

AN OLIVE LEAF

“... plucked from the Tree of Paradise, the Lord's message of peace to us.”

(See History of the Church 1:316 and D&C 88.)

“TELL ME 'BOUT THE HEAVENLY MOTHER”

There are few Mormon elaborations on the LDS belief of a Mother in Heaven. In 1872, the Church's periodical in England, the Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star, approvingly reprinted this item from the contemporary non-Mormon Golden Age. Thirty-eight years later, in 1910, the Millennial Star again reprinted the piece accompanied with quotes from B. H. Roberts extolling the inspiration of Eliza R. Snow's poem "O My Father," which explicates the existence of a feminine deity. Mormon artists seldom depict Father in Heaven and, with few exceptions, never depict Mother; the accompanying Mother-in-Heaven painting by turn-of-the-century Mormon artist John Hafen is from a group of paintings he did in 1910 to illustrate Snow's poem.



A SMALL CHILD WITH questioning eyes of blue, holding a thought in leash, leaned confidently on the bosom of her mother, and with a voice full of repressed feeling asked,

“Why don't you tell me 'bout the Heavenly Mother? Don't she give us any thing?”

A thrill of strange rapture shot through the heart of the mother as she pressed her child to her heart and inaudibly prayed that she might be able to give her child a true and worthy thought. Then from her book of memory, she read in subdued tones, as follows:

I knew a little girl once, almost like you, who thought about her Heavenly Father, how good and great he was, but ever and ever alone through eternity, with no one to understand him and none to love. How understandingly men, women and little children on earth and the angels in heaven loved each other; birds and beasts had their kind. But God had no other

God to love him. How solitary and gloomy for him to sit for ever alone in heaven.

This overwhelming thought of the solitude of God oppressed her little heart. It would not leave her. Overcome with sadness she cast herself on the moist grass and sobbed herself asleep, while in her dream a bright and winged angel came and whispered something in her ear, and she awoke and arose, and with flute-like voice cried exultingly aloud,

“O Heavenly Mother, I have found you! Strange, I did not know, that no one told me! Why, there must be a Heavenly Mother if there is a Heavenly Father.”

Can any one conceive of a Divine Father without including a Divine Mother in the conception? No more than we think of child without involving the idea of mother and father. People prate glibly of a “Parent” in heaven—yet look with compassion on the child

who has only a *parent* on earth. The love of God is often illustrated by showing what an earthly father will do for a child. But does a mother do less?

Not only from the mouths of babes and sucklings has the cry gone forth for a mother in heaven. Men, strong and brave, have yearned to adore her. Theodore Parker was wont to pray, “Father and Mother God.” The heart of man craves this faith, and has from time immemorial demanded the deification of woman. The Catholic Church, with a wonderful adaptability gave her children the Mother of Jesus for an object of worship.

When we draw nearer the Divine Man, lo! we shall find a Divine Woman smiling upon us. Much that is plaintive in music, sad in poetry, and pathetic in art, is the expression of the soul's instinctive sigh for a Divine Mother. In the Father's many mansions we shall find her and be satisfied. ☞