# Reviews

*Edited by Richard L. Bushman*

*A review can be the occasion for proposing a major reinterpretation. Klaus Hansen finds in Robert Flanders's study of Nauvoo evidence for a new explanation of the division among Mormons after the death of Joseph Smith. The protestors against Brigham Young's leadership preferred a church that restricted itself to ecclesiastical affairs, while Utah Mormons, continuing the direction taken by Joseph Smith in Nauvoo, aimed to build a new society with a communal economic order, a theological political structure, and new forms of family life. Polygamy and priesthood succession were simply aspects of this overarching controversy.*

*In his review of recent articles on Mormon conflicts with the law, Thomas Alexander reverses two conventional interpretations. Mormons have often been apologetic about the repression of the* Nauvoo Expositor. *Now Dallin Oaks, in an article which Professor Alexander lauds, has shown that the Nauvoo City Council was within its rights. In the Utah period, on the other hand, the Mormons are thought to have been the innocent victims of shameless mistreatment by the federal government. Dr. Alexander takes issue with this position in a critical review of a pair of articles by Orma Linford.*

*Milton Backman's review of Horton Davies's work on Chistian sects points up the unfortunate consequences of not reviewing a book. While it went through two editions, no one called Professor Davies's attention to minor errors of fact and gross errors of interpretation in the chapter on Mormonism (nor, apparently, to those in the chapters on other "sects"). Dr. Backman says that the Mormonism of the book is not the Mormonism of Mormons, which should be interesting to ecumenicists like Mr. Davies.*

*While an old book by book-review standards, John Robinson's* Honest to God *is still being discussed, especially on college campuses. Karl Sandberg introduces readers to the modern dilemmas which spawned the book and to Bishop Robinson's method of handling them. The problems of faith which plague other Christians seem far removed from most Mormons, and yet Mormon wrestlings with science reflect a similar tension. Professor Sandberg briefly suggests how the Mormon concept of God may be a more satisfactory answer to contemporary religious disaffection than the one Bishop Robinson offers.*

# THE WORLD AND THE PROPHET

*Klaus Hansen*

*Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi.* By Robert Bruce Flanders. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965. x plus 364 pp. Illustrations, bibliography, and index. $6.50. Klaus J. Hansen is Visiting Assistant Professor of History at Utah State University, where he advises the Priests' Quorum in his L.D.S. ward; he has articles and reviews in various professional journals, and his *Millennial Empire: The Political Kingdom of God and the Council of Fifty in Mormon History* will be published this year.

Discussing religion in America, de Tocqueville once remarked that "religions ought . . . to confine themselves within their own precincts; for in seeking to extend their power beyond religious matters, they incur a risk of not being believed at all. The circle within which they seek to restrict the human intellect ought therefore to be carefully traced, and, beyond its verge, the mind should be left entirely free to its own guidance." Joseph Smith could not have disagreed more. Religion, in his opinion, clearly should not confine itself to traditional precincts. In fact, it served its intended purpose only if it included the entire spectrum of human thought and action. Nauvoo became his monument to this philosophy. Perhaps at no other period of his career was Joseph able to merge religion and temporal affairs more fully. He saw his roles as real estate promoter and speculator, city planner, architect, politician, military leader, innkeeper, business entrepreneur, progagandist, and public relations man as necessary and complementary adjuncts to the role of "Prophet, Seer, and Revelator." This all-inclusive view of religion became a major heritage of Mormonism and Nauvoo the crucible in which were formed the religious, social, and political institutions which Brigham Young transferred to the Great Basin after Joseph's tragic death.

Not all Mormon residents of Nauvoo would have disagreed with de Tocqueville. Ebenezer Robinson, for example, first editor of the *Times and Seasons,* found it increasingly difficult to accept the temporal counsel of his beloved prophet. He refused to join the Nauvoo Legion at the peril of tremendous social and moral pressure; when he learned of the doctrines of plural marriage, he refused to believe they were of God. William Marks, president of the Nauvoo Stake, joined the Council of Fifty — a secret political organization with executive, legislative, and judicial powers intended as a nucleus government for a projected Mormon nation state — only because of his strong ties of fealty to Joseph Smith. He witnessed Joseph's installation as king over that organization with the greatest distaste. Others, less loyal to Joseph, openly broke with him over such doctrines while he was still alive. In fact, this break precipitated the events leading to the murder of the Mormon prophet.

The death of Joseph Smith produced a rift in Mormon history which has not yet been healed. Those who accepted the union of temporal and spiritual matters, those who supported the political kingdom of God, polygamy, and temple work, followed Brigham Young to the Valley of the Great Salt Lake. Those who rejected these doctrines and practices — which they considered to be radical departures from the more "orthodox" Mormonism they

had joined – refused the leadership of Young, and, flitting from one claimant to the mantle of the Prophet to another, ultimately joined the Reorganized Church, established in 1860.

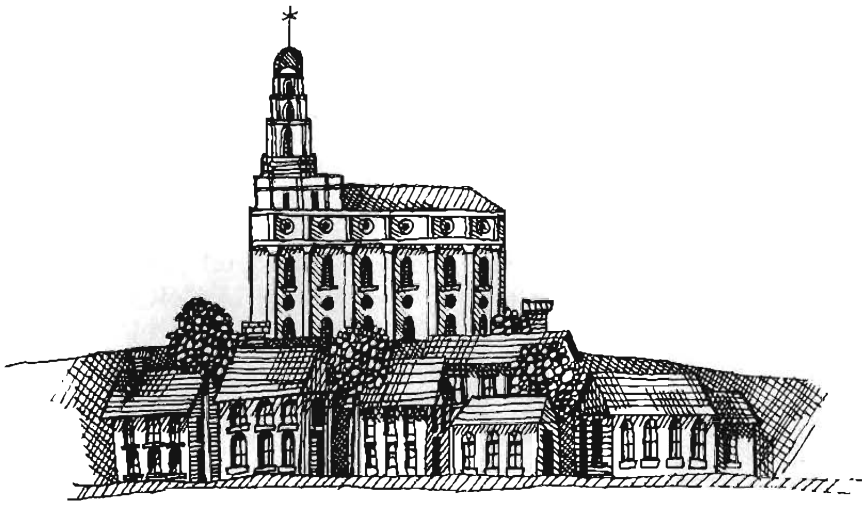
It is understandable that Utah Mormons and those of the Reorganized Church have disagreed about the significance of Nauvoo and the role of Joseph Smith in its controversial history. Utah Mormons, proud of their Nauvoo heritage, have always pointed to Joseph Smith as the father of their institutions. It was in Nauvoo, according to B. H. Roberts, "that Joseph Smith reached the summit of his remarkable career. It was in Nauvoo that he grew bolder in the proclamation of those doctrines which stamp Mormonism as the great religion of the age. It was in Nauvoo that Joseph Smith's life expanded into that eloquent fulness which gives so much promise of what man will be in eternity." All his life Brigham Young insisted that he was merely following the visions Joseph Smith had imparted to him in Nauvoo. The union of the spiritual and temporal continued inseparable in Utah. Polygamy was publicly announced; the Council of Fifty controlled political and economic life; endowments, marriages, and baptisms for the dead were performed in temples as they rose in St. George, Logan, Manti, and Salt Lake City. Hence Utah Mormons had no difficulties with historical logic and continuity. Joseph was a prophet of God in both temporal and spiritual affairs, and so was Brigham Young.

Those, however, who rejected the political kingdom of God, plural marriage, and temple work were trapped in a contradiction if they acknowledged Joseph's authorship of these "innovations." The simplest escape was simply to deny that he had anything to do with such practices. According to them, the villainous John C. Bennett had duped an honest prophet who always believed the best of those who served him and who lacked experience in temporal affairs. The episode taught the prophet to stick to spiritual matters and they would argue that Joseph did so most of the time after the Bennett affair. That arch-villain Brigham Young, they would say, foisted the image of a temporal-minded Joseph Smith upon the world. Brigham put into the mouth of a Joseph unavailable to defend himself doctrines which the Utah leader wanted to practice in his new kingdom and for which he needed Joseph's prestige and the authority. And so it can hardly be said that the historiographies of the Reorganized Church and of Utah Mormonism have been parallel.

It is, therefore, refreshing and not a little ironic to read a book by a brilliant and objective historian, a member of the Reorganized Church, who corrects some of the discrepancies in the historical record. He has looked unflinchingly at facts which for the most part support the Utah Church: Joseph Smith *did* start a political kingdom of God and a Council of Fifty; he *was* made king over that organization; he *did* originate polygamy; he *was* the author of those new rituals which were practiced in the Nauvoo Temple – all facts which the Reorganized Church has preferred to contradict or ignore. Again and again, he emphasizes that Nauvoo was the prototype for Utah. Flanders is even more emphatic on this point than B. H. Roberts or Reva Latimer Halford in her gigantic masters' thesis, "Nauvoo—The City Beautiful" (University of Utah, 1945), because he has uncovered much significant new evidence to substantiate that assertion. It is doubtful that anyone will improve on Flanders in this respect for a long time to come.

This book is indeed the definitive political and economic history of the Mormons in Illinois, superseding George R. Gayler's rather superficial doctoral dissertation, "A Social, Economic, and Political Study of the Mormons in Western Illinois, 1839-1846: A Re-Evaluation" (Indiana University, 1955). Flanders's work will be a major building block for whoever attempts the Herculean task of writing a much-needed encyclopedic history of the Mormons in Illinois, an undertaking in which Mrs. Halford only partially succeeded.

