



Edith Mary Turpin McMurrin, 1864–1950. Photograph courtesy John and Debbie Dester.

“I Cannot Refrain from Testifying’: Edith Mary Turpin’s Observations about Mormonism and Plural Marriage”

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Edith Mary Turpin, a convert to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, emigrated from England to America in 1886. Following her arrival in Utah, she penned a powerful letter to her closest living relatives, her half-brother, John Smith Turpin, and his wife, Elizabeth. John subsequently responded to Edith’s letter with a short note of his own. The original correspondence—transcriptions of which are included at the end of this article—are currently in the possession of John (Edith’s great-grandson) and Debbie Dester, of Provo, Utah.¹

Edith wrote her letter, in part, to inform John and Elizabeth of her circumstances upon settling in Utah. (This appears to be the first letter she has written to them since her departure from England.) However, a more careful reading reveals that this is more than a simple report about her new home. Through the eloquent words Edith penned, one discovers the depth and breadth of her thoughts and feelings—the unification of her heart and mind. Indeed, the letter captures her independent nature, her ability to consider and present ideas and observations in a balanced and thoughtful manner, her familiarity with the Bible and other religious texts, her commitment to covenants, her personal sense of conviction and her desire to be a

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witness of her faith. Edith certainly shares her testimony of Mormonism with her family, but the letter conveys even more than personal belief; in its pages, one also discovers a subtle but powerful conversion narrative within the context of late-nineteenth century Mormon history. Edith unwittingly reveals to her brother and sister-in-law why she became and chose to remain a Latter-day Saint; she is recounting her journey of faith. Therefore, a figurative and literal depiction of the spiritual pilgrimages early Mormon converts engaged in is intricately woven throughout the letter Edith penned.

Edith Mary Turpin's Youth

Edward Turpin, Edith's father, was born on March 10, 1811, in Plymouth, Devon, England. Frances Dawkins, her mother, was born on August 28, 1815, in Croyden, England. They were married on October 10, 1858, in All Saints Church in Southampton. On August 20, 1864, Edward and Frances welcomed a new baby girl—Edith Mary—into their home in Southampton.

Following the Norman Conquest in 1066, Southampton served as the major port of transit between Normandy and the then-capital of England, Winchester. It thus makes sense that Edward worked as a mariner and then a sea captain, and that his son, John Smith Turpin (from Edward's previous marriage to Grace Smith) seems to have been a sailor.² Since her father and older half-brother (twenty-six years her senior) were so often at sea, and because her only full sibling, Julia, passed away in 1864, young Edith likely spent much time alone. Her "delicate" disposition, and the untimely deaths of her parents in 1879 and 1881 respectively, resulted in what she later called an "unhappy girlhood."³ By the age of seventeen, her closest living relative was her half-brother, John.

Notwithstanding these circumstances, Edith's youth should not be equated with emptiness. An extant letter written by her former teacher E. J. Ash hints at Edith's creativity, intelligence, curiosity, commitment to learning and thoughtfulness. Aware of this ten-year-old's budding potential, Ash counseled, "My dear I am pleased to find that you strive to learn all you possibly can, pray continue to do so."⁴ Through her teacher's words, it becomes clear that Edith was a strong pupil who consistently demonstrated a passion for learning.

Although precise details about Edith's educational background are unavailable, it is notable that academic opportunities began to increase for women in Great Britain during the 1860s and 1870s. For example, "An Endowed Schools Act was passed in 1869; and Parliament readily assented to the proposal that in the framing of schemes, 'provision shall be made, as far as conveniently may be, for extending to girls the benefits of endowments.'"⁵

Two years later, at the Social Science Congress held in Leeds in 1871, Maria Grey proposed that a national Union be founded with the express purpose of advancing women's education, which would be known as the National Union for the Education of Girls of all Classes.⁶ They created the Union in behalf of young women "whose educational needs were not covered by the provisions of the Education Act of 1870."⁷ One of the Union's proposed objectives was "to assist the formation of councils similar to the North England Council for the Education of Women in other divisions of the country, and, while endeavouring to multiply local centre of activity, to afford all workers in the same cause a common bond of union, and a means of intercommunication and combined action." Clearly, those organizing it hoped to make the Union a national success.⁸

One year later, in 1872, the Union established the Girls' Public Day School Company, which spearheaded the founding of thirty-five schools by 1878.⁹ And it encouraged the formation of similar unions, which likewise sought to promote female education. Illustrating the Union's influence on England as a whole, Zimmern explains, "The impulse given by the Union and its pioneer schools was felt everywhere, and it seemed as though before long every large town in England would have a proprietary or public school for girls."¹⁰ In Southampton, for instance, a girls' school was built and directed by the Hampshire Association.¹¹ And in 1875, the Southampton College and High School for Girls was established.¹² It is therefore not unrealistic to assume that Edith may have benefited from this growing interest in and commitment to female education.¹³ Extant documents certainly reveal an eloquent young lady of keen intelligence and exemplary writing skills.

Like many young women in nineteenth-century England, Edith also became a skilled tailoress.¹⁴ Quite commonly, working-class women attended evening schools that focused on the development of sewing skills—those seeking employment as milliners, needlewomen, dress-makers, mantle-makers, and tailoresses were most likely to attend.¹⁵ The Taunton Trade School, located in Southampton, placed particular emphasis on technical and commercial training. Edith may have developed her tailoring skills in this type of setting.

Conversion to Mormonism

While little is known of Edith's early religiosity—other than her Sunday School attendance as a young girl, which certainly resulted in her familiarity with the biblical text—her parents' marriage in All Saints Church, and her own christening in St. Mary's Parish, both in Southampton, suggest an affiliation with the Church of England.¹⁶

For centuries, extreme limitations were placed on religious freedom in England—people were expected to embrace the Anglican faith. Such impositions evolved over time. For example, the 1689 Toleration Act granted freedom of worship to Protestant Nonconformists, but Catholics and Unitarians were excluded from such rights.¹⁷ Although promised freedom of worship, and the opportunity to select their own teachers and preachers, Nonconformists were not given the legal rights to participate in local and national politics at this time. Furthermore, because the Five-Mile Act (1665)¹⁸ and the Conventicle Act (1664)¹⁹ remained on the statute books, preaching and gathering rights had the potential to be severely limited. In 1812, Parliament finally repealed these two acts. This change enabled pastors and missionaries to preach openly without the looming threat of legal interference. Eventually, laws that forbade non-Anglicans—including Catholics—from participating in politics were also repealed. For the first time, legal obstacles did not prohibit preaching in Great Britain, as long as one obtained a license to do so.²⁰ These changes allowed religious diversity to flourish more openly.

In the early nineteenth century, transatlantic religious revivals hinted at past and future transformation.²¹ Preachers such as Nancy Towle, Lorenzo Dow, Asahal Nettleton, and others cross-pollinated religious thought to large crowds of people in both America and Britain.²² And, many preachers of new American-based faiths—such as the Millerites and the Campbellites—traveled to England to share messages of salvation, millennialism and restoration.²³ A growing commitment to religious freedom finally enabled missionary work, of all varieties, to abound on both sides of the Atlantic. It was in this setting that the first LDS missionaries arrived in England in 1837, under the direction of Apostle Heber C. Kimball. According to historian Malcolm Thorp, they “ushered in the most spectacular and lasting of the American missionary endeavours in Britain, and the Mormon Church became the fastest-growing religious body in that period.”²⁴ Indeed, by 1850, there were 30,747 Saints in Great Britain; at that time, the total population there actually surpassed the LDS population in North America.²⁵

Notwithstanding this impressive growth, mid-nineteenth century Mormonism also encountered significant opposition. Plural marriage, in particular, became the target of anti-Mormon sentiment, both nationally and internationally, following its public announcement in 1852. Over time, newspapers and other periodicals “exposed” the “realities” of Mormonism.²⁶ British newspapers, for example, contained endless accounts and criticisms about Mormon polygamy, which warned people to be cautious of the “dangerous” elders who sought to kidnap English women so they could establish and further their Utah harems.²⁷ One English critic of Mormonism declared: “English husbands, and the wives and daughters of England (though

many, alas, are destitu[t]e of any religious feelings) have not yet become so reckless of chastity and pureness of living, that they can read such accounts of these filthy 'saints' without the blush of shame involuntarily rising on their cheek. Their righteous outburst of indignation, which insulted humanity so keenly resents, and so emphatically abhors, is only restrained from avenging itself by the pity they feel for these deluded creatures, and by the credulity with which they so readily believe the lying denials of the 'priests' of these unclean brothels."²⁸

Such sentiments increased throughout the 1870s and 1880s, due to the rise of federal persecution of Mormon polygamists in the United States throughout these decades, and the growing public awareness—national and international—that followed. Although polygamy had been outlawed in the US during the Civil War, the Morrill Anti-Bigamy Act (1862) had remained largely unenforced in the Territory of Utah at its passing, partly because of the demands of the Civil War and the ensuing period of Reconstruction. Eventually, however, federal indifference toward Utah polygamists ended. The Edmunds Act of 1882, intended to bolster and support the Morrill Act (1862), stripped various rights, such as voting and jury duty, from those who practiced polygamy. The passage of the Edmunds-Tucker Act in 1887 only increased the number of limitations imposed on the Mormons. For example, it disincorporated the Church and its Perpetual Emigrating Fund, authorized the seizure of any Church real estate not used for religious purposes, and permitted the government to seize cash holdings in excess of \$50,000.²⁹

It was during this time of growing animosity toward Mormonism that Edith became acquainted with the Church—likely in the home of her relative, Mary Ann Tippet, who lived in Swanage, England, an “out-of-the-way” place located on the sea coast in Dorsetshire.³⁰ Mary Ann was baptized a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Southampton River in September 1847. Like many female converts in the nineteenth century, she longed to share the message of salvation with family, friends, acquaintances and strangers.³¹ Although precluded from preaching herself, Mary Ann found creative ways to share the gospel throughout her life.³² In addition to laboring with the missionaries who served in the Swanage area, she distributed religious tracts and other Church publications and assisted with the organization of open-air meetings so the missionaries could preach to large audiences. At times, the Tippetts also housed and fed Mormon missionaries.³³ Later in life, upon immigrating to Utah, Mary Ann devoted her remaining years to completing proxy temple work for deceased ancestors. Her willingness to serve, and her evangelistic zeal, touched numerous lives.³⁴ Sadly, her husband, Edward Henry Turpin Tippet, never joined the Church.

Although extant documents do not provide an account of Edith's decision to become a member of the Church, her baptismal certificate contains important clues to this transformative experience. In addition to revealing that missionary Arthur Stayner Jr. baptized her on October 16, 1884, in Southampton, England, the certificate also lists her "present address" in Swanage, Dorset.³⁵ During this time, then, Edith was living near, or possibly even with, Mary Ann Tippett, a woman she would later describe (on the back of a photograph) as a "mother to me."³⁶ A tribute to Mary Ann, written by James L. McMurrin (Edith's eventual husband) upon her death in 1895, also uses the term "Mother" in reference to his wife's relative. Clearly, Mary Ann assumed a maternal role in the life of this orphaned young woman. In his tribute, James also highlighted Mary Ann's desire and willingness to share her faith with everyone she knew—she could be described, quite simply, as an ambassador of Mormonism. It thus seems likely that Edith's conversion to the Church was initiated by conversations with Mary Ann—in this case, the gospel message was conveyed woman to woman.³⁷ As revealed in Edith's written words, the depth of her own conviction hints at the impact Mary Ann would have on her as she encountered a new and seemingly controversial faith.

