

# What Is Zion? A Distant View

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The first thing to note is that Zion is perfect, flawless, and complete--not a structure in the process of building. We work for the building up of the kingdom of God on earth and the establishment of Zion. The first step makes the second possible. Zion has been on the earth before in its perfection, as (we are told) it is to be found in other worlds. When the world has been ready to receive it at various happy times in the past, Zion has been brought down from above; and we have the joyful promise that at some future time it will again descend to earth. When men are no longer capable of supporting Zion on earth, it is bodily removed--taken up to heaven; whence go forth the sayings, "Zion is fled" and "Zion is no more." It is no more here but continues to thrive elsewhere. For it is a constant quantity, as perfect things are.

In its present state, the world is far from qualified to receive a celestial society into its midst. But if we today cannot achieve Zion, we can conceive of it. Whenever we use that resounding word, the idea of perfection is always implied, even though we may be using it only in a local and limited sense. Thus, when the Prophet Joseph says, "We will still weep for Zion," it is not an imperfect Zion he is weeping for, but the absence of true Zion; he weeps because the Zion he has so clearly in mind has not been realized. One does not weep for paradise, a place of consummate joy, but only for our memory of paradise, for paradise lost, even as the Jews, by the waters of Babylon, wept for a Jerusalem that was no more. Brigham Young admonished the people who came to the Valley lest they "go into error when they expect to see that Zion here which they have seen in vision." The Zion in the vision was the real one. It must always be kept in mind, not as a present reality, but as the goal toward which all the labor of the Church is a preparation.

"Blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion at that day" (1 Nephi 13:37). If they are obedient, "they shall have power after many days to accomplish all things pertaining to Zion" (D&C 105:37). "My people must be tried in all things, that they may be prepared to receive the glory . . . of Zion" which lies ahead (D&C 136:31).

When all the accidentals and incidentals are stripped away, what remains that is quintessentially Zion? Buildings, walls, streets, and gates--even of gold and jasper--do not make Zion; neither do throngs in shining robes. Zion is not a Cecil B. DeMille production; the properties do not make the play, no matter how splendid they may be. What makes Zion? God has given us the perfect definition: Zion is the pure in heart--the pure in heart, not merely the pure in appearance. It is not a society or religion of forms and observances, of pious gestures and precious mannerisms: it is strictly a condition of the heart. Above all, Zion is pure, which means "not mixed with any impurities, unalloyed"; it is all Zion and nothing else. It is not achieved wherever a heart is pure or where two or three are pure, because it is all pure--it is a society, a community, and an environment into which no unclean thing can enter. "Henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean" (3 Nephi 20:36). It is not even pure people in a dirty environment, or pure people with a few impure ones among them; it is the

perfectly pure in a perfectly pure environment. "I . . . will contend with Zion . . . and chasten her until she overcomes and is clean before me" (D&C 90:36).

This makes it so different from our world that it almost begins to sound distasteful. But a moment's reflection will show that Zion cannot possibly be other than wholly pure. For Zion is the eternal order; it has existed elsewhere from the eternities and will someday be permanently established on this earth. Even the smallest impurity or flaw in anything designed to continue forever would, in the course of an infinite stretching of time, become a thing of infinite mischief. The most perfect structures men have been able to erect have been short-lived because of tiny, all-but-imperceptible flaws. Hence, any flaw, no matter how small, must be removed from a system designed to be timeless; otherwise, there will be no end of trouble. The only kind of life that can be endured forever is one completely devoid of sin, for we are told that the most calamitous thing that could befall man at present would be for him to reach forth his hand and partake of the tree of life and live forever in his sins. Jeremiah describes Zion as a comely and delicate woman who cannot live in the presence of what is vile (Jeremiah 6:2-7). "When men presume to build up Zion in their sins, they labor in vain, for the daughter of Zion withdraws from the scene entirely" (Micah 4:10).

If only to preserve its purity, Zion is set apart from all contaminating influences. For it must be holy enough to receive the Lord himself: "For the Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it" (Psalm 132:13-14). Ancient writers assure us repeatedly that the temple is the earthly type of Zion, a holy place removed from contact with the outer world, set apart for ordinances from which the world is excluded; while it is in the world, the temple presents a forbidding front of high gates, formidable walls, narrow doors, and frowning battlements, dramatizing the total withdrawal of Zion from the world and its defensive position over against it. Zion itself, of course, is absolutely impregnable and unassailable, since the world has no access to it. Should the world get too close, Zion withdraws: "[God] dwelt in the midst of Zion; and it came to pass that Zion was not, for God received it up into his own bosom; and from thence went forth the saying, ZION IS FLED" (Moses 7:69). Hence, it is often described as a refuge and a place of safety: "And it shall be called the New Jerusalem, a land of peace, a city of refuge, a place of safety for the saints; . . . the terror of the Lord also shall be there, . . . and it shall be called Zion" (D&C 45:66-67). Her invulnerability makes Zion an object of awe and terror to her enemies. Hence, scripture speaks of "the gathering together upon the land of Zion, and upon her stakes, . . . for a defense, and for a refuge from the storm, and from wrath when it shall be poured out without mixture upon the whole earth" (D&C 115:6). In a hostile world, those seeking for Zion form a sort of bridgehead, a command post from which God may expand his work "for the rising generations that shall grow up on the land of Zion, to possess it from generation to generation, forever and ever" (D&C 69:8). That can be the real Zion only after the groundwork has been laid for it. It is always described as a place of unearthly beauty.

The Bible contains a fairly complete description of Zion, but there is one aspect of it that only the Latter-day Saints have taken to heart (or did formerly), and it is that doctrine that sets them off most sharply from all of the other religions, namely, the belief that Zion is possible on the earth, that men possess the capacity to receive it right here and are therefore under obligation to waste no time moving in the direction of Zion. The instant one realizes that Zion is a possibility, one has no choice but to identify himself with the program that will bring about the quickest possible realization of its perfection. The call is to awake and arise, to "push many people to Zion with songs of everlasting joy upon their heads" (D&C 66:11). If undue haste is

not desirable, delay is inexcusable; a sense of urgent gravity has ever marked the latter-day work: "I am Jesus Christ, who cometh quickly, in an hour you think not" (D&C 51:20). "Wherefore, stand ye in holy places, and be not moved, until the day of the Lord come; for behold, it cometh quickly" (D&C 87:8).