Largely disregarding social history or the development of Mormon theology, Flanders focuses almost completely on Nauvoo as a political, corporate kingdom of God, a kingdom that was not only *in* this world, but in his opinion very much *of* it. Flanders's interpretation will undoubtedly alienate many Utah Mormons, although they will be delighted with the additional historical proof for their position. As an objective historian, he presents the facts. But what do these facts mean to him? He makes it obvious that he does not like what he has uncovered. Although agreeing with Roberts that Nauvoo was



the prototype for the Rocky Mountain kingdom, Flanders clearly implies that the results were unfortunate. If the one was flawed, as he obviously believes, so inevitably must be the other. In Flanders's opinion, Joseph was first of all founder of a new religion, one who "inspired a new faith in his converts, and gave them and their posterity a large body of scripture, much of which has proved of lasting religious and literary value" (p. 4). Yet at Nauvoo Joseph abandoned these high endeavors for more mundane pursuits. Flanders obviously agrees with de Tocqueville.

Flanders's story of Nauvoo is tragedy in the large sense of the word, a tragedy resulting from the same dilemma that faced John Winthrop three hundred years earlier: the dilemma of living in the world without becoming part of it. Simon Stylites, who pursued holiness on a pillar in the Syrian desert, took the easy way and could never aspire to sainthood either in the Puritan or the Mormon heaven. But as Winthrop recorded so candidly in his journal, if man did live in the world, he was continually in danger of becoming either an intolerant religious zealot or a profligate. Joseph Smith and his

followers faced essentially the same problem. Yet they also had other troubles which Winthrop escaped by sailing to America: the Gentiles. If the Saints defended the kingdom too vigorously, they might become too exclusive; but they would also be tempted to adopt the methods of their enemies for self-defense and thus become like those whom they despised. How could a worldly Mormon "Kingdom of God" defend and protect the kingdom of Christ? That is Flanders's implicit question. His objective answer is the history of the fall of Nauvoo — a fall produced because the Saints were too much in and of the world.

The image of Joseph Smith in Nauvoo emerging from Flanders's pages "is of a man of affairs — planner, promoter, architect, entrepreneur, executive, politician, filibusterer — matters of which he was sometimes less sure than he was those of the spirit" (p. vi). "When Smith failed to separate the prophetic role from that of administrator, entrepreneur, political aspirant, and plain disputant, the sacredness of his spiritual leadership became jeopardized in the eyes of many Mormons. When 'thus saith God' mixed in temporal affairs, as it did in the Nauvoo House enterprise, trouble resulted" (p. 244). Flanders's story of Nauvoo is largely composed of such troubles: Joseph being taken in by Isaac Galland and John C. Bennett; engaging in petty squabbles with the Laws, Higbees, and Foster over whether the commercial center should be on the "flat" or on Mulholland Street on the "hill"; playing political games with Cyrus Walker; installing himself as the only Lieutenant General in the history of the United States since George Washington; repudiating debts by filing for bankruptcy; relaxing prohibition laws, with the spirits flowing freely even at his own mansion; succumbing to vanity and affectation; desiring political power and prestige to the point of having himself crowned king in the Council of Fifty. The melancholy facts of a tragic decline are all here.

For Utah Mormons, on the other hand, Nauvoo was tragedy only in the colloquial sense of the word that permits newspapers to call murder or even automobile and airplane accidents tragedy. For in the eyes of Brigham Young and those who followed him to Utah, Joseph's "innovations" failed primarily because of the Gentiles. It is true that Roberts, perhaps more than many of his coreligionists, acknowledged human weaknesses in the Saints. He even recognized minor flaws in the character of Joseph Smith, something the more flowery panegyrics issuing periodically from Mormon presses in recent years fail to do; yet ultimately there is no question in Roberts's mind that Nauvoo fell because, as Joseph once remarked, "the influence of the devil and his servants will be used against the Kingdom of God." Utah Mormons cannot admit a major flaw in Nauvoo, for these were the very practices and doctrines Young transplanted to the Rocky Mountain kingdom. Hence the inevitability of Roberts's proud evaluation of Smith's accomplishments in Nauvoo.

Flanders may have gone a little too far with his implicit uncomplimentary evluation of Utah Mormonism. He might well have let his readers come to their own conclusions. What the facts imply is uncomfortable enough. A final quote at the end of the book, a very derogatory assessment of Utah Mormonism by the apostate Stenhouse, seems gratuitous. Unfortunately, Flanders has thus seriously weakened a strong position, particularly because such barbs, though irritating, have long ago lost their sting. After having suffered such missiles for more than a hundred years, Utah Mormons have developed a thick hide. I am afraid that too many readers will simply

pull out the barb and with it dismiss the whole book. And that would be unfortunate indeed; they cannot afford to dismiss this study for such superficial barbs, which may well have been intended as balm for members of the Reorganized Church, who have to grapple with veritable spears thrust into their sides.

Flanders's book may be uncomfortable for a more important reason. It is a monument to the irony of Mormon history. How much of the Nauvoo that Flanders establishes as a prototype for Young's Rocky Mountain kingdom are contemporary Utah Mormons willing to accept? How do they feel about Joseph Smith as king over the Council of Fifty and as Lieutenant General of the Nauvoo Legion? And what is their real attitude towards polygamy? Admittedly, descendants of polygamous families still proudly acknowledge their heritage; but many Mormons clearly wish it had never happened. A leading historian at the leading state university in Utah for years avoided any mention of the subject; references to it in graduate theses were eradicated with the remark, "Too controversial!" Preston Nibley, it will be remembered, wrote an entire book on Brigham Young without mentioning the dread word once. The Nauvoo most Utah Mormons are willing to accept as a cradle for their institutions has more in common with the romanticized and superficial image of Cecil McGavin's *Nauvoo the Beautiful* (Salt Lake City, 1946) than with historical reality.

Utah Mormonism has moved subtly but distinctly in the direction of de Tocqueville. Not that anyone would publicly admit the change. Yet unquestionably, those who rejected Brigham Young and what he stood for in Nauvoo could more easily have accepted the kind of Mormonism found in Utah today. In many ways Nauvoo was less the prototype of the future than was the Mormonism of those who rejected all the city stood for. Today kingdom building is frowned upon not only in Independence but in Salt Lake City as well. Here is the larger meaning of Flanders's book. Clearly, it is a pivotal work in the historiography of Mormonism, one that could well initiate serious dialogue between the factions. If no Mormon scholar can afford to ignore it, neither can other Mormons of whatever persuasion.

## MORMONS IN THE SIDE STREAM

*Milton V. Backman, Jr.*

*Christian Deviations: The Challenge of the New Spiritual Movements.* By Horton Davies. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965. 144 pp. $1.45 (paper). Milton Backman is Associate Professor of History of Religion at Brigham Young University and serves in the presidency of his L.D.S. stake mission; he recently published *American Religions and the Rise of Mormonism.*

During the third week of January, 1966, millions of Americans united in prayer, beseeching God's assistance in their quest for Christian unity. One of the leading advocates of this ecumenical movement is Horton Davies, Putnam Professor of Religion at Princeton University. According to Professor Davies, the next stage in the reintegration of a divided Christendom is the uniting of "side-stream" Christianity with the "mainstream." Many Catholics and Protestants are not satisfied, he asserts in the recent reissue of

*Christian Deviations*, with the current divisions within the Christian fold and are working cooperatively to correct this problem. Unfortunately, he contends, many societies such as Pentecostalism, Seventh-day Adventism, Moral Re-armament, Mormonism, the Jehovah's Witnesses, British-Israel, Christian Science, Spiritism, and Theosophy have deviated considerably from traditional Christianity and are impeding the movement.

Rather than merely summarizing the beliefs of all these societies, Horton Davies emphasizes the unusual or peculiar concepts of the "side-stream" sects and condemns unrelentingly beliefs which conflict with his interpretation of the Christian gospel. According to Davies, Christians should endorse the Apostles' Creed and the reality of the Incarnation, the Cross, and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. They should believe in an eternal life given through grace alone, based upon the fulfillment of certain moral and spiritual conditions. They should also adopt as the three interlocking authorities for the Christian faith, the Bible, the Church, and the individual inspired by the Holy Spirit. The Bible should be regarded as of primary importance, "the Church of secondary, and the inspired individual of tertiary importance."

Davies criticizes Roman Catholics for placing too much emphasis on the Church as a norm of faith. "The exclusive dependence upon the Church as the organ of truth leads to the propounding of unbiblical doctrines, such as the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin and the Immaculate Conception, as the essence of the faith." He also censures Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh-day Adventists, British-Israelites, and Mormons for over-emphasizing the Old Testament to the detriment of the New, and classifies Joseph Smith, Mary Baker Eddy, and Ellen G. White as "self-appointed prophets" who sought to displace Jesus. "Christian humility," he argues, "makes it unlikely for a mere human to pretend to a better insight into the mind of God than Jesus had."

Even though Davies is extremely critical of groups who depart from his version of Christianity, he fails to define precisely his interpretation of the gospel essentials. Davies argues that a paramount reason Christians should unite is to prevent the confusion that has resulted from sects competing in the mission field. Yet Protestant liberals who strongly support the ecumenical movement disagree sharply on the meaning of basic Christian dogma and endorse widely differing views of the Apostles' Creed. They would disrupt a reunited church fully as much as the deviants Davies condemns. How would missionaries of the world church answer questions such as: What is the Incarnation? Is Jesus the Son of God or the son of Joseph and Mary? What is meant by the resurrection of Christ? Many seekers would not be satisfied with the vague answers missionaries of such a world church might provide. "I don't know," a missionary would be forced to respond. "Doctrines have been de-emphasized. A wide latitude of belief exists in the church." The "clarity" proposed by Davies could not be a feature of the church contemplated by the current leaders of the ecumenical movement.

