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TB Spackman

MAKING VISIBLE THE BEAUTY AND GOODNESS OF THE GOSPEL

Daniel C. Peterson

Abstract: Apologetics is typically seen as a purely cerebral activity designed to convince others of the truth or, at least, of the plausibility of certain propositions, typically but not always religious. In the case of the Gospel, however, mere intellectual assent isn't enough—not in the eyes of God and, probably, not for the typical mortal human being. To please God, we must live our lives according to the Gospel, not merely concede its truth. But living such lives to the end requires that we love God and the Gospel and find them desirable, in addition to checking off a list of required faith-statements. Can apologetics play a role in encouraging and cultivating such attitudes as well as in convincing our heads? This article maintains that apologetics can and should play such a role, and invites those with the appropriate gifts and abilities to make the effort to do so.

Martin Luther (d. 1546) taught that there are two ways of believing. In the first place I may have faith *concerning* God. This is the case when I hold to be true what is said concerning God. Such faith is on the same level with the assent I give to statements concerning the Turk, the devil, and hell. A faith of this kind should be called knowledge or information rather than faith. In the second place, there is faith *in*. Such faith is mine when I not only hold to be true what is said concerning God but also when I put my trust in him in such a way as to enter into personal relations with him, believing firmly that I shall find him to be and to do as I have been taught. ... The word *in* is well chosen and deserving of due attention. We do not say, “I believe God the Father” or “concerning God the Father,” but rather *in* God the Father, *in* Jesus Christ, and *in* the Holy Spirit.¹

1 J. N. Lenker, trans., *Luther's Catechetical Writings*, 2 vols. (Minneapolis: Lutheran Press, 1907), 1:203, as cited in Alvin Plantinga, *Knowledge and Christian*

It isn't enough simply to accept the Gospel as true. Mere intellectual assent isn't sufficient from God's point of view: "Thou believest that there is one God," says the Epistle of James. "Thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble."² We must believe and obey. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord," said Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount, "shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."³

The "belief in" of which Luther speaks cannot, of course, exist in the total absence of propositional knowledge. One would need to have first heard of God the Father in order to know him or even to have belief in him. And one would need to know something of his will and his commandments in order to obey him.

Nor is mere acceptance of the Gospel as true likely to be sufficient from a human standpoint either, since, in order to be motivated to a lifetime of committed and sometimes even difficult discipleship, most if not all of us must regard the Gospel of Jesus Christ as true, yes, but also as good and beautiful — that is, as desirable.

And here too, of course, at least some basic propositional awareness is indispensable. "Holy affections," wrote the American Calvinist preacher, theologian, and philosopher Jonathan Edwards (d. 1758), "are not heat without light; but evermore arise from some information of the understanding, some spiritual instruction that the mind receives, some light or actual knowledge."⁴ Still, that knowledge need not be academically extensive, and, very often, it can be distinctly slight. Christ's apostles, newly called along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, followed him "immediately."⁵ They didn't spend months as catechumens, attended no graduate seminars, earned no degrees in theology. "Those to whom God has imparted religion through the feeling of the heart," commented the great mathematician and philosopher Blaise Pascal (d. 1662), "are

Belief (Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2015), 72–73. (My debt in this essay to the sixth chapter of Plantinga's excellent book will be obvious to anybody who reads it.) I believe, though, for reasons very like those given by Luther, that there's value in the expression (and the attitude) of "believing God." On this point, see (for example) Stephen E. Robinson, *Believing Christ: The Parable of the Bicycle and Other Good News* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992).

2 James 2:19.

3 Matthew 7:21.

4 Jonathan Edwards, *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections*, edited by John E. Smith (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 266.

5 See, for instance, Matthew 4:22 and Mark 1:18.

very fortunate and justly convinced.”⁶ “All true religion,” said even the cerebral Jonathan Edwards, “summarily consists in the love of divine things.”⁷

It’s not a matter, in other words, of bare cognition, but also one of affection. The devils, we can safely assume, love neither the Gospel nor, indeed, God himself. By contrast, as Edwards observed, “True religion, in great part, consists in holy affections.”⁸ “There is a distinction to be made,” he wrote,

between a mere notional understanding, wherein the mind only beholds things in the exercise of a speculative faculty; and the sense of the heart, wherein the mind doesn’t only speculate and behold, but relishes and feels. That sort of knowledge, by which a man has a sensible perception of amiableness and loathsomeness, or of sweetness and nauseousness, is not just the same sort of knowledge with that, by which he knows what a triangle is, and what a square is. The one is mere speculative knowledge; the other sensible knowledge, in which more than the mere intellect is concerned; the heart is the proper subject of it, or the soul as a being that not only beholds, but has inclination, and is pleased or displeased.⁹

In order to have a solid place in human souls, the central claims of Christianity in general and of Mormonism in particular must be attractive, indeed delightful, emotionally moving and gratifying objects of awe and wonder, reasons for humble gratitude. They should have us standing “all amazed.”¹⁰

It seems reasonable to assume that a person who fears or hates faith, or who holds religious belief in contempt, will be more difficult to bring to belief by means of logic and evidence than will a person who would dearly love to believe but who has encountered historical or other intellectual obstacles that render belief difficult for her. If, though,

6 Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, translated by M. Turnell (London: Harvill Press, 1962), 282, as cited by Plantinga, *Knowledge and Christian Belief*, 73 note 3. Compare Daniel Peterson, “Perhaps the world’s most important living Christian philosopher,” *Deseret News* (8 October 2015): <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865638546/Perhaps-the-worlds-most-important-living-Christian-philosopher.html>.

7 Edwards, *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections*, 271.

8 Ibid., 95.

9 Ibid., 272.

10 See *Hymns of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985), #193.

someone loves God — or at least the idea of God — and desires to know him and to have a personal relationship with him, and is moved by ideas of holiness and divine beauty, that person already has one foot in the Kingdom, and perhaps, with a little help, can come to believe that the Gospel is not only good and beautiful, but true.

Are there really people who hate the idea of God, who don't want any religious claims to be true? Yes, indeed, there are. Friedrich Nietzsche seems to have been such a person, for instance. Consider, too, the case of Joseph Stalin, who had devoted decades to destroying churches and killing priests, rabbis, and lay believers, and who may have railed against God even on his deathbed in March of 1953. Having suffered a severe stroke, the tyrant's right side was paralyzed, and he spent his last hours in virtually unbearable pain. "God grants an easy death only to the just," his daughter Svetlana, who was present, later reflected. Slowly, he choked to death. As she wrote years later, her father was effectively strangled while those in the room looked on. Although he had seemed at most merely semiconscious for the last few hours, he suddenly opened his eyes and looked about the room, plainly terrified. Then, Svetlana recalled, "something incomprehensible and awesome happened that to this day I can't forget and don't understand." Stalin suddenly opened his eyes and "cast a glance over everyone in the room. It was a terrible glance, insane or perhaps angry and full of the fear of death."

He suddenly lifted his left hand as though he were pointing to something above and bringing down a curse on us all. The gesture was incomprehensible and full of menace, and no one could say to whom or at what it might be directed. The next moment, after a final effort, the spirit wrenched itself free of the flesh.¹¹

But there are less dramatic, more explicit, first-person declarations of intense dislike for religious claims and the very idea of God. Here, for example, is a statement from Thomas Nagel, who is currently the University Professor of Philosophy and Law Emeritus at New York University and who says that he actually has a "fear" of religion:

11 See Svetlana Alliluyeva, *Twenty Letters to a Friend* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), 5–11. See also the account given by Ravi Zacharias in his Harvard Veritas Forum. (<http://www.christianbook.com/the-harvard-veritas-forum/ravi-zacharias/9781612560960/pd/1225BD>.) Alliluyeva, Stalin's daughter, was an eyewitness to the scene. Zacharias heard the story from Malcolm Muggeridge who, in his turn, based his report on three weeks of interviews with Alliluyeva, conducted for a three-part BBC series.

I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers. It isn't just that I don't believe in God and, naturally, hope that I'm right in my belief. It's that I hope there is no God! I don't want there to be a God; I don't want the universe to be like that.¹²

Before such a person is fully open to the possibility that God exists or that religious claims are true, it would be helpful for her to see the truth of such claims as desirable, and God as lovable. I say "helpful" and not "absolutely necessary" because there seem to be clear exceptions: Saul of Tarsus showed no signs of any secret longing for Christianity to be true, and yet he was converted by the spectacular self-revelation of the risen Lord on the road to Damascus that is recorded in Acts 9:1–19. (Of course, it must be acknowledged that Saul's zeal for Judaism and his misdirected antipathy toward Christianity manifest a zeal for God, not religious indifference. And, plainly, the Lord built upon that in his case.) Moreover, there is also the well-known instance of C. S. Lewis, who had entered the University of Oxford as a convinced atheist:

You must picture me alone in that room at Magdalen [College, Oxford], night after night, feeling, whenever my mind lifted even for a second from my work, the steady, unrelenting approach of Him whom I so earnestly desired not to meet. That which I greatly feared had at last come upon me. In the Trinity Term of 1929 I gave in, and admitted that God was God, and knelt and prayed: perhaps, that night, the most dejected and reluctant convert in all England.¹³

People can, of course, be reluctantly convinced of truths that they would rather reject. It happens. But, on the whole, as the old adage says, "A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still."¹⁴

12 Thomas Nagel, *The Last Word* (Oxford University Press, 1997), 130.

13 C. S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy: The Shape of My Early Life* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1955), 228–229. Francis Thompson's frequently-anthologized poem "The Hound of Heaven" describes another such case. It can be found online here, among many other places: <http://www.bartleby.com/236/239.html>. On page 211 of his *Surprised by Joy*, Lewis uses a metaphor analogous to Thompson's pursuing hound (which obviously represents God): "And so the great Angler played His fish and I never dreamed that the hook was in my tongue."

14 See <http://www.cliffsnotes.com/cliffsnotes/subjects/writing/who-wrote-a-man-convinced-against-his-will-is-of-the-same-opinion-still> for a brief discussion of the authorship of the saying.

And there seems little question that a person already persuaded that a proposition is good and beautiful will be more readily convinced of its truth.

But how can those of us who believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ to be altogether desirable as well as truthful bring others to see it as we do? Apologetics, a significant function of The Interpreter Foundation though certainly not its only purpose, is generally seen as a method of merely intellectual persuasion. And truly, to a large extent, it is left to the lives and examples of disciples to make visible the beauty and goodness of Christ's teachings. "Let your light so shine before men," he taught, "that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."¹⁵ "Preach the Gospel at all times," St. Francis of Assisi (d. 1226) is supposed to have said, "and when necessary use words." "The deeds you do may be the only sermon some persons will hear today."

Certainly, too, the Holy Ghost also plays an important role here. Latter-day Saints can agree with St. Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274) in his insistence that "the Holy Spirit makes us lovers of God."¹⁶

There's a vast gulf between a purely cerebral acknowledgement of truths about Deity and the ardent love for those truths of a committed disciple who seeks to "serve him with all [her] heart, might, mind and strength."¹⁷ The ecstatically joyous words of Isaac Watt (1674–1748), which were wonderfully set to music by the Latter-day Saint organist and composer John J. McLellan (1874–1925), beautifully capture this love:

Sweet is the work, my God, my King,
To praise thy name, give thanks and sing,
To show thy love by morning light,
And talk of all thy truths at night.

My heart shall triumph in my Lord
And bless his works and bless his word.
Thy works of grace, how bright they shine!
How deep thy counsels, how divine!

But, oh, what triumph shall I raise
To thy dear name through endless days,

15 Matthew 5:16.

16 See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, Charles O'Neil, trans. (Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1957), 121–127.

17 Doctrine and Covenants 4:2.

When in the realms of joy I see
Thy face in full felicity!

Then shall I see and hear and know
All I desired and wished below,
And every pow'r find sweet employ
In that eternal world of joy.¹⁸

Conversion, therefore, isn't merely a changing of the mind — although it is most definitely that. It's also a changing of the will, a redirection of our affections. In his famous *Varieties of Religious Experience*, William James wrote rather condescendingly of St. Teresa of Ávila (d. 1582) that, "In the main her idea of religion seems to have been that of an endless amatory flirtation ... between the devotee and the deity."¹⁹

But, however much Professor James — a "Boston Brahmin" if ever there was one — may have disapproved, such love is entirely scriptural:

And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?

And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he: And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.

18. *Hymns*, #147, verses 1, 3, 4, and 6.

19 William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: The Modern Library, 1994), 380. "That cultured, sophisticated New England Victorian gentleman," the distinguished modern American philosopher Alvin Plantinga summarizes, commenting on James's remark, "looks down his cultivated nose, and finds all that a bit, well, *tasteless*, a bit *déclassé*." See Plantinga, *Knowledge and Christian Belief*, 74.

And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.²⁰

The Bible commonly compares God's love for his people, and Christ's love for his church, to a bridegroom's love for his bride (e.g., "as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee" [Isaiah 62:5]). And the Psalms provide numerous expressions of this passionately loving relationship:

One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple.²¹

As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God.²²

O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is.²³

My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.²⁴

I opened my mouth, and panted: for I longed for thy commandments.²⁵

So passionate was David in his praise of God, says the Qur'an, that the very mountains and the birds joined with him.²⁶ But this longing, perhaps a kind of nostalgia or homesickness, appears far beyond the Psalms: "For You have made us for Yourself," wrote St. Augustine, addressing God in the first chapter of his *Confessions*, "and our heart is restless until it rests in Thee."²⁷ "The source of my suffering and loneliness is deep in my heart," the great early Sufi mystic Rābi'a al-'Adawiyya is said to have remarked of her yearning for God. "This is a disease no doctor can cure. Only Union with the Friend can cure it."²⁸ Jalāl al-Dīn

20 Mark 12:28–34.

21 Psalm 27:4.

22 Psalm 42:1–2.

23 Psalm 63:1.

24 Psalm 84:2.

25 Psalm 119:131.

26 See, for example, Qur'an 34:10, 38:17–19.

27 Augustine, *Confessions*, 1.1 (my translation): *quia fecisti nos ad te et inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in te*.

28 See <http://rabia-al-adawiya.over-blog.com/2014/02/rabia-s-quotes.html>.

Rūmī (d. 1273), the illustrious Persian mystical poet, opens his *Mathnavi* with the image of a reed:

Hearken to the reed-flute, how it complains,
Lamenting its banishment from its home.²⁹

The plaintive sound of the reed flute reflects its sorrow at its exile from its home in the reed bed by the river, and it induces melancholy in its hearers because we too are in exile, far from our home in and with God.

In a similar vein, the great nineteenth-century English Romantic poet William Wordsworth (d. 1850) lamented in his “Ode: Intimations of Immortality” what he described as “something that is gone”:

There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparell'd in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore;—
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.
The rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the rose;
The moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare;
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair;
The sunshine is a glorious birth;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath pass'd away a glory from the earth. ...
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

Wordsworth plainly thought that we come to earth from another place, with dim memories of a more exalted state that, unfortunately, fade all too swiftly as we mature. As he put it in another poem,

29 The translation is from E. H. Whinfield, *Teachings of Rumi: The Masnavi* (London: The Octagon Press, 1994), 1.

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
 Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;—
 Little we see in Nature that is ours;
 We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!

This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
 The winds that will be howling at all hours,
 And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
 For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
 It moves us not.

Great God! I'd rather be
 A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
 So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
 Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
 Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
 Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

But the process of disenchantment — or what Latter-day Saints might call, simply, the “veil” — cuts us off from what we once knew, or, at least, once dimly sensed (in nature and elsewhere) and vaguely remembered. Returning, again, to his famous “Intimations of Immortality”:

Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
 Shades of the prison-house begin to close
 Upon the growing Boy,
 But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
 He sees it in his joy;
 The Youth, who daily farther from the east
 Must travel, still is Nature's priest,
 And by the vision splendid
 Is on his way attended;
 At length the Man perceives it die away,
 And fade into the light of common day.
 Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
 Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
 And, even with something of a mother's mind,
 And no unworthy aim,
 The homely nurse doth all she can
 To make her foster-child, her Inmate Man,
 Forget the glories he hath known,
 And that imperial palace whence he came.

Then comes a passage that many members of my generation, at least, once had virtually by heart, as one of the clearest declarations in all of non-Mormon writing of a belief in the antemortal existence of the human spirit:

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home.

Eliza R. Snow (d. 1887), Wordsworth's younger contemporary, formulated the doctrine in her own memorable lines:

For a wise and glorious purpose
Thou hast placed me here on earth
And withheld the recollection
Of my former friends and birth;
Yet oftentimes a secret something
Whispered, "You're a stranger here,"
And I felt that I had wandered
From a more exalted sphere.³⁰

A central theme in C.S. Lewis's autobiographical book *Surprised by Joy* — and the obvious source of its title — is what he terms "Joy." Yet Lewis struggles to convey what he means. "Longing," he calls it, sometimes using the evocative German synonym *Sehnsucht*.³¹ He describes fleeting instants when, encountering a landscape or phrase or musical passage, he suddenly and unexpectedly "desired with almost sickening intensity something never to be described." "It was a sensation, of course, of desire; but desire for what?" "Before I knew what I desired, the desire itself was gone, the whole glimpse withdrawn, the world turned commonplace again, or only stirred by a longing for the longing that had just ceased." Of his earliest such experience, he writes, "It had taken only a moment of time, and in a certain sense everything else that had ever happened to me was insignificant in comparison."

30 *Hymns*, #292, verse 2.

31 Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, 7. Most of the quotations from the book that follow come from pages 16–18.

Lewis's first encounters with "Joy" often involved Norse mythology and, eventually, the music of Richard Wagner: "Pure 'Northernness' engulfed me: a vision of huge, clear spaces hanging above the Atlantic in the endless twilight of northern summer, remoteness, severity."³² Yet he eventually realized that his yearning wasn't really for things Norse and Northern, but for something beyond them.

Joy, in Lewis's sense, is "an unsatisfied desire, which is itself more desirable than any other satisfaction." Though it resembles them in the sense that "anyone who has experienced it will want it again," it's distinct from happiness and pleasure. Indeed, he describes it as "inconsolable," a "stabbing," a "pang," and a sense of "loss," observing that "it might almost equally well be called a particular kind of unhappiness or grief. But then it is a kind we want. I doubt whether anyone who has tasted it would ever, if both were in his power, exchange it for all the pleasures in the world." "All Joy reminds," he says. "It is never a possession, always a desire for something longer ago or further away or still 'about to be.'" It always "implies the absence of its object."³³

When I first read Lewis on "Joy," I knew immediately what he meant. He wondered whether others shared his experience. I have. The eminent Austrian-American sociologist Peter Berger regards northern Italy's extraordinarily beautiful Lake Como as the most powerful argument for the existence of God. I would quibble about the specific location, but I understand. Certain alpine landscapes — in the Canadian Rockies, in Italy around Cortina d'Ampezzo and the Dolomites, and, pre-eminently, in Switzerland's Berner Oberland (where I served as a missionary) — have often awakened in me an aching and almost overwhelming sense of transcendence.

I know how it feels to want to possess them in a way that they simply cannot be possessed — though what I've just written doesn't really capture the feeling. What would it mean to "possess" the Bernese Alps? How, Lewis asks, can anybody "possess" the "Idea of Autumn" (as, in one such transient moment, he deeply desired to do)? I can no more define the experience than Lewis could. I'm confident, though, that some readers will recognize it.

The desire is, in a sense, entirely vain. "Stay a while!" says a famous line from Goethe's *Faust*, addressing one rapturous but passing moment.

32 Ibid., 73.

33 Ibid., 82.

“You are so beautiful!”³⁴ But the moment *doesn't* stay. Everything is transient.

Still, I believe that such experiences offer powerful religious meaning to those who've had them. They are, I think, “stabs” of “divine homesickness,” a yearning for something unspeakably and unchangingly beautiful, good, and holy. Reasoning that, since ordinary desires (e.g., for food, water, air, sex, or companionship) can always be fulfilled (at least potentially), Lewis argued that the yearning he called “Joy” also promises the possibility of satisfaction — if only in another life than this one:

A man's physical hunger does not prove that man will get any bread; he may die of starvation on a raft in the Atlantic. But surely a man's hunger does prove that he comes of a race which repairs its body by eating and inhabits a world where eatable substances exist. In the same way, though I do not believe (I wish I did) that my desire for Paradise proves that I shall enjoy it, I think it a pretty good indicator that such a thing exists and that some men will. A man may love a woman and not win her; but it would be very odd if the phenomenon called “falling in love” occurred in a sexless world.³⁵

The inescapable but deeply significant problem, contended Lewis, is that:

we do not want merely to *see* beauty, though, God knows, even that is bounty enough. We want something else which can hardly be put into words — to be united with the beauty we see, to pass into it, to receive it into ourselves, to bathe in it, to become part of it.³⁶

The eminent American Christian philosopher Alvin Plantinga has also written on this experience of deep yearning, longing, or *Sehnsucht*:

It isn't easy to say with any precision what the longing is a longing for, but it can seem to be for a sort of union: it's as if you want to be absorbed into the music, to become part of the ocean, to be at one with the landscape. You would love to

34 *Verweile doch, du bist so schön*. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust* I.7.2.699. In context, of course, Faust intends the line ironically or with disdain.

35 C. S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory and Other Essays*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: Touchstone, 1980), 30.

