Review of Books on the Book of Mormon 1989–2011

Volume 12 | Number 1 Article 19

2000

Cultured Conflicts: History Served on the Half Shell

Elden J. Watson

Title Cultured Conflicts: History Served on the Half Shell

Author(s) Eldon J. Watson

Reference *FARMS Review of Books* 12/1 (2000): 355–70.

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

Abstract Review of *Cultures in Conflict: A Documentary History of the Mormon War in Illinois* (1995), edited by John E. Hallwas and Roger D. Launius.

Cultured Conflicts: History Served on the Half Shell

Elden J. Watson

Cultures in Conflict is not your standard, ordinary, run-of-the-mill anti-Mormon book, but it is definitely an anti-Mormon book just the same. I am certain that the authors would disagree with me. They are John E. Hallwas, an English professor at Western Illinois University, and Roger D. Launius, chief historian at NASA. One gets the initial impression from the list of their previous publications (see p. 369) that both are members of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. However, although Launius is RLDS, Hallwas's affiliation remains unknown. From their point of view, this volume is impartial and unbiased, presenting both sides of the story. Why would I, then, call it an anti-Mormon book? Initially, and from my point of view, because any book may be called anti-Mormon that depicts the Prophet Joseph Smith as a liar (see p. 112), a thief (see p. 75), and a despot (see p. 111), while implying that Thomas Sharp was a "much-admired champion of republican virtue" (p. 80) who later became a well-respected judge (see p. 6), that William Law and others of questionable integrity were "some of the most solid and dignified men of the community" (p. 175), and that John C. Bennett

Review of John E. Hallwas and Roger D. Launius, eds. *Cultures in Conflict: A Documentary History of the Mormon War in Illinois.* Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 1995. x + 369 pp., with bibliography and index. $37.50.

was "made the scapegoat for activities that the Nauvoo Mormons did not want to acknowledge in Smith" (p. 8).

This fine-looking volume begins with a preface that explains the purpose and methodology used by the authors in presenting a collection of some ninety source documents from the Nauvoo period. These documents are arranged chronologically in six parts, with thirteen to seventeen documents contained within each part. Each of these six sections has its own introduction and footnotes, and each document is preceded by its own headnote.

The authors inform us:

> We have avoided the inclusion of explanatory notes in the documents themselves—so much of what passes for this type of scholarship is really pedantry—and have confined such material to the headnotes. (p. ix)

True to their word, they have confined all their pedantries to the volume and section introductions and the document headnotes.

I suppose it would be appropriate to begin with a few comments on what I found worthwhile, enlightening, or of interest in the volume. The one document that most captivated my interest was a heretofore unpublished account of the martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph Smith written by Samuel Otho Williams, a second lieutenant in the Carthage Greys (pp. 222–26). In about four pages, it provides interesting detail from a non-Mormon perspective on some of the events shortly preceding the martyrdom. From a distance of about 150 yards, Williams saw the Prophet fall from the upper window of Carthage Jail.

In addition, seven other documents are published for the first time in this volume. However, only one of them is of Mormon origin, and non-Mormon documents for this time period can be found in abundance. Most of the documents, from both sides of the fence, are neither new nor particularly noteworthy. For example, fully half of the Mormon documents come from either the *Times and Seasons* or *History of the Church*.

The preface concludes with an impressive list of the organizations and individuals who contributed to the volume. The organi-

zations listed are Brigham Young University Library, Chicago Historical Society, Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Huntington Library, Illinois State Historical Library, Illinois State Historical Society, Missouri Historical Society, Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Library Archives, State Historical Society of Iowa, Utah State Historical Society, and Western Illinois University Library.

The preface is followed by an introduction that gives preliminary background for the Nauvoo conflict and explains why a Mormon study of the Nauvoo conflict, even though scholarly, cannot give a true perspective of the actual events:

> The modern explanation of the conflict has been developed primarily by Mormon scholars, most of whom view the conflict in western Illinois not only as historians but also as members of the same interpretive community as the Nauvoo Mormons of the 1840s. That is, many of them assume that the early church was led by divine revelation through Joseph Smith and that the Saints were innocent followers of God, persecuted by enemies who failed to recognize their righteousness. (p. 1)

> Mormon scholars too often write history that, if not blatantly, at least tacitly defends the faith. Their work might be of a scholarly nature, but it strives to reinforce traditional Mormon conceptions about the church rather than to comprehend the full complexity of the past. (p. 2)

I am always a little annoyed when someone says that I am incapable of properly understanding Mormon history or Mormon theology because as a Mormon my views will inevitably be biased and one-sided. It's a little like saying that the Gospels written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are hopelessly biased and prejudiced and simply cannot give a true perspective of the actual events of Christ's life because the writers were Christians themselves. "Oh, that we had a history of Christ written by a pious Pharisee or Sadducee so we could have an unbiased view of what really happened!"

