

# Readers' Forum

## Subscribed Again

I got a renewal notice in December, but I thought my subscription had expired sometime back, so I just thought I'd let it go. But, last week I got a new issue of your magazine, and it impressed me so much I am sending in my money again. Your project is getting better all the time. Good luck.

Richard Popp  
Ronan, Montana

## Recaptured Attention

Your publication is very much improved from the period of time when I decreed that it would no longer be in our home. Being very interested in history and people you have certainly recaptured my attention.

I still stand slightly amazed at the challenges to Mormonism from such renowned men as: Dr. McMurrin and Dr. Cummings. It seems that they have not ventured out into the branches of the Church. Having done so or even having studied with a more open heart the teachings of the Savior in the New Testament, they would realize there is no stereotyping of the members, but that the truth is simple and complete. There is Order and not confusion. In my travels throughout the world, the Mormon Religion stands clear on issues and does not waver, but has never detracted from the cultural origins of the people except when in conflict with the teachings of the gospel. This is very much like the early Christians in Israel and Rome.

Having been a recent convert of the Church, and having been asked not to attend several other churches before joining, I do not see myself either restricted or limited in my questioning of Doctrine. In fact the opposite is true, this is the only church where I have been able to find that expression, this being the reason of my not being invited back by other religions, (asking too many questions). I feel the only ones who have this identity crisis are those who forget the correct way to approach a problem, or who are looking to prove wrong answers are in fact correct.

In 1957 I started my search for the Church defined in the Bible. I was ridiculed, made to look anti-religious,

thrown out of many churches, told that I had no right to question various teachings, etc. In 1974 upon being baptized into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, this has all stopped, even from my many non-member friends.

Charles J. Ingerson  
Rochester, New York

## The Moral

Regarding article "Christmas" in your latest issue: Author Susan B. Packard indicated she could not quite find the moral to the story. I spotted the moral almost instantly:

Aparrotly one cannot illustrate as accurately as toucan.

Gwen Sandberg  
Cedar City, Utah

## Christ at the Periphery

In response to Prof. Bassett's article ("Knowing, Doing & Being: Vital Dimensions in the Mormon Religious Experience") I should like to comment that overemphasis on "grace" (or Christ, it is the same, i.e. negating the value of personal moral effort as the primary criterion for personal religious progress) does the following: (1) cuts the heart out of the Mormon plan of salvation; (2) distorts the gospel away from the works-oriented morality inherent in the true purposes of life and erroneously toward the dishonest receipt of "something for nothing" (grace); (3) psychologically diverts the individual from pursuing the knowledge/action essential to his own personal salvation/exaltation; (4) perverts the morality of free will (the doctrine of the "Two Ways") by changing it into an amoral mysticism ("One Way"—sole focus on Christ); and (5) falsely focuses on the *person* of Christ rather than correctly focusing on the *teachings* of Christ.

## Free Will, The Heart of the Gospel

I agree that "faith" is the first principle of the gospel, but I do so reluctantly and only in a "negative" sense. Knowledge is clearly more valuable than faith, but faith is the "necessary evil" supporting life's enterprise during the many stages thereof wherein knowledge is imperfect. Faith honestly sustains us in

gospel inferences until experience/study give us knowledge of the line between truth and error. If faith were *above* knowledge of truth (defined as information consonant with reality), a rank fideism would result, placing the premium on the desire for truth rather than its actual attainment. A chat with a typical "born again" Christian at once demonstrates the superiority of knowledge over faith. He places such a premium on faith that no amount of reasoning nor contrary evidence will dissuade him from his heroin-like addiction to Christ. His trust (faith) is so strong that fact (reality) becomes irrelevant to him. That kind of "faith" is simply self-deception. I deny, therefore, Bassett's assertion that faith is "first in the order of importance." I deny also that there are different categories of "knowing." We know either truth or error.

Now, if knowledge is superior to faith—although faith sustains our numerous knowledge gaps—knowledge is but the handmaid of action, for it is, as Bassett correctly notes, action ("works") which is an "integral aspect of the principle of faith." "Faith and works are not separate aspects of the gospel. . . ." But "works" (or lack thereof) produce the character ("being") Bassett would have us develop by means other than good works. It always disturbs me when authors correctly articulate the non-separability of faith and works then proceed to sever "internal" from "external" works, emphasizing solely the former. The finest motivations alone are merely good intentions. And you know what Hell is paved with?

