Attitudes and Beliefs Concerning Women

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B. H. Roberts between 1895 and 1900. During these years, Roberts's main writing projects were *New Witnesses for God* and several works in Church history. As a delegate to the Utah state constitutional convention in 1895, he stood out as one opposed to woman suffrage. Photographer C. R. Savage. Courtesy LDS Church Archives.

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Doris R. Dant

In 1895 an LDS father planned to name his newborn child Roberts Kimball in recognition of B. H. Roberts, a Church leader whose oratory the father esteemed. But the baby's mother opposed honoring in such a fashion the man who that year had opposed including woman suffrage in the Utah state constitution. And so the baby, who was to become the twelfth president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, was named Spencer Woolley Kimball.[1]

Olive Kimball was not the only person who disagreed with Roberts's stand against woman suffrage. Roberts upset his own constituency from Davis County and members of both political parties. His stand was not supported by most of the leading women and men of the Church.[2] His position was notorious in 1895 and remained so for some time. For instance, when Roberts ran for Congress in 1898, some women believed he had incredible gall to solicit votes from those whose rights he had tried to withhold.[3] In 1899, during Roberts's battle to be seated in Congress, Emmeline B. Wells and nine other Utah women were in Washington, D.C., attending a meeting of the National Council of Women. When the Roberts question arose during a plenary session of the council, the women were discomfited to have to support Roberts's right to represent Utah when he had opposed their right to vote.[4] Even now, what is remembered about Roberts concerning women is primarily his antisuffrage campaign and the controversy over his practice of plural marriage.[5] The publication of *The Truth, The Way, The Life,* therefore, provides an opportunity to examine Roberts's attitudes toward women in the light of that work's language and concepts.

Gender Discourse in Roberts's Time

During Roberts's lifetime, Americans followed a set of prescriptions, many subconscious, in thinking and talking about men and women. In retrospect, modern commentators have given the label of gender

discourse to those prescriptions and the values, roles, and prohibitions they reflected.[6] Mormon culture partook of gender discourse, although with some permutations peculiarly its own probably arising, in part, from the partial independence many women had experienced earlier as plural wives and Relief Society sisters.[7] Certainly, leading Latter-day Saint women believed their lot differed from that of their sisters of other faiths. Ida S. Peay of Provo wrote that "man in his might and blindness has wrested from Eve's daughters their God-given rights in the dominion [of the earth], hence this modern war which woman-kind is waging to obtain them back again." Then she noted:

> But we of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, are not obliged to fight for this kind of recognition. Joseph Smith, under the inspiration of the Father, restored to our sex a voice in public councils. As we often express it, "He opened the door to women," by organizing them into societies and leading them into church and civic responsibilities and privileges.[8]

Any discourse, whether that of gender, science, or nation, shapes the texts produced by members of those groups. Ideas, terminology, metaphors, and descriptions specific to that discourse seem so natural and commonsensical that they are used unquestioningly.[9] In fact, the group will see proposed change as unnatural and wrong, a phenomenon experienced by Emmeline B. Wells, who was a central figure in the movement for woman suffrage:

> Every day those who are stepping forward in the march of improvement, with a determination to succeed and accomplish something creditable and exceedingly desirable for woman, are made painfully aware, by the current of opposition which pours in upon them from all sides, that they are literally rowing against the stream. Generation after generation have yielded the palm in favor of man's superior intelligence, until it has become a time-honored, authenticated, and established positivism, "immutable as the laws of the Medes and Persians."[10]

She understood just how incontestable the gender discourse of that time seemed to those carried along in its stream.

Public discussion of woman's sphere and woman's suffrage, which began in the mid-nineteenth century, forced many people to consider the roles and status assigned to the sexes or the ways those were incorporated into common language. Generally, however, both women and men, even those who fought for suffrage, unconsciously subscribed to much of the language of the prevailing gender discourse.[11]

Roberts, too, was influenced by the discourse of his day. But he also viewed his work in *TWL* as potentially shaping the attitudes and

practices of his own readers, as implied in the introduction, where he sets forth his purpose: "There is great need that someone should seek to bring forth to the clear understanding of men the Truth, the Way, and the Life, for there is great confusion existing among men on these matters of such high import" (16). In part 3, "The Life," Roberts explicitly instructed his readers on the relationship of all men and women to each other and to God. In addition, his language, his examples, and the details of Eve's story reveal the ways in which Roberts hoped to affect attitudes and in turn was affected by gender discourse.

Roberts's References to Male and Female

Consistent with the usage of his day, Roberts employs *man* and *men* extensively to refer to all humans.[12] For example, the main title for chapter 26 is one word: "Man"; humans are "children of men" (185); part of Christ's mission is "redeeming man from the Fall through the resurrection from the dead and the reestablishment of man's union with God" (162); and "knowledge of things as they are . . . will be each man's truth" (22).