36 *Ibid.*, 39.

climb that mountain, certainly, but that isn't enough; you also somehow want to become one with it, to become part of it, or to have it, or its beauty, or this particular aspect of it, somehow become part of your very soul. ... When confronted with beauty, it is never enough; we are never really satisfied; there is more beyond, a more that we yearn for, but can only dimly conceive. We are limited to mere fleeting glimpses of the real satisfaction — unfulfilled until filled with the love of God. These longings too are types of longing for God; and the brief but joyous partial fulfillments are a type and foretaste of the fulfillment enjoyed by those who "glorify God and enjoy him forever."³⁷

The entire vast literature of mysticism in Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and beyond can be read as an expression of the quest for an ultimately satisfying *unio mystica* with God. "And this is life eternal," records the gospel of John, "that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."³⁸ Eternal life is not to know *about* the Father and the Son, but to know *them*. Moreover, it's probably not insignificant that a form of the same verb for "knowing" that's used by John is also used in the Septuagint Greek form of Genesis 4:1, which reports that "Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived." Plainly, this isn't mere book learning. It's experiential.

It's possible that there are some people who've never experienced the yearnings described by St. Augustine, Rābi'a al-'Adawiyya, Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, William Wordsworth, Eliza Snow, C. S. Lewis, Alvin Plantinga, and many others. If so, I honestly don't know what to do for them. Still, while the frenetic pace of modern life, and its various ways (chemical and other) of dulling such feelings, may work against senses of disquiet and foreignness in this world, my supposition is that almost everybody has experienced or will experience these longings, at least briefly, once or twice in a lifetime.

What does this have to do with apologetics? How is it connected with Interpreter? My hope is that Latter-day Saint philosophers, scholars, writers, artists, composers, and others will find ways to exhibit the Restored Gospel such that at least some currently outside the Kingdom, or not thoroughly within it, will recognize that in its promises rests the ultimate fulfillment of our deepest human yearnings.

37 Plantinga, *Knowledge and Christian Belief*, 75, 76. He alludes to the first question and answer of the Westminster Confession.

38 John 17:3.

Many of these methods of exposition won't fit this journal especially well. The beauties of the Gospel need to be expressed and celebrated in a wide variety of ways. Such expressions will commonly find their proper place in recordings, in concert halls, in choral performances and dramas, hanging on walls, featured in novels and poems, or in other sorts of writing. But I hope that some of them will also come to *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture*. I firmly believe that The Interpreter Foundation itself, through its journal and elsewhere, can become a vehicle not just for arguments that fortify intellectual conviction — important as those can be and are — but also for examinations of scripture and revealed doctrine that will set forth, insightfully and eloquently, the profundity and spiritual wealth to be found in them.

A slogan has been circulating among Mormon intellectuals of late, to the effect that “Richness is the new proof.”³⁹ If this is taken to suggest that historical and other arguments no longer have a place in discussions of the claims of Mormonism, I strongly disagree. But if it's understood to mean simply that “richness” is a powerful apologetic, I strongly concur. It's not enough, as I've said, to show that the Gospel is true, or at least plausible. We ought also to be trying to show how very good and beautiful it is, how rich and deep. And *Interpreter* is an excellent place for doing that.

And here's just one of many themes on which such variations can be created: “The thought that God is triune,” writes Alvin Plantinga, “distinguishes Christianity from other theistic religions; here we see a way in which this doctrine makes a real difference, in that it recognizes eros and love for others at the most fundamental level of reality.”⁴⁰

“Does this suggest,” he asks, “that we should lean toward a *social* conception of the Trinity, the conception of Gregory and the Cappadocian fathers, rather than the Augustinian conception, which flirts with modalism?”⁴¹

I plan to publish an article in the *Interpreter* journal that answers that question with a resounding “Yes.” Professor Plantinga also notes that, in Christianity, “God's love for us is manifested in his generously inviting us into this charmed circle (though not, of course, to ontological equality), thus satisfying the deepest longings of our souls.”⁴²

39 Creation of the phrase has been ascribed James Faulconer, but, in conversation, he disclaims authorship.

40 Plantinga, *Knowledge and Christian Belief*, 78, note 13.

41 Ibid.

42 Ibid., 78.

In Mormonism, I will argue, and specifically in its doctrine of exaltation or human deification, that invitation takes on a uniquely concrete and profound meaning. “One must admit,” an astute non-Mormon scholar recently wrote:

that the Mormon doctrine of deification presents something heartwarming. Deification among the Latter-day Saints is not a matter of the lonely individual buried in contemplation. To become a god, one must become a god in the midst of family — as a husband, wife, daughter, son, father, or mother progressing with the family into higher and higher levels of godhood. Mormonism does not so much teach the deification of the individual as the deification of the family and the larger family of the church. Godhood is eternal communion, and the increase of this communion with God and with each other. It is not just the rule and domination of other planets; it is the progression and infinite multiplication of love.⁴³

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43 M. David Litwa, *Becoming Divine: An Introduction to Deification in Western Culture* (Eugene OR: Cascade Books, 2013), 203–204.

YOU MORE THAN OWE ME THIS BENEFIT: ONOMASTIC RHETORIC IN PHILEMON

Matthew L. Bowen

Abstract: Wordplay and punning involving the names Philemon (Φιλήμων, “affectionate one”) and Onesimus (Ονήσιμος, “useful”) and their meanings, with concomitant paronomasia involving the name-title Χριστός (Christos) and various homonymic terms, constitutes a key element in Paul’s polite, diplomatic, and carefully-worded letter to Philemon, the Christian owner of a converted slave named Onesimus. Paul artfully uses Philemon’s own name to play on the latter’s affections and to remind him that despite whatever Onesimus may owe (ὀφείλει, opheilei) Philemon, Philemon more than owes (προσοφείλεις, prosopheileis) his very self — i.e., his life as a Christian and thus his eternal wellbeing — to Paul. Hence, Philemon “more than owes” Paul his request to have Onesimus — who was once “useless” or “unprofitable” and “without Christ,” but is now “profitable” and “well-in-Christ” — as a fellow worker in the Gospel. In a further (polyptotonic) play on Onesimus, Paul expresses his urgent desire to “have the benefit” (ὀναίμην, onaimēn) of Onesimus in the Lord out of Philemon’s own free will and with his blessing, since all three are now brothers in Christ, and thus slaves to Christ, their true “master.” In the context of Paul’s use of –χρηστός (–chrēstos) and ὀναίμην (onaimēn), Paul’s desire for Philemon’s voluntary “good deed” or “benefit” (τὸ ἀγαθὸν σου, to agathon sou) is to be understood as the granting of Onesimus and as the point and climax of this publicly-read letter.

As one of the shortest texts in the New Testament and the Bible as a whole, Paul’s letter to Philemon is something of an enigma that has troubled exegetes for almost two millennia due to its “deferential and circumspect” diction.¹ Paul wrote this brief letter to a Christian slaveholder, Philemon, who hosted a church congregation in his house (Philemon 1:2) at Colossae and who was himself an associate of Paul’s.²

1 See J. Albert Harrill, “Philemon, Letter to” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible Dictionary* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2009), 497.

2 Ibid., 497-499. Paul and Philemon’s relationship is described as a *koinōnia*, a “partnership” (Philemon 1:6, 17) which has strong ecclesiastical and even

Paul wrote this letter concerning Philemon's possibly escaped³ slave Onesimus⁴ whom the apostle Paul had converted.

John Paul Heil argues⁵ on the basis of structure that verse 14 is the key to the whole letter: "But without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly" (κην); or, "But I preferred to do nothing without your consent, in order that your good deed [benefit] might be voluntary and not something forced" (NRSV). Heil further states that Paul's motive is that he "wants Philemon to give his former slave Onesimus back to Paul as a beloved brother and fellow worker for the Gospel of Jesus Christ," because of Philemon's "faithful love" for the saints "as a beloved brother and fellow worker of Paul."⁶ In his attempt to persuade Philemon, Paul cleverly employs a nexus of onomastic puns involving the meanings and sounds of the names "Philemon" (Φιλήμων) "Onesimus" (Ονήσιμος) and "Christ" (Χριστός). The genius of the apostle's rhetorical approach is evident when each instance of wordplay is examined.

In this short study, I will examine each instance of onomastic wordplay (puns on names) in the Greek text of the letter. The artful, circumspect rhetoric of Paul's letter can be more fully appreciated when this onomastic wordplay is recognized in its variety and its implications are understood. Paul's message to Philemon is simple and more direct than is sometimes assumed: Philemon, "you more than owe me" the benefit that I am requesting of you.

Literacy, Orality, and the Memorability of Onomastic Puns

Concerning orality and literacy in the world and milieu of the New Testament, James F. McGrath observes that "while it was not at all a *purely* oral culture, the contexts of the New Testament authors were characterized by a high degree of residual orality" (emphasis in original).⁷

eucharistic overtones (see below).

3 Scholars are divided on whether Onesimus actually escaped, although this has been traditionally accepted. There is also disagreement as to whether and how Onesimus may have sinned against Philemon.

4 Onesimus is mentioned as being from Colossae in Colossians 4:9.

5 John Paul Heil, "The Chiastic Structure and Meaning of Paul's letter to Philemon," *Biblica* 82/2 (2001): 178.

6 Ibid.

7 James F. McGrath, "On Hearing (Rather Than Reading) Intertextual Echoes: Christology and Monotheistic Scriptures in an Oral Context," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 43/2 (2013): 74.

Literacy rates during that time varied from place to place, as they do today, but there was perhaps a “wide[r] range of degrees of literacy in the time period.”⁸ For example, the literacy requirements of marketplace commerce differed from those of professional court scribes.

Regarding Paul’s letters in particular, McGrath further observes that, “we have good reason to believe that Paul’s letters, as well as other early Christian literature, would have been heard read aloud by most who were exposed to them, rather than actually read with their own eyes.”⁹ “What needs to be remembered,” he reiterates, “is that very few early Christians would have *read* Paul’s letters. Most who encountered the words Paul authored would have encountered them when they were read *aloud*” (emphasis in the original).¹⁰ Although Paul’s letter to Philemon is directed to a private individual, the implied audience of the letter also includes fellow-workers Apphia, Archippus as well as the church congregation that met at Philemon’s house (see Philemon 1:2).¹¹

Given “the limits of human memory,”¹² such communications needed to be memorable. Hence the importance and usefulness of onomastic wordplay. Beyond their rhetorical potency, onomastic puns are, by nature, memorable.¹³ They, like scriptural citations, can serve as hooks or pegs on which lengthier ideas and arguments can be hung. Paul’s letter to Philemon is, by virtue of these onomastic puns, both rhetorically potent and memorable.

“Useful” and “Well-in-Christ”

Addressing Philemon, Paul says of Onesimus (Ὀνήσιμος), whose name means “useful”¹⁴ or “profitable” in Greek: “Formerly, he was¹⁵ *useless*

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid., 75.

11 Heil, “Chiastic Structure,” 178.

12 McGrath, “On Hearing,” 79.

13 Hence, the use of onomastic puns today in the media (cf., e.g., the frequent use of onomastic puns in the headlines of newspaper and online articles). We certainly remember when our names have been made the object of puns, kind and unkind. Onomastic puns grab our attention.

14 Walter Bauer, Fredrick William Danker, William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (rev. and ed. by Fredrick William Danker; 3rd ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 711. Hereafter cited as *BDAG*.

15 The Greek masculine singular definite accusative particle *ton* here makes the description of Onesimus in Philemon 1:11 grammatically appositional to the

[ἄχρηστον, *achrēston*]¹⁶ to you, but now he is indeed *useful* [εὐχρηστον, *euchrēston*]¹⁷ both to you and to me”¹⁸ (Philemon 1:11, NRSV); or, “in times past he was to thee unprofitable to thee, but now profitable to thee and to me” (KJV). Paul here creates a play on the *meaning* of Onesimus’s name using an unrelated synonym and an antonym of “Onesimus.” Both of these forms of *chrēstos* (χρηστός) are rare, ἄχρηστον occurring only here and εὐχρηστον occurring here and twice in 2 Timothy.¹⁹

J. Albert Harrill believes that this wordplay is “technical language [pointing] to a particular kind of document, the ‘journeyman apprentice’ contract, such as those found among the Oxyrhynchus Papyri in Roman Egypt”²⁰ (de-emphasis mine). He further notes that “the aim” of such apprenticeships “was the personal transformation of a slave or a child from ‘useless’ to ‘useful.’”²¹ While it is possible, as Harrill notes, that Paul is petitioning “for Philemon to let Onesimus be apprenticed to Paul in the service of the Gospel,”²² it is also possible that Paul is petitioning Philemon to let him be fully apprenticed to Christ as Master, as I believe is further suggested by this wordplay.

But Paul also deliberately plays on the name-title “Christ.” The word χρηστός (*chrēstos*) in the Greek of Paul’s time also *sounded* almost exactly

accusative form of his name in 1:10: *Onēsimon, ton ... achrēston ... euchrēston*.

16 BDAG, 160. It is noted here that in Greco-Roman society *achrēston* pertains “to a lack of responsibility within the larger social structure.”

17 Ibid., 417. *Euchrēstos* is used “in description of service that has special social value” (versus *achrēstos*).

18 The phrase in Greek places the pronouns representing Philemon [*soi*] and Paul [*emoi*] between *achrēston* and *euchrēston*, painting the desired picture of a potentially closer relationship between Philemon and Paul ([*kai soi kai emoi*] on account of the Onesimus matter).

19 In addition to Philemon 1:11, see 2 Timothy 2:21: “If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto **honour** [τιμήν, *timēn*], sanctified, and **meet** [εὐχρηστον, *euchrēston*] for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work.” The adjective εὐχρηστον occurs alongside wordplay on the name “Timothy” (“one honoring God” or “God-honored,” from τιμάω [*timaō*], “to honor” and θεός [*theos*] “god”). See also 2 Timothy 4:11, “Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is **profitable** [εὐχρηστος, *euchrēstos*] to me for the ministry.” In all three instances, εὐχρηστος/ον, conveys the idea of being “useful,” “beneficial,” or “profitable” with respect to service in the gospel.

20 Harrill, “Philemon,” 498.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.

the same as Χριστός (*Christos*, “Christ”).²³ Thus Paul is also referencing Onesimus’s conversion *to Christ*: “in times past he was ‘without Christ’ [i.e., ἀχρηστον ~ *achr[i]ston*]²⁴ to you, but now he is indeed ‘Well-in-Christ’ [εὐχρηστον ~ *euchr[i]ston*] both to you and to me” — a clever pun on -χρηστός (*-chrēstos*).²⁵ This homophonic wordplay adds additional nuance to Paul’s play on “Onesimus.” F.F. Bruce notes that “in Gentile ears Christ was simply an alternative name for Jesus ... *Christos* sounded exactly like a fairly common slave-name, *Chrēstos* (Latin *Chrestus*) and among Greeks and Romans there was considerable confusion between the two spellings, as also between *christianoī* and *chrestianoī*.”²⁶ The Latin suffix *-ianus*, attached to the name Christ, denoted “adherent of.” Thus, a “Christian” was an adherent of Christ, but an ordinary Greek or Roman might have heard “Chrēstianos” and understood it to mean an “adherent of (a slave) Chrestos.”²⁷

As a Christian of the Roman Mediterranean world, Philemon would have been sensitive to the pejorative overtones of this terminology. Christ, had in fact, died the ignominious death of a slave, of whom Philemon professed to be an adherent, like Paul and now Onesimus. By calling Onesimus (Ὀνήσιμος, “useful”) -χρηστόν (*-chrēston*, “useful”), Paul is placing Onesimus on the same level as himself and Philemon within the sphere of their “shared” relationship to Christ (Χριστός/χρηστός, *Christos/chrēstos*).

23 The eta (ē) in - χρηστός (*chrēstos*) was pronounced -EE (as in fee) in the Koine of that time, just as it is today in Modern Greek. Thus the pronunciation of *-chrēstos* was hardly distinguishable from Χριστός (*Christos*).

24 Cf. Ephesians 2:12: “At that time ye were **without Christ** [χωρὶς Χριστοῦ, *choris Christou*], being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God [ἄθεοι, *atheoi*] in the world.”

25 Paul uses unmodified forms of the adjective χρηστός, -όν in Romans 2:4 (used here substantively; 1 Corinthians 15:33 and Ephesians 4:32, where it has the sense of “kind” or “good” (substantively, “kindness” or “goodness”).

26 F.F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 132.

27 Ibid. Bruce cites the manuscript confusion between the two spellings in Acts 11:26 (“And the disciples were called Christians [*christianous/chrēstianous*] first in Antioch”: “A few Greek witnesses to the text (including the first hand in Codex Sinaiticus) exhibit the spelling *chrēstianous* (accusative plural) instead of *christianous*. The latter is certainly what Luke wrote, but the former may well represent what some of the Antiochenes thought they were saying.”

Paul is trading on the “culturally charged moral values in Paul’s fundamentally hierarchical ancient Mediterranean world.”²⁸ Paul refrains in his letter from calling Philemon κύριος (*kyrios*, “lord, master”), reserving that title for Christ alone (Philemon 1:5). The implication for Paul, Philemon, and Onesimus is that they are all three δούλοι (*douloi*, “slaves”) of Christ, who died as a slave on their behalf. This is also the force of Paul’s addressing Philemon as ἀδελφέ (*adelphē*, “brother,” Philemon 1:7) and urging him to accept Onesimus “no longer as a slave [δούλον, *doulon*], but more than a slave, **a brother beloved** [ἀδελφὸν ἀγαπητόν, *adelphon agapēton*]” (Philemon 1:16 NRSV); or, “as a servant, but above a servant, **a brother beloved**” (ΚΙΥ). They are to be equal “in the Lord” (Philemon 1:16), i.e., in relationship to their common master (κύριος, *kyrios*). Outside of the fellowship of Christ they are all ultimately “useless” or “unprofitable.”²⁹

Grace and Partnership

Paul’s pun on the meaning of Onesimus (“useful”) and χρηστόν/ἄχρηστον/εὐχρηστον (*chrēston/achrēston/euchrēston*) has an additional dimension. Paul’s description of Onesimus as εὐχρηστος (*euchrēstos*) has soteriological and Eucharistic overtones. In Paul’s language one can hear the echo of χάρις (*charis*) “grace” (English “grace” from Latin *gratia*, by way of Old French, is cognate with Greek χάρις; so too apparently Latin *caritas*, “charity” which the Vulgate uses to render Greek *agape*, the early Christian term for the pure “love” of Christ). Onesimus is not “without grace,” (cf. Greek ἄχαρις, *acharis* = “without grace” or “graceless”; ἀχάριστος, *acharistos* = “unthankful,” “ungrateful”)³⁰ and “useless” or “unprofitable” (ἄχρηστος, *achrēstos*) because he remains “in the Lord”

28 Harrill, “Philemon,” 498.

29 Cf. the “unprofitable” or “useless servant” language of Matthew 25:30: “As for this worthless slave [τὸν ἀχρεῖον δούλον, *ton achreion doulon*], throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Cf. also Luke 17:10: “So you also, when you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, ‘We are worthless slaves [Δοῦλοι ἀχρεῖοι ἐσμεν, *Douloi achreioi esmen*]; we have done only what we ought to have done!’” In the language of King Benjamin, “I say unto you that if ye should serve him who has created you from the beginning, and is preserving you from day to day, by lending you breath, that ye may live and move and do according to your own will, and even supporting you from one moment to another — I say, if ye should serve him with all your whole souls yet ye would be unprofitable servants” (Mosiah 2:21).

30 The adjective ἀχάριστος, ον is attested in Luke 6:35 and 2 Timothy 3:2.

(Philemon 1:16, 20) — i.e., “in Christ” (cf. Philemon 1:6, 8, 23) — and is a partaker or partner of Christ’s love (cf. Philemon 1:17).

Moreover, Paul’s use of the word εὐχρηστος (*euchrēstos*), not only evokes the idea of “useful” and “well-in-Christ,” but echoes the verb εὐχαριστέω (to “give thanks”) as used previously in Philemon 1:4 (“When I remember you in my prayers, I always **thank** [εὐχαριστῶ, *eucharistō*] my God” [NRSV]; or, “I thank my God, making mention of the always in my prayers” [KJV]). Beyond his use of *eucharistō* as part of his greeting formula (see, e.g., Romans 1:8; 1 Corinthians 1:4; Philippians 1:3; and Thessalonians 1:2), this verb is used by Paul in reference to what came to the communal Christian meal:

And **when he had given thanks** [εὐχαριστήσας, *eucharistēsas*], he broke it and said, This is my body, which is [broken] for you. Do this in remembrance of me. In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me” (1 Corinthians 11:24-25, NRSV)

And **when he had given thanks**, he brake it and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me (1 Corinthians 11:24-25; see also 1 Corinthians 10:16-17).

On the basis of this passage and others,³¹ the nominal form of εὐχαριστέω (*eucharisteō*), εὐχαριστία (*eucharistia*), of course, becomes the basis of the Eucharist as a technical term.

