



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

---

Volume 19 | Number 2

Article 15

---

2007

### The Sperry Symposium and the New Testament

Kevin L. Barney

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

---

#### BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Barney, Kevin L. (2007) "The Sperry Symposium and the New Testament," *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon 1989–2011*: Vol. 19 : No. 2 , Article 15.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/msr/vol19/iss2/15>

This New Testament 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).

# THE SPERRY SYMPOSIUM AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

Kevin L. Barney

Review of Frank F. Judd Jr. and Gaye Strathearn, eds. *Sperry Symposium Classics: The New Testament*. Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2006. viii + 423 pp., with index. \$24.95.

Review of Kent P. Jackson and Frank F. Judd Jr., eds. *How the New Testament Came to Be: The 35th Annual Brigham Young University Sidney B. Sperry Symposium*. Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2006. ix + 334 pp., with index. \$24.95.

Sidney Branton Sperry was born in Salt Lake City the day after Christmas 1895. In 1917 he earned his bachelor's degree in chemistry from the University of Utah. Following a mission to the southern states from 1919 to 1921, Sperry became a seminary teacher. Feeling keenly the need for greater education in the scriptures, he resolved to attend the Divinity School at the University of Chicago. He earned his master's degree in 1926 and his doctorate in 1931, both in Old Testament studies. After a year of postdoctoral work at the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem, he joined the faculty of Brigham Young University, where he taught with great distinction until his retirement in 1971. He passed away six years later, on 4 September 1977.

Having entered BYU in the fall of 1976, only a year before Sperry's death, I unfortunately never met the man; but he was a giant in BYU religious education, and I was well aware of who he was and his stature at the university. As a young student interested in Latter-day Saint scripture, I had occasion to read many of his published writings,

which are influential even to this day. Sperry was the vanguard of an entire generation of religious educators who would end up following in his footsteps at the University of Chicago throughout the 1930s, and he was warmly remembered by my own professors who had been his students.<sup>1</sup> Even the great Hugh Nibley built on the foundation Sperry laid at BYU. It is therefore entirely appropriate that for more than three and a half decades BYU has been sponsoring an annual symposium in religious education dedicated to his memory.

Anticipating the church's focus on the New Testament for the 2007 curriculum year, BYU's Religious Studies Center and Deseret Book jointly published two volumes drawn from Sperry Symposia on the New Testament. The first, *Sperry Symposium Classics: The New Testament* (hereafter simply *Classics*), is a *florilegium* of New Testament-related articles drawn from many past Sperry Symposia, a sort of "greatest hits" compilation, if you will. The second, *How the New Testament Came to Be: The 35th Annual Brigham Young University Sidney B. Sperry Symposium* (hereafter simply *Came to Be*), represents the proceedings of the thirty-fifth in the series, held at BYU in October 2006.

Latter-day Saint scholars have come to realize that there is no such thing as pure objectivity; we all come to our studies molded by our prior experiences, and we all bring our own perspectives and biases to our work. So, in the interest of full disclosure, I approached these volumes with a certain expectation of what I would find. Previous collections of Sperry Symposium presentations have been very uneven. This is probably due to the symposium being a kind of showcase for religious studies at BYU, resulting in a large number of contributions for which it would be difficult to maintain a consistently high standard. I anticipated that these two latest volumes would be similarly uneven in quality, with a mixture of stronger and weaker contributions. I would say that *Classics* was about what I expected, but I was

---

1. See the delightful account of Russel B. Swensen, "Mormons at the University of Chicago Divinity School: A Personal Reminiscence," *Dialogue* 7/2 (1972): 37-47, as well as the warm memories published in *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 4/1 (1995), which is entirely devoted to Sperry and his work and which I highly recommend as an excellent entrée for those unfamiliar with Sperry and his writing.

pleasantly surprised to find that *Came to Be* has strong contributions almost across the board. So while I can recommend both volumes, my recommendation of *Came to Be* is considerably warmer than it is for *Classics*.