"When we conclude to make a Zion," said Brigham Young, "we will make it, and this work commences in the heart of each person." Zion can come only to a place that is completely ready for it, which is to say Zion must already be there. When Zion descends to earth, it must be met by a Zion that is already here: "And they shall see us; and we will fall upon their necks, and they shall fall upon our necks; . . . and there shall be mine abode, and it shall be Zion" (Moses 7:63-64). Hence, President Young must correct a misunderstanding among many of the Saints who "gather here with the spirit of Zion resting upon them, and expecting to find Zion in its glory, whereas their own doctrine should teach them that they are coming here to make Zion," that is, to make it possible. "The elements are here to produce as good a Zion as was ever made in all the eternities of the Gods." Note that Zion is an eternal and a universal type and that the local Zion, while made of the substances of this earth, "shall come forth out of all the creations which I have made" (Moses 7:64). "I have Zion in my view constantly," said Brother Brigham, making it clear that Zion for this earth is still an unrealized ideal of perfection. "We are not going to wait for angels, or for Enoch and his company to come and build up Zion, but we are going to build it," so that we will be ready. If we did not have a responsibility for bringing Zion, and if we did not work constantly with that aim in view, its coming could not profit us much--for all its awesome perfection and beauty, Zion is still our business and should be our constant concern.

Throughout the scriptures, Zion is brought into the clearest focus by placing it against a dark background; and like Zion, that background world is given a code name: Babylon. Babylon, like Zion, is a real society--a type, place, and environment of human existence, described in the scriptures with great clarity and precision. (The word Babylon is not just a general term to indicate anything that is not Zion; it is the designation of a very particular and specific type of society.) Though Babylon is vividly described by the prophets, the best way to define her is as the exact opposite of Zion in all things. Babylon is just as pure in its way as is Zion; it is pure evil--for even good, when it becomes contaminated and perverted, becomes an evil. The main thing is that Babylon and Zion cannot mix in any degree; a Zion that makes concessions is no longer Zion.

One may well ask if it is necessary to choose between such absolute extremes, and wonder if there is not some more moderate approach to the problems. By the very nature of things, there is no third way--as the early Jewish and Christian writers remind us repeatedly in their doctrine of the Two Ways. According to this oldest and best-established of teachings (though quite unpopular with the conventional Christianity and Judaism of our time), there are Two Ways lying before every person in this life, the Way of Light and the Way of Darkness, the Way of Life and the Way of Death; and every mortal every day of his life is required to make a choice between them. Unfortunately for our peace of mind, any compromise between the Two Ways is out of the question, since they lead in opposite directions. As the wise Heraclitus pointed out long ago, "The up-road and the down-road are one and the same." Which one you are on depends entirely on the way you are facing. To go off at an angle is to get nowhere; if you find the road to Zion, the Heavenly City, too steep, you may mitigate the climb by striking off on a more level course--but in that case you will never, never reach Zion. The only road to Zion is the shortest road, for to take any other shows a lack of faith and zeal, which will exclude you from the city.

As there is no compromise between the Two Ways, so there is no mixing of Babylon and

Zion; God will not tolerate any concessions by Zion: "A scourge and judgment [is] to be poured out upon the children of Zion. For shall the children of the kingdom pollute my holy land?" (D&C 84:58-59). Zion does not make war on Babylon: "I forgive all men. I feel in my heart to forgive all men in the broad sense that God requires me to forgive all men, and I desire to love my neighbor as myself; and to this extent I bear no malice toward any of the children of my Father. . . . I leave them in the hands of the just Judge. Let him deal with them as seemeth him good. . . . I would not harm a hair of their heads." We don't need to. Zion has never made war on Babylon, for when the environment has become too foul for Zion, she has simply been removed. Babylon is always reserved for the burning--she is never converted or reformed; though many may leave her for Zion, her fate is to be overthrown, violently, suddenly, unexpectedly, and completely by the direct intervention of God. "Thou shalt not know from whence it riseth: . . . thou shalt not be able to put it off, and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou shalt not know" (Isaiah 47:11). "Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed; howl for her. . . . We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed: forsake her" (Jeremiah 51:8-9).

From the beginning the cry went forth to the Saints, repeating the words of the ancient prophets: "Go ye out from Babylon. Be ye clean. . . . Go ye out from among the nations, even from Babylon, from the midst of wickedness, which is spiritual Babylon" (D&C 133:5, 14). The substance of this woe "is that of an idol, which waxeth old and shall perish in Babylon, even Babylon the great, which shall fall" (D&C 1:16). Babylon's time is all but used up, and the only thing for the Saints to do is to get out of her. As we all know, they sought to do this in a very physical as well as a spiritual sense. "I will that my saints should be assembled upon the land of Zion . . . and lift a warning voice . . . by word and by flight" (D&C 63:36-37). How could they stay in the world? "We are trying to be the image of those who live in heaven; we are trying to pattern after them, . . . to walk and talk like them, to deal like them, and build up the kingdom of heaven as they have done." That meant a total renunciation of the world and its ways: "It is useless for us to expect the favor of the world. We have been called out of the world, therefore the world hates us. If we were of the world, then the world would love its own, and we should have no trouble with them." That was what the Lord often told his disciples. You cannot be "in the world but not of the world," "for all that is in the world . . . is not of the Father, but is of the world," and that in the most literal sense (1 John 2:16).

The world lost no time in getting the message, and if the antipathy was mutual, the ferocity of the attack on the one side matched the finality of retreat on the other. "In the first place," said Brigham, "they will not fellowship us, and in the next place we cannot fellowship them. . . . I would not give a snap of my finger for them; for as the world is I want not their fellowship." Right from the beginning, the standard charge against Joseph Smith and the Mormons was treason. And why not? That was the only possible charge when the crime was simply that of rejecting a whole way of life: "They accused him [Joseph Smith] of treason, because he would not fellowship their wickedness." In a way he had asked for it, for he would make no concession: "It may be considered treason," said Brigham Young, "to say that the kingdom which that Prophet [Daniel] foretold is actually set up; that we cannot help, but we know it is so, and call upon the nations to believe our testimony." "Do you blame the wicked for being mad?" he asks. "No. They desire to rule, to hold the reins of government on this earth; they have held them a great while. I do not blame them for being suspicious of us; men in high standing are suspicious of us, hence the frequent cry, 'Treason, treason, we are going to have trouble with the people in Utah.'" So God drives a wedge between Zion and Babylon, an intense mutual antipathy that constantly forces them apart. "If the wicked come here they do not wish to stay, no matter how

well they are treated, and I thank the Lord for it; and I want hard times, so that every person that does not wish to stay, for the sake of his religion, will leave." Whenever the Lord prepares for Zion, there must be a division among the people. "The Lord is building up Zion, and is emptying the earth of wickedness, gathering his people, bringing again Zion, redeeming his Israel, sending forth his work, withdrawing his Spirit from the wicked world, and commencing to build up his kingdom." The perennial "Mormon Problem" was not how to fellowship the Mormons but how to liquidate them; but that was not surprising: "The cry has been against the Prophets of every age, against the Apostles and against Jesus himself, and against all those who have ever preached the truth, and why? Because the systems of the world are errors; while the Gospel is true." "Joseph Smith, in forty-seven prosecutions, was never proven guilty of one violation of the laws of his country. They accused him of treason, because he would not fellowship with their wickedness." The nature of their hatred and their charges is reported by Joseph Smith himself:

If there were priests among them of all the different sects, they hated us, and that most cordially too. If there were generals, they hated us; if there were colonels, they hated us; and the soldiers, and officers of every kind, hated us . . . --they all hated us, most cordially. And now what did they hate us for? . . . Was it because we have committed treason against the government in Daviess county, or burglary, or larceny, or arson, or any other unlawful act in Daviess county? We know that we have been so reported by priests, and certain lawyers, and certain judges, who . . . for a number of years have tried, by a well contemplated and premeditated scheme, to put down by physical power a system of religion that all the world . . . by any fair means whatever, were not able to resist.

