

# Notes and Comments

*Notes and comments are not merely short articles or long letters; they are varied, informal glimpses of Mormon thought and life. The Editors welcome news, profiles, opinions, accounts, speeches, and other items that seem appropriate.*

## TAKING FLANDERS TOO SERIOUSLY

*Stanley B. Kimball*

*Stanley B. Kimball, Associate Professor of History at Southern Illinois University and a member of the L.D.S. St. Louis Stake High Council, has written the following response to Klaus Hansen's Review in the Summer issue of Robert Flanders's NAUVOO: KINGDOM ON THE MISSISSIPPI.*

I have read with great interest and respect Professor Hansen's review-essay on Robert B. Flanders's *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi* in Vol. I, No. 2, of *Dialogue* and very much appreciate his scholarly and helpful remarks.

Unfortunately, however, Hansen takes this book too seriously and seems unaware of some serious faults — the lack of objectivity in the researching and writing of this book and its great bibliographical lacunae. This is all the more surprising since Hansen praises Flanders for being an "objective historian" and further writes, "As an objective historian [Flanders] presents the facts." The simple presentation of facts, however, even if one does not like what he uncovers, is not necessarily good history or objectivity. *How* one presents the facts is what counts. Nowhere does Hansen evaluate, or even refer to Flanders's bibliography (which is, after all, one of the tasks of a reviewer). Perhaps this is because Hansen wrote more of an essay than a review.

A more serious flaw in Hansen's review, however, is that he does not seem to be aware of the somewhat less than subtle technique of distortion consciously or unconsciously used by Flanders throughout his whole study. In one instance Hansen even dismisses an example of Flanders's technique of distortion and practically pleads that this book not be rejected out of hand for "such superficial barbs." This barb, an anti-"Utah Mormon" quotation

from Stenhouse, to which Hansen specifically refers, is more than a “superficial barb.” It is one of many such carefully placed barbs, the sum total of which distorts not only the character of Joseph Smith, but also the meaning of the Nauvoo period in church history.

Since I agree with Professor Hansen’s conclusion that “If no Mormon scholar can afford to ignore [Flanders’s book], neither can other Mormons of whatever persuasion,” I would like to add my own rather prosaic remarks.

Professor Flanders finally has done what should have been done long ago — put some meat onto the skeletal history of the extremely interesting and important Illinois phase of early Mormon history. The book is very well written and presents a mass of interesting material. It is especially good in political and economic history (and correspondingly weak in religious, social, and cultural history). Some of his most valuable and noteworthy contributions are on the early history of Illinois (Chapter 1), land acquisition in and around Nauvoo (Chapter 2), the English mission (Chapter 3), and Illinois political history (Chapter 8).

This study is solidly founded on orthodox Mormon sources. Of the more than 770 footnotes, almost 400 come from Joseph Smith’s *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, the *Times and Seasons*, the *Millennial Star*, and the *Nauvoo Wasp*, and many others refer to such decidedly orthodox Mormon works as the sermons of Brigham Young and the writings of Parley P. Pratt, B. H. Roberts, and William E. Berrett. Furthermore, Flanders has wisely eschewed most of the notoriously anti-Mormon works. He has also used most profitably the records in the Hancock County Court House.

In reference to tone or attitude, however, many readers will not realize and understand that a book, even a large book, can be written mostly from good primary source materials, with few errors, and still present a more or less untrue and unfair version of what happened. This is accomplished most handily through tone and selectivity. A carefully chosen adjective or adverb can completely distort meaning and sense. One carefully selected and placed quotation can completely negate pages of preceding positive or favorable material. The inadequacy of introductory material can also distort. Whether by design or accident, Professor Flanders’s book is seriously marred by words and quotations which he does use and by material which he omits.

Joseph Smith suffers most from Flanders’s technique. The author quite ingeniously admits in his preface that his book is not biography and that “the account of Smith is not a balanced one . . . it does not treat him as a great religious leader [but] as a man of affairs . . .” (p. vi). Flanders is certainly not to be criticized for this, and it is refreshing to read something about Joseph Smith where he neither appears as a ten foot tall puppet of the Almighty nor as a patent villain. While Flanders has avoided both extremes, he has not found a happy medium. He is entirely too harsh on his “man of affairs,” who emerges not only naive and unwise, but also as an opportunist, a zealot, and a vindictive schemer. In this respect, Joseph Smith does not fare much better at the hands of Flanders than he did twenty-one years and seven printings ago in Faun Brodie’s regrettable “history.”

It is a rule of good drama (and well written history can be dramatic) that the audience or readers must be able to have some sympathy even for the villain of the piece. While Joseph Smith is not exactly the villain of

Flanders's book, the reader is never moved to sympathy. Nowhere does Joseph Smith appear kind, generous, or even likeable.

Joseph Smith's land dealing and his financial affairs form a *leitmotiv* of this book in respect to which Flanders is constantly critical. That Joseph Smith was rather naive and at times even unwise in such matters is hardly a point to be contested, but the author goes entirely too far. His constant harping on these subjects in no way improves his book or strengthens his main thesis, which seems to be that kingdoms, even those of God, are, after all, built by mere men.

Professor Flanders's first main error was to present inadequately the Missouri background of the Nauvoo period. The history of Nauvoo cannot be understood without some knowledge of the awful persecutions which drove the Mormons from Missouri into Illinois in the first place. Such persecution caused Joseph Smith and others to take defensive, and even offensive, measures in Nauvoo which in the light of previous experiences in Missouri are understandable, but which do seem highhanded if the Missouri period is not taken into consideration. Flanders gives the Missouri period a bare three pages, rather than the introductory chapter which it deserves under the circumstances.

For example, on page 34 we read that "in April, 1839, Joseph Smith escaped prison." Flanders provides little explanation of why he was in prison and no account of how he escaped. (He was allowed to.) Here Flanders should have presented more material, for throughout the rest of the book he comments on the attempts of Missourians to extradite or kidnap Joseph Smith, all of which appears quite just and proper on the part of the Missourians. On page 307 we read, "Particularly galling to the anti-Mormons was the notion that Smith was a fugitive from Missouri justice and that he repeatedly escaped his just punishment by flight or by legal maneuvers, the most prominent of which was his automatic release from any arrest by writ of habeas corpus from his own Nauvoo Court." Without further comment from Flanders the reader is left to ponder the force and implication of the expression "just punishment" and most likely will draw the conclusion, since information on Missouri is so lacking, that Joseph Smith really was running from justice.

Flanders's objectionable tone is likewise unfair. Joseph Smith "toyed with leading a little army" (page 4), "hated his enemies" (page 5), was "an easy mark for sharp dealers and flatterers" (page 5), "was learning how easy it was to buy on credit" (page 39), "addressed a crowd of thousands with a strident estimate of the power and sovereignty of Nauvoo" (page 105), "hit upon a new device which would meet the Hotchkiss obligation" (page 130), "hoped by pleas, threats, exaggerations, and repeated assurances to avoid being pressed too closely or brought to a reckoning by 'coercive measures'" (page 132), "chose to ignore the provision of the law that no trustee-in-trust was eligible for bankruptcy" (page 169), "betrayed what was perhaps his basic objection" (page 188), and his "threatened interdict . . . stood as an example of his vindictive zeal" (page 200).

