

CHAPTER TEN

THE “ELECT LADY” REVELATION (D&C 25): ITS HISTORICAL AND DOCTRINAL CONTEXT

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In the last anxious hours before the Prophet Joseph Smith left for Carthage in June 1844, his wife Emma asked for a blessing. Unable to grant her wish at the time, Joseph instructed her to write out “the desires of her heart” and he would confirm the blessing by his signature upon his return. Among the desires she expressed in her short, self-inscribed blessing was her fervent wish “to honor and respect my husband as my head, ever to live in his confidence and by acting in unison with him retain the place which God has given me by his side.”¹

What unspoken thoughts moved Emma Smith to write those words? Could she have been affirming her belief that God had called her to be the wife and companion of a latter-day prophet? Might she have been thinking of the ordinances she had received with him in 1843, which promised her exaltation and a place by his side eternally? Or, after more than a year of anguishing over the principle of plural marriage, was Emma finally acknowledging that only by acting in concert with Joseph, even on this divisive issue, could she fulfill the revelation given to her fourteen years earlier through her prophet-husband?

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Emma's self-written 1844 blessing, of which the quoted passage is only a part, in many ways is a companion piece to the revelation she received in 1830, which was codified as Doctrine and Covenants 25. Each of these two spiritual documents is better understood in relation to the other. The enduring influence of the 1830 revelation to Emma is evident in the 1844 blessing, which carries strong echoes of the Lord's words to her fourteen years earlier. The later blessing illuminates not only the importance and reality of the 1830 revelation in Emma's life but also the timeless and universal quality of its content.

Doctrine and Covenants 25 has long been read primarily as a revelation commissioning a hymnbook for the newly organized Church. In recent years more attention has been given to the revelation's injunction to Emma "to expound doctrine and exhort the church" and to define Emma's role as an "elect lady."² Less examined have been its points of universal application and its correlation with the 1844 blessing, which this paper will address.

This sacred, personal communication embodies elements of a long tradition of women's personal theophanies. Dating back to the eleventh century, their spiritual autobiographies record these sacred moments. Some of them recount striking religious awakenings or a newly quickened sense of God's overarching love emerging from a variety of spiritual manifestations. These include visions of light in which God's presence is unmistakably felt and spiritual doubts are resolved.³ Some recount long periods of spiritual struggle and study leading to "a divine change" and a discernment "of the fullness of God" and His divine power in all things.⁴ One woman, after living a life of pleasure and luxury, felt her heart unaccountably pierced "by a sudden and immense love of God" which drew her away from her former life and set her on a path of total religious devotion manifest by her service to the sick.⁵ An eighteenth-century American woman, Sarah Pierrepont, left no account of a miraculous vision or sudden revelation, but she wrote of occasions when the Spirit seemed to engulf her and she basked in "a glow of divine love" which came from "the heart of Christ into [her] heart in a constant stream, or pencil of light."⁶

Similar experiences, recorded by early Latter-day Saint women in their diaries and journals, also fall within this tradition, the pattern

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of spiritual enlightenment often the same. For instance, after weeks of fervent prayer to be led to the truth, Elizabeth Ann Whitney one night felt herself enveloped in the midst of a cloud from which a voice spoke, saying, "Prepare to receive the word of the Lord, for it is coming." Shortly thereafter Parley P. Pratt brought her the gospel message and she was baptized, becoming one of the earliest and most faithful members of the Church.⁷ In a light that illuminated her mind as she received a healing blessing, Jane Snyder Richards "saw as plainly as if a book was opened before me with it written in it, my need of baptism, if Christ who was sinless needed to be baptized should I hold myself as better than He."⁸ Eliza R. Snow, on the night following her baptism, as she later recorded, felt an "indescribable, tangible sensation" that filled her with an "inexpressible happiness" as she saw in a vision a brilliant light from a candle blazing over her feet at the foot of her bed, which signified, she learned in the vision, that "the lamp of intelligence shall be lighted over your path."⁹ And Mary Gibbs Bigelow, another early convert, sick and bedridden, thinking she was soon to die, received a vision in which the Savior promised her peace, health, and life long enough to complete the work she was still to do.¹⁰ Such heavenly manifestations moved their recipients to conversion or confirmation of their faith and to lives of service and devotion to Christ.¹¹ Emma's revelation similarly confirmed her acceptance by God and showed her the way to service in His kingdom.