Prof. Bassett has good cause to fear "a partial loss of one's individual initiative" from his advocacy of the "imitation of Christ." (Does he really advocate following a full "life style similar to that of Christ," including unmarried, nomadic wandering?)

It is precisely "individual initiative" (free will) which is the center of the purposes of life. I speak not merely of "kingdom building." Mormon theology teaches that the antemortal war in Heaven was waged precisely over this issue. Bassett expressly notes, "the well established fact that we will ultimately be judged by our works," but then adds, "and the term 'works' has come to connote only external activism." I deny the latter statement. The whole purpose of *James 2*—cited by Bassett—is to destroy the dichotomy of internal vs. external (faith vs. works) by demonstrating the all-inclusiveness of "works". This may place *James 2* at odds

**SUBSCRIBE NOW**  
 SAVE \$3.00 OVER COVER PRICE WITH THE COUPON BELOW.

# SUNSTONE

## MAGAZINE



### THE UNIQUE PERIODICAL FOR MORMONS

Since 1975, SUNSTONE has made important contributions to the Mormon community in:

- |                |          |                 |
|----------------|----------|-----------------|
| History        | Fiction  | Personal Essays |
| Theology       | The Arts | Reviews         |
| Current Issues | Poetry   |                 |

SUNSTONE is a must for every Mormon interested in expanding both his knowledge and his faith.

"SUNSTONE Magazine is suddenly the most exciting Mormon-based periodical extant. The mix of solid reporting, penetrating analysis, confident humor, vigorous writing and commitment to examining issues is unique. SUNSTONE has arrived."

Paul Swenson, Editor, Utah Holiday Magazine

"Two exciting things about SUNSTONE are its independence and creativity. Because it is managed by individuals firmly committed to the Church, it has broadened my faith while inviting me to explore new facets of my relationship to the Church and other Saints. Thank heaven for such an open forum."

Craig M. Call, President, Utah Heritage Foundation

"SUNSTONE is dealing with important issues in a substantive way. It reaches to the heart of those things which matter most."

Lowell Bennion, Mormon educator, author and humanitarian

Please send me a subscription to SUNSTONE Magazine, the unique Mormon bimonthly.

- 1 Year at \$12—a savings of \$3
- 2 Years at \$21—a savings of \$9
- 3 Years at \$30—a savings of \$15

Enclosed is my check or money order for

MAIL MY ISSUES TO:

ADDRESS

CITY  STATE  ZIP CODE

**SUNSTONE** P.O. Box 2272 Dept. G  
 Salt Lake City, Utah 84110

Please send me a subscription to SUNSTONE Magazine, the unique Mormon bimonthly.

- 1 Year at \$12—a savings of \$3
- 2 Years at \$21—a savings of \$9
- 3 Years at \$30—a savings of \$15

Enclosed is my check or money order for

SEND MY FRIEND'S ISSUES TO:

ADDRESS

CITY  STATE  ZIP CODE

**SUNSTONE** P.O. Box 2272 Dept. G  
 Salt Lake City, Utah 84110

with *Moroni 7*, but it need not. External works ("things done in the body . . ." 2 Cor. 5:10) include study, prayer, and all things—spiritual and non-spiritual—which occupy man's time.

Bassett's whole exegesis of the scriptural word *gnosis* ("knowledge") as mystical (or "empathetic") union with Christ is simply false. *Gnosis* in the New Testament generally refers to precisely what Mormons call "a testimony of the gospel." Any Mormon who thinks I Cor. 13 refers to something other than the apostasy is seeing milk where he should see meat. *Gnosis* involves Christ, as the plan of salvation involves Christ, but there are more important aspects of the plan of salvation than Christ. Free will is more important to the plan of salvation than is the person of Christ. This is not because Christ's role (person) is unimportant, but because, like gravity, it is constant. Individual spiritual progress does not depend upon Christ nor His "grace." It depends upon our "works", in Bassett's phrase "individual initiative"—honest efforts, including honest mistakes. Therefore, knowledge (cerebral or otherwise) is always subordinate to free will, the choices we make with it, including the time devoted to its acquisition. Sterling McMurrin is correct when he states we need to have intellectual foundations for our testimonies. And, ironically, it is Bassett's suggestion that we study "the problems of mankind" (literature of existentialism)—not the person of Christ—which may give us testimonial appreciation of the plan of salvation. The ability of the Mormon plan of salvation (as distinct from false or fragmentary gospels, including the gospel of Christ only) to answer the Great Questions of life is the ultimate criterion of its truthfulness.