One of the most surprising aspects of this book is that so many oversimplications, contradictions and other glaring errors have survived two editions. It is, for example, an exaggeration to say that Spiritism and Christian Science are attempts "to make one Christian tenet into the whole of Christianity." British-Israelites, Davies asserts at one point, have placed the writings of the Old Testament prophets on the same level as those found in the New Testament, but in a subsequent sentence he argues that they

hold the Old Testament to be more important than the New. He says on one page that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the "sect . . . most widely committed to missionary activity" and on the next that the "most active proselytizers among the sects are the Jehovah's Witnesses." He avers, without giving any evidence, that the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society is "the religion of the hard-pressed and frustrated, who without such faith and the company of their fellows at the bottom of the social scale, would be the utterly defeated," and that the British-Israelites' belief in a "chosen people" leads to the conviction that there is a "master-race." He overemphasizes the influence of William Miller on Seventh-day Adventist theology, stating that Mrs. White picked "the brains of William Miller." He incorrectly attributes the doctrine of investigative judgment to Mrs. White, failing to note that Adventists credit Hiram Edison wih discovering this principle. Davies badly oversimplifies the unique aspects of the Seventh-day Adventists and Latter-day Saints by failing to discuss a number of their distinguishing beliefs.

The most inaccurate chapter is the one on Mormonism. It is incredible that a distinguished historian and theologian, teaching at a reputable institution would make so many mistakes. In all three editions of his work the date of the visit of a heavenly messenger to Joseph Smith is given as 1822 instead of 1823. In the current edition, Davies specifies the date that Utah entered the Union as 1895 instead of 1896. In the 1954 and 1961 editions, Davies states that the Mormons arrived in the Salt Lake Valley in the spring of 1847. He improves the latest edition by saying that in 1847 Brigham Young "started for the Rocky Mountains with a selected group of stalwarts." But this later statement needs clarification, for a majority (possibly five-sixths) of the Latter-day Saints residing in Nauvoo and nearby communities began their journey to the Rocky Mountains in 1846. After spending the winter on the Great Plains, the first company under the direction of Brigham Young continued the migration west.

In addition to these mistakes, Davies neglects to describe in any detail Joseph Smith's account of the first vision and inaccurately describes the events that occurred between 1823 and 1827: "Four years later [meaning four years after the initial appearance of Moroni] he [Joseph] claimed that the angel instructed him where to look for the golden volume and then he immediately dug it up."

Davies's most serious error is his failure to differentiate between the theological speculations of Church members and accepted doctrines of the Church. On occasions he describes as established beliefs concepts which few members have held and which no reputable members have taught. Davies should be pleased to learn that Mormons themselves would classify many of these doctrines as Christian deviations.

Latter-day Saints, for example, do not deny the existence of Jesus before His incarnation as Davies charges; in fact, they believe He is the Jehovah of the Old Testament and, like all the children of God, has always existed. Notions that Jesus is "the son of Adam-God and Mary" and that Jesus married the Marys and Martha at Cana have never been officially endorsed. Latter-day Saints do not hold that the Indians are "the lost ten tribes of Israel." The Church certainly does not claim that "all who are not Latter-day Saints will be everlastingly damned." On the contrary, Mormons believe that

all individuals who have not had an opportunity to accept the gospel of Christ in this life will be granted this privilege after death and before the Final Judgment. Although they hold that the wicked will suffer mental anguish following death, they interpret "eternal" punishment as punishment imposed by God. They reject the traditional concept of hell and a simple division at Judgment into "saved" or "damned" in favor of a great variety of opportunities for progression in a future existence. The Church does not teach that "the Atonement wrought by Christ is limited to the pre-Mormon dispensation"; and to charge that Mormonism is not Christo-centric "for Christ is to them merely a forerunner of Joseph Smith" is to display startling ignorance. Mormons believe that all men will be resurrected as a consequence of the Atonement and maintain that only those who accept Christ and live in harmony with the teachings of the Savior will fully benefit from Christ's action. These disciples will be cleansed of their sins preparatory to their return to God's presence.

A number of questions directed at Latter-day Saints have been proposed in this work. How could Nephi learn to speak and write "Reformed Egyptian" in Jerusalem, much less in America? And why did Nephi claim to have "engraved the first sacred plates in 'Reformed Egyptian'?" Davies overlooks the many economic and cultural ties between the Israelites and Egyptians in the seventh century before Christ and the likelihood that Nephi and other emigrants could have learned Egyptian before being uprooted. Moreover, Nephi did not claim to have employed a "Reformed Egyptian" language when he inscribed his history on the plates, for Nephi wrote, "I make a record in the language of my father, which consists of the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians" (1 Nephi 1:2). Centuries after the Nephites arrived in America, Moroni mentioned that he and Mormon had adopted a language which they called "reformed Egyptian, being handed down and altered by us, according to our manner of speech" (Mormon 9:32). The reason for utilizing this language is also briefly explained: "If our plates had been sufficiently large we should have written in Hebrew [characters]" (Mormon 9:33), indicating that ideas could be recorded on less space using modified Egyptian than using the Hebrew language. Would Horton Davies question the assertion that the Egyptian (and Hebrew) language would change between 600 B.C. and 400 A.D. among a people isolated from the Old World?

"Are there any extant examples of pre-Columbian gold plates?" is another question proposed by Professor Davies. The answer is an emphatic yes. There are hundreds of such plates. He might have asked, "Are there in existence any pre-Columbian gold plates that contain writings by early Americans?" The answer to that question is probably no. However, some of the gold plates that archaeologists say were employed for ornamentation purposes contain inscriptions or decorations. These plates substantiate the claim that early inhabitants of this continent possessed the necessary technological skill to record their history on metallic plates.

In a work entitled *The Problems of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1964, pp. 92, 121), Dr. Sidney B. Sperry provides a possible answer to another question raised by Davies, "How can we account for 27,000 words from the King James or Authorized Version of the Bible in Smith's 'translation'?" Sperry writes:

> The text of Isaiah in the Book of Mormon is not word for word the same as that of the King James version. Of 433 verses of Isaiah in the Nephite record, Joseph Smith modified about 233. Some of the changes made were slight, others were radical. However, 199 verses are word for word the same as the Old English version. We therefore freely admit that Joseph Smith may have used the King James version when he came to the text of Isaiah on the gold plates. As long as the familiar version agreed substantially with the text on the gold plates, he let it pass; when it differed too radically he translated the Nephite version and dictated the necessary changes.

The same basic reasoning has been employed by Dr. Sperry to explain parallels in the New Testament and the Book of Mormon, for Latter-day Saints believe that Christ delivered the same sermons and taught the same concepts to His "other sheep" in America as He did to the inhabitants of Palestine.

Another weakness of his work is that Davies has failed to include in his suggestions for further reading many excellent books discussing the beliefs of the societies considered. Because Davies primarily discusses doctrines rather than history, his selected bibliographies should include works such as *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald, 1957); James E. Talmage, *The Articles of Faith* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1924) and *Let God Be True* (Brooklyn, N. Y.: Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, 1946) or *Things in Which It is Impossible for God to Lie* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, 1965).

In one respect, Davies's book indicates a failing of Latter-day Saints. In the preface to the third edition Davies writes that he is grateful for criticisms, both positive and negative, and trusts that the latest edition reflects the benefits of helpful suggestions. From these comments it seems that no Latter-day Saint has written to Professor Davies about the obvious errors in his book. Probably no Latter-day Saint was invited to review the first two editions, indicating a definite need for a publication such as *Dialogue*. In the past, Latter-day Saints have too frequently failed to reply to authors who have perpetuated myths about Mormonism.

This work further indicates a need for Latter-day Saints to produce more scholarly books on Mormonism and to promote their placement in libraries. Many non-Mormon authors have been greatly influenced by well-written but biased and unreliable works. When better books on Mormonism are available, critics are more likely to present the history and beliefs of the Latter-day Saints with greater accuracy.

## THEOLOGY FOR A NEW AGE

*Karl Sandberg*

*Honest to God.* By John A. T. Robinson, Bishop of Woolwich. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1963. 143 pp. $1.65 (paper). Karl Sandberg is Associate Professor of French Literature at the University of Arizona, where he recently published *At the Crossroads of Faith and Reason: An Essay on Pierre Bayle;* he observed European Christianity first-hand as an L.D.S. missionary in France.

The Church of England, the heir of a nineteen hundred year Christian tradition, has fallen upon evil days. At least such is the assessment of The Reverend Nicholas Stacey, Rector of Woolwich, in a recent issue of *Harper's.*[1] Far removed from the mainstream of modern life, the church is an ineffective eddy in a secular society, whose values are shaped without reference to the divine. In spite of a sustained reactivation program, the Rector's own parish of 10,000 members situated in an industrial area can scarcely muster enough souls on Sunday to create an atmosphere of worship. For most people the church has become a religious club, Stacey says, where God is isolated from people except for one or two hours a week. It would appear that the church has suffered a worse fate than ceasing to be true — it has become meaningless.

It is against this background that one must read *Honest to God,* a challenging and provocative little book by the Bishop of Woolwich, Dr. John A. T. Robinson. The work attempts to re-establish contact with the world and to relocate the sense of holiness in a secular society.

Bishop Robinson's point of departure is that the modern world is secular, in contrast to the time when most of society stood on the common ground of a revealed book and ethic. Though men sinned against it, they acknowledged a transcendant standard of morality. Secular society repudiates the standard itself.

The experience of and necessity for God have largely disappeared. Bishop Robinson affirms that the hypothesis of God, once necessary to explain the creation and continuance of the universe, has been replaced by materialist explanations which seem just as plausible. Personal weakness and dependence on the elements once compelled people to rely on divine protection; today science and technology have made men the masters of nature. More important, the sanctions of the traditional Christian morality, deprived of their theological foundations, have largely disappeared, and secular society has fallen into a sterile ethical relativity, which threatens the worth and dignity of the whole human venture.

