



## Review of Books on the Book of Mormon 1989–2011

---

Volume 9 | Number 1

Article 2

---

1997

### Editor's Introduction: Traditions of the Fathers

Daniel C. Peterson

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/msr>

---

#### BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Peterson, Daniel C. (1997) "Editor's Introduction: Traditions of the Fathers," *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon 1989–2011*: Vol. 9 : No. 1 , Article 2.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/msr/vol9/iss1/2>

This Front Matter is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon 1989–2011* by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact [scholarsarchive@byu.edu](mailto:scholarsarchive@byu.edu), [ellen\\_amatangelo@byu.edu](mailto:ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu).



---

NEAL A. MAXWELL INSTITUTE  
FOR RELIGIOUS SCHOLARSHIP

---

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY • PROVO, UTAH

**Title** Editor's Introduction: Traditions of the Fathers

**Author(s)** Daniel C. Peterson

**Reference** *FARMS Review of Books* 9/1 (1997): v-xxix.

**ISSN** 1099-9450 (print), 2168-3123 (online)

**Abstract** Introduction to the current issue, as well as editor's picks. Peterson discusses two incorrect "traditions of men"—that Latter-day Saints believe the atonement of Jesus Christ covers only the transgression of Adam but not our sins and that Latter-day Saints are forbidden to think for themselves. Early statements from eyewitnesses confirm the Book of Mormon.

## Editor's Introduction: Traditions of the Fathers

Daniel C. Peterson

"Bunter," said Lord Peter, as the kitchen door closed behind them, "do you know why I am doubtful about the success of those rat experiments?"

"Meaning Dr. Hartman's, my lord?"

"Yes. Dr. Hartman has a theory. In any investigations, my Bunter, it is most damnably dangerous to have a theory."

"I have heard you say so, my lord."

"Confound you—you know it as well as I do! What is wrong with the doctor's theories, Bunter?"

"You wish me to reply, my lord, that he only sees the facts which fit in with the theory."

"Thought-reader!" exclaimed Lord Peter bitterly.<sup>1</sup>

What Dorothy Sayers's aristocratic sleuth does not seem to realize, of course, is that it is virtually impossible for any investigator, be he or she a detective or a scientist or a historian, to function without a theory. Not, at least, for more than the first few moments of contemplating a question.<sup>2</sup> Bunter's obvious reluctance to

---

Matthew Roper and my son Joseph Peterson were helpful in locating certain materials for citation in this essay.

<sup>1</sup> Dorothy L. Sayers, "The Vindictive Story of the Footsteps That Ran," in *Lord Peter: The Complete Lord Peter Wimsey Stories* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), 159–60.

<sup>2</sup> I have tried to make this point in a number of places, among them Daniel C. Peterson, "Editor's Introduction: Triptych (Inspired by Hieronymus Bosch)," *FARMS Review of Books* 8/1 (1996): v–xlv; Daniel C. Peterson, "Text and Context," *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 6/1 (1994): 524–62; Daniel C. Peterson, "Editor's Introduction," *Review of Books on the Book of*

agree with the usually perceptive Lord Peter is entirely justified. The issue is never whether or not we will have a hypothesis or a working theory—for we inevitably will—but how good a theory it will be, and how open we will be to potentially modifying or even disconfirming new data. And this applies, we must emphatically note, not only to religious believers. It applies to atheists and agnostics fully as well. Even the pragmatist who boasts of his or her freedom from ideology operates, necessarily, on the basis of at least an unreflective, muddle-headed notion of how the world works and what is or is not good. “Philosophy is inescapable,” observed Karl Jaspers. “The only question is, whether it will be conscious or not, whether it will be good or bad, confused or clear. Whoever rejects philosophy acts on a philosophy himself, without being aware of it.”<sup>3</sup> Much of what we think we know and much of what we value, in fact, we have imbibed subrationally from our earliest days, and have rarely if ever thought to question or to examine. This received tradition—for such it may be called—can be good, bad, or, very frequently, a matter of utter indifference (such as ways of decorating a Christmas tree or the direction that clothing should face in a closet).

Typically, when the scriptures allude to “the traditions of men” or “the traditions of the fathers,” they are speaking negatively about the false notions that hinder people from recognizing and accepting the truth (e.g., at 1 Peter 1:18; D&C 74:4; 93:39). “Why do ye . . . transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?” the Savior asked his audience (Matthew 15:3). “For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men” (Mark 7:8). The Lamanites, too, were misled by the false traditions of their fathers (Mosiah 1:5; 10:12–3; Alma 9:16; 60:32; Helaman 15:4).

Salvation therefore consists, at least partially, in overcoming false traditions (Alma 9:17; Helaman 5:51; 15:7–8; D&C 74:6–7),

---

*Mormon* 6/1 (1994): v–xii; and David B. Honey and Daniel C. Peterson, “Advocacy and Inquiry in the Writing of Latter-day Saint History,” *BYU Studies* 31/2 (1991): 139–79. I deal with the issue yet again in an essay entitled “Notes on Historicity and Inerrancy,” forthcoming in a volume (edited by Paul Y. Hoskisson) on historicity and the Latter-day Saint scriptures.

<sup>3</sup> Karl Jaspers, *Einführung in die Philosophie* (Munich: Piper, 1971), 12 (my translation).

and, accordingly, it is part of the goal of those who preach the true gospel to lead people to see the incorrectness of the traditions they have previously been taught (Alma 17:9; 24:7). (This is, perhaps, one of the justifications that can be offered for criticism in general and for book reviews in particular.) Thereafter, following their conversion, the Saints are not to “mix and believe in incorrect traditions which would prove their destruction” (Alma 3:8); indeed, in the New Testament they are commanded to avoid those who do not follow the apostolic tradition (2 Thessalonians 3:6). Much of the Old Testament can in fact be read as an account of people sorely tempted to accept the traditions of those around them and of those who sought to ensure that they would keep their distance from those traditions. “Beware,” wrote the apostle Paul in an age when Hellenism, rather than Canaanite idolatry, was the chief snare, “lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Colossians 2:8). Unfortunately, as Latter-day Saints know, and as history abundantly attests, the early church did not take his advice. Thus most of Christendom—to say nothing of the rest of the religious world—lies more or less under “the influence of that spirit which hath so strongly riveted the creeds of the fathers, who have inherited lies, upon the hearts of the children” (D&C 123:7).

