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## BOOK NOTES

Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman, gen. eds., and Dean C. Jessee, Mark Ashurst-McGee, and Richard L. Jensen, vol. eds. *The Joseph Smith Papers: Journals, Volume I: 1832–1839*. Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2008. xvi + 506 (a printable, searchable index for this volume is available at [josephsmithpapers.org](http://josephsmithpapers.org)). \$49.95.

This remarkable first fruit of the effort to publish all of the papers of Joseph Smith contains a graceful introduction by Richard Bushman and Dean Jessee entitled “Joseph Smith and His Papers” (pp. xv–xlvi). Other highly useful items, including a time line, map, preliminary commentary, and an explanation of editorial method (pp. xliii–lxvi), precede the five journals (pp. 3–354) that form the core of this volume. The elaborate, carefully prepared reference materials feature a chronology for the years 1832–1839 (pp. 357–63), a geographical directory (pp. 364–80), maps (pp. 381–95), a pedigree chart for Joseph Smith (p. 396), an exhaustive biographical directory (pp. 397–454), ecclesiastical organizational charts (pp. 455–60), a glossary (pp. 461–74), an essay on sources (pp. 475–76), a list of works cited (pp. 477–96), and an aid in locating corresponding sections in various editions of the Doctrine and Covenants (pp. 497–506).

The result of a massive expenditure of time and talent, this volume is a major landmark in Latter-day Saint scholarship. But it is also more—a harbinger of important things to come and a clear indication that the Saints deserve full access to all of Joseph Smith’s papers. In addition, the entire Joseph Smith Papers project, of which this volume is the initial part, is a witness that the Church of Jesus Christ is fully committed to both preserving and presenting the truth about the faith of the Saints. It is also a sign of confidence that this faith is

firmly rooted in real events in the past. This and subsequent volumes will demonstrate that from the beginning Joseph Smith and the Saints were dedicated to recording and preserving the history of the restoration. Church members should rejoice in knowing that the entire record will eventually be accessible in a carefully prepared, full, and accurate form.

The publication of this volume and those to follow is part of an effort to preserve and protect the crucial tangible record of the entire restoration of the kingdom of God on earth. The hope is that publishing the Joseph Smith Papers will assist church members in remembering some of the mighty acts of God on their behalf and thereby deepen their desire to serve and obey God fully and faithfully. Augmented by an elaborate scholarly apparatus, this initial volume and all to follow will also assist in the defense of the faith. The claim of critics that the history of Joseph Smith and the Saints has been sanitized will be shown to be a partisan myth. This high-quality, comprehensive publication project is the beginning of an appropriate memorial to the life of the first seer and prophet of the restored church of Jesus Christ.

**N. T. Wright. *Justification: God's Plan and Paul's Vision*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009. 279 pp., with bibliography, name index, subject index, scripture index. \$25.00.**

Whatever the differences between Luther and Calvin, or those assembled loosely under the umbrella of contemporary evangelicalism—the primary current manifestation of conservative Protestantism—the very root and core of all their teachings is the idea of justification by faith alone. The reason, according to Luther and Calvin, and also Augustine, their mentor on this matter, is that it is only by being justified that the saved one is assured of salvation once and for all and come what may. This presumably happens at the moment one accepts Jesus as Lord and Savior—that is, when one answers an altar call or offers a sinner's prayer. Then and only then is one saved. No deeds are necessary since all humans are always perverse and depraved, totally alienated from God, and hence incapable of doing anything that has merit in the eyes of God. Justification is

thus seen as a wholly unmerited, gratuitous gift in which the righteousness of God is imputed to sinful human beings at the moment they confess Jesus. Though some faint signs of sanctification should seem to follow being saved, any stress on deeds is pictured as ineffectual “works righteousness.” For N. T. Wright, this is, to be blunt, pure bunk.

In several books and essays, Wright challenges the received opinion among evangelicals and fundamentalists concerning justification. A passionate and at times acrimonious controversy has irrupted as evangelical theologians and churchmen have challenged Wright’s arguments. Often this has been done in unseemly and irresponsible ways. Latter-day Saints will be reminded of sectarian anti-Mormon diatribes over similar and related issues. Hence the following remark by Wright about some of his critics:

Go to the blogsites, if you dare. It really is high time we developed a Christian ethic of blogging. Bad temper is bad temper even in the apparent privacy of your own hard drive, and harsh and unjust words, when released into the wild, rampage around and do real damage. And as for the practice of saying mean and untrue things while hiding behind a pseudonym—well, if I get a letter like that it goes straight in the bin. But cyberspace equivalents of road rage don’t happen by accident. (pp. 26–27)

Latter-day Saints who have glanced at what sectarian critics of the Church of Jesus Christ have to say on the Internet, often hiding behind handles, will recognize exactly what Wright is complaining about. The common complaint of his critics, much like ours, is the insistence on works righteousness. Though this is clearly not true of Wright, it is true that his critics and those of the Latter-day Saints see correctly that this new perspective on Paul is a radical challenge to what is probably the key element in their “orthodox” version of Christian faith.

