TO OUR READERS:

The Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS) encourages and supports research about the Book of Mormon, Another Testament of Jesus Christ, and other ancient scriptures.

FARMS is a nonprofit educational foundation, affiliated with Brigham Young University. Its main research interests include ancient history, language, literature, culture, geography, politics, and law relevant to the scriptures. Although such subjects are of secondary importance when compared with the spiritual and eternal messages of the scriptures, solid research and academic perspectives alone can supply certain kinds of useful information, even if only tentatively, concerning many significant and interesting questions about the scriptures.

It is hoped that this information will help all interested people to “come unto Christ” (Jacob 1:7) and to understand and take more seriously these ancient witnesses of the atonement of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

The principal purpose of the FARMS Review of Books is to help serious readers make informed choices and judgments about books published, primarily on the Book of Mormon. The evaluations are intended to encourage reliable scholarship on the Book of Mormon.

Reviews are written by invitation. Any person interested in writing a review should first contact the editor. Style guidelines will be sent to the reviewers.

The opinions expressed in these reviews are those of the reviewers. They do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies or its editors, of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or of the reviewers’ employers. No portion of the reviews may be used in advertising or for any other commercial purpose, without the express written permission of the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies.

FARMS Review of Books
(formerly Review of Books on the Book of Mormon)
is published semiannually.
© 1999 Foundation for Ancient Research
and Mormon Studies
All rights reserved
Printed in the United States of America
ISSN 1050-7930
FARMS Review of Books

Volume 11, Number 1 1999

CONTENTS

Editor’s Introduction ................................................................. v

THE BOOK OF MORMON

Krajewski, Walter, “Voice from the Dust: A Literary Analysis of the Book of Mormon”

Gorton, H. Clay, A New Witness for Christ: Chiastic Structures in the Book of Mormon
(Richard Dilworth Rust) .............................................................. 1

(Gary F. Novak) ........................................................................ 6

Sorenson, John L., Images of Ancient America: Visualizing Book of Mormon Life
(Diane E. Wirth) ....................................................................... 10

Welch, John W., and Stephen D. Ricks, eds., King Benjamin’s Speech: “That Ye May Learn Wisdom”
(Keith H. Lane) ......................................................................... 18

MORMON STUDIES

(Daniel B. McKinlay) ................................................................. 23

Nibley, Hugh W., The Ancient State: The Rulers and the Ruled
(Louis Midgley) .................................................................... 27

Smith, Mark A., The Power of God
(Robert C. Freeman) ................................................................. 88
White, James R., *Letters to a Mormon Elder: Eye-Opening Information for Mormons and the Christians Who Talk with Them*  
(Russell C. McGregor with Kerry A. Shirts) ........................................ 90

**STUDY AIDS**

Deseret Book, *GospeLink*  
Infobases, *Collector's Library '98*  
(William Raventos) ................................................................. 299

**TEN-YEAR INDEX TO FARMS REVIEW OF BOOKS, 1989–98**

By Author .................................................................................. 311  
By Title .................................................................................... 329  
By Reviewer ............................................................................. 345  
By Subject ................................................................................ 363  
About the Reviewers ................................................................. 425
Editor’s Introduction:  
Perceptions and Expectations  

Daniel C. Peterson  

In 1894, Albert Michelson delivered the main address at the dedication of the Ryerson Physical Laboratory of the University of Chicago. Michelson took the opportunity to declare that “The more important fundamental laws and facts of physical science have all been discovered.” The physics community thought that there was not much new to learn about our universe.

Ten years later, Albert Einstein published the first of his papers that were to revolutionize our understanding of nature and the universe. Einstein’s discovery that energy and matter are actually two different forms of the same entity (E=mc²), that matter can be made from energy, and that the flow of time is not a constant, changed mankind’s paradigm of the world. His work rested on research performed by Albert Michelson.

Changing one’s paradigm is not easy.¹

As I have had frequent occasion in these pages to note, we tend to see what we are disposed to see.

Lately, I have been looking at a biography of the eminent British political philosopher and essayist Sir Isaiah Berlin, who died at an advanced age just few years ago. Sir Isaiah had a remarkable career that rather unexpectedly made him a celebrity. The famous British philosopher A. J. Ayer reported that, once,

when he was introduced at a London party as "the cleverest man in England," someone exclaimed, "Oh, so you must be Isaiah Berlin."2

That anecdote in itself illustrates my point. But there is another, even better.

Isaiah Berlin spent the years of World War II in Washington, D.C., and New York City, where his charm and wit and erudition—and probably his Englishness, as well—gained him access into the most exalted circles of American academic and political life. And he used those contacts to garner information about American attitudes and intentions that he then quietly passed on to a very appreciative British prime minister, Winston Churchill, who was eager for anything he could glean about Britain's vitally important allies in the United States. But Churchill had never actually met his highly valued source of American background information.

During roughly the same period, it happens that the prominent American songwriter Irving Berlin was also devoting a substantial portion of his talents to the support of the war effort—though, of course, in a very different way.

In early February 1944, Clementine Churchill told her husband that Irving Berlin was in London. She thought it might be appropriate, in view of the composer's generous patriotic efforts, for her husband to greet Berlin, to shake his hand and thank him, and perhaps to pose for a quick photograph with him. To her surprise and puzzlement, however, her husband insisted that Berlin come to the prime minister's official residence for a formal meal.

At the end of lunch, Churchill turned and said, "Now, Mr Berlin, tell us what in your opinion is the likelihood of my dear friend, the President, being re-elected for a fourth term." Berlin, who spoke in a heavy Brooklyn accent, said he felt sure that Roosevelt's great name would ensure him victory. He added for good measure, "But if he won't stand [for re-election] again, I don't think I'll vote at all."

“You mean,” asked Churchill, “that you think you’ll have a vote?”
“I sincerely hope so.”

Churchill muttered that it was a good sign of Anglo-American cooperation if the Professor had a vote in America. Churchill’s subsequent questions about the state and volume of war production in the States elicited only vague and noncommittal replies. Churchill, growing exasperated, asked Berlin when he thought the war would end. “Mr Prime Minister, I shall tell my children and grandchildren that Winston Churchill asked me that question.” By now thoroughly confused, Churchill asked what was the most important thing that Mr Berlin had written. He replied, “White Christmas.”

Sensing social disaster, Clementine Churchill said gently that they should all be grateful to Mr Berlin because he had been so generous. “Generous?” her husband growled, looking about him in consternation. By this time [Churchill’s secretary] Jock Colville was gently kicking the Prime Minister under the table. “What are you kicking me for?” Churchill growled, and then turned his back on Berlin. Shortly thereafter the lunch broke up. Berlin returned to the hotel where he was staying with the producer Alexander Korda. He reported that it had been a puzzling lunch. He did not exactly seem to hit it off with the Prime Minister.3

Within a short while, when Churchill learned what had really happened, he roared with laughter at the misunderstanding and all was well. In fact, as the story got around, it cemented Isaiah Berlin’s reputation as a man to be taken seriously far beyond the exalted academic enclave of All Souls, Oxford.

But the incident is also instructive. Winston Churchill was certainly not dense. Yet, despite all the clues to the contrary—including Irving Berlin’s thick American, indeed Brooklyn, accent and his distinct if similar name—Churchill persisted in supposing that his conversation partner was the already distinguished Oxford

3 Ibid., 125–26.
political philosopher and observer Isaiah Berlin because that was what he expected.

Our expectations and presuppositions play a crucial, almost unavoidable role in our intellectual and spiritual lives, too. They are very difficult to overcome. That, indeed, is one of the reasons why conversion is often termed a "miracle." Early Christians knew that acceptance of the truth was very likely to require overcoming one's preconceptions, and that this could be disconcerting and sometimes even painful:

These are the secret words which the Living Jesus spoke and Didymos Judas Thomas wrote.
And He said:
Whoever finds the explanation of these words will not taste death. Jesus said:
Let him who seeks, not cease seeking until he finds, and when he finds, he will be troubled, and when he has been troubled, he will marvel and he will reign over the All.\(^4\)

I recently ran across some E-mail correspondence between a very fair-minded and well-informed evangelical and one of his coreligionists. The first commented that he had read a vast amount of Latter-day Saint writing, probably more than all but a few Mormons themselves, and that he had tried to be both sympathetic and reasonable in his reading. Knowing him somewhat, I am confident he is not misstating the situation. Yet, he said, he has emerged from his extensive investigation of Mormonism and of the best of Mormon apologetics unconvinced by the claims of the restoration—a fact that, he thought, ought to give pause to intelligent Latter-day Saints. And, of course, in a sense he is entirely right. We need to do our job even better, probably, though we should be under no illusions about our capacity ever to argue somebody into the church. But our evangelical friend needs to remember that there are also Latter-day Saints who have read a large amount of evangelical Protestant scholarship and apologetics, and who themselves remain unconvinced. I am one of those.

That fact ought to give him precisely as much pause as his own case should give us. Both sides come to any interaction with distinctive expectations and preunderstandings. These affect our judgments, because they affect what counts for us as evidence and demonstration and what will be required to produce conviction.

The situation is rendered still more difficult by the fact that not everybody involved in such interactions is operating in good faith. Communication is made much worse for most people because there are not a few individuals out there who are actively devoted to the production of phantasms and specters, designed to obscure the vision of those who want to see. I shall have more to say about one such individual, "Dr." Walter Martin, in the next issue of the Review. Although he has been dead for a decade, he continues to be an almost talismanic figure in certain relatively small but militant Protestant circles. Only lack of time—I leave for Iran in the morning—prevents me from examining here one of his self-glorifying tales that is yet again circulating among the Martinistas as evidence of his superiority to the benighted and spineless Latter-day Saints. Stay tuned.

Editor's Picks

As has become customary in this space, I now list certain texts or items treated in the present issue of the Review and offer my own (inevitably subjective) ratings. In some cases, my evaluations derive from personal and direct acquaintance with the materials in question. In every case, I have determined the ranking after reading the relevant review in this issue and after further conversations either with the writer of the review or with those who assist in the production of this Review. The final judgments, however, and the final responsibility for making them, are mine. This is the scale that I use in the rating system:

**** Outstanding, a seminal work of the kind that appears only rarely.
*** Enthusiastically recommended.
** Warmly recommended.
* Recommended.
Here, then, are my ratings for the items that we feel we can recommend from the present issue of the FARMS Review of Books:

***  Collector's Library '98
***  GospeLink
**  Walter Krajewski, “Voice from the Dust: A Literary Analysis of the Book of Mormon”
***  Hugh W. Nibley, The Ancient State: The Rulers and the Ruled
*  Mark A. Smith, The Power of God
****  John L. Sorenson, Images of Ancient America: Visualizing Book of Mormon Life
****  John W. Welch and Stephen D. Ricks, eds., King Benjamin’s Speech: “That Ye May Learn Wisdom”

I am grateful to those who have made this Review possible. Above all, I thank the writers, volunteers all of them, for their unpaid work. I am grateful, too, to Shirley Ricks for her indispensable efforts and for other staff members who have assisted: Josi Brewer, Alison Coutts, Melissa Garcia, Rebecca Isom, Jessica Taylor, Melvin Thorne, and Wendy Thompson. The opinions and interpretations expressed here are those of the authors. They are not necessarily those of the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, and they are not necessarily mine. But I hope that they are always interesting, provocative, and useful.
Reviewed by Richard Dilworth Rust

The “voice from the dust” works convincingly and beautifully as “a new witness for Christ” in part because, in Krajewski’s words, “there is a closely integrated relationship between the form and the content of the text.” Krajewski’s interest is primarily in showing how imagery and typology work in the Book of Mormon. Gorton’s, as his subtitle indicates, is in chiastic structures. Both authors implicitly present strong arguments for continuing examination of literary elements in the Book of Mormon.

What struck me most about Walter Krajewski’s master’s thesis is that he was able to write it for Concordia University’s Department of Religion without apology for his belief in the Book of Mormon as an ancient sacred text with an inspired origin. In clear and forthright language, he sets forth the contents of the book and then employs tools of literary analysis to study the work. His main interest is in the writers’ conscious use of typology (e.g., Nephi’s invoking the exodus and Alma’s reference to the Liahona as typifying the word of Christ) and their stress on terms such as promise, inheritance, choice, and liberty. He further examines the limitations of language, freely acknowledged by the writers, coupled with their desire to present their message in plainness. He ends with applying Paul Ricoeur’s hermeneutical problem to the Book of Mormon. The problem, in Ricoeur’s words, is “to understand, it is necessary to believe; to believe, it is necessary to understand” (p. 103, quoting Ricoeur, Essays, 58). Krajewski sees a resolution
of this dilemma as the writers of the Book of Mormon grapple with the process of interpretation as well as affirming their faith.

Some errors of fact slightly mar Krajewski’s work. The first, a common error, is to limit the audience of the Book of Mormon to Jews and gentiles (although later Krajewski acknowledges the Lamanites as an audience). He says no one other than Joseph Smith read the plates, although the ninth section of the Doctrine and Covenants indicates that Oliver Cowdery began translating them. Krajewski says that the voices of Nephi, Jacob, and other writers of the small plates have been “subject to Mormon’s interpretation of those voices in his edited version of the records.” And he identifies the book of Nephi from which Mormon has taken his account (see Helaman 2:14) as 4 Nephi. Still, errors like these do not materially take away from Krajewski’s presentation of types and themes.

Large strategic errors, however, do limit Clay Gorton’s A New Witness for Christ: Chiastic Structures in the Book of Mormon. The book is essentially a collection of chiasms in the Book of Mormon. Gorton implies he has found them all, which allows him to make authoritative statements about percentages and authorship, as in this assertion: “The nine hundred sixty-one chiasma [sic] identified in the Book of Mormon comprise 3394 verses out of a total of 6404. Thus, 53% of the verses in the Book of Mormon are of a chiastic structure” (p. 20). He tabulates the authors by percentage of chiasticity and then organizes the main part of the book accordingly, starting with one verse by God the Father, which gives him 100% chiasticity, down to Mosiah, who with one chiastic verse has only 4% chiasticity.

There are several problems with this, though. Any addition to, or subtraction from, Gorton’s chiasms would change his percentages. For example, he says God the Father speaks only one chiastic sentence: “Behold my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name—hear ye him” (3 Nephi 11:7). What happens, though, if there are other statements by the Father in the book? As I interpret Helaman 5 (a view shared by the editors of the Book of Mormon Critical Text), the voice from heaven is that of the Father, especially in his statement, “Peace, peace be unto you, because of your faith in my Well Beloved, who was from the foundation of the world” (v. 47). With
this verse lacking chiasticity, the Father’s percentage changes from 100 to 50. Likewise, objections could be made to what seem to be forced chiasms, if they exist at all. For example, Gorton sees 1 Nephi 1:1 as a chiasm with this structure:

I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents,  
therefore

I was taught somewhat in all the learning of my father;  
and having seen many afflictions in the course of my days,  
nevertheless, having been highly favored of the Lord in all my days;  
yea, having had a great knowledge of the goodness and the mysteries of God,  
therefore

I make a record of my proceedings in my days. (p. 83)

A weakness in Gorton’s approach arises because his methodology is tied significantly to number of verses (that is, he speaks of “the number of verses that each author wrote”). After all, the manuscript of the Book of Mormon is essentially one continuous flow, and the 1830 edition was broken up into paragraphs by the compositor. It was not until the 1879 edition that Orson Pratt divided the Book of Mormon into our present-day chapters and verses. Another weakness is Gorton’s overlooking the important treatments of chiasmus found in Nils Wilhelm Lund, *Chiasmus in the New Testament* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1942); John Welch’s work, especially *Chiasmus in Antiquity: Structures, Analyses, Exegesis* (1981; reprint, Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1999); and Donald W. Parry, *The Book of Mormon Text Reformatted according to Parallelistic Patterns* (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1992).

Parry treats the opening of 1 Nephi more convincingly. For him, the section from “I, Nephi,” to “all my days” is not chiasitic, but the part that follows is:

A yea, having had a great knowledge of the goodness and the mysteries of God,

B therefore I make a record of my proceedings in my days.

C Yea, I make a record in the language of my father,

D which consists of the learning of the Jews
C and the language of the Egyptians.
B And I know that the record which I make is true:
A and I make it with mine own hand:

Of course informed people can differ in their interpretations of chiasms. James T. Duke remarks that his chiastic analysis of Alma 13:1–9 differs significantly from Parry’s. And so it goes.

The discovery of new chiasms in the Book of Mormon continues, with one person seeing a certain structure and another something else—but the first does not necessarily invalidate the second. What is risky, however, is to affirm that one has found them all. Indeed, new ones continue to be discovered (or, in some cases, created), including the Davidic chiasmus in the Book of Mormon posted by Jared Demke and Scott Vanatter on their web page and chiasms found on Jeff Lindsay’s web page.

Gorton has put an enormous amount of work into his book on chiastic structures in the Book of Mormon. Some of his examples are excellent, such as the chiasm of Mosiah 4:5–11. And the overall impression one gets from reading his book is that the Book of Mormon is extensively chiastic. However, Gorton’s book is not the kind of book I like to read through; it would be like perusing a book filled almost solely with tables and graphs. What I miss is the interpretation. So what is important about Alma 36 being chiastic? John W. Welch has given me the satisfactory answer to my question about Alma 36. The focus, Welch shows, is on the atonement of Jesus Christ as providing the turning point for Alma from pain to joy. Without interpreting it, Gorton places the turning point in the verse, “And now, for three days and for three nights was I racked, even with the pains of a damned soul.”

---

1 Donald W. Parry, The Book of Mormon Text Reformatted according to Parallelistic Patterns (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1992), 1.
Gorton’s work we do not see clearly what we do in Welch’s—the perfection and purpose of Alma’s chiasm. When I first encountered Welch’s treatment of Alma 36, my response was similar to that expressed by Jeff Lindsay on the Internet:

The beauty and power of Alma’s writing here makes this chapter one of the greatest pieces of ancient literature—and contributes to my assessment of the Book of Mormon as one of the greatest works of literature ever. The indisputable existence of chiasmus in the Book of Mormon raises a very big question about its origin: how could it possibly be the product of an early nineteenth-century writer? To me, this piece of evidence alone demands that we take this book seriously as an authentic document from antiquity.5

In trying to understand my initial delight in learning about chiasmus in the Book of Mormon and my dissatisfaction with Gorton’s book, I think it comes to a matter of layout and purpose. Chiasmus was initially employed for oral transmission of ideas. Printed structures help us visualize the patterns, but they can also get in the way with their accumulated letters, numbers, italics, and so forth. The structural devices are an aid to study but can impede readability. This is especially true if they are void of analysis. Examples of appropriate combinations of these parts are found in Chiasmus in Antiquity. Too, since people can come up with various ways of finding and organizing chiasms, I like to see these presentations grounded in the rules of chiasmus, starting with the work by Nils Lund and building on later work by scholars such as Robert F. Smith, Wilfred G. E. Watson, and John W. Welch. And I would recommend Welch’s guide, “Criteria for Identifying and Evaluating the Presence of Chiasmus.”6

The Book of Mormon truly is a glorious literary work, comparable in its intricacies to a Bach fugue and in its depth of feeling to a Beethoven sonata. It deserves the most careful attention sensitive and respectful critics can give it.

---

5 Jeff Lindsay, www.athenet.net/~jlindsay/chiasmus.shtml.

Reviewed by Gary F. Novak

**Censoring the Book of Mormon?**

No one should confuse *A Reader's Book of Mormon Digest* with the popular magazine, *Reader's Digest* (although the title of this volume itself appears in various forms on the spine and within the volume). *A Reader's Book of Mormon Digest* is intended to be "an additional way for members and nonmembers alike to read, study, and digest the precious truths of its [the Book of Mormon] doctrine in a shorter time frame" (p. vii). Hence, the author has cut the narrative, "precious history, geography, traditions, and culture" in favor of what he understands to be the doctrinal content (p. vii). Whatever else must be said about this book, it is clearly well intentioned.

*A Reader's Book of Mormon Digest* is intended to be read in a single month (see pp. vii–viii). Hence, one finds markers in the text to indicate where to start and stop reading. While these are usually placed at chapter or book divisions, they occasionally occur between verses. Thus the reader will find "seventeenth day" sandwiched between Alma 12:18 and Alma 12:20.¹ Although *A Reader's Book of Mormon Digest* can be completed in this fashion, this particular break, for example, is awkward since it comes in the middle of Alma's speech to Zeezrom and the chief rulers.

Obviously much of the Book of Mormon is missing in this 162-page book. Many chapters have been omitted, along with the

¹ Alma 12:19 is omitted.
text that gives the Book of Mormon its narrative structure and plot. However, *A Reader's Book of Mormon Digest* retains all the chapter headings found in the Book of Mormon, even when the chapter itself is not included. Book of Mormon characters move in and out of the selected verses without the narrative connective tissue that explains who they are, why they are there, or what they stand for. For example, neither Sherem (see Jacob 7) nor Korihor (see Alma 30) are mentioned. Zeezrom (see Alma 11–12) makes an appearance, but no surrounding context in this book indicates his status as a lawyer, the nature of his questions, or his attempt at bribery.

The language of the Book of Mormon has been modernized in some places. For example, Alma 36:1 reads, "If you keep the commandments of God you shall prosper in the land," thus replacing *ye* with *you*. In other places the shortening of a phrase has altered its meaning. For example, Alma 36:2 reads:

> Remember the captivity of our fathers. They were in bondage and none could deliver them except the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He surely delivered them in their afflictions.

Contrast that with the full text of Alma 36:2:

> I would that ye should do as I have done, in remembering the captivity of our fathers; for they were in bondage, and none could deliver them except it was the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; and he surely did deliver them in their afflictions.

Although such changes are subtle, what is lost is the earnest pleading of Alma to his son, the plea to perform the deeds of Alma, and the careful style Alma chose to express that pleading. Alma's action ("ye should *do* as I have *done*”) in remembering the captivity of his fathers is at least as important—if not more—than what Moss's book appears to regard as a simple imperative to remember.

In addition to confronting the loss of meaning through the editing process and the modernization of language, careful readers of the Book of Mormon who spend time identifying parallel-istic structures—where understanding the form can help reveal the
teaching—will be sorely disappointed. For example, much of the chiasmus in Alma 36 is missing in *A Reader’s Book of Mormon Digest*, this chapter being perhaps the most glaring example.

Robert Moss indicates that he has “only retained that which, in [his] judgment, [he] considered as doctrinal” (p. vii). What is of concern to me is that the excised “history, geography, traditions, and culture” may be as important as what North American Saints immersed in a modern Western tradition consider to be doctrinal. The Book of Mormon is not always read this way, perhaps especially among non-Westerners. For example, Louis Midgley notes that

The Māori . . . found nothing surprising in how rapidly individuals and communities of Lehi’s descendants forgot their duties. This was exactly what they considered the reality of their own lives and the history of their people. They not only believed that they were somehow related to Hagoth and hence to Nephi’s tribe, but they also saw themselves as replicating the tragic tale told in the Book of Mormon of the woes that come upon a disobedient covenant people. To me, on the other hand, the ease with which the Nephite faithful fell away . . . was the least believable feature of the book.

I had learned to mine the Book of Mormon for discrete bits of information about divine and human things, and I had little appreciation for the way in which stories and their plots can carry a message. I was not sensitive to aphoristic, highly symbolic, and formalized messages. Instead, I wanted the Māori Saints to read the Book of Mormon for the kinds of things that I

---

2 Compare Donald W. Parry, *The Book of Mormon Text Reformatted according to Parallelistic Patterns* (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1992). It is clear not only that some parallelistic patterns have been disrupted but also that others have been removed.


4 This is precisely what *A Reader’s Book of Mormon Digest* tries to do.
found interesting in it. But the Māori loved the Book of Mormon for different reasons. They had their own way of reading it. First and foremost, they read the Book of Mormon as a tale of a people very much like themselves. The Māori were a tribal people with genealogies and accompanying accounts of noted ancestors, and they were keenly aware of the traditional hostilities between the different tribes, subtribes, and extended families. Much of the Māori lore was directly or indirectly related to tales of family and tribal conflicts. The Māori were known for the ease with which they gave and received insults, and the passion with which they kept alive over many generations real or assumed offenses of others. They saw a dire warning against this sort of thing when they read the Book of Mormon.¹

John L. Sorenson’s suggestion that the Book of Mormon is, or can be read as, lineage history is also of particular importance in this regard.² In excising the narrative portions of the Book of Mormon—that is, what is or may be considered nondoctrinal—what may have been left out are the important elements of the larger message of the book itself.

The regular, complete text of the Book of Mormon is still the best way to read the Book of Mormon. Whatever the difficulties of length and language, Latter-day Saints will still want to read it—indeed should—with the difficult, old-fashioned language, the long quotations from Isaiah (which are, for the most part, curiously retained in A Reader’s Book of Mormon Digest), the seemingly difficult grammar, and the plot and narrative intact. Such a Book of Mormon is still a voice of warning for our times and a marvelous work and a wonder. Or, as Robert Moss himself says, “I strongly recommend that people read the Book of Mormon in its entirety” (p. vii).


Reviewed by Diane E. Wirth

The demeanor, format, and fine presentation of John Sorenson’s book *Images of Ancient America: Visualizing Book of Mormon Life* are impressive, making a real contribution for the Latter-day Saint who has an interest in Mesoamerica as it relates to the Book of Mormon. For the general reader, Sorenson’s text is informative and outlines parallels between Mesoamerican cultures and traditions referred to, or implied, in the Book of Mormon. The high-quality photographs and illustrations are also a credit to this volume. However, there are a few points dealing with the interpretation of Mesoamerican iconography that I believe need to be clarified and may be taken into consideration for any future printings. With the exception of one comment, all these points refer to captions describing pieces of artistic expression.

In the text of this book, page 16, there is a comment on DNA findings. Footnote 16 on page 228 cites V. Morrell, rather than Virginia Morell, as the source of this information. Not available to Sorenson at the time of the publication of his book is another news-breaking genetic study by Dr. Morell that is worthy of mention.¹

On page 74 the description of a Maya slate mirror back shown on the next page is given as “a Maya father exhorts a son.” This phrasing was no doubt used to show relationships between rulers

---

¹ See Virginia Morell, “Genes May Link Ancient Eurasians, Native Americas,” *The American Association for the Advancement of Science* 280/5363 (1998): 520. She reports: “Now a new genetic study may link Native Americans and people of Europe and the Middle East, offering tantalizing support to a controversial theory that a band of people who originally lived in Europe or Asia Minor were among this continent’s first settlers. The new data comes from studies of a genetic marker called Lineage X, which has been found both in living Native Americans and in certain groups in Europe and Asia Minor, including Italians, Finns, and certain Israelis—but not in any Asian population.”
and their sons in the Book of Mormon, especially since a comparison is made with Benjamin and his sons. However, the hieroglyphs on this object identify the relationship of these individuals, and they are not father and son. Michael Coe informs us that this is a king and a younger brother who is an ah k'u hun, a "keeper of the books." Sorenson correctly makes the supposition that books are next to the young man—two are in baskets.

Steam baths are briefly mentioned in a caption for an illustration of the same on page 87. Sorenson writes, "It is not clear whether women had access to this facility." Steam baths, or sweat baths as they are referred to in most studies, were for "curing, rest, and maintenance of health." Although used by men, steam baths were especially important to midwives and women ready to give birth, or those women who had recently delivered. This purification rite is still practiced by women today.

On page 99 the illustration of a dancing man reminds Sorenson of a "clown." This is a deity known as the Maya Long-Nosed Merchant God, or God M. One of his identifying accoutrements is the fan he carries—an item typically held by merchants. Clowns do perform today in Mexican and Central American ceremonies, which is a good indication that they may have done so in pre-Columbian times; however, we do not have sufficient evidence to support the conjecture that men dressing as god impersonators of this particular merchant god performed as clowns for spectators.

The beautifully carved Maya panel on page 109 is described by Sorenson as follows: "An officer (a virtual 'lawyer') of the royal court informs the ruler, who is acting as high judge." According to the hieroglyphic text, the man at the right bears the title of Ah K'in, which identifies him as a priest. But in this particular scene he has the additional role of a soldier as he is dressed in the garb of a warrior; his headdress in particular is similar to those

---

4 See ibid., 160.
worn by warriors portrayed in the Bonampak murals.\(^6\) The man to the left on the throne to whom the victor presents his captives is not the "ruler," but a subsidiary officer of the court who served the king of Yaxchilan.\(^7\)

Page 123 has two illustrations: one of an Olmec man holding a possible banner and the other a depiction over 2,000 years later from a postconquest manuscript of a group of Tlaxcalan lords. Sorenson claims they are similar. How, may I ask? The hand of the Tlaxcalan ambassador is not holding the same object as that held by the striding Olmec. Years ago this monument from La Venta was dubbed the "Ambassador," and it is perhaps for this reason an association was made by Sorenson with the Tlaxcalan ambassador. The message on the Olmec stone has not yet been fully determined, but a look at the Olmec's clothing reveals that he is simply clad with a piece of fabric that is less than a loincloth. Is this the finery that would be worn by an ambassador? In fact, Jacques Soustelle comments that the physical type of this person closely resembles depictions of Olmec wrestlers or athletes.\(^8\) Perhaps this man just won the Olmec Olympics and is carrying his victory banner around the field. The point here is that assumptions of this type weaken rather than strengthen a statement. As Saburo Sugiyama notes, "ascribing meaning to an earlier period on the basis of later evidence is always risky."

At the bottom left of page 140 Sorenson shows an artist's reconstruction of a temple from Uaxactun, which he claims is Structure E-VII-sub. The identification of the structure, however, is Structure H-X-sub-3, which makes a considerable difference. Sorenson claims this illustration is that of the "sun god." If he had used the correct plaster sculptures from E-VII-sub, that would be true—they represent the Jaguar God of the Underworld (the


\(^7\) See ibid.


Night Sun). His illustration, on the other hand (from Structure H-X-sub-3), depicts two stacked monster heads, neither one of which is a representation of the "sun god." The top section symbolizes what is known as "Snake Mountain," of which there were many in Mesoamerica. As Linda Schele and Peter Mathews have pointed out, "Since the Maya conceived of mountains as living beings, they represented them as zoomorphic creatures, complete with eyes, muzzle mouth, and ear ornaments." Snakes emerge from the mouth of this monster—it has nothing to do with the sun god. The lower head symbolizes "Sustenance Mountain." It has maize foliation at the top, and the primordial sea can be seen below with little shark heads. This is from the Late Preclassic period—the theme of these two mountains prevailed for over a thousand years through Aztec times.

On page 160 Sorenson would have done better just to show the typical Maya scribe as he does on the following page. His example on page 160, from Monte Alban, Oaxaca, Mexico, is not regarded today as being that of a scribe. According to Dr. Mary Ellen Miller of Yale University, the so-called Scribe of Cuilapan was dubbed a "scribe" only because of his meditative face and cross-legged, seated position. We cannot assume that because this individual is posed in a position similar to the manner in which Egyptian scribes worked that this particular man was of the same profession. In Miller's opinion the Cuilapan figure "is just a red herring." This man has no tools of the trade on or near his person. Maya scribes, for example, often wore a large, spangled turban with bunches of pens tucked in their headdress. Inkpots were also present on or near the scribe. The Cuilapan figure has two calendar dates on his person: 13 Flint on his chest and 13 Water on his headdress. Neither has anything at all to do with scribes.

13 See Kappelman and Schele, "What the Heck's Coatepec?"
14 Personal communication from Mary Ellen Miller to Diane E. Wirth, 11 July 1989.
Furthermore, scribes were not typically portrayed in sculpture in this part of Mexico, whereas they were ubiquitous in Maya art.

The Jaina-style figure shown on page 174 does not suggest "the use of priestly or lordly rhetoric to teach." This is clearly a statuette of a dancer with heels raised, back arched, and arm extended. His closed eyes may even be indicative of a trance state.15 This dancer may not be speaking words of wisdom to his viewers as Sorenson surmises.

A painted vase on page 179 is used by Sorenson to show that dance was important to Mesoamericans, and indeed it was. Here we see the raised heels of dancers similar to the Jaina figure on page 174. Sorenson’s caption reads, "Men dance near a lord or priest seated on a platform." The man Sorenson refers to is not actually seated on the stick-frame sacrificial scaffolding, which I believe Sorenson refers to as a "platform." A jaguar has already been killed and three death eyes are affixed to the wooden framework. It is doubtful the man seated above the row of hieroglyphs (perhaps this is Sorenson’s "platform"), which are positioned over the scaffolding, is a "lord or priest." According to Justin Kerr, the name glyph located to the right of his head identifies this individual as a "fire sacrifier." The first glyph in his name phrase is the same as the burning, smoking fire-deity glyph that he holds. Kerr believes this bowed personage is one of the supernatural Hero Twins of the Popol Vuh, the sacred book of the Quiché Maya. His bowed head is merely an artistic convention to keep him in the picture.16 The point to be made here is that the dancers are probably not performing in honor of a high-ranking official. The message of this vase is that of offerings and sacrifice. The dancer on the left holds a personified disc-shaped decapitator’s ax, and the dancer on the right has a personified bloodletter instrument affixed to his belt.

Regarding Stela 25 at Izapa, shown on page 186 and described on page 187, Sorenson writes: "This scene represents a specific mythic event told in the Popol Vuh in which a crocodile bites off the arm of a hero-god." This is not so! According to the

16 Personal communication from Justin Kerr to Diane E. Wirth, 2 December 1998.
Popol Vuh story, it is Vucub Caquix, the vain bird who represented the sun of the previous world, who tore off the arm of one of the Hero Twins, namely Hunahpu. Sorenson cites Michael Coe for this information; however, giving a description of Vucub Caquix and this particular incident, Coe writes, "This creature was a gigantic bird-monster of magnificent appearance.... The over-proud bird puffed himself up on his perch.... The Twins knew that each day the bird-monster came to a nance tree to eat its fruit. There, Hunahpu shot him.... Vucub Caquix seized Hunahpu’s arm and tore it off." Coe then goes on to say that this scenario is portrayed on Izapa’s Stela 25. It is therefore the bird Vucub Caquix who tore “off the arm of a hero-god”; it was not bitten off by a crocodile. In fact, the crocodile in Mesoamerican art when in an upright position, as portrayed on Stela 25, was often used as one of the forms to represent the World Tree. When the ceiba tree is young it is not only green but is covered with spikes that resemble Hershey kisses. This visual oddity may be equated with the color and rough, spiked back of a crocodile. Mesoamerican cultures were noted for their keen use of metaphors and puns in both art and language.

On page 192 Sorenson shows the beautiful onyx bowl belonging to an “old man with a Jewish-looking profile.” It is true that the man does have a Semitic visage; however, I believe I would have also explained that this is a portrait of the second ruler of the great city of Palenque, dating from the Early Classic, not the “Late Classic period.” David Stuart, Nikolai Grube, and Werner Nahm have all identified a glyph both on this bowl and on the early dynastic history of Palenque found in an inscription on the Tablet of the Cross, as the second ruler of Palenque. His name glyph is currently dubbed Casper, because a portion of it resembles Casper the Friendly Ghost. This ruler’s birth was A.D. 9 August 422, and his accession to the throne took place on A.D. 10 August 435. Casper, with a good-sized beard, certainly did not

18 See photo of older ceiba on Sorenson’s page 182.
have the physical appearance of a typical Maya. Perhaps in time it will be determined that he was a charismatic foreigner who won the hearts of the people and their kingdom and was subsequently accepted as their ruler. Today it is known that foreigners from the West became rulers of such places as Tikal in Guatemala and Copan in Honduras.\(^{20}\)

On page 207 Sorenson's text mentions the famous Temple of Quetzalcoatl at Teotihuacan (reconstruction pictured on page 206), built circa A.D. 200 with feathered serpent heads affixed to the exterior (museum reconstruction pictured on page 207). However, he fails to mention that nearly two hundred sacrificial victims were placed inside the temple structure as a dedicatory offering to the gods during the early stages while this edifice was being constructed.\(^{21}\) What was the meaning of this? I suggest this temple was built after the Golden Age of the Book of Mormon began to fragment, and we do not as yet have sufficient evidence to warrant an association between all feathered serpent motifs and Jesus Christ. Many Latter-day Saint writers, including myself, were once of this opinion, but further study of the subject shows that great caution should be exercised with such determinations. I do, however, agree with Sorenson's statement on page 206 that "The historical and archaeological data are not clear enough to establish that relationship decisively [between Quetzalcoatl and Jesus Christ]; nevertheless, a reasonable case can be made in support of the proposition."

Page 208 shows a mural from Tetitla, Teotihuacan. Sorenson describes this picture as that of a hybrid eagle. It would perhaps be more appropriate to have said that bird elements compose a headdress with bloody motifs of hearts and intestines that is worn by a goddess figure who dominated Teotihuacan theology commencing about A.D. 300. Moreover, the owl, rather than the eagle,

\(^{20}\) See David Stuart, "Smoking Frog, K’inich Yax K’uk’ Mo’, and the Epigraphic Evidence for Ties between Teotihuacan and the Classic Maya" (paper presented at a symposium, A Tale of Two Cities: Copan and Teotihuacan, at Harvard University, 3 May 1997). See also Coe, The Maya, 90-93, 98, 118.

was the special insignia of the goddess. This particular mural is dated to A.D. 650–750.\textsuperscript{22}

For some reason, the text of this book was far superior to the captions for the beautiful array of photographs. Overall, there is probably no harm done, even with some incorrect statements as to what is portrayed. As one who has studied Mesoamerican iconography for over twenty-five years, I found some of these statements impulsive and not up to current determinations made by scholars. However, for most Latter-day Saints, the points made in this review will most likely appear as mere nit-picking, and indeed they may be.

Reviewed by Keith H. Lane

Turning toward the Wisdom of King Benjamin

King Benjamin’s Speech: “That Ye May Learn Wisdom” is a very important work, and students of the Book of Mormon will want to have it on their shelves and use it. Like a previous FARMS volume (The Allegory of the Olive Tree, copublished with Deseret Book), this book, a concerted effort by scholars, is devoted to a particular section of scripture—a smaller section even than those publications that have dealt with particular books of the Book of Mormon or the Gospels. I find this approach valuable in its effort to get us to read more closely and in greater detail than we often do. My review of this book could be summarized in two sentences: This is a good work. More work can and should be done.

This large volume is the result of a symposium presented in 1996, though clearly some of the articles are expanded and given more detail than is possible in a symposium. This book is intended primarily for the scholar or careful reader. Many of the articles, but particularly the textual commentary and notes, are not light reading and require the patience of close study. This is not to say that the material is cumbersome, but merely that this is not a book one can breeze through with only slight attention. King Benjamin’s speech deserves no less.

The first article is Elder Neal A. Maxwell’s “King Benjamin’s Sermon: A Manual for Discipleship,” wherein he uses Benjamin’s speech to reflect on important aspects of being Christ’s disciples and to urge us toward greater discipleship. Speaking about King Benjamin’s speech, and reflecting on its importance and depth, Elder Maxwell comments:
What King Benjamin said with such clarity and humility about becoming more saintly and childlike, in my opinion, has a fulness and specificity unrivaled in all of scripture. In my opinion, if King Benjamin had uttered only the words in Mosiah 3:19, the verse would still rank among the great gems in all our scriptures. (p. 16)

Latter-day Saints will be edified as they read and consider Elder Maxwell’s observations on this speech.

Other contributors to the volume include Hugh W. Nibley, John W. Welch, Stephen D. Ricks, M. Catherine Thomas, Bruce A. Van Orden, Terrence L. Szink, and Daryl R. Hague. Of the eleven articles following Elder Maxwell’s, five are written by Welch, who is also coauthor of two other articles, one with Hague and one with Szink. To deal with each article would be too time-consuming for this review, so the best thing I can do is give a sense for what is in the book and urge readers to examine it for themselves.

Hugh Nibley’s article, entitled “Assembly and Atonement,” is characteristically interesting and challenging. Those who know Nibley’s work well will note some return to and amplification of material he has previously written, though it is gathered here in a different way. Among other things, Nibley brings out the unifying power of the at-one-ment, not only to make us one with God, but also with each other. “In the eternal order of things, we are all assembled and bound together” either in an inevitable downward spiral or in covenantal redemption from such a fall—a redemptive condition made possible only by “the intervention of God himself who ‘possesses all power’” (p. 143) and who gives more than is humanly possible. Nibley shows how this unifying power is clearly manifest in Benjamin’s speech and the overwhelming impact it has on the people who hear it.

John Welch’s article, “Benjamin’s Speech: A Masterful Oration,” reviews the speech in light of criteria for great orations. Welch argues convincingly that in the world of noteworthy sermons, Benjamin’s speech triumphs, hands down. But it is at a place like this that I think more work can be done. This is not a criticism of Welch’s article, but rather an observation and a challenge to Latter-day Saint scholars. For instance, if Benjamin’s speech is regarded as great oratory, more might be written on its
rhetorical aspects, on how it seeks to persuade, and the means it does (and does not) use to seek such persuasion. Much of Benja-
min’s speech derives its power from the words given to him by the
angel. How does one measure the oratorical impact of angelic words? Welch makes interesting and helpful insights that are valu-
able in themselves but that also open up other fields to be plowed.

Stephen Ricks’s article, “Kingship, Coronation, and Covenant in Mosiah 1–6,” is another piece of solid scholarship that uses
Near Eastern studies to illuminate both the context and content of
Benjamin’s speech. The section “From Dust to Exaltation” was
for me one of the most enlightening in the whole book. Ricks
cites scholarship that points to common motifs of “dust, kingship,
covenant, enthronement, and resurrection” (p. 261) that run inter-
twined through ancient Israelite thought and demonstrates how
such motifs run through Benjamin’s speech as well. For instance,
the careful reader can’t help but notice the references to dust and
particularly how the people of Benjamin are brought to see them-
selves in their own nothingness, their being less than the dust.
Adding light to this, Ricks explains:

Texts that speak of being in the dust can refer to situa-
tions in which the covenant relationship between Jehovah and the king or his people has been broken. . . . In
the case of Benjamin’s people, they first viewed them-
selves as “even less than the dust of the earth” (Mosiah
4:2), but through the force and effect of their covenant
they became spiritually begotten, born, free, and posi-
tioned on the right hand of God (see Mosiah 5:7–10).
It was the covenant that raised them from the dust, both
ceremonially and spiritually. (p. 262)

Such an insight gives me a better understanding of being “less
than the dust of the earth” and of the lifting power of covenants;
it also enriches my reading of this passage and similar concepts in
other places in the scriptures. That is to say, Ricks’s article not
only sheds immediate light on the passage at hand, but assists and
enlivens reading elsewhere.

M. Catherine Thomas’s article, “Benjamin and the Mysteries
of God,” speaks of a guide by which God reveals his mysteries
(“spiritual realities that can be known and understood only by
revelation,” p. 278) to those who follow the priesthood and covenantal pattern to lead lives of righteousness. Benjamin enjoins his people to open their ears, hearts, and minds in order that “the mysteries of God be unfolded to them” (Mosiah 2:9). Thomas shows that the people truly open themselves to these mysteries with Benjamin’s help and with the astounding help of an angel. The mysteries are revealed to them—and how! They receive both a real view of their fallen state and a real view of the love of God for them, as manifest in Christ’s atonement. The effect on the people is tremendous. But, having said that, Thomas explains what is crucial for Latter-day Saints to understand:

What is impressive here is that Benjamin’s people were already commandment keepers. It is not a mighty change from evil to goodness that they have undergone, like Alma or Paul, but a profound transformation from basic goodness to something that exceeded their ability even to describe. (p. 290)

Among other things, this experience is a partaking of the mysteries of godliness, which have little to do with all the intricate, perplexing theological questions we spin and everything to do with covenants, rebirth, joy, sanctification, and a fullness of God’s presence. Thomas helps us see our way to the mysteries more clearly.

At the end of the book is the important appendix: “Complete Text of Benjamin’s Speech with Notes and Comments.” This I consider to be the most important section of the book, at least in terms of helping readers look much more closely at the text. The commentary is generally good, though in a few places uneven. Some verses and concepts get thorough treatment, sometimes using scholarship in Near Eastern studies to illuminate the context or meaning, sometimes citing a General Authority’s comments or a scholar’s insight on a passage or phrase. Some words or phrases are followed by a listing of other places in the scriptures where they recur. At other times, passages receive extended comments, but tend to leave even some of the current scholarship untouched. For instance, Mosiah 4:13–30 is dealt with at length under the title “Stipulations of the Covenant.” In this section the material covered is treated as our part of the covenant—the things we must do. My criticism here is that this reading of the passage tends to
ignore a reading such as that given in James Faulconer’s “How to Study the Book of Mormon”—a FARMS publication. Faulconer argues that the “And” that starts verse thirteen is a link forming a continuation of the fruits that result from remembering our own nothingness and the greatness of God. While no one would dispute that teaching children to live peaceably and not to quarrel, and remembering our deep obligation to help those in need, are things we should seek to do, these may be not so much stipulations of the covenant but the inevitable fruits of taking that covenant to heart and experiencing the transforming power of the atonement. This may be one instance in which we can see that grace and works commingle. We taste the goodness of God’s love, and it leads to certain results. When read this way, what is mentioned in this passage is not primarily a list of what one must do (stipulations) but a description of what one will do—what results will flow—because of the influence of the Lord’s grace and power given through the covenant. Now, while the reading I have just given this passage is not the only possible one, it is in such places where one can see the need for continuing discussion and debate.

I began this review by claiming that this is a good book and that more work can and should be done. No one would agree more with the last portion of that statement than those who have compiled this volume. *King Benjamin’s Speech: “That Ye May Learn Wisdom”* will indeed help readers study this address in a new light and from fresh perspectives, but (to paraphrase the editors’ introduction) it will be a long time before Latter-day Saint scholars ever wear out the depth and import of this humbly given speech.

Reviewed by Daniel B. McKinlay

One of the inevitable matters that confront the conscientious Latter-day Saint temple attender is what to make of the array of symbols that comprise much of the temple experience. The authors in this handsomely bound book discuss in considerable detail a number of the symbols found on the exterior of the Kirtland, Nauvoo, and Salt Lake Temples and occasionally other temples. But they offer more than the title of the book would suggest: they examine symbols within the above-named structures as well.

Their method of dealing with this project is to locate the historical and doctrinal foundations of the symbols and to report, where available, the interpretations given in the scriptures and in church documents related to the building of the sanctuaries. Giving latitude for the fact that response to symbols is subjective and flexible, I commend the authors for the materials they have gathered to inform the reader of the rich meanings that have been assigned to the various symbols; at the very least they contribute appealing possibilities for the interested learner. In some cases they alert their audience to "myths," or false interpretations not originally intended, that have circulated in church circles. While certainly there is room for more than one meaning for a given symbol, it is helpful to know what scriptural and doctrinal backgrounds can be adduced in the literature to teach us what lies behind our sacred images.

One of the bonuses for me is the inclusion in a prefatory chapter of temple-related matters pertaining to the future of Missouri. The authors have assembled scriptures and documents concerning the plan for the future temple in the "center place," at Independence, Missouri. They point out that the plans for the
great temple were similar in part to the pattern revealed for the Kirtland Temple, and they add other fascinating information from early church records, suggesting what the early Brethren anticipated in this remarkable edifice. They explain the meaning of stakes, cords, and tents and relate these and other symbols to the parousia or second coming of Christ. In addition they supply quotations from some of the Brethren concerning the pivotal role of Adam-ondi-Ahman, which is a location significantly tied in with priesthood and the patriarchal chain.

As part of their presentation, the authors include tasteful and inspiring accounts of visions and other manifestations to Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and other early members of the church that enhance the meaning of the symbols that are otherwise given by word. For example, the latter-day prophets, like their Old Testament counterparts, saw the specified dimensions and other features of the contemplated temples. In the section on the Salt Lake Temple, the authors piece together from a variety of sources the visionary scenes preliminary to building that magnificent structure, thus bearing witness to Brigham Young’s (and Wilford Woodruff’s) visionary gifts and reminding us that part of the heritage of God’s people through the ages has been their esteem for consecrated land and temple. These spiritual experiences throughout the book are well documented, and in most cases have been made available in previous church publications.

The authors have researched widely in preparation for the book. Much of their material is taken from non-LDS scholarly works that deal with symbols, and in my opinion they blend in remarkably well with the considerable references taken from scripture and LDS sources. One of the natural consequences of their approach is that they demonstrate a continuity in symbolic meaning between past dispensations and this last one. The authors include copious endnotes, which should be read carefully because they contain items that are as engaging as the script itself; they are intended to bolster and enlarge the text.

I found a few places in the book where the authors might have been a little more informative. Perhaps in a future printing they could embellish these issues. On pages 65–66 they discuss the Greek letter tau and point out that this letter, in an interconnected pattern, once decorated gateways and domes near the Jerusalem
Temple (as it does in the Kirtland Temple), and that in the Vul­gate, angels put the tau on the foreheads of Yahweh’s people to protect them from the ravages of the destroying angels when the destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon was about to take place (see Ezekiel 9:3–6). Proceeding from that, they cite scriptures to show that the tau symbolized eternal life and sealing for the early Christians. This is welcome information, but I wonder if the authors could have explained a little more what the design of this letter meant anciently and why this letter had the implications to which they refer.

Similarly, on page 69 the authors discuss another symbol in the Kirtland Temple, the gonfalon, a w-shaped image that they identify with a flag or ensign designed to represent ancient mysteries. They go on to note that the individual tribes of Israel had their own ensigns and that a prophecy in Isaiah 11:10–12 refers to an ensign that would be set up for the gathering of Israel in the latter days. This they tie in to the restoration of the keys of gathering bestowed by Moses in the Kirtland Temple. I value these connections, but I would appreciate a little more understanding of what the gonfalon with its peculiar shape meant in earlier days.

On pages 106–7 the authors inform their readers that, in the architectural design for the Nauvoo Temple, an emblem that looked like a flame was located on the upper end of the spire. They comment a little on flames and fires in Solomon’s Temple, quote a spiritual report by Perrigrine Sessions about the Nauvoo Temple having flames lighting on it, then cite an account of the glory of the Lord in the latter temple, recorded by Samuel W. Richards. I am grateful for the Richards quotation; however, I feel that it is a bit of a stretch to relate this incident to flames or fire in the Nauvoo Temple. But these slight deficiencies (as I see them) are more than compensated for with the richness of the suggestions the authors present for the interested student of latter-day temples.

Some members of the church may wonder at the wisdom of disseminating a book on a theme as sensitive as the temple. In my experience with reading the book, I found that it maintains an impressive balance between manifesting discreet respect for sacred matters while at the same time providing genuine insight. The complex of temple themes is vast, since it is reflective of the plan
of salvation with Christ in the lead. The book is neither inappropriate nor insipid. And though the style is restrained and sober, it is invigorating.

As we witness the accelerated visionary movement of President Gordon B. Hinckley in the construction of temples around the world, thoughtful Latter-day Saints will desire edifying literature to help make the experience of temple participation increasingly meaningful. I believe that this exciting book can be an aid in this endeavor (with all due recognition and understanding that it is not an official publication of the church and that it represents the views of the authors) and that this tome will be enjoyed especially by at least two classes of Latter-day Saints: (1) those who have an intense interest in early church history and (2) those who enjoy studying suggestions about temple symbolism. In many instances I suspect that these two groups will overlap.

Reviewed by Louis Midgley

**Directions That Diverge:**

“Jerusalem and Athens” Revisited

There is nothing so painful to anyone as is separation from Athens and one another, for those who have been comrades there.

Gregory of Nazianzus¹

Within the “limits of reason” one can create a science, a sublime ethic, and even a religion; but to find God one must tear oneself away from the seductions of reason with all its physical and moral constraints, and go to another source of truth. In Scripture this source bears the enigmatic name “faith,” which is that dimension of thought where truth abandons itself fearlessly and joyously to the entire disposition of the Creator: “Thy will be done!”

Lev Shestov (1866–1938)²

I do not know. That may sound like a profession of ignorance that would constitute my closest possible approach to Socrates, but it is more plausibly understood as an admission of incompetence. Only rarely does

---


incompetence ever stop anybody from anything, and it will not stop me.

Werner J. Dannhauser

The ten essays by Hugh Nibley included in *The Ancient State* appear to be scholarly treatises on topics like education, or on rhetoric and its corrupting influence on ancient and modern civilization, or on ancient statecraft and its related ideology and supporting rituals, and so forth. These essays are certainly not conventional or even arcane scholarship fashioned for the sake of a struggle for tenure, promotion, and an academic career. The essays assembled in *The Ancient State* are not unlike Nibley's other efforts to explicate Mormon things by means of intellectual history—whatever else they appear to be, they are apologetic "Mormon essays." From my perspective this is a strength—they are part of Nibley's larger effort to defend the gospel of Jesus Christ against its critics.

Though Nibley occasionally employs both the product and the authority of philosophical inquiry as a tool in defense of divine special revelations and hence as an element in his effort to warrant faith in God as revealed in the scriptures, his scholarly endeavors constitute intellectual history (which is often coupled to stinging social criticism); they are not genuinely philosophical, since he already begins with the understanding of the objects or contents of faith as revealed by God.

Instead of commenting on the full range of essays found in *The Ancient State*, as tempting as that might be, I will focus exclusively on two essays written in 1963 and published in this book for the first time nearly three decades later. Nibley first set forth his schema in lectures entitled "Three Shrines: Mantic, Sophic, and Sophistic" (pp. 311–79) delivered on 1, 2, and 3 May 1963

---


4 A fine example can be found in Nibley's essay entitled "Goods of First and Second Intent," in *Approaching Zion*, ed. Don E. Norton (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1989), 524–53. The title and the structure of Nibley's analysis in this essay are borrowed from Book XII of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and then put to use in explicating and defending a morality grounded in divine special revelations.
NIBLEY, THE ANCIENT STATE (MIDGLEY) 29

at Yale University.5 (At approximately the same time he drafted a manuscript entitled “Paths That Stray: Some Notes on Sophic and Mantic,” pp. 380–478). In these essays he depicts what he argues was an old but also continuing struggle between the quest for or a claim to a wisdom available through human reason and a longing for a wisdom that comes from another world.

Nibley compared and contrasted “two basic human attitudes” (p. 315), which he also described as addictions (p. 319), expectations (p. 314), hopes (p. 317), traditions (p. 319), or inclinations (p. 331). He called these attitudes mantic and sophic. The term mantic, which will be recognized in the name “praying mantis” (Mantic religiosa)—an insect that holds its forelegs in a position suggestive of hands folded in prayer—is a Greek word identifying the prophetic, that is, the words of those claiming to be in various ways the spokesmen for the will of God (prophētai). Both mantic and sophic attitudes are, it turns out from Nibley’s perspective, thoroughly religious even when their advocates disdain that label. Nibley found evidence in Greek literature, and especially in the poets, for these two contrasting and competing religious dispositions. He also sketched the presence of sophic and mantic moods in the literature of both classical antiquity and the modern world.

Though Nibley focuses on Greek literature and religiosity, the New Testament also displays something similar to what he describes as contrasting sophic and mantic attitudes. I will demonstrate that the products of these longings and expectations either constitute or flow from the competing claims to wisdom now widely symbolized by Jerusalem and Athens. I will also show that the literature on this confrontation of religious attitudes bolsters and also corrects some of what Nibley has written on these issues.

Foolishness or What?

In the New Testament we find the claim that “God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached” concerning Jesus as the Messiah or Christ “to save those who believe,” even though “the world through its wisdom did not know him” (1 Corinthians 1:21 NIV). Many who heard the prophetic message

---

5 The original subtitle for these lectures, “The Confrontation of Greek and Christian Religiosity,” was not included in the published version.
concerning Jesus Christ, of course, rejected it. At least part of the reason for this rejection, according to the Apostle Paul, was that the Greeks turned instead to their own “wisdom” (v. 22). From this and similar remarks, it appears that at least some of the Greeks seemed to Paul to have been charmed by pagan philosophy, that is, they were enthralled by the wisdom of this world. Paul thus ridiculed a life dedicated to philosophy, one endeavor for which the ancient Greeks are still very much celebrated.

Paul thus insisted on a radical disjunction between “the wisdom of God” made available through Jesus Christ (and supporting special revelations) and the “wisdom” that some of the more sophisticated Greeks were then apparently demanding. But the quest for worldly wisdom, it turns out, constituted a life driven by a noble effort to acquire knowledge of the highest or divine things by reason alone. Something like Paul’s radical separation between opposing truth claims was later set forth by the first prominent Latin Christian writer, the remarkable Tertullian (ca. A.D. 160–225), in a famous enigmatic question: “What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What concord is there between the Academy and the Church?”

It seems that Tertullian read Paul—and I believe correctly—as yearning “to confound even philosophy itself. For (philosophy) it is which is the material of the world’s wisdom, the rash interpreter of the nature and the dispensation of God.” In setting forth his argument, Tertullian pointed to the “unhappy Aristotle

---

6 See 1 Corinthians 1:17-25 and compare 2:6-16. The closest parallel in the Old Testament to Paul's contrast between the world's wisdom (or philosophy) and divine wisdom manifest in Jesus Christ is found in language in Isaiah which indicates that, when God seeks to "do marvelous things with this people," then "the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the discernment of their discerning shall be hid" (Isaiah 29:14 RSV). But this passage cannot be read as a criticism of the pursuit of knowledge by unaided human reason, but only as a warning against the employment of something like skill or cunning in governing human affairs apart from genuine obedience to the will of God.

7 His full name was Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus.


9 Ibid.
who invented for these men dialectics, the art of building up and pulling down” among those he saw advancing an ultimately and radically corrupting worldly wisdom (or philosophy). But his primary target was the Academy, which was, incidentally, an effort to revive a school originally founded by Plato. Tertullian specifically mentions Platonism and “Plato’s school,” which may have been for him either Alexandrian Platonism or the incipient Neoplatonism attributed to Ammonius Saccas, who is sometimes thought of as the founder of this school. Be that as it may, Tertullian’s position on the danger to Christian faith found in the teachings of Platonism (and certain other philosophical schools) seems clear: “Away with all attempts to produce a mottled Christianity of Stoic, Platonic, and dialectic composition!”

My first encounter with Tertullian’s stunning contrast between what he considered the wisdom available from God through inspired men—prophetic wisdom—and the teachings of pagan philosophy came when I heard Hugh Nibley read an address entitled “Prophets and Philosophers” over KSL, a Salt Lake City radio station, on 16 May 1954, on what was then the regular 9:00 P.M. Sunday evening LDS radio program. Nibley quoted passages from Tertullian that illustrated at least some early Christian qualms about philosophy.

Though noting that “the subject of philosophy” was one with which he was “not competent to deal,” Nibley indicated that he...
would, instead, report the opinions of some of the earliest Christian writers on the encounter of the faithful with the teachings of pagan philosophers. This then constitutes the content of Nibley’s essay on “Prophets and Philosophers,” as well as part of additional remarks concerning philosophy found in portions of The World and the Prophets.\textsuperscript{15}

The Famous Question

It turns out that Tertullian’s famous enigmatic question is still very much with us.\textsuperscript{16} There is a recent, sizeable, and sophisticated literature that attempts in one way or another to deal with it.\textsuperscript{17} We

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 11, 44-62, 71-97, 100-102, 107.
\item \textsuperscript{16} Though some writers would deny this. Some of this literature provides a thorough and carefully documented and hence rather useful account of biblical materials seemingly drawn from or perhaps merely similar to the literary forms and language of pagan philosophical and poetic literature. Abraham J. Malherbe’s \textit{Paul and the Popular Philosophers} (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 1989) provides a model of careful scholarship on this issue. Malherbe notes that “one could have begun a recitation of denials of philosophic influence [on the New Testament] with Tertullian’s question, which calls for the reply that Athens has nothing whatever to do with Jerusalem. Tertullian, of course, was interested in preserving what was distinctive about the Christian faith” (p. 1). Malherbe, unfortunately, does not contrast philosophy, understood as a way of life, with prophetic faith. He therefore brushes aside Tertullian’s question on the assumption that it is merely a rhetorical flourish and that, hence, nothing much is behind it. For other similar studies, see Lancelot A. Garrard, \textit{Athens or Jerusalem? A Study in Christian Comprehension} (London: Allen and Unwin, 1965), or E. G. Weltin, \textit{Athens and Jerusalem: An Interpretive Essay on Christianity and Classical Culture} (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1987).
\item \textsuperscript{17} If the authors have roots in Roman Catholicism, then what one finds is a concerted effort to justify the large role traditionally occupied by philosophy in medieval Roman Catholic theology or an effort to reach a synthesis between Jerusalem and Athens in which philosophy has a significant place. See, for example, Jack A. Bonsor, \textit{Athens and Jerusalem: The Role of Philosophy in Theology} (New York: Paulist Press, 1993), or Stephen R. L. Clark, \textit{From Athens to Jerusalem: The Love of Wisdom and the Love of God} (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984). Jewish authors who have appropriated Athens and Jerusalem as symbols standing for something like reason and revelation (or faith) have sometimes merely described efforts of medieval Jews to find a place within their own faith for at least some of the teachings they found attractive in pagan philosophy. See, for example, Yaacov Shavit, \textit{Athens in Jerusalem: Classical Antiquity and Hellenism in the Making of the Modern Secular Jew}, trans. Chaya Naor and Niki
are certainly entitled to ask: Was Tertullian right when he argued that the claims to wisdom symbolized by Athens and Jerusalem are not equivalent or commensurate? Are they, instead, when properly understood, dissimilar and competitive? And, if Tertullian was in some fundamental way right, how can one justify (or even account for, apart from an apostasy) the appropriation by Christian theologians of the categories and explanations, and not merely some of the vocabulary, of pagan philosophy? And how can one justify the work of those who fashioned the great ecumenical creeds that have subsequently more or less defined God? These creeds employ categories borrowed from or controlled by pagan philosophy. Yet they are found in the more sophisticated versions of orthodox Catholicism and Protestantism to the perhaps surprising inclusion of the Protestant evangelical or fundamentalist faction.

"Jerusalem and Athens" in Recent Jewish Thought

If Nibley has not seen himself as competent to deal with ancient pagan philosophy in more than rhetorical and historical ways, is there someone from whom we might begin to glimpse the intellectual horizon of pagan philosophy, who could also assist us in reflecting upon its possible impact on the life of communities claiming to manifest prophetic faith? I believe there is such a one. I have in mind Leo Strauss (1899–1973), an influential Jewish philosopher whose celebrated lecture entitled "Jerusalem and

Werner (London: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1997), or Jacob Neusner, Jerusalem and Athens: The Congruity of Talmudic and Classical Philosophy (Leiden: Brill, 1997); John J. Collins, Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora (New York: Crossroad, 1983). Other Jewish writers have taken seriously the opposition of the two as set forth by Tertullian and have passionately rejected philosophy or the quest for wisdom apart from the divine revelation as found in the Bible. See Shestov, Athens and Jerusalem, for an example of this literature. Others stress the tensions as they struggle to find a synthesis between the two. See, for example, Paul Eidelberg, Jerusalem vs. Athens: In Quest of a General Theory of Existence (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1983). Finally, volumes of essays like that edited by Novak, Leo Strauss and Judaism, manifest different degrees of anguish over whether to turn (or return) to Jerusalem (and what is believed to be divine revelation) or to continue to grasp Athens (and be satisfied with merely the longings for human wisdom).
Athens” first appeared in 1967. When I discovered this lecture in booklet form, I was fascinated by its somewhat enigmatic contents. Here was an atheist Jew, or so I supposed, deeply involved in explicating and defending ancient philosophy against certain of the excesses of modernity (that is, modern, as opposed to pre-modern, notions of the limits of rationality). And yet he also had much to say about the confrontation of two competing claims to wisdom that he, silently following Tertullian, symbolized as Jerusalem and Athens. He did not, as one might have expected, just assume that even his own brand or understanding of philosophy—which was deeply indebted to, if not identified with, what he believed was ancient philosophy properly understood—necessarily had the final word.

I was led to opine about Strauss and what I could make of his arcane remarks regarding the eventual impact of the quest for knowledge by reason alone on the faith of Jews and hence on their commitment to the Bible and their fidelity to its moral demands. Whatever his own personal predilections might have been, Strauss seemed to me to have steadfastly and correctly left open the question of whether a life focused on faithful obedience

---


19 There is a complicated and passionate debate among the followers of Leo Strauss on this issue. See, for example, the various essays included in *Leo Strauss’s Thought: Toward a Critical Engagement*, ed. Alan Udoff (Boulder, Co.: Riener, 1991), those in Novak, ed., *Leo Strauss and Judaism*, and some of the essays included in *Leo Strauss: Political Philosopher and Jewish Thinker*, ed. Kenneth L. Deutsch and Walter Nicgorski (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1994). See also the introductions to the two volumes of Strauss essays cited in note 18 above and various essays cited by Kenneth H. Green in his *Jew and Philosopher: The Return to Maimonides in the Jewish Thought of Leo Strauss* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 248–64.

to God or a life dedicated to the quest for knowledge by unaided human reason was the proper way to live. He also brushed aside as unworthy choices other ways of living on the grounds that those who followed them were oblivious to the evils that haunt human nature and afflict this world or they were inattentive to the noble possibilities within. And he seems to have insisted, silently echoing Tertullian, that no synthesis was ultimately possible between the claims of Jerusalem and those of Athens.

Quite unlike Nibley, Strauss saw himself as engaged in a radical quest for knowledge by unaided human reason; he was thus a philosopher even or especially when he was engaged in composing histories of ancient or modern philosophy, and also when he was dealing with the claims he symbolized by Jerusalem and Athens. Precisely because of his own commitment to the philosophic life—to the quest for knowledge by reason alone—it is possible to draw upon his account of ancient philosophy with some confidence that his writings can assist us to begin to understand the inner structure and hence charms of that world. Grasping philosophy in its nascent forms may facilitate our own effort to clarify exactly how and why the commitment to the philosophic life may challenge the faith of communities grounded on prophetic truth claims or may corrupt and transform the faith of those who see themselves as guided by the Bible.

Strauss seems not to have mentioned that it was Tertullian who first used the symbols of Jerusalem and Athens to identify competing claims to wisdom, nor did he draw attention to Tertullian’s writings. The reason may have been that he was Jewish and Tertullian was Christian. To me, Strauss seems to have been at least somewhat contemptuous of Christian theologians. Why? Because they were not Jewish? There seems to have been a somewhat deeper reason. From his perspective, Christian theologians were

21 Werner Dannhauser is the only student of Leo Strauss I have found who even mentions Tertullian as the “origin of... ‘Athens’ and ‘Jerusalem’ as symbolizing the differences between reason and revelation.” Dannhauser, “Athens and Jerusalem or Jerusalem and Athens?” 170 n. 12, citing Tertullian’s De Praescriptione Haereticorum 7, and also Harry A. Wolfson’s famous The Philosophy of the Church Fathers, 3rd ed. rev. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), 102ff.

22 I neither agree with Strauss on this matter or I attribute to him my own bias.
too anxious to draw upon pagan teachings: they rushed into the arms of philosophy, perhaps without knowing what they were doing. They did not comprehend the tensions between the two claims to wisdom. In their understandable desire for the polemical weapons they could borrow from pagan sources and their equally understandable desire to fashion a systematic, rational structure and support for their faith, they either knowingly or perhaps unwittingly ended up corrupting their faith. They also garbled what they borrowed from pagan sources by turning it into a set of dogmas rather than understanding that it is a radical quest for knowledge and hence a way of life rather than a specific teaching or set of finished dogmas.

When Jews like Moses Maimonides (1135–1204)23 eventually took an interest in pagan philosophy, they never forgot that it was dangerous both to themselves and also to the faith of the community they loved and in which they lived. They often thought that much of what they really believed ought to be concealed from the uninstructed or vulgar. They understood that what they had appropriated from pagan sources was profoundly threatening—at least to the faith of uninstructed believers (that is, to most of those in their own faith communities).

Strauss wrote as if the practice of contrasting Athen’s wisdom (understood as ancient pagan philosophy) with Jerusalem’s (or divine revelation) was the intellectual property of Jewish writers and hence not Christian at all. What he did not acknowledge publicly was that his own favorite way of contrasting what he saw as the tensions between what appear to be radically competing claims to wisdom had its origin with a remarkable Christian writer.

Is Nibley’s sophic, from the perspective provided by the treatment of Jerusalem and Athens by Strauss, just another name for ancient pagan philosophy? I believe that what Nibley calls sophic is what Strauss (and his many disciples) most emphatically associate with philosophy understood in its ancient form. Ancient philosophy is perhaps best known and accessible to us in the popular teachings of various Epicureans and Stoics, and then in the Neoplatonic elements found at the heart of Augustine’s highly influential Christian “theology.”

Augustine does not seem to have described himself as a theologian, but rather seems to have favored the label philosopher. In Books IV and VI of his famous City of God he introduces the Christian world to the classification of theology known at least within the Stoic school of philosophy. Following the famous Stoic philosopher Varro, Augustine distinguishes political (or civil) from poetic theology and condemns both as absurd and unseemly. But instead of then introducing a presumably revealed theology, Augustine again follows Varro and describes instead “natural theology,” which turns out to be what philosophers, and specifically what he, believed were Plato’s views concerning divine things. He obviously understood that natural theology was the work of various philosophers attempting to discover divine things by reason alone. Augustine argued that Plato, as he understood (or, more likely, misunderstood) him, drawing upon Neoplatonic sources for his command of Plato, provided a necessary intellectual grounding for a mature Christian faith. It also seems that Augustine saw Christian faith, when properly understood, as somehow rising above what one might find even in the Neoplatonism with which he was familiar. But one way to read the scriptures was through the lens of Neoplatonism. If we accept Augustine’s own account of his conversion to Christianity as set forth in his Confessions, the role of Neoplatonism seems to have been crucial in his coming to see that God is incorporeal. This also seems to account for his favorable remarks concerning the Neoplatonist manifestations of natural theology that he sets forth in the City of God.

If something like this is true, are we not then, in the final analysis, still forced to deal with the issues raised by Tertullian, only now under a somewhat different set of labels? The efforts of Leo Strauss to sort out and assess the merits of the competing
claims to wisdom symbolized by Jerusalem and Athens are thus, I will strive to demonstrate, potentially useful for Latter-day Saints. But to see exactly why this is so, we must examine Nibley’s early essays on the mantic and sophic.

**Nibley on “The Confrontation of Greek and Christian Religiosity”**

As early as 1954, Nibley argued that “the unique thing about Mormonism is that it is a nonspeculative religion in a world of purely speculative religions.” From his perspective,

that remarkable characteristic establishes at once the identity or kinship of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints with the original, primitive Christian church, which in ancient times also had the unique distinction of being a nonspeculative religion in a world completely “sold” on philosophy.24

In this early distinction between speculative and nonspeculative religions we seem to have access to a key element in what Nibley later claimed is the struggle between religion that is either dominated by sophic or by mantic components. Once such a distinction is clearly in mind, it is possible to begin to trace the dialogue between those alternatives among the ancients and also in the modern world, especially among a cultural Mormon fringe group currently operating on the margins of the Mormon intellectual community.25

As is well-known, Nibley has long been engaged in the corroboration of prophetic wisdom, or of what he also labels

---


25 In a number of essays I have dealt with the appropriation by cultural Mormons of ideologies flowing from Enlightenment skepticism concerning divine special revelations. These folks tend to question or deny the miraculous and hence strive to explain the prophetic truth claims which both ground and form the content of the faith of Latter-day Saints in secular, naturalistic terms. See, for example, Louis Midgley, “Atheists and Cultural Mormons Promote a Naturalistic Humanism,” *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 7/1 (1995): 229–97; and Louis Midgley, “A Mormon Neo-Orthodoxy Challenges Cultural Mormon Neglect of the Book of Mormon: Some Reflections on the ‘Impact of Modernity,’” *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 6/2 (1994): 283–334.
“nonspeculative religion.” As part of the historical clarification and vindication of prophetic religions, he contrasted the claims of the vast array of teachings generated and maintained by the host of often competing philosophers, theologians, mystics, officers, reformers, scholars, and preachers26 with the essentially nonspeculative manifestations of mantic religiosity. The latter rest, among other things, on the attitudes and yearnings of people interested in (or at least open to the possibility of) a wisdom from another world—people who are thus open to divine special revelations.

Nibley can be read as arguing that, by focusing on the distinction between sophic and mantic, we can begin to move beyond the more traditional discussions of such seemingly enduring issues as the confrontation of reason with revelation, or of science with religion. Both of these he pictures as later and confused offspring of an earlier confrontation between two different claims to wisdom, and hence two different types of “religion,” at least when viewed through his sophic-mantic (or philosophic-mantic) lens.

That this is possible can be seen when we sense that the mantic, which is more difficult to identify clearly than the sophic (or philosophic) quest for wisdom, seems most accessible to us when we focus on the desire for prophetic truth claims that are more or less linked to the Bible. (In the case of Latter-day Saints, they are also linked to the Book of Mormon and other revelations.) Similar yearnings are found in some but of course not all expressions of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim religiosity. Nibley also sees mantic yearnings at work in much of Greek literature, poetry, and religion, and even standing behind Near Eastern cultures until “around 600 B.C.,” at what he likes to call, appropriating a label from the French scholar Lasaul, “the ‘Axial Period’ of world history.”27 (The phrase is also discussed by the German philosopher Karl Jaspers.)

How does Nibley distinguish mantic yearnings and the resulting manifestations of religiosity from the stress on rational

26 Various chapters in Nibley’s The World and the Prophets are devoted to each.
27 Hugh W. Nibley, Since Cumorah, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1988), 239 (originally published in book form in 1967). Nibley seems to hold that civilization as we know it was originally grounded on and expressive of mantic longings.
speculation—on *theoria* (or theory)—that constitutes both the substance and ground of sophic religiosity? In 1967 he briefly alluded to Erwin R. Goodenough’s rather offhand reference to a distinction

in Judaism between the “horizontal” and the “vertical” types of religion, that is, between the comfortable and conventional religion of forms and observances as opposed to a religion of revelations, dreams, visions, and constant awareness of the reality of the other world and the poverty of this one.28

Nibley then indicated that he had previously “called this the conflict between the ‘sophic’ and the ‘mantic,’ and,” he added, “it goes back to the earliest records of Greece and the Levant.”29 He identified a quest in ancient Greece for a wisdom through unaided or unassisted human reason that yielded—to use Immanuel Kant’s much later formulation—a “religion within the limits of reason alone,”30 which itself called into question and strove to replace the earlier mantic religious substratum. Such essentially religious celebrations of skepticism and rationalism Nibley called sophic. He thus contrasted a “smug ‘horizontal religion’ with . . . its utter contempt for visionary prophets”31 with a longing for a wisdom that comes from or that discloses another world. And he held that one can find this going on in Greece and Egypt, as well as in Palestine. Following the terminology he first introduced in 1963, Nibley thus described a dialectic between the sophic (or philosophic) and a contrasting yearning for the mantic, or a struggle between horizontal and vertical types of religiosity. Are these affirmations, we may ask, equivalent, commensurate, and harmoni-

---


ous, or are they, if not simply contradictory, at least competitive? He insists that the two are at least competitive, just as Leo Strauss saw tensions and even radical contradictions between what he symbolizes as Jerusalem and Athens.

**Wisdom, Wonder, and Wayfaring: Sophic and Mantic Addictions**

An important discussion has been taking place both within and outside Latter-day Saint circles on the confrontation of the wisdom sought through unaided human reasoning and the wisdom that has presumably been revealed by God through prophets. If we think of those two claims to wisdom as forming the basic foundations of Western civilization, which I do, then this discussion takes on an added importance. And if one is concerned about the confrontation of Mormon things with modernity, as I am, then taking part in the conversation is crucial, and that necessitates getting clear on the historical background of the discussion, thereby bringing these issues into focus and providing the proper bearings so that we can sort them out.

What Nibley labels as sophic yields an understanding resting entirely on the resources of the human mind, or, more narrowly, it consists of the quest for wisdom through unaided human reason. By contrast mantics long for at least some glimpse of the meaning of the magnificent and also tragic drama within which they tend to see themselves. We should not, however, assume that Nibley has ever been anxious to defend from criticisms all manifestations of mantic longings. Unlike some of his early efforts to vindicate the prophetic, in Nibley’s treatment of these longings we see him at work describing both the virtues and vices of the mantic. And he likewise does not shy from noting the virtues of sophic endeavors.

Nibley drew his categories and descriptions from the vocabulary in which such things were discussed by ancient Greeks. That has certain advantages. By so doing, he avoids imposing modern categories upon the past, as would be the case if he had addressed what he calls the “old donnybrook between science and religion” (pp. 380–81). Instead, he borrows ancient categories with which he eventually strives to understand the modern world. He argues, much as Leo Strauss did, that our current way of seeing things is a
confused outgrowth of old, and now half-forgotten, quarrels. His approach requires the reader to acquire a subtle new vocabulary; it also demands that we avoid jumping to conclusions.

Nowadays we like to contrast science and religion, or reason and revelation, or facts with faith. And given the charming ideologies of secular modernity, when such amorphous and yet simple binary sets come to define the alternatives, it is not difficult to imagine which one will have a political or rhetorical advantage. We are, for example, often easily persuaded to see a contest between science and religion, with the word science presumably identifying the solid rational position, while religion is reduced to vague feelings, mere sentimentality, or raw emotion, if not to myth, magic, or superstition. Even among Latter-day Saints, some today feel the need for talk about divine things to appear credible or be vindicated in the light of the currently fashionable notions of science. When this is the case, what is labeled science clearly tends to call the tune. But the quarrel between science and religion is not what is directly at stake in the confrontation of sophic and mantic attitudes.

Even in *The World and the Prophets*, Nibley did not address exclusively the quarrel between science and religion, though it was mentioned here and there in that book. Instead, he argues that the old donnybrook can be better understood when examined historically, when we know something of its roots and contours over time. When this is done, it turns out that the quarrel is derivative and also confused, at least partly because it turns out to be a by-product of a more fundamental and earlier confrontation between what Nibley labels sophic and mantic.

And it is not that one of these two presumably competing expectations, attitudes, or claims to wisdom is “religious” and the other is not. For it turns out that the choice between sophic and mantic necessarily commences before the grounds for either alternative can be made entirely evident, and hence involves hopes, longings, assumptions, and beliefs. In a broad sense both are thus “religious,” and both are expressions of “faith,” though with radically different and even contradictory contents. Those whose attitudes can be described as sophic—whose way of life rests entirely on the resources of the unaided human mind, of reason alone, or who may be involved in a quest for knowledge of First
Things by unaided human reason—are "religious," even when they tend to reject this label.\textsuperscript{32} It also turns out that both are necessarily articulated, explicated, and defended with words and hence involve arguments. Thus both are at least in that sense rational. It is a serious mistake to see one as rational and the other as irrational, as some have done,\textsuperscript{33} for both have elements of what can be called the rational and nonrational.

For there to be genuine faith—a rare thing indeed, according to Nibley—the possibilities of a wisdom from other worlds must be understood unequivocally (or literally); otherwise sophic assumptions dominate. What this means is that much of the world's pious religiosity, according to Nibley, is not genuinely mantic at all, since it is made to rest on the currently accepted intellectual fashions and involves in one way or another sophisticated equivocations about divine things. It turns out that hostility to even the possibility of wisdom from other worlds fuels one or another of the host of rationalizing naturalistic explanations of mantic longings and also of prophetic truth claims.

These essentially naturalistic explanations are sophic precisely because, among other things, they demand a closed universe of what they see as the natural and hence rule out in advance the possibility of other worlds. They are also sophic because they rely ultimately on reason alone or the unaided resources of the human mind. The post-Enlightenment tendency has been for those representing what they understand as the correct and controlling intellectual currents to find in the science of the day either a surrogate for faith (hence often called "scientism"), or to appeal to the mystique and authority of science. They thereby transform science into a secular religion. But it is hardly irrational or anti-intellectual to avoid such dogmatic scientism.

---

\textsuperscript{32} Marxists and some other naturalistic humanists steadfastly reject the label \textit{religion} when it is applied to their own ideology and dogmas. For a criticism of this rhetorical practice, see Midgley, "Atheists and Cultural Mormons," 246–51.

\textsuperscript{33} The other slogan commonly used to gain a rhetorical advantage by those charmed by sophic (or sophistical) claims to wisdom is the charge that the mantic is anti-intellectual. Whenever one sees that charge being directed at another party, one can expect to be treated to an exercise in propaganda and not to carefully worked-out arguments.
Whatever its charms, by itself the sophic is, from Nibley’s perspective, ultimately destructive, for it demands magnanimity (megalopsychia) and hence breeds what we know as pride. And, for the mantic, pride is lethal. From Nibley’s perspective, about the only thing in which we can appropriately and genuinely excel is repentance (when that is grounded in trust in divine mercy); everything else is a potential trap capable of decoying us away from divine things and into a world in which “religion” is debased as it becomes another commodity to be advertised and merchandized.

There have been, of course, according to Nibley, many attempts to find a synthesis or harmonization between the sophic and mantic. That sort of thing has been the business of swarms of popularizing preachers and rationalizing theologians and other fashionable intellectuals. Nibley treats such endeavors with scorn, describing them as sophistical and often merely rhetorical, even when they manifest considerable ingenuity; he strives to demonstrate that they corrupt and weaken what is genuine in both the sophic (or philosophic) and mantic; they tend to blur and obscure the real alternatives. In fact, they both cause and flow from confusion over the real alternatives.

From Nibley’s point of view, there are only two ways between which we must choose, and phantasms result from attempts to mix or blend the two or when we do not confront clearly the radical choice we must all face. He therefore distinguishes between the prophetic, oracular, and inspired, on the one side, and essentially naturalistic accounts of “religious” things, on the other. The one attitude is mantic, while the other is sophic. This distinction places theology, traditionally understood as rational speculation about

34 Consider the following: “It is commonly believed that humbleness is a precondition of wisdom. This opinion is rejected by the philosophic tradition going back at least to the Platonic Socrates. Neither Plato nor Aristotle include humbleness among the virtues. True, in the Apology (20–23), as in other Platonic dialogues, Socrates readily professes ignorance. But this is not amov so much as irony rooted in (restrained) skepticism.” And “in Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics (1123b–1124a), megalopsychia, translated as “magnanimity” or “pride,” is referred to as the adornment of the virtues. The proud or great-souled man is one who thinks himself worthy of great things, especially honor—not out of conceit but from a just estimate of his merit and desserts.” Eidelberg, Jerusalem vs. Athens, 48–49.
divine things, squarely within the realm of the sophic. And hence Nibley is not interested in doing theology; he abhors theology, whether dogmatic or systematic, including that done by Latter-day Saints.  

Nibley thus describes what he sees as the corruption of the mantic tradition brought on by its marriage to philosophy in the Christian world of Origen, Minucius Felix, Justin Martyr, and especially Augustine. The union between Christian faith and pagan philosophy turns out to have been a kind of shotgun wedding. Why was faith in Jesus as the Messiah or Christ, when guided and directed by divine revelation, not sufficient? Why was philosophy needed to support faith? Putting the question in a different way, Nibley asks, why was the marriage with philosophy necessary? Answer: “To overcome the objections of reason to revelation”—that is St. Augustine’s famous reconciliation of Classical and Christian learning. But how can you call it reconciliation when it is always the church that gives way? It is always reason that has to be satisfied and

35 I first encountered Nibley’s antipathy toward what he called “speculative theology,” as opposed to divine revelation or what he called “the apocalyptic,” in a lecture he gave on 27 November 1956 entitled “Types or Varieties of Christian Theology,” delivered at Orson Spencer Hall, University of Utah. He argued that theologians attempt to feel their way along by turning a little bit of information, some of which is drawn from divine special revelations, into a systematic or scientific comprehension of God. They all end up engaging in the same task, teaching the same things, and using the same or very similar arguments, which they often borrow from pagan philosophers, sometimes without genuinely understanding the medium in which they are busy trafficking. The problem is that information about divine things, even or especially when we take seriously divine revelation, is inadequate for a systematic account of all reality, and hence we end up supplementing and then replacing what has been revealed with speculation grounded in “the unaided powers of the human mind.”


37 Others have described similar and, from my perspective, equally unfortunate weddings between philosophy and faith that took place within medieval Jewish and Islamic communities. Leo Strauss and some of his disciples have had much to say about these developments.
revelation that must be manipulated in order to give that satisfaction; this is no compromise but complete surrender, by which Theology "becomes the train-bearer of the Old Queen Philosophy." (p. 367)\textsuperscript{38}

In this and other similar passages, Nibley describes what he believes was the end result of attempts to draw upon the sophic as a way of supporting an original and now sagging mantic tradition, if not to find a place within the sophic for some elements merely drawn from the earlier mantic foundations as recorded in the sacred scriptures. But in such schemata it is always either the grounds or contents of faith that are adjusted to the currently fashionable demands of reason. And when these efforts more or less take hold, the earlier mantic tradition is thereafter seen through a lens provided by the newfangled sophic rationalization of the contents of the scriptures.\textsuperscript{39}

\textsuperscript{38} Thus Nibley complains about what he sees as unfortunate efforts to reach what he calls an "accommodation" between mantic and sophic (p. 367).

\textsuperscript{39} Something like this can be seen in the efforts to justify the obvious use by churchmen after the third century of pagan philosophical categories to set forth and defend various understandings of divine things. Subsequently the language and understanding of the resulting theology has provided the lens through which the Bible has been read by those professing the creeds. For an instructive recent example of an effort to read back into the scriptures notions fashioned in the fourth century by uninspired and apostate churchmen, see James R. White, \textit{The Forgotten Trinity: Recovering the Heart of Christian Belief} (Minneapolis, Minn.: Bethany House, 1998). White argues that the study of history can be useful in shedding "much light on the doctrine of the Trinity," but only if we do not attribute any real authority to it (p. 177). He simply ignores the fact that both theological formulations and creedal statements sporting language about the nature, essence, being, or substance of God (coupled with efforts to distinguish the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit by calling them "persons") were clearly drawn from and deeply impacted by pagan philosophy. For him, those churchmen who fashioned the creeds were merely looking for a more precise language with which to support what they thought were authentic biblical teachings. White then reads back into the Bible his understanding of what was fashioned in the fourth and subsequent centuries as churchmen fought over the proper understanding of the Trinity. He seems unaware that he reads the Bible through the lens of subsequent theological developments and controversies that clearly manifest the influence of sophic pride and nothing of divine inspiration or revelation. Those churchmen who crafted the creeds and those theologians who fashioned explanations of the Trinity were anxious to deny such inspiration. See also White's recent venture into anti-Mormonism entitled \textit{Is the Mormon My}
In his examination of sophic and mantic, Nibley is certainly not setting forth a distinction that can somehow be transformed into a key to a metaphysics (an understanding of nature or being) that he somehow thinks stands behind true religion; it is precisely that kind of philosophical enterprise that he sees as sophistical, if not genuinely sophic. It is therefore a mistake to understand or reduce what Nibley does with sophic and mantic to the categories derived from or attributed to Greek philosophy. Nibley is not attempting to figure out an ontology or provide a metaphysics. From his perspective, to attempt to do that (and especially for religious purposes), whatever else might be said about it, would constitute a vain and fruitless exercise in sophic pride. It should be remembered that, from Nibley’s perspective, genuine manifestations of prophetic religion are embedded in narratives and are essentially practical or moral, and not speculative or theoretical, as such things are understood from within the horizon of ancient Greek philosophy. What God desires from us is faithful response to his message, not clever speculation. He requests a broken heart and contrite spirit, repentance understood as a change of heart, or a turning or returning to him witnessed by our obedience. We are to flee from Babylon and make genuine efforts to build Zion.\(^\text{40}\)

In attempting to clarify certain fundamental alternatives by probing a past that was then and there, Nibley calls attention to what he sometimes describes as “the split between rationalists and believers.”\(^\text{41}\) This split points to or involves a contest over the question of what constitutes the proper or highest way of life—that is, over the proper mode of “religion.” In such endeavors, Nibley is not engaged in theology—either systematic, natural, or dogmatic—but in essentially historical explications of meanings and possibilities.

