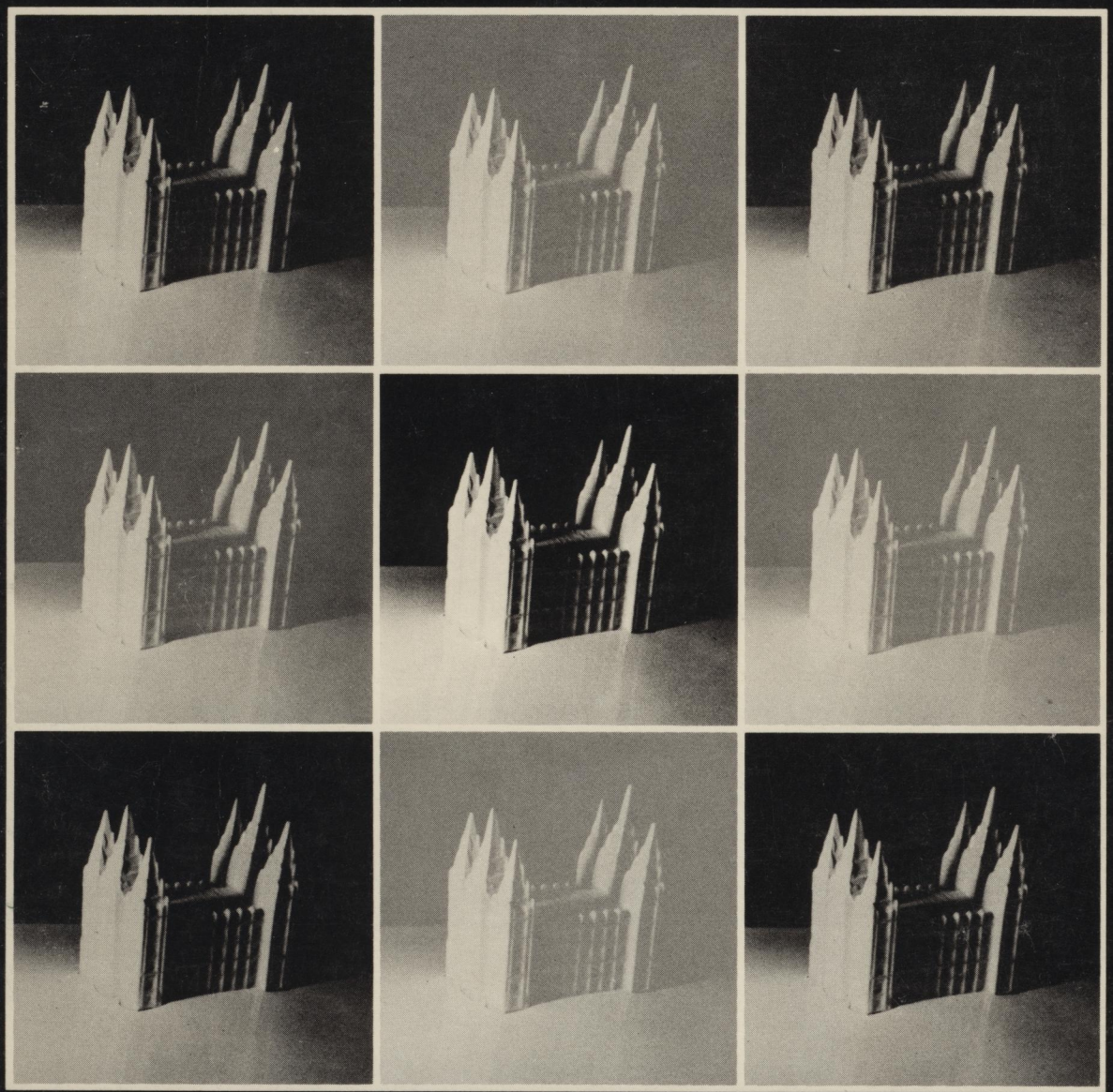
DIALOGUE



DIALOGUE: A Journal of Mormon Thought is an independent national quarterly established to express Mormon culture and examine the relevance of religion to secular life. It is edited by Latter-day Saints who wish to bring their faith into dialogue with human experience as a whole and to foster artistic and scholarly achievement based on their cultural heritage. The Journal encourages a variety of viewpoints; although every effort is made to insure accurate scholarship and responsible judgment, the views expressed are those of the individual authors and are not necessarily those of the Mormon Church or of the editors.

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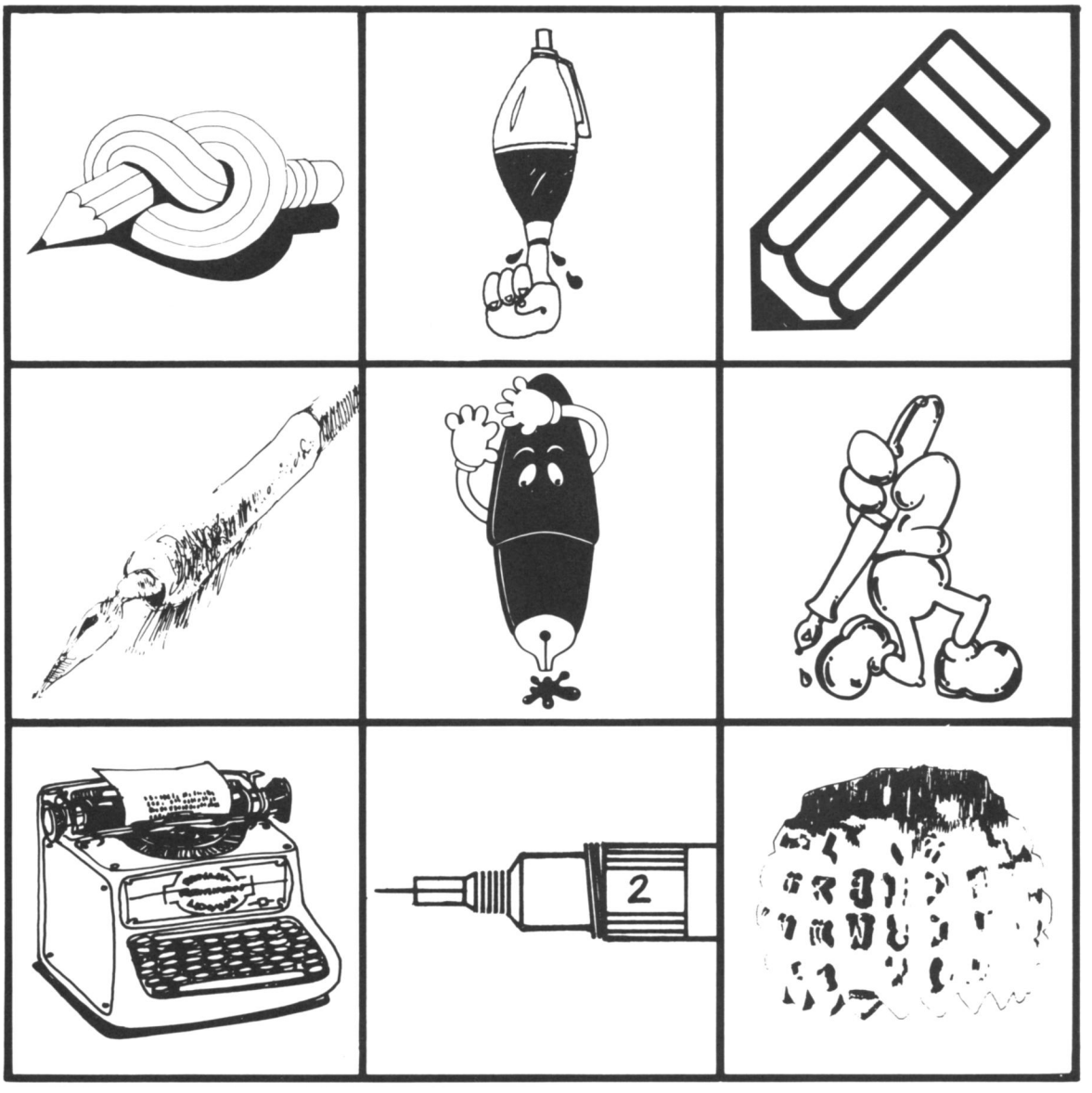


Roundtable:
MORMON
LITERATURE

Letters to the Editor

letters of beliefs

Although I am a charter subscriber, this is my first letter to the Editor. I wonder how many other readers of *Letters of Belief* observed the peculiar lack of specificity with which "L———," the "drifter," defined his new freedom and happiness. For his correspondent the Gospel meant very specific and un-mystical personal blessings and experiences. For him, only imperfect people and an "uninteresting" way of life, which he gladly leaves behind, but for what? And when his specific objections (for example, the Church is "derivative") are flatly met head-on he moves to the easy generality.

In many discussions with friends and acquaintances who have followed L———'s path the same features seem to re-occur. It cannot be coincidence. They scoff at revelation, but have nothing to take its place. They magnify the (often very real) imperfections of Church members and administration, but cannot point out any more perfect system, or better people, on the face of the earth. Their "freedom" from the Gospel is either a license to sin (and Alma told Corianton, and us, just how little that license is worth even on this earth) or an open door to vague and vain empty generalities which profit them nothing. They are not happy and cannot make others happy.

It is a great thing to know not only *what* the light is, but also *where* it is. We have that knowledge. *Dialogue* has done its share in helping all of us appreciate and better use that knowledge when it publishes such an exchange as *Letters of Belief*.

Neil D. Thompson
New York City

Those of us who have flirted with humanism and returned to the fold of spirituality can sympathize with "L———" in "Letters of Belief." We can also understand why he doesn't feel what "S———" does. When one becomes inactive, stops praying, no longer reads the scriptures, and stops experiencing the Spirit, the spiritual mind becomes amnesiac. Only when one is in tune with the Spirit do things take on their full meaning and reality. "L———" is happy, he says—but this turns to a pitiable hollowness after a while. Those who think they'll make it in the universe alone are in for bitter disappointment. Maybe it will take a few of Eugene England's Chevrolet experiences—*without* help—to wake them up. Not just Mormonism but every spiritual path is full of evidence of the great reality—only the blind can't see it. But without light one cannot see, even if one did before.

Scott S. Smith
Phoenix, Arizona

hanging by a thread

I appreciate Brother Eugene England's concern about Watergate, but when he writes about Mormons and Watergate as he did, I must strongly object.

According to Brother England, "Mormons, it seems, have always been quite taken with Nixon. . .," and "we have liked the way he sounded. . . ." Here I must take exception. While many Mormons, including perhaps Brother England, felt that way, he should not include all Mormons. Many of us have never been able to vote for Nixon because he seemed to us selfish, an opportunist, and lacking in commitment to high ideals. Among these people are intelligent and spiritual members of the Church. To us Nixon's abuse of the power of office for his own benefit (and thus to the detriment of others) was simply a continuation, although on a grander scale, of past behavior. Thus Brother England errs when he concludes that all Mormons failed by not responding better than other people, by not speaking out early enough or clearly enough. Many of us tried.

I therefore object to the entire tone of Brother England's article. To suggest that Mormons as a group enthusiastically supported Nixon, were duped and betrayed by him, and should now undergo penitence and an agonizing reappraisal is an absurd oversimplification which offends many of us. I want to go on record as one of the many Mormons who never supported Nixon and who were saddened but not surprised by the events of Watergate. I cannot feel he has betrayed me personally, nor need I wonder how my religious inspiration failed me so utterly in this instance—it didn't.

Grete M. Johnson
Bloomington, Indiana

renewal and self-renewal

Here is my $20 check for another year's subscription to *Dialogue*. I absolutely consume each issue. I am always exposed to so many new viewpoints and opinions. The dialogue carried

on within the journal's pages helps me in my own search for truth and prepares me to discuss many issues. It is very stimulating! The "Letters of Belief" in the Autumn 1974 issue (the most recent one, Mormon Standard Time?) were especially moving. How many of us have gone through similar struggles with friends who become alienated from the Church? Yet somehow the struggle builds my faith; sad and painful experiences often do. I appreciate such articles and all you publish in the journal.

Alan E. Zauche
Tallahassee, Florida

I am pleased to renew my subscription to *Dialogue* from the mission field. I want you to know that *Dialogue* has helped me understand many things, including the mission field. Those of us who have been introduced to *Dialogue* wish to thank you for the help that you have given us in understanding, realizing and comprehending that which we have to do.

I am particularly thankful for Brother Carlos Whiting's article, "Some Thoughts on a Rational Approach to Mormonism." I have translated it and am using it with some of our investigators.

Sam A. Kitterman, Jr.
Herrnstrabe, West Germany

"but a very little meat . . ."

I never cease to be amazed at the anachronistic "progressive" thinking of old-style liberals in science, technology, and world problems. If their arrogant assumptions about how the universe operates don't permanently blind them, perhaps someday they will see things with an open mind and humbly recognize their ignorance. Biologists seem especially prone to this, as the Snows note in their discussion of evolution.

But more to the point, I am surprised that Garth Jones doesn't mention the Word of Wisdom as a partial solution to the world food problem. First of all, coffee, tea, alcohol, and tobacco all involve crops of no food value when used as they are. But more importantly, the fact that consumption of animal products is ecologically wasteful is now well known. Adoption of a non-meat diet as the scriptures and prophets have advised would solve a great deal of the world food problem. This is now accepted by every major nutrition and agricultural body—yet resisted or ignored by Mormons. How ironic that we should know a major solution to the food crisis 140 years before the rest of the world, and yet be the last to implement it.

Scott S. Smith
Phoenix, Arizona

truth is reason, truth eternal

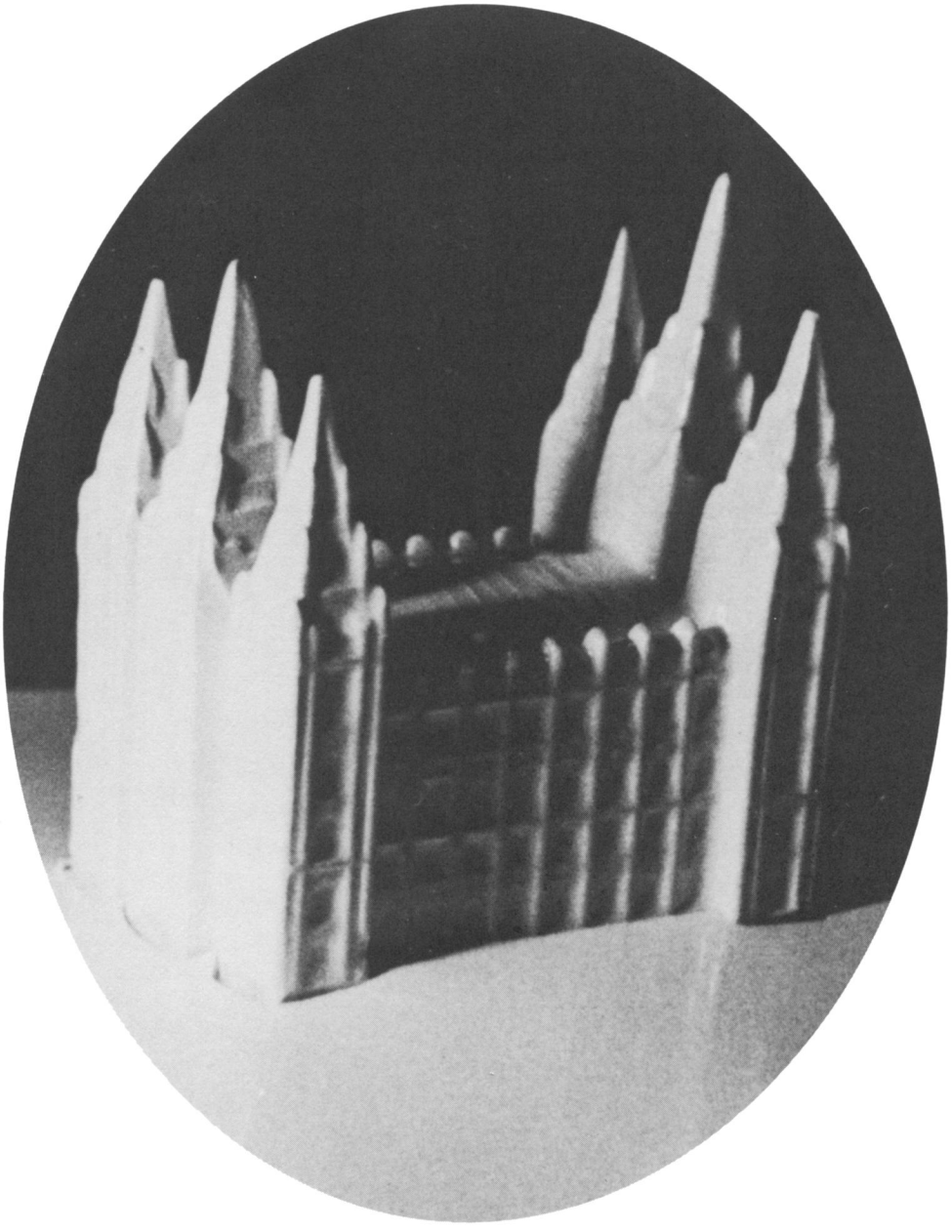
I must say to Teddie Wood Porter—you have spoken the unmentionable but inevitable consequence of exploring the issue of women in the Church. For if we take our musings to their logical, ultimate end, we reach the point of godhood. And if "like-begets-like," then we, as women, shall certainly never become like God the Father. To whom do we turn for our perfected identity? Women in the Church have never had the blessings of a divine being of the same sex as a role model. My first yearnings in this direction occurred during pregnancy. I felt that surely no one could totally understand or explain my deep ongoing feelings like my God-Mother could. Yet, the silent expression of this thought brought visions of partriarchal chastisement. Nevertheless, the questions still remain. I can't help but feel cheated about my lack of knowledge of "Her." I wonder why she isn't allowed to speak, to guide and direct and console her daughters. I can't help but believe that somehow she is different (than male deities), is special, and can offer women something that they cannot get anywhere else. If she is equal in stature and function to God the Father, why is she not taking part in a world and life that for her children is so consequential?

Karen Sorensen Smith
Fresno, California

shocking

I was shocked to read that Betty Norton was shocked by Laurel Thatcher Ulrich's article on women and the priesthood. She says that Sister Ulrich "missed a point" but Sister Norton's letter shows that she missed the point of the article—and badly!

Elaine Young
Bellevue, Washington



A CONVERSATION ABOUT MORMONISM

The following is a transcript of a discussion held in Los Angeles in March, 1975. The discussion was organized by Jerry Kaufmann, an investigator of Mormonism from New York. In addition to Kaufmann, participants include Cheryl and Dick Fuller, Brent and Marilyn Rushforth, Maureen Keeler, Bonnie Lewis, Sheila Lauritsen, and Robert Rees.

The discussants include individuals who are either investigating the Church, have left the Church, are thinking of leaving the Church, have come back into the Church, or are active Mormons—both convert and life-long members. This wide spectrum of viewpoints provides for a lively discussion of what the Mormon Church means to different people a hundred and forty-five years after its organization.

Bob: Perhaps it would be good to preface this discussion by explaining how it came about. Jerry Kaufmann came to church one Sunday when he was visiting from New York, was introduced to Brent and me, and sometime later discovered *Dialogue*. In the course of his reading he came across a letter Cheryl had written and we had published in the Spring, 1973 issue of *Dialogue*. It struck a responsive chord in him as it did in me when I first read it. He called Cheryl and invited her and Dick to come to Los Angeles. He then conceived of the idea of having a discussion about Mormonism, recording it and, if it was of any value, publishing it in *Dialogue*.

Jerry: Well, I should like to be a bit more specific about the motivation on my part. For the past three months I've been with Mormons who have been giving me all the reasons why I should come into the Church. Cheryl's letter intrigued me because Cheryl, as a Latter-day Saint, was questioning her own feelings about the Church. Her letter also seemed to suggest that *Dialogue* could be a reason for her to hang in. Interestingly, our positions, at that time, were about mid-way, as two passing elevators going in opposite directions, although I'm not certain as to who was going up or who was going down. I was then spiritually prompted to call Cheryl. We discussed her letter and the possibility of a forum with the editor and some of the staff members of *Dialogue*. Cheryl then agreed to come to Los Angeles. I want to hear what Cheryl has to say, because she might give me some reasons for staying out of the Church. What are your feelings now, Cheryl? Have they changed since you wrote that letter two years ago?

Cheryl: I suspect I have been moving further away, Jerry, and probably as a result of my associations with people who are not in the Church, especially other Christians. For a while I kept thinking, "Oh, I'll stay in. There must be more people like me and somewhere I can fit in too. Maybe the Church will change." But I don't

see that happening and I've begun to feel, "Why should I waste the next fifty years of my life trying to fit into something that isn't feeling comfortable?" And I suppose basic to my position is the fact that I don't have a testimony that Mormonism is the single true way, that it exclusively has the truth and the appropriate organization, or that it is really significant either in its hold on people or in its relationship with people who are not within that select group. So my feeling lately has been, "Why keep trying to fit or hiding who I really am. Why not go someplace where I can be more comfortable?" For a while I felt like inactivity might be the solution, but I'm feeling now that I want a religious involvement in my life, that that's significant for me and for my children. My oldest child is five and the older she gets the more difficult the transition out of the Church into another will be for her if there is going to be one. She is starting to come home from church classes with ideas that disturb me. If she's "reverent" in primary she will get more candy bars than those who aren't. In Sunday School she learns that only if she thinks about Jesus during the Sacrament will He think about her during the rest of the week. She is asking all these questions about where God lives, does he really answer prayers, etc. I feel if I were a good Mormon I could tell her without a doubt what all the answers are. But I can't, and I feel guilty about not filling the parental role the way the Church expects me to.

Bob: The feelings you've expressed are very common, the feeling of estrangement and the feeling that some things in the Church are giving you so much pain, why should you stay, why should you put up with it? It's frustrating to go to Church and try to express how you feel and people don't understand. Your children come home from Primary with ideas that are not compatible with your beliefs, and you ask yourself, "How can the true Church be doing these kinds of things? How can it be the true Church when there seems to be so much wrong with it for me?" That's part of what you're expressing, is it not?

Cheryl: Yes, I think I question the whole "true Church" idea.

Bob: Right, but it begins in the kinds of experiences we've just described. One response is to recognize that the Church is imperfect. It may be the restored Church, but there are many things preached by individuals as gospel and practices put forth as true which are not, and which not only are not true but often drive people away from the truth. I think that being able to understand the difference between the Church and the gospel is an important perspective to have, because the gospel is true and perfect; the Church much less perfect. It is in a way an imperfect vehicle by which the gospel is translated into our lives. One of the most limiting beliefs many Mormons have is that we have an exclusive hold on truth—even that we enjoy a monopoly on it. That feeling of being exclusive and being the chosen ones sometimes leads us into an arrogance that alienates us not only from people outside the Church but also from those in the Church whose own experience belies that belief.

The bishop was just saying the other day that he would probably have more luck going down to Watts and getting some people to come and take care of a Relief Society sister than he would in getting women in the ward to respond to this sister's needs. That suggests that we aren't as charitable as we sometimes present ourselves as being. Accepting that imperfection, and still staying in the Church, is a great challenge. It's a challenge which is not exclusive to the Church; it's true of any in-

stitution to which one belongs or gives allegiance or commitment. The question is whether we can accept the imperfection and try to change it. The challenge of sensitive and perceptive Latter-day Saints is to stay in the Church and change it because it is in some sense as good as we are and we can make it much better than it is. If we are committed to the fact that it can be better it can be a force for good in our lives, and we can be a force for good in it.

Cheryl: Yes, but there are many Mormons who are comfortable the way it is, who like being exclusively right.

Bob: Why abdicate to them? There are millions of Americans who like this country the way it is. Those of us who want it to be better than it is can either leave or stay and make it better. I'm determined not to let those people have their way by not doing anything, by abdicating to them, by saying there are more of them or whatever. We *can* change it.

Jerry: Cheryl, I might have received a flash of conviction when I read your letter. The idea of being able to call you, to feel a kinship with you even though we had never met, and to say, "Come on down and let's all talk about this," is quite remarkable. This kind of positive feeling seems prevalent among Mormons. What other religion can boast that! You're a stranger to me and yet I don't regard you as a stranger, and I think all of us here have the same feeling, and I believe you said that's one of the things you find attractive about Mormonism.

Cheryl: Yes. The feeling of fellowship. I don't deny that it's a super organization, that it works beautifully for a lot of people and has brought happiness to a great many people—including me. What I'm saying is that if it's not working for me now, why stay unhappy with it? Why not get into something that will be more gratifying? Right now I don't see enough in it to want to be there, to participate and say, "I want to be part of it." Too, that testimony thing is always hanging over me.

Bob: You feel excluded in that you don't really have the complete credentials to be a member of the in group. . . . That kind of conviction seems for many people an important ingredient.

Have you ever felt the testimony that we're talking about, that mysterious, elusive thing that somehow marks one as being completely in or not in? Did you ever have that feeling?

Cheryl: I think I did for a year or two, when I was at BYU.

Bob: Dick, how about you? You must have had it, since you were a missionary.

Dick: Basically I went through what Cheryl is going through, four or five years ago. We started out be being pretty much in and now we're pretty much out, although I'm further out than she is. I grew up in St. George which is like growing up Catholic in Rome. It was evident very early to me that there were the good guys and the bad guys, the ones that smoked and the ones that didn't, and I was one of the bad guys. But when it came time for a mission I thought, "Well I'm going to prove it to myself one way or another," so I went on a mission. A couple of times I did get to the point where I bore my testimony and afterward I felt like I had really

psyched myself into it and I never felt comfortable about it. I was by all measures a successful missionary—I baptized people, held leadership positions, etc. After I got out of the mission field I still was wavering. I thought, well, I really haven't given it a good chance, so I got into the seminary program. I taught full time seminary for a year in Ogden and still I never saw any . . . I never felt any . . .

Bob: After teaching seminary you still didn't feel that . . . whatever it was that you were expecting to feel?

Dick: I went through what to me was as deep and as soul-searching an experience as I could subject myself to. I remember as a missionary locking myself in the roominghouse bathroom in Winnipeg and trying to pray like President Snow did—all night—and nothing happened. Nothing ever happened. And so I always come back to the thing that I can understand and relate to which is learning and thinking and discussing. As I got into this further I found fewer and fewer people to whom I could talk because I ask questions. It seems like in the Church there's the catechism questions that you can ask and there are answers for them. And then there are the questions that you don't ask because there aren't answers.

Jerry: I think there is a question of spiritual priority. Conviction must come before credentials. The lack of a testimony doesn't preclude the feeling for one, or the knowledge that it could never happen. I think a testimony is felt in the process of honing oneself into a near perfect person—I have the advantage of starting at the bottom. So will the process of my spiritual development be my testimony, or will my testimony (which I haven't as yet received) be the result of this process? But if you, Dick, started with a Mormon package to begin with—early baptism, Primary, a mission, the whole Mormon thing—and then looked for a testimony only because you thought it had to be there or you needed one, then maybe your credentials were greater than your conviction. You can sharpen a knife blade until there's nothing left. So I might have the advantage in starting out spiritually uncut and raw.

Maureen: I think one of the things you have to come to terms with, Dick, is that the Church is much more difficult to deal with than the gospel is. I grew up in a rather typical middleclass marriage-oriented LDS ward, and I married much later than most people. For several years as I lived in this ward I felt persecuted for being single, and looking back on it, I felt that way with good reason. I just didn't fit into the two-by-two Noah's Ark part of the culture. For many years that ward represented the Church to me. As I look back on those years I marvel that I hung in there as long as I did because I was having terrific problems identifying socially with many of the members of that ward. I was not having problems with the gospel but with the Church. As a result of this, when I attended college, most of my close friends were non-Mormons and this included most of the men I dated during those years. It wasn't until I had graduated, moved to Washington, D.C., and started going to Church back there, that I finally came to feel there were many active married and single Mormons I could relate to. I was about 22 or 23 at the time, and in all of those intervening years there were few Mormons along the way with whom I could be close friends. When I finally found there were some people I could relate to easily, it seemed that the face of the Church changed and what had been a mixture of both valuable and painful things suddenly seemed to smooth out. I began to find people who could accept me as I was.

One of the things which helped me work out my social problems with the Church was the recognition that in spite of my discomfort, there was something of great value in the gospel. That was what held me, and it was an important learning experience. For example, it has been really helpful to me to have learned what it was like to be the odd one—the girl who didn't grow up and get married at 19 like every other girl on the block. That feeling of being different and not fitting in, while giving me lots of pain and sorrow, was responsible ultimately for a lot of strength. Having been told for years I was out of step and ought not to be single has enabled me to make many courageous decisions and to follow my own best judgment in many other areas. I think that's not a bad thing to happen to you and I think when you find yourself in an uncomfortable social situation in the Church it's important to believe that it's not necessarily terminal. Does that make sense? (Laughter)

Sheila: Yes, there are things wrong with the Church socially. You can go to church and spend a lot of unhappy time with people you don't relate to, but if in the back of your mind you've made a decision that you want a relationship with God and he cares enough about you, that he's structured some type of pattern for you to follow and that you'll put up with the imperfections to get to a perfect place, it helps you weed out the extraneous.

Bob: I relate very much to what you say, Sheila, in the sense that I have felt that there were people in the Church whose definition of Mormonism did not include me. But I have refused to let them define Mormonism for me. I have experienced some of the things Maureen talks about—pain, and frustration and anger and anguish—some of it as a result of my own immaturity and struggling to find myself in relation to the Church; but I've also felt a deep, abiding joy in the fundamental aspects of the gospel and in what I see as the genius of the Church. I am coming more and more to appreciate these things as a parent. What my daughter Jennifer gets at MIA I could not buy for a million dollars. There are people there who love her, care for her, who teach her concepts about being a person that I value so much that I rejoice in the fact that the Church makes this possible.

When I gather my family for a home evening as the Church has directed me to do, I find it personally rewarding and extremely valuable to me as a father and husband. From a pragmatic point of view I must say that the Church works. But in addition to that conviction I have a spiritual conviction that it's true; it's true in spite of all of the problems, in spite of all of the weaknesses.

