LETTERS

"Heretical Lies"?

In regard to D. Michael Quinn's article "LDS Church Authority and New Plural Marriages, 1890–1904," (Spring 1985), a reader has noted that since 1981 university students at BYU and in LDS Church institute courses have been given the following instruction: "Others who refused to follow the commandment of the Lord claimed that the Manifesto was issued only for good public relations and that in secret the Church leaders still performed marriages and supported the practice. To put down such heretical lies, President Joseph F. Smith" issued the Second Manifesto of 1904. See Church Educational System. *The Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual (Religion 324–325)* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981), p. 363.

The Editors

Peace at Any Price?

May I express my disappointment with the Winter 1984 issue of DIALOGUE and particularly with those articles that addressed the issue of war and peace in our time.

In dealing with most topics (e.g. Mormon history), the editors insist that contributors meet the highest standards of objectivity and reasoned discourse. Normally, the editors would demand that all sides of an issue be examined fully and completely and that the most difficult questions be raised and explored.

But with respect to the "peace" issue, only one point of view was represented. It appeared to this reader that the editors were taking a peace-at-any-price-stand. If so, this is a point of view that needs to be explored thoroughly.

Are the editors omniscient with respect to this particular issue? What is the source of this omniscience?

Are the editors omnipotent? Can they guarantee that following a peace-at-any-price policy will lead to the best of all possible worlds?

One logical result of pursuing such a course of action 'is the possible loss of our national sovereignty. We could certainly end up living under some form of one-world government (most probably a communist dictatorship). What would life be like under such a dictatorship? How would the Church progress under such a totalitarian government?

If we had to choose between nuclear war and slavery, can the editors be sure that slavery would be the lesser evil?

Maybe true peace can be built only on a spiritual foundation. Why was not this possibility explored thoroughly?

Is it possible that a strong nuclear deterrent force has helped preserve the peace and prevent a nuclear holocaust?

Why were these issues not explored in depth? Why did the editors abandon the long standing DIALOGUE policy of "encouraging a variety of viewpoints?"

Richard H. Hart
Forest Grove, Oregon

Editors' note: The editors of DIALOGUE do prefer peace to war. It is also true that people of good will differ about the most effective ways to achieve international tranquility. If the winter issue lacked balance as to strategies for peace, it was only be-

cause suitable manuscripts were not submitted from across the full spectrum of informed opinion. We too regret this fact.

Indians Not "Lamanites"?

Professor John Sorenson's recent series of articles, "Digging into the Book of Mormon," Parts I and II, *Ensign* Sept., Oct. 1984, is a milestone in Book of Mormon scholarship because it suggests a major change in the officially sanctioned interpretation of the Book of Mormon. Sorenson, an anthropologist at Brigham Young University, argues for abandoning the long-held doctrine that substantially all North and South American Indians are descended from the "Lamanites" of the Book of Mormon.

Sorenson's articles attempt to solve the most obvious archeological problem of the Book of Mormon — its contradiction with overwhelming evidence that the Indians were descended from nomads who began to migrate from Asia across the Bering Strait more than 20,000 years ago. Considering that there were up to 1,500 Indian languages at the time of Columbus, Sorenson observes that it would be "impossible to suppose that all those languages could have derived from the Hebrew presumed to be the speech of the Nephites and Lamanites." To resolve these conflicts between scientific evidence and religious doctrine, Sorenson sees the Book of Mormon peoples as a small Hebrew culture confined to a limited geographical region in Central American, isolated from widespread Indian populations to the north and south of them.

Notwithstanding Sorenson's printed disclaimer that the articles "are not intended to be an expression of official Church teachings," the articles were published in the *Ensign*, the official monthly magazine of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which means that they were screened for orthodoxy by the Correlation Reading Committee (Adult).

Responding to questions about Joseph Smith's claim that the Book of Mormon was an ancient record — including those raised in my own writings (" 'Is There Any Way to Escape These Difficulties?': The Book of Mormon Studies of B. H. Roberts," DIALOGUE Summer 1984; and "Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon," *Free Inquiry*, Winter 1983–84), Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Council of the Twelve directed in a 3 July 1984 memorandum to the Church Board of Education Executive Committee and the Special Affairs Commitee that a scholarly defense of the historicity of the Book of Mormon be prepared. Sorenson was named as a possible author, and his articles in the *Ensign* apparently serve as this "rebuttal."

