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HAVE YOU ANY MONEY?

WHAT IS
ZION?
A DISTANT
V I E W
.....
**HUGH
NIBLEY**



SUNSTONE SYMPOSIUM XI

UNIVERSITY OF UTAH • 23-26 AUGUST 1989

GUEST SCHOLARS

Ann and Barry Ulanov, authors, *Picturing God*
 James Fowler, author, *Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian*
 Peter Novick, author, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession*

SELECTED PAPERS

Pillars of My Faith, *Richard Cracroft, Kathleen Flake, Sharon Swenson, Lawrence Young* • Religiosity of LDS Afro-Americans, *Jessie Embry*
 • Mormons, Christianity & World Religions, *Karl Sandberg* • Seven Heresies of Mormonism, *Dean May* • Mormon Women and the Pure
 Heart Problem, *Donlu Thayer* • Crooks, Con-Artists, and Crackpots, *Warner Woodworth* • Removing Racism & Sexism From Popular Mormon
 Theology, *Eugene England* • The Fifty Most Influential LDS Books, *Curt Bench* • A Response to Mormon Neo-Orthodoxy, *Blake Ostler & Mark
 Gustavson* • Pre-mortal Calling and Mate Selection, *C. Jess Groesbeck* • Mormon Women: A Kingdom of Priests, *Margaret Toscano* • The Book of
 Mormon in Jacksonian America, *Dan Vogel* • Mormon Women as Writers, *Phyllis Barber* • Aunty-Mormon I Aint, Nor Anti-Mormon Neither,
Samuel Taylor • Why a Convert Can Never Truly Be A Utah Mormon, *Tom Blakely* • LDS Scriptures & Ancient Near Eastern Belief, *John
 Tvednes* • Sex and the Single Adult, *Robert Rees* • Why Isn't the Doctrine and Covenants Also the Most Correct Book, *Andrew F. Ehat*

SELECTED PANELS

"Not Commanded In All Things": Alternate Voices In the Church • The Experience of Being A Mormon Male • Addictive Aspects of Mormon
 Society • Improving Church Worship • Mormon Women Folklore • Animal Rights and Mormonism • Repentance • Prayers and Intellec-
 tuals • Anger and Righteousness • The Simple Life and the Gospel • LDS and Other Christian Approaches to Homosexuality • Mormon
 Financial Scams • The Phenomenon of "Hugh Nibley Depression" • The Challenges of the International Church • The Liberating Aspects of
 Interfaith Dialogue • Church Leadership Styles • Home Teaching • Mormonism and the Land • Women and the Priesthood

BENEFIT CONCERT

A new symphony by Mormon composer William Call will be performed at St. Marks Cathedral on Sunday, 27 August 1989, at 8:00 P.M.
 Proceeds will benefit the Sunstone Foundation.

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Cover *Brian Bean*

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READERS FORUM

CORRECTION

IN A LETTER responding to Armand Mauss's review of *Mormon Neo-Orthodoxy*, I originally wrote, "But perhaps that's the kind of violent reaction Kendall White would predict from a believer in the midst of a crisis. Because what White calls traditional Mormonism—Mauss's Church—is in crisis today."

In clarifying the sentence you altered its meaning. My intent was to state that liberal Mormonism is in crisis, as illustrated by the tone of Brother Mauss's review. Your alteration made a different point, namely, that traditional Mormonism is responsible for a crisis in the Church at large. While I find that thesis intriguing, I did not assert it.

J. FREDERIC VOROS, JR.
Salt Lake City

A MOST INGENIOUS PARADIGM

CONGRATULATIONS ON PUBLISHING Robert Lauer's insightful play "Digger" (SUNSTONE 12:6). Aside from a few minor historical quibbles that I may have regarding his introduction (eg., I am not convinced that village scryers were commonly called "digger" although "money digger" was an extremely popular title), Lauer has astutely captured the complexities of the youthful Joseph Smith. "Digger" presents a believable image of Smith who was periodically prone to fraud because, paradoxically, of the depth of his sincerity. This is an interesting paradigm which may be applicable to strictly historical appraisals of the Palmyra seer.

BRENT LEE METCALFE
Salt Lake City

A CONFESSION

I WAS EXCITED to learn of your student essay contest. There is always a need for critical thinking. Since universities are important centers of intellectual activity, it is appropriate that they are also the focus of inquiry. Your contest will serve as a catalyst for thought about the issues and experiences of student life.

It is therefore with deep regret that I am not submitting an essay to your contest. It is not that I didn't have the time; I will not offer that feeble excuse. Although undergoing an

education is often demanding, there are many long breaks and I can always afford to skip a few "job cultivation" functions. Nor is it because I didn't try; I did, and was horrified at the result.

Instead of a challenging inquiry, I found my effort was contrived and insincere. There was no insight, only a calculated attempt at producing exactly the right product. Stooping to academic commercialism, I had produced a typical student paper.

It hasn't taken long to succumb. I only recently returned to graduate school after working several years in industry. I was excited to again devote my time to inquiry and learning. I was appreciative of the rare privilege I had after being out of school. I sincerely wanted to learn some important truths that I felt our society needed.

Yet, after just a few months back in a university, my idealism is slowly evaporating. Expediency has replaced inquiry and competition has overshadowed enlightenment. I learn as directed, repeat on command. I worry about my grade point average. My most penetrating thinking seeks a clever way to beat the system.

I am disturbed that my lofty ideals were corrupted so quickly in a great center of idealism. It may be that the shock of returning to student poverty has precipitated panicked careerism. Perhaps I was never really idealistic in the beginning. However, I think there is something intrinsic to universities that deflects one away from altruistic learning.

A university may be an oasis of inquiry and learning, but it is also a huge bureaucracy complete with procedures, regulations, and authorization forms in triplicate. Administrative imperatives take priority over inquiry. Crass stupidity and mindless drudgery coexist with enlightenment.

Bureaucracies may hand out parking stickers or allocate scarce English classes with reasonable efficiency, but they have no procedures for dealing with enlightenment. Instead, the university bureaucracies use grades and degrees. Grades and degrees not only fit nicely in databases, but they are a useful currency outside the university, linking learning to less altruistic pursuits.

When something is measured and recognized, it becomes important, often transcending things of greater intrinsic worth. As universities quantify, enlightenment suffers. In the academic marketplace, thought and

ideas are reduced to commodities, to be packaged and traded for numbers and certificates.

In spite of my fresh start at school, I have rapidly been reconditioned to strive for these symbols of learning. As this end has come to justify my means, I produce more and learn less. A rare opportunity is diminished.

It would be unfair to place all the blame on the university. I would not be paying for the privilege of working long hours and starving if I didn't hope to get something besides enlightenment. Nor am I naive enough to ignore that grades, fellowships, and degrees provide the carrot (and stick) that inspire much of the intellectual activity on campuses.

Universities are wonderful institutions; I have always found it intellectually stimulating to be around them, particularly when I wasn't enrolled. Perhaps that is the secret of getting the most out of the university experience, being in the university but not of its bureaucracy.

Universities don't compel anyone to compromise their education. The choice is made freely. I decide to sacrifice the special guest lecture for a higher test score. I choose to limit my reading to the assigned chapters. I ignore important questions in favor of exam material.

It would be courageous to forget about grades, getting into graduate programs, and

future jobs. Yet if I claim there are more important things than success, wealth, and fame, I should be able to forsake them for enlightenment. I should be strong, resist careerism, hold to truth; but then I should be many things.

Please hold the contest again. I actually do reflect about my university experience often. Next time I could report on what it is like to get an education for its own sake. Perhaps I will, if my grades hold up.

SCOTT THORPE
Albany, CA

HISTORICAL FLAWS

I WAS PROVOKED by the book review on the three books about the recent forgery/murder scandal in Salt Lake City (SUNSTONE 12:5). That the forged letters would upset Mormons so much was, to me, rather funny. Joseph Smith was well-known to have been a gold seeker and to have used a peep-stone. It seems to me one of the reasons the documents were so realistic was because they were very much in character with the personality and background we have on Joseph Smith. The fact that the documents were forged should relieve Mormons is

absurd. It should also be mentioned that what evil men do should not reflect on the truth of a religion. This incident, the Mountain Meadows Massacre, and other black moments in Mormon history do not rob my testimony. On the contrary, if a church only had good and never contained struggles and searches within the hearts of the members it would seem superficial and would make me suspicious of the motives of its leaders and members. Life is complex and should never be replaced by some phony, pat, ex-post facto solution.

As a child I discovered that a relative who did genealogy for the family excluded an unsavory ancestor. Should the fact that this person lived life differently than I would make any difference in my acceptance of him in my family history? I hope that people realize that to exclude part of history merely reduces the validity of that history. Skeletons placed in the closet are usually later found and exposed. Hiding truth makes us wonder whether the given truth is true, important, biased.

Church members need to recognize our responsibility to history and not change it to suit our preconceived notions. Joseph Smith was like the character described in the Salamander letter. Without an accepting, believing, and questioning mind he might



"We're going to play 'Mormon Trivia.' Let's have the cautious church historians play against the reckless church historians."

have never sought for nor believed the first vision, but as some of us he would have shrugged it off. We belong to a religion of miracles and revelations. The scientific world would call that superstitious. We need to accept our religion and its history as a whole and realize that any organization with people has flaws. Those flaws merely show that people are human. Joseph Smith was the greatest man to live on the earth after Jesus Christ, but he was human. This realization should not be shocking.

MARY NELSON
Fort Dix, New Jersey

QUORUM WATCHING (KREMLIN STYLE)

AFTER READING YOUR news story on the organization of the Quorum of the

Twelve into three executive councils and how the three active senior apostles chair one of the councils and together make up the Correlation Committee (SUNSTONE 12:2), I noticed that this new hierarchy is reflected in the most recent photograph of the quorum. No longer are they arranged in two rows according to seniority—clearly showing the junior and senior apostles—but now the three executive council chairs, along with the ailing quorum president, are the only four on the prominent first row.

GEOFFERY AUTHUR JONES
Salt Lake City

Editor's response:

As the accompanying photographs illustrate, the 4-8 seating arrangement did not begin with the last sitting, nor has a 6-6 arrangement been the norm.

A PSALM

PSALM OF A GOSPEL DOCTRINE TEACHER

I know you can make use of the unlearned.
Indeed you may prefer them.
You move easily upon the void
To fill it with light.

The unformed to the perfectly formed
The miracle of creation. Praise. Praise.

But if—instead of void, there is clutter—
Can you move upon the face of these waters?
If—instead of darkness there is twilight,
A mind dim with contorted smatterings?

The deformed to the perfectly formed.
The miracle of redemption. Praise and Amen.

—KATHRYN KIMBALL



1965



1974



1984



1988

SUNSTONE WELCOMES CORRESPONDENCE. LETTERS FOR PUBLICATION SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO "READERS FORUM." WE EDIT FOR SPACE, CLARITY, AND TONE.

CHRISTIAN BODY BUILDING

By Elbert Eugene Peck



SHORTLY AFTER becoming the first editor of the *Seventh East Press*, an independent BYU student newspaper in the early 1980s, I was awakened by a phone call from a professor

who pleaded to talk with me before we went to press that morning. We had called him the night before for his response to an item which reported that his class syllabus contained uncredited copyrighted works; he denied the fact. When I met him at his office before the sun peeped over 'Y Mountain it was obvious he had spent a troubled night. He confessed that the at-cost priced syllabus did contain plagiarized materials but explained that he never intended to do wrong. Motivated by a desire to reduce the already exorbitant cost of textbooks for a strenuous class, one semester he had photocopied work problems for his students from supplementary textbooks. Over the years these continued to be included in his syllabus and, overcommitted, he annually promised to himself that with the next printing he would straighten out the situation. Sobbing, he said that if we printed the information he would lose his job. He apologized, said he was repenting, promised to promptly make corrections, and begged me to forgive him.

As I listened to him my eyes misted and I empathized with his tale, thinking of my many casual, stupid, yet non-malicious deeds which if broadcast would humiliate me. Identifying with his desire to be given slack I began to reply, "I forgive you . . ." but tightened my lips, catching the words. Who am I to forgive this man?, I thought. Who made me his judge? I sat in a long, for him uncomfortable, silence internally considering the unanticipated and horrifying temptations and dangers of my new position and prayed for help. Finally, not wanting to engender the enmity

of other faculty members and also desiring to avoid judging, I told him that we'd pull the story, that the *Press* was an intellectual newspaper interested in exploring ideas (a complement to the university) not in attacking personalities. Perhaps sometime in the future, without mentioning him, we might feature the issues involved in his plight.

As I left his office the morning sun was warming the earth and I felt a confirming peace on the outcome, but poking in my mind now was a persistent question about the proper role of independent voices in our religious community. Should we zealously investigate and publish such controversial information? I considered how in the American pluralistic society a vigorous even antagonistic press is essential to both check individual abuse and to inform the sovereign public. Yet, to me, that adversarial role didn't seem entirely appropriate to what BYU (and the Church) was about—a righteous society where people are of one mind and one heart (Moses 7:18) and where all activities are motivated by the Christian virtues, especially love.

Certainly the free exploration of issues and ideas furthers the gospel vision, but the us/them approach toward institutions and individuals tends to separate the reporter and others from the community, replacing celebration with cynicism and suspicion, cultivating hesitating doubt instead of unified action. And while undeniably dissent has, in the long run, benefited an at times guilty Church by challenging falsehoods and illuminating alternatives, lamentably it has often left the dissenter alienated. Further, factual and challenging reports, lacking charity, can engender polarizing anger, creating schism in the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:25). Also, the public exposure of an individual's sins complicates repentance (making everyone a judge, encouraging coverups), and when something is in print it makes it difficult for

a gossipy public to forget and let the person move on.

On the other hand, the desire to avoid scandal—public controversy—can stagnate growth, stifle truth, and smother individuals; without the dynamic that comes from diversity the Church would be a dead body (one reason, perhaps, President Kimball said, "if there were no converts the Church would shrivel and die on the vine"). After all, Paul's vision of a schism-free body of Christ is a community *with* variety, of very different but essential members, some much more attractive than others, each providing a unique service to the whole—hands, heads, hearts, eyes, nerves. The body is a splendid metaphor for a diverse Church in quest of unity (better than the centralized beehive which also stresses collective action). If, added to our established emphasis on conforming obedience which affords the strength of unified action, we also sustain diverse roles we then cultivate every member's unique contribution. Then, too, our power-checking commandments to make decisions in councils with the common consent of *all* members has practical significance.

For me, diversity is a key to understanding the role of independent agents in the Church, in whom God has placed spiritual gifts and the power to do good. It is almost a commonplace that most of our current Church programs began with the free will, independent (at times almost dissident) action of local leaders or visionary Saints engaging in causes to cultivate righteousness (see D&C 58:27-28). When we accept and encourage different talents, roles, and spiritual vocations we strengthen each member while blessing the body with their contributions. Nevertheless, while we must be tolerant of members' different callings, no one should presume that any member's contribution should dictate the whole: simply because the eyes report a candy store on the horizon and the taste buds register desire does not mean the body should respond, fortunately other members collaborate in the decision and hopefully the head makes the correct judgment, but neither should the eyes and taste buds be reprovved for their service. There is an inherent tension in diversity and, hence, the ever-present danger of schism. No wonder Paul followed his discussion on the body of Christ with his essay on charity.

What does this imply for the independent voices in the Church? (I refer, of course, to being independent in the sense of acting on one's own—unofficially—not in being independent of the Church as an alternative or substitute.) First, our actions should be

motivated by a desire to help the body as a whole, of which we are members (not an alien virus), and to care about all individual members. Sometimes independent voices are more clear about our critique than our motivation, which however sorrowful should come from a love of God and neighbor, a celebration of the Restoration, and a desire to establish Zion (which implies reform). Similarly, independent voices must not claim that all members should be like them or that they should be the head, nor should the other members reply "We have no need of thee," questioning their faith and worth. We must not see difference and disagreement as contention, nor demand that open discussion agree with determined policy (we can be of one mind on executing existing policy while still exploring future possibilities). The schismatic temptations—anger, hatred, contention, exclusion—are only truly avoided by the attributes of charity—kindness, gentleness, long-suffering patience, and meekness.

Independent voices—and every Latter-day Saint assumes that duty on occasion—are often like the sensory body members that provide important, sometimes disturbing, information which must be shared in love and be considered by the body. Sometimes a SUNSTONE reader or symposium attendee is offended by a presentation. Surprisingly, they lament the rigidity of the Church's Correlation Department (which is but the judgments of the head) but are very willing to exercise their own "spiritual quality control" over what is acceptable in such a forum. Of course there are standards (and SUNSTONE does make mistakes), but there is a need to be cautious about excessively restricting the independent honesty of our eyes, ears, and memory. After all, SUNSTONE is a forum for the *unofficial* exploration of ideas within our believing community, not a council determining policy or doctrine. *New Yorker* film critic Pauline Kael recently expressed the value of alternate perspectives, when asked

Is it possible that a critic could not have great taste and still show us something about the medium? "Yes, there are critics whose judgments are way off but whose perceptions of a movie are quite stunning. I'll read a review and think the person is blind to what the narrative is doing, but he'll describe certain details and I'll think, Gee, I took that in and yet I didn't fully register what it meant. . . . We read critics for the perceptions, for what they tell us that we didn't fully grasp when we saw the work. The

judgments we can usually make for ourselves." (*Interview*, April 1989, p. 130.)

A few months after becoming the editor of SUNSTONE—once incorrectly labeled the "watchdog on the Church"—and sorting through these issues (I probably always will be), I took advantage of one of the few perks of my job: a general conference press pass—no early arrival, no lines, a guaranteed Tabernacle seat. Although the press section is overwhelmingly occupied by LDS reporters, I ended up with two non-Mormon scholars on one side and a French journalist on the other. We had a thoughtful pre-session discussion watching the General Authorities mingle their

way to the stand. During the mid-point congregational song, my comrades didn't participate and, being surrounded, I felt awkward singing, primarily because of the reportorial distance I adopted from them. As the organ and the crowd continued through the verses, I became uncomfortable and ashamed about my emotional distance from my community and joined in the anthem, gustily singing "We'll sing and we'll shout with the armies of heaven, hosanna to God and the Lamb."

As Latter-day Saints, our independent voice is a member of the body of Christ and, to mix the metaphor, we must sing our part in his chorus. ☞

FIRST VISION

In the purest intellection
the word ceases.

So with Joseph:
the letters of the quoted page unbend,
loosen their grasp on the mind's own page,
whose blankness is answered by darkness
and then, the rejoinder of light.

At the center of the eye
the grove reshapes itself
according to the order of fire,
its pale wind hot, awash
with stranded syllables
and the resonance of spirits.

(Who can know the mind of the Lord?)

The wind gestures in a wordless song
that conceives the grove and him,
conceives itself upon all things in the woods.
Here, at the center of the ear
the song of holy ghosts
stuns the firmament that separates
the mind from all that is in Palmyra.

(Who can know the Lord of the mind?)

Here, at the center of the page
the vision becomes story,
huddled in the cocked shapes of letters—
the truest falsification of sight,
in which the eye discovers
light and dark precisely mingled,
word crouched against word,
upon which the mind paces
in its devout recitative
until, perhaps, in a pure intellection,
the word ceases.

—MICHAEL HICKS

TURNING THE TIME OVER TO . . .

Nola W. Wallace

THE CONTINGENCY OF WOMAN



IN 1844, SHORTLY before his death, Joseph Smith gave a discourse which has had profound significance for the development of Mormon thought. In it, he stated:

We say that God Himself is a self-existing being. . . . Who told you that man did not exist in like manner upon the same principles? . . . The mind or the intelligence which man possesses is co-equal with God himself. . . . The intelligence of spirits had no beginning, neither will it have an end. . . . The first principles of man are self-existent with God.¹

While the traditional Christian God had

NOLA W. WALLACE has a B.A. in English and is a member of the Sunstone National Advisory Board.

necessary being in that he could not *not* exist, the universe and mankind, being entirely of God's creation, had only contingent being and *could* not exist.² They had been created *ex nihilo*, by divine fiat.

Joseph Smith and his followers did not accept the traditional view. Not only was the universe created out of pre-existing material, but God himself had once been as humans now are, and though sufficiently perfect for all practical purposes he was still in some sense progressing and was genuinely and personally involved in the processes and happenings of this world.

Men and women were embarked on a path of eternal progression that could ultimately lead to godhood. Joseph Smith's doctrine included a Mother in Heaven, named but not clearly delineated. Though humans, like God,

had necessary being, they still depended on God in a spiritual sense. In *The Theological Foundations of the Mormon Religion*, Sterling M. McMurrin explains that

although Mormon doctrine holds that the person ultimately is uncreated and indestructible, it nevertheless holds as well that the soul is subject to salvation . . . and that, although man's ultimate destiny is determined by human merit, salvation is possible only through Jesus Christ and by the grace of God.³

If women and men are held to be ultimately uncreated, and having necessary being, why have I titled this paper "The Contingency of Woman"? Because historically it is never safe to assume that what applies to the male automatically applies to the female. In Mormon theology, as in other Christian traditions, woman is created in the image of the Divine. In Mormonism, unlike other Christian traditions, woman has necessary being in relation to God; yet as Adam's rib, she, like her traditional Christian sisters, has contingent physical being in relation to man. Much of the justification for the subordination of women found in the New Testament is based on the creation story of Genesis 1-2, which most Mormons uncritically accept as literal truth.

Jews and Christians alike appear to have traditionally assumed a second-class status for the female, basing that belief on the biblical story of the Fall. Christians developed a theology of the sin of Adam and Eve: the Fall had something to do with sex, Eve was more guilty than Adam, the event resulted in children being born in sin, and all humans depended on the redeeming sacrifice of Jesus Christ or faced a nasty future in the world to come.

Mormons are more optimistic. We reject the sinfulness of infants, and while acknowledging the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice, we believe the fall was necessary for mankind to get on with the business of progression. We believe that "men will be punished for their own sins and not for Adam's transgression" (Article of Faith 2), but seemingly find no inconsistency in placing the female subordinate to the male—a status other Christians have traditionally attributed to the Fall.

Societal attitudes about ourselves and our relationship to Deity develop over time. When we are enlightened by revelation, we must still assimilate the new information or attitudes into our religious and cultural milieu. Thus I believe we can better understand Mormonism by looking at the development—

historically, archaeologically, and anthropologically—of the religious beliefs we profess. A brief review of how ideas about Deity's personality may have evolved can help us put Joseph Smith's revolutionary teachings in a broader perspective.

ACCORDING to some scholars, in the beginning of religion God was a woman. There was a time, it is theorized, when primitive peoples did not understand biological paternity and the connection between coition and conception was not clearly made. Under these circumstances the womb as origin of new life would have been a source of wonder. Hence, the creative principle would have been seen as female; a goddess, not a god, would have been the object of worship.⁴ We see evidence of these attitudes in ancient "Venus" figurines, which date back as far as 25,000 B.C. and appear in archeological sites across Europe and Asia. Of them, James Mellaart of the Institute of Archeology of London has written, "Art makes its appearance in animal carvings and in statuettes of the supreme deity, the Mother Goddess."⁵

Apparently, Goddess worship was widespread, first with an Earth Mother figure and later Queen of Heaven. The second-century writer Apuleius, author of the comic and satiric "romance" *The Golden Ass*, described the Goddess and Queen of Heaven in ways that clearly tie her both to contemporary Isis-worship and to the Astarte plaques found in Egypt, Lebanon, Israel, Jordan, and Iraq dated circa 1250 B.C. In *The Golden Ass*, the Goddess says, "I am she that is the natural mother of all things . . . my divinity is adored throughout the world . . . by many names. The Phrygians call me the Mother of the Gods . . . the Egyptians call me by my true name, Queen Isis."⁶

Where a Goddess was worshipped, social structure tended to be matrilineal, with inheritance passed on through the female line. And not surprisingly, women enjoyed a higher social status when deity was female. But gradually Goddess worship declined. First, to the Mother-Goddess a male consort or son was added who rapidly became the dominant figure. The identity of the consort/son merged with a storm-god into a male Creator-God who headed the pantheon of gods and goddesses; the power of creation and fertility was transferred from the goddess to the god. However, as Gerda Lerner has written in *The Creation of Patriarchy*:

No matter how degraded and commodified the reproductive and

sexual power of women was in real life, their essential equality could not be banished from thought and feeling as long as the goddesses lived and were believed to rule human life. Women must have found their likeness in the goddess, as men found theirs in the male gods. The power and mystery of the priestess was as great as that of the priest.⁷

Although women retained a tenuous equality in spiritual matters, their political status in this period was one of complete subordination. Lerner has evolved a working hypothesis to explain this initial male dominance, which she holds to be "a historic phenomenon in that it arose out of a biologically determined given situation and became a culturally created and enforced structure over time."⁸

Since tribal taboos forbade marrying within one's own tribe, the exchange of marriageable women began. While this arrangement may have first been mutually agreed upon by the sexes, it became institutionalized when the hunter-gatherers turned to agriculture, a more labor-intensive way of life. Woman's reproductive capability became a tribal resource, a commodity to be exchanged or otherwise acquired. Woman may well have been the first "private property."

By the time of the biblical Abraham, a patriarchal system was already the cultural norm. The family structure reflected in the Old Testament was descriptive of the existing surrounding society, and was not necessarily of divine origin, as many Mormons claim. Slavery, which had begun with the subjugation of women, later included men. All slaves performed labor and services for their masters without pay. For women, sexual service was a condition of slavery; often, the same woman was slave to the wife and concubine to the husband. For example, in Genesis we read "And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the Lord hath restrained me from bearing; I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her" (Genesis 16:2).

The story of Rachel and Leah is another example: "Now my husband will love me," said Leah, when she had borne Jacob a son (Genesis 29:32). "Give me children, or else I die," begged the barren Rachel (Genesis 30:1), and later, "Behold my maid Bilhah, go in unto her; and she shall bear upon my knees, that I may also have children by her" (Genesis 30:3). Barren wives, even beloved ones, were counted less worthy, indeed, they

counted *themselves* worthy only in terms of their ability to reproduce.

From reading the Old Testament, one could argue that the Abrahamic covenant destroyed any equality of the sexes. In a Hebrew reading of Genesis, The Creator-God was not allied with *any* female, goddess or otherwise, for *any* part of creation. Adam was created from dust; the female was formed from Adam's rib and named woman by Adam "because she was taken out of Man" (Genesis 2:23). In naming and defining woman, inverting the natural process by which woman brings life from *her* body, man became the "mother" of woman. Her subsequent child-bearing was contingent upon *his* having given symbolic birth to *her*.

The question "Who gives life?" was now answered: The male Creator-God and his *male* creations. Genesis 6:1 reads "when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them. . . ." As Lerner notes, "not only the tracing of lineage, procreation itself had been turned into a male act. There are no mothers involved in it."⁹ Similarly, the circumcised penis as a token of the covenant replaced the symbol of the vulva which figured in Goddess worship. The "seed" or semen of the male was now the symbol of procreative ability.

