



Review of Books on the Book of Mormon 1989–2011

Volume 17 | Number 1

Article 15

1-1-2005

Book Notes

FARMS Review

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

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Review, FARMS (2005) "Book Notes," *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon 1989–2011*: Vol. 17 : No. 1 , Article 15.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/msr/vol17/iss1/15>

This Book Notes 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, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.

BOOK NOTES

Margaret Barker. *An Extraordinary Gathering of Angels*. London: MQ Publications, 2004. 432 pp., with index. £14.99 / \$22.50.

Margaret Barker, a biblical scholar from England, has published a remarkable book about angels. Drawing on Christian and Jewish traditions, and to some extent on Islamic understandings, her book ranges widely from the importance of angels in the creation, their ranks and authorities, and their prominence in the heavenly visions experienced by the prophets to their ministry among mankind in furthering God's work and purposes on earth. Barker discusses the close association of godly persons with the angels and the possibility of mankind becoming angels. The book relies heavily on the canonical scriptures but is also much informed by the treatment of angels found in extracanonical texts, especially in the Enoch literature and other related sources. She discusses the fallen angels and their evil influence and such concepts as guardian angels and the role of angels in providing inspiration and guidance.

A striking feature of the book is the great number of illustrations, most in color, taken from Christian, Jewish, and Islamic art, including paintings, frescoes, stained-glass windows, icons, and sculptures. Barker also offers many quotations about angels from writers and

poets and includes interviews from scholars and officials representing various traditions.

Latter-day Saints will appreciate Barker's sensitive treatment of angels that are of special importance to them. A photograph of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir is shown as an illustration of the principle that in sacred song on earth we join with the saints and angels above in worshipping at the throne of God. The first vision of Joseph Smith, with the appearance of God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, is described and illustrated with a painting by Greg Olsen (p. 403). The volume closes with an interview with Professor John W. Welch of Brigham Young University, summarizing what Mormons believe about angels and giving some details about the appearances and purposes of the angel Moroni and other heavenly messengers that ministered to the Prophet Joseph Smith (pp. 412–13).

Francis J. Beckwith, William Lane Craig, and J. P. Moreland, eds. *To Everyone an Answer: A Case for the Christian Worldview; Essays in Honor of Norman L. Geisler*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004. 396 pp., with a foreword by Josh McDowell, an introduction by Francis J. Beckwith, and a conclusion by J. P. Moreland, with indexes of names, subjects, and scriptures. \$29.00.

According to Josh McDowell's interesting foreword (pp. 9–11), Norman Geisler got started witnessing "door to door" at age seventeen immediately after he became a Christian. While witnessing in a Detroit rescue mission, he met a drunk who stumped him (pp. 9–10). McDowell quotes Geisler as follows: "I decided then after being twisted up by Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons and now this drunk, I had better get some answers or stop witnessing" (p. 10). Geisler has subsequently led a rather distinguished group of evangelicals into defending their faith. This volume contains twenty-three essays by those in one way or another influenced by or indebted to Geisler, including Craig J. Hazen, Ravi Zacharias, Gary R. Habermas, and the editors.

Carl Mosser and Paul Owen contributed a chapter on Mormonism (pp. 324–49), which unfortunately indicates that they have learned little from public comments or private conversations on their previous efforts

to overcome what they describe as “a challenge” posed by the Church of Jesus Christ “to the health and growth of authentic Christianity” (p. 324). They assert that “the tradition of Christian orthodoxy has always insisted that devotion to Christ is not sufficient in itself to qualify a religious movement as authentically Christian” (p. 331). What then is both necessary and sufficient? According to Mosser and Owen, what separates Christianity and Mormonism is a “worldview disparity” (p. 326). They then insist that they will not see the Saints as Christians since they assume the role of gatekeepers on such issues, unless we come to believe that God—who they insist “transcends the space-time cosmos” (p. 331), following a notion popularized by St. Augustine—created everything out of nothing and so forth.

To get a clear view of what evangelical apologists mean when they talk about a “Christian worldview,” or what it means to be an “authentic Christian,” *To Everyone an Answer* should be read in conjunction with the more substantial volume edited by J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig entitled *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), which is not marred by petty rants about the faith of the Saints.

