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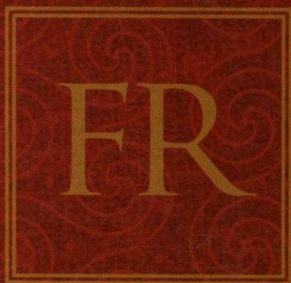
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The FARMS Review

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Editor's Introduction

GOD AND MR. HITCHENS

Daniel C. Peterson

Christopher Hitchens is the fourth of what one might call the four horsemen of the New Atheism—the other three being Sam Harris,¹ Richard Dawkins,² and Daniel Dennett.³ Hitchens is the author of a recent best seller called *god is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything*.⁴ Notice the lowercase *god* in the title of his book. Subtlety

1. Sam Harris, *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason* (New York: Norton, 2005). For responses to Harris's ideology, see Michael D. Jibson, "Imagine," *FARMS Review* 18/1 (2006): 233–64; and Louis Midgley, "Knowing Brother Joseph Again," *FARMS Review* 18/1 (2006): lxii–lxv, which discusses Harris's curious fondness, apparently because of his atheism, for a vacuous mysticism. Harris has also published *Letter to a Christian Nation* (New York: Knopf, 2006); some attention has been given to portions of this screed in *FARMS Review* 18/2 (2006): 250–51.

2. Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2006). For a careful examination of this book, see David Grandy, "Ideology in the Guise of Science," in this number of the *Review*.

3. Daniel C. Dennett, *Breaking the Spell: Religion as a National Phenomenon* (New York: Viking, 2006).

4. Christopher Hitchens, *god is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* (New York and Boston: Twelve, 2007). For convenience, all subsequent references to this book in the present essay, "God and Mr. Hitchens," are cited by page number alone. This essay, based on remarks given at the annual symposium of the Foundation for Apologetic Information and Research (FAIR) on 3 August 2007 in Sandy, Utah, derives from a book that William J. Hamblin, of the Department of History at Brigham Young University, and I have been working on, tentatively entitled *God and mr. hitchens: Empty Rhetoric, Skewed History, and "the New Atheism."* I have allowed the present essay to retain something of its original oral character. I am grateful to my wife, Deborah, and to my son Stephen for their help in tracking down sources for my response to Christopher Hitchens.

is seldom his strong suit, and that is emblematic of the very serious and mature approach that he takes to the subject. Christopher Hitchens has been a presence in America for quite some time as a television commentator on politics. He is a British writer who recently took U.S. citizenship and has appeared in recent years as a defender of the war in Iraq and, more generally, of the “war against terror.” His stance on these topics makes me nervous because, having now read his book twice and given some thought to his positions, I wonder about his motivation. Is it really defense of freedom, or is it just disdain for religion, a sentiment that is a very, very powerful force in his life? Notice the subtitle of his book again: *How Religion Poisons Everything*.

In May 2007, when the Reverend Jerry Falwell died, Hitchens became notorious for his comments about Falwell on various television programs and in other venues. What he said in *Slate* magazine will serve well as an example:

The discovery of the carcass of Jerry Falwell on the floor of an obscure office in Virginia has almost zero significance, except perhaps for two categories of the species labeled “credulous idiot.” . . .

Like many fanatical preachers, Falwell was especially disgusting in exuding an almost sexless personality while railing from dawn to dusk about the sex lives of others. His obsession with homosexuality was on a par with his lip-smacking evocations of hellfire. From his wobbly base of opportunist fund raising and degree-mill money-spinning in Lynchburg, Va., he set out to puddle his sausage-sized fingers into the intimate arrangements of people who had done no harm. . . .

. . . It’s a shame that there is no hell for Falwell to go to, and it’s extraordinary that not even such a scandalous career is enough to shake our dumb addiction to the “faith-based.”⁵

That is not the usual kind of obituary.

5. Christopher Hitchens, “Faith-Based Fraud,” *Slate*, 16 May 2007, <http://www.slate.com/id/2166337> (accessed 17 January 2008).

Christopher Hitchens is also famous for despising Billy Graham, Mahatma Gandhi, and (at book length) Mother Teresa of Calcutta.⁶ On the other hand, he is not a total misanthrope. He has described Vladimir Lenin as a great man, and he still reveres Leon Trotsky (pp. 151–53). However, his *god is Not Great* is explicitly contemptuous of religious believers, at excruciating length and in considerable detail. He despises Jerry Falwell for his alleged crimes but, again, admires Trotsky, who is famous for saying, among other things, that we need to get beyond “the Church babble about the sanctity of human life,”⁷ an idea that Trotsky put into force, serving, with Lenin, as the co-architect of the Gulag in the Soviet Union, leading to the deaths of potentially as many as 40 million people.

Hitchens on the Mormons

One of the exhibits in Hitchens’s case against religion is Mormonism. He has a short and poorly informed section about Mormonism in his book in which he describes Mormonism—and this language is fairly typical of the way he approaches religion altogether—as a “ridiculous cult” (p. 161). He further states that “the actual story of the imposture is almost embarrassing to read, and almost embarrassingly easy to uncover” (p. 162). He has personally gone to a great deal of effort to uncover it by studying the work of Fawn Brodie. The story, Hitchens says, “has been best told by Dr. Fawn Brodie, whose 1945 book *No Man Knows My History* was a good-faith attempt by a professional historian to put the kindest possible interpretation on the relevant ‘events’” (p. 162). This is typical of his approach. Fawn Brodie becomes *Dr. Fawn Brodie*, even though, in fact, she never had a doctorate. And he does this sort of thing consistently. The most obscure atheist emerges as “the great so-and-so,” “the illustrious so-and-so,” whereas the greatest theists—Thomas Aquinas, St. Augustine—are all depicted, essentially, as completely clueless idiots. I am fond in

6. Christopher Hitchens, *The Missionary Position: Mother Teresa in Theory and Practice* (New York: Verso, 1995).

7. Quoted in Erik Durschmied, *Blood of Revolution: From the Reign of Terror to the Rise of Khomeini* (New York: Arcade, 2002), 170.

particular of his contrasting “Dr. Fawn Brodie,” who did not have a doctorate, with “William Albright of Baltimore” (p. 103), who is considered by many to be the leading archaeologist and the leading Old Testament scholar of the twentieth century. “William Albright of Baltimore” happens to have taught at Johns Hopkins University, where he founded that university’s notable tradition of biblical studies and archaeology. But that does not count, because it appears he was some sort of believer.

Mormonism shows “what happens when a plain racket turns into a serious religion before our eyes” (p. 165). Joseph Smith was a “gifted opportunist” whose “cleverness was to . . . unite cupidity with half-baked anthropology” (pp. 161, 162). Hitchens also claims that Joseph Smith modeled himself on Muhammad (p. 161). (I find that last assertion interesting because I have recently published a biography on Muhammad and had not noticed any such connection.)⁸ Here is another Hitchens comment I liked: “Smith refused to show the golden plates to anybody, claiming that for other eyes to view them would mean death” (p. 163). He makes no mention of the Witnesses, perhaps because he does not know about them. And further: the Book of Mormon is “a piece of vulgar fabrication” (p. 166).

But you learn a lot about the Book of Mormon from his book. You learn, for example, about “Nephi, the son of Lephi [*sic*]” and “the made-up battle of ‘Cumora’ [*sic*].” Such comments represent the meticulous research found all the way through Hitchens’s book, which is why I can safely use his approach to Mormonism as an illustration, in microcosm, of the way he generally approaches the whole issue of religion. Speaking of the policy on priesthood and blacks and the Mormons, Hitchens informs his readers that Mormon leaders “had still another ‘revelation’ and, more or less in time for the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1965 [*sic*], had it divinely disclosed to them that black people were human after all” (p. 167). Apart from the misstated theological content of the revelation (I was around then, and I am sure we knew that blacks were human), I am puzzled by how he arrived at

8. Daniel C. Peterson, *Muhammad: Prophet of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007).

the date of 1965—not only for the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (signed into law on 2 July 1964) but also for the revelation on priesthood. He explains, early on in his book, that his research methodology consists chiefly in using Google, but even then he should have discovered the correct date since this is not an obscure historical issue. June of 1978 is not close to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, but it fits Hitchens’s thesis to argue that the revelation on priesthood was connected with passage of the Civil Rights Act. His description of baptism for the dead is also carefully researched: “Every week, at special ceremonies in Mormon temples, the congregations meet and are given a certain quota of names of the departed to ‘pray in’ to their church” (p. 168).

Hitchens on the Bible

Hitchens devotes only a few pages to the Mormons, but he devotes many pages to the Bible—and, on this subject as on others, his book is a treasure trove. I am reminded of the old Far Side cartoon in which a deer is looking at another deer. The second deer has a target on its back, and the first looks at him and exclaims, “Gee, bummer of a birthmark!” Or, alternatively, one thinks of someone walking around with a “Kick me!” sign hanging on his rear end. I am one who is, congenitally, not disposed to not kick. I mention just a few items, though I am choosing from an embarrassment of riches here.

“All religions,” Hitchens says, “have staunchly resisted any attempt to translate their sacred texts into languages ‘under[stood] of the people’” (p. 125). Now, what are the facts? According to the United Bible Societies, parts of the Bible have been translated into 2,426 languages, with hundreds more in process.⁹ And this is by no means merely a modern phenomenon: the Bible was the most widely translated book in the ancient world. It was translated into Greek (the Septuagint) in the second century BC; Aramaic by the first century BC; Old Latin by the second century AD; Syriac (the *Peshitta*) in the third century AD; Coptic (Egyptian), fourth century AD; Old German (Gothic) in the

9. United Bible Societies, “Scripture Language Report 2006,” <http://www.biblesociety.org/index2.htm> (accessed 21 January 2008).

fourth century AD; Latin (Jerome's Latin Vulgate), late fourth century; Armenian, early fifth century; Ethiopic, fifth century; Georgian, fifth century; Old Nubian by the eighth century; Old Slavonic by the ninth; and Christian Arabic and Jewish Arabic (Saadia Gaon's Jewish Arabic version) by the tenth century. Obviously, a lot of effort went into these translations. And the history of the translation of the Buddhist scriptures also reflects a considerable degree of effort through the centuries. So Hitchens is not well-informed on the history of scripture translations. Instead, he is trying to universalize a very isolated phenomenon connected with a specific religious controversy. But even in this limited context, his argument is based on unsubstantiated assertion. "There would have been no Protestant Reformation," he assures us, "if it were not for the long struggle to have the Bible rendered into 'the Vulgate'" (p. 125). Aside from the obvious fact that the term *Vulgate* refers not to translations of the Bible into the vernacular but to a particular late-fourth-century Latin translation by Jerome already referred to, translating the Bible into German does not appear among Luther's original Ninety-Five Theses. It wasn't a major issue of the Reformation. In fact, the Bible had been translated into German in the fourteenth century, and a German Bible had been printed by Gutenberg in 1466, thirteen years after his publication of the Latin Bible. By the time Luther had nailed his theses to the door of Wittenberg's Castle Church on 31 October 1517—the act that is generally regarded as the opening salvo of the Protestant Reformation—Gutenberg's German Bible was nearly sixty-five years old. How serious an issue could this have been for Luther? Of course, he made his own translation, and his own Bible is tremendously important for German culture, but it was not a major issue in Reformation polemics.

Various parts of the English Bible had been translated into Anglo-Saxon from the seventh century on, with interlinear Latin/Anglo-Saxon versions by the tenth century. The Venerable Bede (AD 672?-735), one of the greatest figures in ecclesiastical history in Britain, is said to have translated the Gospel of John into Anglo-Saxon. This may come as a shock to some Latter-day Saints, but the problem during most of the medieval period was not that the church was attempting to suppress

the translation of the Bible, but rather that all literate persons in the early Middle Ages knew Latin. There was no particular point in having another translation. People who couldn't read Latin couldn't read *at all*.

Hitchens laments that “devout men like John Wycliffe [ca. 1330–1384], Miles Coverdale [1488?–1569], and William Tyndale [ca. 1494–1536] were burned alive for even attempting early translations” of the Bible into vernacular languages (p. 125). However, this is another example of the care with which he approaches his research. Far from being burned at the stake, Wycliffe died while hearing Catholic mass in his parish church. Coverdale died, unburned, in 1569 at the age of eighty-one. Of the three translators mentioned by Hitchens, only Tyndale (ironically, he was also known by the adopted family name of Hitchens) was burned at the stake.

Here is an example of biblical interpretation, as he does it: Hitchens's polemics fail completely to put the *akedah*, the near sacrifice of Abraham's son, into context. In his discussion of the *akedah*, Hitchens describes it as “mad and gloomy” (p. 53) and remarks, “There is no softening the plain meaning of this frightful story” (p. 206)—that God would require humans to sacrifice their children. But this is not the message the ancient audience would have gotten from that story. The message they would have gotten is that God does *not* require the sacrifice of their children. He allows a substitutionary sacrifice instead of human sacrifice.

There are other alleged biblical problems to which he points. According to Hitchens, “the Old Testament is riddled with dreams and with astrology, the sun standing still so that Joshua can complete his massacre at a site that has never been located” (p. 117). But the sun's standing still has nothing to do with astrology, which developed centuries later. And Gibeon, the site where the battle occurred, can be located in any biblical atlas; it is an easily found site.¹⁰

But what about the New Testament? For Hitchens, the New Testament “exceeds the evil of the old” (p. 109). That is astonishing to

10. Yohanan Aharoni and Michael Avi-Yonah, *The Macmillan Bible Atlas*, 3rd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1993), 17–18, 56, 94, 99, 100, 103, 111, 120, 140.

me, really. It shows how extreme his case is. Most people will point to the evils of the Old Testament God, but they typically feel more comfortable, even if they are agnostics, with the God depicted in the New Testament. But, for Hitchens, Christianity is even worse than the ancient Hebrew religion. Because he has boundless scorn for the Old Testament, it is very difficult to imagine the New Testament being worse. Hitchens's basic argument is that "the case for biblical consistency or authenticity or 'inspiration' has been in tatters for some time, . . . and thus no 'revelation' can be derived from that quarter" (p. 122). Like the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament is for Hitchens merely a "crude" forgery (p. 110). So any evangelical anti-Mormons who take pleasure in his description of the Book of Mormon as a crude forgery should have the smiles erased from their faces as they discover Hitchens's view of the Bible, which was "hammered together long after its purported events" (p. 110). For Hitchens, the claim that the Gospels could be based on eyewitness accounts is patently fraudulent. It is an "error" to assume that "the four Gospels were in any sense a historical record" (p. 111). There happens to be a fascinating new book on the question of eyewitness testimony in the New Testament. Richard Bauckham's *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony*¹¹ meticulously argues the case that the New Testament Gospels are in fact based on eyewitness accounts—that they have access to eyewitness testimony. Whether they were written by the eyewitnesses or simply on the basis of eyewitness testimony is a matter of irrelevance to Bauckham. The fact is that they apparently go back to very specific eyewitness testimony, and he is very careful in laying this out. Of course, Hitchens pays no attention to these sorts of things. His research is limited largely to what he turns up on Google and to what little is represented in his handful of endnotes. He makes the most outrageous assertions, and if you look for any justification for them, you find nothing. One can read twenty or thirty pages without finding any kind of documentation whatsoever.

11. Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006).

This is one that I like. It is probably not coincidental that Hitchens provides no scholarly sources for this claim that the Gospels, as we have them, were based on oral accounts. Why does he not offer any documentation for that? Because the consensus of even secular biblical scholars is precisely the opposite of his claim. Matthew and Luke use at least two written sources, Mark and Q, according to the consensus. (Q is an abbreviation for the German *Quelle*, which simply means “source.” It is essentially defined as passages found in both Matthew and Luke but not in Mark.) Hitchens is aware of this hypothetical source, Q. Remember that he is talking about consensus accounts, but he understands Q in a hopelessly garbled fashion. He regards it as the book on which all four Gospels may possibly have been based (p. 112). Note first that Hitchens is aware that Q is a written source, a book, which is a direct contradiction of his claim that the Gospels are based on oral sources. He simply cannot have it both ways. But he is further mistaken: he says that all four Gospels are based on Q. All *four* of them. In reality only *two* are thought, even by the consensus he refers to, to have used Q: Matthew and Luke. John has nothing to do with Q. John is not one of the synoptic Gospels. And Q is defined precisely as the material common to Matthew and Luke but not found in Mark. So where does he get off saying that Q is the source for all four Gospels? There is no one knowledgeable who holds that view, let alone a consensus.

He is also mistaken in his claim that all of Jesus’s disciples were illiterate. Presumably he is making this claim in order to lessen their value as witnesses; the presupposition seems to be that illiterate people are stupid and cannot recognize what they see and cannot record it or remember it or dictate it accurately. In fact, though, there is no evidence for their illiteracy, but rather considerable evidence against it. There are lots of cases of their writing letters and of Jesus reading from texts, for example. That the early Christian movement was dominated by illiterates is simply unsupported in the sources.

Hitchens also describes the Gospels as late. Because they are late, of course, they cannot be trusted as history. But there are several arguments for assigning early dates to the sources of the Gospels. For

example, it is generally agreed by New Testament scholars that the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts were written by the same author. So people routinely talk of *Luke-Acts*. Acts ends with Paul preaching in Rome for two years as a fulfillment of God's plan to bring the gospel to the gentiles, but it does not mention Paul's death, which is thought to have occurred sometime between AD 62 and 65. If Acts was written after the death of Paul, why did the author not mention that rather important event? Although various explanations have been suggested, the most obvious conclusion is that Acts was written before the death of Paul—that is, in the early 60s. Since the Gospel of Luke was clearly written before Acts, this gives a date in the early 60s—at the latest—for the composition of the Gospel of Luke. Further, since it is widely agreed that Luke is dependent upon Mark, this gives a date for Mark in the late 50s at the latest. In fact, the main reason consistently given for dating the Gospels to after AD 70 is that Jesus prophesies the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem. Since Jesus predicts the destruction of the temple, and since atheists assure us that there is no such thing as real prophecy, the Gospels must have been written after that destruction occurred—in other words, after AD 70. But, in fact, that is a very, very weak argument. We may be looking at documents that were written within roughly twenty years of the death of Christ. Now, how does that compare to secular historiography from the ancient world?

Hitchens on Ancient Historiography

Hitchens seems to be under the impression that we are simply awash in ancient documents that were written by eyewitnesses to many of the events that we talk about in ancient history. But this is not so. The earliest surviving biography of Alexander the Great, by Diodorus, dates to nearly three centuries after Alexander's death in 323 BC. Livy's account of the campaigns of Hannibal was written over a century and a half after the death of that general in 182 BC. Tacitus wrote his annals about AD 115, yet they cover imperial Roman history from AD 14 to 68, meaning that he wrote about fifty to one hundred years after the events he describes. Suetonius wrote his history of the Caesars in the early second century. His biography of Julius Caesar

was thus written more than a century and a half after Caesar's death. The point should be clear: by the standards of the ancient world and of the study of ancient history, the Gospels are amazingly close to the events they narrate, even if you give them a fairly late date. Herodotus wrote non-eyewitness accounts of the Persian Wars, and his treatment was written up to half a century after the dates he describes. Our major surviving source for the lives and teachings of most ancient philosophers is Diogenes Laertius, who wrote centuries after many of the men whose lives he records. Plutarch's famous biographies, *Plutarch's Lives*, are likewise often centuries after the fact. Hitchens clearly has no understanding of ancient historiography. If we were to go by his standards, we could know essentially nothing about the ancient world. All secular ancient history would have to be tossed.

Significantly, Hitchens completely ignores Paul, who is our earliest surviving source for the life of Jesus. One can reconstruct a lot of the life of Jesus (including important things like the account of the resurrection) from the letters of Paul, who apparently wrote before the Gospels were written. The New Testament letters that are universally recognized as authentically Pauline were written in the 50s. We are talking about a gap of only about twenty years between the death of Christ and the writing of Paul's letters.

Some Miscellaneous Mistakes

Hitchens makes errors that demonstrate a lack of seriousness and thus show how seriously he should be taken. One of my favorites is an epigraph at the beginning of one of his chapters. He is trying to show that all serious Christian thinkers are idiots, and so he has to take on one of the biggest, Thomas Aquinas, arguably the greatest philosopher of the Middle Ages and certainly the greatest in the Christian West. Aquinas, suggests Hitchens, once remarked that "I am a man of one book" (p. 63). And by the phrase "one book" he presumably meant the Bible. I could not remember ever running across a passage like that from Thomas Aquinas. And, in fact, anybody who has read Thomas Aquinas knows that he is constantly citing Aristotle, early Greek commentators on Aristotle, Avicenna, other Arabic philosophers, and the

like. He is drawing on all sorts of sources. He is a man of scores if not *hundreds* of books. By the standards of the Middle Ages, the man was a walking library. So why would he say, “I am a man of one book”? Well, what a big surprise! He didn’t. Hitchens says he said it, but he didn’t. In fact, if one follows Hitchens’s own research methodology and does a Google search for Aquinas, one discovers a quotation attributed to Aquinas (probably not authentic either) in which he says, “*Beware the man of one book.*”¹² This is precisely the opposite, of course, of what Hitchens seeks to put in Aquinas’s mouth. Curious, I wrote to Professor Ralph McInerny at Notre Dame, who is one of the leading Aquinas scholars in the world. “Good grief, you know, where’d that come from?” he wrote back. “Just tell somebody to look at the notes in [Aquinas’s] texts. He’s quoting all sorts of things. This is outrageous misrepresentation of Aquinas.”

Another outrageous misrepresentation: Hitchens tries to show that religion is evil in all its effects. One prominent example is Pius XII, the pope during World War II, whom he describes as a “pro-Nazi” (p. 240). I know it has been a common charge over the past couple of decades, but it is absurd. The best book on it that I have seen is one written by Rabbi David Dalin, a professor of history at Ave Maria University in Florida, called *The Myth of Hitler’s Pope*.¹³ If anyone takes the charge against Pius XII seriously at all, he or she should have a look at this book. It devastates the claim. In 1945, Isaac Herzog, the chief rabbi of the British Mandate of Palestine (and, subsequently, of Israel), sent a message to Monsignor Angelo Roncalli (who, in 1958, would succeed Pius XII as Pope John XXIII) in which he expressed his gratitude for Pius XII’s actions on behalf of Europe’s beleaguered Jews. “The people of Israel,” he wrote, “will never forget what His Holiness and his illus-

12. http://thinkexist.com/quotation/beware_the_man_of_one_book/12058.html (accessed 21 January 2008).

13. David G. Dalin, *The Myth of Hitler’s Pope: How Pope Pius XII Rescued Jews from the Nazis* (Washington, DC: Regnery, 2005). I cannot possibly do justice to the strength of Dalin’s case here, though I note that Sir Martin Gilbert, official biographer of Winston Churchill and author of ten books on the Holocaust, himself a Jew, has endorsed and supported Dalin’s conclusions. See Martin Gilbert, “Hitler’s Pope?” *The American Spectator* 39/6 (July/August 2006): 68–73.

trious delegates, inspired by the eternal principles of religion, which form the very foundation of true civilization, are doing for our unfortunate brothers and sisters in the most tragic hour of our history, which is living proof of Divine Providence in this world.”¹⁴ Moreover, as if to put an exclamation point after Rabbi Herzog’s tribute, Israel Zolli, the chief rabbi of Rome itself, converted to Catholicism right after the war.¹⁵ And, to honor the pope for what he had done for the Jews and for the role he had played in Zolli’s own conversion, he took the name of *Eugenio*—after *Eugenio Pacelli*, Pope Pius XII’s given name—for his baptismal name.¹⁶ At this removed time, Hitchens can perhaps describe the pope as pro-Nazi and get away with it, but contemporary Jews did not feel that way—and neither did the Nazis. There is a new book out called *A Special Mission*,¹⁷ about Hitler’s plot to kidnap Pope Pius XII and execute him. Is that what Hitler generally did to his faithful supporters?

Hitchens on Secular Glories

There is another tendency running throughout Hitchens’s book: anything that is good is secular; anyone who is bad is a believer, a faithful person. For example, Hitchens admires Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German theologian who died in 1945 as a martyr against Hitler, shortly before the end of World War II. Bonhoeffer was a Christian pastor who believed in a radical discipleship of Christ, and that led him to oppose the Nazis. But Hitchens says that Bonhoeffer was really not a believer, that he was motivated by a “nebulous humanism” (p. 7). Karl Barth, another strong opponent of Hitler and probably the most prominent Protestant theologian of the twentieth century, is omitted altogether, even though he was the main author of the Barmen Confession, the principal Protestant statement denouncing Nazism. Why?

14. Cited in Dalin, *The Myth of Hitler’s Pope*, 100.

15. James Akin, “How Pius XII Protected Jews,” <http://www.catholic.com/thisrock/1997/9702fea1.asp> (accessed 15 February 2008).

16. Akin, “How Pius XII Protected Jews.”

17. Dan Kurzman, *A Special Mission: Hitler’s Secret Plot to Seize the Vatican and Kidnap Pope Pius XII* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2007).

It is difficult to escape the suspicion that Barth is omitted because he doesn't count. And why doesn't he count? Because he doesn't fit the story that Hitchens is trying to tell. Moreover, Martin Luther King, whom Hitchens greatly admires, turns out not to have been a Christian at all. That would have been a shock to King, who earned a doctorate in theology at Boston University and whose speeches are heavily laden with biblical imagery. But no, he wasn't a believer either.

Secularists, it turns out, were the ones who ended slavery. Really? The famous John Brown was a militant Calvinist preacher who opposed slavery. But it seems that, for Hitchens, he was a secularist. And there is no mention of William Wilberforce. Some may have seen the recent film *Amazing Grace*, about Wilberforce and the Christian opposition to the British slave trade. It tells the story of the profoundly evangelical movement led by Wilberforce and his friend John Newton, who wrote the hymn *Amazing Grace*. Nonetheless, in Hitchens's book, John Newton is not mentioned, nor is William Wilberforce. It turns out that in the Hitchens version slavery was done away with in the United Kingdom by secularists. There is also no mention of the underground railroad in his account of the end of slavery. Nor is there any mention of Sojourner Truth or Harriet Tubman or the *Battle Hymn of the Republic* or Harriet Beecher Stowe (a member of that great family of preachers that also included Henry Ward Beecher), who wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, "the little lady who launched the war." There is no mention of them because religious people, according to Hitchens, cannot ever do anything good.

On the other hand, everything that's bad is done by religious people. For example, religious people put an end to science, tried to stomp it out wherever they could. And of course Hitchens gets into the old standard warfare of science versus religion. The latest interpretations of the history of science, however, suggest that science grew up, interestingly enough, not in China, not in the Islamic world, not in India. Technologies arose there, it is true. But science grew up in Christian Europe. Why? Probably specifically because of attributes of Christian

culture in Europe. This idea, developed in the works of Pierre Duhem¹⁸ and Stanley Jaki,¹⁹ for example, is pretty much the consensus view right now. But Hitchens doesn't know about it, or if he knows, he isn't telling. For him, science and belief are enemies, absolutely opposed to each other. Galileo, of course, is invoked, but Galileo is the one who, unbeknownst to Hitchens, said that we read about God in two books, the book of the scriptures and the book of nature.²⁰ He was a religious man. Still, Hitchens's campaign demands that he has to be painted as a secularist, and so he is.

An interesting case is that of Sir Fred Hoyle, probably one of the most brilliant physicists of the twentieth century. He was a British agnostic, but in Hitchens's book he shows up as a creationist (p. 65). Some may remember that, once, there were two viable alternatives for the origin of the universe: the big bang theory and the steady-state theory. Fred Hoyle was the founder of the steady-state theory, and Hitchens portrays him as being opposed to the big bang theory because it threatened his theism. But Hoyle was actually an agnostic or an atheist. He resisted the big bang theory precisely because it seemed, to him, to carry theistic implications. Hitchens has the facts completely turned around. In many cases, Hitchens is 180 degrees wrong. He is so far wrong that, if he moved at all, he would be coming back toward *right*. But he does this constantly, and in the case of Hoyle, it is especially amusing.

18. Pierre Duhem's ten-volume work on the history of science, *Le système du monde: histoire des doctrines cosmologiques de Platon à Copernic* (Paris, 1913–59), credits the Roman Catholic Church for fostering Western science during the Middle Ages.

19. See, for example, Stanley L. Jaki, *Miracles and Physics* (Front Royal, VA: Christendom Press, 1989); and *Scientist and Catholic: An Essay on Pierre Duhem* (Front Royal, VA: Christendom Press, 1991).

20. An example of this idea is Galileo's 1615 letter to Christina Lotharinga, Archduchess of Tuscany: "For the Holy Scripture and nature derive equally from the Godhead, the former as the dictation of the Holy Spirit and the latter as the most obedient executrix of God's orders." *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*, 6th ed., ed. Elizabeth Knowles (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), s.v. "Galileo Galilei." See "Science, Religion and Galileo" (http://gc.users.nelsonbay.com/observatory_files/Page1559.htm [accessed 28 January 2008]), which, among other things, notes that the Christian churches of Galileo's era promoted science and discusses the intellectual history of the "two books" idea and its relation to Galileo.

Interestingly, Hoyle *was* probably having doubts about his atheism towards the end. He is the one (and Hitchens simply goes ballistic at this) who said that looking at the theory of evolution reminded him of a storm hitting a junkyard, and when it's done, a Boeing 747 has emerged. But he was by no means an ardent Christian. The irony about this is that although Hitchens sees the big bang as the enemy of religion, guess who was one of the earliest people to just love the big bang? He went so far that his advisers criticized him for it and asked him to restrain himself. It was Pope Pius XII. (You remember him—the supposed pro-Nazi.) He thought it was a wonderful thing. It reminded him of Genesis 1, and so he pushed the big bang. Why? Because this great “atheist” theory, the big bang, was originated to an extent by Georges Lemaître, who was a Belgian priest as well as a mathematician and physicist. So Hitchens has the history of science turned on its head. He doesn't know what he's talking about.

“Newer and Finer Wonders”

“The loss of faith,” Hitchens says, “can be compensated by the newer and finer wonders that we have before us, as well as by immersion in the near-miraculous work of Homer and Shakespeare and Milton and Tolstoy and Proust, all of which was also ‘manmade’” (p. 151). But what is Homer without religion? What do you make of his story of the Trojan War, or of the wanderings of Odysseus, without the gods? You lose about half of the narrative right there. And Tolstoy without religion? He would have been shocked by that. But the one that really gets me is *Milton* without religion. Here are the opening lines of *Paradise Lost*:

Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
Sing Heav'nly Muse. . . .

.....

... what in me is dark
 Illumine, what is low raise and support;
 That to the heighth of this great argument
 I may assert Eternal Providence,
 And justify the ways of God to men.²¹

That's the purpose statement of *Paradise Lost*. So, Hitchens advises, get rid of religion, but read your Milton.

But imagine Dante without religion! I have tried to imagine Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* without religion. It is a story about pilgrims; but, absent religion, pilgrimage to what? Where are they going? Imagine a world without Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, without Handel's *Messiah*, without Mozart's *Requiem*, without Igor Stravinsky, without John Tavener, without John Coltrane—heck, even without Brian Wilson. Without cathedrals. Without the Blue Mosque in Istanbul. I mean, it's all gone. You cannot imagine that you can just get rid of all the bad parts of religion and you are still going to have all the good things. All of it has to go. What are you left with? Instead of the cathedral of Chartres maybe a Quonset hut, something purely functional.

More Atrocities

Now we come to a really serious point: totalitarian atrocities. The 1997 *Black Book of Communism* estimates the total deaths caused by Communism at between 85 and 100 million,²² but I think even the highest of those figures may be too low. A relatively new biography of Mao Tse-tung credits him with 70 million deaths—on his own, in peacetime.²³ And you've still got to factor in Stalin and Trotsky and Lenin and the rest. And then, of course, there are the Nazis. Hitchens realizes that such facts pose a threat to the atheism he advocates because *religion* is supposed to be guilty of all these crimes and because secularism will create a brave new world of peace and justice

21. John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, bk. 1, lines 1–6, 22–26.

22. Stéphane Courtois et al., *The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 4.

23. Jung Chang and Jon Halliday, *Mao: The Unknown Story* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2005).

and harmony and all that sort of thing. But it doesn't seem to work. So what does Hitchens do? He takes a fairly daring step. He declares that religion created totalitarianism. He points, for example, to the Jesuit "reductions" in Paraguay (pp. 231–32), a theme treated in the Robert De Niro movie *The Mission*, a really fine movie set around Iguazú Falls, a gorgeous area near the intersection of Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina. The reductions, Hitchens says, were an early totalitarian state where the Indians were kept in terror and fear by these Jesuit priests. But let me tell you about these Jesuit priests. There were two of them for every 3,500 Indians, and the Indians were free to come and go anytime they wanted. What kind of terrorist totalitarian state is that? Hitchens has completely misrepresented the reductions. And then he goes on to say that all totalitarianism is religious. And totalitarianism didn't only *originate* in religion; all totalitarianism (and here you thought you knew about Stalin!) is actually theocratic. It's all religious stuff. Believers are guilty for that too. He says of Saddam Hussein, for instance, "I shall simply say that those who regarded his regime as a secular one are deluding themselves" (p. 25). Well, I hereby declare myself deluded. Saddam Hussein was less of a Muslim than I am, and the Iraqi Baathist state was a fascist state. Baathist ideology was founded by a lapsed Christian named Michel Aflaq. Saddam Hussein was merely a nominal Muslim, yes, but his chief deputy, Tariq Aziz, was a Christian—in much the way that Vito Corleone of *The Godfather* was a Christian, but still a Christian of some sort, at least nominally. What kind of a theocracy is this? It is true that after 1979 Saddam Hussein, being a thug but a fairly clever thug and a survivor, knew which way the wind was blowing; so he discovered, for example, that he was a descendent of the Prophet Muhammad. Who would dare to question him on that? And then he also put *Allāhu akbar* ("God is most great!") on the Iraqi flag because he knew which way the ideological winds were blowing. But he never showed any serious signs of religion. He persecuted religious leaders in Iraq. He killed them by the thousands, Shi'a and Sunni both. It wasn't as if he favored only the Sunnis; he disliked them all. Anybody who was a threat to him died. So this is a preposterous claim on Hitchens's part.

Hitchens describes Trofim Lysenko's experiments with Marxist-Leninist genetics. Those who have read some Soviet history may recall Lysenko, who, under the sponsorship of Stalin, undertook an insane project to create a Marxist science of agriculture. The idea was to reject Mendelian genetics and all that sort of scientific nonsense and to go with Marxist-Leninist principles not only in politics and economics (where they failed miserably) but also in genetics (where they failed even more obviously). Many people starved to death as a result of Lysenko's agricultural experiments. So Hitchens, who, remember, is an ex-Trotskyite who really admires Lenin and Trotsky and the entire Soviet experiment, claims that "Stalin . . . pedantically repeated the papal routine [note that word *papal*] of making science conform to dogma, by insisting that the shaman and charlatan [again, note the religious language] Trofim Lysenko had disclosed the key to genetics and promised extra harvests of specially inspired vegetables [note the connotative word *inspired*]. (Millions of innocents died of gnawing internal pain as a consequence of this 'revelation' [again, note his choice of a religious word, *revelation*].)"²⁴ Now that is just rhetorical irresponsibility. Once more, notice the religious language: *inspiration, revelation, dogma, shaman, papal* (bringing up the Catholic papacy), all of which has to do with a completely atheist regime—a *militantly* atheist regime. Consider the demise of the great theocrat and believer Stalin, who died a horrific death in March 1953. He had suffered a severe stroke that had left his right side paralyzed, and his last hours were spent in virtually unbearable pain. Slowly, he was strangled. As his daughter Svetlana later reported, her father choked to death as those around his deathbed looked on. Although at the very last he had seemed at most merely semiconscious, he suddenly opened his eyes and looked about the room, plainly terrified. "Then," according to Svetlana, "something incomprehensible and awesome happened that to this day I can't forget and don't understand." Stalin partially lifted himself in the bed, clenched his fist toward the heavens, and shook it

24. Hitchens, *god is not Great*, 244.

defiantly. Then, with an unintelligible murmur, he dropped motionless back onto his pillow, and died.²⁵ It was a holy death, I suppose.

Hitchens's attempt to blame the atrocities of the Nazis and the Communists on religious believers is nothing short of obscene. Permit me to illustrate:

Lenin wrote to Maxim Gorky in 1913 that "any religious idea . . . is the most dangerous foulness, the most shameful 'infection,'" and that worship is no more than "ideological necrophilia."²⁶ In 1921, by now firmly in control of the country, he called upon the Communist Party to adopt a program of "militant atheism" and "militant materialism."²⁷

Accordingly, the atheist weekly *Bezbozhnik* (The godless) began publication in 1922, and a monthly journal entitled *Bezbozhnik ustanka* (The godless in the workplace) was launched. In 1923 the Communist Party set up the League of the Godless. In 1924 a Society of Militant Materialists was established, and the party launched a national campaign of atheist propaganda and scientific demonstrations. The next year the relatively highbrow magazine *Ateist* appeared. By 1929 the League of the Godless had 465,000 members and 9,000 cells of atheist agitators, and it changed its name to the League of the Militant Godless. In 1932 it could claim 5.6 million members. Museums of scientific atheism were built across the country. During 1940, some 239,000 antireligious lectures were delivered to an estimated audience of 11 million nationwide under the auspices of the League.²⁸

But the Bolsheviks weren't content with propaganda. In 1922 Orthodox churches were ordered to surrender all of their treasures, including chalices and clerical vestments, to the state. When the patriarch tried to retain objects related to church sacraments, they were seized by force. More than 8,000 members of the clergy were killed during the process of expropriation, and over 1,400 violent clashes

25. Svetlana Alliluyeva, *Twenty Letters to a Friend*, trans. Priscilla Johnson McMillan (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), 5–11, quotation on p. 10.

26. Quoted in Richard Overy, *The Dictators: Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2004), 270.

27. Overy, *The Dictators*, 271.

28. Overy, *The Dictators*, 271–72, 274, 275.

are recorded between agents of the state and angry believers. By 1930, estimates the British historian Richard Overy, a fifth of all of those imprisoned in the far northern Solovki prison camp complex were “clerical victims of religious persecution.” By 1940 the overwhelming majority of churches, chapels, mosques, synagogues, and monasteries had been dynamited, closed down, or seized by the state for some other use. Whereas the Russian Orthodox Church had 46,457 churches and 1,028 monasteries at the time of the revolution in 1917, by 1939 there were fewer than a thousand still in operation—and some estimates put the number as low as a hundred. Six hundred religious communities existed in Moscow in 1917. By 1939 only twenty survived. The famous Strastnoi monastery, for example, located in the heart of the city, was converted into the national antireligious museum.²⁹

Russian novelist and historian Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn puts the proportion of women imprisoned for their religion at Suslovo at about a third.³⁰ When the women of the religious commune near Khosta were arrested and sent to Solovki, their children were left to fend for themselves on their farms. They tended the orchards and vegetable gardens, milked their goats, studied hard at school, and sent their grades to their parents, “together with assurances that they were prepared to suffer for God as their mothers had. (And, of course, the Communist Party soon gave them this opportunity.)”³¹

“At that time,” Solzhenitsyn says of the very beginnings of the Soviet system under Hitchens’s venerated Lenin and Trotsky, “the authorities used to love to set up their concentration camps in former monasteries: they were enclosed by strong walls, had good solid buildings, and they were empty. (After all, monks are not human beings and could be tossed out at will.)”³² In Moscow, for example, there were concentration camps in the Andronnikov, Novospassky, and

29. Overy, *The Dictators*, 273–74.

30. Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago, 1918–1956: An Experiment in Literary Investigation*, trans. Thomas P. Whitney, 3 vols. (New York: Harper & Row, 1973–76), 3:67.

31. Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*, 2:464.

32. Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*, 2:19.

Ivanovsky monasteries. Others were located in empty nunneries in Nizhni Novgorod (already in September 1918) and in Ryazan.

“Men of religion,” says Solzhenitsyn,

were an inevitable part of every annual “catch,” and their silver locks gleamed in every cell and in every prisoner transport en route to the Solovetsky Islands.

From the early twenties on, arrests were also made among groups of theosophists, mystics, spiritualists. . . . Also, religious societies and philosophers of the Berdyayev circle. The so-called “Eastern Catholics”—followers of Vladimir Solovyev—were arrested and destroyed in passing, as was the group of A. I. Abrikosova. And, of course, ordinary Roman Catholics—Polish Catholic priests, etc.—were arrested, too, as part of the normal course of events.

However, the root destruction of religion in the country, which throughout the twenties and thirties was one of the most important goals of the GPU-NKVD, could be realized only by mass arrests of Orthodox believers. Monks and nuns, whose black habits had been a distinctive feature of Old Russian life, were intensively rounded up on every hand, placed under arrest, and sent into exile. They arrested and sentenced active laymen. The circles kept getting bigger, as they raked in ordinary believers as well, old people, and particularly women, who were the most stubborn believers of all. . . .

True, they were supposedly being arrested and tried not for their actual faith but for openly declaring their convictions and for bringing up their children in the same spirit. As Tanya Khodkevich wrote:

You can pray *freely*

But just so God alone can hear.

(She received a ten-year sentence for these verses.) A person convinced that he possessed spiritual truth was required to conceal it from his own children! In the twenties the religious

education of children was classified as a political crime under Article 58-10 of the Code.³³

Such people, Solzhenitsyn observes, typically received ten-year sentences to the labor camps and were prohibited from returning to their children and homes even upon their release. By contrast, prostitutes customarily received three-year sentences, continued to ply their trade among camp administrators and guards, and then returned home bearing suitcases laden with gifts.³⁴

The number of Orthodox parish priests fell from approximately 40,000 in the late 1920s to roughly 4,000 in 1940. And this was by no means merely the result of natural attrition or loss of interest in religion. Many had been executed as counterrevolutionaries or died in prison camps while unknown numbers were in hiding. Jewish and Muslim religious figures suffered similar fates. In 1929 religious study groups and Bible circles were banned, religious youth and women's groups were prohibited, church reading rooms and libraries were closed, and religious instruction was outlawed. Taxes on the incomes of religious workers were raised to 100 percent.³⁵ Civil service workers were fired if their fathers had been Orthodox priests; people who refused to work on Sundays were imprisoned.³⁶ Some religious believers were deliberately starved to death.³⁷

“One stream has never dried up in the U.S.S.R.,” Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn could still write in the 1970s with reference to the river of prisoners going to the labor camps,

33. Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*, 1:37–38. Even Christians sympathetic to Communism were subject to imprisonment (see 1:51.) For more on the treatment of believers, and especially of believing women, in the camps, see Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*, 2:309–10, 419–20.

34. Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*, 1:38; 2:67.

35. Overy, *The Dictators*, 274–75.

36. Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*, 1:58, 59.

37. See Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*, 2:65–66. For more examples of deliberate Soviet starvation, see Robert Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); and Nicolas Werth, *Cannibal Island: Death in a Siberian Gulag* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

and still flows. A stream of criminals untouched by the “beneficent wave summoned to life . . .” etc. A stream which flowed uninterrupted through all those decades—whether “Leninist norms were infringed” or strictly observed—and flowed in Khrushchev’s day more furiously than ever.

I mean the believers. Those who resisted the new wave of cruel persecution, the wholesale closing of churches. Monks who were slung out of their monasteries. . . .

These are in no sense politicals, they are “religionists,” but still they have to be *re-educated*. Believers must be dismissed from their jobs merely for their faith; Komsomols must be sent along to break the windows of believers; believers must be officially compelled to attend antireligious lectures, church doors must be cut down with blowtorches, domes pulled down with hawsers attached to tractors, gatherings of old women broken up with fire hoses.³⁸

It is simply obscene for Christopher Hitchens to be suggesting that religious believers were responsible for the Soviet Union.

Another thing that he says they are responsible for is violence. Hitchens objects to the violence that, he says, is caused by religion, and he specifically targets suicide bombings as an example of that evil thing. He apparently doesn’t realize that he makes a crucial admission when he acknowledges that the Tamil Tigers of Sri Lanka “pioneer[ed], long before Hezbollah and al-Qaeda, the disgusting tactic of suicide murder.” (p. 199). While, true to form, he seeks to paint the violence in Sri Lanka as a religious war between Buddhists and Hindus, the Tamil Tigers are not motivated by religion. Hitchens acknowledges that the conflict is one of ethnic tribalism, but he attempts to obscure its reality by pointing out that the Tamils are “chiefly Hindu” (p. 199). Note that important word *chiefly*. It means that some of them are *not* Hindu and that the strife is at most *reinforced* in some cases by religion. Consider the language of theology in the theological demands made in 1985 by a confederacy of Tamil militant groups:

38. Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*, 3:514–15.

1. the Tamils to be recognised as a distinct nationality;
2. the recognition and guarantee of the territorial integrity of the traditional homelands of the Ceylon Tamils;
3. the right of self-determination of the Tamil nation; and
4. recognition of citizenship and fundamental rights of all Tamils who regard Ceylon as their home.³⁹

Do you hear a single word about religion in that? There isn't any. But that's deeply significant. Robert Pape, a political scientist at the University of Chicago, compiled a database of every single suicide bombing and suicide attack worldwide from 1980 through 2003 (315 attacks altogether) and carefully analyzed them. In a 2005 book entitled *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*, he concludes that

while it might seem obvious that Islamic fundamentalism is the central simple cause, the presumed connection between suicide terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism is misleading. In fact, the data show that there is little connection between suicide terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism or any one of the world's religions. In fact, the leading instigators of suicide attacks are the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka, a Marxist-Leninist group [that's Trotsky territory, Lenin territory, Hitchens territory] whose members are from Hindu families but who are adamantly opposed to religion. This group committed 76 of the 315 incidents, more suicide attacks than Hamas. Rather, what nearly all suicide terrorist attacks have in common is a specific secular and strategic goal: to compel modern democracies to withdraw military forces from territory that the terrorists consider to be their homeland. Religion is rarely the root cause, although it is often used as a tool by terrorist organizations in recruiting and in other efforts in service of the broader strategic objective.⁴⁰

39. As given in A. Jeyaratnam Wilson, *The Break-up of Sri Lanka: The Sinhalese-Tamil Conflict* (London: Hurst, 1988), 185–86.

40. Robert A. Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* (New York: Random House, 2005), 4.

David Martin, who is an emeritus professor of sociology at the London School of Economics, responded to a book by Richard Dawkins, a friend and ally of Hitchens.⁴¹ Martin says that, from a sociological viewpoint, the role and nature of religion vary according to the kind of society in which it is present, and its relationship to warfare will likewise vary. That is why statements to the effect that religion causes war are not likely to be taken very seriously by sociologists. (Other scholars have written about the causes of violence, and religion is only one factor among many in those cases.) Martin continues:

I know of no evidence to show that the absence of a religious factor in the contention of rival identities and incompatible claims leads to a diminution in the degree of enmity and ferocity. . . . The contribution of religion has instead been of signal importance, and it's always been almost entirely directed to peaceful reconciliation internally and peace in foreign affairs. If Dawkins' arguments were correct, then the separating out of believers and clergy from the general population ought to reveal them as major proponents of violence towards each other and violence in international affairs. This is far from being the case. The evidence does not bear out the contention, the case falls.⁴²

Now, in fact, the cause of violence is what it always is, and it happens with religious people and nonreligious people. It involves lust, greed, irritability, the urge to power—all those sorts of things. Religion is a factor, but not a major factor. As my son recently put it to me: "Hitchens seems to be saying that without religion we could all just hold hands and sing 'Kumbaya'—except that, of course, we *couldn't* sing *Kumbaya*, because it is a religious song."

Hitchens also claims that Islam has ruined the culture of Persia. However, the culture of Persia is Islamic. The greatest writers of the Persian tradition are Islamic writers, the Persian miniature paintings are Islamic paintings, the greatest poet of Persia is Jalal ad-Din Rumi,

41. David Martin, *Does Christianity Cause War?* (New York: Oxford, 1997).

42. Martin, *Does Christianity Cause War?* 19–20, 220.

who is an Islamic mystical poet. His book, the *Mathnawi*, is often called “the second Qur’an” or “the Persian Qur’an.” If you get rid of Islam, you get rid of every major poet in the Persian tradition for the past fourteen centuries. You get rid of every major bit of Persian architecture. You are getting rid of every bit of Persian artistry and painting. Statements like this are abysmally ignorant. It’s just astonishing to read them.

The book *god is not Great* has been on the best-seller list. But it is crammed to the bursting point with errors, and the striking thing about this is that the errors are always, *always*, in Hitchens’s favor. If you have an accountant or a cashier who makes errors but those errors are random, sometimes one way, sometimes another way, you think, okay, that’s all right; but if the bank teller is always making the error in her favor, you begin to smell a rat. Well, I smell a rat in this case. There is not a disputed fact or a fact that struck me as questionable that I’ve checked in Hitchens’s book where it has not turned out that he’s wrong. Every single time. It reminds me of a very famous review of a book by Lillian Hellman, who wrote a memoir called *Scoundrel Time*. It was reviewed by her longtime archenemy Mary McCarthy, who was on a television show on PBS, the old *Dick Cavett Show*. At one point (this was in 1979) when asked about the book *Scoundrel Time*, she replied, famously (and this led to a lawsuit), “Every word she [Lillian Hellman] writes is a lie, including ‘and’ and ‘the.’”⁴³ Now, I am not saying that Hitchens is lying, but I am saying there is virtually not a sentence in this book that is true. It is absolutely astonishing. He has become wealthy with this book, which gives me hope: by reputation among some ex- and anti-Mormons, I am a constant liar, so perhaps my own future is bright.

I have said before that I think the secular critique of Mormonism and of religious belief is much more serious now than the evangelical critique that Latter-day Saints have been experiencing for so long. When Hitchens’s book first came out, I thought it would represent a formidable challenge. Hitchens is a remarkable fellow. He writes well,

43. Frances Kiernan, *Seeing Mary Plain: A Life of Mary McCarthy* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2000), 15–16.

he has written extensively, he has traveled the world, and he is a formidable presence on television. It is truly disappointing (or in another sense really exhilarating) to realize how poor the case is, at least in his hands, against both Mormonism and religious belief.

Some Final Comments

Christopher Hitchens wasn't done with Mormonism when he published his unfortunate book. In a 26 November 2007 column for *Slate* magazine entitled "Mitt the Mormon: Why Romney Needs to Talk about His Faith," Hitchens railed further against "the bizarre beliefs of [Romney's] church, . . . the Mormon cult." "It ought to be borne in mind," Hitchens wrote,

that Romney is not a mere rank-and-file Mormon. His family is, and has been for generations, part of the dynastic leadership of the mad cult invented by the convicted fraud Joseph Smith. It is not just legitimate that he be asked about the beliefs that he has not just held, but has caused to be spread and caused to be inculcated into children. It is essential. Here is the most salient reason: Until 1978, the so-called Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was an officially racist organization. Mitt Romney was an adult in 1978. We need to know how he justified this to himself, and we need to hear his self-criticism, if he should chance to have one.⁴⁴

"The Book of Mormon," he continued, "is full of vicious ingenuity." Thereupon Hitchens found the roots of the pre-1978 restriction on priesthood ordination in "antebellum Missouri" where "Smith and his cronies" were allegedly "preaching against abolition." And although, this time, Hitchens gets the 1978 date of President Kimball's revelation correct, he still claims, without explaining his quite dubious reasons, that "the timing . . . permits one to be cynical about its

44. Christopher Hitchens, "Mitt the Mormon: Why Romney Needs to Talk about His Faith," *Slate*, 26 November 2007, <http://www.slate.com/id/2178568> (accessed 24 January 2008).

sincerity.”⁴⁵ (As if, when the topic is religion, Christopher Hitchens required anyone’s permission for cynicism.)

Richard Dawkins, another prominent “new atheist,” was so inspired by this “excellent *Slate* article by Christopher Hitchens” that he too felt the imperative need to comment upon “Mitt Romney, . . . a self-confessed Mormon,” in an online article entitled “Banishing the Green-Eyed Monster,” which was otherwise devoted to denouncing sexual jealousy and, in effect, arguing that our desperately repressed and puritanical society needs a more open attitude toward sex. Whatever the subject, Dawkins is rarely in doubt about his opinions, and he has strong views on the Book of Mormon and those who believe in it:

The fact that Joseph Smith wrote it in 16th century pseudo-biblical English although he was a 19th century man marks him out—along with much else—as a charlatan, yet Mitt Romney apparently is gullible enough to be taken in by the scam. After Smith “translated” them, the gold tablets containing God’s words conveniently shot off to Heaven before anybody else could examine them. If a man is gullible enough to believe that, would you trust him to negotiate on your country’s behalf in the tough chancelleries of the world?⁴⁶

Romney’s superb education and his remarkable attainments in the private sector, in the world of nonprofit management, and in government count for nothing when compared with the fact that he’s a Latter-day Saint. “Would you wish,” Dawkins asks, “to be governed by a man who has such a cock-eyed view of reality that he thinks the Garden of Eden was in Missouri, even if he keeps that cock-eyed view private?”⁴⁷

45. Hitchens, “Mitt the Mormon.”

46. Richard Dawkins, “Banishing the Green-eyed Monster,” http://newsweek.washingtonpost.com/onfaith/richard_dawkins/2007/11/banishing_the_greeneyed_monste.html (accessed 24 January 2008). For an examination of Dawkins’s book *The God Delusion*, see David Grandy’s review “Ideology in the Guise of Science,” in this number of the *FARMS Review*.

47. Dawkins, “Banishing the Green-eyed Monster.” In addition to the brief forays into anti-Mormonism by Hitchens and Dawkins, Sam Harris has also recently entered the fray. In a rambling commentary on a host of issues, Harris suddenly mocks the faith

Joining Christopher Hitchens and Richard Dawkins in the claim that Mormons, because of their faith, are unworthy of positions in political leadership is Carole Schutter, co-screenwriter of the abortive propaganda film *September Dawn* (discussed in some detail by Craig Foster in this number of the *Review*). In what the Web site on which it appeared in October 2007 terms “A Heartfelt Letter to America from the Co-Author of September Dawn,” Ms. Schutter laments the failure of her fellow Evangelicals to patronize her film despite its poor quality, and summons them to rally around a true believer in order to thwart the Mormon infidel. She sobs that “Christians . . . backed away from us because they didn’t want to ‘upset’ the LDS church because Mitt was running for office. . . . Money and the unbelievable power and organization of the LDS church (who we discovered are incredibly internet savvy) backs [sic] Romney.”⁴⁸ “I am not anti-Mormon,” Ms. Schutter declares in a counterfactual run-on sentence, “I know some very nice people who are Mormon, but they are not Christians by the biblical and dictionary definitions of the word Christian.”⁴⁹ Anti-Mormon or not, though, she is most definitely courageous: “Now, I fully expect

of the Latter-day Saints. He begins his assault by noting that religions have differences. He then claims that “these differences make all religions look contingent, and therefore silly. Consider the unique features of Mormonism, which may have some relevance in the next Presidential election. Mormonism, it seems to me, is—objectively—just a little more idiotic than Christianity is. It has to be: because it is Christianity plus some very stupid ideas.” Following some additional sneering, Harris insists that the faith of the Saints “is almost guaranteed to be embarrassing even to most people who believe in the biblical God” (Sam Harris, “The Problem with Atheism,” http://newsweek.washingtonpost.com/onfaith/sam_harris/2007/10/the_problem_with_atheism.html [accessed 18 January 2008]). But do those whose religion is some form of atheism not also differ in their views? Harris doesn’t take up this issue. But, if a difference of opinion on issues is grounds for embarrassment, then shouldn’t atheists also experience embarrassment, given the variety of ideologies grounded in militant atheism that have torn up the world in the last two centuries? Shouldn’t Harris have justified his fondness for certain brands of mysticism in the face of typical atheist hostility to that sort of thing?

48. Carole Schutter, “A Heartfelt Letter to America from the Co-Author of September Dawn,” <http://quilterforhuckabee.blogspot.com/2007/10/heartfelt-letter-to-america-from-author.html> (accessed 25 January 2008). Those familiar with the notorious anti-Mormon pseudodocumentary *The God Makers* (produced in 1982 by Ed Decker) will recognize the familiar motif of the virtually omnipotent, truth-squashing Mormon Church.

49. Schutter, “Heartfelt Letter.” On this issue, see Daniel C. Peterson and Stephen D. Ricks, *Offenders for a Word: How Anti-Mormons Play Word Games to Attack the Latter-*

to be blasted for this because the media representatives in every ward of the LDS church crawl the net looking for anything they construe as anti-LDS.”⁵⁰ Nevertheless, Carole Schutter will not be intimidated. She is willing to stand up to the looming menace of Mitt Romney and the jackbooted thugs of the approaching Mormon dictatorship:

He is not just LDS, he is a stake president. They hope that at least one of Joseph Smith’s prophecies come true, that “when the Constitution lies in tatters,” a Mormon president will be elected. The history of the LDS church is one supportive of a theocracy. I truly believe, only someone like Huckabee will not tear the Republican party apart. I think Huckabee actually has the best chance of winning. He is a stunningly articulate speaker, but he lacks the backing and financial support of a Republican party seduced by Mitt Romney. And may I say this, by merely saying this and identifying who I am opens me up to vicious attacks. Sandra Tanner, evangelical Christian, great-great-granddaughter of Brigham Young, is not called the “bravest woman in Utah,” for no reason. I challenge you to go to ex-Mormon websites, call a Christian church in Utah or talk to a Christian teenager going to public school in a predominantly LDS area in Utah and ask them how they are treated, and then tell the Christians leaders what you learn. It will open your eyes.⁵¹

Despite our crimes and our nefarious schemes, however, Ms. Schutter refuses to be unkind. Her appeal to religious tribalism is motivated entirely by selfless charity:

But remember, God wants us to love everyone. I do not speak this out of hatred, as the LDS have accused me of, I speak this in bewilderment that Christians would not support a candidate who sincerely espouses their values. . . . Isn’t it enough that we

day Saints (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1992), esp. 1–54, where it is demonstrated that no biblical or dictionary definition of the word *Christian* exists to exclude Mormons.

50. Schutter, “Heartfelt Letter.”

51. Schutter, “Heartfelt Letter.”

have shoved God out of our schools? Now, we, the Christian people, through our leadership, have decided that it is okay to turn our backs on someone unashamed to declare that our God is God, in order to endorse someone who believes there are many gods and in fact, that he will be a god of his own planet when he dies. . . . What are the most important Christian values? “Hear O Israel, the Lord is God, the Lord is one,” and Jesus “is the way the truth and the light, no man comes before the Father except through Him.” Everything else, being pro-life, being a strict constructionist, EVERYTHING falls under those two major truths. As a Christian, if you have a choice, how can you not support a candidate who supports these truths?!⁵²

Since Ms. Schutter’s letter appeared, her candidate has in fact become the choice of a burgeoning movement of Evangelicals (which may or may not be ancient history by the time this number of the *Review* sees print). Perhaps this development will assuage the grief she must feel at the monumental failure of her movie. As I write, I have just seen an account from a Latter-day Saint lawyer of something told him by a client:

So, I have a client who was hanging out last week in Aspen with one of the producers of *September Dawn*. My client, who is Jewish, was asked to attend a party at the producer’s Aspen home. My client attended with his two daughters.

The producer was an Evangelical Christian. He was holding anti-Romney meetings for influential people, which were capped off with a screening of *September Dawn*. The producer had quite a screening room in his basement.

My client had never heard of *September Dawn* before. He and his children watched the screening. The producer, who said his son was an actor in the film, explained that the reason *September Dawn* received little play is that Mormons issued

52. Schutter, “Heartfelt Letter.”

death and bomb threats against screening theaters, which came after death and bomb threats against the producers.

My client and his children were deeply offended by the movie in the first place and then by the host's comments thereafter—basically attacking Romney and claiming that Mormons had a death wish against all true Christians. When it became apparent that the meeting was organized just to malign Romney, my client informed all present that his attorney was a Mormon bishop who wasn't like anybody in the movie, and that if his attorney were present he'd set the record straight for what appeared to be gross misrepresentations. My client and his daughters were shown the door.

Being a Dem, I am not a Romney supporter. Nonetheless, the lynch mob mentality Reed Smoot saw is alive and kicking.⁵³

Some Final Comments

I have drawn attention, as readers will have noted, to two essays included in this number of the *Review*: David Grandy's excellent examination of Richard Dawkins's *The God Delusion* and Craig Foster's review of *September Dawn*. Both the script for this dreadful anti-Mormon film and the subsequent book were the work of Carole Schutter, who is clearly driven by sectarian animosity towards the Saints and their faith. Recently released on DVD, the film will undoubtedly become—regardless (or because) of its lack of either cinematic excellence or even modest historical accuracy—a weapon in the arsenal of sectarian countercult anti-Mormon propaganda.⁵⁴

53. As posted on the Mormon Apologetics and Discussion Board, 10 January 2008 (<http://www.mormonapologetics.org>). Reprinted with the author's permission.

54. For example, the Christian Research Institute's Web site announces "Mormonism Week" with "Bible Answer Man" Hank Hanegraaff and special guests Bill McKeever, Sandra Tanner, and John Voight discussing "the recently released DVD *September Dawn* and the ideas that lead up to such horrific tragedy" (<http://www.equipt.org> [accessed 18 January 2008]). Of course, among other works of anti-Mormon propaganda offered for sale there is the *September Dawn* DVD.

