Zion established in the tops of the mountains in the name of Holiness. Here again, for the reader who keeps that vision in mind, *Provo: A Story* implies a rather un-boosterish judgment of the city's history. Clue: the twice-repeated phrase, "the business of becoming a city" (pp. 14, 15)—with the accent on *business*. Not just buying and selling, speculating and promoting, getting and spending and laying waste—though a good half of the book, after the Indians have been moved in on, is about that; but also the things we lip-servingly call "higher"—education, the arts, religion—these, too, in all the details of decision-making, planning, erection of buildings, become busy-ness, become the main business of this "Story of People in Motion." And thus this local history's vision of the city and its story becomes a matter largely of business—economic, political, religious; the city's dimension in time is marked with streets laid out, paved, lighted, blocks filled with buildings, buildings torn down, replaced, razed again for parking lots. So at last even the Provo Temple comes to look like still another civic building, "one of Provo's most significant new" ones, which has "added much to the beauty of the city" (p. 97). Significantly, though the Temple, its spire cropped, is the last visual image the book leaves us, the text closes with a summary of Provo's assessed valuation, rate of building-permit issue, and miles of streets, sidewalks, curbs and gutter, water mains, and sewer lines, and with one parting booster shot: "In the 1970s it still looks forward to growth" (p. 97).

But the vision of Zion, of which a Temple is the largest tangible symbol, was a vision of saintly community, beside which a Chamber of Commerce vision of Provo's story looks, alas, Babylonish. Which is, of course, no more than could be said of any Mormon city's story. And which is also, perhaps, no more than we should expect, for who invented the business of civilization in the first place but Cain or his son (see Genesis 4 and Moses 5)? And further, as St. Paul says, "Here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come" (Heb. 13.14). Earthly cities, like Provo, are always in business, and always in the business of becoming, but we may seriously doubt—and I think *Provo: A Story* quietly implies this to a Mormon reader who keeps his perspective—that the worldly city has much chance of becoming the heavenly.

Acting Under Orders

Victor B. Cline

Obedience to Authority: An Experimental View. By Stanley Milgram. New York: Harper and Row, 1973. xvii + 224 pp., $10.00.

What do we do when we have agreed to participate in an experiment under the auspices of a prestigious university (and are getting paid for it) and we are asked to do something objectionable? The Ph.D. experimenter instructs us that this is a research project studying memory and learning. He explains that we are to be the "teacher" and another volunteer will be the "learner." Since the experimenter is concerned with the effects of punishment on learning, it will be necessary for us to "shock" the other subject every time he makes an error in learning a list of word pairs. Additionally, as he makes repeated errors it will be necessary for us to

increase the electric shock intensity. The "teacher" and "learner" are in separate rooms with an observation window between them. The learner is seated in a chair with his arms strapped down to prevent excessive movement, and an electrode is attached to his wrist. The teacher in the adjoining room is seated before an impressive shock generator with a line of thirty switches, ranging from fifteen volts to 450 volts with verbal designations above ranging from "slight shock" to "Danger —extreme shock." As it turns out, the "teacher" is a naive subject who is the real focus of the research while the "learner" is an actor who actually receives no shock at all. The whole point of the experiment is to see how far a person will go in inflicting increasing pain on a protesting victim.

Social psychologist Stanley Milgram has authored a fascinating book focusing on an area of interest to many Latter-day Saints: authority. At what point will the subject refuse to obey the experimenter, a prestigious authority figure who constantly urges the "teacher" to increase the shock intensity? This, of course, raises memories of Nuremburg, reminding us that ten million Jews and many foreign workers were gassed during World War II by hundreds of compliant Nazis because "somebody above had ordered it." To what extent will a person acting under authority perform actions which violate his conscience? Thus we have a basic dilemma which faces all men on occasion, the conflict between conscience and authority. The bishop requests that we participate in a project that we are thoroughly opposed to. The government orders that we fight in a war which we personally feel is immoral and illegal. What do we do?

As might be expected, Milgram's findings show a great variation in the "teachers' " willingness to shock their victims at high intensity levels. In some of the sessions, the "teacher" could see and hear his "learner" cry out in pain, furiously protest and writhe as the shock levels were increased, but still administered more shocks to the highest levels possible because the experimenter insisted on it. If the choice was left entirely up to the subject, he usually shocked at the lowest levels possible. If the "teachers" had peers or associates (as "co-teachers") who suggested noncompliance when the experimenter urged high shock levels, this contributed powerfully to their refusal to continue on.

What are the implications of this research (and its many variations discussed more fully in the book) for committed Latter-day Saints who believe in unswervingly obeying God's commandments, following the Brethren wherever they might lead, and not speaking evil of the Lord's Anointed? The most probable answer to most of these questions is that most Latter-day Saints, if asked to do something evil, morally wrong, or injurious to others, would not do it. Ultimately, one's conscience and the Holy Spirit of Truth must confirm and bear witness that a particular act is right and proper, regardless of who requests that we do it. Hopefully, we have been taught "correct principles" and we would usually govern ourselves reasonably and humanely. Such minor matters as being requested to work on a stake farm project which we may feel is a waste of money or energy do not present a serious moral issue. On more serious matters, such as *practicing* polygamy, even though ordained of God, the free agency of participating members was a vital element to all concerned. And while some exceptions might be cited, the basic rule was "informed consent" and freedom of choice.

