

day Saints are not going to ignore what science tell us about human life, we must not only uncover and recover the facts, but also find ways to speak about and understand evolutionary science that are sustainable in our community of faith in the twenty-first century.

In the concluding scene of *Inherit the Wind*, Drummond (Darrow) upbraids Hornbeck for denigrating Brady's convictions while simultaneously being hopelessly uncritical of his own dogmatic unbelief. Hornbeck exits in disgust. In the empty courtroom, Drummond stands at the counsel's bench and picks up first the Bible,

then Darwin's *Origin of Species*, and—with a quizzical glance—places them side by side in his briefcase as the curtain falls. Contemporary Latter-day Saints need to find a way to keep both the scriptures, with their keys to religious belief, and science's constantly revised book of Nature in mind. The two books reviewed here illustrate possibilities for doing this without breaking faith with either science or religion. But they also remind us that those who have troubled the house of the Latter-day Saints with fiery rhetoric—on both sides—have left us the legacy of a hot wind that blew through Dayton during the summer of 1925.

## Ridiculously Sublime

*Madame Ridiculous and Lady Sublime*, by Elouise Bell (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001), 153 pp.

Reviewed by Kathryn Loosli Pritchett, Columnist, Knight Ridder newspapers, Piedmont, California.

MIDWAY THROUGH HER LATEST collection of humorous essays, former Brigham Young University professor Eloise Bell pleads for a calculated spontaneity in humorous writing. "I do in fact know that much humor is intentional and crafted. And in the Beauty division, my niece tells me it takes her an hour each morning to look "natural." My point is not that all humor, beauty, storytelling is unplanned, but that its charm lies in SEEMING so" (p. 56). With very few exceptions (a strained parody of photo-happy tourists in "Say 'Fromage!'" for example), Bell has crafted her essays with a sly, unforced charm that seems nearly effortless. This, as anyone who has ever tried to start a sacrament meeting talk

with a crowd-pleasing quip knows, is tricky work.

The best contemporary humor writers meander through a folksy tale (Garrison Keillor) or a modern-day saga (Jonathan Franzen) only to surprise you with a well-timed punch line that induces a smile of recognition. Bell uses her anecdotes in much the same way to illuminate topics familiar to her readers. A Trivial Pursuit champ herself, she ponders the popularity of trivia contests: "Ultimately, maybe some of us collect answers to the little questions because we find so few answers to the big questions" (p. 127). She condemns those in the service trade who substitute a social demeanor for a professional one, including waiters who insist on being the highlight of a dinner party. "They seem to be saying, 'Don't think for a minute that I'm a servant: I'm your social equal and then some'" (p. 24).

But the commentaries that resonate most are those which tackle the frustrations of modern technology.