That doesn't mean that we go lockstep into the Celestial Kingdom. I think there is much room for individual expression and I think there is much latitude for you, Cheryl, or Maureen, or anyone else to come to terms with the Lord, individually, because that is a private and individual relationship. Communing with the Lord privately or in a sanctuary is one thing, but communing with the Lord in a difficult social situation—like a ward—is another.

I really feel the Church is a discipline, like marriage and having children are disciplines, which can teach us to be like Christ. The Church provides us with an opportunity to be more compassionate, to be more humble, to somehow come to terms with ourself in relation to Christ through other people.

Dick: That reminds me of the saying that you buy shoes that are too small because it feels so good when you take them off. I suppose I've gone through many of the same kinds of things that you're talking about. I spent a lot of time, as I said,

trying to talk myself into the Church and because I wasn't able to get the inner convictions I tended to look at things intellectually, and that is currently my approach to things. I think Mormonism a great system and I would really like to believe it; I mean, I would like to believe that it's the one and only true religion. And if I had to choose right now I would choose that system. I like the idea that people are going to be recognized after they die for what they accomplished; and I like the idea of families continuing, and so on. In truth, I am a very religious person. I want to believe there's a God, that there is a personal God. And so I have tried to do those things that make me feel good about the God I want to believe in; I have tried for years to make it work—going to church, sitting through Sacrament meetings where people . . . you know what I'm talking about . . . where it's just boring and pathetic. And I've been in Sunday School classes where I wanted to say something and I've said it and I've gotten responses that were less than sympathetic. So I have come to the conclusion that for me being a religious person is something that can take place outside of the formal organization of the Church, because even though I am a religious person, I do not find friends, I do not find people I can talk to, I do not find rewarding experiences inside the Mormon Church.

Jerry: Let me give you my point of view Dick. I was attracted to Latter-day Saints—or rather I was converted to the Mormon people—before the gospel, which I'm still working on. I love the people and they're the kind of people I desire to be with. They're the kind of people with whom I want to share a community of love as well as a community of conviction. I believe the Mormons, bound together in their abiding faith, form a kind of spiritual macrocosm, of which I would very much like to be a part. No matter where I am, in Geneva, in Los Angeles, in Manhattan, there are people who call me brother. No matter where you go, there is this kind of kinship and it's this kind of orchestrated effort at spirituality which has become very important in my life. I don't think there are many inspiring externals in the Mormon Church: all the buildings look like conservative synagogues; there is nothing in the way of traditional trappings and accouterments; the music could be more inspiring; and maybe some of the traditions could be better, but it is a young church and the spirituality is borne out of the testimonies of the members—the Saints—rather than through a single minister or priest paid to preach alone in his presbyterial stewardship. In the Mormon Church each member is God's steward. And the rewarding experience in being an elder or steward of God is intensified through the affirmation of a church organization where members feel and share the same testimony.

Dick: Well, Jerry, even though you haven't yet joined the Church, it looks like you've passed me.

Jerry: What do you mean?

Dick: Well, from what you've just said I would say you're further into the Church than I am even though you're still investigating.

Jerry: Is it possible to reinvestigate?

Dick: Sure. My first reaction to what you're saying is that the church you've experienced is probably different from the church that I've had to deal with. When I

was here at UCLA the Institute director had weekly discussion groups very much like this. It was a group where I could say what I felt and where I had friends I could talk to. There have been isolated instances in my life where I've found members of the Church that I could talk to about how I feel. But that has not been my characteristic experience in the Church. In most of the wards I have lived in . . . if I act the way I feel, and if I say what I want to, then there's automatically a barrier that goes up. And I cannot cross that barrier, cannot penetrate it.

If I could talk to people like those in this group I could probably stay in that Church, but that is not the church I have to deal with, and I suspect that that's not the church most of you have met, for the most part.

Bonnie: I think most of the problem is not with the religion. The Mormon philosophy is wonderful; I don't think there's anyone here who would argue about the principles of the religion. But the Church itself varies from ward to ward. One summer we spent a month and a half touring the United States and in that time we visited a lot of wards. It was very interesting to me to see how different they were. In Arizona I got in trouble because my skirt was too short. I had to kneel on the floor to see if it came to my knees and when it didn't they asked me to go home and change, even though I was only a visitor for one Sunday. We visited one ward on a Fast Sunday where they had guards at the drinking fountains to keep you from drinking until church was over.

Bob: In one sense, most of what we say points out that when we talk about most Mormons being narrow-minded or intolerant or whatever we want to say, I think it's important for us to recognize that most people are. I belong to various organizations where I can be much more selective about the kinds of people I work with than I can in the Church.

Brigham Young said the whole purpose of our existence is to see whether or not we can learn to use God's power as God does. And the Church is set up in some sense to give us the opportunity to learn to use God's power as He does. The fact that most Mormons are not doing it is something to which we can all testify. Most of *us* do not use God's power as He does; we don't have the love, the tolerance, the patience, the understanding. But part of the Mormon philosophy which we find so attractive is that we learn to become Godlike by imitating God. And one of the things that God has chosen to do is love all of us.

Jerry: Without running the risk, Bob, of the possibility of schism, do you think that some of the things that Bonnie spoke about can be redressed within the Church?

Bob: To me the most basic, and the most attractive principle of Mormonism is that our lives can change and that the purpose of the gospel is to effect that change. It's to help us so that we can, next year we can look at a person and accept that person and not the length of their dress. That we can work with and accept and love people even though they may differ in their philosophy. For some people it's a challenge to sustain Brother Benson, for other people it's a challenge to sustain Brother Brown. The important thing is to sustain them both. You have to accept the premise that the gospel can change; otherwise, it has no meaning.

Cheryl: Somewhere, someone was talking about reasons for not being in the

Church. I've tried to look at some of the reasons for my wanting to separate myself from the church. My parents may be a reason; maybe I won't feel I'm grown up until I get out, because they're the Church.

Bob: That's really an important recognition.

Cheryl: Like—do I fear commitment? Am I getting out because I don't want to be committed to something? I suppose most of my associations lately have been with people who are humanistically oriented, and I find it very attractive. Maybe I'm afraid of being committed to something, of working at something, especially if I have no support system. You are commitment-oriented as opposed to relating to the Church because it's socially comfortable. My worth as an individual in the Church is based on my testimony—or at least that's how I see it. If I don't have one, if I flounder because I don't have that commitment, and because I'm just dealing with it as a workable social system, then I'm worthless. You talked about God. I suspect the closest I've felt to God in the last six months was when I was in a Methodist service. Their God can accept me—there aren't so many rules. Their God says that's O.K.

Bob: The interesting thing, Cheryl, is when you say the Mormon God can't accept you, I want to know what your concept of Him is. If your understanding of Him is that you're a naughty girl for going and feeling spiritual in a Methodist church or you're bad because you have doubts, or you're worthless because you don't have a testimony, then you believe in a different God than I do. I too in the past several months have had one of the most spiritual experiences I had in a long time in another church. Two weeks ago I went to hear Bach's "St. Matthew's Passion" at the Episcopal Church, and I felt my testimony of Christ renewed and strengthened by that experience. I think God approves of that. I've also had those kinds of experiences in our Church, including one during last Fast and Testimony Meeting. The God people define and believe in is limited to their vision. And when people say God doesn't approve of this and God doesn't like that, I think that it's important for us to realize that that's their understanding of God, and God will not be confined and limited by individual definitions. He is expansive, His love is infinite and He loves you. I think, hearing you both talk, that you are both very sincere people. I don't think it's Dick's fault that he's struggled and tried to get a testimony and doesn't have one. God doesn't say, "It's too bad, you tried but you didn't get one and now you're not one of the elect." No. God understands if you don't have a testimony and he also understands the frustration you've experienced in trying to get one. When Joseph Smith was complaining to God about his difficult and humiliating experience in Liberty Jail, Jesus said, "I've been there, I know what it's like." That's why on the day of judgment or reconciliation with Christ none of us will be able to say, "You don't understand." He will say, "I know; I understand." And that's what he's saying now, "I understand, come unto *me*."

Maureen: We transfer so many of our own limitations onto the Lord, so many of our hangups, so many of our misconceptions. Somehow that all gets pasted onto God and we all suffer for it.

Brent: Jerry, you asked earlier whether the Church was going to change. I don't think the Church as an organization is going to change radically. But this group

represents change; here we have a St. George dyed-in-the-wool Saint on his way out and a New York Jew on his way in—I mean, that's change, right!

My response to your question is another question, namely, can *we* change? I take an apocalyptic view of the subject matter we've been talking about. By apocalyptic I mean I think it is perhaps the most important subject that we will ever talk about during our mortal lives—how we relate to God and to His Church. It's one of the central purposes of our coming here, away from His presence. He never told us it would be easy. On the contrary, He seemed to intimate that it would be extremely complex and difficult. Without the direct communication with God which we enjoy through the power of His Spirit, I think faithfulness to the Church would be quite difficult. It simply isn't a place where we go on Sundays to be comfortable. I'm not comfortable on Sundays. I get up very early. I am a stake mission president, a senior member of the seventies presidency and I do a lot of other things that I would not otherwise do on Sunday and on other days of the week. It's not a matter of personal convenience or personal comfort; in fact it often runs contrary to personal convenience and comfort. When asked the difference between our church and the other churches, Joseph Smith said that the essential difference is that we have the Holy Ghost. That's the essence of it. That is not saying that other churches do not have the Holy Ghost, now and again, but without the direct communication with God and apocalyptic spiritual experience this church would be no different from any other. The purpose of the priesthood, home teaching and family home evening and doing all of these things that we do, though often personally inconvenient and sometimes boring, is to try to get us to a place where that cataclysmic event can occur—namely direct communication between us and our Heavenly Father.

Dick: So evidently you have found out, you have had the apocalyptic experience you've been talking about.

Brent: Not only have I had one such experience, I have had many. And I can tell you the time, place and circumstances surrounding the first one. It wasn't the kind of experience I would con myself into, for under the circumstances I would have been an utter fool to have suggested it to myself. I don't have a moment's hesitation in saying that that experience was a direct communication with my Heavenly Father.

That's not to suggest that it's easier, that my activity in the Church is assured. That's something that we all have to work out day to day. But that's where it's at. And that is not to be duplicated, I am certain, in any other religious organization on an ongoing basis. That's not to suggest that Methodists cannot feel the Holy Ghost, that's not to suggest that Episcopalians cannot have a great spiritual experience, but the Holy Ghost is in this Church and it functions through the priesthood authority of this Church. I am convinced of that and I'm sure that you're sure I'm convinced.

Dick: Therefore that puts you and me on opposite sides of the fence.

Brent: I don't think it does.

Dick: But if you were to leave the Church after having had such a solid, positive experience, you would be dishonest with yourself. My feeling was, and still is, that I was being forced into being a hypocrite, playing a role that I did not feel inside—that I was not convinced of.

Brent: On one occasion Jesus said to his disciples, "If you want to know if what I'm saying is true, do it and then you'll know." He didn't say how long it would take, and He didn't say it would be easy, but He was suggesting that the surest way to know is to act it out, to pretend if you will. That's not hypocrisy. He was saying, "If you want to know, do it, and then yo'll know." I think that promise still pertains.

Dick: You're telling me to play the role, but I have been playing the role the best way I could for almost 18 years now. In the last two or three years I have become tired of playing the role because I have felt like a hypocrite.

Brent: I think the Lord understands that, Dick, but the scriptures don't say, "Play the role for 17 years and at the end of 17 years, you'll know." If it takes your whole life, and it's painful your whole life, but you come to know, the message I get from Jesus and Alma and Joseph Smith is that it's worth it.

Dick: It seems to me you're doing what everyone else in the Church does. You start with a premise that the Church is true and then you quote the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith, you quote Christ—from the Mormon perspective—to confirm your argument. Let me say before we go any further that Christianity and the Mormon position are the same to me. The issue to me is not just Mormonism, but the whole Christian system. I don't have any premise to start with. I have tried to get a premise as I said earlier, but I don't have a premise. So quoting Alma or Christ or the bible or Brigham Young is all the same to me—it's all part of the same thing.

Brent: Then we have to establish whether there is a premise from which we can begin, a starting point for dialogue.

Dick: I have worked down to the point where I believe there is a God. I don't know there is a God—I believe there is.

Jerry: I read somewhere that Brigham Young spent his entire life waiting for a vision that never came. Is that true?

Brent: I've read the same thing.

Jerry: Yes, and it didn't lessen his testimony. I would like to go back to something Cheryl said earlier about being moved deeply during a Methodist church service. I was moved similarly last week in meeting with a Franciscan monk who has since become a close friend of mine. I can't quote Alma or Nephi. I doubt that I can quote Ezekial or parts of the Pentateuch, because to me, at this time, words are not as important as people. I could walk into church and feel something spiritual. My own change has not been within an intramural arena. I mean, one Protestant sect going over to another Protestant sect is one thing, but mine has been a Kierkegaardian leap of Hollywood proportions. (Laughter) And it has only been through people—through divine inspiration of people, not the gospel, that my own feelings for Mormonism grew.

Bob: There's something Brent said that I wanted to comment on. He said that it

might take a long time to get a testimony. On the other hand, there have to be enough rewarding experiences for you to keep trying; there has to be something that holds you while you are waiting for an answer. And at this point there hasn't been for you, Dick. There's still a little bit that's holding Cheryl, but not very much.

The crucial thing about Mormonism is that it requires an ultimate commitment. If it is true then it is worth any effort that we can expend to find out whether it's true or not. The possibility, Dick, that you can have this lovely woman and your children forever, that you can be exalted in our Father's Kingdom—that possibility should provoke you to continue trying to find out if Mormonism is true. You have come to terms with the idea of God. It seems to me there are several positions you can take next. You can say, "I don't want to be bothered, I've arrived at a place where I finally feel peace, it's kind of nice for a change"; or you can consider the idea of God's existence a purely intellectual matter and go on to look at other related ideas intellectually; or you can build on that idea spiritually. I consider myself an intellectual, but I also consider myself a spiritual person. To pursue something strictly intellectually can only lead one to a certain place. This is why I think coming to concrete spiritual terms with this body of truths is important. It's a challenge that Brent and I present continually when we go out and teach the gospel to people.

Cheryl: What you're talking about is the basic issue. If you believe the kernel then you'll do the other stuff because of that. There may be some who never get that experience, but who continue to be faithful and function in the Church. On the other hand, there are others who never get that experience and who don't stay in the Church. One of the difficult issues for me is whether I have to agree with everything the Church says, for example, its stand against the Equal Rights Amendment. What if I support the ERA? How's that going to complicate my life in the Church?

Brent: What you're asking, Cheryl is, "Can I support the ERA and still be a good Mormon?"

Bob: Sure, you can.

Marilyn: Definitely.

Brent: I believe there are only about half a dozen things you have to accept to be a good Latter-day Saint; the rest is a matter of individual choice or opinion. The essential things are our acceptance of the fact that God lives, that Jesus is His son, that Jesus atoned for our sins and was resurrected, that the gospel and the priesthood were restored through the prophet Joseph Smith, and that the prophet at the head of the Church today is God's chosen representative to guide His kingdom on the earth. Almost everything else you can disagree on and still be a good Latter-day Saint. Now, how can you turn down a bargain like that! (Laughter)

Dick: That doesn't necessarily mean you have to go to church.

Bob: I suppose that if you feel spiritually right about not going to church it would be o.k. I knew a bishop who sometimes prescribed inactivity for certain people

because he thought that's what they needed spiritually, to get away from all the activity and everything and somehow re-establish a connection with God. So in certain instances it might be O.K.

Marilyn: We were in Great Britain last summer. We had a delicious month of doing nothing but going to High Masses and Low Masses and hearing great music. After that month I welcomed coming back to the Church. We don't have the magnificent music or the eloquent speakers, but there is that spirit, or whatever it is that makes the Church unique.

There's also a great difference in my life compared to the time I was living outside of the Church, even though I was living among lovely people and living a nice life. I've got to say, and I wasn't sure I'd ever feel this either, that there is a difference now in my life—that spirit, that gospel, whatever it is, does give my life meaning.

It took me a long time to be willing to admit that. Unlike some people, my testimony didn't just come one night, with the sky falling in; it came patiently and slowly, from being in the Church and working in it.

When Brent and I were first married I really fought the idea of a testimony. I kept saying, "I really don't have a testimony, I really don't. Brent has one, he can name the date and the place but I really don't." Finally, I had to be truthful with myself and recognize that I had one, as much as it was hard for me to admit it.

So if it's any interest at all I do believe that testimonies can come in different ways. Perhaps it's harder to keep working for the kind of testimony that hits you right on the spot and then you stand up and know you've got it.

Jerry: I think we tend to make our own divine providence. I was looking for spiritual people and I found them—in New York, in Westwood, in Provo. I found Bob and Brent because I felt I needed their conviction. There's an old Jewish joke—and this may explain Dick's not getting his testimony—about this Jew who was praying incessantly for success in his business. When it didn't come he asked the Lord why, after so much prayer. The Lord responded by saying, "Because you bug me too much." I think, finally, we get the inspiration from other people. I know that my testimony will come out of the testimony of others, and if I find it difficult to believe I'll just have to believe in those who believe.

Dick: The Church is great for a lot of people and a lot of people find exactly what they want there. And this is one reason why I often feel hesitant to tell others how I feel about it—I don't want to ruin it for them. In fact, one of my hesitations about coming down today was that I didn't want to ruin it for you, Jerry. You may very well find a lot of good things in the Church and if you should participate and join that would be great.

For me, however, the Church has been frustrating. And one of the most significant "spiritual experiences" that I've ever had was the point at which I finally could say, "I don't need the Church and I can make that decision." Whether that was wrong or right, I don't know, but I have decided at this point, for now, that I am not going to be active in the Church. After making that decision I felt like what people I brought into the Church told me that they felt when I taught them the gospel, "This is what I have been looking for all my life and it's beautiful." Now, I can look at the Church, sort of objectively, and I'm not constrained by this guilt feeling that there's something wrong with me because I don't have a testimony, because I don't feel what all those other three million people say they feel. So I always felt like an in-

ferior person in the Church, but now all of a sudden the light bulb flashed and I feel like a superior person in my relationship to the Church.

Now I think I can be active on my own terms, if I wanted to, and it would be alright. I think you may come into the Church, Jerry. You may say, "I am joining the Church because of the people and maybe a few other reasons." You would know exactly why you were joining and you would be able to get out of it exactly what you want. And it looks to me like Bob is saying he is getting out of it what he wants—it's meeting his needs—Brent, Marilyn, the rest of you, you're saying that.

Jerry: One of the things that attracts me to the Church is its practicality. For example, I feel there's a lot of good sense in the Word of Wisdom. Joseph Smith is finally being vindicated by the surgeon general—over a hundred years later. But the statistics among the Mormons are most impressive: no social disease; little or no crime; the lowest divorce rate; good health and longevity. There is a kind of amelioration of life that it generates. Coming from New York, I wish that all New Yorkers were Mormons. New York would be a better place to live. (Laughter) So the Mormon doctrine works beautifully!

Bob: Joseph Smith said that a religion which can not save people temporally, cannot hope to save them spiritually—but it has to be both.

Jerry: That is the point, save people temporally, that's it, and that's my big motivation.

Dick: Well, I think you can really find that in the Church.

Jerry: Dick, maybe you need something tragic in your life to motivate you to return.

Brent: Dick, I hear what you say and I certainly entertain it as a possibility that someone can maintain a direct communication with his or her Heavenly Father, without participating in the organization of the Church. I entertain that as a possibility. For myself, I think that it would be difficult, quite frankly, simply because I would get caught up in other things too easily. I think I could just go my own way and let my relationship to my Heavenly Father become a secondary or tertiary matter in my life. It may be possible for other people to do otherwise and to maintain this communication without organized religion, be it organized Mormonism or something else, but I think it's difficult . . . and dangerous.

Dick: I like your point because I have a lot of friends in the Church that have gone through exactly the same thing—around and around again. For the first time in my life I'm able to say to them, like you're saying to me, "I can see that your position is possible, and I can see problems with it." For the first time I've finally been able to say that and say it confidently because I am sure of my own position, sure enough that I am pleased with what it's bringing me, where it's leading. It's a much better position for me than it was when I was always feeling guilty about not being like everybody else. And that's really great, it's really opened up a lot of things and it may lead me back into the Church—on my own terms.

Marilyn: Maybe that's the reason why you could never really get there—you were

fighting it so hard. It would be difficult to achieve peace with the Church and yourself feeling those kind of feelings.

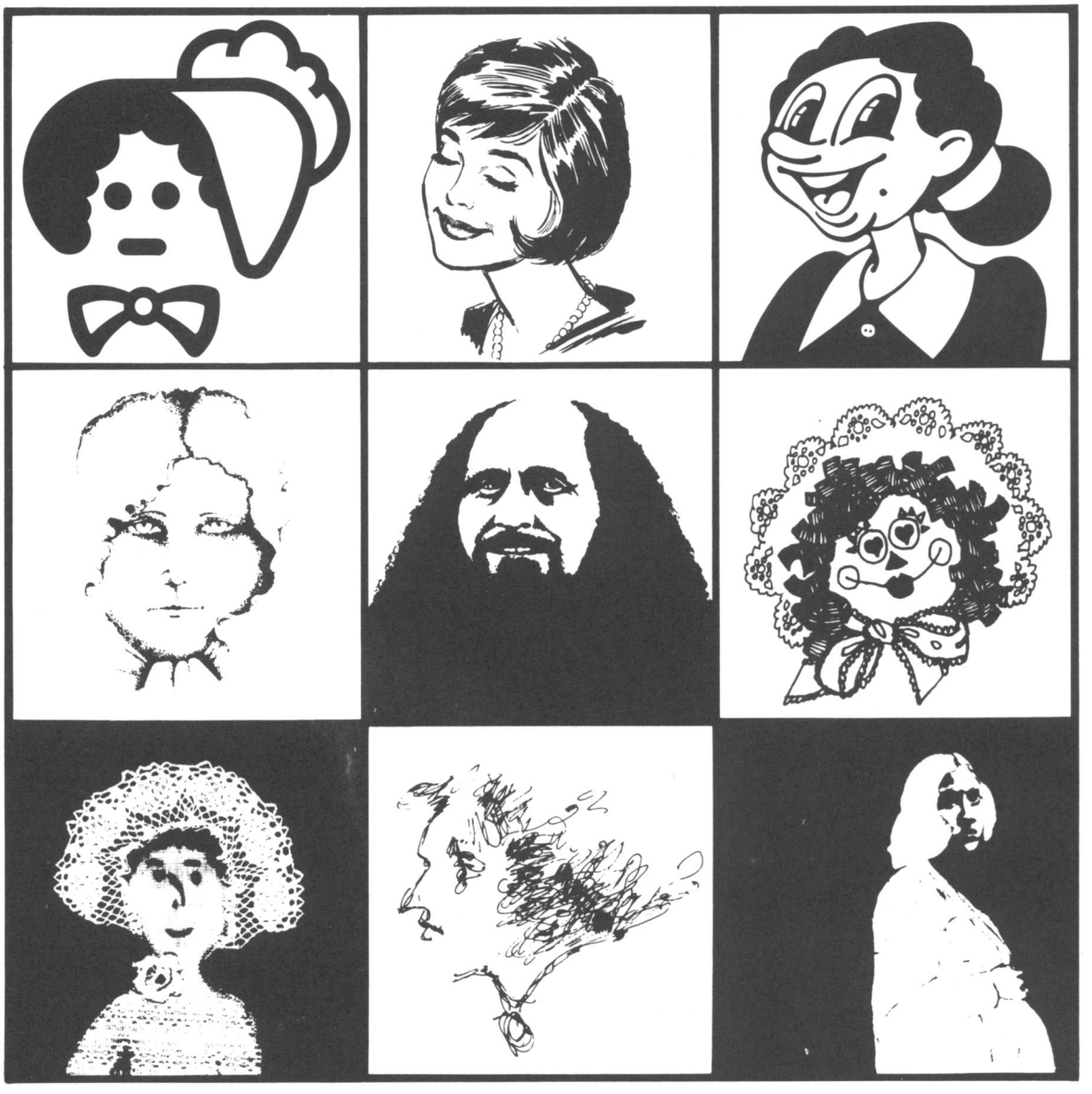
Dick: If I had friends in the Church, even one or two, who could accept me as a person, accept me for what I am and where I am, then I wouldn't mind being the Elders' Quorum President or serving in another position. As long as people knew and could accept me. I love doing the things in the organization, I even like the singing, not because it's good singing, but because of the feeling of everybody standing up and singing together—that's great and I enjoy it. I've been all over the world and I've enjoyed going to church, and even though it was in Dutch or German or whatever, I could relate and that is really really great. If I could have that and not have people, home teachers and others, coming around and checking as to whether I'm paying my tithing or what my attitude is about birth control or whatever, that would be fine. But it isn't. I get kicked out of teaching Sunday school classes because I talk about what I think is happening.

Brent: There is one person who does accept you as a person and for what and where you are, Dick, and that's the Lord. And He accepts and loves you right now. Remember, He helped create a place where we could work out these problems—with fear and trembling at times—and He knew it would be difficult and that we would have tremendous struggles, but He loved us enough to make the ultimate sacrifice to help us make it.

Dick: This is my escape clause. (Laughter) It really is, because the God that I want to believe in and probably do believe in is the God who says He would rather me go through life my own way, making my own decisions, meeting life as it comes and doing my own thing my way, making all the mistakes, than going through life in the Church because I'm too damn scared to get out and stand on my own two feet and say, "I'm sorry, it doesn't work for me."

Bob: Obviously the Lord would rather have you respond through faith and love than through fear and intimidation. And the great thing about Mormon theology is that it gives us first of all a chance to be free and second of all a context in which we can help each other be free. I think what you said and what Brent said suggest that there is some benefit in our relating to each other, in exchanging feelings and thoughts in the contexts of brotherhood and sisterhood, in saying, "Yes, I've felt that too, I've had those kind of doubts, I've had that same kind of problem with the home teachers." If we can continue to talk to each other as we have here today and also continue to talk—and listen—to the Lord, we have a much greater chance of understanding ourselves and each other as we strive for the Kingdom.

Now the script calls for you—Cheryl and Dick—to say, "I believe, I believe, I'm back in." But you know, life goes on. I think we can simply draw this discussion to conclusion by saying that the Lord established a climate in which we could, both by conversing with Him and with each other, learn how to attune ourselves to those forces, those powers within and without, that can help us to get back to Him. If we keep in mind the ultimate reason why we are here then it makes us less concerned about the petty things and the frustrations and helps us to grow back toward Him. It helps me to be able to talk and hear others' ideas, to be able to hear the things that have been expressed here today. I feel grateful that we have the freedom to do this.



A Little-known Defense of Polygamy from the Mormon Press in 1842

Lawrence Foster

In attempting to understand the early promulgation, development and significance of Mormon plural marriage, the scholar encounters great difficulties. Among them is the almost total lack of direct, detailed statements shedding light on the larger social and intellectual arguments used initially to justify such a remarkable departure from normative nineteenth-century American belief and practice. Although numerous contemporary allusions to plural marriage in Nauvoo exist, most of them

are brief and veiled, and those that are not come almost exclusively from unsympathetic apostate sources. Plural marriage, like other alternative forms of marriage and family organization originating in this period, was so controversial that it could be introduced only under cover of secrecy. One consequence is that almost all detailed public explanations and defenses of plural marriage were made after it was relatively well-established in Utah and had been practiced by the leaders of the Church for approximately a decade. Whether such statements represent the attitudes and beliefs of the earliest period is unclear.

The official announcement of Latter-day Saint belief and practice of polygamy was given at a special conference of the Church in late August 1852.[1] At that time, Orson Pratt, one of the twelve apostles of the Church, presented a major speech which provided most of the arguments that would be used to explain and justify plural marriage during the succeeding four decades when it was publicly defended and practiced by the Mormons in Utah. At the same conference, a revelation was read publicly for the first time which had allegedly been given through the prophet Joseph Smith on July 12, 1843, in Nauvoo. It explained the doctrinal justification for a "new and everlasting covenant." This called for the restoration of a form of polygamy modeled after the marriage practices of the Old Testament patriarchs and based on a larger conception of "celestial marriage" lasting for time and all eternity.

Although some have charged otherwise, evidence from internal construction, contemporary Mormon and apostate statements and later affidavits strongly suggests that this statement, now printed as Section 132 of the current Utah Mormon version of the Doctrine and Covenants, was indeed dictated by Joseph Smith and represented a part of his carefully considered beliefs.[2] Certainly the revelation is extremely important for understanding later Utah Mormon marriage and family attitudes. It also appears to contain clear allusions to problems in the introduction of the belief and practice in Nauvoo, including the difficulties of Joseph Smith's first wife, Emma. Nevertheless, the statement as a whole is incomplete. It provides a part of the intellectual framework for plural marriage, but no explanation of how such beliefs were to be practiced or why plural marriage should have been seen as socially desirable—or even, perhaps, as a social necessity. The revelation concludes, ". . . I will reveal more unto you hereafter; therefore, let this suffice for the present" (132:66).

Even if the theoretical possibility of the introduction of plural marriage existed, why should such marriage practices have been introduced specifically in America, in the 1840's, and among the Mormons? Many Mormons simply have assumed that Joseph Smith had been commanded by God to introduce plural marriage and that he was just mechanistically doing his best to carry out the inscrutable demands of the Almighty. This may well represent the way many Mormon believers reacted to the command; however, it does not do justice to the complex process by which Joseph Smith himself received and interpreted revelation. Typically Smith received revelation only in response to concrete intellectual and social problems which he placed before the Lord. When his heart "burned within him" with a definite sense of the answer to the problem, he would deliver it as a revelation, though not necessarily in written form or at the precise time that he received the new understanding.[3] Before his death, Smith frequently declared that he felt emotionally compelled to introduce plural marriage. According to a number of accounts, he declared that "an angel with a drawn sword" stood before him and told him that if he did not introduce the belief and its practice he would lose his prophetic powers and the Church would be unable to progress.[4]

Why might Joseph Smith have felt this so intensely? The Mormon doctrinal view summarized above fails adequately to suggest what driving dynamic could have led Smith—let alone his followers—to make such a radical transformation in their behavior. Likewise, the anti-Mormon assumption that Joseph Smith simply was rationalizing or theologizing his amorous propensities after the fact, fails to account for the complexity of his mind, the consistency of his sense of mission, or his compulsion to introduce such beliefs among his entire following. More conventional means would certainly have sufficed for purely sexual outlets. In Nauvoo many new doctrines and practices were introduced. These included new conceptions of the nature of God and of material and spiritual reality, ordinances such as baptism for the dead, and special temple endowment and sealing ceremonies. Apparently these were designed to provide a basis for a sense of security and social solidarity for Mormons within both a this-worldly and a cosmic context. Introduction of plural and celestial marriage appears to have been viewed by Joseph Smith as an important part of this total effort, but why? What concrete problems of social disorganization might Joseph Smith have hoped to solve by the introduction of plural marriage?