Unlike Wright’s earlier books on Paul, *Justification* responds to the critics, and especially to John Piper, who has written an entire book entitled *The Future of Justification: A Response to N. T. Wright*. Wright

explains that he has written *Justification* because he believes that Piper, unlike many critics, “has been scrupulously fair, courteous and generous in all our exchanges” (p. 27). Wright also hopes that Piper and others might actually come to a better-grounded understanding of Paul—to an understanding freed from St. Augustine’s dead hand.

Wright indicates that the controversy generated by his radical reassessment of Paul “can be located interestingly in a sociocultural, and even political, milieu where an entire way of life, a whole way of understanding the Christian faith and trying to live it out, a whole way of being human, is suddenly perceived to be at risk” (p. 26). This fear of a shaking of the foundations of conservative Protestant orthodoxy has generated, from Wright’s perspective, “the sudden volcanic eruption of angry, baffled concern” expressed by evangelicals anxious to defend the core of their faith (p. 26).

Unlike his earlier examinations of Paul on justification, in which he mentioned Luther only as a source for confusion about what Paul was teaching, Wright identifies in this new volume both Calvin and Luther, whatever their differences, as having made the same or similar fundamental mistakes (pp. 22–23, 36, 50–51, 72–74, 252). He now also links confusion introduced by St. Augustine with what he considers the crucial mistakes made by both Calvin and Luther (pp. 102, 193).

Wright, unlike the magisterial Reformers, stresses covenants and covenant faithfulness, which he sees as a key element in Paul’s teachings. This emphasis leads directly to his stressing the importance of God’s plan for understanding both Paul and our own relationship with God. According to Wright, “absolutely central for Paul . . . is the apostle’s understanding of the story of Israel, and of the whole world, as a single continuous narrative which, having reached its climax in Jesus the Messiah, was now developing in the fresh ways which God the Creator, the Lord of history, had always intended” (p. 34). He adds that “highlighting Paul’s reading of the ‘story of Israel’ isn’t a matter simply of ‘narrative theology’ in the reductive sense that, while some people like to do theology in abstract propositions, others prefer, as a matter of cultural taste, to think in story mode” (p. 34). The reader must understand exactly why this is the case.

Wright insists that “Paul’s references to Adam and Abraham, to Moses and the prophets, to Deuteronomy and Isaiah and even the Psalms, mean what they mean because he has in his head and heart, as a great many second-temple Jews did, a grand story of creation and covenant, of God and his world and his people, *which had been moving forward in a single narrative and which was continuing to do so*” (p. 34, emphasis in original). Wright then argues that

Paul’s view of the cataclysmic irruption of God into the history of Israel and the world in and through the death and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah was that this heart-stopping, show-stopping, chart-topping moment was, despite initial appearances, and certainly despite Paul’s own earlier expectations and initial understanding, the very thing for which the entire history of Israel from Abraham onward, the entire history of Israel under Torah from Moses onward and indeed the entire history of humanity from Adam onward, had been waiting. (p. 35)

Wright emphasizes that “it is central to Paul, but almost entirely ignored in perspectives old, new and otherwise, that *God had a single plan all along through which he intended to rescue the world and the human race, and that this single plan was centered upon the call of Israel, a call which Paul saw coming to fruition in Israel’s representative, the Messiah*” (p. 35, emphasis in original).

One enters this new age and becomes part of the new Israel not with the dead works of the law, which had been fulfilled by Jesus the Messiah, and not by being justified, but through entering the community of Saints by making a covenant through baptism and then by seeking and allowing the work of the Holy Spirit to purify and cleanse, thereby eventually burning out the old stuff and sanctifying the disciple. All of this, of course, is a gift from a gracious and forgiving God. Wright demonstrates that the necessary sanctification—that is, purification or cleansing from sin—must entail constant repentance, as well as genuine effort at strict obedience to God’s commandments. In addition, he insists that justification takes place fully only at the final

judgment. In Latter-day Saint terms, Wright argues that mercy cannot rob justice, which would be the case if righteousness were merely imputed to totally depraved humans.

There is much more in *Justification* than what has been briefly and inadequately set out above. Wright has much more to say about righteousness and the mercy of a loving God, all of which should be of special interest to Latter-day Saints since in many ways it reaches what is found in their own scriptures, and especially in 3 Nephi, where the Lord himself sets forth his doctrine and his gospel. The Saints can therefore learn much about the flaws in sectarian preaching from N. T. Wright. They can also find in *Justification* an easy-to-use vindication of what is taught in the Book of Mormon.

**N. T. Wright. *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church*. New York: HarperOne, 2008. xiv + 332 pp., with index and biblical passages. \$24.99.**

*Surprised by Hope* is a wonderful book, full of wisdom offered in a graceful and gentle way. An eminent biblical scholar, author N. T. Wright wears his learning lightly, choosing not to burden his readers with obfuscating technical jargon. Instead, his writing is crystal clear, full of fresh metaphors that help to clarify complex issues and controversial matters and also to render his opinions compelling. In this volume he takes up three large topics (identified in the book's subtitle) and their corollaries.

Wright insists that we do not, at death, suddenly waft to heaven. Instead, we stay right here. This earth is our home, and our business is to turn it into a "heaven" here and now by seeking and accepting merciful forgiveness from sin and then striving to assist others in overcoming the broken elements of this world. For Wright it is a false notion that "after death we pass into eternity in which all moments are present" (p. 168), a corollary of elements of classical theism in which God is pictured as timeless and incorporeal.

