

in that man, and his love for me impressed itself as forcefully as the love I have received from our God and Father in Heaven.

On Sunday, in an extraordinary and intimate Sunrise Service, President Tanner shared stories with a few of us about the Prophet. He told how his wisdom did not dampen his wit, how he made quips about his age and his declining agility. It seems Brother Smith used laughter constructively, and that he was the prime subject for his own ribbing. I had not seen this gift of humor in his Conference talks, and hearing about it made him a more comfortable, endearing person to me, one I'm glad I came to know.

At this moment the memory of Joseph Fielding Smith dwells with me. His death does not erase the testimony I gained at the final session of the M.I.A. Conference. In his last general public address it was obvious that his strength came from the Lord. The Prophet's physical body did not possess the ability to walk alone. When he rose to speak he had to receive assistance from his two counselors. Yet, as he stood at the pulpit I could see the strength of the Lord supporting him, and his clear unbroken voice delivered a message of hope and assurance to me—a message that although we will encounter enormous difficulty in the world we need not be overcome with the spirit of despair. Indeed he left us with a testimony that we have every reason to rejoice in the Lord. As he spoke I came to understand him as the faithful servant—the Prophet—I once only thought I knew. After ten minutes he was again assisted to his seat by President Tanner.

Through coming to know President Smith I began to understand that we are indeed to be as God once was—the kind of man President Smith was—and I am keeping President Smith's memory with me as a reflection of the total being I should become.

JOSEPH FIELDING SMITH— THE KINDLY, HELPFUL SCHOLAR

G. HOMER DURHAM

Many published works of Church history and doctrine testify to the scholarship and direct literary style of the late, tenth President of the Church, President Joseph Fielding Smith. Those who were privileged to use the archives during his tenure as Church Historian can recount many examples of the openness and helpfulness extended to visiting scholars during his term. The following incident reports and shares a different but related experience. It illustrates his warm, friendly character which was not always appreciated by those not having benefit of personal association.

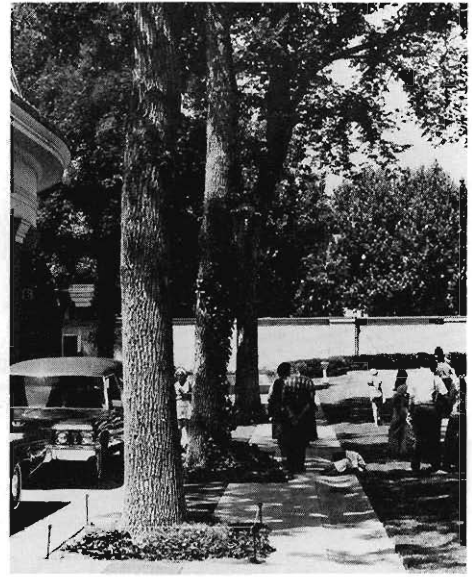
My first serious use of the Historian's Office began about 1940. I suffered from the usual American-Mormon ambition to produce *opus magnum seriatim ad infinitum*. After writing several articles on Mormonism, I found myself examining the output since 1882 of the then President of the Church, Heber J. Grant. The results, thanks to Dr. John A. Widtsoe and Richard L. Evans, then editors of the *Improvement Era*, appeared in 1941 as *Gospel Standards*:



Selections from the Sermons and Writings of Heber J. Grant, Seventh President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (1941). The volume was most graciously received by President Grant as a tribute for his 85th birthday. It was published and distributed as "An Improvement Era Book." Harvardman Widtsoe, long familiar with Ellery Sedgwick, the *Atlantic Monthly*, and *Atlantic* books, visualized a future, selective series of "Improvement Era Books," a project not fully realized.

After completing the work on President Grant, my energies turned toward the third and relatively unstudied (so far as his discourses and writings were concerned) President of the Church, John Taylor. The manuscript, entitled *The Gospel Kingdom*, was virtually completed in October, 1942. At that time, before entraining with my family for a new faculty appointment at Swarthmore College, I left a copy of the manuscript with Richard L. Evans, an editor of the *Era*, for possible consideration as another *Era* book. Work continued during the year at Swarthmore. Paper for publishing "non-essential" books was available only through the War Production Board. It was not until summer, 1943, and a return to Utah, that channels began to clear for publication. Meanwhile, the First Presidency, through President David O. McKay, Second Counselor, had been drawn into the question of book publishing by Church agencies other than Deseret Book Company. I was informed by Elder Evans that the *Era* was not in a position to publish the John Taylor manuscript. However, John K. Orton, immediate past business manager of the *Era*, was interested in and was willing to publish the manuscript as a private venture. So it was done. Orton had published *Courting America*, and Bookcraft was launched with *The Gospel Kingdom* as its first major venture.

A few gift copies were proudly distributed, including one to President McKay. Having sat under his tutelage in the Mission Home in 1933, and having enjoyed close association with his children, I eagerly awaited his response to the book. The mail of Monday, January 24, 1944, brought his letter. The former head of Weber College and lifelong student of English literature was commendatory. But he raised the point, not explained, that the volume might have benefited from "more careful editing." I was deeply troubled. Richard L. Evans, trained by James E. Talmage on the *Millennial Star*, had been kind enough to go through the manuscript, and I considered him the most careful editor that ever edited!



Three days after receiving President McKay's letter, John K. Orton telephoned me in Logan asking clearance for another printing. I immediately called President McKay for an appointment in order to ascertain his specific concerns before proceeding with the second edition. During our meeting, in a helpful and understanding way, he pointed to a paragraph which he feared might be distorted and misapplied by the then-current "Fundamentalists" with respect to the long-since abandoned practice of plural marriage. He also expressed concern for including a piece written in archaic English style by President Taylor in an 1855 New York newspaper. Also, he observed one or two typographical errors. Although he did not express it, I felt he also may have objected to the book being published by someone other than Deseret Book Co. I thanked him for this careful concern and personal help to me in improving a second edition.

Nevertheless, I was somewhat crestfallen as I left his office. I went up to the fourth floor, to Elder Evans' office. He suggested I go down to the third floor Historian's Office and see President Smith. I expressed my concern to President Smith about the book being published by someone other than an "official" publisher and about the typographical errors which President McKay had caught.

Kindly, gently, the great Church Historian and leader assured me that his own book, the compilation of the Prophet Joseph's teachings, had *not* been published by Deseret (although they distributed it), that there had to be enterprise in publication, with similar freedom on the part of the Church to favor or not favor the fruits of such free enterprise. As to typographical errors, he opened his triple combination, to 2 Nephi, Chapter 12. He asked me to read verse 1, and see if I found any fault with it. I picked up the volume of scripture and read:

"The word that Isaiah, the son of Amos, saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem:"