Richard L. Bushman with the assistance of Jed Woodworth. *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*. New York City, NY: Knopf, 2005. xxv + 725 pp., plus index, bibliography, photographs, and maps. \$35.00.

This book will receive full attention in futures issues of the *Review*, but suffice it to say that this is the full-length biography of Joseph Smith that everyone has been waiting for since Fawn Brodie’s *No Man Knows My History* was released sixty years ago. Bushman, who is the Gouverneur Morris Professor of History, Emeritus, at Columbia University, has finally completed the work he began twenty years ago with *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism*. In fact, large portions of chapters 1, 2, 3, and 5 of *Beginnings* were used in this book. With the assistance of Jed Woodworth, Bushman has covered every area and event of the life of the Prophet. He has done so fully, honestly, and faithfully and has dealt with hard questions raised by others. The notes (over 100 pages) point out those who disagree with

his interpretations, and the bibliography (50 pages) appears to contain every serious work on Joseph Smith since the beginning. That still leaves over 560 pages of narrative to cover the life of Joseph Smith; the reader is fully exposed to him but is left to draw his or her own conclusions. The narrative style flows very well and assists in this process.

Avraham Gileadi, *Studies in the Book of Mormon*. N.p.: Hebron Books, 2005. xii + 192 pp.

Avraham Gileadi, a Latter-day Saint scholar of Hebrew and the scriptures, has now written a small volume of brief studies on aspects of the Book of Mormon. Gileadi is noted for his translation of and commentaries on Isaiah, including work on the meaning of Isaiah that can be derived from the Book of Mormon. The new book consists of forty-eight chapters, each containing a short discussion of an important teaching of the Book of Mormon. It could provide a useful commentary to a reading of the scripture, highlighting important doctrinal and historical insights.

As in Gileadi's other works, the book is a model of the usefulness of carefully comparing all the scriptures to give a rounded view of a given point. He is insistent on the importance of the Book of Mormon teaching that we should "liken all scriptures unto us" (1 Nephi 19:23). Gileadi seeks for instructive patterns and for types that are repeated and may yet be repeated again: "I will give unto you a pattern in all things, that ye may not be deceived" (D&C 52:14). Thus he discusses the importance of the exodus pattern in the Book of Mormon, as have other scholars. Here the pattern includes an oppressive situation with the Lord commanding a prophet to lead his people away from evil and to a new land of promise. Gileadi sees such a pattern as being "equivalent to a hero's journey, in which the hero or heroine experiences a transformation that takes a person to a higher level. The exodus thus becomes an integral part of a participant's spiritual progression" (p. 5).

Examples of the many important topics discussed are the tree of life; the coming of the Messiah; the infinite atonement; the need for continuing revelation; the allegory of the olive tree; covenants; blessings and curses; the plan of happiness; the sealing power; remembering the Lord; and the virtue of believing.

Terryl L. Givens. *The Latter-day Saint Experience in America*. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2004. xxi + 347, with four appendixes, timeline, glossary, select annotated bibliography, and index. \$58.95.

Latter-day Saint Experience is one in a series of titles on religious communities in America edited by Philip Goff. Givens became a leading figure in Mormon studies with his *Viper on the Hearth*—a study of literary anti-Mormonism—and then with *By the Hand of Mormon*, which is the most complete, candid study of the entire range of issues raised by the Book of Mormon currently in print. (Both books were published by Oxford University Press.) He has now published another outstanding book—a thoughtful, insightful, well-documented account of the Church of Jesus Christ in its American setting. Virtually all crucial and controversial issues receive careful attention in this fine book. It can be warmly recommended to those curious about the faith of Latter-day Saints and their community.

Irving Hexham, Stephen Rost, and John W. Morehead II, eds. *Encountering New Religious Movements: A Holistic Evangelical Approach*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2004. 322 pp., with scripture and subject indexes and a recommended reading list. \$17.99.

