

March 4, 1978

Dear Children:

I had a shower (quilting type) for Diane Jonsson (yes, that little kid is getting married, can you imagine?) and had about 24-05 ladies in for lunch. We ran it in shifts and if any of you ever want to have a quilting you might borrow the idea. We invited 16 ladies for the morning and eight for the afternoon, and had the ladies on the morning shift END their shift and lunch and the afternoon ladies START their shift at lunch so we were all together at noon, when Diane came over to have lunch and open her gifts. Sister Babcock (she is still the same sister Babcock) had bought a quilt top and said SHE was going to make a quilt all by herself for Diane. It ended up with Helen buying the material for the bottom and the bat. Lucille was supposed to be on our committee and furnish the drink. We had four ladies--I furnished the salad, Donna H. furnished the ice-cream for dessert, Myrtle Joy furnished the rolls, and Lucille (?) furnished the drink. Guess who ended up furnishing the drink? Helen Jonsson. I was fit to be tied. Old age is improving me--I didn't blow up. However, I always dread to put a quilt on that has to be really quilted and not tied. If we had tied that quilt it would have been off at noon and the border done by the day's end, but as it was (and we had good quilters, there, too (except for me) there was still a lot of quilting on that quilt to be done. Helen took it home and her husband's step mother has been working on it. On top of everything else Helen has had Kathryn in the hospital with a virus something (everything is always a virus something) (if they can't diagnose something else) and she has been quite ill. She is on the mend now, but still in the hospital and can't eat anything without throwing up. She said when I called her yesterday that she can hardly wait to get strong enough to limp to the scales to see how much she weighed. She is a cutie, but she can easily stand to lose 10 pounds or so. And that brings up another problem--my perennial one--control of MY appetite. I need to lose 30 or so pounds--and what I really need to do and it won't help until I do is revamp my eating habits so that I have control of my input. Grunk. I LOVE to eat. It's terrible--especially when that husband of mine looks so good and has such disgustingly good self-control. You know that's what my whole trouble was all the time I was raising you yahoos--it is said that he who cannot control himself cannot control others. Well, we're not supposed to want to control others anyway, are we. (Just ourselves.) Liz, how are you coming? I went down five pounds and then back up again, so I have to start all over. Liz and I are trying to lose some weight by the summer camp.

Virginia has sent me the first installment of her childhood memories. She said it should be entitled "childhood confessions" but we LOVED it made us cry. Dad said when I laid it on his desk at noon after I had received it, "I'll have to read it tonight--got too much to do," but he made one mistake--he picked it up and read the first page and then he was a captive audience.

I got a kick out of your interviews of your kids, Tracy. So like kids--so full of truth (and inconsistencies). The gist of it all was that all of them decided to keep you all as a family--and isn't that nice?

Tracy, isn't it maddening that someone like Betsy can get under those little monster skins so easily when someone like you and myself have to work so hard at it. Don't feel bad--it's a gift. Some have it and some don't. And classes vary. I had good rapport with some and -----something else with others.

In all honesty, the hardest job I ever had in my life in the church was the five years I taught those 15 year old teen-agers. In a way they are delightful, but in another way they are the most exasperating creatures ever created. One happy thought--they do grow up-- and become quite human people. Betsy has the real approach though--and it does take "GIVING" of oneself--going to their games, and calling when ill, etc. Even though I did a lot of that, though, there is something else that is needed--and that is to genuinely love them--and sometimes that is VERY HARD, INDEED. Most of the time I managed it--and by the end of the five years I really did not have any hard feelings towards anyone and could laugh at myself and them-- which is always easy when its over. Someone has to cope--and I really envy those who have the gift for working with young people-- and some do.

My patriarchal blessing said I would work with the youth. Is Youth 12 and younger? I did pretty well in that category and really got along very well with the 12 year old boys all those years in the primary--but 15? Yuuck! Marty is another who may have the gift. I would imagine that Sherlene would be good with teen-agers-- but failure to have a "spiritual experience" with them might get her down (and about 90 % of the time that's what happens). Virginia would be good--they'd run all over Charlotte--but she's sure good with difficult 11 yr olds. Bryan has a class of obstreperous 12 year olds. He should have no trouble understanding them because from some of the tales he has told to me, he was one of them himself at that age. That doesn't help, however, in handling them, because I was the worst yacker in the class when I was that age. If I had been the teacher I would have thrown me out every class. I always said that that five year period of my life was just getting the bread I had thrown on the water previously..