A remarkable thirty-seven page pamphlet defense of polygamy printed by the Mormon press in Nauvoo in the autumn of 1842 suggests new perspectives on the introduction of plural marriage. The account allegedly comprises two chapters from a larger manuscript—apparently never published—called *The Peace Maker, or the Doctrines of the Millennium.*[5] The pamphlet presents a brilliant, highly unorthodox intellectual and social argument for the "Biblical" basis of marriage, divorce, and polygamy, which were seen as closely related. The *Peace Maker* was published at a key point in Joseph Smith's early attempt to prepare the minds of his followers eventually to accept plural marriage. As far as is known, the pamphlet constitutes the only explicit defense of polygamy published under the auspices of the main body of the Mormon Church before 1852.

As if to compensate for the explicitness of its argument for polygamy, the *Peace Maker* seems to suggest calculated ambiguity as to its authorship. An "Udney Hay Jacob" is indicated as the author. The "Preface" to the account states:

> The author of this work is not a Mormon, although it is printed by their press. It was most convenient. But the public will soon find out what he is, by his work.

Yet, on the title page, Jacob was identified as "An Israelite, and a Shepherd of Israel"—implying a possible leadership position in the Church. Beneath that was the note: "J. Smith, Printer."

The "Preface" to the *Peace Maker* further indicates that the goal of the account is "to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children" and vice versa as indicated in Malachi 4:5-6 and that the author of the account professes to stand in relation to the coming millennium as Elijah did to Christ's first coming. These two claims were strikingly similar to those being developed at the time by Joseph Smith as the underlying rationale for temple sealing ceremonies connected in part with polygamy. And polygamy was one of the last major practices which must be restored before the millennium could be ushered in.[6] In an exhortatory conclusion, the *Peace Maker* declares:

> The truth on this important matter is now clearly set before you my countrymen:. . . . The question is not now to be debated whether these things are so: neither is it a question of much importance who wrote this book? [*sic*] But the question, the momentous question is; *will you now restore the law of God on this important subject, and keep it*? Remember that the law of God is

> given by inspiration of the Holy Ghost. *Speak not a word against it at your peril.* . . . (p. 37; emphasis in original.)

Not surprisingly, publication of the *Peace Maker* created a brief furor in Nauvoo. For nearly six months, the Church had been recovering from the impact of the devastating John C. Bennett apostasy and his series of wild allegations about lurid polygamous debaucheries in the Church. Bennett's *History of the Saints* had come out in late September; yet only a month later—seemingly with the authorization of top Mormon leaders—an account defending polygamy was published. A sometimes reliable contemporary source for Nauvoo gossip, Oliver Olney, expressed what must have been a common opinion when he said, "If the pamphlet was not written by the authorities of the Church, it by them was revised in Jacobs [*sic*] name."[7] As a rebuttal to such arguments, Joseph Smith mildly dissociated himself from the publication in a brief statement in the *Times and Seasons* on December 1, 1842. He denied that he had seen it in advance or that he would have printed it had he known its contents. Significantly, however, Smith defended the author's right to publish such opinions. And more importantly, he did not make any criticisms of the extraordinary claims to authority made by the pamphlet—claims that in effect would have threatened to supercede his own leadership.[8]

In the tense political situation in Nauvoo following the Bennett fiasco, Joseph Smith had moved to centralize all power in his own hands. As part of this effort, he had placed the Church press in control of a totally loyal subordinate, John Taylor. Taylor apparently had replaced Ebenezer Robinson in part because of Robinson's hostility to plural marriage.[9] Under such circumstances, it is hard to imagine how—short of extreme and uncharacteristic carelessness—the pamphlet could have been published without the sanction of the leadership of the Church. Probably, as John D. Lee later alleged, the pamphlet was put forward as a "feeler" to test Church opinion but was denied when public reaction proved too unfavorable.[10]

The question of the authorship of the *Peace Maker* and the circumstances under which it was written remain unclear. Overzealous Mormon supporters of polygamy as early as 1850 and as late as the mid 1960's have in fact attributed authorship of the first chapter of the pamphlet to Joseph Smith himself.[11] This appears unlikely. Udney Hay Jacob was a real person, not a pseudonym. He was baptized into the Mormon Church in 1843, initially joined his better-known son Norton in beginning the exodus to Utah with the original band of pioneers in 1847, and died a member of the Church in Salt Lake City in 1860.[12] Udney Jacob's letters reveal that he would have been entirely capable of writing a document like the *Peace Maker* and his style appears similar to that of the pamphlet.[13] In fact, in a letter of March 5, 1851, to Brigham Young, Jacob stated that he had written the *Peace Maker* "for the citizens of the United States who professed to believe in the Bible" and that it also served as an "apology for this people [the Mormons] who were accused by them of Polygamy."[14] This statement would not be incompatible with John D. Lee's assertion that Jacob had been commissioned by Joseph Smith—or by other intermediaries acting in his name—to select passages from the Bible pertaining to polygamy, to write it up in pamphlet form, and to advocate the doctrine.[15]

Whether other Church involvement with the *Peace Maker* might also have occurred remains unclear. The complex historical questions of the authorship of this pamphlet and its relation to the political and social aspects of the early development of Mormon polygamy must be deferred to later analysis.[16] Instead, the remainder of

this article will discuss the controversial social and intellectual argument for the "Biblical" basis of marriage, divorce, and polygamy raised by the *Peace Maker*. Striking similarities between the pamphlet's distinctive argument for divorce and the divorce policy in early Utah will be presented. These similarities suggest the possibility that the pamphlet's argument for polygamy may also shed new light on early Mormon belief.

The *Peace Maker* itself is without doubt an intellectual *tour de force*. It presents an argument of astonishing intellectual and social sophistication, even though one easily may find the author's extreme stress on male dominance and prerogatives one-sided and disturbing. Entering into the author's way of thinking poses some initial problems. An elaborate and highly unorthodox Biblical exegesis underlies the argument. Combined with this is an almost paranoid concern for reestablishing patriarchal authority and male dominance. This is seen as the only means by which total social chaos can be avoided. The Fall in the Garden of Eden was due to the woman, not the serpent, and implicitly that fall was related in part to woman's sexual influence over man: "Adam was enslaved by the woman, and so are we." Man should be the head over his wife; for a woman to take the lead in any way is a usurpation.

The pamphlet argues that the unnatural female usurpation of power in the family has brought in its wake a host of social evils. Children have become ungoverned and ungovernable, while husbands have even been pushed into abandonment of their families "to the mercy of a heartless world" due to "the unnatural and in-

tolerable nature of female tyranny and usurpation." "Multitudes of families are now in confusion and wretchedly governed. This is a great evil." Woman's unnatural leadership in the family and her sexual power over men has had a ruinous effect under the present laws; it is "such an unnatural shackle to the dignity and original excellency of the mind of man" that it threatens to corrupt the very fountainhead of life. The married woman should see that she revere her husband, for God is not the author of confusion, but of peace. Satan "must be expelled by exalting man to his original authority and dignity, and by forming our laws exactly according to divine pattern."[17]

Underlying the frantic, paranoid surface tone of much of the *Peace Maker* is a genuine concern for overcoming the existing alienation between men and women in marriage and reestablishing satisfying relations between the sexes. The question is how this is to be accomplished. The *Peace Maker* offers some highly unorthodox and controversial suggestions. One problem area is divorce. The author of the pamphlet is profoundly disturbed at the existing divorce laws. That these laws are wrong in principle is shown by the fact that such great variation in divorce standards exists in different states. These varying standards, he concludes, cannot all be right. There can be only one divine standard of divorce, just as there can be only one true standard of religious authority.

The true or Biblical standard of divorce which is necessary to reestablish social order must be based on Christ's statement, as given in the King James translation, that to put away a wife for any cause but fornication and then marry again is to commit adultery (Matt: 5:32). The meaning of "fornication" in this statement is not immediately obvious. The normal meaning of "fornication" involves intercourse prior to marriage; this cannot be meant here. Likewise, "fornication" in this quotation could not be translated as "adultery," since the Biblical punishment for adultery was death by stoning, not divorce. And the Bible remains the same from beginning to end, according to the author of the pamphlet. Then what is the Biblical "fornication" which is the only true basis for divorce? According to the author of the *Peace Maker*, it is *the alienation of the affections of the wife from her husband.* That, and that alone, constitutes the divine basis of divorce.

The *Peace Maker* sees marriage, therefore, as a relationship in which the wife should be fully devoted mentally and physically to her husband, subject to his authority in all things:

> The truth is this: the spiritual law of marriage is binding upon both the body and the mind of the wife equally. The prostitution of the body after marriage constitutes adultery; but the alienation of the mind or affections from her husband constitutes fornication in a married woman. (p. 7)

An alienated wife, held in wedlock against her will is peculiarly harmful. She will bear spiritually corrupted children and rear them to disrespect her husband. Her children, born of "fornication" are "bastards" and are disqualified from entering the congregation of the Lord to the tenth generation.

> It is evident that the minds or souls are propagated by natural generation as well as bodies. . . . The woman is the producer, and while she remains pure, truly attached in spirit to her husband, her children are pure, and born in honor, but not otherwise. (p. 13)

Thus, when a woman becomes totally alienated from her husband, he should "write her a bill of divorcement according to the strict letter of the law of God given by Moses."

> A right understanding of this matter, and a correct law properly executed, would restore this na-

> tion to peace and order; and man to his true dignity, authority and government of the earthly creation. It would soon rectify the domestic circle, and establish a proper head over the families of the earth, and be the means of driving satan; together with the knowledge and restitution of the whole penal law of God, and the glorious and everlasting gospel; yea, of driving satan from the human mind and, seting [*sic*] a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more until his time. And by no other means can order and peace be restored to man. And by no other means can the heart of the fathers be turned to their children, and the heart of the children be turned to their fathers. (p. 10)

The wife, then, should be divorced by her husband should her affections become alienated from his; however, if the husband's affections are alienated from hers while she remains sincerely attached to him, the same standard does not apply, for "a man shall not take advantage of his own wrong." If a man could go about divorcing wives and taking new ones at his own whim, he would be acting with gross irresponsibility and contributing to social chaos. What recourse does the man have in a less-than-ideal marriage? After all, the wife may not be unfaithful, yet "she may be a perfect devil to her husband." This is not desirable, for God's will is orderly and harmonious social relations.

Underlying the solution to this problem proposed by the *Peace Maker* is a special view of male authority in marriage, a view which was still widely prevalent in less explicit form in nineteenth-century America. The pamphlet declares repeatedly that a married woman is the property of her husband, property in a very special sense, "very precious, near and dear to him as his own body." As the property of her husband, the wife cannot in turn own her owner, for that would be a logical absurdity. Thus the husband is not under the law of marriage to his wife; in his treatment of his wife, he is responsible only to God's law. If a husband is unreasonable toward his wife or if he physically abuses her, he can be held legally accountable by society, but not by his wife.

Since the man is not under the law of marriage to his wife, the *Peace Maker* thus concludes that the solution for a man in an unsatisfactory marriage situation is the ancient one of taking additional wives while continuing to maintain the first:

> In ancient times under the law of God, the permission of a plurality of wives had a direct tendency, to prevent the possibility of fornication in the wife. For the law of divorcement, and all the law on the subject, sustained the lawful and independent power of the husband over the wife; and his dignity of character was thereby supported. The interest, the hopes, the prospects of the wife, were all turned in the opposite direction by the law; where indeed her mind ought always to be. Her main object was to win, and retain the affections of her husband. And there was no means more successful for this purpose, than to bear him many children; . . . The ruinous evil of a woman's being jealous of her husband, could not then exist under the law, and this evil is almost the only source of fornication in a wife. . . . And the wife was perfectly passive, submissive and non-resisting towards her husband. (pp. 17-18)

Following out this line of argument, the *Peace Maker* develops some of its most controversial assertions. According to the pamphlet, for a married man to "entice a maid . . . is not an offence against his wife; neither is it against the maid; but altogether in the maid's favor"—*provided* the man then take the maid in a regularized fashion and support her as a wife. Since the man is not under the law of marriage to his wife, there is no possibility of the man abrogating the marriage covenant by taking additional wives in such a fashion.

> But if a man commits adultery with another man's wife; it has a direct tendency to produce the great evil of alienation in the wife; which is murder to her posterity in its nature: and he robs the husband of his most precious rights, violates the interest of his life and family in the most sacred points of a man's existance [*sic*]. He therefore, and the adulteress shall be put to death. God now

> calls us to peace, and purity and order; for his house is a house of order, and not of confusion. This is the object of the whole law. (p. 19)

To recapitulate, the complex and sometimes convoluted social argument of the first chapter of the *Peace Maker* may be summarized as three main assertions. First, patriarchal authority and proper related patterns of male-female roles in the home and in society must be restored if social chaos is to be avoided. Second, to aid in accomplishing this end, a true or "Biblical" form of divorce must be reestablished. It would allow women who had become irrevocably alienated from their husbands to be divorced. Thus the atmosphere of the home would not become poisoned because women were held in wedlock against their will. Finally, as a counterpart to restoring the "Biblical" standard of divorce, polygamy, the "Biblical" form of marriage, must be reinstituted. Polygamy would allow men to reassert their proper authority and leadership. It would free them from the unnatural sexual influence women hold over men in a monogamous system. And it would provide men with an acceptable response to unsatisfactory marital situations short of the socially irresponsible one of divorcing rebellious but not fully alienated wives.

Underlying the three-fold social argument presented in the *Peace Maker* is the assumption that only by reestablishing such a patriarchal basis for social authority can the true order of Christ's Church on earth be realized. The proper relationship between husband and wife is seen as analogous to the proper relationship which should exist between Christ and his Church. Inversion of proper male and female roles was a key factor in the Great Apostasy from Christ's Church. Such role inversion destroyed the Patriarchal Order, thereby undermining the whole family organization and resulting in chaos. A restitution of patriarchal authority is thus of overriding importance both for the social order and for Christ's Church.[18]

The second chapter of the *Peace Maker* develops more fully these and other arguments about the specific circumstances under which polygamy is legitimately to be practiced. Although interesting, these details will not be presented here. The most intellectually and socially distinctive ideas in the pamphlet are all outlined in the first chapter.

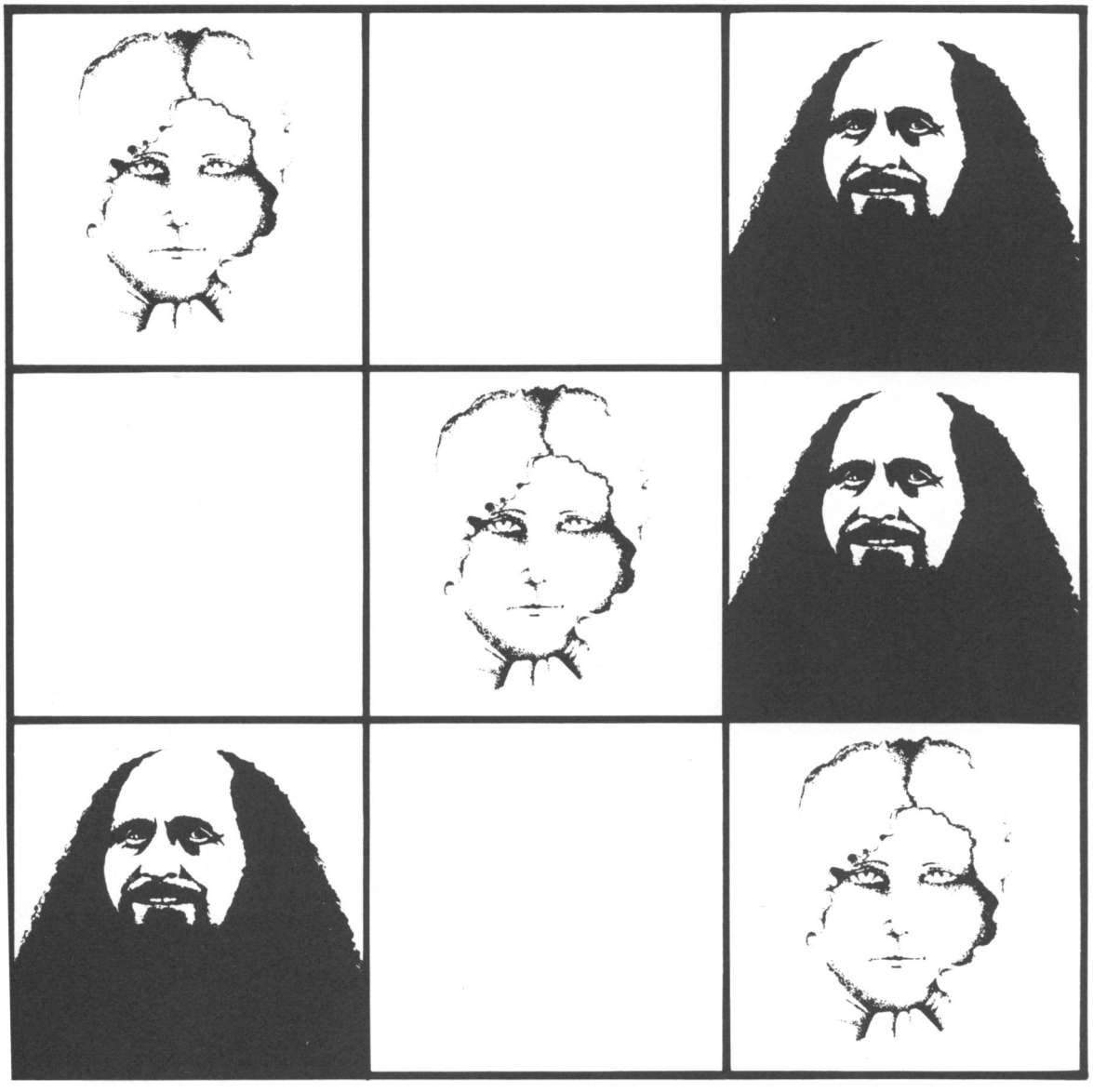
What relation, if any, do the ideas advanced in the *Peace Maker* have with early Mormon values, especially those of Joseph Smith? This is a difficult question which might be approached from a number of different perspectives. Here only a few tentative documentary suggestions of the possible relationship will be provided, based on some early Mormon statements about divorce.

Despite its shrill tone and almost pathetic fearfulness that women were getting out of their place, many of the arguments in the *Peace Maker* offered possibilities for humanizing relations between the sexes. Probably the most striking thesis advanced in the pamphlet was that the alienation of the affections of the wife from her husband was the only legitimate grounds for divorce. This was a significant liberalization from the attitudes in many parts of antebellum America. Despite the increasing flexibility of divorce laws in the period, divorce generally remained hard to arrange and desertion frequently provided the only practical means of terminating an unsatisfactory marriage relationship. Like the argument of the *Peace Maker*, one of the most distinctive aspects of polygamy in early Utah was its relation to Utah's relatively liberal divorce policy in which women's feelings were seriously taken into account. Women in early Utah had the primary initiative in determining when to terminate a relationship, while their husbands could not easily divorce their wives if the wife were opposed. This contrasts with the practice in many polygamous

societies in which, typically, women have little to say in such matters, while husbands are relatively free to divorce their wives. In Utah, therefore, women possessed a significantly higher and safer status than in many polygamous societies elsewhere.[19]

That the *Peace Maker*'s theory of the alienation of affections may relate closely to Joseph Smith's beliefs is suggested by a number of sources. A statement made by John D. Lee presents Joseph Smith's alleged attitudes in the same paragraph in which he discusses the Jacob pamphlet.

> About the same time [1842] the doctrine of "sealing" for an eternal state was introduced, and the Saints were given to understand that their marriage relations with each other were not valid. That those who had solemnized the rites of matrimony had no authority of God to do so. That the true priesthood was taken from the earth with the death of the Apostles and inspired men of God. That they were married to each other only by their own covenants, and that if their marriage relations had not been productive of blessings and peace, and they felt it oppressive to remain together, they were at liberty to make their own choice, much as if they had not been married. *That it was a sin for people to live together, and raise or beget children in alienation from each other. There should exist an affinity between each other, not a lustful one, as that can never cement that love and affection that should exist between a man and his wife.*[20] (Emphasis added.)



Evaluating the accuracy of Lee's statement involves numerous problems of memory, bias, and editing. Certainly he may well be confusing the argument of the *Peace Maker* itself with Joseph Smith's own beliefs, since Lee is writing about both in the same paragraph. However, other sources also suggest that Joseph Smith possessed the sort of sensitive concern for the quality of relationships between men and women that is expressed here.

One of the most articulate of Joseph Smith's alleged plural wives, Lucy Walker Kimball, wrote of his concerns for the quality of relations between the sexes in a way that would seem at least partially to support Lee's statement. She said that Smith

> Often referred to the feelings that should exist between husband and wives, that his wives, should be his bosom companions, the nearest and dearest objects on earth in every sense of the word. He said that men must beware how they treat their wives. They were given them for a holy purpose that the myriads of spirits waiting for tabernacles might have pure and healthy bodies. He also said many would awake in the morning of the resurrection sadly disappointed; for they, by transgression would have neither wives nor children, for they would surely be taken from them, and given to those who should prove themselves worthy. Again he said, a woman would have her choice; this was a privilege that could not be denied her.[21]

Hints of similar attitudes on Joseph Smith's part toward the alienation of affections are suggested in two entries in Wilford Woodruff's Journal. In the first entry, for June 15, 1851, Woodruff summarizes the conclusion of one of Brigham Young's sermons as follows: "In speaking of the married state [he] says if man & wife become alliniated [*sic*] from each other it is in one sens [*sic*] the spirit of Adultery."[22] An entry for June 2, 1857, in Woodruff's Journal records the following conversation with Brigham Young:

> The subject of Adultery again came up Joseph said a man cannot commit adultery with his wife so says the revelation on the Patriarchal Marriage Yet a man can do rong [*sic*] in having connection with his wife at times Joseph Young [indecipherable] said the Ancient Apostle said that a man should not put away his wife save for the cause of fornication If he did they would both commit Adultery. Brigham Young said that Joseph taught that when a womans [*sic*] affections were entirely weaned from her husband that was adultery in spirit her Affections were Adulterated from his.[23]

Possibly the most striking parallel between the *Peace Maker* and stated Mormon beliefs is found in a sermon by Brigham Young in the Tabernacle on October 8, 1861. As reported by James Beck, Young

> then gave some instructions in relation to sealing He said that there were many men & women who after having been sealed to each other for time & all Eternity. Came to him for a Bill of Divorce. & for the sum of 10 dollars he gave them a Bill Because the Lord permitted it but it was of no use to them. they might Just as well tear off a Peice [*sic*] of Blank Paper for a divorce. But on account of the hardness of their hearts. the Lord permitted it. as it was in the days of Moses. But there was a way in which a woman could leave a man lawfully. When a woman becomes alienated in her feelings & affections from her husband, it is then his duty to give her a Bill & set her free which would be fornication for the man to cohabit with his wife after she had thus become alienated from him. the children begotten of such a woman would be bastards in the true Scriptural term of the word Fornication. for the crime of adultery a woman (& also men) would be stoned to death & come up in the morning of the Resurrection & claim all of her rights & Priviledges [*sic*] in the marrage [*sic*] covenant.[24]

This statement will be recognized as virtually a précis of the main thesis of the *Peace Maker*. One can not help but think of the concluding sentences in that pamphlet: "The question is not now to be debated whether these things are so:

neither is it a question of much importance who wrote this book?" What is significant is that—however it may have happened—this obscure pamphlet and the official position of the early Church appear essentially the same, at least on the vital question of the grounds for terminating the marriage relationship. The possibility that the *Peace Maker* may also shed important light on larger aspects of the development of new marriage and family forms among the early Mormons also deserves serious scholarly consideration.

In summary, the aim of this paper has been a rather narrowly restricted one: to evaluate an obscure early pamphlet defense of polygamy printed by the Mormon Church and to raise the possibility that the pamphlet might shed light on issues of much broader significance in both the social and religious development of the Church. Evidence summarized in this paper suggests that the *Peace Maker* probably was published with the sanction of the leaders of the Church, even though it was later denied by them because of the controversy it aroused. The author or chief writer of the pamphlet probably was Udney Hay Jacob, but whether his work was encouraged, edited or revised by Joseph Smith or other leaders of the Church remains unclear.

Given the striking similarities between the argument for divorce in the *Peace Maker* and in early Utah, the possibility that some of the key ideas for which Jacob found Biblical support might have been based in part on prior discussions with Mormons or have influenced later Mormon leaders remains a live option. In the final analysis, however, the chief significance of the *Peace Maker* lies not in its authorship or in the authority behind it. Rather the pamphlet's significance is to be found in the degree to which it may open a window of understanding into the values and felt social necessities underlying the remarkable Mormon effort to establish a distinctively American form of Biblical polygamy and the culture of the Hebrew patriarchs in mid-nineteenth-century America.

[1]The minutes of the conference appeared as a *Deseret News* Extra for September 14, 1852, and were reprinted as a Supplement to Volume 15 of *The Latter-Day Saints' Millennial Star*. Orson Pratt's speech is most readily available in the *Journal of Discourses*, 1 (1854), 53-66 (hereinafter *JD*). An early reprinting of Joseph Smith's alleged revelation of July 12, 1843, is in the *Millennial Star*, 15 (January 1, 1853), 5-8.

[2]Full documentation for this and other statements made here about the origin and early development of Mormon plural marriage will be provided in my forthcoming dissertation in progress at the University of Chicago: "The Family and the Millennium: The Early Shaker, Oneida Perfectionist, and Mormon Reorganization of Marriage and Family Life." The Mormon chapters of this dissertation will analyze the development of the distinctive Mormon form of polygamy between its probable intellectual origins in the early 1830's and the mid 1850's when the general character of its development had become largely set. Special consideration will be given to the values underlying this remarkable new form of family organization. I am very grateful for the support of this research by individuals in the LDS Church Historical Department in Salt Lake City, particularly Leonard Arrington and Davis Bitton. The assistance of these as well as of many other fine Mormon scholars has been of inestimable value.

[3]The complex process by which Joseph Smith received and interpreted revelation has not yet received adequate scholarly analysis. Some starting points for such an analysis are found in The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints [Utah edition] (Salt Lake City, Utah, 1968), especially Sections 6, 9, and 10; Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: Period I, History of Joseph Smith the Prophet*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 6 vols. 2nd ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1955), 5: xxiv-xlvi; Eduard Meyer, "Nature and Mechanisms of Smith's Revelations" in his *The Origin and History of the Mormons*, trans. Heinz F. Rahde and Eugene Seaich

(Salt Lake City: Univ. of Utah Press, 1961), 30-38; Richard P. Howard, *Restoration Scriptures: A Study of Their Textual Development* (Independence, Mo.: Herald, 1969); and Jan Shipps, "The Prophet Puzzle: Suggestions Toward a More Comprehensive Interpretation of Joseph Smith, "*Journal of Mormon History*, 1 (1974), 4-20.

[4]Accounts of the "angel with a drawn sword" story are widespread, although manuscript evidence for such a story apparently does not exist from the period when Joseph Smith was alive. Whether or not Joseph Smith ever made this particular statement, his actions in attempting to introduce polygamous belief and practice among his closest followers in Nauvoo suggest that he was, indeed, operating under a sense of intense inner compulsion.

[5]The title page of the pamphlet reads as follows: *An Extract. From a Manuscript Entitled The Peace Maker, or the Doctrines of the Millennium: Being a Treatise on Religion and Jurisprudence. Or a New System of Religion and Politicks* [*sic*]. For God, My Country, and My Rights. By Udney Hay Jacob. An Israelite, and a Shepherd of Israel. Nauvoo, Ill. J. Smith, Printer, 1842. Apparently there are only two extant copies of this extremely rare document. The one to which reference is made in this paper is found in the William Robertson Coe Collection of the Beinecke Library at Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut. A xerox made from this pamphlet is found in the Library of the LDS Church Historical Department in Salt Lake City, Utah. The other copy of this document is in the Everett D. Graff Collection of the Newberry Library, Chicago, Illinois. A typescript from this copy made by Dale Morgan is located in the Utah State Historical Society Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.

[6]In his sermon "Celestial Marriage" which introduced the Mormon belief in and practice of plural marriage to the world, Orson Pratt provided a succinct summary of normative nineteenth-century Mormon belief on that topic. According to Pratt, Joseph Smith held the "sealing keys of power, or in other words, of Elijah, having been committed and restored to the earth by Elijah, the Prophet, who held many keys, among which were the keys of sealing, to bind the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers; together with all the other sealing keys and powers pertaining to the last dispensation. They were committed by that Angel who administered in the Kirtland Temple and spoke unto Joseph the Prophet, at the time of the endowments in that house." *JD*, 1 (1854), 64. See also Doctrine and Covenants, Sections 2 and 110.

For a contemporary discussion of the context within which the restoration of the patriarchal order and plural marriage was conceived of by 19th-century Mormons as part of a necessary prelude to the coming of the millennium, see Hyrum L. Andrus, *Doctrines of the Kingdom: Volume III, Foundations of the Millennial Kingdom of Christ* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1973), especially pp. 1-19 and 439-489.

[7]Oliver H. Olney, *The Absurdities of Mormonism Portrayed: A Brief Sketch* (Hancock County, Ill.; n.p., 1843), 10.

[8]The complete statement as printed in *The Times and Seasons*, 4 (December 1, 1842), 32, read: "NOTICE. There was a book printed at my office, a short time since, written by Udney H. Jacobs [*sic*], on marriage, without my knowledge; and had I been apprised of it, I should not have printed it; not that I am opposed to any man enjoying his privileges; but I do not wish to have my name associated with the authors [*sic*] in such an unmeaning rigmarole of nonsense, folly, and trash. JOSEPH SMITH."

