

# Letters to the Editors

*The Sketches of San Francisco in this section are by Paul Ellingson.*

Dear Sirs:

. . . . The expression of personal opinions will inevitably engender some disagreement, but it would be sad if *Dialogue* were to try to limit itself to the expression of only those opinions with which a majority of Church members would concur. It is very probable that there are some areas of fairly general consensus that could stand reexamination. We often tend to become so used to looking at an issue from a certain traditional or sanctioned point of view that we begin to believe that the view from that point is the only complete one. All other views then appear to be "distortions" when in reality there is always some distortion in any *one* way of viewing an issue and only by a many-sided examination can we be sure to see the matter in its totality.

It is immaterial whether a "controversial" point of view is really better than a more traditional one or not. (For example whether Mr. Snell's historical method of analysis ["Roundtable," Spring 1967] of Biblical passages is generally or even occasionally superior to the "proof-text" method of substantiating certain beliefs. The important thing is that such opinions be expressed and evaluated and compared with older ones and that our insistent adherence to a certain method of viewing an issue or a point of doctrine does not become more important than the issue or doctrine itself. . . .

Mary Gay Doman  
New York, N. Y.

*As Letters to the Editors is designed as an open forum on all areas of Mormon thought as well as for responses to previous issues, we publish the following that we*

*have received in order to provide an opportunity for readers to enter into dialogue with the author on his subject, which Mormons are called on increasingly to deal with in public discussion. [Ed.]*

For more than a decade we Americans have been caught up in a revolution in thinking about race and human relationships. The Supreme Court has wisely and effectively related the Constitution to the facts of life in the twentieth century; three Presidents and five Congresses have laid new foundations for a society of equal opportunity; most of the churches, with unaccustomed and admirable militance, have enlisted foursquare in the fight for equal rights and higher human dignity.

The whole future of the human race is now keyed to equality — to the ideal of equal opportunity and of equal civil rights and responsibilities, and to the new dignity and freedom which these would bring. The brotherhood of all men is a moral imperative that no religion and no church can evade or ignore. Enlightened men everywhere see now, as their greatest prophets and moral teachers saw long ago, that brotherhood is universal and indivisible.

It was inevitable that national attention would be focused on what critics have called the "anti-Negro doctrine" of the L.D.S. Church. As the Church becomes increasingly an object of national interest, this attention is certain to intensify, for the divine curse concept which is so commonly held among our people runs counter to the great stream of modern religious and social thought.

We Mormons cannot escape persistent, painful inquiries into the sources and grounds of this belief. Nor can we exculpate ourselves and our Church from justified con-

demnation by the rationalization that we support the Constitution, believe that all men are brothers, and favor equal rights for all citizens.

This issue must be resolved — and resolved not by pious moralistic platitudes but by clear and explicit pronouncements and decisions that come to grips with the imperious truths of the contemporary world. It must be resolved not because we desire to conform, or because we want to atone for an affront to a whole race. It must be resolved because we are wrong and it is past the time when we should have seen the right. A failure to act here is sure to demean our faith, damage the minds and morals of our youth, and undermine the integrity of our Christian ethic.

In her book, *Killers of the Dream*, the late Lillian Smith — whose life was exposed to all the warping forces of a racist culture — wrote these words:

I began to understand slowly at first, but more clearly as the years passed, that the warped, distorted frame we have put around every Negro child from birth is around every white child also. Each is on a different side of the frame but each is pinioned there. And I knew that what cruelly shapes and cripples the personality of one is as cruelly shaping and crippling the personality of the other.



My fear is that the very character of Mormonism is being distorted and crippled by adherence to a belief and practice that denies the oneness of mankind. We violate the rights and dignity of our Negro brothers, and for this we bear a measure of guilt; but surely we harm ourselves even more.

What a sad irony it is that a once out-cast people, tempered for nearly a century in the fires of persecution, are one of the last to remove a burden from the most persecuted people ever to live on this continent. The irony is deepened by the circumstance of history that the present practice of the Church in denying full fellowship to the Negro grew out of troubles rooted in earlier pro-Negro policies and actions. It is well known that Joseph Smith held high ideals of universal brotherhood and had strong pro-Negro leanings that were, in a true sense, prophetic. And it is well known that in the beginning the Church accepted Negroes into full fellowship until this practice offended its anti-Negro neighbors. It then settled for a compromise with its own ideals based on a borrowed superstition that the Negroes are under a divine curse. This anomaly is underscored by the fact that the Church has always enjoyed excellent relations and complete fellowship with all other races. (How different have been our associations with the American Indians, the Spanish-speaking peoples, the Japanese and Polynesians!) What transformations might take place in our spiritual and moral energies if we were to become, once again, moral leaders in improving the lot of the Negroes as we have striven to do with the natives of the South Seas?

