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From the Editor

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From the Editor



I am excited about possibilities. Hamlet’s line “There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy” (Hamlet 1.5.167–68) invites us to look for answers: What more is there? How do we find it? Probing the possibilities keeps our minds open to helpful prospects. If you thrive on such enrichments, I’m confident that you will enjoy the ideas presented in this issue of *BYU Studies Quarterly*. Let me point out just a few.

The illuminating article by David Grandy about the latest scientific understandings of the behavior of light offers insightful analogical realizations about the characteristics of the light of Christ. This article is worth the price of this journal. It offers a spectrum of surprising possibilities in approaching the phenomena of light, ultimately shedding new light on D&C 88:6–7. Grandy speaks of the “elemental graciousness whereby vision is accomplished” as “light drops out of sight to give us sight” (30). He adds that light, like the horizon, is “at the interface of two worlds,” the infinite and the finite (33). In the workings of such thoughts, many perplexities dissolve into a “larger pattern of possibility,” like the sunrise and sunset anticipating “multiple yet-to-be realized possibilities” while capturing “all realized possibilities” simultaneously (34, 35).

Professor Barry Bickmore teams up with Grandy to offer a possible framework for understanding science as “a powerful, but limited, path to understanding” (60). With years of teaching experience, they describe seven rules that operate in the reports or “stories” that scientists tell in giving useful explanations of observations about the natural world. As distinctions are drawn in this essay between these rules and

religion, one wonders if the idea of storytelling proffers possibilities for both science and religion. Both, after all, are fundamentally interested in embracing and recounting endless possibilities of realities yet to be encountered, and both stand eager to tell of those experiences.

Chad Richardson and Shon Hopkin offer an answer to the question, what two nations and what time should be identified with the Book of Mormon prophecy that “when the two nations shall run together the testimony of the two nations shall run together also” (2 Ne. 29:8)? While there may be other possible answers, they propose that this confluence occurred between 1816 and 1830 with the forthcoming of the Book of Mormon at the time of the emergence of Latin American nations filled with descendants of Sephardic Jews.

Disrupting the idealized scene of the pioneer trek as a completely harmonious experience—“but with joy wend your way”—David Clark introduces other possibilities of occasional violence and disruptive behavior among the Mormon pioneers. He offers several possible reasons for these outbursts under the stressful conditions on the trail, and he looks at possible reasons why such incidents were considerably less severe than among gold rushers and land grabbers headed for California and Oregon. Understanding the beliefs that united the pioneers increases appreciation for the difficulties, disappointments, and stress they suffered. Significantly, although trail deaths did occur among the Mormon pioneers, as is demonstrated by the data Melvin Bashore, Dennis Tolley, and their team have collected, few deaths were due to violence.

Joseph Spencer’s essay about Professor Ralph Hancock’s important book, *The Responsibility of Reason*, also opens up further possibilities. As Spencer summarizes, Hancock argues that it is necessary to recognize that the world of concrete practices bears within itself a set of organizing forms that are governed by “the good,” such that the material world bears a unified moral topography. While finding Hancock’s argument plausible, Spencer proposes that it may not be the only possibility. He offers instead a revitalization of the idea of a pluralistic and inconsistent cosmos, using the modern French philosopher Badiou as a model. Leaving much still to be explored, Spencer concludes: “To understand what Mormonism has to say in the history of thought, it will be necessary to decide how to conceive of a materialism that nonetheless affirms (whether within consistent or inconsistent realms) the existence of a moral order” (73).

I am happy to open this issue to your inspection and introspection. May these prospects offer you more than you have dreamed.