*Came to Be* has several advantages over *Classics*. First, with eighteen chapters, *Came to Be* is shorter (*Classics* has twenty-six), and thus its potential for unevenness was somewhat less. Moreover, *Came to Be* benefits from being a coherent set of presentations all given at the same symposium, as opposed to presentations given at different symposia over the years at different times and under different circumstances and with different emphases. *Came to Be* also benefits from having a specific theme rather than the broad and generic topic of “New Testament.” For me it helped considerably that the focus of *Came to Be*, the coming forth of the New Testament, is a topic in which I happen to have a particular interest. The most important advantage of *Came to Be* is that it features many of BYU’s young cadre of fine religion scholars. While BYU’s College of Religious Education has always had a core of strong senior scholars, in recent years it has hired a promising group of young scholars from among the many Latter-day Saints pursuing advanced degrees in religion. BYU is to be commended for its recent practice of hiring those with advanced degrees in topics of direct relevance to religious studies, as opposed to tangential fields such as counseling or education. These young professors were once the kinds of students that the Maxwell Institute honors as Nibley Fellows. The positive results of this trend show in *Came to Be*, and consequently the future of BYU Religious Education appears to be very bright indeed.

It is customary at these symposia for the proceedings to be inaugurated with a keynote address given by a General Authority. I think part of the reason that I found it more difficult to get fully engaged in *Classics* than in *Came to Be* had to do with the General Authority keynote addresses. *Came to Be* featured probably one of the finest such keynote addresses ever offered at one of these symposia—“Plain and Precious Things’: The Writings of the New Testament,” by Elder Alexander B. Morrison. Not only was it a strong contribution in its own

right, but it established a thoroughly scholarly tone for the presentations to follow. Elder Morrison touched on such issues as Markan priority, Docetism, the amanuensis theory as it relates to Pauline authorship, pseudonymity, Marcion's *Apostolicon*, the Muratorian Canon, the Johannine Comma, and much, much more. Near the end of his piece, Elder Morrison indicates that "for too long Latter-day Saint scholars have not, perhaps, paid as much attention to examining the New Testament as they have to their brilliant analysis and defense of the Nephite record and other aspects of this great latter-day work" (p. 23). In the margin next to this statement I wrote "Yes!" This inspired and inspiring call to greater New Testament scholarship by Latter-day Saint students of scripture was exactly what was needed, and it laid the foundation on which the following essays would build.

Now, I do not expect General Authorities to give such substantive attention to matters of scholarship as Elder Morrison did, and for those particular addresses a more devotional approach is of course appropriate. But given its eclectic origins, *Classics* presents not one such address, but five.<sup>2</sup> While these are all fine presentations for what they were meant to do, if I am going to purchase a book such as this, I want the focus to be on the scholarship since there are ample devotional and doctrinal approaches in general conference, the *Ensign*, and Sunday School. While a single keynote address can be an inspiration, five is too much of a good thing and weighed down the beginning of the volume.

One of my favorite essays from *Classics* was S. Kent Brown's "The Four Gospels as Testimonies." Brown surveys the history of Gospel harmonies, acknowledges the strengths of harmonistic study, but then also examines the serious deficiencies of such study, concluding that ultimately each of the Gospels is a separate work that must be studied on its own terms. This is a very important point that needs to be made. But later in the book, Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, in another strong contribution, makes essentially the same point in his essay, "The

---

2. I assume that the first five essays were originally keynote addresses since each was given by a General Authority. There is no historical information provided in *Classics* indicating when each presentation was originally given, so this is guesswork on my part.

Passion of Jesus Christ.” While these are both fine essays, the overlap in treatment is presumably due to the “greatest hits” format of this volume as opposed to its being a presentation of the proceedings of a single coherent symposium.

