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INCONSEQUENTIAL WHISKERS

A Spokane, Washington, newspaper reported on May 7, 1928, the visit of Presiding Patriarch Hyrum G. Smith. The title of the article was "SAINTS PUT LID ON WHISKERS: Presiding Patriarch Smith Tells that Joseph Used Razor." In the body of the article, it quoted the Presiding Patriarch as saying, "Somehow or other when people hear the title 'patriarch' they expect to meet an old man with white hair and long, white whiskers. . . . They also connect white beards with the term 'disciple.' That, however, is not the way I read the Scripture. I do not believe the disciples selected by Jesus were either old or had whiskers. In fact, the Bible records that Joseph shaved, and that Mark was a mere youth. None of the disciples were more than forty years old. . . . I was ordained patriarch 16 years ago. At that time it was suggested that, to lend dignity to the office, I let my beard grow. I replied that I would follow the teachings of Joseph—and shave." The reporter went on to comment that the Presiding Patriarch, with his shaven face, "has more the appearance of a young business man than a church dignitary."

Hyrum G. Smith was my grandfather. I presently have a beard and refer to Hyrum G. Smith's grandfather, John Smith, for a precedent. I follow the teachings of Brigham, John, Heber (including several with that name)—and don't shave. What greater illustration of how inconsequential it is one way or the other.

E. Gary Smith
 Costa Mesa, California

EXAMINE ASSUMPTIONS

Joseph Hepworth's recent article on dating the birth of Christ (SUNSTONE, 9:1) was a useful collection of information on this well-worn subject, but there were a couple of things missing. First, he failed to point out that it is clear from 3 Nephi 2:6-7 that Mormon meant the 600 years from Lehi's departure from Jerusalem until the birth of Christ quite literally and not approximately. Now whether the Nephite calendar was precise through all its thousand years of duration, or whether Mormon was correct (in view of the frequent disclaimers of

infallibility) we cannot say. We can only state positively that Mormon claims it was exactly 600 years from the departure until the sign of the birth of Christ was given.

This prompts me to some speculation on the Nephite calendar. I have always assumed, as I suppose most people have, that they simply utilized the Jewish lunar calendar with its present modifications to keep it in step with the solar year. But what if they used a straight lunar calendar, letting the months cycle around the solar year the way the Moslem calendar still does? That would make six hundred years too few, rather than too many. Even with months of 30 days each it would add up to 3,150 days in 600 years, or nearly 9 years! That is enough and to spare, even if we want to date the birth of Christ at 4 B.C. Sometimes it pays to examine our assumptions!

Kathleen R. Snow

GRACE WITHOUT WORKS

In discussing the matter of grace, Donald Olsen has presented an insightful, if flawed, examination of the historical Christian view of God's relation to a corrupt humanity. While exhaustively examining the selective scriptural basis for claiming that Christ's grace is sufficient to salvation, Olsen nevertheless fails to provide any reason why anyone—whether churchd or secular—should believe that, relatively, human virtue is insignificant to God.

Olsen tells us that grace is related to the claimed corruption of the human soul. Without any discussion of what is entailed by this corruption (or even what it consists of), we can only conclude that we have been presented with a curiosity of language, a tautological truth: *of course*, if we are corrupted by Adam's fall, by which our natures are depraved, we may need some assistance to jump over a hidden abyss. But Olsen asks us to treat as psychological fact that people are innately corrupt because parts of scripture say so. This is just bland assertion.

The uneasiness with legalisms—the hollow formalities that Olsen should reject but does not clearly identify as such, instead confusing "works" with the Pharisaical

disposition—enjoys a rich history of abhorrence in the Christian ethos. But the efforts of Sister Teresa, or Albert Schweitzer, or the unnumbered saints who labor to improve the human condition have not been shown by Olsen's analysis to have been anything but thoroughly moral and genuinely efficacious. Instead of rejecting the hollow formalisms and ritual that many Mormons confuse with the religious attitude, Olsen only treats us to a well-worn, but now fashionable, recitation of the outline of the doctrine of grace, leaving the reader without any reason to adopt this view.

