

NIBLEY LETTERS

ANTHROPOLOGY. There is no subject on which there is less agreement than American anthropology. It is impossible to exaggerate the wrangling and jealousy that prevails among those who study the Indians. (Darrel Pierce; Salt Lake City; May 4, 1980)

ANTI-MORMON POLEMICS. Don't worry about the Tanners. They serve a necessary purpose in keeping things stirred up. Without them it would practically be impossible to interest members of the Church in the real evidence for the Book of Abraham. The papyri in possession of the Church are authentic but they do not contain the text of the Book of Abraham and no responsible Latter-day Saint has ever said they did. (Michael Masferrer; Newark, OH; May 14, 1980)

ANTI-MORMONS. As to those people who have "received Christ into their hearts and become Christians": what have they done about it? They have made a paying business of running down another church. The strange thing about them all is that once they have decided that they have found better and left a snare and a delusion, they refuse to leave it: they cannot get it out of their minds; they talk about nothing else. Originally almost all Mormons, and still the vast majority of them, have left other churches--but are they obsessed with denouncing them? I have dealt with scores of anti-Mormon writings, and the plain impression is that it is their own doubts that plague the writers. Typical of the trivial issues on which they center, is Mrs. Tanner's statement that it was Nephi and not Moroni who first visited Joseph Smith. What proof does she give of that? Where and when did Joseph Smith say it? I myself have often confused the names of Book of Mormon characters in teaching classes. That is perfectly natural with such a cast of characters, but has Mrs. T. nothing more basic against Mormonism than that sort of nit-picking? (Greg Edwards; Richmond, KY; Mar. 15, 1982)

APOCRYPHA. The very early apocryphal writings that have come forth in recent years make it very clear that the earliest Christians identified Michael with Adam, though they considered it a mystery. (Jeff Chalmers; Miami; May 14, 1980)

The very early Christian texts now coming to light have more to say about a heavenly mother than the later writings which were spared by the doctors of the church, who destroyed everything they did not like, and so have come down to us. The insistence of the University of Alexandria on the absolute oneness of God was Neoplatonic and formed the basis of all Christian theology since. (Greg Edwards; Richmond, KY; Mar. 15, 1982)

> The Prophet Joseph Smith knew by revelation that the Apocrypha, of which only a small amount were available in his day, and to which he was never able to give serious attention, were of immense value and not to be ignored. (Brennon Bounds; Manchester, England; Feb.

25, 1983)

> We must realize that the scriptures are full of apocryphal material and the apocrypha full of real scripture--see D&C 91. If you want to find out what has been going on you must read both and be guided by the spirit. (Glenda Lemon; LaPoint, UT; May 18, 1984)

The apocryphal Jewish writings, as you know, are very abundant, though most of them survived in Christian hands after the Rabbis condemned them. (Elder James Rizzo; Provo MTC; May 18, 1964)

ARABS. Exhilarating weather, kids raring to go--nothing doing: weltering in heavy seas of academic overload. Did I mention that I had a flock of students from Mecca? They are a problem--slightly sinister, silent, dark, not too comprehending, but deeply religious--which makes them very unlike our Iranians, Lebanese, Egyptians, etc. I have become quite fond of them. (Dr. Klaus Baer; University of Chicago; Mar. 29, 1963) [The Oriental Institute Archives; All Rights Reserved]

Then there are the Arabs. This is a case of the mountain coming to Mohammed, since thy continue to come and, of all things, get baptized. When one considers the risk involved in this, and the heavy penalties they inevitably incur when they return to the Old Country, I think this is a remarkable demonstration of something or other. (Dr. Klaus Baer; University of Chicago; Jun. 1, 1964) [The Oriental Institute Archives; All Rights Reserved]

AUTHORITY. Joseph Smith tells us that since the days of Adam the Gospel has always been on the earth somewhere preserved between the Dispensations by "holy men ye know not of." Many people have claimed to belong to such lines--that is the Baptist "trail of blood theory." In the teachings of the gospel John has a unique place: he is the only New Testament figure mentioned by name in the Book of Mormon, and Section 7 of the D & C is the translation of a scroll he hid up in the manner of the Qumran sectaries. The Masonic origins are particularly interesting because they go back to the Temple at Jerusalem. But so do a lot of other rites and societies, some of which are far nearer to the original version than the Masons. The problem is, of course, the line of authority. To recognize the existence of a true and unbroken tradition does not give me the right to claim it for myself. The Seventh Day Adventists, for example, recognize the importance of continuing certain ancient Hebrew practices--but who authorized them to take the burden on themselves? It is true that Peter was the Rock, the Seer Stone, but having said that I still have to prove any later ties to Peter. It is as if I were to claim Abraham Lincoln for a relation by proving beyond a doubt that he had delivered the Gettysburg Address. None of these people can connect themselves up with the ancient order--least of all the Masons--but Joseph Smith has given us that ancient order in great consistency and detail as it is being confirmed of hundreds of documents coming forth long after his mission was completed. (Bender Hash; Laramie, WY; Jan. 27, 1981)

AUTHORITY. Today for the first time, a distinction is made between receiving knowledge and authority by a horizontal as opposed to a vertical line of descent, with the idea that the horizontal line, being strictly human, lacks validity that can only come by revelation. It is easy for us to forget today that not long ago all the churches rejected the doctrine of continued revelation absolutely, and indignantly denied the need for a restoration of things. Today it is another story: revelation and restoration are the big thing. (Bender Hash; Laramie, WY; Jan. 27, 1981)

BIBLIOGRAPHIES. A complete bibliography of all my stuff up until 1977 is included in the book called Nibley on the Timely and the Timeless. Also there is a bibliography in another book called Of All Things! A Nibley Quote Book. Both of these books were published without my cooperation--I didn't know what was going on until the damage was done. However, the bibliographies are fairly complete...I am told that a complete bibliography is in preparation here at the BYU, though it seems to me that it's much ado about almost nothing. (Adelbert Haws; Huntington Beach, CA; May 3, 1982)

BLOOD ATONEMENT. The doctrine of blood atonement is that one can become one or "at one" again with his Heavenly Father through the shedding of blood--the blood of Jesus Christ. We cannot shed our blood to atone for another--which of the Apostolic Fathers said that no man can have more than enough oil for his own lamp?--but we can share in the act of atonement by making sacrifices of our own. (Jeff Chalmers; Miami; May 14, 1980)

BOOK OF ABRAHAM. (see also PEARL OF GREAT PRICE) Though the manuscripts now available do not contain the text of the Book of Abraham as described by Joseph Smith, the matter they do contain can be related to Abraham at many points. Taken by themselves, the contents of these papyri are of peculiar interest to Latter-day Saints. Of one thing I can assure you: the Book of Abraham is a true and authentic history. That I have never doubted. (Ms. Carol Turner; Las Vegas; Feb. 3, 1980)

Joseph Smith was not deceiving anybody: the Book of Abraham is a direct revelation. (Michael T. Griffith; Dallas; Apr. 14, 1980)

BOOK OF JASHER. The trouble with the Book of Jasher is that it exists in no ancient manuscript copy. It is written in very correct school Hebrew and was long suspected of being an 18th century fabrication. Since the discovery and study of many very old apocryphal writings, however, it has become apparent that many things in the Book of Jasher are taken from very old sources and that the author of the work had access to some of the most ancient and valuable texts. Therefore, the reading of the Book of Jasher is to be controlled by Section 91 of the D & C: There is much in it that is true but only one who is enlightened by the spirit can benefit by it. (Mrs. Don Wrathall; Tucson, AZ; Mar. 19, 1981)

BOOK OF JOSEPH. Orson Pratt identified the largest piece of papyrus now in the church's possession as part of the Book of

Joseph...Such writers as Elliott Smith and Arthur Weigall, who worked for years with Egyptian mummies, were convinced that some of the writings of Joseph would some day be found. I am inclined to agree with them, but for the present we will have to wait until the Lord springs the surprise on us. (David M. Hoover; Mammoth Lakes, CA; May 16, 1984)

BOOK OF MORMON. Since the Book of Mormon must be either accepted, rejected, or let alone completely, archaeologists, unwilling to commit themselves have always avoided trouble by talking about the weather. The archaeologists most impressed by the Book of Mormon are all orientalist. Some very good ones have accepted the Book of Mormon because the text was to them irreputably authentic in its oriental tone and content. American anthropologists and archaeologists know nothing of this approach. (Mr. Tom Sherry; Sunset Heights Seminary; Farmington, NM; Apr. 23, 1975)

> The Book of Mormon deals mostly with the fall of civilizations projecting past experience into the present and future. I cannot imagine a more powerful, prophetic document or one more obviously going into fulfillment at the present time. If you look at the big picture, the Book of Mormon is as up-to-date as tomorrow's newspaper. (Jan Taylor; Des Moines, IA; Apr. 24, 1975)

I don't think the time is even yet ripe for a comprehensive commentary on the Book of Mormon. On the other hand, the book is loaded to the ground with a heavy burden of ripe and over-ripe fruit which should be plucked and savored before we start putting the confection together. (Mark A. Riddle; Salt Lake City; Mar. 19, 1981)

What intrigues me at present about the Book of Mormon, independent of all other considerations, is the immense scope and detail of the story under the deceptively, even naively simple, first appearance. (Jacob Neusner; Brown University; May 18, 1984)

BOOK OF MORMON--ANTHROPOLOGY. The Hopewell culture and the vast expansion of related artifacts throughout the lower and upper Mississippi valleys indicate the kind of mobility in which the Indians have engaged in modern times. We tend greatly to underestimate the speed and the distances of their journeys. One is reminded of the early history of the Church when the brethren apparently thought little of walking a thousand miles or more to a conference. Navaho and Hopi students at the BYU during short school vacations as a matter of course walk home and back, not even expecting rides. All this is grist for the computer. But you are quite right in suspecting that some very important factors have been overlooked in our Book of Mormon calculations. Up until very recently, scientists have thought it utterly unthinkable that "primitive" people could have achieved the immense ocean voyages attributed to them in their legends. But it turns out the scientists were wrong. (F. L. Williams; Salt Lake City; Apr. 14, 1980)

> BOOK OF MORMON—AUTHENTICITY. Consider once more the Book of Mormon. There are thousands of points at which it can be tested against real historical evidence, but in the world of science nothing is settled until the last reports are in. Meanwhile, if one would put the Prophet to a truly rigorous test, let him compare his performance with that of other men who have created fanciful civilizations out of their heads. One thinks at once of Tolkien, then of Homer, Dante, James Joyce, Galsworthy, Dickens, Thomas Mann, etc., men who have conjured societies, mythical nations, whole worlds into existence by the power of their imaginations. How does their performance compare with Joseph Smith's? It is completely different: they all had age and experience, reading and training and all the literary and historical sources they needed at their disposal; they were all free to put down anything they chose, without having to answer for it as fact or history. But Joseph Smith goes far beyond any of them as he blocks out his geography, builds his cities, names and clothes his strange people, arranges his battles and elaborate campaigns, follows his migrations and explorations, evolves his social unrest, his dynastic intrigues, invents ingenious weights and measures, describes plagues and the upheavals of nature, while telling a religious story of great moral impact, with heavenly visitations, inspired prophecies, cosmological discourse and eschatological significance. With it all, his book must have something to tell people that they did not know before, something extremely important for the world to know. And all this was done without the aid of scholarship, age, experience, literary or historical sources or assistance, in a situation tense with hostility and danger, and completed in a matter of weeks. Since there is in the annals of human attainment no performance to equal this, I think it entitles Joseph Smith to a patient and respectful hearing free from the ridiculous nit-picking which has always been fashionable where the Book of Mormon is concerned. (Missionaries Tom and Paul Nibley; Jan. 1, 1971)