I have no doubt, as unecumenical as it sounds, that the great intellectual traditions, which include other religions and even other Christian denominations, are among those to be grouped in the blinding “traditions of men.” For all their contributions, which are significant, and for all their value, which is immense, even the best worldviews offered us by a largely apostate global culture can block understanding and acceptance of the gospel of Jesus Christ. But I have been struck in recent days by the stubborn persistence of false perceptions that do not reach even the level of what some anthropologists call “little traditions.” We might perhaps call them “microtraditions.” Small as they are, though, and despite the fact that they have no basis in reality, the little myths that I am thinking of distort and blind. They live on, and they undoubtedly make it harder for certain people to hear the real message of the gospel of Jesus Christ when it is preached to them.

I have in mind two specific incorrect “traditions.”



The first, fostered by certain evangelical critics of the church, maintains that, in the belief of Latter-day Saints, the atonement of Jesus Christ covers only the transgression of Adam and, accordingly, ensures only our resurrection from physical death. This assertion has recently been repeated by no less an authority than Mr. Ed Decker, in a slick, multicolored brochure clearly intended for mass distribution.<sup>4</sup>

"The Bible is clear," Mr. Decker quite accurately noted in an earlier publication, "that Jesus did not just die for Adam's sin but for the individual sins of individual people."<sup>5</sup> And any believing Latter-day Saint who is even minimally conversant with the teachings of his or her church would instantly agree with the biblical doctrine, which is also the doctrine of the scriptural texts unique to the restored gospel. But Mr. Decker nonetheless insists that Mormons deny Jesus' atoning death for our sins. To Latter-day Saints, he says, Jesus is "no more than a pointer, an example," and "without redemptive powers."<sup>6</sup> "In Mormonism," he declares, "the blood of Christ atones for Adam's sin only, which brings resurrection to all. . . . Christ's blood doesn't atone for a single individual sin."<sup>7</sup> The Latter-day Saints, says Mr. Decker, "spurn—even mock—the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus Christ."<sup>8</sup>

Hank Hanegraaff, successor to the late "Dr." Walter Martin as leader of the Christian Research Institute in California, has chimed in with a similar (and, sad to say, rather widely distributed) claim.<sup>9</sup> In an undated "CRI Perspective" entitled "Mormonism and Salvation," Hanegraaff informs his unfortunate readers that,

---

<sup>4</sup> Ed Decker, "Mormonism: What You Need to Know" (Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House, 1997).

<sup>5</sup> Ed Decker, *Decker's Complete Handbook on Mormonism* (Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House, 1995), 350. For a review of Mr. Decker's handbook, see Daniel C. Peterson, "P. T. Barnum Redivivus," *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 7/2 (1995): 38–105.

<sup>6</sup> Decker, *Decker's Complete Handbook*, 253, 255; compare 56.

<sup>7</sup> Dave Hunt and Ed Decker, *Unmasking Mormonism* (Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House, 1984), 34.

<sup>8</sup> Decker, *Decker's Complete Handbook*, 311.

<sup>9</sup> On Walter R. Martin, see the astonishing exposé offered by Robert L. and Rosemary Brown, *They Lie in Wait to Deceive*, vol. 3 (Mesa, Ariz.: Brownsworth, 1986).

When Mormons talk about salvation by grace, they're referring to what they themselves call "general salvation." By this, Mormons mean that everybody is going to be resurrected, after which they will be judged according to their works. In other words, everybody gets an entrance pass to God's courtroom, but once inside, they're on their own! This, of course, adds up to nothing more than salvation by works.

It doesn't really matter that the allegation made by Mr. Decker and Mr. Hanegraaff is flagrantly false, nor does it matter that literally hundreds if not thousands of passages from Latter-day Saint scripture and Latter-day Saint leaders teach quite a different doctrine than that which these two critics attribute to us. It certainly doesn't matter that I (rather redundantly) refuted Mr. Decker's claim on this subject in 1995.<sup>10</sup> He is repeating it yet again, in 1997. And, given the gravity of the charge, it will be surprising if this assertion that Latter-day Saints deny the central doctrine of the gospel of Jesus Christ—the Savior's atonement—does not make it more difficult for some to hear, much less accept, the message of the restoration. That, after all, is the point of the accusation.

A second microtradition, popular among secularizing critics (but not only among them), holds that Latter-day Saints are forbidden to think for themselves.<sup>11</sup> We are, according to this

---

<sup>10</sup> See Peterson, "P. T. Barnum *Redivivus*," 76–82. It appears, by the way, that Mr. Decker is familiar with my refutation, and that he is rather displeased by it. In a 26 February 1997 E-mail message, he informed me that he and another professional anti-Mormon are gathering materials for an attack on your humble editor.

<sup>11</sup> Secularist and Protestant fundamentalist criticisms of the church often feed off of one another. Consider a very recent example: Janis Hutchinson, *The Mormon Missionaries: An Inside Look at Their Real Message and Methods* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel, 1995), 105–12, although written by an evangelical, achieves a specious sophistication by drawing on the irredeemably flawed work of John L. Brooke, *The Refiner's Fire: The Making of Mormon Cosmology, 1644–1844* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). For reviews of Brooke's work, see William J. Hamblin, Daniel C. Peterson, and George L. Mitton, "Mormon in the Fiery Furnace or, Loftes Tryk Goes to Cambridge," *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 6/2 (1994): 3–58; also the reviews by William J. Hamblin, Daniel C. Peterson, and George L. Mitton, in *BYU Studies*

tradition, the stupefied victims of an un-American ecclesiastical tyranny. On 3 March 1997, a woman named Laurie (or something of the kind) called in to the program "Take Two" on Salt Lake City's television station KUTV (Channel 2). The host, Rod Decker, and his two guests, D. Michael Quinn and Marvin Hill, had been discussing past disagreements among the General Authorities of the church. With obvious irony, "Laurie" demanded to know how such disagreements could possibly occur, given the fact that Mormonism forbids unregulated individual opinion:

Laurie: "Mormon scripture itself discourages independent thought when it states that, and I quote, 'The thinking has already *been* done,' and when independent thought . . ."