Edith undoubtedly knew about Mormonism's connection to plural marriage through her inevitable exposure to anti-polygamy newspaper accounts as well as sermons given by preachers who spoke against the LDS Church.³⁸ As she became better acquainted with Mormon beliefs, publications, and people, she also heard the arguments they used to defend their theology and practices, including plural marriage. For example, in 1884 (the year of her baptism), a three-hour outdoor meeting was held in Swanage, England, where Edith seems to have been living at the time. At this gathering, Mary Ann Tippett and President N. M. Hodges sang "the songs of Zion with all the energy and zeal of a good and faithful Latter-day Saint." Following President Hodges's talk, which focused on the restoration of the gospel through the Prophet Joseph Smith, Mr. Morgan, a D.D., and editor of a religious newspaper, *The Christian*, denounced everything Hodges had taught. Morgan then "began a tirade against the 'Mormons'" and their practice of polygamy, suggesting that the missionaries had come to Swanage to "induce people to go to Utah to practice adultery and whoredom." President Hodges responded to this accusation by explaining the "difference between plural marriage, as taught by the Latter-day Saints, and the seductions, whoredoms, and abominations that existed in the Christian world. The former tended to happiness, virtue and purity of life; the latter to misery, degradation and death." He concluded by using passages of scripture to support the LDS claim that plural marriage had been ordained of God.³⁹ This event illustrates the many public exchanges that took place in England over the subject of polygamy,

thus hinting at the debates Edith encountered and ultimately had to work through. At the age of twenty, she made the significant choice to be baptized—a choice that not only reoriented her heart and mind, but also led to a change of geographical base as well as new conceptions of marriage and family. This rather radical religious decision certainly worried her half-brother, John.⁴⁰

Emigration to America

For Mormons, missionary work, indeed salvation itself, included an invitation to gather together and to restore the covenant community that had been promised to the children of Israel. Therefore, like many nineteenth-century British converts to the Church, Edith eventually decided to emigrate to Utah so she could gather with the Saints. In the spring of 1886, she traveled to Liverpool, England, then the largest emigration port in the world.⁴¹ It was in Liverpool—on Lime Street, to be exact—where Edith became acquainted with a returning missionary, James Leaing McMurrin, who had served in Scotland.⁴² The two would travel with a company of Saints on the ship *Nevada*, which departed from Liverpool on April 17, 1886.⁴³ The company arrived in Salt Lake City on May 4. The following day, Edith traveled to Kanosh, Juab County, where she took up residence with Adelaide Tippet Paxton, daughter of Mary Ann and Edward Henry Turpin Tippet.

Cousin Addie, as Edith called her, was baptized in Southampton, England, in 1861, at the age of eight. As a young woman, she received her education at the district school in the Parish of St. James. Eventually, she began working as a nurse. Through her employment, Addie saved her money so she could immigrate to America and join the Saints in Utah. To the chagrin of her father and brothers, who tried to convince her to remain at home, Addie departed from England on September 15, 1875 on the ship *Wyoming*. She arrived in New York City on September 26, and then traveled to Utah by train and stagecoach. Addie then lived with the B.J. Watts family in Kanosh, Utah. While working in their store she became acquainted with James Mills Paxton and eventually accepted his proposal to become his plural wife. The two were sealed in the St. George Temple on January 25, 1877.⁴⁴

In the spring of 1886, Addie and her family welcomed Edith into their home in Kanosh. A few days later, James Paxton—an amateur poet—penned a poem commemorating the occasion.⁴⁵ In addition to welcoming Edith to the land of Zion, the poem underscores the reason the Saints felt such a commitment to gathering—indeed, it explains, in part, why Mary Ann, and thus Addie and Edith, valued Mormonism so much. Temple covenants and the prospects of eternal family appealed to these women; each longed for reunion.⁴⁶ These distinctions set Mormonism apart from other faiths:

covenants made the gathering of Israel a more tangible concept. Indeed, this was the something more they, as women, had been searching for: the temple provided unity and an “enhanced . . . position in the church” as well as “limitless potential in the hereafter.”⁴⁷ All—women and men, dead and living—could experience the blessings promised to those who made and kept covenants. These blessings expanded their vision of eternity. In the context of Mormonism, salvation meant more than “sweet rest in the bosom of Christ. It was an assurance that they would become *like* him.”⁴⁸ Capturing the import of the sacred spaces for which Edith had traveled so far to become a part of—indeed, the home of the Saints and the House of the Lord—the poem reads:

Welcome to Utah the home of the free
Receive this kind token
From Addy and me
Our home is quite humble
Though shaded with trees
Here is Joy in the household
And health in the breeze
There is life in the water
That flows down the street
There’s bread in the bin and plenty of meat
The bees are at work bringing sweets from each tree
Me thinks as they pass
They hum welcome to thee

Welcome dear Edith it was not regret
That started the tear when four black eyes met⁴⁹
And bound with a spell for a moment each soul
And took from each limb the power of control
The drops are not sorrow that flowed from the spring
Relaxing the cord of the heart’s tender string

It was but a drop from the fountain so free
Biding welcome kind welcome
Thrice welcome to thee.

Welcome to Zion in God’s chosen land
The saints are increasing they go hand in hand
To build the vast places regardless of foes
The desert is conquered and blooms as the rose⁵⁰
And temples are reared, God’s purpose to fill
Be upward and onward there’s no standing still
For in the dark prison thy kindred may be
A grand work there is waiting
In the temple for thee.⁵¹

Paxton’s words proved prophetic. The temple would indeed become meaningful to this young convert.

Analysis of the Letter

Six months following Edith's arrival in Kanosh she moved to Salt Lake City so she could resume her trade as a tailoress; accustomed to independence, she wanted to be able to support herself. Sometime following this move, she penned a powerful letter to her closest-living relatives—her half-brother, John Smith Turpin, and his wife, Elizabeth.

After apologizing for her “long silence”—perhaps as long as eighteen months—Edith promises to “give an account of my experience since leaving old England.” She proceeded by incorporating pragmatic details about her new situation with astute observations about Mormonism and its people. In doing so, she assures John that she will paint a complete and accurate picture of the “peculiar people among whom my lot is now cast.” In order to meet this promise, she describes the Saints' exemplary deeds, while also acknowledging weaknesses and admitting that there are some who are not fully committed to living their religion. The balance she strives to achieve as she describes the people and the place makes her claim “that I have never seen a better lot of people, taken as a whole, than the Latter Day Saints” more convincing than if she had underscored strengths and omitted weaknesses.⁵²

Throughout the letter it becomes clear that Edith longs for John and Elizabeth to see the Mormon people as she sees them—a group of imperfect but pure-hearted individuals striving to live the gospel of Jesus Christ. They are not, as a whole, she contends, the hypocritical people the press portrays them to be. Edith wants her family to understand that the Mormons have been “grievously lied about”—that the stories conveyed through the popular press are a composition of falsehoods and intentional exaggerations. Edith hoped to correct these misconceptions by sharing “the truth and nothing but the truth” concerning their “situation and conduct here in the mountains.”⁵³ Stressing that she is now a firsthand witness of Mormon life in Utah—one who can speak “knowingly” and “understandingly with reference to the awful stories”—Edith establishes herself as a credible source. She then depicts the exemplary and wholesome character of the “honorable, upright, God-fearing” people that surround her, a challenge to the vitriolic stereotypes to which she has alluded.⁵⁴

In describing the practice of plural marriage, Edith reveals much about her own conversion story and, implicitly hints at her own struggles—the struggles LDS women inevitably encountered—as she sought to come to terms with this practice. Her familiarity with the arguments used in anti-Mormon materials, as well as her awareness of LDS arguments in defense of plural marriage are evident. Even before her baptism, she had to grapple with the prospects of polygamy, the tales of horror that were spread throughout the

popular press, as well as the anti-Mormon rhetoric used by local preachers. This could only have been exasperated by concerns expressed by family members and friends. In order to work through the complexity of the practice and the confusion she inevitably felt, she had to consider the topic from every angle, and attain a sense of spiritual peace about it.

Upon her arrival in Utah, the boundaries between observer of Mormonism and participant in Mormonism may have been blurred for Edith once again. She found herself in a foreign land among a people that seemed peculiar, despite a common faith. Did she fit? Could she fit? As hinted in her letter, the time she spent living with Addie's family helped her make important transitions in heart and mind. Although she does not state explicitly the benefits that came through personal observation, it becomes clear that it was in the Paxton home that Edith could see, firsthand, how the daily life of a polygamous family unfolded.⁵⁵ As she notes to her brother (without mentioning polygamy), she has witnessed the goodness of Addie's husband. In him, she saw a loving spouse and father, not a lustful demon in search of future victims. In this particular household, then, Edith saw plural marriage work. Her experiences there certainly challenged the dramatic stories about harems she had heard in England. So while living among the Saints, Edith had the opportunity to continue studying and thinking through this new marriage pattern, and her letter reveals that she remained an engaged seeker determined to reach her own conclusions. The words she penned make it clear that she is familiar with her scriptures and well read on the topics she addresses. Indeed, Edith has considered various arguments, positive and negative, and she has come up with her own conclusions, thoughts, and feelings about the Mormon faith and its practice of plural marriage—enough so that she could declare in confidence, "I had rather to be the 20th wife of an honorable God-fearing Man, than to be the only wife of any one of two thirds of the Men in the world."⁵⁶

Perhaps speaking in silent defense of her own choices, since it is likely Edith was a plural wife when she composed this letter, she ultimately informs her brother that polygamy is "one of the most beneficial doctrines to women if properly carried out."⁵⁷ To make her case, she continues to use logic and reason, rather than relying on emotion and sentiment. Edith engages with the biblical and philosophical interpretations employed by Church leaders and LDS apologists, in an attempt to most effectively explain the positive reasons for this most unusual practice.⁵⁸ Her study of the Bible seems to have helped her heart and mind change. The possibility of covenants and eternal family appealed to a young woman who was already far too acquainted with loss and the intense grief that follows. Journeying to a new land—and to a temple—made sense to her.

Through her own personal journey, figurative and literal, Edith began to see crucial connections—Abraham, temple, covenants, work for the dead, and the gathering of Israel. Perhaps she sensed the import of this topic in an eternal framework. Joseph Smith had explained that plural marriage provided a way to preserve human relationships throughout eternity; his reason for introducing it, then, had a strong dynastic element.⁵⁹ At the time, the sealing of the human family—a welding together of relationships through plural marriage and the law of adoption, as well as monogamy—was horizontal rather than vertical.⁶⁰ Plurality created lateral links within the LDS community that bound people together in an extensive cosmological sphere.⁶¹ The belief that relationships crossed time and space explains why Joseph Smith would declare, “We need the temple more than anything else.”⁶² To him, restoration enabled the mending of relationships, human to human as well as human to divine.⁶³

Edith hoped to create welding links within her own family and preserve relationships with the living and the deceased (horizontal and vertical). Perhaps the losses she experienced throughout her life made her even more attuned to the idea of eternity and the need to bind the human family together, whether in plural or monogamous relationships. Her father's first wife had passed away (hence her own family consisted of two mothers), and her half-brother, to whom she was writing, had played a significant role in her life. Preserving these relationships mattered to Edith. Furthermore, Edith never knew her only full sibling, Julia. Because Edith's parents died when she was in her late teens, she had become an orphan prematurely. It thus makes sense that letters to Edith, whether written by her half-brother when she was a little girl, or from her husband as he served in the mission presidency in Europe, would request information about aunts and uncles and cousins.⁶⁴ Like so many women who had suffered the loss of loved ones, she longed for family ties. Her letter—and her actions—make it clear that she was developing spiritual eyes that allowed her to look beyond the here and now and to glimpse into the then and there. She understood—grew to understand—what it meant to be a savior on Mount Zion.⁶⁵ It was within the walls of the temple that Edith, as well as other Mormon women, discovered a “clearly marked, step-by-step progression toward exaltation.” Indeed, it was in this sacred space that the meaning of conversion expanded—there, the faithful felt “the divine call of the elect” and discovered the relational nature of salvation.⁶⁶

Edith's letter, then, reveals that she has become a careful observer and a cautious student of Mormonism. Indeed, intricately woven throughout this lengthy correspondence is a powerful declaration of personal testimony. Edith explains and defends her personal commitment to the Church and all its teachings. She also invites her half-brother, albeit implicitly, to understand

(and ultimately become a part of) Zion. Sharing a description of her own spiritual pilgrimage, her own process of change, reveals the evolution that can take place as heart and mind unite.