I had applied for credit for the research done this summer--on a "field" type of thing. I thought only credit was involved and found that what happened was that you registered for a 400R class in genealogy and then didn't have to go but you did have to submit a report for a grade, which got me started to organizing the reams of materials I had on the Hall side of the family (not all organized yet) but after the shower I just left up both those long tables in the living room and "spread out". The neices called it "an early American mess." and it was--for two full weeks. I am now sitting here basking in the glory of a clean study and a clean living room. (won't last long) But I did find that I had one family of Staleys who turned out to be the only staleys in the county and who went into a logical family that fit the numbers in the family in the 1820-30 census and then could be filled in with marriage records. We now have another progenitor decorating the pedigree charts who I knew was there, because Elizabeth Staley's father was Peter Staley Jr. which certainly implied a Peter Staley Sr., which is the one I picked up, but I think I took him back to Jacob Staley of Frederick Co, Va, but will need more research to prove that one out.

Barry, I told you that you may need to stay with the government to have more time to do genealogy--that's a bunch of malarky. What you need is your own business and the ability to not mind if you didn't make the ultimate money out of it and WAS willing to take off any time the urge hit you, and maybe that would be if you had your own business. Glad to hear you are working on the book. I wish you had a lot of vacation coming, I would come to D.C. and pick you up and the go up to Pa with you. By the way, that John Kincaid is probably not ours, but he will add to the general Kincaid picture and it does give me someplace to look. I haven't checked but probably

Washington Co., was taken off Lancaster co. which is where our Kincaids were originally supposed to have come into.

Speaking of genealogy, I promised Nancy I would give her a copy of a genealogy family home evening we had the other week. We had a "this is your life" evening, and Dad and I portrayed one branch of the Hall family and one branch of the Mecham family. I found a genealogy book on Doug's side of the family and got enough information to do a spiel on his. We drew a map of the US with yarn on the rug and moved across the country with the spiel. Doug guessed. (He had heard me call his mother and ask for his line to tie in with this book.) I should have been more sneaky, but when I called her I did not have this family night idea. His line closely parallels the Tracy family, being a New England Line from Mass. While ours went into New York from Vt., his went into Lower New York. His people were in Nauvoo along with the Fracys--and in Mo., but probably not in Kirtland. We've got a lot of new England blood to pass on to the grandchildren now. Doug--Dan--Bryan--Betsy--Hey--Karen, I know about your Holland line, but do you have an early American line--and is it Southern or New England? Also Barrys lines are some of them New England. I don't know about Marty, but it's a good thing that there's some new blood brought in (from Sweden and the South--those staid new England lines need a little life instilled in them (from the Langfords and Neils, etc.) Any rebuttals welcome. Too much inbreeding among those early Mormon lines. One can't help but wonder, and I'm going to ask them when I get over there--if they knew each other back there in Salem, and Mass, and Vermont--in Mo., and Nauvoo, etc. The church wasn't all that big, then, and I'll bet a lot of our ancestors knew each other.

I am taking an old Testament class this semester--the second half of the course, but changed teachers--I haven't met Madsen, and she is doing a beautiful job--she is not as dogmatic as those male chauvinist Religion teachers (a jab at Tracy Jr., saying he wish they would quit acting like "women".) (Probably to get under Mother's skin). She doesn't mind admitting she doesn't know all the answers and that she doesn't think anyone really knows. A true blue open minded woman.

MOM SAYS THAT I HAVE TO WRITE NOW, SO---. As I was walking in to the Timpanogos club meeting the third Thursday of February, Elder David B. Haight motioned for me to sit by him at his table (there are about eight tables in the presidents room at the Hotel Utah where Timp Club always meets. Elder Haight had just returned from Chile where he had been for about three weeks. He spoke of the great need for older couples out in the mission field, not to proselyte but to help the converts (particularly from South America) to make the switch from the passive activities of Catholicism such as crossing oneself or counting a couple of beads to the "works of Mormonism". Evenso, the Church has to be greatly simplified to the basic essentials for the mañana people. Elder Haight said that it would be a great thing if we could take the Wasatch Front High Priests out of their priesthood classes where they are arguing about which way the pearly gates swing and put them in the mission fields of Central and South America to teach new members the basic principles of leadership and church activity. In this same connection he said something else that struck home with me. Before telling you what he said, I will have to lay a little background. Upon becoming Bishop of the Pleasant View First

