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Abstract Review of *The Book of Mormon: Fourth Nephi through Moroni, From Zion to Destruction* (1995), edited by Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate Jr.

Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr., eds. *The Book of Mormon: Fourth Nephi through Moroni, From Zion to Destruction*. Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1995. xviii + 374 pp., with subject and scripture index. \$12.95.

Reviewed by Bryan J. Thomas

The Book of Mormon: Fourth Nephi through Moroni, From Zion to Destruction is the ninth and last volume published from a series¹ of symposia on the Book of Mormon sponsored and published by the Brigham Young University Religious Studies Center. The work features twenty-five papers focused on various topics arising from 4 Nephi through Moroni. More than half of the contributors are from either Brigham Young University's College of Religious Education or the Church Education System.²

According to the editors' introduction (pp. xviii), thirty-six papers were presented at the symposium, from which referees were

¹ The other published volumes of the symposia include *The Book of Mormon: The Keystone Scripture* (1988); *The Book of Mormon: First Nephi, The Doctrinal Foundation* (1988); *The Book of Mormon: Second Nephi, The Doctrinal Structure* (1989); *The Book of Mormon: Jacob through Words of Mormon, To Learn with Joy* (1990); *The Book of Mormon: Mosiah, Salvation Only through Christ* (1991); *The Book of Mormon: Alma, The Testimony of the Word* (1992); *The Book of Mormon: Helaman through 3 Nephi 8, According to Thy Word* (1992); and *The Book of Mormon: 3 Nephi 9–30, This Is My Gospel* (1993). All the volumes, except the first, were edited by Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr. The first volume, *The Book of Mormon: The Keystone Scripture*, was edited by Paul R. Cheesman.

² Thirteen of the authors are professors—assistant, associate, or emeritus—from the Ancient Scripture or Church History and Doctrine departments of the College of Religious Education at BYU. Two of the contributors are from the Church Education System and another two are from the religion department at Ricks College. One author is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Virginia. Four of the last seven authors are educators from other departments at BYU—Continuing Education, English, Statistics, and Organizational Behavior—and the remaining contributors are outside of academia from other professions.

to select twenty-five to be published based on given criteria. I am uncertain as to what exactly the objectives of the papers were, to whom they were targeted (*many of the papers appear to be geared to a readership that is less informed about Book of Mormon text and scholarship; yet some of the papers, a minority, were prepared for a readership more acquainted with recent faithful Book of Mormon scholarship*), and the respective criteria they were required to meet. Without this basic information, it is difficult to thoroughly and, perhaps, more accurately assess their value. However, standard criteria exist that a compilation of this kind should meet.

We must assume some basic standards for a volume that appears to be, at least from its cover, a quasi-commentary on the Book of Mormon. (1) The title itself, as well as the multivolume structure of the entire series, leads one to assume the material covered in the volume will follow the chronology of the Book of Mormon and give insight—historical, archaeological, doctrinal, spiritual, and behavioral—on at least a chapter-by-chapter basis. The introduction notes the editors' desire to go "through the Book of Mormon in sections" (p. xii), and gives descriptions for each volume, such as "the fourth symposium covered Jacob through the Words of Mormon" (p. xiv). (2) The papers should be thorough in their analysis. As noted earlier, this volume has an impressive list of contributors who are highly educated, well read, and well published within the Latter-day Saint faith and general religious scholarship. Given that all the contributors are faithful members of the Church and committed to the "building up of the Kingdom," combined with their intellectual accomplishments as instructors of the faith in a majority of their personal situations, it should be assumed that the reader will receive the full benefit of their knowledge—both intellectual and spiritual—and their experience on their respective topics. Great expectations are established. (3) The papers should bring new insight to and appreciation for the authenticity, antiquity, and spiritual power of the "New World" scriptures.³ (4) They should be motivating and

³ The Prophet Joseph Smith, referring to contemporary discoveries about South American civilizations, commented, "We can not but think the Lord has a hand in bringing to pass his strange act, and proving the Book of Mormon true in the eyes of all the people. . . . Surely 'facts are stubborn things.' It will be

inspiring.⁴ (5) The contributors should provide fresh information, insight, and perspective that stimulates further light and knowledge,⁵ rather than predictable overworked notions that only reinforce the obvious. (6) Given the credentials of the participants, their contributions should be comprehensive and substantive—well researched and well documented—in nature. Since a majority of the contributors carry the title of professor in one manner or another—all have received various postgraduate degrees, and

as it ever has been, the world will prove Joseph Smith a true prophet by circumstantial evidence, in experiments, as they did Moses and Elijah.” *TPJS*, 267. B. H. Roberts felt that over time the truths of the restored gospel—philosophical, doctrinal, and theological—would be established, proven, and presented in a scholarly way. “These doctrines contain the elements of a physical, moral, and spiritual philosophy that will be the accepted philosophy of the New Age now dawning upon our world; a philosophy that will supersede all other philosophies and remain steadfast in both the beliefs and affections of mankind. The elements, I say, are here in these doctrines; they await only some future Spencer to weave them into synthetic completeness, that shall be as beautiful as it will be true, to make that philosophy acceptable to the higher intellects of our age.” B. H. Roberts, *Joseph Smith: The Prophet Teacher*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1927), 66–67.

⁴ See Doctrine and Covenants 88:118; 109:7; and 13th Article of Faith, *DHC* 4:541.

⁵ The concept of “line upon line,” “precept upon precept” (Isaiah 28:10) is the basis of continuing revelation, whether it be secular or spiritual. Orson Pratt’s admonition is clearly supportive of this position: “We should not get into the old sectarian notion, that we have no right to know anything about this, that or the other, and that we must not pry into this, that or the other. That is an old sectarian notion, which we have fought against all the day long, and we do not want it to creep into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is the privilege of its members to let their minds expand, and to ponder upon the things of God, and to enquire of him, and by and by, when we have prepared ourselves by getting all the knowledge we possibly can from that which is written, God will give us more.” *JD* 16:336.

