

LETTERS

Play Omitted

I was disappointed not to find my anthology of plays, *God's Fools: Plays of Mitigated Conscience* (Midvale, Utah: Orion Books, 1983), listed in your "Bibliography of Recent Books on Mormons and Mormonism." Most everything else brought out this last year by the same publisher was included. If only for the record, I'd appreciate your taking note of my book also.

Thomas F. Rogers
Provo, Utah

Errata

I was very pleased to receive the latest issue of *DIALOGUE* with my article on Jerald and Sandra Tanner. I was disappointed, however, to discover that three typographical corrections which I had made in the galley remained uncorrected in the final published version. More disturbing, an incorrect title for my article was substituted in final publication. The correct title was: "Career Apostates: Reflections on the Life and Work of Jerald and Sandra Tanner." For no apparent reason and without any consultation with me, the article title as published was changed to: "Career Apostates: Reflections on the Works of Jerald and Sandra Tanner." The difference in wording may seem slight. I believe, nevertheless, that a journal of *DIALOGUE*'s caliber can be expected to do a better job on the technical aspects of its publication. At the very least, authors should be able to anticipate that the titles of their articles will be printed correctly.

Lawrence Foster
Atlanta, Georgia

Specious Kaufman

Rustin Kaufman's reasoning in the Spring 1984 *DIALOGUE* concerning how you "prove" the true church is so shallow and specious that I can't help commenting.

First, he states that you "prove" the true church by numbers alone. Since when was that proof for anything? Copernicus, Galileo, Columbus, and others too numerous to mention refute that idea.

Then he uses the figure of 50 million for the Roman Catholics, divides it by 1950 years, and shows that we have a higher average per year than the Catholics do. Therefore, we are the true church. What he forgets is that there are approximately 600 million other Catholics in the world, so if you are going by numbers alone, the Catholics win hands down. He was only including the Catholics in the United States, but he was including all LDS throughout the world. Hardly a fair comparison.

Omer Dean Nelson
Tucson, Arizona

Elsie Declined

I read with interest Gene Sessions's review of my book *Gospel Letters to a Mormon Missionary*. Upon how many other authors he has bestowed the Elsie the Cow Award (for milking the Mormons), I don't know. But I, at least, must decline for lack of the prime qualification: "milk."

The fact is, my little literary enterprise produced none to speak of. For though Gene Sessions may be unable to recognize theology when he reads it, the Mormon rank and file have no trouble doing so. And if scant sales are any indicator, it appears that they prefer something else.

If only I had written the large print, "happy-daddy" gift book I was credited with in the review, it would have made all the difference. It would have produced "milk" in abundance. It would have justified the bestowal upon me of the coveted Elsie. And, what's more, it would have made an honest reviewer of the dreaded Sessions.

Paul James Toscano
Provo, Utah

Appreciative Audience

I have enjoyed my association with *DIALOGUE* for a number of years. As a former student in a religious studies program, who frequently was assigned essay topics relating to Mormonism, I found the articles invaluable as resource material.

DIALOGUE offers a unique three-fold opportunity for me to stimulate my intellect, expand my vision, and strengthen my testimony. As my own academic career progresses, I look forward to a time when perhaps I may have the privilege of taking a more active role than the one I currently hold—that of solely an appreciative audience.

Sincere best wishes for continued success.

Pat Court
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

Repudiation of Evolution

I was happy to see four more letters in the Spring 1984 issue stemming from Steven H. Heath's important article, "The Reconciliation of Faith and Science: Henry Eyring's Achievement" (Autumn 1982). Marc A. Schindler, David H. Bailey, E. B. Christiansen, and J. P. Martin all made useful comments on a letter by Julian R. Durham (Autumn 1983). However, Christiansen and Martin take comfort in quoting Church authorities of the past who condoned belief in evolution. It seems to me that today's leaders have tacitly repudiated all such statements—an astonishing development mentioned in none of the letters.

Since the fifties Elder Bruce R. McConkie has repeatedly declared that prior

to Adam's fall about six thousand years ago, all living things were immortal and unable to reproduce. It was long possible to assume that not all the Brethren would insist we believe that doctrine, but that assumption appears insupportable now. In the June 1982 *Ensign*, Elder McConkie declared that "an understanding of the doctrine of creation is essential to salvation" and then spelled out "what the inspired word sets forth," including the teaching that no plant or animal reproduced or died until after Adam's fall. Having spoken out on this topic for so long, he has had ample opportunity to find out if any of the General Authorities disagree with him. I find it hard to believe that he would contradict the views of any of them in the *Ensign*, especially while asserting that "we are duty bound to accept" the "revealed verities" which he expounds.

If my analysis is correct, the many Mormons who believe in evolution—or even in the existence of fossils over six thousand years old—now bear the burden of feeling that perhaps they are going against all the Brethren. Many of us will want to work toward a change in that situation.

Finally, I agree with Durham that Henry Eyring "kept his knowledge of the revealed truths of religion and his organic evolutionary views in separate compartments." Eyring said of himself: "I never worry what the Brethren believe about my specialty today because it is part of the genius of the Lord's Church that both they and I will understand the entire situation better tomorrow" (letter to Elder Richard L. Evans, 8 April 1954, copy in my possession). Of course he tried to reconcile the findings of science with his religion; but like most scientists, he knew that it is wise to leave religion out of scientific research. Galileo and Darwin would have been far less successful had they not so delimited their investigations.

Richard Pearson Smith
Westfield, New Jersey