This is one of the mildest of all Joseph Smith's carefully worded apparent denials of polygamy. Far stronger denial statements were made of beliefs and practices which contemporary apostate and later Utah Mormon sources clearly verify existed with official sanction in Nauvoo. Note the possible *double entendre* in the phrase: "not that I am opposed to any man enjoying his privileges." At the obvious level, this statement could be taken to mean that Joseph Smith would not oppose publication of the pamphlet. But in later Utah Mormon usage, statements about men exercising or enjoying their privileges often referred to polygamy. And there is some evidence that Joseph Smith may have made similar oblique references to polygamy in some of his own statements. Thus, this phrase could also have been a word to the wise that even if Joseph Smith was disavowing this particular pamphlet for the record, he was not opposing properly sanctioned polygamy. Since polygamy was illegal in Illinois at this time, any explicit public statement in its support was hardly to be expected from Mormon leaders.

It would be useful to know whether other printed items from the Mormon press at Nauvoo also bore the designation: "J. Smith, Printer." I have not as yet been able to make such a survey of the literature emanating from the Church press in Nauvoo. If the *Peace Maker* were unique or almost unique in bearing Joseph Smith's name as printer, then that would tend to suggest that the pamphlet might be viewed as being of special importance.

[9]Joseph Lee Robinson, a brother of Ebenezer Robinson, wrote on July 14, 1846, in Nauvoo, as a loyal member of the Church, that the involvement of Ebenezer's wife Angeline in anti-polygamy efforts with Emma infuriated Joseph Smith. Apparently Ebenezer's support of his wife's stand in the matter was a contributing factor in his precipitous removal from the editorship of the *Times and Seasons* in February 1842. Joseph Lee Robinson, Autobiography and Journal, 49. The original manuscript is in the Brigham Young University Special Collections. For the larger context of this controversy, see Robert Bruce Flanders, *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi* (Urbana, Ill.: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1965), 249-251.

[10]John D. Lee, *Mormonism Unveiled; or The Life and Confessions of the Late Mormon Bishop, John D. Lee*, ed. W. W. Bishop (St. Louis, Mo.; Bryan, Brand & Co., 1877), 146.

[11]When a Paul Harrison of Manchester, England, had copies of the first chapter of the *Peace Maker* privately printed in 1850, attributed it to Joseph Smith's authorship, and then proceeded to give public lectures at which he sold the pamphlets, a great commotion was created in the British Mission. Prior to 1852, all statements linking the Mormon Church with belief in or practice of polygamy were being emphatically denied. Harrison thus was a considerable embarrassment to the Church, whether or not his claims had any validity. For the controversy, see Eli B. Kelsey, "A Base Calumny Refuted," *Millennial Star*, 12 (March 15, 1850), 92-93. Harrison's letter of July 29, 1850 abjectly begging to be readmitted to the Church was printed, with additional comments by Orson Pratt, as "Beware the Apostate's Doom," *Millennial Star*, 12 (September 15, 1850), 280-283. Significantly, Harrison's four page letter nowhere denied the truth of his assertions about the authorship of the pamphlet. The only extant copy of Harrison's extremely rare imprint is found in the Coe Collection of the Beinecke Library, Yale Univeristy, New Haven, Connecticut.

That Paul Harrison may have been a premature or ill-advisedly open polygamist is implied in Kelsey's article in the *Millennial Star* and by Harrison's arrest sixteen years later for bigamy, reported in the *Millennial Star*, 28 (December 15, 1866), 793. Harrison's relationship to the Church and to the *Peace Maker* remains obscure. The LDS Geneological Society Library in Salt Lake City contains a family group sheet referring to a Paul Harrison in Manchester, England, who was baptized into the Church in 1843, but whether this is the man in question remains in doubt. How Paul Harrison secured a copy of what was even at the time an extremely rare and controversial pamphlet or why he attributed it to Joseph Smith is unclear.

In the mid 1960's a minor stir was created when an item entitled "A Little Known Discourse by the Prophet Joseph Smith" was distributed in Mormon circles in California. Allegedly it was taken from an unpublished biography of Warren and Amanda Smith. Thomas G. Truitt of the Library of the LDS Church Historical Department showed that striking line by line similarities exist between the "Discourse" and the first chapter of the *Peace Maker*. I am also informed that the Historical Department knows of no original documentary source for the biography of Warren and Amanda Smith. If such an original source existed and contained the "Discourse," it would raise new questions. For a discussion of these issues, see Kenneth W. Godfrey, "A New Look at the Alleged Little Known Discourse by Joseph Smith," *BYU Studies*, 9 (Autumn 1968), 49-53; and Ogden Kraut, "The Little Known Discourse: A Documentary," n.p., n.d. Xerox copies of Thomas G. Truitt's analyses and of Kraut's typescript are in the Library of the LDS Historical Department.

[12]The primary biographical source for Udney Jacob is in the Norton Jacob, Journal and Reminiscences, 1842-1852. The original manuscript is held in the Archives of the LDS Church Historical Department, hereinafter cited as Church Archives.

[13]Two letters written by Udney Hay Jacob suggest his writing style and thought processes. One, to President Martin Van Buren, dated March 21, 1840, is now located in the Illinois State Historical Society Library, Springfield, Illinois. The other, to Joseph Smith, dated January 6, 1844, is in the Joseph Smith Collection, Church Archives.

[14]Letter, Udney Hay Jacob to Brigham Young, March 5, 1851, Church Archives.

[15]Lee, *Mormonism Unveiled*, p. 146.

[16]I plan to provide further analysis of some of the complex problems connected with the *Peace Maker* in an appendix to my forthcoming dissertation.

[17]*Peace Maker*, pp. 3-6. The argument in this pamphlet is often rather convoluted and repetitious. In this presentation, the main lines of thought and their interrelationships have been highlighted, but quotations have not necessarily been used in their order of appearance. To avoid unnecessary footnote clutter, page citations will be given only for the longer quotes. All remaining citations from the *Peace Maker* in this article are from the first of its two chapters, identified as: "Chapter XVIII: On the Law of Marriage."

The argument of the *Peace Maker* is similar to that of many other contemporary publications in fearing that the family, and with it the whole social order, were threatened. However, the *Peace Maker* attributes this problem to different causes and proposes different solutions to it than did most antebellum Americans. For instance, note that the *Peace Maker*'s argument that the Fall in the Garden of Eden was the fault of Eve, the Temptress, is an older belief that was not generally shared by other nineteenth-century Americans. Instead, the literature of the period stresses the pure, innocent qualities of the woman. The man was the lascivious one; his animal passions were the ones which needed to be curbed. The pure, asexual woman would be the one to do it and thus restore order in the family and by extension in society itself. See Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860," *American Quarterly*, 18 (Summer 1966), 151-174, for a summary of this point of view.

[18]The social argument of the *Peace Maker* has been emphasized in this paper, but that argument is integrally connected with and receives its intellectual justification from an argument for the nature of true religious authority. A discussion of the relationship of the religious and social argument of the *Peace Maker* and "Discourse" to contemporary Mormon values is presented in C. Jess Groesbeck, "Psychosexual Identity and the Marriage Relationship," *Dialogue*, 2 (Spring 1967), 130-135.

[19]Divorce policy, like marriage practice and other aspects of antebellum American life, was also in flux. Between 1800 and 1870, fairly drastic changes took place in the legal grounds for divorce in many states. During this period, a number of states and territories, including Indiana, Illinois, Connecticut, Maine, Washington, Louisiana, and Arizona adopted "omnibus" clauses which in practice permitted the courts and legislatures to grant divorces almost at their discretion. Utah adopted such a clause in 1852. Restrictions on the remarriage of divorced parties also were eased. Following the Civil War, a conservative trend developed and much of the earlier liberal legislation was repealed. For a detailed analysis of changes in English and American marriage and divorce policy over the past several hundred years, see George Elliott Howard, *A History of Matrimonial Institutions, Chiefly in England and the United States*, 3 vols. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1904). A convenient summary of American divorce trends in the nineteenth century is found in James Harwood Barnett, *Divorce and the American Divorce Novel, 1858-1937: A Study in Literary Reflections of Social Influences* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1939), 15-68.

The development of early Utah's relatively flexible divorce policy and its relationship to plural marriage and to the idealization of marriage as an eternal relationship and basis of social stability deserves careful study. Any such analysis would have to be based largely on manuscript material, since questions of marriage and divorce were handled primarily by the Church not the courts in early Utah. While divorce was strongly discouraged in Utah, especially in cases of temple marriages, divorce nevertheless appears to have been fairly widespread during the difficult early days of Utah settlement. In addition to the problems of early Utah settlement, plural marriage itself undoubtedly placed special stresses on marital relationships in the period.

For evidence of Brigham Young's strong official disapproval of divorce, especially when requested by the man, see the *Journal of Discourses*, 8:202 and 17:119, Historian's Office Journal, 1858-1859 Book, p. 11 (December 15, 1858), and Historian's Office Journal, 1858-1859 Book, p. 15 (December 17, 1858). These citations were kindly called to my attention courtesy of D. Michael Quinn. See also Herbert Ray Larsen, "'Familism' in Mormon Social Structure" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Utah, 1954), 201-205; Kimball Young, *Isn't One Wife Enough?* (New York: Holt, 1954), 226-240; and D. Michael Quinn, "Organizational Development and Social Origins of the Mormon Hierarchy, 1832-1932: A Prosopographical Study" (M.A. thesis, University of Utah, 1973), 246-291. The Utah divorce law passed on March 6, 1852, is found in *Acts, Resolutions and Memorials, Passed at the Several Annual Sessions of the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Utah* (Great Salt Lake City: Joseph Cain, 1855), 162-164.

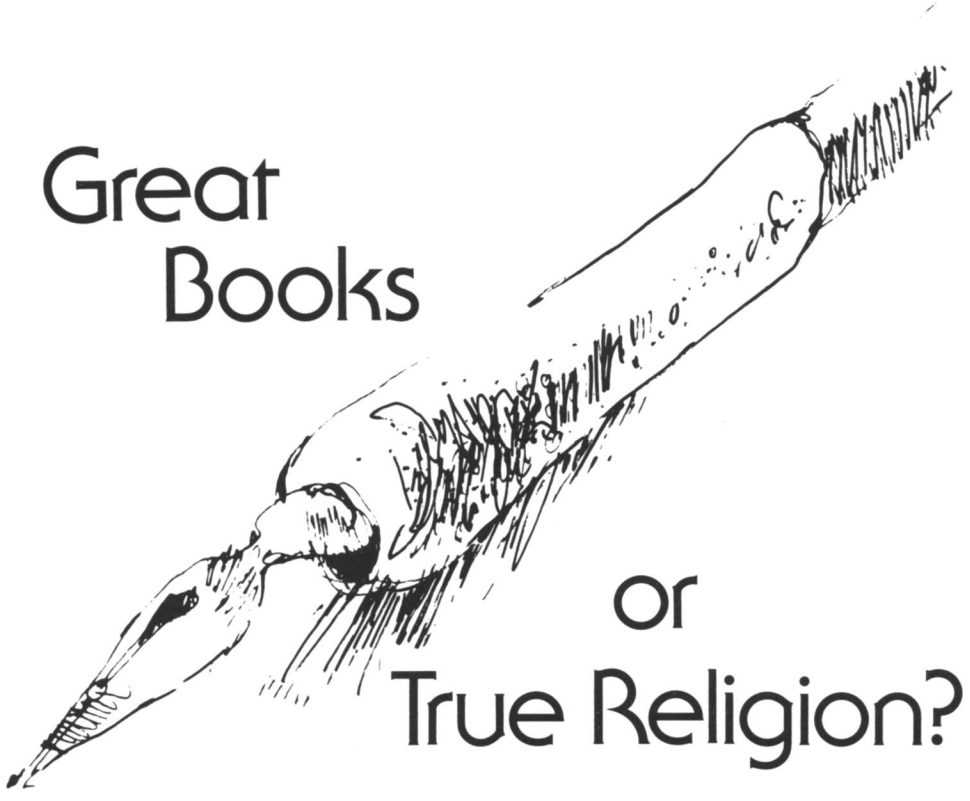
[20]Lee, *Mormonism Unveiled*, pp. 146-147.

[21]Lucy Walker Kimball, Statement. Copied for the Federal Writers Project, 1940, 5. A slightly longer original manuscript is held in the Church Archives.

[22]Wilford Woodruff, Journal, Church Archives, June 15, 1851. This and the following entry were called to my attention by D. Michael Quinn.

[23]Woodruff, Journal, June 2, 1857. Compare this final play on words with the *Peace Maker*, 8: "Adultery signifies simply, the act which adulterates, legally, that which defiles the marriage bed."

[24]James Beck, Notebooks, 1859-1865, I, Church Archives, October 8, 1861.



Great Books or True Religion?

Defining the Mormon Scholar

Eugene England

My Brothers and Sisters, I greet you at the beginning of the last twenty-five of this second thousand years after Christ. I greet you who will be the generation of leaders—certainly the intellectual leaders—of the Church as it prepares a people for Christ's second coming.

You have been honored tonight because you have magnified a gift that the Lord has given you. I should remind us all who have been honored in various ways for our intellectual gift that it is just that—a gift—and it is only *one* of the many different gifts that the Lord enumerates in the 46th section of the Doctrine and Covenants (in addition to organizational ability, good judgment, spiritual receptiveness, etc.). He reminds us there that our intellectual gift—what he calls "the word of knowledge"—does not make us better than others, but only possessed thereby of a way and a special responsibility to be of service—"that all may be taught to be wise and to have knowledge," he says, "that all may be profited thereby." But nevertheless you should be honored for accepting and using your gift, and I am pleased to be able to wear a Phi Kappa Phi pin with you tonight.

I address you tonight in terms of your special gift; I propose to explore what it might mean in these last days to be a Mormon Scholar, a Latter-day Saint intellectual. Perhaps some of you flinch at the label, "intellectual"; it isn't always a complimentary term in our society—or even in the Church. I use it in an essentially neutral way, as descriptive of your gift from the Lord that makes you delight in ideas, alive to the life that goes on *in* your mind as well as outside it, that makes you question set forms and conventional wisdom to see if they really are truth or only habit, whether they endure because right or merely because of fear or sloth; I use the term intellectual to refer to the gift from the Lord that makes you curious about why as well as how, anxious to serve Him by being creative as well as obedient. You, more than most people, have it in you to exemplify Sir Thomas More's phrase in *A Man for All Seasons*, when he says God made animals for innocence and plants for their simplicity, but humans he made "to serve him wittily, in the tangle of our minds."

The Restoration has been characterized from the first by such people as you, by intellectuals, though our histories have so far tended to slight them as such. Take Joseph Smith, founder of the School of the Prophets, student of Hebrew in frontier Ohio in the midst of desperate struggles of the fledgling Church to survive. Read his King Follett funeral sermon, where he proposes the most intellectually exciting as well as spiritually satisfying vision of man's nature and destiny in human history. Then he says:

> "This is good doctrine. It tastes good. I can taste the principles of eternal life, and so can you. They are given to me by the revelations of Jesus Christ; and I know that when I tell you these words of eternal life as they are given to me, you taste them, and I know that you believe them. You say that honey is sweet, and so do I. I can also taste the spirit of eternal life. I know that it is good; and when I tell you of these things which were given me by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, you are bound to receive them as sweet, and rejoice more and more."

That is the perspective and language of an intellectual, one to whom ideas taste sweet. Or read Section 88 of the Doctrine and Covenants, which Joseph Smith gave a special name, "The Olive Leaf." It is an incredible revelation of how God relates to the physicial universe, how physical light relates to intelligence. Think of the kinds of questions Joseph must have asked to move the Lord to give it. Surely that man was an intellectual, as well as a charismatic leader, a fine husband and father, a city-planner, and a Prophet of God. Think of the Pratt brothers, Parley P. and Orson, one a marvelously creative theologian and writer, the other a first-rate mathematician and astronomer. Many of you, I hope, have seen the calendar published by the Sunstone Foundation, a group of your peers, young LDS intellectuals who are selling the calendars to raise money to publish a journal in which to explore and express their gifts; the cover picture is of Temple Square in 1875, with the temple walls just starting up, and in the corner of the Square is Orson's observatory, a witness of the amazing intellectual vitality of that pioneer community still struggling to survive in a desert frontier. Think of Eliza R. Snow, accomplished poet, fine thinker, energetic leader in the late nineteenth-century women's movement, or her niece, Louisa Green, first editor of *The Women's Exponent*, or Eliza's brother, Lorenzo Snow, an early graduate of the experimental Oberlin College and himself a poet and writer of skill as well as a courageous and inspiring president of the Church during the darkest hours under the polygamy persecutions. Think of Orson Spencer, appointed first president of the University of Deseret by Brigham Young, and Emmeline B. Wells, and Brigham Young himself (whose lesser known

qualities as a thinker and writer are perhaps best revealed in his letters, such as those to his sons just recently published), or of B. H. Roberts or James Talmage—or of Juanita Brooks. (I recently heard Sister Brooks praised in a totally non-Mormon group as a supreme example of the historian's ideal because she was able, in her book on the Mountain Meadows Massacre, to attain a remarkable degree of objectivity despite a clear continued loyalty to her own people and faith.) These are our intellectual heroes—or ought to be.

But let me remind you of something about all of them. Juanita Brooks served the Church devotedly, as a Stake Relief Society President among other things, for many years, and she then remained an unembittered and faithful Latter-day Saint wife and mother despite the almost total rejection of her and her husband by her own people because of that book on Mountain Meadows. Not only Joseph Smith gave his life for the Church; Parley Pratt bled to death after being stabbed by an assassin while serving a mission for the Church, dying, as he said in his last testimony, "a martyr to the faith." Orson Spencer was a cultivated, sensitive intellectual, whose equally cultivated and sensitive wife died in a tent in Iowa when the Saints were driven from Nauvoo; after teaching for a time in the new University of Deseret, he humbly accepted a mission call from Brigham Young in 1856 and died of tuberculosis while serving in St. Louis. And B. H. Roberts, whose combination of commitment to historical truth with a clear sense of ultimate values and a conviction of the divinity of the Restoration shines through his *Comprehensive History of the Church* in a way that remains a standard for all LDS historians, this B. H. Roberts, man of conscience and integrity, after real struggle humbled himself to the authority of the Presidency of the Church when that authority came into conflict with his political convictions and ambitions. What is my point? These intellectual heroes I hold up to you tonight were also spiritual and moral heroes; these men and women pursued the truth with courage, and new ideas and creative expression with delight, but they finally put their faith in the Lord and loyalty to his Church over everything—over their pride, their comfort, health, lives—even their gift itself, when it came to that.

So I propose to you tonight the Mormon Scholar, the Latter-day Saint intellectual of the last generation before the year 2,000: a person whose standards and mission will of course best be formed and expressed by your generation itself—perhaps with some little help from what report I can give you tonight of the past and of the stir and struggle in myself and in my own generation. My call to your generation is that you help establish a new tradition of intellectual service to God and his Kingdom, a new style founded in part on the great tradition of the pioneer intellectuals and with the benefit of the example of the successes and an understanding of the failures of some in this past generation or two. I call you both to affirm your gift with courageous integrity and fullness of heart and to develop and manifest your loyalty to the gospel and the Restored Church in such a whole-souled and creative way that you can have that measure of acceptance you need—it will never be total, of course, given the critical edge of the intellectual enterprise—enough to allow you to serve the Lord as he intends with a minimum of apology, of being on guard. I call you to be loyal to true religion, not merely great books, especially when it comes to a choice, as sometimes it does. Of course, what I'm really doing is trying to chart a new course for myself, because I span these two periods—I have been part of the growing pains and mistakes of the recent past, of improperly resolved loyalties and defensiveness and uncertain role in the Kingdom, but I have also had some experiences, especially these past few years, including a reacquaintance with the

pioneer intellectual tradition, that are changing me and make me want to be part of what I hope for your generation to define and exemplify—the new Latter-day Saint intellectual life.

Since I was in my teens I have loved the gospel with my mind—rejoicing in the great concepts of God and man, of our uncreated, eternal existence, our divine parentage, and our endless journey of increased knowledge and power and joy that lies ahead. But I have in recent years, while serving as a branch president in Minnesota, learned again to love the Church, as well as the gospel, and with both mind and heart: I have both a broadly based intellectual conviction and a deep spiritual witness that the Church structure, informed by Restored Gospel principles, is *the* means that the Lord has given us to bring us to Christ—to involve us in a saving struggle with the great moral and spiritual imperatives from God for attaining the possible Godhood within us. I am convinced that the Church is the *only* place we can really do that, partly because of the very challenges that human association in the Church context provides and which are sometimes so upsetting to us intellectuals.

One of Martin Luther's great statements is helpful here. He said, "Marriage is the school of love." I believe that is true (in even more ways than Luther meant, of course, if we consider eternal marriage), but the statement is also true of the true Church: *it* is also the school of love—the place where, through being given assignments to serve, while being taught true principles by which to understand and act in the world, we are continually confronted with the personal and social challenges that can teach us how to love in that unique, unqualified way Christ showed us and taught us was the only way to salvation.

One reason I can quote Luther is that I have been teaching at a Lutheran college, and that has also helped change my perspective on the Mormon intellectual in the past five years. St. Olaf college encourages its teachers, just as Brigham Young did the teachers here, to deal openly and continually with the religious and moral implications of their subject matter. I didn't need any particular encouragement for that, but I did find at St. Olaf, compared to Stanford or California State University, much greater freedom—from legal and professional as well as social pressure—to be forthright about my convictions. Incidentally, some of you may have felt or imagined that being at a Church school *decreases* your freedom and that of your teachers—and it may in some ways. But you have a much greater amount here of what is the most important academic freedom, in my opinion, the freedom to express and discuss openly your *positive* religious and moral views and convictions rather than merely your negative ones or your criticism. (That is a freedom you have in much greater abundance here than there is, for instance, at the University of Utah.)

In this process of exploring openly with my students the religious and moral dimensions of literature, the principal subject I teach, I have been forced to consider certain things much more directly than ever before—the intellectual perspective and moral vision of the authors, and the qualities of the societies they describe or from which their writing emerges. I have also been more forcefully confronted with the effect on my students' thinking and life decisions of all those things I expose them to. And I have come to be increasingly uneasy with the perspectives of formalist literary criticism in which I was trained under some of the great masters of such criticism. Over the past few years I have become increasingly uneasy about the inadequacy of formalist criteria (I mean those concerned with aesthetic qualities—structure, style, organization, etc.) to account for the experiences of my students—

and myself—with certain literature, especially some which powerfully affected us despite its obvious lack of formal or aesthetic perfection.

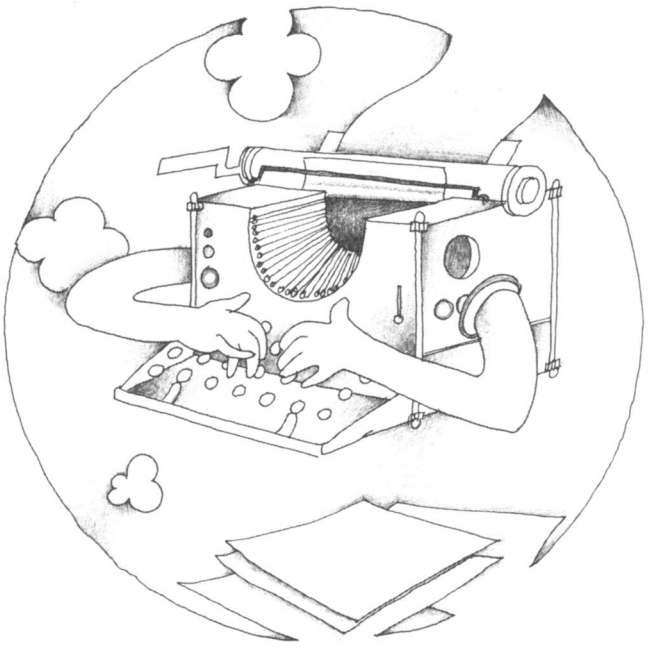
Some of these rather vague concerns were brought into focus last fall by Robert Scholes, the fine critic from Brown University. He spoke at St. Olaf in a symposium honoring Ole Rolvaag (who wrote his great novel, *Giants in the Earth*, fifty years ago, while a member of our faculty) and traced, in the work of Midwestern writers Rolvaag, Willa Cather, Sinclair Lewis and William Gass, the building of one "great" tradition of literature on pioneer vision that he characterized, in both its social and religious dimensions, as "deeply and tragically wrong" because it was "too limited, too material, too rapacious."

Scholes calls the basic flaw in that vision "prairie consciousness": the Midwestern pioneers had the illusion, facing those ever-receding plains, of a world that was limitless and which they could never use up. Worse, they rested in the arrogant assumption that they had the right, nay, even the religious duty, to exploit it as quickly and fully as they could. We know the moral consequences of such a vision in our polluted, tacky, alienated modern world, which derives directly from a frontier past in which a natural balance was destroyed and materialistic concerns took precedence over solving problems of human relationships and much of the literature in that great Midwestern tradition derives its power from brilliant satirizing of the quality of life that resulted.

In a private conversation after his address, Professor Scholes and I discussed other pioneer visions—I mentioned the Mormon and he generalized to other mountain peoples. He pointed out that most of these groups had avoided the arrogance of "prairie consciousness." Why? Partly because they were forced to humility by more stringent physical circumstances in desert and mountain country. But the Mormons, I reflected, were saved from arrogance mainly by a sense of religious consecration and the prophetic leadership that took them to the mountains, rather than to the gold of California, and kept them there, continually facing new struggles and challenges. We then talked about the lack of a "great" literature among such mountain peoples, including the Mormons, a lack, that is, in terms of general fame and by traditional formalist standards. And Scholes risked a rather astounding conjecture: it might have been because their social vision was *more* successful that the literature of such peoples has been *less* successful than, say, that of the Midwest—at least less successful by those orthodox literary criteria.

Suddenly some things clicked together for me and I began to consider some new directions for defining a Mormon aesthetic, a set of principles upon which to assess and encourage our own literary tradition. I thought how often I had heard similar explanations for the lack of a great Mormon literature, though they were offered condescendingly by Gentiles and apologetically by Mormons, including myself; *many* have said that Mormonism answers so well so many basic questions and provides such a satisfying way of life for most of its people that there is not sufficient tension or tragedy. What I have finally clearly realized is that there is no need to apologize: religious success is infinitely preferable to literary success.

Of course, we may not have to choose, and I'm certainly not advocating that we intentionally neglect the formal and other values of great literature, just because we rejoice in our religion and the comparative greatness of the societies it has produced. But we must more clearly and intelligently face that fact that there are values, even in literature itself, other than purely literary or aesthetic ones; there are social and religious and moral values, and they are not always intrinsically bound up in the formal perfections. In fact, it is somewhat sobering to reflect that, at least in



America, Robert Scholes' conjecture seems all too accurate: the "great" literature of the past has almost invariably grown out of the religious failure of a group (e.g., *The Scarlet Letter*) or the religious despair of an individual (e.g., *Moby Dick*), and, at least in the twentieth century, the so-called "great" literature has mainly been content to describe a morally barren or depraved contemporary landscape or has been based on a vision that has itself been shot through with moral or philosophical error. To the extent we have to choose between great books and true religion—and you will discover increasingly, I believe, that the choice must sometimes be made—we should rejoice that we can choose true religion, and without apology.

But let me be more optimistic and back off a bit from the offensive (and *perhaps* false) dilemma that I posed in the title of these remarks—"Great Books or True Religion?" Of course there is value in great literature—in great books of all kinds that you have studied and will, I trust, continue to study. My point tonight is that they are not the most important things in your lives—even in the exercise of your special intellectual gifts—and that you have near at hand some great literature, great books and ideas of all kinds in your own tradition, that you perhaps have neglected, and for which you may even need to develop some special insights and criteria in order to appreciate properly. And these are things you should be less defensive, less apologetic about, should more anxiously pursue in the future than my generation has.

Part of the reason for this defensiveness is that Mormons and Mormonism have had from the beginning a bad press, both at the popular and at the more sophisticated or academic levels. Our incredible history of physical persecution has carried over into various forms of misunderstanding and prejudice in the world of print and scholarship. It has been assumed, even by those like Wallace Stegner who have been able to praise some aspects of our achievement, that our beliefs are absurd and our perspective essentially anti-intellectual. This has been partly because

of our superficial similarity to groups that developed on the American frontier that *were* rabidly anti-intellectual and partly because in some ways we *have* been anti-intellectual, or at least stressed other values more; but some of this rejection has been outright prejudice based on intentional ignorance and unscholarly assumptions by Gentile thinkers; and perhaps some of it is even a semi-conscious shying away from truth claims that, if they proved convincing, could not be dismissed as merely interesting ideas—as the ideas of most other churches and groups can. In contrast, the gospel assertions about history and about physical, moral and spiritual reality make absolute claims on the action and thinking of those who seriously entertain them. How else explain, for instance, the continued avoidance of serious consideration of the Book of Mormon by scholars of American history and literature? In its very existence, and the response of millions to it, it is a powerful and incontrovertible fact about America, no matter what initial assumptions one makes about its origin. Or how explain the general avoidance in theological circles of Mormon ideas about the nature of God? Those ideas both precede and in important ways move far beyond the thinking of Alfred North Whitehead and the "process theologians," which thinking has been hailed by many in America as perhaps the most exciting new development in twentieth-century theology.

Take Christopher Lasch, for instance, a fine historian, who, in a review of some literature on the Mormon experience in the *New York Review of Books* back in 1967, finds much to praise in our early ideals and achievements. He puts his finger squarely on what made the Mormon pioneer vision different from the Midwestern one that Scholes, you remember, characterized as materialistic, even rapacious: "In Utah, under Young's leadership the Mormons created a self-sufficient, cooperative, egalitarian, and authoritarian economy devoted not to individual enrichment but to the collective well-being of the flock." He cites our present Church Historian, Leonard Arrington, who in his landmark study of the Mormon economy, *Great Basin Kingdom*,

> . . . shows how the Mormons accomplished, through a system of cooperative and compulsory labor, impressive feats of planning and development—irrigation, roads, canals, sugar beet factories, iron works—without generating the institutions or the inequalities elsewhere associated with industrial progress; indeed, without even developing a money economy.

