

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

friends

The last issue of *Dialogue* (XIII, 3) was splendid. It was like being with old friends, and I don't even know Virginia Sorensen nor have I read her books! I am still thinking about Bruce Jorgensen's essay, and I have just finished reading *Once in Israel*. You have inspired me to read Marden Clark's *Moods: Of Late* next.

Maryann Olsen MacMurray
Salt Lake City, Utah

I particularly like the last *Dialogue*, not because of my article but because of the piece on the MHA meeting in Palmyra. The report from the grove was just excellent; I only wish I had been there.

Richard Sherlock
Memphis, Tennessee

grand controversies

Grand was the article on the controversies between Pres. Brigham Young and Elder O. Pratt. Grand were the implications, I suppose, when the question should be treated by the general church leaders how it were possible that some of the doctrines preached by Pratt earned severe chastisement in the 19th century, but are part of the present presentations of theology. What is truth? How is it possible to recognize truth as truth? When the Prophet speaks, must this be absolute "truth" a priori (if Brigham Young had really preached the Adam-God theory)? May the "truths" pronounced by the various "mouthpieces" (living or dead) contradict each other? (Example: if Pres. Young had really taught that Negroes should get the priesthood only after the last of Abel's seed had received it . . . , this in the light of the recent [and certainly correct] revelation that now also Negroes should be ordained to the priesthood.) What does it mean that the

living oracle should take precedence always over all past ones (sermon by Elder Benson last winter) when "truth" is the point.

In my personal judgement you may deepen and broaden your understanding, obtaining deeper insight into "truth;" but how should you react if you have no means of reconciling different statements that are in obvious contradiction, both being pronounced by "infallible" "mouthpieces of God"? Only read the various parts where Pres. Young announced what he thought about the value of his sermons himself (page 48, footnote 77). I wonder if this article (scholarly, well researched, so it seems) will heighten the discussion of the central moot points involved. Let us see what effect it will have.

Heinz Platzer
Vienna, Austria

I enjoyed the *Dialogue* featuring the Brigham Young/Orson Pratt conflict. After reading that piece, I went back and had a more detailed look at *The Seer*. Pratt was getting close to a mystical interpretation of the Godhead in that material. None of the Mormon theologians I have read so far (a far too limited range as yet) resolve the basic problem of a personal God: what principle regulates the particles of his physical body?

Orson came close to a "first principle" solution in *The Seer*. He emphasizes the "Spirit of Christ"—the Force, as it were. This, he says, is the One God, and it is this that men worship in essence when they worship the personal God. Interestingly, Roberts is prepared to call this God, too, but in the Van der Donck debate at least, he is unprepared to pursue this concept to its end.

Parley P. Pratt seems to offer another model in *Key to Theology*. He's ambiguous, but in general he seems to consider the Spirit, "light and truth," as a principle subservient to God. It derives from him. As I said, he's not consistent on this, and it seems to me that if he were given the chance he would argue that this Force is always a subservient principle. Our God's particles are regulated by his God's Spirit, whose particles are regulated by his God's Spirit, and so on ad infinitum.

This is more in harmony with the individualist themes in Mormonism, the Gods thus being One only in an indirect way. This interpretation requires a redefinition of some of the scriptures about God being the same yesterday, today and forever, God being eternal and there being only one God.

I personally find myself more at home with the "First Principle" model which has some God (Force) superior to all the Gods (personal). It's been little discussed by Mormon theologians who have had to do battle with the concept that there cannot be a personal God at all. This has dominated the writings of Roberts and from what I can see, Madsen. They have not addressed themselves to the further problem. . . .

Gary Sturgess
Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

Gary Bergera's timely study of the doctrinal conflicts between Orson Pratt and President Brigham Young was an important addition to the available information on the Adam-God dilemma. He apparently found himself squeezed between what the source materials reveal and what the Church has reported on their contents in semi-official statements. His article slaughtered several sacred cows. The words of many leaders cum historians were sacrificed.

Take for example Joseph Fielding Smith's unequivocal statement that, "President Brigham Young did not believe and did not teach that Jesus Christ was begotten by Adam." (Selections from *Answers to Gospel Questions, A*

Course of Study for the Melchizedek Priesthood Quorums, 1972-73, page 22.)

Similar sentiments have been expressed in the apologetic treatise by Mark E. Petersen entitled "Adam; Who Is He?" Both of these men had access to the source documents that Bergera quotes, especially Brother Smith. Did these brethren not know better?

Bergera's study opens the can of worms so wide that we are faced with the fact the Brigham did, indeed, believe it and taught it against all odds. He did not, however, claim it as his own doctrine but said that he learned it at Luke Johnson's home before 1838 from the lips of Joseph Smith as a secret doctrine. Those who deny that Joseph taught Adam-God must explain the enormous credit Joseph gave to Adam. The following list can be made simply by reading pages 157, 158, 167, and 168 of *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*:

Adam (1) presides over the spirits of all men, (2) reveals the keys of the Priesthood to men, (3) holds dominion over every creature, (4) all who hold keys must answer to him, (5) holds the keys of the Universe, (6) organized the spirits of all men in creation, (7) is the head, (8) held the keys first and gives them to all others, (9) reveals Christ unto men, (10) holds the keys of ALL dispensations, (11) is the first and father of all, (12) is the Ancient of Days, (13) reveals ordinances from heaven, and (14) angels are subject to his dominion.

These facts are apparent even before we begin to look into the book of Daniel and compare the attributes and actions of the Ancient of Days with Adam. Joseph, of course, shocked theologians of other religions by establishing Adam as the Ancient of Days. From the tremendous glory of his person as told by Daniel and John the Revelator, all other religions, including the Jews, equated the Ancient of Days with Jehovah or Christ.

