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BOOK NOTES

Matthew B. Brown. *A Pillar of Light: The History and Message of the First Vision*. American Fork, UT: Covenant Communications, 2009. xii + 268 pp., with bibliography and index. \$23.95.

Matthew Brown has published an interesting and readable account of Joseph Smith's first vision, which the Prophet experienced in 1820. The book provides useful background information, the several accounts of the vision as related by Joseph, the elements in these accounts, and some of the more important results and implications of the vision. It also responds to criticisms about the vision.

Church leaders have stressed the great importance of the first vision. President Gordon B. Hinckley noted that "our entire case as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints rests on the validity of this glorious First Vision" (p. ix). Brown's book will assist members in becoming better acquainted with the details of the vision, and his historical sketch will help shed light on the conditions and circumstances in which the vision was received. Of special interest is the information on what Joseph referred to as the "religious excitement" of the time that led him to inquire of the Lord. Brown identifies and discusses contemporary newspaper articles, religious camp meetings, and persons in the area that could have been important in encouraging Joseph's prayer that resulted in his momentous vision.

The elements of the different accounts are compared in some detail. Considered together, they are impressive and give a more complete and rounded understanding of what transpired. Although written over a period of time, these accounts reveal a remarkable harmony. Particular attention is given to comparing the two primary accounts—the one that Joseph committed to writing as early as 1832 and

the second, more familiar account written in 1838. A chart compares eight accounts on a substantial number of details, assisting in showing the consistency among them (pp. 170–71).

Helpful appendixes feature documents showing what was said about the first vision during Joseph’s lifetime, provide a chronological listing of first vision recitals and references through 1844, demonstrate the interconnectedness of the different accounts, and offer additional comparative information. A select bibliography is provided for the reader who would like to pursue further the study of this foundational vision.

George L. Mitton

William J. Hamblin and David Rolph Seely. *Solomon’s Temple: Myth and History*. New York: Thames & Hudson, 2007. 224 pp., with 201 illustrations, glossary, maps, select bibliography, and index. \$40.00.

William Hamblin and David Seely both served LDS missions in Italy. They shared a Latin class at BYU. They both earned doctorates from the University of Michigan—Hamblin in the history of the pre-modern Middle East and Seely in biblical studies. On one occasion, they were standing in a Borders bookstore in Ann Arbor together, admiring something from the London publisher Thames and Hudson, and they decided that they would like to do a book with that firm someday.

So, in 2007, they did. And their book has since been translated into French, German, Spanish, Dutch, Norwegian, and Romanian.

Solomon’s Temple: Myth and History is a beautifully illustrated book, not only about the Bronze Age background and historical reality of ancient “Israelite Temples,” the title of the first of the volume’s five chapters, but also about the afterlife of those temples, and particularly that of Solomon, in subsequent Jewish tradition, Christian thought, and Islamic lore. It concludes with a chapter entitled “Modern Conceptions of Solomon’s Temple” that ranges from the Reformation to Freemasonry, from Renaissance painting to the politics of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem (where both authors have lived for extended periods).

Latter-day Saint readers will note with interest the authors' dedication: "For Hugh W. Nibley, who showed the way." Although the book is by no means overtly (or even covertly) designed to preach Mormonism (though "Mormon Temples" are treated on pp. 190–93), the inspiration of Nibley's passion for the temple is apparent on every page of it for those familiar with his work. (John M. Lundquist's *The Temple of Jerusalem: Past, Present, and Future*, published by Praeger in New York City, also in 2007, is likewise dedicated to Professor Nibley. Another Michigan PhD, Lundquist went on to write several important books and articles about ancient temples for both Latter-day Saint and non-LDS audiences, and to become the Susan and Douglas Dillon Curator of Asian and Middle Eastern Collections at the New York Public Library. Thus, Hugh Nibley's influence continues—and well beyond Provo.)