Onesimus has become a “partner” with Paul and with his master Philemon in what Paul calls a κοινωνία (*koinōnia*) — a “fellowship” (“the sharing [fellowship] of your [Philemon’s] faith” [Philemon 1:6, NRSV] = “the communication of thy faith” [KJV]; “If thou count me therefore a partner [κοινωνόν (*koinōnon*), a sharer, a member of the fellowship], receive him as myself,” Philemon 1:17, KJV) — i.e., the “fellowship of [Christ’s] sufferings” (Philippians 3:10). *Koinōnia* is a term Paul uses

31 See, e.g., John 6:11, 23; Matthew 15:36; 26:27 [26-29]; Mark 14:23 [22-24]; Luke 22:17-20; cf. Matthew 14:19; Luke 9:16.

elsewhere with additional, explicit eucharistic overtones (see especially 1 Corinthians 10:16-17).³²

All of this is framed by the “grace” (χάρις, *charis*, Philemon 1:3) that Paul the “prisoner of Christ [Χριστός, *Christos*] Jesus” wishes to all of his partners or fellows in the fellowship of their master Christ, the thanks (εὐχαριστῶ, *eucharistō*) Paul gives “always” for them (Philemon 1:4), the great “joy” (χαρὰν, *charan*, Philemon 1:7; cf. English *cheer*) that Paul feels on account of Philemon’s charity or love, as well as the “grace [χάρις, *charis*] of the Lord Jesus Christ [Χριστοῦ, *Christou*]” that Paul wishes to be with Philemon and his fellow congregants. In other words, the χαρά (*chara*, cheer/joy) of Christ is their shared χάρις (*charis*, “grace”) and – χρηστός (–*chrēstos*, “profit,” “usefulness,” Philemon 1:11), of which the erstwhile slave Onesimus now also partakes.

Philemon the “Affectionate”

From the beginning of the letter, Paul has been playing on both the affections of Philemon and the meaning of his name, “affectionate one,”³³ by addressing him as “dearly beloved” (Φιλήμονι, τῷ ἀγαπητῷ, *Philēmoni tō agapētō*, 1:1). He has noted his “love [ἀγάπην, *agapēn*] for all the saints and ... faith toward the Lord Jesus” (Philemon 1:5, NRSV); or, “love ... which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all his saints” (ΚJV). Paul has further noted that they — Paul and the saints — had “received much joy and encouragement from [Philemon’s] love [ἀγάπην, *agapēn*]” (NRSV) or “had great joy and consolation in [Philemon’s] love” (ΚJV), this “because the bowels of the saints [were] refreshed” in him (Philemon 1:7). He has besought him “for [the] love’s sake [διὰ τὴν ἀγάπην, *dia tēn agapēn*]” (Philemon 1:9) that he would treat Onesimus, whom Paul calls his “own bowels” (1:12), as a “brother beloved” [ἀδελφὸν ἀγαπητόν, *adelphon agapēton*] (Philemon 1:16), and again urged him, “Refresh my bowels in the Lord [or, in Christ].”³⁴ The noun φιλία (*philia*), from which the name “Philemon” (Φιλήμων) derives, and the noun ἀγάπη (*agapē*) both denote kinds of “love” or “affection” in Greek. The bowels or viscera were often considered the seat of “love” or “affection” (see further below).

32 1 Corinthians 10:16-17: “The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.”

33 BDAG, 1057.

34 “In Christ,” in some of the other manuscripts, has become the preferred reading.

By invoking the term ἀγάπη (*agapē*) and φιλία (*philia*, the latter present in the name Philemon) as a paronomasia (pun) on Philemon, Paul gently but firmly applies a pressure on Philemon as “the affectionate” one to live up the Christian ideals embodied in his name. A public failure or refusal to live up to these ideals by complying with Paul’s wishes, greatly risks lessening his standing in his church community.

“Your Good Deed” (“Thy Benefit”)

While perhaps opaque at a glance, the “good deed” or “benefit” (τὸ ἀγαθόν, *to agathon*) to which Paul refers in Philemon 1:14 is clear when viewed as an extension of the punning on “Onesimus” and *–chrēstos* in 1:10-11. According to Heil, verse 14 sits at the chiasmic center of the structure of the letter.³⁵ Both ballast and a confirmation that the “good deed” or “benefit” is Philemon’s possibly permanent granting of Onesimus to Paul as a fellow-worker and ministrant are achieved with Paul’s subsequent use of the verb ὀναίμην (*onaimēn*, “let me have the benefit [of/from]”) in v. 20 (see below).

However, it is between his mention of the “good deed”/“benefit” (τὸ ἀγαθόν, *to agathon*) and “hav[ing] benefit” (ὀναίμην, *onaimēn*), that Paul employs one of his strongest rhetorical punches. Instead of returning immediately to playing on Philemon’s affections, he invokes commercial terminology punctuated by his use of verbs that sound like Philemon’s own name.

“You More than Owe Me One[simus]”

As if to further suggest their equality before the Lord in the Gospel, Paul declares that if Onesimus “owes” (ὀφείλει, *opheilei*)³⁶ Philemon anything

35 Heil, “Chiastic Structure,” 178.

36 Paul uses the verb ὀφείλει (*opheilei*) in Romans 13:8 (“Owe no man any thing, but to love one another”); 15:1 (“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak”); 15:27 (“their duty is [literally, they ought] also to minister unto them in carnal things”); 1 Corinthians 5:10 (“for then must ye needs [or, you would need to] go out of the world”); 7:36 (“if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require [i.e., if it must be thus]...let them marry”); 9:10 (“he that ploweth should [or, ought to] plow in hope”); 11:7 (“For a man indeed ought not to cover his head”); 11:10 (“for this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels”); 2 Corinthians 12:11 (“I ought to have been commended of you”), 12:14 (“for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children”); Ephesians 5:28 (“So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies”); 2 Thessalonians 1:3 (“We are bound [or, we ought] to thank God always for you”);

that it should be charged to his (Paul's) account, but then immediately reminds Philemon that he "more than owes" (προσοφείλεις, *prosopheileis*) Paul his very self (Philemon 1:19). This constitutes a paronomasia — that is, a play on the similar sounds in Philemon, ὀφείλει, and προσοφείλεις.

The wordplay suggests a triangular relationship between Philemon, Onesimus (the one who "owes" Philemon) and Paul (the one covering Onesimus's debt, and the one to whom Philemon "owes" more than everything) under Christ, the one to whom they all owe themselves. Here too the rhetorical effect is to place Onesimus on a more even footing with Paul and Philemon. Their interrelationship is to be horizontal, rather than hierarchical or vertical.

There may be a further dimension to Paul's wordplay on ὀφείλω (*opheileō*), προσοφείλω (*prosopheileō*) and Philemon here. The homonymous Greek verb ὠφελέω (*ōpheleō*), the pronunciation of which would have differed from the former primarily in vowel quantity, means to "assist," "benefit," "be advantageous," "profit." In other words, ὠφελέω was at once a homonym of ὀφείλω/προσοφείλω (*opheileō/prosopheileō*) and a synonym of χρηστός (*chrēstos*), Onesimus, and ὀναίμην (*onaimēn*, see immediately below). Thus Paul's wordplay on Philemon, ὀφείλω/προσοφείλω and implicitly ὠφελέω identifies Philemon's name more closely with that of Onesimus, his slave.

"Let Me Have Benefit [or Joy] in the Lord"

The final two onomastic wordplays occur when Paul pleads with Philemon, "let me have joy [*onaimēn*, literally, let me have profit or benefit] in the Lord, *refresh my bowels* in the Lord" (Philemon 1:20). The use of ὀνίνημι (*oninēmi*) represents a careful and climactic word-choice by Paul,³⁷ forming a polyptoton³⁸ — this time on the name "Onesimus," which is cognate with this verb. Here Paul makes Onesimus a symbol

2:13 ("but we are bound [or, we ought] to give thanks alway to God for you"); and Philemon 1:18 (here). Paul uses the verb predominantly — almost exclusively apart from Romans 13:8 and Philemon 1:18 — as an auxiliary verb that roughly translates "ought." Paul's use of ὀφείλω as commercial/spiritual term makes its use here in Philemon 1:18 and in Romans 13:8 noteworthy.

37 In the New Testament, ὀνίνημι (*oninēmi*) only occurs here in Philemon 1:20.

38 According to Richard A. Lanham (*A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms*. 2nd ed. [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991], 117) polyptoton constitutes a wordplay involving a "repetition of words from the same root but with different endings" (vis-a-vis paronomasia, "punning [or] playing on the sounds and meanings of words," i.e., from unrelated roots [see p. 110]).

of the “profit” or “benefit[s]” that he has gained in the Lord through preaching the gospel and of his hopes to further acquire through Philemon’s “benefit” or “good” (Philemon 1:14).

If not clear previously, it is now evident that Onesimus (“useful”, “beneficial”) is the “benefit” or “good thing” (τὸ ἀγαθόν, *to agathon*) that Paul wishes from Philemon, so that he (Paul) might “have benefit” (ὀναίμην, *onaimēn*) in the (true) Master (ἐν κυρίῳ, *en kyriō*), the Lord Jesus Christ. The polyptotonic wordplay on “Onesimus” and ὀναίμην (*onaimēn*) is unavoidable to the hearer. The pressure to do the “good thing” or “right thing” is now practically irresistible. If Philemon still has any further reticence about granting Paul’s request, the latter now makes one more appeal to Philemon’s “affections.”

An “Affectionate” Reprise

On top of all of this, Paul makes a final allusion to “Philemon” as “affectionate one” when he says: “refresh my heart [literally, bowels] in Christ” (Philemon 1:20) or, some of the other manuscripts have it, “in the Lord [Master].” Again, the bowels or viscera were often considered the seat of affections anciently.³⁹

Paul’s reprise of this phrase, used previously in Philemon 1:7 in reference to Philemon as the “affectionate” one by whose “love” or “affection” (Philemon 1:2, 5, 7) “the hearts [bowels] of the saints have been refreshed” (Philemon 1:7; cf. 1:12, 20). This constitutes a final play on, or allusion to, the meaning of Philemon as the “affectionate one” as a part of Paul’s final appeal to Philemon to grant Onesimus and to “do even more than I say.” As McGrath has noted, “material closer to the end [of a Pauline letter] could have had a potentially overpowering influence on the understanding of the letter that hearers took away with them.” The onomastic puns in Philemon 1:17-20 on Onesimus and Philemon’s names should be read with this in mind.

Conclusion

As noted at the outset, Philemon hosted a congregation of the nascent Christian community — a “house-church” at his own house (Philemon 1:2). The letter that bears his name would have been read in a meeting of the local church community, presumably by one of the local church

39. See, e.g., Isaiah 16:11; 63:15; Jeremiah 4:19; 31:20; Lamentations 1:20; 2:11; Philippians 2:1; Colossians 3:12; 1 John 3:7; Mosiah 15:9; Alma 7:12; 26:37; 34:15; 3 Nephi 17:16-17.

officials. Philemon, no doubt, would have been present, and all eyes would have been on him (as it were) as it was given a public reading.⁴⁰ The social pressure for him to “do the right thing,” “the good thing” (τὸ ἀγαθόν, *to agathon*, Philemon 1:14) would have been practically impossible to resist.

Paul’s letter to Philemon and its rhetoric, including the interwoven plays and puns on “Onesimus,” “Philemon,” and “Christ,” constitute a miniature masterpiece and a fine example of how thematically central and richly textured onomastic wordplay in ancient texts and literature can be. In a world without telephone, text-message, Twitter, television, radio or internet, communications had to be composed for maximum effect on first hearing or reading, with virtually every syllable contributing to the rhetorical and mnemonic impact of the whole. Paul’s letter to Philemon constitutes just such a communication.

The author would like to thank Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, Daniel B. Sharp, and Parker Jackson.

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40 Heil (“Chiastic Structure,” 191) notes that the “implied audience” of this letter is not only “composed ... of ... Philemon, the primary addressee (v. 1), but also two other fellow workers, Apphia and Archippus, as well as the assembly of Christians gathered at the house of Philemon for the public reading of the letter (v. 2). Thus, the letter is a communal rather than a private communication between partners with a mutual concern and responsibility for advancing the gospel.”

ZARAHEMPLA REVISITED: NEVILLE'S NEWEST NOVEL

Matthew Roper, Paul Fields, and Larry Bassist

Abstract: This article is the third in a series of three articles responding to the recent assertion by Jonathan Neville that Benjamin Winchester was the anonymous author of three unsigned editorials published in Nauvoo in 1842 in the Times and Seasons. The topic of the unsigned editorials was the possible relationship of archeological discoveries in Central America to places described in the Book of Mormon narrative. The first article shows that, contrary to Neville's claims, Winchester was not a proponent of a Mesoamerican setting for the Book of Mormon, but rather a hemispheric one. Since this was a view commonly held by early Mormons, his ideas did not warrant any anonymity for their dissemination. The second article shows that, also contrary to Neville's claims, Joseph Smith was not opposed to considering Central American geographic parallels to the Book of Mormon. The Prophet even seemed to find such possibilities interesting and supportive of the Book of Mormon. This third article shows that despite Neville's circumstantial speculations, the historical and stylometric evidence is overwhelmingly against Winchester as the author of the Central America editorials.

In *The Lost City of Zarahemla from Iowa to Guatemala — and Back Again*, novelist Jonathan Neville tries to discredit what he calls the “limited Mesoamerican geography” of Book of Mormon events.¹ To do so he argues that Benjamin Winchester — an early Mormon missionary, writer and eventual apostate — was the anonymous author of three unsigned editorials published in the *Times and Seasons* on correspondences between the discoveries in Central America by Stephens

1 Jonathan Neville, *The Lost City of Zarahemla: From Iowa to Guatemala — and Back Again* (New York: Let Me Read It.com, 2015). Page number references to Neville's book throughout this article are for this edition.

and Catherwood and the Book of Mormon.^{2,3} The three editorials were published during Joseph Smith's editorship of the *Times and Seasons* from March to November of 1842.

Neville claims that Joseph Smith was opposed to drawing Mesoamerican connections with the Book of Mormon account and felt that they posed a threat to his prophetic authority. In order to explain how the three editorials came to be published, Neville invents an elaborate tale of subterfuge and conspiracy masterminded by Winchester. Neville also includes a pseudo-stylometric "analysis" in an attempt to support his speculations. Neville is the author of at least twelve self-published novels. He is an attorney by training. He is not a historian, statistician, or stylometrician.

This paper is the third in a series of three articles that address Neville's assertions. In the first article Matthew Roper showed that what Neville characterized as the "limited Mesoamerican geography" of the Book of Mormon was actually the traditional hemispheric view, which assumed that North and South America were the lands described in the Book of Mormon and that Central America was the "narrow neck of land" referred to in the account.⁴ Winchester's writings merely reflected that commonly held perspective, which was never challenged during Joseph Smith's lifetime. Neville claims that Winchester and possibly a co-conspirator had to conceal their identities in order to get their ideas published. But, since the idea that the "narrow neck of land" was in Central America was a widely held view, Mormons did not think of it as controversial, and the motive for a secret publication scheme evaporates. Winchester's writings did not present anything especially new or controversial; thus there was no need for subterfuge and conspiracy to publish them.

In the second article Roper discussed the influence of Stephens and Catherwood's work *Incidents of Travel in Central America* on early

2 The three editorials are "Extract from Stephens' 'Incidents of Travel in Central America,'" *Times and Seasons* 3/22 (15 September 1842): 914-15. "Facts Are Stubborn Things," *Times and Seasons* 3/22 (15 September 1842): 921-22. "Zarahemla," *Times and Seasons* 3/23 (1 October 1842): 927.

3 John Lloyd Stephens and Frederick Catherwood. *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan*, 2 vols., Arthur Hall, Virtue [and] Company, 1854. Both volumes were reprinted in their entirety by Dover Publications in 1969.

4 Matthew Roper, "The Treason of the Geographers: Mythical Mesoamerican Conspiracy and the Book of Mormon," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture*, 16 (2015): 161-05.

Latter-day Saint readers, including Joseph Smith.⁵ The Prophet embraced with interest and enthusiasm the book's description of Central American history and ancient ruins, and asserted they corresponded with and supported the Book of Mormon account.

In this third article we apply statistical and stylometric analyses to examine whether Winchester is a likely author of the three unsigned Central America editorials. We first summarize the results of our previous paper — “Joseph Smith, The *Times and Seasons*, and Central American Ruins” — regarding the Central America editorials, since Neville used that article to form the foundational premise for his book.⁶ We show that his premise is invalid, and therefore the entire argument put forth in his book is baseless. However, going further to address the specific assertions in his book, we explain “stylometry,” discuss Neville's pseudo-stylometry, and present the results of appropriate stylometric analyses.⁷ Our results show consistently that Winchester is not a viable candidate author of the Central America editorials, and there is no evidence that he is a better candidate than Joseph Smith.

Summary of “Joseph Smith, the *Times and Seasons*, and Central American Ruins”

Candidate Authors Used: Joseph Smith, John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff

As we discussed in “Joseph Smith, the *Times and Seasons*, and Central American Ruins,” there are sound reasons to consider Joseph Smith, John Taylor, and Wilford Woodruff as potential candidate authors of the unsigned material on Central America and the Book of Mormon. All three men were in Nauvoo during the time of publication, they were responsible for the publication of the *Times and Seasons*, and they were all familiar with Stephens and Catherwood's work. As Roper shows in the second article of this series, Joseph Smith's letter to John Bernhisel shows that Joseph Smith shared the enthusiasm of his companions about

5 Matthew Roper, “John Bernhisel's Gift to a Prophet: Incidents of Travel in Central America and the Book of Mormon,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture*, 16 (2015): 207-253.

6 Matthew Roper, Paul J. Fields, and Atul Nepal. “Joseph Smith, the *Times and Seasons*, and Central American Ruins,” *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture* 22/2 (2013): 84-97.

7 All statistical analyses were performed using SAS/STAT® Software, JMP® Software, IBM SPSS Statistics®, R: A language and environment for statistical computing®, or Wordprint 4®.

the correspondences between Central American history, Stephens and Catherwood's discoveries, and the Book of Mormon.

On February 19, 1842, after Joseph Smith had taken control of the *Times and Seasons*, Wilford Woodruff wrote in his journal, "Joseph the Seer is now the Editor of that paper & Elder Taylor assists him in writing while it has fallen to my lot to take charge of the Business part of the establishment."⁸ In a later recollection, John Taylor provided some insight into what it was like writing for the Prophet and then having him critique and correct what John Taylor had written. The subject on one occasion had to do with priesthood keys, the judgment, and the Ancient of Days.

In speaking with the Prophet Joseph once on this subject, he traced it from the first down to the last, until he got to the Ancient of Days. *He wished me to write something for him on this subject*, but I found it a very difficult thing to do. *He had to correct me several times*. We are told that the "judgment shall sit and the books be opened." He spoke of the various dispensations and of those holding the keys thereof, and said there would then be a general giving up or accounting for. *I wrote* that each one holding the keys of the several dispensations would deliver them up to his predecessor, from one to another, until the whole kingdom should be delivered up to the Father, and then God would be "all in all." *Said he, "That is not right."* *I wrote it again, and again he said it was not right*. It is very difficult to find language suitable to convey the meaning of spiritual things. The idea was that they should deliver up or give an account of their administrations, in their several dispensations, but that they would all retain their several positions and Priesthood. The Bible and Doctrine and Covenants speak about certain books which should be opened; and another book would be opened, called the Book of Life, and out of the things written in these books would men be judged at the last day.⁹

John Taylor's account suggests that in working with John Taylor, Joseph Smith would sometimes explain in his own language what he wanted written. Then John Taylor would write, after which the Prophet

8 Scott G. Kenney, "Wilford Woodruff's Journal, 1833–1898, 9 vols," *Midvale, Utah: Signature Books* 85/2 (1983): 19 February 1842, 2:155.

9 John Taylor, 31 December 1876, in *JD* 18:330. Emphasis added.

would critique and correct, sometimes repeatedly, what John Taylor wrote if needed. While we do not know if the same process was followed in all the writing done under his direction, it does suggest that Joseph Smith could be very involved in the process, particularly if he considered it a matter of significant doctrinal importance.

The Prophet also placed *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan* in the Nauvoo Library and Literary Institute — a strange decision if he disapproved of the use of the books by John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, and others.¹⁰

John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff were seriously ill during August and September, and both men were essentially bedridden from August 9 until middle to late September. This suggests the chance that someone besides them might have penned the editorials for September 15 and October 1. Neville thinks that Joseph Smith could not have contributed to the content of any of the articles because he was in hiding from his enemies in September 1842 and may not have been able to visit the printing office during that time. None of the editorial portions of the Central America articles for 1842 were long, and they would not have required an inordinate amount of time to write. The editorials for July 15 (signed “Ed”) and September 15 (unsigned) both mention Stephens and Catherwood’s discoveries and have a similar theme. The September 15 material may have been written in September, but it could have been written just as easily previous to John Taylor’s and Wilford Woodruff’s illnesses in July or early August.

Neville notes that in Joseph Smith’s journal, “There is no hint that Joseph is reading, writing, or conversing about any topic related to Book of Mormon geography” (p. 130). While true, the way that Neville presents this information is misleading. Indeed, as far as we are aware, there is no hint of *any* discussion of Book of Mormon geography in *anyone’s* Nauvoo journal during 1842. Thus, the journal’s silence cannot be taken to mean very much, since *someone* was interested in it, and the *Times and Seasons* published a handful of articles relating to that subject while Joseph Smith was editor, despite the subject’s absence from anyone’s personal diaries.

10 Kenneth W. Godfrey, “A Note on the Nauvoo Library and Literary Institute,” *Brigham Young University Studies* 14/3 (Spring 1974): 388.

