



CORNUCOPIA

SUNSTONE invites short musings: chatty reports, cultural trend sightings, theological meditations. All lovely things of good report, please share them. Send submissions to: <SunstoneED@aol.com>

Scripture Chase

YOU CAN FACE ANYTHING

SOONER OR LATER, MOST CHRISTIANS, SEARCHING for the highest good, the philosopher's *summum bonum*, come to realize that the supreme good is contained in the twin commandments set forth by the Savior—to love God and to love others (Matt. 22:36–40).

Of these two great commandments, most of the time I find the former easier than the latter. The second, however, weighs a little lighter for me when I remember we don't have to love others equally. My great-uncle J. Golden Kimball put this idea in a memorable way: "Hell yes, I love my neighbors. I just love some a damn sight more than others!"

One recent Sunday afternoon, I pulled my King James off the shelf and decided to take a really close look at I Corinthians 13, to honestly see how I measured up in faith, hope, and charity. Using a pass-fail system, I leniently gave myself a low pass. I might have scored myself slightly higher except for verse 7: "[Love] beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." Somehow this

"bearing" and "enduring" seemed to me too much like resignation, submission, and making the best of a bad situation. I have never cared much for the meek, mild, persecuted, downtrodden, poor, lowly, and despised characterizations of living the gospel. I'm much more comfortable with the "manly," up-and-at-'em dynamics of Christianity. I identify better with the abundant life, a light yoke, joy, and happiness. Was there possibly a more positive, clear interpretation or translation of what Paul might have meant?

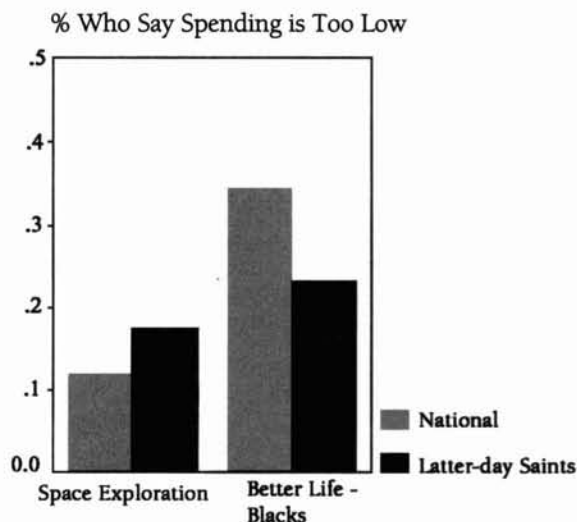
So I picked up the various other translations of the Bible I have around to see how they read. None, including Joseph Smith's translation and the monumental, multi-volume *Anchor Bible* series with all its translation help, comments, and notes, conveyed my sense of what love is really like.

My search was going nowhere when my wife Violet and I chanced upon a local garage sale. She looked for grandchildren clothes while I checked out the books. I was idly looking at what I thought was the *New Oxford* translation of the bible and was about to put it down when she said, "If you want it, buy it." I said I already had a copy, but she replied, "Well, it's only a dollar. Buy it, and give it to a friend." So, I bought it.

After I got it home, I noticed it was not the *New Oxford*, but the *New English Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), a translation I had never read before. I turned to my passage. It read: "There is nothing love cannot face; there is no limit to its faith, its hope, and its endurance." I had struck platinum!

Peculiar People

MORMONS PREFER "OUT-OF-THIS WORLD" SPENDING



MORMONS ARE MORE FISCALLY CONSERVATIVE than the rest of the nation on some issues but more liberal on others. Cumulative results from the General Social Survey conducted by the National Opinion Research Center annually or bi-annually between 1972 and 2000 bear this out. On the question of the amount the government spends to improve the condition of African-Americans, 34 percent of those polled nationally think we are spending too little while only 23 percent of Mormons say so. Yet, on the question of money allocated to space exploration, 17 percent of Mormon respondents believe more should be spent while only 12 percent of the others questioned agree.