The Temple of Solomon, believed to be a place of communion between God and humanity, has been a continuing focus of profound reverence for more than three thousand years. Although its last successor was destroyed very nearly two millennia ago, it lives on. Justinian's great sixth-century church of Hagia Sophia, in Istanbul (the former imperial Byzantine capital, Constantinople), was conceived as, in some sense, a re-creation of the ancient Israelite shrine. When it was finished, according to the historian Procopius, Justinian exclaimed, "Solomon, I have outdone thee!" Likewise, Jerusalem's seventh-century Islamic Dome of the Rock and the later headquarters of the Templar knights and many medieval Christian cathedrals were regarded by their builders as restorations of King Solomon's great structure.

For Jews, in fact, after the final destruction of the temple by the Romans in AD 70, the Bible itself became a metaphorical "Temple of the Lord." Its traditional three sections were said to coincide with the tripartite structure of Moses's wilderness tabernacle: the Writings were the outer court, the Prophets were the holy place, and the Law was the holy of holies. The Mishnah and the Talmud contain entire tractates on the measurements of the temple and its rituals, and about their meaning and function even in post-temple Judaism, and these

texts are at the core of rabbinic studies still today. Moreover, many of the biblical psalms are temple hymns.

So great was Solomon's temple that many later legends ascribed that achievement to supernatural help, and many magicians sought to harness that power for their own ends. (The six-pointed shield or star of David seems to have originated in a magician's hexagram called the Shield of Solomon.) And this temple has persisted in the visions of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim mystics, who have seen a celestial temple that mirrors the temple on earth, a place where divine secrets are revealed to humankind.

Solomon's Temple: Myth and History tells a story that is every bit as fascinating, every bit as exotic and far ranging, as the tales spun by Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* and Steven Spielberg's *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. It has one advantage over those, however, that will appeal to some: the story that Professors Hamblin and Seely tell is true.

Daniel C. Peterson

Grant Hardy. *Understanding the Book of Mormon: A Reader's Guide*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010. xix + 346 pp., with subject and scripture indexes. \$29.95.

Grant Hardy majored in classical Greek at Brigham Young University, then earned a PhD in Chinese literature from Yale.

Now a professor of history and religious studies at the University of North Carolina at Asheville (where he formerly chaired the Department of History), he specializes in premodern historical writing. Columbia University Press published his *Worlds of Bronze and Bamboo: Sima Qian's Conquest of History* in 1999, Greenwood issued his coauthored *The Establishment of the Han Empire and Imperial China* in 2005, and his coedited *The Oxford History of Historical Writing, Volume I: Beginnings to AD 600* will appear later this year.

But that isn't all. The University of Illinois Press issued Hardy's *The Book of Mormon: A Reader's Edition* in 2005, and Oxford has recently published his *Understanding the Book of Mormon: A Reader's Guide*, in which this superbly trained scholar applies his expertise to a book that has seldom been read so carefully and intelligently.

Hardy pronounces the Book of Mormon “an extraordinarily rich text” (p. xii), “a carefully constructed artifact” (p. xv), “more intricate and clever than has heretofore been acknowledged” (p. xv). “My basic thesis,” he writes, “is that the Book of Mormon is a much more interesting text—rewarding sustained critical attention—than has generally been acknowledged by either Mormons or non-Mormons” (p. xvii).

Although himself a believer (of an admittedly skeptical sort, as shown in his entry on MormonScholarsTestify.org), he sets the question of historicity or authorship aside: “It does not matter much to my approach whether these narrators were actual historical figures or whether they were fictional characters created by Joseph Smith; their role in the narrative is the same in either case. After all, narrative is a mode of communication employed by both historians and novelists” (p. xvi).

“I want to demonstrate a mode of literary analysis,” he explains, “by which all readers, regardless of their prior religious commitments or lack thereof, can discuss the book in useful and accurate ways” (p. xvii). “I will leave it to others,” he remarks, “to prove or disprove the historical and religious claims of the book; my goal is to help anyone interested in the Book of Mormon, for whatever reason, become a better, more perceptive reader” (p. xviii).

He seeks to enable discussion of the Book of Mormon even among those who differ over its origin and religious importance. “If we shift our attention away from Joseph Smith and back to the Book of Mormon itself, a common discourse becomes possible” (p. xvi).