The fact is that a person who has a firm belief in and a proper understanding of truth is always more competent to perceive, understand, and describe events related to that truth than one who does not. A person who believes that 2 + 2 = 4 is always more capable of perceiving and describing basic mathematics than a person who believes that 2 + 2 = 3 or one who believes that 2 + 2 = 5. Being correct is immeasurably more significant than being unbiased. Therefore, what our "unbiased" authors are actually proclaiming is that Mormon beliefs are wrong, that Joseph Smith was not a prophet, and that he did not receive revelation from God, see angels or visions, or translate ancient manuscripts. Since we who are Mormons still believe in these fallacies, we are incapable of properly assessing what actually took place. Moreover, the Saints who lived in Nauvoo in the 1840s were just as naive as we are and held at least many of the same irresponsible beliefs. Their descriptions of what took place are therefore tainted and must be examined for any legitimate facts but cannot be viewed as authoritatively historical when compared with those descriptions written by the upright and more perceptive populace, which we have termed non-Mormons. In order to arrive at an unbiased understanding of the conflict that took place in Nauvoo, we must therefore give preference to those historical accounts produced by non-Mormons and allow them to be interpreted by those today who are non-Mormons, thereby filtering out those biases induced by an excess of emotional religious fervor. Is it any wonder that such an approach here leads to the inevitable conclusion that it was the Mormons in general and Joseph Smith in particular who caused the conflicts in Nauvoo?

As one particularly biased individual who sincerely believes that Joseph Smith was a prophet, that he received revelation, that he saw and conversed with angels, and that he translated ancient manuscripts, I can assure the authors that their views are every bit as biased and tainted as are mine, just from an opposing perspective. I can see and understand their perspective, but I cannot agree with it. They appear to have the same difficulty with my point of view. Nevertheless, the pertinent issue is not bias but correctness. It is understandable that the authors believe that they are right, but this

leads us no closer to the solution of the problem. Still, an examination of opposing viewpoints is not without merit as it helps to broaden our perspective and tends to point out both strengths and weaknesses of our own position.

As I indicated above, properly assessing what actually took place in Nauvoo depends much less on presenting both points of view than it does upon which point of view is correct; however, presenting both points of view appears to be the stated purpose of the present volume. We are assured at the onset by Hallwas and Launius that this volume circumvents the common defect of all Mormon analyses of the Nauvoo conflict through a "sensitive comprehension of both Mormon and non-Mormon ideals, values, and motives" and by recognizing that there are "two sides to any story" (p. 4). It would seem, however, from the remainder of *Cultures in Conflict* that the authors feel that the Mormon side of the story has too frequently been told and that it is now time to balance out the scales by putting as much weight as possible back onto the anti-Mormon position. Unlike most anti-Mormon books, however, this is accomplished here more through subtle and consistent methodology rather than through the blatant and raucous antagonism to which we have become accustomed. The authors proceed to do this in several different ways.

Selection of Documents

Sixty documents are from non-Mormon sources and only thirty from Mormon sources, with half of the Mormon sources being descriptions of the martyrdom. In addition, some of the documents from Mormon sources appear to have been selected more to emphasize the non-Mormon perspective than to give a Mormon point of view or understanding. Examples of these include a selection of pertinent portions of "The Nauvoo City Charter" (p. 21); Sidney Rigdon's address at the laying of the Nauvoo temple cornerstones, "Celebrating the Power of Mormon Nauvoo" (p. 55); "The Prophet Denies 'Spiritual Wifeism'" (p. 138); and "Governor Ford Justifies the Use of Militia" (p. 310). Thus, although claiming to be fair and to give both points of view, the authors do not equally present both

points of view. Instead, they deceptively discriminate in order to support their own thesis.

Manipulation of Words and Phrases

Words and phrases whose meanings may differ somewhat between the 1840s and today are manipulated. For example, the term *persecution* is throughout depicted as having been incorrectly used and unwarranted.

