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Studies in Scripture, vol. 1 *The Doctrine and Covenants* Robert L. Millet and Kent P. Jackson, eds.

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ROBERT L. MILLET and KENT P. JACKSON, eds. *Studies in Scripture*. Vol. 1, *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: Randall Book, 1984. 615 pp. \$15.95.

Reviewed by H. Dean Garrett, assistant professor of Church history and doctrine at Brigham Young University.

This book was prepared as a "collection of essays written to give deeper insight into historical and doctrinal aspects of those revelations, epistles, and instructions which constitute the Doctrine and Covenants" (1). It consists of fifty-two chapters written by thirty-three different authors who represent a broad range of scholarly expertise in the areas of the Doctrine and Covenants and Church history. The editors have attempted to achieve a blend of the sequential approach and the topical approach to the study of the Doctrine and Covenants. Overall, this blend works well. Not all sections of the Doctrine and Covenants are discussed, nor are those sections treated given equal weight. The emphasis is on those sections where the writers' expertise would best be used.

This approach allows for the meaningful application of each scholar's particular strengths. For example, in the essay on the mission to the Shakers and section 49, the writer makes good use of the diary of the Reverend Ashbel Kitchell, which was discovered only recently. Kitchell was a minister in the Shaker community, and his diary is an aid to understanding both the actions of Lemman Copley and the problems concerning the doctrines of the Shakers to which section 49 is addressed. Similarly, in the essay on section 111 the writer draws upon recently discovered documents to give insights into the travels of Joseph Smith and his companions to Salem, Massachusetts, and the challenges they faced there.

Another strength of the book is in its doctrinal insights. The essay on sections 6, 8, 9, and 11 is very instructive on the process of revelation and develops the idea that God had first to reveal how to receive revelation to a people who were not used to receiving revelation.

As with any book, there are flaws and deficiencies. Some of these are the result of editorial decisions. For example, there is no discussion of the incident of Martin Harris and the lost 116 pages of the Book of Mormon manuscript. The doctrine of the foreknowledge of God and his preparation to protect a prophet and his work seems important enough to be discussed in a work of this magnitude.

There is some redundancy of information in the essays. This is especially obvious in the treatment of the united order, where the same basic historical background material is repeated in three different essays. Some of the essays do not seem to answer the questions raised by their

authors. For example, the author of the essay on section 89 declares that two questions will be answered: "When the Lord revealed the Word of Wisdom, why did he not issue it as a commandment?" and "Amid the varieties of Word of Wisdom practice, how should section 89 be interpreted?" (359). The first question is answered fairly well, but the second is not. The writer goes to considerable lengths to describe how *not* to interpret the Word of Wisdom, but spends very little time on how it should be interpreted. The question of what one should do to meet the requirements of the Word of Wisdom is not discussed.

Some writers seem to do no more than rehash the sections of the Doctrine and Covenants with little evidence of research and analysis. Some dealt well enough with some themes but neglected others. For example, the chapter on sections 101, 103–6 presents an excellent discussion of the preparation for the Millennium but gives very little insight into the history surrounding Zion's Camp, the problems of Church members in Missouri, and the impact that history had on these sections. This leads to perhaps the greatest weakness of the book. The editors have tried to do too much in too little space. A two-volume work would have allowed the writers to expand their themes a little more, to provide scriptural commentary as well as explore the historical context.

The book's strengths, however, outweigh its weaknesses. The introductory chapter prepares the reader well for the study of this book. It discusses the historical changes that were made in the headings of the Doctrine and Covenants between the former editions and the 1981 edition and also gives an excellent historical overview of the Doctrine and Covenants and explains how that history impacted on many of the sections. The scripture and subject indexes make this a very usable resource book. The work represents a major contribution to the understanding of the Doctrine and Covenants and gives valuable insights into the doctrines of the Church. The essays should aid both the novice and the serious student.