And yet this letter is more than a record of Edith's testimony. It shows how she shifts from thinking about the Mormons to becoming a Mormon. She is in the process of internalizing her faith. She has, as she declares, "had the opportunity of becoming acquainted with what may be termed the true inwardness of this people and their unpopular Religion"; and she has not been and will not be "idle in this direction."⁶⁷ Edith has engaged fully in her faith and personal transformation thus resulted. The conversion process was underway in her life. Her letter therefore provides a powerful description of a journey—the development of her testimony and the shift from belief to conversion—as she embraced a rather unusual religion. The words she has penned reveal a beautiful story; they capture a changing Edith.

Conclusion

Following her move from Kanosh to Salt Lake City, Edith became reacquainted with James Leaing McMurrin, whom she had met while immigrating to Utah.⁶⁸ On March 16, 1887, James married Mary Jacobsen in the Logan Temple. The following day, Edith and James were also married and sealed in this temple. At this time, Edith completed proxy temple work for her parents as well. A web of relationships had formed—eternity appeared to be within her reach.

Sadly, minimal extant writings composed by Edith exist, so we know little about her experiences and feelings as a plural wife and a mother of four children: James Albert, Joseph, Edith Marguerite, and Gilbert Leaing McMurrin. Only a few short years following her temple sealing to James McMurrin, Wilford Woodruff issued the Manifesto, which officially discontinued the practice of plural marriage (or entering into new plural marriages). While we have no recorded reactions by Edith, like so many others, she must have been "astonished" by this unexpected change. Throughout the 1870s and 1880s the Mormons had given all to defend polygamy—their commitment to this practice had even led to the imprisonment of many, as federal laws stripped them of their rights.⁶⁹ Its demise thus resulted in mixed emotions among the LDS people. While some expressed relief—because they would not have to become plural wives—others experienced pain, confusion, and in many cases even doubt because they were plural wives. To believe that revelation had been retracted, that God's word had changed, required intense soul searching. In many ways, the Manifesto required a paradigm shift, a reconfiguration of

Mormon culture and belief.⁷⁰ Accepting the end of polygamy, it seems, may have been as difficult as embracing the practice in the first place.⁷¹

Capturing the turmoil so many plural wives felt upon learning about the Manifesto, Lorena Eugenia Washburn Larsen wrote:

I could not believe that the Authorities of the Church had given up plural marriage, as it had been called the crowning principal of the Gospel, and it has been such a sacrifice on the part of many young women to go into that order of marriage. . . . My husband went out and talked with them about the Manifesto. They told him that it was a fact that the principal was dropped by the Church. They said that the first Presidency and the Apostles were all united on it, and it should be practiced no more. My husband came to our tent and told me about it, and my feelings were passed description. I had given into that order of marriage solely for the purpose above mentioned, and because I believed God had commanded his people to do so, and it had been such a sacrifice to enter it and live it as I thought God wanted me to. So I thought about it. It seemed impossible that the Lord would go back on a principal which had caused so much sacrifice, heartache and trial before one could conquer ones carnal self, and live on that higher plane and love ones neighbor as ones self. My husband walked out without saying a word, and as he walked away I thought, oh yes, it is easy for you, you can go home to your other family and be happy with her, and then while I must be like Hager sent away. My anguish was inexpressible, and a dense darkness took hold of my mind. I thought that if the Lord and the Church Authorities had gone back on the principal, there was nothing to any part of the Gospel. I fancied I would see myself and my children, and many other splendid women and their children turned adrift, and our only purpose in entering it, had been more fully to serve the Lord. I sank down on our bedding and wished in my anguish that the earth would open and take me and my children in. The darkness seemed impenetrable.

During this moment of utter despair, of heart-wrenching agony, Lorena experienced a revelation of her own. She recalls:

All at once I heard a voice and felt a most powerful presence. The voice said, "Why, this is no more unreasonable than the requirement the Lord made of Abraham when he commanded him to offer up his son Isaac, and when the Lord sees that you are willing to obey in all things the trial shall be removed. There was a brightness by light which cannot be described which filled my soul and I was so filled with joy and peace, and happiness that I felt that no matter whatever should come to me in all my future life, I could never feel sad again. If the people of the whole world had been gathered together trying with all their power to comfort me they could not compare with the powerful unseen presence which came to me on that occasion. As soon as my husband came back I told him what a glorious presence had been there, and what I had heard. He said, "I knew I couldn't say a word to comfort you, so I went to a patch of willows and asked the Lord to send a comforter." In the trying years which followed, often a glimmer of that same light came to me again."⁷²

Edith, Lorena, and thousands of other Mormon women suffered deep emotional anguish as well as remarkable spiritual peace as they dealt with

the often agonizing complexities of plural marriage. Their “sacrifices” had certainly become “more sacred” than their “increase” (D&C 117:13).

As Mormon marital norms slowly transitioned back to monogamy, Edith raised her children primarily alone, in part because James served as the first counselor in the European Mission Presidency from 1898–1901. Although he wrote tender and affectionate letters to his wives and children during this time, and engaged in their lives as much as he possibly could, given the circumstances, Edith and Mary faced many challenges during his absence. In a letter she wrote to her husband during this trying time, Edith declared, “I find there has been nothing in my past life like the present way of living to draw one nearer to the Lord.”⁷³ She recognized, yet again, that conversion—indeed the journey to exaltation—was a process one engaged in over the course of a lifetime. Edith was still becoming.

Near the end of his mission, James began to suffer from cancer. Although friends and family hoped for a miraculous recovery, he passed away in 1902, at the age of thirty-eight. Once again, Edith encountered an early loss—her sister, her parents, and now her husband had died far too soon. Perhaps it was the intricate web of human relationships that had formed through the familial sealings, between March 17 and 18, 1887, that provided her with comfort throughout the remainder of her life. Edith’s spiritual pilgrimage continued, despite the lingering hurt. Eternity certainly had its appeal.

The Letter

Edith’s well-preserved letter is written on cream-colored stationary that measures 9 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches by 8 inches. The paper contains an embossed crown at the top of each sheet. Only the first few sentences of the letter have faded slightly with age; the black ink in which the text is written remains otherwise clear. The letter, which evidences Edith’s prolific tendency, is five pages long (front and back). Her tidy, cursive penmanship is extremely legible. Each sheet of paper is folded in half vertically (like a quarter-fold greeting card; and she filled each of the four panels), and then folded in thirds horizontally (to fit in an envelope).

John’s letter, equally well preserved, measures 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches by 7 inches. Although the buff-colored paper is weathered with age, the dark brown ink John used to pen his note has not faded over time. The sheet of paper is folded in half vertically (like a quarter-fold greeting card; John’s text fills the four panels) and then folded in thirds horizontally (to fit in an envelope).

Unfortunately, Edith’s letter is undated, so only an approximate time frame for its authorship can be determined. The content of the letter implies that she wrote it shortly after moving from Kanosh to Salt Lake City, six

months following her arrival in Utah. However, the note John Turpin wrote in response to Edith's letter is dated December 16, 1887, over eighteen months after she settled in Utah. In his note, John explains that his family received a letter from Edith in early November 1887. If the letter included here is the letter he refers to, then Edith wrote it a full year after moving to Salt Lake City, and several months after becoming the plural wife of James Leaing McMurrin, an event she does not mention in her correspondence. Edith very likely writes in defense of her own choice to enter a polygamous marriage, without actually acknowledging that she has done so. While she may have written this letter earlier than November 1887, and that John's December 1887 note is a response to a letter written at a later date, the exchanges do seem to belong together thematically. John's comment that Edith's letter took half an hour to read, and his request that she compose shorter correspondence in the future, certainly fits the length of this particular letter as well.

Salt Lake City
My Dear Brother⁷⁴

I feel that I owe you an apology for having been so long in replying to your last kind favor, and I take this opportunity of offering it to you. I Sincerely trust that you will not think that I have forgotten you because of my long silence, for I assure you that such is not the case. I have several times made up my mind to write you all about my condition here, and to give you an account of my experience since leaving old England, and I have desired particularly to give you all the information that I can regarding the peculiar people⁷⁵ among whom my lot is now cast, but the circumstances surrounding me have been of such a nature that I could not carry out my intentions until the present time. I will not trouble you with a detailed account of my Journey from England here,⁷⁶ as you are so familiar with Ocean voyages and long Journeys,⁷⁷ that the recital of mine would perhaps prove uninteresting to you, so by saying that it was, in the main, pleasant and agreeable to me as well as profitable, I will pass over the time that elapsed between my departure from England and my arrival in the world-famous City of Salt Lake and hasten to pen you things of more Importance. I only remained in this place one night when I took train for Juab,⁷⁸ from which place I was conveyed to Cousin Addies in a wagon.⁷⁹ I found Addie and her family in good health and glad to see me, and, Believe me, I was delighted to meet them and to know that my destination was reached at last, for I was tired of travelling and needed rest. Addie has a nice family and a good Husband, and also a comfortable home in the midst of the Rocky Mountains, and I spent a very pleasant Six months with her during which my health was pretty good, but I was anxious to be at work earning something for myself, and as there was nothing for me to do in Kanosh but to go out washing and I was not strong enough to engage in that kind of employment, I concluded to go to Salt Lake⁸⁰ and work at my trade, so, accordingly, I wended my way towards the City, in which, soon after my arrival, I secured a situation as Tailoress,⁸¹ went to lodge with a respectable family who were very kind to me, and there I have remained ever since. Now, during all this time, Dear Bro, & Sister, I have had an excellent opportunity of becoming acquainted with what may be termed the true inwardness of this people and their unpopular Religion, and, Believe me, I have not been Idle in this direction, so if it will not weary you I shall endeavor to faithfully

present them and there condition at home before you. I will say in the first place that I am now prepared to speak knowingly and understandingly with reference to the awful Stories⁸² that have been so widely circulated concerning them, and I have not hesitation in denouncing them as being utterly false and without foundation.⁸³ I do not wish to be understood as saying that the “Mormons” are all, or any of them, perfect, for that is not to be found in humanity here below, but I do say that they are grievously lied about and I make this declaration from personal observation it matters not where you may go in this Country, Great Britain,⁸⁴ or in any other civilized land,⁸⁵ the “Mormons” are derided, stigmatized and branded as the “offscourings of creation,”⁸⁶ and it is popular to point the finger of scorn at them and cry “deluded Mormons.”⁸⁷ You know this to be a fact as well as I do, but is this any evidence that they are a corrupt God-defying people. if it must be so considered then we force the Savior and his Apostles into a very unfavorable position, for, as you also know, he was hissed at and called the Nazerene,⁸⁸ and his Apostles and Saints were derisively nicknamed Christians, and suffered all manner of persecution.⁸⁹ Their proper title in the days of Jesus and at all other times when God had a people on the earth, was that of Saints,⁹⁰ and that is the name by which the people of Utah should be known abroad as they are at home, but as “Christians” was the name given to the followers of our Savior by Scoffers and unbelievers in former times, so “Mormons” has come to be the term by which they are known among the same class in Latter days.⁹¹ why did they call them “Christians” eighteen hundred years ago? because they believed in the Divine Mission of a person who bore the name of Christ. and why do they call this people that I now reside among “Mormons”? because they believe in the Divinity of a Book written by a Succession of Prophets on this continent who bore that name, which book the Bible declares should come forth in this age?⁹² as well might I turn round and call the Christian World “Peters” and “Pauls”, “Isaiahs” or “Jeremiahs”, because they believe in the writings of those men as for them to call the Latter Day Saints “Mormons” because we believe in the writings of the Prophets who once lived upon this Continent as well as in the Inspired books of the Bible. having made this explanation in reference to the nick-name given to this people, I will now endeavor to present the truth and nothing but the truth as regards their situation and conduct here in the Mountains, you know it is often said in England that the Elders preach one thing there and another here and that there lives are the very reverse at home to what they are abroad,⁹³ while I admit that there are some among the “Mormons” who are anything but what they profess to be, yet I deny that the majority of them are in this position, for I see hundreds of honorable, upright, God-fearing people all around me. people that are working for the good of their fellow creatures, and who are willing to sacrifice all that the Savior requires for the spread of his truth and the rebuilding of his Kingdom.⁹⁴ and to their everlasting honor be it said that there is not a Saloon, Gambling Hall or House of Prostitution owned or operated by any of the Latter Day Saints from one end of Utah to the other I do not say that there are none of these things here for they have been established by the enemies of the “Mormon” people and with the approval of the American Government in spite of all the Efforts of the Latter Day Saints against them.⁹⁵ you desired me to write the truth and I intend to do so. you can find all kinds of people here to associate with, but while some are committing such crimes as occur daily and hourly in the large cities of England, the great majority of them are living good lives, and working faithfully for the Dead in their Temples,⁹⁶ and also for the living in a great many lands besides their own,⁹⁷ and in all honesty I can say that I never seen a better lot of people, taken as a whole, than the Latter Day Saints are. perhaps you would like to hear something about their Polygamy, so I will write a