A more serious flaw in Flanders's work is his penchant for negating the effect of many positive things he reports by concluding with a negative comment or quotation. For example on page 22 he ends Chapter 1 with a quota-

tion from Governor Ford, who certainly had every reason for wanting others to think that the Mormons were undesirables. "The old Governor concluded that perhaps the Mormons themselves were roques. 'So it may appear that the Mormons . . . may have been induced to select Hancock as the place of their settlement, rather than many other places where they were strongly solicited to settle, by the promptings of a secret instinct, which, without much penetration, enables men to discern their fellows.'" Flanders does not say he accepts or rejects this verdict, but he tosses it in at the close of his chapter in such a way that the reader could very easily conclude that this was not only Flanders's opinion, but most likely true.

On pages 340-341 Flanders closes the book with two particularly negative and dated quotations which seem calculated to leave a distinctly unsympathetic feeling in the minds of the reader. The first one is from Pease's *The Frontier State* (Springfield, 1918): "After full allowance is made for the violence and perhaps the greed of the opponents of the Mormons in Illinois, it must be admitted that they saw clearly how terrible an excrescence on the political life of the state the Mormon community would be, once it had attained full growth . . . and to enforce the will of public opinion, the resort to private war, though to be deplored, was inevitable." (One thing history is supposed to teach is that nothing is inevitable.) The second, with which the book ends, is from T.B.H. Stenhouse's *The Rocky Mountain Saints* (New York, 1873). Stenhouse was an apostate anti-Mormon, identified by Flanders as "an astute ex-Mormon." This quotation, which some will see as a typical R.L.D.S. swipe by Flanders at the "Utah Mormons," was written in Utah about 1870, and concludes, "No professors of religion . . . could be more bitterly bigoted than the rigidly orthodox among the Mormons today."

I do not wish to imply that there is no place in such a book for the opinions of Pease, Stenhouse, or other critics of the Mormons. This is not the point. The point is that such negative comments should not be used so insensitively. One is almost tempted to think the Flanders meticulously constructed his book largely from pro-Mormon sources so as to masquerade as objective, if not partisan, towards the Mormons, in order to better drive home his negative attitudes with adjectives and well placed quotations. If this is the case, he may have succeeded even better than many past detractors whose works are so rabid as to be self defeating.

Flanders's book will no doubt be praised for having a good bibliography. Yet, despite a nine page listing of over 160 items the author has managed to miss many important collections of primary sources. Aside from a few newspapers, several contemporary books, a few published journals, and fifteen manuscripts (not all of which are significant), and thirty public documents and "Other Primary Sources" (all of which are printed), the vast amount of unprinted primary sources was left strictly alone. For example, the large collection of documents and letters, including the Mayson Brayman papers and the John J. Hardin papers, at the Chicago Historical Society, were not used, nor were materials in the National Archives, the Thomas L. Kane papers at Stanford and Yale, or the Thomas C. Sharp and allied anti-Mormon papers and the Oliver H. Olney papers also at Yale. Ideally, of course, Flanders would have also visited the Huntington Library, Bancroft Library, the Missouri Historical Society, and collections in Salt Lake City, Utah, and Inde-

pendence, Missouri. At least he could have utilized the microfilm collection of the sources of Mormon history in Illinois, 1839-48, at Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville, which prior to the publication of Flanders's book consisted of about 75,000 pages of documents, letters, newspapers, periodicals, theses and dissertations. (It has since grown to 103 rolls and aggregates 83,000 pages.)

Of the seven newspapers published by the Church and its members during the Nauvoo period only four are used, and of the nearly 200 non-Mormon newspapers which have been excerpted and partially indexed by C. A. Snyder, Brigham Young University, and Dale L. Morgan, only two are used. And there was no use of the 322 pages of extracts from 35 Illinois, Iowa, and Missouri newspapers contained in a master's thesis by Snyder. (Snyder's original compilation of extracts from 57 newspapers is on file at the Illinois State Historical Society where Flanders did research, but apparently it was not used.)

While ten unpublished theses and dissertations are listed in the bibliography, 17 others, including Don F. Colvin's important study of the Nauvoo Temple, are not.

Flanders cannot make up his mind whether to treat polygamy as an off-color story, as a crime, or straightforwardly as a religious experiment which ran counter to U.S. morals and customs. He certainly can find nothing good to say about it. On pages 336-337 there is mention of the fact that Brigham Young and other church leaders were indicted by the U.S. District Court at Springfield for counterfeiting. The reader is left in doubt whether Flanders knew that these charges were later dropped on motion of the District Attorney. On page 99 Flanders makes one of several very critical remarks about the misuse of the habeas corpus provision of the Nauvoo charter. A Dr. Thomas L. Barnes is cited as an authority on the subject: "[The Mormons] murdered many of our best citizens, and there was nothing . . . that they would not steal. . . . The law could not reach them . . . our lives and property was at the mercy of the worst set of outlaws that ever congregated together." The reader is not told that the letter was written about 50 years after the events referred to, or that Barnes was secretary of an anti-Mormon group in Carthage at the time of the Mormon troubles.

If Flanders's distortions are unintentional and the result of strained objectivity, and his bibliographic omissions a result of unwise haste to meet some deadline, I hope he has the opportunity to bring out a revised and enlarged second edition.

## MERGING BUSINESS AND RELIGION

*Joseph H. Jeppson*

*Joseph H. Jeppson, a member of the L.D.S. Church who has been a lawyer and business entrepreneur and now teaches history, analyzes in this essay some historical roots and present-day manifestations of the tendency to confuse business and religious ideals and ethics.*

Last year four of my Utah relatives, friends, or acquaintances committed suicide. Three of them had once lived within a mile of one another on the

pendence, Missouri. At least he could have utilized the microfilm collection of the sources of Mormon history in Illinois, 1839-48, at Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville, which prior to the publication of Flanders's book consisted of about 75,000 pages of documents, letters, newspapers, periodicals, theses and dissertations. (It has since grown to 103 rolls and aggregates 83,000 pages.)

Of the seven newspapers published by the Church and its members during the Nauvoo period only four are used, and of the nearly 200 non-Mormon newspapers which have been excerpted and partially indexed by C. A. Snyder, Brigham Young University, and Dale L. Morgan, only two are used. And there was no use of the 322 pages of extracts from 35 Illinois, Iowa, and Missouri newspapers contained in a master's thesis by Snyder. (Snyder's original compilation of extracts from 57 newspapers is on file at the Illinois State Historical Society where Flanders did research, but apparently it was not used.)

While ten unpublished theses and dissertations are listed in the bibliography, 17 others, including Don F. Colvin's important study of the Nauvoo Temple, are not.