Mormon Media Image

“ONE OF THE THREE”

COMIC BOOK FANS ARE USED TO READING ABOUT their favorite heroes battling every manner of super-human threat. While few would even bat an eye over the appearance of a giant radioactive lizard, killer clown, or horde of mutant zombies, in *Madman Adventures* #3 (1993, Tundra Publishing, Ltd.) award-winning comic writer and artist Mike Allred introduced the comics community to an all-new villainous foe—Lamanites! When the zany Madman travels to the ruins of South America to rescue a stranded alien, he and his compatriots find themselves surrounded by a “ghost tribe” of bow-and-arrow-wielding warriors. The group is soon rescued by a hooded stranger who, speaking in tongues, announces “I am one of the Three. I am Nephite. These people are Lamanite.”



Luckily for Madman, the Three Nephites continue to appear from time to time and in various guises in later issues, providing him with clues, insights, and the warning to “Keep your wits about you!”

Madman Adventures is not the only comic series in which Allred has drawn from his Mormon background. In an interview about another one of his series, *Red Rocket 7*, Allred says he drew his inspiration for his race of alien heroes—the “Celestonians”—from reading accounts of his Mormon pioneer ancestors.



JEFF JOHNS
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Here, finally, was an active, positive expression of the power of love. This was not merely passively bearing, enduring, hoping, and being patient and hang-doggish.

This passage cried out to me, rather colloquially, “Hey, Elder, with love as a companion, you can face anything—personal crises, familial crises, financial crises, work problems, illness, age, you name it, whatever. Quit moping around; quit standing around in that circle of pain you have constructed; get up on your hind legs and with love at your side and in your heart, live the abundant life! You really can love and help others—even yourself.” The great second commandment will never again seem so difficult for me.



STANLEY B. KIMBALL
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Twenty Years Ago in Sunstone

“THE USE AND ABUSE
OF RELIGION”

THE MARCH-APRIL 1982 ISSUE OF SUNSTONE contains an insightful article, written especially for SUNSTONE, by Kenneth Woodward, religion editor for *Newsweek*. In his reflection, Woodward shares his thoughts on many topics, including asking questions and seeking answers:

“Children, as we all know, are natural philosophers. When they wonder, children ask all the big questions. ‘Where did I come from?’ ‘What happens when you die?’ ‘Where is God—why can’t I see him?’ Such questions arise not only from the mind but from the heart as well. ‘Thou has made us for thyself, O Lord,’ declares St. Augustine, ‘and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee.’ Children not only want to know what God is like, they want to know him the way they know their own parents. They want an emotional attachment because such attachments are the cement of human connections. It is through emotions that we join and respond to others. They become a part of us and we a part of them. Without emotions we can know *about* each other but we cannot *know* each other. And it is through the ordinary experience of human connections, the disappointments as well as the exaltations, that we gain a glimmer of the Divine embrace. . . .

“We honor tradition by bringing our hearts’ most pressing questions to it, by turning childhood answers into questions for adult selves. That is the way adults recover the sense of wonder.

“The enemy of faith . . . and wonder is certitude. No one knows God with certitude. Every tradition, being a human response to the divine, conceals even as it reveals his face. We cannot be certain of God any more than we can be certain of ourselves or of those we love. Indeed, as theologian John Dunne has amply demonstrated, the more we try to make sure of another’s friendship or love, the more uncertain we become. And the more we try to make certain of ourselves, the more we

Sunspots

A CAFFEINE-FREE DIET COKE TO GO WITH THAT JELL-O DISH?