Rod Decker: "All right. I'll ask him that, okay. We've heard that. 'When the Church leaders speak, the thinking has been done.'"

Unfortunately, neither Mr. Decker, Dr. Quinn, or Dr. Hill challenged the substance of the quoted passage, nor did anyone ask "Laurie" for a scriptural reference. The source for the statement in question is actually a June 1945 ward teachers' message, and one should scarcely need to point out that it is not to be found in any Latter-day Saint scripture. For obvious reasons, however, it has become quite popular among certain critics of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Back in the early 1980s, for example, in an article addressed to intellectually inclined religious skeptics, George D. Smith, the owner of Signature Books, cited the statement as evidence of what Mormonism is really about.<sup>12</sup> One might, of course, have thought that the 1986 publication of George Albert Smith's repudiation of the statement would have euthanized it. After all, at the time he penned this, George Albert Smith was the president of the church—and, as the

---

34/4 (1994-95): 167-81, and by Davis Bitton, in *BYU Studies* 34/4 (1994-95): 182-92.

<sup>12</sup> George D. Smith, "Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon," *Free Inquiry* 4 (Winter 1983/84): 27. For a perspective on Signature Books, see Daniel C. Peterson, "Editor's Introduction: Questions to Legal Answers," *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 4 (1992): vii-lxxvi.



June 1945 ward teachers' message itself explains, "When our leaders speak, the thinking has been done. . . . When they give direction, it should mark the end of controversy."<sup>13</sup> But the myth lives on. (How many other ward teachers' messages, from the 1940s or any other decade, are remembered today?) Edward H. Ashment used it, for instance, to flog the church during an address to the 1991 annual meeting of the Mormon History Association.<sup>14</sup> And now, indeed, this obscure ward teaching message, apparently written by a minor church functionary and more than a half century old, has been elevated by at least one critic of the church into a vital passage from the canonical scriptures of the Latter-day Saints.

More important than the specific charge of intellectual tyranny, however, is the implicit claim (often made explicit elsewhere) that Latter-day Saint belief, or Christian belief, or religious belief in general, grows out of ignorance, is out of touch with new developments in science and scholarship, is out of sync with contemporary morals and human experience, or is simply out of date, and, therefore, should be tossed out. The argument, such as it is, is seldom overtly stated. More often, we are presented with a proposition that pretends to be either the obvious and undeniable conclusion of an unstated syllogism, or, simply, intuitively apparent to all Deep Thinkers. The well-publicized "Jesus Seminar," for example, announces in one of its recent books that "the Christ of creed and dogma, who had been firmly in place in the Middle Ages, can no longer command the assent of those who have seen

---

<sup>13</sup> The full text of the message, as well as that of a letter of concerned inquiry from Rev. J. Raymond Cope and the important reply of President George Albert Smith, may be found in "A 1945 Perspective," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 19/1 (1986): 35-9. For a different (and predictably hostile) perspective on the exchange between Rev. Cope and Pres. Smith, see Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *The Mormon Purge* (Salt Lake City: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 1993), 56. In a remarkable passage, the Tanners effectively contend that Pres. Smith's statement refusing to assume the role of a religious dictator must be rejected. Why? Because he and his colleagues actually *want* to be religious dictators and, thus, deny that anybody ever has a right to reject or even question their statements.

<sup>14</sup> Edward H. Ashment, "Canon and the Historian," a paper presented at the 26th annual meeting of the Mormon History Association, 1 June 1991, p. 10.

the heavens through Galileo's telescope."<sup>15</sup> Why this should be so, and what Galileo's primitive little telescope has to do with the central doctrines of Christianity, is never made clear, although the Seminar (in my opinion, rather pompously) dedicates its book to the Italian astronomer's memory. But one can hardly fail to be reminded, in this context, of an exchange in C. S. Lewis's early novel *The Pilgrim's Regress*—a novel that seems more prescient with each passing year. The conversation revolves around the "Landlord," who, in Lewis's allegory, represents God:

"But how do you *know* there is no Landlord?"

"Christopher Columbus, Galileo, the earth is round, invention of printing, gunpowder!" exclaimed Mr. Enlightenment in such a loud voice that the pony shied.

"I beg your pardon," said John.

"Eh?" said Mr. Enlightenment.

"I didn't quite understand," said John.

"Why, it's plain as a pikestaff," said the other. "Your people in Puritania believe in the Landlord because they have not had the benefits of a scientific training. For example, I dare say it would be news to you to hear that the earth was round—round as an orange, my lad!"

"Well, I don't know that it would," said John, feeling a little disappointed. "My father always said it was round."

"No, no, my dear boy," said Mr. Enlightenment, "you must have misunderstood him. It is well known that everyone in Puritania thinks the earth flat. It is not likely that I should be mistaken on such a point. Indeed, it is out of the question."<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> Robert W. Funk, Roy W. Hoover, and the Jesus Seminar, *The Five Gospels: The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1997), 2.

<sup>16</sup> C. S. Lewis, *The Pilgrim's Regress: An Allegorical Apology for Christianity, Reason, and Romanticism* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1992), 20-1.

