

Letters to the Editors

The sketches in this section are from Renaissance tomb effigies. The artist is Frank Ferguson.

Dear Sirs:

. . . . I borrowed the first two issues and have read each one with a great sense of gratitude. I knew it — I knew you were there somewhere, you people in the church who THINK, but I had begun to despair of finding you and now this very good journal is available to me and I am most appreciative. Here in print are so many of my own thoughts explained and thoroughly investigated. I must admit that I read the "Journal" with a dictionary in one hand. I am not a Ph.D. but an M. Hw. (Mother and Housewife), but I find myself very much in tune with most of the writers of this journal up to this time.

After finishing the two volumes I tried to think of a few words of praise to pass on to you and the first ones that came to mind were "*Dialogue* is as tasty as the food at dinnertime at the end of fast day." (And that is GOOD!) *Dialogue* is refreshing, inspirational, thought-provoking, and so necessary for people who want to commune with other minds about the facts of life, inside and outside the church. I look forward to receiving the future issues. Congratulations to all connected with this journal.

Virginia Peterson
Phoenix, Arizona

Dear Sirs:

After reading the moving account in the Autumn 1966 *Dialogue* concerning the intellectual's plight, tears of compassion flowed from the well-spring of my soul. How can the Church give the intellectual his just dues? This is indeed an important question!

Perhaps the Church could hold a day of prayer and fasting, beseeching the Lord to speed up the process of revelation to President McKay. This might enable the Church to reach the high level of achievement and knowledge now held by the intellectuals. (The fact that in the entire history of our Western civilization the so-called intellectual has never produced one satisfactory solution to any of society's great social, moral, or ethical problems should deter no one.) President McKay might even preside over some type of Mormon ecumenical council composed of intellectuals within the Church. Then the world would be treated to the spectacle of Mormons debating basic principles in the vain attempt to reach a consensus; and like the rest of Christendom the Mormons would be "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine."

"Man is the measure of all things,"

is he not? Fortunately, he is not! While the Lord has admonished members of the Church to "seek learning even by study," the Lord has also declared: "the wisdom of their wise men shall perish." The Apostle Paul write, "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." The Lord has always subordinated the wisdom of this world to reveal truth. This is a true principle no matter how unpalatable it may be to the intellectual.

Faith is the *first principle* of the Gospel. This is a truth so basic and essential that it would be superfluous to elucidate further. The intellectual in the Church would do well, while acquiring mountains of knowledge, to also obtain understanding.

Richard H. Hart
Hillsboro, Oregon



Charles V

Dear Sirs:

"Notes and Comments" in the Autumn, 1966, edition of *Dialogue* provided a stimulating alternative to J. D. Williams' consideration of the Church and state issue. The dialogue between Mr. Williams and Mr. Frame is a vital one for all politically active Latter-day Saints.

The substance of the controversy is the extent of Church authority in the temporal realm. Mr. Frame stresses the 68th section of the Doctrine and Covenants in explaining that whenever our leaders speak under the

guidance of the Holy Ghost, their words are scripture. Certainly this is true. But are we to assume that every word coming from a General Authority is inspired? Don't General Authorities often present personal opinions without expressing them as such? No and yes. The Lord certainly hasn't revealed Himself politically when President Brown and Elder Benson have such divergent political opinions.

Nevertheless, a serious dilemma exists for the Mormon political liberal. A significant element within the Church has attempted to link political conservatism with spiritual morality. The liberal is often confronted with the claim that he is either a conservative or an apostate. President Ernest Wilkinson, in his commencement address to the Brigham Young University Class of 1965, demonstrated this movement when he said, "I am going to talk to you, not in my words, but in the language of the prophets themselves. Should you disagree with what the prophets say, it will not be a disagreement with me, but an unwillingness on your part to follow the counsel of those whom we have sustained as our leaders." Dr. Wilkinson then discussed "The Possible Decline and Fall of the American Republic," with liberalism as the cause of the decline.