At an earlier impasse, the Church, unable to escape history, wisely abandoned the deeply imbedded practice of plural marriage and thereby resolved a crisis of its own conscience and courageously faced the moral judgment of the American people. In 1890 for most Church leaders polygamy was a precious principle — a practice that lay at the very heart of Mormonism. Its proscription took genuine courage, but our leaders were equal to the task. By comparison, the restriction now imposed on Negro fellowship is a social and institutional practice having no real sanction in essential Mormon thought. It is clearly contradictory to our most cherished spiritual and moral ideals.

Every Mormon knows that his Church teaches that the day will come when the Negro will be given full fellowship. Surely that day has come. All around us the Negro is proving his worth when accepted into the society of free men. All around us are the signs that he needs and must have a genuine brotherhood with Mormons, Catholics, Methodists, and Jews. Surely God is speaking to us now, telling us that the time is here.

"The glory of God is intelligence" has long been a profound Mormon teaching. We must give it new meaning now, for the glory

of intelligence is that the wise men and women of each generation dream new dreams and rise to forge broader bonds of human brotherhood. To what more noble accomplishment could we of this generation aspire?

Stewart L. Udall  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sirs:

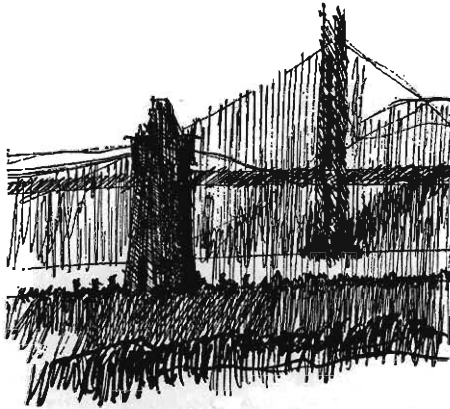
I disagree with the thinking of Marden Clark in the article, "Art, Religion and the Market Place." [*Dialogue*, Winter, 1966] Actually, when Mr. Clark limits the term "Market Place" to something other than its proper meaning, he has destroyed the chances for a meaningful discussion; from then on, all the reader can do is guess what he means by the term *materialism*. . . .

No man can ever escape the influence of the Market Place, whether he is an artist, theologian, businessman, or plumber. The world is one huge market place and has been since God, Himself, created it with one of the first commandments given to Adam, "Thou shall eat thy bread by the sweat of thy brow." With this commandment, the necessity of work was established as one of the fundamental laws governing man's existence on this earth. The direct result of this law is the market place, where the products of a man's work are voluntarily exchanged for the food and other commodities necessary to sustain his life. If religion is a study of God, his relationship to man and his commandments regarding the behavior of man, and a man's righteousness is judged by the degree to which he keeps these commandments, then a man, to be considered religious must be keeping this first and basic commandment, i.e. he must be an active participant in the market place.

Through the centuries, man has developed innumerable means of trading the products of his energy. Works of art could, no doubt, be considered some of the first and foremost commodities in the market place, but the producer of such a work has no higher claim to morality than the man who produces an idea, a pair of shoes or digs a ditch. Neither does he have more right to exclude himself from the market place and live as a parasite. The true moral stature of a man is determined, not by the nature of his work, but by how well he performs his labors. Creating a great symphony doesn't make a man more righteous than the man who invents a washing machine or a laborer who gives an honest day's work. Nor does a cigarette salesman have less claim to morality than a man who in the

name of art produces a filthy book, or a man who teaches lies in the name of religion.

Mr. Clark implies that all enrichment for the spirit must come from Art or Religion, because the market place is an enemy to such fulfillment. I'm convinced that when God established the law of work, he realized the spiritual enrichment to be derived from a long, productive day of work. This work could definitely include artistic creation, but doesn't necessarily exclude any other labor.



Mr. Clark decries religion's sell-out to the market place, but a religion, like any other commodity or service, should be judged by its market value. God said, "Man is that he might have joy," and the purpose of religion is to help man achieve this very desirable possession, just as money is merely a tool for acquiring desired material possessions. When a man joins the Mormon Church (i.e. buys its teachings) he does so for the same reason he will buy clean, fresh food, because he recognizes its greater value to him. He is, in fact, making a good bargain.

The D&C 130:20 states, "There is a law irrevocably decreed in the heavens before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated." This statement, by setting a price on every blessing, makes market place thinking a part of every phase of our lives.

Whenever men advocate a higher plane than the bargaining, market place idea of life, they are merely expressing a desire for the unearned. They may seek love when they haven't paid the price of love and developed lovable characteristics; they may

wish for respect when their actions aren't worthy of respect or they may just be seeking food, clothing and a good home without having to pay the price, which is work.

There is no way to separate market place thinking from art, religion, or any phase of our lives without destroying the concept of values. For so long as men recognize the value of some things above others they will pass value-judgments on every person, every work of art or every idea they encounter and they will always be willing to pay the highest price to achieve their highest values.

According to Mormon thought the highest value attainable is the Celestial Kingdom, but the price of admission is very high. No matter how great the price demanded of us, however, if we manage to earn a place in the presence of God, we will never doubt that we have made a good bargain.