B. H. Roberts stated, “To be known, the truth must be stated, and the clearer and more complete the statement is, the better opportunity will the Holy Spirit have for testifying to the souls of men that the work is true. . . . [However,] I would not have it thought that the evidence and argument presented in [here] are unimportant, much less unnecessary. Secondary evidences in support of truth, like secondary causes in natural phenomena, may be of first-rate importance, and mighty factors in the achievement of God’s purposes.” B. H. Roberts, *New Witnesses for God*, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1909), 2:viii, as cited in *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, ed. John W. Welch (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1992), xiv.

many of them continue to research and publish their observations and conclusions, and certainly are evaluated on the merit of their contributions within academia—we must assume that they (a) have been educated in the rigorous and intellectual disciplines of solid scholarship; (b) are capable of applying that perspective to their topics; and (c) are motivated, if not compelled, to give their best thinking.⁶

The first clue that the reader is probably going to get less than the above criteria require is the total lack of preface or introduction (pp. xi–xviii) from the editors regarding the objectives, style, and impetus of the book.⁷ Although they provide a brief recap of the previous eight volumes (containing only the authors and the titles of their papers) and the symposia each represented, the editors assume the reader is well acquainted with the series and its agenda, and move quickly into the various papers.

The other disappointing aspect of the brief introduction is the lack of any explanation pertaining to the book's "intentional" style of documentation. All nine volumes of the symposia show a very clear and deliberate approach to the documentation style, which can only be explained as either a format considered more effective for the reader to navigate or more efficient for the contributor to write to. The footnotes are scarce at best and, when used, perform only a perfunctory role as a light elaboration by the author or a reference to other sources, in general. Only eight of the contributors used footnotes. The greatest number of footnotes

⁶ Daniel C. Peterson's comments regarding Signature Book's representatives, authors, and supporters decrying a lack of scholarship and credentials among writers of faithful scholarship within the Latter-day Saint academic community are helpful in clarifying some issues pertaining to scholarly application. See Daniel C. Peterson, "Editor's Introduction—Questions to Legal Answers," *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 4 (1992): vii–lxxvi, especially xxxi–xxxiii.

⁷ A statement of purpose was found in the preface to volume 1, but is absent from volume 9. It reads, "The purpose of the symposium represented by this volume was to show there is much more we can learn from and about that scripture in the pursuit of truth and understanding." Cheesman, ed. and comp., *The Book of Mormon: The Keystone Scripture*, preface. It must be acknowledged that a hint of this same perspective was found in Nyman and Tate's introduction: "The great lesson we have observed from these symposia is that there is much more in the Book of Mormon than can be gleaned from a casual reading" (p. xviii). This comment will be further addressed later in the review.

in any given article was eight. Bibliographical references ranged from none in two of the articles to thirty-two in one essay. One should not evaluate the scholarly effort of an author based solely on the number of footnotes or references found in his text. However, what is most bothersome in this volume, and apparently consistent with the frugal use of footnotes and references, is the lack of helpful substantiation in many of the articles. Much of the substantiation, which is entirely lacking in several of the papers, is quoted or referenced in the text itself, with the title of the reference and page number listed. A bibliography is then listed at the end of each paper for the complete reference. This style may be considered acceptable (the style used for the nine-volume series is the Modern Language Association [MLA] format, which accommodates a narrative style of text in which in-depth documentation can easily be avoided without extreme scrutiny being applied [my own interpretation of the style's weaknesses]), but it is difficult to follow and inconvenient for those who care to review the references; and, if these papers are any indication, it allows for a "loose" approach to substantiation. This style can more easily accommodate a narrative or lecture approach than a heavily documented, well-referenced paper by requiring little secondary substantiation beyond an initial quote or reference (again, my own bias). It would have been helpful if the editors had explained why this approach was chosen over a more suitable documentation style, enabling the reader to establish a more appropriate level of expectation.

However, setting an expectation, whether implied or spelled out, is the problem this volume, in common with its predecessors, struggles with most.⁸ Like the other volumes, the ninth volume

⁸ All the preceding volumes, one through eight of the Book of Mormon symposia, were reviewed by *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon (RBBM)*, with similar observations. See the following: vol. 1, Lavina Fielding Anderson, *RBBM* 1 (1989): 18–19; vol. 2, Daniel C. Peterson, *RBBM* 1 (1989): 124–26; vol. 3, Noel B. Reynolds, *RBBM* 2 (1990): 182–86; vol. 4, Scott Woolley, *RBBM* 3 (1991): 106–17; vol. 5, Rand H. Johnson, *RBBM* 4 (1992): 160–63; vol. 6, Brian M. Hauglid, *RBBM* 5 (1993): 198–202; vol. 7, Jennifer Clark Lane, *RBBM* 6/2 (1994): 134–38; and vol. 8, Mack C. Stirling, *RBBM* 7/1 (1995): 208–18.

takes the reader on a roller coaster of scholarship and insight.⁹ As noted earlier, a high expectation was set with the title of the book, its contributors' credentials, and the impressive track record of the publisher.¹⁰ Yet the reader comes away from many of the articles feeling disappointed and unsatisfied, receiving only the "headlines" of the deep substance and insight contained in the books of 4 Nephi, Mormon, Ether, and Moroni.

In many cases, the reference material is one dimensional, quoting only from within the Book of Mormon, or slightly broadening the scope to typical Church sources, with very little consideration of other material that would further substantiate and add depth, texture, and insight to the points being made. The obvious is stated and taken no further.

Millet's article on the baptizing of little children, "Alive in Christ: The Salvation of Little Children" (pp. 1-17), provides solid insight into some of the theological implications of a doctrine that is contrary to free agency; the fall of Adam, which requires the atonement of Christ; and other eschatological aspects of the restored gospel (pp. 3-5). But where the article falls short is the absence of any detail or depth regarding the conceptual and practical origins of infant baptism, whether from the Old Testa-

⁹ The inconsistent quality of the papers is reminiscent of a Mother Goose lyric, "There was a little girl who had a little curl / Right in the middle of her forehead; / When she was good, she was very, very good, / And when she was bad she was horrid." *The Real Mother Goose* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1983), 84.

¹⁰ The Religious Studies Center of BYU has, in the past, published outstanding literature in the form of the Monograph Series or the Specialized Monograph Series. In reviewing one of the volumes in the series, Noel B. Reynolds comments, "The Religious Studies Center, by virtue of its prestige and financial base, has the potential to provide the larger Latter-day Saint community with the highest quality of research and scholarship on our sacred texts." Reynolds, review of *The Book of Mormon: Second Nephi*, 185.

ment,¹¹ New Testament, or Book of Mormon environments—new territory for LDS scholarship.¹²

Millet quickly dismisses the historical complexity of the doctrine with a quotation on general apostasy from Elder James E. Talmage (p. 6) and jumps into a theological sermonette.¹³ He does not take advantage of the opportunity to address the doctrinal evolution of infant baptism, at least in post-Nicene times,¹⁴ and to give some insight and understanding to what

¹¹ Millet points out, "A form of the heretical practice seems to predate the Christian era by many centuries" (p. 5), quotes from JST Genesis 17:3–7, and then comments in a footnote that this is an "interesting heresy," perhaps referring to the Apostle Paul's reference in Hebrews 12:24. Millet is right; it is interesting and could have probably given us more insight on the origination of infant baptism. But then he drops the issue like a lead balloon.