little on that subject.⁹⁸ there are men here who have got more wives than one, but to my certain knowledge they are the very best men that can be found in any land, for I know some of them personally, and they are men that walk with the fear of God before their eyes continually. Some people would ask if they have more wives than one how can they be good the "Mormons" answer would be, how could that Great Man whom we are pleased to call our Father Abraham have more than one wife, and yet be the friend of God and the Father of the faithful?⁹⁹ To get married in this Church a man must live a most strictly virtuous and pure life, such as the people of the old world have never been taught all their days.¹⁰⁰ they must not lie, nor steal, nor swear, and they are called upon to refrain from the use of tea & coffee, intoxicating liquors, tobacco, and everything else that is calculated to defile the body.¹⁰¹ truly they hold out a higher plane for men and women¹⁰² to walk on than can be found any where else among any people in the world. and this principle of marrying more wives than one is, like all the rest of their Religious principles, abundantly supported by the Bible,¹⁰³ the Standard for us to among the Christian Nations, who, by the way, hold up their hands in Holy Horror when the name "Mormon" passes ones lips.¹⁰⁴ there is a principle practiced, which, compared with the practice of Polygamy as found among the Latter Day Saints, is too revolting to be mentioned in the same breath. it is similar to placing a sin-soaked degraded, prostitute¹⁰⁵ beside a pure, virtuous Girl. as a certain kind of Serpent besmears everything it touches and leaves a Slimy Sickening substances wherever it goes, so the Christian way of keeping mistresses and putting away one wife to take another,¹⁰⁶ to say nothing of their conduct with fallen women, leaves a Stain that cannot be removed.¹⁰⁷ while the Polygamy of this people, rightly understood, has just the opposite effect, for it is one of the most beneficial Doctrine to women, properly carried out, that ever was known.¹⁰⁸ in fact it is the most beneficial one, for it is a Revelation¹⁰⁹ from God in these last Days, and gives to every woman the privilege of Marriage, at the same time teaching her that her Soul¹¹⁰ is her own¹¹¹ and that she must not associate with her Husband under certain circumstances. this fact alone carries on its face the evidence of Divine Revelation and points out the way in which we can rear pure healthy children that will be an honor to God,¹¹² an ornament to Society,¹¹³ and who will live to the age of a tree,¹¹⁴ while the practice of the opponents of this people canker and destroy¹¹⁵ the very fountains of life. Instead of the "Mormons" deceiving their wives by consorting with the vile and impure among women, they marry more wives than one and support each family, educating their children alike, when all persons concerned in these marriages mutually agree to live in this manner, whether it be two or a half Dozen, tell me who is wronged, and is it not better than the course that is pursued by so many who howl rage against the "Mormons"?¹¹⁶ Yes, high as the Heavens are above the Earth, So are the ways of this people superior to the Soul-sickening conduct of the "civilized" world! for the one brings forth and promotes life, while the other prevents and destroys it. let us consider, Dear Bro & Sister, for a few moments, a few Ideas that the Bible sets forth in relation to this principle that is so universally rejected by the Christian World.¹¹⁷ You believe in that Divine Record don't you, well then, draw the bolts and open the Shutters of your minde so that its teachings may have free access to your Innermost heart. Are you not looking for the time to come when there shall be a grand and Beautiful leity established into which the humble followers of the meek and lowly Jesus shall enter? and are not all Christians moved with the same anxiety to get there? the name of that City will be New Jerusalem¹¹⁸ and it shall come down from God out of Heaven, and when it does there shall be Inscribed over its pearly gates the names of the twelve sons of Jacob. what a great honor! and yet it is a Polygamous family that will be thus

favored!¹¹⁹ we read in the Bible that this family built the House of Israel.¹²⁰ Strange that the Lord should choose these persons for a great work!¹²¹ in Ruth we find the words “the Lord make thee like Leah and like Rachal which two did build the House of Israel.”¹²² and from the House of Israel came the Savior of the world. what powerful evidences in favor of this system of marriage! I want to go where Jesus and his Forefathers are and if I do I shall certainly be among a great throng of Polygamists for Israel was a nation of Polygamists. Some people say those old practices are all done away long ago, and I suppose Isaiah understood that such assertions would be made for he has been careful to tell us in his 4th Chapter¹²³, that “in the last days Seven women shall take hold of one Man, saying, we will Eat our own bread and wear our own apparel only let us be called after by thy name to take away our reproach”.¹²⁴ they did not wish to bear a man’s name in order to get food or raiment, for they had those things of their own, but it was to take away the reproach of being childless. there are many more arguments that might be used for this subject, but I fear I have already been too long. I will say that I had rather be the 20th wife of an honorable God-fearing Man, than to be the only wife of any one out of two thirds of the Men in the world.¹²⁵ for there is so much misery caused through deception and the perfidy of Man. having a deep feeling of interest in you, Dear Bro & Sister, I cannot refrain from testifying that this is the Church and Kingdom of God and I know it. the Savior said in his day that if any man would do his will, meaning Our Heavenly Fathers, he should know of the Doctrine, whether it was true or false, that promise holds good to day.¹²⁶ I have tried it and know whereof I speak. and I warn you to stop and consider well the way of your feet, for the Lord has Spoken as he said he would do in this the last dispensation¹²⁷ and called to the Earth from the Rising of the Sun unto the going down thereof, out of Zion the perfection of Beauty, God hath shined, our God shall come and shall not keep Silent, a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him, in all honesty and Godly fear I give you this testimony and I know that I speak the truth,¹²⁸ for the Spirit of the Lord whispers to my Soul that great and terrible calamities are rapidly approaching that will shake to pieces and destroy all things that are not founded on the rock of ages and clothed in the robes of Christs righteousness¹²⁹, with unfeigned love, I am Yours. E. M. Turpin.

John Smith Turpin’s Response to Edith Turpin

Dec 16/87¹³⁰

No 2 Longcroft Street

Southampton¹³¹

My Dear Sister

I now sit down to answer your kind & welcome letter which we received early last month & glad to here that you enjoyed good health I thought the Winter would have been too severe for you I have been ask after you since I wrote the last letter by several people the Trim’s in John Street¹³² & Jnr White I see in your letter that you still belong to the good Church as you call it but I don’t mind that for I believed we are all trying to get to the one Place¹³³ only there are different ways of going there the only thing I object in youre Church is Polygamy and I hope you will not throw yourself away with it for some Day you may be glad to come to England again and I would much you rather know that you are the one Wife of any good man¹³⁴ whatever his Religion may be this is my opinon but I may be wrong so now I will Drop that—& go into Famly matters so to start with I must tell you that Ted is married Two months ago so I shall soon be Grandfather now & Ada and Lizzie is at Service¹³⁵ so my Family

is getting small now I must tell you I am still in the Bromsgrove Trading Home every Week to them Cranes in the Dock¹³⁶ Elizabeth¹³⁷ enjoys good health our Youngest Baby¹³⁸ is three years old and we all send our kind Love to you and wish you every success in your anticipation Dear Sister do not be afraid to write to us what ever your start in life may be just a short letter it took us a half hour to read your last one so now I will conclude with my kind all our kind Love to you

From Your Ever
Affectionate Brother
J. S. Turpin

we all wish you a merry Christmas & happy New Year

Notes

1. The author expresses appreciation to John and Debbie Dester for providing access to the personal papers of Edith Turpin McMurrin, as well as those of her husband, James Leaing McMurrin. Hereafter, it will be assumed that all correspondences cited are in the private collection of John and Debbie Dester, unless otherwise stated. All correspondences are reproduced here with their original spelling.

2. John L. Dester, "Preserving the Past for the Future: McMurrin, Irvine, Craig and Leaing Family History," copy in possession of author.

3. In a letter to her granddaughter Alice, Edith mentions that she was always "delicate" as a girl, which seems to imply that she had health problems, which may have been one reason for her unhappy childhood. See Edith Turpin McMurrin to Alice McMurrin, July 30, 1939. Edward Turpin passed away on August 27, 1879, after being at sea for three days. The crew turned the ship around and returned to Southampton so he could be buried there.

4. E. J. Ash to Edith Turpin, October 20, 1874. This is a letter Edith received from her former teacher, E. J. Ash, who was responding to a letter her young pupil had sent to her.

5. Josephine Kamm, *Hope Deferred: Girls' Education in English History* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1965), 212. Under the direction of an Endowed Schools Commission, "the number of endowed schools for girls, which had been only 12 in 1864, was substantially increased; and, where resources were insufficient for the actual establishment of new schools, funds were set aside for scholarships and exhibitions." By 1890, there were eighty endowed schools for girls. "The Endowed Schools Act has rightly been called 'the Magna Carta of girls' education, the first acknowledgment by the State of their claim to a liberal education.'" Kamm, *Hope Deferred*, 212–13.

6. Alice Zimmern, *The Renaissance of Girls' Education in England: A Record of Fifty Years' Progress* (London: A. D. Innes, 1898), 54–55.

7. The Education Act of 1870 focused primarily on public education. Kamm, *Hope Deferred*, 162; 215.

8. Three hundred people immediately joined Grey's Union. The organization would also later receive endorsement from Princess Louise, daughter of Queen Victoria. Kamm, *Hope Deferred*, 55, 215.

9. Zimmern, *The Renaissance of Girls' Education in England*, 56–57.

10. Zimmern, *The Renaissance of Girls' Education in England*, 58.

11. Zimmern, *The Renaissance of Girls' Education in England*, 56–58.

12. The teacher at Southampton College and High School for Girls was a Miss Sherwood. Old Tauntonians' Association (Southampton), "College History—New Road, 1864–1926," <http://www.ota-southampton.org.uk/history/newroad.html>, accessed February 22, 2013.

13. The instruction at each of the schools under the Union "prepared girls for the university local examinations, and for the examinations of the College of Preceptors, which demanded a slightly lower standard. The course included religious instruction (girls belonging to different denominations could receive their own instruction), reading, writing, arithmetic, book-keeping, English grammar and literature, history, geography, French and German, the elements of physical science, drawing, class singing and callisthenic exercises." In some schools, girls were also taught more domestic subjects, such as needlework and hygiene. This was similar to the curriculum in boys' schools, and of course varied according to headmistress and school. See Kamm, *Hope Deferred*, 216–17.

14. In the 1881 census, Edith is listed as living with her mother, Frances Dawkins Turpin. At this time, Edith was working as a tailoress and her mother as a laundress. They also had a boarder living in their home, likely as a means to supplement their incomes. See "1881 England Census Record for Edith M. Turpin," Ancestry.com, http://search.ancestryinstitution.com/iexec?htx=view&r=5561&dbid=7572&iid=HAMRG11_1208_1212-0738&fn=Edith+M.&ln=Turpin&st=4&ssrc=&pid=6872610, accessed February 23, 2013.

15. These sewing schools often gave them a "broader" education, which focused on religion and conduct. Regarding other options for working-class women, the census goes on to record shopwomen, teachers, pupil-teachers, bookkeepers, clerks, law copyists, domestic servants, hospital nurses, superintendents, housekeepers, machinists, upholsterers, bed-makers, blind brushmakers and chair-caners, artificial-flower makers, toy makers, feather cleaners, embroiderers, lace milliners, fancy trades and stationers, gilders, china painters, artists, book-binders, composers, and "'no stated occupation,' a category where nearly all the women were employed in housework or needlework in their own homes." June Purvis, *A History of Women's Education in England* (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1991), 48–49, 53.