Just as dogmatically, and with just as little actual argument, the Jesus Seminar informs us that “Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo have dismantled the mythological abodes of the gods and Satan, and bequeathed us secular heavens.”<sup>17</sup> Really? The Russian cosmonaut who, having orbited the earth a few times, returned to the ground and announced that he had not seen God, yields nothing to the Seminar in subtlety or depth of thought. One recalls also John Stuart Mill’s exclamation of disapproving surprise, while contemplating “the remarkable phenomenon of Mormonism” during the late 1850s, at “the unexpected and instructive fact that an alleged new revelation and a religion founded on it . . . is believed by hundreds of thousands, and has been made the foundation of a society in the age of newspapers, railways, and the electric telegraph.”<sup>18</sup>

The sheer passage of time, and the mere accumulation of technology and scientific insights, reveals nothing, in itself, about the truth or falsity of religious claims—no more than does the bare traversing of geographical distances, however great. Serving as a missionary in Switzerland, I once met a woman whose name remained on the membership rolls of the church although she had long been uninterested in worshiping with the Saints. When I asked her why her testimony had withered away, she replied that she had lived abroad for several years and that her acquaintance with the wider world had so broadened her soul that she now found the gospel far too narrow for her tastes. Asked where she had lived that had so expanded her horizons, she answered, “Frankfurt.” (Frankfurt is a German-speaking city no more than three hundred miles distant from the German-speaking city in which we were sitting at the time.) Needless to say, to a pair of missionaries who had traveled thousands of miles and learned a new language in order to speak with her (my companion having spent part of his youth in Burma and Ethiopia), this did not seem a fully adequate explanation.

Likewise, the question isn’t one of antiquity or pedigree, but of truth. The Gadianton robbers of the Book of Mormon had both antiquity and pedigree. As Giddianhi observed, the

---

<sup>17</sup> Funk et al., *The Five Gospels*, 2.

<sup>18</sup> John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, ed. Currin V. Shields (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1956), 111.



Gadianton “society and the works thereof . . . are of ancient date and they have been handed down unto us” (3 Nephi 3:9). Jaredite secret societies were also surrounded with an aura of authentic antiquity (Ether 8:9, 15–8; 9:26; 10:33). The book of Moses puts the earthly origins of such secret combinations at the very dawn of history, when Satan administered the oath to his mortal deputy, Cain (Moses 5:29–31, 49, 51; compare Ether 8:15, 25). Materialistic and practically atheistic naturalism, which can seem so very modern and up-to-date, goes back at least to Lucretius (d. 54 B.C.), Epicurus (d. 270 B.C.), and Democritus (d. 360 B.C.). And it is not merely modern religious believers who have been known to lose their faith and to adopt essentially atheistic worldviews. For example, we have the well-known case of the ancient Talmudic sage Elisha Ben Abuyah.<sup>19</sup>

The great Muslim thinker al-Ghazālī (d. A.D. 1111) knew that the pedigree and the antiquity of certain rivals to scriptural theism—notably of Hellenistic philosophy, far and away the most prestigious intellectual system of his time—were dangerously distracting and seductive:

The heretics in our times have heard the awe-inspiring names of people like Socrates, Hippocrates, Plato, Aristotle, etc. They have been deceived by the exaggerations made by the followers of these philosophers—exaggerations to the effect that the ancient masters possessed extraordinary intellectual powers: that the principles they have discovered are unquestionable . . . and that with all the subtlety of their intelligence and the originality of their accomplishments they repudiated the authority of religious laws; denied the validity of the positive contents of historical religions, and believed that all such things are only sanctimonious lies and trivialities.

When such stuff was dinned into their ears, and struck a responsive chord in their hearts, the heretics in our times thought that it would be an honour to join the company of great thinkers for which the renuncia-

---

<sup>19</sup> Milton Steinberg, *As a Driven Leaf* (New York: Behrman House, 1939), fleshes out Elisha’s fragmentary biography in a rather moving novel.



tion of their faith would prepare them. . . . They flattered themselves with the idea that it would do them honour not to accept even truth uncritically. But they had actually begun to accept falsehood uncritically. They failed to see that a change from one kind of intellectual bondage to another is only a self-deception, a stupidity. What position in this world of God can be baser than that of one who thinks that it is honourable to renounce the truth which is accepted on authority, and then relapses into an acceptance of falsehood which is still a matter of blind faith, unaided by independent inquiry?<sup>20</sup>

Al-Ghazālī lamented the foolishness of “people who tend to think that a vainglorious conversion to unoriginal heresy would be an indication of intelligence and good sense.”<sup>21</sup> Such people are not confined to the medieval period.

Every Easter, an urge to publish articles on the quest for the Real Jesus of History seems to overcome popular magazines like *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *U.S. News and World Report*.<sup>22</sup> These articles typically feature the Jesus Seminar and other supposedly “representative” scholars, and the academic situation in biblical studies is routinely misrepresented—if only by virtue of the fact that the importance of the radical revisionists within the profession of biblical studies is grossly inflated. As I have noted elsewhere, those who assume that the conclusions of the Jesus Seminar and its fellow travelers rest on actual evidence, or are grounded in real textual discoveries, are quite mistaken.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> Sabih Ahmad Kamali, trans., *Al-Ghazali's Tahafut al-Falasifah* (Lahore: Pakistan Philosophical Congress, 1963), 2–3. A fresh translation of this text by Professor Michael Marmura of the University of Toronto is soon to appear under the auspices of Brigham Young University in a dual-language edition (with the original Arabic).

<sup>21</sup> Kamali, *Al-Ghazali's Tahafut al-Falasifah*, 3.

<sup>22</sup> As I write, I have in front of me David van Biema, “The Gospel Truth?” *Time* (8 April 1996): 52–9, and Jeffery L. Sheler with Mike Tharp and Jill Jordan Seider, “In Search of Jesus,” *U.S. News and World Report* (8 April 1996): 46–53. Easter is approaching again, and I am confident that another collection of articles will appear about the time I send this essay to press.

<sup>23</sup> For a discussion of the Jesus Seminar and its analogues on the fringes of Mormondom, see Peterson, “Editor’s Introduction: Triptych,” xi–xli.

But it is true that the arguments back and forth are rarely if ever decisive and that the scholarly consensus shifts. In academic studies of the Bible, in the past, now, and into the future so long as we live on this side of the veil, all is uncertainty. It has been said that the late American philosopher Sidney Hook, a noted agnostic, was once asked what he would do if, after death, he found himself still alive and in the presence of God. What would he say to the supreme being? Professor Hook replied, "I will ask him why he didn't give me better evidence."