But the 1830 revelation for Emma was different from these other women's personal communications from the heavens. Preceding the introduction of patriarchal blessings in the Church by three years, its form and content were very much their prototype. It was received through an intermediary, it declared to Emma that she was one of the elect, or of the Abrahamic covenant and lineage,¹² and its promises and foretellings were conditional on her faith and obedience. Why, then, we might ask, was this individual spiritual guide included in a book of scripture for all Latter-day Saints?

The answer might possibly lie in its distinctiveness from the patriarchal blessings it prefigured. First, Emma was the Prophet's wife, and any blessing given to her was therefore distinctive. More specifically, like the other revelations that make up the Doctrine and Covenants, the revelation to Emma came directly from God through His

prophet, not through a patriarch, bishop, or other ecclesiastical leader. Moreover, unlike personal revelations, patriarchal blessings, or even some of the other personally directed revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants,¹³ it concludes with these significant words, which Joseph Smith repeated years later to the Relief Society in reference to the revelation: "And this is my word unto all."¹⁴ Thus, in significant ways, it transcends the merely personal, fitting the parameters of scripture and thereby acquiring permanence, authority, and universality. While its specifics are addressed to Emma, its principles are applicable to all.

And what was God's message to Emma and, by implication, to the Church? The revelation's sixteen verses address four essential aspects of Emma's life: her actions and desires, her relationship to her prophet-husband, her responsibilities to the Church, and her relationship with the Lord.

ACTIONS AND DESIRES

In His consistent pattern of promise for performance, the Lord tells Emma in the revelation precisely what He expects of her as a Latter-day Saint and in return promises her aid in fulfilling those expectations. Though verses 4 and 10 appear to be mild rebukes, they could also be read as appeals for trust and faith in His divine will: "Murmur not because of the things which thou hast not seen, for they are withheld from thee and from the world, which is wisdom in me in a time to come" the Lord tells Emma in Doctrine and Covenants 25:4. He may have been referring only to Emma's regret at not having seen the gold plates, though she had held them, protected them, and acted as scribe in their translation, but He may also have been alluding to the tumultuous experiences Emma had endured since her marriage to Joseph three years earlier. The attempts by gold seekers to wrest the plates from Joseph, the harassment during their translation, the mobs who interfered with Emma's baptism, the unwarranted arrest of Joseph the same night, as well as the alienation of her parents, the loss of home and roots, and the death of her first child all gave Emma a harsh introduction to the life of a prophet's wife. An early lesson from these experiences was that only patience and trust in God's wisdom and often inscrutable purposes would sustain her through the difficult times.

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Then in verse 10 the Lord counsels Emma, in what certainly must be one of the most oft-repeated commands in Christian literature, to "lay aside the things of this world and seek for the things of a better," surely a call to keep perspective on the uncertainties her life offered. But her compliance to these two admonitions would not go unaided. "Lift up thy heart and rejoice," He encourages her in verse 13, "and cleave unto the covenants which thou hast made." Only a month earlier Emma had entered into the covenant of baptism, which promised her that if she would "serve [the Lord] and keep his commandments," He would in turn "pour out his Spirit more abundantly upon [her]" (Mosiah 18:10). Furthermore, before another month passed, at her long-delayed confirmation she would receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, an additional source of solace and guidance.

MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP

At the time of the revelation Emma had just turned twenty-six and Joseph was not yet twenty-five. They were relatively inexperienced and unsophisticated young people who had been given momentous responsibilities. A supportive and trusting relationship would be crucial to the fulfillment of their respective callings. Its reciprocal nature is explained in verses 5 and 9 of the revelation. Emma was counseled to comfort and console her prophet-husband in his times of affliction and to continue to assist him when needed in his ecclesiastical duties as scribe (verse 5). In turn, she was promised Joseph's support in the Church, presumably to enable her to fulfill the mission to which the Lord had called her (verse 9). The import of this counsel became clear as circumstances challenged Joseph and Emma's efforts to fulfill their obligations to each other. While Joseph's support gave legitimacy and significance to Emma's assignments in the Church, her support of Joseph eased the burden of his calling. But the merging of their marital and ecclesiastical relationships often created an emotional kaleidoscope alternating joy with sorrow, peace with anxiety, trust with suspicion, and unity with doubt. For equilibrium, the Lord urged Emma to maintain her spirit of meekness and let her soul "delight in [her] husband, and the glory which [would] come upon him" (verse 14). To enjoy these blessings, He warned, she must "beware of pride" (verse 14).

The binding force of that counsel united Joseph and Emma in a supportive and truly complementary relationship for most of their seventeen years together. Joseph's letters to her express affection and confidence. Though few of Emma's letters to Joseph remain, the anxiety and urgency evident in her published letters to Illinois governor Thomas Carlin, pleading against Joseph's extradition to Missouri, along with her boldness in daring to interfere with the processes of law, certainly testify of her willingness to be more than a comfort and consolation. One can only wonder why the strength of their union was not sufficient for Emma to accept plural marriage, a principle accepted in faith by so many other devoted couples. Perhaps for Emma it was *because* of that unity, the oneness that had so characterized their relationship, that she was unable to open it to others. Could Emma's reluctance to share her prophet-husband be a manifestation of the pride she had been warned against? Did her faith falter only in this final test when the sacrifice claimed too much of her own identity? The answers remain elusive.

DUTIES TO THE CHURCH

But the revelation called for Emma to do more than support and assist Joseph. There were specific tasks for her to perform that would benefit the Church, in preparation for which her time was to "be given to writing, and to learning much" (verse 8). One assignment was "to make a selection of sacred hymns" (verse 11). By this mandate the Lord sanctioned music as an appropriate form of religious worship. Hymn texts have long been a medium to express religious thought and emotion, and the birth of Mormonism evoked a wide range of both, from the millennialist fervor of the poems of Parley P. Pratt and the doctrinal assertions of Eliza R. Snow to the joyous affirmations of W. W. Phelps. Now these and other poetic testimonies would become part of Latter-day Saint worship.

It took two years for Emma to complete the hymn selection, and another three passed before the hymns were printed in a single volume. From July 1830 to April 1832, when the selection process was completed and W. W. Phelps was instructed to correct and publish the hymns, Emma worked despite a growing antagonism toward the Church in Kirtland and a series of personal tragedies. Through them all, she persisted in fulfilling this assignment of the Lord. Her

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mother-in-law observed that during this time "her whole heart was in the work of the Lord and she felt no interest except for the church and the cause of truth."¹⁵

Finally, in June 1832, *The Evening and the Morning Star* began printing Emma's selection of hymn texts described as "Hymns, selected and prepared for the Church of Christ, in the last days." The destruction of Phelps's press in 1833 suspended the printing of hymns and other Church publications. Until then, thirty-eight hymn texts had appeared in either the *Star* or its successor, the *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate*.¹⁶ But in 1835 the Church council instructed Phelps to continue his work with Emma, and early in 1836 the first Latter-day Saint hymnal finally came off the press, entitled *A Collection of Hymns for the Church of the Latter Day Saints*. The 127-page hymnal contained ninety hymns, approximately forty of them written by Latter-day Saint authors, primarily Phelps himself. Emma's preface drew on the words of the 1830 revelation, affirming that "the song of the righteous" was "a prayer unto God" and suggesting that the hymnal was only a beginning effort "till more are composed or we are blessed with a copious variety of the songs of Zion."¹⁷