Other contributions to *Classics* that I enjoyed include Thomas A. Wayment, “Jesus’ Use of the Psalms in Matthew”; Richard D. Draper, “He Has Risen: The Resurrection Narratives as a Witness of Corporeal Regeneration”; Richard Lloyd Anderson, “Paul’s Witness to the Historical Integrity of the Gospels”; C. Wilfred Griggs, “An Hebrew of the Hebrews’: Paul’s Language and Thought”; Brian M. Hauglid, “‘As the Body without the Spirit’: James’s Epistle on Faith and Works”; and Andrew C. Skinner, “Peter, the Chief Apostle.” I especially enjoyed “Visions of Christ in the Spirit World and the Dead Redeemed,” by M. Catherine Thomas, who has become something of a Latter-day Saint expert on the *descensus ad inferos*, or “Harrowing of Hell.”

The remainder of this review will focus on *Came to Be*.

Without question the most discussed contribution to this volume has been Kent P. Jackson’s “Asking Restoration Questions in New Testament Scholarship,” which made quite a splash on the Mormon blogosphere. This discussion stemmed from an abridged version of Jackson’s article entitled “Sacred Study,”<sup>3</sup> so it is possible that some of the nuance of Jackson’s piece was not fully accounted for in the early stages of the discussion.

Although wide-ranging and difficult to characterize succinctly, the discussion began with a concern common to many of the eighty or so Latter-day Saint students around the world who are pursuing graduate work in religion and related fields: that the kind of Bible scholarship advocated by Jackson—using restoration sources at every step along the way—could be practiced only at BYU and its related institutions and appears to leave no room for faithful Latter-day Saints who, while informed by their faith, practice a more conventional form of biblical scholarship (such as could be presented at the Society for Biblical Literature, for example).

---

3. Kent P. Jackson, “Sacred Study,” *Church News*, 6 January 2007, 12.

In his study in *Came to Be*, Jackson begins by urging Latter-day Saint Bible scholars to

seek out the best professional training, use the best academic tools, examine the best available ancient evidence, be aware of the best of current scholarship, and ask the same hard questions that others ask. Ideally, this means that Latter-day Saint Bible scholars must master the historical and cultural sources that pertain to the world in which the Bible came to be, and they must know the languages of the original writers so they can study their words without having to rely on the scholars who translated those words into modern languages. (p. 27)

This “raising of the bar” for Latter-day Saint Bible scholars is of course unobjectionable and has often been applauded. What has been controversial is Jackson’s insistence that such Latter-day Saint Bible scholarship must embrace “revealed sources” and use them “at every stage in the process of understanding and interpreting the words of scripture” (p. 28). Furthermore, Jackson insists that Latter-day Saint scholars who do not use “all the sources available to them, which is a necessary scholarly practice,” are engaging in “shoddy scholarship” and are “unfaithful to the Restoration and its blessings” (pp. 28–29).<sup>4</sup>

One of Jackson’s qualifications to this principle in order to make it more workable in practice is to distinguish between matters that are *important*, such as the resurrection, which Latter-day Saints are obligated to accept, and matters that are less important, such as the authorship of Mark, which is in the greater scheme of things not a deal breaker either way. In some ways, however, this principle may have been more meaningful had Jackson chosen a harder example to work through rather than such a relatively easy one. As Mogget comments in “Inside the House”:

---

4. I have adapted this summary from “Faith and Scholarship,” at *Dave’s Mormon Inquiry*, 11 March 2007 (<http://mormoninquiry.typepad.com>). One of the Internet contributors observed that what is important is not necessarily *using* all sources, but rather *weighing* them.

Although I certainly agree that the resurrection is important and the authorship of Mark much less so, I'm not sure how illuminating this example actually is. There are a variety of reasons why it is emotionally reassuring rather than substantive.

First, it is not clear how a scholar unconvinced by the NT witness of the resurrection might be moved by any modern witness. From this perspective, modern revelation on the subject does not provide more "proof." Second, there is nothing uniquely LDS in considering the reality of the resurrection to be a given matter. I don't think I know anybody who doesn't so regard it. Third, from a practical standpoint it raises but does not resolve the matter of who is going to rule which topics, statements, and opinions are "important" and which are not.