Latter-day Saints should be pleased to discover Wright using language familiar to them. For example, Wright believes that all genuine Christians deserve the title *Saints*, and not merely some iconic

individuals of presumably special merit (p. 169). “If we are true to our foundation charter,” Wright observes, “we must say that all Christians, living and departed, are to be thought of as saints and that all Christians who have died are to be thought of, and treated, as saints” (p. 170). These are a few examples of the sort of thing set out in this book.

On the crucial question of the resurrection (a topic for which he has become widely acclaimed), Wright does not shy from truth-telling, though he is always irenic. He asserts correctly that “precisely because the resurrection has happened as an event *within our own world*, its implications and effects are to be felt within our own world, here and now” (p. 191, emphasis in original). He then complains that “various opinion polls” seem to indicate that “a lot of clergy and even some bishops” express the opinion that “believing in the bodily resurrection of Jesus is a take-it-or-leave it option” (p. 191). Wright objects, arguing that the resurrection of Jesus “marks a watershed.” The reason is that “if you accept the bodily resurrection of Jesus all the streams flow in one direction, and if you don’t they all flow in the other direction” (p. 191). This constitutes what can be the Great Divide between those who are genuinely faithful and those for whom the Christian tradition merely offers a familiar cultural setting. On one side of this divide there is a genuine hope for the future, as well as hope here and now. On the other side all that is available is at best a nostalgia for a lost faith, and perhaps also an antiquarian curiosity, but not what is really entailed by the Christian story in all its complexity and wonder.

**N. T. Wright. *Simply Christian: Why Christianity Makes Sense*. New York: HarperOne, 2006. xii + 240, no index. \$23.95.**

N. T. Wright is an author whose works are well worth pondering. Latter-day Saints who are familiar with and fond of the elegant prose and pithy formulations of C. S. Lewis will be delighted with *Simply Christian*. Of Wright’s many books, this should be the first one with which to become familiar. Wright is a writer with the insight and literary skills of Lewis. Yet, unlike Lewis, Wright knows the his-

tory and variety of Christian beliefs and is in command of current scholarship on the New Testament. In this book he avoids partisan controversies and petty quarrels. Although Latter-day Saints may part company with Wright on some issues, none of these surface in *Simply Christian*, which is a fine introduction to the larger corpus of Wright's work.

Wright, currently the Anglican bishop of Durham, is a highly acclaimed New Testament scholar, having taught at Cambridge and elsewhere prior to his current appointment. His cogent defense of the resurrection of Jesus, which he strives to demonstrate, is the central element of a story or complex of stories that reveal to the faithful the plan of God for human beings. While this vast and deep scholarship has won for him acclaim among conservative Protestants and made him very popular with evangelicals, his more recent flat rejection of justification by faith alone and certain other understandings of crucial elements of the apostle Paul's letters has generated controversy and turned some evangelicals against him.

*Simply Christian* is accessible to those annoyed by the partisan, sectarian wrangling endemic to conservative Protestantism. Those desiring clear, simple, and also elegant explanations of the foundational elements of Christian faith by a renowned New Testament scholar will be pleased with and enlightened by this book.

Not only does Wright—in this volume and elsewhere—demonstrate that Christian faith necessarily rests on historical events, he also points out that those who are at all inclined to put their trust in Jesus and who strive to enter his kingdom are invited to find their own place in the history of redemption from individual sins through the death and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah. Unlike so many who restrict the mighty acts of God to a “then and there” as set out in the Bible, Wright insists that our own stories must become part of the larger, continually unfolding story of God's designs and plans for us now and in the future as we, with him, strive to build the kingdom of God in the broken world in which we all find ourselves.

**John Piper. *The Future of Justification: A Response to N. T. Wright*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007. 239 pp., with six appendixes, list of Wright's works cited by Piper, scripture index, person index, subject index. \$17.99.**

Prominent Anglican churchman and biblical scholar N. T. Wright has pleased contemporary evangelical scholars with his defense of the historical foundations of Christian faith, including especially his careful effort to champion the crucial resurrection of Jesus. But he has also stunned and annoyed some conservative Protestants by challenging the dogma that justification, or what evangelicals think of as “being saved,” takes place when God imputes righteousness to depraved sinners at the moment they confess Jesus Christ. For many in the Reformation tradition, this instant of “regeneration” is at the core of the gospel of Christ, and believing in justification, thus understood, defines being a Christian for many evangelicals. In this view, one who does not believe in the formula “justification by faith alone” is not a genuine Christian. Rather, in popular versions of contemporary evangelical ideology one becomes a Christian by answering an altar call and thereby being “born again.” So it is not at all surprising that some evangelicals insist that Wright’s opinions on justification corrupt, disfigure, and even deny the gospel as they understand it. John Piper, who is deeply anxious to defend what he considers the very core of Reformation theology, engages Wright with passion and learning. Avoiding sarcasm and acrimony, Piper’s book is a model of civility in an arena not otherwise known for moderation and genuine respect.

