

“COMPASSION UPON THE EARTH”: MAN, PROPHETS, AND NATURE

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How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable seem to me all the uses of this world!” cries Shakespeare’s Hamlet, depressed about his father’s recent death and his mother’s hasty remarriage. “Fie on ’t, ah, fie ’tis an unweeded garden that grows to seed. Things rank and gross in nature possess it merely.”¹ Hamlet admits he’s in a bad mood, but his assessment of the earth’s overall value, and the relative quality of its creature inhabitants, provides an interesting perspective—by no means unique to disturbed Danish princes—on the question of humankind’s relationship with the natural world. The bumper sticker on my neighbor’s truck provides another. “Earth First!” it declares. “We’ll mine other planets later.” Both views are short-sighted, though in different

ways; where Hamlet can’t see anything valuable, my neighbor apparently can’t see anything that’s *not* valuable—monetarily valuable, that is. They are similar, too, in that neither seems open to the idea that something earthly might possess an inherent worth over and above any value it may or may not hold for them personally. Even Hamlet, who wants to concede a certain goodness and majesty to earth and sky, ultimately condemns them as a “sterile promontory” and “a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors,” worthless to his purposes and so worthless altogether.² Other ways of looking at man’s relationship with the earth exist, of course, but none, if the growing bibliography of environmental history tells us anything, have been more influential in the history of civilization than this self-centered myopia, so aptly portrayed by bumpers and bards alike, and so effective at justifying the exploitation of everything that can be converted into cash to the detriment of everything that can’t.

Standing over and against this history of extraction, abuse, and neglect, and begging for an audience in a world that is becoming increasingly polarized over environmental issues, are the inspired records and counsels of ancient and modern prophets. Their words are neither shrill nor extreme. All concede that the earth and its products do serve some strictly utilitarian, temporal functions in ways that my neighbor would find gratifying. But they also teach that the earth and her creatures are in many respects coeternal with ourselves, that our obligation to respect and preserve them extends from reasons that go beyond the simple utilitarian purposes we may see them serving, and that to fail to appreciate the beauty and wonders of the natural world is to miss out on a God-given opportunity for spiritual growth.

The scriptures make it clear that mankind holds a place of preeminence among all of God's creations—indeed, that His own “work and glory” is intimately linked to His children's progress through the eternities (Moses 1:39). They make it clear, too, that one of the fundamental purposes for creating the earth was to provide man with a place and a situation where God could “prove them . . . to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them” (Abraham 3:25). Man's placement on the earth was the main event, not a whimsical side show; as Nephi put it, “the Lord hath created the earth that it should be inhabited; and he hath created his children that they should possess it” (1 Nephi 17: 36). Not only possess it, but possess it completely—the earth was created “that it might be filled with the measure of man” (D&C 49: 17), whose dominion was to extend “over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth” (Genesis 1:26). With man playing the leading role, these others—“the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, and that which cometh of the earth”—were to be a supporting caste of sorts, having been “ordained for the use of man . . . that he might have in abundance” (D&C 49:19).

The scriptures indicate that this arrangement has been in place since the creation of Adam, and anyone who takes them seriously has to concede a certain utilitarianism behind the Creation, with man as the designated utilizer. To view the earth, her creatures, and her products *strictly* in utilitarian terms, however, or to assign them values on the basis of their temporal, immediate, man-centered utility, does not seem justified—especially when it was God Himself who started pronouncing His creations “good” long before Adam was on the scene. Beginning with the third day (following the Book of Moses account), when God separated the dry land from the waters, He surveyed each day's work and found much to recommend it. The dry land, the sea, the plants, the animals, and the “lights in the firmament”—“all these things,” God noted, “were good” (Moses 2:15, 25; see also Moses 2:9–25). This suggests an inherent value in them all, quite independent of any utility they may hold for Adam and his clan.