The principal feature of his method is to treat the three main authors of the book—Nephi, Mormon, and Moroni—“as if they were real people” (p. 23). And it turns out, under his meticulous analysis, that “Nephi, Mormon, and Moroni are major characters themselves, and each has a distinctive life story, perspective, set of concerns, style, and sensibility” (p. xv).

I don’t labor under Grant Hardy’s self-imposed neutrality. I say that the striking fruitfulness of his analysis powerfully supports the Book of Mormon’s authenticity. “Under close scrutiny,” he writes (and

demonstrates), “it appears to be a carefully crafted, integrated work, with multiple narrative levels, an intricate organization, and extensive intratextual phrasal allusions and borrowings. None of this is foreign to fiction, but the circumstances of the book’s production are awkward: the more complicated and interconnected the text, the less likely it is that Joseph Smith made it up spontaneously as he dictated the words to his scribes, one time through” (p. xvii). And yet, as I have argued elsewhere, the evidence clearly indicates both that Joseph was encountering the text for the first time and that he had no other reading materials with him during the translation process (and, physically speaking, could almost certainly not have read them if he had).¹

“Clearly,” Hardy comments regarding Nephi, “there is an active mind at work here, one that is colored by his experiences, his sense of audience, and his desire for order. Readers will always be divided on whether that mind is ultimately Nephi’s or Joseph Smith’s, but it is possible to recover from the text a coherent personality within the multiple time frames, the different levels of narrative, and the extensive intertextual borrowings” (p. 84). And yet, when, with Mormon (as later with Moroni), “it turns out that there is another mind at work in the text” (p. 90), the most reasonable interpretation of the evidence Hardy so carefully marshals is that these are, indeed, distinct persons. Moreover, when, as Hardy also demonstrates, Mormon the editor struggles to conform his historical data to his moralistic view of the past, that struggle strongly suggests that Mormon was dealing with real, recalcitrant history, not with fiction.

Those inclined to disagree should read this important book.

Daniel C. Peterson

Hugh Nibley and Michael D. Rhodes. *One Eternal Round*, vol. 19 in *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley* series. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 2010. Illustrations directed by Michael P. Lyon.

1. See my “Editor’s Introduction” to *FARMS Review* 17/2 (2005): xi–xlix, entitled “Not So Easily Dismissed: Some Facts for Which Counterexplanations of the Book of Mormon Will Need to Account.”

xxii + 698 pp., with seven appendixes and indexes of passages and subjects. \$48.99.

Michael Rhodes's adroit introduction (pp. xvii–xxii) to *One Eternal Round*, which is Hugh Nibley's last book, is a valuable, elegantly written, remarkable witness to Nibley's dogged pursuit of further light and knowledge, which drove his endeavors from his earliest days until at last his health waned and he could no longer work on his final project. In addition, Rhodes has provided a stunning preface (pp. xiii–xvi) in which he tells the story of how he came to work on the enormous collection of manuscripts and other materials generated by Nibley and out of which Rhodes was able to distill this book.

The richly detailed, massive book examines one of the three vignettes attached to the Book of Abraham—namely, Facsimile 2, which is the famous and important hypocephalus owned by Joseph Smith. *One Eternal Round* is thus seemingly focused on the hypocephalus—an inscribed disklike object that the Egyptians placed under the head of a dead person as an amulet “to deliver the owner from death and oblivion” (p. 190). A detailed consideration of these funerary objects is taken up in the chapter titled “What Is a Hypocephalus?” (pp. 188–235). Before reaching this point in his analysis, Nibley has cleared the way by, among other things, answering the chorus of critics of Joseph Smith regarding his opinions about the meaning of the strange texts he owned (pp. 1–28). He then provides an elaborate staging of an argument that the hypocephalus, or its many surrogates in the ancient world, was a way of confronting the sting or fear of death—a central concern of those who fashioned the cultic objects, rituals, and accompanying myths (see especially pp. 96–132).