Lasch concludes: "Cooperation and planning caused the desert to bloom, in marked contrast to the exploitive patterns of agriculture which on other frontiers exhausted natural resources and left the land a smoking waste." But though Lasch recognizes that those practices of our ancestors were uniquely successful from a human and ecological point of view, like other Gentile intellectuals he fails to see the connection of those successes to our religious truth and consequent heroic devotion to correct principles; in fact, in obvious ignorance of its content, he characterizes our theology, surely the most comprehensively rational theology in existence, as inconsistent, even "grotesque." And, like a number of recent commentators, including some of our own intellectuals who have left the Church and turned around to criticize, he sees no continuance in the twentieth century of those remarkable but for him inexplicable pioneer virtues; he claims that our accelerating growth rate is only possible because we have gradually sacrificed the utopian, communitarian commitments, the very ideals which in the nineteenth century posed a challenge to the American way of life, that especially threatened exploitive, laissez-faire capitalism, posing such a challenge that the Church was hounded and driven and almost destroyed. Some of that charge is close enough to the truth to make me

uncomfortable—the claim that we are no longer persecuted, are even courted by politicians and the popular press, because many of us are no longer a challenge but have become rather a *defense* of some of the most reactionary elements in American life: racism, individualistic economic conservatism, middle-class conspicuous suburbanism.

But nevertheless he is essentially wrong: That original inspiriting vision that produced almost utopian success in our early societies was a direct result of a true and in modern times unique religious vision, an egalitarian, communal ideal in which all of life—including the social order—is integrated and is motivated by religious faith rather than economic sanctions, etc. And that same ideal remains vital with us today, called to our minds and hearts each time we make our covenants of consecration in the temple, motivating much that we do as the Church expands in the third world, especially South America, where we are building—cooperatively—schools, churches, even whole colonies; it is lived out explicitly right here in capitalist America, even in East Bench Salt Lake City or Provo, by individuals who without coercion or even being asked give all beyond their basic needs to building up the Kingdom—in fact, it is maintained by all of us in the Church who see life whole, not divided between sacred and secular, as almost all other twentieth-century religion has done.

Our own literature has intuited this well. Take Maureen Whipple's *The Giant Joshua*, which is, despite its flaws and the way its vision and artistic force weaken toward the end, probably our best piece of Mormon fiction to date. In writing about the colonization of St. George, Whipple examines the most crucial elements of our pioneer experience—the building of communities under prophetic direction, against private inclination, with the aid and challenge of the United Order and of polygamy. And she shows undergirding the search for effective group religious life and individual redemption. This passage gets at the heart of the struggle and achievement:

> . . . [After one year of the United Order, Apostle Snow] surveyed his community and was not ashamed to uphold its accomplishments even to Brigham, whose face these days seemed more than ever like parchment, whose eyes could not hide their longing for proof that this work of his lifetime would stand.
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> "Enoch hats [i.e., hats produced in the United Order], a half-finished Temple, brush grubbed from the sidewalks and the square," inventoried Erastus, "and above all, something you can't see but is worth much more to a man—a sense of responsibility toward his neighbor, an armor against selfishness and greed. . . ."

But let me make my point more clear by discussing briefly a piece of Mormon literature that it is quite certain none of you has read; I do this in part because there has been some reaction among Church members against *The Giant Joshua*, because of its frankness about such things as polygamy and Mountain Meadows that may color your reaction to it. This other example is a good one also because it, even more clearly than that novel, helps make another point that must be considered in our Mormon aesthetic—that a literature such as ours, which I have suggested may be inferior in *form* to that conventionally recognized as great but which is superior in *content* and *vision*, shows to best advantage in certain genres, those characterized by personal witness to faith and experience, ones in which the truth of actual living and of direct confession is at least as important as aesthetic or metaphorical truth—I mean journals and diaries, letters, sermons, lyric poetry (especially hymns), autobiography and autobiographical fiction, and the personal essay. We should look more closely at our rich heritage in these genres.

The diary of Joseph Millett, which I came across last year in the Church Historical Department, is to me a prime example, a major exhibit in the reevaluation I am suggesting. Joseph Millett's father was converted by Brigham Young and called to take charge of the masonry work on the Kirtland Temple, where he invented an extraordinarily hard exterior plaster that glittered with the pieces of china dishes that the women sacrificed to be broken up in it. (That plaster, by the way, is a perfect symbol for our religion and literature because it is rooted in real experience and expresses concisely and precisely the difference between Mormon colonists and, say, Rolvaag's Midwesterners; rather than accumulating and clinging to the material objects of civilization, the Saints gave their treasured china dishes and precious porcelain ware to be crushed up in the plaster used to adorn the walls of their Temple to God.) After the Saints were driven from Nauvoo, the Millett family stayed in Iowa helping others move on until they went to Salt Lake in 1850 and settled, under Brigham Young's direction, in Manti. In August of 1852 Brigham Young convened a special conference that was an unprecedented occasion on the American Frontier. Only three years into a colonization effort that had barely escaped disaster and which still existed on the bare edge of survival, he called together 2,000 of the Elders of Israel and reminded them of their *greater* task—to take the gospel to all nations. And he sent ninety-eight of them, including a number of general authorities, and also Joseph Millett, then eighteen years old, on missions to literally the four quarters of the earth, including Europe, Africa, the West Indies, China, Siam, India—young Joseph to Nova Scotia. Elder Millett's diary tells of his father's blessing, the setting apart by Apostle Jedediah Grant, and then his journey, essentially alone and literally penniless—without purse or scrip—across a continent that was still mainly a wilderness frontier, to his field of labor. But now listen to his own voice, certainly unsophisticated and lacking the formal graces but with some of that intuitive sense of significant detail and forthright revelation of self that are certainly at least as important to good literature as those other qualities—and more important to true religion:

> *Apr. 13, 1853* I went to Cranberry Head, near to Yarmouth. Here I found Brother John Robinson and Brother Benjamin T. Mitchell at Mr. Moses Shaw's. The Brethren (Robinson and Mitchell) said that they were going to travel together. The Brethren both said I was too young and inexperienced to travel with either of them. They said I had better go to Halifax and see Brother A. D. L. Buckland and get counsel from him.
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> *Apr. 14* I went in to Yarmouth. Came back to Mr. Grace's. He treated me kindly. I stayed until Saturday. Started for Halifax. Left Cape Sable to my right hand. Traveled two hundred ten miles around the coast capes and bays to get to Halifax. I had to rely upon Him whose business I was on. I felt my weakness. A poor ill-clothed ignorant boy in my teens, thousands of miles from home, amongst strangers. The promise in my Blessings, the encouraging words of President Young to me, with the faith I had in the Gospel, kept me up. Many a time I would turn in to the woods and brush in some desolate place, with a full heart, wet eyes and face, to call on my Master for strength and aid. I believed the Gospel of Christ. I never had preached it. I knew not where to find it in the scriptures. I had to give my Bible to the boatman [at the channel] for passage across.

From that low point of loneliness and rejection and lack of confidence in his ability, the journal records a growing self-confidence as Elder Millett obtains books and tracts at the branch in Halifax and studies the gospel, decides, because a prophet has called him to Nova Scotia, not to return to the states with the other missionaries (who had become discouraged at their lack of success), crosses over to nearby Cape Breton Island and, after being joined by a locally called missionary, begins to teach and baptize. He organizes a branch, and starts to have extraordinary

experiences such as the following (notice the simple but effective narrative skill and sense of drama, combined with sincere, almost humorously direct reliance on the Lord):

June 30, 1853 At the brothers Bagnal's they were starting out to fish. I said, "Success to you; you must catch a whale," just in a foolish, joking way, and thought no more about it until I went down to Brother John McGilvery's. After a while one of the girls came down and said that Brother Millett had promised that Uncle Joseph's folks would get a whale and the Gentiles said that now you see he is a false prophet, for any fool would know that they can't get a whale. I overheard the girls talking about the whale. It then came to my mind what I had said. I then ran to the woods and thought how foolish I was to say such a thing. I prayed the Lord to forgive [me], that I desired to do right. I felt the position we were in. I couldn't keep back the tears. I called on the Lord to help me in his cause.

About one o'clock P. M. the people noticed six boats coming in the Bay towing something. Some said it was the hull of a schooner; others said no, that it was the whale that the Mormon promised about.

The brothers Bagnal's was the first boat going out of the Bay. They heard the report of a cannon and saw the flag and topmast of the packet steamer circling around, [which] fired their third gun as soon as they saw that the fishermen were coming; the steamer went on and Brother Bagnal was the first to the prize.

And it was a lucky day for all of them that assisted in getting the prize in. The whale I believe was above seventy feet long, the biggest fish I ever saw. . . . I never have ceased to thank the Lord for his goodness.

And notice the well-controlled humor and the sense of effective diction in this passage:

July 27, 1853 Elder Adamson and myself went to Mr. Gibbon's a rich infidel. He said he was an astronomer and philosopher. Said that Mormonism was more reasonable than the rest of the religions and as for polygamy it was the only thing to regenerate the human family.

Or witness the self-effacing but clearly communicated sense of a life lived in great spiritual beauty in this:

July 31, 1853 Brother Allen Adamson says he must go to Halifax and perhaps on in to the States. Wants to make fitout for the Valley. Anxious to gather with the Saints. He was from Dundee, Scotland. So I will be left alone with almost every door closed against me. Elder Adamson has been with me pretty near 2 months. . . . Some was ready to be baptised at Gabarouse when Brother Adamson came to me but I had never baptised. So when he came we were ready to commence. After I saw him baptize, I could then baptize. Oh, must I part with a good companion in him.

August 1 Elder Allen Adamson left me for Gabarouse after I blessed him and he blessed me. I went about 3 miles with him. Then we parted not to meet again in this land. In the last two weeks I have held two meetings in private houses. I have to depend on the Lord, not on Brother Adamson. I have felt rather shy about asking favors of people; had rather go into the woods, pick blueberries, bless them and eat, and felt myself welcome. I find myself in rather straitened circumstances, although I have some friends.

Despite those few friends, opposition from the Protestant clergy was very severe: Elder Millett's handbills were torn down, schools and halls were closed to him; finally a Reverend McLeod comes directly to a home where he is staying and confronts him; notice the sense of well-paced dialogue and of dramatic timing, which conveys both humor and the steady seriousness of conviction:

"Are you that imposter that has come to lead the people astray?" "No sir, I am a servant of the living God and I am preaching His Gospel." Says he, "Brother McArthy, what does the scriptures say?

> 'Though we or an angel from Heaven preach any other gospel than we have preached, let him be accursed.'" Says Brother McArthy, "This young man has preached the same gospel that Paul did. But you are preaching another gospel."
>
> The dinner was just ready. . . . As he went to sit down he said, "There is a sick woman in the other room and you people profess to do miracles. Heal that woman; then I will believe in your doctrine." Just then the door opened and the woman came out and said, "I am healed." He said, "Yes, the devil can do miracles."

Believe me, these are only a few samples of the quality of this record of the life of a Latter-day Saint.

Near the end of his journal, when he is looking back over his life as an old man, Joseph Millett shows what seems to me extraordinary ability to summarize a life in one anecdote, to capture the central moral vision and sense of self acquired by one who has lived a true religion, when he concludes with an experience from many years before in 1871. He and his wife had been called in 1856 to that same constantly struggling Dixie Mission that Maurine Whipple tells about, and then later to the even more harsh life in the Mormon Settlement in Spring Valley, Nevada, where their oldest daughter died of typhoid and many suffered great sickness and hunger. This lifelong servant of the Lord, who learned on his mission, and never forgot, what it is like to be in need and how to give, leaves us with this final picture of himself:

> . . . one of my children came in, said that Brother Newton Hall's folks were out of bread. Had none that day. I put . . . our flour in sack to send up to Brother Hall's. Just then Brother Hall came in. Says I, "Brother Hall, how are you out for flour." "Brother Millett, we have none." "Well, Brother Hall, there is some in that sack. I have divided and was going to send it to you. Your children told mine that you were out." Brother Hall began to cry. Said he had tried others. Could not get any. Went to the cedars and prayed to the Lord and the Lord told him to go to Joseph Millett. "Well, Brother Hall, you needn't bring this back if the Lord sent you for it. You don't owe me for it." You can't tell how good it made me feel to know that the Lord knew that there was such a person as Joseph Millett.

I have to call that great literature, though, as I've suggested, to do so offends to some degree my formalist training and convictions; so, I have to come up with some new criteria and a new ranking of the old, some means of judgment and appreciation that will recognize that the power of Joseph Millett's journal derives in large part from the true religion that he and his people knew and lived, that will factor in the moral and social truth of the author's vision and his effect on our own vision as we put ourselves in his hands as readers.

Now, don't misunderstand me; I am not suggesting didacticism as an adequate or even good criterion for literature; I'm not advocating a return to the pious moralizing that plagued Victorian literature. In fact, it could well be argued that the decline in quality of the content—the moral and philosophical vision—in most recent literature, especially poetry, is a direct result of intentional neglect of form. What we must remember is that, all other things being equal, the more skilled and effective the formal elements the better and more powerful the literature. But if the moral goodness or intellectual truth of the author's vision is flawed, the formal beauty and power will only make the writing more effective for evil—more able to take possession of the reader. Moreover, the truth and goodness of the author's vision must be weighed into our assessment and will sometimes compensate for formal inadequacy or even give rise to more intuitive formal achievements; especially will this latter happen in unsophisticated and confessional forms like letters and journals, where the writer is able to project the fundamental and ultimately ex-

emplary quality of life lived day by day—as Joseph Millett does.

What, then, about you, whom I have characterized, at least potentially, as the new Latter-day Saint intellectual? How might you generalize what I have said about literature to other great books and ideas that you are and will be dealing with, in a variety of fields? You must develop your own vision of what, as an intellectual, your contribution to the Kingdom might be, of how you might love the Lord as he commanded—with all your mind, as well as your heart, might and strength. You must develop your own style and your own standards, not with arrogant indifference to the standards and resources of the Western intellectual tradition which has helped form you, but with the courage to go creatively beyond that tradition in finding a way to be properly loyal to your special gifts and to the Church and the Restored Gospel.

Let me read you one remarkable manifesto for Mormon intellectuals, one with which some of you are familiar and which I think ought to inspire and give some direction to us all. This is B. H. Roberts, member of the First Council of Seventy, writing in 1906 in an interesting context: in creating a course of study for the Church's Seventies, he had proposed a new and more naturalistic understanding of **the manner in which Joseph Smith may have used divine instruments—the Urim and Thummim, etc.—in translating the Book of Mormon. He received many letters challenging or agreeing with his theory and a lively exchange with his critics was printed in the *Improvement Era*. The following appears near the end of one of his responses:**

> I believe "Mormonism" affords opportunity . . . for thoughtful disciples who will not be content with merely repeating some of its truths, but will develop its truths; and enlarge it by that development. Not half—not one-hundredth part—not a thousandth part of that which Joseph Smith revealed to the Church has yet been unfolded, either to the Church or to the world. The work of the expounder has scarcely begun. The Prophet planted by teaching the germ-truths of the great dispensation of the fullness of times. The watering and the weeding is going on, and God is giving the increase, and will give it more abundantly in the future as more intelligent discipleship shall obtain. The disciples of "Mormonism," growing discontented with the necessarily primitive methods which have hitherto prevailed in sustaining the doctrine, will yet take profounder and broader views of the great doctrines committed to the Church; and, departing from mere repetition, will cast them in new formulas; cooperating in the works of the Spirit, until they help to give to the truths received a more forceful expression, and carry it beyond the earlier and cruder stages of its development.

President Roberts, of course, is not suggesting that the intellectual's task is to create new doctrine, but rather to take revealed doctrine and give it new formulations that will relate to the changing world we live in, that will enable us, for instance, to more effectively criticize our flawed social, political, artistic and intellectual environment by using the great germ-truths of the gospel. We need to respond, affirming where we can, denying where we must, to such things as the women's liberation movement, which is significantly altering our perspectives and lives in this country, or to the twentieth-century sense of the challenge of evil, focused in the holocaust in which six million Jews were destroyed, an event which has destroyed much faith in our world because for many it calls into serious question the intentions and nature of a supposedly good and all-powerful God. We have the resources in the gospel to respond profoundly to these challenges, both for our own people and for others.

What am I saying? As a first principle for Mormon intellectuals, you should know and use your own great intellectual traditions and the resources of your own true religion, before you get too impressed with the great books and great ideas from other sources. Know and use them both, in constant dialogue.

As a second principle, I call you to a proper sense of self-consciousness as intel-

lectuals and a loyalty to each other and to your own loose community within the Church, but only as part of, and ultimately second to, your commitment to full communion with the full Church. Consider a young Mormon intellectual, a college teacher in a small ward that badly needs leadership. He has been in the ward a number of years but has had no significant effect on it, because his career is apparently more important to him. He once agreed to serve as bishop, but insisted in advance on limiting his service to a certain period, served efficiently and well enough to show how much difference he really could make, and then returned to his scholarship and teaching and to semi-activity. He will likely succeed fairly well in his scholarship and teaching, but he has failed to serve the Lord with his gift—and he may truly have lost his soul, and his family's future, for that mess of honors and publications. Many of you will be called into similar situations where you might strengthen a branch or ward—by the natural opportunities all over the world that will come to you, in academic life, business, government, etc., because of your intellectual and other gifts, or perhaps by the whisperings of the Spirit in your heart, as I have felt, or even by direct call from the Lord's servants. May you meet the challenge—the opportunity provided by the Lord—better than this young intellectual.

My generation and the previous one have in many ways failed to meet the standard I am setting for you; I call you to join us in going beyond our failures and even our few successes. As one measure of our failure, I ask you to name those thinkers and writers who are now willing and able to appear in all four of our periodicals for expression if ideas, *Exponent II, Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, BYU Studies,* and *The Ensign*. I ask you to reject the labels of this previous generation that have fragmented our intellectual community and to some extent the larger Church—I mean labels like "orthodox" and "unorthodox," "liberal" and "conservative"; these are Gentile terms and have no place in a community of the Saints, if used to hold oneself apart and reject others from fellowship, love and forgiveness. And as one measure of a danger for failure that *you* may already be slipping into, evidence of your own degree of disloyalty to the Mormon intellectual tradition and community and your lack of awareness, I ask how many of you have read Juanita Brooks and Leonard Arrington as well as Bruce Catton and Samuel Eliot Morison; Parley Pratt's *Key to the Science of Theology* and Sterling McMurrin's *Theological Foundations of the Mormon Religion* as well as Karl Barth and C. S. Lewis and Nels Ferré; Joseph Smith's *Lectures on Faith* as well as Paul Tillich's *Dynamics of Faith;* Lowell Bennion as well as Martin Buber; *The Giant Joshua* as well as *Giants in the Earth* or *Main Street; A Believing People: The Literature of the Latter-day Saints,* edited by Professors Cracroft and Lambert of your English department, as well as the Norton anthologies of literature? Do you subscribe to *Dialogue, Exponent II* and *BYU Studies* as well as *Encounter,* the *New York Review of Books* or *Scientific American*? Will you read *Sunstone* as well as *Harper's* or *Psychology Today*? The past generations have been a time of seed planting, of struggle and mistakes and losses. You can nurture and harvest what we have done if you will and can profit from our experience. You can be more Christian, better Saints than we have been, both helping and sustaining each other in the inevitable clashes you will have with uncomprehending or unsympathetic authority and with what you might consider ignorance or low-browism, in the Church as well as outside it. You can also act to reduce those clashes and their consequences by working loyally within the Church, both serving humbly in all its functions and moving wisely and courageously to increase understanding and acceptance of the role and contribution of the intellectual.

Since the intellectual endeavor is always easy to misunderstand and tends by its very nature—its emphasis on analysis, criticism, on ventures into the unknown—to threaten and alienate, *you* must find ways to show that, in the great phrase from the 121st section of the Doctrine and Covenants, "your faithfulness is stronger than the cords of death." Your gift will make you inescapably aware of problems in the Church, and thus the *burden* of change will be on you, because others, often those committing the errors, can't see what is "wrong." What you can do about such problems is not leave, desert, turn the Church over to those who in your point of view are perverting it, nor to remain within only to withdraw spiritually through self-righteousness. You must reach out in love, trying to help—and also trying to learn through your cooperation and common service, from the perspective and commitments of others with different gifts than your intellectual gift, including learning to see your own faults, such as lack of courage, perhaps, or lack of whole-souled commitment, failings which may be, in the long run, more destructive than the ones you naturally see in others.

Be true to your special gift. Read the great books and learn to be critical of them. Learn to do without the agreement or approval of everyone in the world or even in the Church. Another great line from *A Man for All Seasons* is More's response to Richard Rich, an ambitious young intellectual who ultimately betrays More, and loses his soul by selling out to that ambition. More, who intuits his problem and probable future, has told him to be satisfied with being a teacher; he can be a fine one. Rich asks who would *know* it if he were, and More replies, "You, your students, your friends, God. Not a bad public that." Be satisfied with such a public. Be loyal to your peers; learn to help them and yourself find your place in the Kingdom. Be courageous and honest. God does not need your lies, even your shading of the truth, to build up His Kingdom. Our history, our theology, our present selves do not need to be censored or dressed up in false clothes or cosmetics. Remember your own inclination to sin, to arrogance, to lack of proper appreciation of the different but equally valuable gifts of those who aren't intellectuals. Remember the scriptural warning about milk before meat and not leading the innocent astray; remember the Apostle Paul's humble example of not eating the food offered to idols, not wanting to do anything that might offend his brother who might not understand, even though he knew it was something harmless for himself. And remember the simplest, clearest and most effective formula for balancing faith and reason, given by Elder Marion D. Hanks, an intellectual who knows from experience—search the scriptures, seek the Lord in mighty prayer, and serve faithfully in whatever Church calling comes to you.

With what power I have, my power as your brother in Christ and the power of the priesthood we share, I bless you. May you succeed where too many of us have not and even go beyond where we have succeeded. May you be more self-confident, more accepting of the gift God has given you. At the same time may you be more loyal, both to your own intellectual tradition as Latter-day Saints and also to the true revealed principles and practices that have informed the lives of those who have built that tradition. And may you be, above all, committed to living such lives, loving and blessing your brothers and sisters with your gift, acting bravely to communicate its values to them and freely forgiving and asking forgiveness when your exercise of your gifts is misunderstood or mistaken. In these ways, and in others that He may help us discover, I ask the Lord to bless us all, in order that we might use his gift of intelligence as he would want us to. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Digging the Foundation: Making and Reading Mormon Literature

Bruce W. Jorgensen

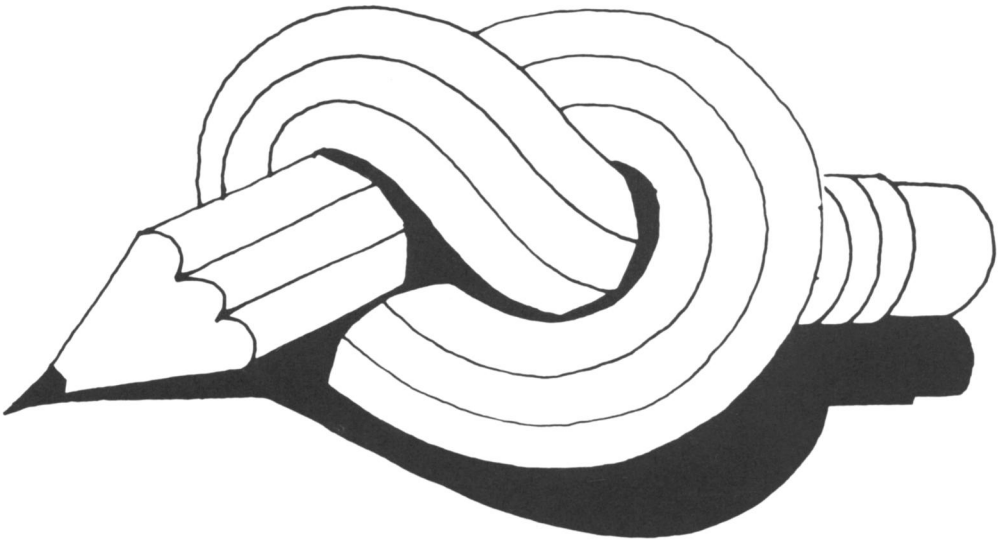
The worst tragedy that can befall us is to go unimagined.
—N. Scott Momaday

Their inner intellectual and spiritual problems cannot easily be shared with others.
—Sydney Ahlstrom

As an epigraph to their anthology *A Believing People: Literature of the Latter-day Saints*, Richard Cracroft and Neal Lambert quote Orson F. Whitney's 1888 *Contributor* essay, "Home Literature":

> We shall yet have Miltons and Shakespeares of our own. God's ammunition is not yet exhausted. His highest spirits are held in reserve for the latter times. In God's name and by his help we will build up a literature whose top shall touch heaven, though its foundation may now be low on earth.[1]

While their anthology does not show us any Miltons or Shakespeares of our own, Professors Cracroft and Lambert have excavated a foundation long buried away from the sight of most Mormon readers, and they have shown us where some of the small-arms ammunition has been stored. If *A Believing People* reveals a foundation still "low in earth" (rather like the "hopeful houses" begun in so many small Utah towns in the 30s and 40s—three feet of concrete roofed with clay), if its genre-by-genre tour distracts and fragments our view of vertical continuity from past to



present—still it does show us what is there, what Mormon readers have to explore, enjoy, and learn from, what Mormon writers have to beat on their own ground.

The editors' admission that their anthology is "tentative and growing and open to change and improvement" (p. 5) gives me leave to make some modest proposals. First, simply a more careful job of proofreading to tidy up errata both gross and minuscule—from the twenty footnotes in Leonard Arrington's article (corrected on an errata sheet) to "noisesome" (p. 27) in Thomas L. Kane's lecture, to the incorrect title of Marden Clark's essay, "Art, Religion, and the Marketplace" (p. 289n). Such blemishes plague nearly all anthologists, of course.

Second, some suggestions on content. The editors note that we are "a world church" (p. 5), yet their selections implicitly define Mormon literature as a subspecies of American literature. Granted, perhaps most Mormon literature still is American in some sense; granted, as an American literature specialist, I, too, would feel less than competent to select works written in (or translated from) German or French, not to mention Japanese or Tagalog; still, since Mormon literature must cut across cultural and linguistic barriers, it would profit us to have an anthology that reflected this. Perhaps we may hope for an expanded, multi-ethnic edition, or for a companion volume.

Even on the home ground of American literature, though, the anthology suffers from the omission of significant work by "expatriates" like Ray B. West, Jr., Jarvis Thurston, Wayne Carver, Richard Young Thurman, and Lewis B. Horne. The inclusion of work by a few such writers (May Swenson, David L. Wright) implies a definition of "Mormon literature" open enough to include more of these writers, and surely by reason of literary quality they deserve to be here.

I found myself disappointed by some other inclusions and omissions. If Paul Cracroft, Helen Walker Jones, Charis Southwell, and Ann Doty (the last two published posthumously), why not Iris Corry, Sherwin Howard, Karl Keller? (I would not necessarily exclude the former, just include the latter.) Why not David L. Wright's *Still the Mountain Wind* or Ronald Dalley's *Only There Were Two* instead of Martin L. Kelley's *And They Shall Be Gathered?* Or why not one of Wright's published stories instead of the chunk from "River Saints"? I could go on, of course, and to little purpose; and I do know the editors wished to include much that I have mentioned, but could not because of limited space and other hindrances. Again, we might look forward to a revised edition, or to companion volumes.

But by far the biggest quarrel I have with *A Believing People* concerns its organization by genre rather than by historical sequence. I recognize the problems inherent in the latter approach: do we organize by authors' birth dates or by the dates of their first publications or (in the case of biography and history) by the dates of the events treated? I do not know how I might resolve such questions, but I do believe that while any organization must be somewhat arbitrary, an historical scheme might be less so than a generic one. Mormon literature is old enough that its history should have a discernible shape, while the histories of genres within that literature may not be clearly traceable in the limited samplings an anthology can afford. In *A Believing People* the genres don't seem all that distinct; for instance, the editors admit that Mormon "biography and autobiography are akin to Mormon history" and that "all three become, in a sense, forms of spiritual autobiography" (p. 47)—or hagiography, one might put it. Lines between fiction and poetry seem easy enough to discern, though Thomas Asplund's "The Heart of My Father," here located under Poetry, first appeared in a *Dialogue* Table of Contents (IV, 4) labeled Fiction; lines between Journal and Autobiography blur somewhat; the "Essay" by Orson F. Whitney reads very much like an oratorical "Discourse."

All this is technical quibbling, though, and fussy and foggy at that. I would really rest my proposal for an historical organization on some such rhetorical question as this: Wouldn't it be better, for instance, to have all the selections by Joseph Smith in one place, so that we could get a stronger sense of his as *one* Mormon imagination—*the* Mormon imagination, in fact, where it all begins? Think of the implications for a Mormon poetics of such a phrase as "chaotic matter, which is element, and in which dwells all the glory" (p. 169). Ponder the challenge to the Mormon imagination confronted by Mormon experience that is implied in the Prophets famous declaration (usually not read from this angle), "You never knew my heart; no man knows my history; I cannot tell it; I shall never undertake it. If I had not experienced what I have, I should not have believed it myself" (p. 172). The Prophet's calling was not a poet's or a novelist's, but he told us how hard it was, and was going to be, to imagine Mormon experience. The history of Mormon literature is a sequence of moments in which Mormon imaginations wrestle with that chaotic matter, striving for forms that will shape it into symbols and disclose its indwelling glory. This anthology should have helped us to see those moments and their sequence more clearly.