While the creation accounts don't inform us explicitly and precisely *why* God deemed everything good at this early date, they and other records do provide some suggestions. First, at least part of their value can be attributed to the simple fact that they are the “very handiwork” of God, stamped and imprinted at some level with divinity's seal (D&C 104:14). Second, and similarly, their very presence serves as a testimony of God and His power. “All things denote there is a God,” taught Alma. “Yea, even the earth, and all things that are upon the face of it . . . do witness that there is a Supreme Creator” (Alma 30:44). This may smack of the “divine watchmaker” idea of philosophy, but modern revelation teaches that the earth and her creatures are more than just *evidences* of God's presence—they are *manifestations* of His presence: “he [Christ] is in the sun, and the light of the sun. . . . As also he is in the moon, and is the light of the moon. . . . And the earth also. . . . The light which is in all things, which giveth life to all things, which is the law by which all things are governed” (D&C 88:7–8,

10, 13). Thus it is, the revelation goes on to say, that “any man who hath seen any or the least of these hath seen God moving in his majesty and power” (88:47).

Finally, the scriptures make it clear that all forms of life, from the “herb of the field” to the “creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth,” have a spirit as well as a body. The Hebrew text suggests this by referring to the brute creation in much the same terms that it refers to Adam—both are designated as “nephesh hayah,” a phrase answering to “living soul” or “living being.”³ The Septuagint preserves the parity, referring to both Adam and his fellow creatures as “living souls.”⁴ Any possible doubt or ambiguity on this point was removed by Joseph Smith in his retranslation of the Genesis creation account. “I, the Lord God, created all things, of which I have spoken, spiritually, before they were naturally upon the face of the earth. . . . All things were before created; but spiritually were they created” (Moses 3:5, 7). Then, just as Adam became a “living soul” after having been “formed . . . from the dust of the ground” and receiving the “breath of life,” so “every tree” that grew “out of the ground . . . became also a living soul,” as did “every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air” (3:7, 9, 19).

Working through the book of Revelation a year later, Joseph Smith received further information along these lines, learning about “the spirit of the beast, and every other creature which God has created . . . in the enjoyment of their eternal felicity” (D&C 77:2-3). Indeed the Prophet taught the “grand secret” of the first part of John’s revelation “was to show John what there was in heaven . . . all the beasts, fowls and fish in heaven . . . showing to John that beasts did actually exist there.”⁵ The earth itself, he learned subsequently, will receive an eternal glory, “that bodies who are of the celestial kingdom may possess it forever and ever; for, for this intent was it made and created” (D&C 88:20). The point in all of this is that while the earth and her creatures were made for the use of man, both have an exis-

tence independent of and as eternal as man’s existence. Their claim on fair treatment is not determined or limited by their temporal utility but by their status as “living souls” in their own right, destined to be around long after mankind is done using them for “food or for raiment, or for houses, or for barns, or for orchards, or for gardens, or for vineyards” (D&C 59:17). Little wonder that God was pleased with His accomplishments so early in the week.

Little wonder, too, that God has always coupled His statements granting us the use of these things with strict commandments to use them with care. Adam, for example, was “to dress” (*le-avdah*, literally “to work it” or “to serve it”) and “to keep” (*le-shamrah*, literally “to keep it,” “to watch it,” or “to preserve it”) the world he would be living off (Genesis 2:15). Noah, similarly, after being given “every moving thing that liveth” for food, “even as the green herb” (9:3), was sternly warned, “And surely, blood shall not be shed, only for meat, to save your lives; and the blood of every beast will I require at your hands” (Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 9:11). The earth and her fulness, Joseph Smith revealed, are most definitely to be used, but “with judgment, not to excess, neither by extortion” (D&C 59:20). Animal flesh, especially, is to be used “sparingly, . . . only in times of winter, or of cold, or famine” (89:12, 13); “Wo be unto man that sheddeth blood or that wasteth flesh and hath no need” (49:21).

Ancient Israel was frequently reminded of the sanctity of their earthly home and of their obligation to take care of it. “The land, whither thou goest in to possess it,” taught Moses on the east bank of the Jordan, “is . . . a land which the Lord thy God careth for: for the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year” (Deuteronomy 11:10, 12). Israel might live on the land, but only in the capacity of “strangers and sojourners” with God, not as owners. “The land” itself, He taught emphatically, “is mine,” and could not therefore be sold or used as an article of commerce (Leviticus 25:23). Like the tabernacle,

the land was an actual dwelling place for the Lord, and He expected it, again like the tabernacle, to be kept clean (see Numbers 35:34; Deuteronomy 23:12–14). Even the heat of battle was no excuse for environmental abuse. “When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it,” the Lord commanded, “thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by forcing an axe against them: for thou mayest eat of them, and thou shalt not cut them down.” An exception was made for trees that didn’t bear fruit, but even then, apparently, only insofar as Israel needed them to “build bulwarks against the city that maketh war with thee” (Deuteronomy 20:19–20).