16. E. J. Ash to Edith Turpin, October 20, 1874. Edith's birth certificate, in possession of John and Debbie Dester. In the 1780s, Robert Raikes, editor of the Gloucester Journal, promoted the founding of Sunday schools so children living in poverty could learn skills such as reading and writing—the Bible served as their textbook—rather than descending into a life of crime. Over time, many children in England, male and female, would attend Sunday school. For more information, see W. F. Lloyd, *Sketch of the Life of Robert Raikes, esq., and of the History of Sunday Schools* (New York: G. Lane & P. P. Sandford, 1843).

17. Unitarians hold that god is a single being, in contrast with the Trinitarian belief of a tripartite Christian deity (God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost). Other notable features of their doctrine include rejection of original sin, emphasis on the compatibility of religion and reason, and acknowledgment of Biblical authors' human fallibility. The first explicitly Unitarian denomination in England was formed, breaking away from the Anglican Church, in 1773 by Theophilus Lindsay.

18. The Five-Mile Act of 1665, otherwise recorded as "An Act for Restraining Non-Conformists from inhabiting in Corporations," was a Parliamentary decree that attempted to reinforce the primacy of the Anglican Church. This act punished clergymen who refused to conform to the mainstream Church of England by prohibiting them from living within five miles or their former parishes, and prohibiting them further from visiting their former congregations.

19. The Conventicle Act (1664) prohibited Nonconformists from meeting or preaching in congregations that dissented from the Anglican Church. Like the Five-Mile Act, the law was passed under the Clarendon Code, which sought to curb religious nonconformism and promote fidelity to the established church.

20. For further information on this topic, see Malcolm R. Thorp, "The Setting for the Restoration in Britain: Political, Social and Economic Conditions," in *Truth Will Prevail: The Rise of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the British Isles, 1837-1987*, ed. V. Ben Bloxham, James R. Moss, and Larry C. Porter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 44–70.

21. On the subject of transatlantic revivalism, see Richard Carwardine, *Transatlantic Revivalism: Popular Evangelicalism and in Britain and America, 1790–1865* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1978).

22. Catherine A. Brekus discusses the role of female preachers in revival contexts in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. See Catherina A. Brekus, *Strangers and Pilgrims: Female Preaching in America, 1740–1845* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

23. Millerites were adherers to the teachings of William Miller (1782–1849), a preacher who emerged in the "burnt-over district" of New York—a region renowned for its proliferation of religious revivals—and came to be recognized as a national religious leader. A key feature of Millerism was their anticipation of the second coming of Christ, which Miller prophesied would occur in late 1844. October 22, 1844, came to be known as the Great Disappointment when Christ ultimately failed to appear. Campbellites were followers of the teachings of Thomas Campbell (1763–1854) and his son, Alexander Campbell (1788–1866). In a Restorationist vein, Campbellites believed that it was important for Christianity to align itself more exactly with the New Testament. They united in 1832 with the Barton Stone Movement, a religious group with similar beliefs. Distinguishing tenets of the Stone-Campbell restoration movement include the beliefs that adults rather than infants ought to be baptized, and anti-confessionalism.

24. Thorp, "The Setting for the Restoration in Britain," 44.

25. Richard Cowan, "Church Growth in England, 1841–1914," in *Truth Will Prevail*, 199.

26. While Mormon polygamy rarely made the front page, it frequently occupied the middle pages of British and American periodicals. See, for example, "The Condition of Mormon Women," *New-York Tribune* (New York, NY), November 17, 1871; "The Danger of War in Utah," *The Evening Telegraph* (Philadelphia, PA), February 9, 1870; "The Mormon Women and Polygamy," *Manchester Evening News* (Greater Manchester, England), October 27, 1871; "The Mormon Women's Love of Polygamy," *Dundee Courier* (Angus, Scotland), November 20, 1871.

27. One woman wrote: "I had always been religiously inclined, and the Mormon doctrines, as there preached, seemed to me so simple, beautiful, and good, that it was not long before I became an enthusiastic votary of the new religion. I had heard that the Saints in America practiced polygamy, but I did not trouble myself much about it, as I did not anticipate leaving my own country. Besides, the missionaries always denied it, and said the report was only a wicked invention of their enemies to injure the reputation of the Saints in the outside world. Subsequently, when I was sought in marriage by a missionary, my parents inquired into the matter very particularly, but were positively assured by him that no such thing as polygamy existed. We were married, and lived happily for two years, when he was recalled to Utah, and I, of course, accompanied him to the promised land. I left my childhood home, and bade farewell to my parents with many tears and regrets, yet with many bright hopes and anticipations for a happy future in Zion. They were on

the declining side of life, and could not bear to sever themselves from all old ties and associations, but they gave up me, their dearest treasure, and bade me ‘God speed’ with their last blessing.” Jennie Anderson Froiseth, ed. *The Women of Mormonism; or The story of Polygamy as Told by the Victims Themselves* (Detroit: CGG Paine, 1887), 91.

28. Rev. Edmund Clay, *Tracts on Mormonism* (London: Wertheim and Macintosh; Leamington: J. Glover, 1855), as quoted in Craig L. Foster, *Penny Tracts and Polemics: A Critical Analysis of Anti-Mormon Pamphleteering in Great Britain, 1837–1860* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2002), 20.

29. For further details about this period, see Sarah Barringer Gordon, *The Mormon Question: Polygamy and Constitutional Conflict in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); and Kathryn Daynes, *More Wives Than One: Transformation of the Mormon Marriage System, 1840–1910* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 2001).

30. Nathaniel M. Hodges, “Doings in the Bristol Conference,” *Millennial Star* 46, no. 38 (September 22, 1884): 606–7.

31. For contextual background see Scott Stephan, *Redeeming the Southern Family: Evangelical Women and Domestic Devotion in the Antebellum South* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2010); Lucy Mack Smith, *Lucy’s Book: A Critical Edition of Lucy Mack Smith’s Family Memoir*, ed. Lavina Fielding Anderson (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001); and Janiece Johnson, “‘Give it All Up and Follow Your Lord’: Mormon Female Religiosity, 1831–1843” (master’s thesis, Brigham Young University, 2001).

32. Many women in nineteenth century America found creative ways to preach the gospel. For example, Fanny Newell married preacher Ebenezer Newell so she could engage in pastoral work. See Fanny Newell, *Memoirs of Fanny Newell* (Springfield, MA: G. and C. Merriam, 1833). For broader contextual information, one might also consider, Rebecca Larson, *Daughters of Light: Quaker Women and Preaching and Prophesying in the Colonies and Abroad, 1700–1775* (New York: Knopf, 1999); Phyllis Mack, *Heart Religion in the British Enlightenment* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); and Brekus, *Strangers and Pilgrims*.

33. In the 1881 Census, Thomas M. Tarbet and Orson Merrett are listed as visitors in the Turpin household. The occupation for each is noted as LDS missionary. See Sue Mills, “Swanage 1891 Census,” Swanage Census Returns, http://members.iinet.au/~suegar/swan91_3.htm, accessed February 17, 2013.

34. For examples of Mary Ann Tippet’s commitment to sharing the gospel see James McMurrin, letter to the editor, *Deseret Evening News*, November 19, 1895; and Hodges, “Doings in the Bristol Conference,” 606–07.

35. Edith’s baptismal certificate in the possession of John and Debbie Dester, Provo, Utah. Arthur Stayner Jr., of Farmington, Utah, was set apart to serve a mission in Great Britain on October 8, 1883. He returned from his mission on April 28, 1885. He later, in 1889, formed the Utah Sugar Company and was a successful businessman.

36. This photograph is in the possession of John and Debbie Dester, Provo, Utah. In the 1871 census, Mary Ann Tippet’s occupation is listed as dressmaker. In the 1881 census, she is listed as a nurse. See Sue Mills, “Swanage 1871 Census.”

37. It is interesting to note that it was while James L. McMurrin was serving in the mission presidency in England that the first single LDS women served proselytizing missions.

38. See for example Foster, *Penny Tracts and Polemics*; and Terryl Givens, *Viper on the Hearth: Mormons, Myths, and the Construction of Heresy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

39. Hodges, "Doings in the Bristol Conference," 605–7. Nathaniel M. Hodges was called to serve a mission in 1883 to Great Britain, along with sixty-five other elders. In 1884, he was appointed president of the Bristol Conference, a region that consisted of about six counties. See "Labors of Elder Hodges," *Millennial Star* 47, no. 32 (August 10, 1885): 507–10.

40. In his 1887 letter to Edith, her brother John wrote the following to her: "There are different ways of going there the only thing I object in your Church is Polygamy and I hope you will not throw yourself away with it for some Day you may be glad to come to England again and I would much you rather know that you are the one Wife of any good man what-ever his Religion may be this is my opinion but I may be wrong so now I will Drop that." John Turpin to Edith Turpin, December 16, 1887.

41. Between 1830 and 1930 about forty million people left Europe in search of a new and better life. About nine million of them sailed from Liverpool. These people were mostly traveling to North America, Australia, and New Zealand—the "New World."

42. James recounts this memory in a later letter to Edith. See James L. McMurrin to Edith Turpin McMurrin, May 2, 1901.

43. The ship *Nevada* took over forty-two different voyages that transported 8,146 LDS emigrants from the UK to the US.

44. Following the completion of her own temple ordinance work, Addie also completed proxy work for her deceased sister.

45. James was a self-educated musician and poet; Addie often edited his work. See Helen Johnson Nielson and Itha LeFevre Hollerman Nelson, "History and Genealogy of Adelaide Tippet Paxton, 1853–1930," LDS Infobase, <http://www.ldsinfobase.net/rh/history/histories/Adelaide.html>, accessed February 16, 2013; and "James Mills Paxton: Autobiography (1845–1877)," <http://www.timeforitnow.com/genealogy/histories/james-mills-paxton/>, accessed February 16, 2013.

46. For further discussion on Mormon women's experiences with the temple see Carol Cornwall Madsen, "Mormon Women and the Temple: Toward a New Understanding," in *Sisters in the Spirit: Mormon Women in Historical and Cultural Perspectives*, ed. Maureen Ursenbeck Beecher and Lavina Fielding Anderson (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 80–110.

47. Madsen, "Mormon Women and the Temple," 84.

48. Madsen, "Mormon Women and the Temple," 103.

49. Edith had beautiful black eyes. Her husband, James L. McMurrin, wrote: "Well, my thoughts often steal away over the ocean and I look into a pair of black eyes that are dear to me." James L. McMurrin to Edith Turpin McMurrin, June 21, 1899. After meeting some of Edith's relatives in England, James wrote: "They are very nice people. I looked for black eyes among them but they all have blue eyes. Mrs. Richards said your father had blue eyes and that you looked just like your mother." James L. McMurrin to Edith Turpin McMurrin, January 31, 1900. On another occasion, he wrote: "Well, Dear Edith, I see lots of black eyes and black hair here, but there are none like those far away. It is like old Glory, there are many flags in many lands of every tint and hue, but there is no flag in any land like the old red, white and blue." James L. McMurrin to Edith Turpin McMurrin, August 22, 1900. He also wrote, "I frequently indulge in the sweet thought of meeting you once more. I see those black eyes again and that sweet smile and feel your loving arms around me, and my heart is filled with joy. It is true what the poet says that the place where our loved ones reside though but a cabin is more wide than kingdoms, though a desert bare the river of the Gods is there." James L. McMurrin to Edith Turpin McMurrin, May 2, 1901.

50. See Isaiah 35:1.

51. Poem written by J. M. Paxton to Edith Mary Turpin, Kanosh, Utah, May 18,

1886.

52. Edith Turpin McMurrin to James L. McMurrin, January 16, 1900.

53. Edith Turpin McMurrin to James L. McMurrin, January 16, 1900.

54. Edith Turpin to John Smith Turpin, date unknown, circa 1886, letter cited below.

55. For a description of polygamous life in Utah as observed by an outsider, see Elizabeth Kane, *Twelve Mormon Homes Visited in Succession on a Journey Through Utah to Arizona*, ed. Everett L. Cooley (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993).