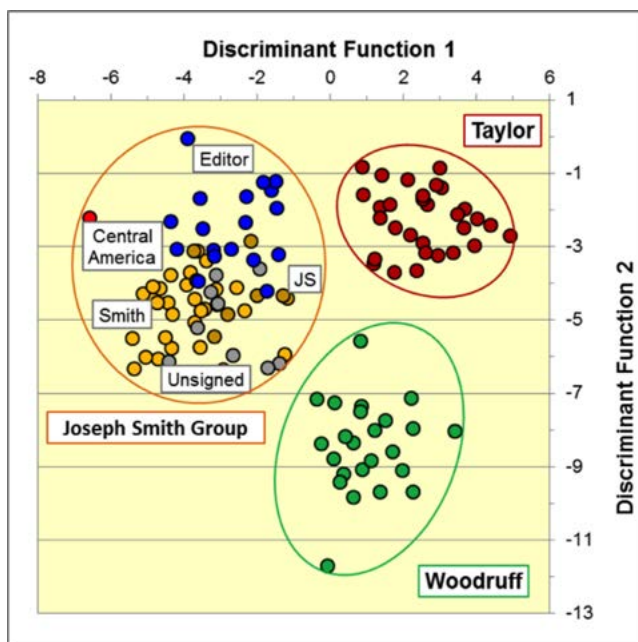


Figure 1: Discriminant Analysis Plot from “Joseph Smith, the *Times and Seasons*, and Central American Ruins.”¹¹ The Joseph Smith holographic texts, editorials signed “Joseph Smith,” editorials signed “Ed.” during his editorship, and the unsigned editorials during his editorship cluster together as a group and are obviously separate from the John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff texts. The editorials on the topic of Central America cluster closest to the Joseph Smith Group.

Joseph Smith’s journal does not record everything that Joseph Smith did or did not do during this time, but it does show that Joseph Smith was in or near Nauvoo while printing activities were going on, which is why he must be considered seriously as a candidate author. Joseph Smith’s journal does show that he met with John Taylor on September 21 about the work of the printing office and also on September 23. This would have given him and John Taylor the opportunity to read or discuss what was to appear in the October 1 editorial and at least allow Joseph Smith to provide his own input, had he wished to do so.

Methods Used and Results: Our previous article examined the probable authorship of the *Times and Seasons* editorials related to Central America. A timeline of significant events, as well as other

11 For color versions of the figures in this article see the electronic version of the article on the *Interpreter’s* website, <http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/>.

historical evidence, indicate that the most likely candidates are limited to Joseph Smith, John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff. To characterize the writing style of each potential author, we assembled a collection of texts known to have been written by each author.

For Joseph Smith we took a sample of texts for which he is the known author (holographic documents written in his own hand) and combined them with texts from the *Times and Seasons* signed "Joseph Smith," editorials signed "Ed" when Joseph Smith was editor, and unsigned editorials when he was the editor. We refer to these texts together as the "Joseph Smith Group."

We applied the statistical technique of discriminant analysis to identify how the texts group together based on the word-use frequencies in each text and then determined the probable group membership of the texts of unknown authorship.¹² We showed (see Figure 1) that the Joseph Smith Group of texts cluster together, and they are distinct from the John Taylor texts and the Wilford Woodruff texts. The Central America editorials composited together are closest to the Joseph Smith Group of texts and obviously closer to those texts than to the John Taylor or Wilford Woodruff texts. Thus we concluded that the writing style in the Central American editorials is closest to the writing style of Joseph Smith, and consequently that Joseph Smith is the most likely author of the Central America editorials of the three historically justifiable candidate authors.

The "Lost City" of Zarahemla

In *The Lost City of Zarahemla*, Neville claims that the Central America editorials do not belong to the Joseph Smith Group and spends about 200 pages speculating how Winchester could have been the author. He repeatedly states his speculations as "fact" without scientific substantiation, and he even resorts to using a weak stylometric analysis for support.

Neville's Foundational Premise is Invalid

Neville asserts that there must be an unrecognized anonymous author for the Central America editorials by claiming that Figure 1 shows the Central America editorials collectively to be an "outlier" (pp. 219-20) in relation to the other texts in the Joseph Smith Group. He says this leads him to believe that there was a different author other than Joseph Smith,

12 Alvin C. Rencher, *Multivariate Statistical Inference and Application* (Wiley Interscience, 1998), ""232, 239.

John Taylor or Wilford Woodruff for the unsigned Central America editorials. Neville conjectures that Benjamin Winchester was that unrecognized latent author of the unsigned editorials.

What Neville means by “outlier” is more properly referred to as an “extreme value.” The term “outlier” refers to an extreme value among a set of values that is so far from the other data points that it is probably incongruent with the other members of that set of values. His method of assessment is purely visual; and, as he correctly says, it is only his “layman’s opinion” (p. 219). Yet his claim that the Central America editorials are an “outlier” is the foundational premise of his entire argument. If this claim is false, his entire argument has no basis and cannot be substantiated.

Ignoring rigorous statistical analysis and only visually examining the plot in Figure 1, Neville concludes that the Central American texts are “too far” from the Joseph Smith Group to be congruent in style with the other texts. He does not realize that the distances shown in the plot are scaled relative to only the texts examined and do not represent any absolute measure of separation between the texts, as would be the case if the data points were simple two-dimensional locations of physical items plotted on a map in a Cartesian coordinate system.

Graphical Tests: His “eyeball method” is a simplistic approximation of applying a Euclidean distance measure like the distance-between-two-points calculation taught in high school algebra.¹³ Figure 2 shows a histogram plot (frequency plot) of the Euclidean distances of each text in the Joseph Smith Group from the centroid of the group.¹⁴ Along with these we have included the distances to typical points from the John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff groups to show what true “outliers” would look like on the plot. The points for John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff are extreme values, but not the Central America point. In fact, there is another text in the Joseph Smith Group even farther away than the Central America editorials.

13 Michel Marie Deza and Elena Deza, *Encyclopedia of Distances*, ed. 3 (Heidelberg: Springer, 2014), 100.

14 Mary Natrella, *NIST/SEMATECH e-Handbook of Statistical Methods*, Section 1.3.3.14, <http://www.itl.nist.gov/div898/handbook/> (accessed August 2015).

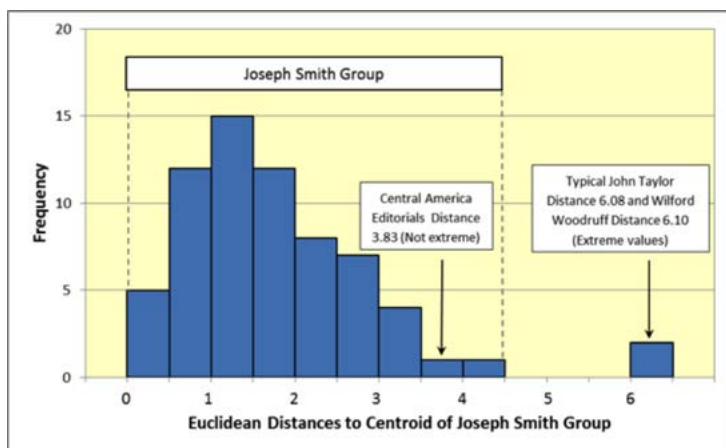


Figure 2: Histogram of Euclidean Distances of Each Text in the Joseph Smith Group from the Centroid of the Group. The distances from the Joseph Smith Group centroid to typical points from the John Taylor group and the Wilford Woodruff group have been added to show what truly incongruent values look like. The Central America editorials are not inconsistent as part of the Joseph Smith Group, and there is even another Joseph Smith Group text more distant than the Central America editorials.

A data point exactly at the centroid of the Joseph Smith Group would have a Euclidean distance of zero (0.00). The first bar on the left in the plot shows five points with Euclidean distances between 0.00 and 0.50. The distances are deviations from the centroid and thus positive with no direction indicated. The next bar shows twelve points with distances between 0.50 and 1.00. An extreme value is one that is inconsistent with the rest of the data points in a set of data. For a point to be an extreme value in the plot, it would be to the right of the other Joseph Smith Group points, as indicated by a gap between it and the other group points. There is no such gap for the Central America editorials, which have a distance of 3.83, but there is an obvious gap in the distance to the typical John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff points, 6.08 and 6.10 respectively, showing what true extreme values look like. The histogram plot shows that the Central America editorials are within the distribution of the other points in the Joseph Smith Group and do not exhibit characteristics of an extreme value.¹⁵

¹⁵ Karl Pearson, "Contributions to the Mathematical Theory of Evolution. II. Skew Variation In Homogeneous Material," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal*

A “box plot” is another standard statistical representation of a set of data.¹⁶ The box plot shown in Figure 3 further illustrates that the Central America editorials are not an extreme value of the Joseph Smith Group.

The “box” contains the middle 50% of the data points. The vertical line extending down from the box spans the lower 25% of the data, ending at the minimum value. The vertical line extending upwards from the box spans the upper 25% of the data, ending at the maximum value.

The threshold distance for an extreme value for the Joseph Smith Group using typical box plot methodology is 4.41. The Central America editorials distance of 3.83 is not beyond the threshold. Therefore, here again, the Central America editorials are not an extreme value within the Joseph Smith Group of texts.

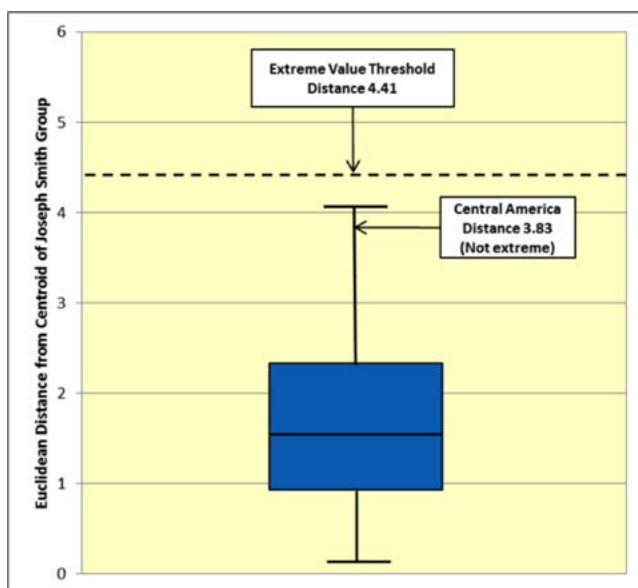


Figure 3: Box Plot of Euclidean Distances from the Centroid of Joseph Smith Group with the Extreme Value Threshold Distance. The Central America editorials distance is not an extreme value in relation to the other texts in the Joseph Smith Group.

Univariate Tests: There are numerous objective statistical tests for extreme values in a set of data: Dixon’s Q Test, Grubb’s Test, Iglewicz and Hoaglin Test, Rosner’s Generalized Extreme Studentized Deviate

Society of London, A (1895): 343-414.

¹⁶ NIST, section 1.3.3.7.

(GESD) Test, and Tietjen-Moore Test.¹⁷ To further test Neville’s eyeball method, we applied each of these statistical tests to the two-dimensional distance data in Figure 1. Table 1 shows the results.

Extreme Value Test	Central America’s Test Value	Extreme Value Criteria	Result
Dixon’s Q	0.115	>0.206	Not Extreme
Grubb’s	2.379	>3.230	Not Extreme
Iglewicz Y Hoaglin	2.343	>3.500	Not Extreme
Rosner’s GESD	2.168	>2.768	Not Extreme
Tietjen-Moore	0.841	<0.751	Not Extreme

Table 1: Results of Extreme Value Tests of the Euclidean Distances in Figure 1. All the tests show no evidence that the Central America editorials are an extreme value within the Joseph Smith Group.

Each test uses the data and calculates a test value for the Central America editorials. The test value is compared to a criterion value that indicates whether the Central America editorials might be an extreme value or not. For example, Dixon’s Q test calculates a test value for the Central America editorials of 0.116. This is compared to the criterion value of 0.206. Since 0.116 is not greater than 0.206, there is no evidence that the Central America editorials are an extreme value. For the first four tests in Table 1, if the calculated test value is greater than the criterion value, then that would indicate an extreme value. The Tietjen-Moore test is different. If its test value is less than the criterion value then this would indicate an extreme value.

As we can easily see in Table 1, all the tests show no evidence that the Central America editorials are an extreme value from the other texts in the Joseph Smith Group.

Multivariate Test: Since the data measure the proportions each author used 67 noncontextual words, the data constitute a 67-dimensional multivariate data set. To visualize the multi-dimensional data in graphical form on paper we needed to depict it in our previous article in only two dimensions. The amateur Neville sees two-dimensional plots and thinks this is all the information. Consequently, Neville was easily

17 R. B., Dean, and W. J. Dixon, "Simplified Statistics for Small Numbers of Observations," *Analytical Chemistry* 23/4 (1951): 636-38. For the four other tests see: NIST Section 1.3.5.17. Also see: Bernard Rosner, "Percentage Points for a Generalized ESD Many-Outlier Procedure," *Technometrics* 25/2 (1983): 165-172.

deceived by his “eyeball test.”

The most commonly used test for extreme values within a high-dimensional multivariate data set is to test the Mahalanobis distance.¹⁸ For a Mahalanobis distance to be considered an extreme value, the random sampling chance of observing that distance is generally required to be less than one in a thousand (probability < 0.001).¹⁹ Using the data from our previous article, this test shows that the Central America editorials are not extreme values in comparison to all the other texts in the Joseph Smith Group. The results are shown in Table 2.

	Joseph Smith	John Taylor	Wilford Woodruff	Critical Value
Mahalanobis Distance	12.79	72.80	100.74	13.82
Group Membership Probability	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	>95%

Table 2. Mahalanobis Distances and Probability of Group Membership for the Central America Editorials. The Mahalanobis distance from the editorials to the centroid of the Joseph Smith Group is not beyond the critical value. The probability of the editorials’ membership in the Joseph Smith Group is virtually 100%.

Since the Mahalanobis distance from the Central America editorials to the centroid of the Joseph Smith Group (12.79) is not larger than the critical value (13.82), while the distances to the centroids of the John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff groups are larger than the critical value, the editorials are judged to be “outliers” from John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff but not from Joseph Smith. The probability of group membership of the editorials in the Joseph Smith Group is virtually 100%. This further indicates that there is no evidence the Central America editorials are “outliers” in the Joseph Smith Group when tested with the appropriate statistical technique.

Open-Set Test: Is There Evidence of a Latent Candidate Author?

A statistical technique that can be applied directly to Neville’s claim of someone other than Joseph Smith, John Taylor or Wilford Woodruff

18 Rencher, *Multivariate*, 22-23.
19 Kay I. Penny, "Appropriate Critical Values When Testing for a Single Multivariate Outlier by Using the Mahalanobis Distance," *Applied Statistics* (1996): 73-81.

authoring the three unsigned Central America editorials is the Extended Nearest Shrunken Centroid Method (ENSCM). ENSCM is an extension of a sophisticated technique developed for high-dimensional classification problems in genomics research and DNA microarray analysis that we and others have used in authorship attribution, including our studies of the Book of Mormon.^{20 21 22 23 24}

Using ENSCM, we tested Joseph Smith, John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff as an open-set of candidate authors of the Central American editorials. ENSCM first establishes a profile of word-use frequencies for each candidate author based on texts he or she is known to have written. Then ENSCM computes the probability that each candidate author's writing style is closest in style to the style of the texts of unknown authorship. However, ENSCM allows for the possibility of an additional unknown latent author — sometimes referred to as the “none of the above” alternative. Should the latent author's probability of closest writing style exceed the probability of any of the candidate authors, then the group of authors should be considered to be an open-set and include the possibility of an unknown author.

Applying ENSCM, we found that the latent author probability — the probability someone else needs to be considered as having a writing style closer than at least one of the candidate authors — is less than one in a thousand (probability < 0.001). See Figure 4. This means that the word-use frequencies of the candidate authors are close enough to the word-use frequencies in the Central America editorials that we can conclude there is insufficient evidence of the need to consider other authors. Consistent with the historical evidence, Joseph Smith, John Taylor and

20 Robert Tibshirani, Trevor Hastie, Balasubramanian Narasimhan, and Gilbert Chu, “Class Prediction by Nearest Shrunken Centroids, with Applications to DNA Microarrays,” *Statistical Science* 18/1 (2003):104-17.

21 G. Bruce Schaalje, Paul J. Fields, Matthew Roper, and Gregory L. Snow, “Extended nearest shrunken centroid classification: a new method for open-set authorship attribution of texts of varying sizes,” *Literary and Linguistic Computing* 26/1 (2011): 71-88.

22 G. Bruce Schaalje and Paul J. Fields, “Open-set nearest shrunken centroid classification,” *Communications in Statistics-Theory and Methods* 41/4 (2012): 638-52.

23 Paul J. Fields, G. Bruce Schaalje, and Matthew Roper, “Examining a Misapplication of Nearest Shrunken Centroid Classification to Investigate Book of Mormon Authorship,” *Mormon Studies Review* 23/1 (2011): 87-111.

24 Michael P. Oaks, *Literary Detective Work on the Computer*, Volume 12 of Natural Language Processing (Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2014), 197-98.

Wilford Woodruff can be considered to be a closed-set of candidates for authorship of the three Central America editorials.

Consequently, in our previous paper we included only Joseph Smith (and the editorials that group with Joseph Smith), John Taylor, and Wilford Woodruff in the analysis. Since the question of authorship of the Central American editorials could be addressed as a closed-set, the evidence indicates that Joseph Smith is the most probable author, as we concluded in the previous paper.

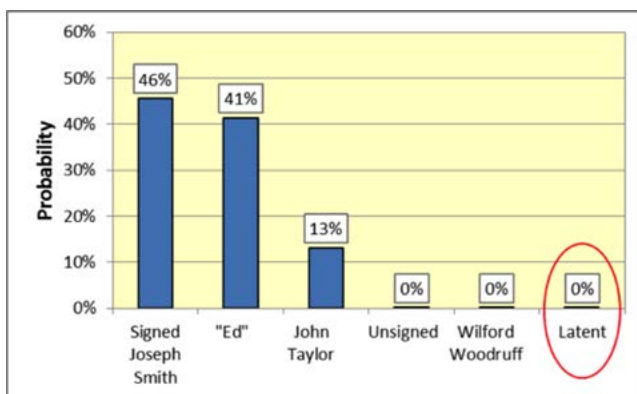


Figure 4: Extended Nearest Shrunken Centroid Method (ENSCM) Probability of Closest Pattern. The probability of a latent author is less than 0.001. This indicates that Joseph Smith, John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff (along with "Ed.") can be considered as a closed-set of candidates for attributing authorship of the Central America editorials.

Thus, Neville's biased "layman's opinion" based on his "eyeball test" is contradicted by a host of relevant objective statistical tests and analyses. Therefore, his assertion that another author needs to be considered is baseless. Consequently, the entire foundational premise of Neville's book is invalid.

Adding Benjamin Winchester to the Analysis

We have shown that the foundational premise of Neville's argument is invalid; nevertheless, to directly test Neville's contention, we added Winchester to the data from our 2013 article and reanalyzed the data to see how close his style is to the style in the Central America editorials. We also tested for evidence that his style is closer to the editorials than to Joseph Smith's. We followed objective, formal scientific hypothesis-testing methodology.

We formulate the research question as follows:

Is Benjamin Winchester's writing style the same as the writing style in the Central America editorials, and is his style closer to that of the editorials than to Joseph Smith's style?

To answer this research question we formulate the null (H_0) and alternative (H_a) hypotheses as follows:

H_0 : The Central America editorials writing style is closest to Joseph Smith's style.

H_a : The Central America editorials writing style is closest to Benjamin Winchester's style.

We performed discriminant analysis and determined the probabilities of group membership. Figure 5 shows a plot of a discriminant analysis similar to that in Figure 1 with Winchester added as a candidate author.

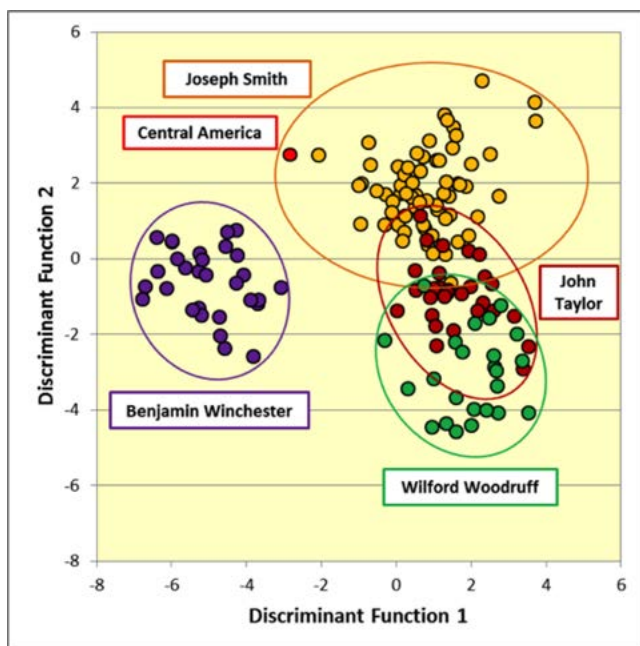


Figure 5: Discriminant Analysis, including Winchester. The Central America editorials are closer to those of the Joseph Smith Group than to the Winchester texts.

The first discriminant function (the dimension of greatest distinctiveness) differentiates Winchester from the other three authors. The second function differentiates Joseph Smith from Wilford Woodruff.