The only difference, in action or motivation, between Jesus' sacrifice and the actions of the best among us, acting in the care of the weak and afflicted, is a matter of scope. The World War II concentration camp doctor who decided to accompany his infant charges to the gas chambers, carrying two in his arms, rather than experiment on other children, differs only from Christ's sacrifice and love because the circumstances of that mortal doctor did not permit him any greater sacrifice for innocence than he did. The doctor's love and refusal to harm others is praiseworthy and certainly no "dirty linen" to God.

The grace of Jesus Christ, understood within the context of Mormonism's insistence upon the inviolate, uncreated, and eternal status of the individual soul, might be properly understood as the love and compassion of Jesus for his brothers and sisters. Christ's sacrifice was chosen out of respect for the intrinsic worth of each person, and was offered as a simile of our moral obligation to clothe the naked, feed the starving, care for the afflicted, and comfort the dying. The Savior's act thus indicated a belief that human efforts might have genuine effect in the service of God and humanity.

Judgment implies, if not requires, that choice is the central

issue. If choice is made hollow by unearned grace, then how can God insist on the judgment? Jesus wept over the children in the Book of Mormon [3 Ne. 17:14-25] because of their innocence and goodness, not their corruption, and because of the greatness that humanity is capable of achieving, but so seldom does. When thinking of the woman who cradled the frightened child, whom she was unable to free from the path of an oncoming train, facing her death in order not to leave a soul alone in fear, it is hard to imagine how such care and compassion was not the result of a free and good soul, uncorrupted and not in need of grace.

Now, perhaps Olsen is discouraged by the experience of the twentieth century. But just at the moment when we need the encouragement accompanying the belief that we are not unavoidably tied to misery and degradation, Olsen and his scriptures only offer us the nihilism and hopelessness that attend the theology of grace. The love of Christ, and the efforts and achievements of the genuine saints among us, require us to believe that grace is as unrelated to the improvement of the human condition as it is out of place in the Mormon metaphysic.

Mark S. Gustavson
Salt Lake City, Utah

PRIVILEGE HATH ITS RANKINGS

Okay, so they turned my picture to the wall, they cut off my buttons, they broke my sword, and then they delivered me unto the buffetings of Satan for a thousand years.

Why? And who are "they"? Well, "they" are a multitude of secret societies to which Mormon footnote freaks belong. They say if three Mormons meet, they hold a meeting. If four meet, they form an organization. We're not supposed to have secret societies, but we've got 'em by the dozen.

How do I know? Because in all innocence I asked them for copies of their membership roster,

the reason being that as the Taylor Trust I'm publishing "The John Taylor Papers" in two volumes, and alerting LDS historians, scholars, students, history buffs—footnote freaks in general—of the fact by a direct-mail campaign. And I've been told in no uncertain terms that the roster can't be had.

I say in all innocence, because while I don't belong to any organization of footnote freaks, I do belong to the professional author's union, the Writers Guild of America, and to the California Writers Club, where information about membership isn't secret. The California Writers, in fact, publish a yearly roster, sent to every member, and if as a result I get nefarious junk mail, who cares?

Also, I was following counsel by our inspired leadership at Salt Lake, who exhort us to follow their leadership, do as they do. Well do I remember a full-color poop sheet of four pages which as a home teacher I received copies with instructions to deliver to my families, and also give the sales pitch. The pitch was for a book by a *General Authority*, and we were exhorted to urge everyone, Mormon, Jew, or Gentile, to buy this book, for it should be in every possible home.

In studying the fine print, I saw no suggestion that royalties would be donated to the Church. Nor was there any explanation regarding who stood the cost of publication of sufficient copies to supply every home teacher in the United States. (I don't have information about the rest of the world.)

Well, the *General Authority* didn't have his picture turned to the wall, his buttons cut off, his sword broken, nor was he consigned to the buffetings of Satan. But I know why not. While in basic training in the World War II Army, I asked, "Why should I buck for promotion?" And the officer in charge of indoctrination said, "Rank hath its privilege."