Mrs. Mary Ann Atkin  
St. George, Utah

Dear Sirs:

I was pleased to see John W. Rigdon's reminiscences published in the fourth issue of *Dialogue*. There are numerous unpublished manuscript documents relating to Mormon history that are both fascinating and significant, and *Dialogue's* interest in publishing documents of this type can contribute greatly to the study and writing of Mormon history. I hope that the Rigdon narrative will be the first of many historical manuscripts published in *Dialogue*.

Like any reminiscence written forty years after the fact, the Rigdon narrative contains errors. Some of these I am noting as follows.

p. 23, n. 13: Orson Pratt was not included in this missionary effort.

p. 26, n. 22: This was actually the second visit of Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon to Missouri. They and several others left Kirtland for Missouri June 19, 1831, returning Aug. 27. It was during this first visit that the land of Zion was dedicated and the location for the temple selected.

p. 26, n. 24: Though the mob first met in April, 1833, the Saints were not driven from Jackson County until November 1833. They remained in Clay County until September, 1836. Philo Dibble was shot during the Jackson difficulties, November 4, 1833.

p. 31, n. 37: Should be 1838.

p. 32, 2nd paragraph: What Rigdon lists as Cracker River was actually Crooked River. Parley Pratt indicated that the battle was fought about twelve miles from Far West.

p. 34, last paragraph and p. 35, 1st paragraph: Actually George M. Hinkle was the

highest ranking military officer in the Mormon militia. I am not aware that Seymour Brunson (Rigdon calls him Brownson) was involved in the negotiations with Lucas. All other sources with which I am familiar list the group that met with Lucas as George M. Hinkle, John Corrill, Reed Peck, W. W. Phelps, and John Cleminson. Hinkle, as ranking officer, made the arrangements. It would appear that Rigdon has confused Seymour Brunson and George M. Hinkle.

Peter Crawley  
Pasadena, Calif.

Dear Sirs:

I am sure many must be delighted that *Dialogue* published Sidney Rigdon's history written by his son. In reading Professor Karl Keller's introduction, one may come away, as I did, surmising that this was the first time that this manuscript had ever been published. To quote: "Otherwise the son's work has gone unpublished and unknown" (footnote, p. 18). Keller is, however, aware that a major portion of this manuscript was published by Mrs. Sam (Arlene) Hess in a souvenir newspaper, the "Friendship, N.Y., Sesqui-Centennial Times," July 25-31, 1965. This was brought to the attention of all readers of the *Deseret News* Church Section the weekend of September 11, 1965. However, according to Mrs. Hess, the account had never been previously published, as the *News* contended.

Having possession of the "Times" edition of Rigdon's manuscript, I compared it with that edited by Keller and found a number of deletions and abridgements in the former. But after careful reading I became convinced that the "Times" account must indeed have been based on the same manuscript as that published by *Dialogue*. Accordingly, I called Mrs. Hess, who at the time was in a hospital in Sayer, Pennsylvania (Jan. 30, 1967), and found my suspicions verified. Briefly, she had published slightly more than half of the original manuscript, deleting those passages she felt may have been harmful to the Church. In two instances she made additions.

It may be interesting to some to note that two or three of Keller's textual difficulties were at least given a different reading in the "Times" account. The word "conyer" (p. 22), which Keller was at a loss to explain, is rendered "couryer," which could possibly be an old spelling of "courier." The name "Madisib" (p. 36) is printed in the "Times" as "Madish." The phrase "he found them" (p. 26), which Keller in a footnote takes to mean "eluded them," is rendered in the

"Times" "he fought them." A look at the manuscript or other historical material might confirm or negate these discrepancies. On page 39, footnote 57, Keller notes that "some significant events in the life of Rigdon between 1839 and 1844" were not mentioned by the son. One of the events which Keller mentions as not included is the candidacy of Joseph Smith and Rigdon for the presidency and vice-presidency of the United States. Interestingly, this information was added by Mrs. Hess to help the local townspeople realize that the town did have individuals in its past of whom they could be proud. From the library of St. Bonaventure University in St. Bonaventure, New York, she copied out from a book (the title of which she could not remember) the following:

pensating their owners — a policy which if followed likely would have saved the treasure and lives later sacrificed in the Civil War. He further suggested that prisons be made schools where offenders might be taught useful trades thus becoming valuable members of society.