However, in the latter half of *TWL,* Roberts occasionally includes females in his phrases, although sometimes still indirectly: "what of man, male and female" (290); "love of man—the race" (496); "disciples of Christ are but men and women in the making" (528); and "'any man'—or person" (530–31). In his discussion of marriage, Roberts endeavors to be evenhanded, sometimes in ways remarkable for his time: "completed man is man-woman" (539)[13]; "woman is derived from man (and also, though it is not written, man is derived from woman)" (539); "consecrated fatherhood and motherhood" (556); "men of high character" and "women of like character" (557); and "manhood and womanhood" (558). In order to include women, he also furnishes a gloss on Genesis: "'It is not good for man to be alone' (nor for woman either)" (540). Even in these phrases, however, Roberts is somewhat bound by the gender discourse of his time, for he follows "the general pattern"[14] of putting the male term before the female term.

In discussions of the resurrected Christ's appearance to Mary Magdalene at the tomb, Roberts chose between male and female terminology depending on his purpose for writing. In *TWL*, Roberts's comment on Christ's instruction, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (John 20:17), focuses only on Christ's relationship with his brethren: "A sweeter statement of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of the Christ to men may not be found" (248). Such language may reflect the fact that

Roberts initially wrote *TWL* as a priesthood course of study.[15] By contrast, in a letter sent to his mother, which Roberts read in the Tabernacle on another occasion, Roberts referred to the incident at the tomb in paying tribute to women, especially his mother: "Next to her holy office of wifehood and motherhood, the most exalted honor Deity ever conferred on woman was that of making her his first messenger of the resurrection."[16] Roberts's interpretation was possibly influenced by James Talmage or Alfred Edersheim, although both of them viewed Christ's appearance at the tomb as an honor to a "favored" woman rather than to women in general.[17]

A text's use of the generic *man* can be problematic, especially for female readers, who must determine whether the word includes them or not.[18] Roberts takes notice of this ambiguity when he wants to emphasize that all humans are coeternal with Jesus. In that instance, he edits a crucial scripture in order to specify that *man* refers to the whole race: "'Man' ⟨that is, all men, the term is generic, includes the race⟩—'man was also in the beginning with God' (D&C 93:29)" (249; a similar commentary is added twice on 252).[19] However, when Roberts uses *man* and *men* in discussing who receives priesthood authority, he simply expects his audience to have the necessary background to correctly interpret the passage (362). In a generic context, Roberts was so influenced by gender discourse that his phrasing eliminates the possibility of females reading themselves into his text: in describing the generic benefits of the Fall, he lists experiences that develop "virile manhood" (349).

The most instructive example of the difficulty of interpreting *man* occurs in chapter 10, where Roberts pairs features of the earth with human acts that give those features purpose. In the process, he lists "man" who "let[s] loose . . . energy for useful production," "man the builder," "man the sculptor," "man the artist," and "man" who "fashions [gold and silver] into objects of beauty or utility" (94). Because the passage begins with a phrase that is clearly generic—"human life"—a female reader believes she is included. But then Roberts pairs gemstones with the sentiment that "no queens or princesses or other women of grace and beauty are on earth for whom they will be fitting adornments." For two reasons, woman is left to wonder at what point the passage ceased to be generic: Because woman is specified in one sentence, are the earlier sentences about man limited to males? Because the passage shows woman as passive, a consumer, and "man" as active, a creator, does this difference mean that the preceding sentences refer only to males? Is or is not woman among the builders and artists of the earth? For women, the question is not trivial.[20]

Roberts's Examples

On the few occasions when Roberts employs an example, he follows the gender discourse of the time by emphasizing males and "male" activities.[21] In one such illustration, which he paraphrases from deist Dean Paley's *Natural Theology,* a man finds a watch, concludes that the watch must have had a designer, and seeks out the designer. At the end of the quest, "he finds that the designer, the 'cause' of the watch, to be a man" (72). In the same chapter are examples of a man building a house and a group of men building a city. Earlier a male mariner is selected to illustrate how miracles may utilize laws unknown to humanity (64). The story of David and Absalom is used as an example of the "willingness of men to suffer for each other" (450).

In one of the chapters on the Atonement, a woman is specified but only in company with a man: "Take the case of an honorable father and mother who have led . . . ideal lives. . . . Then out of this family group . . . there comes forth a reprobate youth [a male]. . . . And what is the condition of that righteous father and mother the while, when they look upon this sad mischance in their household? Sorrow!" (449). Roberts then departs from specifying a female and uses *men* generically: the parents "illustrate . . . the fact that men can suffer because of each other" (450). This practice of generic references following inclusive language occurs several times in *TWL*.