Flanders cannot make up his mind whether to treat polygamy as an off-color story, as a crime, or straightforwardly as a religious experiment which ran counter to U.S. morals and customs. He certainly can find nothing good to say about it. On pages 336-337 there is mention of the fact that Brigham Young and other church leaders were indicted by the U.S. District Court at Springfield for counterfeiting. The reader is left in doubt whether Flanders knew that these charges were later dropped on motion of the District Attorney. On page 99 Flanders makes one of several very critical remarks about the misuse of the habeas corpus provision of the Nauvoo charter. A Dr. Thomas L. Barnes is cited as an authority on the subject: "[The Mormons] murdered many of our best citizens, and there was nothing . . . that they would not steal. . . . The law could not reach them . . . our lives and property was at the mercy of the worst set of outlaws that ever congregated together." The reader is not told that the letter was written about 50 years after the events referred to, or that Barnes was secretary of an anti-Mormon group in Carthage at the time of the Mormon troubles.

If Flanders's distortions are unintentional and the result of strained objectivity, and his bibliographic omissions a result of unwise haste to meet some deadline, I hope he has the opportunity to bring out a revised and enlarged second edition.

## MERGING BUSINESS AND RELIGION

*Joseph H. Jeppson*

*Joseph H. Jeppson, a member of the L.D.S. Church who has been a lawyer and business entrepreneur and now teaches history, analyzes in this essay some historical roots and present-day manifestations of the tendency to confuse business and religious ideals and ethics.*

Last year four of my Utah relatives, friends, or acquaintances committed suicide. Three of them had once lived within a mile of one another on the

“East Bench” of Salt Lake City. I think I could classify all four as “businessmen.” All were Mormons, faithful in their church duties.

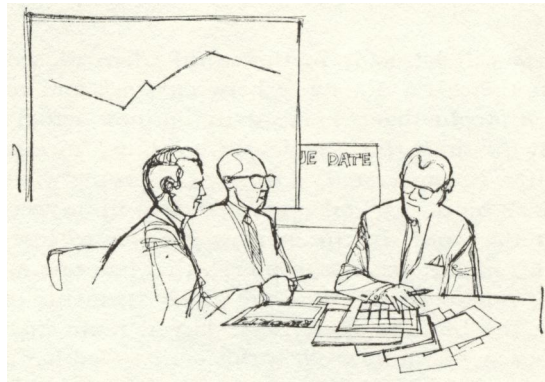
When I lived in Utah I was a businessman myself — thrilling to the exhilaration I derived from setting sales record, beating competitors, and developing the character of my salesmen. I lived in a 3700 square foot home on the “Bench” among neighbors who either were wealthy, or who endured considerable hardships to keep up the pretense. And I contend that it was acquisitiveness in this atmosphere, in part, that drove my friends to suicide. Furthermore, I believe that acquisitiveness among Mormons is often linked to our religion, not because the religion intends it to be so, but because we individually (and usually unconsciously, link our business thoughts to Mormonism. Those who do this have two religions, and cannot tell them apart.

### *American Money - Success Philosophy*

Money-success philosophy is a popular American system of thought. Its present posture finds its clearest roots in the industrial revolution which transformed America (and most of the world) between the Civil War and World War I. It is grounded in the attitudes of big businessmen who amassed fortunes at a dizzy pace during the “Gilded Age.” It emerged out of their optimism and was fossilized by their fears — optimism over “empire-building,” fears of their enemies, who were the “respectable” old-line family businessmen who were passed up and who resented their loss of status. The respectables enlisted the aid of the government to “level” the tycoons, who had previously used the government to help them squeeze out their competitors, some of whom, of course, turned out to be the “respectable.” Before the respectables (called “Progressives,” turned the tables on the tycoons, the latter group had developed philosophies to justify their activities. These notions are known to us as “social Darwinism” and “self-help.” Social Darwinism held that the fittest survive (by the will of God) in business as well as in nature. The ultimate extension of the notion that God wills that the fit survive and that the unfit do not survive was the proposition that one ought not to feed beggars on the street on the theory that such activity would promote their indolence and would also postpone what God had in mind for them (ie., that they starve to death and be eliminated as unfit members of human race).

The philosophy of “self-help” or “positive thinking,” held that men’s wills, sometimes in mystical ways, could lead them to riches. Success comes in “cans” (e.g. “I think I can, I think I can”); and success is the result of “service.” The way to determine whether or not one has been of “service” is to discover if his activity enriched him. “Believe and succeed” was the motto, meaning that if one believed he was rich, he *was*, for money flows automatically from the maintaining of “successful attitudes”; money and fame are mere “by-products” of success, and success is anchored in “positive thinking.” “God helps him who helps himself,” said Benjamin Franklin in a world of emerging Deism, and the “self-help” men of the late nineteenth century extended the notion to imply that the wealthy were those whom God favored. The theory, at this point, is almost the same as social Darwinism: Wealth is taken to be a sign of virtue and God’s grace and poverty to be a sign of evil or indolence and of God’s rejection.

Positive thinkers were parishioners of the Puritan “gospel of hard work.” Hard work might be mental work, of course, and the self-help people persuaded themselves that their mental work, including their “scheming,” was not only hard work, but holy. The wealthy at the turn of the century supported preachers like Henry Ward Beecher (author of the best seller *How to Succeed*) who told them that they were God’s elect. John D. Rockefeller justified his cut-throat business tactics to his Sunday-school class by explaining that the American beauty rose blooms most gloriously when the young buds around it are plucked. *Laissez faire* was not a part of his philosophy, for the thing he least endorsed was free competition. *Laissez faire* became the cry of the tycoon type only when Progressives turned the government into a “policeman and judge” instead of an expediter of inequality.



Someone finally noticed that the workingmen in the cities had stopped attending church services. In the 1890's, sixty per cent of the church attenders in Pittsburgh were drawn from the top ten per cent of income earners. A.F. of L. founder Samuel Gompers commented that his workers considered preachers to be apologists for the rich. It was in response to this situation that a counter-philosophy developed, which is known to us as the “social gospel,” holding that Jesus cannot be worshipped properly by people who are too poor, because their concerns are turned more naturally toward their staying alive than toward Him. The Salvation Army was brought from England to minister to the poor. Churches caught the spirit and incorporated “social” programs. One minister was asked whether or not he liked the Salvation Army, to which he replied, “I don’t, but I think God does.” Many businessmen contributed to the new movements in hopes that if the workingmen were made to go to church on Sundays, they might be less prone to go on strike during the week.

But the ultimate result was that as the churches came to concern themselves more with this world than the next, their members sought more and more temporal reforms. The “social gospel” spilled over into economic and political arenas. Progressives rose up to harness the government to the task of fighting big business. And when government was used against them rather than for them, the descendants of the “robber barons” set up the cry of *laissez faire*, narrowed to mean “leave us alone.” Big businessmen intensified



their self-help philosophies to defend against on-rushing socialism. Because the "social gospel" and "socialism" spanned the worlds of religion and politics, the businessman, in reaction, made his self-help ideas cover the same ground. The ultimate equation was made in a 1924 life of Jesus Christ, written by the New York Life Insurance Company's Bruce Barton — *The Man Nobody Knows*. In his preface, Barton said that Jesus was the "founder of modern business," who "picked twelve men from the bottom ranks of business and forged them into an organization that conquered the world."