Another portion of the "Times" account also calls for comment. The section of Keller's edited manuscript dealing with the events in Far West — Rigdon's Fourth of July oration, the death of David Patten, the massacre at Haun's Mill, the preparations to do battle against the Missourians under the direction of General Lucas, the drumhead courtmartial, General Doniphan's refusal to obey Lucas, and the imprisonment of Joseph Smith and Rigdon in Liberty Jail (pp. 30-36) — all this is disposed of by the "Times"



In Jan. on the 29, 1844 Joseph Smith ran for president and Sidney Rigdon as vice president. The Mormons voted for men whose policies they thought would lead to greatest good, sometimes the candidates of one party and sometimes those of another. In the presidential campaign of 1844, disagreeing with the policies of both major parties, they steered to a middle course by nominating their own candidates. The Mormon leader issued a statement of his views on government which attracted attention of many. Among other things he advocated that the government solve the slave problem by purchasing the negroes, thus freeing the slaves and com-

in twelve and one-half inches of type. Patten's death, Haun's Mill, and other details are not even mentioned. However, what is added, this too copied by Mrs. Hess from the same source mentioned above, is Lucas's military order to Doniphan to shoot Joseph Smith and the other prisoners and Doniphan's formal refusal:

Nov. 1, 1838. Brigadier General Doniphan: Sir you will take Joseph Smith and the other prisoners unto the public square of "Far West" [sic] and shoot them at 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

Samuel D. Lucas [sic]

Major General Commanding

General Doniphan replied: It is cold

blooded murder. I will not obey your order. My Brigade shall march for liberty [sic] tomorrow morning at 8 o'clock; and if you execute these men, I will hold you responsible [sic] before an earthly tribunal, so help me, God!

Other deletions, abridgements, and differences between Keller's manuscript and the "Times" publication are of relatively lesser importance. Those anxious to pursue the matter further can do so at their own leisure and expense. It is puzzling indeed that Keller did not see fit to mention Mrs. Hess' publication along with the other bits mentioned in his footnote (p. 18).

John R. Wendel  
Amherst, Mass.



Dear Sirs:

I don't consider *Israelites All* [Dialogue, Summer, 1966] a review of my book. B. Z. Sobel doesn't say a word about what kind of sources I used or what the historic relations of Jew and Mormon were according to my book. He is furthermore silent on all my conclusions, at the end of each chapter, as also on *Conclusions*, at the end of my book. (pp. 331, 332.) To write on these matters should constitute the duty of a reviewer of *Jew and Mormon*.

To see what he missed Sobel should compare his meaningless diatribes with the review of his fellow sociologist Dr. Krinsky (California Historical Society Quarterly, Sept. 1964, pp. 252, 253), who informs the reader about these matters. To make up for the things he missed Sobel substitutes some research ideas of his own. However, they don't deal with the historic relations of Jew and Mormon and therefore don't belong to the theme I chose. In developing my chosen theme I could not be expected to do some spoonfeeding to any ideas of another man.

A contention that *Jew and Mormon* is not an easy book to read proves nothing about the merits of this book. Letters of appreciation which I received from students and teachers don't complain about any uneasiness felt in reading the book.

Rudolf Glanz  
New York, N. Y.

Dear Sirs:

My initial response to Dr. Groesbeck's article ["Psychosexual Identity and the Marriage Relationship," *Dialogue*, Spring, 1967] is that it is most stimulating and in many ways provocative.

However, I think he has overstated his case. I see too many successful marriages where the female plays a quite dominant role (at least in the home situation) and the father is somewhat on the passive side. The children from some of these unions have been remarkably adjusted and effective. Also his statements suggesting that domineering mothers and weak fathers produce homosexual sons is a little strong for me. In my experience (my theoretical bias on the genesis of homosexuality is in the Bergler camp) I find that there are a variety of dynamic relationships with parents which can produce homosexuality in male offspring — and in some of these cases the father is very strong, to the point of being tyrannical. In addition there are too many negative instances to his assertion about the family pattern in homosexual development (e.g. strong mother, weak father) that produce healthy heterosexual sons. Also I think we have to be very cautious of the "clinician's bias," where, when we work with psychopathology all the time (to the exclusion of seeing a broad representative sample of healthy people), we fall err too often to the *post hoc ergo propter hoc* fallacy — that merely because B follows A, A is necessarily responsible for or causally connected with B. Thus we see a certain kind of family relationship in several instances of homosexuality and conclude that they caused this condition. I think the truth more likely is that a number of conditions must occur, at a certain age, frequency, and intensity, before homosexuality and many other psychopathological conditions will occur. The reason I raise this point is that some effective mothers may be made to feel guilty about being competent, "dominant," successful, etc., after reading this piece — which would be, in most cases, most unfortunate.

Thus, while I would agree with him that many people in our Western civilization have "identity crises," and that many people have problems centering around sex-role confusion (they are very uncertain about their role as male, female, husband, wife, father, mother, etc.), I also feel that there are many "roads to Rome" and there are a remarkable variety of healthy marital relationships and ways to produce "good" families. Thus a somewhat "masculine" woman might be very unhappy and incompatible with husband A, but very

fulfilled and happy with husband B — depending on the nature of their personalities and ways they fill each other's needs.

Victor B. Cline  
Associate Professor of Psychology  
University of Utah

AFTER READING  
*FASCINATING WOMANHOOD*  
(with regards to Dr. Groesbeck)

The feminine has always been suspect  
So I shall be terse  
And hide behind this verse.