\(^{40}\) This can be seen in some of Nibley’s more recent work. See, for example, the essays assembled in his *Approaching Zion.*

\(^{41}\) Nibley, *Since Cumorah,* 240.
Such an approach has merit. Other than direct contact with divine things, our understanding of such rests on accounts of God’s mighty acts and man’s halting responses that are contained in texts. That is, it is found in the written word, which is our tiny window to the past. This helps explain Nibley’s concern with what is contained in and can be derived from ancient texts.

Both sophic and mantic involve various longings, hopes, and expectations; they constitute alternative approaches, styles, or stages which even some of the most disparate communities share. Neither sophic nor mantic is a single entity, and hence, when different versions confront each other, they tend to recognize the similarities and the common ground upon which their competing claims are made to rest; they also tend to become petulant toward those who seem to share a similar territory.42 Jewish, Islamic, and Christian believers, from Nibley’s perspective, constitute in an important and obvious sense a single mantic “People of the Book,” despite having sometimes different and even contradictory understandings of the book (or even different books). Whatever the confrontations and quarrels between the adherents of different strands or modes of mantic tradition, the more fundamental contest turns out to be between sophic and mantic, and not the sophistic corruption of both resulting from attempts at a synthesis or blend of the two.

The dialectic between sophic and mantic, though accessible to us through a study of the past, should not be thought of as merely a matter of antiquarian curiosity, for something like it can be seen here and now, even among the Latter-day Saints. For example, the principle behind the writing of some recent Mormon history—

---

42 Much of sectarian anti-Mormonism is grounded in what might be called the narcissism of small differences. Anti-Mormons, precisely because they are anxious to speak for and sell their product to one or another of the competing and contentious brands of nineteenth-century Protestantism, have become aware that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints offers a coherent and attractive alternative to their own ideology. Sectarian anti-Mormons presumptuously arrogate to themselves the role of authoritative gatekeepers of what they imagine has always been Christian orthodoxy. This is possible because they tend to deny that Christianity has a genuine, rich, and diverse history—in which their particular narrowly constricted heresy is but one in a long line of competing efforts to preserve some semblance of the fruit of the prophetic charisms obvious in biblical texts.
which has been described as “Revisionist” (or, more vaguely, as “New Mormon History”)—is that historians ought to strive for neutrality or scientific objectivity, or what is sometimes called balance or detachment, as they deal in “human or naturalistic terms” with the Mormon past. What seems to be an essentially sophistic if not genuinely sophistic hope is found among those who hold that history and culture can be furthered by the employment of naturalistic explanations of what they label “the Mormon myth.” In that way some hope that Mormon culture and history can be “humanized” without completely disabling the traditional account of the church’s origin. Of course, those enthralled by such an essentially sophistic agenda like to picture theirs as the genuinely “scientific” attitude, or at least as detached, critical, balanced, neutral, objective, secular, and rational. They may grant that even though full objectivity is impossible, such is still a worthy ideal that can be more or less approximated, for they assume that there are degrees of neutrality or detachment. And they imply that they have these in large measure.

For some with revisionist proclivities, any sign of faith in God may be seen as a corrupting bias. In addition, some historians continue to assume that the truth about what really happened in the past makes itself known, insofar as it can be known, only to the extent that even vestigial elements of faith are shed. In that way the mantic elements of Mormon faith are managed and manipulated. As one writer concluded: “subservience to a particular


44 This language was again introduced by Arrington, who expressed the desire to justify naturalistic explanations of “what may be called ‘the Mormon myth’” or “certain historic themes sacred to the memories of the Latter-day Saints,” which “may not appeal to the rational faculty of the majority as an objective picture of the world about us.” This language is found in the preface to his Great Basin Kingdom (1958; reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), xi. Arrington reaffirmed his fondness for naturalistic explanations in a book entitled Mormons and Their Historians (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1988), 131–32.
religion is therefore incompatible with honest inquiry, whether by historians or by anyone else.”  

Such approaches seem rhetorical and dogmatic. And from Nibley’s perspective they are also essentially sophistic. Such formulations, graced with the protean expressions subservience and particular religion, suggest a distinction between servile attention to the special tenets of a particular faith (or religion), presumably including that of the Saints, which is then set over against neutrality, detachment, and objectivity—a kind of presumably rational (and hence sophic) “religion in general.” From such a perspective the trappings of conventional religion are not entirely jettisoned, but properly subordinated to a currently fashionable and regnant scientism.

At the present time it is unfortunately still common for a few secularized historians to praise detachment, and, in the binary opposition thus implied, to eschew attachment to a particular faith. All of this fits rather nicely within what Nibley describes as sophistic (or even the sophistic); the end result has been that some writers want to “distinguish studies which tend to be basically ‘faith-promoting’ from those done in ‘secular’ graduate schools which insist upon naturalistic or humanistic description and analysis.”  

Given that distinction, it turns out that much of Mormon history has been routinely dismissed by some as “basically faith-promoting.” Historians like Nibley are, of course, apologists in the sense that they both defend the faith and tend to be sympathetic with the mantic tradition. But, if Nibley’s analysis is at all sound, we are all faced with a choice between competing religious faiths, and there is no neutral or higher perspective from which to judge the competing claims. In addition, it turns out that all accounts are “faith-promoting” in the sense that they all must necessarily rest upon or support either one or another of the various sophistic or mantic hopes and longings. Or they may exemplify the confusion of the two that Nibley labels the “sophistic junk yard.”

47 Nibley, “Three Shrines,” 356. A striking example of such rationalization of divine things is found in the efforts on the fringes of the Mormon intellectual community to understand Joseph Smith’s prophetic truth claims,
Neither the sophic nor mantic constitutes a single claim to wisdom. For example, philosophers squabble; they are divided into competing schools, brands, or varieties of philosophy. One fashion in philosophy follows and competes with another. To label something sophic, as Nibley does, is not to imply that there is a single ontology or body of knowledge or a single claim to wisdom known by that name, or anything like a single metaphysical stance. Likewise, the longing for a mantic wisdom, presumably flowing from another world, also comes in different and competing shapes and varieties. Unlike the historical arguments found in The World and the Prophets, which are intended to vindicate the prophets both ancient and modern, Nibley’s arguments on sophic and mantic do not lead to the conclusion that every manifestation of the one or the other is sound or authentic.

Sophic and mantic are both open to excesses, corruption, and distortion. In addition, according to Nibley, even as yearnings, the presence of the one may act as a corrective for the abuses or excesses of the other. Western civilization can be seen as at least partially the product of the confrontation of these two seemingly different and competing claims to wisdom, and hence also with various efforts of the one to challenge or accommodate the claims of the other. In the end, however, instead of calling for a balance between the two or a synthesis, Nibley makes it clear that he sides with the mantic, despite all of its actual or potential abuses. From his perspective there is no genuine middle ground between sophic and mantic, and no higher ground from which it is possible to assess competing claims.

Nibley tends to avoid the designation sophisticated, and uses, instead, the term sophic as his designation for the employment of unaided human reason in the quest for knowledge of highest or First Things. He also tends to skirt the word philosophic, though he grants that the word sophic, albeit present, was much less common in the ancient Greek world than either sophisticated or philosophic. All three terms are versions of what was called “wisdom.” A

including the Book of Mormon, as “the Mormon myth.” Acting as clandestine theologians, a few revisionist historians have tried to distinguish actual history (what they assume can be proven to have really happened) from what they see as the encoding of Mormon faith in myth—that is, in so-called “sacred narratives” in which the divine is imagined to be part of the story.
philosopher, from Pythagoras to the present, is a lover (philos) of wisdom (sophia). By turning his focus on the word sophic, rather than on philosophic, Nibley avoids having to determine exactly what is going on among those known as philosophers as they attempt to deal with divine things.

He thus skirts the thorny question of whether this or that author involved in the philosophic is what he calls sophic, or whether their stances must ultimately be subsumed under that category. The reason seems to be that he wants to claim Plato, and especially Socrates, as mantic.48 That is possible if, among other things, one ignores the host of seemingly ironic statements in Plato’s dialogues, as well as their dramatic components and the quarrel Plato sets forth between philosophy and poetry, since it is the poets who are the ones most often driven by mantic longings. Nibley holds that Plato was not being ironic (and hence paraphrastic, if not esoteric) when he put into the mouth of Socrates (or one of the other figures in his philosophic dramas) what appear to be mantic longings, sentiments, and thoughts.

No doubt much evidence of the tension between sophic and mantic can be found in Plato’s dialogues. And given the form and style of those dialogues, it has not been easy to determine exactly where Plato (or Socrates) comes down on various issues. Hence, Plato’s writings have been open to various different and even competing interpretations, that being one of their charms. Not everyone will agree with Nibley’s assessment of Plato. But little if anything is lost of his argument, if it turns out that he is wrong about where exactly Socrates or Plato (or Aristotle) ought to be placed in his mantic-sophic classification schema. What counts is not whether he managed to classify all the players correctly, but whether he managed to identify the broad outlines of a struggle between two radically different and competing claims to wisdom.

**Encountering the Alternatives**

For a long time, as I have shown, at least since the second century, there has been a tendency to minimize the possibility of a radical disagreement between the Bible and Greek philosophy. There are certain justifications for playing down the possibility of

---

48 Though Nibley sometimes faults Plato.
such a conflict. First of all, much of what has subsequently taken place in the West involves, in one way or another, attempts to reach a synthesis between or harmonize Greek philosophy and the Bible. This is clearly the case with Christianity, but a similar process can be found in certain Jewish and Islamic circles. The clearest manifestation of an attempted synthesis is to be seen in the flowering of what eventually came to be known as Christian theology. Be that as it may, the story of Christianity cannot be told without dealing with the encounter with and then the appropriation of Greek philosophy, either knowingly or unknowingly, by various zealous and clever churchmen.

But a closer look at the relationship of Greek philosophy and biblical wisdom seems to indicate that, instead of a harmonization, what has taken place is more of an attempt to reach or attain a synthesis. Is this attempt ultimately doomed to failure? Will the confrontation of the two claims to wisdom result in the one finding a home, merely being more or less accommodated, within the larger context of the other? Will one be a guest on terms set by the host? Will both be transformed by attempts to reach a harmonization? Are such attempts at harmonization merely instances of the weakening or corruption of either or both philosophy and the Bible?

While in “Paths That Stray” Nibley provides a number of insightful propositions setting forth certain of the attributes—which are coupled to the subsequent history—of the two traditions, he does not provide a systematic account of exactly what constitutes what he called the sophic (or philosophic) quest for wisdom. For this we can turn to the writings of Leo Strauss.

“Nature” and the Philosophic Quest

We must have a closer look at what Nibley calls the sophic (or what I prefer to call the philosophic) tradition in its original form. Nibley complains about the way in which the sophic attitude looks to nature (and hence to a closed natural world) for the explanation of everything. He specifically targets what the philosophers called

49 And it is especially true within the Roman Catholic version of Christianity, elements of which are far more intellectually sophisticated than are most of the manifestations of Protestant faith.
nature (*physis*), claiming that sophics tend to look to it for a full account of reality (see, for example, pp. 338–39). He is right. Ancient philosophy involved, above all else, the attempt to close the door to genuine manifestations of prophetic charisms by fashioning naturalistic explanations intended to account for all of reality. Nibley correctly emphasizes that the first philosophers strove to discover the nature (*physis*) or essence (*ousia*) standing behind the multiplicity of finite things—they were what might be called physical investigators.

“The first philosophers,” according to Leo Strauss, “are called by Aristotle ‘those who discourse on nature’; he distinguishes them from those ‘who discourse on the gods.’ The primary theme of philosophy, then, is ‘nature.’” 50 But the quest for the *physis* or nature (or essence), or for the form, idea, or substance of a thing is not what we call nature and it is also problematic. Why? Well, for one reason, it turns out that

Nature, however understood, is not known by nature. Nature had to be discovered. The Hebrew Bible, for example, does not have a word for nature. The equivalent in biblical Hebrew of “nature” is something like “way” or “custom.” Prior to the discovery of nature [by the “physical investigators” who stand at the beginning of classical Greek philosophy], men knew that each thing or kind of thing has its “way” or its “custom”—its form of “regular behavior.” 51

Among other things, what this tells us is that philosophy, understood as the inquiry into nature, has a history; it is a unique, temporarily located, and hence conditioned intellectual endeavor and is not necessarily coextensive with human thought as such. And this history of the idea of an essential “nature” of things is itself significant.

With the discovery of nature, the Greek notion of the “way” or “custom” of a thing was split “into ‘nature’ (*physis*) on the one hand and ‘convention’ or ‘law’ (*nomos*) on the other.” 52

---

51 Ibid., 3.
52 Ibid.
Aristotle could therefore hold that it was natural for human beings to communicate with language, but that it was conventional for some to speak Greek and others Egyptian and so forth. Likewise, it is natural for humans to be political, that is, to live in a city or ordered community (polis), but the specific laws (nomoi) governing any particular regime are conventional, artificial, mere opinion (doxa). Hence, they differ from time to time and place to place like all other human conventions. One might say that it is natural for human beings to govern themselves with conventions, for without the powerful effects of moral and legal rules, we would not be genuinely human.

So what is the essence or nature of a thing? Physis identified “the character of a thing, or of a kind of thing, the way in which a thing or a kind of thing looks and acts, and the thing, or the kind of thing, is taken not to have been made by gods or men.” So we should not be surprised to learn that “the Greek word for nature (physis) means primarily ‘growth’ and therefore also that into which a thing grows, the term of the growth, the character a thing has when its growth is completed, when it can do what only the fully grown thing of the kind in question can do or do well.” But it should also be obvious that “things like shoes or chairs do not ‘grow’ but are ‘made’: they are not ‘by nature’ but ‘by art.” Included among the artificial things that it is natural for humans to make or craft by skill (i.e., artifacts) are such things as language and the communities in which we live, and hence also the opinion (doxa), including the laws, upon which communities necessarily rest.

But some things, and perhaps even the deepest or highest things, simply are. They do not grow and are not cultivated or cultured; out of some of these things everything else comes. Or, put

---

53 Hence, man is “by nature” both a rational animal (one capable of communicating with words) and a political animal (living within a structured community). But each language and each regime is conventional.

54 Strauss, introduction to History of Philosophy, 2. We can, of course, speak of the purpose or end or function (telos) of a work of art or a technical thing crafted by man. And this means that an artifact (or thing crafted by human design or skill) can be said to have a nature in the sense of that which it is intended by its artificer to be or do.

55 Ibid., 3.

56 Ibid.
another way, some of these things, understood as nature or natures, ultimately determine, dominate, or control all other things and hence are the First Things. Those who sought the nature of things were therefore especially eager to discover the nature of what they imagined were these highest or First Things. Such things as atoms and the void, fire, air, water, numbers, ideas, a prime mover, and the boundless or infinite have been included by different schools of philosophers among the candidates for the First Things. Other than providing us with a general label for the inquiry into First Things, philosophers have never reached anything like a consensus on these matters.

The quest for a knowledge of the nature of the First Things, beginning with and hence grounded in the inquiry into nature, is commonly known as ontology (on, being, and logos, inquiry).\(^{57}\) The quest for an ontology, that is, for an understanding of being itself and not simply for an encounter with some existing thing that just happens to be, commencing with a knowledge of the physis of finite, existing things and mounting methodically up to an ultimate ground of these natures, constituted what was eventually called the “first part of philosophy.” Logos (word, inquiry, and hence rationality),\(^{58}\) or how one can come to know the nature of things, was known as the “second part of philosophy.” Together these two inquiries constituted theory (theoria)—that is, speculation about the nature of things. Inevitably questions about the nature of divine things, and how or to what extent their nature can be known, were included within the category of theoretical inquiries by Aristotle.\(^{59}\)

It seems that with Socrates what was called praxis (the practical or moral) came to be known as the “third part of philosophy.” These practical or moral inquiries into how one ought to behave and hence into what we easily recognize as ethical and political issues, though introduced by Socrates, constitute major themes in

\(^{57}\) Sometimes this inquiry is known as metaphysics. Aristotle wrote a book that carried this name because it followed a book entitled Physis, which was an examination of what was thought to be the nature of things. Subsequently the term more or less came to identify inquiries into First Things, that is, what is now rather commonly called “metaphysics.”

\(^{58}\) Ratio (reason) in Latin.

\(^{59}\) See Aristotle, Metaphysics 1026a, 19–20.
several of Plato's dialogues and are dealt with in much detail by Aristotle (especially in his *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics*). And the subsequent schools of philosophy (Stoic, Epicurean, Academic, and so forth) also focused on ethical or moral and hence political issues.

Socrates is thus said by Plato to have "turned away from the study of the divine or natural things and directed his inquiries entirely to the human things, i.e., the just things, the noble things, and the things good for man." And why did Socrates turn away from the inquiry into natural or divine things, and take up, in their place, questions about virtue, justice, courage, and so forth? "It seems that Socrates was induced to turn away from the study of the divine or natural things by his piety. The gods do not approve of man's trying to seek out what they do not wish to reveal."

If this is true, a genuinely pious man will focus on human things and leave those other and perhaps dangerous matters alone. Socrates is thus known both for his piety and for asking questions that begin with "what is . . .?" These questions still dealt with the nature of things, but more precisely with human things; Socrates thus sought to grasp "the nature of the kind of thing in question, that is, the form or the character of the thing." And he also sought to relate each thing to the whole in which it is situated. Plato tells us that Socrates was especially concerned about actual human society, but even more about the nature of man, since he assumed that one cannot genuinely understand human things without seeing how individuals might become truly human. And the inquiry into this and related questions began with an examination of the opinion found in actual communities, and hence into moral and legal rules, which were seen by him not as divine or natural imperatives but as human conventions intended to cultivate the noble and just in man, or at least to control the base, degrading, and dehumanizing. This inquiry led directly to a consideration of the question of the status of the rewards and punishments that seem to support the behavior demanded by moral and legal rules and hence also led to questions of what became known as theology.

---

61 Ibid.
62 Ibid., 5.
The Situation and Function of "Theology" in the Quest for Wisdom concerning Human Things

The word theology (theologia) was first introduced into philosophic discourse in Book II of Plato's Republic, where it describes models of the "fine tales" that poets, broadly understood, ought to be required to tell children in a well-ordered city.53 The argument goes as follows. Virtue or human excellence (aretē) is acquired by education; it must be learned. Virtue cannot exist outside a community, for its higher elements are cultivated or cultured. But children (or childlike adults, that is, most humans for most or at least some of the time) cannot understand the real reasons for habitually acting justly. They must therefore be told stories that link the virtues to stories of proximate and also ultimate divine rewards and punishments. Nothing short of such "fine tales" will have the power to persuade children (and hence also childlike adults) to habitually obey the legal and moral rules and hence to act justly. And a community short on the necessary virtues (or educated habits) will be filled with factions—will be disorderly, ungoverned, and ungovernable.64

For Plato, at least, it seems that the necessary "fine tales" about divine rewards and punishments for obeying or disobeying laws are not, strictly speaking, true; they are, instead, "noble lies." The problem is that the poets have often not told the necessary "fine tales." Instead, "with one tongue they all chant that moderation and justice are fair, but hard and full of drudgery, while intemperance and injustice are sweet and easy to acquire, and shameful only by opinion and law."65 In doing this the poets

---

53 See Plato, Republic 379a, 376e–382e. For a nice translation, see The Republic of Plato, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1968), 54–61, for the exchange in which the word theologia is introduced into the discussion of "noble lies.”

64 And a corollary is that a soul not focused on virtue will also be involved in what can be seen as an analogue to the civil war or factional squabbles that afflict all actual (and hence disordered) communities.

65 Plato, Republic 363e–364a. That is, they are made shameful by opinion (doxa) and law (nomos). One writer notes that “there can be no doubt that Plato’s arguments against the art of poetry are much more likely to sound strange to the reader of today, who is no longer familiar with the role of the poets in Greek education. It was the practice then to justify the whole of one’s knowledge
produced a literature and other artifacts that undercut the crucial link between virtue and obedience to moral and legal rules. They thereby overlooked the ultimate and decisive bond between the need for just acts and the deeper pleasure or happiness that presumably attends genuine human excellence or the whole of human virtue; they dismantled the ultimate sanction for law, that is, they questioned divine rewards and punishments.\textsuperscript{66}

It is necessary “to supervise the makers of tales; and if they make a fine tale, it must be approved, but if it’s not, it must be rejected.”\textsuperscript{67} The poets, including even Homer and Hesiod, have “surely composed false tales for human beings.”\textsuperscript{68} It is not that they have necessarily told lies. In fact, it might be better if they had, since even the “fine tales” that ought to be told to children (or childlike adults) are not always or necessarily simply true, “though there are true things in them too.”\textsuperscript{69} If we are to have virtuous human beings and also a well-ordered city, we will need some model for the songs to be sung, the stories told, the “embroideries woven” for the habituation in virtue that is necessary in a just city (\textit{polis}). And this means that poets “must be compelled to make speeches” that conform to these rational models.\textsuperscript{70} In a well-ordered polity there must be what we would recognize as censorship of the various arts (including music, sculpture, drama, literature, poetry) and hence thereby control of opinion (\textit{doxa}). It is exactly at this point in Plato’s \textit{Republic} that the hypothetical model for the speeches that ought to be made by poets to children (and childlike adults) is given the designation “theology.”

\textsuperscript{66} See Plato, \textit{Republic} 364b.
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid., 377b; compare Plato, \textit{Laws} 652a–674c.
\textsuperscript{68} Plato, \textit{Republic} 377d.
\textsuperscript{69} Ibid., 377a.
\textsuperscript{70} Ibid., 378d.
It appears that Plato does not have Socrates (or the Athenian Stranger in his *Laws*) inquire into the nature of divine things as such, though much is said about divine things in these and some of his other dialogues, but only into the question of what ought to be taught and believed about such matters for the sake of the best possible regime. "Theology" is thus political. It is not mantic. It is not what the Gods reveal about themselves through prophets, though it is located in and expressed by what poets say about such matters. In Plato’s *Laws* the content of theology is what wise men come to understand should be believed by children (or childlike adults, that is, most people) about divine things. The truth of "theology" is thus seen as a social cement. If we seek guidance regarding the proper contents of "theology," understood as the “fine tales” that must be told to youths, or to those unable to control their desires, appetites, or passions without the threat of divine rewards and punishments (that is, all those unqualified for the philosophic life, the quest for knowledge of First Things), then we must turn to Book X of Plato’s *Laws*.\(^1\) It is there that we find the initial effort to set forth rudiments of what would eventually become the famous proofs for the existence or reality of God. Here we have, set forth for the first time, the God of the philosophers.

And it is at this point that Plato has the characters in his didactic dramas argue that atheists are the mortal enemies of a well-ordered community precisely because they sever the crucial link between the divine and the ultimate sanctions for either obedience or disobedience to the laws.\(^2\) It is also where prophets—once again those Nibley sees as driven by mantic longings or expectations—are seen as disruptive to the social order. Why? A well-ordered community is threatened by individuals who might suddenly claim that the actual laws governing a given community are in fact an abomination in the sight of God. *Prophētai* (prophets) also ought to be terminated, since their presence could also be disruptive to the proper order of a well-constituted community.

---

\(^1\) Especially Plato, *Laws* 884a–899e.

\(^2\) And hence we also have the proposal set forth in Book X of the *Laws*, that in a well-constituted regime some atheists ought to be put to death. Does this, perhaps, explain the fate of Socrates?
So, from the perspective of philosophy, it is useful and perhaps even necessary for wise men to set forth arguments that seem to demonstrate the reality of the divine and also assert a link between the existing laws of a community and the divine as understood by wise men. And here we have, for what appears to be the first time, the inactive, static God of the philosophers being set in place—for essentially political (or ethical) purposes. Why? It appears, or it is at least possible, that for Plato the “proofs” for God, though they may contain some truths, are actually noble lies. They appear intended to place powerful controls on the desires of youths and others lacking the habits that constitute the virtues necessary for a well-ordered soul or community. They are designed for those incapable of a life fully controlled by reason.

For Aristotle the inquiry into divine things (that is, into the nature of God) seems to have been subsumed under the “first part of philosophy,” within the life driven by the quest for knowledge of the nature of things and mounting up to the inquiry into First Things. The way was thus paved for God to become another name for whatever the philosopher considered the First Thing. And it was argued, beginning with Plato, that the essential and “by nature” most noble or highest thing for man is the use of reason in the noble quest for knowledge and wisdom. The highest manifestation of such a virtue is to be found in one genuinely engaged in the quest for virtue, beginning with questions such as “what is virtue?” It therefore should not come as a surprise that Aristotle thought that God is a kind of disembodied philosopher—that God, when properly understood, is pure thought thinking about thought. I suppose that this turns God into something like the ultimate ground of rational discourse.

So there is, at least from the perspective of classical philosophy, an inevitable collision between what every actual community and its poets or prophets happen to teach about divine things, and what ought to be taught and believed in a well-ordered community. There are, therefore, different types or levels of “theology.”

---

73 And wise men must control the content of theology, since the very idea of genuinely active Gods revealing new things to prophets is potentially threatening to the laws and hence to the order needed in a well-constituted regime.

74 At least Aristotle’s argument for a “prime mover” can be found in his *Physics* 6–8, and in his *Metaphysics* XII.
The vulgar or uninstructed must hold to the opinions common to the community in which they find themselves, while philosophers, those pursuing the knowledge of the nature of things, may come to somewhat different and even contradictory opinions. Philosophers also tended to be tolerant of the received opinions about divine things found in more or less stable communities. There were various reasons for this tolerance. One was the threat of persecution for heterodox opinions.

But there is a deeper reason that philosophers like Plato seem to have held that a well-ordered regime actually needs opinions that may not necessarily be simply true. Philosophers, at least in public, tended to respect the theology of the community, or what eventually came to be called political (or civic) theology. In private, however, they engaged in inquiries that at least potentially called into question the opinions that they knew grounded the moral and legal order of their communities. But whatever their private opinions, their public endeavors consisted of support for notions of divine rewards and punishments, while they also engaged in presumably noble efforts to refine the “theology” of their communities for the sake of these communities. And this was often done by subtly redefining divine things in an effort to bring the popular beliefs more in line with what they considered the nature of First Things. In this way they sought to provide a more noble conception of divine things by engaging in rational inquiries into the nature of God.

The so-called “proofs” for God—and in this sense a theology resting on an inquiry into the nature of things—is thus not always entirely consistent with the work of poets or even with the accepted opinions on such matters found within any actual community. Those demonstrations of God originally offered by Plato were set forth as the best efforts of wise old men who were engaged in a journey (or a quest involving an ascent) moving symbolically from low to high things, from human things to di-

---

75 On this matter, see especially Cicero’s famous dialogue entitled De natura deorum.
76 And also to protect themselves from being forced, like Socrates (presumably for the boldness of his heresies), to drink the hemlock or undergo some similar sanction.
77 Plato, Laws 885d–891e, 894e–900d.
vine. These old gents are thus pictured as busy during their symbolic ascent setting forth a model and a rational grounding for the laws necessary for a well-ordered polis, and also in linking divine rewards and punishments to those laws.

The Appropriation of "Theology" by Christians

Later the variations on these arguments would be identified by the famous Stoic philosopher Marcus Terentius Varro (116–27 B.C.) as "natural theology" (theologia naturalis)—that is, what philosophers might presumably demonstrate through unaided human reason about divine things—which he then contrasted with the political (or civic) and the poetic theology common to actual human communities. Varro's classification of theology (and also his similar classification of the gods) was later appropriated by Augustine (A.D. 354–430)78 and other Christian theologians eager to find a synthesis between the Bible and classical philosophy, or between what Tertullian and others identified as the wisdom of Jerusalem and the wisdom of Athens. How did efforts to generate this synthesis come about?

As we have seen, theology (a term from theos or god, and logos or word, and not found in either ancient or modern scripture) was first employed by Plato to describe the stories appropriately told by poets in a well-ordered city.79 As such it constitutes one of the "noble lies." The word theology was not crafted to describe the mantic (that is, divine special revelations, or the word of God), but merely human inquiries into the nature of things. Aristotle has theologians offering mythological explanations, while philosophers look to nature for explanations. He also assigned theology, as he understood it, to the first part of philosophy (theoria), which looks to nature for an understanding of First Things.80 In the Christian tradition, Origen (A.D. 185–254) seems to have been the first to describe the opinions of Christians, rather than those of the pagans, as theology. With Augustine we see the elaboration of a classification scheme in which natural theology (what philosophers, probing nature, say about God) is given

---

78 In Books IV and VI of Augustine's famous City of God.
79 See Plato, Republic 379a.
80 See Aristotle, Metaphysics 6.1025.
priority over the stories told in the community (civil or political theology) and over what poets have made of those stories (poetic theology).81

What was understood as theology within the horizon of pagan Greek philosophy, which I have just described, was originally cautiously introduced into Christianity by Origen and more thoroughly but also cautiously by Augustine in his famous City of God. Theology thus understood is not biblical.

The fruit of this borrowing from pagan philosophy can be seen in the works of the councils, in the vocabulary of the ecumenical creeds, and especially in the theology that took its cue from the efforts of the three so-called Cappadocians: Basil of Caesarea (ca. 330–79), Gregory of Nyssa (ca. 332–95), and Gregory of Nazianzus (ca. 329–89), who struggled to devise formulas to explain how the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, though clearly separate beings from the perspective of the New Testament, could still be understood as one God. This was accomplished by invoking categories borrowed from pagan sources and hence foreign to the Bible.82

Among those writing in Greek it became common to refer to God’s “being” or “essence” (ousia), which was sometimes translated as “substance” (Latin substantia). But in order to protect against monarchians (mono + arche, literally “one-rule”) and Sabellians (or modalists), who stressed that there really was only one God, Christians began to insist on there being what they called three persons (personae in Latin, borrowed from the Greek prosopon). Tertullian seems to have used this word to identify the mask worn by an actor in a play, but he also insisted, against the modalists, that a “person,” at least in Roman law, was a separate, distinct entity and hence capable of owning property (substantia). In this way he attempted to avoid having Father, Son, and Holy Spirit simply dissolved into one Being, which is exactly what the modalists were doing.

Augustine uses the label theology to identify the received opinions about the gods found in Rome and also what the poets have done with those opinions. He does not, as later Christian writ-

81 See Augustine, City of God IV, VI.
82 See Pelikan, Christianity and Classical Culture, 28–29, 32–33, 84–85, 86–89, 238–39.
ers have done, connect theology with the divine revelation or with the contents of the scriptures nor does he use the word to identify knowledge gained by reflections on what is found in the scriptures, that is, on the content of faith. Instead, when Augustine borrows from Varro—whom he praises for his considerable understanding and deep learning—what he called “natural theology,” he treated this as something very much like the science (scientia) or wisdom (sapientia) available to unaided human reason. Christians eventually came to use the term natural theology to describe rational, as opposed to mystical, efforts to capture the divine self-understanding—the nature, being, or mind of God that can presumably be known either by analogy from the created world (the so-called teleological and cosmological arguments) or by reflection on being-itself (the ontological arguments).

But this sort of intellectual endeavor has been much more at home among Roman Catholics than among Protestants. And it is customary to find Protestants either uninterested in or actually opposed to “natural theology,” or to theology overtly drawn from a philosophical culture. What many Protestants do not seem to understand is that, whatever their insistence on a so-called dogmatic or “biblical theology” and hence on theology understood as the word of God, they also have inherited an understanding of God that is heavily influenced by the infusion of pagan philosophy into medieval Christian theology, some of which is found in the creeds, while other elements were passed on to them by Augustine.

This is the point made repeatedly by Norman Geisler and Ralph MacKenzie in a recent study, though, of course, they put the best possible face on the facts they set forth. In comparing traditional Roman Catholicism with contemporary evangelical religiosity, these two evangelical theologians advance the thesis that what they label “Augustinianism” was “the major soteriological framework that informed Western Christianity. Both Roman Catholics and Protestants are indebted to the Bishop of Hippo [Augustine].”83 They claim that “both Catholics and orthodox [evangelical?] Protestants have a common creedal and

Augustinian doctrinal background. Both groups accept the creeds and confessions and councils of the Christian church of the first five centuries. Both claim Augustine as a mentor.84 I certainly agree with the opinions of Geisler and MacKenzie on this matter. One major theme of their arguments is that, whether evangelicals know it or not, they are profoundly indebted to Augustine for much of their theology.

That Protestantism in its various manifestations is grounded in medieval theological speculations turns out to be true despite the common assumption by the more biblically oriented factions of recent Protestantism (that is, the most recent varieties of evangelical, as well as fundamentalist and Pentecostal, religiosity) that their dogmas are drawn only from the Bible. What they do not see is that their way of reading the Bible is heavily influenced by later philosophically grounded theology and is also dependent on the creeds, which borrow much of their crucial terminology from pagan philosophy. Proof of this is found in the obvious fact that portions of evangelical and fundamentalist dogmatic theology rest on notions about divine things that are set forth in language borrowed from a philosophical culture. For example, notions of the Trinity or even salvation “by grace alone” were originally not biblical at all. They were, instead, hammered out by people like Augustine, who were working at least in part within the categories already borrowed from various schools of philosophy.

“A Nonspeculative Religion”

Even when the business of theology is seen as essentially descriptive or apologetic, it is not entirely at home among Latter-day Saints, who have not manifested much sympathy for the notion that divine things can be discovered with the unaided resources of the human mind.85 From the perspective of the restored gospel, what can be known about divine things has been, must be, and still can be revealed by God to seers and prophets. Though the beliefs of Latter-day Saints are rationally structured (that is, more or less coherent and ordered), the content of the faith is not the mere

84 Ibid., 17.
85 Latter-day Saints have occasionally referenced arguments for the reality of God, but they draw nothing significant from them for faith.
fruit of philosophical speculation about the nature of First Things, nor has it been deduced from premises or in some way derived from philosophical or scientific inquiries into the nature of things. Instead, the beliefs of the Saints are derived from or are grounded in divine special revelations or from reflection on such revelations. Hence, portions of the faith of the Saints have been at times set forth in what are considered authoritative statements.

The test of faith for the Saints is thus not the work of a council and is not set forth in a traditional confession, nor is it linked to one or more of the ecumenical creeds. Faith should be—must be—grounded on a witness that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, and it should reflect genuine mantic longings. The presence of the Book of Mormon and other sacred texts, when coupled with the belief in continuing contact between God and his prophets, allows the beliefs of the Saints to be identified and also allows a space for corollaries to these basic beliefs to fit changing circumstances, as God sees fit to reveal his mind and will to his prophets. The Saints may draw on their scriptures and the words of their prophets to meet their spiritual needs, and also on charisms broadly available within their own prophetic community. This leaves little need or even much room for a formal theology, and even less room for systematic treatises intended to fix, order, and settle the understanding of the believers. It does, though, allow an appropriate, subordinate role for reason, broadly understood, as a powerful and necessary tool for attaining coherence and for understanding and also working out the meaning and implications found in the revelations.

It is theology, understood as the attempt to discover the nature of divine things by unaided human reason, that the Saints see as challenging, radically altering, or competing with the original understanding of biblical messages. From a Latter-day Saint perspective, attempts to provide systematic accounts of divine things on the basis of categories drawn from philosophy are seen as indications of apostasy, signs of which are detected when categories and explanations foreign to the scriptures are used to replace (or to corrupt) the revealed content of faith. The Saints look with suspicion on speculation about divine things and hence have not been particularly attracted to proofs about the nature or the reality
of God—that is, to what has been known as natural theology since Augustine borrowed that label from Varro.

Not having what has traditionally been understood as theology, Latter-day Saints instead have sacred texts that describe theophanies and special revelations and contain inspired teachings. These are accompanied by several accounts of God’s establishing his covenant people, usually coupled with accounts of a dialectic of obedience and disobedience that followed such events. Such accounts may be said to contain “theology,” but not in the sense that it is assumed to be a body of knowledge accessible to human ingenuity rather than the word or will of God as revealed to and through prophets.

The Book of Mormon, along with the account of its coming forth, anchors the faith of Latter-day Saints. It is, however, not theological speculation. Instead, it is a long and tragic history, providing those who now possess it with prophetic warnings about deviations from their own covenants with God. In the Book of Mormon (and other sacred texts) the doctrine of Jesus Christ provides the rock (or foundation) for all other beliefs, practices, and understandings. What the Book of Mormon calls “the doctrine of Jesus Christ” is a singular teaching, having several points, including faith in Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah or Christ, repentance, baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. Those who observe these points of doctrine, which are all set within a cosmic plan of redemption (see, for example, Alma 12:25; 34:9), and who “endure to the end” as they strive to keep the commandments will be saved in the kingdom of God by the merits and mercy of the Holy One of Israel (see 2 Nephi 25:29; 31:20; 3 Nephi 15:9). This understanding of the gospel was known to the original prophets of the Lehi colony (see, for example, 1 Nephi 15:14) and was later taught by Jesus on his visit to his faithful followers (see 3 Nephi 11:30–40; 27:1–22). As both ground and substance of the faith of the Saints, these are simply realities and not matters of conjecture. It is a mistake to see the basic points of doctrine or what is

87 See Louis Midgley, “Prophetic Messages or Dogmatic Theology?” Review of Books on the Book of Mormon 1 (1989): 92–113. For an investigation from a Latter-day Saint perspective of the differences between the prophetic
built upon them as theological speculation, just as it is inaccurate to see them as myths or to see Joseph Smith as a mystic. 88

The content of the faith of Latter-day Saints is thus rooted in events they firmly believe actually happened. Jesus was the literal Son of God, was born in Palestine, was crucified, rose the third day, and appeared to his disciples in both the Old and the New Worlds. Jesus Christ appeared to Joseph Smith and sent his messengers to restore the fulness of his gospel and provide additional sacred texts. Hence, it is in historical work, especially that which records the crucial founding revelations, that both the explication and also the defense of the faith takes place. The Saints can scarcely be said to have much in the way of a dogmatic theology, though they sometimes informally borrow the tendency that was established by Roman Catholic writers as early as the eleventh century to designate the whole of Christian dogma by the label theology.

Coming as they did from mostly Protestant sectarian backgrounds, the early Saints were fond of the word theology, and it turns up here and there among their writings. And they seemed to desire something like an authoritative compendium of their beliefs. An example of the literature this desire seems to have generated is provided by Parley P. Pratt’s Key to the Science of Theology, once a popular little book. 89 Such books seem to have filled a need for an orderly explication of what was believed to have been revealed through Joseph Smith, but they do not approach what is commonly understood as theology in Christian circles and have never enjoyed anything approaching the popularity of the scriptures as authoritative texts in the life of the Saints. And some Saints also seem to have felt a need for something approaching a

creed or an orderly and authoritative setting forth of their beliefs. What they managed to produce were initially called “theological lectures,” which were later known as Lectures on Faith.  

Formal theological treatises found in Protestant sectarian circles such as those fashioned by Charles G. Finney (1792–1875) or Alexander Campbell (1788–1866) may have provided models for these materials. Even though the Lectures on Faith have been widely available and attempts to breathe life into them have not entirely disappeared, these efforts to set forth LDS beliefs have had little influence on the life of the Saints.

The desire for definitive answers to a host of seemingly interesting or perhaps even vexing questions has been satisfied recently by books written by Elder Bruce R. McConkie. His writings have obviously not been influenced by a philosophical culture, as is much of Christian theology, and hence represent more nearly an instance of dogmatic rather than speculative, formal, or systematic theology. Such compendia have no official standing among Latter-day Saints and offer only the opinions of their authors.

The desire to have “Mormon” teachings set forth in a seemingly philosophically sophisticated manner has been gratified by Sterling McMurrin, who attempted to show how traditional phi-

---


91 See ibid.

92 They were the original “doctrinal” portion of the Doctrine and Covenants. The sections containing revelations to Joseph Smith and certain other materials, which are currently known as the Doctrine and Covenants, were originally known as the Book of Covenants and Commandments or simply as the Book of Commandments.

93 See, for example, the new version of the Lectures on Faith published by Larry E. Dahl and Charles D. Tate Jr., eds., The Lectures on Faith in Historical Perspective (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1990).

94 See especially Bruce R. McConkie’s once-popular compendium of opinions on various topics entitled Mormon Doctrine, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966). The first edition of this book became notorious because some of what it contained had to be deleted or altered in the subsequent reedition.

95 Books like Mormon Doctrine have recently been more or less replaced by the much less dogmatic Encyclopedia of Mormonism as a primary source for information on the beliefs, practices, and history of Latter-day Saints.
Losophy and Christian theology might be accommodated to what he believed was the ontology (or metaphysics) somehow necessarily inherent in LDS teachings. But his obvious failure to take into account divine special revelations seriously undermined his project, as did his misunderstanding of many LDS beliefs. He discounted the possibility of divine revelation and looked instead for signs of naturalism and humanism in the beliefs of the Saints.

McMurrin thought that what he called “Mormon theology” manifests a “humanistic temper.” He also liked to refer to the “naturalistic facet of Mormon thought” and the “naturalistic quality of Mormon philosophy.”96 What McMurrin rather gratuitously attributed to the Saints were some of his own naturalistic biases.

McMurrin, among other things, asserted without argument that the “Mormon religion” manifests “a naturalistic and humanistic quality uncommon in theistic religion.”97 His use of philosophical, theological, and ideological terminology, though elegant, smacks of what one might find in the glossary of an introductory textbook. Hence, his characterization of what he calls “Mormon theology” and “Mormon religion” simply doesn’t makes sense, since he employed terms like naturalism and humanism in their most ordinary meaning. “It is,” he opined, “perhaps not entirely inaccurate to describe Mormonism as a kind of naturalistic, humanistic theism.”98 In making such assertions, he never once gave even a hint that he was engaged in shrewd terminological legerdemain by means of which he had radically redefined his terminology. Instead, he read into the faith of the Saints some of the slogans that defined his own ideology.99 His views remain incomprehensible to most Latter-day Saints, though at times they seem to draw attention from those not familiar with Mormon

96 Sterling M. McMurrin, foreword to The Theological Foundations of the Mormon Religion (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1965), 2–3. He did not sense that the adjective contradicts the noun when he referred to “Mormon philosophy”—and for exactly the same reason that Leo Strauss argued that there can be no such thing as a “Jewish philosophy,” though there can be cultural Jews who are also philosophers.
97 Ibid., 1.
98 Ibid., 3.
things. They thereby divert attention to matters of speculative theology and to the ideological labeling that often takes the place of genuine philosophy—and hence away from historical matters and the crucial prophetic claims upon which the faith rests.  

Certain elements of McMurrin’s stance, not always fully understood, have been appropriated by a few cultural Mormon critics eager to show that there has been a radical “reconstruction of Mormon doctrine” as it has allegedly shifted from a pessimistic orthodoxy to a presumably more fashionably optimistic liberalism and then back toward an even more dreadful, pessimistic neo-orthodoxy. Offended by what they perceive as the pessimistic account of man found in LDS scripture, since the sacred texts obviously take sin and the need for a redemption seriously, a few “liberal” critics have striven to find grounds for denying the necessity of an atoning sacrifice by Jesus of Nazareth. The literature containing such arguments is not well-known among Latter-day Saints generally and has had virtually no impact on the life of believers. Instead, the influential scholarly works among Latter-day Saints tend to be either historical or exegetical, though these too have no official standing. But these attempts to link Mormon beliefs to the vocabulary of Protestant liberalism are marginal even within the Latter-day Saint intellectual community.

Is an Accommodation Possible between Jerusalem and Athens?

According to Strauss, some hold that what he considered the two crucial “roots of the Western world,” which he symbolized

---

100 McMurrin’s attention to the actual faith of Latter-day Saints was marginal and hence flawed. He actually boasted that he had never read the entire Book of Mormon. See Sterling M. McMurrin and L. Jackson Newell, Matters of Conscience: Conversations with Sterling M. McMurrin on Philosophy, Education, and Religion (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996), 114.

101 For the single most outlandish example of such an attempt to argue that “traditional Mormonism,” understood through the lens provided by Sterling McMurrin, had no need for an atonement or redemption from sin by Jesus Christ, since it advanced a “liberal” view of man, see O. Kendall White Jr., Mormon Neo-Orthodoxy: A Crisis Theology (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1987). For a detailed criticism of White’s argument and an account of his dependence on his own understanding of McMurrin’s religious sympathies and ideology, see Midgley, “A Mormon Neo-Orthodoxy,” 285–87, 289–316, 321–34.
by Jerusalem and Athens, are incompatible. They contend that a harmonization of the Bible and Greek philosophy is ultimately simply impossible, precisely because

each of these two roots of the Western world sets forth one thing as the one thing needful, and the one thing needful proclaimed by the Bible is incompatible, as it is understood by the Bible, with the one thing needful proclaimed by Greek philosophy, as it is understood by Greek philosophy.  

Strauss argued that "the one thing needful according to Greek philosophy," from within the horizon of that cultural perspective, "is the life of autonomous understanding," or the quest for a knowledge of First Things accessible by reason alone. Philosophy thus understood was not a set of dogmas, but a way of life. On the other hand, from the perspective of the Bible, the one thing needful is "the life of obedient love." Hence, the tension between what is symbolized by Jerusalem and Athens turns out to be a radical quarrel between two contrasting and competing ways of life.

Strauss argued that this apparent "radical disagreement" between the Bible and Greek philosophy today is frequently played down, and this playing down has a certain superficial justification, for the whole history of the West presents itself at first glance as an attempt to harmonize, or to synthesize, the Bible and Greek philosophy.

---

102 The language is from Leo Strauss, "Progress or Return?" which can be found in both The Rebirth of Classical Political Rationalism: An Introduction to the Thought of Leo Strauss: Essays and Lectures by Leo Strauss, ed. Thomas L. Pangle (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 246; and Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity, 104. Subsequent citations of Strauss, "Progress or Return?" will list the page number from Rebirth first and that of Jewish Philosophy second.

103 Strauss, "Progress or Return?" 246; 104.
104 Ibid.
105 Ibid., 245; 104.
 Strauss also argued that all efforts to reach a synthesis or harmonization of the Bible and Greek philosophy are necessarily “doomed to failure. . . . [For] a closer study shows that what happened and has been happening in the West for many centuries is not a harmonization but an attempt at harmonization.”

At this point in his study, we see Strauss offering an argument that supports the general thesis advanced by Nibley for distinguishing between sophic and mantic traditions.

Even if we admit that in the final analysis it is impossible to harmonize the Bible and Greek philosophy, one need not necessarily argue that it is impossible to find a way of accommodating either the Bible to philosophy or philosophy to the Bible. Perhaps a place within the one, a lodging or home—an accommodation in that sense—can be found for the other, even if no real synthesis or harmonization is possible. Accommodations between philosophy and the Bible might be possible, even when a harmonization is not, precisely because, according to Strauss, “Greek philosophy can use obedient love in a subservient function, and the Bible can use philosophy as a handmaid; but what is so used in each case rebels against such use, and therefore the conflict is really a radical one.”

In other words, reason may and even must be placed in the service of divine special revelations. In that case, reason would no longer stand alone or be strictly unaided. Instead, reason would then be aided or directed by faith, and hence controlled by its presuppositions. And faith, from the biblical perspective, is not dependent on unaided human reason but on something transcendent—the mighty acts of God in human affairs. That much at least can be seen, if not in the Apostle Paul, at least in Tertullian, who clearly drew on the forms and some of the content of pagan culture to support the faith as he understood it.

But is there still not a tension between the two even when the one has been made subordinate or subservient to the other? Does not every attempt at finding an accommodation between philosophy and the Bible open the possibility of the underground resis-

---

106 Ibid.
107 Ibid. 246; 104. One wonders why Strauss describes such an attempt at a subordination of the one element to the other as a synthesis (or harmonization), rather than as an accommodation in which a place is found within the one or the other according to either explicit or implicit rules of subordination.
tance and rebellion of the one against the claims of the other? Would not an accommodation open the possibility of subtle transformations in one or both of the parties? If we grant that there is a real or at least a potential tension between the claims of Greek philosophy and the Bible and if the two ways of life are ultimately incompatible when radicalized, then is an attempt at an accommodation either necessary or desirable?

Put another way: are there areas of agreement between the Bible and Greek philosophy that make possible (or even necessary) some effort at reaching a kind of accommodation between the two, or that encourage efforts at accommodation from within the horizon of either of the two claims to wisdom? What exactly might be an area of agreement between Greek philosophy and the Bible, other than their opposition to certain elements of what is now commonly called modernity?\textsuperscript{108} This seemed to Strauss (and also to Nibley) to be a rather fruitful avenue to explore.

The Third Part of Philosophy and Biblical Morality

It may not be entirely misleading to say that the Bible and Greek philosophy agree on morality on many, if not all practical matters (if not on theoretical ones). But this statement is vague. More specifically, they appear to agree on several matters, including the importance of morality and even concerning some of the formal "content of morality, and regarding its ultimate insufficiency."\textsuperscript{109} But are such areas of agreement sufficient to allow either Greek philosophy or the Bible to subordinate the one to the other? They seem, for instance, to differ concerning what "supplements or completes morality."\textsuperscript{110} In order to begin to answer that question, we must take notice of the disagreements between the two that have made Strauss and Nibley, each coming from a different perspective, see them in radical disharmony, whatever the obvious areas of agreement.

Though both Greek philosophy and the Bible appear implicitly to reject the leading assumptions behind the understanding of divine things common to various stands of modernity, they also

\textsuperscript{108} Ibid. 246; 105.
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{110} Ibid.
disagree on at least the following: (1) the place of theoretical (or speculative) matters and (2) practical (or moral) matters, specifically concerning the basis or grounds of morality.

Some, of course, may wish to claim that Greek philosophy and the Bible disagree entirely on morality. Whatever else might be said about such a stance, it is certainly an exaggeration. Moving further from the surface, some may wish to assert that there is a radical opposition between biblical and philosophic morality because they find passages here and there that seem to manifest plain differences. They may find evidence for the radical opposition of biblical morality to that found in Greek philosophy because of what they see as advocacy or permissiveness concerning homosexuality or pederasty among the Greeks. But some statements in Plato’s dialogues seem to support the Mosaic teaching on those matters. And it appears to have been “as obvious to Aristotle as it was to Moses that murder, theft, adultery, etc., are unqualifiedly bad.” And both seem to agree, according to Strauss, that the framework of morality is the family, since both see the family as the cell of society.

The Bible and Greek philosophy can be seen as agreeing in assigning a very high place to what might be called justice, rather than to courage. At least, both turn away somewhat from courage toward justice as the higher or controlling virtue or moral requirement. And both seem to mean by justice something occasioned by obedience to law. They both see law as consisting of rules—both moral and civil, both religious and secular—to invoke the modern terminology on such matters. Both see that, for the community to prosper, full obedience to the law is required. Strauss points out that in the language of the Old Testament it is the Torah that provides the guidance for the whole of life, for it is the “tree of life for those who cling to it to them that lay hold upon her” (Proverbs 3:18, as cited by Strauss), while in Plato we find language indicating that “the law effects the blessedness of

---

111 Ibid.
112 In this regard, Strauss cites Plato’s Laws 835c, at ibid., 246–47; 105.
113 Strauss, “Progress or Return?” 247; 105.
114 Ibid.
115 See ibid. 247; 106.
those who obey it." Law is also seen as comprehensive both for the Greek philosophers and in the Bible. Only within a community regulated by law is it possible to be human, according to Aristotle. Similarly, for the Jew, what Moses delivered from God—the Torah—is light and life, and for the Christian, the one who descended from the Father as the Christ is the new Moses, and hence the new lawgiver. Put another way, the gospel or doctrine of Jesus Christ is the way, truth, light, and life.

When we look deeper into either the content or the ground of morality, we begin to see differences—some of which are radical—between Greek philosophy and the Bible. Some language in Plato’s Laws (Book X) about divine retribution reminds one of similar language in the Bible, where it is clear that disobedience to divine commandments provokes divine retribution. For the Bible, the rule of law is at the same time the rule of God, since it is commanded by God. So it appears, at least on the surface, that the Bible and Greek philosophy agree on certain practical (or moral) matters, specifically on the place each assigns to notions of justice and the connection between justice and obedience to laws, and even in part on the character of law. They even agree on the importance of belief in divine retribution, if not entirely on the fact of divine retribution. They also seem to agree, to some extent at least, concerning the problem posed by the misery of the just and the prospering of the wicked. Plato, it will be recalled, mentions in the second book of the Republic the problem of the just man who suffers the fate of the unjust, and the unjust man who seems to prosper. Such observations remind one of certain biblical language (for example, the book of Job or Isaiah 53:7). And the Republic ends with what seems like a restoration of prosperity to the just, as the book of Job ends with a restoration of what he had temporarily lost.

If we assume that justice, from the perspective of Greek philosophy, has something to do with obedience to laws that are

---


117 Compare Strauss, “Progress or Return?” 248; 106.

118 Incidentally, this problem was of such proportions that it led Immanuel Kant to argue for immortality, freedom, and God (and also for progress in human history) as necessary postulates of the practical reason, even though he held that pure reason offered no grounds to support such notions.
believed to be divine commands or to have been derived from divine law, we find what appears to be a common ground between the Bible and Greek philosophy. But this common ground, upon closer inspection, seems problematic. Each seems to solve the problem of the status of what is commonly believed to be divine law in a different way.

I have mentioned the place of justice in the Bible and Greek philosophy. If we are interested in getting clear on the root of the difference between the two truth claims, this may be a good place to focus attention. If we assume that Aristotle’s Ethics is “the most perfect, or certainly the most accessible, presentation of philosophic ethics,” then we will immediately notice that Aristotle not only insists on justice and obedience to law, but that he also has a large place for noble pride or magnanimity.119 It appears that, for Aristotle, in some crucial ways justice and magnanimity comprise all other virtues. Justice “comprises all other virtues” because it relates to actions between human beings and thus forms the summit of civic virtue.120 But then magnanimity or pride comprises the intellectual virtues because Aristotle seems to believe that it is proper for a genuinely wise man to claim great honors because he justly deserves those honors. Such a notion is totally alien to the Bible.121 Why? From the perspective of the Bible, obedience to God’s will involves lowering oneself in fear and trembling in an act of humility, without which obedience to the law is of no avail. Finally, the biblical insistence on humility, coupled to an intense opposition to pride or arrogance, “excludes magnanimity in the Greek sense.”122

Language in the Bible seems to insist on man’s duties to the poor, a point Nibley is noted for emphasizing,123 which seems to be a rejection of the Greek idea of a gentleman, even though it is true that philosophers were not vulgar worshipers of wealth. Socrates is pictured as living in something approaching poverty, and Aristotle’s Ethics contains some interesting things about

119 See Strauss, “Progress or Return?” 248; 107.
120 See ibid.
121 See ibid. 248-49; 107.
122 Ibid., 249; 107.
123 See, for example, Hugh W. Nibley, Approaching Zion (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1989).
greed. Strauss notes that Socrates is said to have wondered why we can say that a horse is good without having money, but a man cannot be called good without wealth.\(^{124}\) On the other hand, Plato suggests that health, beauty, and wealth form the foundation for human if not divine goods.\(^ {125}\)

According to Strauss, "the Bible . . . uses poor and pious or just as synonymous terms."\(^ {126}\) And those who do not care for the poor are warned that they will lift up their eyes from hell. Hence, "compared with the Bible, Greek philosophy is heartless in this as well as in other respects."\(^ {127}\) Why? Strauss argued that the reason is that "magnanimity presupposes a man's conviction of his own worth. It presupposes that man is capable of being virtuous, thanks to his own efforts."\(^ {128}\) Such noble pride was thought to be derived from the recognition of one's own superiority in reason and hence in human wisdom. But the Bible will have nothing of that, for merit is always made dependent on divine mercy.

Shame, from the perspective of Greek philosophy, appears to be appropriate only to youths who have not genuinely attained virtue or who lack a genuine love of noble things, but not for old men who have attained ethical maturity. A consciousness of human failings is inappropriate in those who have been habituated to avoid wrong in the first place. But, of course, Greek philosophers differed over whether any human being can ever really become fully virtuous or fully wise. If some deny the possibility (for example, Plato in his account of Socrates), they replace the self-satisfaction or self-admiration—the magnanimity or pride—of the virtuous man with the subtle self-congratulation of the one moving toward virtue or deeply concerned with the whole of virtue, which is seen as itself the highest possible virtue.\(^ {129}\)

The Bible and Greek philosophy thus also seem to differ over the question of guilt. Guilt seems to be the guiding theme of tragedy. And Plato seems to expel tragedy from the best city. The philosopher, the best of men, is a comic and not a tragic figure.

---

\(^ {124}\) See Strauss, "Progress or Return?" 249; 107.
\(^ {125}\) See Plato, Laws 661a–662c.
\(^ {126}\) Strauss, "Progress or Return?" 249; 107.
\(^ {127}\) Ibid.
\(^ {128}\) Ibid.
\(^ {129}\) See ibid., 249–50; 107.
Tragedy is thus replaced by choruses praising the virtues and hence those genuinely virtuous. The reason for this is that tragedy is for the multitude and its purpose is to purge both pity and fear from the city.\textsuperscript{130}

But fear and pity both seem to be passions associated with guilt. If I genuinely feel guilty, I may perhaps have some pity for those I have harmed as I failed to obey the laws. And then I may also even begin to fear divine retribution. God, king, and judge are thus objects of fear. God, the father of all, makes men brothers and thus hallows pity. But Greek philosophy seems to want to avoid such a thing, viewing it as excessively and even unnecessarily morbid. Greek philosophy does not seem especially interested in the ruthless examination of intentions. That sort of thing is stressed, on the other hand, in the biblical demand for purity of heart. “Know thyself” means, for the philosopher, to know one’s nature, what it means to be human, to know one’s place in the larger pattern of nature, to examine one’s prejudices—\textit{not} to search one’s heart and come away guilty and hence humiliated and with a crushed or broken heart. All of that is biblical language and quite unlike what is found in Greek philosophy. Such a stance as that held by Greek philosophy can be maintained only if one assumes that God is not really concerned with man’s goodness or if man’s goodness is assumed to be entirely man’s own affair.\textsuperscript{131}

What all this means is that “the Bible and Greek philosophy agree . . . as to the importance of morality or justice” and the resulting order they generate. They even concur, to an extent, on the formal content of morality, on the place of law in ordering the community and individual souls, “and as to the insufficiency of morality.”\textsuperscript{132} “But they disagree as to what completes morality,”\textsuperscript{133} and also on the grounds of morality.

For Greek philosophy it is understanding or contemplation—rationality or the fruit of reason—that completes morality. Strauss conceded that this obviously tends “to weaken the majesty of the moral demands, whereas humility, a sense of guilt, repentance, and faith in divine mercy, which complete morality ac-

\textsuperscript{130} See ibid., 250; 108.
\textsuperscript{131} See ibid.
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{133} Ibid.
cording to the Bible, necessarily strengthen the majesty of the moral demands.\textsuperscript{134} What this means is that, according to Strauss, the life of philosophy, from the perspective of the Greeks, “is essentially a transsocial or asocial possibility, whereas obedience and faith are essentially related to the community of the faithful.”\textsuperscript{135} Biblically, by contrast, there can be no genuine obedience and faith without a community guided by divine law and living in the hope of divine mercy.\textsuperscript{136}

Finally, Plato can be read as holding that “evil will never cease on earth, whereas according to the Bible the end of days will bring perfect redemption.”\textsuperscript{137} The force of the moral demand is thus weakened in philosophy because it is not backed up with divine promises. This is one reason why hope is enshrined as a Christian virtue by Paul and others and is associated with faith and love. These three stand outside the philosophic catalogue of the virtues. According to Strauss, “the philosopher lives in a state above fear and trembling as well as above hope.”\textsuperscript{138} The ultimate goal of a life lived with an understanding of the nature of things is tranquility and apathy. But nothing like that is possible from the perspective of the Bible.

Likewise the philosopher finds the beginning of wisdom in wonder—in a sense of wonder specifically concerning the nature of the First Things. On the other hand, “Biblical man lives in fear and trembling as well as in hope” grounded on the promises of a merciful and just God. Philosophers thus seem to have a sense of serenity. Notice how Xenophon (in \textit{On Tyranny}) tries playfully to convince a tyrant who had committed many “murders and other crimes that he would have derived greater pleasure if he had been more reasonable” and moderate.\textsuperscript{139} Strauss contrasts this story

\textsuperscript{134} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{135} Ibid., 250–51; 109.
\textsuperscript{136} As Strauss notes, Yehuda Halevi, expressing the verdict of medieval Judaism, asserted that “the wisdom of the Greeks has most beautiful blossoms, but no fruits.” For Halevi, the term \textit{fruits} refers to actions and deeds, and not mere words. See ibid. 251; 109.
\textsuperscript{137} Ibid., 251; 109.
\textsuperscript{138} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{139} Ibid., 251; 109–10.
with the account of Nathan's rebuke of King David "for having committed one act of murder and one act of adultery." 140

Now it is true that there is much talk of divine things in Greek philosophy. And it is sometimes said that the gods can do anything. But why? Because they are thought to know the nature of things? What this implies is that they are subordinate to something exterior or that they are somehow models of the philosophic life cast in mythological form — and that something exterior is also approachable by man through his reason. Hence the philosopher is a kind of divine man or one worthy of being called a god. In Greek thought we seem to find in one form or another an impersonal or natural necessity higher than any personal being. I must apologize for such language, for it obviously caters to the current sense of what constitutes a person, which is somewhat confused if not misleading. In the Bible the one who rules in the heavens is what we would now call a "person." Why is this so? Part of the reason is that one of the things that distinguishes Greek philosophy from the Bible is that ancient Greek philosophy is possible precisely because of the discovery or invention of the idea of nature, an idea for which there is no Hebrew equivalent. Instead, there is the notion of the way (derekh in Hebrew). 141 Philosophy is thus rooted in the quest for knowledge of First Things as that can be found by investigating (with unaided human reason) what the Greeks and those who follow in their footsteps knew as nature, or as the natures of things. From the biblical perspective there is only the way or custom of a people—the statutes and the law which is binding on them because of the covenant that God has made with them. That covenant proffers to them both blessings for their faithfulness and cursings when they falter. Accordingly, they live with an awareness of the threat of divine retribution.

Some Tentative Conclusions

Nibley, of course, is not the first or the only one to notice something like the quarrel between sophic and mantic dispositions. His general theme, as I believe I have demonstrated, has drawn considerable attention from Leo Strauss and others influen-

140 Ibid.
141 Ibid. 253; 111.
enced by him. Sophic and mantic dispositions, from his perspective, ground what others have described in metaphorical language as a confrontation between Jerusalem and Athens. But we have also noted that this confrontation was alive even within Greek culture and was identified in Plato’s dialogues as a quarrel between philosophy and poetry. In addition, these Straussians tend to see the atheism in ancient philosophy as much less blatant than in modernity. Ancient atheists were not, as are modern atheists, bold and adventuresome. Why? They believed that the discussion of divine things is an important beginning element in the quest for knowledge of First Things. And they also believed that those incapable of knowledge must live by opinion, hence they respected the beliefs of the communities in which they found themselves. What may tempt us now to conclude that certain ancient philosophers were partial to or even toyed with mantic things is that they were shy and retiring in their atheism.

Some have seen in the pantheism of Stoic thought a ringing affirmation of the divine, though hardly one congenial with or resting upon mantic notions or otherwise touching the passions of believers. But Stoic pantheism is more nearly a form of sentimental atheism couched in language congenial to the uninstructed. The closest thing to a conspicuous atheism among ancient philosophers is found in Epicurean thought, and even there some provision, at least nominally, was made for the gods.\(^\text{142}\) One of the reasons for a lack of candor by ancient philosophers about divine things may have been the threat of persecution from believers. But the deeper and hence real reason for the cautious treatment of divine things by Greek philosophers, when compared with the moderns, would seem to be that the ancients did not discount the political utility or social significance of faith. Therefore they made room for the mantic in some entirely subordinate role. In Plato’s case, it was in providing edifying tales of divine retribution to support the laws of a city. But, from the perspective of the believer, attempts to reduce God to a useful social convention

\(^{142}\) See especially the didactic poem by Lucretius entitled *De rerum natura*, where the gods are placed in the empty space between the worlds and where reality is reduced entirely to atoms and the void. Whatever their status, the Epicurean gods seem totally uninterested in human matters and, for that matter, incapable of rewarding or punishing human actions.
must be considered as blasphemous as attempts to deny the reality of divine things.

When confronted with complex and subtle argumentation about divine things by ancient philosophers, it would seem worthwhile to be at least a little skeptical of what is being said. After all, it is those same writers who fasten upon us what we know as natural theology—that is, what some philosophers think they can discover by unaided human reason about God. Such an enterprise may appropriately be symbolized as the wisdom of Athens in contrast to that of Jerusalem, or as distinct from what Niblery sees as authentic mantic longings.

Leo Strauss, a secularized Jew whose own way of life seems to have involved the quest for knowledge of First Things by unaided human reason, argued that philosophy, which term once described such a radical and uncompromising quest for demonstrable knowledge, had a powerful competitor in the claim to wisdom that was believed to have been revealed by God to prophets. Their wisdom was not merely the product of unaided human reason, and hence was ultimately not believed to have been a human manufacture or merely a human discovery.

Of course, even among philosophers there were and still are vast differences over the question of what exactly constitutes the wisdom available to unaided human reason. The philosophic way of life, for which the metaphor Athens seems appropriate, is characterized by the assumption that knowledge of First Things or of the highest things can be attained, or is available to the extent that such things are possible, solely through human reason. Athens thus symbolizes a quest for knowledge of First Things and not necessarily the possession of such knowledge; it is a way of life that is thought to be the highest, most excellent, or virtuous. On the other hand, the wisdom of Jerusalem is believed to have its origin with God and is known only because and to the extent that it has been revealed to and through prophets.

As useful as the Jerusalem-Athens distinction may be, that way of setting the matter out also has the tendency to lead to the con-

---


144 See Strauss, “Progress or Return?” 227–70, 281.
clusion that the actual Athens of antiquity housed only those who sought for knowledge of First Things solely through the resources of the human mind, and that Jerusalem only made a place for those who followed the prophets and divine revelation. Nibley strives to show that in antiquity something like those two competing claims to wisdom were found among the Greeks, and not just among those peoples with biblical roots. And the actual Jerusalem was, according to Jesus, worthy of divine cursing.

And, we might add, something like that ancient religious struggle can also be seen taking place wherever secular views are being pushed by dissidents on the fringes of the church. It occurs, for example, here and there in the pages of Sunstone and Dialogue, or in the secular ideology at work in much of what gets published by Signature Press, or when the claims of the restored gospel are reduced to mere sentimentalities or to the slogans of advertising copy.

In the prophetic tradition, the giving of reasons is necessarily subordinated to explicating and defending a wisdom that the believers trust comes from deity. By contrast, in its more radical or purer and original articulations, the philosophic quest looked only to the resources of the human mind. The sophistic is Nibley’s name for the clumsy effort to harmonize the two. And modernity is the label Strauss used to identify the profound transformation of the philosophical quest into a system or even an ideology that presumably makes irrelevant the longing for genuine answers to what Nibley calls the “Terrible Questions.”

Contrary to what some critics have claimed, Nibley has not been busy providing proofs for the prophetic—he has always been within the mantic tradition. His has always been a modest effort fully within the province of the historian. On the other hand, those anxious to advance a knowledge set within the sophic tradition would have us believe that science, or at least competent scholarship, as such matters are currently understood, is entirely their business, and that they have all the answers. Nothing could be further from the truth. Nibley has striven to show that, by providing the plot, the prophetic yields a plausible alternative to

---

145 For example, see the remarks about Nibley (and others) by Marvin S. Hill in his “The ‘New Mormon History’ Reassessed in Light of Recent Books on Joseph Smith and Mormon Origins,” Dialogue 21/3 (1988): 118–19.
secular, naturalistic explanations. He has done this with historical arguments, even though secularized historians may not recognize them as such or appreciate them when they begin to see what he is doing. From the point of view of the prophetic, plausibility is about as much as is possible. But it is all that is really necessary for faith. Proofs turn out to be a chimera that those enthralled with sophic pride assume is both necessary and possible.

There is still a possibility for what can be called an accommodation, though not a harmonization, of at least some of the fruit of human reason with divine special revelations as set out in the scriptures. But this kind of accommodation can only flourish on terms laid out from the perspective of faith. It will be corrupting of faith if some specific school or brand of philosophy begins to call the tune.

The problem for many of those who believe that they possess a wisdom found in the Bible has been that there really are many interpretations and hence many ways of understanding divine things as they are disclosed in that text. What this means is that any particular faith, if it is in any way grounded in the scriptures, will find itself confronted by other competing brands of faith also claiming roots in mantic longings, which also make similar appeals to the Bible. And every manifestation of mantic longing will also face sophic skepticism concerning prophetic truth claims.

How can one account for the diversity of religious claims presumably resting on an original mantic foundation? From the perspective of ancient Greek philosophy, it was precisely the existence of many laws (and lawgivers) and also many different gods that made the quest for knowledge by unaided human reason a search for that which stands beneath (or beyond) the opinions, customs, laws, and ways of any actual people.

There is neither a higher ground from which one can adjudicate the conflicting affirmations of philosophy, nor a presuppositionless way to assess the different claims made by those with differing understandings of the Bible. One obvious problem for those who focus their mantic longings exclusively on the Bible is that they deny to themselves (and hence also to others) even the possibility that what they presumably admire in the Bible can be a possibility in their own lives. This is especially true of certain recent evangelical or fundamentalist factions of Protestants who in-
sist on the Bible alone. In place of divine special revelations, which they flatly deny are possible outside the Bible, they tend to stress the necessity of an emotional experience of regeneration and in some instances encourage highly emotional expressions of piety. And they also read the Bible through a lens provided for them by theologians dependent upon sophic categories and explanations.

Whether one embraces one of the fashions of recent philosophy or some version of faith in God will ultimately rest on a moral choice and therefore on an act of faith. Why? As Strauss has shown, neither claim can be made entirely evident. Since we all must begin to act before we can begin to know in any full sense, we necessarily all live by some faith, even when we dogmatically deny that this is what we are doing. We should not be ashamed of our faith. Nor should we hide from ourselves and others that our choices are ultimately a way of life and hence are moral and not ever entirely or genuinely theoretical. I prefer what is symbolized by Jerusalem, with its mantic mood and tradition, and with its prophetic faith. I strive to put my trust in God. I seek to learn from what I believe are divine revelations precisely because these offer hope, while the philosophic quest for wisdom—unless its useful moral elements are strictly subordinated to faith in another world and hence to a wisdom from the heavens that is not merely a human invention—ends with the grave.

146 See Leo Strauss, "Preface to Spinoza's Critique of Religion," in Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity, 170–73. A slightly different version of this essay can be found in Strauss, Liberalism: Ancient and Modern, 254–57; the original version was also published under the title "Preface to the English xTranslation," in Strauss's Spinoza's Critique of Religion, 28–31. For my use of this enigmatic but insightful essay, see Midgley, "The City and Philosophy," 42–46.

Reviewed by Robert C. Freeman

In his book *The Power of God,* author and attorney Mark Smith provides a mixture of insights, formulas, and definitions on the subject of faith's power. This text could also have been entitled *Faith* as Smith asserts that the phrase *power of God* is a synonym for the term *faith.* Although I am slow to conclude that faith is the only meaning of the phrase *power of God,* the book is instructional and generally makes a contribution to the study of this important topic.

At times, the text lacks a thoroughness of discussion and quotes little from very recent general leadership of the church. A fair amount of credit for the doctrinal aspects of this book belongs to Elder Bruce R. McConkie, who is quoted extensively (no less than thirty times, far more than any other source). While portions of this text are clearly the result of years of thinking and writing, as in the case of the chart that accompanies the author's discussion of "The Three 'Faces' of Faith" (see pp. 62–63), other sections of the book appear to be little more than a compilation of quotations (see pp. 182–90). Additionally, the author is occasionally guilty of employing more scriptural text than his point requires. For example, more than three pages of scriptural text—*Doctrine and Covenants* 46:10–33; *Moroni* 10:8–21; and *1 Corinthians* 12:4–13—are quoted at pages 87–90, simply to enumerate a dozen or so key spiritual gifts; perhaps a simple cross-reference would have sufficed. The author occasionally reiterates points in a redundant fashion (see, e.g., p. 80).

Conversely, the author is guilty in some cases of hanging his doctrinal position on a single quotation and in other places of placing too heavy a reliance on less-known sources without contemporary quotations to give balance to the discussion. At times, specific assertions of the author invite further examination. For instance, Smith declares that "belief is not the power of God" (p. 37). But this conclusion is not well supported by the author.
Because this is an important idea, perhaps more effort should have been expended to offer the reader more evidence of what and how the notion of belief lacks in relation to faith. Further, the author may have fallen short in presenting a convincing case that belief can be misdirected while faith cannot (see p. 40).

The author employs concepts from the world of business and law to assist the reader in evaluating particular principles. Terms such as *causation, prima facie, trustee, shareholders, and corporation* are used to explain more intricate points of doctrine. While the use of such terms is generally helpful, on occasion Smith is perhaps too creative in his discussion. This text has a tendency to overgeneralize. For example, the author suggests, “Christ on multiple occasions commented about how little faith we mortals have” (p. 85). While Jesus may have done so in the New Testament context, he had a very different view, it seems, of those he taught in the New World setting (see 3 Nephi 19:28, 35).

Again, this text has a contribution to make. Much of the discussion on the subjects of faith and power is enlightening. Especially insightful is Smith’s discussion of the principle of agency (pp. 73–74)—he argues in favor of using the general term *agency* rather than the phrase *free agency*, citing the fact that the latter is not specifically found in the scriptural canon. Near the end of the book, though, the author asserts, “We need the type of knowledge which this book seeks to provide” (p. 90). Although arguably true, the determination of which nuggets of knowledge come from this offering may be best left up to the reader.

Reviewed by Russell C. McGregor
with Kerry A. Shirts

**Letters to an Anti-Mormon**

James White’s book *Letters to a Mormon Elder* is clearly regarded (at least by Mr. White and his ministry) as a major “witnessing” tool for confronting Latter-day Saints. “Reading this book may prove to be one of the most important events in your life” goes the blurb on his Internet site. Thus it is appropriate to see what responses it has garnered. Until now, L. Ara Norwood’s review in the FARMS *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* has been the only substantive response given to this work. In that review, Norwood says, “It would have been much more interesting and balanced had the letters been written between Mr. White and an actual member of the Latter-day Saint Church with the proper background, but then that would change the entire outcome of the book.”

Taking this as a challenge, I decided to write a series of responses to Mr. White’s letters.

In some respects, my responses will suffer the same problems as the letters in the book. This is still not a real dialogue, since White’s second and subsequent letters do not reply to my letters, but to imaginary (and rather weak) letters. The best way I can find to get around this is simply to respond to each letter without regard to what White will say next. In this way, he still has the initiative, but to do anything else would be dishonest. With the entire series in front of me, it would be trivially easy to word my letters in such a way that White’s “replies” can be made to look both

---

related and inadequate, but that would be self-serving and even manipulative.

The one exception to this policy is the letter written by the mission president. Since White’s letter 18, “The Mission President Speaks,” tends to portray the fictitious mission president as bombastic and cowardly, it seemed only fitting to undo this misconception. I have known many mission presidents, and none of them have been anything like that. Thus the letter I have written for him makes his actions realistic and plausible; it also makes White look bad. This is not intended to be an actual reflection on White’s character, as the incidents described are fictitious, but it is necessary, because mission presidents do not usually prevent missionaries from talking to people just because those people have anti-Mormon ideas.

The letters in White’s book, as well as attacking the church, develop a story line in which the missionary becomes increasingly befuddled and eventually seems to cave in. However, in his conclusion, White admits that, “You have no guarantee that if you say ‘all the right things,’ and present ‘all the right information,’ that the person with whom you are speaking is going to respond positively” (p. 297). In other words, the book is really making what is tantamount to a misleading advertisement. Furthermore, it is unreal. A real missionary wouldn’t correspond with someone in his own area; he might correspond only after being transferred out of the area, but would lose interest once he realized that the correspondent was not an investigator but an anti-Mormon—which would be glaringly obvious after the third letter. But responses to just the first three, while realistic, would not be sufficient, so I have gone along with the premise that the missionary will answer all seventeen of them. However, I feel no obligation to follow any other part of White’s script.

The most unreal aspect of the story is the clandestine meeting to which White invites the missionary at the end of letter 9, and then alludes to in letter 10 and after. A real missionary would not “ditch” his companion to meet someone in a park. This rendezvous has some rather nasty (and I hope unintended) undertones that I have not canvassed, preferring only to refer to its flagrant opposition to mission rules. But it is the key to White’s picture of the missionary giving in; up to that point the missionary, although
losing the argument, is going down fighting; afterward, he is suddenly accepting everything White says. And because White does not give us the minutes of that meeting, he leaves his hopeful evangelical audience out on a limb. White must have had some really powerful arguments in that meeting—but he is too modest to reveal them to his audience. Oh, well.

It is worth noting that in selecting a missionary as his target, White leaves nothing to chance. LDS missionaries are reasonably young—just the right age group, in fact, for the kind of "cult recruitment" that White proposes. They are called into the field to perform a very specific role. They take with them very limited reading materials; they have a grueling schedule to follow and a fairly rigorous personal study program. They couldn't divert themselves to the kind of research needed to answer White's claims even if they wanted to, and they wouldn't have the necessary resources even if they did manage to make the time. It is not surprising that some people would see them as easy targets; what is surprising is that so very few, if any, are ever successfully recruited.

Apart from answering all of White's letters, I have not followed his story line at all. I could have turned it around and had him making a commitment to baptism, but that would be just as silly as White's own script. I have decided to make Elder Hahn a good missionary who follows the rules, does the work, keeps his leaders informed, and answers White's letters according to his own timetable and priorities, and not White's. I have also provided him with a brother, an aunt, and an uncle who have access to the sorts of material that are necessary to answer some of White's material. The role of "Uncle Larry" was filled by Kerry A. Shirts, a Latter-day Saint who is active in apologetics, both on the Internet and in print.
Letter 1: What Is a Testimony?

Dear Mr. White,

Thank you for your letter.

You seem to be under the impression that my testimony consists only of subjective feelings. Please let me clarify this point. When I bear my testimony to you, I am not speaking only of my feelings, but I am telling you something that I know with certainty.

You wrote, "We both know people who are honest, kind, and moral, but who teach falsehood about Jesus Christ and His gospel. For example, we both have encountered Jehovah's Witnesses as they go door-to-door preaching their version of the truth" (p. 16). I'm not sure that I would agree that the Jehovah's Witnesses are teaching "falsehood"; certainly I would agree that they are mistaken in some points, but that is not the same thing. But yes, I certainly do agree that they are sincere and fully genuine in their belief, as I am sure you are. I don't actually regard you (or them) as being "in error"; on the contrary, I believe that your understanding of the gospel includes a great deal of truth. As I understand it, your beliefs are based on the Bible. Ours are also based on the Bible, as well as additional truth that has been revealed from heaven. You have correctly pointed out that truth is absolute and not relative. But only God knows things as they really are. We mortals can only see "through a glass, darkly" (1 Corinthians 13:12); our perception of truth is always incomplete, and hence imperfect. This means that many times when we presume to correct one another's "errors" we are committing errors just as great ourselves. Our Savior said it best: "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" (Matthew 7:3). Therefore I am always hesitant to say that you or anyone else is wrong; all I will say is that there is still more truth for you to find.

You tell me that you also have a testimony, "and [your] testimony is in direct conflict with [mine]" (p. 17). I ask you this: have you personally prayed and asked God to know whether the Book of Mormon is his word? For that is the foundation of my testimony; I asked, he answered, and no matter what else happens,
I can never deny this. It is as real and as sure to me as if he had appeared and told me to my face.

I would also like to know what you mean when you say “the Spirit has testified” to you (p. 17). This is not because I doubt your sincerity, but because I wish to know whether we are talking about the same thing. Do you actually mean that you have personally received revelation from your Father in Heaven, by the power of the Holy Ghost?

Or do you mean what many, or most, evangelical Protestants have meant by similar statements—namely, that you have formed a conclusion from your reading of the Bible and you give that conclusion the status of a revelation?

I agree quite enthusiastically with your point about not trusting our own hearts. I have on many occasions rationalized wrong things to myself; I have very strongly desired things that were not right for me to have. On one occasion I even prayed for confirmation of one of these things; it was something that I badly wanted. (I didn’t get an answer on that occasion, although I wanted the thing every bit as badly afterwards. It didn’t turn out the way I wanted it to, either.) But when I received the witness from the Holy Ghost that the Book of Mormon is true, it was something entirely different than wanting or rationalizing, or anything else.

There is an analogy that we sometimes use: if you met someone who had never tasted salt, could you describe its taste to him or her? In just the same way, I can’t describe my experience of receiving a testimony. I can only talk about it in terms of feelings because that is the nearest thing that people can relate to. But it is certainly much, much more than that.

You said that, “There is something which is unchanging, unlike our feelings. There is something that tells us the truth at all times, again, unlike our feelings. That something is the Word of God” (p. 17). I follow what you are saying about the Word of God being pure, respected, and unchanging (see pp. 17–18). Since God has gone to the trouble of revealing truth to a long line of prophets, it certainly behooves us to make good use of his recorded word. But to start from the assumption that the Word of God exactly equals the Bible is to guarantee that we are going to
discover that the Word of God exactly equals the Bible. Circular arguments do tend to work that way.

But we may not be too far from a common starting point here. Certainly I accept that both the Bible and the Book of Mormon are true, and I do not expect truth to contradict truth. But it is not sensible to read one volume in isolation, make up our minds about it, and then expect another volume to agree with our newly formed interpretations. That would be circular reasoning and would actually make our interpretations, rather than the texts themselves, our yardstick. Rather, in the case of the Book of Mormon, it is necessary to read it together with the Bible, and ask ourselves: “can these two scriptures be reasonably understood to be harmonious with each other?” If not, then we need to investigate why. But we cannot approach them with a set of assumptions about which came first; for I believe the Bible because I have a testimony of the Book of Mormon; it is the Book of Mormon that testifies to me of the Bible. If I ceased to believe in the Book of Mormon, I would then have to be converted to the Bible all over again.

So I ask you this: does the Bible have priority over God, or does God have priority over the Bible? That is the question that we need to settle before we can move ahead. If you accept, at least conceptually, that the God who revealed the scriptures to prophets anciently could have spoken to other prophets as well and could choose to speak to prophets today, then we could get somewhere. But if you start from the position that the Bible is all there is and all there ever could be, then we are not going to come to a meeting of the minds, however much common ground we might otherwise find.

You gave the example of the Berean Saints, who studied the scriptures daily to learn whether the things the apostles had taught them were true (see p. 18). I have had the privilege of meeting people during my mission who do just that. I have also met those who, like the Pharisees in Jesus’ day, searched in the scriptures to find something to use against him. The distinction is not in the act of searching the scriptures, but in what is being sought. For, as I am sure you realize, it is quite possible to read the Old Testament on its own and form a very consistent picture of what God wants us to do and then read the New Testament and find real
discrepancies. This has always been a fairly easy exercise for well-read Jews who want to find fault with the Christian gospel, and there are some Christians who apply the same approach to criticizing the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Also, we cannot conclude that the Berean Saints did not pray about the apostles’ message; nothing is incompatible at all about scripture study and prayer. In fact, I even venture to suggest that it might have been very difficult for them to have found the message of salvation through Christ to be compatible with the Old Testament scriptures without prayerfully pondering the apostles’ message.

Incidentally, the Jehovah’s Witnesses, whom you mentioned earlier, consider themselves to be carrying on the Berean tradition. They are in dead earnest about this. They arrive at their beliefs in exactly the same way that you arrive at yours—by reading the Bible. They cling to it as their one and only source of truth. And although there are many similarities between their doctrine and yours, you and they regard each other as being in error. What more eloquent commentary could there be on the need for further revelation?

I take your point about the Holy Ghost not being in conflict with the scriptures (see pp. 18–19), but I’m sure you realize that this must have posed a challenge to first-century Christians. For example, God established the covenant of circumcision with Abraham (see Genesis 17:10) for an “everlasting covenant” (Genesis 17:7, emphasis added). Yet in Acts 15, we find that covenant being revoked. I’m sure you can readily see that your “zero contradiction” rule might have been a difficult point for the earliest Saints.

Now I certainly believe that this contradiction, and others like it, can be resolved, but I would ask you this: are you willing to accept that the same kinds of resolutions can be applied to contradictions that you perceive between, say, the Book of Mormon and the Bible? If so, then we can go forward. If not, then you would seem to be operating a double standard.

Your discussion of James 1:5 is interesting. I cannot really respond in kind, because I do not know Greek, but I have this thought: the fact that wisdom and knowledge are different words is not in itself decisive. The English words are also different, but
come from roots that are synonyms. You point out that "If we are wise, we will accept that truth [from the Bible], and will not pray to God and ask Him to repeat what He has already said" (p. 19). But I can’t find in the Bible where God has "already said" anything at all about the Book of Mormon, unless you accept such passages as Isaiah 29 and Ezekiel 37:15–20 as prophecies of its coming forth, as I do; so praying and asking him about it wouldn’t be asking him to repeat himself. And I can think of few subjects upon which wisdom is more earnestly needed than the choices we should make regarding our eternal salvation. How can God grant wisdom better than to let his children know which is the wisest choice? Or would you argue that God wouldn’t—or couldn’t—tell us something if it isn’t already in the Bible?

And your argument can be just as easily turned around. As I mentioned, I have a testimony of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. That testimony is more than just a feeling; the Holy Ghost has revealed to me personally that it is true. If praying to know if the Book of Mormon is true is to “ask Him to repeat what He has already said,” then wouldn’t it be equally faithless for me to investigate a question that God has already settled? And in my case, the question was not settled indirectly via the Bible, but directly and personally.

Therefore, it seems to me that if you are going to ask me to put my faith on the line by testing it according to the Bible, you should be equally willing to put yours on the line by making the Book of Mormon a matter of prayer.

But in any event, other passages support the use of prayer. In Matthew 7:7–8, the Savior said, “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.”

Now you could argue that this passage does not talk about prayer alone; the admonition to “seek” may well be directing us to the scriptures. But if, as you rightly point out, prayer without seeking will not find the answers (for faith without works is dead), seeking without prayer equally will not. For if human hearts are untrustworthy, then human minds are devious and can find support in the scriptures for whatever preconceived conclusions they see fit.
Just one more thought on the subject of prayer: we read that when Nebuchadnezzar had a dream, which he could not remember, he asked his wise men to explain it to him. When they could not, he ordered them put to death. Daniel asked for a stay of execution and went back home and with his companions “desired mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret,” which was subsequently “revealed unto Daniel in a night vision” (Daniel 2:18, 19). In simple language, they prayed. They prayed and got an answer. The Lord revealed knowledge—and very specific knowledge, at that—to Daniel in answer to his prayer. I believe that is a good pattern to follow. I earnestly recommend it.

