

FROM THE EDITORS

Back in November we sent a letter to all subscribers describing SUNSTONE's financial difficulties and asking for help. The response was generous and overwhelming. Because of the donations we received we were able to publish both the September/October and November/December issues of the magazine. (A list of contributors is included on page 76.) Thus Phase One of the crisis passed.

Now we must face Phase Two--the future. To help us get through the next few lean months we are printing this double issue of the magazine. We have increased the number of pages and the number of features for this special issue and have included articles from each of the columnists.

But we must ask your help in one more way. Because of our genuine desire to make the publication accessible to the greatest number of persons, we have always set subscription prices well below what it actually costs to produce the magazine. As if to compound the problem, we have repeatedly sold multiple year subscriptions at even greater discounts. The bottom line is that we have spent the future in the past.

If all of our subscribers would renew their subscriptions now at the new rate of \$18 we could come close to breaking even. But only a fraction of our subscribers are due to expire in 1983--the rest have subscriptions lasting from 2 to 10 years (the Sunstone fanatics). So we must get 4000 new subscribers or early renewals in order to pay expenses this year. Or we must make up the difference in donations.

Therefore, we are asking all of you to RENEW NOW REGARDLESS OF WHEN YOUR SUBSCRIPTION EXPIRES at the new subscription prices. Or give gift subscriptions. Or send a donation.

If we all pull together, we can maintain our SUNSTONE community. SUNSTONE at this point is pretty much in your hands.

Readers' Forum

Historicity of the Book of Mormon

Russell's premise appears to be that the historicity of the Book of Mormon can be proven or disproven by comparing the Book of Mormon theology of First and Second Nephi with contemporaneous Old Testament theology, circa 600 B.C. He concludes that a balance of the evidence weighs heavily against the Book of Mormon being an historical account and that for Mormons to maintain "intellectual honesty" and "intelligible Christian faith," they must reinterpret it. Such reinterpretation, Russell feels, must reflect Joseph Smith's "religious struggles" and "the original faith" of the early Mormon community.

The unstated supposition underlying Russell's paper is that the ideas extant in Israel at the time of Lehi and company's departure from Jerusalem are to be found in totality in the Old Testament writings that we have today. Such writings are all that one

could use to make the comparison that Russell undertakes to do. However, there is substantial indication from the Bible itself that we do not have all the writings of all the prophets and historians that lived in pre-exilic Israel (e.g. "Book of the Covenant," Exo. 24:4; "Book of Jasher," Josh. 10:13; "Books of Nathan and Gad," 1 Kings 11:41).

Furthermore, we have no reason to conclude that those Old Testament writings that we do have tell us all the theology and historical interpretation that existed or was acceptable way back then. Canonical determination is made by the winners, those in power, not by those holding minority opinions. Just because a writing was later canonized does not necessarily put God's stamp of approval on it; canonization is man's stamp of approval, not God's.

Unfortunately, Russell fails altogether to mention the Book of Mormon's

own explanation for the theological discrepancies between itself and the Old Testament. This is, of course, "... that there are many plain and precious things taken away from the book, which is the book of the Lamb of God" (1 Nephi 13:28). The Book of Mormon quotes, paraphrases, and refers to alleged pre-600 B.C. prophets who propounded the Gospel (e.g., the prophet, Zenos, 1 Nephi 19:10, 12). Nephi's brother, Jacob, and later Book of Mormon writers are emphatic in declaring that Jesus Christ has been taught from the beginning. (See Jacob 7:11; Mosiah 13:33-35; Hel. 8:16, 18.) The "Inspired Version" of the Bible and the Pearl of Great Price also would have us believe that the prophets from Adam to Abraham to Moses were privy to and expounded revelations concerning the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Having noted this explanation for many of the dissimilarities Russell has shown, I would now press on to briefly examine some of the particular points that he uses to demonstrate theological dissimilarities between the pre-exilic Old Testament text and First and Second Nephi.