The idea that Emma Smith should be the sole compiler of the Church's hymnal emerged in 1839 when the high council authorized an expanded hymnbook. David Rogers, a New York convert, had previously published for the New York Saints a hymnal that had drawn heavily on Emma's 1835 selection, and Brigham Young had taken a collection of hymns to England with the intent of publishing a hymnal there. But the Nauvoo high council voted to destroy all copies of Rogers's hymnbook and to forbid Brigham Young to publish a British edition.¹⁸ The prohibition evidently did not reach Young in time to prevent the publication of three thousand Latter-day Saint hymnals in Manchester, England, in 1840. When he decided to revise the hymnal the next year, Brigham Young wrote to Joseph Smith for permission. Apparently the needs of the growing Church prompted Joseph to permit a second edition in England and a new, enlarged edition, under Emma's direction, in Nauvoo. Emma's exclusive stewardship over the church hymnal had been modified to allow the publication of a volume of hymns appropriate to the British Saints under Brigham Young's direction.¹⁹

A second, more problematic commission of the Lord to Emma in

the revelation was “to expound scriptures, and to exhort the Church, according as it shall be given thee by my Spirit” (verse 7). With only a few exceptions, no religious denominations at that time gave public platforms in mixed congregations to women. Tradition and contemporary ideals of feminine propriety were powerful agents in defining a woman’s appropriate public behavior, and preaching in public was not a feminine occupation in the nineteenth century.²⁰ These social strictures, however, did not affect the small, informal Church meetings, characteristic of Latter-day Saint worship from its beginnings. In Nauvoo, women regularly addressed the mixed Church gatherings in one another’s homes for a Sunday or weeknight prayer, blessing, or cottage meeting. Along with the men, they bore testimony, expounded doctrine, and read scriptures to the assembled members. They prophesied, spoke in tongues, and blessed one another.²¹ Emma often accompanied Joseph to such meetings.²² Few could have been more conversant with Mormon doctrine than Emma Smith or had more incentive to expound its truths.

The patriarchal blessings of other women during this period admonished them, also, to instruct one another, mentor the young in gospel principles, and “encourage and strengthen” others in the faith.²³ One so blessed was Phebe Woodruff before she left on a mission to England with her husband, Wilford. Brigham Young promised her that she would be “looked up to as A mother in Israel for council and for Instruction.” He granted her “power & wisdom to teach the truth to thy friends and thy se[x],” and guaranteed that she would “not be at a loss for Ideas & words in [her] teaching.”²⁴

The organization of the Relief Society in 1842 provided Emma Smith with the public setting most conducive to the fulfillment of her assignment. At its initial meeting, Joseph Smith proposed that the sisters should “elect a president to preside over them.” After Elizabeth Ann Whitney nominated Emma, she was elected by the nineteen other women present. Joseph then read the 1830 revelation, explaining that at the time it had been given, Emma had been “ordained to expound the scriptures to all and to teach the female part of the community.”²⁵ Though she met with the Relief Society only from March to October in 1842, when it adjourned for the winter months, and again for just four meetings in March 1844, Emma was clearly its head and moving spirit.²⁶

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She took her calling to exhort the sisters seriously and immediately set about instructing them to purify their own lives and help in creating a virtuous community. She urged them to extend their compassionate service to all distressed Saints and to draw around them protective bands of unity. The Relief Society was to save souls as well as relieve the poor, Joseph counseled, and Emma advised the sisters in this important obligation. "Each member should be ambitious to do good," she urged, "deal frankly with each other, watch over the morals, and be very careful of the character and reputation of the members of the Institution etc."²⁷To this end, Emma zealously acceded to Joseph's charge to assist in "correcting the morals and strengthening the virtues of the community" and "to reform persons . . . and by kindness sanctify and cleanse [them] from all unrighteousness."²⁸ Ferreting out iniquity was a delicate task, but Emma, with the help of her counselors, endeavored to fulfill Joseph's charge. Like that of hundreds of female moral reform associations throughout the country, all bent on exposing evil, one of the Relief Society's aims was to cleanse the Church of any wrongdoing. Noting their reluctance to be moral caretakers, Emma lamented that "the sisters are not *careful enough* to expose iniquity; the time had been when charity had covered a multitude of sins," she said, "but now it is necessary that sin should be exposed."²⁹ Her commitment to "uphold virtue" and "put down transgression" dominated the final meetings of the Relief Society in March 1844, in which she used her authority as president to denounce the false doctrine of "spiritual wifery," a counterfeit of the revealed doctrine of plural marriage, and warn the sisters to guard against it and "any other improper practice."³⁰ It is generally conceded that Emma used her position as Relief Society president and her commission to exhort the sisters as a license also to thwart the establishment of plural marriage.³¹ The evidence shows that she did indeed attempt to mobilize overt action against the practice through the Relief Society, which numbered more than thirteen hundred by 1844. Moreover, the minutes of the final meetings of the Relief Society clearly indicate that she never questioned her right or her authority to instruct the sisters of the Church in their duties as she saw them.