The Central America editorials clearly cluster with the Joseph Smith Group and not with Winchester. Even Neville's "eyeball test" would

conclude that the Central America editorials are an “outlier” relative to the Benjamin Winchester texts rather than the Joseph Smith Group of texts. To make matters worse for Neville’s eyeball, the third function, which is not shown in the two-dimensional plot in Figure 5, separates John Taylor from the others and moves Winchester even further from the Central America editorials.

Applying the appropriate statistical distance measure for multivariate data — the Mahalanobis distance — the evidence shows the Central America editorials to be an “outlier” from the Benjamin Winchester, John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff groups, but not from the Joseph Smith Group. This is shown in Table 3.

	Joseph Smith	Benjamin Winchester	John Taylor	Wilford Woodruff	Critical Value
Mahalanobis Distance	15.97	25.48	45.61	54.35	16.27
Group Membership Probability	98.9%	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%	>95%

Table 3. Mahalanobis Distances and Probability of Group Membership for the Central America Editorials. The Mahalanobis distance from the editorials to the centroid of the Joseph Smith Group is not beyond the critical value. The probability of the editorials’ membership in the Joseph Smith Group is 98.9%.

Since the Mahalanobis distance from the Central America editorials to the centroid of the Joseph Smith Group (15.97) is not larger than the critical value (16.27), while the distances to the centroids of the Benjamin Winchester, John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff groups are larger than the critical value, the editorials can be judged to be “outliers” from the others, but not from Joseph Smith. Of the four, Joseph Smith is a much more likely candidate as author of the Central America editorials. The probability of group membership of the editorials with the Benjamin Winchester text is a mere 1.1%. This shows even more lack of evidence contrary to the null hypothesis.

We could end the article here, since we have fully demonstrated that Winchester is not a more likely author of the Central America editorials than Joseph Smith. But, since Neville spends hundreds of pages trying to build his case, it is necessary to analyze his methods more deeply. We will discuss Neville’s “pseudo-stylometry,” and then to show further how poor a candidate Winchester is, we compare him to an expanded pool of candidate authors.

Stylometry: The Statistical Analyses of Writing Style

Our previous article and this article use *stylometry*: the statistical analyses of written text to characterize the writing style of the author. In authorship attribution it is necessary to first examine the historical evidence for authorship. Without a solid historical foundation, attribution assertions are baseless. Yet, if we consider only the historical evidence, we can get only so far towards an answer, since multiple scenarios could still remain plausible. Applying stylometrics, if done correctly, can provide additional information showing who the most likely author is, given the historical context.

Stylometry uses statistical measures to characterize an author's writing style and identify what makes it unique from other authors' styles. Many approaches have been used to define an author's unique writing style. All have looked at various features of an author's writing as measures of style. Some have counted letters, words, word-pair choices, unique words, word lengths, sentence length, paragraph length, language complexity, and many other metrics of style in an attempt to distinguish one author from another. Some have proven to be better than others.

A good metric of writing style is one that is consistent within an author's writing and yet different from that of other authors. Many naïve methods are not capable of meeting these requirements. Among these deficient methods are average sentence length, unique words, and language complexity. However, some methods are capable of satisfying the criteria.

Focusing on what are called noncontextual words has been shown to be highly useful. Examples of noncontextual words are the words *and*, *for*, *of*, *the*, and *to*. These are function words — they do not convey the author's message but provide the structure by which the author forms his or her message. They define the grammatical relationships among words instead of conveying specific information themselves.

Noncontextual function words are used by all authors, but not in the same way or with the same frequencies. Therefore, different usage frequencies for noncontextual words are useful in characterizing an author's subconscious word "fingerprint," sometimes referred to as his or her *wordprint*. Consequently, the use of noncontextual words is a standard approach in the field of stylometry. Although the specific noncontextual words that are distinguishing among authors vary from

study to study, their effectiveness in measuring writing style is well established.²⁵

It is best to select the noncontextual words for a specific study that truly distinguish the authors in that study. If this is not done, then the words selected may not be the ones that will show differences among the writing styles in the study. Once the noncontextual words for a study have been selected, an appropriate analysis method must be used. Discriminant analysis is well-suited to the requirements for a good stylistic measure because it can find the combination of weights for the words that (1) best shows consistency of word-use within authors, and (2) at the same time discriminates among different authors' word-use tendencies.

Discriminant analysis is the method we used in our previous article and one of the methods used in this article. Studies that do not use powerful validated statistical methods are deficient and prone to yield misleading, unsupportable conclusions. Neville's methodological approach is a textbook example of how not to do stylometric research and the consequences of doing it inappropriately.

Neville's Pseudo-Stylometry

Noted authorship attribution historian Harold Love says, "Anyone wishing to conduct serious research in attribution studies cannot do so today without a good general understanding of the nature and basic techniques of statistical reasoning."²⁶ Neville, lacking such an understanding, presents the unwary reader with several pseudo-stylometric analyses which he claims provide evidence in support of his Winchester-authorship theory. The main ones he uses are average sentence length measured as average number of words per sentence, words unique to one author compared to those of other candidate authors, and "cherry-picked" word-pattern similarities. All these methods are amateurish, nondistinguishing techniques. We examine Neville's use of these in detail and show their deficiencies.

Average Sentence Length: Neville compares Winchester's average sentence length (ASL) to the ASL of the Central America editorials,

25 Frederick Mosteller and David L. Wallace, "Inference and Disputed Authorship The Federalist," *The David Hume Series Philosophy and Cognitive Science Reissues*, CSLI Publications, 2007, 17.

26 Harold Love, *Attributing Authorship: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 162.

showing they are about the same (p. 225). However, ASL is not a good measure of style by the two criteria for a good style metric: consistency within an author and differentiation among authors.

ASL was first used to attribute possible authorship over one hundred years ago.²⁷ It is an archaic method that has been shown to be unreliable and nondistinguishing. A specialist in disputed authorship of documents, Patrick Joula, says, "Many other statistics have been proposed and largely discarded, including average sentence length."²⁸ Naively using ASL can lead to faulty conclusions and self-deception.

To show the deficiency of ASL to distinguish between authors we use *The Federalist Papers*, commonly used for testing the usefulness of authorship-attribution methods.²⁹ Well-known stylometrician David I. Holmes says, "*The Federalist* problem has been used ... as stylometry's 'testing ground' for new techniques."³⁰

The authorship of twelve of the eighty-five *Federalist Papers* has been disputed, but stylometric analyses have shown that they were all probably written by Madison, with the possible exception of one paper. However, attempting to identify the author of the disputed *Federalist Papers* using ASL proves problematic. Figure 6 shows the ranges (lowest to highest) of ASLs for the papers commonly attributed to Hamilton, Madison and Jay, along with the range of ASLs for the disputed papers (with Winchester added as a comparative control). In order to be comparable, Winchester's texts were concatenated and split into blocks of text that were about the length of the average size of *The Federalist Papers* (2058 words).

Based on the ASLs, although Jay might be ruled out as the author of the disputed papers, it would appear that Hamilton may be a better choice than Madison, but the difference is small and unconvincing. Using ASLs as a method of author identification fails to identify the author of the disputed *Federalist Papers*.

27 One example from over ninety years ago is Harold H. Scudder, "Sentence length," *The English Journal* 12/9 (1923): 617-20. Published by: National Council of Teachers of English, Article DOI: 10.2307/802036, Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/802036>, Page Count: 4.

28 Patrick Juola, "Authorship attribution," *Foundations and Trends in information Retrieval* 1/3 (2006): 240.

29 Mosteller, *Inference and Disputed Authorship*.

30 David I. Holmes, "The Evolution of Stylometry in Humanities Scholarship," *Literary and linguistic computing* 13/3 (1998): 112, col. 2.

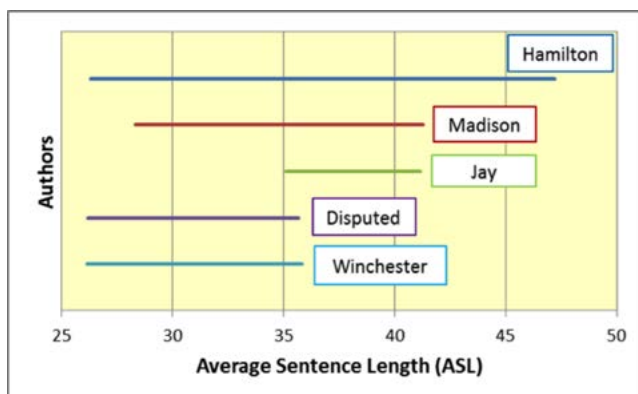


Figure 6: Ranges of Average Sentence Length (ASL) for *The Federalist Papers* with Winchester Added for Comparison. The ASLs vary widely within authors and do not provide a basis to make convincing conclusions about authorship of the disputed *Federalist Papers*. Winchester appears to be the best choice as the author of the disputed papers — a clear sign that the method is inadequate.

Furthermore, ASL as a measure of writing style fails to distinguish the control author (Winchester) from the other candidates. In fact, Winchester's ASL matches the range of ASLs of the disputed *Federalist Papers* more closely than any of the actual *Federalist Papers* authors, but Winchester had not yet been born when *The Federalist Papers* were written. So using ASL can lead to absurd conclusions for *The Federalist Papers*. It is equally not useful when Neville applies it to the *Times and Seasons* editorials. Based on ASL, Winchester is more likely to be the author of the disputed *Federalist Papers* than he is to be author of the Central America editorials.

Words “Unique” to an Author: Neville focuses on an author's “unique” words, i.e., words which he claims one candidate author uses but which the other candidate authors do not use. Such words are sometimes referred to as “marker” words. However, stylometrician Leon Maurer notes, “It turns out that rare words do not provide as reliable a ‘fingerprint’ because, while it is easy to work in certain words now and then, it is hard to change personal modes of common word use.”³¹

Again using *The Federalist Papers* as a standard to evaluate Neville's technique, we find that 16% of Madison's unique words are also in the disputed papers, 14% of Hamilton's unique words are in the disputed

31 L. Maurer, *Stylometry Using Adjacent Word Graphs*, Leon Maurer, March 10, 2008, 1.

papers, and 5% of Jay's unique words are in the disputed papers. Adding Winchester to the mix as a control, we find that he has 3% of his unique words (which is twenty "marker" words) in the disputed papers. Although 3% is less than the percentages of Madison, Hamilton and Jay, Neville did not use percent but only pointed out that there were some of Winchester's unique words in the Central America editorials. By his approach, we ought to conclude — as Neville's approach would require — that Winchester wrote the disputed *Federalist Papers* simply because the disputed papers contain some of his unique words!

Repeating this exercise using Neville's words in *The Lost City of Zarahemla*, we find that Neville has forty-two unique words that appear in the disputed *Federalist Papers*. Neville's method of pointing out unique words used in the Central America editorials, and saying that that provides evidence of authorship, would require him to conclude that he himself had written the disputed *Federalist Papers*. The use of unique so-called "marker" words fails to distinguish clearly the author of the disputed papers, and Neville's way of using them would not eliminate the control, Winchester, nor would it even eliminate himself as the author.

So using Neville's method leads to useless results. Thus applying Neville's "unique words" method is not reliable and cannot provide useful support for his Winchester conjecture.

Cherry-picked Word Pattern Similarities: Neville singles out 73 words and phrases in the Central America editorials and asserts that they are similar to words and phrases used by Winchester (pp. 207-16). However, his statements rely only on mere circumstantial similarities. Many people use words similar to the words in the Central America editorials simply because the words are commonly used by English speakers. At best the word pattern similarities only show that Winchester and the author of the three editorials were speaking English. Contextually similar phrases are insufficient to attribute authorship. Such similarities can only generate a question about authorship, not an answer.

As we have noted, noncontextual words rather than contextual words are well-recognized among stylometricians as useful in characterizing authorial styles, but all the words and phrases Neville focuses on are contextual words. Contextual words are not as much an indication of an author's style as an indication of the author's subject matter. None of the 73 words and phrases that Neville focuses on is distinctive of Winchester's writing style as opposed to other authors' styles. He tries to make Winchester's use of the 73 words mean something, when they are not distinguishing among other English-speaking authors to begin with.

His method is saying, in effect, “See, the author of the Central America editorials uses these words and so does Winchester.” When in reality so do many other English-speaking people.

If we use Neville’s similarities between Winchester and the Central America editorials and apply discriminate analysis with Joseph Smith and John Taylor included, the evidence still indicates that Joseph Smith is more likely to be the author of the editorials due to stronger similarities than Winchester. So we must conclude that there is no evidence that Winchester is the author of the editorials based on Neville’s cherry-picked similarities.

Conclusion about Neville’s Attempt at Stylometry: In sum, the pseudo-stylometric analysis done by Neville is unreliable. He relies on average sentence length, so-called “unique” marker words, and cherry-picked similarities, all of which have been shown to be nondistinguishing. Neville’s “layman’s” observations, analytic methods and reasoning result in unfounded, misleading, erroneous conclusions. They do not provide valid support for his Winchester authorship theory. For further consideration, Neville’s pseudo-stylometric analysis is evaluated in even greater detail in the Appendix.

Appropriate Stylometric Analysis

If Benjamin Winchester should be considered as a candidate, perhaps there are other early LDS writers who also should be considered. Up to this point all the analyses we have shown use the data from our previous article. We transition now to performing stylometry, using an expanded set of comparison authors.

To do stylometry appropriately one needs an appropriate set of authors, focused texts, truly distinguishing features to analyze, and high-powered methods to rule out unlikely candidates. Objective formal scientific hypothesis testing methodology should be used.

How We Picked an Expanded Comparison Set of Authors: Although we contend, on the basis of historical and statistical evidence, that the Central America editorials authorship question is a closed-set problem, to directly test Neville’s assertions we stylometrically evaluated Winchester as a candidate author among an expanded comparison group of authors with historical backgrounds that make them potentially plausible authors and who published writings about American antiquities comparable in subject matter to the unsigned *Times and Seasons* editorials during the same period of time in Church history.

Expanded List of Other Potential Candidate Authors for the Unsigned Editorials: In addition to Joseph Smith, John Taylor, and Wilford Woodruff, it might be conjectured based on historical evidence alone, that the unsigned editorials were written by other members of the Church who are known to have written about the Book of Mormon and American antiquities previous to the *Times and Seasons* editorials. These include George J. Adams, John E. Page, W. W. Phelps, Orson Pratt, Parley P. Pratt, William Smith, Erastus Snow, Charles B. Thompson, and Benjamin Winchester.

Although ENSCM showed that Joseph Smith, John Taylor, and Wilford Woodruff could be considered a closed set, we compared Winchester to these others to see if he is the closest in style among them to the style in the Central America editorials. If he is not, then his viability as a candidate for authorship diminishes even more.

George J Adams. George J. Adams was an actor who joined the Church in New York in early 1840. His flamboyance and skills as an orator were often used in defense of the Church in the Eastern States, and England, and reports of his debates with opponents were often printed in the *Times and Seasons* and the *Millennial Star*. He published several pamphlets in defense of the Mormons.³² Adams visited Nauvoo in September 1842. On September 7 the Prophet's journal records:

Early this morning Elder Adams and brother Rogers from New York visited president Joseph and brought several letters from some of the brethren in that region. ... In the P.M. brother Adams & Rogers came to visit him again. They conversed upon the present persecution &c president Joseph in the discourse to brothers Adams and Rogers shewed the many great interpositions of the Almighty in his behalf not only during the present trouble, but more especially during the persecution in Missouri &c. The remarks dropped on this occasion was truly encouraging and calculated to increase the confidence of those present.³³

32 George J. Adams, *A Few Plain Facts, Shewing the Folly, Wickedness, and Imposition of the Rev. Timothy R. Matthews* ... (Bedford: C. B. Merry, 1841); Adams, *A Lecture on the Authenticity and Scriptural Character of the Book of Mormon* (Boston: J. E. Farwell, 1844).

33 Joseph Smith Journal, 7 September, 1842, in Andrew Hedges, Alex D. Smith, and Richard Lloyd Anderson, eds., *The Joseph Smith Papers. Journals Volume 2: December 1841–April 1843* (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2011), 133, 137.

The two men again visited the Prophet five days later on September 12: “At home all day in company with brothers [George J.] Adams & [David] Rogers, and counselling brother Adams to write a letter to the Governor.”³⁴ The Prophet sat to have his portrait painted by Rogers at his home on September 16, 17, 19 and 20.³⁵ Following his excommunication in 1845, Adams followed the leadership of James Strang, organized his own church in 1861, and led an ill-fated attempt to settle in the Holy Land in 1866.³⁶

John E. Page. John E. Page, baptized in 1833 and ordained an apostle in 1838, received a call to accompany Orson Hyde on a mission to Holy Land, but was unable to fulfill the assignment. He actively labored as a missionary in the Eastern United States from 1840 until 1844, after which he rejected the leadership of Brigham Young and the Twelve and became associated with several rival factions. Page visited Nauvoo for a conference in April 1842, but then returned to Pittsburgh, where he resided until June 1843. While there he published a short-lived newspaper, the *Gospel Light*, and two pamphlets in refutation of the Spalding theory.³⁷

W. W. Phelps. W. W. Phelps had joined the Church in 1831 and been the editor of the Church’s first newspaper, the *Evening and Morning Star*, published in Independence, Missouri, from 1832 to 1834. Phelps had written several brief editorials discussing assorted reports of antiquities, including an article describing a ruined city in Central America. He left the Church during the troubles in Missouri in 1838 but returned and was rebaptized in Nauvoo during 1840. In 1843 he was considered, but passed over, for editor of the *Nauvoo Neighbor*, but there is evidence that Joseph Smith made use of him as a ghost writer for some material attributed to the Prophet during 1843 and 1844.³⁸ It is conceivable that

34 Joseph Smith Journal, 12 September 1842, in Hedges, *The Joseph Smith Papers, Journals Volume 2*, 151.

35 Joseph Smith Journal, 16, 17, 19–20 September 1842, in Hedges, *The Joseph Smith Papers* p., 157.

36 Peter Amann, “Prophet in Zion: The Saga of George J. Adams,” *New England Quarterly* 37/4 (December 1964): 477–500; Reed M. Holmes, *The Forerunners* (Independence, Missouri: Herald Publishing House, 1981).

37 John Quist, “John E. Page: An apostle of Uncertainty,” *Journal of Mormon History* 12 (1985): 53–68.

38 Samuel Brown, “The Translator and the Ghostwriter: Joseph Smith and W. W. Phelps,” *Journal of Mormon History* 34/1 (Winter 2008): 26–62.

he may have contributed to or authored some of the articles published during Joseph Smith's tenure as editor.³⁹

Orson Pratt. Orson Pratt, also an early convert to the Church, was baptized in 1830 and became a well-known missionary and writer. Like his older brother and fellow apostle Parley, Orson labored in Great Britain from 1839 to 1841, after which he returned to Nauvoo with other members of his quorum. In May 1842, he was out of harmony with Joseph Smith and the Twelve over the issues relating to plural marriage. He returned to full fellowship in early 1843.⁴⁰

Parley P. Pratt. Parley P. Pratt joined the Church in 1830 after reading and gaining a testimony of the Book of Mormon. His pamphlet *A Voice of Warning* was widely read; and an 1839 expanded revision cited several reports of antiquities from North and Central America which supported the Book of Mormon. He participated in the apostolic mission to Great Britain and from 1840 until 1842 was editor of the *Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star*. Pratt returned to Nauvoo in early 1843.⁴¹

William Smith. William Smith, the younger brother of Joseph Smith, was one of the earliest converts to the Church. In 1835 he was ordained an apostle and continued to serve in that office until the Prophet was killed in 1844. William's relationship with Joseph and fellow apostles from 1835 to 1844 was sometimes contentious. In April 1842 he became editor of *The Wasp* in Nauvoo. In August he was elected a representative to the Illinois State Legislature, but continued to edit *The Wasp* until early December, after which he was replaced by John Taylor. Following the martyrdom, he became Church Patriarch, but in later 1845 he broke with the Twelve and was excommunicated; later he became associated with several religious factions.⁴²

Erastus Snow. Erastus Snow was baptized in 1833. In the spring of 1840, at the suggestion of the Prophet he moved to Pennsylvania, where he served as a missionary in Philadelphia, New York, New Jersey, and

39 Bruce Van Orden is currently preparing a bibliography of Phelps. We thank him for suggesting this possibility.

40 Breck England, *The Life and Thought of Orson Pratt* (University of Utah Press, 1985).

41 Terry L. Givens and Matthew J. Grow, *Parley P. Pratt, The Apostle Paul of Mormonism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

42 Kyle R. Walker, *William Smith: In the Shadow of the Prophet* (Draper: Kofford Books, 2015).

Rhode Island. In September 1840 he returned briefly to Nauvoo to escort his wife back to Pennsylvania, where he returned the following month. In August 1841 he moved to Salem Massachusetts, where he labored until 1843. He briefly visited Philadelphia in April 1842, after which he returned to Salem, where he remained until his return to Nauvoo in March 1843. He would later serve as an apostle from 1849 until his death in 1888.⁴³

Charles B. Thompson. Charles B. Thompson joined the Church in 1835. After the Saints were expelled from Missouri, Thompson moved to New York. In 1841 he published his book *Evidences in Proof of the Book of Mormon* in Batavia, New York, and extracts from it were published in the *Times and Seasons* that same year.⁴⁴ He moved to Macedonia in Hancock County Illinois in the summer 1843. After the death of Joseph Smith he formed a Church of his own and led a somewhat colorful career.⁴⁵

Benjamin Winchester. Benjamin Winchester, who joined the Church in 1833, participated in Zion's Camp in 1834. He published a newspaper, the *Gospel Reflector*, in Philadelphia from January 1841 to June 1841. From 1840 to 1843 he also published several books and pamphlets. Winchester was an industrious writer and missionary, but became a contentious figure during his time in Philadelphia from 1841 to 1843. He returned to Nauvoo in October 1841, where he was reprovved by Church leaders for his conduct and counseled to do better. He briefly assisted as an editor of the *Times and Seasons* from November until January 1841, when the Twelve, at Joseph Smith's direction, purchased the paper from Ebenezer Robinson. Winchester then returned to Philadelphia, where he continued to cause problems in the local branch. In June 1842 he again visited Nauvoo for a brief period, then returned again to Philadelphia until October of that year.