Sorenson's "limited region" theory is not new. Historian and General Authority B. H. Roberts considered and rejected a similar theory more than sixty years ago on the grounds that this solution to "Book of Mormon difficulties" raised a new problem. This theory violates Book of Mormon characterizations of Hebrew migrations into a land "where there never had man been" (Eth. 2:5), and where Lehite populations would eventually "cover the whole face of the land" (Hel. 11:20) to become the ancestors of the American Indians. This designation of Indians as remnant "Lamanites" is expressed in the revelations and edicts, not only of Joseph Smith, but also of his successors, Brigham Young and Wilford Woodruff (Smith, DIALOGUE, Summer 1984, p. 104). Even the Book of Mormon prophet Moroni (as reported by Joseph Smith) "said the Indians were literal descendants of Abraham" (Dean C. Jessee, *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith* [Salt Lake City; Deseret Book, 1984], p. 76).

From the discovery of the New World through the first half of the nineteenth century, American religious writers worried that the Bible contained no mention of Indians. A Bible focused on the Middle East, Greece, and North Africa appeared to lack universal meaning. If the Indians or their ancestors were not mentioned in Genesis, some believed the authenticity of the Bible was open to challenge. Were the Indians

part of a separate creation? Book of Mormon descriptions of Jaredite and Lehite migrations from the Old World echoed popular efforts to trace the genealogy of the American Indian back to Adam and Eve by way of the Tower of Babel and later Hebrew dispersions. In 1830, the Book of Mormon thereby served to validate the Bible.

Although he abandons the outdated LDS doctrine that the Indians are descended from Lamanites, Sorenson's revision leaves other archeological problems unresolved. Even if the Jaredites and Lehites occupied only a limited region of Central America, the Book of Mormon still portrays what appears to be an Old World culture, foreign to pre-Columbian Mesoamerica.

This problem is not merely an absence of evidence which some day we may hope to find. As some knowledgeable LDS Mesoamericanists have observed, the Book of Mormon describes a civilization which is inappropriate for the New World. It describes the wrong culture. Book of Mormon contradictions with early Mesoamerican culture are too pervasive to be explained, as Sorenson tries to do, as problems as "semantics" or due to "limitations" of research.

For example, the cows, pigs, and horses presented in the Book of Mormon were typical of both the Old World cultures found in the Bible and those in the Americas after the Spanish conquest, but not those in the ancient New World. On this mismatch, Thomas Stuart Ferguson, founder of the LDS-funded New World Archeological Foundation, commented: "That evidence of the ancient existence of these animals is not elusive, is found in the fact that proof of their existence in the ancient old-world is abundant" ("Response to Papers by John Sorenson and Garth Norman," Written Symposium on Book of Mormon Geography, 1975; partial typescript in my possession).

Though Mormons may no longer see a "Lamanite" in each Indian, Sorenson's "limited region" theory is ultimately un-

satisfactory because it does not explain the discrepancy between Mesoamerican archaeological evidence and Book of Mormon descriptions of a transplanted Old World culture.

George D. Smith
San Francisco, California

German Scriptures

Marcellus Snow's "New German Versions of the Standard Works" (Spring 1984), raises several important points concerning these German translations. I would like to add these suggestions:

1. The newly-revised 1984 Luther text abandons *Umkehr* ("repentance") (an innovation of Karl Barth) and restores the older *Buße*. We should do the same. Baptism means different things in different religious groups but we do not abandon the word and say "faith, repentance, immersion" or "I immerse you . . ." or "John the Immerser." We simply explain what the word means to us. Where it might be misunderstood we say "baptism by immersion." Without doing violence to any theological concept, we could have retained four hundred years of tradition and said *Glaube, Buße, Taufe* instead of *starker Glaube, Umkehr, Taufe* ("strong faith, a change of heart, baptism").

2. Similarly, several other innovations are unnecessary. *Die Andern* ("gentiles") is too general and misleading. We should return to *die Nichtjuden* or *die Andersgläubigen* as some modern translations (*Fotobibel*, etc.) have done. The only possible reason for replacing *Heiland* with *Erretter* "savior" is its parallelism (*erretten, Errettung, Erretter*) with English "save, salvation, savior." *Heiland* is accurate and should have been retained.