Though it is, of course, not possible to comment on each of the items included in this issue of the *Review*, I must draw special attention to the review essay by Thomas Wayment, who examines a portion of the work of Robert Price. The Reverend Price's rather bizarre career consists of heavy involvement with Paul Kurtz and the primary atheist organization in America, as well as with the notorious Jesus Seminar and related activities. Price has recently begun to insist that there may not have even been a Jesus of Nazareth. These rather odd opinions seem not to have troubled George Smith, the owner of Signature Books, since that press was willing to publish the flawed volume reviewed by Wayment. Those at Signature Books have previously called upon the Reverend Price, who is both a preacher apparently enthralled by religious matters and also a functional atheist, to assist in their effort to convince the Saints that the Book of Mormon is merely fiction fashioned by Joseph Smith out of his immediate environment and, hence, neither an authentic ancient history nor the word of God.⁵⁵

Kevin Barney examines some fine new Latter-day Saint scholarship on the New Testament, indicating, I hope, a new trend that I wish to highlight. A collection of essays on the topic of remembrance is also included in this number of the *Review* and has been given its own introduction, and Larry Morris has demonstrated the troubles flowing from a slanted account of historiography relating to things Mormon. In addition, there are many other essays herein that we trust will interest our readers.

Editor's Picks

Once again, we turn to the matter of making recommendations, something I do after reading the reviews and consulting with my two associate editors and, as a result of staff changes, also with the two new production editors of the *FARMS Review*. Of course, the final responsibility for such endorsements is mine. As usual, the rating system comprises the following elements:

55. See William J. Hamblin, "Priced to Sell," review of "Prophecy and Palimpsest," by Robert M. Price, *FARMS Review* 16/1 (2004): 37–47.

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

And now for the recommendations . . .

- *** Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, Eric D. Hunstman, and Thomas A. Wayment, *Jesus Christ and the World of the New Testament: An Illustrated Reference for Latter-day Saints*
- *** Kent P. Jackson and Frank F. Judd Jr., *How the New Testament Came to Be: The 35th Annual Brigham Young University Sidney B. Sperry Symposium*
- ** Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*
- * Frank F. Judd Jr. and Gaye Strathearn, eds., *Sperry Symposium Classics: The New Testament*

In addition, I would like to call attention to several items highlighted in the Book Notes section that will be of special interest to Latter-day Saints: W. C. Campbell-Jack and Gavin McGrath, eds., *New Dictionary of Christian Apologetics*; Mark Lilla, *The Stillborn God: Religion, Politics, and the Modern West*; Christopher Partridge, ed., *Dictionary of Contemporary Religion in the Western World: Exploring Living Faiths in Postmodern Contexts*; and Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*.

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tasks with equal aplomb, ably assisted by Brette Jones, Kelley Konzak, Matt Roper, Keegan Taylor, and Sandra Thorne. I also thank Jacob Rawlins and Alison Coutts for the fine typesetting of this number of the *FARMS Review*, and I am indebted to Alison and the other administrative personnel of the Maxwell Institute for their continual support of what we all feel is a worthwhile publication.

Of course, special thanks go to those who have contributed essays, making this enterprise possible. Together their efforts represent hundreds of hours of research and writing given without remuneration except for a copy of the *Review* and perhaps a free book.

MORMON'S SPIRITUAL TREASURE, “DAZZLING” OR OTHERWISE

Paula W. Hicken

Review of Keith Bailey Schofield. *How to Increase Your Enjoyment of the Book of Mormon: Striking New Insights into the Life of Mormon and His Work*. Orem, UT: Granite Publishing and Distributing, 2005. xi + 235 pp., with index. \$17.95.

During the 1980s when I began to pursue freelance writing, I attended a few workshops to learn the craft. One of the pointers I remember from those lectures was to write a how-to piece because readers navigate toward essays that feature a way for them to develop new skills or improve their lives. I never wrote a how-to article. But a glance at Keith Bailey Schofield's title suggests that he did, or at least intended to. However, I am perplexed by the decision to use “how to” in the title. Schofield's book is better described as a biography of the prophet Mormon. “No penetrating study of Mormon and his work has been written since the publication of the Book of Mormon almost two centuries ago, a fact that amazes me” (p. 3). His book is an effort to provide this previously unwritten “penetrating study.”

Schofield's use of the words *penetrating study* brings two issues to mind. First, if the book is a penetrating study, which would encourage serious study, why use the word *enjoyment*, a term that connotes reading for entertainment? Schofield's publisher was possibly hoping to entice a broad group of potential buyers ranging from those who want to be entertained to those who want to be enlightened. Second, Schofield's statement astonishes me. I wonder how he defines “Mormon

and his work.” Numerous “penetrating” studies of Mormon’s work, which might be considered the entire Book of Mormon, come to mind.¹ Perhaps Schofield’s focus is narrower, intending only to consider Mormon as the compiler or editor of the book. If he means that no specific study of the prophet Mormon has been written, then he may not be aware of articles by Jeffrey R. Holland, Spencer J. Condie, and Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, for example.² Although these are not book length, they represent insightful studies of the life of Mormon. I believe Schofield intends his “penetrating study” to be about the life and editorial work of Mormon.

Part of the challenge of constructing a penetrating study of Mormon is the lack of adequate source material. Jerry L. Ainsworth wrote a book titled *The Lives and Travels of Mormon and Moroni sev-*

1. To mention only a few, Terryl L. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon: The American Scripture That Launched a New World Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997); Noel B. Reynolds and Charles D. Tate, eds., *Book of Mormon Authorship: New Light on Ancient Origins* (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1982); Hugh Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert; The World of the Jaredites; There Were Jaredites* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1988); Nibley, *An Approach to the Book of Mormon*, 3rd ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1988); Nibley, *Since Cumorah*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1988); Nibley, *The Prophetic Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1989); and numerous in-depth studies published by the Maxwell Institute, such as John L. Sorenson and Melvin J. Thorne, eds., *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1991); John W. Welch, ed., *Reexploring the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1992); Noel B. Reynolds, ed., *Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1997); Donald W. Parry, Daniel C. Peterson, and John W. Welch, eds., *Echoes and Evidences of the Book of Mormon* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2002); John W. Welch, David Rolph Seely, and Jo Ann H. Seely, eds., *Glimpses of Lehi’s Jerusalem* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2004)—all of which predate Schofield’s book. See also any issue of the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*.

2. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Mormon: The Man and the Book, Part 1,” *Ensign*, March 1978, 15–18; Holland, “Mormon: The Man and the Book, Part 2,” *Ensign*, April 1978, 57–59; Spencer J. Condie, “Mormon: Historian, General, Man of God,” in *Heroes from the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1995), 168–79; Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, “Mormon, the Man and the Message,” in *The Book of Mormon: Fourth Nephi through Moroni, From Zion to Destruction: Papers from the Ninth Annual Book of Mormon Symposium, 1994*, ed. Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate Jr. (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1995), 117–31.

eral years ago.³ T. Lynn Elliott, in a review of this book, describes the challenge to create a history of Mormon:

Unfortunately, [Ainsworth] faces the same problem as have other authors who have dealt with [the issues of answering questions about Mormon and Moroni], namely the paucity of source material. Taken together, the books of Mormon and Moroni make up only thirty-one pages in the current English edition of the Book of Mormon, and much of this space is dedicated to doctrinal subjects rather than to biography, history, geography, or culture. To these pages one can add the occasional marginal notes that both Mormon and Moroni make at various places in the Book of Mormon, but even so, one is left with very little firsthand material with which to reconstruct the “lives and travels” of these two men.⁴

Schofield’s portrait of Mormon is derived from Mormon’s writings in the nine chapters of the short book of Mormon (although two are written by Moroni), three chapters of the book of Moroni, and the many verses Mormon inserts as compiler, abridger, and redactor, which include the Words of Mormon. Schofield is confident this is enough, declaring, “I saw that even though Mormon had written little about himself, his writings were so extensive that deductions and inferences could be drawn bit by bit from his writings that would reveal various aspects of his life” (p. 4). Schofield categorizes his biography as “interpretation” (p. 57), “theory” (p. 66), “inquiry” (p. 71), “inference” (p. 73), “guesses” (p. 86 n. 4), and “pure speculation” (p. 84). These are accurate descriptions. For example, Mormon’s father took him to the land of Zarahemla when he was eleven years old (Mormon 1:6). According to Schofield, Mormon was “overwhelmed” by the size of the “city” of Zarahemla, and his “dramatic reaction” means that “Mormon was born and raised in a small town, village, or on a plantation” (pp. 9–10).

3. Jerry L. Ainsworth, *The Lives and Travels of Mormon and Moroni* (n.p.: PeaceMakers, 2000).

4. T. Lynn Elliott, “Discovering Mormon and Moroni,” review of *The Lives and Travels of Mormon and Moroni*, by Jerry L. Ainsworth, *FARMS Review of Books* 12/2 (2000): 1.

The actual text reads as follows: “And it came to pass that I, being eleven years old, was carried by my father into the land southward, even to the land of Zarahemla. The whole face of the land had become covered with buildings, and the people were as numerous almost, as it were the sand of the sea” (Mormon 1:6–7).

When I read those verses I picture an eleven-year-old being surprised by how much the land of Zarahemla had grown, but I do not detect that he was overwhelmed or that his reaction was dramatic. I could equally speculate that Mormon had visited the land before and therefore later noted how much it had grown since that time. Although I currently live in a metro area, when I return to the small town I lived in previously, I notice the growth and will often comment on the changes. It does not follow that I am overwhelmed or that my reactions are dramatic. Clearly the population growth of the land of Zarahemla was significant enough to mention. This fact might have served to set the stage for conditions Mormon writes about in the following verses: war began between the Nephites and the Lamanites, wickedness was prevalent enough for God to remove the Three Nephites, Mormon was not allowed to preach to the people because of their hardened hearts, the Gadianton robbers infested the land, and the “power of the evil one was wrought upon all the face of the land, even unto the fulfilling of all the words of Abinadi, and also Samuel the Lamanite” (Mormon 1:19; see vv. 8–18). Observing the teeming land of Zarahemla and perceiving the connection between it and the degradation of the Nephite society that followed seems appropriate for a young man who only one year earlier had been given the charge to “remember the things that ye have observed” and to “engrave on the plates of Nephi all the things that ye have observed concerning this people” (vv. 3–4). Mormon’s observations seem to me to have little to do with whether he was “raised in a small town, village, or on a plantation.” More likely his observations were influenced as Terryl Givens describes: “Much of the balance of the record, written mostly in the third person and mediated as it is by Mormon’s perspective from the

side of apocalyptic destruction rather than of hopeful exile, is marked by the somber lessons of lived history.”⁵

Schofield’s discussion of Mormon’s military career is another example of his unconvincing use of deductions and inferences. Mormon writes that he was only in his sixteenth year when he was appointed leader of the Nephite armies (see Mormon 2:1–2). Schofield notes, “The Nephites were not so reckless as to elect a military leader solely because he was large in stature. They had to see in Mormon numerous qualities that would fit him for high command. . . . Selected Nephite men, including Mormon, had to be trained during the four-year peace following the first series of battles” (pp. 43–44, 45). Schofield then conjectures that Mormon’s “intelligence and education would have enabled him to speak with clarity and act with confidence. His military training would have taught him enough to be sure of himself when dealing with military matters” (p. 48). A few pages later Schofield seems to contradict his earlier assertions when he calls Mormon an “inexperienced commander” and argues that it “would not be a surprise if Mormon had flaws in his leadership” (p. 49). Reading the same verses, I see no mention of military training. Could readers conclude that Mormon was born great, achieved greatness, or had greatness thrust upon him?⁶ Rather than gain skills through extensive training, which may have consisted of “hour after hour, day after day, and week after week learning and then sharpening their skills with the weapons with which they fought” (p. 45), Mormon may have succeeded as a military leader because he was endowed with other skills, such as “integrity and faithful independence,”⁷ “a strong body and a resolute spirit,”⁸ “compassion and charity,”⁹ and a divine calling to be in a position of leadership “for such a time as this” (see Esther 4:14). One can only wonder at the lasting influence the visit from Jesus Christ had upon Mormon’s leadership (see Mormon 1:15).

5. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon*, 53.

6. See William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, 2.5.145–46 (Riverside ed.).

7. Holland, “Mormon, Part 1,” 16.

8. Holland, “Mormon, Part 1,” 16.

9. Holzapfel, “Mormon, the Man and the Message,” 122.

However, scholarship from John A. Tvedtnes supports Schofield's conclusions, rather than my own. He writes:

[A student in my Book of Mormon class] suggested that Mormon, the father of the abridger of the Nephite record, was a professional soldier. As evidence, he noted that the younger Mormon was eleven years of age when his father took him into the "land southward" (Mormon 1:6) and that "in this year there began to be a war between the Nephites . . . and the Lamanites. . . . The war began to be among them in the borders of Zarahemla, by the waters of Sidon" (Mormon 1:8, 10). The family's departure into the war zone hints at a military transfer. In light of this possibility, I suggest that the historian/general/prophet Mormon was, in fact, from a line of army leaders who belonged to a military caste.¹⁰

Many of Schofield's speculations beg for more scholarly discussion. One example concerns the language on the plates. Schofield guesses that in order for Mormon to work with the plates of Nephi he had to have knowledge of Egyptian. "You can imagine that learning Egyptian with its unfamiliar characters and unfamiliar syntax would have driven the young Mormon to his studies day after day, month after month" (p. 21). Schofield also supposes "it is logical to assume that Ammaron was the tutor who taught that language to the young Mormon" (p. 21). Moroni summarizes the script used on the plates as "characters which are called among us the reformed Egyptian, being handed down and altered by us, according to our manner of speech" (Mormon 9:32).¹¹ The suggestion that Mormon had to know Egyptian

10. John A. Tvedtnes, "Tribal Affiliation and Military Castes," in *Warfare in the Book of Mormon*, ed. Stephen D. Ricks and William J. Hamblin (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1990), 317.

11. For more discussion on the language and writing of the Nephites and writing during the preexilic period (which would have been the type Lehi and Nephi took with them into the New World), see John Gee, "La Trahison des Clercs: On the Language and Translation of the Book of Mormon," review of *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon: Explorations in Critical Methodology*, by Brent Lee Metcalfe, *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 6/1 (1994): 51–120; Gee, "The Hagiography of Doubting Thomas," review of *Quest for the Gold Plates: Thomas Stuart Ferguson's Archaeological Search for the Book*

is not objectionable, but more discussion should be pursued. How well was this script known? Did only those who kept these particular records know it? Where and how Mormon learned to write reformed Egyptian script is uncertain. We do not know that Ammaron taught Mormon himself. Their association could have been several years or only enough time for Ammaron to be spiritually guided to Mormon and to watch or talk with him to “perceive that [he was] a sober child, and [was] quick to observe,” and then to conclude he was the designated custodian of the sacred Nephite records (Mormon 1:2). The Book of Mormon does not indicate how soon after Ammaron’s instructions to Mormon that Ammaron died. Since in most ancient cultures literacy is taught by father to son,¹² perhaps Mormon’s father taught him or caused him to be taught. But we just don’t know, because the record does not say.

Whatever language the Nephites spoke was probably an amalgam of Hebrew and the native languages of their region of the New World. Languages fuse and confuse over time.¹³ We see this natural process in the history of the English language. Although English has Germanic roots, through time it has absorbed words from Latin, Greek, French, and other languages; it continues to change. Moroni indicates that the Nephites’ “reformed Egyptian” script was “handed down” and “altered.” He does not indicate why or how or when they altered it, other than the fact that their spoken language influenced the changes. We have no reason to doubt that Mormon was able to read the script written on plates during Nephi’s time, just as many English speakers

of Mormon, by Stan Larson, *FARMS Review* 10/2 (1998): 158–83; Gee, “Epigraphic Considerations on Janne Sjodahl’s Experiment with Nephite Writing,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 10/1 (2001): 25; John S. Thompson, “Lehi and Egypt,” in *Glimpses of Lehi’s Jerusalem*, ed. John W. Welch, David Rolph Seely, and Jo Ann H. Seely (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2004), 259–76; John Gee, “Egyptian Society during the Twenty-sixth Dynasty,” in *Glimpses*, 277–98; Aaron P. Schade, “The Kingdom of Judah: Politics, Prophets, and Scribes in the Late Preexilic Period,” in *Glimpses*, 299–336; Brian D. Stubbs, “Looking Over vs. Overlooking Native American Languages: Let’s Void the Void,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 5/1 (1996): 1–49.

12. Personal communication with Egyptologist John Gee, 21 August 2007.

13. Most of the observations in this paragraph were brought up during my conversation with John Gee, 21 August 2007.

living in 2007 are able to read and understand the King James Version of the Bible or Shakespeare's plays and sonnets, written about 400 years ago. And many English students and scholars familiar with the Early Modern English of King James and Shakespeare can figure out Middle English words written a few centuries earlier than that.

The subtitle of Schofield's book, *Striking New Insights into the Life of Mormon and His Work*, refers to insights Schofield considers new, five of which he names in the book (pp. 5–7). These insights may best be described as personally striking to him because he mentions them broadly and does not explain them well enough for me to understand his meaning or adopt his enthusiasm. The book's cover and title page also feature the phrase "a dazzling spiritual treasure," which probably refers to the Book of Mormon. I was put off by the use of excessive adjectives elsewhere too: "breathtaking spiritual sensitivity" (p. ix), "brilliant creativity" (p. ix), and "incredibly perceptive Nephite prophets" (p. x). The book contains frequent flowery narrative, such as "You may be sure that Mormon . . . consistently went to his studies and tutors feeling anticipation, challenge, excitement, wonder, delight, and passion for learning. The exhilaration and near ecstasy of prized learning has a celestial quality that the studious young Mormon would have deeply felt" (pp. 22–23). Thankfully, this style dissipates in later chapters.

Elliott said of Ainsworth's work: "Perhaps because of the paucity of material available on the lives of Mormon and Moroni, most of this book deals with subjects other than these two men."¹⁴ Similarly, Schofield's book could have been a little less tangential (for example, he includes a chapter on King Benjamin, Abinadi, Alma, and the Savior, with the correlation that as compiler and abridger, Mormon was influenced by them and determined the content of their Book of Mormon accounts).

Schofield's final chapter is reminiscent of the message President Ezra Taft Benson often delivered about asking ourselves if we have taken the Book of Mormon too lightly. I found this chapter stirring, not because he mentioned anything new or thought provoking, but because I had just read Schofield's two hundred pages with Mormon

14. Elliott, "Discovering Mormon and Moroni," 2.

on my mind. Being an editor and writer myself, I considered Mormon's work as compiler and writer and wondered if he viewed the Book of Mormon as his magnum opus or as the culmination of his life's dedication to the care of a sacred record that would bless the lives of future generations. I envisioned him sorting through stacks of plates, writing, compiling, and selecting during the horrific years of degradation and destruction of a people who would not repent and be converted to the Lord Jesus Christ. But he persisted because he knew the purposes of the Lord would be fulfilled and the book would convert millions in a future day (see 3 Nephi 30:1–2; Mormon 5:9–14; 7:2–10). I wondered if I appreciate Mormon enough.

In an address given at a Brigham Young University nineteen-stake devotional in 1994, Elder Joe J. Christensen, then of the Presidency of the Seventy, spoke of a resolution to expand our intellectual horizons and increase in wisdom.

Suppose you were to read an entire book each week for the next seventy years. You would read 3,640 books. That sounds like a lot, but in the Library of Congress are more than 27,000,000 books. Futurist Alvin Toffler said that books are spewing from the world's presses at the rate of one thousand titles per day. That means that in seventy more years there will be an additional 25,000,000 volumes. Even if we read continually, we could not read more than the smallest fraction of the books in print. Therefore, we should not waste time reading anything that is not uplifting and instructive.¹⁵

I think about this advice almost every time I pick up a book. I thought about it after finishing Schofield's book, and I asked myself if reading his book was time well spent. Although I do not consider Schofield's book a "penetrating study," nor entertaining, I found it a biography meant to inspire and motivate readers to deepen their study of the Book of Mormon.

15. Joe J. Christensen, "Resolutions," *Ensign*, December 1994, 63. This address is also available in its entirety at speeches.byu.edu/reader/reader.php?id=7704&x=28&y=6 (accessed 16 August 2007).

THE LIGHT IS BETTER OVER HERE

Lawrence L. Poulsen

Review of V. Garth Norman. *Book of Mormon Geography—Mesoamerican Historic Geography*. American Fork, UT: ARCON/Ancient America Foundation, 2006. vii + 22 pp., with bibliography and map with gazetteer. \$22.00.

There is an old fable that recounts the story of someone coming upon a man busily studying the ground under a lamppost. He asked the man what he was looking for and offered to help. The man told him that he had lost his pocket watch and graciously accepted the offered help. After searching fruitlessly for some time, the helper asked the man, “Where did you lose the watch?” The man responded, “Over there,” indicating a location about fifteen feet away outside the pool of light shed by the streetlight. Aghast, the helper asked, “Why are you searching here by the lamppost instead of over there where you lost your pocket watch?” The man answered, “The light is better over here.”

Since the publication of John Lloyd Stephens’s book about his travels in Central America, archaeologists and anthropologists have been amassing a growing mountain of data about the Maya.¹ Until recently, most of this information was focused on the Classic Maya culture from AD 400 to 600. However, with the discovery of the Preclassic ruins at San Bartolo, there has been increased interest in the Preclassic period.

1. John L. Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1841).

Just as the lamp on the lamppost brightly illuminates the area around its base, all of this information brightly illuminates the nature of the Maya culture and the location of a multitude of Maya ruins and artifacts. With so much light shed on the Maya, it is difficult to resist searching among Maya ruins for signs of Book of Mormon culture. After all, “the light is better over here.” In other words, there is more data and information about the Maya, so let’s look here first.

Unfortunately, the location of Book of Mormon events is lost like the man’s pocket watch. And the authors of the Book of Mormon text, the men who could tell us where those events took place, are not readily available to enlighten us. All we have been told is that it was someplace on the American continent. The only source we have for exactly where is the text itself.

In the letter accompanying this thirty-page booklet and map, V. Garth Norman, the author, describes the booklet as an aid to stimulate reading of the Book of Mormon from “an archeological historic approach.” It contains an annotated gazetteer describing seventy-six Book of Mormon geographic features with the author’s proposed locations indicated on the accompanying map. For each feature, the gazetteer references applicable verses in the Book of Mormon text relevant to its location. It also gives the author’s reasons for each location’s placement on the map.

Based on the assumption that the Book of Mormon culture took place among the ancestral Maya, Norman has certainly packed a large amount of Maya-related data and history into his map and its accompanying descriptive gazetteer. In fact, there is so much information there that it would require an essay several times the length of the original publication to adequately cover all of the information presented. I will, however, limit this review to several of the points that I find problematic. Although Norman cites the Book of Mormon text in connection with each of his proposed locations, he freely admits that it is a work in progress and subject to modification and change with further research.

Some of the areas that I find problematic follow. In a brief description on the back of the map, Norman explains his methodology for

map construction. He defines directions as “north/south/east/west—literal planetary cardinal directions.” Unfortunately, this definition imposes a global geocentric definition of direction on the Book of Mormon text. Clearly this text was written by an ancient agrarian culture and ignores the original concept of direction prevalent in ancient cultures. A study of the origin of the modern word used to denote the cardinal direction east gives the following results:

English: “The etymology of *east* is from a Proto-Indo-European Language word for dawn. Cf. Latin *aurora* and Greek *eōs*.”²

Latin: *oriens* (stem *orient*) “rising, rising sun, east”; from *oriri* “to rise”³

A similar study of the words translated as “east” from native Mesoamerican languages gives:

Classic Maya: *hok' k'in* “sunrise, east” and **k'ah k'in* “sunset, west”⁴

Nahuatl: “As Nahuatl did not adopt Spanish terms for cardinal directions until the mid-seventeenth century, bills of sale initially used such indigenous phrases as *iquiçayampa tonatiuh itzticac*, ‘facing east [literally where the sun rises].”⁵

Quiche Maya: *relibal q'ij* (n) east (“its coming out sun”)⁶

The concept of direction in ancient cultures was centered on the movement of the sun, in particular its movement relative to the individual’s location. This is an anthropocentric rather than a geocentric view of direction. In other words, it is based on personal orientation rather than on contemporary global map orientation.

2. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East> (accessed 3 December 2007)

3. <http://www.freedict.com/onldict/at.html> (accessed 3 December 2007), s.v. “oriens.”

4. Brian Stross, “Classic Maya Directional Glyphs,” *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 1 (1991): 97.

5. Rebecca Horn, “Nahuatl and Spanish Sources for Coyoacan.” Available at <http://whp.uoregon.edu/Lockhart/Horn.pdf> (accessed 8 November 2008).

6. Allen J. Christenson, “K’iche’-English Dictionary,” s.v. “relibal q’ij.” Available at www.famsi.org/mayawriting/dictionary/christenson/index.html (accessed 8 November 2008).

well, a contradiction in his use of directions that he explains by saying this is required by the Book of Mormon.

The Book of Mormon tells the story of two civilizations, the Nephite/Lamanite civilization and the Jaredite civilization. Based on the anthropocentric view of directions, it is possible for these two different cultures to have had different concepts of the direction toward the various seas surrounding Mesoamerica than we currently have. The book of Ether offers no information on seas in the New World other than a reference (Ether 9:3) to a seashore located to the east of the Jaredite settlement area where it is recorded that the last battles occurred, this being the location of the Hill Ramah (known as Cumorah by the Nephites). Here again, Norman locates the Hill Cumorah at Tres Zapotes (a site where ruins have been found) rather than further north where the Gulf coast is actually located to the east. Recent publications about the Tamtoc ruins found in eastern San Luis Potosi indicate that an Olmec-like culture existed in this area about 2000 BC with a written language differing from those found further south. Although this culture is designated “Olmec-like,” there is still some question as to whether it was part of the same culture found in eastern Veracruz.⁸ Based on the text of the book of Ether, I find this to be a much better location for the Jaredite culture and the Hill Ramah. This would make the Gulf of Mexico the east sea of the Jaredite culture but not the east sea of the Nephite-Lamanite culture.

Norman dismisses the Grijalva River as the river Sidon on the basis of a lack of any significant ruins that could be identified with the city of Zarahemla and problems with John L. Sorenson’s view of directions (p. 15). The seeming lack of an identifiable ruin for the city of Zarahemla is also applicable to Norman’s model. Although he places the city in the locality of Palenque, he writes, “Classic Palenque is not Zarahemla, but Late Preclassic ceramics in the region with unexcavated large mound sites qualifies” (p. 21). Although the site at Santa Rosa lacked imposing ruins, the two-colored nature of the excavated floor might suggest the possibility of a relationship with the Book of

8. “Mexican monolith could change history,” found at <http://ancientx.com/nm/anmviewer.asp?a=81&z=1> (accessed 3 December 2007).

Mormon city of Zarahemla. There are at least four geographic features that identify the location of the city of Zarahemla: (1) it is north of the head of the river Sidon and the narrow strip of wilderness, (2) it is on or near the west bank of the river Sidon, (3) it is south and east of the wilderness of Hermounts, and (4) it is south of the narrow neck.

The description of the narrow strip of wilderness in Alma 22:27 includes the phrase “by the head of the river Sidon, running from the east towards the west.” Norman identifies two rivers that form part of the Guatemala-Mexico border and that have headwaters in the Cuchumatán mountains as the narrow strip of wilderness. A ridge similar to the Continental Divide results in one of the headwaters running from east to west and the other running from west to east. Both rivers exit the mountain range to the north. Norman and others favoring the Usamacinta as the river Sidon, whose headwaters run from west to east, choose to either ignore this phrase or claim that the phrase is a redundant description of the mountain range. On the other hand, as pointed out by Patrick L. Simiskey,⁹ correct English parsing of the citation shows this phrase to be a modifier of the noun *river Sidon*. Assuming the parsing is correct, then the river Sidon is identified as the Grijalva River, and Zarahemla must be located in the highlands somewhere between the narrow strip of wilderness and the wilderness of Hermounts.

Norman and most advocates of a limited geography identify the Isthmus of Tehuantepec with the narrow neck spoken of in the Book of Mormon. The eastern edge of the passage through the Isthmus of Tehuantepec is formed by an uninhabited mountain wilderness. This wilderness is sparsely inhabited even now. Melesio Ortega Martínez, in his *Reseña Histórico de Tehuantepec*, recounts the origin of the word *Tehuantepec*.¹⁰ It is derived from the Nahuatl words *tecuaní* and *tepec*. *Tecuaní* has the meaning of “wild beast,” and *tepec* translates as “hill.” According to the Nahuatl dictionary, *tecuaní* also means “man-eating

9. Patrick L. Simiskey, *The Zarahemla Puzzle*, vol. 1, *A Study in Nephite Geography* (Decorah, IA: Amundsen Publishing, 2002), 169–70.

10. Melesio Ortega Martínez, *Reseña Histórico de Tehuantepec* (Oaxaca, Mexico: H. Ayuntamiento Constitucional de Tehuantepec, 1998), 5.

beast.” The composite has the meaning “Hill of the Fierce Beasts.” Alma 2:36–38 describes the fate of a Lamanite army after its defeat by the Nephites:

And they fled before the Nephites towards the wilderness which was west and north, away beyond the borders of the land; and the Nephites did pursue them with their might, and did slay them. Yea, they were met on every hand, and slain and driven, until they were scattered on the west, and on the north, until they had reached the wilderness, which was called Hermounts; and it was that part of the wilderness which was infested by wild and ravenous beasts. And it came to pass that many died in the wilderness of their wounds, and were devoured by those beasts and also the vultures of the air; and their bones have been found, and have been heaped up on the earth.

The almost exact correlation in meaning for *Tehuantepec* and *Hermounts* suggests that the wilderness of Tehuantepec is an ideal candidate for the Book of Mormon wilderness of Hermounts. A line drawn from this wilderness to the headwaters of the Grijalva River intersects with the Grijalva River near the ruins of Santa Rosa and never comes near the Usamacinta River except at its headwaters. The probable identification of Tehuantepec with Hermounts gives strong support to Sorenson’s identification of the Grijalva River as the Book of Mormon river Sidon.¹¹

Figure 2 depicts the relationship between the borders of the Nephite quarters and a pathway between the center of the land and Hermounts (based on a three-dimensional view of the Grijalva basin using Google Earth).

Over twenty years ago, Sorenson carefully documented the textual, geographical, and anthropological data that supported his conclusion that the Nephite culture was located in the Chiapas highlands

11. See John L. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985), 33–36.

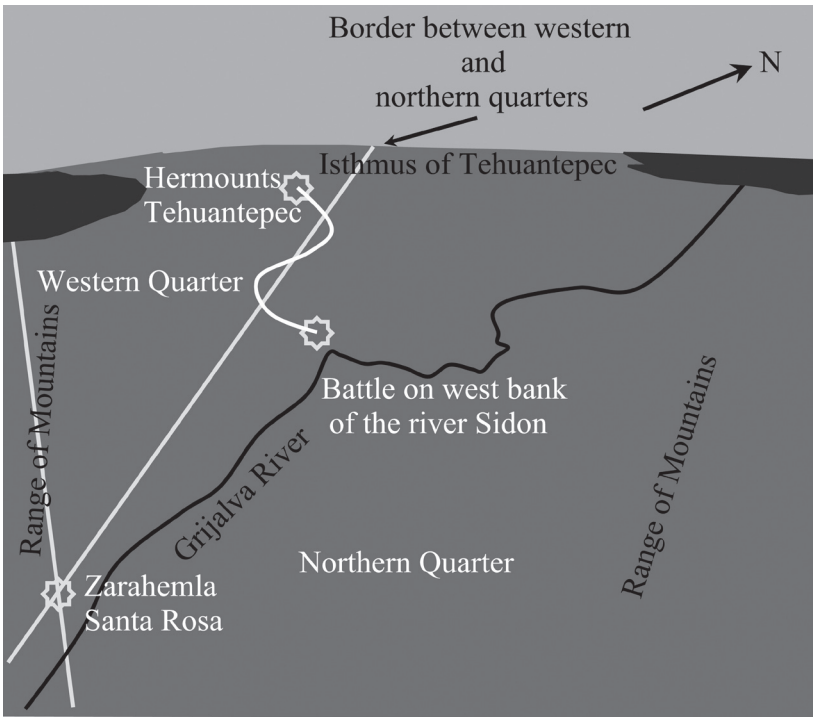


Fig. 2. Grijalva River basin with proposed Book of Mormon geographical correlations. Courtesy of the author.

and not in the Maya lowlands.¹² Since then, Norman and others have discounted his conclusions and continued attempting to equate the Nephites with the Maya in the lowlands. They often use the review of John Lloyd Stephens's discovery and description of the Maya ruins in Guatemala and eastern Mexico published in the *Times and Seasons* as support for this conclusion.¹³ They mistakenly attribute this review to Joseph Smith, although it is unlikely that he wrote it, because he was in hiding, as reported in the same issue. John Taylor probably wrote it.¹⁴

Norman's conclusions about the relationship of Nahuatl place-names with Hebrew and biblical place-names are in most cases a

12. See, for example, Sorenson, *Ancient American Setting*, 33–38, 41–42, 342–43.

13. "Zarahemla," *Times and Seasons* 3/22 (1 October 1842): 927–28.

14. See Matthew Roper, "Limited Geography and the Book of Mormon: Historical Antecedents and Early Interpretations," *FARMS Review* 16/2 (2004): 243–48.

stretch, and in the case of Tehuantepec, they are completely erroneous (see the above definition of *Tehuantepec*). Norman claims to derive it from *tehuan* rather than *tecuani*. In addition, Robert M. Carmack has used the Popul Vuh and other historical documents to show that Nahuatl arrived in the Maya lowlands no earlier than AD 800, well after the demise of the Nephite culture.¹⁵ Although it was customary for surviving cultures to gloss geographic features with names from their own language having similar meanings to an earlier name, Norman's attempt to equate this word with a Hebrew place-name is highly unlikely in light of the known derivation of the word.

These problematic areas in Norman's publication suggest that perhaps he, like the man who lost his watch, is looking in the wrong place merely because "the light is better over here."

Norman suggests that we use his map as a jumping-off point for further conversations about the Book of Mormon. I agree, but in doing so we should be careful not to take everything he says as proof that his views are correct; but if we are to better understand the geography of the Book of Mormon, we should examine multiple models including this one and compare them to the text. As John Clark has admonished, we should take care to ask the right questions and make the right assumptions.¹⁶

15. Robert M. Carmack, *The Quiché Mayas of Utatlán: The Evolution of a Highland Guatemala Kingdom* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1981), 45, 128.

16. See John Clark, "A Key for Evaluating Nephite Geographies," *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 1 (1989): 20–70; see especially 20–22.

PRESERVING AND ENLARGING THE MEMORY OF THE SAINTS

Louis Midgley

Remembering

In 1983, when my attention was first drawn to Yosef Yerushalmi's remarkable study of Jewish history and memory¹ and then to the careful examination of memory in ancient Israel,² I uncovered a similar and related pattern in the Book of Mormon. I was elated by this and closely related discoveries. I was delighted to see the subtle and complex way in which remembrance was linked with covenants, with blessings for obedience, and also with the very survival of the covenant people of God, as well as with the dire consequences of forgetfulness, rebellion, and failure to honor our covenants.

I felt a certain joy upon finding something in the Book of Mormon that I had not previously noticed. The ways of remembrance had been hidden right before my eyes. I even imagined that I might have been the first Latter-day Saint to notice the central role of remembrance in the Book of Mormon. Although, as I now believe, I was probably not the first, my passion has not diminished for this crucial element in our scriptures, ancient and modern. It is also a central, though not always

1. Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, originally published in 1982 by the University of Washington Press and subsequently revised and republished twice. See the discussion of this book in the Book Notes section of this number of the *Review*.

2. See especially Brevard S. Childs, *Memory and Tradition in Israel* (London: SCM Press, 1962). There are many publications dealing with memory, identity, and history.

fully appreciated or understood, element in our communal worship—that is, in the renewal of our covenant with God (see Moroni 4–5; Doctrine and Covenants 20:77, 79).

In 1984 Gary Novak and I fashioned an essay entitled “Remembrance and the Past: Jewish and Mormon Memory and the New History,” which Novak read at the Mormon History Association meeting that year. In this essay we tried, among other things, to call the attention of those interested in the Mormon past to the cautionary tale told by Yerushalmi about the impact on Jewish identity of the revived interest in the Jewish past—an interest that is now driven by motivations other than merely preserving the memory and fidelity of the Jewish people. We discovered that our project was overly ambitious; we had addressed far too many issues, and we also managed to ruffle some feathers. Our endeavors, for various reasons, were ridiculed, and our paper was never published. I was not deterred.

I have striven to draw attention to what I call the “ways of remembrance” and also to the dire consequences of forgetfulness for the covenant people of God. In addition, I have argued that the Saints live both by and in stories and not by creeds or carefully worked-out theology, either systematic or dogmatic.³ I have, with my colleagues, attempted to examine in detail these and related topics in previous essays published in the *FARMS Review*.

A New Zeal and Passion for the Ways of Remembrance

It very much pleases me that others have discovered and made much of the ways of remembrance. In this number of the *Review* we have brought together four essays on the ways of remembrance. I have already mentioned one of these—Novak’s and my “Remembrance and the Past,” now edited and published for the first time. We are also pleased to republish in a slightly edited form a fine address given by James Faulconer in which he describes his own encounter with the

3. See, for example, Louis Midgley, “Two Stories—One Faith,” *FARMS Review* 19/1 (2007): 55–79.

ways of remembrance and his sense of the importance and dynamics of memory in grounding the faith of the Saints.

In the April 2007 General Conference held in the Salt Lake Tabernacle (for the rededication of that wonderful building), Elder Marlin K. Jensen of the Seventy delivered a powerful sermon entitled “Remember and Perish Not,”⁴ in which he urged the Saints to pay close attention to the ways of remembrance in our scriptures. He also linked the scriptural injunctions and warnings about remembrance to our efforts to write and preserve the history of the Church of Jesus Christ. Subsequently, Elder Jensen, who is currently Church historian and recorder, has spelled out what he and his associates see as the scriptural mandate grounding the massive efforts supervised by the Church historian.⁵

Elder Jensen has been asked, “What is the purpose of recording and teaching Church history?” His response is instructive:

The primary purpose of Church history is to help Church members build faith in Jesus Christ and keep their sacred covenants. In fulfilling this purpose, we are guided by three main considerations:

First, we seek to bear witness of and *defend* the foundational truths of the Restoration.

Second, we desire to help Church members *remember* the great things God has done for His children.

Third, we have a scriptural charge to help *preserve* the revealed order of the kingdom of God.⁶

We have also included in this number of the *Review* an essay by Steven Olsen entitled “The Theology of Memory.” Olsen, who is

4. Marlin K. Jensen, “Remember and Perish Not,” *Ensign*, May 2007, 36–38. Others have taken up some of these matters. See, for example, Henry B. Eyring’s address at the October 2007 General Conference entitled “O Remember, Remember,” *Ensign*, November 2007, 66–69.

5. See Marlin K. Jensen, “There Shall Be a Record Kept among You,” *Ensign*, December 2007, 28–33. For an even more detailed account, see Marlin K. Jensen and David F. Boone, “A Historian by Yearning: A Conversation with Elder Marlin K. Jensen,” *Religious Educator* 8/3 (2007): 1–13.

6. Jensen, “There Shall Be a Record Kept among You,” 28–29, emphasis added.

Elder Jensen's assistant, elaborates on the themes mentioned in the two interviews cited above.⁷ In addition, we have included an essay by John Murphy in which he deals with the ways of remembrance and the role of the archivist in preserving the record of the past—something he describes as “a sacred commission.” The essays by Olsen and Murphy should be read in conjunction with the two interviews with Elder Jensen.

It should also be noted that Elder Jensen's summary of the scriptural mandate for the massive effort to record and preserve the written and artifactual remnants, as well as the understanding of the Mormon past, includes the key words *defend*, *remember*, and *preserve*. I am pleased to be associated with those at the Maxwell Institute who see each of these as vital to building the kingdom. What we now call the *FARMS Review* has been, since its modest beginnings nearly two decades ago, a prime vehicle for defending the faith and preserving the history and memory of the restoration. This it does by, among other things, providing detailed, refined, and accurate versions of the truly remarkable and wonderful story that constitutes the shared ground and content for Latter-day Saint faith in Jesus of Nazareth as Messiah or Christ, and hence Redeemer of otherwise lost souls.

7. Steven Olsen and Elder Jensen addressed these issues in detail at the 2007 meeting of the Mormon History Association, held in Salt Lake City on 24–27 May.

THE THEOLOGY OF MEMORY: MORMON HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Steven L. Olsen

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was formally organized in upstate New York on April 6, 1830. On that day, the founding prophet, Joseph Smith, received a revelation that inaugurated the church's ambitious enterprise to preserve records of enduring historical value. Simply and without equivocation, this revelation addressed the youthful religious leader, "Behold, there shall be a record kept among you; and in it thou shalt be called a seer, a translator, a prophet, an apostle of Jesus Christ, an elder of the church" (Doctrine and Covenants 21:1). This and subsequent revelations clarified the types of records the church was to preserve and for what purposes.

A later revelation appointed John Whitmer, who had been one of the eight special witnesses to the Book of Mormon, to be the second church historian and recorder (D&C 47:1–3). Eight months after receiving this divine calling, Whitmer was given his principal charge: "Let my servant John Whitmer travel many times from place to place, and from church to church, that he may the more easily obtain knowledge—preaching and expounding, writing, copying, selecting, and obtaining all things which shall be for the good of the church, and for the rising generations that shall grow up on the land of Zion," meaning wherever the church was formally organized (D&C 69:7–8).

This paper was originally presented as a lecture at the Museum of Natural History, University of Utah, on 13 March 2004.

A survey of Latter-day Saint scriptures suggests four primary purposes for keeping and using historical records: (1) to testify to the truth of the restoration of the gospel as effected by Joseph Smith and subsequent church leaders, (2) to help preserve the revealed order of the church, (3) to formally remember the great things that God has done for his children, and (4) to extend the blessings of salvation to all of God's children. While the church allows its historical records to be used for academic, pragmatic, personal, and other comparable purposes, the central justification for its extensive historical enterprise is spiritual.

The office of church historian and recorder was one of the first offices to be formally defined in the newly restored church. The office has remained a key position in the church's administrative hierarchy until the present. Nearly all church historians have been General Authorities, members of governing ecclesiastical councils in the church. As the church has grown, so have the responsibilities of this office. Eventually the staff of the church historian's office was organized into an administrative department at church headquarters. The Family and Church History Department currently has several hundred full- and part-time employees and a few thousand additional full- and part-time volunteers. They are involved in a variety of professional services, including acquisitions, collections management, research and exhibition, preservation, product development, and patron service.

The Family and Church History Department consists of several complementary institutions. These include the Church History Library and Archives, currently located in the four floors of the east wing of the Church Office Building; the Museum of Church History and Art and the Family History Library, located on the block just west of Temple Square; the Granite Mountain Records Vault, located in Little Cottonwood Canyon in south Salt Lake Valley; some 4,200 family history centers located nearly everywhere the church is formally organized; approximately four dozen architecturally distinctive historic landmarks that serve as operating temples, tabernacles, and meeting-houses, located mostly in North America; two dozen restored historic

sites and site complexes that document church origins in the United States; and hundreds of historic markers throughout North America and elsewhere. Except for the Granite Mountain Records Vault, which is closed to the public, these various facilities accommodate several million visitors and patrons annually. In addition, the Family and Church History Department constitutes a major private repository of historical materials. Permanent collections include nearly 300,000 publications (e.g., books, pamphlets, magazines, newspapers, maps), 30,000 audiovisual materials (e.g., films, videos, audiotapes), 3.5 million manuscripts (e.g., letters, diaries, official church records), more than 100,000 historic photographs in all media, 5,000 oral histories, more than 60,000 artifacts, 7,500 works of art in all media, 2.5 million rolls of microfilm, and 670,000 microfiche. These numbers are exclusive of historical collections at the 4,200 family history centers.

It is not a trivial question to consider of what necessity such an ambitious historical enterprise is to the church. Why should a vibrant and deep-seated historical consciousness be so essential to Latter-day Saints? From the perspective of my formal training in cultural anthropology and my quarter-century career working in the Family and Church History Department, may I speculate on this seeming necessity? I suggest two key reasons why the church's historical enterprise is central to Mormon religious identity.

1. *The nature of Latter-day Saint theology.* The belief systems of many Christian denominations are expressed in formal terms, that is, as logical deductions from metaphysical or supernatural premises that are organized more or less in a systematic manner. By contrast, the core religious beliefs of Latter-day Saints derive largely from spiritual experiences and are expressed in narrative terms. That is, Latter-day Saint theology is more experiential than propositional. For example, the church's standard works—consisting of the Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price—are structured largely as historical narratives, or they have clear and direct reference to historical events and contexts. In addition, personal testimonies of individual Latter-day Saints are often expressed as spiritual experiences or events, and moral, ethical, and doctrinal

principles are often taught by actual or metaphorical examples. This experiential basis of Latter-day Saint doctrine has more than heuristic or pedagogical value. Rather, it seems to partake of the very essence of Latter-day Saint identity.

This is not to say, as some have suggested, that Mormonism is fundamentally anti-intellectual and has not produced profound religious thinkers. Nor does this point of view necessarily engender pessimism about the future of Latter-day Saint thought, as has been expressed by such notables as Thomas O’Dea and Mark Leone.¹ However, this perspective does acknowledge that Latter-day Saint truth claims result more from spiritual experiences than from logical inferences, reasoned abstractions, or other formal philosophical or rational processes. Such confirming experiences for Latter-day Saints occur in real time and real space, with real people, often in response to real circumstances, which have the effect of influencing all dimensions of a person’s consciousness (see D&C 8:2).

For Latter-day Saints, the process of getting to know God—the ultimate goal of theology and the essence of the concept of eternal life (see John 17:3)—is similar to that of getting to know an earthly loved one: a process contingent upon a lifetime of experiences that are motivated by devotion, tempered by service, and refined by reflection. While much about intimate human relations can be abstracted into thought or speech, these abstractions can neither perfectly and totally comprehend nor substitute for the complexities or the rewards of personal experiences and interpersonal relationships. In short, the theological process in Mormonism is at least as relational as it is rational.

From this perspective, religious beliefs cannot be separated from genuine experiences, and genuine experiences are rarely devoid of spiritual significance. The traditional dichotomy between history and doctrine is ultimately an artificial and unsatisfactory construct in Latter-day Saint thought. The eminent historian of religion Martin Marty addressed this point when he traced its ultimate truth claims

1. Thomas F. O’Dea, *The Mormons* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 224–42; Mark P. Leone, *Roots of Modern Mormonism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), 167–93.

to two experiences: Joseph Smith's first vision and the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. Said he:

If the beginning of the promenade of Mormon history, the First Vision and the Book of Mormon, can survive the [historiographical] crisis, then the rest of the promenade follows and nothing that happens in it can really detract from the miracle of the whole. If the first steps do not survive, there can be only antiquarian, not fateful or faith-full interest in the rest of the story.²

For Latter-day Saints, the occurrence of the first vision is both chronologically and logically prior to any particular doctrinal significance that is ascribed to this event.

Leone correctly observes that Mormon thought has a great deal of flexibility, but he incorrectly concludes that it is therefore a “do-it-yourself” theology.³ Its rigor, which escaped Leone's notice, is in its experiential foundations. Latter-day Saints can have personal beliefs that vary quite widely about particular points of doctrine, as long as they hold fast to the experiential foundations of the faith.

Hence, a keen historical consciousness is essential to a proper appreciation of the faith's moral, ethical, theological, and metaphysical beliefs. Such tangible, empirical, and intimate dimensions of faith are essential for a religion that claims that God is a distinct physical being, that mankind are his spiritual offspring, that spirits consist of a rarefied matter, that individual human consciousness existed long before birth and will continue forever after death, that the true history of the earth is the unfolding of God's plan of salvation, and that earth will eventually become a heaven for those worthy to live with their loved ones in the literal presence of God. The ambitious historical enterprise of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints can be best appreciated within this context of an experiential theology.

2. Martin E. Marty, “Two Integrities: An Address to the Crisis in Mormon Historiography,” *Journal of Mormon History* 10 (1983): 9.

3. Leone, *Roots of Modern Mormonism*, 7.

2. *The nature of Latter-day Saint covenants.* For Latter-day Saints, covenants are the foundation of eternal relationships with God and with beloved family members. Covenants are established by means of sacred rituals that are performed by authorized priesthood officials. Covenants have associated with them specific codes of conduct. Those who live faithful to their covenants are promised blessings that approximate the glorious conditions of heaven. Those who willfully reject their covenants, once made, are threatened with dire spiritual consequences.

The covenant I wish to address on this occasion is that of formally becoming a member of the church. The rituals of baptism and confirmation symbolize the spiritual rebirth of individuals and their purification from sin as they take upon them the name of Jesus Christ and promise to remember him and keep his commandments. In turn, baptismal candidates receive the promise of the continuing influence of the Holy Spirit.

The details of this covenant are expressed not so much in the contents of baptism and confirmation per se, but in the weekly renewal of this covenant in another ritual called the sacrament, or communion as it is generally known in Christianity. The sacrament is the centerpiece of the Sunday worship services of the Latter-day Saints. In it the emblems of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ are blessed and distributed to the faithful. The prayers that consecrate the emblems of the sacrament are two of only three fixed prayers in Latter-day Saint public worship. The other is that of baptism. Reinforcing the crucial nature of their wording, the sacramental prayers are specifically defined in two separate scriptures, once in the Book of Mormon and another time in the Doctrine and Covenants (Moroni 4:3; 5:2; D&C 20:77, 79). In both sacramental prayers, the covenantal obligations of the faithful are summarized in the verbs *witness* and *remember*. As an essential tenet of church membership, Latter-day Saints are expected to remember and to witness to certain essential truths.

The spiritual imperative for Latter-day Saints to remember is not confined to the sacramental prayers. In the Book of Mormon, for example, the verb *remember* and its various cognates appear more

than two hundred times, making remembering one of the most frequently repeated messages in this “keystone” of Latter-day Saint faith. Furthermore, in most instances, the message to remember appears as a spiritual imperative, as in the plea “remember, and perish not” (Mosiah 4:30).

Similarly, the importance of witnessing finds numerous applications in the standard works. Most often, witnesses are selected *people* who, because of their unique relationship to a gospel truth, can testify to the world of its eternal veracity. But the law of witnesses is not restricted to the oral or written testimony of holy men and women. Latter-day Saint scriptures are replete with examples of *places* or *things* that serve as physical, tangible witnesses of spiritual experiences or other divine realities. Finally, historical *events* often serve as witnesses of sacred truths, as in the following example from a revelation that is generally considered a kind of constitution for the church.

Section 20 of the Doctrine and Covenants defines basic organizational structures, operational processes, and spiritual principles for the church. In the formal introduction to this revelation, Jesus Christ accepts the church and Joseph Smith as its leader. The revelation then makes reference to two key historical events—the first vision and the emergence of the Book of Mormon—that prepared Joseph Smith to assume his duties as prophet (D&C 20:5–12). The introduction concludes in terms reminiscent of other church covenants: “Therefore, having so great witnesses, by them shall the world be judged, even as many as shall hereafter come to a knowledge of this work. And those who receive it in faith, and work righteousness, shall receive a crown of eternal life; but those who harden their hearts in unbelief, and reject it, it shall turn to their own condemnation” (vv. 13–15). This passage suggests that the founding of the church was signaled by certain historical events that serve collectively as a witness to the world of the central message of this religion, namely that the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ is once again upon the earth and that the church serves as a means by which all people can avail themselves of its blessings. Historic sites, historical collections, museum exhibitions, and other historical resources and products of the church serve as a witness in

all three senses—human, material, and experiential—and preserve an institutional memory of those things that are central to the church’s spiritual mission.

I conclude with some reflections on the role of memory in defining the historical beginning and central truth claims of the church, namely, Joseph Smith’s first vision. These reflections address the theology of memory on two levels: the individual memory of Joseph Smith regarding this defining event in his life and the symbolic significance of this event in defining the religious identity of the Latter-day Saints.

Joseph Smith’s first vision occurred in a grove of trees on the family farm in Manchester Township, New York, in the early spring of 1820. Four separate firsthand accounts of this experience were written or dictated by the Prophet between 1832 and 1843, and several other secondhand accounts exist, written by Joseph’s contemporaries and based on his oral testimony. These various accounts are remarkably similar, given the differences in time, place, and context in which they were given. These accounts also differ from one another in significant ways. I wish to compare briefly two of the firsthand accounts, the first one in 1832 and the one he wrote six years later, which is the only account of this experience accepted as scripture by the Latter-day Saints.

Contemporary learning theory acknowledges that what and how we learn from life’s experiences depend upon several factors, including our personal, social, physical, and temporal contexts. That is, learning is not an abstract intellectual activity. It is a complex process by which our consciousness—including our memory, our character, and our worldview—is constructed. Personal expectations and backgrounds, social relationships, environmental conditions, and subsequent experiences all play important roles in defining how we remember and interpret our experiences.

What does this have to do with Joseph Smith’s first vision? In 1832, when Joseph wrote his first known account, he seems to have been concerned primarily with personal redemption, because the message from the heavenly messenger to him at that time was that his sins had

been forgiven him. Furthermore, much of the literary structure of this initial account is reminiscent of conversion narratives of many other New Englanders who were influenced by the religious fervor of the “Burned Over District.”⁴

By the time that he dictated what became the official account of the first vision some six years later, Joseph Smith had received most of the major revelations that would eventually be published in his lifetime. These greatly expanded his understanding of his own prophetic mission, the divine destiny of the church he had founded, the plan of salvation, and the nature of God. As a result, he had come to understand the first vision within this more expansive religious context. Hence the 1838 account not only emphasizes Joseph’s personal struggle for his soul but also becomes an authoritative narrative of the historical beginnings, the doctrinal foundations, and, at a symbolic level, the spiritual destiny of the church. So what is the point? Additional experiences and more mature reflections after 1832 helped Joseph Smith to remember details and express the meaning of the 1820 vision in more profound terms in 1838 than he could have possibly done in 1820 or even 1832.

The first vision also operates within the collective memory of the Latter-day Saints. On this grander stage, the first vision is no longer purely a historical event or an isolated spiritual experience. It has become a spiritual archetype, or model for the identity and behavior of a body of believers that transcends time, space, and cultural boundaries. This sacred story provides a spiritual paradigm for individual conversion, resistance to temptation, persistence in prayer, study of the scriptures, and similar processes that govern the religious lives of Latter-day Saints. The archetypal significance of the first vision was not immediately apparent for the Latter-day Saints. However, once it was canonized in 1880 as a portion of the Pearl of Great Price, it received the authoritative status to become, eventually, a foundational sacred story for the Latter-day Saints.

4. Neal E. Lambert and Richard H. Cracroft, “Literary Form and Historical Understanding: Joseph Smith’s First Vision,” *Journal of Mormon History* 7 (1980): 31–42.

In conclusion, I would like to address the process by which memories seem to be made and refined within these spiritual contexts, at both the individual and collective levels.⁵ Memories are generated from a person's experiencing some kind of event. That event becomes a meaningful experience as it is interpreted within the individual's consciousness. The interpretation of experience is based on four distinct but interrelated contexts. The personal context of interpretation reflects the particular background, interests, and expectations of the individual. In a word, the personal context for learning recognizes that the old adage "seeing is believing" is equally valid in the reverse, "believing is seeing." There is at least a dynamic interplay between perception and conception in the process of interpreting experiences. The social context of the making of meaning considers the influence of a person's interpersonal relationships. Family, friends, colleagues, and other associates all influence how a person interprets life's experiences. The physical setting is a third dimension of the learning process: What else was going on at the time of the initial experience? Were there distractions? How familiar were the surroundings? The more unfamiliar or novel elements of the setting will likely be those that are the least memorable, at least initially and without some kind of subsequent reinforcement. Finally, the temporal context of our memory acknowledges that the meaning of experiences is transformed, refined, erased, or, in some cases, re-created by subsequent experiences and reflections. The meaning of a profound or life-changing experience is rarely if ever fully comprehended at once.

From this perspective, it is not surprising that the memory of spiritual experiences is complex, elusive, even ineffable. Nevertheless, for the Latter-day Saints, the spiritual experiences that define their individual and collective lives are hardly ever exclusively intrapersonal. Hence, church members are counseled to share them with one another, where appropriate, in oral and written forms—in testimony meetings, in gospel discussions, in journals and family histories, and so on. And the church devotes considerable resources to preserve in

5. John H. Falk and Lynn D. Dierking, *Learning from Museums: Visitor Experiences and the Making of Meaning* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2000).

perpetuity the memories of those actual, real-life experiences in written, material, electronic, and other media “for the good of the church, and for the rising generations” (D&C 69:8).

REMEMBRANCE AND THE PAST

Gary Novak and Louis Midgley

And I exhort you to remember these things. . . .

Moroni 10:27¹

This essay was drafted in 1984 after a chance reading of a book review² that called our attention to Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi's account of the role of memory in Jewish identity.³ He contrasted the ancient passion for remembering God's mighty acts, as well as the dire consequences of turning away from the covenants that had framed Jewish identity, with the recent withering, under the impact of modernity, of the traditional and often quite lachrymose Jewish understanding of their past. What has replaced this older understanding of the past is a flowering of Jewish historiography. This new Jewish history is primarily produced under the standards of Enlightenment skepticism of divine things. It manifests a mere curiosity about the variety and details of Jewish culture and has assisted the subsequent decline in authentic religiosity. We believe that the tale told by Yerushalmi provides a caution for Latter-day Saints as we attempt as

1. See Alma 37:8; compare 3 Nephi 29:3; Moroni 4:3; 5:2; Doctrine and Covenants 20:77, 79.

2. David Singer, "Testimony," review of *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, by Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Commentary* 76/1 (1983): 72–75.

3. See Yosef H. Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982). This volume was translated into a number of languages and then issued as a paperback (Schocken Books, 1989) with a new preface and postscript by the author and also a foreword by Harold Bloom.

best we can to tell our own story. In addition, Yerushalmi's attention to the role of remembrance in the faith of ancient Israel has alerted us to the identical dynamic in the Book of Mormon, where covenants and their renewals, as well as faith itself, are bound up with remembrance of the mighty redeeming acts of God and hence also with the hope for a future beyond the present wilderness in which we now sojourn here below. In this essay we examine the relationship Yerushalmi sets out between the distinctive Jewish history and Jewish memory. How has Jewish memory and identity been formed and preserved and eventually transformed? We believe that memory of a portion of the past is crucial to being the covenant people. We strive to uncover parallels between ancient Israel and the latter-day "New Israel." We believe there are crucial lessons for Latter-day Saints in the Jewish experience with the past.

According to Yosef Yerushalmi, it has been difficult to reconstruct more than a basic outline of Jewish history from the destruction of the Second Temple in AD 70 to about 1700, and especially in the talmudic period.⁴ Why? From the end of the Jewish canon until recently, there were virtually no Jewish historians and virtually no historiography. The identity of the Jews did not depend upon "ordinary history," but upon a literature that evoked the mighty acts of God and the sufferings of rebellious Israel, which served as reminders of the mercy of God, who remembers the covenant people in their troubles if they will only remember him and forsake their sins. Hence, without historians, Jews still managed to retain an identity by relying primarily upon biblical accounts.

"The Jews . . . have the reputation of being at once the most historically oriented of peoples and as possessing the longest and most tenacious of memories."⁵ Their sacred texts have something to do with their persistence as a people. Those who once thought of themselves

4. Between 1706 and 1711 Jacques Basnage, a French Huguenot who lived in Holland, produced a seven-volume history of the Jews, a story that had virtually ceased to be told after the time of Josephus. Expanded to fifteen volumes between 1716 and 1721, Basnage's history provided the foundation for later Jewish historical work. Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, 81.

5. Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, xxxiii.

as covenant people did not approach the past with mere curiosity, but with profound passion; they placed God at the center of their story. In their record of encounters by seers and prophets with divine things, the biblical texts describe the mighty acts of God and tell of covenants made by man with God. They also render with striking candor the sinful rebellion and subsequent bondage of the covenant people.

“It was ancient Israel that first assigned a decisive significance to history and thus forged a new world-view whose essential premises were eventually appropriated by Christianity and Islam as well.”⁶ “If Herodotus was the father of history, the fathers of meaning in history were the Jews.”⁷ Yerushalmi has shown that “although Judaism throughout the ages was absorbed with the meaning of history, historiography itself played at best an ancillary role among the Jews, and often no role at all; and, concomitantly, that while memory of the past was always a central component of Jewish experience, the historian was not its primary custodian.”⁸

Yerushalmi shows that remembrance of the crucial words and deeds of the past, including especially the mighty acts of God, and the repentance that sometimes followed disobedience to the covenants formed the substance of the Jewish memory. God had promised to remember Israel, and Israel was commanded to keep in remembrance certain things. To forget these things was to cease to be the covenant people. But the demand that Israel remember “has little to do with curiosity about the past. Israel is told only that it must be a kingdom of priests and a holy people; nowhere is it suggested that it become a nation of historians,” as we now tend to understand history. Why? “Memory is, by its nature, selective, and the demand that Israel remember is no exception.”⁹ Jewish memory was thus regulated by a principle of selection that “is unique unto itself.” It is God’s mighty acts in history and man’s responses to these that must be placed and kept in memory.¹⁰

6. Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, 8.

7. Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, 8.

8. Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, xxxiii.

9. Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, 10.

10. Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, 11.