Thus, the Israelite culture developed a male-centered reading of Genesis, and like ancient Mesopotamia and Israel, Greece of the eighth through fifth centuries B.C. was a patriarchal society that accepted slavery. Aristotle's view of reproduction, influential in developing Western thought, was that the female merely provided passive incubation for the male's "active" semen. Between the Bible and Aristotle, in Lerner's words,

we see the emergence of two symbolic constructs which assert and assume the existence of two kinds of human beings—the male and the female—different in their essence, their function, and their potential. This metaphoric construct, the "inferior and not quite completed female," became embedded in every major explanatory system in such a way as to take on the life and force of actuality.¹⁰

AN important side to this apparently male-dominated view of humanity is that a female element never entirely disappeared from the Divine. Despite Judaism's on-going monotheism, *hokmah*—"wisdom" in English,

Sophia in Greek—appeared as a hypostasis or personified attribute of god, and “functioned virtually as a goddess among the Hellenistic Jews of the first century B.C.”¹¹ Although this manifestation of the feminine archetype never achieved separate divine status in the Judaic tradition, canonized portions of the book of Proverbs include tantalizing verses which personify wisdom transcending mere attribute.¹²

I am Wisdom, My neighbor is
intelligence. . . .
The Lord possessed me, the first prin-
ciple of his sovereignty
Before any of his acts.
When he laid the strong foundation
of the earth—
Then I was beside him binding all
together;
I was his daily joy,
Constantly making merry in his
presence.
Rejoicing in the habitable world
And delighting in the human race.¹³

Similarly, Latter-day Saints have not canonized references to a Mother in Heaven, but do cherish such “inspired common sense” as Eliza R. Snow’s poem “O My Father.”¹⁴ Joseph Smith’s radical theology led to a revolutionary vision for the Church. He included an egalitarian female element in the nature of God and humankind; he sensed the presence of a Mother in Heaven. The Church would not be subject to limiting dogma; rather a prophet should teach correct principles and let people govern themselves. From revealed principles, rules evolved in response to need, study, and inquiring of the Lord.

As a charismatic prophet opening a new dispensation, Joseph inevitably offended society’s sense of what was appropriate and moral. Sometimes his innovations seemed advanced even to his followers. His proposed structure for the Relief Society, for example, appears to have troubled some of the women. The Nauvoo Relief Society minutes of 30 March 1842 state that “Pres. Joseph Smith arose—spoke of the organization of the Society. Said he was going to make of this society a kingdom of priests as in Enoch’s day.”¹⁵

After Joseph Smith’s death, and despite the fact that *society* in the Relief Society minutes invariably means *Relief Society*, the word *society* was changed to *Church* in the version found in the *History of the Church*. According to Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon Cook:

This change obscured the important fact that these minutes demonstrate that at least a month before he gave endowment ordinances in their

fullness for the first time (4 May 1842), Joseph Smith intended that women would receive ordinances promising them that they would be queens and priestesses in eternity. Moreover, Joseph Smith conveyed the impression that husbands and wives would receive the fullness of the Priesthood blessings.¹⁶

With the founding of the Relief Society, Joseph Smith established what Maureen Ursenbach Beecher has described as a “significant quorum parallel to those priesthood quorums already in order for men.”¹⁷ Pertaining to the authority he was bestowing, Joseph said, “I now turn the keys to you in the name of God and the Society shall rejoice and knowledge and intelligence shall flow down from this time.”¹⁸

Those 28 April 1842 minutes provide a wonderful insight into Joseph Smith’s thinking. He told the women that he was speaking because “some little things was circulating in the Society, that some persons were not going right in laying hands on the sick, &c.” To paraphrase, he told them it was appropriate for them to heal the sick and implied that still greater gifts were in store for them when the Church was “organized in its proper order.” He reminded them gently, “if God has appointed him and chosen him as an instrument to lead the Church, why not let him lead it through?” He spoke with urgency, and was delivering the keys to this society and to the Church.¹⁹

It is not surprising that with Joseph’s death, his more traditional successors had second thoughts about increasing women’s autonomy. According to Beecher, “it seems clear from John Taylor’s 1880 comments that Emma Smith’s use of her power as president to oppose the introduction of plural marriage forced the 1844 abolition of the society.”²⁰ Leaders faced many challenges trying to keep the Church intact, and without the founding prophet’s forceful personality and transcendent personal vision, the impetus behind the Relief Society was lost. Both Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball, in 1845 and 1846, vigorously opposed the reinstatement of the Relief Society, which had been disbanded in 1844.²¹

And yet, despite these setbacks, the women who had shared a vision of exercising personal spiritual gifts such as washing, anointing, and laying on of hands in administering to the sick felt secure in their right to these gifts. In 1884, responding to a

query, Eliza R. Snow wrote in the *Woman’s Exponent*:

Any and all sisters who honor their holy endowments, not only have the right but should feel it a duty whenever called upon to administer to our sisters in these ordinances, which God has graciously committed to His daughters as well as to his sons. . . .²²

But as the years passed, women who exercised these gifts were thought to be encroaching upon priesthood powers, and meaningful participation in spiritual gifts outside the temples became restricted. Finally in 1946, with the advice that “it is far better for us to follow the plan the Lord has given us and send for the Elders of the Church to come and administer to the sick and afflicted,”²³ Elder Joseph Fielding Smith ended women’s official right to exercise these spiritual gifts.

The question remains: who has correctly enunciated the Lord’s will in this matter? Was it Joseph Smith, whose revelations and far-reaching vision established the Church, or subsequent leaders who understood the plan differently? I find a relevant response in the Book of Mormon:

And again, I exhort you, my brethren, that ye deny not the gifts of God, for they are many; and they come from the same God. And there are different ways that these gifts are administered . . . and they are given by the manifestations of the Spirit of God unto men, to profit them.

For behold, to one is given by the Spirit of God, that he may teach . . . and to another, exceeding great faith; and to another, the gifts of healing by the same spirit. . . .

And I would exhort you, my beloved brethren, that ye remember that . . . all these gifts of which I have spoken, which are spiritual, never will be done away, even as long as the world shall stand, only according to the unbelief of the children of men. . . .

And wo unto them who shall do these things away and die, for they die in their sins, and they cannot be saved in the kingdom of God; and I speak it according to the words of Christ; and I lie not (Moroni 10:8-11, 19, 26).

If I read these verses correctly, the gifts of the Spirit come from God, they are auto-

mous, and are beyond the jurisdiction of any earthly authority to bestow or deny. And despite the male pronouns of these verses, they are available to *all*. Fearing censure by Church authorities, lacking confidence in themselves, or not accepting responsibility for their own actions, some Mormon women asked questions which did not need to be asked—in essence casting themselves as “children” in relation to the parent authority figures. After the death of Joseph Smith, there were many authority figures to assume that role.

Joseph Smith, after delivering the keys of authority to the society, had said, “The female part of communities are apt to be contracted, in their views. You must not be contracted . . . After this instruction, you will be responsible for your own sins. . . .”²⁴ With these words he seemed to be inviting women to move into spiritual adulthood, to break the bonds of psychological contingency and subordination. Many women—such as Eliza R. Snow—comprehended his vision for them and moved into greater autonomy, all the while respecting Church authority. This is an example I believe all Mormon women can follow.

Although from an official perspective spiritual gifts are now denied women, we still have Moroni’s words on the gifts of God. And perhaps more importantly, we have Joseph Smith’s words on the use and misuse of priestly power:

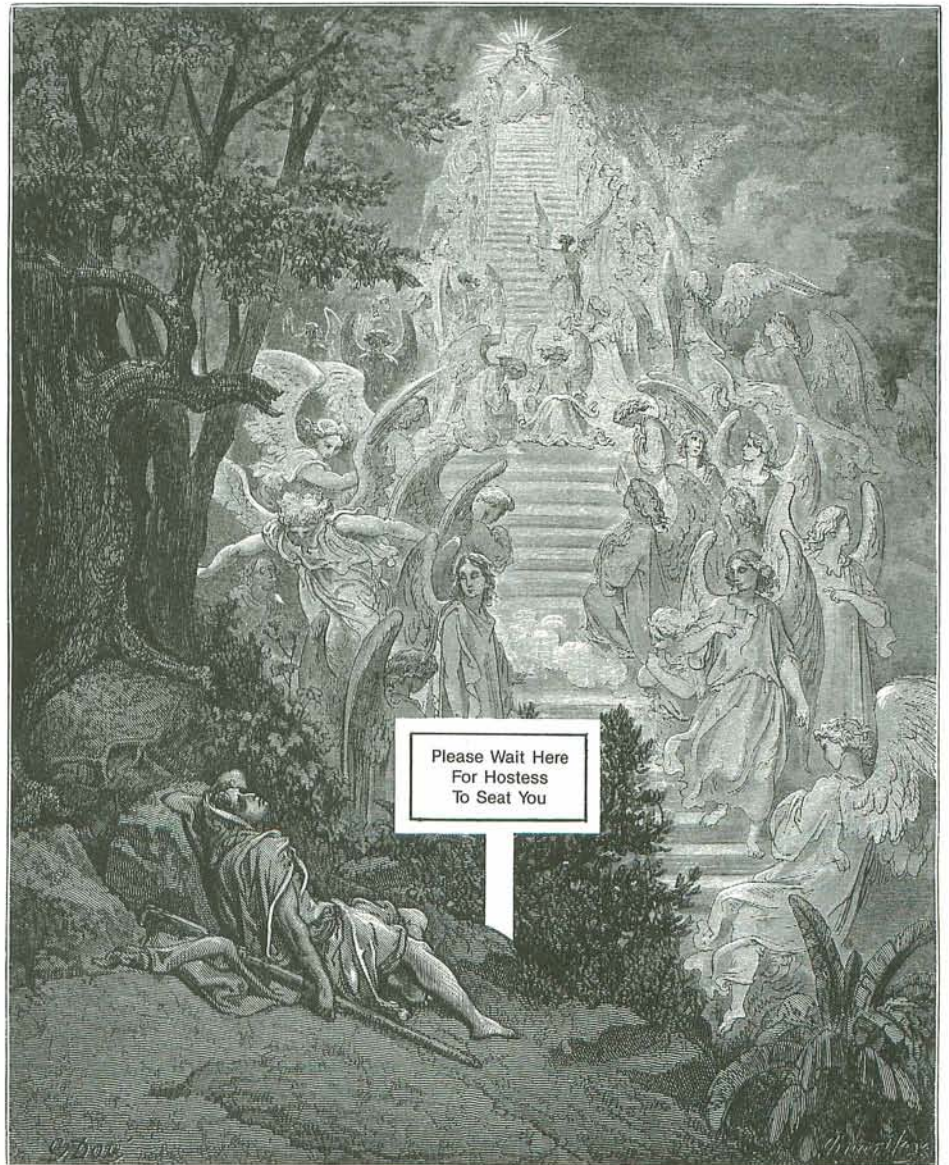
The rights of the priesthood . . . may be conferred upon us, it is true; but when we undertake to cover our sins, or to gratify our pride, our vain ambition, or to exercise control or dominion or compulsion upon the souls of the children of men, in any degree of unrighteousness, behold, the heavens withdraw themselves; the Spirit of the Lord is grieved; and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the priesthood or the authority of that man (D&C 121:36-37).

The last word has not been written on these subjects. The Gospel is open-ended; we believe that God “will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God” (Article of Faith 9). We must, male and female, leaders and followers keep our minds eager to ask for, our hearts unbiased to prepare for, and our spirits open to receive further revelation. ☪

NOTES

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19. Ehat and Cook, p. 115.
20. Beecher, p. 15.
21. Beecher, p. 15, 18. See also Seventies Record, 9 March 1845, holograph, LDS Archives.
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23. Newell, p. 23.
24. Ehat and Cook, p. 117-118.



INTERVIEW

READING THE BIBLE AS A LOVE LETTER

A Conversation with Phyllis Tribble

Phyllis Tribble is a professor of Old Testament at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. Much of her recent research has focused on feminist interpretation of the Bible. She is the author of *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (1978) and *Tests of Terror* (1984). Understandably some of her views differ from Mormon theology, yet her approach and perspective challenge us to reexamine the Bible with increased rigor and devotion. This interview was conducted with a group of interested individuals immediately after Ms. Tribble's address at the Sunstone Symposium IX on 27 August 1987.

WERE YOU ALWAYS INTERESTED IN FEMINIST THEOLOGY?

I completed graduate school in 1963, before the second wave of the feminist movement. When I moved to Boston in 1969 feminist questions were being asked: "How does feminism work with your academic subject?" "Is there some relationship between your field, the Bible, and feminism?" At that point I got interested in feminism and the Bible, where before I was just interested in the Bible.

SOME SAY THE FEMINIST APPROACH READS THINGS INTO THE SCRIPTURE THAT AREN'T THERE.

A text does not have a single meaning; literature opens itself to multiple interpretations. This position is distinguished from two others: One, that literature, the Bible, Shakespeare, or whatever, has only one meaning, the author's; two, that a text can mean anything you want it to mean. I disavow both these positions. Though meanings are not limitless, a text may well have a life beyond the intention of its author. With the Bible, authorial intentionality is difficult to establish; in some ways that frees us. We don't know a biblical author's intention and the historical-critical methodology for determining it allows a wide range of options. Additionally, a text,

especially the biblical text, has a way of undercutting interpretation. A view may be proposed but then the text will come back to refute it. So it's a lively interchange in reading the text. When someone says, "You're reading into the text," I consider that assertion, because it may be true. Actually, as a general statement that is always true—we're always reading into the text. We don't come with a blank mind. We cannot possibly read the text the way it was read in 1500 C.E., or in 600 B.C.E. In some sense we're hindered and liberated by our own historical period.

Reading is circular. Interpretations I make of the text may well be altered sometime down the road by someone else or at this time by someone who stands at a different point. It's like seeing a Zen garden with its thirteen beautifully placed rocks. Depending on where you stand, you can see three, or seven, or all but one, but there's no place where you can stand and see all the rocks at one time; you have to move around. Texts are like that. They give some of their truths and some of their riches from one position, and then you read them from another and you see something else.

HOW DO YOU RESOLVE THE QUESTION OF THE AUTHORITY OF ONE INTERPRETATION OVER ANOTHER?

That is a tough question, and I think that's where feminism is pushing faith. It is pushing this whole question of authority—"By what authority do you do this?"—and it is juxtaposing claims to authority: "Patriarchy has read this way, but look, here's another way of reading the text and you show me why it's not valid." So feminism isn't answering the question as much as forcing the question. More and more the issue is going to the question of authority. And there are competing authorities, as there were in ancient Israel, one prophet countering another prophet. No one was ever able to solve that problem. Some

people refer to it as the Achilles' Heel of prophecy, and say that's why prophecy eventually petered out—because it couldn't answer the problem of competing and conflicting authorities.

On a different level, the Bible speaks authentically to my existence and in that existential sense the Bible is an authoritative voice for me. When I say "speaks authentically to my existence," I don't mean it always says what I want to hear, that it always confirms me, or that what it says is always good and right and pure. I do mean that it functions as a mirror in which I see who I am and who the world is. The world is not a single pure picture, but a mess, and the Bible reflects that mess. It has good things in it, and bad things. Now, when you look in a mirror, it functions as an authority for you. It shows you what you look like but it leaves open what you do about that. You may say, "Well, I don't think this looks so bad," or, "I look terrible, I've got to clean up." Once the mirror has made a picture available to you, you can make decisions about that picture. The Bible makes pictures available to us, or, to use the phrase from Deuteronomy, God says to Israel, "I set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Now choose life that ye may live."

HOW DOES THAT RESOLVE THE QUESTION OF AUTHORITY?

We use authority in relative ways. We call the official speakers for certain positions "authorities." When Jesus was asked the question of authority, he refused to answer. I take great comfort in that because I do not have to answer that question. There is something about the relativizing of all authority that is profoundly scriptural.

YOU'RE DESCRIBING A COMMUNITY OF AUTHORITIES WITH EACH MEMBER CONTRIBUTING THEIR PICTURE—THEIR GIFT—AND CORRECTING PREVIOUS PERSPECTIVES.

That is the hermeneutical process for feminist, Jungian, patriarchal, or any other readings of the text. The wonderful thing about the process is that you are saved from idolatry. The sin of idolatry makes idols out of authority, be it the Bible, the Tabernacle, the synagogue, or whatever. And if there is one thing scripture is always shattering, it's idol making. The very moment when you say, "Now, I've got it! This is *the* interpretation," scripture comes along and says, "Kill it." It's the Genesis 22 paradigm: "Kill your son Isaac,

your only son, the one whom you love." What had happened there was idolizing the child of promise, saying, "This is it." So God said, "Kill that promise, because you have now made an idol out of it." Tennyson's poem comes to mind. "Our little systems have their day, they have their day, and cease to be. They are but broken lights of thee, and thou, O Lord, art more than they."

WHAT ABOUT JESUS' GENDER?

Jesus was a man. But he was unlike the males of his culture; he didn't fit the pattern. One could say, given the information we have, he was "less a male." That is, we don't know that he married or had offspring. However, our faith is not in the Jesus of history; our faith is in the Christ. There is both continuity and discontinuity between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith.

One point of discontinuity is specifically gender or sexuality. Here I give you my interpretation of Paul's Galatians passage, "In the Christ there is neither male nor female." Most often we interpret it to say something about us as Christians. This interpretation can be dangerous; it can be used to perpetuate patriarchy. One can say, "I don't have any problem with patriarchy because in Christ there isn't any male or female and, of course, we're all in Christ." You then cover up a problem. I don't think that was Paul's intention; nor is it an accurate exegesis. There's another side to this. The statement not only says something about us (that in the vision of God sexuality isn't an issue), but it also says something about the Christ: the Christ is neither male nor female. That is the discontinuity with the Jesus of history. So when people ask me, "Can a male savior save women?" I say, "No, and a male savior can't even save men." They are confusing Jesus the male with the Christ, in whom there is neither male nor female.

DO YOU SELECT TEXTS FOR STUDY BECAUSE THEY SUPPORT YOUR INTERPRETATION?

Sometimes it's the text that raises the question; sometimes it's the questions that leads us to the text. You have a question and you work it through in the text and it gives you another question and another text comes. Recently, I have pondered this question of authority because Miriam is the one who raised it, "Does God speak only to Moses? Does God not also speak to us?" Feminism opens up Miriamic traditions. Earlier the ques-

tion was, "Is the rule of man over woman decreed by God?" That opened up an exegesis of Genesis 2:4. Another time the question was, "Although you've found happy texts like the Book of Ruth and the Song of Songs, what are you going to do with unhappy stories like the sacrifice of the daughter of Jephthah?" Working with one text that doesn't answer a question may lead to another question and another text.

One needs to learn to read texts closely but not literally. It's very important to distinguish between those two things, especially in a country where fundamentalism is on the rampage, promoting literal reading. People confuse that kind of reading with close reading. Close reading is comparable to reading a love letter. When someone writes you a love letter and says, "Your eyes are as blue as a Utah sky on a balmy day and your breasts are like the Wasatch Mountains," and all that, how do you read it? You read it very closely and you say, "Why just a balmy day? Why those mountains? Why not these mountains? Why did he or she put a period here? Why not an exclamation mark?" You're not reading the letter literally; you're not reading that your breasts are really mountains. But you are reading it very closely. So I read the Bible as a love letter.

CAN THE SONG OF SONGS BE READ SYMBOLICALLY AS THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE WOMAN—THE BRIDE, THE CHURCH—TO GOD?

Some people have done that. One way it developed was to say that this erotic poetry came to Israel from outside sources that contained love poetry about a male and female deity. Originally fertility cult poetry, it got redivinized in Israel. If you follow this view, then you have sexuality in the realm of divinity. I can see that as a historical process, but I wouldn't follow it as a theological interpretation.

The God of scripture is beyond sexuality, neither male nor female, nor a combination of the two. Many places in the Bible God is described as a male and a few places as a female. But that is not to say that God as God is male, or female, or male and female. The Genesis 1 text is helpful in making a distinction between God and Godlike—God and the image of God. God creates sexuality but God is not a sex, nor two sexes. God creates in the image male and female but God is not the image; God is beyond male and female. For among other reasons, I don't bring the Song of Songs into discussion of the deity.

Surprisingly, for many, the Song puts eroticism in the context of sacred. This liberating understanding puts a certain kind of responsibility on sexuality. It is not license to exploit the physical being of each other. As a part of the canon, the Song of Songs belongs to the God who created us male and female. Sexuality, when biblically centered, is an act of worship, in which people not just enjoy each other but testify to the goodness of the creator.

Many parallels occur between Genesis 2 and Song of Songs. In fact, one could say that the Song is a commentary, an expansion, of the idyllic setting in the Garden before the expulsion: "bone of bones, the flesh of flesh." These two texts share mutual symbols: the garden, eating, animals, and water. In many ways these passages resonate within a canonical interpretation.

IS IT APPROPRIATE THEN TO TAKE SYMBOLS AND LANGUAGE FROM ONE BOOK AND USE THEM AS SYMBOLS IN ANOTHER?

I think it's fun to play in scripture, to see scripture interpreting scripture, standing in judgment on scripture, and redeeming scripture. There's an interesting scriptural conversation going on. But as soon as we find a text that we like a great deal, we're back to the danger of idolizing. When that happens some other text rears its head, I hope, and saves us.

PALENQUE*

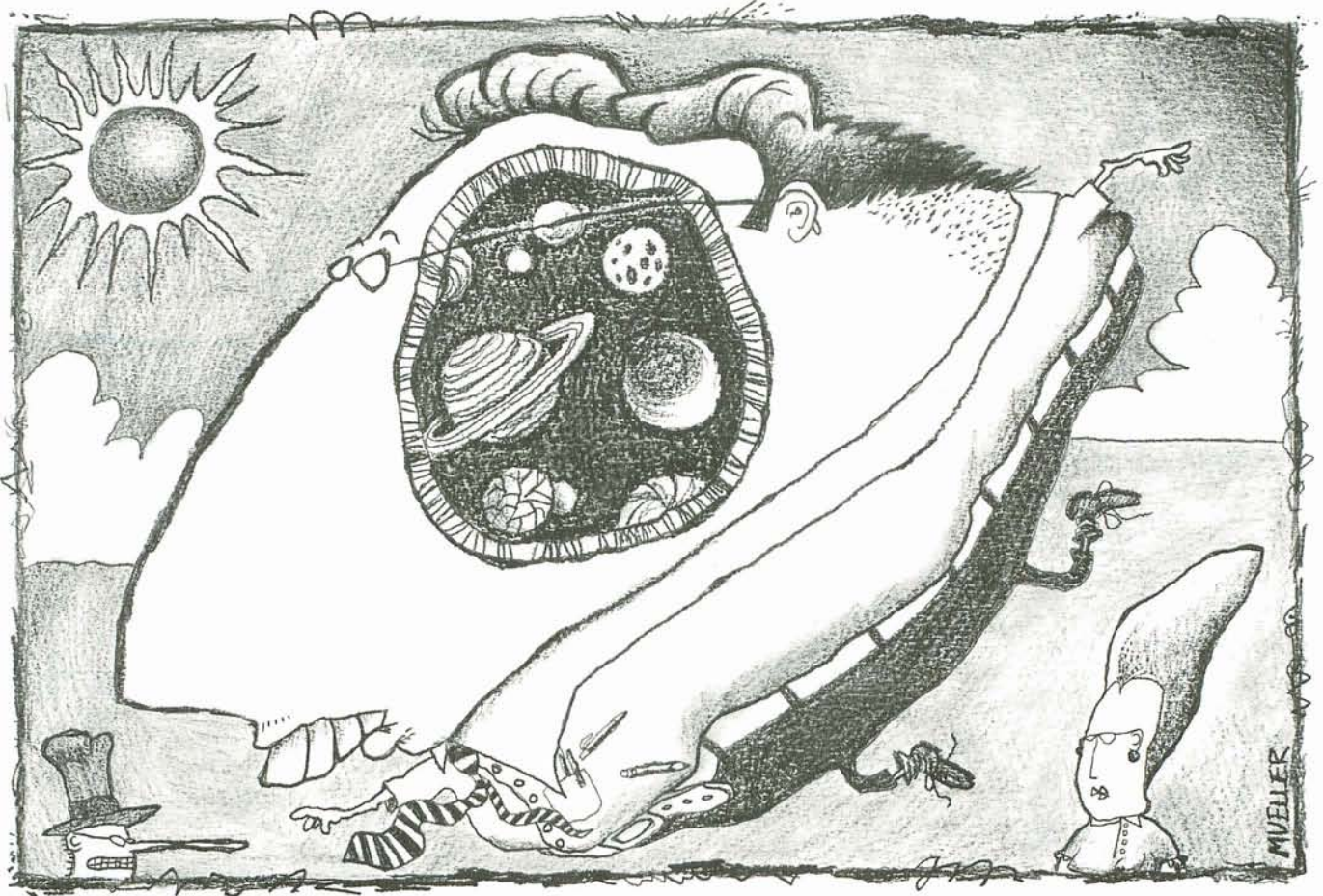
Oxygen offers no breath in the air
of overripe bananas and a temple
concealed with sprawling vines.
It makes the message of a descendantless
culture difficult to interpret. You will not
learn it from the one-time valley child
Now suckling tequila, nor from those
With proper degrees picking endlessly
At the records. One must be still.
The answer is in the cry of the macaw—
And the sound of lichen pulverizing rock.

—LAURA HAMBLIN

*Palenque: one of the most important archaeological metropolises in ancient Mayan civilization, located near Chiapas, Mexico

MYSTICISM AND MORMONISM: AN LDS PERSPECTIVE ON TRANSCENDENCE AND HIGHER CONSCIOUSNESS

By Mark Edward Koltko



AMONG LATTER-DAY SAINTS, THE INJUNCTION TO “MAGNIFY one’s talents” has the status of an Eleventh Commandment. We talk a lot about developing strong spirits and bodies.

MARK EDWARD KOLTKO is the father of four children, and a doctoral student in the counseling psychology program at New York University. This essay is a version of papers presented at the 1987 Washington Sunstone Symposium and the 1987 Sunstone Symposium IX in Salt Lake City.

What of the mind? We are great proponents of education—but are there levels of mental development which one cannot reach through schooling and study alone?

According to some ancient traditions, the most highly developed minds are not those of the poets, the artists, the scientists or the philosophers, nor even the prophets. Rather, they are those of the mystics, the people who have experienced “higher” states of consciousness.¹ Although difficult to describe or comprehend through everyday language, these experiences can transform the lives of the people who have

them; they are also remarkably consistent across cultures and history. On the whole, people who integrate mystical experiences into their lives seem to be happier, healthier in mind and body, and more creative. It may be that such people also develop important abilities and come to know the mind of God in a special way.

In this essay, I hope to acquaint you with some basic characteristics of the mystical experience. I will consider mysticism in light of the Latter-day Saint gospel, and I will conclude with some things that mysticism can offer the Mormons.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE

Several psychologists and philosophers have arrived at a loose consensus concerning the essential qualities of the mystical or transcendent experience.² A given experience may not have all of these qualities, but it will have some of them. Different experiences may also have these qualities to different degrees. The eight central characteristics are:

The "ego quality." During the experience, the person may lose the sense of self, and feel absorbed into something greater.

The "unifying quality." During the experience, the person may feel that "everything is one."

The "inner subjective quality." The person may feel that some things possess consciousness which we don't usually regard as being conscious, like trees, or the Earth itself.

The "temporal/spatial quality." The person may experience time and space differently, and may even feel that the experience occurs outside the normal boundaries of space and time.

The "noetic quality." The person may feel that the experience is a source of true knowledge.

The "ineffable quality." The experience may be impossible to express in normal language.

The "positive emotion quality." The experience may have a joyous aspect.

The "sacred quality." The experience may seem to be intrinsically sacred.

