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Plain and Precious Things

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formulated and his conclusion is earnest. Those interested in and familiar with Mormon theology will find this a refreshing read, while the uninitiated may struggle with the sometimes-intense philosophical web weaving. Either way, Spencer's book adds freshness and credibility to the literature, and his contribution to this topic is noteworthy.

—Lauren McCombs

Plain and Precious Things, by D. John Butler (N.p.: D. John Butler, 2012).

D. John Butler received his law degree from New York University and currently practices law in Idaho. He is also a fiction writer and the author of *The Goodness and the Mysteries: On the Path of the Book of Mormon's Visionary Men*. In *Plain and Precious Things*, Butler casts the beginning of the Book of Mormon in a specific light: Lehi and Nephi as spiritual outsiders looking in on a corrupt Jerusalem. According to Butler, Nephi and Lehi's teachings contradict many of the Jewish doctrines in Jerusalem that are described in the latter part of 2 Kings.

Josiah was the king of Judah and a contemporary to Lehi, and although the Old Testament generally implies in its history that Josiah's reforms are positive, Butler shows, through the lives and visions of Nephi and Lehi, that many of those reforms were corrupt and contributed to Jerusalem's destruction.

Butler takes Nephi at his word about his writings: they were written to restore the "plain and precious things" that had been removed from Hebrew scripture and temple practices. In particular, Lehi's dream and Nephi's vision can be seen as temple visions that corrected and transcended the practices found in Jerusalem's temple. Scholars in biblical studies, particularly Margaret Barker

in *The Older Testament*, have taken a critical look at Josiah's influence and the changes he made to the Jewish temple and religion. Butler's argument is similar, except it is taken from the Book of Mormon and shows 1 Nephi's tree of life visions in the context of the temple—a perspective most readers may not have considered.

Those interested in temple studies will find *Plain and Precious Things* particularly interesting, but any Latter-day Saint will enjoy this book because of its straightforward style and singular interpretation. Butler guides readers through some complex reasoning in a way that is friendly both to lay readers and those who study the temple from a scholarly perspective. This book encourages readers to think deeply and discover new layers of meaning about the temple and tree of life, along with considering the inexhaustible richness of the Book of Mormon.

—Lexi Devenport

Nauvoo & Hancock County, Illinois: A Guide to Family History and Historical Sources, by Kip Sperry. Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, 2014.

For over a century, the LDS and RLDS (now Community of Christ) churches have had an interest in Nauvoo and Hancock County. Among Latter-day Saints, the Nauvoo period is seen as a kind of religious renaissance. It was there that Joseph Smith organized the Relief Society, clarified the nature of the temple and vicarious work for the dead, and forever altered the cosmological view of the Saints through sermons like the King Follett discourse. With so much interest today in what happened 170 years ago on the banks of the Mississippi, Kip Sperry's *A Guide to Family History and Historical Sources* in