Now to other matters. I am a full-time missionary. I have been called of God, through his prophet, to labor in the Lord’s vineyard; my time is not my own. Also, you live within my mission area, and so it is not normally acceptable for us to correspond. I have consulted my mission president, and he has given me permission to correspond with you, providing that our correspondence does not take up time when I should be working nor displace my personal scripture study program. In other words, my correspondence time will only take place on my weekly preparation day. Therefore, I hope that you will understand that I may not always be able to reply as quickly as you would like. He also made the proviso that it must not turn into a “Bible bash.”

Now I hope that you will give some thought to the points I have raised herein. Please let me know whether you can accept that God does have priority over the Bible, and that he can also answer prayers and reveal truth to you now. I testify to you that he can and will, if you ask in faith.

May the Lord bless you in your search for truth.

Elder Hahn
Letter 2: As Far as It Is Translated Correctly

Dear Mr. White,

I was really surprised to read your statement that, "The vast majority of LDS, in my experience, harbor some doubts concerning the accuracy of the Bible, some going so far as to reject the Bible, for all intents and purposes, as a book that can be trusted" (p. 21). That, if I may say so, is quite different from my experience. My companion and I study the Bible daily. We teach from it with confidence. In common with the overwhelming majority of Latter-day Saint youth from active families, I attended four years of seminary classes; two years of the four were devoted to the Bible. This is the standard seminary curriculum. The two years we spent on the Old and New Testaments did not focus on textual problems or errors in translation but on the actual teachings of those collections of scripture.

You should not be too surprised at the sometimes odd statements made by some of the early Brethren; Elder Orson Pratt, in particular, was one whose opinions were often a little on the margins. His writing, "The Bible Alone an Insufficient Guide," from which you quoted, has never been accepted by the church as authoritative. I remember reading that he edited a periodical called The Seer, in which he advanced some rather unorthodox ideas. It seems that he was "hauled over the coals" for some of the things he said in that paper, and he ended up repudiating it.

And I don't exactly see that "there are a lot of different attitudes toward the Bible among Latter-day Saints" (p. 22). I see that you have shown two. One was Elder Pratt's criticism of the Bible's accuracy; the other, in opposition to Elder Pratt's view, was President Young's more conservative view that supported its reliability. In fact you quoted President Young thus: "The Bible is good enough as it is, to point out the way we should walk, and to teach us how to come to the Lord of whom we can receive for ourselves" (p. 22, from Journal of Discourses, 3:116).

In other words, you only showed two views, and the first was pretty well quashed by the prophet and seer of the Lord. Does "a lot" really just mean two—one of which was rejected?
But in any event, what I wish to propose is this: I will tell you what I believe; I will take the responsibility for representing the LDS position. Please, by all means, tell me what you believe and lay out the Baptist position, but please don’t tell me what my beliefs are. I won’t be so presumptuous as to make myself a spokesman for your church, and I would ask that you please return the favor. Does that sound fair?

I agree that when Jesus quotes the Old Testament, he does so with approval. I also agree that he regarded a direct first-person quotation such as “I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob” as being the words of the Lord. It does not follow, however, that he automatically regarded the entire Old Testament as “the very words of God Himself” (p. 22), which it clearly is not.

I should tell you that, being a missionary in the field, I have to travel light. Although I do have a reasonable collection of books at home, all I have with me are my scriptures, the missionary discussions, and a couple of other church books. By scriptures I mean, of course, the Bible (King James Version), the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price. So I’m not really equipped to carry on a full-scale debate by mail, since I do not have much of a library in my one suitcase and a briefcase. Thus I’m going to have to impose on you with another request: can you accept that when you cite a passage from the Bible, I’m going to refer it back to my King James Version? That’s not because I doubt your skill, but because even if I did speak Greek (which I don’t) I wouldn’t be able to check up on your translations any other way.

So here I am, KJV in hand, looking up your scriptural citations. The first one you quote is 2 Timothy 3:16 (although you reference the verses as 16–17). Since I think verse 15 is important as well, I hope you won’t mind if I quote it too:

And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. (2 Timothy 3:15–16 KJV)
From Acts 16:1, we know that Timothy was an adult convert, the son of a Jewish mother and a Greek father. Given this background, what scriptures had he known "from a child"? Answer: the scriptures we now know as the Old Testament. Is Paul telling him to accept the Old Testament as God’s final and complete word? Where would that leave the Gospels—or Paul’s own letters? Continue now to verse 16, and learn that all scripture comes by inspiration and is therefore good stuff. Timothy’s exposure to the Hebrew scriptures prepared him to receive more truth when it came along; many of his contemporaries took quite the opposite approach, as I’m sure you know. I fully agree with this passage, applying it to all scripture—including the Book of Mormon.

I also note that while my Bible says “given by inspiration of God,” you translate the passage as “God-breathed” (p. 23). I remember in English class we were once reading T. S. Eliot, and one of the footnotes mentioned that the Greek word pneuma means both “wind” and “spirit”; so I suppose “breath” fits in well enough too. But do you see that this is itself a perfect example of the problem of translation? Not that I am saying that your translation is wrong, or even that it is different in its strict dictionary meaning to that given by the King James translators; I am saying that it highlights the problem in the very nature of translation. The two variants, while they may denote the same thing, carry entirely different connotations—they draw different “mental pictures.” To me, “given by inspiration” suggests that the prophet is given to know a truth he didn’t know before and then has the task of expressing that truth in his own words. (This is consistent with my personal experience of inspiration.) The phrase God-breathed conveys the sense of “from God’s mouth to the prophet’s ear” and so on down his arm to the prophet’s pen. The prophet is a secretary taking dictation.

Please understand me: not being qualified in Greek, I’m not going to say that you’re wrong and the seventeenth-century committee was right; my point is simply that—how can I know? And if one day I find out that the text supports both readings just as well, where does that leave me? I can only point out that, having rendered your translation in the most “inerrantist-friendly” way possible, you have then argued it all the way to the hilt. You say, “God used men to write His Word, but He did so in such a way as
to insure that what was written was word-for-word what He had intended from eternity past” (p. 23). Do you mean to say that the verse we are discussing says that? Do you really get all that from “all scripture is given by inspiration”? 

And are you—a scholar in Hebrew, Greek, French, and German—really unaware of the woeful inadequacies of human language? Every word in every language is an approximate and imperfect carrier of its meaning. Simple little words like and and the really convey no meaning at all—they just help text to flow. The really meaningful words—like power, light, truth, and love, not to mention scripture and inspiration—each carry a whole range of meanings, and they convey them differently to each hearer or reader. Thus even if, as you say, “God . . . insured[d] that what was written was word-for-word what He had intended” (p. 23), the next fellow to come along and read it would not understand it exactly as God intended it—because God’s pure thought had been encapsulated in an imperfect human language.

But perhaps the biggest logical problem with sola scriptura, the idea that the Bible contains the totality of God’s revelation, is that it is itself unscriptural. You said, “The God of the Bible is big enough to use men to write His message, yet at the same time see to it that the resultant revelation is not mixed with error or untruth” (p. 23). And where in the Bible does it actually say that? I can see how you can contemplate a phrase like God-breathed and then develop such an idea, but can you in your turn see that it is a very significant idea to rest on that one little phrase?

Not only is your letter-perfect model not apparent from what the scripture says, but there are also some passages that seem to say quite unselfconsciously the opposite. In Jeremiah 1:1–2, we read, “The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the priests that were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin: To whom the word of the Lord came in the days of Josiah.” Did you notice that? The book of Jeremiah is “The words of Jeremiah . . . to whom the word of the Lord came.” It’s not at all “the words of the Lord written by Jeremiah’s pen” (in fact it was written by Baruch’s) but Jeremiah, in his own words, expressing the word of the Lord. This prophet, at least, was no mere secretary.

You also cited 2 Peter 1:20–21, which reads thus in my Bible:
Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Notice once again that we have the same problem of translation here; indeed, it is even more glaring this time, since your rendering, "no Scriptural prophecy ever came about by the prophet’s own personal interpretation" (p. 23), means something quite different than "no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.” The latter quite clearly tells us not to attempt a private interpretation of the scriptures. Indeed, I have always taken this passage to mean that, since the scriptures were given by the power of the Holy Ghost, they can only be understood by that same power.

In giving me what you call your “own translation” of these verses (p. 23), can you see that “personal translation” is a synonym of “private interpretation”? For every translation is an interpretation. And when you say, “I have often had LDS people say, when confronted with a passage that contradicted their own beliefs, ‘Well, that must be mistranslated’” (p. 27), I must protest that that has not been my experience. But even if they did, your approach of providing your own translation when it suits you to do so is no less a vote of no confidence in the standard translations than the statement you have cited.

But to come back to the passages at hand: the fatal objection, of course, to your argument that these passages are talking about the Bible is that when these passages were written, there was literally no such thing as “the Bible.” You can consider the possibility that the writers had particular scriptures in mind, or you can apply them to all scripture—but it still remains an open question: just what constitutes “all scripture”?

You have then anticipated my reaction thus:

We might agree to this point. You might be willing to say, “Yes, as the Bible was originally written it was the perfect and complete Word of God.” But, then you’d be quick to add, “Things have changed—the Bible has been changed, things have been lost. We can
no longer say that the Bible is fully and completely the Word of God.” (p. 24)

Your first attributed statement is right on the mark, except for the word complete. But the second statement would not reflect my first thoughts: I would say that I see no indication that God ever thought to stop speaking to his children; hence, in that sense, at no time has the scriptural canon ever really been closed—it was never complete because it was never finished. There is always more for God to say, so we should always be prepared to accept whatever he has to reveal to us.

Your second statement does have some interesting thoughts. First, I would say that I do not see the Bible as ever having been the total Word of God. I would say that it has always contained the Word of God and does so today. Neither would I say that the contents of my quadruple combination—the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price—constitute the total Word of God. These, too, only contain the Word of God. That, in a nutshell, is our idea of canon: an open-ended collection of scriptures containing the Word of God, and to which God is always at liberty to add.

But you are right: the Bible has been changed; things have indeed been lost. Consider what Paul has to say in 1 Corinthians 5:9: “I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators.” What’s wrong with this? Well, if Paul is referring to an epistle he previously wrote, then First Corinthians is really Second Corinthians, and the real 1 Corinthians is simply lost. Paul wrote it and quoted it again in our 1 Corinthians, so he presumably thought it was important; if so, where did the original epistle go?

Another example: when Paul was taking his leave of the Saints at Ephesus, he quoted a scripture to them, as follows:

I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. (Acts 20:35, emphasis added)

Now I have emphasized remember for this reason: the Saints at Ephesus were all Paul’s converts; they hadn’t heard Jesus speak in person—and neither had Paul (except in visions). So when he
reminds them of a familiar saying of Jesus that they all knew, it is clear that they did not hear it in person; it must have been in their scriptures. So where is it? Not in any scripture we currently have—except for Acts 20:35, of course. Conclusion: the Ephesian Saints had scriptures that have not come down to us.

There are many other such passages, but I don’t want to belabor the point. The simple matter is that there once existed scriptures that perfectly orthodox Christians thought were very important. We no longer have them. Thus it is undeniable that things have been lost.

Your technique of interpreting scripture seems to undergo a bit of a wrench when you come to the Book of Mormon. In commenting on 1 Nephi 14:10, you say that, “It is clear that . . . ‘all churches other than the LDS Church’ must be actively ‘keeping back’ many ‘plain and precious truths’ of the Bible” (p. 25). However that comes to be clear to you, it is not at all clear to me. It seems to me that the act of “keeping back” need only happen once—there is nothing in that passage that makes it an active ongoing process. I’m wondering if you are not trying to deliver the most ridiculous reading possible—something that is equally easy to do with the Bible.

But indeed, I recall that at the great ecumenical councils, many books previously highly regarded were condemned as heretical and consigned to the flames. Among these were the Gospel of Thomas and the Gospel of the Twelve Apostles. Shortly before my mission, I read a book called The Pastor of Hermas, which says some interesting things about the salvation of the dead and seems to have been very highly esteemed in the first two centuries; that has certainly been “kept back” from inclusion in the canon. Jude, who also wrote a lost letter (see Jude 1:3), quotes from the book of Enoch (v. 14)—another “kept-back” book. It would seem that the Book of Mormon has scored a bull’s-eye on this one.

Now I agree that when some of us talk about translation problems we also, by a kind of shorthand, include transmission problems under that category. But I’m not certain that you are one hundred percent right when you claim that there is only a one-step translation between the long-lost Urtexte and our English New Testament. To start with, not every qualified person I have
spoke to is certain that Greek was the original language of every book of the New Testament, as you claim in no less than four places in your letter. I have heard of a very old Jewish-Christian sect in Palestine that uses a Gospel of Matthew in Hebrew—and they think that is the original. Certainly none of the New Testament authors were native Greek speakers, and some scholars bluntly claim that lost Aramaic originals lie behind most of our New Testament books. Even if they are wrong, when a person writes a letter in a language other than his or her native tongue, he is already translating; he develops the thought in his first language, translates it into his second language in his head, and then writes it down. Thus, whichever way you look at it, from the original Aramaic thought, whether written or not, to the Greek manuscripts, our modern translations are the result of at least a two-step translation.

However, I was not trying to argue that any process such as you describe (p. 27) had taken place:

"Hebrew⇒Greek⇒Latin⇒French⇒German⇒Spanish⇒English."

I apologize if I gave that impression. I was attempting to point out that each new translation that has been made has a tendency to both rely upon and rebel against previous translations. Received versions carry an awful lot of authority, and they have a way of intimidating later translators—who somewhat resent being intimidated. I can’t quite make up my mind whether the benefits of this process outweigh the disadvantages, but the point is that nobody ever seems to be completely satisfied with any translation, because they all seem to want to do it again. And that really wouldn’t be necessary if everyone agreed that the translator(s) had got it one hundred percent right, would it?

I’m not sure that the only important mistakes in translation would be “purposeful and malicious” ones (p. 27); my academic friends tell me that it is hard enough to render a good translation between closely related contemporary languages. Translating a dead ancient language into an unrelated modern one must be a nightmare.

But I wonder why you added that little tag about Joseph Smith’s “obviously attempting to insert a prophecy about himself in something that was written a full 3,000 years earlier” (p. 27). It may be obvious to you, but not to me. If we accept, for the sake of
argument, the possibility that Joseph Smith may have been a true prophet, then we allow the possibility that God could reveal to him prophecies that really were recorded anciently, but that were lost at an early date and never found their way into the manuscripts we now have. If it is "obvious" to you that Joseph was simply pretending to be a prophet, then of course he was only making things up; such is the way of circular arguments.

I am also a little concerned with the following statement that you made:

If you ask me, Elder Hahn, James Talmage knew that the Bible was translated accurately in the English versions, and he also knew that the charges of gross corruption of the biblical text, made so often by Latter-day Saints, have no basis in fact. That is why he was so reticent in his statements that I cited above. (p. 28)

If you ask me, Mr. White, Elder James E. Talmage of the Quorum of the Twelve was teaching perfectly accurate Latter-day Saint doctrine when he made the statements about the Bible that you quoted. If you ask me further, I might be able to tell you that I have never heard Latter-day Saints in high or low positions make "charges of gross corruption" against "the biblical text"; not often, not even occasionally, but never. Quite the contrary, most church members I know believe that Paul wrote all fifteen epistles attributed to him. I have also known some quite senior Latter-day Saints who were reluctant to rule out John as the author of the so-called Johannine Comma in 1 John 5:7–8, despite the consensus of both liberal and conservative scholars that that passage is an interpolation. Are you sure you aren't exaggerating just a little? Or maybe just setting up a straw man?

In any event, as I said before, perhaps you will be so kind as to let me speak for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, as well as for my personal beliefs, and you can speak for your beliefs. That way, neither of us will need to feel misrepresented.

In regard to your talk-show anecdote, I notice with some curiosity that you seem to be using the words Christian and Mormon as though they were mutually exclusive categories. This is not the case. We regard ourselves as Christians because we are Latter-day Saints; the former is the superset, the latter the subset. In just the
same way, the fact that you are a white American man also means that you are a human being; it wouldn’t make much sense to divide those into mutually exclusive categories, would it?

But aside from that, I am interested in how you arrive at the conclusion that it “is not a very meaningful fact” that “none of the 5,000 Greek manuscripts (as an example) of the New Testament read exactly like another” (p. 28). If you are going to make an argument for the flawless transmission of the text from past ages, then the fact that all the manuscripts differ from each other should seem to be quite an important fact. Be that as it may, the number of the variants, while important because it defines the scale of the task, is not as important as the significance of the individual changes—a question which your impressive array of statistics does not address.

But in any event, we are not nearly as far apart on the issue of the accuracy of the Bible as you seem to think. Elder Talmage pretty well speaks for me, as for most Latter-day Saints; his book The Articles of Faith, from which you quote, is one of the few books on the approved reading list for missionaries. Still, I am curious about your claim relative to what you call the “tenacity” of the different readings, that is, that “every reading that has entered into the manuscripts of the New Testament has remained there. While some might think that this is bad, it is not, for what it also means is that since no readings ‘drop out’ of the text, the original reading is still there as well!” (p. 29). Actually that isn’t bad at all; if I understand you correctly, variant readings simply accrete to later copies of manuscripts. This would mean that the latest manuscripts would have the largest number of words, and the earliest manuscripts would have the smallest number, and so finding the original readings would be as easy as simply performing word counts on each manuscript copy. Have I misunderstood something here, or is it really that simple? Or are you in fact saying that all the different readings that there ever were are still around on different manuscripts, and so the original has got to be around somewhere? If the latter is what you are saying, then your statement above would appear to be little more than an expression of faith that the original readings are being preserved somehow. That is not, if I may say so, a very strong argument to make. Even if the original reading is still around
somewhere, the problem of recovering the original reading from among all of the available variants would still remain; and what is the chance of any translator getting that right _all_ of the time?

I have already pointed out the clear fact that whole books of scripture have been lost, and so I do not see a need to reiterate that.

Mr. White, I really do hope that this isn’t going to turn into a “Bible bash,” as I said in my first letter. I have no objection at all to discussing these matters with you, but I’m not interested in a recital of all the “evils” of Mormonism.

I hope you understand our true position with regard to the Bible. We use it widely, for both proselyting and internal teaching purposes. We are aware that it was not translated by inspiration, and we know of some problems in the transmission of the manuscripts. In short, we are not inerrantists. I hasten to add that we are not inerrantists with regard to our other scriptures, either. From my reading, doctrines of the all-sufficiency and inerrancy of scripture arose only _after_ the ancient Saints realized that revelation had ceased. These doctrines enabled them to treasure up and guard the past revelations that were stored in the Bible, much as people in a desert might treasure up and guard a well—_after_ the stream has stopped flowing.

I look forward to hearing from you again. Once more, I urge you to read the Book of Mormon, to ponder its message, and to pray and seek the Lord’s guidance. I testify to you that he will indeed answer your prayers in a real and tangible manner.

Your friend,

Elder Hahn
Letter 3: Is That All There Is? Not Hardly!

Dear Mr. White,

I must begin by apologizing for giving you the wrong impression about my intentions. In pointing out some contradictions in the Bible, I was not trying to denigrate that volume of scripture; my purpose was twofold. First, to point out that the Bible, while true, is not inerrant; and second, to establish a single standard. For if we are going to forgive the Bible for containing difficult or contradictory passages, couldn’t we be equally forgiving if similar problems arise when considering the Book of Mormon?

Again, I must reiterate that I am perfectly willing to consider the Bible’s teachings about scripture per se—and in fact I believe them. But you have not demonstrated that the Bible is talking about itself in those passages. You said, “At times I think that this list, or one very similar to it, is part of the ‘missionary training packet’ that is passed out to every new missionary before being sent out into the field” (p. 31).

You need not fear. There is no missionary training packet of contradictory scriptures given in our formal training. What exists is a certain amount of field experience that has arisen among missionaries and is shared around; inerrantists challenge all of us, at some time or another. In such circumstances, we have found that these passages can give pause to our challengers and allow them to consider our position a little more carefully.

It may be so that atheists and others use similar passages to attack the Bible, and I certainly do not wish to give them aid and comfort. I am emphatically not trying to attack the validity of the Bible. Unlike those others, I believe that these anomalies can be explained. I also believe that similar explanations apply to so-called contradictions between the Bible and the Book of Mormon. But if you say that I “join hands” with people who would attack the Christian faith in this manner, I can only respond by pointing out that it is your insistence on an inerrant Bible that makes it such an easy target in the first place. We believe that the Bible is true, while accepting that it is possible for it to contain errors; for this reason, such attacks do not really faze us. We can still point to the
magnificence of the edifice without getting embarrassed about any little blemishes it may have.

I notice that the next paragraph of your letter includes this statement: “Your list of contradictions in the Bible is actually very well suited for my purposes” (p. 32). I suppose that really isn’t so surprising; it wasn’t my list, but yours. You would not likely provide a list that did not suit your purposes, would you?

I would like to thank you for your explanation of Paul’s first vision (see pp. 33–37). I had honestly thought that one or the other of these passages in Acts must be mistaken; it was not an important part of my faith, and it did not shake my belief in Paul’s testimony at all, but thank you just the same. Believe me when I tell you that for every “inerrantist” with whom these anomalies are useful, we encounter at least one “infidel” for whom they are problematic. So you have helped to make my job easier, and I thank you.

However, I am not sure if you haven’t underscored another point of mine—and undermined a rather important one of yours. I pointed out that “We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly” (Article of Faith 8). Your response was in your last letter, which carried the subtitle, “But It Is Translated Correctly!” Only now you have emphasized yet again the problems involved in translating the Bible from ancient languages. My understanding of those passages came from my King James Bible; you pointed out the NIV and stepped through the Greek wording of those passages. While I don’t claim to follow all of what you are saying (what on earth is “partitive genitive case I’”?), I understand that your argument is that Acts 9:7 is saying that Paul’s companions heard a sound, while in Acts 22:9 they didn’t understand what was said. If your translation is correct, then there is no contradiction in this one detail—but which translation is correct? And this is just one verse.

This is the problem: if doctrinal accuracy really matters, and I daresay it does, then whom are we to trust? You say to trust the Bible, but 99.99 percent (at least) of the world’s population can only read the Bible in translation. For the overwhelming majority, “trust the Bible” actually means “trust the translators.” Whether you realize it or not, the clear consequence of your argument is that we must trust in the opinions of a small group of scholars.
trained in dead languages—scholars whose skill we cannot check, over whom we can exercise no control—and who rarely seem to agree among themselves. What is the solution?

Well, fortunately there is a solution. It lies in continuing revelation. The stream is flowing anew from its source; we enjoy the ancient scriptures, and having ongoing revelation only enhances our ability to understand them.

I would like to express my wholehearted agreement with, and approval of, the following statement from your letter:

Finally, it must be stated that part and parcel of dealing with almost any ancient or even modern writing is the basic idea that the author gets the benefit of the doubt. . . . Some critics of the Bible seem to forget the old axiom “innocent until proven guilty.” (pp. 36-37)

And may I just add that all critics of the Book of Mormon forget that same axiom. I hope that you are prepared to apply this principle evenhandedly.

I agree that Matthew didn’t deliberately misattribute Zechariah’s words (from Zechariah 11:12-13) to Jeremiah (in Matthew 27:9-10; see pp. 38-39); I have no doubt it was an honest and unintentional mistake on his part. Still, any mistake, however trivial, means that the Bible is not completely inerrant, doesn’t it?

I am quite certain that I didn’t raise the issue of the time of the crucifixion in my letter (see pp. 39-40). Perhaps it came from your list of standard criticisms. I am quite aware of the usual solution to that one, namely, that John was using Roman time while the synoptists used Jewish time. In fact, I learned that in seminary when I was sixteen.

I don’t have a problem with Peter and Andrew meeting Jesus (see pp. 40-41), so again I presume that the argument comes from your list of standard criticisms. Nor did I raise the “staff” issue (Mark 6:8; Luke 9:3; Matthew 10:10; see pp. 41-42). However, I wonder if your “harmonizing” on the last one does not owe more to your commitment to inerrancy than to what the text says. Certainly when Jesus told them not to obtain or provide shoes for their journey, we need not assume that he meant for them to go barefoot; he seems to be saying “go as you are.” So,
are they standing around with their staves in their hands while he is meeting with them? It seems not very likely. No, as I read Luke’s and Matthew’s accounts, the staff is explicitly prohibited, while in Mark’s account it is explicitly permitted. That is a contradiction. Again, not an important one, but a contradiction nonetheless.

Now, as I frequently find myself telling people I meet: we don’t have to worry about these things as long as we are willing to see the Gospel writers as simply reporting, as reliable witnesses, their own recollections of what they saw and heard. (Except for Luke; he’s writing a “research paper.”) If you ask any police officer what happens when four different people witness the same traffic accident, he or she can tell you that the several accounts sound like four different accidents. And so we are quite happy with the New Testament as we presently have it—true, but not inerrant. The Gospel writers were witnesses who honestly reported their experiences as they remembered them, and that’s good enough for us. It is only when you want to postulate infallible divine guidance to assure the inerrancy of the witnesses’ memories that you run into difficulty.

In the matter of the lost books of the Bible, you make a strange argument (see pp. 43-44). You say, referring to the epistle from Laodicea, that perhaps Laodicea is another name for Ephesians (or maybe another name for the missing First Ephesians—see Ephesians 3:3). But you also said, “I see no reason to call this a ‘lost book’ if God never intended it to be in the Bible in the first place. Surely, if God wishes a book to be in His Word, He can manage to get it there” (p. 14).

The anatomy of this argument seems to be as follows:

If a book is not in the Bible, then that is because God didn’t want it there. The reason we know God didn’t want it there is because it’s not in the Bible. And thus we see that, after all, there is really no such thing as a lost book; if a book isn’t in the Bible, that’s because it wasn’t supposed to be there. We might wonder why it was written in the first place, but we know that it wasn’t important, because the Bible is complete without it. How can the Bible be complete without all of the books of scripture once prized by the Saints? Never mind—it just is. And so by assuming the completeness of the Bible, we are able to prove, against all the
evidence, that the Bible is complete. As I mentioned in my first letter, circular arguments do tend to work that way.

You know, it has occurred to me just now that if “the Bible” as a single monolithic unit were such an important part of God’s plan, why were the Saints in past ages able to get along quite well without it? Because, as I’m sure you know, until the fourth century there was no such thing as “the Bible” at all; there were collections of highly prized sacred writings, but each book was thought to stand alone—as they still do, really. Why, after thousands of years, did the need for a Bible as such suddenly emerge? Is it perhaps your view that God changed his mind about what constitutes scripture?

Or did people suddenly realize that they needed to be able to “control” the scriptures in order to protect them—because revelation had ceased?

I am glad that you have such reverence for God’s revealed word. I just hope it does not eclipse your reverence for the Revealer.

Well, you indicated that you would like to move along to discuss your view of God. You call him “the God of the Bible” (p. 44). I would call him the God of the whole universe. But in either case, I am happy to move on.

Your friend,

Elder Hahn
Dear Mr. White,

It has taken me some time to read all the way through your letter. I would like to begin with some general observations before I get into the specifics of it.

First, I recall mentioning in an earlier letter that I felt it would be better for me to set out the LDS position and describe our doctrine and my beliefs, and allow you to tell me what your beliefs are. Here, I find that you devoted almost the first half of your letter—over 3,800 words—to expounding the LDS doctrine of God, as you see it. You could have saved yourself a considerable amount of trouble if you had allowed me to tell you what we believe, instead of your telling me. The remainder of your letter contains a good deal of “anticipating” what you think my answers will be. If you had confined yourself to explaining what you believe, and only that, your letter would have been considerably shorter—perhaps only one-third its present length—and thus much less taxing for a full-time missionary to read.

Second, it is clear that you have read and studied LDS materials rather extensively. I am starting to wonder something, but I don’t know any really tactful way to ask, so I will come out and ask it. Mr. White, if I gathered that much information showing what’s wrong with the Baptist Church, you might very well think I was anti-Baptist. I expect you would be right, too. So I’m beginning to wonder if there isn’t an anti-Mormon agenda of some kind going on here. Can you assure me that you are truly approaching the church with an open mind? Do you really want to know what I can teach you? If not, then I need to be about the Lord’s errand.

Now, I have been called and set apart as a missionary of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; that makes me, in a small way, an official spokesperson for the church. Any person who is not called to speak for the church is merely self-appointed and has no business making pronouncements on what the church believes or teaches. So I am going to tell you what we believe, and that will be the LDS position for the purposes of our discussion.
The first point that I wish to make is that, as you admitted (see p. 47), the King Follett sermon, *Journal of Discourses*, *Mormon Doctrine*, and *The Seer* are *not* canonical scripture to us. While they may be useful indications of what their authors thought, they are in no way binding upon the Saints, because the church has never accepted those works as scripture. In the case of *The Seer*, I remember mentioning it to you in my first letter. Elder Orson Pratt, who was its editor, was called to account for some of the things it said, and he repudiated them. The *Journal of Discourses* was taken from extemporaneous conference talks given in halls that had sometimes-doubtful acoustics and no electronic sound systems—and without the aid of electronic recording devices. There is lots of good stuff in it, but it is not all that reliable. Even if it were, it would still mostly represent the opinions of the speakers.

*Mormon Doctrine* also has its difficulties. I notice that you pointed out that it was written by “Mormon Apostle Bruce R. McConkie” (p. 49). Strictly speaking, that’s not true. Elder McConkie wrote it before he was called as an apostle. The leaders of the church instructed him to make changes to some statements that were simply “beyond the pale”—a little bit like Elder Pratt’s experience—but it has no official status.

As you correctly quoted Elder McConkie, we regard ourselves as *monotheists*, and not as *polytheists* (see p. 49). By that we mean that we believe in one God. God the Father, his son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost are three separate and distinct divine beings. You can call them “Gods” if you want. But they are united in purpose, in thought, and in power; in all things they act as one. Therefore it is entirely correct to call them “one God.”

It is entirely incorrect, and more than a little uncharitable, to accuse Elder McConkie of playing “word games” when he points this out (p. 49). If you have ever spoken to Muslims on this subject, you would discover that they think that *all* Christians are playing “word games” when we claim to be monotheists, while believing that Jesus can be fully divine, but a different person from his Father. And those who are astute enough to distinguish the rather small (from their point of view) differences between mainstream creedal trinitarianism and LDS precreedal trinitarianism will generally remark that ours just seems less murky.
When Elder McConkie elsewhere says, "But in addition there is an infinite number of holy personages, drawn from worlds without number, who have passed on to exaltation and are thus gods" (p. 49, from Mormon Doctrine, 576–77), that is not a polytheistic statement. For my dictionary defines polytheism as "the worship of more than one god." Leaving aside our "trinitarian" differences for a moment, you must see that the mere acknowledgment that other gods exist entirely out of our reckoning is a far cry from any known form of polytheism. No worship of any of these beings is contemplated even for a moment. Neither can we be said to even "believe in" them in any meaningful way; we simply indicate that they are "somewhere out there," like quarks or pulsars, but they make no difference to us at all. Our religion would be exactly the same without them—because it is, in fact, without them. They do not figure in our worship or in our religious life at all. They are a mere academic detail.

When we consider that every known polytheistic system includes the names of the multiple gods, their relationships with one another, and their various powers, interests, or "departments"—and then find that all these features are completely absent from Latter-day Saint belief—it becomes apparent that calling our belief "polytheism" is not very meaningful and could be seen as a simple insult.

So your statement, "we see the first major difference between Mormonism and Christianity—monotheism versus polytheism" (p. 49), contains two false dichotomies. Once again, I notice that you are using Christian and Mormon as mutually exclusive terms. They are not, and you seem to be loading the dice when you use them in this way.

Now we could argue this at considerable length, but there is no need to. As the apostle Paul taught, "But to us there is but one God" (1 Corinthians 8:6). Paul's statement goes for us, too. I will come back to that passage later.

As far as God's having a previous mortal life is concerned—nothing anywhere in scripture requires us to embrace this notion. As a missionary, I should properly leave it at that, but I cannot resist pointing out that the Snow couplet, which you quoted, has some illustrious ancient predecessors. The very orthodox Athanasius had a couplet very similar to it; his ran, "God
became man that man might become God.” Of course his first line is talking about the incarnation of Christ, but the second line is one that Latter-day Saints may well be much happier with than are other modern Christians.

You have cited Doctrine and Covenants 130:22 and argued that it supports the idea that God was once a man (see p. 51). In fact, it merely says that God the Father has a tangible, physical body; it makes no claims as to how he obtained it.

You make the following statement about Joseph’s beliefs and the first vision:

Joseph Smith’s beliefs evolved so during the period between the writing of the Book of Mormon and his final beliefs in 1844. When Smith wrote the Book of Mormon, he was still monotheistic in his beliefs, and had not yet developed the concept of multiple gods (yes, I know about the First Vision, but, as we shall see, Smith did not claim to have seen God the Father until well after the writing of the Book of Mormon). (p. 47, emphasis changed)

This argument is important because it clearly displays your assumptions. Joseph Smith didn’t write the Book of Mormon; he translated it. Whether or not his beliefs “evolved,” the fact is that the doctrines of the church were revealed to him incrementally. I will return to this in a moment. And your point about the first vision tells me precisely where you are heading, so I hope you don’t mind if I forestall you here.

The argument that “Smith did not claim to have seen God the Father until well after the writing of the Book of Mormon” is part of what my Aunt Jenny calls “the great retreat.” She says that for years, anti-Mormons argued that Joseph “invented” the first vision only in 1838. Then when a number of much earlier accounts of the first vision came to light, the critics had egg on their faces, and so they retreated to a position that the accounts didn’t exactly resemble each other and tried to make “contradictions” out of these points of difference. In fact the differences are not contradictions at all; they merely consist in details that are in one version and not in others—details that are entirely consistent with those that are in the others. The argument about what the earlier
versions didn’t say is an argument from silence, and as such it is weak and desperate. I just thought I’d let you know that, to save you the trouble of trying to make an unsupportable argument.

I also pointed out that the Lord revealed doctrines to Joseph incrementally. This seems to be his pattern, thus:

But the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken. Wherefore hear the word of the Lord, ye scornful men. (Isaiah 28:13–14)

Thus it seems that in the days of Isaiah, the Lord revealed his word line upon line and precept upon precept, and this was a problem for “scornful men.” Human nature doesn’t change much, does it? I’m sure that an idea such as the “evolution” of beliefs would have been very useful to the scornful men of Isaiah’s day.

You seem to have understood the doctrine of eternal progression reasonably well, so I don’t see a need to discuss that, except to say that we don’t actually see ourselves as becoming God the Father; we see that we may ultimately become like him, but we do not expect to replace him.

You have made too much fuss over what you see as an “inconsistency” in LDS belief:

Is God progressing in knowledge or not? Wilford Woodruff said he was, Bruce McConkie said he wasn’t, and Joseph Fielding Smith said the same thing. Some Mormons today say he is, more say he isn’t. It is not consistent, I believe, to accept Smith’s teachings and say that God is not progressing, but many LDS today, realizing the problems attendant with the concept of a changing God, prefer to hold to a different belief.

(p. 54)

I will discuss the actual issue below. The point you are missing, however, is that it is perfectly possible for Joseph Smith to say something without that something automatically becoming doctrine for the church. The church’s enemies frequently accuse us
of misrepresenting or not understanding our own beliefs because we do not ascribe infallibility to every statement ever made by a prophet or apostle. In their minds, if a prophet said it, then it must be scripture—that is, canonical scripture. But that is their own misunderstanding. For us, a prophet is someone who has his own mind and opinion, but who also sometimes receives revelation. We see no need to assume that every time he opens his mouth on any particular subject, he is speaking revealed truth. That is a challenging view, but at the same time a very liberating one. I recommend it to evangelical Protestants. That way your ministers can stop trying to find eternal, spiritual truths in the mundane little details in the Bible—such as Paul asking Timothy to send him his cloak and books (see 2 Timothy 4:13).

But I believe that you are using this as an opportunity to make another surreptitious dig at the church. We believe what we believe because we think it is true, and not because it lets us out of some problems which you imagine are attendant with some concept or other. Actually the “problems attendant with the concept” of an unchanging God are themselves considerable, as I shall show below.

The question of whether or not God the Father increases in knowledge is actually related to the question of whether his foreknowledge is absolute or not. Most of us believe that God knows beforehand every detail of what will happen, including exactly what each one of us will do and when. On the other hand, some believe that God’s foreknowledge actually consists of knowing all the possibilities and their probabilities, and being able to plan for all contingencies—as well as knowing that he has the power to accomplish all of his purposes, should it become necessary for him to intervene. We all agree that God’s foreknowledge is not deterministic—if he knows what you are going to do tomorrow, then that is because he knows you very well and knows what circumstances you will be in tomorrow. His foreknowledge does not actually decide your actions for you.

Thus if God absolutely knows all things before they happen, then he does not progress in knowledge. But if his foreknowledge is hyperintelligent prediction rather than absolute and certain knowledge, then he does progress in knowledge, since an event that he merely expects beforehand becomes a fact when it hap-
pens. The reason for the possibility of divergent opinions on this subject is the lack of revealed doctrine about it.

I have waxed somewhat long on this point because it is going to become relevant again later on when I address your discussion about God’s changing his mind.

Something else that perhaps you may not realize is that in the church, nobody’s testimony or personal revelation is binding on anyone else. It doesn’t matter who is bearing a testimony; if the Holy Ghost doesn’t confirm it to those listening, then they are not obliged to accept it. This is important, and I will have occasion to refer to it again.

Finally, about halfway through your letter you come to the point about what you see as LDS belief, namely:

So the Mormon view of God, as seen above, includes (1) polytheism, the belief in more than one God; (2) the concept that God was once a man who lived on another planet, and who progressed to the status of God; (3) the eternal law of progression, whereby, it is said, men can become gods. (p. 54)

Of these, the last point is reasonably correct (although you have inexplicably rephrased it “the eternal law of progression” instead of “the law of eternal progression”); the second is not doctrine, since it is not found in any of our scriptures; and the first is not true in any meaningful way at all. Unless, that is, you regard our ideas about the Trinity as polytheistic. So perhaps it is appropriate to look at that issue.

The doctrine of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints regarding the Godhead consists of all the relevant statements found in the four standard works. Thus the passages you cite are part of our doctrine, although we don’t necessarily give them the same priority as you do.

To start with, I notice that you give the following reason for choosing the Isaiah passages to support your argument: they constitute “the clearest, most unambiguous statements of absolute monotheism. . . . I choose them as being representative of a teaching that is to be found throughout the Bible” (p. 56). This seems to be contradictory. If they are the “clearest, most unambiguous” passages you could choose, then they are obviously not
"representative," since other candidates are more ambiguous. Indeed, it is fairly clear that these passages, far from being "representative," are actually the strongest supports you could find. Which is not a fault; most people who are making an argument will generally advance the strongest evidences they can muster to support it. But calling them "representative," as though they say the same thing as every other passage on the same subject, is a little conceited.

I propose to restore some balance by looking at what some other passages have to say, and then coming back to the passages you favor. The first passage of interest is Genesis 1:26, where God says, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness," and then proceeds to do so. So the question arises: who is "us" in this passage? And why "our" image and likeness? There is clearly a plurality here, but of what? If you argue that the plural pronouns in that verse refer to God and angels as a group, that would seem to be inconsistent with verse 27: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."

God created man in whose image? God's own image. Angels don't rate a mention there. So the plural numbers in verse 26 can refer only to God. Now I have had people suggest that God is merely referring to himself in the plural, as earthly kings have been wont to do, but even if God was inclined to such affectations, it is noteworthy that he seems not to use it elsewhere. In his conversations with the prophets, he invariably refers to himself in the singular. (Incidentally, it is quite clear that image and likeness refer to what God looks like, because exactly the same words are used in Genesis 5:3, describing Seth in the image and likeness of his father, Adam.)

But if we move along to Genesis 3:22, we discover that, as a result of eating the forbidden fruit, "the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil" (emphasis added). "One of us" is not the way the royal plural is used. It can only refer to a group of beings. What kind of beings? Well, what kind of beings would God consider himself "one of"? The question answers itself: divine beings, that is, gods.

In Deuteronomy 32:8–9 we have an interesting situation:
When the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord’s portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.

Now, although our Bible says “children of Israel” at the end of verse 8, the experts say that this should read “sons of God.” The situation, then, is that someone called the most High God divides the nations up among his sons; Israel is the inheritance that falls to the Lord, that is, Jehovah, who is one of those sons. This is hardly “pure monotheism.” In fact, the very title “most High God” is a comparison, and it really doesn’t mean anything unless there are also less High Gods.

By the same token, the titles “God of gods, and Lord of lords” applied to the Lord by Moses in Deuteronomy 10:17 are not very purely monotheistic. He seems to be describing Jehovah as supreme, not only over men, but over gods as well. What gods? I once had someone tell me they were idols. But that doesn’t make much sense either, since that would make the Lord “God of idols.” Do we really want to call him that? How about “Idol of idols,” or “most High Idol”? No, they don’t really have the same ring to them, do they?

Turning to the New Testament, when we read about the baptism of Jesus in Matthew 3:16-17, Mark 1:10-11, and Luke 3:22, what do we find? We have Jesus stepping up out of the water, the voice of the Father speaking from heaven, and the Holy Ghost descending “like a dove” and lighting upon him. It is abundantly clear that, in whatever way the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are “one,” it doesn’t preclude them from each being in a separate location.

A similar thing happens at the transfiguration (Matthew 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:34-35). The voice of the Father comes out of a bright cloud, but Jesus does not dissolve into that cloud; the cloud itself is, very significantly, always and only called a cloud and is never identified with the Father. In other words, the Father might be inside the cloud, or on the other side of the cloud, but he wasn’t the cloud; his voice came from that direction and no other—so he was in one place, and not everywhere at once.
Now we come to some passages you have already discussed. You mentioned John 10:34, quoting Psalm 82:6, and claim that Jesus is quoting the scripture as a way of accusing the Pharisees of being bad judges. There are several problems with this interpretation. Let’s look at the context of what Jesus himself is saying in John 10:29–36:

My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand.

I and my Father are one.
Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him.
Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?
The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.
Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?
If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken;
Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?

The meaning of this is plain. Jesus tells the Jews that he and his father are one. He does not say, “I am my Father,” but says instead that he and his Father enjoy a special unity. The Jews take exception to this, understanding quite correctly that he is making himself God. Jesus then quotes Psalm 82:6 to them and makes this argument from it:

If he (i.e., God) called those to whom his word came “gods” (and not “judges”); and,
If you believe the scripture;
Then you can’t accuse me of blasphemy for saying that I am the Son of God.

That is the argument Jesus makes, and it only works if Psalm 82 really refers to people as gods and not merely as judges. So when you conclude that “The interpretation you provided to me
in my home, Elder Hahn, is certainly incorrect, is it not?” (p. 63), I have to answer no, it is not incorrect. On the other hand, your interpretation seems to rely upon a fairly violent forcing of the text to fit your monotheistic presuppositions. Unfortunately, that won’t work. You are trying to fit a square text into a round doctrine.

But you are certainly not the first to do that. When my brother was working on his master’s degree, I got to help proofread some of his thesis on the development of Rabbinical Judaism. He pointed out that it was quite important for the Jews to maintain some distance between themselves and Christianity—especially when Christian rulers were very intolerant. So they reinvented themselves, to a certain extent. Their monotheism became much more definite, but the Old Testament didn’t carry them all the way; therefore, they came up with new interpretations of some passages, including Psalm 82. Nowhere else in scripture does the word gods refer to princes or judges.

Another passage that got the new spin was Deuteronomy 6:4, which you quoted to me. But the statement “The Lord our God is one Lord” simply refers to the unique covenant relationship between Jehovah and Israel. A parallel statement would be for me to say, “Elder Hahn, your correspondent, is one Elder Hahn,” which would be perfectly correct. There are about 60,000 other missionaries out there, and over 10,000,000 Latter-day Saints, but I would expect that I’m the only Elder Hahn with whom you are corresponding. In like manner, whatever other divine beings might live in eternal worlds, Jehovah was the only God with whom Israel had such a relationship.

And that brings us around to the Isaiah passages which form the backbone of your argument for “absolute monotheism.” My brother’s sources (and he quoted a lot of them, mostly non-LDS) showed that biblical Judaism was henotheistic or monarchistic; rather than believing that God was utterly unique and alone, they pictured him as the ruler of a myriad of other similar beings. The meetings of the sons of God in Job 1:6 and Job 2:1 are “representative,” to use your word, of this picture. So when we look at what Isaiah reports, how is it different?

You quoted Isaiah 43:10 as follows (p. 57):
Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.

There are three rather glaring things about this passage. First that the Lord is talking about Gods being “formed.” Idols, which are false gods, are “formed,” or made by hand. The Lord is clearly saying that no God is ever “formed,” either before him or after him, and yet, idols get formed all the time. Clearly idols, being formed, are not Gods.

Second, and following from this, we can understand that when the Lord speaks of Gods, he does not mean idols; for these are not Gods. If we find other instances in which the Lord speaks of Gods but does not clearly signal that they are false gods, or idols, then he is probably talking about something else.

Third, we have to get a handle on what is meant by “before me” and “after me.” One point on which you and I agree is that the Lord has always existed and always will. Thus nothing happened before him, because he always was, and nothing will happen after him, because there is no after with regard to him. Thus if there were to be other Gods, this passage tells us that they would neither be his predecessors nor his successors; they would have to be his “contemporaries.”

This, therefore most assuredly does not cancel out eternal progression, since, come the day that you enter into your exaltation, the Lord will still be there—he will not come to an end so that you can come “after” him. On this, more later.

On page 57 you also quoted Isaiah 44:6-8 thus:

Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God. And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and shall come, let them show unto them. Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any.
The key word in all this is *beside*, but this is used to translate a Hebrew word that could just as well be rendered “apart from” or “away from” or even “not associated with” or “in preference to.” So while the passage in English looks pretty uncompromisingly monotheistic, it would be hard to make the same argument from “don’t have any God in preference to me.” This looks a whole lot more “monarchistic,” as my brother would put it. Baal, Molech, and Astoreth are not gods because they are *apart from* the Lord and their worshipers preferred them *ahead of* Yahweh.

But again, the real thrust of this passage is to emphasize, not the Lord’s unique aloneness, but his unique covenant relationship with Israel. And in fact there is an element here that makes “strict monotheism” impossible to maintain, since the Lord refers to himself in verse 6 as “the first, and . . . the last.” This cross-references nicely to no less than *four* places in Revelation (see Revelation 1:8, 11; 21:6; 22:13) that make it abundantly clear that Jesus is the “first and the last” in these passages. These passages, taken together, are strong support for the LDS view that Jesus is Jehovah, the God of the Old Testament, in which case he can’t possibly be excluding the Father in what he is saying. This, after all, is a personal title that he is using. But even if you take the sectarian view that Jehovah is the Father, you would have to agree that he can’t be excluding Jesus.

And when Isaiah quotes God as saying, “Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any,” does that mean that Jesus does not know his Father? Or that the Father does not know Jesus? I rather think that they do know each other.

I know that you argued this point yourself, trying to say that the Father and the Son are not separate beings. This, if I may say so, is another example of forcing a verse to conform to your presuppositions; for if John 17 means anything at all, it means that Jesus is *not* his Father—and that his followers can or should have the *same* kind of unity that Jesus and his Father enjoy. Thus whatever Jesus meant when he said that he and his Father are “one” is something that can also apply to all Christians. So I ask you: if you got all the Christians in the world in one place and excluded everybody else, how would the total number of “beings” present compare with the total number of Christians? I daresay they would
be equal. All Christians are separate beings, but united, they are one—thus it is with the Father and the Son.

From the New Testament we learn that Jesus is fully divine. I'm sure I don't need to quote passages to prove that. And he always either addresses his Father in the second person (in prayer) or refers to him in the third person (in conversations with others). He makes no confusion in person or number in his discourses. But in the Old Testament, Jehovah is calling himself "I"—first person, singular—and insisting that he is in some way unique. Shall we conclude a contradiction? Do we insist that Jesus isn't really God in order to preserve the "strict monotheism" that you see in this passage? Or do we accept that Jesus and the Father are truly both divine beings and that Jehovah (whichever one he be) is saying something that does not exclude the other members of the Godhead? I vote for the latter. Apart from anything else, it seems more—Christian, for want of a better word.

You also gave the following quotations (p. 58), which I here reproduce in full:

I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the Lord, and there is none else. (Isaiah 45:5–6)

For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else. (Isaiah 45:18)

And there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. (Isaiah 45:21–22)

Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying,
My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.  
(Isaiah 46:9-10)

I especially like the quotation from Isaiah 45:21, wherein the Lord calls himself a "Saviour." And when in Isaiah 43:11 he insists that he is the only Savior, then according to your reasoning, that means that the Savior, "Christ the Lord," announced to the shepherds in the field near Bethlehem can be only one person.

But that is aside from the subject at hand: is Jehovah alone in the heavens or not? It is possible to read these Isaiah passages in isolation, and draw that conclusion, but the only trinitarian doctrine that could survive this interpretation is modalism—and you made it clear that you don’t believe that.

If we read these chapters in their entirety, it is clear that the Lord is contrasting himself to idols—the false gods that men foolishly worship. I like your phrase, "the trial of the false gods." The Lord is not rejecting true Gods, if such there be, that nobody on earth worships because they are out of our reckoning. Isaiah 46, for instance, starts off by talking about Bel and Nebo—burdens to their worshipers. Isaiah 44 describes men cutting down trees and making a barbecue with part of the wood and an idol with the other part. But nowhere in all of this does Jehovah say, "I have no divine Father" or "I have no divine son," which lets both of us off the hook; what he says is something like "there is no God to be preferred to me." Bel and Nebo are not Gods, they are just earthbound, useless man-made objects that never enter into the Lord’s presence.

Do you understand that we perfectly well accept the statements in the Bible about the "gods of the nations" (Psalm 96:5)? Such "gods" have nothing whatsoever to do with any LDS teaching. The countless divine beings to which Elder McConkie gives a wave of his hand are not the "gods of the nations" and have nothing whatever to do with this earth and its heavens.

Now I could go on (and on and on), but I won’t. The important things that we discover are:

LDS doctrine is not polytheistic. It is not as strictly monotheistic as Islam or modern Judaism either—but then, neither is "mainstream" Christianity.

The Bible passages most commonly used to argue "pure monotheism" are as hard on mainstream creedal trinitarianism as
they are on LDS precreedal trinitarianism. You will certainly throw your baby out with our bathwater if you insist on your quite uncompromising—and somewhat blinkered—reading of the Bible passages.

Moving along: as I pointed out, the belief that God was once a man is not doctrine, because it is not found in any binding or authoritative source. Having said that, I must add that most or all of us do believe it, but we don't claim to know how that state of affairs came to be, or if he has a Heavenly Father of his own, or the particulars of how God came to be God. But let me make it clear that we do not think of God as just “the guy who got the top job.” He is far more than that. LDS writings about God, from the earliest period down to today, uniformly regard him in the most reverent and worshipful terms. Thus, contrary to your rather cavalier treatment of the subject, Isaiah 29:16 does not describe our view of God at all; hence, the passage does not refute our view.

Your claim that God “is the Creator of . . . everything in the universe, including time itself” (p. 60) is one that I do not find support for, either in the passages you have cited or in any other scriptures. I cannot imagine where you got it from, unless it was from the Greek philosophy that you say has no influence on Christian thought. God is eternal because he has always existed in time, and always will do so, not because he exists in a state that is somehow outside of the time process. In fact, each and every time we talk about God's doing something (such as creating the earth), we describe his bringing about a state of affairs that did not exist before his intervention and which did exist afterwards. God’s actions happen in time. Therefore he is operating within time. He is “eternal” because he continues forever; there is no future time when he will not exist, and there was no past time when he was not around.

The statement you quote from Jeremiah 23:24 that God “fill[s] heaven and earth” (p. 61) does not grab me as meaning that he personally occupies all of the space therein. It seems rather to say that he “fills” those places just as I fill this page, or as you might fill a suitcase when you pack it—by placing other things in them. And the other Jeremiah passage (you referenced 10:10 on p. 61, but it’s actually 10:11) is yet again referring to idols (as verses 9 and 10 make plain)—false gods that created nothing and
that will "perish from the earth, and from under these heavens" (emphasis added). True Gods aren't on the earth, and no other celestial beings are mentioned or even considered in this passage.

You argue that "Man likes to attempt to make God in man's image" (p. 59). This may be true, but it is also unnecessary, since God got there first, making man in his own image. In fact it is significant that whenever God appears to man, he is in human form. This is consistent, from the time that the Lord, in company with two unnamed others, appeared before Abraham (see Genesis 18), to the time that Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy others saw the God of Israel (see Exodus 24:9-11), to the appearance of the risen Lord before John on Patmos (see Revelation 1:13-16). And let us not forget the appearance of the Father and the Son to Joseph Smith in the spring of 1820. You say, "The God of the Bible will not allow himself to be put into human categories" (p. 60), but one of two things is happening here: either he is going to the trouble of appearing human (as the Gnostics said of Christ)—in which case he wants us to think of him that way—or else he appears that way because he really is that way—that is, human form is his "native" form.

You argue further that "the God of Mormonism did not, in reality, create all things" (p. 61), to which I respond, "all what things?" I venture to say that he did in fact create "all things" that were within the knowledge of the authors of the Bible and, indeed, that are within the knowledge of modern science, including astronomy. For the idea of God as merely the God of this little planet is a silly anti-Mormon caricature that comes right out of the first-grade textbook of the Ed Decker School of Nonsense Polemics. Please don't trot it out again. The real "God of Mormonism" says this about his creations: "worlds without number have I created; and ... by the Son I created them" (Moses 1:33).

True, he did not create the elements. But then, the Bible never says that he did. Genesis 1:1-2 makes it clear that at the commencement of the creation, the earth was chaos without form. It explicitly does not say that God created the chaos before he started organizing it. That doesn't mean that God couldn't have done so, but it does mean that you absolutely cannot argue a creation ex nihilo from the Bible; it is not there. It comes from
that Greek philosophy that you insist does not influence Christian thought, and it comes from no other source.

You seem to feel that you have proved your case about what God is really like. You also seem to think you have refuted, with the use of the Bible, “the Mormon concept of God.” You haven’t, simply because you haven’t really understood it. If you were to get your LDS theology from authoritative LDS sources, instead of from speculative works such as The Seer, or anti-Mormon sources such as The God Makers, then you would be in a position to critique the real thing and not just the caricature. But then, I suspect the real thing might not prove such an easy target. Not being made of straw, it might prove rather harder to demolish.

Mr. White, if you really want to have a dialogue, then I sincerely suggest that you put away your anti-Mormon books. Do not let this sort of propaganda blind you to the truth that is found within the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. We know that it is possible for willful men to find all manner of criticisms against the Lord’s church and kingdom. They did it in Jesus’ lifetime, so of course they will do it again now. Can you understand that this does not faze us at all?

Your discussion of the passages of scripture that you anticipate in response is interesting, if a little presumptuous. Nevertheless, it is good to know that you are aware of them. You quoted 1 Corinthians 8:4–6 thus:

As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. (p. 64)

You argue that since Paul is talking about whether it really matters if Christians eat meat that has been offered to idols or not, the “gods” and “lords” he refers to are simply idols. I agree that the context of this passage is a discussion of the issue of eating
meat offered to idols. But that in no way abrogates Paul’s right to make an *obiter dicta* comment about another topic.

Verse 6 makes it clear that Paul sees that the Father and the Son have different roles, and further, that the Father is the “one God” on his own, while the Son is “one Lord” in a manner somehow separate from the Father. He is clearly *not* saying that the one God consists of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; for Paul, the one God is the Father, and Jesus is *someone else*.

This doesn’t mean that you can’t hold a different view, but if you do, then you will either have to deal with Paul’s view on this matter, or else admit that the Bible is not your only source of enlightenment on the subject of the Godhead.

But the verse you have focused on is verse 5, where Paul says, “For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many),” and you argue that these “gods many and lords many” are exclusively and only idols. I’m afraid that this verse doesn’t take you all the way there.

To start with, Paul says that those “that are called gods” are “in heaven or in earth.” As we discussed previously, idols exist only on earth. So when Paul distinguishes between *two groups* of beings “that are called gods,” the one group in heaven and the other on earth, he is making a clear distinction between those that are *rightly* called gods—those that dwell in heaven—and those that are *wrongly* so called, that are only on the earth. Thus Paul can add “(as there be gods many, and lords many,) But to *us* there is but one God, the Father . . . and one Lord Jesus Christ” (emphasis added). Paul clearly has no problem with the existence of divine beings other than the Father and the Son, but he is clear they are not anything to *us*.

Your introduction of other translations of this passage is yet another vote of no confidence in the Bible we use. But those translations dramatically illustrate the translation problem I mentioned in my first two letters. Consider the NIV rendering you quoted: “For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many ‘gods’ and many ‘lords’).” What the KJV renders “that are called,” the NIV gives as “so-called.” They both look synonymous to me, but “so-called” carries an implication of falseness that the KJV does not show. Can you guarantee that Paul’s own words conveyed this
implication? The giveaway in this translation is the quotation marks around *gods* and *lords* in the parenthetical portion. Do you expect me to believe that any accepted Greek manuscript uses quotation marks to imply falseness? Do they use them at all? Or indeed any form of punctuation? The quotation marks are clear indications not of the actual meaning of the text but of the translators’ own preferences.

Your discussion of the stoning of Stephen is, to be fair, a good and intelligent attempt to view this event from a mainstream perspective. However, I don’t think you make your case. While some people might imagine that Jesus is actually standing upon his Father’s hand, I think it is clear that Stephen is talking about the right-hand *side*. You argue that this refers to “the position of power and authority,” and that may indeed be what is intended, but Stephen clearly *said* that he saw Jesus “on the right hand of God”—that is, whatever “position of power and authority” Jesus occupied, it was a definite spatial position with relation to another person. How, I might ask, is it possible to stand to the right of someone or something that is everywhere? That which has no boundaries also has no right or left side. Whatever Stephen saw, Jesus was standing on the right of the picture.

In support of your interpretation, you argue that “God is spirit, and a spirit does not have flesh and bones.” But you seem to have forgotten some of your own rules about reading scriptures. Stephen was neither praising God nor declaring deep truths, both of which situations may call for a certain “poetic license”; he was describing, in plain and simple language, what he saw. Eyewitness testimony takes precedence over syllogisms.

I shall save my discussion of John 4:24 for another letter.

I must say, I did enjoy your minidiscourse on the subject of idolatry, even if it was a little bit pointed (i.e., in my direction). You said, “One can make a god out of almost anything: As someone put it—some people get up in the morning and shave their god in the mirror, others get into their god and drive it to work, while others sit in front of their god for hours each night and simply watch it. Idolatry is alive and well today” (p. 64). That is true. And, may I humbly point out, placing the Word ahead of the Speaker—putting the Bible before the One who revealed the truths contained therein—is also a form of idolatry.
Now, this letter is already too long, but I did promise to mention some of the problems attendant upon the idea of an absolutely unchanging God. So let us consider these briefly.

The first question I would ask you to consider is this: if a rational being chooses to do something, knowing the consequences of that action, is it not logical to conclude that that being *intends* to bring those consequences about? This question is important, because you seem to believe that God created each one of us in a conscious, deliberate, and rational act of creation. But you also believe that God's foreknowledge is absolute and unchanging—he always knew what he knows now about the future. He therefore knew, at the moment he created Hitler, of the death and misery that Hitler would bring into the world. As an absolutely free being, God could have chosen *not* to create Hitler. And he presumably made the same choice with Stalin, Pol Pot, and other ghastly murderers. In each case his choice was rational, absolutely free, and undertaken in full and perfect foreknowledge of the consequences, but he did create them. Since he could have chosen not to, and thus prevented World War II, the Holocaust, the Gulags, and the Killing Fields, is it not logical to conclude that he caused those catastrophes to happen?

Take it one step further; we believe that Satan was once one of the premortal sons of God, but that he rebelled and was cast out. You evidently believe that God knowingly and perspicaciously created Satan—again, with full foreknowledge of the consequences. God *could have* chosen *not* to create Satan—but he did create him; as a result of *that* choice, there is evil in the world. Your theology leads to the inescapable conclusion that God is personally and immediately responsible, if not for individual evil acts, then for the existence of evil. It is here because God chose that it should be here.

So, is evil good? Obviously not. Is God good? I think that you would agree with me that, in a moral sense, God is good. He always and only chooses good over evil. But your theology has a free, rational, powerful, and morally good being knowingly bringing evil into existence. He could prevent evil simply by choosing to create men and women who would always exercise their free will to do good and never evil, but he chooses otherwise.
This is, of course, a bit of an old chestnut, but it doesn’t go away; we keep meeting skeptics who throw it up at us. Of course we go back to agency, and of course they say, “why couldn’t God just create people who would freely choose to only do good?” They expect this question to stump us. In fact, it doesn’t. The “problem” of evil is not a problem for LDS theology; it is only a problem for those theologies that are influenced by platonic ideas.

But indeed, it is actually questionable whether God, if he was exactly as you view him, could do anything at all. You insist that God is self-existent, outside of time, and not limited in any way by his creation. Above, I argued that since God’s acts in the world happen in time, he must be also within the time process. This is because his actions happen at a specific time; Israel gets trapped by the Egyptian army, and right then God parts the Red Sea. He did not part it the previous month or the following week or in 1973 during the Yom Kippur war; his timing was perfect. But even if he had parted it at any of those other times, the fact remains that that is an act that takes place entirely in time. If God was outside time, as you claim, how would that be possible?

And even if he was within time, could he still do anything? Action always requires a decision. You said to me that God never changes his mind. That means that he cannot make a decision, since a decision is a change of mind. If God can’t decide to do anything, how can he then do it?

And not only how, but why? If God is not limited in any way by his creation, then he is not dependent on it for anything. He is not God because we worship him; we worship him because he is God. He is wholly “other”—you said so—and so he doesn’t need us for anything, right?

So why did he create us? He must have had a reason to create us, because he is rational and not capricious. But what reason could that be? He doesn’t depend on us for anything, remember? Not even his emotional states, right? If God went to the trouble of creating us—however little trouble that might be for an omnipotent being—then he must have wanted to do so. And creating us satisfied that want. He is, therefore, happier with us around. We make him happier. Or, to put it another way, we influence his ability to be happy—we move him, if you like.
But we just couldn’t move a God who was an abstract bundle of platonic absolutes, could we?

Well, this letter is far longer than it should have been. But I want you to understand that there are strong, rational criticisms for every belief under heaven. You cannot arrive at absolute truth by human means—reading, studying, and discussion—only. There is a way to know for certain what God really wants of you. All you have to do is humble yourself in prayer before him. Read the Book of Mormon, ponder it in your heart, and ask him in sincere prayer if it is true. I testify that he will answer your prayer.

As always, your friend,

Elder Hahn
Letter 5: What Think Ye of Christ?

Dear Mr. White,

Thank you for writing a letter of manageable length. Since you seem determined to continue to try to teach me LDS doctrine, despite my continued requests that you leave that to me, perhaps you would be so kind as to confine yourself to official, canonical sources—namely, the four standard works.

You do not seem to notice when I correct your misconceptions about our teachings. For example, in this letter you say, “as you know, in Mormon belief, the Father and the Son are separate and distinct individuals, and separate and distinct gods” (p. 68). As I know and have tried to explain to you, it is indeed our doctrine that the Father and the Son are separate and distinct individuals. But “separate and distinct gods”? With a small g? That doesn’t sound very much like our belief. As I said in my last letter, God the Father, his Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost are three separate and distinct divine beings. You can call them “Gods” if you want. But they are united in purpose, in thought, and in power; in all things they act as one. Therefore it is entirely correct to call them “one God.” And that is pretty much how we generally think of them.

The fact that some passages in the Bible use the construct “Jehovah Elohim,” thus giving the Father’s name to the Son as well (see p. 70), does not even begin to be a problem for me. I don’t know about you, but I also use my father’s name. I suspect that you probably do, too. One of the things a son almost always inherits is his father’s name.

I must say that I have read the talk by Elder McConkie that you give little excerpts from. Once again, I do not know if you are making this argument on your own, or if it comes from others. If the latter, I would once again earnestly invite you to put away your anti-Mormon books and get the truth from the source.

If the argument is your own work, then I must be blunt with you: I have read the entire talk, and you are not using it responsibly. In his talk Elder McConkie was addressing a particular development that was happening at Brigham Young University at the time. My brother was studying there then, and some students had
decided that their relationship with Jesus was so “special” that they could ignore the other members of the Godhead. They felt that, instead of praying to the Father in the name of the Son, they could pray to Jesus in his own name. This was contrary to our doctrine (see Colossians 3:17) and a departure from correct teaching—a heresy, if you will—and it fell to Elder McConkie to correct it. He was absolutely not saying that Latter-day Saints do not or should not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. He was saying that there is no such relationship that excludes the other members of the Godhead. If you are trying to make his words mean something else, then the most charitable thing I can say about your attempt here is that it is very tendentious and tends to cast doubt on your sincerity.

While on this subject, I can’t help pointing out that apostles are often called upon to do just what Elder McConkie did—that is, correct false teachings. That’s why Paul and James look like they were disagreeing with each other, when they really weren’t—Paul was correcting some “Judaizers,” while James needed to set some “Antinomians” straight. Be honest for just a moment; couldn’t your church use some living apostles once in a while?

With regard to your Isaiah passages: please refer to my previous letter. Although I was not thinking of the specific issues you raise now, I think you will find that I have dealt with them anyway.

You say that it is “utterly impossible, on the basis of the Bible, to distinguish between Jehovah and Elohim” (p. 71). I suggest that it is a good deal more possible than you realize. For one thing, it is clear that, although the terms Jehovah and Elohim are often used together in the Old Testament, they are not always used interchangeably. For example, while there are many instances where expressions such as “sons of God” or “sons of the most High” appear in the Old Testament, I have never seen even one reference to “sons of the Lord” or “sons of Jehovah.”

For another thing, I notice that you rely almost exclusively on the Old Testament. This is interesting, because as a Christian I would expect you to regard the New Testament as somewhat more definitive as far as your faith is concerned. When we look at the New Testament, what do we find?

The first thing we notice is that it quotes the Old Testament all over the place. (If Jerald and Sandra Tanner were Jewish anti-
Christians instead of Protestant anti-Mormons, they would have a field day “proving” that the New Testament simply “ plagiarizes” the Old.) And the quotations from the Old Testament are translated into Greek.


How does Elohim appear in the Greek New Testament? As Theos—especially Ho Theos. This, of course, gets translated as “God” in English.

Of course the same words appear in many places in the New Testament that are not merely quotations from the Old. And you will find that Lord usually refers to Jesus—especially after his resurrection—while God usually refers to the Father.

As I mentioned in my last letter: in a number of places in your favorite Old Testament book, Isaiah, the Lord announces that he is the one and only Savior (see Isaiah 43:3, 11; 45:15). And when the angel appeared to the shepherds in the field outside Bethlehem, he said to them, “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11).

Now we may never really know what the angel’s words were in the original Aramaic, but it seems reasonable that it would be something like, “a Savior, who is the anointed Jehovah.”

But don’t just take Luke’s word for it. In John 1:1–2 we read, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.” My brother explained that the first and third “God” in this passage comes from Greek Ho Theos—the God—while the second occurrence was simply Theos. So this could be rendered, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with The God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with The God.”

Now we know that Jesus is the Word—I’m sure I don’t even have to mention verse 14, because you’re probably way ahead of me here. So Jesus is “God,” and in the beginning he was with “The God.” So who is “The God?”

While we ponder this, have a look at verse 3: “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.” That’s pretty definite, isn’t it? The Word (a) was God, (b) was with The God in the beginning, and (c) made everything. He’s starting to sound very much like the Old Testament Jehovah,
with what you could call a “Christian spin.” (It has just occurred to me, at this point in our discussion, that John would probably make a better Mormon than he would a Baptist.)

It seems pretty clear that, according to John, in the beginning Jesus was God in some sense and was with another being who can be identified as “The God.” You have pointed out that Elohim basically means “The God,” so this looks like a good match; the other being, “The God,” is Elohim. And what does Jesus do, in the beginning, while he is with Elohim? He creates “all things.” You’ve made a pretty strong case from the Old Testament that Jehovah created all things, so we’ve got another good match.

On another occasion, Jesus was speaking with the Pharisees and told them that Abraham had rejoiced to see his day. They responded that he was too young to have seen Abraham. He answered, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58). This cross-references back to Exodus 3:14, wherein Jehovah tells Moses that his name is “I Am.”

Now there are three possible ways to understand this statement. Jesus could be saying, “I’m a lot older than I look; I’m actually older than Abraham,” to which the Jews would likely respond, “he’s cracked, this guy.” Or he could have meant, “Jehovah lived before Abraham,” to which they would probably say, “your point being?” Or, he could be saying “I am Jehovah, who lived before Abraham,” at which point they would respond as they did two chapters later, when he called himself the Son of God—they would pick up stones. And in fact this is precisely what they did do (see John 8:59), clearly showing how they understood this statement; Jesus was claiming for himself the personal name of Jehovah—and this despite the fact that he always distinguished himself from his Father.

Yes, Jesus is Jehovah. And in making his covenant with Israel, through Moses, he did indeed command them to worship him—that was basic to the covenant. But when he was on the earth as a mortal, Jesus mediated a new covenant and deflected all worship to his Father—despite the fact that it was his due. And so we do as he taught, praying to the Father in his name, instead of to Jesus.

Near the end of your discourse on Jehovah as the Father, you make the following accusation: “You have a god before Jehovah,
Elder Hahn! Your Mormon beliefs are causing you to break the very first commandment of God himself!” (p. 72).

And there’s that small g again! I don’t often get to see logic this bad, so I feelprivileged to have seen this one. Can’t you see the fallacy in this argument? You have gone to a whole lot of trouble to show that Jehovah is the Father. If you are right about that, and we are wrong, then we have indeed been worshiping Jehovah all along, and just didn’t know it. On the other hand, if we are right and you are wrong, then Jehovah himself has commanded us to worship the Father in his name. In neither case are we breaking the first commandment.

There is absolutely no doubt at all in my mind that if we were in fact directing our worship to the Son, on the basis of his being Jehovah, you would argue (and with slightly better logic) that we were breaking the first commandment on the basis of your conclusion that Jehovah is the Father. Thus, whichever member of the Godhead we gave priority to in worship, you would still make the same accusation.

I have often wondered how it is that people can think it so sinful of us to understand verses of scripture differently from them. Thank you for showing me how it works.

Mr. White, if believing that it is a sin to be a Mormon helps you sleep better at night, then don’t let me stop you. Just don’t try to convince me with such feeble arguments.

Now, you brought up the endowment ceremony. You are right that it is sacred, and we will not be discussing it. That is not to say that we cannot discuss the doctrines it contains, since those doctrines are fully and clearly attested in the scriptures—including, but not limited to, the Bible.

And so, referring back to John 1:3, we see again that “all things were made by him [Jesus]; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”

This fits in nicely with 1 Corinthians 8:6 which says: “But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.” Jesus clearly has a very significant part to play in the creation; in fact, it seems that he did it himself. Now if it happens that he had others assisting him in that work—in the nature of one or more subordinates who worked under his direction—then does
that diminish his right to claim the work as his? Not at all. If an
architect can say “I built this building” when it was really built
by a couple hundred sweaty-looking guys in hard hats operating
big machines, or if a conductor can say, “Now I will play
Finlandia” and then wave his baton at seventy-five other people
who actually produce the sound, then surely the Lord can say, “I
created everything” even if others were also involved.

Now, I have read the passages you referred me to, namely
Isaiah 6:9; Acts 28:25-26; Exodus 4:11; and 1 Corinthians
12:10-11 (see p. 73), and I find nothing therein that identifies the
Father as Jehovah. Nor do I find anything that identifies the Holy
Ghost as Jehovah. I realize that Acts 28 quotes Isaiah 6, and says
that it was the Holy Ghost who spoke those words to Isaiah, which
words he attributes to the Lord (not in capitals, incidentally) but
why shouldn’t he? If the Holy Ghost tells a prophet something,
then that something is the word of the Lord. The Holy Ghost is
preeminently a messenger, and as such speaks on behalf of the
Father and the Son. Throughout the ancient world, the concept of
the royal messenger who speaks in the name and with the author-
ity of the king is widespread and firmly established. The Holy
Ghost can be readily understood in that context. It does not en-
hance our understanding of scripture either to impose our cultural
models on the ancients or to ignore their cultural models—which
is precisely what you do when you try to superimpose your post-
Nicene understanding of the Trinity on passages that were written
by men who had no such notions.

Thank you for at last getting to a discussion of your own be-
liefs—in dealing with the Trinity—instead of merely denigrating
mine. Once we get down to the clear biblical teachings about the
Godhead, we can help individuals such as yourself understand
why Bible believers such as myself do not believe in such un-
scriptural and man-made notions as the Trinity.

By the way, do you find that last sentence condescending and
a little hackle-raising? I’m not surprised; I lifted it straight out of
your letter (see p. 75).

I counted over 4,300 words in your letter; of these, only the
last portion—the portion on the Trinity, a mere 842 words—actu-
ally conveyed your own beliefs in any positive way. The remain-
der, the bulk of your letter, was nothing more than an attack upon
my beliefs. I wonder—why is this so? As missionaries, we encounter people of many creeds and denominations. We find no need to undermine their beliefs before presenting the message of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to them. Our message is entirely positive and not at all negative. If we were to devote eighty percent of our teaching to attacking what others believe, as you have done, our missionary discussions would have to be increased in length by a factor of five.

Now to the question at hand. I thank you for your explanation of the Trinity, since it is the clearest and most concise explanation I have seen. For all that, it is still a little fuzzy around the edges, but it is still a lot clearer than anyone else has ever been able to explain it to me.

Once again, as I have said before, we are not polytheists. Perhaps, though, we are coming down to the nub of where we differ, since you clearly believe that the Trinity is one being, containing three persons, while we believe that the Godhead contains three beings, each of whom is a person.

I don’t want to get involved in a beat-up on the Jehovah’s Witnesses, although I would point out that they arrive at their conclusions in exactly the same way you do—by reading the Bible as the one and only source of doctrinal authority. But since you brought up the subject of subordinationism, I would point out that there is a whole lot of biblical support for such a doctrine. I have already mentioned 1 Corinthians 8:6 twice. Let us look at another passage that says something quite similar: “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5). Now, it is entirely apparent, yet again, that Paul sees Jesus as someone separate from God. But more than that, he sees Jesus as the mediator between God and men. Now a mediator between two parties is—indeed, must be—a third party. Ideally, such a mediator should be completely independent, but in any event, he must be someone who is not partial to one side over the other—he can’t be closer to one side than he is to the other. If he was, the trust that makes him effective would be lost.

Now if God is supreme, then Jesus must in some respect or other be somewhat less than supreme; for the underlying sense of the word mediator is “in between.” If I were to draw a diagram—of the type that you seem fond of—it might show God the
Father "up there," us "down here," and Jesus in the middle. That would probably be an oversimplification, though.

There are some other important passages that address this point. One of these is John 5:19, wherein Jesus says, "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." In saying that he follows the Father's lead, Jesus is clearly proclaiming his subordinate status. But I also mention this passage because the *only* coherent explanation of it that I have ever heard is that God the Father once had a mortal life. I would be interested to hear how you explain it; for Jesus explicitly says that he can do *nothing* except what he has *seen* his Father do.

Matthew 28:18: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is *given* unto me in heaven and in earth" (emphasis added). "All power" sounds pretty powerful, so you may wonder why I bring this up in the first place; well, power that is *given* comes from somebody else—somebody who has it to give in the first place, somebody who therefore is *more* powerful.

John 14:28 says in part; "My Father is greater than I." This needs no commentary.

John 20:21: "Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." What could be clearer than this? The Father sent Jesus, and Jesus obeyed; now Jesus is sending the apostles in like manner. And the apostles went, too, because they were subordinate to Jesus; just as Jesus went where and when the Father sent him, because he was subordinate to his Father.

First Corinthians 11:3: "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; . . . and the head of Christ is God." Skipping the "controversial" bit of that verse, only because it does not relate to the subject at hand, this becomes another passage that needs no commentary. Christ is subordinate to the Father.

Now once again, I had thought to talk a little about some other issues in this letter, but I think I've made my point; using the Bible, you have put forward a good case for your interpretation. I believe that I have shown that the Bible also supports our interpretation, which is different from yours, to say the least. You would clearly have me abandon my interpretation in favor of
yours, but on what basis? Both are equally supportable from the Bible, depending only upon one’s presuppositions; so what is the solution?

Fortunately, there is a solution, and we’ve found it. It is that God has chosen to speak to his children again. He has raised up prophets in our time and revealed his mind and will to them. He has even chosen to appear to some of them in person.

In Doctrine and Covenants 110:3–4 we read:

His eyes were as a flame of fire; the hair of his head was white like the pure snow; his countenance shone above the brightness of the sun; and his voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters, even the voice of Jehovah, saying: . . . I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain; I am your advocate with the Father.

For us, that settles the matter.

Now I don’t expect it to settle the matter for you, at least not yet. It does for me, because I have a testimony of the restored gospel; I know that the Doctrine and Covenants is the word of God, just as the Bible is. And you can gain the same testimony. But you will not find it in any books, nor in all the books in the world, for it is not there. You can only gain it in personal communication with your Father in Heaven.

Therefore I once again urge you to open your mind and your heart. Put away your collection of anti-Mormon books. They are of no value. Read the Book of Mormon and ponder what you read. Then ask the Father in faith, nothing doubting. I testify that you will receive a sure witness and testimony that it is true. And you will find, as I have, that this testimony will be able to withstand all human calculations that are brought against it.

May you have a desire to seek the Lord’s will.

Elder Hahn
Dear Mr. White,

You said to me that “Any kind of rebuttal of what I had written to you would require more than two sheets of paper, but I could tell your letter contained no more than that” (p. 79).

This is getting confusing. I sent you an eight-page letter, and you seem to have received only two. You also quoted me as saying, “Your interpretation of these passages of the Bible lacks the proper authorization, the proper authority. God has restored the priesthood authority upon the earth, and since God has always operated through this means, and you do not have this authority, you lack the proper means of interpretation, and, therefore, the proper understanding of the Bible” (pp. 79–80). I’m sorry, but I honestly don’t remember saying that your interpretations were wrong because you didn’t have the priesthood. I have clearly misspoken if I said that.

So that there may be no misunderstanding, let me just say that priesthood authority is not required to understand the scriptures correctly. That is not our doctrine. What is required is the gift of the Holy Ghost, which is conferred by the laying on of hands by those who hold the priesthood. Without that gift, which is the power by which the scriptures were given in the first place (see 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20–21), we are left entirely to our own devices and are guaranteed to get things wrong.

I would just like to mention that my mother has been the Gospel Doctrine teacher in our ward for a lot of years, and her understanding of the scriptures is widely respected. She doesn’t hold the priesthood, and it has never occurred to any Latter-day Saint that she shouldn’t be teaching the scriptures. We did have a Baptist family visit our ward who thought it was strange that a woman should be teaching, though.

I hope you will excuse me for the delay in replying to you. As I believe I made clear in my second letter, I have only a very few books with me. It was therefore necessary for me to write home to get some information relevant to the contents of your letter.

I have read your letter very carefully. I am sorry to say that I find it very disappointing, in more ways than one. I have asked
you repeatedly to put away your anti-Mormon books and read the Book of Mormon with an open mind. In this letter you have relied on those anti-Mormon books more than ever.

You say that my testimony of the gospel “stands in the way of [my] acceptance of the true gospel of Jesus Christ. Anything that stands between a person and the gospel must be dealt with—it must be exposed by the light of truth. If this means ‘tearing down’ falsehoods, then so be it” (pp. 82–83).

This, if I may point out, is not the modus operandi of the ancient apostles. Consider the case of Paul, who took the gospel to the gentiles. In Ephesus, the famous cult center of the goddess Diana (or Artemis), there was a confrontation with the devotees of that goddess. Do I need to remind you that they, and not Paul or his companions, started the confrontation? Must I labor the point that all of the “tearing down [of] falsehoods” was done by the supporters of Diana? Is it lost on you that Paul never once attacked the worship of Diana in any way—not in his parting speech in Acts 20 and not in his long letter to the Ephesians? Would you call me smug if I pointed out that we follow the example of Paul as completely as you are following the example of Paul’s enemies?

You claim that you don’t enjoy repeating slander against the good name of Joseph Smith, or trying to tear down my testimony of his divine calling. I’m sorry, but try as I may, I can’t find those claims convincing. You describe the little bits of detail found by professional anti-Mormon Wesley P. Walters as “rich rewards.” With the air of a magician about to produce a rabbit, or a salesman about to offer me a free set of steak knives, you say “there is more . . . much more” (p. 99). This, if I may say so, sounds like you are rather enjoying yourself.

But let us get into the meat of the thing, and discover what substance, if any, there is to your arguments that Joseph Smith is to be rejected as a true prophet.

With regard to latter-day revelation, you say, “even if such a thing as latter-day revelation existed, it would not in any way supersede, or contradict, what the Bible says in the passages we have examined” (p. 80, emphasis added). The first thing that leaps out from this statement is the “even if” at the start. You really aren’t prepared to consider seriously the possibility that the Lord might
still want to speak to prophets, are you? Your mind is pretty firmly made up on this point, isn’t it?

The second thing is that not only must latter-day revelation not contradict what has been revealed before, for you it cannot even supersede it. But that is precisely what new revelation does do. Does Acts 15 supersede Leviticus, or not? If not, why don’t you live the law of Moses? If so, why can’t latter-day revelation do the same?

It becomes clear after all that there is, for you, one source of truth, and only one. It is the Bible. You pray to your Father in Heaven, and I’m sure you are sincere, but you don’t really expect any answers to come from anywhere but the pages of your Bible. That is your real god. That is the one you truly worship. That is the one whose uniqueness you so fiercely defend.

And not only must any new revelation not supersede or contradict the Bible, it must fully agree with “the passages we have examined.” Not only is the Bible the only guide to all truth, but you choose which texts to use as yardsticks. Shall we say that you have set up a game in which we have to play on your field, with your equipment, according to your rules—and with yourself as the umpire? Or shall we say there is no god but the Bible, and James White is its prophet?

You also said, “What Jesus revealed about God does not contradict what God had revealed before!” (p. 80). I would be interested to hear you try to persuade a rabbi of that. Actually I agree that Jesus did not teach anything that contradicted what had been previously revealed. But it is only by taking the Old and New Testaments together that this becomes clear. If a scholar takes the Old Testament on its own and draws his conclusions from that, together with the writings of others who have taken the same approach, and then approaches the New Testament with his conclusions already set, what is going to happen? Well, how many Jews joined your church last year?

In this connection, you say, “By taking the LDS position as an a priori assumption, and then forcing the Bible into the mold created by Mormon teaching, you are doing great injustice to the teachings of the Bible” (p. 81). How is this different from taking your preexisting interpretation of the Bible as an a priori assumption? Couldn’t a Jew accuse you of doing exactly the same thing
with the New Testament—forcing the Old Testament into its “mold”? And aren’t you doing with the LDS scriptures what you would disapprove of a Jew doing with the New Testament, when you demand that it exactly conform to what went before?

You further say:

You allege that my interpretation is “incomplete” because I lack something you have—in this case, further revelation from God. And I reply, if you have further revelation from God, it will be in perfect harmony with what God has already revealed! As is plain to see, that which you call revelation from God is not in harmony with the Christian Scriptures, the Bible. (p. 81)

I’m sure I don’t need to reiterate the problem I have when you assume that “the Christian Scriptures” exactly equal the Bible. This is called “begging the question.”

Your examples of “contradictions” I believe we already discussed in connection with your letter on the nature of God. You claim that the statement “The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s” (D&C 130:22) contradicts a raft of scriptures. Hosea 11:9 says nothing at all about God having a body; neither does 2 Chronicles 6:18 or Jeremiah 23:24. Many people casually assume that John 4:24 does imply that God has no body, for it says, “God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” But if saying that God is a spirit means that he can’t have a body, then what are we to make of Romans 8:9, wherein Paul tells the Saints, “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you”? Are Christians supposed to lose their bodies? Is that perhaps what Jesus meant when he said that we were to worship God “in spirit and in truth”? You seemed corporeal enough to me when I met you last. Or is it possible that Paul meant that Christians can be “in the spirit” and still keep their bodies? If so, why can’t God do that too? Or do you believe that such things are possible for us, but beyond him?

The teaching that God has a body is authentically early Christian. St. Augustine turned his nose up at it, and eventually rewrote it. I have already discussed the LDS doctrine of the plurality of Gods, which is also comfortably at home with ancient Christianity,
but not with modern creedal Christianity. I shall simply say here that the contradiction exists only in your mind.

Therefore your statement that I “take ‘latter-day revelation’ to be superior to all else, and, if there is a contradiction, you simply dismiss the teachings of the Bible in favor of LDS doctrine” (p. 80) is simply untrue. You present it as though it were a case of a completely uniform biblical message being rejected in favor of latter-day revelation. In reality, latter-day revelation helps us decide which of several possible interpretations of many Bible passages to accept.

You go on to say that the “Mormon claim of latter-day revelation can be approached from many different angles” (p. 81). You then mention some of those angles. Conspicuous by its absence is the suggestion that one might try taking that claim seriously and examine it on the basis that it might, after all, actually be true. I humbly venture to suggest that you cannot honestly say that you have evaluated a truth claim until you have seriously considered the possibility that it might actually be true. The fact that you have not even thought that approach to be worthy of mention among your list of “angles” is most revealing.

The best possible “angle” from which to approach the Latter-day Saint doctrine of continuing revelation, together with the new scripture that it entails, is simply to ask: what if it is true? I find your entire letter to be a (very) long list of excuses to reject modern revelation without actually considering it. And from what you have said, I take it that there will probably be more.

You introduce your ad hominem against Joseph Smith with these words:

If your belief in Joseph Smith stands in your way of finding a real relationship with Jesus Christ, I will do whatever is necessary to remove that stumbling block, simply because I care about you. I do not enjoy the task—but tough love often demands that we do that which we do not like. (p. 83)

Now we know that in the Middle Ages, the dominant church of the day used to take those who disagreed with its interpretations and burn them for a crime they were pleased to call “heresy.” And they genuinely believed that they were saving souls from
hellfire, too. I’m certain a grand inquisitor would wholeheartedly agree with your dictum that “tough love often demands that we do that which we do not like.”

At the same time, Jews were being forced to live in ghettos and wear yellow stars of David. At one point the Jews were forced to maintain, at their own expense, a house in each ghetto for those of their number who wanted to investigate the major Christian religion of the region. No doubt the medieval anti-Semites would approve of the slogan that “tough love often demands that we do that which we do not like.”