Samuel W. Taylor
Redwood City, California

ALL IS NOT WELL

It completely baffles me how writers of letters to SUNSTONE can take pages to ponder simple concepts. E. K. Hunt's conclusion (vol. 8, no. 6, p. 5) that "either men, women, and children were killed by Mormons or they weren't" and that "either Juanita Brooks in her classic account of the massacre is fundamentally misinformed and/or misrepresenting the facts or my seminary teacher and the Mormon history he showed me were misinformed and/or misrepresenting the facts" should indicate to him that somewhere in all that there ought to be a message.

When one considers that practically every facet of Mormon literature (such as the *Millennial Star*, *Ensign*, histories of the Church, etc.) is crammed with attempts to justify or cover up the eccentricities of the Church and its history, he should not be too surprised to find out that, indeed, all is NOT well in Zion. A study of even the Haun's Mill (supposed) massacre will show that it, too, is nothing more than Mormon-leader fabrication, based almost entirely on the *obviously false* testimony of Joseph Young.

Even Juanita Brooks is *proved* guilty of omitting the Church-leader-damning FORGED LETTERS (supposedly by Eleanor McLean, Pratt's twelfth wife, and others) found in the appendix of Reva Stanley's *The Archer of Paradise*, a biography of Parley P. Pratt by his great, great granddaughter. The letters appeared in the *Deseret News* just prior to the arrival of the ill-fated Arkansas train. That a scholar of the ability of Juanita Brooks would overlook such essential evidence as these letters appears highly suspect of either literary cowardice on her part or pressure upon her by Church leaders, none of which is honest. Since no one besides McClean himself was present at Pratt's murder, the letters show the warped premeditation of Brigham Young in condemning the rich wagon train from Arkansas to death as vengeance for Pratt's death by a man from California. The Church never has and never can supply a suitable justification for this atrocity; and its very existence dooms the Church to acknowledge that its leaders were murderers and,

hence, that the Church is founded upon falsity. (If you fail to print this letter, you acknowledge, also, that you are as guilty as Brooks of omission of the truth.)

J. Clair Batty's puzzle over the need for the Atonement (same issue, p. 11) would be solved if he would refer to the second article of faith which states, "We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression."

It appears that the Mormon god DOES NOT practice what the Mormon leaders preach.

But then the third article of faith confuses the matter further, stating that "all mankind may be saved by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel." It seems that Christ went through all that suffering to have ONLY THOSE SAVED who were *obedient*. Batty is not the only one who seems confused.

Grant N. Mildenhall
American Fork, Utah

QUAKER MYSTICAL MUDDLE

Moyné Oviatt's article in (SUNSTONE, vol. 9 no. 1) was of particular interest to me, not only because of its thrust regarding the value of contemplation and heeding the inner light but also because some of my ancestors were Quakers. Because of my ancestry, I am surely not alone among Mormons in this interest. Both President Grant and President Kimball had Quaker ancestors. American history shows that the Quakers have made a contribution which is all out of proportion to their numbers. Their role in the antislavery movement, for example, was seminal and courageous. (Some of my Quaker relatives were active in this movement long before it became safe or popular.) Quakers also had a major hand in many reforms (social, economic, and political) which have made America what it is. For instance, they promoted the "one price system" whereby all customers were charged the same thing (in preference to the old system of haggling where the strong or belligerent usually prevailed). The impetus for this reform was motivated by the radical-at-the-time notion that people should have equal opportunity even if (or perhaps especially if) they are not inherently equal, i.e., equally

endowed. Quakers have been pioneer reformers in connection with treatment of prisoners and the mentally ill. Their witness against war and oppression is well known. Many of the activities discussed here are described and evaluated in more detail in Gerald Jonas' excellent book *On Doing Good*. His treatment of the Quakers' dealings with American Indians is especially interesting in that their approach was so similar to that of Mormonism.