AIR NEW ZEALAND HAS A NICE WEBSITE FULL of helpful travel tips and information regarding their in-flight services <www.airnz.com>. As a carrier devoted to high-quality customer care, the airline assures travelers, "If you need a special meal during your flight for health, medical or religious reasons, or you have children with special needs, we will gladly accommodate you." The site then lists the special meals available: vegetarian

dishes, diabetic, kosher, Mormon, Hindu, and Moslem. Potential flyers are assured that each of the special religious meals "is designed according to the standards of the particular religious group." Whew! It's good to know that we'll be able to get our sliced ham, funeral potatoes, carrot and raisin Jell-O, and double-thick chocolate mint brownies next time we fly to New Zealand!

Thanks to BRIAN HALL, Bountiful, Utah, for this story tip.

lose ourselves in uncertainty. How much more true is this of God who so transcends all our categories of thought and desire?

"But the kind of religion we hear about today, the kind that is sold on television and door to door is the kind that appeals to insecure people seeking false certitude. In short, it is false religion. Jesus did not teach certitude but understanding. He himself learned through experience and growing insight what it meant to call God 'Abba' or Father. He established a relationship with the Father so intimate that those who proclaimed him the Christ saw in Jesus—especially his suffering and death—not only an act of atonement for sin but, as the evangelist John put it, 'the way, the truth, and the [light].' The way entails a quest, the truth a relationship, and the light an understanding. If I were an advice giver, I would warn against those who deny the quest, cheapen the truth, and block understanding. These are the true and ever present abusers of religion."

Margin Notes

LIVING INTENTIONALLY

Behold, they believed in Christ and worshiped the Father in his name, and also we worship the Father in his name. And for this intent we keep the law of Moses, it pointing our souls to him; and for this cause it is sanctified unto us for righteousness, even as it was accounted unto Abraham in the wilderness to be obedient unto the commands of God in offering up his son Isaac, which is a similitude of God and his Only Begotten Son.

—Jacob 4:5

IT HAS OFTEN BEEN SAID THAT THE ROAD TO HELL is paved with good intentions, but those who say it mean to cast aspersions at the intender, not the intent. Jacob 4:5 reports that the Nephites kept the Law of Moses for the intent of leading them to Christ, and doubtless that was the result for many of them. But we also know that for many descendants of Lehi, the Law of Moses became an end in itself (Jacob 7:7 gives a fine example), leading them even to deny the existence of

any Christ. Surely the miscarriage of the intent does not indicate that the intended purpose was wrong. It merely demonstrates how easily even godly purposes can be perverted.

I first realized that I was having unintended effects on the lives of other people when in 1995, a college friend in a talk quoted something I had said in 1992. Fortunately, I still agreed with the statement. But hearing it gave me a seasick sort of feeling, like I was standing on shifting ground. I am not a prophet; what I say is not scripture. Like most people, my viewpoint is constantly changing. So how many people are out there holding on to an outdated version of who I am or what I stand for, based on some foolish thing I might have said or did years ago? How many paths have turned to the right or the left due to my actions (or lack thereof) without my knowledge?

It seems as though all actions, even those that appear to take place within limited spheres of influence, have far-reaching and even unintended effects. For example, I like chocolate. I know that subsistence farmers in developing nations grow most of the world's cocoa beans. Most don't have their own channels of distribution, so they sell their crops for meager profits to corrupt middlemen. If everyone stopped using chocolate, these farmers would suddenly have no way to make a living. If, on the other hand, we all increased our consumption, their lives would not likely improve, only those of the brokers.

I'd like to think that the effects of my actions usually match my intent. For example, I use cloth diapers on my children. They are considered to have less of an environmental impact than disposable diapers and are cheaper in the long run, but they are significantly less convenient. I hope that the extra effort I put into my babies' hygiene will help preserve the quality of earth life for them and their children, but I have no guarantee. I also served a mission for the Church, and several people I taught in my "greenie" area were baptized. By the end of my eighteen-month mission, they were all inactive. Eight years later, I cannot work up the courage to go back to see if anyone I taught is still active, but there is now a temple in Massachusetts; that will have to suffice. I have found washing stinky diapers about as much fun as tracting, and I can only hope they both have a positive effect on the world.

It does seem that while good intent may not always yield

