

Letters to the Editor

Dear Sirs:

It has been a long time since any issue of a magazine has given me so much pleasure as the Autumn-Winter, 1971 issue of *Dialogue*. Even the cover was a delight and all the illustrations, photographs, etcetera.

Thomas Cheney's story touched me immensely, and of course I loved Mary Bradford's "Mr. Mustard Plaster." Sam Taylor's "Little Man Who Isn't There" was marvelous, of course, and all of the DeVoto material; he was a good friend and I treasure some letters of my own that gave me a lift in the early days of my career. I visited with Halldor Laxness in Iceland, one of my best experiences, and treasure books he gave to me. Because I had reviewed *Paradise Reclaimed* he thought, I'm afraid, that I must be a very important American critic. Though I'm sure he'd be gracious in any case.

What else? About Maurine Whipple, of course; I do wish she had left Zion because I remember a Writers' Conference in the Hotel Utah soon after *The Giant Joshua* appeared and there were some hot-under-the-collar St. Georgians there; I thought it boded no particular happiness for her down there, anyway *creative* happiness.

Lots of good poetry too. And for once I was delighted with words from the pulpit.

Bravo. Keep turning them out; much needed, much appreciated.

Most sincerely,
Virginia Sorensen Waugh
Tangier, Morocco

P.S. Sometimes, reading this magazine, I get a mighty dose of nostalgia for my Former Days . . .

Dear Sirs:

This morning, the Spring 1972 issue of *Dialogue* arrived in our mail and we were very grateful to receive it, along with the pleasant reminder of our lapsed subscription.

You were certainly correct in stating we would feel desolate in missing an issue since we have been enjoying *Dialogue* for some time.

We just had to take the time, following our breakfast meal, to read Rustin Kaufmann's

review of "The Godfather" and found that his "tongue in cheek" analysis of the movie was as entertaining as his earlier review of "The Graduate."

Thank you again for a most pleasant reminder and for your excellent *Dialogue*.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Sherwood E. Bridges
Mt. Pleasant, Michigan

Mr. Kaufmann contends that he never writes with his tongue in his cheek; it makes it too difficult when he must turn the other one.
— Ed.

Gentlemen:

Still *another* tribute to J.F. Smith? *Dialogue* has become, *when* it comes, just another church magazine. I'll take *Ensign*, as its quality goes up, *Dialogue's* goes down. The women's issue followed the church line. Ho hum!

Evalo H. Blackley
Solana Beach, California

Dear Sirs:

Mr. Sherlock was not the only person who had great hopes for the issue on women and came away disappointed. At least it was a beginning. After hearing the women's movement denounced time and again in Relief Society and even in Sacrament meeting, it is a relief to know there are some women in the Church who have open minds on the subject. The defensiveness of so many women gives me cause to wonder why they are so threatened.

One of the basic ideas of the women's movement is that women are persons before they are anything else, and as persons they should be able to choose what they will be. If a woman wants to be a wife and mother only, and bake homemade bread and apple pie, that's fine, especially if she doesn't have an overweight husband. This does not mean that every other woman in the world should have to do the same thing. One may live a life of duty and sacrifice, but I wonder how worthwhile the sacrifice is if there is no choice

involved. If a girl is conditioned to believe from her birth that she must marry and have children, and there are no other alternatives available, then she is hardly more than a servant and a breed animal. It is nice to say that one can be a housewife and do something else too, but some women may choose just the something else.

Each one of us does have talents and gifts, and I believe many of us do have a calling or mission to perform in this life. It is sad that the stereotype women are expected to conform to may keep some person from achieving what she could have. Marriage and children just may not be the calling for some young women, and I don't believe anyone can be the judge of what another should do. Some people are not capable of marriage at some point in their lives, and may never be. There are people who should not have children, and some who cannot. There are many women who can have only one or two children, and who tire of having to explain their reproductive difficulties to everyone who asks, "When are you going to have another kid?" I don't believe for one minute that all Mormon career girls are just dying to get married.

Ms. Bushman's fear of competing in the "real world" raises another issue. If the home isn't real, what is? In our society only money making is real. And since being female means being inferior, why even try?

Speaking of inferiority, consider the lady missionary. At times there is no creature more lowly. Her motives are suspect immediately. She is husband hunting, of course. Her mental health is questionable. "All the lady missionaries in our mission had emotional problems." If she is successful, she is aggressive and unfeminine. If she is not, whether by the Lord's standard, or by the sales quota baptism system, it proves L. M.'s are useless and don't belong in the field. Never mind that she was called by the Lord

to do His work. Several young women have said to me that they would have loved to go on a mission, but they could not see themselves as lady missionaries, or they were pressured into marriage and babies "before it was too late" and they became old maids at twenty-two or three.

I agree that housewives and mothers should be recognized as human beings who carry on a valuable, although not glamorous, task in our society, just as garbage men do. Raising children is a challenge, mopping the floor is not. It is a bore. Talking about it, or writing about it is a deadly bore. Please, just because we are women does not mean that we are interested in hearing more about housework, or cooking, or diapering. It is bad enough to have to do it. Also, I can relate to a woman as a person and do not need to know how many children she has. You never tell us how many children the men have. Why does Mary Bradford have to tell us about her morning sickness when we would rather hear more about living in Washington, D. C. She doesn't have to justify herself for having a job. I have never heard of any morning sickness that is any more interesting than any other morning sickness.

Times are changing, and I am certain that the roles of men and women in the Church will change, perhaps more slowly. In the meantime, women need to develop more pride and self-respect for themselves as human beings. Those who do not wish to be type cast need to know about other remarkable women, other than beauty queens and movie stars, whom they can use as models and an inspiration for their own self-confidence. Through *Dialogue* I am given the hope that such women do exist.

Sincerely,

Susan Woodland Howard
Northridge, California