As an example, here is the experience of Richard Bucke, a nineteenth century Canadian psychiatrist who was President of the Psychological Section of the British Medical Association and President of the American Medico-Psychological Association:

I had spent the evening in a great city, with two friends, reading and discussing poetry and philosophy. We parted at midnight. I had a long drive in a hansom to my lodging. My mind, deeply under the influence of the ideas, images, and emotions called up by the reading and talk, was calm and peaceful. I was in a state of quiet, almost passive enjoyment, not actually thinking, but letting ideas, images, and emotions flow of themselves, as it were, through my mind. All at once, without warning of any kind, I found myself wrapped in a flame-colored cloud. For an instant I thought of fire, an immense conflagration somewhere close by in that great

city; the next, I knew that the fire was within myself. Directly afterward there came upon me a sense of exultation, of immense joyousness accompanied or immediately followed by an intellectual illumination impossible to describe. Among other things, I did not merely come to believe, but I saw that the universe is not composed of dead matter, but is, on the contrary, a living Presence; I became conscious in myself of eternal life. It was not a conviction that I would have eternal life, but a consciousness that I possessed eternal life then; I saw that all men are immortal; that the cosmic order is such that without any peradventure all things work together for the good of each and all; that the foundation principle of the world, of all the worlds, is what we call love, and that the happiness of each and all is in the long run absolutely certain. The vision lasted a few seconds and was gone; but the memory of it and the sense of the reality of what it taught has remained during the quarter of a century which has since elapsed. I knew that what the vision showed was true. I had attained to a point of view from which I saw that it must be true. That view, that conviction, I may say that consciousness, has never, even during periods of the deepest depression, been lost.³

This powerful experience illustrates most of the classic characteristics of the mystical experience which I mentioned above. Another example comes from a woman who, in her sixties, wrote of an experience which she had had as a schoolgirl:

I was a girl of 15 or 16, I was in the kitchen toasting bread for tea and suddenly on a dark November afternoon the whole place was flooded with light, and for a minute by clock time I was immersed in this, and I had a sense that in some unutterable way the universe was all right. This has affected me for the rest of my life, I have lost all fear of death, I have a passion for light, but I am in no way afraid of death, because this light experience has been a kind of conviction to me that everything is all right in some way.⁴

Both of these were spontaneous experiences. That is, the people involved did not do anything out of the ordinary in order to achieve these experiences. Let us turn to experiences associated with some activity or intent. I will focus on experiences which involve a change in a person's sense of self (cf. the "ego quality," above).⁵

We each draw a boundary line which defines a "self." One person may draw a very small circle, encompassing only the qualities which this person presents to other people. It is as if the person says, "I am my public persona, and no more," while repressing private thoughts and feelings as if these were not also parts of the self.

Most of us draw a larger boundary. Perhaps we are willing to include within the circle of the self our thoughts, feelings, and biological impulses. Our surrounding environment, other people, and the universe at large remain outside that circle of

the self. This is what everyday reality looks like—the boundary of the self stops at the skin—and in the everyday world this perspective has its uses.

In the mystical experience, however, the boundary of the self expands further. A person may feel at one with other people, with the natural environment of the earth, or with the universe as a whole. This is not merely an intellectual experience. In transcendence, people *are* one with their world or their universe. The person's circle is drawn with a larger boundary. Ultimately, the boundary disappears altogether. Situations like this, where one's sense of identity enlarges beyond the boundaries of the personality, are also called "transpersonal" experiences. This whole realm of human experience is the subject of a branch of science known as "transpersonal psychology."⁶

Alfred Lord Tennyson gave this description of what we would call today a transpersonal experience:

A kind of waking trance—this for lack of a better word—I have frequently had, quite up from boyhood, when I have been all alone. This has come upon me through repeating my own name to myself silently, till all at once, as it were out of the intensity of the consciousness of individuality, individuality itself seemed to dissolve and fade away into boundless being, and this not a confused state but the clearest, the surest of the surest, utterly beyond words—where death was an almost laughable impossibility—the loss of personality (if so it were) seeming no extinction, but the only true life. I am ashamed of my feeble description. Have I not said the state is utterly beyond words?⁷

Tennyson said of this, "There is no delusion in the matter! It is no nebulous ecstasy, but a state of transcendent wonder, associated with absolute clearness of mind."⁸ He experienced, temporarily, an identification with something larger than the personal sense of self which we usually carry around with us.

Much more recently, the scholar Ken Wilber described his experience at an intensive Zen meditation retreat which lasted several days. He wrote this about the state of mind which he attained during the fourth day of the retreat: "There appeared, so to speak, the state of the witness, the transpersonal witness that steadily, calmly, clearly witnesses all arising events, moment to moment."⁹

In the "witness state" of consciousness, instead of having one's mind occupied with this thought or that, one takes a step back and witnesses the process of thinking itself. One watches, without interference, thoughts and emotions emerge into consciousness and pass away, like bubbles on a stream. Perhaps we can comprehend this state of consciousness through an analogy. In our usual state, we are like actors in a play, completely taken up with the events of the play at a given moment. But in the witness state, we take a step back from the personal melodrama of life and stand backstage, watching the actors prepare in the wings, make their entrances, give their speeches, step off into the wings, change costumes, and so on. In sum, in our ordinary state of consciousness, we *live* the play of our

lives, but in the witness state, we *watch* the play and all its workings. It is a special form of detachment.

Ken Wilber's teacher, however, "was thoroughly unimpressed with all this. . . . 'The witness [said the teacher] is the last stand of the ego.'¹⁰ But then an interesting thing happened. As Wilber wrote:

At that point, the whole stance of the witness absolutely disappeared. There was no subject anywhere in the universe; there was no object anywhere in the universe; there was only the universe. Everything was arising moment to moment, and it was arising in me and as me; yet there was no me. It is very important to realize that this state was not a loss of faculties but a peak-enhancement of them; it was no blank trance but perfect clarity; not depersonalized but transpersonalized. No personal faculties—[like] language, logic, concepts, motor skills—were lost or impaired. Rather, they all functioned, for the first time it seemed to me, in radical openness, free of the defenses thrown up by a separate self sense. This radically open, undefended . . . state was both incredible and profoundly ordinary, so extraordinarily ordinary that it did not even register. There was nobody there to comprehend it, until I fell out of it. (I guess about three hours later.)¹¹

Ken Wilber experienced a state of mind where he was not separate from the universe, where he was not inside of himself looking out. Rather, he was connected to everything—so connected that a separate sense of self fell away completely. Temporarily, the boundary line was erased.

"EFFECTS" OF THE MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE

What kind of effects do these states of consciousness have on people? The term "effect" is tricky. All we can really observe is that people who have these experiences are different in certain ways from people who don't have these experiences. At this stage of research, we don't know whether they became different because they had these experiences, or whether they had these experiences because they were different people to begin with. With this in mind, let us consider what kinds of things seem to "go along with" these experiences.

Jack Huber, an American psychotherapist, spent some time at a monastery in Japan. He started exercises in meditation that would likely seem moronic to most Westerners, and which he found hideously boring and frustrating. But eventually he experienced something like the witness state of consciousness, accompanied by great emotion. Later, he described how this experience changed his life:

I seemed almost to have a new pair of eyes, new ears, new abilities to taste and smell and feel. I had learned to give my full attention to whatever I was doing at any one moment and I wondered if I had ever really done this before. Gradually I began to see I was eating when I was hungry, not when it was "time to eat." I began

to eat what I wanted to eat, not because it was placed before me, because others were eating, because we must have three good meals a day. . . . I was seeing and choosing what I wanted to do.¹²

It seems that Jack Huber gained greater capacities for attention, awareness and self-determination, and a fresh approach to life. Paradoxically, transcending the personal self and leaving it behind for a while "tends to be accompanied by a sense of personal freedom and a renewed sense of inner directedness and responsibility."¹³ Perhaps this is because our everyday sense of self or ego is incomplete, not whole, dissatisfied.

Why do I say this? To sustain the usual sense of self, the person sets up a boundary line between what is "me" and what is "not-me." This means that a certain sense of separateness and incompleteness is inherent in the everyday sense of self. It also means that we create defense mechanisms to protect our precious self-image.¹⁴ Deprivation, shame, or insult all hurt the self-image and may result in personality quirks. The separate sense of self leads people to seek after approval, power, or personal gain.

But, when a person *transcends* the ego, and has that experience of intimate connectedness with the world, then frequently that person is no longer concerned with *protecting* the ego, and preoccupation with approval and so forth fall away.¹⁵ When people find out through vivid experience that they are composed not only of their thoughts and feelings, when they find out that they share a nature common to every other person and to everything in the universe, then the whole personal drama and all the defenses and needs that arise out of being separate beings become much less important.¹⁶ One's past history no longer commands the present.¹⁷ And that is part of what the mystics mean when they say that transcendent experience leads to "liberation."

So far I have given a rather impressionistic description of how transcendent experience might change one's life. There are some research data, as well. For example, Marilyn May Mallory studied a mystical Christian religious order in Holland, a group in existence for centuries. Dr. Mallory administered batteries of psychological and psychiatric tests, and concluded that "advanced mystics are more stable than 80 to 90 percent" of the general Dutch population. She found that the more advanced mystics tended to be more stable, more happy, and less anxious than the less advanced mystics.¹⁸ Several psychologists have found that mystical experiences seem to be associated with psychological strength and well-being.¹⁹

The late Abraham Maslow, president of the American Psychological Association about twenty years ago, studied people who had "peak experiences." (The term "peak experience" refers to a broader category of experience than "mysticism," but definitely includes mysticism.) His clinical impressions were that people who reported peak experiences were more psychologically healthy than people who did not report these experiences.²⁰ Researchers have found that people who report peak experiences are less likely than others to say that they value material possessions, high pay and fame.²¹ Psychologi-

cal tests indicate that "peakers" are less dogmatic, less authoritarian, and more intelligent, imaginative and relaxed than non-peakers.²² These qualities are remarkably similar to the personal characteristics reported in ancient Eastern literature regarding people who were advanced practitioners of meditation, a technique to promote mystical development.²³

In terms of intellectual development, a practice like meditation can be associated with insight into how the mind works. There seem to be three levels of insight here. First, by turning attention to their consciousness, people realize how much of their life they spend on automatic pilot. Second, they begin to see their own patterns of behavior more clearly. Third, they come to see a bit of how the mind is constructed, and how motivation and desires shape thought.²⁴

You might think that all this concentration on the self would lead to a withdrawn and antisocial attitude, a "loner" mentality. Not so. Researchers have found that people who report peak experiences are *more* likely at least to say that they are willing to help people in need, and that they perform some type of social service.²⁵ People who go through transpersonal experiences may undergo a shift in motivation, from self-enhancement to service; they may become less involved with their personal aggrandizement and more involved in participation in the world through service.²⁶

This tendency has been noticed from ancient times. In twelfth-century China, an artist first drew a set of ten pictures to illustrate stages in the development of mystical enlightenment, symbolized by a man going out to find an ox which has gone astray. The last of the ox-herding pictures is called "entering the marketplace with helping hands,"²⁷ symbolizing that the enlightened person returns to the thick of the world to involve himself or herself in service to others.

IS MYSTICISM ANOTHER RELIGION?

Now let us analyze this from a distinctly LDS perspective. One of the first questions we must consider concerns the nature of mysticism itself. Is it a form of apostate religion?

It is easy to see why this question arises. As my wife put it when she read some material on transpersonal psychology which I was working with, "This is Buddhism 101!" Most of what is written in this area is based on writings from Taoism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sufism with some input from Catholic, Jewish, Protestant and pagan mystics.

But, as Hugh Nibley points out, "the very universality of mysticism shows that it is not peculiarly Christian or Jewish, it is the peculiar property of no nation, race, society, or church."²⁸ Mystical experience reveals no scriptures and defines no specific religion. Throughout history, most mystics have remained within one or another longstanding religious organization, rather than creating their own.

If mysticism is not an artifact, either of madness or of apostate religion, then what is the source of mystical experience? To approach this question, we must consider another issue first.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MIND OF GOD

What is the mind of God like? We speak of "the wisdom of him who knoweth all things" (2 Ne. 2:24), but what does it *mean* to know all things? Does God know all things by just piling fact upon fact in his memory over the millennia? Or does the Lord think in a way entirely different from our everyday form of consciousness? I think that the scriptures (especially the latter-day scriptures) indicate that the Lord has a form of consciousness which is very different from our usual one—a form which may sound a bit familiar to you now.

Consider this verse from the Olive Leaf revelation. The Lord says of himself:

He comprehendeth all things, and all things are before him, and all things are round about him; and he is above all things, and in all things, and is through all things, and is round about all things; and all things are by him, and of him, even God, forever and ever (D&C 88:41).

This is very much the manner of existence one sees in the highest mystical experience: a form of consciousness where one is connected to everything, where one's identity is greatly expanded and, in a sense, one *is* everything.

Another example from the Doctrine and Covenants is where the Lord says, "Thus saith . . . Jesus Christ . . . the same which looked upon the wide expanse of eternity . . . before the world was made; The same which knoweth all things, for all things are present before mine eyes" (D&C 38:1-2).

This sheds an interesting light on passages like the following, where the Lord says, "Wherefore, I can stretch forth mine hands and hold all the creations which I have made; and mine eye can pierce them also" (Moses 7:36).

I interpret this to mean that God is not limited in his awareness as we are. He is aware of everything, in all places and all ages, at one time, in what for him is the Eternal Now. This is God's way of thinking, his mode or form of consciousness, and mystical consciousness seems to resemble it greatly.

The scriptures record instances where the Lord seems to have "lent" this form of consciousness to individual mortals, such as Enoch, the brother of Jared, Abraham and Moses. For example: "The Lord . . . showed unto the brother of Jared all the inhabitants of the earth which had been, and also all that would be; and he withheld them not from his sight, even unto the ends of the earth" (Ether 3:25).

Perhaps people read this as if the Lord showed the brother of Jared everyone in a crowd scene, like a fuzzy cosmic snapshot. However, I feel that the scripture indicates that the Lord showed everyone to the brother of Jared, maybe 60 billion people, *as individuals*. If I am correct, this could not have been done under the constraints of normal consciousness. However, in a mystical state it could be done, operating outside the normal constraints of space and time.

The visions of Moses recorded in Moses chapter 1 are excellent examples of God's form of consciousness being lent to a man. Upon an unnamed mountain, "Moses beheld the world

and the ends thereof, and all the children of men which are, and which were created" (Moses 1:8). After this, the presence of God withdrew from Moses, and Moses had an encounter with the adversary, whom Moses cast out. The Lord returned to Moses, and spoke with him.

And it came to pass, as the voice was still speaking, Moses cast his eyes and beheld the earth, yea, even all of it; and there was not a particle of it which he did not behold, discerning it by the spirit of God.

And he beheld also the inhabitants thereof, and there was not a soul which he beheld not; and he discerned them by the spirit of God; and their numbers were great, even numberless as the sand upon the sea shore.

As he beheld many lands; and each land was called earth, and there were inhabitants on the face thereof (vv. 27-29).

Moses saw every mote of dust on this planet, every person on it, a host of other planets and *their* inhabitants as well. Here again, I feel that the Lord lent his own state of consciousness to Moses, enabling Moses to grasp all of this simultaneously, outside the bounds of space and time. This resembles mystical consciousness, where one *can* have a grasp of such vastness.

Probably the best scriptural example of this kind of consciousness being lent to a mortal is found in the vision of Enoch, recorded in chapter 7 of the Book of Moses:

And it came to pass that the Lord showed unto Enoch all the inhabitants of the earth . . .

. . . Enoch beheld, and lo, all the nations of the earth were before him.

And there came generation upon generation; and Enoch was high and lifted up, even in the bosom of the Father, and of the Son of Man . . . (Moses 7:21, 23-24).

Note how the scripture puts this. To see these things, Enoch was "in the bosom of the Father and the Son," and partook, I would presume, of their manner of consciousness. To continue, Enoch said to the Lord:

. . . Were it possible that man could number the particles of the earth, yea millions of earths like this, it would not be a beginning to the number of thy creations; and thy curtains are stretched out still . . . (Moses 7:30).

We may infer that Enoch saw these things himself. This could occur through Enoch temporarily receiving the manner of mystical consciousness which I feel that God has.

But now we come to something new. The Lord tells Enoch of the wickedness which would be rampant among the men who lived before the flood.

[Enoch] looked upon their wickedness, and their misery, and wept and stretched forth his arms, and his heart swelled wide as eternity; and his bowels yearned; and all eternity shook (v. 41).

It would be hard to find in all of mystical literature a more powerful example of transpersonal identification with the world beyond the everyday boundaries of the ego. It seems that Enoch's sense of self was expanded, as I feel the Lord's can

be, to include everything. But we can go farther here.

... Enoch looked upon the earth; and he heard a voice from the bowels thereof, saying: Wo, wo is me, the mother of men; I am pained, I am weary, because of the wickedness of my children. When shall I rest, and be cleansed from the filthiness which is gone forth out of me? When will my Creator sanctify me, that I may rest, and righteousness for a season abide upon my face? (Moses 7:48).

As mentioned earlier, one of the eight classical characteristics of the mystical experience is the "inner subjective quality." This means that during the experience, the person may feel that some things have "consciousness" which we don't usually think of as being conscious, like trees or rocks. Here Enoch experienced the whole Earth as a vast, conscious being; again, it would be hard to find a more powerful example of this quality in all of the literature on mysticism.

This encounter with the Earth as a conscious being in pain had a profound effect on Enoch. His compassion for the Earth was so deep that he begged the Lord three times to alleviate the suffering of that vast conscious being—a being whom most people consider to be a dumb hunk of rock.²⁹

I started this discourse on the mind of God as a means to answer the question, "what is the source of mystical experience?" What do I conclude from the apparent similarity between scriptural descriptions of the consciousness of God and mystical consciousness?

MYSTICISM AND THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF GOD

I feel that when a person has a mystical or transcendent experience, that person's mind is working in the same mode as does the mind of God. It is not, strictly speaking, inspiration or revelation as Mormons usually understand these terms, that is, as some kind of message from God. I feel that it is an opportunity to experience the universe and to think in the terms that God does.

Our doctrine is that human beings are gods in embryo. This suggests that the important capacities which God has are also present in us in embryo. Certainly one of the most important aspects of any being is the mode of consciousness which that being has. I believe that we have, locked within us, the capacity to perceive the universe in the way that God does. I think that transcendent experiences are occasions when people exercise this capacity.

(Note, however, that although mystical consciousness is available to the Lord, we cannot assume that it encompasses all the modes of consciousness available to God, nor that it is the predominant mode.)³⁰

A NEW LDS PERSPECTIVE ON MYSTICISM

Mormons seem to abhor the word "mysticism." In my

experience, most Mormons brush off the experiences of past or contemporary mystics as either illusion or apostate religion. But if I am correct, the scriptures I consider above provide the basis for a very different LDS perspective on mysticism. At least some of these experiences may offer valid insight into the way the mind of God works.

This analysis also points up a basic error that some mystics have made. Some cultures which did not have the benefit of revelation turned to mysticism as a substitute, as Nibley points out.³¹ Some mystics themselves made the error of substituting this manner of thinking for God Himself. That is, they mistook the experience of *seeing things the way God does* for the experience of *seeing God himself*. The widespread idea in the religions of the world that God has a center that is everywhere and a circumference that is nowhere may be simply a confusion between a form of thought that goes outside the normal boundaries of space and time and the Being who can think in those terms.

This, then, is the error into which some mystics have fallen, the error of substituting the transcendent experience for God, and mysticism for religion. It is only fair to point out, though, that many Mormons have made the reverse error, of substituting religion for the transcendent experience. That is, some of us feel that because we have the true gospel, we have no need to be involved in contemplative practices or transcendent experience. I feel that this is a great mistake.

SO WHAT?

Perhaps your reaction is, "So what? We don't need these experiences to make us holier people. And as for experiencing reality the way God does—who needs it? The Lord will give us that when we are exalted! As far as right now is concerned—what is it *good* for?"

That is a good question. As Ron Bitton put it, "Mysticism is not a shortcut to divinization."³² Salvation and exaltation are what the gospel is for, and I do not want to substitute mysticism for the gospel. But because the gospel encompasses everything, from apple canning to plats of Zion, mysticism is a part of the gospel, too—a greatly neglected part, but a part all the same.

Abraham Maslow pointed out that there is a hierarchy of needs in a person's life.³³ Once a person has taken care of needs for basic nourishment and safety, once one has a measure of self-esteem and social contact, once one is magnifying one's personal talents, then the need arises to "transcend the self," as Maslow put it. In other words, after a certain point in personal development, one needs to transcend the self in order to be a healthy or mature person. One puts away one's toys to grow up. One (temporarily) sets aside one's adult toy, the ego, to grow farther.

To some extent, we meet the need to transcend the personal self through communing with the Lord. But *if* we are already doing that, then there is nothing wrong with expand-

ing one's consciousness by a contemplative discipline such as meditation. Some might say that this is "looking beyond the mark" (Jacob 4:14), but I think of it rather as a different aspect of the development of godliness. Mystical consciousness is another capacity, another talent to increase and magnify. We spend thousands of hours tying quilts, canning prunes, playing volleyball, running in marathons, watching BYU football, and somehow all of this can come under the umbrella of our religion in the name of "magnifying our talents." I think that there is also a place for mystical development, so that we expand not only our physical and spiritual abilities, but our highest mental capacities as well.

The preponderance of evidence indicates that mystical consciousness is an innate, healthy, but usually hidden capacity. If I am correct, this is the capacity to experience reality in the way that God does. It seems unobjectionable for prepared Latter-day Saints to engage in mystical development; indeed, the "magnify your talents" ethic suggests that the mature Latter-day Saint *should* do so. (Although it is beyond the scope of this essay to discuss in detail what one can do to develop one's personal capacity for mystical consciousness, mature and spiritually grounded Latter-day Saints might profitably study the meditative traditions of other cultures. Studied with discretion and discernment, they have much to offer.)

I would not wish mystical development to replace the strengthening of our testimonies. But if we can combine both of these efforts—testimony development and mystical development—perhaps we may come to know in a deep and direct way what it means to say that the Father, the Son and the disciple are one (see John 17:21, 23). ☐

NOTES

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1. It implies no disrespect to say that, on the whole, Olympic athletes have more highly developed bodies than do the prophets. Similarly, I see no disrespect in saying that mystics may have minds which are more highly developed in specific ways than are those of the prophets.

2. W.T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1960), pp. 78-79, 110-111; Abraham H. Maslow, *Toward a Psychology of Being*, 2nd ed. (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1968), pp. 74-96. In the main, I follow here Ralph W. Hood, Jr., "The Construction and Preliminary Validation of a Measure of Reported Mystical Experience," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 14 (1975): pp. 30-32.

3. William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902; reprint, New York: New American Library, 1958), pp. 306-307.

4. Aldous Huxley, "Visionary Experience," in John White, ed., *The Highest State of Consciousness* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1972), p. 49.

5. I follow here Ken Wilber, *No Boundary: Eastern and Western Approaches to Personal Growth* (1979; reprint, Boston: Shambhala, 1981), pp. 4-8.

6. See: Roger Walsh and Frances Vaughan, eds., *Beyond Ego: Transpersonal Dimensions in Psychology* (Los Angeles: Tarcher, 1980); many of the works of Ken Wilber; and the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*.

7. James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 295.

8. *Ibid.*

9. Ken Wilber, "Odyssey: A Personal Inquiry into Humanistic and Transpersonal Psychology," *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 22, no. 1 (Winter 1982): pp. 83-84.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 84.

11. *Ibid.*

12. Adam Smith, *Powers of Mind* (New York: Random House, 1975), pp. 174-175.

13. Frances Vaughan, "Transpersonal Psychotherapy: Context, Content and Process," in

Walsh and Vaughan, eds., *Beyond Ego*, pp. 188-189.

14. Frances Vaughan, *The Inward Arc: Healing and Wholeness in Psychotherapy and Spirituality* (Boston: Shambhala), 1985, pp. 187-194.

15. Vaughan, *Inward Arc*, p. 185.

16. James Fadiman, "The Transpersonal Stance," in Walsh and Vaughan, eds., *Beyond Ego*, pp. 177-178.

17. James Bugental, "Being Levels of Therapeutic Growth," in Walsh and Vaughan, eds., *Beyond Ego*, p. 192.

18. Marilyn May Mallory, *Christian Mysticism: Transcending Techniques* (Amsterdam: Van Gorcum Assen, 1977), pp. 67-68.

19. E.g., David Hay and Ann Morisy, "Reports of Ecstatic, Paranormal, or Religious Experience in Great Britain and the United States—A Comparison of Trends," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 17 (1978): pp. 256-264; Ralph W. Hood, Jr., "Psychological Strength and the Report of Intense Religious Experience," *ibid.* 13 (1974): pp. 65-71; *idem*, "Construction and Preliminary Validation," *idem*, "Anticipatory Set and Setting: Stress Incongruities as Elicitors of Mystical Experience in Solitary Nature Situations," *ibid.* 17 (1978): pp. 279-287; Howard L. Sacks, "The Effect of Spiritual Exercises on the Integration of Self-System," *ibid.* 18 (1979): pp. 46-50.

20. Maslow, *Toward a Psychology of Being*; *idem*, *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences* (1964; reprint, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1970).

21. Robert Wuthnow, "Peak Experiences: Some Empirical Tests," *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 18, no. 3 (Summer 1978), pp. 67-70.

22. E.W. McClain and Henry B. Andrews, "Some Personality Correlates of Peak Experiences—A Study in Self-Actualization," *Journal of Clinical Psychology* 25 (1969): pp. 36-38.

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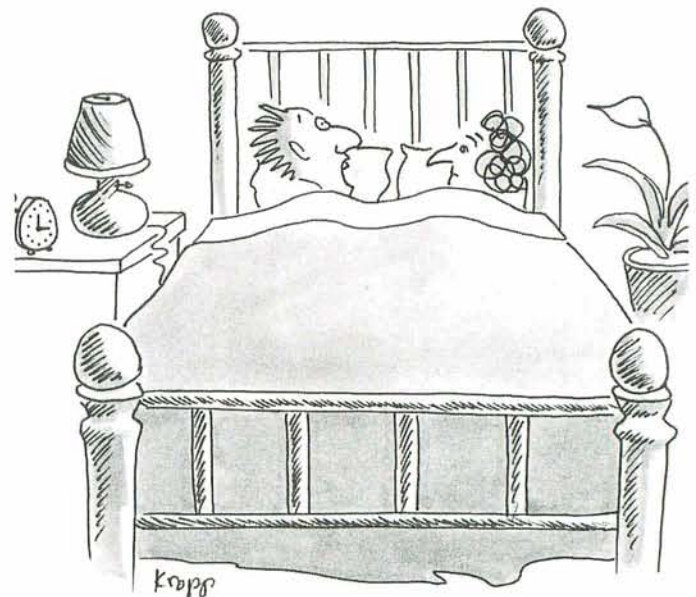
29. As a sidelight, Enoch's pleas and the Lord's responses appear to form a chiasmus, the ancient Hebrew literary construction that John Welch has found in the Book of Mormon. I find a chiasmus in vv. 49, 54, 58, 61, 64, 67. Compare: John W. Welch, "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon," *Brigham Young University Studies* 10, no. 1 (Autumn 1969): pp. 69-84; *idem*, "A Book You Can Respect," *Ensign*, September 1977, pp. 44-48.

30. Ron Bitton, "Response to Mark Edward Koltko, 'Mysticism and Mormonism,'" (Paper delivered at the Sunstone Symposium IX, Salt Lake City, 27 August 1987).

31. Nibley, *The World and the Prophets*, p. 97.

32. Bitton, "Response."

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"I just had a terrible nightmare. I dreamed Hugh Nibley had a Swiss bank account."



Zion vs. Babylon: The Game Has Always Been Money

WHAT IS ZION? A DISTANT VIEW

By Hugh Nibley

THE FIRST THING TO NOTE IS THAT ZION IS PERFECT, FLAWLESS, and complete—not a structure in the process of building. We work for the building up of the kingdom of God on earth and the establishment of Zion. The first stop makes the second possible. Zion has been on the earth before in its perfection, as (we are told) it is to be found in other worlds. When the world has been ready to receive it at various happy times in the past, Zion has been brought down from above; and we have the joyful promise that at some future time it will again descend to earth. When men are no longer capable of supporting Zion on earth, it is bodily removed—taken up to heaven; whence go forth the sayings, “Zion is fled” and “Zion is no more.” It is no more here but continues to thrive elsewhere. For it is a constant quantity, as perfect things are.

In its present state the world is far from qualified to receive a celestial society into its midst. But if we today cannot achieve Zion, we can conceive of it. Whenever we use that resounding word, the idea of perfection is always implied, even though we may be using it only in a local and limited sense. Thus, when the Prophet Joseph says, “We will still weep for Zion,” it is not an imperfect Zion he is weeping for, but the absence of true Zion; he weeps because the Zion he has so clearly in mind has not been realized. One does not weep for paradise, a place of consummate joy, but only for our memory of paradise, for paradise lost, even as the Jews, by the waters of Babylon, wept for a Jerusalem that was no more. Brigham Young admonished the people who came to the valley lest they “go into error when they expect to see that Zion here which they have seen in vision.”² The Zion in the vision was the real one. It must always be kept in mind, not as a present reality, but as

the goal toward which all the labor of the Church is a preparation.

“Blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion at that day” (1 Nephi 13:37). If they are obedient, “they shall have power after many days to accomplish all things pertaining to Zion” (D&C 105:37). “My people must be tried in all things, that they may be prepared to receive the glory . . . of Zion” which lies ahead (D&C 136:31).

When all the accidentals and incidentals are stripped away, what remains that is quintessentially Zion? Buildings, walls, streets, and gates—even of gold and jasper—do not make Zion; neither do throngs in shining robes. Zion is not a Cecil B. DeMille production; the properties do not make the play, no matter how splendid they may be. What makes Zion? God has given us the perfect definition: Zion is the pure in heart. The pure in heart, not merely the pure in appearance. It is not a society or religion of forms and observances, of pious gestures and precious mannerisms: it is strictly a condition of the heart. Above all, Zion is pure, which means “not mixed with any impurities, unalloyed”; it is all Zion and nothing else. It is not achieved wherever a heart is pure or where two or three are pure, because it is all pure—it is a society, a community, and an environment into which no unclean thing can enter. “Henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean” (3 Nephi 20:36). It is not even pure people in a dirty environment, or pure people with a few impure ones among them; it is the perfectly pure in a perfectly pure environment. “I . . . will contend with Zion . . . and chasten her until she overcomes and is clean before me” (D&C 90:36).

This makes it so different from our world that it almost begins to sound distasteful. But a moment’s reflection will show that Zion cannot possibly be other than wholly pure. For Zion is the eternal order; it has existed elsewhere from the eternities and will someday be permanently established on this earth. Even the smallest impurity or flaw in anything designed to continue forever would, in the course of an infinite stretching of time, become a thing of infinite mischief. The most perfect structures men have been able to erect have been short-lived because of tiny, all-but-imperceptible flaws. Hence, any flaw, no

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matter how small, must be removed from a system designed to be timeless; otherwise, there will be no end of trouble. The only kind of life that can be endured forever is one completely devoid of sin, for we are told that the most calamitous thing that could befall man at present would be for him to reach forth his hand and partake of the tree of life and live forever in his sins. Jeremiah describes Zion as a comely and delicate woman who cannot live in the presence of what is vile (Jeremiah 6:2-7). "When men presume to build up Zion in their sins, they labor in vain, for the daughter of Zion withdraws from the scene entirely" (Micah 4:10; author's translation).

If only to preserve its purity, Zion is set apart from all contaminating influences. For it must be holy enough to receive the Lord himself: "For the Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it" (Psalms 132:13-14). Ancient writers assure us repeatedly that the temple is the earthly type of Zion, a holy place removed from contact with the outer world, set apart for ordinances from which the world is excluded; while it is in the world, the temple presents a forbidding front of high gates, formidable walls, narrow doors and frowning battlements, dramatizing the total withdrawal of Zion from the world and its defensive position over against it. Zion itself, of course, is absolutely impregnable and unassailable, since the world has no access to it. Should the world get too close, Zion withdraws: "[God] dwelt in the midst of Zion; and it came to pass that Zion was not, for God received it up into his own bosom; and from thence went forth the saying, ZION IS FLED" (Moses 7:69). Hence, it is often described as a refuge and a place of safety: "And it shall be called the New Jerusalem, a land of peace, a city of refuge, a place of safety for the saints; . . . the terror of the Lord also shall be there, . . . and it shall be called Zion" (D&C 45:66-67). Her invulnerability makes Zion an object of awe and terror to her enemies. Hence, scripture speaks of "the gathering together upon the land of Zion, and upon her stakes, . . . for a defense, and for a refuge from the storm, and from wrath when it shall be poured out without mixture upon the whole earth" (D&C 115:6). In a hostile world, those seeking for Zion form a sort of bridgehead, a command post from which God may expand his work "for the rising generations that shall grow up on the land of Zion, to possess it from generation to generation, forever and ever" (D&C 69:8). That can be the real Zion only after the groundwork has been laid for it. It is always described as a place of unearthly beauty.

THE Bible contains a fairly complete description of Zion, but there is one aspect of it that only the Latter-day Saints have taken to heart (or did formerly), and it is that doctrine that sets them off most sharply from all of the other religions, namely, the belief that Zion is possible on the earth, that men possess the capacity to receive it right here and are therefore under obligation to waste no time moving in the direction of Zion. The instant one realizes that Zion is a possibility, one has no choice but to identify himself with the program which shall bring about

the quickest possible realization of its perfection. The call is to awake and arise, to "push many people to Zion with songs of everlasting joy upon their heads" (D&C 66:11). If undue haste is not desirable, delay is inexcusable; a sense of urgent gravity has ever marked the latter-day work: "I am Jesus Christ, who cometh quickly, in an hour you think not" (D&C 51:20). "Wherefore, stand ye in holy places, and be not moved, until the day of the Lord come; for behold, it cometh quickly (D&C 87:8).

"When we conclude to make a Zion," said Brigham Young, "we will make it, and this work commences in the heart of each person."³ Zion can come only to a place that is completely ready for it, which is to say Zion must already be there: when Zion descends to earth it must be met by a Zion that is already here, "and they shall see us; and we will fall upon their necks, and they shall fall upon our necks, . . . and there shall be mine abode, and it shall be Zion" (Moses 7:63-64). Hence, President Young must correct a misunderstanding among many of the saints who "gather here with the spirit of Zion, resting upon them, and expecting to find Zion in its glory, whereas their own doctrine should teach them that they are coming here to make Zion,"⁴ that is, to make it possible. "The elements are here to produce as good a Zion as was ever made in all the eternities of the Gods."⁵ Note that Zion is an eternal and a universal type and that the local Zion, while made of the substances of this earth, "shall come forth out of all the creations which I have made" (Moses 7:64). "I have Zion in my view constantly," said Brother Brigham, making it clear that Zion for this earth is still an unrealized ideal of perfection. "We are not going to wait for angels, or for Enoch and his company to come and build up Zion, but we are going to build it,"⁶ so that we will be ready. If we did not have a responsibility for bringing Zion, and if we did not work constantly with that aim in view, its coming could not profit us much—for all its awesome perfection and beauty, Zion is still our business and should be our constant concern.

THROUGHOUT the scriptures Zion is brought into the clearest focus by placing it against a dark background; and like Zion, that background world is given a code name: "Babylon." Babylon, like Zion, is a real society—a type, place, and environment of human existence, described in the scriptures with great clarity and precision. (The word *Babylon* is not just a general term to indicate anything that is not Zion; it is the designation of a very particular and specific type of society.) Though Babylon is vividly described by the prophets, the best way to define her is as the exact opposite of Zion in all things. Babylon is just as pure in its way as is Zion; it is pure evil—for even good, when it becomes contaminated and perverted, becomes an evil. The main thing is that Babylon and Zion cannot mix in any degree; a Zion that makes concessions is no longer Zion.

One may well ask if it is necessary to choose between such absolute extremes, and wonder if there is not some more moderate approach to the problems. By the very nature of things,

there is no third way—as the early Jewish and Christian writers remind us repeatedly in their doctrine of the Two Ways. According to this oldest and best-established of teachings (though quite unpopular with the conventional Christianity and Judaism of our time), there are Two Ways lying before every person in this life, the Way of Light and the Way of Darkness, the Way of Life and the Way of Death; and every mortal every day of his life is required to make a choice between them. Unfortunately for our peace of mind, any compromise between the Two Ways is out of the question, since they lead in opposite directions. As the wise Heraclitus pointed out long ago, “The up-road and the down-road are one and the same.”⁷ Which one you are depends entirely on the way you are facing. To go off at an angle is to get nowhere; if you find the road to Zion, the Heavenly City, too steep, you may mitigate the climb by striking off on a more level course—but in that case you will never, never reach Zion. The only road to Zion is the shortest road, for to take any other shows a lack of faith and zeal, which will exclude you from the city.

As there is no compromise between the Two Ways, so there is no mixing of Babylon and Zion; God will not tolerate any concessions by Zion: “A scourge and judgment [is] to be poured out upon the children of Zion. For shall the children of the kingdom pollute my holy land?” (D&C 84:58-59). Zion does not make war on Babylon: “I forgive all men. I feel in my heart to forgive all men in the broad sense that God requires me to forgive all men, and I desire to love my neighbor as myself; and to this extent I bear no malice toward any of the children of my Father. . . . I leave them in the hands of the just Judge. Let him deal with them as seemeth him good. . . . I would not harm a hair of their heads.”⁸ We don’t need to. Zion has never made war on Babylon, for when the environment has become too foul for Zion, she has simply been removed. Babylon is always reserved for the burning—she is never converted or reformed; though many may leave her for Zion, her fate is to be overthrown, violently, suddenly, unexpectedly, and completely by the direct intervention of God. “Thou shalt not know from whence it riseth: . . . thou shalt not be able to put it off, and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou shalt not know” (Isaiah 47:11). “Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed; howl for her. . . . We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed: forsake her” (Jeremiah 51:8-9).

From the beginning the cry went forth to the saints, repeating the words of the ancient prophets: “Go ye out from Babylon. Be ye clean. . . . Go ye out from among the nations, even from Babylon, from the midst of wickedness, which is spiritual Babylon” (D&C 133:5,14). The substance of this world “is that of an idol, which waxeth old and shall perish in Babylon, even

Babylon the great, which shall fall” (D&C 1:16). Babylon’s time is all but used up, and the only thing for the saints to do is to get out of her. As we all know, they sought to do this in a very physical, as well as a spiritual sense. “I will that my saints should be assembled upon the land of Zion . . . and lift a warning voice . . . by word and by flight” (D&C 63:36-37). How could they stay in the world? “We are trying to be the image of those who live in heaven; we are trying to pattern after them, . . . to walk and talk like them, to deal like them, and build up the kingdom of heaven as they have done.”⁹ That meant a total renunciation of the world and its ways: “It is useless for us to expect the favor of the world. We have been called out of the world, therefore the world hates us. If we were of the world, then the world would love its own, and we should have no trouble with them.”¹⁰ That was what the Lord often told his disciples. You cannot be “in the world but not of the world,” “for all that is in the world . . . is not of the Father, but is of the world,” and that in the most literal sense (1 John 2:16).

The world lost no time in getting the message, and if the antipathy was mutual, the ferocity of the attack on the one side matched the finality of retreat on the other. “In the first place,” said Brigham, “they will not fellowship us, and in the next place we cannot fellowship them. . . . I would not give a snap of my finger for them; for as the world is I want not their fellowship.”¹¹ Right from the beginning the standard charge against Joseph Smith and the Mormons was treason. And why not? That was the only possible charge when the crime was simply that of rejecting a whole way of life: “They accused him [Joseph Smith] of treason, because he would not fellowship their wickedness.”¹² In a way he had asked for it, for he would make no concession: “It may be considered treason,” said Brigham Young, “to say that the kingdom which that Prophet [Daniel] foretold is actually set up; *that* we cannot help, but we know it is so, and call upon the nations to believe our testimony.”¹³ “Do you blame the wicked for being mad?” he asks. “No. They desire to rule, to hold the reins of government on this earth; they have held them a great while. I do not blame them for being suspicious of us; men in high standing are suspicious of us, hence the frequent cry, ‘Treason, treason, we are going to have trouble with the people in Utah.’”¹⁴ So God drives a wedge between Zion and Babylon, an intense mutual antipathy that constantly forces them apart. “If the wicked come here they do not wish to stay, no matter how well they are treated, and I thank the Lord for it; and I want hard times, so that every person that does not wish to stay, for the sake of his religion, will leave.”¹⁵ Whenever the Lord prepares for Zion, there must be a division among the people. “The Lord is building up Zion, and is emptying the earth of wickedness,

“The greatest temporal and spiritual blessings, which always come from faithfulness and concerted effort, never attended individual exertion or enterprise.”

—Joseph Smith

gathering his people, bringing again Zion, redeeming his Israel, sending forth his work, withdrawing his Spirit from the wicked world, and commencing to build up his kingdom."¹⁶ The perennial "Mormon Problem" was not how to fellowship the Mormons but how to liquidate them;¹⁷ but that was not surprising: "The cry has been against the Prophets of every age, against the Apostles and against Jesus himself, and against all those who have ever preached the truth, and why? Because the systems of the world are errors; while the Gospel is true."¹⁸ "Joseph Smith, in forty-seven prosecutions, was never proven guilty of one violation of the laws of his country. They accused him of treason, because he would not fellowship with their wickedness."¹⁹ The nature of their hatred and their charges is reported by Joseph Smith himself:

If there were priests among them of all the different sects, they hated us, and that most cordially too. If there were generals, they hated us; if there were colonels, they hated us; and the soldiers, and officers of every kind, hated us . . . --they all hated us, most cordially. And now what did they hate us for? . . . Was it because we have committed treason against the government in Daviess county, or burglary, or larceny, or arson, or any other unlawful act in Daviess county? We know that we have been so reported by priests, and certain lawyers, and certain judges, who . . . for a number of years have tried, by a well contemplated and premeditated scheme, to put down by physical power a system of religion that all the world . . . by any fair means whatever, were not able to resist.²⁰

There is no third way: "Those who believe and obey the Gospel of the Son of God forsake all for its interests, belong to the kingdom of God, and all the rest belong to the other kingdom."²¹

AND so we have Zion and Babylon, and never the twain shall meet. That is, they wouldn't if we did not take human nature into account, for how many humans have ever succeeded in renouncing the world completely? The separation of the saints from the world was, in most cases, not a matter of choice—it was forced on them; God is constantly driving wedges between the Church and the world, or in Brigham Young's vivid terms, there are always cats coming out of the bag to put us at odds with the world, whether we want it that way or not. "The brethren and sisters came across the plains because they could not stay; that is the secret of the movement."²²

"Do you think we came here of our own choice? No; we would have stayed in those rich valleys and prairies back yonder."²³ When the first revelation was given to prepare for Zion by the gathering of Israel, "when the people came to Jackson county, . . . they were as far from believing and obeying that revelation as the east is from the west."²⁴ "And so we have got to continue to labor, fight, toil, counsel, exercise faith, ask God over and over, and have been praying for thirty odd years for

that which we might have received and accomplished in one year."²⁵ That complete break between the saints and the world that must precede the coming of Zion has not yet taken place.

"They have not learned 'A' concerning Zion; and we have been traveling now 42 years, and have we learned our A, B, C's? . . . I will say, scarcely. Have we seen it as a people? How long shall we travel, . . . how long shall God wait for us to sanctify ourselves and become one in the Lord, in our actions and in our ways for the building up of the kingdom of God, that he can bless us?"²⁶ "How long, Latter-day Saints, before you will believe the Gospel as it is? The Lord has declared it to be his will that his people will enter into covenant, even as Enoch and his people did, which of necessity, must be before we shall have the privilege of building the Center Stake of Zion."²⁷

This was one of the last public addresses of the prophet Brigham, and the people were still not ready to go all the way. They still wanted to mix Babylon and Zion; or, as he put it, "Some of the Latter-day Saints had an idea that they could take the follies of the world in one hand and the Savior in the other, and expect to get into the presence of the Lord Jesus."²⁸ Such heaping up gold and silver would prove their destruction.²⁹ Again and again the Lord had to rebuke even Joseph Smith for little concessions to the world: "You have feared man and have not relied on me for strength as you ought" (D&C 30:1). "Your mind has been on the things of the earth more than on the things of me, . . . and you . . . have been persuaded by those whom I have not commanded; . . . you shall ever open your mouth in my cause, not fearing what man can do, for I am with you" (D&C 30:2, 11). "How oft you have transgressed the commandments and the laws of God, and have gone on in the persuasions of men. For behold you should not have feared man more than God" (D&C 3:6-7).

Speaking to the Mormon Battalion in 1848, President Young warned them: "If we were to go to San Francisco and dig up chunks of gold or find it here in the valley it would ruin us. Many wanted to unite Babylon and Zion; it's the love of money that hurts them."³⁰ In his last public address he noted that because they are still "lusting . . . after the things of this world, [the Latter-day Saints] are . . . shaking hands with the servants of the devil, instead of sanctifying themselves. . . . When I think upon this subject, I want the tongues of seven thunders to wake up the people."³¹ Even though the Lord said, "Zion cannot be built up unless it is by the principles of the law of the celestial kingdom; otherwise I cannot receive her unto myself" (D&C 105:5), the Latter-day Saints still wanted to compromise and say, "We will not go up unto Zion, and will keep our moneys"—but as long as that was their plan, there could be no Zion: "Mine elders should wait for . . . the redemption of Zion" (D&C 105:8-9). For God had made it perfectly clear: "I give not unto you that ye shall live after the manner of the world" (D&C 95:13). "For after today cometh the burning. . . . I will burn them up . . . and I will not spare any that remain in Babylon" (D&C 64:24). It had to be the one or the other.

"Shall we now seek to make ourselves wealthy in gold and silver and the possessions which the wicked love and worship, or shall we, with all of our might, mind, and strength, seek diligently first to build up the Kingdom of God? Let us decide on this, and do the one thing or the other."³² Notice that every time the issue is raised, it is made clear that the powerful link that continues to bind the Mormons to the world and that advocates the perverse doctrine of a deal between Zion and Babylon is a deep-seated desire of the saints to acquire personal wealth. Joseph Smith's speech at Far West is a vividly specific statement of the case:

Brethren, we are gathering to this bountiful land to build up Zion But since I have been here I perceive the spirit of selfishness, covetousness exists in the hearts of the saints. . . . Here are those who begin to spread out, buying up all the land they are able to do; . . . thinking to lay foundations for themselves only, looking to their own individual families. . . . Now I want to tell you that Zion cannot be built up in any such way. . . . I see signs put out, Beer signs, speculative schemes are being introduced. This is the ways of the world—Babylon indeed, and I tell you in the name of the God of Israel, if there is not repentance . . . you will be Broken up and scattered from this choice land [sic].³³

We all know that this prophecy was literally fulfilled: God would not tolerate such a mockery of Zion. We cannot compromise between the way of Babylon and the way of Zion, because they do lead in opposite directions, as Brigham Young explains: "I am sorry that this people are worldly-minded. . . . Their affections are upon . . . their farms, upon their property, their houses and possessions, and in the same ratio that this is the case, the Holy Spirit of God—the spirit of their calling—forsakes them, and they are overcome with the spirit of the evil one."³⁴

Every step in the direction of increasing one's personal holdings is a step away from Zion, which is another way of saying, as the Lord has proclaimed in various ways, that one cannot serve two masters: to the degree in which he loves the one he will hate the other, and so it is with God and business, for *mammon* is simply the standard Hebrew word for any kind of financial dealing.

So money is the name of the game by which the devil cleverly decoys the minds of the saints from God's work to his.³⁵ "What does the Lord want of us up here in the tops of these mountains?" Brigham asked twenty years after the first settling of the valley. "He wishes us to build up Zion. What are

the people doing? They are merchandizing, trafficking and trading."³⁶ "Elders are agreed on the way and manner necessary to obtain celestial glory, but they quarrel about a dollar. When principles of eternal life are brought before them—God and the things pertaining to God and godliness—they apparently care not half so much about them as they do about five cents."³⁷ "Instead of reflecting upon and searching for hidden things of the greatest value to them, [the Latter-day Saints]

rather wish to learn how to secure their way through this world as easily and as comfortably as possible. The reflections, what they are here for, who produced them, and where they are from, far too seldom enter their minds."³⁸ Well, what was wrong with that? Isn't a comfortable living what we all want? It would be all right if we did not have our choice, but if we fail to realize that "we are engaged in a higher-toned branch of business than any merchants or railroad men, or any institution of an earthly nature,"³⁹ and give priority to the comfortable and respectable life after we have seen the greater light, we are in great danger. "Are their eyes single to the building up of the Kingdom of God? No; they are single to the building up of themselves."⁴⁰ "Does this congregation understand what idolatry is? The New Testament says the covetousness is idolatry; therefore, a covetous people is an idolatrous people."⁴¹ "Man is made in the image of

God, but what do we know of him or of ourselves, when we suffer ourselves to love and worship the god of this world—riches?"⁴² Had the Latter-day Saints gone so far? They had, from the beginning; when the Church was only a year old the Prophet Joseph observed that "God has often sealed up the heavens because of covetousness in the Church."⁴³ Three years later God revoked that "united order" by which alone Zion could exist on earth (D&C 104:52-53)—in their desire for wealth, the saints had tried to embrace both Babylon and Zion by smooth double-talk. The Mormons would have to wait for their blessings until they learned their lesson: "If the people neglect their duty, turn away from the holy commandments which God has given us, seek for their own individual wealth, and neglect the interests of the kingdom of God, we may expect to be here quite a time—perhaps a period that will be far longer than we anticipate."⁴⁴

Satan has many arrows in his quiver: "I cannot tell you all the things whereby we may commit sin," said King Benjamin to his people, "for there are divers ways and means, even so many that I cannot number them" (Mosiah 4:29). These were the closing words, however, of a speech devoted to warning his people against the ways in which they were most likely to commit the greatest sins, namely, in the search for private gain. Of all the devil's arrows, this has ever proven the most deadly and effective. "My experience is that this people have

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opposite directions.

too great a tenacity for the goods of this world, and the Enemy thinks he can get the advantage over them in this respect, and he is improving the time."⁵⁵ Did not Paul say, "Love of money is the root of all evil" (1 Timothy 6:10)? And has God not restated the proposition for our own generation through the mouth of his prophet, Mormon? "Behold, I speak unto you as if ye were present, and yet ye are not. But . . . Jesus Christ hath shown you unto me, and I know your doing. . . . For behold, ye do love money, and your substance, and your fine apparel, and the adorning of your churches, more than ye love the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted" (Mormon 8:35, 37). That is not Zion as described by God: "They were of one heart and one mind . . . and there was no poor among them" (Moses 7:18). The people "do not understand the power of the devil and how liable they are to be decoyed."⁵⁶ Wealth is a pleasant and heady narcotic that gives the addict an exhilarating sense of power accompanied by a growing deadening of feeling for anything of real value. It seals up the heavens and closes the mind to revelation;⁵⁷ it takes possession of the heart and darkens the spirit;⁵⁸ it works by deception, bewitching the nations (Revelation 18:23); it becomes an obsession—"We wish the wealth or things of the world; we think about them morning, noon, and night; they are first in our minds when we awake in the morning, and the last thing before we go to sleep at night";⁵⁹ it gives a false sense of security against which the Prophet Joseph warned: "Every man who is afraid, covetous, will be taken in a snare," adding that the only security in the future would be "in Zion and her stakes";⁶⁰ it paralyzes the mind's perception of higher things: "Are not the sordid things of this life before our eyes, and have they not thrown a mist before them so that we can not see? . . . What do we know of heavenly things?"⁶¹ "When you see the Latter-day Saints greedy, and covetous [sic] of the things of this world, do you think their minds are in a fit condition to be written upon by the pen of revelation?"⁶²

There are exceptions, but they are dangerously rare, for wealth is a jealous mistress: she will not tolerate any competition; rulers of business are openly contemptuous of all other vocations; and all those "How-to-get-rich" books by rich men virtuously assure us that the first and foremost prerequisite for acquiring wealth is to think of nothing else—the aspirant who is guilty even of a momentary lapse in his loyalty, they tell us, does not deserve the wealth he seeks. That is why there are so few exceptions: "I know," says Brigham Young, "that there is no man on this earth who can call around him property, be he a merchant, tradesman, or famer [sic], with his mind continually occupied with: 'How shall I get this or that; how rich can I get[?]; . . . no such man ever can magnify the priesthood nor enter the celestial kingdom."⁶³ The game is almost always demoralizing: "You may take the class called merchants, also the doctors, the priests in the various sects, the lawyers, and every person engaged in any branch of business throughout the world, and as a general thing, they are all taught from their childhood to be more or less dishonest."⁶⁴ "In my young days

I had to quit the business of painting purely because I had either to be dishonest or quit; and I quit."⁶⁵ "But the great majority of men who have amassed great wealth have done it at the expense of their fellows, on the principle that the doctors, the lawyers, and the merchants acquire theirs. Such men are impositions on the community."⁶⁶

All this in the relatively simple and innocent nineteenth century. Brigham grieved to see how inevitable covetousness led to dishonesty among the saints. "Their cheating and lying, their scheming in every possible way . . . [have] caused my spirit to weep and mourn."⁶⁷

WAS there no trend towards improvement? The whole tenet of the dualism of Babylon and Zion, the Two Ways, is that one does not move gradually and easily from a sinful to a righteous life. One forsakes sin completely, or one does not forsake it. That danger of covetousness did not diminish with the flight of the saints from Babylon: "Have we separated ourselves from the nations? Yes. And what else have we done? . . . Have we not brought Babylon with us? Are we not promoting Babylon here in our midst? Are we not fostering the spirit of Babylon that is now abroad on the face of the whole earth? . . . Yes, yes, to some extent, and there is not a Latter-day Saint but what feels that we have too much of Babylon in our midst."⁶⁸ Many years before, Brigham had laid it on the line: "I am more afraid of covetousness in our Elders than I am of the hordes of hell. Have we men out now of that class? I believe so. I am afraid of such spirits; for they are more powerful and injurious to this people than all hell outside of our borders. All our enemies in the United States or in the world, and all hell with them marshalled against us, could not do us the injury that covetousness in the hearts of this people could do us; for it is idolatry."⁶⁹ "Whether you can see it or not, I know that this people are more or less prone to idolatry; for I see that spirit manifested every day, and hear it from nearly every quarter."⁷⁰

I have a long list of quotations in which President Brigham Young, down through the years, repeats this warning with growing concern. Way back in Kirtland the Lord had said, "[The saints] do not forsake their sins, and their wicked ways, the pride of their hearts, and their covetousness" (D&C 98:20). Thirty-five years later Brigham says, "My experience for the best part of forty years teaches me that they never progress—they are as they were, and as they no doubt will be."⁷¹ And six years after that, he says: "The Lord . . . is sending forth his voice . . . into the hearts of his people, crying unto them—'Stop! Stop your course! Cease to bring in and build up Babylon in your midst!'"⁷² In his last sermon he said: "The devils in hell [are] looking at this people, too, and trying to overthrow us, and the people are still shaking hands with the servants of the devil, instead of sanctifying themselves and calling upon the Lord and doing the work which he has commanded us and put into our hands to do."⁷³

If those who have been "called out of the world" still admit its charms, we can hardly expect the world itself to improve. The world *as such* is Babylon and always has been. It will not change. "Evil is here," says Brigham. "The Devil reigns on the earth, and has held dominion on it for thousands of years."⁶⁴ "The Devil has the mastery of the earth: he has corrupted it, and has corrupted the children of men. He has led them in evil until they are almost entirely ruined, and are so far from God that they neither know Him nor his influence, and have almost lost sight of everything that pertains to eternity. This darkness is more prevalent, more dense, among the people of Christendom than it is among the heathen. They have lost sight of all that is great and glorious—of all principles that pertain to life eternal."⁶⁵ "We are here in this wicked world, a world shrouded in darkness, principally led, directed, governed, and controlled, from first to last, by the power of our common foe . . . --the devil. Lucifer has almost the entire control over the whole earth, rules and governs the children of men and leads them on to destruction."⁶⁶ "The whole world are wrapt up in the garment of corruption, confusion, and destruction; and they are fast making their way down to hell, while we have the words of eternal life."⁶⁷ "Will the inhabitants of the earth receive the truth? They will not."⁶⁸ "It never enters the hearts of the mass of mankind that they are preparing for the day of calamity and slaughter."⁶⁹ "You will see that the wisdom of the wise among the nations will perish and be taken from them. They will fall into difficulties, and they will not be able to tell the reason, nor point a way to avert them any more than they can now in this land. They can fight, quarrel, contend and destroy each other, but they do not know how to make peace. So it will be with the inhabitants of the earth."⁷⁰

We have presented this basic historical proposition of the Latter-day Saints in little-known but powerful words of the prophet Brigham Young to call to mind how faithfully such sayings continue the teachings of the Prophet Joseph and foreshadow the world in which we live. Almost the first words spoken by the Lord himself to the boy Joseph in his first vision were, "Behold the world lieth in sin at this time and none doeth good no not one; they have turned asside [sic] from the Gospel and keep not my commandments; they draw near to me with their lips while their hearts are far from me and mine anger is kindling against the inhabitants of the earth to visit them according [sic] to this ungodliness."⁷¹ The preface to the Doctrine and Covenants repeats this: "They seek not the Lord, . . . but every man walketh in his own way . . . in Babylon, even Babylon the great, which shall fall" (D&C 1:16). And so on down: "Behold, the world is ripening in iniquity" (D&C 18:6). "The hour is nigh and the day soon at hand when the

Every step in the direction of increasing one's personal holdings is a step away from Zion, for *mammon* is simply the standard Hebrew word for any kind of financial dealing. Man's wants are few. To take more than we need is to take what does not belong to us.

earth is ripe; and all the proud and they that do wickedly shall be as stubble; . . . I will take vengeance upon the wicked, for they will not repent; for the cup of mine indignation is full" (D&C 29:9, 17). "All flesh is corrupted before me; and the powers of darkness prevail upon the earth, . . . and all eternity is pained, and the angels are waiting. . . . The enemy is combined" (D&C 38:11-12). (Do such words mean nothing to us?) "Behold, the day has come, when the cup of the wrath of mine indignation is full. . . . Wherefore, labor ye; . . . for the adversary spreadeth his dominions, and darkness reigneth; and the anger of God kindleth against the inhabitants of the earth; and none doeth good, for all have gone out of the way" (D&C 43:26, 28; 82:5-6). "Darkness covereth the earth, and gross darkness the minds of the people, and all flesh has become corrupt before my face. Behold, vengeance cometh speedily . . . upon all the face of the earth. . . . And upon my house shall it begin, . . . first among . . . you . . . who have professed to know my name and have not known me" (D&C 112:23-26).