43 Andrew Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia* (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson History Company, 1901), 1103-15.

44 Charles B. Thompson, *Evidences in Proof of the Book Of Mormon* (Batavia, New York: 1841).

45 Junia Braby, "Charles B. Thompson: Harbinger of Zion or Master of Humbuggery?" *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 23 (2003): 149-64; Crawley, *A Descriptive Bibliography of the Mormon Church. Volume One 1830-1847* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1997): 178-79; Christopher J. Blythe, "Sophisticated Dissent: Charles B. Thompson's Inspired Enoch—A Case Study in Scriptural Rivalry and Narrative Theology in Nineteenth-Century Mormon Sects," *Restoration Studies* 11 (2010): 12-40; Junia Silsby Braby, "An Abode in the Wilderness: Charles B. Thompson's Communal Society in Western Iowa," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 35/1 (Spring-Summer 2015): 84-103.

He continued to cause difficulties in the Eastern branches of the Church until he was excommunicated from the Church in 1844.⁴⁶

Although each of the above men had written on the Book of Mormon and pre-Columbian antiquities previous to 1844, Page, Snow, Thompson, and Winchester were not in Nauvoo during the fall of 1842, making them less likely candidates as writers of the unsigned editorials. It is possible, however, that one of these men wrote the unsigned articles and with the help of a collaborator in the Nauvoo printing office may have succeeded in publishing them. Neville argues that Winchester may have done so with the assistance of William Smith while Joseph Smith was in hiding and unable to oversee the work in the printing office. William himself may have written the unsigned editorials. The same could be said of George Adams, who met with Joseph Smith in September 1842 and, given his interest in the Book of Mormon, could conceivably have written or contributed to the editorials.

Chronological considerations suggest that the Pratt brothers likely did not write them. Parley, though familiar with Stephens' work, was in England in 1842. Unlike Parley, Orson was in Nauvoo in 1842, but was in the middle of perhaps the most severe emotional and spiritual crisis of his life. From May 1842 until January 1843 he was not involved in the work of the Twelve; and with his faith and marriage in crisis, American antiquities and Book of Mormon geography would likely have been the furthest topic from his mind.

As a journalist, Phelps could certainly write, was in Nauvoo at the time, and given his activities as a ghostwriter for Joseph Smith, should also be considered as a potential candidate. Although these candidates all seem less likely than Joseph Smith, John Taylor, or Wilford Woodruff, we have nevertheless included them in our statistical analysis below.

The comparison set thus has nine authors as shown in Table 4.

46 David J. Whittaker, "East of Nauvoo: Benjamin Winchester and the early Mormon Church," *Journal of Mormon History* 21/2 (Fall 1995), 31-83; Stephen J. Fleming, "Discord in the City of Brotherly Love: The Story of Early Mormonism in Philadelphia," *Mormon Historical Studies* 5/1 (Spring 2004), 3-28.

Adams, George J. Page, John D. Phelps, W. W.	Pratt, Orson Pratt, Parley P. Smith, William	Snow, Erastus Thompson, Charles D. Winchester, Benjamin
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Table 4: Expanded Set of Comparison Authors. There are nine in total who can be considered plausible candidates due to possible historical connections.

How We Selected Texts Specific to the Style of the Central America

Editorials: Efstathios Stamatatos, a specialist in textual analysis, says, “Any good evaluation corpus for authorship attribution should be controlled for genre and topic. ... In addition, all the texts per author should be written in the same period to avoid style changes over time.”⁴⁷ To be able to distinguish clearly between authors, we focused on constructing a study with texts from the comparison group of authors that meet these three specifying criteria: (1) genre matched, (2) topic matched, and (3) time period matched to the unsigned Central America editorials.

Genre Matched: Since the Central America articles in question are editorials, for genre matching we selected only published works of an editorial or expository nature. This criterion is crucial because it is recognized that an author’s writing style can change with genre.⁴⁸ By focusing the text selection on the editorial or expository genre we did not include items such as personal letters, journal entries, or news items. If these other genres are included in the analysis set they can dilute the accurate characterization of the authors and confuse the results. Neville’s discussions refer to using a large corpus of articles and other writings — an apparent potpourri of genres; thus he subjects his conclusions to a multitude of potential confounding errors.

Topic Matched: The Central America editorials deal with parallels between the recently explored Central America ruins and the Book of Mormon. For topic matching, we selected only texts dealing with the relevant topic as indicated by key words or phrases from the Central America editorials, such as those shown in Table 5.

47 Efstathios Stamatatos, "A Survey of Modern Authorship Attribution Methods," *Journal of the American Society for information Science and Technology* 60/3 (2009): 552.

48 Shlomo Argamon, Moshe Koppel, Jonathan Fine, and Anat Rachel Shimoni, "Gender, genre, and writing style in formal written texts," *Text – Interdisciplinary Journal for the Study of Discourse* 23/3 (2003): 321-46.

Antiquities*	Guatemala*	Narrow Neck of Land	Ruins
Central America	Incidents	Palenque	Stephens*
Darien	Isthmus	Quiriua	Zarahemla

Table 5. Typical Topic-Specifying Key Words in the Central America Editorials. The asterisks indicate that we included all spelling variations.

These words are indicative of the topic covered by the unsigned Central America editorials. We did not use “Book of Mormon,” since that phrase is used many times in numerous articles that have nothing to do with Central America. Some phrases, like “authenticity of the Book of Mormon,” were not included, because they did not add any texts that were not already included by those in Table 5. Other words that seemed peculiar to these editorials were noted, but because they were not topic-specifying, they were not included.

This topic criterion is crucial because it gives the best chance of matching authors’ styles with the Central America editorials. The inclusion of other topics has the effect of producing a less focused style characterization. Neville includes a mix of topics in his textual analyses, thus adding further confusion to his results and diminishing the distinctiveness of the stylistic measures.

Time-Period Matched: The Central America editorials were published in 1842. For time-period matching we restricted the selected texts to those written from 1837 to 1852. Thus we excluded texts written in the 1880s, for example. This criterion is crucial because an author’s writing style can evolve over time.⁴⁹ For example Sidney Rigdon’s writing style changed in his later years from his early years in the Church.⁵⁰ Again, if too large a timeframe is included in an analysis, an author’s style in a relevant period can be diluted, and this can lead to inconsistent results. In his analyses, Neville includes references to texts from later time periods, which is methodologically unwise.

Twenty-one texts comprising over 114,000 words from the expanded set of authors were found to match these three important specifying criteria.⁵¹ Note that we were careful to consider all the Winchester texts

49 Fazli Can and Jon M. Patton, “Change of Writing Style with Time,” *Computers and the Humanities* 38/1 (2004): 61-82.

50 Fields, “Examining a Misapplication,” 104.

51 A list of all of the texts used in the analyses is available from the authors to interested researchers upon request.

mentioned by Neville in his Appendices II and III. Most are off topic. Those that are on topic were included in the analyses.

By focusing on the published editorial or expository genre, the Central America ruins topic, and the relevant timeframe, we compiled a set of texts that can specifically distinguish between the authors relative to the Central America editorials. Without meeting these crucial criteria, analyses can give misleading, erroneous results. Significantly, Neville's naïve analyses do not meet any of these criteria.

How We Prepared the Texts for Analysis: To guarantee that each and every word was correct, we independently verified our electronic texts against photo copies of the original publications. If this is not done, the computed frequencies of word usage can misrepresent each author due to typographical errors. Neville did not verify all of the texts he used in his analyses.

To get an unsullied characterization of the authors, we also deleted all non-authorial words, like quoted material and scriptural references. If this is not done, an author's words can be mixed with the words of other people and can once again lead to mischaracterization of his or her style. Neville did not make this effort consistently in his analyses.

How We Found Truly Distinguishing Words: Since all the authors share many words in common, it is necessary to find which words are truly distinguishing. A criteria-based method of selecting words can be used to provide a sound, unbiased basis for decisions. To obtain a set of truly distinguishing words, we examined all words; only those that met the following four criteria were selected:

1. The word has to be a noncontextual word. This is a standard approach in stylometry, as discussed previously.
2. To help guarantee that the words used will differentiate among authors, the word has to be one of the words whose range of proportions is in the top five percent of all the words. A lower percentage gives too few words; a higher percentage gives too many.
3. To guarantee that the word is used frequently enough to give statistically meaningful results, the overall pooled proportion for the word has to be greater than one in a thousand.
4. To help guarantee statistical relevancy and ensure that the word is characteristic of the author of the Central America editorials, the word must appear at least three times in the composite Central America editorial texts.

Thirty-seven noncontextual words met all four criteria: *a, all, and, are, as, at, be, been, but, by, can, could, from, has, have, his, in, is, it, more, not, of, on, our, so, such, that, the, they, this, those, to, upon, was, we, will, with*. Selecting words in this fashion helps distinguish among authors using statistically significant words specific to the Central America editorials. This methodological rigor contributes to achieving the goal of high overall specificity for the study.

Validation of Word Selection Method and Discriminant Analysis: To demonstrate the usefulness of our criteria-based word selection method and discriminant analysis, we applied them to *The Federalist Papers*. This yields seventy-five noncontextual distinguishing words. Figure 7 shows discriminant analysis results for these words.

The discriminant analysis had 99% correct classification of the seventy training-set papers. Three papers are considered co-authored by Madison and Hamilton, so they were not included. All but one of the disputed papers is assigned to Madison — the attribution generally accepted by historians.

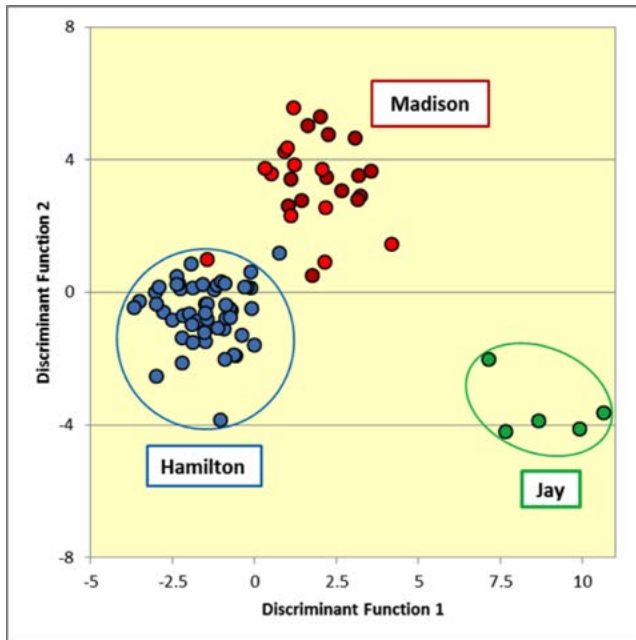


Figure 7: Discriminant Analysis for *The Federalist Papers*. There are clear separations among authors, and all but one of the disputed papers are assigned to Madison, consistent with the findings of previous historical and stylometric analyses.

Will this method also discriminate between *The Federalist Papers* authors and Winchester and Neville? Including Winchester and Neville as negative controls in the discriminant analysis generates the plot shown in Figure 8.

As they should, Winchester and Neville clearly separate from Hamilton, Madison, and Jay, as well as from the disputed papers. Interestingly, Neville's style is the most distinctive, as captured in the first discriminate function (horizontal axis). Winchester's style, the next most distinctive, is contrasted with Jay's style in the second function. Although not shown in Figure 8, the third function displays less separation between Hamilton and Madison, who are known to be similar in style. Thus we can see that the criteria-based, word-selection method, coupled with discriminant analysis, form a powerful and accurate technique.

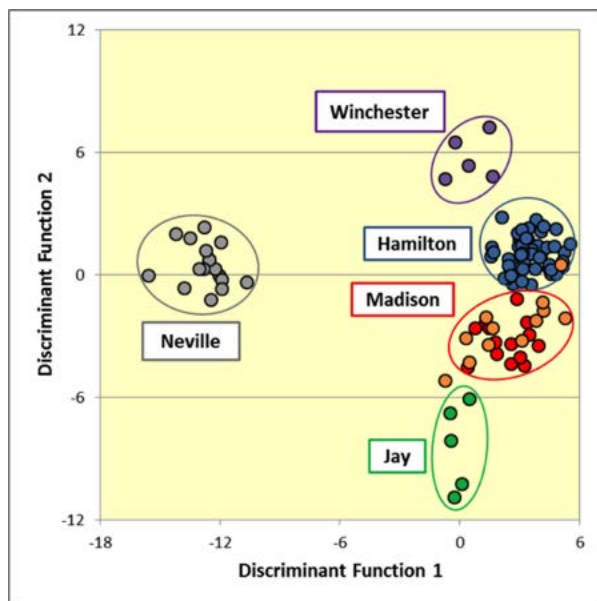


Figure 8: Discriminant Analysis of *The Federalist Papers*, including Winchester and Neville. Winchester and Neville are easily distinguishable from *The Federalist Papers* authors.

Objective, Scientific Hypothesis Test Methodology

Having observed that the three Central America editorials are unsigned and that Neville offers Winchester as the author, we formulated the research question as follows:

Is the writing style in the Central America editorials closer to Benjamin Winchester than to the other candidate authors in the expanded set?

To test this research question we formulate the null (H_0) and alternative (H_a) hypotheses as follows:

H_0 : Winchester's style is not the closest to the style of the Central America editorials among the other comparison authors (at least one other is closer).

H_a : Winchester's style is the closest to the style of the Central America editorials among the other comparison authors.

Note that since we have already shown the results of an analysis comparing Winchester with Joseph Smith, John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff, in this analysis we compared only Winchester to the other comparison authors.

Performing discriminant analysis, we obtained the plot of group centroids shown in Figure 9. Six comparison authors are closer to the Central America editorials than to Winchester. The probability that the Central America editorials belong with the Winchester texts is less than one in a thousand (< 0.001).

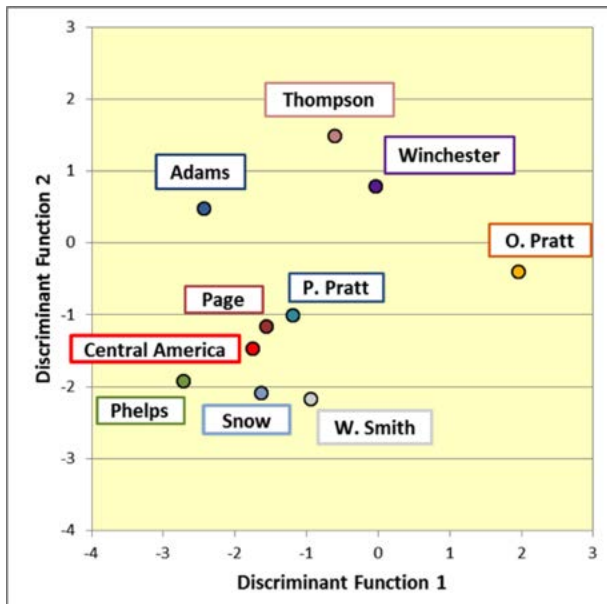


Figure 9: Group Centroids from Discriminant Analysis. Winchester is not the closest to the Central America editorials. Neither is William Smith. We point out William Smith because Neville conjectures he could have been another possible source of the editorials.

Robust Results: Many studies rely on only one approach to analyze the styles of authors. But in order to not be fooled by the results of only a single approach, we incorporated an array of analysis techniques to confirm that the results are consistent and reliable. When viewing the data from these various angles we can see a more robust picture of the real situation. With the word-use proportions for the selected words for each author, we performed the following analyses: Burrow’s Delta Method, Discriminant Analysis, Fisher’s Combined Probability Test, n-Gram Matching, and Principal Components Analysis.^{52, 53}

To help ensure that the results were not affected by the number of texts we included for each author, we checked to see if there is any relationship with sample size. There was no evidence of a strong relationship. This indicated that the stylometric results are unaffected by varying sample sizes.

This array of five analytic techniques showed Winchester to be an even worse candidate among a group of other plausible candidates for authorship of the Central America editorials than when he was compared to Joseph Smith, John Taylor, and Wilford Woodruff. The results are shown in Table 6.

Test Method	Number of Comparison Authors Closer than Winchester to the Editorials
Principal Components	8
Discriminant Analysis	6
Burrow’s Delta	6
Fisher’s Method	2
n-Grams Matching	2

Table 6: Number of Comparison Authors Closer than Winchester to the Central America Editorials. Among the expanded set of comparison authors, for each test there are always other candidates who are closer to the Central America editorials than Winchester.

Winchester is never the closest in any of these tests: Two to eight other candidates are always closer in style to the Central America editorials than Winchester. The highest he ever ranked was a distant third place. Consequently, once again we find no persuasive evidence that

52 John Burrows, "Delta: A Measure of Stylistic Difference and a Guide to Likely Authorship," *Literary and Linguistic Computing* 17/3 (2002): 267-87.

53 John Houvardas and Efstathios Stamatatos, "N-Gram Feature Selection for Authorship Identification," *Artificial Intelligence: Methodology, Systems, and Applications* (Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg, 2006), 77-86.

Winchester is a good candidate for authorship of the three unsigned Central America editorials.

Stylometric Evidence Conclusion: The results of multiple formal, statistical tests of hypothesis combined provide consistent, overwhelming lack of evidence that Winchester is a viable candidate for authorship of the unsigned Central America editorials.

Neville's Highly Speculative Style

In contrast to the evidence provided by these objective tests, Neville's conclusions throughout his book are not based on facts, but on a continual framework of conjectures, speculations and suppositions — so much so that they can be easily measured. He frequently uses speculative words such as *could*, *maybe*, *perhaps*, *possibly*, *seems*, *suggests*, *supposedly*, and a host of other similar words. Figure 10 shows a “word cloud” to illustrate how frequently he uses speculative words. The most prominent word is *suggests*.

To see how unusually often he uses speculative words, we compared them to the frequencies tabulated in the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), available online at <http://corpus.byu.edu/>. It is described as follows.

COCA is the largest freely-available corpus of English, and the only large and balanced corpus of American English. The corpus was created by Mark Davies of Brigham Young University, and it is used by tens of thousands of users every month — linguists, teachers, translators, and other researchers. The corpus contains more than 450 million words of text and is equally divided among spoken, fiction, popular magazines, newspapers, and academic texts. It includes 20 million words each year from 1990–2012 and the corpus is also updated regularly. The most recent texts are from summer 2012. Because of its design, it is perhaps the only corpus of English that is suitable for looking at current, ongoing changes in the language.

speculative vocabulary increases as his narration continues. From the information displayed in Figures 10, 11 and 12, we can describe Neville's style in *The Lost City of Zarahemla* as "highly speculative."

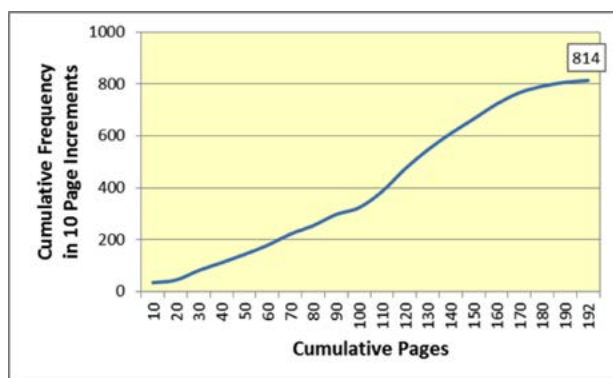


Figure 12: Frequency of Neville's Speculations. In the first 192 pages of his book, Neville uses speculative words over 800 times, and his speculation rate even increases as he goes along.

Neville's speculative language indicates the nonresearch nature of his work, since speculative language is used more frequently in popular articles than in research articles.⁵⁴ Two linguists who have studied speculative language and its functions, Elsa Pic and Grégory Furmaniak, state, "If such hypotheses [speculations] were too numerous in research articles, they would be severely received, as readers of [research articles] are peers who do not accept unsupported conjectures and do not expect to be treated as less knowledgeable."⁵⁵

Neville's Speculations Unscientifically Morph into Facts

Within a cloud of speculation, Neville is unable to distinguish fact from fiction. He accuses Winchester of creating facts out of the whole-cloth of inference (123) and disparages "Winchester's inference ... which morphed into a fact in his *Times and Seasons* articles" (p. 180). Yet he himself does the same thing.

Neville repeatedly creates "facts" morphed out of the whole-cloth of his own original inferences, suppositions and speculations. For example, on page 7 he speculates: "led me ... to suspect someone else entirely

54 Elsa Pic and Grégory Furmaniak, "A study of epistemic modality in academic and popularised discourse: The case of possibility adverbs perhaps, maybe and possibly," *Revista de Linguas para Fines Especificos* 18 (2015): 13-44.

