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Book Notices

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The Founders on Religion: A Book of Quotations, edited by James H. Hutson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005)

This book presents a collection of spiritual insight from some of early America's most brilliant minds. Typically, we associate the Founders' religious views only with the laws they created about church and state relationships, but Hutson opens a panorama of quotations that show the prominence of many areas of religious thought and discussion during the nation's beginnings. *The Founders on Religion* is subject driven, rather than being arranged by speaker. This method successfully highlights the depth and breadth of religious topics of concern to the Founding Fathers. Subjects include addiction, the afterlife, children, divorce, education, Islam, prayer, profanity, war, women, and many more. The quotes come from fifteen men, several of whom were signers of the Declaration of Independence, and also from Abigail Adams and Martha Washington—two deeply influential wives of two politically important men.

As Chief of the Manuscript Division at the Library of Congress, Hutson has access to endless primary sources from which he draws his quotes, thus eliminating the propagating errors in many well-known quotations as well as statements taken out of context. His strength is objectivism. Topical arrangement removes as much as possible the tendency to regurgitate oft-quoted passages that have been passed merely from one secondary source to another. Hutson has pulled these statements from primary sources in the Princeton, Yale, and Columbia University Libraries, along with the historical societies of Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and Maryland—making his collection more in-depth than other quote compilers before him.

Hutson's awareness of the Latter-day Saint community is strong. During the 2002 Winter Olympics, he brought the Library of Congress exhibition entitled *Religion and the Founding of the American Republic* to Provo, which resulted in the subsequent BYU publication of a lecture series associated with the exhibition. He also was on the organizing committee that hosted the two-day Library of Congress conference entitled "The Worlds of Joseph Smith" in May 2005. Rising above his many personal interests in religious subjects, Hutson is chiefly concerned that this collection of quotations accurately and objectively portrays the mature views of the Founding Fathers and wives. Latter-day Saint readers will be particularly interested in James Hutson's work and commitment to preserving this nation's great spiritual heritage. The only way we can appreciate America's foundational values is to understand the minds and hearts of those who shaped the nation's formation.

—Kelsey Lambert

The Mormon History Association's Tanner Lectures: The First Twenty Years, edited by Dean L. May and Reid L. Neilson (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 2006)

In 1979, Richard Bushman proposed the idea of inviting eminent non-LDS scholars whose work paralleled the research being conducted by historians of Mormonism to spend a year researching a Mormon topic and present their findings at the annual conference of the Mormon History Association. It was hoped that an outsiders' perspective would bring fresh, critical, and engaging analysis that might be overlooked by those inside the Mormon fold. As Bushman writes, "By bringing fresh eyes to Mormonism, historians with less personal attachment identify the oversights" (1). The

idea for the lectures was well received, and Obert C. and Grace Tanner agreed to provide financial support for the annual lecture, thus the title.

This volume is a collection of the first twenty-one Tanner Lectures, bringing difficult-to-find papers into one volume. The lectures are organized into three broad categories: first, Beginnings; second, Establishing Zion; and third, Mormonism Considered from Different Perspectives. The three divisions are prefaced with essays by Richard Bushman, Thomas Alexander, and Jan Shipps, respectively. The introductory essays provide a discussion of the general topic and summaries and critiques of each lecture. Each lecture brings a different perspective, a different lens to the Mormon past. Reading the essays in order, Shipps points out, reveals not only the findings of the studies but also something of “the history of the doing of Mormon history across twenty years” (270).

—Josh E. Probert

The Marrow of Human Experience: Essays on Folklore, by William A. Wilson and edited by Jill Terry Rudy (Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 2006)

William A. (Bert) Wilson, professor emeritus from Brigham Young University, has become the preeminent scholar of Mormon folklore since publishing his first article on Mormon cultural traditions in 1969. This book, which is a collection of his major articles on folklore, is divided into three sections: the first explains why folklore takes seriously a wide range of artistic expression, the second explores the role folklore plays in nationalism, and the third details the dynamics of Mormon folklore and family history. Ably edited by Jill Terry Rudy, associate professor of English at BYU, the book not

only presents Wilson’s work, but it also situates that work in the field of folklore. Rudy has solicited from Wilson’s colleagues introductions that describe how the ideas in each article have influenced other scholars. The authors of these introductions include some of the most prominent folklore scholars in the nation and illustrate the wide-ranging effects of Wilson’s thought.

Even for those familiar with Wilson’s work, the collection of essays will provide new insights. The previously published articles come from various published sources that are helpfully brought together under one cover. Additionally, the collection includes three never-before-published essays.

For readers not familiar with Wilson’s work, the third group of essays will be especially interesting. Readers looking for detailed examples and insightful analysis of the lore about the Three Nephites and J. Golden Kimball will be rewarded. However, Wilson’s focus on Mormon folklore is fuller, and readers of his collection will also learn about Mormon folklore that is more common and more central: the initiation rituals of missionaries; stories about miracles doing temple work; jokes about a priest, a rabbi, and a Mormon bishop; family history narratives; and so on. In dealing with these everyday aspects of cultural Mormonism, Wilson sheds light on “those things that Mormons feel most deeply” (235).

This volume of essays represents the best scholarship of a respected student of Mormon culture and narrative and will both entertain and enlighten those interested in Mormonism as it is lived. Additionally, what arises out of the volume is an articulate and vividly illustrated argument for the humanities—broadly defined to include the artistic expressions of all individuals.

—David A. Allred