* * *

When I try to envision that sequence, I see something like this. Those nineteenth century Mormon writings that seem most consciously "literary" are the ones that, for me, just won't wash. Contrast the urbane polish of Thomas L. Kane with the

rough plainness of Priddy Meeks. Kane, describing Nauvoo and escalating into abstract polysyllabic vagueness:

> Half encircled by a bend of the river, a beautiful city lay glittering in the fresh morning sun; its bright new dwellings, set in cool green gardens, ranging up around a stately dome-shaped hill, which was crowned by a noble marble edifice, whose high tapering spire was radiant with white and gold. The city appeared to cover several miles, and beyond it, in the background, there rolled off a fair country, checkered by the careful lines of fruitful husbandry. The unmistakable marks of industry, enterprise, and educated wealth, everywhere, made the scene one of singular and most striking beauty. (p. 26)

Meeks (as quoted by Arrington), describing the first winter in the Salt Lake Valley:

> I went sometimes a mile up Jordan to a patch of wild roses to get the berries to eat which I would eat as rapidly as a hog, stems and all. I shot hawks and crows and they ate well. I would go and search the mire holes and find cattle dead and fleece off what meat I could and eat it. We used wolf meat, which I thought was good. . . .
>
> We had to exert ourselves to get something to eat. I would take a grubbing-hoe and a sack and start by sunrise in the morning and go, I thought, six miles before coming to where the thistle roots grew, and in time to get home I would have a bushel and sometimes more thistle roots. And we would eat them raw. I would dig until I grew weak and faint and sit down and eat a root, and then begin again. (p. 38)

Given its occasion and audience, Kane's piece is quite good within certain limits; Meeks's journal gives us some sense of what those limits are, as does the almost Biblical compression of style in Mary Goble Pay's diary: "My brother James ate a hearty supper was as well as he ever was when he went to bed. In the morning he was dead" (p. 144). Even with the more tranquil reality it tries to represent, Kane's style seems out of touch; it is what Emerson meant by a "rotten diction," full of precut phrases. By contrast, Meeks and Pay pierce that, and "fasten words to things."

By thus opposing conscious "literary" style to primitive eloquence, I do not mean to argue that Mormon writers should have tried to work without literary sophistication. Quite the contrary: what was needed was more literary awareness, not less; but of the kind that led Mark Twain to recognize the power of vernacular speech, or Emily Dickinson to wrest the standard measures of hymnody to her own stylistic purposes. If Bernard DeVoto should stand glowing at my bedpost some night and ask me what "merely mortal storyteller" I would have to turn Mormon experience into literature, I'll answer, "Give me back Priddy Meeks. Or better yet, somebody who has read Dante, Shakespeare, Tolstoy, and the rest of the great ones, and who also understands the voice of Priddy Meeks." Bless us now, un-Saint Bernard.

Perhaps the closest we came to that kind of storyteller—and still a far piece off—in the nineteenth century would be Parley Pratt, with his wild mix of personae and styles. At times cloyingly sentimental-formal in the worst nineteenth-century manner, Pratt elsewhere breaks through into vernacular tale-telling that, had he been able to sustain it, might make him a good candidate, as in the story of the "love cracked" Luman Gibbs and his shrewish wife Phila (pp. 51-52). Pratt tells this story as an instance of the sordor that "served to enhance the misery of imprisonment, and to render our sufferings complete" (p. 52), but the manner of telling relishes the tale itself. In the portions of Pratt's *Autobiography* I have read, the partial literary sophistication and the vernacular power never quite get together (almost, by way of irony, in the rattlesnake incident on p. 71): Pratt maybe had the

makings of a good mortal storyteller, but most of the time he was about other business, and the makings stayed in his possible sack. Bless us now, Saint Parley.

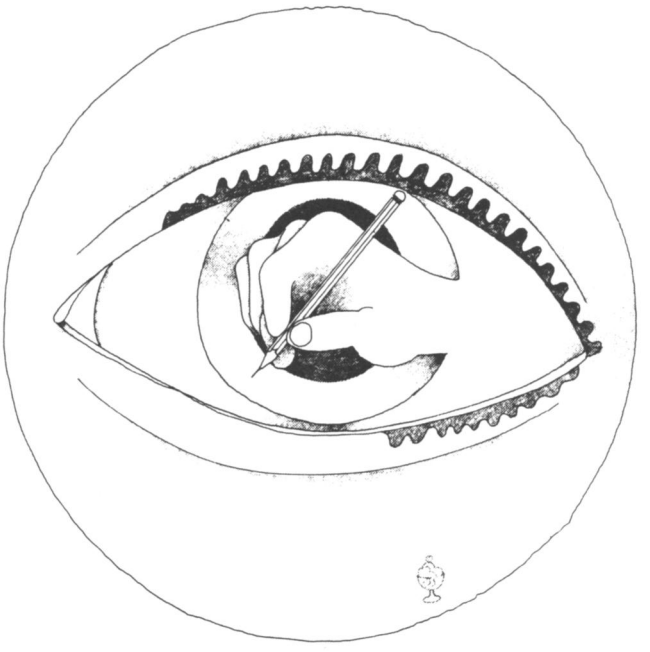
* * *

The trouble with literature is that it is always literary: woodnotes wild are just woodnotes wild, and Shakespeare didn't just warble, he imitated; as every maker learns to make by following the gestures of the best makers he can find to teach him until those gestures that fuse experience in language become so habitual that the apprentice discovers a private inscape in the common syntax. Petrarch's sonnet becomes Syndey's, Spenser's, Shakespeare's, Donne's—and in each master's hand the form, imitated over and over, modified here and there, stays alive, original, never entrapping, always liberating. Literary imitation that succeeds goes deeper than the surfaces of form or diction, goes deep by unremitting discipline, holds the angel hard until he blesses, names, and wounds. No nineteen-century Mormon writers represented in *A Believing People* seem to me to have wrestled that hard: they have settled for a seeming-sublime manner, for a sentimental manner, for a homiletic manner, rather than trying to see the vision and submit to the discipline of those writers whose manners they too lightly borrowed.

So I would take issue with Orson Whitney's insistence that "Above all things we must be original" (p. 206). Probably Mormon literature ought to be "for God's glory, not man's" (p. 205); maybe "The Holy Ghost is the genius of 'Mormon' literature" (p. 206); but I doubt this entails the radical "originality" Whitney exhorts us to, because I doubt that kind of originality happens very often. The first instances of new literary forms usually descend by intelligible steps of reaction or mutation or combination from older forms, and those first instances are not always the best of their kind. God seems to have been willing enough to pour the new wine of the restoration into the old bottles of the English language; I can't imagine why the Holy Ghost should scorn the sonnet or the short story. And (*tu quoque*, Orson) Whitney himself can hardly be said to have invented any new literary forms, but rather badly to have imitated old ones (for example, using ballad stanzas for his epic *Elias*). I wish he and others had been a little less chauvinistic and a little more humble, teachable, and willing to learn from the masters they aspired to equal or excel, more devoted to the calling and discipline of makers with words.

Almost everywhere in nineteenth-century Mormon writing, imitation looks slack and slavish, not strenuous enough. I don't know a Mormon hymn that quite stands up, poetically, to the best of Watts. The "Vision" (pp. 258-266), attributed to Joseph Smith but likely written by W. W. Phelps, is not as tough as its popular Puritan analogue, Wigglesworth's "Day of Doom," and it falls far short of the quality of Edward Taylor's "God's Determinations." Most of the poems of Augusta Joyce Crocheron (pp. 276-77) might have been written by Emmeline Grangerford ("And hast thou shut and locked thy heart/Against me? Nay, not so"), except that their subjects are not all deaths; though perhaps under the surface of stock diction in "Estranged" lies a certain toughness we could respect, were it not so far surpassed in Emily Dickinson:

I could not sing in heaven, if there
A loved face turned away,
Unreconciled; 'twould chill my joy,
E'en in that perfect day.



Mrs. Crocheron's *Wild Flowers of Deseret* also raises for us the question as to how you tell a Mormon poem from a non-Mormon poem. In "Estranged," perhaps the only thing that would suggest a specifically Mormon consciousness, even to a Mormon reader, would be the phrase "Life's holy mission here." Content, then? A little drop of doctrine, whether preached or, as here, absorbed into the stream of the speaker's emotion? Mormon literature may always suffer from identity problems that won't be made to go away by striving after originality or by invoking the Holy Ghost.

Another approach to the making of "Mormon" literature has been to employ, manipulate, or elaborate established Mormon symbols, such as the iron rod of Lehi's dream which Joseph L. Townsend used in "To Nephi, Seer of Olden Time" (p. 278). But given the hymn's heavily homiletic intention, such versified moralization might be said only to diminish into banality the symbol's original potency.

If, as the editors are probably right to say, the sermon is "the predominant form of literary expression in the Mormon church" (p. 165), the predominance of a homiletic intention in so much Mormon poetry and fiction from the nineteenth century to the present in the official and semi-official press of the Church should come as no surprise. From Orson Whitney's stricture that Mormon literature "must be made subservient to the building up of Zion" (p. 205), it is all too short a jump to the "flood of moralistic stories" (p. 331) which the editors represent with pieces by Josephine Spencer and Nephi Anderson. "'God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform.' This was certainly exemplified in the history of Lester Amsden's love," begins Anderson's tale; and it goes on, "Although the cynic and the scoffer may scorn the thought that God has anything to do with the loves and hates of man, the careful student understands that our Heavenly Father takes cognizance of our every act and overrules it for our good. Lester Amsden understands this now" (p. 349). The homiletic story-writer has no particular interest in

his characters, except as they might serve him to point up such a moral for his dear readers.

The assumption that literature, in order to build up Zion, must preach, teach, expound, exhort, rather than represent, illuminate, celebrate, and judge human experience, has probably done more harm to the Mormon imagination than its lack of literary sophistication or its proneness to cheap imitation. The choice was not simply between didacticism and the untenable dogma of art for art's sake: literature is for some human sake, all right; it teaches; but its proper power differs from the power of a sermon; there is such a thing as "narrative knowledge," as Wayne Booth has called it,[2] and narrative knowledge is not the same as a homiletic storyteller's truism exemplified in narrative. On the side of art's sake and God's glory, the devout Catholic novelist and short story writer Flannery O'Connor cites Thomas Aquinas to the effect that "art . . . is wholly concerned with the good of that which is made," and she proposes that an art work that is "good in itself glorifies God because it reflects God."[3]

Homiletic Mormon writers seem to have excused themselves from the severest demands of artistic discipline on the grounds that they possessed the truth and were obligated to promulgate it and to strengthen their readers' faith in it. Thus an easy polarization of didactic and fine art, followed by an unexceptionable choice of didactic, has led to a cheap way out of disciplined art and into the cheapest sort of pious subliterature. Why have Mormon writers degraded their own values by using them as a cop-out?

The artistic complacency of nineteenth-century Mormon writers probably reflects the general intellectual complacency of the Church, if Hugh Nibley's "Educating the Saints—A Brigham Young Mosaic" accurately reflects what one prophet thought the Mormon mind needed. And Brigham Young's call for "strenuous, critical, liberal, mind-stretching" education (as Nibley characterizes it, p. 234) still accuses all of us. Our forebears' and our own failure to come up to that standard has led to the "supine readership" and the "uneducated literacy" decried by William Mulder (p. 210) and to the "terrifying intellectual vacuum" Nibley himself excoriates. That failure, together with other factors, might account for the apparent dearth of reprintable Mormon literature between roughly 1900 and 1940, an interval within which the editors of *A Believing People* present us with no examples of fiction or poetry. Assuming they sought and did not find, how do we explain the Great Gap? Perhaps the literary developments of the 1880s, the 1890s, and especially the 1920s could not be assimilated by Mormon writers still committed to didacticism and to waning literary fashions.

* * *

Somewhere this side of the Gap, things begin to change. It is as if the call in William Mulder's 1954 essay, "Mormonism and Literature," for "a smaller canvas, a surer perspective," for "stories that provide the feeling of living experience, . . . of very particular situations," for "authentic voices" (pp. 210-211) had begun to be answered. The causes must be many and complex, but Mulder's suggestion that "Mormonism is perfectly capable of its own *Christian Century* and *Commentary*" has of course literally been answered—by *Dialogue*, by a reinvigorated *BYU Studies*, most recently by *Exponent II* and by the inception of *Sunstone*. (A glance at the Acknowledgements in *A Believing People* may suggest, at least quantitatively, how much *Dialogue* alone has contributed to the growth of contemporary Mormon writing.) Mormon writers have begun to acquire and exercise a modicum of the critical intelligence and imagination called for by Brigham Young, and the

literary results deserve the attention of more than just historical or documentary interest.

"Imagination applied to the whole world," said Wallace Stevens in *Adagia*, "is vapid in comparison to imagination applied to a detail." Where an epic attempt might fail, a lyric vision of the "movement of history" (as in Edward Hart's "To Utah") can succeed because of prosodic skill and sharply focused images. When contemporary Mormon writers have looked back to Mormonism's usable past from the perspective of several generations' distance, the results have been criticism of popular Mormon symbols, as in Vesta Crawford's "The Fable of the Rose" (p. 285), or of our very understanding of and relation to some moment in our history, as in R. A. Christmas's tightly disciplined "At Mountain Meadows: For Juanita Brooks" (p. 316). The poem fairly cries out for the inclusion in the anthology of a chapter from Brooks's historical work. Again, in Clinton Larson's "A Letter from Israel Whiton, 1851" (pp. 292-294), in his "Homestead in Idaho" (not anthologized here), and in Clifton Jolley's "Heritage" (pp. 319-321), the thrust of the contemporary poet's critical intelligence aims at our own attitudes: a moment of history (here private rather than public) is imagined and set before us as a symbol of experience that tests complacent faith, challenges easy security within the Plan, by reminding us how often the tragic implications of our theology are borne out in mortality. Some readers have seen in Larson's work a tendency toward "meaningless violence";[4] but those who question, on this ground, whether Larson's poems are "Mormon" might do well to reread Sterling McMurrin and Truman Madsen.[5] Behind the oft-noted baroque splendors of Larson's style works a severe dynamic of Mormon theological ideas.

Contemporary Mormon writers have begun to work well with the smaller canvas of particular situations, too: witness lyric poems like Emma Lou W. Thayne's "First Loss" (pp. 300-301), with its poignant image for the experience of a twelve-year-old girl's aggrieved faith at her grandmother's death:

> Now, lying on my back, I ran my longest arms
> From hip to head, slow arcs on icy sheets,
> And whispered childhood's chant to the breathless room:
> "Angel, Angel, snowy Angel,
> "Spread your wings and fly."

Or consider Dennis Clark's small triptych on the expectation and birth of his daughter (pp. 321-322), in which the last poem, "A Name and a Blessing," fuses private experience and ritual occasion to create a multivalent symbol; or Linda Sillitoe's "Trip toward Prayer" (pp. 323-325), which works through a welter of quotidian opposition to finally open its cry to the Father. Behind both of these there may reverberate Eliza Snow's "Invocation" ("O My Father," p. 269), but the older poem is generalized in voice and theological imagery (being a hymn, it should be), where the present ones are personal and experientially particular.

We may hear authentic voices in contemporary Mormon prose as well—in the fiction of Douglas Thayer, Eileen Kump, and Donald Marshall, in the theological and critical essays of Truman Madsen and Marden Clark, and more recently in a personal essay like Edward Geary's "Goodbye to Poplarhaven" (pp. 242-247). In the last, there sounds for me the voice of a contemporary Mormon partly urbanized and partly expatriated by university and graduate education and nostalgic for a past that seems (perhaps was) more simply and securely Mormon. And the essay finds or makes symbols for the way many of us must feel about being half-uprooted from small intermountain Mormon towns and from a kind of community that might

have been, once, but clearly is not now. Note how Decoration Day comes to stand for that tenuous, half-gone community in its "massive reunion and homecoming" that involves "not only those living in the community but also the larger number who had moved away and the still larger contingent of the dead" (p. 245). That symbolic image of our common annual experience sank so far into my own buried sense of small town Mormon life that I awoke early one July morning in Ithaca to set down in my journal a similar description as an original note for a story, not to realize for eight months that the idea was not wholly mine.

In the stories of Don Marshall, here represented by "The Week-End" (pp. 372-380), the small voices of Mormon villagers speak from the dust of the dry places some call "Zion." What a shock of recognition when I first opened *The Rummage Sale*! I did not need to be told Marshall came from Panguitch to guess just about where his ear for dialogue had been tuned. Marshall's small but significant achievement is dual—first to have seen the stories in the uneventful lives of his Mormon villagers, and second to have begun to make their idiom work as a literary language. In effect, he has uncovered a "submerged population group," which to Frank O'Connor was the proper subject for short stories, a source of characters who, instead of representing "the reader in some aspects of his conception of himself," rather move on the fringes of their society, incongruent with its dominant self-images, small, lonely, inarticulate.[6] Deriving from such a literary tradition, Marshall's stories will not be thought "uplifting" by some parts of the Mormon audience, for they tell of lives endured more than enjoyed. But as O'Connor points out, even though we do not "identify with" characters in this kind of story, yet in their words and gestures, however trivial or pathetic, we may hear a voice saying, "I am your brother." It can be edifying to be reminded, as in Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio*, how "many people must live and die alone," even in Zion.

But historically the most important thing about contemporary Mormon literature, I believe, is that writing as a vocation within the Church not only has come to seem possible, but also has come to pass. It was not always so: Mormon literature may be said to have its lost or half-lost generation; and some who have not expatriated themselves have suffered mistrust and even brutal ostracism. It will not always be so in individual cases: witness the instance of David L. Wright, a one-man revolt from the Mormon village, yearning back like Anderson to "Winesburg"; perhaps enormously gifted, certainly passionately devoted to his craft, yet unable fully to reach and hold the discipline he needed. The reasons why some of those named above have been able to pursue the vocation of writing within the Church may be as many and as singular as the writers themselves. Surely the editors and readers of contemporary Mormon publications have helped; as has the creative writing program at BYU; nor could one discount the examples of scholars and writers like Hugh Nibley, Juanita Brooks, and Clinton Larson. But finally what may count most is the dedication and patience of the writers themselves.

Perhaps the patience above all. I think especially of Douglas Thayer and Eileen Kump, who I believe have published the best recent Mormon short stories. Thayer may revise enough times to lose count of the drafts before a story satisfies his exacting fictional and stylistic standards; for some stories this painstaking process has required as much as five years. Mrs. Kump began, at least as early as 1964, her cycle of historical stories about Amy Taylor Gordon; as teacher, graduate student's wife, and mother of four children she has carried on her work through a decade and several changes of residence, so far publishing four of eight projected stories.

The fruit of dedicated and patient craft is quality: these two writers have made

Mormon stories that will not easily be dislodged. Often deliberately flattened in tone, yet written in a style whose very syntax registers the rhythms of each central consciousness, Douglas Thayer's meditative stories show him to be our most incisive anatomist of the personal tensions of contemporary Mormons stressed between private needs and the social patterns of the Church. Thayer's work is well represented by "Under the Cottonwoods" (pp. 365-372), framed in a moment of quiet crisis when an innocently joyous boyhood self, sacrificed or disowned, rises to confront its protagonist.

Mrs. Kump's "The Willows" (pp. 360-365) I regard as her best story so far, and the best Mormon historical story I know. Nostalgia (as Karl Keller has remarked in conversation and in the following essay) has generated a great deal of Mormon historical fiction; but Mrs. Kump's stories seem to me to belong not to the nostalgic tradition of history-as-fiction, the genre of the costume novel, but rather to the tradition of fiction-as-history, best represented in American literature by Hawthorne's Puritan tales and by the work of modern Southern writers like Allen Tate, Caroline Gordon, and Andrew Lytle: fiction as a mode of historical understanding, the imaginative apprehension of consciousness in another time.[7]

What makes "The Willows" work is first of all the credible child's consciousness of eight-year-old Amy, struggling between her father's charitably inclusive tolerance and the hateful polarization of Saints and Gentiles, us and them, that the Edmunds Act so exacerbated. And there is the story's indelible central image, almost too true to have been invented, of the hunted polygamous wives hiding among the willows, mourning alone or consoling one another, constrained even to drive away their own children. This image and the story's title may refract our vision back beyond the imagined historical moment to a Biblical analogue for the story's emotional logic in Psalm 137: the lament for Zion—

> By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept,
> when we remembered Zion.
> We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.

—and the violent delight in the image of revenge on Babylon—

> Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones
> against the stones.

The pattern is latent in the child Amy Taylor's confused feelings, but the shadow of a scriptural archetype is part of what makes "The Willows" a moving verbal symbol of Mormon experience, and a fine example of how Mormon literature can be made.

With works like these, that literature is here—with us and for us. The desert has begun to sprout if not to blossom, and Cracroft and Lambert's anthology gathers some of the greenest leaves.

* * *

I needed this anthology: I need Mormon literature. Sydney Ahlstrom's mild, almost offhand comment about contemporary Mormons, "Their inner intellectual and spiritual problems cannot easily be shared with others," cuts deep: for me, his "others" include other Mormons. And, in my need of the imaginative—the poetic, dramatic, fictive—sharing of Mormon experience, I don't think I'm alone. Some years ago Douglas Thayer remarked in a letter, "I wish that all my friends were

splendid artists who could create forms to tell me what they feel. . . . I see more and more how lonely people (especially Mormons) are and how art can help us to experience what others feel"; and in another letter, "It's almost as if no Mormon really understands himself or that he can be understood by another person." For me, imaginative literature has become the richest, most sensitizing mode of such sharing and understanding, a mode and a mediator of self-knowledge and other-knowledge.

I know—we know, some of us—exactly how deep N. Scott Momaday cuts when he says, "The worst tragedy that can befall us is to go unimagined." Maybe not the "worst" (my Mormon mind holds back from that slight inflation of language, an unavoidable temptation for BYU Forum speakers), but a tragedy all right: to go unimagined (and unimagining) is to go deprived of those modes of knowledge that may most closely and fully reflect the shape, color, odor, sound, mass, texture, rhythm of our mortal experience. I believe I came here for that experience; I believe I am embodied for it; I do not believe it is dross, an orange peel to be thrown away when I have sucked the sweetly acrid juice of its implicated meanings; I needed to know *it*, as well as whatever I could conclude from it. Imaginative literature, like the other fine arts, helps me to know my experience, which includes, must include, that of my brothers and sisters.

We hear too much careless quotation of the prophets' phrase, "vain imagination." Like any other human capacity, imagination *per se* is neither vain nor otherwise; it becomes vain (empty and vaunting), in both artists and audience, unless it is strictly, rightly, and finely disciplined and used. There may well be more "vain imagination" of the undisciplined kind sloshing around in the Church than there is of the prideful kind, though the two go together like the Tweedle Twins (contrariwise). Verbal imagination (my main concern here) becomes vain when either writers or readers will not pay the hard price, the hours and energy of spirit, demanded by the discipline of the genres they wish to practice or enjoy. Its vanity is confirmed whenever the editors of a Church publication settle for less than excellence of artistic discipline in the name of "message" or "uplift" (Flannery O'Connor calls the results of such compromise by a harsh but just name, "pious trash"[8]), whenever they implicitly advocate non-excellent, undisciplined imagination by rewarding it with publication and prizes. Its vanity may be further augmented when the editors of the first major anthology of Mormon literature succumb even slightly to the temptation to inflate the language in which they judge that literature and the culture that produced it: "outstanding" (p. 47); "very good poems" (p. 251); "a rich heritage, a firm foundation for the literary tradition of the Saints," "a people whose individuality and commitment . . . have seldom been equaled" (p.4). I have augmented its vanity if I have overrated any writer whom I have praised in this review.

What is non-vain imagination good for, aside from the possibly selfish joy of imaginative knowledge? I believe John A. Widtsoe's teaching that "our feelings with respect to our fellow men should be cultivated. We must learn to sympathize with them in their joys, and pity them in their sins."[9] The non-vain imagination matters here because, as C. S. Lewis wrote, "In the moral sphere, every act of justice or charity involves putting ourselves in the other person's place, thus transcending our own competitive particularity."[10] Such acts presuppose that we imagine (thus in a sense "know") each other person as what George Eliot in *Middlemarch* (end of Ch. 21) calls "an equivalent centre of self."

By the verbal imagination even at the pitch of its discipline, as by any human mode of knowledge, "we see through a glass, darkly" (1 Cor. 13.12). And we would

see as we are seen, know as we are known by God. But that, Paul reminds us, will be "then"; and here we are "now." For now, I need the dim mirror of the verbal imagination, need it polished to the highest clarity a human writer can attain—aided by God if God will. I need Mormon literature because I need to understand and share Mormon experience, need to imagine it as a way to understand, in pain and joy, myself, my brothers and sisters, my Brother, my Father. It reflects some discredit on myself and my Church that it took James Agee's *A Death in the Family* to help me feel family life and sense one personal dimension of the image of Christ crucified; Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* to help me feel the depths of the miracles in birth and death, the perplexity of conversion; Reynolds Price's meditations on some works of Rembrandt[11] to lead me to some imaginative understanding of Abraham's experience on Moriah; the last cantos of Dante's *Purgatorio*, so moving I trembled and wept, to give me a faint hint of what God's forgiveness may feel like. (I trust it was better for me to tremble with Dante than for Augustine to weep for Dido.) These are things I came here to know. It reflects some discredit . . . . But praise God it happened at all.

A Believing People belongs in the hands of every Latter-day Saint (or half-Saint) seeking to understand and possess his heritage and his cultural identity. Whatever its failings, it shows us the contour of the foundations of Mormon literature, the literature many of us need. If it shows us also how little distance we have come since Orson Whitney spoke, how far short of his high expectation, how low in earth still lie the foundations—yet it shows us the foundations *are there*. And from there we may hope to build more, to make it and read it well.

[1]Quoted on p. 1 of the anthology. The text of Whitney's essay (p. 206) differs: "will" for "shall" in the first sentence; "brightest" for "highest"; "foundations" for "foundation"; "in" for "on" in the last phrase. All subsequent citations of *A Believing People* will be given parenthetically by page number.

[2]In *Modern Dogma and the Rhetoric of Assent* (Chicago, 1974), p. 186.

[3]*Mystery and Manners* (New York, 1970), p. 171.

[4]Edward Geary in "On the Precipice: Three Mormon Poets," *Dialogue*, 9, 1 (Spring 1974), 88; and Thomas Schwartz in "Sacrament of Terror: Violence in the Poetry of Clinton F. Larson," *Dialogue*, 9 (Fall 1974).

[5]For once in agreement, more or less. See McMurrin, "On Evil and Mormon Finitism" in *Theological Foundations of the Mormon Religion* (Salt Lake City, 1965), esp. pp. 96, 104-105; and Madsen, *Eternal Man* (Salt Lake City, 1966), pp. 18-19 and Ch. V. P. A. Christensen's "Tragedy as Religious Paradox" in *Of a Number of Things* (Salt Lake City, 1962), pp. 86-101, would be worth a glance, too; despite its apparent "humanism" I would have included it in *A Believing People*.

[6]*The Lonely Voice* (New York: Bantam, 1968), pp. xi-xiii.

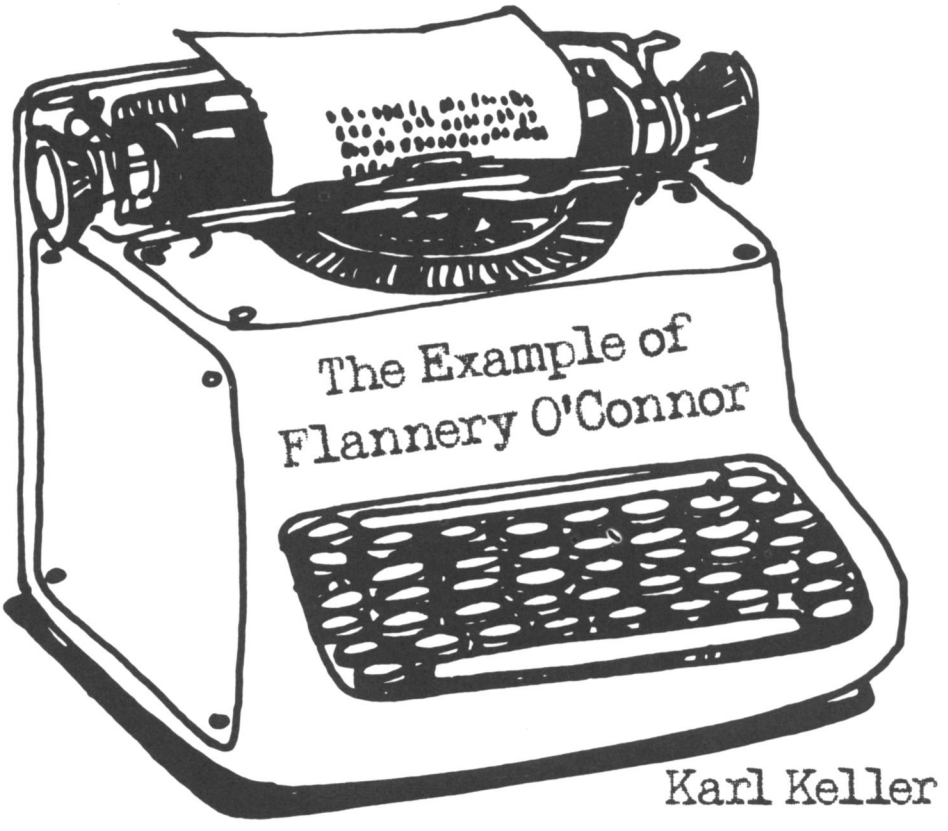
[7]See Tate's "Foreword" to Lytle's *The Hero with the Private Parts* (Baton Rouge, 1966), pp. xiii-xiv, and in that book Lytle's own essays, "The Image as Guide to Meaning in the Historical Novel" and "Caroline Gordon and the Historic Image." On the more complicated instance of Faulkner, one might start with the chapter on *Absalom, Absalom!* in David Levin's *In Defense of Historical Literature* (New York, 1967), which also deals with Hawthorne. For a more extensive and intensive treatment of Hawthorne's fiction as moral history, see Michael J. Colacurcio's essays on *The Scarlet Letter* (*ELH*, 39 [Sept. 1972]) and "Young Goodman Brown" (*EIHC*, 110 [Oct. 1974]).

[8]*Mystery and Manners*, p. 180. If anyone thinks I'm being tough on my Church and its writers and readers (myself included), he should see this tough Catholic tear into hers, in "The Church and the Fiction Writer," "Novelist and Believer," and "Catholic Novelists and Their Readers," all in the collection cited here.

[9]*A Rational Theology*, 7th ed. (Salt Lake City, 1966), p. 175.

[10]*An Experiment in Criticism* (Cambridge, 1961, 1965), p. 138.

[11]In *Things Themselves* (New York, 1973), pp. 260-269.



"I see from the standpoint of Christian orthodoxy. This means that for me the meaning of life is centered in our Redemption by Christ and what I see in the world I see in its relation to that. I don't think that this is a position that can be taken halfway or one that is particularly easy in these times to make transparent in fiction."