This elaborate argument places Nibley within a certain strand of scholarship, although he is anything but an ideologue blindly following a single school of interpretation. Instead, he builds on, and modifies and molds, what others have done. He thus leads his readers to Facsimile 2 and Joseph Smith's interest in it, and then out into a complicated, rich, diverse chain of possibilities, none of which we can explore here. Getting this complicated argument into print was a labor of love performed by Michael Rhodes.

After first sketching an essay, Nibley tended to continually edit and redraft it, never fully satisfied with what he had written. His manuscripts were often littered with changes. He knew, as did his editors and publishers, that he needed a deadline. But there was no deadline for the completion of *One Eternal Round*, which meant that recasting, revising, and restructuring went on and on. As Nibley's health declined, even his notorious single-mindedness began to lapse.

Since Nibley, despite enormous efforts, could not finish *One Eternal Round* to his own satisfaction, he ended up in need of a properly qualified, sympathetic friend who could sort the stack of materials, pick the most complete and polished manuscripts, and then tie them together, fleshing out a bit here and there. This task has been expertly done by Rhodes, who came to the rescue.

Nibley had never relied upon student assistants, as some prodigious publishers have done. When he cited or quoted an item, he was the one who had located it in a library, read and assessed it, and very often translated it. For some rather famous authors who have managed to publish a steady stream of books and essays, this is simply not the case; they tend to rely very heavily upon assistants whom they merely manage and direct. This was never the case with Nibley. He was not an academic team player, nor did he collect disciples or found an ideological school. He simply did not engage in a kind of "Bancroft"² mode of writing about the past, even though he influenced a host of scholars, many of whom have ended up in ancient studies.

Nibley had an amazing familiarity with the arcane literature of antiquity in the West. He drew upon primary sources but was also familiar with secondary commentary. This aspect of his endeavors can be seen in *One Eternal Round*. However, his declining health may have made it at first difficult and then impossible to examine some of the secondary literature that has appeared in the last decade. It appears that Rhodes may not always have updated Nibley's work with the latest scholarship. However, given the magnitude of the venture, this is

2. The American historian and ethnologist Herbert Howe Bancroft (1832–1918) eventually ended up trying to produce a multivolume history of the entire American West. He is infamous for doing this with research and writing assistants.

a rather small problem. Aside from stitching together and organizing Nibley's work into its present form, Rhodes has allowed Nibley to have his say.

Further research will, of course, challenge and may revise some of Nibley's lines of argument or conclusions. This is inevitable in any historical account. This would not trouble Nibley in the least. Why? He was convinced that everything we produce is necessarily tentative and limited. In fact, what fed his appetite to revise his own manuscripts was a desire to include, as well as weigh and assess, *all* of what might constitute evidence and to bring into consideration *all* plausible explanations and new evidences that he continually found in his ongoing research. He was not at all like writers who begin by figuring out an explanation and then stick to it to the end, come what may. Nibley's faith in God and in the restoration of gospel fulness through the Prophet Joseph Smith remained rock solid, but everything else was open to doubt as he rigorously and vigorously sought further light and knowledge.

If Nibley is only partly correct in *One Eternal Round*, then in antiquity there were artifacts, beliefs, rituals, strange costumes, and institutions of richness and variety that should be of considerable interest for Latter-day Saints striving for greater knowledge about human and divine things. Nibley managed to open the door for us to peek into this world. For this, if for no other reason, this lengthy book—639 pages of exposition, including seven appendixes (pp. 633–39) and a host of wonderful illustrations (see pp. vii–x for the list of images expertly drawn or directed by Michael Lyon)—deserves careful attention. Even those who pride themselves on being familiar with Nibley's work will find themselves astonished by the richness and detail found in his last testament of faith in Jesus Christ and his redeeming work. And, of course, critics lurking on the margins of the community of Saints, with their usual fear that Nibley might jumble their comfortable conformity to secular tastes, may brush this book aside without really caring or learning about its rewarding contents.

Louis Midgley

Roger E. Olson and Adam C. English. *Pocket History of Theology*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005. 112 pp., with index. \$8.00 (paperback).