¹² This issue seems to be a major component—important enough for Mormon to address it directly—of the Book of Mormon apostasy (and perhaps very relevant to early Christian apostasy) and an issue addressed head-on in the restoration scriptures. By that standard alone, it should merit further research and analysis.

¹³ As an example in giving additional texture to the apostasy in the New Testament primitive church and a place to compare with what was occurring in the Book of Mormon environment, Geoffrey W. H. Lampe, *The Seal of the Spirit: A Study in the Doctrine of Baptism and Confirmation in the New Testament and the Fathers* (London: Longmans Green, 1956), 98, explains the state of confusion at the departure of the Apostles: "The Church was left with second-class leaders at its head to face the critical period of consolidation with many urgent tasks to carry out in the development of its organization and the foundation of its doctrinal system." Many of the early Church's "congregations consisted in the main of small groups of urban people of the lower middle-class. They were set in the confused religious milieu of the Gentile world, side by side with the guilds and their hero-cults, and the devotees of the numerous mysteries; in places they were in close contact with the fringe of Judaism, particularly in those quarters where a syncretistic amalgam of Judaism and 'pan-Orientalism' had developed" (ibid.).

Infant "baptism gradually took [within the church] under the influence of the mystery cults (Hellenism), partly through the analogy with circumcision on the eighth day, partly through the teaching on inherited sin . . . and finally to the conception of the Church as the exclusive institution of salvation, into which one came through baptism and from which it was desired not to exclude the infants." Hjalmar Evander, *Det Kristna Dopet, dess Uppkomst och Betydelse: Några Synpunkter till Ledning för Diskussionen vid Prästmötet i Lund den 20, 21 och 22 September 1938* (Lund, 1938), 92.

¹⁴ There seems to have been a natural progression or evolution of theological interpretation and priority, without the revelatory leadership of the apos-

perhaps had also occurred in the Book of Mormon. The possibility of ordinance/ritual corruption as a pattern of apostasy, and, along the way, providing substantiation of restored gospel ordinances, was ignored.¹⁵ But perhaps the largest hole in Millet's paper is the absence of any analysis of the differing factors leading to infant baptism in the Book of Mormon versus the New Testament milieu.¹⁶ Unlike conditions during the apostasy in the

tles, that led to the final acceptance by the Church of infant baptism. See G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1962), 352–86; for a counter opinion see Joachim Jeremias, *Infant Baptism in the First Four Centuries* (London: SCM, 1960).

¹⁵ The actual ritual of baptism by immersion (Paul tends to make immersion quite clear in Romans 6:3–4, as confirmed by Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament*, 133, and C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* [New York: Harper, 1932], 87), though practiced in the primitive church, was impractical for infant initiation as seen from the eyes of a leaderless church. Subsequently, it seems only a “small” leap to “commingle” other sacred washing and confirmation rituals familiar to the early Christians (Tertullian, in his treatise *de Baptismo*, about 200 C.E., refers to those who are both immersed and then washed in other “post-baptism” rituals. See Tertullian, *de Baptismo* 7–8, in *Corpus Christianorum*, vol. 1, p. 282. Also, Cyril of Jerusalem gives a very similar perspective as he details the various aspects of the sacred anointing ritual. See *The Works of Saint Cyril of Jerusalem*, trans. Leo P. McCauley and Anthony A. Stephenson, vol. 2 [Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1970], 168–70), where the original intent had become somewhat blurred. With the external and internal pressures of a multicultural church and the loss of any authoritative voice, the Church was left confused, knowing that the washing rituals—baptism, confirmation, and various anointings—were essential to salvation and, perhaps, by eventually transitioning to a less cumbersome washing ritual such as the anointing, a “simple compromise” was reached, seemingly ensuring that all the salvific “bases” were covered. The result, however, appears to be an emasculation of the atonement, dilution of ritual-based covenants, and subjugation to doctrinal apostasy. See also Leonel L. Mitchell, *Baptismal Anointing* (London: SPCK, 1966).

¹⁶ Enemies and critics of the Church have long implied that some of the doctrinal issues emanating from the Book of Mormon were only the result of environmental influences upon Joseph Smith at the time he introduced it. Note Alexander Campbell, *Delusions: An Analysis of the Book of Mormon* (Boston: Greene, 1832); Eber D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled, or a faithful account of that singular imposition and delusion, from its rise to the present time* (Painesville, OH: privately printed, 1834); Dan Vogel, *Religious Seekers and the Advent of Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1988); Brent Lee Metcalfe, ed., *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon: Explorations in Critical Methodology* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993).

New Testament, prophetic and authoritative leadership was present in the Book of Mormon. No Hellenistic influence was present; however, perhaps other cross-cultural/pagan influences, not necessarily identified, were. The outcome of the Book of Mormon apostasy eventually led to a more dramatic conclusion—annihilation of a people. In other words, the Book of Mormon identifies more than one way for apostasy in doctrine, as well as in ordinance, to occur, with or without apostolic authority. Unfortunately, Millet's paper only seemed to skim the surface of his subject matter.

In Robert J. Matthews's paper, "The Mission of Jesus Christ—Ether 3 and 4" (pp. 19–29), a less-than-impressive analysis is given of the deep doctrinal issues of these Book of Mormon chapters. Matthews notes the historical questions regarding the absence of glass in 2200 B.C. and provides interesting support by quoting William S. Ellis from a report he made in *National Geographic Magazine* (p. 21). But Matthews seems to be unaware of Hugh Nibley's earlier work on the same subject.¹⁷ Matthews comments on the ascension pattern of ancient prophets (pp. 20–21)—to gain revelation, to learn the process of entering the Father's presence, and to establish their "calling and election"—giving it only passing attention by referring the reader to Joseph Fielding Smith's work, *Doctrines of Salvation*.¹⁸ Matthews

¹⁷ Hugh Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert, The World of the Jaredites, There Were Jaredites* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1988), 216–17.

