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*The Pearl of Great Price: Comprehensive Concordance*

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Reviewed by James R. Harris, assistant professor of ancient scriptures at Brigham Young University.

Since the 1961 publication of Lynn M. Hilton’s *Concordance of the Pearl of Great Price* went unnoticed by authors Curtis and Hill, they assumed that they were “writing a book which had never been written before.” Hilton’s *Concordance* not only predates the work of Curtis and Hill by thirteen years, but it is also a more accurate tool for scriptural study.

Inclusion of historical information on the whole Pearl of Great Price as well as each individual book therein is a valuable contribution of the Curtis-Hill publication; however, some areas of the narrative are misleading because vital bits of information were not included.

The authors discuss three major editions of the Pearl of Great Price, naming Elders Franklin D. Richards and James
E. Talmage as editors of the first and last (1902) edition but failing to identify Orson Pratt as the editor of the 1878 edition.

Their assigning specific dates to revelations received by ancient prophets is a precarious practice.

They made no attempt to identify the book of Moses as part of the Inspired Revision of the Bible. The absence of this information made it difficult for them to explain why the 1878 edition was more complete than the 1851 edition. In the process of revising the book of Genesis, Joseph Smith revised his revision, and revised his revised revision before he was satisfied with the results. The 1878 book of Moses was mainly a product of that third and “most complete” revision by the Prophet. Consequently, it was more complete than the 1851 edition. (See BYU Studies 8 [Summer 1968], pp. 361, 377, 382.) Curtis and Hill should have looked for a more current treatment of this problem than the 1955 pioneer publication of Dr. James R. Clark, Story of the Pearl of Great Price. While Clark’s book is still a valuable source, several areas have been superseded by two decades of additional research.

The authors seem unaware that we do not have all of the book of Abraham. They also suggest that the 24th chapter of Matthew was not published until 1851 when it was a popular “broadside” prior to 1851, probably in 1835. (See BYU Studies 12 [Summer 1972], pp. 505-7).

The following errors in the concordance listings in the Comprehensive Concordance are illustrative, not exhaustive:

1. The most prevalent error was the many times a reference was listed two, three, or four times when it needed listing only once. For example, on page 27 under “beloved,” Moses 4:2 was listed twice when it needed listing only once. (See also pages 13, 26, 52.)

2. There are numerous mistakes in references. Instead of Moses 5:26, the listing reads Moses 5:25. These errors are found as frequently as every four or five pages.

3. Several references are out of their proper order. For example, on page 27, under “being,” JS 2:67 precedes JS 2:58, and JS 2:32 precedes the whole book of Abraham.

4. Added to these mistakes are a number of typographical errors in the words following the references.

On the positive side of the ledger, the Curtis and Hill concordance is readily available to the student of scripture, while
the better Hilton book is out of print. Their paragraphs are brief and to the point, so the reader’s endurance is not taxed. Size-wise, the volume is a handy companion to the average Triple Combination. There are a number of references in Curtis and Hill that are not listed in Hilton’s work, as on page 43, under “desire,” JS 2:15. Unfortunately, there are also many references in Hilton completely left out of the Curtis-Hill publication.

Possibly the most redeeming characteristic of the Curtis-Hill work is an inclusion of specific leads to hyphenated forms, synonyms, and variations in tense, person, and so forth. For example, note the following:

"AFFECTION"- (See compassion, feeling for)
"AFTERWARDS"- (See after, afterward, following)

The inclusion of common words such as: also, am, a, an, are, art, as, at, be, etc., in the main concordance or in a special section in the back of the book may be considered an advantage or a nuisance according to personal preference.

The problems of this new volume point up the need of reprinting the Hilton concordance. If that is not forthcoming, the Curtis-Hill book is better than none.