Letters to the Editors

Lucile C. Tate who made the sketches in this section in the course of a summer's travels is an instructor in Humanities at Brigham Young University and mother of four children.

Dear Sirs:

After Udall's letter, what now? Despite the possible political implications of Stewart Udall's letter, I hailed it as a welcome voice on a subject generally veiled in public silence. And yet, after the letter's admitted value as a statement of a problem, of what value is it? Mr. Udall said nothing new, although he said it well. In asking for a resolution of this issue, and a salve for our troubled consciences, he asked for an impossibility. The dilemma of Udall, and of others like myself who desperately wish for a solution to this problem, is that we are steeped in a tradition which emphasizes the capacity of the individual to effect change, and yet we have accepted membership in a church which has exclusively central leadership. By our voluntary acceptance of membership in the Church, we must accept this dilemma. We cannot demand a revelation. That demand, it would seem, is unstated but present in Mr. Udall's letter.

I feel, as Mr. Udall seems to, the need for immediate, physical action. What can we, as concerned individuals, do? I don't intend to present a solution to this complex question. However, I would call for an end to the intellectual and physical isolation which marks most Mormon thought and inaction on this subject. We, as a people, and Salt Lake City, as a community, can no longer refuse to recognize the growing status of the Negro. We must effect a public consciousness of our racial problems. Our role as Church members, it would seem, is to realize and to make distinct the difference between the denial of a man the priesthood and the denial of fellowship and of full civil rights. What the Lord can offer, we can only patiently wait for; what we can offer, we must learn to give. This calls for a tremendous sensitivity and an immersion in personal relationships. It calls for a realization that the value of letters such as Mr. Udall's lies in their function as a catharsis —perhaps a valuable function, but one which cannot and perhaps should not have effect on the First Presidency or on the quality of Negro-Mormon relationships. Such a catharsis is by its nature an isolating experience. It is certainly no substitute for personal responsibility.

As Mormons we are faced with a dilemma which becomes increasingly problematic. Perhaps our situation could be viewed as a modern-day refiner's fire or as a test of our understanding of the spirit of brotherhood and of the Gospel. We must learn what elements of ourselves can be given in solution of the problem which we face. I ask with Mr. Udall, "To what more noble accomplishment could we of this generation aspire?"

Robyn Sandberg
Sarah Lawrence College

Dear Sirs:

By virtue of what Church standing does Udall presume to lecture the brethren on their doctrine?

Does he suppose that his transient political status now supersedes his years of religious condescension and inactivity?

Fortunately, his socio-religious treatise, ghost-written or not, will be treated with the same urgency in high Church places as would a sudden political solution offered by a casual,

indifferent, precinct-level functionary by the highest councils of the Democrat Party.

How much better would it have been, had he chosen to spend the time consumed in "writing" his dissertation, in cleaning out the chicken coop down at the Stake Farm—perhaps in the company of the editors of your magazine, and myself.

Vernon B. Romney
Salt Lake City, Utah

Dear Sirs:

I don't agree with Mr. Udall's private interpretation concerning what "essential Mormon thought" ought to be, but I do appreciate the logic he must have used to arrive at his conclusions. It's what one would expect from a nonmember. Of course, there are members, too, who apply this type of logic, but they are usually more open about their over-all negative attitude toward the Church. They honestly admit that they don't think the Church is an instrument of God—it's merely a great social organization. They don't pretend to be concerned about the "minds and morals of our youth" and "the integrity of our Christian ethic." Certainly they are critical, but they don't set themselves up, by virtue of political and economic power, to be self-appointed spokesmen for the Church.

But now comes Mr. Udall with some pertinent observations designed to let the world know that all Mormons are not unenlightened die-hards. It's too bad the world doesn't know that there are Mormons and then there are Mormons, and I cringe to think that many of the world now think that Mr. Udall's views represent Mormon thought.

Of course, he must be a member in good standing or he wouldn't use terms like "we Mormons," "our people," "our leaders," "our . . . ideals," and "our Church." And he certainly must know and understand the whole Mormon picture because of statements like: ". . . the restriction now imposed on Negro fellowship is a social and institutional practice having no real sanction in essential Mormon thought," "Surely God is speaking to us now, telling us that the time is here," ". . . 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," and ". . . we are wrong and it is past the time when we should have seen the right."

Mr. Udall must think the Church is made up of extremely gullible people. Otherwise he never would have set himself up as he did to try to influence the members.

The Church is either true or it isn't. If it changes its stand on the strength of the "great stream of modern religious and social thought," it will be proven untrue. If that happens, the more serious members would do well to join the Cub Scouts. It's cheaper and there is less work and less criticism.

But these more serious members have a conviction that the Church is true. They fully expect to receive "persistent, painful inquiries" and worse. To them, the Church is not a social institution and an outlet for power seekers in spite of the obvious politics and insensitive kingdom building perpetrated by some. They know the Church is a loner, just like Judaism and Moses and Noah and Lincoln and like our Founding Fathers. I'm glad they weren't afraid of painful inquiries.

If the Church is true, it will hold to its beliefs in spite of its members. If it is false, more power to the easy-way-out philosophers who claim to know the "imperious truths of the contemporary world."

Paul C. Richards
Provo, Utah

Dear Sirs:

Secretary Udall's letter in the Summer 1967 issue of *Dialogue* prompts the following observation:

In the book of Second Samuel, chapter six, there is recorded the story of a man named Uzzah. Not having a legal right to touch the ark of God, he treated it casually and with disrespect when David was returning it to Jerusalem. For his insolence he was struck dead, the Lord thus making clear that He would have His work done in His own way. Uzzah thus gained the dubious distinction of becoming the charter member and founder of that society of individuals who will "steady the ark" when God's anointed has in their eyes faltered, grown old, or become fearful, or is just not up with the times and cannot see that which the real intellectual can see. This group is known as the Ark Steadier's Society (A.S.S.). They are on hand to keep the Church up to date and to keep it current in the onward march of progress. They are the "liberals" who will deliver from destruction those who, in blind faith, wait for the Lord Himself to speak. They insist we should put pressure on Him, and in this way we can be saved from sinking into the abyss of

oblivion that is due a small-time church that cannot keep abreast or adapt itself to the modern facts of life. They are sure we can force God to up-date the Church if we will just be firm with Him. They remind us that we wrenched a revelation out of Him in the days of Wilford Woodruff to end an "abomination" —we can do it again.

All hail to the newest member of the Ark Steadier's Society. . . .

Edwin P. Rudel
Salt Lake City, Utah

Dear Sirs:

Dialogue encouraged response to Stewart Udall's letter (Summer, 1967). I was offended, not so much by the subject of the letter, but by the author's own "moralistic platitudes" and his naive approach to the essence of Mormon theology. Not only did the letter seem politically charged but it also lacked the spirit of one who is genuinely interested in or committed to the Church. I concur with statements attributed to George Romney (*New York Times* News Service) that Udall knows that this is not the way to bring about the change that he desires.

Although doctrinal change in our Church does not come about through public pressure, each of us as individuals in the Church must come to grips with the issue. I would only ask that we consider the many ramifications of our Church's position regarding the Negro race.