¹⁸ Although it is good to give an ecclesiastical reference point pertaining to this subject matter, greater substance in this area from additional sources could have made the difference in Matthews's essay, providing rich insight into the revelatory and salvific processes. The ascension pattern is extremely interesting and substantiates claims of the restoration, as well as the "calling and election" process of prophets. Ample references with greater detail on this subject can be found: John M. Lundquist, *The Temple, Meeting Place of Heaven and Earth* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1993), 6–7; Donald W. Parry, "Garden of Eden: Prototype Sanctuary," in *Temples of the Ancient World*, ed. Donald W. Parry (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1994), 133–37; John M. Lundquist, "What Is Reality?" in *By Study and Also by Faith: Essays in Honor of Hugh W. Nibley*, ed. John M. Lundquist and Stephen D. Ricks (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1990), 1:430–31; "The Ascension of Isaiah" in *The Other Bible*, ed. Willis Barnstone (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1984), 526–27; *Testament of Levi* 8:2–10, in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, ed. James H. Charlesworth, trans. H. C. Kee (Garden

basically misses various elements of the temple motif found in the extraordinary experience of the brother of Jared; specifically, our understanding of what it means to enter God's presence.¹⁹ One comes away from Matthews's essay feeling unquenched, receiving little substance from what can only be considered a short Sunday School²⁰ lesson rather than a scholarly approach to two revealing chapters in the Book of Mormon.

Patterns of covenant making and cycles of blessing/cursing are the theme in Lee L. Donaldson's essay, "The Plates of Ether and the Covenant of the Book of Mormon" (pp. 69–79). The article is quite thorough in many respects, weaving a comprehensive foundation of pattern in the Book of Mormon covenantal process. However, as Donaldson identifies the various criteria of the covenant and its implementation and implications in Jaredite civilization, he neglects recent scholarship on the subject.²¹ In his treatment of the inevitable destruction of an ancient covenant people, the reader is left to understand that it is simply the Lord's way of dealing with a "land-of-promise" people who do not keep

City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1983), 790–91; Violet MacDermot, *The Cult of the Seer in the Ancient Middle East* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1971), 121, 132, 214–16. Also, see Martha Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) and Nathaniel Deutsch, *The Gnostic Imagination, Gnosticism, Mandaeism, and Merkabah Mysticism* (Leiden: Brill, 1995).

¹⁹ See Hugh Nibley, "The Meaning of the Atonement," in *Approaching Zion* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1989), 554–614.

²⁰ Others in reviewing this series have made similar comments: "Many of the contributions have the substance and depth of a good-to-excellent Sunday School Gospel Doctrine lesson. Others show evidence of more profound insight, deeper analysis, or more extensive scholarly research." Mack C. Stirling, *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon 7/1* (1995): 218.

²¹ See John M. Lundquist, "Temple, Covenant, and the Law in the Ancient Near East and in the Old Testament," in *Temples of the Ancient World*, 272–94; Seock-Tae Sohn, *The Divine Election of Israel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 183–238; Victor L. Ludlow, "Secret Covenant Teachings of Men and the Devil in Helaman through 3 Nephi 8," in *The Book of Mormon: Helaman through 3 Nephi 8, According to Thy Word*, ed. Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr. (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1992), 265–82; Stephen D. Ricks, "Oath and Oath Taking in the Old Testament," lecture given at *The Seventh Annual Church Educational System Religious Educators' Symposium on the Old Testament* (Salt Lake City: Corporation of the President, 1983).

their end of the covenant (pp. 75–76). Donaldson spends no time explaining how the eternal forces of the covenant law and the law of free agency come into conflict, placing the posterity of a fallen covenant people in heavy jeopardy before their “earthly probation” ever starts—the problem of the “traditions of their fathers.”²² Both E. Dale LeBaron’s “Ether and Mormon: Parallel Prophets of Warning and Witness” (pp. 153–65) and Michael W. Middleton’s “Gatherings in the Last Days: Saved in Sheaves, Burned in Bundles” (pp. 185–97) touch upon the same issues and likewise ignore, to a greater or lesser extent,²³ the complex ramifications of a people, as well as their posterity, caught between the requirements of two eternal laws. The texture and depth that additional references and perspective could have brought to each of the articles would have helped demonstrate the Book of Mormon’s ancient authenticity,²⁴ further reinforced covenantal

²² As noted in the Nephite and Jaredite situations, the true mercy that comes into play, in some situations when the covenant of the land is broken, must be the literal obliteration of the covenant people because of the condemnation or cursing placed on their heads, and likewise their posterity. The slate must be swept clean for future generations to have a “fighting chance.” Note the Father’s discussion with Enoch relative to many of these issues: “Behold these thy brethren; they are the workmanship of mine own hands, and *I gave unto them their knowledge*, in the day I created them; and in the Garden of Eden, *I gave I unto man his agency*; and unto thy brethren have I said, and also given commandment, that they should love one another, and that they should choose me, their Father; but behold, they are without affection, and *they hate their own blood*; And the fire of mine indignation is kindled against them; and in my hot displeasure will I send in the floods upon them, for my fierce anger is kindled against them; . . . there has not been so great wickedness as among thy brethren. But behold, *their sins shall be upon the heads of their fathers*; . . . these which thine eyes are upon shall perish in the floods; and behold, I will shut them up; a prison have I prepared for them” (Moses 7:32–38; see also Alma 9:23–24 and Moroni 8:29). In some situations, the Lord can be persuaded not to obliterate a civilization, e.g., Ninevah.

²³ Middleton’s essay is the most thoughtful and well substantiated of the three. He does touch, although to a limited extent, upon the free agency element and accountability of the knowledgeable covenantor versus those unenlightened and uncovenanted (p. 189). His article is one of the few recommended in this review.

²⁴ The annihilation of civilizations, as well as the entire world populace, is common to God’s approach to a completely wicked state (e.g., Noah’s time or Sodom and Gomorrah) in which freedom of choice is no longer viable. The

patterns, and underscored the power of both blessings and cursings attached to a people's covenant with God.