Remembrance is meant to teach and warn Israel and not to inflate individual reputations or national pride, for the people of God need to know how they came to be chosen; how they have strayed, both collectively and individually, from the correct path; and how they might once again regain favor with God by turning to him and away from their sins and thereby showing the fruits of repentance. Israel must plead with God for forgiveness because she has never managed to offer to God an offering in righteousness. Memory is the key to keeping the commandments. Yerushalmi shows how this memory did not flow from a history done out of curiosity (that is a modern thing) but from a history that preserved the crucial story of God's dealings with his covenant people and the subsequent halting responses, the substance of which is a dialectic of obedience and rebellion, of liberation and bondage, of prosperity and suffering, of human agents in rebellion against the divine will.¹¹

The Vessels of Remembrance

“No more dramatic evidence is needed for the dominant place of history in ancient Israel,” according to Yerushalmi,

than the overriding fact that even God is known only insofar as he reveals himself “historically.” Sent to bring the tidings of deliverance to the Hebrew slaves, Moses does not come in the name of the Creator of Heaven and Earth, but of the “God of the fathers,” that is to say, as the God of history: “Go and assemble the elders of Israel and say to them: The Lord the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob has appeared to me and said: I have surely remembered you . . .” (Exod. 3:16). When God introduces himself directly to the entire people at Sinai, nothing is heard of his essence or

11. Yerushalmi examines the passages in which remembrance is commanded in the name of the Lord. Forms of the verb *zakhar* turn up in the “[Hebrew] Bible no less than one hundred and sixty-nine times, usually with either Israel or God as the subject, for memory is incumbent upon both.” Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, 5 (see p. 119 n. 1 for references to other relevant studies). The admonition to remember turns up 227 times in the Book of Mormon and an additional 62 times in the Doctrine and Covenants.

attributes, but only: “I the Lord am your God who brought you out of the Land of Egypt, the house of bondage” (Exod. 20:2). That is sufficient. For here as elsewhere, ancient Israel knows what God is from what he has done in history. And if that is so, then memory has become crucial to its faith and, ultimately, to its very existence.¹²

God’s mighty acts, including special revelations and the covenant founding of the people of God, are portrayed in the Bible as actual events. If the hopes and expectations of further deliverance still involve a real future for the faithful, it follows that for Israel the remembrance of those events is crucial to the existence of the covenant people of God.

When Abraham, Moses, or Enoch is understood as having been instructed by heavenly messengers, such ought to be remembered. To forget the then and there of divine disclosure is to lose contact with God here and now. The result of such a forgetting is to follow some alien tradition into darkness and the captivity of sin. A primary vehicle for remembering the prophetic words and covenants, in addition to the biblical text, was ritual—ritual supported by recitals buttressed by narratives that chronicle the making of those covenants and also provide accounts of certain elements of God’s dealings with Israel and the resulting dialectic of obedient response and willful rebellion. The passion of remembering those things was felt by ancient Israel. The biblical history is thus the fruit of the prophetically enjoined effort to remember the words and deeds that form the tragic yet hopeful dialectic between Israel and God.

The writing of such narratives ceased with the passing of the prophetic gifts. Henceforth Jews might preserve memories of covenants and an earlier apocalyptic, recite the grim but awesome and yet hopeful story of covenants and prophetic special revelations, at times take comfort in apocalyptic visions, long for the vindication of the covenant people and even be induced to follow various messianic figures. But more than anything, they were busy recounting the story of Israel’s sinful forgetting and repentant remembering. There were, of

12. Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, 9.

course, commentaries on the sacred texts and also commentaries on those commentaries. Until transformed by the charms of modernity, Jews would mostly ignore the doing of history, especially as it is now commonly understood; they engaged instead in the careful study of the sacred texts, and the preservation of traditions. The inventiveness of the learned was turned to invoking the past already set out in the sacred texts and interpreted in the commentaries of the faithful. The result was a literature of power and haunting beauty.¹³

Since the rabbis had in the sacred texts the key to the meaning of history, and having no prophetic gifts with which to initiate further extensions of the historical substance of these texts, they had no need for historiography. That does not mean that they did not see divine providence at work, for they did, but under the patterns, categories, and explanations already set down.

For the rabbis the Bible was not only a repository of past history, but a revealed pattern of the whole of history, and they had learned their scriptures well. They knew that history has a purpose, the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth, and that the Jewish people had a central role to play in the process. They were convinced that the covenant between God and Israel was eternal, though the Jews had often rebelled and suffered the consequences. Above all, they had learned from the Bible that the true pulse of history often beat beneath its manifest surfaces, an invisible history that was more real than what the world, deceived by the more strident outward rhythms of power, could recognize.¹⁴

Jewish History and the Acids of Modernity

Before modernity began to unravel Jewish historical memory and piety, the identity of the covenant people depended upon the memory of divine promises and yielded the dialectic of obedience and rebellion

13. Yerushalmi illustrates the power and beauty of various devices that invoke memory and erase the distance between the past and present. Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, 29, 43.

14. David Singer, "Testimony," *Commentary* 76/1 (July 1983): 74.

that was the substance of sacred history. For generations the accounts of covenants with Abraham and Moses filled the hearts and minds of the faithful. This changed radically when Jews suddenly confronted the modern world with its own curiosity about the past and compulsion to explain the past in secular or naturalistic terms. Modernity challenged the historical orientation of the Jews in part by questioning the biblical accounts. The new history excluded the divine from human history or rendered the religious past ordinary and harmless by reducing the divine to a universal human response to the terrors of nature and the distempers of human affairs. On the other hand, accommodations to modernity have resulted in a remarkable blossoming of Jewish historical studies. And these have been done by learned and inventive scholars. By secular standards, this new Jewish historiography is done as well as any other history.

Some have questioned whether this new historiography, whatever its charms and accomplishments, has been good for the Jewish faith¹⁵ or even unambiguously good for the Jewish community. These complaints do not come from kooks on the fringes. Those reflecting on the consequences of the new Jewish history express dismay at the disintegration of Jewish memory and identity. The new Jewish history has vastly multiplied, thinned, and flattened Jewish memory; it has also weakened Jewish identity by changing the traditional categories and understandings. The new history is not written from the horizon provided by the canon and supporting literature, nor does it employ the traditional vocabulary or selection principles; it is written from a perspective in which Jews are “paralyzed by the need to appear apologetic before the non-Jewish world. Apologetics demanded that Judaism be portrayed as a familiar rather than foreign belief.”¹⁶ Jewish historians have sought to place Judaism within the general development of religion.

Jewish historiography, with the rise of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* (scientific investigation of Judaism), “confidently pushes her way to the very center and brazenly demands her due. For the

15. David Biale, *Gershom Scholem: Kabbalah and Counter-History*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 2–8.

16. Biale, *Gershom Scholem*, 3.

first time it is not history that must prove its utility to Judaism, but Judaism that must prove its validity to history, by revealing and justifying itself historically.”¹⁷ “Modern Jewish historiography began precipitously out of that assimilation from without and collapse from within which characterized the sudden emergence of Jews out of the ghetto. It originated, not as scholarly curiosity, but as ideology, one of a gamut of responses to the crisis of Jewish emancipation and the struggle to attain it.”¹⁸

Yerushalmi has also striven to understand himself “as a Jewish historian, not within the objective context of the global scholarly enterprise, but within the inner framework of Jewish history itself. With the former I have no particular problems—that is, none that are not shared by historians in other fields. Given that it is important to consume most of one’s waking hours in the study of the past, Jewish historical scholarship is as significant as any other and its achievements are manifest. From the perspective of Jewish history, however, it is different.”¹⁹ Although Jews have been absorbed with finding meaning in history, and therefore the “memory of the past was always a central component of Jewish experience, the historian was not its primary custodian.”²⁰

And in the nineteenth century, when the Jewish past became the arena of the assimilated historian, it was no longer transmitted as the core of the faith. Jewish historians used the categories drawn from the secular culture. Everything was disputed as well as discovered by the historian. The new Jewish history introduced contention into the life of the community. The historian, under the impact of modernity, did not act as conduit for memory or bearer of tradition, but became an active agent with respect to the past—constantly discovering something novel, striving for the unexpected, challenging, interesting, or entertaining. As secularized Jews turned to history, anxious

17. Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, 84.

18. Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, 85. “The overweening desire of partially acculturated Jews to enter the German bourgeoisie motivated in them an apologetic stance that sapped Judaism of any authenticity.” Biale, *Gershom Scholem*, 3.

19. Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, xiii–xiv.

20. Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, xiv.

to escape into the respectability of gentile culture, eager for political emancipation and full access to the glories of the larger society, they were freed to invent or to adopt gentile categories of historical explanation—they no longer invoked those already set down in the sacred texts. The traditional understandings and standards of interpretation were replaced by those brought to the study of Jewish things from outside, from the gentile world. Secular history became an avenue for Jews to enter a seemingly glamorous gentile world.

Modern Jewish historiography was thus grounded on assumptions that run counter to the substance of Jewish faith. And the proliferation of this new Jewish history transformed the substance of faith.

There is an inherent tension in modern Jewish historiography even though most often it is not felt on the surface nor even acknowledged. To the degree that this historiography is indeed “modern” and demands to be taken seriously, it must at least functionally repudiate premises that were basic to all Jewish conceptions of history in the past. In effect, it must stand in sharp opposition to its own subject matter, not on this or that detail, but concerning the vital core: the belief that divine providence is not only an ultimate but an active causal factor in Jewish history, and the related belief in the uniqueness of Jewish history itself.²¹

It is a “conscious denial, or at least the pragmatic evasion, of these two cardinal assumptions that constitutes the essence of the secularization of Jewish history on which modern Jewish historiography is grounded.”²²

The roots of this secularization date from 1670 with the appearance of Spinoza’s *Theologico-Political Treatise*, the first open attack on biblical faith from within the Jewish community.²³ But it was in the nineteenth century that this process reached its peak. Judaism came

21. Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, 89.

22. Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, 89.

23. Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, 89; compare Leo Strauss, *Spinoza’s Critique of Religion* (New York: Schocken, 1965).

to be understood as merely part of the larger development of “religion,” like all other manifestations of human piety and communal devotion, or as merely another exemplar of human folly and illusion. Two of the most sophisticated and powerful rejections of “religion,” those of Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud, came from assimilated Jews bent on settling accounts with their own seemingly “primitive” past. When “religion” was not understood as delusion or illusion, it was understood on the assumption that all peoples share some “sentiments” that are the essence of religion. It was also believed that these sentiments are undergoing a process of unfolding over time. When the acids of modernity did not yield rejection of the faith, as was the case with Marx and Freud, they ate away at the foundations. “If the secularization of Jewish history is a break with the past, the historicizing of Judaism itself has been an equally significant departure. It could hardly be otherwise. Western man’s discovery of history is not a mere interest in the past . . . , but a new awareness, a perception of a fluid temporal dimension from which nothing is exempt.”²⁴

If every expression of piety is but a manifestation of some larger inclusive entity called “religion,” then all are somehow on a rough parity and no one is simply true in the way that is understood from within the categories of faith. Even when there were protests against the relativizing historicism that engulfed every faith within a so-called religious development, such protests have gone unheeded.²⁵

When confronted by modernity Jews began to long for “assimilation” into gentile culture. Prior to that encounter, Jewish identity was challenged more by apostasy than by cultural assimilation. But in the nineteenth century, as Jews desired a place within the intellectual and political community of Western Europe, the Jewish identity was

24. Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, 91.

25. Leopold Zunz, in his *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, tried to convince Germans of “the true value of the Jewish experience” (from Chaim Potok, *Wanderings: Chaim Potok’s History of the Jews* [New York: Fawcett Crest, 1980], 493). What fueled this scholarly undertaking was “the allure of this brimming bourgeois culture, then at its zenith— . . . it was all too dazzling; and their own Jewish learning was too shallow.” Potok, *Wanderings*, 492–93. And all this sort of thing was done “through rigorous objective criticism and modern methods of research.” Potok, *Wanderings*, 492.

eroded by assimilation. Complaints about the decay of Jewish memory are but manifestations of a larger pattern of concern over attrition through assimilatory processes.

The Mormon Side of the Analogy

A consideration of these concerns provides lessons for those Latter-day Saints who currently yearn for a science of Mormon things and have embraced what some call “New Mormon History,” which promises, much like secularized Jewish history, to liberate them from parochial things—especially from what is considered naïveté about Mormon origins—and thereby to allow a more secure identity in the larger development of American religion and culture. In 1974 Robert Flanders claimed that “a significantly different understanding of the Latter-day Saint past has begun to emerge.” This “New Mormon History,” from this perspective, is a new departure, not a mere refinement of older understandings. “In sum, the New Mormon History is a modern history, informed by modern trends of thought, not only in history, but in other humanistic and scientific disciplines as well, including philosophy, social psychology, economics, and religious studies.” The concern of this new history is not the truth claims of the faith, but centers on “the significance of the Mormon experience” and the place of that experience in the larger web of American culture and religious development.²⁶ The New History provides a comfortable place for cultural Mormonism within the imagined fabric of the development of American religion because it is unconcerned with the truth, coherence, or internal logic of the faith as such. Flanders was once interested in discovering just how the Mormon past fit “satisfactorily into the main stream of American history where it belongs and where it can be better understood.”²⁷

What are the assumptions at work in this so-called New History? The expression *New Mormon History* was first defended as a description of a history that flows from the urge “to discover Mormon history

26. Robert B. Flanders, “Some Reflections on the New Mormon History,” *Dialogue* 9/1 (1974): 34, 35, 40.

27. Robert B. Flanders, “Writing on the Mormon Past,” *Dialogue* 1/3 (1966): 47.

as a legitimate rather than an aberrant phenomenon in American culture. As a result . . . , a kind of new middle ground has been created between those with and those without LDS faith assumptions, with the accompanying possibility of communication between them that does not have to struggle with the *a priori* of the legitimacy of the faith assumptions.”²⁸ This seems to match nicely with our Jewish example. The label *New Mormon History* may sometimes, of course, have been appropriated with a different program in mind; some might merely wish to do history more accurately or more comprehensively or in closer conformity with the categories of the scriptures. But the label was promoted by Flanders to identify radical shifts in the understanding of Mormon origins. *New Mormon History*, for Flanders, provided “a new location where ‘marginal’ Latter-day Saints, who hold some faith assumptions but reject others, or who are attached to Mormon societies or social networks but not to the religion *per se*, can share in the dialogue about the significance of the Mormon experience.”²⁹

One issue concerns the political position of both Jewish and Mormon apologetics. What is at stake is the persistence of faith with its distinctive form of memory or historical consciousness that maintains identity over time. Yerushalmi’s concern “is not historical writing *per se* . . . , but the relation of Jews to their own past, and the place of the historian within that relationship.”³⁰ Can we learn from the concerns being expressed by Jewish scholars over the burgeoning Jewish historiography? “Only in the modern era do we really find, for the first time,” according to Yerushalmi, “a Jewish historiography divorced from Jewish collective memory and, in crucial respects, thoroughly at odds with it.”³¹ The destruction of historical memory is not, however, merely a problem facing Jews. Others see their traditions, ways, and memories in disarray. “There are many within Jewry today who deplore the widespread decay of Jewish memory even while, perhaps symptomatically, sharing no real consensus as to its original or

28. Flanders, “Some Reflections on the New Mormon History,” 40.

29. Flanders, “Some Reflections on the New Mormon History,” 40.

30. Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, 6.

31. Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, 93.

ideal content. Who, then, can be expected to step into the breach, if not the historian? Is it not both his chosen and appointed task to restore the past to us all?"³² But why should the secularized historian, whose ideology is the source of the problem, become the healer when the memory "never depended on historians in the first place"? Jewish memory and faith cannot be healed until or unless the "group itself finds healing, unless its wholeness is restored or rejuvenated."³³ Such a restoration would constitute the grounds for a worthy community, a Zion called out of Babylon. Historians, under thrall to modernity, are thus at best pathologists rather than physicians, and they are among the least adequate caretakers of sacred things, though they may be good morticians.

Religious history done in naturalistic terms and intended to please secular tastes stands directly in the way of the life of the memories shared by believers that constitute the ground for a community of faith and a people of God. What the professional historian does, both by inclination and training, is create a whole new set of memories that tends to replace the old ones that have been rejected for various reasons; historians do not merely busy themselves telling the old story and filling in the details or telling the story more accurately—such would be unobjectionable. Jewish historians, with a good conscience, are busy whittling away at sacred things; the product is their New History.

In its quest for understanding it brings to the fore texts, events, processes, that never really became part of Jewish group memory even when it was at its most vigorous. With unprecedented energy it continually re-creates an ever more detailed past whose shapes and textures memory does not recognize. But that is not all. The historian does not simply come in to replenish the gaps of memory. He constantly challenges even those memories that have survived intact. Moreover, in common with historians in all fields of inquiry, he seeks ultimately to recover a total past—in this case the entire Jewish past—even if

32. Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, 93.

33. Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, 94.

he is directly concerned with only a segment of it. No subject is potentially unworthy of his interest, no document, no artifact, beneath his attention.³⁴

In a faith grounded in history there is bound to be much selecting, winnowing, sorting, and condensing. But that is true of all attempts to do history. Not everything is memorable. Not all the things that happen to have been left around for the historian to locate as grist for his mill are significant from the perspective of the norms of the faith. And even more importantly, not every possible way of telling the story of the past is consistent with faith in God's mighty acts. Thus the flux of interpretations and explanations that secularized historians necessarily generate may dissolve the content of faith. Sometimes this has been done inadvertently; sometimes it is intentional. If we can compare high things with low things, we might see some parallels between Spinoza's powerful mockery of the Bible and the recent attacks on the Book of Mormon coming from the margins of the Mormon community³⁵ and delineating the bold versions of the New Mormon History.

According to Yerushalmi, historians question, dispute, and evaluate from grounds that reject the possibility of faith. Still there are some Jews who remain within what he calls the "enchanted circle of tradition" and who have not been entirely secularized nor had the substance of their faith wrenched away from them by debunking and relativizing historians. Those charmed believers see certain elements of the past as still somehow directly before them in a kind of eternal contemporaneity. They do not concern themselves with how or whether it all took place, but only with its immediate emotional impact for them; nor do they always see their Jewish past as a clue to their own future. They remain blind to the contents and consequences of the debates of the historians about the Jewish past. It is an anti-historical attitude that seeks

34. Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, 93–94.

35. William D. Russell, "A Further Inquiry into the Historicity of the Book of Mormon," *Sunstone* 7/5 (1982): 20–27; William D. Russell, "History and the Mormon Scriptures," *Journal of Mormon History* 10 (1983): 53–63; George D. Smith, "Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon," *Free Inquiry* 4/1 (1983/84): 20–31; "The History of Mormonism and Church Authorities: An Interview with Sterling M. McMurrin," *Free Inquiry* 4/1 (1983/84): 32–34.

the promises accompanying the covenants without the historical component, thereby betraying the profoundly historical orientation of prophetic piety. Are there such attitudes within the community of Saints? If the acids of modernity dissolve the historical foundations of faith, then only a thoughtless stupor, a vague sentiment, or perhaps mystical flight remains open to the one who wishes to grasp some fragment of faith. It may be beyond the scope of modern historical consciousness to decide which “history” among various alternative accounts is superior; it is not, however, beyond the scope of prophetic faith.

The Saints Confront Modernity

Through their professional standing, historians in the Latter-day Saint cultural setting seem to have gained a measure of control over the past. As this extends to the doing of Mormon history, it suggests that historians will have a crucial and perhaps even decisive role in either enlarging or shrinking the memory of the Saints and thus forming and transforming their identity. But those involved in writing Mormon history have given little attention to the question of the historian’s role as caretaker or guardian of the identity of the Saints.

Our survey on the results of the explosion of Jewish historical works since 1700 yields the conclusion that this new historical scholarship has had profoundly corrosive effects on Jewish memory and identity, and it suggests that a faith with broad and deep links to history, such as the faith of the Latter-day Saints, may also confront some of the same difficulties if its history is done by historians armed with secular ideologies and eager for acceptance by the larger culture. Leonard J. Arrington once claimed that most historians believe that “Mormon life is fair game for detached examination and clarification. They believe that the details of Mormon history and culture can be studied in human or naturalistic terms—indeed, must be so studied—and without thus rejecting the divinity of the Church’s origin and work.”³⁶ No clear indication has been given of exactly what

36. Leonard J. Arrington, “Scholarly Studies of Mormonism in the Twentieth Century,” *Dialogue* 1/1 (1966): 28.

might constitute “human or naturalistic terms,” other than hints that such would involve detached historians doing “objective” history. Unfortunately, there has been no effort made to show how the faith might survive a treatment of its historical roots done in “naturalistic terms.” There has been virtually no public discussion of the possibility that a history of Mormon things, especially as it deals with the historical foundations of faith, if done in these terms, may profoundly transform the faith. Since the history that forms the basis and even much of the content of the faith has been exposed to constant contention from the beginning, the Saints are more or less armed to defend themselves from onslaughts from without; but their trusting attitude to those who seemingly speak with authority makes them more vulnerable to a revisionism from within.

It has been assumed that historians will be honest truth seekers and that professional norms will somehow prevent the penetration of distorting ideologies into their work. But it is forgotten that historians, themselves situated historically, have been indoctrinated, often unknowingly, in the ideologies of a secularized world. As they go about interpreting texts and explaining things using secular categories, they introduce background assumptions that are different from the assumptions that form the core of the faith. Our concern is with these assumptions, and especially with the common assumption that the history of the Saints must be done in “naturalistic terms.” Such an approach would mean that any possibility of divine things, as understood from within the faith, be jettisoned by the historian as she tells her story. Historians have not reflected deeply, if one can judge from the literature, on the fundamental assumptions at work in their doing of history. They may not even be aware of them. In addition, they may be at one time working with one set of assumptions and at another time working with a radically different set or mixture of background assumptions. Our interest is in the potentially corrosive effect of those secular assumptions—of modernity—on the memory and identity of the Latter-day Saints.

The analogy between Mormon and Jewish memory seems to provide some useful lessons. The transformation of memory that is traced

by some distinguished Jewish scholars to the new Jewish historiography presents a spectacle that is worth thoughtful attention. Have Latter-day Saint historians addressed the issues raised by Yerushalmi? It would seem that the destruction of Jewish memory and communal identity can offer vital lessons for those who do Mormon history and are genuinely concerned with the welfare of the covenant people.

In our present cultural setting, historians, professionally trained or otherwise, either within or without the community of Saints, are not likely to disappear, and interest in or controversy over the Latter-day Saint past is not likely to subside. Hence it is crucial for the Saints to have their own history told from within or, as a bare minimum, not told from outside the categories, assumptions, and norms of the faith.

Though it is part of the current secular mythology that prophetic faith has much to fear from honest history and hence cannot possibly confront its own history, it seems that, keeping in mind the Jewish analogy, nothing is more likely to produce a deterioration of faith than an inauthentic, not to mention incompetent, telling of the story of that faith. This may be done either through mindless inadvertence or with some intention of reconstructing the faith by manipulating or controlling the past with explanatory frameworks or interpretative schema that begin with the assumption that the faith is simply not true, which would seem to involve a form of the fallacy of begging the question.

The primary intellectual encounter between Judaism and modern culture has lain precisely in a mutual preoccupation with the historicity of things. As a result there is not a field of Jewish learning today which, to the degree that it is modern, is not “historical,” and only insofar as they are historically oriented have the disciplines of Jewish scholarship impinged upon cognate fields of general scholarship, a process now constantly accelerating.³⁷

The end result is that “for the first time history, not a sacred text, becomes the arbiter of Judaism.”³⁸

37. Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, 85–86.

38. Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, 86.

In our cultural setting it is commonly assumed that professional historians should control the interpretation of the past since they are believed to have at their command powerful tools to penetrate to the truth in ways not previously possible. To the degree that Latter-day Saint historians have published well-received histories of their religion, they have begun to have a crucial and perhaps even decisive role in enlarging, shrinking, or preserving the communal memory of the Saints and thus in forming and transforming their identity. This has been recognized by Leonard Arrington. In addressing the question of the historian's role as guardian of Mormon identity, he asked: "Are we authentic Latter-day Saints (i.e., real Mormons) unless we receive messages from our collective past?"³⁹ The answer seems to be that we would not be real Saints unless we received authentic messages from the past that constitute our individual and communal memory. To this point, at least, we seem to have a statement about the links between history and the identity of the Saints that is close to some of Yerushalmi's views on Jewish memory and history.

What of the possibility that the work of historians may sometimes threaten faith with a corrupting secularization, or that incompetently or thoughtlessly done history may yield a fundamental reconstruction of that faith? This would seem to be a special danger when the historian goes about reinterpreting and explaining the crucial generative events with secular categories and in "naturalistic terms." Sometimes these transformations are subtle and go unnoticed; at other times they are more open. Be that as it may, there has been virtually no response by prominent Latter-day Saint historians to the recent spate of essays by certain cultural Mormons attacking the foundations of the faith, including especially the Book of Mormon. Are we to assume that historians, even those deeply troubled by a divided loyalty, are the proper caretakers of the Latter-day Saint past? "And who but the historian is prepared to relay authentic messages from the past? Our individual and collective authenticity as Latter-day Saints depends on

39. Leonard J. Arrington, "The Search for Truth and Meaning in Mormon History," *Dialogue* 3/2 (1968): 65.

the historians telling the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth about our past.”⁴⁰

But can we ever be certain that the truth has been told about the past? Are the accounts provided by historians anything more than conjectures, models, or theories that, as such, cannot ever get to the truth or objective reality of the past? As Latter-day Saint historians become familiar with the literature on the philosophy of science and hermeneutics, they realize that the dream of an objective account of the past, of a presuppositionless history, is a chimera resting on questionable assumptions.

Historians are frequently in thrall to various notions about the possibility of an “objective history.” This view contrasts with the opinion of Thomas Alexander, an apologist for the New History who claims that no accounts of the past are objective but are always necessarily tentative and that “historians are not working with general laws.”⁴¹ And he seems confident that his fellow historians involved in revisionist history fully understand and accept such agnostic views on these matters. Be that as it may, if he is correct about the impossibility of an objective history, what exactly would constitute the “whole truth” about the Mormon past and form the substance of the authentic messages from the past that would make us “real Mormons”? Would the work of historians doing the New History with explanations borrowed from the social sciences provide such a thing? Would a history done in “human or naturalistic terms” necessarily have advantages over a history done from within the categories and assumptions of the faith? This agnosticism about historical objectivity would seem to have demolished the New History’s pretenses to having occupied some higher ground upon which to assess the past.

In light of Yerushalmi’s arguments, is it obvious that historians, especially those who do history in “naturalistic terms,” are the ones best fitted to know and transmit the truth about the sacred past? Can the story of God’s mighty acts be appropriately told in naturalistic terms?

40. Arrington, “Search for Truth and Meaning,” 65.

41. Thomas G. Alexander, “An Approach to the Mormon Past,” review of *Mormonism and the American Experience*, by Klaus J. Hansen, *Dialogue* 16/4 (1983): 148.

If secularized historians are to function as the guardians of sacred history, then processes analogous to those that fueled the transformation of Jewish historical memory are likely to have profound consequences for the future of the restored gospel. Virtually nothing has appeared in print that considers the impact of modernity on Latter-day Saint historiography or the role of the ideological indoctrination that goes on in graduate schools and in the professional settings where historians operate. Nor has there been a serious consideration of the effects these things have on the doing of Mormon history. Rather, the assumption seems to have been that the truth about the Mormon past, including the messages that contain the crucial norms and categories by which we define ourselves as Saints, depends upon the understanding of the past provided by historians. Yet if the historian is unable to tell the truth about the past—the crucial past from which, according to Arrington, the Saints must somehow acquire their identity—then the ground for that understanding of the past is, as Leo Strauss would say, merely “a figment of the imagination of the historian.”⁴²

Those troubled by doubts or misgivings about the truth of the restored gospel have often turned to history and to the textual sources that provide access to the past. But they have done so not for an understanding of God’s mighty acts, nor for a pattern with which to build Zion, nor for a map with which to begin fleeing Babylon, but for arguments with which to reconstruct the substance of the faith. The New History is not celebrated for its literary grace or greater accuracy, nor for its deep understanding of the dialectic between God and man, nor for its contributions in building the kingdom. It is sometimes applauded because it seems to promise to place control of the past in the hands of those who wish to alter the content of faith or because it allows the history of the Saints to be done in “naturalistic terms” or with fashionable explanations borrowed from the social sciences.

Some historians, deeply troubled by their own doubts about the historical foundations of the faith, have recently opined that exactly nothing that concerns faith depends in any crucial or decisive way

42. Leo Strauss, “How to Study Spinoza’s *Theologico-Political Treatise*,” in *Persecution and the Art of Writing* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1973), 143.

upon what can be learned from the past or upon any statement about what may have taken place in the past. And, at times, lengthy autobiographical descriptions have been offered of exactly how and when they came to hold such views. In these remarkable addresses there is boasting about the liberating power of secularized accounts of the Mormon past and a celebration of the scholarly detachment of historians bent on debunking the understanding of the Saints. But these addresses merely contain a flow of opinions with no reasons given to justify them.

Historical Truth?

Why should we assume that the stories told by historians are more than the work of the imagination? Are not these accounts essentially inventions controlled largely by uncritically accepted assumptions? Well, we have certain primary texts, those traces of the past. They provide some control, do they not?

But in all reflections on experience, including historical accounts and even our own individual stories, there is interpretation and a work of construction and imagination. This is true especially when the work of the historian is grounded on a passionate struggle with texts. It would seem impossible for one to have any experience that is not itself coupled with interpretation, and every casual or serious reflection on our experiences will involve additional interpretations of those experiences. Even (or especially) when we memorialize some incident in our lives, we interpret and explain; we do not merely report in some detached, mechanical manner. The report itself is necessarily an interpretation and perhaps explanation. Hence there is no such thing as an “objective historian,” and “objective” history is merely the understanding of the past that we have objectified through writing. The object is what the historian produces and not the past about which some things are written—the past is always our understanding of it and not an object before our eyes. The only things that we can have before our eyes are the texts that memorialize the understandings of the past. Through these we have access to the words and deeds of the past. These we believe are worth our attention, and some are even

worthy of remembrance. Every understanding of the past is thus some particular point of view. But which one is, to use Arrington's striking expression, the "whole truth"?

Which historical account yields an understanding of "events as they actually happened"? Obviously that depends upon what one means by "truth." And it also depends upon exactly what one will allow within the realm of possibilities and hence upon the background assumptions or frameworks one brings to the task of understanding the past. These possibilities, influenced by our preunderstandings and by our language, affect our categories of interpretation and explanation.

But we are now being told that our history simply cannot be done any longer on the basis of assumptions that include the possibility that God acts in history or that messengers could visit prophets. One striking bit of such dogmatism has it that "you don't get books from angels and translate them by miracles; it is just that simple."⁴³ Sterling McMurrin opines that "the church shouldn't tie religious faith to its history." He also complains that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints "has concealed much of its history from its people."⁴⁴ These opinions appear to be a way of saying that the understanding of Mormon origins held by the faithful rests on a different framework of assumptions than McMurrin's naturalistic understanding of those events. He begins with positivist assumptions, including a dogmatic rejection of the possibility that heavenly messengers may visit with prophets, and then begs the question from that point on. The faithful will at least grant the possibility that God has acted and see where it takes them. When the faithful tell the story of the people of God, McMurrin sees that as a clear indication of a suppression of the truth and as a failure to face the truth about unseemly elements in the past. Something becomes "unseemly" when it does not fit easily within the dogmas of his positivist (or naturalistic) ideology.

We also have the case of an author complaining that some fellow writer of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day

43. McMurrin, "History of Mormonism and Church Authorities," 34.

44. McMurrin, "History of Mormonism and Church Authorities," 32.

Saints (now the Community of Christ) has made a dreadful mistake because “he . . . seems to uncritically assume that alleged contact with supernatural beings actually occurred, a faith assumption which the historian—lacking methods of verification—cannot make.”⁴⁵ That statement implies that historians cannot be believers and that believers cannot be historians. There is a confusion here between the role of assumptions when one seeks to test statements (assuming that verification is possible) and the actual testing of those statements. An assumption is exactly what is not verified. Hence, when the historian begins to tell stories, the assumptions upon which the plot is fashioned will not have been verified; that is exactly why they are called assumptions.

When we write history we are, whether we realize it or not, interpreting and explaining texts. And it seems unlikely that one can provide a presuppositionless interpretation of a text or a presuppositionless account of the past. What this means, among other things, is that all historians must operate with something like what our Community of Christ friends like to call “faith assumptions.” Likewise, every explanation will be in terms of some tentative theory resting again on assumptions. The mistake, and it is common among those involved in the New History, is an uncritical acceptance of a crude version of old war-horse positivism. And it is one that should not be forthcoming among those familiar with the recent literature on the philosophy of science or on hermeneutics. But it is one that some historians who are often not concerned with such things are wont to make. In addition, while historians are pleased to look in on the presumably naïve views held by people in the past, they find much less pleasure in having a careful scrutiny made of their own assumptions.

The naïve understanding of the past that commonly carries the name *positivism* among historians assumes that the historian has directly before him an objective reality called “the past,” or some finite segment of it, and that it is possible—if one is detached, objective,

45. William D. Russell, “Swarming Progeny of the Restoration,” review of *Divergent Paths of the Restoration: A History of the Latter Day Saint Movement*, by Steven L. Shields, *Dialogue* 16/4 (1983): 160.

neutral, not evaluative, not emotionally involved—to come up with some neutral-observation sentences that simply yield what is the “whole truth” about the past. With these neutral-observation statements (or historical “facts”), one can verify one’s theories about the past that were drawn from those observations. Hence one can produce objective accounts of the past and tell the story of “what really did happen.” In this view, the only limitations on the historian in providing the “whole truth” about the past are (1) the failure to achieve detachment and (2) the absence of “evidence,” that is, the textual sources of history. With such assumptions, the historian eventually tells, whether he wants to or not, a story of Mormon origins that leaves out (that is, explains away) the story of the visits of heavenly messengers with prophets and the mighty acts of God. We are admonished that we cannot properly tell the story of Mormon things, especially the crucial story of Mormon origins, with the assumption that God revealed anything, that messengers from another world visited with prophets, and so forth, because none of those things fit within the objective, that is, verifiable, world of natural objects.⁴⁶

History cannot really harm faith, James Clayton claims, because it and “fundamental religious beliefs . . . seldom meet.” It is, however, evident that prophetic faith necessarily involves links between faith and history. For example, statements about the revelation of the Torah to Moses or that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ involve faith in history. Clayton simply ignores such considerations. He holds, instead, that the “historian cannot prove historically that any of these beliefs are true and certainly cannot apply these beliefs to his or her scholarly research because there is no historically acceptable evidence of God, divine intervention, or life after death. Historians have no way to discern the hand of God or to measure the validity of inspiration,” and so on.⁴⁷ He would, of course, be correct if he had in mind a historian whose explanatory framework rested on positivist assumptions. Such a historian could not discern the hand of God in history, and such

46. See, for example, James L. Clayton, “Does History Undermine Faith?” *Sunstone*, March–April, 1982, 37–38.

47. Clayton, “Does History Undermine Faith?” 37–38.

an explanatory framework might provide an excuse for not applying even the historian's own deepest faith to history. Clayton's historian would exclude God's mighty acts from history. Such a historian could treat in "naturalistic terms" beliefs about divine things, but only on the assumption that they are sentiments that are simply unfounded. Clayton strives to reduce faith to irrational sentiments. Since the very "wellsprings of religion" are merely "mystical experiences," the historian, he concludes, cannot "corrupt them," nor can he confirm or disconfirm them. This curious argument rests upon various dogmatic assumptions about history and faith that are employed rhetorically to reduce the content of faith to socially conditioned sentiments. History in such an ideology is believed to rest on proven truths.

The resulting accounts of the faith of the believer are not the "whole truth" that the historian has been able, with his own interpretive and explanatory framework, to verify; they are simply a figment of the imagination of the historian who insisted on letting his positivist assumptions dictate precisely what the truth about the past can or cannot be.

This view of what constitutes "truth" in history is a notion of simple correspondence between the "facts" about the past and our statements about the past. This view is common among those who assume that the task of the historian is verification of statements about the past with evidences that have a standing apart from the understandings, biases, temperament, disposition, or framework of the historian. Believers, according to this objectivist point of view, simply invent things because their beliefs corrupt their understanding by introducing biases and prejudices. Latter-day Saint historians, in this scenario, must detach themselves from their own beliefs and suspend faith in order to allow the truth about the past to be spoken to them by the facts of history. The goal is objectivity. Those who hold this view, recognizing certain but not all of its more obvious defects, begin by granting that, of course, as a practical matter such complete objectivity is impossible, but they maintain it is still an admirable ideal and one that their own professional training fits them to approximate rather closely or at

least better than those still corrupted by “faith assumptions.”⁴⁸ In this naïve or unreflective view of the standing of the historian, the truth about the past consists of demonstrable assertions, and prophetic claims are either untestable or demonstrably false; hence we are thus forbidden to begin with the assumption that special divine revelations might have taken place. Without that possibility, the story of Latter-day Saint origins is not the one that fills the hearts and minds of the Saints; it becomes merely a story of human folly.

It should be evident that historical accounts resting upon positivist assumptions concerning the structure of the world will not be inherently or obviously superior to those resting on assumptions that have been glibly labeled and thereby denigrated as “faith assumptions.” The reason is that the positivist assumptions of historians are themselves problematic, if not incoherent. Both sets of assumptions rest, ultimately, on a choice that is a matter of faith. The truth of any matter, therefore, depends upon the assumptions one adopts. The more adequate conception of truth therefore becomes a crucial, even decisive, question.

What we have of the past are textual sources. These are merely the traces of words and deeds that are already interpretations and explanations. Should we presume to substitute some fashionable new understandings for the old ones? Are the new versions obviously superior to the old ones merely because they are new? When dealing with textual accounts of prophetic revelations, including visits with heavenly messengers, must we begin with the assumption that such simply did not take place and then proceed with our own explanation of what happened? Of course, we cannot but make such substitutions of our own understandings when we provide explanations, but we should be fully aware of our presumption in so doing and the risks in such a procedure. To make such a substitution involves the assumption that our own framework, including our background assumptions of what

48. Hence the approach to history often begins with the disclaimer that “full objectivity is an impossibility,” which is followed by a *however* and then a soft version of the argument. See, for example, McMurrin, “History of Mormonism and Church Authorities,” 33.

can and cannot be the case, our own understanding of the world, is necessarily superior on the decisive issues to that contained within the texts we wish to explain and understand. That might be the case, but unless we are certain that it is, we must move with extreme caution. And caution should be the special mark of one who turns to the texts that have a bearing on the faith of his or her own community.

Naïve notions of historical method have fallen on hard times in the literature in which such things are now being discussed precisely because of an increased awareness of the crucial importance of frameworks, assumptions, and informal and formal preunderstandings in our attempts to get at the past. There simply is no truth about the past that is independent of our own historically situated understanding of things. What understanding of truth does this involve?

Truth and Remembrance

One might hear in the Greek word for truth, *aletheia*, a somewhat different notion of what constitutes the truth about the past than is common in our culture, but one that is perhaps consistent with the prophetic demand for remembrance of a past in which the mighty acts of God mingle with the welter of human acts. Truth in this sense is identified with that which ought not to be forgotten, that which is memorable, that which is worthy of being memorialized and hence remembered.⁴⁹

At the end of the *Republic*, Plato has Socrates give an account of some souls who, having made certain choices, now find it necessary

49. See the following essays and discussion by Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 261–66; Heidegger, “Plato’s Doctrine of Truth,” in *Philosophy in the Twentieth Century: An Anthology*, ed. William Barrett and Henry D. Aiken (New York: Random House, 1962), 3:251–70; Heidegger, “Aletheia (Heraclitus, Fragment B 16),” in *Early Greek Thinking*, trans. David F. Krell and Frank A. Capuzzi (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 102–23; Heidegger, *Nietzsche: Volume I: The Will to Power as Art*, trans. David F. Krell (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 171–87; and also Paul Friedländer, “Aletheia: A discussion with Martin Heidegger,” in *Plato: An Introduction*, trans. Hans Meyerhoff, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 221–29. Compare H. D. Rankin, “A — ΑΛΘΕΙΑ in Plato,” *Glotta* 41 (1963): 51–54; John Sallis, *Phenomenology and the Return to Beginnings* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1973), 97–106.

to come out from “under Necessity’s throne” and thereby find themselves in a strange place. It is a dry, hot realm, the “plain of Lethe,” which was, we are told, “barren of trees and all that naturally grows on earth.” As darkness approached, in that stifling heat they found it necessary to drink at least in some measure from the river called Lethe. Those who lacked the virtue of “prudence drank more than the measure,” and as they did so they “forgot everything” and eventually lapsed into a deep sleep. When they awoke, they found they had been carried away to a strange land they could not recognize. Presumably, to have drunk just the right measure of forgetfulness, but not an excess, or to have somehow been prevented from drinking at all, would have allowed the recovery of sight in the light of the day. What all this means in the context of that dialogue is difficult to say, but it may help illustrate something like what we are suggesting with remembrance and truth.⁵⁰ Even a sip of “Lethe” makes one lethargic. We hear in the word *Lethe* a faint reference to the river of forgetfulness surrounding Hades; what ought to be forgotten slips into that river.

Stories are necessarily controlled by plots, either explicitly or implicitly. Historians must employ some selection principles to fashion the plots that control their narratives. The truth, when understood as the memorable, is that which is worthy of being remembered and hence that which moves to virtuous deeds. What has been memorialized from the past? Certainly not everything. What is truly memorable? What ought to be remembered from the past? Everything? No one could hold that view, and especially not the believer, for he wants God to forget some things and may even long to himself, just as we should also.

Remembering everything is simply impossible because not everything has been recorded or memorialized, and what has been written down is never some neutral description of what happened but is already an interpretation controlled by various assumptions including our own hopes and desires. Even as we invoke the memory of things past, we reinterpret them for our present situation and in the light of

50. For the language quoted, see *The Republic of Plato*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1968), 303.

our current understanding. Should Latter-day Saints now substitute the conjectures of highly secularized historians whose controlling assumptions do not permit the mighty acts of God in history? Should these push aside the original interpretations of the record keepers, assuming we can interpret them reasonably correctly? Would that be the proper way of preserving or enlarging the memory and hence preserving the identity of the Saints? Or would doing this lead to a radical transformation in the meaning of the message? These are important questions. We cannot avoid taking a position on them. Perhaps the analogy between Jewish and Latter-day Saint memory and the role of history in preserving an identity grounded in memory will assist us in arriving at faith grounded in affirming answers.

In an effort to preserve and enlarge the memory of the Saints, we should strive to draw upon categories found in the sacred texts rather than borrow our controlling assumptions from other sources. History written from within the circle of faith would not make the faithful into paper heroes, nor would it overlook their proclivities for their own kind of “works of darkness.” The story of Mormon things should be told in such a way that the Saints are reminded that the axis ultimately runs between man and God and not between Gentiles and faultless Saints.

ACQUIRING AND PRESERVING WRITTEN RECORDS: A SACRED COMMISSION

John Murphy

Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believe that righteous men and women can receive inspiration and revelation from a loving and omniscient Heavenly Father. Revelation is sacred, and although Latter-day Saints are counseled to maintain the sanctity of personal revelatory experience, they are also encouraged to preserve their sacred experiences in personal records.

For the Latter-day Saint faithful, the written word—including their scriptures but also their journals, diaries, correspondence, and even the more mundane business ledger or e-mail message—is a mediating space where the sacred and the profane may meet. The blank page or tablet has always been a place of unlimited potential and literary opportunity. The blank page also represents a dialogical space where the faithful can talk to God. In other words, the blank page can be transformed into holy text for an individual, a family member, or the larger community of Saints. It is on paper and in prayer that the righteous converse with their Creator. It is on paper that the faithful document their travails and sorrows as well as their joys and successes. And it is on paper that the righteous convey or relate their experiences to future generations.

Revelation in tandem with the written record provides historical and spiritual memory and hence the thread of continuity that preserves the past, thereby guaranteeing the longevity of a righteous community. The preservation of texts is therefore a sacred and holy task.

In the ancient world, for example, record keepers who created and preserved texts were often priests who carried out their sacred work in temples and holy sanctuaries. Temples have always represented that sacred ground where heaven meets earth, and it is no accident that both ancient and modern manuscript repositories and libraries have often been associated with churches and other sacred places.

Although manuscript curators and librarians are not necessarily priests in the Latter-day Saint tradition, their role in appraising, acquiring, processing, preserving, and making records accessible is a vital one. Because the Saints value sacred revelatory experience and thus cherish historical experience and knowledge, manuscript repositories can and do play central roles in the Latter-day Saint spiritual and historical tradition. This explains their enormous and expensive efforts to preserve as full a record of the past as possible. For example, because Brigham Young University is sponsored by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and because the L. Tom Perry Special Collections is a central element within that university system, manuscript curators employed by BYU are expected to meet the highest professional standards in their work. Their task to document the historical experiences of Latter-day Saints is a sacred one. Another sacred aspect of their work is to document all human activity that flows from or has a potential impact on the faith of the Saints (see Doctrine and Covenants 123, which provides a justification for collecting and preserving, among other things, the “libelous publications” [v. 4] of their enemies).

The Saints value land and landscape, tolerance and diversity, faithful scholarship and learning, and creativity. They seek a “knowledge of history, and of countries, and of kingdoms, of laws of God and man” (D&C 93:53), and they “seek after” that which is “virtuous, lovely, or of good report” (Articles of Faith 1:13). To the extent possible, the Saints must assemble and preserve a full record of all these things, and they must maintain a true and sacred record of both human activity and God’s dealings with his children.

This professional activity is in harmony with BYU’s stated mission to “assist individuals in their quest for perfection and eternal life.”

So it is not surprising that the university's mission statement highlights the idea that "the gospel encourages the pursuit of all truth." Consequently, "students at BYU should receive a broad university education. The arts, letters, and sciences provide the core of such an education, which will help students think clearly, communicate effectively, understand important ideas in their own cultural tradition as well as that of others, and establish clear standards of intellectual integrity." Written records, particularly those we designate "primary sources," are vital to a "broad university education."¹ They are also important for the community of Saints.

By having access to the unmediated and unedited words of their parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents, to the thoughts, words, and wisdom of their spiritual and intellectual forebears, and to the greatest thought that their people have had to offer, the Saints will come to "think clearly" and will be assisted in understanding the vital role of revelation and the written record in developing and perpetuating a Zion community.

As we come to terms with our historic past and learn to love and appreciate those who sacrificed and suffered so that we might grow and develop, we in turn will see prophecy and ancient revelation fulfilled as the "hearts of the children . . . turn to their fathers" (Joseph Smith—History 1:39; see Malachi 4:6; D&C 110:15; 128:17). We will also be led to look to the future with faith and hope.

1. "BYU Mission Statement," found at unicomm.byu.edu/president/missionstatement.aspx (accessed 28 November 2007).

REMEMBRANCE

James E. Faulconer

I don't know when children begin to remember, but I know that my earliest childhood memories are an important part of who I am even though I don't have a good memory for things that I really should remember: people's names, things that happened to me, important events. For example, I was fourteen when I was baptized, but I remember only a few details of what happened, though I remember vividly some of the things surrounding my conversion. Perhaps it's true that you don't remember what doesn't matter to you or what is painful, but I don't think so. I remember relatively little about my childhood, but I know that it was a happy one. I remember relatively few details of when my wife, Janice, and I and our sons lived in Pennsylvania while I went to graduate school, and that was one of the most important and happiest times of my life.

In spite of my poor memory, some memories stand out for me. One of my earliest is a game that my mother and I played together: she chewed gum and blew as large a bubble as possible, and I tried to break the bubble before she could suck it back into her mouth. I also remember the interior of my Grandfather Sammon's car. It was dark and warm, and I especially remember the seat covering—gray, rough,

This essay is a slightly revised version of a devotional talk given at Brigham Young University on 23 June 1998. James E. Faulconer was a BYU professor of philosophy and dean of General Education and Honors when this devotional address was delivered.

and musty but pleasant smelling. Was it made of horsehair or wool? I don't know, but once in a great while I smell the smell again, though I can never quite decide just what I am smelling. In new-car showrooms or dry-goods stores I often sniff the air, unsuccessfully searching for that smell.

I remember riding in the back of that car with my mother—my grandfather driving while she pointed at the telephone poles going by outside. I think she was counting them, and we pointed to animals in the fields: “Look, a horse” or “See the cow?”

These two shadows of memory come together in one vivid memory. While my father served in General MacArthur's honor guard in Japan during the Korean War, my mother and I lived with and near my grandparents in central Missouri. I remember riding with my mother one afternoon, probably in the fall—my mother on the right and I in the middle of the backseat, and my grandfather in the front, driving. Mother blew an especially large bubble, and this time I won, exploding the bubble before she could pull it back. When it burst, it was all over her face and in her hair, and she laughed. But Grandpa didn't laugh. I think he was probably afraid we would get gum on the upholstery of his car.

I also remember my first experience with death, though until I was an adult I didn't know what experience I was having. The house where my grandparents lived when I was young is gone now, torn down because it had become dilapidated after they had passed away. I'm told that the large room in the northwest corner at the front of the house was the bedroom for my mother and me when we came back from Colorado after my father left for Japan. In spite of that, it wasn't until many years later that I remember being allowed in that room, a sitting room. In the early days that I recall, its large double doors were kept closed, and I had to be quiet when around them. At that time my Aunt Betty, Uncle Ermon's first wife, slept in the room behind those doors. In fact, she was confined there with tuberculosis—which I only learned when I was quite a bit older.

I remember nothing about Aunt Betty except being kept from her, but I remember standing in the front yard one day, north of the

yard gate across from where the chicken coop was later built, watching Uncle Ermon carry a small woman wrapped in a light-colored blanket or quilt out to the car, her head on his right shoulder. My mother and grandmother stood watching from the porch on my left. My grandfather got in the front seat to drive.

The memory ends there, but my mother says this must have happened when I was about two years old, perhaps on a visit, since by the time we returned to Missouri to wait for my father, my aunt was dead.

I also remember well the first time my father talked to me about baptism, several years before we joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I was in the fourth or fifth grade, and we lived in Munich, Germany. One day (I suppose it was a Saturday or Sunday) my father took me for a walk. We crossed the two-lane highway (now a freeway) west of our apartment building, and we walked along the forest paths with others out for a stroll. The sky was clear and bright, and the green and black of Perlacher Forest contrasted beautifully with the light of the sky. My father talked to me about whether I wished to be baptized, and I agreed. I only vaguely remember being baptized by the Protestant chaplain, but I remember well the event of our conversation. In a certain way, that walk in the Bavarian woods, talking with my father about serious things on a beautiful day, has come to define my experience in Germany.

Such memories have played a large part in shaping who I am. For philosophical reasons, I do not believe in what many refer to as the unconscious. I cannot make sense of what is said about it. Nevertheless, it is obvious that there is much about myself that I cannot bring to explicit consciousness. Memories such as those I've mentioned are the tips of icebergs floating in my consciousness; they indicate places where matters of considerable weight can be found, even if I cannot explicitly name or bring them to consciousness. They reveal not by exposure, but by suggestion.

I would like to discuss memory partly because it is a professional interest of mine, not least of all because memory is so central to the gospel that we covenant to remember every time we take the bread and water of the sacrament.

Philosophers have had quite a bit to say about memory. Reading and teaching philosophy, I've learned to distinguish between recollection and memory, though in ordinary discussions we use the two terms interchangeably. Recall is a psychological event. Memory is what we share and participate in. It includes the things I can recollect, but it is not limited to it. As share and participation, memory gives us direction (intention) beyond our subjective intentions, often intentions we do not know explicitly. It also creates expectations of us that are beyond our will.

Many may ask, "What in the world can that mean? What could memory be except a subjective psychological phenomenon—what I call to mind?" To think about that, consider an example.¹ Like most married people in our culture, I wear a wedding band, and it cannot be reduced to its economic value as a piece of gold or even to its instrumental values. That is because, beyond having economic or instrumental values, my wedding band is a symbol of my marriage. As a symbol, it is obviously connected to memory. However, though it serves to remind me that I am married, it is more than just a reminder.

What more could it be? First notice that if my wedding ring were only something for reminding me, then I could also have chosen to tie a string to my finger. Though I can create such reminders—putting Post-it notes on my computer monitor or remarks in my daily planner—a wedding ring "works" differently than such things.

My wedding ring is more than a reminder at least because my wife, Janice, gave it to me. It is different from a reminder because it has a physical relation to her and so mediates my physical relation to her. However, when I wear the ring, it isn't that, by doing so, I touch Janice in absentia. The ring isn't a substitute for my wife. Though the ring can remind me—it can cause me explicitly to think about my marriage—most of the time I wear it without explicitly calling my wife or marriage to mind. And yet it continues to do its work, as I notice quickly

1. My thinking about memory is heavily influenced by the Belgian philosopher Paul Moyaert. For more on these issues, see my paper "Scripture as Incarnation," in *Historicity and the Latter-day Saint Scriptures*, ed. Paul Y. Hoskisson (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2001), 17–61.

if I have taken it off to work and forget to put it back on. I am more conscious of its absence than its presence, so I cannot explain its work by the way in which it is, sometimes, explicitly present to thought.

Thus my wedding ring is a memorial of our relation because it does something for me in spite of myself: even if I am not thinking of my marriage, the ring demands a certain attitude toward the world, a certain reverence and respect for Janice; it connects me to Janice even when I am not explicitly thinking of her. My wedding ring makes possible certain relations in the world by embodying those relations.

Said another way, my wedding ring gives order to my world: an order that relates me to my wife and to the rest of the world, an order that cannot be reduced to an intention to remember my marriage. Thus, though it is odd to say, it is as if my wedding ring remembers my marriage for me.² Not only does the ring not usually refer to or represent Janice, it does not take her place. In a very real sense, it takes *my* place rather than hers. Perhaps like all symbols, rather than merely reminding me, my wedding ring “remembers for me.” That is how it can also, therefore, serve as an explicit reminder.

We encounter the same phenomenon in many things other than wedding rings—for example, in other physical symbols, in sacred objects, in ritual practices, in a variety of institutions. I’ve mentioned the sacrament, perhaps the most important of such event-symbols in Latter-day Saint experience, but we see the phenomenon in other, more mundane places as well.

The university is an institutional repository of memory. As an institution, it remembers a great deal for us: making our explicit recollection of many things possible, giving our lives a particular character, and creating possibilities for us that we have often not yet envisioned. The university is a memorializing object and institution, not only in the library collections but also in its organization and influence, in such things as our academic regalia and other traditions (recognized or unrecognized), in our folklore and style of gossip, and in courses such as the civilization courses or American heritage classes. We often

2. Remember that I distinguish memory from recall. Though the ring remembers for me, it does not always or even usually recall for me. Perhaps it never does.

see the university as a place from which we look to the future—a place where we prepare for jobs, where we produce knowledge that will have effects in the future. But it is equally important to recognize that, as an institution, the university is a place of remembrance and memorial.³ In fact, I suspect that a university can be oriented toward the future only because it is an institution of memory. As a Latter-day Saint institution, Brigham Young University is a repository for one particularly important memory, that of the restoration of the gospel as it enlightens the academy. That memory orients us to the world and the future in a unique way.

At the personal level, memory resides not only in my subjective recollections but also in things I may seldom notice, such as the ways I speak—ways that sometimes betray my origins, as when I say “Missouruh” rather than “Missouree.” More broadly, that I speak English rather than Korean or Swahili or Romanian as my native language is a memory of my cultural inheritance. The ways that I interact with others are memories of the interactions of my family and childhood as well as the accumulated results of countless human interactions in ages past. When I joined the Church of Jesus Christ, such things as our pioneer heritage became part of my memory, as did a uniquely Latter-day Saint vocabulary and various social practices. Most important, by joining the church, the memory of the prophets became part of me, as did the atonement. Though I was raised a believing, Bible-reading Christian, through my conversion a vast storehouse of memory was added, an important part of which is latter-day revelation.

While studying the scriptures a few years ago, I was impressed by the importance of memory when I read a passage from the Book of Mormon. At the end of 1 Nephi 1, the prophet tells us that he will

3. This should make us wary of sudden or drastic changes in the university or anywhere else. Revolutions, whether cultural or political, rarely succeed, because they propose to cut themselves off from the very memory that makes them possible and meaningful. Progress can be important (though we often overrate it), but it rarely, if ever, requires what have come to be called, in a mistaken understanding of the philosophy of science, “paradigm shifts.” Even when it does, such shifts are events that happen as we work and learn but that we can rarely, if ever, engineer.

abridge the sacred record that his father, Lehi, kept, and he will give an account of his own life. He then tells us that Lehi prophesied to the people of Jerusalem, but they refused to listen. Instead they mocked him and sought to kill him. Then, having set the context and the mood of his message, Nephi says, “I . . . will show unto you that the tender mercies of the Lord are over all those whom he hath chosen, because of their faith, to make them mighty even unto the power of deliverance” (1 Nephi 1:20).⁴ As I read this sentence, it struck me that we might take this to be Nephi’s “thesis statement” for the Book of Mormon: Nephi and the other Book of Mormon prophets give us to remember the tender mercies of the Lord so that we can be delivered according to our faith.

As I reread the Book of Mormon with Nephi’s statement in mind, I was struck by how often the prophets begin by calling us to remember the Lord’s mercy.⁵ However, given that the Book of Mormon ends

4. Nephi’s language seems to be influenced by Psalms. See Psalm 25:6: “Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy lovingkindnesses; for they have been ever of old”; 40:11: “Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O Lord: let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me”; 51:1: “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions”; 69:16: “Hear me, O Lord; for thy lovingkindness is good: turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies”; 77:9: “Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?”; 79:8: “O remember not against us former iniquities: let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us: for we are brought very low”; 103:2, 4: “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: . . . Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies”; 119:77: “Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live: for thy law is my delight”; 119:156: “Great are thy tender mercies, O Lord: quicken me according to thy judgments”; 145:9: “The Lord is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.”

5. The Book of Mormon as a whole begins with such a call. Its preface tells us that the book was provided “to show unto the remnant of the House of Israel what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers; and that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off forever—And also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations.” Lehi’s descendants will learn what the Lord did for their fathers, and the Jew and Gentile will be convinced that Jesus is the Christ by seeing that God has revealed himself to all nations—in other words, by seeing what the Lord has done for the descendants of Lehi as well as for those in Jerusalem. Moroni’s preface confirms Nephi’s thesis statement: In the Book of Mormon we are reminded that the tender mercies of the Lord are over the faithful unto their deliverance.

with the annihilation of the people of Mormon and Moroni, we may find this thesis startling. How does a record that ends in disaster and genocide show us the tender mercies of the Lord? Moroni's answer is clear: By showing us that the Lord has, over and over again, been merciful to his children, the Book of Mormon, like the Bible, gives us hope, even when we are in what would otherwise seem a hopeless situation. In Moroni 10:1, Moroni begins his final exhortations. To the remnant of the Lamanites he says:

Behold, I would exhort you that when ye shall read these things, if it be wisdom in God that ye should read them, that ye would remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam even down until the time that ye shall receive these things, and ponder it in your hearts. (Moroni 10:3)

And he follows this exhortation to remembrance with one that those who receive the Book of Mormon should ask the Father whether it is true. In other words, they should ask the Father about the truthfulness of the record of God's mercies in the Book of Mormon. In verse 24 Moroni turns from the descendants of Lehi to the rest of us, exhorting us, too, to remember the things we have read—namely, the account of God's tender mercies to his people, tender mercies that “make them mighty even unto . . . deliverance” in faith.

As do the psalmists, Nephi and Moroni see a close connection, perhaps even an identity, between remembering the tender mercies of the Lord and repentance. Without such memory, we seem unable to repent; if we repent, remembering those tender mercies is always part of our repentance. Over and over again we find this theme in the Book of Mormon: conversion and reconversion come by remembering; dedication, sacrifice, and covenant are one with memory. Sermon after sermon begins with a prophet reminding his listeners or readers of what the Lord has already done for them. They remind us of the flood (Alma 10:22), of the exodus from Egypt (Mosiah 7:19), and of the journey across the ocean (2 Nephi 10:20). Ammon converts Lamoni

by rehearsing these stories to him, beginning with the story of Adam and Eve (Alma 18:36).

Once I noticed this theme of remembering God's mercy, I saw it everywhere. The Lord announced himself to Moses by calling himself "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (Exodus 3:6), a common appellation and a name that reminds us of the mercies that he showed to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, particularly as those mercies are manifest in his covenant with them (see Leviticus 26:42).⁶

And occasions for memory are found not only in the scriptures. Each Sunday we renew our covenant with the Father by taking tokens of Christ's body and blood in remembrance of that flesh and blood and by covenanting always to remember him. I understand the Word of Wisdom as an ongoing memorial of who we are and what we have covenanted.⁷ One of the most obvious sites of memory is the garment worn by those who are endowed, reminding us of the covenants we have made in the temple; we wear sacred memory on our bodies day in and day out. Like my wedding ring, the garment remembers for me, calling me to recollection when need be, but ordering my world even when I do not have it explicitly in my consciousness. Because I wear the garment, I am in the world differently than I would be if I did not.