Coming down to what your “tough love” demands that you do, it seems to be little more than breaking your own rules. While proclaiming the purity of your motives, you slip in the phrase “deceptions of Mormon leaders such as Joseph Smith” almost under my nose (p. 83, punctuation altered). But I spotted it anyway, as I also spotted your claim that the efforts of others who slandered him were “noble.” Very well, so in what do these “deceptions” consist?

It appears that Joseph Smith is a deceiver for telling the story of the first vision. Before I come to that issue, I will take a moment to discuss your cavalier treatment of the martyrdom of Joseph Smith.

Your claim that “martyrs do not die with a pistol in their hands fighting back” (p. 86) comes entirely from your own cultural assumptions. The distinguishing feature of a true martyr is not passivity or pacifism, but his personal eyewitness testimony which gets him into trouble, and which he never denies. Joseph Smith claimed to see the Father and the Son. Yes, I know you think you can explain it away, but the fact remains that he did claim it, and for that reason alone his enemies hounded him, schemed and plotted against him, and finally achieved his death.

Do you genuinely believe that Joseph Smith was murdered for suppressing a scandal-mongering newspaper? Others have done the same, before and since, with perfect safety. If you ask any ten Americans which was our greatest president, I’d be surprised if fewer than eight of them named Abraham Lincoln. But he suppressed newspapers too, and he locked up hundreds of Americans for years without due process of law, and that to cope with a danger far less than what Joseph Smith and the Latter-day Saints...
faced. For Lincoln was interested only in saving the Union as a political entity; Joseph saw that his people were in real danger of extermination. The mobs of bigots and fanatics that howled for Joseph’s blood were only appeased for a short time; in less than two years the Saints were driven from Nauvoo at gunpoint, thanks largely to the good offices of “Christian” ministers.

But back to Joseph Smith. You claim, “I believe that I have already laid a sufficient foundation for the ‘testing’ of Joseph Smith as a prophet with regard to Deuteronomy 13:1–5” (p. 87). That is the biblical passage that warns Israel to reject prophets if they say, “Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them” (v. 2)—something that Joseph Smith never said. Joseph testified of the Father and the Son. Your interpretations of Joseph’s teachings differ from your interpretations of the Bible passages of your choice, and by dint of such strained and artificial methods you are able to take Joseph’s clear call to “come unto Christ” as an invitation to follow after “other gods.” Is there anything that Joseph could say that would meet with your approval?

You also add, “You and I have already discussed how . . . following the advice of such LDS leaders as Bruce R. McConkie results in a direct violation of the very first commandment of God!” (p. 88). Yes we have, and I have shown that your view on this is wrongheaded, if not ridiculous. You are altogether too smug about your interpretations, Mr. White. You may regard them as having the same stature as holy writ, but forgive me if I’m not quite so persuaded. To follow Joseph is to follow the master, Jesus Christ, whose servant he was, and not any “strange god.”

Your discussion of the first vision introduced rather a lot of material that I was not in a position to verify. As I mentioned, I wrote to a member of my family who has a good deal of knowledge in this area. My Aunt Jenny has written back to me, and I feel that I can do no better than to quote you the relevant portions of her letter.
Excerpts from Aunt Jenny’s Letter

Let’s look into these claims that your friend makes about the first vision, and then come back to some of the scriptural issues he raises.

Your friend starts from Joseph Smith’s own account and summarizes it in a paragraph containing seven points (see p. 90). The first point, “this ‘revival’ began some time in the second year after the Smiths’ move to Manchester,” is one we will return to. I will note that your friend is rather free with his quotation marks, as the word revival does not appear in Joseph Smith’s own account. The second point, “it took place ‘in the place where we lived’ and spread to ‘the whole district of country,’” is taken from Joseph’s own words, but the key word, spread, is not Joseph’s. I label that as the key word because it defines a very specific chain of events: according to that word, the religious excitement that Joseph describes must start in his neighborhood and afterward spread to surrounding regions. But this is not Joseph Smith’s story: he says, as I’m sure you know, that the excitement “was in the place where we lived,” and “indeed the whole district of country seemed affected by it,” which is a different kind of picture. Joseph describes a widespread excitement which included his own neighborhood; he emphatically does not say it started there.

Now you may think I am being a little pedantic in my reading here, but I’m a lawyer, and it’s my job to analyze implications closely. Your friend seems to rely on Joseph Smith’s story, but he makes subtle adjustments to it. As I will show you, he is trying to make it easier to attack.

Much later in the letter, your friend introduces the Reverend Lane’s account of the 1824 revivals. When your friend says that “Lane’s description matches Joseph Smith’s recounting of the revivals to a tee” (p. 101), he is massively overstating the case. The only point on which Lane’s account matches Joseph’s is that in both cases the excitement “commenced with the Methodists.” To be sure, Lane’s account matches your friend’s “summary” of Joseph’s account—which only proves that your friend has deliberately reworked Joseph’s account to make it match Lane’s. Joseph does not say that the excitement started in Palmyra and spread outwards from there, but simply that it happened “in the
place where we lived” and “the whole district of country seemed affected by it.”

Your friend also mentions that Joseph’s account was written “in 1838, a full eighteen years after the supposed events he narrates concerning the First Vision” (p. 89). This presumably is an important gap in your friend’s mind. Perhaps he feels the eighteen-year gap somehow discredits the first vision in and of itself. I should point out that your friend, who appears to be a conservative Protestant of some kind, would probably not think that the much longer gap between the birth of Christ and the writing of the Gospels would discredit those documents. Does he understand the importance of consistency?

He later says, speaking of Joseph’s account: “He tells us that he went into the ‘sacred grove’ (as modern Latter-day Saints call it) on a beautiful spring day in 1820. Did he just make a little mistake in remembering when his sister Lucy was born in his previous listing?” (p. 92). Actually, the mention of his sister Lucy being a member of the family has to do with the family’s removal to Manchester. It is a useful evidentiary clue, but its real significance seems to have escaped your friend. I will explain its importance below.

Your friend describes the Lord’s message to Joseph thus:

Smith asked the two Personages which church he should join. He was told he should join none of them: “They are all wrong—Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists—the whole lot are in error.” Their creeds, which present the basic elements of the Christian faith, were said to be “an abomination” in the sight of God. And what of church members, the “professors” of these faiths? “They are all corrupt.” It is not that this was new for Joseph—he included this kind of rhetoric in the Book of Mormon as well when he said that one either is a part of the church of the Lamb or the church of the devil (I Nephi 14:10). (p. 93)

I have been practicing law for over twenty years now, and I have seldom seen such skillful manipulation as this. Note again, the liberal use of quotation marks around phrases that are not direct quotations. Are you sure that he wrote this for you in
particular? It would seem to be better suited to people who were actually unfamiliar with the document he is abusing. He says that “creeds . . . present the basic elements of the Christian faith,” as if Christianity were creedal by definition. (It isn’t.) He cleverly equates the word professors with church members when it really refers to church leaders. Then in the most breathtaking display of effrontery, he says, “It is not that this was new for Joseph—he included this kind of rhetoric in the Book of Mormon as well,” a sentence that relies upon at least three hostile assumptions. Your friend assumes that the Book of Mormon, published in 1830, predates this experience, which Joseph declared happened in 1820; he assumes that Joseph wrote the Book of Mormon instead of translating it; and he assumes that Joseph was making up the entire first vision experience “as well.” All of which demonstrates that your friend is arguing from the assumptions he is trying to prove.

Your friend’s statement that “Joseph did tell many different stories, most of which, Elder, contradict the others on important points” (p. 94) is quite disingenuous. As a lawyer, I make this statement without fear of legal repercussions. Take the transcript of Joseph’s 1832 handwritten account of the first vision. This remarkably compact account actually agrees with the longer 1838 account in every single detail that it mentions about the vision. To be sure, there are a lot of details that it does not mention, including the appearance of God the Father. But in the much longer account the Father says only eight words—the bulk of the interview is clearly taken by the Son. The short account discreetly avoids mentioning the Father’s presence and sticks to the message the Lord brought to Joseph, which was that his sins were forgiven and that he was not to join any church, since they were all apostate.

Now a contradiction must be the juxtaposition of two explicit and incompatible statements of fact, and the 1832 version does apparently contradict the 1838 account on one point, although it is a very trivial one. Your friend has quoted the earlier account as saying that the vision took place “in the 16th year of [Joseph’s] age” (pp. 94–95). We shall be charitable to your friend on this point, since others without ill will have made the same mistake, and he may be quoting them. The mistake I refer to is the “16th.” For qualified handwriting experts have stated that the actual figure
should be the “15th,” but the second digit has been smudged or overwritten.

Likewise, the mention of angels in the 1835 accounts is not a contradiction, but a generalization. The term angel in the first half of the nineteenth century was a generic term referring to all heavenly beings, especially when they were visiting the earth with a message. This is precisely what the Father and the Son did on that spring day in 1820, and that made them angels par excellence. We can reasonably infer that every Christmas, Joseph Smith, along with the rest of the Christian world, sang an old Catholic hymn that says, in part, “Come and behold him, born the King of angels.” What sort of being would the King of angels be? In Joseph’s time, what sort of person was the king of England? The king of England was English, and by the same token the King of angels was an angel—if not the angel, “the angel of his presence” in fact. There is no contradiction, and your friend is playing a shell game when he tries to manufacture one.

Your friend’s rather smug (and if I may say so, unfriendly) challenge that you “produce any shred of evidence that Smith claimed to have seen God the Father prior to the year 1834, a full fourteen years after the event supposedly took place” (p. 96) is one that he thinks he makes with perfect safety. You are a full-time missionary and are not in a position to go digging up obscure historical references. It is your calling to preach the gospel. Do not neglect it for any reason.

Nevertheless, Joseph Smith makes a very clear claim on 16 February 1832 to have seen God the Father. True, this is not referring to the first vision, but it does rather upset your friend’s theory of evolution. For the date of Doctrine and Covenants 76:19–24 is not in dispute, and on that date the Father and the Son appeared to Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon together. Two witnesses are better than one, and Sidney is yet another witness who had differences with Joseph (and later on with Brigham Young); Rigdon is yet another witness who left the church and died out of it. Yet he maintained his testimony to the end of his life.

But while your friend is waiting for that “shred of evidence that Smith claimed to have seen God the Father” in the first vision “prior to the year 1834,” he might accept a challenge to produce
a shred of evidence that anyone claimed that Jesus was born of a virgin prior to A.D. 64. If he cannot, are you then entitled to reject the virgin birth as unhistorical? If you are not, will he apply the same standard to the first vision? I believe that careful examination will show that your friend has two quite different standards of evidence that he applies to belief systems—an almost impossibly strict one for yours and a lenient one for his. This stance is called hypocrisy.

I do not think your friend has much experience reading the scriptures; certainly he doesn’t seem to understand the rule that if two texts are produced by the same author, and there exists a plausible reading of both of them that is noncontradictory, then that is the reading that should be adopted. Certainly his treatment of Doctrine and Covenants 84:22 with reference to the first vision ignores this rule.

Your friend thinks that Doctrine and Covenants 84:22 contradicts the first vision because Joseph didn’t hold the Melchizedek Priesthood at that time and therefore could not have seen the face of God and lived. The problem, of course, is that nowhere in that verse, or indeed in all of that section, or anywhere else for that matter, does it state that the person who is seeing God’s face must hold the priesthood himself. That is the assumption that your friend relies on, and it is utterly baseless. The passage in question simply says that the priesthood is the power that makes it possible for a person to see the face of God and live. And that priesthood power was certainly present during the first vision; for God the Father is the source of all power, while the Son of God uniquely possesses that priesthood—it is his and anciently was named for him; to men here on the earth it is merely delegated.

Others, including General Authorities of the church, have offered an alternative explanation. They have suggested that the person who is seeing God’s face must indeed hold the priesthood himself, if and only if the theophany occurs at a time when the priesthood is on the earth. Since the priesthood was not on the earth in 1820, Joseph could see the Father at that time even without it.

Thus the three choices your friend offers you for understanding this passage comprise a false dilemma. Note the loaded phrases with which he tries to build up his case—“the priesthood,
a teaching that . . . had begun to evolve in his mind” and “He asserts that it is impossible for a man who does not have the priesthood to see the face of God . . . and live to tell about it.” Who asserts that? Actually your friend does; note how breezily he tries to palm off his own opinion as Joseph’s assertion. “Mormon leaders have come up with some ingenious ways around this obvious contradiction” (pp. 96–97)—obvious, that is, to your friend; to those who know how to read the scriptures and who understand the doctrine of the priesthood, there is no contradiction at all. And, “I would like to suggest to you that the reason Smith could say what he did in D&C 84:21–22 without even noticing that he was creating a contradiction is simply that at this point in time (1832) he had never claimed to have seen God the Father!” (p. 97). How modest of him to merely “suggest” this, all the time dropping his subliminal little hints that Joseph was “creating a contradiction,” that is, he was making it all up! And how about “Smith’s beliefs obviously evolved over time” (p. 97), a mantra that he likes to keep repeating. This is a well-known technique of manipulation; he thinks that if he repeats it often enough, you will start to accept it without ever having actually examined it. But he shows real temerity when he takes it upon himself to tell you what “you must accept”; playing fast and loose with facts and logic, to borrow your friend’s phrase, “does not qualify one as a prophet, either” (p. 97).

Your friend mentions E. D. Howe’s classic of anti-Mormon letters (I call it the Mein Kampf of the anti-Mormon movement) and makes the predictable argument from Howe’s silence about the first vision (see p. 97). Howe, incidentally, was arguing the thesis that the Book of Mormon was originally written as a money-making novel and was only later worked over into a religious book; thus talking about the first vision would not have helped him. A number of years ago, Professor Hugh W. Nibley of BYU wrote an essay entitled “Censoring the Joseph Smith Story” (later included in his Tinkling Cymbals and Sounding Brass). In it he clearly showed that anti-Mormon writers have universally suppressed or distorted the first vision story; even years after it was officially published and included in the scriptures of the church, the church’s critics have fought shy of it or seriously misused it. Your friend himself has carefully manipulated Joseph Smith’s
account, even while claiming to rely upon it; he has been somewhat more subtle than most of his predecessors, though.

But Nibley also found some very clear indications that the first vision story was known from a much earlier date. In 1829, a journalist named Abner Cole wrote a series of satirical articles in a Palmyra newspaper. His “Book of Pukei” was intended as a satire on the Book of Mormon, but he satirized everything he could—including Moroni and the first vision. Oh yes, it was talked about, all right. Mocked and distorted though it was, it was still recognizable.

You told me that your friend is using some anti-Mormon books. This is certainly true, to some extent. His use of some passages from the Journal of Discourses to claim that certain early church leaders didn’t know anything about the first vision is regurgitated nonsense that he would have obtained from a Salt Lake City outfit headed by Jerald and Sandra Tanner. But there are many indications in your friend’s letter that he is arguing the anti-Mormon case in his own right and not simply believing what others tell him.

Be that as it may, those passages from the Journal of Discourses do not prove that the early Brethren didn’t know about the first vision in the mid-nineteenth century. Your friend is clearly ignorant of the competent answers that have been made to this silly claim. His conclusion that the Brethren were confused by the “evolving” story of the first vision (for thirty-one years after it stopped “evolving” and was published in its final form) is simply ludicrous, and it serves as an excellent illustration of how much influence wishful thinking has over his reasoning processes. For the very Brethren he quotes were intimately involved in having Joseph’s history published in England and America; of course they knew it. His argument about whether “the First Vision story as you tell it today was being told over and over again back in 1869” is again manipulative. That story doesn’t get told “over and over again” in the church even today; while on the other hand, if someone were to give an unprepared talk without notes and without notice in sacrament meeting next Sunday and talk about the first vision, the chances of that person making no errors at all would be slim. But the talks your friend cites—the ones in the Journal of Discourses—were exactly that: unprepared, without
notes, and without notice. In twenty-six volumes of such talks, one can undoubtedly find mistakes on every subject imaginable. Those mistakes prove nothing, because they are not even consistent with each other.

The Brigham Young quotation doesn’t say what your friend (and his mentors, the Tanners) want it to say. It simply says that neither God, nor his angels, visited the earth with ostentatious display, but quietly, to a few chosen servants. The crucial sentence says, “But He did send his angel to this same obscure person, Joseph Smith, Jr., who afterwards became a Prophet, Seer, and Revelator, and informed him that he should not join any of the religious sects of the day, for they were all wrong” (Discourses of Brigham Young, 108). Now the subject of that sentence is the first “He,” that is, God. The verb clause starting “and informed” relates to the subject, and not any other noun; thus, it is God, and not the angel, who “informed him,” namely Joseph, not to join any churches. Brigham’s statement is right on track.

George A. Smith’s statement is interesting and actually supports what I said about the word angel above. For he is clearly talking about the first vision, and just as clearly is familiar with the 1838 account—the only one which gives the James 1:5 quotation in full. But he also uses the words angel and angels in the same manner that Joseph does in his 1835 account. Note that these words are the only hint that this statement is in any way “confused,” but the speaker’s obvious familiarity with the 1838 account, together with the fact that angel is a normal nineteenth-century word denoting all heavenly beings, including God, makes your friend’s conclusion quite unwarranted.

Wilford Woodruff is also familiar with that account. He cites seven specific details from the 1838 account, in the correct order—again, including a reference to James 1:5. But he does make a fairly important mistake in that he mixes this experience up with two of Moroni’s visits—the first, in 1823, and the last, in 1827. However, mixing details of three experiences together in one paragraph is of no evidential value in determining what he actually believed about one of those experiences. When your friend offers his conclusion thus: “The confusion of the early leaders after Smith’s death is natural—Smith had not told one story all along, but had told many different stories between 1830 and his
death in 1844,” he is spinning cobwebs from moonshine. Those talks, as I pointed out, were given entirely extemporaneously. Of course there will be mistakes in them. Arguing that those mistakes are due to a process of “evolution” that had reached its final form over thirty years before is a tremendous leap in logic. Woodruff conflates the first vision with two other experiences; there is no sign of his being “confused” by any earlier account of the first vision itself. Therefore, his mistake does not support an evolutionary model.

Your friend’s letter is over 12,000 words long. I am therefore amazed to see him say, “I have not yet commenced to begin!” (p. 99) after more than 9,300 words. What does he think he was doing for the first three-quarters of the letter? Making small talk? If so, he was wasting both your time and his—and I must remind you that your time is considerably more valuable, because it is the Lord’s time.

You will probably not get another opportunity to serve the Lord full time until you retire. That is over forty years away. The remaining months of your mission are too precious for you to let yourself get sidetracked.

Your friend makes a fairly determined effort to prove that the first vision “couldn’t” have taken place. His proof, if such it may be called, is as follows:

Joseph Smith claimed there was a revival in 1819/1820. Wesley P. Walters proved this revival took place in 1824. Therefore Joseph was lying or mistaken about the timing of the first vision. Therefore it never happened.

The first point is not true. Joseph did not mention the word “revival” in his account; he talked about a period of religious “excitement.” He uses the terms “region of country,” “district of country,” and “the place where we lived” interchangeably, and not to imply some kind of outward spread, as your friend has so tendentiously paraphrased him.

Nor does he say that the excitement happened in 1820. He says that it happened, or reached his area, “some time in the second year after our removal to Manchester.” In the second year means more than one year but less than two years later. I realize your friend has already given you a rundown of Joseph’s chro-
nology, but I’ll give you another one, without any hostile commentary.

Joseph reports that his father moved from Vermont to Palmyra when Joseph was about ten. That would be in 1816, the year the Smith family was “warned out” of Norwich, Vermont. Four years later the family moves onto the Manchester farm. In the second year after, the religious excitement begins.

Now, your friend has suggested that Joseph Sr. moved to Palmyra in advance of the rest of the family, which is not inherently unreasonable; expecting the family to cool their heels in Vermont for another two years is quite idiotic. The fact is that the Smiths purchased the Manchester farm in July 1820. Some months prior to moving there—an entire growing season at least—they had built a log cabin on an adjacent property, and they continued for a time to live there. They probably thought it was on the farm itself—the boundaries were not marked—but in fact it was off the farm by a mere fifty feet. Incidentally, the boundary of the farm was also the boundary between Palmyra and Manchester.

Nevertheless, there is a problem in this chronology as it stands. Taking the 1816 move from Vermont as the starting point, four years later they move onto the farm—that is, in 1820. If the religious excitement begins in the second year after, that is, in 1821–22, that is too late to have influenced Joseph before his first vision in 1820. Your friend’s rather devious sleight-of-hand tries to force Joseph’s chronology up to 1824, but I’m sure you see the fallacies in his reasoning as he picks and chooses the facts that suit his theory, and rejects equally well-attested facts because they don’t suit it. When people let their opinions control the facts, they can prove anything. But even after discarding his mangling of the time line, there remains yet a problem in Joseph’s chronology.

Let’s leave the chronological problem for a moment. It can in fact be quite easily solved once we get the rest of the facts into place, so we will come back to it.

Your friend is clearly familiar with some of the answers to his theory, and he tries to deal with them by telling you to dismiss them without a hearing. This is known as “poisoning the well,” and it is what convinces me that he is arguing this line all on his own. Note where he says, “Backman asserts that the revivals might
have taken place prior to 1819, and that Smith’s ‘confusion’ over what church he should join may have started much earlier in his life. Aside from the fact that this results in an obviously strained reading of Smith’s history, it again only deals with one issue, not all together” (p. 104).

There are two obvious problems with this statement. The second problem is that your friend’s borrowed theory is a house of cards—it is not necessary to “deal with” every piece of the whole rickety structure; dismiss one and the whole thing collapses. The first problem is the statement that “this results in an obviously strained reading of Smith’s history.” This is a knowing and calculated misrepresentation of fact, or in other words, a deliberate lie. I would point out that there is no more “strained” way to read Joseph’s history than to flatly contradict all of the most important facts it contains, including the first vision. Further, your friend quoted from Joseph’s 1832 account, but suppressed the following statement found therein: “From the age of twelve years to fifteen I pondered many things in my heart concerning the situation of the world,” which announces that Joseph had been thinking about things since at least 1818. Now by a curious coincidence there were revivals in the Palmyra area in the 1817–18 period. Although Joseph does not say anything about revivals in the earlier account, if we take the two together, it is easy to see the sequence of events: Joseph is impressed by revivals in 1817–18 and then disturbed by some subsequent interdenominational ill will. He broods over these things for some time, reading the Bible, going to meetings, and listening to preachers. Then in 1820 he reads James 1:5 and goes out to pray.

This is not “straining” Joseph’s history, but taking all of his accounts and doing the only responsible thing we can do with them—presume them to be true, give them the benefit of the doubt, and work from there to see how they fit together. That is what real scholars do.

We still haven’t solved the chronology problem, but as Richard L. Bushman points out in Review of Books on the Book of Mormon 6/2 (1994): 129, “the chronologies of the two [accounts] would coincide if one word in Joseph’s 1839 account were changed. If the text read ‘sometime in the second year after our removal to Palmyra,’ rather than ‘after our removal to Manches-
ter,’ the stories would blend.” Bushman argues that Joseph has made a simple error in conflating the move to Palmyra with the move to Manchester. This is not difficult to believe; I have some very clear memories of family circumstances from my early teens which other family members think happened at other times and places.

Your friend made a rather sarcastic comment about Joseph’s inclusion of Lucy in the list of family members who moved to Manchester in 1820, when she was not born until 1821. He thinks it proves the family actually moved in 1822, but of course it doesn’t. The purchase of the Manchester farm in July 1820 is a given quantity, a fixed point which shows your friend’s contrived chronology to be false. It also means that little Lucy hadn’t been born before the farm was taken over, so Joseph was in fact making a mistake. Actually these little errors are quite important in their own way, for they show quite clearly that Joseph didn’t go over his story to check it for “holes,” as a clever deceiver would have to do. He simply relied upon his memory and told it as he recalled it, and so made just the sorts of little mistakes in detail that all authentic reminiscences contain. That’s the real significance of that mistake. It proves beyond doubt that Joseph was sincerely remembering and not crafting a “cunningly devised fable.”

Your friend offers some additional argumentation to support his conclusion as follows:

The Smiths were “warned out” from Norwich, Vermont, in March 1816.

The weather records of the time, matched to Lucy Mack Smith’s recollection, prove that the family left Vermont in 1818, not 1816.

The Palmyra road-tax records show Joseph Smith Sr. from 1817, but Alvin doesn’t appear until 1820, despite the fact that he turned twenty-one in 1819.

The Smiths stay on the Palmyra road-tax records until 1822; therefore, they must not have been on their Manchester farm before that time.

Your friend argues that since the Smiths were “warned out” from Norwich, Vermont, “therefore the Smiths most probably moved to Norwich in 1816 and lived there two years, until 1818.” So runs his claim. But this is a mere assumption; why would they
“probably” stay? It is apparent that Joseph Sr. did go to Palmyra in 1816; it is not completely unreasonable for him to go a few weeks ahead of the rest of the family while he finds work and accommodation, but two years? Does your friend really imagine the rest of the family would be content to wait around for two years, without the primary breadwinner, in a town that had officially notified them that they would get no help if they got into difficulties? That is a huge stretch of our credulity, and all to try to fit Joseph’s chronology to an 1824 revival.

Your friend also claims that Walters ran down the “weather records” of the time and matched them to Lucy Mack Smith’s account. Yet Lucy’s account confirms the dating of Joseph’s first vision, a point on which your friend is silent. Why is Lucy’s account useful about a peripheral item like the weather, but not worthy of mention when it tells of the first vision? Especially when the first vision is the subject of the investigation?

And indeed, if your friend disbelieves Joseph on everything else, why is he so devout about accepting the length of Joseph’s chronology? Note well: he accepts only the length of it, while trying to violently force all of the dates it contains into much later events.

Your friend makes much of the fact that the road-tax records don’t show Alvin Smith until 1820. He argues,

It is evident that Joseph Smith, Sr., moved to Palmyra before the rest of his family, who joined him there at a later date. We know this from the fact that Alvin would have been listed in the 1819 road-tax records, had he been present in Palmyra (he turned 21 on February 11, 1819). Obviously, Lucy and the children did not arrive in time for Alvin’s name to be found on the 1819 lists.

(p. 102)

Your friend thinks that something is “obvious” or “evident” when other equally likely explanations are readily at hand. Is your friend prepared to vouch for the efficiency of nineteenth-century civil servants to the extent that Alvin couldn’t possibly have been overlooked in 1819? It is a known fact that the Smith men often hired out as laborers; is your friend absolutely certain that Alvin wasn’t away “on the job” when the tax assessors came around?
Your friend also points out that "It is important to note that Smith is listed as living in Palmyra until 1822—despite LDS scholars' contention that he moved from there four years earlier in 1818" (p. 102). This may explain why your friend relies on Walters's 1967 article, instead of his Inventing Mormonism (with Michael Marquardt) from 1994. For that book makes it clear that the Smiths "articled for" their Manchester farm in 1820. Thus there was evidently some official confusion about where the Smiths actually lived. Your friend has actually undercut his own case with this item, since it casts doubt upon the sources he relies on to establish the later arrival of the family in Palmyra.

In fact, it is known that the Smiths lived only a few feet away from the farm for several months before they bought it; they built a log cabin, moved in, and started working the farm before the papers were signed, so that they would be able to bring in a harvest. The fact that the land was taxed at the unimproved rate for two years most emphatically does not mean that the family did not live there or work the property. It is entirely absurd to imagine a poor family buying a farm and then letting it lie idle—while paying tax on it—for two years, but that is the absurdity your friend wants you to swallow. It is far more reasonable to suppose that the local tax authority continued to tax the land at the lesser rate even after the family started working it. Many local authorities still tax partly improved property at the same rate as unimproved property. They probably did not tax it at the higher rate until after the frame home was completed.

Now it happens that all of your friend's "evidences" come via the same conduit—Wesley P. Walters. Your friend introduces him as a Presbyterian minister, which he was, but had he been as zealous and diligent in his pastoral work as he was in his anti-Mormon activity, he would have been one of the finest ministers any Protestant church ever produced. For his real claim to fame was as an anti-Mormon researcher and author. I do not say this to discredit him—even anti-Mormons occasionally get things right, and in fact some of Walters's finds, though rather minor, are quite valuable. I point it out because your friend has been a little shy about mentioning it. Why do you suppose that is so? Is it because your friend doesn't want you to realize that Walters's mind was
made up before he ever laid eyes on the documents he relies upon?

Your friend makes this comment about Walters's finds and the conclusions he offers from them:

Joseph Smith fabricated the story years later, and, to make "room" for the First Vision without getting rid of Moroni and the golden plates, he "changes history" and pushes events back by four years. But, history has caught up with Joseph Smith. (p. 103)

If the last sentence were not just a pompous cliché, it could be quite offensive. History does not need to catch up with Joseph, for on 27 June 1844, a large number of your friend's coreligionists "caught up" with him and murdered him for the crime of being a prophet. In almost twenty years of reading various anti-Mormon publications, I have never once read anything by an evangelical Protestant that has shown the least bit of shame about that atrocity. If one of them did, we would have to say that there is one anti-Mormon who has some Christian conscience left. I have not come across even one, and the sheer hypocrisy displayed by those who profess to be Christians, and who can justify such criminal actions, is mind-boggling.

But what your friend fails to grasp is that if Joseph were really just making it all up, he would have no need to falsify the material facts of his history at all. The first vision doesn't have to have happened in the sacred grove; if Joseph is just inventing it, he can make it happen anywhere, and any time far enough back. Nor does he have to tie it in with revivals; any trigger—or no trigger at all—would fit in with well-known biblical examples, such as the visions of Moses, Samuel, and Paul. In his tendentious zeal to convict Joseph of lying, your friend has failed entirely to provide a valid motive.

Your friend also makes much of the fact that Oliver Cowdery and William Smith both mention the Reverend Lane as a person whom Joseph knew prior to the first vision. Your friend needs to be aware that both Oliver Cowdery and William Smith are secondary sources, not primary ones. Oliver didn't meet Joseph until 1828, and William Smith was even younger than Joseph. But the fact is that your friend is again picking and choosing his evidence;
both Cowdery and Smith confirm the essential facts of Joseph’s story, a fact about which your friend is silent. But he swoops on this detail because he thinks that it helps his cause. As he points out, Lane moved to Palmyra in 1824, but that was not Joseph’s only opportunity to meet him. For, as Larry C. Porter reports in *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 7/2 (1995): 128: “in July 1819, Rev. Lane was just fifteen miles away from the Smith home for a period of eight days attending the annual Genesee Conference at old Vienna (later Phelps, New York).” This conference took place from 1 July to 8 July. It was a major event, at which many of the attending ministers preached sermons for the benefit of the lay people who inevitably showed up. Joseph could certainly have met Lane there, or heard him preach.

Now I could easily pile argument upon rebuttal to show just how shoddy your friend’s argumentation is, but I’m sure that you’ve got the message by now. Your friend is trying to prove that the first vision did not happen because it is possible to reach a different set of conclusions about external events than those which Joseph describes. In other words, he wants you to reject Joseph’s unambiguous direct testimony on the strength of highly ambiguous circumstantial evidence. He has entirely failed to show why Joseph should lie about those events—if he’s inventing the whole story, then the first vision doesn’t depend on anything that happened in the real world; in fact, the first vision only depends on those external events if they *really did* influence Joseph, and if he *really did* have the vision as he said he did. If he didn’t actually have it, then he can invent any inner turmoil he likes, without linking it to anything else. That would be the safe thing to do and is the obvious course of action for anyone making up a story like the first vision. The fact that Joseph didn’t take that course is very strong evidence of his sincerity. And, I’m sorry to say, the shifty way your friend handles the evidence is equally strong evidence of his insincerity.

Before I finish, I want to mention the problems your friend has in reading scripture. First of all, as I mentioned, he fails to give Joseph the benefit of the doubt. His approach to reading LDS scripture is to look for anything that could possibly be seen as an inconsistency and then milk it for all it is worth; in other words, he is an entirely hostile interpreter. Second, with regard to the Bible
passages he cites, he shows a tendency to read documents as they were never intended to be read. He seems at times like what we call a “strict constructionist”—that is, he argues that the meaning of a passage is equal to the sums of the dictionary meanings of all the words it contains. At other times, he seems to want to excuse a passage from such treatment, if the clear thrust of it is contrary to his preconceptions. And he does it just about the wrong way around, since a straightforward narrative probably says just what it means, while ecstatic declarations of praise tend toward exaggeration. So when Stephen in extremis reports what he sees, it is only fair to take him literally—he’s hardly likely to try to compose a beautiful poem in those circumstances; while when other prophets, in chapters chock-full of poetry, make expressions of wonder and awe about God’s majesty and greatness, we really shouldn’t read them as dry theological treatises.

Back to Elder Hahn’s Letter

Aunt Jenny says some other things, but I have copied just the portions that relate to your letter. As you can see, she has some fairly strong opinions of some things. But, if you look past her sometimes strong language, you will realize that what she says is perfectly sound. If you reject the central episode of Joseph Smith’s testimony, but still insist on some of the trivial details in it, then that is far more “strained” than accepting that episode and looking for ways to work out the trivial details. I will paraphrase what you said to me in an earlier letter:

Part and parcel of dealing with almost any ancient or even modern writing is the basic idea that the author gets the benefit of the doubt. It is highly unlikely that a writer will contradict himself within short spans of time or space. Some critics of the church, and the prophet Joseph Smith, seem to forget the old axiom “innocent until proven guilty.” The person who will not allow for the harmonization of the text (as my aunt did above) is in effect claiming omniscience of all the facts surrounding an event that took place over one and a half centuries ago. Most careful scholars do not make such claims. The above-presented explanation is perfectly reasonable, it coincides with the known facts, and it does not engage in unwarranted “special pleading” (compare with
pp. 36–37 of your letter 3). This comes directly from what you said to me about reading the Bible; this is your rule, but you seem to quite openly ignore or even reverse it when it comes to Joseph Smith. You are using a double standard. Is this really a Christian thing to do?

By the way, as I mentioned to you in an earlier letter, full-time missionaries have a fairly short list of approved reading material. The last time I looked, there was nothing by Jerald and Sandra Tanner on that list. When I return home I can read what I please, but for the balance of my mission, I intend to stick to the mission rules. So thank you for your kind offer, but I won’t be collecting those books.

Now this letter is already far too long. I once again urge you to put away your anti-Mormon books. It does you no credit to keep relying on them. They contain no revealed truth; all they do, in Aunt Jenny’s words, is “poison the well.” I invite you to come to the well and drink of it unpolluted. It will lead to great joy and a multitude of blessings.

May you gain a desire to learn the Lord’s will.

Elder Hahn
Dear Mr. White,

It appears that our letters crossed in the mail, as your latest letter arrived the same day I posted my last reply to you.

You will forgive me if I continue to give priority to my calling. Your comment that our discussion "is directly relevant to the propriety of" my "missionary activities" is a little puzzling (p. 107). Perhaps I am unusually dull-witted, but I cannot think of any argument that would make serving the Lord improper.

Once again, I have had to write home for additional information, in this case the information related to the so-called Bainbridge trial of 1826.

You argue that I am somehow obligated to prove that Joseph Smith was a true prophet and that you have no obligation to disprove that claim. Your second point is quite correct—you don't have to disprove anything at all. You can simply reject Joseph Smith and walk away. The only reason I can see why you would need to continue your ad hominem attack against him is to justify your rejection to yourself.

You seem to feel that I have simply accepted without question what others have told me about the Prophet Joseph Smith. You describe me as someone who just blindly accepts whatever my church leaders say. That is not the case. In reality I believe Joseph to be a prophet because the God of Heaven has revealed that fact to me personally. And all the clever sophistries in the world cannot overthrow my testimony because it came by the power of the Holy Ghost.

You say, regarding Joseph Smith's prophetic calling, that "I do believe that he made many prophetic errors during his lifetime—I fully believe that he expected Christ to return before the year 1890 or 1891" (p. 108).

I wonder if you have thought this matter all the way through. That idea comes from Doctrine and Covenants 130:14–17, which reads:
I was once praying very earnestly to know the time of the coming of the Son of Man, when I heard a voice repeat the following:

Joseph, my son, if thou livest until thou art eighty-five years old, thou shalt see the face of the Son of Man; therefore let this suffice, and trouble me no more on this matter.

I was left thus, without being able to decide whether this coming referred to the beginning of the millennium or to some previous appearing, or whether I should die and thus see his face.

I believe the coming of the Son of Man will not be any sooner than that time.

Please notice what Joseph actually tells us here: he was praying to know the time of the Second Coming—and what Christian wouldn’t want to know that?—and in response he was told that if he lived to age eighty-five he would see the Savior’s face. Verses 16 and 17 make it clear that Joseph didn’t know quite what to make of this communication, and the most he was prepared to commit himself to, speaking in his role as a prophet, was that “I believe the coming of the Son of Man will not be any sooner than that time.”

Notice also how Joseph passes up every opportunity to grandstand or to make a show of superior knowledge here. Note also that the Lord’s answer to Joseph is entirely consistent with what the Savior himself taught, as recorded in Matthew 24:36, which reads, “But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.” Taken in that context, the Lord’s answer to Joseph appears as both a put-off, and something of a rebuke—albeit a mild one, since the Lord does not want anyone to be afraid to approach him.

But you may be right about Joseph’s expectations; I have seen a number of statements that suggest that he was rather excited about this revelation and felt that this really was the Lord’s timetable. Now if Joseph the man holds an opinion which he is unwilling to put forward in his role as the prophet of the Lord, that is a clear indication that he took that role seriously. On the other hand, if as a result of this revelation he developed a personal conviction based upon a particular interpretation of it, that can mean
only one thing—namely, that Joseph really did believe that the communication came from the Lord. Therefore if, as you say, you "fully believe that he expected Christ to return before the year 1890 or 1891," then you must also believe that Joseph believed he was receiving revelation. Whether he was right or not, he was certainly sincere about it, which pretty much rules him out as a deliberate deceiver, since deceit is insincere by definition.

Now to the "false prophecies" that you think are so important. The first one you cite is from Doctrine and Covenants 84:1–5 and states that the temple to be built in Jackson County, Missouri, will be built "in this generation." In regard to this, you conclude,

Smith said it was the word of the Lord; he defined the exact event that would take place—the temple would be built at a specific location that is known to this day; he defined the time parameters in which it would take place—prior to the death of that generation. It is a classic prophecy that can be tested—and it fails. (p. 113)

This may come as a shock to you, but I have certainly heard this one a number of times before. And the first thing I must do is refer you back to Matthew 24, which I mentioned above. In that chapter, Jesus prophesies a number of events. Some of them have already taken place, such as the destruction of Jerusalem, the scattering of Israel, and the persecutions against the early Christians. Others of these have not yet occurred, such as the astronomical signs described in verse 29—the sun being darkened, the moon being turned to blood, etc., and the sign of the Son of Man being seen in heaven, as per verse 30. But what is disturbing about this is that Jesus himself said, "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled" (Matthew 24:34).

Now it is entirely possible to argue as follows: "Jesus said it was the word of the Lord; he defined the exact event that would take place—he would return in power and great glory; he defined the time parameters in which it would take place—prior to the death of that generation. It is a classic prophecy that can be tested—and it fails."

So that you do not misunderstand me, let me say that that is not my argument. It is merely the logical result of applying your
argument to a prophecy made by Jesus himself. And it certainly seems that a great many of the early Saints anticipated that the Savior would return in their lifetimes. Shall we hold it against them for believing that?

Another difficulty arises with your interpretation when we realize that it is entirely possible, within the normal uses of the English language, to view the critical verses of section 84, namely verses 3 to 5, as a commandment rather than a prediction. Let us review these verses again:

Which city shall be built, beginning at the temple lot, which is appointed by the finger of the Lord, in the western boundaries of the State of Missouri, and dedicated by the hand of Joseph Smith, Jun., and others with whom the Lord was well pleased.

Verily this is the word of the Lord, that the city New Jerusalem shall be built by the gathering of the saints, beginning at this place, even the place of the temple, which temple shall be reared in this generation.

For verily this generation shall not all pass away until an house shall be built unto the Lord, and a cloud shall rest upon it, which cloud shall be even the glory of the Lord, which shall fill the house.

Verse 5 is certainly a prophecy, and many of the Saints thought it was fulfilled when the Kirtland Temple was dedicated in March 1836. But what of the other verses? Note that the word shall is often used in the sense of giving a command—the Ten Commandments say “thou shalt not” do things that people have continued to do to this day; are they then failed prophecies? Or merely disobeyed commands? Certainly the passage that you quoted from Doctrine and Covenants 124 refers to the verses above as a command and released the Saints from the responsibility of obeying it.

The fact that some church leaders felt that the command, although revoked, would ultimately need to be obeyed is entirely consistent with scriptural use; the command that the children of Israel take possession of the land of Canaan was only postponed for a time.
But I would sum up on this one point simply by saying that whatever the Lord meant by "this generation" in A.D. 33 is probably still valid in 1832.

Your use of Doctrine and Covenants 114 as a failed prophecy is rather weak, largely because it isn’t a prophecy at all—it is a command. David W. Patten was commanded to “settle up all his business as soon as he possibly” could, with a view to preparing for a mission. Although, as you rightly point out, he died strong in the gospel, it has been argued that he nevertheless didn’t settle up his business as soon as he could; had he done so, he wouldn’t have been “on the scene” to be killed at Crooked River.

But there is indeed a prophecy contained in that section, namely, the prophecy that a twelve-man mission would depart the following spring, the spring of 1839. And it happens that on 26 April 1839 the Quorum of the Twelve did in fact depart on a mission to England. Had Patten been alive at the time, he would have been part of that mission. Thus your rhetorical question “Why would God describe the specifics of a mission that would never take place?” is moot, since the mission did in fact take place. Therefore it was entirely appropriate for Patten to prepare for it. The mission went ahead, with another in Elder Patten’s place.

It is entirely clear that neither of these cases, nor both of them together, is sufficient to bring down a verdict that Joseph Smith was a false prophet.

There is another test, also a biblical one, which I notice that critics of the church never use. It is found in Acts 5:38–39, and reads: “And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.” This counsel and this work have not “come to nought”—at least, not yet. If you, and all the critics, leave us alone and stop contending against us, and our work not be of God, then that will soon become apparent, but if you continue to contend and the Lord is with us, then you will only bear witness to your own impotence.

Before moving on to your “other matters,” I would comment on your treatment of the prophecy of Jonah. You must know perfectly well that we understand the failure of Jonah’s prophecy in
very similar terms to your explanation here. The weakness is in your labored argument by which you try to distinguish the two cases. Joseph’s “prophecies” were mostly commands—the prophetic elements were in fact fulfilled. Even if you insist that the command to build the city of Zion in Missouri is a prophecy, it can only be called a false one if Jesus was a false prophet as well. As I seem to keep reminding you, you need to discard your double standard and adopt a single, consistent one.

But most importantly, you have tried to limit the Lord’s right to make a conditional command or prediction. May I ask—who are you to command the Lord?

The rest of your letter I find to be nothing more than a personal attack on the Prophet Joseph Smith. That’s all it is, and nothing more. I would like to leave it there, but I don’t want you to think that these accusations cannot be answered.

As I mentioned earlier, I have written back to my aunt, the lawyer, to get her view on the Bainbridge “trial.” Here again are some excerpts of her letter.

**Excerpts from Aunt Jenny’s Letter**

Dear Elder Hahn,

You really are a glutton for punishment, aren’t you? Don’t you know an anti-Mormon when he starts slandering the Lord’s prophets?

Anyway, since you are determined to persevere with this fellow, I will give you the lowdown on the Bainbridge “trial.”

First of all, I would point out that your friend is yet again judiciously selecting his material to create the impression that the various stories about the so-called trial are consistent. They are not—in fact they contradict each other all over the place—and his picking and choosing of bits of accounts is not very scrupulous.

The old and dubious accounts he relies on have only one piece of hard evidence supporting them, namely a bill for the services of the justice who heard the case and the constable who brought Joseph in. While on the face of it that bill appears to support the account your friend has chosen, it in fact does not, for two important reasons.
The first is that the bill itself is tainted. As your friend so gloatingly remarks, it was found by professional anti-Mormon Wesley P. Walters. However, Walters’s handling of it has broken the “chain of evidence,” since he removed it from the venue he claims to have found it in. I don’t just mean that he took it out of the box—he would have to do that—but he actually took it out of the custody of its lawful custodians, without their permission, without their signing it out or recording any description of it. He took it, along with an unspecified number of other papers, to Yale University. They were not returned to their lawful custodians for almost three months—and then only under legal duress. The only reason the county authorities found out about these documents was that Walters had them published—and you can bet your name tag that he would not publish any document that would not help his case. Therefore, there is no way to know whether all the documents Walters took were in fact returned; it may well be, for all we know, that other documents were found that exonerated Joseph Smith, but that Walters chose not to return. And there’s also no way of knowing whether the documents themselves were tampered with in some way. The fact is that if anyone tried to produce in court a document that had been so badly handled and rely on it as evidence, that document would be thrown out.

The second reason the bill does not support the so-called court record your friend produces is that the court record is clearly not what it purports to be, for several reasons. First, misdemeanor trials were not recorded at that time, only felony trials. Thus whatever the court record is, it is not an official court transcript, because there would not have been one.

Second, the court record gives the testimony of several witnesses, but none of them signed it, as they would have to have done had an official transcript been taken.

Third, as your friend himself points out (albeit reluctantly), “Later study caused Wesley Walters to view this incident not as a full-blown trial, but as what we might call a ‘pretrial hearing’” (p. 124). But his precious court record ends with the words, “And therefore the Court find[s] the Defendant guilty.” Pretrial hearings cannot deliver guilty verdicts. They can only determine if the defendant has a case to answer and therefore needs to be bound over for trial. If, as seems clear, the 1826 hearing was a pretrial
examination, then the court record is a bogus document and has no evidentiary value.

Your friend once again draws some entirely unwarranted conclusions from Justice Neely’s bill. He casually assumes, for example, that “Smith was examined with reference to ‘glass looking’ in March of 1826” (pp. 123–24). But was he? The phrase “the glass looker” appears below Joseph’s name on the bill. All of the other defendant’s names are listed with the charge beside them. Joseph’s name does indeed have a charge listed beside it—the charge is “misdemeanor.” The phrase “the glass looker” appearing below his name was an identifying reference, nothing more. It wasn’t the charge, and indeed could not have been; there was no such crime as glass looking in the State of New York in the 1820s. Thus your friend’s sanctimonious claim that “Smith was actively involved in abominable practices and ran afoul of the law in the process” (p. 124) is entirely unfounded.

And what was the outcome of the hearing? Your friend relies upon the so-called court record, as well as the equally suspect account of Judge King Noble, in claiming that Joseph was bound over for trial. Noble, although a judge, did not hear the case, and is not a primary source. Without anything more substantial to go on than his own and Walters’s wishful thinking, your friend confidently declares that the hearing “would have resulted in a later full trial had Joseph Smith not taken what Joel K. Noble called ‘leg bail’ (i.e., he fled the area)” (p. 124). In reality, the evidence points toward Joseph’s having been acquitted.

The court record your friend relies on so heavily actually does include some valid details, although badly garbled. I mentioned Justice Neely’s costs of $2.68. There is also an amount of $.19 listed as “warrants.” Another document that Walters ran down was a bill presented by Constable De Zeng for that amount. Now it happens that $.19 was the prescribed amount for a pretrial mittimus (warrant of commitment to prison for lack of bail), as set down in A Conductor Generalis of 1819. In other words, it was the amount the constable would charge for bringing an accused person in. If Justice Neely had found that there was a case for Joseph to answer, he would have ordered him bound over for trial at the next court of General Sessions, and De Zeng would have charged an additional $.25, which was the prescribed amount for a posttrial
warrant of commitment. But that charge was not levied; therefore, Joseph was not remanded to the custody of the constable, and so he was, in all probability, acquitted. That is precisely what Oliver Cowdery reported in *Latter Day Saints’ Messenger and Advocate* 2 (October 1835): 202.

So your friend’s confident and sneering pronouncements about this matter are unfounded. A hearing took place, charge unknown, and Joseph was acquitted. The only valid conclusion to be drawn from these facts is that he was not guilty of any crime—he did not run “afoul of the law.”

**Back to Elder Hahn’s Letter**

Once again, my aunt has expressed herself quite forthrightly, and I hope this does not offend you. Moving on from the trial issue, which has been quite satisfactorily settled as far as I am concerned, I would like to comment on some other points you raise.

In a number of places you seem to argue from your conclusions. This can be seen where you say such things as, “In the Book of Mormon we find more evidence of his belief in the same magical practices found in the testimony given at his trial” (p. 125). Why do you assume that the Book of Mormon reflects Joseph’s own beliefs? It could only do that if Joseph wrote it, but he always insisted that he translated it—it may reflect his vocabulary, but the beliefs are those of the authors.

Your entire argument that Joseph couldn’t have been a true prophet if he was involved in what you choose to call the occult seems to me to manifest a kind of spiritual snobbery. You seem to say that God wouldn’t stoop to consorting with someone whom you think unworthy of such contact. But as I’m sure you realize, we are all unworthy. So were the ancient prophets—but God spoke to them anyway.

Now I realize that you may accuse me of “joining hands with atheists” again, but I will risk it anyway. After all, I am only asking for a little less hypocrisy in dealing with the modern prophets. What I would like to do is ask you to consider whether Moses, by your standards, was good enough to be a prophet.

When he went before Pharaoh, he took with him his brother Aaron. Pharaoh demanded a sign, and Aaron cast down his rod.
was a remarkable item, that rod. When Aaron cast it down, it turned into a serpent; when Aaron picked it up again, it changed back. I'll come back to Aaron's rod in a moment, but you remember that when Pharaoh's magicians cast down their rods, they also turned into serpents—and Aaron's serpent devoured them. This is important, because it is clear that this first miracle was a demonstration of the same kind of power that magicians of the day were able to use. Moses and Aaron were clearly "dabbling in the occult" because they were performing the "magical practices" of the culture that was around them.

But, as you once said to me, there is more—much, much more. You see, it turns out that the confrontation between the prophets and the sorcerers was a reenactment of an ancient Egyptian myth wherein Pharaoh proved his kingly power in exactly the same way. Moses and Aaron, therefore, were not only using Egyptian magic, but they were actually carrying out an Egyptian religious practice by so doing. Doesn't that make you look down on them with disdain? They can't really be our kind of people, can they? They just aren't sanitized enough.

And if dabbling in the occult is not enough to put you off Moses, there are other ample reasons to consider him an unsavory character. For he was a murderer. He saw an Egyptian overseer beating a slave; in so doing, the overseer was merely carrying out his lawful duty. But did Moses take that into consideration? According to the Bible, he did not. He first looked around guiltily to make sure nobody was watching and then murdered the Egyptian and buried him in the sand. When his crime became known, he fled the country and was actually on the run from Egyptian law when he claimed that God spoke to him. Do you really believe that claim?

If I got really warmed up, I could tell you all about how his pattern of getting his way by murder was repeated; how he broke several other commandments even after God supposedly gave them to him; how he had "revelations of convenience" to prop up his political power; how his marital practices were somewhat, uh, irregular; and how God didn't consider him good enough to even set foot in the promised land. But I hope you realize that I am not truly making this argument. I am simply pointing out that
it can be made—all it takes is a Bible and a chip on one’s shoulder.

But back to Aaron’s rod. As I said, it was a nifty gadget. It could change into a snake; it was the instrument Aaron used to turn the Nile to blood and to bring various other plagues. After everything else, it actually budded. And what did they do with this “magical talisman”? They put it in the ark of the covenant.

I point this out because you make such a to-do about Oliver Cowdery having a spiritual gift which at one time was referred to as “the rod” and at another time as “the gift of Aaron.” I don’t doubt that this could be linked with a physical object, such as an actual rod. Your assumption that it was a dowsing rod is exactly that—your assumption—and as such is not binding on me. It is also not consistent with what the scripture says, for in Doctrine and Covenants 8:6 we find that this gift “has told you many things.” Dowsing rods don’t give revelations—they merely react to water.

I realize that we could easily make a fairly large discussion about the changes to the Doctrine and Covenants, but this is quite long enough for one letter. I will simply point out a couple of passages of scripture. First, Isaiah 28:13–14: “But the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken. Wherefore hear the word of the Lord, ye scornful men.” And second, Jeremiah 36:32: “Then took Jeremiah another roll, and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah; who wrote therein from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire: and there were added besides unto them many like words” (emphasis added). I’m sure I don’t have to draw you a picture here.

Last of all, you get all indignant about Joseph carrying a “Jupiter Talisman” in his pocket. You mention the affidavit of one Charles Bidamon, son of Emma Smith and Lewis Bidamon. What you don’t mention is that Charles was born years after Joseph died, and his affidavit, given in 1938 was to support the sale of the piece. In other words, Bidamon told the purchaser that the coin was Joseph’s because that would make it more interesting—the statement was “sales talk.” To be sure, he claimed that it was one of Joseph’s prized possessions, but that just makes me
more suspicious; why did Bidamon, born twenty years after Joseph died, have the coin and not one of Joseph’s own sons? Charles Woods, Joseph’s lawyer, made a detailed list of all of Joseph’s personal effects that were found on him at the time of the martyrdom; the talisman was not among them. *Not one contemporary source* links Joseph with the talisman; it only gets linked to him ninety-odd years after his death by a man who never met him, who was trying to sell something.

But even if it had been Joseph’s, why is that important? You offer not one iota of evidence that he actually used it for anything, or that it would have been anything other than a sentimental keepsake for him, but the mere possibility that he had this round piece in his pocket is enough for you to assume that he was doing all manner of satanic practices with it. You know, symbols only mean what the people who use them think that they mean, and not what some book says that they mean; otherwise, none of us would be able to put up a tree at Christmas time. I notice that on one side of the talisman the figure seems to have what look like Hebrew letters in boxes, and on the other some odd geometrical figures in the center, while around the rim are some Greek and other letters. I distinctly make out the word *Deus*, which is Latin for God. Some might see this as heap big sinister juju, but others with more open minds might wonder whether it might be seen as a perfectly innocent, even devotional, mnemonic—like the soldier’s pack of cards.

Be that as it may, I wonder if the real reason you bring up all of this stuff is that you think it gets you off the hook. By proving that Joseph couldn’t possibly be a true prophet, because he was just not the kind of modern, rational, twentieth-century intelligence that you could look up to, you have possibly persuaded yourself that you don’t have to take his truth claims seriously. I’m sorry, but it’s not that easy. The Lord has a habit of calling the very people that the smart and well-educated set don’t admire. This is partly why, as Jesus pointed out, “a prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house” (Matthew 13:57). The hometown folks can dismiss the prophet because they know all his little foibles, and in that sense, modern means of mass communication can make us all the Prophet Joseph Smith’s hometown folks, because some people so diligently put his foibles before us.
All of these excuses to avoid facing the truth claims of the church, the Prophet, and the Book of Mormon are ultimately rather flimsy. I know without any doubt that if you gained your own testimony of the truthfulness of this work, you would laugh at the arguments that you find so compelling now. I challenge you to engage the Book of Mormon on its own terms—read it, ponder its message, and pray to the Father in the name of Christ to know if it is true. You will find, as I have, that revealed truth is far more powerful than unaided human reason.

Once again, it is my heartfelt prayer that you gain a desire to seek the Lord’s will.

Your friend,

Elder Hahn
Letter 8: The Book of Mormon and the Book of Abraham

Dear Mr. White,

This must be the longest letter yet. Once again, I’ve had to write home to get some extra information. This time, though, I’ve given Aunt Jenny a rest—she’s more into early LDS history anyway—and asked my Uncle Larry to chip in. He’s really into the ancient world and knows a lot about the Book of Abraham.

Anyway, having read your letter, I find you are still tossing up anti-Mormon arguments. And you still refuse to pray about the Book of Mormon. Well, that is, of course, your choice; however, the arguments you use to justify that refusal are, if you don’t mind my saying so, rather thin.

To begin with, your likening it to praying about the Satanic Bible by Anton LaVey is just plain silly (see p. 132). What are the truth claims of that volume? I haven’t read it, but I would expect that it claims to have been inspired by Satan, who is the father of lies. So if it is true, then it is an evil book full of lies. But if it was merely written by uninspired, wicked men, then it is false. In neither case can it be of interest to those who desire to follow God and Christ, as we do.

The Book of Mormon is an entirely different matter. It testifies of Christ in a direct way. It also testifies of the Bible. It claims to have been given to the world by miraculous means. All of this merits serious consideration—which you refuse to give. Instead, you insist on making the Book of Mormon subject to the Bible. And not only to the Bible, but to your interpretation of the Bible; God, it would seem, is not allowed to reveal anything that is not in harmony with the results of your exegesis. Your method, and your personal skill in using that method, carry as much weight as the sacred text itself—if not more. Since you will not permit God to reveal anything that disagrees with your own conclusions, it would seem that you have rather more faith in your own mental powers than you do in him. Thus when you announce, “I will not question God’s truth by praying about it” (p. 132), you are assuming that your own conclusions are God’s truth—they are infallible and couldn’t possibly be wrong.
You say that the Book of Mormon is "opposed to biblical teaching" (p. 132). Yet when we come down to cases, it invariably turns out that your interpretation of the Book of Mormon is opposed to your interpretation of biblical teaching. And that is surely the rub, since people who read the Bible and the Book of Mormon together, understanding each in the light of the other, find only harmony and consistency in them.

You also argue against praying about the Book of Mormon on the grounds that Moroni’s promise “is a ‘no win’ proposition” (p. 133), since it puts the failure of the promise back onto the person who is praying. That rather depends on your point of view; only you and the Lord know how sincere you are being in your prayer, and if you were to tell me that you prayed sincerely and didn’t get an answer, I would have to accept that. Actually it is only “a ‘no win’ proposition” in that you can’t use your failure to get an answer as evidence with which to convince me of anything. It works exactly both ways—my testimony is not binding on you, and your lack of one is not binding on me. Each of us is equally free to rely on the Lord alone, without the other getting in the middle of that relationship. Moroni’s promise simply means that the Lord takes upon himself the responsibility of revealing the truth to his children, leaving them free to decide whether to accept that truth—or even seek it in the first place. My role as a missionary is to point it out and invite you to seek it. I have to trust the Lord to do the rest.

I find that Jesus made some promises in person that are equally difficult to test. Consider Matthew 17:20. How could anyone test that? “Didn’t the mountain move? Then you must not have had enough faith—it’s obviously your own fault.” Is this another example of a double standard—it’s okay when the Bible says it, but not when the Book of Mormon does?

You also claim that “any group (and many of them have done so in the past and continue to do so today) can construct such a ‘test’ about the truthfulness of their teachings” (p. 133). I find that an interesting claim. I have never come in contact with such a group. Would you like to name one? If there is even one such group that (a) spends only an hour at a time teaching people in their own homes, (b) is able to go away and leave people to read and pray alone to find whether what they teach is true, and
(c) as a result, experiences growth significant enough to be seen as a threat by the “mainstream” churches, then I would be very, very interested to know about it.

You go on to offer your “five reasons” why nobody “should pray about the Book of Mormon” (p. 134–53). They are, if you don’t mind my saying so, astoundingly weak. The first reason, “The Book of Mormon is historically inaccurate” (p. 134), seems to equate to, “Archaeologists know better than God.” Are you aware that secular archaeologists are unanimous that Israel did not conquer Canaan, as described in the Bible? Do you realize that not one scrap of archaeological evidence has turned up to support the life and deeds of Abraham or the resurrection of the Savior? What archaeologist (apart from Indiana Jones, that is) can tell you where the ark of the covenant is?

The statement you quote from Carlson, that there is in effect no such thing as Book of Mormon archaeology (see p. 137), is true enough—but largely because the geographical problem has not been solved. In your eagerness to “prove” the Book of Mormon wrong, you have actually supplied the answers to many of your own objections when you point out that we don’t really know where the events it describes took place. Until the archaeologists know for certain where to dig, how can you reasonably expect them to find anything?

And even if they do find anything, how are we to recognize it? It is entirely possible that archaeologists have already dug up some Nephite artifacts, but there isn’t anything that makes them clearly identifiable as such. You make quite a deal about Nephite “coinage,” pointing out that “no such coins have ever been found.” How do you know? Can you describe a senine well enough that anyone who found one would recognize it? The words coin, coins, and coinage, as well as mint, minted, and mint- ing are entirely absent from the Book of Mormon text, and these units of money are clearly also units of weight. Insisting that Nephite monetary units represent minted coins is a straw man argument.

You try to link the Book of Mormon with View of the Hebrews, but that isn’t even a straw man—it’s just a straw to grasp. View is as different from the Book of Mormon as they both are from King Lear or Batman. Sure, View quotes many verses from
Isaiah—but that can only indicate “borrowing” if the number of verses they both quote, in common, is statistically significant, but it is not. Isaiah, you see, has a total of 1,292 verses. The Book of Mormon cites 459 Isaiah verses, or 35.53 percent of the total. View of the Hebrews cites 116 Isaiah verses, or 8.98 percent of the total.

Given that such a lot of Isaiah verses are quoted in both books, if there was absolutely no relationship between them, random chance alone would allow for some of the same verses to be quoted in both. In fact, random chance could account for 35.53 percent of 8.98 percent, which is 3.19 percent of 1,292 verses, or a total of 41 verses being cited in both books. In fact the two books have just 23 Isaiah verses in common, which is well inside the limits that random chance allows. Thus the Isaiah quotations found in the Book of Mormon provide no support whatsoever for the hypothesis that View of the Hebrews was a “source” of any kind.

I’m not just making those numbers up. My brother has a copy of View, and a few months before my mission, I read it. I also obtained counts of the verses and figured out the odds.

Contrary to your claim, B. H. Roberts absolutely did not lose faith in the Book of Mormon—his study was merely an attempt to anticipate possible future criticisms. And no, that’s not something that LDS “apologists” simply invented to try to cover up. Elder Roberts wrote a cover letter that accompanied his study. In that he tells his real conclusion, namely, that “our faith is not only unshaken but unshakable in the Book of Mormon” (B. H. Roberts’s letter of 15 March 1922, in Roberts, Studies of the Book of Mormon, 58). That’s the real verdict of the man whom you describe as “one of the greatest minds in LDS history.” I agree with him.

The question of animals and crops is a hoary old chestnut. In reality it is the rule, and not the exception, that migrants rename animals, naming species they find after others from “back home.” My second companion was from Scotland. I once had a good argument with him about what an elk is. He says that an elk is a very big animal that looks like a moose. When I showed him a picture of an elk, he said to me, “Och, Elder, that’s no’ an elk; that’s a red deer.” And indeed, from his point of view, he was right; our elk is a red deer to people from Europe, while our moose is their elk.
Likewise with crops. What is "corn"? It gets mentioned in the Bible a number of times, and it is certainly not what we call corn. My Scottish companion called our corn "maize" and insisted that oats are the "real" corn. He also mentioned in passing that the English, whom he called "Sassenachs," use the word corn to describe grain. And so it is not merely possible, but actually likely, that the Nephites did the same as our migrant forbears did—renaming plants and animals to suit the uses they put them to.

Your second reason, the "false doctrine" one, goes right back to what I said at the start of the letter: what you call "false doctrine" I call truth; what you call "biblical truth" I call your interpretation. It's all a matter of opinion. I could say more on this point, but it can wait for another time.

Your discussion of Abinadi's teaching on the Godhead has several problems. First, you fail to understand that Abinadi, prophesying in Old Testament times, is perfectly correct when he describes Jesus as "God himself"; as I pointed out in an earlier letter, Jesus is Jehovah, the God of Old Testament times, the one whom Israelites regularly called "God." But you are ignoring a good part of Abinadi's teaching and distorting the rest, when you insist that he is teaching modalism. What does Abinadi mean when he says that Jesus is "the father, because he was conceived by the power of God"? If he meant that Jesus was the father himself, in person, why didn't he just say so? Or why didn't he say that Jesus was "the father, because he was conceived by his own power"? Clearly the God by whose power Jesus was conceived is somebody else. But since Jesus was the personal representative and messenger of the Father, it is natural that ancient people would identify him with the Father. This is perfect evidence of the Book of Mormon as an ancient book, since modern people never think in those terms; contrary to your conclusion, then, it is clearly not the production of Joseph Smith.

But note again where Abinadi says, "And they are one God" (Mosiah 15:4). Abinadi is emphasizing the perfect unity shared by the members of the Godhead; the plural pronoun makes it clear that he is not teaching any idea like modalism. A modalistic teaching would have to say, "And he is one God, manifesting himself in different ways." No such teaching ever appears in the Book of Mormon.
But I notice that, once again, you are arguing from the conclusions of your own argument. You say, "It is evident that, at the time of the writing of the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith did not believe in a plurality of gods at all. He was still, technically at least, a ‘monotheist’" (p. 143). You are trying to use the Book of Mormon as evidence of what Joseph Smith thought—and then argue that since it reflects Joseph Smith’s own ideas, he must have written it. An argument doesn’t get much more circular than that.

Your third reason, that “the Book of Mormon was given by a false prophet” (p. 144), is one that I addressed in my previous letter. You have entirely failed to prove that Joseph was a false prophet.

By including “anachronisms” among your “grave textual problems” (p. 144) you seem to be trying to give your first argument—the “historically inaccurate” one—a second turn at bat. But the “cross” and “Bible” issues seem, if I may say so, a little contrived. If you believe in prophecy, then you presumably accept that prophets could know that, in the future, brutal men would introduce crucifixion, on the one hand, while on the other hand uninspired men would declare the canon of scripture closed. Given that prophets could know such things, the choice of words becomes a simple matter of translation. So, can you think of more appropriate words?

You then discuss the Liahona in these words:

In 1 Nephi 18:12 we read of a “compass” being used by Nephi on the trip across the ocean to the “promised land.” The compass was not invented till some time later. You might say that this was simply a “miracle,” but why do we not find examples of compasses among the descendants of these people? (p. 145)

Clearly, you think the Liahona was an ordinary magnetic compass, when in fact it was nothing of the sort. It was given to Lehi while they were still in the desert, and a number of passages describe it. Indeed, I am at a loss as to why you did not refer to its first appearance, described in 1 Nephi 16:10. I cannot imagine why you did not refer to this much fuller description—unless you chose to ignore it because it is so clear about the real nature of the
“compass” Lehi was given? Have you tried to suppress this passage because it doesn’t support your opinion?

Here is Nephi’s description:

And it came to pass that as my father arose in the morning, and went forth to the tent door, to his great astonishment he beheld upon the ground a round ball of curious workmanship; and it was of fine brass. And within the ball were two spindles; and the one pointed the way whither we should go into the wilderness.

So it was not magnetic, because it pointed first south-southeast (see 1 Nephi 16:13) and then east (see 1 Nephi 17:1). It only worked according to the faith of its users (see 1 Nephi 16:28), and it had writing on it (see 1 Nephi 16:27) that changed from time to time (see 1 Nephi 16:29). At the end of the twentieth century, at the very height of our technological prowess, human ingenuity can only now start to duplicate what the Liahona did. Everything about it was miraculous—I “might say” indeed! And I might further say that of course the Nephites couldn’t make others like it; neither can we. So your question, “Why do we not find examples of compasses among the descendants of these people?” is rather silly. Why on earth would you expect to? Its miraculous properties couldn’t be replicated, and it was useless as a model for magnetic compasses, since it wasn’t one.

I’m afraid that introducing “Alpha and Omega” as well as “adieu” reaches new lows in banality (p. 145). In our mission, we reckon the “adieu” argument to be the silliest of all anti-Mormon arguments against the Book of Mormon; the “Jerusalem nativity” argument (from Alma 7:10) is only the second silliest, and yet I noticed you drew the line at that. You must be slipping to let “adieu” get under the wire. Of course a translator can use whatever word best suits the meaning he is trying to express to the modern audience, and both “adieu” and “Alpha and Omega” work rather well in that regard. Of course Jacob’s brethren didn’t speak French. Neither did they speak English—the language the rest of his book is now in. Why is one French word a problem, while 239,000 English words are not?

You also engage in the famous circular argument of so-called plagiarism. You ask, “Do you really think that Peter was actually
quoting the Book of Mormon when he gave his speech in Acts 3:22–26 (in comparison with Deuteronomy 18:15, 18–19 and 3 Nephi 20:23–26)?” (pp. 145–46). Of course I don’t—Peter didn’t have the Book of Mormon to quote from. But in 3 Nephi it is the Lord speaking; Peter could very well have been quoting what the Lord taught him and the other apostles. In fact, while the Lord could have taught it to them at any time he was with them, it is most likely a postresurrection teaching, belonging to the Forty-Day ministry.

Just so you know, plagiarism happens when somebody takes someone else’s work and claims it as his or her own. Joseph didn’t claim the Book of Mormon as his own work, so it’s not plagiarism. In this particular case, Joseph is taking the Lord’s words and attributing them to the Lord. What deceit!

I’m not going to get into a discussion of the nuts and bolts of the translation of the Book of Mormon (see pp. 146–49). I wasn’t there at the time, so anything I say would only be guesswork—just as your opinions are. The important thing is that it was translated by the gift and power of God and that anyone who reads it, ponders its message, and earnestly prays to know of its truthfulness will receive an answer from above.

I have come across the terribly trivial issue of changes in the various editions of the Book of Mormon before today (see pp. 149–53). The fact that the first edition reads “mother of God” instead of “mother of the Son of God” (1 Nephi 11:18) simply shows that that passage was written by someone who had never been exposed to—or rebelled against—medieval Christianity, that is, its author was not Protestant. But nobody ever said Nephi was. The change, and others like it, simply clarifies which member of the Godhead is being spoken about. It is only a question of “confusion as to just who Jesus is” to someone who is trying to find fault. Actually one of the strong evidences of the authenticity of the Book of Mormon is the fact that each prophet has a slightly different interpretation of the role of the Messiah. But, as I already mentioned, for the most part, Jesus is God, and it is entirely correct to see him as such. None of the changes alter the actual meaning of the text; Joseph was right about that. Of course.
Ammon’s mistake about King Benjamin is a completely authentic detail, the sort that we would expect to find in the circumstances. As you yourself quoted, “And king Benjamin lived three years and he died” (Mosiah 6:5). That is, he lived for three years after he placed his son Mosiah on the throne. Now if you read down the same column just a few inches, you will find that Ammon’s expedition set out for Lehi-Nephi about three years after Mosiah ascended the throne—see Mosiah 7:1–3. So it is certainly possible that King Benjamin was still alive when Ammon’s group left. If so, Ammon might well have believed that Benjamin was still alive when he met King Limhi. This is just the sort of mistake that a genuine historical account could make. Thus the first edition was most probably the correct translation, while the later editions are more historically accurate. But I really wonder if you didn’t realize that already. Maybe you were just relying on the Tanners again, or maybe, as my Aunt Jenny suggested, you were playing games with the evidence on your own account.

I think I know what she would make of your handling of the “white and delightsome” issue (see pp. 152–53). In this regard, the 1981 edition reflects the changes made by the Prophet Joseph Smith himself in the second edition, when he also changed white to pure (see, for example, 2 Nephi 30:6; compare this usage to Daniel 12:10). That change was lost in subsequent editions and restored in 1981. Your statement that “the fact that it was put into this form (a physical quality being replaced with a moral or a spiritual one) after the ‘revelation’ giving the priesthood to the blacks (June 8, 1978) seems to be more than just a ‘coincidence’” (p. 153) is simply your own opinion. As such, it tells me nothing about the Book of Mormon. But it does tell me something about you. It tells me that you are willing to find fault wherever you can. It tells me that you are judgmental and accusatory.

In reality, the 1981 edition was a major effort to correct the standard Book of Mormon text in line with the Prophet Joseph Smith’s own work. The change from white to pure was Joseph’s own.

You go on to say that if you were to pray about the truth of the Book of Mormon, your prayer would have to say,

God, I know that this book is historically inaccurate, and I know that this book contains teachings that are
contrary to those doctrines taught in your Word, and I
know that Joseph Smith fails the test of a true prophet,
and I know that there are many problems with the text
showing it to be a modern composition and not an an-
cient record, and I know that the text of this book has
undergone a good deal of editing and changing, but,
despite all of that, is it true?” (p. 153)

But that is, I’m sorry to say, a contrived and grossly exaggerated
attempt to make seeking the Lord seem somehow ridiculous and
certainly does not constitute an open mind.

In reality, you do not know that the Book of Mormon is his-
torically inaccurate at all; you merely think that it is. Nor do you
know that its doctrines are contrary to the Bible, any more than
you know that the Bible is the only document containing God’s
word. Nor do you know that Joseph Smith was a false prophet or
that the Book of Mormon is a modern composition.

Your argument that Joseph was a false prophet rests, in part,
on your argument that “in the Book of Mormon we find more
evidence of his belief in the same magical practices found in the
testimony given at his trial” (p. 125). But that also rests on the as-
sumption that Joseph wrote the Book of Mormon—in other words,
that he was a false prophet. How do you know that he was a false
prophet? Because the Book of Mormon shows his magical beliefs.
How do you know they are his beliefs? Because he was a false
prophet. And so your circular argument proves its own premises,
as circular arguments always do.

Actually, a humble servant of God could phrase the question
something like this: “Father in Heaven, my imperfect human wis-
dom leads me to reject the Book of Mormon. But I know only
what man can know. Thou knowest all things, including those
things that are hidden from me. Is it true?”

I entirely fail to see how asking such a question would be to
“deny the Christian faith” or “abuse the privilege of prayer.”
Actually the pious indignation with which you refuse to “abuse
the privilege” is strongly reminiscent of King Ahaz, in Isaiah
7:10–13. Prayer, according to you, is so “important” to you that
you won’t use it to actually ask God anything, for to you that
would be to “test God” and “question the revelation of his
truth.” Of course that’s not what it would be at all, and, indeed, it
could only be so if you elevate your own conclusions to the status of divine revelation.

And, as I said in my first letter, your argument can be just as easily turned around. As I mentioned, I have a testimony of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. That testimony is more than just a feeling; the Holy Ghost has revealed to me personally that it is true. If praying to know if the Book of Mormon is true is to "ask Him to repeat what He has already said" (p. 19), then wouldn't it be equally faithless for me to investigate a question that God has already settled? And in my case, the question was not settled indirectly via the Bible, but directly and personally.

Therefore, it seems to me that if you are going to ask me to put my faith on the line by testing it according to the Bible, you should be equally willing to put yours on the line by making the Book of Mormon a matter of prayer. But you quite consciously demand that I put my revealed faith on the line, even while you insist that your speculative faith is to be regarded as unquestionable. Your double standards are nowhere more glaring than on this point.

As I mentioned earlier, my brother says that medieval Judaism "reinvented" itself in reaction to Christian claims. I wonder if you are not reinventing mainstream Christianity in reaction to the claims of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. When you define prayer as "an act of worship that is to be undertaken in solemn adoration" (p. 153) to the exclusion of actually asking God any questions, you seem to be making quite a nonbiblical definition of prayer. It almost seems as if you want to remove prayer as a means of seeking truth, something that you would not need to do if you thought it would lead to the conclusions you want to establish.

Now I would like to discuss the Ezekiel and Isaiah prophecies with you, but this letter is already too long, and I haven't given you Uncle Larry's analysis of your Book of Abraham material. I will simply affirm my belief that Isaiah 29 is a prophecy of the restoration of the gospel, even in detail. Verses 20 and 21 seem especially apt in consideration of your various arguments.

Now we come to your arguments about the Book of Abraham. I must say that I find it extremely hard to believe that you would find two missionaries who have never heard of the Book of
Abraham. But I would like you now to read my uncle’s letter, a copy of which is attached. I warn you that it is rather long. In our family, we regard Uncle Larry as just a little bit eccentric. In some ways, he seems to live more in the ancient world than in the modern one. And he seems to have pulled out all the stops in his response to your letter—he’s even got footnotes.

As you can see, the arguments you have presented against the Book of Abraham are not especially convincing, in light of current Egyptological knowledge. I am especially impressed by the fact that the Book of Abraham gives the authentic Egyptian story of the original settlement of the land, shorn of its religious-mythological trappings. You have not addressed this fact, but that is not surprising, since that story was unknown to the Western world in the 1830s. In fact, since the Book of Abraham contains the first version of that story any Americans ever heard, how could Joseph Smith have known about it, except by revelation?

I am glad to see, at the close of your letter, that you are “concerned and praying.” I hope your prayers seek two-way communication, in that you are prepared to listen to the Lord and not do all the talking yourself.

May you humble yourself enough to seek his will.

Your friend,

Elder Hahn
Letter 8a: Uncle Larry Holds Forth

Dear (nephew) Elder Hahn,

You know I always hate to be so formal, as it just isn’t my style, but in respect (which I do have for you and your wonderful sacrifice of time to teach folks about the Good Lord) I’ll call you Elder. Now then, son, about the letter you recently wrote to me and which I have sat on for a day or two and thought about with great interest. This fellow, James White, the chap you wrote me about, is bothering you about the papyri? What is he trying to pull here with you? Of course you don’t know about the papyri; that isn’t what you’re trying to teach. The gospel ought to be presented in proper order, but this fellow comes along and wants to divide fractions before he can add regular whole numbers, so to speak. But just to inform you so you know in the future, I’ll tell you what his problem is. In a word, everything.

You know as well as I do that folks who want to stir up trouble always get things backwards; they do it on purpose in order to confuse. The Pharisees are among us still after all these centuries, I suppose. I noticed he claims that the anti-Mormon authors, the Tanners, in their book Mormonism: Shadow or Reality have done the most work on the papyri. This isn’t near the truth, but the critics just have to have someone be their hero who does their thinking for them. Now, then, as to the idea that Mormon scholars and the church are trying to keep this information on the papyri away from the regular church attenders: No kidding? Since when? Look here. I’m going to bring out some sources that I know you are not aware of, so you’ll have the references for him to go through (if he will). This is going to get extensive, but at least from the get-go you’ll know he is woefully inadequate in his knowledge about all phases of the papyri and the facsimiles, as well as about the Egyptologists and their stance. That is essentially what you will need to know, as you can then dig into this later when you come home to your mom and dad and family.

Incidentally your dad and I went fishing the other night and he outfished me again. I told him it’s because he was calmer than I was against this White fellow you’re wrangling with, and hence perhaps had a more kindly, meek approach to him. But then, as
we all know from the time you were just a wee tot, I haven’t taken any guff against the Prophet Joseph Smith, the church, or otherwise, and I’m too old to change that attitude. I suppose with my long hair and no-holds-barred attitude, I have a lot of Porter Rockwell in me to give the critics something to deal with. If they want to lie, I want to reveal it. Let’s look into this now in some depth, shall we?

In the first place, Mr. White doesn’t have much knowledge of the Egyptologists at all. Do you remember when I went to the university several years back to do some firsthand research, take classes, and have lunch with some of them? Well, John Wilson told me then that he had no intention of trying to cause a fuss or argument with the papyri. He was simply practicing his hand at translating, hoping to bring more light in on the subject. Why, he had nothing but respect for the Mormons and he even told me (and later printed it) that if it had been anyone else asking the Egyptologists to translate papyri for any other church they would have refused to do it. His was a helpful attitude, not this childish nonsense this White fellow presents. In fact, Wilson was one of the most respected Egyptologists and certainly knew the inside of the field better than any mere outsider. Why, over the wonderful lunch salads we used to consume with passion there at the university, we would constantly talk about how Egyptologists were always trying to sort things out in ancient Egypt and how we constantly had to redo what had been done by the others before our time. This is something White just cannot grasp. Wilson always used to tell us how biased James Breasted was in his approach to ancient Egypt. Now we’ve all read Breasted and we’ve all learned a thing or two from his powerful pen, but we all knew that he never had the last word on things Egyptian, as none of us do either. That is a point critics fail to understand. But the rest of us

---

2 See John A. Wilson, Thousands of Years: An Archaeologist’s Search for Ancient Egypt (New York: Scribner’s Sons, 1972), 177: “In agreeing to study the papyri we had no interest in controversy. We simply were eager to try out our skills on new manuscripts. I should not have agreed to translate if the invitation had not come from the Mormons.”

3 See ibid., 43 (speaking of James Breasted): “Similarly, in his history course, he went right down the middle of the story, brushing aside complexities and uncertainties in order to give us the sweep of mortal triumph and tragedy.”
scholars and Egyptologists certainly are aware of our limited understanding of history and archaeology.

Wilson used to tell me, "Larry, the problem you LDS scholars have is you are so emotionally attached to the subject." Well, he sure had a good point, and I would suggest to him that so was he. He ended up printing something to that effect. 4 In fact, after several of their discussions, Egyptologists found that there were many mistakes in their research. 5 Now would Mr. White then extend his

---

4 See Wilson, Thousands of Years, 51: "Today there is still eagerness to learn, but this becomes dampened by the necessities of office holding, which discourage imaginative scholarship." "What is now going on in Oriental studies may be called specialization or fragmentation, according to one's emotional bias" (p. 112). "Specialization means both refining and narrowing. The fragmentation of Oriental studies has strengthened the control of restricted fields of study at the cost of the broader picture. Narrowing down the focus cuts off the wider periphery of vision, which includes outside contacts. It is all very well to insist that a picture has more meaning if you can play light upon it from different directions. But life is short, and our immediate interests demand all of our time and attention" (p. 113). "In their writings scholars may attack another in more vigorous language than they would use in verbal debate. The language of academic disagreement is superficially polite" (p. 120). "When Breasted offered the Egyptian Government the Rockefeller proposal for a new museum and training institute, the defeat of this overture sharply illustrated archaeological antagonisms. An admirable idea crashed on the irrational reefs of international and personal politics" (p. 121). "Every writer of history must remember that his works will be dated and will have only a limited currency. I have tried to tell my students that what I tell them is always subject to change, that they will be privileged to revise written history by their own discoveries and interpretations" (pp. 135–36).

5 See Wilson, Thousands of Years, 137: "Frankfort's 'multiplicity of approach' I accepted wholeheartedly—that is, the argument that the ancients did not select one explanation of a phenomenon but believed that a world of divine miracle was capable of different causations. For example, the different myths about the creation were all instances of the productive purposes of the gods and thus reassured man that the gods worked in different ways to achieve the same goals.... Although the ancient logic is not our logic, it had its own consistency and integrity. One has to leave the world of rational scientific causality and enter the world of expected miracles to understand this." "My lack of enthusiasm was a legacy from Breasted, who loved Egypt so much that he saw its culture as independently creative and not influenced from the outside" (p. 138). "Obviously my argument is extreme. No system can last a thousand years unless it has some vital sap in it. Other scholars have pointed out genuine triumphs in later ages. I may have presented a partial truth as though it were the whole truth.... Some of what we may have embraced in the 1920s has been cast
logic to proclaim in stentorian voice that this proves the Egyptologists are phony? He'd be laughed out of the arena of scholarship were he to do so, yet that is what critics have done with LDS scholars on this papyri issue. If they can find just one minor point on which an LDS scholar is wrong, they immediately throw out all the scholarship on the papyri. Such extremes are what Wilson was clearly against.

While critics love to pretend there is a unified front of Egyptologists against the Prophet Joseph Smith's explanations and LDS scholarship, we constantly talked about the problems and differences of the scholars. G. Ernest Wright was one of the foremost scholars who said there is no unified field in any scholarship away.... So similarly what we now see as the truth may appear to be absurd a generation from now" (p. 142). In dealing with the Egyptian translations for James Pritchard's Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament (1950), Wilson acknowledges that "My renderings were generally reliable, careful rather than literary, and unmarked by any flashes of genius. Indeed Sir Alan Gardiner, in the Journal of Egyptian Archaeology [hereafter JEA] (1953), once showed that I had translated the lines in one broken text backward!" (pp. 143-44). "I once wrote an article (Journal of Near Eastern Studies [hereafter JNES] 1955) claiming that Hierakonopolis must have been small and economically insignificant because it lay in an area that is poor in its modern agricultural production. That may have been reasonable as a theory, but actual observation has shown that I was wrong" (p. 184).


7 See Wilson, Thousands of Years, 175-76: "Back in 1912 an Episcopal bishop had mounted an attack on Joseph Smith as a translator. He had solicited and published several offhand and hostile opinions from Egyptologists. The resulting controversy had left a lot of bitterness. Scholarship required a more responsible analysis than a lot of indignant snorts." "A valid counterargument for the faithful would be that we Egyptologists can claim no inspiration. We can only scrape the surface meaning. If Joseph Smith was a prophet, he was an instrument of divine authority, so that he might find the deepest meaning. Although our work deals with fact, we must respect faith. As the Protestant world survived the Higher Criticism of the Bible three generations ago, the Mormons will survive this criticism" (p. 177).
of any kind on any subject. So when critics say that all is proven false in the Mormon papyri and that the church ought to quit faking things that are still being discovered or retranslated into more correct terms and forms, I would suggest to the critics that they at least bother to inform themselves of the real situation. This reassessment is constantly going on in all fields of scholarly endeavor, and none more so than in Egyptology itself. We are nowhere near a complete and thorough understanding of what was once thought the basics of ancient Egypt and Egyptological understanding. I'll leave all the goodies for you in the footnote.

---

8 See G. Ernest Wright, “Biblical Archaeology Today,” in *New Directions in Biblical Archaeology*, ed. David N. Freedman and Jonas C. Greenfield (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1969), 149–65. He reviews Werner Keller’s book *The Bible as History: A Confirmation of the Book of Books*, trans. William Neil (New York: Morrow, 1956), and finds it far too simplistic (see pp. 149–51). For instance, with Jericho, “there is nothing but negative archaeological evidence” (p. 151). “The most astonishing thing to be said about the field of biblical history is that in spite of the vast mass of new evidence which archaeology has provided, there is no starting point that can be agreed upon by the various groups of scholars, no method of extracting history from tradition that forms a consensus” (p. 155).

Since Mr. White lacks the scholarly acumen to deal with the papyri and the Egyptological literature, is it any surprise to you that he won’t show you this continuous reevaluation going on in the field? And note that this reassessment covers virtually the entire history, religion, politics, chronology, philosophy, and economics of the ancient Egyptians. We just simply are not done by any stretch of the imagination.

And I can’t help but notice with amusement how Mr. White tells you there is no need to go into the actual papyri because we have everything we need to see if Joseph was a true prophet in the Pearl of Great Price, and then he launches off into the papyri. Such consistency on his part. If we don’t need to go into it, then why does he? (see pp. 158–59). He is correct about one thing though—“Please do not engage in a frantic search for some kind—any kind—of ‘explanation’ for Smith’s obvious blunders and errors” (p. 167). That isn’t your job; it’s mine. The thing I note is that this White fellow simply refuses to engage in any kind of research himself but is content to declare things on his own (without any documentation) and then give us one quotation from the 1969 view of the papyri. But, my boy, I must insist that this is 1999 and if White is going to get into it, he ought to do so from today’s information, not yesteryear’s. In other words, what he feels are blunders and goofs of Joseph Smith are simply nothing of the kind. I will now go detail for detail into what White has said, and, more significantly, what he has left out. This fellow hasn’t got a clue, so heads up: we’re going to have some fun.