Historical Ramifications: To justify the Church's current position denying priesthood to members of the negroid races, we must be prepared to accept and defend that all Negroes (a term which itself presents many ambiguities) descend from the union of Ham and his wife Egyptus. This, of course, means that the numerous and diverse black peoples of sub-Saharan Africa, Madagascar, Malay Peninsula, the Philippines and Celebes, Australia, Tasmania, New Guinea and Melanesia had their origin at that rather recent time in history and are all descendants of Ham, regardless of diversity in their physical types, language, and culture. If we assume that Pharaoh was denied the priesthood because he too was a descendant of Ham (and consequently a Negro), then the civilization of the Pharaohs in the Nile Valley, not to mention all the Biblical Canaanites who settled along the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, known as Phoenecians and Philistines in their day and whose land was later given to Abraham as a land of promise for his descendants, must all be considered Negroes. In addition, descendants of Ham went on to settle most of the Middle East and founded such cities as Nineveh, Sidon, Tyre, Beersheba, Jericho and even Babel (from whence Jared and his brother came) according to the Biblical accounts (Gen. 10:6-20).

There are also the modern historical problems relating to the social context and setting in which the Church was founded and in which it developed as well as the problems relating to a clear-cut position in the nineteenth century Church regarding the Negro and the priesthood and the Negro in the Church, for that matter. This has scarcely been touched by Mormon historians in a sophisticated manner. These historical problems could well be a theme for discussions regarding *social* science and religion.

Scriptural Ramifications: There is only one reference in any of the standard works to any one or any group being cursed with a "skin of blackness" and the reference is to the Lamanite people of the Book of Mormon (2 Nephi 5:21). References to "blackness' and being considered black are found in the Book of Moses in the Pearl of Great Price and pertain to antediluvian peoples with whom there is no mention of priesthood. One of these groups, the preflood people of Canaan "which dwelt in tents" (Moses 7:6-8) appears to have been descended from Seth, the son of Adam (Moses 6:16-19 and Gen. 7:8-10 Inspired Version). In addition, there is no reference in any of the scriptures, to my knowledge, which even implies that the Canaanites or the Cainanites are descendants of Cain, the son of Adam.

President McKay stated in a letter of November 3, 1947 (*Home Memories of President David O. McKay,* pp. 226-231): "I know of no scriptural basis for denying the priesthood to Negroes other than one verse in the Book of Abraham. . . ." That verse states, "Now Pharaoh being of that lineage by which he could not have the right of Priesthood, notwithstanding the Pharaohs would fain claim it from Noah, through Ham,—therefore my father was led away by their idolatry" (Abraham 1:26). It is the relation of the Negroid peoples of the world to the Pharaohs of ancient Egypt who were clearly cursed regarding the priesthood according to the scriptural record that should occupy the attention of any critic of the current L.D.S. Negro doctrine. In this regard, facsimile number three from the Book of Abraham might be noted. The question could be raised why the Pharaohs, presumably Negroes, are not represented as such, while the Egyptian slave—probably from somewhere on the upper Nile in central Africa—clearly is.

Sociological Ramifications: My studies currently in Brazil, a country where mass miscegenation among European Caucasians, Bantu and Sudanese Africans, and indigenous American Indians has been a reality now for almost three hundred years, have led me to conclude that most Brazilians who are not second or third generation descendants of German, Italian, Polish, or Japanese immigrants, are probably descendants of Negroes. This is especially true among the lower and lower-middle classes which make up a large portion of L.D.S. Church membership in this land. Pelotas, for example, in the state of Rio Grande do Sul and one of the most successful missionary cities of the Brazilian South Mission, is described by nineteenth century chroniclers (Saint-Hilaire, Dreys, and Ave-Lallemant) as being "predominantly black" and this is in Rio Grande do Sul considered to be the "whitest" part of Brazil. Branches of the Church have recently been established in Aracajú, Recife, João Pessoa, and Fortaleza in the "very black" *nordeste.*

We must therefore ask, "Just who is a Negro?" We, as a Church, have decided that the Melanesian Fiji Islanders are *not* while the Papuans of neighboring New Guinea *are.* In some of the branches of the Church which my wife and I have attended here in Brazil, there appear to be priesthood bearers who possess the essential characteristics of the Negroid races. I am reminded that someone of authority decided that these people are *not.*

These, I believe, are some legitimate questions for us as individuals within the Church to examine, and we should examine them within a context of our testimonies and with the assurance of the divine mission of Joseph Smith.

Gary Lobb
Pôrto Alegre, R.G.S.
Brasil

Dear Sirs:

Let nobody doubt that Stewart Udall has spoken for thousands upon thousands of his concerned and thoughtful fellow churchmen. His letter regarding the Negro problem led me to reflect that it is twenty years ago this summer that I was first shocked into a realization of the implications of the present policy and began a "dialogue" with the First Presidency. I had spent twelve months beginning in September, 1945, making a study of rural life in Cuba for the Department of State. The following year, 1947, a friend of college days was sent by the Church Authorities to investigate the possibility of establishing mission work there. Upon learning of my having been in Cuba, he wrote me to inquire if I had found many white people there. In retrospect, I realize that I was very naive. But the truth is, that it was my first real confrontation with this question. Inevitably, in growing up in a Mormon Utah village, I had become familiar with such phrases as "white and delightsome," "cursed with a dark skin," the "third who sat on the fence," but they were just "phrases" that went in one ear and out the other. The Negro never came to our village. In my correspondence with the First Presidency, I was truly troubled to find myself in opposition to a fixed dogma. I decided to let the matter drop.

But five years later a friend in Salt Lake City sent me a copy of the Church supplement to the *Deseret News* containing a story about some returned missionaries from South Africa who had promised a woman on her deathbed to do her work in the temple. Their efforts to make sure her blood was not "tainted" disturbed me all over again. I resolved to make public the story of "Mormons and the Negro" and published it in *The Nation* (May 24, 1952). So much for "reflection."

All churches, other Christian groups as well as Mormons, which are founded on revelation have difficulty in adjusting to change. But Mormonism was founded on the principle of "progressive revelation" and therefore has a

built-in mechanism for adjustment. Without entering into a discussion as to what is revelation, I think it is appropriate to remark that such revelations as have guided the Church since Joseph Smith's death have not followed the format of the Prophet. Decision-making has followed a quite different and more normal pattern. It seems unrealistic to expect the Church to deal with this problem in any other manner.

The dilemma of the Church leaders is a cruel one, but less so than the doctrine itself. Yet there are some aspects of the problem which call urgently for solution, and in some sense mitigate the difficulties.

1. It was never the subject of a formal revelation by Joseph Smith as was polygamy. Moreover, the scriptural base cited for its support conflicts with other Mormon scripture, not to mention the New Testament.

2. Church practice itself has not been consistent. It is well known that Negroes have been ordained to the Priesthood. Moreover, skin color *per se* is not a bar to full "citizenship" in the Church. Only the American Negro—and by extension his ancestry in Africa—is victimized.

3. To penalize the present black population for the presumed delinquency of their ancestors in the First Estate is to bring us into conflict with that Article of Faith which says: "We believe men will be punished for their own sins . . ."

4. "Pure whiteness" is today impossible to validate. Negroes and whites have lived together on this continent since the early years of settlement. The mixture of white and black "blood" is so widespread that there are relatively few pure blacks. By the same token the diffusion of black blood among the whites must be regarded as widespread. Each year thousands of babies are born in this country whose Negro ancestry is so remote as to have no influence on the physical characteristics. How is the "drop of tainted blood" to be discerned?

5. Options for change in the doctrine have never been foreclosed. Always there is the modifier, "the time will come when . . ."

6. In my *Nation* article, I mentioned that the blessings of the Gospel were not available to the Negro. This brought from one of my critics a lengthy exposition to the effect that there are at least seven blessings available to the Negro. This being the case I have often wondered why no effort is made to bring him these blessings. On the contrary, mission work among the blacks has been studiously avoided. Witness my Cuban inquiry.

7. Since we claim to be a universal church whose message is to go to "every kindred, tongue, and people," how can we justify the exclusion of over 100 million human beings?