3. There are no separate German equivalents for "just/justice" and "righteous/righteousness." They are simply King James variants. So are "charity" and "love." All German Bibles from Luther to the present treat them that way with two minor exceptions, but the LDS stan-

dard works create a new trilogy, *Glaube, Hoffnung, Nachstenliebe* instead of the traditional *Glaube, Hoffnung, Liebe* for English "faith, hope, and charity." Similarly, the 1980 Book of Mormon uses *fester Glaube* ("strong, firm faith") for the English "faith" where earlier German editions used *Glaube*. As a result there are now two kinds of faith in the Book of Mormon (*Glaube* and *fester Glaube*) based on the personal interpretation of its current translator.

4. English has obviously been the source language in too many cases. Except for "emblems" (*Symbole*) in Snow's table of Latin and Greek origins, all the words are based on the English in the original text and only secondarily on the Latin or Greek.

Furthermore, the new translation for "the Lord God" (Hebrew *adonai yahwe*) ignores over 400 years of traditional German word order (*Gott der Herr* "God the Lord") to follow the English word order literally (*der Herr Gott*).

5. The distinction between "priesthood" (power, authority) and (men who hold the) "priesthood" should have been maintained throughout: *Priestertum* and *Priesterschaft* respectively.

6. Catholic and Protestant members of the translation commission agreed on uniform spellings for proper names in the Bible, but the Book of Mormon now has nonstandard spellings. Mosiah has been changed to *Mosia*. The biblical Noah, Zedekiah, and Isaiah (*EüNoach, Zidkija, Jesaja*) are *Noa, Zedekia,* and *Isaia* for nonbiblical persons in the Book of Mormon. An impossible German spelling (*Ssezoram*) has been created for English *Cezoram*, modern Yiddish spellings notwithstanding. Some English words ending in *-ah* are now spelled *-a* in German while others are spelled *-ach*. This inconsistency should be resolved by following the form of the name in the language of the original, English.

7. I believe native German speakers will verify that the new versions of the sacrament prayers are rhythmically uneven compared to the older versions because of

the deletion of *du*, and the placement of appositives, relative clauses, and infinitive phrases. The use of the distributive singular *die Seele all derer* ("the soul of all those") is theologically disturbing, and modern German Bibles (including the EÜ) use the plural in Rev. 6:9 and 20:4 (*die Seelen all derer*). (See "Thoughts on the 1980 Translation of the Book of Mormon into German," unpublished paper available from the author).

King James translated the Greek *aionios* as *eternal (life)* twenty-nine and *everlasting (life)* thirteen times with no difference in theological meaning. The translator should have followed all earlier German translations and used *ewig* instead of the very nonbiblical *immerwährend*.

The translation guidelines were narrowly interpreted as excluding the German biblical tradition, thus implying that no tradition exists beyond the King James version. In the case of the Book of Mormon, the English text seems to have been considered an original source, even for phrases obviously from the King James Bible.

Perhaps it would be useful to reappraise translation procedures with the idea of eliminating some of these problems. For instance, using a group of specialists rather than a single translator would broaden the collective experience and almost certainly reduce the number of purely personal interpretations.

As another suggestion, we could follow the example of the *Einheitsübersetzung*, which was published in 1972 as a preliminary edition with sufficient time for revision before the final edition in 1980. This plan would have allowed reappraisal of some questionable decisions and also provided a period of accommodation between the two texts.

It would also be helpful if the translation guidelines acknowledged the history of the text. Many of the problems of finding the right words in German would have been simplified considerably if the translator had not felt it necessary to find a "literal translation" for "recurring [King James] expressions." The present guide-

lines seem unaware that neither the King James nor the Luther versions are literal translations. A useful model would allow translators to use the established tradition of the Luther text in the same way that Joseph Smith used the established tradition of the King James version when translating Isaiah and Matthew in the Book of Mormon.

And certainly, as part of the larger question, we should reexamine the place given to the King James text. It seems ironic to use the EÜ because it "comes closest to the King James version" (p. 134) when stylistically it is the Luther text that is closest to the King James. By reversing 150 years of LDS of Luther's Bible as praised by Joseph Smith, the Church has now approved for German what it has refused for decades to do for English. I believe this is the real problem raised by the new translation. Can we afford to pursue one course in English and a very different course in German? If we should choose to follow for German the course presently followed in English, we would return to the Luther text. If we should choose to follow for English the course recently adopted for German, we would discontinue using the King James version and approve a more modern version or make our own translation. I would hope that guidelines of the future will provide a clear solution to this problem.