In my own life, the memorializing objects and practices of the church continue to make my spiritual life possible. When I remember the Savior not only in my recollections, but especially in my practices and relations with others, I bear witness of his saving relation to me; and, as promised in the sacrament prayers, I receive the Spirit. To the

6. See also Exodus 3:15–16; 4:5; 6:3, 8; 33:1; Numbers 32:11; Deuteronomy 1:8; 6:10; 9:5, 27; 29:13; 30:20; 34:4; 2 Kings 13:23; Matthew 8:11; 22:32; Mark 12:26; Luke 20:37; Acts 3:13; 7:32; 1 Nephi 6:4; 17:40; 19:10; Mosiah 7:19; 23:23; Alma 29:11; 36:2; 3 Nephi 4:30; Mormon 9:11; D&C 27:10; 136:21.

7. The Word of Wisdom may also direct our attention to the coming of Christ. Since anticipation is a form of memory (another reason it cannot be reduced to recollection), it may call the second coming to our remembrance. The Savior says: "But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" (Matthew 26:29). Perhaps by our not drinking of the fruit of the vine now, we remember the Savior's promise that he will drink with us when he returns.

degree that I do not have memory—from the readily identifiable and seemingly mundane culture that Latter-day Saints all over the globe share to my obedience to commandments even when I am not thinking of them to the mysteries and blessings of the temple—I am not part of the body of Christ, I am not one of his adopted children.

Sometimes I find myself slipping from the memory into which I entered through my conversion. I have doubts about my testimony. Something happens that I do not understand, and I wonder whether the church is true. I may chafe at commandments or policies. I might think myself better than others—sometimes because of education, sometimes because of social status, occasionally for political differences, often for who-knows-what reason. I may criticize instructors and leaders in the church, wishing (not out loud and rarely even to myself, but wishing it anyway) that they had more “training for the ministry,” that they were better at getting my interest—shifting the burden of my spiritual life to them. Occasionally I find myself bored with the talks in sacrament meeting or quietly and self-deceptively scornful of the testimonies borne on fast Sunday. In other words, though I may be able to recall my covenants, sometimes I find myself no longer remembering them, no longer remembering (whatever I recollect) that at baptism I covenanted to “mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort” so that I would “stand as [a witness] of God at all times and in all things, and in all places” (Mosiah 18:9).⁸ In spite of that covenant, sometimes I do not even learn with those who would learn or testify with those who would testify, much less mourn or comfort. Whatever I may recall, whatever I may repeat consciously, at such times I have begun no longer to remember the tender mercies of the Lord; I have begun to slip out of the ongoing process of repentance. (I hope that others will recognize a version of themselves in my self-description, not because I hope they share my failings, but because I assume that I am not the only one who finds himself slipping on occasion.)

8. Notice that Alma makes bearing witness (recollection) dependent on our relation with others (memory): “mourning with” and “comforting” make testimony possible, suggesting that it is not truly possible without such relations to our fellows.

Such events do not characterize most of my life in the church, but they happen often enough that I must consider how to deal with them. My answer is recollection. Though memory cannot be reduced to recollection, when I begin to fade and falter, the answer is to explicitly recollect a few events in my life that have brought sharply to my attention what living my life memorializes. Recollecting the visible tips of the largely invisible icebergs of memory helps resituate me, bringing me back to who I am, putting me back into the larger context of memory.

Consider a few of those recollections. I share them with some trepidation. Sacred experiences are not to be shared easily, like political slogans or loose change. One should be careful about sharing them, for sharing them too often or under inappropriate circumstances strips them of their sacred character. They become commonplace rather than sacred. Nevertheless, there are times when we can share sacred recollections with each other to strengthen the testimonies of both those who testify and those who hear the testimony. I pray that this can be such an occasion.

The first experience I recall is that of my conversion. My father met the missionaries through a friend at work, Robert Clark. I met them through my parents when my mother cajoled me into taking part in a “cottage meeting” at our house. Though I began reluctantly, once I started listening, I was hooked. I enjoyed the missionary discussions and liked the missionaries, and I enjoyed learning what they taught. To be honest, I didn’t read the Book of Mormon, and I didn’t pray about the church very much. However, after several months of discussion, with the rest of my family I wanted to join the church.

Since we hadn’t been to church yet, the missionaries arranged for us to attend the next Sunday so that we could be baptized the Saturday after that—the first one of February 1962. Sitting on the left side of the chapel, watching the meeting begin, I was not particularly impressed. It looked very much like the Protestant services I was accustomed to, except that there were more people on the stand, the table for communion—what Latter-day Saints call the sacrament—was to the right of the room rather than in the middle, those to say the prayers over the

sacramental emblems were surprisingly young, and the meeting was shockingly informal and unpolished. Though I had decided to be baptized, as yet I remained a curious onlooker more than a convert.

As the sacrament was blessed and passed, the bread came to me. In my former church, the Disciples of Christ, we believed that everyone present should take the sacramental emblems, and though the missionaries had told my parents that this wasn't the Latter-day Saint practice, no one had told me. As the bread tray came around, I took a piece and put it in my mouth out of habit.

As I placed the bread in my mouth, I was overcome by the most intense spiritual experience I had ever had. Instantly I knew something of what Paul had experienced on the road to Damascus. Without being especially worthy of it, without having sought it any more than superficially, I had been touched by the Holy Ghost. My entire soul—body and spirit—was electrified and on fire. Now, rather than thinking that it would be a good idea to be a Mormon, that Latter-day Saint theology was interesting, and so on, I knew that I had to join this church. I was no longer an interested spectator. I knew that what I had learned from the missionaries and what I would learn later was true. I knew that Joseph Smith was a prophet, as was David O. McKay, the prophet at the time. Though I had as yet read only a passage here and a passage there in the Book of Mormon, I knew it was the word of God. Though I had believed in Christ all my life, for the first time I knew that Jesus Christ had died for my sins and I understood something of what that meant.

With that experience, I suppose there was a sense in which I could still choose not to be baptized. Nevertheless, there was a more profound sense in which I no longer had any choice. I knew that my life from that point on would be inextricably bound to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I didn't know what that entailed, but I knew it was true.

I do not know why I was privileged to have such an experience when many others are not. I cannot explain what happened. I only know that the experience has provided an anchor for my soul, a memory to which I can return in recollection when I begin to falter, a mem-

ory that returns me to the ordering of the gospel and the order of the church. Recollecting this moment of my life returns my memory to me and, more importantly, returns me to it. The experience is something for which I am deeply and eternally grateful.

That first taste of the sacrament has been the most important spiritual experience of my life because it converted me, changing my life. However, since then I have, on the whole, lived a relatively mundane life; though spiritual experiences are common, they are rarely dramatic. I do not regret that. It is important to learn to see the spiritual in the mundane, to find spirituality even when not emotionally wrought, to recognize that the Spirit usually brings peace (John 14:27) and speaks quietly. That is more important than having dramatic experiences, and we must be wary of equating our emotional and our spiritual lives. Nevertheless, my first experience with the sacrament was not the only such emotionally powerful spiritual experience I have had.

Shortly after we were baptized, my father was assigned to the Korean Military Advisory Group for the South Korean Army and was allowed to take his family to Korea with him. We were privileged to grow up in the church while in Korea, to be taught and guided by such families as the Terrys and the Hogans, and to be inspired by wonderful Korean Saints like Rhee Honam and Kim Cha Bong. In those days in Korea we did not have stake or district conferences for people in the armed services. We had “servicemen’s retreats,” occasions when those who could get time off could go to Seoul and spend two or three days meeting and sharing testimonies. Elder Gordon B. Hinckley was the visiting General Authority for Asia, and he was often able to attend our retreats, so they were a special occasion for us.

One year, during late fall or winter, we had a retreat in Seoul, and Elder Hinckley attended. As we met in our final meeting, a testimony meeting, many bore their testimonies, including my younger brother. I recall nothing said in those testimonies (though President Hinckley has such a prodigious memory that he can still tell what my brother said), but I felt the Spirit as strongly then as I had when I first received my testimony. I particularly remember Elder Hinckley bearing his

testimony, telling us that the Spirit in our meeting was as strong as he had ever felt it, as strong even as he had felt it in meetings of the Twelve in the temple. He said that there were angels in the room witnessing our testimonies.

I knew that what he said was true. I could see no angels. Tears were streaming down my face so heavily that I couldn't see anything, much less angels. But I knew again, absolutely knew, what I had learned with my first experience with the Spirit: the church is true; the priesthood is real, and it is the power of God. I had a feeling that I take to be a premonition of what it means finally to be sanctified, for like King Benjamin's people, for a time I had "no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually" (Mosiah 5:2). I could not and did not want to separate myself from the church that made such an experience possible or from the gospel taught in that church, pointing as it does to salvation in Jesus Christ. That experience with the Spirit in the presence of one of the Twelve became another anchor for my soul.

The Lord has not ceased to give me such anchors. One of the more recent was in August of 1994. My second son, Matthew, was to return from his mission to Pôrto Alegre, Brazil. He asked that his mother and I meet him and do some traveling, but we couldn't. However, we compromised and I went to Pôrto Alegre to pick him up. Matthew and I stayed in Pôrto Alegre for a few days and then set out to São Paulo by bus. The day we were to leave for Curitiba, we discovered that we would have to wait until late afternoon to get the bus, but we had already checked out of our hotel and didn't have anything left that we wanted to do in Pôrto Alegre.

Matthew had the idea to take a bus to some point midway between Pôrto Alegre and Curitiba, spend the day there, and then catch the bus to Curitiba as it came through our stopping point at night. He asked the woman selling tickets to tell us a good place to go. "Rosário," she said. "It is a nice resort town with a beach." We bought our tickets and headed to Rosário.

When we stepped from the bus in Rosário, we were surprised. There were mountains, but no beach. We were obviously inland and

rather high. We decided to get some lunch and see what Rosário had to offer. If worst came to worst, we could sit in the bus station and read.

As we turned the corner of one of the first streets we passed, two boys, one a teenager and the other perhaps eleven, came running down the street shouting, “Elders! Elders!” Matthew stopped and talked with them, explaining that although I was wearing a white shirt and tie, only one of us was a missionary and that we were to be there for only a few hours. They were excited anyway, not caring that I wasn’t a missionary as long as someone was. We must go to see their mother. The older boy ran off to find her, and the younger boy led us toward her. As we came around another corner, a middle-aged woman came running down the street, tears flowing, also crying, “Elders! Elders!” Again Matthew explained that he was the only missionary there and that we would be there only a short time, but that was irrelevant to her. Her prayers had been answered. She said, “Fine, but have family home evening with us, please.”

We couldn’t refuse, so we agreed to go to their home early that evening for family home evening. We spent the afternoon in the town wandering around, buying some presents for Matthew’s sisters, and sitting in the park, reading and talking. Then we went to their tiny apartment above the woman’s small candy store. We visited with them and sang a hymn. Matthew taught a lesson, and we prayed with them. As we were finishing, the sister told us that we must visit a young man in town who was inactive. (I wasn’t sure how one knows that another is inactive when there is no branch or activity of the church in a town, but she knew—and she was right.)

We walked across the small town to the highway where this young man owned a truck stop. He fed us a gigantic, definitely nonvegetarian dinner and talked at length with Matthew. As Matthew later explained to me, the young man had had a dream the night before. In the dream the missionaries came to visit him and told him that he must return to church—and there we were. (He could attend church in a neighboring city by hitching a ride with truck drivers, but he had stopped doing so.)

I was thunderstruck. I could not believe the faith of these people. I could not believe how desperately they hunger for what I take for

granted. I could not believe how much the Lord loves them as individuals. I could not believe that he had used our seemingly chance wandering around Brazil to bless a few of his children. As I sat on the bus that night, I had difficulty sleeping, not because the bus was uncomfortable (which it was), but because I was so overcome with a vision of the love that the Father and the Son have for us, of the need for missionaries in places like Rosário, of the beautiful faith of people like those I had just met, of my own unworthiness in comparison to theirs, and of my ingratitude for the blessings I have received.

Those few hours in Rosário, Brazil, gave me a deepened appreciation for the love God has for his children. I was reminded that his love is not a general love but a love for each specific person. Though what we brought to the Saints in Rosário was relatively little, that we could be instruments for bringing it renewed my understanding of the Lord's power to save—to save from difficulty, from oppression, from loneliness, and especially from death and sin. It made me ashamed of taking for granted the access I have to the church and the temple, to inspired leadership and instruction. It showed me why the missionary effort is so important and must expand, for here was a group of ten or fifteen people to whom the church could not yet come because, in spite of the large numbers of young people who serve missions, there are still not enough missionaries in the field. Like the previous experiences, those few hours in Rosário became another anchor for my soul, something I recollect as a way to continue to remember the covenants I am part of and the obligations that have come to me.

I live in a world that gets its significance from memory: memory manifest in wedding rings and garments and sacramental emblems, in ordinances and practices and customs, in speech patterns and names and literature, in universities and libraries and classes. I have learned that I live not on my own breath but also on that of the Spirit, without which there is only recollection at best and no memory, without which emblems, ordinances, and society are dead and hollow shells. Memory—manifest in our speech, our customs and habits, our relations, our ordinances and commandments—transcends

and encompasses me, making the world I live in possible by giving it meaning and structure.

Recollection, calling various things to mind, isn't memory. Nevertheless, recollection can resituate us in memory. As I recollect—re-collect—my experiences with the Spirit, I take my place again in the memory that makes life possible and good, that strengthens and continues my testimony. Most Saints have experienced moments of spirituality to which their souls are anchored. Those who have not will—sometimes in answer to prayer, sometimes unbidden. My prayer is that, when we face doubt or difficulty, we will re-collect our souls by recollecting those anchoring experiences. And, though I have no authority to offer spiritual promises, based on my experience I promise that those who do so recollect will continue not only to recollect but also to remember the everlasting gospel, the covenants they have made, and the holy name of Jesus Christ.

IN THE FORECAST: GLOBAL CHRISTIANITY ALIVE AND WELL

Ted Lyon

Review of Philip Jenkins. *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007. xiii + 316 pp., with maps and index. \$14.95 paperback.

God is not dead, and neither is Christianity. But Christian faith is rapidly being transformed as it moves south! And not just for the winter—it'll stay there for a long time. Phillip Jenkins, Distinguished Professor of History and Religious Studies at Pennsylvania State University,¹ advances a simple and direct thesis: that Christianity is growing, not shrinking, and that Africa, Asia, and Latin America are now replacing Europe as the geographic center of world Christianity. He projects that by the year 2050 only 20 percent of the world's Christians will live in Europe and the United States; he also projects that by midcentury, when world population will have grown to some 9 billion, a third of the total, or 3 billion people, will be Christians. While the percentage of Christians in the world will remain relatively unchanged (there are currently about 2 billion Christians in a world population of 6.3 billion), the geographic center will shift to southern climes.

1. Jenkins has published some ten or twelve books on contemporary religious topics, including *Hidden Gospels: How the Search for Jesus Lost Its Way* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); *The New Anti-Catholicism: The Last Acceptable Prejudice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); and *The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

Perhaps the subtitle of this book—"The Coming of Global Christianity"—is a bit sensationalist, even misleading. Jenkins does not project the idea of the Christian religions sweeping the entire world in some massive global crusade, nor does his use of the rather archaic term *Christendom* elicit the same meanings it did during medieval times. There will be no heavily armored knights marching across the globe with swords unsheathed. But Christianity, he argues, will continue to flourish and expand, especially in Africa and South Asia. For example, in the year 1900 there were only 10 million Christians in Africa. By 2000 some 360 million Africans had identified themselves as Christians; by the year 2050 the number will likely increase to 1 billion! The center of Christianity will no longer be Europe. Instead, the center will shift, and by the landmark year Jenkins uses to measure change, the year 2050, only one in five Christians will be non-Hispanic white. The "new face" of Christianity will be decidedly darker.

Latin America, of course, is already Christian and Catholic, but Jenkins projects a change from mildly passive, nominal Catholicism to more energetic, charismatic denominations, noting that in the economically progressive country of Chile, for example, more than 20 percent of the population is already evangelical, active, and highly participative. Even in a more traditional country like Guatemala, charismatic Christianity is expanding rapidly, flourishing in the tiniest hamlets as well as in urban centers. From my own studies, I calculate that there are likely more participating, "churched" non-Catholics than active Catholics in both of these countries. In short, Roman Catholicism is weakening, but Protestant Christianity is thriving.

Many of Jenkins's statistics may shock the reader. For example:

1. "The annual baptismal totals for Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo are each higher than those for such familiar Catholic lands as Italy, France, Spain, and Poland" (pp. 194–95).
2. "There are [only] half as many Catholics in the whole of the Netherlands as in (say) just the Manila metropolitan area" (p. 198).
3. "In absolute terms, there are more Christians in the People's Republic [of China] than in either France or Great Britain" (p. 70).

In this dynamic sea change, it seems that the United States will be an anomaly. The “southerners” are coming north—the flood of Hispanic immigrants bolsters and renovates the still-dynamic Catholic Church in the United States, as well as provides millions of converts to U.S. Protestant and evangelical congregations. Yet even without the influx of Hispanics, the United States has stood out as the exception to the European norm that economic prosperity generally spawns religious passivity. Indeed, Roger Finke and Rodney Stark have convincingly demonstrated that from its inception 230 years ago, the United States has become more “churched,” more religiously active, and not less participative.² As North America has prospered, so has religion. Jenkins confirms this analysis. He charts the largest Christian communities over a period of fifty years (numbers are in millions):

Nation	2000	2025	2050
United States	225	270	330
Brazil	164	190	195
Mexico	95	127	145
Philippines	77	116	145
Nigeria	50	83	123

By every measure the United States seems destined to continue as the largest single Christian country in the world.

Jenkins seems unsure how to handle the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints within the United States and indeed throughout the entire world. He presumes it to be “independent” from general Christianity (see p. 60). Later he notes that many “hard-line Northern observers would consider [Mormonism] only a semi-Christian movement,” but he offers little definition for what a “semi-Christian” religion would be (p. 66). He hardly even counts Latter-day Saints, since worldwide the number of Latter-day Saints is still rather small in comparison to Protestant Christians. Jenkins does briefly explain why

2. Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776–2005: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy*, 2nd ed. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 23.

many religious denominations find it difficult to accept Mormons as Christians: the use of additional scriptures and various unique doctrines not shared by other Christian religions (see p. 86).

Jenkins sets out some present and possible future religious conflicts, especially the current clashes between dynamic Christianity and crusading Islamic fundamentalism in Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia. For followers of Muhammad, “Babylon” is now the symbol for the West, and Baghdad, Damascus, and Tehran are the spiritual centers, almost akin to a “Zion.” He believes that this tension between Islam and the West will increase in relation to population and geographical expansion. Jenkins is optimistic, perhaps too much so, that Islam and Christianity can somehow coexist. But he projects that tensions will worsen by 2050, when Islam will likely boast 2 billion adherents to Christianity’s 3 billion. His summary of these possible future conflicts leaves the question of religious coexistence for other scholars to sort out.

Jenkins argues that the new world Christendom will be poorer as it expands through Africa and South America. Christ’s doctrines appeal more to the hungry masses than to those with full bellies. Jenkins’s recent book *The New Faces of Christianity* explores the relationship between poverty and religion with innovative analysis supported by statistics. The new Christianity will not only appeal to the poor, but it will also become more conservative, emphasizing personal revelation, angelic visitations, and the presence of many prophets. It will become more syncretic, as the example of the Virgin of Guadalupe demonstrates. Her story began in a tiny town near Mexico City, but she now transcends her country of origin and has become the patron saint of all Latin America. Similar mixes of local myths and apparitions will infuse the new Christianity with vitality and may even become the norm, according to Jenkins’s projections. These charismatic elements will then manifest themselves in the United States as well as in the South. Jenkins also projects considerable splintering, with more local leaders breaking off from established churches and forming new centers and types of worship in the Southern Hemisphere.

The new Christian church (composed of many denominations) will be an evangelizing, missionary Christendom, but not only in the South—thousands of missionaries will, he imagines, come from Africa, Asia, and South America to reclaim and return the apostate North to Christ. As a harbinger, Jenkins notes that in 2002 there were already fifteen hundred foreign missionaries teaching and preaching in Great Britain alone, hailing from fifty nations! Evangelizing the North will only increase in future decades. Christianity will survive, transformed and vibrant.

“THE GLORY OF GOD IS INTELLIGENCE”: A NOTE ON MAIMONIDES

Raphael Jospe

In a series of four lectures at Brigham Young University on the role of intellect in Judaism and the idea “that we serve God through the use of our minds,”¹ Jacob Neusner borrowed the university motto for his title essay, “‘The Glory of God Is Intelligence’: A Theology of Torah-learning in Judaism.” Neusner correctly and perceptively called attention to the parallel between the traditional Jewish emphasis on the centrality of developing the mind and learning—specifically learning Torah—and this seminal Latter-day Saint value, based on Joseph Smith’s statement in Doctrine and Covenants 93:36, “The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth.”²

Neusner explains the parallel as follows:

Religions say the same thing in different ways. Let us ask, when Judaism states, “The study of Torah—revelation—outweighs all else,” and when The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints says, “The glory of God is intelligence,” what is it that the two affirm about the nature of the human being and of God? The answer begins in the scripture *Let us make man in our likeness*. Judaism maintains that that part of man which is like God is not the corporeal, but the spiritual, aspect of man.

1. Jacob Neusner, *The Glory of God Is Intelligence: Four Lectures on the Role of Intellect in Judaism* (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1978), xii.

2. Revelation at Kirtland, Ohio, 6 May 1833.

Man is made in God's image. And that part of man which is like God is the thing which separates man from beast: the mind, consciousness.³

Neusner's focus and discussion are, appropriately, based on the ideas of classical rabbinic Judaism. In the Middle Ages, however, we find an even closer parallel in the thought of Moses Maimonides (1138–1204). His *Guide of the Perplexed*, which aims at showing a student perplexed by the apparent contradictions between philosophical, scientific truth and the Torah, arising from a literalist reading of scripture and rabbinic tradition, opens with a discussion of the term *zelem* (Genesis 1:26–27), usually translated as the “image” in which God created the human being. In Maimonides' analysis, *zelem* refers not to a physical resemblance (for which there are other Hebrew words) but to “the natural form, I mean to the notion in virtue of which a thing is constituted as a substance and becomes what it is,”⁴ in other words its essential nature. Maimonides continues: “That which was meant in the scriptural dictum, *let us make man in our image*, was the specific form, which is intellectual apprehension, not the shape and configuration.”⁵

Even more remarkable is another statement by Maimonides, part of which is almost exactly paralleled by Joseph Smith's phrase. The Mishnah *Hagigah* 2:1 states: “Whoever has no regard for the honor of his creator is worthy of not having come into the world.” In his *Commentary to the Mishnah*, Maimonides explains “the honor of his creator”:⁶ “This means whoever has no regard for his intellect, for *the intellect is the glory of God. (w'al-`aql hu kevod adonai).*”⁷

3. Neusner, *Glory of God*, 2.

4. Moses Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, trans. Shlomo Pines (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 1:22.

5. Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed*, 1:22.

6. My thanks to my friend and learned colleague Professor Menachem Kellner for calling my attention to this passage in Maimonides' *Commentary to the Mishnah* and for suggesting that I follow up on it. He has translated the Maimonidean passage in question in his essay “Maimonides' Commentary on *Mishnah Hagigah* II.1: Translation and Commentary,” in *From Strength to Strength: Lectures from Shearith Israel*, ed. Marc D. Angel (New York: Sepher-Hermon Press, 1998), 101–11.

7. Maimonides, *Commentary to the Mishnah*, trans. Yosef Kafih (Jerusalem: Mosad Ha-Rav Kook, 1964), 2:378, emphasis added. In the Judeo-Arabic original, Maimonides

In an earlier article, I discussed various similarities and differences between Jews and Latter-day Saints.⁸ It seems to me that the parallel between statements by Maimonides and Joseph Smith is an instructive case in point. Jacob Neusner has written, also in a publication of Brigham Young University,⁹ about rabbinic corporealistic conceptions of God, which, he maintains by comparative citations, are similar to Latter-day Saint belief in a physical God.

Maimonides, of course, vehemently argued to the contrary, as is immediately evident from his understanding of the divine *zelem* in which humans were created as the essence or natural form and not as a physical resemblance. The whole thrust of Maimonides' work, both as a rabbinic codifier of *halakhah* (Jewish law) and as a philosopher, was to educate Jews away from corporealistic beliefs and to sublimate biblical and rabbinic anthropomorphisms as metaphor. The third of Maimonides' "Thirteen Principles" (found in his Judeo-Arabic *Commentary to the Mishnah* and intended for a popular readership)¹⁰ is "the negation of corporeality from [God], namely that this One is not a body."¹¹ The denial of any of these principles, Maimonides

uses the Hebrew phrase *kevod adonai* for "the glory of God." The Arabic *'aql* and Hebrew *sekhel* can be translated as "intellect," "intelligence," or "reason." For a discussion of Maimonides' use of the expression *kavod*, see Menachem Kellner, *Maimonides' Confrontation with Mysticism* (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2006), 189–98, 209–15.

8. Raphael Jospe, "Jews and Mormons: Similarities and Differences," in *FARMS Review* 17/2 (2005): 401–21.

9. Jacob Neusner, "Conversation in Nauvoo about the Corporeality of God," *BYU Studies* 36/1 (1996–97): 7–30; also his "The Case of Leviticus Rabbah," in *By Study and Also by Faith: Essays in Honor of Hugh W. Nibley on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday, 27 March 1990*, ed. John M. Lundquist and Stephen D. Ricks (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1990), 1:332–88.

10. Maimonides, *Commentary to the Mishnah*, Sanhedrin, chap. 10, 5:195ff. A partial English translation is found in Isadore Twersky, ed., *A Maimonides Reader* (New York: Behrman House, 1972), 401–23.

11. For important studies of the "Thirteen Principles" and of contemporary Jewish problems with them, see Menachem Kellner, *Dogma in Medieval Jewish Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986); Kellner, *Must a Jew Believe Anything?* 2nd ed. (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2006); and Marc B. Shapiro, *The Limits of Orthodox Theology: Maimonides' Thirteen Principles Reappraised* (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2004).

claims, constitutes heresy and warrants removal from the Jewish community.

In his *Code* (written in Hebrew and also intended for a popular readership), Maimonides categorized as a heretic (*min*) a Jew, however pious in his or her observance of the Torah, who affirms that there is one God but that God has a body.¹² Later, in his *Guide of the Perplexed* (written in Judeo-Arabic and explicitly intended only for the intelligentsia), Maimonides asserted that a person who believes in a corporeal God is worse than an idolater.¹³

Furthermore, Maimonides insisted not only that all biblical and rabbinic anthropomorphisms are to be understood metaphorically, but that the rabbis themselves affirmed and insisted on noncorporealist readings of these passages. If Neusner is correct that the Talmudic rabbis believed in a corporeal God,¹⁴ then Maimonides was a phenomenally successful ideological revolutionary in the history of Judaism. If Maimonides is correct, that his view was always the true (albeit esoteric) stance of the rabbis, then by his own standards he was a great educator, but no ideological revolutionary.

The consistent and virtually universal Jewish affirmation today, and for hundreds of years, of noncorporealist conceptions of God and metaphorical understanding of biblical and rabbinic anthropomorphisms are testimony to Maimonides' success, one way or the other, in sublimating Jewish belief.

The remarkable parallel between the statements of Maimonides and Joseph Smith—"Intellect is the glory of God" and "The glory of God is intelligence," respectively—is thus, once again, an example of the fundamental similarities and differences between Jews and Latter-day Saints. But the meaning, for virtually all Jews since Maimonides (and many before him), radically differs from Latter-day Saint conceptions of God.

12. Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Book of Knowledge, Laws of Repentance 3:7.

13. Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed*, 1:36.

14. See Neusner, "Conversation in Nauvoo," 25.

SISTER BRODIE AND SISTER BROOKS

Larry E. Morris

Review of Gary Topping. *Utah Historians and the Reconstruction of Western History*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003. xii + 388 pp., with index. \$24.95.

Gary Topping, associate professor of history at Salt Lake Community College and archivist of the Catholic Diocese of Salt Lake City, brings good credentials to the researching and writing of Utah history. Former curator of manuscripts at the Utah State Historical Society, he is the author of *Glen Canyon and the San Juan Country* and the editor of *Great Salt Lake: An Anthology*.¹ In *Utah Historians*, Topping treats the lives and writings of an amazing group of historians—Bernard DeVoto, Dale Morgan, Juanita Brooks, Wallace Stegner, and Fawn Brodie—all contemporaries, all with a strong Utah connection, and all of whom wrote about Western and Mormon history. Such a book is overdue because each of the five produced significant work and achieved national prominence. In addition, their interrelation-

Dale Morgan inspired the title for this essay by sometimes calling Fawn Brodie and Juanita Brooks “Sister Brodie” and “Sister Brooks,” respectively, and by referring to himself as “brother.” Writing to Brodie in 1955, for example, he closed by saying, “I am, Dear Sister Brodie, your bro. in the bonds of faith.” John Phillip Walker, ed., *Dale Morgan on Early Mormonism: Correspondence and a New History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1986), 87. Morgan made such references with a touch of sarcasm but also with genuine affection, and I do the same.

1. Published by the University of Idaho Press and Utah State University Press, respectively. Publishing with the University of Oklahoma Press, definitely in the top tier of publishers of Western Americana, adds another feather to Topping’s cap.

ships influenced their writing careers. Few Western states could boast such an interesting group of historians. Topping, who has studied all of them meticulously, candidly discusses their strengths and weaknesses as historians. He also offers fascinating biographical information. While *Utah Historians* thus has value for readers interested in these historians, Topping undercuts that value by going out of his way to cast the church and its leaders in a negative light—sacrificing sound historical methodology in the process.

“The Niece of David O. McKay”²

I would like to focus on Brodie and Brooks because they were both born into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and both produced controversial work on Mormon history. I am interested in DeVoto, Stegner, and Morgan and admire them as writers,³ but none of the three published books that engaged Mormon historical issues

2. In April of 1951, not long after David O. McKay had been named president of the church, Morgan sent a mock title page of *No Man Knows My History* to Brodie, listing the author as “the niece of DAVID O. MCKAY/PRESIDENT OF THE MORMON CHURCH.” Walker, *Dale Morgan*, 187.

3. Not long ago, I pulled down one of the three Bernard DeVoto books on my shelf, *Across the Wide Missouri* (a compelling account of the Rocky Mountain fur trade during the 1830s), expecting to find a colorful and interesting description of pemmican. DeVoto did not disappoint, explaining that pemmican was a mixture of pulverized meat—with the gristle and sinew removed—and melted fat: “It was a splendid high-energy food, a complete diet in itself. It was also a great treat (some cynics dissenting), incomparably richer and more flavorsome than jerky. It could be eaten uncooked or fried, roasted, or boiled, by itself or in combination with anything you had on hand. The luxury article was ‘berry pemmican,’ into which pulverized dried fruits of any available kind had been mixed.” *Across the Wide Missouri* (Boston: Mariner Books, 1998), 164. This is vintage DeVoto. His descriptions of Indian and frontier life are packed with detail and are endlessly fascinating. As Topping points out, DeVoto was a solid researcher who could write well. His work was well received by both readers and critics, and he won both the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize for his Western history. As for Stegner, who also won the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize (but in his case for fiction), one of the most recent novels I’ve read was his haunting *The Spectator Bird*. I also believe that another of his novels, *Recapitulation*, contains some of the best descriptions of the Salt Lake Valley that I know of. The historian among Topping’s fearsome fivesome I admire most is Dale Morgan. I see his *Jedediah Smith and the Opening of the West* as a masterpiece and believe that *The West of William Ashley* is one of the best examples I’ve seen of thorough research into primary documents accompanied by impeccable annotation.

the way that Brodie's and Brooks's did. (Morgan planned a great work on Mormon history but never completed or published it.) I would like to point out, however, that one of the best sections of Topping's book is his comparison of DeVoto to the great American poet Walt Whitman, noting that "one could easily imagine Whitman's delight if he could have witnessed DeVoto's continental vision, his extravagant language, and his easy trespasses across the boundary lines of literature and history" (p. 79). In parts of the book like this one, Topping demonstrates both his ability to view the past from a refreshing and insightful perspective and his skill as a writer.⁴

Getting back to our duo, we turn first to Fawn Brodie (1915–1981). In taking a closer look at her life, I found several interesting parallels between her background and mine. We both had ancestors who lived in Nauvoo before coming west, ancestors who converted to Mormonism in Great Britain, ancestors who settled in northeastern Utah (hers in Huntsville and mine in Hyrum). In addition, Fawn Brodie is in several ways exactly one generation ahead of me: She was born in 1915, three months before my dad. Her father, Thomas E. McKay, was born in October of 1875, the same month and year as my grandfather. Her first grandchild was born in 1975, months before the birth of my and my wife's first child. Like Fawn Brodie, I loved reading as a child, wrote poetry as an adolescent, got a master's degree in English, and later turned to history. (I wish that, like Brodie, I had signed a contract with a prominent national publisher before turning thirty, but what can you do?)

At first glance, it is natural to assume that Fawn Brodie experienced an ideal Mormon upbringing. Both of her grandfathers, David McKay and George H. Brimhall, the latter president of Brigham

Morgan had unique gifts for both finding forgotten documents and writing beautiful prose—what a rare combination.

4. Even in his treatment of DeVoto, however, Topping editorializes needlessly on Mormonism. Rather than allowing DeVoto to express anti-Mormon sentiments for himself—something he does quite well—Topping insists on labeling Joseph Smith's theology "bizarre" (pp. 64, 86) and on characterizing priesthood authority as "iron" (p. 64). Indeed, Topping uses the word *iron* so often in describing LDS leaders that he manufactures his own cliché (see pp. 8 and 89 for other examples).

Young University from 1903 to 1921, were well respected Latter-day Saints, as were her parents, and she grew up in the McKay home in Huntsville. Her uncle, David O. McKay, became an apostle before she was born and was called to the First Presidency when she was a teenager.⁵ But all was not well in the McKay and Brimhall families. In his brief discussion of Fawn's early life, Topping mentions that her grandfather, George H. Brimhall, had been dismissed—unjustly in the minds of some family members—as president of BYU⁶ and that her mother, Fawn Brimhall McKay, lost her faith in Mormonism and attempted suicide more than once. All of this was news to me. (I knew of George Brimhall but didn't know he was Fawn Brodie's grandfather.) I was surprised, however, that Topping fails to probe the question of whether Brodie's childhood experiences prompted an early disillusionment with Mormonism that later blossomed into a complete loss of faith.

Nor does Topping inform us that a seriously ill George Brimhall committed suicide (when Fawn was sixteen) or that his daughter—Fawn's mother—finally succeeded in taking her own life (when Fawn was forty-five). Again, Topping says little of the strange living arrangements in the Huntsville home, with Thomas's seven-person family occupying only two bedrooms of the nine-bedroom home, even though the other bedrooms were unoccupied most of the year. (Thomas's brothers and sisters used them during the summer months.) In addition, Fawn's mother had virtually no say in the decorating and upkeep of the home because she was not a voting member of the McKay Family Corporation. Topping does not mention that all of this could be quite meaningful in terms of Fawn's decision to give up her belief. Her "idyllic" childhood (a phrase she herself used) was

5. Fawn's father, Thomas E. McKay, was called as an assistant to the Twelve in 1941. Topping mistakenly refers to him as an apostle (p. 285).

6. Different branches of the Brimhall family tend to view George Brimhall's history and his attitude toward the church quite differently. See Mary Jane Woodger and Joseph H. Groberg (a descendant of Brimhall through a different wife than the one Fawn Brodie descended through), "George H. Brimhall's Legacy of Service to Brigham Young University," *BYU Studies* 43/2 (2004): 4–46.

in some ways quite the opposite of that.⁷ In reading of her family circumstances, I felt a good deal of sympathy for her.

‘No Man Knows My History’

Fawn Brodie, of course, is best known both in and out of Utah for her biography of Joseph Smith, *No Man Knows My History*. Early in his discussion of this book, Topping reveals much about his attitude toward Mormonism in a single sentence. Speaking of the Book of Mormon, he writes: “What sounds to modern readers like an *ungodly slumgullion* of popular cultural themes designed to address the yearnings of a particular locality at a particular moment turned out to have a widespread and profound appeal” (pp. 290–91, emphasis added). It’s hard to understand why Topping, who claims to have “no conscious awareness of ill will toward the Mormon people or the Mormon culture” (p. 11) and whose book was funded in part by Brigham Young University’s Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, would choose to characterize the Book of Mormon in such an unnecessarily negative manner.

I went to Mr. Webster for help with *slumgullion*, a word I have certainly never used (nor does my Microsoft Word spell checker recognize it). It is defined as “meat stew,”⁸ and the sound of the word conjures up a rather unappetizing stew. Indeed, the words *slum* and *gullion* originally meant “slime” and “mud, cesspool,” respectively, an etymology that one would expect a careful writer like Topping to be well aware of. Topping gives us no clue why readers should think of the Book of Mormon as *slumgullion*. Given its large cast of characters and its complex flashbacks, I can understand how it might be thought of as a collage, and given its close relationship to the King James Bible, I can also see how some might consider it a pastiche, but *slumgullion*? Topping is clearly taking pains to use highly negative rather than neutral words. Worse yet, he claims these modern readers will also view the Book of

7. See Newell B. Bringhurst, *Fawn McKay Brodie: A Biographer’s Life* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999), 7–44, for an overview of Brodie’s early life. Her son Bruce noted that she referred to her youth as “idyllic” (7).

8. *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed.

Mormon as “ungodly.” Why would that be true? This is a book that continually speaks of God and Christ in reverential terms. Try opening it at random without seeing a verse or several verses honoring deity. Topping’s label is not only biased, it is inaccurate. In this and numerous other places throughout the book, his choice of words reveals a strong bias against Mormonism and indicates that he has a serious axe to grind, not what one would expect from a thoughtful scholar.

Topping again describes the Book of Mormon quite negatively in his discussion of Dale Morgan, calling it a “lurid” tale (p. 144) but offering no explanation as to why that word would be appropriate. If Morgan felt that way, why not quote him? “Ungodly slumgullion” and “lurid” thus reveal much more about Topping than they do about Brodie or Morgan.

Although Topping criticizes all five subjects of this book for various scholarly failings, he basically gives Brodie a free pass in her attack on Joseph Smith. In discussing the translation of the Book of Mormon, for example, Topping mentions that Brodie sees the speed of the process as evidence of Joseph’s ability, whereas Latter-day Saint historian Francis W. Kirkham had argued that it was evidence of divine assistance. Topping simply gives Brodie the last word in this debate. In doing this, he does not account for the complexities of the issue. To her credit, Brodie explains that Joseph and Oliver produced a 275,000-word manuscript in approximately ten weeks, a pace that meant averaging 3,700 words a day. Brodie presumes to explain this by insisting that Joseph “had a remarkable facility for dictation.”⁹ But neither Brodie nor Topping mentions that the extreme difficulty of producing a manuscript of that size in such a brief period of time was compounded by the method of production: Joseph Smith—while looking at the seer stone in his hat and having no access to other source material—dictated the text to Oliver Cowdery in fifteen-to-twenty-word segments; Oliver then transcribed the dictation and read it back to Joseph, who made any necessary corrections before moving on to the next segment (a process no doubt considerably more exhausting

9. Fawn Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith the Mormon Prophet* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945), 62.

and time-consuming than normal composition with pen and pad—not to mention computer and word processor).¹⁰ Nor does Brodie or Topping inform us that in the history of American literature, no one is known to have produced a prominent work of similar length in anything close to a ten-week period. But Topping glides past this as if the speed of the translation presents no difficulty for critics. He also ignores the fact that Brodie attempted to escape some of that difficulty with an ill-advised and unfounded speculation that Oliver merely copied some of Martin Harris's text.

Topping also takes Leonard Arrington to task for his criticism of Brodie, saying that Arrington's "opinion of *No Man Knows My History* was uncharacteristically caustic" for a man who was normally "kind and generous" (p. 334). What Arrington actually said is as follows:

The [Mormon] biography most often referred to by most scholars is Fawn Brodie's life of Joseph Smith, but earnest critics have found many inaccuracies in both fact and interpretation. Despite the evidence of prodigious research, despite the charming imagery of its style and its stirring chronicle of an enigmatic career, the book has two methodological weaknesses. First, it is evident that Mrs. Brodie, who is a lapsed Mormon, not only has little patience with the pretensions of Mormonism, but little appreciation of religious phenomena generally. She refuses to accord integrity to the many men of undoubted intellect and character who associated with the Mormon prophet and believed him to be an inspired leader. Second, Mrs. Brodie was concerned, or at least it would seem, with painting a pen portrait rather than with writing a work of history. The work reads as though she began by studying the historical background sufficiently to formulate what she regarded as a reasonable and believable approach to Joseph Smith and then proceeded to mobilize the evidence to illustrate and support her interpretation. To be sure, these indictments may be overdrawn, but Mrs.

10. See Royal Skousen, "Translating the Book of Mormon: Evidence from the Original Manuscript," in *Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited: The Evidence for Ancient Origins*, ed. Noel B. Reynolds (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1997), 61–93.

Brodie's colorful adjectives and sometimes damning inferences imply a finality of judgment that is not warranted by the contradictory character of the evidence she examined.¹¹

Rather than discussing the substance of Arrington's comments, Topping argues that Arrington is being "caustic." That is ironic because Arrington's judgments are not only right on the mark, they are measured and civil, anything but caustic, with a tone that is perfectly appropriate for a scholarly journal.

Topping likewise dismisses reviews by Hugh Nibley and others with a wave of the hand, calling them "attacks that were heated but lacking in substance" (p. 293). I realize that early Mormon history was not Hugh Nibley's specialty, and I personally wish he had published a serious review of Brodie's book in a scholarly journal rather than a somewhat flippant commentary with Bookcraft.¹² But let's take a look at his criticisms and see if they amount to anything. Nibley starts by objecting that Brodie "first makes up her mind about Joseph Smith and then proceeds to accept any and all evidence, from whatever source, that supports her theory,"¹³ which is much like Arrington's second point. As an example, Nibley points to Brodie's assertion that the fortune-teller Luman Walters was a "mentor" to young Joseph Smith.¹⁴ Brodie refers to "press accounts"¹⁵ mentioning Walters, but as Nibley notes, these so-called accounts all originated with one man, newspaper editor Abner Cole—using the

11. Leonard J. Arrington. "Scholarly Studies of Mormonism in the Twentieth Century," *Dialogue* 1/1 (1966): 24–25. Once again revealing his bias, Topping accuses Arrington of being "caustic" when he criticizes Brodie but claims that Arrington "soft-pedals" his discussion of being frustrated with certain General Authorities in his role as church historian. But I believe both are simply instances of Leonard Arrington being his normal diplomatic self. (See *Utah Historians*, 369 n. 8.)

12. Hugh Nibley, *No, Ma'am, That's Not History* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1946). For an interesting comparison of Nibley's and Morgan's criticisms of *No Man Knows My History*, see Gary F. Novak, "'The Most Convenient Form of Error': Dale Morgan on Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon," *FARMS Review of Books* 8/1 (1996): 137–44.

13. Nibley, *No, Ma'am*, 11.

14. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History*, 31.

15. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History*, 19.

pseudonym Obadiah Dogberry.¹⁶ Even when such rabid anti-Mormons as Philastus Hurlbut, Chester Thorne, and Arthur Deming went searching specifically for damning statements on Joseph Smith from Palmyra neighbors, not a single person mentioned Walters. Nor does Brodie tell us that Cole's first discussion of the contents of the Book of Mormon was rather evenhanded and said nothing at all about Walters or treasure seeking. "We do not intend at this time," Cole wrote, "to discuss the merits or demerits of this work. . . . The *Book*, when it shall come before the public, must stand or fall, according to the whims and fancies of its readers. How it will stand the test of rigid criticism, we are not prepared to say, not having as yet examined many of its pages."¹⁷ In an even more serious omission, Brodie neglects to mention that Cole launched his assault on the Book of Mormon and made allegations about Walters—via a parody called "The Book of Pukei"—only *after* Joseph Smith had confronted him about illegally printing excerpts from the Book of Mormon. Cole's claims are therefore suspicious, to say the least, and Brodie's hasty conclusions are unwarranted.¹⁸

Another example of Brodie's uncritical source selection is her use of a quotation from Thomas Ford in her discussion of the Eight Witnesses. In a history of Illinois published in 1854, Ford, the governor of Illinois from 1842 to 1846 and the man who abandoned Joseph and Hyrum Smith after encouraging them to give themselves up at Carthage, wrote that Joseph set his followers

to continual prayer, and other spiritual exercises, to acquire this lively faith by means of which the hidden things of God could be spiritually discerned; and at last, when he could delay

16. For information on Cole, see Andrew H. Hedges, "The Refractory Abner Cole," in *Revelation, Reason, and Faith: Essays in Honor of Truman Madsen* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2002), 447–75.

17. *Palmyra Reflector*, 2 January 1830, as cited in Dan Vogel, ed., *Early Mormon Documents*, 5 vols. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996–2003), 2:228. Brodie gives no mention at all of this newspaper article about the Book of Mormon.

18. I believe that Luman Walters was on the scene at various times. Lucy Mack Smith and Brigham Young both seem to mention him, although not by name. However, his exact role and his relationship with the Smith family, if any, remain hazy.

them no longer, he assembled them in a room, and produced a box, which he said contained the precious treasure. The lid was opened; the witnesses peeped into it, but making no discovery, for the box was empty, they said, “Brother Joseph, we do not see the plates.” The prophet answered them, “O ye of little faith! how long will God bear with this wicked and perverse generation? Down on your knees, brethren, every one of you, and pray God for the forgiveness of your sins, and for a holy and living faith which cometh down from heaven.” The disciples dropped to their knees, and began to pray in the fervency of their spirit, supplicating God for more than two hours with fanatical earnestness; at the end of which time, looking again into the box, they were now persuaded that they saw the plates. I leave it to philosophers to determine whether the fumes of an enthusiastic and fanatical imagination are thus capable of blinding the mind and deceiving the senses by so absurd a delusion.¹⁹

Brodie opines that Ford offered “one of the most plausible descriptions of the manner in which Joseph Smith obtained these eight signatures.”²⁰ Is it solid source criticism that leads to this conclusion? Not at all, because Ford’s account is weak on several levels. First, Ford’s account is late—it was not printed until twenty-five years after the witnesses reported seeing the plates. Second, and most important, Ford did not identify his sources, claiming instead that “I have been informed by men who were once in the confidence of the prophet, that he privately gave a different account of the matter.”²¹ Brodie even takes the liberty of expanding on Ford’s explanation by stating that Ford “knew intimately several of Joseph’s key men after they became disaffected and left the church.”²² How does she know this? Despite this posturing, the fact remains that Ford’s sources are anonymous, so we have no way of knowing how reliable they are. Third, since we can’t

19. Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 3:333–34.

20. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History*, 79.

21. Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 3:333.

22. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History*, 79.

identify the sources, we don't know whether they received their information directly from those involved or from someone who talked to those people, making Ford's version thirdhand at best and possibly even fourthhand. (We have a word for the kind of story that floats from one anonymous source to another—we call it a *rumor*.) Fourth, Ford's account is not corroborated by any reliable sources.²³

Given all these difficulties with Ford's statement, one wonders why Brodie claimed it is "the most plausible description" of what happened. After all, the Eight Witnesses themselves made a perfectly clear statement, explaining that "Joseph Smith . . . has shown unto us the plates of which hath been spoken, which have the appearance of gold; and as many of the leaves as the said Smith has translated we did handle with our hands."²⁴ This account is both early and firsthand, trumping the Ford statement by any reasonable historical standard. Nor can it be dismissed as describing a "metaphysical" experience, whatever that might be, because the text itself gives no indication of that whatsoever. Brodie, however, clearly privileges sources that fit with her theory of what must have happened.

Admitting that Emma and William Smith "emphasized the size, weight, and metallic texture of the plates," Brodie speculates that "perhaps Joseph built some kind of makeshift deception. If so, it disappeared with his announcement that the same angel that had revealed to him the sacred record had now carried it back into heaven."²⁵ To her credit, Brodie has broached one of the key issues related to the coming forth of the Book of Mormon: Did Joseph Smith have real plates,

23. True, Stephen Burnett claimed to hear Martin Harris say "that the eight witnesses never saw [the plates] & hesitated to sign that instrument for that reason, but were persuaded to do it." Stephen Burnett to Lyman E. Johnson, 1838, in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:291. But even if Burnett recorded Harris's statement accurately—and this is a matter of considerable dispute—Martin Harris was certainly not a firsthand witness of what the Eight Witnesses experienced. Nor did he explain, according to Burnett, the source of his information. Therefore, Burnett's letter fails to make any meaningful link to the Eight Witnesses themselves. It falls into the category of rumor (as far as the Eight Witnesses are concerned), and Ford's repeating that rumor would not add up to anything. See Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:288–90, for an editorial note detailing various reports of Martin Harris's statement.

24. "The Testimony of Eight Witnesses," in the front matter of the Book of Mormon.

25. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History*, 80.

fake plates (“makeshift deception,” in Brodie’s words), or no plates at all? This question deserves careful consideration by those interested in Joseph Smith. Why? A number of honest people claimed to have handled, lifted, or seen the plates in many different circumstances. However, if Joseph created fake plates, as Brodie hints, he would have left a trail of evidence. He had to obtain the material somewhere, he had to have tools, and he had to have a place to work. He had to have created the plates in a specific place at a specific time. Any number of people, including neighbors who later did everything possible to make Joseph look bad, could have seen Joseph involved in these activities. There was one chance after another to catch Joseph in such a fraud. Receipts for purchases could have been written. Tools or fragments of material could have been seen or found. Where did Joseph get the money to do this? Did he have coconspirators? Did anyone mention his or her suspicions—or collusion—in a letter or diary? Anyone claiming that Joseph produced fake plates needs to provide evidence for that assertion or admit there is none and, if that’s the case, explain how the theory can possibly be a good one. Likewise, anyone claiming there were no plates at all must account for firsthand testimony to the contrary, from at least fifteen witnesses.²⁶

According to Nibley, “here is Brodie’s method” of dealing with the fundamental questions regarding the plates: “Exactly how Joseph Smith persuaded so many of the reality of the gold plates is neither so important nor so baffling as the effect of this success on Joseph

26. Without offering any evidence whatsoever, Dan Vogel speculates that Joseph Smith “*could have* easily set up shop in a cave on the other side of the [Hill Cumorah] or in some corner of the forest. Using a pair of metal sheers, it *would have been* easy to cut a number of 6 x 8-inch sheets.” Next, in a shot in the dark that would do Fawn Brodie proud, Vogel muses: “That Smith was unable to finish the plates on the night of 21–22 September 1827 *may be* the best explanation for why he neglected to bring them home.” *Joseph Smith: The Making of a Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2004), 98, 600 n. 66, emphasis added. Of course, such plates would hardly have “the appearance of gold” with engravings having “the appearance of ancient work, and of curious workmanship” (“Testimony of Eight Witnesses”). Vogel therefore makes an elaborate attempt to show that the Eight Witnesses—despite their unequivocal statement to the contrary—never actually saw the plates, only imagined them while feeling them through a cloth. This theory is capably dispatched in Richard Lloyd Anderson, “Attempts to Redefine the Experience of the Eight Witnesses,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 14/1 (2005): 18–31.

himself.' Whereupon she drops the question for good. . . . She is simply side-stepping the issue, and the law of parsimony screams bloody murder: it must have an explanation of those plates, but such is not forthcoming from our oracle."²⁷ In just a few pages, Nibley has revealed serious problems with Brodie's methodology, problems that persist throughout her book.²⁸ Topping, however, is content to ignore Brodie's deeply flawed source criticism and echo Dale Morgan's laughable claim that Brodie could have eliminated nine-tenths of the criticisms directed by Nibley and others by changing twenty phrases in her book (see p. 293).

Juanita Brooks (1898–1989)

Of the three church members covered by Topping, Juanita Brooks has the distinction of being the only one who remained a faithful Latter-day Saint. As Topping aptly notes, Brooks was "born, reared, educated, and employed in that far-flung outpost of Mormon country along the middle and lower Virgin River in southern Utah and Nevada." She "left her homeland only for brief sojourns and spent her scholarly career collecting sources and writing about little else" (p. 178). Topping adds that "there was an undercurrent of tragedy in Dixie culture, an unspoken memory of the Mountain Meadows Massacre" (p. 185). This undercurrent had a profound effect on Brooks, and in 1950 she published *The Mountain Meadows Massacre*, still the best book yet published on the subject. According to Topping, "Brooks's problem, then, as she worked out her interpretation of the Mountain Meadows Massacre, was the question of why good people do bad things. Her answer, and probably the only answer available to her within a Mormon worldview, was that

27. Nibley, *No, Ma'am*, 13. I find Nibley's discussion of Brodie's faulty use of parallels to be just as convincing as his discussion of her biased selection of sources. See pp. 14–16.

28. Another example of Brodie's biased selection of sources is appendix A in *No Man Knows My History*, which Brodie entitles "Documents on the Early Life of Joseph Smith." Brodie has conspicuously chosen statements from such hostile individuals as Abner Cole, Peter Ingersoll, Lucy Harris, and others that cast the Prophet in a negative light. Firsthand statements from Lucy Mack Smith (the key source on this topic), Emma Smith, Martin Harris, Joseph Knight Jr.—or any other friendly party—are nowhere to be found.

external agents had temporarily clouded the otherwise good judgment and moral rectitude of the people of southwestern Utah” (p. 209).

Convinced that Brooks refused to “follow her sources to conclusions that might embarrass her church” (p. 6), Topping offers his interpretation of the massacre, which he explains in terms of a fundamental flaw in Mormon culture:

Early Mormonism, and the Mormonism of the frontier of both [John D.] Lee and Brooks, was an enchanted world. It was an apocalyptic world in which signs and wonders abounded, in which people prophesied and worked miracles. Patriarchal blessings loomed over people’s lives as the manipulative gods of the Greek pantheon kept dipping into human affairs. Some kind of miraculous manifestation of God’s hand pops up, if not on every page, certainly in every chapter. Brigham Young’s face lights up with a heavenly glow as he dispenses the word of God; his voice becomes the voice of Joseph Smith as he asserts his authority over the church; fatal illnesses yield to the laying on of hands; people’s heads are run over by wagons with no ill effect. And through it all is a profound sense of the End Times, that history is coming to a culmination, that the trumpet of the Lord is about to sound and the sword of the Lord to be drawn, while He dons His boots to trample out the vintage of the grapes of wrath. All this, of course, is readily documented in a multitude of sources, not the least of which is John D. Lee’s diaries. There can be no question that the enchanted world of John D. Lee was precisely as Brooks presents it, and that he was willing to serve and to suffer for the church—and to take blaspheming Gentiles into eternity with him—because Lee’s head was in heaven while his feet were on earth, and he was zealously eager to bring the kingdom of God to earth. What is curious, though, is that Brooks presents all this with a wide-eyed straightforwardness as historical fact. The absence, in Brooks’s narrative, of any external, critical perspective on Lee’s enchanted world forces

the reader to wonder, then, just what was wrong about the Mountain Meadows Massacre. . . .

It seems reasonable to suggest, then, that Brooks's research might have yielded more plausibly to an interpretation based on her Augustinian moments rather than the Pelagianism with which she felt compelled to reconcile it. Instead of giving us thoroughly good people who became suddenly sidetracked by a highly aberrant moment of hysteria and provocation, she might have probed more deeply into the dark recesses of the Mormon psyche, with its festering resentments, its latent violence, and its readiness to visit the sins of the fathers upon the children. Unfortunately, she was unable to arrive at an Augustinian interpretation because of her felt obligation to explain the tragedy in terms acceptable to her church (pp. 201–2, 218).

In these passages, Topping makes his disdain for things Mormon quite clear. He also psychoanalyzes Brooks based on what he concludes she must have been thinking. Again, his choice of words reveals his attitude: the pioneer world is not *spiritual* but *enchanted*; patriarchal blessings don't *inspire*—they *loom*; deity is depicted not as the *Lord God* who *blesses* but as the *manipulative Greek god* whose hand *pops up*. For Topping, the Mountain Meadows Massacre condemns not only the perpetrators of the tragedy but the entire movement founded by Joseph Smith. One gets the distinct feeling that *festering resentment* is actually a good description of Topping's own feeling toward Mormonism.

There is no doubt that, from any perspective, the Mountain Meadows Massacre is difficult to understand. Any author attempting to interpret the event faces genuine obstacles. Still, Topping could have provided some context. He could have pointed out, for example, that the nineteenth-century Mormon "apocalyptic world in which signs and wonders abounded, in which people prophesied and worked miracles," sounds remarkably like the world of the New Testament, where miracles were common and believers frequently saw the hand of God in their lives—and where the second coming of Christ was believed to be on the horizon. Topping could have also posed the question

of whether similar beliefs concerning God’s intervention in human affairs were common among non-Mormon Christians of the time or whether they are still found among Evangelicals, Roman Catholics, and a host of others.

An even more serious omission is Topping’s failure to place the “latent violence” of the “dark recesses of the Mormon psyche” in a nineteenth-century context. He could have reminded his readers that such “heroes” as Daniel Boone, Davy Crockett, Andrew Jackson, and Wyatt Earp (to name a few) all participated in violent events that we would find abhorrent. He could have reminded us that many Americans had no qualms about massacring innocent people they had classified as outsiders—for example, American Indians. To those of us appalled by Mountain Meadows, such discussions offer no consolation; nevertheless, all of this is pertinent to the dialogue.

Brooks, according to Topping, feared offending church leaders because she was “staring down the barrel of excommunication” (p. 218). Where is evidence for this? Topping offers none. Furthermore, in his biography of Brooks, Levi Peterson discusses visits that Brooks had with such leaders as church president George Albert Smith and First Presidency member Stephen L Richards but never mentions any threat of excommunication. This was true even though Brooks had written an angry letter in which she chided President Richards.²⁹

Although Topping admires Brooks and expresses a degree of respect for her work on the Mountain Meadows book, he also short-changes her by implying that she caved in because of her fear of church leaders and intentionally told less than the truth about the massacre. But in subsequent events not mentioned by Topping, Brooks showed just how fearless she was. When Brooks learned that church leaders

29. Levi S. Peterson, *Juanita Brooks: Mormon Woman Historian* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1988), 219. Nor does Topping inform us of David O. McKay’s apparent reluctance to excommunicate apostates, and Brooks did not even fall into that category. Sterling McMurrin, who spoke out against the church in ways that Brooks never did, said that certain church leaders threatened to excommunicate him. According to McMurrin, David O. McKay, then president of the church, offered to testify on his behalf at any church court. See Gregory A. Prince and Wm. Robert Wright, *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2005), 55. McMurrin was still a member of the church when he died in 1996.

had decided to posthumously restore John D. Lee's blessings—another important fact ignored by Topping—she resolved to include a paragraph telling of the reinstatement in her biography of Lee. Although an apostle reportedly exerted pressure, warning that she could be excommunicated and that the reinstatement of Lee's blessings could be rescinded, Brooks did not flinch but went ahead with her plans to publish the announcement. In the end, neither of the threats materialized, and David O. McKay instructed other leaders to leave Brooks alone, something that brought tears to Juanita Brooks's eyes when she heard about it.³⁰

Just as he did with Brodie, Topping fails to give full disclosure on these points related to Brooks. This pattern continues throughout *Utah Historians*, detracting from a book that had considerable potential. As it is, however, readers not well acquainted with Mormon history are likely to gain a skewed view of it, while readers who believe in the reality of Joseph Smith's visions are likely to find Joseph's history repeatedly distorted.

30. Prince and Wright, *David O. McKay*, 53–55. See also Peterson, *Juanita Brooks*, 273–84. Prince and Wright's book (which describes President McKay's instructions to leave Brooks alone) was published after Topping's book. Peterson's book, however, tells the rest of the story and was available to Topping, who cites it in other contexts.

PLURAL MARRIAGE AND THE HALF-EMPTY-GLASS SCHOOL OF HISTORIOGRAPHY

Allen L. Wyatt

Review of B. Carmon Hardy. *Doing the Works of Abraham: Mormon Polygamy, Its Origin, Practice, and Demise*. Norman, OK: Clark, 2007. 446 pp., with illustrations, bibliography, and index. \$39.95.

Doing the Works of Abraham is the latest publication on the subject of plural marriage by Carmon Hardy.¹ Hardy is emeritus professor of history at California State University, Fullerton, best known in Latter-day Saint circles for his previous treatment of post-Manifesto polygamy in *Solemn Covenant: The Mormon Polygamous Passage*.² In many ways, *Doing the Works of Abraham* can be seen as a follow-up to *Solemn Covenant*, but it should also be viewed as an expansion of that earlier book. Whereas *Solemn Covenant* focused primarily on the post-Manifesto period of polygamy (1890 to 1904), *Doing the Works of Abraham* is much more ambitious, covering the entire expanse of polygamy among Latter-day Saints and schismatic groups (1830s through the early 1900s).³

1. This is another in the *Kingdom in the West* series, published by the Arthur H. Clark Company.

2. B. Carmon Hardy, *Solemn Covenant: The Mormon Polygamous Passage* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992).

3. It includes some cursory information—less than ten pages—on polygamy as practiced by Mormon schismatic groups since the practice of plural marriage ceased in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Consistent with the subtitle, *Doing the Works of Abraham* contains a wealth of information on the “origin, practice, and demise” of plural marriage. The impressive forty-two-page bibliography indicates that Hardy has pulled information from a wide range of primary and secondary sources.⁴

Neutrality and Polygamy

Polygamy is a difficult issue for individuals who have spent their lives in a modern monogamous society. For such individuals, examining nineteenth-century polygamy is doubly difficult. The larger societal context of Victorian America is foreign to the permissiveness of our day, and Latter-day Saint polygamy is often viewed as morally aberrant. Working through such sociological and moral differences presents a challenge that makes it difficult for a historian to establish the emotional distance necessary to examine the topic.