Max Weber's famous thesis is that John Calvin was, to some extent, responsible for accelerating the rise of capitalism because he told men that their *callings* (specifically extended to include *vocations*) were appointed to them by God, who expected all men to glorify Him by working devotedly at their daily tasks. This "gospel of hard work," not consciously appreciated in a religious sense by most tycoons, was clearly invoked by Barton, who cherished the connection:

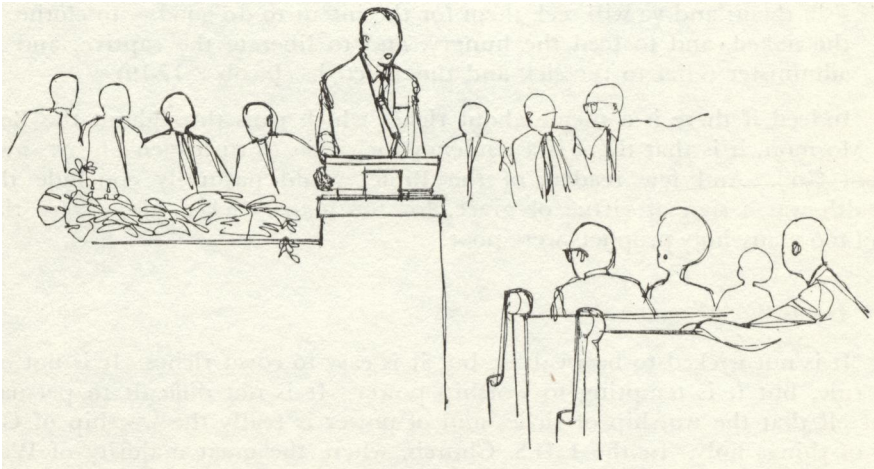
Great progress will be made in the world when we rid ourselves of the idea that there is a difference between *work* and *religious work*. We have been taught that a man's daily business activities are selfish, and that only the time which he devotes to church meetings and social service activities is consecrated. Ask any ten people what Jesus meant by his "Father's business," and nine of them will answer "preaching." To interpret the words in this narrow sense is to lose the real significance of his life. It was not to preach that he came into the world; nor to teach; nor to heal. These are all departments of his Father's business, but the business itself is far larger, more inclusive. For if human life has any significance it is this — that God has set going here an experiment to which all His resources are committed. He seeks to develop perfect human beings, superior to circumstance, victorious over Fate. No single kind of human talent or effort can be spared if the experiment is to succeed. The race must be fed and clothed and housed and transported, as well as preached to, and taught and healed. Thus *all* business is his Father's business. All work is worship; all useful service prayer. And whoever works wholeheartedly at any worthy calling is a co-worker with the Almighty in the great enterprise which He has initiated but which He can never finish without the help of men. (pp. 179-180)

### *Merger with Mormonism*

Some L.D.S. businessmen link the money-success pattern to church doctrine by reducing Mormon concepts such as free agency, recompense for paying tithing, the law of consecration, and eternal progression to some kind of related *business* meanings. They accept the gospel of the money-success cult without realizing that these notions and Mormonism came in from different directions. Some businessmen within the Church fancy that they have been led to such beliefs by the scriptures rather than by the conditioning of their society. For instance, they believe that "eternal progress" consists essentially of learning "leadership" skills in this life which can be utilized in the next. Knowing how to run a ship-shape used car lot should train men to organize galaxies as Gods. These businessmen superimpose their own worldly "heaven" upon the one revealed by their God.

Many Mormon businessmen have come to believe that *laissez faire* means the same thing as “free agency,” an important L.D.S. concept dating from Jacksonian days, which emphasizes the eternally redemptive value of individual freedom of choice. They tell themselves that if God had wanted a government-regulated program, He would have accepted Satan’s blue-print for a regimented world and salvation. What they fail to see is that the regulation of *groups* (in this case, “big business”) is in many cases a way to protect the freedom of opportunity of individuals and smaller or weaker groups.

Tithing is too often totally related to money. It is true that Malachi 3:10-11 says that if a man pays his tithes, “the Lord of hosts . . . will . . . open . . . the windows of heaven and pour . . . out a blessing, that there will not be room enough to receive it.” Could it be that the blessing might be a house full of love or a bounty of wisdom?



The “law of consecration” originally meant that men should consecrate themselves and their properties to the Lord. When the United Order failed in the nineteenth century, the Church adopted the “law of tithing” as a “schoolmaster” for the higher law (of consecration). Mormons are asked to stand ready to return to the living of the law of consecration (giving all they have to the purposes of God) when called upon to do so. Presently only the Apostles are occasionally called to “give all their goods to feed the poor and come and follow me.” In the Catholic Church, monks salve the community conscience because they volunteer to live the “higher laws”; and in the L.D.S. community, the Apostles may inadvertently do the same thing.

But some businessmen go further, and make the law of consecration into something it was not intended to be. They make of it a divinely ordained *savings* plan. The idea is to save one’s money, keeping it in readiness to give to God when He calls for it. But God did not ask men to be ready to *give*; He asked that they be ready to *live* the law. This equation of the law with saving seldom results in backdating the call to live the law. Rather it results in a man’s justifying his not giving alms to beggars on the pretext that he is saving his money for God. He doesn’t feel that it is proper to be “generous with someone else’s money.” He wants to do good only when “called” to do

it. Besides, to give hand-outs to beggars denies beggars an opportunity to build their "characters" and to develop their "leadership" traits. Yet the Book of Mormon teaches a different ethic:

Perhaps thou shalt say: The man has brought upon himself his misery; therefore I will stay my hand, and will not give unto him of my food, nor impart unto him of my substance that he may not suffer, for his punishments are just. But I say unto you, O man, whosoever doeth this the same hath great cause to repent; and except he repenteth of that which he hath done he perisheth forever, and hath no interest in the kingdom of God. (Mosiah 4:17-18)

Think of your brethren like unto yourselves, and be familiar with all and free with your substance that they may be rich like unto you. But before ye seek for riches, seek ye for the kingdom of God. And after ye have obtained a hope in Christ ye shall attain riches, if ye seek them; and ye will seek them for the intent to do good — to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry, and to liberate the captive, and administer relief to the sick and the afflicted. (Jacob 2:17-19)

Indeed if there is a theme about riches which runs throughout the Book of Mormon, it is that there is a tendency for riches to turn men's hearts away from God. And few readers of the Bible would naturally conclude that wealth was a sign of virtue or grace, for too many wicked kings were rich, and too many holy prophets were poor.