It is certainly remotely conceivable that a mission president, stake president, bishop, or other individual in high authority could have a psychosis, such as say

paranoid schizophrenia, wherein he might request those under his authority to do improper things. However, any kind of extreme or bizarre behaviors would be quickly noted by his counselors, family, or associates who within hours or less could seek counsel of higher authorities who could in turn request hospitalization, release him from his Church position, or take whatever other action was necessary to neutralize his influence. And in actual practice, when a member of the Church at any station of life or priesthood feels that his immediate ecclesiastic superior is "out of step with the Lord" he can discuss the matter in confidence with the next higher authority. Or he can "sit it out" and do nothing—as many senior Aaronics and inactive elders have done since the Church was organized (but usually for reasons other than "conscience").

I believe that it is possible for any person, regardless of position or station in the Church, to be corrupted and "fall." King David, Judas, and Oliver Cowdry all attest to this, as do numerous examples known to all of us in our personal experience. But I do not believe that it would be possible for the entire Council of the Twelve to fall from grace at one fell swoop, even though individuals on the Council might fall (as has happened on several occasions since the Church was organized). Each man on such a council serves to cancel out the human weaknesses and personal idiosyncracies of his fellow members. This serves as a corrective and purifying influence to protect the sanctity and integrity of God's will, if you wish. Even though each man acts as a lens with some distortions and imperfections which will to some degree distort the inner light (Holy Spirit) as it shines through his personal spiritual nature, when consensus is reached by such a body it ordinarily represents a highly distilled essence of truth. And the same psychological processes are at work in a ward priesthood quorum or relief society. In the extremely unlikely event that some higher authority were to request ward members to do something immoral, improper, or anti-social, the collective conscience of the group would not tolerate it (as in Milgram's experiment) even though one or two might be misled. This, however, does not mean that small groups on their own can't—like cancer cells—become corrupted. Though rare, it sometimes happens under certain psychological stress conditions as at My Lai, with a lynch mob, or at Mountain Meadows.

Admittedly there have been historical apostasies of the major Church organization. This, however, has always been a slow corroding process. Also splinter and apostate groups (including a few missionaries in the French Mission several years ago) have broken off and established their own brand of True Religion. The test that can be applied to the legitimacy of their authority (in addition to logic and good judgment) would be "by their fruits ye shall know them."

Love and long suffering are the major methods in the LDS Church of winning converts as well as keeping them with the ever-present influence of the Holy Spirit to guide and inspire. Coercion and threats of damnation and eternal fire as methods of behavior control are for all intents and purposes unknown in our Church. I would see the specter which Milgram raises as more appropriate to political and military organizations than to most religious sects. One can imagine some difficult moral choices facing Church members who live in lands controlled by dictatorships, where one might be conscripted to serve in armies or police actions and where being a conscientious objector would not be a permissible "out" to avoid participating in evil enterprises. Ultimately each person will have to

struggle with these moral dilemmas on an individual basis. After all, LDS theology suggests that this earth life was purposefully designed as a testing ground, a vale of joy and tears, a place of struggle and growth, where goodness and evil would co-abound and compete for our allegiance. This is still earth, not heaven.

Sisters Under the Skin

EDWARD GEARY

Dear Ellen: Two Mormon Women and Their Letters. By S. George Ellsworth. Salt Lake City: Tanner Trust Fund, University of Utah Library, 1974. 92 pp., $12.00.

Ellen Spencer and Ellen Pratt were born in 1832 and moved to Nauvoo in 1841, where they became close friends. They both crossed the plains in the emigration of 1848 without their fathers. Orson Spencer was in England as president of the British Mission, and Addison Pratt was leading the first Mormon missionaries to the Society Islands. Ellen Spencer had the additional hardship of being without a mother; from the age of fourteen she was in charge of a household consisting of five younger brothers and sisters. The two Ellens died only a year apart, in 1895 and 1896, but in the intervening years their lives were very different and from the differences we can learn a good deal about Mormon life in the nineteenth century. Ellen Spencer remained in the Salt Lake Valley and married Hiram B. Clawson, a protégé of Brigham Young. Hiram married three additional wives, including two daughters of President Young, and fathered forty-two children, one of the most prominent families of Mormondom. Ellen Pratt accompanied her family on a second mission to the South Pacific, in 1850, where she learned Tahitian and became a great favorite with the natives. After her return she lived for the rest of her life in a succession of homes in various places in California and in Beaver and Ogden, Utah. At the relatively late age (for the time) of twenty-four, she married a mechanic named William McGary, a match which disappointed her friends. She bore four children of whom only one survived to adulthood. (One child died as a result of falling into a vat of hot lye.)

S. George Ellsworth has built the book around nine letters exchanged by the two women between May, 1856, and August, 1857. Ellen Pratt McGary was living in the Mormon colony at San Bernardino during this period, while Ellen Spencer Clawson belonged to a rapidly expanding family kingdom in Salt Lake City. It was a critical period in Mormon history, the time of the "Mormon Reformation," and shortly before the outbreak of the Utah War. It was also a critical time in the lives of the two correspondents, for during the fifteen months of the surviving correspondence Ellen Pratt married and bore her first child and Ellen Spencer's husband took his third wife. The two young women wrote candidly about their experiences. From Ellen Spencer we learn about the Twenty-fourth of July celebration in Big Cottonwood Canyon: "Oh! that was grand, and delightful, beyond any other pleasure excursion I ever participated in." We also learn that some of the Mormon girls in Salt Lake City got involved with the soldiers in Colonel Steptoe's command. The girls, Ellen Spencer Clawson wrote, "were so *wilful* that