56. Edith Turpin McMurrin to James L. McMurrin, undated.

57. Edith Turpin McMurrin to James L. McMurrin, undated.

58. For more examples of similar and contemporary attempts to highlight the beneficial aspects of polygamy, see Belinda Marden Pratt, "Defense of Plural Marriage by a Lady in Utah," *Millennial Star* 16, no. 30 (July 29, 1854): 468–73; Orson Pratt, "Celestial Marriage," *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: "F. D. Richards, 1855–1886), 1:46–53; and Eliza R. Snow, "Great Indignation Meetings," *Deseret News Weekly*, January 19, 1870.

59. See Todd Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness: The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1997), 487; J. Spencer Fluhman, "'A Subject that Can Bear Investigation': Anguish, Faith, and Joseph Smith's Youngest Plural Wife," in *No Weapon Shall Prosper: New Light on Sensitive Issues*, ed. Robert L. Millet (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University), 110–11; and Daynes, *More Wives Than One*, 28.

60. During this period Latter-day Saints believed that humankind must all be sealed to one another, preferably to a Church leader, to ensure salvation and exaltation, rather than modern Mormon understandings of families sealed together in an unbroken line back to Adam. They saw sealings as a horizontal or dynastic chains, whereas today it is viewed as a vertical chain or the creation of domestic familial bonds. See Samuel Morris Brown and Jonathan Stapley, "Mormonism's Adoption Theology: An Introductory Statement," *Journal of Mormon History* 37, no. 3 (Summer 2011): 1–53.

61. Daynes, *More Wives Than One*, 28.

62. Joseph Smith Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed. rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book 1971): 6:230.

63. Philip L. Barlow, "To Mend a Fractured Reality: Joseph Smith's Project," *Journal of Mormon History* 38, no.3 (Summer 2012): 28–50.

64. Examples include: John Smith Turpin to Edith Turpin, February 17, 1877; James L. McMurrin to Edith McMurrin, 31 January 1900; and James L McMurrin to Edith McMurrin, February 17, 1900.

65. Obad. 1:21.

66. Madsen, "Mormon Women and the Temple," 102–03.

67. Edith Turpin McMurrin to James L. McMurrin, January 16, 1900.

68. James reminisced about this experience when writing a letter to Edith: "You are as dear to me now as in those old days when we met at Lime St. and journeyed to Utah, and when you came from Kanosh and we had our first experiences in Salt Lake. These things are dear to me. I have told them occasionally to dear friends and they never lose their interest. They are as fresh and sweet to my spirit today as the "lilies of the valley or the roses of cashmere." James L. McMurrin to Edith Turpin McMurrin, May 2, 1901.

69. See Kimberly Jensen James, "Between Two Fires: Women on the Underground of Mormon Polygamy," *Journal of Mormon History* 8 (1981): 49–61.

70. A Second Manifesto, written by then-president of the Church Joseph F. Smith, was issued in 1904. The Manifesto officially revoked polygamy as an illegal practice, and stated that those that refused to comply would be excommunicated. See Joseph F. Smith,

"Statement by President Joseph F. Smith," *Improvement Era* 7, no. 7 (May 1940): 545–46.

71. See for example, Annie Clark Tanner, *Mormon Mother: An Autobiography by Annie Clark Tanner* (Salt Lake City: Tanner Trust Fund, 1983).

72. Lorena Eugenia Washburn Larsen, *Autobiography* (Provo, UT: BYU Press, 1962), 93.

73. Edith Turpin McMurrin to James L. McMurrin, January 16, 1900.

74. Edith Turpin writes this letter to her half-brother, John Smith Turpin and his wife, Elizabeth. John and Edith's father, Edward Turpin, was first married to John's mother, Grace Smith. Following her death, Edward Turpin married Francis Dawkins in 1862; they had two daughters. Although John is twenty-six years older than Edith, the half-siblings clearly have a close relationship. Since Edith's father passed away in 1879 (when Edith was fifteen), and her mother passed away in 1881 (when Edith was seventeen), John seems to have assumed a paternal role in her life.

75. In keeping with the belief of many faiths, but especially Judeo-Christian traditions, Latter-day Saints believe that they are a chosen, or "peculiar," people. See Titus 2:14, Deut. 26:18, and 1 Pet. 2:9 as examples. See also, R. Laurence Moore, *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

76. Information on Edith's immigration to Utah is found in Fred E. Woods, "Mormon Immigration Index," Mormon Migration, <http://mormonmigration.lib.byu.edu/>, accessed October 9, 2012; John Dester, "Our McMurrin, Leaing (Laing) Irvine & Craig Ancestors," unpublished copy in author's possession; and James Leaing McMurrin to Edith Turpin McMurrin, May 2, 1901.

77. As previously noted, John S. Turpin was (or had been) a sailor. On February 17, 1877, he wrote a letter to Edith Turpin from the ship *Henry Brand*. See John S. Turpin to Edith M. Turpin, February 17, 1877.

78. Juab County, located south of Salt Lake City, was first settled by the Mormons in 1851. In 1880, the county population was 3,474. In 1890, it was 5,582. See Juab County, "Brief History," Juab County Utah, <http://www.co.juab.ut.us>, accessed February 23, 2013.

79. J M Paxton to Edith M. Turpin, May 18, 1886, original in possession of John and Debbie Dester. While serving as a member of the mission presidency in the European Mission, James tells Edith about several letters he received from cousin Addie. She sent relatives' (who lived in the UK) addresses to him, so he could visit them and possibly send missionaries to meet with them. James L. McMurrin to Edith Turpin McMurrin, May 31, 1899; and James L. McMurrin to Edith Turpin McMurrin, February 17, 1900.

80. Edith would have departed from Kanosh, Utah, around November 1886. Catherine R. Stimpson notes: "The middle-class English woman, the first of her sex who could afford to live on her own earnings outside heterosexual domesticity or church governance. She wanted and needed to work." Catherine R. Stimpson, "Foreword," in Martha Vicinus, *Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women, 1850–1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 2–9. For more information on American women at this time see Frances B. Cogan, *All-American Girl: The Ideal of Real Womanhood in Mid-Nineteenth Century America* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1989). While in Salt Lake, Edith and James L. McMurrin began courting. James recounts this in a letter he wrote to Edith. James L. McMurrin to Edith Turpin McMurrin, May 2, 1901.

81. As noted previously, Edith worked as a tailoress. Regarding this trade, one historian has written: "The traditional clothing trades were, therefore, part of the group of occupations which constituted 'acceptable women's work' in the nineteenth century. On the other hand, the ready-made tailoring industry, which grew so rapidly from the 1860s

and 1870s, seemed to have many features which separated it from the older trades.” Deidre Busfield, “‘Tailoring the Millions’: the Women Workers of the Leeds Clothing Industry, 1880–1914,” *Textile History* 16, no. 1 (1985): 71. Regarding wages that Edith might have expected, British women’s average pay for tailoring was \$3.37 in 1885, whereas American women’s average pay for tailoring was \$6.09. For more information see Sidney Webb, “The Alleged Differences in the Wages Paid to Men and to Women for Similar Work,” *The Economic Journal* 1, no. 4. (December 1891): 636. It is also important to note that “the hierarchical division of labour was confirmed in the nineteenth century after a brief interlude when, in some industries, notably textiles, greater employment opportunities were created for women by changes in the organization and technology of production and were supported by capitalist interests. . . . The perception [of women’s work compared to men’s is that] women [are] unskilled.” Katrina Honeyman and Jordan Goodman, “Women’s Work, Gender Conflict, and Labour Markets in Europe, 1500–1901,” *The Economic History Review* 44, no. 4 (1991): 619.

82. Stories circulating about Mormons in the popular press include infanticide, sexual depravity, violence towards dissenters, and psychological torture of women. For additional details see Givens, “This Great Modern Abomination,” in *Viper on the Hearth*, 106–7; 144–45.

83. Elizabeth L. Kane, wife of Thomas L. Kane, political ally and personal friend to Brigham Young, commented extensively on polygamous families during her tour of Utah in 1872–1873. Elizabeth Kane was originally skeptical of the practice of plural marriage, but observed that many polygamous homes were warm and loving and well kempt. See Claudia L. Bushman, “Mormon Domestic Life in the 1870s: Pandemonium or Arcadia?” in *The Collected Leonard J. Arrington Mormon History Lectures* (Logan, UT: Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, Utah State University, 2005), 91–118.

84. For an example of a newspaper article published in nineteenth century Great Britain that portrayed Mormonism in a negative light, see “Mormon Polygamy,” *The Sheffield & Rotherhame Independent* (Sheffield, England), October 22, 1861, issue 2205. The British had heard many sordid accounts of plural marriage, which were published continually in newspapers and by the popular press, including articles how plural marriage could hurt the UK’s sexual and societal norms. See *Morning Chronicle* (London), September 15, 1854, issue 27372.

85. In referring to the ways Mormons were depicted by the outside world, George Q. Cannon said: “We are lied about! Yes, all manner of lies are circulated concerning us. I have heard men say that when they came to Salt Lake they were actually afraid of their lives because of the falsehoods that had been sent abroad. . . . Like all the lies in the past, we shall outlive them. It would be amusing to read all the lies that have been used in days past and gone. But there is a new batch in process of incubation all the time, and when the old ones get stale the new ones come forth adapted to the change of the case. Yet notwithstanding all this we continue to live. Lies do not hurt us. I do not think they cause us to sleep any the less. They do not cause us to enjoy any the less our pleasant homes, our fruit, or these beautiful streams that come from the mountains. We have learned that we can live and be lied about. We will continue to live and increase.” George Q. Cannon, in *Journal of Discourses*, 22: 367–68. For more information regarding anti-Mormon sentiments specifically in Britain, see Malcolm Thorp, “The Mormon Peril: The Crusade Against the Saints in Britain,” *Journal of Mormon History* 2 (1975): 69–88. For discussions regarding other countries’ perceptions of Mormonism in the nineteenth century see Wilfried Decoo, “The Image of Mormonism in French Literature: Part I,” *BYU Studies* 14, no. 2 (Winter 1974): 157–75; Johnnie Glad, *The Mission of Mormonism in Norway 1851–1920: A Study and Analysis of the Receptive Process* (Frankfurt am Main, Germany: Peter Lang, 2006);

and William Mulder, "Image of Zion: Mormonism as an American Influence in Scandinavia," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 43, no. 1 (June 1956): 18–38.

86. Offscouring refers to a person regarded as fallen from society; an outcast. See John Addington Symonds, *Renaissance in Italy: The Age of the Despots* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1897), 57.

87. John H. Smith noted: "When we have declared the fact that present revelation was and is essential for the guidance of man, and that the Church of Christ never did or could exist without it, and that the Lord had again revealed Himself to man, our hearers would generally either turn aside or perhaps show some sign of pity for 'the poor deluded Mormons,' for this is the light in which we are held for believing in such things. . . . It does seem singular to me—and yet I should not regard it as strange for this reason: whenever there has been a Gospel dispensation a man having the Holy Spirit could bear witness of the correctness of these things. When that spirit of testimony rests down upon a man it begets conviction in his heart, whether he is willing to acknowledge it or not. Nicodemus could find his way by night to Jesus, and acknowledge that there was a power with him that other men were not possessed of. Others received the witness of the Spirit, and were able to abide by its dictates, renounce their former ways, and take up the cross unpopular though it was. Others again treated the whole thing with ridicule, not being able to see anything in it. Such doubtless would be the case were the same persons to teach the same things now." John Henry Smith, in *Journal of Discourses*, 26: 278–79.

88. See Matt. 2:23.

89. Drawing connections between the ancient Christians and the Mormons, George Q. Cannon said: "Were the ancient Saints persecuted? So are we. Did they die for the truth of their principles? So have many of our people. Did they have to flee from their homes? Were they driven by their enemies because of their religion? So have we had to flee from our homes in this nineteenth century, in this land of boasted liberty, the proudest nation and the freest nation upon the face of the globe—we have had to flee to these mountains and take refuge here because we believed in those ancient principles, and because we contended for the restoration of this ancient power." George Q. Cannon, in *Journal of Discourses*, 24:137. For contextual scriptural information, see Acts 11:26; and Matthew 5:11–12. For further information on the changes in the persecution dynamic, see Kathleen Flake, "Re-placing Memory: Latter-day Saint Use of Historical Monuments and Narrative in the Early Twentieth Century," in *Dimensions of Faith: A Mormon Studies Reader*, ed. Steve Taysom (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2011), 215–58.