> Indeed, because he was a religious leader, Smith commonly characterized any criticism of him, for whatever reason, by non-Mormons or disaffected Mormons, as persecution. (p. 5)

> [Arrington and Bitton] . . . omit such pertinent intellectual currents as American millennialism and theories about the origin of the prehistoric mound builders—they still do not investigate seriously the causes of the conflict between early Mormons and their neighbors. Instead they see it as essentially a matter of religious persecution (one of their chapters is even entitled "Early Persecutions"). (p. 3)

Obliquely one wonders why current theories about the origin of the prehistoric mound builders are so pertinent. But more pointedly, one wonders if the authors feel that the murders of Joseph and Hyrum Smith by a mob in Carthage Jail, while they were under the promise of protection by the highest official of the state, should perhaps be called "Political Disagreements."

Misconceptions about Joseph Smith

The book regularly encourages common misconceptions about Joseph Smith and the church instead of correcting them. It is possible that these errors are not all intentional, but that the authors, being sympathetic to RLDS views, simply have not availed themselves of the abundance of scholarly material published in the LDS community. Or perhaps they have avoided it intentionally because "it

strives to reinforce traditional Mormon conceptions about the church rather than to comprehend the full complexity of the past" (p. 2).

> There is no evidence, contrary to Marsh's comments, that the whittlers were part of the Danites, a secret Mormon group formed in Missouri that was committed to violent reprisals against enemies of the church. (p. 75)

The authors either do not know, or make no attempt to help the reader understand, that the Danites were neither a part of nor legitimately affiliated with either the church or its leaders. Or that Sampson Avard, who organized the group, was cut off from the church as soon as his actions and motives were discovered.[1] Another example of a misconception follows:

> Thus, at Nauvoo Joseph Smith could engage in secret polygamy, lie to his followers about it, and when accusations were made against him, he could go into a public meeting, denounce his accusers, and be regarded by the Mormons as a persecuted innocent. (p. 112)

Again, the authors either do not themselves understand the differences between *polygamy, polygyny, plural marriage,* and *spiritual wifery* (in the index, the entries for both *polygamy* and *spiritual wifery* say "see plural marriage")[2] or else they go to great pains to

1. See Leland H. Gentry, "The Danite Band of 1838," *BYU Studies* 14/4 (1974): 421–50. A more recent evaluation of Gentry's article can be found in Dean C. Jessee and David J. Whittaker, "The Last Months of Mormonism in Missouri: The Albert Perry Rockwood Journal," *BYU Studies* 28/1 (1988): 11–15.

2. *Polygyny* is defined as the state or practice of having more than one wife or female mate at one time. *Polyandry* is defined as the state or practice of having more than one husband or male mate at one time. *Polygamy* is defined as marriage in which a spouse of either sex may have more than one mate at the same time. *Spiritual wifery* was defined by Brigham Young in the following statement: "And I would say, as no man can be perfect without the woman, so no woman can be perfect without a man to lead her, I tell you the truth as it is in the bosom of eternity; and I say to every man upon the face of the earth: if he wishes to be saved he cannot be saved without a woman by his side. This is spiritual wife *ism,* that is, the doctrine of spiritual wives." *Times and Seasons* 6 (1 July 1845): 955; *Millennial Star* 6 (1 October 1845): 121.

confuse the words in the various texts in order to ensure that their readers will not understand how Joseph Smith could denounce one while practicing another. Joseph Smith apparently knew and understood these distinctions and used that understanding to help avoid accusations of polygamy while espousing polygyny.[3]

Bias within the Explanatory Headnotes

Significantly, the authors bias the reader in the explanatory headnotes of each document. For example, the authors introduce document 3:1, "John C. Bennett's Exposé," by implying that Joseph Smith made John C. Bennett a scapegoat for difficulties that arose with his own problems with polygamy by making a lot of lies and false accusations about him, but that John C. Bennett, although not immaculate, was actually a reasonably swell fellow.

> Bennett, whose reputation was not exactly clean anyway, became the target of a smear campaign in Nauvoo. He was charged with everything from rape to attempted murder, and his character has been sullied ever since. While there is certainly some truth to the charges made by Joseph Smith against John Bennett in 1842, some of them were mere fabrications. He became a scapegoat for secret polygamy—seduction, deception, and hypocrisy. (p. 116)

In the same introduction, they depict Joseph Smith as the bad guy and portray most of John C. Bennett's accusations against Joseph Smith as credible.

> Even though some of them were probably untrue, especially those concerning sexual improprieties, Bennett countered with his own set of charges against Joseph Smith. Many of his descriptions of the evolution of Mormon theocracy, temple endowments, and plural marriage have proved to be pretty much on the mark. (p. 116)

3. For a discussion, see Danel W. Bachman, "A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage before the Death of Joseph Smith" (master's thesis, Purdue University, 1975), 19–23.