BOOK OF MORMON—EVIDENCE. There comes a point of diminishing returns beyond which the accumulation of further evidence becomes less and less material. I can't imagine anything that would establish the authenticity of the Book of Mormon beyond the evidence we already have. Now we can take a new view of the evidence and work from the center out. (Brother Larsen; Mar. 18, 1979)

> BOOK OF MORMON—MIGRATIONS. How could any people engaged in a project so significant as that of transferring the rest of their lives to a distant setting possibly avoid thinking of the operation in symbolic and even cosmic terms? Steven Olsen; SLC, UT; October 30, 1979)

> There is nothing whatever in the Book of Mormon to forbid the presence of people on this hemisphere ages before the Nephites--and that does not include the Jaredites. (Carlyle Eyre; Cowley, WY; May 3, 1982)

> BOOKS. Any book is worth putting in the library if only as a record of human folly. (Donald Gilchrist; Laramie, WY; Feb. 22, 1980)

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY. My remark about BYU being no longer a center of liberal education was off-the-cuff but not without the authority of only too much first-hand observation.....It was Brother Widtsoe who told me to go to the BYU but be careful. My first interview with President McDonald showed him genuinely interested in making the BYU a real center of learning. He spoke indignantly of the miserable condition of the library and took me on a walking tour in which his comments on the state of the school were anything but complimentary. I found that refreshing. But you are right--it was then that the pressure began. It mounted steadily but only got serious in the sixties when I thought of resigning a number of times and discussed this matter with President Joseph Fielding Smith and Brother Romney. They urged me to stay on. When I said I was bound to offend certain parties if I continued to speak too freely, a number of General Authorities, including members of the First Presidency, assured me that they considered my dissenting opinions not only valuable but indispensable to maintaining a healthy academic climate in Provo. But don't get me started. (David B. Rimington; Los Angeles; Mar. 4, 1980)

Every year it is the same thing. The young people on the grounds crew protest that it breaks their hearts to destroy all that lovely verdure after it has been so carefully planted and cultivated; but they can do nothing about it--they must obey orders. The botanists and others complain, but go unheeded. President Oaks put a stop to it last Spring, but the operation is now going forth with renewed vigor, and with an alarming innovation--the chain-saw. In the past week over 100 young trees, after having been carefully nursed for some years, have been cut to the ground. The extremely clumsy job of paving the "Nature Trail" last year, and the thorough cutting of bushes and tearing up of the grass cover by hand has produced serious erosion problems on the west side. Where a short time ago a large variety of fruits and berries, aromatic plants, and asparagus helped balance the diets of many a poor student, today the scene is as sickly and as barren as a back lot. The south side of campus was President Harris's favorite project: what other school could match the delights of the now ruined nature trail? Can't we do something to save what is left? (Jeffrey R. Holland; Provo; Apr. 9, 1981)

> The B.Y.U. is as droll an extravaganza as ever; like the Jews, the Mormons have a remarkable capacity for making fools of themselves--if they took each other's antics more seriously they would call of the whole thing tomorrow. (Dr. Klaus Baer; University of Chicago; Oct. 4, 1968) [The Oriental Institute Archives; All Rights Reserved]

CAREERS. I joyfully take your word for it that you are not the traditional university student. To advise one of your age to

pursue a business career with such an expanse of unexplored future lying ahead is the equivalent, I think, to urging you to start collecting silver for the rest of your life. Remember the first commandment given to the Church in this dispensation: D&C 6:7: "Seek not for riches but for wisdom, and behold, the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto you, and then you shall be made rich." Believe it or not, many people around here believe that this is a piece of inspired instruction on how to get lots of money.... The important thing is to go to the top--don't bother the authorities. You have already indicated that you can expect that kind of guidance. I would urge you to go all the way. Ask for the direction of the Holy Spirit everyday and learn to recognize its whisperings. Then you will know exactly what steps to take and all the rest. Not but what you will have to walk by faith "in fear and trembling," because that is the way we are tested. But do not hesitate to do it that way. The Lord will guide you and in time you will find that our present-day Babylon will be but a distant memory. (Craig F. Kinghorn; Athens, OH; Apr. 14, 1980)

As far as the career side is concerned, we can say what Commodore Vanderbilt said about owning a yacht: "If you have to think of the price, forget it." In this time of probation, the study must be its own reward, and the honest student will be willing to pay a high price for the luxury of engaging in it. To expect "hire and salary" along with that is too much. Even Albright had to have an independent source of income. In all of this, there is only one rule to follow, and that is, "Let the spirit guide." (Gary B. Keeley; Santa Rosa, CA; Mar. 11, 1982)

CHRISTOLOGY. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, by and through whom the worlds were created, went all the way to prove that he is one of us. His divinity and humanity are the tie between us and our Heavenly Father (I believe even Christians call him "Our Father which art in Heaven"). If you read John chapters 14-17, especially the prayer in the garden, you will see that our relationship to him and our common Father is no mere symbolic, abstract, or allegorical matter. (Greg Edwards; Richmond, KY; Mar. 15, 1982)

The fierce Christological controversy which hit the church with great violence in the fourth century and has never been resolved by the Christian theologians deals with the relationship of the Father and the Son. The trouble was that men in those days thought in terms of their own social and political relationships. There was an Emperor, an Augustus, with sub-emperors, Caesars, ruling under him. It was usually a family setup, but it always led to rivalry, violence, and murder because of the perennial problem of who was greater than, holier than, and mightier than whom? To say that the Father was greater than the Son was an unpardonable insult to Christ according to the Athanasians. To say that Christ, or anyone, or anything, was equal in greatness to the Father was an equally outrageous offense to the glory of the one and only God, according to the Arians. The trouble was that these people did not realize that the Father did not think of the Son as a rival and a competitor aspiring to equal his glory, or that the Son was jealous

of the superior status of the Father. That was very silly. A loving son does not envy his father's achievements, and a loving father wants nothing more than that the son's deeds should equal and surpass his own. All this fuss about who is greater than whom is ridiculous. Which brings up still another point: with a large vocabulary of abstract, symbolic, and "spiritual" terms at their disposal, why do the authors of the Bible stubbornly persist in expressing the relationship between God, Messiah, and Man in family terminology, using the best-known and most-used words in languages all over the world to denote human family ties? What could be more misleading than to choose these particular words if one really meant something else? Take Luke 3:38: "...which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God." Does one of the best-known words in the language suddenly change its meaning? (Greg Edwards; Richmond, KY; Mar. 15, 1982)

I believe that from the time of Adam to the coming of the Lord in the flesh he appeared to his children upon this earth as Jehovah, a personage of spirit. Otherwise he would not have taken on a body nor laid it down. (Robert Hawthorne; Pittsburgh, PA; Sep. 9, 1985)

CHURCHES No idea was expressed more fervently by Joseph Smith or Brigham Young or today by President Kimball than the idea that all churches contain much good, the understanding being that some will continue to flourish even after the millenium. (Piotr Klafkowski; Oslo, Norway; June 17, 1980)

CONTROVERSIES. Joseph Smith laid down certain rules for dealing with controversial matters, foremost among which are certain absolute prohibitions: 1) NEVER accuse, 2) NEVER aspire, 3) NEVER content, 4) NEVER coerce, 5) NEVER flatter. If these are observed, conversation becomes completely positive and constructive. True, it is reduced to "yea, yea," and "nay, nay," but that is as it should be, since "whatsoever is more or less than this is of the devil." Personal conviction can be stated to others, but cannot be imposed upon them. (Missionaries Tom and Paul Nibley, Jan. 1, 1971)

CREATION. Disembodied spirits who have never possessed the complete physical equipment that comes with resurrection are hardly in a position to create solid worlds without number. My idea of the most hopeless project on earth is to depict anything sacred, to say nothing of celestial, in the crowded and frustrated dimensions of our present senses. One might almost make a case for Kitsch, which is simply to say if we are going to achieve a theatrum Dei, there is no point to imitating Bernini or even Michelangelo. (Mr. Daniel Sorenson; Los Alamitos, CA; April 23, 1975)

The light appears in many contexts, first of all, since God dwells "in the midst of eternal burnings" there are many ancient accounts, Jewish and Christian, of the council in heaven planning the creation of the earth in a setting of everlasting light. (P. Brooks; Lakewood, CA; May 9, 1986)

> CREDENTIALS. My credentials are nonexistent; for as the Brethren were reminded in the first issue of the Times and Seasons, "No man's opinion is worth a straw." I am careful to pass the buck to others, never claiming to be an authority for what I say. Quite frankly, I must admit that I was not present in any of those situations which present us with problems of ancient history. The experts often reminded the world that Einstein was an amateur mathematician and an amateur astronomer—he failed to gain admission to college and his Ph.D. thesis was rejected; professionally he was a clerk in the patent office, in which position he had to let the evidence speak for itself. There are no Einsteins around today, but the point of this is that credentials are worth nothing. (Brother Ball; March 1979)

> I have always maintained that displays of titles and credentials, to say nothing of disputes and wrangles about them, are entirely irrelevant to the question of what is authentic and what is not. It is the document that is being judged, and whatever proof is offered must stand on its own legs. (Mr. Robert L. Brown; Mesa, Arizona; December 18, 1980; concerning the credentials of Dee Jay Nelson)

CRITICISM. Any talks we give that bring forth material that is sensational in nature (and there is quite a bit of legitimate material) should be heard critically and stringently questioned. I, for one, welcome such criticism. (Louise Wrathall; Tucson, AZ; October 15, 1979)

> DRESS AND GROOMING. Personally, I don't find beards very effeminate. (Mr. Daniel Sorenson; Los Alamitos, CA; April 23, 1975)

ECOLOGY. As one who grew up 40 miles from Mt. St. Helens I am most impressed at the horrifying resemblance between the wreckage inflicted by the volcano on the forest and the appearance of the same forest after Weyerhaeuser has finished a season of clear-cutting: I see very little to choose between them except the greater fertility of the ashes. (Mac Madsen; Ogden, UT; June 23, 1980)

> EDUCATION. Apparently our present-day education has forgotten the ancient world, to our loss, for theirs is the history we are even now repeating. (Mrs. Leslie Francis; Lancaster, TX; Sep. 29, 1987)

> EGYPTIAN. Believe me, there is far, far more here than meets the eye. That is the fun in studying Egyptian. (Scott Stuteville; Whittier, CA; December 6, 1979)

EGYPTIAN, REFORMED. Professor Anthon was not able to translate or understand Reformed Egyptian. Nobody could do it today, for Reformed Egyptian was what the Nephites called their script, and not any Reformed Egyptian known from the Old World. Of course, Anthon was bluffing and went too far; that is perhaps why he called back the note and tore it up. But it was important that the best-

known scholar in America should have a chance to see the characters, so that it could never be said that the Mormons never gave real scholars a chance to look at them. (Elder Rummler; Limoges, France; Apr. 29, 1982)

EGYPTIAN ALPHABET AND GRAMMAR. The "Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar" was just what it pretended to be, an Egyptian alphabet and grammar, and it was a failure--but what of that? It was far from the first or worst of many futile attempts at translating Egyptian in the early 19th century. The whole thrust of the argument against it is that its authors viewed it as a key to the Book of Abraham--a necessary prerequisite for its existence; it is claimed that the Book of Abraham was actually derived from this abortive and indigestible production, but nobody has ever offered to explain or illustrate how it was done. What everybody has overlooked is that Joseph Smith actually did produce his Book of Abraham and that he did it without the aid of any Alphabet and Grammar--that project never got off the ground. It can be shown quite definitely that the Book of Abraham chapters were completed before the Alphabet and Grammar was attempted. It was a purely experimental and exploratory project with each of its five authors giving his own version of things. (Brother Castle; 1979)