It is in some ways a fair point. But we are fortunate, remarkably fortunate, that the Lord in our day has removed much of the ambiguity and made the options clear. The decision of whether or not to obey the gospel rests on no everlastingly inconclusive sifting of ancient textual variants.<sup>24</sup> It need not be indefinitely postponed, pending the doubtful reconstruction of long-vanished and very foreign cultures. We are not paralyzed. The decision is available now, and the answer is Yes, or it is No. In modern times, amid abundant historical documentation, God has given us the Book of Mormon,

Which contains a record of a fallen people, and the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles and to the Jews also; Which was given by inspiration, and is confirmed to others by the ministering of angels, and is declared unto the world by them—Proving to the world that the holy scriptures are true, and that God does inspire men and call them to his holy work in this age and generation, as well as in generations of old; Thereby showing that he is the same God yesterday, today, and forever. (D&C 20:9–12)

The entirely reasonable question, "If God spoke then, why does he not speak now?" dissolves once it is recognized as a pseudoproblem, a bogus issue that is based on a false, if under-

---

<sup>24</sup> See James A. Keller, review of *Reported Miracles: A Critique of Hume*, by J. Houston, *Faith and Philosophy* 13/2 (1996): 286–93, for a sophisticated recent statement of the position—which I, of course, reject—that the texts of the Bible are too fragmentary and self-contradictory to allow their accounts of miracles and revelations to serve as satisfactory empirical evidence for religious belief.

standable, premise. Furthermore, the essential historical data of the New Testament find confirmation in the record revealed through the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Book of Mormon authors knew in advance, for instance, that Jesus would come to earth and take upon himself a physical body (and they knew the approximate *time* of his coming). Several saw him before his mortal advent. They knew his name-title, "Jesus Christ." They knew the name and the virginity of his mother. They knew the place of his birth. They foresaw his baptism, including its location and other specific details of the ministry of John the Baptist. They knew that he would call twelve apostles to assist in his ministry. King Benjamin prophesied of his many miracles. The Lehite prophets expected his atoning death by crucifixion, knowing also of the three days of darkness that would intervene before his resurrection. They understood the sacrifices of the law of Moses as foreshadowing his sacrifice. The Book of Mormon confirms the authenticity of many of the sayings ascribed to Jesus in the New Testament Gospels. It confirms his pain in the Garden of Gethsemane and his resurrection on the third day.

The most important event that the Book of Mormon reports is the appearance of the resurrected Christ in America. But this, of course, would be impossible unless Christ were divine and was truly resurrected. During his visit to the New World, Christ reiterated his fundamental New Testament teachings. For instance, he redelivered, and thus confirmed the unity of, the Sermon on the Mount.

The Book of Mormon is thus, if it is true, a powerful second witness to the essential accuracy of the New Testament Gospels.<sup>25</sup> And this is precisely what it was supposed to be, for it is, as its relatively recent subtitle expressly says, another testament, a second witness, of the Lord Jesus Christ. It begins, on its title page, by declaring that it has come forth "to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations."

---

<sup>25</sup> References for the foregoing claims of corroboration are given in Daniel C. Peterson, "Ministry of Jesus Christ," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 2:730-2.



At roughly the midpoint of the volume, and at the very midpoint of Nephite history, the magnificent Christ-centered chiasm of Alma 36 testifies of the atonement and healing power of the Savior. And, finally, at its conclusion, the Book of Mormon summons its readers to “come unto Christ, and be perfected in him” (Moroni 10:32). Throughout its pages, the Book of Mormon testifies that “there is no other way nor means whereby man can be saved, only through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ” (Helaman 5:9).

But is the Book of Mormon true?

Yes, it is.

Remarkable eyewitness confirmations of the Book of Mormon exist from the earliest time. There is, for example, the testimony of Joseph Smith himself, expressed both verbally and in his actions as they were observed by others. Listen to his wife, Emma Smith, in an 1856 interview with E. C. Briggs:

She remarked of her husband Joseph’s limited education while he was translating the Book of Mormon, and she was scribe at the time, “He could not pronounce the word Sariah.” And one time while translating, where it speaks of the walls of Jerusalem, he stopped and said, “Emma, did Jerusalem have walls surrounding it?” When I informed him it had, he replied, “O, I thought I was deceived.”<sup>26</sup>

The Prophet’s honesty and sincerity are apparent in this simple story, and they shine brightly in his personal writings, as these have begun to be published in recent years.<sup>27</sup>

Similarly, the honesty and consistency of the Three and the Eight Witnesses to the Book of Mormon are manifestly apparent

---

<sup>26</sup> Cited in Lyndon W. Cook, ed., *David Whitmer Interviews: A Restoration Witness* (Orem, Utah: Grandin Book, 1991), 126–7.

<sup>27</sup> See, for example, Dean C. Jessee, comp. and ed., *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1984); Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, vol. 1, *Autobiographical and Historical Writings* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989). Scott H. Faulring, ed., *An American Prophet’s Record: The Diaries and Journals of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989); Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, vol. 2, *Journal 1832–1842* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992).



in the materials concerning them that have been preserved for our examination today, and extensive historical research about them has confirmed their reliability.<sup>28</sup> Several early sources, for example, tell of Oliver Cowdery, confronted during a trial by a rival attorney who sought to embarrass and discredit him. Alienated from the body of the church, offered an opportunity and abundant motivation to distance himself from the widely condemned claims of an unpopular people, Cowdery nevertheless reaffirmed his testimony of the angel, the plates, and the corroborating divine voice.<sup>29</sup>

On the day following the death of David Whitmer in 1888, the *Chicago Times* reported an interview with an unnamed "Chicago Man." This man related a conversation that he had carried on with another individual some years before, a prominent resident of the county in which David Whitmer had lived, who had been a lawyer and a sheriff there and who had, he said, known the Witness very well and had told him a remarkable story of David Whitmer's later life.