In spite of my admiration for the Quaker way I would like to point out a few areas where it seems to me less practical and efficacious than the Mormon way. First, style of meetings: I have been to only two Quaker meetings in my life—one was the silent type and the other a sort of testimony meeting. I must say that I enjoyed the latter much more than the former. Could I not learn to like the silent type of meeting? Probably not. My feeling is that we learn from others to the degree that they share their thoughts and feelings with us. We can gain something from partaking of fellow worshippers' spirits in silence—but not as much. We can certainly not be uplifted by silence as effectively as we can by the singing of hymns. To rule out music (as in some Quaker meetings) is to rule out one of the most uplifting and wholesome influences of all. The testimony meeting I attended was pretty much like a Mormon testimony meeting. It was inspiring because the people were themselves, and they spoke from the heart. There were also hymns.

Perhaps it will be claimed that sermons and hymns are crutches that strong, inwardly directed people do not (or should not) need. Perhaps so, but this is an elitist argument which begs the question of what sort of worship service is best suited to the mass of humanity. God's church should, logically, appeal to more than just the strong and the inwardly directed.

Paul said he sought to be all things to all men. Maybe this is impossible, but it seems worth trying to have something in every worship service that appeals to everyone. In our Mormon sacrament meetings we have talks (few are really sermons), hymn singing,

special musical numbers, and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. By having the sacrament every week, we provide a time for contemplation that should be of high quality even if it is not a long time. Members are supposed to think of the Savior and what He has done for them. They are also supposed to have a "broken heart and contrite spirit" in recognition of their sins and shortcomings. This is in effect a chance to repent and start over. Every Sunday can be a new beginning thanks to the ordinance of the sacrament. What a blessing!

Because they deny the need for all ordinances, the Quakers deny themselves the blessings that come from ordinances. We are told quite plainly in D&C 84:19-21: "And this greater priesthood administereth the gospel and holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God. Therefore, in the ordinances thereof, the power of godliness is manifest. And without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh."

In reality, of course, the Quakers are no worse off than other Christians in that they all "have a form of godliness but they deny the power thereof." So, whether ordinances are practiced or not, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men without the priesthood. The point is that Mormons are tremendously blessed to have the priesthood and its ordinances. No amount of contemplation and soul-searching by Quakers, Hindus, or anyone else can make up for the basic deficiency from which all of these man-made religious organizations suffer. Hence, the Quaker way may teach us the value of contemplation and the inner light, but we can go a lot further with the priesthood and its ordinances (and especially with the gift of the Holy Ghost) than they (or other Christians, Hindus, etc.) can go without the priesthood or proper ordinances and with only the Spirit or Light of Christ to enlighten them. This is not to denigrate the Spirit or Light of Christ but merely to recognize that it is culturally conditioned (as its individual manifestation as a conscience must be)

and is therefore not the undeviating and sure Spirit of Truth which the Holy Ghost is. (See John 16:13; 2 Pet. 1:19-21.)

Although not treated in Ms. Oviatt's fine article, I feel another aspect of the Quaker way is in error. While I both admire and deplore the Quaker stand on war and self-defense, I deplore it more than I admire it. I respect the Quakers for their radical stand against war as a means of settling national differences because I hate war almost as much as they do. However, I say "almost" because I believe that defensive war is justified by God.

The Book of Mormon makes this abundantly clear. There is perhaps no book on the face of the earth which sets forth in greater clarity the circumstances which do and do not justify war (unless it might be D&C 98). The Book of Mormon does this not in abstract theory but in terms of real life dilemmas and tribulations. We are told how Ammon's Lamanite converts foreswore hatred and war because of the great harm it had done them in the past. However, when their protectors, the Nephites, were about to be overrun by unconverted Lamanites and apostate Nephites the Ammonites were tempted to take up arms again in defense of their liberty. They were prevented from doing this only by the solemnity of their oaths and by the fact that 2,000 of their sons who had not taken the oath were mustered to battle. In other words, defensive war is justified by God. The converted Lamanite parents were a special case of "conscientious objection" because of their oath.