After reviewing Joseph's teachings, one must admit that Joseph *could* have taught that Adam was God.

According to Presidential secretary L. John Nuttall, Joseph himself called Brigham Young to organize and systematize the temple endowment cere-

monies. He did so and he finalized the veil lecture which was used in temples from 1877 until the first decade of the 1900s. In this lecture Brigham taught Adam-God in great clarity. (See L. John Nuttall Journal, February 8, 1877, and the entire lecture, printed in *Unpublished Revelations* by Fred C. Collier, pages 113–118).

Assuming Joseph authored both the temple endowment and the translation of the Book of Abraham, a comparison of the two tells us something about Adam-God. We are taught that Elohim, Jehovah and Michael (Adam) were the three who created the world. Abraham 4:1 says, "And then the Lord said: "Let us go down. And they went down at the beginning, and they, that is the Gods, organized and formed the heavens and the earth." Temple goers will clearly see that Michael (Adam) is here referred to as a God.

Denying the possibility that Joseph was the originator of the Adam-God doctrine, Bergera attributes it to "a misunderstanding or misinterpretation of Joseph Smith's earlier teachings about Adam." (See article footnote 51). This releases Bergera from simply calling Brigham a liar to merely accusing him of doctrinal heresy due to ignorance.

One would think that a prophet of God like Brigham, whom God personally affirmed by miraculous vision to a congregation of members seeking a new leader, would certainly not be allowed by that God to teach the Church a false God for twenty-five years. Bergera finds Brigham guilty of that charge. To do otherwise would bring modern Church doctrines into question. Has the modern Church, after all, found its second prophet guilty of heresy and exonerated Orson Pratt?

Joseph said that Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball (another Adamist) were the only two who did not "lift their heel" against him. (*DHC* 5:411). Pratt, on the other hand, was excommunicated in August of 1842, may have attempted suicide (See *ibid.* 5:60, 61, 138), opposed the selection of Brigham Young as Church President in 1847, and continued in conflict with him for years thereafter.

It appears that the Church has finally adopted most of Pratt's speculations on the Godhead.

T. Edgar Lyon's observation that "Orson Pratt did more to formulate the Mormon's idea of God . . . than any other person in the Church, with the exception of Joseph Smith," may be a total understatement. If, as Brigham claimed three times, Joseph did teach Adam-God, Orson did *more* than Joseph Smith in that area.

Merle H. Graffam
Palm Desert, California

Your summer 1980 issue featuring the ups and downs and ins and outs of the Pratt-Young controversy was exciting and, in the case of Bro. Orson, soul-baring enough almost to draw tears. Great issue throughout, with the Broderick interview another winner—especially for us harried bishops.

R. Paul Cracroft
Salt Lake City, Utah

The last two issues of *Dialogue* have been superb. The articles on the Orson-Brigham controversy and the Roberts-Talmage-Smith controversy may well turn out to be key articles in the intellectual history of Mormonism, and the piece by Ed Geary was as well crafted as any I have seen in *Dialogue* or *Sunstone*. Aesthetically and psychologically it sets a standard to measure other things against.

Karl Sandberg
Saint Paul, Minnesota

Please send the issue with Bergera's Pratt vs Young article, currently rated as required reading for all Mormons who finished the 10,000 pages of the *Journal of Discourses* and still had a few questions.

David S. Alleman
29 Palms, California

scholarship or apologetics?

In a recent letter to *Dialogue* (XIII, 3), Mary D. Nelson made the statement, "Hugh Nibley is *the* great scholar of our time." I would like to suggest a change in that statement. We should say, "Hugh Nibley is *the* great apologist of our time."

There is a difference between a scholar and an apologist. The scholar

examines facts and evidence and draws conclusions from them. The apologist knows the conclusions at the start and sifts the facts and evidence to find support.

I do not wish to denigrate the contribution which Nibley makes. We have always needed and continue to need an aggressive defender of the faith. Nibley fills this role with enthusiasm and dignity. But there is a community of Mormon scholars dedicated to pursuing the truth, regardless of where it leads. Some members of that group are concerned lest there be confusion between scholarship and apologetics.

D. James Croft
Salt Lake City, Utah

"second anointings" anyone?

While reading portions of my great grandfather's journal recently, I ran across a statement that he and my great grandmother had been called to go to the temple at St. George, Utah and receive their "second anointings" and that they had done so.

I have also seen other references to "second anointings" in other old journals.

I think it would be interesting to have one of your historian-type writers do a piece on "second anointings"—what they were, qualifications for selection, and why they have disappeared from current temple ceremonies.

I am the patriarch in our local stake.
Ken Earl
Moses Lake, Washington

enjoy, enjoy

I enjoyed the issue on Medicine, especially Wilcox on Brigham Young and medical doctors. I became curious as to what calomel and lobelia were. Fortunately, I have an early edition of Goodman and Gilman (*the* textbook of pharmacology) in which these are listed. There wasn't even any historical reference to these useless and possibly dangerous drugs in the 5th edition of Goodman and Gilman. Incidentally, I enjoyed the issue on Freud and Jung even more.

N. Blaine Belnap, M.D.
Eden, Utah

Although I cannot always fully agree with what is contained within the issues of *Dialogue*, I wholeheartedly support *Dialogue* and what it stands for.

Randy Davis
San Jose, California

writing contest

The Center for the Study of Christian Values in Literature is sponsoring a writing contest. Purpose: To encourage literature that achieves a meaningful blend of artistic form and moral content. Categories: short story, poetry, personal essay and critical essay. Student and non-student divisions. Cash prizes in all categories. Deadline: May 15, 1981. Please ask your readers to write for information to English Dept., Jesse Knight Bldg., Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 84602.

Dr. Marilyn Arnold, Director
Center for the Study of Christian
Values, Brigham Young University