In the opinion of this gentleman, no man in Missouri possessed greater courage or honesty than this heroic old man [David Whitmer]. "His oath," he said, "would send a man to the gallows quicker than that of any man I ever knew." He then went on to say that no person had ever questioned his word to his knowledge about any other matter than finding the Book of Mormon. He was always a loser and never a gainer by adhering to the faith of Joseph Smith. Why persons should ques-

---

<sup>28</sup> See especially Richard Lloyd Anderson, *Investigating the Book of Mormon Witnesses* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1981); and Cook, *David Whitmer Interviews*; also Eldin Ricks, *The Case of the Book of Mormon Witnesses* (Salt Lake City: Olympus, 1961); Milton V. Backman Jr., *Eyewitness Accounts of the Restoration* (Orem, Utah: Grandin Book, 1983), reprinted in 1986 by Deseret Book; Rhett Stephens James, *The Man Who Knew: The Early Years* (Cache Valley, Utah: Martin Harris Pageant Committee, 1983).

<sup>29</sup> For a discussion of this incident, with references, see Anderson, *Investigating the Book of Mormon Witnesses*, 58–60. One account, problematic in its details, but probably essentially correct, is cited by Susan Easton Black, ed., *Stories from the Early Saints: Converted by the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1992), 94.

tion his word about the golden plates, when they took it in relation to all other matters, was to him a mystery.<sup>30</sup>

In an 1878 interview with Elders Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith, David Whitmer gave dramatic and emphatic testimony of his experience as a Witness:

I saw [the plates and other Lehite artifacts] just as plain as I see this bed (striking the bed beside him with his hand), and I heard the voice of the Lord, as distinctly as I ever heard anything in my life, declaring that the records of the plates of the Book of Mormon were translated by the gift and power of God.<sup>31</sup>

Six years later, Whitmer was interviewed by the leader of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Joseph Smith III:

Rather suggestively [Colonel Giles] asked if it might not have been possible that he, Mr. Whitmer, had been mistaken and had simply been moved upon by some mental disturbance, or hallucination, which had deceived him into *thinking* he saw the Personage, the Angel, the plates, the Urim and Thummim, and the sword of Laban.

How well and distinctly I remember the manner in which Elder Whitmer arose and drew himself up to his full height—a little over six feet—and said, in solemn and impressive tones: “No, sir! I was not under any hallucination, nor was I deceived! I saw with these eyes and I heard with these ears! *I know whereof I speak!*”<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> Cited in Cook, *David Whitmer Interviews*, 224.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith (Richmond, Mo., 7–8 September 1878), reported in a letter to President John Taylor and the Council of the Twelve dated 17 September 1878. Originally published in the *Deseret News*, 16 November 1878, and reprinted in Cook, *David Whitmer Interviews*, 40.

<sup>32</sup> Interview with Joseph Smith III et al. (Richmond, Mo., July 1884), originally published in *The Saints' Herald*, 28 January 1936, and reprinted in Cook, *David Whitmer Interviews*, 134–5, emphasis in the original.

We are fortunate to have, too, the witness of Joseph Smith's family and of many of the other early Latter-day Saints. I shall select only a few statements from these early believers, a representative sample that could be multiplied many times. As William Smith, the Prophet's younger brother, expressed it in 1875,

There was not a single member of the family of sufficient age to know right from wrong but what had implicit confidence in the statements made by my brother Joseph concerning his vision and the knowledge he thereby obtained concerning the plates.

Father and mother believed him; why should not the children? I suppose if he had told crooked stories about other things, we might have doubted his word about the plates, but Joseph was a truthful boy. That father and mother believed his report and suffered persecution for that belief shows that he was truthful.<sup>33</sup>

When Katherine Smith Salisbury, the sister of the Prophet, first saw the Book of Mormon, she was convinced that, without God's guidance, her brother could never have produced such a work. "I can testify," she later said,

to the fact of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, . . . and also to its truth, and the truth of the everlasting gospel as contained therein. . . . Many times when I have read its sacred pages, I have wept like a child, while the Spirit has borne witness with my spirit of its truth.<sup>34</sup>

Hyrum Smith, who along with being the Prophet's loyal elder brother was one of the Eight Witnesses to the plates, wrote in December 1839 of his sufferings in Missouri:

I had been abused and thrust into a dungeon, and confined for months on account of my faith, and the testimony of Jesus Christ. However I thank God that I

---

<sup>33</sup> Cited in Milton V. Backman Jr., *Joseph Smith's First Vision: Confirming Evidences and Contemporary Accounts*, 2nd ed., rev. and enl. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980), 149.

<sup>34</sup> Black, *Stories from the Early Saints*, 19.



felt a determination to die, rather than deny the things which my eyes had seen, which my hands had handled, and which I had borne testimony to . . . ; and I can assure my beloved brethren that I was enabled to bear as strong a testimony, when nothing but death presented itself, as ever I did in my life.<sup>35</sup>

These were not empty words. Four and a half years later, Hyrum Smith sealed his testimony with his blood at Carthage, Illinois. The historical evidence indicates that he realized his likely fate and that he went to it willingly.<sup>36</sup> (It is relevant to note here that the Greek word *martyr* means “witness.”)

John Taylor also knew Joseph well and nearly died with him at Carthage Jail. A cultured English convert, he went on to become the third president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. But in 1844, while he was still recovering from the grievous wounds that enemies of the church had inflicted on him, he paid his tribute to the Prophet. He testified that “the Book of Mormon, and this book of Doctrine and Covenants of the church, cost the best blood of the nineteenth century to bring them forth for the salvation of a ruined world” (D&C 135:6).

The Prophet’s wife, Emma Smith, who knew Joseph Smith as intimately as any human being could have, testified to her eldest son of the Book of Mormon two months before her death. Is it plausible to believe that an elderly mother, knowing that her life was nearing its end, would consciously mislead her son about a matter of such importance and eternal consequence? No. It is obvious, therefore, that Emma Smith’s testimony was the product of honest personal conviction.