This is a collection of essays by fifteen authors detailing recent dissatisfaction with the fundamentalist/evangelical countercult movement by those on its margins. The collection was motivated in part by concern over the propensity of the countercult to engage primarily in internal theological boundary maintenance among American conservative Protestants (see p. 290). In addition, lament the authors, the countercult is ineffective in witnessing, given its notoriously aggressive confrontational mode of behavior (p. 13). In cautious language, since the authors whose essays appear in this volume risk being savaged as dangerous heretics, if not as cult apologists, by those within the countercult, several essays suggest that the already marginalized countercult ought to adopt a different approach (see p. 290). They suggest one that would tone down the confrontational, largely polemical, and also highly ineffective mode of operations set in place in 1965 with the publication of *The Kingdom of the Cults*. John Morehead

describes its author, Walter Martin, as the “granddaddy of this counter-cult movement that over time has become a virtual cottage industry” (p. 280; cf. p. 286).

A number of essays in this volume question the effectiveness of the way countercultists deal with so-called “cults,” now sometimes called “new religious movements” (p. 17). Since belligerent confrontation has not been successful in bringing fundamentalist/evangelical religiosity to “new religious movements,” Morehead and others now want to blend a much softened mode of apologetics with something called “missiology” into a new “methodology” (p. 299). The editors claim that there are now some new “field-tested models” (p. 21) where the target audience is approached missiologically. They recommend a substantive change in “theology, theory, and practice of ministry”—a “change from ridicule to empathy” (pp. 13–14), away from confrontation and toward sharing a message with gentleness and respect. Perhaps this explains the endorsement of the book by Richard J. Mouw, president of Fuller Theological Seminary, and Craig J. Hazen, who teaches apologetics at Biola University.

The “field-tested models” have been directed at the followers of Anton Szandor LaVey’s Church of Satan, Christadelphians, Wicca, various “New Spirituality” (or New Age) seekers, “Do-It Yourself” (DIY) enthusiasts, various aromatherapists, and, of course, Latter-day Saints (pp. 159–73). Kenneth Mulholland, of the Salt Lake Theological Seminary, describes an effort he calls “Bridges,” which he claims is “relational evangelism rather than confrontation” since it makes use of what he calls “points of contact” (p. 159). While the rhetoric in which Mulholland sets out his “new model” (p. 162) is less abrasive than that commonly found in countercult circles, what he says about the faith of the Saints is neither accurate nor respectful. It is only a marginal improvement over what Morehead and others seem to complain about.

In the best essay in this book, Philip Johnson, who lectures “on cults, world religions, and philosophy” at the Presbyterian Theological Center in Sydney, Australia (p. 10), describes the “wooliness” of religion in Australia, where most everyone believes in a Supreme Being, yet the

churches are mostly empty (pp. 228–29) and self-help books detailing how to pleasure oneself and find well-being thrive. Feel-good “spirituality” dominates the hearts and minds of Australians, when they are not focused on sport. Johnson describes his own evangelistic efforts at booths at “spiritual festivals.” These “festivals” are set up to market “holistic healing and spiritual empowerment, borrowing from many different sources, including alternative healing remedies, astrology, first-nation indigenous cultures, meditation, nature-based pagan religion, reincarnation, tarot, theosophy, and much more” (p. 232). He does not see his efforts as merely another in the parade of voices trying to get attention in a land dominated by hedonism.

Philip Jenkins. *The New Anti-Catholicism: The Last Acceptable Prejudice*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003. vii + 258 pp., with index. \$14.95.

Jenkins, who teaches history and religious studies at Pennsylvania State University, seems to have launched the public concern about sex abuse by Roman Catholic clergy with his *Pedophiles and Priests*, published in 2001. The author of more than a dozen books, many of which treat religious themes, Jenkins here has set out a useful account of the constant vituperative and hostile language and bigoted stereotypes commonly found in much social and religious commentary in the United States on Roman Catholics and their faith. Jenkins examines a number of these, including alleged hatred of women, gays, and so forth. Of course, anti-Catholicism has a long history in the United States. What Jenkins shows is that, though it was once thought essentially dead, it is now alive and well and being trumpeted by the media without fear of any negative consequences for the perpetrator.

What Jenkins does not realize is that Latter-day Saints are faced with the same sort of bigotry as he finds commonly directed at Roman Catholics. The old anti-Mormonism, which also has a long and undistinguished career in America, is also alive and well. Americans seem to have been able to export every vice, along with whatever else is marketable. And hence those guilty of advancing anti-Mormonism have

no fear of repercussions here or even in faraway places like Australia and New Zealand.