Finally, in six years of exegetical study the topic of the reality of the resurrection has NEVER come up. This is not an accident. To the best of my knowledge, there are no exegetical practices that can evaluate the reality of the resurrection. None. This sort of information comes by testimony or not at all and good exegetes know it. A similar argument can be made for the reality of the restoration. What is really wanted is an example that deals with an important, exegetically defined point.

Since Professor Jackson's article is limited, I'll suggest a thought experiment. Section 77 gives an interpretive commentary on the Book of Revelation. One passage (D&C 77:7) is an interpretation of the seal septet (Revelation 6) indicating that the activities of the horseman associated with each seal represent the events of a one thousand year period. This reading is not supported by the text. Can you propose a reading of Revelation 6 that takes Section 77 (canonized LDS scripture) as an incontestable source and meets the standards of an SBL seminar as an "intentional" reading?<sup>5</sup>

---

5. Mogget at *Faith Promoting Rumor*: "Inside the House," <http://faithpromotingrumor.wordpress.com/2007/01/24/inside-the-house> (accessed 24 May 2007).

I was considerably less troubled by this article than most of the blog contributors. Indeed, I found much in the article that was quite heartening, at least judged from the perspective of past Latter-day Saint scholarly practice. The particular concern of what a Latter-day Saint professional Bible scholar who is not affiliated with BYU is to do was one I sympathized with, but since I am only an amateur who focuses on Mormon studies anyway, it was not an issue that had the same kind of real world resonance for me that it may have had for others. Nevertheless, given the substantial amount of angst this article has generated, I would encourage Jackson to do a follow-up piece in some venue, addressing specifically the concerns of the small army of Latter-day Saint graduate students currently engaged in advanced degree programs of relevance to biblical studies.

Kerry Muhlestein, “From Clay Tablets to Canon: The Story of the Formation of Scripture” (pp. 43–61), provides a lucid overview of matters we often don’t think about that nonetheless deeply influenced the development of the Bible: the technology of writing, the rise of textual authority vis-à-vis oral authority, and the influence of advances in alternate writing media (particularly the development of the codex). While Muhlestein’s treatment is more specific and relatively technical (given the nontechnical audience for which this volume is intended), Jennifer C. Lane, in “Jews and Greeks: The Broader Context for Writing the New Testament” (pp. 62–77), gives a broader treatment of the religious setting for the writing of the New Testament, using 1 Corinthians 1:22–23 as a nice scriptural framing device: “The Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness.” As Lane shows, the various worldviews that hindered some from accepting the gospel in the first century have their counterparts in our own day as well.

A fine companion set of chapters gives an introduction to the textual criticism of the New Testament: Carl W. Griffin and Frank F. Judd Jr., “Principles of New Testament Textual Criticism” (pp. 78–92), and Carol F. Ellertson, “New Testament Manuscripts, Textual Families, and Variants” (pp. 93–108). The Griffin and Judd article features, as an

illustration of the basic principles described in the article, a detailed examination of the textual issues raised by the variant readings at Acts 20:28, moving from external evidence to internal considerations. Their treatment is excellent<sup>6</sup> and a fine primer for the Latter-day Saint student wishing to understand better how scholars go about establishing the text.

Thomas A. Wayment, “First-Century Sources on the Life of Jesus” (pp. 109–22), was interesting to me in part because Wayment appears to accept Markan priority (p. 110)—the idea that the Gospel of Mark was written before the other Gospels—as do several other contributors to this volume (and as do I). This willingness to move away from the more traditional position of Matthean priority may be a reflection of the kind of openness on nonessential issues that Jackson alluded to in his essay. Wayment briefly addresses Q (p. 115), which is the “name scholars have given to the hypothetical source that would account for the gospel material (not found in Mark) that Matthew and Luke have in common.”<sup>7</sup> I would have liked to see this section expanded, or even an entire presentation devoted to this topic. My impression is that there is considerable antipathy in BYU Religious Education towards the existence of Q, and since the mere existence of such a hypothetical source strikes me as entirely neutral, I would certainly be interested in a fuller statement of the reservations scholars such as Wayment have about accepting the possible existence of such a source.