So the word of the Lord is that Babylon is to remain in Babylon until the day of destruction. Things have not improved since Joseph Smith wrote of "the most damning hand of murder, tyranny, and oppressions, supported and urged on and upheld by the influence of that spirit which has so strongly riveted the creeds of the fathers, who have inherited lies, upon the hearts of the children, and filled the world with confusion, and has been growing stronger and stronger, and is now the very main-spring of all corruption, and the whole earth groans under the weight of its iniquity."⁷² "Some may have cried peace," he wrote (and no man ever loved peace more than he), "but the Saints and the world will have little peace from henceforth."⁷³ "Destruction, to the eye of the spiritual beholder, seems to be written by the finger of an invisible hand, in large capitals, upon almost every thing we behold."⁷⁴ "There is a spirit that prompts the nations to prepare for war, desolation, and bloodshed—to waste each other away," said Brigham twenty years later. "Do they realize it? No. . . . Is it not a mystery?"⁷⁵ "When the nations have for years turned much of their attention to manufacturing instruments of death, they have sooner or later used those instruments. . . . [They] will be used until the people are wasted away, and there is no help for it."⁷⁶

THIS, then, is how things stand: (1) We know what Zion is, (2) we know what Babylon is, (3) we know that the two can never mix, and (4) we know that the Latter-day Saints, against the admonitions of their leaders, have always tried to mix them. How is this done? (And now comes our sermon.)

In order to reconcile the ways of Babylon with the ways

of Zion, it has been necessary to circumvent the inconvenient barriers of scripture and conscience by the use of the tried and true device of *rhetoric*, defined by Plato as the art of making true things seem false and false things seem true by the use of words.⁷⁷ This invaluable art has, since the time of Cain, invested the ways of Babylon with an air of high purpose, solid virtue, and impeccable respectability. "The servants of sin should appear polished and pious, . . . able to call to their assistance . . . the subtle, persuasive power of rhetoric."⁷⁸ "The devil is an orator; he is powerful; . . . he can tempt all classes."⁷⁹

Years ago I published a number of articles in various journals dealing with the Roman world of the fourth century A.D.⁸⁰ Let us recall that early Jewish and Christian writers referred to Rome simply as Babylon; it was the true Babylon of the time, but a Babylon sustained by a high sense of virtue. For, as the Romans became ever more corrupted by wealth (the Roman satirists, shrewd and observant men, infallibly put their finger on the spot every time), they became more and more fascinated with the image of themselves as honest, hard-working, straightforward, tough-minded citizens: *Hic est Ausonia*, they said: "The Western world of clean, fresh, simple, unspoiled pioneers." This fiction became the very cornerstone of the official doctrine. "Rome was great because Rome was good, giving expression to the old Roman belief in the close association between piety and success."⁸¹ This was the rhetoric of wealth, and it was inevitable—it always follows in such a situation, because people simply can't live virtuously and viciously at the same time. Yet they want to be good and rich at the same time, and so they reach a compromise called respectability, which is nothing less than Babylon masquerading as Zion.

Any social worker or observer knows that no one can be more straitlaced, puritanical, and exquisitely respectable than a harlot. She has to reek with virtue to relieve her terrible inner tensions. There is nothing the Godfather prizes more than his respectability, and extensive surveys have shown that he has become something of a hero-figure in this country. A patriot (he loves America with such a passion that a squadron of government lawyers cannot induce him to leave it), a church-going family man, impeccably proper in dress and etiquette, he outwits all his brutal rivals and establishes his credibility by instant liquidation of all who stand in his way. It is not enough for the wicked to make excuses or explanations; in order to live with themselves and succeed in their undertakings, they must stand forth and be counted as pillars of righteousness, raising a hue and cry with practiced skill against those who would jeopardize their position, demonstrating, usually with the aid of paid rhetoricians, ministers, and lawyers, that it is not they but their opponents who are wicked. This is a *leitmotif*, a main theme, in the Book of Mormon: "And we know that the people . . . in the land of Jerusalem were a righteous people; . . . and our father hath judged them, and hath led us away" (1 Nephi 17:22). Thus said the self-righteous Laman and Lemuel.

"This man doth revile against our laws which are just, and our wise lawyers whom we have selected." Amulek, thus

accused, answered: "Have I testified against your law? . . . I have spoken in favor of your law, to your condemnation. . . . And . . . the people cried out against him, saying: Now we know that this man is a child of the devil, for he hath lied unto us; for he hath spoken against our law . . . and . . . reviled . . . against our lawyers, and our judges. And . . . the lawyers put it into their hearts that they should remember these things against him. . . . Now the object of these lawyers was to get gain" (Alma 10:24, 26, 28-30, 32).

"Ye do not remember the Lord your God," said Samuel the Lamanite to the people of Zarahemlah, "but ye do always remember your riches" (Helaman 13:22). (And how righteous they were about it!)

And now when ye talk, ye say: If our days had been in the days of our fathers of old, we would not have slain the prophets. . . . Behold ye are worse than they; for . . . if a prophet . . . testifieth of your sins, . . . ye are angry with him; . . . yea, you will say that he is a false prophet, and that he is a sinner, and of the devil, because he testifieth that your deeds are evil. But behold, if a man . . . saith that all is well, then ye will not find fault with him. [On the contrary,] ye will clothe him with costly apparel . . . because . . . he saith that all is well (Helaman 13:25-28).

These people did not want to hear what was *wrong* with Zarahemla, only what was *right* with Zarahemla. Anyone who wanted their vote had only to avoid any mention of repentance and tell them that they had done no wrong, that Zarahemla was great because Zarahemla was good.

We do not have time here to examine the *loci communes*, the tried-and-true, sure-fire topics that made up the arsenal of the rhetoric of wealth. I was brought up on them and could talk on the subject all night. Suffice it here to mention a few of the most powerful and persuasive talking points.

First, of course, the work ethic, which is being so strenuously advocated in our day. This is one of those neat magician's tricks in which all our attention is focused on one hand while the other hand does the manipulating. Implicit in the work ethic are the ideas (1) that because one must work to acquire wealth, work equals wealth, and (2) that that is the whole equation. With these go the corollaries that anyone who has wealth must have earned it by hard work and is, therefore, beyond criticism; that anyone who doesn't have it deserves to suffer—thus penalizing any who do not work for money; and (since you have a right to all you earn) that the only real work is for one's self; and, finally, that any limit set to the amount of wealth an individual may acquire is a satanic device to deprive men of their free agency—thus making mockery of the Council of Heaven. These editorial syllogisms we have heard a thousand times, but you will not find them in the scriptures. Even the cornerstone of virtue, "He that is idle shall not eat the bread . . . of the laborer" (D&C 42:42), hailed as the franchise of unbridled capitalism, is rather a rebuke to that system which has allowed idlers to live in luxury and laborers in want throughout the whole course of history. The whole emphasis in the

holy writ is not on whether one works or not, but what one works for: "The laborer in Zion shall labor for Zion; for if they labor for money they shall perish" (2 Nephi 26:31). "The people of the church began to wax proud, because of their exceeding riches, . . . precious things, which they had obtained by their industry" and which proved their undoing, for all their hard work (Alma 4:6-7).

In Zion you labor, to be sure, but not for money, and not for yourself, which is the exact opposite of our present version of the work ethic. "The non-producer must live on the products of those who labor. There is no other way," says Brigham, and he gives the solution: "If we all labor a few hours a day, we could then spend the remainder of our time in rest and the improvement of our minds."⁸² That is the real work we are called to do and the real wealth we are to accumulate individually. "Work less, wear less, eat less, and we shall be a great deal wiser, healthier, and wealthier people than by taking the course we do now."⁸³ Work does not sanctify wealth: "I know that there is no man on this earth who can call around him property, . . . and dicker and work, and take advantage here and there—no such man ever can magnify the priesthood nor enter the celestial kingdom. Now, remember, they will not enter that kingdom."⁸⁴ He gives a concrete illustration: "When the Twelve Apostles were chosen in this dispensation, they were told not to labor with their hands, but to preach the Gospel to the nations of the earth. Some of them before a year had elapsed were engaged in trade; they became merchants, and they apostatized."⁸⁵ "If we lust . . . for the riches of the world, and spare no pains [hard work] to obtain and retain them, and feel 'these are mine,' then the spirit of the anti-Christ comes upon us. This is the danger . . . [we] are in."⁸⁶ Admirable and indispensable in themselves, hard work, ingenuity and enterprise become an evil when they are misdirected, meaning directed to personal aggrandizement: "A man says, 'I am going to make iron, and I will have the credit of making the first iron in the Territory. I will have the credit of knowing how to flux the ore that is found in these regions, and bringing out the metal in abundance, or no other man shall.' Now, the beauty and glory of this kind of proceeding is the blackest of darkness, and its comeliness as deformity."⁸⁷ An act, good in itself, becomes a monstrous deformity when thus misdirected.

THE first rule of economics is that everyone should provide, as far as possible, for himself. The second, which receives vastly more attention in the scriptures, is that man's wants are few. "Having food and raiment," says Paul, "let us be therewith content" (1 Timothy 6:8). "If we have our hundreds or thou-

The worst sinners are
not harlots and
publicans, but religious
leaders with their insis-
tence on proper dress,
careful observance of all
rules, concern for status
symbols, strict legality,
pious patriotism.
Babylon is always rich,
respectable, immovable.

sands," says Brother Brigham, "we may foster the idea that we have nothing more than we need; but such a notion is entirely erroneous, for our real wants are very limited. What do we absolutely need? I possess everything on the face of the earth that I need, as I appear before you on this stand."⁸⁸ With our real wants thus modest, there is plenty on earth for everyone, "for the earth is full and there is enough and to spare" (D&C 104:17), and no excuse whatever for competitive grabbing—"wherefore the world lieth in sin" (D&C 49:20). To take more than we need is to take what does not belong to us.

In Zion all are "of one heart and one mind, . . . and there [are] no poor among them" (Moses 7:18), thus showing that equality extends into all fields, as it must also be in the preparation for Zion: "For if ye are not equal in earthly things ye cannot be equal in obtaining heavenly things. For if you will that I give you a place in the celestial world, you must prepare yourselves" (D&C 78:6-7). "And you are to be equal, . . . to have equal claims, . . . every man according to his wants and his needs, . . . every man seeking the interest of his neighbor, and doing all things with an eye single to the glory of God" (D&C 82:17, 19). Well, there is a great deal of this. In the words of the Prophet Joseph, "The greatest temporal and spiritual blessings which always come from faithfulness and concerted effort, never attended individual exertion or enterprise"⁸⁹ (a statement I do not recall having heard from the stand for some time). This was a hard lesson to learn: to come down to earth. "The Latter-day Saints, in their conduct and acts with regard to financial matters, are like the rest of the world. The course pursued by men of business in the world has a tendency to make a few rich, and to sink the masses of the people in poverty and degradation. Too many of the Elders of Israel take this course. No matter what comes they are for gain—for gathering around them riches; and when they get rich, how are those riches used? Spent on the lusts of the flesh."⁹⁰ As to the idler eating the bread of the laborer, "I have seen many cases . . .," says Brigham, "when the young lady would have to take her clothing on a Saturday night and wash it, in order that she might go to meeting on the Sunday with a clean dress on. Who is she laboring for? For those who, many of them, are living in luxury. And, to serve the classes that are living on them, the poor, laboring men and women are toiling, working their lives out to earn that which will keep a little life within them. Is this equality? No! What is going to be done? The Latter-day Saints will never accomplish their mission until this inequality shall cease on the earth."⁹¹ "The earth is here, and the fullness thereof is here. It was made for man; and one man was not made to trample his fellowman under his feet, and enjoy all his hearts desires, while the thousands suffer."⁹² Regardless of who works and

who doesn't, no just father is going to order one son clothed in robes and another in rags (D&C 38:26).

Of course, the man who devotes himself to the tiring routines of business should be rewarded, but should all others be penalized who do not engage in that particular line of work? "Where, then, is your great ability? In your pockets—in the god so much adored," says Brigham with contempt; there is other work to be done and far greater: "But take the men that can travel the earth over, preach the Gospel without purse or scrip, and then go to and lay their plans to gather the saints. That looks like the work of angels."⁹³ Granted that those who acquire wealth are sometimes people of superior talent (though for every real artist, or poet, or composer in America, there are at least ten thousand millionaires), "those who are blessed with superior abilities," even in business, "should use those blessings . . . to administer to others less favored." Our gifts and talents are to be put at the disposal of the human race, not used to put the race at our disposal. "Instead of this," Brigham notes, "man has become so perverted as to debar his fellows as much as possible from those blessings, and constrain them by physical force or circumstances to contribute of the proceeds of their labour to sustain the favoured few."⁹⁴ That is not Zion, but that is what we have. Should we settle for it?

The doctrine of uniting together in our temporal labors, and all working for the good of all is from the beginning, from everlasting, and it will be for ever and ever. No one supposes for one moment that in heaven the angels are speculating, that they are building railroads and factories, taking advantage one of another, gathering up the substance there is in heaven to aggrandize themselves, and that they live on the same principle that we are in the habit of doing. No Christian, no sectarian Christian, in the world believes this; they believe that the inhabitants of heaven live as a family, that their faith, interests and pursuits have one end in view—the glory of God and their own salvation, that they may receive more and more. . . . We all believe this, and suppose we go to work and imitate them as far as we can.⁹⁵

"There are men in this community who, through the force of the education they have received from their parents and friends (i.e., this is an established ethic among us), would cheat a poor widow out of her last cow, and then go down upon their knees and thank God for the good fortune he had sent them and for his kind providences that enabled them to obtain a cow without becoming amenable to *any law of the land*, though the poor widow has been actually cheated."⁹⁶ Here, please note, the defense of immorality is *legality*: if it is legal, all is well, even though the law has been contrived under pressure of interest groups.

God recognizes only one justification for seeking wealth, and that is with the express intent of helping the poor (Jacob 2:19). One of the disturbing things about Zion is that its appeal, according to the scriptures, is all to the poor: "The Lord hath founded Zion, and the poor of his people shall trust in it" (Isaiah 14:32). Of course, once in Zion, no one suffers from poverty, for they

dwell in righteousness and there are no poor among them (Moses 7:18). The law of consecration is a minimal requirement, for "if my people observe not this law, . . . it shall not be a land of Zion unto you" (D&C 119:6). Here our rhetoric engages in a neat bit of sophistry which has always been popular:

Elders of Israel are greedy after the things of this world. If you ask them if they are ready to build up the kingdom of God, their answer is prompt—"Why, to be sure we are, with our whole souls; but we want first to get so much gold, speculate and get rich, and then we can help the church considerably. We will go to California and get gold, go and buy goods and get rich, trade with the emigrants, build a mill, make a farm, get a large herd of cattle, and *then* we can do a great deal for Israel."⁹⁷

I have heard this many times from friends and relatives, but it is hokum. What they are saying is, "If God will give me a million dollars, I will let him have a generous cut of it." And so they pray and speculate and expect the Lord to come through for them. He won't do it: "And again, I command thee that thou shalt not covet thine own property" (D&C 19:26). "Let them repent of all their sins, and of all their covetous desires, before me, saith the Lord; for what is property unto me? saith the Lord" (D&C 117:4). He does not need our property or our help.

EVERY rhetorician knows that his most effective weapons by far are *labels*. He can demolish the opposition with simple and devastating labels such as communism, socialism, or atheism, popery, militarism, or Mormonism, or give his clients' worst crimes a religious glow with noble labels such as integrity, old-fashioned honesty, tough-mindedness, or free competitive enterprise. "You can get away with anything if you just wave the flag," a business partner of my father once told me. He called that patriotism. But the label game reaches its all-time peak of skill and effrontery in the Madison Avenue master stroke of pasting the lovely label of Zion on all the most typical institutions of Babylon: Zion's Loans, Zion's Real Estate, Zion's Used Cars, Zion's Jewelry, Zion's Supermart, Zion's Auto Wrecking, Zion's Outdoor Advertising, Zion's Gunshop, Zion's Land and Mining, Zion's Development, Zion's Securities—all that is quintessentially Babylon now masquerades as Zion.

There is a precedent for the bit of faking—a most distinguished one. Satan, being neither stupid nor inexperienced, knows the value of a pleasing appearance—there are times when it pays to appear even as an angel of light. He goes farther than that, however, to assure that success of his masquerade (given out since the days of Adam) as a picturesquely repulsive figure—a four-star horror with claws, horns, or other obvious trimmings. With that idea firmly established, he can operate with devastating effectiveness as a very proper gentleman, a handsome and persuasive salesman. He "decoys" our minds (a favorite word with Brigham Young) with false words and appearances. A favorite trick is to put the whole blame on sex.

Sex can be a pernicious appetite, but it runs a poor second to the other. For example: We are wont to think of Sodom as the original sexpot, but according to all accounts "this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom": that great wealth made her people cruel and self-righteous.⁹⁸ The worst sinners, according to Jesus, are not the harlots and publicans, but the religious leaders with their insistence on proper dress and grooming, their careful observance of all the rules, their precious concern for status symbols, their strict legality, their pious patriotism. Longhairs, beards, necklaces, LSD and rock, Big Sur and Woodstock come and go, but Babylon is always there: rich, respectable, immovable, with its granite walls and steel vaults, its bronze gates, its onyx trimmings and marble floors (all borrowed from ancient temples, for these are our modern temples), and its bullet-proof glass—the awesome symbols of total security. Keeping her orgies decently private, she presents a front of unalterable propriety to all. As the early Christian writers observed, Babylon always wins: in every showdown throughout history, Satan has remained in possession of the field, and he still holds it. Its security and respectability exert a strong appeal: "When I see this people grow and spread and prosper," said Brigham Young, "I feel there is more danger than when they are in poverty. Being driven from city to city . . . is nothing compared to the danger of becoming rich and being hailed by outsiders as a first-class community."⁹⁹

Brigham Young has this to say on the Puritan ethic, which shifts the burden of guilt from wealth to sex:

When the books are opened, out of which the human family are to be judged, how disappointed the professedly sanctified, long-faced hypocrites and smooth-toned pharisees will be, when the publicans and harlots enter into the kingdom of heaven before them; people that appeared to be full of evil, but the Lord says they never designed to do wrong; the Devil had power over them, and they suffered in their mortal state a thousand times more than you poor, miserable, canting, cheating, snivelling, hypocritical pharisees; you were dressed in purple and fine linen, and bound burdens upon your weaker brethren that you would not so much as help to lift with your little fingers. Did you ever go without food, suffer with tooth-ache, sore eyes, rheumatism, or the chills and fever? You have fared sumptuously all your days and you condemned to an everlasting hell these poor harlots and publicans who never designed an evil. Are you not guilty of committing an evil with that poor harlot? Yes, and you will be damned while she will be saved.¹⁰⁰

When the saints were shocked by growing juvenile delinquency in their midst, who were the real criminals? Brigham

knows: "I have not the least hesitation in saying that the loose conduct, and calculations, and manner of doing business, which have characterized men who have had property in their hands, have laid the foundation to bring our boys into the spirit of stealing. You have caused them to do it, you have laid before them every inducement possible, to learn their hands and train their minds to take that which is not their own."¹⁰¹ But the respectable appearance will nearly always win, though the Lord has said, "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24).

Here are a few notes from Brigham on this clever campaign: "The devil appears as a gentleman when he presents himself to the children of men."¹⁰² "The devil does not care how much religion there is on earth; he is a great preacher, and to all appearance, a great gentleman. . . . It is popular now-a-days to be religious; it has become the seasoning to a great deal of rascality, hypocrisy and crime."¹⁰³ "The adversary presents his principles and arguments in the most approved style, and in the most winning tone, attended with the most graceful attitudes; and he is very careful to ingratiate himself into the favour of the powerful and influential of mankind, uniting himself with popular parties, floating into offices of trust and emolument by pandering to popular feeling, though it should seriously wrong

and oppress the innocent."¹⁰⁴ No atheism here! "The servants of sin should appear polished and pious, . . . able to call to their assistance . . . the subtle, persuasive power of rhetoric."¹⁰⁵ "The devil is an orator," said Joseph Smith. "He is powerful; . . . he can tempt all classes."¹⁰⁶

It is not difficult to discover the plot of the drama of the restored gospel. But the prince of this world does not like certain aspects of the play, and so his people have undertaken to rewrite the script. What has today happened is an old story and is crassly obvious—they have switched villains on us. They have cast an obnoxious young lightweight (a very minor devil) to the role of the Evil One while the one most qualified to play it prefers to take the part of a dignified, upright, mature, and often charming gentleman. It was clever to put a pathetic, long-haired, dirty, neurotic, mixed-up, idealistic, sex-hungry fool in the role of the heavy while an actor of infinitely greater skill and experience takes the highly respectable part of the arch-pillar of society. But no one whose knowledge of life and letters has taken him as far as a season of TV westerns or soap operas would be fooled for a minute by the shift. The well-groomed, well-dressed, well-fed, successful, respectable man of the world (in the western, it's the banker, mineowner, or local landbaron) points a finger trembling with righteous wrath and scorn at the miserable, half-baked tramp or cowboy who gives himself away all over the place.

Wealth is a pleasant
and heady narcotic
that gives the addict
an exhilarating sense
of power accompanied
by a growing deadening
of feeling for any-
thing of real value.

The sorriest thing about Babylon's masquerade and the switched villains is that there is nothing the least bit clever or subtle about it. It is all as crude, obvious, and heavyhanded as it can be, and it only gets by because everybody wants it to. We rather like the Godfather and the lively and competitive world he moves in: what would TV do without it? What other world have our children ever known? We want to be vindicated in our position and to know that the world is on our side as we all join in a chorus of righteous denunciation; the haircut becomes the test of virtue in a world where Satan deceives and rules by appearance. The full-fledged citizen of Babylon is an organization man: Daniel was thrown to the lions before he would give up his private devotions offensive to the administration to which he belonged; his three friends preferred being cast into a fiery furnace to the simple act of facing and saluting the image of the king of Babylon who had given them wealth, power, and position in his kingdom, to whom they owed all allegiance, when the band played in the Plain of Dura. For Brigham Young, conformity is the danger signal: "I am not a stereotyped Latter-day Saint," he said, "and do not believe in the doctrine. . . . Away with stereotyped 'Mormons'!"¹⁰⁷ When, as a boy, he was asked by his father to sign a temperance pledge, he resolutely refused.¹⁰⁸ Youth rebelling against respectability? No, honesty resisting social pressure and hypocrisy.

WHY this highly unoriginal talk? Because if this is a very important and cosmic part of the gospel, it is also a much neglected one.

All my life I have shied away from these disturbing and highly unpopular—even offensive—themes. But I cannot do so any longer, because in my old age I have taken to reading the scriptures and there have had it forced upon my reluctant attention, that from the time of Adam to the present day, Zion has been pitted against Babylon, and the name of the game has always been money—"power and gain."

It has been supposed that wealth gives power. In a depraved state of society, in a certain sense it does, if opening a wide field for unrighteous monopolies, by which the poor are robbed and oppressed and the wealthy are more enriched, is power. In a depraved state of society money can buy positions and titles, can cover up a multitude of incapacities, can open wide the gates of fashionable society to the lowest and most depraved of human beings; it divides society into castes without any reference to goodness, virtue or truth. It is made to pander to the most brutal passions of the human soul; it is made to subvert every wholesome law of God and man, and to trample down every sacred bond that should tie society together in a national, municipal, domestic and every other relationship.¹⁰⁹

Cain slew "his brother Abel, for the sake of getting gain" (Moses 5:50). For Satan had taught him "this great secret, that I may murder and get gain" (Moses 5:31). He excused himself to God: "Satan tempted me because of my brother's flocks"

(Moses 5:38), and having gotten the best of his brother in competition, Cain "gloried in that which he had done," rejoicing in the rhetoric of wealth: "Saying I am free; surely the flocks of my brother falleth into my hands" (Moses 5:33).

He felt no guilt, since this was fair competition. Abel could take care of himself: "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Moses 5:34).

It was all free competitive enterprise where "every man prospered according to his genius, and . . . every man conquered according to his strength; and whatsoever a man did was no crime" (Alma 30:17). This is no mere red thread running through the scriptures, but the broad highway of history.

Commenting on the astonishingly short time in which the Nephites turned from a righteous to a wicked nation, Nephi puts his finger on the spot: "Now the cause of this iniquity of the people was this—Satan had great power, unto the stirring up of the people to do all manner of iniquity, . . . tempting them to seek [i.e., work] for power, and authority, and riches, and the vain things of the world" (3 Nephi 6:15).

I pray that there may be some Latter-day Saints who do not succumb to the last and most determined onslaught of Babylon, which I believe may be coming. ☞

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Third Place Winner, 1986 D. K. Brown Fiction Contest

GOING THROUGH THE LIST

By Helen Walker Jones

DURING THE MINI-CLASS "A SISTER WHO LOVES HERSELF Loves the Whole World" I sit primly in my brown linen dress, fanning myself with a ward bulletin I've found beneath the chair, wondering if I gave Jason his fluoride tablet at breakfast. The teacher, a girl of twenty-five, keeps tossing her head to show off the blond curls hanging to her waist. She uses expressions like "a marriage made in the celestial kingdom" and "little pitchers have big ears" and confides that she once wore the crown of Miss Kane County. Evidently, this girl loves herself; therefore, it must follow that she loves the whole world.

When the girl says excitedly, "The master bedroom is the soul of the home. Make it as pretty and feminine as you can, so your man will adore the lovely creature who lives there," I can't stop myself from picturing a brothel: lace curtains, a flowered carpet, and a woman in a pink corset reclining on a feather bed. I have to admit my concept of such places is derived entirely from Jimmy Stewart and Randolph Scott movies; still, I figure it's a fairly accurate picture.

Our bedroom is neither dainty nor luxurious. Rick refuses to sleep on anything but brown or navy blue sheets. The fancy pillows were a long-ago gift from my mother, and Rick merely tolerates them.