There is no third way: "Those who believe and obey the Gospel of the Son of God forsake all for its interests, belong to the kingdom of God, and all the rest belong to the other kingdom."

And so we have Zion and Babylon, and never the twain shall meet. That is, they wouldn't if we did not take human nature into account, for how many humans have ever succeeded in renouncing the world completely? The separation of the Saints from the world was, in most cases, not a matter of choice--it was forced on them; God is constantly driving wedges between the Church and the world, or in Brigham Young's vivid terms, there are always cats coming out of the bag to put us at odds with the world, whether we want it that way or not. "The brethren and sisters came across the plains because they could not stay; that is the secret of the movement."

"Do you think we came here of our own choice? No; we would have stayed in those rich valleys and prairies back yonder." When the first revelation was given to prepare for Zion by the gathering of Israel, "when the people came to Jackson county, . . . they were as far from believing and obeying that revelation as the east is from the west." "And so we have got to continue to labor, fight, toil, counsel, exercise faith, ask God over and over, and have been praying for thirty odd years for that which we might have received and accomplished in one year." That complete break between the Saints and the world that must precede the coming of Zion has not yet taken place.

"They have not learned `a' concerning Zion; and we have been traveling now forty-two years, and have we learned our a, b, c's? . . . I will say, scarcely. Have we seen it as a people? How long shall we travel, . . . how long shall God wait for us to sanctify ourselves and become one in the Lord, in our actions and in our ways for the building up of the kingdom of God, that he can bless us?" "How long, Latter-day Saints, before you will believe the Gospel as it is? The

Lord has declared it to be his will that his people will enter into covenant, even as Enoch and his people did, which of necessity, must be before we shall have the privilege of building the Center Stake of Zion."

This was one of the last public addresses of the prophet Brigham, and the people were still not ready to go all the way. They still wanted to mix Babylon and Zion; or, as he put it, "Some of the Latter-day Saints had an idea that they could take the follies of the world in one hand and the Savior in the other, and expect to get into the presence of the Lord Jesus." Such heaping up gold and silver would prove their destruction. Again and again the Lord had to rebuke even Joseph Smith for little concessions to the world: "You have feared man and have not relied on me for strength as you ought" (D&C 30:1). "Your mind has been on the things of the earth more than on the things of me, . . . and you . . . have been persuaded by those whom I have not commanded; . . . you shall ever open your mouth in my cause, not fearing what man can do, for I am with you" (D&C 30:2, 11). "How oft you have transgressed the commandments and the laws of God, and have gone on in the persuasions of men. For behold you should not have feared man more than God" (D&C 3:6-7).

Speaking to the Mormon Battalion in 1848, President Young warned them: "If we were to go to San Francisco and dig up chunks of gold or find it here in the valley it would ruin us. Many wanted to unite Babylon and Zion; it's the love of money that hurts them." In his last public address, he noted that because they are still "lusting . . . after the things of this world, [the Latter-day Saints] are . . . shaking hands with the servants of the devil, instead of sanctifying themselves. . . . When I think upon this subject, I want the tongues of seven thunders to wake up the people." Even though the Lord said, "Zion cannot be built up unless it is by the principles of the law of the celestial kingdom; otherwise I cannot receive her unto myself" (D&C 105:5), the Latter-day Saints still wanted to compromise and say, "We will not go up unto Zion, and will keep our moneys"--but as long as that was their plan, there could be no Zion: "Mine elders should wait for . . . the redemption of Zion" (D&C 105:8-9). For God had made it perfectly clear: "I give not unto you that ye shall live after the manner of the world" (D&C 95:13). "For after today cometh the burning. . . . I will burn them up . . . and I will not spare any that remain in Babylon" (D&C 64:24). It had to be the one or the other.

"Shall we now seek to make ourselves wealthy in gold and silver and the possessions which the wicked love and worship, or shall we, with all of our might, mind, and strength, seek diligently first to build up the Kingdom of God? Let us decide on this, and do the one thing or the other." Notice that every time the issue is raised, it is made clear that the powerful link that continues to bind the Mormons to the world and that advocates the perverse doctrine of a deal between Zion and Babylon is a deep-seated desire of the Saints to acquire personal wealth. Joseph Smith's speech at Far West is a vividly specific statement of the case:

Brethren, we are gathering to this beautiful land to build up Zion. . . . But since I have been here I perceive the spirit of selfishness, covetousness exists in the hearts of the saints. . . . Here are those who begin to spread out, buying up all the land they are able to do; . . . thinking to lay foundations for themselves only, looking to their own individual families. . . . Now I want to tell you that Zion cannot be built up in any such way. . . . I see signs put out, Beer signs, speculative schemes are being introduced. This is the ways of the world--Babylon indeed, and I tell you in the name of the God of Israel, if there is not repentance . . . you will be Broken up and scattered from this choice land [sic].

We all know that this prophecy was literally fulfilled: God would not tolerate such a mockery of Zion. We cannot compromise between the way of Babylon and the way of Zion, because they do lead in opposite directions, as Brigham Young explains: "I am sorry that this people are worldly-minded. . . . Their affections are upon . . . their farms, upon their property, their houses and possessions, and in the same ratio that this is the case, the Holy Spirit of God--the spirit of their calling--forsakes them, and they are overcome with the spirit of the evil one."

Every step in the direction of increasing one's personal holdings is a step away from Zion, which is another way of saying, as the Lord has proclaimed in various ways, that one cannot serve two masters: to the degree in which he loves the one he will hate the other, and so it is with God and business, for mammon is simply the standard Hebrew word for any kind of financial dealing.

