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Last year in the Mormon Bibliography I noted that the printing of the Book of Mormon on newsprint paper gave it a somber, dull appearance, certainly not what I want to see upon opening a book of scripture. Its paper and printing placed the book in the dime novel category where it certainly does not belong. It is interesting that the only comment I received was from a gentleman at Deseret Book Co. who defended its publication. This caused me to pause and reconsider my position. Was the demand for an inexpensive copy an overriding factor over what to me was good taste? Since then, Deseret Book Co. has published the highly successful "Reference Set"—a series of nine books ranging from James E. Talmage’s Jesus the Christ to President Kimball’s Miracle of Forgiveness. This set was on Mountain West’s ten top sellers for several weeks. Although I personally would not have the set in my own library, having it printed on pulp paper does not offend me as does printing the Book of Mormon this way. Over the centuries people have gone to great lengths to ensure that scriptures appear in the best form imaginable. For example, I have a Moslem book in which the quotations of Mohammed are printed in gold. At the book store is an extremely inexpensive edition of the Bible published by the World Publishing Company, but it is on white, not grey paper. It is my contention that that which we believe to be divine should not be poorly printed on poor paper and bound poorly. Frankly, there is a practical side as well as aesthetic: certainly there are people who will be turned away from a serious consideration of the Book of Mormon because of the unpleasant appearance of this new edition.

The newest edition to the collection of books in this pulp library is the History of the Church, which is also enjoying good sales. Apart from the paper, it has been sufficiently reduced so that only young eyes are able to read it.

Arriving in my office about the same time was an addition of Parley P. Pratt’s Key to the Science of Theology bound with his Voice of Warning. Again the printing is mediocre, but its binding I thought was wretched—in ersatz half leather without end papers. But more serious than the printing and binding which remain a matter of taste, and it appears mine differs from a great many oth-
ers' who are buying the book, there are some bibliographic problems with the book. In its 1978 preface the anonymous editor talks of its being a revision of an earlier edition, but makes no mention of which earlier edition was used. In The Key to the Science of Theology this is critical. Similar bibliographical lapses occur with the Voice of Warning.

The printing of books of poor quality is certainly not restricted to any one publisher. Closer to home is the unsatisfactory book making by the Brigham Young University Press. Consider The Biography of Ina Coolbrith printed in purple ink, Armed with the Spirit on brown paper with a center inset of dead white paper, Water Stone Sky with Lake Powell's panoramas illustrated in two-inch views. More critical are our scholarly books. Arrington's Charles C. Rich, McLaw's Spokesman for the Kingdom, and Sister Saints comprise the series "Studies in Mormon History." Yet instead of being issued in high quality editions one expects for important books from a university press, these books are wretchedly designed and poorly printed on inexpensive paper and do not compare with the similar series of books coming from the University of Utah Press. With less adequate facilities and a smaller staff, the University of Utah Press consistently publishes books of printing quality. It is not that Brigham Young University Press can't print a quality book; Wesley Burnside's Maynard Dixon, and the Brescia Dante prove it can. Again economics seems to get the blame. But, practical considerations must come to mind too. The books published by BYU press are advertised all over the world; for many in the scholarly community these books are their only contact with BYU. What kind of statement does an ugly, badly printed book make about us?
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