In contrast to the controversial nature of the Relief Society's moral purity campaign was Emma's equally emphatic desire that the sisters

clothe themselves in Christian service, "Seek out and relieve the distressed," she urged, and she counseled them to give help and material aid to one another, invoking the Spirit by blessing one another when needed for healing, for comfort, for childbirth, and for spiritual support and guidance.³² If the sisters needed a model of selfless service, Emma could provide it. In this benevolent charge, Emma's actions far outweighed her words. From the Kirtland days, when she and Elizabeth Ann Whitney prepared a "love feast" for the poor, Emma, so often a beneficiary of the compassion of friends, was the first to extend it to others. Her compassion and hospitality in Nauvoo were legendary. Her home was often a sanctuary for the homeless, the orphaned, and the sick. Lucy Walker and her siblings were only a few of the dozens of individuals who came under her protective care. Virtually orphaned at their mother's death because their father was abroad on a mission, the Walker children were offered a home with the Prophet and Emma. "Our own father and mother could scarcely have done more," Lucy noted when her younger sister died. "The Prophet and his wife introduced us as their sons and daughters. Every privilege was accorded us in the home. Every pleasure within reach was ours."³³

Emma's counselors were also exemplars to the sisters. Elizabeth Ann Whitney, then a stranger to Emma, opened her home to Emma and Joseph when they arrived in Kirtland almost destitute, and Sarah Cleveland, also a stranger at the time, gave Emma and her children refuge in Quincy when she fled from the Missouri persecutions, leaving her husband still imprisoned in Liberty Jail. It is little wonder that Emma turned to these women for her closest associates and advisers in the new organization.

Another persistent theme in Emma's exhortations to the Relief Society was her appeal for unity. "Measures to promote union in this society must be carefully attended to," she urged the members at the outset.³⁴ As membership dramatically increased, Emma was even more urgent in her plea for unity. "We shall have sufficient difficulty from abroad," she presciently warned in August 1842, "without stirring up strife among ourselves and hardness and evil feelings, one towards another etc."³⁵ This call to "circle the wagons," she was saying, was to guard themselves more against an encroaching disloyalty to

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Joseph and disunion within the Church than against threats from the outside.

But, as is often the case, the principle of unity was easier for Emma to preach than to practice. Even as she pleaded for a united sisterhood, she was herself becoming a symbol of disunion. Both the 1830 revelation and her 1844 blessing centered on her unity with Joseph as the key to the success of her own calling. But in the end unity gave way to doubt, and doubt invoked disloyalty. Her exhortations to the Relief Society in its final four meetings in March 1844 seemed frantic but futile. Immediately thereafter both the Relief Society and Emma's place as its "elect lady" abruptly ended. Emma's commitment to the 1830 revelation seriously faltered, and the consequences were monumental.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LORD

Finally, how did the 1830 revelation define Emma's relationship with the Lord? Was it unique, or can principles be extrapolated to all believers? The first three verses of the revelation set forth the primary elements of that relationship. First, the Lord claims Emma as a daughter because of her willingness to accept the gospel, a condition applicable to all who desire to be sons and daughters of God.³⁶ Second, He covenants with her, promising her eternal blessings in return for obedience and faith, another universal principle. Finally, He forgives Emma her sins, personally validating the efficacy of her recent baptism, and receives her into the circle of the "elect," who are those, He explains elsewhere, who "hear my voice and harden not their hearts" (D&C 29:7).