Pocket History of Theology is a reduction of Roger Olson's book *The Story of Christian Theology* (1999) into a much less intimidating survey of the main twists and turns in the complex history of speculation, conflicts, and challenges that have fretted Christianity from the end of the apostolic period to the present. The story told is divided into five "acts," the first beginning in the second century. "Act I: A Story Takes Shape" (pp. 9–28) opens with this observation: "The story of Christian theology does not begin at the beginning. . . . Theology is the church's reflection on the salvation brought by Christ and on the gospel of that salvation proclaimed and explained by the first-century apostles" (p. 9). The New Testament itself is not theology; instead, it records the founding stories about Jesus of Nazareth, the agent of redemption from sin and death, as well as the author of a new covenant and a New Israel (or the community of Saints).

If there had been no subsequent conflict and contention over what Jesus had done and who he was, we would have had no theology about which Olson and English could tell a story. Some of the initial challenges were from without—from Jewish and Pagan writers (p. 11; compare p. 25). But other challenges came from within the church and hence from competing understandings of the founding stories and their meaning. In telling this compelling story, the authors seem to grant that the earliest Christians believed in *theosis* (divinization or deification). "Salvation[,] in such a view, is not merely a one-time decision but a lifelong journey toward godliness. As 2 Peter 1:3–4 [NRSV] indicates, the life of godliness means that we 'become participants of the divine nature'" (p. 12 n. 3).

Many similar statements that will resonate with Latter-day Saints will challenge contemporary conservative Christian theology. For example, *The Shepherd of Hermas*, which "contains a series of visions and their explanations given by an angel to Hermas himself" (p. 14), indicates that

God's mercy is narrowly limited. God will forgive, but not endlessly. Furthermore, forgiveness is conditioned on keeping the commandments. The Shepherd tells Hermas that "there will be forgiveness for your previous sins if you keep my commandments; in fact, there will be forgiveness for everyone, if they keep my commandments and walk in this purity." (p. 14)

"This summary of the gospel," we are told, "not only speaks for Hermas but also summarizes nicely the overall sentiment of the apostolic fathers. While all mention God's mercy in response to true repentance and occasionally express the necessity of God's grace through the cross of Christ, the apostolic fathers seem more concerned with promoting Christian virtue and obedience by instilling fear of judgment for moral failure" (pp. 14–15).

Olson and English grant that the later "apologists defended Christian faith by using Greek (or Hellenistic) philosophy to meet their critics on their own terms" (p. 15; compare p. 17 on the apologists' use of "non-Christian philosophy"). "The relationship between philosophy and Christian theology has been a major point of controversy within Christian thought" (p. 19), according to these authors. This remark introduces the stance on this issue taken by Tertullian (AD 150–212), who strongly "advised Christians to avoid rationalizing Christian beliefs with Greek philosophical categories" (p. 21). Tertullian radically contrasted what he called the wisdom of Athens (the Platonic Academy) with the wisdom of Jerusalem (the words and deeds of Jesus and the teachings of his apostles). Yet even Tertullian was eager to engage in what he warned about when he tried to blunt the modalist (or Sabellian) heresy by inventing the Trinity, defined by Olson and English in these terms: "the God Christians believe in is *one substance and three persons (una substantia, tres personae)*" (p. 22, emphasis in original).

Like other early Christian apologists, Origen (ca. AD 185–254) loved speculation and tried to fashion a synthesis of Greek wisdom with the biblical message (pp. 22–23). He also introduced the so-called allegorical interpretation of the scriptures in an effort to clear the way for what has come to be called classical theism. In this kind of

theological schema, “God is ‘simple substance’ without body, parts or passions” (pp. 24–25), and hence “is Spirit and Mind, simple (uncompounded), incorporeal, immutable and incomprehensible” (p. 24), and so forth. All this, according to Olson and English, was “strengthened . . . through the use of Platonic philosophy” (p. 25).