Did you happen to notice that he says all we need to do is look in the Pearl of Great Price for our test, and then he launches into the History of the Church? What for, if all we need is the Pearl of Great Price? You might want to ask him that. If he answers that

their rulership; Hassan El-Saady, “Two Heliopolitan Stelae of the New Kingdom,” ZAS 122/2 (1995): 101–4, wherein he assesses archaeological evidence that the dead person identifies himself with everything to do with the resurrection; Nadette Hoffmann, “Reading the Amduat,” ZAS 123/1 (1996): 26–40, noting that after all, there really are hidden meanings and double meanings in the hieroglyphics because of the multiplicity of meaning and forms in various combinations; and J. Gwyn Griffiths, “The Phrase hmf mw in the Memphite Theology,” ZAS 123/2 (1996): 111–15, updating this discussion. (This lists just a few recent samples of updating and correcting old thoughts going on in Egyptological studies.)
he needs to prepare the background, then ask him why he said all we need to do is read only the Pearl of Great Price (see p. 158). In other words, stick it to him for inconsistency. But anyway, notice also in his quotation concerning what the History of the Church said about Joseph acquiring and translating the papyri that White said, “It is important to note that Smith claimed to translate these items, in the same way he had claimed to translate the Book of Mormon” (p. 158). Now is this nuts or what? Tell you what. You inform this White fellow that if he can show you anywhere in the History of the Church 2:235–36 where the Book of Mormon is even mentioned, you’ll come home off your mission and your dear old uncle here, who is reviewing his writings and helping you understand his nincompoopery, will quit Mormonism. Where in the dusty hills of Idaho did White come up with the idea that Joseph ever said he translated these items the same way as he translated the Book of Mormon? Talk about putting words in the mouth of the Prophet. This is a clear example of a straw man argument, my boy. Remember I told you earlier this year about a straw man argument I discussed with the Egyptologists on another subject, and you asked me what that was? Well, here it is in all its grandeur. This has nothing to do with the Book of Mormon. White is setting this up on his own so he can destroy it and make you look like he is getting the victory. Well, that just isn’t the case. If this is White’s best attempt at cleverness, we ought to come out of this shining like the sun at noonday.

Notice the clowning around White does next. He contends that if these writings were of Abraham’s own hand they would be the greatest archaeological find the planet has ever known. And notice how he has ignored the analyses done by Hugh Nibley, Michael Rhodes, John Gee, and H. Donl Peterson. Let me explain something I found when reading the Hebrew Bible.

It is obvious from reading the Hebrew Bible that the phrase by his own hand is a Hebrew idiom beyadh, which means “by the authority of,” as we can clearly see in the Stuttgartensian Hebrew text that Kohlenberger translates. He renders Exodus 9:35 as “just as the Lord said through Moses,” while the Hebrew has beyadh, that is “by the hand of.” Clearly it was the Lord’s hand—the Lord’s authority, which had led Moses against Pharaoh, that is, by
the Lord’s authority. Though we don’t get it that way in the English, the Hebrew definitely has “by the hand of.”

At 1 Samuel 28:15 we see another example—the English translation reads that God would not appear to Saul either by the prophets or by dreams. In the Hebrew we again find beyadh, “by the hand of,” or in other words, by the prophet’s authority from God.

In other words, Abraham may not even have touched the documents that bear his name, the very ones that fell into Joseph’s hands in the 1830s, since Abraham could have had them commissioned and written for him. Yet for all this, the documents would still bear his signature, since they were authorized by him, “by his own hand,” even though a scribe may have written it instead of Abraham. Isn’t it interesting that our critics take this one instance with sheer concrete literalness, yet they guffaw when we take other scriptures literally, for example, that God is our real Heavenly Father, embodied as a man in yonder heavens?

When I was having lunch with a Greek scholar the other day, he mentioned he had just been studying the Septuagint, the Greek Old Testament, and told me that the Greek word cheir was a fascinating one because it had various levels of meaning. One of the meanings was the hand as an “instrument of action and power. Thus, to the hand is ascribed what strictly belongs to the person himself or to his power.” “By the hand” means by his intervention, or by the hands of someone. At Leviticus 10:11, Moses is to offer the sacrifice, but he actually has Aaron, Eleazar, and Ithamar eat the unleavened bread. The Greek cheir here means that though Moses offered the sacrifice, it was not Moses who ate the sacrifice, even though he is credited with it, having “by his own hand” ordered it done by others. At 1 Kings 12:15 in the Hebrew text, the hand of the Lord was going to be on the king if he did not listen to the Lord. Of course, it was not God’s hand, but rather the expression meant God would have someone else punish the king, which is the meaning of “by his hand.” For the Book of

10 John Gee notes that the point can also be made from the Egyptian phrase ngr.t=f, “by his hand” = “from.”

Abraham, we see this as an expression of speech more or less, not a literalism that Abraham himself personally wrote.

As the LDS Egyptologist John Gee has noted, there have been various Jewish immigrations into Egypt through history, and nothing compels us to assume that Abraham must have written his account in Egyptian. His book could have passed through the hands of Abraham’s posterity through time and eventually been translated into other languages.12 John Wilson, one of the Egyptologists to work on the Joseph Smith Papyri, also noted that copies of documents were made, but attribution of the writing was to go to the original authors.13 I notice that this White fellow hasn’t bothered to inform himself of the ancient ideas at all. You need not worry about his argument—it is not only convoluted, but incorrect, as the historical evidence shows.

White’s contention that Abraham on the lion couch has in reality been identified as Osiris, and hence that Joseph Smith blew it, is laughable. White is not up on the current literature on this at all. Both John Wilson and Klaus Baer, Egyptologists who worked on the papyri, noted that one of the figures in the papyri, a little female, was considered Osiris, even though she could not be, literally speaking.14

The one source critics usually ignore in their research is the most interesting in this respect. Roy B. Ward has noted something especially phenomenal, considering how White argues. Ward notes that in Luke 16:19–31, where Lazarus is taken to the bosom of Abraham, “The story itself is probably, as Grellmann proposed, dependent on an Egyptian tale, whose closest descendent is the Demotic tale of Satme. The role of Osiris in the Egyptian tradition has been replaced in the Lukan story by Abraham.”15 Isn’t it

---

interesting that a New Testament sketch featuring Abraham may be based on the Egyptian Book of the Dead, and that Abraham takes the role of Osiris? White never told you that, did he? The idea that Abraham can and did take on the role of the pagan god Osiris seems to have historical roots; hence it isn’t a problem with the Book of Abraham Facsimile 1 either. At a bare minimum, if it is damning to the Book of Abraham, it is also damning to the New Testament, something I seriously doubt White will ever agree to. Note his double standard here. He would damn the Book of Abraham for this but let it slide with the New Testament—a common trick and a common unscholarly double standard of the critics.

White’s clowning around is ridiculous. Had he bothered to read only one Egyptologist he would see the embarrassing stance he has taken. In fact, there have been recent studies on just this interesting phenomenon of folks becoming an Osiris and what it means. This is, trust me, too good to miss.16

What was the aim of the Osirian mummification rites? Quite simple. “The ritual aims at bestowing the fate of Osiris on the dead man. The Osirian person incorporates both the pharaoh and the father and belongs to all those who carry the name of this god.”17 The way Englund puts it is “the dead identifies himself with gods and entities in order to show and prove the insight he has reached, the position he has attained, and the powers he disposes over.”18 The royal divine access was identified by Egyptologists with Osiris.19 The Coffin Texts have as an example of divine access: “the deceased is identified with Osiris.”20

---

20 Ibid., 114.
dead has access to the god, and is a god, because of his knowledge: "You shall not hinder the King when he crosses to him [that is, the father of the primeval gods] at the horizon, For the King knows him and knows his name."\textsuperscript{21}

Later developments in the ancient Egyptian religious systems eventually allowed the private individual divine access. The public were then also "identified" with Osiris.\textsuperscript{22} We read: "The spirit is (destined) for heaven, the corpse for the earth, What men receive when they are buried is a thousand of bread, a thousand of beer on the offering-table of Khentamenthes [Osiris]."\textsuperscript{23}

So Joseph Smith was not incorrect in noting that there was a human figure on the lion couch since, in Egyptian religious terms, this person, by being involved in the very rituals of Egyptian religion, was Osiris. This is clearly confirmed again, by none other than Klaus Baer, who reported that it was after 2200 B.C. that private individuals began to claim the privileges of royalty. Baer noted such specific privileges as "The deceased person who has been ‘justified’ in the judgment of the dead and lives again in a blessed existence in the Netherworld is like Osiris and therefore [according] to the Egyptian way of thought is Osiris."\textsuperscript{24} So whether Abraham or Osiris, it is correct. The Egyptians, as already noted, simply did not think in exclusionary terms as we moderns do. Because A is A, we think, it cannot be B. But to the Egyptian A can be A and also B, and we need to begin to understand this. Why, just in 1996 an Egyptologist wrote that Egyptian hieroglyphs themselves had hidden meanings, more than one function, and multiple forms of meanings; they were actually a cryptographic code and in fact a metalanguage, among other things.\textsuperscript{25}

Joseph Smith does things the Egyptian way, it appears. The Book of the Dead indicates that the dead, on reciting certain spells

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 117. Compare J. Gwyn Griffiths, "Motivation in Early Egyptian Syncretism," in Studies in Egyptian Religion: Dedicated to Professor Jan Zandee, ed. M. Heerma van Voss et al. (Leiden: Brill, 1982), 48, 52–54, where we read that the ultimate goal is the divinization of a human being.
\textsuperscript{23} PT 305; §474, in Griffiths, "Motivation," 48.
\textsuperscript{24} Baer, "The Breathing Permit of Hôr," 117 n. 24.
\textsuperscript{25} See Nadette Hoffmann, "Reading the Amduat," ZÄS 123/1 (1996): 26–40.
and acquiring the attributes of the various gods—the ears of Wepwawet, the hair of Nun, the lips of Anubis, etc.—simply claims, “I am Osiris.”

As J. Gwyn Griffiths has noted on taking on the various characteristics of the gods, “in general the divine limbs which are specially suitable have been chosen and . . . the result is the permanent survival of the deceased; thou hast not perished. If these divine physical properties have thus been assumed, it may be confidently inferred that it is meant to imply the divinization of a mortal man.”

Spell 42 of the Book of the Dead ticks off the characteristic physical features of the gods the mortal acquires. In fact, in Spell 45 the dead says “May it be done to me in like manner, for I am Osiris.”

The dead says to the gods, “I know your name, I know your names, you gods, you lords of the realm of the dead, for I am one of you.”

Something else White misses is that the figure on the lion couch is not a mummy, but is stirring. This is not a dead man at all. And in fact, we have a similar lion-couch scene at Abydos, where we are told that, in the chapel of Sokar-Osiris on the southern wall, we see the mystical conception of Horus. Anubis is not involved in embalming in this lion-couch scene at all. While we admit the lion-couch idea is similar, White seems to want us to believe that if we have seen one of these, we have seen them all and understood them all. This is false. Hugh Nibley has also described and discussed the Opet Temple Lion Couch, wherein the Egyptologists have noted the man on the lion couch at Opet is not dead, but is praying, which rings a bell for our Facsimile I. The hands of the two figures on the lion couches are in the same position.


27 Griffiths, “Motivation,” 54.

28 Book of the Dead 45, in Faulkner (ed. Andrews), Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead, 64.

29 Book of the Dead 81B, in ibid., 79.

30 See Omm Sety and Hanny El Zeini, Abydos: Holy City of Ancient Egypt (Los Angeles: LL, 1981), 149 (see also fig. 11–6 on p. 148).

Besides, Egyptologists have already declared that Osiris on this lion couch is not a dead mummy but is in the process of rebirth and rejuvenation. White also says the bird should have a human head and that Smith incorrectly copied it as a bird’s head. But I. E. S. Edwards has a picture of an artifact of the tomb of Tutankhamun with the soul bird carved in wood; however, the carving reveals that there are really two birds, a human-headed one and a bird-headed one.32

Nibley also discussed this idea of the human-headed bird according to the Egyptologists and noted some significant things that White, true to form, has ignored. Nibley indicated that this figure should wear a jackal’s mask (presumably over a human head),33 but we must also realize that “no claim of inspiration is made for the drawings. . . . There is nothing particularly holy about them.”34 But now the question becomes, Who made the error? Of course, White wants us to suppose that Smith in his ignorance made it, neglecting the fact that the woodcuts of the facsimiles were made by Reuben Hedlock. However, Nibley notes the existence of “at least three Ptolemaic lion-couch scenes closely paralleling this one [the Joseph Smith lion couch] in which the artist has deliberately drawn the embalming priest without a jackal-mask.”35 In fact, in one case the mask had been purposely


32 See I. E. S. Edwards, The Treasures of Tutankhamun (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1976), plate 23 left; Christiane Desroches-Noblecourt, Life and Death of a Pharaoh: Tutankhamen (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1978), 281; Katherine S. Gilbert and Joan K. Holt, Treasures of Tutankhamun (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1976), 151, for illustrations. Gilbert and Holt say, “The human-headed bird and the falcon are two of the forms that the king might adopt” (p. 151). They also note that another high Egyptian official “included in his tomb at Elkab an inscription containing a promise to transform himself into “a phoenix, a swallow, a falcon, or a heron”” (pp. 151–52). Howard Carter, The Tomb of Tutankhamun (New York: Copper Square, 1963), 84, notes the two birds on the right and left of the wooden coffin protecting the mummy; both are manifestations of divine protection for the king. Plate XXIV in the back picture section shows the mummy.


34 Ibid., 74.

35 Ibid., 98.
erased; hence his conclusion on this matter: "We do not at present know why the Egyptians preferred here to dispense with the mask, but it is at least conceivable that the artist of Facsimile 1 had his reasons too. It will not do to attribute to the Mormons everything that puzzles us."36 So, based on the archaeological examples of lion couches that we have, White’s argument is more counterproductive to his case than strong proof against Joseph Smith. And, of course, you don’t see White mentioning John Gee’s excellent research on this either.

In his master’s thesis, “Notes on the Sons of Horus,” Gee shows a priest officiating with an Anubis mask on. The illustration shows a side profile of the man with the outline of the mask over his head.37 Gee also notes that Seeber says of the representation there that the rule allows for the possibility of no distinction between the deity and the masked priest who is in the deity’s role and also wears the deity’s mask.38 Hatshepsut tells how her father “made love to her mother in the disguise of the god Amon, with ‘attendant priests . . . masked to represent his fellow-deities.’”39

These are just two examples of the many we have, showing that persons did wear masks of the deities and took over the gods’ roles and attributes and were considered to be the god in Egyptian rites and rituals. In fact, Lewis Spence says that a certain mummy was taken from a coffin and “placed upright against the wall of the mastaba by a priest wearing the mask of the jackal-headed god Anubis.”40 Furthermore, Gee also noted the importance of realizing how correct Joseph Smith was in saying the officiant at the lion couch was a priest. He is refuting Ed Ashment:

Ashment’s booklet also adds yet another item of bibliography to the completely irrelevant debate over whether the head of Figure 3 in Facsimile 1 of the

36 Ibid.
37 See also Siegfried Morenz, Gott und Mensch im alten Ägypten (Zürich: Artemis, 1984), 181.
39 Nibley, Abraham in Egypt, 130.
40 Lewis Spence, Myths and Legends: Ancient Egypt (Boston: Nickerson, n.d.), 30.
book of Abraham has been restored properly. The figure in Facsimile 1 has a bald human head; the critics argue that it should be a jackal’s head. (Joseph Smith Papyrus I presently is missing the figure’s head.) This particular question—one on which Ashment has lavished his best work ever—is of absolutely no significance. To see why, consider the following:

(1) Assume for the sake of argument that the head on Facsimile 1 Figure 3 is correct. What are the implications of the figure being a bald man? Shaving the head was a common feature of initiation into the priesthood from the Old Kingdom through the Roman period. Since “Complete shaving of the head was another mark of the male Isiac votary and priest,” the bald figure would then be a priest. [Would Joseph Smith have known this?]

(2) Assume on the other hand that the head on Facsimile 1 Figure 3 is that of a jackal, as was first suggested by Theodule Devéria. We have representations of priests wearing masks, one example of an actual mask, literary accounts from non-Egyptians about Egyptian priests wearing masks, and even a hitherto-unrecognized Egyptian account of when a priest would wear a mask. In the midst of the embalmment ritual, a new section is introduced with the following passage: “Afterwards, Anubis, the stolites priest (hry sštꜣ) wearing the head of this god, sits down and no lector-priest shall approach him to bind the stolites with any work.” Thus this text settles any questions about whether masks were actually used. It furthermore identifies the individual wearing the mask as a priest.

Thus, however the restoration is made, the individual shown in Facsimile 1 Figure 3 is a priest, and the entire question of which head should be on the figure is moot so far as identifying the figure is concerned. The entire debate has been a waste of ink. It is ironic that the best work Ashment has ever produced, Egyptological or otherwise, has been spent on a point that makes no difference in the end. The question is not
"whether or not Joseph Smith’s reconstruction of the standing figure in his lion-couch vignette is accurate" but whether or not the figure is identified correctly as a priest. It is.\footnote{41}

James White says that nothing Joseph Smith said was correct. In light of this information, he appears quite uninformed.

The description of a scene from the tomb of Neferhôtep says "the bald-headed priest with the panther-skin is the Sem; the priest holding the mummy is dressed as Anubis."\footnote{42} In fact, we know that a jackal mask was worn by the chief embalmer, who impersonated Anubis at the embalment and burial ceremonies. Hans Bonnet states that masks were used unequivocally to represent Anubis.\footnote{43} Kate Bosse-Griffiths shows actual Beset masks and contends that the dancers who wore these masks were impersonating the deity.\footnote{44}

For the last one hundred years in Egyptian archaeology, it has been understood that priests wore masks representing the deities they were trying to impersonate. Many of the chapters in the Egyptian Book of the Dead were drawn with priests wearing the Anubis masks.

In a scene from Kerasher’s mummy, the description by Faulkner reads: "The mummy is held upright by a priest wearing a jackal’s head while water is poured over it." Note that the priest pouring the water is bald.\footnote{45} The description accompanying an-

\footnote{41} Gee, "Abracadabra, Isaac and Jacob," 79–82.  
\footnote{42} Adolf Erman, Life in Ancient Egypt, trans. H. M. Tirard (New York: Dover, 1971), caption of plate, "Funeral Procession and Ceremonies at the Tomb," between pages 320 and 321. Nina M. Davies’s article, "Some Representations of Tombs from the Theban Necropolis," JEA 24 (1938): 26, noted that in funeral processions "either a male mourner, or a priest personifying Anubis, supports it [the mummy]." Aylward M. Blackman, in his article "Some Notes on the Ancient Egyptian Practice of Washing the Dead," JEA 5 (1918): 117, observed that the living Pharaoh was considered the embodiment of the sun-god while here on earth. And when the priests were performing their lustration rituals in the temple, they wore masks.  
\footnote{43} See Hans Bonnet, Reallexikon der Ägyptischen Religionsgeschichte (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1971), 441.  
\footnote{44} See Kate Bosse-Griffiths, "A Beset Amulet from the Amarna Period," JEA 63 (1977): 103–5.  
other illustration used in *The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead* says, “[Hunefer’s] mummy is held upright . . . by a priest wearing a jackal’s mask.”\(^{46}\) And, finally, Bob Brier shows an actual existing Anubis mask, which he describes as being “worn by a priest at a mumification.”\(^{47}\)

The points I make are two. The figure in the Joseph Smith Facsimile 1 is a priest, properly so, as Joseph Smith said, with or without his Anubis mask. Joseph Smith is not incorrect here, as James White claims.

White’s analysis of Facsimile 3 is a laugh. When he says “In reality this scene . . . shows the god Osiris enthroned” (p. 162), he stops at that concerning the enthroned figure. But there is a lot more to it than that, and here is where Joseph Smith also scores a bull’s-eye in his explanation. Notice that Joseph Smith says figure 1 is “Abraham . . . with a crown upon his head, representing the Priesthood, as emblematical of the grand Presidency in Heaven.” Now interestingly, in Facsimile 3 we have Osiris enthroned as Osiris Khenty-Amentiu. This name means, and I quote, “First (or President) of the Westerners.”\(^{48}\) Osiris, as Lord of the Dead, is called Khenty-Amentiu. Khenty means “Before, earlier,” as the Egyptologist Alan Gardiner noted,\(^{49}\) or preceding, that is, the president, as Hugh Nibley has noted.\(^{50}\) Joseph Smith is right on the money here.

White’s complaint that the male figures were dressed as females is simply laughable these days. True enough, the Prophet did identify female figures with men, and notice how much fun White has with this. He says, “It is rather embarrassing to note that the femininity of figures 2 and 4 is rather obvious—how could

\(^{46}\) Ibid., 54 (illustrating Spell 23).
Smith have missed it?” (p. 162). Indeed! Were Mr. White to get his nose out of worthless anti-Mormon literature and bother reading an Egyptologist or two, he would certainly see that Smith didn’t miss anything. His identification of Maat and Hathor as men is possible in the depiction because of the ritual context. First, let us take a necessary diversion back to Facsimile 1 to help us understand this odd idea of men as women in Facsimile 3. Remember how in Facsimile 1 Anubis was supposedly drawn incorrectly as a bald-headed man? Every critic out there in lala land has proclaimed in resounding voice that this is proof positive that Smith was a fraud. This figure ought to be Anubis, the jackal-headed god. Further analysis has shown that the priest wore the Anubis mask. The same thing here.

What White has dismally failed to understand, because he shows no awareness at all of Egyptological literature nor of ancient Egyptian ideas, is precisely this aspect that he raves against. The ancient Egyptians dressed in costume during their rituals, coronations, and funerals and took on the roles of the deities whose robes they wore, whether male or female. It is that simple. And there is rather an abundant amount of evidence to demonstrate this these days.

The first thing to note is Olaf E. Kaper’s study wherein he shows that the astronomical ceiling at Deir El-Haggar depicts androgynous figures, specifically, one figure that “displays female hairstyle and breast, but the sexual organ is male.” At Denderah as well as Philae, figures are represented with female breasts but without the distinctive female traits. The Denderah figure is bearded, yet other male figures are shown with pendulous breasts. “The breasts on the curled-up god are female.”51 The idea is that to the ancient Egyptians gender was constantly being mixed and switched around. Faulkner has noted that, in the ritual of the bringing of Sokar in the Bremner-Rhind Papyrus, there is an unusual concentration of praise for Hathor. It is quite revealing that it is she who guides the gods through the land, and it is she who has power over them. 52 Julia Sampson has demonstrated that

Nefertiti’s authority was equal to if not greater than that of the king who sits on the throne. In fact, the queens, with kingly status, changed their names to masculine forms to signify being successors to the throne of the king. The goddess prepares the king for his office. In the Seti I Temple at Abydos “a number of Hathor-goddesses are suckling the young Ramesses, who is wearing different crowns,” and in fact, the goddess, “by fixing the uraeus on the forehead of Haremhab, [establishes] his right to be king . . . although he was not of royal blood.” The queen anointed her husband during the coronation of his kingship, thus showing that it was by her authority that he reigned. Elise J. Baumgartel notes that “during the Naqada I period the largest and most important tombs belong to women . . . From this I infer a matriarchal society of which strong remnants survive into historical times.” One more connection, and we’ll see the serious significance this has for Book of Abraham Facsimile 3. Kate Bosse-Griffiths shows that, early on, Beset masks were worn during ceremonies and rituals involving the living, not the dead, and in fact, an organized cult of Bes dancers “were acting the part of the god.” That is, by wearing the Beset masks, one of which has been found, humans became the god through enactment and ritual; hence the necessity for wearing various masks of various gods. This is what is happening in Facsimile 3.

A syncretization (that is, a fusing and mixing not only of genders, but gods and mortals) occurred with the many Egyptian goddesses—Hathor being Isis, Maat, and most any other goddess, depending on what circumstance she finds herself in. But to the ancient Egyptian, it was Hathor (or Isis) who rewarded the king with his throne. Isis, as the spiritual authority, is recognized in Coffin Text Spell 148, where we read “I am Isis, more spiritual

55 Ibid., 103.
56 See ibid., 107.
and noble than [all] the gods." She tells the king, "I give you the office of Atum on the throne of Shu." Hathor's status, even office, is taken over by the "Great Enchantress," "Wr.t-Hk3w [Weret-Hekau]," and as the "Lady of Heaven" (dame du ciel) she was syncretized with Mut and Isis (the Mother) while she announced that she put the king's crown on him. "Wr.t Hk3w, a real divinity (and not an epithet), assimilates herself to the double uraeus." Hari even notes that the king, as Hapy, the feeder or provider of his people, appears bearded but also pregnant. Hence his identification as the Lady Weret-Hekau. It's interesting that Weret-Hekau holds in her hand the symbol of life—grain—and that she conduct the king to Hathor, who makes the nyny gesture. Nibley has noted that the same situation is depicted in Facsimile 3 where Hathor is holding the sign of life in her hand.

The whole point of this long foray is that the mixing of the sexes is very plausible in Joseph Smith's Facsimile 3. Far from being a liability, it shows that Joseph Smith was correct in depicting this odd situation where men represent women and women represent men. The point is, it is ritualistic assimilation, role modeling, role playing, exactly as in the classical world of the Romans and Greeks, as far as that goes. Hence we find Nero wearing masks, not only of himself but of his female lovers, while performing a play. With various masks, players could play the roles of gods, goddesses, heroines, and heroes. Not only masks, but entire costumes were donned by the actors and players because, "in a funeral procession, this reincarnation of the great ancestors through the masks in the presence of their living descendants did honor to both the living and the dead." We find this exact situation in Facsimile 3. It truly is an ancient Egyptian touch, by all means. Hugh Nibley has shown time and again that the Hathor

---

61 Roeder, "Der Isistempel," 67.
63 See ibid., plate XIV A, following 104.
64 See Nibley, Abraham in Egypt, 139.
mask was worn by men, and in fact, the king, by donning that mask, became Hathor. He has also shown how Isis is the throne as well as the kingship "which is embodied in the living King. . . . With the idea of the Great Lady actually 'embodying' the King, the incongruity of Figure 2 as 'King Pharaoh' begins to dissolve."66 It is not so much a question of how Joseph Smith missed this incongruity, as how James White missed all this, since it has all been published well before he wrote his book—in some cases, many years before. Again, we see that James White needn't be taken seriously, since he is not serious about understanding this himself.

Let's get on to Facsimile 2 because we have a lot of ground to cover that White deliberately skips. He first blunders by saying that the hypocephalus is a common item of Egyptian funerary artifacts (see p. 164). Common? Out of all the Egyptian materials thus far discovered there have been slightly more than a mere 150 of these items found, yet there have been thousands and thousands of mummies. Common, my eye. White thinks that by making it common we all ought to understand it by now. Nothing is further from the truth, and you notice that White in the next few pages of his letter to you did not elaborate on it either.

White next says that, "Rather than explaining the 'principles of astronomy' as Smith alleged, this object comes directly from the pagan religions of Egypt" (p. 164). In fact, White then literally skips the rest of the entire hypocephalus to get to the figure identified as Min, the sexually active procreative god, and spends a few pages denouncing what to his view is simply lewdness, without understanding anything of the symbolism of this figure. Then White wraps up with saying, "he [Joseph Smith] grossly misidentified each of the items not only on this facsimile, but in the other two as well" (p. 167). This is simply ridiculous. How can White claim all is wrong when he skips 95 percent of the items? And then he himself mishandles the Egyptian god Min in many ways, most of which certainly and absolutely do have to do with astronomy. My, what chicanery we see from this White fellow. Let me just give you a brief indication of his silly stance on this, going

---

66 Nibley, Abraham in Egypt, 135.
through some of the figures, identifying them and their function, and demonstrating two things:

1. Many of them do have to do with astronomy.

2. Joseph Smith’s interpretations are far more correct than incorrect on the figures in Facsimile 2, the hypocephalus.

Facsimile 2, figure 1, is the seated two-headed deity in the center of the circle. Joseph Smith said this figure has to do with the creation (and White thinks this has nothing to do with astronomy!). Who is this figure? I would say it is none other than Khnum, who was the “creator” god who arose from “Nun,” the primeval watery abyss. And how do we know that this central figure in Facsimile 2 is Khnum? The one giveaway identifying feature of the figure is its flat, curly ram’s horns, with which Khnum was always associated, he being the ram-god, creator par excellence. And, it was from Nun that Khnum as well as the rest of the Ogdoad (“Council of the Gods”) arose. So we read the following sentence, “Nwn pw it ntrw,” rendering it, following Gardiner, as “The father of the gods is Nun.” And we read further that “The Nile was a river of creative forces . . . As the fount of Egypt’s fertility, the (supposed) source of the Nile was linked to the ram-headed creator god Khnum, who was believed to have fashioned humankind from Nile mud on a potter’s wheel.” We also now understand from Jan Assman that “The potter’s wheel is the instrument of the creator-god who forms shapes from shapeless material.” We also know of Khnum that “his symbol was the flat-horned ram.” The central figure in the Joseph Smith hypocephalus has the flat horns of the ram and hence is Khnum. Most interestingly, in his four-headed aspect (most of the central figures in hypocephali have four heads) he “was the type of the great primeval creative force, and was called Sheft-ḥāt [šfr-
(Nothing astronomical or cosmological about that, is there?) In fact, because he was associated with the Ram of Mendes he is “sometimes described as the Ram with ‘four faces (or, heads) on one neck.’” This is the central figure, as in the Joseph Smith hypocephalus. So Joseph Smith was not so out of line in saying that this represented “the first creation.” Interestingly, Khnum created the “first egg,” fashioned the “first man” on the potter’s wheel, and was “god par excellence of the First Cataract,” where the “first city that ever existed” came to be. In other words, this is literally, following ancient Egyptian thought, “the first creation.” Joseph Smith’s exact words. But even more interesting still, many of the various names of Khnum are simply electrifying in light of what Joseph Smith explained about this figure.

So, we know this is “the first creation,” and now these other names also indicate that this is so. To quote Joseph Smith, “First in government.” Very interesting. Joseph Smith is three for three here: First in creation, first in government, and Khnum associated with the waters of Nun, which are depicted in the hieroglyph just to the side of his head. But there is more. Khnum was, early on, we are informed, “regarded as the god of the Nile and of the annual Nile-flood.” He was “the creative power which made and which sustains all things. . . . [His] priests . . . identified him with Nu, the great primeval god of the watery abyss, and from being the local river-god of the Nile in the First Cataract, he became the god Ḫāp-ur, or the Nile of heaven.” All good things poured forth from this heavenly Nile; this “double cavern [Qerti—the Joseph Smith hypocephalus hieroglyph] was, in fact, the ‘couch of the Nile.’”

---

71 Budge, Gods of the Egyptians, 2:51.
72 Ibid., 65.
73 Ibid., 50. 53. Alan H. Gardiner has noted how closely tied Khnum is with the ancient Egyptian “House of Life,” that is, the temple, as the drama of creation was performed there; “The House of Life,” in JEA 24 (1938): 178.
74 Explanation to Facsimile 2, figure 1, in the Pearl of Great Price (Abraham).
75 Budge, Gods of the Egyptians, 2:50.
76 Ibid., 52.
77 Ibid., 53.
Is it not interesting that one of the main temples at Heliopolis was dedicated to the phoenix, the symbolic bird of immortality and resurrection, and that Heliopolis is mentioned at least three times on the rim of the Joseph Smith hypocephalus, more than on any other hypocephalus? In addition, associated further with this famous bird—as well as with the famous city of the sun, Heliopolis, the Benben stone, and the Great Pyramid—is “the belief that time is composed of recurrent cycles which are divinely appointed.” . . . There is further a governing moment [note this] amongst all these cycles and epochs—the ‘genesis event’ that the Egyptians called Zep Tepi, the ‘First Time.’” 79 Zep tepi means “the first day of a period of time” or the “beginning or commencement of anything.” 80 When we look in Faulkner’s Egyptian Dictionary, we find that tepi, as in zep tepi, means, depending on how the word is used, “in front of, in the direction of, before (of time)”; it can mean “previously,” as well as “of place, who are in front of, before,” and even “a good beginning.” 81 This certainly relates well to the Egyptian idea and explanation that Joseph Smith propounded as “first in measurement,” a notion also involving time.

This is an astonishingly good fit. Joseph Smith did not miss one element in figure 1. Even the apes tie in with the theme Joseph Smith claimed for figure 1.

Hans Bonnet notes some interesting things about these apes. The apes can represent Thoth, the god of writing. 82 Bonnet de-

---

80 Ibid.
82 See Bonnet, Reallexikon, 7.
scribes something else interesting in light of what Joseph Smith said about figure 1 in the hypocephalus. Horapollo explains that the apes, during the equinox, urinate hourly, as a sort of measure of time.\textsuperscript{83} Joseph Smith shows that the central panel in which the apes reside is directly involved with celestial time, and the measure of time (Fac. 2, fig. 1). Bonnet also clarifies that the apes have a strong relationship with the heavenly bodies, specifically the sun, as they raise their front paws to the rising sun in worship.\textsuperscript{84} So the sun, moon, and stars, the measurement of time, and a correspondence of the heavenly bodies and measurement of time all appear in Joseph Smith’s explanations.

Alan Gardiner notes that Thoth is the god of writing and mathematics as well.\textsuperscript{85} Smith’s explanation includes the idea of “The measurement according to celestial time, which celestial time signifies one day to a cubit.” Note the application of mathematics and the interaction with time. Spence says that Thoth “is called the ‘great god’ and ‘lord of heaven,’”\textsuperscript{86} and that, in his role as a lunar god, Thoth was considered “the measurer.”\textsuperscript{87} He is the “Great White” of Bonnet’s description because the full moon is very large and very white in the sky. Thoth, or Dhwty, is the scribe of the gods.\textsuperscript{88} There is nothing amiss in Joseph Smith’s explanation of Facsimile 2, figure 1, despite James White’s claim.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{83} See ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{84} See ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{85} See Gardiner, \textit{Egyptian Grammar}, 113.
\item \textsuperscript{86} Note that Bonnet, \textit{Reallexikon}, 7, says of him that he is the old baboon-god, the “Hez-ur, the ‘Great White.’”
\item \textsuperscript{87} Spence, \textit{Myths and Legends}, 107.
\item \textsuperscript{88} Karl-Theodor Zauzich, \textit{Hieroglyphs without Mystery}, trans. Ann M. Roth (Austin, Tex.: University of Texas Press, 1994), 94. Thoth was the creator of hieroglyphs, according to some accounts; he is also shown in scenes of “Weighing of the Heart” making a written record of the judgment of the deceased, as in the temple of Ramesses II at Abydos, where we read, “For recitation by Thoth, Lord of Khmunu (Hermopolis), the Scribe.” Hilary Wilson, \textit{Understanding Hieroglyphs} (Lincolnwood, Ill.: Passport Books, 1995), 96–97; compare Margaret Bunson, \textit{The Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt} (New York: Facts on File, 1991), 264. In Egypt, “It is Thoth (Hermes to the Greeks; Mercury to the Romans) who is the ‘Master of the City of Eight.’ Thoth ... gives man access to the mysteries of the manifested world, which is symbolized by Eight.” John A. West, \textit{Serpent in the Sky: The High Wisdom of Ancient Egypt} (Wheaton, Ill.: Quest Books, 1993), 51. While in the Joseph Smith hypocephalus there are only
When we turn to figure 4, the hawk with outspread wings signifying the expanse of heaven, we also find that Joseph Smith is in line with the ancient Egyptian idea here, contrary to White’s pet theory.

Alan Gardiner, in his analysis of the Hymns to Amon, noted the following in the 50th chapter: “Thy name is strong, thy might is heavy. . . Divine hawk with outspread wings.” According to Gardiner, this shows how the might of Amon is described in conventional ways, comparing Amon with a hawk, a bull, and a lion. And where is this hawk? “Crossing the sky by ship.” “Concealing (imn) thyself (?) as Amon at the head of the gods . . . the dweller in heaven.” “His soul . . . is in heaven.” “He is Hor-akhti who is in heaven. . . . The main conception is that of a sky-god wedded to the earth.”

Rudolf Anthes has noted that Re melded with Harachti. As Re-Harachti, he was identified in the Pyramid Texts as the sun, that is, in the expanse. Klaus Koch describes a comb from early Egypt two baboons, in other hypocephali there are sometimes two, four, six, or eight. Eight baboons can also be seen on the Metternich Stela. Adolf Erman notes that the town of eight was named after the eight elementary beings of the world, whose chief god was Thoth, the god of wisdom. Erman, Life in Ancient Egypt, 23-24.

Alan H. Gardiner, “Hymns to Amon from a Leiden Papyrus,” ZÄS 42 (1905): 26. Compare the same idea of mounting to heaven on birds’ wings in Gardiner, Egyptian Grammar, 357. See also Eliade, Shamanism, 392, concerning the Greek ideas on this mode of transport: “As for Hermes’ ‘wings,’ symbolic of magical flight, vague indications seem to show that certain Greek sorcerers professed to furnish the souls of the deceased with wings to enable them to fly to heaven.” Compare the Apocalypse of Abraham, wherein Abraham is ordered to offer up sacrifices, all except for the turtledove and pigeon. The reasoning was, as Abraham said, “I will ascend on the wings of the birds. . . . And the angel took me with his right hand and set me on the right wing of the pigeon and he himself sat on the left wing of the turtledove, (both of) which were as if neither slaughtered nor divided. And he carried me up to the edge of the fiery flames.” James H. Charlesworth, ed., The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983), 1:695-96.

Gardiner, “Hymns to Amon,” 23.
Ibid., 30.
Ibid., 34.
Ibid., 39, compare 41: “his soul is he who is in heaven.”
on which the king is depicted as a falcon soaring over his palace; up in heaven is another falcon on curved wings in a bark. The king on the Narmer Palette is also depicted as a hawk. The same falcon/hawk is called the “venerable falcon” at the Heb-sed festival at Edfu, venerable because he was Horus, the god, who flew to the heavens.

Perhaps the most telling evidence in favor of Joseph Smith’s interpretation comes from Rudolf Anthes in his long study of Egyptian religion in the third millennium B.C. Anthes notes directly that “on the ivory comb of King Horus, Serpent of the First Dynasty, however, the falcon Horus is represented twice: in the lower register he stands upon the symbol of the royal palace as the king, in the upper register he stands in a boat beneath which two wings representing the sky are spread. . . . the sky was thought to be represented by the wide-spread wings of the same falcon.”

One thing is certain: “Horus . . . presides over the sky.” As Behdety, Horus was “confined to the hovering falcon,” which is also a variant of the standing falcon, “identical with Horus as early as the Third Dynasty.” Interestingly, Junker “lists only Ptolemaic temple inscriptions as evidence of an equation of the wings of Horus with the sky,” yet “the Egyptians regarded the sun as a falcon flying in heaven. The idea that his wings represented the sky was incidental and naturally accepted in spite of

---

95 See Klaus Koch, Geschichte der ägyptischen Religion (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1993), 60. He also notes the falcon on the back of Chephren’s statue with his wings spread around the king, and points out that every king sat on the Horus throne taking on the properties of the god, usually as a falcon.

96 See ibid.


98 Anthes, “Egyptian Theology,” 171.

99 Ibid., 186.


101 Anthes, “Egyptian Theology,” 188.
any logical objections.” And remember, White’s doctrine indicates that none of this has to do with astronomy.

What about figure 5, the Hathor cow, which Joseph Smith said is involved with the sun? A cow the sun? Yet here surely is a direct ancient Egyptian astronomical correlation.

Hathor is also called “Hathor, die Kuh von Gold”—Hathor, the cow of gold. She is the Weret-Hekau, crowned with the sun disc. We know there were four goddesses on the “First Occasion.” These goddesses were figured as cows. Is it any surprise at all that at this juncture we find Joseph Smith also saying that the cow figure is a “governing power”?

Hathor was also the Eye of Re, which is the sun-god. The Eye of Horus is defined as “bright” (bꜣqꜣt), probably because it is the sun and has its properties. In the Coffin Texts Hathor is actually said to be shining herself. In the Egyptian Book of the Dead, chapter 17, Hathor is described as the Sacred Eye, which represents the “waters of the sky . . . . It is the image of the Eye of Re [the sun] on the morning of its daily birth. As for the Celestial

102 Ibid., 189.
103 Bonnet, Reallexikon, 279.
105 See Gardiner, “Hymns to Amon,” 37, where we are told that Amon, in his form of great bull, is the bull, the “father of fathers,” the “mother of mothers” of those four cow goddesses. See also Klaus Koch, Das Wesen altägyptischer Religion im Spiegel ägyptologischer Forschung (Göttingen: Vandenhoek and Ruprecht, 1989), 5–6, where Hathor is said to be the cow on the top corners of the Narmer Palette who grants the king his power to reign.
106 See Gardiner, “Hymns to Amon,” 41—“She is the Eye of Re: she is not repulsed.” Compare page 20 where the God Re is described as the “beneficent influence of the sun-god.” The city of Thebes itself is called the wedjat-eye. For Re’s right eye, which is in his disk, see 21. The Cow-goddess is the Eye of Re, which is the sun, exactly as Joseph Smith had said in Facsimile 2. Compare Erman, Life in Ancient Egypt, 267, where Re says “Call to me my Eye (i.e., the goddess Hathor).”
Cow, she is the Sacred Eye of Re.” In fact, the property of the sun as dying in the west and resurrecting into a new life in the east gives the Hathor Cow the power to feed the dead and nurse them in preparation for their resurrection. The sun travels along her belly throughout the day. The cosmology is obvious. Additionally, the Coffin Texts speak of Hathor rising within the horizon, as the sun certainly does.

Hans Bonnet shows that Hathor is the mother of Horus. This shows that Hathor is associated with the Sun. “The sun ripens in the lap of Hathor.” We also are told “Hathor is the sun because she was the sun’s eye, hence the sun.” Manfred Lurker tells us that “according to an ancient myth Hathor was supposed to have raised the youthful sun up to heaven by means of her horns. In the end the goddess who bore the sun was herself equated with the sun, being regarded as the solar eye.”


110 See Wolhart Westendorf, “Die geteilte Himmelsgöttin,” in *Gegengabe: Festschrift für Emma Brunner-Traut*, 341, for a discussion of the sun’s dying and rising again. See H. Wilson, *Understanding Hieroglyphs*, 82, where she discusses Hathor’s role as guardian of the tree that shades the dead and offers them refreshment. As a funerary deity she was noted as “Chieftainess of the West.” See E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of the Dead: The Papyrus of Ani* (New York: Dover, 1967), cxx: “she provides meat and drink for the deceased.” In Faulkner, *Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 1:37, we see Hathor provides clothing; she also gives myrrh (1:42) and is the “mistress of the northern sky, who strengthen[s] the bonds of the wakeful” (1:256-57).

111 See Westendorf, “Die geteilte Himmelsgöttin,” 341: “The heaven goddess appeared in historic times under the name of Hathor.” See also Erik Hornung, *Der ägyptische Mythos von der Himmelskuh* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1982), 55, for his idea that Hathor as bearer of the Sun Eye was not clearly identified until the New Kingdom.


113 See Bonnet, *Reallexikon*, 280.

114 Ibid.

115 Manfred Lurker, *The Gods and Symbols of Ancient Egypt*, trans. Barbara Cumming (London: Thames and Hudson, 1982), 59. The eye of Horus, we know, was presented to his father Osiris, thereby helping him to attain new life. “The presentation of the eye of Horus was regarded in Egypt as the archetype of every offering ceremony,” 67. We are further informed that the wedjat-eye was “a symbol of power of the god of light.” With the ankh sign it means “to
the sun is not associated with astronomy, that is his prerogative, but I see no reason to follow after him. I find Joseph Smith’s presentation makes much more sense in these ancient Egyptian documents than does White’s.

Now what of figure 2, the top panel at the top of the circle? In the Joseph Smith version, the figure 2 at the top of the hypocephalus, also two-faced, holds the “Wepwawet” staff. Klaus Baer, in his translation of the Joseph Smith “Breathing Permit,” noted that paragraph VI says “Amon is with you every day... in the Temple of Re so that you may live again. Wepwawet has opened the good way for you.” The footnote says that “His name means ‘Opener of the Ways,’ and his standard was carried, from the earliest times, at the head of royal processions.” In Faulkner’s Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts, vol. 1, Spell 10, we read, “fair paths are opened up for you by Wepwawet.” The variant reads “a road is opened up for you.” Spell 24 reads “Wepwawet has opened up fair paths for you.” In Spell 345 we read “Wepwawet will open for you the fair paths of the West.” Another manuscript adds here the words “which belong to the vindication on this day against your foes, male or female, in the sky or on earth or in the realm of the dead.”

So what do we find? The staff in the Joseph Smith hypocephalus is that of the “Opener of the Ways,” which is precisely what a key does. “The key of power” in very deed.

Now then, what about the ship of the God, figure 3? Joseph Smith said it represents God, sitting on his throne, with a crown of light on his head, as well as the grand Key-words of the priesthood. Well, what of it? Here is what of it. This is just too darn good to miss.

favour.” It was also a protection against the evil eye, 128. Compare Gardiner, Egyptian Grammar, 111, §143: “thou hast placed it (the eye of Horus) in thy head, that thou mayst be eminent by means of it, that thou mayst be exalted by means of it, that thy estimation may be great by means of it.” It is called “the sound eye,” 197, §266.1. The eye of Horus is even equated on some occasions with the uraeus (i.e. the cobra), 421 bottom note. So it is also connected with that goddess as well.

117 Ibid., 122 n. 61.
Notice that the figure in the boat holds the *was* scepter, the symbol of dominion. The idea is very similar to the "Emblem of Min of Koptos" which, according to Wainwright, was the lightning bolt, the light weapon. Wainwright, who was one of the excavators of the Great Pyramid as well as of Mastaba 17 at Meidum, says,

In Greek mythology the thunderbolt is the "light"-weapon with which Zeus blasts his enemies, just as in Semitic mythology the angels of Allah destroy devils and evil djinns with the meteorite. Good evidence that the Greeks themselves identified the lightning with the meteorite is supplied by the expression "star-flung thunderbolt." 

In his *The Thousand Nights and a Night*, R. F. Burton uses the expression "cast at the *afrit* (me) with a shooting star of fire (*shihab min nar*)." According to Wainwright, "*Shihab* is the ordinary word for 'shooting star,' but here its dangerous nature is emphasized by the addition of the words 'of fire.'" The *was*-scepter means dominion. According to Faulkner and Gardner, *ḥqꜣs* means "to rule," and *ḥqꜣt* means "scepter."

---


In connection with the scarab in some hypocephali, a Pyramid Text of Unas reads: “This Unas flieth like a bird and alighteth like a beetle; he flieth like a bird and alighteth like a beetle upon the throne which is empty in the boat of Re.” Interestingly, the British Museum Hypocephalus 36188 portrays this god with a scepter by the side of a scarab beetle. This is very similar to Joseph Smith’s interpretation of the figure as God sitting on his throne with a sun disk “symbol of eternal light” above his head.

Accompanying an illustration of this boat of the god is a description of “Atum, Hathor and three other enthroned deities, all holding was-sceptres, pull[ing] on ropes attached to a boat on whose prow squats Horus as a child. Nakht stands in the boat pol·
ing, alongside a large falcon’s head wearing a sun disc. In the following boat, steered by Thoth, the falcon-headed sun-god sits enthroned behind the scarab-headed Khepri and Isis.” Faulkner translation says, “A path is made for me at the head of the Sacred Bark, and I am lifted up as the sun disc; . . . Let me pass, for I am a mighty one, Lord of the mighty ones; I am a noble of the Lord of Righteousness, whom Wadjet made.”

Note here that Wadjet is mentioned but is not pictured in the accompanying vignette. However, in the Joseph Smith diagram the wedjat-eye is shown twice. Now this is interesting because it is the symbol for the resurrection, for life, wholeness, and the nourishment of the gods. The restored eye is symbolic of life and the resurrection. Abraham in one papyrus is called “the pupil of the wedjat-eye, fourfold Qmr, creator of the mouth, who created creation, great verdant creation” (cf. John 1:1: the word is what created). Qmr means something like “creator, creation, mightier, or one who has power over.” Here, “it is very noteworthy that the Patriarch Abraham is called ‘the apple of the wedjat-eye.’” . . . The wedjat-eye was a symbol of perfection, prosperity, preservation, wholeness, completion, health, and resurrection.

125 Ibid., 126.
[It] is frequently mentioned in a closely related group of chapters from the Egyptian Book of the Dead (162–67) that treat the theme of preserving the dead until the time of the resurrection.  

The hypocephalus itself symbolized the eye of Re or Horus, i.e., the sun, and the scenes portrayed on it relate to the Egyptian concept of the resurrection of life after death. To the Egyptians the daily rising and setting of the sun were a vivid symbol of the resurrection. The hypocephalus itself represented all that the sun encircles, i.e., the whole world. The upper portion represented the world of men and the day sky, and the lower portion (the part with the cow) the nether world and the night sky.

Bonnet gives the astronomical background to the “Horusauge” being involved with the sun and the moon.

What is so interesting is that the pieces of the eye represent aspects of an almost complete personality. In an ancient Egyptian myth, 1/64 of the wedjat-eye was missing after it was assembled. To have that missing part was to have the key to eternal life. Since this symbol is consistently identified by Joseph Smith with the “grand Key-words of the Holy Priesthood” perhaps the 1/64 could be what the Egyptians regarded as the secret or sacred name of God. The idea of knowing the names of gods (as well as enemies) was a crucial and very important aspect of the ancient Egyptian religion. Those possessing the secret of the eye were believed to reach a new and higher level of consciousness. Further possession of the eye would determine the successor of Osiris in the battle between Horus and Set; its possessor would, therefore, have the right to rule and reign in heaven.

---

127 Ibid.
129 See Bonnet, Reallexikon, 314, 630.
130 See J. F. Borghouts, “The Ram as a Protector and Prophesier,” Revue d’Égyptologie 32 (1980): 36, concerning the idea that the ram, by knowing his enemy’s name, could have power over him and vanquish him.
The wedjat-eye is explained by Plutarch to represent "divine providence" (literally "foreknowledge"),\textsuperscript{131} "the divine wisdom by which God oversees and cares for all of his creations. It is not unreasonable to see in this the grand key words of the Holy Priesthood" ('The glory of God is intelligence,' D&C 93:36).\textsuperscript{132} Lurker says, "The resurrection of Osiris was attributed ... partly to Horus who embraced his father and gave him the eye of Horus to eat."\textsuperscript{133} The wedjat-eye, Lurker points out, also is "a symbol of the power of the god of light.... Some wedjat-eyes had an arm carrying the ankh or the papyrus staff, symbol for 'to flourish.' The wedjat-eye was also used as a protection against the evil eye."\textsuperscript{134} Gardiner said that "presumably the missing 1/64 was supplied magically by [the God] Thoth."\textsuperscript{135} That the wedjat-eye is shown twice with the "ship of the god" is entirely appropriate in the context of what the Egyptians felt it represented and with Joseph Smith's description of it. And, indeed, the sacramental aspects of the wedjat-eye do need to be examined.

With the cyclically regenerating world of the Egyptians involved directly in the cosmos, the idea is "about the capacity to merge with the divine power of life inherent in all being and which enables the pharaoh to transform himself into other cosmic forms of life after death. Expressed in the mythological language of the Pyramid Texts it is about the state of having 'eaten' the gods of the Egyptian world."\textsuperscript{136} Eaten the gods? This is the sacrament theme. And most interesting for Joseph Smith's explanations of the facsimiles, the wedjat-eye is directly considered to be a sacramental motif.

The wedjat-eye as a sacramental motif; as everything good, sound, true, and beautiful; and as the god's secret, sacred, and powerful name offers all the greatness that a god has to its possessor: "sovereignty," full light, an assurance of a cyclic renewal of

\textsuperscript{131} Plutarch, \textit{De Iside et Osiride} 51.
\textsuperscript{132} Rhodes, "Joseph Smith Hypocephalus," 9.
\textsuperscript{133} Lurker, \textit{Gods and Symbols}, 93.
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid., 128.
\textsuperscript{135} Gardiner, \textit{Egyptian Grammar}, 197.
\textsuperscript{136} Finnestad, "The Pharaoh," 90.
life. The wedjat-eye is "filled," whatever that means, but it is filled on the sixth day by Thoth, the scribe, who is described as not only filling the eye, but fixing it, putting its various parts back together since it was torn apart. The supplying of it with its missing parts, completing it, gathering and fixing it, giving it a restoration of wholeness, Möller notes, is paralleled with the dismemberment of Osiris and the supplement of the lost limb of Osiris, being resurrected again into wholeness, completeness, vitality. What could be clearer as to the "grand Key-words of the Holy Priesthood" than this, a restoring to perfect wholeness, the resurrection?

The filling of the eye on the sixth day is done in Heliopolis, where we read an inscription saying that as "Osiris wakes from his slumber [of death]; he flies upward as the Phoenix and takes his place in heaven, and repeats his shape (moon) with Atum." Note the astronomical aspects of all this, contra James White’s mere assertion that there is none. This filling concept at Heliopolis is considered to hark back to some astronomical observation. Bonnet notes that Horus, in offering his eye to his father, helped his father, Osiris, gain a new life (resurrection) with the eye. What especially catches our notice was Bonnet’s observation that the wedjat-eyes were given as the hands were stretched out to receive the offering. And John Tvedtnes has demonstrated that the Hebrew word consecrate literally means “to fill the hand” of the ordained priests. Most interesting, after citing numerous examples from Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and so forth, it has been noted that “the open hand is to be filled with sacrificial items,” as well, perhaps, as with a shining stone as noted in Revelation 2:17 and Doctrine and Covenants 130:11.

140 See Bonnet, Reallexikon, 314–15.
141 See ibid., 856.
143 Ibid., 179–80.
The sacrament motifs are also prominent in association with the Eye of Horus, as we have noted above. The Coffin Texts are replete with this motif. Spell 939 says, "My bread is the Eye, my beer is the Eye." Spell 863 says, "If N be hungry, Nekhbet will be hungry; if N be thirsty, Nekhbet will be thirsty," and it ends with mentioning the Eye of Horus as the cure. Spell 936 says one’s thirst and hunger are satisfied with the consumption of the Eye of Horus. Spell 1013 says, "I live on bread of white emmer washed down with zizyphus-beer... I testify concerning the Eye of Horus to him." The giving of the Eye of Horus is a very prominent theme and is portrayed not only in hypcephali, but also in a depiction by Lanzone of this event, in which a baboon presents a wedjat-eye to a god in his boat.\(^{144}\) It is noteworthy that Abraham was given the sacrament in his famous meeting with Melchizedek. Robert J. Matthews has remarked on its significance: "When returning from the battle of the kings (see Genesis 14 KJV) Abraham met Melchizedek, who gave him bread and wine. The particular treatment given this episode in the New Translation almost suggests a prefiguration of the sacrament of the Lord’s supper, for the bread and wine are blessed separately."\(^{145}\) The sacrament is certainly in line with keeping our minds pointed toward the covenant that God has offered, and the depiction of it as the wedjat-eye is in line with this thought.

Kurt Sethe noted that as the bread and wine should represent the body and blood of Christ to us, likewise if the priest offers the god or goddess wine, incense, bread, fruits, or something else, it represents the Eye of Horus.\(^{146}\) This seems to fit together well.

\(^{144}\) See Ridolfo V. Lanzone, *Dizionario di Mitologia Egizia* (Turin: Doyen, 1883), #1–2, plate XXXVIII.


\(^{146}\) See Kurt Sethe, *Urgeschichte und älteste Religion der Ägypter* (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1930), 103.
In the Egyptian Book of the Dead we also find this prominent sacramental theme. We read, “may my name be called out, may it be found at the board of offerings; may there be given to me loaves in the Presence, ... may there be given to me bread from the House of Cool Water and a table of offerings from Heliopolis.”\textsuperscript{147} We learn that this is important for the dead to have. “Let there be given to him bread and beer which have been issued in the presence of Osiris, and he will be forever like the Followers of Horus.”\textsuperscript{148} Another statement directly ties the sacramental motif to the sacred eye: “Your bread is the Sacred Eye, your beer is the Sacred Eye; what goes forth at the voice for you upon earth is the Sacred Eye.”\textsuperscript{149} We further read that the perfected souls are drawn near to the House of Osiris and that the officiating person is addressed thusly: “O you who give bread and beer to the perfected souls in the House of Osiris, may you give bread and beer at all seasons to the soul of Ani, who is vindicated with all the gods of the Thinite nome, and who is vindicated with you.”\textsuperscript{150} Klaus Baer, one of the Egyptologists to work on the Joseph Smith Papyri, noted that to be “vindicated” or, as the Joseph Smith Papyri put it, “justified,” means to become an Osiris.\textsuperscript{151} In Spell 68, the spell for going out into the day, we read, “You shall live on bread of white emmer and beer of red barley of Hapi in the pure place.”\textsuperscript{152} And again, “offering shall be made to me of food by my son of my body, you shall give invocation-offerings of bread and beer, incense and unguent, and all things good and pure whereon a god lives ... and there shall be given to him bread and beer and a portion of meat from upon the altar of Osiris.”\textsuperscript{153} On another occasion the dead is asked, “What will you live on?” Wherein the dead responds, “I will live and have power through bread.” “Where will you eat it?” say the gods and spirits to me. ‘I will have power and I will eat it under the branches of the tree of Hathor my mistress, who made offerings of bread, beer and

\begin{footnotes}
\item[147] Faulkner, \textit{Egyptian Book of the Dead}, under plates 1–2.
\item[148] Ibid., under plate 4.
\item[149] Faulkner (ed. Andrews), \textit{Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead}, 33.
\item[152] Faulkner (ed. Andrews), \textit{Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead}, 70.
\item[153] Ibid., 72–73.
\end{footnotes}
corn in Heliopolis.”

Could the sacrament also be mentioned in conjunction with a creative power, or governing power, so to speak?

Now back to the idea of the god in the boat. Budge notes some interesting things with the gods in their ships. Isis prays and says to the god in the ship, “Thou hast conquered heaven by the greatness of thy majesty in thy name of ‘Prince of the festival of the fifteenth day.’ [Notice in the bottom flank of the ship in fig. 4 the fifteen dots.] Thou risest upon us like Rā every day; thou shinnest on us like Atem. Gods and men live at the sight of thee.”

“The holy and divine emanation which cometh forth from thee vivifieth gods, men, quadrupeds, and reptiles, and they live thereby.... Hail, thou Lord, there existeth no god who is like unto thee.”

“Grant thou that I may have my being as a follower of thy Majesty.... The god thereof is the Lord of Maāt, the Lord of offerings, the Most Holy One.... Assuredly there shall be joy to him that performeth Maāt.”

“Homage to thee, O thou God, holy one, great in beneficent deeds, thou Prince of Eternity, who presideth over his place in the Sektet Boat, thou Mighty One of risings in the Ajet Boat!”

“Thou rollest up into the horizon, thou hast set light over the darkness, thou sendest forth air (or, light) from thy plumes, and thou floodest the Two Lands like the Disk at daybreak. Thy crown penetrateth the height of heaven, thou art the companion of the stars, and the guide of every god.”

Or, in short, God “clothed with power and authority; with a crown of eternal light upon his head” (explanation to Fac. 2, fig. 3). Joseph Smith knew whereof he spoke.

When we look at the Coffin Texts we also note that they identify this bark (fig. 3) as the bark of the god Re, many, many times over. This concept is clearly a well-established one. Elizabeth Thomas notes the boats of Re, both morning and evening barks,

---

154 Ibid., 80.
156 Ibid., 63.
157 Ibid., 72-73.
158 Ibid., 74.
159 Ibid., 77-78.
160 See, for example, Faulkner, Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts, especially spells 18, 61, 211, 360, 409.
and acknowledges that they were constantly used by the gods to traverse the sky, which was water, and used also in the underworld.\textsuperscript{161}

This makes all kinds of sense from the Egyptian side. I. E. S. Edwards, the great authority on the pyramids, noted that, “according to the view most commonly accepted, Rê, accompanied by his retinue, traversed the sky each day in a boat.” And, further to the point, “Every day the king would accompany the sun-god on his voyage across the skies. Sometimes he is described as a rower in the barque.”\textsuperscript{162}

Adolf Erman discusses this as well, especially the “Sacred bark of Amon-Re.” Erman notes that to the outside world this bark was itself the image of the god. This situation makes perfect sense, since to the Egyptian travel was always on the Nile in the boat and “the god also would therefore, according to their views, require a Nile boat to go from place to place.” The picture of the god’s boat is from the time of Thothmes II, at Karnak.\textsuperscript{163} The Egyptian Book of the Dead illustrates the ship of the god many times. Usually it is Re, the Sun-god who traverses the sky in his ship, which is usually depicted on a rather large hieroglyph of the sky.

I believe the hypocephalus is the strongest witness to the truth that Joseph Smith taught. Its symbolism is exact and precisely religious, and involves us all in the cosmic afterlife, in glorious resurrection. The big picture is never lost. It is the perfect example of the correlation of the microcosm (mankind) with the macrocosm (eternal life in everlasting realms of light).

These are some of the areas that White has obviously ignored. What he wants you to believe is that nothing can be said for the Book of Abraham. What I want to tell you is to keep preaching the gospel of Christ to folks who need it and don’t get up in too much of a fret with this White fellow. He’ll still be there after you have served the Lord . . . and so will I. We’ll have some good study sessions together with your dad also. I’m sure proud of you for sticking to your guns and letting critics know their research

\textsuperscript{162} Edwards, Pyramids of Egypt, 8, 16.
\textsuperscript{163} Erman, Life in Ancient Egypt, 275–76.
doesn’t bother your testimony much. For what it’s worth, their research doesn’t bother my testimony either, let alone my own research, which refutes their lame contentions against the gospel.

Your affectionate uncle,

Larry
Dear Mr. White,

I must say that I am surprised that you would expect me to give our correspondence greater weight than my holy calling. Naturally, I need to be about the Lord’s errand—and at this moment, that errand includes training a new missionary. That is a serious responsibility and one that I cannot neglect just to carry on what is degenerating into a mere debate. I admit that it is more distracting than painful, but I really need to concentrate on the work I am doing.

You say that you have a friend “who was once a Mormon but left the LDS Church when he accepted Christ as his Lord and Savior” (p. 169). I fail to see what the two concepts—accepting Christ and leaving the church—have to do with each other. Most people I have met on my mission who have accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior have joined the church as a result. Church membership involves accepting Christ as Lord and Savior in a very real way, becoming his covenant disciples.

Now it happens that missionaries have just as much curiosity as everyone else. I admit that curiosity is what has kept me reading and replying to your letters. And curiosity leads us into speculation about questions that are not related to our work. We call these the “did-Adam-have-a-navel” questions. If some missionary were to ask a General Authority, such as Elder Peterson, one of those questions, then that General Authority would be quite correct to respond in the way that you describe (see pp. 169–70).

You say that “we have a phone message for Mormons” (p. 170). I find that statement odd and a little puzzling. Who is “we”? Why would you “have a phone message for Mormons”? Our mission office doesn’t have a phone message for Baptists. Mind you, we aren’t an anti-Baptist organization. Now while the remarks made by your anonymous caller don’t tell me anything, the fact that you are part of a group that has “a phone message for Mormons” and that attracts the attention of church members who want to tell you what is wrong with your perception of the church, does indeed tell me something. It tells me that you are part of an anti-Mormon organization that publicizes a negative,
and probably faulty, view of the church and its teachings. If the misconceptions that you have written in your letters come from that organization, then that explains why your caller wanted to correct your misinformation.

I will be happy to meet with you in the park. Of course my companion will be coming along as well.

Your friend,

Elder Hahn
Letter 10: The God of What?

Dear Mr. White,

As I mentioned to you during our first meeting, my name is Elder Hahn. That is what my friends call me. Even my family (including my slightly eccentric Uncle Larry) calls me that while I’m on my mission. I believe that it is a fairly reasonable request that I make: that you call me Elder. I’m sure that if you met a woman who preferred to be called “Ms.” instead of “Mrs.” or “Miss,” you would respect that preference. I ask the same respect, no more and no less.

You say that “From the very beginning of my correspondence with you I have mentioned how much I wish to speak to you about the God of the Bible” (p. 173). I confess that I am confused. I thought that that was what your fourth and fifth letters were about.

Also, I am a little puzzled by your use of the phrase, “the God of the Bible.” Since you obviously don’t mean that the Bible is all that he is the God of, I wonder why you keep using that expression. It seems almost like some kind of formula for you.

Now I don’t have a problem with your affirming your own beliefs. That is perfectly acceptable, and I am not going to argue with that. I am only going to take issue where you seem to be trying to score points against the restored gospel.

I agree that God is unique. We—that is, the human race—have no knowledge of any other being who is like him. That other similar beings exist in eternal worlds really doesn’t change anything—we have no real knowledge of them; they are not only above us, but they are also beyond us and have nothing to do with us. That makes our God uniquely important to us; as far as the whole human family is concerned, there truly is none like him.

But I notice again, as my Aunt Jenny pointed out, that you are using the wrong kind of scriptures to make the wrong kind of arguments. The Psalms are nothing if not poetry, and the one thing we all understand about poetic statements is that they are not to be taken literally. Did Tennyson mean that the Light Brigade charged into the actual mouth of hell? Did Wordsworth really think enough daffodils would make an army? Or should the
opening lines of Richard III be taken to mean that the right king can change the seasons?

Also, you seem to be willing to go well beyond what the scriptures themselves say. While I agree that the passage you quoted from Isaiah 40:12-18 is indeed impressive, you have gone far beyond it when you presume to answer the questions Isaiah poses. Indeed, it seems that the very point of those questions is that they are unanswerable by human wisdom. If the answer to all those questions is a flat "nobody," then that is in fact a very easy answer. It puts me in mind of the questions God puts to Job in Job 38:4. God asks, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding." Clearly the point is that Job doesn't know—"nowhere" is not the answer. The same goes for Isaiah's questions.

And in fact you seem to realize this, because you say, "None of the questions asked by Isaiah can be answered—they are purely rhetorical" (p. 175). And so you proceed with utter confidence to answer them.

I suppose I should have expected you to cite John 4:24, even though we have already discussed it. Do I need to remind you of Romans 8:9, wherein Paul tells the Saints, "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you"? Is it possible that Paul meant that Christians can be "in the spirit" and still keep their bodies? If so, why can't God do that too? Surely you don't believe that such things are possible for us but beyond him?

And it is clear that the Bible does not present a completely clear division between the physical and the spiritual, for Paul clearly taught that the resurrected body is "spiritual" (1 Corinthians 15:44-46)—even though it is clearly physical as well (see Luke 24:37-39). He also spoke of a spirit in man, which he compared with the Spirit of God (see 1 Corinthians 2:11).

It seems strange that you should use Luke 24:38 as you have done, since it is obvious that the apostles were simply scared of what they thought was a ghost. Pointing out that spooks don't have bodies hardly seems to relate to the nature of God. Certainly, the spirit of a dead person would not have flesh and bones, because the physical body would be in the grave. But Jesus certainly did have flesh and bones. And further, it is in that state—that is, in
his resurrected body—that Paul said, "For in him [Jesus] dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9). Jesus, then, is fully God, though embodied. So why is this impossible for the Father?

You overlook the fact that we believe that man is also spirit (see D&C 93:33–34; Numbers 16:22; Romans 8:16) and yet we are, quite obviously, physical; again, why can this not also be true of God? Weren’t we created in his image and likeness?

But the real weakness with your use of John 4:24 is that it has an important parallel. That verse states, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." The statement about God is used as an argument about how we must worship him. In exactly the same way, we find in 1 John 4:16, "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." This passage is structured in exactly the same way as your lone proof text; since God is love, we have to have love also. If John 4:24 means that God is only spirit, then 1 John 4:16 must by the same token mean that God is only love.

You seem also to make the argument that God sometimes appears in physical form even though he is actually incorporeal. I have to ask—why? Is he trying to deceive his children? Your claim that "Jehovah . . . entered into a physical manifestation in Genesis 18 when He visited with Abraham, . . . but it was not a permanent situation" is one I have not heard before (p. 176). Do you have any references to support this?

I have never at any time been told or taught that Jeremiah 23:23–24 is "the ‘doctrine of the devil’" (p. 177). Clearly one of us is mistaken about what the Church of Jesus Christ teaches, and I venture to say it is not me. I have no problem with the concept that God fills heaven and earth. He fills them with his emanating power and influence, as well as with his creations. Your argument "that He himself fills heaven and earth" (p. 177) is not by any means the only possible interpretation of that passage.

Your argument about man’s inability to understand God is one that we can both use. After all, your beliefs about the nature of God seem to rely, more than you care to admit, on creeds worked out by committees of philosophers. It is one thing for truth revealed from heaven to be beyond human comprehension;
it is quite another for the results of logical deduction and argument to be incoherent. But I enthusiastically second your wish that, “Let God be true, but every man a liar” (Romans 3:4)” (p. 178). For the knowledge that I have received by personal revelation—that is, my testimony of the gospel—comes from God. Arguments about the interpretation of scripture come from men. That passage is reinforcement, if I needed it, that I need to esteem my testimony above any human argument, however compelling it may seem.

I have to confess that I have never been taught “that the Christian doctrine of God makes God an ‘ethereal nothingness’ or some kind of ‘fuzzy, nebulous force’ that no one can know” (p. 181). The Christian doctrine of God that I know is that God is in truth our Father, just as Jesus said. The uninspired creeds of men do indeed seem to make God into “an ‘ethereal nothingness’ or some kind of ‘fuzzy, nebulous force’ that no one can know,” but I find no such concepts in the scriptures.

You make an involved, intricate, and ultimately unscriptural argument from Isaiah 57:15 (see pp. 179–80). The statement that God “inhabiteth eternity” simply means that he lives forever. But what I really am interested in is the idea that God exists outside of time and that he created time.

First, there is no passage that I can find that actually says that God created time. I suspect that that is true for you as well, or you wouldn’t have to rely on Isaiah 41:4, which simply describes God “calling the generations from the beginning.” In fact, the idea of God creating time is not merely hard to understand; it is actually logically incoherent.

Consider for a moment, if you will, what we mean when we say that God creates something—anything at all. Since it doesn’t matter what, let us say “God created x” since x is the most common algebraic symbol for a variable—you can replace it with any value later. Now the formula “God created x” actually means that the following three states must exist in temporal succession:

At first, there is no x. Then God brings x into existence; after this point, x is part of the universe.

We can even express this in mathematical terms, using the symbol t to represent a point in time, thus:
At $t-1$, there is no $x$;
At $t_0$, $x$ comes into existence;
At $t+1$, $x$ is part of the universe.

Where $t_0$ is the moment when God actually creates something, $t-1$ is the last moment before it, and $t+1$ is the first moment after it. So let us plug in some values to our formula, and see if it makes sense. Let us start with a simple one: God created water. Thus we find that:

At $t-1$, there is no water;
At $t_0$, water comes into existence;
At $t+1$, water is part of the universe.

And so we could go on, with sand, bread, silicon chips, dessert (one of my favorites) or anything else you could think of. But what happens when we try to say “God created time”? We imagine that:

At $t-1$, there is no time;
At $t_0$, time comes into existence;
At $t+1$, time is in the universe.

Can you see why that fails? Without time, we can’t have a “$t_0$” or anything like it. The concepts of “before” and “after” need time to be progressing; you have to have time in order to have events in temporal succession. Therefore, the concept of time is logically prior to the possibility of creation.

If we think about it a little more, we discover something else: the idea of a “supratemporal” or “timeless” eternity is describing a state in which no events can happen, since an event of any kind must also be temporal. So, while “things” might conceptually exist in a nontemporal state, they can only always exist in it; they can neither come into existence, nor pass away, nor change in any way, since all kinds of changes are essentially temporal. Now the experts all agree that God’s omnipotence means the power to do what is logically possible. God can’t create a square circle, a married bachelor, or a rock too heavy for him to lift, because none of those things can logically exist. Likewise, he cannot cause an event that cannot happen—such as a temporal event (for example, an act of creation) in a nontemporal state. Therefore, he cannot create anything, including time, inside of a timeless eternity, as your diagram suggests.
You said that God is simultaneously aware of everything at every point on the timeline—“a continuous ‘now’” (p. 180) is how you described it. Was it “a continuous ‘now’” to God before he created time? For if time is created, there must have been a time before time existed. I don’t mean before clocks and calendars but before time actually progressed—a logical impossibility. To the left of your finite time line is the part of eternity when time did not exist. Since time did not exist, it was not progressing. So how did God get to the point when he created time? The simple fact is that the idea is not merely too big or wonderful to comprehend—it is inherently contradictory, and hence untrue.

Now I have taken this flight into the realms of airy speculation because I wanted to show that there is a difference between “I don’t understand it” and “it doesn’t make sense.” The statement that “God created time” is not merely hard to understand; it is actually incoherent, since time must exist before anything can be created.

Now we can certainly say that God’s time is different from ours, and that our time is what God has appointed; in that sense we could certainly say that God created time. But as soon as we say that time only progressed after God decreed it, and did not progress before, then we are talking complete nonsense; before and after only have meaning where time is progressing.

You go on to say, “The God of the Bible is perfect. He lacks nothing, needs nothing, is dependent upon nothing or no one. Since all else that exists does so at His command, then how could He possibly need anything?” (p. 182). This, however, raises a problem: if God needs nothing, then why does he do anything? Rational beings, we would suppose, act for rational reasons. What rational reason could God possibly have for creating the earth, or us, or anything else?

As I pointed out in answer to your fourth letter: If God is not limited in any way by his creation, then he is not dependent upon it for anything. He is not God because we worship him; we worship him because he is God. He is wholly “other”—you said so—and so he doesn’t need us for anything, right?

So why did he create us? He must have had a reason to create us, because he is rational and not capricious. But what reason could that be? He doesn’t depend on us for anything, remember?
Not even his emotional states, right? If God went to the trouble of creating us—however little trouble that might be for an omnipotent being—then he must have wanted to do so. And creating us satisfied that want. He is, therefore, happier with us around. We make him happier. Or, to put it another way, we influence his ability to be happy—we move him, if you like.

You cited Revelation 4:11, which says, in part, “thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.” Does this mean that the creation gives God pleasure? If so, then he is dependent on this creation for that pleasure.

Others have suggested to me that the creation glorifies God—and indeed, you implied the same when you said, “God is working out His will in the world even if we are not sharp enough to figure out exactly how God will be glorified in each separate event that takes place” (p. 188). Does this mean that without the events that have happened and are now happening, God would be less glorious? You may not have thought of it in those terms, but if we say that x glorifies God, then we imply that no x means less glory for him. Any way you cut it, if God truly doesn’t need us for anything, then he has no valid reason to create us, and so the creation is only evidence that he is capricious and not rational.

That is, unless we ourselves existed before this mortal life and are eternal beings. Unless he stands in relation to us as a parent to his children, rather than as a tinkerer to his hobby. Unless we have needs that he can best meet by this physical creation. Unless he is actually anxious for our eternal well-being, as a loving parent would be. Then, and only then, does the creation, as the act of a being who has no needs for himself, actually make sense.

You seem to be hinting that you agree that God is personally responsible for evil in the world. I raised this point in my earlier letter on the subject (see letter 4). You may recall that I said (on page 137),

if a rational being chooses to do something, knowing the consequences of that action, is it not logical to conclude that that being intends to bring those consequences about? This question is important, because you seem to believe that God created each one of us in a conscious, deliberate, and rational act of creation. But you also believe that God’s foreknowledge is absolute
and unchanging—he always knew what he knows now about the future. He therefore knew, at the moment he created Hitler, of the death and misery that Hitler would bring into the world. As an absolutely free being, God could have chosen not to create Hitler. And he presumably made the same choice with Stalin, Pol Pot, and other ghastly murderers. In each case his choice was rational, absolutely free, and undertaken in full and perfect foreknowledge of the consequences, but he did create them. Since he could have chosen not to, and thus prevented World War II, the Holocaust, the Gulags, and the Killing Fields, is it not logical to conclude that he caused those catastrophes to happen?

Take it one step further; we believe that Satan was once one of the premortal sons of God, but that he rebelled and was cast out. You evidently believe that God knowingly and perspicaciously created Satan—again, with full foreknowledge of the consequences. God could have chosen not to create Satan—but he did create him; as a result of that choice, there is evil in the world. Your theology leads to the inescapable conclusion that God is personally and immediately responsible, if not for individual evil acts, then for the existence of evil. It is here because God chose that it should be here.

What this really means is, since all of God's creations exist as a result of his rational, conscious decisions, made in the fullness of his absolute foreknowledge, "your God," if I may call him that, is directly and personally responsible for all of the evil in the world. I am grateful that I worship a God who is a truly moral being.

But you seem actually to feel that God is himself responsible for individual evil actions, for you say,

But while there are many who are willing to confess this kind of general sovereignty of God, few are willing to go as far as the Scriptures go in describing the control of God over one particular area—the very actions of men themselves. When the truth of God begins to
impinge upon man’s supposed freedom, men begin to rebel with intense hatred. (p. 191)

Now I don’t know anyone who would “rebel with intense hatred” against the idea that God personally controls his or her actions. Quite the contrary, that is a very comforting idea, for it absolves us of all moral responsibility. You argue that “God uses an evil people (the Assyrians) to punish His people, and . . . does so in such a just and righteous way as to be able to hold the wicked Assyrians responsible for their behavior” (p. 192). And yet, you don’t actually say how it is that he manages that; you merely assert that he does. I would say that God, knowing the hearts of men, governs the external circumstances so that his righteous purposes are worked out. But you seem to be saying that God actually caused the Assyrians to do what they did. If that is the case, how can they possibly be responsible? Don’t you see that people can only be responsible if their choices are freely made? You want to have your cake and eat it too, but you can’t. Either the Assyrians were responsible for their own actions, or they weren’t; if they were, then God could only influence them indirectly; if they were not, then they cannot be held accountable, for their evil deeds were really God’s doing.

So when you talk about how holy God is—and I agree that he is—you introduce an awful dilemma for yourself. For what can holiness possibly mean, when the being we call holy is responsible for all evil—not merely in the remote, abstract sense of having created free beings and allowed them to make wrong choices, but directly and immediately? As I said in letter 4 (on page 137):

So, is evil good? Obviously not. Is God good? I think that you would agree with me that, in a moral sense, God is good. He always and only chooses good over evil. But your theology has a free, rational, powerful, and morally good being knowingly bringing evil into existence. He could prevent evil simply by choosing to create men and women who would always exercise their free will to do good and never evil, but he chooses otherwise.
And, I would add, he could consistently use his influence to encourage his creations to choose good over evil, but, according to you, he chooses otherwise—but still holds them responsible anyway, for the choices he made for them. Is that holy? Is it even remotely just? Behold, I say unto you, nay.

Now, I don’t have a problem with your beliefs about God’s righteousness, mercy, and justice. I too believe that he possesses those qualities in full measure, so there is no need to debate those points.

I must say that, despite your occasional digs at the church, I have enjoyed this letter much more than your previous ones. A positive presentation of your own beliefs is a good thing, and I am glad to see you move in this direction. Please do not take it amiss that I have taken issue with some of your arguments. That is merely my own point of view, and you are free to believe as you wish. I just hope you remember that in God’s wisdom—and not human efforts such as philosophical argument and scriptural exegesis—the fulness of the truth is to be found.

May you gain the desire to seek that knowledge.

Your friend,

Elder Hahn
Letter 11: What Choices?

Dear Mr. White,

As I mentioned to you during our first meeting and in my previous letter, my name is Elder Hahn. That is what my friends call me. Even my family calls me that while I’m on my mission. I believe that it is a fairly reasonable request that I make for you to call me Elder.

Thank you for your mercifully brief letter. Thank you also for attempting to address my questions relating to the relationship between God and evil acts. But, if I may say so, you haven’t fully clarified what you meant by your statement that God causes specific events to happen. You describe the crucifixion as a terrible crime and go on to say, “God used those sinful men (who certainly did not have pure motives for what they did) to accomplish His will” (p. 198). But the issue you don’t address is—did they have a choice in the matter? Could they have chosen not to crucify the Lord? If they had so chosen, wouldn’t that have defeated God’s plan?

You go on further to say:

The men who acted did so voluntarily. God did not have to “force them” to do what was evil. Their intentions, from the start, were evil. But God’s intentions in the same act were pure and holy. While God eternally predestined this action which involved human guilt and sin, he did so for the holiest and purest reasons. (p. 199)

While I agree that the reasons were holy and pure, the question remains: how responsible were those men for their actions? If God had “eternally predestined” that those men would crucify the Savior, what choice did they really have in the matter?

You might respond that they simply acted out of their own evil wills. But were their wills not what God created them to be? Is a being whose choices are “eternally predestined” by being created with a particularly evil nature truly responsible for those choices? How can people be held accountable for their actions if
they are “made” in such a way that they are not able to choose anything else?

And I don’t think you have thought the question of consequences all the way through, either. Yes, the crucifixion was a very sinful act, and yes it did immeasurable good. But why did it do good? Because it was the means of redeeming fallen mankind. Redeemed from what? From sin and the consequences of sin. And where did that sin come from? From the choices of men and women upon the earth. So again we are back to the issue—why do we make wrong choices? If we are mere creations, why didn’t God choose to create us truly good? Was it beyond his power to do so? Why create us sinful? Would it bring less glory to God to create all righteous people and save all of them than to create all sinful people and save only some of them?

Even though you have explained that you don’t see God forcing people to make wrong choices, the consequence of your theology is still that God is responsible for all the evil in the world. To argue that he allows it to happen because it brings about things that add more glory to him in the long run has two problems: First, if God is all-powerful, doesn’t he have enough power to accomplish his purposes by doing only good? And second, you are essentially arguing that the end justifies the means; God’s holiness thus consists of his being a pragmatist who is right all of the time. I’m sorry, but that is not very holy, or even moral.

Anyway, we can move on from this topic now, I think. I can see where we agree and where we disagree. Actually if you would stop telling me what I believe, you would find that we don’t disagree on nearly as many points as you think we do. For, although you are convinced that “we have already seen that the LDS concept of God is so far removed from the biblical one that the two cannot possibly have their origin in the same Being” (p. 200), the fact remains that, on the one hand, you have seriously misunderstood the LDS concept of God, and on the other hand, you have not convinced me that your theology is strictly biblical either.

In fact, I cannot help pointing out that you made that statement to preempt the use of latter-day revelation to clarify some of these questions, since you admitted “that ‘latter-day revelation’ addresses the issue of why things are the way they are” (p. 200). In other words, you are using your arguments about the nature of
God to avoid having to deal with what God has revealed in our
day. Well, that’s up to you.

I appreciate your attempts to explain your views about God’s
changing his mind. However, I don’t believe that your explana-
tion is truly adequate. Consider Deuteronomy 9:19–20, wherein
Moses says:

For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure,
wherewith the Lord was wroth against you to destroy
you. But the Lord hearkened unto me at that time also.
And the Lord was very angry with Aaron to have
destroyed him: and I prayed for Aaron also the same
time. (emphasis added)

Your explanation seems to be that the Lord is just “talking
down” to us, as parents do to children. Very well, but what has
changed? If this passage means anything, then Moses certainly
believed that he had prevailed upon the Lord to change his mind.
Are you telling me that your own personal wisdom is greater than
that of Moses, at the very end of his life? Or are you in fact saying
that the scriptures are only the second to last court of appeal and
that your own knowledge is the final one?

I’m sure it is flattering to human vanity that we should imag-
ine ourselves so much smarter and more sophisticated than those
simple shepherds that we can see the eternal verities better than
they could, but I wonder if that’s really a very edifying or even
useful way to view the men that stood in God’s presence. The fact
is that you are clearly placing your judgment ahead of what the
scriptures plainly say. Don’t you think it would be better to place
the scriptures ahead of your own opinions?

In any event, I am happy to move on.

May the Lord bless you with a desire to seek his will.

Your friend,

Elder Hahn
Letter 12: So Now We Know

Dear Mr. White,

As I mentioned to you during our first meeting, and in my previous letters, my name is Elder Hahn. Please address me as Elder.

Now I think you have misunderstood something I said. I am more than happy to hear your beliefs about the Savior, Jesus Christ. But I didn’t ask you to “compare and contrast [your] belief with the Mormon perspective” (p. 205); since I already understand the “Mormon perspective,” I am quite capable of doing the comparing and contrasting. I can’t imagine any missionary—or indeed any reasonably well-informed Latter-day Saint—asking you to do that. I have consistently requested that you let me teach LDS doctrine. I renew that request.

And I see that, yet again, you are falling into the same errors that have pervaded your previous letters. You are relying upon The Seer, a publication that was denounced by the First Presidency and repudiated by Orson Pratt, its editor. Why do you keep using it when I have already pointed this out to you?

And so I see that you are also trotting out the usual anti-Mormon chestnuts (see pp. 206, 209, 215). “Mormons worship a different Jesus” (concerned murmurs from the audience), “Mormons believe Jesus and Lucifer are brothers” (shock, horror), and “Mormons think God had SEX with Mary” (gasps of delighted disgust). So I am going to give these stock standard accusations only brief comments. Brief comments are all they deserve. But before I do comment on them, I am going to ask you that if you wish our correspondence to continue, then you will please raise the tone of your letters.

The “different Jesus” argument is a very weak one. I mentioned to you earlier about the great retreat my aunt describes in the anti-Mormon position. The different Jesus argument is part of that retreat, since for years the standard accusations—still heard today, by the way—were that we didn’t believe in Jesus at all, or that we placed Joseph Smith ahead of him. Both of these accusations are false and untenable. The different Jesus argument, although equally false, can be argued from differing interpreta-
tions of scripture; so it made a convenient fall-back position. The only really different things we believe about Jesus have to do with his postresurrection activity. All the rest is just a matter of interpretation.

We believe in Jesus who created all things (see John 1:1–3; Moses 1:32–33); who was and is the divine son of God the Father (see Matthew 3:17; 16:16; Luke 1:32, 35; John 1:14, 18, among a great many others); and who was born of Mary in Bethlehem, taught the gospel, performed many miracles, was betrayed by Judas, was tried by the Jews and Pilate, and was crucified and rose the third day, as recorded in the scriptures. If all of this is not enough to identify clearly which Jesus we believe in, then nothing would be. In reality our Jesus is only different from your Jesus in matters of hair-splitting theological definitions of the kind that were introduced into the church by ancient philosophers with pagan backgrounds.

There is an illustration I sometimes use when confronted with this silly argument: suppose Jesus were to return to the earth tomorrow. Suppose further that he held a press conference to announce the beginning of his kingly reign. (Yes, I know that’s rather hard to imagine, but please bear with me.) And so he announces that he has come to reign on earth for a thousand years and then opens the floor for questions. A bold reporter sticks up his hand and asks, “Er, Lord, are we your spirit brothers and sisters?”

Imagine, then, what the consequences of his answer will be. If he says “no,” will the Mormons in the room say, “Well, in that case we’ll just wait for our Jesus to show up”? I don’t think so. And if he says “yes,” will the conservative Protestants say, “Well, in that case we’ll just wait for our Jesus to show up”? That hardly seems likely. There’s only one Jesus. Sure, we can’t both be right on every point about him, since we don’t agree on every one, but he is still the same Jesus, regardless of which one of us has got all the right pieces of the puzzle.

The “Jesus and Lucifer are brothers” argument is equally weak. Oh, by the way, I know of no Latter-day Saints who are unaware of our teachings about the premortal existence, so your shocked and incredulous Mormons aren’t anyone I’ve ever met. The fact remains that Jesus is the Son of God, according to a
whole raft of scriptures. And Satan is also one of the sons of God, according to Job 1:6 and 2:1. (It is interesting, isn’t it, that in both passages it’s the sons of God presenting themselves to the Lord; there are never any sons of Jehovah mentioned.)