One final comment. It seems to me it would simplify matters if the theological aspect could be disentangled from the social mesh in which it is caught. The solution of the theological matter should come first, and that is all the Church leaders are confronted with. Mormon whites will, of course, continue to nurse their prejudices, but they should be denied the comfort of a sanction for them in their religion.

The problem will not go away by being ignored. Decisions are urgently needed, for no reason other than the moral one to bring our principles of universal brotherhood into clearer view. There is, in my view, only one right—and righteous—answer.

Lowry Nelson
Coral Gables, Florida

Dear Sirs:

Mr. Udall's letter of recommendation as to the status of Negroes in the Church was certainly a delight to all of us who welcome suggestions for new Church teachings. Coming from such an openly devoted member of the Church as Stewart Udall, it should definitely be a key topic of discussion in the next Mormon Ecumenical Council. Perhaps it may even weaken David O. McKay's chances of re-election as President.

John Phillips
Brigham Young University

Dear Sirs:

Re: Secretary Udall's letter

All men should have the required privilege of using a fifty cent rental earphone and walking the proverbial "mile" in Chicago's Field Museum. Malvine Hoffman's sculpting of Negroid, Mongoloid, and Caucasian man (and his family) extracts more love from my soul than ever I knew existed.

We must all live together—or die together. The Church has given us special knowledge that requires our ability to communicate His love to everyone on earth. There are no exceptions.

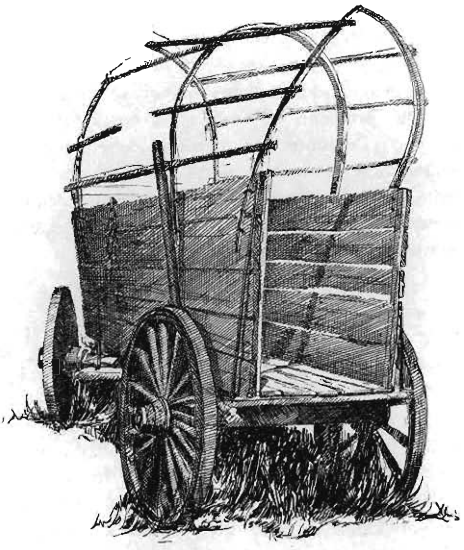
Ramon S. Wilcox
San Francisco, California

Dear Sirs:

Mr. Mayhew (Letters, Summer issue) has attempted to create an empirical model "of what passes for intellectual activity among so

many Mormons these days." Quite aside from being deficient on technical grounds, the model also is less than half complete. He should at the very least have included a sub-type for those who make emotional attacks derived from a pitch they have badly missed.

F. LaMond Tullis
Huancayo, Peru



Dear Sirs:

. . . *Dialogue* has violated my trust by printing quotes which profane Deity. Clearly, the context of Ronald Wilcox's "Morality or Empathy?" (Spring, 1967) does not justify nor require the inclusion of such repulsive examples. The entire thesis being discussed, though controversial, is not enhanced by forcing readers to indulge in vicarious swearing. I did not expect to read those words in *Dialogue;* I did not plan to do so nor did I purchase the journal for that reason. I have disagreed and expect to disagree with various arguments or claims by different writers, but not until now have I been offended. Not until now have I seen expression which violates a commandment as ancient as man. Not until now has my environment been violated. Oh, it's true that this is not the first time in my life that something offensive has occurred, but I have regarded the intruders of past experiences as enemies to the sanctity of my environment. There is no reason for *Dialogue* to become an enemy. Let it stimulate and explore. Let it test the strength of foundations and pull men beyond themselves. Let it challenge or testify. But, don't let it destroy!

. . . The attempt of "Morality or Empathy?" was to justify swearing in the theater as an expression of reality external to the morality of the actor. Aside from the very apologetic and defensive approach, there is a reassuring note of sincerity on the part of the author. At times I wondered if he were trying to convince me or himself. He failed in either case.

There is no basis to the pretext that becoming an "actor" in any way releases a man from the responsibility of his actions to his Father in Heaven. Could an actor justify drunkenness and expect to avoid the hangover in the guise of "art"? Could an exotic dancer be pure before God because her profession demanded lewd behavior? Can a salesman lie, an athlete cheat, or a business steal because in the profession "everybody else does"? Does "art" to the artist, the dancer, or the actor take priority over the laws of God? To the professional thief we say, "Change your profession because it causes you to sin against the Eternal Father and society." To the professional actor we say, "Use your talent to glorify God and build His Kingdom. Man's presence on earth is meaningful; don't let your presence destroy other men."

. . . Ronald Wilcox makes a lengthy plea for all people to overlook the "isolated offensive details" in drama and thereby gain the "greater experience." My only response to such irresponsibility is to remind Brother Wilcox of how frequently a very little evil is packaged with a lot of good. Even the most casual observer can note how the proportion changes with time until the dosage, though "acceptable," is wholly corrupt and corroded. As noted previously in this writing, I hope that the use of profanity in *Dialogue* will not be acceptable "in view of the larger good." Brother Wilcox, himself, has unknowingly documented evidence of the corrosive nature of his professional experience in swearing. He writes, "I concur that profanity is inconsistent with the highest standards of the Church. I am painfully aware of my own predilection for this easy idiom, and must constantly guard my personal speech; but I cannot honestly believe that wishful thinking will make the problem go away." Neither, Brother, will indulgence!

John W. Gwynn
California Institute of Technology

Dear Sirs:

You did a good thing in arranging the confrontation of Professors Heber C. Snell and Sidney B. Sperry on the subject "The Bible in the Church" in your Spring, 1967, issue and in

publishing the very perceptive commentary by Mr. Kent Robson.

For many years, Professors Snell and Sperry have been the undisputed leaders of the main wings of Bible scholarship in the L.D.S. Church. They are both men of high capabilities, excellent academic pedigree, and genuine commitment. The people of the Church deserved to hear from them on this very important subject, and they both stated their positions most effectively—Snell's being that of a critical scholar deeply affected by the literary-historical studies of recent decades, Sperry's that of a scholar fully committed to the defense of the established position of the Church. Nothing but good should come from a genuine dialogue involving persons such as these who have much in common and much in difference.

Because he is in advanced years and has largely retired from teaching and because Professor Sperry unfortunately seemed anxious to support his critique of Snell's ideas by exposing him as a heretic, I hope that I may be allowed a brief comment on Professor Snell directed to those among your readers who may not have had the pleasure and privilege of knowing him.

Professor Snell, who is now in his middle eighties, is a most uncommon combination of three great virtues: piety, honesty, and courage. He is a great teacher and a scholar of high achievement. I personally have never known a man more honestly and profoundly devoted to the good of his Church. He belongs to that dwindling race of so-called liberals who once inhabited the Church and contributed so importantly to its intellectual, moral, and spiritual strength.

Snell has preferred to be a seeker for truth rather than a rationalizing defender of the doctrines. He has never been afraid to raise his pen or voice against the established position when it violated his moral conscience, and he has steadfastly refused to abandon the ideal of reasonableness, being determined that the future of religion depends on an open and unending quest for knowledge and understanding. Above all, he has refused to believe that it is a virtue to lie for God and he still insists that nothing but the courageous search for truth is good enough for his people.

After a lifetime of devoted service to the Church, Heber Snell deserves something more than to be branded as one with whom the scholars of the Church cannot work. I rather think that future historians of the Church, if they pay attention to matters of this kind, will clearly see him as the foremost Bible scholar of the Church in its first 150 years.

Sterling M. McMurrin
University of Utah

Dear Sirs:

In his delightfully provoking little essay, "The Bible in the Church," Professor Snell supplied much food for thought, but his exegesis of the Revelation of John raised a disturbing question.