As a "defender of the faith," Bishop Robinson refuses to confine himself to the shrinking "religious remnant" which still accepts Christian presuppositions. He seeks a common ground which can give meaning and direction, if not to all men, at least to the ethically oriented for whom traditional Christianity has become impossible. His procedure is to emphasize the role of Jesus in Christianity and to suggest a radical revision of the traditional notions of God, ethics, and the spiritual life.

The traditional idea of God (based, it might be noted, upon the Platonic dichotomy between form and matter) is that God differs essentially from His creation. The practical result has been to picture God as a Person (inaccurately, in the Bishop's view) "up there" spatially or "out there" metaphysically, occasionally entering into relationship with His creation, but possessing a nature totally foreign to it. This God has become remote, unnecessary and, in a scientific age, incredible. To be meaningful, God must be present "in the center of life."

How does one get God back in the world, or in other words, how does one recover or discover the holy and transcendant in a secular world? Here Bishop Robinson leans heavily on the writings of the late Paul Tillich. Frankly

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[1] "The Decline of the Church of England," *Harper's Magazine* (March, 1966), pp. 64-70.

parting company with the idea of God as a supreme person, whose existence or non-existence becomes a matter of argument, Bishop Robinson and Tillich assert that God is by definition that which is ultimate in the universe. Beneath the flux of surface phenomena, beneath the changing and transitory, is the Eternal. God is not thought of as "a" being, but as Being itself. When Tillich speaks of "God," says the Bishop, he speaks of "our ultimate concern, of what we take seriously without reservation" (p. 46). For him the word "God" denotes "the ultimate depth of all of our being, the creative ground and meaning of all our existence" (p. 47). When we say, "God is Love," we do not refer to a person who embodies love perfectly. We mean that "in pure personal relationship we encounter, not merely what ought to be, but what is, the deepest, veriest truth about the structure of reality" (p. 49).

Jesus was not the God-Man described in the traditional understanding of the Incarnation. "Jesus never claims to be God, personally," says Bishop Robinson, "yet he always claims to bring God, completely" (p. 73). He could say "I and the Father are one. . . . The Father is in me and I am in the Father," because in Jesus there was nothing of self; He was "utterly open to, and united with, the Ground of His being" (pp. 74, 76). Jesus is the "man for the others" and it is in His life that we find "the love whereby we are brought completely into one with the Ground of our being" (p. 82). As Bonhoeffer says:

> To be a Christian does not mean to be religious in a particular way, to cultivate some particular form of asceticism (as a sinner, a penitent or a saint), but to be a man. It is not some religious act which makes a Christian what he is, but participation in the suffering of God in the life of the world (p. 83).

The experience of the divine is to be found in the depth of the world, in relationship with people, and not out of the world. The only atheists are those who hold life to be shallow. And Bishop Robinson offers the way of unconditional Christian love as expressive of the ultimate depth of life.

In questions of ethics, the Bishop casts the traditional molds into the melting pot in his attempt to confront the secular twentieth century. He departs from the absolutistic morality, whose precepts are "given, objectively and immutably" (p. 107). For example, one Christian view of marriage holds that it not only should not but *cannot* be dissolved. Wedlock creates an indelible union; once two people are married, they can no more cease to be man and wife than a brother and a sister can cease to be related. Bishop Robinson feels that the chances are small of commending this view to a modern world which has rejected the metaphysical suppositions upon which it rests. Binding Christianity to such a doctrine would simply discredit the one with the other (pp. 108-109).

The precepts of Jesus, he says, were not meant to be understood legalistically. The one absolute constant in ethics is the command of unconditional love of God and man, and Jesus did not spell out what love demanded in every situation. His teachings are simply illustrations of what love might require. At one time it might mean sacrificing all one possesses, at another giving one's clothes, lending money without question, or violating the accepted rules concerning the Sabbath. The rightness or wrongness of any given act is determined not by *a priori prescription* but by the consideration that "the

deepest welfare of these particular persons in this particular situation matters more than anything else in the world" (p. 114).

To a couple contemplating a divorce, Christian counsel would not be, "Don't, because divorce is always wrong." The "new morality," as Bishop Robinson conceives it, would rather pose the question, "What will serve the deepest interests of the people concerned?" To a young man asking in his relations with a girl, "Why shouldn't I?" the answer is not, "Don't, because it is a sin." He should be helped to see for himself that if he does not love the girl deeply, his act is immoral; and if he does, he will respect her too much to use her or take liberties with her (pp. 118-119).

Such a morality would rely upon the guidelines of tradition and the "bank of experience," but it would insist that each person find for himself the application of the law of love in his own situation. More demanding than the old ethic and potentially dangerous, this morality, the Bishop maintains, is the only way possible between the morass of relativism and the unworking rigidity of the old absolutism.

A common Mormon approach to the Sabbath is very similar to what Bishop Robinson advocates as a general rule of conduct: the principle is stated, a few strong recommendations are given, and the application is left to the individual. Can this approach be used in all questions of ethics? I believe Bishop Robinson's approach has much to recommend it. The fruits of the morally absolutistic Puritan religion or the rigidly legalistic religion of the Pharisees were far from being universally admirable. Yet the history of casuistry shows that often the principle is accommodated to conduct before conduct is made to square with principle. To avoid either excess, it is necessary to provide the individual with both principle and freedom and let him find his own way. This approach may be strengthened by the Mormon idea that man and God cooperate in a universe governed by law. Moral stability does not come by absolutes imposed from without but by increasing knowledge of one's present self, of the cause-and-effect nature of his environment, and of his eternal potential.

The chief weakness in the book may be precisely in the use of the word "God." Before reacting too vigorously to the phrase "God is dead," used popularly and somewhat inaccurately to refer to the whole of the radical theology, I would want to know which God is reported to have died. Having spent two and one-half years talking about religion in European industrial cities, which must strongly resemble Woolwich, I have to agree that the traditional idea of God has become meaningless to most people. It is possible, however, that this condition does not result from making God too personal but rather from a doctrine making him too remote. Although popular Christianity pictures God in some personal form, it insists that He is wholly different from man, existing above and beyond His creation, in a state of uninvolvement with it. He exists mainly as an intellectual necessity to explain the world. A remote and uninvolved God or a mere hypothesis cannot but become meaningless to human beings.

Consequently, I cannot get very enthusiastic about depersonalizing God as a means of getting Him back in the world. It is true that for many Anglicans and others the Bishop's approach has had a rejuvenating effect, making the concerns and questions of religion real and immediate by insisting that God is not "out there" but "in the midst of us," and that the Gospel has to

do with the world and not withdrawal from the world. He has no doubt made the idea of God accessible to the subtle intellect, but I wonder to how many others. It is significant that the more he insists on the impersonality of the Ground of all Being, the more he emphasizes the personality of Jesus and the personal element of religious encounter. Personality seems to be such an indispensable element of religion that the vagueness of "the Ground of Being" may ultimately make it as meaningless as the God "up there."

Fortunately, the alternatives are not restricted to the traditional idea and the "Ground of Being." The Mormon concept of God differs essentially from both. The idea of God as an explanation for the world has had almost no part in Mormon writings. And Mormons have never accepted the Platonic dichotomy between spirit (mind) and matter. The whole effort of Mormonism is predicated upon God's direct and continued involvement in the world to bring all of mankind to a higher level of existence. God surpasses man incomprehensibly in degree but is not essentiallly different from him in nature.

Mormonism, in fact, looks upon God as a divine Parent whose purpose is, through the experience and knowledge to be gained in the world, to bring mankind to an eternal and divine quality of life. Men are thus regarded as eternally progressive beings. Given desire and obedience to presently discovered truth, they will continue to increase their knowldge of their environment and consequently their control over it. The "autonomy" of men in this sense is consistent with the bringing of them to the condition in which they become "free forever" (II Nephi 2:26).

But an increasing human independence and maturity does not push God out of the universe. As men become freer, they are not cut off from God. They are rather invited to cooperate more intelligently and more effectively with Him and with each other in fulfilling the divine plan.

Space permits neither an elaboration of these views nor an attempt to forestall the veto which some will prepare. But such a view of God and man is at least consistent with the modern emphasis on action and the discovery of progressive qualities in human beings.

These doctrines may also have the virtue of evoking the latent powers in men as they encounter greater demands and greater opportunities to participate with God in resolving the problems of life. A religion becomes vital only as it communicates the feeling that God's purposes are being worked out in and through the world, and what is vital in Mormonism may be attributed in part to its success in imparting this sense of immediacy.

But in spite of reservations and basic differences of point of view, I find Bishop Robinson's book significant and important, first of all for its candor and honesty. To throw overboard the forms and beliefs which have become established and venerable through long tradition is not a task lightly undertaken, and he has not hesitated when these forms and beliefs become hindrances to the meaningful life. Without such honesty there is perhaps no authentic religion.

More important, the very writing of such a book suggests that the sectarian age is moribund. When the challenge to Mormonism was to defend its position among other churches in a society still basically Christian, it did so with energy and intelligence, as is seen in the writings of the Pratts and B. H. Roberts. Today, in a society which is basically secular, the challenge to Mormonism, as to all religions, is to direct its voice to the issues of a new age.

# BY STUDY AND BY FAITH

*Joseph R. Murphy*

*Truth by Reason and by Revelation.* By Frank B. Salisbury, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1965. x plus 362 pp. $4.50. Joseph Murphy is Associate Professor of Zoology at Brigham Young University and has published articles in the fields of Ecology and Ornithology; he and his wife are superintendent and president of their ward Mutual Improvement Association, the L.D.S. youth auxiliary.