But it’s time for another illustration. I have a moderately large family, but I’m quite certain I don’t have a sister named Sally. Now suppose when I return home I find that I have a new sister, named Sally, who was born or adopted into the family—and nobody told me. Would that make me a different person? All along I thought I was Elder Hahn—and now, because I’ve got this sister, does this mean I’m not the same person any more?

Can you see how inexpressibly silly that is? I am who I am, no matter to whom I am related. And, by the same token, Jesus is Jesus, and Lucifer is Lucifer. And of the two, Jesus is the fixed point. If it turns out that Lucifer is not truly a son of God, then we would have been wrong to believe the testimony of the scriptures, and you would have been right to reject that testimony—but it would have nothing to do with who Jesus really is.

And, just by the way, since we are guilty of believing the Bible on this point, while you are rejecting it, just what did you say is your ultimate source of doctrinal knowledge?

And now for the issue of the conception of Christ. First, I will just point out that your disgust and horror at all things sexual is not biblical; it is Augustinian. It was Augustine who taught Catholics and Protestants alike to be ashamed of the process which God decreed for the perpetuation of the human race. The Bible has no such hang-ups.

Second, I would point out that, whatever our differences of opinion may be on this subject, I regard it as one of the three or maybe four most sacred events in all of history. I therefore treat it with great reverence. And I question whether it is that sacred to you, since you seem happy to use it so cheaply just to score a point.

Having said that, after all of your many references from extra-canonical works—not one of which mentions sexual intercourse as the means by which Jesus was conceived—you insist that we believe that sexual intercourse was the means by which Jesus was conceived. Well, that is your conclusion. But what do the non-canonical references you quote actually say? The closest thing to
an official source is the excerpt from the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*—which was in fact citing James E. Talmage, whom you had already quoted. What are you trying to do here? Prove your case by repeated assertion? Anyway, this is how you quoted the encyclopedia, which quotes Talmage: “It is LDS doctrine that Jesus Christ is the child of Mary and God the Father, ‘not in violation of natural law but in accordance with a higher manifestation thereof.’” Knowing LDS doctrine, I of course knew that already. But I will now explain something to you that you clearly do not know.

In my Bible Dictionary, under the heading “Miracles,” we find the following statement:

Miracles should *not* be regarded as deviations from the ordinary course of nature so much as manifestations of divine or spiritual power. Some *lower* law was in each case superseded by the action of a *higher*. (emphasis added)

You see, it is the doctrine of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints that all miracles—note that, *all* miracles—are “not in violation of natural law but in accordance with a higher manifestation thereof.” That is, we don’t know how they happen, but the fact that Jesus changed water into wine was a higher manifestation of natural law, not a violation of it. The same with feeding the five thousand, walking on the water, calming the storm, healing many, even raising the dead—all were higher manifestations of natural laws that are presently beyond our comprehension. So when Talmage, McConkie, or anyone else says that the conception of Jesus happened “not in violation of natural law but in accordance with a higher manifestation thereof,” he is describing it in terms that we *always* use when speaking of miracles.

Now it seems obvious to me that a higher manifestation of natural law means something significantly *different* than a usual manifestation. The usual way that a child is conceived is by sexual intercourse. We wouldn’t need a “higher manifestation” of the laws of genetics if Jesus were conceived in the ordinary way, would we? Somehow—and none of us claims to know how—the Father introduced his genetic material into the body of Mary. And since both male and female DNA were present, this was *ipso facto*
an instance of sexual reproduction, as scientists define the term. So you don’t need to indulge in any prurient little speculations beyond that. When you say that “they [i.e., various General Authorities and others] are teaching that Elohim, God the Father, had sexual intercourse with Mary, resulting in her pregnancy and the birth of Jesus Christ” (p. 215), you are presenting your own conclusions. That is what their words suggest to your mind. I’m sorry, but you are not an authority on the doctrines of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Your conclusions are not binding on me or anyone else. You can entertain them if they entertain you—I suppose some people might find them entertaining—but I don’t accept them.

Another conclusion that I reject in this case is your claim that “In Mormonism all you can say is that she [i.e., Mary] was a virgin at the time of conception” (p. 215). Actually, in Mormonism, we say that Mary was a virgin at the time of the birth of Jesus. That is what we say, because that is what we believe. You can deny that fact until you are blue in the face, but it won’t change anything.

I see no need to rehash the issue of “polytheism”—we have been over that ground already, except to say that you do not understand Latter-day Saint thought on the subject. Jesus is God. But Jesus is not his own Father. Therefore the Father is someone else—someone who is also God. That is our doctrine. If that is polytheism, then the New Testament is polytheistic.

You also claim, at the end of a rather long argument about Christ’s creative activity, that “if Christ were the Creator of all things, then He would be the only true and eternal God. That is what the Bible teaches, but it is not what the LDS Church teaches” (p. 219).

The Bible teaches that Jesus is “the only true and eternal God?” Really? Then what about his Father—the one whose voice was heard from heaven on occasions when Jesus was present (see Matthew 3:16–17; 17:5; Mark 1:10–11; 9:7; Luke 3:22; 9:34–35) and who Jesus himself said was “greater than” him (John 14:28)? Doesn’t he count?

The fact is, as I mentioned previously, that we certainly do accept that Jesus is the creator of all things—read again Moses 1:31–39 for the fullest exposition of this doctrine.
Which brings me to the last point I wish to make. I apologize if my tone has been somewhat brusque, but many people would legitimately feel that a letter like yours would deserve no reply at all. At one part of your letter you said:

I was caught utterly flat-footed one day outside of the west gate of the LDS temple in Salt Lake during the General Conference. A tall man, about fifty years of age, came striding across West Temple Drive. I could tell he was in a hurry, but in my best tracting style I offered him a gospel tract. (p. 215)

I am forced to wonder—just what did you think you were doing handing out tracts outside Temple Square during conference? Please understand—I have no problem with the idea that you or anyone else might want to try to proselyte us; proselyting is the prerogative of all believers of every stripe. If you believe that you are following Christ, then you cannot ignore the injunction of Mark 16:15, which says, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”

The problem I do have is twofold: first, selective, targeted proselyting is predatory in nature. It actually disobey's that injunction, because instead of preaching the gospel to every creature, you are preaching only to those who hold specific beliefs of which you disapprove.

Our message is the same for all: Jew and gentile, Christian and Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, agnostic, atheist, and pagan. Except where legal or other constraints are placed on us by others, we simply invite all to come unto Christ. We do not carry an arsenal of pamphlets tearing down the specific beliefs of others, for that is not our mission. We are not “anti” anybody, just as Jesus and Paul and Alma weren’t “anti” anybody. We simply share the good news of the restored gospel.

The second problem is that, by waylaying the Saints on their way to conference, you are interfering with our right to worship the Lord without being molested. I know that you would resent anyone targeting Baptists in like manner. Let me share an experience with you.

In my last area, we met a really sweet widow. She was Baptist and as kind-hearted as anyone you could hope to meet. She was
very receptive to the gospel, too. Well, we gave her the first five discussions. She was reading the Book of Mormon, and each time we visited her she would tell us what she had read and how much she had enjoyed it. She was looking forward to being baptized, but then one day we came by and she looked really unhappy. "I'm sorry, Elders," she said. "You are such nice young boys, but I can't be baptized. My pastor said that if I join your church, I'll burn in hell, and none of my Baptist friends will ever speak to me again. I've really enjoyed our talks, and I'll keep reading the Book of Mormon."

Well, naturally we couldn't let it go at that. We asked her to arrange a meeting with her pastor in her home. The pastor showed up with The God Makers book and some other pamphlets from the "Ex-Mormons for Jesus" outfit. I said to him, "What do you know about those guys?" He said, "They are sincere Christians who reach out in love to their Mormon neighbors." I told him, "Those sincere Christians picket temple open houses. If someone were to picket your Baptist church, would you think they were sincere Christians?" The pastor turned red and started to splutter, but the lady said, "I wouldn't want anything to do with people like that!" The pastor tried to say that it was "different," but she asked him to go. She said, "I know what a real Christian is, and I'm getting baptized at the Second Ward chapel a week from Saturday!"

Well, he cursed us in the name of God and left. She was baptized, sure enough. Some of her Baptist friends did stop talking to her, but not all of them did, and she made new friends in the Second Ward.

The point of the story is that, just like that lady, I know a real Christian when I see one, and I will never see one distributing negative literature at an LDS place of worship; just like you will never see one distributing negative literature at a Baptist place of worship. That's just not something real Christians do.

You've read the Bible, and I presume not just the parts that support your interpretations. I'm sure you've read Acts 19. So tell me: can you visualize Paul and his companions outside a Temple of Diana, handing out pamphlets entitled, "Why Diana-Worshipers Will Burn in Hell"? Or is it much easier to visualize Demetrius the silversmith handing out anti-Christian pamphlets at
a Christian meeting place? I know which seems more realistic in
my mind.

Well, it is now time for me to close. I have met a number of
people who were more or less antagonistic to the church. You are
the first actively proselyting anti-Mormon I have met. I’m sorry
that you were not what you pretended to be.

I hope that you will seriously consider your actions. If you
truly believe that you are in God’s service, then you must believe
that he does not need deceitful and manipulative misrepresenta-
tion on his behalf. I hope you will not let yourself be blinded any
longer by the anti-Mormon propaganda that you are spreading.

May the Good Lord be merciful and forgive you for oppos-
ing his kingdom.

Your friend,

Elder Hahn
Letter 12A: From the Mission President

Dear Mr. White,

First, let me introduce myself. My name is A. Thad Marvin, and I am the mission president for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in this mission. I am writing to you because I have become aware that you have been corresponding with a number of missionaries here. The four elders and one sister missionary have shown me the letters you have sent them. I notice that apart from the salutations and small talk those letters are essentially identical to each other. Despite their friendly tone, I have no hesitation in regarding them as anti-Mormon in their content.

Our missionaries are sent forth as lambs among wolves (see Luke 10:3). They have little experience of the world and its dangers, and they do not know the kinds of people they can meet. My role is to oversee them and to teach them how to avoid the perils that the adversary will cast around them.

All but one of the missionaries indicated that you asked to meet with them privately, without their companions present. You did this after they explained to you that the mission rules require them to stay with their companions at all times. If you knew what the mission rules were, why did you try to get the missionaries to break them? They all know that a true friend will respect their standards and not try to persuade them to do something they are not comfortable with. I'm sure that is what your church tells its Protestant youth. And by this, the missionaries now know that you are not truly their friend.

I notice from your letters that you use a familiar ploy in trying to persuade them to meet with you alone. "If you *really* believe that you are doing God's will, you will come and talk to me" (p. 171) ran the argument in one of your letters. That is familiar, because someone else used the same argument once: "*If* thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread" (Matthew 4:3). Just like that tempter, you are trying to challenge the missionaries' testimonies, so that they will feel like they have to do what you say in order to prove something to you.
If you are in any doubt as to what conclusions I draw from this, please read John 8:44.

I am aware of the activities of certain kinds of organizations popularly called “cults”; by that term I do not mean every religion I disagree with, as some do. I refer to those that target young people and separate them from their families and their support structures. My missionaries are away from their homes and families; their support structure largely consists of their companions and their leaders, including myself. So when I see you trying to separate missionaries from their companions, I wonder what you might be trying to achieve. Do you think they will be more vulnerable alone? Do you think that if you persuade them to do something contrary to the mission rules they will be unable to report it to me? Do you hope to weaken the channels of communication that protect them from predatory individuals?

You project a very nice fleecy coat, Mr. White. But I can see the wolf hair underneath.

For these reasons, and for others, which I will not go into in this letter, I would ask you now to refrain from making further contact with the missionaries. I am also placing your name and address on a list of people whom the missionaries are not to contact. This list includes people who have physically threatened the missionaries or made overt advances toward them.

If you wish to have debates by mail with someone, I can refer you to people who are well qualified to deal with your claims and arguments. But, considering your level of education, I feel that you may look upon our young missionaries as soft targets. Perhaps you should pick on someone your own size in terms of educational attainments.

Elder Hahn, with whom you have exchanged the largest number of letters, has been transferred to another area of service. This is the normal practice after a missionary has served in an area for a number of months. He and I have discussed the matter and have agreed that, should you continue to write to him, your correspondence will not be forwarded to him. We will retain it at the mission home and give it to him at the time of his release, if he so desires.

In closing, I would like to ask you to not harass any of our missionaries any further. They are not here to provide idle amusement for you, but to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ.
They are sent forth to "testify and warn the people"; their calling is not to be taught, but to teach. After they return home they are entirely at liberty to learn all they wish about whatever other churches they so desire, but during their missions they need to remain focused on their high and holy calling.

Yours faithfully,

A. Thad Marvin
Letter 12B: Elder Hahn Returns

Dear James,

I am writing this to let you know that I have completed my mission and returned home. After being transferred from the area where we met, I served in three other areas. I want to tell you that having to deal with your arguments and objections was truly a growing experience for me. The additional prayer and study I had to do helped to strengthen my faith greatly and made me a far more effective missionary.

I have known some elders whose first meeting with an anti-Mormon shook them up some. That wasn’t the case for me; your letters advance much the same arguments as other anti-Mormon literature does, but they do not carry the same kind of malice. It did shake me up a little when I found that you had written very similar letters to a number of other missionaries; that made it seem as though you were following some kind of formula. But what shook me up more than anything else was learning, from your twelfth letter, that you were an actively proselyting anti-Mormon.

I can’t pretend that you did no harm at all. You distracted me when I was about the Lord’s errand. I should have had the wisdom to say to you, as Nehemiah did to Sanballat and Geshem the Arabian: “I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down; why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?” (Nehemiah 6:3). And when you gave me all the anti-Mormon stuff you dredged up, I should have responded, “There are no such things done as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thine own heart” (v. 8).

Just one more thing before I finish: my mission president showed me the letter you sent him, and a copy of the letter he sent you. It was a little bit funny, but a lot more sad.

I have to disagree with one thing my mission president wrote. He said that because of your level of education, you should really find a similarly educated Latter-day Saint to debate with. I think he put it something like “pick on somebody your own size.” I disagree. I think that, at the middle of my mission, I was your size. I had half a computing degree and fifteen months of missionary experience; with a little help from my relatives, I could hold my
own against your several degrees and five languages. It isn't hard to tell which side the truth is really on, is it?

James, you led me to believe you were my friend. You weren’t. I have many friends who are not members of the church; I have no friends who are actively opposed to the church, or who make a career out of attacking my beliefs. That’s not what real friends do.

But I will pray for you anyway.

When I was released, my mission president gave me the letters you sent to me after I was transferred. It really shouldn’t be necessary to tell you that they were handed to me unopened, having not been tampered with in any way. I have decided to answer the rest of them, in order to bring some closure to this matter.

Therefore, my reply to your thirteenth letter is enclosed. I will reply to the other four over the next four weeks. I don’t know if you will read my replies, or even if you are interested in what I have to say. Reading over your letters again, they seem to be little more than pamphlets with a salutation at the top and a signature at the bottom. But I feel that they need to be answered—and you need to be answered, if only to leave you without excuse.

Yours truly,

Steve Hahn
Dear James,

I must say that, once again, you have shown the most amazing ability to completely fail to see the obvious. You quote Job 38:1–7 and insist that the questions God is putting to Job are rhetorical. Then you come out with this sweeping statement: “So when God asked Job where he was when ‘the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy’ Job had no answer because he wasn’t there!” (p. 224).

That exclamation point seems like an attempt to carry the argument by force, since the glaringly obvious fact that you are missing is that if Job really wasn’t there, the question would be trivially easy to answer. Actually, the easy and naturalistic assumption to make is that we come into existence at the moment of conception, or birth, or sometime in between; if God’s questions to Job are actually hard questions, then the answers must not be accessible by making easy and naturalistic assumptions.

You have taken it upon yourself to warn me “about ‘importing’ human concepts into [my] understanding of God, such as understanding ‘person’ in human terms” (p. 225). Yet you have failed entirely to provide a satisfactory alternative meaning for that word. The same goes for being. Your analogy that “rocks have being, but they are not personal” (p. 225) is not at all useful. A rock is an inanimate object; if you split it in half, you have two rocks. What then, are there now two rock “beings”? Or do all rocks share one gigantic “metabeing”—the ultimate essence of all “rockness”? Or are you, in this case, simply using the word being as a way of saying that the thing exists? The rock “is,” therefore it is being a rock, therefore it is a rock being. Is that what you had in mind? If it is, then you have equivocated, since we clearly mean something else when we speak of a living being—such as a cat or a man, or God or God’s son. Your argument that “There is one being of God, eternal and infinite, yet there are three Persons who share that one being” (p. 225) is something you have asserted a number of times, but you have merely asserted; not one of the scriptural passages you have cited
in support of your notion has come anywhere near substantiating that.

But the subtitle of your letter is “The Atonement of the Lord Jesus,” so I would like to focus on that. And I find that, in your now well-established style, you have chosen first to attack and undermine our beliefs before coming around to your own. I think I know why you do that, too.

I must say that you have worked mighty hard to minimize the importance of grace in Latter-day Saint thought. You have picked and chosen your sources—mostly noncanonical—very carefully to attain this end. Therefore let me begin by redressing the imbalance. I refer to Doctrine and Covenants 45:3–5. These are the words of Christ:

Listen to him who is the advocate with the Father, who is pleading your cause before him—

Saying: Father, behold the sufferings and death of him who did no sin, in whom thou wast well pleased; behold, the blood of thy Son which was shed, the blood of him whom thou gavest that thyself might be glorified;

Wherefore, Father, spare these my brethren that believe on my name, that they may come unto me and have everlasting life.

Note that there is no mention at all of our merits or goodness; the blood of Christ is all that we have in our favor. The Savior’s only argument in our behalf is his sacrifice, and nothing else.

I don’t see the sense of your argument about the atonement. Blood that was forced from the Savior’s pores was certainly shed, and I fail to see why you presume it was not.

You have used Elder Packer’s talk, “The Mediator,” somewhat more responsibly than others have. But you assume too much. We do not “somehow continue to owe the debt of sin even after our ‘salvation’” (p. 227). That was the whole point of Elder Packer’s parable; the original debt was paid in full. We owe a new debt to him who freely gave his sinless life for us. Gratitude demands it even if nothing else does. And the glorious truth is that the Savior does not ask that we repay him by doing anything that benefits him; he asks us only to do those things that, as Elder
Packer goes on to point out, benefit us and those around us. Consider for a moment the fact that Jesus gave his very life for us; all he asks in return is that we live in such a way as to make that sacrifice meaningful in our lives. It would seem a dreadfully unthankful faith that answered “no” to that request. And indeed, Paul taught that the atonement was conditional, when he said that Jesus “became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Hebrews 5:9, emphasis added).

Your arguments about “blood atonement” are not very original. My brother has over 150 anti-Mormon books in his library that say the exact same things that you do. I should have expected that you would trot out this wizened old chestnut. Actually, I am being unfair. You did make one original contribution when you claimed that typing the quotations sickened you. Well, if typing the words of the latter-day prophets sickens you, let me prescribe a remedy: stop typing them.

I looked up “Blood Atonement” in my Topical Guide, and all it says is “see Jesus Christ, Atonement through.” Not being satisfied with this, I looked for some more references. See what I found:

He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints. (Revelation 13:10)

Now while this is worded as a general principle, it does seem to be specifically applied to a particular person, who is represented as the beast from the sea. So I look further still, and find this:

But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. (Matthew 18:6)

Wow, that’s gruesome. Did it sicken you to read it, James? Or is it all right for Jesus to say sickening things, but not his servants?

Actually the teachings of President Young can be quite simply understood in the light of the legal practice of capital punishment—a perfectly biblical notion. Brother Brigham was arguing two things: first, that capital offenders ought to voluntarily accept
their punishment, and second, that that punishment was ultimately beneficial for them. I would also suggest that he was putting a little hellfire into his sermons—and that to an audience who didn’t believe in a literal burning hell.

It is clear, though, that the part you really object to is the idea that our own blood can save us from something that the Savior’s blood cannot. Since you have been unable to find that in any canonical source—that is, in any document accepted by the Saints as binding—I’m sure I don’t have to labor the point: such is not our doctrine. But you might consider that, to one who believes in a loving God, as Brigham did and the Latter-day Saints do, there often exists a need to understand divine sanctions that seem harsh—like capital punishment—as being compatible with God’s love and not counterexamples thereof. Thus the idea that a capital offender who voluntarily offers himself for punishment is making a sincere attempt to repent and is thus placing himself in the way of God’s grace actually emerges as quite an enlightened one, and not at all barbarous or “sickening.” Except, of course, to those determined to find fault.

But it is also clear from the scriptures that there are some sins for which there is no forgiveness. Consider the following passage, which you yourself cited:

Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.

And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come. (Matthew 12:31–32; see Mark 3:28, 29; Luke 12:10)

You tried to explain away this very passage by a quite extraordinary argument. You claimed that while the blood of Christ still could atone for the sin the Savior describes, in fact it won’t because the person who commits it can no longer repent. Your actual words were:
The . . . unpardonable sin is not one that by its
gross severity is beyond the reach of the atonement of
Christ—it is unforgivable because of the position it
places the sinner in, one from which he cannot, and will
not, ever cry for forgiveness. (p. 239)

There are two vast problems with this argument. First, it is
logically absurd to argue that Christ’s atonement has power to
save a class of sinners whom it actually and always fails to save.
Your claim was that “there is no sin that is beyond the atoning
blood of Christ, no sin so heinous, so evil, that the blood of Christ
is insufficient to bring about forgiveness.” But you have also ad-
mitted that the blood of Christ never will save those who commit
the unpardonable sin. This is equivalent to a mother arguing with
a school principal that her son deserves an A on a test because
even though he didn’t answer any of the questions correctly, he
nevertheless could have—he just didn’t want to. The proof of the
child’s knowledge was in the performance, and by the same token,
the proof of the power of the atonement is actually in whom it can
really save—not whom it could theoretically save.

Second, the above quotation flatly contradicts your belief that
salvation is unconditional. I refer to your statements that say:

The death of Jesus Christ on the cross accomplished atonement. We agree on that. But what does
atonement mean? How are we to understand this?
Briefly, the Bible uses a number of terms to describe
the effect of the death of Christ. Some of these terms
include forgiveness, righteousness (or justification), re-
demption, reconciliation, and propitiation. It teaches
that these things flow necessarily and surely from the
work of Christ. What do I mean by this? I mean that the
death of Christ actually accomplishes the forgiveness,
justification, redemption, and reconciliation of those
for whom it is made, without any outside considera-
tions. The death of Christ is not “incomplete” without
the addition of “other works” such as your own acts
of obedience. The sacrifice of Christ is not dependent
upon Steve Hahn or James White for its effectiveness.
(p. 232)
And later in your letter, you said, “All those for whom Christ died are by that action saved, and cannot possibly fail of receiving eternal life” (pp. 239–40).

In simple terms, according to you, Christ died to save a specific group of people. Those people are thereby and therefore saved, and that is the end of the matter. Their salvation is not in any way dependent on anything that they might do or leave undone. If this belief is true, then all those who have been elected to be saved will be, whether or not they ever “cry for forgiveness” (p. 239). Thus it wouldn’t matter if they committed the unpardonable sin and became incapable of repenting, because they don’t need to repent—they’ll be saved anyway.

But, if your argument about the “reformed view” is correct, those who are not of that elect group won’t be saved no matter what sins they do or don’t commit, or how much they try to repent. Thus your doctrine flatly contradicts the Savior’s teaching, since on the one hand those whom he has decided to save will certainly be forgiven the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, while on the other hand those whom he has not decided to save won’t ever be forgiven of any sin or blasphemy, however trivial. Clearly, the gospel of James White is not the gospel of Jesus Christ.

But to move along: not only do you simply misunderstand the Latter-day Saint doctrine of the atonement, and not only do you hold contradictory and inconsistent ideas of your own about the atonement, but you have also completely misunderstood the doctrine of the priesthood.

First, you make the completely erroneous claim that “we have seen already, of course, that Joseph did not claim to hold the priesthood until after the founding of the Church in 1830” (p. 243). In fact “we have seen” nothing of the sort. I have gone back over your letters and cannot even find where you have proved that claim. All I can find is the assertion that “As David Whitmer pointed out clearly in his book An Address to All Believers in Christ, Smith had developed the concept of the ‘priesthood’ after the founding of the Church in 1830” (p. 126).

Perhaps nobody ever told you, but assertion is not proof. And in fact Whitmer at that time, an embittered apostate with an ax to grind, did not claim that Joseph Smith “had developed the concept of the ‘priesthood’ after the founding of the Church in
1830.” He actually claimed that Joseph had introduced what Whitmer called “the error of high priests” (Whitmer, Address, 49); in his view the church was authorized to have only elders, priests, and teachers, because of his erroneous belief that “the Church of Christ of old had in it only” those offices (ibid., 60). But note this—he was quite convinced that those priesthood offices were legitimate.

Apart from Whitmer, the only evidence you ever cite was to show that the current version of Doctrine and Covenants 27 is not the same as the first published version in 1833. And yet that first version certainly did mention the priesthood, as did a number of other revelations.

But don’t just take Joseph’s word for it. The October 1834 edition of the Messenger and Advocate published a letter from Oliver Cowdery wherein he related some of his own experiences while assisting with the translation of the Book of Mormon—including being ordained to the priesthood by the resurrected John the Baptist. This letter is reprinted on pages 58 and 59 of the Pearl of Great Price. I invite you to study it at your leisure. Oliver Cowdery, although at one time excommunicated from the church, always maintained the reality of these experiences and ultimately returned to the church at the end of his life. And his testimony utterly destroys your borrowed “theory of evolution.”

You contradict yourself all over the place in this letter. For example, you correctly point out that the law of Moses is no longer in force, but you quite inconsistently demand that ordination to the Aaronic Priesthood must follow the Mosaic pattern, set down in Leviticus. Why should this be the case? The priests of the line of Aaron held the priesthood by right; we receive it by ordination, under the direction of the Melchizedek Priesthood, which, as Hebrews 7 plainly points out, is the higher of the two. And in any event, Hebrews 7:12 explicitly states that the Aaronic Priesthood has changed; why then, do you insist that it must be the same?

You also claim that “Jesus Christ is our only high priest, and anyone claiming to be a ‘high priest’ is usurping His position, Hebrews 7:26–28” (p. 245). (I do not see why you feel a need to put single quotation marks around every Latter-day Saint term, such as high priest and priesthood. That seems rather gratuitous and insulting to me.) In any event, I have read Hebrews 7:26–28
very carefully, and it absolutely does not say that “anyone claiming to be a ‘high priest’ is usurping His position.” That is eisegesis of your own.

The same goes for your idea that “the work of Christ on the cross” somehow disposes of the Aaronic Priesthood (p. 246). I believe that you are simply arguing from self-interest here; since your church does not have the priesthood, you can’t afford for it to be important, because for you it is lost beyond recovery.

In the middle of your misrepresentations of our teachings on the atonement you slipped in the following statement:

The concept that there could possibly be any more sacrifices by the ‘priesthood’ is so far removed from biblical teaching (note the entire argument of the book of Hebrews), and so foreign to the Christian mind, that it is difficult to fully grasp what I have just presented above. (p. 232)

This was in reference to a statement that the day will come when the sons of Levi will offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness. I don’t mind at all that you disagree with it—that is certainly your prerogative, but is it truly that difficult an idea to grasp? Or are you protesting too much? Surely your imagination is up to visualizing that.

Perhaps you do not realize that the statement you quoted (from History of the Church, 4:211) is followed only two sentences later by a statement explicitly clarifying that the law of Moses would not be restored.

Your arguments about the Melchizedek Priesthood are sinking. I expected you to trot out the old evangelical standby that “unchangeable” in Hebrews 7:24 really means “intransmissible.” And yet the whole argument of Hebrews 7 is a contrast between the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods; note that the Aaronic Priesthood was now changed (v. 12) but the Melchizedek Priesthood is unchangeable. That’s the clear contrast. Arguing, as you do, that the Aaronic Priesthood was ended and the Melchizedek Priesthood is intransmissible is not at all meaningful.

Furthermore, when you assert (without support) that “no one but Melchizedek and Christ has ever held” (p. 246) that priesthood, you fail entirely to notice that there were, in fact, others who
held the priesthood but who were not descendants of Aaron. Among these were Jethro (see Exodus 3:1) and King David (see 2 Samuel 6:14, 17–18). Since Jethro in particular was already a priest before the Lord spoke to Moses, what priesthood did he hold? Not Aaron’s. Are you proposing another order of the priesthood that nobody knows about?

And what of the apostles? We know that they did not offer sacrifices. But they did have a vital authority in spiritual matters. We read:

Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:

Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:

(For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)

Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. (Acts 8:15–19)

Now there are a number of notable things about this passage. First, the Holy Ghost did not fall upon the new converts until after they had had the apostles’ hands laid on them. Second, the apostles had to come in person to perform the ordinance—they couldn’t do it long distance. This is clearly an important ordinance, and at that period in the church, only the apostles had the authority to perform it. Philip, though a mighty missionary who was on the spot and had authority to baptize, couldn’t do it.

So the question is—what do we call this authority the apostles held? This authority to perform ordinances that could call down the powers of heaven? Please explain just why we should refuse to accept the obvious answer—that it was the priesthood, specifically the Melchizedek Priesthood.

Yours truly,

Steve Hahn
Letter 14: Salvation . . .

Dear James,

Your letter on salvation has made for interesting reading. Were it not for the somewhat barbed and pointed remarks you keep making about the doctrines of the Church of Jesus Christ, I could probably let it go by with a simple acknowledgment that I had read it and that I appreciated knowing what you believe. But it is you who has made our correspondence into a contest of the rival doctrines, and so you cannot complain that I respond in kind.

First, the bulk of your letter is made up of seven passages of scripture and your commentary on those passages, which you claim show that God saves whomever he chooses, because he has thus chosen, without any action or response on their part. This is your theory of “absolute sovereignty”—that not only does God’s grace make salvation possible, but it also makes it unconditional for some and unattainable for all others. I shall return to this later in my letter.

Your seven passages of scripture (actually you cited more, but the ones which made up the “perfect number”) were Ephesians 1:3–12; 2 Thessalonians 2:13–14; Matthew 11:27; John 6:37–39, 44–45; 2 Timothy 1:8–9; Romans 8:29–30; Romans 9:10–24.

Against those seven passages, a total of thirty-seven verses, I have found quite a number of passages that say entirely the opposite. I could easily marshal seven times seven passages without even raising a sweat, but I will stick to just seven.

The first of these is Matthew 5–7, also known as the Sermon on the Mount. Have you ever wondered, if the essence of being a Christian is to believe the right theology, why the burden of Jesus’ own teaching was always ethical and behavioral? Or why, if being saved was dependent only on God’s irresistible will, Jesus kept insisting that his followers should do things, and that they would be saved thereby? Consider this from chapter 5:

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you; and persecute you;
That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. (Matthew 5:44–45)

Or this, from chapter 6:

But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:
That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly. (Matthew 6:3–4)

Or this, from chapter 7:

Judge not, that ye be not judged.
For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. (Matthew 7:1–2)

And again, also from Matthew 7:

Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:
And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.
And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:
And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it. (Matthew 7:24–27)

With your quotations you provided approximately five words of explanation and commentary for every word of scripture. I don’t need anything near that much. I will simply point out the obvious—that we will fall if we do not follow the Savior’s teachings; we will be judged as we judge others; God will reward us for what we do; and we become the children of God by doing godly things. Jesus said all this, not me.
The second passage is from Matthew 18. The Savior had just related the parable of the unmerciful servant. We pick up where that servant’s lord has just learned what the servant did:

And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.

So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses. (Matthew 18:34–35)

Again, this passage needs little commentary. Jesus taught that his Father would treat us as we treat others. That’s a little different from the idea that God will simply claim us anyhow because he so chooses, isn’t it?

The third passage is also from Matthew, in chapter 23:

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! (Matthew 23:37)

Note here the plain and undeniable statements that are made: Jesus “would” have gathered Jerusalem “often,” but Jerusalem wasn’t cooperating and “would not,” and so it didn’t happen. Whatever kind of absolute sovereign God is, he certainly allows his subjects to make meaningful choices—choices that have consequences and choices that even he respects.

Now I could quite easily fill my quota of seven passages from Matthew alone, but I am not a single-author Bible reader. Contrary to your claim, I know of no Latter-day Saints who “have an almost ‘anti-Paul’ attitude” (p. 255)—but I do know of some Protestants who seem to take more notice of Paul than they do of the Master he served.

But Paul was not entirely given over to the doctrine which you have taught, as my fourth passage shows. For in 1 Corinthians 6 we find:

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither forni-
cators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor
abusers of themselves with mankind,
Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revil-
ers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.
(1 Corinthians 6:9–10)

Note that Paul doesn’t say that fornicators, idolaters, adulter-
ers, and so forth, will be “made righteous” whilst continuing in
their sins. He says that unrighteousness of these kinds will dis-
qualify people from inheriting the kingdom of God.

Further, in 1 Timothy 2 we find our fifth passage, which reads:

For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God
our Saviour;
Who will have all men to be saved, and to come
unto the knowledge of the truth. (1 Timothy 2:3–4)

Paul seems to believe—or so he told Timothy—that God wants
“all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”
But we know that doesn’t happen, does it? It seems that even Paul
recognized limits on God’s sovereignty. Perhaps those limits are
self-imposed—God voluntarily refrains from imposing his will
upon mortals—but clearly not everything works out the way he
would like it to.

I have used Hebrews 5:9 already, so you know what it says.
I do want to introduce just one more from Paul. In 2 Timothy 4
we find:

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my
course, I have kept the faith:
Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of
righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge,
shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto
all them also that love his appearing. (2 Timothy
4:7–8)

Note that Paul’s reward is a consequence of his having fought,
finished, and kept. These are all verbs. Paul did certain things, and
as a result, he stood to receive his crown. And, he adds, that applies
to us too—if we “love his appearing.” That’s a condition, James.
Lastly—and there are many, many more that I could use—I come to the book of Revelation. And what do I find in chapter 20?

And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. (Revelation 20:13)

And so there we have it. We are judged according to our works. Clearly, salvation is not the “free-for-a-few-but-denied-the-rest” kind of gift that you would make it.

You go on to some more topics. At one point you make the following statement:

He [i.e., man] “suppresses” the truth about God, and instead worships created things rather than the Creator himself. He engages in idolatry—the worship of anything other than the true God, the Creator of all things. What does man worship? Anything—birds, reptiles, beasts, even man himself. Have you stopped to think that this would apply equally well to an “exalted man” such as the god of Joseph Smith? (p. 261)

Of course. One characteristic that sets Latter-day Saints apart from other Christians is our ability to look without fear on alternative points of view. I suppose that is the consequence of having a testimony that comes from the Holy Ghost.

But I ask you—have you considered that this would “apply equally well” to another kind of idol? I refer to an invisible idol—an idol not made with men’s hands, but with their tongues: a purely intellectual creation. Those idolaters who construct the immaterial god from pagan blueprints and then fondly imagine that they find him in the Bible, when in fact the God of the Bible is and always was anthropomorphic—those idolaters are guilty of ignoring the Savior’s warning: they try to cast the mote from the eye of another before removing the beam from their own.

Now I have used up my quota of seven passages to answer your seven. I am now going on to the subject of exaltation. You have indicated a number of times that you strongly disapprove of
that doctrine. I am surprised that you, a student of Greek, haven’t heard of the original Christian doctrine called *theosis*, or *theopoiesis*. I do not intend to argue that teaching here, except to point out some well-known passages that support it. The first is found in Revelation 3; here the Savior is speaking through John:

> To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. (Revelation 3:21)

This seems remarkably plain to me. Jesus overcame, and so he sits with his Father as God. And so, if we also overcome, will we. That is his promise.

And now to Paul. In the eighth chapter of Romans, we read:

> The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:
> And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. (Romans 8:17)

And again, in Galatians 4 we find:

> Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. (Galatians 4:7)

We’ll take these two together, since they say the same thing. What does Christ’s atonement make us? According to Paul, it makes us heirs. What do heirs do? They inherit. What does any son expect to inherit from his father? At least a share, if not all, that the father has. If that father is a king, the son stands to inherit his royal authority. And every son, rich or poor, inherits his father’s name. So those whom Paul described as “heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ” are by those very words being promised that they will inherit God’s royal authority—that is, his godly power—and his name, which is God. So what will they be then?

Let us consider the words of the Savior in Matthew:

> Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. (Matthew 5:48)
In your fourth letter you attempted to explain away the clear import of this passage thus:

Many LDS assume that this means that men can become gods, yet, is this what Jesus is saying? This text comes from the Sermon on the Mount. In this section Jesus is laying out the “kingdom standards” for the people of God. This section is ethical in nature, and the standard of perfection to which He calls us is ethical and moral. The Lord is not addressing the vast chasm that separates the creature, man, from the Creator, God, but is instead calling us to the moral perfection that is God’s. Such is hardly a solid basis for teaching that creatures can cease being creatures and become gods! (pp. 63–64)

I’m sorry, but while you are fully entitled to your own (private) interpretation of this passage, it just doesn’t wash with me. You are, as usual, arguing from your own assumptions; we are not “creatures” in fact, but are “the offspring of God” (Acts 17:29) and thus in line to inherit our Father’s estate.

The point is that “even as” means “just like.” Jesus is actually commanding us to be just like God.

The last passage I will mention is found in 2 Peter:

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. (2 Peter 1:4)

What do you suppose it means to be “partakers of the divine nature”? Whose nature is divine? Isn’t God’s nature? Whoever partakes of that nature would have to become a lot like the One who possesses it in the first place, wouldn’t he?

Now we are nearing the end. I have read this letter, as I have read all of your letters, very carefully. And I think that I am beginning to see something that I didn’t see before. Your belief about salvation, if I understand it correctly, is that God saves sinners. He saves them unconditionally, without waiting for them to do anything, because he so chooses. Have I understood this correctly?
Furthermore, as you have told me, God *never* changes his mind. That means that if he saves someone, it is because he has *always* intended to save that person; nothing anyone does can ever alter God's intentions with regard to saving him or her. Have I got that right?

If I have, and if you are right, then *it does not matter*. For if your doctrine is correct, and if God has always intended to save me, then he will do so even if I never accept your doctrine, because nothing I do, or leave undone, can change his mind or nullify his grace. On the other hand, if he has always intended to *not* save me, then he will not, no matter how earnestly and sincerely I accept your teaching; I could pray the "sinner's prayer" every moment from now until my last breath, but it would be to no avail, for God is so magnificently unmoved by my entreaties—or anyone else's—that he will *never change his mind*.

Some people might find this a somewhat unlovely concept. The idea of a God so majestically aloof that the most heartfelt prayers of his children make utterly no impression on him at all, if I may be excused for saying so, an idea not easy to love.

But, indeed, this is the *better* side of this doctrine. For, if we think it all the way through, we are bound to stumble across another one of your doctrines: that God, who *never* changes his mind and whose foreknowledge is absolute, created each of us in a conscious, rational act of creation.

Now, if we join the two concepts together, we are faced with this consequence: that *before* he created each one of us, he *knew* whether or not he was going to save us. The *inescapable* conclusion is that God knowingly created billions of human beings *unto damnation*—for he had no intention of saving them, and there was no possible way for them to be saved otherwise. Don't you see that, if your doctrines are believed, there is no logical escape from this conclusion?

So I ask you: what kind of being would knowingly and consciously create billions of rational beings simply in order to condemn them to eternal misery? Is that a loving God? A merciful God? Or perhaps not?

As I pointed out in response to your letters on the nature of God: since all his creations exist as a result of his rational, conscious decisions and are made in the fulness of his absolute
foreknowledge, “your God,” if I may call him that, is directly and personally responsible for all the evil in the world.

On the other hand, “my God,” as you are pleased to call him, is the Father of an innumerable progeny of spirit children. Each of those spirits possesses a fulness of agency—the same underlying freedom that God himself has. And he has taught us the way that we ought to act, so “my God” is not responsible for the independent acts of his children, any more than earthly parents are.

“Your God” has created billions of people in order to allow most of them to spend eternity in utter and inescapable misery. “My God” has designed a plan whereby all of his children can return and live with him, if only we repent.

Is this perhaps why you simply had to attack the foundation of our beliefs before you got onto the subject of salvation? Was it because you knew that your doctrine couldn’t possibly stand up to a fair comparison with ours? Is it always necessary to undermine a Latter-day Saint’s beliefs before offering your alternative—because your alternative isn’t nearly as good?

Yours truly,

Steve Hahn
Letter 15: . . . And Grace

Dear James,

You seem to have a terrible problem with Elder McConkie’s statement that “Grace is granted to men proportionately as they conform to the standards of personal righteousness that are part of the gospel plan” (quoted on p. 269). I notice, by the way, that you still refer to this quotation as being written by “a Mormon apostle,” although of course he was nothing of the kind when he wrote the book. But I will let that pass.

This quotation seems to deeply sadden, shock, and disturb you, so I suppose I had better spend some time on it. Although I would just like to mention that you brought this up in what you described as a discussion of “the topic of justification as it is defined in the Bible” (p. 267).

Now the Bible is not a dictionary and actually defines very few of the words it uses. But the fact is that when the quotation above appears, you hadn’t quoted a single line from the Bible. You had given me several paragraphs of your own unalloyed opinion; you had already quoted Mormon Doctrine two times and the Book of Mormon once. Then you come to the quotation above, and there is still not a Bible verse anywhere on the horizon.

This is an excellent sample of your methodology, James. You begin by announcing that you intend to tell me exactly and only what the Bible says; then, in order to ensure that I will see things your way, you soften me up by telling me what the Bible passages you quote are going to mean; your next step is to put in a considerable effort to undermine and discredit the teachings of the Church of Jesus Christ. Finally, when you imagine that you have removed our teachings from contention—and only then—you bring out your teachings. As I pointed out in my last letter, this approach is necessary for you, because if both teachings were to be presented fairly, yours would not stand a chance.

Anyway, back to Elder McConkie’s statement. All your exclamations of sadness and disbelief seem to be an attempt to avoid confronting the fairly obvious fact that only by granting grace “to men proportionately as they” obey the commandments, can God be both just and merciful at the same time. For if, as you
have argued previously, God simply chooses to save some and
damn the rest, then his “grace” is nothing more than favoritism
and his “justice” a travesty, wherein we are condemned for being
what he created us to be, without ever having a chance to be any-
thing else. Whereas, by giving everyone the same chance and
granting grace unto his children according to their diligence, he is
being both just because he treats us all alike and merciful because
none of us could possibly make it without his help.

You make the statement that “Grace plus works is dead, being
meaningless” (p. 269). Don’t you realize that that statement is
entirely antscriptural? The structure is an obvious and prema-
bly conscious borrowing from James 2:17, but the content is a
direct and irreconcilable contradiction of that passage: “faith, if it
hath not works, is dead, being alone.”

You go on to argue that “personal righteousness . . . comes as
a result of God’s work” (p. 270). That sounds nice, but what does
it mean? If a person is righteous solely as a result of God’s (pre-
sumably irresistible) work in his or her life, then how can we really
call that righteousness? Is a puppet righteous because the puppet-
eer makes it do good things? Or to put it another way: if one
computer is made to run a program to solve the problems of
world hunger, while another is made to run a program to work out
a way to eradicate everyone who isn’t blond and blue-eyed, do we
really say that the first computer is “righteous” while the second
is “evil”? Of course not; the computer is a mere machine; it has
no moral sense and no choice. And if a person is only righteous
because God chooses to work in that person, then I respectfully
submit that that doesn’t mean anything. Only if a person has a
real choice between actual alternatives can anything that person
does be counted as “righteous” or “unrighteous.”

You obviously believe that Romans teaches your doctrine,
since you rely on it almost exclusively. Whatever happened to the
Sermon on the Mount? Nevertheless, the amount of commentary
you have to provide is testimony that you are not willing just to
“step back” and allow the Apostle Paul to present this doctrine
as you claimed (p. 270), since Paul clearly does not say what you
want him to say without a considerable amount of editing from
you.
Take, for example, Romans 4:3, which says, "For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." You offered this as part of an argument that Abraham’s works didn’t count for anything. Yet, where do we find God irresistibly working in Abraham’s life? Nowhere. Instead, we find Abraham choosing to exercise his own faculties ("Abraham believed God") and reaping the consequences ("and it was counted unto him for righteousness"). Note well, what Abraham did—the choice he exercised—was what counted as righteousness for him and not what God did to him or for him.

But the biggest problem with your letter is that you have simply not understood what we believe and teach about salvation. I can see that your presentation here might be quite convincing to someone whose knowledge of our teachings is slight or nonexistent, but to one who knows what he believes, you have missed the mark at which you are aiming.

Your little graphic whereby you try to show that we exactly equate justification with good works and obedience betrays a clear and indeed fatal misunderstanding of Latter-day Saint doctrine. No authoritative LDS source denies the necessity of God’s grace to our salvation.

Perhaps the clearest illustration of your failure to understand our doctrine—and indeed, of your inability to read LDS scripture with anything resembling an open mind—is your mistreatment of 2 Nephi 25:23. You claim that it is an example of "theological errors in the Book of Mormon" (p. 268) and go on to protest that "we are not saved by grace after all we can do, but that we are saved by grace in spite of all we have done!" (pp. 268–69). I wonder if the difference in emphasis is not as much cultural as it is theological, but in any event, you have not understood the passage correctly. You assume that Nephi is telling us that God’s grace only comes into play after we have done all that is possible. But let us see instead what Nephi is really saying:

For we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do.
As you can see, the statement would be complete in its essentials if the last five words were simply omitted. They are there for emphasis, to make it clear that no matter what we do or don’t do, it is still by grace that we are saved.

If we really believed that each work, or ordinance, or whatever else we did added “brownie points” to our “score sheet” then your criticisms might have some merit. But that is not what we believe.

We know that our own efforts are always inadequate to save us. We know that we have to press forward, “relying wholly on the merits of him who is mighty to save” (2 Nephi 31:19). Our own merits are not part of the equation. But we believe that the Lord has given us commandments and requires us to obey them. The ordinances are the means by which he has decreed that we can show our acceptance of the gift he offers us.

Belief is always a decision, and it can only ever be made by the believer. It is, therefore, a work, even if it is a nonphysical work. It is only ever sweat-free to believe something that is trivially easy to believe—such as the fairly obvious fact that the sky is blue. For any belief that really matters, some real effort is required. If, as you seem to be saying, the right belief is essential to salvation—and you most definitely do seem to be saying that—then the decision to hold that belief is a work.

Please note that I am not trying to tell you what you believe. I am simply pointing out what I see as the logical consequences of what you believe. You insist in a salvation that requires no effort at all. The only way I can see that happening is if God simply picks people to save without any reference to what they do or don’t do. And that is in fact what you describe: God, you say, saves sinners, no questions asked. Except the only way God will save a Mormon sinner is if that Mormon gives up his erroneous beliefs. Do you detect a slight inconsistency here? I’m certain that I do.

For all your belief in the overwhelming sovereignty of God, you seem incapable of considering that God might regard the sin of holding heretical beliefs as any less grave than you do. Your officious zeal to defend God—and why would he ever need defending?—reminds me of nothing so much as the medieval inquisitors who, utterly convinced of their own personal and institutional righteousness, could not see heretics as anything other than
dangerous fanatics who had to be forced to see reason. That approach didn’t work for them. And it won’t work for you, either.

You went to a lot of trouble to demonstrate “that Paul’s doctrine of justification is not contradicted by James” (p. 280). And this despite the fact that James clearly located Abraham’s righteousness in his faith-directed actions. I agree that the two apostles were not contradicting one another, simply because there is a lot more action in Paul than you seem to be willing to accept. You dwell a lot on Galatians 2. Paul’s controversy with Peter in that chapter was about the works “of the law,” that is, the law of Moses, and not any question of obedience to New Testament teaching. And, indeed, in the very first verse of chapter three, we find Paul asking, “O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth?” (Galatians 3:1, emphasis added). It has occurred to me a number of times that cheap-grace solafidianism—the doctrine that the grace of God in Christ requires no response from us beyond a verbally expressed belief—is a very bewitching teaching to those who want to be excused from obeying the truth.

I don’t know if you belong to that category. But whether or not you realize it, you are clearly trying to offer me the “easy way out.” For when you ask me, “Wouldn’t you like to exchange that burden of continually striving after ‘worthiness’ for the worthiness of Jesus Christ?” you are clearly pitching your offer based on an appeal to my natural laziness. Here, you are telling me, is a far less strenuous program. Yes, I agree that it is. And if the universal experience of mortality teaches us anything, it is that in the last analysis, the easier program is the path of less growth. Thanks, but no thanks.

Yours truly,

Steve Hahn
Letter 16: A Smorgasbord

Dear James,

In the first paragraph of your letter you say, "I appreciate . . . the fact that you are really examining the Scriptures and seeking to know what they really teach" (p. 283). That is true and is what I have always done, because the church teaches me to do so. I should also point out that I am not relying on my own limited human understanding of the scriptures, but on personal revelation. This mostly comes in answer to prayers, but it comes in various ways. Sometimes it comes as I read something else that is equally uplifting and edifying—like the *Ensign*. The Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price, all of which are also scripture, contain a powerful additional witness, not only to the *truth* of the Bible, but also to its *meaning*. Some of the most remarkable insights into the meaning of the scriptures have come to me in the house of the Lord, the temple. All of these things continue to enhance my knowledge and understanding of the scriptures.

Your own approach is not one that I can adopt. Indeed, the problems with your approach can best be illustrated by your serious misunderstanding of the writings of modern prophets. If you cannot understand your own contemporaries, whose native tongue is your own, how can you possibly understand the ancients, who spoke only Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek?

I will return to those misunderstandings later. Let's consider, though, your misunderstandings of the New Testament. For example, Paul counseled the Philippians to "work out [their] own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12). You responded by making two points: first, that Paul was saying to work *out* their salvation instead of to work *for* their salvation—meaning that they already had it. I must admit that I find this a remarkably slender argument; when I sit down at a computer to "work out" the solution to a problem, it is precisely and only because I do not have the solution that I need to work it out. But the obvious answer to your claim is the fact that the work has to be done "with fear and trembling"—something that would be entirely unnecessary if their salvation was absolutely assured, as you seem to be-
lieve. In fact their salvation must still—at least at the time of Paul’s writing—stand in jeopardy; otherwise, there would be no cause for them to fear and tremble. The suggestion that they should fear and tremble makes it clear that “working out” matters very much to their salvation.

Your second point was that Galatians 2:13 says, “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” You went on to ask me (rhetorically, of course), “Who is really doing the work, Steve?” (p. 283). Well, what does the verse say? It says that God is working in them so that they would “both . . . will and . . . do of his good pleasure.” But who is willing and doing? Those in whom God works. So the question arises: is the working of God within a person resistible or irresistible? The answer is obviously the former: a person always has a choice whether or not he or she is going to respond to that working and “yield to the enticings of the Holy Spirit,” as King Benjamin so eloquently puts it (Mosiah 3:19). If it were not so, Paul would have no reason at all to continue to exhort them to do things—such as working out their own salvation—because they would have no choice—God would simply compel them to do whatever he wanted. And so, God does the “working,” but we do the sweating.

Except for one statement you made, I am not going to concern myself with your discussion of Matthew 7:21–23, since you simply used it as a lead-in to your assault on Bruce R. McConkie. The exception is when you said that there would be a large group of religious people whom the Lord would reject and then added, “I believe that nearly every LDS person will be in that group” (p. 284). Apart from the fact that I find that statement personally insulting, I am further offended by the way you arrogate to yourself the prerogative of judging the hearts of men, which prerogative is Christ’s alone. I am most forcefully reminded of your letter in which you attempted to debunk the priesthood: you claimed that “Jesus Christ is our only high priest, and anyone claiming to be a ‘high priest’ is usurping His position, Hebrews 7:26–28” (p. 245). Well, it happens that Jesus Christ is our judge, and so by your logic, anyone presuming to judge others—especially with regard to their salvation—is “usurping His position.”

Your unprovoked attack on the late Elder Bruce R. McConkie contains errors that would, in my estimation, be difficult to make
unintentionally. You claimed that “A book had been circulating at BYU that spoke about having a ‘personal relationship’ with Jesus Christ. McConkie came to BYU to ‘correct’ this kind of thinking” (p. 284).

Actually the booklet in question was not simply talking about having a personal relationship with Christ. As a missionary, I advocated that to everyone whom I was able to teach; having a personal relationship with Christ is sound Latter-day Saint doctrine. That particular booklet was advocating a relationship that was inappropriate, in that it attempted to argue that worship and especially prayers should be addressed exclusively to the Son and not to the Father.

Consider this for a moment: there are many kinds of possible relationships between people, but not all of them are appropriate. Does warning against inappropriate relationships mean the same as warning against any and all relationships? Suppose, for example, that you were to give a talk in which you said that it was inappropriate for adults to have sexual relationships with children. Suppose further that a pedophile subsequently claimed that you had preached against parents loving their children. Would you not think that such a misrepresentation was a rather blatant one?

In the same way, your misrepresentation of Elder McConkie’s statements—and especially of the error which they addressed—was rather blatant. To claim that he was opposed to members of the church having a relationship with Christ is entirely misleading, because it is completely false. To show you what his true feelings about the Savior really were, I refer you to the following hymn, authored by Elder McConkie:

I believe in Christ; he is my King!
With all my heart to him I’ll sing;
I’ll raise my voice in praise and joy,
In grand amens my tongue employ.

. . .
I believe in Christ—my Lord, my God!
My feet he plants on gospel sod.
I’ll worship him with all my might;
He is the source of truth and light.
I believe in Christ; he ransoms me.
From Satan’s grasp he sets me free,
And I shall live with joy and love
In his eternal courts above. (Hymns, 1985, no. 134)

I recommend the entire hymn to you. It will disabuse you of any notion of which you may have convinced yourself, that Elder McConkie was opposed to anyone having a personal relationship with the Savior.

Your love of uninformed speculation—especially hostile speculation—is given full rein in your treatment of the three degrees of glory. You assert, on no authority beyond your own opinion, that “The third word, telestial, is not even an English word, but was created by the imagination of Joseph Smith by combining the first two letters of terrestrial with the last seven letters of celestial” (p. 286).

In reality, as a Greek scholar you should know that the word telestial points to at least two good Greek words as possible roots. The word telos means “last,” so the telestial kingdom may simply be the last kingdom, that is, last in glory. Alternatively, the word teleos, the plural of which is teleotes, means a disciple, or an apprentice to a master. This relates well to the concept of this earth, in its present telestial state, as a place of learning and probation. The “scrabble method” of coining words invariably produces mere nonsense, and yet time after time Joseph Smith, with less than one twentieth of your education, manages to come up with words you haven’t heard of elsewhere, but which are valid. How does he do it? I think I know how, but since you reject his prophetic calling, you will need some better explanation than that which you have offered so far.

You treat 2 Corinthians 12:2–4 in an astonishingly cavalier manner. After quoting verse 2, you go on to casually announce that “in verse 4, Paul identifies this ‘third heaven’ as ‘Paradise’” (p. 287).

Does he? Let us quote the entire passage, and see.

I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven.

And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)
How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. (2 Corinthians 12:2–4)

It seems to me, as I suspect it does to most Bible readers without a special case to plead, that Paul is talking about two separate experiences, being “caught up” to two different destinations. Your glib and apparently conscious attempt to conflate the two seems tendentious at best.

Your treatment of John 3:5 is equally cavalier. The fact is that Jesus is flatly stating that being “born of water” is a prerequisite for salvation. Cross-referencing to Ezekiel may be interesting, but it ultimately distracts us from the concrete reality of this teaching of Jesus. For the Ezekiel passage in question states emphatically that the water would be sprinkled, which cannot possibly be represented as any kind of birth. In a mortal birth, the baby is at first entirely inside the mother’s womb and then emerges totally, a process known in the scriptures as being “born of woman.” To be “born of water” would require a similar process; the candidate is at first entirely enclosed in water, and then emerges totally from it. That is baptism. Furthermore, I would ask you to consider what John tells us immediately after giving the words of Jesus to Nicodemus. In John 3:22 he says, “After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized.”

The fact that baptism is not elsewhere called “born of water” is a red herring, since it is clearly being called that in this passage. And your final argument, that baptism couldn’t possibly be necessary for salvation because “this would leave God utterly dependent upon the actions of men” (p. 288), merely makes your own opinions the yardstick against which scripture is measured. The simple fact is that Jesus himself, in his famous commission to the apostles, said, “he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16, emphasis added).

Speaking also of baptism, your incredibly stretched interpretation of 1 Corinthians 15:29 has the virtue of being original, so original, in fact, that it seems highly improbable that any first-century Christian—including Paul—ever thought of it. You argue—desperately, it seems—that “the baptism of a young child, for example, the day after an elderly saint of the Lord has passed
away could be viewed as the younger person coming to ‘fill’ the position of the person who has gone home to be with the Lord” (p. 289). I suppose it could be viewed that way—but what evidence have you that the ancient Saints ever held such a view? Is it your contention that all baptisms at that period were held the day after a death in the church? Or that those baptisms that were so timed were somehow classified differently than baptisms whose timing did not thus coincide? I respectfully suggest that we have here yet another example of an exegetical result that is informed more by your need to make an argument against a Latter-day Saint belief than by sound methodology.

But let us suppose that the early Saints did indeed think of the baptism of a new member as replacing those who had died. What, I ask you, can this possibly have to do with baptism for the dead? For if huper (or hyper) denotes substitution, then why can it not mean “on behalf of”—clearly a very meaningful form of substitution for another? Baptism for the dead allows a living Christian to be baptized on behalf of—that is, as a substitute for, or in the place of—a person who had no opportunity to be baptized in his or her own behalf.

I realize that my arguments are not going to convince you in this matter, any more than your arguments have convinced me. I will simply close my discussion of baptism for the dead by pointing out that no less an authority than DummeIow (in his A Commentary on the Holy Bible, 919) concurs with the Latter-day Saint view that Paul is referring, with approval, to an actual Christian practice, which he then uses as evidence of the resurrection.

And now to your discussion of Acts 3:21. I feel that I can do no better than to quote back your argument to you, and explain the problems with it. You first quoted the verse, and then said:

This raises the entire LDS belief that the church went into a state of apostasy after the death of the last apostles, only to be re-established by Joseph Smith in 1830. The phrase “the times of restitution of all things” in Acts 3:21 is interpreted to refer to this restitution of the Church. In fact, as I recall, Steve, this verse is used on that little “17 Points of the True Church” card that you gave me when we first met. An examination of the text chosen to represent this claim
will show just how weak this argument is. Acts chapter 3 is not in any way discussing the Church. This is seen in two ways. First, verse 21 says that the “restitution of all things” was “spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” As Paul points out in Colossians 1:25–27, the mystery of the church was not made known to the past ages and generations (see also 1 Peter 1:10–12), hence this certainly is not talking about the church. Second, the prophets spoke of the restoration of Israel to its own land, and the restoration of the theocracy under David’s Son. This is what Peter is discussing in Acts 3. Besides all of this, I must ask when it was that Christ returned, as verse 19 says this would happen at the “restitution of all things.” (p. 290)

The errors in this paragraph are many. To begin with, you haven’t really defined what you mean by apostasy and restitution. I’m not even certain that you have a specific or concrete concept of church, so your arguments exist in a blanket of fog. Let us define these terms, and see where we are.

First, church always and only refers to a specific institution, and not to some amorphous and abstract “body of believers”; it is a definite, centralized organization, not some nebulous entity consisting of everyone who happens to think the same way at a given time.

Apostasy means many things. In this context, it refers to the departure of the early church from the gospel path, and the attendant loss of authority, gifts, and true doctrine.

Restitution means the restoration of those things which were lost through apostasy, that is, the authority to act in God’s name, the spiritual gifts that testify to the presence of the Holy Ghost, and the fulness of the doctrine of Christ. The last item can only come by direct revelation, for while many points of doctrine are spelled out in the scriptures, there are many other points that are merely alluded to. For the Bible, and especially the New Testament, was never intended by its authors to be a complete handbook for the building up and maintaining of the Church of Jesus Christ—and is therefore not suited to be used as such.
Now it happens that there are two possible readings of Acts 3:21. One is to read it as saying that all the prophets since the world began have prophesied of this restitution. The other is to read it as saying that the restitution will reestablish all things which were taught by the prophets. It is not especially important which view we take, since we know for a fact that the Bible does not contain every word ever spoken by every prophet.

You also claimed that "As Paul points out in Colossians 1:25–27, the mystery of the church was not made known to the past ages and generations" (p. 290)—except that he points out no such thing in those verses, since he isn’t discussing the church at all.

So what is it that Latter-day Saints speak of when we talk of the restoration or “restitution of all things”? We are not talking about the church per se, just as Peter wasn’t. We are talking about the fulness of the gospel, with its attendant divine authority and saving ordinances. With those things, the church is a powerful instrument of salvation. Without them, it would simply be another bunch of people singing hymns on Sunday morning.

As for the return of Christ, I wonder if you understand the meaning of *until*, as in “he shall send Jesus Christ . . . whom the heaven must receive *until* the times of restitution of all things.” It simply means “not before.” When my Mom used to tell me, “You can’t go to bed *until* you’ve dried the dishes,” she didn’t actually mean that my head would hit the pillow the moment the last dish was dried. What she did mean was that I had to dry the dishes *first*. Likewise, Acts 3:21 doesn’t actually mean that Jesus will appear as soon as the times of restitution start—or are completed—but simply that he won’t come *before* then.

I notice with some surprise that you have fallen back on the old chestnut of using Matthew 16:18 as a proof text for the survival—indeed, the invulnerability—of the church. It is ill suited for such a purpose. The “gates of hell” (as you said, *hades*, the place where the dead are detained) do not prevail against the church when it falls into apostasy. They prevail against the church when they are able to keep someone out of reach of its saving work. In simple terms, the gates of hell prevail against every church that is powerless to extend the offer of salvation to those
who die without hearing the gospel. But Jesus says that those gates will not prevail against his church. And they don’t.

Ephesians 3:20–21 is not much more helpful to your cause. Paul’s prayer, “unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end,” is exactly that—a prayer. And if Jesus could pray in the Garden of Gethsemane that he might be spared, and yet he was not, then what is so special about a prayer of Paul, that the mere utterance of it guarantees its fulfillment? The church that survived, though apostate, has done its best to glorify God, as have its offspring. If that isn’t good enough to answer Paul’s prayer, then I can only point out that Paul cannot compel God to obedience. History does not contradict the word of God, although it may disappoint the wishes of Paul. Making that prayer into infallible scriptural prophecy is little short of Bible-worship.

Thank you again for keeping your letter brief. My final letter will follow soon.

Yours truly,

Steve Hahn
Letter 17: Conclusions

Dear James,

I intended to reply to your seventeenth letter, but that was mostly small talk, and I am now focused on straight doctrinal issues. It is time, therefore, to sum up our correspondence.

As I said a number of times: if you had been willing to advocate your religious position on its merits alone, then we would have had a disagreement, but no quarrel. We do have a quarrel, only because you have insisted on first trying to undermine the position of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In fact, that effort has taken up the bulk of your writings to me. Your letters are enough to fill a book; take out all the anti-Mormon material, and they would barely fill a pamphlet.

Your first letter showed that you do not understand what Latter-day Saints mean by a testimony. You assumed that a testimony is just a feeling. True, we describe it in those terms. But those who have had the experience of receiving personal revelation know that it is much more than a mere feeling. Human language is not especially adequate to describe things that are not of this world, and so talking about feelings is as close as we can get. I truly hope that you some day have the experience of receiving personal revelation from the Holy Ghost. Not indirectly, from a book, but straight from the source. Then you will know. Until then, you just won’t know what I’m talking about.

You have quite consistently attempted to disqualify the church’s position, rather than engage it. Your treatment of the truth claims of the church has been to try to dodge them, with clever arguments as to why they should not be taken seriously. I would have expected that, if you were able to disprove them, you would have done so. I’m sure that you would have liked to have disproved them. Your failure to deal with them advertises your insecurity.

Throughout your letters, you play a rather tedious word game. You may call Latter-day Saints “Mormons” if you wish—we won’t be offended. But it is dishonest to pretend that “Christians” make a separate category. Especially since you insist, in so many of your letters, that your interpretations are the only
Christian ones, despite the fact that the overwhelming majority of Christians—and even a great many Baptists—disagree with you on a number of points. Latter-day Saints are dedicated followers of Jesus. That ought to qualify us as Christians. For a great many unprejudiced people, it does. If that’s not good enough for you, then that is a shame, but I see no reason why we should have to conform to your wishes.

You have relied on a number of logical fallacies in your letters. Circular arguments and straw man fallacies are present in considerable numbers.

You demonstrated time and again that you hold the Bible in higher esteem than you do the God who inspired its authors. You argue that the Bible is translated correctly—and then you introduce alternative translations when the King James Version doesn’t suit you. Don’t you think you might try to be more consistent?

Although you clearly believe yourself to be a Christian, you have consistently taken positions that would perplex and alarm the Christians of the first century. In particular, you have adopted a number of arguments against the church that would be equally hostile to the primitive church. Many of your arguments would be more appropriate in the mouth of a first-century anti-Christian than a twentieth-century Christian.

Although you have tried very hard to discredit Joseph Smith personally, and the church in general, you have simply failed. This lends support to the conclusion that the task is impossible.

Your letters have been an interesting introduction to the strange world of anti-Mormon rhetoric. But I don’t think I will be delving any further into that world. I don’t really find it attractive.

Yours truly,

Steve Hahn
**A Layman’s Comparison**

This is a cursory comparison, not intended to be complete, and my personal preferences are reflected. We all seek the best, most useful product for our own needs. Rarely will one product in a competitive marketplace offer all the best choices: the best look and feel and the most versatility. It appears in this case that such a rule holds true.

It is not intended that this comparison be used for anything other than personal interest. The potential purchaser of either of these products should use his or her own judgment. At most, this comparison should be used as a starting point to explore both products, confirming (or refuting) the observations and conclusions drawn here.

That stated, I have considerable experience with software of all types and tend to look at things from the “power user” point of view. Casual users may have different opinions, but anyone who is serious about employing either of these tools for study, background material in talks, or general “exploring” of texts will want a product that makes navigation and data retrieval easy and is pleasant to use. A product that can, through its look and feel, actually make a contribution to the study process is very desirable.

I installed both of these products on two computers, neither of which is a state-of-the-art “screamer” by any stretch. One is a clone PC, Pentium 166 MHz with 32MB of RAM and a good video card. The other is a Dell notebook, Pentium 133 MHz, with 32MB of RAM.¹

---

¹ GospelLink is not currently available for the Macintosh; Infobases is.
The Infobases products have been in the marketplace for several years, whereas the Deseret Book product is "first edition new." This would imply that Infobases has had several years to learn and improve while Deseret Book is making its first offering. Of course, it might also be said that Deseret Book has the advantage of being able to look at the evolution of Infobases products and benefit from its competitor’s learning curve. In any event, it is impossible to look at one product without making comparisons to the other, and that is the intent of this review.

Installation

I found installing Infobases Collector’s Library (IBCL) easier and shorter than Deseret Book’s GospelLink™ (DBGL). Deseret Book has a very nice install utility, but there are yet a few kinks to work out. For example, when installing the “bonus quotes” section of DBGL, you are given the chance to specify a location, but the install wizard ignores that and uses its own specifications.

I installed both IBCL and DBGL on my second hard drive because of available space restrictions. IBCL had no problem. The DBGL program, as stated, was uncertain what to do with the bonus title install. As a result, I had to move the six files in the bonus install manually to the same drive and folder as the main install. Doing so overwrites the INSTALL.LOG in the main directory and has the potential of causing other problems down the road. The only other option might be to edit the Registry so DBGL will know where to look for the bonus quotes application. However, the LDS Quotation Library application is worth the effort of overcoming that glitch.

**Bottom line:** IBCL is easier to install and takes less than half the time it takes to install DBGL. However, DBGL’s install utility is a little more versatile and friendly.

Size (Disk Space Taken)

There is no contest here. IBCL takes up considerably less space. While both products end up putting some additional files in

---

2 Although Deseret Book did have an earlier product, *Book of Mormon Reference Library.*
the Windows directories (from 5 to 10MB), DBGL in its most “frugal” installation mode added around 100MB on one computer, while only around 80MB on the other. I am unable at this time to explain why it took so much more space on one computer than the other. Compare this to the about 47MB for IBCL on both machines. DBGL does install the scriptures on your hard drive, however, which makes it possible for you to study and search the scriptures alone without the CD.

You could argue that hard drive space is cheap these days, and you would be right. But this is a product focused at the “average user,” one would hope, and an extra 100MB might be hard to come by.

Many large applications (word processors, spreadsheet programs, even games) offer the option of minimum installations on the hard drive, and data access from the CD at the sacrifice of a little speed. This is an option both of these companies might want to consider, especially DBGL.

**Bottom line:** DBGL is the bigger space hog.

### Content

It is not the intent of this comparison to look in detail at the content of either package. Suffice it to say that they both offer some things unique to the individual applications. I personally think it is “pure marketing” to compare the number of titles available in each. This can lead to “how-you-count” kinds of games. And it also can lead to the inclusion of various things that are there for no reason other than to help inflate the title count.

Both products have much of what you would expect as basic, and both products have a lot to offer in the titles that are unique to each. As would be expected, Deseret Book has some exclusive titles, and Infobases has some titles exclusive to Bookcraft. Of course, almost all the public domain sources are included in both. Wouldn’t it be great to have one engine that would read both in a user-friendly way?
Bottom line: Both DBGL and IBCL have very impressive lists of almost all the public domain titles in common. Each has several unique titles. الاحتياجات القياسية

Look and Feel

From my way of looking at it, the DB product comes out a little better here. The graphic look is cleaner and not as visually dark as the IB product. In later releases of IBCL it is possible to remove the background “textures” from the screen (before that happened I would not even have run it). Also, the later releases of IBCL allow much better viewing by selecting predefined window sizes that either remove or de-emphasize some of the less important windows so you can actually read text. I think that represents an effort on IB’s part to meet some customer requests (demands?).

DB has gone one better by not only offering some predefined window and viewing templates, but also giving you the option to resize the windows to suit particular needs. Very nice. And, as I said, the look and feel is not as “dark” as the IB product, which makes for a friendlier feel.

Graphics

While both packages would prefer you to use 16- or 32-bit color (high color or “true” color), DB’s product almost requires it. The IB product in 256 colors is just fine. However, when viewing DBGL with 256 colors, you can even miss some buttons and other controls; they seem to come and go depending on where your mouse is or what you are doing. My Dell notebook (Latitude LM) is only a year old, but it does not allow more than

---

3 Recently, the church negotiated a purchase of Bookcraft (and consequently Infobases), so now all of the resources and products of both Bookcraft and Deseret Book will be coordinated and administered by the same group. That could be a very positive move, if done properly and with care, and it will be interesting to see how things work out. Sources have told me that the GospelLink and Infobases products will somehow be “joined,” and there will in the future be a single, consolidated product. When this will happen, how it will happen, and what the new product will look like is anyone’s guess. I’m sure we will all await the new product with anticipation and curiosity.
256 colors when in 600 x 800 resolution, so I am stuck with poor graphics with DBGL.

**Bottom line:** The DB product has lighter, friendlier graphics and is easier to look at, but penalizes you if you are using 256 colors (they do not mislead you on the colors though; they tell you that 16-bit color is needed).

**Speed**

No contest here. Though speed is relative and a faster Pentium with more RAM might make both products run quicker, DBGL is definitely at a bit of a disadvantage in the speed department. It is slower (application opening time, going from screen to screen, searching, and so forth). Even with my fastest machine (admittedly not a speedy one by today’s standards), the DB product drags along at screen change and search speeds slow enough to be a little frustrating.

One would think that the relative speeds of the two products ought to be closer. They both use the same Folio engine. And one might even argue that the DB product should be faster, since it puts more “stuff” on your hard drive. But that is clearly not the case.

I thought I might be doing something wrong, so I called DB’s technical support. When I explained that DBGL was quite a bit slower, the young man I spoke with acknowledged that to be the case.

As an example, DB takes 56 seconds to open the main screen fully from clicking on the start icon and 17 seconds to complete a simple search on 3 words (fiends, infernal, pit). IB takes 12 seconds to open fully and 3 seconds to do an advanced search on the same words.

**Bottom line:** IB’s product is much faster, especially at moderate computer processor speeds. *Note: DB’s technical support people assured me that improving the basic speed of the product is one of their top priorities.*

**GUI (Graphical User Interface)**

This category can spill over into “look and feel,” but my take on GUI is that it is more feel than look, while look and feel is, well,
more look than feel. In the GUI department DB is the winner for me. The layout of the screen is more functional and intuitive, and the choices at any given point in the program are more obvious. For a first-time user, I think the DB product would be easier to learn and offer more flexibility. For the experienced user it is still a little easier to navigate. That is a big plus.

**Bottom line:** Graphical user interface on the DBGL is better.

**Searching**

For many people, searching will be the heart of their use of either program. In general, IBCL wins.

IB offers two search levels, simple and advanced. Both levels are effected within the IBCL program. DB offers only one level of search within its program. The IB simple search is just that: simple. But the advanced level is quite powerful and still very easy to use. DB’s single search function is considerably more powerful than IB’s simple search but has glaring omissions when compared to IB’s advanced search.

DBGL has an advanced search function (available from a right-click pop-up menu), but this function jumps to a Folio window and is not at all simple to use (you need to learn at least a few search terms), is not as versatile for defining the search area (you cannot use search sets), and is not intuitive. It is, however, fast.

Both products offer their versions of search sets, and they both work quite well. I think DB’s predefined search sets are better (or at least there are more of them). DB’s search set manager is easier to use. The one major weakness in DB’s search sets is that you cannot include (or exclude) the various parts of the scriptures in your search sets. It seems odd that you cannot select, for example, just the New Testament for a custom search set. Their technical support people tell me that they are working to include this in a future update.

But DB’s simple search (the one that most people will use) has two main disadvantages. The searching is slower. But more important, the simple search (again, what most are going to use) leaves out one important element (I called DB’s technical support people in the hopes that I had somehow missed this element, but I had not). It is this: When defining a search by entering words,
DBGL does not let you see the number of “hits.” That is a big negative, and since both products are using essentially the same Folio engine, this lack of “hits information” has to be an omission on DB’s part.

What I mean by not showing you the hits is this: Say you want to find the original quotation in Parley P. Pratt’s biography where he recounts Joseph’s experience in the jail at Richmond, Missouri, when he rebukes the guards and calls them “fiends of the infernal pit.” With both products, I select a search of the entire database and type in “fiends.” “The IBCL product then informs me that I have 143 hits, or, there are 143 references where “fiends” appears. Then, following “fiends,” I will type in “infernal.” Again, IBCL tells me I now have 30 hits. In other words, the combination of “fiends” and “infernal” occurring within a few words of each other appears in the entire database only 30 times. With the IB product I can tell that I am narrowing the search. With the DB product, which is not showing me hits as I type, I have no idea whether or by how much I am narrowing the search. Finally, I will type in “pit.” IBCL now tells me I have only 25 hits. I will execute the search by clicking on the “Search” button, and the first instance of this hit is shown on-screen almost as soon as my finger comes off the mouse button. Executing the search on DBGL just starts the search. I now have to wait (and watch a little window pop up that says “searching”) for a lengthy search to be made before the actual text window comes up with the first hit. It is only then that I see how many hits occurred and which hit I am viewing. While the DB product does show me a window with a line listing of the hits, I have to wait a long time to see it, and I do not enjoy the advantage of having the statistics available to narrow my search. To anyone who uses the search tools, this is a large disadvantage.

IB also offers one more “qualifying field,” but in practice being able to enter words that must not be in the search is not a feature that I often use.

One thing I wish IB would do is allow you to conduct a search, find your results, then go back to the search window and pick up where you left off. You cannot do this with IB. With DB’s advanced search (again, they toggle over to Folio for this), you have a hit counter and the ability to recall easily what your last several
searches were, but the search itself is harder to use and not as versatile in that you cannot apply a search set (as you can in IB). DB’s simple search also allows you to recall the parameters of several of the most recent searches—a very powerful tool.

One search feature that is not very well documented in DBGL can help speed up and refine searching. Using DB’s very speedy “advanced search” (this is the Folio search, not integrated into the actual DBGL searching), you cannot use search sets but you can narrow down your searching in a different way. After selecting which window you want to search (e.g., scriptures, General Authorities, other LDS authors), maximize the size of that window. This process opens up a “tree” window that allows you to see a complete list of authors and titles for that section. By clicking on various authors or titles and then selecting “checked branches” in the advanced search, you can apply a search—with hit counter—to only those authors and titles you have selected. That is not as good as a predefined or user-defined search set, but it is something!

**Bottom line:** IB has an advanced search function as a part of their application (DB has only one level of search as part of theirs). IB’s easy-to-use advanced search provides a hit counter and is very powerful. Going to DB’s advanced search takes you to Folio; the Folio advanced search is very fast and has a hit counter, but is not as versatile and is somewhat less user-friendly. DB’s simple search, though slow, allows you to recall your several most recent sets of search parameters and offers search selections that make it powerful.

**Two Windows On-Screen, Different Items in Each**

If you want to put up two different things at the same time on your screen, DBGL wins the prize. IBCL has some of this function available, but DBGL really makes creative use of it. With DBGL you can put either the KJV or the JST up in one window, and any other book or study material in the second window. That is a very powerful study tool. You can read any book and have the scriptures up alongside at the same time. Moreover, you can click anywhere in the scriptures you are reading and see cross-references to
those scriptures in another window (both products do this, but I think the DB product does it better).

One powerful tool the DBGL provides is the ability to put the KJV on one side of the screen and the JST on the other and then “synchronize” them so that as you scroll in the one version, the other moves with it. You can do some interesting studying and comparing in that way. Very impressive.

**Bottom line:** For comparative viewing, especially between the KJV and the JST, DBGL is the choice.

**Composing with a Word Processor**

Each product has its own set of advantages in this area. Each product allows you to manipulate selected text. But with IBCL you can choose which word processor you prefer (and it must be installed as a separate application on your PC) and have that automatically open when you want to bring text over for printing or writing. With DBGL you can select text and bring it to your own word processor, but not automatically. However, DBGL has a fairly useful word processor (“composer”) built in, so if you do not have a favorite word processor you do not have to leave the program to write your talk or print your text. DBGL also provides a “preprint” function that allows you to gather all your selected sections and quotations in one place and then easily rearrange the order and content before sending them to the print program or to your own personal word processor.

**Bottom line:** Both products offer good ways to write and print. DB’s function is easy and versatile; IB’s has more flexibility with regard to external word-processing applications.

**Features**

In three feature areas, I think DBGL clearly offers the better choice.

1. DBGL offers twelve “highlighters,” IBCL offers six. With the ability to highlight text (much like light underlining or highlighting text in your scriptures or other books), you can create more categories of highlighted text in the standard package with DB’s product. For those who highlight, this could have been a big advantage with DB, but apparently the designers did not complete
the function very well. DBGL does not allow you to name the highlighters. If you want to try to remember what 12 colors each mean in your highlighting system, have at it. The simple ability to rename a highlighter from “yellow” to Basics, My Favorites, or Repentance would complete this feature and make it a real advantage. (DB says that will be one of the first things provided in an update.)

2. DBGL’s Explorer is marvelous. As a study tool, or just for light reading on a subject, the GL Explorer allows you to cover a lot of ground very efficiently and quickly. It is a great tool.

3. DBGL’s “Virtual Encyclopedia” is another powerful tool, with a broader view (pulling more reference material into play) than IB’s presentation of the Encyclopedia of Mormonism. The Virtual Encyclopedia helps you learn about one subject or topic very quickly.

**Bottom line:** DBGL probably gives you more state-of-the-art tools for looking up topics and learning about them, and for marking down and saving areas of interest (with the exception of not being able to name the highlighters yet).

**Storage Media**

IBCL comes on four CDs, DBGL on three. Discounting the one install and utility disk for both products, you end up with three CDs on IB’s product and two CDs on DB’s product. IBCL has a lot more media-related material such as pictures, graphics, maps, music, and so forth. They take a separate CD just for that. DBGL, while not concentrating on the media-related items, offers a much smoother means of transitioning between the CDs since you need to change them. All the General Authorities and LDS authors are on one CD, while the LDS periodicals and all the “classics” are on the other. IBCL’s scriptures and LDS topics are on one CD, the media-related items on the second, and the classics on the third. (With IBCL, you do not have to install the indexes for the classics and graphic items if you do not want to. DBGL gives you no choice.)

**Bottom line:** If you are going to be dipping into classics and other nonspecific LDS matter, you can navigate between disks
more easily with the DB product. The IB product has more pictures, maps, and music.

Special Features

One special feature in the DBGL, which is treated as a bonus (registering the product activates the feature), is the LDS Quotation Library. This stand-alone application is very useful if you want to see what General Authorities and others have said on a variety of subjects. These are preexcerpted quotations arranged for topical access by people you would probably feel quite comfortable referring to in a church talk or a report. It is a very nice little product all by itself.

Bottom line: Both products have some nice extra features, but this one in DBGL stands out as exceptional.

Features Needed or Missing

The "old" IBCL '97 gave the user the power of creating pop-up links and hyperlinks from one place in the scriptures to another. This was a very powerful feature, which neither IBCL nor DBGL has. I am told that IBCL tried to put that feature in, but there were reliability problems between it and the new Folio engine. I was also told that they think this is an important feature and are aiming to restore it. I do not know what DB is planning to do. Either package would be more powerful if this were included.

Bottom line: Here is an area where some very visible improvement could be made.

Palm Pilot Users

If you are a Palm Pilot user, take note that the IBCL product does a much better job. IB gives you a separate, dedicated reader application that runs on your Pilot. You can install from a fairly large library of preformatted books (all the scriptures are included, plus many books), and the Pilot reader application allows you to navigate and search the material you have installed very easily and intuitively. DBGL includes AportisDoc as a very nice reader application for the Pilot, but bringing over text from DBGL
is not as easy as with IBCL; also, AportisDoc does not let you navigate nearly as easily as with the IBCL reader.

**Bottom line:** If you use a Palm Pilot, the package that IBCL supplies is so much better as to make comparison meaningless.

### Conflicts with Other Software

As I write this (January 1999) DGBL still has one minor conflict with WordPerfect. Installing DGBL puts a file (MFC32.dll) in your Windows system directory that is a newer version than the one WordPerfect (version 8) expects to see. The DGBL install overwrites any previous version that was there. The newer file installed by DGBL effectively disables the template function in WordPerfect, as well as causing a few minor problems with the Corel desktop application manager (DAD).

DGBL has a yet-newer version of MFC32.dll—which they make available to any interested user (and may by now be shipping on the product CDs)—that corrects the problem with WordPerfect templates. As of this moment, however, there is still the DAD conflict, but it is the only one I know of. I am sure DB will have this fixed before long.

### Personal Conclusions

There will be champions for both products. Notwithstanding the large amount of disk space required, I will run both products on my machines for now.

If I had to choose only one product, the choice would be very difficult. I vacillate back and forth, depending on what I am doing at the moment. I think I like much of DGBL better, but the price you have to pay in lack of speed and in much less efficient searching is a big one. If DB can figure out how to make their application run faster (IB made large improvements in their second release, and DB could follow suit) and put a hits counter in their basic search function, then I think the nod would go to DGBL.

Watching both of these products as they put out their next versions will be very enlightening. In the meantime, I will continue to play with both.
Ten-Year Index to
FARMS Review of Books
1989–98

By Author

The entries in this section are listed by author, title, reviewer (in parentheses), volume number, and beginning page number.

Ankerberg, John, *Behind the Mask of Mormonism* (Daniel C. Peterson), 8/2:60.
Aston, Michaela Knoth, *In the Footsteps of Lehi: New Evidence for Lehi’s Journey across Arabia to Bountiful* (L. Ara Norwood), 7/1:85.


Black, Susan Easton, *Finding Christ through the Book of Mormon* (Camille Williams), 1:3.


Brodie, Fawn McKay, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet* (Louis Midgley), 8/2:147.
INDEX BY AUTHOR, 1989–98


Card, Orson Scott, *The Folk of the Fringe; The Tales of Alvin Maker: Seventh Son; The Red Prophet; Prentice Alvin* (Eugene England), 2:56.


Charles, Melodie Moench, “*Book of Mormon Christology*” (Robert L. Millet), 6/1:187; (Ross David Baron), 7/1:91; (Martin S. Tanner), 7/2:6.


Clark, Robert S., *Fathers and Sons in the Book of Mormon* (Daniel McKinlay), 4:24; (Clark Johnson), 4:29.


Farkas, John R., *Mormonism: Changes, Contradictions, and Errors* (Craig L. Foster), 9/1:51.


Fingerhut, Eugene R., *Explorers of Pre-Columbian America?: The Diffusionist-Inventionist Controversy* (William J. Hamblin), 7/1:120.


Garr, Arnold K., *Christopher Columbus: A Latter-day Saint Perspective* (Daniel C. Peterson), 8/1:104.


Gileadi, Avraham, *The Book of Isaiah: A New Translation with Interpretive Keys from the Book of Mormon* (Bruce D. Porter), 4:40; (Donald W. Parry), 4:52.


Goff, Alan, "A Hermeneutic of Sacred Texts: Historicism, Revisionism, Positivism, and the Bible and Book of Mormon" (Daniel B. McKinlay), 2:86.


Hales, Robert E., *How to Hiss Forth with the Book of Mormon* (Donald W. Parry), 3:84.


Hales, Sandra L., *How to Hiss Forth with the Book of Mormon* (Donald W. Parry), 3:84.


Hauck, F. Richard, *Deciphering the Geography of the Book of Mormon* (John Clark), 1:20; (William J. Hamblin), 1:71; (Mark V. Withers), 1:78.


Heimerdinger, Chris, *Gadiantons and the Silver Sword: A Novel* (Brent Hall), 4:77.


Heimerdinger, Chris, *Tennis Shoes and the Feathered Serpent* (Chris Crowe), 8/1:176.

Helland, Dean Maurice, *Meeting the Book of Mormon Challenge in Chile* (Louis Midgley), 5:116.

Hemmingway, Donald W., *Christianity in America before Columbus?* (Bruce W. Warren), 2:98.


Hobby, June M., Angular Chronology: The Precolumbian Dating of Ancient America (V. Garth Norman), 8/1:112; (Bruce W. Warren), 8/1:118.

Hobby, Michael M., Angular Chronology: The Precolumbian Dating of Ancient America (V. Garth Norman), 8/1:112; (Bruce W. Warren), 8/1:118.


Horton, George A., Keys to Successful Scripture Study (Patricia Gunter Karamesines), 3:86.

Hullinger, Robert N., Joseph Smith's Response to Skepticism (Gary F. Novak), 7/1:139.


Johnson, Eric, Questions to Ask Your Mormon Friend: Challenging the Claims of Latter-day Saints in a Constructive Manner (D. Charles Pyle), 8/2:231.

Johnson, Eric, Questions to Ask Your Mormon Friend: Effective Ways to Challenge a Mormon’s Arguments without Being Offensive (LeIsle Jacobson), 7/1:155.

Johnson, Sherrie, My First Scripture Stories (Elaine A. Andelin), 8/2:375.