He made it clear that the early Christians expected actual fulfillment of the prophecy. He also gave several proof-texts (Rev. 1:1,3 and 22: 7,10,12, and 20) to show that it was to be fulfilled immediately. But it is now 1967, and many of the predicted events, such as the Second Coming and the Millennium, have certainly not yet occurred. Was John therefore a false prophet?

Or would Professor Snell do well to add to his "better" historical methods a study of the scriptures themselves? A little studying of the context of Matthew 16:28, Matthew 24:33-4, Luke 21:31-2, II Thessalonians 2:1-3, I Nephi 22:15-24, or the footnote to Doctrine & Covenants 1:12 before writing his essay should have helped his exegesis considerably.

Russell T. Pack
St. Paul, Minnesota

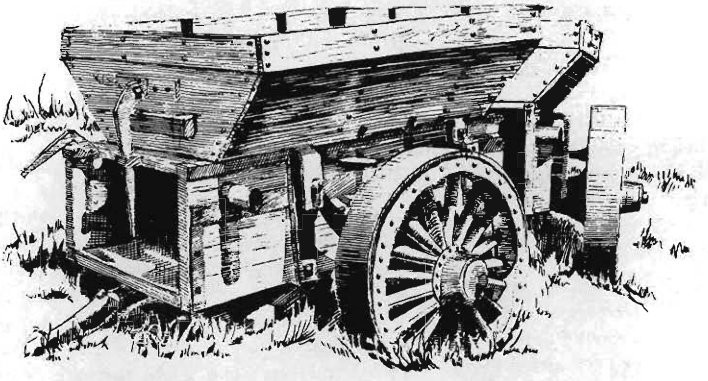
Dear Sirs:

. . . Many of the quandaries of sophisticated intellectuality and the Gospel are illustrated in the sterile posturing of "The Bible in the Church," a recent *Dialogue* roundtable.

Initially we often attribute an elemental nature to our particular and personal questions, methods, and goals; then we demand that all others conform. Brother Snell, for example, belabors the frequent Mormon use of "proof-text" interpretation of scripture. Here scripture is quoted, without regard to the historical milieu in which it arose, to "prove" the accepted theology. For Snell, "the free use of the 'proof-text' approach to scripture in the Church has led to a number of highly questionable interpretations of biblical material" (p. 61). But the prophet and his "disciples" were not preparing scholarly annotations and studies of biblical texts to satisfy Brother Snell's insatiable desire for the ultimate in contemporary intellectual respectability. They were instead concerned with lives, and repentance, and perfection; they were preaching sermons to instill and enrich

faith, to develop understanding of Gospel principles, not to analyze the historical context of scripture. The historical context is not ignored by most Mormon theologians; rather it is not developed because of its irrelevance to the specific hortative goals at hand. Joseph's sermons were no different from contemporary Protestant sermons in their "proof-text" interpretation of scripture.

A second problem arises from mental axioms or assumptions which condition and limit the variety of answers to a problem which we are willing to accept. Most scholars assume no one can foretell the future; Daniel's prophecies of the return of the Jews from Babylon to Jerusalem consequently must have been written, not during Daniel's lifetime (sixth century B.C.), but long after their fulfillment. So too, Rudolf Bultmann assumes that because he has not seen a man rise from the dead, the resurrection of Christ is unbelievable. In both cases evidence might strongly suggest a simple literal reading of the text, but the assumptions have prejudiced our minds to that possibility. Indeed, almost all modern thought is but a function of our mental axioms.



But just as our mental axioms condition problems, so too do the given facts. Take for example the documentary hypothesis. Kent Robson speaks approvingly and at length of this hypothesis which chops the Pentateuch (the Books of Moses) into small pieces and then generally forgets Moses. It is only after diligent efforts to harmonize Mormon beliefs with the hypothesis that he claims he is "not interested in defending" the one claim he has presented

Therefore let us examine, for example, in a dangerously over simple way, the creation account of Genesis. Scholars have here found two separate accounts of the creation. The first (Gen. 1:1-2:4a) is characterized by the use of "Elohim" as the name given to the divine creator; the creator of the second account (Gen. 2:4b-3:24) is "Jehovah." To the gentile documentary scholar we have obviously two separate accounts (known respectively as the "E" and "J" texts) of the same creation that have been clumsily shoved together to form the Genesis account.

But one of the few Mormon biblical scholars might see other possibilities when he examines the problem in the light of the additional "given" evidence provided by the texts of Moses and Abraham in the Pearl of Great Price, evidence seemingly unknown to either Snell or Robson. Here too we find two creation accounts, but they are accounts of different creations. The first is a spiritual creation while the second and latter creation is an earthly, material creation. And just as the names given the creators in the corrupted Genesis text suggest, Elohim the Father was responsible for the spiritual creation while Jehovah the Son was for the second material creation. Gentile scholarship might thus mean little to a Mormon when the Mormon "givens" so radically restructure both the problem and its answer.

Mormon intellectual problems generally arise from two sources. The first is ignorance. We are often so ignorant of the Gospel and its scriptural texts that we cannot see the answers the Gospel presents. Often we are also ignorant of others' contributions to these problems. Brother Sperry has discussed at length the textual problems of Isaiah in his *Voice of Israel's Prophets* (which served as a recent Sunday School manual) and Hugh Nibley in *Since Cumorah* discussed Isaiah in terms that made progressive modern textual scholarship look positively reactionary. Neither Brother Snell nor Brother Robson seems interested in or aware of these efforts to awaken general Church membership to such basic

biblical problems. (And I suspect Mormons are no more ignorant of these problems than the membership of most other Christian churches.)

A second source of intellectual problems is a lack of independent creative thought and reflection on the part of many Mormon intellectuals. One professor, for example, in a splendid apology for intellectual sloth, feels honor bound to accept the views of his academic mentors whenever they happen to conflict with the views of the brethren. When we are so cowed by "authorities" our minds quit thinking and our eyes no longer see. As was pointed out some years ago, many Mormon intellectuals are intellectually so ill-prepared that they fear rocking the academic boat with new and vigorously defended views of their own. But I guess such timidity is understandable when we are not sure if we can swim.

I love the life of the mind too much to give up easily such childish games, but deep introspection constantly shows me how little we gain from intellectual tennis. We can take seriously either ourselves and our games, or the Gospel. We can never take both seriously. When we have finished playing, the Gospel will still be patiently waiting, waiting for us to return to the real world of sin, salvation, and Sunday School.

Robert J. Christensen
Yale University

Dear Sirs:

. . . I submit that history, including historical books of the Church, should not be written or taught. . . .

For years, I have been resentful of the time spent in repetitiously plowing over the historical books of the Church by inadequately trained or prepared teachers using the same words and and phrases from Junior Sunday School up through adult Gospel Doctrine classes. Anyone who doesn't use the expected words and phrases to which adult members were conditioned in Junior Sunday School is considered unorthodox at best and heretical at worst. In class after class that I have sat through the Bible has been presented as literal and factual accounts of the past with no relation to the present. In class after class that I have taught I have been corrected by the righteous brethren of the ward when I have suggested that the Bible as a whole or any part of it being considered was something else than literal. And it was always by the righteous brethren who defined the Gospel in terms of their own personal limitations of understanding. Now I know there are better men in the Church, but it has been my observation that when some of these men may be present in a class they are reticent to present the best that they know and understand when the majority of the class may be talking nonsense.