A survey of Latter-day Saint literature dealing with science and religion will reveal that, with few exceptions, biologists are poorly represented. All manner of other scientists and technologists, including chemists, physicists, geologists, agriculturalists, sociologists, medical practitioners, and even non-scientists have attempted to define the place of science and scientific philosophy in L.D.S. theology. The lack of expression from professional biologists is the more regrettable because many of the topics dealt with are those of vital concern to modern biology (e.g., organic evolution, man's physical nature, human nutrition and metabolism, extraterrestrial life, etc.).

It is significant, then, that a devout Latter-day Saint who has earned a solid reputation in biological research and teaching has recently produced a book dealing with many facets of science which appear to present interpretive difficulties for adherents to the restored Gospel. This commendable effort is the work of Dr. Frank B. Salisbury, Professor of Plant Physiology at Colorado State University, who has made important investigations into the physiology of flowering and other phases of physiological plant ecology, and has also studied and published in the fascinating field of exobiology. It would appear that Dr. Salisbury is well qualified to undertake a work of the nature of his *Truth by Reason and by Revelation.*

According to the author's preface, the book was written with two rather disparate groups of people in mind: the troubled student who may experience some erosion of his religious foundations as he encounters "the theories and philosophies of the world," and the author's fellow scientists, at least the atheists and agnostics among them, for whom he would like to provide a rational basis for his own faith in God and the Gospel of Christ. Dr. Salisbury feels that he can find common ground for both groups by describing the development of faith, "beginning with the assumption of no faith at all." Although the author states that no effort was made to outline the principles of the gospel, I believe that most readers will agree that the book contains a fairly complete treatment of the major tenets of the restored Church.

The opening section of the book, subtitled "Searching for Truth," begins with a statement of the alleged areas of conflict between science and religion and is followed by chapters which contrast the approach to truth through the two methods, concluding with a chapter on the mechanics of gaining a testimony of the gospel.

In section II, "Problems of Science and Religion," the author devotes five chapters to the general subject of the creation of life and organic evolution. There are additional chapters on miracles, nature of the spirit, the Word of Wisdom, extraterrestrial life, and Satan.

The final section of the book consists of two chapters dealing with the nature of man, contrasting the viewpoints of science and of revealed truth.

Any attempt to define or explore a concept as subjective and often as abstract as truth is apt to prove difficult, particularly when the intent is to compare truth as a part of religious experience with the tentative "truths" of science. The author contends that there are absolute truths towards which scientific inquiry and religious revelation are both leading; nevertheless, the inherently different methods and limitations of the two systems suggest that less than complete correlation can be achieved. Dr. Salisbury tacitly acknowledges this in his discussion of the two methods of truth seeking (Chapters 2 and 3) wherein he concludes that the scientist is limited to those conclusions which will stand the test of the formal processes of logic, while the method of revelation has no such limits. I do not mean to imply that there are no absolutes discernible by science, but the scientist's major contribution is made on the frontiers of expanding knowledge, where he is apt to be more concerned with evidence than with final proof or absolutes.[1]

Turning from generalities to some of the specific problems discussed in the text, I will restrict the majority of my comments to the "problem" of organic evolution, and the related question of the origin of life. Judging from the amount of space devoted to these concepts, the author considered them of crucial importance in developing the theme of his book.

Although the author makes some concessions to evolutionary processes and allows natural selection limited operation, I believe it is fair to say that his position is, with some important qualifications, essentially anti-evolutionary. He is particularly unwilling to recognize the process of natural selection as fundamental in the creation of new species. In developing his argument, he first states the case for evolution (Chapter 7) by reviewing the various lines of evidence generally found in introductory biology texts (e.g., the fossil record, anatomy and embryology, biogeography, evidence from genetics, etc.). Owing in part to the necessity for brevity and in part to questionable interpretations and errors in fact on the part of the author, this is not in my opinion a particularly strong or satisfactory chapter.

For instance, in his discussion of fossils Dr. Salisbury argues that there are few if any known intermediate forms which might serve as transitional types between major animal groups. As a matter of fact, paleontological museums and monographs are replete with fossil forms so intermediate and so transitional in character that appellations such as "reptile-like amphibian" and "mammal-like reptile" are widely applied. In the one instance which the author does cite as a possible example of this kind of transition, "the giant flying lizards which might be thought of as intermediate between the lizards and the birds," he adopts a hypothesis, namely derivation of birds from the ancient pterodactyls and pteranodons, which has been discredited for many decades; but he unfortunately fails to mention the well-studied fossils of *Archaeopteryx* which provide a nearly ideal transition between reptiles and birds.

This is but one example; similar exceptions could be taken to many of the author's conclusions relative to the other evidences for evolution which are discussed in this chapter, wherein he appears to be arguing against the evidence for evolution rather than presenting the case for it. In fact, he

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[1] For a good discussion along these lines, see Paul B. Weisz, *The Science of Zoology* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), pp. 10-15.

reaches the remarkable but poorly supported conclusion that these traditional evidences for organic evolution argue equally well or better for the hypothesis of special creation.

I am tempted to devote considerable discussion to Chapter 8, entitled "Natural Selection," for it is here that the author considers evidence primarily from the fields of genetics and cytology and believes that he detects "fatal weaknesses" in evolutionary theory. Genetics is not my speciality, however, and I will restrict myself to one or two observations on his conclusions in this key area.

Dr. Salisbury believes that natural selection does occur in a limited sense, but feels that its effects are quantitatively too small to account for the broader patterns of evolution. On page 155 he asserts that "the source of variability, gene mutation, cannot provide enough good mutations or combinations of mutations to supply the selection process with stock for evolution." By way

of contrast, G. L. Stebbins, a competent student of speciation processes, has recently argued that "only one in a million of the useful mutations or one in a billion of all mutations which occur needs to be established in a species population in order to provide the genetic basis of observed rates of evolution."[2] Stebbins also points out that there is no relationship between the rate of mutation and rate of evolution.[3]

Continuing this same line of argument, Dr. Salisbury asserts that we cannot account for the observed complexity in nature on the basis of the selection process, since essential intermediate stages in the development of organs or behavior patterns would seem to have negative survival value. This "classic" argument, as he terms it, would hold true only if we asserted that the environment remained constant over long periods of time, whereas there is ample evidence to indicate that past environments were notably unstable. A con-

[2] G. L. Stebbins, *Processes of Organic Evolution* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966), p. 30.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 31: "Natural selection directs evolution not by accepting or rejecting mutations as they occur, but by sorting new adaptive combinations out of a gene pool of variability which has been built up through the combined action of mutation, gene recombination, and selection over many generations . . . . Consequently, the rate of mutation rarely if ever has an influence on the rate of evolution."

dition which from our present point of view may seem to have been non-adaptive might have been eminently adaptive under the environmental complex prevailing at the time. The recent careful studies on industrial melanism in British moths have provided an excellent example of the manner in which a changed environment can convert a "harmful" mutation (in this case the dark or melanistic phase of the moth) into an "advantageous" mutation.[4]

In the above paragraphs I have deliberately attempted to demonstrate the vulnerability of many of Dr. Salisbury's conclusions relative to the evolutionary principle. By so doing it is not my intent to defend the position of the atheistic or agnostic evolutionists. On the contrary, I prefer to ally myself with that group within the Church who feel that a reasonable and harmonious synthesis can be forged between the principle of organic evolution and the revealed truths bearing upon these subjects. This general attitude has been expressed in a recent article by B. F. Harrison which appeared in *The Instructor.*[5] I find a daily source of inspiration in the knowledge that within a few steps from my office in the biology building on the B.Y.U. Campus are located the offices of several bishops, high councilmen, and at least one general board member, who espouse views similar to my own. That these views are at variance with many of Dr. Salisbury's ideas certainly implies no lack of respect for his professional competence. I am fearful, however, that his book will be used as an anti-evolutionary tract by certain fundamentalist elements. (Judging from comments and questions about the book already brought to me by students, my fears are well grounded.) This would be most unfair to Dr. Salisbury, for while he by no means warmly embraces the evolutionary concept, he avoids the trite and unwarranted "either — or" approach (i.e., either you are a good Latter-day Saint *or* an evolutionist, etc.) so frequently offered inquiring students by those who have been unable to come to terms with various scientific philosophies. In fact the author suggests a number of alternatives to account for the creation of life and its present diversity (pp. 186-193). He points out that several of these are in essential harmony with revealed truth and admits that he finds himself vacillating from one point of view to another as he continues to study the problem. I also appreciated Dr. Salisbury's interpretation of some of the scriptural passages, ancient as well as modern, often cited by fundamentalists as adequate to "put down" scientific principles and philosophies which seem to be at odds with their own understanding of these concepts. The author has demonstrated that such scriptures need not present the insurmountable obstacles which some have suggested.

In reference to general literary style, the author writes lucidly enough but incorporates certain characteristics of expression which I frequently found irritating. I suppose it is impossible in a book of this type to suppress one's personal biases and prejudices without appearing to equivocate, but Dr. Salisbry often seems to get carried away. For example, he seems to have the notion that most scientists accept ideas such as organic evolution and pre-Adamic man blindly, dogmatically, and "without thinking." Whatever may have been Dr. Salisbury's experiences with his scientific colleagues along this line, I have certainly not found this to be generally true of my own non-L.D.S.

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[4] For a discussion of this fascinating example of natural selection in action, see J. M. Savage, *Evolution* (N. Y.: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1963), pp. 54-55.