EGYPTOLOGY. I am engaged at present in a simple-minded project which serves, as far as I can tell, only my own vaulting curiosity. That is to say, I still can't rid myself of the idea that the Egyptians had something to say--a doctrine deplored at Chicago and absolutely anathema to Dr. Wilson. Accordingly, I have been systematically moving through every Egyptian text available here, never referring to anyone else's translation, and never leaving a word until I had a satisfactory understanding of it. This is not so much vanity as necessity. People who study Egyptian, like Classical students in England, simply feed on each other, and everyone is conditioned in the same way. The practice I am following is proving immensely satisfactory. The texts speak eloquently, and everything gets faster and easier as we go. You know how that is. Who knows I might even stumble on something significant one of these days. (Robert Smith; Council Grove, KS; November 20, 1979)

ENOCH, BOOK OF. The short Qumran text of the Book of Enoch ... is the best evidence yet available for the authenticity of the Joseph Smith Book of Enoch. (Edward J. Baldwin; NY: Mar. 4, 1980)

ENVIRONMENT. I have travelled in the Four Corners country and over wide parts of the Southwest with the late Spencer W. Kimball, who wrote on the occasion of the Bicentennial, speaking of that part of the world, "I would sometimes ask myself, 'If you were going to create a world, what would it be like?' Now with a little thought the answer seems so natural: 'Just like this one.' This is a marvelous earth on which we find ourselveswhen I pass through the lovely countryside...I compare these beauties with many of the dark and miserable practices of man; and I have a feeling that the good earth can hardly bear our presence upon it.: He points out

what he calls "the intolerable pollution of our surroundings" by the natural or rather traditional urge to turn everything into a quick buck. The idea that everything in the West is up for grabs was one which Brigham Young found particularly offensive. The idea that people should actually clamor for a decade or so of boom-town construction as the price of rendering the land uninhabitable for 10,000 years to come seems perfectly insane, yet it is an example of how far things can go when greed becomes the motive. ("Letter to the Bureau of Land Management," May 7, 1986)

ESCHATOLOGY. Both the majestic world and I have reached a state of life that may be called critical. Many of my generation are asking, Which of us are going to get to the wire first? At any rate, the aging passenger can hardly expect to survive the wreck. There will be no last laugh. (Robert Smith; Council Grove, KS; November 20, 1979)

He gives us everything we need as a gift and is not at all pleased when we spend our days fighting among ourselves to see who can grab the most. That is not what he intended us to be doing either here on earth or in the eternities. We have been sent to school upon the earth with all our room and board freely provided; if we spend the time we should be devoting to our studies planning how to get and secure more room and board, and more room and board he will say to us as he did to the highly successful entrepreneur who expanded his business and achieved delightful security for the future, "thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee." (Stuart C. Reid; Provo, UT; December 11, 1979)

FREE AGENCY. The paradoxes that arise from the problem of free agency versus complete foreknowledge have taken a front place in the new quantum physics. The nature of the problem and the direction of its solution you may find dimly adumbrated in the enclosed study from a recent spiel of mine. Of course God knows the mind and heart of every individual, and so there is no real difference between mass action and individual will in the final outcome. And so we could go on and on and on. This is one of the four problems that St. Augustine found to be insoluble. We await further revelation on the subject. (Robert L. Mauzy; Spokane, WA; Dec. 2, 1986)

GOSPEL. The things in which the Mormon Church resembles and sometimes excels other churches could be dispensed with and never be missed. But the prophetic mission of the prophet Joseph Smith and the scriptures and the ordinances are worth everything the world has to offer--without them the Church would be nothing at all. Since you asked for a frank opinion, the fact that no two Latter-day Saints see the gospel alike has nothing to do with the question of whether it is true or not. It is the everlasting gospel from eternity to eternity and the only plan by which mankind can be saved here and hereafter. (Ms. Carol Turner; Las Vegas; Feb. 3, 1980)

The Gospel, having been on the earth in various dispensations, with

many of its teachings and ordinances kept from the world, has in the process of such debacles as occurred in the 2nd century like an exploding star left most of its elements scattered in bits and fragments and sometimes surprisingly large chunks throughout the world. (Brennon Bounds; Manchester, England; Feb. 25, 1983)

The evidence does not exist that can force anyone to accept the Gospel. Anything that would compel belief automatically and completely would deprive people of their free agency and defeat the purpose of this life of probation. Certain phenomena, however, do suggest the desirability and feasibility of "making an experiment upon the words" of the prophets. If there is any possibility of their being right, they should be looked into. (Missionaries Tom and Paul Nibley; January 1, 1971)

I have been away--first visit to southern California in 20 years--so here we are back again and forced to think about a religious philosophy. I can see that there would be a place for my peculiar views in your interesting Roman salad if only for contrast: "If a man will compare the richness and variety of the universe," wrote A.E. Housman, "and inspire his mind with due measure of wonder and of awe, he must contemplate the human intellect not only in its heights of genius but in its abysses of ineptitude." Let that be my passport to your august company while I list, in no particular order, a few propositions that express my religious position at the moment.

Proposition No. 1. We are participating in a vivid little drama being enacted in empty space. If blind chance can set this stage, put the characters on it, and set the plot in motion, then there is nothing that blind chance cannot do, including the staging of innumerable other plays on other worlds; and blind chance may very well have arranged to have this particular world quarantined to provide a testing situation in which we find ourselves--strained and awkward, but just the test for those particular qualities which are going to be needed in the really long run.

Proposition No. 2, etc. Blind chance isn't a force at all, but a term denoting an unknown X. Just as Newton could never bring himself to believe that gravity could be a force operating across a completely empty gap, so I can't believe in a directing force which is itself completely without any sense of direction or an organizing force which itself has no concept of organization--that idea stopped even Darwin, you may recall.

3. From the tiny segment of the play I have studied I like to think that things have been following the script recommended by Joseph Smith more closely than the other scripts written by scientists and scholars and altered from time to time. I really believe that the unfolding of the human comedy has shown a consistent tendency to adhere to the ancient script, and at present gives every indication of following it out to the bitter or glorious end.

For me religion to be convincing must be non-speculative. If it were the sort of thing we could figure out for ourselves, I would strongly suspect that we had invented it (C.S. Lewis). Mormonism has the great virtue of being, along with Judaism, Early

Christianity, and Islam, a non-speculative religion. It accepts the moral law within and also the starry heavens above, the latter being something we do NOT make up ourselves and yet somehow part of the religious picture.

My present religious mood is an all-out literalism. If the history of Christianity has been one long undignified retreat, one continual process of accommodation to the science of the hour (Whitehead), the time has come to reverse the process, since the science of the hour has brought us to a most dismal slough in which it is no delight to dwell (Kozyrev). If the discussion is to be kept alive it must move away from its old perennial game of de-mythologizing and de-eschatologizing in the opposite direction, which I call de-rhetoricizing. So today, just for kicks, I read the Scriptures AS IF everything in them was meant to be taken in the most literal sense, as if no such thing as a symbol, allegory, or type even existed. And in doing that I find that there begins to build up within my personal computer a mass of data that has a totally different power and thrust from anything I have known before. Granted that the new deposit in its naive literalism will in time need radical correction, still I am convinced that the correction will not have to be nearly so radical as that required by the opposite view, that of the Doctors of the Church, who insisted on reading the Scriptures as if nothing in them was to be taken literally, and instructed their students never to give a literal interpretation to a passage if any other interpretation was possible.

I deplore the authoritarian, Baconian structure on which the entire edifice of modern learning is built (the schoolmen are even worse than the churchman--when they are not actually the same), and have always been a passionate devotee of the open-minded discussion in which nothing is ever proven except for the individual. Whenever anything is proven it is because some individual has been convinced, having acquired a personal, non-communicable testimony of the truth of the proposition (Popper).

A testimony is a gift and a talent (I Cor. 12:7ff); man muss ein Organ dafür haben. It functions like any of the senses, e.g., like hearing it is an "absolute" thing--you either have it or you don't, but like hearing it may be strong at one time and weak at another; it is never in ailing mortals in perfect operating condition (Heraclitus), and may vanish altogether at times, be non-operative at times, and at times return with astonishing force and vigor. But it does NOT produce the things it hears. It would be hard to explain to one devoid of those senses that seeing and hearing are not functions of the imagination and are only in part self-induced--that there would be no seeing and hearing at all if some sort of stimulus did not come from the outside (Kantish). All this is commonplace enough, but I am trying to say that when I "bear my testimony" I am really talking about something, whether you get it or not.

We are here to use our brains, but the most important impressions that come to us do so directly and without any conscious cerebration. We may work over the data of such experiences in our minds, but we do not produce the impressions in the first place. An interview with John the Baptist led Oliver

Cowdery to declare that whatever the doings of men may be, "one ray from the upper world, or one word from the mouth of the Savior, from the bosom of eternity, strikes it all to insignificance, and blots it forever from the mind!" I have not had Oliver Cowdery's experience, but I have had some like it, and this puts any discussion of my religious "philosophy" on a difficult plane. For if I were to tell you that on a particular day I had such and such an experience you would write me down as a mental case, and rightly so, in case you had not had the same experience or one like it. I see no reason why I should prejudice and offend you by telling you stories you can't believe and have no means of testing. But such experiences as I refer to are bound to affect one's behavior if only in subtle ways, and I find for one thing that there are some things that I simply cannot take seriously and other things which I must take seriously even at the risk of giving offense to my more rational colleagues. It is surprising how many people have thought me to be merely spoofing--just having a little fun, like Joseph Smith when he got up the Book of Mormon. I wonder if they realize what a price one must pay for that kind of fun. I say to hell with careers and the things of the world, but if I thought there was the remotest possibility that this was my only life and my only world I would most assuredly NOT say it, and I would not throw away invitations to serious accomplishment for the sake of a monotonous series of pranks.

I include acceptance of the Gospel among the basic bodily functions like sleeping, eating, and breathing. They are not rational but spontaneous; without them we would die, but that is not why we engage in them. We eat, breathe, and sleep long before we are in danger of dying of hunger, suffocation, or exhaustion--if we had to have a rational explanation for doing those things before we were willing to invest any effort in them we would not be long for this world. The eye it cannot choose but see, l'ame pense toujours, and as far as I can see faith is inseparable from the awareness of existence. Existence, the Egyptians said, is a marvel compared with which all other marvels pale into insignificance: it is something not to be explained but accepted; and to accept it is to feel a surge of gratitude--to what for what? We cannot shake off the wonder and delight of being, the indefinite prolongation of which is but a minor problem once we have got over the original obstacle, namely, the enormous odds against existing at all. Our reaction to being here must be a religious one, because the only principle of continued being is holiness. One cannot maintain an even level of folly--each act is a step downward unless it is a righteous act, and the concept of righteousness cannot be divorced from the idea of holiness.

I have written too much and said too little. This is no religious philosophy at all. It is a situation in which I find myself: I am stuck with the Gospel, I know perfectly well that it is true; there may be things about the Church that I find perfectly appalling--but that has nothing to do with it. I KNOW THE GOSPEL IS TRUE. Yours as ever, If all this sounds trite, I can't help it. (Sterling McMurrin; Salt Lake City; Aug. 23, 1967)

GRADING. The test was perfectly fair since all had to answer the

identical questions, and erred if anything on the side of leniency. For whatever reason Karen's grade was the lowest in the class and, therefore, if we had stuck to the curve should have been "F." It has always been my contention that grades are not important, and I am more convinced of that now than I ever was. (Mrs. Kenneth Giles; Rosemead, CA; Feb. 3, 1980)

HISTORICAL SOURCES, EARLY CHRISTIAN. The Clementine Recognitions are of the highest value in any reconstruction of the primitive church. They are now being re-edited at the Papal Institute. The Nazareans and Ebionites are as near to primitive Christians as it is possible to get, aside from the New Testament. (Randall V. Douglass, Eugene, OR; October 20, 1979)

There have always been good and righteous men going under the name of Christian, but the best of them are quite free in admitting that they were lacking either in a fulness of doctrine or of authority. To take the biggest names of all there is Origen, who in the "First Principles" goes down the list of vitally important gospel questions to which the church of his day no longer taught and which he will neither condemn nor confirm. Then there is Hilary, who is in desperate doubts about the integrity of the teaching, perplexed by the goings on in that first and greatest of church councils, the one at Nicaea. St. Basil, one of the great Cappadocians, speaks of the basic ordinances including baptism and notes that the church has no clear statement of how they should be performed. St. Augustine has left almost three hundred letters written in answer to people asking questions about authority and doctrine. Repeatedly he declares that he does not have an answer and knows of no one who does; he refers sometimes to Milan but never to Rome and, strangely, never forwards the letters to higher doctrinal authority--there was none.