I have my year's supply of paper plates for compassionate service visits. The cookies are still warm and I snitch one, tucking the plastic around the edge of the plate again as I leave the house.

Sister Baxter waves at me from across the street, making me conscious that, like sorority women, Relief Society presidents should never eat while walking in public. I shove the entire cookie into my mouth and wave back.

Cynthia Mars is stretched out on her couch behind the screen door, holding her baby in the crook of her arm. "Oh, come in," she calls and I watch her switch off the television and drape a quilt over the bassinet. Through the screen, the girl moves in shadows, her blond ponytail bouncing across her shoulders.

"You're the same one, aren't you?" she asks, holding the door and stepping to one side with the baby on her hip.

"As what?"

"The lady who brought the booties, you know, from the Church."

"That's me," I say, conscious of the drawl creeping back into my speech. I brush nervously at my bangs, feeling how oily my forehead is. It makes me feel like a teenager. "I brought you some cookies."

Cynthia stares at me and I wonder if my slip is showing, or if my hair is sticking flat to my forehead. "Oh, then you don't know," the girl says at last. "We're vegetarians."

"There's no meat in these cookies," I say, wondering what on earth she's talking about. "In fact, they're zucchini cookies."

The girl balances the plate in her free hand, finally setting it on her rickety dining room table. "I'm not real sure if we're supposed to eat eggs, is what I mean," she says. "I'll have to ask my husband." The tablecloth is green and white gingham with sunflowers painted in each corner. It's a lie about the zucchini.

"Come on," Cynthia says, motioning toward the couch. "Let's sit." She pulls up her grey sweatshirt and offers a breast to the baby. "My husband and I, we're sort of into Zen Buddhist stuff right now, you know?" I try to smile. "No offense," the girl continues, "but don't expect us at Church."

"Well, if you ever feel like coming, we'd love to have you," I say weakly, regretting I'm not bold enough to rise up and bear my testimony. "How are you all doing, your health and everything, I mean."

"You from the South?" the girl asks excitedly, jerking away from the baby, who wails until she presses her nipple back into its mouth.

"Yeah," I say, "sort of. A hick town in West Texas."

"Odessa?" Cynthia says. "My aunt lives there."

"No. It's called Longfellow, actually, after the poet. But then we moved to Waco, which isn't really West Texas, but still. . . ." I feel foolish, rambling on about my hometown. A recent visiting teaching seminar gave these hints: never talk about yourself; always let them open themselves up to you; draw them out with questions. "Tell me about your aunt," I say quickly. "The one from Odessa. Is she a member of the Church?"

"Ah, never mind," the girl says. "There's not a fascinating bone in her body, but she talks like you." She presses the baby against her shoulder and begins patting it on the back. I realize I don't even know the sex, and since the infant is wearing

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generic yellow, it's difficult to tell. The quilt hanging over the bassinet is green, so that's no clue, either.

"I just love Willie Nelson, don't you?" Cynthia asks.

"Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain," I say, wondering how I'll sum this visit up in welfare meeting.

"You're no Utah Mormon, I could tell right off," Cynthia says. I assume this is a high compliment. I wish I could leave; my panty girdle is killing my thighs.

"Listen," Cynthia says, flipping her head so her ponytail brushes the top of the infant's head, "Could somebody watch my baby sometime while I do errands? Don't you ladies do that sort of stuff?"

"We could arrange it," I say, writing my phone number on a scrap of paper from my purse, looking at the sunflowers on the tablecloth and wondering if the girl will dump the cookies into the garbage after I leave, or wait till her husband comes home to consult him on the burning "egg" question.

Cynthia Mars seems to think I'm eyeing the cookie plate, as she says, "I'd offer you one, but you're probably on a diet. Mormon women are all overweight, did you notice?"

I flush, remembering my daydreams about going off to a fitness farm. "Me in particular?" I say sweetly.

"No," Cynthia says. "Just as a group. You're not so bad, really, if you'd go natural, you know. Forget the bra and girdle, I mean. After all, this is the eighties."

"There is no zucchini in those cookies," I say, standing and brushing off my skirt as though it had crumbs on it. I don't even feel like saying good-bye, let alone call-if-you-need-anything or pray-and-you-shall-be-strengthened. I pull my sweater together at the neck, thinking of Cynthia's off-the-shoulder baggy sweatshirt, wishing I'd worn something besides this old denim wrap-around skirt and a pink cardigan. The outfit makes me look ten pounds heavier, at least.

"No hard feelings," Cynthia says, wrinkling up her forehead and smiling perkily. "I like people from Texas, really I do." I hold the screen door open and look back at the girl, who's standing now, switching the baby to her other breast. I can't imagine a nursing mother going without a bra. The very thought makes my back and breasts ache.

"Maybe I'll come to one of your meetings sometime," the girl says, "if you promise not to make chickens out of straw. My aunt in Odessa has one of them on her kitchen table that she made at Relief Society." She laughs in a mocking, insolent way.

I let the screen door close behind me and walk to the edge of the porch, then stop and turn back to face the girl. I'm dying to say, "When you're forty, your breasts will sag to your waist," but instead I take a deep breath, tuck my sweater into the waistband of my skirt, and say, "Next month we're learning to smock baby dresses." My voice quavers.

"It's a boy," Cynthia says from behind the screen. "We're naming him Waylon. You know, after Waylon Jennings."

I realize I haven't asked a single question about the baby—its sex, size at birth, the actual birth date, which the ward clerk will want to know. They probably won't have it blessed anyway, or maybe they plan to sprinkle its forehead and chant

"Om" while they burn incense. I suck in my stomach. I didn't even ask to hold the baby, a grave social faux pas if ever there was one. "Let me know if you need anything." My voice reminds me of a pull-string toy, repeating the Relief Society motto: Charity Never Faileth.

"If you ever go back to Longfellow," Cynthia says sweetly as I start down the steps, "I'd love to go along for the ride." She giggles. "Get it?" she asks. "Long-fellow. A-long."

"You're a real wit, Cynthia," I say, turning away.

Occasionally I glance back even after the yellow house has long since vanished behind the cottonwood trees; does she ever stare out the windows of the grubby house, feeling lonely, I wonder. Probably not. I also speculate about whether her master bedroom is the soul of the household, or if the non-egg-eating husband only lets her buy solid brown sheets.

THE list sits always on my nightstand:

1. Cookies to Sis. Mars
2. Funeral luncheon for Bro. Quantrill
3. Welfare orders—get signed by Bishop
4. Assign visiting teachers to nursing home women

"Figure it out," my sister Ingrid said over the phone when I called to announce my new church job. "Any Mormon woman without a kid under six automatically goes into the drawing for Relief Society president. They figure you have too much time on your hands. And miscarriages don't count a whit, honey."

"You make it sound like they draw names from a hat," I said.

"Who knows?" Ingrid laughed. "I'm not privy to the inner workings of the priesthood." Ingrid lives in Waco and she's always been prone to sarcastic comments about the Church. Her soft drawl reminds me of how people teased both of us when we were roommates at the Y. None of the girls we lived with had ever eaten grits or hush puppies or black-eyed peas. And they constantly yelled, "Hurry up, y'all" whenever either of us was late. I've consciously tried to lose the relaxed, slow-paced speech of my childhood, but once in a while someone will ask, "You're not from Utah, are you?" and I feel a sudden shyness and a nostalgia for Texas, a longing for the sound of my mother's old screen door slapping closed.

"So what are you doing in the ward now?" I asked Ingrid hesitantly, trying to distract her from setting off on a discourse about the inequities of the priesthood.

"I'm Primary pianist. Face it, Marn, I can't do any damage there. How can I teach false doctrine while I'm plunking out 'Book of Mormon Stories' on the old upright?"

I pictured Ingrid's inch-long fingernails clicking against the piano keys. She sells computers for a living and makes more money than her husband. On weekdays she farms her four children out to a little old German lady, not even LDS, who smokes and takes an occasional nip of cough syrup with codeine. The kids always smell of tobacco and once in Primary the oldest, Leah, requested "Bringing in the Sheaves" during choosing time.

"Listen, Marnie," Ingrid said, "Admit it—you're perfect as a

Relief Society lady. You always dragged home stray dogs, after all, and what a sucker for a sob story." I thought of our neighbor's dog, dead in the street just a few days before. At the time, I wondered if it was the Relief Society president's duty to make a meal for the family.

"Go see a Jimmy Stewart movie and you'll feel better," Ingrid suggested. This had been a joke from childhood. Our mother was such an avid fan that all of us children thought Jimmy Stewart was one of the General Authorities, since his portrait hung on the living room wall next to J. Reuben Clark and David O. McKay. When Ingrid and I saw "Mr. Krueger's Christmas" seated beside our own children, our mother was already dead, but Ingrid turned to me in the dark screening room on Temple Square and whispered, "Somewhere, Mama is clapping her hands with delight."

"She's just waiting for his arrival in the Celestial Kingdom," I whispered back, and the two of us sat through the sentimental story with tears in our eyes, remembering Saturday afternoon matinees with our mother in the old movie house in downtown Waco.

I never dared tell Ingrid that, while other people are doing meaningful things like sending milk to Poland or feeding Korean children for four dollars a month, I spend entire weekends trying to find storage space for old men's furniture because they're moving into nursing homes. Inevitably, I end up stacking the chairs and tables in the crawl space of our basement, alongside boxes from a ward member now residing at the State Penitentiary.

I'M lying on the bed now, my cheeks pressed against the smallest pillow, which smells strongly of fabric softener. I should have been a laundress, a washboard clamped between my knees, my gnarled knuckles working mercilessly at a stained collar. Maybe the master of the house would have fallen in love with my flowing dark hair and ignored my sandpaper hands.

Rick has taken Jason to Liberty Park to swing. "Go lie down a while," he said before leaving, so here I am on the navy blue quilt, leaning against the old but pretty pillows. Usually Rick isn't so solicitous. I wonder if he's feeling guilty about something—maybe the young girl whose desk is next to his. A recent BYU grad, the girl keeps asking Rick's advice on her articles. Once she even called him at home, asking for "Brother Elliott" and he seemed embarrassed. "Is she pretty?" I asked when he hung up.

"In a dippy sort of way," he said, laughing and tugging at his socks. "She thinks we work for the devil's newspaper. The city editor asked her to cover a story on Planned Parenthood and she's afraid to go alone, with all the picketers."

So he went with her on the assignment, leaving me to ponder why they didn't teach you to cope with these situations in Family Relations at Provo. A girl like that may be harmless, but it's still scary sending your husband out to work every day to be bombarded by gorgeous single women. If I'd been born five years later, I could have been a career woman like Ingrid—

maybe even a lawyer. Mother was mad for Perry Mason, too.

WHO died this time?" Rick says, coming back from the park with Jason, who flops onto his bed fully clothed. Rick unbuckles his belt and yawns.

"It wasn't a death," I say wearily. "Just a birth."

"When did the Bootie Brigade get so depressing?" He strokes my arm through the pink sweater.

"You're about as witty as Cynthia Mars." I press my hand over his, feeling the bulge of flesh beneath the wool. I wonder if the cute little reporter from the Y has ever been on a diet.

"Who's Cynthia Mars?" Rick asks, turning to pick up his briefcase. I know he's through listening. An idea is already forming for his next column. I positively expect "Bootie Brigade" to be the title for it.

"Never mind," I say. "There's not a fascinating bone in her body, but her aunt in Odessa has a straw chicken on her kitchen table."

"You lost me," Rick says as I pass the landing on my way upstairs. "But I love the name. Can I use it?"

"If you're ready for a libel suit," I say. Upstairs, I sink down onto the bed, pressing my face into the eyelet pillow again. This time it smells of "To a Wild Rose," the perfume Mother always wore. I wonder why I thought it was fabric softener, that distant scent that seemed so embedded. Mother must have sewed a tiny sachet into the middle.

From outside the window, I catch a whiff of smoke—someone burning leaves, probably—and think of old Brother Quantrill. I used to take him oranges, afraid he might get scurvy. "He lives exclusively on Cheerios and cigarettes," the bishop said in welfare meeting once, so I went to see him every Tuesday until he went into the hospital. Could he ever blow smoke rings! A pack of Kools and a book of matches sat on his coffee table next to the channel changer. "Got my necessities of life right here," he joked the first time I came. He told me his ancestors had been pirates, then changed his story the following week. "I just got mixed up," he said. "They were really staunch Confederate spies against the Union. Quantrill's Raiders, they called 'em."

"Sounds like a football team," I said, laughing.

The next month, Brother Quantrill was admitted to the hospital. "It wasn't scurvy, I hope?" I asked at the nurse's station, and they all stood there in their white dresses and laughed at me.

"Emphysema," a skinny nurse said, picking a burr out of her pearl-colored stocking, and I knew his funeral would be the next one to worry about. I began thinking about delegating the lunch.

Lying on my bed now, remembering the hospital, thinking of this room as the soul of the home, I think of the old man lying in bed with a hand on each of the side rails, saying, "Sorry, I ain't wearin' my garments. I been a faithful high priest long enough to know better."

I looked at his I-V tubes, thought of his smoke rings, and said, "Sorry, no oranges today."

THE house is quiet. Jason must be asleep and Rick is undoubtedly sorting through the chaos of papers he has spread out on the dining room table. I brush my hair and walk downstairs, noticing dust at the base of the rungs on the banister. "I'll have this cleared away before you know it," Rick says without looking up. I lean over to kiss him on the cheek and feel the hairs beginning to bristle. When we were dating, he shaved twice a day, to spare me from whisker burns. His whole body is hairy. Just last week Jason asked, "When will I get fur like Daddy?"

"Don't kid me," I say, feeling indulgent. "You'll be slaving over that column till three in the morning."

"Forgive me, then? You know how it is when I get an idea."

"Listen, I just want to get out in the air for a while," I tell him.

"Take the Mace," he says, rubbing the back of his neck and scratching his stomach at the same time.

ITS *A Wonderful Life* is going to be on the late show tonight. The rose scent of the pillow has made me feel homesick as I sit here on the porch steps with my skirt tucked around my knees. Engelbert Humperdinck is singing from a neighbor's upstairs window: "Please Release Me." I laugh, wondering if I should sing that for the bishop.

Maybe mother will meet Jimmy Stewart someday in the Celestial Kingdom, both of them grey-haired, wearing white robes. They could co-star in a Church movie to be shown at all visitors centers in the hereafter.

I entertain thoughts of calling Ingrid, then remember Texas is an hour later. Life would have been different if we'd gone to Baylor with all our buddies instead of BYU. I might have married some good ole boy and be living in Longfellow right now. He might have been somebody who'd stay up till one o'clock in the morning, watching Jimmy Stewart movies with me.

Sitting alone on a warm night always reminds me of the parched nights in Longfellow, when everybody left their doors unlatched, propped open with bricks, even while they slept. I was always afraid of what could get in through those open doors.

The sixty-foot cottonwoods are moving in the breeze, sounding like a whole congregation of people whispering at once. Would my life really be that different if I started sending milk to Poland?

RICK is snoring with his head on a pile of papers. I look at the thick dark hair on his arms and feel ashamed for having thought of marrying someone else.

"You're back," Rick says sleepily, stretching and putting on his glasses.

"Are you almost done?" I ask. "Shall we go to bed?" I stoop to pick up a marble from the carpet, then press my cheek against Rick's hair, bending over the back of his chair, feeling weary and disloyal at having thought of the good old Waco boys.

Our beautiful maple bed is upstairs. It belonged to Rick's grandmother and was shipped from Milwaukee on the train. I imagine turning back the dull brown sheets and slipping under the old navy blue quilt to get my feet warm on the backs of Rick's calves.

It's midnight now in Longfellow and in a dark windy house the man I could have married is pulling off his socks and tossing them in the direction of the hallway hamper, turning down the flowery sheets chosen by the woman he married who regards the master bedroom as the soul of the home.

The list is up there on my nightstand, reminding me to arrange a funeral lunch for an old man who liked me a lot because I brought him oranges and laughed at his ancestor stories and never complained about his smoking. The welfare orders still aren't signed and I'll probably never send milk to Poland or adopt a Korean baby. In the light from the old chandelier, I reach down and touch Rick's frayed pinstriped shirt collar.

In two days, Brother Quantrill will be buried. I wonder if he has given an accounting of his life yet. "I been a faithful high priest long enough to know better," he'll say, dressed in grass-stained jeans, his nicotine-yellow fingers fumbling in the dark for a match.

Upstairs, our bedroom is dark and windy, the small white pillows resigned to their spot on the drab blue quilt, dull stars in an overcast sky, the scent of my mother emanating from them even now, years after her death. ☞

THE VIEWING

Point of yet another unmarked road, space
To stretch and finish off our food, as still
As the sloping fields above the cliffs and hushed
As the flat ruff nudging the idle quay.
We walked out to the far end of the pier,
Our biscuits salted by the slightest wind.

Perceptions wrecked, strange instincts woke
As we observed the water's shallow set.
Before gray water focused into slate,
The image slowly registered as shark.
Leviathan long as the pier was wide,
Tethered tail and snout inverted, strung like bait,

So undefiled, so clean, so sound
As might prohibit spoilage and deny
Our dying. I gauged the flaccid tail-fin
With the rope and looked to sea—a picnicker
Pinioned in a far Atlantic cove,
Surprised to doubt the languor of my island.

—KAREN MARGUERITE MOLONEY

BETWEEN THE LINES

GIVEN OR GIVER IN MARRIAGE?

By Dorice Williams Elliott



MY FEMINIST FRIENDS were shocked when my six-year-old daughter asked Santa Claus for a wedding dress—and when I delayed a paper deadline in order to sew it for her. While not all of them are opposed to marriage, they do find the notion of marriage as the pinnacle of achievement for young girls—which my daughter's request called up for them—abhorrent. The requirement that women must marry and fulfill their “natural” destiny as bearers and nurturers of children is, for most feminists, tied up with patriarchal hierarchies which not only restrict women's freedom and limit their opportunities, but actually use them as a medium of exchange to promote male interests.

My answer to my feminist friends, who

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find my allegiance to Mormonism odd and rather irrational anyway, is that for Mormons marriage is not just a stringent requirement for women, but is an equally strong injunction for men. We believe, or so we say, that “no success can compensate for failure in the home,” and in principle we do put more emphasis on the man's role as loving husband and father than on his “worldly” enterprises. If my son asked for a wedding dress (or its equivalent), I say, I would stay up all night sewing for him, too. But, unfortunately, this answer is not very satisfying, even to me. Even leaving aside the obvious difference between preachment and practice in the Church's valorization of the domestic sphere, the very language structures we use to discuss men's and women's roles tend to reinforce the kind of hierarchical arrangements feminists find so abhorrent. The very words we use to praise women can in fact serve to “keep them in their place.”

I was especially struck by the kind of vocabulary I hear employed by both male and female speakers addressing women at the last General Women's Meeting. Relying, naturally enough, on one of the few scriptural passages relating directly to women in a positive way, a number of the speakers quoted from Proverbs 31 which begins:

Who can find a virtuous woman?

for her price is far above rubies.

The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her,

so that he shall have no need of spoil.

She will do him good and not evil

all the days of her life.

She seeketh wool, and flax,

and worketh willingly with her hands.

She is like the merchants' ships;

she bringeth her food from afar.¹

This is lovely Biblical poetry, and it certainly speaks in praise of good women. The metaphors used in this famous passage, however, are overwhelmingly economic: a woman has a “price,” her worth can be measured in terms of precious stones, her husband trusts in her instead of “spoil,” she “seeketh wool and flax,” and she is “like the merchants' ships.” While such expressions are, of course, only metaphorical, the accumulation of such metaphors implicitly equates women with other valuable objects.

Anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss, in his influential *Elementary Structures of Kinship*, identifies the central role that women as objects of exchange fill in almost all primitive societies, where marriage ceremonies are “moments in a ceaseless and ordered procession in which women, children, shells, words, cattle, names, fish, ancestors, whale's teeth, pig, yams, spells, dance, mats, etc., pass from hand to hand, leaving as their tracks the ties that bind.”² And, points out Gayle Rubin, “if it is women who are being transacted, then it is the men who give and take them who are linked, the woman being a conduit of a relationship rather than a partner to it.”³ This exchange of women, continues Rubin, “does not necessarily imply that women are objectified, in the modern sense, since objects in the primitive world are imbued with highly personal qualities. But it does imply a distinction between gift and giver.” And, most importantly, Rubin finds the same kinds of structures—if anything “more pronounced and commercialized”—in more “civilized” societies.⁴ It is this distinction between woman as gift and man as giver—between being the thing valued and the valuer—that I hear

repeated both in the Proverbs passage and in contemporary Mormon discourse directed toward women.

Besides at least three direct references to the "far above rubies" passage, the talks given in the Women's Meeting employed numerous metaphors of economics and value to describe contemporary LDS women. General Relief Society President Barbara W. Winder, for example, links "knowing our own worth" to "sustaining the priesthood."⁵ She also refers to the other most frequently quoted scriptural passage in these talks, the parable of the ten virgins who "accumulate" oil drop by drop as if it were some kind of dowry they need in order to be ready to meet the Bridegroom. Women have "great worth," she says, and shouldn't "settle for less than the Lord wants you to be."⁶ The economic metaphors are most noticeable, however, in the only speech given by a male speaker—President Benson (although Ardeh Kapp does refer to a pamphlet addressed to women by another male, Gordon B. Hinkley, in which the title begins "The Wonderful Thing That Is You").⁷ President Benson speaks of women being "fully utilized," hopes that single women will not feel "less valuable," and stresses women's "worth."⁸ He tells single women, to whom the talk is specifically addressed, not to "take risks, the importance of which you cannot now fully calculate," and counsels them not to "expect perfection in your choice of a mate" (that is, not to be overly concerned about his physical appearance or his bank account but rather to focus on other good qualities). While I would agree that this is good counsel, it nonetheless puts the choice of mate into a discourse of bartering—taking risks, weighing what qualities one can get for what one has to offer, etc. Women, it seems, are *not* to take risks and not to insist on a great bargain, but rather to accept what they're offered. Further, President Benson counsels these women not to become so self-reliant that they decide marriage "isn't worth it"—that is, they should not take themselves out of the marriage market.⁹ Women, of course, are expected to "sacrifice . . . degrees and careers" in favor of marriage—"our priorities are right when we realize there is no higher calling than to be an honorable wife and mother." God will "compensate" single women if they are unable to marry, because women are "jewels in His crown"—their "price above rubies."

Recalling the answer I gave to my feminist friends' objections to marriage, we might want to counter the insistence of the economic valuation metaphors used to describe women in talks like the ones I have cited by claiming

that the same kinds of metaphors are also used to describe men. Self-worth, after all, is a universal need (though, judging from the comparative frequency of talks about it, it would seem that women need to be reminded about it much more often). Accordingly, I took a look at the General Priesthood meeting talks printed in the same *Ensign* as the Women's Meeting talks. Sure enough, economic language is used frequently in these talks as well—but with a slight grammatical difference.

Besides being frequently reminded of the power they bear in general, and that they are to be "fathers and patriarchs in [their] own families," men are specifically told that, rather than being the Lord's "jewels," they are acting for Him as "agents."¹⁰ "Agent" is a particularly suggestive word here, since it implies both governing power—to act as an emissary or representative—and economic power—to act as steward or bailiff. And clearly, the word "agent" implies active rather than passive exertion. It is, in fact, a synonym for the grammatical term "subject" in a sentence. Thus, while to call a man God's "agent" does suggest his subordination to God, it also strongly reinforces his own powerful position in the societal structure—which is even mirrored grammatically. Men act, women react; men propose, women accept; men value, women are valued.

In the priesthood meeting talks, men are told to "build a spiritual foundation," to "shepherd . . . young men," and to "magnify [their] callings." All of these (active) verbs suggest, among other potential meanings, the idea of investing and capitalizing on resources. Such words as "build," "shepherd," and "magnify" contrast, for example, with "accumulate" (as in the ten virgins "accumulating oil"), which suggests passive accretion rather than active "husbanding." Young men are "seed" which will grow to harvest. Women, on the other hand, are described as "waiting" for the privilege of being married to them. Men are "not to fear the added responsibilities that come with marriage"—and are told to "prepare financially." Elder Joseph P. Wirthlin's talk, from which most of these particular phrases are taken, also uses a scriptural passage which is explicitly economic: "Then Peter said, silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee."¹¹ What Peter gives is a priesthood blessing, which is thus metaphorically equated with money. In all these examples, while economic language is used in relation to men's role in the Church and world, the man acts not as the *object* of economic activity, but as the *subject*: rather than being the thing valued, he does the valuing.

The man's role in the Church as valuer rather than valued is most explicit in a fairly commonplace statement made in Elder Gerald E. Melchin's talk, where he says "I have been blessed with a family of whom I am proud. . . . I don't know what else you can ask of our Father in Heaven that is *of so much worth*."¹² In Levi-Straussian terms, Melchin is outlining a basic kinship transaction: God has given me a valuable wife (and, through her, children), which cements my relationship as a powerful male with him and with other powerful males in his Church. I am proud of my family, both for their intrinsic worth and for what they signify about my relation to God as one of his agents.

In saying all this, I don't mean to imply that these Church leaders actually view women as commodities to be traded for their own status, although there have been instances in Church history where classic Levi-Straussian economies have operated quite literally.¹³ Of course, not all the language addressed to women is couched in such economic metaphors, and even when it is, women do occasionally occupy the subject rather than the object position (I can, for instance, imagine a woman saying virtually the same words as Melchin, although my sense is that for her such a statement would be an imitation of an originally male construction rather than an intuitive expression). But such usages of language, unconscious as they are, are both symptomatic and causal. I have the sense, based not only on these talks but on my general Church experience, that priesthood holders do tend to see themselves as actors, builders, leaders, and valuers, while women are much less sure about their function. One important duty of many priesthood positions is, after all, to *evaluate* people's *worthiness in order to grant or withhold* blessings and privileges. Women, on the other hand, though so frequently admonished of late to esteem and value themselves, are never in positions where they can even make decisions about which people would be worthy or valuable workers in their own organizations.

I would like to suggest then, that as long as women in the Church continue to be celebrated for their value while men are noted for valuing, women will remain in an object position both grammatically and socially. Notice, however, that I didn't say "spiritually." For I'd like to think that if God's work and glory is to aid us in reaching immortality, he at least is *not* doing that only in order to decorate his crown with more jewels. That metaphor, I sincerely hope, is a manmade

one—lovely poetry, but an inaccurate expression of God's loving relationship to his children. And I'd also like to be able to think that I can in good conscience and without embarrassment encourage my worthy daughters to *join with*—not “be given to”—worthy men in happy, productive eternal marriages. I'd like to think that their wedding dresses will symbolize not the obedience and value they bring to their husbands, but rather the freely offered love they both give and receive as agents acting in their own right in the service of God. ☞

NOTES

1. I have taken the poetic arrangement of these verses from *The Dartmouth Bible*, Roy B. Chamberlin & Herman Feldman, eds. (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1961), p. 415.

2. Gayle Rubin, “The Traffic in Women,” *Toward and Anthropology of Women*, ed. Rayna R. Reiter (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975), p. 174.

3. Rubin, p. 174.

4. Rubin, p. 175.

5. Barbara W. Winder, “Becoming a Prepared People,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, p. 88.

6. Winder, p. 89.

7. Ardeth G. Kapp, “Stand for Truth and Righteousness,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, p. 93. The emphasis in this title, as elsewhere unless otherwise noted, is mine.

8. Ezra Taft Benson, “To the Single Adult Sisters of the Church,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, p. 96.

9. Benson, p. 97.

10. Joseph B. Wirthlin, “The Priesthood of God,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, pp. 34-35.

11. Wirthlin, p. 36. The quotation from Acts 3:6-7.

12. Gerald E. Melchin, “What Went Ye Out . . . To See?” *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, p. 43.

13. See Melodie Moench Charles's description of polygamy in “The Need for a New Mormon Heaven,” *Dialogue* 21 (Autumn 1988), pp. 80-82. D. Michael Quinn also described a very Levi-Straussian system of exchange of women in marriage to promote powerful kinship relations in a paper delivered at the 1988 Washington Sunstone Symposium entitled “Just Among Kin—Mormon Hierarchy.”