[5] B. F. Harrison, "The Relatedness of Living Things," *The Instructor,* V. 100, No. 7 (July, 1965), pp. 272-276.

associates in science. Quite the contrary, most of these men have reached their conclusions only after extensive study and the rejection of what they felt were unsatisfactory alternatives. In this connection, I believe that our author sets some kind of record for reiterative quoting of Matthew 24:24 ("false Christs, and false prophets . . . shall deceive the very elect"), which is a convenient if not always sporting method of consigning one's opponents to the scriptural scrap heap. He reserves his strongest censure for the field of anthropology, which he dismisses as at best "poor science," although he is obviously not well acquainted with this area. He also takes psychologists strongly to task, but I imagine they are accustomed to such treatment.

How successfully, then, has the author accomplished the purposes he set out to achieve with this text? I am not at all certain that it adequately serves the purpose for either the "troubled student" or the unbelieving scientist whom the author had hoped to convince. As he correctly points out, no one, neither scientist nor layman, can build a testimony of the gospel on the tentative truths of science. Yet men of science, as well as inquiring students, are apt to judge the merits of an argument on the basis of the material presented in evidence. I wonder, therefore, about the reaction of the author's worldly scientific associates to the inclusion in the book of his speculative "biological" hypothesis on Eve's emergence from Adam's rib, his assumption that flying saucers are likely genuine space ships operated by extraterrestrial intelligences, and his adventures with the evil spirits in the tapping piano bench. Perhaps ideas and experiences of such a highly personal nature would best be left to individual confrontations, where a more subjective atmosphere generally prevails.

In my opinion the author's strongest argument, and the principal contribution of his text, is in the area of gaining a knowledge of the reality of God and His eternal Gospel not through empirical evidences or logical inference, but only through exercise of faith in things spiritual. Recognizing this, scientists within the Church can certainly support the oft-repeated statement that there can be no conflict between revealed truth and the teachings or conclusions of science. The problem remains that God has not spoken relative to many matters of immediate concern in science; hence the believing scientist will continue to sift evidence from all sources in his never ceasing attempt to approach a more complete and harmonious understanding of the Creator and his creations. Dr. Salisbury's book represents a noteworthy precedent relating to this search; it is to be hoped that his fellow Latter-day Saint biologists will be stimulated to expand and enlarge on his effort.

## FOOLS OF LIFE

*Cherry Silver*

*The Collected Stories of Katherine Anne Porter.* New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1965. 495 pp. $5.95. Cherry Silver, a member of *Dialogue's* Board of Editors, received her doctorate in English from Harvard University and now makes her home in Lahaina, Hawaii, where she serves as Primary president and a teacher for teen-age girls in the L.D.S. branch.

*The Collected Stories of Katherine Anne Porter* has been published following the success of her long novel, *Ship of Fools.* None of the stories is new

although she includes three "lost" stories and has finished a fourth from an early manuscript. The resulting volume contains her earliest work, *Flowering Judas,* the three short novels in *Pale Horse, Pale Rider,* plus the stories published in *The Leaning Tower and Other Stories,* all written between 1922 and 1944.

Katherine Anne Porter is acclaimed as one of our most important living writers, not because of the volume of her work, which has been modest, but because of her stylistic accomplishment. She follows the manner of Henry James and Edith Wharton. Like James, Miss Porter focuses each story on a central character through whose eyes the reader gradually discovers the situation and its meaning. Her style is less involuted than James's, and when she is symbolic, her symbols are large — a landscape, a house, or a train of thought that illuminates the mind of her character. Other writers can learn much from her precise description, her careful structuring of events and conversations, her exact vocabulary, and her exploration of moral issues without moralizing.

Her work should be especially interesting to Mormon readers — and writers — because she comes from a religious background, although her feeling for family and for the traditions of the South and Mexico seems to be stronger than her Catholicism. More than James or Wharton, she celebrates a section of the country and its people. She is a local-color writer turned psychologist and an objective and poetic stylist who does not avoid moral issues. She writes some of her best work about herself and her family, who were Kentucky plantation aristocracy that had moved to Texas, or about her experiences among Mexicans and Germans. But she demonstrates that lands and people can provide source material without limiting an artist's perspective on personality. For all her careful laying of setting — a farmhouse kitchen, a country lane, a cafe — she never succumbs to mere description. The center remains the thinking, feeling, remembering mind of the character who lives in the setting and reveals a part of his life.

Mormon writers may profit more from studying Miss Porter's style than from observing her use of religious ideas. While her stories have the morality of individual life as their central concern, she is seldom articulate or resolute about the world view Catholicism should have given her. An absence of positive comment seems to express implicit criticism of the Church. Her characters take from religion only the strength and comfort of tradition, not any personal conviction of truth. Catholicism has little moral influence on the Mexican peasant, Maria Concepcion, knife-swinging wife of an unfaithful husband, whose purpose in life beyond faithful attendance at mass is to kill her rival and win back her man. When Miss Porter confronts moral problems head on, as in "Noon Wine," she responds to these crises with primitive and suicidal solutions, rather than mature or philosophical ones.

Among Katherine Anne Porter's more sophisticated characters, interest in social reform for the most part has taken the place of religious allegiance. Laura, the heroine of "Flowering Judas," is an American school teacher in Mexico who carries messages for the revolutionary underground. From time to time she surreptitiously enters a church to try to pray, but neither her old religion nor the philosophy of revolution satisfies her. When a young political prisoner dies of an overdose of sleeping drugs she has smuggled to him, Laura dreams she is eating the blossoms of the Judas tree as they are transubstantiated

into his flesh and blood and awakens in terror. That is the end of the story; the Church provides symbols for guilt but no return route for the lost soul.

In her introduction to the 1940 edition of *Flowering Judas,* Katherine Anne Porter says that because she found the world sick and society dislocated, her energies have been spent in trying "to understand the logic of this majestic and terrible failure of the life of man in the Western world." Her writing probes the reasons for failure without offering much hope for change and correction.

Here I must take issue with Miss Porter's approach to reality. Her people have no sense of purpose to raise them beyond the vortex of their own pasts. Parents and children, friends and lovers, never reach deep personal understanding of each other, with the result that nothing in life means much. No one saying what he believes is understood by another. No purpose — neither art, politics, religion, or love — gives ultimate meaning to life. Only in the death coma of Granny Weatherall in "The Jilting of Granny Weatherall," or in the feverish delirium of Miranda in "Pale Horse, Pale Rider" comes some epiphany, some visionary reconciliation of past desires with present suffering and future hopes.

Like the young Miranda of "Old Mortality," Katherine Anne Porter refuses to understand the world in conventional terms. Fleeing distortions, she vows to see life for herself, to find truth through her own experiences. Such a declaration of independence both frees and limits a writer. She is free to create observing, sensitive, analyzing spirits who can study human failure, but she also divorces herself from systems of thought that might lead her characters to positive action or hope.

Only the domineering, horseback-riding grandmother in "The Source" has the moral strength to give meaning to the world around her. The grandmother, once a Southern belle, has become matriarch of a clan and holds together her family, homes, farm, and servants by her will to work and her power of command. Her authority and sense of duty provide security for the whole family. When she dies and the Negro nanny who has been her life-long companion retires, the family begins to disintegrate. A counterpart of this grand dame appears in "Holiday," where absolute obedience to the mother and father brings stability to a German immigrant farm family. In both these households, feelings of affection are subjugated to the larger interests of work, increase, and solidarity. When individual members separate themselves from the family group, the authority that defined their identity loses its force, and they face the world alone, confused by its injustice, falsehold, and misery.

There, too, Miss Porter's readers are left without hope; they are philsophically, as she said of herself and the deformed sister in "Holiday," "equally the fools of life."

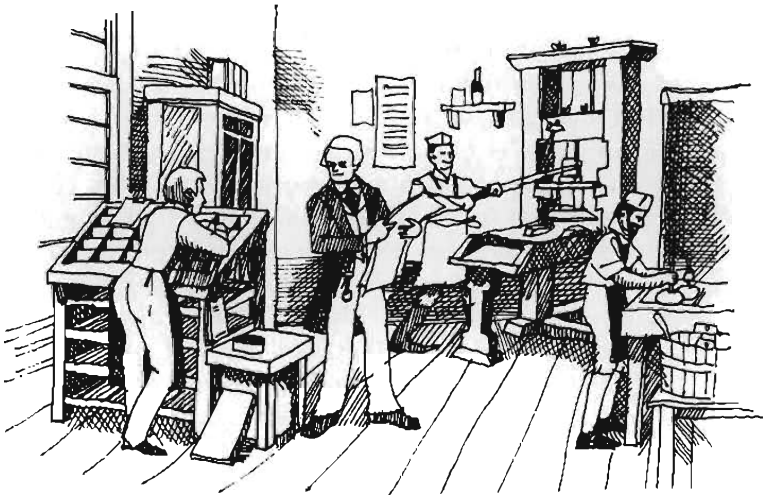
# THE CHURCH AND THE LAW

*by Thomas G. Alexander*

"The Suppression of the *Nauvoo Expositor.*" By Dallin H. Oaks. *Utah Law Review,* IX (Winter, 1965), 862-903.
"The Mormons and the Law: The Polygamy Cases." By Orma Linford. *Utah Law Review,* IX (Winter, 1964, and Summer, 1965), 308-370 and 543-591. Thomas Alexander is Assistant Professor of History at Brigham Young University and has published a number of articles on Utah history in various historical quarterlies; he is a member of the bishopric of his L.D.S. ward.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the Church and its leaders were regularly involved with federal and state law. The recent article by Professor Dallin H. Oaks[1] is a prudent, well researched attempt to deal with one incident, the abatement of the *Nauvoo Expositor,* in which legal matters seriously affected the Church.