### *Dangers of the Merger*

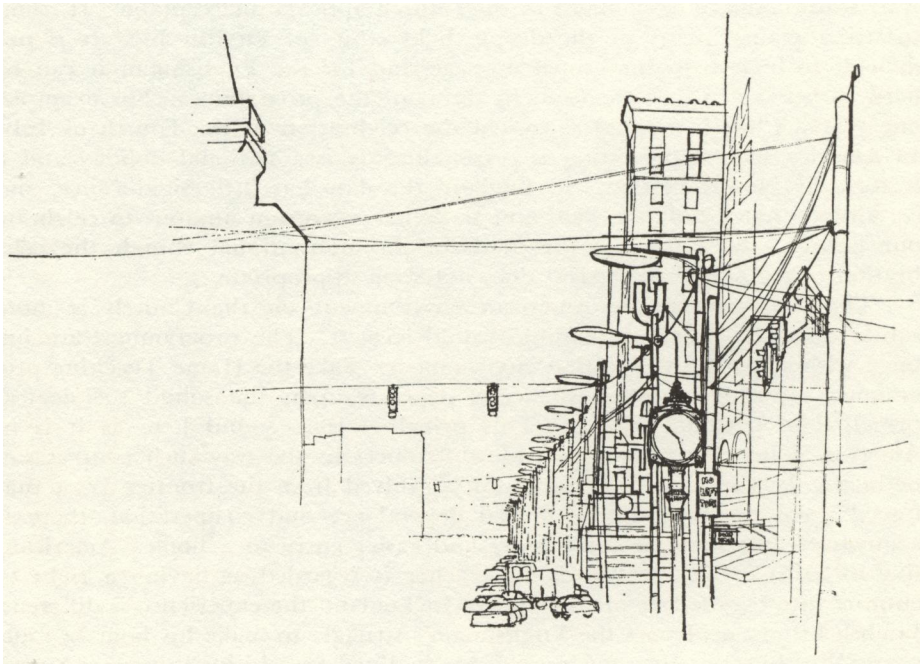
It is not wicked to be wealthy, but it is easy to covet riches. It is not evil to rule, but it is tempting to worship power. It is not difficult to persuade oneself that the worship of riches and of power is really the worship of God or of things holy. In the L.D.S. Church, where the great majority of Ward leaders (and higher) are both lay preachers and businessmen, it is too easy for such leaders to pass off their weekday philosophies as Sunday fare and their success philosophy as "true religion."

I know for a fact that many men find happiness pursuing the business ethic. But not all men. A few poor souls are crushed by the business-religion merger. Their business philosophies cease to be tempered and made more merciful by their Mormon beliefs. Instead, their Mormon beliefs become eclipsed by their business philosophies. Those who get hurt are often men who have strong needs to overcome their natural anxieties about meaninglessness. They believe that life should have meaning and purpose because they were reared to believe that it should and does. A few of them seize upon the business religion as the doctrine which will save them. They internalize it. They look to it to shield them from their anxieties. But too often, when the chips are down, it fails to support them. Their business friends in the Church, who have become their creditors, may be more apt to foreclose on them or to sue them at law than to render positive assistance or to forbear. Their business ethic of claiming what is justly due them has been given powerful sanction by its merger with religion. Indeed, it has become an idolatrous religion that blinds them to the true religion of meekness and forgiveness and mutual aid.

When affluence and friends have deserted them, they next look to God for relief. When no relief in the form of financial help or steadfast friends comes, they either believe that there is no God (and life is meaningless) or that there is a God who has chosen to withhold his blessings from them. They know that God punishes people who take their own lives, but they are numb to the threat, for they see their unhappy financial situation and the withdrawal of friendships as evidence that God has condemned them already.

God's favor is not to be perceived in the rise and fall of the stock market. It is to be seen in the selfless acts which men with prosperity of soul render to one another. The influence of the Lord is to be seen in men's kindnesses to other men. It is to be seen in their brotherly love, not in their acquisitiveness and "success." The spirit of God unfolds in the opening of a human heart, not in the building of a success-oriented "character" which will pass muster either at the Rotary or at the Pearly Gates. All too often that kind of "character" is merely another name for an unyielding posture that makes it easy for men to be self-righteous, unforgiving, and fatalistic.

On the other hand, there are a number of Mormon businessmen who are at once generous, happy, and affluent. In their humility they thank God for their opportunities. But they do not link him to their reverses. Deep down they know that their business philosophies are systems of entertaining themselves, not saving themselves. They reserve for true religion their serious and ultimate considerations of life here and hereafter; they part with their accumulations graciously; and they give of themselves in the same spirit.



## WE LOVE THE AMERICANS, BUT . . . .

*Peter Houghton*

*Peter Houghton, who has sent us this response to Americans, is a social psychologist serving as Special Welfare Officer for the Ministry of Social Security in the Midland Region of England. He is an Elder in the L.D.S. Birmingham Ward and has recently been preparing and giving courses in sociology for branch presidencies and bishoprics in Britain.*

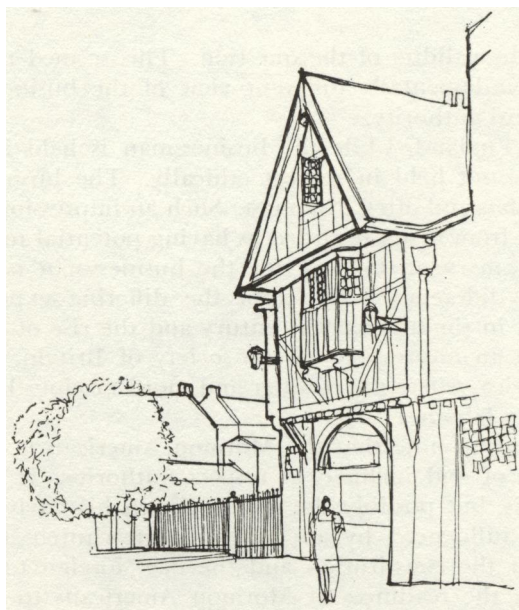
I am an Englishman and have been a practicing Mormon since 1957. I am also a sociologist and one of the few English Mormons, living in England, who has an academic education. In fact the Church in England is composed largely of persons from the non-professional groups, and this creates problems for the academic member. I say all this merely to explain my position.

To a person who is not an American, membership in the Church poses an additional problem. It is simply that the non-American must evolve a relationship with American life and culture expressed extensively in the Church. To evolve such a relationship is easy to some who are basically discontented with or underprivileged in their own society. To such persons the Church is a literal salvation since it provides an ideal to believe in far removed in thought from that in which they live; and it also gives opportunity for social status inside the Church, a status difficult to attain in the community. The evolution of such a relationship is, however, much more difficult to persons not basically underprivileged or dissatisfied. Brought up in the non-American, in my case English, way of life, the intrusion of so much American method and thought in the Church appears unacceptable. It seems to strike against many of the deeply held ethics of English life. It is not difficult to believe in the gospel message, but for the Englishman it can be hard to believe in its expression in terms of the programmes. For example, one year a Church manual suggested the celebration of the Fourth of July. In America such a suggestion is reasonable. It is a national holiday and a historically important date. In England the date has little significance, and certainly is not a holiday; like most nations, we are not anxious to celebrate our failures. In a manual prepared for an international church the celebration of an American festival does not seem appropriate.