This call to use the earth, her products, and her creatures with care also manifested itself in ancient Israel’s well-known sabbatical year. “Six years thou shalt sow thy land, and shalt gather in the fruits thereof,” the Lord told Moses. “But the seventh year thou shalt let it rest and lie still; that the poor of thy people may eat: and what they leave the beasts of the field shall eat. In like manner thou shalt deal with thy vineyard, and with thy oliveyard” (Exodus 23:10–11; see also Leviticus 25:2–7). The moderation would pay off for everyone, the Lord went on to say, with temporal prosperity and security the ultimate reward (see Leviticus 26:3–13). He then underscored the significance of this sabbatical year by telling Israel that if they refused to keep this commandment, He would keep it for them: “I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass,” He threatened. “Your land shall not yield her increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits. . . . Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate . . . then shall the land rest, and enjoy her sabbaths” (26:19–20, 34). Israel broke the commandment essentially from the start, and the Jews’ Babylonian exile, the chronicler poignantly informs us, was the Lord’s literal fulfillment of His promise, “for as long as [the land] lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years” (2 Chronicles 36:21).

Man’s obligation to care for God’s creatures was a favorite theme of early Church leaders and

a constant challenge for early Church members to fulfill. Most people have heard, for example, how Joseph Smith prevented members of Zion’s Camp from killing three large rattlesnakes they found in eastern Illinois. “Let them alone—don’t hurt them!” Joseph reportedly said. “How will the serpent ever lose his venom, while the servants of God possess the same disposition, and continue to make war upon it?” Urging camp members to “become harmless, before the brute creation,” Joseph “exhorted the brethren not to kill a serpent, bird, or an animal of any kind during our journey unless it became necessary in order to preserve ourselves from hunger,” a subject on which he reportedly “had frequently spoken.”⁶ When they found another rattler in camp the very next day, however—and here perhaps is the real lesson of the story—the men prepared to kill it; only Solomon Humphrey’s interference prevented its death.⁷ The camp did better on other tests Joseph gave them, but the incident with the fourth rattler demonstrates as well as anything the facility with which modern Israel can forget the words of the prophets on this score.

Brigham Young spoke frequently on this subject as well, echoing many of the scripturally based doctrines we’ve already alluded to. “Always keep in view,” he told the Church in 1860, “that the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms—the earth and its fulness—will all . . . abide their creation—the law by which they were made, and will receive their exaltation.”⁸ Man’s role, he taught, is “to beautify the whole face of the earth,” and to “take a course to preserve our lives and the lives of the animals committed to our care.”⁹ This last duty of man to preserve *all* life was, according to President Young, one of the most important activities we could be engaged in. “The very object of our existence here,” he taught in 1862, “is to handle the temporal elements of this world and subdue the earth, multiplying those organisms of plants and animals God has designed shall dwell upon it.”¹⁰ Time and again, through all the challenges and diffi-

culties the Saints faced in settling early Utah, he returned to these themes.¹¹

Their reception among early Utahns was mixed. The spacious and well-kept yards, large gardens, and shady streets that characterized early Salt Lake City, and which so many visitors found noteworthy, attest to the influence that at least some of Brigham Young’s words had on Church members.¹² Yards were one thing, but animals were quite another, and the frequency with which he and other Church leaders condemned the Saints for their treatment of animals suggests that all was not well in Zion. In a typical address, for example, he chastened Church members in 1868 for the indifference they showed toward their animals. “There is a grievous sin upon this people,” he said, “for neglecting their stock and letting them perish; turning their sheep on to the range for a few hours, and bringing them up and penning them twenty hours out of the twenty-four, until they become diseased and sickly. If the people could see as an angel sees, they would behold a great sin in neglecting the stock.”¹³ Worse than the neglect, perhaps, was the abuse many animals received. “I cannot keep a decent horse,” a frustrated Heber C. Kimball said in 1857.