So money is the name of the game by which the devil cleverly decoys the minds of the Saints from God's work to his. "What does the Lord want of us up here in the tops of these mountains?" Brigham asked twenty years after the first settling of the Valley. "He wishes us to build up Zion. What are the people doing? They are merchandizing, trafficking and trading." "Elders are agreed on the way and manner necessary to obtain celestial glory, but they quarrel about a dollar. When principles of eternal life are brought before them--God and the things pertaining to God and godliness--they apparently care not half so much about them as they do about five cents." "Instead of reflecting upon and searching for hidden things of the greatest value to them, [the Latter-day Saints] rather wish to learn how to secure their way through this world as easily and as comfortably as possible. The reflections, what they are here for, who produced them, and where they are from, far too seldom enter their minds." Well, what was wrong with that? Isn't a comfortable living what we all want? It would be all right if we did not have our choice, but if we fail to realize that "we are engaged in a higher-toned branch of business than any merchants or railroad men, or any institution of an earthly nature," and give priority to the comfortable and respectable life after we have seen the greater light, we are in great danger. "Are their eyes single to the building up of the Kingdom of God? No; they are single to the building up of themselves." "Does this congregation understand what idolatry is? The New Testament says that covetousness is idolatry; therefore, a covetous people is an idolatrous people." "Man is made in the image of God, but what do we know of him or of ourselves, when we suffer ourselves to love and worship the god of this world--riches?" Had the Latter-day Saints gone so far? They had, from the beginning; when the Church was only a year old, the Prophet Joseph observed that "God has often sealed up the heavens because of covetousness in the Church." Three years later, God revoked that "united order" by which alone Zion could exist on earth (D&C 104:52-53)--in their desire for wealth, the Saints had tried to embrace both Babylon and Zion by smooth double-talk. The Mormons would have to wait for their blessings until they learned their lesson: "If the people neglect their duty, turn away from the holy commandments which God has given us, seek for their own individual wealth, and neglect the interests of the kingdom of God, we may expect to be here quite a time--perhaps a period that will be far longer than we anticipate."

Satan has many arrows in his quiver: "I cannot tell you all the things whereby we may commit sin," said King Benjamin to his people, "for there are divers ways and means, even so many that I cannot number them" (Mosiah 4:29). These were the closing words, however, of a speech devoted to warning his people against the ways in which they were most likely to commit the greatest sins, namely, in the search for private gain. Of all the devil's arrows, this has ever proven the most deadly and effective. "My experience is that this people have too great a tenacity

for the goods of this world, and the Enemy thinks he can get the advantage over them in this respect, and he is improving the time." Did not Paul say, "Love of money is the root of all evil" (1 Timothy 6:10)? And has God not restated the proposition for our own generation through the mouth of his prophet, Mormon? "Behold, I speak unto you as if ye were present, and yet ye are not. But . . . Jesus Christ hath shown you unto me, and I know your doing. . . . For behold, ye do love money, and your substance, and your fine apparel, and the adorning of your churches, more than ye love the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted" (Mormon 8:35, 37). That is not Zion as described by God: "They were of one heart and one mind . . . and there was no poor among them" (Moses 7:18). The people "do not understand the power of the devil and how liable they are to be decoyed." Wealth is a pleasant and heady narcotic that gives the addict an exhilarating sense of power accompanied by a growing deadening of feeling for anything of real value. It seals up the heavens and closes the mind to revelation; it takes possession of the heart and darkens the spirit; it works by deception, bewitching the nations (Revelation 18:23); it becomes an obsession--"We wish the wealth or things of the world; we think about them morning, noon, and night; they are first in our minds when we awake in the morning, and the last thing before we go to sleep at night"; it gives a false sense of security against which the Prophet Joseph warned: "Every man who is afraid, covetous, will be taken in a snare," adding that the only security in the future would be "in Zion and her stakes"; it paralyzes the mind's perception of higher things: "Are not the sordid things of this life before our eyes, and have they not thrown a mist before them so that we can not see? . . . What do we know of heavenly things?" "When you see the Latter-day Saints greedy, and coveteous [sic] of the things of this world, do you think their minds are in a fit condition to be written upon by the pen of revelation?"

There are exceptions, but they are dangerously rare, for wealth is a jealous mistress: she will not tolerate any competition; rulers of business are openly contemptuous of all other vocations; and all those "how-to-get-rich" books by rich men virtuously assure us that the first and foremost prerequisite for acquiring wealth is to think of nothing else--the aspirant who is guilty even of a momentary lapse in his loyalty, they tell us, does not deserve the wealth he seeks. That is why there are so few exceptions: "I know," says Brigham Young, "that there is no man on this earth who can call around him property, be he a merchant, tradesman, or [farmer], with his mind continually occupied with: 'How shall I get this or that; how rich can I get?' . . . No such man ever can magnify the priesthood nor enter the celestial kingdom." The game is almost always demoralizing: "You may take the class called merchants, also the doctors, the priests in the various sects, the lawyers, and every person engaged in any branch of business throughout the world, and as a general thing, they are all taught from their childhood to be more or less dishonest." "In my young days I had to quit the business of painting purely because I had either to be dishonest or quit; and I quit." "But the great majority of men who have amassed great wealth have done it at the expense of their fellows, on the principle that the doctors, the lawyers, and the merchants acquire theirs. Such men are impositions on the community."

All this in the relatively simple and innocent nineteenth century. Brigham grieved to see how inevitably covetousness led to dishonesty among the Saints. "Their cheating and lying, their scheming in every possible way . . . [have] caused my spirit to weep and mourn."

Was there no trend toward improvement? The whole tenet of the dualism of Babylon and Zion, the Two Ways, is that one does not move gradually and easily from a sinful to a righteous life. One forsakes sin completely, or one does not forsake it. That danger of covetousness did not diminish with the flight of the Saints from Babylon: "Have we separated ourselves from the nations? Yes. And what else have we done? . . . Have we not brought Babylon with us? Are we

not promoting Babylon here in our midst? Are we not fostering the spirit of Babylon that is now abroad on the face of the whole earth? . . . Yes, yes, to some extent, and there is not a Latter-day Saint but what feels that we have too much of Babylon in our midst." Many years before, Brigham had laid it on the line: "I am more afraid of covetousness in our Elders than I am of the hordes of hell. Have we men out now of that class? I believe so. I am afraid of such spirits; for they are more powerful and injurious to this people than all hell outside of our borders. All our enemies in the United States or in the world, and all hell with them marshalled against us, could not do us the injury that covetousness in the hearts of this people could do us; for it is idolatry." "Whether you can see it or not, I know that this people are more or less prone to idolatry; for I see that spirit manifested every day, and hear it from nearly every quarter."

I have a long list of quotations in which President Brigham Young, down through the years, repeats this warning with growing concern. Way back in Kirtland the Lord had said, "[The saints] do not forsake their sins, and their wicked ways, the pride of their hearts, and their covetousness" (D&C 98:20). Thirty-five years later Brigham says, "My experience for the best part of forty years teaches me that they never progress--they are as they were, and as they no doubt will be." And six years after that, he says: "The Lord . . . is sending forth his voice . . . into the hearts of his people, crying unto them--`Stop! Stop your course! Cease to bring in and build up Babylon in your midst!' " In his last sermon he said: "The devils in hell [are] looking at this people, too, and trying to overthrow us, and the people are still shaking hands with the servants of the devil, instead of sanctifying themselves and calling upon the Lord and doing the work which he has commanded us and put into our hands to do."

