

out. I pray for this continually.<sup>1</sup>

Wilford Woodruff's evaluation of the Reformation is given in this paragraph from his biography:

There were those, however, in those days who were not so conscientious and by nature so upright. They took advantage of the repentant and humble condition of others. They exercised authority that was unjust and harmful. The dangers of the excesses of a certain class began to be felt and restraint was put upon them. When the movement had accomplished the good intended and dangers arose, the Reformation subsided and has gone into history with a mixture of evil with a vast amount of good. Elder Woodruff records his belief that the Reformation had a great effect for good upon the lives and the conduct of the people. It also had a tendency to separate those who were insincere and untrustworthy.<sup>2</sup>

Considering the fact that the Reformation was designed to correct error and evil within the Church, it must be admitted that it accomplished a great deal in the direction of this objective. It is generally acknowledged that the moral and "spiritual tone of the entire Mormon Commonwealth was markedly raised."<sup>3</sup> Although the main results of the Reformation were beneficial to the Church, there were certain by-products of the movement that were injurious to many Church members. Notwithstanding the fact that they were usually motivated by the loftiest of ideals, there were many zealous Churchmen who erred on the side of severity and retribution. During the excitement of the movement many extreme things were said and done that were later a source of regret when a

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<sup>1</sup>Journal of Discourses, IV, 348.

<sup>2</sup>Neff, op. cit., p. 554. Quoted from Matthias Cowley, Wilford Woodruff (Salt Lake City, 1909).

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 554.

calmer atmosphere prevailed. In evaluating the Reformation it must be kept in mind that in fairness to any people, they should not be judged by their extremes alone, but by their normal and customary conduct as well. The following quotation from a Latter-day Saints historian is an excellent statement of this principle:

I am not so blind in my admiration of the "Mormon" people or so bigoted in my devotion to the "Mormon" faith as to think there are no individuals in the Church chargeable with fanaticism, folly, intemperate speech, and wickedness; nor am I blind to the fact that some in their overzeal have lacked judgment; and that in times of excitement, under stress of special provocation, even "Mormon" leaders have given utterances to ideas that are indefensible. But I have yet to learn that it is just in a writer ...to make a collection of these things and represent them as the essence of that faith against which said writer draws an indictment.

"No one would measure the belief of 'Christians,'" says a truly great writer, "by certain statements in the Fathers, nor judge the moral principles of Roman Catholics by prurient quotations from the casuist; nor yet estimate Lutherans by the utterances and deeds of the early successors of Luther, nor Calvinists by the burning of Servetus. In all such cases the general standpoint of the times has to be first taken into account." --Edeshiem's *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, preface p.8.

A long time ago the great Edmund Burke in his defense of rashness expressed in both speech and action of some of our patriots of the American revolution period said; "It is not fair to judge of the temper or the disposition of any man or any set of men when they are composed and at rest from their conduct or their expressions in a state of disturbance and irritation." The justice of Burke's assertion has never been questioned, and without any wrestling whatever it may be applied to "Mormon" leaders who sometimes spoke and acted under the recollection of rank injustice perpetrated against themselves and their people; or to rebuke rising evils against which their souls revolted.<sup>1</sup>

Although the benefits of the Reformation probably

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<sup>1</sup>Joseph Fielding Smith, Blood Atonement and the Origin of Plural Marriage (Independence, Missouri: Zion's Printing and Publishing Co.), p.37. Quoting B. H. Roberts in his criticism on Harry Leon Wilson's Lions of the Lord.