Walter Martin. *The Kingdom of the Cults*, Ravi Zacharias, gen. ed., Kevin Rische and Jill Martin Rische, managing eds. Bloomington, MN: Bethany House, 2003. 704 pp., with bibliography; scripture and subject indexes. \$29.99.

This volume, apparently the primary literary source upon which the countercult industry has been built, first appeared in 1965. It has been reissued in revised editions in 1977 and 1985. In 1997, after Martin's death, Hank Hanegraaff, who had immediately taken control of Martin's massive Christian Research Institute (CRI), served as general editor of a "revised, updated, and expanded anniversary edition." But Hanegraaff was not a loyal follower of the late "Dr." Walter Martin. There was soon an ugly, acrimonious falling out between Hanegraaff (and his supporters) and Martin's family (aligned with many former CRI employees).

In this edition of Martin's most influential book, Hanegraaff has been replaced as general editor by Ravi Zacharias, who has his own lucrative international ministry and who is a popular writer and spectacular stump speaker. Zacharias is not known as a countercultist. He indicates that it was for him "a great privilege to be asked by [Martin's] family to serve as general editor of this volume" (p. [9]). He seems merely to have lent his name to the project. Kevin Rische and Jill Martin Rische, Walter Martin's daughter, did the editing for this edition. They indicate that "several chapters removed from previous editions were updated and included in this new edition" (p. [13]). What is not said is that essays by Hanegraaff and his supporters (for example Gretchen Passantino and Richard Abanes, among others) were summarily removed from this edition without comment. The role of Kurt Van Gorden, who reportedly "began his work in Christian Apologetics under Dr. Walter Martin's ministry in 1976 as a staff researcher, writer and missionary" and who also "served as Dr. Martin's teaching assistant and directed his Bible classes" (p. [7]), has been upgraded and emphasized—he is now described as the senior researcher.

Robert L. Millet. *A Different Jesus? The Christ of the Latter-day Saints*. Foreword and afterword by Richard J. Mouw. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005. xviii + 226 pp., with two appendixes, glossary, bibliography, indexes of subjects and scripture references. \$16.00.

This book, unfortunately highly controversial in some Protestant circles, is the product of the friendship of Robert Millet, who teaches ancient scripture at Brigham Young University, and Richard Mouw, president of Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. Its publication clearly marks a significant advance in the relationship of evangelicals and Latter-day Saints. In the past all that was available in Protestant bookstores was the badly informed, highly polemical literature written by the partisan anti-Mormon element of the counterculture industry. Without realizing it, those who have turned to this literature for an understanding of the Church of Jesus Christ have done something analogous to consulting Nazi propaganda for an understanding of the faith of Jews or to old Communist propaganda for an understanding of American life and culture.

Latter-day Saints can also benefit from giving careful attention to Millet's presentation of their faith to Protestants. If there is a weakness in Millet's book, it stems from his inattention to the historical elements in the faith of the Saints and thus his inattention to the sophisticated literature on the historical authenticity of the Book of Mormon. Sorting out theological issues for evangelicals, as useful as that is, still leaves the crucial truth questions bracketed. However, by publishing Millet's book, Eerdmans, a leading evangelical press, has now made available in Protestant bookstores a sound, nonpolemical presentation of the fundamentals of the faith of the Saints.

Roger E. Olson. *The Story of Christian Theology: Twenty Centuries of Tradition and Reform*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999. 652 pp., with name and subject indexes. \$56.98 cloth; \$34.99 paper.

Those interested in the latest social history of Christianity should, of course, consult the work of Justo González, but Roger Olson has written a remarkably readable, candid, sophisticated story of Christian theology. He deftly surveys the quarrels that constitute the intellectual history of

Christianity through twenty centuries with many of its most significant heroes and villains, as well as its twists and turns. Olson mangles the myth of a single biblical, orthodox, historic, trinitarian Christianity. His is a truly remarkable intellectual history of Christianity.