(over)

Ward, I immediately made a demographic study of our members. It showed that we were moving out of the era of plenty with respect to young people. There are sixty five persons aged sixty or older and the median age in the ward is exactly fifty. At ward conference, I set several goals for the ward including sending a number of older couples on missions. So far, only the Walter D. Tuellers have gone. Walter is age eighty two and his wife is a few years younger. This couple belies their age in appearance, but you should see them now! They are at the LTM learning the German language and it is definitely very difficult for them at their age but they sneaked away from the LTM the other evening to come and visit with mom and I. They were radiant! They considered this the crowning event of their lives and the blessing of youth was upon them. Well, where was I? Oh, yes, there has not been a good response with respect to getting our older ones out on missions. They are mostly looking forward to a comfortable and sedentary retirement thinking that they have put in their time for the church. In fact, one brother has told us exactly that and refuses to even attend church. I can empathize with this a little bit but not as much as before talking to Elder Haight. I mentioned to him the problem of getting older couples out on missions and he told several stories about getting people off retirement dead center. One brother didn't want to go to Scotland because he was afraid he might die over there and he wanted to die in more familiar surroundings. Elder Haight convinced him that if he was planning to die, he should die with his boots on. The brother served two consecutive missions in Scotland and never had such a good time in his life. Elder Haight suggested that I use the following to awaken responsibility in our people; I am only number three. The best that I can ever be is number three. The scriptures emphasize that the Lord our God is first (we must love him with all our might, mind, and soul). Our neighbor is number two (we must love him as we love our selves as a minimum and Jesus said our love for our neighbor must be like unto our love for our father in heaven. So we are stuck with being number three and the sooner we fully recognize this the better we will be with respect to things eternal." I took Apostle Haight's advice and looked for an opening to make a small speech. I thought it would come at the next Fast and Testimony meeting (tomorrow) but our High Councilman of last week burned out twenty minutes early so I seized the opportunity to make a fifteen minute presentation. When I was through and the meeting had ended, one good brother approached me and said, "I always knew that you were a great physicist but what I hadn't realized is that you are also a great con-man!" The wife and I will immediately begin to put our affairs in order so that we can go on a mission. There were some unexpected benefits from this number three idea also. A much harried and discouraged Laurel leader was revived. My talk caused her to realize that you shouldn't expect seventeen year olds to love, respect, honor, obey, and appreciate you or your efforts. You may or may not, someday, get a thank you for your arduous labors on their behalf but you must labor anyway. CHILDREN, I LOVE YOU! May you remember that on this earth you are only number three (3). It will make you number one in the life to come. I remain your everlasting admirer, Dad (3 March 1978).

*H. Tracy Hall*

*P.S. Its really 4 March 1978 but  
I can't get the number 3  
off my mind.*

March 14, 1978

Dear Children: Just an added note. I have had an exciting two days the last two days. Ann and Trueman madsen have sponsored a symposium featuring eminent jewish and Protestant scholars who have been brought here to discuss their particular specialty from a comparative with Mormon doctrine point of view.

(A sneaky way to make these scholars delve into mormon theology.)

(And about time, too--how long can they go on ignoring the mormon point of view?) Trueman made an introduction to the symposium saying that he hoped the end result of the symposium would be to "build-bridges" between various religions, and "tear down walls". Rassmussen, in the closing few minutes said the symposium might be called "a symposium from Trueman Madsen's non-mormon friends.

The first day only one of the speakers I heard (and I heard all of them but the last) really "compared" and so I was disappointed in this respect. I also had a hard time keeping awake. The second day I had no trouble keeping awake I was on the end of my seat at all times. Tracy--you would have loved the Jewish brethren--three of them Kaplan, Milgrom, and ironically Charlesworth, who is a methodist minister, but also a jew, so you got the JEWISH CHRISTIAN point of view in his talks. Actually, all of you would have enjoyed those talks. Karen thought about going, but she is somewhat swamped by a particularly challenging relief-society presidency at this time, so felt she had better not take the time.