Emma, like others of the elect, had proven her faithfulness even before mortality and through the "covenant of grace" was permitted to enter this life at a time and place that would bring her into contact with the gospel.³⁷ But being of the elect also carried responsibilities, foreordained missions that varied with each individual according to God's purposes. A passage in Joseph Smith's private journal for March 17, 1842, affirms that definition: "*Elect* meant to be *Elected* to a *certain work*," a broad definition of the term. The Prophet then noted that Emma fulfilled this part of the 1830 revelation when she was elected president of the Relief Society, the specific work to which she had been "previously ordained."³⁸ In the Relief Society minutes

of that date, however, he seemed to narrow the meaning, indicating that “elect lady” specifically meant “elected to preside,” a term presumably applicable to any woman who presided. Certainly that was how the term was applied in later years. In that same meeting, John Taylor confirmed Emma’s earlier blessing from Joseph, also declaring her to be “a mother in Israel” who was “to look to the wants of the needy, and be a pattern of virtue.” In referring to the 1830 revelation, he said he “rejoiced to see this Institution organized according to the law of Heaven . . . according to the revelation” previously given to Emma “appointing her to this important calling.”³⁹ His words suggest that the organization of the Relief Society facilitated the fulfillment of Emma’s call as an elect lady.

One might wonder why it took twelve years for this part of the revelation to be realized. Perhaps Emma’s service to the Church before 1842 was merely preparatory, although certainly falling within the range of Emma’s special calling. The Lord evidently directed the proceedings of that organizational meeting, for there was a possibility for other women to be elected president, particularly Sarah M. Kimball, a logical choice, when Joseph opened the meeting for nominations. Elizabeth Ann Whitney, however, gave the nomination to Emma, and her election by the women present ratified her call as the “elect lady.”⁴⁰ From that time on, the title “elect lady” in reference to Emma Smith developed a mystique that curtailed its use for others until after her death, despite her dissociation with the Relief Society and the Church. Though Brigham Young authorized Eliza R. Snow to organize Relief Societies throughout the Church and direct its activities in 1868, she was not officially set apart “to preside” as the new “elect lady” until 1880, the year after Emma’s death.⁴¹

The final element that defined Emma’s relationship with the Lord is the fifteenth verse of the revelation. “Keep my commandments continually,” He told her, “and a crown of righteousness thou shalt receive. And except thou do this,” He cautioned, “where I am you cannot come” (D&C 25:15). In that passage Emma was taught a fundamental principle of the gospel—that God’s blessings are obtained only by obedience to the laws upon which they are predicated (see also D&C 130:20–21). This principle underlies every command and blessing the Lord expressed to Emma in the revelation, which was as complete and certain a personal guide to Emma Smith, the Latter-

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day Saint, as it was a special calling to Emma Smith, the wife of the Prophet.

CONCLUSION

Despite the years between the two, the 1844 blessing reads like a reprise of the 1830 revelation on several points. It repeats, expands, and develops several of the themes introduced in the earlier document, reflecting the seasoning of fourteen years. Perhaps more than her words and actions in those final mercurial years before the Prophet's death, the 1844 blessing is the best index to Emma's mind and spirit at that time and the enduring effect of the 1830 revelation upon her.

Besides her "deepest desire to act in unison with Joseph and retain her place by his side," a remarkable statement in view of the events of the preceding months, Emma made several other self-revelatory requests of the Lord in that 1844 blessing. She expressed a "craving for wisdom" that she would not do or say anything she would regret; she desired the Spirit of God and a fruitful mind that she would be able "to comprehend the designs of God, when revealed through his servants without doubting"; she sought wisdom to rear her children to be "useful ornaments in the Kingdom of God" and prudence to care for her body that she would live to perform "all the work that [she] covenanted to perform in the spirit world"; and finally, she asked for "humility . . . that she might rejoice in the blessings which God has in store for all who are willing to be obedient to his requirements."