Finally, to help illustrate the "heterogeneous mass" that "had full access" to Christ (484), Roberts names the woman taken in adultery and the widow of Nain along with Nicodemus and Zacchaeus. In this case, the inclusion of both women and men is significant for its affirmation that women have equal access to the Lord.

The Story of Eve

The story of Eve has been so central to the way Judaism and Christianity define the roles of men and women that the history of this story "is a record of its interpretation both as shaped by cultures and as shaping them."[22] Roberts's interpretation, which elevates Eve, was somewhat unusual within both his American culture (in view of his account's Mormon traits) and his Mormon culture. Because the identity of women tends to be determined in Jewish and Christian cultures partly by the interpretation of Eve's actions in Eden,[23] Roberts's account can be read as having had the potential to advance the status of women had it been published.

For Roberts, the story of Eve begins on another world, where she and Adam were of a race of intelligences who had evolved until they were superior to humans physically, intellectually, morally, and spiritually and were capable of great self-sacrifice for the sake of a less-developed world (95–101, 324–26). The two progressed in these qualities until prepared to come to this earth:

> When they had attained suitable development to receive this mission appointment to open a dispensation with reference to the purposes of God on the earth, they came to plant their race in a desolate earth, and **to** become Patriarch and ~~Mother~~ **Matriarch** to earth's future teeming millions in that dispensation they were honored to begin. (325)

As a being brought to the earth, Eve was not created from Adam's rib; thus Adam's statement that "she shall be called Woman, because she is taken out of Man" merely means that she is "derived from the same race, and is of the same nature" (540).

Already Roberts's account is noteworthy for its very favorable treatment of Eve. She is made the equal of Adam in several regards: she, too, is a superior being; she, too, received a "mission appointment"; she shared in opening a dispensation; and she was given a title to match Adam's designation of patriarch. In the latter instance, Roberts's intention is clearly revealed by his striking out "Mother" and replacing it with "Matriarch."

Once on this earth, the "'royal planters'" (324) are to bring about not the fall of man, but "'the beginning of the rise of man'" (344, 349; see also 342). To show that "the affair in Eden" (340) is not a fall, Roberts casts those events, including Eve's actions, in a positive light. First, he reasons that Eve did not break a commandment,[24] because the Lord's statement about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was not a prohibition; the Lord was instead stating the natural consequences of eating the fruit of that tree (341). Second, when Eve said that the tree and what it stands for is good, she was stating a truth, not a falsehood fed to her by Lucifer (341–42). Third, her statement that the fruit would make Adam and her as the Gods is also a truth, affirmed later by God himself, and no one can say that being like the Gods is undesirable; in fact, partaking of the fruit was necessary, for it is "the only way to be 'as God'" (342, 345). Fourth, Eve offered the fruit to Adam out of love: she "so loved him that she would have him as 'God, knowing good and evil'" (350). Fifth, rather than simply choosing death, Eve and then Adam "chose the way of . . . immortal and eternal life, though the way led through the valley and the shadow of temporal

death" (343). Sixth, being prevented from partaking of the tree of life gave Eve as well as Adam and their posterity the "opportunity" to be tested (342). Seventh, the so-called curse upon Eve was but "announced consequences of the 'fall'" (351). Eighth, Eve rejoiced about her role in Eden after receiving more knowledge about the gospel (358).[25]

On all counts, Eve is a hero in this outline of the events in Eden. But Roberts waffles when discussing 1 Timothy 2:14: "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." In this section, Roberts's concepts are more traditional and his language follows the lead of the King James translation of Paul. Making a choice is replaced with being persuaded; a positive act is replaced with disobedience, transgression, and violations of the law; natural consequences with the penalty of the law; and opportunity to be tested with banishment (350).[26]

Such inconsistency is problematic in the work of someone developing a theological system. Probably Roberts was truly ambivalent in his views about women, sometimes treating them as equals and other times subordinating them. In this regard, he mirrored themes in the national culture. Certainly his language demonstrates the tension of working partly in and partly out of the contemporaneous gender discourse; apparently when he makes a conscious effort to include women, he can break free of the standard discourse, but the rest of the time the subconscious discourse takes command, sometimes as soon as a few words later.