I submit it is not to the Bible, or any other historical book of the Church, that we should turn. The people of the past taught the best that they knew, but it was limited by the knowledge and understanding of the time, and the capacity of those they were teaching. These limitations do not remain constant through time. For me the greatest doctrine of the Church is the Doctrine of Eternal Progression. This involves the search for completion of truth. I submit that the accounts of 2,000 to 4,000 years ago are no more worthy of the time and attention of a progressing man than is plowing over the ABC's to the college student. It seems to me that we should be turning to the thoughts of our best minds recorded in current books on literature and science and relating this to a better way of life. Large segments of our population are falling behind and irretrievably becoming wards of those who more nearly keep apace of the explosion of knowledge.

I submit that man's basic loyalty is to the concept of developing truth, and not to the Church as the institution currently existing. To me, Exaltation is a function of man's knowledge and ability to use it constructively at any given point in time, and relative to that possessed by those currently existing at that point in time. I believe that periodically there will be a sifting and a grading based on personal quality, and this will probably not include the number of pages of the Bible one can quote. God, while supervising our progression, is likewise progressing and is not omniscient or omnipotent. There are limitations on him based on his knowledge and ability, and there are opportunities for his continued growth and development. The Church, as it is organized today, is an arbitrary structure devised and set up in this day by God to assist man now in his eternal progression. It is different from the Church set up by God 4,000 years ago, it is different from that set up by Christ 2,000 years ago, and it is different than that set up some 130 years ago by Joseph Smith. And the Church will continue to change in the future as man's needs and the purposes of God dictate. The only constant thing in the scheme of Eternal Progression is the search for truth and understanding. Truth and understanding can never be completely encompassed by either man or God. There is nothing which will not be changed

to some extent by future knowledge, experience, and needs of both man and God.

The Bible is evil to the extent that it directs the mind of all too many of the Church members backward in time rather than to a progressing present and future. Exaltation requires all the time and all the energies of those who are teachable, and of those who can teach. It is not the purpose of the Church to teach the Bible, or to teach a course of study, or a manual, but to teach men. It should be the purpose of the Church to help with the half found answers to which man can frame questions, to work on the controversial frontiers of men's knowledge and ability. And to the extent to which teaching the Bible interferes with this, it is evil. The Bible, like love and charity, is a two-edged sword. It can be used for both good and evil—and oftentimes with the best of intentions.

Look at the long dreary ineffectual years of Bible study listed by Dr. Sperry in his article. These only include the Sunday School and not the years of Bible teaching often running concurrently in the priesthood classes and other auxiliaries. Thousands upon thousands of Church members sat through these classes and learned not a thing. You ask them after the class ten minutes later what the lesson was about and few of them know. And even with all this Bible teaching, had they learned the Bible verbatim—then what? Have they increased their personal quality one iota? Have they increased their personal capacity to master this material sphere of existence one bit? To the extent that it prevented a small increment of progression it was sinful.

The best definition of the Gospel I know is "All Truth," and I would like to see more than lip service paid to the admonition to search the best books. Our scholars do it, I know, but what of the sorry plight of the average member who never reads his manual even when one of the Church scholars has written a good one pertinent to man's problems of the day. And how has it come about that so many of the most righteous men of a ward with burning testimonies of the truthfulness of the Bible (King James version) are the most ignorant of man's quest for the truths and understanding of the forces extant in man and this physical world? Why is knowledge denigrated by these members? Is it an inward wish to deny to others what they do not have themselves, to satisfy their egos by attempting to define the Gospel in terms of their own personal limitations? Surely to this extent the teaching of the Bible has been a force of evil in their lives. Only an infinitesimal portion of the Gospel is taught in the Church classes. The Gospel is learned in the street by observing and listening men. The Gospel is learned in the academic institutions by students. The Gospel is learned on the job by the conscious laborer. How are vast areas of the Bible, especially when interpreted literally, helpful here? . . .

William J. Tanner
Hayward, California

Dear Sirs:

I must confess my disappointment in the Spring issue roundtable papers. Although I disagree with many of Professor Snell's observations, my objections are not so much with what he says as with what he has failed to say. I recognize that it is not the reader's privilege to tell the author what his subject should have been, but the reader does have the right to expect the author to provide some support for those assertions which are unlikely to be accepted by the audience.

In several places Professor Snell asserts that the "historical method" is a superior approach to the study of the Bible. To be sure, there are many circles in which such a statement need not be bolstered by convincing arguments, but Professor Snell was writing for a largely Mormon audience, and, as he has taken pains to show, Mormons do not commonly use the "historical method" for analysis of the scriptures. It is evident from Professor Snell's own paper that he should not have expected his audience to accept his estimate of the "historical method" simply on the basis of his assertion. Dr. Sperry's rejoinder is further evidence of this fact.

My greatest disappointment, however, was awakened by what appeared to be an attempt to achieve harmony at any price. Kent Robson's assurance that Professors Snell and Sperry are not really so far apart was quite unconvincing in the presence of the other two papers. It is true that both professors are aware of the dangers of the "proof text" approach, but Dr. Sperry shows no indication of accepting Professor Snell's fundamental point that the "historical method" is "the better way of studying scripture." Dr. Sperry's approach seems to place the historical, the linguistic, and the proof text method as alternative approaches to the search of truth, each with its uses and each with its dangers, and all three distinctly inferior to a reliance upon interpretations given by other inspired prophets. I do not see how one could

cite Dr. Sperry's paper as even a partial endorsement of the "historical method" as that term was defined and illustrated by Professor Snell.

As a professional historian myself, working in the operations research field, I am extremely pessimistic about the suitability of the historical method or the so-called higher criticism for the study of literature out of the remote past.

You may understand my amazement when I read Professor Snell's comment that we know nothing about the prophet Nahum except that which is given in his very short book, that we cannot identify his native town, and that we presume the book was written "about 612 BC," and then I find Professor Snell stepping forth to give an "historical" interpretation of the prophet's writings. It is a bold task which forces one to admire his bravery, but I cannot consider his effort anything more than an interesting speculation. To view it as a serious *analysis* of the Bible would be patent foolishness.

It seems obvious that an adequate historical analysis of the book of Nahum would require as an absolute minimum some knowledge as to whether it was written before, during, or after the seige of Nineveh. It would also require knowledge as to whether the prophet himself was a "Quisling" (as Jeremiah might be considered in the case of Babylon), and whether his home town had been one of the cities to suffer from Assyrian attack or whether it increased in relative prestige when Assyria struck down its more important neighbors. We know none of these facts, and yet the "historical" analysts of the Bible pretend to be able to interpret the book according to their historical "knowledge." Surely one is justified under the circumstances in questioning whether or not the "historical approach" really represents a superior method of study.

There is, however, one point of unanimity expressed by your roundtable writers with which I must express agreement. It is clear that the Church would benefit greatly by the development of scholarly interest in the Bible, and I fully agree that a scholar must be free to pursue the truth without feeling an obligation to make the truth fit his preconceptions of the truth. (It is impossible to approach any subject without preconceptions of some sort.) I am pessimistic, however, about the probability of the development of such scholarly interest. The interests of most Church members seem to lie along other lines. The "documentary hypothesis (JEPD)," which is cited by Kent Robson, developed, I understand, because of textual problems which assaulted traditional Christian interpretations of the Bible. These problems were much less pressing on the Mormon mind because of our unique doctrines concerning the godhead, and because of the sense of spiritual security rightly or wrongly acquired from modern day scripture and from living prophets.

Because the Mormon mind is not usually troubled by Biblical controversies, it seems unlikely that any significant portion of our youth will become sufficiently concerned to acquire the prerequisites for scholarship in that area. We may lament the lack of expertise and the lack of a developed dialogue within the Church in this area, and we may hope that Professors Snell and Sperry will be joined by many others with a deep interest in Bible scholarship, but I am afraid that we must consider such a development highly unlikely.