If those who have been "called out of the world" still admit its charms, we can hardly expect the world itself to improve. The world as such is Babylon and always has been. It will not change. "Evil is here," says Brigham. "The Devil reigns on the earth, and has held dominion on it for thousands of years." "The Devil has the mastery of the earth: he has corrupted it, and has corrupted the children of men. He has led them in evil until they are almost entirely ruined, and are so far from God that they neither know Him nor his influence, and have almost lost sight of everything that pertains to eternity. This darkness is more prevalent, more dense, among the people of Christendom than it is among the heathen. They have lost sight of all that is great and glorious--of all principles that pertain to life eternal." "We are here in this wicked world, a world shrouded in darkness, principally led, directed, governed, and controlled, from first to last, by the power of our common foe . . . --the devil. Lucifer has almost the entire control over the whole earth, rules and governs the children of men and leads them on to destruction." "The whole world are wrapt up in the garment of corruption, confusion, and destruction; and they are fast making their way down to hell, while we have the words of eternal life." "Will the inhabitants of the earth receive the truth? They will not." "It never enters the hearts of the mass of mankind that they are preparing for the day of calamity and slaughter." "You will see that the wisdom of the wise among the nations will perish and be taken from them. They will fall into difficulties, and they will not be able to tell the reason, nor point a way to avert them any more than they can now in this land. They can fight, quarrel, contend and destroy each other, but they do not know how to make peace. So it will be with the inhabitants of the earth."

We have presented this basic historical proposition of the Latter-day Saints in little-known but powerful words of the Prophet Brigham Young to call to mind how faithfully such sayings continue the teachings of the Prophet Joseph and foreshadow the world in which we live. Almost the first words spoken by the Lord himself to the boy Joseph in his first vision were, "Behold the world lieth in sin at this time and none doeth good no not one they have turned asside [sic] from

the Gospel and keep not my commandments they draw near to me with their lips while their hearts are far from me and mine anger is kindling against the inhabitants of the earth to visit them according [sic] to this ungodliness." The preface to the Doctrine and Covenants repeats this: "They seek not the Lord, . . . but every man walketh in his own way . . . in Babylon, even Babylon the great, which shall fall" (D&C 1:16). And so on down: "Behold, the world is ripening in iniquity" (D&C 18:6). "The hour is nigh and the day soon at hand when the earth is ripe; and all the proud and they that do wickedly shall be as stubble; . . . I will take vengeance upon the wicked, for they will not repent; for the cup of mine indignation is full" (D&C 29:9, 17). "All flesh is corrupted before me; and the powers of darkness prevail upon the earth, . . . and all eternity is pained, and the angels are waiting. . . . The enemy is combined" (D&C 38:11-12). (Do such words mean nothing to us?) "Behold, the day has come, when the cup of the wrath of mine indignation is full. . . . Wherefore, labor ye; . . . for the adversary spreadeth his dominions, and darkness reigneth; and the anger of God kindleth against the inhabitants of the earth; and none doeth good, for all have gone out of the way" (D&C 43:26, 28; 82:5-6). "Darkness covereth the earth, and gross darkness the minds of the people, and all flesh has become corrupt before my face. Behold, vengeance cometh speedily . . . upon all the face of the earth. . . . And upon my house shall it begin, . . . first among . . . you . . . who have professed to know my name and have not known me" (D&C 112:23-26).

So the word of the Lord is that Babylon is to remain in Babylon until the day of destruction. Things have not improved since Joseph Smith wrote of "the most damning hand of murder, tyranny, and oppressions, supported and urged on and upheld by the influence of that spirit which has so strongly riveted the creeds of the fathers, who have inherited lies, upon the hearts of the children, and filled the world with confusion, and has been growing stronger and stronger, and is now the very mainspring of all corruption, and the whole earth groans under the weight of its iniquity." "Some may have cried peace," he wrote (and no man ever loved peace more than he), "but the Saints and the world will have little peace from henceforth." "Destruction, to the eye of the spiritual beholder, seems to be written by the finger of an invisible hand, in large capitals, upon almost every thing we behold." "There is a spirit that prompts the nations to prepare for war, desolation, and bloodshed--to waste each other away," said Brigham twenty years later. "Do they realize it? No. . . . Is it not a mystery?" "When the nations have for years turned much of their attention to manufacturing instruments of death, they have sooner or later used those instruments. . . . [They] will be used until the people are wasted away, and there is no help for it."

This, then, is how things stand: (1) We know what Zion is, (2) we know what Babylon is, (3) we know that the two can never mix, and (4) we know that the Latter-day Saints, against the admonitions of their leaders, have always tried to mix them. How is this done? (And now comes our sermon.)

In order to reconcile the ways of Babylon with the ways of Zion, it has been necessary to circumvent the inconvenient barriers of scripture and conscience by the use of the tried and true device of rhetoric, defined by Plato as the art of making true things seem false and false things seem true by the use of words. This invaluable art has, since the time of Cain, invested the ways of Babylon with an air of high purpose, solid virtue, and impeccable respectability. "The servants of sin should appear polished and pious, . . . able to call to their assistance . . . the subtle, persuasive power of rhetoric." "The devil is an orator; he is powerful; . . . he can tempt all classes."

Years ago I published a number of articles in various journals dealing with the Roman

world of the fourth century a.d. Let us recall that early Jewish and Christian writers referred to Rome simply as Babylon; it was the true Babylon of the time, but a Babylon sustained by a high sense of virtue. For, as the Romans became ever more corrupted by wealth (the Roman satirists, shrewd and observant men, infallibly put their finger on the spot every time), they became more and more fascinated with the image of themselves as honest, hard-working, straightforward, tough-minded citizens: Hic est Ausonia ("Here is Ausonia"), they said: "The Western world of clean, fresh, simple, unspoiled pioneers." This fiction became the very cornerstone of the official doctrine. "Rome was great because Rome was good, giving expression to the old Roman belief in the close association between piety and success." This was the rhetoric of wealth, and it was inevitable--it always follows in such a situation, because people simply can't live virtuously and viciously at the same time. Yet they want to be good and rich at the same time, and so they reach a compromise called respectability, which is nothing less than Babylon masquerading as Zion.

Any social worker or observer knows that no one can be more straitlaced, puritanical, and exquisitely respectable than a harlot. She has to reek with virtue to relieve her terrible inner tensions. There is nothing the Godfather prizes more than his respectability, and extensive surveys have shown that he has become something of a hero-figure in this country. A patriot (he loves America with such a passion that a squadron of government lawyers cannot induce him to leave it), a church-going family man, impeccably proper in dress and etiquette, he outwits all his brutal rivals and establishes his credibility by instant liquidation of all who stand in his way. It is not enough for the wicked to make excuses or explanations; in order to live with themselves and succeed in their undertakings, they must stand forth and be counted as pillars of righteousness, raising a hue and cry with practiced skill against those who would jeopardize their position, demonstrating, usually with the aid of paid rhetoricians, ministers, and lawyers, that it is not they but their opponents who are wicked. This is a leitmotif, a main theme, in the Book of Mormon: "We know that the people . . . in the land of Jerusalem were a righteous people; . . . and our father hath judged them, and hath led us away" (1 Nephi 17:22). Thus said the self-righteous Laman and Lemuel.