> Marvin H. Folsom
> Provo, Utah

Another View of Scholarship

McMurrin, the Tanners, and some of the
    rest
Just don't seem to get it at that.
When Packer declares in a most solemn
    voice
That history is not where it's at.
Now how can that be when some of our
    best
Are engaged in pursuit of that course?
They've brought forth the issues with élan
    we see
And shouted them out till they're hoarse.

Well, let's not get down on scholarly views.
They ring with an interesting voice.
But surely we see philosophical thought
And history's no ultimate choice.
They bring home the bacon, are fun for
    the able —
But both are just gaming at best.
No discipline's able to get us upstairs,
And could be an ultimate test.

So what do you do if you're hanging out
    there
Wondering if the gospel is true?
Can you give it a test as logic demands
That it meet all criteria for you?
Forget it, dear friends, it may never do
    that.
King Benjamin says why that's so.
In Mosiah 3 verse 19 you find
The reason some miss the plateau.

Higher critics can hardly aspire
For the case to be rested that way
But you won't find the message thrust into
    view
By rigor, no matter the day.
Just listen to Alma and try the reverse.
Believe in advance that it's true.
Forget what psychologists say of that trick
And the message will come home to you.

It's been so for others. You won't be the
    first
To sidestep what rigor demands.
But what do you care if it yields the result
That you know it without show of hands?
Humility's majesty singles few out
From the vast intellectual throng
But the spirit that touches the humble in
    heart
Will sing you a much sweeter song.

> A. B. Leaver
> Logan, Utah

Rendering Unto Caesar

The 1 March 1842 issue of the *Times and Seasons* included a copy of a letter to John Wentworth, editor of the *Chicago Democrat*, from Joseph Smith. Designed

to improve the public image of Mormonism, it omitted most of the peculiar teachings in favor of an image of variant Protestantism in its fourteen (now thirteen) Articles of Faith.

Responding to regular accusations that the Church was seditious, Joseph stated: "We believe in being subject to kings, queens [later deleted], presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring and sustaining the law." The Articles of Faith were canonized at the same general conference in which the Manifesto on polygamy was accepted. The year 1890 signaled a dramatic shift in the relationship of the Church to government. In the near-century since, most members have become politically conservative. The thunderings of earlier prophets against the national government are forgotten, Johnston's Army is barely mentioned, and polygamy is thought of as an embarrassment once practiced by a handful of members which ended with the Manifesto. The tendency to yield to authority in secular matters is an extension of our religious passivity as well.

Subservience to the powers that be is not, of course, unique to Latter-day Saints. Christ spoke of rendering unto Caesar what was of the worldly kingdom (Matt. 22:15–21) and the apostles counseled general cooperation with government (Tit. 3:1, Rom. 13:1–7, 1 Pet. 2:13–17). Yet they also made clear the dangers and limits in this approach (Acts 4:18, 31; 5:28–32, 40–42; also see James Talmage, *Articles of Faith*, p. 421).

Indeed, the present Mormon posture faces the same danger. While a low profile may be helpful in dealing with difficult governments, we face the prospect of identity with oppression when we seek the approval of regimes in places such as Chile and the Philippines. If the government is overthrown, might the new government consider expelling the Church or retaliating against members?

While protection of the institution and individual members necessitates a role less heroic than that, say, of Jehovah's Witnesses, we need to face the fact that sins of omission can be as damaging as those of commission when it comes to government-church relationships. Members should be taught Christian principles that will motivate them to work for social reform and to see oppressive governments as accepted by but not endorsed by the Church. While the Church need not encourage civil disobedience as an institution, will it allow individuals to exercise their consciences this way? Will it encourage social consciousness in a way which motivates members to be critical of oppressive governments? Clearly, some priorities need to be weighed or we would give approval to those condemned at Nurnberg and condemn those who struggle for civil rights in Poland and Russia today.

Three modern scriptures which support obedience to secular power have to be re-examined: Doctrine and Covenants 58:21–22 states:

> Let no man break the laws of the land, for he that keepeth the laws of God hath no need to break the laws of the land.
> Wherefore, be subject to the powers that be, until he reigns whose right it is to reign, and subdues all enemies under his feet.