In addition, decisions must be made by historians about how they will approach a topic. Some of those decisions involve how original sources will be used—what will be included, how they will be presented, and what weight they will be given. Because a historian’s work is inherently distillatory, it is impossible for such work to be neutral because of the very decisions that are at the heart of the historian’s work.⁵

The impossibility of historical neutrality is, however, not recognized by all, and at times historians are themselves blind to the subjective nature of the works they produce. The series editor, Will Bagley, claims in his foreword that Hardy approaches the topic “with a refreshing honesty, letting the people and facts speak for themselves” (p. 16). Bagley seems unaware that texts do not speak for themselves. There is always an act of judging and selecting. People cannot be heard in Hardy’s pages without his choosing to give them

4. The bibliography alone is an important contribution to anyone interested in studying the history of plural marriage as practiced by Mormons in the nineteenth century.

5. For an excellent discussion of the impossibility of historical neutrality, see Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The “Objectivity Question” and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

voice, and the texts consulted cannot speak without being selectively presented in a context of his own making.

Fortunately, Hardy doesn't share Bagley's apparent naïveté. The author-editor states very plainly that he is "keenly aware that other historians would have selected different themes and documents" and that they "would sometimes have given different emphases" (p. 19). His goal in writing *Doing the Works of Abraham* was "to present as full and balanced a portrait of nineteenth-century polygamous Mormonism as possible." But he also grants that "the reader will encounter frequent passages of exploration and suggestion" of his own (p. 19).

It is in these choices that Hardy made—that is, what is presented, what is explored, and what is suggested—that the underlying bias can be discerned, *contra* Bagley. To what conclusions does the author-editor lead the reader, and along which path is the reader led to those conclusions?

Half-Empty Glasses

To date, most treatises on the topic of polygamy tend toward the polemic, some more than others. Most of those who engage the subject—especially when it comes to polygamy as once practiced by Latter-day Saints—invariably become polemical either for or against the subject. For instance, Bagley, in his foreword, slides into a comfortable polemical mode. He asserts that nineteenth-century polygamy "hangs around the neck of the modern LDS church like the ancient mariner's albatross" and implies that polygamy is still alive and well since the church "still quietly seals devout widowers to additional wives" (p. 14).⁶

Knowing Bagley's disdain for anything remotely positive associated with Mormon polygamy, I did not count it as a harbinger of Hardy's endeavors. In his foreword, Bagley closes with appeals to the "human anguish behind so much" of polygamy's history. Bagley calls

6. Perhaps Bagley's zeal can be understood since he freely admits his bias regarding Mormon polygamy. Quoting Robert N. Baskin, an anti-Mormon, Bagley agrees with what he calls "hardboiled realism"—"that if Joseph Smith had been a eunuch he would never have received the revelation on polygamy" (p. 16).

attention to those who “forfeited so much for” the Principle and suggests how “compassionate reader[s] will acquire a deeper appreciation of the sacrifices the devout made to practice their religion” (p. 17). Once one moves beyond the foreword, though, the negative harbinger struck by its author did not translate into reality. For the most part, Hardy did a fine job of pulling together disparate sources into an interesting mix. The majority of the book consists of long excerpts from historical documents, presenting what Hardy views as the voices for and against plural marriage. Hardy gives greater emphasis to negative voices, both from practitioners of the Principle and those seeking its demise. Numerous examples could be cited, but I will just mention a few to illustrate the point.

When Hardy discusses the effect that the official announcement and open practice of polygamy had on the church and missionary efforts in Great Britain, starting in August 1852, he begins by quoting the words of T. B. H. Stenhouse that the announcement “fell like a thunderbolt . . . and fearfully shattered the mission” (p. 80). No mention is made that Stenhouse penned these words two decades after the fact, at a time when he had already left the church.⁷ The quotation is from *Rocky Mountain Saints*, which was written by Stenhouse to reflect the Godbeite position regarding leadership of the church. Portrayals of Joseph Smith were sympathetic, but portrayals of Brigham Young (and anything with which Brigham was involved) were not flattering. Young is generally portrayed as “defiled by his ‘frenzied lust of power’ and his love of wealth” and “corrupted by his faith.”⁸

In the footnote for the Stenhouse quotation, Hardy also cites a book by Craig Foster about the same time period (p. 80 n. 15). However, Foster had a different take on the effects of the announce-

7. Interestingly, Stenhouse’s break with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was precipitated, at least in part, by the decision of Zina Priscinda Young, daughter of Brigham and Zina Diantha Huntington Jacobs Smith Young, to marry one of her father’s office clerks (Thomas Williams) instead of Stenhouse. He took this refusal of Young to become his third wife as a slap in the face by her father and, thereafter, found himself more and more at odds with him.

8. Ronald W. Walker, “The Stenhouses and the Making of a Mormon Image,” *Journal of Mormon History* 1 (1974): 68.

ment than Stenhouse. While acknowledging some defections, Foster stated that “while there were a number of apostasies in consequence of the announcement, most of the members remained in the Church.”⁹ These divergent views may be a classic example of considering a glass half empty or half full; Stenhouse recounts a shattering of the mission, while Foster reports that most stayed true to the church. The point is, however, that Hardy takes the “half-empty” approach, indicating in the main body of the text that the picture within Great Britain was bleak and that “hundreds left the church” because of the announcement (p. 80). Having taken this approach, he chose to subtly reference the “half-full” analysis in a footnote.

Another example of seeing the negative instead of the positive is found in Hardy’s accounts of the difficulties faced by first wives during the “rapid increase of plural marriages after [Joseph Smith’s] death and the move west” (p. 162). Hardy cites, as examples, statements by Mary Haskin Parker Richards and Helen Mar Whitney. While these two accounts are accurate, they represent a conscious choice to again reference a half-empty glass. Other accounts from the same period provide a different picture of polygamy during the migration. For example, Zina Diantha Huntington Jacobs Smith Young stated the following about the early days of the exodus:

Arrived at Sugar Creek, we there first saw who were the brave, the good, the self-sacrificing. Here we had now openly the first examples of noble-minded, virtuous women, bravely commencing to live in the newly-revealed order of celestial marriage.

“Women; this is my husband’s wife!”

Here, at length, we could give this introduction, without fear of reproach, or violation of man-made laws, seeing we were bound for the refuge of the Rocky Mountains, where no Gentile society existed, to ask of Israel, “What doest thou?”¹⁰

9. Craig L. Foster, *Penny Tracts and Polemics: A Critical Analysis of Anti-Mormon Pamphleteering in Great Britain, 1837–1860* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford, 2002), 153.

10. Zina D. Young, in Edward W. Tullidge, *The Women of Mormondom* (New York: Tullidge & Crandall, 1877), 327.

While such later reflection could be easily dismissed by those predisposed to do so, the view represents the other side of the same coin on which Hardy seems to focus. As non-Mormon commentator William Chandless stated in 1857, the “wretchedness of wives in Utah has been greatly exaggerated” (p. 190). Hardy has exaggerated that focus as well, with his choice of negative sources and their emphasis in preference to positive sources.

Pulling Probability out of Impossibility

Hardy insists that any effort “to fully understand historical events must give respectful attention to the claims of actors involved” (p. 32), yet he seems unable to give a full measure of that respectful attention when it comes to firsthand accounts that attribute joy and happiness to some polygamous marriages. Instead, he cavalierly dismisses such accounts: “Mormon awareness that their marriage doctrine was an object of interest to outsiders undoubtedly accounted for attestations by both male and female Saints that their homes were happier than those found in monogamy” (p. 145).

With the firsthand accounts summarily dismissed, Hardy sees only scenarios of bitterness and unhappiness in polygamous marriages. He views such reports as more exemplary of the rule of the day. He prefaces several largely negative accountings (pp. 146–60) with the introductory remark that despite “all that was done to brightly clothe the Principle, records exist that are filled with honest descriptions of polygamous practice” (p. 146). It is disappointing that Hardy could find no positive accounts that he could judge as “honest descriptions” of polygamous marriages. Hardy praises the “inadvertent . . . candor” of a negative comment (p. 163). It seems odd that he couldn’t locate any positive statements that reflect “candor,” inadvertent or not. In still another place, he makes “allowance” for the “excessively positive attitudes” expressed by children of polygamous families (p. 172). Why? Perhaps because such attitudes, in Hardy’s view, cannot possibly be true, and therefore must be discounted.

One wonders if some future historian, called upon to examine monogamous marriages of the early twenty-first century, could pen

condemnation of the entire marriage system. It should be easy—just find reports of unhappy marriages, broken homes, and public condemnation. Any positive reports could be summarily dismissed since they would be “undoubtedly” due to outside interest and could be “excessively positive.”

Hardy states that “it is impossible to judge whether most men and women were ‘happy’ in polygamy” (p. 184 n. 92), yet his selection of sources and presentation of stories seems to indicate that he tries to pull probability out of impossibility. In his words, “the emotional burdens of those living the Principle, especially women, seem undeniably wounding” (p. 184). Such a conclusion, coupled with his wholesale discounting or dismissal of positive firsthand accounts, makes it hard to escape the conclusion that Hardy has judged it impossible that the majority were happy.

Eugenic Plans and Wormwood

In some instances Hardy takes liberties with some of his sources. For instance, in a section entitled “‘Take unto You Wives of the Lamanites and Nephites’: An Early Revelation on Polygamy?” (pp. 34–37), he explores whether Joseph Smith authored a revelation “condoning plural relationships” through intermarriage with Native American women (p. 35). The very title of the section, ending as it does with a question mark, is consistent with Hardy’s warnings throughout the section that “one must view the document cautiously” (p. 35).

Yet, just a few pages later, Hardy throws caution to the wind and unequivocally proclaims that “as noted, [Joseph Smith’s] mind encompassed eugenic plans to make American Indians ‘white and delightful,’ as well as Romantic visions of the hereafter” (p. 40). How one moves from caution to certainty is unclear.

Another example of Hardy taking liberties with sources occurs in the following passage:

Despite Young’s contention that intermarriage alone could transform the native race, Mormon Elders were loath to answer the call. Some who did soon soured on the enterprise,

one saying of the Shoshones at Fort Supply that he “wouldn’t give his horse to save all the d—d Indians from hell.” (p. 140)

The problem with the quoted statement is that it had nothing to do with intermarrying with the Native Americans. Indeed, a full examination of the source Hardy provides bears this out. It is from a journal of John Pulsipher, recounting some of his experiences on a mission to the Shoshone Indians, at Fort Supply, Wyoming territory. Here is the full quotation:

As this company of missionary boys were camped one night on Green River, while talking of the best plan of keeping the horses from being stolen by the Indians—one of the boys, who owned a fine horse, said he wouldn’t give his horse to save all the d—d Indians from hell. That seemed a hard saying if it was in fun. It was said by a Missionary that was sent to teach the poor Ignorant Indians the way of salvation & we believe the Lord will not hold him guiltless that will indulge in such sayings. Before leaving that camp the said favorite horse got tangled in his rope & *died*. We thot this a warning to us that we should not place our affection on any Earthly thing—or let it hinder us from our duty to the Lord.¹¹

The full story thus has nothing to do with intermarriage or souring on intermarriage. In fact, the entire article from which this quotation is pulled (some twenty-eight pages) never refers to marrying Native Americans.

Still another example regarding Hardy’s selection of sources is his decision to include “the legend of Chris L. Christensen,” as recounted by Juanita Brooks. This story is judged worthy of inclusion despite the fact that it amounts “perhaps to no more than third-or-fourth-hand hearsay” (p. 154) and is not supported by Christensen’s diary (p. 155 n. 13). Why include such a story? Hardy uses the story to illustrate the “openness with which Mormon males could advertise themselves in the hunt

11. Juanita Brooks, “From the Journal of John Pulsipher,” *Utah Humanities Review* 2/4 (1948): 359.

for [plural] wives” (p. 154). It would seem that Hardy should be able to provide a better illustration of a point he is trying to make. Indeed, one wonders if the point can stand at all on such a tenuous foundation.

In some cases Hardy is guilty of misrepresentation of sources. One example occurs when he introduces a discussion about the difficulty that men experienced in living the Principle: “Women were not alone in finding polygamy difficult. Brigham Young’s statement that he often heard stories of such bitterness about the practice that it was like ‘drinking a cup of wormwood’ probably referred to male as well as female complaints” (p. 174). One is left with the impression that people were complaining to Young about the necessity of living in polygamous unions (“he often heard stories . . . about the practice”). Yet, that is not what Young is referring to, as can be seen from the full quotation:

If the Elders of Israel, who enjoy this privilege [of plurality], understood it as it is in the bosom of eternity, they would not trifle with and abuse it, and treat the blessings of the Lord lightly, as is too often the case. How often am I called upon to hear tales of sorrow which are like bitterness to my soul—like drinking a cup of wormwood. I hate this. God hates it. He does not hate to have us multiply, increase, and replenish the earth; but he hates for us to live in sin and wickedness, after all the privileges bestowed upon us,—to live in the neglect of the great duties which devolve upon us, notwithstanding the state of weakness and darkness in which the human family lives. Burst that vail of darkness from your eyes, that you may see things as they are.¹²

Contrary to Hardy’s assertion, the complaints and their bitterness weren’t *about* the practice. Instead, the bitterness was experienced by Young because of the sin and wickedness he saw as the root of the sorrow in the tales he heard. Yet, that is not how Hardy characterized Young’s words.

12. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 8:63. This and other historical quotations herein appear with original spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.

Men, Women, and Marital Relations

Hardy also explores the purported relationship between men and women in polygamous unions. His exploration is unfortunately one-sided, almost to the point of caricature. For instance, Hardy discusses how polygamy provides a framework for “patriarchal dominion” (pp. 122–25), the subjugation of women as inherently inferior (pp. 125–29), and sex within marriage solely for procreative purposes (pp. 130–40). Since such views of women and the marital relationship were common in Victorian society at large, it is odd that Hardy included such explorations in his book.¹³

Indeed, throughout the entire nineteenth century, the whole legal system was designed to recognize the rights of the husband at the expense of the rights of the wife. It was almost universally held that when a man and woman were married, her very being was subsumed within his and “covered” by his legal standing. These laws, collectively referred to as *coverture*, provided a framework that most today would view as repressive.

Certainly, patriarchy and misogyny were present in the legal culture as well as in the words and worlds of judges. A nineteenth-century judge could always find reasons, if wanted, why the wife before him in court was not recognizable as a separate person from her husband, why her identity had been “covered over” by his. And many judges, like many other men, believed, passionately and adamantly, in a hierarchical, patriarchal order that they identified with the law of marriage and with *coverture*.¹⁴

The common view of nineteenth-century Christians of any sect was to relegate sexual relations within marriage solely to an act of procreation and to consider the woman’s sexual needs and desires to

13. Hardy, in an offhand manner, states that the “Saints were thoroughly Victorian in outlook” (p. 145) but fails to connect those Victorian outlooks with their approaches to marriages of any type, be they monogamous or polygamous.

14. Hendrik Hartog, *Man and Wife in America: A History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 4.

be inferior to the man's.¹⁵ It wasn't until well into the last half of the twentieth century that American society finally accepted that a married woman controlled her own body sexually, even within marriage.¹⁶ Common nineteenth-century societal beliefs about women can even be found in some of the non-Latter-day-Saint quotations provided by Hardy elsewhere in *Doing the Works of Abraham*. For example, James Bodell commented on the necessity of keeping "women under subjection" and how hard that must be in polygamy (p. 209).

Since concepts of patriarchy, female inferiority, and the role of sex weren't uniquely Mormon or inherent to polygamy, how does their inclusion in *Doing the Works of Abraham* shed light on Mormon polygamy? Does their inclusion instead illuminate Hardy's views of polygamy? It would seem so, as he blatantly mischaracterizes the "gender configuration" of polygamous families as "a single male figure at the center of his kingdom with wives and children radiating from him in worshipful dependence" (p. 125). Historical accounts that would counter such a view are either ignored or buried in footnotes.¹⁷

Further, when commenting on the irony of women actually being ardent supporters of the Principle, Hardy notes his feeling that the reasons were "societal reinforcement, hierarchical household life, and religious teaching" (p. 310 n. 15). Why he fails to accept the women's statements at face value—as a bona fide and acceptable statement of

15. A fascinating examination of marriage in various religious traditions can be found in John Witte Jr., *From Sacrament to Contract: Marriage, Religion, and Law in the Western Tradition* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997).

16. Nancy F. Cott, *Public Vows: A History of Marriage and the Nation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 211–12.

17. For example, the nonuniversality of any patriarchal view of the inferiority of women is never addressed, except inadvertently in a footnote. Hardy recounts a comment by Lucinda Lee Dalton in which she "bemoaned" feelings of superiority by some men (p. 165), but then tells in a footnote how she was able to marry a man who didn't hold those feelings (p. 165 n. 48). The mere fact that such a man could be found should provide evidence that attitudes of male superiority, while they may have been the Victorian norm, were not universal. A footnote on the same page (p. 165 n. 51) comments on the "irony" that women in polygamous marriages "often enjoyed greater independence from their husband's control than in monogamy." The irony would seem to be that Hardy doesn't view such information, which is contradictory to his caricature of polygamous relationships, as worthy of exploring in the main body of the text.

their personal beliefs—is unclear. Is it possible for a woman to have a belief without it being the result of external forces? In Hardy’s view of history, apparently not.

Concerning marital relations, I found the inclusion of the following statement by Hardy to be odd: “The importance of offspring was stressed constantly [by LDS leaders], and women who had large families, whether monogamous or polygamous, were singled out for recognition” (p. 120). Hardy states that such spotlighting wasn’t unique to polygamous families but also applied to monogamous marriages. Was this statement included merely because recognition to large families was provided? I wouldn’t think such recognition would even raise an eyebrow since even today large families—particularly those with triplets, quadruplets, sextuplets, or some other number of multiple births—draw recognition in both television and print. The reality that large or uniquely composed families have always been recognized by society leads one to wonder why Hardy would consider such a statement to be worthy of inclusion in *Doing the Works of Abraham* unless it was to somehow suggest that LDS leaders, besides promoting a change in the nature of marriage, were somehow promoting sexual productivity among the Saints. Even if this is so (and Hardy never explicitly claims that), how would such an expectation be any different than the command given by God to Adam and Eve to “multiply and replenish the earth”—a command recognized and accepted by Christians and Jews the world over?

When one compares the relationship between a man and one of his polygamous wives, can Hardy point to any differences in the relationships of monogamous marriages? It would seem not, as he provides no information, examples, or stories to illustrate such differences. Indeed, the information he does provide is applicable to monogamous marriages in Victorian America, just as much as it is to polygamous marriages. So why did he include a discussion of marital relations, if those relations in polygamous households didn’t differ materially from relations in monogamous households of the day? Hardy points out that practitioners of Mormon polygamy often spoke about it “in ways contemporary Mormons would hesitate to own” (p. 109), so per-

haps the argument can be made that Hardy's decision to include the information was a way for him to accentuate the "foreignness" of plural marriage for his readers. Yet, such an artificial accentuation is a disservice since it provides no context by which the reader can really judge—it would seem that contemporary Mormons would "hesitate to own" most nineteenth-century concepts about marital relations, polygamous or not.

Trading in Husbands: Divorce in Mormondom

Of particular interest to me was Hardy's reference to Zina Diantha Huntington Jacobs Smith Young and how she was an example of leaving her husband "for men of higher priesthood" (p. 182 n. 87). Hardy is not the first to make such a suggestion, but, upon full examination, such a position cannot be reasonably maintained. Hardy makes the suggestion in reference to a statement by Brigham Young: "If a woman can find a man holding the keys of the priesthood with higher power and authority than her husband, and he is disposed to take her, he can do so, otherwise she has got to remain where she is."¹⁸ Young, within a few sentences, clarifies his statement in a recapitulation, where he says the following: "If a woman claims protection at the hands of a man possessing more power in the priesthood and higher keys, if he is disposed to rescue her and has obtained the consent of her husband to make her his wife, he can do so without a bill of divorcement."¹⁹

So it would seem that this method of gaining a divorce (finding one with keys of a higher priesthood power) was only to be used if the woman "claims protection." Exactly what this means is not known, as this concept has not been cited in any other extant source. It is important to note, however, that the burden for pursuing a divorce in this manner rested squarely on the woman; it was she who had to find

18. *Brigham Young Addresses, 1860–1864: A Chronological Compilation of Known Addresses of the Prophet Brigham Young*, vol. 4, comp. Elden J. Watson, March 1980, p. 2 (Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University). Watson references this particular sermon as "HDC, ms d 1234, Box 49 fd 8 SLC Tabernacle, October 8th, 1861, a.m."

19. *Brigham Young Addresses, 1860–1864*, 3.

the willing man with keys to a higher priesthood, and she had to get permission from her present husband for the divorce and subsequent remarriage.

Even though Hardy holds that Zina's case is an example of this type of divorce, such a scenario does not fit with what is known of her life. Young's 1861 requirements for such a divorce and remarriage include finding a willing priesthood holder with "higher keys" in the priesthood. Brigham may have had the highest keys at the time of his marriage to Zina, but it was generally understood that Joseph Smith—the person to whom Zina was sealed prior to her sealing to Young—held "more power in the priesthood and higher keys" than did Young. Thus, Zina's agreement to be married to Brigham does not seem to fit the requirements of this type of divorce.

It should also be noted that the concept of trading in one husband for another, with the purpose of securing some semblance of salvation or exaltation, was also condemned by church leaders in Zina's day. President Jedediah M. Grant stated the condemnation very clearly, fully five years before Young's 1861 statement:

I would be far from taking a woman that would leave a good man. A woman that wants to climb up to Jesus Christ, and pass by the authorities between her and him, is a stink in my nostrils. . . . there is a low, stinking pride in a woman, that wants to leave a good husband to go to another. What does it matter where you are, if you do your duty? Being in one man's family or the other man's family is not going to save you, but doing your duty before your God is what will save you.

. . . Shall a man be saved because of some particular Quorum to which he belongs, or a woman be saved because she is in some particular family? No, that is foolery. Men and women are saved because they do right. It is nonsense for a woman to suppose, that because she is sealed to some particular man she will be saved.²⁰

20. Jedediah M. Grant, in *Journal of Discourses*, 4:128.

Hardy's suggestion that Zina was an example of somehow "trading up" in her marriages just doesn't make sense. A better fit is that Zina's marriage to Young was an example of a modern application of levirate marriage.²¹

Hostility among Cattle Watchers

Hardy describes how the non-Mormon public felt that polygamy must change or cease: "There were others, however, observers neither hostile toward nor persuaded by the Saints, who disapproved of Mormon polygamy and warned that they must change if they wished to remain in the republic" (p. 210). It is unclear how Hardy fails to see "hostility" in the words of Samuel Bowles, one of his two non-Mormon commentators. Indeed, Bowles seems quite hostile toward Mormons. For example, Bowles comments on how "the greatness of a true Mormon is measured . . . by the number of wives he can keep in . . . obedient subjugation" (p. 210). Not content to leave such non-hostility ambiguous, he comments that "handsome women and girls, in fact, are scarce among the Mormons of Salt Lake" (p. 211). Pity.

Perhaps the most acerbic commentator given voice by Hardy, however, is Mary Katherine Keemle Field. Hardy reprints nearly three pages of her ruminations about Mormons. Among her comments is this priceless gem:

Looking down on that congregation [in the Tabernacle], I understood why the church held its sway. There were thousands of human beings, ranging from infancy to extreme old age; there were bodies and no brains. All were clothed with bad taste, when there was an attempt at more than decent covering; all looked foreign, and not one pleasing face could I discern, apart from a few of the young Saints born in Zion. The

21. For more information on the marriages of Zina Diantha Huntington Jacobs Smith Young, see Allen L. Wyatt, "Zina and Her Men: An Examination of the Changing Marital State of Zina Diantha Huntington Jacobs Smith Young," at www.fairlds.org/FAIR_Conferences/2006_Zina_and_Her_Men.html (accessed 11 October 2007).

vast majority were cattle on two legs—obedient, subservient cattle, not to be blamed for being themselves. (p. 217)

While such bigotry might find acceptance as part of a mission statement for several modern-day anti-Mormon ministries, one must wonder how such sentiments help anyone better understand the “origin, practice, and demise” of Mormon polygamy.

Confusing Obedience and Polygamy

Hardy, like others who examine Mormon polygamy, focuses on how people were coerced to practice the Principle. Indeed, he affirms that “claims that polygamy was . . . not essential for the highest reward in heaven, ignore a large body of teachings to the contrary” (pp. 111–12). What such assertions fail to recognize is that it was not polygamy that was required for the “highest reward” but obedience to God’s command. Polygamy isn’t the issue; obedience is. Polygamy was simply the command, and it has always been true among those professing to follow God that when they are satisfied that he has commanded, it is incumbent upon them to obey.

This principle of obedience is not unique to Mormonism; it is found in many religious traditions. If one chooses not to obey God’s command—even when those commands are inconvenient or unpopular—then one does so at the peril of one’s salvation. The words of Elder Joseph F. Smith are to the point in this matter: “I understand the law of celestial marriage to mean that every man in this church, who has the ability to obey and practice it in righteousness and will not, shall [be] damned, I say I understand it to mean this and nothing less, and I testify in the name of Jesus that it does mean that.”²²

Even though Hardy includes this as part of a larger discourse by Joseph F. Smith (pp. 113–14), he does so in a section of his book entitled “‘No Exaltation without It’: Importance of the Doctrine.” In doing so, he fails to recognize the true issue at point and promulgates

22. “Discourse Delivered by Elder Jos. F. Smith, in the Tabernacle, Sunday morning, July 7, 1878,” reported by Geo. F. Gibbs, *Deseret News [Weekly]* 27/32 (11 September 1878), 499.

an improper view of the issue: that it was somehow polygamy that ensured salvation, rather than obedience that is salvific. This concept is also echoed in more detail by George Q. Cannon:

No woman can enter into the celestial kingdom any more than a man whose will is in opposition to the will of God. When God speaks all must submit to it. It may not be pleasant to us; it may come in conflict with our traditions; it may not be that which will suit us if we had the choosing. There are a great many things which would not suit us if we had the choosing, according to our natural feelings, for these are often far from correct. But whatever feelings we may have which may be the result of tradition and false education, we must get rid of and be willing to do that which God requires at our hands. And it is the experience of the women of this Church who have done that—I speak now of plural marriage, for that is one of the most trying things—those who have submitted to this order, have reached a point where they enjoy true happiness, because in sacrificing their own will they have the consciousness of knowing that they have done the will of God; and in their supplications to Him they can ask Him in confidence for such blessings as they stand in need of. Where is the man or the woman who has been diligent in observing the requirements of God, who has failed upon any point upon which he has sought earnestly to God? If there are any, there must be something lacking, they have not that claim upon God which they would have if they had submitted perfectly to the requirements made of them.²³

Quotations throughout *Doing the Works of Abraham* provide evidence that it is obedience that is being preached, yet Hardy never draws the distinction for the reader. The logical reality of such a distinction is evidenced by the fact that those who perished as faithful Saints prior to the institution of plural marriage were assured of their eternal reward

23. George Q. Cannon, in *Journal of Discourses*, 22:126–27. Thanks to Greg Smith for bringing this quotation to my attention.

the same as those who later practiced the Principle and remained faithful. In addition, those who have left this life since the discontinuance of polygamy likewise have the assurance that their salvation is assured, provided they were obedient to God's commands during their lifetime. The idea that God can change his commands from time to time is also not unique to Mormonism. Numerous religious traditions adhere to various tenets based on whether they believe that God commanded something or rescinded some ancient command.²⁴

Obedience to God's command, with a willing heart, has always been treated as a requisite virtue for salvation. It shows a regrettable lack of understanding that Hardy uses historical sources to almost cast plural marriage as a "saving ordinance," when it never was any such thing. Stating that "without plural marriage" one cannot attain salvation (p. 112 n. 2) is different from pointing out that for those living at the time, it may rather have been that obedience to God's command of plural marriage was required for exaltation.

Conclusion

Critics of the Latter-day Saints have found much to condemn in plural marriage. They may find within Hardy's latest offering additional ammunition for their broadsides.²⁵ Hardy fails to come to grips with why Joseph Smith would institute a marital system that was diametrically opposed to and essentially abhorred by the Victorian establishment of the day.

24. For example, there are many instances in the Bible where God gives "everlasting commands" that have yet to be rescinded (e.g., Genesis 17:9–14; Exodus 12:14, 24–27; Leviticus 16:34). I know of few Christian religious traditions whose adherents lose sleep over not following such divine edicts. Either the Bible was in error in recording them as everlasting commands, or God has changed his mind and no longer requires compliance with such commands. Is one to believe that God cannot similarly change his will relative to how marriages should occur?

25. For instance, series editor Will Bagley comments on how Hardy's work speaks to "the joys and evils of polygamy" (p. 17), seemingly oblivious to the fact that both could be just as easily found in an examination of any marital system.

Most, of course, assume it was for sexual gratification and power.²⁶ However, the argument can easily be made that Joseph already had power and that changing marital systems was destructive to that power and eventually led to the forfeiture of his life. Religious leaders throughout history have had no problem commanding and receiving sex without overhauling the basic familial relationships of their societies. Kathleen Flake likewise sees the critics' assessment of Joseph's motivations as too facile:

Do I think Smith's revelations on polygamy can be reduced to his sex drive? No, I don't. . . . It's too simplistic; we all know this. There are so many easier ways to satisfy our sex drive than to have many marriages—at least at one time. Now, maybe serially, but having many marriages at one time seems, to me, to be the least rational way to satisfy one's sex drive.²⁷

It would have been so much easier for Joseph and other early Latter-day Saint leaders to exercise their libidos through the socially acceptable means of the day, without the need to resort to a wholesale change of everything society *did* accept. Joseph and thousands of others would never have pursued such a course without a genuine belief that obedience to the Principle was divinely instituted and mandated—unless, of course, one dismisses the ability of Providence to require such behavior. It seems unfortunate that Hardy chooses, in his words, to present, explore, and suggest (p. 19) information valuable to critics without presenting, exploring, or suggesting why those critics' most long-held condemnations don't seem reasonable when compared to the actual record.

26. It was, for example Fawn Brodie's contention that "there was too much of the Puritan in [Joseph], and he could not rest until he had redefined the nature of sin and erected a stupendous theological edifice to support his new theories on marriage." Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith the Mormon Prophet*, 2nd ed. (New York: Knopf, 1986), 297.

27. "The Origins of Polygamy—1843," chap. 10 in *The Mormons*. Originally aired on PBS as part of *American Experience*, 30 April 2007, and also viewed on www.pbs.org/mormons/view/ on 15 October 2007.

This review should not be taken as a wholesale rejection of *Doing the Works of Abraham*. Hardy's efforts should not be minimized; there is much that is excellent in his book. Unfortunately, some elements will be used by the polemical naysayers to misstate the historical record and to continue to cast Mormon polygamy in the worst light possible. For this reason I do not suggest this book as an introductory primer to polygamy. I am not sure that such a book has been written, but I have great hopes that it will be in the future.²⁸ I agree wholeheartedly with this statement in Hardy's afterword: "For those who study it, however, Mormonism's brave adventure with plural marriage, including its modern reversal and flight from the practice, is an instructive subject. As with all historical inquiry, revisiting the topic enlarges humane sensibility and tolerance" (p. 392).

It is my hope that when scholars examine plural marriage in the future, they will create works that don't accentuate the negative at the expense of the faith exemplified by those who practiced the Principle.

28. Perhaps the book that comes closest to being a good introductory primer on the topic is Kathryn M. Daynes, *More Wives Than One: Transformation of the Mormon Marriage System, 1840-1910* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001). Her approach, tone, and tenor have a more balanced feel than what Hardy has achieved in *Doing the Works of Abraham*.

MASSACRING THE TRUTH

Craig L. Foster

Review of Christopher Cain (producer). *September Dawn* (a motion picture released by Black Diamond Pictures in 2007).

Review of Carole Whang Schutter. *September Dawn*. Self-published through AuthorHouse, 2007. 276 pp. \$19.95.

In the classic Western movie *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*, Senator Ranse Stoddard tells the small-town newspaper reporter the true story of the shooting of Liberty Valance and his own rise to prominence. At the end of the movie, the journalist slowly tears up his notes. Stoddard asks if he's going to use the story. The reporter answers, "No, sir." He then explains that his late editor used to say, "This is the West! When the legend becomes a fact, print the legend."¹

That statement appears to be the mantra of Christopher Cain with his new movie, *September Dawn*, which was released on 24 August 2007. Advertised as a "Romeo and Juliet relationship love story . . . set against the background of the controversial real-life massacre of 120 men, women and children traveling through Utah in the nineteenth century," the movie, as Cain says, "closely resembles the religious fanaticism the world is seeing today. People were killed in the name of

1. "The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance," summary of film found at <http://www.orac.net.au/~mhumphry/libvalan.html> (accessed 9 March 2007). The film, starring John Wayne, James Stewart, Vera Miles, and Lee Marvin, was released 11 April 1962.

God 150 years ago and they're still being killed in the name of God."² The official *September Dawn* Web site advertised the film in even more sensational terms:

On September 11, 1857 in an unspoiled valley of the Utah Territory—and in the name of God—120 men, women and children were savagely murdered.

Who ordered the massacre, and why, has been hidden in a cloak of secrecy and conspiracy.

And the reputation of one of the nation's mightiest religious figures has been preserved and protected.

Until now.³

The movie was created by Christopher Cain and his Aspen, Colorado, friend Carole Whang Schutter. According to Schutter, she approached Cain with the story she had been writing, and he told her it "[didn't] look like a screenplay."⁴ The two began to work together on a screenplay, which included a fanciful Romeo and Juliet relationship, with the son of a Mormon bishop falling in love with the beautiful girl from the wagon train. "Then it felt like a movie to me," Christopher Cain said.⁵

But romance was not all Cain felt the movie needed. He wanted more controversy. "At the core of the controversy is the notion that the Mormon church, and church leader Brigham Young himself, sanctioned the killings."⁶ In fact, Christopher Cain and others associated with the movie seem to have sought controversy through their

2. Murray Weissman & Associates (press release), "Christopher Cain's 'September Dawn,' Starring Jon Voight and Terence Stamp, About 1857 Mountain Meadows Massacre, Opens Wide on May 4," Los Angeles, 24 January 2007, <http://uk.us.biz.yahoo.com/iw/070124/0207147.html> (accessed 26 January 2007).

3. Murray Weissman & Associates press release, p. 5.

4. Stewart Oksenhorn, "Aspen screenwriter experiences miracle with 'September Dawn,'" *Aspen Times*, 24 August 2007, <http://www.aspentimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070824/AE/108240060/-1/rss01> (accessed 7 December 2007).

5. Sean P. Means, "A foggy 'Dawn,'" *Salt Lake Tribune*, 23 August 2007, news archive at <http://www.sltrib.com> (accessed 12 December 2007).

6. Oksenhorn, "Aspen screenwriter experiences miracle with 'September Dawn.'"

interviews and statements, beginning with some of the earliest articles about the movie.⁷

Recognizing potential for publicity, the director and producers of *September Dawn* even attempted to link Mitt Romney's presidential campaign to their movie. In March 2007 they held a special screening of the film and invited reporters to interview Jon Voight.⁸ And while they kept insisting the movie had nothing to do with Romney's campaign, articles began to appear with titles like "Will New Anti-Mormon Movie Hurt Mitt?"⁹ and "Mitt Romney campaign eyes Mormons' 9/11 movie."¹⁰ In fact, according to a news article, "Promo spots for the flick include a nod to the presidential campaign with the suggestion that we're at a point in history 'when issues of Mormonism are in heightened areas of the news.'"¹¹ The Romney campaign expressed displeasure at the wording in the advertisement. "That statement alone 'obviously is directed at our campaign,'" an anonymous source complained.¹² Reporters happily took the bait and began hounding the Romney campaign for a statement.

Shortly before the movie premiered, Mitt Romney finally responded by telling the Associated Press, "That was a terrible, awful act carried out by members of my faith. There are bad people in any church and it's true of members of my church, too."¹³ Even so, Romney said he had

7. John Anderson, "With Only God Left as a Witness," *New York Times*, 22 January 2006, http://www.nytimes.com/2006/01/22/movies/22ande.html?_r=1&oref=slogin (accessed 17 April 2006).

8. Means, "A foggy 'Dawn.'"

9. Nikki Finke, "Will New Anti-Mormon Movie Hurt Mitt?" *LA Weekly*, 29 March 2007, <http://www.deadlinehollywooddaily.com/could-new-movie-impact-mitts-campaign> (accessed 29 November 2007).

10. "Mitt Romney campaign eyes Mormons' 9/11 movie," *The Spoof*, 6 May 2007, <http://www.thespoof.com/news/spoof.cfm?headline=s4i18379> (accessed 7 May 2007).

11. James Hirsen, "A Political Look at Hollywood," *The Left Coast Report*, 21 August 2007, an e-mail sent by "Hollywood Confidential," from newsmx@reply.newsmx.com.

12. Bill Zwecker, "Mitt's a bit miffed: Film about 1857 Mormon massacre due out Aug. 24 and likely to have negative impact on his campaign," *Chicago Sun-Times*, 16 August 2007, <http://www.suntimes.com/entertainment/zwecker/512514,CST-FTR-zp16.article> (accessed 16 August 2007).

13. Manya Brachear, "What was behind Sept. 11?" *Chicago Tribune*, 24 August 2007, http://newsblogs.chicagotribune.com/religion_theseeker/2007/08/sept-11-movie-r.html (accessed 26 August 2007).

no plans to watch the movie, to which Christopher Cain commented cynically that the film might help his candidacy because Romney “has somewhere in the area of 30% of the American public who say they won’t vote for a Mormon. And perhaps this is an opportunity for him to deal with (that) 30% of the American public.”¹⁴

On a recent segment of the *Hugh Hewitt Show*, Jon Voight commented:

Let me say that the LDS Church just came out very recently, and perhaps because of the film, with a rather comprehensive statement that was by their managing director of family and Church history, the department there, and his name is Richard E. Turley. . . . Very, very strong statement that really parallels everything that we have in the film, right up to the door of Brigham Young. It doesn’t pass that threshold, but it really does a very, I think, a very scholarly job of describing the events.¹⁵

In addition, a report of an interview with Scott Duthie, one of the movie’s producers, suggested that *September Dawn* “forced the church’s hand,” noting that the church “published several articles on the massacre, painting an unflattering picture of past leaders who ordered the crime.” “Actually, to their credit, that was great,” Duthie said. “They itemized and took accountability for what happened.”¹⁶

Both Voight and Duthie seemed to be unaware that Richard E. Turley, Ronald W. Walker, and Glen M. Leonard have been working for over six years on what promises to be the definitive work on the Mountain Meadows Massacre. The first volume of this work, which

14. Etan Vlessing, “Director says ‘Dawn’ would help Romney,” *The Hollywood Reporter*, 25 August 2007, http://hollywoodreporter.com/hr/content_display/news/e3id4e927e2a226195fff0859186f5a0de3 (accessed 29 November 2007).

15. Hugh Hewitt Show Transcript, *Townhall.com*, 22 August 2007, <http://www.hughhewitt.townhall.com/talkradio/transcripts/Transcript.aspx?ContentGuid=af9cb8fb-dd4e-4a56-99cl-ab75686fd459> (accessed 29 November 2007).

16. Martin J. Kidston, “Independent vision,” *Helena Independent Record*, 26 August 2007, http://www.helenair.com/articles/2007/08/26/helena_life_top/c010826_01.txt (accessed 26 August 2007).

has been tentatively titled *Massacre at Mountain Meadows*, will be published in 2008 by Oxford University Press.

In the autumn of 2006 Cain and some of his associates attended a meeting of relatives of massacre victims, offering a special viewing of the film and interviewing relatives for a series of featurettes. These featurettes, later included on a DVD, include provocative sound bites, such as one calling the Mountain Meadows Massacre “a crime against humanity”¹⁷ and another describing it as “one of the most important historical events in the history of America’s westward expansion.”¹⁸ One descendant claimed that “the Mormons have covered this up. If they have their way, this would be forgotten.”¹⁹ Another said, “The Mormons have an agenda,” and added that “too much has been covered up for so many years” and “the LDS Church will be held responsible for getting out the truth.”²⁰ “Religious fanaticism and extremism is a dangerous thing,” said another.²¹

Dean Cain, the director’s son, has been an enthusiastic supporter of his father’s film. As early as September 2005 he had announced, “It’s hush-hush what’s going on with the film. It’s going to be very controversial.”²² Since that time, he has made other comments to the press emphasizing the controversial nature of the film. On an episode of the *Rachael Ray Show* that aired on 11 December 2006, he again indicated that it would be controversial.²³ In an article in the *National Ledger*, Dean Cain explained that his father “just wants people to see the movie and draw their own conclusions.”²⁴ He stated further:

17. “Featurette,” chap. 2, *September Dawn EPK* (electronic press kit), a Black Diamond Pictures and Alkemi Production DVD sent by a public relations firm and in the possession of the author. This quotation is from Cheri Baker Walker.

18. “Featurette,” chap. 2. This quotation is from Scott Fancher.

19. “Featurette,” chap. 12. This quotation is from Phil Bolinger.

20. “Featurette,” chap. 12. These quotations are from Harley Fancher.

21. “Featurette,” chap. 12. This quotation is from Scott Fancher.

22. Marilyn Beck and Stacy Jenel, “Dean Cain is Everywhere, Wayne Gretzky Has a New Gig,” *National Ledger*, 27 September 2005, <http://www.nationalledger.com/cgi-bin/artman/exec/view.cgi?archive=1&num=912> (accessed 6 December 2007).

23. “It’s a Bird! It’s a Plane! It’s . . . Dean Cain!” *The Rachael Ray Show*, <http://www.rachaelrayshow.com/show/view/63> (accessed 9 April 2007).

24. Marilyn Beck and Stacy Jenel Smith, “Dean, Christopher Cain in Mormon Film Controversy,” *National Ledger*, 4 April 2007, <http://www.nationalledger.com/artman/>

I think that some people will be very offended, by the film and by the slaughter. I think some people will protest it. I think people will think that it's untrue. I think that some people will think that it demonizes Mormons and the Mormon religion. . . . Some people will say, hey, it's great, someone's finally telling the truth. People will have to find out more about it.²⁵

Christopher Cain likewise insisted that the film was about religious fanaticism. "I'm not attacking the Mormon Church. This was an incident that happened in history. It's an incident that happens today by radicals."²⁶

Cain's protestations notwithstanding, both the book and movie versions of *September Dawn* appear to have a darker intent than to simply comment on contemporary religious fanaticism and terrorism. With that in mind, I will look at both the movie and the book, focusing on the book and the featurette DVD. I revised some parts of this essay after viewing the film version. I have also added new information because the movie contradicted the novelized version released a few months in advance. My not viewing the movie before the national opening, however, was certainly not due to a lack of effort on my part. I called the public relations firm handling the film at least six times, and during five of those phone calls I asked if it would be possible to go to a screening or have a "screener" or DVD sent to me so I could review the film. I was continually but very cordially put off. On my last phone call, I was told there would be no more showings and that the producer had "asked for no screeners to be sent out." When I said that seemed odd, the representative repeated twice that she didn't "understand their logic."²⁷ I didn't either until I saw the actual movie.

publish/printer_12532.shtml (accessed 4 April 2007).

25. "Featurette," chap. 10.

26. "Featurette," chap. 10.

27. Telephone conversation with Lindajo Loftus of Murray Weissman & Associates, 31 July 2007. Murray Weissman & Associates is an independent marketing and public relations firm located in North Hollywood, California. The firm has, according to its Web site at <http://www.publicity4all.com/bios.html>, represented hundreds of motion picture and television projects, including *Chicago*, *Chocolat*, *Dances with Wolves*, *Empire of the Sun*, *Enchanted April*, *The English Patient*, *Farewell My Concubine*, *Field of Dreams*, *Good Will Hunting*, *GoodFellas*, *Mighty Aphrodite*, *The Piano*, *Pulp Fiction*, and *Shakespeare in Love*.

Who Made *September Dawn*?

Christopher Cain was born Bruce Claibourne Doggett in 1943 in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.²⁸ Like many other people in the entertainment industry, Bruce Doggett changed his name, Christopher C. Cain being his choice. Cain grew up on the Doggett family farm, north of Hartford, South Dakota. His parents, Douglas and Jeanette Holt Doggett, as well as his grandparents, were active in the community and church. Douglas, like his father, served for a number of years on the administrative board of the Hartford United Methodist Church, and he also served as a choir director, Sunday school teacher, and lay speaker for a number of years.²⁹

Christopher Cain graduated from Hartford High School in 1961 and attended Dakota Wesleyan University in Mitchell, South Dakota, where he graduated in 1965.³⁰ Soon he made his way to Hollywood, “hoping to break into music, but instead found himself singing back-up on TV commercials.” After switching to acting and appearing in a number of television shows, he turned to directing. After writing and directing several family films in the 1970s, Cain directed *The Stone Boy* in 1983. The film, described by one film critic as “powerfully done,” made many of the critics’ “top ten” lists for the year, and Cain’s career appeared to be on the fast track.³¹

“Known for his visual style as well as his keen portrayals of human interaction,”³² Cain next directed *That Was Then . . . This Is*

28. Sioux Valley Genealogical Society, “Index to Births, 1880–1990, of Sioux Falls, South Dakota” (Salt Lake City: Filmed by the Genealogical Society of Utah, 1991), Family History Library film 1738664; and http://www.superiorpics.com/christopher_cain (accessed 11 February 2007).

29. Sue Boy, *Hartford, S. D., Centennial, 1881–1981* ([Freeman, SD: Pine Hill Press], 1981), 104.

30. “Young Alumnus/Alumna of the Year,” Dakota Wesleyan University, http://www.dwu.edu/alumni/previous/young_year.htm (accessed 13 February 2007).

31. “Christopher Cain,” http://www.hollywood.com/celebrity/Christopher_Cain/188994 (accessed 2 June 2006). Reviews of this film are found at http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/stone_boy/?critic=columns (accessed 8 November 2007). According to Box Office Mojo, found at <http://boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=stoneboy.htm> (accessed 15 February 2007), the domestic total gross for the film was \$261,033.

32. “Christopher Cain: Director, Actor, Producer, Scriptwriter,” http://www.allocine.co.uk/personne/fichepersonne_gen_cpersonne=19090.html (accessed 31 January 2007).

Now (1985), which received mixed reviews.³³ *Where the River Runs Black* (1986), while not a box office success, won praises for its artistic accomplishments.³⁴ Cain gained enough respect in Hollywood to be asked to direct a Western with several of the popular young stars of the 1980s.

Young Guns (1988) was Cain's most profitable directorial turn, grossing \$45,661,556³⁵ and starring such actors as Emilio Estevez, Kiefer Sutherland, Lou Diamond Phillips, and Charlie Sheen, as well as iconoclast Terence Stamp.³⁶ Popular among the viewing audiences, the film received mixed reviews from critics. As one wrote, "*Young Guns* supposedly takes place in the old west, but it actually takes place in front of the cameras. . . . *Young Guns* doesn't have a good reason to exist besides an excuse for these hot young Turks to look good onscreen."³⁷ Hal Hinson bemoaned the fact that "'Young Guns' plays out less as a movie than as a sort of fraternity frolic."³⁸ Christopher Cain's directing also came under scrutiny. Gregory Dorr described the film as a "pimped-up smudge of pop history" that "plays like luke-warm late-'80s kitsch."³⁹

33. Please see the reviews found at http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/that_was_thenthis_is_now (accessed 8 November 2007). According to Box Office Mojo, <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=thatwasthenthisisnow.htm> (accessed 28 March 2007), the domestic total gross for the movie was \$8,630,068.

34. Roger Ebert, "Where The River Runs Black," 19 September 1986, <http://rogerebert.suntimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/19860919/REVIEWS/609190304/1023> (accessed 28 March 2007). According to Box Office Mojo, <http://boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=wheretheriverrunsblack.htm> (accessed 15 February 2007), the domestic total gross for the movie was \$676,166.

35. Box Office Mojo, <http://boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=youngguns.htm> (accessed 15 February 2007).

36. Box Office Mojo, <http://boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=youngguns.htm> (accessed 15 February 2007).

37. Jeremiah Kipp, "Young Guns," <http://filmcritic.com/misc/emporium.nsf/84dbbfa4d710144986256c290016f76e/738f6a5e3320729d88256d0c005ce8a8?OpenDocument> (accessed 26 January 2007).

38. Hal Hinson, "Young Guns," *Washington Post*, 16 August 1988, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/style/longterm/movies/videos/younggunsrhinson_a0c8d5.htm (accessed 26 January 2007).

39. Gregory P. Dorr, "Young Guns: Special Edition," *The DVD Journal*, <http://www.dvdjournal.com/quickreviews/y/youngguns.q.shtml> (accessed 22 February 2007).

In spite of the critical views, *Young Guns* was popular with the viewing audiences, and Christopher Cain was at the height of his career. Oddly enough, when *Young Guns II* was made the next year and released in 1990, Cain did not direct it.⁴⁰ Instead, he directed *Wheels of Terror*, a made-for-TV movie that has the dubious distinction of being ranked among the three hundred worst movies.⁴¹ Jason MacIsaac wrote that Cain's "resume doesn't contain many things that will make you swoon, but his career was semi-respectable until of late. Now he's got things like *The Amazing Panda Adventure* (1995) and *Gone Fishin'* (1997) under his belt. Yeah, ouch."⁴² Billed as a buddy movie, *Gone Fishin'*, which starred veteran actors Joe Pesci and Danny Glover, has been described as "the *Ishtar* of the 90s."⁴³ Between 1997 and the making of *September Dawn*, Cain directed four pictures, two of which were for television. He directed three episodes of USA Network's *The Magnificent Seven* in 1998 and 1999 and the made-for-TV movie *A Father's Choice* in 2000.⁴⁴ Although two other theatrical films were advertised and appear to have had some filming completed, they were never released.⁴⁵

The Cain-Schutter Connection

The person who introduced Cain to the idea of making a film about the Mountain Meadows Massacre—and who wrote the screenplay with him—was his friend Carole Whang Schutter. She and her

40. "YoungGunsII," <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0100994/fullcredits#cast> (accessed 29 March 2007). The director was Geoff Murphy.

41. "The Worst 300 Movies Part 3," *Epinions.com*, 3 August 2004, http://www.epinions.com/content_4034699396 (accessed 8 November 2006).

42. Jason MacIsaac, "Wheels of Terror Review," Jabootu's Bad Movie Dimension, 15 October 1999, <http://www.jabootu.com/wot.htm> (accessed 8 November 2006).

43. Tom Keogh, "Gone Fishin': Reviews: Amazon.co.uk Review," <http://www.amazon.co.uk/Fishin-Christopher-Glover-Rosanna-Arquette/dp/B00004CVX8> (accessed 11 February 2007). Chris Hicks of the *Deseret News* in a telephone interview on 30 March 2007 called *Gone Fishin'* an "absolutely terrible film."

44. "Christopher Cain," *Internet Movie Database (IMDb)*, <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0128883/> (accessed 4 April 2007).

45. There is no evidence *Tender Touch of Evil* (1999) and *PC and the Web* (2001) were ever released.

second husband, Monte H. Goldman (who died in 1995), had been prominent socialites in Aspen, Colorado, where Cain also lived.

Carole Schutter stated that while her husband and his brother were very wealthy, they did not know Jesus. “I once had everything money could buy but nothing is of more value to me than the love that the Lord Jesus Christ gave to me.”⁴⁶ She further explained, “I look to God to guide me in all things. I’ve surrendered everything to Him and meditate daily upon God’s wonderful promises. I stand upon those promises no matter what the devil brings against me. The battle isn’t mine, but the Lord’s.”⁴⁷ The *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* announced:

There’ve been some major changes in the life of Carole Whang Schutter. The ex-wife of attorney David Schutter and widow of millionaire playboy Monte Goldman, who shot and killed himself, Carole has become a born-again Christian. She’s just written a book called “Miracles Happen,” sub-titled, “A Prayer Guide for Desperate People.” Her message is simple—no matter how bad things are, there’s always hope.⁴⁸

She has also written a number of essays about finding God,⁴⁹ in addition to her 1999 book, *Miracles Happen*. This book discusses the importance of faith, prayer, and miracles. She has had her faith tried and strengthened by difficult experiences that included sons with drug and legal problems and being defrauded out of almost \$120,000.⁵⁰

46. “Testimony of Carol [sic] Schutter,” <http://www.bibleprophecyrevealed.us/2001/carolschutter.html> (accessed 8 November 2007).

47. “Testimony of Carol Schutter.”

48. Dave Donnelly, “Hawaii,” *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, 1 July 1999, <http://starbulletin.com/1999/07/01/features/donnelly.html> (accessed 24 January 2006).

49. “Run to Him,” <http://www.miracleshappen.com> (accessed 24 January 2006); “What Is Your Season?” <http://www.sermonillustrator.org/minisermons/folder1/WHAT%20IS%20YOUR%20SEASON.htm> (accessed 26 January 2007); “Testimony of Carol Schutter.”

50. “Schutter lands in county jail,” *Aspen Daily News*, 11 January 2005, http://www.aspendailynews.com/print_9972 (accessed 15 June 2006); “Schutter awaits arraignment in Jefferson County Jail,” *Aspen Daily News*, 4 December 2006, http://www.aspendailynews.com/print_17157 (accessed 9 February 2007); and Joel Stonington, “Socialite sued in fraud case,” *Aspen Times*, 29 August 2006, <http://www.aspentimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060829/NEWS/108290030&se> (accessed 26 January 2007).

Of *September Dawn*, Schutter said, “It’s an extremely controversial movie. It takes place in the first act of religious terrorism in the United States.”⁵¹ She claimed she “got the idea for the movie when she was driving between Buena Vista and Salida through country that looks very much like site [*sic*] of the Mountain Meadows massacre. She didn’t know it at the time.” Instead, she explained, “I got this crazy idea to write a story about a pioneer woman going in a wagon train to the California gold rush, and the train gets attacked by Mormons dressed as Indians. The idea wouldn’t leave me. I believe it was from God.”⁵²

Schutter began doing research. “I came across the Mountain Meadows massacre and I was blown away,” she said. “I thought, ‘Holy cow—this isn’t made up in my mind. This is real.’ I got really into it. I cried and cried when I read about the story.”⁵³ She insists she had never heard of the massacre before she began researching it. “Why would it just explode in my mind all of a sudden?” she asked.⁵⁴

With evangelical zeal, Carole Schutter wrote a script about the massacre. She claims that her screenplay becoming a movie is nothing short of miraculous:

I found the nature of terrorism especially intriguing and relevant today. Creating likeable characters that take part in unimaginably atrocious acts is a chilling reminder that terrorists can be anyone who chooses to blindly follow fanatical, charismatic leaders. I believe we should examine the leaders we follow that we might not be misled.

Our fight is not against certain religions or “flesh and blood,” as the Bible says, but “against principalities and powers of darkness” which are prejudice, hate, ignorance, and fear

51. Pete Fowler, “Local pens screenplay about massacre,” *Aspen Times*, 9 July 2007, as quoted at <http://www.aspentimes.com/article/20070709/AE/70709002> (accessed 31 July 2007).

52. Fowler, “Local pens screenplay about massacre.”

53. Fowler, “Local pens screenplay about massacre.”

54. Fowler, “Local pens screenplay about massacre.” The article states that Schutter “thinks it’s very odd that the Mountain Meadows massacre fell on the same day of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, but she said people can draw their own conclusions. ‘It is strange that it’s the same day, isn’t it?’”

perpetuated by leaders who history will surely judge by their deeds.⁵⁵

While appreciative of the help Christopher Cain gave her in turning her script into what she describes as “a stirring, evocative movie that will force people to think about the nature of terrorism,”⁵⁶ she is grateful also for divine aid:

Most of all, I am grateful to the Lord Jesus Christ who took one of the “foolish things of the world to confound the wise.” In a world where only 1.1% of all screenwriters ever get a movie made, Jesus gave me a miracle. He turned me into a screenwriter and fulfilled a lifelong dream of being an author. Thank you, Jesus. What He did for me, He can and will do for you, if you never give up, and simply believe.⁵⁷

The movie, billed as “a romance played out against a drama of a mass murder that continues to engender controversy almost 150 years after the fact,”⁵⁸ includes a combination of real and fictional characters. The synopsis of the film, as provided by Murray Weissman & Associates, the public relations firm representing the movie, is interesting in what it does and does not say:

Captain Alexander Fancher (Shaun Johnston) is leading his third wagon train overland to California in the spring of 1857. For Fancher, an Arkansas militiaman, it would be his last trip, as this time he is bringing his family with him to settle down on the rich Gold Coast of California.

Mormon Bishop Jacob Samuelson’s (Jon Voight) family compound just outside Cedar City, Utah is home to his many wives and children, particularly his beloved oldest son, Jonathan (Trent Ford), and adored second son, Micah (Taylor Handley).

55. “About Me: Carole Whang Schutter,” <http://www.carolewhangschutter.com/about.html> (accessed 25 July 2007).

56. “About Me: Carole Whang Schutter.”

57. “About Me: Carole Whang Schutter.”

58. John Anderson, “With Only God Left as a Witness.”

Run out of Missouri a decade earlier, victims themselves of massive persecution, including the murder of their Prophet Joseph Smith (Dean Cain), the Mormons are now on edge when “Gentiles”—a term used by the Mormons for anyone not of their faith—cross into their territory. Rumors are circulating that President Buchanan is sending US Army troops to displace Territorial Governor Brigham Young (Terence Stamp) from his post. Young, in turn, has declared martial law, warning his church members to be prepared to turn back interlopers by any means.

When the Fancher wagon train stops in Mountain Meadows in early September, they are first met by Mormon deacon John D. Lee (Jon Gries) and his Danites (a group of extreme LDS vigilantes). Urged by Lee to leave the encampment, Fancher stands fast and continues to plead for compassion, as his teams need to refresh and rest.

Bishop Samuelson intervenes and allows the wagon train to stay in the valley for two weeks. The Bishop commands Lee to offer help to the settlers, while at the same time instructing his son Jonathan to spy on them, hoping to ascertain their true intent. In the meantime, the Bishop makes his way to the Elders in Cedar City and asks for divine guidance.

Jonathan is only too happy to accommodate his father’s wishes, for he was captivated the first day by the angelic smile of a beautiful young girl on the wagon train. The minister’s daughter, Emily (Tamara Hope) and her family are traveling with the wagon train on their way to a new life. Generous in spirit and kind in nature, Emily helps the settlers by caring for the younger children on the train. . . .

By the time the Bishop returns to the encampment, Jonathan and Emily have declared their love and commitment to each other. Still, Bishop Samuelson has other plans. The Church declares the wagon train to be enemy combatants who must be killed. Against Church teachings, as the Bishop incites his followers to prepare for the blood atonement of

those killed earlier in Missouri, Jonathan urgently and frantically tries to quell the fury.

Unable to make his father see reason, Jonathan and Emily have one last moment where they can share their commitment and Jonathan's pledge to move with her to California. The two young lovers share tokens of their promise and privately bond themselves to each other.

Planning to slip away at dawn to join the wagon train, Jonathan is instead ambushed by his father, locked up in chains and is anxiously close to being killed himself. . . .

Jacob first persuades the local Paiute Indians to attack the wagon train, accompanied by some of his own men disguised as Indians. The settlers are able to repulse the onslaught and, after losing many of his own men, the Indian chief withdraws, realizing that he has been duped by the Bishop.

As the settlers help their own wounded and wait for the next onslaught, John D. Lee comes to them under a flag of truce. Telling them that he will lead them to safety if they will follow him and leave their wagons and possessions behind, he instead leads them into a brutal ambush.

When Jonathan can at last escape and make his way to the encampment site, he encounters a scene more vicious than any from Dante's *Inferno*. Horrified at the sight, a distraught Jonathan begins the torturous search for Emily among the bodies. What he finds will put him squarely in the crosshairs between love and death—and test the will of God against the will of man.⁵⁹

Theater or History?

Christopher Cain insists that the film was not meant to attack Mormons. "I'm comfortable that historically this movie is as accurate as you would want a theatrical movie to be," he said.⁶⁰ Cain's state-

59. Murray Weissman & Associates press release, pp. 5–6.

60. "September Dawn: The Making of . . ." YouTube.com, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OKy6mVq_ANA (accessed 31 July 2007).

ment might not be too comforting given Hollywood's record of portraying the past. Hollywood is known for "skewing historical events to fit audience profiles and lift profit margins."⁶¹ For example, no mention was made in *Saving Private Ryan* of British and other Allied troops who also landed in Normandy on D-Day, and British submariners were replaced by Americans in the movie *U-571*.⁶² A British historian called these Hollywood distortions "shameless and totally irresponsible—a grotesque distortion of history."⁶³

Film portrayals of the American West are also far from real. Hollywood's West is filled with outlaws, gunfights on Main Street, Indian battles, and violence. But this is what the viewing audience has been taught to expect and enjoy. As one historian noted, "We are surrounded in the United States by a mythology of our own creation that frontier violence forged the essential American character."⁶⁴ While there certainly was a culture of honor, which included violent acts, these incidents were not the norm. With Hollywood, however, when it comes to "image versus reality, image usually wins." It is difficult for those writing about historical events to "compete with the media's power to form popular views of reality through visual impact. Granted, no one really expects films to be historically accurate."⁶⁵

Unfortunately, Hollywood not only skews history for profit but also distorts it for even darker reasons. Some supposedly accurate movies replace "an accepted, well-supported version of an historical event with a 'new improved' version that exists less because of its accuracy than because of its advocates' biases."⁶⁶ While biases are often political in

61. Cahal Milmo, "1066 and all that: how Hollywood is giving Britain a false sense of history," *The Independent*, 5 April 2007, http://news.independent.co.uk/uk/this_britain/article54671.ece (accessed 5 April 2007).