Other aspects of Roberts's wording lend additional credence to these possibilities. As noted earlier, in the discourse of Roberts's time women were subsumed under the category of man. Roberts himself usually followed this practice, but he was erratic. In like manner, Roberts (1) sometimes subsumes Eve within Adam, (2) sometimes excludes her, (3) sometimes names Adam but designates Eve by role rather than by name, (4) sometimes names her equally (although *Eve* always follows *Adam*), and (5) sometimes tacks her onto the sentence. An example of each will suffice:

(1) It became the mission of Adam to "replenish" the earth with inhabitants. (294)

(2) Such was Adam's world into which he was driven from his Eden. (354; the following example is from the next page and deals with similar subject material more inclusively)

(3) Adam and his wife were driven from Eden, and shut out from the presence of God, the source of his spiritual life. (354; note the "his," which excludes Eve)

(4) But here it was, this physical death [of Abel], the very palpable evidence of it, thrown into the trembling arms of Adam and Eve—a strange silence, and coldness! (355)

(5) One [Adam] from among their number . . . is brought to the earth and with him his spouse. . . . A man is ~~created~~ **brought**, and a woman. (324; note the comma separating the woman from the man)

Often, Roberts's inconsistency of language parallels that of the scriptures he is paraphrasing. When the scriptures mention only Adam, Roberts does likewise. When they specify both, he follows suit. But he sometimes breaks this pattern. For example, Moses 5 says both Adam and Eve heard the voice of the Lord speaking from Eden; Roberts first emphasizes Adam's joy upon hearing the words and only then notes that both Eve and Adam had received the message (356). Moses 5:5 specifies Adam's obedience to the commandment to offer sacrifices; Roberts speaks of the obedience of both (357). Whatever the cause, the pattern of inconsistency is sufficiently prevalent to indicate some unresolved tensions in Roberts's conscious and subconscious discourse.

Relationship between Husband and Wife

The only "instruction on the domestic relations" that Roberts names as such comes from Peter, who, Roberts says, urges "that husband and wife so live 'as being heirs together of the grace of life'" (518; 1 Pet. 3:7). Significantly, Roberts focuses on the mutuality of the relationship and does not cite the first part of the verse, which by present-day standards disparages women: "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them . . . giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel."

This selectivity is echoed in Roberts's section on "St. Paul's doctrine of obedience." There Roberts stresses that the "principle which underlies that whole Gospel plan" is obedience (521); it is the "crux of 'the life'" (488). Christ is used as the exemplar, who, Roberts says, learned obedience as the son of God (521). Thus the obedience that is crucial is our obedience to God.[27] What Roberts does not include, but could have in a section on Paul's teachings about the Christian character, is the pronouncement that wives should obey their husbands. In contrast, the obedience of wives to husbands was one of Roberts's six issues of "merit" in the antisuffrage debate some thirty years earlier, when he argued that only those who could act independently should have the vote. Married women could not be independent: "Such was

the relationship of woman in the family that she was not capable of acting thus independently without the dictation or the suspicion of dictation from her husband. . . . Do we not know from the difference of man's nature and woman's nature that it will be so?"[28]

Perfect marriage for Roberts is "marriage for companionship and marriage for family" (551, 554). It is "man and woman united" in a sacramental relationship instituted by God (539). This union is based upon the need for completion. Although Roberts links union to procreation, he suggests it extends beyond the physical realm. In such a union, women have a greater importance to the marriage relationship than was found in the stereotypical family of Roberts's day because the man depends no less on the woman than the woman on the man and she clings no more to him than he to her: "The nature of both man and woman cries out aloud—each needs the other for completion. Completed man is man-woman" (539; see also 540).[29]

The marital relationship, Roberts states, should be characterized by "true companionship for man and woman" (540), permanence, and chastity—a desirable and for civilization a necessary contrast to the trends he observed leading to sexual promiscuity and easy divorce. Should a person divorce his or her spouse for any reason not sanctioned by the Lord and then remarry, that person is guilty of adultery (501). In this regard, Roberts feelingly describes the plight of a divorced woman:

> Here is the case of a young wife, not guilty of the offense that would justify her husband in putting her away, but blameless. Her husband, however, has become weary of her, she no longer pleases his fancy, he may already have found someone more desirable to him, and so puts away his wife that he may marry the creature of his lust. . . . But in the case of the innocent, cast-off wife, where does she appear in blame or guilt? (502)

Roberts responds that even if the woman should remarry, she, as the innocent party, is not guilty of adultery. This, Roberts says, is the correct application of God's law, which is only partially expressed in Matthew 5:32: "But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery." Perhaps Roberts's belief that a legal second marriage could nonetheless be adulterous is what the review committee objected to when they commented that "the question of divorce does not seem clear to us as here stated, and in harmony with the words of the Savior" (see note on p. 502).