"This man doth revile against our laws which are just, and our wise lawyers whom we have selected." Amulek, thus accused, answered: "Have I testified against your law? . . . I have spoken in favor of your law, to your condemnation. . . . And . . . the people cried out against him, saying: Now we know that this man is a child of the devil, for he hath lied unto us; for he hath spoken against our law . . . and . . . reviled . . . against our lawyers, and our judges. And . . . the lawyers put it into their hearts that they should remember these things against him. . . . Now the object of these lawyers was to get gain" (Alma 10:24-32).

"Ye do not remember the Lord your God," said Samuel the Lamanite to the people of Zarahemla, "but ye do always remember your riches" (Helaman 13:22). (And how self-righteous they were about it!)

Now when ye talk, ye say: If our days had been in the days of our fathers of old, we would not have slain the prophets. . . . Behold ye are worse than they; for . . . if a prophet . . . testifieth of your sins, . . . ye are angry with him; . . . yea, you will say that he is a false prophet, and that he is a sinner, and of the devil, because he testifieth that your deeds are evil. But behold, if a man . . . saith that all is well, then ye will not find fault with him. [On the contrary,] ye will clothe him with costly apparel . . . because . . . he saith that all is well (Helaman 13:25-28).

These people did not want to hear what was wrong with Zarahemla, only what was right with Zarahemla. Anyone who wanted their vote had only to avoid any mention of repentance and tell them that they had done no wrong, that Zarahemla was great because Zarahemla was good.

We do not have time here to examine the loci communes, the tried-and-true, sure-fire topics that made up the arsenal of the rhetoric of wealth. I was brought up on them and could talk on the subject all night. Suffice it here to mention a few of the most powerful and persuasive talking points.

First, of course, the work ethic, which is being so strenuously advocated in our day. This is one of those neat magician's tricks in which all our attention is focused on one hand while the other hand does the manipulating. Implicit in the work ethic are the ideas (1) that because one must work to acquire wealth, work equals wealth, and (2) that that is the whole equation. With these go the corollaries that anyone who has wealth must have earned it by hard work and is, therefore, beyond criticism; that anyone who doesn't have it deserves to suffer--thus penalizing any who do not work for money; and (since you have a right to all you earn) that the only real work is for one's self; and, finally, that any limit set to the amount of wealth an individual may acquire is a satanic device to deprive men of their free agency--thus making mockery of the Council of Heaven. These editorial syllogisms we have heard a thousand times, but you will not find them in the scriptures. Even the cornerstone of virtue, "He that is idle shall not eat the bread . . . of the laborer" (D&C 42:42), hailed as the franchise of unbridled capitalism, is rather a rebuke to that system which has allowed idlers to live in luxury and laborers in want throughout the whole course of history. The whole emphasis in the holy writ is not on whether one works or not, but what one works for: "The laborer in Zion shall labor for Zion; for if they labor for money they shall perish" (2 Nephi 26:31). "The people of the church began to wax proud, because of their exceeding riches, . . . precious things, which they had obtained by their industry" (Alma 4:6) and which proved their undoing, for all their hard work.

In Zion you labor, to be sure, but not for money, and not for yourself, which is the exact opposite of our present version of the work ethic. "The non-producer must live on the products of those who labor. There is no other way," says Brigham, and he gives the solution: "If we all labor a few hours a day, we could then spend the remainder of our time in rest and the improvement of our minds." That is the real work we are called to do and the real wealth we are to accumulate individually. "Work less, wear less, eat less, and we shall be a great deal wiser, healthier, and wealthier people than by taking the course we do now." Work does not sanctify wealth: "I know that there is no man on this earth who can call around him property, . . . and dicker and work, and take advantage here and there--no such man ever can magnify the priesthood nor enter the celestial kingdom. Now, remember, they will not enter that kingdom." He gives a concrete illustration: "When the Twelve Apostles were chosen in this dispensation, they were told not to labor with their hands, but to preach the Gospel to the nations of the earth. Some of them before a year had elapsed were engaged in trade; they became merchants, and they apostatized." "If we lust . . . for the riches of the world, and spare no pains [hard work] to obtain and retain them, and feel 'these are mine,' then the spirit of the anti-Christ comes upon us. This is the danger . . . [we] are in." Admirable and indispensable in themselves, hard work, ingenuity, and enterprise become an evil when they are misdirected, meaning directed to personal aggrandizement: "A man says, 'I am going to make iron, and I will have the credit of making the first iron in the Territory. I will have the credit of knowing how to flux the ore that is found in these regions, and bringing out the metal in abundance, or no other man shall.' Now, the beauty and glory of this kind of proceeding is the blackest of darkness, and its comeliness as deformity." An act, good in itself, becomes a monstrous deformity when thus misdirected.

The first rule of economics is that everyone should provide, as far as possible, for himself. The second, which receives vastly more attention in the scriptures, is that man's wants are few.

"Having food and raiment," says Paul, "let us be therewith content" (1 Timothy 6:8). "If we have our hundreds or thousands," says Brother Brigham, "we may foster the idea that we have nothing more than we need; but such a notion is entirely erroneous, for our real wants are very limited. What do we absolutely need? I possess everything on the face of the earth that I need, as I appear before you on this stand." With our real wants thus modest, there is plenty on earth for everyone, "for the earth is full and there is enough and to spare" (D&C 104:17), and no excuse whatever for competitive grabbing--"wherefore the world lieth in sin" (D&C 49:20). To take more than we need is to take what does not belong to us.

In Zion, all are "of one heart and one mind, . . . and there [are] no poor among them" (Moses 7:18), thus showing that equality extends into all fields, as it must also be in the preparation for Zion: "For if ye are not equal in earthly things ye cannot be equal in obtaining heavenly things. For if you will that I give you a place in the celestial world, you must prepare yourselves" (D&C 78:6-7). "And you are to be equal, . . . to have equal claims, . . . every man according to his wants and his needs, . . . every man seeking the interest of his neighbor, and doing all things with an eye single to the glory of God" (D&C 82:17, 19). Well, there is a great deal of this. In the words of the Prophet Joseph, "The greatest temporal and spiritual blessings which always come from faithfulness and concerted effort, never attended individual exertion or enterprise" (a statement I do not recall having heard from the stand for some time). This was a hard lesson to learn: to come down to earth. "The Latter-day Saints, in their conduct and acts with regard to financial matters, are like the rest of the world. The course pursued by men of business in the world has a tendency to make a few rich, and to sink the masses of the people in poverty and degradation. Too many of the Elders of Israel take this course. No matter what comes they are for gain--for gathering around them riches; and when they get rich, how are those riches used? Spent on the lusts of the flesh." As to the idler eating the bread of the laborer, "I have seen many cases . . .," says Brigham, "when the young lady would have to take her clothing on a Saturday night and wash it, in order that she might go to meeting on the Sunday with a clean dress on. Who is she laboring for? For those who, many of them, are living in luxury. And, to serve the classes that are living on them, the poor, laboring men and women are toiling, working their lives out to earn that which will keep a little life within them. Is this equality? No! What is going to be done? The Latter-day Saints will never accomplish their mission until this inequality shall cease on the earth." "The earth is here, and the fullness thereof is here. It was made for man; and one man was not made to trample his fellowman under his feet, and enjoy all his hearts desires, while the thousands suffer." Regardless of who works and who doesn't, no just father is going to order one son clothed in robes and another in rags (D&C 38:26).