Neither can brother Brigham, or any other man; for the boys will kill them. Let them rest: they are as good as we are in their sphere of action; they honour their calling, and we do not, when we abuse them: they have the same life in them that you have, and we should not hurt them. It hurts them to whip them, as bad as it does you; and when they are drawing as though their daylight would fly out of them, you must whip, whip, whip. Is there religion in that? No; it is an abuse of God’s creation that he has created for us.¹⁴

Wild animals, too, suffered at the hands of the early Saints. Concerned at the negative impact predators and other animals might have on their stock and grain, settlers in the winter of 1848–49 divided into two teams of one hundred men each and held a contest to see who could kill

the most “wasters and destroyers,” as they termed them. Over the course of the hunt, some eight hundred wolves, four hundred foxes, two wolverines, two bears, two bobcats, thirty-seven mink, and “several thousand” birds of prey were killed.¹⁵ Such tactics might have seemed justifiable under the circumstances; after all, Utah’s early settlers lived life on the edge, and famine was a very real threat on several occasions. The loss of a cow to wolves or a grainfield to mice could, and often did, represent a serious problem. Even then, though, Brigham—who stood to lose as much as anyone—doesn’t seem to have found the potential loss these destroyers might have represented to be a compelling reason for eradicating them. For Brigham, their presence was a call for diligence and planning, not extermination. “Attend to your crops,” he told assembled Saints in May 1855 during a grasshopper outbreak, “and if your corn is eaten off to-day, plant again tomorrow; if your wheat is cut down by the grasshoppers, sow a little more and drag it in. Last season when the grasshoppers came on my crops, I said, ‘Nibble away, I may as well feed you as to have my neighbors do it; I have sown plenty, and you have not raised any yourselves.’”¹⁶ Twelve years later, under similar circumstances, he reiterated his point: “According to present appearances, next year we may expect grasshoppers to eat up nearly all our crops,” he said. “But if we have provisions enough to last us another year, we can say to the grasshoppers—these creatures of God—you are welcome. I have never yet had a feeling to drive them from one plant in my garden; but I look upon them as the armies of the Lord.”¹⁷

At times we see everything working as it should. One gets the impression that the Nephites, for example, shortly after separating themselves from the Lamanites, were living up to the ideal. “We did sow seed,” recorded Nephi, “and we did reap again in abundance. And we began to raise flocks, and herds, and animals of every kind. . . . We lived after the manner of happiness” (2 Nephi 5:11, 27). Usually, though, the

picture is not so pretty, the relationship between man and nature not so harmonious. So Enoch learned when he “looked upon the earth” in his cosmic vision. “Wo, wo is me, the mother of men,” he heard the earth cry. “I am pained, I am weary, because of the wickedness of my children. When shall I rest, and be cleansed from the filthiness which is gone forth out of me? When will my Creator sanctify me, that I may rest, and righteousness for a season abide upon my face?” (Moses 7:48). Notice here, it is unrighteousness in general that is bringing the earth down, not just environmental abuse; indeed, one gets the impression from all that Enoch sees and hears in this vision that a little smog is the least of the earth’s worries.¹⁸

But that in itself is an important point and teaches a lesson that is often overlooked in discussions about the environment: nature suffers when man is unrighteous. Enoch is telling us that the earth, like God, has a low tolerance for sin of any sort, and that the strip mining, overgrazing, air pollution, and animal abuse that constitute the meat and drink of mainstream environmentalism today are actually only part, and probably a small part, of the problem. Just as devastating to the planet, perhaps in ways not as immediately apparent but every bit as real, is the “great chain” Satan holds in his hand, with which he veils “the whole face of the earth with darkness” (Moses 7:26). One shows “compassion upon the earth,” to use the prophet’s phrase, by keeping *all* God’s commandments, not just those that speak directly to the subject (Moses 7:49).