In his discussion of plural marriage, Roberts exalts plural and first wives by comparing their sacrificial renunciation of "the exclusive companionship of the husband"[30] and the purity of their motives[31] to the self-sacrifice and religious motivation of nuns:

> As some women, against the promptings of natural inclinations of the social instincts, of the cravings for wedlock companionship, and the desire for offspring, will renounce the world and the noble office of motherhood itself, and retire into dismal retreats, and spend their lives in prayer and meditation, only emerging into the world to render service of teaching the youth, visiting the needy, or nursing the sick; so plural wives among the Latter-day Saints, and first wives who consented to their husbands entering into these relations, accepted the institution from the highest moral and religious motives. (556)

This view of plural marriage is a positive departure from a nineteenth-century concept advanced by others that linked women's motivation to marry with Eve's curse that her desire would be to her husband and that her husband should rule over her.[32] Obedience to the principle of plural marriage was viewed by some as the means by which women would be redeemed from that curse.[33]

Medieval theologians believed that nuns atoned for Eve's act by preserving their virginity.[34] But plural wives were not nuns; whether or not they believed they were redeeming themselves through child-bearing, they did have children. Through plural marriage, Roberts believed, they had "a special opportunity to consecrate themselves to the high mission of motherhood" (557). Brigham Young taught that by providing righteous homes for spirits, women in plural marriage would help establish "a royal Priesthood, a royal people, on the earth."[35] In Roberts's opinion, plural wives did more than provide devout homes; they helped improve the race physically as well. The "inspiring motive" of plural marriage is "race culture"—"a divinely ordered species of eugenics" (556–58).[36] Eugenics was a popular movement in America during Roberts's time,[37] but a few years after Roberts's death, Hitler used that cause as justification for murdering thousands of "inferior" humans. As a result, eugenics has been in disrepute until recently, when proponents of genetic engineering reopened the issue. Interestingly, Roberts does not initially attribute this motive to Joseph Smith, whom he acknowledges as having taken plural wives; the specified motive is simply that plural marriage was sanctioned by revelation.

Family Government

The kingdoms comprising the universe, Roberts believes, have "what would doubtless be [a] patriarchal, and theo-democratic order of

government, constituting, as a whole, the priesthood of the cosmos" (224). By "theo-democratic," Roberts means a government by council that answers to a higher priesthood authority yet practices the principle of common consent. Common consent applies because the government must be one of "love and persuasion," not force (224). Thus, as Roberts makes clear earlier in *TWL,* a theo-democratic government is a "moral government" that "rests upon" the precepts of love and persuasion found in Doctrine and Covenants 121 (90). This government is hierarchical, one in which each council acts "in its place and station and appointed office" (224).

Should this form of government also pertain in the home? Roberts is silent on this issue. However, because he envisions theo-democracy as pervading the universe, with "empires of kingdoms" governed in this manner (224), he probably expected the smallest unit of the kingdom on earth—the family—to operate in like fashion. Yet another clue evidencing Roberts's attitude is that he uses *companionship,* not *partnership* and not *rule,* in describing the marriage relationship and applies *preside* in describing government by council.[38] These usages appear in the context of Roberts's discussion of high religious ideals and contrast with his earlier political statements that by nature husbands dictate to their wives, who by nature obey those commands.

Conclusion

Roberts made significant efforts to rise above the gender discourse of his time. Sometimes he names women instead of using the generic *man,* even editing a few scriptures to make them more directly inclusive. He acknowledges that women have access to Christ equal to that of men. He describes Eve as the equal of Adam and celebrates her actions in the Garden of Eden. He underscores the mutual need, mutual fidelity, companionship, and unity of a good marriage, and he eschews dictatorship in the home. He attributes noble motivations to plural and first wives.

On the other hand, Roberts uses the generic *man* or *men* the majority of the time. All of his examples involve men and usually only men. Phrases involving both Eve and Adam always subordinate Eve in some way, and in one section of *TWL,* Eve's actions are described in less positive terms than found in other sections. Frequently, sentences or paragraphs that designate a woman or both sexes will lapse into generic or strictly male terms, occasionally with illogical results.

These conflicting approaches reveal a Roberts who stood between the discourse of his environment and the discourse he was attempting

to create. They may also reflect a deeper, personal ambivalence concerning the status of women. These tensions he did not reconcile in spite of his systematization of theology.

NOTES

[1]Edward L. Kimball and Andrew E. Kimball, Jr., *Spencer W. Kimball* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1977), 18–19.

[2]Truman G. Madsen, *Defender of the Faith: The B. H. Roberts Story* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980), 219; and Linda Thatcher, "'I Care Nothing for Politics': Ruth May Fox, Forgotten Suffragist," *Utah State Historical Quarterly* 49 (Summer 1981): 250, 253. In fairness, we should remember that some of Roberts's arguments about the merits of antisuffrage were resorted to by Congressmen twenty years later. For example, Roberts believed that politics would degrade and unsex the "'queens of the domestic kingdom.'" The same argument was used by Congressmen Frank Clark, Martin Dies, and Edwin Webb in 1915. Jean Bickmore White, "Woman's Place Is in the Constitution: The Struggle for Equal Rights in Utah in 1895," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 42 (Fall 1974): 358; and Haig Bosmajian, "Sexism in the Language of Legislatures and Courts," in *Sexism and Language* (Urbana, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1977), 83–86.