I shall be circumspect  
In recounting the wrongs  
Of feminine songs

Down through the ages,  
Accepting with equanimity  
Almost certain anonymity

And the score of sages,  
How thoroughly domesticated,  
How haltingly truncated,

How limited their view!  
I shall gladly admit  
That woman in creative fit

Produces children — Nothing New.  
Thinking's not for her;  
She sees life through a blur,

The world of things her habitation.  
Yes, an extra layer of fat  
Protects her from that

Knowledge of intellectual creation  
That makes men seers,  
That protects them from tears

And other sentimental traps.  
Yes, I do capitulate —  
And I still recapitulate:

Women should be kept under wraps,  
Safe in a cozy cocoon,  
Regulated by phases of moon

And the habits of cooks.  
Above all, let us join forces  
With the speed of wild horses

To keep them from writing books!

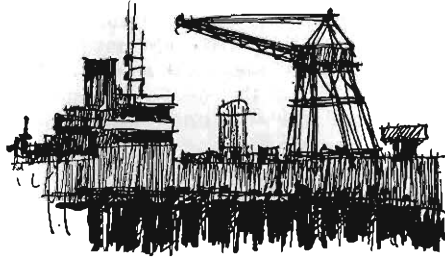
Mary Bradford  
Arlington, Va.

For another appraisal of *FASCINATING WOMANHOOD* see Moana Bennett's review in this issue. [Ed.]

Dear Sirs:

A person misses the point of Dr. Groesbeck's article if in his struggle with the proper balance of role playing he fails to see that the established pattern of family government is the flow of guidance, direction, and power from the Savior to the family through the patriarchal line of a righteous Priesthood bearer. Man's patriarchal dominion now and in the eternities presupposes a noncompulsory response from those in his charge — a response inspired by Godly love. Speaking of those who magnify their Priesthood the Lord said to Joseph Smith, "The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, and thy scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth; and thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without compulsory means it shall flow unto thee forever and ever" (Doctrine and Covenants 121:46).

George Pace  
L.D.S. Institute of Religion  
Palo Alto, California



Dear Sirs:

The editors of *Dialogue* are to be congratulated for their courage in publishing a brilliant and biting piece of satire in the Spring issue. I refer, of course, to "Psychosexual Identity and the Marriage Relationship" by "C. Jess Groesbeck." "Dr. Groesbeck" has produced a beautifully understated burlesque of what passes for intellectual activity among so many Mormons these days. In an attempt to demonstrate the profundity of Mormon philosophy we opportunistically choose isolated but useful bits of conjectural pseudo-science. We then make a far-fetched pseudo-identification of these items with some idiosyncratic and personalistic interpretation of doctrine. Our analysis complete, we withdraw from the field to securely contemplate the prescient wisdom of prophets and the perspicacity of secular intellect.

"Dr. Groesbeck" deftly parodies this Mormon pastime. Part of the success of his effort must be attributed to his happy selection of one of the least defensible of our traditional attitudes as the vehicle for his barbs. In selecting our condescending approach to the female sex as his topic "Dr. Groesbeck" was able to achieve heights of ironic effect not seen in the pages of *Dialogue* since Truman Madsen used Parley P. Pratt's ecstatic paean to the eternal servitude of women as an example of exalted insight into love (Vol. I, Number 1, p. 131).

I do regret that Erich Fromm must suffer as a by-product of this little joke. Unfortunately many unsuspecting readers will be introduced to the normally sensible Erich Fromm as a defender of stereotyped accounts of "normal" men as "adventurous" and "disciplined" and "normal" women as "protective" and "realistic." Such generalizations about sexual characteristics bear about the same relation to the scientific study of sexual differences as does phrenology to modern stereotaxic neurophysiology. Of course, the careful reader will notice that it is not Fromm who is being satirized. It is rather the Mormon habit of subtly transforming materials in order to make them useful. In this case Fromm's relatively non-pejorative materials are cunningly transformed into support for the idea that men are natural born leaders and women natural born followers.

The crowning hilarity occurs when the author comes to buttress his paper-thin supports for the bridge between sexual roles and doctrinal orthodoxy. I found the idea that the Great Apostasy was really caused by a sinful reversal of the husband-wife roles a brilliant commentary on the any-two-things-I-believe-in-must-be-related style of argument. The documentation of this point by reference to an obscure and doubtful source was a deft added touch by a great master of the art of parody.

"Dr. Groesbeck" is also well attuned to the logical difficulties encountered in the opportunistic use of isolated materials, namely, the tendency to fall into contradictions. In this piece such logical problems are beautifully set forth when the author brings on the authority of psychoanalysis to support the idea that children fail to adopt proper sexual roles when parents do not provide good role models. Since the implication of this idea is that masculine and feminine characteristics are learned rather than built into the spirit the author cleverly points out the inconsistencies involved in the use of psychoanalytic ideas to buttress doctrine. In one breath psycho-sexual differences are

said to be both eternal in the spirit and produced by a proper social environment.