Olson makes no effort to disguise or downplay the turn to the intellectual resources of pagan philosophy in the setting out and defense of postapostolic Christian theology. His story revolves around the conflict between what he identifies as the earlier “synergism” of eastern or oriental Christians and the “monergism” found in Augustine’s theological formulation in the fourth century, which keeps turning up in later writers, especially in the speculation of the great Protestant reformers and some of their disciples. Olson gives special attention to Augustine, whose views are reflected in those of the great reformers and are clearly noticeable in current versions of conservative Protestant theology. His endnotes, though brief, provide a good introduction to the most significant primary and secondary literature. This is an intellectual history that should be of special interest to Latter-day Saints.

Gregory A. Prince and William Robert Wright. *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2005. xx + 490 pp., with appendix, bibliography, and index. \$29.95.

Claire Middlemiss served as personal secretary to David O. McKay from 1935 until he died in 1970. Shortly after she started working for Elder McKay, she began keeping a diary of his daily activities that eventually ran some forty thousand typescript pages. These diaries form the basis of this book and provide both its greatest strength and its greatest weakness. Elder McKay apparently did not keep a diary himself. Its weakness is that David O. McKay is seen through the eyes of Middlemiss, whose vision, arguably, is not always 20/20. Her admiration for her subject is obvious, and her portrait is perhaps more flattering than one would expect from an objective chronicler. In addition to the Middlemiss records, the authors conducted interviews with many individuals who participated in the events recounted. Although

they do a fine job in most cases, interviews with some critical individuals are missing.

If the reader is looking for a conventional biography of President McKay, he or she is in for a disappointment. Very little is revealed about his personal life and his relationship with members of his family. Instead, the authors have chosen a topical approach with sixteen chapters focused on such topics as free agency and tolerance; blacks, civil rights, and the priesthood; correlation and church administration; the education system; temple building; and politics and the church. Some may find this approach cumbersome and would have preferred a more chronological format. However, addressing major areas of focus seems to work well overall.

The prophet comes across as a very complex individual who was prepared to address complex issues. For instance, he was upset when Elder Joseph Fielding Smith published *Man: His Origin and Destiny* and when Bruce R. McConkie published *Mormon Doctrine*. His concern with the former was that, among other things, the book was not preapproved and that it presented a view on evolution beyond what the Lord had revealed. He also felt that people would have difficulty separating Joseph Fielding Smith, senior apostle, from Joseph Fielding Smith, the author of the book. Elder McConkie's book raised similar concerns, as well as a fundamental question regarding the book's title, President McKay's position being that only the president of the church can declare doctrine. Prince also discusses the priesthood being withheld from blacks. The prophet's position was that the ban was a matter of *policy* rather than *doctrine*, but that the practice was so set that a revelation would be required to change it, and no revelation came to him during his administration.

President McKay's secretary assumed the role of chief of staff, particularly during the latter years, and effectively controlled who had access to the prophet and who did not. Those who did not would often make end runs around Middlemiss through one of the president's sons. It all makes for a most intriguing story.

The book itself is very well crafted and nicely bound. The color plates are beautiful and include seldom-seen portraits of David O.

McKay, Stephen L Richards, and J. Reuben Clark Jr. by Arnold Friberg. Reportedly, the authors declined royalties if the University of Utah Press would produce a quality book selling at a reasonable price. Both objectives are met quite nicely.

Thomas P. Rausch, ed. *Catholics and Evangelicals: Do They Share a Common Future?* with a foreword by Richard J. Mouw and an afterword by Edward Idris Cardinal Cassidy. New York: Paulist, 2000. vii + 178 pp. \$12.95.

This remarkable book should be better known by Latter-day Saints. Thomas P. Rausch, S.J., explains that Richard J. Mouw, president of Fuller Theological Seminary, “was one of the founding members of the Los Angeles Catholic/Evangelical Committee (1987), the first local Catholic/Evangelical dialogue in the United States” (p. vii). (As is now rather well-known, Mouw has also been for some time sponsoring informal conversations between his evangelical friends and groups of LDS scholars assembled by Robert Millet.) In his foreword to *Catholics and Evangelicals*, Mouw indicates that it is time for Protestants to cease being stridently anti-Catholic, to stop seeing the Pope as an antichrist, and Catholicism as “uniformly a religion of ‘pagan darkness’” (p. 2). This is not to say that there are no significant disagreements, but the fact is that both “evangelicals and Roman Catholics have found common cause on a number of issues” (p. 2). And it is appropriate for those who speak for these two communities to cease “talking past each other,” especially when both are confronted with the same “culture of unbelief” (p. 3).