“‘The Knowledge Hid Up Because of Unbelief’” (pp. 31–44), by Kenneth W. Anderson, hints at intriguing subject matter. The objective of the article is to “identify the knowledge of God which is hid up from men and women because of unbelief and then to show the pattern of performance required for believers to find the great things laid up for them” (p. 31) through the brother of Jared's experience with the Lord. From Moroni's powerful statement regarding the “mighty” record of the Jaredites, Anderson intuitively assumes that these mysteries, which were hidden up until the bringing forth of the Book of Mormon, are a clear understanding of the character and nature of each member of the Godhead. However, he uses the brother of Jared as the receiver of that knowledge and foundation for Moroni's statements, but is unable to garner any evidence for that claim.²⁵ The brother of Jared witnessed the spiritual body of Christ and learned extensively who the Messiah was, and was shown “all things,” but no direct scriptural evidence is shown that he gained knowledge pertaining to the whole Godhead, specifically the Father and Holy Ghost.²⁶ Anderson's intent must be saluted, but

wicked are kept in a prison with the opportunity to repent (Moses 7:38–39). As an antithesis to this approach, one might note that the City of Enoch or Zion was taken out of the world so it could “dwell in safety forever.”

²⁵ There is no disagreement that the brother of Jared must surely have known the nature and character of the Godhead. But that assumption is not borne out in Anderson's evidence. Pertaining to the distinctions and character of the Godhead, Anderson quotes the Prophet Joseph Smith, Elder Bruce R. McConkie, the LDS Bible Dictionary, and the Doctrine of Covenants, but provides no evidence to demonstrate the brother of Jared's clarity of understanding on the subject.

²⁶ Anderson writes: “he [the brother of Jared] understood the character of the Godhead—God the Father, his Son, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost” (p. 32); “The brother of Jared also knew the nature of the Holy Ghost” (p. 33); “The ‘Great Mystery’ of the Godhead was revealed and made known to the brother of Jared” (p. 36). Although one assumes this is correct, Anderson's lack of qualification gives the reader the impression that it is in there somewhere. Unfortunately, the scriptural text lacks information on the Father and the Holy Ghost.

his use of the brother of Jared as the platform²⁷ for a narrative on the implications of the first Article of Faith²⁸ is forced and unsubstantiated.

Two articles that merit little attention are “The Jaredites—A Case Study in Following the Brethren” (pp. 45–59), by Douglas E. Brinley, and Frank F. Judd, Jr.’s “Jaredite Zion Societies: Hope for a Better World” (pp. 147–52). These are parochial chronologies that belong in a Book of Mormon primer, as opposed to a volume that hopes to reflect deeper observations.²⁹ They show nothing more³⁰ than one’s ability to list the basic events and characters of the book of Ether. Judd’s contribution could have been more suitably subtitled, “Hope for a Better Article.”

²⁷ Anderson tries to use the brother of Jared’s encounter with God as a means to bring in further enlightenment on the Godhead through modern revelation. However, he completely moves away from the experiences of the brother of Jared, assuming the reader must know where the book of Ether elaborates on such matters. Anderson then immediately changes gears to jump into commentary on modern revelation without ever showing the reader the “linkage” between the two subject matters.

²⁸ Anderson could better have tackled the issues of the Father motif centered around the Son rather than providing a narrative on the Godhead that has tenuous links to the brother of Jared experience. Millet’s essay on this issue in *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol. 2—Jacob through Mosiah*, ed. Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988), 226–30, begins to open the door on various issues related to the Book of Mormon’s focus on this aspect of Christ’s mantle. Other outside sources that could be helpful on this subject include: Margaret Barker, *The Great Angel: A Study of Israel’s Second God* (Louisville, KY: Westminster, 1992); Jarl E. Fossum, *The Name of God and the Angel of the Lord: Samaritan and Jewish Concepts of Intermediation and the Origin of Gnosticism* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1985); and Mark S. Smith, *The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990).

²⁹ The editors, Nyman and Tate, say in their introduction, “The great lesson we have observed from these symposia is that there is much more in the Book of Mormon than can be gleaned from a casual reading” (pp. xviii). Judd and Brinley surely must have been aware of this sentiment, which makes one wonder why their papers were even allowed into the volume.

³⁰ The articles are basically narratives that provide no further investigation beyond the obvious, no correlation with other cultures, e.g., Mesoamerican history or morals, and no biblical or extrabiblical commentary expansion.

One of the editors, Monte S. Nyman, provides an interesting article regarding "apostolic judgment" in reference to the final judging of the twelve tribes of Israel. The essay, "The Judgment Seat of Christ" (pp. 199–213), touches on several interesting aspects of the final judgment, and a few that are unique to Mormon thought. It notes that the "Jerusalem Twelve" will judge Israel because of their firsthand witness of the Savior's ministry, as well as each member possibly originating from one of the tribes of Israel (pp. 201–2). Nyman relies on his ability to persuade the reader of this logic (which is probably correct) without providing any direct substantive references pertaining to the thesis.³¹ Nyman raises an interesting concept that the four Book of Mormon abridgers—Nephi, Jacob, Mormon, and Moroni—could be the four angels of judgment noted in the book of Revelation 7:1 because of their respective valedictions mentioning joining us at the judgment bar (pp. 206–8).³² Nyman must get points for bringing some insightful concepts to the table, but he does himself, as well as the reader, a great disservice by not further substantiating and expanding his interesting thesis through the multitude of available sources.³³ Still, Nyman at least cracks the door open on subject matter that must be further researched.

³¹ Nyman does not provide one reference (whether modern revelation, scholarly, or other) outside of the scriptures regarding any of his assertions. In many cases, the scriptures, as helpful and forthright as they are, do not necessarily directly or indirectly support his perspective.

³² Nyman builds a case for this thesis by: (1) noting all four abridgers declare, directly or indirectly, that they will meet us (readers of the Book of Mormon) at the judgment bar; (2) interpreting an explanation of Revelation 7:1 in Doctrine and Covenants 77:8, as messengers who will have power to save and condemn, to fit well with the record recorded by the four abridgers; and (3) explaining that the messengers with the "everlasting gospel" in Revelation 7:1 are consistent with descriptions of Moroni as the angel with the everlasting gospel in Revelation 14:6 and could easily be transferred to the other Book of Mormon representatives.