The Book of Mormon is of divine authenticity—I have not the slightest doubt of it. I am satisfied that no man could have dictated the writing of the manuscripts unless he was inspired; for, when acting as a scribe, your father would dictate to me hour after hour; and when returning after meals or after interruptions, he would at

---

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>36</sup> Donna Hill, *Joseph Smith: The First Mormon* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1977), 402.



once begin where he had left off, without either seeing the manuscript or having any portion of it read to him. This was a usual thing for him to do. It would have been improbable that a learned man could do this; and, for one so ignorant and unlearned as he was, it was simply impossible. . . . The plates often lay on the table without any attempt at concealment, wrapped in a small linen table cloth, which I had given him to fold them in. I once felt of the plates as they thus lay on the table, tracing their outline and shape. They seemed to be pliable like thick paper, and would rustle with a metallic sound when the edges were moved by the thumb, as one does sometimes thumb the edges of a book.<sup>37</sup>

My own ancestor, Joseph Knight Jr., recalled his earliest encounter with the young Prophet:

In 1827 [the winter of 1826–1827] he [my father] hired Joseph Smith. Joseph and I worked and slept together. My father said Joseph was the best hand he ever hired. We found him a boy of truth. He was about 21 years of age. I think it was in November [1826] he made known to my father and I that he had seen a vision, that a personage had appeared to him and told him where there was a gold book of ancient date buried, and if he would follow the directions of the angel he could get it. We were told it in secret. . . . My father and I believed what he told us. I think we were the first [to believe] after his father's family [and probably Martin Harris]. . . . At last he got the plates, and rode in my father's wagon and carried them home.<sup>38</sup>

During the night of 22 September 1827, at the conclusion of the precise day on which Joseph Smith received the golden plates from the Hill Cumorah, Vilate and Heber C. Kimball and their neighbors John Greene and "Father Young" watched a spectacular vision of an army of soldiers in the sky for hours. Only

---

<sup>37</sup> Cited by Black, *Stories from the Early Saints*, 91–2.

<sup>38</sup> Autobiography of Joseph Knight Jr., p. 1 (church archives), cited in Backman, *Eyewitness Accounts*, 72.

later, when they encountered early missionaries, did they appreciate the timing and significance of what they had seen.<sup>39</sup> Many of the distinctive doctrines of Mormonism were revealed to Solomon Chamberlain even before the publication of the Book of Mormon, and he was led by the Spirit to the Smith family at the very time the book was at the printer's. "A sweet melodious voice" testified to Luman Shurtliff of the calling of Joseph Smith and the truth of the Book of Mormon.<sup>40</sup> Brigham Young recalled several individuals (clearly beyond the better-known "official" witnesses to the Book of Mormon) "who handled the plates and conversed with the angels of God." One of the early members of the Quorum of the Twelve, President Young said, "prayed, and the vision of his mind was opened, and the angel of God came and laid the plates before him, and he saw and handled them, and saw the angel, and conversed with him as he would with one of his friends."<sup>41</sup> The angel Moroni appeared to Oliver Granger.<sup>42</sup> An angel showed the plates to Harrison Burgess.<sup>43</sup> Two of the three Nephites appeared to the skeptical Benjamin Brown and testified to him of the truth of the Book of Mormon. When they left, the Spirit warned him, "Now, you know for yourself! You have seen and heard! If you now fall away, there is no forgiveness for you."<sup>44</sup>

We are blessed, even, with the witness of some early *non-Latter-day Saints*. For example, historians have recovered an interview with a Presbyterian lady, a Mrs. Palmer, who grew up on a farm close to Joseph Smith's. She

said her father loved young Joseph Smith and often hired him to work with his boys. She was about six

---

<sup>39</sup> Cited by Black, *Stories from the Early Saints*, 7-8. On this incident, see Daniel C. Peterson, "Heavenly Signs and Aerial Combat," *Sunstone* (March-April 1979): 27-32.

<sup>40</sup> See Black, *Stories from the Early Saints*, 71-2.

<sup>41</sup> Brigham Young, *JD* 7:164 (5 June 1859). That early apostle, whoever he was, later fell away, said President Young, warning that even those with strong and seemingly invincible faith can lose their testimonies.

<sup>42</sup> See Black, *Stories from the Early Saints*, 10.

<sup>43</sup> See *ibid.*, 27.

<sup>44</sup> See *ibid.*, 31.

years old, she said, when he first came to their home.

...

She remembered, she said, the excitement stirred up among some of the people over the boy's first vision, and of hearing her father contend that it was only the sweet dream of a pure-minded boy.

She stated that one of their church leaders came to her father to remonstrate against his allowing such close friendship between his family and the "Smith boy," as he called him. Her father, she said, defended his own position by saying that the boy was the best help he had ever found.<sup>45</sup>

In later days, however, the visit of Moroni, and the translation of the Book of Mormon—which made clearer the demanding nature of the religious claims of the restoration—unfortunately injured the family's affection for young Joseph beyond repair. Early participants in the emergence of the church knew what some perhaps overly sophisticated observers today do not: There can be no compromise, no middle ground, on the question of whether or not God spoke to Joseph Smith. A choice is inescapable. And, I am convinced, it is designed to be so.

But we are not left with merely nineteenth-century witnesses to the truth of the gospel. The remarkable text of the Book of Mormon is itself internal evidence of its truth. Its complexity, its richness, and the fact that so many generations of varied people, of various nationalities and cultures, have found it satisfying, speak eloquently of the power of what the Lord did through the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Parley Pratt, to choose one example, remembered his first encounter with the Book of Mormon: "I read all day; eating was a burden, I had no desire for food; sleep was a burden when the night came, for I preferred reading to sleep."<sup>46</sup> Daniel Spencer Jr. was a prosperous Massachusetts merchant. "One day, when his son was with him in his study, he suddenly burst into a flood of tears, and exclaimed: 'My God, the thing is true, and as an honest

---

<sup>45</sup> Cited from a typescript by Truman G. Madsen, "Guest Editor's Prologue," *BYU Studies* 9/3 (1969): 235.