[3]See Emmeline B. Wells, Diary, November 10, 1898.

[4]Carol Cornwall Madsen, "'The Power of Combination': Emmeline B. Wells and the National and International Councils of Women," *BYU Studies* 33, no. 4 (1993): 438–66. Roberts and Wells were reconciled in 1910 after Roberts presented a tribute and a bouquet of white roses to Wells during the public celebration of her eighty-second birthday. Carol Cornwall Madsen, conversation with author, March 15, 1994.

[5]See, for example, White, "Woman's Place Is in the Constitution," 368. Roberts married three women: Sarah Louisa Smith (md. 1878), Celia Dibble (md. 1884), and Margaret Curtis Shipp (md. 1890, just months before the Manifesto was issued). Roberts's practice of plural marriage is what led to his expulsion from Congress.

[6]Note that today's discourse, although gender-inclusive, is nonetheless still a form of gender discourse.

[7]One permutation was fueled by recurrent attempts to clarify religious roles. By the time *TWL* was written, most of the LDS women who were leaders in the nineteenth century had died. These women had relied on sisterly interdependence to sustain them through the hardships of the early Church and had shared the spiritual experiences of Nauvoo, Winter Quarters, the establishment and reestablishment of the Relief Society, polygamy, and the leadership of Eliza R. Snow. But even before this era ended, Church leaders had begun the process of formalizing and systematizing relationships, including women's relationships, within the Church organization, for "the house of God is a house of order," President Joseph F. Smith observed. The Relief Society, youth organizations, and Sunday School were defined as auxiliaries to the priesthood. As such, President Smith noted, "when [the Relief Society or any other auxiliary] meets it proceeds as an independent organization,

always mindful of the fact it is such, by virtue of the authority of the holy Priesthood." Correlation of auxiliary and priesthood lessons was initiated (a move that meant both opportunity and challenge to Roberts). In 1921, Charles W. Penrose reminded women that they were to obtain permission before holding meetings in their wards and that they could supplement but not usurp the role of the elders in blessing the sick. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine,* 144–45 (excerpted from a 1903 article), 147–48 (excerpted from 1903 and 1915 talks); and *Conference Report,* April 1921, 199. See also Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890–1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), chapter 8, "The Church Auxiliary Organizations."

[8]Ida S. Peay, "Taking a Stand for the Right," *Woman's Exponent,* June 1913, 61. Another phrase often alluded to when women explained why their lot in the 1900s was better than that of women in the early 1800s is that the Prophet Joseph Smith "turned the key for woman." They believed that the organization of their "*powerful* society" (Relief Society) "was the opening wedge." "General Relief Society Conference," *Woman's Exponent,* May 1913, 52; italics added. For another example, see Annie Wells Cannon, "Relief Society Day," *Woman's Exponent,* March 1913, 44. Other examples are spotted throughout the pages of the Relief Society's unofficial newspaper, the *Woman's Exponent.* For the minutes of the Relief Society meeting in which "turned the key for woman" was used, see Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, comps. and eds., *The Words of Joseph Smith,* The Religious Studies Monograph Series, vol. 6 (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1980), 118. For a discussion of the meaning of "the key," see Jill Mulvay Derr, Janath Russell Cannon, and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, eds., *Women of Covenant : The Story of Relief Society* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 1, 46–50, 74–75.

[9]For a more complete discussion of the commonsense nature of discourse, see Norman Fairclough, *Language and Power,* Language in Social Life Series (New York: Longman, 1989), chapter 4.

[10]Blanche Beechwood [Emmeline B. Wells], "Rowing against the Stream," *Woman's Exponent*, February 15, 1875, 140.

[11]For example, a 1912 issue of *Woman's Exponent* chastises women for "their apathy in political matters." "Office for Women," *Woman's Exponent,* September 1912, 4. The editors and correspondents of this monthly newspaper rejoiced in every advance for women that came to their attention, yet they still used phrases such as "the sterner sex," "man's brain and faculties," and "man's experiments." "Office for Women"; and "The New Year—1913," *Woman's Exponent,* Midwinter 1913, 36.

Examples of men subscribing to the prevailing discourse can be found in the quotations Roberts includes in *TWL.* As would be expected, those citations use *man* or *men* in the inclusive sense, as referring to both male and female, a common practice until the 1970s. Cited authors using *man* or *men* in this way include John William Draper, William Hurrell Mallock, Robert Kennedy Duncan (but science for Duncan is feminine [42]), William James, Thomas Paine, and George Rawlinson. Two other common practices were using *man* as a suffix and providing male-oriented examples. For example, Rawlinson uses *layman.* Simon Newcomb gives us an example of a hypothetical man voyaging through space.