³³ See Joseph Fielding Smith, *Church History and Modern Revelation* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1953), 1:300–301; Richard D. Draper, *Opening the Seven Seals: The Visions of John the Revelator* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1991), 76–80; E. Isaac, "1 Enoch 40:1–10," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), 1:31–32; Barker, *The Great Angel*, 86–87. For other general references, see E. Theodore Mullen, Jr., *The*

In his essay, "The 'Author' and the 'Finisher' of the Book of Mormon" (pp. 61–68), John M. Butler provides some insightful correlations between Mormon and Joseph Smith in their roles as prophets of God, particularly their respective contributions in bringing forth the Book of Mormon to this dispensation. The author gives the reader interesting tidbits to chew on regarding the two prophets' early age of prophetic initiation (pp. 62–63), predecessors prophesying of their work (p. 62), their instruction by other ancient prophets (p. 63), their same age—24 years—of beginning their work of recording or translating the Book of Mormon (p. 64), similar adversarial challenges they both faced (pp. 64–66), and their calling and election being made sure while they were yet in the flesh (p. 66). Although somewhat brief, the essay is interesting and gives the reader greater understanding of the roles of prophets. The only mild glitch in the article is on page 62, where Mormon is mistakenly replaced with Moroni as the "author" pertaining to the "Mormon-Joseph/author-finisher" comparison.

Three of the essays—"Light in Our Vessels: Faith, Hope, and Charity" (pp. 81–93), by H. Dean Garrett; "There Was No Contention" (pp. 167–83), by Byron R. Merrill; "Unity through the Power of Charity" (pp. 263–75), by Alvin C. Rencher—feature various aspects of the "Faith, Hope, and Charity" (Moroni 7) thematic. It was interesting that none of the papers mentioned the source issues concerning this text, starting with the Apostle Paul's believed origination of the formula.³⁴ One might assume that, since they avoided noting the "Pauline formula," they were not obligated to address the issues surrounding it in the Book of Mormon.³⁵ However, Hugh Nibley notes that "a number of

Assembly of the Gods: The Divine Council in Canaanite and Early Hebrew Literature (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1986); and *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, ed. Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst (Leiden: Brill, 1995).

³⁴ 1 Corinthians 13:13 (the entire chapter)—Paul's discourse on charity.

³⁵ Critics of the Book of Mormon have used this issue, among others, to support their perspective that Joseph Smith lifted heavily from the New Testament in "creating" the Book of Mormon; see Melodie Moench Charles, "Book of Mormon Christology," in *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon*, 81–114—for a review of Charles's essay see Martin S. Tanner, *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 7/2 (1995): 6–37. See, further, Jerald and Sandra Tanner,

scholars have independently shown the really ancient background—traced by some even to Babylonian times—of the well-known Pauline formula.”³⁶ Others have felt that Christ may have brought the “ancient formula” with him when he visited the Book of Mormon people.³⁷ Interpretation and application of the faith, hope, and charity formula is important, but further research³⁸ on its origins could be insightful toward understanding the antiquity of the Book of Mormon, the sayings of Christ outside the biblical canonized gospels and 3 Nephi, and the contents of the brass plates.

Of the three essays, Merrill’s and Rencher’s are the more insightful and comprehensive. Merrill begins his article by noting a 4 Nephi descriptor of Zion, “There was no contention,” and uses it as a jumping-off point to build “a pattern for reestablishing Zion, which encompasses both a warning of what must be avoided and a promise of what can, with the Lord’s help, be achieved” (p. 167). Merrill then proceeds to establish a strong foundation by scripturally analyzing the elements of contention, anger, faith, hope, and charity. However, if there can be one criticism given to Merrill’s work, it is the absence of any reference to John 17, known as the “Priestly Prayer,”³⁹ which establishes

Mormonism—Shadow or Reality? (Salt Lake City: Modern Microfilm Company, 1982), 73–79—for a review of the Tanners’ work, see Matthew Roper, *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon 4* (1992): 169–215. The correlation of Moroni 7 and 1 Corinthians 13 is one of the topics.

³⁶ Hugh Nibley, *Since Cumorah*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1988), 112. Also, see *ibid.*, 455–56 n. 4: “Also considered an anachronism in the Book of Mormon is the reference to faith, hope, and charity, a formula on which the new Coptic texts cast some light, and which was known to be not a Pauline invention but a well-known expression in very ancient times. . . . Henri-Charles Puech and Gilles Quispel, ‘Les écrits gnostiques du Codex Jung,’ *Vigilae Christianae* 8 (1954): 13–14.”

³⁷ See Richard Lloyd Anderson, *Understanding Paul* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 118–19; Sidney B. Sperry, *Paul’s Life and Letters* (Salt Lake City, Bookcraft, 1968), 134.

³⁸ Currently no exhaustive work is available on this subject. Any original work on the origin of the Pauline formula would likely require much more effort and research than what appears to have been invested in a majority of this volume’s essays.

³⁹ See Andre Feuillet, *The Priesthood of Christ and His Ministers*, trans. Matthew J. O’Connell (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975), 28–48.

the “oneness” motif found in the Zion concept featured by Merrill. Rencher, on the other hand, does bring this element into his essay (p. 266), noting first Christ’s version of it in 3 Nephi 19. The quintessential element of again entering the Father’s presence is to be one with him. This is where the heart, the mind, and the actions are consistent with God’s.⁴⁰ Each one of the three articles by Garrett, Merrill, and Rencher gives sound interpretation of the Pauline formula in conjunction with the Zionistic approach to selflessness and unity; however, would any of the articles be considered breakthrough, original contributions?—probably not.

Related to the Zionistic approach, Jeff O’Driscoll’s article, “Zion, Zion, Zion: Keys to Understanding Ether 13” (pp. 215–34), is one of the few standouts in the volume. O’Driscoll conducts a thorough analysis of Zion, carefully leading the reader verse by verse in Ether 13 and then translating the issues to the restoration and the Second Coming. He emphasizes that three things should be gained from Ether 13: (1) Zion is a “significant theme” of the past, present, and future; (2) Jackson County will be the place of “Zion, the New Jerusalem;” and (3) the “preservation of Zion has necessitated its being removed from the earth in the past and will require it in the future.” O’Driscoll notes that beyond there having been three holy cities in three dispensations there will “perhaps . . . be a fourth city in yet another time” (p. 229). This article was a delight to read, establishing a substantive path⁴¹ to its conclusion.

Another highlight was Bruce K. Satterfield’s essay, “Moroni 9–10: Remember How Merciful the Lord Hath Been” (pp. 277–88). His elaboration on the importance of seeking spiritual gifts

⁴⁰ See Arthur R. Bassett, “Knowing, Doing, and Being: Vital Dimensions in the Mormon Religious Experience,” *Sunstone* 10/5 (1985): 59–63. As noted in Merrill’s paper, see also Ezra Taft Benson, “Beware of Pride,” *Ensign* (May 1989): 4–6, regarding the unity process.