Frank F. Judd Jr., “Who Really Wrote the Gospels? A Study of Traditional Authorship” (pp. 123–40), successfully uses Latter-day Saint sources such as the Book of Mormon and the *Lectures on Faith* as analogs to gently introduce Latter-day Saint readers to some of the complexities inhering in the concept of authorship with respect to the books of the New Testament. He is also one of several authors in this volume to introduce amanuensis theory as an important factor to consider in examining questions of authorship; that is, the prevalent

---

6. For my own considerably briefer treatment of these same issues, see Kevin L. Barney, “God’s Own Blood,” *By Common Consent*, <http://www.bycommonconsent.com/2006/03/gods-own-blood> (accessed 24 May 2007).

7. *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, s.v. “Q.”

use of scribes in writing ancient texts (much as Joseph Smith himself usually relied on scribes in his own writing). Later in the collection, Lincoln H. Blumell, “Scribes and Ancient Letters: Implications for the Pauline Epistles” (pp. 208–26), devotes an entire presentation to this important concept. Of course, the possible use of an amanuensis is just one factor to consider in examining authorship issues and does not excuse a full consideration of all of the relevant evidence when examining such issues, but it is a relatively recent insight that is properly highlighted in this collection.

Gaye Strathearn, “Matthew as an Editor of the Life and Teachings of Jesus” (pp. 141–56), highlights Matthew’s role not only as an author but as an editor of preexisting sources. Some people are touchy about the possibility that preexisting sources were used in producing the Gospel accounts, but as this and other presentations make abundantly clear, this should not be considered in any way problematic. Strathearn also accepts Markan priority (p. 144) and discusses Q (pp. 144–46). As Strathearn demonstrates, we have nothing to fear from recognizing ancient editorial work in forming the scriptural text.

Daniel K. Judd and Allen W. Stoddard, “Adding and Taking Away ‘Without a Cause’ in Matthew 5:22” (pp. 157–74), is a detailed examination of whether the words *without a cause*, which represent the single Greek adverb *eikē*, were an original part of the text. They examine Jesus’s general teachings on anger, the manuscript and early textual evidence, patristic writings, and English translations in concluding, I believe correctly, that the adverb was not an original part of the text. This is significant, inasmuch as the English words *without a cause* are not represented in either the Joseph Smith Translation of Matthew 5:22 or in the parallel text at 3 Nephi 12:22.<sup>8</sup>

Charles Swift, “The Bread of Life Discourse as Dialogue” (pp. 175–89), uses the Bread of Life discourse to illustrate the artistry of New Testament stories. Following the lead of Robert Alter, he exam-

---

8. The authors take note of, and reject, the suggestion of Ronald V. Huggins, “‘Without a Cause’ and ‘Ships of Tarshish’: A Possible Contemporary Source for Two Unexplained Readings from Joseph Smith,” *Dialogue* 36/1 (2003): 157–79, to the effect that the source for this reading may have been the writings of Protestant reformer John Wesley.

ines the discourse in light of four general rubrics: words, actions, dialogue, and narrative. One insight I especially appreciated is that, by deciding to present the crowd as one person, John essentially transforms the event into a dialogue between two people. The focus is not on the group dynamics with the crowd, which in reality would not speak with one voice anyway, but on the answers given by the Lord. As Swift astutely observes, this dialogic approach creates a more personal tone, as if the Lord were speaking directly to *us*, and John's text calls upon us to consider how we would respond to what he is saying.<sup>9</sup>

There is a tendency for some modern readers to try to fashion a systematic theology from the Pauline epistles. In reality, as demonstrated by Eric D. Huntsman, "The Occasional Nature, Composition, and Structure of Paul's Letters" (pp. 190–207), these letters were ad hoc compositions responding to specific circumstances and problems. I especially enjoyed Huntsman's discussion of the mechanics of writing an ancient letter, which were much more involved than what we think of in modern letter writing and involved others at every step. "The entire process of composition, dictation, writing, revision, review, and approval was not only time-consuming but also expensive" (p. 200). The cost of a letter, including papyrus and secretarial labor, could be quite high. Huntsman cites some calculations that Romans (979 manuscript lines) would have cost \$2,275 in 2004 U.S. dollars to produce (p. 200), and this does not even take into account the time and expenses of the person who would travel with the dispatch to deliver it (the imperial post was limited to official government correspondence and would have been unavailable to Paul). This was all quite fascinating and puts these letters in an entirely different light than what many of us assume with our presentist assumptions.