55 Pic, "A study of epistemic modality," 41.

had written the 900 words.” Then one page later he asserts flat out, with no hedging: “Joseph did not write these editorials.” Throughout his book, there are numerous such morphs of speculated conjectures into statements of fact.

Neville asserts as facts his speculations and spins a tale based merely on things he imagines seeing in the data. If we use his speculative vocabulary, *The Lost City of Zarahemla* “suggests, perhaps, that maybe, it appears, that it could be that” his imagination is reality.

Conclusion

Our previous article, “Joseph Smith, The *Times and Seasons*, and Central American Ruins,” concludes that our analysis pointed to Joseph Smith as the most likely author of the Central America editorials, with possible influence from John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff.

In *The Lost City of Zarahemla* Neville conjectures that there is another author — Benjamin Winchester — and spins an elaborate tale based on speculation and imagination which he often states as fact while weaving a baseless story of conspiracy.

He ignores the simple fact that unsigned editorials are common in newspapers then and now, and do not imply a clandestine desire for anonymity by the author. In fact, the most logical assumption then and now is that the editor is the author of unsigned editorials. It is also common practice now, as it was then, for editorials to be the “voice” of the editor expressing the opinion of the publisher. The most logical assumption is that editorials — signed or unsigned — are official statements of the people responsible for the newspaper. When that is not the case, a disclaimer is published which says, in effect, “The views expressed in this article are not necessarily the views and opinions of the editor or publisher of this newspaper.”

Further, he ignores the fact that it is completely irrational for Joseph Smith to have published in the *Times and Seasons* three editorials of unknown authorship that contradicted his views, since he took over the editorship due to his concerns for what was being published in the paper. And it would be even more irrational for him to publish material for which he did not know the author after he had assured his readers at the onset of his editorship that he was responsible for the content of the paper with the clear statement “I stand for it.”

Even in the unlikely event that something he disagreed with had slipped by his notice and was published three times, Joseph Smith still had numerous opportunities and venues to correct those statements,

even after he was editor. There is simply no logical basis for Neville's characterization of the publication of the unsigned Central America editorials as being contrary to Joseph Smith's views and due to clandestine conspiracy. The Prophet could have corrected any errors at any time.

The first article in a series of three *Interpreter* articles showed that Winchester did not promote a limited Mesoamerican geographical setting for the Book of Mormon, but rather a hemispheric one. His ideas were nothing new and thus did not warrant any subterfuge for their dissemination. The second article showed that Joseph Smith was not opposed to considering Central American cultural, geographical, and historical correspondences with the Book of Mormon, but to the contrary found them interesting and supportive of the Book of Mormon.

In this third article we have shown the inadequacy of Neville's arguments. Neville says he sees an "outlier" in the discriminant plots in our article "Joseph Smith, the *Times and Seasons*, and Central American Ruins." But statistical tests contradict his "eyeball" test and show no evidence that the Central America editorials are inconsistent in style with the texts in the Joseph Smith Group of texts. So the foundational premise for his book is false. What he sees is due to his preconceived bias for Winchester's authorship of the unsigned Central America editorials.

We have also shown that Winchester is no better candidate than Joseph Smith as author of the Central American editorials; and we have further shown, using an array of objective statistical techniques, that Winchester is a poor choice among an expanded set of comparison authors. The historical and stylometric evidence is overwhelmingly against Winchester as the author of the Central America editorials.

Neville's book is at best a work of fiction. In fiction an author can create an imaginary world to match the way he or she wants things to be. However, in history and science we are constrained by the evidence provided by data. There is only imagination in Neville's pseudo-science masquerading as history. *The Lost City of Zarahemla* is just the latest entry Neville has added to the list of his other novels.

Appendix:

Dissection of Neville's Pseudo-Stylometric Statements in Appendix III of *The Lost City of Zarahemla*

By his own admission, Neville is an amateur when it comes to stylometry (p. 219). Since he evinces no experience, expertise or sound judgment in stylometric research, it is not surprising that he uses archaic, low-power,

nondistinguishing methods, and jumps to baseless conclusions. In the following we address by topic each of his assertions in Appendix III (pp. 217-33) of *The Lost City of Zarahemla*.

Excessive Variation

- Neville says that a problem in applying stylometric analysis is that the unsigned *Times and Seasons* editorials vary so widely in style, content and approach that they cannot be grouped to Joseph Smith (pp. 217-218).
- >> This statement is unfounded. Discriminant analysis shows that the unsigned editorials group together and cluster with Joseph Smith's writings and editorials.

Outlier Claims

- Neville says that we have previously concluded that Joseph Smith is the author "because his writing style is a little closer to the unsigned articles than are the styles of Wilford Woodruff and John Taylor" (p. 218).
- He claims that these previous studies by Roper and Lund tend to show that Joseph Smith is not the author of the unsigned editorials (p. 218).
- He repeatedly asserts that the Central America editorials are "so distant from Joseph that it appears to be an outlier" (p. 219) and that the composite of the Central America editorials "appears to be an outlier" (p. 220).
- >> Univariate and multivariate distance measures show that the Central America editorials are much closer to Joseph Smith than to John Taylor or Wilford Woodruff. Multiple analyses testing for extreme values show that the Central America editorials are not incompatible with the Joseph Smith Group of texts. Neville's opinions are not supported by objective statistical analyses.

"Someone Else Wrote Them"

- Neville says, "In my layman's opinion, Roper's results suggest someone other than the three writers he tested actually wrote the 900 words" (p. 219).
- He asserts that analyses by Roper and by Lund "assume" that the only possible authors are Joseph Smith, Wilford

Woodruff, and John Taylor; he ignores the role of William Smith (p. 218).

- He claims that Roper made a “simple mistake, ... forgot about *The Wasp*,” i.e., about *The Wasp*’s editor, William Smith (p. 220).
- >> Joseph Smith, John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff are the three candidates for whom the historical evidence is the strongest, since they were responsible for the paper and were known to be directly connected with the *Times and Seasons* production during this time. All other candidates are only circumstantially possibilities. The Extended Nearest Shrunk Centroid Method (ENSCM) open-set test found no evidence of a latent author, and thus no need to consider another candidate besides the historically justifiable Joseph Smith, John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff. Even so, when Benjamin Winchester and William Smith are included individually as possible candidates along with Joseph Smith, John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff, and when they are tested as part of the extended set of comparison authors, statistical tests show repeated that neither is a likely candidate.

In fact, when we took each author from the extended set of authors (Table 4) and used discriminant analysis to compare his writings to those of Joseph Smith, John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff, for nine out of nine comparisons, the Central America editorials are closer in style to Joseph Smith than the comparison author, and the lowest probability of group membership for the editorials in the Joseph Smith Group is 99%. We did not forget anyone. No one else is a more likely candidate than Joseph Smith. There is no evidence that “someone else wrote them.”

About Techniques

- Neville says, “A writer’s use of function words can be unique enough to yield statistically significant results” (p. 217).
- He claims that collocation habits and rare pairs can be distinguishing (p. 217).
- He claims, “I decided to apply similar stylometric methodology” (p. 218).
- >> Though Neville recognizes the value of function words

(noncontextual words), he does not use them in his analyses. We use them in our analyses. Further, an author's word pattern habits can be distinguishing, yet Neville analyzed only a few collocation and word pairs, whereas we analyzed all the phrases from two-word to six-word sequences for the extended set of candidate authors in comparison to the Central American editorials. We looked for the author with the greatest number of phrases in common with the Central America editorials. As Figure 13 shows, Winchester was never the top choice. The closest he ever came was third place — at best a bronze medal but never a gold medal.

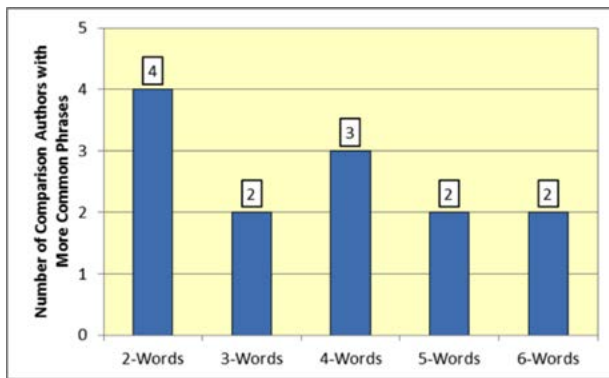


Figure 13: Comparison Authors with More Two-word to Six-word Phrases in Common with the Central America Editorials than Winchester. Winchester always shares fewer phrases with the editorials than do other authors.

Neville did not use valid and reliable stylometric techniques, so his claim of applying “similar stylometric methodology” is a gross misrepresentation.

Average Sentence Length

- Neville uses average sentence length (ASL) as an authorial style metric (pp. 217, 225).
- >> ASL is particularly weak and nondistinguishing as a measure of authorial style. It is an antiquated and amateurish metric. The following shows the deficiency of ASL as a stylometric measure:

Splitting each of the comparison author's composite texts into blocks that are roughly the size of the Central America editorials while maintaining whole sentences, the ASLs of

the blocks are not consistent within an author, thus violating a crucial criterion of a useful stylistic measure. The ASL of the Central America editorials is 32. Figure 14 shows the range of ASLs of the comparison authors and of the ASL of the Central America editorials.

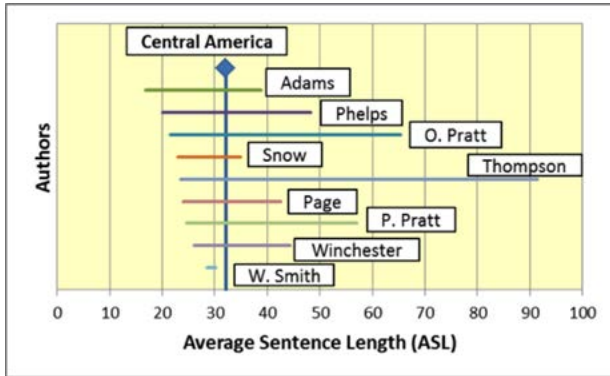


Figure 14: Ranges of Average Sentence Length (ASL) of Expanded Set of Comparison Authors and the ASL of the Central America Editorials. The Central America editorials' ASL is within the range of ASLs for *all* comparison authors except William Smith. Clearly, ASL is not a distinguishing measure.

Winchester's ASL is not distinguished from the other comparison authors' ASLs. The range of ASLs for each comparison author overlaps Winchester's ASL range. All the comparison authors' ranges overlap each other. The ASL for the Central America editorials is within the range of all the comparison authors' ASLs, except William Smith's (who by Neville-logic would thus be disqualified as the author). ASL is obviously a weak and nondistinguishing measure.

Skilled stylometricians abandoned using ASL a century ago. Neville should also.

Unique Words

- Neville discusses "unique" words or phrases he claims are "exclusive to one author" (pp. 222-25).
- >> This is not a distinguishing metric, as we have shown with *The Federalist Papers* example.

In addition, each of the candidate authors in the extended comparison group has so-called unique words compared to those of others. These range from 13% to 27% of their words,

with Winchester having 17% “unique” words. Seven of the other authors have more of their unique words appearing in the Central America editorials than does Winchester. Using Neville’s unique-words approach would actually disqualify Winchester as the author of the unsigned editorials, since other authors are better choices based on so-called unique words. Even Neville himself has some of his unique words in common with the unsigned Central America editorials and, in fact, more “unique” words than Winchester. Using Neville-logic, this is evidence that he wrote the editorials. By his own method, Neville is a better choice for author of the editorials than Winchester.

Similarities

- Neville cites his Appendix II, where he annotated words in the Central America editorials and notes that Winchester also used these words (p. 218).
 - In particular, he focuses on three words: *foregoing*, *credulous*, and *incontrovertible*; and points out that Winchester also used these words (pp. 221-22).
 - He discusses phrases offered by Lund such as *assist us to*, *cannot doubt*, *cuts, the eyes of all the people*, and so forth. (p. 223).
 - He focuses on several more phrases and words: *none can hinder*, *so much*, *surely* and *great joy* (pp. 225-26).
- >> Neville bases much of his “analysis” on “cherry-picking” similar wording and uses them to imply equality of source (same authorship). His approach of searching for similarities is nothing more than snooping around in the data looking for confirmatory evidence.

To see how absurd and misleading this can be, we applied his method to his own book and looked for similarities between Winchester and Neville. We found over fifty examples. Using Neville-logic, these similarities between Neville and Winchester would mean that Neville and Winchester are the same person, but such a conclusion is obviously absurd. To Neville, these similarities would be crucial “facts” that prove equality, but such reasoning is vacuous and intellectually dishonest.

Although we can find similarities between two things or people, similarity does not establish sameness or equality. Neville commits the fallacy of equating Winchester with the author of the Central America editorials because of “similarities” he thinks he sees. It is always possible to find any number of superfluous similarities between two things, if we are determined enough, but similarity does not establish equality.⁵⁶

To further illustrate the fallacy of this method, consider the case of two identical twins. Many people have trouble telling them apart, since there are hundreds of similarities in their physical characteristics, and even in their personalities and behaviors. However, it takes only one feature to tell them apart — perhaps one’s nose is a little different than the other’s nose. Their myriad similarities do not make them the same person. We see, then, that it is necessary to focus on distinguishing characteristics rather than on similarities, or we risk being fooled.

Neville alters the phrase *great joy* and then claims that since Winchester used the word *joy* a number of times, his writing is similar to the writing in the Central America editorials. Does such a similarity really identify him as the author of the editorials? How many other people use the word *joy*? Millions! Did you use it recently? If so, by Neville’s way of thinking, maybe you wrote the Central America editorials. Nor are any of Neville’s other cherry-picked similarities informative about the authorship of the editorials.

We put Neville’s “similarity words” to the test. The statistical technique of stepwise discriminant analysis examines the groups within a data set to determine the features within the data that are the most distinguishing (discriminating) among the groups. It picks the most distinguishing feature first and subsequent features in descending order of distinctiveness. Applying stepwise discriminant analysis to the expanded set

56 Benjamin L. McGuire, “Finding Parallels: Some Cautions and Criticisms, Part One,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture*, 5 (2013): 1-59. Benjamin L. McGuire, “Finding Parallels: Some Cautions and Criticisms, Part Two,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture*, 5 (2013): 61-104.

of candidate authors, we found that only 14 of Neville's words were even slightly distinguishing features among the authors. Therefore he is correct that his words show similarity, but his word list also shows that all the authors use those words similarly. This is depicted in Figure 15.

Since Winchester's range of word-use frequencies for Neville's similarity words spans the range for those words in the Central American editorials, he is "similar," but all the authors' ranges overlap with the range in the editorials completely or mostly. So if Neville wants to conclude that Winchester wrote the Central America editorials based on his "similarity words," he must also conclude that at least six of the other authors did so as well, and maybe even the other two. Using Neville's "similarities" approach, we could pick any one of the nine authors and claim he was the author of the unsigned editorials. Winchester is not a materially better choice than any of the others. Incidentally, William Smith, whom Neville also suggests as the author of the Central America editorials, is the least likely choice, since he has least overlap of Neville's similarities.

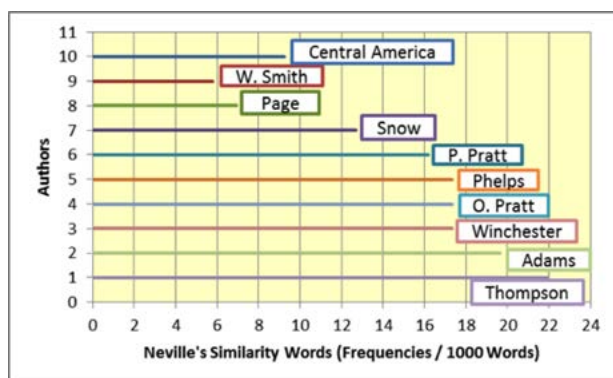


Figure 15: Ranges of Word-Use Frequencies for Neville's "Similarities" for the Expanded Set of Comparison Authors and for the Central America Editorials. Winchester's range of word-use frequencies is "similar" to that in the Central America editorials, since his range spans that of the editorials, but that is true for six of the other authors as well.

At best, similarities can only generate questions. In the case of Neville's book, it would be "Could Winchester be the author of the Central America editorials?" Neville cannot validly

assert that the supposed similarities he claims to have found answer this question.

To quote Neville's own words, "Until now, these facts were never put together. The various threads ... woven here were loose strands, unattached, unimportant, and unnoticed. Until now, they've been meaningless" (p. 118). Despite Neville's claims, they are still meaningless.

Other Specious Arguments

- Neville implies that if an article is unsigned, the author "desired anonymity," as if the real author had something to hide (p. 218).
 - He suggests that someone wanting anonymity could alter their style and include phrases borrowed from Joseph Smith to imitate the Prophet (p. 218).
 - To support his case, Neville cites an example of William Smith borrowing wording from Don Carlos Smith (pp. 218, 229).
 - Among his similarity arguments he asserts that "the proximity of these uses over less than a year suggests a connection between Winchester and these editorials" (p. 228).
- >> Hundreds of unsigned articles were published in this time period in myriads of periodicals. It is unjustifiable to conclude that all anonymous authors were trying to hide something. Rather, this was just simply part of common editorial practice in those days, as it is today. Should we conclude that all the unsigned editorials in Winchester's own newspaper, *Gospel Reflector*, were not signed because Winchester was trying not to reveal his identity in his own publication and thus had something to hide? Why apply such a claim to unsigned *Times and Seasons* editorials?

Winchester himself, in the *Gospel Reflector*, borrows many phrases from others, as Roper has shown in the first article of this series. This is one of the reasons contextual words are not reliable as distinguishing markers of authorship. Stylometric researcher John Hilton stated, "Our wordprinting technique has shown that most highly skilled authors (e.g., Twain,

Johnson, Heinlein, etc.), when intentionally trying to imitate the writings of different persons, are unable to successfully change their own free-flow non-contextual word patterns enough to simulate a different wordprint.”⁵⁷

The possibility that William Smith may have borrowed phrases is irrelevant to the question of Winchester’s authorship of the Central America editorials. There is nothing informative about one author employing in his writing useful phrases he or she may have found elsewhere. Further, Neville’s “proximity argument” is a spurious assertion. It is merely “guilt by association.” It is *prima facie* obvious that many things can be in proximity and not be connected. Neville relies only on circumstantial evidence.

Neville’s Basic Conclusions

- He says, “In my view, the results of both analyses [by Roper and by Lund] contradict the conclusions of their authors” (p. 218).
- He says, “Evidence suggests Winchester wrote these” (p. 227).
- >> Neville’s view is based only on his preconceived bias against the results of others’ research and his propensity to replace facts with his imagination. Neville’s stylometric assertions are ill-informed and baseless. None of Neville’s pseudo-stylometric statements are supported by the evidence from appropriate analyses. He finds confirmatory evidence because all he is looking for is confirmation of his theory. He seems to be in love with his theory; and, like a love-struck suitor, everything he sees confirms his ardor. The dispassionate, skeptical eyes of a historian, statistician and stylometrician look at numerous objective statistical tests and see no persuasive evidence that Winchester authored the unsigned Central America editorials.

57 John L. Hilton, “On Verifying Wordprint Studies: Book of Mormon Authorship,” *Brigham Young University Studies* (1990): 91.

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THE TEMPLE: A MULTI-FACETED CENTER AND ITS PROBLEMS

Joshua Berman

Editor's Note: *At the request of BYU Law Professor John W. Welch, Dr. Berman graciously provided this article for publication as an introduction to a series of lectures he will be giving in Utah on October 7 and 8, 2015. The first lecture will focus on the differences between the Tabernacle and the Temple, the second lecture will discuss recent findings linking inscriptions from Ramesses II to the sea account in Exodus, and the third lecture will touch on issues in biblical law. These lectures are co-sponsored by the Academy for Temple Studies, BYU Studies, the Ancient Near Eastern Studies Department in the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies, the J. Reuben Clark Law School, and The Interpreter Foundation, and details can be found online. This article is adapted from The Temple: Its Symbolism and Meaning Then and Now (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, first ed., 1995).*

Abstract: *One of the primary identities of the Temple is that it is the place of hashra'at ha-shekhinah, the site at which God's presence is most manifest. It is no surprise then, that the Temple is the focal point of prayer. Yet, as the site at which God's presence is most intimately manifest, the Temple is also the center of the nation in several major spheres of collective life. This centrality is exhibited in the structure of the Book of Deuteronomy. Chapters 12-26 depict commandments that are to be the social and religious frame of life in the land of Israel. Within this section the central shrine, "the place in which God shall establish His name," is mentioned nearly twenty times. The Temple is cast as the center for sacrifices (ch. 12), the consumption of tithes (14:23-25), the celebration of the festivals (ch. 16), and the center of the judicial system (ch. 17). In this chapter we will explore how the Temple constitutes the national center for social unity, education, and justice. The concentration of activity and jurisdiction at the Temple, however, renders it prone to abuse, and in the second half of this chapter, we will probe the social and religious ills that emerged as an endemic part of the Temple's existence.*

Social Unity

A reading of the commandments enumerated in the Book of Deuteronomy reveals that the Temple was a central gathering point for the Jewish people.