Keller, Roger R., Book of Mormon Authors: Their Words and Messages (John A. Tvedtnes), 9/2:16.


Larson, Charles M., . . . *By His Own Hand upon Papyrus: A New Look at the Joseph Smith Papyri* (John Gee and John L. Sorenson), 4:93; (Michael D. Rhodes), 4:120.


Ludlow, Daniel H., *How to Get the Most from the Book of Mormon* (cassette tapes) (Kay P. Edwards), 8/1:168.

Lundquist, John M., ed., *By Study and Also by Faith*, vol. 2 (Gregory Dundas), 4:127.


McKeever, Bill, *Questions to Ask Your Mormon Friend: Effective Ways to Challenge a Mormon's Arguments without Being Offensive* (LeIsle Jacobson), 7/1:155.


Metcalfe, Brent Lee, “Apologetic and Critical Assumptions about Book of Mormon Historicity” (William J. Hamblin), 6/1:434; (Alan Goff), 7/1:170.


Metcalfe, Brent Lee, ed., *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon: Explorations in Critical Methodology* (Davis Bitton), 6/1:1; (John A. Tvedtnes), 6/1:8; (John Gee), 6/1:51; (Royal Skousen), 6/1:121; (John W. Welch), 6/1:145; (Kevin Christensen), 7/2:144; (John Wm. Maddox), 8/1:1.


Millet, Robert L., *By Grace Are We Saved* (John Gee), 2:100.

Millet, Robert L., *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon: vol. 1, First and Second Nephi; and vol. 2, Jacob through Mosiah* (Louis Midgley), 1:92.

Millet, Robert L., *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon: vol. 3, Alma through Helaman* (Donald W. Parry), 4:139; (J. Michael Allen), 4:147.


Miner, Alan C., *Step by Step through the Book of Mormon* (Fred W. Nelson), 9/1:25.


Myers, Katherine, *The Lehi Tree: A Novel* (Shirley S. Ricks), 9/1:175.


Nibley, Hugh W., *Since Cumorah* (Todd Compton), 1:114; (John A. Tvedtnes), 2:175.


Nyman, Monte S., ed., *The Book of Mormon: Jacob through Words of Mormon, To Learn with Joy* (Scott Woolley), 3:106.


Parry, Donald W., *The Book of Mormon Text Reformatted according to Parallelistic Patterns* (Jo Ann H. Seely), 5:203.


Pearson, Carol Lynn, “Could Feminism Have Saved the Nephites?” (Kevin and Shauna Christensen), 10/2:9.


Poulson, Clair, *Samuel, Moroni's Young Warrior* (cassette tapes) (Deborah Farmer), 8/1:178.


Quinn, D. Michael, *Same-Sex Dynamics among Nineteenth-Century Americans: A Mormon Example* (Klaus J. Hansen), 10/1:132; (George L. Mitton and Rhett S. James), 10/1:141.


Reed, David A., *Mormonism: Changes, Contradictions, and Errors* (Craig L. Foster), 9/1:51.


Ricks, Eldin, *Eldin Ricks’s Thorough Concordance of the LDS Standard Works* (Gary P. Gillum), 8/1:172.

Ricks, Stephen D., ed., *By Study and Also by Faith*, vol. 2 (Gregory Dundas), 4:127.

Ricks, Stephen D., ed., *The Allegory of the Olive Tree: The Olive, the Bible, and Jacob 5* (Terry B. Ball), 8/1:61.


Sampson, Joe, *Written by the Finger of God: A Testimony of Joseph Smith’s Translations* (Frederick M. Huchel), 6/2:150; (John Gee), 7/1:219.


Silverman, David P., ed., *For His Ka: Essays Offered in Memory of Klaus Baer* (John Gee), 8/2:46.


Smith, George D., ed., *Faithful History: Essays on Writing Mormon History* (Gary F. Novak), 5:231.


Tanner, Jerald, “Joseph Smith’s Use of the Apocrypha” (John A. Tvedtnes and Matthew Roper), 8/2:326.


Tanner, Sandra, “Joseph Smith’s Use of the Apocrypha” (John A. Tvedtnes and Matthew Roper), 8/2:326.


Tate, Charles D., Jr., ed., *The Book of Mormon: 3 Nephi 9–30, This Is My Gospel* (Jennifer Clark Lane), 6/2:134.


Tate, Charles D., Jr., ed., *The Book of Mormon: Jacob through Words of Mormon, To Learn with Joy* (Scott Woolley), 3:106.


Terry, Keith, *Dead Sea Scrolls and the Mormon Connection* (Dana M. Pike), 9/2:88.


Thorne, Melvin J., ed., *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon* (Cherry B. Silver), 4:166.


Treat, Raymond C., ed., *Recent Book of Mormon Developments: Articles from the Zarahemla Record*, vol. 2 (Alison V. P. Coutts), 7/2:253.


Van Horn, Mark, *Book of Mormon Stories* (Charles D. Bush), 9/1:159.


Vogel, Dan, “Anti-Universalist Rhetoric in the Book of Mormon” (Martin Tanner), 6/1:420.


Walker, John Phillip, ed., *Dale Morgan on Early Mormonism: Correspondence and a New History* (Gary F. Novak), 8/1:122.


Welch, John W., ed., *The Allegory of the Olive Tree: The Olive, the Bible, and Jacob 5* (Terry B. Ball), 8/1:61.


Weldon, John, *Behind the Mask of Mormonism* (Daniel C. Peterson), 8/2:60.


White, James, “Of Cities and Swords: The Impossible Task of Mormon Apologetics” (Matthew Roper), 9/1:146.


Williams, Jeff, *Who Was the Pharaoh of the Exodus?* (John Gee), 9/1:43.


Wilson, Timothy B., *Mormon’s Story: An Adaptation Based on the Book of Mormon* (Camille S. Williams), 7/1:3.


Yorgason, Blaine, *To Mothers and Fathers from the Book of Mormon* (Lynn Nations Johnson), 4:258.


Yorgason, Brenton G., *To Mothers and Fathers from the Book of Mormon* (Lynn Nations Johnson), 4:258.
By Title

The entries in this section are listed by title, author, reviewer (in parentheses), volume number, and beginning page number.

About the Three Nephites, by C. Douglas Beardall and Jewell N. Beardall (Richard L. Hill), 5:87.
The Allegory of the Olive Tree: The Olive, the Bible, and Jacob 5, edited by Stephen D. Ricks and John W. Welch (Terry B. Ball), 8/1:61.
American Religion: The Emergence of the Post-Christian Nation, by Harold Bloom (Alan Goff), 5:96.
Ancient American Indians: Their Origins, Civilizations and Old World Connections, by Paul R. Cheesman and Millie F. Cheesman (Martin Raish), 4:21.
Angular Chronology: The Precolumbian Dating of Ancient America, by Michael M. Hobby, June M. Hobby, and Troy J. Smith (V. Garth Norman), 8/1:112; (Bruce W. Warren), 8/1:118.
Answering Mormon Scholars: A Response to Criticism Raised by Mormon Defenders, by Jerald and Sandra Tanner (Matthew Roper), 9/1:87.
“Anti-Universalist Rhetoric in the Book of Mormon,” by Dan Vogel (Martin Tanner), 6/1:420.
“Apologetic and Critical Assumptions about Book of Mormon Historicity,” by Brent Lee Metcalfe (William J. Hamblin), 6/1:434; (Alan Goff), 7/1:170.

An Approach to the Book of Mormon, by Hugh W. Nibley (Todd Compton), 1:114; (William J. Hamblin), 2:119.

Archaeology and the Book of Mormon, by Jerald Tanner and Sandra Tanner (William J. Hamblin), 5:250.

Are the Mormon Scriptures Reliable? by Wesley P. Walters and Harry L. Ropp (Diane E. Wirth), 2:209.

Ashamed of Joseph: Mormon Foundations Crumble, by Charles and Steven Crane (LeIsle Jacobson), 8/1:80.

Behind the Mask of Mormonism, by John Ankerberg and John Weldon (Daniel C. Peterson), 8/2:60.

The Best Kept Secrets in the Book of Mormon, by Loftes Tryk (Daniel C. Peterson), 3:231.

Bible II (Royal Skousen), 6/2:1.

The Bible and the Book of Mormon: Connecting Links, by John E. Enslen (Melvin J. Thorne), 10/2:1.

The Book of Isaiah: A New Translation with Interpretive Keys from the Book of Mormon, by Avraham Gileadi (Bruce D. Porter), 4:40; (Donald W. Parry), 4:52..

The Book of Mormon: 3 Nephi 9–30, This Is My Gospel, edited by Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate Jr. (Jennifer Clark Lane), 6/2:134.


The Book of Mormon and the Constitution, by H. Verlan Andersen (Ralph C. Hancock), 9/2:1.

Book of Mormon Authors: Their Words and Messages, by Roger R. Keller (John A. Tvedtnes), 9/2:16.


“Book of Mormon Christology,” by Melodie Moench Charles (Robert L. Millet), 6/1:187; (Martin S. Tanner), 7/26; (Ross David Baron), 7/1:91.

Book of Mormon Dictionary, by George Reynolds (Bruce A. Van Orden), 8/1:51.
Book of Mormon Insights: Points to Ponder from Every Chapter, by William N. Partridge (Melvin J. Thorne), 10/2:1.
The Book of Mormon: Jacob through Words of Mormon, To Learn with Joy, edited by Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate Jr. (Scott Woolley), 3:106.
The Book of Mormon Text Reformatted According to Parallelistic Patterns, by Donald W. Parry (Jo Ann H. Seely), 5:203.
Book of Mormon Studybase (Alan C. Ashton), 8/2:377.
Building Faith with the Book of Mormon, by Glenn L. Pearson and Reid E. Bankhead (Richard I. Winwood), 9/1:31.
By Grace Are We Saved, by Robert L. Millet (John Gee), 2:100.

... By His Own Hand upon Papyrus: A New Look at the Joseph Smith Papyri, by Charles M. Larson (John Gee and John L. Sorenson), 4:93; (Michael D. Rhodes), 4:120.

By Study and Also by Faith, vol. 2, edited by John M. Lundquist and Stephen D. Ricks (Gregory Dundas), 4:127.

The Children of Noah: Jewish Seafaring in Ancient Times, by Raphael Patai (John A. Tvedtnes), 10/2:147.


Christianity in America Before Columbus? by Donald W. Hemmingway (Bruce W. Warren), 2:98.


Christopher Columbus: A Latter-day Saint Perspective, by Arnold K. Garr (Daniel C. Peterson), 8/1:104.


A Comprehensive Annotated Book of Mormon Bibliography, edited by Donald W. Parry, Jeannette W. Miller, and Sandra A. Thorne (Richard D. Van Orden), 9/2:33.

Converted to Christ through the Book of Mormon, by Eugene England (Susan Easton Black), 2:74.


"Could Feminism Have Saved the Nephites?" by Carol Lynn Pearson (Kevin and Shauna Christensen), 10/2:9.


Dale Morgan on Early Mormonism: Correspondence and a New History, edited by John Phillip Walker (Gary F. Novak), 8/1:122.

INDEX BY TITLE, 1989–98


Dead Sea Scrolls and the Mormon Connection, by Keith Terry and Stephen Biddulph (Dana M. Pike), 9/2:88.

Deciphering the Geography of the Book of Mormon, by F. Richard Hauck (John Clark), 1:20; (William J. Hamblin), 1:71; (Mark V. Withers), 1:78.


Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon: vol. 1, First and Second Nephi, by Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet (Louis Midgley), 1:92.


Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon: vol. 3, Alma through Helaman, by Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet (Donald W. Parry), 4:139; (J. Michael Allen), 4:147.

Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon: vol. 4, Third Nephi through Moroni, by Joseph Fielding McConkie, Robert L. Millet, and Brent L. Top (Darrell L. Matthews), 5:183.


The Easy-to-Read Book of Mormon: A Learning Companion, by Lynn Matthews Anderson (Camille S. Williams), 7/1:3; (Marvin Folsom), 7/1:13.

Eldin Ricks’s Thorough Concordance of the LDS Standard Works, by Eldin Ricks (Gary P. Gillum), 8/1:172.


An Ensign to All People: The Sacred Message and Mission of the Book of Mormon, by Monte S. Nyman (L. Gary Lambert), 1:121.


Everything You Ever Wanted to Know about Mormonism, by John Ankerberg and John Weldon (Daniel C. Peterson), 5:1.

Explorers of Pre-Columbian America?: The Diffusionist-Inventionist Controversy, by Eugene R. Fingerhut (William J. Hamblin), 7/1:120.


Faithful History: Essays on Writing Mormon History, edited by George D. Smith (Gary F. Novak), 5:231.

Fathers and Sons in the Book of Mormon by E. Douglas Clark and Robert S. Clark (Daniel B. McKinlay), 4:24; (Clark Johnson), 4:29.


Finding Christ through the Book of Mormon, by Susan Easton Black (Camille Williams), 1:3.

First Nephi: Study Book of Mormon (Larry K. Smith), 7/2:3.

Folk of the Fringe, by Orson Scott Card (Eugene England), 2:56.

For His Ka: Essays Offered in Memory of Klaus Baer, edited by David P. Silverman (John Gee), 8/2:46.


Gadiantons and the Silver Sword: A Novel, by Chris Heimerdinger (Brent Hall), 4:77.


The God-Inspired Language of the Book of Mormon, by Wade Brown (Donald W. Parry), 1:5; (David P. Wright), 1:10.


Heroes from the Book of Mormon (Cristie B. Gardner), 9/1:7.


How to Get the Most from the Book of Mormon (cassette tapes), by Daniel H. Ludlow (Kay P. Edwards), 8/1:168.

How to Hiss Forth with the Book of Mormon, by Robert E. Hales and Sandra L. Hales (Donald W. Parry), 3:84.

If Men Were Angels: The Book of Mormon, Christ and the Constitution, by Brad E. Hainsworth (Ralph C. Hancock), 9/2:1.
I Know Thee by Name: Hebrew Roots of Lehi-ite Non-Biblical Names in the Book of Mormon, by Joseph R. Salonimer and Norrene V. Salonimer (John A. Tvedtnes), 8/2:34.

Indian Origins and the Book of Mormon, by Dan Vogel (Kevin Christensen), 2:214.


In the Footsteps of Lehi: New Evidence for Lehi’s Journey across Arabia to Bountiful, by Warren P. Aston and Michaela Knoth Aston (L. Ara Norwood), 7/1:85.


Inventing Mormonism: Tradition and the Historical Record by H. Michael Marquardt and Wesley P. Walters (Richard L. Bushman), 6/2:122; (Larry C. Porter), 7/2:123.


Isaiah Made Easier, by David J. Ridges (Terrence L. Szink), 4:164.


Joseph Smith’s Response to Skepticism, by Robert N. Hullinger (Gary F. Novak), 7/1:139.

“Joseph Smith’s Use of the Apocrypha,” by Jerald and Sandra Tanner (John A. Tvedtnes and Matthew Roper), 8/2:326.

Keys to Successful Scripture Study, by George A. Horton (Patricia Gunter Karamesines), 3:86.
The Land of Lehi, by Paul Hedengren (John E. Clark), 8/2:1.
The Lands of Zarahemla, by E. L. Peay (Les Campbell), 6/2:139.
LDS Perspectives on the Dead Sea Scrolls, edited by Donald W. Parry and Dana M. Pike (S. Kent Brown), 10/2:141.
Legend and Lore of the Americas before 1492: An Encyclopedia of Visitors, Explorers, and Immigrants, by Ronald H. Fritze (William J. Hamblin), 7/1:120.
Lehi in the Desert, The World of the Jaredites, There Were Jaredites, by Hugh W. Nibley (Todd Compton), 1:114; (Stephen D. Ricks), 2:128; (David B. Honey), 2:143.
The Lehi Tree: A Novel, by Katherine Myers (Shirley S. Ricks), 9/1:175.
Letters to a Mormon Elder, by James R. White (L. Ara Norwood), 5:317.
El Libro de Mormon ante la critica, translated and edited by Josué Sánchez (Terrence L. Szink), 5:223.
Light from the Dust: A Photographic Exploration into the Ancient World of the Book of Mormon, by Scot Facer Proctor and Maurine Jensen Proctor (Fred W. Nelson), 6/2:146.
The Literary Message of Isaiah, by Avraham Gileadi (David Rolph Seely), 8/1:69.
Little Known Evidences of the Book of Mormon, by Brenton G. Yorgason (Paul Y. Hoskisson), 2:258; (John A. Tvedtines), 2:260.


Meeting the Book of Mormon Challenge in Chile, Dean Maurice Helland (Louis Midgley), 5:116.

Meeting the Mormon Challenge with Love, by Leon Cornforth (John A. Tvedtnes), 10/1:264.

The Messiah in Ancient America, by Bruce W. Warren and Thomas Stuart Ferguson (Terrence L. Szink), 1:132.


Mormonism on the Internet (Gregory Taggart), 9/1:161.

Mormonism on the Internet II (Gregory Taggart), 10/2:200.

Mormonism, by Kurt Van Gorden (Daniel C. Peterson), 8/1:95; (L. Ara Norwood), 9/2:164.

Mormonism: Changes, Contradictions, and Errors, by John R. Farkas and David A. Reed (Craig L. Foster), 9/1:51.

Mormonism: Shadow or Reality? by Jerald Tanner and Sandra Tanner (Matthew Roper), 4:169.

Mormonism: The Prophet, the Book, and the Cult, by Peter Bartley (Daniel C. Peterson), 2:31.


The Mormon Puzzle: Understanding and Witnessing to Latter-day Saints (Daniel C. Peterson), 10/1:12.

Mormons and Jews: Early Mormon Theologies of Israel, by Steven Epperson (Frank F. Judd Jr. and Terrence L. Szink), 7/2:106.
Mormons and the Bible: The Place of the Latter-day Saints in American Religion, by Philip L. Barlow (Marvin Folsom), 4:1.

Mormons Answered Verse by Verse, by David A. Reed and John R. Farkas (Keith J. Wilson), 8/1:92.

Mormons on the Internet, by Lauramaery Gold (Gregory Taggart), 10/2:206.

Mormon's Story: An Adaptation Based on the Book of Mormon, by Timothy B. Wilson (Camille S. Williams), 7/1:3.


The Most Correct Book: Why the Book of Mormon Is the Keystone Scripture, by Monte S. Nyman (Brian M. Hauglid), 4:155.


My First Scripture Stories, by Sherrie Johnson (Elaine A. Andelin), 8/2:375.


New Approaches to the Book of Mormon: Explorations in Critical Methodology, by Brent Lee Metcalfe (Davis Bitton), 6/1:1; (John A. Tvedtnes), 6/1:8; (John Gee), 6/1:51; (Royal Skousen), 6/1:121; (John W. Welch), 6/1:145; (Kevin Christensen), 7/2:144; (John Wm. Maddox), 8/1:1.

No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet, by Fawn McKay Brodie (Louis Midgley), 8/2:147.

Norman the Nephite's and Larry the Lamanite's Book of Mormon Time Line, by Pat Bagley (Ted L. Gibbons), 8/2:373.

Nurturing Faith through the Book of Mormon (Marilyn Higbee Walker), 9/1:28.

"Of Cities and Swords: The Impossible Task of Mormon Apologetics," by James White (Matthew Roper), 9/1:146.


Overview of the Book of Mormon (Larry K. Smith), 7/2:1.


The Power of the Word: Saving Doctrines from the Book of Mormon, by Robert L. Millet (Dennis H. Karpowitz), 8/2:25.

Pre-Columbian Contact with the Americas across the Oceans: An Annotated Bibliography, by John L. Sorenson and Martin H. Raish (William J. Hamblin), 3:154.

Prentice Alvin, by Orson Scott Card (Eugene England), 2:56.

“Priority of Mosiah: A Prelude to Book of Mormon Exegesis,” by Brent Lee Metcalfe (Matthew Roper), 6/1:362.

The Prophetic Book of Mormon, by Hugh W. Nibley (Daniel C. Peterson), 2:164.

Quest for the Gold Plates: Thomas Stuart Ferguson’s Archaeological Search for the Book of Mormon, by Stan Larson (John Gee), 10/2:158.

Questions to Ask Your Mormon Friend: Challenging the Claims of Latter-day Saints in a Constructive Manner, by Bill McKeever and Eric Johnson (D. Charles Pyle), 8/2:231.

Questions to Ask Your Mormon Friend: Effective Ways to Challenge a Mormon’s Arguments without Being Offensive, by Bill McKeever and Eric Johnson (LeIsle Jacobson), 7/1:155.

A Reading Guide to the Book of Mormon, by David H. Mulholland (Daniel W. Graham), 2:118.


Rediscovering the Book of Mormon, edited by John L. Sorenson and Melvin J. Thorne (Cherry B. Silver), 4:166.
The Red Prophet, by Orson Scott Card (Eugene England), 2:56.
Reexploring the Book of Mormon: The F.A.R.M.S. Updates, edited by John W. Welch (David Rolph Seely), 5:305.
The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History, by Rodney Stark (Bruce A. Chadwick), 10/2:156.
Same-Sex Dynamics among Nineteenth-Century Americans: A Mormon Example, by D. Michael Quinn (Klaus J. Hansen), 10/1:132; (George L. Mitton and Rhett S. James), 10/1:141.
Samuel, Gadianton’s Foe (cassette tapes), by Clair Poulson (Deborah Farmer), 8/1:178.
Samuel, Moroni’s Young Warrior (cassette tapes), by Clair Poulson (Deborah Farmer), 8/1:178.
Samuel, Moroni’s Young Warrior, by Clair Poulson (Richard H. Cracroft), 6/2:118.
The Sanctity of Dissent, by Paul Toscano (William J. Hamblin), 7/1:298.
Seventh Son, by Orson Scott Card (Eugene England), 2:56.
Since Cumorah, by Hugh W. Nibley (Todd Compton), 1:114; (John A. Tvedtnes), 2:175.
Southwestern American Indian Rock Art and the Book of Mormon, by James R. Harris, Sr. (Stephen E. Thompson), 4:65.

Step by Step through the Book of Mormon, by Alan C. Miner (Fred W. Nelson), 9/1:25.


Strangers in Paradox: Exploration in Mormon Theology, by Margaret Toscano and Paul Toscano (Brian M. Hauglid), 6/2:250.


Studies in Scripture: vol. 8, Alma 30 to Moroni, edited by Kent P. Jackson (Stephen D. Ricks), 1:89.


Tennis Shoes among the Nephites: A Novel, by Chris Heimerdinger (Elouise Bell), 2:96.

Tennis Shoes and the Feathered Serpent, by Chris Heimerdinger (Chris Crowe), 8/1:176.


Timely Truths from the Book of Mormon, by Allan K. Burgess (Amy L. Livingstone), 9/1:4.


To Mothers and Fathers from the Book of Mormon, by Blaine Yorgason and Brenton G. Yorgason (Lynn Nations Johnson), 4:258.

The Truth about Mormonism: A Former Adherent Analyzes the LDS Faith, by Weldon Langfield (Matthew Roper), 4:78.
Truths from the Earth, vol. 2: The Story of the Creations to the Floods, by David T. Harris (John A. Tvedtines), 9/2:68.


View of the Hebrews, by Ethan Smith (Andrew H. Hedges), 9/1:63.


Warfare in the Book of Mormon, edited by Stephen D. Ricks and William J. Hamblin (David B. Honey), 3:118; (Kurt Weiland), 3:141.


Who Was the Pharaoeh of the Exodus? by Jeff Williams (John Gee), 9/1:43.


By Reviewer

The entries in this section are listed by reviewer, author, title, volume number, and beginning page number.


Ball, Terry B., review of Stephen D. Ricks and John W. Welch, eds., *The Allegory of the Olive Tree: The Olive, the Bible, and Jacob 5*, 8/1:61.
Bell, Elouise, review of Chris Heimerdinger, Tennis Shoes among the Nephites: A Novel, 2:96.
Black, Susan Easton, review of Eugene England, Converted to Christ through the Book of Mormon, 2:74.
Brown, S. Kent, review of Donald W. Parry and Dana M. Pike, eds., LDS Perspectives on the Dead Sea Scrolls, 10/2:141.
Bushman, Richard L., review of H. Michael Marquardt and Wesley P. Walters, Inventing Mormonism: Tradition and the Historical Record, 6/2:122.
Christensen, Kevin, review of Brent Lee Metcalf, ed., New Approaches to the Book of Mormon, 7/2:144.
Christensen, Kevin, review of Carol Lynn Pearson, "Could Feminism Have Saved the Nephites?" 10/2:9.
Christensen, Kevin, review of Dan Vogel, Indian Origins and the Book of Mormon, 2:214.
Christensen, Shauna, review of Carol Lynn Pearson, “Could Feminism Have Saved the Nephites?” 10/2:9.
Clark, John E., review of Paul Hedengren, The Land of Lehi, 8/2:1.
Clark, John, review of Delbert W. Curtis, Christ in North America, 6/2:79.
Clark, John, review of F. Richard Hauck, Deciphering the Geography of the Book of Mormon, 1:20.
Compton, Todd, review of Hugh W. Nibley, Lehi in the Desert, The World of the Jaredites, There Were Jaredites; An Approach to the Book of Mormon; Since Cumorah, 1:114.
Cracroft, Richard H., review of Chris Heimerdinger, Daniel and Nephi, 6/2:118.
Cracroft, Richard H., review of Clair Poulson, Samuel, Moroni’s Young Warrior, 6/2:118.
Crowe, Chris, review of Chris Heimerdinger, Tennis Shoes and the Feathered Serpent, 8/1:176.
Dundas, Gregory, review of John M. Lundquist and Stephen D. Ricks, eds., *By Study and Also by Faith*, vol. 2, 4:127.


Gardner, Cristie B., review of *Heroes from the Book of Mormon*, 9/1:7.


Gee, John, review of Charles M. Larson, *... By His Own Hand upon Papyrus: A New Look at the Joseph Smith Papyri*, 4:93.


Gee, John, review of David P. Silverman, ed., *For His Ka: Essays Offered in Memory of Klaus Baer*, 8/2:46.
Gee, John, review of Jeff Williams, Who Was the Pharaoh of the Exodus? 9/1:43.
Gee, John, review of Joe Sampson, Written by the Finger of God: Testimony of Joseph Smith’s Translations, 7/1:219.
Gee, John, review of Robert L. Millet, By Grace Are We Saved, 2:100.
Gee, John, review of Stan Larson, Quest for the Gold Plates: Thomas Stuart Ferguson’s Archaeological Search for the Book of Mormon, 10/2:158.
Gibbons, Ted L., review of Pat Bagley, Norman the Nephite’s and Larry the Lamanite’s Book of Mormon Time Line, 8/2:373.
Gillum, Gary P., review of Eldin Ricks, Eldin Ricks’s Thorough Concordance of the LDS Standard Works, 8/1:172.
Graham, Daniel W., review of David H. Mulholland, A Reading Guide to the Book of Mormon, 2:118.
Hall, Brent, review of Chris Heimerdinger, Gadiantons and the Silver Sword: A Novel, 4:77.

Hamblin, William J., review of Eugene R. Fingerhut, Explorers of Pre-Columbian America?: The Diffusionist-Inventionist Controversy, 7/1:120.

Hamblin, William J., review of F. Richard Hauck, Deciphering the Geography of the Book of Mormon, 1:71.


Hamblin, William J., review of Jerald Tanner and Sandra Tanner, Archaeology and the Book of Mormon, 5:250.


Hamblin, William J., review of John L. Sorenson and Martin H. Raish, Pre-Columbian Contact with the Americas across the Oceans: An Annotated Bibliography, 3:154.


Hamblin, William J., review of Paul Toscano, The Sanctity of Dissent, 7/1:298.

Hamblin, William J., review of Ronald H. Fritze, Legend and Lore of the Americas before 1492: An Encyclopedia of Visitors, Explorers, and Immigrants, 7/1:120.

Hancock, Ralph C., review of Brad E. Hainsworth, If Men Were Angels: The Book of Mormon, Christ and the Constitution, 9/2:1.

Hancock, Ralph C., review of H. Verlan Andersen, The Book of Mormon and the Constitution, 9/2:1.

Hansen, Klaus J., review of D. Michael Quinn, Same-Sex Dynamics among Nineteenth-Century Americans: A Mormon Example, 10/1:132.

Hauglid, Brian M. review of Margaret Toscano and Paul Toscano, Strangers in Paradox: Exploration in Mormon Theology, 6/2:250.


Johnson, Lynn Nations, review of Blaine Yorgason and Brenton G. Yorgason, *To Mothers and Fathers from the Book of Mormon*, 4:258.


Mitton, George L., review of D. Michael Quinn, Same-Sex Dynamics among Nineteenth-Century Americans: A Mormon Example, 10/1:141.


Nelson, Fred W., review of Alan C. Miner, Step by Step through the Book of Mormon, 9/1:25.

Nelson, Fred W., review of Scot Facer Proctor and Maurine Jensen Proctor, Light from the Dust: A Photographic Exploration into the Ancient World of the Book of Mormon, 6/2:146.


Nibley, Tom, review of Sandra Tanner and Jerald Tanner, Covering Up the Black Hole in the Book of Mormon, 5:273.

Norman, V. Garth, review of Michael M. Hobby, June M. Hobby, and Troy J. Smith, Angular Chronology: The Precolumbian Dating of Ancient America, 8/1:112.


Norwood, L. Ara, review of Jerald Tanner and Sandra Tanner, Covering Up the Black Hole in the Book of Mormon, 3:158.

Norwood, L. Ara, review of Kurt Van Gorden, Mormonism, 9/2:164.


Novak, Gary F., review of Robert N. Hullinger, Joseph Smith's Response to Skepticism, 7/1:139.


Parry, Donald W., review of Avraham Gileadi, The Book of Isaiah: A New Translation with Interpretive Keys from the Book of Mormon, 4:52.

Parry, Donald W., review of Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon: vol. 3, Alma through Helaman, 4:139.

Parry, Donald W., review of Robert E. Hales and Sandra L. Hales, How to Hiss Forth with the Book of Mormon, 3:84.

Parry, Donald W., review of Wade Brown, The God-Inspired Language of the Book of Mormon, 1:5.

Peterson, Daniel C., review of Arnold K. Garr, Christopher Columbus: A Latter-day Saint Perspective, 8/1:104.


Peterson, Daniel C., review of John Ankerberg and John Weldon, Behind the Mask of Mormonism, 8/2:60.

Peterson, Daniel C., review of John Ankerberg and John Weldon, Everything You Ever Wanted to Know about Mormonism, 5:1.


Peterson, Daniel C., review of *The Mormon Puzzle: Understanding and Witnessing to Latter-day Saints*, 10/1:12.


INDEX BY REVIEWER, 1989–98

Raish, Martin, review of Paul R. Cheesman and Millie F.


Rhodes, Michael D., review of Charles M. Larson, . . . *By His Own Hand upon Papyrus: A New Look at the Joseph Smith Papyri*, 4:120.


Ricks, Shirley S., review of Katherine Myers, *The Lehi Tree: A Novel*, 9/1:175.


Roper, Matthew, review of Jerald and Sandra Tanner, “Joseph Smith’s Use of the Apocrypha,” 8/2:326.


Roper, Matthew, review of Jerald Tanner and Sandra Tanner, *Answering Mormon Scholars: A Response to Criticism of*
the Book “Covering Up the Black Hole in the Book of Mormon,” vol. 1, 6/2:156.


Seely, Jo Ann H., review of Donald W. Parry, *The Book of Mormon Text Reformatted according to Parallelistic Patterns*, 5:203.


Skousen, Royal, review of *Bible II*, 6/2:1.

Skousen, Royal, review of Brent Lee Metcalfe, ed., *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon*, 6/1:121.


Smith, Larry K., review of *First Nephi: Study Book of Mormon*, 7/2:3.


Smith, Larry K., review of *Overview of the Book of Mormon*, 7/2:1.


Spackman, Randall P., review of Thomas O. Moore, A Detailed Chronology of the Book of Mormon, 10/1:1.


Stirling, Mack C., review of Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate Jr., eds., The Book of Mormon: Helaman through 3 Nephi 8, According to Thy Word, 7/1:208.


Szink, Terrence L., review of David J. Ridges, Isaiah Made Easier, 4:164.


Szink, Terrence L., review of Steven Epperson, Mormons and Jews: Early Mormon Theologies of Israel, 7/2:106.

Taggart, Gregory, review of Mormonism on the Internet, 9/1:161.

Taggart, Gregory, review of Mormonism on the Internet II, 10/2:200.

Taggart, Gregory, review of Lauramaery Gold, Mormons on the Internet, 10/2:206.


Thomas, Bryan J., review of Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate Jr., eds., The Book of Mormon: Fourth Nephi through Moroni: From Zion to Destruction, 8/1:27.


Thompson, Stephen E., review of James R. Harris, Sr., Southwestern American Indian Rock Art and the Book of Mormon, 4:65.


Thorne, Melvin J., review of William N. Partridge, Book of Mormon Insights: Points to Ponder from Every Chapter, 10/2:1.


Tvedtnes, John A., review of Hugh W. Nibley, Since Cumorah, 2:175.


Tvedtnes, John A., review of Jerald Tanner and Sandra Tanner, Covering Up the Black Hole in the Book of Mormon, 3:188.

Tvedtnes, John A., review of Joseph R. Salonimer and Norren V. Salonimer, I Know Thee by Name: Hebrew Roots of Lehite Non-Biblical Names in the Book of Mormon, 8/2:34.

Tvedtnes, John A., review of Leon Cornforth, Meeting the Mormon Challenge with Love, 10/1:264.

and "Did Jesus Establish Baptism for the Dead?"
10/2:184.


Tvedtnes, John A., review of Roger R. Keller, Book of Mormon Authors: Their Words and Messages, 9/2:16.


Walker, Marilyn Higbee, review of Nurturing Faith through the Book of Mormon, 9/1:28.

Warren, Bruce W., review of Donald W. Hemmingway, Christianity in America before Columbus? 2:98.

Warren, Bruce W., review of Michael M. Hobby, June M. Hobby, and Troy J. Smith, Angular Chronology: The Precolumbian Dating of Ancient America, 8/1:118.


Welch, John W., review of Brent Lee Metcalfe, ed., New Approaches to the Book of Mormon, 6/1:145.


Williams, Camille S., review of Timothy B. Wilson, *Mormon's Story: An Adaptation Based on the Book of Mormon*, 7/1:3.

Williams, Camille, review of Susan Easton Black, *Finding Christ through the Book of Mormon*, 1:3.


Withers, Mark V., review of F. Richard Hauck, *Deciphering the Geography of the Book of Mormon*, 1:78.

Woolley, Scott, review of Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate Jr., eds., *The Book of Mormon: Jacob through Words of Mormon, To Learn with Joy*, 3:106.

### By Subject

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scripture Reference</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Corinthians 6:9-10</td>
<td>10/1:258</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Corinthians 15:22</td>
<td>10/1:62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Corinthians 15:29</td>
<td>10/1:79, 10/2:186</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertullian's interpretation of, 10/2:196</td>
<td>attempts to explain, 8/2:43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discussion of, 8/2:245-47</td>
<td>struggle of anti-Mormons with, 8/2:75 n. 37</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Corinthians 15:46, discussion of, 9/2:190</td>
<td>Abinadi, 9/1:10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1 Nephi 13:12, referring to 
Columbus, 8/1:105 | disguise of, 7/1:194 |
| 1 Peter 3:18-19, 10/2:189 | teaching of, on God and Jesus Christ, 7/1:92 |
| 1 Peter 3:19, 9/2:131-37, 10/1:79 | Abish, 10/2:14 |
| 1 Peter 3:19-22, 10/2:186 | strong deed and vision of, 10/2:16 |
| 1 Peter 4:1-5, 10/2:187 | aborigines, American, 9/1:64 |
| 1 Peter 4:6, 10/2:186 | Abraham, Book of, 2:212, 4:91-126, 6/1:40, 112, 210, 6/2:212-14, 9/2:68, 124, 125, 10/1:84, 10/2:173-78 |
| 1 Samuel in the Dead Sea Scrolls, 10/2:143 | James Harris's contributions to discussion on, 8/2:47 |
| 2 Esdras, parallels with Book of Mormon, 8/2:337, 343-46 | LDS scholarship on, 10/1:84 n. 228 |
| 2 Maccabees, parallels with Book of Mormon, 8/2:346-48 | publication of, 8/2:57 |
| 2 Peter 2:5-9, 10/2:191 | relationship to Joseph Smith Papyri, 7/1:71 |
| 3 Nephi, insights into text of, 7/2:158 n. 37 | Abraham, name of, among Egyptian documents, 7/1:19, 22-23, 28, 29 n. 35, 29-35 |
| 4 Baruch, parallels with Book of Mormon, 8/2:353-56 | Abrasax, name of, 7/1:32-34 |
| 600 B.C., as departure date for Lehi's group, 10/1:7, 1 | absolute and unchanging doctrine, belief in, 7/1:269 |
| | academic freedom at Brigham Young University, 7/1:245, 250, 264, 274 |
| | academic inquiry, limitations of, 9/2:45 |
| | academic training, 10/2:4 |
| | accuracy of key predictions, a value in evaluating paradigms, 7/2:161-73 |
| | acids of modernity, and return to Christian faith, 7/1:290 |
Adam, transgression or sin of, 8/2:28
Adam and Eve, story of, 9/2:69
Adam-God as Adam Kadmon, 8/2:317
Adams, Daniel B., 9/1:136
advocacy vs. inquiry among anti-Mormons, 9/2:199
affluence and poverty, 9/2:87
afterlife, concept of, 9/2:195
agency, 2:182, 5:347–50
use of term, 7/1:252
Alkaid, 6/1:82
Alger, Fanny, 10/2:78, 79, 85
Al-Ghazālī, 9/1:xiv, xv, 9/2:vi
Allāh
as an evil, pagan deity, 8/2:71
title of, 10/2:xix n. 9
Allred, Janice Merrill, belief of, that Father and Son are one being, 7/1:309–11
allusion, as indication of sophistication, 7/1:192–206
Alma, book of, and the Epistle to the Hebrews, 8/1:14–16
Alma, name of, 10/1:51
Alma the Elder, 9/1:10, 176
Alma the Younger, 9/1:11, 10/2:2
commandments and instructions of, to sons, 9/2:31–32
Alpha & Omega, 10/2:203
Alpha Internet Ministries, 9/1:173

Alphabet and Grammar, from the Kirtland Egyptian Papers, 7/1:219
Al-Shimas, Kamar, 9/1:129
Alter, Robert, 10/2:19
Amalickiah
death of, 10/2:66
rise of, 10/2:40
Amarna letters, 5:67–68, 73, 77
Amateurs
enthusiasm of, 10/2:1
works by, 10/2:3
Amberst Papyrus, 5:45–63
Ammon, 9/1:12, 10/2:14
Amulek, 9/1:11, 10/2:2
Amulon, 9/1:176
anachronism in the Book of Mormon
claims of, refuted, 8/1:2–3
reference to faith, hope, and charity, not an, 8/1:41–42, 42 n. 36
Anastasi archive
Egyptian nature of, 7/1:45
significance of, for the Book of Abraham, 7/1:72–74, 76
ancient Near East word category, 9/2:22
Andersen, H. Verlan, 9/2:1
Anderson, Einar, 9/2:125
Anderson, Mary “May,” 10/1:191
role of, in Primary, 10/1:192
Anderson, Richard Lloyd, 9/2:44
Andrus, Hyrum L., 9/2:79
angel, words of, to Nephi, 9/2:19
angular chronology and pre-
Columbian dating, 8/1:112
animals, 2:148, 4:206–7, 6/1:10,
29–30, 299–300, 342–48
linguistic problems in naming,
9/1:132–33
names of, 9/1:131
Ankerberg, John, 10/1:v
academic degrees of, 8/2:90–92
annotations in Book of Mormon
bibliography, 9/2:34
annunciation, 10/2:19
Anselm of Canterbury, St.,
10/2:v, vi
Anthon, Charles, 2:44, 200,
4:210–12, 5:260
and accounts of meeting with
Martin Harris, 8/1:98–99
Anthon episode, 9/2:171–72
Anthon transcript, script
of, 10/2:171
anthropomorphism, 8/2:311,
9/2:118 n. 26
anti-anti-Mormon, 9/1:88
anti-Catholic ministries,
10/1:317 n. 124, 319
anti-Christ, 1:14, 2:101,
6/1:12–13
anti-Christ doctrines, 9/2:8
anti-Christian, gospel portrayed
as, 10/1:33
anti-Christians in the Book of
Mormon, 8/2:28
anticult ideology, secular and
sectarian, 10/1:307
anticult movement, 10/1:273
anti-Mormon. See also Book of
Mormon, criticism, 1:x,
2:31–55, 110, 169, 187,
204, 3:52–80, 158–318,
4:vii–lxxv, 8–9, 78–126,
169–215, 247, 5:14, 101–2,
116–21, 126, 140, 350–54,
6/1:v–xii, 1, 117, 148, 219,
254, 524–25, 6/2:19–20,
114–17, 156–249
activism, 9/2:140
book, 9/1:61, 10/1:261
criticisms, 10/1:269
exposés, 10/1:107
individuals and agencies,
10/1:278
literature, study of, 10/1:267
ministries, 10/1:305–6
novels, 9/2:49
publications, 8/1:xlii, 8/2:61,
78, 80–84, 9/2:165
use of term, 10/1:327, 328
web sites, 9/1:172–73
web sites, mirroring of,
10/2:202
writing, 10/1:v
Anti-Mormon Almanac,
10/1:328
anti-Mormonism, 7/1:229–30,
9/2:54, 10/1:v, 274
in Cairo weekly magazine,
10/1:xix–xxiv
contemporary, 10/1:277
history of, 10/1:272
manifestations of, 10/1:271
in 19th-century American
fiction, 9/2:47
in Russian newspaper, 10/1:xi
sectarian, in 1830s and 1840s,
272
sources on, 10/1:84–85 n. 229
study of, 9/2:47
anti-Mormons, 9/2:52, 10/1:15
n. 12
assault by, 10/1:19
flawed methods of, 9/2:198
anti-Mormons (continued)
motivated by insecurity, 9/2:200
phony degrees of some, 8/2:97, 97 n. 80
rejection of label by,
62–63
at temple dedications and pageants, 10/1:94
united by disbelief, 8/1:xlii
use by, of writers whose arguments would logically destroy own beliefs, 8/2:62 n. 6
anti-polygamy turmoil in Utah, 9/2:48
Apocrypha, 4:114–17, 122–23
King James, comparison of, with Book of Mormon, 8/2:326
apocryphal gospels, modern, compared to Book of Mormon, 9/2:123
apocryphal story of woman and husbands, 9/1:41
apologetics, web sites linked to, 10/2:203
apostasy, 3:50, 6/1:65, 412–13, 454–55, 9/1:38, 10/1:74
criticism leading to, 7/1:300
denial of, 9/2:115
and destruction, 7/1:214
of the early Christian church, 9/2:177
in first centuries of our era, 8/1:xxxiii n. 80

Latter-day Saint works on,
10/1:75
in the primitive church, 8/1:33 n. 13
stages in development of, in society, 7/1:212
apostates, 10/1:280
role of, 10/1:326
apostles, summons of, to follow Christ, 10/1:46
apostles and prophets, 9/2:168
Apostles' Creed, 9/2:132
apotheosis or deification, 9/2:190–91
Arabia
culture and customs of, 9/1:16
Lehi's trail through, 9/1:15
Arabia Felix, 9/1:118
Arabian Peninsula, 10/2:6
Arabic, 2:172, 258
Aramaic, 6/1:11, 68–70, 153
archaeological evidence
for house of David, 8/1:xxii
presence of, 10/2:166
archaeological method, 9/2:xxvi
archaeological support for the Bible, 9/2:123
Book of Mormon (see also Book of Mormon: archaeology), 8/1:20–21, 9/1:26
tentativeness and incompleteness of, 9/2:xxiii
archetypal situations, 10/2:13
arguments, responding to, 9/2:viii
ark, glowing pearls or stones inside, 10/2:153
Arminianism, elements of, in Book of Mormon, 7/1:146
Arnold, Marilyn, 9/1:1, 9/2:45
artifacts, discovery of, 9/2:xxvi
Asay, Carlos E., 9/1:13
Ashment, Edward H., 9/1:xi
vs. Hugh Nibley on Hebraisms in the Book of Mormon, 7/2:193–95
Ashton, Marvin J., 9/1:88
Asia, 2:143–53
assertion without evidence or analysis, 9/2:166
assumptions as ideological base of science, 8/1:xxvi
Aston, Warren, 10/2:6
Aston, Warren and Michaela, 9/1:116, 10/1:343
Athanasian Creed, 9/2:132
Athanasius, 10/1:71, 73
atheism, 10/2:viii, 182
atheistic presuppositions, 9/2:vi
atheists, 10/2:viii
accusation that Mormons are, 10/2:v
Atiya, Aziz, 9/2:124
according to Ed Decker, 7/2:76–77
Book of Mormon teachings on, 10/2:8
efficacy of, 9/1:viii
as explained in Encyclopedia of Mormonism, 7/2:77–78
limited, 10/1:320
location of, 9/2:192–93
role of Paul Toscano’s deities in, 7/1:307–8
as taught in the allegory of the olive tree, 8/1:62
attitudes toward learning and testimony, 9/2:41
author word use in the Book of Mormon, 9/2:27
authority, 6/1:415
appeal to, 7/2:180 n. 102
divine investiture of, 7/1:109
authors and principal word clusters, 9/2:26
authorship
individual, within the Book of Mormon, 9/2:21
of the standard works, 7/1:v
autobiographical genre in the Book of Mormon, 9/2:31
Avard, Sampson, 10/2:93
Aztec, 6/1:323, 328–29, 331–35
Babel. See Tower of Babel
Babylon, 10/2:46
Baer, Klaus, 10/1:268, 10/2:176
memorial volume for, 8/2:48
Baker Book, publications of, 9/1:54
Ballard, M. Russell, 9/2:156
Bancroft, Hubert Howe, 9/2:177
biblical passages on, 10/2:198
equivalence of, to circumcision, 10/2:198
by immersion and washing rituals, 8/1:34 n. 15
infant, 4:182, 8/1:32–35, 33
nn. 13–14, 9/1:40
baptism (continued)
LDS, rejection of, as Christian, 9/2:141
proxy, 4:83
for the remission of sins, 10/2:197
required for membership, 10/1:38
use of term, 9/2:95
baptism for the dead, 8/2:244–47, 9/1:41, 9/2:139, 142, 191, 10/1:79, 10/2:184, 194–97
as a necessary link between ancestors and posterity, 8/2:45
scholarly attention to, 8/2:43
baptismal prayer, 9/1:56
Baptists, advice of, to Latter-day Saints, 10/1:336–38
Barker, Margaret, 9/1:36
Barker, Stanley, 10/2:204
barley, 9/1:135
found at Hohokam site, 9/1:136
Barr, Stephen, 9/2:vii
Bart, Peter, 10/1:vii
Barth, Karl, 9/2:117
Bartholow, Roberts, 9/2:59
Basil, 10/1:71
Bat Creek inscription, 4:22, 212, 5:207, 9/1:139–43
Bateman, Merrill J., 9/1:8
Bay Area Colloquium, 10/1:101
Beckwith, Francis, 10/1:67
*Behind the Mask of Mormonism*, by John Ankerberg and John Weldon
errors in current edition of, 8/2:63 n. 8
remaining problems and falsehoods of, 8/2:68–79
reprint of *Everything You Ever Wanted to Know about Mormonism*, 8/2:60
silent corrections in, 8/2:63–68
belief, religious, 9/1:xi
beliefs, LDS, 9/1:165, 168
compared to Christianity, 10/1:24
logical attack on, 8/2:231
misrepresented, 10/1:21
Benjamin, King, 9/1:10
speech of, as 19th-century revival, 7/2:174
Bennett, John C., 10/1:127, 154, 165, 258, 10/2:73, 130, 133
possible involvement of, in homosexual practices, 10/1:168
Bennion, Steven D., 9/2:41
Benz, Ernst W., 10/1:72
Berge, Dale L., 9/2:xxiv
Bergin, Allen E., 9/2:40
Bergman, Ray, 10/1:202
Berryman, Mildred J., 10/1:185
LDS membership of, 10/1:187 n. 114
betrothed, encounter with, as type-scene, 10/2:19
Betz, Hans Dieter, 10/1:58
use by, of term *magic*, 7/1:66 n. 240
beverages, Native American, 9/1:137
Bible, the, 1:127, 2:xi, xxi, 53, 77, 91–95, 220–21, 3:147–49, 4:1–3, 41–43, 55,
INDEX BY SUBJECT, 1989–98

103–4, 220–50, 228–32, 6/1:232–33, 500
acceptance of, 9/2:171
animals of, 9/1:131
archaeological proofs for, 10/1:49
archaeological support for, 9/2:xxiii
attacks on Mormon use of, 8/1:92–93
contradictions and textual problems in, 8/2:238
feminist criticism of, 10/2:23
links between Book of Mormon and, 10/2:2
as only legitimate source of doctrine for Christians, 10/1:58
Protestant beliefs based on, 10/1:60
scholarship (see also documentary hypothesis), 6/1:108–11, 121–25, 384–90
sufficiency of, 10/1:56
translations, 2:140
truth of, 10/1:60
use of, during translation of Book of Mormon, 9/1:91–93
as the word of God, 10/1:58
Bible Baptist Ministry, 10/1:285 n. 30
biblical books, missing, 9/1:59
biblical prophecies, format of, 9/1:61
biblical prophets, magical practices of, 9/1:95
biblical scholarship
contemporary, 9/2:ix, xviii
procedures and premises in, 8/1:xxv
biblical stories, proof of, 10/1:53
bibliography
categories of, 9/2:35
electronic format of, 9/2:37
on Zion and economics, 9/2:79–80
bibliolatry, 10/1:59
bifid structure of book of Isaiah, 8/1:71
Big Fifteen, Hauth’s designation of, 9/2:111
biographies, purpose for, 10/2:158
bishop, office of, 9/1:39
“Black Hole” theory, 9/1:143
Black, Susan Easton, 9/2:40
blessing and cursing, cycles of, 8/1:36
Blomberg, Craig, 9/2:198
blood, 3:167, 5:297, 352–53
blood group evidence, 10/1:344
Bloom, Harold, 9/2:51
Bond, Christopher S., 10/1:88
Bonneville LDS Radio Network, 9/1:169
Book of Abraham. See also Abraham, Book of, 10/2:173–78
Book of Breathings, 4:94, 100, 105, 10/2:160
Book of Mormon, the
19th-century explanation of,
9/1:107
abridgment of, by Moroni,
9/1:143
as alleged 19th-century fiction,
7/2:146, 8/1:2–10, 8/2:179
alleged anti-Masonic sentiment
of, 8/1:162
alleged biblical plagiarism of,
8/1:93
and alleged contradictions with
the Bible, 8/1:18
as an alleged scheme to make
money, 8/1:157
as ancient scripture, 7/2:24
animals of, 9/1:131
another testament of Christ,
8/2:25
Arabian portion of, 9/1:15
archaeological anachronisms
alleged in, 8/1:93
archaeological evidence for,
lack of, 9/2:xxiii
archaeological proofs for,
10/1:49
archaeology, 9/1:26
archaeology as means of
authenticating, 8/1:96
archetypal or ritual
backgrounds of, 10/2:20
archaeological evidence
supporting, 7/1:88 n. 2
assumptions about, 9/1:101
attempt to separate restored
church from, 10/1:38
as an authentic ancient text,
7/1:90, 231, 9/2:44
authors of, 7/2:1, 9/1:xvii,
9/2:26
authorship, 2:200, 6/1:v–562,
7/2:247
autobiographical genre in,
9/2:31
on baptism for the dead,
10/2:184
and belief in its truth, 7/2:229
belief of Saints in its truth,
7/2:251
bibliography, 9/2:33–38
book-by-book summary of,
7/2:1
as Book of the Restoration of
the Covenant, 7/2:253
changes in text of, 7/2:90–92
chapters in, 6/1:137–40, 6/2:1
christology of, 10/2:7
chronology of, 2:24–25, 3:34,
50, 193–94, 264, 5:24–25,
6/2:180–84, 220–22, 9/1:25,
10/1:1, 6
commentary, standards for,
8/1:28–30
commentary on, 9/1:26
compared to modern apocryphal
gospels, 9/2:123
compared with Old Testament
passages, 9/1:114
complexity of, 7/1:207
computer software for, 9/1:159
criticisms of (see also anti-
Mormon), 1:vii–x, 2:ix–xv,
87–95, 132, 139, 165,
187–204, 234–35, 3:52–80,
158–318, 4:vii–lxxv, 82–92,
169–215, 220–50, 5:25–26,
40, 53, 61–84, 101, 123,
150–54, 162–70, 231–89,
350–54, 6/1:v–562,
6/2:v–ix, 3–9, 156–203,
9/1:143–45, 9/2:xxiii
culture of, 9/1:25
dates in, 8/1:53
INDEX BY SUBJECT, 1989–98

371

differences in the manuscripts of, 7/2:254

directional system in, 10/2:181
divine origin and antiquity of, 9/1:85
doctrinal sections of, 10/1:4
editions of, 6/2:1–2
Eight Witnesses to, 10/1:xii
elements of, 10/1:5
emphasis on, by Ezra Taft Benson, 8/2:32
and epics, 9/2:30

evidence for, 2:28, 54, 90, 137–39, 167–68, 199,
258–66, 4:65, 117–19, 129,
166, 5:35, 114, 256–57,
8/1:20–25, 9/1:70 n. 2,
10/1:49–51
female actions and words in, 10/2:14
female imagery in, 10/2:24
fictionalization of, 8/1:176, 177, 180
flora and fauna in, 8/1:22–23
Friberg's depiction of, 10/2:63
gender-inclusive language of, 10/2:11
geographic location of, 7/2:2
geography, diverse theories on, 10/2:159
geography of, 9/1:16, 25, 123, 9/2:36, 10/1:6, 10/2:179
healthy societies in, 10/2:44
heroes of, 9/1:7
historicity of (see also Book of Mormon, translation into
English), 1:90–91, 93–100,
106–9, 116, 127, 2:87,
119–27, 134–38, 214, 257,
3:32, 52–80, 101, 118,
158–318, 4:9–12, 78–92,
176–79, 186, 191–92,
5:231–50, 271, 328–34,
6:1:1–10, 12, 40–48, 56–57,
65, 111–12, 116–17, 119,
135–37, 150–69, 180–86,
200–259, 280–82, 362–433,
452–56, 527–62, 6/2:3–58,
61–66, 121–33, 7/2:144,
8/1:9–10, 9/1:22, 70,
9/2:144
history of, 7/1:13–14, 9/1:25
imagery in, 9/2:32
important events in, 10/2:1
individual authorship within, 9/2:21
individuals, groups, and events in, 8/2:373
as inspired fiction, 7/2:185
intended audience of, 8/1:4
internal consistency of, 9/2:45
invitation of, to come unto Christ, 8/2:26
Isaiah, quotations of, in, 10/2:8
Isaiah passages in (see also
Isaiah passages in the Book of Mormon), 9/2:12
issues relevant to, 10/1:10
Jesus Christ as protagonist in, 9/2:30
as keystone of the faith, 7/2:213
and King James Bible, 8/1:13–14
language claims of, 8/1:10–12
language of, 8/1:10–17
legal details of, 9/2:46
letters in, 9/2:31
linguistic style of, 2:165–67,
237–47, 262–66, 4:41–42,
52–62, 167, 5:73–74, 81,
163, 286, 307–8, 310–11,
6/1:11, 14–15, 30–48,
saving principles and doctrines of, 8/2:25

scholarship, 1:vii–x, 3–4, 90, 93–100, 105–13, 115–16,
2:vii–xxv, 32–33, 40, 54, 86–95, 141, 176, 234,
3:261–318, 158, 4:vii–lxxv,
21–23, 26, 137, 148,
150–53, 162–63, 5:17–19,
39, 6/1:v–xii, 1–8, 33,
52–66, 102, 114–19,
145–52, 182–86, 198–99,
201–3, 295–96, 306,
358–61, 379–81, 416–17,
434–523, 527–62,
6/2:37–39, 156–208, 9/1:26

scholarship, pioneering efforts of George Reynolds in,
8/1:57

as second witness for Jesus Christ, 7/1:99

as a second witness to the Gospels, 9/1:xvii

as a self-contained literary unit,
7/2:107

sermons in, 9/2:31

simplified text in double columns, 7/1:7

simplified text in parallel columns, 7/1:3

sophistication in, 1:v,
2:xxi–xxii, 168, 4:26, 91,
137, 6/1:146, 182,
6/2:61–62, 202–3

sources for, 10/1:55

spiritual message of, 7/1:15

study guide for, 9/1:31

study helps for, 8/1:168–71

study of, 2:77–85, 118, 207–8,
3:86–95, 4:24, 63–64,
164–65

subtitle of, 7/2:72

supposed 19th-century sources of, 8/2:183

Teichert’s depiction of, 10/2:63

terms, dictionary of, 8/1:53–54

testimony of, 9/1:xxii

testimony of, leads to testimony of Christ, 8/2:32

testimony of witnesses of,
8/1:159–60

text, alleged sources of, 8/1:83

n. 2
textual discoveries about, in novel, 10/1:341

themes of, 4:28, 130,
6/2:134–38, 199–202, 9/1:4

Three Witnesses to, 8/1:99
time line of, 7/2:2, 8/2:373

as a tool for conversion, 8/2:32

as a trance-related production,
7/2:227

translation of, into English,
2:51–54, 65, 93, 200,
236–47, 261, 3:164,
171–72, 201–13, 228–29,
263–64, 4:9, 5:163, 337–39,
6/1:v, 33–48, 74–102,
122–23, 130–31, 135–37,
181, 362–78, 6/2:12–95,
208–9, 9/1:91

translation of, into other languages, 2:82, 264

as a true classic of literature,
9/2:46

truth claims of, 7/2:222

truth of, 7/2:171, 9/1:xviii,
81, 10/1:6 n. 2

type-scenes of, 10/2:19–20
typology in, 9/2:32

understanding and appreciation of, 9/1:29

verse arrangement of, 9/2:31
Book of Mormon, the (continued)
versification according to 1830
edition of, 7/2:3
vs. Maya archaeology,
10/2:168
witnesses to, 9/1:xxviii, 91,
9/2:175
women in, 9/1:10
wordprint studies of, 9/2:16
as a written document, 9/1:29
Booth, Ezra, 9/1:89
botany in Mesoamerica,
9/1:134–36
Bountiful, 9/1:20, 23, 10/2:6
characteristics of, 9/1:118–19
site where Nephi built his
ship, 7/1:86
Wadi Sayq as site of, 7/1:88
Bowie, David, 9/1:164
“boy chum,” 10/1:225
bridal figures, 10/2:31–32
Brigham Young University,
issues of academic freedom
at, 7/1:253–54
Brinthurst, Newell, preparing
biography of Fawn Brodie,
8/2:189
Britain, Latter-day Saints in,
9/2:113
Brodie, Fawn M., 10/1:335
assisted by Dale Morgan,
8/1:124, 138–39
literary style of, 8/2:158
and view of Joseph Smith,
7/2:224
Brooks, Juanita, and critique of
Hugh Nibley, 8/1:140 n. 43
brother of Jared and knowledge of
the Godhead, 8/1:38, 38 n.
26
Brough, Monte J., 9/1:13
Brown, Benjamin, 9/1:xxiv
Brownlee, William (biblical
scholar), 8/1:71
Buerger, David J., 10/1:100–103
Bullough, Vern and Bonnie,
10/1:186
Bultmann, Rudolph, cosmology
of, 7/1:95
Buonarroti, Michelangelo,
9/2:170
Burgess, Harrison, 9/1:xxiv
burial of family members in
nearby graves, 10/1:157
Burton, Sir Richard, 10/1:23
Bushman, Richard L., 9/2:42
“By the Brooklet,” poem by Evan
Stephens, 10/1:221
Cage, Nicholas, 9/2:53
calling and election process,
8/1:35, 35 n. 18
Calvinism, 5:348–49
Campbell, Alexander, 9/2:57
Cannon, George, 9/1:xxvi
Cannon, George Q., 9/1:124,
10/1:138, 180, 183
Cannon, James W., 9/2:42
Calvinism, 10/1:320
Canaanites, 2:140
canon
equated with Bible, 9/2:180 n.
34
New Testament, 10/1:57
open, 10/1:56
open vs. closed, 9/2:173, 179
capitalism, use of term, 9/2:82
Card, Orson Scott, fiction of,
10/2:58
cardinal-shift hypothesis, 8/1:114
Carmack, John K., 9/1:12
Carnegie, Andrew, 9/2:79
Carthage Jail, 10/1:137
events at, 10/1:90
Catholic mass in LDS buildings, 10/1:28–29
Cave 1, 10/2:145
CD-ROM libraries
advantages of, 8/2:377–78
Book of Mormon Reference Library, 8/2:390–92
Book of Mormon Studybase, 8/2:387–90
content of, 8/2:381–84
creation and use of multiple copies of, 8/2:385
cross-reference links of, 8/2:386
Folio Bound VIEWS technology, 8/2:378–79
LDS Collectors Library, 8/2:392–94
Lesson Planner/Talk Writer program, 8/2:388–90
Macintosh versions of, 8/2:379 nn. 8–9
searching capabilities of, 8/2:384–85
use of, in word processing, 8/2:380, 386–87
celestial kingdom, 10/1:79
celestial marriage, 10/1:83
Cenez, compared with Zenas and Zenock, 8/1:63
Central Park, love of, by Evan Stephens, 10/1:252
censorship, 5:238–40
Central America. See Mesoamerica
challenging a Mormon’s arguments, 7/1:155
Chamberlain, Solomon, 9/1:xxiv Chandler, Michael, relationship of, to Antonio Lebolo, 8/2:58
charitable organizations, 9/2:75
charity as a fruit of the Spirit, 8/2:29
Charles, Melodie Moench, contradictory conclusions of, 7/2:36
Charvatt, Charles, 10/1:130
Chick publications, 10/1:viii
angelic ministrations to, 10/2:65
and understanding Book of Mormon, 7/1:3
Choctaw, 1:19
Christ. See Jesus Christ
Christensen, Joe J., 9/1:12
Christensen, Ross, 9/1:116
Christian
determination of who is, 10/1:299–300
God, efforts to identify with the god of sophisticated paganism, 8/2:71–72 n. 31
LDS claims to be, 10/1:27
term of, 10/2:xvii
terminology adopted by Mormonism with its own definitions, 7/1:158–60
themes in Book of Mormon and Qumran documents, 8/1:163
writing and art about Christ’s visit to the spirit world, 9/2:132–37
Christianity, 9/2:107
   based on Jesus-centered
discipleship, 9/2:65
biblical, 10/1:22, 299
definition of, 9/2:119
difficulties of defining, 10/1:30
early and late, 10/1:74
early converts of, 10/2:156
emergence of, 10/2:156
god’s support for, 10/2:157
historical tradition of, 9/2:65
LDS doctrines in disagreement
with, 10/1:95 n. 253
of Mormons, 9/2:49
rehistoricizing of, 9/2:63
teachings of, 9/2:44
vs. magic, 9/2:130
vs. Mormonism, 10/2:199
Christian Research Institute,
10/1:284, 288
Christians
   charge that Mormons are not,
9/2:65
definition of, 10/1:297–98
family practices of, 10/2:156
life span of, 10/2:156
Mormons as, 7/1:vii, 160
Saints as, 10/1:340
Christology
   according to Abinadi, 7/2:8
Book of Mormon, 7/2:12–16,
91
Christopherson, Willard,
10/1:210
chronological arguments for
borrowing from Masonic
rites, 10/1:120–21 n. 42
chronology
of the Book of Mormon,
9/1:25
of early Mormon events,
according to Marquardt and
Walters, 7/2:125–26
of early Mormon events,
limitations of, 7/2:125
Egyptian, 9/1:43
elements of detailed, 10/1:5
issues relevant to detailed,
10/1:10
church
   critics of, 10/2:106
great and abominable, 10/2:26,
55
Internet guide to, 10/2:200
and state, relationship between,
7/2:65
three-fold mission of, 10/2:209
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-
day Saints, the
details of organization of,
7/2:135–37
origin of, 10/1:321
churches
   attacking other churches,
10/1:25
beliefs and practices of,
attacked by individuals and
agencies, 10/1:272
equality of, 7/1:303–4
cimeteries in the Book of Mormon,
9/1:77
circumcision, 9/1:40
cities, feminine gender of,
10/2:36
Civil War, prophecy of, 9/1:60
civilizations, annihilation of,
8/1:37–38 n. 24
claims, unsubstantiated, 10/1:112
Clancy, Tom, fiction of, 9/2:53
Clark, J. Reuben, 9/2:156
INDEX BY SUBJECT, 1989–98

Cleveland, Sarah, 10/2:76
cloth, 3:196
Coe, Michael, 9/1:113
coercion and bondage, tales of, 9/2:51
coins, not mentioned in Book of Mormon, 8/1:97, 8/2:61
colleges and universities, church, 9/1:169
Cologne Mani Codex, parallels with Book of Mormon, 8/2:360–63
colophon. See also poetry, 4:167
Columbus, Christopher, 1:125, 3:97–98, 5:109
first transoceanic voyage of, 8/1:107
life of, 8/1:104
referred to in 1 Nephi 13:12, 8/1:105
role of, predicted by ancient prophets, 8/1:108
seven themes relating to, 8/1:105–6
vicarious baptism for, 8/1:110
combinations, 9/2:8
commentary
Book of Mormon, 8/1:53
on Isaiah passages, 9/2:12
communism, 9/2:2, 4
compass and the square, 8/2:261, 261–62 n. 31
comprehensiveness and coherence, values in evaluating paradigms, 7/2:173–76
computer, 1:119
computerized story programs, 9/1:159
computers as substitutes for books, 8/2:395
computer software, 9/1:159
Comte, Auguste, coined term positivism, 7/1:171
Conan Doyle, Sir Arthur, 10/1:vi
concordance
Book of Mormon, 8/1:53
of three LDS standard works, by Eldin Ricks, 8/1:172–75
condescension of God, 5:297
Condie, Spencer J., 9/1:13
conflict, causes of and cure for, 10/2:50
conspiracy theories, 9/2:94, 10/1:325
Constitution, U.S., 9/2:2, 4
produced by wise men, 9/2:5
prophetic warnings about, 9/2:8
constitutional amendments, 9/2:8
constitutional themes, 9/2:7
context, as a limit on human perspective, 7/2:198–208
conversion, 1:3–4, 2:74–76, 4:12–19
conversion stories, 9/1:169
converts portrayed as victims, 9/2:61
Cook, J. E., 10/1:62
cooperatives, 9/2:76
Mondragon in Spain, 9/2:76, 87
Coppenger, Mark, 10/1:82 n. 218
Coptic, 4:75
copyright, 2:200
Corbin, Henry, 9/2:107
Cornwall, J. Spencer, 10/1:255
corporate contributions, 9/2:76
corporeality of the Father and the Son, 9/1:35
Corrill, John, 10/2:93
cosmology, 6/2:3–58
cosmos, explanation of, 9/2:vii
Council in heaven, 9/1:37
Council of the Twelve Apostles, 9/2:111
councils
debates in, 10/1:61
divinely appointed, 9/2:157
countercult movement, 10/1:271, 274
countercultism, directory of, 10/1:283
Cowdery, Oliver, 9/1:xix
charge of, to the Twelve, 9/2:153
covenant law and conflict with law of agency, 8/1:37
covenant making, patterns of, 8/1:36–38, 36 n. 21
covenant people, obliteration of, 8/1:37 n. 22
covenantor vs. uncovenanted, 8/1:37 n. 23
covenants in the Book of Mormon as a reflection of modern theology, 8/1:3
covenant, new and everlasting, 10/2:70
covenants
premortal, 10/2:92, 128
counter-Mormon movements, Protestant evangelical attacks, 7/1:236
covenant making, pattern of, in the Old Testament, 7/1:211
covenant of Abraham, for literal descendants of Israel, 7/2:113
covenants
among secret combinations, 7/1:215
as central concept in overview, 7/2:1
Cowdery, Oliver
and connection to supposed forgery, 8/1:159 n. 75
and first meeting with Joseph Smith, 8/1:158
Cox, Paul Alan, 9/2:43
Craddock, P. T., 9/1:140
Crane, Charles, contradictions and sensationalism of, 8/1:89–91
ex nihilo, 8/2:101, 8/2:134–36, 304, 9/2:118, 10/1:67, 67 n. 181, 10/2:xvi
Mormon concept of, 8/2:101
story of, 9/2:68
credentials in scholarly methodology, 8/1:xxiv
creeds, Christian, 10/1:61
criminal code, establishment of, 10/1:178
critics, professional, 10/1:26
critics, 9/2:143
response to, 9/1:167, 168
Cross, Frank Moore, 9/1:141
cross, symbolism of, 9/1:40
Cudworth, Ralph, 10/1:73
Cult & Occult Unification Program, 10/1:292
cult vs. new religious movement, 10/1:315
cult, term of, 10/1:310–12, 328, 10/2:xxvii
“cults,” characteristics of, 9/2:108
culture
Mesoamerican, 3:28, 3:40–43, 3:128
Mormon, 6/1:206–8
INDEX BY SUBJECT, 1989–98

Cumorah, location of, 8/2:2
Cumorah, theories of, 9/1:126 n. 97, 147
curse, simile, and obedience to law, 7/1:200
curses, 2:182
Custer, Solomon, 10/2:79
cyber Mormonism, 10/2:207
Cyrus, coming of, prophesied by Isaiah, 9/2:xxi
Cyrus (Persian king), 8/1:70
D&C 132, crisis precipitating, 10/2:86
D&C 138, 10/2:190, 193
d’Anastasi, Giovanni
collector of Egyptian antiquities, 7/1:35
papyri collections of, 7/1:35, 38–41
dances, male-only, 10/1:176
Daniels, Sarah, 10/1:209
loneliness of, 10/1:214
sealing of, to Evan Stephens, 10/1:214
Danites, 10/1:x, xi, 10/2:93
darkness, skin of, 9/1:18
data, as theory-laden, 7/2:151, 159
database for scriptures, 8/1:172
David and Jonathan, brotherly love of, 10/1:184
Davidic king, 4:40–51, 57
latter-day, to bring temporal salvation, 8/1:75
Davies, Rachel, 10/1:210
Davis, Tal, 10/1:27, 31, 53, 73, 334
discovery of, 10/2:142
DNA analysis of, 10/2:144
early work on, 10/2:142
messianic hopes in, 10/2:141
and the Mormon connection, 9/2:95
people who produced the, 10/2:142
plan of salvation in, 10/2:143
as sacred writings, 9/2:96
value of, 9/2:88
Dead Sea Scrolls Database, 10/2:145
dead, redeeming the, 10/1:76, 10/2:209
dead, work for, Jewish beliefs in, 10/2:185 n. 3
defaith church members, 9/1:170
Dealy, Steven J., 10/1:302 n. 95
death, 6/1:108
continuing existence of the spirit after, 10/1:269
death penalty, 9/2:2
deception, supposed, by LDS, 10/1:26
decision-making, 10/2:140
Decker’s Complete Handbook on Mormonism, typographical errors in, 7/2:92–93
Decker, Ed, 9/2:102, 10/1:v, viii, 19, 96, 281, 300
and his charges against the Mormons, 7/2:67–70
critical look at, 7/2:38 n. 3
followers of, 10/1:324
Decker, Ed (continued)
and his questionable
commitment to religious
liberty, 7/2:63–66
and refusal to debate publicly,
8/1:xi
Tanners’ opinion of, 9/2:103
Decker, Rod, 9/1:x
defense, fortified line of, 9/1:127
defensive line “from the east to
the west sea,” 9/1:129
defication, human, 7/2:74–75,
8/2:141–42, 8/2:247–48,
262–64, 9/2:190–91
deHoyos, Art, 10/1:101 n. 8
Deir el-Bahri, 10/2:163
deities, genuine, 10/2:xviii
deity
Neoplatonic, 10/2:xvi
term of, 10/2:xi
worship of, 10/2:xviii
delivery, 4:25
Demke, Jared, 9/1:170
demographics in the Book of
Mormon, 8/1:23–25
Department of Religious Educa-
tion, BYU, 9/1:163
Descartes, René, 9/2:vii
descensus, 9/2:132
Descent into Limbo, 9/2:132
destruction, 2:78–85
destruction in 3 Nephi,
9/1:111–14
devil, 3:234, 3:242–43
casting out of, 7/1:49 n. 154
spirit of, 10/2:188
DeVoto, Bernard, 8/2:156,
199–200
Dhofar, 9/1:22
Dickens, Charles, 10/1:182
Didache, 6/1:390–92
differences, mocking vs. under-
standing, 9/2:198
directional system in the Book of
Mormon, 10/2:181
disciple, life of, 9/1:8
disguise type-scenes,
7/1:194–204
dissent from within, threatening
the Saints, 7/2:233
dissenters
commitments of, 7/1:314
excommunication of,
7/1:313–16
dissidents and critics, response of
Brethren to, 7/1:259
dissimilarity, criterion of, rejects
statements attributed to
Christ, 8/1:xi
distance as estimated by speed,
9/1:127
diversity, 6/2:59–78
diversity in the Amerindian
languages, 9/1:71
divination practices, biblical,
9/1:95
divine nature, respect for, 8/2:29
DNA analysis of, from the Dead
Sea Scrolls, 10/2:144
Dobson, James, 10/1:285
doctrinal errors, introduction of,
7/1:1, 15
doctrine. See theology
doctrines, fundamental and objec-
tionable, 9/2:59–60
Documentary History of the
Church
online access to, 9/1:163
reliability of, 7/2:54–55
documentary hypothesis. See also
Bible, scholarship, 2:31,
89–95
documents. See texts, ancient
documents relating to the origins
of the restored Church,
7/2:123
documentation, adequate,
10/1:105
documents online, 9/1:164
domination, 10/2:135
doubt as an invitation to think,
9/2:vii
Dürer, Albrecht, 9/2:137
Durfee, Elizabeth, 10/2:76
Durham, Reed, claims of,
10/1:110
dynasticism, 10/2:107
dynasties, Egyptian, 9/1:45
earth, use of word, 9/2:22–25
Easter, 9/1:xv
Eby, Arden L., 9/1:171
ecclesiolatry, 10/1:33
economic equity, principles of,
9/2:87
economic expansion, in
Mesoamerica, 7/1:218
economic systems, differences in,
9/2:84
economic topics, discussion of,
9/2:81
economy, 2:148
ecumenical movement and the
Latter-day Saints, 7/2:122
Eden, Garden of, 3:222
editorial slips, 9/2:89–90
editor’s picks, 7/1:xii,
7/2:vii–viii, 8/1:xliv–xliv,
8/2:vi–vii, 9/1:xxviii–xxix,
9/2:xxvii–xxix,
10/1:xxv–xxvi,
10/2:xxi–xxii
education and religious commit­
ment, 9/2:39–40
egocentricty, 10/1:132
Egypt, 9/1:16
chronology of, 9/1:43
dynasties of, 9/1:45
Egyptian, 2:201, 210–12, 235,
258, 4:67–76, 90–117,
120–26, 5:44, 6/1:30–40,
39–40, 79–88, 94–99,
106–8, 112–14, 6/2:150–55,
9/1:139
Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar,
10/2:160
Egyptian papyri, 10/1:84
Egyptian script, Jewish writings
in, 8/2:329
Egyptology, discipline of,
7/1:25–27
Eight Witnesses to the Book of
Mormon, 9/2:175
elder, office of, 9/1:39
electronic format of bibliography,
9/2:37
Eliot, John, 9/1:64
Eliot, T. S., 10/1:35
Ells, Josiah, 10/2:95
Elohim, 10/2:xiv
as father of Jehovah, 7/1:114
Emerald Tablet, 8/2:259, 259 n.
25
end of time, sequence of events
leading up to, 8/1:76
Enders, Donald L., 9/2:xxv
enemies of the Latter-day Saints,
murderous spirit of, 10/1:93
n. 248
Engels, Friedrich, 9/2:82
Englund, Wade, 10/2:202
Enlightenment
an intellectual movement,
8/2:268
Jewish, 8/2:269
Enos, 9/1:10, 10/2:52
environmental explanation of the Book of Mormon, 7/1:141, 150, 153–54
Epicurus, 9/1:xiv
epiphany in the field, 10/2:19
Episcopalianism, 2:xx
errors
methodological, in misrepresentation of Book of Mormon and early Latter-day Saint teachings about the Jews, 7/2:120
purported, in Mormon scripture, 7/2:93–96
Essene Gate of ancient Jerusalem, 10/2:142
Essenes, 2:140
eternal increase, 10/1:155
eternal life, 8/2:247, 10/1:34
promise of, 7/1:211
eternal marriage, doctrine of, 10/1:159
eternal progression. See progression, eternal
eternal security, 10/1:337
Ether, 9/1:13
ethical teachings of Book of Mormon, compared to historical authenticity, 7/1:152
Evangelical Ministries to New Religions, 10/1:284
Evans, Vella Neil, 10/1:194
Eve
and joy, 10/2:23–24
scapegoating of, 10/2:23
evidence, failure to examine, 10/1:52
evolution, 3:106–8, 5:212–16
excommunication, of dissidents, 7/1:270
Ex-Mormons for Jesus, 10/1:303
Exodus 20:16, 10/1:62
extermination order, 10/1:86
rescission of, 10/1:88
external evidences of gospel principles, 9/2:45
Eyring, Henry B., 9/1:11, 9/2:43
Facsimile 1, 10/2:160
Facsimile 1, fig. 3, restoration of head in, 7/1:79–82
Facsimile 2, 4:109, 123–26, 10/1:123
Facsimile 3, 4:100, 109
fact and fiction, line drawn between, 10/1:343
factual errors, 9/2:90–93
faith, 4:126, 6/1:4–6, 211, 6/2:285–87
attacks on, 10/1:283
basis of, 7/1:27–28
historical foundations of, 8/2:188–89, 229
hope, and charity, essays on, 8/1:41–43
and naturalistic humanism, confrontation between, 7/1:278
nurturing of, 9/1:29
political implications of, 9/2:6
fall, the, 9/1:29
false doctrines and principles, 8/2:236–38
falsehoods, response to, 9/1:88 n. 3
falsification, limits of, 7/2:153–59
familial obligations, denial of, 10/2:25
family history web sites, 9/1:166
family, nuclear, values of, 9/2:9
famine, 4:145
INDEX BY SUBJECT, 1989–98

FARMS home page, 9/1:162
Farrer, Austin, 9/1:91
fasting when a ship is in danger, 10/2:152
Father
appearance of, in the Sacred Grove, 10/1:80
Son’s subordination of, to the, 9/1:36
voice of, 10/1:80
Father and the Son, 8/1:39 n. 28
First Presidency’s doctrinal exposition on, 10/2:8
as two separate personages, 9/2:186
father, charges of, to sons, 9/2:32
fathering, promotion of good, 9/1:169
fathers and husbands, errant, 10/2:14
fathers, early Christian, 9/1:33
Faust, James E., 9/2:156, 10/1:139
Feast of Tabernacles, as model for King Benjamin’s speech, 7/2:175, 175 n. 88
feasts. See festivals
Felt, Joseph H., 10/1:195
Felt, Louie B., 10/1:191
role of, in Primary, 10/1:192
female actions and words in Book of Mormon, 10/2:14
female imagery, negative, in the Book of Mormon, 10/2:24
feminism, 7/1:254–57, 10/2:46
feminist bias, 10/2:116
Ferguson, Thomas Stuart
(student of archaeology), 8/1:96
assumptions of, 10/2:173
Book of Mormon as, 6/1:6, 200, 210, 222–35
as a means of civilizing Mormons, 9/2:56
fictionalization of Book of Mormon, 8/1:176, 177, 180
fifth Gospel (3 Nephi), 8/2:29
Filson, Floyd V., 10/1:59
finitude of being, 10/2:ix
First Nephi, study aids for, 7/2:3
First Presidency, 9/2:111, 168
First Presidency assisted by the Twelve, 96
first vision, 8/1:vi, 10/1:83
accounts of, 7/1:165, 7/2:32, 8/1:86, 8/2:177–78, 232, 232 n. 2, 9/1:164
dating of, 8/1:154 n. 66
Fawn Brodie’s explanation of, as a “half-remembered dream,” 8/1:151
paintings of, 9/2:169
first vision of Paul, accounts of, 8/2:233–34
Fisher, Irving, 9/2:vii
flesh and bones, body of, 9/1:35 n. 2
flood, 3:111–15
flood story, 10/2:152
food, 2:149, 3:43, 3:160
footnotes in Quinn’s book, 10/1:149
foreknowledge, and free will, compatibility of, 8/2:107–10, 108–9 nn. 13–14
forty-day ministry, of Jesus Christ, 7/2:109
Foster, Lawrence, and view of Book of Mormon, 7/2:226–27
Foucault, Michel, 9/2:56
franchises to push ideology and sell products, 10/1:322
free agency. See agency
freedom within the community of faith, 7/1:262
counterfactuals of, 8/2:105, 105 n. 6
and humanism, 7/1:243
individual, argument for, 9/2:5
intellectual, in the LDS Church, 8/1:xxxv
religious, in early Utah, 7/2:57–58
“freedom of the mind,” expression of Hugh B. Brown, 7/1:266
Free Inquiry, 10/1:308
free will, 10/1:80
Freemasonry, 8/2:256, 257 n. 19, 286–89, 10/1:97 n. 1
origin of, 10/1:112
free speech, 6/1:531–34
friendship, poem on, 10/1:228
fruitfulness, a value in evaluating paradigms, 7/2:176–77
Fullmer, John S., 10/1:163
fundamentalism among religious believers, 8/1:xxxix
fundamentalists, 5:49
fundamentals for Latter-day Saints, 10/1:39
funerary text in conjunction with other texts, 10/2: 175, 175 n. 60
Fussell, Paul, 9/2:52
future, knowledge of, 9/2:xxi
future events, predictions of, 8/2:118
future promise, a value in evaluating paradigms, 7/2:181–87
Gadianton oaths, suppression of, 7/2:216 n. 183
Gadianton robbers, 9/1:xiii, 10/1:3
Gadianton’s band, 10/2:64
García Martínez, Florentino, 10/2:141
Geer, Thelma, 10/1:20, 39–40
gematria, 4:58
gender-inclusive language of Book of Mormon, 10/2:11
genealogical records, microfilming of, 9/2:141
genealogy web sites, 9/1:166
General Authorities, photographs and biographies of, 9/1:167
general conference talks, online access to, 9/1:162
generosity and redemption, Book of Mormon teachings on, 9/1:3
Genesis, multiple authorship of, 9/2:ix, xiii
Genesis 1:1, interpretation of, from Zohar, 8/2:299
INDEX BY SUBJECT, 1989–98