90. There are sixty-one New Testament references to the term *Saints* in the King James Version of the Bible.

91. Joseph Smith wrote the following about the meaning of the word "Mormon": "It has been stated that this word [Mormon] was derived from the Greek word *mormo*. This is not the case. There was no Greek or Latin upon the plates from which I, through the grace of God, translated the Book of Mormon. . . . The Bible in its widest sense, means good; for the Savior says according to the gospel of John, 'I am the good shepherd;' and it will not be beyond the common use of terms, to say that good is among the most important in use, and though known by various names in different languages, still its meaning is the same, and is ever in opposition to *bad*. We say from the Saxon, *good*; the Dane, *god*; the Goth, *goda*; the German, *gut*; the Dutch, *goed*; the Latin, *bonus*; the Greek, *kalos*; the Hebrew, *tob*; and the Egyptian, *mon*. Hence, with the addition of *more*, or the contraction, *mor*, we have the word MOR-MON; which means, literally, *more good*." See "Correspondence," in *Times and Seasons* 4, no. 13 (May 15, 1843): 194. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, one of the earliest published usages of the term "Mormon" to describe believers in the Book of Mormon was in 1833 by the Louisville, Kentucky, *Daily Herald*.

See Oxford English Dictionary, “Mormon, *n.* and *adj.*” Oxford University Press, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/122273?redirectedFrom=Mormon#eid>, accessed February 23, 2013.

92. Orson Pratt explained: “We believe in that sacred record called the Book of Mormon. Why? Because the ancient Prophets have predicted that such a book should be revealed in the latter times; and it has come, accompanied with sufficient evidence to produce conviction in our minds; but if any person could persuade us that the Book of Mormon is not the book predicted by the ancient Prophets, we have sufficient light and information in the prophecies to convince us that such a book must come, and we should with one accord look for a book of a similar description.” Orson Pratt, in *Journal of Discourses*, 2:284–98.

93. Terryl Givens argues that Mormons were persecuted for their lack of heterodoxy in doctrine and sexual practice, rather than any particular aspect of their theology. See Givens, “This Great Modern Abomination,” in *Viper on the Hearth*, 76–96. For additional information, the following two British newspaper articles detail the hypocrisy of Mormon missionaries who they claimed used lies to lure women to Utah for marrying into polygamous families: “Mormon Polygamy,” *The Standard* (London, England), January 15, 1857, issue 10117; and “Sale of Property in Belfast,” *The Belfast News-Letter* (Belfast, Ireland), January 19, 1857, issue 12664.

94. Several of Joseph Smith’s early revelations focused on the importance of missionary work—“crying repentance”—above all other duties. See D&C sections 11, 13, 15, 16, and 18. Missionary work was expected to be done voluntarily. In speaking of the Mormon commitment to consecration, Steven C. Harper wrote: “Empowered with correct knowledge of the law, we are free agents—accountable stewards of the Lord’s possessions, including ourselves. We must act right now either in obedience or disobedience to the law of consecration. To ignore it is to disobey.” *The Doctrine and Covenants: Revelations in Context*, ed. Andrew H. Hedges, J. Spencer Fluhman, and Alonzo L. Gaskill (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; and Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2008), 212–28.

95. Wilford Woodruff declared: “We have been sustained by the power of God from the beginning to this day, and nothing short of the power of God could have saved us and brought us through; and nothing but the power of God can preserve us, and nothing but his wisdom can pilot us safe to the high destiny which awaits us. Perhaps I may be permitted to say, we met with a good deal of persecution and oppression and suffering before we came to these valleys, and still the hand of oppression is stretched out against us, and the public mind everywhere within the pale of Christendom is more or less set on our destruction, and that because a certain Biblical principle—the patriarchal order of marriage is practiced by us.” Wilford Woodruff, in *Journal of Discourses*, 22:147. For additional information, see also “Political Relations of the Mormons to the United States Government,” *Daily News* (London, England), April 15, 1854, issue 2466.

96. Latter-day Saints believe in the ability to stand in as proxy for deceased individuals in order to perform the ordinances necessary for salvation. This occurs in Latter-day Saint temples, with ordinances such as baptism and sealing of families for eternity (discussed in Doctrine and Covenants 127 and 128). Richard E. Bennett has noted that proxy temple work, which began in 1877, had a remarkable impact on the religious life and liturgy of the Latter-day Saints, because Mormons then had a reason for returning to the temple to perform ordinance work. Before 1877, no endowments were performed for the dead. See Richard E. Bennett, “‘Line Upon Line, Precept Upon Precept’: Reflections on the 1877 Commencement of the Performance of Endowments and Sealings for the Dead,” *BYU Studies* 44, no. 3 (2005): 38–77.

97. There were 209 LDS missionaries serving in 1886 when Edith Turpin was baptized, and 282 in 1887 when the letter was written. See The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, "Church History: Missionary Statistics," <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59046/Church-History-Missionary-Statistics.html>, accessed December 6, 2012.

98. It is important to note that the term "polygamy" actually means plural marriage of more than one man or woman. The correct term here would be "polygyny," because Latter-day Saints only married more than one woman to a man. The opposite would be "polyandry," the marriage of a woman to more than one man.

99. See D&C 132 and Gen. 25.

100. Brigham Young explained: "This law was never given of the Lord for any but his faithful children; it is not for the ungodly at all; no man has a right to a wife, or wives, unless he honors his Priesthood and magnifies his calling before God." Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 3:265. Mormon men were required to adhere to standards of worthiness before entering "the principle."

101. In 1833, Joseph Smith received a revelation concerning a health code for the Latter-day Saints. The "Word of Wisdom," as it came to be known, is canonized today as section 89 in the Doctrine and Covenants. Adherence to the Word of Wisdom was not yet required for entrance to LDS temples. See Thomas G. Alexander, "The Word of Wisdom: From Principle to Requirement," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 14, no. 3 (Autumn 1981): 78–88; and Paul H. Peterson, "An Historical Analysis of the Word of Wisdom" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1972).

102. Women in the LDS Church responded to polygamy in various ways. Emma Smith reportedly burned the original copy of the revelation in 1843. She used fire tongs to place the manuscript in the fire so she could say that she never touched the revelation herself. See Robert J. Woodford, "The Historical Development of the Doctrine and Covenants" (PhD diss., Brigham Young University, 1974). Helen Mar Whitney, a plural wife of Joseph Smith, reacted to the practice similarly to other Mormon women: initial aversion to plural marriage, then acceptance as the result of a spiritual experience, followed by public defense of the practice. Lucy Walker likewise struggled with the idea of plural marriage, until receiving a powerful spiritual confirmation about the practice. Hannah Tapfield King recalls feeling ill and shedding countless tears upon hearing about plural marriage preached over the pulpit for the first time. She later wrote in its defense. Martha Cragun Cox decided to become a plural wife, despite advice from friends and family that she should avoid doing so, after praying about the practice and receiving a spiritual impression that she should become a plural wife. To read further, see Fluhman, "'A Subject That Can Bear Investigation,'" 105–19; Helen Mar Whitney, *Plural Marriage, as Taught by the Prophet Joseph: A Reply to Joseph Smith, Editor of the Lamoni (Iowa) "Herald"* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor, 1882); Helen Mar Whitney, *Why We Practice Plural Marriage: By a "Mormon" Wife and Mother—Helen Mar Whitney* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor, 1884); Charles M. Hatch and Todd M. Compton, eds., *A Widow's Tale: The 1884–1896 Diary of Helen Mar Kimball Whitney* (Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 2003). Martha Cragun Cox, "Autobiography of Martha Cragun Cox," M270.07 C877c 1970, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.

103. Brigham Young explained: "Why do we believe in and practice polygamy? Because the Lord introduced it to his servants in a revelation given to Joseph Smith, and the Lord's servants have always practiced it. 'And is that religion popular in heaven?' It is the only popular religion there, for this is the religion of Abraham, and, unless we do the works of Abraham, we are not Abraham's seed and heirs according to promise." Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 9:322.

104. See Isa. 5:26 and Jer. 50:2. Charles Cannon explained: “The anti-polygamists held differing views on the role of women under polygamy, but they were certain that the continuity between the moral and natural law was nowhere more evident than among the offspring of polygamous union. The critics warned that to tamper with natural practices was to court disaster. Transgression of moral law (monogamy) was in this case said to be identical with the pollution of natural or biological law. Sexual sin, because it involved the pollution of the body, was expected to have bodily or physical consequences. The alleged physical effects of polygamy on children were an obvious sign of degeneracy. Critics reported that the infant mortality rate for Utah far exceeded the rate for other regions of the country. This claim has been demonstrated to have been false, but the anti-polygamists apparently wanted to believe that it was true.” Charles Cannon, “The Awesome Power of Sex: The Polemical Campaign against Mormon Polygamy,” *Pacific Historical Review* 43, no. 1 (1974): 77.

105. George Q. Cannon wrote: “In speaking of Utah and this peculiar practice amongst its people, it is frequently said, ‘Look at the Turks and other Oriental nations and see how women are degraded and debased among them, and deprived of many privileges which they enjoy among us!’ But if it be true that woman does not occupy her true position among those nations, is this not more attributable to their rejection of the Gospel than to their practice of having a plurality of wives? Whatever her condition may be there, however, I do not therefore accept, as a necessary conclusion, that she must be degraded among us. We have received the Gospel of the Lord Jesus, the principles of which elevate all who honor them, and will impart to our sisters every blessing necessary to make them noble and good in the presence of God and man.” George Q. Cannon, in *Journal of Discourses*, 13:204.

106. The most significant discussion of this topic prior to 1869 comes from Orson Pratt: “This law of monogamy, or the monogamic system, laid the foundation for prostitution and the evils and diseases of the most revolting nature and character under which modern Christendom groans, for as God has implanted, for a wise purpose, certain feelings in the breasts of females as well as males, the gratification of which is necessary to health and happiness, and which can only be accomplished legitimately in the married state, myriads of those who have been deprived of the privilege of entering that state, rather than be deprived of the gratification of those feelings altogether, have, in despair, given way to wickedness and licentiousness; hence the whoredoms and prostitution among the nations of the earth, where the “Mother of Harlots” has her seat. When the religious Reformers came out, some two or three centuries ago, they neglected to reform the marriage system—a subject demanding their urgent attention. But leaving these Reformers and their doings, let us come down to our own times and see whether, as has been often said by many, the numbers of the sexes are equal; and let us take as a basis for our investigations on this part of our subject the censuses taken by several of the States in the American Union.” Orson Pratt, in *Journal of Discourses*, 13:194–95. See also, “The Mormons at the Salt Lake,” *The Bradford Observer* (Bradford, England), September 28, 1854, issue 1073.

107. Amasa M. Lyman wrote: “This is the unwept, friendless fate of an extensive class of our erring sisters. What do we call them? Oh, she is merely ‘a common woman on the street,’ ‘prostitute,’ which means a woman, created by and bearing the image of God our Heavenly Father—a woman prostituted to become the victim of passion—passion unhallowed, impure passion in man who should have guarded her virtue with the most scrupulous care, with the most vigilant watchfulness—man who should ever have recognized in her his sister, who should have regarded her as the personification of the purity and innocence of heaven itself, and who should never have made her the victim of his unholy passion. But she has fallen, and this terminates her wretched career.” Amasa M.

Lyman, in *Journal of Discourses*, 11:201.