Jerrald Newquist, in his *Prophets, Principles, and National Survival*, wrote that "the principles of the so-called socialist, collectivist, and welfare-state are *not in harmony with the Gospel standard and should not have our support.*"

Finally, Hyrum Andrus, in "*Liberalism, Conservatism, and Mormonism*," said that, in his opinion, "Latter-day Saints are *bound* by what they hold *sacred* to support an intelligent, conservative position in social, economic, and political philosophy. . . ."

For the liberal, the sentiment pre-

sents this dilemma: Is it morally possible to be a political liberal and at the same time maintain an active, faithful membership in the Church? Maybe Brigham Young illustrated an answer when he said, in urging political abstinence on the Saints after the martyrdom, "We do not, however, offer this political advice as binding on the consciences of others; we are perfectly willing that every member of this Church should use his own freedom in all political matters; but we give it as our own rule of action, and for the benefit of those who may choose to profit by it." Is it impossible today, in judging and dealing with the political controversy, to maintain this precept?

James S. Olson
Brigham Young University



Marguerite d'Autriche

Dear Sirs:

Permit some observations on Dr. Williams' article in your second issue.

First, I wonder if Dr. Williams has ever considered that when he raises his voice in political arenas (and even areas non-political) he does so under the mantle of a church official. Granted this may not be of his own making, the effect is still the same. Witness your own biography as a preface to his article: "a former bishop and presently a member of a high council." These offices have been mentioned as credentials when he has been quoted in *Look* and other periodicals of broad circulation. It seems

incongruous that a church official on the "lower level" can have this accrue to his benefit while a general authority must be silent for fear of causing a "schism." If one is to be denied the prerogative of public statement as a private citizen (I agree with Dr. Williams that he should take care to preface his statements) then the other should not be given the benefit of official sanction by mention of his church office.

To assume that the church is in danger of a schism of the making of the John Birch Society is to be less than objective in assessing the situation. I would agree that a schism is indeed a frightening possibility — but the Birch Society has not caused it. I would challenge Dr. Williams or others of his orientation to justify the Welfare State in light of what have always been fundamental tenets of the church. If the Welfare State or Socialism or whatever label you apply to it can indeed be reconciled with the philosophy of the L.D.S. Church, then Dr. Williams deserves credit for calling attention to those who are unable to reconcile the two. But to give credit for an impending schism to a relatively new movement, with a measurable influence of less than 4 years so far as the Utah scene is concerned, is to pay an undeserved compliment — especially since the so-called liberal philosophy has had the benefit of respectability given to it not only by the endorsement of recent (36 years) public officials, but it is rapidly becoming adopted as a national way of life.

If and when a schism should occur, it will be because church members of a liberal political persuasion will not be able to reconcile their allegiances and belief in this area to concepts of thought and belief that have been a part of L.D.S. philosophy since the church was founded. I am assuming,

of course, that the church will not change its basic orientation, which when applied to the issues today places it a majority of the time in the conservative "camp."

Finally, might I suggest that the topic of a future "round table" be "The Welfare State and the Church" (L.D.S., of course). This would seem to me to be at least as worthy of discussion as pornography.

Robert D. Preston
Salt Lake City, Utah

Dear Sirs:

It has been brought to my attention that your Summer issue contains an article by J. D. Williams entitled, "Separation of Church and State in Mormon Theory and Practice," in which Mr. Williams asserts that in March, 1966, I sent a "Dear Brethren" letter to L.D.S. Bishops inviting them to hear Robert Welch (Founder of The John Birch Society) during the week of April General Conference.

Mr. Williams is mistaken.

I didn't send such a letter in March, or at any other time. I would appreciate your printing this letter of correction in your next issue.

Garn E. Lewis
Utah Coordinator,
The John Birch Society
Salt Lake City

cc: President David O. McKay
Robert Welch

J. D. Williams replies:

Mr. Lewis is technically correct, and I was technically incorrect in my article saying that the "Dear Brethren" letter of last March had been issued by the local co-ordinator of the Birch Society. Rather, that letter was signed by Dr. J. Reece Hunter, the Dinner Chairman, who is the Chairman of the Utah Forum for the Amer-

ican Idea, the leading front group of the Birch Society in Utah. The obvious link between the Utah Forum and the Birch Society itself is their joint use of the American Opinion Bookstore at 63 E. Second South for the distribution of pamphlets, tape recordings, films and the like.