Every essay in this collection should be of interest to the Saints. One example is the treatment of theosis or sharing in God’s life (pp. 70–72) offered by Robert L. Wilken in his chapter on “Salvation in Early Christian Thought” (pp. 56–76). Wilken argues that, even in the West (for example, in some of Augustine’s writings) there are signs of a deep commitment to deification as the ultimate promise of the sanctification that must follow justification. Neither the evangelicals nor Roman Catholics whose essays are included in this volume manifest the kind of certainty or ecclesiastical triumphalism that one

sometimes finds in the literature produced by both camps, especially when they are in an adversarial mode.

Noel B. Reynolds, ed. *Early Christians in Disarray: Contemporary LDS Perspectives on the Christian Apostasy*. Provo, UT: FARMS and BYU Press, 2005. x + 397 pp., with appendixes and citation and subject indexes. \$29.95.

Edited by Noel B. Reynolds and published jointly by FARMS and BYU Press, *Early Christians in Disarray: Contemporary LDS Perspectives on the Christian Apostasy* is the culmination of several years' work by BYU scholars to build on the formative research on the Christian apostasy by James E. Talmage, Joseph Fielding Smith, and B. H. Roberts using manuscripts written during the first few centuries of Christianity but not discovered until after their time.

As Reynolds writes in his introduction, "The great difference between the first Christian apostasy and the many other apostasies [is that] it did not consist only in widespread rejection of God, but was accompanied by the disastrous loss of priesthood authority. Why was there an apostasy? How did it come about? What does it mean? What is the significance of new discoveries on the study of the apostasy? These are among the questions discussed in this book, and which we hope will be given new life with these essays" (p. 26).

Jana Riess and Christopher K. Bigelow. *Mormonism for Dummies*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2005. xviii + 365 pp., with index. \$21.99.

As part of the For Dummies series, this book takes a solid, basic look at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, defining and explaining its unique terms and concepts. Jana Riess has a PhD in American religious history and serves as the book review editor at *Publishers Weekly*, and Christopher K. Bigelow is a writer and editor who formerly worked at the *Ensign*. Even someone who has grown up as a member of the church might benefit from the carefully organized sections dealing with history, beliefs and doctrines, statistics, lifestyle, facilities, organizations, practices, culture, humanitarian efforts, and prominent members of the church. The book is divided into five parts: What the Mormon Faith Is

All About, Eternal Rituals and Endless Meetings, Holy Books and Sacred History, Mormonism Today, and The Part of Tens.

This friendly approach is heavily cross-referenced, leading the reader to later (or earlier) discussions on a given or related topic. Sprinkled with icons and numerous lists, the book seems to cover topics in a straightforward, honest way.

Andrew C. Skinner. *The Garden Tomb*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005. v + 218 pp. \$18.95.

This is the third book in a trilogy about Christ's atonement by Andrew Skinner, following books on Gethsemane and Golgotha. Skinner here brings an intimate view of the events from the time Jesus is taken from the cross and buried in the tomb through his forty-day sojourn and eventual ascension into heaven. He skillfully weaves the words of both modern and ancient prophets into his narrative and brings a uniquely Latter-day Saint viewpoint to the events and teachings, particularly as he discusses the spirit world.

John W. Welch with Erick B. Carlson, eds. *Opening the Heavens: Accounts of Divine Manifestations, 1820–1844*. Provo and Salt Lake City: Brigham Young University Press and Deseret Book, 2005. xii + 500 pp., with name index. \$32.95.

This anthology of important articles and even more important primary sources will strengthen the faith of believing Latter-day Saint readers in an inspiring way. On the other hand, it will challenge any unbelievers who honestly confront the data it contains. Two articles, one by Dean Jessee and one by James Allen and John Welch, carefully examine the earliest accounts of the first vision, demonstrating that those documents tell a deeply harmonious story. Welch then considers, with meticulous attention to detail, the data relevant to "The Miraculous Translation of the Book of Mormon," concluding that the English text of that ancient record was produced at a stunningly rapid—and, one might plausibly argue, a humanly inexplicable—pace. Brian Q. Cannon and the *BYU Studies* staff gather and discuss seventy contemporary documents relating to the restoration of the