Wayne G. Aamodt
Fallston, Maryland

Dear Sirs:

In the space available to me it is impossible to respond fully to Professor Sidney Sperry's review of my essay, "The Bible in the Church." But it is hardly necessary to do so since Kent Robson, a member of the *Dialogue* staff, has followed up our two writings with an evaluation of them. He has dealt with most of the vital issues and, from my point of view, very effectively. I shall make some observations, however, relating to the Sperry review and then notice briefly one or two issues suggested by our three papers.

First then as to the Sperry writing. A strong note of complaint runs through it to the effect that I am not in accord with distinctively Mormon scriptures and teachings. Professor Sperry seems totally oblivious to the fact that these are not my concern and are not in any way contested by me. His review appears to be dominated by his feelings, as he himself virtually confesses (pp. 74 f., *passim*). The parts of his paper which deal with real issues I shall reply to, but not to his aspersions in relation to my faith.

The Sperry review, "Scholars and Prophets," betrays in its title and contents a certain naivete on the Professor's part. In his view the scholars are dilettantes in biblical lore when compared with the prophets. Has Professor Sperry never heard of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Jesus, and Paul—to say nothing of many others since their time—who might rightly be regarded as honoring both the scholarly and the prophetic role? History has

repeatedly shown that both callings may inspire the same person in his dedication to religious truth.

I am taken to task by Professor Sperry for my position that the Bible has been generally subordinated by L.D.S. writers to the distinctive scriptures of the Church. On page seventy-eight however, he virtually admits my contention—so far as the Book of Mormon is concerned—and goes on to explain that because this volume had been attacked by so many critics, "numerous articles and books" had to be written in its defense. In this way he accounts for the superabundance of these writings in the Church magazines. A second point Sperry makes is that since "ours is a living, not just a 'Bible' Church," it does not need to depend on the Bible.

The Sperry argument may be questioned on both points. A partial analysis of the writings in the *Improvement Era* shows that they are mostly narrative or expository in character, not polemical. If further examination of them continues to show their non-controversial character, Professor Sperry's first point will have been completely nullified. His second point, namely, that a "living Church," such as ours, does not need the Bible so much as the "living oracles," may be seriously questioned as good L.D.S. doctrine. The Book of Mormon is vital, according to the Sperry position, to the very existence of the Church (pp. 76, 79). The Bible is equal in standing and worth in the Church, according to the "Articles of Faith" and such authorities as J. Reuben Clark and David O. McKay. Is the Bible then less necessary and less vital than the Book of Mormon to the existence of the Church? The answer is obviously an emphatic *No.*

The list of lesson guides (pp. 78, 79) is intended by Professor Sperry as an impressive exhibit showing the extensive use of the Bible in the classrooms of the Church. But what kind of exhibit is it? Not one, I think, whose contents deal with or utilize to any extent the great fund of biblical knowledge created by the world's best scholarship. Rather it is an exhibit whose biblical texts are generally slanted toward proving L.D.S. teaching. An exception must be made of *some* of the writings under section "B" of the Sperry list, those which represent honest efforts to escape dogmatic interpretations and which present the Bible in its true character.

Professor Sperry's discussion of the "proof-text" method leaves me confused as to his actual position. At first he seems to approve of it, even calling in the Gospels and Jesus as supporting witnesses (p. 80). On the following page he agrees with me "perfectly"—barring some of my examples—that the method has led to misinterpretations of scripture, even in the L.D.S. Church. It is tempting to review further Sperry's ambiguous remarks on this issue, but since Kent Robson has dealt adequately with it I shall refer the reader to his discussion.

Before I go on to one or two broader issues which our three papers suggest, I must comment on Professor Sperry's criticism of my treatment of the Revelation of John. He objects rather vehemently to the book's interpretation which I present, yet he suggests no interpretation to take the place of it. I wonder why. As a Bible scholar he must have a preference among the several interpretations which scholarly studies present.

The setting for the Revelation (which I say is "somewhat controversial") I have given as "almost certainly the later years of the Emperor Domitian." This I find to be the view confidently expressed in such authoritative works as James Moffatt's *Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament* (pp. 503 ff.), Edgar J. Goodspeed's *Introduction to the New Testament* (p. 251), *The Abingdon Bible Commentary* (p. 1365), L. Clarke, *The Concise Bible Commentary* (p. 934), *The Twentieth Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (pp. 971 f.),[1] *Harper's Bible Dictionary* (pp. 614 f.), and the *New Bible Dictionary* (p. 1094).[2] Other equally scholarly works could be cited to the same effect, but the ones named should satisfy the reader that I have not greatly overstated the case for the historical setting of the Revelation of John. Possibly even Brother Sperry might find in these writings some of the "proof" he demands.

There are some concepts relating to controversy on Church subjects which, it seems to me, should be clarified if the "Roundtable" in *Dialogue* is to be more than a center for idle disputation. One of these concepts may be stated as one's right (privilege, if you prefer the word) to disagree with Church teachings. Do we Mormons have this right without being "read out of the Church" by some brother who differs from us? In my essay I have referred to the

[1]This conservative work says, "Ancient tradition (e.g., Irenaeus) and the content of Revelation favor a date about A.D. 95, toward the end of Domitian's reign."

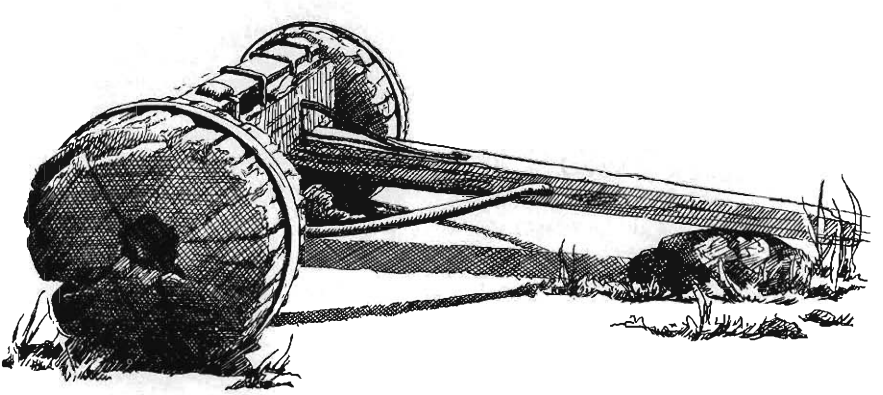
[2]This authoritative work states, "Most scholars today are agreed that the later date is to be preferred." The date is "the time of Domitian."

position taken by Joseph Smith on this question (p. 73). Since the Prophet's time a number of L.D.S. authorities have taken the same position. It is unmistakable: we do have this right.

The right, or privilege, in question is a special expression of the principle of "free agency" proclaimed by the Church. I cannot do better, as I come to the end of this discussion, than to refer the reader to the quotation from Brigham Young (*Dialogue,* Spring 1967, p. 47) and the one from Hugh B. Brown (p. 136). Both men sustain eloquently the principle of freedom in the Church. As an ending to his statement, President Brown quotes approvingly an ancient prayer:

> From the cowardice that shrinks from new truth, from the laziness that is content with half truth, from the arrogance that thinks it has all the truth—oh God of truth deliver us.

Heber C. Snell
Logan, Utah



Dear Sirs:

I would have liked to have met Professor Jensen at Cornell University when I spent a week there a few years ago speaking upon anarchism and my Joe Hill House of Hospitality, upon the invitation of a Mormon, a Jew, and a Catholic priest. Perhaps he has not so much of an academic mind as it appears in his review of Foner's book on Joe Hill [*Dialogue,* Spring, 1967].