Oaks discusses the legality of subsequent actions in the Municipal Court of Nauvoo and in Justice Robert F. Smith's court in Carthage, but the central



issue is the legality of the abatement by the Nauvoo City Council. Newspaper statements against the Church fell into three categories: political, religious, and moral. Oaks concludes that the city council had no right to abate the newspaper on the basis of its political and religious allegations, but on the charges of immorality, the city could have made a case. Precedents from Illinois courts and from Blackstone justified the abatement of nuisances without trial.

Calling a newspaper a nuisance was unusual, but the Council may have been on good grounds because of the fear of mob action and the scurrilous and defamatory character of the paper's articles. There was, however, no legal justification for the destruction of the press, and the proprietors might have sued the council for recovery of the machine's value.

[1] Dallin H. Oaks is Professor of Law at the University of Chicago.

In the nineteenth century, Oaks points out, the only generally recognized guarantee under freedom of the press was protection against prior restraint in the form of licensing or censorship. The city could have either brought the newspaper's proprietors to trial for criminal libel or abated the paper by injunction. To assume that the city would have lost the case on its legal merits is to attribute to the Illinois courts a civil-libertarian attitude characteristic of the period since 1930, rather than the attitude of the nineteenth century, which Leonard W. Levy has characterized as a *Legacy of Suppression.*[2]

Oaks does not discuss the probable attitude of the Illinois courts had the Mormons been brought to trial in 1844. They could have made a good case for the abatement, but would they have won the suit? Mr. Dooley (Finley Peter Dunne) long ago commented that the Supreme Court follows the election returns. The Illinois Constitution allowed the legislature by a two-thirds vote to remove judges "for any reasonable cause which shall not be sufficient ground for impeachment."[3] A case could be made that public pressure would have influenced the court and that the Church would have lost despite its strong position.

It was not Oaks's purpose to deal with problems beyond the legality of the city's case, and here he accounts himself well. But other studies have made it abundantly clear that from a practical point of view the action of the council proved disastrous and, of course, led to the murder of the Prophet.[4]

If Oaks's article describes conditions as they actually existed in the nineteenth century, the opposite is true of recent articles by Professor Orma Linford dealing with the anti-polygamy prosecutions and the civil disabilities imposed on Church members in the 1870's and 1880's.[5] The general purpose of the articles is to determine how the federal and territorial courts interpreted the First Amendment while prosecuting cases under the various federal anti-polygamy acts. Linford argues that the polygamy cases were the Supreme Court's first "direct encounter with first amendment provisions regarding religion." Her general thesis is that both the United States and Utah Territorial Supreme Courts disregarded the limitations on government under the clause separating church and state. What she fails to state, however, and this is the major failing of the articles, is that the Utah situation was the federal government's only major confrontation with a theocracy.

By telling only part of the story, she gives a distorted picture of what the government was trying to do. Polygamy is discussed as if it existed in a vacuum. Opposition to plural marriage was not confined to moral and traditional arguments as she assumes. Though such objections were important, many were convinced, as Angie F. Newman said in her testimony before a Congressional committee, that the "foundation, the perpetuity of this government [the Mormon Church] is based upon the subjugation of women."[6]

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[2] *Legacy of Suppression: Freedom of Speech and Press in Early American History* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1960).

[3] State of Illinois, *Constitution* (1818), Art. IV, Sec. 5.

[4] See for instance B. H. Roberts, *Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (6 vols.; Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1930), II, 221-308.

[5] Orma Linford is Assistant Professor of Political Science, University of Wisconsin, Kenosha Center.

[6] U. S. Congress, *Senate Report 1279,* 49th Cong., 1st Sess., p. 10, Serial 2361.

Those who drafted the anti-polygamy legislation were convinced that they were attacking the foundation of church domination of political and social life in Utah. Linford could have seen this had she looked more closely at some of the arguments from the *Congressional Record* which she supplies in the article.[7] A similar limitation appears in the discussion of the naturalization decision of Justice Thomas J. Anderson.[8]

The main value of the articles is the excellent summary of the polygamy cases themselves. But the argument suffers from the implicit assumption that the courts then should have known the direction in which the law has developed since. In the Reynolds case, for instance, Linford seems to expect the courts to expound a sociological jurisprudence, such as Louis D. Brandeis developed in *Mueller* v. *Oregon* a quarter of a century later. Linford claims that "the Court never quite explained *why* plural marriage was a threat to the public well-being." This is hardly fair to the Court, which said that plural marriage was a threat because it had traditionally been held to be such. The Court's pronouncement that polygamy led to despotism also was in line with the prevalent belief that plural marriage was part of the basis of Church control in Utah.

As Linford points out, the courts changed the definition of unlawful cohabitation and used other means to make it difficult for people who continued plural marriage to support their families. The courts in Utah also went far beyond the bounds of propriety in allowing segregation of offenses into small time periods, and judges failed to observe strict rules of evidence. Contrary to what Linford asserts, however, judges sometimes did tell polygamists "how to remove themselves from the operation of the law." Utah Chief Justice Charles S. Zane on numerous occasions said they could simply renounce the practice of plural marriage. Where Mormons such as Bishop John Sharp tried to obey these injunctions, however, they were charged with disloyalty and ostracized by their coreligionists.[9]

To argue, as Linford does, that plural marriages "were not civil contracts amendable to the ordinary processes of civil law; they were spiritual unions recognized and regulated by ecclesiastical law," is to approach naivete. Were these simply spiritual unions, this reviewer, together with many others who descended from polygamous families, would still be in the spirit world. As far as the law was concerned, plural marriages were unrecorded civil and religious contracts. Probably to protect plural marriages, the territorial legislature passed no laws for recording any marriages until the passage of the Edmunds-Tucker Act made their recording mandatory.[10]

Moreover, the contention that juries in unlawful cohabitation and polygamy cases were packed is specious. It would be just as reasonable to argue that people who believe in theft should sit on the juries trying persons accused of stealing as to say that those who believed in polygamy had a right to judge persons accused of that crime.

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[7] *Utah Law Review,* IX, 315, 319.

[8] See *Deseret Evening News,* December 12 and 14, 1889.

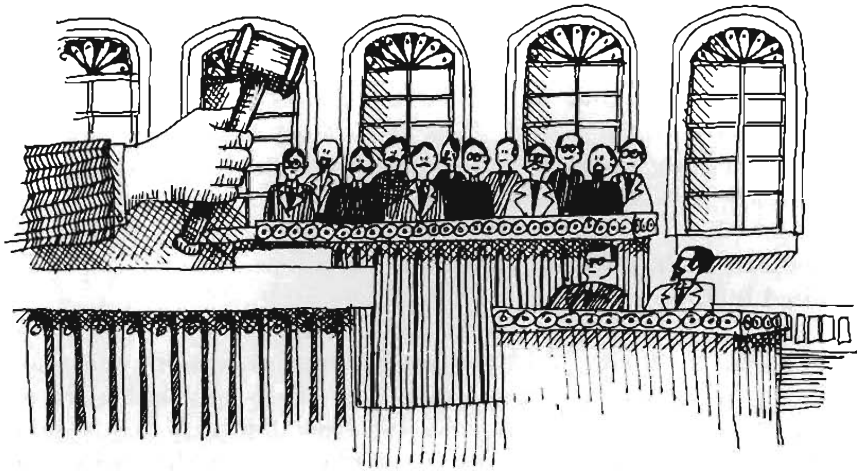
[9] *Salt Lake Tribune,* November 4, 1884 and July 22 and September 18, 1885; Charles S. Zane. "The Death of Polygamy in Utah," *Forum* XII (November, 1891), 368, 370.

[10] Jacob Smith Boreman, "Crusade Against Theocracy: the Reminiscences of Judge Jacob Smith Boreman of Utah, 1872-1877," ed. Leonard J. Arrington, reprinted from The *Huntington Library Quarterly,* XXIV (November, 1960), 17-18; *22 U. S. Statutes at Large,* 635.

The author is on much firmer ground when she discusses disfranchisement and disqualification from office. It is clear, as the United States Supreme Court decided, that the Utah Commission had no right to disfranchise all who believed in polygamy. In Idaho, where Mormons were in a minority, the Idaho test oath was nothing short of reprehensible. The law there punished mere adherence to a powerless minority group.

The L.D.S. Church escheat cases present a thorny problem because they involved much more than the mere practice of polygamy. One might well conclude from the evidence which Linford presents that in "abolishing the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Congress overstepped the legitimate bounds of its obligation to preserve the separation of church and state, and infringed upon the religious freedom of the Mormons." Again, however, Linford fails to take into account the temporal as well as spiritual power of the Church and the dual view which Gentiles held of polygamy – that it was immoral and the basis for the Church's political power.

As the Reynolds case made clear, separation of church and state is a two-edged sword. It imposes on the government the obligation not to interfere with religious beliefs and actions so long as they are not detrimental to the



general welfare. On the other hand, as Linford says, quoting Jefferson, the founding fathers proposed by the First Amendment to erect "a wall of separation between the church and State."[11] The church was not to interfere in state affairs. Even though the dividing line between religious and political questions may be narrow, the L.D.S. Church owed it to the government to try to observe the line.

The Church's position on its political role in building the Kingdom of God was summed up in a discussion of one of Utah's constitutional conventions in the *Millenial Star*. The article said that in

> . . . case of any dispute or dubiety on the minds of the convention, the Prophet of God, who stands at the head of the Church, decides. He nominates, the convention endorses, and the people accept the nomi-

[11] Jefferson's reply to an address sent to him by the Danbury Baptist Association, cited in *Utah Law Review*, IX, 581.