Jared W. Ludlow, "Paul's Use of Old Testament Scripture" (pp. 227–42), begins with an interesting survey of the limited literacy and availability of written scripture in the early church. Again, we tend to

---

9. This is analogous to the effect of the rhetorical device of enallage used often in the scriptures. See my articles "Enallage in the Book of Mormon," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 3/1 (1994): 113–47; and "Divine Discourse Directed at a Prophet's Posterity in the Plural: Further Light on Enallage," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 6/2 (1997): 229–34.

bring presentist assumptions to our reading of the situation, picturing individuals as having their own sets of scriptures just as we do. But this was simply not the case. Although literacy was increasing, only a minority could actually read, and prior to the printing press and the codex, it would have been quite rare for any individual to have a complete set of the scriptures. Both Jews and Christians typically *heard* the scriptures as they were read orally, either at the synagogue or in fledgling churches. With this background, Ludlow goes on to describe nine categories in which Paul used Old Testament scripture in his writings: election, faith and works, ministry/Paul's defense, ethical teachings, separation from sin, resurrection, wisdom, collection for the poor, and the gift of tongues. Ludlow also provides several very useful tables, showing that while Paul usually relied on the Septuagint, he occasionally gave his own rendering of the Hebrew text.

I was particularly pleased to read Terrence L. Szink, "Authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews" (pp. 243–59). For some it seems as though insistence on Pauline authorship of Hebrews is a sort of Mormon litmus test of faith. This attitude has long struck me as a lazy conclusion since, as Jackson noted previously in the volume (pp. 30–33), Joseph's ascription of material in the New Testament to specific authors generally appears to have been based simply on the traditional ascription of such material in the headings of the King James Version of the New Testament without any sort of independent revelation.<sup>10</sup> Szink is very cautious and conservative, but he still leaves ample room for one to draw the conclusion, as I do, that Paul did not author Hebrews. I wrote a very similar (if considerably shorter) essay once,<sup>11</sup> but to have this

---

10. Although Richard Lloyd Anderson accepts Pauline authorship of Hebrews (see *Classics*, 216), a position with which I disagree, his is a considered view and based on his reading of the evidence, and is not the sort of lazy opinion to which I make reference here.

11. Kevin L. Barney, ed., *Footnotes to the New Testament for Latter-day Saints* (privately published and available in various formats at <http://feastupontheword.org/Site:NTFootnotes, 2007>) 2:77–79. In a small irony, given that this was a presentation at a Sperry Symposium, Szink neglected to mention Sperry's own conclusion that Paul was not the author of Hebrews. See Sidney B. Sperry, *Paul's Life and Letters* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1955), 268–72. I had to smile that both Szink and I included in our respective discussions an argument from numerous examples of General Authority usage (speaking obliquely of "the author" rather than definitively of Paul when referring to material in

openness articulated by a BYU professor in a Sperry Symposium volume is very important and makes it clear that an adherence to Pauline authorship of Hebrews should no longer be considered some sort of test of orthodoxy (if indeed it ever really was applied in such a way).

In a very interesting essay, Richard D. Draper, “The Earliest ‘New Testament’” (pp. 260–91), argues, contrary to the common idea that the canon came together but very slowly, that there was actually a core of material—accepted by the proto-orthodox and forming the base for what would eventually become the New Testament—as early as the end of the first century CE. His essay is basically an explanation of and introduction to a lengthy table of scriptural citations from the apostolic fathers that provides the evidence for his claim. The core collection, as he argues, included the Gospels (which were already known as a collection in their own right); Acts (which may have been separated from Luke when the Gospels were formed into their own collection); most of the Epistles of Paul (except for 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon); Hebrews (often separated from Paul and with a lesser level of citation); and, among the general Epistles, 1 Peter, 1 John, and Jude (with the Apocalypse being but poorly attested in this early period).