FLANNERY O'CONNOR

The flaws of Mormon fiction are many. But so are the possibilities.[1] Neither in the flux of Mormon activities nor in the canon of Mormon writings has fiction ever figured very significantly. But I believe it can be argued that that comes less from any prohibitions inherent in the theology than from the general irrelevance of our fiction to the doctrinal interests of the Church. More alarming than the paucity of qualified works of fiction in the Church is the lack of fictional exploration of the theology itself. Mormon fiction is by and large jack-fiction; it does not live by the principles of the Church. It is almost axiomatic, unfortunately, that with few exceptions the more removed a work of Mormon fiction is from orthodoxy, the better its art (viz., *Children of God* by Vardis Fisher or *A Little Lower Than the Angels* by Virginia Sorensen), and the more narrowly orthodox its point of view, the poorer its art. What is needed is a new awareness of the imaginative possibilities for use of Mormon ideas in fiction. I would like to argue that possibility.

The usual complaint is that Mormon fiction tends to two extremes, the historical-regional and the didactic.[2] The one articulates the teachings of the Church only incidentally and has as its subject the life-style, the manners, the ethics following from and incidental to the theology, without coming very close to the doctrinal heart, the intellectual core, of the Church. The other type of fiction, the didactic, sells the Church without making it very believable. It cannot be read in this world.

Unlike what one finds in the works of Jewish novelists like Bernard Malamud and Isaac Bashevis Singer or Catholic novelists like Walker Percy and Wilfrid

Sheed, it would therefore be virtually impossible to deduce a theology from works of Mormon fiction. For that reason, while they illustrate the imaginative capabilities of members of the Church, they by and large fail to reveal the imaginative potential of the theology itself. *Mormon fiction* at the present moment is a contradiction in terms: the two factors have not yet become one fact.

Like the manners of the Church, its art is not separate from but part of the larger environment of the West, where there has always been a difficulty representing ideologies artfully. Wallace Stegner has voiced this difficulty best: a writer of the Church, like any western writer, suffers from both "an inadequate artistic and intellectual tradition" and from "the coercive dominance of attitudes, beliefs, and intellectual fads and manners destructive of his own" coming from the world around him.[3] He therefore turns to that which he is sure of, his area and his past, even though to write about such at this point in time is more often than not sure suicide. Readers don't believe in going there anymore. Such a writer does not get past the celebration of the heroic and mythic frontier, however Church-dominated, to write about his beliefs as facts of his present earthly existence. He denies his gods for a mess of local color. Mormon historical-regional fiction suffers in precisely this way.

To be sure, some of the best fiction to come out of the Church has been of the local-color format—for example, Samuel Taylor's *Heaven Knows Why* (1948), Ardyth Kennelly's *The Peaceable Kingdom* (1949), and (best of all) Maurine Whipple's *The Giant Joshua* (1941). Yet this has been fiction that for the most part is the by-product of a history and a life-style that has *already* been created. It is parasitic. It reveals what lucidity about the history reveals. Whereas fiction with an ideology (or theology) at the heart of it is not based on the given but participates through language in the *creation* of that theology, historical-regional fiction lives off *lived* life; and too often that means living off stereotypes and patterns, off outmoded tribal qualities and virtues. The historical Mormon novel discredits with narrative that which it affirms by the choice of its subject. The native voice in Mormon literature has not always sounded very native, but twice removed from the life it loves and recreates. Its nostalgic, elegiac tone is a confession of yearning for a heroic, hard, dangerous life our authors have been cheated of. It has little ideological substance.

The didactic fiction suffers in another way, from obscurant sentimentality and folklorish inaccuracy. Nephi Anderson's *Added Upon*, for example, is a tract-like novel promoting hope in family life in the hereafter. But its lack of love of the worldly concrete and its sentimentalized guesswork make it vague and maudlin—and ultimately insulting to the mystery of the Resurrection. Similarly, a novel like O. F. Ursenbach's *The Quest* (1945) insults the mystery of personal salvation by relying on abstractions and conjectures. Such didactic Mormon fiction is escape fiction. It has no faith in the real and so will be incapable of stirring faith in the minds of real people. It does not begin where human perception begins, in the senses, and so its message cannot be believed. That is, it fails to be sufficiently *in* the world and *of* the world. It is concerned, to its own artistic disadvantage, with unfleshed ideas and emotions. It tries to make that which is good without giving enough consideration to the good of that which is made.

The historical and the didactic purposes of such works of these two types ignore not only the present world but *especially* the philosophical foundations of the gospel. They may therefore be largely peripheral to one's most serious interests. It does seem odd that of all the things Mormon writers of fiction have had to offer the world, they have not yet offered it their beliefs, their theology, the gospel.

The attempts of Clinton Larson and Arthur H. King (in poetry) and Douglas Thayer (in fiction) to integrate art and Mormon theology are about the only ones where one may observe another type of writing being explored. Larson and King, through concrete baroque metaphor, have attempted to create means for realizing imaginatively such abstractions as the institution of the Church (a fun house), the saving Christ (a pyromaniac), conversion (hot weather in Tucson), and even God ("Ellipse, oval . . . O golden excrement"). Thayer, in several of the works in his "Mormon Stories" series being published in *Dialogue*, has likewise attempted the use of concrete, worldly symbols to represent factors of his faith: a wounded deer is the crucified Christ, a hawk is the Holy Ghost, a label inside a pair of jockey shorts is one's conscience, an uncompleted construction site is the fallen world, a gull is the Church devouring the entrails of the natural man. But these are only *beginnings* in the attempt to make the Mormon intellectual experience understandable and credible in imaginative literature.

The works of these writers demonstrate, if only tentatively, the possibilities of a Mormon literature which excitingly and convincingly *could* represent the theology in both form and content. In such works, the writer's moral sense coincides with his dramatic sense; his faith is not detached from the natural world. Yet it must be evident that Mormon writers have not yet been very successful in creating a fictional world in which their beliefs are shown to be *true*.

The possibilities for an artfully articulated theology can be demonstrated best, I think, with a reference to the theories of literature and the literary methods of the highly skilled Catholic writer of fiction Flannery O'Connor. In her techniques the Mormon writer has the best of possible examples. So remarkable is it to find a writer proclaiming Christian orthodoxy in these days ("I see from the standpoint of Christian orthodoxy, . . ." she exclaimed in a lecture in 1960. "I shall have to remain well within the Judaeo-Christian tradition. I shall have to speak, without apology, of the Church, even when the Church is absent; of Christ, even when Christ is not recognized.")—so unusual is this attitude that special attention must be given to the ways in which she captures what she calls "the Mystery of religion" in her works.

Nathan A. Scott, Jr., the most orthodox Christian apologist among notable critics of modern literature, writes of Flannery O'Connor's art and faith:

> Now it is as a part of this tradition [of offering a kind of attestation to the divine mystery that is part of the world] that we ought, I believe, to understand the legacy of that remarkably valiant and gifted young American, Flannery O'Connor. . . . In her two novels—*Wise Blood* (1952) and *The Violent Bear It Away* (1960)—and her two collections of stories, *A Good Man Is Hard to Find* (1955) and *Everything That Rises Must Converse* (1965),[4] she leaves a body of work which is to be counted amongst the finest fiction produced anywhere by her literary generation. And what makes it in part so notable are the radical kinds of moral judgment into the service of which she was so intent on putting her art. It was indeed always an art that very much wanted to wake the spirit's sleep, to break that somnolence into which we flee from the exactions of the moral life; and it consistently expresses a fierce kind of rage at the feckless, lack-lustre slum to which the human world is reduced when through indolence of spirit or failure of imagination, men have lost all sense of the pressure of glory upon the mundane realities of experience and have thus "fallen" into the profane. . . . She wanted not only to exhibit what is banal and trivializing in the desacralized world of modern unbelief but also to portray its vacuity in such a way as to stir the imagination into some fresh awareness of what has been lost—and thus to "baptize" it, to render it open and responsive once more to the dimension of the Sacred and the pressure of glory. . . . Hers is a body of fiction made rich and radiant by a Christian presence whose wit and brilliance and (notwithstanding all the Gothic furniture) whose cheerfulness we are only now at last beginning to discern.[5]

Similar amazement at the happy coincidence of Christian orthodoxy and fine art in her works has been expressed by Alfred Kazin:

> The fascinations of Flannery O'Connor's work to me are many. She is one of the few Catholic writers of fiction in our day . . . who managed to fuse a thorough orthodoxy with the greatest possible independence or sophistication as an artist. . . . Her stories show that the Church—which as a physical character she used rarely in her work, and then in a mood of relaxed satire at her own expense—was so supreme in her mind as to be invisible.[6]

For these reasons, and for others that I will show, Flannery O'Connor is, better than anyone else in our time, the Christian fiction writer's mentor.

In technique as much as in subject matter, Flannery O'Connor is the supreme example of the writer with Christian convictions. That writer's true country, she believed, is not that which is past or that which is regional, not even that which is practiced and normal and desirable, but that which is eternal and absolute. Though a Southern writer with a deep regard for Southern tradition, O'Connor never succumbed to the self-defeating temptation of nostalgia, reminiscence, or memorializing that many Mormon writers have fallen under. She avoided the narcissistic sentimentality of much fiction written from the point of view of a region or an institution. She escaped it, she felt, by working in the light of an ultimate concern. Her answer to provincialism was simply to widen the province to include the acts of God in the lives of men in her stories. In addition, she was able to avoid the didactic by concentrating on the *worldly* manifestations of the supernatural. To Flannery O'Connor, it must also be pointed out in contrast to the Mormon writer, Catholic dogma was never a hindrance to a writer; instead, she found it a liberating force. It affects one's writing, she felt, by guaranteeing one's respect for the mystery of God's work in the world. This respect, she believed, separates the writer from the conventions of belief and the conventions of writing in the conventional world. The believer in the Mormon philosophy, from Flannery O'Connor's point of view, should find his field of vision of the concrete facts of man's life enlarged, not narrowed. Whenever she was told that because she was a Catholic she could not be an artist, Flannery O'Connor would reply that because she was a Catholic she could not afford to be *less* than an artist. She called religion "a dimension added" to her writing.

Though her stories are always concerned with ultimate and absolute religious matters ("My subject in fiction is the action of grace in territory held largely by the devil"), they do not *sell* a religious viewpoint. Since she believed that divine manifestations were always *concrete* manifestations, she transcended both didacticism and regionalism by insisting that her art be incarnational; that is, that it approach the infinite *indirectly* through the mediation of matter, that in fact it use the humblest materials of our lives to represent the relation of the human and divine. To her, fiction is about things human, and since we are made out of the earth, the writer of good fiction must be willing to be earthy:

> If the writer uses his eyes in the real security of his Faith, he will be obliged to use them honestly, and his sense of mystery, and acceptance of it, will be increased. To look at the worst will be for him no more than an act of trust in God.[7]

She has a story, "Greenleaf," in which the divine appears in the form of a bull ("like some patient god come down to woo") that troubles the herd of a self-satisfied woman, Mrs. May. She is a candidate for grace, but the divine must first

break through the great wall of her damning pride. The bull charges and gores Mrs. May; only then does she have "the look of a person whose sight has been suddenly restored." Flannery O'Connor thus renders her conviction about divine grace concrete and entertaining. Her dramatization makes any statement of dogma unnecessary: Mrs. May cannot deny either the reality of God in the end or His intolerable demands. Abstract beliefs have been made concrete, the divine working itself out imaginatively through the things of the world.

Flannery O'Connor felt that when it comes to the desire to write concretely about ultimate concerns, however, there is perhaps the temptation to write a sketch with an essay woven through it or an essay with a sketch woven through it or an editorial with a character in it or a case history with a moral or some other mongrel form of story-telling. To avoid such, she found it valuable to follow Aquinas' observation that "the artist is concerned with the good of that which is made." By that is meant that just as human experience has its meaning *in* that experience and not apart from it, so a work of fiction must speak *with* characters and actions from amid our mundane lives and not *about* characters and actions, not from any position above mankind and the world. It speaks from the earth to God, not the other way around. "The writer's moral sense," Flannery O'Connor wrote, "must coincide with his dramatic sense."[8] The good writer is interested in doing justice to the visible world because it suggests to him an invisible one.

None of this means that when one writes, he forgets or gives up any religious position that he holds. As the example of Flannery O'Connor shows, one's beliefs are the *light* by which one sees. But that is quite different from letting them be *what* one sees or letting them be a *substitute* for seeing. Religious and moral judgment is something that begins in the act of seeing; whenever it becomes separate from one's vision of the real world, then confusion results in both the mind and the story. The hardest lesson for the writer of convictions is that he must move from the concrete to the metaphysical and never the other way around. One story of O'Connor's, "The Life You Save May Be Your Own," is about "a poor disabled friendless drifting man," Tom T. Shiftlet, who fixes up a woman's car for her and takes her idiot daughter off her hands for her, only to desert the girl at a roadside restaurant and drive on looking for hitchhikers to help. It is a story in which O'Connor is exploring the relation between a savior and the savable. "The life you save may be your own," says a sign along life's road, but as this Christ-figure finds out, there is no one who wants salvation anymore or is worthy of it, and all that is left to do is to call down apocalyptic destruction on the world:

> Mr. Shiftlet felt that the rottenness of the world was about to engulf him. He raised his arm and let it fall again to his breast. "Oh Lord!" he prayed. "Break forth and wash the slime from this earth!"
>
> The turnip [of a cloud] continued slowly to descend. After a few minutes there was a guffawing peal of thunder from behind and fantastic raindrops, like tin-can tops, crashed over the rear of Mr. Shiftlet's car. Very quickly he stepped on the gas and with his stump sticking out the window he raced the galloping shower into Mobile.

With such black humor O'Connor makes concrete her concern for an unbelieving world, a concern that is made believable in concrete fictional terms first so that one may believe the idea behind it when one deduces that.

Now, the orthodox Mormon writer is apt to be a reformer and apt to want to write because he is possessed by the bare bones of some abstract idea, conscious of problems but not always necessarily conscious of people, concerned with questions

and issues but not with the texture of existence, knowledgeable of case histories but not knowledgeable about all those concrete details of life that make actual the mystery of our position on earth. The anagogical approach of a writer like Flannery O'Connor has to do with the divine life and our participation in it. She worked to make her descriptions of human action reveal as much of the mystery of existence as possible. Both man and God are present in all that she wrote. She believed that two qualities make fiction—a sense of mystery and a sense of manners. Fiction must have human gestures through which one makes contact with Mystery. What Flannery O'Connor's stories teach is that what is needed in the writer is a sharp eye for the almost imperceptible intrusions of the divine in our lives. She asks one to define the divine concretely, to document any plan of salvation *at work*.

In her short novel *The Violent Bear It Away*, a call comes from God to a young country boy through his drunken, hysterical great-uncle to "GO WARN THE CHILDREN OF GOD OF THE TERRIBLE SPEED OF MERCY." No matter how he tries to escape this divine election to be a prophet, he finds the divine at work in every contrary and evil thing he does, so that he is eventually driven to do the will of God he has tried violently to avoid. The divine intrudes in odd and surprising ways in his life to teach him to accept his call:

> He felt his hunger no longer as a pain but as a tide. He felt it rising in himself through time and darkness, rising through the centuries, and he knew that it rose in a line of men whose lives were chosen to sustain it, who would wander in the world, strangers from that violent country where the silence is never broken except to shout the truth. He felt it building from the blood of Abel to his own, rising and engulfing him. It seemed in one instant to lift and turn him. He whirled toward the treeline. There, rising and spreading in the night, a red-gold tree of fire ascended as if it would consume the darkness in one tremendous burst of flame.

O'Connor is exceedingly skillful in finding concrete, "natural" ways in her stories to give the divine will expression in men's lives that normally exclude the divine: a pride-filled woman yells "Who do you think you *are*?" at the heavens and it turns into an echo; a displaced person comes from Poland to work a widow's farm and when he tries to teach her compassion and concern, she lets a tractor run over and "crucify" him; an escaped convict, "The Misfit," shoots all of a family stranded on a roadside in order to send them "to the father of souls." In such grotesque ways, she gives the divine an appearance.

Like any writer of special interests, it is easy for the Mormon writer to make himself a victim of parochial esthetics and cultural insularity, especially if he lets certain "official" doctrines keep him from seeing comprehensively or lets opinions and traditions keep him from seeing certain ways. It may also be easy for him to try to use fiction to prove the truth of the Church or the existence of the supernatural, even if he must fraudulently manipulate or smother certain facts and actions in his stories as he writes. But as the example of Flannery O'Connor shows, the writer of convictions does not necessarily have to move or mold reality in the interests of abstract truth. If he at any point separates the natural and the supernatural in what he writes, he will reduce his faith to pious cliches, and he will give himself over to a sentimentality that overemphasizes innocence and goodness. Both cliche and sentimentality ignore the hard work of experience and are therefore to the religious mind obscene.

The writer of faith, Flannery O'Connor contended, looks for the apt symbol to express his beliefs, one which will represent his theology believably:

> Great fiction involves the whole range of human judgment; it is not simply an imitation of feeling. The good novelist not only finds a symbol for feeling, he finds a symbol and a way of lodging it which tells the intelligent reader whether this feeling is adequate or inadequate, whether it is moral or immoral, whether it is good or evil. And his theology, even in its most remote reaches, will have a direct bearing on this.
>
> It makes a great difference to the look of a novel whether its author believes that the world came late into being and continues to come by a creative act of God, or whether he believes that the world and ourselves are the product of a cosmic accident. It makes a great difference to his novel whether he believes that we are created in God's image, or whether he believes we create God in our own. It makes a great difference whether he believes that our wills are free, or bound like those of the other animals.[9]

This means that the religious writer must try to penetrate the concrete world and seek to find in it the image of its true source, the image of some ultimate reality. Because writing fiction is by its very form the art of dealing with the concrete world, the writer must seek to find in the world of things the means for talking about his abstract beliefs, even the supernatural. If he does justice to the visible universe, to the world of experience, and makes that believable *first*, then he will be believed when he bears witness to the invisible world. He must not fall for the convention of portraying a reality that ends very close to the surface, if his belief indeed extends to an ultimate divine source. He must find a concrete way of showing the mysteries of life that make an objective world beyond the processes of consciousness. If he is a true artist, he will suggest, as O'Connor herself did in her stories, that image of ultimate reality as it can be seen in some aspect of the human condition. Then his art will perform the service of revelation.

In her story "The Enduring Chill" a young intellectual is dying to spite his mother and all that she represents. He is cured when a water stain on the ceiling of his bedroom takes the form of a hawk in his mind and descends upon him; it is the Holy Ghost forcing him to live in a world in which grace takes the form of the struggle to live:

> The old life in him was exhausted. He awaited the coming of new. It was then that he felt the beginning of a chill, a chill so peculiar, so light, that it was like a warm ripple across a deeper sea of cold. His breath came short. The fierce bird which through the years of his childhood and the days of his illness had been poised over his head, waiting mysteriously, appeared all at once to be in motion. Asbury blanched and the last film of illusion was torn as if by a whirlwind from his eyes. He saw that for the rest of his days, frail, racked, but enduring, he would live in the face of a purifying terror. A feeble cry, a last impossible protest escaped him. But the Holy Ghost, emblazoned in ice instead of fire, continued, implacable, to descend.

In this way O'Connor has the ultimate alive in the world's symbols. Her stories are redolent with such Mystery relayed through mere manners.

Such anagogy is the surest artistic method for a person to be both novelist *and* believer. This means that he will, as Flannery O'Connor herself did, locate the supernatural, the invisible, the mysterious *in* the world. Only in this way could she feel she was representing the central religious experience of a relationship with a supreme being recognized through faith. There is little of the anagogical in Mormon fiction, and therefore no God, little theology, and only a modicum of faith. The problem for the believing writer who wishes to write about man's encounter with God is how he can make the experience—which is *both* natural and supernatural—understandable and believable to readers. This has been a problem in every age, but in our own it is an almost insurmountable one.

The supreme example in Flannery O'Connor's fiction of the convergence of the natural and supernatural is her story "Good Country People." The main characters are a cynical, agnostic intellectual, Hulga Joy, and a tricky Bible-salesman, Manly Pointer; the main conflict is a contest of wills about who will seduce whom. They go to the hayloft of the barn where he tries to get her to tell him she loves him. But she does not know what love is. She has an artificial leg and he manages to get her to unhook it and give it to him. He runs away with it, leaving her humiliated and humbled. He has been the Christ trying to overcome her pride-filled intellectual coldness. When she cannot learn love, he leaves her in a condition that is without grace. The story is both humorous and rich in theology. What is important about the approach is the use of the natural to talk about the supernatural, the doubleness of language (puns, elaborate metaphors, black humor) as a representation of the world's doubleness (nature and supernature), and the use of the grotesque to show both the displacement of man and his need for redemption. By such means a writer becomes a revelator of the Mystery.

Even with the anagogical approach there is the danger of a writer not seeing the truth while he writes but seeing only what he *believes*. Poor religious fiction results from the mistake of a writer thinking that his church or the scriptures have done his thinking for him and from the fact that he has not been willing to get himself dirty arranging reality into satisfying patterns on his own. "But the real novelist, . . ." Flannery O'Connor advised, "knows that he cannot approach the infinite directly, that he must penetrate the natural human world as it is. The more sacramental his theology, the more encouragement he will get from it to do just that."[10] In the story "Everything that Rises Must Converge" the question of how mankind can learn love when he is by nature loveless is dramatized by the bitter conflict between a mother and her son. Only when a black woman knocks the mother down (she represents the artfully made darkness of this world through which the divine works to bring man to grace) does the son discover his need of, even his love of, his mother. The story presents the idea of the need of a third, outside force (the divine will) to bring mankind together.

The comparison here may be unfair since Catholic theology is considerably more definite than Mormon theology in constructing a reality that yields itself to such dramatization: the long line of theology-dramatizing works from Augustine's *City of God* to J. F. Powers' *Morte D'Urban* attests to that fact. The relative ease of salvation in Mormon thought may in some writers' minds prevent use of many of the features of great art—anxiety, alienation, suffering, tragedy, the absurd, grotesque humor, and therefore (often!) depth. In application it is a theology that tends to exclude divine *action* (either prevenient or intervenient); there is definitely the tendency to hold that man helping himself is the divine at work already. Mormon fiction may therefore tend to be man- rather than God-centered; that is, it is emphatic about the Mormon's manners and rather equivocal about any Mystery beyond. Herein may lie the cause of much of the superficiality. But such positions overlook the possibilities for exploring the ways in which language can be applied to aspects of the theology to make it reproduce itself esthetically. The use of writing to keep the universe sacramental should not continue to pass Mormon thought by.

A particularly good source for material for Mormon fiction after the O'Connor manner (*contre* Wallace Stegner's recommendation that one look under his nose for stories and characters) is, I believe, a work like Sterling M. McMurrin's *The Theological Foundations of the Mormon Religion*. Whatever its philosophical in-

tent, it is essentially an outline of the esthetic possibilities of Mormon articles of belief. As codified richly by McMurrin, the catechism becomes dramatic. Juxtapose the optimistic, confident "concept of man as uncreated and underived," for example, over against the gloomier, humbling "sense of dependence upon God for his present estate and for whatever salvation he may achieve" and you have a tension that should make a valuable story: our lives given conflict, duplicity, ambiguity, and tragic depth by the concurrent thoughtful pursuit of both being and nothingness. Look as well at the imaginative possibilities in McMurrin's description of the Mormon God:

> God is described in non-absolutistic terms as a being who is conditioned by and related to the world of which he is a part and which, because it is not ultimately his creation, is not absolutely under his dominion. . . . God's environment is the physical universe, the minds and selves which exist but are not identified with him, the principles under which reality is structured, and perhaps even the value absolutes which govern the divine will. . . . This means that God is a being among beings rather than *being* as such or the ground of being. . . .[11]

This gives the writer license to clothe the divine in any earthly form—though ultimately grotesque, dependent, and infinitely varied. There could be scores of stories, too, in "the relation of reason to revelation" in all men's lives, or in the place of the divine in transmuting tragedy into moral good, or in the idea of evil as an absolute, or in the interplay of man's creativity and Christ's atonement. In any case, one would work as a writer to create a fictive world in which a belief is made true.

But our writers' decision to keep God out of the picture and ignore man's cosmic dilemma (as imposed on him by Mormon ideology) reduces much Mormon fiction to mere skill with ephemera. The example of Flannery O'Connor provides a relief: the willingness to narrate beliefs believably. The reason this is a valuable process is that as a writer turns his abstract convictions into fully earth-bound fiction he is demonstrating his faith that transcendent things matter in our lives, that, in fact, one's life can have both. To write about only transcendent matters (dogmatic fiction) or only earthly manners (historical/regional fiction) and to fail to embody the one in the other and make them one imaginatively is tantamount to denial. In this light, faith-promoting fiction is heresy and history-documenting fiction is untrue. An approach which affirms at one and the same time the means by which we live and the means by which we believe would make important fiction: the very bringing together of the two imaginatively and convincingly would be a demonstration of an act of faith.

If Mormons are the last believers—it is supposed to be what one is best at!—then it should not be so difficult to get those beliefs into imaginative forms. So far, no one has done it very thoroughly, very devotedly. Perhaps the problem lies in the fact that we have not yet learned that there is quite a difference between ethnic consciousness and esthetic belief. In the one the job is to come to terms with one's past, but that can yield an overweening self-consciousness and an obsession with the burden of history. The other is liberating, for it explores the possibility of using language to create a universe in which one's beliefs become true; one proceeds to create the truth. This does not mean that one's art thereby becomes a servant of (or subservient to) one's beliefs, but means instead that art is making it possible for one to believe by imaginatively creating a fictive world where what one holds to by faith becomes a reality. In her best short story, "The Artificial Nigger," Flannery O'Connor takes two characters, a pompous grandfather and a rebellious boy, into the hell of an inner city where they get lost, deny each other, and cannot get home. She

turns a plaster hitching-post into a pointer for them, a symbol of Christ showing the way to the train station and their home in the country—and therein salvation through the atonement of Christ in which she believes becomes a reality on the pages of her story:

> The two of them stood there with their necks forward at almost the same angle and their shoulders curved in almost exactly the same way and their hands trembling identically in their pockets. Mr. Head looked like an ancient child and Nelson like a miniature old man. They stood gazing at the artificial Negro as if they were faced with some great mystery, some monument to another's victory that brought them together in their common defeat. They could feel it dissolving their differences like an action of mercy. Mr. Head had never known before what mercy felt like because he had been too good to deserve any, but he felt he knew now. He looked at Nelson and understood that he must say something to the child to show that he was still wise and in the look the boy returned he saw a hungry need for that assurance. Nelson's eyes seemed to implore him to explain once and for all the mystery of existence.

To *make* a world where the factors of one's faith actually become realities has always been the opportunity of the fiction-writer. If salvation through Christ's atonement was one of her central concerns, Flannery O'Connor wrote about it in the most worldly of terms (man lost in hell in need of a signpost showing him the way home) so that she could believe it as really being true. For others this means simply finding a form for one's faith. Fiction-writing is not bearing witness to the truth so much as witnessing one's faith come alive in one's own hands.

Admittedly the imaginative handling of the Mormon past is a way to a delightful fiction; Fisher, Sorensen, Taylor, and Whipple have proved that amply. The imaginative handling of conflicts inherent in Mormon life is, too; Douglas Thayer and Robert Christmas make excellent reading: a built-in conflict of vision, together with the desire to resolve it, can make a writer. Yet both handlings leave a whole world unexplored—the abundant world of Mormon thought. That plane dies in the rhetoric of the theologian and survives only by sheer weight of authority until the thoughtful writer gives it a medium to live in. When someone becomes capable of creating imaginative worlds where Mormon theological principles are concretely true, then we will have a writer of the stature of Flannery O'Connor. *Because* she was a Catholic, she said, she could not afford to be less than a good artist.

1. See my "On Words and the Word of God: The Delusions of a Mormon Literature," *Dialogue*, 4 (Autumn 1969), 13-20.

2. Kenneth B. Hunsaker, "Mid-Century Mormon Novels," *Dialogue*, 4 (Autumn 1969), 123-128. I am ignoring another category of Mormon fiction that is just now beginning to emerge, the contemporary satire, the best representative of which is Robert Christmas' *The Beheading Game* (Chicago, 1971).

3. *The Sound of Mountain Water* (New York, 1969), p. 170.

4. All of which have been brought together as *The Collected Writings of Flannery O'Connor* (New York, 1971).

5. "Flannery O'Connor's Testimony: The Pressure of Glory," *The Added Dimension: The Art and Mind of Flannery O'Connor*, eds. Melvin J. Friedman and Lewis A. Lawson (New York, 1966), pp. 143-144, 155.

6. "Heroines," *New York Review of Books*, Feb. 11, 1971, p. 30.

7. "The Church and the Fiction Writer," *Mystery and Manners*, eds. Sally and Robert Fitzgerald (New York, 1970), p. 148.

8. "The Nature and Aim of Fiction," *Mystery and Manners*, p. 76.

9. "Novelist and Believer," *Mystery and Manners*, pp. 156-157.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 163.

11. *The Theological Foundations of the Mormon Religion* (Salt Lake City, 1965), p. 29.

Lewis B. Horne

Vision of an Older Faith

Car window turned to shale from sun-
burst, the car parked some summer
Sunday there before the church-
house. Voices sing: "Spirit
of God like a fire . . ." Shadows look firm
as rocks, as dark as stars gone out,

as still as roots. Against the church
and cars they shrink up from the sun.
This seventh day, the sky is firm
in curve and color as any summer-
heated roof—a light without
a face, photographic, spirit-

flashing. There in church how firm
a foundation's set. We sang in church,
I remember. A day out
of childhood, tracked back through sun
and year, memory of minutes, spirit,
blood. A day that's always summer,

unreal now, crafted out
of an antique voice. I move infirm,
unceremonious in spirit,
in these my latter days. Still, church
can conquer time—the heat of summer,
the unambiguous and burning sun.

I am susceptible to spirit.
Listen: closing prayer. There out
of doors, blinking into summer,
the congregation comes. How firm
my past belief. A light like suns
unnumbered fell and restored church

through a youthful Joseph. Many a summer
brought winter-sorrow, many a spirit-
loss. No primary noonday sun
struck us. But out of word, out
of song, faith, miracle, church
was true for us and mountain-firm.