Dear Sirs:

The article by J. D. Williams on Church and State in the Summer 1966 issue, and the response by R. M. Frame in the Autumn 1966 issue, are concerned with a problem of great importance to the Church today. If the Church takes too many stands on political issues, it becomes a quasi-political organization whose membership must conform to a political persuasion in addition to a set of religious beliefs. To my knowledge the founder of Christianity was concerned principally with personal faith and love, and never took a stand on the political issues of the day. When the Church intrudes into politics, prospective converts of opposing political beliefs will be shut out, not because of their religious disbelief, but because of their political disbelief. Some Church policies already make it difficult to attract certain races, and it would be undesirable to extend this exclusiveness to political affiliations also.

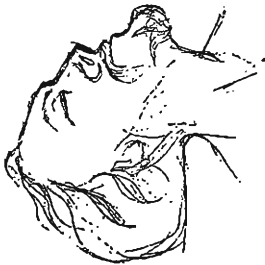
Curtis C. Johnson
University of Utah

Dear Sirs:

. . . . Having married a convert to the church who, by the act of baptism, did not, for some reason, automatically acquire all of my background, understanding and prejudices, I often find my views on my gospel subjects challenged at home even without the aid of your magazine. Having shared an office for the

past three years with a Jewish agnostic whose philosophy of life was almost wholly alien to my own, and having had a most enjoyable and compatible relationship in the office during that period, I have discovered that it is often possible to accept with equanimity the totally different point of view of one with whom we do not expect to agree while a slight disagreement over a minor point of doctrine with one that we expect to hold a similar view may be the cause of endless consternation. I suspect, therefore, that some of the views that you publish may create a greater awareness in your readers that we do not at all times agree with those with whom we think we are in agreement, from which, it may be hoped, we will be stimulated to more carefully examine our own views, as well as those of others, to determine just what we do think and why. . . .

Gerald S. Fish and
Lona Mae Fish
Alexandria, Virginia



Henry II

Dear Sirs:

This is intended not so much a critique of James Allen's "The Significance of Joseph Smith's First Vision in Mormon Thought" in the autumn issue of *Dialogue* as a commendation. Generally Mr. Allen has been forthright and factual in his enumeration and study of source materials relating to this subject. To those in the L.D.S. Church nurtured on the familiar

words of the Vision as found in the Pearl of Great Price and various other Church annals, the additional information here presented may be surprising, and to some disturbing. However, many of *Dialogue's* readers are likely to agree with the thought expressed by P. A. M. Taylor on page 110: "secrecy does more harm to the Church's reputation than could result from any disclosures from the archives".

Mr. Allen is evidently not seeking to impose a dogmatic interpretation of the Vision but rather to juxtapose the accounts for easy comparison and analysis. He rightly notes that belief in the Vision is cardinal in the faith of the Saints, that it is the fulcrum upon which modern-day revelation rests. This being so it is the more important that nothing pertinent be omitted.

In the editors' preface to the autumn issue it states that portions of two early accounts by Joseph Smith of his First Vision are here printed "for the first time." This is an error. Modern Microfilm Company of Salt Lake City, Jerald and Sandra Tanner proprietors, published one of these accounts (the one referred to by Mr. Allen on page 39 as having been written "about 1833") more than a year ago in a work entitled *Joseph Smith's Strange Account of the First Vision. . . .*

On page 34 Mr. Allen says: "Perhaps the closest one may come to seeing a contemporary diarist's account of the story is in the journal of Alexander Neibaur, which is located in the L.D.S. Church Historian's office." It should be noted that such journals are not open for public inspection. Several researchers have been denied access to this particular journal, including the donor. . . .