<sup>46</sup> Cited by Black, *Stories from the Early Saints*, 64.



man I must embrace it; but it will cost me all I have got on earth.”<sup>47</sup> George Cannon of Liverpool read the book through twice, concluding that “No wicked man could write such a book as this; and no good man would write it, unless it were true and he were commanded of God to do so.”<sup>48</sup>

Mounting external evidence supports the Book of Mormon as well. And this is exactly as the Lord foretold it to his early servants. In an interview with James H. Hart, in 1883, David Whitmer recalled that

When we [the Witnesses] were first told to publish our statement, we felt sure the people would not believe it, for the Book told of a people who were refined and dwelt in large cities; but the Lord told us that He would make it known to the people, and people should discover the ruins of lost cities and abundant evidence of the truth of what is written in the Book.<sup>49</sup>

This, I am firmly convinced, is currently being fulfilled through the efforts of the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS) and others doing similar work. (A recent rereading of John L. Sorenson’s *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon* has left me impressed, all over again, with the insight and general plausibility of its suggestions.)

Most importantly, the evidence of the Spirit is available to those who seek it. I, for one, have received the witness of the Spirit, and I bear testimony that the Book of Mormon is what it claims to be, and that the gospel is true. The gospel is not just a myth, a pretty story. It rests on literal, historical truth.

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us” (Hebrews 12:1). President Hinckley has told the story of a young Asian military officer from a non-Christian background, who accepted the gospel and was baptized while training in the United States. Elder Hinckley (not yet president of

---

<sup>47</sup> Cited by *ibid.*, 76.

<sup>48</sup> Cited by *ibid.*, 26.

<sup>49</sup> Interview with James H. Hart (Richmond, Mo., 21 August 1883), as recorded in Hart’s notebook; reprinted in Cook, *David Whitmer Interviews*, 96.



the church) asked him what would happen when he returned home. "My family will be disappointed," the young man replied.

"I suppose they will cast me out. They will regard me as dead. As for my future and my career, I assume that all opportunity will be foreclosed against me." "Are you willing to pay so great a price for the gospel?" Elder Hinckley questioned. Tears rose to the young man's eyes as he responded, "It's true, isn't it?" When Elder Hinckley replied, "Yes, it's true," the man concluded, "Then what else matters?"<sup>50</sup>

And, truly, what else does matter?

Thus the false traditions of the world are countered by the tradition of the gospel, which we affirm to be true and God-given. In other words, a righteous tradition exists, a tradition whose origin is to be sought elsewhere than in the apostate cultures in and among which we live our daily lives. It is a tradition that we are divinely obligated to pass on to those who have not yet received it (Mosiah 26:1). Nephite identity, for instance, rested not merely on their rejection of Lamanite tradition but on their acceptance of the records and tradition of their fathers (Alma 3:11). Not all traditions of all fathers are false. "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught" (2 Thessalonians 2:15).

Shall the youth of Zion falter  
 In defending truth and right?  
 While the enemy assaileth,  
 Shall we shrink or shun the fight? No!  
 True to the faith that our parents have cherished,  
 True to the truth for which martyrs have perished,  
 To God's command,  
 Soul, heart, and hand,  
 Faithful and true we will ever stand.<sup>51</sup>

---

<sup>50</sup> Sheri L. Dew, *Go Forward with Faith: The Biography of Gordon B. Hinckley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1996), 364.

<sup>51</sup> "True to the Faith," *Hymns*, no. 254.

## Editor's Picks

Having concluded on that rather militant note, I will now assume the black robes of the judge. As has become traditional in recent issues of the *Review*, I shall now list certain texts or items treated in the present issue and shall offer my own (necessarily subjective) ratings. I have formed my opinions, in some cases, from personal and direct acquaintance with the materials in question. In all cases, I have determined the rankings after reading the reviews published herein and after further conversations either with the relevant reviewers or with those who assist in the editing of the *Review*. But the final judgments, and the final blame for making them, are mine. This is how the rating system works:

- \*\*\*\* Outstanding, a seminal work of the kind that appears only rarely.
- \*\*\* Enthusiastically recommended.
- \*\* Warmly recommended.
- \* Recommended.

So, at last, and for whatever value and utility they may have, here are my ratings for the items that we feel we can recommend from the present issue of the *FARMS Review of Books*:

- \*\*\* Marilyn Arnold, *Sweet Is the Word: Reflections on the Book of Mormon—Its Narrative, Teachings, and People*.
- \* Allan K. Burgess, *Timely Truths from the Book of Mormon*.
- \*\*\* *Heroes from the Book of Mormon*.
- \* Michael T. Griffith, *One Lord, One Faith: Writings of the Early Christian Fathers as Evidences of the Restoration*.
- \* Lynn M. and Hope A. Hilton, *Discovering Lehi: New Evidence of Lehi and Nephi in Arabia*.
- \*\* Katherine Myers, *The Lehi Tree: A Novel*.
- \*\*\* *Nurturing Faith through the Book of Mormon*.
- \*\* Glenn L. Pearson and Reid E. Bankhead, *Building Faith with the Book of Mormon*.
- \*\* Ethan Smith, *View of the Hebrews*.

- \* Michael R. Todd, Ted E. Van Horn, and Mark Van Horn, *Book of Mormon Stories* (CD-ROM).

Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to the reviewers for their efforts in evaluating the books and other materials that we have asked them to examine. Shirley S. Ricks and Alison V. P. Coutts, assisted by Claire Foley, did most of the real work in getting the reviews ready for publication. Melvin J. Thorne offered useful comments and criticism. I am indebted to each of them for their contributions.

We employ the abbreviations that are customary in Latter-day Saint publishing. The *Journal of Discourses* appears as *JD*, while *TPJS* refers to *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* and *HC* denotes B. H. Roberts's compilation of the *History of the Church* (which is commonly but incorrectly referred to as the *Documentary History of the Church*) and *CHC* denotes *Comprehensive History of the Church* (written by B. H. Roberts).