Now out of that valley, I see that summer—
sunburst glass, church, the firm
in spirit. Bright with sun surpassing sun.

REVIEWS

Edited by Edward Geary

A Hint of an Explanation

ERIC JAY OLSON

The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment. By Hugh Nibley. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1975. xii + 305 pp. $14.95.

This long-anticipated book by Hugh Nibley on the Joseph Smith Papyri continues his latest efforts to open our minds to the ancient world. Nibley has focused his wide-reaching scholarly interests on an exposition of an aspect of Egyptian religion and has made a valuable contribution to the few books available which give the amateur an exposure to the culture of forgotten peoples.

Nibley restricts his discussion primarily to two of the papryi, Numbers X and XI, which are remnants of an example of the genre of Egyptian funerary texts commonly called "books of breathing." P. JS XI is the document quoted in the so-called Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar (EAG) where it is presented as the source of part of the Book of Abraham. Much discussion has centered around this identification because it is attributed to Joseph Smith, but does not stand up under scrutiny by any trained translators. Nibley (Chapter 1) adds more arguments to his article in *BYU Studies*, in which he claimed that Joseph Smith was not responsible for the production of the Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar; rather it should be assigned to the speculative efforts of "the brethren in Kirtland," who sought to follow in Joseph's footsteps and reproduce his work. Whether his additional evidence will quiet the storm centering around the connection between the EAG, the Book of Abraham, and Joseph Smith remains to be seen. Since the various arguments produced are mainly to justify the proponent's previously confirmed convictions about the veracity of Joseph Smith's productions, it is doubtful.

Chapter 2 presents an elaborate interlinear translation of the two papyri, with line-by-line facsimile of the original hieratic text, hieroglyphic transcription, both right to left and then, for the convenience of the English reader, from left to right, followed by a phonetic transcription and word by word translation. To this are added notes to explain the options available to the translator. I am disturbed by the frequent proof-reading errors which mar an otherwise very worthwhile effort. For example, on the first page of the chapter, the labels of the columns are reversed. In the transliteration, there are several inconsistencies, such as the word for "on" being given as both *hr* and *ḥr*. Also various superscript numbers are scattered around without accompanying footnotes or explanation. However, this is the first time in recent memory that the literate Mormon has been presented with such an extensive exposure to the background of the translated word. This will contribute greatly to helping us see the tentativeness of any translation of an ancient text, and the number of decisions that must be made before a completed translation is produced.

The next chapter is a discussion of possible ways to understand the nature of a translation. The ultimate purpose of a translation is to provide a reader in one language with a similar intellectual experience had by a reader in another language. The production of a translation must take into consideration the different cultures

of the respective readers. Translators can either strive to produce one-to-one correspondence between words in a sentence or they can attempt to reproduce a similar meaning which communicates with the reader's experience. For example the German sentence, "Der Apfel faellt nicht weit vom Baume ab," can be translated either "The apple falls not far away from the tree," or "He's a chip off the old block." The problem is really insurmountable when we attempt a similar enterprise between cultures as fundamentally different as Egyptian and American. The differences are so radical that we can only suspect them in most cases. Nibley has helped place our discussion in perspective by drawing attention to this problem. A translation of a Book of Breathings as presented in Chapter 2 is still foreign to most modern readers. His claim that it presents an "Egyptian Endowment" hints at another translation.

The remainder of the body of the book gives the fruits of Nibley's efforts to find meaning in the Egyptian symbols that will be understandable to one of our culture. This is Nibley at his most characteristic, drawing on his wide exposure to the primary and secondary literature of the ancient world. He has made extensive use of the so-called Books of the Underworld, a corpus of Egyptian literary productions which elaborate on the activities of the denizens of the underworld. This material has recently been tapped by Egyptologists like Erich Hornung as a valuable source for insights into how the Egyptian understood the nature of his gods and the way he related to them. Nibley has brought together much material that will give all a detailed exposure to the Egyptian world. Scattered throughout this section are numerous drawings and illustrations taken from original Egyptian material (although the source is not always given) which give an exposure to Egyptian religious scenes. Their connection to the text, however, is often loose—possibly an attempt to illustrate the Egyptian style, as Nibley claims (p. 3), in which figures used often have only a remote connection with the text.

A further attempt to expose us to the Egyptian world of religious concepts and its remnants is provided in the Appendix, where Nibley has shown six documents that follow the pattern that he has adduced from the Book of Breathings.

Nibley avoids providing a summary and conclusion to the material he has presented. His purpose was "not to prove a case but to state one," providing the reader "with information to help him make up his own mind." And it is with great control that the reviewer has resisted the temptation to improve on Nibley's resolve. For always behind any such summing up lies the necessity to refer to the ceremonies of the Mormon temples, to which part of the readers of this journal will not have been initiated. Suffice it to say that there are obvious parallels apparent to those exposed to both and Nibley has made a valuable contribution by providing us with the material which will allow some of us at least to draw our own conclusions.

Life Under the Principle

EDWARD GEARY

Family Kingdom. By Samuel Woolley Taylor. Revised Edition. Salt Lake City: Western Epics, 1974. xi+323 pp., $7.95.

Family Kingdom was written primarily for a non-Mormon audience, written, as the

author says in his Preface, to satisfy the "insatiable curiosity" and correct the "amazing amount of misconception regarding the institution of plural marriage as once practiced by the Mormons." It had a considerable success in the market for which it was intended when it first appeared in 1951, and though it met some initial resistance it has in the succeeding years achieved the status of a minor classic within Mormondom as well, making it one of the very few books on the Mormons to be accepted both inside and outside the Church.

This is a remarkable achievement, but then *Family Kindgom* is the story of a remarkable and fascinating man. John W. Taylor was the son of a president of the Church, was himself a highly regarded and widely popular apostle, a man of big ideas, great personal charm, and an unwavering devotion to principle. So unwavering, in fact, that he refused to give up the practice of plural marriage when the Church did and as a result was dropped from the Quorum of the Twelve for marrying two wives (his fourth and fifth) after the Manifesto and eventually excommunicated for taking yet another wife. At the same time, however, he refused to associate with any of the splinter groups that sprang into existence after the Manifesto. He insisted that his personal disagreement with Church practice was not a challenge to the truth or authority of the Church.

As remarkable as he was, John W. Taylor was simply an eminent example of a type familiar in Mormondom, the man who combines an extreme conservatism on theological and social issues with a wildly speculative approach to economic affairs. Such people insist upon (and often pride themselves in) walking by the Spirit in all things and strictly refuse to compromise on matters of principle, as they see them; yet they are ever ready to involve themselves and their fellow saints in risky get-rich-quick schemes (usually with the claim that the wealth so effortlessly gained will be used to further the Lord's work) which often lead to financial disaster. Samuel Taylor maintains that this man was a hero to his family. Certainly he is a hero to Samuel. The book treats of John W. Taylor's foibles as well as his heroism, but its general tone is full of admiration, even awe. Indeed, there is at times a pre-adolescent quality to the author's tone. It is the tone of one who lost his father before the stage at which he would have begun to rebel against him. As I read the book, I occasionally had the feeling that John W. Taylor was too good to be true. But perhaps I am wrong. After all, any man who can marry six strong-willed and (judging by the photographs on the book's dust jacket) unusually attractive women and who can keep each of them firmly convinced until her dying day that she is his favorite wife—such a man is capable of anything.

Family Kingdom is a commercial book, the product of a craftsman who knows his market and sets out to meet its requirements. There has always been a national market for the "colorful" book about a backwater subculture. But this book is also the work of a man trying to come to terms with his own heritage, which has at its center the greatest crisis in Mormon history. Samuel Taylor is clearly interested in the psychology of polygamy and in its social implications. Yet he also realizes that the interest of the popular audience is of a much shallower sort, that they seek entertainment rather than insight. Therefore it is understandable but also, I think, unfortunate, that the author takes pains not to seem too "serious." The book is highly anecdotal, with its more serious exploration kept to small and irregular doses.

For example, in the middle of the book Taylor begins to bring out the problems faced by the children of a polygamous family, especially the eldest in his mother's family, Joseph. Joseph is deprived of his childhood, given too much responsibility

too soon, compelled as he is to be the man of the house most of the time. There is a fine passage in chapter ten describing a journey to the Mormon colonies in Mexico, where John W. Taylor is taking some of his wives to avoid legal problems in the States. As usual, Joseph's mother must pose as a widow, managing her five young children entirely by herself while her husband sits in another part of the train giving his full attention to Rhoda, the new wife. Here is the encounter:

> In the car ahead, Father was seated with Rhoda, laughing, joking, having a gay time. The children dutifully said nothing, but their large eyes picked him out instantly, staring at him and the dark-haired beauty beside him; their heads turned as they approached his seat, looked back as they went past.
>
> "Watch where you're going, children," Mother said.
>
> Then the baby saw her father, reached out her arms and began to bawl. "Shh, darling. Shh."
>
> "Beautiful children, Madam," Father said.
>
> "Thank you, sir. Traveling makes them so cross." Mother hurried on.

Then she must deal with the resentment of her eldest son:

> "We can't speak to him, but Rhoda Welling can laugh and joke with him all day long every day. I don't like it."
>
> "Father is helping her pass the time away."
>
> "Is she traveling alone?"
>
> "I'm sure I don't know, dear." She bent to his ear. "Joseph."
>
> He waited. "Yes, Mother?"
>
> But he couldn't know. Not yet. In case of trouble she couldn't have the responsibility of the knowledge upon him. "Try to understand, darling."
>
> "I think I do, Mother. And I don't like it."

What, we wonder, will happen to this boy? What form will Joseph's resentment take when he is eighteen? I value *Family Kingdom* because it raises such questions as these. I wish it explored them more thoroughly.

Fatherly Advice

WILLIAM MULDER

My Dear Son: Letters of Brigham Young to His Sons. Edited by Dean C. Jessee. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1974. 375 pp., $9.95.

The fiddles are tuning in Mormon historiography. Not only is there a great deal of activity as new histories are written and old classics revived; there is, more importantly, a new professionalism. Mormon scholars have come of age: they have learned the tools of their trade and have achieved a certain objectivity and composure in dealing with their extraordinary history. The amateurs and apologists are still around, but now, *officially*, if we are to judge from what has been happening in the Historical Department, the Church seems to favor the trained historian and an educated handling of its great storehouse of materials. A new spirit animates the original commission that "There shall be a record kept among you," and modern means are being put at its service. A *Guide to the Historical Department* welcomes

scholars and, indeed, provides them with a list of "Finding Aids" for exploring the riches of the Archives and the Library in the new Church Office Building in Salt Lake, a towering western Vatican: a journal list, collection registers, indexes (printed, film, and card), and catalogs of manuscripts, minute books, photos, and printed materials. The staff of trained researchers and historians in the Historical Division promises to rival the industry and output of H. H. Bancroft's famous history workshop, with Leonard Arrington, Church Historian, and Davis Bitton, Assistant, setting the pace, not only writing books themselves but each serving as general editor of multi-volumed projects—Arrington of a new comprehensive history of the Church and a Mormon Heritage Series, and Bitton of the Peregrine Smith Classic Mormon Diary Series.

Dean Jessee, a member of Arrington's impressive team, has edited *My Dear Son: The Letters of Brigham Young to His Sons* (the first volume in the Heritage Series), a collection of ninety-five letters found in the archives. The Church Archives, says the general editor, "has the responsibility of making available materials in the archives that would be edifying and informative." The qualification "edifying" is without doubt an important principle of selection and we can only wonder what silent omissions and censorship take place under that well-intentioned but preceptorial standard. Mormon literature must, of course, be faith-promoting, and perhaps it is not a question of an editor's mistrusting the ability of truth to carry the day but more a matter of understandable taste and propriety.

These qualms aside, the present collection of the letters Brigham Young wrote to thirteen of his seventeen sons is a model of editorial care and completeness, exemplifying the new professionalism. An immense labor of research lies behind the volume, giving it an exceptional documentary value: biographies of each of the sons (including the four to whom no letters are extant); an introduction providing setting, circumstance, and continuity for each letter with generous quotation from the other half of the correspondence, the existing letters from the sons themselves; annotations; a biographical appendix for every name mentioned in the letters; a chronology of events in the life of Brigham Young; a list of all the wives by whom he had children, and a chronology of those children; a chronological listing of the letters themselves (since in the body of the work the letters are grouped according to the son to whom they were written); and finally an exhaustive name, place, and subject index. No pains have been spared to provide every informational aid by way of reference and cross reference. And no pains have been spared in Keith Montague's design and the physical production of the book: it is a handsome volume, printed on laid paper, bound in buckram, with Brigham Young in his prime on the cover, in magisterial broadcloth in old age as frontispiece, and an enlargement of his signature spread across the front end-pages. A photograph, in appropriate oval frame, of each son faces the biographical sketch which introduces the group of letters addressed to him. An additional aesthetic pleasure is the superlative Foreword by Jack H. Adamson, whose books on Sir Walter Ralegh and Sir Harry Vane have acquainted him with both the greatness and the shortcomings of public men. His shrewd estimate but evident admiration, touched with irony, of Brigham lift the volume briefly into literature.

Most of the letters by far—65 of them—were written in the 1870s, when Brigham Young himself was in his seventies; 25 were written in the 1860s, only five in the 1850s. It was Brigham old but vigorous: "My health is good and I feel first rate." In 1873 we find him wishing, "health permitting," he could "go and help the brethren found a city somewhere on the Colorado River on the line of the projected Southern

Pacific Railroad." It is Brigham benign and paternalistic toward his sons and, toward the rest of the world, self-assured, firmly entrenched in the faith and in the works of Zion so materially visible on every hand; Brigham vindicated against schismatics within and enemies without. The continuing efforts of the Gentiles to disturb the peace of Zion only amuse him: "Our new marshall has arrived . . . a quiet everyday person, a kind of third-rate politician." He was shrewd enough to know, as he confides in one letter to Willard, who was a cadet at West Point, that "Our commerical enterprises . . . have a powerful effect in heading off those who would introduce strife and discord in our midst, as it is so much to the interest of capitalists wherever we deal to have business undisturbed here." Not a doubt assails him, only irritation at either a divorce proceeding or yet another defamation, a pachyderm switching his tail at flies, as he adjures his sons to walk upright in pursuit of their careers and give the world a favorable image of Mormonism.

The letters are bulletins from Zion, the father informing his sons of events at first hand before they could read about them in the *Deseret News*, which the father faithfully had follow them wherever they went: news about crops, mining, new settlements, politics, elections, improvements in the city (gaslight in the Salt Lake Theater, a steam engine to hoist stone for the temple, a new building for Z.C.M.I.). They are, in this respect, a back door to the events familiar enough in Utah and Mormon history but now with intimate detail from the chief protagonist.

So the letters have a documentary interest, moving easily from family news (a birthday dinner) to public event. But though they often deal with domestic matters, there is little revelation of the private man, no play of mind such as we get, for instance, in the Adams-Jefferson correspondence. The letters have to be put into the right company to be appreciated. Brigham Young was not a letter writer on the order of Chesterfield or Henry James or Justice Holmes. Part news despatch, his letters are also part homily, lapsing readily into cant when he admonishes his sons to live the gospel, but taking on individual color when he describes an event in folksy metaphor, as when he tells about the Methodist camp meeting in the city he urged the Saints and his own family to attend, certain they would appreciate their own preaching the more: "The affair," wrote Brigham, "is very dry. Mr. Boole who preached on that occasion put me in mind of an old, dried-up wooden pump, laboring and creaking in a dry well, working very hard but producing no water." Such passages are disappointingly few; too often the letters suffer from the formal correctness we suspect may be blamed on Brigham's clerks to whom he dictated and whom he directed on occasion to give his boys the news from home and admonish them to behave. The text treats us to a facsimile of a postscript in Brigham's own hand to a letter addressed to his eldest son, Joseph Angell, in 1854, and a literal transcript of a letter in 1855 as Brigham wrote it. He was no speller, but his own language provides a refreshing contrast to that of the clerks. We may be sure the directness, the simplicity, the practicality, the homeliness and the humor are always Brigham's, as opposed to whole paragraphs of both the news and the moralizing often duplicated in letters written within a day or two of each other.

It is not duplication so much as the institutionalized personality dictating the letters that makes them sound interminably alike—they could have been written to one son as well as another and at any time. The value to history is the same, but the human interest is considerably diminished. *My Dear Son* calls for a companion volume of the letters from Brigham's wives, the mothers of these stalwart sons; they are, without doubt, more personal, more sensitive, more ultimately revealing. Writing about the marriage of his son Oscar Brigham in 1876, the father tells

Alfales, away in Michigan studying law, "I presume I need say no more on this point; it is quite possible you are acquainted with her [the "favored young lady"] and have been fully posted by your mother." We would like to enter that world of the wives and mothers, about whom the letters and the introductions are so silent. Brigham Young's male chauvinism, to be sure, was unconscious; he took for granted it was the divine order. His letters report a man's world, leaving it to the wives to report on woman's place.

Brigham Young took pride in his sons and established a manly relationship with them. They treated him with respect. They asked for money, but with diffidence, and always gave a good account of their stewardship. "Amongst the pleasures of my life at the present time," he wrote in 1875, two years before his death, "is the thought that so many of my sons are acquiring experimental and practical knowledge that will fit them for lives of great usefulness. . . . All true science," he was confident, "is the true knowledge of God and God's works," and he never questioned but that in pursuit of their careers (in business, in law, in engineering, in military service, in architecture) his sons would come to the same conclusion.

My Dear Son is an important event in the history of Mormon publication. We look forward to succeeding volumes in the Heritage Series, hopefully among them a complementary selection of the letters of the wives and mothers.

Close To The Bone

R. A. Christmas

Fresh Meat/Warm Weather. By Joyce Eliason. Harper & Row, New York, 1974. 145 pp. $6.95.

It's nice to know there was something to talk about in Manti last winter. I'm referring to Joyce Eliason's *Fresh Meat/Warm Weather*, a confessional autobiography disguised as a first novel, which has a lot to say about growing up absurd in Southern Utah. Published by Harper & Row in the fall, *Fresh Meat/Warm Weather* has been getting favorable reviews around the country. (It was eighth on the best-seller list in Southern California last spring.)

Although Manti is not mentioned by name, the setting is unmistakable, and I can just imagine how the book must be arching some of the local eyebrows. Joyce Eliason lays bare the wound, cutting so close to the bone that I'm sure there are some who can feel the scraping of her knife. (I predict a meeting in hushed tones at the Manti library, perhaps a couple of letters in the city paper—like a garnish on top of two hundred tons of gossip. Note: the four-letter words are enough to keep the book out of town, if anyone wants to press the issue.)

Fresh Meat/Warm Weather is the story of a perplexing Mormon childhood, two failed marriages, a failed career (as an actress), and, in sum, a failed personality. It is also, for better or worse, the Mormon "woman's movement" novel ("Is it easier to be black and Jewish than a woman and a Mormon?"—Sammy Davis, where are you when we really need you?). The book will undoubtedly provide some solace to those long-ignored "Jill" Mormons whose hearts have been broken by the world but who still have enough good sense to reject the *Fascinating Woman* solution.

> I tried to get recognition through Lee and it never worked out the way I wanted it. I want so much. And through myself this time. . . . Maybe I don't even want a man anymore. Maybe I just want me.

Maybe. Overall, *Fresh Meat/Warm Weather* reads less like a novel than a loose collection of reminiscences, recriminations (against self as well as others), and determinations. At its worst, it is open to the charge of woolgathering; at its best it offers us a mini-tour-de-force in the art of recollected anger, in verse as well as prose:

> What I want to tell you is
> that I hate you
> I hate you
> I hate you
> I hate you
> and
> I hate me
> I hate me
> I hate me
>
> But you four times and me three.

The narrative is only roughly sequential; everything is presented in flashbacks. The question is not *when* something happened, but *when* the narrator wants to bring it up, so the effect is cumulative—we gradually piece her story together as she ruminates on the pieces. The point of view is first-person-hysterical; the paragraphs tend to be short, without indentation, and separated by double-spaces—sketches. It looks like an exercise in getting one's dreck together, and I strongly suspect that it was written at the prompting of the author's analyst ("one sheds one's sickness in books," etc.)—see the dedication.

What holds *Fresh Meat/Warm Weather* together—remarkably, considering the dangers in this self-indulgent kind of fiction—is a letter written by the narrator's grandfather, which was at his request opened only after his death. (If Ms. Eliason composed this letter herself she is even more of an artist than I think she is; if she stole it, braving her family's wrath, I salute her pluck and her sense of form.)

> We didn't much get along with Father. But that was hard to say then. I remember of going to the first wife's house (her name was Mary) for dinner and all the kids and the big table. She always served soup out of a big bowl in the middle. One night the cat got frantic and jumped on the table and right into that big bowl of soup. It didn't bother Mary at all. She got the cat out of the soup and continued dishing up our portions. My mother never fully recovered.

Grandpa Erastus' letter, quoted in sections throughout the novel, helps to ballast the narrator's emotional freight. Grandpa Erastus himself apostatized from Mormonism, struggled against the frontier—and the Ward teachers—all his life ("There was no way of keeping fresh meat in warm weather") and achieved an integrity *of his own*—which puts his granddaughter's trials in perspective. Things were different then, in the same way. Without Grandpa's letter, *Fresh Meat/Warm Weather* would be no better than a good cry in the ladies' room. With it, Joyce Eliason has constructed a small masterpiece out of a small problem.

Notes on the Margin

JOHN L. SORENSON

Religious Movements in Contemporary America. Edited by Irving I. Zaretsky and Mark P. Leone. Princeton, New Jersey; Princeton University Press, 1974, 837 pp., $25.00.

Religious Movements in Contemporary America is a collection of 27 papers, mainly based on field work, on "marginal religious movements in the United States"—such as Jehovah's Witnesses, the Pentecostals, Spiritualists, Satanists, Hare Krishna, Scientology, and the Mormons. The Introduction lists 26 characteristics of this class of "modern" religious systems, extending J. S. Judah's 1967 grouping, "the American metaphysical movement." The term "modern religion" follows the much-cited work of Robert Bellah, who believes a stage of "religious evolution" is upon us in which belief systems tend to be continually self-revising, for the synthesis of the beliefs is in the hands of individuals rather than of institutional churches.

These papers are by social scientists writing to each other. Most describe fairly extensively one religious system, then connect their data to some aspect of method or theory. Anybody seriously interested in social science study of religion ought to read this volume. The concept of "sect," for example, demands reconsideration in the light of the reports in this volume. Mormon social scientists in particular will benefit by reading Luther Gerlach's biting but fair characterization of conventional academic studies of religion.

The Mormons are extensively treated in three papers, as well as being referred to other places. Leo Pfeffer, a law professor, considers the Mormons as one case under "the legitimation of marginal religions," recapping the polygamy controversy in a way most Mormons will not have encountered.

Janet L. Dolgin, a former student of Leone's, in "Latter-day Sense and Substance," offers a number of stimulating and informative points amidst unfortunate errors and painful jargon (e.g., "the actualization of a direct and immediate communicative link between gods and men is the cardinal (and innovating) neologism of the Mormon Church . . ."). Among her contributions are a treatment of how varying uses of terms in the Mormon lexicon mask substantial differences in beliefs, her distinguishing several levels of ritual, a "structural" analysis of the (garbled) temple ceremonies which reveals a twofold, chiasmatic form, and some valuable observations on apparent authoritativeness in the LDS Church and the simultaneous underlying openness which qualifies Mormonism as "modern" in Bellah's terms.

Dolgin studied Mormon communities in Arizona in 1970, but she didn't learn enough detail. Her article is seriously handicapped by small errors and downright blunders, most of which could have been avoided had she simply asked assistance from some Mormons. She holds, for example, that "blood" is a central concept in the Mormon system. "The Mormon concept of blood entails the notion of a definitive substance which divides humanity into three groups: the blood of the House of Israel, the blood of the Gentile, and the blood of the Negro." Among the slight documentation on the third group is "Nephi 21:25," which she takes to refer to "the Negro" rather than Lamanites. She concludes that it is a sense of ("unisub-

stantial") blood connectedness which unites Mormons. The idea is simply not accurate. As a Mormon in the face of such avoidable misconstruals, I begin to appreciate the feelings of Vina Deloria, the Indian who gripes about the anthropologists who afflict his people.

The biggest paper in the book is by Mark Leone. (It would have been improved considerably, along with other papers, by much tighter editing; lengthy redundancies are common.) It is one of the most important scholarly statements on Mormonism to appear in years. It has weaknesses, but they are less serious than those in the work of O'Dea, for example, while the insights Leone offers are in many cases so valuable that I wish I had grasped them first. Historians may wish for fuller documentation on certain points, but it seems to me that we have had in studies of the Mormons to this time a surfeit of documentation without enough insights. I'm pleased with this turnabout.

The author's study of Mormons has been mostly on the Arizona communities on the Little Colorado River. He began while a student in archaeology at the University of Arizona, studying the historic ecology of that area for comparison with prehistoric times. By treating the entire set of communities rather than a single village he gained valuable perspective. Still, that area is obviously provincial and somewhat atypical. When he, and his reader, try to apply his insights to the larger Mormon community, and particularly abroad, the extension fails to come off successfully in all ways.

Leone's central aim is to understand how the material conditions of life in these communities relates to religious belief and action, and vice versa. His position is based in systems theory, not a simple-minded economic determinism. He demonstrates clearly that changes have occurred in the way Mormonism in Arizona villages has been interpreted and used to cope with a difficult natural and social environment, and that at the same time that environment exists for these people in the way it does because of the religion. In the nineteenth century, he claims, a particular set of circumstances prevailed within which the Church served the people by adapting them successfully in one way, while since about 1920 the Church has become a means for shaping "modern" man in Bellah's sense—flexible, prepared to change roles, non-dogmatic, self-revising. He details, for the Little Colorado in particular and Mormon country generally, some of the forces which have required this shift.

The title, "The Economic Basis for the Evolution of Mormon Religion," turns out not to be as offensive as the phrasing might make it appear. He himself says at one point that the term "adaptation" or even "progression" to Mormons, could have been used instead of the somewhat pretentious "evolution."

The author is sensitive and even sympathetic to the Mormons, not as a believer, but as an observer fascinated by what he sees as a remarkably successful social institution. In all his work and conversation he evinces genuine interest—even excitement—about "his" people. In this he is reminiscent of Thomas O'Dea, whose dissertation, done while he was yet fresh from his discovery of Mormons in Ramah, New Mexico, shows him deeply affected. Let us hope that over-analysis and armchair rethinking does not rob Leone's forthcoming book on the Mormons of that warm, sensitive feeling he now has (as O'Dea's tone shifted while dissertation became book, during his years at Fordham).

Whether this bulky volume is read as a research record or for its pictures of the Mormons, it has substantial value. Too bad it is priced outlandishly.

AMONG THE MORMONS

A Survey of Current Literature

Edited by Ralph W. Hansen

"Progress has been much more general than retrogression."

DARWIN, *The Origin of Species* (Chapter 5)

Progress implies change and for this writer the call to explore new opportunities has become more insistent in recent years. It will soon be ten years since this column appeared in the first issue of *Dialogue*. Ten years seems sufficient to insure a sound beginning. If there are any among our readers who wish to take up the challenge of editing this column now is the time to step forward.

The subject of this column is, again, periodicals. The close student of "Among the Mormons" will recognize that the Summer, 1974 issue also dealt with periodicals. For a variety of reasons, with which we need not bore you, it's periodicals once again.

First there was *Dialogue*, then *Courage*, *The Carpenter*, *Exponent II*, and perhaps others and now there is another new LDS periodical—*Sunstone*. Subtitled "A Quarterly Journal of Mormon Experience, Scholarship, Issues and Art," *Sunstone* is directed at LDS youth and published in Berkeley, California (Box 4200). Another new title is *Utah Magazine* (976 South West Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah 84101). At press time we are not aware of the direction of this journal. Still another new title is *Measuring Mormonism*, a publication of the Association for the Study of Religion (c/o Glenn M. Vernon, 3646 East 3580 South, Salt Lake City, Utah 84109). Apparently an annual, *Measuring Mormonism* contains the "best" papers given at an annual seminar on the sociology of Mormonism held at the University of Utah. It is a pleasure to report that *Tangents*, the annual publication of the Brigham Young University Honors program has released a third issue. Two articles of interest in *Tangents* III are "The Causes of the Mormon Reformation of 1856-57" and "The Trumpet of Zion: Mormon Conversion and Emigration in Britain."

The Mormon History Association has announced the following awards for recent contributions to historical writing: Best Book Award to Dean C. Jessee for his editorial work on *Letters of Brigham Young to His Sons*. Best Article Awards went to D. Michael Quinn and Gordon Irving. Special awards were presented to Dr. Kenneth W. Godfrey, Kenneth Stobaugh, Dr. T. Edgar Lyon, Ralph Tate, Jr. and George S. Tanner for various aspects of meritorious service.

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Barnet, Steven G. "Collecting Manuscripts in Mormon History," *Manuscripts*, 26 (Summer 1974), 159-170.

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Bitton, Davis, "The Making of a Community: Blackfoot, Idaho 1878-1910," *Idaho Yesterday*, 19 Spring 1975), 2-15.

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Notes on Staff and Contributors

This is the first issue since *Dialogue's* inception that Richard Bushman's name has not appeared on the inside cover. Richard was *Dialogue's* first Book Review Editor and has been one of our hardest working and most helpful editors. His essay on "Faithful History" in the Winter, 1969 issue is still a focal point of discussion about the writing of Mormon history.

BRENT D. BURCH, a designer for BYU Graphic Communications, was able to attend BYU for six years without graduating in Graphic Design.

ROBERT CHRISTMAS is an itinerant teacher, novelist, poet, song writer and Jack-Mormon who says he wrote this review "so that I could advertise my need for honest employment, either in Salt Lake or Los Angeles."

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RON EDDINGTON won 2nd place and a silver cup in a baby contest, since then, he says, his life has been comparatively ordinary. (If one can call working for BYU Graphic Design ordinary!)

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KERRY SUMMERS, a member of BYU's Graphic Communications team, studied at California State University, Long Beach, and BYU. He says his profile was once mistaken for that of Groucho Marx.

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