A particularly interesting time was an open-house which Anne invited us to to meet these speakers. As soon as we got there she introduced us to Edmund Cherbonnier, (see enclosed program) and his wife and for all the time we were there they had us cornered asking us questions--questions--and more questions. They were especially interested in the temple. They were very discreet, and said they understood that there were parts of the temple ceremony which we could not talk about. We were proving to be a bottleneck around the serving table, so I said "Let's go in the other room where we can talk about it and we will tell you all we can tell you about the temple. When we got in there I said: "shoot! Ask away and we will tell you what we can. So we explained (briefly) about baptism for the dead (all being subject to the acceptance of the individual for whom the work is done accepting such ordinances) etc. and sealing, and endowment. We didn't talk long, and Tracy and I left soon after that so we did not pursue it any farther. The next morning I ask Tracy if I could give them our copy of "The house of the Lord" and so had Anne see that they got it. Anne called this morning and said that Mrs. Cherbonnier, had said that it was sweet of us to send it to her, but she lost the note and so Anne had called to ask me what was in the note. It was a sneaky note. I had told her that "in continuation of our conversation the evening before they might be interested in the enclosed publication written by one of our eminent LDS scholars whose "Jesus the Christ" had become an LDS classic. (Hoping it might pique their interest in "Jesus the Christ". Anne said she was sure they would be interested in that book. And that she was going to see that the Cherbonniers got the BOM.

John Dillenberger and his wife Jane are the ones who endowed the chair "Richard L Evans" chair which Trueman Madsen now holds. She is intrigued by Christensen's paintings of the martyrdom and persecutions of the Mormons.

But objects to the "slick" madison-square type art displayed in the visitors center. In my opinion she is right and wrong. She also doesn't think our art in the temples is very good. Well some of it is good and some of it is not good, but it is good in that it is typical of the art work of the artists of the LDS people at the time they were painted. In that respect it is probably as good as Christensens art which she classed as Provincial. What she wanted was "good" or even "great art" which has the same power to "move" the masses but is "lasting in its values. Maybe, but what she doesn't know is that those artists were told what to portray and also How to portray it (like our chapel designs) and she needs to work with the church bureaucracy. Ernst Benz didn't come--instead Robert N Bellah gave the last talk as he missed his plane and didn't make it to give the first talk. The afternoon scholars had really made in-depth studies for comparison. Krister Stendahl went through the two sermons almost point for point and his general conclusions were that the greatest differences were that in the biblical account Christ appears as a teacher of principle--but in the account in III Nephi he appears as the son of God, the Great I am, the Redeemer, and gives the sermon more as a Commandment than as a teaching. "I say unto you". Very astute observation. And I hope the thought comes to him that it further reinforces the BOM "truthfulness" as revelation and not just "copying". Christ at the time of his Sermon in the Gospels was not revealing the true nature of himself as the son of God. Persecution was increasing and he was avoiding actual confrontation as his time "had not yet come", but when he appeared to the Nephite, he had overcome death, had taken upon himself the sins of the world, had become the Mediator--the Christ==the Great I AM. (He used that phrase). He was obviously moved by the Nephite story of Christ blessing the little children." I think he was a little afraid of what he had read. He said:"I have never seen a people with "so much" information. (he had been reading from "Book of Mormon commentary" and "Doctrine & Covenant Commentary" and said "There is a danger in wanting to know everything." (that is true--we do have to know all the answers--even when we don't have the answers) but at the same time when you "discover" something (truth) then you have the responsibility to "do something" about it. which might be a frightening thing to one so eminently placed in a protestant situation.

The last speaker Robert N. Bellah (first on the program) is a sociologist, and spent three months in a small community of Rama, New Mexico as a grad student in New Mexico. He was obviously taken with the mormon community and felt the extra something of love and christian fellowship there. And desired that this might be incorporated, somehow, into all our communities-- (it can, by conversion to the Gospel) but it can't any other way. He compared it to the early Puritan community in America, and found many similarities.

The whole series are going to be published and would make interesting reading.

Some of these I feel are almost converted Mormons-- but can't bring themselves to make the ultimate committment.

They, however, are doing us a lot of good. For Instance John Diloenberger has been instrumental in helping to establish Mormon Studies in the theological school at Berkely. That's a very good start, I think. It means that the theologians will be taught Mormon theology by Mormons and not by someone else who does not understand our doctrine. Enough. It's been a rich, spiritual feast and very interesting. Mom