The Mormon plan of salvation—found in the *teachings* of Christ, not the Person of Christ—teaches us that mankind is by nature good. Man's very "being" is a child of God, and although godhood is not automatic (as adulthood automatically follows mortal childhood) yet man by following his honest motives and wise choices will be inevitably led to the experiences of life (joys and sorrows, gifts and catastrophes) which make for godlike character ("being").

The development of that godlike character is likely retarded by too great a dependence upon the person of Christ or his "grace." Humans are more apt to misread their misfortunes as divine punishments when they assume Christ's absolute sovereignty in their personal lives. Mortal life is designed

with looseness so that man's independence will truly reflect his individual free will—for good or ill.

#### *Scripture As Misleading*

Prof. Bassett's injunction to study only scripture and especially the "milk" thereof is misleading. (The fault is not Bassett's but inherent in the present defective form of the New Testament and some of its erroneous notions carried inadvertently into other Mormon scriptures.) Modern textual criticism is making it clearer that the New Testament was composed on the basis of a creed, the creed of Christ crucified, which in my opinion placed erroneous emphasis upon the *person* of

Christ, rather than correctly emphasizing the substance of his *teachings*, the plan of salvation. I do not disparage the important part Christ plays in the plan of salvation, but it is only a part, not the whole, as Bassett appears to assume. (More needs to be written in Mormon circles about the parallel and exalted role of Adam in the same plan of salvation.)

Bassett's primary error, I feel, is his falling victim to the "creed of Christ crucified," the ancient and canonical unifying principle used to squelch contrary Christian "gospels" and to suppress some *teachings* of Christ in deference to the *person* of Christ. These

# DIALOGUE

A JOURNAL OF MORMON THOUGHT

### Here's an offer you can't refuse!

To honor the Sesquicentennial of the LDS and RLDS churches, from now until May 15, 1980, you may subscribe to DIALOGUE: A Journal of Mormon Thought for only \$15 and may give gift subscriptions for only \$10 each.

#### Don't miss:

Hugh Nibley's "How Firm A Foundation!"

Our long-awaited International Issue, including an interview with David Kennedy.

Issues on women, literature and art.

BACK ISSUES are still for sale:

Medical issue, "The Black Revelation: One Year Later," "Blood Atonement and Capital Punishment," Leonard Arrington's Bibliography and many more.

Please begin my Dialogue subscription:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Subscriptions: \$15                      Subscription: \_\_\_\_\_

Student rate: \$10                      Gift Subscription: \_\_\_\_\_

Gift rate: \$10                              Contribution: \_\_\_\_\_

Total enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Dialogue • P.O. Box 1387 • Arlington, Virginia • 22210

Now available from  
**OLYMPUS**

# Mormon Sisters

Women in Early Utah

Edited by Claudia Bushman

320 pages, soft cover \$5.95

"A remarkable enterprise. The most exciting work of collective authorship." Davis Bitton, Ensign Magazine

"The best single book on the history of Mormon women." Louise T. Knauer, Coordinator, Women's Studies, University of Utah

"If you believe a history book has to be dull, read this one and learn otherwise." Elizabeth Schoenfeld, Deseret News

"After reading this book, no one will be able to think of our gallant foremothers as anything but bold and individualistic. And yet they moved always in harmony with their brothers, spoke in defense of home and community, love for their children, and left a legacy of luminous records." Mary L. Bradford, Exponent II

"... a signal contribution in the neglected area of Mormon women's studies." Mormon History Association



## Mormon Sisters

### Other books from Olympus

**JAYHAWK** · Dorothy M. Keddington  
A western romantic suspense novel.  
216 pages, hard cover \$6.95

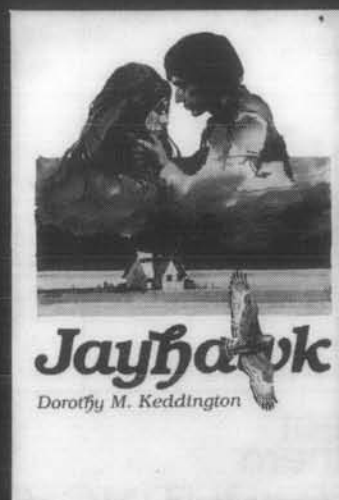
**LEARNING ACTIVITIES** · Ellen DeFranco  
A welcome addition to church nurseries.  
136 pages, soft cover \$6.95