62. "Historians: Hollywood distorts facts," AlJazeera.net, 3 September 2004, <http://english.aljazeera.net/English/archive/archive?ArchiveId=5529> (accessed 5 April 2007).

63. "Historians: Hollywood distorts facts."

64. Michael A. Bellesiles, "Guns Don't Kill, Movies Kill: The Media's Promotion of Frontier Violence," *Western Historical Quarterly* 31/3 (2000): 285.

65. Bellesiles, "Guns Don't Kill, Movies Kill," 284.

66. "The Ethics of Changing History: Of Crockett, the Titanic and 'One Small Step,'" *Ethics Scoreboard*, 10 October 2006, <http://www.ethicsscoreboard.com/list/history.html> (accessed 26 January 2007).

nature, they can also be religious. “Ever since Hollywood’s self-imposed censorship code began to fade in the ’60s, religion and the religious [*sic*] have been portrayed in negative stereotypical terms.”⁶⁷ This is particularly true with Christianity; various denominations have come under attack in Hollywood movies. Some films depict other religions in a positive light while portraying Christianity negatively.⁶⁸ Regarding such negative stereotyping, one writer argued that an analysis of Hollywood films with religious themes or characters reveals that in the last four decades Hollywood has portrayed Christians as sexually rigid, talking to God, disturbed, hypocritical, fanatical, psychotic, dishonest, obsessed, dumb, manipulative, phony, neurotic, mentally unbalanced, unscrupulous, destructive, foulmouthed, and fraudulent; and their roles have ranged from slick hucksters, fake spiritualists, Bible pushers, Adam and Eve as pawns in a game between God and Satan, Catholic schoolboys run amok, miracle fabricators, and deranged preachers to outlaws, devil-worshipping cultists, Bible-quoting Nazis, and murder suspects (including an unbalanced nun accused of killing her newborn infant). Few, if any, positive portrayals of Christians were found in Hollywood films released in the last four decades.⁶⁹

“Trapped by the Mormons”

Latter-day Saints have long been the victims of negative stereotyping in Hollywood movies. From the earliest days of motion pictures,

67. Chris Hicks, “Nobody knows less about religion than filmmakers,” *Deseret News*, 23 April 1999, http://www.desnews.com/cgi-bin/cqcg_state/@state.env?CQ_SESSION_KEY=VXOETMGGQXNC&CQ_CUR_DOCUMENT=90&CQ_TEXT_MAIN=YES (accessed 11 December 2007).

68. An excellent example of a blatantly biased film is Ridley Scott’s *Kingdom of Heaven* (2005). According to “Hollywood’s Crusade Against History,” *Christian Action For Reformation & Revival Magazine*, http://www.christianaction.org.za/articles_ca/2005-2-hollywoodcrusadeagainsth.htm (accessed 6 December 2007), the movie “distorts history beyond all recognition.” It purposefully distorts known events and historical aspects by depicting the Christians doing some of the things the Muslims actually did, such as collecting tribute taxes that allow Christians and Jews, or dhimmis as they are known, to practice their religion in Muslim-controlled countries. The film reflects Scott’s dislike for religion, Christianity in particular.

69. John W. Cones, *What’s Really Going On in Hollywood* (Los Angeles: Rivas Canyon Press, 1997), <http://www.homevideo.net/FIRM/whats.htm#3> (accessed 12 April 2006).

films depicting supposed Mormon fanaticism have appeared.⁷⁰ One of the better-known movies from the silent era was *A Mormon Maid* (1916), which used a familiar plot device found in earlier and later anti-Mormon films—“an innocent non-Mormon family with an attractive daughter caught up in the machinations of the polygamous Elders.”⁷¹

Since the 1960s, Mormons have for the most part been portrayed as “simply caricatures designed for easy jokes and general disdain.”⁷² While this approach has continued, there has also been another technique to portray the Saints as violent and dangerous. There have been several films focusing on this theme, and one of the more egregious was a made-for-TV movie entitled *The Avenging Angel* (1995), with Tom Berenger starring as a professional Mormon bodyguard out to stop a plot by other Mormons to assassinate Brigham Young.⁷³ The movie had the usual negative stereotype of the Saints as fanatics living in a strange, foreboding place and following strange religious practices, such as polygamy.

September Dawn certainly fits this format by portraying Mormonism in exaggerated, stereotypical imagery. For example, the Saints

70. Richard Alan Nelson, “A History of Latter-day Saint Screen Portrayals in the Anti-Mormon Film Era, 1905–1936” (master’s thesis, Brigham Young University, 1975), 28. According to Nelson, pp. 21–22, 95, some of the earliest films included *Mormonens Offer* (A Victim of the Mormons, 1911), *Mormonbyens Blomst* (The Flower of the Mormon City, 1911), *The Mormons* (1912), *The Mountain Meadows Massacre* (1912), *The Danites* (1912), *A Study in Scarlet* (1914), and *A Mormon Maid* (1916).

71. Nelson, “History of Latter-day Saint Screen Portrayals,” 103. Among the other films using this plot line are *Mormonbyens Blomst* (1911), *The Mormons* (1912), *A Study in Scarlet* (1914), *Trapped by the Mormons* (1922), and *Married to a Mormon* (1922).

72. Chris Hicks, “Films portray Mormons in an ugly light,” *Deseret Morning News*, 18 May 2007, <http://deseretnews.com/dn/print/1,1442,660221510,00.html> (accessed 10 July 2007). Hicks asked, “Why does it always seem to be open season on the LDS Church?” in another essay, “TV portrayal of Mormons mean, callous,” *Deseret Morning News*, 6 May 2005. Near the end of his essay he asked, “Why would a mainstream TV show openly ridicule a sacred symbol of any religion?” Even Mormon-made films have caused controversy between Latter-day Saints and Evangelicals over whether Mormons and their films are really Christian. “Latter-day Complaints: Mormons and evangelicals fret over movies, politics, and each other,” *Christianity Today*, 1 July 2006, http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/article_print.html?id=38401 (accessed 18 April 2007).

73. “The Avenging Angel (1995),” <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0112423> (accessed 8 August 2007).

are pictured as fanatical and violent individuals who repress women, believe in strange doctrines and rituals, and worship a false Christ. Not surprisingly, the Mountain Meadows Massacre is portrayed as a plot of pure evil planned at the top and executed to destroy good and innocence.⁷⁴

Violence in Nineteenth-Century America

Although Carole Schutter claims to have spent four years researching the subject before writing the screenplay,⁷⁵ the movie contains glaring historical inaccuracies, claiming, for example, that Brigham Young “transported 16,000 people to the Rocky Mountains . . . in one wagon train.”⁷⁶ In fact, according to the *Mormon Pioneer Resource Study*, it took from 1847 to the middle of 1851 before 16,000 people had immigrated to Utah.⁷⁷ Again, Jonathan Samuelson was supposed to have seen Brigham Young preach in the Salt Lake Temple,⁷⁸ but the temple was not finished until 1893, almost sixteen years after Young died. Schutter and the other creators of *September Dawn* also described the First Presidency as “the level immediately below the office of the Prophet,”⁷⁹ but the prophet is actually a part of the First Presidency. She also had Joseph Smith and other Latter-day Saint leaders practicing plural marriage while they were still in Kirtland, Ohio,⁸⁰ but plural marriage on a large scale was not practiced until about 1843, when the Latter-day Saints were centered in Nauvoo, Illinois. Schutter

74. For various studies on Mormons and film, see *BYU Studies* 46/2 (2007), a special issue devoted to this subject.

75. “Most controversial movie since Mel Gibson’s *The Passion of the Christ*?” RNS Press Release, Religion News Service, 1 August 2007, <http://www.religionnews.com/press02/PR073107B.html> (accessed 6 August 2007).

76. Carole Whang Schutter, *September Dawn* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2007), 136. Most of the quotations and references are from Schutter’s novelized version of the screenplay, *September Dawn*. AuthorHouse is a self-publishing company (www.authorhouse.com [accessed 26 November 2007]).

77. *Mormon Pioneer Historic Resource Study*, National Park Service (2003), http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/mopi/hrsab.htm (accessed 18 August 2007).

78. Schutter, *September Dawn*, 133.

79. Schutter, *September Dawn*, 37.

80. Schutter, *September Dawn*, 75

also described Missouri's "Mormon War" as starting when Latter-day Saints "attacked state troops" in October 1838.⁸¹ She did not, however, mention that state militia served on both sides of the skirmish nor that the reason the Latter-day Saints approached Samuel W. Bogart's militia camp was that he and his men had kidnapped two Latter-day Saint men who the Saints feared were going to be executed. The supposed "attack" was a rescue mission, and gunfire occurred on both sides, with several Latter-day Saints being wounded and three being killed.⁸²

Perhaps more troubling is Schutter's failure to mention what has come to be called the Haun's Mill Massacre, in which state militia attacked a Latter-day Saint settlement and killed nineteen men, including a ten-year-old boy who begged for his life.⁸³ Moreover, the events in Missouri and Illinois were portrayed as if they were completely the fault of the Latter-day Saints. "Mob brutality exploded and found its way from Independence to Far West, Missouri. . . . Joseph [Smith] ultimately betrayed his own people by inciting them to violence in a frenzy of self-righteous fury with his demands of complete subjection to god and his commands."⁸⁴

The creators of *September Dawn* portrayed the Latter-day Saints as aggressors deserving mob reciprocation. In fact, descriptions and images of beatings, castrations, and murders permeate the film—for example, dark images of Danites, "often dressed as Indians," bursting into houses, dragging "sinners out of their beds, slitting their throats from ear to ear," and exacting other types of severe punishment.⁸⁵ Even more insidious than the murders, as portrayed by the movie, "the Mormons had an unusual form of punishment for men accused of sexual sins—castration."⁸⁶

81. Schutter, *September Dawn*, 86.

82. For an in-depth discussion of the Mormon-related conflicts in Missouri, see Stephen C. LeSueur, *The 1838 Mormon War in Missouri* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1990).

83. For more information on the Haun's Mill Massacre, see Alma R. Blair, "The Haun's Mill Massacre," *BYU Studies* 13/1 (1972): 62–67.

84. Schutter, *September Dawn*, 86.

85. Schutter, *September Dawn*, 106.

86. Schutter, *September Dawn*, 107.

There were, of course, examples of extralegal punishment for sexual and other serious crimes in territorial Utah. For example, in 1846 Daniel Barnum and Peletiah Brown were whipped for “carnal communication” with some young women. But the legal punishment was death.⁸⁷ In 1856 one of the more controversial incidents took place when Thomas Lewis of Manti was taken by a group of men on his way to the territorial penitentiary for some unspecified sexual crime, probably fornication, and castrated.⁸⁸ Another man named John Beal was castrated in 1858 for adultery.⁸⁹

Most cases of extralegal punishment, however, were retribution for seductions and rapes. The precedent-setting case was that of Howard Egan, who in 1851 killed James Monroe. Monroe had had an affair with Egan’s first wife, Tamson. Monroe wisely chose to get out of town before Egan returned home from a journey to California. Egan, however, followed Monroe and caught him close to the Utah border, where he shot and killed him.⁹⁰

Egan was later brought to trial, where he was defended by George A. Smith. During the closing arguments, Smith argued, “In this territory it is a principle of mountain common law, that no man can seduce the wife of another without endangering his own life.” He then continued, “The principle, the only one, that beats and throbs through the heart of the entire inhabitants of this territory, is simply this: The man who seduces his neighbor’s wife must die, and her nearest relative must kill

87. Juanita Brooks, ed., *On the Mormon Frontier: The Diary of Hosea Stout, 1844–1861* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press and Utah Historical Society, 1964), 1:190–91.

88. Elizabeth Lewis Jones to Brigham Young, 2 November 1856; Elizabeth Lewis Jones to Brigham Young, 8 November 1856; and Elizabeth Lewis Jones to Brigham Young, 9 November 1856, Brigham Young Papers, Bx 69, fd 7, Family and Church History Department Archives, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (hereafter Church Archives). Brigham Young responded by stating he had been told that Thomas Lewis was “wilful wicked and ungovernable.” Brigham Young to Elizabeth Jones, 13 November 1856, Brigham Young Papers, Bx 69, fd 7, Church Archives.

89. Brooks, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 2:663.

90. Kenneth L. Cannon II, “Mountain Common Law: The Extralegal Punishment of Seducers in Early Utah,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 51/4 (1983): 310–11. For other examples of extralegal punishment in territorial Utah, see Craig L. Foster, “The Butler Murder of 1869: A Look at Extralegal Punishment in Utah,” *Mormon Historical Studies* 2/2 (2001): 105–14.

him!”⁹¹ Egan was acquitted, and during the following decades, several husbands and fathers who killed seducers or rapists used Smith’s argument as the basis for their actions. Obviously, extralegal punishment of this nature would certainly not be condoned today. It was not, however, limited to Utah. Nor was extralegal punishment of this nature a strictly local means for enforcing local mores—it was common across the United States and its territories and was much more accepted in the nineteenth century than in the present.

Some examples may help give a better picture of the culture at that time. In 1886 in Walla Walla, Washington, a man tried to rape a young girl but was stopped. While he was never brought to trial, a group of men later abducted him and tried him for rape. He was not seen again until his corpse was found hanging from a tree.⁹² In 1850s Morgan County, Missouri, a resident poisoned a spring used by the schoolchildren, several of whom died from the poisoning. His neighbors chased him, brought him back, and hanged him at the schoolhouse.⁹³

Extreme violence over real or imagined attacks against a person and his honor was not uncommon. This was particularly true in the South, where tradition emphasized the need to preserve one’s honor, especially in regard to female members of a man’s family. Southern states were also the site of intense anti-Mormon activity, particularly in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, when there were over three hundred instances of anti-Mormon violence,⁹⁴ including meetings being broken up by mobs, property destroyed, beatings, whippings, tar and featherings, shootings, and murders.⁹⁵ Such activities were not only accepted but even encouraged. In 1886 the *Alabama*

91. *Deseret Evening News*, 15 November 1851, as quoted in Cannon, “Mountain Common Law,” 312.

92. The *Washington Statesman* account of the lynching is published in “Walla Walla in the 1860s: Violence,” *Western Places: A Chronicle of Western Settlement 2* (October 1993): 33.

93. Gerard Schultz, *Early History of the Northern Ozarks* (Jefferson City, MO: Midland Printing, 1937), 144–45.

94. Patrick Q. Mason, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry Mob: Violence Against Religious Outsiders in the U. S. South, 1865–1900” (PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 2005), 280.

95. Mason, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry Mob,” 281.

Baptist published an editorial insisting that “it is Mormonism itself that is to be hated, to be feared, to be crushed.”⁹⁶

No part of the country was free of extralegal violence, usually in the form of vigilantism. Such states as Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa had strong vigilante groups, but even stronger ones were found in such western states as California, Texas, and Montana. In addition, the Missouri-Arkansas border country, where most of the members of the Baker and Fancher wagon train came from, witnessed extreme vigilantism between 1884 and 1892.

Interestingly, extralegal violence in Utah “was rare compared to that found in other frontier communities.”⁹⁷ For example, “within six months of arriving in California in 1849, one in every five of the 89,000 gold seekers was dead, an astonishing statistic.”⁹⁸ And it has been estimated that there were 4,200 murders in California between 1849 and 1855.⁹⁹ “The city of Marysville reportedly had seventeen murders in a single week, prompting the formation of a vigilance committee.”¹⁰⁰

Danites

Tales of Danite intimidation and violence notwithstanding, Utah never reached the level of violence of the mining and frontier communities in surrounding states and territories. There were certainly forms of vigilante justice in Utah, but not to the extent of its neighbors. Nor was vigilantism perpetrated by Danites (mispronounced with a long *a* in *September Dawn*), who were “a defensive paramilitary organization” created to assist the Saints during the religious violence leading up to the so-called Mormon War in northwestern Missouri in

96. Mason, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry Mob,” 127. According to Mason, the editorial appeared in the *Alabama Baptist*, 22 April 1886.

97. “The Legal History of Utah,” *Utah History Encyclopedia*, <http://www.media.utah.edu/UHE/1/LEGALHISTORY.html> (accessed 2 May 2007).

98. David T. Courtwright, “Violence in America,” *American Heritage* 47 (September 1996): 40. Certainly not all of the deaths were from violence. Disease, mining accidents, and other factors were also causes of death. Even so, a high percentage of deaths resulted from violence.

99. Courtwright, “Violence in America,” 44.

100. Courtwright, “Violence in America,” 44.

1838. The head of the two known units that composed the Danites was Sampson Avard, who, unbeknownst to Joseph Smith and other Latter-day Saint church leaders, altered the original defensive purposes of the Danites by using “initiation rites and secret oaths of loyalty and encouraged subversive activities.”¹⁰¹

While Joseph Smith was aware of the Danites, he was not aware of their more violent and destructive operations. Nevertheless, Danite tales had been created, and stories of their atrocities were plentiful throughout the nineteenth century. Anti-Mormon fiction writers created fanciful accounts of rampaging Danites committing murder in the name of God. “By 1900 at least fifty-six anti-Mormon novels alone had been published in English, incorporating one or more aspects of the Danite myth, beginning with the false assumption that there was a functioning Danite organization in Utah.”¹⁰²

September Dawn relies upon the old anti-Mormon stereotypes of Danites. In visual imagery reminiscent of the Ring-wraiths from the *Lord of the Rings* movies, Danites appear throughout the movie wreaking havoc. We are told, for instance, that John D. Lee was a Danite and was “aware of the lengths the church went to in order to keep their people in line and strengthen the position of the men in power.”¹⁰³

There is no doubt that, as early as 1847, Brigham Young did appoint “a few ‘rough-rider’ type minute men” who “were on call for Indian uprisings and immigrant problems.”¹⁰⁴ But “there were never ‘70 Destroying Angels’ appointed by Brigham Young”¹⁰⁵ to roam the territory and terrorize people, nor was there even one organized band of Danites. But the imagery of Brigham Young’s “Destroying Angels”

101. Arnold K. Garr, et al., eds., *Encyclopedia of Latter-day Saint History* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000), 275. For further reading on the origins and activities of the Danites, see Leland H. Gentry, “The Danite Band of 1838,” *BYU Studies* 14/4 (1974): 421–50.

102. Rebecca Foster Cornwall and Leonard J. Arrington, “Perpetuation of a Myth: Mormon Danites in Five Western Novels, 1840–90,” *BYU Studies* 23/2 (1983): 149.

103. Schutter, *September Dawn*, 102–3, 148.

104. Lynn M. Hilton and Hope A. Hilton, “Danites,” *Utah History Encyclopedia*, <http://www.media.utah.edu/UHE/d/DANITES.html> (accessed 13 April 2007).

105. Hilton and Hilton, “Danites.”

was appealing to readers and, later, filmgoers and apparently continues to capture the imagination.

Misrepresentation of Temple Ceremonies

September Dawn also portrays Mormonism as a non-Christian cult with strange doctrines and rituals by focusing on presumed eccentricities, particularly the temple ceremony. These portrayals are filled with sensationalism, stereotypes, and innuendo. In both the movie and the book, Jonathan Samuelson is taken to the Latter-day Saint temple in Cedar City, where he is forced to endure rituals.¹⁰⁶ The most obvious problem with this scenario is that there never has been a temple in Cedar City. In 1857 there was no Latter-day Saint temple anywhere, only the Endowment House in Salt Lake City. The creators cannot claim ignorance on this matter because Schutter, according to Sandra Tanner of Utah Lighthouse Ministry, phoned her and “asked about the temple ritual.”¹⁰⁷ During this conversation Tanner explained that Salt Lake City would be where the endowment ceremony would have taken place.

A temple placed in the wrong setting is not the only misleading scene related to the temple. Another scene depicts Jacob Samuelson in a temple meeting working a group of men into a rage, with all of them “screaming and chanting with frenzied fury, ‘Blood atonement! Blood atonement!’” Even Sandra Tanner felt this was “a little over the top.”¹⁰⁸ But, as she explained several times, she only had some casual telephone conversations with Carole Schutter, she never read the screenplay, and she didn’t see film clips until the movie was completed and she and others were invited to a private screening.¹⁰⁹

Where did Carole Schutter and Christopher Cain come up with these ideas? They drew upon Increase Van Dusen’s temple exposés as the primary source for this part of the movie. What they either did not know or chose to ignore was that Van Dusen suffered from mental

106. Schutter, *September Dawn*, 112–16.

107. Telephone interview between Craig L. Foster and Sandra Tanner (15 August 2007).

108. Telephone interview between Foster and Tanner.

109. Telephone interview between Foster and Tanner.

and emotional problems. Even after publishing several tracts exposing the temple ceremony, he was still affiliated with James J. Strang and his group (who had broken off from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints). This affiliation continued until personal conflicts between Strang and Van Dusen over the latter's 1849 publication of a tract containing his own revelations caused Van Dusen's banishment from the Strangites.¹¹⁰

September Dawn also contains numerous references to oaths of vengeance supposedly taken by Latter-day Saints. For example, at the very beginning Jonathan Samuelson is pictured as knowing it was "his duty to expose the defiantly anti-American oaths taken by members."¹¹¹ During the scenes of the temple ceremony, the participants spoke in unison as they made their final vows:

We promise to never question the commands of the authorities in the church and promise instant obedience. We swear everlasting enmity to the United States government and promise to disregard its laws as far as possible. We vow to exert every effort to avenge the death of our Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum on the Gentile race and on this American nation. We vow to teach our children and our children's children to foster this spirit of revenge. The penalty for anyone who breaks or reveals this oath is excruciating torture. They shall have . . . their throats cut from ear to ear; and their hearts and tongues will be cut out. In the world to come, they will inherit eternal damnation. There will be no chance of salvation for them.¹¹²

Typically, Schutter has relied on a few well-used nineteenth-century anti-Mormon sources rather than plumbing the many primary documents relating to this topic. While there are reports that the Saints sometimes prayed for the Lord to execute vengeance on their enemies

110. Craig L. Foster, "From Temple Mormon to Anti-Mormon: The Ambivalent Odyssey of Increase Van Dusen," *Dialogue* 27/3 (1994): 283–84.

111. Schutter, *September Dawn*, xiii.

112. Schutter, *September Dawn*, 115–16.

(in a spirit reminiscent of Psalm 83:13–17 and Revelation 16:4–7), there is no evidence that they took an oath to seek vengeance themselves.¹¹³

Plural Marriage

The way plural marriage is depicted in *September Dawn* is merely a rehash of stereotypes used since the days of the nineteenth-century penny tracts and tell-all novels “exposing” Mormon polygamy. There are numerous references to polygamy in the movie (and the book) that play up sexual stereotyping. For instance, in a scene in the movie, Jacob Samuelson, as the bishop, walks along a row of Mormon men prepared to attack the wagon train and anoints the forehead of each man, repeating how they would be honored “with a polygamous kingdom in the last days.”

The book also employs the stereotype of the misery of the lesser wives:

Bands of impoverished polygamists roamed the countryside with their many wives, some of them girls barely in their teens, married to men in their sixties. Starving and dressed in rags, they tagged after their “Father,” as they called their husbands, carrying their naked babies on their hip. The famine of 1856, caused by the locusts, had left some families so poor even the older children ran around unclothed. It was not uncommon to see the younger wives of wealthy Mormons walking barefoot to church. As younger wives, they were nothing more than servants to the first wife and whoever the “Father’s” current favorite wives were.¹¹⁴

The book thus creates the impression that all Latter-day Saint women wanted to escape plural marriage but were too frightened to try.¹¹⁵

113. See http://www.fairwiki.org/Oath_of_vengeance (accessed 25 October 2007).

114. Schutter, *September Dawn*, 4–5.

115. Schutter, *September Dawn*, 138–39. Women’s fear of being punished for running away from polygamy is reinforced in *September Dawn* by the blood atoning of Jonathan Samuelson’s own mother, who ran away from an unnamed apostle after she was forced to become his plural wife. Her blood-atoning is described on pages 101–3.

Clichés related to polygamy abound in *September Dawn*. The Mormon apostle who stole Jonathan Samuelson’s mother away from Jacob Samuelson, her rightful husband, is described as “a fat old man with piggish eyes.”¹¹⁶ In explaining Brigham Young’s having at least twenty-seven wives, Jonathan states matter-of-factly, “Women feel honored to marry him.”¹¹⁷ Again, when Jacob Samuelson and John D. Lee go to report the massacre to Brigham Young, they arrive at the Beehive House. “Next to it was the magnificent, sprawling Lion’s House, which housed Brigham’s harem.”¹¹⁸ Note that *harem* is used to describe Brigham Young’s large family. Since the mid-1800s, anti-Mormon writers have compared Mormons to Muslims, particularly using imagery of captivity, sensuality, and sexuality, which have long played an important part in the Western world’s perception of Islam and its adherents.¹¹⁹ Muslims have been viewed as “irredeemably lustful and therefore immoral. This negative image was in the eighteenth century complemented by another, again largely imagined, dimension of the Middle East as an exotic area with romantic longing, harems, Turkish baths and eunuchs. Middle Easterners were seen as inherently licentious.”¹²⁰

Anti-Mormon literature often described Brigham Young as one who “glories in his shame, so as to make every friend of modesty and morality blush for him, and sigh over his evil example.”¹²¹ Mormon leaders were characterized as “conspicuously obscene, profane and

116. Schutter, *September Dawn*, 56.

117. Schutter, *September Dawn*, 142. The book goes on to include how Jonathan Samuelson, having grown up with polygamy, “had automatically accepted the practice. He wondered why this Mormon mandate suddenly seemed distasteful to him. *Perhaps the Gentiles have the right idea*, he thought, immediately feeling disloyal.”

118. Schutter, *September Dawn*, 231. Of course, what Schutter calls the “Lion’s House” was and still is called the Lion House.

119. Craig L. Foster, *Penny Tracts and Polemics: A Critical Analysis of Anti-Mormon Pamphleteering in Great Britain, 1837–1860* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford, 2002), 165.

120. Sabine Schmidtke, “Review of *Sexual Encounters in the Middle East: The British, the French and the Arabs*, by Derek Hopwood,” *Die Welt des Islams*, n.s., 41/1 (2001): 121.

121. Dawson Burns, *Mormonism, Explained and Exposed* (London: Houlston and Stoneman, 1853), 26.

immoral”¹²² and as “lecherous old scamps,”¹²³ and the women were described as “panderers to . . . lust.”¹²⁴ Such movies as *Trapped by the Mormons* and *A Mormon Maid* employed this imagery; *September Dawn* does the same, showing John D. Lee and Brigham Young arguing about a woman Lee loves but whom Young insists on marrying as a plural wife.

Joseph Smith is portrayed in even worse terms. He is said to have justified his infidelities with teenage girls “by announcing he had a revelation from God that the Heavenly Father had not only sanctioned, but encouraged, polygamy.”¹²⁵ Of course, Joseph Smith’s plural marriages with teenagers are mentioned with appropriate shock and disgust. Carole Schutter and the other creators of *September Dawn* have fallen into the same trap that even some historians fall into—projecting their values onto people of another era.

While Americans today react with disgust at the thought of older men marrying teenage women, it was much more common in earlier centuries. Peter Laslett, the prominent social historian, has noted, for example, that in eighteenth-century Belgrade, Serbia, girls as young as eleven and twelve were not only marrying but also having children. Furthermore, 87 percent of all women between the ages of fifteen and nineteen were married, and one-third of fifteen-year-old girls and over half of all sixteen-year-old girls were married.¹²⁶

On the American side, it was common in newer regions of settlement and farming in both the United States and Canada for women to marry at a young age. Both brides and grooms were very young in

122. Albert King Morris, *A Word of Warning to Young Women: The Unseen Hand of Mormonism* (Pittsburgh: The National Order of Anti-Polygamy Crusaders, ca. 1920), 4. He also urged young women not to desert their home for “a place in one of the Mormon harems” and to “forsake not the sacredness of [their] true womanhood.”

123. William Jarman, *British Female Slaves*, 2. This is an undated anti-Mormon tract identified as no. 13 (in the author’s possession).

124. John Benjamin Franklin, *The Mysteries and Crimes of Mormonism; or, A Voice from the Utah Pandemonium* (London: C. Elliott, 1855?), 3.

125. Schutter, *September Dawn*, 73.

126. Peter Laslett, “Age at Menarche in Europe since the Eighteenth Century,” in *Marriage and Fertility: Studies in Interdisciplinary History*, ed. Robert I. Rotberg and Theodore K. Rabb (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 291, 293.

colonial America.¹²⁷ For example, in seventeenth-century Chesapeake Bay and environs, it was common for women to marry at age sixteen or younger. Marriages at a young age continued with the American push West, and while the marriageable age for both women and men has risen over the years in the United States and other parts of the Western world, there are still some ethnic and social groups that continue to accept and even encourage marriages between young couples.¹²⁸

The Reality and the Illusion

The regrettable reality is that after a week's siege, on the morning of 7 September 1857, Mormon militia talked members of the Baker and Fancher wagon train into laying down their weapons and trusting in the protection of the militia. Then on 11 September the militia and a group of Paiute Indians killed at least 120 unarmed men, women, and children. This event provides the supposed reason for making *September Dawn*—to tell the story of a tragedy that took place almost 150 years ago. Unfortunately, rather than provide a straightforward account of one of the worst massacres in American history, the makers of the movie created a convoluted love story full of inaccurate information. So eager were Carole Schutter and Christopher Cain to portray this sad event with clichéd stereotypes that they garbled the entire story, introducing many factual mistakes in the process.

From the outset, both minor and major historical inaccuracies mar the film. Mountain Meadows, for example, is represented as a valley with tall trees alongside a wide river. But in reality there were very few trees, at best just some scrub oak. Moreover, the source of water was the small Magotsu Creek, located in a gully. Another problem is the depiction of travel time when riding on a horse or in a wagon. In one scene, Jacob Samuelson departs in a one-horse carriage to visit

127. Michael Gordon, ed., *The American Family in Social-Historical Perspective*, 3rd ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), 16; and David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 674–75.

128. For a lengthier discussion on marriage ages and marriage customs in comparison to Mormons, see Craig L. Foster, "Doing Violence to Historical Integrity," *FARMS Review* 16/1 (2004): 149–74.

Brigham Young, telling his son he will be gone “two days, maybe more.”¹²⁹ But Salt Lake City is more than 250 miles north of Cedar City, and riding hard and changing horses at every settlement up and back would have taken at least five or six days (and even then the rider could have spent only a few hours in Salt Lake City). Furthermore, the movie depicts Jonathan riding back and forth between Cedar City and Mountain Meadows as if it is a twenty- or thirty-minute horseback ride rather than approximately forty-five miles.

The chronology and time frame of events have also been changed. The wagon train arrived at the valley probably sometime around mid-day or early evening on Saturday, 5 September. The emigrants had a peaceful Sunday at the meadow and were attacked shortly before dawn on Monday, 7 September. The book and movie have the wagon train reaching the meadow at the end of August and resting there a week before they were attacked.¹³⁰

Schutter and Cain needed the added time to have a relationship develop between Jonathan and Emily, the “Romeo and Juliet” of the movie. The likelihood of a romance springing up between the two is improbable to say the least, even if they did have that extra week at the meadow. Even Sandra Tanner told Carole Schutter that the idea of a love-at-first-sight romance was “improbable” and suggested that the storyline have the two originally meeting in Arkansas. One family could join the church and move to Utah, where the couple could renew their romance when the wagon train passed through.¹³¹ This idea did not appeal to Schutter. Instead, she had the wagon train arrive at Mountain Meadows a week early in an attempt to make a far-fetched scenario seem plausible.

Several other points are also overlaid. After Jacob and practically all of the community leaders in southern Utah make their short trip to Salt Lake City, they meet with Brigham Young and various Indian chiefs to plan the wagon train’s destruction. In the course of their plotting, Brigham Young declares in a rather melodramatic

129. Schutter, *September Dawn*, 23.

130. Schutter, *September Dawn*, 1.

131. Telephone interview between Foster and Tanner.

voice, “I am the voice of god, and anyone who doesn’t like it will be hewn down.”¹³² “Enthralled, the assembly shouted, ‘Amen!’”¹³³ But contrary to Cain and Schutter’s assurances that everything their “Brigham Young” utters is what the real Brigham Young said, there is no source for Young having actually spoken those words. However, Christopher Cain went as far as to say, “I didn’t write any of his dialogue,” claiming it was all found in Brigham Young’s depositions.¹³⁴ But I read Brigham Young’s deposition for John D. Lee’s second trial without finding any hint of the above statement.¹³⁵ (Nor was Sandra Tanner able to find it.)¹³⁶

That is not the only instance in which Brigham Young is misquoted. A little later Young proclaims, “Now I will loose the Indians upon them! And if any miserable scoundrels come here to our Zion, cut their throats!”¹³⁷ In a blatant act of misrepresentation, the creators of *September Dawn* combined two different quotations, both taken out of context. In his 16 August 1857 speech, Brigham Young complained that the emigrants had “shot at every Indian they saw,” angering the Indians to the point where Young felt he could not “keep them peaceable [*sic*].” He then announced that if an army came to Utah, he would “not hold the Indians still while the emigrants shoot them, as they have hitherto done, but [he would] say to them, go and do as you please.”¹³⁸

The other part of the quotation had nothing to do with loosing the Indians. Brigham Young was speaking about the persecution the Saints had experienced and about evil men coming to Utah to take advantage of the Mormons:

132. Schutter, *September Dawn*, 39.

133. Schutter, *September Dawn*, 39.

134. Anderson, “With Only God Left as a Witness.”

135. “Deposition of Brigham Young, July 30, 1875 (for second trial of John D. Lee),” Mountain Meadows Association, <http://www.mtn-meadows-assoc.com/bydep.htm> (accessed 21 August 2007).

136. Response to a 28 November 2004 letter to the editor, http://www.utlm.org/onlineresources/letters_to_the_editor/2004/2004november.htm (accessed 21 August 2007).

137. Schutter, *September Dawn*, 42.

138. Brigham Young, speech in the old tabernacle on 16 August 1857. I thank Melvin Bashore for providing these quotations.

We have the proof on hand, that instead of the laws being honored, they have been violated in every instance of persecution against this people; instead of the laws being made honorable, they have been trampled under the feet of lawyers, judges, sheriffs, governors, legislators, and nearly all the officers of the government; such persons are the most guilty of breaking the laws.

To diverge a little, in regard to those who have persecuted this people and driven them to the mountains, I intend to meet them on their own grounds. It was asked this morning how we could obtain redress for our wrongs; I will tell you how it could be done, we could take the same law they have taken, viz., mobocracy, and if any miserable scoundrels come here, cut their throats. (All the people said, Amen.)¹³⁹

While the portrayal of events leading up to the actual attack against the wagon train is inaccurate, that is nothing compared to the ineptitude with which the wagon train members and the massacre itself are handled. Christopher Cain claimed that while there is “some fiction” in the movie, the creators of the film are “fairly accurate in terms of the real story.”¹⁴⁰ Cain ends up trivializing the members of the Baker and Fancher wagon train, their fortitude in the face of a horrific attack, and, ultimately, their senseless murders.

Similarly, the first victim in the movie is Nancy Dunlap, whom Cain and Schutter depict as a pants-wearing, gun-toting woman who earns the wrath of the Mormons. Her “bloody body” is discovered the night before the actual attack, and they quickly see that “a part of her scalp had been brutally cut away.”¹⁴¹ Thus forewarned, Captain Fancher orders that the wagons be circled tight and the number of outriders doubled.¹⁴²

139. Brigham Young, “The Kingdom of God,” *Journal of Discourses*, 2:311.

140. Paula K. Parker, “A Conversation with September Dawn’s Christopher Cain,” BuddyHollywood.com, 15 August 2007, <http://www.buddyhollywood.com> (accessed 21 August 2007).

141. Schutter, *September Dawn*, 164–65.

142. Schutter, *September Dawn*, 166–67.

What an insult to the courage and tenacity of the actual wagon train members. In actuality, the attack Monday morning was a complete surprise. The wagons and tents were spread out haphazardly by family groupings near the creek, and the emigrants were unprotected and in a very vulnerable position. Impressively, even in the face of a surprise attack, they were able not only to defend themselves and force the attackers back but also to move the wagons into a circle and start digging a wagon fort by piling up dirt embankments under and between the wagons.¹⁴³ To have them prepared the night before takes away from their herculean accomplishments during what was no doubt the frenzied hysteria of the first attack.

John D. Lee estimated that seven men were killed and three wounded in the initial attack.¹⁴⁴ More men probably died because the pickets and herders were most likely killed before they could make it back to the safety of the camp. Schutter, however, depicts a veritable bloodbath of both sexes and all ages with more women being killed than men.¹⁴⁵

Adding to the absurdity of this recounting of the massacre is the scene portraying numerous Mormons attacking the wagon train on the day of the first attack. The historical data shows that Lee and perhaps one or two other Mormon men were the only settlers at the meadow during the first attack. But even more ludicrous is how the film portrays the Mormon men darkening their faces to look like Indians but then making a full-on assault on the wagon train still wearing “white men” clothing, including their hats (a few of which looked like the old beaver-skinned top hats similar to what Abraham Lincoln wore). How gullible do the makers of *September Dawn* think the wagon train emigrants were? If the emigrants had seen men wearing that type of clothing at the beginning of the week attacking and shooting at them, would they have been so receptive and gullible on that fateful Friday?

143. Juanita Brooks, *The Mountain Meadows Massacre* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962), 70.

144. Brooks, *Mountain Meadows Massacre*, 70.

145. Schutter, *September Dawn*, 186–88. Among the women mentioned being killed were Nancy Dunlap (killed the night before), Armilda Tackitt, Manerva Beller Baker, and Sarah Baker Mitchell.

In the book, Schutter further demonstrates a lack of knowledge regarding the actual emigrants. Several examples from the book will suffice. Twenty-two-year-old Amilda Tackitt was killed by an Indian. “Out of nowhere, twenty-five-year-old Charles Stallcup appeared. Just the day before, he had confided to Emily that he planned to ask Amilda to marry him before they reached California.”¹⁴⁶ That certainly would have been interesting since both were already married—and not to each other. Furthermore, Amilda appears to have survived death; she later surfaces alive and well under her actual name of Armilda. “Alexander’s heart went out to all the young mothers, like twenty-two-year-old Armilda Tackitt, who sobbed as she placed William Henry, nineteen months, and Emberson Milum, four years, in the wagon.”¹⁴⁷

Another wagon train member who should be dead isn’t. Saladia Ann Brown Huff is described as carrying a dead baby and “screaming as she attacked a Mormon guard” who has entered the wagon fort. “Her four-year-old daughter, Nancy, was crying and clinging to Saladia’s skirts, while Saladia’s husband, Peter, stood next to her, trying to explain to the guard that the baby was already dead.”¹⁴⁸ Since Peter Huff died on the plains before the wagon train reached Salt Lake City,¹⁴⁹ his being at the meadow was quite miraculous but certainly not impossible for writers intent on demonizing a religion.

In the film, Cain has all of the men, women, and children happily coming out of the protection of their wagon fort when John D. Lee and others ride up with their white flag to talk them into surrendering. But walking out in the open when the whereabouts of the Indians was unknown would have been foolish, and the real emigrants did no such thing. Cain nevertheless includes this scene in the movie. The movie and book also include a rape scene—played out in detail in the book—even though Juanita Brooks, among other reputable historians, has concluded that “the whole suggestion of rape in this incident seems to

146. Schutter, *September Dawn*, 186.

147. Schutter, *September Dawn*, 210.

148. Schutter, *September Dawn*, 211.

149. “A Survivor of the Mountain Meadow Massacre,” *Fort Smith Weekly New Era*, 24 February 1875.

be another example of how repeated suggestion and whisperings may grow into more and more impossible tales, which are then passed on as fact.”¹⁵⁰

Cain, Schutter, Voight, and others involved with *September Dawn* have repeatedly claimed to have nothing against the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. “I don’t have an agenda with the Mormon Church,” Cain said.¹⁵¹ “I made a movie about Mormons attacking a wagon train; not me attacking Mormons.”¹⁵² Schutter begins her book by stating, “Throughout the ages, religious radicals have justified horrific deeds by piously announcing that their crimes against humanity were done in the name of God.”¹⁵³ She then explains that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has “a bloody past”¹⁵⁴ but has “reinvented itself from its brutal beginnings by becoming as blandly non-threatening as the pictures of their founder, Joseph Smith.”¹⁵⁵ Although her attitude toward Mormonism is quite clear, Schutter makes it even more overt by including the following scripture on the page preceding the author’s note: “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of the world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12).¹⁵⁶

Schutter, as do some other conservative Christians, sees herself as involved in spiritual warfare against the powers of darkness. “The ‘spiritual warfare’ movement, born in the 1970s and 1980s in Californian Evangelical and Pentecostal circles, gained international prominence in 1986 when the best selling novel *This Present Darkness* by Frank Peretti was published. By 1991, one and a half million copies of the novel had

150. Brooks, *Mountain Meadows Massacre*, 105–6.

151. Chris Lee, “Fanatics and a forgotten massacre,” *Los Angeles Times*, 19 August 2007, <http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/news/movies/la-ca-september19aug19,1,5904349,p> (accessed 20 August 2007).

152. Parker, “A Conversation with September Dawn’s Christopher Cain.”

153. Schutter, *September Dawn*, ix.

154. Schutter, *September Dawn*, x.

155. Schutter, *September Dawn*, xii.

156. Schutter, *September Dawn*, vii.

been sold.”¹⁵⁷ Numerous Evangelicals were soon engaged in battling the forces of evil. For Schutter, as well as others, that spiritual warfare involves attacking the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.¹⁵⁸ (Not surprisingly, some anti-Mormon groups quickly recognized the polemical value of the movie. In fact, according to a posting on the Internet titled “‘September Dawn’ as a deconversion tool,” an issue of *The Cross* [*Christians Reaching Out to Sincere Saints*], “the bi-monthly newsletter issued by the Arizona-based anti-Mormon organization called Concerned Christians,” wrote that *September Dawn* would be a good thing for the ministry; and Bob Betts, the author of the review, expected “a flurry of calls and e-mails from people, wanting more information.” Betts also suggested readers “pray for all those who will watch *September Dawn*.”)¹⁵⁹

Public Reaction to *September Dawn*

Fortunately, the movie’s anti-Mormon sentiments have not gone unrecognized.¹⁶⁰ Several movie reviewers have commented on the anti-Mormon tone of the movie. *Slant Magazine* stated that the movie “quickly feels less like an attempt at historical truth-telling than like shameless anti-Mormon propaganda.”¹⁶¹ Weber State University pro-

157. Frank Peretti, *This Present Darkness* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1986), as quoted in Massimo Introvigne, “Strange Bedfellows or Future Enemies?: Is the split between the secular anti cult and the religious counter cult movement bound to grow into open antagonism?” *Dialogcentret* (October 1993), <http://www.dci.dk/?artikel=200> (accessed 22 August 2007). Introvigne wrote in his essay that “even a cursory look at the Christian counter cult literature would show that the single most targeted group is the Mormon Church.”

158. Thus the comment near the end of *September Dawn* (p. 252) about finding “the real Jesus.”

159. Justin, “‘September Dawn’ as a deconversion tool,” *Mormon Wasp*, <http://www.mormonwasp.wordpress.com/2007/06/21/september-dawn-as-a-deconversion-tool> (accessed 12 July 2007).

160. Online posts about the movie have appeared at numerous Web sites, including xmormon.org and mormontruth.blogspot.com. Well-known anti-Mormon John L. Smith also discussed the movie in an article titled “New Film About Mountain Meadows,” *The Newsletter* 3/28 (2006): 1. Some anti-Mormon groups immediately saw the polemical value of the film.

161. Nick Schager, “September Dawn,” *Slant Magazine*, 20 April 2007, http://www.slantmagazine.com/film/film_review.asp?ID=2925 (accessed 7 May 2007).

fessor and Mountain Meadows Massacre expert Gene A. Sessions was quoted in a *Boston Globe* review saying, “This is a bit of salacious trash, designed to sensationalize a terribly tragic event and horrible atrocity as well as to exploit current anti-Mormon and anti-religious sentiment that seems to be sweeping through popular culture.”¹⁶² Scott Renshaw of the *Charleston City Paper* described the movie as “unintentionally hilarious and borderline offensive.” “It does everything but gasp and insist there are horns under the Mormons’ hats.”¹⁶³ He described the portrayal of Mormon leaders “cackling in cartoonish villainy and twirling moustaches—er, beards”¹⁶⁴ and concluded by calling the film a “historical tar-and-feathering” in which Cain had portrayed Mormons as “homesteading Nazis,” adding an interesting observation echoed by other reviewers: “By treating the Mormons with such laughable contempt, he actually made me feel sorry for them.”¹⁶⁵

Other newspapers were similarly harsh in their criticism of what they perceived to be blatant anti-Mormonism. The *Clarion-Ledger* declared, “Though largely based on historic fact, *September Dawn* is so ham-handed as to feel like blatant propaganda,”¹⁶⁶ while well-known film critic Roger Ebert described the movie as “unbelievably ugly and an insult to Mormons.”¹⁶⁷ The *Idaho Statesman* accused Christopher Cain of doing “a hatchet job on an entire religion” and said that his movie was “devoid of objectivity.”¹⁶⁸ Another reviewer insisted that

162. Michael Paulson, “Religious violence stirs a western,” *The Boston Globe*, 19 August 2007, http://www.boston.com/ae/movies/articles/2007/08/19/religious_violence_stirs_a_western (accessed 5 December 2007).

163. Scott Renshaw, “Mountain Muddle: The inept *September Dawn* gets a good hate on for Mormons,” *Charleston City Paper*, 22 August 2007, <http://www.charlestoncitypaper.com/gyrobase/Content?oid=oid%3A31846> (accessed 5 December 2007).

164. Renshaw, “Mountain Muddle.”

165. Renshaw, “Mountain Muddle.”

166. Robert W. Butler, “Movie Review: *September Dawn* is blatant propaganda against the Mormons,” *The Kansas City Star*, 24 August 2007, http://www.projo.com/movie_reviews/lb_September_Dawn_08-24-07_L96QEF4.11cf7b6.html (accessed 6 December 2007).

167. “*September Dawn*,” *Winston-Salem Journal*, 23 August 2007, <http://www.journalnow.com> (accessed 23 August 2007).

168. “*September Dawn*: Bias blurs fact and fiction in this tale,” *Idaho Statesman*, 24 August 2007, <http://www.idahostatesman.com/130/v-print/story/140812.html> (accessed 24 August 2007).

“the jarring MTV-style filmmaking is so distracting and the ‘messaging’ so unsubtle that after two long hours you find yourself leaving the theatre with a massive headache, wondering when you started to hate Mormons.”¹⁶⁹ The trade newspaper *Variety* commented on how “the pic is ultimately less interested in understanding its Mormon characters than in demonizing them,”¹⁷⁰ and the *Kansas City Star* described the movie as a “stridently anti-Mormon and cliché-heavy melodrama,”¹⁷¹ while the Minneapolis-St. Paul *Star Tribune* complained that “the film feels less like historical drama than a venomous religious tract printed on celluloid.”¹⁷²

A powerful review expressing the disgust that many people felt for the anti-Mormonism in the film was published by a Christian-oriented Web site whose reviewers are theologians, authors of Christian-oriented literature, and commentators on Christian pop culture. In a review entitled “September Dawn: A Nasty Trip Down History Lane,” the reviewer wrote, “*September Dawn* is, simply put, one of the most shockingly poor and mean-spirited films of the year—despite the fact the filmmakers’ intentions are pretty noble.”¹⁷³ He then continued by expressing frustration at the lack of depth in the movie’s characters and the “black-and-white anti-Mormon vision” of *September Dawn*. “I’m afraid I can’t recommend *September Dawn* for much of anyone at all, as much as I wanted to like the film going in.”¹⁷⁴

169. Brett Register, “September Dawn,” *Orlando Weekly*, 23 August 2007, <http://www.orlandoweekly.com/film/review.asp?rid=12972> (accessed 27 August 2007).

170. Justin Chang, “September Dawn,” *Variety*, 21 August 2007, <http://www.variety.com> (accessed 22 August 2007).

171. As cited by Jacob Gordon, “‘September Dawn’ Opens to Negative Reviews,” *TheCelebrityCafe.com*, 25 August 2007, <http://www.thecelebritycafe.com/features/11535.html> (accessed 26 August 2007).

172. Colin Covert, “September Dawn casts long shadows,” *Star-Tribune*, 23 August 2007, <http://www.startribune.com/1553/v-print/story/1378721.html> (accessed 24 August 2007).

173. Greg Wright, “September Dawn: A Nasty Trip Down History Lane,” *Past the Popcorn: Films, and the Artists Who Make Them*, <http://past-the-popcorn.gospelcom.net/index.php/2007/sepember-dawn> (accessed 24 August 2007). The reviewer is the managing editor of the Web site and is “Writer in Residence at Puget Sound Christian College in Everett, Washington.” He is also an editor at HollywoodJesus.com and is a member of Faith and Film Critics Circle.

174. Wright, “September Dawn: A Nasty Trip Down History Lane.” Not all religiously oriented movie reviews, however, expressed disappointment with the film. Harry Forbes,

Particularly strongly worded reviews appeared on Collider.com and in the *Detroit News*, respectively:

The point of the picture appears to be the blunt mockery of the Mormon culture, but surely “Dawn” would be far more controversial if it didn’t try so hard to be raw and unpleasant. Cain has turned the Mormons into baby-eatin’ Nazis to suit his argument, parading around these black-clad, chin-bearded, testicle-slicing gunslingers without any thoughtful consideration. To Cain, the Mormons were hulking, borderline insane fundamental gorillas who flung excrement at anyone daring to besmirch the name of Joseph Smith . . . and led around . . . by a Zod-like deity in Brigham Young.¹⁷⁵

Director Christopher Cain . . . paints a damning, one-sided portrait of Latter-day Saints in this irresponsible, ham-fisted morality tale that plays off our cultural ignorance of the Mormon religion. If you think polygamy is a bit wacky, wait until you learn Mormons are bloodthirsty, murderous psychos! What’s worse, Cain shamelessly evokes Sept. 11 by playing up the fact the massacre occurred on Sept. 11, 1857. He stops short of calling Osama Bin Laden a Mormon sympathizer, but maybe that’ll be on the DVD.¹⁷⁶

The references to Muslims were in reaction to the claim that *September Dawn* is supposed to be a commentary on modern fanaticism and terrorism. Some reviewers suggested that Hollywood attacks Mormonism because it is afraid to criticize radical Islamic jihadists. Michael Medved agreed and explained that while Mormons were

in “September Dawn,” *Catholic Online*, 24 August 2007, <http://www.catholic.org> (accessed 24 August 2007), was generally complimentary of the movie. He ended with, “Whatever the truth, the film can at least be viewed, in generalized terms, as a warning against religious fanaticism of any stripe, a theme with great resonance in today’s world.”

175. Brian Orndorf, “September Dawn,” *Collider.com: Latest Entertainment Stories*, 23 August 2007, <http://www.collider.com/entertainment/reviews/article.asp?aid=5265&tcid=1> (accessed 24 August 2007).

176. “September Dawn,” *Detroit News*, 24 August 2007, <http://www.detnews.com> (accessed 24 August 2007).

compared to Muslims with all of the implications of fanaticism and violence, “Mormons won’t respond with any comparable rage [like the deadly riots in 2006 over a dozen Danish cartoons making fun of Islam], no matter how badly *September Dawn* tarnishes the memory of their faith’s founders. . . . The measured response to public smears of Mormonism in effect rebuts the *September Dawn* suggestion that the church represents a relevant example of violent fanaticism.”¹⁷⁷

Like reviewers, moviegoers reacted negatively to *September Dawn*. With 857 screens nationwide, the first day’s gross was \$182,000. By Sunday evening, the total gross intake was \$601,857.¹⁷⁸ Subsequent figures bore out the film’s poor reception.

As for Carole Whang Schutter, in her zealotry to portray the Latter-day Saints in a negative way, she has employed several anti-religious stereotypes as well as Victorian pornographic imagery (in the rape scene, for example). She has portrayed the Saints as fanatics who are blindly obedient, who look on outsiders with suspicion and intolerance, and who belittle those not of their faith. Nevertheless, Schutter claims to have felt called by God to research and write *September Dawn*;¹⁷⁹ she also claims her journey has been “a miracle.”¹⁸⁰

Cain and Schutter set out to make a controversial movie attacking the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and used the Mountain Meadows Massacre as a backdrop. Unfortunately, contrary to their noble statements about honoring the victims of the massacre, the members of the fateful wagon train were nothing more than mere stage props and pawns in this poorly executed anti-Mormon melodrama. Rather than memorializing the victims, the film ultimately dishonors their memory.

177. Michael Medved, “Hollywood’s terrorists: Mormon, not Muslim,” *USA Today*, 13 August 2007, <http://www.usatoday.com/printedition/news/20070813/opledereigion81.art.htm> (accessed 6 December 2007).

178. “Daily Box Office, for Friday, August 24, 2007,” <http://boxofficemojo.com/daily/chart/?sortdate=2007-08-24&p=.htm> (accessed 6 December 2007).

179. Fowler, “Local pens screenplay about massacre.”

180. Oksenhorn, “Aspen screenwriter experiences miracle with ‘September Dawn.’”

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.¹ 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.² 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,”³ 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).⁴

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?⁵

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 excellent⁶ 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.”⁷ 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 12:22.⁸

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.⁹

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.¹⁰ 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,¹¹ 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.¹² 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.

FINALLY!

Kevin L. Barney

Review of Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, Eric D. Hunstman, and Thomas A. Wayment. *Jesus Christ and the World of the New Testament: An Illustrated Reference for Latter-day Saints*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2006. viii + 327 pp., with bibliography and index. \$39.95.

I well remember when the BYU Religious Studies Center published *The Words of Joseph Smith*.¹ This was a landmark development in publishing as it relates to Mormon studies. The Nauvoo discourses of the Prophet Joseph were portrayed in this volume using modern documentary editing standards so as to re-create as closely as possible the actual manuscript records of the discourses without the kind of prettifying (and often misleading, whether or not intentionally) editing that had been imposed on these sources in some previous publications. When this book was first published, a reporter asked Hugh Nibley for his reaction, and I well recall his trenchant one-word response: “Finally!” I took it from this reaction that Nibley felt that there had long been a need for such a resource and that Andrew Ehat and Lyndon Cook had done a good job in preparing and making available that collection of texts.

I have adopted as my title for this review Nibley’s single-word response, for it represents my own reaction to *Jesus Christ and the World of the New Testament* (hereafter *World*): Finally! At last we have

1. Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph* (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1980).

a one-volume general introduction to the study of the New Testament that is geared to Latter-day Saint students of scripture—a resource of high quality and impeccable scholarship that an average Saint might crack open and actually *read*. This is no small accomplishment. *World* fills a need that I have long felt existed, and I despaired that such a book would ever actually appear. The authors and Deseret Book are to be congratulated for filling such a long unmet need so well. I give this volume my highest recommendation.

World succeeds for three fundamental reasons. First, it is graphically rich. It is a large, beautiful book, suitable for display in the home, brimming with images of vistas, maps, coins, artifacts, artwork, manuscripts, inscriptions, photos, and more on almost every page. They say a picture is worth a thousand words, and the extensive use of such illustrations adds great value to this book. I believe we all appreciate being taught visually as well as by the printed word. I have strong scholarly interests, which often means that I read lengthy works of nothing but text, so I very much appreciated the generous use of illustrations in *World*. They made distant history come alive. Occasionally the images may seem of only tangential relevance to the actual study of the New Testament, but I certainly support the authors' commitment to keep the reader visually engaged. The editors of the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* made a similar commitment to the importance of visual images when they changed from a strictly print format to today's visually rich format (modeled after such popular magazines as *Biblical Archaeology Review*). As much as I loved the old print-only volumes of the *Journal*, the visual richness of the newer style is an improvement that makes the scholarship more accessible to a wider array of readers. The authors of *World* obviously understand this concept well and have applied it to excellent effect in their introduction to the New Testament.

Second, this book is very readable. Part of this has to do with the writing itself. The authors understand that not all of their readers will be university-level students of scripture, so they have written in a clear and straightforward manner; but they also credit the reader with basic intelligence and do not skimp on necessary detail. I thought the tone

and level of their writing were just about perfect. Perhaps of equal importance was the decision to make frequent use of sidebars to convey additional, more detailed information on particular individuals, concepts, and issues. Further, the sidebars (with various captions, such as “Detail,” “Portrait,” and “Legend”) provide visual relief that makes reading easier, much as paragraph breaks improve the readability of long prose texts. Trying to incorporate this more detailed material directly into the text or omitting it altogether would have been a mistake. Nevertheless, a detailed table of contents listing all of these sidebars would have been helpful. As an appendix to this review, I have endeavored to present such a listing, partly as a resource for readers of the book, but mostly to give the reader of this review some indication of the fascinating breadth of subjects the authors treat in this way.

Third, this book reflects strong contemporary scholarship. I recently had lunch with a friend who told me it was his understanding that the authors, in preparing to write this book, took older Mormon secondary literature and noted items that needed clarification in light of more modern scripture scholarship. The results of their study were used to help select topics to address. I do not in fact know whether this was a part of their methodology, but if so, the results are excellent. Past Latter-day Saint writers on the Bible have tended to rely too much on prior Mormon secondary literature. Although there is much of value in such sources, they are often dated and must be used with care. A fresh approach is preferable, taking into account the findings of the best contemporary non-Latter-day Saint scholarship but reading and applying it through the lens of faith. Latter-day Saints have nothing to fear from such scholarship, and those who neglect to consult it often miss out on insights of great importance to the gospel generally and the restoration specifically. The authors have modeled how to bring to bear strong scholarship on topics of interest to Latter-day Saint students of the New Testament, a lesson that may be profitably applied to other areas of scripture study as well.

I first learned of this book from a positive review I read on the Mormon blogosphere that began as follows: “It looks like a coffee table

book but it reads like top-notch scholarship. Much to my surprise, an LDS publisher has brought forth a book on the New Testament that is well worth owning.”² This observer, Julie Smith, is a fine Latter-day Saint New Testament scholar in her own right, so I was certainly predisposed by her favorable review to like this book, and I was delighted to find when I actually read the book that my own opinion matched hers.

The book begins with a forty-three-page introduction divided into three parts: first a lucid introduction to the New Testament itself, and then surveys of both the Jewish world and the Greek and Roman worlds at the time of Jesus. To the novice some of this material may seem rather far afield from the New Testament, but it provides an essential context and background for understanding the New Testament. Skimping on this context would have been a mistake, one that our authors fortunately do not make.

I was heartened by the authors’ approach to the Joseph Smith Translation (pp. 14–15), which was appropriately nuanced and made no claim that *all* JST variants reflect restorations of original text, an assumption I have found to be frustratingly common among Latter-day Saints. The authors allude to ongoing research into the textual nature of the JST, an effort I applaud. My own (very preliminary) study³ suggested that there are indeed more possible parallels with ancient texts than previously realized and that some of these may indeed parallel the original text, but we cannot simply assume as much, for other parallels may involve nonoriginal variants. This all requires study and argument in each specific case and cannot be handled with global assumptions across the board. As with all good textual study, this project needs to be eclectic in its approach, and I get the impression

2. Julie M. Smith, “Book Review: *Jesus Christ and the World of the New Testament*,” *Times and Seasons*, <http://www.timesandseasons.org/?p=3501> (accessed 29 November 2007).

3. “The Joseph Smith Translation and Ancient Texts of the Bible,” *Dialogue* 19/3 (1986): 85–102. I wrote this article long before the publication of the critical text of the Joseph Smith Translation (Scott H. Faulring, Kent P. Jackson, Robert J. Matthews, eds., *Joseph Smith’s New Translation of the Bible: Original Manuscripts* [Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2004]), and I made no attempt at a systematic approach to the variants, simply picking some of the low-hanging fruit. The study that the authors allude to should rectify these limitations in my own early work.

from the authors' brief description that those undertaking this study understand that.

I had to smile at the explanations (p. 31) of such terms as *barbarians*, from the Greek *barbaros* (onomatopoetic for the Greeks' perception of the unintelligible speech of foreigners: ba-ba-bar), and *pagans*, a word originating as a description of the more religiously conservative country dwellers, or *pagani* (the *pagi* being countryside districts whose inhabitants tended to hold more closely to the old religions of Greece and Rome), in contrast to the more sophisticated city dwellers, or *urbani*. I first learned about these things as a young student at Brigham Young University, and for me it was this type of knowledge that began to make the text come alive.

Some of the correctives to common misunderstandings broached in this introductory section include an explanation of Herod's role as a client-king (and how he astutely managed to protect Jewish interests vis-à-vis Rome), historical problems with the census of Luke 2:1, the relative benevolence of Rome toward other peoples and their religions, and the need for a critical eye when using ancient historians such as Josephus.

Like Caesar's Gaul, the bulk of the book is divided into three parts: "The World of Jesus' Ministry" (focused on the Gospels), "The World of the Apostles' Early Ministry" (focused on Acts and Paul's letters), and "The World of the Apostles' Later Ministry" (focused on the general letters, the book of Revelation, and the world immediately following the New Testament).