He points out, for example, that the Book of Mormon anachronistically uses the words "Jews," "Gentiles," "Church," and "synagogue." Current biblical scholarship supports the idea that these words would not have been in the vocabulary of Lehi or his contemporaries. An approach to this problem is to consider the work of Joseph Smith as translator of the Book of Mormon. The reader will do well to review Edward H. Ashment's "The Book of Mormon—A Literal Translation?" SUNSTONE (March-April 1980):10-14. Ashment's message is that Joseph Smith's translation was a rendition of subject matter rather than a word for word translation and that he was limited by his literary experience. This means that Joseph would be translating into those words that held meaning for him and his contemporaries.

Russell says that the Book of Mormon lacks sufficient reference to and detail of important Israelite ritual, dietary laws, and Old Testament prophetic writings other than Isaiah's. This is a no-win situation. If the Book of Mormon was replete with such references then its detractors would just add that as further evidence that Joseph Smith simply borrowed his ideas from the Bible.

Russell misinterprets the Book of Mormon when he says that it holds that riches are evil. The Book of Mormon speaks repeatedly of

righteousness resulting in prosperity and the wealthy becoming corrupt. However, wealth itself is not condemned as evil.

Russell proposes that, "The Book of Mormon is inconsistent wherein it contains both the Deuteronomic piety-prosperity theory and an apocalyptic dualism." That is, in pre-exilic Israel, being wealthy was synonymous with being favored by God and poverty implied the opposite. This is the piety-prosperity theory. The apocalyptic worldview is characterized by a belief that the rewards of righteousness will come later, whether that be when a new Golden Era of Davidic Kingship is reestablished or in the next world.

According to Russell, the apocalyptic worldview "did not infiltrate Israel until after the Exile." The implication is that for the Book of Mormon to exhibit an apocalyptic view before the exile is anachronistic. Curiously, three of the Book of Mormon passages which are cited as exhibiting this anachronistic post-exilic apocalyptic view are passages from First Isaiah. (II Nephi 13:18-26; II Nephi 15:11; II Nephi 23:12). Therefore, the Old Testament is also inconsistent in its exhibiting post-exilic views in pre-exilic or exilic times.

According to Russell, the anti-

monarchical sentiment expressed in the Book of Mormon is inconsistent with the popular feeling in Lehi's Jerusalem. However, it is precisely the fact that the Davidic line was considered divinely anointed which caused Jerusalem's loyalty to the monarchy. The Israelites in the New World, who often took a strong anti-monarchy posture, certainly had theological precedent behind them (See 1 Samuel 8:4-18). Furthermore, loyalty to the Davidic line was irrelevant in their situation in the New World.

Russell interprets "opposition in all things" to mean opposing opinions on every issue. This interpretation supports his theory that "the ideas (of the Book of Mormon) seem to fit the 19th century America more than pre-exilic Israel." However, this interpretation is not supported by the phrase's scriptural context. The examples Lehi gives to describe "opposition in all things" are pairs of opposite abstract concepts or conditions of existence: e.g., righteousness/wickedness, good/bad, life/death, corruption/incorruption, happiness/misery, sense/insensibility. What Israelite of any age would not agree that those opposites exist?

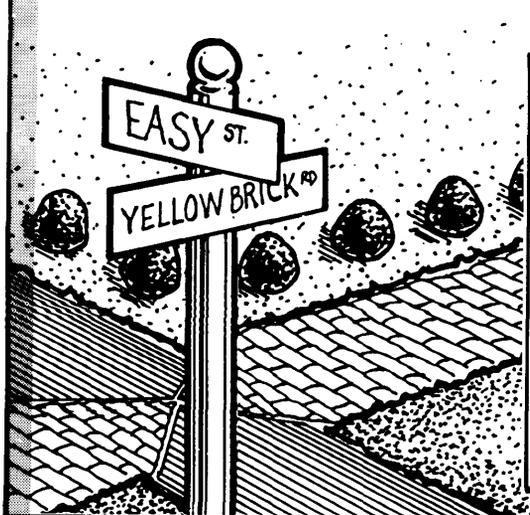
As mentioned earlier, Russell has decided that the considerable

dissimilarity in ideas found in I and II Nephi and the pre-exilic Israel leads him to conclude that the Book of Mormon story is not history. For the sake of preserving "our intellectual honesty," Mormons are advised to reinterpret this non-historical brainchild of the farm boy Joseph to have it reflect his "religious struggles," and "conception of true Christianity as he understood it at the time."