**YOUR CHILD'S INTELLECT** · T. H. Bell  
Teach your child to think.  
191 pages, hard cover \$8.95

**YOUR CHILD'S CAREER** · Garth L. Mangum  
Teach your child to work.  
316 pages, hard cover \$9.95

**POLYGAMIST'S WIFE** · Melissa Merrill  
A personal experience in modern day polygamy.  
167 pages, hard cover \$5.95

Available at all fine LDS bookstores



### Learning Activities for Preschool Children

A home teaching handbook  
for parents and teachers



ELLEN B. De FRANCO

 OLYMPUS

1670 EAST 1300 SOUTH · SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH 84105 · (801) 583-3666





**GREAT NORTHERN  
HEAVY DUTY  
FLOUR MILLING STONES**

For the real do-it-yourselfer. Buy these heavy duty stones complete with motor mounting arbor and instructions to build your own electric grain mill. You make the cabinet and supply your own motor. Ten year free replacement warranty. Stock # 1b. \$39.95



**GREAT NORTHERN FLOUR MILL KIT**

Top quality electric wheat grinder, grinds all grains, Makes finer flour, runs cooler, grinds 65 pounds per hour. Kit is complete with cabinet, motor, stones, and instructions for easy assembly. Ten year stones warranty.



Stock # 1c. **\$159.95**

**GREAT NORTHERN  
PRE-ASSEMBLED READY TO FINISH  
3/4-HORSE FLOUR MILL**

Top quality electric wheat grinder. Grinds all grains, makes finer flour, and runs cooler. Grinds 65 pounds per hour. Ten year stones warranty.



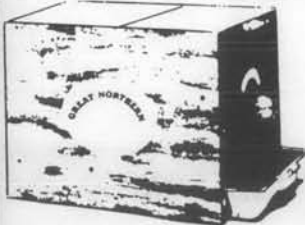
Stock # 1D **\$239.95**

**GREAT NORTHERN  
PRE-ASSEMBLED READY TO FINISH  
1/2-HORSE FLOUR MILL**

Top quality electric wheat grinder. Grinds all grains, makes finer flour and runs cooler. Grinds 65 pounds per hour. Ten year stones warranty.



Stock # 1E **\$199.00**



Our most popular flour mill, with a beautiful wood grained formica finish for easy cleaning. This mill will grind up to 65 lbs. of flour per hour. The stones are guaranteed for 10 years, and the mill and motor are guaranteed for one year.

Stock # 2A. 1/2 Horse . . . . **\$249.95**  
Stock # 2B. 3/4 Horse . . . . **\$289.95**



**BICYCLE CONVERSION KIT**

Fits Stock # 1E or # 2A only **\$20.00** Stock # 2H

**GREAT NORTHERN MAGIC FARM  
SPROUTER WITH SEEDS**

Two Magic Farms should keep a family of four supplied with delicious sprouts.

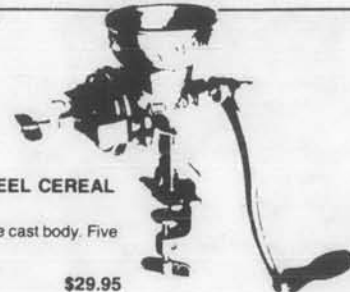
Stock # 44 **\$6.99 each**



**GREAT NORTHERN STEEL CEREAL  
MILL**

Sturdy solid hopper. One piece cast body. Five year warranty. Adjustable.

Stock # 4A **\$29.95**



**Great Northern  
DISTRIBUTING COMPANY**  
325 West Pierpont Avenue (250 So.)  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84101 Dial (801) 521-0505

Ask for these fine products at your local health food store.

suppressed teachings of Christ (including such teachings as pre-existence, free agency, and polytheism as understood by the Mormons) have recently been discovered at Nag Hammadi, Egypt. The *Gospel of Thomas* contains 114 "sayings" (*Logia*) of Christ. About 80% of them were already known and contained in canonical sources. But 20% are heretofore unknown; they include the aforementioned "Mormon *logia*". If the latter come—as *Thomas* clearly shows—from the mouth of Christ as part of His original teachings, why were they suppressed from the New Testament? They were suppressed by the growing "creed of Christ crucified," extolling—precisely as does Barrett—the inordinate efficacy of the person and Passion of Christ.

"The basic pattern of the genre of gospel which determined the canonical gospels [Matthew, Mark, Luke, John] has already been discussed. A quite remarkable feature in the evolution of this genre is its power to digest gospel literature and traditions of a different type and christological orientation, and to make these subservient [i.e. suppress them] to its own creed of Jesus' death and

resurrection. It was, indeed, this orthodox creed and its further development which provided the basic criterion for the growth of the canonical gospel.