KILLER

sometime before it became too late,
you should have been brought here
and doused in red and blue
(some green)
until your inky caverns emptied
poison on the red clay
and left you whole.

poison to be powdered
like burned boe
under the Navajo sun
then swept on a long tangent
by the dark wind.
nor could you approach
this land unrecognized: here

a sane man lives by his heart.
a crazy man lives in his head.

—LINDA SILLITOE

A CHANGED MAN

WALKING THE TIGHTROPE

By Orson Scott Card

WE WERE SO smug, we Westerners, we Christians, we Mormons, when the Moslem world convulsed and bled over a mere book, a splash of words, a fillip of decorative art. People died in a riot in Pakistan—and for what? Because they thought our embassy bookstore was selling *Satanic Verses*, a work of fiction, a *novel*. And then the Ayatollah Khomeini pronounced a death sentence on the author and urged Muslims to carry out the sentence as privateers, with a reward guaranteed.

Outrageous, disgusting—we, the civilized West, would never act that way.

FEAR AND LOATHING IN ZION

THEN my mother sent me a clipping from a Utah paper, telling how Ed Firmage, noted Utah Democrat and grandson of Hugh B. Brown, had provoked outrage by asserting that his fond wish was to see four blacks among the General Authorities of the LDS Church—three of them women. Just to make sure we Mormons, at least, could not pass ourselves off as wholly civilized, many volunteers in the Mormon community had made anonymous phone calls to the Firmages, many of them with veiled and not-so-veiled death threats. “You can be removed,” they said.

Apparently there are some followers of the Ayatollah among the Saints.

These events happened to be juxtaposed with general conference, in which two speakers addressed the issue of critical voices within the Church. Bishop Glenn Pace's talk stated that criticism of the Church from within was the most dangerous kind. Immediately afterward Elder Dallin Oaks urged us to be

extremely selective in choosing to participate in the various unofficial “alternative voices.”

And then a friend sent me a clipping of Eugene England's protest on BYU's policy of discouraging its faculty from publishing in *Dialogue* and this very magazine.

Thus coincidence suggested to me that two continuously overlapping groups within the Church—the hierarchy and the intelligentsia—are in the process of tearing themselves into rival camps. The very division is a monstrous deformation of the way the Church is meant to function—indeed, Elder Oaks's talk can and should be read as a careful but heartfelt attempt to keep that rift from widening.

I could imagine the reactions of many of my friends—many of you who read this magazine, I believe. Applause for Eugene England's spirited defence of alternate LDS magazines; a slow burn as Elder Pace warned against criticism of the Church by Church members; a certain wariness throughout Elder Oaks's talk; instant solidarity with Ed Firmage in his victimization by the pinheads of Mormondom.

Through it all, I imagine many LDS intellectuals feeling that the Church hierarchy was overreacting or, worse, that it was becoming repressive and dictatorial toward legitimate free expression. Feeling, in other words, that the Church hierarchy was, on its own initiative, clamping down on all non-official voices within the Church.

There is another way of looking at this, however. A truer way. Those among us who feel injured or oppressed by the hierarchy's policies and attitudes must remember that the finger of blame points both ways.

Perhaps the easiest and clearest way to understand our own situation is to look at what happened in the cultural and religious community of Islam.

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GOOD GUYS AND BAD GUYS

I watched with a mixture of gratification and embarrassment as every writers organization in America expressed its solidarity with Salman Rushdie, the man whose book, *Satanic Verses*, led to the Ayatollah Khomeini pronouncing a death sentence upon him.

I was gratified because I also am afraid whenever words are answered by violence; we who live by words are always vulnerable to those who have the power of the sword.

I was embarrassed, however, because in the process of defending the freedom of the press, most failed to notice that Rushdie was an unworthy champion – that defending Rushdie's freedom of the press should have been just as unpleasant to people of good will as defending, say, Larry Flynt's freedom to publish pornography.

Just because Khomeini behaved in a very bad way toward Rushdie did not make Rushdie one of the good guys. Quite the contrary. Rushdie is a bad guy in this story, and we defend him only because of the inappropriateness of the Ayatollah's response, not because what Rushdie did was good or even innocuous.

ASSAULT ON FAITH

SATANIC Verses is a despicable book that could not have been written by a person who wished to behave decently and responsibly. The book is clearly aimed at Muslim readers; it is hard to imagine a non-Muslim reading it with anything more than mild curiosity. Yet Rushdie, as a lapsed Muslim, also knew that the Muslim audience would be outraged by it. He could only have written it as a calculated offense against his own community.

The most dangerous aspect of the literary world's knee-jerk defense of *Satanic Verses* was the widespread assumption that because the book was fiction, it was absurd for anyone to be so angry at it. Especially galling was this frequent bit of illogic: "How dare these people get upset about *Satanic Verses* when they haven't even read it!" This makes as much sense as saying, "How dare these people get upset about drunk drivers when they've never been run over by one."

Storytelling does not operate in a vacuum. It fulfills a vital human need – that's why

there's no human society without it and precious little human contact that does not take the form of storytelling. We can hardly get through the day without many stories of many kinds. And fiction is one of the most powerful kinds. Unlike "true" stories (history, science, news, gossip), fiction is not subject to immediate revision upon discovery of a new fact. The author of a fictional tale has absolute authority, within the world of the story, over the most fundamental area of human thought: causality, why things happen.

What happens in fiction resonates or clashes with the deepest parts of our identity: our sense of how the world works, of what it means to be human, and of who, as individuals and members of a community, we are. When we read fiction we either reaffirm or redefine our conception of reality to a degree surpassed by only one other type of story: religious revelation. And when fiction moves into a realm of mind where revelation holds sway, it will be the profoundest challenge to – or affirmation of – faith.

Muslims' very existence as a people depends on the holiness of Mohammed and the validity of his revelation from God. Their understanding of the way the world works depends on this. When Rushdie treated Mohammed with scorn and depicted him in a vulgar, low way, he challenged the foundation of their collective and individual identities. He tore at the very heart of who they are.

Satanic Verses is not "pure" artistic expression. (There is no such thing, anyway.) It was anti-Islamic literature – a story by a former insider who deliberately struck at the very heart of the Islamic faith.

ANTI-MORMON LITERATURE

I remember my first exposure to hardcore anti-Mormon literature. I was in Brazil on my mission when a member brought us some pamphlets that a friend of his had been given. (You know the pattern – nobody talks to the guy about religion in his whole life, but the minute they find out he's attending Mormon meetings, they have all kinds of "information" about the Mormons.)

As I read the pamphlets, I never felt my faith challenged – I never was tempted to doubt. It was all silly stuff that I'd heard about before. But I found myself getting deeply angry because I imagined other people reading this stuff and thinking it was true. I wanted to go out and find every copy of those pamphlets

and include with each one my own detailed refutation of every lie they told.

Yet that was impossible. So I found myself filled with helpless, impotent rage at how these people were creating a false image of Mormonism. They were defining for many people what the name *Mormon* stands for; they were defining the most powerful of the communities that comprise my identity; therefore they were defining me. I seethed for days, even after I carefully and patiently answered the questions these pamphlets had raised in the minds of the members and nonmembers I knew who had read them. It still hurts to remember – for even though my faith is unchallenged by them, my public identity is profoundly challenged.

Those pamphlets were written by avowed anti-Mormons. People of reason and good will are usually repelled by such hate literature, and sometimes are even sympathetic to the victims of such obvious lies. But what about attacks on a community written by members?

Back to Rushdie. Remember that countless Western authors have written about Islam in a negative or demeaning way, with few or no repercussions. Muslims might resent such writing, might try to refute it, but as long as everyone knows that the negative stories are being told by outsiders, they pose no particular threat to the epic of Islam – the more anti-Islamic they are, the less credibility they have.

But Rushdie was *not* an outsider. Rushdie might have lost his faith, he might be living in a Western nation, but to Muslims these matters are irrelevant – he wrote as a member of the Muslim community. He knew all the buttons to push. He knew all the ways to offend. And he used them.

ENEMIES OF THE KINGDOM?

WE don't have to go far to find a Mormon parallel. I quote from Sonia Johnson's own account in *From Housewife to Heretic* of a key moment in her church court:

Here is the direct quote from the transcript of the videotape [of Sonia Johnson's speech to NOW members in Kalispell, Montana]: "The leaders of the Mormon Church are somewhat isolated in Utah. Those who are directing this anti-ERA activity need a taste of the consequences of their behavior, and one of the things everyone can do is write and call church head-

quarters and say, 'I am outraged that the Mormons are working against my civil rights, and if your missionaries ever come to my door, I wouldn't consider letting them in' " (Anchor, 1983, p. 332).

Johnson, as an insider, knew what pressure would be felt most by the Church. And because it was a Church member who was urging NOW members to proclaim a boycott of LDS missionaries, she had infinitely more authority than an outsider. How could this be anti-Mormonism, when a Mormon suggested it? The moment Johnson made this statement, however, she declared herself to have a higher allegiance than her allegiance to the Church. Any Mormon who gives greater priority to a non-Mormon cause than to LDS missionary work is not a Mormon at all. Johnson's excommunication was a formality—she was already gone. Most Saints knew this at once. She was beyond the pale.

But Johnson didn't see it that way. Indeed, she even claims that her suggestion to non-Mormon NOW members was a perfectly legitimate thing for a Mormon to do:

"That's political lobbying, pure and simple," I pleaded vainly with my prosecutor-judge and his cohorts. "Lobbying is deal-making: you have something I want, I have something you want. Let's make a deal. The church wants women to join the church, women want the church to unhand the ERA. Women should therefore say, 'If you'll listen to us, we'll listen to you.' That's political" (Johnson, pp. 332-33).

Here is the root of Johnson's apostasy; here is the attitude that led her out of the Church. She believed that revelation was negotiable.

Most Mormons easily accept the idea that revelation is *responsive*—that is, that revelation comes at times when it is needed. Most of the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants were given in response to requests, questions, or calamities. Most Mormons also accept the idea that revelation is *not universal*—that many decisions or attitudes of bishops or stake presidents or even General Authorities are merely their own best judgment, and not the literal word of God; and almost all of us are suspicious of people who claim that every thought that enters their heads comes from God.

But what Mormons *can't* accept is the idea that revelations might come as a bargain, a compromise, a deal with some pressure

group. Sonia Johnson was attempting coercion—*forcing* the Church to comply with her program. Much the same thing was done by the federal government during the polygamy era; but at least none of the federal officials trying to force LDS compliance with anti-polygamy laws pretended to be members.

The root of Johnson's heresy was contempt for the principle of revelation and the living prophets, seers, and revelators who are called to govern the Lord's Church. That same spirit of contempt, that same urge to pressure the Brethren into doing what can only be accomplished by prayer, is still with us.

TRANSFORMING THE CHURCH

OPEN, public criticism of a Church doctrine or policy, especially from within the Church, is the single least effective way to change that doctrine or policy. All that such critics succeed in doing is demonstrating that they do not believe that the Lord gives revelation to guide the prophets, and that fact declares these critics to be enemies of the fundamental point of LDS faith: that God speaks to living prophets.

Please note: It is not necessarily their *ideas* that make these critics seem to be enemies of the faith, but rather the fact that they seem to believe that Church leaders can be negotiated with like politicians. It makes these critics at once infuriating to Church members and ineffective with Church leaders. It is exactly that attitude on the part of some *Dialogue* and *SUNSTONE* writers that has made these magazines seem like enemies of the faith to most Mormons who are aware that they exist—because so many writers for these publications are not members of the community of believers, and some are genuine enemies of the faith. They plainly don't believe in revelation; and if they don't believe in revelation, it is difficult to understand how they are Mormons in any sense but the cultural.

Such critics sound to many Mormons the way Rushdie sounded to many Muslims; they strike at the heart of the Saints' identity, their community, their worldview, and, as Elder Pace said, they are the most dangerous storytellers in the Church, because many nonmembers—and some members—will believe that it is possible to be a Latter-day Saint and have no belief in revelation or respect for prophets, seers, and revelators.

THE POSSIBILITY OF INFLUENCE

DOES this mean that there is no way for members to influence the Church? Does this mean that ideas can only flow from the top down? Of course not. Anyone who knows anything about Church government knows that the flow of ideas on doctrine and policy is omnidirectional. As often as not, revelation at the highest levels consists of getting ratification from the Lord for ideas first proposed and tried out in stakes, in wards, or in the minds and hearts of humble Saints. Most of the Brethren, far from being aloof declarers of the word, are passionate, involved listeners, eventually aware of every voice that is raised. And anyone who wants to be part of this vast network of teaching and discovery and transformation *can* be.

How is it done? It's so simple. No power or influence can or should be maintained in the Kingdom of God except by:

Persuasion. No public ultimatums or threats, no "negotiations," but rather privately offering a new idea with a desire that the other person receive it.

Long-suffering. Not giving up because our idea seems to be rejected at first. People change, and the idea that astonished them when they first heard it becomes sweeter to them over time.

Gentleness. Never using stridency, anger, or ridicule toward those we hope to influence.

Meekness. Always being willing to obey, even when your ideas aren't accepted.

Love unfeigned. Not merely pretending to support and sustain fellow Saints, but actually loving them, desiring their happiness, trusting their good will.

Kindness. Never using our words to injure another, or even to return an injury we have received.

Pure knowledge. Seeking our own confirmation from the Holy Ghost before we presume to teach others, instead of immediately trusting in our own "neat ideas" or the teachings of the world.

Few of us have a calling that allows us to reprove anybody — and even fewer of us are ever moved upon by the Holy Ghost to do so. However, sometimes our ideas will seem to others to be a rebuke, and therefore we must be sure that we show them an increase in love, *lest they esteem us to be their enemy.*

The Saints will not listen to an enemy. Why should they? But they *will* listen to people who are demonstrably loyal, believing Saints. You can have far more influence

in the Church if you *never* utter a word of criticism, but instead teach your values positively, in circumstances that affirm faith in the gospel and commitment to the Church. If the Saints—particularly the Church leaders—know that “your faithfulness is stronger than the cords of death,” they will learn to trust that your stories are told out of “charity toward the household of faith.” Then their confidence in you will strengthen, and your righteous influence in the Church will increase.

HIGHER ALLEGIANCES

I can imagine some of you thinking, How wimpy, how weak — has he no commitment to telling the truth?

Well, “telling the truth” is a much overrated virtue in America today. It is the all-purpose excuse for verbal cruelty and domination. How many of you would find much virtue in parents who said to their child, “You were the least talented person on that stage. It was excruciating to watch you.” Or, “I always thought you were dumb, but this much stupidity surprises even me.” Or, “Face it, you’re deeply ugly and no amount of make-up is going to change that.” All these statements might be true; but saying them to a person who will be deeply hurt by them is not virtuous. The noble course is to maintain a discreet silence, gently teaching the child to overcome, avoid, or live with his or her shortcomings.

Shouldn’t we love the Church as good parents love their children? Shouldn’t we be as gentle and careful in sharing our scant wisdom with them as we hope they will be in teaching us from their great wellsprings of wisdom? And if, like children, they sometimes stingingly reject what we offer, shouldn’t we be patient, our commitment to the Church unwavering? Instead of being outraged when they read *SUNSTONE* and *Dialogue*, shouldn’t Latter-day Saints open these pages to be fed? Isn’t it worth keeping silence about some “truths” in order to earn their trust in the far more important truth that we have vowed to help them bear their burdens?

If *SUNSTONE* or *Dialogue* are forums for people who have left the community of believers and now scorn it, or people who have succumbed to their sins and hate the Church for not pretending their weakness is acceptable, or people who have embraced heresy and wish to proselytize for it, then how can *SUNSTONE* and *Dialogue* hope to be taken

seriously—by Mormons—as journals of Mormon thought? These people may need a magazine of their own, but if *SUNSTONE* or *Dialogue* choose to be that magazine, no one should complain if people with positions of trust in the Church are expected not to contribute to them.

Does this mean that I think *SUNSTONE* and *Dialogue* should only publish items that could clear Correlation Review? Of course not. Between official publications and heresy there is a vast area for serious speculation and passionate discussion. Many—perhaps most—of the articles in these magazines fall within this vital range.

Furthermore, even if all *SUNSTONE* and *Dialogue* writers spoke exactly the way I have suggested, there would still be some Saints, in or out of the hierarchy, who would resent, object to, even attack these publications. A well-meant, careful statement by a loyal Saint can still be misinterpreted. And no work can survive a hostile reading. I’ve had my own tastes of this—from the Mormon Left as often as from the Mormon Right. So have many of you.

For instance, my novel *Saints* was written as an attempt to create a positive, accurate impression of early Mormonism in the minds of nonmember readers. It was important to me that nothing in the book suggest that Joseph Smith was not a prophet—but also that nothing in the book require nonmember readers to decide whether to believe that he was a prophet. I carefully walked the narrow line between my faith and the nonmember readers’ unbelief, in the effort to give the unconverted an understanding of the lives of believers. In the process, I also wanted to give Mormon readers as real and powerful an experience of their own forebears’ lives as I could.

For many thousands of readers I succeeded—but I am well aware that to some I gave great offense. I regret that offense; I would undo it if I could. I don’t believe that because I am an artist I am immune from the responsibilities of Church membership; I don’t have a higher allegiance to art than to the Church. Quite the opposite. I can’t possibly be a good artist unless my highest allegiance is to the Kingdom of God. Evil art, well-wrought, is all the more harmful; good art, clumsily executed, is better. Best of all, though, is good art well-made, and that’s what I strive for.

When any in the Mormon audience, after a fair reading, find that I have not achieved it, I hope they will forgive my personal imperfection and trust me to grow out of it, as they also expect the rest of us to forgive

their imperfections. That someone will take offense is almost inevitable whenever we make any kind of statement that rises above blandness. It will certainly happen with *SUNSTONE* and *Dialogue* despite the best intentions; it happens all the time to General Authorities, too. Anyone’s words and acts can be misinterpreted; anyone can, through ignorance or carelessness, offend unintentionally.

Fortunately, Mormons believe it is the road to heaven, not to hell, that is paved with good intentions. We forgive each other for unintended harm. ☒

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AS THE FIRST publications in the Liahona Chapbook series, these three volumes promise much for the development of LDS poetry—and the publication of LDS poetry. The collections represent wide-ranging thoughts, experiences, verbal textures, and approaches to Mormonism and to poetry, from conventional expressions to urgent explorations of ideas and images apparently only tangential to spirituality. Yet each volume—and almost every poem in each—repays the reader's time and attention; the result of the reading experience is a deeper awareness of the complexities of and possibilities inherent in LDS belief.

MICHAEL R. COLLINGS is a past poetry editor for *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, associate professor of English and the director of creative writing at Pepperdine University (Malibu, CA), and the author of over twenty-five books of literary criticism, fiction, and poetry.

The physical format of the chapbooks is impressive, especially given the amateurish appearance of many small-press poetry publications. Aesthetically designed, printed on thick, high quality paper, typeset with quiet elegance that avoids cramping or crowding, and occasionally coupled with dramatically effective graphics, all three are a delight to read and, even simply as artifacts, well worth the price. As poetry, however, their full value far exceeds the cost. Each poet brings unique experiences to bear on his work; each develops a particular voice in defining his immediate concerns; and each helps recreate the boundaries of LDS devotional poetry.

Marden J. Clark's *Christmas Voices* is the most conventional, as is entirely appropriate, given his approach to poetry and to the occasion that stimulated each poem. Clark notes that the poems were "written over the past ten years as Christmas greetings and testimony." The note helps explain Clark's apparently idi-

osyncratic approach to Christmas poetry; only two of the poems refer directly to the Nativity—the first, "Joseph's Christmas Eve," and the last, "In Proprio Voce." The remainder cluster under the heading "Christmas: 33 A.D.," and focus on images of Crucifixion and Resurrection most often associated by the Christian world with Easter. Clark adroitly interweaves the tragedy, suffering, and joy of Easter with the LDS belief that "Christmas and Easter fall on the same day of the year" (Introductory note). The result is a series of poems that affirm and confirm rather than explore; that bear witness to Clark's beliefs by allowing characters intimately connected with the death and resurrection of Christ to witness the final culmination of the Incarnation.

Joseph's
Christmas Eve

Seems almost Jahveh didn't want us here.
Feet sore enough to make me etch
In slow relief each rock and tree. Even now
Could I have doubts so great they'd stretch

The road like that? or drag us finally here
To where no door will close against
The cold, where (father, no father) I've straw
for ease
Of pangs—they seize here now!—where
scents

Are stench of barn and stall? The simple ass
That carried her deserves as much.
What word was that? Only a cry newborn.
And what a cry! So soon. The touch.

Of Mary's breath tonight meant heaven's close.
And now that light above the ridge,
That choir, both softly swelling softly filling
As if with light and sound to bridge

The earth and sky. Look! They come to
rest

On Mary's berth, reflecting clear
As though that manger were their source.

It is:
The Word himself, Jahveh, lies here.

—MARDEN J. CLARK

"Joseph's Christmas Eve" announces the essentially ceremonial nature of the collection. The poem begins colloquially—"Seems almost Jahveh didn't want us here" (p. 7)—combining feet sore from walking with the "stench of the barn and stall" to suggest homeliness and immediacy. Before the final lines, however, Clark modulates into more typical Christmas

language, to end with "The Word himself, Jahveh, lies here." There is nothing surprising in the poem—appropriately enough, given the poem's genesis as a Christmas greeting. But it leads the reader into more crucial areas of Clark's vision—blending birth and death, Christmas and Easter.

"Christmas, 33 A.D." includes seven poems narrated by Mary, the Magdalene, the Father, Christ, Judas Iscariot, Simon Peter, and John the Beloved. Again, the poems do not attempt to exceed traditional readings; Clark's purpose seems to be, with Alexander Pope, to say "What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed." In "Mary Mother," the mother of the crucified Christ recalls the long, difficult road from Bethlehem to Calvary, occasionally paralleling the two events by intersecting images: "That ass he rode, no bigger than the one / That brought us both to Bethlehem, / Trod this time on leaves of palm / And flowered wreathes. But thorns were hidden / There" (p. 12). Birth-pangs "like hammer blows" echo the hammer blows of the Crucifixion. Yet even though we glimpse the archetypal other, we never quite see the mother, the woman/wife/mother. The human responses of an individual woman to birth and death are obscured by the greater awareness that "Eternal life is being born" (p. 13). And that is as it should be. Clark reaffirms and reconfirms what we already know; he does not explore new levels of awareness.

"Magdalene" follows the pattern of using assertive language such as "evil thrusting out, / The flow of holy healing in" (p. 14) to define her relation with the dying Christ. The poem lacks strong imagery, instead communicating its central ideas directly—which, again, is consonant with Clark's stated purpose of bearing witness. The same techniques appear in the "The Father." Milton experiences difficulties in speaking for Deity, and here Clark acknowledges his debt to Milton in several paraphrases, including an ironic reversal of Satan's "The mind is its own place, and in itself / Can make a heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven" (*Paradise Lost* l.254-255) and an echo of "They serve who only stand and wait" ("When I Consider. . ."). Omniscient Godhood is humanized and almost trivialized ("How can my eyelash stand the strain" [p. 16]), with the sense of physical pain asserted but not made imagistically real. Yet again, that is how it should be when one contemplates the Man of Holiness in turn contemplating the death of His Son. The final stanzas rely on the ceremonial rather than the experiential—yet given Clark's assumptions, how could it be

otherwise?

The remaining poems similarly reaffirm underlying truths through assertion. "Ascension" begins conventionally, almost colloquially, and transposes into a hymn/lyric that radically alters the poem's verbal structure. "Iscariot" is the most consciously poetic (or at least contains the most self-conscious poeticisms in the blood-kiss-tree imagery of the opening stanza). And that is also as it should be; Iscariot represents the human impulse to alter rather than to obey. By using more overt poetic devices, such as the alliterative coupling of "gushed," "gore," and "grace" the poem suggests Judas's unwillingness to accept Truth, his futile struggle to create his own version of reality.

The final poem, "In Proprio Voce," explains Clark's narrative voice; his presumption in "giving word of mouth" to those involved proceeds to a final testimony. The poem invites the reader into Clark's circle of self and family, bringing Christmas/Easter to the familiar and familial level. Even though the verbal texture at times relies on images of metallic, harsh technology, the poem subordinates the act of making poetry to the act of acknowledging Truth. The volume ends with a "final, simple voice"—"I testify of Thee."

Sand-barite rosette
(Oklahoma's official state rock)

This is how the desert, unhastened,
blossoms
as a rose—petals in ruddy sandstone:
crystals splayed about a sunken grief
forming in the bone-dry rock of ages.
Each persists as, all about it, crazing
stone returns to sand, till in the open
sun it blooms in positive relief,
an outcrop of the earth's eternal loss.

It's this rosetta will instruct the plowman
who in the next great age turns up our
bones
to read the extinguished language of our
love:
it grew in sand that rusted into silence,
diverging clustered blades that cut against
the grain of entropy, the drift of blood.

—DENNIS MARDEN CLARK

DENNIS Marden Clark rejects the ceremonial mode in *Tinder Dry Poems*. His works vary more in tone than those in

Christmas Voices; he engages more in exploration and observation than in affirmation. The twenty-one poems evoke the healing wonder of nature, assess critical areas of life, take overt delight in the power of words. The poems range from stripped-down four-line stanzas, to formal blank verse, to sonnets that vary rhyme schemes within conventional quatrain/couplet arrangements. He moves from images of the land in "Into Lake Solitude," "Down the glacier" and the "Sand-barite rosette," to images of seed-time and growth in "Corn Grows in Rows" and "On naming our daughter Meadow." Growth transmutes into elegies on common things in "Selvage," on love and pain and family and death.

The poems are often imagistically strong and, at their best, transcend the senses to suggest eternal meanings, as in "Sand-barite rosette," with its literalization of the desert blossoming as a rose in "crystals splayed about a sunken grief / forming in the bone-dry rock of ages" (p. 9). Occasionally, however, a strong beginning descends to a too overt conclusion, as when the stark beauty of "Rock canyon" is invaded by blaring rock music in the final three lines (p. 22); the puns here and "Starter pistol" do not do justice to the lines preceding them.

In general, however, *Tinder Dry Poems* offers much. Clark is a fine poet; his variations in the line length and stanza form—especially in creating inter-stanzaic syntactical links that propel the reader over the white space and into the next line—are engaging and imaginative. There is much in the collection to praise, and little to quibble with.

TIMOTHY Liu's *A Zipper of Haze* is a logical extension of the directions defined in *Christmas Voices* and *Tinder Dry Poems*. The first asserted and confirmed; the second observed and described; the third explores and struggles toward understanding and identity. Liu is younger than the Clarks; his work is less fixed, less assured, at times more vigorous and more frustrating. The twenty-two poems are divided into three sections; the first section is the most powerful, with poems that pose social and sexual questions. "My Generation" illustrates one weakness in Liu's poetry—his occasional reliance on culturally defined symbology: "Nazis who survived / that Gestapo / slam dance. . ." (p. 8). "Convertible," "Losing My Vision," and "So Cal," on the other hand, showcase Liu's stronger, more authentic voice, as he litters his poetic landscape with *things*: references to places, makes of cars, brand-name sunglasses, In & Out

Burgers—the landmarks of late twentieth-century American culture. The later poems in this section gain even more intensity by assuming a more personal narrative voice. The juxtaposition of theological icon, societal assumptions, and sexual reality in “The Men’s Room,” “In the Closet,” and “Walking Back to High School” create inherent tensions that Liu capitalizes on, stripping his lines to minimal words, slamming opposing beliefs and images together without transition.

The Lord’s Table

The banquet table was spread,
But I could no longer smell
Satisfaction in the room.

I couldn’t swallow the smiles
Nor could I decipher
The language I once knew.