The extensive and drastic changes made in Church liturgy, including the mass, since the new ecumenical movement are enough to indicate how much in the dark the Christian world has been for all these years. Their knowledge and authority have both been limited, but then so are ours. Nobody has it all, and like Israel in the days of the Prophets, though they were by no means what the chosen seed should have been, they still held the keys to certain blessings not enjoyed by the rest of the world. (Erick Nelson; Costa Mesa, CA; May 14, 1980)

HISTORICAL SOURCES, EARLY JEWISH. The new Temple Scroll from the Dead Sea Scrolls gives a revolutionary view of the Jewish calendar; all the new evidence is that the Holy days of the Jews and Christians had a way of sliding around a good deal--the seven-day week was by no means obligatory when it came to matching up the schedules of the sun and the moon. (Elder Brian Thompson; Kezar Falls, ME; Mar. 19, 1981).

HISTORICAL SOURCES, EGYPTIAN. In the whole of Egyptian literature nothing is taken as absolutely settled because nothing is completely understood. The great Erman rejoiced exceedingly to discover an Egyptian story that was straight storytelling invention without any mystical or recondite contamination. Today, the same story is treated as a religious experience of deep eschatological import. The fact is that no ancient document can actually prove anything if anyone chooses to dispute it. (Sharyn Cash; Torbay, Auckland, New Zealand; Feb. 24, 1988)

HISTORY. Things have reached the point where they can continue no longer: God is about to intervene massively in the affairs of men and in not many years bring about an entirely new order of things. The steps by which this was to happen were clearly set forth. (Missionaries Tom and Paul Nibley; Jan. 1, 1971)

HOLY GHOST. Since the Holy Ghost is the Holy Spirit, the whole problem hinges on the nature of spirit. In these days of forces and particles which cannot in any way be visualized or described, save in terms of mathematics, we can consider spirit as another of those elusive realities. The point is that it is real, and so is the Holy Ghost. To discuss such matters requires going into a frame of reference or state of mind conditioned on a preparation which we have so far fallen far short of fulfilling. (Mr. Daniel Sorenson; Los Alamitos, CA; April 23, 1975)

☆ Let the spirit be your guide from hour to hour, do what it tells you and do not concern yourself with other things. This is my advice to everyone else. There are vitally important issues which concern us all but to which I pay no attention unless so directed by the Spirit. This is because: 1) There is altogether too much for anyone to handle. 2) The time is too short to undertake certain things unless one is emphatically directed to. 3) God moves in a mysterious way--you can count on surprises. The important thing is to know that what you are doing today is what God wants you as an individual to be doing. (William Bartley; Riverdale, UT; Apr. 14, 1980)

HUMOR. (see also PERSONAL) Brothers Mackay and Brown just told me about plans--distant I hope--for (of all things) a Denkschrift with name on it. This is a strong argument against freedom of the press, but as an ardent advocate of nonsense unlimited, I cannot object. I find the idea grotesque, but can offer no obstacle to free agency. (Dear Doug; May 29, 1973)

> Don't pay attention to anything I have said, but do read the word of the Lord. (Stuart C. Reid; Provo, UT; December 11, 1979)

Just after the war I fled to Hurricane and spent some happy months in hiding there. I never wanted to see Southern Utah change and the statements of Brigham Young that appeal to me most are those that celebrate the natural beauty of St. George and the need to respect it. I have collected no prophecies on the subject and so can contribute nothing that would transform St. George to San Jose. (Dr. R; April 30, 1979)

The press does not keep a backlog of separate offprints, but it is still possible to get the back-issues complete. If you really want more, xeroxing is the best way. (Mr. John T. Cardall; Downey, CA; April 23, 1975)

Though the Deseret Book Company tries our patience, I can only ask you to wait until they make it available. (Mr. Walter B. Kerri; Ogden, UT; April 23, 1975)

All my Xerox copies of articles have melted away long ago. I trust that you have access to a machine, which would save a diligent scribe the trouble of copying this stuff. The art of Xerox is of inestimable worth to this generation, and I am sure that you are as skillful in it as I am. (James S. Johnston; Sandy, UT; October 19, 1979)

I am never able to keep up with you and that is why I cop-out so frequently in answering your letters--cumulative guilt in time leaves me paralyzed. (Robert Smith; Council Grove, KS; November 20, 1979)

I am good at stretching things but simply can't get Qumran and Qur'an together. (Scott Young; Reno, NV; Oct. 31, 1980)

I do not have copies of most of my speeches, etc., in fact, having given away most of my books I now find it impossible to get copies of them. Your request is not unreasonable and to comply with it I would have to dig up a lot of stuff for my own edification. I shall have to do that anyway sooner or later, but what I am working on now is far more interesting than what has gone before. And so I tend to let all the rest of it go. What is worth saving will probably be saved, but that can't be very much, and in this world it is vain to pin one's hopes on the survival of anything for long. What belongs to the eternities will not be lost; the rest does not interest me very much. With the Bible and Three-in-One we have far, far more than we have ever made use of. Such at least are my sentiments. (David H. Mulholland; Anaheim, CA; Jun. 26, 1981)

My knowledge is apparently weakest of all in communications, since I haven't the vaguest idea what you are talking about. I suspect that goes for both of us. (A. E. Gygi; Salt Lake City; Jun. 26, 1981)

Can you remind me later of my appointment and ask for a subject? It should be a good one, but I can't imagine what it will be. (Russell M. Nelson; Salt Lake City; Dec. 22, 1981)

It looks like almost anything to a dabbler like me. What is puzzling is that it is obviously written with confidence and speed as if in an established idiom, but the separation of the characters suggests code of some kind, as do the patterns of repetition. All that may be an idiosyncrasy of the writer, but the document naturally says absolutely nothing to me. Why do they fake such things? Or how come authentic stuff often looks very fake. One is bemused. If you can find out who left this note for the milkman send me an offprint. (Professor James H. Charlesworth; Duke University, Durham, NC; Mar. 2, 1982)

Will you please, after taking proper precautions for your own person, ask President Romney if he would be interested in a copy of the talk Bro. Nibley gave at the Lion House in April. A number of people asked for copies, and though President Romney was present at the meeting. I did not have the nerve to address him, he looked so

formidable. If Bro. Romney turns it down, give it to the first poor person you meet. (Secretary of President Marion G. Romney; Salt Lake City; Jun. 29, 1982: reference to "Work We Must But the Lunch is Free")

Perhaps I have retreated because I found your subject altogether too tempting and could be only too easily allured into the distant Hesperides where in this life, alas, I am not allowed to loiter. (M. Fay Campbell; Laie, Hawaii; May 22, 1985)

Both the majestic world and I have reached a state of life that may be called critical. Many of my generation are asking, "Which of us is going to get to the wire first? At any rate, the aging passenger can hardly expect to survive the wreck. There will be no last laugh. (Robert Smith; Council Grove, KS; Nov. 20, 1979)

Ah me, this weather! Well, back to the midterms, distorted echoes of my own inert discourse. Serves one right. (Dr. Klaus Baer; University of Chicago; Mar. 29, 1963) [The Oriental Institute Archives; All Rights Reserved]

Every summer we have at the BYU what is optimistically called "Education Week," a sort of Chataqua for stirring up the rubes, both on the faculty and off....The public wants your presence especially on the first two days.... The second day would be an all-time climax if you would condescend to give one public talk on any subject you choose. You could do it all blindfolded, and would bring great comfort to them that sit in darkness. If you would consider such a filibuster, could you drop us a line? Aside from sheer educational uplift a lot of people in Provo would find your presence during the Dog Days exhilarating. (Dr. Klaus Baer; University of Chicago; Apr. 16, 1974) [The Oriental Institute Archives; All Rights Reserved]

IMPERFECTIONS. It is foolish to attack the Church for its shortcomings. The imperfections of the Saints have never been a secret, and they have been plainly told that they will have to pay for all their follies. It is also foolish to attack Babylon, the world as we find it. We have the assurance that Babylon is going to fall by God's hand and in his own due time. Instead of hastening the process, we should want to delay it, to allow ourselves the most possible time for repentance. (Missionaries Tom and Paul Nibley; Jan. 1, 1971)

★ INTELLECTUALISM. The objection to an "over-intellectual" approach to the Gospel runs entirely counter to the long tradition of learning in the Church. When I wrote the Melchizedek Priesthood Manual for 1957, the "Reading Committee" rejected each and every lesson as it was submitted week by week; and in each and every case without exception President McKay overruled the Committee, saying, "If it is over their heads, let them reach for it--that is what we need!" Every lesson was printed, without any alteration; the Manual was reprinted many times and with all its "mistakes of men" is still in print. So much for study that is "too advanced" for

to approach the
"in it, however."

our people.

The department of Religion holds a position of unrivaled privilege but abysmal prestige in the University. Young people are being more critical today than ever before; they complain that they feel that they have a right to something more than rather average Sunday-school teaching in classes in which they are compelled to spend some of the most valuable (and expensive) hours of their lives. Meaning that they have a right to be exposed occasionally to learning on the same level as that provided by departments of Physics or Biology. The revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith have added immensely to our knowledge of the real world, knowledge which we are obliged to acquire for ourselves and convey to the world. (Department of Religion; BYU; Feb. 16, 1982)

> ISAIAH. How are the "great words of Isaiah" to be raised above the level of superficial manuals, piecemeal commentaries, sketchy summaries, classroom routine, or microscopic learned contributions? ("To Whom It May Concern, re Avraham Gileadi; BYU; Sep. 16, 1982)

ISLAM. The Moslems ask me by what right do you clutter the scene with a Son and a Holy Ghost. I answer by quoting their credo which says they believe in God and his angels and his prophets, etc.--all glorious beings. Who is cluttering up the scene? (Jeff Chalmers; Miami; May 14, 1980)

> The Jews never flourished more or were more respected and influential than under the Moslem rulers of Spain, so they can get along together. (Carol Nash; Tustin, CA; Jun. 22, 1982)

JOSEPH SMITH PAPYRI. I hold no copyrights on any of the Joseph Smith papyri or introductions of the same. Since they were looted in the first place, and then laundered by dubious parties, legitimately purchased by the Saints in Kirtland, sold by Emma Smith's husband to a museum or sold to somebody else to the Metropolitan Museum, traded by them for a bust which was paid for by an unknown donor and now reside in the Church Historian's office, I have had nothing to do with them. (John Ball; Huntsville, AL; Feb. 24, 1988)

KNOWLEDGE. Joseph Smith said that knowledge was the most intimate of all things--which means that nobody can know what you or I know. I have found conversations with such eminent characters as you name to be singularly unproductive. Just as no committee ever created anything, so from conversations the best that can be expected is the planting of the seed in each secret mind. It is all between you and your Heavenly Father, and no one else will ever get in on it. As to offices, emoluments and awards, they are a snare and a delusion. Our ablest local scientist recently pointed out that while Latter-day Saints have produced the largest proportion of scientists to the population of any other people, they have produced probably the fewest productive scientists, so I would forget about the matter of recognition. Brigham Young said that [the ability to] prophesy is not an office but a gift, and only [the able] can have it, know it. The best thing, said Plato at the end

of his life, is to go into hiding and not let anybody know what you are up to. Only then can you enjoy the pleasures of the mind to their fullest. (Alma E. Gygi; Salt Lake City; Mar. 19, 1981)