297–361, 470–74,
6/2:79–113, 139–49,
7/1:150, 8/1:23, 9/1:16, 25,
9/2:36
beginnings of, 8/1:52–53
bibliography of LDS works
on, 8/1:96 n. 3
construction of internal map
of, 8/2:21, 23
directions in, 1:20, 23–25, 73,
3:33, 5:63–64, 74–77,
6/1:10–11, 299–300,
305–15
distances in, 1:76, 25–58, 120
extended view of, 8/1:56
Hedengren’s key for evaluating,
8/2:18
limited, 9/1:122, 126
limited Great Lakes geography,
8/2:1, 22 n. 13
and location of Cumorah, 8/2:5
maps, 1:23–70, 76, 85–88,
119–20, 2:205–6, 3:150–53,
6/2:141–42
problems with Hedengren’s
view of, 8/2:13–18
scale of Book of Mormon lands
in, 8/2:5
scholarship, 6/1:318–19,
358–61, 471–74, 6/2:80–82,
110–13, 140–48
typology, 1:67–70
variations of, based on initial
assumptions, 8/2:5
Gid, city of, 10/2:64
Gideon, 9/1:176
Ginzberg, Louis, 9/2:72
Givens, Terryl, 10/1:x, 29, 58
glass looking, Joseph Smith
accused of, 8/1:84
glory, kingdoms of, 10/1:63
glowing pearls or stones inside
ark, 10/2:153
gnosticism, 2:140, 175
God
anthropomorphism of,
8/2:143–46, 144 n. 62,
9/1:68
attributes of, 10/2:xiii
becoming like, 8/2:141–42,
9/1:36
of the Bible, 10/1:66
biblical concept of,
8/2:132–34, 9/2:117, 119
cleaned of, 7/1:304–5
as deity, 9/2:170
different, 10/1:67
existence of, 9/2:v, 10/2:vi
existence of only one,
8/2:142–43
the Father, 8/2:139–40,
9/2:167, 186, 10/1:71
immutability and timelessness
of, 8/2:120–25
inadequate attempts to describe,
9/2:169
infallible foreknowledge of,
8/2:110–14
kingdom of, 9/2:183, 10/1:271
knowledge of, 8/1:38, 10/2:xx
of the Latter-day Saints,
9/2:119
LDS concept of, 8/2:262–64,
99, 10/2:v
love of, 10/1:66
as a man, 9/2:170
middle knowledge of,
8/2:104–5
moral perfection of, 10/2:xx
nature of, 8/2:249, 9/1:62,
9/2:185
as an object of worship,
10/2:xvii
God (continued)
omniscience of, 8/2:106
oneness of, 10/1:68
open view of, 8/2:115–20
perfect goodness of,
8/2:125–26
power of, 8/2:103–6, 10/2:xx
rejection of, 9/2:v
relationship of, to man,
9/1:xvi
self-sufficiency (aseity) of,
8/2:101–3
as a spirit, 9/1:35
supposed ignorance of, 9/2:120
term of, 10/1:70
Thomist view of, 8/2:102–3
trinitarian concept of, 7/2:25
as Yahweh and Elohim,
7/2:100
God the Father, incorporeality of,
9/2:167
goddess, role of, in resurrection
of husband, 10/2:18
Godhead
members of, as distinct beings,
7/1:91 n. 2
Paul Toscano’s teachings on,
7/1:307–9
as separate deities, 9/1:34
statement of Joseph Smith on,
7/1:116
understanding of, 8/1:38, 38 n.
26, 39 n. 27, 8/2:101 n. 3,
138–42
understanding of, in
1830–1835, 7/1:113
unity of, 10/1:69
godhood, criterion for, 10/2:xix
God Makers (film), The, evaluation of,
7/2:70
gods, plurality of, 8/2:305
Goff, Alan, 9/1:121
golden plates. See plates
possible composition of,
8/1:84 n. 4
weight of, 7/1:165, 8/1:83
Golden Rule, 9/2:5
Gomes, Alan, 10/1:310
goodness in the world, 10/2:60
goodness, perfect moral, 10/2:xix
good Samaritan, 10/2:153
Gookin, Daniel, 9/1:64
Gordon, Cyrus, 9/1:139, 142
gospel
acceptance of, 9/1:vii
Christian, compared to restored
gospel, 7/2:71
definition of, 10/2:184
portrayed as anti-Christian,
10/1:33
preached by the Savior to the
dead, 9/2:131
proclaiming the, 10/2:209
promises and obligations for
all, 10/2:13
restoration of, 10/1:271
restored as response to cultural
conditions, 7/1:148
themes of, 9/1:4
Gospel of Nicodemus, 9/2:132
Gospel of Thomas, reliance on,
by Jesus Seminar, 8/1:xv
Gottwald, Norman K., cosmology of,
7/1:95
government
minimalist, identified with Ten
Commandments, 9/2:5
scope of, 9/2:4
theory of, 9/2:7
grace, 2:100–106, 5:343–50
emphasis on, 8/2:28
necessity of, 7/2:77, 210
salvation by, 10/1:336
and works, 10/1:62
INDEX BY SUBJECT, 1989–98

grains, New World, 9/1:135
Granger, Oliver, 9/1:xxiv
Grant, Heber J., 9/1:55, 9/2:154
Gray, James M., 10/1:291
Gray, Mike, 10/1:14
great and spacious building, 8/2:367–69
Great Basin, flight to, 10/1:92
Great Divide, separating accounts of Mormon past, 8/2:157,
223
greatest being, existence of, 10/2:xx
Greek, 2:101, 136–37, 154,
3:21–22, 6/1:11, 49–50,
68–70, 150–68, 438–39
Greene, John, 9/1:xxiii
Grey, Zane, 10/1:xi
Griggs, C. Wilfred, 9/2:45
Groat, Joel B., 10/2:106–7 n. 6,
119 n. 19
Groberg, John H., 9/1:10,
9/2:155
growth, spiritual, 9/1:10
Gutches, Drew, 9/1:169, 170
Hades, 10/1:76
Hadfield, Gary M., 10/1:55
Hadramaut coast, 9/1:21
Hafen, Bruce C., 9/2:42
Hall, William, 10/2:127, 129
Halpern, Baruch, 9/2:xx
Hamblin, William J., 9/1:147,
156, 10/2:180
Hancock, Mosiah, 10/2:78
Hancock, Ralph C., 10/1:xvi
hand as a cup in ancient temple
worship, 9/1:19
Hanegraaff, Hank, 9/1:viii,
10/1:300
Hardison, Richard, 9/1:168
Harris-Anthon affair, 7/1:146
Harris, George, 10/2:109
Harris, Lucinda Morgan, 10/2:75,
110–11
Harrison, R. K. (biblical
scholar), 8/1:71
background of, 9/2:104
Harrowing of Hell, 9/2:132–37
Hart, James H., 9/1:xxvi
harvest, 3:1–31
Haskalah (Jewish Enlighten-
ment), 8/2:294
Hassig, Ross, 9/1:128, 155, 157
Hatshepsut, 10/2:163
Hauck, Richard, 10/1:343
Hauth, Rüdiger, 9/2:103,
10/1:vii
Haynes, Carlyle B., 10/1:291
healthy societies in the Book of
Mormon, 10/2:44
Hebraisms in the Book of
Mormon, 8/1:17
and it came to pass, 7/1:v–vii,
4
Hebrew, 1:5–6, 10–12, 2:42–43,
210, 4:41–43, 52–62, 216,
6/1:11, 30–40, 49–50,
68–70, 79–99, 132–35, 145,
325, 344–45, 6/2:150–55,
9/1:139
presence of, in Indian
languages, 9/1:73
Hebrew phonology, 8/2:36
Hebrew poetry, use of, 7/2:254
Hebrews 9:27, 10/2:187
Hedengren, Paul, fallacious
argument of, for Book of
Mormon geography, 8/2:13
Helaman, stripling warriors of,
10/2:39–40
hell, 2:29, 5:301–3
concept of, 9/2:195
hell (continued)
descent of Christ into, and rescue of spirits from, 10/2:190
Hellenism, 1:286
heresy, 10/1:286
identification of, 9/2:56 vs. orthodoxy, 9/2:262
Hermetica, citing of, 8/2:255
hermeticism, 6/2:12-58 decline of, 8/2:268 in the early 19th-century United States, 8/2:267
hero, testament of dying, 10/2:19
heroes in the Book of Mormon, 9/1:7
Herzog, Rolf, 10/2:165
hidden things, 10/1:126. 126 n. 52
hieratic paleography, 10/2:177
Hill Cumorah, 9/1:125
Hill, Marvin, 9/1:x
and his "middle ground" (between prophet and faker), 8/1:144, 8/2:218, 224
Hilton, John, 9/2:18
Hilton, Lynn M. and Hope A., 9/1:15, 116
Hinckley, Gordon B., 9/1:xxvi, 13, 9/2:37, 10/1:6 n. 2, 89 prophet of our time, 7/1:316
Hinduism, 10/1:23
historians, 9/2:56
historical evidence and rhetoric, 10/2:109
history, 2:87-95, 5:231, 236-37 early, of the Latter-day Saints and voids in information, 7/2:124 liberalizing role of, 7/1:293 manipulation of, 8/2:171, 221-23 sacred vs. ordinary, according to Jan Shipps, 7/2:234-35
Hittites, 9/1:47
Hobby, Michael (director of Zarahemla Foundation), 8/1:112
Hofmann, Mark, 335 holistic approach, tools of, 8/1:72
Holland, Jeffrey R., 9/1:9, 28
Holy Ghost gift of, by laying on of hands, 7/2:103 vs. Holy Spirit, 9/2:189 role of, in bringing souls to Christ, 7/1:161 as teacher, 48
Holy Spirit, 9/2:185
Holzapfel, Richard Neitzel, 9/2:45 homeoteleuton, type of scribal error, 7/2:91
home schooling, 10/2:210
Homer, Michael, 10/1:102 n. 8, 120 homoerotic behavior, 10/1:135 homosexual conduct, Quinn as apologist for, 10/1:143 homosexual orientation, inborn, 10/1:140 homosexuality, 6/2:71-73 church teachings on, 10/1:256 tolerance for, 10/1:141
Hook, Sidney, 9/1:xvi
Houtman, C., 9/1:97
Howard, F. Burton, 9/1:12
Howe, E. D., 9/2:58
INDEX BY SUBJECT, 1989–98

Howsepian, A. A., 10/2:v
   Anselmian assumptions of, 10/2:xiv
   use of religious terms by, 10/2:x
Huggins, Ronald V., 9/2:146
Hughes, Robert D., 10/1:291
human deification, 9/2:117,
   10/1:72, 10/2:xiii
humanization of deity, 10/2:vii
human religious needs, 10/2:xiii
humor, LDS, 9/1:164, 10/2:210
Huntington, Presendia, 10/2:82
Hurlbut affidavits, conflicting
tales of, 8/1:153
husbands and fathers, errant,
   10/2:14
Hutchinson, Anthony, 10/1:103
Hutchinson, Janis, 10/1:viii
Hyde, Orson, 9/1:144
   and the Tree of the Sefirot,
   8/2:319
hymn composed by Evan
   Stephens, 10/1:200
hymn, sacramental, 10/1:41
hypocephalus collection, 8/2:47
hypotheses, 9/2:164
idolatry, 6/1:5–7
imagery. See also symbolism
   in the Book of Mormon,
   8/2:32
   positive and negative, 10/2:26
Immanuel prophecy, 9/2:12
immorality, 6/1:537–42
immortality, 10/1:62, 10/2:xiii
imperfection of our knowledge,
   7/2:218
Indians, American, and the
   priesthood, 8/1:102–3
Indians. See Native Americans
   individualism and the minimal
   state, political theory of,
   9/2:9
infallibility, 9/2:156, 158 n. 19
infinite, possibility of an actual,
   8/2:126–30
infinite sins, concept of, originat-
   ing with Anselm of
   Canterbury, 7/2:22
Infobases, online links of,
   9/1:172
information, outdated, 10/1:111
   Inner Circle, 10/1:52
inquiry vs. advocacy among anti-
   Mormons, 9/2:199
inspiration and diligent study,
   9/2:42
Institute for Religious Research,
   4:93
interest groups, 9/2:8
Internet, use of, to prepare church
   lessons, 10/2:208
interpretive keys to a sealed
   book, 8/1:72
intolerance, 10/1:94
Introvigne, Massimo, 9/2:143,
   10/1:307, 318
Iraq, 2:137
iron
   in the Americas, 9/1:75, 75–76
   n. 14
   mention of, 9/1:150
Irvine, Robert, 9/2:53
Irvine, William C., 10/1:291
Isabel, 10/2:33
Isaiah
   as favorite author of
   Columbus, 8/1:109
   prophecies of, relevant to a
   latter-day audience, 8/1:74
Isaiah (continued)
quotation of, in Book ofMormon, 9/2:12, 10/2:8
words of, 9/2:11
authorship of, 7/1:127, 8/1:69–70
Book of Mormon version as
oldest text of, 7/1:126
commentaries on, 8/1:77–78
concordance of, 8/1:71
holistic approach to, 8/1:78
index of literary analysis of,
8/1:71
interpretation of and
commentary on, by Avraham
Gileadi, 8/1:74
literary analysis of, 8/1:73
literary unity of, 8/1:69–70
methodology of interpretation
of, by Avraham Gileadi,
8/1:70–71
multiple authorship of, 9/2:xx
reference works on, 8/1:71
rhetorical analysis of, 8/1:73
seven themes of, 8/1:72–73
translation of, by Avraham
Gileadi, 8/1:71, 76
typology in, 8/1:73
Isaiah (prophet), 2:180
Isaiah passages
Book of Mormon context of,
9/2:13–14
parallel versions of, 3:163, 9/2:12
selection of, by Book of
Mormon writers, 9/2:14–15
variants of, 2:237
Isaiah passages in the Book of
Mormon, 2:183, 7/1:123,
INDEX BY SUBJECT, 1989–98

Jasher, book of, 9/2:70–71
Jaspers, Karl, 9/1:vi
Jastrow, Morris, Jr., 9/2:xxii
Jehovah, as God of the Old Testament, 7/1:114
Jehovah of the Old Testament, 9/1:36
Jehovah’s Witnesses, 9/1:53
concentration on, by countercult agencies, 10/1:295
Jensen, Harold H., 10/1:255
Jenson, Andrew, 10/2:74
Jeremiah, book of, different versions of, 8/2:238
Jershon, 9/1:119
city of, 9/1:16
destruction of, 10/1:9
land of, 9/1:16
second Babylonian siege of, 10/1:8
Jesus
as the Christ, the Eternal God, 10/1:70
worshiping a different, 10/1:29
Jesus Christ
acceptance of, 10/1:37
atonement of (see also atonement of Christ), 9/1:viii, 9, 9/2:192, 10/1:35, 10/2:185
baptism of, 10/1:80
biblical view of, 65
as a brother to Lucifer, 10/1:81
descent of, into hell, 10/2:190
as distinct from the Father, 7/1:111
dying in ignorance of, 10/2:187
false stories about, 8/1:87 n.
12
as the Father, 7/2:27
as the Firstborn, 9/1:37
as God and man, 7/2:12–14 n.
11, 10/1:67
as God and man, scriptural basis for, 7/2:14 n. 12
and God as separate beings, 7/2:6
as God (Jehovah) of the Old Testament, 7/2:28, 34–36, 9/1:36
incarnation of, 10/1:68
Jerusalem as birthplace of, 8/1:98
knowledge of, hundreds of years before his coming, 7/2:111
Latter-day Saint teachings on, 9/2:114
LDS works on, 10/1:77–79
life and exaltation of, 9/2:170
as the Messiah, 7/1:103 n. 27, 9/2:97
miracles of, 9/2:183
mission of, in Ether 3–4, 8/1:35
as mortal during his ministry, 7/1:98
names and roles of, 7/1:209
necessity of, in our lives, 10/1:337
as personal Savior, 10/1:45
postresurrection appearance of, 7/2:72
prophecies of, in the Book of Mormon, 7/1:97 n. 16
prophecies of, in the Old Testament, 7/1:117
as prophet like unto Moses, 9/1:39
Jesus Christ (continued)
as protagonist in the Book of
Mormon, 9/2:30
resurrection of, 8/2:xii, 9/1:84,
10/2:17
as Rock, 10/2:152
salvation through, 9/2:114
as savior of the whole world,
10/1:44
sinlessness of, 10/1:77–79
as son of God, 7/1:103 n. 27,
10/1:79
trust in, 10/1:65
understanding the premortal,
9/1:28
virgin birth of, 10/2:vii
visit of, to the spirit world,
9/2:131
worship of, in New Testament,
7/1:101 n. 22
Jesus Movement, 10/1:293
Jesus Seminar, 9/1:xi, xiii, xv
and analysis of Jesus’ sayings
in canonical Gospels,
7/2:111
and its lack of true critical
 scholarship, 8/1:xviii–xix
and quest for historical Jesus,
8/1:xii–xxxv
Jew, use of the term, 8/2:86,
88–89
Jewish writings in Egyptian
script, 8/2:329
Jews, 1:3, 2:180, 201
and their acceptance of the
fulness of the gospel of
Jesus Christ, 7/2:116–19
conversion of, to the Church of
Jesus Christ, 7/2:114, 119
in the Diaspora, 10/2:156
and recognition of Jesus Christ
as the true Messiah,
7/2:114–19
Latter-day Saint attitudes and
beliefs regarding, 7/2:106
and Nephites, 8/2:84–89
John, the apostle, 9/2:182
Johnson, Benjamin, 10/2:78
Johnson, Jeffrey O., 10/1:224
Johnson, Paul, 9/2:6
Johnson, Phillip E., 9/2:vi
Jones, Cleo, 9/2:53
Jones, Dan, 10/1:137, 163
Jones, Melba Thomas, 10/1:237
Joseph Smith Papyri. See also
Papyri, Joseph Smith,
4:93–117, 120–26,
5:274–75, 6/1:207–8,
10/2:160, 174
color of ink on, 10/2:160
journal entries on, 8/2:52
journey of, from Thebes to
Kirtland to Salt Lake City,
8/2:56–57
studies on, 8/2:46 n. 1
judgment, 10/1:22, 63
apostolic, of the twelve tribes
of Israel, 8/1:40
four angels of, 8/1:40, 40 n.
32
Judith, apocryphal book of, paral-
lels with Book of Mormon,
8/2:338–42
Jungian Type Theory, 10/2:56
justice, 10/2:57
justification, relationship with
sanctification, 7/1:209
Kabbalah, Christian, 6/2:150–55,
8/2:258–59
INDEX BY SUBJECT, 1989–98

Kabbalah game, according to Sampson, 7/1:224–25
kabbalism
and hermeticism, Lance Owens’s blurring of distinctions between, 8/2:277
origin of, 8/2:260
kabbalistic ideas and LDS thought, 8/2:313
kabbalistic keys used to unlock Book of Mormon, 7/1:219
kabbalistic materials, compilation of, 8/2:297
Kenison, David, 9/1:165, 166
Kerr, Marion Belnap, 10/1:194, 197
keywords, repetition of, 7/1:213
Khor Kharfot as site of Bountiful, 9/1:20, 21
Kiddle, Lawrence, 9/1:132
Kimball, Heber C., 9/1:xxiii, 10/1:115, 172
Kimball, Helen Mar, 10/2:78, 79–81, 92
Kimball, Lucy Walker, 10/2:102
Kimball, Spencer W., 9/2:160
 teachings of, concerning the law of the gathering of Israel in the latter days, 7/2:120
Kimball, Vilate, 9/1:xxiii
Kinderhook plates, 2:210–11, 4:252–53
kindred spirits, doctrine of, 10/2:92, 127
kingdom of God, inheritance of, 9/2:114
kingdoms of glory, 10/1:63
King Follett discourse, unique LDS doctrines of, 8/2:299
King Lear, as inspired work, 7/2:186 n. 115
Kirk, Russell, 9/2:6
Kirtland, Ohio, archaeological evidence at, 10/2:166
Knight, Joseph, Jr., 9/1:xxiii
Knight, Vinson, 10/2:94, 98
knowledge, secular, vs. saving principles of the gospel, 9/2:42
Kofford, Cree-L, 9/1:10
Koran, 2:xxv–xix, 3:143, 5:59
Kurtz, Paul, 10/1:308
Kushner, Tony, 9/2:53
Kwas, Mary, 9/1:141
Laban, Nephi’s encounter with, parallels later parts of Book of Mormon, 8/2:349–52
La Barre, Weston, 9/1:137
Lamanite bondage and captivity, 9/1:175
Lamanite daughters, 9/1:176
Lamanite skin of darkness, 9/1:18
identification of, with Indians, 7/1:144
interrelationships with Nephites, 7/1:212
Lamb, M. T., 9/1:112
Lamoni conversion of, 10/2:14
father of, 10/2:20
land, promised, 6/2:82–93
land(s), use of terms, 9/2:25
Lane, Rev. George, and opportunities for Joseph Smith to hear him, 7/2:128–31
Langland, William, 9/2:134
language
inclusive of women,
10/2:45–46
scriptural, 7/1:11
languages, New World, 9/1:139
Larsen, Dean L., 9/1:11
Larson, Charles M., 10/1:303–4 n. 98
Larson, John, and information on Joseph Smith Papyri,
8/2:50–55
Larson, Stan, 9/2:146
Laslett, Peter, 10/1:133
Last Temptation of Christ (film), The, and its portrayal of Jesus Christ, 7/2:73–74
Latter-day Saints
and Christian beliefs, criticism of, 10/2:203
and Christians, 9/2:115
distinguished leaders among, 9/2:110
love for and liberation of, 10/1:326
negative portrayal of, 9/2:109
law of consecration as a precursor to a Zion society, 8/1:44
law of Moses, 9/2:98, 184
as foreshadowing sacrifice of Christ, 9/1:xvii
Nephite knowledge of, 7/2:112
law/command category, 9/2:25
Law, William, 10/2:90
Lawrence assets, Joseph Smith’s legal responsibilities for,
10/2:91
Lawrence, Maria and Sarah,
10/2:85, 90–91
Lazarus and rich man, 10/2:188
Lazarus, raising of, 10/2:189
LDS beliefs, understanding,
9/1:165
LDS business driven to bankruptcy, 9/2:140
LDS Church
official name of, 10/1:31
growth of, illustrating social science hypotheses, 10/2:157
LDS Collectors Edition CD-ROM
contents of, 7/2:257–58
hypertext and search capabilities of, 7/2:258–60
Macintosh version of, 7/2:260–62
Windows version of, 7/2:262
LDS corporate cultures, 9/2:78
LDS link sites, 9/1:171
LDS music online, 9/1:170
LDS singles, 9/1:171
LDS web sites, 9/1:167, 172
Lears, Jackson, 10/1:133
Leazer, Gary, 10/1:334
Lebolo, Antonia, 10/2:177
background of, 8/2:58–59
Le Carré, John, 9/2:53
learning
by faith, 9/2:43
interest in, 9/2:40
and testimony, attitudes toward, 9/2:41
Lectures on Faith, never canonized, 7/2:90
Lee, Harold B., 9/2:43, 152
Lee, John D., 10/2:122, 125
Leftow, Brian, 10/2:xiv, xix
legal details of the Book of Mormon, 9/2:46
legal system, 9/1:12
Lehi
as an author, 9/2:19
descendants of, 10/1:347
prophetic calling of, 10/1:7
seven tribes of, 10/1:351
trail of, 9/1:15-24
Lehi Cave, 9/1:16
Lehi’s group, travels of,
10/2:151
Lehyanites, 9/1:17
Leigh, Allen, 9/1:165
letters in the Book of Mormon, 9/2:31
Lewis, Catherine, 10/1:120
Lewis, C. S., 9/1:xii
Liahona, 2:175, 221-22, 3:99,
5:290-91
Liberty Jail, Joseph Smith’s
letter from, 10/1:89
library collections of Mormon
materials, 9/2:33
Lightner, Mary Elizabeth,
10/2:82, 126-27
Limhi, King, 9/1:176
limits on human perspective,
7/2:187-88
Lincoln, Abraham, 9/2:139,
10/1:137
Lindsay, Jeff, 9/1:163
linen, 3:180
linguistics, pre-Columbian,
9/1:72
link site to articles online,
9/1:165
linking from web sites, 10/2:208
literary and narrative theory
claim of, that ideology is
inevitab:le, 7/1:174, 180-82
undermining historical claims
of Book of Mormon,
according to Metcalfe,
7/1:170
literary patterns in the Book of
Mormon, 7/1:174
presence of, denies possibility
of its being authentic
history, 7/1:182-87
literature, 2:107-17
literature, anti-Mormon,
10/1:277, 281, 329
Litorski, Nick, 9/1:170
living arrangements, strict, in
Stephens’s home, 10/1:230
living conditions of church
members, 10/2:138
Lloyd, Wesley, journal of,
9/1:106
Locke, John, 9/2:5
logic
argument from silence, 8/2:14
begging the question,
10/2:xviii
circular argument, 7/1:100
of a claim, 10/1:60
fallacies of negative proof,
7/1:25
fallacy of argument ad
verecundiam, 10/2:176
fallacy of equivocation, 7/1:46,
111, 10/2:ix
problems of causality,
8/2:278-81
propter hoc fallacy, 10/1:139
question-begging, 10/1:311
and reason, to counter
arguments, 7/1:160
semantic equivocation,
8/2:270-71
straw man arguments,
9/2:168-71
straw man fallacy, 8/1:vi-x
logic (continued)
    traditional, in examining
    Latter-day Saint beliefs,
    7/1:vii–x
loneliness of plural wives,
    10/2:71, 115
Lord, recognition of, 65
Lord, use of title, 9/2:20
Lott, Melissa, 10/2:86–88, 112
love feast, 10/1:233
love feasting, 10/1:194
Lucifer, 3:234, 242–43
    as a brother of Jesus Christ,
    7/2:85–86, 10/1:81
Lucretius, 9/1:xiv
Ludlow, Daniel H., 9/1:28,
    9/2:43
Luke 18:18–27, 10/1:64
Lund, Gerald N., 9/2:41
Luther, Martin, 10/1:94
Luther Rice Seminary,
    8/2:90–91, 91 n. 71
Lyon, T. Edgar, 10/1:171
Maccabaeus, Judas, 10/2:185 n. 3
MacDonald, George, 9/1:90
Mackey, Albert, 10/1:117
macuahuitl, 9/1:148, 151, 156
Madsen, Brigham D., 9/2:144
Madsen, Gordon, 10/2:90
Madsen, Truman G., 9/2:41
magic, 2:58–62, 5:143–45
    in ancient Egyptian religion,
    7/1:56–57
    definition of, 7/1:46–50, 83
    as distinguished from religion,
    7/1:50–66
    defined by D. Michael Quinn,
    7/1:59–60
    defined by Hans Dieter Betz,
    7/1:66–67 n. 240
    defined by Jerald and Sandra
    Tanner, 7/1:60–62
    defined in scholarly discourse,
    7/1:64–66
    defined in the Hekhalot
    literature, 7/1:56
    defined outside of one’s beliefs,
    7/1:57–58
    issue of, 9/1:94–98, 95 n. 20
    in Mormonism, according to
    Ed Decker, 7/2:41
    and the occult, involvement of
    the Smith family in, 7/2:231
    vs. Christianity, 9/2:130
    magical artifacts, 8/2:281–84
    “magical” practices, 9/2:130–31
    n. 65
Magnus, Albertus (medieval
    author), 8/2:261
maidens, Lamanite, abduction of,
    10/2:37–39
Mainfort, Robert, 9/1:141
man, divine potential of, 9/1:38
Manetho, 9/1:48–49
manic depression, associated with
    genius, 7/2:227 n. 26
map of Book of Mormon events,
    9/1:124
marketplace, Latter-day Saint
    prominence in, 9/2:110
markets and equality, problem of,
    9/2:83
Marks, William, 10/2:95
Marquardt, H. Michael, and
    search for Mormon
    documents, 7/2:123–24
marriage, interracial and
    intercultural, 7/2:68
marriage
    celestial, as priesthood
    ordinance, 10/1:79
    civil, rejection of, 10/2:124
marriage (continued)
covenant, eternal nature of, 10/1:81, 155
customs, Semitic, 9/1:17
as earthly ordinance, 10/1:82
following the resurrection, 9/2:117
ideal, 10/2:vii
importance of, 10/1:173
of Ishmael’s daughters to Lehi’s sons, 10/2:64
plural, 9/1:57
as a religious ordinance, 10/2:123
scriptural basis for, 10/1:173
of a woman to more than one husband, 10/2:81
marriages
posthumous, 10/2:74
previous, 10/2:122
Marrs, Texe, 10/1:274, 274–75 n. 5
Martin, Walter, 9/1:viii, 146, 10/1:286–93, 330, 10/2:vii, viii n. 5, 204
works of, 10/1:287–88 n. 38
Marty, Martin, 9/2:52
martyrs, acceptance of death by, 10/2:157
Marx, Karl, 9/2:82
Marxism, as response to cultural conditions, 7/1:148
Mary, 10/2:29
masks, use of, by Egyptian priests, 7/1:82 n. 315
Masonry, Book of Mormon as response to, 7/1:149
Masonic influence in architecture of Kirtland Temple, 10/1:110
Masonic lodge, layout of, 10/1:111 n. 24
masonic, term of, 10/1:108, 108–9 n. 20
Masoretic Text clarified by Dead Sea Scrolls and Septuagint, 8/1:76
materialism, 5:192–93, 6/1:328
materialistic ideology, 9/2:vi
maternal imagery in the Book of Mormon, 10/2:35
Matthews, Robert J., 9/1:29, 9/2:44
Maxwell, Neal A., 9/1:10, 90, 9/2:148
Maya archaeology, 10/2:168
Maya people and possible connection with Nephites, 10/2:169
McCarter, P. Kyle, 9/1:140
McConkie, Bruce R., 9/2:37, 44, 153
McCulloch, J. Huston, 9/1:140
McKay, Robert, 9/2:143, 10/1:21, 31, 33, 37, 39, 48, 52 n. 120, 55, 331
McKeever, William J., 10/1:95 n. 253
McKenzie, John L., 9/2:xx
McKinney, Joyce, 10/1:316
McMurrin, Sterling, opinions on naturalistic humanism, 7/1:278–94
McQuown, Madeline Reeder, 
relationship of, with Dale 
Morgan, 8/1:128–33
media manipulation by the Jesus 
Seminar, 8/1:xvii–xviii
medieval English mystery drama, 
9/2:136
Meeks, Priddy, journal of, 
8/1:153
Melchizedek, 6/1:19–23, 170–74
Melchizedek Priesthood, 9/2:168
Melton, Gordon, 10/1:306 n. 105
membership only through 
baptism, 10/1:38
men and women
gospel promises and 
obligations for, 10/2:13
mutual dependence and 
independent agency of, 
10/2:13
Mendoza Codex, 9/1:155
mercy, 10/2:57
Merrill, Brent, 9/1:147
Mesoamerica. See also culture, 
Mesoamerican, 2:67–73, 
98–99, 134, 137, 205, 218, 
220, 256, 3:1, 32–33, 96, 
4:252, 5:259–63, 6/1:29–30, 
299–301, 310–16, 10/2:161
Messiah
as expected by the Israelites, 
7/2:16–24
New Testament expectations 
of, 7/1:100–105
prophetic statements about, 
7/2:21 n. 29
visit of, to hell, 10/2:194
 messianic figures and hopes in 
the Dead Sea Scrolls, 
10/2:141
metal tablets used for sacred 
texts, 10/2:148
metallurgy, 2:48–49, 3:43, 146, 
4:209, 6/1:30–31, 299–300, 
319–28, 6/2:30–31
and the Book of Mormon, 
8/1:21–22
metals, 9/1:138–39
Metcalf, Brent Lee, 9/2:145
methodological issues, 10/2:108
methodology, 1:71–74, 2:86–95, 
123–26, 134–35, 139–41, 
214–19, 3:53, 291–95, 
321–22, 4:72–76, 
6/1:52–57, 59–66, 91–92, 
102, 116, 119, 121, 144–47, 
182–86, 223–24, 259–63, 
297–98, 301–4, 319, 
358–61, 379–81, 422–32, 
434–523, 552, 434–523, 
6/2:48–52
relationship between 
parallelism and causality in, 
8/2:320
Meyer, Eduard, 9/2:103
“middle ground” (between prophet 
and faker) of Marvin Hill, 
8/1:144, 8/2:218, 224
militarism, 10/2:49
of the Nephites, 10/2:10
military. See warfare 
millennium, 5:183
Mill, John Stuart, 9/1:xiii, 
9/2:55
millet, 9/1:134
Millet, Robert L., 9/1:29, 
9/2:42, 10/1:19
mind, redemption of, 9/1:30
minutes (of meetings) 
consulting of, 9/2:159
tailoring of, 9/2:149–50
mission of the church, threefold, 
9/1:167, 10/2:209
missionary activities, 9/2:172
missionary lessons, teachings within, 9/2:105
missionary opportunity with anti-Mormon literature, 8/2:250
missions, description of current LDS, 9/1:168
Missouri
    flight from, 10/1:85
    Mormon resistance in, 10/2:93
Missouri persecutions, 9/2:57
    religious component of, 9/2:57–58
Mitten, Samuel B., 10/1:214, 239
Mixtec people, royal genealogies of, 8/1:118–21
Müller, Georg, 10/2:177
Mondragon cooperative in Spain, 9/2:76, 87
    monetary terms, 9/2:21
money, love of, 9/2:86
Mongolia, 2:229–31, 4:210
monotheism vs. plurality of gods, 8/2:136–43
moral conduct of business, 9/2:78
Morey, Robert, 10/1:331, 335
Morgan, Dale
    assistance of, to Fawn Brodie, 8/1:137–44, 8/2:184
    biographical sketch of, 8/1:127–33
    plans of, to write history of LDS, 8/1:133–37
    unfinished history of, 8/1:164–65
Morgan, William, 10/1:120
Morianton, 10/2:41
Mormon
    account of, 10/2:46–47
    and correlations with Joseph Smith, 8/1:41
    as an editor, 7/1:215
    and his philosophy of history, 7/1:215
Mormon culture, 9/2:57
Mormon doctrine, 9/2:114
Mormon historians, history of positivism among, 7/1:176
Mormon History Association, 9/1:xi, 9/2:127
    book award from, 10/2:69
Mormon leaders
    Quinn’s treatment of, 10/1:149
    teachings of, 9/2:105
Mormon mind-control, 9/2:109
Mormon offenses, 9/2:49
Mormon politics or culture, condemnation of, 9/2:56
Mormon position, strength of, 9/2:67
Mormon’s abridgment, 9/2:18
Mormon stereotype, 9/2:52
Mormon texts, allegations of secret changes in, 8/2:68
Mormon theology, naturalistic conception of, 10/2:112
Mormonism
    attempt to separate Jesus from, 10/1:38
    basic beliefs of, 9/1:168
    and Christianity, 9/2:115
    compared with Hinduism, 9/2:100
    concentration on, by countercult agencies, 10/1:294
    criticism of, 9/1:173
    as a “cult,” 9/1:54
    cultural, 8/1:166–67
cyber, 10/2:207
Mormonism (continued)
errors and contradictions of, 9/1:51
and fiction, 9/2:49
non-Christian designation of, 9/2:48
puzzle of, 10/1:14
as a religion, 9/2:66
religious persecution of, 9/2:47
response to critics of, 9/1:167
so-called “crimes” of, 9/2:47
syncretism of, 9/2:107
vs. Christianity, 10/2:199
vs. conservative Protestantism, 10/1:17
web sites for, 9/1:161
Mormonism Research Ministry, 10/1:95 n. 253
anti-Mormon activities of, 8/1:viii
Mormons
accused of being atheists, 10/2:v, xv
claim by others that they are not Christians, 10/1:15, 296
defined out of Christendom, 9/2:143
described as a new and inferior race, 9/2:58
faithful, online recounts of, 10/2:208
faithful worship of, 10/2:xvi
as an indigenously developed ethnic minority, 9/2:47
ostensible racism of, toward American Indians, 9/2:176
popular image of, 9/2:49
Moroni (captain), 9/1:12, 10/2:51
Moroni (son of Mormon), 9/1:13
timing of visits of, as angel, 7/2:132–35
Morris, Nephi, 10/1:92
Morse, Jedidiah, 9/1:118
Moses
book of, 9/2:68
law of, 9/2:98 n. 3
Mosiah 15:1–4, analysis of, 7/1:118–19
mother earth, 10/2:27–28, 27
Mother Goddess, Paul Toscano’s concept of, 7/1:306–7
Mother, Heavenly, 9/1:37
Mother in Heaven as the Holy Ghost, 7/1:307, 309
LDS concept of, 7/1:306
mother of abominations, 10/2:26
Mound Builder myth, 7/2:154 n. 26
Muhammad, Joseph Smith compared to, 9/2:58
Munson, Eliza, 10/1:129
music, LDS, online, 9/1:170
mystery, term of, 10/2:30
mysticism, as explanation of early revelations, 7/1:147–48 n. 14
Nabopolassar, 10/1:7 n. 4
NAFTA, 9/2:79
Nahom, 9/1:18, 23, 116, 117, 120–22
as ancient place-name in southern Arabia, 7/1:87
Ishmael’s place of burial, 7/1:85
research on, 7/1:87
names, Book of Mormon, 8/1:13, 53
INDEX BY SUBJECT, 1989–98

Egyptian etymologies for, 8/2:34, 37–38, 40, 42
gentilic or nisbeh, 8/2:40
Hebrew etymologies for, 8/2:38
nonbiblical, 8/2:34
names, places, 1:85–88, 2:24, 76, 3:195
narrative forms, 9/2:56
narrative repetitions, 7/1:187–92
narratives
of coercion and captivity, 9/2:60–62
of conversion, 9/2:60
narrow neck of land, 9/1:126
Panama as, 8/1:112
narrow passage, 9/1:126
naturalism, 9/1:xiv
naturalistic explanations, implications of, 7/2:225, 228
_Nauvoo Expositor_, 10/2:109
Nauvoo Temple
endowment rooms in, 10/1:105
weather vane of, 10/1:106
Nauvoo, archaeological evidence at, 10/2:166
Near East. See culture, Near Eastern
neas, 9/1:176
Nebuchadrezzar, 10/1:8 n. 5
Necho II, 9/1:46
Nehem, 9/1:116
Neibaur, Alexander
and knowledge of Aramaic, 8/2:293
as Lance Owens’s candidate for Joseph Smith’s kabbalistic mentor, 8/2:269
supposed owner of kabbalistic texts, 8/2:289, 296
Nelson, Dee Jay, 9/2:100
credentials of, 10/1:267
Nelson, Russell M., 9/1:7
Nelson, William O., 10/1:298
Nephi, name of, in the Apocrypha, 8/2:327 n. 4
Nephi (son of Lehî), discipleship of, 9/1:7
Nephi (son of Helaman), 7/1:210, 9/1:12
Nephite architecture, 10/2:169
Nephite artwork, 10/2:170
Nephite city, defense of, 10/2:64
Nephite interrelationships with Lamanites, 7/1:212
on the American continent, 10/1:349
cultural definition of, 10/1:349
and Jews, 8/2:84–89
possible connection of, with Maya people, 10/2:169
remnant of, 10/1:346, 349
Nevada, prosperity of, 9/2:77
New Age Movement,
concentration on, by countercult agencies, 10/1:295
New Approaches (book) designed to provide escape from faith,
7/2:211
Newark stones, 5:70
New Historicism, 9/2:56
Newman, John Henry, 10/1:30, 32, 58, 61, 71, 74
New Mormon History, 9/2:56
new religious movement vs. cult,
10/1:315
new religious movements, sociological approach to,
10/1:315
New Testament expressions in Book of Mormon, 8/2:326
New World population of, 9/1:18
pre-Columbian explorations of,
7/1:120
New World Archaeological Foundation, 1:133, 4:117–18,
5:55–56
Nibley, Hugh W., 2:53, 55, 3:52–56, 125, 162–63,
182–85, 244–46, 283–89,
322, 4:26, 87, 96–97, 105,
137, 242, 5:9, 17, 190–97,
6/1:vi, 146, 148, 394–96,
6/2:37, 300–302, 9/2:44,
124–25, 10/1:329, 10/2:5,
176
Book of Mormon essays of,
8/2:210–11
and critique of Fawn Brodie's
No Man Knows My History,
8/1:141–44, 8/2:155
vs. Dale Morgan on Fawn
Brodie, 8/1:140–44
Nibley, Tom, 9/1:146
Noah, King, 9/1:175, 9/2:7
priests of, 10/2:15

No Man Knows My History, by
Fawn Brodie
as "definitive" biography of
Joseph Smith, 8/2:148, 213
celebratory reviews of, 8/2:150
criticisms of, 8/2:151–52, 151
n. 11, 217
errors and mistakes in,
8/2:176–77
Hugh Nibley's response to, in
No Ma'am, That's Not
History, 8/1:141–44,
8/2:155
reviews of, by historians,
8/2:190–97
reviews of, by literary
gentlemen, 8/2:197–210
RLDS reaction to, 8/2:186–88
nonaggression, 10/1:87
Noyes, John Humphrey,
10/2:130
Nubia, archaeological evidences
for, 10/2:167
Oaks, Dallin H., 9/1:130,
9/2:149, 156
obedience, 10/1:36
of Nephi, 9/1:7
objective history, Dale Morgan's
position on, 8/1:149–51
subjectivity
in analyzing Book of Mormon,
8/1:19
functional, 10/1:145
and the historical method,
7/2:228, 237
scholarly, 10/1:104
in scholarship, 8/1: xviii, xx, 
xxvi–xxvii
in writing history, 8/2:223
obsidian, 9/1:152
INDEX BY SUBJECT, 1989–98

403

Occam, William of, 9/2:9
occult sciences, Lance Owens’s introduction to, 8/2:253
O’Connor, David, 10/2:165
O’Donovan, Rocky, 10/1:145
Oftedahl, Jeff, 10/1:152
Old Testament passages, LDS interpretation of, 8/1:92
olive, origin, significance, use, and cultivation of, in the ancient Near East, 8/1:65–66
olive oil, use and symbolism of, 8/1:66–67
olive tree, allegory of
botanical metaphors in, 8/1:65
botanical studies of, 8/1:67–68
cognates in Old Testament texts, 8/1:63
comparative studies of, 8/1:63–65
historical studies of, 8/1:65–67
interpretive studies of, 8/1:61–63
similarities in ancient Near Eastern texts, 8/1:64
similarities in the Bible and extracanonical books, 8/1:64
similarities in Romans 11, 8/1:64
textual studies of, 8/1:67
understanding of, in the early period of the restored Church, 8/1:62
Olmec, 2:46, 3:36–37, 6/1:320, 355–59
Oneida Community, 10/2:130
oneness, in reference to deity, 7/2:26

online forum for discussion of
issues of interest to faithful Latter-day Saints, 9/1:168
Only Begotten, designation of, 9/2:167
ontological argument for the existence of God, 10/2:vi
opposition, 2:60, 183, 252, 3:158, 270
ordeal, worship following, 10/2:23
ordinances, 2:81
ordinances invalid without priesthood authority, 10/2:121–22
organic evolution, 8/2:vii–xii, vii, 33
original sin, 9/2:187, 188
denial of, by Mormons, 7/2:98
orthodoxy vs. heresy, 9/2:62
Ostler, Blake, 10/2:vi
other people, presence of, 9/1:130
overstatement in Mormon Puzzle material, 10/1:22
overview, of The Book of Mormon, 7/2:1

Owens, Lance
Mormon History Association’s Best Article Award for 1995, 8/2:251
unsupported assertions of, 8/2:265–66
ownership, 9/2:84
shared, 10/2:140

Pacific College of Graduate Studies, 8/2:92–96, 93 n. 76
Packer, Boyd K., 9/2:148, 152, 10/1:36
Pahoran, 9/1:12
Palmer, David, 9/1:127
Palmer, Mrs., 9/1:xxiv
Palmyra, New York, 9/2:xxiv
*Palmyra Reflector* and story of Walters the magician,
8/1:153
Palmyra, possible revival in,
8/1:155
papyri
  background of, 7/1:35
  magical, use and content of,
  7/1:83
Papyri, Greek Magical (PGM)
  contents of, 7/1:38
  definition of, 7/1:46
  nature of, 7/1:42
Papyri, Joseph Smith. See also
  Joseph Smith Papyri
  dating of, 7/1:71 n. 272
  relationship of, to Book of
  Abraham, 7/1:71
papyrus find at the Metropolitan
  Museum in New York City,
  9/2:124
paradigm debate, makes real
  communication possible,
  7/2:159–60
paradigms
  choice between, based on
  application of values, not
  rules, 7/2:161
  source of assumptions and
  methods, 7/2:148
  vs. self-evident facts, 7/2:209
parallels between *View of the*
  Hebrews and the Book of
  Mormon, 9/1:103 n. 41
Parry, Donald W., 9/2:45
Palenque as a Book of Mormon
  site, 10/2:159, 179
Parahyba text, 5:269
parallelism. See also poetry,
  1:5–9, 10–17, 2:13, 4:53,
  5:202–8, 6/1:178–79
parallels, 1:80–88, 2:90,
  189–204, 3:101–2, 170,
  4:91–92, 5:1, 17–19, 105–7,
  227–29, 6/1:67, 382–412,
  488–93
between temple rites and
  Masonic rites, 10/1:120
transoceanic. See transoceanic
  comparisons
Parker, Richard, 10/2:176
Parry, Donald W., 10/2:143
Partridge, Emily, 10/2:97, 102
Partridge, Emily and Eliza,
  10/2:85, 88–90
passivism, moral complexity of,
  10/2:50
Passover, 6/1:388
Patai, Raphael, 10/2:147
patriarchal blessing, Ed Decker's
  view of, 7/2:41
patriarchal order, 10/2:xviii
patriarchy, 10/2:49
patriolatry, the idolatry of God
  the Father, 7/1:303–5
Paul, apostle
  letters of, 10/1:57
  warnings of, 9/1:vii
Paul, Joshua A., 10/1:217
peace and love, gospel message
  of, 9/1:177
peace, preservation of, 10/2:50
Pearce, Mike, 9/1:172
Pearl of Great Price, 9/2:68
  recent writings on, 10/2:204
Pement, Eric, 10/1:279
Penrose, Charles W., 9/1:89
perdition, son of, 7/2:88
perfection, 8/2:249–50
  of God, 8/2:100–103
Mormon view of, in contrast to classical view, 8/2:100
perplexity, as precursor to all learning, 7/1:213
Perry, L. Tom, 9/1:11
personal names. See names, people
personal property, 9/2:83
personality determinants, 10/2:57
personality type, authoritarian, 7/2:179 n. 100
Peter, 10/1:73
Peters, Karl, 10/2:165
Peterson, Andrew W., 9/1:12
Peterson, Daniel C., 9/2:44
response of, to Van Gorden, 9/2:196–98
Peterson, Mary Ann, 10/2:127
petroglyphs, 4:65, 72
pharaoh of the oppression, 9/1:44
philosopher's stone, 8/2:259–60, 260 n. 27
philosophy, 9/1:vi
phrenology, 10/1:174
Piers Plowman, 9/2:134
Pike, Dana, 10/2:143
Pinker, Steven, 9/2:vii
pioneers, 5:195
Pistis Sophia, paral lels with the Book of Mormon,
8/2:356–60
Piute Indians, 1:129–31
Pixiner, Bargil, 10/2:142
place names. See names, places
plagiarism, 9/2:73
alleged, by Joseph Smith,
8/2:326
alleged, in 3 Nephi 12–14,
7/2:178–79
possible, by Buerger, 10/1:105
plain and precious parts of the gospel, restoration of,
7/1:211
plan of salvation, 9/2:195
plants, nomenclature of,
10/2:162
plates, 2:29, 68–69, 183, 3:159,
170, 185, 190, 193–96,
201–10, 4:135–36, 6/1:39,
111, 463–70, 6/2:186–99,
217–23
Plato, 10/2:xx
plurality of gods vs. monotheism, 8/2:136–43
plural marriage, 9/1:57
campaign against, 10/2:70
conversion to, 10/2:101
dissatisfaction with, 10/2:101
doctrinal foundations of,
10/2:99
experimental nature of,
10/2:135
as a failed practice, 10/2:118
as harmful to women,
10/2:137
implementation of, 10/2:99
motivation for, 10/1:172,
10/2:107 n. 6
revelation on, 9/2:127
as a social system, 10/2:117
theology of, 10/2:120
Pluto, 10/1:76
poetic qualities in the Book of Mormon
poetry. See also chiasmus; colophon; parallelism; and Book of Mormon: literary qualities
of, 1:5–17, 90, 2:153–55,
4:167, 5:203–8
in the Book of Mormon, 7/1:7,
9/2:31
polemics, lexical, 10/2:v
politics, 5:97–99
polyandrous marriages, nature of,
10/2:82
polyandry, 10/2:81, 99–101, 118
Joseph Smith’s involvement in,
10/2:119
polygamists, Mormon, 10/2:114
polygamy, 9/2:50, 53, 58
early Mormon, 10/2:71
Emma Smith’s reaction to,
10/2:84–86
environmental influences on,
10/2:92
introduction of, 10/2:68
polygyny, contradictions concern-
ing, 9/2:174
polytheism, 10/2:xi
Popper, Sir Karl, 9/2:xx
population, 6/1:24–29, 259–94
Porter, Muriel, 9/1:113
Porter, Roger B., 9/2:41
positivism
as conception of scientific
approach to human
understanding, 7/1:171
historical development of,
7/1:172
and ideology, 7/1:175
positivist claims for neutrality
and objectivity, 7/1:172–73
positivist distinction between
literature and history,
7/1:174
postpositivist position, dissemi-
nated through literary and
narrative theory, 7/1:172
poverty and affluence, 9/2:87
power and the powerless,
10/2:40–42
praise and thanks, 10/2:xix
Pratt, Noel S., 10/1:211

---

childlessness of, 10/1:238
Pratt, Orson, 9/1:xx, 10/1:169
Pratt, Parley P., 9/1:xxv,
10/1:138, 10/2:132
Pratt, Sarah M., 10/2:130
prayer, 2:255, 5:35, 326–28,
6/1:72–74, 396–403, 9/2:44
Preclassic Mesoamerican sites,
widely spread cardinal shift in,
8/1:113
pre-Columbian, 2:50, 98–99,
5:259–60, 6/1:266–68,
335–42
contacts, between the New and
Old worlds, 7/1:121
grain, 2:49–50
linguistics, 9/1:72
metal, 2:48–49
metallurgy, 6/1:30–31,
299–300, 319–28
people, 6/1:266–68
plants, 6/1:335–42
predestination, 10/1:320
preferences, interaction of, in
determining personality,
10/2:57
Preisendanz, Karl, publisher of
Papyri Graecae Magicae,
7/1:38
prejudice. See agenda
premortal existence, doctrine of,
10/2:126
Presbyterianism, and Smith
family membership,
7/2:131–32, 134
pride, 3:111–12, 5:295
priesthood blessings, as demoni-
cally empowered, according
to Ed Decker, 7/2:41
Priest, Josiah, 9/1:110
priest, office of, 9/1:39
priestcraft, 4:183, 9/2:86
INDEX BY SUBJECT, 1989–98

Book of Mormon warnings against, 9/2:3
practice of, 9/2:3
priesthood, 4:161, 6/1:23, 6/2:259–82, 9/2:110
authority, 9/2:176
ordination, policy of, 9/2:112
revelation on, 9/2:162
Priesthood
Aaronic and Melchizedek, 8/2:239–41
Seal of the, 8/2:317
Primary lesson, preparation for, 10/2:210
primitive church, 9/2:115
Prince, Gregory, 10/1:117
principles
of the gospel, 8/2:26–27
of Mormonism, according to Joseph Smith, 8/2:30
printed word vs. Internet, 10/2:206
process theology, views of, 8/2:100 n. 2
progression, eternal, 10/1:72, 10/2:xiii
Prometheus Books, 10/1:308
propaganda, anti-Mormon, 10/1:299, 320
property, private ownership of, 10/2:139
prophecies
of coming of Christ, 7/1:96
before-the-fact, 7/1:95, 108–11, 7/2:14–16, 8/1:70
types of, 8/2:111–14
prophet and revelation
Owens's use of words, 8/2:272–77
prophet-fraud dichotomy, 8/1:145–47
prophetic fulfillment, 9/2:11
prophetic narrative, 10/2:26
prophetic statements, 9/2:3
prophetic truth claims, rejection of, by Fawn Brodie, 8/2:188
prophet like unto Moses, 9/1:39
prophets, 2:58, 84, 115–16, 6/1:199, 452–56, 10/1:80
and apostles, necessity of, 9/2:183
in the Book of Mormon, 9/1:13
continuation of, 9/2:173
foundational, 9/2:184
function of, 10/1:81
living, putting trust in, 7/1:161
Old Testament, 9/2:183
reliance of, on Christ, 40
revelation of, in the Book of Mormon, 10/2:8
revelation to, in latter days, 9/2:173
rivalry between, and skeptics, 7/2:183
test for genuineness of, 10/1:82
prophet spectacles, 9/2:111
proselyting new members, 9/2:59
conservative, vs. Mormonism, 10/1:17
inadequate for salvation, 9/2:63
Pseudepigrapha, 4:122
pseudepigraphic texts, 10/2:192
Pseudo-Philo writes of Cenez, 8/1:63
psychohistory, attempt at,
10/2:71
punishment theme, parallels
between Jeroboam and Noah,
7/1:200–206
Punt
archaeology of land of,
10/2:162–68
locations proposed for,
10/2:163
pupil of the wedjet-eye, Abraham
called, 7/1:76–79
Pyper, George D., 10/1:205, 206
Quagebeur, Jan., 10/2:178
queen, Lamanite (wife of
Lamoni's father), 10/2:20
queen, Lamanite, husband of,
slain by Amalickiah,
10/2:40
queen, Lamoni's, 10/2:14
faith of, 10/2:15
Queener, 10/1:243
quenching of iron, 9/1:149
quest for the historical Jesus,
8/1:xiii–xv, xiii
questions asked by non-
Mormons, 8/2:232
questions of B. H. Roberts,
9/1:70
Quetzalcoatl, 1:132–34, 2:43,
56, 64, 3:41–43, 5:266–67
Pyramid of, dating of, 8/1:118
Quiché-Mayan language,
10/1:352
Quinn, D. Michael,
8/2:225–99/1:x, 9/2:147,
10/1:103, 133
background of, 10/1:141 n. 2
book of, reactions to,
10/1:150–52
errors by, 9/2:161
as historian, 10/1:143
homosexual view of, 10/1:261
professed homosexuality of,
10/1:134
research of, 9/2:147
as source for Ed Decker, 7/2:41
n. 15
special vocabulary of, 10/1:147
Quinn'speak, 10/1:136, 148
Quirigua as a Book of Mormon
site, 10/2:160, 179
Qumran community, 9/2:97
inhabitants of, 9/2:97, 98 n. 3
worship practices at, 10/2:144
Qumran documents, concealment
of, 9/2:94
quorum, unanimity in, 9/2:160
quorum votes, negative outcome
of, 9/2:160
Qur'an. See Koran
Rabbinic legal provisions related
to seafaring, 10/2:149
Ralson, Colleen, 10/1:87
Ramses II, 9/1:46
Rasmussen, Ellis T., 9/1:28
records. See texts, ancient
Recovery from Mormonism,
9/1:172, 173
redemption and generosity, Book
of Mormon teachings on,
9/1:3
redemption of the mind, 9/1:30
Redford, Donald, 10/2:x
redness, quality of, 9/2:vii
reformation, 9/2:62
Reformation, Protestant,
10/1:74, 94, 320
reformed Egyptian, 8/1:97,
9/1:138–39
reign of judges, 9/2:2
Relief Society, 10/2:111 n. 13
religion
ancient Near Eastern, 10/2:18
as distinguished from magic, 7/1:50–66
and politics, separation of, 9/2:1
on radio and TV, 10/1:301
religions, world, 9/1:165, 171
religious beliefs, political implications of, 9/2:1
religious bigotry, 10/1:271, 272
religious commitment and education, 9/2:39–40
religious nonconformity vs. heresy, 9/2:48
religious orthodoxy, 10/1:272
Religious Studies Center, BYU, 2:185–86, 9/1:163
religious texts online, 9/1:165
remarriage without prior divorce, 10/2:124
remembrance, 6/1:400–403, 9/1:2
Renaissance, 6/2:3–58
Rencher, Alvin, 9/2:18
Reorganized Church, 10/2:86
repentance, 5:292–93
encouraged by church, 10/1:260
after death, 10/2:188
fruit of, 10/1:338
repetition, 2:165
and contrast in Book of Mormon narratives, 9/2:30
responsibility, individual and collective, 9/2:87
restoration, 2:165, 3:265, 271, 4:15, 6/1:413, 6/2:3–9
founding narratives of, 9/2:126
by Joseph Smith, 9/2:116
and modern evils, connection between, 9/2:8
necessity of, 9/1:38
reformation vs., 9/2:49
writing on, 9/2:127
restored gospel and the ancient church, 9/2:44
resurrection, 3:11, 35, 6/1:75–76
of Christ, reality of, 8/1:xiii
familial joy at time of, 10/1:158
funeral sermon on, 10/1:156
of husband with assistance of goddess, 10/2:18
10/1:47, 61
continuing, 8/1:29 n. 5,
7/1:299, 7/2:7
divine, defense of, 7/1:296
explanation of, 7/1:147
Mormon concept of, 9/2:117
necessity of ongoing, 9/2:183
rejection of, 9/2:180
worldview based on, 9/2:vi
revisionist agenda of Signature Books, 7/1:231
revival, 4:179
revivals, religious, timing of, 7/2:127–31
Reynolds, Michael H., 10/1:15,
15 n. 12, 21, 40, 52 n. 120,
56, 60, 61, 63, 338
Reynolds, George
biographical sketch of, 8/1:52
as Book of Mormon scholar,
8/1:51
concordance of, for Book of Mormon, 8/1:173
Reynolds-Sjodahl Commentary on the Book of Mormon as a fraud, 8/1:58–60
rhetoric, 6/1:418–33
Rich, Adrienne, 10/1:132
rich man and Lazarus, 10/2:188
riches, 5:192–93, 6/1:328
riches (continued)
grasping for, 9/1:11
Richards, Willard, 10/1:90, 153, 157
Ricks, Stephen D., 9/2:44, 10/2:144
Rigdon, Sidney, 9/1:89, 10/1:83
righteous, rescue of, 10/2:191
Riley, I. Woodbridge, 9/1:63, 107
rituals. See festivals
rivers of water, 8/2:366–67
RLDS, 3:56, 68, 70, 110, 261–311
and the Book of Mormon, 9/1:98–110
Book of Mormon study of, 9/1:100–106
faith of, 9/1:79–86
literature on, 9/2:144–45
questions of, 9/1:70
Roberts, Philip, 10/1:17, 19, 27, 31
Robertson, Lavoid, 10/1:21, 27, 83
Robinson, Stephen, 9/2:198, 10/1:19, 10/2:55
Rock, as Christ, 10/2:152
rod and root of Jesse, 9/2:13
Rollins, Mary Elizabeth, 10/2:112
Roman Catholic approach, 10/1:317
Romans 1:24–32, 10/1:257
5:12, interpretation of, 9/2:187

11:17–24, bibliography of commentaries to, 8/1:64
Roper, Matthew, acknowledgment of error of, 9/1:105–6
Rosicrucian movement, 8/2:256, 256 n. 17
Rotundo, E. Anthony, 10/1:136, 229
Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyam, 10/1:219
Ruckman, Peter S., 10/1:285 n. 30
ruler, rich young, 10/1:64
Rust, Richard Dilworth, 9/2:45
Sabbatean movement, messianic and mystical excesses of, 8/2:268
Sabbath worship, 10/1:269
Sabellianism, doctrine of, regarding Godhead, 7/1:105–7, 7/2:26–28, 31
use of wine and water for, 9/1:40, 55
sacrament prayers, paraphrase of, 7/1:8
sacrament ordinance in the Book of Mormon, 8/1:4–6
sacred experiences of modern apostles, 9/2:151
sacred space, 9/1:176
sacred texts on metal tablets, 10/2:148
sacrifice, human, in Egyptian practice, 8/2:49, 49 n. 10
Sagan, Carl, 9/2:vi
Saints
perfecting the, 10/2:209
persecution of, 9/2:106
Saints Alive, 10/1:303
Salisbury, Katherine Smith, 9/1:xxi
salvation, 5:343–50, 6/1:424–33, 9/1:vi, 10/2:135
for the dead, 10/2:184, 186–94
by faith alone, 9/2:194
by grace, 9/1:ix
through Jesus Christ, 7/2:119, 9/2:114, 10/1:33, 35
in modern Christianity, 7/2:81–82
Mormon concept of, 10/1:103
obtaining, 10/1:62
plan of, 9/2:195, 10/1:35, 36
plan of, in the Dead Sea Scrolls, 10/2:143
by works and grace, 7/2:77–80
same-sex attraction as an inherited genetic trait, 10/1:135
same-sex dynamics, 10/1:148
of 19th-century Mormonism, 10/1:133
as term to replace homosexuality, 10/1:135
same-sex past, 10/1:133
Samuel the Lamanite, 9/1:12
Samuelson, Cecil O., Jr., 9/1:13
sanctification
principle of, 7/1:208
relationship of, with justification, 7/1:209
Sanders, John, 10/2:xii
Sapp, John N., 10/2:93
Sariah, 10/2:21
comforting of, 10/2:22
likening of, to widow of Zarephath, 10/2:22
Satan, 3:234, 242–43
malevolent activities of, 10/2:153
as a spirit child of God, 9/1:37
Satanic ritual child abuse, 10/1:324
satanism, claim that Mormonism is a form of, 8/2:72
saving principles of the gospel vs. secular knowledge, 9/2:42
Savior
Jesus as, 10/1:63
among the Nephites, 10/1:44
Schnoebelen, Bill, 10/1:280
scholarly methodology, 9/2:56
scholarly tools for understanding the gospel, 9/2:45
scholars, 9/2:ix
biblical, 9/2:xx
Book of Mormon, 9/1:2
New Testament, 9/2:131
testimonies and experiences of, 9/2:39
scholarship, 9/1:52
Book of Mormon, 9/1:26
books critical of radical biblical, 8/1:xxv n. 56
and faith, 7/2:182
naive and dishonest, 9/2:xix
radical revisionist, 8/1:xx–xxxvii
weaknesses of traditional, 9/2:42
science, history of, includes many instances of intolerance and resistance to new theories, 7/2:155 n. 31
science and scholarship, 9/2:v
scientific method, influence on knowledge, 7/1:171
Scott, Richard G., 9/1:12
scouting, 9/1:171
scriptural authority, 9/2:179–83
scriptural books, acceptance of, 10/1:56
scripture, 6/1:228–42
scripture, proof of, through the
power of the Holy Ghost, 7/1:24
scripture-marking system, 9/1:31
scriptures
extrabiblical, 9/2:118
interpretations of, 7/1:168
possible correction of,
10/2:54–56
tools for studying, 10/2:3
women in, 10/2:9 n. 1
scripture scholarship, 10/2:4
scripture study, 10/2:4
scrolls. See texts, ancient
seafaring
biblical and Book of Mormon,
10/2:150
in biblical times, 10/2:151
parables and traditions of,
10/2:151
Rabbinic legal provisions
related to, 10/2:149
sealed book, Book of Mormon
as, 7/1:219
sealing vs. marriage, 10/2:80
search engines, 10/2:209
Second Comforter, 7/1:211
second coming, 3:102–3
events leading up to, 9/1:167
second death, 5:302
secrecy and Christianity, 9/2:120
secret combinations, 4:184, 9/2:2
Book of Mormon warnings
against, 9/2:3
of Gadianton, identified with
communism, 9/2:3
secret signs and symbols of early
Christians, 9/1:56
secret teachings in ancient Christ-
ianity, 9/1:40
sect, recognition of, as Christian,
9/2:63
secular humanism, 4:vii–lxxv, 5,
144, 6/1:v–562, 10/1:309
advanced by Paul Kurtz,
7/1:237
secularization, process of, 9/2:9
seed of Alma vs. Lehi’s tree,
9/1:8
Seely, David, 10/2:144
seer stone, 8/2:259, 9/2:175
Sefer Nishmat Hayyim of
Manasseh ben Israel, com-
pilation of kabbalistic
materials, 8/2:297
selectivity, as a limit on human
perspective, 7/2:192–95
self and other, awareness of,
9/2:viii
self-interest and special interest
groups, role of, 9/2:7
Semitic languages, roots in,
9/1:117
seniority, role of, in decision
making, 9/2:158
Septuagint helps clarify
Masoretic Text, 8/1:76
Sermon at the Temple,
3:319–22, 6/1:152–68,
10/2:8
antiquity of, 9/2:146
Sermon on the Mount,
3:319–22, 6/1:121, 152–68,
10/2:8
compared with 3 Nephi,
7/2:9–10, 8/1:16–17
sermons in the Book of Mormon,
9/2:31
serpents, 3:43
services, institutionalization of, 9/2:86
Sessions, Patty, 10/2:113
Sessions, Sylvia, 10/2:82, 83
sexual immorality, rationalizations for, 10/2:131
sexuality and sexual identity in 19th-century America, 10/1:134
sexual sin, social costs of, 9/2:5
Shakespeare, parallels of, to Book of Mormon, 9/1:114–15
Shanks, Hershel, 9/1:149
Shaw, George Bernard, 9/2:131
sheath of Laban’s sword, 9/1:152
Sheets, Payson, 9/1:113
Sheol, 10/1:76
Sherem, 9/1:9
sheum, 9/1:120
shilum, 9/1:120
Shipps, Jan
background of, 7/2:221–22
and Mormonism as a new religious tradition, 8/2:182
and reviews of Mormonism, 7/2:220 n. 3
shipwrecks, 10/2:152
Shiz, beheading of, 10/1:55
Shurtliff, Luman, 9/1:xxiv
Siedenschnur, Günther, 9/2:106
sign seeking, 9/2:153
Signorile, Michelangelo, 10/1:262
signs of the times, 9/1:61
silk in pre-Columbian America, 9/1:78
similes, 10/2:154
simplicity and aesthetics as values in evaluating paradigms, 7/2:177–81
sinners, 10/1:44
Mormons as, 10/1:336
skepticism in contemporary biblical studies, 8/1:xii
Joseph Smith’s response to, 7/1:146
Skinner, Andrew, 10/2:142
Smith, Adam, 9/2:5
linked to Joseph Smith, 9/2:81
Smith, Agnes Coolbrith, 10/2:70, 108
Smith, Alvin, death of, and knowledge of Moroni, 7/2:132–35
Smith, Andrew, 10/1:167
Smith, Don Carlos, 10/2:70
Smith, Emma, 9/1:xxii, 10/2:110–11
Joseph’s expressions of friendship to, 10/1:160
Smith, Ethan, 9/1:63
evaluation of theory of, 7/1:150 n. 22
and View of the Hebrews, reputedly borrowed by Joseph Smith, 7/1:149
Smith, George Albert, 9/1:x, 10/2:71
Smith, George D., 9/1:x, 10/1:308
Smith, Gerald, 9/1:168
Smith, Hyrum, 9/1:xxi, 10/2:131
death of, 10/1:89
Smith, Hyrum (continued)
teachings of, on eternal marriage, 10/2:132 n. 33

Smith, John L., 10/1:vii, ix, ix n. 13, 18, 21, 31, 44, 51
doctorate of, 10/1:15 n. 12

Smith, Joseph, 9/1:89, 125,
9/2:58, 10/1:34, 39, 53, 89
and 1826 trial, 9/1:94
and access to the Bible,
8/2:330–32
children of, 10/2:83
compared to Muhammad,
9/2:58
daguerreotype of, 9/1:166
and comparison of his theology with Book of Mormon theology, 8/1:7–9
and correlations with the prophet Mormon, 8/1:41
and efforts to debase his character, 7/2:124
encounters of, with angelic messengers, 10/1:271
environment of, influencing Book of Mormon, 7/1:146
as a false prophet, according to Ed Decker, 7/2:48–50
and his family, 9/2:119
and first meeting with Oliver Cowdery, 8/1:158
first vision of, 10/2:103
and folk magic, 8/2:281
as a good worker, 9/1:xxv
historical narrative of, 7/2:138
humanizing of, 8/2:215
and his ideas about revelation, 7/1:146
influenced by Kabbalah, 8/2:289
inspiration of, for sealings, 10/2:82

knowledge of, concerning Nauvoo temple ceremonies, 10/1:123
and knowledge of Aramaic, 8/2:293
and knowledge of Hebrew, 8/2:292
linked to Adam Smith, 9/2:81
and links to kabbalism, 8/2:252
literacy of, 10/1:53
and magic and superstition, 10/1:321
marital theology of, 10/2:137
misinformation on, by Ed Decker, 7/2:50–55
money digging, alleged involvement in, 8/1:84,
8/2:174
murder of, 10/1:89
as a mystic, 7/2:241–46
naturalistic biography of, by Marvin Hill, 8/2:216
naturalistic explanation of,
8/2:152, 154, 221
negative reports of, 8/1:87
number of wives of, 10/2:72
persecution of, 10/1:92
and plural marriage, 10/2:105
as prophet, 10/1:270, 10/2:103
prophetic calling of, 10/2:102
prophetic truth claims of,
8/2:214
prophet or conscious fraud in Brodie's approach, 8/2:153, 176, 218, 220
Quinn's treatment of,
10/1:137, 153
and references to South American civilizations, 8/1:28 n. 3
religion of parents of, 9/2:175
Rosicrucian influences on, 8/2:269
shots fired by, in Carthage Jail, 10/1:90 n. 240
status of wives of, at marriage, 10/2:77
story of, 9/2:126
supposed plagiarism by, of ritual elements from Freemasonry, 10/1:97
supposed plagiarism of, for the Book of Mormon, 10/1:54
teachings and opinions of, 7/1:143
teachings of, on marriage and the family, 10/1:154
translation by, of Book of Abraham, 10/1:123
understanding by, of Freemasonry, 10/1:122
view of, 10/2:70
visions of, 9/2:64
wives of, 10/2:67
wives of, biographies of, 10/2:113
wives of, later sealing of, to apostles, 10/2:97
Smith, Joseph, III, 9/1:xx
Smith, Joseph F., 9/1:xx, 55, 9/2:43, 10/1:203, 10/2:193
Smith, Joseph F., II, 10/1:260
Smith, Joseph Fielding, 9/2:37, 157, 10/1:85
Smith, Lucy Mack, 9/2:119–20
biography by, about Joseph Smith, 8/1:88
personal revelations of, 8/1:88
Smith, Robert Morton (author of Jesus the Magician), 7/1:67–71
Smith, T. Michael, 9/2:xxv

Smith, William, 9/1:xxi, 10/2:133
Smith family cabin, excavation of, 9/2:xxiv–xxvi
Smithsonian statement, 4:204, 5:258–59
Smoot, Reed, 10/1:92
Snow, Eliza, 10/2:86, 96
social, economic, and political conditions, in Helaman and 3 Nephi, 7/1:217
socialism, principles of, in contrast to united order principles, 10/2:139–40
social science hypotheses, 10/2:157
social stratification, in Mesoamerica, 7/1:218
Society for Early Historic Archaeology, 4:117–18
Society for the Study of New Religions, 10/1:318
Society of Biblical Literature, 9/2:ix, 10/1:58
Sodom, destruction of, 10/1:137, 154
sodomy, tolerance for, in 19th century, 10/1:142
Solis (Spanish historian), 9/1:157
Sorenson, John L., 9/1:147, 9/2:xxiv, 10/1:344, 10/2:181
souls, premortal existence of, 9/2:167, 190
source criticism, 9/2:ix–xxiii
source materials, lack of, during translation of the Book of Mormon, 9/1:93
Southern Baptist Convention, 9/2:109
Southern Baptist Convention, 10/1:283 n. 21, 310, 333
annual national meeting of, 10/1:13
Spanish Archive Manuscripts, 9/2:68
Spaulding, Samuel, 1:80–88, 2:29, 91, 224, 3:60, 4:84–86
Spaulding theory, 8/2:176 n. 90, 9/2:100, 122
Spencer, Daniel, Jr., 9/1:xxv
Spencer, James R., 10/1:335
Sperry, Sidney B., tribute to, 9/1:28
spirit, continuing existence of, after death, 10/1:269
spirit prison, 9/2:195, 10/1:80
spirits, righteous, organized to preach to disobedient spirits in prison, 10/2:190
Spirit teaches spiritual things, 47
spiritual abuse, accusations against the Church of, 7/1:254, 304
spiritual body, 9/1:35 n. 2
spiritual death, 5:302–4
spiritual gifts, importance of seeking, 8/1:43–44, 44 n. 42
spiritual growth, 9/1:10
spiritual things, knowledge of, 10/1:47
spiritual wifery, 10/2:68, 129, 130
denunciation of, 10/2:131
spiritual wives, 10/2:92, 129
spirit world, 5:202, 10/1:76
Christ’s visit to, 10/2:187
Stafford, Tim, 10/1:284
standard works, online access to, 9/1:163
Standing, Joseph, murder of, 10/1:93 n. 248
steel
mention of, 9/1:150
in Nephhi’s time, 9/1:74
presence of, in New World, 9/1:149
Steinmetz, David, 10/1:30
Stenhouse, T. B. H., 10/2:74
Stephen, vision of, 9/2:188–89
Stephens, Evan, 10/1:139
as author of “Friends,” 10/1:227
as author of articles for children, 10/1:223
as a case study, 10/1:198
as an example for youth, 10/1:191
as Mitton’s mentor in music, 10/1:242
reasons of, for never marrying, 10/1:202, 204
resignation of, as director of Tabernacle Choir, 10/1:245
sealing of, to Sarah Daniels, 10/1:214
travels of, 10/1:250
Stephens family photograph, 10/1:211
stewardships of consumption and production, 9/2:83
Stone, Erasmus, 10/2:92
stories, scripture, 8/2:375–76
storm on the sea, 10/2:152
Stout, Richard, 9/2:140
Strang, James J., 10/1:xii
INDEX BY SUBJECT, 1989–98

claim by Van Gorden that witnesses followed, 9/2:175–76, 176 n. 23
study and inspiration, 9/2:42
study guide for the Book of Mormon, 9/1:31
subjectivity, as a limit on human perspective, 7/2:195–98
Sumerian, 6/1:82
Supreme Court, 9/2:7
survivor witnesses, 10/2:47–48
sword found near Jericho, 9/1:149
swords in the Book of Mormon, 9/1:148–58
drawing of, 9/1:152–53
hilts of, 9/1:156
Mexican, 9/1:154
pointed, 9/1:155–56
staining of, 9/1:151
symbols, opposing, 10/2:26
symbols of sun, moon, stars on Nauvoo Temple, 8/2:260
synagogues, 2:177
Tabernacle Choir, 10/1:231
Stephens’s resignation of, as director, 10/1:245
Talmage, James E., 9/1:125
Talmage, Thomas De Witt, 9/2:48, 10/1:92
Tanner, Jerald, 9/2:101
critique of writings of, 9/2:101
investigative techniques of, 8/2:xii–xiv
omissions of evidence by, 9/1:109–10
response to criticisms of, 8/2:76–79
Tanner, Sandra, 9/2:100, 10/1:vi, 19, 20, 23, 38
tapir, 9/1:133
Tate, Charles D., Jr., 9/1:63, 67
Taylor, John, 9/1:xxii, 10/1:90, 92, 167
Taylor, John (not president of church), 10/2:131
Taylor, Samuel W., 10/1:167
Taylor, William, 10/1:138
Teacher of Righteousness, 9/2:97
Tehuantepec, 9/1:126, 128
Teichert, Minerva, 10/2:58, 62
temple at Jerusalem, 9/2:122
temple ceremony
discussion of, 10/1:99
introduced in May 1842, 10/1:123
as restoration of ancient Masonic rites, 10/1:115 n. 30
sacred nature of, 10/1:99
temple clothing, 10/1:129, 129–30 n. 60
temple garments, 9/2:176
temple endowment
angelic delivery of, 10/1:129 n. 59
within biblical texts, 10/1:118, 118–20 n. 41
derivation of, 10/1:101 n. 8
divine authenticity of, 10/1:98
origins of, 10/1:98 n. 3, 113–14 n. 28
revelation on, 10/1:127, 128
Temple Lot Case, 10/2:86
“temple Mormons,” 9/2:111
temple mysteries, 10/2:30
temple ordinances, 9/2:114
knowledge of, 10/2:31
temple practices, ancient and modern, 9/2:121, 121 n. 36

belief in, 10/2:17

temple recommends, 8/2:242–43

caracteristics of, 9/2:43

of a Latter-day Saint, 10/1:33

process of obtaining a, 9/2:42

text of the scriptures, 9/1:160

texts, ancient, 1:115, 2:125,

5:194, 269, 6/1:23, 40–48,

70–71, 6/2:261–68, 9/1:34

Textual Comparison Chart notes

temporary welfare, 9/2:87

change in various editions

of 1 Nephi, 7/2:4

thanks and praise, 10/2:xix

theologians, “absolute sovereignty” and “limited sovereignty” of, 8/2:100

theology, 1:3–4, 90–104, 2:xx,

27–28, 78–79, 100–106,

182–86, 3:110–13, 4:20, 64,

139–53, 155–59, 5:57–58,

181–84, 200, 290–304,

6/1:145, 6/2:34–39,

250–334

tents, 2:148, 161, 6/1:299–300,

331–35

theory, judging a, 9/1:vi

Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, translations of,

8/2:334–37

theos, term of, 10/2:xiii

theosis, or human deification,

9/2:117, 117 n. 5

thinking for oneself, 9/1:ix

Thomas, Agnes Olsen, 10/1:236

Thomas, Robert K., 9/2:29

Thomas, Thomas Stephens,

10/1:242

Thomas Jefferson, by Fawn Brodie

advertising blurbs for,

8/2:168–71

criticisms of, 8/2:160–64

quality of reviews of,

8/2:166–68

success of, 8/2:159
INDEX BY SUBJECT, 1989–98

Thompson, Stephen, and his response to reviews of *New Approaches*, 7/2:146–47 n. 4
three Nephites, 5:87–92
Tillich, Paul, theology of, 10/1:339
Titt, William, reputed analogue of Joseph Smith, 8/1:153
Tocqueville, Alexis de, 10/1:298
Todd, Jay, 9/1:15
Tolbert, Keith, 10/1:279, 325
toleration, approaches to, 9/2:63
Topical Guide to the Scriptures, 8/1:172
Topical Index, like a concordance, 7/2:4
Toscano, Paul, accusations of, against the LDS Church, 7/1:298, 302
“touch me not,” vs. “do not hold on to me,” 7/2:94–95
Tower of Babel, 2:145, 227, 246
tradition, appeal to, 7/2:180 n. 102
traditions
Arabic and Persian, 9/2:vi of the fathers, 9/1:vi of the gospel, 9/1:xxvii of men, 9/1:vi, vii overcoming false, 9/1:vi of the world, 9/1:xxvii
Transfiguration, Mount of, 10/1:80
treaty/covenant pattern, 1:90–98, 106–7
tree of Lehi vs. Alma’s seed, 9/1:8
association of, with Mary and birth of Son of God, 10/2:30 in Jeremiah, 8/2:369–72
vision of, 10/2:29
tree of life visions, parallels with, 8/2:363–66
Trever, John, 10/2:142
trial, initiatory, 10/2:19
Trinity, 10/1:69
Christian doctrine of, 9/2:118
Nicene doctrine of, 9/2:188
representation of, on Norman baptismal font, 9/2:134
Trosset, Carol, 10/1:236
true believer, characteristics of, 7/2:181 n. 103
true church, only, belief in, 7/1:268
trust
in author’s conclusions, 9/2:163
in the Lord, 9/1:8
truth, 2:181, 6/1:9–10
in other religions, 10/1:83
possession of, 10/1:354
recognizing and accepting, 9/1:vi
religious, 10/1:48
source of, 10/1:275
truth claims, avoidance of, 7/2:223
truths
plain and precious, 9/2:96
restored, 7/2:7
worth of, 9/2:42
420

truths of restored gospel to be presented in scholarly way,
8/1:29 n. 3
Tryk, Loftes, 10/1:v
Tsemminis papyrus, 10/2:174
Tuckett, Henry A., 10/1:235
tumbaga, alloy of gold and copper, 7/1:166
Twelve
authority of, in 1843-44,
10/2:94-96
relationship between senior and junior members of, 9/2:159
types. See symbolism
type-scene, 10/2:17
type-scenes
biblical, 10/2:19
in the Book of Mormon,
10/2:19-20
typology in the Book of Mormon, 9/2:32
Uniformitarianism, 5:214-15
united-order living, failure of,
9/2:87
united order principles, 9/2:77,
10/2:139, 140
application of, 9/2:78, 85
united order principles inspired enterprises (UOPIEs), 9/2:77
units of value, 9/1:176
universal toleration, 9/2:48
Universalism, 2:223, 6/1:12-13,
418-33
Universalism and the Book of Mormon, 7/2:201-8, 8/1:6
universities, church colleges and,
9/1:169
unpardonable sin, 9/2:196
Urim and Thummim
biblical use of, 9/1:96
use of, for translation, 9/2:175
URL listings, 10/2:206

FARMS REVIEW OF BOOKS 11/1 (1999)

Utah Evangel, 10/1:ix, 51, 87
Utah Lighthouse Ministry,
10/1:315, 323, 333 n. 172
Utah Missions, Inc., 10/1:ix, 15
n. 12, 18, 51, 52, 52 n. 120,
332, 333 n. 172
utopian society and spiritual conversion, 8/1:46
Vanatter, Scott, 9/1:170
Van Baalen, Jan Karel, 10/1:291
Van Dam, Cornelis, 9/1:96
VanderKam, James, 10/2:142
Van Gorden, Kurt, 10/1:xii, 327
testimonials of, 9/1:67
Van Nattan, Steve, 10/1:316,
316 n. 123
veil, splitting of, 9/2:122
verbal legerdemain, 10/2:v
verification, limits of,
7/2:151-53
View of the Hebrews, by Ethan Smith. See also Spaulding manuscript, 9/1:63, 78, 99, 102, 9/2:122
and the Book of Mormon,
8/2:211-12
as discussed by B. H. Roberts,
8/1:161 n. 81
as possible influence on Joseph Smith, 8/1:161
violence, 10/1:271
violence in the Book of Mormon,
10/2:48
vision of an army of soldiers,
9/1:xxiii
vision of the redemption of the dead, 9/2:132
Visser, John, 9/1:172
vocabulary, religious, ranging from formal to colloquial,
7/1:11
INDEX BY SUBJECT, 1989–98

volcanic activity in Mesoamerica, 9/1:112
volcanic eruption in 3 Nephi, 8/2:22

Wadi Sayq, as site of Bountiful, 7/1:88, 9/1:20
Walgren, Kent, and view of Dale Morgan, 8/1:123–24 n. 5
Walker, Lucy, 10/2:98
Walter, Luman
as occult mentor, 8/2:284–86
supposedly influenced by Rosicrucian ideas, 8/2:269
Walters, Wesley P., 9/1:94, 94 n. 18
and search for Mormon documents, 7/2:123–24
with Fred Poffarl, unethical use of source documents, 7/2:139–43
Walters the magician, attempts to identify, 8/1:153
wandering or journey motif, 8/1:45, 45 n. 44
war among all nations, 9/1:60
Ward, Maria, 9/2:61
warfare, Mesoamerican, 9/1:154
Warren, Bruce, 9/1:112
Washington D.C. Temple, 10/1:93
Washington, George, 1:125, 3:270
water, blessing on, 10/1:42
waters, dangers on, 10/2:153
weaknesses or strengths, 9/2:44
wealth, 2:181
accumulation of, 9/2:8
distribution of, 9/2:87

inequitable distribution of, 9/2:86
in the perspective of the Zion society, 9/2:85
uses and abuses of, 9/2:85
uses of, 9/2:87
Weber, Max, 10/1:20
web publishers, identity of, 10/2:207
web sites
devoted to Mormonism, 10/2:210
homel.gte.net/shannon2/index.htm, 10/2:210
www.aeros.net/~wenglund/frame2.htm, 10/2:202
www.fair-lds.org, 10/2:204
www.farmsresearch.com, 10/2:205
www.inficad.com/~novak/, 10/1:xxiv
www.ldsworld.com/index.asp, 10/2:208
www.mormons.org, 10/2:208
www.panic.com/~kklarsen/ldsprimary.html, 10/2:210
www.sas.upenn.edu/~dbowie/armc/armc.htm, 10/2:210
www.shields-research.org, 10/2:203
www.xmission.com/~dklenison/lds/gems, 10/2:209
Weeks, William, 10/1:106
Welch, John W., 9/1:29, 9/2:46, 146, 10/1:343, 10/2:5
Weldon, John, 10/1:v
academic degrees of, 8/2:92–98
Wentworth, Richard, 10/1:261
Western civilization, traditions of, 9/2:9
westward migration of the Saints, 10/1:91
Whalen, William, 9/2:125
wheat, 9/1:135
White, Ellen, 10/1:270
White, James R., 9/1:146, 10/1:95 n. 253, 276, 10/2:203
White, Stephen, 10/1:xi
white vs. pure in Book of Mormon, 10/2:55
Whitmer, David, 9/1:xix
interviews of, 9/1:xix, xx
statements of, 8/1:100–102
Whitney, Elizabeth A., 10/1:128
Whitney, Orson F., 9/2:66, 10/1:107, 10/2:71, 133
Whitney, Sarah Ann, 10/2:84
whore, image of, 10/2:32
wicked
of Noah’s time, 10/2:191
of Sodom and Gomorrah, 10/2:191
widow of Zarephath, 10/2:21
likening of, to Sarah, 10/2:22
Widtsoe, John A., 9/1:125, 10/1:255
wilderness, notion of, 8/2:20–21, 20 n. 12
Williams, Fredrick G., statement of, 9/1:124
Winchester, Nancy Maria, 10/2:76
wine, Book of Mormon references to, 9/1:136
Wirthlin, Joseph B., 9/1:10
wisdom
as feminine, 10/2:28–29
opposition to, 10/2:30
witch burnings, 10/2:23
witches, not, but murderers, 10/2:24
to the Book of Mormon, 9/1:xviii, 91
credibility of, 8/1:26, 99
Eight, to the Book of Mormon, 10/1:xii
testimony of Three, 10/1:69
wives
of Joseph Smith, 10/2:73, 113
number of supposedly related to degree of salvation, 10/2:134
plurality of, 10/1:171
Wolfe, Alan, 10/1:xiii–xvi
addressed in the Book of Mormon, 10/2:35 n. 30
behavior and treatment of, 10/2:43
blessing the sick, 10/2:116
Book of Mormon, in the foreground, 10/2:13
doctrines referring to, 10/2:12
entreaties of, 10/2:43
great, from the Bible, 10/2:59
involvement of, in spiritual gifts, 10/2:17
Lamanite, mention of, 10/2:36–37
leadership of, 10/2:25
message for, from Book of Mormon, 10/2:10
and men, gospel promises and obligations for, 10/2:13
and men, mutual dependence and independent agency of, 10/2:13
in Nephite culture, as property, 10/2:42
plural marriage harmful to, 10/2:137
positive aspects of lives of, 10/2:116
presence of, in Book of Mormon text, 10/2:11
and their relationship to men, 7/2:59
in the scriptures, 10/2:9 n. 1
silence and submissiveness of, 10/2:23
suffering of, in the desert, 10/2:42
women’s voices, church’s tolerance for, 10/2:99
Woodruff, Wilford, 10/1:153, 158
use by, of word friendship, 10/1:161
Woodward, Scott, 10/2:144
Word of Wisdom, 9/1:55, 10/1:80
wordprint studies, 4:216, 10/1:344
of the Book of Mormon, 9/2:16
statistical methodology for, 9/2:18
word groups or clusters for, 9/2:16, 20
worker/employee ownership, 9/2:76
worker motivation, 10/2:140
works and grace, 10/1:62
good, 10/1:337
salvation by, and grace, 7/2:76-80
world, intelligent design of, 8/2:131-32
worldview
anti-religious, 9/2:vii
based on revelation, 9/2:vii
world views, competing, 7/2:181
worship of deity, 10/2:xviii
Wright, David P., teachings of, 7/1:268 n. 89
Wright, Dennis A., 10/1:52 n. 120, 332
Wright, John B., 10/1:xvii
writing, 5:260-65
Xochicalco, monuments at, 8/1:118
Yacovone, David, 10/1:234
Yadin, Yigael, 10/1:51, 10/2:142
Yamauchi, Edwin, 9/2:xxiii
Yemen, 9/1:116
Yemen Arab Republic, 9/1:18
Young, Ann-Eliza, 10/1:175
Young, Brigham, 9/2:178, 10/1:39, 109, 138, 168, 10/2:103, 122
and attitude toward women, 10/1:171
as legitimate successor to Joseph Smith, 10/1:83
quotation of, on Jews and gentiles misused, 7/2:120-21
son of, 10/1:129
Young, Lorenzo D., 10/2:93
Zarahemla Foundation, 8/1:112
Zeezrom, 9/1:11, 10/2:2
Zelph the Lamanite, 9/1:58
Zenos, allegory or parable of, 8/1:62-63
Zerahemnah, 10/2:51
Zion
   analysis of, 8/1:43
   working toward, 10/2:139
Zion-building, 9/2:75-76, 79
Zohar

kabbalistic text in Aramaic,
8/2:291
unique ideas from, 8/2:314-15
Zoramites, 2:170, 223, 228,
   5:192, 6/1:371-72
Zosimus, Egyptian pagan, 7/1:45
About the Reviewers

Robert C. Freeman, J.D. (Western State University), is an assistant professor of Church History and Doctrine at Brigham Young University.

Keith H. Lane is a Ph.D. student in Philosophy of Religion and Theology at Claremont Graduate University, California. He currently teaches part time for Church History and Doctrine at Brigham Young University.

Russell C. McGregor is working on a degree in computing and is a computer applications analyst/programmer in New Zealand.

Daniel B. McKinlay has master’s degrees in theological studies (Boston University), New Testament and Early Christianity (University of Virginia), and library and information science (Brigham Young University). He is acting manager of the reference services at the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies.

Louis Midgley, Ph.D. (Brown University), professor emeritus of political science at Brigham Young University, is serving an auxiliary mission for the Church Educational System in New Zealand, where, with his wife, he directs the Lorne Street Institute of Religion, which serves the LDS students attending Auckland University and the Auckland Institute of Technology.

Gary F. Novak, M.A., is webmaster at Mt. Hood Community College in Gresham, Oregon.

Daniel C. Peterson, Ph.D. (University of California, Los Angeles), is an associate professor of Islamic studies and Arabic at Brigham Young University and director of the Center for the Preservation of Ancient Religious Texts (CPART).
William Raventos, a BYU alumnus, has thirty years experience in
product development and is currently vice president of marketing
at Ivie Technologies, Inc., in Orem, Utah.

Richard Dilworth Rust, Ph.D. (University of Wisconsin), is a pro-
fessor of English at the University of North Carolina at Chapel
Hill.

Kerry A. Shirts, B.S., is a self-employed artist currently writing a
book on scrollsaw art in Idaho Falls, Idaho. He serves as the direc-
tor of research for FAIR (Foundation for Apologetic Information
and Research), an Internet organization discussing Mormonism,
answering anti-Mormon claims, and helping Latter-day Saints find
answers to their questions.

Diane E. Wirth has a B.A. in art from Brigham Young University
and has studied Mesoamerican art for twenty-five years.