I belonged to the I.W.W. in 1912 and knew Bill Haywood, and I was in prison with them against the war, and I expect my opinion could be just as biased as that of Professor Jensen. For there is that ivory tower—that academic fog—which prevents a professor from getting the spirit of a situation, although he may very well have much more of the letter than others. You could live in a community and be so inoculated with the prevailing opinion that you would not even know until you had moved away what the real situation was until you had come upon an honest perspective. When I came to Salt Lake City six years ago both Mormons and Catholics said to me: "There is no migrant or race problem here. Why don't you go to Fresno?" The problem is here and it has been here since the beginning of the century, but it is not recognized.

There is no doubt but that there is a germ of truth in Jensen's thesis that Communists, as in the Scottsboro case, have distorted facts and taken over the defense of a case for Party gain, rather than for justice for the accused. Whether Mr. Jensen is a Mormon who does not want his Church blamed in the death of Joe Hill, or whether his academic ivory tower frame of mind is disturbed by those who have deep feelings instead of academic inertia, I do not know.

A friend of mine who has charge of the records in the case remembers Mr. Jensen's visit, in which he looked up information on Joe Hill. Another friend of mine who was writing on this case visited Merlin Morrison, who saw the shooting of his brother and father, and the widow of Dr. McHugh, but neither of them would comment on the case. In dealing with the Molly Maguires, the Homestead Strike, the Haymarket, Mooney and Billings, Sacco and Vanzetti, as well as with Joe Hill, it is obvious that there are different opinions regarding those who have come to be labor martyrs. I introduced Lucy Parsons at the 50th anniversary of the Haymarket, and I visited Sacco and Tom Mooney in prison, but in 1915 I was not of the age to travel west and meet Joe Hill, although Elizabeth Gurley Flynn who knew Joe Hill

promised to speak here at the 50th anniversary of his execution, but unfortunately she died in Moscow a few months before.

Mr. Jensen says that the I.W.W. won no strike in Utah. They did win in June 1913 when Local 69 struck where the Utah Construction Company was doing work for the Denver and Rio Grande. Mr. Jensen says that Joe Hill never worked in the mines at Park City where there was a strike in the winter of 1913-14. The *Deseret Evening News* said on January 12, 1914, that "Hillstrom had worked at Park City as machinist in the Silver King mines." Mr. Jensen's assertion that Hill was not convicted because he was an I.W.W. misses the fact that the Salt Lake police had declared war upon the I.W.W. in 1913 and broke up their street meetings. On August 12, 1913, thugs openly attacked an I.W.W. street meeting in Salt Lake City and the police did nothing. James G. Morgan, an I.W.W. leader, and not the armed mobster, Alex Steele, who attacked him, was arrested. I know old men in this city who have told me of the I.W.W. activity in those days. A few weeks before the execution of Joe Hill, Major H. P. Myton of the Salt Lake City police force shot and killed A. J. Horton, an I.W.W. member who was unarmed. This was while he was making a speech at Second South, where hundreds of people witnessed the murder. He was promptly acquitted. Virginia Snow, daughter of President Snow of the Mormon Church, played the piano at Horton's funeral, and an effort was made to discharge her from the University where she taught art. The I.W.W. picketed the University, so the authorities waited until after Joe Hill was executed, when she was fired. The day of Joe's execution Governor Spry said that all I.W.W.'s should be driven from the state. He was the Mormon Governor who was the "jumping Jack" of the copper kings.

Mr. Jensen says that Dr. McHugh told him that Joe Hill confessed to him that he had shot the Morrisons only in self-defense. If so, why did he not tell the court about it when he was a witness? I have seen a copy of the letter Dr. McHugh wrote asking for $500 reward for turning Joe in. He didn't get it. Many men have told lies, on and off of the witness stand. I choose to believe Joe Hill rather than Dr. McHugh and Mr. Jensen.

If today the Mormon Church writes to senators and congressmen who are Mormons directing them to vote against the repeal of the right-to-work law, why would it be difficult to believe that in 1914-15 they would favor the execution of an I.W.W. troublemaker? The *Deseret News* published a series of articles against the I.W.W. when the Joe Hill case was the big news of the day. All of the school principals of Salt Lake City wrote to Governor Spry approving the execution of Joe Hill. . . . The District Attorney appealed to the jury to be aware of "the motley horde of hoboes . . . who will not work and whose philosophy is . . . the overthrow of capitalism . . . the arch-fiends and dregs of society."

I submit that Joe Hill in such an atmosphere had neither a legal trial nor moral justice, and that he is a legitimate labor martyr.

Ammon Hennacy
Salt Lake City, Utah

Dear Sirs:

In your 1967 summer issue, you print a letter from Val Woodward, commenting upon Joseph R. Murphy's review of my book *Truth, by Reason and by Revelation* and upon my letter in the winter issue, written in response to this review. . . . Dr. Woodward has a reputation as an astute scientist, yet he missed what I was trying to say.

. . . My whole purpose in discussing evolution in the book was to indicate that it may or may not be the answer to creation, and that we should keep our minds open until more data, either scientific or revelation from God, are available (e.g., see p. 194). My defensiveness was not directed toward the evolutionist but rather toward the anti-evolutionist in the Church. Joseph Fielding Smith's *Man, His Origin and Destiny* was essentially the only previous document upon which I could build a discussion of evolution for a publication directed at Church members. Elder Smith's views are clearly anti-evolutionary. As a prophet of God, he may well turn out to be right, and I thought that I was being quite daring in concluding that his argument might be more scientific than inspired and that we might thus continue to keep our minds open for a few more years. Murphy in his review understood this. Why should Woodward miss the point so far?

. . . It is interesting that Woodward's main rebuttal to my ideas is the old argument from authority ("thousands of scientists"). Of course, I knew that thousands of scientists accept the gene mutation mechanism as the basis of evolution, and I was duly impressed by such a heavy weight of authority. I worried about the matter for several years but could find no loopholes in my argument, nor could several people to whom I gave a preliminary manuscript, and finally I

decided that even the authorities could be wrong. . . .

I refuse to align myself with the cause of anti-evolution. I am deeply impressed by many of the evidences in favor of evolution. The theory has been productive in my field of plant physiology. I can apply evolutionary theory without internal conflict, because for all I know my argument about the mechanisms of natural selection may turn out to be wrong, and furthermore, as stated in the book and the letter, a limited natural selection has been demonstrated beyond doubt.

I am scheduled to teach a course in basic biology next fall, and I have every intention of presenting the evolutionary case as strongly and as convincingly as possible. In my class, there will no doubt be young Latter-day Saints. Some of these may have been taught that evolution is a nasty word. I will do my best to convince them that it is a theory exhibiting marvelous insight and providing a large potential for unification and new interpretation of biological data. If there are also students in my class who accept evolution as a dogma and a religion, I hope that they will finish the class with a bit more of a scientific approach to things.

. . . Although the book was written nearly five years ago, my summary on page 124 still seems to express my present convictions: "I do not know at this time whether or not evolution actually occurred. There are certainly many good evidences to indicate that it did. . . . But before we accept without qualification the idea that it did occur on the large scale, we must study the scriptural account—the revealed word of God—on the subject." I intend in my biology class next fall to present nothing which is not the product of the application of the scientific method. My book, however, was not written to the students of a biology class but to people who accept the restored Church or who might at least consider accepting it. The scriptures are quite explicit in telling us that creation took place through the application of Divine Intelligence. If future research makes natural selection with gene mutations acceptable to everyone as the mechanism of evolution, I will still remain convinced that creation came about by the application of planning and intelligence and that everything shall fit together some way when all the information is in.