What exacerbates discussions of views on the apostle Paul’s understanding of justification is that contemporary conservative Protestants of whatever faction follow a theological tradition set out by the magisterial Reformers and also much earlier by St. Augustine. Piper is appalled by Wright’s argument that “the entire history of the discussion of justification for the last fifteen hundred years—Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox—has been misguided” (p. 60). He opposes what he considers a faulty claim about “church history,” quoting Wright as saying that “the discussions of justification in much of the history of the church, *certainly since Augustine*, got off on the wrong

foot—at least in terms of understanding Paul—and they have stayed there ever since” (p. 61). Piper is thus engaged in attempting to defend a traditional way of reading Paul that began with Augustine and was taken up later by Luther and Calvin.

Piper defends “justification by faith alone” against Wright’s argument that one is saved not by believing in justification by faith alone but by believing that Jesus is the Messiah, whose death and resurrection fulfilled and vindicated God’s covenant with his people and established a new covenant whose sign is faith and not the dead works of the Torah—that is, circumcision and so forth. Piper complains that there is an ambiguity in this reasoning since one might just as well imagine that the death and resurrection of Jesus was for health or a better marriage (see pp. 85–86) and not for sin. This and other similar and related arguments are offered by Piper to counter what he understands to be Wright’s flawed understanding of what Augustine, Luther, and Calvin made out of the teachings of the apostle Paul.

For Piper, at stake in the debate with Wright is the key teaching of the Reformation. Piper provides a vigorous defense of the notion that one is justified at the moment of confessing Jesus. He does not mention sanctification, though he grants that at a final judgment all human beings will be judged by their works. He seems to believe that one is saved in one’s sins by faith alone. If so, then quite unlike Wright, Piper will not allow a robust role for the cleansing, purging, and purifying work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of those who enter into the new covenant with God.

**Eric Shuster. *Catholic Roots, Mormon Harvest*. Foreword by Mark L. McConkie. Springville, UT: CFI, 2009. xviii + 269 pp., with bibliography, no index. \$17.99.**

Eric Shuster tells a compelling, moving, and sometimes humorous story of the journey of faith that he and his wife underwent as they became Latter-day Saints. He insists that they were able to bring with them all the many good things they had learned and experienced in their previous faith community. This was possible in part because they were longing for something more—for a genuine community of

Saints. They sought for the work of the Holy Spirit in deeds and not merely in words, and they desired a oneness with God that embraced families sealed together in a lasting covenant with God. In a carefully crafted foreword, Mark McConkie explains that Marilyn and Eric Shuster were once “devoted and knowledgeable Catholics, not casual church-goers. Their Catholicism was woven joyfully into the fabric of their lives. They were reluctant to be introduced to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but this reluctance faded as they learned step-by-step that the Catholic threads in their spiritual lives did not have to be pulled out before the Mormon threads could be woven in” (p. ix).

The Schusters’ remarkable and moving encounter with Latter-day Saints, including missionaries, never involved pressure or anything approaching an attack on their faith. Instead, they were invited and encouraged and assisted in entering a loving community that deepened their spiritual lives and fulfilled their deepest longings. They faced struggles, of course, but their story of this journey is worth reading. Eric Shuster has provided a moving account of a wonderful faith journey.

Eventually, of course, they had to confront the apostasy that unfortunately flawed their former faith. They did this reluctantly. Why? They were and are deeply appreciative of the spiritual discipline they received as Roman Catholics. This they see as having nourished and prepared them for the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Hence they take “no delight” in acknowledging the apostasy. They are not at all anti-Catholic (p. 260). Nor do they gloat over such things as the devastating difficulties among Roman Catholic clergy recently brought to light.

Although their engaging spiritual odyssey is unique in many respects, their story is rather typical of those who, having spiritual roots in other faiths, eventually become Latter-day Saints. Facilitating such successful conversion experiences is the fact that the Saints’ endeavors to witness to the divinity of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ are not offered as attacks on what is good and true in other faith traditions, for the apostasy is not seen as having effected the loss of all

religious truth. In addition, the disciplined, moral lives of those of other faiths are admired, and the church's members and missionaries are not confrontational in their witnessing but instead are encouraged to witness in word and deed to the faith that is in them.

**Justo L. and Catherine Gunsalus González. *Heretics for Armchair Theologians*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008. viii + 166 pp., with list of further reading, index. \$16.95 (paperback).**

With his academically oriented wife, Justo González, noted author of widely read books on the history of Christianity, has written a delightful account of some of the more noteworthy “heresies” that mark the fashioning of what the Christian “church” with all its versions and divisions now believes—that is, those who subscribe to orthodox, creedal Christian theology. *Heretics* is part of Westminster John Knox Press's popular Armchair Series, which includes brief, highly accessible accounts of Augustine (2002), Aquinas (2002), Calvin (2002), Luther (2004), the Reformation (2005), Wesley (2005), Barth (2006), Jonathan Edwards (2008), and Bonhoeffer (forthcoming).

Each of these volumes is, unfortunately, marred by “illustrations”—that is, corny cartoons—by Ron Hill. Despite this inane feature, *Heretics* is easily accessible and generally sound and has many subtle lessons for Latter-day Saints. It is a fine book and can be highly recommended.