While it is tempting to argue that a radical witness against war is needed to show the world how foolish war is—especially when the radical witnesses are themselves made to suffer because of their witness (as during the Civil War)—there is also the argument of equity or fairness to consider. Is it fair for one person to have to go to war and perhaps be killed in defense of his country while another person escapes this fate because he is a certified "conscientious objector"? The basic unfairness of this position has been recognized by one Ben Seaver, quoted in Gerald Jonas' *On Doing*

Good: "We have intellectually condemned conscription as a fundamentally evil system contrary to basic human rights. But when it became law we somehow accommodated ourselves to it provided it allowed us an out. . . . We accepted things which, when you examine them, turned out to be unbelievable: That we should accept the right of the government not only to define religion, which seems to be forbidden in the First Amendment, but also that we should allow the government to decide that only those who met this definition had a conscience that was worth considering; that others didn't have a conscience." (P. 142.) In other words, acceptance of conscientious objector status condones conscription and the nation's right to wage war, to defer some persons if they meet a certain religious standard, and relegate all other men to the war effort. Is this not preferential treatment of a religious minority on the very grounds which they themselves decry?

My third great grandfather, John Sellers, was a practicing Quaker until the Revolutionary War came along. Because he participated in the war effort rather than maintaining strict neutrality (he printed the Continental money), he was "read out of meeting" or excommunicated. Did he do right or did he do wrong? I'm convinced that he did right, not only because I believe the colonials had a just cause, but because I believe in self-defense. (We know from D&C 101:79-80 that God "redeemed the land by the shedding of blood.") Quakers benefited from the defense provided by their neighbors (and they still do). In my view it is more honorable to participate in the defense of one's liberty than to stand aside as a neutral—providing only that the cause is just. Even if the cause is not clearly just (as in the case of the Vietnam War) we are still obliged by our twelfth article of faith to be found "obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law." Peace is devoutly to be desired, but not at the price of freedom.

Charles L. Sellers
Knoxville, Tennessee

A CHEER FOR SELF-CRITICISM

Having recently joined the SSMT (Society for the Study of Mormon Theology) in response to their newsletter distributed at the recent Sunstone Symposium, I am pleased to note an impetus which is shared by all modern publications of the *Dialogue*-SUNSTONE ilk: the notion that rigorous self-criticism is healthy—healthy for the Church as well as each member.

Criticism is healthy for the Church, despite its exclusivist truth claims, because those claims need objective investigation not only to ascertain (1) historic proof of their existence, but (2) analytical definition of their nature and scope, as well as (3) their changes throughout history. (“Iron Rods” won’t like the third category, thinking it an atheistic concession to God’s inability to “control” history without change in derogation of God’s omnipotence, but “Iron Rods,” frankly, look for personal security more than they look for truth; if they come to realize that God is as much a victim of time’s vicissitudes as is man, they would value their individual freedom/responsibility rather than sacrificing it at the altar of “God’s unchanging plan for their lives.”)

Criticism is healthy for each member because it keeps him/her “honest.” Personal growth occurs for those venturing to “risk” their testimonies against real information in a real world. A testimony is no better than the information (true or false) upon which it is founded. Knowledge is fundamental, but only *critical* knowledge—knowledge *tested* (for truth) by hypothetical (or actual) adversariness, i.e. doubt. Hardly a wonder, then, that there needs be “opposition” in all things. Opposition, criticism, doubt, and the determination to *know* through it all are the criteria separating a “good” testimony from a lazy one.

The sweetness of knowing without restriction, in the full and honest light of rigorous self-criticism (regarding all one’s sources of knowledge) is the sweetness (perceived truth) powering the venture to know. It is the hope that religious dialogue (more “opposition” in a pluralist society) will ultimately demonstrate Mormon truth claims to be vindicated among non-Mormon “adversaries” (rendering

them converts) as well as demonstrate our individual half-perceptions and fuzzy ideas in mutual refinement of the exact nature of those truth claims.

J. S. Mill said it best: “But the peculiar evil of silencing the expression of an opinion is, that it is robbing the human race; posterity as well as the existing generation; those who dissent from that opinion, still more than those who hold it. If the opinion is right, they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth: if wrong, they lose, *what is almost as great a benefit* [indeed, it’s the same thing!], the clearer perception and livelier impression [testimony!] of truth, produced by its collision [opposition!] with error” (“Of Thought and Discussion” in *On Liberty*, p. 18, emphasis added.)