[12]Some of the central issues of linguistic sexism were presented to a general audience for the first time when the *New York Times Magazine* published an

article on April 16, 1972, titled "One Small Step for Genkind." Alleen Pace Nilsen, "Linguistic Sexism as a Social Issue," in *Sexism and Language,* 6–7.

[13]President Joseph F. Smith made a somewhat similar comment in 1902: "We never could be in the image of God if we were not both male and female." Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine* (1919; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1977), 276.

[14]Alleen Pace Nilsen, "Sexism in the Language of Marriage," in *Sexism and Language,* 132–33.

[15]Gershuny provides a similar example—"'Man, like the other mammals, breast-feeds *his* young'"—that is caused by the "lack of an English pronoun that symbolically includes men and women [and forces] users of Standard English into uttering nonsensical statements." H. Lee Gershuny, "Sexism in Dictionaries and Texts: Omissions and Commissions," in *Sexism and Language,* 145.

[16]Madsen, *Defender of the Faith,* 275.

[17]James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ* (1915; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1955), 681; and Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah,* 2 vols. (McLean, Va.: MacDonald, [1886]), 2:636.

[18]See Kathryn H. Shirts, "Women in the Image of the Son: Being Female and Being Like Christ," in *Women Steadfast in Christ: Talks Selected from the 1991 Women's Conference Co-sponsored by Brigham Young University and the Relief Society,* ed. Dawn Hall Anderson and Marie Cornwall (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 94; and Gershuny, "Sexism in Dictionaries and Texts," 145.

[19]Another example from Mormon literature of such a gyration is this by Brigham Young: "the world of mankind, the world of man, not of woman." Contrast the ambiguity of *mankind* with the clarity of *womankind.* August 31, 1873, *Journal of Discourses* 16:167.

[20]Several researchers have concluded that the generic *he* and generic *man* do affect perceptions. For example, see Barrie Thorne and others, "Language, Gender and Society: Opening a Second Decade of Research," Wendy Martyna, "Beyond the He/Man Approach: The Case for Nonsexist Language," and Donald G. MacKay, "Prescriptive Grammar and the Pronoun Problem" in *Language, Gender, and Society,* ed. Barrie Thorne, Cheris Kramarae, and Nancy Henley (Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1983), 25–37.

[21]This practice was firmly embedded in gender discourse for the majority of this century. For fairly recent examples, see Gershuny, "Sexism in Dictionaries and Texts," 145, 152–53, where he notes the same pattern in a 1966 dictionary, a 1967 shorthand textbook, and a 1973 accounting textbook.

[22]Jolene Edmunds Rockwood, "The Redemption of Eve," in *Sisters in Spirit: Mormon Women in Historical and Cultural Perspective,* ed. Maureen Ursenbach Beecher and Lavina Fielding Anderson (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 10. Similarly, Paul Morris comments that "our primary relationships—between man and woman, humanity and deity, and humanity and nature—have been defined by our understandings of this biblical text." Paul Morris, "A Walk in the Garden: Images of Eden," in *A Walk in the Garden: Biblical, Iconographical and Literary Images of Eden,* ed. Paul Morris and Deborah Sawyer, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 136 (Sheffield, Eng.: JSOT Press, 1992), 22.

[23]Rockwood, "The Redemption of Eve," 1–10.

[24]Joseph Fielding Smith took a similar position: "We all owe a debt of gratitude to Mother Eve for partaking of the 'forbidden fruit.' It was not a sin . . . but an eternal blessing." Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions,* comp. and ed. Joseph Fielding Smith, Jr., 5 vols. (1966; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book,

1979), 5:65. See also *Selections from Answers to Gospel Questions: A Course of Study for the Melchizedek Priesthood Quorums of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1972–73* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1972), 60. John A. Widtsoe's view, expressed in 1915, was that "the fall . . . was simply a deliberate use of a law, by which act Adam and Eve became mortal, and could beget mortal children. The exact nature of this event or the exact manner in which the law was used is not understood. . . . There was no essential sin in the fall, except that the violation of any law . . . is always followed by an effect." *Rational Theology* (n.p.: General Priesthood Committee, 1915), 47. On the other hand, James E. Talmage echoed the language of 1 Timothy. James E. Talmage, *Articles of Faith* (1890; Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1975), 65. See also n. 26 below.