LaMar Petersen
Salt Lake City, Utah

Dear Sirs:

Orchids to James B. Allen for his fine article on Joseph Smith's first vision. The accounts taken from Paul Cheesman's thesis furnish the key to a reference to the vision thus far overlooked by scholars. In the *Pearl of Great Price* Joseph tells of seeing his vision, then falling into foolish errors and later being visited by the angel Moroni. This is the 1938 account in brief. In the *Doctrine and Covenants* 20:5-6 we read, "After it was truly manifested unto his first elder that he had received a remission of his sins, he was entangled again in the vanities of the world; but after repenting and humbling himself sincerely through faith, God ministered unto him by an holy angel. . . ." The sequence is the same in both versions except that, in the second, remission of sins replaces the vision. Does this refer to the first vision experience? From the accounts in Allen's article (pp. 40-41) it does indeed.

This revelation was published, though not circulated, in 1833 in the *Book of Commandments* and again in 1835 in the *Doctrine and Covenants*. Further, the revelation was made public in 1830. The abbreviated form would indicate either a deliberate vagueness or, more likely, that the group for which it was intended was so familiar with the events as to need only a brief reminder of their occurrence. This is not in conflict with Allen's conclusion on the extent of early knowledge of the vision, but it is another bit of evidence that the story was not merely a product of Joseph's designing imagination later in the 1830's.

Vance W. Rollins
Indiana University
Bloomington, Indiana

Dear Sirs:

The name of your journal has induced me to respond to the review of my book, *Truth by Reason and by Revelation*, written in your summer issue by Joseph R. Murphy of the Zoology Department at Brigham Young University.

I cannot take issue with the general feelings and opinions expressed by the reviewer. Of course, they were his opinions, and all I can do is react to them with various degrees of satisfaction, consternation, or regret for not having taken a different course. I must even admit that it is not difficult to feel sympathetic towards some of his most negative comments. I believe the book would indeed have made a much better appeal to some of my non-Mormon friends if I could have left out certain deeply personal experiences and opinions. But if the book must fail because it tried to talk to members and non-members, then *Dialogue* will probably fail for the same reason. I detect much attempt to accommodate our non-member friends with explanations such as ". . . their ward MIA, the LDS youth auxiliary." At the same time, I detect some of the same deeply personal expression of testimony which ended up in my book.

I can explain these elements in my book, but I can hardly apologize for them. Remembering the final year of work, writing the book was surely the most intensely personal, and even spiritual experience of my life. I wrote in the preface my desire to speak to my fellow non-member scientists while sitting in Austria by the bedside of a six-year-old son who had suffered a nearly-fatal brain injury. It was a time of deep emotional feeling which had begun several months before with the writing of the book. I look back on the writing experience with the feelings of immense joy

which come from spending a period of one's life in deep contemplation of the important things. It is easy for me, then, to see how I could, on another occasion, write a more scholastic, objective, academically correct work, but I can hardly apologize for the approach that I took in my initial attempt to speak in print of science and testimony.

I would like to discuss certain points brought up in Professor Murphy's review relating to the question of organic evolution and the origin of life. To begin with, I believe his fears that my book will be utilized as an anti-evolutionary tract are far from grounded. Another review castigates me for "leaving the door open for a Darwinian-type evolution." It has been my experience that the reader of the book sees in it the arguments for the viewpoints which are opposite to his own. This is gratifying, to say the least, and certainly well born out by Professor Murphy's review! . . .



Valentine Balbiani

As Professor Murphy did recognize, I was not trying by my argument to eliminate natural selection as the ultimate answer for evolution. I don't feel that my argument is conclusive enough for that. Nevertheless, the argument has raised grave questions in my mind, and this is what I was

hoping to do in the minds of those who accept the evolutionary approach without any serious questions (while Professor Murphy's experience may have been different, many people whom I know do accept the theory almost without question, although they certainly could recite the "tried and true" evidences).

I am extremely happy that men such as Professor Murphy and his office neighbors can maintain an active faith in the Gospel while accepting the evolutionary mechanism as the means of creation. I am especially happy that an outstanding person such as B. F. Harrison (whom I have long respected as a personal friend) can publish these ideas in a church publication such as the *Instructor*. He thereby served notice to the youth of the church who are interested in such matters that they, too, can maintain their testimonies of the gospel without being afraid to study topics of science such as organic evolution. In my opinion, this is one of the most significant events in the recent history of the church. My book was written before this happened, and consequently it was written from a very defensive position.