The personal and institutional consequences of accepting Russell's position are immense; it is not merely a matter of accepting the Nephites as fictional in the same way one might accept Jonah, Ruth, or Esther. If the Book of Mormon is not history, then Joseph Smith made it up. It follows then that there were no visitations from an angel named Moroni. It seems unlikely that God would use a deceiver, however well-intentioned, to communicate his will or organize his church. Therefore, the subsequent revelations to Joseph Smith would also have been bogus. The Church and its theology would all have been Joseph's invention.

Certainly there are obstacles to viewing the Book of Mormon as history, and it would probably be possible to make a good case against the Book of Mormon based on Russell's premise. However, the

EASY STREET OR THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD?



Network version of easy street is pretty modest. For a (nearly) five year old publication for Utah women and men, easy street means subscriptions. *Sunstone* readers know that publications that dare to be bright and beautiful survive and thrive because their readers care. If you'd like to see *Network* travel easy street, please subscribe. If you know someone who likes *Network* but doesn't subscribe, pass the word along, or arrange a gift subscription. Without subscriptions, *Network* will be forever heading down the Yellow Brick Road. And we all know what humbug waits at the end of that.

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evidence Russell has amassed is insufficient to make his conclusion compelling. Just as Russell has selected points to compare which support his conclusion, someone being equally selective could make the opposite conclusion seem more probable.

Yet probability and truth are not equivalent. Undoubtedly the silliest statement I've read in years is this quote used by Russell from Barzun and Graf: "Truth rests not on possibility nor on plausibility but on probability." Does any truth, for example, the existence of God, really rest on probability? Of course not. Truth is independent of our perception of the odds in its favor. If something which we judge to be improbable is nonetheless false, then we probably looked at the wrong data, misread the data, or did not gather in enough of it. Even if Russell's evidence were more compelling, the historicity of the Book of Mormon could never be proven or disproven by reliance on such evidence.

Robert L. Charles
Washington, D.C.

Essential Ideas Neglected

I enjoyed very much reading Hale and Allen on "Mormons and Moonmen" (Sept.-Oct. 1982 issue) but feel they neglected in their discussions two essential ideas: the early Mormon concept of "degrees of glory" and the possible influence of Thomas Dick on early Mormon cosmology.

Hale mentions but quickly passes over the vision-document now found in D&C 76 with its clear reference to other-world inhabitants (vs. 24). This vision is, among other things, a commentary on Paul's much-quoted statement that "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead." (I Cor. 15:40-41.)

Joseph and Sidney's vision-document in turn refers to the inhabitants of the terrestrial world, "whose glory differs from that of the church of the Firstborn . . . even as that of the moon differs from the sun in the firmament. . . . the glory of the terrestrial is one, even as the glory of the moon is one" (D&C 76:71, 97).

The crux of interpretation is the meaning of "even as"—do these words simply set up a metaphor, or do they allude to the real location of a kingdom? We usually assume the former, that the sun, moon, and stars

only symbolize degrees of glory. Some early brethren took a more literal view. Orson Hyde is a notable example, explaining on 8 March 1857 that

The sun, moon, and stars are the representatives of the final homes of the departed dead, if not their real homes. . . . These stars or planets vary in their size, motion, distance from the earth, and intensity of heat, cold, etc. Some of them may revolve in eternal day while others roll in endless night; and still others, like our earth, may have alternate day and night.

Here are homes for all grades of spirits. . . .

The children of this world who love darkness rather than light, will find themselves, finally, to be inhabitants of those planets that move in outer darkness; having a home adapted to their disposition and character. . . . after they have suffered in prison and are finally released, after many a thousand years' servitude in pain and darkness, their glory cannot be like that of the moon, nor yet like the stars of the first magnitude; but, perhaps, like the faint glimmer of a distant star—so distant from the sun, that a ray from that brilliant orb can hardly reach it. (JD 5:71-72).

He goes on to speak of the principle of "borrowed light," a popular phrase that has its roots in the early cosmology of degrees of glory: only the celestial (inhabitants of suns) generate their own light. Lesser kingdoms (moon, stars) reflect or "borrow" theirs (cf. the Kirtland "Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar," which is quite clear on this).