But still I joined them,
Nibbling crusts of dry bread
And sipping tepid water.

The elders’ faces grew old
Like the legends
That seasoned my youth.

I sat in silent pews
Staring past the chancel,
Wanting more.

I hungered to be
Consumed, and left
Emaciated.

—TIMOTHY LIU

Part II explores ramifications of cultural identification, especially the cross-cultural perceptions of a Chinese-American. Again the weakest poem relies on what seem media-stimulated images: “Nativity in Nicaragua” is self-consciously exploitive and sensationalized. “Bittersweet” and “Paper Flowers,” on the other hand, focus on specifics that compress experience into a line, a phrase that echoes infinitely upon itself. Liu has a special sense for word placement, line length, and stanza form. Poems such as “The Lord’s Table” use poetic form to emphasize the speaker’s inability to fill an emptiness caused by an increasing awareness of flaws in himself and in the world around him.

Part III shifts to poetry and art: “To the Muse” talks of the pragmatics of writing—receiving rejections. “Diamond Head” connects life experience with photographs.

“Vienna in My Bed” connects music, memory, and experience. “Big Cottonwood Canyon,” on the surface a poem about the external world, seems equally a metaphor for the struggle, the pain, the beauty of engagement with words. Liu’s words explore pain, even as they ameliorate it. By defining identity, by artistically focussing experiences, by immersing oneself in images of nature and wholeness, the reader undergoes increasingly intense emotional shifts. There are faults in the poems. Liu relies too often on quick, strong, but facile images; there seems to be a lack of engagement in some of the poems (balanced, however, by brutal honesty in others); and he occasionally includes phrases that explain the whole poem. “In the Closet” would be stronger without the explicitness of “found

your identify / while losing life’s immunity” (p. 15). But on the whole, the collection succeeds.

IF these three books indicate the direction the Liahona Chapbooks intend to take, they promise much. LDS readers should appreciate the poetry, from the ceremonial tones in Marden Clark to the agonizing urgency of Liu’s best. Read as an unintentional (and certainly unintended) triptych, the volumes encapsulate generations, from confident maturity, to perceptive adulthood, to searching adolescence. And, whether explicitly or implicitly, the poets seek to find those common themes and images that help define LDS life. ☞

THE WEIGHTIER INNER AND OUTER MATTERS

CELEBRATION OF DISCIPLINE

By Richard J. Foster

San Francisco, Harper and Rowe, 1988, 228 pages



Reviewed by Lowell L. Bennion

THIS BOOK IS a comprehensive, detailed statement of ways to increase spirituality in our complex, materialistic age. The author is quite original and very positive in speaking of *celebrating* disciplines.

He writes about three types of discipline. (1) Inward disciplines of meditation, prayer, fasting, and study; (2) outward disciplines of simplicity, solitude, submission, and service; and (3) corporate disciplines of confession, worship, guidance, and celebration.

The above disciplines are not ends in themselves but avenues to freedom and spirituality. Submission, for example, leads to freedom because it enables us to lay down “the terrible burden of always needing to get our way” (p.111).

I like the author’s thought that the “Christian Discipline of simplicity is an inward reality that results in an outward lifestyle. Experiencing . . . [because] the lust for status and

position is gone because we no longer need status and position” (p. 80). The author harmonizes the inner motivation and the outward action again and again.

The author, Dr. Foster, is a Quaker teacher and pastor. True to his religion, he places great value on meditation, reflection, solemnity, and waiting in faith on the presence of the Lord. He quotes liberally from the Bible, Jesus and the Great Christian Mystics.

In his third section on corporate discipline I was surprised at his great faith in the ability of laymen to hear confessions and offer guidance to members of the community.

I can encourage Latter-day Saints to read this book. We are encouraged to read the scriptures daily but not much is said about how to read them except with the Holy Spirit to guide us. The Mormon tradition is one of obedience and action. We can profit by Dr. Foster’s Quaker emphasis on meditation and worship. ☞

A WELL-BALANCED SEESAW

ONE ON THE SEESAW: THE UPS AND DOWNS OF A SINGLE-PARENT FAMILY

by Carol Lynn Pearson

Random House, 1988, 205 pages, \$15.95.



Reviewed by Lavina Fielding Anderson

CAROL LYNN PEARSON, long a steady pulse in the Mormon literary body, attracted national attention three years ago with her best-selling autobiographical account of her husband's homosexuality and eventual death from AIDS (*Good-bye, I Love You* [New York: Random House, 1986]). This second book from the same national publisher deals, as its subtitle states, with being a single parent.

The "seesaw" title is apt. She has written a balanced account. She describes moments of frustration and inadequacy at having to father as well as mother her children, but also describes rewarding moments of shared delight and closeness. For example, she shares the familiar pain of never having enough time, enough energy, enough attention to go all the way around:

I was going to start a monthly family newspaper with John as editor, and he was excited about the idea, but I didn't have time. I was going to organize all the good recipes we liked and have each child develop a file of their own, but I didn't have time. I was going to make for them a tape recording of me singing the Hebrew songs I learned on the kibbutz, but

I didn't have time. I was going to read to the kids all the histories of their ancestors, but I didn't have time. And then they didn't have time. . . .

Being a working mother was tough. Sometimes it was a mess.

But . . . my kids have had the fun of seeing me on television, of traveling with me on speaking engagements, and of learning about the various subjects that have found their way into my writing.

And they have had to become—as have most of the children of the working mothers I talk to—pretty independent. John makes better spaghetti than I do, Katy makes better combread, Aaron mops faster than I do, and Emily puts away groceries more efficiently than I ever will.

. . . And they will always know that a mother is a real person too, not just a household appliance, and that she has a right to a life of her own, whether she wants to or whether she has to. (pp. 145-47)

Experiences of alienation and loneliness are balanced with accounts of community and support from her LDS ward. She has a very funny chapter about the pinewood derby. (An experienced mother standing by mutters, "If the boys walk in carrying the cars it'll be a good

derby. If the fathers walk in carrying the cars there's going to be trouble," p. 187). But after a thoroughly disgraceful shouting match between two grown brothers in the gospel who have their egos wrapped up in five inches of pinewood shaped like a car, there's also Ted Sutton who spends Saturday afternoons, sharing his skills, his son, and his enthusiasm to be sure that all of the boys have a good time.

I much enjoyed her chapter on raising chaste children in a sex-saturated society. Again she found that delicate balance between expressing the fear and outrage at the crimes routinely perpetrated against children, at the thin line between teaching children responsible choice and turning them loose with too much power.

She also talks frankly, but without excessive detail, about her own sexual adjustment as a single woman: "I have yearnings I do not discuss with them. I have temptations I do not discuss with them. But I draw the line, because if I don't then how can I expect my children to? And I think there's some general universal law that says life works best this way" (p. 165).

Humor is often the fulcrum upon which she maintains the balance. For example, she begins that same chapter this way:

The easy time is before they're twelve and don't take showers without being told and make the throw-up sound if you ask if they have a crush on someone. Like Katy. Last year when she was twelve and I was sitting on her bed with her, discussing whether or not her room met local sanitation standards, I saw that she had written a list of names on the side of her dresser and drawn a large heart around it.

"Well, what's this?" I asked. "Are those the names of the boys you like?"

She turned to me with her most disgusted look and said, "No, Mom. Those are the names of horses I like." (p. 160)

Those who have kept up with Pearson's myriad of books over the years will find several favorite stories repeated in this volume, perhaps a problem of recycling material for different audiences. As another problem, one chapter doesn't seem to fit, "The Day Our Ship Came In and Sank," about a con artist who moved into their lives, ran up their phone bill into the thousands of dollars, and then disappeared, leaving the dreams behind. This event took place when Pearson was still

LAVINA FIELDING ANDERSON, former associate editor of *Dialogue*, is president of *Editing, Inc.* and lives in Salt Lake City with her husband Paul and their son Christian.

married and pregnant with Katy, so its place in a book on single-parenting seems somewhat dubious.

The format of the other chapters works well for absorbing one concept at a time, illuminated with lots of personal examples but written in a way that still safeguards the family's privacy. It begins with a chapter on each child, talks about the boy in the neighborhood who was making obscene phone calls, the difficult art of listening, negotiating over a pet, raising liberated children, and more.

Even more important, much of the wisdom in this book has nothing to do with her marital status. The book is a freewheeling account of the collisions and intimacy of five people of different temperaments and talents sharing the same household. Chronological age and the different responsibilities of parent/child "assignments" make a difference, but the results are ultimately more important when seen as "Carol Lynn," rather than "the mother," and "Emily, John, Aaron, and Katy," rather than "the children." They are people, not roles—and that dynamic is a glorious one, for all its occasional moments of gore. Any parent can relate to this book, no matter what the particular configurations of his or her family might be.

Take, for instance, John, imaginative and creative, yet unable to remember where he left his shoes, find his spelling list, or care about getting good grades. To Pearson, an effortless A student to whom academic success was a cornerstone of identity, John was an enigma. What parent has not puzzled through the pain and little triumphs of accepting and (eventually?) even rejoicing in those differences in one's own flesh and blood?

A particular contribution is her gentle but firm demolition of that unfortunate phrase, a "broken home." In her introduction, she observes:

When I was little, people used to talk about "broken homes" with the same tone of voice they used when talking about cancer, and I knew that "broken homes" were responsible for just about everything that was going wrong in the world.

My children live in such a home. But I don't think of it as broken, and I don't think they do either. The family stretched and cracked and, like the glass I watched take shape in Venice, had to be sent back to the fire and reblown. It's in a different shape now than the one I originally planned.

But it's in good shape and it works.
(p. xii)

Another contribution, particularly for a national audience, is a lovely and loving scene toward the end of the book when John is quite convinced that the world is going to end, as prophesied by a Montana crackpot. After leading the discussion into an empowering dialogue on change on a child level ("Like my being nice to Aaron is going to save the world!"), Pearson has late night second thoughts:

I was furious with myself for even thinking about it. . . . Khomeini didn't have the bomb, did he? What if . . . ? What would I do if I knew this were really our last day?

I pulled back the covers, climbed out of bed, and walked into the hall. The children were asleep, each in their own bedroom. Katy's room was first. I went in. Juliet, her cat, was curled inside the circle of her arm. A five-year-old face is pure enough by daylight, but by moonlight it is sweet to break your heart. What if . . . ?

I knelt down and put my hands on Katy's head. That's what I would do if I knew this would be our last day together. I would give her a blessing.

"Dear Father and Mother in Heaven," I said softly. "I don't think the world is going to end tomorrow. But just in case, and if it ever does, thank you for Katy and for all her beauty and for letting us be together. . . . Katy, I love you very much and I bless you with peace and comfort and strength to meet whatever life gives you. . . ."

When I was through, I went to John's room and knelt by his bed and did the same. Then to Emily's room, and Aaron's. Then I went back to bed and I slept (pp. 203-4.).

Pearson's contributions to Mormon letters, to which this volume must be added, are substantial. When I checked a local bookstore shortly before Christmas, the clerk mentioned that they'd just sold out of her calendar, clever captions attached to historical photographs, but over half a dozen items were still stocking the shelves, all of them modestly priced, attractively designed, and life-enhancing. Some have the added bonus of Trevor Southey's art as cover and/or interior illustrations. It's by no means all of the books that

Pearson has written, but no other Mormon author comes to mind who has so many books simultaneously in print. They included:

Daughters of Light (1973; thirteenth printing, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1986), \$6.95. I was particularly glad to see this book in print. It was probably the first work many Mormon women read that introduced them to their own spiritual heritage through the revelations, healings, and spiritual gifts of their foremothers. Every generation of readers—men and women both—should get reacquainted with it.

The Growing Season (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1976), \$5.95. Another collection of Pearson's epigrammatic poems, illustrated with more Trevor Southey drawings.

A Widening View (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1983), \$6.95. One of my favorite poems appears in this collection: "Things pinned down / (Like butterflies) / Lose something / (Like life).

Beginnings (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1985), \$6.95. Includes favorite selections from Pearson's first two books of poems, *Beginnings* and *The Search*, with some of Trevor Southey's exquisite drawings.

Blow Out the Wishbone (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1985), \$5.95. Several family stories in *Seesaw* appeared first in this book.

Thoughts of the Heart (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1986), \$6.95. A journal format with evocative drawings and a sprinkling of poems.

Speaking at the Mormon Women's Forum in Salt Lake City in early January, Pearson read some of the poems planned for publication next year. It has been several years since we have seen a new collection, and its appearance will find many eager readers, some who have liked her for years, some who have the delight of getting to know her for the first time. ☺

NEWS

MORMONS CREATE OTHER WORLDS

By P. K. Todd

MORMONS ARE making inroads into the writing of science fiction and fantasy. Within the past few years, several Latter-day Saints have published nationally in the genre. And in the last two years three young Mormon writers have put Utah County on the star charts by winning first place in a prestigious international science fiction contest.

Orson Scott Card, the best-known and most acclaimed LDS fantasy author, has made a permanent niche for himself in science fiction. Author of numerous novels, two years in a row he won the two top national honors in science fiction, the Hugo and Nebula awards, for *Ender's Game* and its sequel *Speaker for the Dead*. Card's *Seventh Son* and its sequel, *The Red Prophet*, are fantasies with a peculiarly Mormon flair.

There are other rising stars from Utah County. In 1986 two former BYU students, Shayne Bell and David Wolverton, won first place—and \$1,000 each—in the quarterly "Writers of the Future" contest, a prestigious contest for newcomers in the genre throughout the English-speaking world. Wolverton's story then took the annual grand prize and an additional \$4,000.

Their winning short stories were published in *Writers of the Future III*. Bell has since sold six stories, seven poems, and a play. Wolverton has a three-book contract with Bantam, his novel *On My Way to Paradise* will come out in October.

Virginia Baker is now the third winner from the Provo area. Baker's win is unusual not only because she is the third local winner in two years, but also because

she has rocketed to success on her first science fiction attempt. According to Rachel Denk of contest sponsor Bridge Publications, the fact that Utah has produced three winners in two years is "phenomenal." Said Bell, "Bridge noticed that they were getting a lot of entries from Provo, and when both Dave and I won in the same year, they asked, 'What's going on out there?'"

Part of "what's going on out here" is happening in a local writing group called "Xenobia." All three local winners are long-standing members and had their winning stories critiqued by Xenobia, an informal nine-year-old continuation of a 1980 class taught by BYU English professor Marion K. Smith.

All three winners are former BYU students. Bell believes that everything he studied at BYU, including courses in the sciences and in creative writing, helped. His master's thesis was a collection of science fiction stories. Wolverton said, "BYU has a pretty good writing program." But Baker feels BYU only helped her learn how to deal with the rejection a writer inevitably faces. "They wouldn't let me do a creative thesis until after I'd won a Mayhew award," she explained. "They said I didn't have enough talent at first."

Since BYU's English Department has traditionally not encouraged writing science fiction, it is interesting that so many successful fiction writers out of BYU are writing science fiction. Wolverton believes the support they find in Xenobia deserves credit. He also attributes their success to the genre of science fiction itself. "Much science fiction deals with

the hero journey, with a metamorphosis; the hero often becomes godlike, gaining superhuman power of some kind," he explained. "And so science fiction has turned into what Algis Budrys calls the religious fiction of our time."

Bell believes Mormons are drawn to science fiction partly because of their unique beliefs. "The Pearl of Great Price says there is intelligent life on worlds without number, and that statement inevitably leads to speculation. Also we have a hopeful culture; we believe in a glorious afterlife and a wonderful future." This fits in well with the world view of science fiction, which looks toward the future and progress.

Whatever the reasons, the community of serious Mormon artists in the genre is growing. Glen Anderson, who works for BYU's Instructional Graphics, has published two short science fiction novels with *Horizon*, *The Millennium File*, and *The Doomsday Factor*. Anderson said that these novels "use points of [LDS] doctrine as starting points for the premise." James Christensen of the BYU Department of Art has gar-

nered numerous awards for his fantasy art. Mike McDonough of BYU's motion picture studio wrote and produced thirteen radio plays for the *Ray Bradbury Theater* National Public Radio series; his series won the prestigious Peabody Broadcasting Award. Tracy Hickman, a BYU graduate, has co-authored numerous novels in the *Dragonlance* series. Two LDS women, Elizabeth Boyer and Carolyn Vesser, have also published science fiction and fantasy novels.

Mormons have not only sent their work out to national media; they have also brought national publishers and authors to Provo. Some of the original members of the Xenobia began an annual science fiction convention at BYU called "Life, the Universe, and Everything." This symposium, according to Bell, was "founded to be a serious consideration of science fiction and fantasy as literature." It has drawn such best-selling authors as Algis Budrys, C.J. Cherryh, Stephen R. Donaldson, Paul Anderson, and Jack Williamson.

"Life, the Universe, and Everything" is sponsored jointly by the



"IT'S JESUS — I DIDN'T RECOGNIZE HIM AFTER BYU STANDARDS GOT THROUGH WITH HIM."

BYU student association (BYUSA, formerly ASBYU), the BYU science fiction club Quark, and *The Leading Edge*, BYU's science fiction and

fantasy magazine. Now in its eighth year, *The Leading Edge* is considered one of the top amateur magazines of its type and has a

nationwide readership.

Mormons are making their presence felt in science fiction and fantasy circles. No doubt in the

future, those circles will encompass other new writers residing in Happy Valley but living on other worlds. ☺

SUNSTONE CALENDAR



AFFIRMATION: GAY AND LESBIAN MORMONS, a support group for gay Mormons and their family and friends, will hold its annual fall conference in Reno, Nevada, because "the large Mormon Reno community has been particularly active in anti-gay causes," including blocking the 1988 Nation Gay Rodeo finals. "Most Mormons know the meaning of persecution in their own lives, and don't support intolerance," said Affirmation National Coordinator Mel Barber. "What the others need to realize is that in supporting anti-gay causes they are helping to create an environment that promotes hate-motivated violence. Those values are not Mormon and they end up being destructive not just to minorities but to all of us." Affirmation, PO Box 46022, Los Angeles, CA 90046 (213/255-7251).

THE BROOKIE AND D.K. BROWN MEMORIAL FICTION CONTEST deadline for short stories dealing with LDS issues (25 page maximum length) is 15 June 1989. For more details see the announcement in the September 1988 *SUNSTONE* or contact the Sunstone Foundation, 331 Rio Grande Street, Suite 30, Salt Lake City, UT 84101-1136 (801/355-5926).

DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS LECTURE SERIES. The May 9 lecture will feature BYU Professor of History Marvin Hill on "The Kingdom of God as a Reordering of Society and a Reallocation of Power." On June 13 BYU Professor of English Eugene England will speak on "Radical Mormon Revelations: Women and War and Atonement in the Doctrine and Covenants." All lectures are held in the James Fletcher building at the University of Utah and begin at 7:30 P.M., a \$2.00 donation is appreciated.

EXPONENT II is sponsoring the second Helen Candland Stark Essay Contest. Submissions are being accepted until 1 June 1989. Essays should be typed and not exceed twelve double-spaced manuscript pages. If possible, please submit essays on a computer disc. *Exponent II*, Box 37, Arlington, MA 02174.

FOUNDATION FOR ANCIENT RESEARCH & MORMON STUDIES (F.A.R.M.S.) has inaugurated a new journal, the *Annual Review of Book of Mormon Books*, edited by Daniel C. Peterson of the Arabic faculty at Brigham Young University. The once-a-year periodical will be printed in the format of *BYU Studies* and will feature article-length review essays and shorter critiques of recent books on the Book of Mormon. The first 100-page edition includes a review of Richard Hauck's *Deciphering the Geography of the Book of Mormon* by John Clark and William Hamblin and a review of Joseph F. McConkie and Robert Millet's *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon* by Louis Midgley. Copies of the *Review* may be purchased for \$5.00 from F.A.R.M.S., PO Box 7113, University Station, Provo, UT 84602. (F.A.R.M.S. is also distributing copies of Hugh Nibley's recent address "The Meaning of the Atonement" for \$1.50.)

THE JOHN WHITMER HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION newsletter recently announced the association's 1988 awards. Best book awards went to both Roger Launius for *Invisible Saints: A History of Black Americans in the Reorganized Church* (Herald House) and to D. Michael Quinn for *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* (Signature Books). Best article was awarded Ronald E. Romig and John H. Siebert for "The Genesis of Zion and Kirtland and the Concept of Temples" (*Restoration Studies IV*). A special award was given to Jack

Garnier for his water color paintings on exhibit at the RLDS Church Headquarters and for his book *Images and Impressions* (Herald House).

At the 1988 annual September meeting held in Nauvoo the following new officers were elected. President: Maurice Draper; vice president: Peter Judd; new members of the board of directors: Gregory Prince, Edward Warner, Steven Shields, and Paul Edwards; continuing board members: Clark Johnson, Lee Pement, and William Russell.

The 1989 annual meeting will be held in Lamoni, Iowa, on 22-24 September. For more information contact: Alma R. Blair, JWHA, Graceland College, Lamoni, IA 50140.

MORMON HISTORY ASSOCIATION (MHA). The 1989 annual meeting will be held 11-14 May in Quincy, Illinois, at the Holiday Inn, and feature over 50 papers including some at historical sites in Nauvoo, Carthage, and Warsaw. Optional pre- and post-conference tours to Nauvoo are being arranged. Contact: Roger D. Launius, 1001 East, Cedar Street, New Baden, IL 62265.

THE MORMON WOMEN'S FORUM May 16 event, "Celebration of Women," will be a reception at the Lion House from 6:00 to 9:00 P.M. The June 8 meeting at 7:00 P.M. at the University of Utah's Art and Architecture Building will feature "Women's Relationship to the Priesthood: A Debate."

SEATTLE SUNSTONE SYMPOSIUM will be held 10-11 November 1989. Send proposals, offers to help, and requests for details to Molly Bennion, 1150 22nd Avenue East, Seattle, WA 98112 (206/325-6868).

SUNSTONE SYMPOSIUM XI will be held 23-26 August 1989 on the University of Utah campus. Last-minute proposals are still being accepted. Volunteers to help in the advance organization and to staff the event are needed. Contact the Sunstone Foundation.

THE WOMEN'S RESEARCH INSTITUTE at Brigham Young University has a new director. Marie Cornwall, assistant professor of sociology, replaced Mary Stovall, who is returning to full-time status with the history department. Cornwall will be responsible for promoting and encouraging research on the experiences of women in all areas of life. In addition to conducting research, the institute gives funding to faculty and students interested in studying topics related to women and sponsors the annual BYU Women's Conference.



Before joining BYU in 1985, Cornwall worked for several years as a research supervisor with the research and evaluation division of the LDS church. Her emphasis has been the study of religious socialization and the processes of faith development in adolescents and adults.

The Sunstone Calendar reports events and notices of Mormon-related organizations. Submissions are requested.



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TEMPEST IN A WINE BOTTLE

A WIDELY supported liquor-related bill unexpectedly died in the Utah Senate this winter without even being brought to a vote after LDS church officials voiced their last-minute reservations. House Bill 132, which would have legalized drinking on chartered tour buses and in limousines, sailed through Utah's House of Representatives with a 53-20 vote and support from Gov. Norman Bangert, numerous state health and safety agencies, and many businesses. Rep. Ray Nielsen called the measure "a public safety bill" because it would tend to keep possibly intoxicated drivers in passenger seats. Although Families Alert, a citizens' morality advocate organization, protested the bill "for its potential of exposing passengers to Ted Bundy types or other unwieldy undesirables."

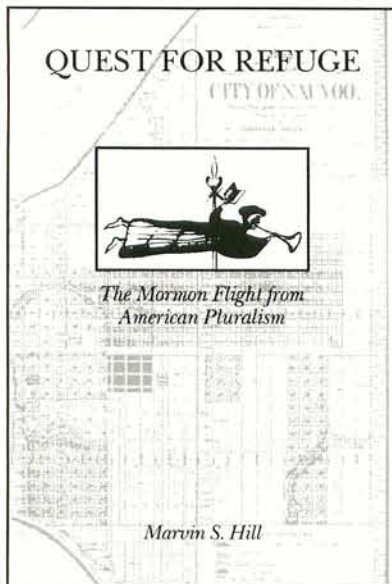
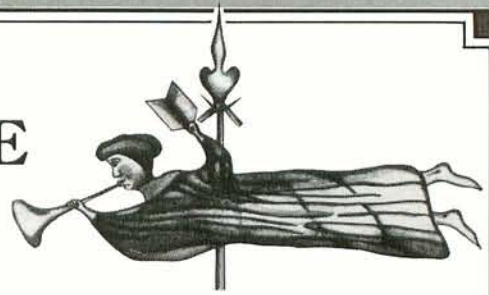
Church spokesman Jerry Cahill confirmed that LDS Public Affairs Director Richard Lindsey and his assistant Bill Evans had called and been called by senators but he denied that they applied any pressure. Non-Mormon Sen. Frances Farley was not called by Church officials. "I feel sort of left out," she said.

A public controversy ensued about the Church's involvement with politics. Although state senators followed the Church's wishes, many were displeased that it did not voice its objections earlier when the bill could have been quietly killed in committee. Mysteriously, the tape recording of a legislative committee debate over the bill disappeared and House officials believe it was stolen.

Rusty Anderson, owner of Image Limousine Rental, threatened a lawsuit against the Church for harming his business and interfering with government. But, to the surprise of many, Utah American Civil Liberties Director Michele Parish-Pixler defended the Church's right to express its opinions to lawmakers even though Lindsey and Evans were not registered lobbyists.



BOOKS FOR PECULIAR PEOPLE



QUEST FOR REFUGE

The Mormon Flight from American Pluralism

Marvin S. Hill

The culmination of more than twenty-five years of research, this new interpretation explains Mormonism as a counter-revolution to American religious pluralism and Jacksonian democracy.

"A splendid contribution."

— Richard T. Hughes, co-author, *Illusions of Innocence: Protestant Primitivism in America*

"It is doubtful that any scholar or layman has as thorough a grasp of the primary sources of the Joseph Smith period as Marvin Hill."

— Thomas G. Alexander, professor of history, Brigham Young University

"Erudite and imaginative, Hill's work is stimulating, perhaps even controversial."

— Klaus Hansen, author, *Mormonism and the American Experience*

312 pages. \$19.95.

AN AMERICAN PROPHET'S RECORD

The Diaries and Journals of Joseph Smith

Scott H. Faulring, ed.

Joseph Smith's early diaries and journals have been published before, but the later journals covering the significant Missouri and Illinois periods have never appeared in print in their entirety. In this complete, unexpurgated edition of the original documents, published by permission of the Joseph Smith family, the Mormon prophet emerges as a multi-dimensional, believable human being — a portrait more honest and humane than available in compilations which edit out controversial portions or offer sanitized interpretations.

An American Prophet's Record "probably gives one the most accurate access to the thinking and speaking of Joseph Smith this side of the grave."

— Edward A. Warner, *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal*

575 pages. \$9.95.

HISTORY AND FAITH

Reflections of a Mormon Historian

Richard D. Poll

History and Faith addresses some of the ethical questions facing Mormon historians today. Should historians consider all interpretations and facts regardless of the possible impact on their readers' faith? How should one deal with discrepancies in the way history has been recorded?

150 pages. \$9.95.

MORMON POLYGAMY

A History (Second Edition)

Richard S. Van Wagoner

"A fascinating tale."

— *New York City Tribune*

"Finally there is a book-length study of polygamy that is done in a scholarly way, with known sources fully utilized and expert conclusions drawn."

— *Journal of the Southwest*

"Written with grace and clarity, candor and compassion, and no one who aspires to be a student of the Mormon religion or history should ignore it."

— *Free Inquiry*

350 pages. \$12.95.

LINE UPON LINE

Essays on Mormon Doctrine

Gary James Bergera, ed.

Line Upon Line features some of the most important essays on Mormon doctrine to have appeared in recent years, including new articles on "The Earliest Mormon Concept of God," "The Development of the Holy Ghost," and "The Origin of the Human Spirit."

200 pages. \$10.95.

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