Along the way are numerous traps, which our authors carefully avoided. A few random illustrations: The Gospels were composed in Greek and not translated from Aramaic (even if the latter position is a popular speculation) (p. 53). The Aramaic word *Abba* is best represented as meaning *Father*, not *Daddy*, contra a popular folk etymology that gets wide circulation.⁴ The "inn" of Luke 2 (*katalyma*) may have been the guest room of a house as opposed to any sort of a public inn,⁵

4. See Kevin L. Barney, "Who's Your Daddy?" By Common Consent, <http://www.bycommonconsent.com/2007/02/whos-your-daddy> (accessed 30 November 2007).

5. On page 109 the authors note that the JST renders a plural *inns*, thus interpreting the concept as one involving public accommodations.

and 1 BC is too late for the birth year of Jesus (p. 68). In the expression “an high mountain apart,” found in the King James Version of Matthew 17:1, the word *apart* is an archaic idiom meaning *privately* and has nothing to do with a lack of proximity to other mountains (p. 73). The Syriac version of a New Testament text should not be equated with an original Aramaic version (p. 89). The saying about a camel going through the eye of a needle has nothing to do with a city gate or a rope (p. 92). The short ending of Mark was most likely intentional (p. 103). Jesus was not born on Christmas day (p. 112). Wine in the New Testament does not mean unfermented grape juice (p. 124). Mary had other children after Jesus (p. 165). We have no way to be sure whether Paul was married (p. 243). Textual variants make it likely that at least some scribes perceived the number 666 as Hebrew-based gematria for Caesar Nero; whether that was the author’s original intention is a separate question (p. 288).

I found precious little to disagree with in this book, and even when I did disagree, it was more a matter of what I perceived to be a slightly misplaced emphasis than out-and-out disagreement. Here I will mention two examples. First is the discussion of the authorship of Hebrews (pp. 254–57). While the authors give a fine overview of the evidence, to my taste they seemed to try too hard to keep off the table the option that Paul was *in no sense* the author of Hebrews. Since in my view that is in fact the most likely conclusion, I would have liked to see the authors gently prepare the reader for such a possibility. It is fine to discuss the broader ancient conception of authorship inherent in the *auctor* (Latin for “author,” deriving from *auctoritas* “authority”) of a work, but I would have liked to see the authors go a little bit further with the possibilities here than they did.

Second is the discussion of John the Baptist on the Mount of Transfiguration (pp. 73–74). The authors quote JST Mark 9:3 as follows: “And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses, or in other words, John the Baptist and Moses.” This text clearly portrays John the Baptist as being on the mount *in lieu of* and not *in addition to* Elijah. But on the next page, without explanation, the authors represent John the Baptist being on the mount in addition to both Moses and

Elijah. (I certainly agree with their impulse not to kick Elijah off the mount, which I believe is ultimately the right call.) The authors appear to be following the conclusory opinion of the Latter-day Saint Bible Dictionary: “The curious wording of Joseph Smith Translation Mark 9:3 does not imply that the Elias of the Transfiguration was John the Baptist, but that in addition to Elijah the prophet, John the Baptist was present” (s.v. “Elias”). Now, I think that there is a way to get to where the authors wish to go—to place John the Baptist on the mount without simultaneously kicking Elijah off—but it is not by simply misreading the JST emendation as the Bible Dictionary appears to do. Rather, it is by comparing the episode on the mount with the visionary experience of Doctrine and Covenants 110, which appears to be directly parallel with the Mount of Transfiguration. In that passage, both Moses and Elijah appear, as well as another unidentified “Elias.” I have speculatively argued that this Elias may have been John the Baptist, based largely on the parallel with the Mount of Transfiguration.⁶ But this material is all rather too difficult and speculative for an introductory text such as *World*.

Julie Smith, in the course of her otherwise very favorable review, mentioned four errors or issues with the book that I would like to comment on. First: “They do seem to have confused red-letter editions of the Bible with the color-coding system of the Jesus Seminar (see page 87), an error that I find (please forgive me) delightful.”⁷ I am not sure that they actually confused the color coding; I think, rather, that they simply made a little too much of what is intended by the colored font of a red-letter edition, which is simply trying to highlight for the reader the text that is spoken by Jesus *as portrayed in the given translation*, as opposed to making some sort of affirmative conclusion about the original form of such sayings. The red-letter edition simply reflects a harmless and possibly helpful editorial device, and nothing more.

Second: “Later, they propose that ‘most conservative specialists accept Pauline authorship’ (p235) of all the epistles—including

6. See Kevin L. Barney, “Who was the Elias of D&C 110?” By Common Consent <http://www.bycommonconsent.com/2006/03/who-was-the-elias-of-dc-110> (accessed 16 June 2007).

7. Smith, “Book Review: *Jesus Christ and the World of the New Testament*.”

Hebrews. This is simply not true. (This issue doesn't even pose problems for that most conservative group of conservatives, the inerrantists, since there is no internal attestation of Pauline authorship—but there *is* internal evidence that the writer was converted in a manner very different from Paul.)”⁸ Actually, I do not think the authors intended to include Hebrews in this assertion. They write: “Generally, however, most Latter-day Saint and conservative specialists accept Pauline authorship of these epistles” (p. 235). I would read the antecedent to “these epistles” as being the six epistles immediately spoken of (Ephesians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus), and not inclusive of Hebrews, which had been mentioned earlier in the paragraph (although the intended scope of the antecedent is somewhat ambiguous). If we remove Hebrews from consideration, then I do not think the statement is off base. My lodestar for good, conservative Christian scholarship on the New Testament is the Dallas Theological Seminary—what some participants on the B-Greek list (online mailing list for those interested in biblical Greek) dismissively allude to as “those fundamentalists down in Dallas”—and while their material is open to the possibility of other authors for these letters, it does tend to push for Pauline authorship.

Third, Smith observes that

at one point, they dismiss “speculation” that Phebe was a priesthood holder just because the word *diakonos* is applied to her (p206)—a somewhat tenuous position since they have previously held that the word is sometimes used “in the technical sense” (p10) for a priesthood office. And then in a later reference to Phebe, they state that *diakonos* implies that she “held a recognized ecclesiastical position” (p251).⁹ If I were interested in redaction criticism, I might find evidence of multiple authors here, especially since the same paragraph later notes

8. Smith, “Book Review: *Jesus Christ and the World of the New Testament*.”

9. At this point Smith gives the following footnote: “I imagine that they would explain this by noting the difference between ‘an ecclesiastical position’ and ‘a priesthood office’ and I have no problem with this as long as they acknowledge that it is eisegesis and not exegesis.”

that Prisca and her husband worked together “seemingly equally” while the text previously noted that the fact Prisca’s name is usually mentioned before her husband’s indicates that she was more prominent than he was (p228).

I agree with Smith that the application of the nontechnical meaning of *diakonos* to Phebe in the first instance seems to be based more on presentist assumption than on any particular analysis of the text. On the other hand, the book appropriately discloses that both nontechnical and technical meanings of the word in any given instance are possible and need to be evaluated, and the authors do seem to portray a more technical understanding of the term in the later passage Smith references. Having worked myself on a long New Testament book with two other authors, I think such differences of perspective are a good thing and are actually a strength of this volume.¹⁰

Fourth:

The only section of the work with serious problems was on “the lost gospels.” That text states that “a growing number of scholars are advocating that we replace the New Testament Gospels with some recently discovered texts from antiquity” (p310). This seems a stretch—especially since they name the discovery of the Gospel of Judas as one of the events “fueling” this movement. I don’t know of any non-crackpot who has suggested that a canonical gospel be replaced by the Gospel of Judas; perhaps it would have been more accurate to say that some scholars question whether the gospels in the canon deserve a status any different from the apocryphal gospels. The inexplicable hostility of this section comes through in other ways as well: Why say that the Gospel of Philip was

10. As I wrote in the preface to *Footnotes to the New Testament for Latter-day Saints* (privately published and available in various formats at <http://feastupontheword.org/Site:NTFootnotes>), 1:iv: “The reader may also note occasional differences in positions taken by the different contributors [Kevin L. Barney, John H. Jenkins, and John A. Tvedtnes]. To one unaccustomed to the ways of scholarship, this may seem unusual, but it is really quite normal. Even faithful, committed Latter-day Saint scholars sometimes disagree about this or that detail, and the contributors to this volume are no exception.”

“forged” (p311) under his name when the very same process—when it applies to the Epistle to the Hebrews—is described as “translat[ing] it or rework[ing] it” (p256).

I suspect that the introductory sentence to this section was influenced by the overhyped Gospel of Judas, which was much in the news at the time the authors were finishing this book, and perhaps had more to do with the media than with responsible scholars. As Smith is quick to urge, and I of course agree, these kinds of issues are very minor in the context of the book as a whole. As a reviewer I feel an obligation to point them out, but ultimately they are trifles.

I also have reviewed two volumes of presentations derived from Sperry symposia, *Sperry Symposium Classics*¹¹ and *How the New Testament Came to Be*.¹² I would analogize my overarching reaction to these three recent books on the New Testament to the linguistic degrees of an adjective. *Classics* is the positive: *good*. *Came to Be* is the comparative: *better*. And *World* is the superlative: *best*.

In conclusion, this book is simply a stunning achievement in Mormon publishing, and every Latter-day Saint with an interest in the New Testament, which should indeed be *every* Latter-day Saint, should purchase and read this book.

11. 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).

12. 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).

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MAVERICK SCHOLARSHIP AND THE APOCRYPHA

Thomas A. Wayment

Review of Robert M. Price. *The Pre-Nicene New Testament: Fifty-four Formative Texts*. Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2006. xxvi + 1211 pp., with bibliographic essay and index. \$49.95.

According to his own declaration, Robert M. Price, in his newest contribution, *The Pre-Nicene New Testament: Fifty-four Formative Texts*, wanted to create a volume that uniquely represented his own viewpoints on the formation of the Christian textual canon. In his words, “I might have invited other scholars to join me in preparing translations for these [apocryphal] books, but I decided not to because I wanted my own distinctive viewpoint to be reflected throughout the whole collection. In my experience, committee translations tend to be dull and safe. I wanted neither” (pp. 1187–88). And so it goes with the footnotes also. The entire volume contains virtually no citations to the vast body of secondary literature on the texts in question, but only textual notations concerning variant readings and random musings, which begs the question of what purpose this volume is intended to achieve.

Price’s impressive yet random collection of texts from early Christianity includes those with origins in the first century and those that are typically thought to have been written in the fourth century or later (e.g., the Mandaeen Book of John). Because the author avoids scholarly discussions of dating, he is able to sift through the extensive

body of apocryphal literature and cull out those writings that may contain fragments, sayings, and historical notes from earlier centuries even though the texts in which they are included were written much later. So, for example, *Thunder: Perfect Mind*, a decidedly esoteric gnostic text from Nag Hammadi (before the mid-fourth century AD), is used to illuminate the writings attributed to John the Apostle in the first century. Price does this because he thinks it bears some affinity to Johannine thought, particularly language found in the Revelation of John. But the troubling issue is whether the author of *Thunder: Perfect Mind* borrowed from and copied portions of John's writings rather than merely being an inheritor of John's teachings and faith. This and related issues are never even mentioned.

This volume purports to contain "translations" of fifty-four "formative" texts from early Christian history. They are not truly new translations in all instances, for some are described as "accurate English paraphrases" (p. 1187). The author admits he is not "fluent in Arabic, Aramaic, Coptic, Hebrew, or Latin" (p. 1187), although he implies fluency in Greek. So it appears that he has offered new translations only when the texts in question were in Greek, while for other texts he was forced to use existing English translations to create "paraphrases" representing his own views of textual content. These paraphrases of non-Greek texts were carried out without consulting any of the original texts!

The Pre-Nicene New Testament is divided into eight sections: "Pre-Apostolic Writings," "Matthean Cycle," "Marcion's Apostolicon," "To Theophilus," "The Testament of John," "The Petrine Corpus," "Heirs of Jesus," and "The Pauline Circle." In each of these categories, apocryphal and canonical texts are included together. They are each intended to demonstrate a school of thought associated with various early Christians figures. For example, under the heading "Matthean Cycle," the Gospels of Mark and Matthew are included first, followed by *Gospel according to the Hebrews*, *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*, and *Generations of Jesus*. These texts, according to Price, reveal a pattern of emerging proto-orthodoxy in the pre-Nicene era, an orthodoxy that had an interest in canonizing the story of Jesus in light of com-

peting versions. Once the peculiar orthodoxy of the Matthean school was established, other forms of Christianity would simply fade away, or so the author supposes. The origin of this peculiar Matthean form of Christianity stems from the earliest known Gospel, the Gospel of Mark, which Price shockingly dates to “the mid-second century AD/CE” (p. 69). Each subsequent writing in the Matthean cycle supposedly builds on previous writings from members of the school until a more nearly perfect representation of their ideas is achieved in later texts.

One of the most startling texts contained in Price’s book is a “translation” of the *Gospel according to the Hebrews* (also known as the *Gospel of the Hebrews*). Early Christian commentators like Eusebius and Hegessipus quoted from or referred to a Gospel of the Hebrews. Eusebius contended that this text was a source, if not an earlier version, of our canonical Gospel of Matthew. Others, such as Epiphanius and Origen, quoted brief snippets from this text in order to demonstrate to their audiences its unorthodox character. Unfortunately, only small portions of this text have survived through patristic quotations. Surprisingly, Price includes a full text of the *Gospel of the Hebrews* in his volume. He has created this text by pruning the Gospel of Matthew according to what early patristic authors said about the *Gospel of the Hebrews*. Price uses his own judgment to decide which portions of the canonical Gospel of Matthew were not included in this early source and has therefore produced an English text that has no textual support whatsoever.

Such an effort to create a text from ancient quotations of that text is not without merit, but in this particular instance the effort is hampered by the omission of scholarly literature on the subject. If this text of the *Gospel of the Hebrews* is to have any value for students of early Christianity, then it must conform to scholarly standards already established. Hermeneia’s *The Critical Edition of Q*¹ is commendable in this regard. It also reconstructs an ancient text for which there are no surviving manuscripts, a text whose existence many scholars doubt. However, those involved in producing that volume have carefully set

1. Paul Hoffmann, John S. Kloppenborg, and James M. Robinson, eds., *The Critical Edition of Q*, Hermeneia Supplement Series (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000).

out their reasons for including and excluding certain passages so that the reader is able to fully assess the value of each reading in the hypothetical text.

The Pre-Nicene New Testament includes all twenty-seven canonical books from the New Testament in new, eclectic translations, as well as twenty-seven apocryphal books. Some of these apocryphal books originate from the Nag Hammadi collection, while others come from patristic authors or from disparate textual discoveries and sources. No class of books, canonical or apocryphal, is given preference in Price's attempt to present a more complete and doctrinally inclusive canon. "The goal of the present collection," Price explains, "is to try to strip away the Nicene, that is, the orthodox, traditional gloss from the underlying early Christian texts" (p. xxiii).

It is important to note that *The Pre-Nicene New Testament* seems to be aimed at exposing a larger audience to the vast body of apocryphal literature and at demonstrating how prevalent apocryphal literature was in some early Christian communities. This is certainly a commendable goal, and the reader will often be rewarded for studying the diversity of early Christian beliefs. In fact, the relevance of non-canonical texts has been emphasized repeatedly in recent decades as prominent scholars have attempted to present a more complete picture of early Christianity based on a broader collection of early Christian texts, including the apocryphal literature. At the end of his volume, Price addresses the issue of modern scholarship and how it has come to terms with the Apocrypha. The final essay (pp. 1145–85) is insightful in this regard.

This final essay also reveals Price's penchant for admiring liberal scholarship and denigrating conservative scholarship. Certainly Price did not draw the lines between these two camps, nor did he define the scholarly arguments between them. However, his work is clearly dependent upon a more liberal, post-Bultmannian perspective that has been informed considerably by a new *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule* (literally "history of religions school," or biblical criticism). Contrary to Price's viewpoint, however, no scholarship, whether liberal or conservative, is unbiased in its presentation. The truly unbiased scholar

is a phantasm of a previous generation. Scholars working in the field of biblical studies today must address their own preconceived notions and attempt to account for them in their academic endeavors. Price's book is an egregious example of someone who neglects to address his own biases. For such a work to be useful to a wide audience, it must help the reader apply a new paradigm more broadly. When that paradigm is so entrenched in a single viewpoint, it is difficult for anyone outside that viewpoint to use it.

For example, one of my favorite biblical passages is the Sermon on the Mount as recorded in the Gospel of Matthew, particularly the passages known as the Beatitudes. Price provides some startlingly loose translations of the biblical text. For example, the third beatitude as translated by Price reads, "Blessed are the meek, for when the great ones destroy one another fighting over it, the meek shall remain to inherit the earth" (p. 124). And the sixth beatitude reads, "Blessed are those with a clean conscience, for only they shall see God" (p. 125). These two beatitudes, as well as five of the other seven in Price's volume, are radically distant from the Greek text. Perhaps Price is trying to achieve a translation that approaches what Jesus might have *meant* rather than what Jesus is actually recorded as having *said*. For both beatitudes, the King James text is much closer to how the Greek text reads. How can the modern reader trust Price to determine what Jesus meant when it is so unlike what Jesus is recorded to have said?

Price provides little for the scholar specializing in the field of New Testament studies and early Christian Apocrypha. All of the texts in his volume, with the exception of the hypothetical *Gospel of the Hebrews*, are available elsewhere in more careful and thorough scholarly editions and translations. Price's eclectic "translations" are too far removed from their textual bases to further the scholarly enterprise. For the average reader who wants more information about the Apocrypha and early Christian literature that did not make it into the canon, Price's volume is also problematic because of its strong, unexamined bias. There are numerous translations of these texts that are considerably less problematic than Price's editions. Three books stand out as exemplary in making Christian Apocrypha available to a

wide audience. They are J. K. Elliott's *The Apocryphal New Testament*,² W. Schneemelcher's *The New Testament Apocrypha*,³ and James Robinson's *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*.⁴ Each of these is more comprehensive than Price's volume and offers the reader a wealth of information about the texts in question.

2. J. K. Elliott, ed., *The Apocryphal New Testament: A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

3. Wilhelm Schneemelcher, ed., *The New Testament Apocrypha*, 2 vols. (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1991).

4. James M. Robinson, ed., *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, 3rd rev. ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1998).

THE QUICK AND THE DEAD

John A. Tvedtnes

Review of Michael F. Hull. *Baptism on Account of the Dead (1 Cor 15:29): An Act of Faith in the Resurrection*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005. xvi + 327 pp., with bibliography and indexes. \$42.95.

MONSIGNOR Michael F. Hull is a senior fellow of the St. Paul Center for Biblical Theology and professor of Sacred Scripture at St. Joseph's Seminary, Dunwoodie, in Yonkers, New York. Although his view of 1 Corinthians 15:29 is to some extent new, he has tried to approach the text in light of earlier studies (beginning in the second century AD) while concentrating on modern exegesis. The first part of Hull's book reviews some of the major articles and books that deal with explanations given by various Bible scholars. This is followed by a lengthy discussion of Paul's writing style and the topics he discusses in his first epistle to the Corinthians. The last part of the book introduces Hull's view of what Paul meant in 1 Corinthians 15:29.

The Majority View

Hull maintains that although some exegetes claim 1 Corinthians 15:29 has spawned two hundred or more readings over the centuries, there are actually about forty "general hypotheses" that have been put forward, reflecting "enormous variation in exegetical opinion" (p. 8). Though he acknowledges that most scholars who have dealt with the verse see it as evidence that at least some early Christians in Corinth

performed proxy baptisms for the dead, Hull parts company with them in an effort to make sense (in his religious worldview) of the passage. “At first glance, one could read [15:29] to mean that vicarious baptism had been practiced, at least at some point in time, by Corinthian Christians,” Hull notes. “But, also at first glance, one could read it as a reference, albeit an extraordinary one, to ordinary baptism, even if Paul’s point in mentioning it is unclear” (p. 1). If one can read “ordinary baptism” into the verse, it certainly would not be “at first glance.” Otherwise, there would be no need for books like Hull’s to explain how it can refer to regular baptism. He adds:

It is evident that the majority of contemporary scholars read 15:29 as a reference to one form or another of vicarious baptism. However, given the gravity of baptism in Christian theology, the atypical character of vicarious baptism, and the lack of any parallel to 15:29, any reading of the verse in terms of vicarious baptism is bound to evoke serious challenges. This is especially so when we find a scholar such as [Richard E.] DeMaris¹ holding for vicarious baptism while at the same time implying that the text of 15:29 itself might admit of other interpretations. The most obvious of these other interpretations is that 15:29 refers to some form of ordinary baptism, and many challenges are offered against vicarious baptism on

1. Richard E. DeMaris, “Corinthian Religion and Baptism for the Dead (1 Corinthians 15:29): Insights from Archaeology and Anthropology,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 114/4 (1995): 661–82. See John W. Welch, review of “Corinthian Religion and Baptism for the Dead (1 Corinthians 15:29): Insights from Archaeology and Anthropology,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 114/4 (1995), by Richard E. DeMaris, *FARMS Review of Books* 8/2 (1996): 43–45. At my invitation, DeMaris came to Brigham Young University’s Provo campus to discuss the topic of baptism for the dead. DeMaris, to whom Hull also refers in notes 9–10 on page 9, holds that the practice of vicarious baptism in Corinth resulted from cultural views held by the Corinthians before the introduction of Christianity. In my 1981 article “Baptism for the Dead: The Coptic Rationale,” I had already noted that pre-Christian practices made it easier for Egyptian Christians to accept baptism for the dead. This article was presented at a 5 June 1981 symposium in Jerusalem sponsored by the L. A. Mayer Memorial Museum of Islamic Art and the Israel Ministry of Education and Culture; it was published in *Special Papers of the Society for Early Historic Archaeology*, September 1989, and subsequently posted online at www.fairlds.org/Misc/Baptism_for_the_Dead_the_Coptic_Rationale.html (accessed 2 October 2007).

behalf of ordinary baptism. Generally speaking, such challenges maintain that, whatever Paul is speaking of in 15:29, he is not speaking of any form of vicarious baptism: either Paul is speaking about something else in the verse (heretofore misunderstood) or the verse is a reference to some (albeit extraordinary) form of ordinary, traditional baptism. It is not surprising that such a difficult verse as 15:29 should elicit suggestions of textual inaccuracy or mistranslation. It is less surprising to find that many read 15:29 to be an example of ordinary baptism. (p. 21)

Hull's rejection of the plain sense of the verse is based on the fact that scholars who understand it to refer to vicarious baptism do not account for this "seemingly aberrant practice" (p. 12). Most of those Bible scholars agree that the rite was indeed an aberrant practice, as the views cited by Hull demonstrate.

Hull's Proposal

Unwilling to accept the concept of vicarious baptism, Hull posits:

1 Cor 15:29 is a reference to ordinary baptism, extraordinary circumstances notwithstanding. Baptism "on account of the dead" is baptism into eternal life; it is a rite for the living, and undergoing it expresses faith in the resurrection of Christ and of Christians. . . . Paul believed that submission to the baptismal rite was *the* act of faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and of his dead by which one secured the opportunity for eternal life. Therefore, in an atmosphere of denial of resurrection, to accept baptism "on account of the dead," that is, with a faith in the resurrection of once baptized and now dead Christians, is, to say the least, laudable in Paul's estimation. Without the resurrection, his and their faith is in vain (1 Cor 15:12–14) and his struggles useless (1 Cor 15:30–34). (p. 5)

Hull's explanation for his reading of 1 Corinthians 15:29 is as follows:

The βαπτιζόμενοι [*baptizomenoi*, “ones being baptized”] are those who are undergoing the rite of baptism. Their motivation for so doing is their steadfast faith in the resurrection of Christ and, concomitantly, of Christians. They believe that the νεκροί [*nekroi*, “dead ones”] are to be raised as Christ has been raised. They undergo the rite of baptism “on account of the dead”—on account of the fact that the dead are destined for life, having died hoping in the Lord’s promise of salvation—on account of their faith in the fact that “if there is no resurrection from the dead, then Christ has not been raised” (1 Cor 15:13). By committing themselves to baptism, the βαπτιζόμενοι shame the arrogance and ignorance of those among the Corinthians who deny the resurrection (1 Cor 15:12). The example of the βαπτιζόμενοι, along with that of Paul himself (1 Cor 15:30–32), serves as a source of edification for the entire community. 1 Cor 15:29–32 is the crown of chapter 15 in terms of the personal examples given by Paul. After his long theoretical defense of the resurrection in 1 Cor 15:1–28, Paul is able to turn to two practical examples: the βαπτιζόμενοι and himself. Therewith, he is able to warn the Corinthians that they should not be deceived, to tell them that he defends the resurrection to their shame (1 Cor 15:33–34), and to continue his defensive discourse by explaining how, in fact, the dead are raised (1 Cor 15:35–58). (p. 3)

Paul describes the resurrection in terms of the difference between various types of resurrected bodies, comparing them to the sun, moon, and stars in glory. Some early Christian fathers read this portion of 1 Corinthians 15 in the same way Latter-day Saints do.² The interpretation of 1 Corinthians 15:29 rests on the meaning of three Greek words: *baptizomenoi*, “ones being baptized”; *hyper*, usually “above, over”; and *nekroi*, “dead ones.” The preposition *hyper* has usually been rendered “for,” but Hull translates it “on account of.” In doing so, he

2. For a detailed discussion, see John Tvedtnes, “Three Degrees of Glory,” posted on the *Meridian Magazine* Web site at <http://www.meridianmagazine.com/gospeldoctrine/nt/070823nt34sf.html> (accessed 28 September 2007).

inadvertently supports the view of vicarious baptism, for the English idiom “on account of” can also mean “for” or “in behalf of,” though Hull seemingly thinks of it in the narrower sense of “because of.”

In a moment of candor, Hull writes, “While it is true that the literary context does not necessitate such a reading of ordinary baptism any more than it necessitates the majority reading of vicarious baptism, the literary context does not, in fact, demand a reading one way or the other” (p. 230). This is the reason Hull goes on to investigate the historical context, maintaining that there are no examples that support the idea of vicarious baptism. He also writes that “one cannot be baptized without hearing and accepting” (p. 233). I agree with this assessment but am surprised that Hull, a Roman Catholic priest, should make such a declaration, given that his church christens infants and that godparents, not the newborn, are the ones who hear and accept Christ on behalf of the infant.³ While he rejects vicarious baptism for the dead, his church allows the godparents to act vicariously for the infant, who is too young to hear and accept the message of salvation. Moreover, Jesus vicariously suffered and died in our behalf.⁴

Paul’s Teachings about Baptism

Hull maintains (and I agree) that one must take into account what Paul has written elsewhere on the subject of baptism. Two challenges in doing this, Hull notes, are that Paul’s baptismal theology is but a

3. While Roman Catholic priests place water on the head of a newborn, priests in the eastern Orthodox churches still immerse them completely in water, reflecting the fact the Greek term from which the word *baptize* derives means “to immerse or sink.” In the Roman Catholic Church, extreme unction is administered to a dying person, and even to a person who dies before the priest can perform the rite. If the dying individual is unbaptized, baptism must be performed before extreme unction. But early councils (AD 393 Synod of Hippo, Third Council of Carthage, Council of Sardica) forbade the baptizing of a corpse. St. John Chrysostom, in his *Homily 1* on Acts 1:1–2, notes that baptismal water had been occasionally poured on the dead—a practice he opposed. Philip Schaff, ed. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Series (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 11:10.

4. The Book of Mormon declares that the atonement of Jesus Christ had to be infinite in its nature, necessitating the suffering and death of God (see 2 Nephi 9:6–7; 25:16; Mosiah 13:28; 15:1; Alma 34:9–14).

part of his larger “theological enterprise” and that nowhere in his writings is the subject of baptism discussed per se—that is, Paul’s comments on baptism are oblique, passing references in his treatment of larger issues (p. 240). Given these difficulties, Hull’s study is “intended as a contribution to Paul’s baptismal theology, not [as] a restatement thereof,” and involves four steps: “First, we look to Rom 6:1–14, which is spoken of by many as the *locus classicus* of baptism in Paul [though Hull readily acknowledges that this text is ‘mostly not about baptism’]. Second, we look to Gal 3:26–29. Third, we look to other references to baptism in the Pauline literature and review our findings. Finally, we seek to integrate our reading of 15:29 within the larger context of Paul’s baptismal theology” (p. 241).

In two of his epistles, Paul likened baptism in water to being buried and then resurrected in Christ (Romans 6:3–11; Colossians 2:12–13). This works only if there is an immersion, which is the only way baptism (the Greek word means “immersion”) was performed in the days of Christ and his apostles. As a Roman Catholic priest, Hull has most likely never performed such an immersion.

In regard to 1 Corinthians 15:29, Hull argues that “Paul could have placed an affirmation of baptism anywhere in the letter—baptism is certainly relevant to each and every aspect of the Christian life—but he chose to place it in reference to the resurrection” (p. 235). This leads him to the conclusion that, in writing to the Corinthians, Paul had reference to ordinary baptism. It is certain that Paul’s view of baptism as symbolic of death and resurrection is reflected in the passage, but this does not exclude vicarious baptism as his referent.

Purpose of 1 Corinthians 15:29

Most commentators read 1 Corinthians 15:29 as an aside thrown in by Paul to bolster his argument for the resurrection. They insist that Paul neither approved nor disapproved of the actions of those being baptized for the dead, and some anti-Mormon writers go so far as to say that Paul would not have approved of the practice. Hull disagrees. Though at one point he terms the verse an “oblique reference to baptism [that] has piqued Christian curiosity for centuries” (p. 7),

he later concludes it is far more, describing the verse as “a dual rhetorical question in which Paul holds up one group within the Corinthian community as a *laudable example* for the entire community” (p. 3, emphasis added; see p. 5). He argues that Paul was “*praising*” those who are baptized “because they are affirming the resurrection of the dead in accepting baptism; theirs is an act of faith that opposes the lack of faith Paul perceives among so many Corinthians.” He adds that “baptism is *the* ultimate act of faith in the gospel, in Christ’s resurrection, and in his promise of eternal life to believers. Thus, Paul *applauds* the βαπτιζόμενοι for what they are doing, for accepting baptism and all that goes with it, for affirming the resurrection of the dead” (p. 233, emphasis added except for *the*).

We said that Paul holds up the βαπτιζόμενοι as a *laudable example* for the Corinthians because the βαπτιζόμενοι’s motivation for undergoing the rite of baptism is their steadfast faith in the resurrection of Christ and of Christians. They believe that Christ has been raised and that the νεκροί are destined for life. Therefore, they undergo the rite of baptism “on account of the dead”—on account of the fact that “if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised” (1 Cor 15:13). (pp. 250–51, emphasis added)

One can almost hear Paul *bellowing*: “Look at those *eager* baptismal candidates. Look at their faith. It was once yours. They believe all that I preached about Jesus. They do not doubt that many persons including myself have seen him alive after death. They do not doubt that those among us who have fallen asleep will rise on the last day. As a matter of fact, it is their firm faith in the resurrection of Christ and of his dead that moves them to baptism. That is what they believe. That is what you once believed. Come back to your senses!” (p. 235, emphasis added)

But rather than being a major theme in Paul’s epistle, as Hull implies, 1 Corinthians 15:29 is more likely something added to support Paul’s argument about resurrection, though it is clearly some-

thing with which his readers were already acquainted. Similarly, Peter's discussion of salvation for the dead (1 Peter 3:18–20) is also interjected in a casual and offhand manner.

Dead Christians?

Hull assumes that the “dead” mentioned in 1 Corinthians 15:29 are “those among us who have fallen asleep.” They “are destined for life, having died hoping in the Lord’s promise of salvation” (p. 3). Those who “accept baptism ‘on account of the dead’” do so “with a faith in the resurrection of once baptized and now dead Christians” (p. 5). Hull writes: “Given the relatively small size of the Christian community in Corinth at the time of 1 Corinthians, the dead are the saints and the sinners with whom the βαπτιζόμενοι were associated. The acceptance of baptism in 15:29 expresses the βαπτιζόμενοι’s trust in Paul’s gospel: not only is Christ raised, but departed brothers and sisters are truly destined to share in resurrected glory” (p. 254). However, this makes more sense if the passage refers to deceased ancestors. After all, given the small size of the Corinthian church, how many of them could have died before Paul wrote his epistle to the Corinthians?

As some Corinthian Christians die and are buried, the community’s faith in the resurrection is tested because the resurrection of their bodies is a future event. But not just *a* future event; it is *the* future event—the parousia. Baptism is the act of faith that incorporates one into Christ and, therefore, into his resurrection. Baptism simultaneously incorporates one into Christ here and hereafter. If the baptized do not believe that their departed Christian brothers and sisters are destined for life eternal, they have *de facto* renounced Christ and the baptism that incorporated them into him. (p. 236)

If Hull’s reasoning is correct, then only baptized Christians can be resurrected. This is at odds with Paul’s declaration in 1 Corinthians 15:20–23 that, because of Christ’s resurrection, *all* mankind would be resurrected, just as all had inherited death from Adam. Paul also declared that “there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just

and unjust” (Acts 24:15). Revelation 20:5–6 speaks of a “first resurrection,” thus implying that there would be a second. Jesus declared that there would be both a “resurrection of life” and a “resurrection of damnation” (John 5:29).⁵ Moreover, we learn from Matthew 27:53 that some of the dead saints—presumably the prophets who foretold his advent—rose from their graves shortly after the Savior’s resurrection.

Hull believes that Paul’s epistle is addressed to Corinthian Saints who do not believe in resurrection and that Paul (in 1 Corinthians 15:29) draws their attention to new converts who are being baptized for themselves. He writes: “The ones ‘who have themselves baptized on account of the dead’ are obviously not part of the larger group Paul is addressing in chapter 15. In fact, ‘if the dead are not really raised,’ it would seem that they should stop doing whatever it is they are doing—accepting baptism on account of the dead, i.e., on account of dead Christians—because it would be futile.” Hull notes that Paul was not correcting the ones being baptized but, rather, “the Corinthians who deny the resurrection of the dead,” and then he adds, “Apparently, ‘they’ (the third person, βαπτίζόμενοι) are being offered as an example to the ‘you’ (the second person, τίνας and τίς)” (p. 231).

Some anti-Mormon writers also point out the use of the third-person pronoun *they*, though they argue that the ones performing vicarious baptism for the dead are heretics and hence not part of the body of Christians in Corinth. The Greek original of 1 Corinthians 15:29 does *not* use the pronoun *they*. It says, “Otherwise, what will do *the ones being baptized* for the dead?” The text uses a passive participle form, *baptizomenoi* (“the being baptized [ones]”), as a substantive (where it is usually accompanied by the definite article). Participles reflect gender, number, and case but not person. Hence, there is no third-person plural (*they*) in the Greek original, implied or otherwise.

Baptism and Resurrection

“If 15:29 is interpreted as we read it,” Hull notes, “there is now a vital and vibrant link between baptism and the resurrection, which

5. See Luke 14:14, where the Savior mentions “the resurrection of the just.”

is exemplified by the βαπτίζόμενοι in their acceptance of baptism ‘on account of the (resurrection of the) dead’” (p. 253). While disagreeing with Hull in regard to the nature of the baptism Paul mentions, I concur that there is a symbolic tie between baptism and the resurrection, as Paul explained elsewhere (Romans 6:3–11; Colossians 2:12–13).⁶ But Paul is not alone in this regard; the apostle Peter wrote:

For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 3:18–21)

In this passage, the apostle speaks of both death and resurrection, along with Christ’s visit to the spirit world, and adds the flood as a symbol of baptism. Similarly, in an epistle to the Corinthian saints, Paul wrote, “Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the [Red] sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea” (1 Corinthians 10:1–2). Peter mentions Christ as the one who will “judge the quick [living] and the dead,” noting “for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit” (1 Peter 4:5–6). Peter’s words have parallels to Jesus’s explanation found in John 5:25–29:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when *the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God*: and

6. As noted earlier in this review, Paul saw baptism in water as symbolic of burial, while rising from the water symbolizes resurrection.

they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to *execute judgment* also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which *all that are in the graves shall hear his voice*, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the *resurrection of life*; and they that have done evil, unto the *resurrection of damnation*. (emphasis added)

Some might argue, on the basis of the verse preceding this one, that the “dead” of verse 25 are living persons who are dead because they have not yet accepted the gift of salvation brought by Christ. But verse 28 makes it clear that Christ was referring to those who “are in the graves,” hence literally dead.

Several early Christian creeds declare that Christ “descended into hell” after his crucifixion. The idea of descending draws on Paul’s declaration “Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?” (Ephesians 4:9). The notion that Christ descended into hell is found in the fifth article of the so-called Apostles’ Creed and in part 2 of the Faith of Saint Athanasius (also known as the Athanasian Creed). The Greek word rendered “hell” in English (*inferna* in Latin) is *hades*, the same word used elsewhere by Peter to denote the location where Christ went before his resurrection (see Acts 2:29–32). The passage cited by Peter is Psalm 16:10, in which the Hebrew word *sheol* denotes the abode of the dead. The concept of the Messiah liberating captives from Hades is also found in a Jewish text in which “R[abbi] Joshua, son of Levi, tells further: ‘I asked the Messiah to allow me to look into Hell, but he did not allow me, as the righteous should never behold Hell.’ So I sent to the angel called *Komm* that he might describe Hell for me. But it was impossible, for at that moment R. Ishmael, the high priest, and R. Simeon, son of Gamaliel, and ten just men were killed, and the news reached us, so I could not go with the angel. I went afterwards with the angel *Kipod* and the light went with me up to *the gates of Hell*, and the Messiah came with me, and they were open. The sinners who were there saw the light of the Messiah, and rejoiced, and said to one another: ‘This will bring us out

from here.”⁷ A number of early church fathers (Ignatius, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Eusebius) taught that Christ rescued some spirits from Hades.⁸

The “Harrowing of Hell” was a common theme in medieval Europe, teaching that Christ visited the spirits of the dead in Hades.⁹ Early Christian stories of the descent of Christ into hell are virtually unanimous in noting the joy felt by the righteous dead when they learned of Jesus’s baptism. Of this connection, J. Rendel Harris wrote, “In the earliest times the Baptism of Christ was the occasion of His triumph over Hades.”¹⁰ Harris saw Ode 24 of the *Odes of Solomon* as connecting baptism (note the mention of the dove over Jesus’s head) with anointing and the deliverance of the dead (i.e., resurrection). In Ode 6, too, we have a stream bringing water to the temple and bringing back from the dead those who were dying.

A Letter or a Homily?

The goal of chapter 2 is “to read 1 Cor 15:29 as closely as possible in its literary context. In view of the fact that previous readings have proven unsatisfactory, we seek a reading of the verse which flows out of its locus within 1 Corinthians” (p. 51). Hull’s intent is laudable, but he treats 1 Corinthians more like a doctrinal thesis than a letter.

Hull considers “baptism on account of the dead” to be the central point in the apostle’s discussion of the resurrection. Why, then, did Paul not elaborate on this aspect? As noted earlier, most Bible commentators see 1 Corinthians 15:29 as an aside thrown into the mix to strengthen the argument about resurrection. Paul is known for asides

7. “The Revelation of R. Joshua ben Levi” (paragraph 20), English translation by Moses Gaster, “Hebrew Visions of Hell and Paradise,” in *Studies and Texts in Folklore, Magic, Mediaeval Romance, Hebrew Apocrypha, and Samaritan Archaeology* (1928; reprint, New York: Ktav, 1971), 1:148, emphasis added except for the names of the angels.

8. See the discussion in John A. Tvedtnes, “The Dead Shall Hear the Voice,” *FARMS Review of Books* 10/2 (1998): 184–99.

9. A number of books on the subject have been written. See Daniel C. Peterson, “Skin Deep,” review of *Die Mormonen: Sekte oder neue Kirche Jesu Christi?* by Rüdiger Hauth, *FARMS Review of Books* 9/2 (1997): 99–146.

10. J. Rendel Harris, *The Odes and Psalms of Solomon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909), 123.

in this epistle and others. For example, in 1 Corinthians 1:14–16, we read, “I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other.” Initially, he failed to mention Stephanas’s family, but realizing his error, he added the verbiage in verse 16. One would expect this in a letter, but not in a well-crafted homily.

In two of his letters, Paul mentions the office of bishop (1 Timothy 3:1–7; Titus 1:6–9).¹¹ Though he gives the qualifications for one to be called to the bishopric, he does not list the bishop’s duties. Again, this is what one might expect in a letter, but it implies that the duties of a bishop were already known to both Timothy and Titus. Similarly, it is reasonable to conclude that baptism for the dead was already understood by the early Christians and that in 1 Corinthians 15:29 Paul was merely drawing on the previously established practice as evidence for the resurrection that some Corinthians had come to doubt.

Hull refers to language in 1 Corinthians 4:16 and 11:1 (compare 4:6) as evidence that, in 1 Corinthians 15:30–32, Paul is admonishing the Corinthians to take him as an example (p. 233). It is more likely that the apostle was saying that the trials he had suffered would have had no value if there were no resurrection of the dead. Again, this is something one might expect in a letter, but not in a theological treatise.

The Historical Context

Hull explains that “anyone who holds to the majority reading [vicarious baptism] is led to address the naturally ensuing questions: What of the paucity of historical attestation in Corinth and the early Church to vicarious baptism?” (pp. 11–12). In chapter 3 (“Reading 1 Corinthians 15:29 in Historical Context”), he explains:

The importance of the historical context within which we find 15:29 cannot be overemphasized. . . . In Chapter II of our study,

11. Had these two epistles not survived (they were, after all, mere letters, not doctrinal expositions), there would be no biblical proof that there were Christian bishops in the days of the apostles.

we concluded that an examination of the literary context alone was insufficient to yield a definitive reading of the verse. Because 15:29, when we consider its morphology, syntax, and literary context, may be read either as a reference to ordinary baptism or vicarious baptism, the importance of its historical context is promptly seen as the *sine qua non* for the interpretation of the verse. If we were to read 15:29 as an instance of ordinary baptism, parallels for comparison in Pauline literature and the NT would be readily forthcoming. But if we were to read 15:29 as an instance of vicarious baptism, we have no parallel for comparison in the NT, the early Church, or the first century. On the one hand, this presents no problem, for as we have seen, those who hold for a reading of vicarious baptism among the Corinthians also hold that it was an anomaly. (p. 113)

He then notes that proponents of vicarious baptism seek to find its source in Paul, in the Corinthian milieu, or in a combination of the two (p. 113). Having found no such support, Hull contends that “vicarious baptism, without precedent in the NT or the early Church, cannot be claimed as a workable reading of 1 Cor 15:29 on the basis of the literary context alone; there must be some historical underpinning. . . . In vain we search for ‘a needle in the haystack,’ i.e., for the vicarious baptism that so many commentators claim to find—even as an anomaly or aberration—in 1 Corinthians” (p. 4). Further: “We conclude that vicarious baptism is *not* a viable option for interpreting 1 Cor 15:29. Without any semblance of precedence in Paul, Greco-Roman Corinth, or Corinthian Christianity, reading 1 Cor 15:29 as a reference to vicarious baptism is unfeasible” (p. 5).

This approach on the part of a Catholic scholar is strange because it seems to be based on the *sola scriptura* concept, which relies on the Bible as the sole source for the teachings and practices of the earliest Christians and also suggests that the Bible discusses everything important about them.¹² This is contradicted by the Bible itself. In

12. The *sola scriptura* (“scripture alone”) approach to the Bible is more readily identified with Protestants. The Roman Catholic Church relies on much more, including the decisions of ecumenical councils, the writings of the early church fathers, and *ex cathedra*

John 20:30 we find that “many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book [John, not the Bible],” while John 21:25 hyperbolically says, “And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.”

Early Christian Views

Hull points out that Joel R. White¹³ “declines to accept a reading of vicarious baptism on four grounds: (1) the lack of a ‘contextual mooring’ at the end of chapter 15 for such a practice; (2) the ‘cognitive dissonance’ we would have to assume among Paul’s interlocutors in Corinth who would deny the resurrection of the dead while performing such a rite on their behalf; (3) the dearth of ‘any independent historical or biblical parallel’ of vicarious baptism; and (4) vicarious baptism’s obvious incongruity ‘with [Paul’s] entire theology’” (p. 34). The validity of the first argument disappears if one believes that Paul’s mention of vicarious baptism was an aside. White’s second argument assumes that those who deny the resurrection were practicing vicarious baptism, which seems unlikely. The fourth argument rests on the assumption that we know everything that Paul taught and that all of his teachings are in the few letters ascribed to him.¹⁴ As noted earlier, Paul’s epistles are not treatises.

White’s third claim is the one most commonly mentioned in connection with vicarious baptism. With regard to this “dearth of an exterior or interior historical parallel,” Hull writes, “Except for the

declarations from the pope. In its extreme, the sola scriptura approach suggests that God himself wrote or literally dictated the Bible and that each and every word is placed precisely where it needs to be.

13. Joel R. White, “Baptized on Account of the Dead’: The Meaning of 1 Corinthians 15:29 in Its Context,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 116/3 (1997): 487–99.

14. Many Bible scholars, especially those who are Protestant, believe that Paul taught that one is saved by grace alone (or by faith alone or by public confession of a belief in Christ alone, etc.) and that baptism and obedience to God’s commandments are not necessary for salvation. I have discussed such false ideas in my article “Salvation by Grace Alone?” posted on the FAIR Web site at http://www.fairlds.org/Misc/Is_There_Salvation_by_Grace_Alone.html (accessed 28 September 2007).

rare patristic secondary references we consider below, nowhere in the history of early Christianity do we find anyone baptizing in such fashion or writing thereof. Nowhere in intertestamental Judaism or the pagan religions of late antiquity is there anything comparable to vicarious baptism” (p. 37).

Elsewhere, Hull notes that “an attempt to find more source material outside the Pauline literature is, obviously, out of the question” (p. 241). He does not explain why this is so. He draws attention to a passage in the Apocrypha where we read that, following the battle of Marisa in 163 BC, it was discovered that the Jewish soldiers killed in the fight had been guilty of concealing pagan idols beneath their clothing. In order to atone for their wrong, Judas Maccabaeus collected money from the survivors in order to purchase sacrificial animals for their comrades.

And when he had made a gathering throughout the company to the sum of two thousand drachmas of silver, he sent it to Jerusalem to offer a sin offering, doing therein very well and honestly, in that he was mindful of the resurrection: for if he had not hoped that they that were slain should have risen again, it had been superfluous and vain to pray for the dead. And also in that he perceived that there was great favour laid up for those that died godly, it was an holy and good thought. Whereupon he made a reconciliation for the dead, that they might be delivered from sin. (2 Maccabees 12:43–46, KJV)

This passage does not mention baptism, but it is significant that it uses the same argument as Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:29, that is, that unless the dead rise from the dead, any rite performed for them is without value.

Hull calls attention to the writings of two early church fathers, one of whom, John Chrysostom (ca. AD 347–407), notes the practice of vicarious baptism among the Marcionites in Homily 40 on 1 Corinthians 15:29. The other is Tertullian (ca. AD 160–225), whose views seem to have changed over time. In one place he acknowledges that the Corinthian Christians practiced vicarious baptism (*On the*

Resurrection of the Flesh 48), while elsewhere he suggests that Paul was referring to baptism of the body, which is subject to death (*Against Marcion* 5.10). Hull likes Tertullian's approach because it is close to his own beliefs: "Tertullian believes that 15:29 referred to baptism on behalf of our 'dying bodies'" (p. 41). Chrysostom similarly rejected Marcion's interpretation of Paul and concluded that his real referent was the profession of faith in baptism, part of which was, "I believe in the resurrection of the dead" (Homily 40 on 1 Corinthians 15:29). These words, recited before baptism, indicated to Chrysostom that baptism is performed in hope of this resurrection.

Tertullian, in *Against Marcion* 5.10, and Epiphanius (AD 315–403), in *Against Heresies* 8.7, noted that the Marcionites, an early Christian group founded in AD 144, baptized others in the name of the dead. Chrysostom told how, when one of their catechumens died without baptism, they would place a living person under the dead man's bed and ask whether he desired to be baptized. The living person would respond in the affirmative and was then baptized as a proxy for the deceased (Homily 40 on 1 Corinthians 15:29). Some dismiss this evidence on the grounds that the Marcionites were heretics. Latter-day Saints, believing that an apostasy was already well under way by Marcion's time, see this practice as a remnant of an earlier rite going back to the apostles.

In the *Pastor of Hermas*, widely read in the early Christian church,¹⁵ Hermas's angelic guide tells him that the apostles and teachers who fall asleep (die) faithful in Christ preach to others who have died, then go down into the water with them to give them the seal, which is a term usually referring to baptism (*Similitude* 9:16). The passage is cited by Clement of Alexandria (in *Stromata* 2.9 and again in *Stromata* 6.6), where he notes that not only Jesus but also his apostles taught the dead in Hades. This same point is made in *Doctrine and Covenants* 138:29–32.

A number of early noncanonical Christian texts mention the baptism provided for the dead prior to being taken to heaven but seem to

15. The earliest mention of the *Pastor of Hermas* (also known as the *Shepherd of Hermas*) is from the mid-second century AD. Some early Christian fathers placed it on a par with other New Testament books.

suggest that it was their spirits who were baptized. One such text is the widely read *Epistle of the Apostles*, which has the resurrected Lord telling his apostles: “For to that end went I down unto the place of Lazarus, and preached unto the righteous and the prophets, that they might come out of the rest which is below and come up into that which is above; and I poured out upon them with my right hand the water [*baptism*, Ethiopic text] of life and forgiveness and salvation from all evil, as I have done unto you and unto them that believe on me.”¹⁶

In an ancient Christian text generally called the *Epistle of the Apostles* (27–28), preserved in both Coptic and Ethiopic languages, the resurrected Jesus tells his apostles, “And on that account I have descended and have spoken with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, to your fathers the prophets, and have brought to them news that they may come from the rest which is below into heaven, and have given them the right hand of baptism of life and forgiveness.” He then adds, “To those who believe in me through you I will do the same, and as I have said and promised to you, that he should go out of prison and should be rescued.”¹⁷

The *Acts of Pilate*, in its present form from the fifth century, has a later appendage (Part II, The Descent of Christ into Hell, also published as *Gospel of Nicodemus*) that some scholars think predates the earlier portions of the book. It tells how, when Christ descended into hell, he removed therefrom the spirits of the righteous and of the repentant. The latter were then baptized in the Jordan River. The *Gospel of Bartholomew* informs us that when Siôphanes, son of the apostle Thomas, died, his soul was taken by Michael, who washed him three times in the Akherusian lake.¹⁸ The *Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan* notes that people will be baptized in this lake after being raised from the dead (1:2–4). The *Apocalypse of Peter* (14) and the *Apocalypse*

16. *Epistle of the Apostles* 27, quoted from Montague Rhodes James, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1955), 494.

17. Wilhelm Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, trans. Robert McLachlan Wilson (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1991), 1:265.

18. E. A. Wallis Budge, ed., *Coptic Apocrypha in the Dialect of Upper Egypt* (London: British Museum, 1913), 207–8.

of Paul (22–23)¹⁹ both speak of the judgment day, when men will be brought before God and receive a baptism in the sacred lake.

In *Pistis Sophia* 146 we read that the disembodied spirits of certain types of sinners, such as robbers, thieves, and arrogant persons, are saved by being chastised, then led to a water that becomes a seething fire that purifies them. In the following chapter (*Pistis Sophia* 147), we find that the soul of an unbaptized righteous person is brought by angels to God, chastised, then brought to the same water that becomes a seething, purifying fire, after which he inherits the light. In an earlier passage (*Pistis Sophia* 128–30), Mary Magdalene asks the risen Christ about the fate of deceased relatives who had not been baptized. The Savior tells her that living family members are to pray for that person, whereupon his or her soul is handed over to the seven virgins of the light, who baptize it and lead it into the treasury of the light, opening the veils to allow passage. A Christian Ethiopic text (*Book of the Mysteries of the Heavens and the Earth*)²⁰ also describes the baptism of the spirits of the dead before they are allowed to enter heaven.

A Mandaean text has Adam, apparently after his death, ascending “to the House of Life; they (the uthras [angels]) washed him in the Jordan and protected him. They washed him and protected him in the Jordan; they placed their right hand on him. They baptized him with their baptism.”²¹ In *Apocalypse of Moses* 37:3–6, we read that when Adam died, a seraph carried him off to the Lake of Acheron and washed him three times in the presence of God, then conducted him to the third heaven. Equally significant is the fact that the Coptic Christians of Egypt and the Mandaeans of Iraq and Iran (who claim descent from the disciples of John the Baptist) continue to practice vicarious baptism for the dead. Hull does not seem to be aware of

19. These two texts are found in Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, 2:633 and 2:726–27, respectively.

20. E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of the Mysteries of the Heavens and the Earth and Other Works of Bakhayla Mikâ'êl (Zôsîmâs)*, 24.

21. Werner Foerster, *Gnosis: A Selection of Gnostic Texts*, trans. R. McL. Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon, 1974), 2:259.

most of these texts, though I have described them in essays on the topic of vicarious baptism.²²

Latter-day Saints

Hull mentions the practice of vicarious baptism for the dead among Latter-day Saints: “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day [sic] Saints (Mormons) practice ordinary baptism and vicarious (or proxy) baptism. In the practice of vicarious baptism, Mormons stand alone. [footnote 2] As we shall see, the (non-Mormon) biblical scholars, [footnote 3] who concede that some form of vicarious baptism was practiced in first-century Corinth, believe that such a practice was at best an anomaly and at worst an aberration. Hence, what 1 Cor 15:29 has to say about vicarious baptism, if anything at all, is of momentous importance to Christians and Mormons in their common deliberations” (pp. 1–2).

Hull’s footnote 2 reads as follows: “It is beyond the pale of this study to consider the Mormon rationale for vicarious baptism. Suffice it to say that Mormons extend God’s scriptural revelation beyond the Bible to include *The Book of Mormon* (1830) and *The Book of Doctrine and Covenants* (1935).²³ Proxy baptism (for the dead) is not mentioned in the former, but it is found in the latter (sections 107:10–12; 109:57; and 110:1, 12, 16, 17, 18), wherein 1 Cor 15:29 is specifically invoked as a biblical example.” His footnote 3 reads: “It is also beyond the pale of

22. See especially John A. Tvedtnes, “Baptism for the Dead: The Coptic Rationale”; Tvedtnes, “Baptism for the Dead in Early Christianity,” in *The Temple in Time and Eternity*, ed. Donald W. Parry and Stephen D. Ricks, (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1999), 55–78, also posted on the Maxwell Institute Web site at <http://maxwellinstitute.byu.edu/publications/bookschapter.php?chapid=104>; Tvedtnes, “The Dead Shall Hear the Voice,” review of “Does the Bible Teach Salvation for the Dead? A Survey of the Evidence, Part I,” *Heart and Mind* and “Did Jesus Establish Baptism for the Dead?” *Heart and Mind*, by Luke P. Wilson, *FARMS Review of Books* 10/2 (1998): 184–99. See also Tvedtnes, “Proxy Baptism,” *Ensign*, February 1977, 88; Tvedtnes and Matthew Roper, “The Messiah Opens the Gates of Sheol,” posted on the *Meridian Magazine* Web site at <http://www.meridianmagazine.com/farms/021201gates.html> (accessed 28 September 2007); and Tvedtnes, “Question 26, Baptism for the Dead,” posted on the SHIELDS Web site at http://www.shields-research.org/42_Questions/ques26_Tvedtnes.htm (accessed 28 September 2007).

23. The Doctrine and Covenants was originally published in 1835.

this study to consider the Mormon biblical scholarship, since Mormons profess belief in revealed texts other than the Bible.” Ironically, the quotation from the Doctrine and Covenants is from an edition published by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (now termed the Community of Christ), which has never practiced baptisms for the dead. However, his footnote 5 on page 3 correctly identifies Doctrine and Covenants 138.²⁴

For the Latter-day Saint view, Hull recommends the writings of Sterling M. McMurrin and Jan Shippo (a liberal Methodist), the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, and chapter 4 (“The Mormon Response to Higher Criticism”) of Philip L. Barlow’s *Mormons and the Bible*.²⁵ He also mentions Hugh Nibley’s “Baptism for the Dead in Ancient Times”²⁶ but neglects some of the more recent Latter-day Saint studies of the subject. He provides an accurate explanation of the Mormon rationale for the practice:

In addition, it is hoped that our study will serve in some small way as an aid to ecumenical dialogue among Catholics, Protestants, and Mormons. The Mormon theology of baptism is one of the more exacerbating of contemporary concerns between Mormons and other Christians. On the one hand, Catholics question the validity of the nature of the Trinity. Catholics have rejected vicarious baptism as an heretical practice since the second century A.D. On the other hand, Protestants are vehemently opposed to vicarious baptism because of the radical efficaciousness it betokens for baptism

24. Being a vision experienced by LDS Church president Joseph F. Smith, D&C 138 would not have been incorporated into the RLDS edition.

25. Philip L. Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible: The Place of the Latter-day Saints in American Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 103–47.

26. Hugh Nibley, “Baptism for the Dead in Ancient Times,” first published in the *Improvement Era* 51 (December 1948): 786–88, 836–38; 52 (January 1949): 24–26, 60; 52 (February 1949): 90–91, 109–10, 112; 52 (March 1949): 146–48, 180–83; 52 (April 1949): 212–14; and later included in his book *Mormonism and Early Christianity* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1987), 100–67. It has also been posted on the Maxwell Institute Web site at <http://maxwellinstitute.byu.edu/display.php?table=transcripts&id=67> (accessed 28 September 2007). Nibley’s work is not included in the bibliography at the end of the book.

in general.²⁷ Yet for Mormons, vicarious baptism is a revealed and charitable practice. According to the revelations given to Joseph Smith, Mormons hold that Christ continues to offer salvation to the dead. And, although they believe that the practice of vicarious baptism is warranted by the latter-day revelations to Smith, they look to the Bible for support. If baptism is necessary for salvation (John 3:3–5), God desires that all be saved (1 Tim 2:4), and Christ preaches to the dead (1 Pet 3:18–30; 4:6), then there must be some means by which the dead, who no longer have bodies to be baptized, can receive the necessary baptism, i.e., vicarious baptism. Pious Mormons have themselves baptized again and again as proxies for those dead in need of baptismal unction, to help those who cannot help themselves, as they claim the Corinthian Christians once did. To be sure, the confessional differences of Catholics, Protestants, and Mormons extend well beyond baptism (ordinary or vicarious) and 1 Cor 15:29. Thus, should our interpretation of the verse fail to gain acceptance, we hope that our efforts will at least demonstrate an intention to explore honestly and openly the common conundrum of 1 Cor 15:29 and, thereby, to succor our mutual understanding. (pp. 2–3)

One final point regarding Hull's views and those of Latter-day Saints: Hull believes that the resurrection of Christ is the center of Christian belief (see esp. pp. 237–38). Believing this as well, following the Book of Mormon, Latter-day Saints would have to add that Christ's atonement involves not only his resurrection but also his ascension. Christ suffered both spiritually (in Gethsemane) and physically (in Gethsemane and on the cross). He overcame physical death by being resurrected and overcame spiritual death by ascending to heaven to sit on the right hand of the Father.²⁸ Thus we read that the redemption of mankind "was to be brought to pass through the power, and suf-

27. That is, many modern Protestants do not consider baptism to be essential for salvation.

28. For physical and spiritual death, see 2 Nephi 2:5–6; Mosiah 2:41; Alma 42:7–9; Helaman 14:15–27; D&C 29:40–42.

ferings, and death of Christ, and his resurrection and ascension into heaven” (Mosiah 18:2).²⁹

Summary

Hull recognizes that “[r]arely in the history of biblical interpretation has a single verse elicited so much attention and so little concert” (p. 9). His descriptions of previous studies of the passage confirm the truth of this statement. Hull’s work adds to this literature. I do not believe that he has put an end to the speculation.

One wonders how any of the Saints at Corinth, to whom Paul addressed his epistle, could have understood what he meant if they had not previously read Hull’s explanation. To be sure, later Christians might have held one of Tertullian’s opinions regarding vicarious baptism, for they are similar to those of Hull but would not have helped those to whom the apostle was writing. Second Peter 3:15–16 sums up the situation: “Even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.”

As a Latter-day Saint, I consider that Hull’s book, and others like it, demonstrate the necessity of living prophets and additional scripture to help clarify the meaning of obscure passages of scripture. Scholars of other faiths should compare and contrast their views with those of Joseph Smith and not merely dismiss the Latter-day Saint view.

29. See Alma 16:19; 21:9; 22:14; 3 Nephi 6:20; Moroni 9:25; D&C 45:4.

IDEOLOGY IN THE GUISE OF SCIENCE

David Grandy

Review of Richard Dawkins. *The God Delusion*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006. x + 406 pp., with appendix, bibliography, and index. \$27.00.

Years ago while serving as full-time missionaries, my companion and I were invited to talk about our faith to an introductory philosophy class at the University of Missouri at Columbia. Since neither of us knew anything about philosophy, we simply relied on the missionary discussions to make our presentation. Only one member of the class was hostile, stating that we were “intellectual midgets” compared to Freud and Marx. We took that in stride, not knowing Freud and Marx except by name. Afterward, as the professor and several students thanked us, I happened to glance at a book that the professor had in hand and that evidently was being used as a course text. It was Bertrand Russell’s *Why I Am Not a Christian*.¹

About a year later, fresh off my mission and at Brigham Young University, I borrowed Russell’s book from the library and opened its pages with some trepidation. Before long I realized that I mostly agreed with Russell, but only because he was attacking a crude caricature of the God I believed in. I didn’t believe in that caricature either. For all his philosophical learning, Russell had written a shallow, non-threatening book about religion.