In “Act II: The Plot Thickens” (pp. 29–49), Olson and English indicate that “absolute static perfection—including *apatheia*, or impassibility (passionlessness)—is essential to the nature of God according to Greek thought, and nearly all Christian theologians came to agree with this” (pp. 29–30). This dogmatic assumption provides the context of the great ecumenical creeds (pp. 30–31) and explains the “use of extrabiblical terminology” (p. 31). Latter-day Saints will find a useful brief account of the ideological battles, if not the very nasty political intrigue, behind the great ecumenical councils (pp. 30–49).

“Act III: The Story Divides” (pp. 50–68) is an account of deepening controversies, beginning with Augustine (AD 354–430). There is nothing novel in stressing divine mercy or grace, but “Augustine introduced into the stream of Christian thought something called monergism, the belief that human agency is entirely passive and God’s agency [absolute sovereignty] is all-determining in both universal history and individual salvation” (p. 51). *Monergism* is a technical label referring to Augustine’s obsession with predestination and to his radical stress on grace in which human beings are seen as free to do what they desire, albeit all human desire is fixed by God at the moment of creation (out of nothing). Roman Catholics did not adopt monergism, insisting that Christians should not understand divine grace in such a way as to negate the need for “greater self-sacrificing piety (what modern Christians call discipleship)” (p. 56).

Leaving out a host of details about subtle distinctions and differing nuances, Olson and English reach “Act IV: Reforming, Revising and Rewriting the Story” (pp. 69–88). After explaining some of the ecclesiastical abuses that troubled the Reformers (pp. 69–70), they focus on Luther’s mantra about justification by grace through faith alone (pp. 71, 75). In addition, they introduce the Reformer’s insistence on *sola scriptura* and the priesthood of believers (p. 71). They clearly link

Augustine to the Reformers (p. 71) but make the necessary qualifications. They also stress the belief in the imputation of an alien righteousness to the totally depraved sinner, who is then supposedly justified at the moment of surrender to God (pp. 72–73). The authors then introduce John Calvin’s extreme stress on divine sovereignty, which eventually led to TULIP (or five-point Calvinism, p. 82) and its challenge from the Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation (p. 81), from Arminianism (pp. 82–85), as well as from the perfectionism found in the Methodist movement (pp. 86–87).

The final section, “Act V: An Unresolved Plot” (pp. 89–108), takes up the “burgeoning challenge of a modern world,” or modernity (p. 89). The authors discuss the rise of Protestant liberalism and the European resistance to cultural Protestantism, especially from Karl Barth’s neo-orthodoxy (pp. 95–102). At this point Olson and English reach the end of their story. “Post-World War II Christian theology is diverse as never before. . . . The story of Christian theology has taken so many dizzying twists and turns and splintered in so many new directions that even experts find it difficult to draw it all together into one coherent story” (p. 102). Before turning to evangelical theology and its emergence as a reaction to fundamentalism (pp. 102–4) and to their concluding topic of liberation theologies, the authors provide this revealing remark:

A quick glance at some of the adjectives now affixed to the word *theology* give[s] a hint of the growing diversity: *post-liberal, liberation, postmodern, death-of-God, process, narrative, postcolonial, feminist, womanist, ecotheological, black, radically orthodox, paleoorthodox, open, evangelical, correlational*. (p. 102, emphasis in original)

Latter-day Saints should benefit from, as well as enjoy, a careful reading of this brief, easily understood summary of the twists and turns of Christian theology.

Louis Midgley

Roger E. Olson. *Pocket History of Evangelical Theology.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007. 151 pp., without index. \$8.00 (paperback).

Roger Olson is a prolific writer, fashioning both historical and theological works, some of which, often published by InterVarsity Press, include *20th-Century Theology: God and the World in a Transitional Age* (1997), with Stanley J. Grenz; *The Story of Christian Theology: Twenty Centuries of Tradition and Reform* (1999); *The Mosaic of Christian Belief: Twenty Centuries of Unity and Diversity* (2002); *The Trinity* (2002), with Christopher A. Hall; *The Westminster Handbook to Evangelical Theology* (2004); *Arminian Theology: Myths and Realities* (2006); and *Reformed and Always Reforming: The Postconservative Approach to Evangelical Theology* (2007). One constant theme in Olson's essays is the wide variety, fluidity, and diversity of beliefs held by Christians both now and then. He has a reputation for knowing the sources and for setting out his opinions in a clear, evenhanded way. He brings these attributes to his account of the history of evangelical theology.