⁴¹ It is interesting to note that O’Driscoll had more than twenty helpful references in his bibliography (pp. 233–34), substantially more than a majority of the essays found in this volume. This is not necessarily to imply quantity over quality, but it is interesting to note that the author was more successful in convincing the reader of his thesis than the authors of many of the other articles with less substantiation.

was compelling.⁴² Similar to O'Driscoll's approach, Satterfield carefully breaks down the two Moroni chapters, completing the direction and focus Moroni was probably seeking for those who read his words.

Two other papers that hit home runs are "Zion Gained and Lost: Fourth Nephi as the Quintessential Model" (pp. 289–302), by Andrew C. Skinner, and "Jared and His Brother" (pp. 303–22), by Thomas R. Valletta. In focusing on the Zion concept in 4 Nephi, Skinner brings to light the desire of various societies, religious sects, or groups to "imitate" Zion (p. 294). He specifically uses the Qumran community as an example. He provides insight into the Law of Consecration (p. 295), establishing it as a precursor to a Zion society. Although Skinner's work might not be considered original, it does bring certain aspects of a Zion condition, as well as its apostasy, into a new light.

Valletta's contribution is probably the best in the book. He insightfully explores patterns or types established by the Jaredites and relates them to the "Eternal Plan of Redemption" (pp. 304–5), everything eventually pointing to Christ. From types such as the exodus of the Jaredites to the brother of Jared himself, Valletta breaks new ground by establishing clearly ancient elements to the Jaredite record. He supports his thesis with strong documentation, with certainly the most extensive and helpful reference list of any of the contributors in the volume. Valletta compares the Jaredite language of being "driven" from their initial inheritance only to be promised a greater inheritance with other similar expulsions,

⁴² Satterfield quotes Elder Oaks: "We should seek after spiritual gifts. They can lead us to God. They can shield us from the power of the adversary. They can compensate for our inadequacies and repair our imperfections" (p. 282). Satterfield goes on to further elaborate through President George Q. Cannon: "How many of you are seeking for these gifts that God has promised to bestow? How many of you, when you bow before your Heavenly Father in your family circle or in your secret places, contend for these gifts to be bestowed upon you? How many of you ask the Father in the name of Jesus to manifest Himself to you through these gifts? Or do you go along day by day like a door turning on its hinges, without having any feeling upon the subject, without exercising any faith whatever, content to be baptized and be members of the Church and to rest there, thinking that your salvation is secure because you have done this?" *Gospel Truth: Discourses and Writings of President George Q. Cannon*, ed. Jerrald L. Newquist, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1974), 195–96.

e.g., Adam and Eve, Cain, and Israel (p. 309). The paper inspires and motivates the reader to see other types and patterns in the Jaredite record, such as the death and rebirth of the Jaredites crossing the sea,⁴³ drawing parallels to the baptismal covenant and its symbolism (p. 312). The wanderings of the Jaredites and other wandering or journey motifs focus on an “eternal return” theme,⁴⁴ which Valletta identifies and enlarges upon. Valletta covers the “ascension” ground that Matthews’s article sidesteps, bringing a richer appreciation of what is available to those who seek “the face of God.”⁴⁵ This article provides “meat” for the reader and allows him or her to dig deeper into the substantive issues of the Jaredite story. It provides evidence, counter to many of the volume’s articles, that more can be found beyond the obvious in the Book of Mormon.

The book’s final article, “The Socio-Economics of Zion” (pp. 337–52), written by Warner P. Woodworth, gives a strong finish to a volume mainly comprised of lightweight essays. He starts his thesis by establishing key “aspects of how God’s people ‘lived after the manner of happiness’ ” (p. 337) and by noting that cataclysmic events had to occur as a “fundamental cleansing,

⁴³ This is also reminiscent of the ancient Egyptian death rituals. See Hugh Nibley, “The Fearful Passage,” in *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1975), 209–31.

⁴⁴ It reminds the reader of the “The Pearl” hymn in early Christianity, in which the son leaves the royal house of his father and mother to find the pearl. While on his journey, which, over time, makes him forget his noble heritage, he becomes lost to the world he dwells in. His royal parents and elder brother become concerned and send him a letter reminding him of his heritage. He awakes and takes the pearl, returning home clothed in glory to reclaim his inheritance; see G. Bornkamm, “The Acts of Thomas,” in *New Testament Apocrypha*, ed. Edgar Hennecke and Wilhelm Schneemelcher (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1965), 2:433–37; Nibley, *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri*, 267–72. Other sources referring to the wandering or journey motif include: Mircea Eliade, *Myth and Reality* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 81; and, as Valletta recommends in his essay for a general review, see Mircea Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1954).

⁴⁵ Valletta quotes Joseph Smith: “The least Saint may know all things as fast as he is able to bear them, for the day must come when no man need say to his neighbor, Know ye the Lord; for all shall know Him (who remain) from the least to the greatest. How is this to be done? It is to be done by this sealing power, and the other Comforter spoken of, which will be manifest by revelation” (p. 317). *TPJS*, 49.

. . . empowering people to function on a higher plane, that of Zion” (p. 340). Woodworth writes intelligently, showing how man by nature experiences conflict between selfish, self-gratifying behavior and loftier perspectives of caring and selflessness (p. 341), and that only through spiritual conversion can he have “all things in common” to live in a utopian society. Woodworth covers solid ground—including humility, economic commonality, spiritual and priesthood power, and a strong work ethic—in distinguishing this utopian environment, as well as what began to occur economically—a diversity of wealth, socioeconomic classes—in its destruction (pp. 340–48). This article is articulate and well researched.

As noted at the beginning of this review, high expectations were established for this book. In some cases they were met, but in many cases they were not. In an environment where the motto “the glory of God is intelligence” echoes through its halls, one must wonder why more effort, research, thought, and insight were not put into these essays as a whole. In reviewing the third volume in this series, Noel Reynolds observed the same condition.