Ideas like Hyde's were fortified by the writings of Thomas Dick, the then better-known Christian astronomer, two of whose books were cited in Mormonism as early as 1836-37: extracts from *The Philosophy of a Future State* (1827) and *The Philosophy of Religion* (1829) were published in those years in the *LDS Messenger and Advocate*. Of the former work Joseph had a personal copy; he donated it to the Nauvoo Library and Literary Institute in early 1844. *Future State* is sometimes cited as a possible source of Joseph's ideas of the after life. Source or not, its cosmology (and theology) parallels much early LDS thought. In *Future State* Dick declares the existence of "intelligences" of various other planets, including the moon, and speculates on "degrees of glory" (his term) for saved beings. He links these ideas with Paul's I Corinthians statements, remarking that the possible meaning of the apostle's words was at that time a frequent discussion-topic among theologians (p.

64). Using the same argument Brigham Young wielded in the 1870 discourse Hale cited (JD 13:271), and that Orson Pratt put forth at a later date (JD 19:293), Dick insists that other spheres must be inhabited because the Deity "has created nothing in vain" (p. 68). He also defines the meaning of the scriptural "outer darkness" as a habitation for the damned, using terms similar, though not identical, to Hyde's:

Confined to one dreary corner of the universe, surrounded by a dense atmosphere, or a congeries of sable clouds, they will be cut off from all intercourse with all the regions of moral perfection . . . (p. 83. All page references refer to *The Complete Works of Thomas Dick LL.D.; Eleven Volumes in Two* [Cincinnati: H.S. & J. Applegate, 1851].)

Incidentally, when one takes into account that the "glory of the moon" was suited to "honorable men of the earth, who were blinded by the craftiness of men" (D&C 76:75)—and that Joseph had a biting wit—the alleged statement that moonmen "dress very much like the quaker style" becomes clear: it's a religious joke.

Michael Hicks
Urbana, Illinois

Prophets Make Mistakes

I enjoyed the companion articles by Van Hale and James B. Allen on the subject of "moonmen" in the September-October SUNSTONE. I believe, however, that a clarification may be in order.

Both writers seem to imply that prophets do not err in spiritual matters. Mr. Hale, for example, cites the belief that "the religious truths he [the prophet] teaches are irrefutable and eternal." Mr. Allen, for his part, appears to state that prophets have never "made a creedal, irreversible issue" of a fiction. Both assumptions would be incorrect, as I believe Hale and Allen would agree.

Lest the unwitting reader arrive at any incorrect conclusion that would play directly into the hands of the anti-Mormon contingent, the following observation may be appropriate. Prophets are known to have taught false doctrine on occasion. Brigham Young, for example, taught as scripture that the penalty for interracial marriage with blacks "under the law of God, is death on the spot. This will always be so" (JD 10:110, 13:264). He also taught, as did President David O. McKay, that blacks would never hold the priesthood until every other worthy mortal male had received it (JD

AWARDS

1983 D.K. Brown Memorial Fiction Contest

SUNSTONE was gratified by the number of excellent entries submitted to this year's fiction contest. On behalf of D.K. Brown, the first place winner will receive \$500, second place \$250, third place \$75, honorable mention \$50. "Out There" and "Unstrung Amber Beads" are included in this magazine.

FIRST PLACE

Out There Dian Saderup

SECOND PLACE

Ida's Sabbath Phyllis Barber

THIRD PLACE

After the Flood Me Karen Rosenbaum
The Halfway Girl Cheryl Sharp

HONORABLE MENTION

Unstrung Amber Beads Dick Beeson
The Sure Word Joseph Peterson
This Sure and Hell Ain't Pauline Mortensen
No Zion

1984 D.K. Brown Memorial Fiction Contest

SUNSTONE encourages any interested writer to submit material. All entries should in some manner relate to the experience of the Latter-day Saints. All varieties of theme, tone, and attitude are encouraged. Both traditional and experimental forms will be considered. High literary quality is mandatory. Entries are judged by a board of five independent judges.

