

The Editor's Pages

It happened again. Some of the articles and reviews in this issue establish connections unintended by writers and editors alike. I expected a thoughtful review of David Grimsted's book from Illinois Wesleyan's Professor James Simeone, but was surprised and pleased when it began with a discussion of Grimsted's earlier book on the American theater. Apart from its intrinsic interest, this further enriches Benjamin McArthur's article on the Jefferson family of actors in Springfield, and the cultural conflict between those who favored and those who opposed theatrical entertainment. There is a similar cross-fertilization between Simeone's review and Christopher Waldrep's review essay.

The notes to Timothy L. Wood's "Prophet and Presidency" remind me that the Press of my own University of Illinois has rivaled the publishers of Utah in recent years, in bringing forth many valuable studies of the Mormons. Whether written by believing and practicing Mormons or by "gentiles," as Mormons style outsiders, the overarching trend has been to establish the facts of Mormon history rather than write polemics for or against the Latter-day Saints. For those of us who have not kept up with this new scholarship, Wood's article should be a real eye-opener.

Some of Wood's most interesting material is in his notes, and I would like to comment on the modern version of the Nicene Creed placed there, for the purpose of contrasting traditional Christian belief with Mormon belief. I did not trouble the author about this, because it does not materially affect his article. In Joseph Smith's day, and well into the present century, the "creed commonly called Nicene" was typically presented in a straightforward translation from the section of the Latin Mass, which begins "Credo" ó I believe. That modern liturgists choose to translate it "We believe" is hardly a gross distortion, but it slightly distorts our understanding of the sit-

uation in the 19th century. More significant is the rewriting of "for us men and our salvation" as "for us humans and our salvation." This reflects the insistence of many among us that "men" may no longer have its historic meaning of "all mankind." The obvious intent of this change is to affirm the equality of woman. The next and most significant change, however, has to do with a particular woman: the traditional "And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary," is here given as "descended and became incarnate, becoming human." This is not typical of modern translations, but it is worth noting that such a translation is now in circulation. This is not the place to argue whether or not it is important theologically. Historically, however, it is a distortion.

Along with its major messages, Bradley J. Birzer's article reminds us that George Rogers Clark, for all his courage and strategic savvy, did not really conquer the Old Northwest, or even the Illinois territory as the French had conceived and settled it. The British held some positions, the Americans held some, and American Indians (plus assorted trappers, traders, and soldiers of fortune) held still others, while more French and Indians, nominally ruled by the Spanish, watched from the west bank of the Mississippi. The United States required several more wars and treaties to make good the nominal surrender of the area by the British government in 1783.