Of course, the man who devotes himself to the tiring routines of business should be rewarded, but should all others be penalized who do not engage in that particular line of work? "Where, then, is your great ability? In your pockets--in the god so much adored," says Brigham with contempt; there is other work to be done and far greater: "But take the men that can travel the earth over, preach the Gospel without purse or scrip, and then go to and lay their plans to gather the saints. That looks like the work of angels." Granted that those who acquire wealth are sometimes people of superior talent (though for every real artist, or poet, or composer in America, there are at least ten thousand millionaires), "those who are blessed with superior abilities," even in business, "should use those blessings . . . to administer to others less favored." Our gifts and talents are to be put at the disposal of the human race, not used to put the race at our disposal. "Instead of this," Brigham notes, "man has become so perverted as to debar his

fellows as much as possible from those blessings, and constrain them by physical force or circumstances to contribute of the proceeds of their labour to sustain the favoured few." That is not Zion, but that is what we have. Should we settle for it?

The doctrine of uniting together in our temporal labors, and all working for the good of all is from the beginning, from everlasting, and it will be for ever and ever. No one supposes for one moment that in heaven the angels are speculating, that they are building railroads and factories, taking advantage one of another, gathering up the substance there is in heaven to aggrandize themselves, and that they live on the same principle that we are in the habit of doing. No Christian, no sectarian Christian, in the world believes this; they believe that the inhabitants of heaven live as a family, that their faith, interests and pursuits have one end in view--the glory of God and their own salvation, that they may receive more and more. . . . We all believe this, and suppose we go to work and imitate them as far as we can.

"There are men in this community who, through the force of the education they have received from their parents and friends [i.e., this is an established ethic among us], would cheat a poor widow out of her last cow, and then go down upon their knees and thank God for the good fortune he had sent them and for his kind providences that enabled them to obtain a cow without becoming amenable to any law of the land, though the poor widow has been actually cheated." Here, please note, the defense of immorality is legality: if it is legal, all is well, even though the law has been contrived under pressure of interest groups.

God recognizes only one justification for seeking wealth, and that is with the express intent of helping the poor (Jacob 2:19). One of the disturbing things about Zion is that its appeal, according to the scriptures, is all to the poor: "The Lord hath founded Zion, and the poor of his people shall trust in it" (Isaiah 14:32). Of course, once in Zion, no one suffers from poverty, for they dwell in righteousness and there are no poor among them (Moses 7:18). The law of consecration is a minimal requirement, for "if my people observe not this law, . . . it shall not be a land of Zion unto you" (D&C 119:6). Here our rhetoric engages in a neat bit of sophistry that has always been popular:

Elders of Israel are greedy after the things of this world. If you ask them if they are ready to build up the kingdom of God, their answer is prompt--"Why, to be sure we are, with our whole souls; but we want first to get so much gold, speculate and get rich, and then we can help the church considerably. We will go to California and get gold, go and buy goods and get rich, trade with the emigrants, build a mill, make a farm, get a large herd of cattle, and then we can do a great deal for Israel."

I have heard this many times from friends and relatives, but it is hokum. What they are saying is, "If God will give me a million dollars, I will let him have a generous cut of it." And so they pray and speculate and expect the Lord to come through for them. He won't do it: "And again, I command thee that thou shalt not covet thine own property" (D&C 19:26). "Let them repent of all their sins, and of all their covetous desires, before me, saith the Lord; for what is property unto me? saith the Lord" (D&C 117:4). He does not need our property or our help.

Every rhetorician knows that his most effective weapons by far are labels. He can demolish the opposition with simple and devastating labels such as communism, socialism, or atheism, popery, militarism, or Mormonism, or give his clients' worst crimes a religious glow with noble labels such as integrity, old-fashioned honesty, tough-mindedness, or free competitive enterprise. "You can get away with anything if you just wave the flag," a business partner of my father once told me. He called that patriotism. But the label game reaches its all-time peak of skill and effrontery in the Madison Avenue master stroke of pasting the lovely label of Zion on all the

most typical institutions of Babylon: Zion's Loans, Zion's Real Estate, Zion's Used Cars, Zion's Jewelry, Zion's Supermart, Zion's Auto Wrecking, Zion's Outdoor Advertising, Zion's Gunshop, Zion's Land and Mining, Zion's Development, Zion's Securities--all that is quintessentially Babylon now masquerades as Zion.

There is a precedent for the bit of faking--a most distinguished one. Satan, being neither stupid nor inexperienced, knows the value of a pleasing appearance--there are times when it pays to appear even as an angel of light. He goes farther than that, however, to assure that success of his masquerade (given out since the days of Adam) as a picturesquely repulsive figure--a four-star horror with claws, horns, or other obvious trimmings. With that idea firmly established, he can operate with devastating effectiveness as a very proper gentleman, a handsome and persuasive salesman. He "decoys" our minds (a favorite word with Brigham Young) with false words and appearances. A favorite trick is to put the whole blame on sex. Sex can be a pernicious appetite, but it runs a poor second to the other. For example: We are wont to think of Sodom as the original sexpot, but according to all accounts "this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom": that great wealth made her people cruel and self-righteous. The worst sinners, according to Jesus, are not the harlots and publicans, but the religious leaders with their insistence on proper dress and grooming, their careful observance of all the rules, their precious concern for status symbols, their strict legality, their pious patriotism. Longhairs, beards, necklaces, LSD and rock, Big Sur and Woodstock come and go, but Babylon is always there: rich, respectable, immovable, with its granite walls and steel vaults, its bronze gates, its onyx trimmings and marble floors (all borrowed from ancient temples, for these are our modern temples), and its bullet-proof glass--the awesome symbols of total security. Keeping her orgies decently private, she presents a front of unalterable propriety to all. As the early Christian writers observed, Babylon always wins: in every showdown throughout history, Satan has remained in possession of the field, and he still holds it. Its security and respectability exert a strong appeal: "When I see this people grow and spread and prosper," said Brigham Young, "I feel there is more danger than when they are in poverty. Being driven from city to city . . . is nothing compared to the danger of becoming rich and being hailed by outsiders as a first-class community."