Doctrine and Covenants Commentary by Hyrum Smith and Janne Sjodahl (revised and reissued under direction of the First Presidency in 1972), notes that this section refers "to the Constitution and all laws that are constitutional. Civil authority . . . is better than anarchy. Revolutionary movements that aim at the abolition of government itself are contrary to the law of God; those which are aimed at the correction of abuses are not wrong" (p. 139).

Doctrine and Covenants 98:4–7 also emphasizes that the "law" referred to is "constitutional." This does not, however, resolve many problems, conflicts, ambiguities; and it is difficult to apply to countries other than the United States.

The most extensive commentary on the subject is, of course, Section 134. *Doctrine and Covenants Commentary*, however, points out that "this . . . is not a revelation. It was . . . prepared by Oliver Cowdery

and was read at the General Assembly of the Church, August 17, 1835 . . . . Joseph Smith and his second counselor, Frederick G. Williams, were in Canada . . . . It should be noted that in the minutes, and also in the introduction to this article on government, the brethren were careful to state that this declaration was accepted as the belief, or 'opinion' of the officers of the Church, and not as a revelation, and therefore does not hold the same place in the doctrines of the Church as do the revelations" (p. 852). Smith and Sjodahl suggest that that first sentence, claiming that "governments were instituted of God" should be changed: "The Lord in the very beginning revealed to Adam a perfect form of government . . . but we do not hold that all governments, or any man-made government, was instituted of God."

Another comment on Section 134 is found in the 1971 Sunday School manual *Scriptures of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*: ". . . but a wise qualification is added, which reflects the experience of many nations — '. . . while protected in their inherent and inalienable rights by the laws of such governments.' In other words, governments are a means to an end. They must serve man, protecting him in his basic rights. When they fail this, they no longer merit man's loyalty and allegiance" (pp. 168–69). This last sentence has radical implications. It is relatively easy for American members to take a conservative, passive stance. Most belong to an assimilated middle class. As the Church expands into the Second and Third Worlds, the complexities of church-state relations will become pressing.

"Non-constitutional law" is termed being "of evil" (D&C 98:7). It would seem fair to suggest that to ignore conscience when secular government commands would make us also "of evil." Perhaps it is time to examine the other side of Caesar's coin and rethink our obligations as citizens of Christ's kingdom.

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Impossible Task

I agree with D. H. Parker (Autumn 1984, pp. 117–18) that it is "an impossible task" to "elicit a unitary point of view" from the Bible because the biblical text is itself self-contradictory. This is the single best answer to explain why the Bible has been so profoundly influential throughout history. *Both* sides of almost any theological contention can use (and have used) the Bible to prove their own specific truth.

Mormon theology is built squarely upon Joseph Smith, not the Bible. That Mormon doctrine commands respect in light of modern biblical research is evidence that Smith may have merit as an independent source for biblical truth. But Joseph's 1844 pronouncements excoriated the Bible for its theological errors. Joseph was no biblicist.

If the Bible *is* inherently self-contradictory in its important doctrinal pronouncements, a fact to be explained by its historical origins, then is it not "fraudulent" to treat the Bible as if it were unitary and self-consistent? Choosing one of the two (or more) conflicting biblical doctrines as the "true" one is basically fraudulent because there is no way *from the Bible itself* of verifying *that* version, as opposed to other versions equally and legitimately present in the text.

Why not be forthright? Let us *select* (not fuse into harmony) intelligently from the biblical potpourri those doctrines which we determine to be true from exhaustive historical analysis of origins of the Bible, especially the New Testament. Let us then weigh those doctrines in light of our modern *Zeitgeist* to see if they are eternal or were culturally based in their original pronouncement, hence modernly "irrelevant," to borrow Parker's perceptive phrase.

The fact of textual contradiction is a warning that critical examination is needed. Incorrectly to disarm that suspicion by official assurance that one version of the text is true merely covers up the really important question — how did the text get mixed up in the first place?

When Mormons spend the necessary time in the second-century manuscripts of the New Testament canonization process they may begin to see the "fraud" which has been perpetrated upon humanity by Christian orthodoxy since that time. Mormons then will feel less guilty for independently "selecting" (that's what canonization did) the truth among various New Testament doctrines.