The influence of the American environment on the Church is more subtle than the previous example would suggest. The programmes are imbued with systems fitted to that environment. Take the Home Teaching programme. In this programme success depends upon the sound sociological principal of personal contact. This principal is as sound here as it is in America. There are, however, wide differences in the way such contact can be made. In the American community, evolved from the frontier West that forced upon the community mutual dependence and co-operation, there is a much greater sense of community and easier entry to a home. Americans like to "visit." The visiting home teacher is regarded as having a right to enquire into the welfare of the family. In England the experience is different. English history evidences the Englishman's struggle to make his home a sanctuary; thus his temperament is much less inclined to "visiting" than an American's. The visiting part of Home Teaching is thus much less acceptable in

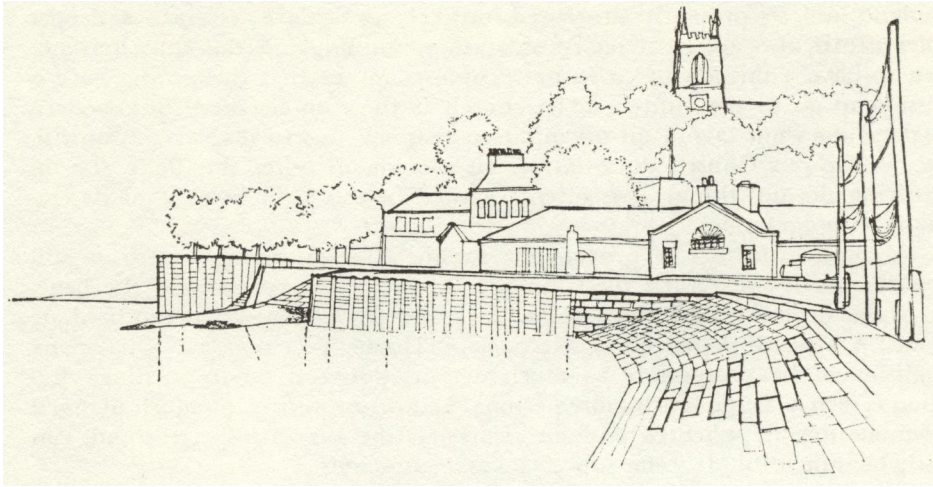
England and, as presently structured, unlikely to achieve its aim. A deeper difference is also apparent on consideration. In England the church is not seen to have a mission to go to the people — rather that the people have a mission to go to the church. The church is there to be used, but modern England does not favour an organisation that sets out to involve the unwilling. While our Church does not see its mission in quite this light (i.e. in involving the unwilling) it is often regarded in this light because of its emphasis on programmes.

A common feature of propoganda for the Church among American missionaries when asked what the Church has to offer is to enumerate the benefits of the various programmes. They stress the active things that can be done in M.I.A., the work of the Relief Society, Home Teaching, etc. To many Englishmen the prospect of so much organisation can be frightening. Religion is seen as being much more personal and introspective. So much planned programming, if presented without clearly stating the introspective end, can easily be unhelpful. It seems superficial and suspicious.



Two years ago, in connection with a private study I was then making, I asked twenty American and twenty English Mormons what type of professional man they felt would make a good Bishop. Of the Americans fifteen gave as either a first or second choice the answer "a good businessmen." Not one of the Englishmen suggested a businessman at all. In fact the Englishmen questioned were more reluctant to answer the question in the terms it was asked, being more anxious to answer in terms of qualities rather than professional merit. I am sure most Americans see the quality of the man as most important also, but they were more definite in their replies and much less





inclined to question the validity of the question. This seemed to me to indicate two things: A fundamentally different view of the businessman and a different attitude toward authority.

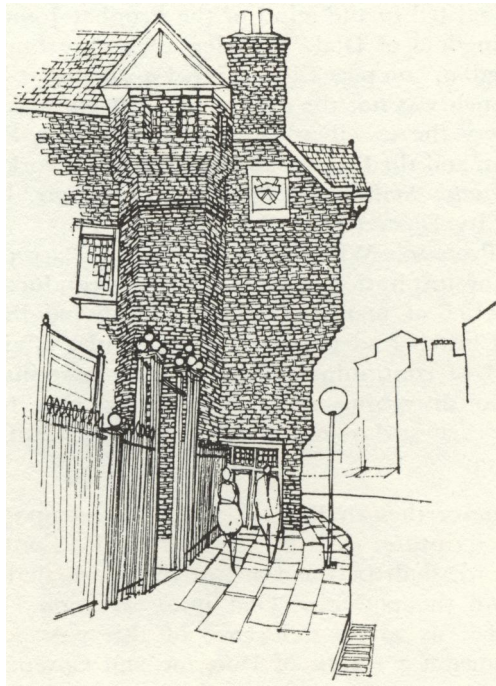
On the whole in England, while the businessman is held in respect for his achievement, he is not held in respect ethically. The businessman, it is felt, is necessarily ruthless and often dishonest. Such an impression would automatically exclude him from being regarded as having potential to be a Bishop. The reverence Americans seem to have for the businessman is alien to the Briton. Perhaps this difference arises from the differing experience. The exploitation of labour in the nineteenth century and the rise of socialism as a consequence have left an impression on the society of Britain very different from that left in America, where the frontier and more spacious life gave other outlets to the American labourer.

It is also interesting to note that the Mormon American is on the whole much more conscious of and inclined to respect authority. It is difficult to attribute causes to this, but possibly the reason lies in his environment. Living in a community influenced by an authoritarian church and having a patriotic reverence for the constitution and the flag, foreign to the Englishman, possibly explain the readiness of Mormon Americans to accept things more easily at face value rather than to urge enquiries into the validity of the source. There is no single dominant religion in England; there is no written constitution to revere; there is a profound suspicion of anyone who gives orders. In his reticent way, the Englishman is passionately determined to be free, but he sees freedom less as a political and more as a personal phenomenon.

It is difficult to rationalise causes and differences in so short an article or to do justice to the historical and environmental factors, multiple and complex. My purpose here is just to outline a few simple differences as they appear to me. As an Englishman with a deep love of my green and precious island I may have erred in too great a criticism of America, but I would here like to express my belief in the alliance and in the mutual concord of our

peoples. Nevertheless, as a member of the weaker nation in terms of power I beg all Americans to understand what the Englishman means when he says, "We love the Americans, but thank God for the Atlantic."

The principles of the Church have a universal validity. The vision of the conquest of the self through service to others, expressing as it does that ethic of Christ, "He that would find himself shall first lose himself," is taught in the Church in a new and refreshing way that can do much for English life, if it can once be seen as something more than merely the thinking of a strange American sect. The ethic of Christ and the Restored Gospel are far more than an *American* dream; they are a way to a discovery of as much of the divine as it is possible for finite, limited man to experience. Despite its corporate activity, Mormonism's spiritual ethic, that is its quest to discover God, is intensely personal and reliant upon self-discovery and self-knowledge. Because of this it has everything to offer the individualistic Englishman. We only need to alter our presentation and be more honest in our teaching of our history to succeed.





## AN UNCASUAL REVIEW OF WILLIAMS

Robert M. Frame

*Robert M. Frame of Camarillo, California, where he is presently serving as an L.D.S. Stake Missionary, has written a review of J. D. Williams's essay in the Summer DIALOGUE, "The Separation of Church and State in Mormon Theory and Practice," from which the following has been excerpted.*

I am proud to hold membership in a church whose basic tenets allow for such expressions of free agency in evaluating history as J. D. Williams's treatise on Church and State in the Summer *Dialogue* represents. What concerns me is not that Professor William's political views may differ from my own, but than many of your readers will assume, through a casual review of his presentation, that his selected documentation represents an impartial review of the history of our church *vis a vis* the political scene and the "issue" of our "involvement" therein.