priesthood, and Alexander Baugh treats Joseph Smith's seventy-six documented visions. Steven Harper considers six eyewitness accounts of the pentecostal manifestations that attended the dedication of the Kirtland Temple, and Lynne Watkins Jorgensen discusses an impressive one hundred and twenty-one individual testimonies—which she justly terms “a collective spiritual witness”—of the famous descent of the mantle of Joseph Smith on Brigham Young in August 1844. (Readers interested in that event may also enjoy Robert C. Mouritsen's rather difficult-to-obtain 2004 book—first published in 1974—*Mantle: Windy Day in August, at Nauvoo*.) Closing with a selection of early documents relating to other key events in formative Latter-day Saint history, this is an indispensable book. Along with such earlier volumes as Richard L. Anderson's classic *Investigating the Book of Mormon Witnesses*, *Opening the Heavens* presents information that should be considered by anyone seriously concerned with the truth of the claims of Mormonism. Attempts to dismiss crucial elements of the restoration as merely metaphorical or subjective are blocked by these powerful reminders that those events occurred in the real, material world and that they are attested to by abundant historical documentation.

James R. White. *Scripture Alone: Exploring the Bible's Accuracy, Authority, and Authenticity*. Bloomington, MN: Bethany House, 2004. 221 pp., with a scripture index. \$13.95.

“Dr.” White claims that this book is not “a massive scholarly tome on *sola scriptura*” (p. 10). He is right. One must look elsewhere for a coherent setting forth of the historical background of the great Reformers' turn toward the Bible as an authority in their quarrel with Roman Catholicism. Likewise, one will need to turn somewhere else for an understanding of the role that this slogan currently plays in the thought of conservative Protestants. White has made, instead, an effort to coach his followers in his method of confrontational apologetics. He boasts of having participated in “more than four dozen moderated public debates” (p. 9) with those who entertain different understandings of the Bible. Some of his most vitriolic comments are aimed at fellow countercultists who dispute his authority. In several places, as one

might expect, White takes gratuitous swipes at the faith of Latter-day Saints (see, for example, pp. 145–46 n. 14 or pp. 191–95).

Like some of his other polemical works, this one contains lengthy imaginary dialogues with those he considers enemies of his stance. He seems to do well trashing straw men of his own invention. This allows him to win still more “debates.” He thus models for his readers how he has learned to accomplish this feat. He rails against those who would “subjugate Scripture to an external authority” (p. 13), without sensing that this is exactly what he has done by insisting on what amounts to the sufficiency and essentially the infallibility of his own understanding of the Bible. He offers, instead of the work of the Holy Spirit, what he calls a “programmed system of argumentation” (p. 15) drawn from and exhibiting his own method of proof-texting the Bible. He grants that “God is able to make Himself known, to communicate His will, His thoughts, and His desires to His creation” (p. 18), but only in the Bible, as he understands it—that is, through the lens provided by Augustine and Calvin and subsequently spelled out by theologians advancing one possible understanding of divine things.

Ravi Zacharias. *The Real Face of Atheism*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004. 185 pp. \$14.99.

Ravi Zacharias was born in India in 1946 and educated at Cambridge University in Romance literatures. He then moved to Canada, where he eventually switched from a career in business to one dealing with religious matters. He has a master of divinity degree from Trinity International University in Deerfield, Illinois. After earning this degree he founded Ravi Zacharias International Ministries. He rapidly became a popular radio personality and dramatic preacher. *The Real Face of Atheism* is a revised and updated version of *A Shattered Visage: The Real Face of Atheism*, which was originally published by Baker Books in 1990 and then later reissued in cloth and paper. It was the original version of this book with which he began his literary career. He does not offer a history of atheism or describe its various varieties, nor does he provide an explanation of its social, political, and intellectual roots. He does not set out the arguments employed by atheists. Instead, he defends the notion that there is a

Christian worldview consisting of, among other things, arguments demonstrating the reality of God and hence furnishing the ground of faith. This worldview provides an emotionally satisfying explanation of nature and history, as well as ensuring a sense of meaning, which cannot be done without this worldview. Zacharias thus provides a homily in support of a worldview rather than a carefully set out argument demonstrating the reality of God. This is a book for believers and not for atheists.