108. Many Mormon women claimed to have found freedom and opportunity within the plural marriage system. "The *Woman's Exponent* strongly opposed the concept of women as passive ornaments and urged the education of girls for self-sufficiency. In a strong feminist editorial, the *Woman's Exponent* urged that women be allowed the choice of all branches of knowledge. Refuting the Victorian concept of female delicacy, the writer urged that women could decide themselves what was 'improper' for they 'will know it a thousand times better than men.'" Joan Iversen, "Feminist implications of Mormon Polygyny," *Feminist Studies* 10, no. 3 (1984): 510. Susa Young Gates, plural wife and friend of Charlotte Perkins Gilman, argued that Mormon wives have time for self-development. Gates argued that polygamy offered obvious advantages in providing women with assistance, stating that "Woman will always be the head and genius of the home but whether it is a corollary that she shall forever wash dishes and scrub floors has become a grave question." Quoted in Iversen, "Feminist implications of Mormon Polygyny," 510.

109. See D&C 132. "One of the most suggestive and frequently cited scriptures in LDS teaching makes the point: 'And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things' (Mor. 10:4-5). This scripture is usually taken to apply to all knowledge. This suggests that both rational argument and empirical evidence, the two traditional approaches to knowledge, can be either supplanted by or encompassed within spiritual knowledge. Of course, the scripture does not say that knowledge comes only by the Holy Ghost. Yet, within the Church, it is often held that what might be thought of as secular learning, for example, modern scientific knowledge, is directly associated with the restoration of the gospel and is rooted in divine inspiration throughout the world." K. Codell Carter, "Epistemology," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow, 4 vols. (New York, MacMillan: 1992), 462-63.

110. Mormons have a unique theological view of the soul. James E. Talmage wrote: "It is peculiar to the theology of the Latter-day Saints that we regard the body as an essential part of the soul. Read your dictionaries, the lexicons, and encyclopedias, and you will find that nowhere, outside of the Church of Jesus Christ, is the solemn and eternal truth taught that the soul of man is the body and the spirit combined." James E. Talmage, *Semi-Annual General Conference Report of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1913), 117.

111. Brigham Young personally condemned sexual abuse in marriage, but also seemed to treat it as a very minor problem. See John G. Turner, *Brigham Young: Pioneer Prophet* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 159. Men had to live up to certain worthiness requirements, but sexual intercourse was at the discretion of the husband, even in monogamous relationships in the nineteenth century. As Sarah L. Zeigler notes: "Sexual intercourse was one of the wife's duties in large part because she had (and still has, in many states) no right to refuse it—that is, a husband could not be sued or prosecuted for the rape of his wife. The action simply did not exist. . . . [Although] courts classified intercourse as one of the wife's marital duties, they were willing to impose limits on how much service the wife could reasonably be expected to provide." Sarah L. Zeigler, "Wifely Duties: Marriage, Labor, and the Common Law in Nineteenth-Century America," *Social Science History* 20, no. 1 (1996): 80-81.

112. It is estimated that between 15-25% of the white women in America were childless. See Donald T. Rowland, "Historical Trends in Childlessness," *Journal of Family Issues* 28, no. 10 (2007): 1318. Mormons, with their family focus and belief that parents are stewards over their children, responsible for their rearing and potential for exaltation in the future, would see childlessness as a greater stigma and public shame than in traditional Christian communities.

113. In response to Gentile critics about their children, Mormon women turned to the scripture “Wherefore by their fruit ye shall know them” (Matt. 7:20): “In these mountain vales, and through the system of marriage the world so loudly condemns, there has grown up a race of the most perfectly developed young men and women any country can produce. Healthy, and vigorous in mind and body, with a knowledge of the principles of life and health, and of their own mission upon the earth, which, no other class of people in the present day so thoroughly comprehend.” See “What they Say about Utah,” *Woman’s Exponent* 10, no. 2 (June 15, 1881): 12.

114. According to LDS scripture, those children born during the millennium will live to the age of a tree at which time they will be changed to a state of immortality. See D&C 101:30–31; and Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 282–83.

115. Brigham Young wrote: “Talk about polygamy! There is no true philosopher on the face of the earth but what will admit that such a system, properly carried out according to the order of heaven, is far superior to monogamy for the raising of healthy, robust children! A person possessing a moderate knowledge of physiology, or who has paid attention to his own nature and the nature of the gentler sex, can readily understand this.” Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 13:317.

116. Observers often came to sympathize with Mormon families, women in particular. Many visitors to Utah came to see Mormon families as warm, loving, and functional, although sometimes reflecting more formal relationships than families in the eastern United States. See Claudia L. Bushman, “Mormon Domestic Life in the 1870s: Pandemonium or Arcadia?” in *The Collected Leonard J. Arrington Mormon History Lectures* (Logan: Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, Utah State University, 2005), 91–118.

117. Isa. 55:8–9.

118. Mormon theology holds the unique belief that the New Jerusalem, a millennial community, will be established in Independence, Missouri. “New Jerusalem” is often interchangeable with “Zion.”

119. For arguments similar to those used by Turpin, see Belinda Marden Pratt, “Defense of Polygamy,” *Millennial Star* 16, no. 30 (July 29, 1854): 468–71, 475–77.

120. Orson Pratt declared: “This law of plurality, as I am going to prove, did not only exist under the law of Moses, but existed before that law, under the Patriarchal dispensation. And what kind of a dispensation was that? It has been proved before the people in this Territory, time after time, that the dispensation in which the Patriarchs lived was the dispensation of the Gospel—that the Gospel was preached to Abraham as well as unto the people in the days of the Apostles; so says Paul; and the same Gospel too that was preached in the days of the Apostles was preached to Abraham.” Orson Pratt, in *Journal of Discourses*, 6: 352–53.

121. Women largely wrote about how polygamy had biblical roots, increased women’s happiness and independence, resulted in happy and healthy children, and led to the increased morality of civilization. These arguments closely followed the reasons preached by the all-male Church hierarchy. See Helen Mar Whitney, “Life Incidents,” *Woman’s Exponent* 9, no. 15 (January 1, 1881): 114–15; “Extract from Dr. R. B. Pratt’s Lecture,” *Woman’s Exponent* 10, no. 2 (June 15, 1881): 16; and Lu Dalton, “Reply to Emily Scott,” *Woman’s Exponent* 10, no. 9 (March 1, 1882): 151–52. See also Sherilyn Cox Bennion, “Sisters under the Skin: Utah’s Mormon and Non-Mormon Women and Their Publications,” *BYU Studies* 33, no. 1 (1993): 111–30.

122. Ruth 4:1.

123. Orson Pratt wrote: “The 4th chapter of Isaiah could never be fulfilled without this restoration. The passage to which I refer is familiar to all the Latter-day Saints—‘In that

day the branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely; and in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, we will eat our own bread and wear our own apparel, only let us be called by thy name to take away our reproach.' Now will this prophecy ever be fulfilled, unless this great restoration or restitution shall take place? It cannot. If this great restitution does not take place, Jesus will never come." Orson Pratt, in *Journal of Discourses*, 17:221.

124. Isa. 57.

125. Erastus Snow noted: "This crime of taking another wife when a man has one is called bigamy; and there are laws and penalties against it. With the Latter-day Saints there is no fraud practiced, the second wife being accepted with the mutual consent of the first, and in accordance with the revelations of God. There is in that no crime at all, unless some law of God is violated, or somebody is injured in the matter. If this transaction that I have just named violates the law of God, or if it injures or infringes upon the rights of a brother or a sister, then there may be some ground for pronouncing it a crime, but belief in, and practice of, the eternity and plurality of the marriage covenant do not violate the law of God, because He has commanded His people to accept and obey it. Neither is it an infringement upon the rights of others, neither men nor women, but gives all women an opportunity to become honorable wives and mothers, and thus to shut out what is politely called the social evil, with all its horrid concomitants of seduction, feticide, infanticide and all the train of sexual monogamic evils which haunt and infest Christendom." Erastus Snow, in *Journal of Discourses*, 26:341. Mormons criticized women from the Eastern United States who looked at polygamists with pity and tried to remove polygamous women from their "terrible" situation. See "What They Say about Utah," 12.

126. John 7:17. There are seven references to John 7:17 in the *Journal of Discourses* in the 1880s. See *Journal of Discourses*, 24:81 (Joseph F. Smith); 25:46 (Charles W. Penrose); 25:95 (John Taylor); 25:139 (B. H. Roberts); 26:23 (Henry W. Naisbitt); and 26:310 (Moses Thatcher). The scripture was not used again until 1944, when it was cited by Spencer W. Kimball. See Kimball, "Ye May Know the Truth," LDS Scripture Citation Index, <http://scriptures.byu.edu/gettalk.php?ID=134>, accessed February 23, 2013.

127. Mormons believe that God has called prophets in distinct periods of time called "dispensations." Adam, Abraham, Noah, Moses, Jesus Christ, and Joseph Smith each began a new dispensation, the dispensation of Joseph Smith being the "dispensation of the fullness of times" (Eph. 1:10). The "dispensation of the fullness of times" holds a unique position in LDS culture and belief, as indicated by the Church's official name—The Church of Jesus Christ of *Latter-day Saints* (italics added). Latter-day Saints believe that the faithful church members are responsible for preparing the earth for the second coming of Jesus Christ.

128. Janiece Johnson wrote of early Mormon women converts: "[Mormon women] demonstrate a continuity of religious commitment and education . . . [Mormon] women willingly sacrificed whatever they felt that God required of them. Conviction was explicitly demonstrated through their personal writings proffering an intimate glimpse of a unique religion and belief as the motivation of these women. . . . Their conviction to it was sure enough to enable their adherence to this persecuted prophet, belief in new doctrine, and the church which Smith established rather than fulfilling their religious desires through the mainstream religions of the day." In "'Give it All Up and Follow Your Lord': Mormon Female Religiosity, 1831–1843," iv.

129. For more information about Mormon millennial beliefs, see Dan Erickson, "Joseph Smith's 1891 Millennial Prophecy: The Quest for Apocalyptic Deliverance," in *Journal of Mormon History* 22, no. 2 (Fall 1996): 1–34. For a more complete understanding of early Mormon millennialism (with limited commentary on post-1844 millennialism),

which is necessary to understanding the 1880s millennialism, see Grant Underwood, *The Millenarian World of Early Mormonism* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1999).

130. John Turpin's immediate mention of polygamy is telling of Mormonism's reputation in Great Britain in the late nineteenth century.

131. Longcroft Street no longer exists, but Southampton is approximately eighty miles northeast of London.

132. John Street today remains largely residential.

133. John Turpin appears to be an inclusivist. "Inclusivism contends that one who is accepted by God apart from the preaching of the Gospel is saved in spite of whatever religion to which he may be an adherent. His religious orientation plays no part in his salvation and in fact is a definite hindrance. The non-Christian's ignorant beliefs, if sincere, are inculpable but have no positive role in his relationship with God." Ken Keathley, "No One Dare Call It Treason: Is an Inclusivist a Paul Revere or a Benedict Arnold?" *Journal for Baptist Theology and Ministry* 1, no. 2 (Fall 2003): 102.

134. John Turpin was relatively progressive in this view, since the English saw Mormons in general as philandering barbarians, and that barbarians converts were "ill-mated" and "silly." See Mrs. T. B. H. Stenhouse, *Exposé of Polygamy in Utah: A Lady's Life Among the Mormons: A Record of Personal Experience as One of the Wives of a Mormon Elder, During a Period of More Than Twenty Years* (New York: American News Co., 1872), 51, 54, and 58, as quoted in J. Spencer Fluhman, "*A Peculiar People*": *Anti-Mormonism and the Making of Religion in Nineteenth-Century America* (Raleigh, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 120–21. The Republican Party's platform in 1856 was based on the eradication of the "twin relics of barbarism," namely slavery and polygamy. In addition to Fluhman, for more information see Givens, *Viper on the Hearth*.

135. To be in service means that Ada and Lizzie were likely living with a family, and that they served as either housemaids or ladies' maids.

136. The cranes refer to steam-driven machines capable of lifting large loads of cargo to place on boats for transportation to trade markets. As noted previously, Southampton was, and remains, an important port for maritime commerce.

137. John S. Turpin married Elizabeth Peninah Collins on September 10, 1862. They had nine children: Minnie, Edward, Charles, Letitia, Ada, Elizabeth, Frederick, Thomas and Herbert.

138. Herbert George Turpin.