1. Bertrand Russell, *Why I Am Not a Christian: And Other Essays on Religion and Related Subjects* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1957).

Richard Dawkins, a well-known biologist and critic of religion, has written a similar book—*The God Delusion*. The book has gotten a lot of advance publicity and is selling well, but for those who keep track of such things, its publication is a bit of a nonevent. Here is another predictable salvo against religion from the world of science. But it is not science: it is ideology poorly disguised as science. Nor does its author grasp the nature of religious experience. Dawkins dismisses religious claims after measuring them against a rather badly misshapen scientific yardstick. This is positivism at its best (or worst): truth is established scientifically or not at all.

Dawkins would have us believe that Darwinian evolution is the omni-explanatory solution to all of life's mysteries. This is an old refrain, one going back to Ernst Haeckel, Thomas Huxley, H. G. Wells, and, in more recent decades, Daniel Dennett. It is not science per se, but the dramatization of science for ideological purposes. Evolutionary biology is a perfectly legitimate theory of science, but like all intellectual constructions, it has its limitations. This fact, readily acknowledged by those familiar with quantum theory and Kurt Gödel's incompleteness theorems, has never really seemed to register with life science enthusiasts like Dawkins. Their passion for universal explanations harks back to an earlier era when Newtonian science struck many people as evidence that the human race had finally arrived. Dawkins, wholly enamored of Darwinian biology, is a curious throwback to that era; and he, like certain *philosophes* of the Enlightenment, is eager to throw traditional religion overboard so as to clear the deck of all ideologies but his own.

It is important to note that Dawkins is not writing in a vacuum. He is replying to a crowd of thinkers—scientists, philosophers, and theologians—who in recent decades have tried to harmonize scientific and religious truth. "What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem?" asked Tertullian centuries ago.² Tertullian's reply was "nothing," and Dawkins's is the same, although for vastly different reasons. The goal of harmonizing faith and reason is an old one, but there are pitfalls along the way; and to his credit, Dawkins does a good job of pointing

2. Tertullian, *De Praescriptione Haereticorum* 7.9.

some of them out. If we invest faith in, say, intelligent design, irreducible complexity, or certain versions of the anthropic principle, all of which lean on God to make sense of things, what happens when persuasive naturalistic explanations emerge?

This is worldview warfare, not science versus religion. Dawkins readily admits he is opposed only to the idea of a God who takes a personal interest in humankind and who therefore strives to bring off our salvation and happiness. His God, if he must use the word, is coincidental with the laws of nature and consequently perfectly oblivious to our being. This outlook is, of course, not original with Dawkins; most notably it is associated with Einstein and Spinoza. But neither Einstein nor Spinoza dogmatically and zealously asserted it. Both took it as a religious *preference*, not as a weapon with which to attack and destroy other religious preferences. Dawkins, however, is a religious firebrand in scientific guise, and by trying to straitjacket others into his atheistic worldview, he does science a profound disservice.

In the latter part of the book, Dawkins offers an explanation for religion. Believing that only Darwinian evolution can get to the bottom of this matter, he weaves an interesting story. But this is not to say that others, working from different principles, could not weave equally interesting but very different stories. The problem here is one that Karl Popper identified decades ago: theories that explain so much and that seem to be immune to falsification ought to arouse our suspicion.³ A piece of Silly Putty can be easily molded into the shape of an elephant, a dog, a giraffe, virtually anything we can imagine; but that does not mean that Silly Putty is the universal substance from which all the world was created. It is merely a substance that reacts easily to the human imagination.

Dawkins, it seems, fails to grasp this point. He never admits that there might be other ways to persuasively spin the empirical data, to play dot to dot with the events of nature. Rather, he talks as if Darwinian evolution affords a uniquely unbiased vision of the past. Yet anyone who closely attends to his explanations of the past notes

3. Karl R. Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge* (New York: Basic Books, 1962).

that they become obscure just at the critical moment. In this respect *The God Delusion* is exactly like *The Selfish Gene*,⁴ Dawkins's most sustained attempt to deal with our biological origins. The selfish gene, he says, began as a lifeless unit, void of intentionality. Eventually, however, it evolved into a living, purposive, "selfish" thing, though Dawkins never specifies quite how this happened. He can only say that natural selection—the mechanism that drives organic evolution—brought it about. Thus, while straining at the gnat of the selfish gene, Dawkins swallows the miracle of life that he is quick to disavow in religious contexts. After getting past this hitch, however, he is able to talk with great confidence, and his explanations come off as persuasive, albeit for reasons just indicated. Many people, unfortunately, overlook the leap of faith taken at the outset of the explanation (the assertion that natural selection somehow or other brings life into existence) and uncritically take that leap with Dawkins.

This failure to deal with fundamental issues affords Dawkins a great deal of argumentative mileage. A case in point is his claim that natural selection is not a random process. (He concedes the improbability of life originating from purely random processes.) He compares it to a combination lock that noticeably clicks each time one of the key digits is passed, thus allowing the person turning the lock to quickly decipher its code. Elsewhere⁵ Dawkins puts a similar spin on the old monkey-at-the-typewriter argument by insisting that a monkey *could* type out a line from Shakespeare in fairly short order: each time the monkey accidentally hits a correct character it gets locked in, while all the incorrect characters are immediately erased. Thus the monkey, completely unaware of what it is accomplishing, never has to start over from scratch—the process itself is self-improving. It retains correct characters, discards those that are incorrect, and, after sufficient iterations, produces a fully coherent sentence.

But for a monkey to do this, its typewriter would have to be programmed, and who or what is the programmer? Dawkins assigns that

4. Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976).

5. See Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker: Why the Evidence of Evolution Reveals a Universe Without Design* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996).

role to natural selection. So on the one hand natural selection is blind and mindless, and on the other it is teleological. This is a contradiction that goes back to Darwin's personification of natural selection (he once described nature as "infinitely more sagacious than man" and as an "all-seeing being" that is ever "rigid and scrutinizing"),⁶ and it cuts so deeply as to shape up as yet another leap of faith. Dawkins might deny this by arguing that each tiny step of the evolutionary process gets locked in by virtue of its survival value, but it is by no means clear that this is always the case. More fundamentally, one wonders whence survival gets its intrinsic value in a cosmos initially devoid of value, which is the kind of cosmos Dawkins posits.

An old adage states that to a man with a hammer everything looks like a nail. This, no doubt, is an overstatement, but certainly to Dawkins any religious belief is something to be pounded on by the ideological hammer of atheistic science. One of his chief complaints against traditional religion is the religious intolerance that flares up in such places as Israel, Iraq, Northern Ireland, and even the United States. Granted, this is lamentable, but Dawkins's own brand of intolerance only exacerbates the problem. What is needed is not diatribe but dialogue and an openness to new ways of thinking and feeling. Religious experience may not make much sense to Dawkins, but, as William James would say, that is because he chooses to stand outside it: "One can never fathom an emotion or divine its dictates by standing outside of it. In the glowing hour of excitement, however, all incomprehensibilities are solved, and what was so enigmatical from without becomes transparently obvious. Each emotion obeys a logic of its own, and makes deductions which no other logic can draw. Piety and charity live in a different universe from worldly lusts and fears, and form another centre of energy altogether."⁷ Dawkins gives us one universe or thought world, but there are many others.

6. Charles Darwin and Alfred R. Wallace, *Evolution by Natural Selection* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), 45–48.

7. William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 2004), 286.

NEW LIGHT ON THE JOSEPH SMITH PAPYRI

John Gee

Forty years ago the eleven remaining fragments of the Joseph Smith Papyri were given back to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I have studied these remnants for more than twenty years and would like to discuss a few related historical issues that are unknown to many people, including Egyptologists.

Full Disclosure

Anyone approaching the Joseph Smith Papyri should be prepared to wade through much nonsense in the form of commentaries and analyses. A bibliography produced in 1992 was thirty-five pages of single-spaced eight-point font,¹ and the amount of material has steadily increased. This material comes from (1) Mormons who produce both nonsense as well as some solid historical studies and some decidedly uneven work, (2) anti-Mormons who produce nonsense, and unfortunately far too often (3) Egyptologists. The nonsense from Egyptologists is not the mistakes made in Mormon history and belief, which is outside our range of interest, but rather the numerous Egyptological and historical errors we make in our treatment of the

This is a slightly modified version of a paper given at the fifty-eighth annual meeting of the American Research Center in Egypt, in Toledo, Ohio, on 20 April 2006. The paper was originally written for Egyptologists and has been modified for a more general audience.

1. Adam D. Lamoreaux, "Pearl of Great Price Bibliography" (FARMS paper, 1992).

Joseph Smith Papyri. Professor Robert Ritner has commented on the low standards of some of the material on the Joseph Smith Papyri, particularly the “apologetic” material,² and I am inclined to agree with his comments. But we should remember that the principal definition of *apologetic* is “defense of a point of view”³ and thus includes Professor Ritner’s work on the subject as well. All work on the Joseph Smith Papyri is unavoidably apologetic for some point of view.

In over two decades of dealing with constant inquiries about the papyri, I have learned that the only disinterested parties are those who truly have no interest in the matter. Disinterested parties do not ask questions or write articles and books. Everyone who writes about the papyri has an agenda and a bias even if unwilling to admit it. I do not think it is a good idea to attempt to hide one’s stance in areas of scholarly inquiry, because understanding the assumptions, presuppositions, and preunderstandings that lie behind one’s presentation of matters is crucial to understanding the arguments.

My stance on the matter is scarcely a secret. In the interest of full disclosure, I note that I am employed by Brigham Young University, which is owned by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, of which I am a believing and active member; I am a member of the board of directors of the Aziz S. Atiya Fund for Coptic Studies; and I am a previous employee of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. I have a personal interest in not besmirching the reputation of these institutions. I also note that Joseph Smith was my wife’s great-great-great-grandfather’s brother and my own great-great-great-great-grandfather’s third cousin. That having been said, I note that in my capacity as a professor at BYU I do not, indeed cannot, officially speak for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Mormon—and I use the term because of its familiarity to Egyptologists even though it is not

2. Robert K. Ritner, “‘The Breathing Permit of Hôr’ among the Joseph Smith Papyri,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 62/3 (2003): 167.

3. Oxford English Dictionary Online, s.v. “apologetic”; see also John Gee, “*La Trahison des Clercs: On the Language and Translation of the Book of Mormon*,” *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 6/1 (1994): 51–120; Daniel C. Peterson, Editor’s Introduction, “The Witchcraft Paradigm: On Claims to ‘Second Sight’ by People Who Say It Doesn’t Exist,” *FARMS Review* 18/2 (2006): xi–xviii.

preferred by the Church of Jesus Christ—and anti-Mormon interpretations are not my focus here. I wish to address only a few of the many historical issues.

What We Think We Know

The popular story of the papyri is as follows: Joseph Smith acquired the papyri from a nephew of Antonio Lebolo for six thousand dollars; Smith produced the Book of Abraham from the Book of Breathings; the papyri were lost for many years but were discovered by Dr. Aziz S. Atiya in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and so when the museum’s administrators found out, they gave the papyri to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Egyptologists then pointed out that the documents were not the Book of Abraham but merely a Book of Breathings Made by Isis. This is the story we think we know; however, none of this is true. The details are all wrong.

The Rediscovery

To illustrate the situation, let us take what is generally thought to be the most secure of the elements of the story, Dr. Atiya’s discovery of the papyri in the Metropolitan Museum. The original sources for this story are newspaper accounts garbled from the original press release.⁴ The crucial paragraph read: “The Museum has had the collection since 1947, but their existence was not known to the Church until recently, when a renowned Distinguished Professor of the University of Utah saw the original of the facsimile while researching Coptic and Arabic papyri in a special room at the Museum.”⁵ The newspapers took this further and made Atiya the discoverer of the document who notified the Metropolitan Museum of Art of what they had. But that is not what happened. The published museum acquisition list for 1947 records that the museum had acquired “papyrus fragments of hieratic Books of the Dead, once the property of the Mormon leader Joseph

4. See Jay M. Todd, *The Saga of the Book of Abraham* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1969), 1.

5. Reprinted in Todd, *Saga of the Book of Abraham*, 4.

Smith.”⁶ This shows two things: first, that the museum knew exactly what they had, and second, that no one had read the museum acquisition list.

What really happened is outlined in correspondence between Atiya and Henry Fischer, then curator of the Egyptian department at the Met. After reading the story in the newspaper, Fischer wrote to Atiya as follows: “Although I was already aware that your version of the ‘discovery’ of these documents had caused considerable confusion, it was startling to read that you had informed me of their existence. While I have taken pains to avoid any outright contradictions of what you said, I do not see why either I or the other members of my department—past and present—should be put in the position of being ignorant about facts we could not fail to have known.”⁷ As Fischer explained in a 1968 interview about the matter: “We knew, since he worked in Salt Lake City and was acquainted with leaders of the Mormon Church, that he might very tactfully find out how they felt about it. So we simply informed him about this in confidence, and I think he handled the matter very nicely.”⁸ Even Klaus Baer, an Egyptologist working at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, knew in 1968 that “the Metropolitan Museum was fully aware of what the papyri were when they first saw them in 1918, and they knew what they were doing when they acquired them. I saw photographs of them for the first time in 1963, I believe, and was asked at the time, on my honor not to tell anyone where they were and to keep the whole thing confidential.”⁹

So why did the museum not contact the church earlier? Fischer explains: “There is only one satisfactory answer to those who wonder why we did not tell the L.D.S. Church about the papyri at an earlier

6. “Review of the Year 1947,” *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 7/1 (1948): 17.

7. Henry G. Fischer to Aziz S. Atiya, 2 January 1968, Aziz Atiya Collection, Accn 480, Bx 40, fd 1, Manuscripts Division, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

8. Norman Tolk, Lynn Travers, George D. Smith Jr., and F. Charles Graves, “An Interview with Dr. Fischer,” *Dialogue* 2/4 (1967): 58.

9. Klaus Baer, letter to Jerald Tanner, 13 August 1968, quoted in Boyd Jay Petersen, *Hugh Nibley: A Consecrated Life* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2002), 316.

date: not that we did not know of the significance of the documents, but that we did not know what the reaction of the Church would be. And it was solely—albeit indispensably—in respect to the latter point that [Atiya] provided me with information.”¹⁰ As he said in an interview at the time: “Frankly, we didn’t know what the Mormon Church’s wishes were. It wasn’t until we discussed the matter with Professor Atiya . . . that we had a possibility of finding out how they felt about it.”¹¹

Furthermore, what Met administrators thought they gave the church was “papyrus fragments of hieratic Books of the Dead.”¹² “There are many, many copies of these texts,” Fischer said. “Of course, a very beautiful example would be of great interest to us, and we do normally have some fine examples on display. Let’s say that these fragments are reduplications in that sense. Such reduplications are of interest to specialists in funerary texts but are not useful to us in terms of our exhibition.”¹³ Somehow we have an idea that it was the Egyptologists who noticed that there was a copy of the Book of Breathings Made by Isis in the collection. But as Baer pointed out, “Let’s face it; it was [Hugh] Nibley and not the Egyptologists who noticed that the sensen fragments were not from the Book of the Dead.”¹⁴

The Discovery

If the story of the rediscovery of the papyri is incorrect, the story of the discovery of the papyri also needs several corrections. First, thanks to the diligent research of Donl Peterson and Brian Smith, we know that almost all of Michael Chandler’s story about the mummies

10. Fischer to Atiya, 2 January 1968, Aziz Atiya Collection.

11. Tolk et al., “Interview with Dr. Fischer,” 56–58. “It is pretty clear to me,” Baer wrote in 1968, that the museum “didn’t want anyone to find out about the papyri before the Mormon Church did, at least not publicly, and that [the museum] took their own sweet time about it. . . . The situation evidently was handled in the manner that would least embarrass anybody, and the general attitude seems to have been to wait until an auspicious moment.” Klaus Baer to Jerald Tanner, 13 August 1968, as quoted in Petersen, *Hugh Nibley*, 316.

12. “Review of the Year 1947,” 17.

13. Tolk et al. “Interview with Dr. Fischer,” 58.

14. Klaus Baer to Jerald Tanner, 8 August 1968, as quoted in Petersen, *Hugh Nibley*, 318.

and the papyri is a fabrication or is based on misunderstandings.¹⁵ Chandler does not appear to have been any relation of Antonio Lebolo, and he certainly was not his nephew. John Larson, the archivist of the Oriental Institute, cites the price of the papyri as six thousand dollars.¹⁶ This is based on the secondhand account of Josiah Quincy¹⁷ but is refuted by the statements of the purchasers¹⁸ and by the legal documents filed in a lawsuit against Chandler over the papyri.¹⁹ The price was only twenty-four hundred dollars. So Quincy was wrong on the price of the papyrus; in addition, here he is a secondhand source. Also, when one compares Quincy's account of things Joseph Smith said with that of Quincy's cousin, Charles Francis Adams, one finds that the latter account is closer to what Joseph Smith published on the same subject.²⁰ Quincy thus becomes an unreliable witness—one writing forty years after the fact.

This brings us to the matter of methodology. As John Baines has written, the typical Egyptologist “tends not to be very open to issues of theory and methodology, and at the level of interpretation he will often work without an awareness of the presuppositions he applies.”²¹ On the other hand, Mormon studies, particularly since the 1980s and the exposure of the forgeries introduced by Mark Hoffman, have pro-

15. H. Donl Peterson, *The Story of the Book of Abraham: Mummies, Manuscripts, and Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1995).

16. John A. Larson, “Joseph Smith and Egyptology: An Early Episode in the History of American Speculation about Ancient Egypt, 1835–1844,” in *For His Ka: Essays Offered in Memory of Klaus Baer*, ed. David P. Silverman (Chicago: Oriental Institute, University of Chicago, 1994), 164 n. 9, 172.

17. Josiah Quincy, *Figures of the Past from the Leaves of Old Journals* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1883), 386.

18. Joseph Coe to Joseph Smith, 1 January 1844, as cited in Peterson, *Story of the Book of Abraham*, 7–8.

19. Peterson, *Story of the Book of Abraham*, 169–74.

20. See John Gee, “Telling the Story of the Joseph Smith Papyri,” review of *The Facsimiles of the Book of Abraham: A Study of the Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyri*, by James R. Harris; *For His Ka: Essays Offered in Memory of Klaus Baer*, edited by David P. Silverman; *The Story of the Book of Abraham: Mummies, Manuscripts, and Mormonism*, by H. Donl Peterson, *FARMS Review of Books* 8/2 (1996): 53.

21. John Baines, “Introduction,” *Royal Anthropological Institute News*, no. 15 (August 1976): 2.

duced an extensive literature on the subject.²² It is clear that recent Egyptological treatments of the Joseph Smith Papyri²³ could have benefited from attention to this literature. Be that as it may, it is worth examining some methodological issues.

Mormonism has always been controversial. From its very origins, there have been accounts pro and con, and in the midst of this war of words and tumult of opinions, historians may say to themselves:

22. While not an exhaustive list, the following are some of the more important discussions: Howard C. Searle, "Authorship of the History of Joseph Smith: A Review Essay," *BYU Studies* 21/1 (1981): 101–22; Richard Lloyd Anderson, *Investigating the Book of Mormon Witnesses* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1981), 151–71; John Clark, "A Key for Evaluating Nephite Geographies," *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 1 (1989): 20–70; Paul Y. Hoskisson, "An Introduction to the Relevance of and a Methodology for a Study of the Proper Names of the Book of Mormon," in *By Study and Also by Faith: Essays in Honor of Hugh W. Nibley*, ed. John M. Lundquist and Stephen D. Ricks (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, UT: FARMS, 1990), 2:126–35; Gary F. Novak, "Naturalistic Assumptions and the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies* 30/3 (1990): 23–40; Dean C. Jessee, "Priceless Words and Fallible Memories: Joseph Smith as Seen in the Effort to Preserve His Discourses," *BYU Studies* 31/2 (1991): 19–40; David B. Honey and Daniel C. Peterson, "Advocacy and Inquiry in the Writing of Latter-day Saint History," *BYU Studies* 31/2 (1991): 139–79; William J. Hamblin, "Basic Methodological Problems with the Anti-Mormon Approach to the Geography and Archaeology of the Book of Mormon," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 2/1 (1993): 161–97; Gary F. Novak, review of *Faithful History: Essays on Writing Mormon History*, by George D. Smith, *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 5/1 (1993): 231–49; Louis Midgley, "The Radical Reformation of the Reorganization of the Restoration: Recent Changes in the RLDS Understanding of the Book of Mormon," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 2/2 (1993): 132–63; David Bohn, "The Larger Issue," *Sunstone*, February 1994, 45–63; William J. Hamblin, "An Apologist for the Critics: Brent Lee Metcalfe's Assumptions and Methodologies," *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 6/1 (1994): 434–523; Daniel C. Peterson, "Text and Context," *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 6/1 (1994): 524–62; William J. Hamblin, "The Latest Straw Man," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 4/2 (1995): 82–92; Massimo Introvigne, "The Book of Mormon Wars: A Non-Mormon Perspective," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 5/2 (1996): 1–25; George L. Mitton and Rhett S. James, "A Response to D. Michael Quinn's Homosexual Distortion of Latter-day Saint History," *FARMS Review of Books* 10/1 (1998): 141–263; Richard Lloyd Anderson and Scott H. Faulring, "The Prophet Joseph Smith and His Plural Wives," *FARMS Review of Books* 10/2 (1998): 67–104; William J. Hamblin, "That Old Black Magic," *FARMS Review of Books* 12/2 (2000): 225–393.

23. Such as John A. Larson, "Joseph Smith and Egyptology: An Early Episode in the History of American Speculation about Ancient Egypt, 1835–1844," in *For His Ka*, ed. Silverman, 159–78; Michael D. Rhodes, *The Hor Book of Breathings: A Translation and Commentary* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2002); and Robert K. Ritner, "The 'Breathing Permit of Hôr' Thirty-four Years Later," *Dialogue* 33/4 (2000): 97–119.

What is to be done? Who of all these parties are right? The most helpful method of sorting through the various accounts and claims about historical events is to use those sources that are eyewitnesses to an event, whether they are Mormon or not, and exclude those that are not eyewitnesses. For history, hearsay sources are irrelevant. Contemporary sources are to be preferred to later reminiscences like Josiah Quincy's.

There are twenty-six eyewitness sources that describe the Joseph Smith Papyri. These accounts provide diachronic descriptions of the Joseph Smith Papyri during the period when the Mormons first owned them—that is, from 1835 to 1856. John Larson uses only a third of these in his article for the Baer memorial volume and includes a number of sources that are not eyewitnesses.²⁴ Those that he uses, unfortunately, are often missing key elements. For example, his sampling of Joseph Smith journal entries dealing with the papyri omits five entries from 1835 alone.²⁵ Larson might have included more eyewitness accounts had he actually read some of the sources he cites in his bibliography.²⁶

Larson claims that “there seems to be no published record of the westward movement of the mummies and papyri with the Mormons from Kirtland, Ohio, to Missouri, and then back across the Mississippi River to Nauvoo, Illinois. One can only imagine how much damage the fragile antiquities may have suffered as they bounced over hundreds of miles of rough roads in carts or wagons.”²⁷ Had he read the accounts, he would not have needed to “only imagine.” The first comes from Anson Call's journal from the summer of 1838, published in 1985:

While at Far West I happened in John Corls [Corrill's] or the Church store and my attention was called by Vincent Knights who was opening some boxes of goods. Says he, “Joseph will

24. Larson, “Joseph Smith and Egyptology.”

25. See John Gee, “Telling the Story of the Joseph Smith Papyri,” *FARMS Review of Books* 8/2 (1996): 54 n. 30.

26. Notably Todd, *Saga of the Book of Abraham*, cited in Larson, “Joseph Smith and Egyptology,” 177.

27. Larson, “Joseph Smith and Egyptology,” 169–70.

be much pleased with these. He has been very uneasy about the translation of the Bible and the Egyptian Records. Here they are.” Placing them on the table, he said to me, “If you will take one of these, I will the other and we will carry them over to Joseph’s office.”²⁸

The trip into Missouri was calm compared to the trip out. On 27 October 1838, Missouri governor Lilburn W. Boggs declared “open war” on the Mormons and issued an order calling out the militia, declaring: “The Mormons must be treated as enemies and *must be exterminated* or driven from the state.”²⁹ Three days later, a contemporary source reported that the militia “had killed nearly all the ‘Mormons’ gathered at” the settlement of Haun’s Mill and “4000 some say 6000 Malitia [sic] had camped that night, one half mile south of Far West with orders from the governor of the state to exterminate the Mormons.”³⁰ Ann Scott Davis records that at the request of her brother-in-law, James Mulholland, Joseph Smith’s secretary at the time, she took charge of the papyri and other important papers, “as he thought they would be more secure with me, because I was a woman, and the mob would not be likely to search my person. Immediately on taking possession of the papers, I made two cotton bags of sufficient size to contain them, sewing a band around the top ends of sufficient length to button around my waist; and I carried those papers on my person in the day-time, when the mob was round, and slept with them under my pillow at night. I cannot remember now the exact length of time I had those papers in my possession; but I gave them to sister Emma Smith, the prophet’s wife, on the evening of her departure for Commerce” in February of 1839.³¹

28. Anson Call, manuscript journal, summer of 1838, p. 9, as cited in Robert J. Matthews, “A Plainer Translation”: *Joseph Smith’s Translation of the Bible: A History and Commentary* (Provo, UT: BYU Press, 1985), 98; Mark L. McConkie, *Remembering Joseph* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003), 259–60.

29. The extermination order is quoted in *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1948), 3:175.

30. Warren Foote, as quoted in Terryl L. Givens, *The Viper on the Hearth: Mormons, Myths, and the Construction of Heresy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 32–33.

31. F. M. Cooper, “Spiritual Reminiscences.—No. 2.: In the Life of Sister Ann Davis, of Lyons, Wisconsin,” *Autumn Leaves* 4 (January 1891): 18.

One does not need to imagine how much damage the fragile antiquities suffered. In a forthcoming publication, Michael Rhodes shows that an 1835 copy of a fragment now part of Papyrus Joseph Smith IX contains thirty-four lines of text as compared to the current fragment, which contains only about twelve. The length of text preserved in each line is also reduced to about one-third its original size.

Eyewitnesses from the Nauvoo period (1839–1844) describe “a quantity of records, written on papyrus, in Egyptian hieroglyphics,”³² including (1) some papyri “preserved under glass,”³³ described as “a number of glazed slides, like picture frames, containing sheets of papyrus, with Egyptian inscriptions and hieroglyphics”;³⁴ (2) “a long roll of manuscript”³⁵ that contained the Book of Abraham;³⁶ (3) “another roll”;³⁷ (4) and “two or three other small pieces of papyrus with astronomical calculations, epitaphs, &c.”³⁸ Only the mounted fragments ended up in the Metropolitan Museum of Art and thence were given back to the Church of Jesus Christ. When eyewitnesses described the vignettes as being of the mounted fragments, they can be matched with the fragments from the Metropolitan Museum of Art; but when the vignettes described are on the rolls, the descriptions do not match any of the fragments from the Met. Gustavus Seyffarth’s 1856 catalog of the Wood Museum indicates that some of the papyri were there. Those papyri went to Chicago and were burned in the Great Chicago Fire in 1871. Whatever we might imagine their contents to be is only conjecture. Both Mormon and non-Mormon eyewitnesses from the

32. William S. West, *A Few Interesting Facts Respecting the Rise, Progress, and Pretensions of the Mormons* (Warren, OH, 1837), 5, cited in Todd, *Saga of the Book of Abraham*, 196–97.

33. Quincy, *Figures of the Past*, 386.

34. Henry Caswall, *The City of the Mormons; or, Three Days at Nauvoo, in 1842* (London: Rivington, 1843), 22–23.

35. Charlotte Haven to her mother, 19 February 1843, printed in “A Girl’s Letters from Nauvoo,” *Overland Monthly* 16/96 (December 1890): 624, as cited in Todd, *Saga of the Book of Abraham*, 245.

36. Jerusha W. Blanchard, “Reminiscences of the Granddaughter of Hyrum Smith,” *Relief Society Magazine* 9/1 (1922): 9; and Haven to her mother, 19 February 1843.

37. Haven to her mother, 19 February 1843.

38. Oliver Cowdery to William Frye, 22 December 1835, printed in the *Latter Day Saints’ Messenger and Advocate* 2 (December 1835): 234.

nineteenth century agree that it was a “roll of papyrus from which our prophet translated the Book of Abraham,”³⁹ meaning the “long roll of manuscript” and not one of the mounted fragments that eventually ended up in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.⁴⁰

As for the translation, no one knows how it was done, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has no position on how the Book of Abraham was translated or from what papyrus. Since there is no official position, members of the church divide into four opinions about the translation of the Book of Abraham. The smallest group, comprising about 0.5 percent of members—according to my informal, admittedly unscientific surveys—thinks that Joseph Smith translated the Book of Abraham from the existing fragments that were in the Met. The next largest group thinks that Joseph Smith translated the Book of Abraham from papyrus fragments that are no longer in existence. About one-third think that there is or was no connection between the Book of Abraham and any papyrus fragments. The largest group, more than half of members, do not care where the Book of Abraham came from. As Egyptologists, however, we routinely assert that the Mormon position is the one that is actually the least popular of all positions. The only eyewitness to the translation process to describe it was Joseph Smith’s scribe, Warren Parrish, who claimed, after he left the church, “I have set by his side and penned down the translation of the Egyptian Hieroglyphicks as he claimed to receive it by direct inspiration from Heaven.”⁴¹

Editions

Since the rediscovery of the Joseph Smith Papyri in 1967, there have been twelve purportedly Egyptological editions of the Joseph

39. Blanchard, “Reminiscences,” 9; and Haven to her mother, 19 February 1843.

40. For the distribution of the manuscript fragments, see John Gee, “Eyewitness, Hearsay, and Physical Evidence of the Joseph Smith Papyri,” in *The Disciple as Witness: Essays on Latter-day Saint History and Doctrine in Honor of Richard Lloyd Anderson*, ed. Stephen D. Ricks et al. (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2000), 188–91; and John Gee, *A Guide to the Joseph Smith Papyri* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2000), 10–13.

41. Warren Parrish, letter to the editor, *Painesville Republican*, 15 February 1838, 3.

Smith Papyri X and XI,⁴² a number that surely far exceeds the papyri's Egyptological importance. One would think that, with so many editions, the work would be getting better, but so far the ninth edition—that of Michael Rhodes, distributed by the University of Chicago Press—has been the best. The tenth and eleventh, both by Professor Robert Ritner, are a step backward in understanding the papyri since it has been shown that on average one out of every four lines in his editions does not match what is actually on the papyri.⁴³ It becomes clear that in places many of the readings in these editions are taken from a different papyrus altogether and that the textual variants of the Joseph Smith Papyri were unnoticed. One line of text was invented. Whatever value those editions may have for polemical purposes,⁴⁴ they are of little use in understanding the papyri since, to borrow a phrase from de Buck, a really sound study of the papyri must be continually going back from the edition to the originals,⁴⁵ which means that, as editions, they are largely useless. Even on polemical grounds the author of these

42. (1) Grant S. Heward, *The Book of Abraham Papyrus Found!* (Salt Lake City: Modern Microfilm, n.d. [1968]); (2) Dee Jay Nelson, *The Joseph Smith Papyri* (Salt Lake City: Modern Microfilm, 1968); (3) Richard A. Parker, "The Book of Breathings (Fragment 1, the 'sensen' Text, with Restorations from Louvre Papyrus 3284," *Dialogue* 3/2 (1968): 98–99; (4) Klaus Baer, "The Breathing Permit of Hôr: A Translation of the Apparent Source of the Book of Abraham," *Dialogue* 3/3 (1968): 109–34; (5) Hugh Nibley, *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1975); (6) Michael H. Marquardt, *The Book of Abraham Papyrus Found* (Salt Lake City: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 1975); (7) Michael H. Marquardt, *The Book of Abraham Papyrus Found*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 1981); (8) Charles M. Larson, *By His Own Hand upon Papyrus: A New Look at the Joseph Smith Papyri* (Grand Rapids, MI: Institute for Religious Research, 1992); (9) Rhodes, *Hor Book of Breathings*; (10) Ritner, "Breathing Permit of Hôr' Thirty-four Years Later"; (11) Robert K. Ritner, "The 'Breathing Permit of Hôr' among the Joseph Smith Papyri," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 62/3 (2003); (12) Hugh Nibley, *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 2005).

43. As demonstrated by Kerry Muhlestein, "The Book of Breathings in Its Place," *FARMS Review* 17/2 (2005): 483–86.

44. See Larry E. Morris, "The Book of Abraham: Ask the Right Questions and Keep On Looking," *FARMS Review* 16/2 (2004): 355–80. For Ritner's propensity to get into academic arguments, see Jacco Dieleman, *Priests, Tongues, and Rites* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 19–20, esp. nn. 58–59.

45. Adriaan de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935), 1:xv.

editions, to quote Professor Ritner, “fails to account for the remarkable persistence of the ‘pathetic or ludicrous’ activities which he finds so devoid of truth or value.”⁴⁶

Advice

For those who would like to work with the Joseph Smith Papyri in the future, a few words of advice:

1. All approaches will be biased. Objectivity is a myth.⁴⁷ The papyri are part of a sectarian debate. I will not describe the various groups involved, their positions, their tactics, or their funding, but anyone who gets involved should first learn who the players are. It is worth knowing, for example, that while *Dialogue* was a Mormon journal in the 1960s when Baer published in it, over the years it has changed so that many members of the church no longer consider it to be Mormon in any meaningful sort of way. It is also worth knowing that for nearly one hundred years it has been standard operating procedure to dig for dirt on the background of anyone who enters the debate, and if one sides with the Mormons, the opponents have no qualms about bearing false witness, as Douglas Cowan has shown.⁴⁸ One simply cannot win playing this game. Baer and Fischer understood quite well that it was not a good idea for outsiders to get involved in a religious dispute. Fischer politely bowed out, and Baer tried to be gracious to everyone. Baer’s graciousness, however, cost him a good deal of time, which brings me to my next point.

2. If you do address the issue in print, you need to know that the two sides in the dispute will never leave you alone. It is a life sentence with no possibility of parole. The Reverend S. A. B. Mercer was still responding to inquiries almost fifty years later in his retirement. Before you rush into print, you might want to ask yourself: “Do I want

46. Robert Kriech Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice* (Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1993), 10.

47. Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The “Objectivity Question” and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

48. Douglas E. Cowan, *Bearing False Witness? An Introduction to the Christian Countercult* (Westport, CN: Praeger, 2003).

to spend the rest of my one moment in annihilation's waste by dealing with this?"

3. If you decide you want to enter the debate, you ought to do some real homework. There is a large bibliography, and there are dozens of theories to master, not to mention a large body of evidence. Many mistakes would not have been made had Egyptologists only known the literature better. You have to pay attention to what Latter-day Saints say about the papyri. It is they who have traced the history of the papyri, dug up what information is known about Antonio Lebolo, identified Joseph Smith Papyri X–XI as a Book of Breathings, and done much basic work on hypocephali, and they are the people who have access to the original documents. They know their own history much better than others do, and they know what they believe better than outsiders. You might be surprised to find yourself on the same side. Hugh Nibley has often been maligned for taking the ludicrous position that others think he ought to have taken rather than the position he actually took. The argument he made in his edition of the papyri is as follows: "*The Book of Breathings is not the Book of Abraham!*"⁴⁹ and it is a "howling absurdity [to insist] that the book [of Abraham] was produced in a manner in which . . . no book could possibly be produced, ever!"⁵⁰ Instead the Book of Breathings has something "to offer in its own right"⁵¹ and deserves to be studied against an Egyptian background. The first two points have been widely accepted by mainstream Latter-day Saints.

4. If you want to do anything with the originals, you need to apply to the archives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints at least a full year in advance. You will need approvals from half a dozen committees that meet only once a month and for whom your request will be far down the list of agenda items. Requests to do anything before that time will garner an automatic denial.

5. Whatever goodwill Professor Baer had established among the Mormons by his tact has more than been destroyed by the recent coop-

49. Nibley, *Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri*, 2nd ed., 2 (emphasis in original).

50. Nibley, *Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri*, 2nd ed., 5.

51. Nibley, *Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri*, 2nd ed., xxv.

eration of certain Egyptologists with anti-Mormons. Whatever short-term tactical gains for anti-Mormonism these Egyptologists may have made, the net result is a long-term loss for a serious Egyptological examination of the material. Those who wish to work with the originals will have to find ways to distance themselves from those efforts and the individuals involved in them, and from those who violate the church's copyrights on the material. It is worth following Professor Ritner's warning that those "for whom ridicule . . . [is] an occupation" and who are "not disposed to be particularly charitable" are "not relevant to the present discussion."⁵²

Conclusions

Most of what we as Egyptologists think we know about the Joseph Smith Papyri is demonstrably wrong, whether on the details of their history or on Mormon attitudes about them. The assumptions we make, the presuppositions we have, and the myths that we have invented dominate discussions of the papyri and the Mormons. It seems therefore fitting to conclude with a slight alteration of one of Professor Ritner's astute observations: "In the past, our theories have dictated our facts as often as our facts have dictated our theories. Theoretical bias has been unrecognized and its pervasive influence ignored. So long as we are willing to allow our preconceptions to structure our questions and answers, to rewrite the historians, or disbelieve the papyrus evidence, how will we ever find examples of positive . . . interaction between Egyptian and [Mormon]? It will not matter whether we use [Mormon] or [Egyptian] evidence, or any evidence at all; we shall see only our long-ingrained stereotypes."⁵³

52. Robert K. Ritner, "Implicit Models of Cross-Cultural Interaction: A Question of Noses, Soap, and Prejudice," in *Life in a Multi-Cultural Society: Egypt from Cambyses to Constantine and Beyond*, ed. Janet H. Johnson (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1992), 290.

53. Ritner, "Implicit Models of Cross-Cultural Interaction," 290.

BOOK NOTES

W. C. Campbell-Jack and Gavin McGrath, eds. *New Dictionary of Christian Apologetics*. Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2006. xx + 779 pp., with index of names, subjects, and articles. \$45.00.

New Dictionary is a truly remarkable book. Assembled herein are the contributions of a host of distinguished British (and also American) scholars. The first part of this volume consists of six essays dealing with key issues in Christian apologetics, including the history of attempts to defend the Christian faith. The second part of this volume consists of very useful entries on a number of issues, topics, and important contributors to Christian apologetics. Nothing in this volume manifests the flaws found in the essentially miserable efforts of those on the fringes of the American version of conservative Protestantism to engage in apologetics or deal with the many interesting and important issues surrounding apologetic endeavors. This volume is definitely not something cascading from the countercult movement.

Examples of competently done essays in the *New Dictionary* include the entry by D. W. Bebbington on “History” (pp. 320–22), a useful treatment of the objectivity question and of postmodernism. In the same vein, the essay on “Modernism/Modernity” (pp. 437–40) by R. D. Geivett is a fine example of the kind of scholarship found in this volume. But these are merely samples of the wide range of expertly crafted, informative, and accurate treatments of topics and individuals

found in the *New Dictionary*, which can be very highly recommended to Latter-day Saints who wish to rise above the confusion found in the polemical literature currently flourishing on the margins of the American evangelical world. The Saints can learn much by consulting this volume, which can be recommended without restraint or qualification.

Allen J. Fletcher. *A Scriptural Discussion of Light*. Springville, UT: Cedar Fort, 2007. 263 pp., \$14.99.

In this book, Allen J. Fletcher, a Church Educational System employee for thirty-seven years, shares his understanding of the concept of light and how it might apply in the life of the reader. The author portrays an extended discussion between two couples as they investigate the principles involved in understanding light, and this portrayal allows Fletcher to raise questions that each of us might bring up if we were participating in a similar dialogue. Fletcher covers, in a very understandable and persuasive manner, what the concept of light teaches us of the nature of God the Father and Jesus Christ. He then relates those lessons to mankind and speaks of what they teach regarding the nature of man and how each of us can apply them. The author's liberal use of scriptural references and prophetic utterances gives readers the opportunity to make their own determinations regarding the validity of his conclusions. His discussion of the atonement and how an understanding of light helps us understand that magnificent event is particularly noteworthy.

Mark Lilla. *The Stillborn God: Religion, Politics, and the Modern West*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007. x + 334 pp., with bibliography and index. \$26.00.

Mark Lilla reminds us that religion is a perennial part of our lives. In spite of our success in secularizing society, we are still confronted with questions that are beyond our abilities and call for more assurance than our philosophical traditions allow. Political theology once dominated political life because its comprehensive answers provided a rational way of viewing the world. It is still dominant in many non-

Western parts of the world. Political theology is the attempt to legitimate and control political authority by appealing to divine revelation. It can be found in philosophers as diverse as Plato, Augustine, al-Farabi, Moses Maimonides, and Thomas Hobbes. Lilla recounts the transformation in thinking that broke with political theology and ushered in modern political philosophy. Thomas Hobbes, writing in response to the religious upheavals of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, argued that the basis of the state and religion was now to be found in human nature, specifically in the passions. To understand that nature is to know how to control it. Hobbes initiated the great separation; he argued that peace and stability within society are possible only if the foundations of social and political life are not based on divine accounts of authority. Legitimation of political authority would henceforth be a human task, a matter of reason and science. Hobbes also thereby set in motion the liberal tradition in politics and theology.

Lilla then traces the European response to this tradition beginning with Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Immanuel Kant. These two thinkers saw human beings as marked by an internal struggle between good and evil. What set their work apart from other political philosophers was their attempt to set this inner struggle in the public arena. In order to allow the good within human nature to win out, it was necessary to cultivate a universal morality. But this required a community of faith. Christianity (or a civic religion) was considered the basis on which to cultivate this morality. This liberal temper eventually brought about a new interpretation of religion. Liberal theology reduced religion, both Christian and Jewish, to being the vehicle for the promulgation of liberal morality. World War I marked the end of the confidence in liberal theology and its morality. After that war, critics such as Karl Barth and Franz Rosenzweig emerged in this period challenging the claims of liberal theology. They argued that in draining religion of its particular claims to truth, liberal theology actually weakened the efficacy of the idea of a universal morality. The irony of this story is that the truth of their critique of liberal theology was illustrated in the way that the followers of Barth and Rosenzweig opted for Nazism and Stalinism.

Lilla's book ought to be of interest to Latter-day Saints if only for his account of the failures of modernity to adequately account for the claims of revelation and society in terms of political philosophy. Religion retains its significance for us because, among other reasons, it is a reminder of the limits of human understanding. But it also tells us that our sense of justice appeals to more than the inner life of the mind. Revelation proves to be the indispensable starting point for charting the boundaries of our moral life. Human life proves to be a continual process of returning to religion for direction in our moral and intellectual struggle to understand the world we live in.

Clay McConkie. *A Man Named Peleg: An Exploration into the Days of Peleg*. Springville, UT: Cedar Fort, 2007. 137 pp., with index. \$13.99.

This book sets out to provide an explanation for three “great floods” that the author discerns in scripture: (a) a flooded earth on the first day of creation, (b) the Noachian deluge, and (c) an extensive but nonglobal flood in the days of Peleg that resulted in the earth’s “division.” McConkie relies on a literal reading of Doctrine and Covenants 133:23–24 as the “key” to his interpretation. His theory is outlined in short, easy-to-read chapters that contain some repetition. The book claims that its theory will “show . . . a definite advantage over . . . other[s] . . . especially in regards to chronology and certain principles of modern-day science” (p. 12). Elsewhere, the author acknowledges that it “is questionable” whether “geologists or earth scientists would ever agree” (p. 31) with his theory but does nothing to engage such concerns. The book mentions alternative theories and explanations on a variety of points, but these alternatives are not engaged, discussed, or rebutted. The author merely mentions them and gives his own theory without explaining why the alternatives are less desirable. McConkie admits to knowing “very little about . . . the floods themselves” (p. xvii), and he shows little or no familiarity with the data upon which other points of view—both scientific and scriptural—are based.

The author does not include references to previous Latter-day Saint discussions of this topic. Significantly, his discussion of the Tower of

Babel would have been richer had he addressed Hugh Nibley's conception of the tower as a corrupted temple rather than as simply a high spot to avoid floods (see Hugh Nibley, *The Prophetic Book of Mormon* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1989], 108). Nibley likewise, in *Teachings of the Book of Mormon* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1993, 1:423), points out that the Jaredite tower is not necessarily the Tower of Babel (contrary to what McConkie says on p. 106).

The style of argument is light and wide ranging, including appeals to scriptural exegesis, supposition, arguments about what "seems logical" to the author, the Septuagint's chronological variations, and Josephus. Unfortunately, many points that are asserted but not argued must be granted to sustain the author's point; in these instances, the book's brevity and its breezy style work to its disadvantage.

Readers favoring an extremely literal reading of scripture will be interested in the novel addition of a second, post-Noachian flood from "a strategic water system" "somewhere in the north" that acts like "a huge hydraulic network" (p. 39). Those who desire textual criticism, a discussion of the impact of ancient worldviews on scripture, biogeography, or any interaction with scientific concepts will be disappointed.

Larry A. Nichols, George A. Mather, and Alvin J. Schmidt, with Kurt Van Gorden, consulting editor. *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Cults, Sects, and World Religions*. Revised and updated ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006. 544 pp., with glossary, three appendixes, bibliography, and index. \$35.99.

Encyclopedic Dictionary is divided into two large sections entitled "World Religions" and "Dictionary Entries." There are also three appendixes and a bibliography. The entire package is typical of the literature produced by the countercult movement. Instead of being a source of accurate information, this book is essentially polemical sectarian propaganda; it is also grounded on slogans such as "cult" and much conceptual confusion about what might constitute a "world religion." There are ninety-nine entries under "World Religions," among them "Convince," "Hanuman Foundation," "Arica (Arica Foundation)," and "Freemasonry (Masonic Lodge)." But there are no

entries under the headings “Protestantism,” “Eastern Orthodoxy,” and “Roman Catholic Church.” Instead there are articles on “Christianity,” “Hinduism,” “Judaism,” “Islam,” “Mormonism; The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; CJCLDS,” and “Community of Christ; Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.”

One of the primary targets of the *Encyclopedic Dictionary* is the faith of Latter-day Saints. Evidence of this focus can be found in the bibliography, where there are ninety-three items listed under “Mormonism.” The only category with more items listed is “General Books,” with ninety-nine items, including books by critics of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints such as Walter Martin, Dave Hunt, and Bob Larson. All other “world religions” get less bibliographic attention than the Church of Jesus Christ. Even though Larry Nichols boasts that “Kurt van [sic] Gorden . . . read each of the articles and dictionary terms carefully and edited the entire manuscript” (p. 13), *Encyclopedic Dictionary* is larded with mistakes and anomalies. In the bibliography on “Mormonism,” the names of authors are often garbled. Jan Shipps becomes “Schipps” (p. 503), James E. Talmage becomes “Talmadge” (p. 503), and Richard Abanes becomes “Albanes” (p. 501). These and numerous other related mistakes, both small and large, mar *Encyclopedic Dictionary*. Though the authors of this volume cite the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* (p. 502), they seem not to have consulted it. If they had done so, they could easily have avoided much confusion and a host of errors. A striking but rather typical example of an erroneous assertion can be found in “Appendix 2: Orthodox Christology and Heresy” (pp. 469–71), where the “capsule summary” of the heresy wrongly attributed to “Mormonism” is found in the bald assertion that Latter-day Saints actually believe that “Jesus’ deity is no more unique than all of humankind” (p. 470).

Some of the most bizarre portions of *Encyclopedic Dictionary* are found in the section entitled “Dictionary Entries” (pp. 355–465). These might be what one could expect to find in notes taken by one struggling to sort out the vocabulary of others or in a replication of the slogans used against the faith of others. The word *cult* is one of these words (p. 381). Striving for a definition of *cult* that is presumably

not “relativistic and subjective” or “transitory,” the authors of *Encyclopedic Dictionary* cultivate an ad hoc definition that simply ignores the term’s origin and curious history. They provide, instead, “a model that is theological and doctrinal in nature.” This yields a label with which they can blast away at the beliefs of those they dislike or do not understand. Sixty-nine of the definitions provided turn out to be tendentious attacks on the faith of Latter-day Saints. Many of these are also garbled.

Encyclopedic Dictionary is described on the back cover as an “extensively revised edition,” with “new topics, updated information, and a brand-new format,” of the *Dictionary of Cults, Sects, Religions, and the Occult*, published by Zondervan in 1993. The authors of *Encyclopedic Dictionary* thank the following: “Keith MacGregor and MacGregor Ministries, Kurt van [sic] Gorden, Jill [Martin] Rische [the stridently anti-Mormon daughter of the notorious “Dr.” Walter Martin], Paul Carden, Arthur Vanick, and Dale Broadhurst for their reviews and remarks on Mormonism” (p. 9). In addition, the Reverend George A. Mather, one of the authors of *Encyclopedic Dictionary*, had earlier provided a flawed foreword to Wayne L. Cowdrey, Howard A. Davis, and Arthur Vanick’s *Who Really Wrote the Book of Mormon? The Spalding Enigma* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2005) in an effort to revive the moribund Spalding theory of the Book of Mormon. Reverend Mather, much like Van Gorden, Cowdrey, Davis, and Vanick, got his start under the tutelage of “Dr.” Walter Martin.

Christopher Partridge, ed. *Dictionary of Contemporary Religion in the Western World: Exploring Living Faiths in Postmodern Contexts*. Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 2002. x + 390 pp., with indexes of names, subjects, and articles. \$25.00.

This volume is essentially a collection of essays on various religious topics by British scholars. The first part contains a host of essays on topics such as “Mysticism,” “Religion (Definitions),” “Religion and Philosophy,” “Religion and Psychology,” “The Study of Religion,” and twenty-nine other related general topics. These essays are generally both insightful and competently done.

The second part of *Dictionary of Contemporary Religion* consists of numerous entries on specific “contemporary religions.” For example, G. W. Trompf, who teaches history at the University of Sydney, provides a reasonably accurate account of Aboriginal and Maori religiosity in “Aboriginal Religion in Australia and New Zealand” (pp. 155–58). There is also, as might be expected, an article on the “Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, the (Mormons),” by A. H. Anderson (pp. 210–13), who is the director of a research unit in the Department of Theology at Birmingham University. This essay, even with the mistake in the name of the Church of Jesus Christ in its title, is moderately accurate, though a bit tendentious. Christopher Partridge would have done better to have invited Douglas Davies, who has a Mormon studies program at Durham University, to write an essay on the faith of Latter-day Saints.

This volume should be of interest to Latter-day Saints genuinely interested in religion in all its varieties and manifestations, as seen from an academic perspective.

Ben Witherington III. *The Problem with Evangelical Theology: Testing the Exegetical Foundations of Calvinism, Dispensationalism and Wesleyanism*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2005. xi + 294 pp., with bibliography and index. \$29.95.

In this book Ben Witherington, a Methodist New Testament scholar, laments that all of the theology that makes the various evangelical denominations distinctive is in fact unbiblical and based on egregious misreadings of biblical texts. According to Witherington, “Evangelicalism is a many-splintered thing with more denominational expressions than one can count, and like much of the rest of the church is to a large extent biblically illiterate or semiliterate” (p. ix). “We need to stop creating churches that essentially serve ourselves and nurture our own way and style of living” (p. 248). “The world is laughing at us [Evangelicals] because our witness is so divided and we speak with forked tongues” (p. 247). “It is time to recognize that denominations are a result of Protestant differing and bickering. They are children of the Protestant Reformation. They are also the result of profoundly weak ecclesiology

on our part, and they reflect and are based upon the biblically weakest aspects of our theology—namely our distinctives” (p. 247).

First Witherington goes after the Reformed theology commonly expressed as “TULIP,” which stands for Total depravity, Unconditional election, Limited atonement, Irresistible grace, and the Perseverance of the saints. “If one believes that God has predetermined from before the foundation of the world people to be saved, then of course election is unconditional, grace is irresistible, and perseverance is inevitable. These three linked ideas do not necessarily require the notion of total depravity or limited atonement” (p. 5). Witherington traces this theology back historically to misreading of biblical texts by Calvin, Luther, and Augustine: “For example, the idea of ‘once saved always saved,’ or the idea that it is impossible for a ‘saved person,’ a true Christian, to commit apostasy, is simply not an idea to be found in the N[ew] T[estament]. More to the point, much in the NT flatly contradicts such an idea” (p. 4). “The especially crucial notions of the influence of Adam on all humanity in terms of total depravity, the bondage of sin, the necessary predetermining of some of the lost for rescue, the imputation of righteousness come from Luther’s reading (and sometimes misreading) of Augustine and his indebtedness to Erasmus” (p. 9). “It must be stressed that Augustine’s interpretation of Romans, and especially Romans 7, seems to be in various regards an overreaction to Pelagius who argued that sin comes from human beings’ free imitation of Adam, and can be overcome by imitating Christ. Pelagius also suggested that justification, at least final justification, is through determined moral action” (p. 7). This forces Witherington to ask: “Should our teachers be Augustine and Luther?” (p. 6). “The tulip begins to wilt when one reads Romans in light of the Pastorals rather than through the much later lens of Augustine, Luther, and Calvin” (p. 16). Unable to find any of the elements of TULIP supported by the Bible, Witherington concludes that “it is time to stop reading Romans 7:14–25 through the lens of Augustine and Luther” (p. 31).

Next Witherington goes after dispensationalism, which for Evangelicals means beliefs about the rapture, an unbiblical doctrine that

says that Christ's return will come in two stages (first to receive the faithful before seven years of tribulation on earth and then, after that period, to usher in the Millennium). Witherington traces the doctrine historically: "In 1830 in Glasgow, Scotland, a young girl named Margaret MacDonald attended a healing service. She was said to have received a vision on the occasion of a two-stage return of Christ. . . . The matter might have fallen into obscurity except that a British Evangelical preacher named John Nelson Darby heard the story and spread it far and wide. . . . Darby made numerous evangelistic trips to America between 1859 and 1877 and won many American converts to the rapture theology" (p. 94). "Dwight L. Moody became enamored with this theology and began promulgating it on both sides of the Atlantic, furthered by the founding of the Moody Bible Institute, and eventually by Moody Press and by a radio network. But by far the single most enduring tool for spreading this theology was a reference Bible, put together by one Cyrus I. Scofield and first published in 1909. . . . What few know about him [Scofield] today is that he was an embezzler and forger who abandoned his wife and children and did time in jail even after his conversion to Christianity. Never mind all this; his Bible had a life of its own, due in large part to the promotion of the Moody Bible Institute and a very wealthy Chicago businessman named William E. Blackstone, who himself had already cashed in on the rapture theology" (p. 95).

Continuing this history, Witherington notes that since Lewis Chafer founded Dallas Theological Seminary in 1924 to promote dispensational theology, the school "has produced the likes of John Walvoord . . . , Charles Ryrie, Hal Lindsey, and many names familiar to Evangelicals who have been readers of popular Evangelical theology. These leaders and their writings have impacted Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, Timothy and Beverley LaHaye, and a host of Dispensational televangelists who will remain nameless" (p. 96). ("In Evangelical theology today, it is hard to tell who the players are without a program," p. 3.) Witherington also tries to link Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon with dispensationalist theology (see p. 255 n. 1), although besides a hint-and-run footnote he does not pursue this dead

end. Despite how influential dispensationalism has been, “there is no theology of the rapture to be found in the New Testament anywhere, never mind the term itself. But if this is so, what then are the implications? Well, if there is no rapture, much of the Dispensational system falls down like a house of cards” (p. 130).

Witherington also attacks his Wesleyanism. The root of these problems is found in the evangelical approach to the Bible, which (like any other scriptures for that matter) is not a handbook on theology. “What we do not have is Jesus’ *Institutes*, or Paul’s *Institutes*, or John’s *Institutes*. Their material is not arranged according to modern ways of framing theological discussions, nor do they address all the topics we might find helpful or interesting” (p. 245). Far from accepting *sola scriptura* and pretending merely to let the text speak for itself, we need to “realize that we are active readers of these texts, that we bring our own training and education and biases with us when we read them, and frequently we are guilty of anachronism, of reading things into the text, especially when we start trying to systematize and order the theological content we find in these documents” (p. 245).

Witherington lays out rules that he feels are necessary for those dealing with the sacred text, among which are the following:

You need to be able to read the text in its original language, since every translation is already an interpretation. (p. 246)

You need to have studied the text in its original contexts (literary, historical, archaeological, theological, rhetorical). (p. 246)

If you are an Evangelical, then it is imperative that you interact with non-Evangelical treatments of the text, and also listen to what was said about the text by church fathers, who studied it in the original Greek before the time of Augustine and the Latinizing of the church. (p. 246)

The text needs to not be watered down or dumbed down. Rather, one needs to ratchet up one’s attention level and

degree of devotion to the text, not to mention one's attention to detail. (p. 246)

But the biggest problem may be simply in the desire to do theology itself:

We need to get beyond both ancient and modern ways of handling the text that strip away the story, leaving a mass of quivering ideas and concepts that we then are free to rearrange in any order that pleases us. That may be an intellectually satisfying exercise for some, but in fact it turns out to be a way of neutralizing the story, and not allowing it to have its effect on us. It is in fact a power trip, an attempt to take control over these stories before they fully take hold of us. If that is what thinking theologically and doing theology amounts to, we need a moratorium on thinking and doing theology. (p. 239)

Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi. *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, with a preface and postscript by the author and a foreword by Harold Bloom. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005. xix + 154 pp., with index. \$14.95.

Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory is the most recent version of a remarkable volume that was first published in 1982. This book is recognized as a classic of modern Jewish scholarship. Yerushalmi's theme is the communal, shared memory that for ages obsessed Jews and founded their identity. He calls attention to the challenges posed by the millennial tension between the age-old Jewish commandment—and tradition—of remembrance and the tragic tale of the disobedience of the covenant people and by the new Jewish passion for history. Yerushalmi builds on the widely recognized imperative given to Israel in her sacred texts to remember God's mighty acts and on a recognition that God is always faithful in remembering his covenant people, even when they have turned against him by not remembering (and hence not keeping) his commandments. Remembering (or forgetting) the covenant with God grounds the controlling metanarrative found in Jewish sacred texts. This includes the story of the creation,

at first unspoiled, and then the fall, which is followed by God calling his people and making a covenant with them that includes promised blessings and also the demand that they always remember him and keep his commandments or suffer cursings—the dire consequences for disobedience (or forgetting).

The imperative to remember makes Israel, more than any other people, intensely conscious of the past, since the sacred texts are primarily historical texts filled with accounts of the sins of rebellious Israel. These stories are blunt and also highly selective. They do not conform to modern fashions in historiography. Yerushalmi provides a brilliant analysis of the selectivity and meaning of memory in Jewish religious tradition. Moving directly from the imperative to remember, which grounds the faith of Israel, he argues that recent secularization has radically transformed memory and identity for Jews by moving away from the traditional account of the covenant people of God. With the rise of modern Jewish historiography in the nineteenth century, “for the first time it is not history that must prove its utility to Judaism, but Judaism that must prove its validity to history, by revealing and justifying itself historically” (p. 84).

Put another way, essentially secular notions of the past have replaced the earlier memories of covenants made with God, the often halting efforts of the covenant people to keep the commandments, and the profoundly tragic consequences of disobedience to divine mandates.

Yerushalmi describes the biblical roots for recording and remembering the covenant with God, as well as the forgetfulness of his people and God’s steadfast covenant love. At first remembering was directly connected with participation in God’s mighty acts and also in recording them. But during the Second Temple period, direct participation in this story ended, and subsequently Jewish memory was preserved through ritual and religious practices not linked to ordinary historical events. From the end of the Second Temple period onward and especially during the Middle Ages, Jewish identity no longer depended on historical events—that is, Jewish identity no longer involved, as it once had, recording the tragic history of the covenant people. The writing

of history was even dismissed as a low form of intellectual endeavor. Remembrance was, after all, subsequently achieved through holidays that sustain Jewish memory and hence identity.

Yerushalmi shows that, with the Enlightenment, Jews again began to take an interest in their own postbiblical past. This new interest in the wide range of the Jewish past is driven by profoundly secular assumptions. And it appears to be a large element in the collapse of Jewish identity as a distinct community of faith. Yerushalmi does not examine in detail the current crop of conflicting narratives of the Jewish past. Instead he provides the setting in which this can and has been done.

In a brilliant introduction, Harold Bloom sketches some of the consequences of the entry into Jewish historiography of an essentially Epicurean critique of religion that Yerushalmi argues has had a devastating impact on Jewish memory and identity (pp. xii–xi). Among other things, Bloom argues that even a pleasure-seeking Epicurean atheism ignores the past, recalling it only if and when it is pleasurable. “Nothing could be more un-Jewish, and one sees again why the great rabbis used ‘Epicurean’ as a term of the greatest abuse. An Epicurean attitude toward memory is antithetical to Judaism” (p. xiv).

Yerushalmi argues that Jews today construct different kinds of narratives of Jewish history as a whole. The result is that they no longer share a common memory or identity. A new Jewish history now challenges and replaces the traditional memory. The problem is not amnesia. Instead it is the variety and the diversity of assumptions upon which contemporary Jewish history is grounded.

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