At the outset we find the statement, following the enumeration of a number of issues which he assumes pose "dilemmas" for the Church, "that the Mormon Church, in trying to administer the Kingdom of God on earth, was deeply immersed in the politics of the Kingdom of men on earth." This would imply, it would seem, when coupled with the statement selected from Jefferson's writings about the "wall of separation between church and state," that such a "wall" existed in the mind of the Prophet Joseph Smith when he conceived "The Kingdom of God." In view of his treatment of "the Grand Council of the Kingdom" on pages 46 and 47, I assume that Professor Williams is well aware that such was not the case at all.\* (I encourage your readers to review in its entirety the excellent treatment of Joseph Smith's concept of politics, government, and the Church as reflected in the work cited by Williams in footnote 45: *Joseph Smith and World Government*, by Dr. Hyrum L. Andrus, Salt Lake City, Deseret Book Co., 1963.)

A little later Professor Williams refers to the "accepted notion" that Church leaders enjoy inspiration from God in the conduct of their religious affairs and "the belief of many Mormons that divine inspiration may be transferable when Church leaders speak out on secular affairs." As he is well aware, the "notion" of continuing revelation as it pertains to secular affairs as well as the tests for discerning true revelation have been fostered among the Mormons since the earliest days of the Church by such authoritative declarations as the following:

And whatsoever they shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost shall be scripture, shall be the will of the Lord, shall be the mind of the Lord, shall be the word of the Lord, shall be the voice of the Lord and the power of God unto salvation. (Doctrine and Covenants 68:2-4; as to the relevance of this passage to "secular" affairs, may I suggest a review of Doctrine and Covenants 29:34-35.)

---

\* Important documentation and analysis concerning this matter can be found in Klaus Hanson's essay in this issue of *Dialogue*, "The Metamorphosis of the Kingdom of God." [Ed.]

The Latter-Day Saints who hearken to the words of the Lord, given to them touching their political, social, and financial concerns, I say, and say it boldly, that they will have wisdom which is altogether superior to the wisdom of the children of darkness, or the children of this world. I know this by the revelations of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the results of my own actions. They who have hearkened to the counsel given to them in temporal matters, have invariably bettered their condition temporally and spiritually. (Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 12:118)

How may the rank and file of the Church recognize the prophetic voice, whether official or unofficial when it speaks? The answer is simple enough. . . . The burden of proof is upon the hearer, not alone upon the speaker. Whoever quibbles about the validity of a message of the Prophet would do well to engage in a serious self-examination. Is the trouble with him? Perhaps he is not "in tune" with the truth. Perhaps he does not live the law of the Gospel in such manner as to respond to the message of truth. In the lives of Latter-day Saints it is best to listen carefully to the counsel of the Prophet concerning any subject upon which he speaks, whether technically "official" or unofficial. . . . Note the words of Brigham Young: "The Lord Almighty leads this Church, and he will not suffer you to be led astray if you are found doing your duty. You may go home and sleep as sweetly as a babe in its mother's arms, as to any danger of your leaders leading you astray, for if they should try to do so, the Lord would quickly sweep them from the earth." (*Journal of Discourses*, 9:289) That is as true today as in the days of Brigham Young. The history of the restored Church is evidence that counsel given by the Prophet and President of the Church has always been found to be for the best good of the people. They who follow their own inclinations in opposition to the light that comes from the head of the Lord's Priesthood on earth are never gainers thereby. To argue whether this or that utterance is official and therefore should not be obeyed, is at best a futile exercise. (John A. Widtsoe, *Evidences and Reconciliations*, Vol. 1:182-7)

We can tell when the speakers are moved on by the Holy Ghost only when we, ourselves, are moved upon by the Holy Ghost. In a way, this completely shifts the responsibility from them to us to determine when they so speak. . . . The Church will know by the testimony of the Holy Ghost in the body of the members, whether the brethren in voicing their views are moved upon by the Holy Ghost; and in due time that knowledge will be made manifest (President J. Reuben Clark, *Church News*, July 31, 1954)

Professor Williams repeatedly refers to the 134th section of the Doctrine and Covenants, stating, for example, in footnote 8, "Brigham Young could say in 1844 in the face of the 134th section, 'No man can draw the dividing line between the government of God and the government of the children of Men.' (*Documentary History of the Church*, 6:322)" President Young did indeed warn against trying to separate the "temporal" from the "spiritual":

In a public meeting of the Saints, I said, "Ye Elders of Israel . . . will some of you draw the line of demarcation between the spiritual and temporal in the Kingdom of God, so that I may understand it?" Not one of them could do it. . . . I defy any man on earth to point out the path a Prophet of God should walk in, or point out his duty, and just how far he must go, in dictating temporal or spiritual things. Temporal and spiritual things are inseparably connected, and ever will be. (*Journal of Discourses*, 10:363-364)

L.D.S. readers must judge for themselves whether, by so speaking, the Prophet was flying "in the face" of Oliver Cowdery's article.

One note of historical importance in this connection, by Apostle Hyrum M. Smith:

This "Declaration of Belief Regarding Governments and Laws in General," is not a revelation. It was not written by the Prophet Joseph Smith, but was prepared by Oliver Cowdery and was read at the General Assembly of the Church, August 17, 1835, at the time the revelations, which had been prepared for publication, were submitted for the vote of approval by the elders of the Church. At the time this conference, or general assembly, was held, the Prophet Joseph Smith and his second counselor, Frederick G. Williams, were in Canada on a missionary journey, and the Prophet did not return to Kirtland until Sunday, August 23rd, one week after the assembly had been held. Since the Assembly had voted to have this article on government and one on marriage, also prepared by Oliver Cowdery, published in the *Doctrine and Covenants*, the Prophet accepted the decision and permitted this to be done. It should be noted that in the minutes, and also in the introduction to this article on government, the brethren were careful to state that this declaration was accepted as the belief or "opinion" of the officers of the Church, and not as a revelation, and therefore does not hold the same place in the doctrines of the Church as do the revelations. In fact, the first sentence could be improved by a slight change. The Lord in the very beginning revealed to Adam a perfect form of Government, and this was "instituted of God for the benefit of man;" but we do not hold that *all* governments, or any man-made government, was instituted of God although the Lord holds a controlling hand over them. (*Doctrine and Covenants Commentary*, Hyrum M. Smith and Janne M. Sjodahl, Salt Lake City, Deseret Book Co., 1957, p. 852)

Beginning with footnote 40 and continuing later on page 50 with his "schismatic threat" thesis, Williams introduces the John Birch Society as having been the instrument which "during the months of February-April, 1966" had widened the alleged political rift within the Church to the point where "the schismatic threat to the Church probably reached its twentieth century apogee." The writer is the first to admit the existence of a certain amount of confusion in the minds of some members of the Church *vis a vis* the "Birchers," in view of the tremendous propaganda campaign levelled against both them and most anti-communist organizations since about 1960. I am neither a member nor "fellow traveler" of the John Birch Society, but in view of President McKay's pointed recommendations to both the Church

and the nation regarding participating in “nonchurch meetings that are held to warn people of the threat of Communism or any other theory or principal that will deprive us of our free agency or individual liberties vouchsafed by the Constitution” (*Improvement Era*, June 1966, p. 477), I would strongly urge Prof. Williams to do some serious and *objective* research in this area before accepting the “extremist” label frequently used in our time regarding such organizations. May I suggest, as a start, a review of the hearing before the subcommittee of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, July 11, 1961, under the title, “The New Drive against the Anti-Communist Program” (G.P.O. Cat.No.Y 4.J89/2:C44/4).