The editors' satire is so subtle that they almost succeeded in making me believe that the article was meant in earnest. However, they gave themselves away. The article purports to be by a second year resident psychiatrist and anyone knows that no hospital could possibly be training a doctor to work with human beings on the basis of such archaic stereotypes of psychosexual uniformity.

Leon Mayhew  
The University of Michigan  
Ann Arbor



Dear Sirs:

In the Autumn number of your journal, James B. Allen presented a very challenging and informative review of Joseph Smith's "First Vision." In his treatment of the significance of that vision, Allen offered strong evidences that little was said or written about the vision in the formative years of the Church. Allen commented that "As far as Mormon literature is concerned," there was apparently no reference to Joseph Smith's first vision in any published material in the 1830's. He then cited the Book of Mormon, *Book of Commandments*, *The Evening and Morning Star*, *Latter-day Saints Messenger and Advocate*, and the Doctrine and Covenants, including the "Lectures on Faith," none of which contained any references to the vision. However, in a note referring to the latter-mentioned lectures, Allen acknowledged that the "only possible allusion" to



the vision might be found in the Doctrine and Covenants (1835) Section 1, paragraph 4, which reads, "Wherefore I the Lord, knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth, called upon my servant Joseph Smith jr. and spake unto him from heaven, and gave him commandments; and also gave commandments to others, that they should proclaim these things unto the world. . . ."

While I agree with James Allen's general conclusion on this point — that little was taught or written about the "First Vision" in early Church history — I would like to suggest an additional, and in my mind, stronger allusion to the vision in early Mormon publications. The allusion, or reference, I suggest will be found in *The Evening and Morning Star*, Vol. 1, No. 1, pg. 1, and is dated June 1832; it is also to be found in the *Book of Commandments*, chapter 24, verses 6-11, pgs. 48-49, dated 1833; and again, it is repeated in the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, Section 2, paragraph 2, pgs. 77-78. The reference reads (quoting the Doctrine and Covenants source above): "After it was truly manifested unto this first elder [Joseph Smith] that he had received a remission of his sins he was entangled again in the vanities of the world: but after repenting and humbling himself, sincerely, through faith in God ministered unto him by an holy angel [Moroni] whose countenance was as lightening, and whose garments were pure and white above all other whiteness, and gave unto him commandments which inspired him, and gave him power from on high, by the means [Urim and Thummim, etc.] which were before prepared, to translate the book of Mormon. . . ."

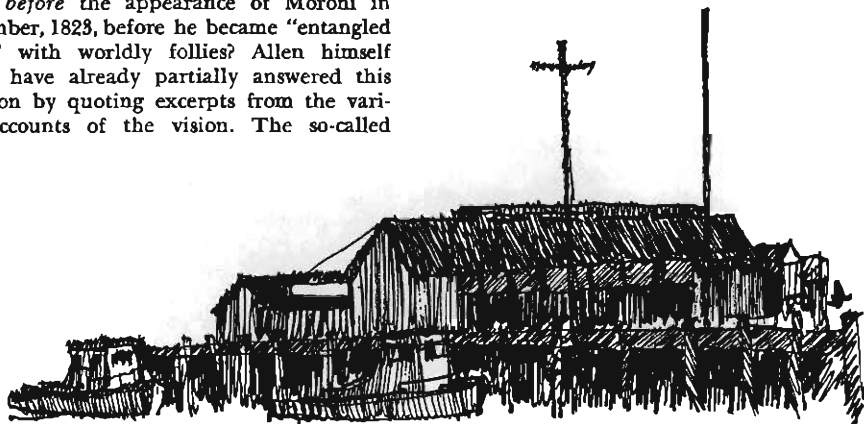
When was it truly manifested unto Joseph Smith that he had received a remission of his sins, an event which had to occur *before* the appearance of Moroni in September, 1823, before he became "entangled again" with worldly follies? Allen himself might have already partially answered this question by quoting excerpts from the various accounts of the vision. The so-called

"Strange Account of the First Vision," written ca. 1833, had Joseph Smith relating, "I was filled with the Spirit of God and the Lord opened the heavens upon me and I saw the Lord and he spake unto me saying Joseph my son thy sins are forgiven thee, go thy way walk in my statutes and keep my commandments. . . ." And in another recently located account of the "First Vision" written ca. 1835, Joseph related again: "Another personage soon appeared like unto the first: he said unto me thy sins are forgiven thee." And again, in 1840, in the first published account of the "First Vision," Orson Pratt described Joseph's remission in these words: ". . . he was enwrapped in a heavenly vision, and saw two glorious personages, who exactly resembled each other in their features or likeness. He was informed, that his sins were forgiven."

When was it truly manifested unto Joseph Smith that he had received a remission of his sins, an event which had to occur *before* Moroni's appearance in September 1823? The statements already cited seem to suggest that the answer was certainly at, or in connection with, the "First Vision," some time in the spring of 1820.

It seems, therefore, that there is more evidence, "as far as Mormon literature is concerned," than the "only possible allusion" of section one of the Doctrine and Covenants that reflects knowledge of the "First Vision" in the early Church.