The story told in *Heretics* is not one of maniacal revolutionaries bent on destroying or distorting Christian faith and leading people astray, but of those who lost in the often fierce, ugly battles over what constitutes the Christian tradition. These “heretics,” we are told, were “sincere people trying to understand the Christian faith in their own context, asking important questions . . . and seeking to lead others to what they took to be a fuller understanding of the gospel” (p. 2). The “church” eventually excluded their opinions “from the mainstream of Christian tradition,” and yet they made “an important and lasting contribution to that tradition” (p. 2). The Gonzálezes explain further that a heretic is “one whose teachings the church at large considers erroneous and even dangerous to the faith,” though they grant

“it is difficult to determine who ‘the church at large’ is” (p. 2). They also admit that if they were to examine every idea labeled a heresy by Christians, they “would have to deal with the entire history of the Christian church—or rather, of all Christian churches and sects, for many of these have their favorite heretics, and many of those are the patron saints of other churches!” (p. 3).

*Heretics* is limited to some of the major controversies “up to the time of the Fourth Ecumenical Council, which gathered in Chalcedon in 451” (p. 3), though fragments of those old “heresies” still rumble around in the larger church. Stress is placed on the “vast diversity within early Christianity” (p. 9) and hence on the fact that what is now considered “orthodox Christianity—what is in the New Testament and in the creeds—is the expression of the faith of those who won” in battles over what should be taught and believed (p. 8).

The earliest followers of Jesus as the Christ had no normative texts for several centuries; they relied instead on the teachings both spoken and eventually written by the early disciples of Jesus. The New Testament seems to have been assembled because of, or out of, squabbles over what should constitute and guide faith (pp. 10–11). Questions such as how Jesus was related to what had gone before—namely, to the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants and hence Israel—was problematic. If one has wondered, for example, about the Judaizers, against whom the apostle Paul remonstrated, there is a useful account of the Ebionites (pp. 15–27) that provides some indication of one of the controversies whose roots we can see in the New Testament. The Ebionites, Christians who believed Jesus was not God but “only a human being endowed with special powers by God,” may have been striving to appease Jews, whose frequent charge was that Christians “were not monotheists but believed in two Gods: the God of Israel . . . and Jesus” (p. 23). This fact may help explain why Justin Martyr in the middle of the second century “made a sharp distinction between ‘God the Father’ and God’s Logos or Sophia, whom he even calls a ‘second god’” (p. 23). It may also help explain what is called “dynamic Monarchianism,” the belief that there is only one God, whose power might be granted to another such as Jesus (p. 25). Another brand of Monarchianism is modalism, or Sabellianism, which is the

idea that the one-God substance has three modes in which it presents itself to humans—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Much of what eventually came to be called the Trinity, and hence Trinitarianism, was fashioned to counter modalism. Latter-day Saints constantly are confronted by versions of modalism when they face anti-Mormons who insist that the Saints are polytheists because they believe that Jesus of Nazareth really is God and not merely a mode in which the God substance manifests itself.

These sorts of issues eventually culminated in the crafting of the label *trinity*—meaning “three”—to describe the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (see pp. 77–92). The Gonzálezes describe the mystery of the Trinity as “mumbo jumbo” (p. 78). “Most of us,” they opine, “mumble something about the doctrine of the Trinity. We know we are supposed to believe it, and that somehow it is an important element of Christian faith. But we really cannot make heads or tails out of it, and we would much rather just mention it and move along to something else” (p. 78). The Father is clearly seen by Jesus as distinct from himself, and Paul clearly distinguished God our Father from the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit (p. 79), as do the other New Testament authors. None of this seems to have caused a great stir among the faithful, who were accustomed to this distinction in their worship (pp. 79–80). The first effort to pound out a notion of the divine oneness drew upon the metaphor of a single actor in a Greek drama wearing different masks for various roles. Something like this view constitutes modalism (pp. 80–81). The response to this heresy was the “mumbo jumbo” of theological and creedal notions of the Trinity in which modalism was repudiated (p. 81)—for example, Tertullian’s adoption of the term *persons* in place of Justin’s plural use of the word *God* (p. 83). In addition, confused and confusing language borrowed from pagan philosophical discourse was employed to set out the oneness of the three “persons,” each possessing divinity or the Godhead attributes.

*Heretics* spells out the core of such disputes as those surrounding Gnosticism (pp. 29–44), Marcion (pp. 45–61), and Montanus (pp. 63–76). Tertullian (pp. 66, 69), who with others longed for an open canon of scripture (p. 65), objected to the closing of the canon

(pp. 65, 72) and sought sanctified, charismatic leaders and new revelations from God. Later, Augustine railed against various heresies, including those of the Donatists (pp. 95–110) and the Pelagians (pp. 111–28), but “this is not to say that he was always correct” (p. 97) or that his opinions have not been highly controversial, though they have been enormously influential for Protestants since Five-Point Calvinism (referred to by the acronym *TULIP*) is mostly drawn from his theological speculations.

The Gonzálezes describe how Christian teachings were hammered out by churchmen and theologians in “the constant presence of power struggles in the church” and also with the “intervention of emperors and politicians” (p. 150). Those teachings “did not fall from heaven” (p. 149, compare p. 150). The conclusion of *Heretics* is that what is now taught and believed in all its variety is not the same “as the doctrine of the early church” (p. 158).

This slim but informative volume is highly recommended.