Elder Benson responded to this confusion on December 19, 1963, remarking:

Even in my own Church I found a certain amount of confusion. I heard people say that the L.D.S. Church was opposed to the John Birch Society. This may have come, in part at least as the result of a statement made by the First Presidency nearly a year ago (*Church News*, January 1963). However, when President McKay discovered that this statement was being misinterpreted and certain people were quoting it to prove the LDS Church was opposing the John Birch Society, he authorized a clarifying statement. This statement appeared in the official Church newspaper for March 16, 1963, and says: ‘The Church is not opposing the John Birch Society or any other organization of like nature,’ and ‘that members of the Church are free to join anti-Communist organizations.’ The statement says that only one man, President David O. McKay, speaks for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on matters of policy. (Address entitled “An Internal Threat Today” at a public meeting sponsored by the Treasure Valley Freedom Forum, Boise, Idaho).

In view of the above and the consistency with which President McKay has treated this matter in public statements reaching back years, one can only wonder at the inference implicit in Williams’s reference to “some courageous and far-sighted General Authorities” who allegedly saved the Church from “officially endorsing the Birch Society” (page 50).

Not that the writer himself didn’t raise an eyebrow upon reviewing the Editorial in the *Church News* of March 26, 1966, to which Williams refers to footnote 40. In a letter to the Editor of the *Church News* the inconsistency of this editorial was pointed out, especially in light of other statements printed in Church publications. (See, for example, the editorial appearing on June 11, 1966, subsequent to President McKay’s recommendation quoted above entitled “Our Flag and Our People.”) In this letter, I referred specifically to Williams’s thesis of a “schismatic threat” among the authorities. I quote in part from the reply received:

As close as I am to the General Authorities of the Church, I find no basis for an assumption that there is a deep “controversy” within the Church. I still hold to the belief that President McKay is the only man who speaks for the Church on matters of policy, and feel that is the only path of safety. (Letter dated July 22, 1966 from Henry A. Smith, Editor, *Church News*, in the writer’s files)

The "option" Williams offers on page 53 to "safeguard against any image of Church commitment" to one point of view; his concern about the "alienation of some groups within the Church (page 50); the suggestion of a "policy of non-involvement of top Church leaders in political matters" in order to avoid "unnecessary schisms within the Church" — all these will have to be evaluated in terms of the basic conservatism which has characterized the entire history of Mormonism on matters of a political nature. In support of this may I recommend a careful review of Dr. Hyrum L. Andrus's scholarly works, the one already referred to, *Joseph Smith and World Government, and Liberalism, Conservatism and Mormonism* (Deseret Book Co., 1965). The writer views Dr. Andrus, a lifetime student of the social, economic and political aspects of Mormonism and Joseph Smith's concept of government, as eminently qualified to respond to those who view separation of Church and State in the particular light that Professor Williams does. A public dialogue between Williams and Andrus would prove most enlightening, I'm sure, in connection with this subject.

Reluctance to endorse the Church's "involvement" in matters of a "political" nature is an old issue, as Professor Williams admits and amply illustrates in his treatise. Said President Young on January 13, 1867, in the Tabernacle:

I have taken the liberty of saying in the past, and I think I might repeat it with safety, that these first revelations (the Doctrine and Covenants) given to the Church will probably be among the last to be strictly obeyed. The revelation I refer to dictated the the brethren what to do with regard to their temporal business; and it will be comparatively easy to obey all the revelations until we come to that which touches the purse. . . . These were the first revelations given to the Church; yet there are men today who are Bishops and Presidents of settlements, who express their willingness to labor for the welfare of the people and the building up of the kingdom, but feel that no person holding the priesthood has a right to dictate to them with regard to their property. They are very willing that Brother Brigham should dictate in spiritual matters, and trust their eternal salvation to the principles he teaches; but the property they may have acquired or the manner in which their labor should be directed, or who they shall trade with, whether an avowed enemy or a man who pays tithing, and taxes, and helps to build up the community, are things with which, they think, he has no business. (*Journal of Discourses* 11:284-285)

Throughout its history the Church has faced the problem posed by those whose political viewpoints have differed from the historically conservative political position taken by the latter-day prophets (See Jerreld L. Newquist's authoritative compilation; *Prophets, Principles, and National Survival*, Salt Lake City, Publishers Press, 1964) and whose dissenting voice has manifest itself in subtle innuendo against the "accepted notion" that continuous revelation includes inspiration involving matters of a secular nature. Nor will Professor Williams be the last to view the alleged ambivalence in the events he describes as constituting so threatening a crisis that "the Church is in danger of undergoing its greatest schism since the days of polygamy." (See Williams's statement in a *New York Times* News Service release reprinted in the *Ventura*

*County Star Free Press*, April 8, 1966. Also see the *Wall Street Journal*, August 8, 1966.) Even were this true the writer has complete confidence that the prophets would today meet the issue with the same direct response with which President Wilford Woodruff met such reasoning in his time; his response both unveils the real issues here and provides an appropriate answer for the benefit of those who might share Williams's prognosis:

“I prophesy, in the name of Israel's God, that the day has come when the mouth of Wilford Woodruff, George Q. Cannon, Joseph F. Smith, and these Twelve Apostles, should not be closed because of the opinions of the children of men. There have been feelings that these men holding high positions . . . should say nothing about politics. I want to say to you here, the day has come when God Almighty requires your hands to unite together in your temporal business, and in your politics, so far as it is wisdom. I do not care whether a man is a Republican or a Democrat. In that he is free; but it is your duty to unite in electing good men to govern and control your cities, your local affairs, and I will state that when you do not do this you are losers of the blessings of Almighty God. . . . My mouth shall not be closed upon these principles — I feel like saying to you, as the President of the Church, and do state, that it is your duty to unite together and appoint good men to act in every capacity for the public welfare. (*Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, pp. 206-207).

Such “schoolmen” have a perfect right to voice their views and to be heard on interpretations of such issues as separation of Church and State, it is true. But underlying all such dialogue there exists, in the writer's opinion, a basic, fundamental truth, which President John Taylor expressed in General Conference, April 9, 1882:

Our philosophy is not the philosophy of the world; but of the earth and the heavens, of time and eternity, and proceeds from God. . . . Besides the preaching of the Gospel, we have another mission, namely, the perpetuation of the free agency of man, and the maintenance of liberty, freedom, and the rights of man. There are certain principles that belong to humanity, outside of the Constitution, outside of the laws, outside of all the enactments and plans of man, among which is the right to live: God gave us the right and not man; no government gave it to us, and no government has a right to take it away from us. (*Journal of Discourses*, 23:48;63)

Or, as President David O. McKay puts it in our day:

In these days of uncertainty and unrest, liberty-loving peoples' greatest responsibility and paramount duty is to preserve and proclaim the freedom of the individual, his relationship to Deity, and the necessity of obedience to the principles of the Gosepl of Jesus Christ. Only thus will mankind find peace and happiness. (*Conference Report*, October 1962, p. 8)