When I consider that we have at least half a dozen different names, offices, lives, personalities, callings, and missions attributed to Adam it is very clear that Joseph, Brigham and others deliberately held back much priceless knowledge which the Saints were then and now unready or even unwilling to receive. (Brennon Bounds; Manchester, England; Feb. 25, 1983)

What difference does it make how much I or anybody else knows? The only question that concerns you is how much you know. (David) Parkos; Parker, CO; Dec. 2, 1983)

LANGUAGE AND LANGUAGES. (see also TRANSLATION) The language business as you know, is like a musician's repertory. If you come to Provo now I could play you some rousing snatches from an Egyptian sonata or a Hebrew concerto, because those are the pieces I happen to be up on. I could also do a minor etude in Coptic since I am engaged in a rather neat operation requiring it, but it has been a long time since I have done my Czerny or Till. (Marian; March 18, 1979)

As to the Anthon Transcripts, certainly no language or script has ever been deciphered on so little evidence. Though all sorts of hints and clues are suggested I think any study of it at present would be a waste of time, barring some new and surprising developments. After all, with all the Mayan documents known and the survival of living dialects the decipherment of Mayan still eludes us. And how long did it take to crack the Minoan Script-B with hundreds of documents and broad clues at our disposal? (Piotr Klafkowski; Oslo, Norway; Jun. 17, 1980)

The nice thing about language is that it is the most testable thing in the world. If you want to know whether I speak French or German or Icelandic, just call me up on the phone sometime and start talking. The nature of my reply will establish almost instantly how well I qualify in the languages you are delivering. The same applies to Egyptian, though nobody speaks it. You would be surprised how many Egyptologists such as S.A.B.M. [Samuel A.B. Mercer], who made a great show of learning and who couldn't read Egyptian at all, and how many humble students, of which I know several, can read it far better than most professional Egyptologists. That, you say, remains to be proved, but it can be proved: just bring along your documents or send them with somebody else and request a performance. (Della Smith; S. Charleston, WV; Jun. 26, 1981)

I have always considered the study of linguistics as such a complete waste of time. (Gary B. Keeley; Santa Rosa, CA; Mar. 11, 1982)

No one would insist more emphatically than I that all languages are

related and that the relationships become increasingly evident as one goes back in time.

There is one great advantage to learning classical Arabic: it is a fossil language and preserves almost all the old Semitic forms you will find in Babylonian, Assyrian, Aramaic, Hebrew, even Egyptian. What is more, the forms are so regular, that once you learn them they are almost impossible to forget (more or less). When in doubt, the first thing you ask yourself is, How would the Arabs put it? That will usually put you on the track. But ~~don't try to learn without a teacher~~; perhaps the greatest of all classical scholars, Joseph Justus Scaliger, spent years trying to learn Greek without a master and sorely regretted it--so did I. Keep scouting around until you find something that really catches your fancy, and then go after it, always bearing in mind that French, German, Greek and Latin are indispensable under any circumstances. (Michael Johnson; Orange, CA; Jul 17, 1987)

LAW OF CONSECRATION. In some talks of Brigham Young recently made public for the first time, he has a great deal to say about the financial predicament of the saints as a direct result of failure to observe the Law of Consecration after solemnly promising and covenanting to observe and keep it. "God will not be mocked," is President Young's refrain, and for this reason and this alone the saints were driven from place to place, never being allowed to settle down to business as normal.

It is we who are being mocked today when the heart of Zion has come to be known as "the fraud capital of the world." We will not have to wait long, however, to see the solution of the problem according to prophecy--it will probably be the roughest time of all. (Morris G. Cline; Ohio State University, Columbus; May 16, 1984)

We forget today how well the United Order worked in many places. United means by definition team-work, cooperation, necessarily requiring a number of people involved in the same project. [As in Zion's (sic) Cooperative (sic) Merchantile (very) Institution (you name it)]. Order means that people are following a common rule. All of which says that you can only live the United Order in a cooperative group; you cannot play it alone. The thing must be planned, directed and controlled from a head; it is an organization, and as such must be properly directed by the head of the Church.

What can you do then? You can agitate, but the first rule the Lord gave to the ancient church was that "there shall be no contention among you." All the presidents of the Church have sponsored the United Order, but from the time of the Prophet Joseph none have forced it. It was even so with Moses; he gave the people commandments and counsel, neither of which they obeyed. He gave them a broken-hearted farewell address and watched them go their way. The Prophets before and after were also quite explicit on the issue, but they could only counsel, and in the end they too "mourned and withdrew." When Cain, "for the sake of getting gain," followed the present-day economy, his parents, zealous missionaries

as they were, could only "mourn before the Lord."

Consecration, on the other hand, is most intimate, personal and private. You cannot consecrate what belongs to somebody else and nobody else can consecrate what belongs to you without first taking it away from you. Consecrate, as you know, means to set apart, take out of circulation, literally put within an enclosure or behind a fence; in ancient Israel, it was thrown (teruama) into an inaccessable sacred enclosure from which it could never be retrieved. The word consecrate says it all; the Greek and Latin equivalents of sacer--hagios and qadosh, as well as the primary meaning of our "holy" all mean to fence or cut off from the profane world.

It is quite possible to give out all you have except what you need to live on--"...having food raiment, etc." and that is what I do. I leave things to my wife, who is a fanatical giver. Needless to say, there is no shortage of takers, but as Joseph and Brigham both said it is better to give to ten imposters than run the risk of turning down one worthy person. (Russell Stewart et al.; Cedar City, UT; Jan. 24, 1986)

LETTERS. Thanks vastly for a letter that is neither demanding nor complaining. I am so relieved at not having to answer your letter, that I could not bear to leave it unanswered. Your kind words of encouragement will not destroy my character, such as it is, because the next one I open will bring me down to earth. (Ms. Joyce Sanchez; Torrance, CA; Oct. 31, 1980)

I have hesitated to write you because 1) I hate letter-writing because of a constant shower of letters that MUST be answered, and especially because 2) I don't like to impose on one who feels as I do. Burn this document and forget it. (Dr. Klaus Baer; University of Chicago; Sep. 2, 1969) [The Oriental Institute Archives; All Rights Reserved]

LOVE. D&C 42:22 was the rule observed by the Patriarchs of old who loved their wives with all their hearts and cleaved to them and to none else. Nothing is said about singular or plural. The title of "wife" denotes a personal and legal relationship as do "son," "daughter," or "children." The Patriarchs also clung to their children and loved them with all their hearts--or did the love of one wife with all one's heart drain it to the exclusion of anyone else? Did Abraham love Sarah to the exclusion of Isaac, Ishmael and Hagar? The emphasis here is on the word "wife:" she is the one you must love. (Greg Edwards; Richmond, KY; Mar. 15, 1982)

MAN. Don't underestimate man (and while he is here don't over-estimate him!). You are far more than you think you are; what is a resurrected, eternal, immortal being, cleansed of all imperfections and flaws if not divine? We do not humanize God at all; human is a word describing mortal people dwelling at present here on this earth (humus=dirt)--God is none of that. (Greg Edwards; Richmond, KY; Mar. 15, 1982)

MAN'S DOMINION. Man's dominion does include his responsibility for other creatures. But the patriarch was thinking of something else...The theme is the subject of all the Patriarchal Narrators of the Old Testament. You will recall that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses were all challenged and even threatened by a brother or twin. (Eric Curry; Pullman, WA; Jun. 26, 1981)

MARTHA, HIS DAUGHTER. In reply to your kind request for personal information about my daughter Martha, I can assure you first of all that there never was a girl more compatible to any society--always in tearing high spirits, game for anything, but also immensely industrious. Her one problem is her inability to say "no" to countless appeals to her many talents. As a result, she has one great problem: a tendency to overdo, driving herself to exhaustion in spite of her considerable physical strength. At present she takes running very seriously and intends to participate in a New Hampshire Marathon, in spite of all our efforts to dissuade her. It has been my conviction based on experience with other children that she will see the light in time as she grows older, because she is no fool. But in this case there is some cause for concern because Martha's energy can only be described as excessive. Martha's main problem is that she feels responsible for having made commitments--and she will never refuse--she feels responsible and to the point of desperation when it becomes too difficult to deliver. The solution, I suppose, is to keep her to a minimum of extracurricular activities (including even church) if possible. But you may probably have a better answer on the basis of your more excessive experience. (Freshman Dean's Office, Harvard University; June 23, 1980)

MILLENIUM. To our present-day hindsight the picture looks plausible, even familiar. But for the past hundred years a different picture of the future has been confidently taught in all the schools and churches of the world. That basic meliorism which is commonly designated as "Victorian" has been completely dominant among thinking people. It was as plain as day that universal education would banish darkness from the minds of the people, that with a rational scientific understanding of things men would solve their problems intelligently: the waste and futility of war, to say nothing of utterly devastating weapons, would render recourse to war unthinkable as a solution to the problems of nations, who would settle their differences sensibly in well-ordered courts, while their internal troubles would yield to sociological knowledge and know-how and the power of a universal ballot in which men for their own good would vote to sustain wisdom and common-sense all their days. With the improved communications, differences of language and nationality would disappear and of course race prejudice would be no more. There could be no problem of whatever nature that science could not solve, and so progress and ever-growing understanding of nature and man was to be the order of the day.

Now Joseph Smith's ultimate picture of things is far brighter even than this, but before that glorious time the world and its inhabitants must undergo a major change. They cannot simply pass as they are by mere force of driving self-interest from Gotham to

Utopia. ~~Babylon is not to be converted--Babylon is to be destroyed. The marriage of Babylon and Zion for which many Latter-day Saints even have fondly hoped with a brilliant transition to a better world directly from the one we now live in, is an illusion.~~ Only one kind of world can ever be permanent: let no one hope to partake of the tree of life and live forever as he is now--in his sins. It is this uncompromising position which turned all the world against Joseph Smith, but the even is proving him right after all. (Missionaries Tom and Paul Nibley; Jan. 1, 1971)

MISTAKES OF MEN. The title page of the Book of Mormon clearly states: "If there are faults they are the mistakes of men; wherefore, condemn not the things of God..." There are mistakes in all things that reach us through human hands--witness the many translations of the Bible that we all have to put up with. (John R. Youmans; Fort Wentworth, GA; Apr. 14, 1980)

MORMONS. Your censure of us Mormons is not only justified but if anything far too charitable. Our easy refuge in naive and simplistic answers after all the material that has been given us and after all the commandments to "seek diligently" among all available records never ceases to amaze me. (Piotr Klafkowski; Oslo, Norway; June 17, 1980)

The Latter-day Saints have always favored exotic trivia over whole libraries of solid evidence awaiting systematic study. Whenever I look at the two stately volumes of [Abu al-Fath Muhammad] Shahrastani that Professor Atiya gave to me years ago I could weep for the neglect of such a treasure, which could "prove" the Book of Mormon a dozen times over. (G. Homer Durham, Historical Department; Salt Lake City; Jun. 26, 1981)

People are free to do as they jolly well please. Everyman has the prerogative of making an ass of himself, and that lofty sentiment has been used time and again as justification for quoting me as approving of and abiding, abetting, supporting and sponsoring everything from the Urantia volume to the Hollow Earth gospel. How well did Pres. Lee say at the last Conference that he never ceases to marvel at the gullibility of some Latter-day Saints! (Robert Smith; Council Grove, KS; Feb. 3, 1973)

MYSTERIES. "Mystery," like "miracle," is a relative term. To one who knows the answer a mystery (as Brigham Young, John Taylor and others have often pointed out) is no longer a mystery--but it is nonetheless wonderful for that; and when you know how it is done a miracle ceases to be a miracle, but in the process may become even more impressive than it was. A mystery designates something that lies beyond the boundary-line of a certain person's knowledge at a certain time; to another person it may not be a mystery at all, and to the original party also it may at another time cease to be a mystery. Mysteries are fascinating because they lie on the borderline of the unknown and are near enough to our comprehension to beckon us enticingly. They are moreover not only the perfectly legitimate object of our investigation, but are strictly speaking

the ONLY legitimate object of present search: a mystery is an unanswered question, but a question of which we are aware; as it ceases to be a mystery, new questions or mysteries pop up, and so it goes on forever. The borderline between the known and the unknown is necessarily where the action is--also where the argument and misunderstanding is. The all-important thing is to be able to handle a mystery the right way: not to treat them as "mysteries" to which a quick and easy access is provided by the lifting of a veil, but as problems to be solved by honest effort, without which God will not recognize the most fervid prayers. Mysteries are not to be approached by those not prepared to deal with them honestly, who look upon them as belonging to the half-world of magic-shows and free supernatural spectacles.