By taking us from strictly temporal or physical considerations into the spiritual realm, Enoch introduces us to another facet of man’s intended relationship with nature. It is, simply, that along with creating the earth for man’s temporal benefit, God created it for man’s spiritual nourishment as well. Our focus is usually on the former, but Joseph Smith learned early on that the original plan called for the “good things which come of the earth” to serve as far more than the “food or . . . raiment” that gets all the

press (D&C 59:17). “All things which come of the earth,” the Lord told the Prophet in 1831, “are made for the benefit and the use of man, both to please the eye and to gladden the heart; Yea, . . . for taste and for smell, to strengthen the body and to enliven the soul” (D&C 59:18–19). We are supposed to be *enjoying* the workmanship of God’s hands, not just existing alongside it; life, as the Savior pointed out, is “more than meat, and the body than raiment” (Matthew 6:25). One of probably several reasons we should be cultivating this higher appreciation for the earth lies in another well-known teaching of the Savior that links eternal life with knowing, really *knowing*, who God is and what He is all about (see John 17:3). One learns something about the Creator by studying His creations, and to realize that this earth, with its vegetation and animal life, is a “glorious and beautiful” place, is to come to know, in at least one way, the mind of the God we worship.

While examples of environmental abuse in our history come readily to mind, many Latter-day Saints over the years have demonstrated a remarkable sensitivity to nature and her subtle beauties. One of these was Eunice Harris, an early Mormon settler in southern Alberta. Joining her husband in Cardston in 1904, Eunice initially had little praise for her surroundings. “I cannot describe, nor can I ever forget the feeling of loneliness and homesickness that crept over me when I looked out over the miles and miles of country, without even a house or tree to obscure the view. The mountains were hidden by the chinook mist that hung over them. I felt that our farm was just on the brink of the end of the world.”¹⁹

Over time, however, the Canadian prairie began to work its magic, and Eunice began to mine its spiritual wealth. “New wonders of the country were continually unfolding,” she recorded. “When I looked over the breadth of it I had a desire and prayer in my heart that I might partake of the influence of its bigness in making me broad-minded, generous, and charitable, and especially in developing the great and true

friendship to others. . . . I desired that I might be big enough and broad enough to at least give as much as I received of the things that make the world better and happier.”²⁰

Another early member of the Church who appreciated the earth’s natural beauty was, not surprisingly, Joseph Smith himself. Throughout his history, one finds him repeatedly and delightedly taking note of his surroundings. He described Nauvoo, for example, as “beautifully situated on the banks of the Mississippi . . . [at] probably the best and most beautiful site for a city on the river.”²¹ In a proclamation to the Saints issued a few months later, he went on to explain the new city’s name—a Hebrew word for a beautiful and restful place—by noting its “most delightful location” on the east bank of the great river and at the western edge of “an extensive prairie of surpassing beauty.”²² Nowhere though was the Prophet’s awareness and enjoyment of nature better demonstrated than in Zion’s Camp on the night of May 26, 1834,—the same day, incidentally, of the first rattlesnake scare. On this night, rightfully enough, members of the camp were exhausted. They had been on the road three weeks now, traveling an average of thirty-five miles a day on five hours of sleep each night. Much of their way had been through boot-deep mud. Food and water had been inadequate, and rumors of mobs in the area had everyone on edge. They had just started to cross the pancake-flat prairie of eastern Illinois, a novelty for most, and by eleven o’clock at night they were finally in bed. At that point, however, those on guard duty reported to the Prophet that they saw the fires of a mob to the southeast. He arose and saw the light, but realized it was simply the “reflection of the rising moon resting on points of timber in the east, which gave the appearance of the reflection of the light of a number of camp fires.” Struck with the beauty of the view, however, and reportedly “wishing the brethren to enjoy the scene as well as myself,” he sounded the alarm and woke everyone up. When all but two of the exhausted camp were on their feet and ready for

battle, he directed their attention to the moonrise on the southeast—a scene “well worth the trouble,” the record states, “of any man rising from his couch to witness.”²³

In our increasingly crowded world, the need to use the earth’s resources to meet our temporal needs may seem to outweigh whatever spiritual benefit they may hold for us. When millions of God’s children are suffering from malnutrition, for example, it may seem difficult to justify leaving a well-watered valley or prairie in its natural state rather than developing it for agriculture. The same holds for forests, mountains, rivers, and beaches—all contain resources people desperately need, and at times it appears there simply isn’t enough to go around, let alone enough to let some of it remain unused. Yet the Lord has made it clear through ancient and modern prophets alike that that is precisely what we are supposed to do—that not everything, as I hope this paper has demonstrated, was designed to be at the mercy of man’s physical needs. He has made it clear, too, that there really *is* enough to go around. In His words, that “the earth is full, and there is enough and to spare,” but *only* if things are used, preserved, and appreciated in the way He has prescribed (see D&C 104:16–17). Prophets from Adam to Joseph Smith and Brigham Young have taught us how to do it and have shown us that a healthy respect for the earth’s natural beauty and all her forms of life is fundamental to the success of the plan. With the temporal and spiritual well-being of *all* of God’s creations hanging in the balance, my hope today is that we can understand the prophets’ words and live them.



