

and personalities behind what I had read about some of them. I found myself paying less attention to what they were saying (much of it was populace posturing) and more, to their radiance. It is interesting to compare the radiance from an Orrin Hatch with the comparative darkness of Edward Kennedy, for example. With few exceptions, the republicans had much brighter radiance than did the democrats--intelligence truly is "truth and light." (No prejudice here, I am certain).

I was trying to be unbiased and would determine the speaker's political party by his/her radiance before they flashed it on the screen. It really worked! Democrat stands for "DARK." I suppose as the winding up scenes get more dramatic, the dichotomy between the parties for righteousness and those for evil will become more clear and it will become more difficult for men of conscience to balance out our two-party system. We'll probably have to resort to Brigham Young's approach and assign good persons to be democrats. It is not that I think all democrats are evil. But most, if not all, of them are what I might classify as "deluded do-gooders." Not too bright. They pander to the depressed in this world--the selfish and lazy--which means a good part of the populace. They will give us all everything we need to be happy--of course, always at someone else's expense! Perish the thought that someone should have to work for what he gets or that there should be consequence for laziness or gluttony. The Doves in the debate never graduated from Dr. Spock's school of permissiveness. Democrat-dark-depressed-deluded-doveish. I'm glad your name doesn't start with a "D."

At any rate, Daniel, you should not be intimidated by politics. You or I could have given as good a talk as most up there. I would like to see you take a little debate when you get back. It is a good way to hone speech skills and learn to see both sides of an issue. It helps people think clearly and organize expression of that thinking. I am not sorry for my four years of high school debate. I must say, though, you probably have more influence in the world giving a humble talk to your little branch in Guatemala than did those representatives speaking over public television. You are where the ACTION is!

I began watching the debates thinking I would support the President's position and ended thinking I would still support the President's decision; but it was very traumatic to watch that debate, consider all sides of the issue, and still decide to support the President--knowing full well that I have a draft-age, only son.

I'm so grateful you are not over in Saudi Arabia right now. We saw part of a broadcast of the entertainment brought to the soldiers in Desert Shield over the holidays. Marie Osmond did some country singing. I thought she looked beautiful. She was probably one of the few entertainers Saudi Arabia would let into the country! Bob Hope was also on the program, but told some disappointing jokes. The camera highlighted some of the young men and women in the troops. It made me weep to think they might lose their lives and we, them. They looked clean, idealistic and bright. T.V. might be our most powerful weapon against war. The only trouble is, some of the countries most inclined to terrorism don't have that kind of communication and would not care, anyway.

Definitely gnawing at me now is the dichotomy between how adamant we are about protecting Kuwait while we only blink and condemn when Gorby sends his tanks into Lithuania. I guess Lithuania doesn't have oil--and, then, Gorby has nuclear arms. And to think we gave him the

Nobel Peace Prize!

Well, now comes the countdown 'til tomorrow, midnight, Eastern Standard Time. I keep praying Saddam Hussein's heart will be softened and he will back down, last minute. According to the news, Israel, which already has its pilots strapped into war planes in alternating shifts, has agreed to sit tight if the promised attack from Iraq comes and let the U.S.A. do the defending, (an apparent effort on our part not to split the so-called Arab alliance). This is all very complex.

I know the prophecies look to that day when all nations are against Israel--so that includes us, I guess. I was interested in a dialogue in BYU Today by some LDS professors who have taught in that region. They speculated that Americans will have less desire to continue their 3.5 billion a yr. support of Israel when we see how Israel is not our bastion of freedom in that area of the world, but rather somewhat "in the way." It all looks like a wind-up scenario, but there is so much which still needs to be accomplished before I think we're ready for the Lord's return. For one thing, I'm not through repenting.

I called Virginia yesterday (they are all down, also, with a virus), and she said she is going out tomorrow to buy water for her family. Saddam has threatened PLO terrorist action if we attack Iraq, and we know he has biological and chemical defenses. Virginia was commenting that all he has to do is have one of his terrorists drop a vial of typhoid germs into the open water supply for the Wash. D.C. area and goodbye, populace. The same thing could happen here. Well, the Lord has said that if we try to live a righteous life and if we are prepared, we shall not fear. I know we can always do better, but I feel the Lord's blessing in so many of our efforts, I feel confident He will stand by us when times get difficult.

The debates kept me occupied for a couple of days, but during the rest of the time I did some meaningful reading in the scriptures. I also read the entire Book of Jasher (referred to in Joshua and Second Samuel)-- which was one of our Christmas gifts to ourselves and proved to be very interesting. It was apparent that there is much truth in that book and also much that might fit a "Paul Bunyan" tall-tale characterization.

I also read the entire Relief Society manual for the coming year (Susan Buckles was on the writing committee which helped put that out). I thought it was excellent, though reading all those goals and ideas in just a couple of days left me feeling a bit overwhelmed with all I want to become and all I want to accomplish. I read much in the Gospel Principles manual in preparation for teaching the "Gospel Essentials" class next year (I had to get a substitute this week because I was still ill). I read the January Ensign from cover to cover--do you get the Ensign? That art work by Bloch, so exquisitely included in that issue, absolutely transfixed me.

I have decided I am a very visual person. I think the hour or so I spent examining those photos of Bloch's paintings brought me closer to my Savior than ten hours of reading about Him might have done. An inspired artist has such a gift! After viewing those, I am no longer satisfied with the paintings I have in the upstairs hall of Christ's second coming (the one in the foyer of the Wash. Temple) and the one of Jesus ascending into heaven. They are uplifting. But paintings by Bloch are absolutely riveting! There is talent and inspiration! I am

hoping the Church can make available prints of those large enough to frame. I wish I were wealthy enough to claim originals for the walls of our home. But, then, I guess I'd have to hire guards and security systems.