"Investigating" the canon anew is an important task, especially in light of the cautions of E. J. Carnell: "When a gifted professor tries to interact with critical difficulties in the text, he is charged with disaffection, if not outright heresy. Orthodoxy forgets one important verdict of history: namely, that when truth is presented in a poor light, tomorrow's leaders may embrace error on the single reason that it is more persuasively defended." (*The Case for Orthodox Theology* [Philadelphia, Westminster, 1959], p. 110)

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SF and Religion

I'd like to add a lengthy footnote to Michael R. Collings's "Refracted Visions and Future Worlds: Mormonism and Science Fiction" (Autumn 1984).

Collings is at his best talking about how non-Mormon writers have dealt with Mormonism in science fiction; I'd like to point out a book that was published after Collings wrote his article: *Them Bones*, by Howard Waldrop (Ace, 1984). This novel, part of Terry Carr's new Ace Specials series of science fiction novels, is a wonderful tongue-in-cheek action-packed time travel story, the sort of sense-of-wonder tale that is at the heart of the sf genre.

Mormons will especially take note of the way Waldrop uses Mormonism in a delightful "bootstrap" paradox. In the bootstrap paradox, which was given its most powerful expression in Heinlein's "By His Bootstraps" and "All You Zombies," a

character goes back into the past and sets in motion a chain of events that ultimately leads back to himself. For instance, in "All You Zombies," Heinlein gives us a character who, through time travel and a sex-change operation, is her own father and mother—an entirely self-existing, uncreated person. The same thing is done with a watch in the movie *Somewhere in Time* — one character received it as a gift from the other, then went back in time and gave it to her. At no point was the watch manufactured; it could not exist. Utterly impossible, but lots of fun.

In Waldrop's *Them Bones*, Colonel Spaulding, the commander of an expedition that has gone back in time to try to change the future, was born and raised a Mormon. Waldrop gets a few things wrong — does any Mormon ever call our meetings "services"? — but as ancient Indians keep killing off his expedition one by one, he becomes obsessed with the Book of Mormon. Whereupon he copies it over on metal plates and wanders off, presumably to go bury it in a hillside in upstate New York. It's hard to imagine many people besides Mormons getting the paradox — that the Book of Mormon caused its own creation — or even the joke about the Book of Mormon being a "Spaulding" manuscript after all. So we'll have to consider this a freebie that fun-loving Howard Waldrop has tossed in to delight his Mormon friends (and outrage a few who won't realize that this is all done in sport).

In "Refracted Visions," Collings does touch upon, but doesn't resolve, the question of how a Mormon writing science fiction should deal with religion. While George Scithers's proscription of mentions of God and angels in science fiction is about as silly as most of the rest of the things George Scithers says, it still reflects, superficially, the stance that science fiction inevitably takes: radical realism. Science fiction stories must take place within a mechanistic cause-and-effect system — or seem to. Thus, while God and Christ are rather often characters in science fiction, Scithers's blathering to the contrary not-

withstanding, they are always explained away. Most recently this is done in Barry Malzberg's fine story "Quartermain" (*Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, Jan. 1985), where Jesus' life is reenacted (or enacted in the first place?) by an obsessive role-player who just can't seem to leave well enough alone. In other science fiction stories, God usually turns out to be an alien (e.g., Arthur Clarke's *Childhood's End*) or a machine or — you get the idea.

So· what does a Latter-day Saint do when entering this radically realistic genre?

Since only a handful of us have done it, and at present I'm the most-published Mormon in the genre, it seems most pertinent for me to mention what *I* have done. I resolved long ago, when I was a playwright trying not to lose more than a few thousand dollars a year writing plays for the Mormon audience, that I would never attempt to use my writing to overtly preach the gospel in my "literary" works. That is, when I wrote for the *Ensign*, I of course wrote openly and favorably about Mormonism. But in my plays, the question of faith did not come up. If characters believed, then that was fine; if they didn't, then fine; but I found boring and usually offensive the endless plays about people wrestling with their faith. The sappy plays always ended with conversion. The artsy-fartsy plays always ended with desperate doubt. So what? It was (and is) my belief that most people who suppose they are struggling for faith are in fact struggling with far deeper and less intellectually available desires; and those who actually have faith do not bother with questions about what they *believe* that they believe. Faith exists in actions, not in emotions; I speak more about my characters and to my audience in what I make my characters *do* than in what I have them say or think.