Notes

1. *Hamlet*, 1.2.133–37.
2. *Hamlet*, 2.2.306–11.
3. The King James translation renders *nephesh hayah* as “living creature” in Genesis 1:24, and as “living soul” in Genesis 2:7.

4. Adam became a *psuchein zosan*, a “living soul,” after receiving the *phoein zoeis*, the “breath of life” (Genesis 2:7). Similarly, “all the wild beasts of the earth, and . . . the flying creatures of heaven, and . . . every reptile creeping on the earth” contains a *psuchein zoeis*, a “living soul,” within it (Genesis 1:30).

5. Joseph Fielding Smith, comp., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 291. The idea that animals were living souls with an eternal destiny was a revolutionary one for many Christian churches of Joseph Smith’s time; see Andrew H. Hedges, “John’s Revelation and the Restoration of the Gospel,” *The Testimony of John the Beloved: The 27th Annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium*, ed. Daniel K. Judd, Craig J. Ostler, and Richard D. Draper (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1998), 83–93.

6. Joseph Smith Jr., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2nd ed., rev. (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1932–51), 2:71–72.

7. *History of the Church*, 2:74.

8. *Journal of Discourses* (London: Latter-day Saints’ Book Depot, 1854–86), 8:191; hereafter cited as *JD*.

9. *JD*, 1:254; 12:218.

10. *JD*, 9:168.

11. See Hugh W. Nibley, *Brother Brigham Challenges the Saints*, vol. 13 of *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley*, ed. Don E. Norton and Shirley Ricks (Salt Lake City and Provo: Deseret Book and Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1994), 3–104.

12. See, for examples, Mark Twain, *Roughing It* (New York: The New American Library, 1962), 92; Richard F. Burton, *The City of the Saints and Across the Rocky Mountains to California* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), 218, 221; William Chandless, *A Visit to Salt Lake* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1857), 142, 152; John W. Gunnison, *The Mormons or Latter-day Saints, in the Valley of the Great Salt Lake* (Brookline, Mass.: Paradigm Publications, 1993), 33; Howard Stansbury, *Exploration of the Valley of the Great Salt Lake* (Washington DC and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988), 128; and Horace Greeley, *An Overland Journey from New York to San Francisco in the Summer of*

1859 (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 206–7.

13. *JD*, 12:218.

14. *JD*, 5:137.

15. William S. Harwell, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1847–1850* (Salt Lake City: Collier’s Publishing, 1997), 139; Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints 1830–1900* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), 58–59.

16. *JD*, 3:159.

17. *JD*, 12:121.

18. Similarly, the Lord taught Moses that the land of Canaan was “defiled” by the idolatry and wickedness of the Canaanites (see Leviticus 18:25, 27).

19. Eunice Stewart Harris, *Autobiographical Sketch of Eunice Stewart Harris*, typescript, 48–49, Archives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah; hereafter cited as Church Archives.

20. Harris, *Autobiographical Sketch*, 50, Church Archives.

21. Joseph Smith to John C. Bennett, Nauvoo, Illinois, August 8, 1840, *History of the Church*, 4:177.

22. *History of the Church*, 4:268. Similar statements are peppered liberally throughout the Prophet’s records and include phrases like “spring . . . with all its charms,” “the beautiful, clear water of the lake,” and “beautiful country,” see *History of the Church*, 2:405, 503; 3:34 respectively. While he may not have penned them, evidence suggests that he read and endorsed a number of similar statements. These would include a description of Jackson County, where the author recorded that “as far as the eye can glance the beautiful rolling prairies lay spread around like a sea of meadows. . . . The shrubbery was beautiful. . . . The prairies were decorated with a growth of flowers that seemed as gorgeous grand as the brilliance of stars in the heavens, and exceed description” (see *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, ed. Dean C. Jessee [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989], 1:359).

23. *History of the Church*, 2:72.