Only half of the papers convince the reader that the authors have mastered the relevant literature on their various topics. One gets the impression that the editors and some of the authors do not place much value on the growing scholarly literature on these scriptural texts. Rather, one frequently notes terminology and assumptions that are unexplained and that seem to depend on an unarticulated oral tradition for both sense and import. Further, one might also wish that the editors would vigorously recruit in wider circles, soliciting the best papers possible on each topic, and truly fulfill the mission of a Brigham Young University Religious Studies Center.⁴⁶

Orson Pratt believed that when we are seeking spiritual, intellectual, or other confirmation we have the “right and privilege to knock, and we have the promise that it shall be opened to us; to seek, and when we do seek, to do so with the expectation

⁴⁶ See Reynolds, review of *The Book of Mormon: Second Nephi*, 186.

of finding."⁴⁷ Very little knocking or seeking occurred in many of these papers. The *modus operandi* most preferred is best described as "well-oiled methods of scriptural elucidation established over many years."⁴⁸ While a few bright spots are present among the contributions, I must echo a review of an earlier volume in saying, "there is more that reflects the view from a cloister, lacking a footing in either the world of the Book of Mormon or our own. It is not enough to let scriptural texts and statements by General Authorities converse among themselves in our essays. The expectations and needs of believers and seekers deserve a scholarship aware of the nature of humankind in whatever period."⁴⁹

The credentials and merits of this volume's contributors are impressive, yet their product contained in the book is not. It has the potential of reinforcing the stereotypes touted by detractors of Mormon scholarship of being biased in perspective, unresearched, and self-indulgent.⁵⁰ Sadly, if this book is any indication, a tendency still exists toward what Hugh Nibley described as

zeal without knowledge. . . . One has only to consider the present outpouring of "inspirational" books in the Church which bring little new in the way of knowledge: truisms, and platitudes, kitsch, and clichés have become our everyday diet. The Prophet [Joseph Smith] would never settle for that. "I advise you to go on to perfection and search deeper and deeper into the mysteries of Godliness. . . . It has always been my province to dig up hidden mysteries, *new things*, for my hearers."⁵¹

47 Orson Pratt, *JD* 17:327.

48 See Hauglid, review of *The Book of Mormon: Alma*, 198.

49 See Johnson, review of *The Book of Mormon: Mosiah*, 162–63.

50 See Daniel C. Peterson, "Editor's Introduction—Questions to Legal Answers," *Review of Books on The Book of Mormon* 4 (1992): xxx–xxxii.

51 Hugh Nibley, *Nibley on the Timely and the Timeless: Classic Essays of Hugh W. Nibley* (Salt Lake City: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1978), 271. The Joseph Smith quotation is from *TPJS*, 364.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell notes "there is so much more in the Book of Mormon than we have yet discovered."⁵² The volume's editors agree "that there is much more in the Book of Mormon than can be gleaned from a casual reading" (p. xviii); yet, the effort to "glean" beyond the obvious rarely occurred in many of the contributions. Holding back one's contribution, even within the field of scholarship, warns Elder Maxwell, is counter to the consecration of one's skills and commitment to "building up the Kingdom."⁵³

Scholars might hold back differently than would a businessman or a politician. A few hold back a portion of themselves merely to please a particular gallery of peers. Another might hold back a spiritual insight from which many could profit, simply wishing to have his or her "ownership" established. Some hold back by not appearing overly committed to the Kingdom, lest they incur the disapproval of particular peers who might disdain such consecration. In various ways, some give of themselves, even extensively, but not fully and unre-servedly.⁵⁴

If lack of effort is not the issue, then lack of recognition or acceptance of the large body of available scholarly literature is. This gives one the impression that a philosophy of "simplicity"⁵⁵—where substantiation is considered unnecessary and burdensome—is "a brew." The danger of this kind of approach is that it breeds a pragmatism and orthodoxy that blinds itself to further light and knowledge, as evidenced in evangelical Christian

⁵² Elder Neal A. Maxwell, "The Children of Christ," in *The Book of Mormon: Mosiah*, 2.

⁵³ Elder Neal A. Maxwell, "Discipleship and Scholarship," *BYU Studies* 32/3 (1992): 5-9.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁵⁵ Lately, this approach has been referred to as "traditional" Mormon scholarship; see Rand H. Johnson's review of *The Book of Mormon: Mosiah*, 160-63. "Traditional Latter-day Saint scripture scholarship is easily identifiable and, in most instances, interesting and sometimes even intellectually stimulating; however, rarely does it have a newness or originality that inspires one to a higher level of commitment and dedication which makes a real 'difference' in one's life"; Hauglid, review of *The Book of Mormon: Alma*, 199.

fundamentalism's smug rejection of most biblical scholarship.⁵⁶ Can this "anti-learned" sentiment be also applicable to one's faithful approach of the Book of Mormon? "God forbid!"⁵⁷ Warning against such a narrow approach, Brigham Young proclaimed that "all truth is for the salvation of the children of men—for their benefit and learning—for their furtherance in the principles of divine knowledge; and divine knowledge is any matter of fact—truth; and all truth pertains to divinity."⁵⁸

Lest we forget, original thinking and asking the unaskable questions are what began the restoration process. Nibley reminds us of Joseph's concerns when introducing new doctrine, new perspectives, in probing beyond the obvious.

"[If I] go into an investigation into anything, that is not contained in the Bible . . . I think there are so many over-wise men here, that they would cry treason and put me to death." But, he asks, "why be so certain that you comprehend the things of God, when all things with you are so uncertain?" True knowledge never shuts the door on more knowledge, but zeal often does.⁵⁹

The Book of Mormon: Fourth Nephi through Moroni, From Zion to Destruction provides some insights, but the real treasures of these last books in the Book of Mormon are yet to be found, or, at least, they are found elsewhere. This book or the entire series should not be considered a commentary on the deeper things of the Book of Mormon. "It must not be forgotten that the Church still awaits an in-depth, scholarly but faithful commentary on the Book of Mormon."⁶⁰ This volume is cautiously recommended,

⁵⁶ Flo Conway and Jim Siegelman, *Holy Terror: The Fundamentalist War on America's Freedoms in Religion, Politics and Our Private Lives* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1982), 200.

⁵⁷ The Apostle Paul's reaction to ludicrous assumptions of God's judgment (Romans 3:6).

⁵⁸ Brigham Young, *JD* 7:284.

⁵⁹ Nibley, *Nibley on the Timely and the Timeless*, 268. For the Joseph Smith quotations, see *TPJS*, 348, 320, respectively.

⁶⁰ See Stirling, review of *The Book of Mormon: Helaman through 3 Nephi* 8, 218.

but disappointment should not come as a surprise if the reader is hoping for something more than the written form of a subjective oratory. Is it worth buying? Perhaps, but only at a value equal to the effort applied to many of the papers: a discounted price.