My point here is that throughout this volume Joseph Smith is portrayed as the bad guy, while the anti-Mormons are the good guys. This approach is not unique to any one segment or portion of the volume; in fact, it seems to be the single major underlying theme. Although carefully written so as not to instill obvious bias in the mind of the reader, the volume everywhere speaks disparagingly and belittlingly of Joseph Smith through the basic sophistry of innuendo and inference:

- Joseph Smith "virtually assured the Mormon conflict in Illinois" (p. 35).
- Josiah Quincy "captured some of the darker aspects of Smith's character" (p. 44).
- Joseph Smith "was depicted as a self-important and dangerously powerful man" (p. 44).
- Joseph Smith's "involvement [in Mormon theft cannot now] be established with any certainty, despite what some of the memoirs in this section imply" (p. 67).
- Joseph Smith ruled through "theocratic domination of government at Nauvoo" (p. 68).
- Joseph Smith encouraged "bloc voting for candidates he supported" (p. 68).
- Joseph Smith used "the Nauvoo Charter to avoid prosecution" (p. 68).
- Joseph Smith violated "the civil rights of his critics" (p. 68).
- Joseph Smith "avoided paying a debt to a non-Mormon farmer" (p. 75).
- "It is impossible to determine whether the prophet encouraged Mormon raiding of area farms, but he apparently instructed Nauvoo's 'whistling and whittling' brigade to run farmer John W. Marsh out of town" (p. 75).
- "Bartlett was concerned about the potential for despotism in Smith because of his 'claims of divine inspiration' and his unusual control of his followers" (p. 78).

- Joseph Smith's speech "reveals his resentment of the Missouri authorities and his determination to oppose them with military force if necessary" (p. 91).
- Joseph Smith "achieved the kind of mass surrender of the will upon which his theocratic government was actually based" (p. 91).
- "As a religious city-state under tight control, Nauvoo was a haven where the followers of Joseph Smith had their most important choices—what they should do to serve God—made for them" (p. 111).

The slander goes on and on. And as if this constant defamation of Joseph Smith and his character weren't sufficiently poignant, the authors concurrently weave a shining web of praise for those who oppose Joseph Smith and the church. I provide a few of the more offensive (to me) statements:

- "Men of integrity who criticized the prophet, such as William and Wilson Law, could be defamed as enemies of the people" (p. 112).
- "In establishing the new church, he [William Law] was joined by his brother Wilson, Dr. Robert D. Foster and his brother Charles A. Foster, Francis M. Higbee and his brother Chauncey L. Higbee, James A. Blakeslee, Charles Ivins, Austin Cowles, and several others. Together they represented well-informed, respectable dissent in Nauvoo" (p. 131).
- "Led by William Law, a successful businessman and a counselor to Joseph Smith in the First Presidency during the early 1840s, some of the most solid and dignified men of the community were involved" (p. 175).
- "Although some non-Mormons regretted [Thomas C.] Sharp's eventual turn to mobocratic means for ridding the county of Smith and the Latter Day Saints, in the minds of many he was a much-admired champion of republican virtue and law" (p. 80).

- "However one-sided his historical account may be, [George T. M.] Davis was not motivated by religious bigotry but by political anxiety" (p. 103).
- "While he [George T. M. Davis] was biased against the Saints, much of his version of events has been substantiated by later writers, both eyewitnesses and scholars" (p. 231).
- "Bennett was, in fact, made the scapegoat for activities that the Nauvoo Mormons did not want to acknowledge in Smith or in the Mormon community generally. However, there is conclusive evidence that Smith originated and engaged in the secret practice of polygamy,[4] which was so upsetting for Hovey and others, and there is corroborative evidence for much of what Bennett asserted in his 1842 exposé" (p. 8).
- "While there is certainly some truth to the charges made by Joseph Smith against John Bennett in 1842, some of them were mere fabrications. He became a scapegoat for secret polygamy—seduction, deception, and hypocrisy" (p. 116).
- "Even though some of them were probably untrue, especially those concerning sexual improprieties, Bennett countered with his own set of charges against Joseph Smith. Many of his descriptions of the evolution of Mormon theocracy, temple endowments, and plural marriage have proved to be pretty much on the mark" (p. 116).

