

to be an unjust or an unconstitutional law. (An example of the latter would be those in the church who continued to practice plural marriage after the *Reynolds* decision.) Each may be highly motivated. Each may in fact place higher value on God's law (moral law) than on the laws of men, but the position of the conscientious objector is much stronger than that of the civil disobedient. The objector's position is both doctrinally strong and at present quite legal. The objector is not a law breaker. There is not in his case an irreconcilable conflict between God's law as perceived by the individual and the law of the land. He seeks merely to avail himself of a legal status long recognized in free societies, by the founding fathers of this country, and by the present draft laws. Confusing conscientious objection and civil disobedience is therefore not only misleading but incorrect. What Mr. Thomasson probably intended to point out is that individuals who are wrongfully denied conscientious objector status must become lawbreakers by refusing induction before their legal rights can be vindicated in a court of law. Though this is certainly one of the most onerous provisions of the present draft law it is really an aside to the main theme of this collection — an aside not very fully or accurately developed.

At some point in reading these materials a somewhat larger issue occurred to me. Perhaps the editor and individual authors by virtue of the spirit which is in them and the truths which they perceive have a duty to do more than merely articulate and justify their position to seek a greater degree of accommodation and tolerance from their brethren. Perhaps the editor and authors should summon up a greater boldness. Perhaps less an exposition of a position and more of a call to repentance is in order. After all, where much is given much is expected.

Courage

James L. Clayton

Courage: A Journal of History, Thought and Action. Venture Foundation, 106 East South, Lamoni, Iowa 50140. Vol. 1, Nos. 1 and 2 (September and December, 1970), \$6.00 per year. James Clayton teaches history at the University of Utah.

Robert Flanders, an exceptionally articulate and perceptive insider in RLDS matters, introduced readers of the Autumn, 1970, issue of this journal to the pilot issue of *Dialogue's* RLDS cousin, *Courage*. What follows is an analysis of the first two regular issues of *Courage* by a sympathetic outsider.

The September, 1970, issue of *Courage* contains articles on the personality of Joseph Smith, problems in interpreting the Book of Mormon historically, the need for greater missionary activity, the desirability of intensive involvement in the practical problems of the day, and a discussion by six observers of the RLDS 1970 World Conference. The December issue focuses on Vietnam, women's liberation, whether to baptize polygamous converts in India, sources for studying the life of Joseph Smith III, and the need for divine help in understanding the Book of Mormon.

Each issue of *Courage* has several short signed editorials. Among other things the authors oppose student strikes, the Vietnam conflict, keeping historical sources locked up, the second-class status of women within both LDS churches, and the natural American tendency to assume our culture is superior to others. These editorials favor an open research policy, including women in top leadership positions, the possibility of ordination of women to the priesthood, the eradication of all forms of racism within the Church and the nation, and frank and open discussion of all problems relating to Mormonism. In addition to articles and editorials, there are documents (relating to the Nauvoo Temple and Nauvoo House Association), reviews of recent books, and letters to the editors.

The most provocative article is, in this reviewer's judgment, Wayne Ham's espousal in the September issue of a nonhistorical view of the Book of Mormon. Mr. Ham writes that "perhaps the time has come in the Church to recognize that some members want to openly espouse a nonliteral view of the Book of Mormon, treating it as a nonhistorical treatise in much the same manner as modern critics view the books of Jonah, Ruth, Job, and Daniel in the Old Testament. . . . These members could then read the book as a product of the American frontier and honor it as an interesting artifact of the Restoration movement in the nineteenth century, perhaps thus 'enjoying' this fascinating piece of literature for the very first time." Mr. Ham is led to this view because he finds a number of "problems" in accepting the traditional Mormon interpretation. Among these problems are the contradictions in the accounts of how the book came forth; the lack of any non-LDS archeological support for Book of Mormon claims; the book's emphasis on contemporary frontier concerns; moral teachings difficult to accept (e.g. the slaying of Laban by divine decree, the notion that certain dark skinned people were cursed, and that God commands wars and destruction); extensive parallels between the Book of Mormon and the King James version of the Bible; and words and concepts used in the book which are believed to have been used or developed later in time.