For example, quasars, pulsars, antimatter and empty holes in space are the present-day mysteries of astronomy; they are the things most eagerly discussed by astronomers, and most widely and passionately disagreed on. The fact that nobody yet knows the answers or ever will know them all, that things are in a great state of confused paradoxes and contradictions, and that everyone is guessing, does NOT give me free access to the discussions. To investigate a mystery one must have certain preliminary knowledge. The more ignorant I am of the subject, the more delightfully titillating I might find the mystery of it, and the more I am encouraged by the disagreements among the experts. But that still gives me no place in the symposium, and my participation at this stage of the game could only be a pernicious nuisance. Please note, O zealous missionaries, that there is nothing whatever forbidden or secret about the mysteries AS SUCH. But there is no point to throwing them away on those who don't appreciate them (Mt. 7:6); who does have access to them? The answer is simple: anybody who is willing to make an honest effort (Mt. 7:7-11). The are withheld from the unworthy, but only because the unworthy seek a superficial and easy excitement instead of real knowledge for which they would have to work.

Another example. One of the liveliest mysteries of our time is the Book of Abraham, containing a good deal of authentic Hebrew and Egyptian lore and astronomical beliefs of which nothing was known in Joseph Smith's day. The whole thing is still 99% mysterious. Some of it we are invited to exercise our wits on: "If the world can find out these matters, so let it be." Such things are mysteries to us, but need not remain such if we go after the answers in the right way. Other things, however, are mysteries in another sense "Contains writings that cannot be revealed unto the world ..." and will only be known when and as God chooses to make them known. So there are TWO kinds of mysteries--those which can be known only by revelation in God's due time, and those which he invites us to investigate and on which he will give us help if we work for it (D&C 9:7-9). It is folly to waste our time discussing the former type: "Oh, ye elders of Israel...when you are sent into the world to preach...Declare the first principles, and LET THE MYSTERIES ALONE, lest ye be overthrown. Never meddle with the visions of beasts and subjects you do not understand." (DHC 5:339-345, in TPJS, pp. 293f). On the other hand, there are mysteries for which we are invited to seek: "Seek not for riches, but for

wisdom, and behold, the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto you..." (D&C 6:7). The first type of mystery is only for those to whom the Lord chooses to reveal them; the second type are only for those who ask, knock, and seek--who do hard and honest work. The Pearl of Great Price is meant to be read and studied, but it is full of things we do not understand. What do we do then? The principal stumbling-blocks are obviously astronomy and Egyptian: anyone who would unlock the mysteries of the book must first master these two fields the hard way. The least we can do is to tackle one of them, and Joseph Smith himself worked hard at Egyptian and Hebrew whenever he got a chance. To write doctrinal commentaries on the Pearl of Great Price without even a half-hearted attempt to scale either of these formidable walls, means that all one brings to the discussion is not knowledge or information, of which the Saints stand sorely in need, but simply one's own opinions, based on the reading requiring no special knowledge whatever. Let us recall the ringing proclamation in the first issue of the Times and Seasons: "No man's opinion is worth a straw!" Nothing can take the place of knowledge, and disregard of this fact has caused "many, having a zeal not according to knowledge" to misrepresent the Church and its teachings, according to Joseph Smith (TPJS, p. 80). He even told the Relief Society to go slow because "sometimes their zeal was not according to knowledge." (TPJS, p. 201)

As to the mysteries proper: A "mystery" in the strict sense is an ordinance, attended with signs, tokens and teachings not to be revealed to the uninitiated. That is the ancient meaning of mystery, the initiated being called "mystae," i.e., those who kept their mouths shut (*myo*) in public. In the ancient and original sense of the word, our Temple ordinances are mysteries, and should be discussed only in the Temple, though we are admonished to think about them at all times; if we don't think about them, they degenerate into meaningless routines. But that is another story. (Missionaries Tom and Paul Nibley; January 1, 1971)

NATIVE AMERICANS. The Indians of the southwest have been beset by anthropologists and others with an eye on publication for over 100 years. They are as wary as Peter Mathiessen's The Snow Leopard of such people, and I assure you, will not tell them a thin, except to lead them down the garden path as old Don at Oraibi did Yale's Professor Simpson in his "Sun Child" and as Sandoval of the Chiricahua did my good friend and colleague Morris Obler. Sitting with the missionaries and sharing the gospel with a group of Hopis you will find them begin to loosen up very late at night, sharing what they really believe because they know that you really believe it. They also know that their learned visitors consider themselves to be detached and aloof observers and don't really believe a thing.

The second time I visited the Hopis with Brother Virgil Bushman they apologized profusely to me for their coolness and aloofness on my first visit: "forgive us," they said, "we thought you were an anthropologist." Some very valuable material can be gleaned from early Mennonite and Baptist missionaries whose attitude to the Hopi religion was one of utter disdain as they learned nothing from them. I can confidently assure you that

commercial and academic publications on the Hopi are worthless as accounts of what is really going on. (Steven Epperson; Philadelphia; Mar. 11, 1982)

My own connections with the Hopi--who have definite linguistic ties to Hawaii--are exhilarating, puzzling, and faith-promoting. (Fay Campbell; Laie, HA; Jun. 22, 1982)

Tomorrow I am getting taken by some Navaho students to a little-known part of the reservation which they have been begging me to visit. I have been getting a lot of these interesting invitations recently, including one from the Hopi Council to view the Hopi Stone....I cannot get it out of my system that we have here in these people who dance all day in animal masks, feathers, paint, and fox-skin aprons something that is a) fundamental in the world's existence and which is b) all but extinct in most parts of the world today. This is the sort of people that the old Libyans or the 'Amu might have been--I feel relaxed and happy with them. Another thing--they have developed years ago an almost perfect defense against the Anthropologists, whom they consider the arch-enemy; they have set up a sort of buffer-culture between themselves and their officious visitors, which the latter take for the thing they are seeking. "We always know Spring is here," the Navahos say, "when we see the beetles and the anthropologists come out." ...I am not at all enthusiastic to go where the world is going just now. It will be nice to get back to the red sand. (Dr. Klaus Baer; University of Chicago; Jun. 1, 1964) [The Oriental Institute Archives; All Rights Reserved]

> By the latest count, the Hopis are the only people in the world who still preserve a full annual cycle of full-dress protological, eschatological and cosmological ceremonies. (Dr. Klaus Baer; University of Chicago; Aug. 12, 1968) [The Oriental Institute Archives; All Rights Reserved]

OPINIONS. We are all welcome to our opinions, but the word of God is something else, and however I, or any minister, may choose to interpret it, that too, is only our opinion. You must read the Scriptures for yourself and pray for your own enlightenment. (Greg Edwards; Richmond, KY; 15 Mar. 1982)

> PAUL THE APOSTLE. There is no more powerful or enlightened exponent of the gospel than Paul. It is true he is Jewish through and through and what shines through his text is not Greek but Hebrew. (Mr. G.L. Fersley; Los Alamitos, CA; Feb. 3, 1980)

PEARL OF GREAT PRICE. (see also BOOK OF ABRAHAM) I consider the Pearl of Great Price no less a marvelous work and wonder than the Book of Mormon itself; and in the Pearl of Great Price nothing more clearly reflects the Egyptian heritage than the Book of Abraham. Every attempt to disprove it has been a fiasco, as some Egyptologists have recognized. (Bruce Holmes; Holladay, UT; May 22, 1985)

PERSONAL AND FAMILY. I have been a member of the Church since I was 8 days old; in those days we wouldn't think of blessing a baby on any other but the eighth day. (I must confess, however, that I have no clear memory of the event, so you will have to give me a low mark on that.) I went to school and never liked it much. I have lived three years in Germany, about a year in France, worked closely with Russians during the war, and read myself to sleep with Russian novels. When I am in Mexico or Greece, I get along very well with a vernacular. I have spent more time with Arabic than any other language, a thing which I regret. Such things as Hebrew, Latin, and Coptic I know as well as the next man. Having sat for four years with some of the nations' top Greek professors, I would blush now if I had to admit I didn't know Greek at least as well as they did; also, I don't do bad in Egyptian, though by no means am I proficient in Demotic. I no longer speak English fluently, that is to say I speak more slowly than I used to.

I am ashamed to admit how ignorant I was when I got two Doctorate degrees--one, you might know, is honorary--but if you are alert in the ways of scholarship you should know that people are to be judged only by what they produce, and that is to be judged not by the credentials of the author but by your own estimate of what he says. My efforts are heavily loaded with footnotes to take the heat off me, and shunt the reader to the sources he should consult. For in the field of ancient history I regret to say I was not privileged to be present at any of the events recorded--that is why I must cravenly refer the reader to others. I hope you are as Greek as your name; if you are, you may understand what I am talking about, if not the more's the pity. (David L. Parkos; Parker, CO; Dec. 2, 1983)

My long delay in answering you is due to the months of soul-searching to determine, if I could, why on earth anybody would want to hear from me. I am a crashing bore, and that is why I plaster everything I write so heavily with footnotes, turning the conversation over to more interesting people. Preston Nibley was my uncle. He knew some wonderful stories about the Brethren, especially Brigham Young, but every time he spoke in public he felt that he had to be dignified and so left the stories out as too frivolous for formal occasions. Thus, a treasure has been lost, though Leonard Arrington, who is re-editing Preston's book on the Presidents of the Church, may introduce some of the happier tales. Meantime, I am working diligently on my hypertension by strenuously pushing deadlines four or five hours a day. It is not very good exercise for building muscles, but it is great for developing humility. (Irene Horsley; Kearns, UT; May 22, 1985)

I have not postponed answering your letter and gift. It was during my annual January clean-up of the office that I first discovered it on the floor among piles of communication which represented dread obligation, and sometimes confrontation. You see why I have put it off--the mere weight and charge of my neglect is enough to daunt anyone.