A cheer for *Dialogue*-SUNSTONE and their ilk, which are producing better “testimonies” (perhaps for both Mormons and anti-Mormons, both of whom will be held responsible for their opinions).

Is there room for creative theological “formulation” (not merely “clarification”) from the unwashed multitude in the face of the Church’s exclusive claim that direct revelation goes specifically to the living prophet and no one else? Yes. Mere members can be, and often were for Joseph Smith, the source of his prophetic inquiries of the Lord, inquiries resulting in direct revelation to Joseph.

Does that mean that the “idea” for that revelation was first “revealed” to the member before it was to Joseph? No. Truth, like commonsense, knows no official channel. Ideas are everyone’s property. If the prophet or Lord chooses to “sanctify” an idea by divine revelation, so be it. Members are still inherently free to speculate and think for themselves.

Any conflicts which inevitably develop between member speculations and the prophet’s revelations are properly manageable without resort to suppression. Many a truth has ridden into history on the back of an error. Keeping a stable full of such errors may be intelligent even for a prophet. The First Amendment precludes suppression of error, so the stable will always be full, anyway.

Criticism of ideas in the common search for truth is the prerogative

of member and prophet. Neither should think itself infallible (beyond criticism). Neither should be personally offended by the inevitability of free speech, which is the necessary adjunct to free thought. And free thought (with its honestly self-critical element) is the basis for one’s testimony of truth.

Gerry L. Ensley
Los Alamitos, California

CONFORMITY AND CONSCIENCE

I am so grateful for the SUNSTONE which arrived yesterday. I read most of it before laying it down.

“How General the Authority?” by Cole R. Capener (vol. 9 no. 2) deserves some response. “Individual Conscience and Defacto Infallibility” reminds me that “truth though buried shall rise again.”

In “Life’s Great Guide Book” by Rev. P. S. Henson, I read these statements: “In the absence of any higher authority man is bound to obey his conscience, even though he cannot trust it. And that conscience is anything but infallible is only too palpably proved by the contradictory judgments it has registered in different lands and ages, touching almost every moral question.

“One is bound to follow his conscience whether right or wrong, and yet if the conscience be wrong the act is not made right because it was performed conscientiously.

“But God in great mercy has provided an infallible standard by which to rectify our private judgments, and if we fail to make the rectification, *then the failure is at our peril.*”

“That standard is his holy Word—which is the standard for all men and for all time, for the nineteenth century no less than the first, for the world has not outgrown it and never will while the ages roll.”

I cannot understand why Mormon leaders and interpreters refuse to acknowledge these facts, and insist on conformity to their confusing conclusions!

Rhoda Thurston
Hyde Park, Utah

DISCOMBOBULATED

One of the most challenging articles in the recent SUNSTONE is “Understanding the Scope of the Grace of Christ” by Donald P. Olsen (vol. 9 no. 2). The truth from MY standpoint is that I had come to

feel that the term grace is regarded by the Mormon church as a dirty word. Other churches speak of the grace of God, and there is, of course, that awful hymn: "Amazing Grace," but I never before recall hearing about "grace" from a Mormon pulpit. I must confess I do not understand the complexities of the subject. After reading the aforementioned article I still don't understand the principle. If one's good works do not count toward one's salvation does it mean, I wonder, that God has a favorite people *He* chooses to save? Didn't the Calvinist Pilgrims believe only a minute fraction of God's children could be saved and that *not* by virtue of personal works? I've always found this theory impossible to figure.

I recently viewed a KBYU-TV devotional assembly where Bruce R. McConkie spoke on Jehovah as opposed to Elohim. After viewing this and after reading "Jehovah as the Father," I've been asking myself if it is necessary to have an understanding of all these things? My own viewpoint is admittedly oversimplified, but it seems to me that the gospel of Jesus Christ was the most simple of doctrines and was preached to the most simple of people. Does God require that we be so totally nitpicky in our attempts to understand His simple gospel?

It is perhaps important to explain here that I'm an INACTIVE Mormon. I think it is this very nitpicky style amongst SOME Mormons that persuaded me to be inactive.