Now your father is a person who responds to sound. 'Drives me crazy sometimes. He is not satisfied unless a tape is rolling or the TV is on (although he gratefully has good taste in what he chooses to view), or music is playing. He truly does not enjoy reading the scriptures unless they are read vocally. I get bored with vocal reading--I read faster than that, and I find my mind wandering. Dad and I finally have reached a compromise. He reads one column, I read one column, and we read the rest silently and then share our thoughts about what has been read. My mind even wanders while I'm reading vocally! During the private reading time I always have to go back and reread the parts which were read out loud. I love silence. Maybe it's a luxury for me, having grown up the oldest of seven children. Nothing drives me wilder than being stuck with people who have to make incessant small talk. Fortunately for me, I can close out noise and create my own private world. It used to drive my mission companions nuts! They would ask questions and think I was ignoring them. But I had just retreated into my beautiful, silent space to concentrate on something.

I also read a book Susan Buckles brought us, In the Lord's Service, a Guide to Spiritual Development, by Carlos E. Asay, a member of the Presidency of the Seventy. It is actually compiled from talks he gave to inspire missionaries. I think it is excellent. I kept thinking how much you would enjoy it while I was reading it--I wish I could send it to you. I also reviewed a lot of genealogy--ought to get ill more often, I suppose.

Dan was wonderful through all this illness--bringing me some pretty good food and keeping things going around the house. He is such a good man.

We were very worried about Hunt Tracy in Haiti, with all the uprisings there, but apparently the military decided to support the government which was elected, so dictatorship did not reign and the missionaries are now safe. Mom said Betsy was very upset for a while there, wondering if Tracy could get out safely, if necessary. We certainly were praying for his safety, as we always do for yours.

Apparently Don Pepper is going to be retired this month and is going the first of February to Utah to see about a possible job in the Church institute system. Since Pres. Workman is head of that system, I think he at least has a fighting chance. So maybe we shall have some good news about him, soon, too! He said to tell you he appreciates your prayers and concern. I tell him every time you ask about him in your letters. Remember Elder Hartman? He got married in the temple about eight months after returning from his mission, and they are now expecting their first child.

Mail just came. 'So stuffed, I could hardly get it out of the box--and was there a letter from Guatemala? Disgusting. Well, that's all for now. Don't forget Grandma Hall's birthday, February 20. I'm sure she'd love one of your Daniel Hallish-design cards. Which reminds me, she wants me to send her a Hallmanack yet. I sent her typed copies of your letters and a copy of my six-pager to you, but no two-pager from me (she won't copy more than two pages). Ah, to be in such demand.

Love always,

P.S. I was telling Charlotte (Weight, my sister) over the phone (your Uncle Bryan just had knee surgery--he's OK) yesterday about your letter where you said you would respond to your bishop's call: "Yes, Bishop--and what else can I do for you?" and she made an excellent suggestion. That you substitute the word "Mom" in that phrase for "Bishop!" 'Can hardly wait 'til you get home and I can hand you my list! (Smile).

P.S.S. Did I ever tell you what a wonderful son you are? The BYU Bowl Game was 65-14--I guess they could use a little humbling after Ty got the Heisman. I'm enclosing a copy of a great letter I got from my South German mission president. I had lost his address, then found it, sent him a Christmas card, and got this incredible letter!

P.S.S.S. It snowed at least 6" last week. We finally have our white Christmas. Gorgeous outside! I got five bird feeders for Dan to give me for Christmas which are now all out hanging from the deck railing (they fit perfectly between the deck-border-boards). I suppose they'll stay there until an ape I know gets home and climbs the trees to hang them outside my study window. It gives me such delight to watch all the chickadees, purple-breasted finches, blue-jays, etc. which now flock to our deck. Your father is not amused, as he does not think the deck needs fertilizing.

No job yet. Dan just asked me what we should name our new company. I told him I didn't know what he was going to name his new company, but I hope he can afford a good secretary. I think he's getting serious about becoming a consultant and helping people put in new computer systems like he just did in this house. He was on the phone about an hour last week with my brother, David, getting ideas for this kind of work.

P.S. from Dad: I just read Mom's letter & enjoyed it much! I have to agree--mom does drive her companion crazy at times. I still don't know how to penetrate her personal world when she is wrapped up in something and processing it internally. Don't imagine any of the children inherited that. What do you think? Also, I would call those Saddam gas and bio items weapons of OFFENSE, not DEFENSE! I called the White House, also congressman Zimmer's office locally, & Roger Porter's office at the White House to urge that tomorrow (Tue 1/15) be declared a national day of prayer for the troops, for Kuwait, and for Lithuania.

I visited the McMullen's yesterday with the Elders' Q. Presidency. They were baptized a few years ago and have a wonderful spirit for being tied down with health problems. Both have lung cancer. He has asbestositis as well, having worked with asbestos for the Manville Corporation much of his life. She was joking about their "His" and "Hers" oxygen supplies that they breathe from. & hospital beds, too. Brother Howe visits them faithfully and brings the sacrament each month.

We moved in a new family Sat.; he's an elder, an biochemistry Ph.D who does cancer research. Also, a young man, Fred Smith will be baptized Saturday. We're gradually getting some reinforcements here to help with home teach and church callings. It will be exciting to see what happens with the Presbyterians when Br. Pepper makes his move and shares it with them. The Morristown chapel has only one congregation meeting there now. I hope there will be a need to use up that vacancy. I'm reading the Nov. Ensign Conference talks now as I cycle. Great. Esp. Elder Ayala on the neurosurgeon/Word of Wisdom. OOPS! Out of space! LOVE!!! Dad