Furthermore, I believe that I present Mormon theology most eloquently when I do not speak *about* it at all. I believe it is impossible for a writer to intellectually control his or her works at the most fundamental level: the most powerful effects of a work emerge from those decisions that

the writer did not know he or she was making, for the decision simply felt inevitable, because it was right and true, not to be questioned or examined. In short, every human being's true faith is contained in what it does not occur to us to question.

So when Collings notices "generalized analogues" to Mormonism in my books *Capitol* and *The Worthing Chronicle*, he is actually noticing things that I did not deliberately do. On a conscious level, *Worthing* was an exploration of layers of story-telling, dreams within tales within memories; but I am not surprised that most LDS sf readers who have discussed the book with me have declared that they could tell all the way through that I was a Mormon. As long as I don't interfere with my own storytelling, I suspect that my works will always reveal my beliefs, both orthodox and unwitting heretical. And I believe that such expressions of faith, unconsciously placed within a story, are the most honest and also most powerful messages a writer can give; they are, in essence, the expression of the author's conceived universe, and the reader who believes and cares about the story will dwell, for a time, in the author's world and receive powerful vicarious memories that become part of the reader's own.

Naturally, with this point of view I found the Glen Larson approach both silly and offensive; I also find that most Mormon critics who have commented on my work and Larson's make the same self-contradictory mistake: They at once find Larson's approach — dropping in trivial LDS references — superficial, and then complain that because I don't do the same, I am denying/concealing/ignoring my Mormonism.

Truth is, LDS theology is every bit as radically realistic as science fiction; if Joseph Smith and the rest of us in our subsequent collective theological evolution have done anything, we have explained godhood in a completely rational way. In the process, however, we Mormons have completely abandoned mechanistic causation and adopted final, or purposive causa-

tion: The universe acts the way it does because it *wants* to, say we. The result is that my writing is received in some sf circles as particularly powerful, with a surprising and yet comfortable world view; while many others (a majority of those who care at all) are disturbed, annoyed, or threatened by the religion in my writing even though religion is almost never openly discussed. They are uncomfortable in my fictional universe because it forces the believing reader to accept a causal system that makes every human being completely responsible for his own actions. This is directly contrary to the prevailing Calvinist literary mode, which holds that human beings have no particular free will, but rather respond uncomfortably as Life (not God, who is out of fashion) dangles them like spiders over a fire, sustaining them as long as he feels like it, dropping them when he gets bored. They have become, in other words, uncomfortable with the notion of purpose, free will, and personal responsibility, which LDS theology uniquely proposes.

So LDS readers who natter about the violence in my stories, or the homosexuality in exactly one of my hundred-odd published or performed works, or my failure to "bear my testimony" in *Woman of Destiny*, are in effect asking me to deal with the most fundamental matters in a shallow, trivial, obvious, and inevitably ineffective way, all the while not noticing that I am already dealing with the LDS cosmology — or my version of it — in everything I do; but on an unconscious level that I discover only after the work is finished. I have come to trust that it will always be present in every work that I write with honesty and passion — which is, I believe, all of them.

However, if there are those who would prefer to see Mormon sf writers deal with something that "is recognizably religious and thematically 'Mormon,'" then I can mention a story I just completed, called "Salvage," which will appear sometime in the next year or so in one publication or another. It deals with Mormons overtly because it is set in a future Utah; the main character is a non-Mormon who discovers the community of faith only by realizing that he does not belong to it. It is, I am told, a very religious story, and I see that now; when I wrote it, it was simply a tale about a small-time expedition to try to salvage legendary hidden gold from the Salt Lake Temple, which is half-submerged in the rising waters of the Mormon Sea (a reborn Lake Bonneville).

I will be interested to see what a thoughtful writer like Collings will think of it, though I expect I'll hear much more from the lunatic fringe that believes that a Mormon writer who does not fulfill their personal agenda is somehow corrupt. The fact remains, though, that the story itself dealt with Mormonism only tangentially. Except for my wife, Kristine, no Latter-day Saint has yet read the story. Yet all who have read it have found it very religious, though perfectly compatible with the rationalist requirements of science fiction. So, apparently, it can be done, at least to the satisfaction of non-Mormons. As to satisfying Mormons — well, Mark 6:4 addressed that.

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