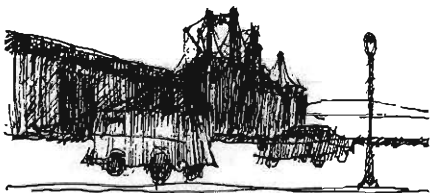
Reed C. Durham, Jr.  
Institute of Religion  
Salt Lake City, Utah



Dear Sirs:

In the Summer, 1966, issue of *Dialogue*, Joseph R. Murphy reviewed the book, "Truth by Reason and by Revelation," by Frank B. Salisbury. In the Winter issue, Salisbury replied to Murphy in a letter to the editors, thus opening the door to discussion of a significant and real issue facing Church members generally and Church teachers specifically. It has been rumored that *Dialogue* will devote a future issue to the religion-science "controversy"; I hope this is true.

It is not my intention to re-review Salisbury's book, but to illustrate the necessity for a more rational approach to the understanding of science than that presented by Salisbury. Murphy's review of the book was exceedingly kind, to say the least. Apart from drawing attention to inconsistencies and errors found in the book, the review suggested that, possibly, fundamentalist types might use the book in support of arguments to rule out the discussion of evolution within Church circles, the point to which my own concern is directed and to which this letter is addressed.



Science-religion controversies have existed since science was born, but the most notorious quarrel of this century centers around the theory of organic evolution. Both pro and con arguments have motivated the writing of books and tracts, the use of pulpit and placard, and much pontification. These kinds of emotions do not spawn scientific truths. Scientists are often emotional people, but the validity of their theories usually remains aloof from their emotional commitments. A scientific theory is devised or adopted for the purpose of generalizing a body of data, and the theory is judged on the basis of its ability to accommodate the data and to suggest the design of new experiments. Today, scientists representing such diverse disciplines as physics and human behavior, chemistry and anatomy, genetics and astronomy all gather data compatible with the theory of evolution, yet no one of the scientists claims that all of the data are in or that he understands

those that are in. But that their data fit the generalized theory to any degree is remarkable, beautiful, and, in science, sufficient grounds for retaining the theory.

If one argues that evolution is wrong because "I can't see this" or "you haven't proved that," one is, in essence, repulsing the very idea of discovery. Salisbury amplifies in his book and reiterates in his letter, "I cannot see an available mechanism for the production of sufficient 'positive' genetic variability," yet data illustrating mutation rates of genes in organisms from viruses to man are legion, and thousands of scientists do "see" gene mutation as the mechanism for the production of "sufficient" genetic variability. The fact that thousands of scientists do see this mechanism does not mean that the interpretations put to the data are correct any more than Salisbury's inability to see means that the interpretation is wrong. My point is that science doesn't "operate" this way; this approach to "right" and "wrong" is inimical to science and an insult to scientists. Scientists may design their experiments either to validate or invalidate a theory, but the "meat" of science consists of asking questions, testing, discovery, and analysis via suspended judgment — not emotion or dogma.

Another thing that Salisbury fails to "see" is that cats and dogs, after all, are not so very different. Rather, they represent modifications of the same basic floor plan, modifications that *can* be rationalized by a finite number of gene mutations.

It is not so much whether a man "believes" in evolution, but whether he approaches his beliefs rationally or irrationally. Certainly scholars and scientists who have acquired some degree of rationality have a responsibility to youth and to the unlearned, not to tell them "what" to believe, but to help them understand various approaches to truth and what truth means in terms of the approach used to acquire it. Salisbury directed his book to the young and to his non-Mormon scientist friends, and he acknowledges doing this with an arbitrary admixture of emotion and scholarship; e.g., if he had not been quite so emotional at the time of writing he might have written "a more scholastic, objective, academically correct work," and not "from a very defensive position." I doubt that this approach will convert many scientists to Mormonism, and I register vigorous objection to the idea of presenting science in this way to the youth of the Church. Emotionally charged "Scholarship" can be used to support any or all propositions. I would hope that we have at

our disposal more acceptable ways in which to discharge our responsibilities to young and inquiring minds.

The central question raised here is whether it is possible for scientists to make clear to non-scientists their approach to truth. Many may disagree with the scientific approach, but if they have been schooled well they will know whether their disagreement is based on an emotional or a reasoned analysis.

Val W. Woodward  
St. Paul, Minnesota

Dear Sirs:

Kent Robson's observation [Roundtable, *Dialogue*, Spring, 1967] that Mormon writers ignore such New Testament issues as the "Q" source and the Canon is of more than passing interest to one who has written on both. Of more vital interest to every informed Latter-day Saint is his position that Dr. Heber Snell's article does not "question the interpretations" but only the "procedure" of L.D.S. scriptural study. It is a serious charge that Mormons basically violate context in their scriptural interpretation; the consequence of accepting this premise is the deduction that Mormon scriptural conclusions are basically incorrect.