Were these the words of a prophet's wife hoping only to retain her place with him, or could they have been a penitent's recovenant with God? Perhaps they were both. As a glimpse into the heart of Emma Smith on the eve of her husband's death, this final blessing, I believe, expresses an intense desire to reconnect with the 1830 revelation that gave her a blueprint for her life. If the words of the blessing can be taken as a measure of her soul at that moment, they testify of Emma's longing to feel the approbation of the Lord and spiritual union once again with Joseph.

What she was *then* willing to sacrifice to fulfill those longings, however, will remain forever moot. The tragedy that followed closed

that chapter in Emma's life, even as it opened a new one in the life of the Church.

Though documenting the spiritual journey of just one woman, the 1830 revelation and its companion blessing can well serve as spiritual markers for all who seek to be in tune with the Lord and in harmony with the Church. "This is my voice unto all," the Lord said at the close of the revelation to Emma. Perhaps we should read it as God's voice to all.

NOTES

1. Typescript of blessing in Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah; hereafter cited as Church Archives.
2. See, for example, Linda Kay Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery, *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1984); and Jill Mulvay Derr, Janath Russell Cannon, and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, *Women of Covenant: The Story of Relief Society* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992).
3. John Ferguson, ed., *An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Mysticism* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976), s.v. "Catherine of Siena," 37.
4. Ferguson, *Illustrated Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Angela of Foligno," 13.
5. Ferguson, *Illustrated Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Catherine of Genoa," 36–37.
6. Ferguson, *Illustrated Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Sarah Pierrepont," 145; see also Martin Buber, *Ecstatic Confessions*, trans. Esther Cameron, ed. Paul Mendes-Flohr (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1985); and Walter Holden Capps and Wendy M. Wright, eds., *Silent Fire: An Invitation to Western Mysticism* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1978).
7. Edward Tullidge, *The Women of Mormondom* (New York: Tullidge and Crandall, 1877), 42.
8. Jane Snyder Richards, "Reminiscences of Jane Snyder Richards," typescript, Church Archives.
9. Nicholas G. Morgan Sr., ed., *Eliza R. Snow, an Immortal* (Salt Lake City: Nicholas G. Morgan Sr. Foundation, 1957), 6.
10. Autobiography of Mary Gibbs Bigelow, June 26, 1809, to April 19, 1858, typescript, Church Archives.
11. Joseph Smith greeted with joy and thanksgiving this proliferation of spirituality that accompanied and indeed testified of the return of the gospel of Christ to the earth. "To witness and feel with our own natural senses, the like glorious manifestations of the power of the Priesthood, the gifts and blessings of the Holy Ghost, and the good and condescension of a merciful God," he wrote in 1830,

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"combined to create within us sensations of rapturous gratitude, and inspire us with fresh zeal and energy in the cause of truth." The dreams and visions of the Saints, he wrote, strengthened his faith and he welcomed them as evidence of the last days "as foretold by the Prophet Joel" (*History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*), ed. B. H. Roberts, 2nd ed., rev. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1957], 1:85–86). Besides the numerous manuscript accounts, Carol Lynn Pearson has collected reports of many of these experiences, most of them previously published, in a volume entitled *Daughters of Light* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1973).

12. See Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* (New York: Macmillan, 1992), s.v. "Elect of God," 2:448–49; see also Bible Dictionary, s.v. "Election."
13. At least thirty-six other revelations are partially or fully addressed to individuals.
14. Minutes of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo, March 17, 1842, Church Archives; hereafter cited as Nauvoo Minutes.
15. Lucy Mack Smith, "Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet and His Progenitors for Many Generations," original manuscript, Church Archives, as quoted in Newell and Avery, *Mormon Enigma*, 44.
16. For more details about the development of Latter-day Saint hymnals, see Michael Hicks, *Mormonism and Music: A History* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 10–14, 18–34. A brief account is available in Karen Lynn Davidson, *Our Latter-day Hymns: The Stories and the Messages* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988), 7–13. E. Cecil McGavin provides an early account in "Emma Smith's Collection of Hymns," *Improvement Era*, January 1936, 38.
17. Hicks, *Mormonism and Music*, 20.
18. Hicks, *Mormonism and Music*, 25–27.
19. Hicks, *Mormonism and Music*, 26–27. Emma's second hymnal was published in 1841 by Ebenezer Robinson in the place of William Phelps, who was temporarily out of favor with Church leaders. Many of the borrowed hymn texts revised by Phelps for the 1835 edition were restored to their original form, giving the 1841 edition less of a restorationist tone than either the earlier edition or the British hymnbook, which contained many of the hymns of Parley P. Pratt. Emma expanded the collection one last time in 1843, but it was never printed. In 1860 Emma Smith was commissioned by the newly formed Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, which her son Joseph would lead, to make a selection of hymns. A number of RLDS publications deal with her contributions. See, for instance, Fred'k. M. Smith, "Emma Smith and Her Selection of Hymns," *Saints' Herald*, 1905, 386–87; Audentia Smith