Such are the basic methods used by the authors to misrepresent the Prophet Joseph Smith and the LDS Church. One can certainly not accuse them of assuming "that the early church was led by divine revelation through Joseph Smith" (p. 1) or that "the Saints were innocent followers of God" (p. 1), but somehow I fail to see how that enhances their presentation of what occurred in Nauvoo. A verse comes to mind:

4. It is ironic that two historians sympathetic to the Reorganized Church are now proclaiming to a largely LDS audience that there is "conclusive evidence" that Joseph Smith originated plural marriage in the church.

> Cursed are all those that shall lift up the heel against mine anointed, saith the Lord, and cry they have sinned when they have not sinned before me, saith the Lord, but have done that which was meet in mine eyes, and which I commanded them. (D&C 121:16)[5]

After having examined the techniques by which the authors promote their thesis of Mormon aggression in the Nauvoo conflict, we can see that almost no significant problems raised by this volume remain to be answered. That the Nauvoo Mormons were free of fault has never been suggested. That they were the basic aggressors is simply wrong, a concept spawned by the authors' obsessive inability to acknowledge any divine involvement in Joseph Smith's life and their predilection to embrace any other solution.

There is one more item I would like to comment on before closing. The destruction of the *Nauvoo Expositor* is perhaps the keystone of the authors' presentation. It is one of the most reiterated and frequently mentioned topics throughout the volume. Time and time again the authors allude to this incident as the prime documented example of an illegal and aggressive action perpetrated by Joseph Smith and other leaders of the church against a few upstanding and honorable men of the community who wanted nothing more than a reform of the church. These claims were answered before they were ever raised, but because the primary legitimate and accepted scholarly assessment of the action taken against the *Nauvoo Expositor* does not agree with their presumptions, the authors discard it with a mere wave of the hand.

> Dallin H. Oaks, former justice on the Utah Supreme Court and present apostle in the church, has tried to pound a square

5. The section continues: "But those who cry transgression do it because they are the servants of sin, and are the children of disobedience themselves. And those who swear falsely against my servants, that they might bring them into bondage and death—Wo unto them; because they have offended my little ones they shall be severed from the ordinances of mine house. Their basket shall not be full, their houses and their barns shall perish, and they themselves shall be despised by those that flattered them" (D&C 121:17–20).

peg into a round hole in seeking to legitimate the clearly illegal act of destroying the *Expositor* in June 1844. See Dallin H. Oaks, "The Suppression of the *Nauvoo Expositor*," *Utah Law Review* 9 (Winter 1965): 862–903. (p. 9 n. 6)

The authors' authority for dismissing forty pages of documentation, detailed legal examination, discussion, and findings by a former member of the Utah Supreme Court is that "virtually everyone except the Latter Day Saints" considered it illegal at the time and that Governor Ford, "as fair an individual as was present in the Mormon conflict," called the action "irregular and illegal, and not to be endured in a free country" (p. 9 n. 6). They make the additional unsupported assertion that Governor Ford was an authority on constitutional law, but neglect to indicate what bearing that may have on Elder Oaks's review.

Oaks's review responds thoroughly and sufficiently to the legality of the destruction of the *Nauvoo Expositor.* Virtually all the additional problems concerning the *Nauvoo Expositor* that were raised in *Cultures in Conflict* are answered in the following Mormon document (written in 1869 by George Q. Cannon, who was present at the time of the incident), which for one reason or another the authors neglected to include in their anthology:

Similarity of Past and Present Apostasy

An examination of all the apostate schemes which have been concocted for the division and overthrow of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints reveals the curious fact that they all bear the marks of a common origin. The lapse of years and the change of men make no difference in this respect. If the programme of the apostates from the Church in Kirtland, and that of the apostates in Nauvoo and that of those of latter days be compared, the similarity is most striking. If they were the production of one brain, they could not be more alike. Even the language in some points is almost identical. In Kirtland the doctrine which Joseph had taught, the organization which he had perfected and the ordinances which he had administered were all

divine, so said the apostates; but *he had fallen,* and was no longer a prophet. He had transgressed, they said, and because of this, his power and authority were taken from him.