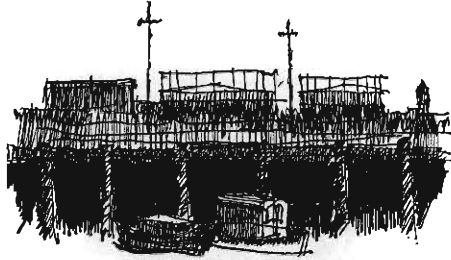
For instance, Dr. Snell takes about one-fourth of his article to show why futuristic interpretation of John's Revelation is unsound. In spite of Robson's view that this is a mere illustration of method without arguing "for some positive interpretation of Revelation," Snell's own conclusion is that Revelation's purpose and general meaning "are well known" and incidentally (according to key footnotes) preclude L.D.S. views that prophecies of Latter-day events may be found there.

While Dr. Snell pleads for Biblical interpretation that is broader and more informed, his article does not recognize the diversity of present scholarship of this main example used. I fail to see his own sense of context in restricting the Early Christian Church to an earthly schedule of fulfillment of the term "near," when it actually is on record as viewing Christ's coming from the perspective of immediacy of divine time (Mk. 13:32-5; 2 Thess. 2:2-4; 2 Pet. 3:8-9). Many readers holding degrees will agree that given Dr. Snell's premises of the "controversial" setting and "baffling nature of "detailed interpretations" of John's Revelation, one should be less than confident that he has uncovered its "general purpose and

meaning." This looks too much like the faulty generalization identified ruthlessly in Freshman English.

As one who has devoted a considerable portion of life to pursue a historical approach to the scriptures, I am not overwhelmed by the dichotomy assumed by Dr. Snell between L.D.S. usage and a historical approach. A great many of the questionings just enshrined in print are at least as questionable as the interpretations they seek to displace. History and language have indeed their place in scriptural study — and their limitations. The charge that Latter-day Saints are using the Revelation of John out of context is not sustained by the evidence presented.

Richard L. Anderson  
Brigham Young University



Dear Sirs:

. . . One disturbing feature, and one which your efforts seem to have accentuated, is the breach which appears to be growing between the so-called *faithful* on one hand, and the so-called *intellectual* on the other.

I'm not sure that there is any easy definition of either, so that a discussion of the problem, and its causes, is difficult, but the writer of a letter signed Richard H. Hart in your last issue, seems to epitomize the posture of a vocal, self-satisfied, self-proclaimed *faithful* group. He had a great deal of fun setting up some straw men, and knocking them down must have been even more fun.

A little exaggeration goes a long way and is a useful tool in rhetoric, but none is too much in any helpful or well meant conversation. The image of President McKay presiding at a conference of *intelligensia* is only slightly less real than the mish-mash of scripture about wisdom and foolishness, which is neither relevant nor helpful, much less a truthful reflection of the views of the editors — at least as those views come through to

me, from the pages of *Dialogue*. Besides, I'm not sure the "scripture" is scriptural or sensible.

I thought I knew what it meant, but being somewhat simple, I wanted to look up *intellectual* in my ancient copy of Webster, and after being referred to the word "intellect" I found this: "The power or faculty of knowing as distinguished from the power to feel and to will; esp. the power of *reasoning, judging, comprehending, etc.; understanding*" (emphasis mine).

Mr. Hart wants the so-called *intellectual* to gain understanding, he said, while Mr. Webster (or his heirs) thought that is precisely what was involved. Perhaps we need a new title for our straw man.

I know there is an attitude which is reprehensible, and which many describe as intellectualism; but I have always thought that it was typified by a smartness, a put-on facade of "camp," name-dropping, smugness in putting down (cleverly, with proper rhetorical flourish) those who are not "in," etc. And those who are careless in their choice of words have sometimes chose to typify the agnostic, the heretic, the atheist, as intellectual.

We can't, I regret, rewrite the *Dictionary of Modern Usage*, and so I'll concede that there is a group sometimes called *intellectual*, but Mr. Hart would be hard put to include

everyone who reserves the privilege of asking "why" as reprehensible, anti-faithful, and intellectual.

The late President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., is the only member of the authorities whose name comes to mind who ever advocated Blind Obedience. And I must presume that until (and perhaps even after) blind obedience becomes a precept of Mormonism, we are free to ask as many questions as we can think of, and that we are free to pursue truth, which, while not the first, must surely be the ultimate principle of the Gospel. We must be, I submit, free, in our search for truth, to create error, to embrace error, to love error. It would seem to me the better part to be wrong and be free than to be right and *not* be free to use our intelligence — to be *intellectuals* — to ask "how come" and "why."

Then, after wrestling with the problem in my own ineffective way, I found tucked away, a long way away (what marvelous restraint) from Mr. Hart's letter, B. H. Roberts's comments about the *faithful*, so called, and the *intellectual* (pp. 131, 132). Give us more of the second sort of disciples, and above all, give every sort of disciple (and anti-disciple, too) freedom to speak their piece. After all, nobody has to read anything.

William L. Knecht  
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