**Harold Heie and Michael A. King, eds. *Mutual Treasure: Seeking Better Ways for Christians and Culture to Converse*. Foreword by Richard Mouw. Telford, PA: Cascadia, 2009. 205 pp., with index. \$19.95 (paperback).**

*Mutual Treasure* is a collection of ten essays by a public defender, a political scientist, a medical doctor, a filmmaker, a faculty minister at Harvard and MIT, and so forth. It consists of accounts of irenic conversations with skeptical elements of the host culture by a variety of Christians hoping to both befriend and better understand a sometimes skeptical and even hostile Other, and also some reflections on how such dialogue ought to be conducted. This is not a collection of efforts of partisan evangelicals to confront cults or sects. The book offers various models of “engagement” with the non-Christian and, at best, the most often indifferent and also increasingly dominant host culture. In one instance there is an appeal for empathetic engagements with Jewish and Muslim communities (see Marvin R. Wilson, “To Know and Be Known: Evangelicals and Interfaith Dialogue,” pp. 125–43). The path recommended by each author in engaging the

predominantly secular culture is nonconfrontational, except under extraordinary circumstances (see Stephen V. Monsma, “Called to Be Salt and Light: An Overview,” p. 25). Each author in this collection recommends friendly, respectful dialogue—a “coming alongside” the Other in order to exert some redemptive influence on the larger culture (editors’ preface, p. 16).

The editors of *Mutual Treasure* “are appalled at the confrontational nature of much public discourse,” including those Christians who “often relish the battle.” Instead of war, Heie and King seek “the better way” of “building relationships of mutual trust” with those with whom they disagree (p. 15). They label this a “dialogic model” (p. 16) and hope thereby to build friendships and have friendly conversations. Despite the shrill, aggressive, hostile, confrontational style of much evangelical engagement with those seen as the Other, doing the “dialogic” thing has become common. One of the best-known facilitators of such exchanges is Richard Mouw, who has provided the foreword to *Mutual Treasure*.

Mouw’s theme is “cultural engagement,” apparently an attempt by some conservative Protestants to “engage” the secular or religious culture. But too often such efforts resemble “a military unit engag[ing] an enemy force.” In that case, “the call to engagement . . . comes across as a recruiting effort for cultural warriors” (p. 13). Recognizing the potential inadequacies in another model of engagement, the courtship model of loving commitment, Mouw settles on “friendship”—that is, “to make room in one’s own consciousness for the other person’s hopes and fears. To be a friend is to be committed to an ongoing dialogue, a process of genuine listening and empathetic responding” (pp. 13–14).

One problem that is not addressed in this volume, despite the tensions between the two editors (one of whom is an evangelical and the other an Anabaptist), is the internecine battleground within the evangelical movement itself, as well as in the larger arena of competing Christian faiths. Unfortunately, no effort is made to address the question of how best to seek an empathetic rapprochement in these cases.

**Margaret Barker. *The Lost Prophet: The Book of Enoch and Its Influence on Christianity*. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2005. xi + 116, with index. \$25.00.**

*The Lost Prophet* is a slim book first published over two decades ago by SPCK and is now available as a reprint. It still deserves to be read. In addition to providing a good introduction to Margaret Barker's scholarship, it will in many ways remind Latter-day Saints of Hugh Nibley's fascination with noncanonical texts that carry the name *Enoch* and also with related textual materials. Scholarly interest in these texts was stimulated by the discovery of fragments of an important Enoch text among the Dead Sea Scrolls (pp. 12–14). Barker sees the Book of Enoch as "very strange," and she argues that the very "shock of its strangeness can be a very good thing" (p. 16) since early Christians were at home in the world those texts depict (p. 16). She also believes the Enoch texts provide a window into the world of the faithful prior to the Babylonian captivity (p. 19), as well as into the world of Palestine during the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth.

In addition, it is in the Enoch materials that we see references to an Elect One (the Son of Man), to heavenly ascensions, special endowments, commissions and covenants, and so forth (pp. 52, 58), all of which Barker sees as central elements in the conceptual furniture of the world of Jesus and his immediate followers.

It was in one of these journeys to heaven that Enoch encountered angels and the tree of life (p. 24), as well as heavenly or holy mountains (pp. 24, 48, 51–53), and was endowed with wisdom and learned of many marvelous things. These are all temple motifs familiar to Latter-day Saints, and Barker's reflections on such things should be of interest to them. Even though they might question some of her views, Latter-day Saints still might learn from her own perceptive encounter with a literature later despised by Jews and then suppressed by Christians, a portion of which was recovered by Joseph Smith very early in his career as a seer.

**Michael R. Ash. *Shaken Faith Syndrome: Strengthening One's Testimony in the Face of Criticism and Doubt*. Provo, UT: Foundation for Apologetic Information and Research, 2008. vii + 296 pp., with index. \$19.95 (paperback).**

With current technology, an increasing number of Latter-day Saints are encountering anti-Mormon material on the Internet. Although most anti-Mormon arguments have been around for decades, many members are encountering these accusations for the first time and are not aware of competent Latter-day Saint responses to them.

