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EITHER EVOLVE, OR DON'T

MANY THANKS TO SUNSTONE for printing Professor Bradshaw's terrific article on evolution.

I've long been amused by my fellow Mormons who inveigh mightily against evolution in one Gospel Doctrine class but on another Sunday proclaim with equal fervor that they believe "as man is now, God once was," not seeming to notice they've just validated that cornerstone of Mormon theology: man's evolution into Godhood.

I hope they will read the article and gain further light and truth.

NANCY LAYTON SKOUSEN

Redlands, CA

MORE MALFEASANCE

I SO APPRECIATED Holly Welker's erudite essay, "Divine Malfeasance," which served to clarify many fragments of thought that have been circulating through my brain for several years.

I, too, have questioned God's actions, shifts, and changes on so many occasions throughout the scriptures. Whenever I review the Ten Commandments in my mind, or see them written out (which they still are on a slab of granite in front of the Lovelock, Nevada, courthouse), I find myself adding, "Unless I, God, command otherwise" to just about every one! Like the humanistic philosophy of situational ethics, it depends on the situation whether something is right or wrong.

I feel that God tends to treat the Ten Commandments in a situational manner. Consider "Thou shalt not kill." Welker uses the example of the people who were destroyed in the great flood during Noah's time. I've also often thought of poor Isaac tied to a bier with his father poised over him, knife in hand, ready to offer him up, stopping only when God finally revokes his command. Perhaps it was a test of Abraham's obedience, but what about Isaac? What unspeakable horror he must have felt abruptly coming to the realization that his father was going to murder him in cold blood! The terror he must have felt realizing that his father was going to murder him in cold blood must

have been a horrible shock to his developing brain. His feelings of trust and safety were likely shattered, and yet, it is never mentioned again! We also have God ordering Nephi to decapitate Laban in order to retrieve the brass plates. Was there no other way?

The selective regard for this one commandment is disturbing enough, but it also calls into question God's claim to love every soul. "What man of you having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness and go after that which is lost, until he finds it" (Luke 15:4). Are we to conclude from this discordance that every soul is precious unless God commands otherwise?

I have similar problems with the way God commanded the early Saints to practice polygamy despite its categorical condemnation in the Book of Mormon (Jacob 2 and 3), and the deceptions and heart-break that resulted from it.

There are so many mixed messages, and yet we are told that God does not change. Like Welker, I wonder: Why would not God hold himself accountable to the same dictums he requires of us? This is certainly a huge feast for thought!

CHRISTINE BURTON

Holladay, Utah

REVISED THIRD EDITION

FOR THOSE WHO WONDER

Managing Religious Questions and Doubts



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