In the meantime, I would hope that Woodward and others, in their zeal to protect the youth of the Church, might not be afraid to tell them about the books of Moses and Abraham and about their personal testimonies that God lives and that He was the Author of creation. I also hope that I will be able to remember these really important things and not let myself get too worked up by well meaning people who convert the things that I try to say into something which was never intended.

Frank B. Salisbury
Utah State University

Dear Sirs:

. . . Professor Van Alstyne [*Dialogue* Roundtable, Summer, 1967] has, in my opinion, been entirely too lenient in excusing the Supreme Court for its failure to uphold state and local ordinances aimed at pornography. His article bears the imprint of his characteristic legal scholarship and adherence to established legal theories but fails to meet head-on the real problem and to place responsibility for the tremendous increase in pornography during recent years. . . .

That it is difficult to establish legal standards and difficult to define pornography or find evidence of a lewd act following exposure to pornographic material are lame excuses for the Supreme Court to strike down attempts to ban material such as "Lady Chatterley's Lover," "Tropic of Cancer," etc., etc.

Furthermore, to say that the establishment of legal standards might affect other acceptable works such as the Bible, Shakespeare, etc., where sexual matters are dealt with, is also a weak excuse for permitting pornography, particularly since the Bible and Shakespeare deal with the subject on an entirely different plane.

In reality, the Supreme Court, through its decisions, has discouraged local authorities from ever controlling pornography when in almost every case local ordinances and state laws are slapped down as a violation of freedom of the press guaranteed by the Constitution. As a result, purveyors of pornography have become more and more daring until it is no longer uncommon to see pictures of persons in the same bed totally unclothed. Also, it is becoming more and more common to permit the televising of "adult movies," which many of us would not permit our children to see in the theaters. I am frank to say that I lay a large measure of the blame on the doorstep of the United States Supreme Court, operating through decisions which interpret the freedom of the press provisions in a way which was never intended by the Constitutional framers. We can still support

the Constitution of the United States and at the same time point out where the Supreme Court has misapplied principles in an erroneous and unconstitutional manner.

But who am I to say that the United States Supreme Court has acted unconstitutionally? Since there is no further appeal from the rulings of the Court, our criticisms bear little weight. We can only turn to our own attempts at self-censorship in an attempt to prevent our people from seeing and hearing what is readily available. Viewed from this standpoint, the statement of the First Presidency is entirely in line with such efforts. . . .

Harden C. Bennion
Los Angeles, California

Dear Sirs:

I hope someone in authority in the church reads Sam Taylor's article, "Peculiar People, Positive Thinkers," and gives it careful consideration. There are many of us who are hungry for a "great" Mormon Literature, and who consider ourselves mature enough to view the "sunlight and shadows" in proper perspective.

But there is another aspect to Church censorship that also should be considered. The things we say in print or otherwise which we intend as a critical tool to polish up, can easily be turned by Satan as a wedge to destroy. . . . There is a need for censorship in authorized Church publications, because of this very reason. Perhaps the Church is being overly cautious, but knowing past history, not without some justification. Too many people who are making the loudest noises these days about freedom of speech and of the press, etc., don't really give a damn about either; all they want is an unobstructed path to power or wealth. Because they use words like freedom, honesty, truth, that is supposed to make them good guys with white hats, while on the other hand we have all been conditioned to place a "black hat" on the word "censorship."

One evening I was discussing with some missionaries some of the problems they are facing in Alabama, and I asked them why it is that the general Church membership is not made aware of the conflicts in the missionary system. Their answer was that if they went home and told the whole story, the good as well as the bad, no one else would even want to go on a mission. They said, "a mission is worth the trouble and the heartache, but you could never make anyone believe it if you elaborated all the problems to someone who hadn't been through the experience."

In a certain branch in Texas, word went around that the new missionary program was too fast, that the missionaries were baptizing duds out of their eagerness to keep up a "record" and so on; the story is familiar throughout the Church. What happened? The branch became so up in arms they refused to support any of the missionary program, and it was necessary to pull the elders out of the area. How easy it is to throw the "baby out with the bathwater."

If a child comes to its mother asking to know the truth about sex, the mother doesn't expose her naked body to the child and describe in minute detail all the intimacies of a sexual relationship, even though she would be telling the truth. She "censors" her answer to fit the person and the occasion. The scriptures have a number of examples where God has chosen to reveal truth "little by little, precept upon precept," to his children. This too is censorship. Wise censorship.

Joseph Smith once said that he would never choose to veil iniquity, but that it is better that ten persons get away with wrong doing than that one innocent person be accused wrongfully. Jesus' parable of the tares could be applied here. In a well-intentioned effort to expose evil, we could very well be pulling up the wheat with the tares.

Loya Beck
Huntsville, Alabama

Dear Sirs:

I was greatly disturbed by Samuel Taylor's article. It is lively and entertaining and Taylor is the logical person to write on the subject, but its casual anecdotes are nothing short of slanderous. I found it extremely ironical that Taylor at the end of his essay says, "truth needs no defense." It may not need any defense, but it does need to be established and supported by sound evidence. Take, for example, his little anecdote about how his play was squelched after a call from Salt Lake City. What are we to infer from that? Perhaps that the President of the Church called one of his many friends among Broadway producers and told him to scrap the play as a personal favor? Or maybe the Church Authorities notified the producer that such a play would be boycotted by the thousands of Broadway theater-goers among the Mormons? Or maybe the Church threatened some kind of libel suit? The whole thing is ridiculous. As

far as we know, the "unofficial call from Salt Lake" could have been from his Aunt Lulu. The accusation is very serious, yet he doesn't give a shred of evidence. And the same holds true for most of his other little anecdotes. His brother asks "a friend" about "a New York book," and the friend hasn't been told what to think of it yet. We don't know who the friend is, what the book is, who tells the friend what to think of it, yet the implication is all too clear. Is this the kind of truth that needs no defense? It had better be, because it certainly cannot be defended in any logical way. The more I study his article the more it sounds like a disappointed writer trying to salve his frustration by pinning the reason for his failure on forces outside his control. It seems that some people think that all one needs to be a successful Mormon writer is to be a Mormon with a desire to write. To me the Mormon experience is just not that unique. The criteria for success as a Mormon writer (whatever that is) are the same as for any writer, and if one can meet those criteria, all the "calls from Salt Lake" and the other obstacles Taylor dwells on will have no significance.

Stephen L. Tanner
Madison, Wisconsin

Dear Sirs:

The excitement I experience each time we receive a new issue of *Dialogue* is equal to the excitement I felt fifteen years ago when, as a twenty-year-old, I discovered Mormonism and what impressed me as a fresh and vital approach to religion and life. Although my allegiance has remained strong and my involvement typical—temple marriage, six children, Church jobs—my disappointments have been constant. The lack of self-criticism and the shallowness of exploration typical of so many Mormons, and I may add, especially women, and the over-zealous desire to emphasize the "good," the press-worthy, the success stories and ignore or deny the existence of problems, dilemmas, disagreements has never ceased to amaze me. So it was with rejoicing that I read Samuel Taylor's "Peculiar People, Positive Thinkers." For some years I had suspected that Dale Carnegie and Norman Vincent Peale were being revered as prophets within the church.

After reading *Dialogue* I can again feel pride in being a Mormon. I no longer have to wonder with my non-Mormon friends how such vast numbers of intelligent people could endure so much brainwashing without asking any questions. Suddenly the questioning ones are making their appearance and the loneliness is more endurable because there is hope for the future. I do hope that our children will inherit a healthier climate. . . .

(Mrs.) Lucy Greene
London, Ontario, Canada