> nation. . . . So in the Legislature itself. The utmost freedom of speech free from abuse is indulged in; but any measure that cannot be unanimously decided on, is submitted to the President of the Church, who, by the wisdom of God decides the matter, and all the Councillors and Legislators sanction the decision. There are no hostile parties, no opposition, no Whigh[sic] and Tory, Democrat and Republican, they are all brethren, legislating for the common good, and the word of the Lord, through the head of the Church guides, counsels, and directs.[12]

On this basis, the Church tried to insulate itself from the rest of the United States and from Gentiles in Utah as much as possible. Members were urged to take their disputes to the Church rather than to civil courts. The legislature vested local probate courts with civil and criminal jurisdiction and created the offices of territorial attorney and marshal, the incumbents of which were elected by joint vote of the legislature. Even the commander of the Nauvoo Legion, who should have been responsible to the territorial governor as commander-in-chief of the territorial militia, was elected by joint vote of the legislature. The People's Party regularly ratified Church nominees, and, on occasion, economic sanctions were voted against Gentiles.[13]

What should the federal government have done in such a case? This reviewer is certainly not wise enough to say, but to view the problem simply as a matter of religious freedom for Church members is to rob the problem of its meaning. If, as Linford argues, the anti-polygamy campaign failed to take into consideration the total damage done to the L.D.S. community, *she* fails to take into account the damage done First Amendment guarantees which Gentiles in Utah had a right to expect.[14]

Finally, Linford argues, as others have, that the prosecution of polygamy may have delayed the dissolution of the institution.[15] This argument forgets that plural marriage was a divine principle believed devoutly by Church members who would not easily abandon it. In the Church service in which I reported on my mission, it was announced that another missionary, also a member of the ward, had been excommunicated for joining the Church of the First Born. She had not been coerced or persecuted; she was merely convinced that the principle of plural marriage was correct. At least one of her sisters and one other family from the ward joined with her. It is not

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[12] Cited in Klaus J. Hansen, "The Theory and Practice of the Political Kingdom of God in Mormon History, 1829-1890" (Unpublished Master's Thesis, Brigham Young University, 1959), p. 49.

[13] On these points see *Journal of Discourses*, I, 218; III, 238; Orson F. Whitney, *History of Utah* (4 vols. Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon and Sons, 1892-1904), II, 549-551, 496-504; Robert N. Baskin, *Reminiscences of Early Utah* (n.p.: By the Author, 1914), pp. 23-27; Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830-1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), pp. 248-249.

[14] The First Amendment rather than the Fourteenth Amendment applied in Utah because Utah, as a territory, was under the exclusive jurisdiction of the United States. U. S. Constitution, Art. IV, Sec. 3.

[15] Stanley Ivins, "Notes on Mormon Polygamy," *Western Humanities Review*, X (Summer, 1956), 231-232. It should be noted that segregation in the South grew stronger rather than perishing when it was left alone: C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow: A Brief Account of Segregation* (New York: Oxford University Press Galaxy Book, 1957), pp. 49-95.

obvious that plural marriage or Church domination of politics would have died out if they were merely left alone any more than that these people will give up polygamy simply because they are not prosecuted.

Some maintain that because Mormons were law abiding they gave up plural marriage after the Supreme Court declared the anti-polygamy acts constitutional.[18] But long after the 1879 Reynolds decision, Church members brought to the bar for sentencing told federal judges that the law of God was higher than the law of the land and deserved prior obedience. The Manifesto officially ending polygamy as Church practice was not issued until 1890, and excommunication for practicing plural marriage did not come until 1904. After 1891, however, the Church did cease to demand adherence to the political policy announced by Church leaders and, as a sign of good faith, broke up the People's Party and adopted the two-party system.

As an historian, I see the problems of the 1870's and 1880's as a conflict of two systems of law, tradition, and morality, which, because they were mutually incompatible, had to be reconciled in some way. As a devoted member of the Church, however, I see in the action of the federal government a manifestation of God's will. The Constitution, which the Church holds to be divinely inspired, demands the separation of church and state. The power exercised before 1890 to compel adherence to the Church's political and economical policies infringed upon that separation. The two principles, which were self-contradictory, could not both stand; and the Lord chose to have the Church abide by the Constitution.

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[18] This view is presented by James E. Talmage, *A Study of the Articles of Faith: Being a Consideration of the Principle Doctrines of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Fortieth English Edition; Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1960), pp. 424-425.

## ECUMENICAL CINEMA

*Rolfe Peterson*

A former Utahn, who taught at Brigham Young University and became a successful radio and television movie critic, Rolfe Petersen now has his own television show in San Francisco and teaches at the College of San Mateo.

God is not dead in Hollywood. The phenomenal success of *The Sound of Music* means that nuns are in again, and two current movies give us a choice, according to side-by-side newspaper ads, of Rosalind Russell on a bicycle and Debbie Reynolds on a Vespa, both of them with their habits billowing behind them, and both of them obviously regular guys.

An interesting footnote to this cinematic stampede to the nunnery is that both *The Sound of Music* and Miss Russell's *The Trouble with Angels* feature a girl from Brigham City named Portia Nelson playing one of the nuns. I don't know if it's art, but it's certainly ecumenical.

Despite its winning the Academy Award, *The Sound of Music* is really not a very good movie. It charms audiences, me included, because Julie Andrews is such a winning performer and because Ted McCord's photography is a constant delight to eye. But these fragmentary excellences cannot disguise the intrinsic stupidity of its story and characters. And Robert Wise, who won the director's Oscar for this, has served up a romantic sub-plot involving the eldest daughter and a village lad which, for sheer clumsiness and sticky sentiment, rivals the worst of MacDonald and Eddy. Richard Haydn lurks in several scenes, like the deliverer of epigrams in a play by Shaw or Wilde, but when the moment comes for his witty line, it doesn't turn out to be very witty. Peggy Wood, as a wispy old Mother Superior, borrows the wrong singing voice when she suddenly bursts into "Climb Every Mountain," and the incongruity of this young and powerful mezzo-soprano, the kind that knocks down ushers in the third balcony at the Met, issuing from her frail image on the screen is the funniest cinematic moment of the year. Baron von Trapp's tyranny might have made a fascinating study in abnormal psychology, but treated sentimentally it is simply offensive. And any father who would fill his home with guests and then inflict upon them the cute little songs of his children ought to be horse-whipped.

The best choice for the Oscar was *Darling.* It's a hard, brittle story, peopled by the Godless, but by exposing the shallowness of their lives it does make a spiritual comment, one that is far more valid than the spurious sugar-pills we get in "religious" pictures.

Another Oscar nominee had great spiritual content for me when I read the book. But on the screen Dr. Zhivago is somewhat reduced. He is no longer every man of good will. Lara is no longer the very spirit of Russia. They are just a couple of ordinary little people caught in a trite love affair. Ironically, the one artisan who fell down on the job in the making of *Dr. Zhivago,* Robert Bolt, received the Academy Award for writing. The director and the photographer show genius in individual scenes like the funeral procession and burial and the massacre in the wheat field. But Bolt's failure to (1) pull the long time-span and chaos of incident and character into any kind of unity or focus or point and (2) give Dr. Zhivago and his friends some dialogue that made them living people instead of stereotypes makes the picture, on the whole, a failure. He even has a World War I soldier yell: "How about that!" — an idiomatic anachronism that would look bad in an MIA pageant. For this they give Oscars?

I was glad that *A Thousand Clowns* didn't win the big award, because it is a sloppily dubbed movie, and because Barbara Harris, who starts out promisingly, turns into a major liability. But it is worth praising in this discussion because one of its many funny lines mentions God:

"Murray, the trouble with you is you think you're God, and everybody has to audition for human being."

It's a superficial comedy, but Herb Gardner's witty lines often convey some fragment of philosophic or spiritual content that places it far above *The Sound of Music.*

# AMONG THE MORMONS

## A Survey of Current Literature

*Ralph W. Hansen*

> *. . . I have seen books made of things neither studied nor even understood. . . .*
> Montaigne. *Essays.*
>
> *"There is no book so bad," said the bachelor, "but something good may be found in it."*
> Cervantes. *Don Quixote.*

Continuing our bibliographical coverage of Mormon material, we turn our attention in this issue to dissertations and theses written to fulfill requirements for graduate degrees. It should be noted that with a few exceptions most of the authors included are new to the world of scholarship. Whether the quality of work is due to this newness to scholarly pursuits or to the limitations of doctoral studies in general, reading the abstracts available has been a discouraging affair – and this is particularly true of dissertations in the field of education. I do not intend to single out any particular shortcoming or author, but rather to join with others who have long recognized that the overall quality of doctoral dissertations leaves much to be desired. Furthermore, I do not intend to document this contention, which would be a rather formidable task; let me rather refer the skeptical to *Dissertation Abstracts* for an hour of incredulity and mirth.

That marvelous compendium of numbers, the *Statistical Abstract of the United States,* in its 1965 edition reported that students of American collegiate institutions earned 14,490 doctorates and 101,122 master's degrees in 1964. As far as I have been able to determine, twenty of the doctoral dissertations accepted during the academic year 1963-64 (as reported in *Dissertation Abstracts* and other sources) were concerned with subjects relevant to Mormonism or Utah. (This does not include dissertations written in the physical sciences.) Education provided the largest number of topics, with music a distant second. These select twenty are not be construed as representative of Mormon scholarship. There is no easy way of determining how many of the twenty authors are Latter-day Saints, and one can assume that some Mormons wrote dissertations on subjects not related to Utah or Mormonism. Our interest is in the subject, not the man.

Information on master's theses, other than selected subject indexes, is almost non-existent. Since there is no service similar to *Dissertation Abstracts* for them, we are obligated to limit our efforts to listing titles of theses reported to us by various readers. Therefore we trust that Ronald Quayle Frederickson's "Maud May Babcock and the Department of Elocution at the University of Utah" (University of Utah, 1965) was not the only master's thesis with a somewhat relevant subject, but rather the only one which has come to the attention of *Dialogue.*