RULES

1. The D.K. Brown Memorial Fiction Contest is open to all writers. Entries must be delivered to the SUNSTONE office or postmarked by 1 October 1983.
2. Papers must be typewritten, double-spaced, on one side of 8 1/2 by 11 inch paper (not onionskin). Since manuscripts will not be returned, contestants should keep a copy and send in the original. The stories should not exceed 28 double-spaced manuscript pages. One author may submit no more than three stories.
3. Each entry must be accompanied by a signed statement from the author attesting that it is the contestant's original work, that it is not being considered elsewhere for publication, that it has not won another contest, and that it will not be submitted elsewhere until the contest results have been announced.
4. Announcement of winning entries will be made in the January/February 1983 issue of the magazine. SUNSTONE reserves the right to publish at some time in the future all articles submitted but is not obligated to do so.
5. Prizes will be awarded as follows:
 - First prize, \$500
 - Second prize, \$250
 - Third prize, \$100
 - Three honorable mentions, \$50 each

THE editors of SUNSTONE are pleased to honor the memory of Donald Kenneth Brown, in whose behalf the fiction contest is sponsored each year. A nationally respected law enforcement official and locally admired religious leader, Bishop Brown, or D.K. as he was known to friends and co-workers, had love for literature. As a child he committed lengthy poems to memory. Later, his memory and literary interests helped launch his career as a college journalist at Arizona State University in Tempe, where he majored in English and business administration, represented the major wire services as the campus correspondent, and was editor of the college paper. During his editorship, he transformed the weekly campus newspaper into a combined city and college paper—the only paper in Tempe at that time.

Soon after his graduation in 1935, he laid the groundwork for an "Arizona" magazine. However, America had not yet recovered from the Depression, and, after several weeks, the aspiring editor and his staff became convinced that the time was not right. "My career in this field," reminisced Brown, "was cut short by the comparative salaries of a cub reporter (\$12 per week) and that paid by the FBI (\$30 per week)."

Consequently, he entered the FBI as a clerk and three years later was appointed to be a Special Agent. This was the beginning of a career in law enforcement which lasted forty years and took him all over the United States. Upon his retirement in 1968, he was honored as having been an Agent in Charge for more years than any other person in the history of the FBI.

After his retirement, Brown was called to be bishop of the Jacksonville, Florida, Sixth Ward. At the same time, the city of Jacksonville was changing to a consolidated government during the transition period. He remained with the department longer than he had intended. Just a few years before his death, he told a visiting Church authority that he wanted to spend all of his time as bishop and asked if it would be wise to resign from his police responsibilities. He was advised to continue his secular *and* ecclesiastical duties. The police chapel in Jacksonville, named in memory of D.K. Brown, serves as a fitting memorial to the fact that until his death in 1975 he did both.

11:272; JD 2:142-3; JD 7:290-1). President McKay even added that the Church's position was "a direct commandment from the Lord" (Statement of the First Presidency, August 17, 1949).

Even the Book of Mormon is subject to doctrinal error, as Joseph Smith suggests on the title page. In 1981, for instance, President Kimball announced that 2 Nephi 30:6 had been amended. In spite of what prophets—including President Kimball—and the Book of Mormon have taught for approximately 140 years, Mormons will no longer believe that Indians will turn white. They will, instead, become pure (*New York Times*, October 1, 1981).

And, of course, it seems that Brigham Young's "26 Years" prophecy (JD 4:40) and "Adam-God" doctrine (*W. Woodruff Journal* entry of Dec. 16, 1867; B. Young Gen. Conf. address of Oct. 8, 1854, HDS) will always be with us.

Nevertheless, none of this means that Brigham Young or David O. McKay were not prophets. They were all mortals with a potential for error, just as are we, and they occasionally made serious doctrinal mistakes. All things considered, we can no more claim they can't be prophets than we can claim that because Joe Theismann threw two interceptions he can't be a Super Bowl quarterback.