The Nauvoo apostates took precisely the same ground. Everything that Joseph had taught and done up to a certain point, even including the acts and policy which their predecessors, the apostates at Kirtland, had objected to, was correct; but they affirmed that he had fallen, because of something which he had just then done. He began to teach false doctrine, they said; the possession of power had spoiled him, he had become so intoxicated by it that he did not yield that respect to others which was justly their due; in fact, instead of being the Prophet of God which he once had been, they declared he had become a tyrant. The prospectus of the paper which they started at Nauvoo stated that its publishers had, as their object in publishing it,

> "To restrain and correct the abuses of the UNIT POWER, to ward off the rod which is held over the heads of the citizens of Nauvoo and the surrounding country, to advocate unmitigated DISOBEDIENCE TO POLITICAL REVELATIONS," &c.
>
> "To advocate and exercise the freedom of speech in Nauvoo, independent of the ordinances abridging the same,—to give toleration to every man's religious sentiments, and sustain ALL in worshiping their God according to the monitions of their consciences, as guaranteed by the Constitution of our country, and to oppose with uncompromising hostility any UNION OF CHURCH AND STATE, or any preliminary step tending to the same," &c.

The cunning of these apostates is apparent in every line of this prospectus. Its writers knew the views of the enemies of the Church, and they artfully worded their prospectus to appeal to them, pandering to their prejudices, and thinking, thereby, to evoke their sympathies and to obtain their attention and support. Yet none knew better than they that to establish a "unit" or "one-man power," in the sense which they wished it understood, or to effect a "union of Church and State" was not the aim of Joseph Smith or the people of the Church.

In the *Expositor* itself appeared half-a-dozen columns of "Cards" and "Manifestoes," in the shape of a preamble, resolutions and affidavits of the publishers and their fellow-apostates. But with all these, they wished the public to know that they were still Latter-day Saints; in fact, the only pure Latter-day Saints; for they said:

> "As for our acquaintance with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we know no man nor set of men can be more thoroughly acquainted with its rise, its organization, and its history, than we have every reason to believe we are. We all verily believe, and many know of a surety, that the religion of the Latter-day Saints, as originally taught by Joseph Smith, which is contained in the Old and New Testaments, Book of Covenants, and Book of Mormon, is verily true; and that the pure principles set forth in those books are the immutable and eternal principles of Heaven, and speak a language which when spoken in truth and virtue sinks deep into the heart of every honest man."

We never look for consistency in apostates from this Church; for of all people, they are the most illogical and inconsistent. The prospectus of the *Expositor* and the contents of its first and only number are but fair specimens of this inconsistency. In one breath calling Joseph a prophet, the doctrine and religion which he taught the immutable and eternal principles of heaven, and in the next denouncing him as guilty of everything that is low and vile, and clamoring for his blood! Napoleon, we believe, it was who said that there was only one step from the sublime to the ridiculous. We never knew an apostate from this Church to undertake to defend his own course and to assail the presiding authority in the Church who did not take this step. A complete illustration of this is afforded in the case of these apostates at Nauvoo; yet, the language and conduct of men of this class were the same previous to those days, are the same to-day and will be so as long as Satan can entrap dupes and make them his willing tools.

The Publishers of the *Expositor* were seven in number, and around them rallied the corrupt and the disaffected to the num-

ber of nearly as many more. They probably did not number twenty, all told, yet they had the cool assurance to try and persuade the people that they were the Church, and while claiming the doctrines which God had revealed through Joseph as their own, they declared that he and those who followed him were all wrong, and that if they ever did get right, it would have to be through their reforming and reconstructing agency! They were not apostates; Oh, no. It is true, they had been cut off from the Church; but what difference did that make with men who believed the religion of the Latter-day Saints as *"originally taught?"* How curiously history repeats itself! They only said what other apostates, years previously, had said, and what other apostates, years subsequently, are saying to-day; and doubtless what apostates will iterate and reiterate in years to come; that is, if men continue to yield to corrupt and iniquitous influences.

Among the advertisements in the *Expositor* was one, which, to the uninitiated was full of gushing philanthropy. The publishers did not say that the *Expositor* was "no personal speculation;" but two of them did what they thought would be equally effective: William and Wilson Law, who as merchants and millers had fleeced the people and defrauded them by means of false scales in their mill, offered to grind the grist of the needy Saints one day in the week toll-free! But even this philanthropic dodge failed. With all their efforts they never secured enough followers to make it difficult for a child to count their number on his fingers. The whole scheme collapsed, and all their belief and knowledge "of a surety that the religion of the Latter-day Saints is verily true," suddenly disappeared, to be heard of no more.[6]

I conclude by reiterating that *Cultures in Conflict* is not your standard, ordinary, run-of-the-mill anti-Mormon book because it presents both Mormon and non-Mormon accounts of historical events and views of those events. However, it is definitely an anti-Mormon book just the same.

6. George Q. Cannon, ed., *Deseret Weekly News,* 18:536, 15 December 1869.