Brigham Young has this to say on the Puritan ethic, which shifts the burden of guilt from wealth to sex:

When the books are opened, out of which the human family are to be judged, how disappointed the professedly sanctified, long-faced hypocrites and smooth-toned pharisees will be, when the publicans and harlots enter into the kingdom of heaven before them; people that appeared to be full of evil, but the Lord says they never designed to do wrong; the Devil had power over them, and they suffered in their mortal state a thousand times more than you poor, miserable, canting, cheating, snivelling, hypocritical pharisees; you were dressed in purple and fine linen, and bound burdens upon your weaker brethren that you would not so much as help to lift with your little fingers. Did you ever go without food, suffer with tooth-ache, sore eyes, rheumatism, or the chills and fever? You have fared sumptuously all your days and you condemned to an everlasting hell these poor harlots and publicans who never designed an evil. Are you not guilty of committing an evil with that poor harlot? Yes, and you will be damned while she will be saved.

When the Saints were shocked by growing juvenile delinquency in their midst, who were the real criminals? Brigham knows: "I have not the least hesitation in saying that the loose conduct, and calculations, and manner of doing business, which have characterized men who have had property in their hands, have laid the foundation to bring our boys into the spirit of stealing. You have caused them to do it, you have laid before them every inducement possible, to learn their hands and train their minds to take that which is not their own." But the respectable appearance will nearly always win, though the Lord has said, "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24).

Here are a few notes from Brigham on this clever campaign: "The devil appears as a gentleman when he presents himself to the children of men." "The devil does not care how much religion there is on earth; he is a great preacher, and to all appearance, a great gentleman. . . . It is popular now-a-days to be religious; it has become the seasoning to a great deal of rascality, hypocrisy and crime." "The adversary presents his principles and arguments in the most approved style, and in the most winning tone, attended with the most graceful attitudes; and he is very careful to ingratiate himself into the favour of the powerful and influential of mankind, uniting himself with popular parties, floating into offices of trust and emolument by pandering to popular feeling, though it should seriously wrong and oppress the innocent." No atheism here! "The servants of sin should appear polished and pious, . . . able to call to their assistance . . . the subtle, persuasive power of rhetoric." "The devil is an orator," said Joseph Smith. "He is powerful; . . . he can tempt all classes."

It is not difficult to discover the plot of the drama of the restored gospel. But the prince of this world does not like certain aspects of the play, and so his people have undertaken to rewrite the script. What has today happened is an old story and is crassly obvious--they have switched villains on us. They have cast an obnoxious young lightweight (a very minor devil) to the role of the Evil One while the one most qualified to play it prefers to take the part of a dignified, upright, mature, and often charming gentleman. It was clever to put a pathetic, long-haired, dirty, neurotic, mixed-up, idealistic, sex-hungry fool in the role of the heavy while an actor of infinitely greater skill and experience takes the highly respectable part of the archpillar of society. But no one whose knowledge of life and letters has taken him as far as a season of TV westerns or soap operas would be fooled for a minute by the shift. The well-groomed, well-dressed, well-fed, successful, respectable man of the world (in the western, it's the banker, mineowner, or local landbaron) points a finger trembling with righteous wrath and scorn at the miserable, half-baked tramp or cowboy who gives himself away all over the place.

The sorriest thing about Babylon's masquerade and the switched villains is that there is nothing the least bit clever or subtle about it. It is all as crude, obvious, and heavyhanded as it can be, and it only gets by because everybody wants it to. We rather like the Godfather and the lively and competitive world he moves in: what would TV do without it? What other world have our children ever known? We want to be vindicated in our position and to know that the world is on our side as we all join in a chorus of righteous denunciation; the haircut becomes the test of virtue in a world where Satan deceives and rules by appearance. The full-fledged citizen of Babylon is an organization man: Daniel was thrown to the lions before he would give up his private devotions offensive to the administration to which he belonged; his three friends preferred being cast into a fiery furnace to the simple act of facing and saluting the image of the king of Babylon who had given them wealth, power, and position in his kingdom, to whom they owed all allegiance, when the band played in the Plain of Dura. For Brigham Young, conformity is the danger signal: "I am not a stereotyped Latter-day Saint," he said, "and do not believe in the

doctrine. . . .Away with stereotyped `Mormons!'" When, as a boy, he was asked by his father to sign a temperance pledge, he resolutely refused. Youth rebelling against respectability? No, honesty resisting social pressure and hypocrisy.

Why this highly unoriginal talk? Because if this is a very important and cosmic part of the gospel, it is also a much neglected one.

All my life I have shied away from these disturbing and highly unpopular--even offensive--themes. But I cannot do so any longer, because in my old age I have taken to reading the scriptures and there have had it forced upon my reluctant attention, that from the time of Adam to the present day, Zion has been pitted against Babylon, and the name of the game has always been money--"power and gain."

It has been supposed that wealth gives power. In a depraved state of society, in a certain sense it does, if opening a wide field for unrighteous monopolies, by which the poor are robbed and oppressed and the wealthy are more enriched, is power. In a depraved state of society money can buy positions and titles, can cover up a multitude of incapacities, can open wide the gates of fashionable society to the lowest and most depraved of human beings; it divides society into castes without any reference to goodness, virtue or truth. It is made to pander to the most brutal passions of the human soul; it is made to subvert every wholesome law of God and man, and to trample down every sacred bond that should tie society together in a national, municipal, domestic and every other relationship.

Cain slew "his brother Abel, for the sake of getting gain" (Moses 5:50). For Satan had taught him "this great secret, that I may murder and get gain" (Moses 5:31). He excused himself to God: "Satan tempted me because of my brother's flocks" (Moses 5:38), and having gotten the best of his brother in competition, Cain "gloried in that which he had done," rejoicing in the rhetoric of wealth: "I am free; surely the flocks of my brother falleth into my hands" (Moses 5:33).

He felt no guilt, since this was fair competition. Abel could take care of himself: "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Moses 5:34).

It was all free competitive enterprise where "every man prospered according to his genius, and . . . every man conquered according to his strength; and whatsoever a man did was no crime" (Alma 30:17). This is no mere red thread running through the scriptures but the broad highway of history.

Commenting on the astonishingly short time in which the Nephites turned from a righteous to a wicked nation, Nephi puts his finger on the spot: "Now the cause of this iniquity of the people was this--Satan had great power, unto the stirring up of the people to do all manner of iniquity, . . . tempting them to seek [in other words, work] for power, and authority, and riches, and the vain things of the world" (3 Nephi 6:15).

I pray that there may be some Latter-day Saints who do not succumb to the last and most determined onslaught of Babylon, which I believe may be coming.