Most of these problems have been extensively debated before. Several long letters to the editor in the December issue opposing Mr. Ham's position continue that debate. One questions his sanity; another calls him a rabble rouser; a third wants him fired from his job. What is new and more interesting is Mr. Ham's reply to his detractors. Mr. Ham does not attempt to defend his original article, but alleges that a member who cannot affirm the historicity of the Book of Mormon is just as acceptable to Christ as one who thinks the book is perfect in every respect. He asserts, and there is a good deal of hard evidence elsewhere to support him, that Mormons already exhibit a certain pluralism in their theological beliefs, that we might as well recognize this openly, and that witch hunts and heresy trials should be a thing of the past.

This exchange between Mr. Ham and his opponents is part of a larger liberal-orthodox split in the RLDS faith. This split is openly discussed by six observers of the 1970 RLDS World Conference in the September issue. What is striking to the outsider is the non-authoritarian frankness and open-mindedness of the RLDS General Authorities who comment. (The mere fact that a General Authority would write for *Courage* will come as a

pleasant surprise to most *Dialogue* readers.) Russell F. Ralston, an apostle, believes for example that his church is too provincial. Maurice L. Draper, a member of the First Presidency, in defending his church's position on monogamy, never implies that he is speaking for the Lord or that any disagreement with him is tantamount to heresy. In the long run this attitude will serve the RLDS organization well. So, one hopes, will *Courage*.

James J. Strang and the Amateur Historian

Klaus J. Hansen

The King Strang Story: A Vindication of James J. Strang, the Beaver Island King. By Doyle C. Fitzpatrick. Lansing, Michigan: National Heritage, 1970. xxviii + 289 pp. \$7.95. Klaus J. Hansen, who teaches social and intellectual history at Queen's University at Kingston, Ontario, is the author of *Quest for Empire: The Political Kingdom of God and the Council of Fifty in Mormon History* (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1967).

In the field of Mormon history, perhaps more so than in other areas of historical inquiry, some excellent contributions have been made by "amateurs," as the holders of the Ph.D. are inclined to call those who encroach upon the preserves of the possessors of that sometimes overrated union card. Among the most prominent names that come to mind are Fawn Brodie, Juanita Brooks, Dale Morgan, and Wallace Stegner. But lack of "the degree" is of course no guarantee against the writing of poor history. Doyle Fitzpatrick's *The King Strang Story* is a case in point.

In fact, the book is so bad that my first reaction was that any kind of review, even a critical one, would give it a dignity that it didn't deserve. Yet a *caveat emptor* is clearly indicated. The author has obviously spent a great deal of money on this handsomely produced, extensively illustrated volume. In all fairness, if I am telling prospective buyers not to throw good money after bad, I should give my reasons.

The volume consists of three parts. The first 132 pages are an attempt to narrate briefly the history of James Strang. The second part, titled "Miscellany," consists of "a sampling of Strangite Impostures," [sic] George J. Adams and John C. Bennett, and "a sampling of Strangite defenders," George Miller and Wingfield Watson, plus a list of Beaver Island residents. The third part consists of the author's reviews of Strang's diary, works about Strang and Beaver Island, and Richard Burton's *The City of the Saints*.

The author has announced the purpose of his work in the subtitle, *A Vindication . . .*, and in the preface, where he states that "prior to 'The King Strang Story,' no individual outside the church itself, has deliberately and publicly championed Strang as a man of good quality. . . . The primary purpose of this narrative is to set the record straight."

Mr. Fitzpatrick has gratefully acknowledged the assistance of numerous individuals in his project, among them Governor William G. Milliken of Michigan — who assures us on the dust jacket that the book "is well documented and well written" — though the author hastens to add that if the