His first task in his *Pocket History of Evangelical Theology* is to try to provide a definition of the term *evangelical*. Why is this necessary? "Even some self-identified evangelical scholars have declared *evangelical* an essentially contested concept—an idea and category with no precise or agreed-on meaning" (p. 7). Olson's strategy is to provide an essentially historical account of the term's variety of senses. Etymologically, the term *evangelical* means "the good news" of the gospel (p. 8). In the next sense, the word "is simply synonymous with *Protestant*" (p. 8). Lutherans like to use it as the name of their denomination (the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America). *Evangelical* also identifies a Low Church party within the Church of England (p. 9), and hence it was associated with the Methodist movement. In another sense, the term refers to Pietism and especially that version found among the Moravian Brethren, as well as to the Great Awakening, where it applied to the message spread in revival efforts (p. 10). But *evangelical* eventually came to identify "conservative Protestant reac-

tion to the rise of liberal Protestantism,” and in this sense it came to be nearly synonymous with fundamentalism (p. 11).

The story Olson wishes to tell concerns that most recent meaning given to the word. In the 1940s and 1950s *evangelical* was used to identify a new postfundamentalist movement—a so-called Neo Evangelicalism, closely associated with Billy Graham (pp. 12–13).

Olson holds that the evangelicalism he describes “is a loose affiliation (coalition, network, mosaic, patchwork, family) of mostly Protestant Christians of many orthodox (Trinitarian) denominations and independent churches and parachurch organizations” (p. 14). This assertion is followed by a long list of beliefs and practices of a loose network of contemporary conservative Protestants, who share revivalist instincts and so forth (p. 15). What keeps the whole thing from flying apart is not some set of core beliefs but “the powerful unifying figure of evangelist Billy Graham” (p. 15). Olson calls this the “Graham glue” and wonders what will happen when it dissolves.

Latter-day Saints probably encounter evangelicals who are essentially from the Reformed (or Calvinist) faction of the movement. This is especially true if they have been confronted by anti-Mormon countercult propaganda, but it is also true if they know conservative Protestantism only from some encounter with the recent “interfaith dialogues.” There they will have faced TULIP (five-point Calvinism), but they will not have even a faint idea of the vast variety of competing opinions held by the large majority of those who consider themselves evangelicals. Olson’s expert and learned narrative is a corrective for this deficiency in LDS understanding of the conservative Protestant world around them. The Holiness-Pentecostal element in the loose gathering under the evangelical umbrella is far more numerically significant than the Reformed element, with which Latter-day Saints are most familiar.

Olson describes the theologies of leading evangelical theologians, including Carl F. H. Henry (pp. 96–107), E. J. Carnell (pp. 108–11), Bernard Ramm (pp. 112–19), and Donald Bloesch (pp. 120–29). He ends this survey by describing what he calls the “postconservative evangelical theology” (pp. 130–40). In this setting, he introduces

Clark Pinnock (pp. 132–38), who, as some Latter-day Saints are aware, espouses opinions close to their own. This is seen, for example, in his rejection of much of classical theism (advancing instead a version of an openness theology), his acceptance of narrative theology, his eschewing of traditional evangelical cessationism (the view that spiritual gifts like prophecy, healing, and tongues ceased early on in church history), and so forth.

As much as Olson prizes and even celebrates diversity among believers, he also longs for a center that can somehow hold all the competing and even warring factions together. However, in his final and most important chapter, in which he addresses the topic “Tensions in Evangelical Theology” (pp. 141–51), he reluctantly but essentially grants that the center simply does not hold. Hence contemporary evangelicalism is in flux, with dynamic forces (some of which involve nasty political and dogmatic powers that he cautiously identifies) on the verge of tearing the movement apart.

This crisp, clearly written little handbook is highly recommended for Latter-day Saints who are interested in or puzzled by what is taking place in conservative Protestant circles.

Louis Midgley