I read Holy Blood the very month it came out, and was much intrigued by it, especially as I had had some experiences on my

mission that tied in with those strange backroom doings. I have always regretted not owning a copy of the book for more careful study; it has been practically impossible to obtain here. Thank you for coming to the rescue. My own present concern with Hermetic matters, in which Christian, Jewish and Egyptian traditions meet and fuse, is in the same shadowy realm as the doings of the Capetans and Merovingians. Naturally I am withholding my fire until I am sure my rusty old cannon will not blow up in my face. You will know what I mean. (James Harris; Glens Falls, NY; Jan. 14, 1986)

The desire of my heart has always been to write pure fiction: as you can see, I am steadily moving in that direction, and look forward to the day when I can stop clowning, and the curtain goes up on some real scholarship. (Robert Smith; Council Grove, KS; Feb. 18, 1970)

A hundred times a week I ask myself in amazement: What am I doing here? Well, if that's the way the Lord wants it--He knows what he is doing; it's a cinch I don't. But that's what makes it interesting. (Dr. Klaus Baer; University of Chicago; Feb. 12, 1968) [The Oriental Institute Archives; All Rights Reserved]

By the way, we have no new children, and such as we do have are doing very well in a variety of outlandish fields. (Dr. Klaus Baer; University of Chicago; Feb. 12, 1968) [The Oriental Institute Archives; All Rights Reserved]

POLYGAMY. If Christ or Luther were polygamists their followers were singularly reluctant to advertise the fact. Studies of the recently discovered Gospel of Philip points out that the earliest charges against the Christians had to do with the scandals of their family life and marital relations--Celsus pointed that out. He was a liar who wrote against the church at a very early time and the only reason his writings were preserved was that Origen chose to write a reply to them many years later, early in the third century. What the scholars are now asking is why this constant emphasis on marital relationships if there wasn't something behind it? The opposition would never let up, but on the other hand the Christians would never explain. The conclusion is that they had a doctrine so sacred or secret that they would not discuss it. Certainly celestial marriage has always been one of the mysteries and remains such. (James D. Still; Salem, OR; May 14, 1980)

PRAYER Some formulaic language is necessary in prayer to get things started. It is a priming of the pump, as in the early revelations to individuals in the D&C--the same formula is repeated at the opening of each revelation but then comes the individual blessings. Such patterns are necessary to put the mind in a mood and as such, really do act as keys to communication. (Brother Lopez; March 1979)

PROPHECIES. The short-comings of the church members and officers has never hindered any faithful Latter-day Saint from receiving

personal revelation and remaining true and faithful, knowing that to bear with "the Brethren" is sometimes the severest test that can be imposed on the Saints. The survival and growth of the Church in view of the obstacles constantly thrown in its way, and the great numbers of rival sects and offshoots that have opposed it and withered away, is impressive, but not so impressive as the way in which the History of the Church has followed the course set for it by the word of prophecy, regardless of the ever-changing climate of world conditions. (Missionaries Tom and Paul Nibley; Jan. 1, 1971)

There are certain PROPHECIES OF JOSEPH SMITH in which I have been taught to believe and which I have believed ever since I was a child, to be the official position of the Church. For me this has always been the fundamental prophetic picture:

1. These are the LAST DAYS, a special time of winding-up, gathering, preparation; a time of increasing perplexity and helplessness among the inhabitants of the earth; an age that will show a consistently downward tendency towards the "consummation decreed." Things are to move forward on two fronts in opposite directions, the "days of wickedness and vengeance" being matched by an outpouring of knowledge and understanding as the way is prepared BOTH for the fall of Babylon and the establishment of Zion.
2. Babylon (fully described in Rev. 18) is to be overthrown; on the verge of its destruction the world will reach a peak of wealth, sophistication, and wickedness. Love of money and contempt for those lacking it will be the dominant theme. Lacking charity, the Gentiles will resort to ever greater violence against each other as the wicked seek to punish the wicked. Secret combinations for power and gain will cause devastating wars. Finally in a single hour the towers of Babylon will be overthrown and the smoke of her burning fill the earth.
3. The Earth itself will enter a period of mounting atmospheric and geological instability. Along with and by its inhabitants it will become polluted--"defiled," and grieve because of its pollutions, while the angels beg to be sent down and put an end to destructive processes before it is too late. It will be covered by "a vapor of smoke", and men's warlike preparations will place all creatures in jeopardy: "Renounce war...lest all flesh be consumed before me." (D&C 98:16). In the end the wicked will be consumed by fire--as stubble, and the earth purged and purified. Through it all "the righteous" will be saved, in a manner totally unpredictable and unimaginable to modern technology.
4. The JEWS will return to Jerusalem, rebuild the city, and "flourish" in the desert. They will be in dire straits, with all the world against them, and will not accept the Savior until their final deliverance, which takes place when they are reduced to the uttermost extremity, surrounded and without hope by mighty enemies.
5. The Lamanites will fail in every attempt to counter the encroachments of the greedy Gentiles by force. They will almost reach the point of extermination before the tide turns,

when "the Lamanites shall blossom as the rose." They will become an independent and formidable force, accept the Gospel, and have their own prophets and leaders.

6. ZION must be established; during the perplexities and division men "must stand in holy places and be not moved." Plagued with internal and external enemies, she will yet be delivered, become "of one heart and one mind" with no poor among her people. Zion can only be saved by a mighty arm, by power from above; Zion is going to have a rough time getting started.
7. The CHURCH prepares the way for Zion, the heavenly city, the celestial order. It will never be great and powerful in the earth, but though its holdings are small and few, comparatively, nonetheless it shall be found scattered over the entire earth, enjoying great spiritual blessings at the very time when the world is in the greatest darkness. The world's opposition to the Church, the "great and abominable," will enjoy a miraculous revival of strength after a serious let-down, attain a peak of power from which it shall be overthrown suddenly and completely, as the result of its own machinations. But the Church will always have problems, and its internal operations will in time need the timely offices of "one mighty and strong" to put things in order. (Missionaries Tom and Paul Nibley; Jan. 1, 1971)

> RECORD-KEEPING. Since Enoch took everything else with him when he and his people made their piecemeal migration "in the process of time" to another world it is reasonable to think that they took the Book of Remembrance with them. There is a great deal in the ancient records about the taking away and bringing back of books--an arrangement first made known to the world by the prophet Joseph Smith in our time. According to the Pistis Sophia, Noah had the book and hid it in a stone receptacle so that it would not be damaged by the waters of the Flood. But who knows? (Elder Ray Greenhalgh; Watertown, SD; Mar. 4, 1980)

✱ > REVELATION. I am writing an article that is going to upset a lot of Mormons. It shows that Joseph Smith always insisted that he was not a revelator so much as a spark to ignite other people so they could get their own revelation and burn with their own light. The keys, he said, were not to be given to anybody, but made available to any and all such individuals as were willing to take them and put them to use. Above all, he insisted that nothing should be believed on his authority, but that everyone should find out for himself. He also saw that people much prefer an authoritarian approach to knowledge, and that the Mormons would have only themselves to blame for having to wait whole generations for information which God was perfectly willing to give them any time they were willing to work for it. (Dr. Klaus Baer; University of Chicago; Sep. 2, 1969) [The Oriental Institute Archives; All Rights Reserved]

SCHOLARSHIP AND RESEARCH. Everybody, it seems, wants to edit the Fathers, but nobody really cares to read them. (Mr. Michael Bundy; Ogden, UT; October 15, 1979)

This is a happy hunting-ground for crackpots, and not being certified in anything in particular I only rush in where fools fear to tread. (Mr. Dee Jay Nelson; June 27, 1967)

It may seem churlish to cite sources to which the reader has no access, but the purpose of such is to silence critics who are eager to call everything into question, and rightly so. If they want to run the stuff down they are cordially invited to do so—that is part of the game. (Susie Timko; Provo, UT; October 19, 1979)

Unless the subject is taken in its fullest context it can only lead to misunderstanding. We cannot bring up such references as evidence unless we are able to go all the way in demonstrating their complete consistency and relevance. To expose the follies of the opposition is one thing, but to bring forth positive proof is a very different assignment. My own work is proceeding apace, but it is very toilsome and detailed, and the worst thing that could happen would be to come out prematurely. (Robert L. Brown; Mesa, AZ; Nov. 21, 1980)

You have put your finger on the spot: the holistic approach is the one everybody has missed. As far as being analytical and objective, the tendency now is to bring the right side of the brain into operation after the long and unchallenged tyranny of the left side. Together they may lead to something like a holistic image. (Ian Barber; Stoke, Nelson, New Zealand; Jan. 27, 1981)

Scientists and scholars, as you know, are supposed to be humble and open minded people; you will find it quite impossible to "insult their intelligence." (Roger L. Samsel; Kennewick, WA; Jun. 26, 1981)

A document like the Anthon transcript is only interesting as proof and is only valid as proof to the degree to which the interpretation is clear and convincing. If the interpreter rests his case on data known only to himself the document has no value whatever as proof to anyone else. (G. Homer Durham, Historical Department; Salt Lake City; Jun. 26, 1981)

How many hundreds of scholars and intellectuals have proven the unreliability of the Bible! But if you want to believe the Bible they still cannot twist your arm, because, after all, their knowledge is very limited. Testimony is another matter. (Kathy Whitford; Riverside, CA; Jun. 26, 1981)

SCRIPTURES. You have in the Bible and three-in-one the greatest library of all, and the more thoroughly you familiarize yourself with it, the quicker and easier will be your researches when you get into the new stuff. (Elder Joseph Grenny; Popeete, Tahiti; Jun. 26, 1981)

SECOND COMING. Various church members have their own ideas about chronology, but I know of no official declaration on the subject. We should take the fortieth chapter of Alma more seriously in which

that prophet, while noting that many people, including his son, are very much disturbed about the timing of the resurrection, judgment and so forth, repeatedly, emphasizes to his son, Corianton, that such chronology "mattereth not." The event is the important thing and not the time. We are to look forward to the coming of Christ, for example, and pay close attention to the signs of its approach, but we are not to waste our efforts trying to calculate the time--even the angels are not allowed to do that. (Miss Sandra Coston; Paris, TX; 15 February 1978)

Our whole concern is to put ourselves right with the Lord as individuals by perfecting ourselves (my opinion) in faith, hope and charity. (John Jordan; Orem, UT; Dec. 18, 1980)

I never thought my children would see THE day, but now I am pretty sure of it. Excuse me for being enigmatic, but this is the moment when everyone pauses in a wild surmise: could it really happen after all? Not that you'd notice it; not until it does happen. (Robert Smith; Council Grove, KS; Jan. 9, 1971)

SPECULATION. We are free to speculate. In fact, we are enjoined to do so, and after we have reached certain conclusions, then we can ask the Lord whether we are right or wrong. That is part of the learning process. (Jeff Chalmers; Miami; May 14, 1980)

SPEED-READING. I have never been a speed-reader. In fact, I have always maintained that anything worth reading at all should be read slowly and aloud. You will find that such apparent plodding really covers more ground than the wildest speed-reader. The purpose of language is to communicate, but what is communicated pleasantly and joyfully is best learned and remembered. I am against speed-reading. (Peter Doherty; Weicester, England; May 9, 1986)

SPIRITUAL GIFTS. You have as much right to be guided by the spirit as anyone else. Also, we are commanded each one to read and search the Scriptures for himself. There is no office or calling in the church that authorizes the holder as an official interpreter of the Scriptures. In the School of the Prophets the greatest variety of opinion and freedom of expression prevailed with the Prophet Joseph taking the lead. Even prophecy, as Brigham Young pointed out, is not an office but a gift, and as a gift it is given to some in greater proportion than to others, regardless of the positions they hold. (Monroe P. Singleton; Rainier, OR; Jun. 26, 1981)

SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVE. All appearance is conditioned by the state of the beholder, and the scriptures make it perfectly clear that whoever sees the Lord must be in a very special state of mind. How would the world itself look to such a person? (Mr. Daniel Sorenson; Los Alamitos, CA; April 23, 1975)

SUCCESS. The passion for succeeding and making something of oneself was nowhere as strong as among the poor Scots laborers of the 19th century, and that is the tradition I grew up in. My canny grandparents had seen enough of the world to know two things: 1)

that nothing can hold you back like poverty; and 2) that nothing can fool and beguile you like wealth. That was their rock-and-a-hard-place situation. My grandfather passionately sought for both prizes, became very rich and was a general authority, but he was always ashamed of his concern for money. He was obsessed with feelings of guilt and warned me against taking that way, even though that is where the world's rewards lie. Did he do the right thing? My other grandfather, who was Irish, and gave up all his wealth when he joined the church and continued to distribute whatever he got for ever, and never achieved a high office. But when the two men were together, which happened sometimes at our house in Portland, everyone, including the two men themselves, knew who the really successful man was. (J. Byron Flanders; Lawrenceville, GA; May 16, 1984)

I was flattered by your invitation and exhilarated by your sense of humor. To put me in a book of successful people is high comedy indeed. The first time I succeed in anything I shall let you know, but don't hold your breath.