At the same time, this expansion of the creed and of the gospel reflects at every stage the explicit or implicit controversy with different christological options. These different options are suggested by Christian factions which adhere to the 'other gospels,' or simply by the challenge to incorporate such other gospels into the established frame of the canonical gospel."

H. Koester, "One Jesus and Four Primitive Gospels," *Trajectories Through Early Christianity* (Fortress Press, Phila., 1971), pp. 198-199.

The plan of salvation "creed" (pre-existence, free will, Final Judgment) of Christ's *teachings*, restored by the *Gospel of Thomas*, is a "creed" of equal validity and more primitive origin than the "creed of Christ crucified" reflected in the canonical gospels.

"These gospels of the church have become the true criterion of faith, because they are understood as the legitimate expressions of the creed, to which they correspond in form and structure—not, however, because they are found to record the works and words of Jesus accurately. The honor of having continued and developed the tradition about Jesus' original works and words must go to the more primitive gospel sources and to the apocryphal gospels. The continuation of Jesus' teaching is present in the gospels which

preserve and expand his sayings (Q and *Thomas*).

*Ibid.*, p. 203.

The suppression of the original words and teachings of Jesus by the growing creed of Christ crucified (Passion/resurrection) very probably distorted primitive Christianity away from the *ideas* taught by Jesus and toward the *role* and person of Jesus therein. Thereby the plan of salvation (as Mormons understand it, wherein salvation is primarily the reward for individual moral merit) was changed from an emphasis upon individual responsibility toward exaltation of the person, Passion, and grace of Christ as the sole means of salvation.

Prof. Bassett well perpetuates the erroneous emphasis on Christ's person.

The "anchor" is simply not Christ, although Christ is pilot of the vessel which ferried the plan of salvation to this planet. Evangelical orthodox Christianity in its present apostate form is similar to Bassett's philosophy of Christ-praising. One who assumes Christ-praising to be man's fundamental purpose in mortal life misses many of the real purposes of mortality.

Gerry Ensley  
Los Alamitos, California

**UTAH HOLIDAY**  
**MAGAZINE**



Jon Boyden photo

## UTAH HOLIDAY MAGAZINE continues where other media stop.

UTAH HOLIDAY Magazine is the top-rated, nationally recognized magazine that complements local media. Consistently, UTAH HOLIDAY features in-depth, behind-the-scenes coverage of social, political and economic trends. UTAH HOLIDAY also presents responsible reviews of the Utah arts and the most comprehensive monthly guide to area activities and events.

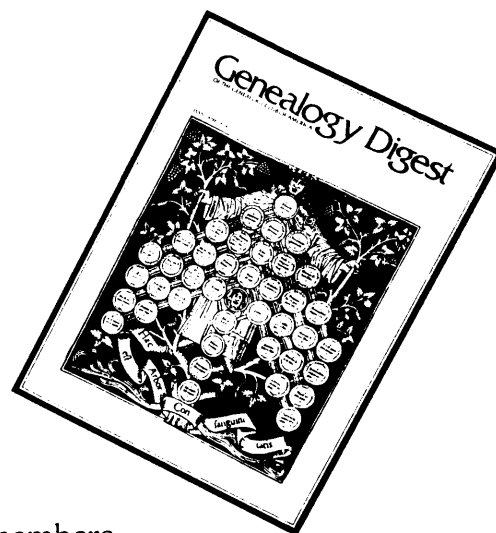
UTAH HOLIDAY Magazine. Subscriptions: \$12 per year. Call 532-3737.

# GENEALOGY CLUB of AMERICA

## 10th Year Anniversary

### *Why The Genealogy Club of America?*

1. Subscription to our quarterly publication, *The Genealogy Digest*.
2. 10% Discount on all club forms and supplies.
3. \$20.00 surveys are \$10.00 to all Club members and are conducted as many times as a member needs.
4. Family Research and how to go about it. Free to all members.
5. Valuable information exchanged through *The Genealogy Digest* publication.
6. Interesting reading on historical events in *The Genealogy Digest*.



*Cut & Mail To*

**GENEALOGY CLUB OF AMERICA/P.O. BOX 15861/SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH 84115**

**You are invited to join the Genealogy Club of America. Dues are \$15.00 a year, and include subscription to the quarterly publication *Genealogy Digest*, published in the spring, summer, fall and winter of each year.**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_