The article which really discomobulated me in this issue was "Are Children Almost Too Much to Bear" by James Tunstead Burchaell, who is as I gather a Roman Catholic professor of theology. In the index to articles a footnote appears with this title: "Nurture is natural only in virtuous human beings." I, for one, would like to challenge that statement. I don't think "virtue" as such has anything to do with nurture, or one's capability and ability to nurture. As "virtuous" individuals we like to think we have an edge on such human qualities as the ability and responsibility to nurture, but it doesn't always follow. Childhood teachings and indoctrinations are important in determining what patterns one will follow in life. As a child and young woman, I was psychologized into believing that

what I wanted above all was to be the mother of a large family. It was important to me, therefore, that I should marry a "good" Mormon and prepare to fill this, the ONLY female function as I saw it. In doing so I made the worst possible choice of a mate (but that's another story). As I was lying on the birthing table for the fifth (?) time, I had a sort of minor revelation as my mind said to me: "This is an awfully stupid occupation for YOU to be involved in. You don't even like children!" (Or words to this general effect.) In all my searchings of the gospel and in all my psychologizings I'd never once gained enough self-knowledge to know that I don't like children. All in all, although I think I can classify myself as a "virtuous" woman, the sad fact remains that I do NOT like to be with children and I'm NOT a natural nurturer. Oh, I loved my children. All of them were wanted, and I think I did a passable job in rearing them. I'm prepared to make great sacrifices to HELP, but I can't stand to be around children *as such*. Much of the indoctrination in the Church fails to take into account the fact that what might be "heaven" for one individual would be nothing but hell for another.

I read the comments of Father Burtchaell and have to agree, IN THEORY, with most of his statements, especially on infanticide. I disagree with the author's quote from Dr. Germaine Greer AFTER her journey to the East as a guest of the Family Planning Association of India. Well, I've never been to India or any other so-called overpopulated country. But I have read and viewed on TV accounts of cultures where women's lives are given over to continual child-bearing and where the mortality rate for infants is tragically high because there isn't enough food, or money, or means to provide the necessary medical care, or where unsanitary conditions contribute to the overall climate of disease. I think it's plain to see there is a problem with overpopulation and also with starvation in various parts of the world.

I've always been thankful I wasn't called upon to bear a retarded child. To a woman such as myself, even "normal" children are, as the author somewhat sarcastically suggests, "almost too much to bear." I dread to think how I would

have reacted to the responsibility of caring for a retarded child.

Although I believe it is better to prevent an unwanted conception that to abort a fetus, had I been advised that the fetus I was carrying would be hopelessly deformed or retarded, *I would have been very seriously tempted to abort.*

It is relatively easy to *teach others* concerning *the sin* of aborting "defective" fetuses or to pass laws to save the lives of such children. The difficult part is in knowing that one has the RESPONSIBILITY to care for that child all the days of one's life. Too, I must always worry about what will happen to this child: WHO will care for him; who will DEFEND him (from cruelty) when they're no longer around to do these things.

I thoroughly enjoyed "Words of Wisdom" by James N. Kimball, who must be a relative of the late J. Golden Kimball.

I read with appreciation the article "How General the Authority" by Cole R. Capener. This is an article which has personal application to my own life and attitudes concerning the Church. I feel I can personally endorse it.

I got a few chuckles out of "The Language of Niceness" by Emma Rebecca Thomas. Those of us who have lived all our lives "in the Church" tend to forget the narrowness of some of our requirements re language. I was always embarrassed to refer too often to the name of "Jesus," even though my pronunciation lacked the Southern drawl of the newly converted black woman to whom the author refers. And often I have been careless in my references to the "Holy Spirit," often using the term interchangeably with the "Holy Ghost." I do understand that Mormons see the "Holy Ghost" as the third *personage* in the Godhead. I have always assumed that "He" delegates his responsibilities to some extent. Also I think of a special spirit of inspiration one sometimes receives as being a manifestation of the "Holy Spirit." Again, I fear I fall very short in the matter of theological preciseness.

As I recall, I agreed with "Social Responsibility and LDS Ethics" (Courtney Campbell) at the time I read it.

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