The Foundation for Apologetic Information and Research (FAIR) is an all-volunteer grassroots Latter-day Saint apologetic organization (here the word *apologetic* denotes efforts to explain and defend the faith). FAIR has produced a host of Internet articles, a very useful wiki, videos, and even DVDs (see [www.fairlds.org](http://www.fairlds.org)). It has also published *Shaken Faith Syndrome*. The author, Michael Ash, begins by addressing the reasons for personal apostasy. He focuses on those reasons that, when challenged, seem to result in “intellectual apostasies”—that is, the loss of faith brought on by LDS-critical arguments and accusations. *Shaken Faith Syndrome* shows how Latter-day Saints can be both critical thinkers and devout believers.

The book is divided into two sections. The first part deals with misconceptions that can make Latter-day Saints vulnerable to challenges to their faith. Ash examines the emotions and cognitive process that believers often engage when they are presented with what appear to be strong arguments that Joseph Smith was a fraud or that the Book of Mormon is merely fiction. Ash demonstrates that naïve and even what can be called “fundamentalist” assumptions, as well as unrealistic expectations of prophets, scripture, science, and scholarship, are often catalysts to testimony damage rather than the actual anti-Mormon arguments. Many members, for example, confuse tradition, rumor, speculation, and opinion with sound teachings. They also may read their own worldviews into the scriptures. Ash shows how these proclivities create straw men that are easily toppled by critics.

Ash examines such common allegations as “LDS scholars are not *real* scholars but church-paid apologists who produce little more than

*ad hominem* arguments,” “Critics—unlike LDS scholars—are unbiased and hence let the facts speak for themselves,” and “The church is engaged in a cover-up to hide the truth from both the Saints and the general public.”

In the second part of his book, Ash tackles some of the most common anti-Mormon claims—for example, those having to do with Joseph Smith’s first vision, DNA studies, plural marriage, the Kinderhook Plates, Book of Mormon archaeology and geography, the Book of Abraham, and Joseph Smith’s early treasure-digging days.

*Shaken Faith Syndrome* is a resource that bishops and many others should find useful. It is currently available both in English and in German. It deserves the high praise it has been receiving.

**Timothy Keller. *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism*. New York: Dutton, 2008. xxiii + 293 pp., with index. \$24.95 (hardback, forthcoming in paperback).**

In the heart of New York City, certainly one of America’s foremost secularized sin-centers, Timothy Keller, pastor of the Redeemer Presbyterian Church, has become something of a celebrity figure. In that difficult setting, he has found ways of gaining a large following and has fashioned a kind of megachurch. He has also branched out into books. In *The Reason for God*, we encounter some of the things that make Keller influential. Among his gifts is the ability to address the persistent, nagging doubts people have concerning the reality of divine things (pp. 3–114) and to set out and make his version of the Christian story plausible (pp. 127–226). In the first half of this book, Keller strives to provide a reasoned defense of the rationality of faith in God against doubts, and in the second half he offers what turns out to be a rather traditional, generic version of contemporary evangelicalism. Keller begins by offering a brief autobiography, which includes reflections of the ubiquity of doubt in our current milieu (pp. ix–xxiii).

The portion of *The Reason for God* that should be of interest to Latter-day Saints is Keller’s rhetorical effort to counter secular critics of faith. He strives to do this by, among other things, demonstrating that all forms of doubt about divine things rest upon or even consti-

tute a kind of alternative secular faith, which is also, he argues, open to critical examination and radical doubt. He strives to demonstrate that this counter faith has various challenges and anomalies. This is the most intriguing feature of the book.

By mining a vast literature for pithy remarks and illustrations, Keller seeks to parry the doubts being raised or exploited by the evangelizing so-called New Atheists—Sam Harris, Christopher Hitchens, Daniel Dennett, and Richard Dawkins, each of whom receives Keller's attention. He also marshals some of the best lines from a string of authorities, including C. S. Lewis, N. T. Wright, Alvin Plantinga, Mark Lilla, Richard Bauckham, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who seem to provide grounds for overcoming doubt or otherwise help provide reasons for faith. Keller mostly argues by probing the language and opinions of his counter authorities. He does this skillfully, even if not profoundly.

**Ross Anderson.** *Understanding the Book of Mormon: A Quick Christian Guide to the Mormon Holy Book.* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009. 116 pp., with scriptural (Bible and Book of Mormon) and subject indexes. \$14.99.

The author of *Understanding the Book of Mormon*, the Reverend Ross Anderson, was a Latter-day Saint in his youth, though he soon went missing. He does not explain why this happened or how he came to found the Wasatch Evangelical Free Church in Roy, Utah. Larded with references to his faithful Latter-day Saint family (pp. 7–9, 14, 47, 49, 57, 82, 86), the book contains numerous hints about his apostasy, the pain it inflicted on his family, and their kindly way of dealing with him. Anderson has not, however, tried to explain in this book his urge to attack the faith of Latter-day Saints.