[25]Joseph Fielding Smith goes a step beyond Roberts in placing a positive interpretation upon Eve's role, for he calls Eve's words in Moses 5:11 a revelation in which she learned "the true purpose for the fall." Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions* 4:59. In contrast, Roberts calls these same words simply a "paean of praise" (358). He does state later that "a dispensation of the gospel had been imparted to them [Adam and Eve]" (358). However, in this passage, Roberts is likely referring only to the Lord's command to offer sacrifice, the message of the angel, and the Holy Ghost's witness to Adam concerning the redemption. Roberts places these communications under the headings "The first revelation after 'the Fall'" and "A dispensation of the gospel to Adam." Eve's words he places under the heading "Rejoicing."

[26]In *Evidences and Reconciliations,* John A. Widtsoe presents a view closer to Roberts's earlier discussion: "It [the eternal power of choice] really converts the command into a warning, as much as if to say, if you do this thing, you will bring upon yourself a certain punishment; but do it if you choose. . . . This they did with open eyes and minds as to consequences." (1947; Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1960), 193–94. See also n. 24 above.

[27]Eliza R. Snow and other women of the nineteenth century believed that obedience was the means by which women would eventually be redeemed from the curse of Eve. Brigham Young was more general in teaching that the curse upon women would be lifted when "the mission is fulfilled, and our Master and our Lord is perfectly satisfied with our work." Jill Mulvay Derr, conversation with author, March 18, 1994; and Brigham Young, August 18, 1872, *Journal of Discourses* 15:132. Jill Mulvay Derr notes,

> Though Brigham Young saw woman's dependence upon man as a possible problem, he could not conceive a solution outside of adherence to the order of the kingdom. . . . So while Young allowed that women should develop their talents, seek their own inspiration from the Holy Spirit and make their own choices, according to Young a "woman of faith and knowledge" would say, "It is a law that man shall rule over me; his word is my law, and I must obey him."

Jill Mulvay Derr, "Woman's Place in Brigham Young's World," *BYU Studies* 18 (Spring 1978): 382–83.

[28]*The Autobiography of B. H. Roberts,* ed. Gary James Bergera (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1990), 190. Note the implication that it is woman's nature to accept the dictates of her husband.

[29]The mutual need that a man and woman have for each other is often placed by Latter-day Saints in the eternal perspective—one cannot receive exaltation without the other. Except for a brief reference to Doctrine and Covenants 132, Roberts does not hint at this meaning.

[30]In the proposal Roberts reportedly made to his second wife, Celia (in the presence of her parents), he briefly noted his awareness of how challenging separations would be: "'My wife and I desire to begin a second family. If you become my wife there will be much hardship for I am constantly on call as a missionary.'" Madsen, *Defender of the Faith,* 157.

[31]Roberts extended the concern for pure motives to himself. He would not enter plural marriage until he became convinced through the example of Erastus Snow that a man could have more than one wife and still escape "the corruption of promiscuity" and that the man's love could be "purified and exalted." *The Autobiography of B. H. Roberts,* 159.

[32]*Journal of Discourses* 15:132.

[33]George Q. Cannon was one who taught the concept of redemption. George Q. Cannon, October 9, 1869, *Journal of Discourses* 13:207. See also n. 26 above.

[34]Rockwood, "The Redemption of Eve," 9.

[35]Brigham Young, April 7, 1861, *Journal of Discourses* 9:37.

[36]Roberts's former professor at the University of Deseret, John Park, was cited by George Q. Cannon as saying that the children born of plural marriage were unsurpassed in intelligence. Elder Cannon also claimed that the children were "much more healthy and strong." *Journal of Discourses* 13:207.

[37]Lester Bush notes that between 1925 and 1930, seventy-nine sterilizations were performed by Utah for eugenics-based reasons. He cites James Talmage as commenting that "a taint in the blood" that can be transmitted "should be hemmed in and not allowed further propagation." Lester E. Bush, Jr., *Health and Medicine among the Latter-day Saints: Science, Sense, and Scripture,* Health/Medicine and the Faith Series (New York: Crossroad, 1993), 168.

[38]Other Church leaders in Roberts's day also emphasized love and persuasion, and they decried tyranny. But at least some did so in the context of the "rule" of husband over wife. For example, Joseph F. Smith defined priesthood government according to Doctrine and Covenants 121 and also taught, "It is intended that [the husband's] rule shall be in love and not in tyranny. God never rules tyrannically, except when men so corrupt themselves that they are unfit to live." Smith, *Gospel Doctrine,* 143–44, 149, 274. In this context, the term *rule* seems to have a different definition than we tend to give it. If a husband's rule is to be like God's rule, it must allow considerable exercise of agency by all family members within laws that are not the husband's creations nor, Roberts believed, even to some undefined degree God's creations. Because such laws are transcendent, they apply to all parties equally.