- Anderson, "Emma Smith and the Church Hymns," *Saints' Herald*, May 6, 1939, 553–54; Samuel A. Burgess, "Latter Day Saint Hymns, Emma Smith," Joseph Smith, *Journal of History* 18 (July 1925): 257–60.
20. Lucy Mack Smith enjoyed the privilege once in 1845 in addressing the last conference of the Church before the departure of the Saints the following winter. See *History of the Church*, 7:470–72. For a complete version of her talk and commentary, see Ronald W. Walker, "Lucy Mack Smith Speaks to the Nauvoo Saints," *BYU Studies* 32 (Winter and Spring 1991): 276–84.
 21. An interesting description of a cottage meeting is provided in Charlotte Havens, "A Girl's Letters from Nauvoo," *Overland Monthly*, December 1890, 627.
 22. Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Papers of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 2:58, 86, 123.
 23. For more discussion of these early blessings, see Carol Cornwall Madsen, "Mothers in Israel: Sarah's Legacy," *Women of Wisdom and Knowledge*, ed. Marie Cornwall and Susan Howe (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1990), 191–92.
 24. Wilford Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal, 1833–1898 Typescript*, ed. Scott G. Kenney (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1983), 3:343.
 25. Nauvoo Minutes, March 17, 1842. This is a slight variation on the actual words of the revelation instructing Emma "to expound scriptures, and to exhort the Church" (D&C 25:7). In earlier times, the terms "ordain" and "set apart" were often used interchangeably, both asserting the delegation of authority. Thus Emma Smith was "ordained" to office, whereas twenty-four years later Eliza R. Snow was "set apart" to the same office. More recently, specific distinctions have been made between the two terms.
 26. During its second year, because of the large enrollment, the Relief Society met as ward groups, each meeting conducted by Emma's counselors. There is no reference in the minutes to Emma's attendance at any of the meetings.
 27. Nauvoo Minutes, March 17, 1842.
 28. Nauvoo Minutes, March 17, 1842.
 29. Nauvoo Minutes, May 18, 1842.
 30. Nauvoo Minutes, March 9 and 16, 1842.
 31. Newell and Avery equivocate on the issue (see *Mormon Enigma*, 173–75). Derr, Cannon, and Beecher are more forthright (see *Women of Covenant*, 61–62).
 32. Nauvoo Minutes, April 19 and 28, 1842.
 33. "An Early Pioneer, Lucy Walker Kimball," in Kate B. Carter, *Our*

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Pioneer Heritage (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1976), 19:198.

34. Nauvoo Minutes, March 24, 1842.
35. Nauvoo Minutes, August 4, 1842.
36. Hyrum M. Smith and Janne M. Sjodahl explain that "all men and women are the children of God, through Adam, who 'was the son of God' (Luke 3:38); those who receive the gospel are sons and daughters in the Kingdom of God" (*Doctrine and Covenants Commentary* [Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1927], 173).
37. Bible Dictionary, s.v. "Election."
38. Jesse, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 371.
39. Nauvoo Minutes, March 17, 1842.
40. Nauvoo Minutes, March 17, 1842.
41. *Woman's Exponent*, August 1, 1880, 36.