Michael J. Barrett
Sterling Park, Virginia

Feeling Less Isolated

I was so impressed by the article by D. Jeff Burton, "The Phenomenon of the Closet Doubter," in your recent issue. It seemed to say all of the things that have recently been going through my mind, some of which I had not completely identified, but which clicked into focus as I read. I have never written a letter to your magazine before, though I have been tempted, but this time I felt I must. One has such an isolated feeling in this situation that I did it mainly with the hope that others would do the same. I am a female convert of 15 years, 40 years old (a dangerous age, I know), happily married, and the mother of four school-age children. I have a bachelor's degree and recently have returned to school seeking intellectual stimulation, ideas for how to meaningfully spend the rest of my life, and friends.

I think that I have come through the "transition stage" that is described, though I am not as tranquil as some

seem to be. I do remember feeling, almost immediately and spontaneously, a heavy, heavy load moving off me as I suddenly realized that *I could decide* whether or not I would do what Church leaders asked me to do, and that I *did* have the choice of what I believed. Something seemingly so obvious—one wonders how we become so buried in guilt? fear? idea of duty? that that freedom eludes us.

At any rate, I remain active, though I am always holding back emotionally now. I have a headache, and have for years, at the end of almost every Sunday. Of course staying active seems the best thing to do—our family has traditionally attended Church meetings and activities and has held home scripture reading, prayers, and family home evening (this last has especially been greatly enjoyed by our family). It seems to me that it would be unfair of me to jar my family, to which I still feel an extremely strong commitment. However, because of this commitment, I sometimes wonder if my hypocrisy, for that is what it is, and my lack of courage—again, that is what it is—will not in the long run be evident and do more harm to my children than truthfully stating and acting on my disbelief. What are the effects of "subtle dishonesty" on oneself and those close to one? Are my Sunday headaches an indication of how my body is reacting to it? Will my children come to see me as one who evades issues and cannot be counted on for honest communication? Will this "subtle dishonesty" eat at me until I become more and more bitter and isolated?

It is not easy. But I am very grateful to SUNSTONE and D. Jeff Burton for presenting this article and reducing some of my feelings of isolation. I hope very much to hear of others who may have reacted to it.

An Active Disbeliever

Another Look at Assumptions

I was very disappointed in a long letter from Tom Rogers, who is on the Church payroll at Brigham Young University, and would like to call attention to some of *his* assumptions.

Certainly he did not expect non-Mormons Woodward and Foster to share Rogers's own testimony of the truth of Mormonism. Does that mean we have nothing to learn from the outside perspective? It is a fair question whether forcible pushing of Mormonism on those who have expressed no interest in hearing it is doing unto others as we would have

them do unto us. Of course converts are grateful to the missionaries. Others are turned off by the missionaries. Conversions might be as numerous, and longer lasting, if they were allowed to occur more naturally, on the basis of expressions of interest and in response to media advertising. At least it doesn't seem that Brother Rogers should be so insecure as to resist considering possibilities. He and his "ilk" (his chosen word) are sensitive indeed.

The name-calling is surprising. Marvin Rytting is called a "nominal" member because he arrived at the conclusion that one could not know for a certainty that the Church was true in a literal sense. Then totally refusing to address the question, in which we might have expected Rogers to demonstrate his own opposite conclusion, Rogers shifts to the question of whether such a belief is "optimal." Brandishing the New Testament, he mentions faith and transcendent contact. If I have understood Rytting correctly, he is quite prepared to accept that human beings operate on the basis of faith-assumptions. Rogers will have none of this: you think the way he does, feeling things deeply, or are labeled "inine."

As for Rytting's preference for the calling of stake clerk over some of the other kinds of callings that come along—and heavens knows the busy work is endless—anyone with an ounce of honesty recognizes this as a human and quite sane response. Rytting did not say that he never had or never would accept any other callings. He enjoys some fellowship as well as Rogers does. Do labels like "churlish" really describe an honest account in a personal essay of feelings that thousands of members must have shared?

Rogers concedes that we might have something to learn from others, but his letter shows more than a little discomfort at the actual experience of listening to them. SUNSTONE and similar periodicals, which are not officially sponsored by the Church, have served a purpose by including different points of view, including many showing positive features of the Church. But if all that Professor Rogers wishes to hear over and over again is how superior we are, to enjoy the strokes of articles that repeat endlessly the claims and the testimonies, I would remind him that another periodical serves this purpose very nicely. It is called the *Ensign*.

Bruce Fairfax
Salt Lake City, Utah