Thomas A. Wayment, “False Gospels: An Approach to Studying the New Testament Apocrypha” (pp. 292–303), steps out of the canon to discuss how to approach early Christian apocryphal texts. Wayment notes that, comparatively, there are probably three or four apocryphal texts for every canonical book of the New Testament, in such genres as gospels, collections of sayings, acts of individual apostles, collections of apostolic teachings, revelatory dialogues, and apocalypses. Wayment then details some of the varying motivations for the producers of these texts, what we generically refer to as “lying for the Lord.” He appropriately concludes that “the apocryphal tradition is not a smorgasbord of historical and legendary information that can be haphazardly drawn from in order to make firm historical conclusions” (p. 300). As one who as a missionary over twenty-five years ago listened to taped lectures that treated these texts as exactly such

---

Hebrews). This is an interesting example where church authorities have led the way in a matter of scholarship and Latter-day Saint scholars have sometimes been slow to follow.

a smorgasbord to be drawn from indiscriminately without regard to context, I applaud Wayment's brief but responsible introduction to this sometimes misunderstood corpus of literature.

The final contribution to the volume is Robert J. Matthews, "Joseph Smith and the New Testament" (pp. 304–21). I of course honor Matthews's long career as a leading light of the BYU Religious Education, and I have tremendous respect for his pioneering work on the JST. But I freely acknowledge that I am about two steps to the left of Matthews here. He concludes with the declaration that his "feeling is that the Prophet's calling as seer and translator far outweighs his possible lack of formal training with manuscripts. I think that if the original manuscripts and other documents of the early Church were available today, we would see that they would support the Prophet's decisions in every particular and that the question of doubt raised by some scholarly research is the consequence of imperfect manuscripts and also not having the divine calling that the Prophet Joseph had" (p. 319). Some of my work is probably among the "some scholarly research" he scorns.<sup>12</sup> I cannot accept his qualification "in every particular." What I particularly disagree with is the impulse to want to see Joseph's revisions in the JST as almost all related in a textual way to the original manuscripts. While elsewhere Matthews has acknowledged in principle that this is not necessarily the case across the board, his strongly held preference is to see all of the changes as having a textual basis of some sort. I differ in this regard. I see much, and perhaps most, of the JST as representing a kind of midrashic commentary on the text and not as a restoration of original textual material. And I don't think that is a faithless conclusion to reach. Further, I think some of Joseph's changes in the JST were provisional and represented experimentation and "studying it out in his mind," often based on the peculiarities of the KJV English, and again, I don't think there is anything wrong with that. It may be possible to hold a view at BYU

---

12. See Kevin L. Barney, "The Joseph Smith Translation and Ancient Texts of the Bible," *Dialogue* 19/3 (1986): 85–102. Some have misunderstood this early article of mine; for my clarification of what I intended, see Kevin L. Barney, "Isaiah Interwoven," *FARMS Review* 15/1 (2001): 353–402, under the subhead "Interweaving of the Book of Mormon and JST" (pp. 379–401).

like the one Matthews expresses, but as a Mormon scholar/apologist working largely in the rough-and-tumble world of the Internet, I don't think his view is either defensible or necessary. The proper approach to understanding Joseph Smith's new translation of the Bible and how it relates to the original manuscripts is far beyond the scope of this review; here I simply wish to register my disagreement with the common notion in the halls of BYU Religious Education to the effect that the JST represents almost completely a restoration of original textual material. We have taught an entire generation of Latter-day Saints to make this unsustainable assumption, and I strongly believe we need to teach our people a more nuanced, eclectic, realistic, and sustainable approach to the JST.

In conclusion, while both *Classics* and *Came to Be* feature many fine essays worth reading, overall I felt a strong preference for *Came to Be*. If one were limited to acquiring only one of these collections, that is the one I would choose.