In spite of the fact that I am happy that Bertrand Harrison can live with evolution in the manner which he described in his article, I must state that I cannot. To begin with, I find real difficulty in fitting the current concepts of a chance-directed evolution with a very careful study of the Books of Abraham and Moses, yet I accept these books as inspired. The two principle scientific reasons for my inability to accept Professor Harrison's approach were stated at length in my book but obviously not convincingly to people such as Professor Murphy. They are, first, as stated above, that I cannot see an available mechanism for the production of suf-

ficient "positive" genetic variability, and second, that I cannot extrapolate from the changes that occur in natural populations such as the British moths with their industrial melanism to the entire evolutionary story. Professor Harrison in his article argued that evolution must work in the broad sense because his neighbor is able to apply it in the restricted practice of cattle breeding. To me this is a logically invalid extrapolation. Clearly the selection process operates in nature (optimizing the genetic composition of a population in terms of its environment), but its ability to over-step the boundaries of certain taxonomic groups (and I haven't any idea whether these are species, genera, or even families) would seem to me to be strongly limited by the source of available "positive" mutations. In my present thinking, this source appears insufficient to allow natural selection to account for evolution in the broad sense.

I am quite ready to concede that a few new discoveries could easily change this whole argument. The stand of Professors Murphy and Harrison would seem to illustrate clearly how independent testimony can be of such problems. Nevertheless, I don't believe my arguments can be dismissed simply by stating that authorities such as Stebbins are willing to accept statements which I could only accept once the arguments have been conclusively laid to rest. . . .

Frank B. Salisbury
Utah State University

Dear Sirs:

. . . . It is evident from the statement of Christ in John 10:26-27 that it was never intended that all men should be induced to follow Christ. That doctrine would be more in accord with the plan of opposition. There

are many voices in the world and different people respond to different voices. Those who are Christ's respond to His call.

Does *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* issue the voice of Christ; or some other voice? I perceive many voices.

A prophet of the Lord now lives on the earth. Through him comes the voice of the Lord. *Dialogue* offers the public a variety of other voices, intermingled with truth. Is it more of the Lord than Unitarianism, Catholicism, or any other *ism*, each of which contains good and truth? John Taylor said that we want to embrace



Maria del Caretto

all truth. The prophet Joseph quoted, "We believe all things." But we believe all things only in their proper relation. This relation or perspective comes not by debate, but through the words of a living prophet, a legal administrator, and through the power of the Holy Ghost to individuals.

And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things. (Moroni 10:5)

Our unaided minds can only fill our lamps with water and fool us into thinking that they will last the night, and by our exclusion of the aid of revelation in a dialogue with an impoverished world we may only succeed in impoverishing ourselves.

To paraphrase William James, "Exclusion becomes denial with the passage of time. . . ."

Doyle P. Buchanan
Brigham Young University

Dear Sirs:

. . . . While there are three Mormons, including myself, on the letterhead of this Foundation, our interests are in telling the Story of America . . . and in interpreting our heritage through the physical evidences of our scientific, historic, natural and cultural inheritance. Your journal is an important contribution to this understanding.

For those born in the Church, any discussion of ideas and "problems" apart from official organs might well seem unnecessary, profitless and even a bit suspect. But I can assure you

those who have been trained to analyze and probe all aspects of knowledge are not afraid of the truth and believe, in fact, that a full understanding of events and forces which help shape our Church does contribute to faith. I am a convert to the Church and I studied every document and evidence I could find for seven years before I finally ventured to accept the Church on faith. If *Dialogue* had been available then, I would have saved those wasted years.

The intellectual evidences to the Mormon Doctrine, which *Dialogue* so powerfully presents, have been an important contribution to the strength of my testimony. *Dialogue* can't help but strengthen the Church.

Carlos S. Whiting
Executive Director,
Foundation of America
Washington, D.C.