Might I suggest a book of Born Losers which I honestly believe would contain some far more interesting characters than any top management. Come to think of it, I am serious about that. The church archives are full of obscure nobodys whose achievements rank with those of Enoch's people. I am not thinking of the usual heroic pioneers but those who disappeared in obscurity after leaving tracks in the wilderness. Wishing you various kinds of success, I remain yours very truly, Hugh Nibley. (Ronald A. Millett; Deseret Book, Salt Lake City; May 16, 1984)

TEMPLES. What the Mormons like best about their temples is the obligation of secrecy that exonerates them from ever having to speak, and hence to think, about what they have learned by the ordinances and teachings. So strict are they in observing the confidential nature of those teachings that they, for the most part, scrupulously avoid dropping so much as a hint to outsiders by putting any of them into practice. (Prof. Jacob Neusner; Providence RI; 12 January 1975)

In a book called An Egyptian Endowment, I analyzed an Egyptian temple endowment at length and in an appendix supplied half-a-dozen parallels from the earliest Christian and Jewish writings. I think you will find there truly impressive resemblances to our own temple ordinances throughout, as well as an indisputable common pattern among them all, far exceeding the Masonic ordinances in age. The undoubted parallels between our temple ordinances and certain Masonic rites can be easily explained. But ours makes a consistent theological and historical whole and is much closer to some of the older rites than they are to Freemasonry. The Hopi Indians, for example, come closest of all as far as I have been able to discover--and where did they get theirs? (Howard S. Rhodes; Surrey, England; Mar. 4, 1980)

You may find the accompanying item on the Temple Scroll enlightening. I am sure you have access to such works as Peter

Tompkins' recent writings on Meso-American ruins and Stonehenge. In all of the literature you will find two basic patterns for ancient temples (Gertrude Lausing has treated the Egyptian)--the circle and the square, which represent the same thing, and in Jewish lore are often combined. There are also certain standard ways of representing the progression or steps of initiation: the straight processional way from room to room through a series of gates or the mounting up by stairways either circular or straight--you find both at Chichen-Itza. The circular Tawwaf is negotiated three times by the pilgrim at Mecca around the Qaaba, which is a great square; in fact, the word Qaaba is cognate with our Cube.

You will note that there is not a curved line on the exterior of the Salt Lake Temple, except for windows and doors. The Cosmic cycle or circle is clearly indicated, however, by the Dipper and Pole Star on the main west tower, for Ursa Major and Polaris have always represented to all peoples the rotation of the heavens and the earth. The cosmic cycle is also represented in the circular font at the bottom and center of everything--the Tehom of the Old Testament. All temples express in one way or another the idea of the divine mountain, the mountain of the Lord. Which makes the tower principle indispensable, even if the tower is a low-profile mountain and includes the whole temple, as in Cardston.

The three levels or three degrees are essential both inside and out. In a single room they could be presented by taking a step up upon entering, another step up at the prayer circle, the altar standing on a slight rise, and a final step up at the veil. Or the walls could have panelling at three levels, indirect lighting displaying successively the blank walls of "matter unorganized" (appropriate designs for such would be only too easy to find among our present-day artists), a panel set back with stars, another behind and above it with phases of the moon, and finally the sun and its rays.

The tower would be a central one over a celestial room, resembling the main tower of the Salt Lake Temple, clearly displaying the three degrees and four-square principle. The lowest and broadest level could have horns at the corners representing the law of sacrifice in or celestial kingdom, the next level could have stylized stairways indicated on four sides like ancient American temples or a Hopi kiva, indicating the covenants by which we mount up. The top crowned with Moroni or some celestial symbol. These are things that occur to me most forcefully in reviewing many studies on the "hierocentric structure." Whatever else one adds or subtracts they represent the historical minimum. (Leland A. Gray; Architectural Services and Standard Plans Section, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; Salt Lake City; May 19, 1981)

> The Council of Jamnia is held responsible for putting an end of any attempts to revive the temple and establishing the Rabbinical schools in its place. (Elder James Rizzo; Provo MTC; May 18, 1984)

It will surprise you how much is known abroad about our Temples--there is nothing an outsider can't find out if he is determined to do so. But until now all "disclosures" have had little or no adverse affect on the spreading of the Gospel. You need not be

overly concerned: the more the truth of these things is known the better we look. (Mada Edstrom; Rexburg, ID; Nov. 25, 1986)

I do continue to learn something new every time [I go to the temple]. Last Saturday, for example, I was struck by "the need for constant nourishment to body and spirit." We go on feeding ourselves with calories and vitamins from day to day, even though we have already been stuffing for years. Why don't we carry on with the same elan in nourishing the spirit instead of chewing the same tire bubble gum that we did as children? (Dr. Ghent Graves, Jr.; Logan, UT; Jul. 22, 1987)

TEMPLES--CLOTHING. Since we are told how the Angel Moroni was clothed, which was not in temple robes, which are for protection in this world, I see no reason for supposing the same dress will apply in the hereafter. (Lloyd Ririe; Provo, UT; Mar. 11, 1982)

TEMPLES--VEILS. The main purpose of the circle is complete unity and absolute concentration. In such a circle, the veiling of faces is to avoid the straying of eyes or wandering of minds. The presence of fair women just might attract the attention of someone or catch some wandering eye, or the lady herself might feel inclined to look around. To guard against such perfectly natural minor distractions and to aid concentration on absolute seriousness of purpose the veiling is a good idea.

TESTIMONY--BUILDING. I can think of no more powerful testimony-building material than the Scriptures. "If they believe not Moses and the prophets," said the Lord, "they will not believe though one rose from the dead." However, I find the autobiographies of early Church leaders such as P. P. Pratt, W. Woodruff, Brigham Young, Geo. Q. Cannon, etc., have an impact that nothing else in the literature can equal. If they don't move him nothing will. (Ms. Lorna Williams; LaFollette, TN; Dec. 1, 1980)

TIME AND ETERNITY. Time is measured only to man and your before and after problem could be explained on quite sound scientific grounds of relativity. All Christians agree that Christ laid aside the glory he had with the Father before the world was in order to come down to this earth and make a supreme sacrifice, descending beneath all things and laying aside his Godhead for our deliverance. The same applies to the Holy Spirit. The trouble is that we are bound by categories of time, and time is measured "only unto man." Eternity is certainly an attribute of godhood, and that is without beginning as well as without end. (Jeff Chalmers; Miami; May 14, 1980)

The problem with dating is not that of the pyramids, but of the Flood. The chronologies of the Bible are by no means definitive. The Masoretic and Septuagint texts give different years for most events. The latest studies emphasize that the term "Son of" almost always means descendant of, and can jump gaps of centuries. I won't say that the dates don't matter, but I will say that they are important only when we know what they are. Meantime, things are

getting ancienter and ancienter all the time, including myself. A good deal is being written just now about the timelessness of Egyptian myth and history. That is not a fanciful concept when things just keep happening over and over again as they seem to in Egypt--they arranged it that way. I think I can share something of their feeling of the timeless; there is something quite salutary about ignoring the clock and the calendar. (Jane Sylvester; Hayward, CA; Jul. 17, 1987)

TITHING. Tithing is paid to the Lord, and whether it is buried in the ground or thrown away is none of my business. (Jan Taylor, Des Moines, IA; April 24, 1975)

The tithe is an eternal principle. It is not a complication of the Law of Consecration but a rule of special dedication in which one makes a specific effort to set apart a particular activity from all the rest. For example, all my time today is taken up with research into a particular subject, in the course of which one particularly important detail turns up--that detail must get special attention until I have finished with it. It is only part of the whole program, but it is a part set apart. The classic tithe found among many ancient people besides the Jews, represents the purely economic aspect of the principle; but I think it applies to everything. Your tithe is your special pet, your nest egg aside with a particular blessing in view. (Dave Clark and Curtis Jaussi; Marshall, MO; December 11, 1979)

TRANSLATION. (see also LANGUAGE) Joseph Smith translated books from a number of ancient languages, none of which he could read. The translations were given to him by revelation, an imponderable process. There is no way of testing the translations by analyzing the method. But there is a virtually foolproof way of testing the authenticity of all those translations, namely by comparing them with the larger body of literature to which they are supposed to belong. (Michael Adler; Glendora, CA; Dec. 12, 1984)

TRUTH. It is surprising how much truth remains to be learned and taught of which none of us at present has the slightest inkling. (Elder Steve Mann; Huntsville, AL; Oct. 31, 1980)

UNITED ORDER (see LAW OF CONSECRATION)

WEALTH (see also LAW OF CONSECRATION) We have been instructed to read the Book of Mormon with scrupulous care and close analysis. If we do that, we will discover that the acquisition of wealth often rewarded the zeal of the Saints but invariably led to pride, ambition and the increase of inequality among the Saints. It was the inequality that bothered the prophets. Let me refer you to the Concordance for checking on these things statistically. Match up, for example, "riches" and "angels", both of which are mentioned many times. The riches tell one story, the angels another. The riches don't bother me because they don't concern me, but the absence of angels on the present scene may be significant. As you know, Joseph Smith said "the heavens have often been sealed up

because of covetousness in the church." But the Church still went on--without angels or revelations, the channel being pretty well closed off. The degree of inspiration in the Church is not always the same; the Book of Mormon is a barometer in which it goes up and down in astonishingly short periods. If you examine it, you will find that there is a definite correlation between wealth and revelation--a negative correlation. You will also find that at every period there are humble servants of Christ who go their way without trying to control anything but their own behavior; they are the ones who really benefit by the Gospel and enjoy it. (Brent Lewis; Cedar City, UT; Feb. 24, 1988)

WORD OF WISDOM. A number of times in the Doctrine and Covenants leaders in the Church are severely rebuked for not observing the Word of Wisdom. Nowhere is abstention from heroin or opium given as a commandment, but that is where the wisdom part of it comes in--we are commanded to use wisdom in these things, but no one can force us to be wise. (Jeff Chalmers; Miami; May 14, 1980)

WRITINGS AND TALKS. Going back over things I wrote years ago, in taking an inventory of the garage, I find that some of it is not so bad, and that time has been very kind to some of my more ambitious articles. Wherefore, I am now aspiring to produce one thing which at least will not be very, very bad. For this, I look to the future, and as far as I am concerned, the past stuff must by its very nature be inferior, since it came forth in my perpetual jahaliyyah ("time of ignorance"). (Pam Lane; Simi Valley, CA; Jun. 22, 1982)

I am confining myself strictly to one class of documents this summer, and I am afraid I can be of no help at all to anyone in anything. (Vern Winterton; Jun. 26, 1982)

Urgent assignments here and elsewhere have kept me from giving you the prompt service your letter deserves. More than that, I have always steered clear of the P.G.P., which, as you can well imagine, has been a Happy Hunting-Ground for crack-pots. However, I would not be human if I were not guilty of speculating at times. (Dr. Klaus Baer; University of Chicago; Aug. 2, 1962) [The Oriental Institute Archives; All Rights Reserved]

The most disturbing thing about the times we live in is the way we see the prophecies, ancient and modern, going into fulfillment--much too fast for comfort. I did not order it that way, and would much prefer a more relaxed, dignified, and adjustable Gang der Geschichte, but we are not going to have it that way. This is the world's worst typewriter. As to the Big Ritual Picture which has been my obsession for years, it is gratifying to see how many experts in how many fields are sort of coming into line. Some of the most die-hard positivists are beginning to see that there IS a rather uniform pattern of ritual and doctrine in the Old World.

Though I may have been over-eager in detecting parallels and pushing analogies (the understatement of the year, you will say!), still it is becoming clearer to more and more people every day that

there is "something there." It is because I have been aware of this all along that I have not been disturbed by what I have considered more or less irrelevant attacks on the P.G.P. (Dr. Klaus Baer; University of Chicago; Sep. 2, 1962) [The Oriental Institute Archives; All Rights Reserved]