Anderson is trained as a pastor; he holds both MDiv and a DMin degrees, the latter from the Salt Lake Theological Seminary. What Anderson calls *A Quick Christian Guide to the Mormon Holy Book* can be seen as a product of the kind of indoctrination he received at that now-defunct institution, which appears to have had as its primary focus the training of pastors and the fashioning of programs to proselytize Latter-day Saints. Instead of witnessing to his own version

of Christian faith, Anderson's book offers a sustained criticism of his former faith. By *Christian* he seems to mean his own understanding of what constitutes Christian faith, though he offers only hints about what that might be. He seems to have picked the Book of Mormon as a target because he senses its crucial role as both the ground for and content of the faith of Latter-day Saints (see p. 81), and also because he wrongly assumes that it is vulnerable to stock criticisms borrowed from secular and countercult critics. *A Quick Christian Guide* is designed to be a handbook with which pastors can protect their flocks from taking seriously the faith of the Saints or arm their flocks to proselytize the Saints. A set of "discussion questions" is included in the book (pp. 95–100) for pastors engaged in such indoctrination. For example, Anderson urges pastors to ask their flocks if there is "any good reason to read the Book of Mormon? If so, what might it be? If you ever do read the Book of Mormon, what precautions should you take?" (p. 100). It seems that the appropriate answer is a cautious yes, but no praying and pondering is recommended.

One of the Reverend Anderson's objections to the Book of Mormon is that there is far too much Jesus in it and not the right things about Jesus (p. 42). He notes that "many central doctrines espoused by the LDS Church are not found in the Book of Mormon" (p. 40) and concludes that the book lacks what he misunderstands as the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ (pp. 47, 59). In repeating this stock objection, he has neglected to read the Book of Mormon carefully and hence does not understand what Jesus describes as his gospel (see 3 Nephi 27:9–22) or his doctrine (see 11:31–40).

Anderson claims that Latter-day Saints lack "concrete evidence" or "empirical verification" for the Book of Mormon and that hence the "ultimate proof" comes for the Saints "in the form of a self-validating spiritual experience" that is unreliable (p. 39). He believes that "the Bible teaches us to evaluate truth by comparing truth claims to the standard of scripture" (p. 84), but this is, among other things, circular reasoning. He also is confident that for the Bible and its message, proof is both necessary and available. Latter-day Saints, from Anderson's perspective, do not have, nor do they seek, a proof or validation of

faith that Protestants have. He makes a big fuss about biblical archaeology (pp. 68, 70, 77), and he claims that the Book of Mormon is without such proof (p. 72) and that, by pondering and praying, the Saints seek or fabricate a “spiritual witness” or “confirming experience” wrongly believed to be a divine revelation (p. 83). Hence the Saints merely depend on what he insists are squishy “spiritual experiences” (pp. 39, 79, 80, 82, 84, 89, 92) that amount to merely an unreliable “positive inner feeling” (p. 13), a “self-validating spiritual experience” (p. 39), and a “subjective inner testimony” (pp. 73, 77). Anderson is thus confident that the Book of Mormon, unlike the Bible, is without a real warrant, including the crucial and necessary archaeological proofs (pp. 68, 72, 77). One wonders, does Anderson have archaeological proof that Jesus existed? That he was the Messiah or Christ? That he atoned for our sins or was resurrected? Does he imagine that one must have such proof before one can come unto Christ and be redeemed?

From Anderson’s sectarian perspective, “no concrete evidence is available” (p. 39) to support the historical authenticity of the Book of Mormon, but he also realizes that there is considerable evidence that makes plausible the historical authenticity of the Book of Mormon. He seeks to bush this literature aside, claiming that it leaves open the possibility of reasonable doubt where absolute certainty is needed. In doing this, he does not confront more than a tiny fraction of this material. Instead, he opines that “even the best Mormon apologists” can only create what he describes as “an aura of plausibility” (pp. 71–72) and not furnish credible proof. Anderson insists on proof prior to faith while also denying that God can or will reveal anything outside of the Bible, as understood by quarreling theologians and churchmen and in the ecumenical creeds, of course.

The Reverend Anderson claims to speak for historical, biblical, or traditional Christianity (pp. 7, 15, 34, 40, 47, 49, 57). Other than a brief reference to the ecumenical creeds of Nicaea and Chalcedon on the Trinity (where we are told there is one God in three persons subsisting in one essence but without the semblance of an effort to indicate what that language means) and an assertion that the Saints

do not properly assent to Augustinian and Protestant notions of salvation, there is nothing setting out what Anderson would have the Saints believe. So it turns out that this book is, despite much talk about the necessity of a kinder, gentler, less hostile and aggressive approach to evangelizing Latter-day Saints, merely another example of a confrontational, adversarial mode of evangelizing the Saints. Anderson has fashioned a handbook with which Protestant pastors can arm their flocks to attack the faith of the Saints in a hopefully less offensive style. Intention and substance are not the issues here, but tone. The endeavor thus lacks probity.

If we turn to substance, *A Quick Christian Guide* offers little that is new or accurate about the Book of Mormon or the faith of the Saints; the treatment is both elementary and superficial. The confident, conversational tone is the most effective part of the Reverend Anderson's efforts to set out ways to lure Latter-day Saints from their faith. However, the assertions, analyses, and arguments found in this book are derivative, lifted from a sectarian and secular literature that is critical of Latter-day Saint faith. The arguments put forth have long been answered in detail in a literature that Anderson neglects to summarize or even mention. *A Quick Christian Guide* is thus not sound scholarship but partisan propaganda rife with mistakes at virtually every turn.

Zondervan is a reputable evangelical press, but it also has a penchant for publishing unseemly attacks on the faith of Latter-day Saints. With the recent release of Ross Anderson's little book, it has again manifested this disappointing and unfortunate proclivity.