On the one hand, the Torah paints a picture of the demography of the land of Israel: each of the twelve tribes of Israel is to inherit its own tribal territory, within the land (Numbers 33:53-54), thereby bolstering tribal identity. Indeed, nearly all biblical figures are introduced by tribal identification, as in, “There was a *man of Benjamin* whose name was Kish son of Abiel ...” (I Samuel 9:1). On the other hand, though, tribal identity needs to be balanced by collective national identity. The Temple serves as the forge toward that end. Several commandments performed at the Temple highlight its social significance, in particular, as a force for unity and brotherhood within the nation. The commandment of *ma’aser sheni* — the second tithe — is an example. Tithes are usually thought of as a kind of tax, presented either to the Priest or to God. *Ma’aser sheni*, however, is different. Deuteronomy 14:22-26 commands us to take a tithing of our produce and to bring it to “the place where God shall choose to establish His name.” This tithe is to be consumed by the owner and anyone else he wishes to include. A tenth of a farmer’s produce could amount to quite a hefty load, and so the Torah makes the provision that the produce may be sold and the money used instead to buy goods in Jerusalem to be consumed there. The consumption of the *ma’aser sheni* is depicted in festive terms (14:26):

Spend the money on anything you want — cattle, sheep, wine or ale, or anything you may desire. And you shall feast there, in the presence of the Lord your God, and rejoice with your household.

Maimonides highlighted the social component that was an inherent part of the commandment of *ma’aser sheni*:

As for the second tithe, it is commanded that it should be spent exclusively on food in Jerusalem. For this leads of necessity to giving some of it in alms; for as it could only be employed on nourishment, it was easy for a man to have others have it little by little. *Thus it was necessarily brought about a gathering in*

*one place, so that brotherhood and love among the people were greatly strengthened.*¹

In similar fashion, the Torah calls for the fourth yield of a tree's life to be brought to Jerusalem so that it could be consumed amid jubilation (Leviticus 19:24). The reality of every household in Israel coming to the Temple on an annual basis and celebrating with great feasts rendered the Temple nothing less than a national meeting place, where families from all over Israel would convene in a singular fashion.

For many this pilgrimage was probably done in conjunction with the pilgrimages of the three festivals, Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkot. These national pilgrimages — whereby the entire House of Israel convened before God — represented a perpetuation of the Sinai encounter.² Yet the festival pilgrimages by their nature also bore a social component as well. In coming before God, the tribes of Israel also came together as one. This point animates the psalmist in his reflections on the ascent to Jerusalem for the festival pilgrimage (Psalm 122):

A song of ascents. Of David.
 I rejoiced when they said to me,
 "We are going to the house of the Lord."
 (2) Our feet stood inside your gates, O Jerusalem.
 (3) Jerusalem built up, a city knit together,
 (4) to which tribes would make pilgrimage,
 the tribes of the Lord,
 - as was enjoined upon Israel -
 to praise the name of the Lord.
 (5) There the thrones of judgment stood,
 thrones of the house of David.
 (6) Pray for the well-being of Jerusalem:
 "May those who love you be at peace.
 (7) May there be well-being within your ramparts,
 peace in your citadels."
 (8) For the sake of my kin and friends,
 I pray for your well being;
 (9) for the sake of the house of the Lord our God
 I seek your good.

1 *The Guide of the Perplexed* 3:39, trans. Shlomo Pines and Leo Strauss (U. of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1963) vol. 2, 551. See also 3:46 at end.

2 See chapter three of *The Temple: Its Symbolism and Meaning Then and Now*.

The first point that emerges is that Jerusalem, with the Temple at its center, is a potent force for Jewish unity; the psalmist stands at its gates not in solitude but with his fellow pilgrims: “*Our* feet stood inside your gates, O Jerusalem (v. 2)”. He lauds the fact that all the tribes of Israel gather there (v. 4) and concludes by praying for the well-being of his kin and friends, bound together by the common endeavor of pilgrimage to Jerusalem (v. 8). The unifying aspect of Jerusalem and the Temple is born out in halakhic writings as well: with all of Israel coming to Jerusalem for the festival, lodging would be at an expensive premium. The rabbis determined however, that no boarding fees could be collected from festival pilgrims, as the land of Jerusalem belongs equally to all.³

Education

An examination of the role of the Priests and Levites — those who officiated in the Temple — highlights their identity as educators. In tracing the scope of activity in the Temple, an appropriate focus falls on the role of the Priests and Levites as officiants in the Temple and their role in society at large. For the sake of simplicity we will refer to them collectively as Levites; the Priests were but a subset of the tribe of Levi and, apart from their ritual responsibilities, served in similar capacities.

The Levites constitute a brigade. Just as an army brigade executes the wishes of a ruler or government, the Torah casts the Levites in quasi-military terms, indicating that they constitute a special brigade devoted to the service of the King of Kings. Numbers 8:24 states that from the age of twenty-five and up, the Levites shall join the *legion* of the service of the Tent of Meeting. In his valedictory blessings to the tribes of Israel, Moses blessed the tribe of Levi, “May the Lord bless His *corps* and favor his undertaking” (Deuteronomy 33:11).

What were the tasks performed by the Levites? The primary duties that immediately come to mind are the various and sundry activities associated with the rites of the Temple. But this impression, easily garnered from a cursory reading of the Torah and references to the Levites in the traditional prayers, is in fact misleading.

Only a small portion of a Priest’s or Levite’s time was dedicated to service in the Temple. I Chronicles 23-24 lists the rotations worked by the families of Levites in the Temple. Both the Priests and Levites were divided into twenty-four families, each of which was responsible for a tour of duty in the Temple. According to II Chronicles 23:5-8, each tour

3 Megillah 26b, Yoma 12a.

of duty consisted of one week's work in the Temple. This means that a typical Priest or Levite would serve in the Temple for only slightly more than two weeks out of any year! What, then, occupied the members of God's corps during the better part of the year? For what purpose were they being supported by the tithes of the Jewish people?

While the Torah focuses on the role of the Levites as sanctuary officials, they served in a second capacity that gains greater amplification in the later books of the Bible: their role as *educators*.

Explicit references to this role already appear in the Torah. When the Priests are commanded to abstain from entering the sanctuary while intoxicated, the Bible writes (Leviticus 10:8-11):

And the Lord spoke to Aaron saying: (9) Drink no wine or ale, you or your sons with you, when you enter the Tent of Meeting, that you may not die — it is a law for all time throughout your generations — (10) for you must distinguish between the sacred and the profane, and between the unclean and the clean. (11) *And you must teach the Israelites all the laws which the Lord has imparted to you through Moses.*

Verse 11, identifying the priests as teachers, is not an independent command but is related to the prohibition of entering the sanctuary while intoxicated. The censure against officiating while inebriated underscores the need for dignity while performing the sacred rites. This same dignity must be maintained when the Priests attend to their further responsibility of imparting God's laws to the Jewish people. The role of the Levites as educators is also central to the blessing given the tribe of Levi by Moses in his valedictory address (Deuteronomy 33:10): "They shall teach Your norms to Jacob and Your instructions to Israel."

The later books of the Bible contain numerous references to the Levites as educators, both in the poetic passages of the latter prophets and in the prose narratives of II Chronicles. When the Judean king Jehoshaphat wanted to fortify the religious awareness of the people, it was to the Levites that he turned (II Chronicles 17:7-9):

In the third year of his reign he sent his officers Ben-hail, Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethanel, and Micaiah throughout the cities of Judah to offer instruction. (8) With them were the Levites, Shemaiah, Nethaniah, Zebadiah, Asahel, Shemiramoth, Jehonathan, Adonijah, Tobijah, and Tob-adonijah the Levites; with them were Elishama and Jehoram the priests. (9) *They offered instruction throughout Judah,*

having with them the Book of the Teaching of the Lord. They made the rounds of all the cities of the Lord and instructed the people.

A similar reform took place later during the reign of Hezekiah, shortly before the destruction of the First Temple. Once again, the key to educating the people was the involvement of the Levites (II Chronicles 31:4):

He ordered the people, the inhabitants of Jerusalem to deliver the portions of the Priests and the Levites, so that they might devote themselves to the Teaching of the Lord.

From this passage we see that in Hezekiah's eyes the primary purpose of the tithes and priestly gifts was not to support them in their role as sanctuary officiants but to enable them to devote themselves to the study and dissemination of the Torah.⁴ The notion that the Levites, inclusive of the Priests, constitute God's corps, a brigade dedicated to the service of God in the Temple and to the dissemination of His word amidst the Jewish people, is succinctly summarized by Maimonides:

And why did not Levi partake of the patrimony of the land of Israel and its spoils with his brethren? Because he was set apart to serve God, to worship Him and *to teach His just ways and righteous ordinances to the masses*. As it is stated, "They shall teach Your norms to Jacob and Your instructions to Israel." Therefore, they have been set apart from the ways of the world; they do not wage war like the rest of Israel, nor do they inherit or acquire unto themselves by physical force. They are, rather, the Lord's corps, as it is stated, "Blessed, O Lord, his corps;" and He, blessed be He, vouchsafes them, as it is stated, "I am thy portion and thine inheritance."⁵

The dual role of the Levites as sanctuary officiants and as educators is apparent. Less clear, however, is the interrelationship between these roles. If we think in terms of the modern-day synagogue, the roles of officiant and educator are usually distinct. Broadly, the rabbi serves as an educator, while the prayer services will be lead by a cantor. Was the

4 Other biblical sources also portray the Priests and Levites as educators. See Nehemiah 8:5-8, Malachi 2:6-7, II Chronicles 30:22 and 35:3.

5 Maimonides, *Yad Hilkhoh Shemitah Ve-Yovel* 13:12.

Priest — the officiant/educator of old — performing two distinct and separate roles or in capacities that integrally related to one another?

The blessing to the tribe of Levi at the end of the Book of Deuteronomy provides one approach to this question. Moses blessed the tribe of Levi, saying (Deuteronomy. 33:9-10):

[Levi] said of his father and mother,
 'I consider them not.'
 His brothers he disregarded,
 Ignored his own children.
 Your precepts alone they observed,
 And kept Your covenant.
 (10) They shall teach Your norms to Jacob
 And Your instructions to Israel.
 They shall offer You incense to savor
 And whole-offerings on Your altar.

Verse 9 lauds the courage displayed by the Levites in the aftermath of the sin of the golden calf. When Moses called for the faithful to gather, the tribe of Levi answered the call and at Moses's behest summarily killed three-thousand Israelites, in effect "disregarding his brothers, and ignoring his own children." By displaying such devotion, the Levites proved themselves as the appropriate bodies to execute God's most sacred callings — the transmission of His teachings, and the service of the Temple. Within this conception of the relationship between the Levites' roles as officiants and educators, their two functions are essentially distinct. Each task was awarded to them in recognition of their devotion, but they do not necessarily relate to one another.⁶

Another perspective on the relationship between these two roles of the Levites stems from the *Babylonian Talmud*, *Tractate Ta'anit* 16a. What is the derivation of the name of the Temple Mount as Mount 'Moriah'? One opinion there maintains that it is called 'Moriah' because *hora'ah* — instruction — stems from there to all of Israel. Rashi comments⁷:

[This] opinion says a mountain from which *hora'ah* goes out -meaning the Torah to all of Israel, "for out of Zion shall go forth the Torah (Isaiah 2:3)"; "They shall teach Your norms to Jacob (Deuteronomy 33:10)."

6 This understanding is also reflected in *Midrash Tehilim* (Buber ed.) Psalm 18 s.v. (21) *yatsileini*.

7 s.v. *mai Har Ha-Mori'ah*

The second verse cited by Rashi is, of course, the blessing to the tribe of Levi that they will serve as the educators of the Jewish people. The implication of the talmudic passage, according to Rashi, is that this capacity is integrally related to the service of the Temple. The implication seems to be that it is precisely from their point of service at the Temple that the Levites go out to all of Israel taking the word of God — the *hora'ah* — with them from Mount “Moriah.”

Amplifying on Rashi's understanding of the talmudic passage in *Tractate Ta'anit*, we may posit the relationship between the two capacities as follows: Even though the role of the Priest or Levite as Temple officiant is quantitatively dwarfed by his primary role as educator, the Temple nonetheless serves as the foundation point for that role. In the Temple the Priest or Levite encounters the divine. It is from that encounter that he then takes God's Torah and transmits it to the rest of Israel. The paradigm of chapter three of this book, that the sanctuary perpetuates the experience of Sinai, can again prove illustrative. At Sinai, Moses (himself a Levite), encountered God in His sacred precincts and then brought the Torah to all of Israel. The Levites re-enact that process by serving semi-annually in the Temple — the place God chooses to establish His name — and then taking *hora'ah* to all of Israel.

The notion that the Temple represented the educational hub of the country is recognized by the thirteenth century *Sefer Ha-Chinukh*:

As every man would take up the tithe of all his cattle and flocks year after year, to the location where the occupation with wisdom and Torah was to be found, namely Jerusalem, where the Sanhedrin were — those who had cognition and understood knowledge ... As we know, the second tithe (*ma'aser sheni*) was eaten there. Then, in any event, the owner of the stock would either go there himself to learn Torah or he would send one of his sons there, that he should study there and be sustained by that produce.⁸

The various commandments to bring produce to Jerusalem — to the place God chooses to establish His name — were seen before to highlight the nature of the Temple as a force for social unity. As the Israelites would consume their produce at the Temple, the occasion also took on an educational dimension, with exposure to Israel's greatest judges in the Sanhedrin.

8 *Sefer HaChinnukh — The Book of [Mitzvah] Education*, trans. Charles Wengrov (Feldheim: Jerusalem, 1984) vol. 3, 509.

Justice

When tracing the role of the Temple in the life of Israel as prescribed in the Bible, attention must be drawn to its function as the focal point of the judiciary system.

In modern bureaucracies, the ministries within government devoted to education and to the administration of justice are distinct. The administration of justice attends to the adjudication of the competing rights of citizens. It has little to do with the endeavor of teaching the young how to function in society, or any of the other aims of a ministry of education. Within the biblical conception, however, the two realms are inextricably bound.

From a biblical perspective, the judicial and educational realms both stem from the same source — the authority of the Torah. When the Levites teach the masses, the course of study is God's laws. When the courts adjudicate — whether it is a question of torts or of ritual law — their criteria are likewise God's laws. Because the Temple represents a perpetuation of Sinai — the point at which God's laws were originally transmitted — the Temple becomes the natural center for the adjudication of those laws.

Let us examine the dynamics that govern the relationship between the judiciary system and the Temple. The primary source for this relationship is Deuteronomy 17:8-10:

If a case is too baffling for you to decide, be it a controversy over homicide, civil law, or assault — matters of dispute in your courts — *you shall rise and ascend to the place which the Lord your God has chosen*, (9) and come before the levitical priests, or the magistrate in charge at that time, and present your problem. When they have announced to you the verdict in the case, (10) you shall carry out the verdict that is announced to you from the place which the Lord chose, observing scrupulously all their instructions to you.

This passage is the basis for two fundamental concepts concerning the relationship between the judicial system and the Temple: the role of the Levites within this system and the significance of God's presence in the Temple for the execution of proper judgment.

Verse 9 implies that the members of the high court are in some fashion Levites. The designation of the Levites as judges is akin to their designation as teachers. The tithing system creates a system of support

for the Levites which allows them to devote themselves to the mastery of God's laws. As masters of God's laws, it follows that they should serve not only as the teachers of those laws, but as their adjudicators as well. The Bible attests to the degree to which the Levites served in this capacity. At the end of his reign, David divided the Levites into units. Of the 38,000 Levites numbered, 6,000 were set aside to be judges and officers (I Chronicles 23:4).

The notion that judges were to be drawn, largely, if not exclusively, from the ranks of the Levites, gains expression in the Oral Law as well. The *Sifrei* to the phrase in Deuteronomy 17:9, "and you shall come before the levitical priests," states:

It is a commandment that the high court contain members who are Priests or Levites. This does not mean, however, that the court is disqualified if it has no such members — for the verse says, "and you shall come before the levitical priests *or the magistrate in charge at the time.*"

The second concept that stems from Deuteronomy 17 which pertains to the relationship between the judicial system and the Temple, concerns God's presence in the Temple. As we have noted, the book of Deuteronomy consistently refers to the Temple as the place God chooses to establish His name. It is no surprise, then, that when the Torah locates the high court in the Temple, in verse 8, it uses this terminology. But the phrase is repeated redundantly two verses later, in verses 9-10: "When they have announced to you the verdict in the case, (10) you shall carry out the verdict that is announced to you *from the place which the Lord chose.*" The repetition of this phrase is instructive — not of the site of the court, but of the nature of its authority. As R. Yehuda Ha-Levi writes in the *Kuzari*,⁹ the ruling of the judges of the high court is to be heeded because they are endowed with divine inspiration symbolized by their presence at the site where God's immanence is at its highest degree.

This concept should not be simplistically mistaken. The inspiration that R. Yehuda Ha-Levi mentions is not some power magically invested in the judges by their mere presence in the Temple complex. We posited in the previous chapter that God's presence in the Temple is reflective of the strength of the covenantal bond between God and the Jewish people. Conversely, then, the removal of God's presence from the Temple, or the Temple's destruction, reflects a weakening of that bond. This axiom bears directly on the authority of the entire court system. Because

9 *Kuzari* 3:39.

the authority of the court is a function of God's inspiration, the court accordingly loses some of its authority when God distances himself from the Jewish people. The very highest power of the Jewish court, indeed of any court, is the power to render capital decisions. The license to put a man to death is a power associated with God himself, as the One who naturally grants and takes life as He wishes. The high court only has this power when the covenantal bond is strong, and the Sanhedrin resides in God's presence in the Chamber of Hewn Stone in the Temple. Basing himself on *Tractate Sanhedrin* 52b, Maimonides describes this function as follows:

Capital offenses are adjudicated only when the Temple is standing, and the high court resides in its chamber in the Temple ... when the priests offer sacrifices upon the altar, capital cases are heard, providing that the high court is situated in its place.¹⁰

Until this point, our portrayal of the Temple has emphasized its positive aspects; its power as a multi-layered symbol and its multi-purpose function within the life of the nation. We saw how the Temple's identity as the place of *hashra'at ha-shekhinah* made it also the national center for social unity, education and welfare.

The Temple, however, engendered several social ills by the very virtue of its existence. Without losing track of all its symbolic and functional value in the life of the nation, we can only gain a full understanding of the Temple's implications by probing the social problems attendant to the existence of the Temple.

Overexpansion

The Temple was the culmination of a long historical evolution.¹¹ It was the climax of processes of change in the religious, social, political, and economic realms. It is quite tempting to read the opening chapters of the

10 *Yad, Hilkhot Sanhedrin* 14:11. This law is an application of the *halakhic* principle of *ha-makom gorem* — literally, "a function of location." Its meaning is that the courts only possess certain powers by virtue of God's inspiration, which is extant only when the Temple is standing and the seat of the Sanhedrin is in the Chamber of Hewn Stone. See *Avodah Zarah* 8a, *Shabbat* 15a, and *Sanhedrin* 14b. For the distinction between the four forms of capital punishment biblically enumerated, and the broader powers given to the king to enact the death penalty, see *Derashot Ha-Ran of Rabbeinu Nissim of Gerona*, essay no. 11.

11 See chapter four of *The Temple: Its Symbolism and Meaning Then and Now*.

book of Kings and conclude that Solomon's age represented a plateau of bliss and that all the people needed do now was live off the fat of the land.

Yet for all its accomplishments, the age of Solomon was subject to the same social and political dynamics that face any culture in any era. Nearly every positive social force can bring in its wake undesired consequences; in our time critics of capitalism will point out that while capitalist societies encourage the entrepreneurial spirit and a healthy work ethic, they often breed greed and devolve into cultures of materialism. Pluralism, a hallmark of contemporary western culture, is heralded as the foundation of tolerance and social stability. Many will say, however, that the pluralism of our times has begotten a culture of moral relativism and an effacement of values.

By their very nature, the evolutionary processes that culminated with the Temple's construction were dynamic ones. No society ever reaches a climax and then stands still. Unless the entire gamut of social and political forces is carefully and continuously monitored, even a great society can quickly find itself thrown out of kilter, hurtling down a dangerous course. The political and social progress of Solomon's age brought about the Temple's construction. Yet it was precisely those currents that later engendered pitfalls that would plague the Jewish people for centuries to come.

Less than twenty years after Solomon completed work on the Temple and palace, the Jewish state found itself torn asunder between the kingdoms of Judea and Israel. The dissolution of Solomon's empire can be seen as an unintended result of the forces that led to Israel's greatness and the Temple's construction in the first place.

Perhaps the dominant impression one gets from a reading of Solomon's reign in I Kings 5-10 is the incredible scope of his building projects. The work of constructing the Temple and palace took twenty years (I Kings 9:10). Following that he embarked on a project to build a citadel and wall around Jerusalem and erected seven major fortresses across the country, and an unspecified number of garrison towns, chariot towns, and cavalry towns (9:15-19), home base to 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horses (10:26). To bolster his contacts abroad, Solomon erected a separate palace for the daughter of Pharaoh in proximity to the Temple (9:24), and built a fleet of ships at the port of Eilat (9:26).

While these projects manifested Solomon's strength, and were undoubtedly recognized by the surrounding nations, they constituted an enormous burden on the country and engendered dramatic changes in the fabric of the society. To build the Temple and palace, Solomon

conscripted 30,000 laborers who were sent to Lebanon in rotating shifts of 10,000 workers on a tri-monthly basis (5:27-28). For his later projects, Solomon again conscripted men broadly to serve as warriors, attendants, officials, and commanders, who manned his army and oversaw the gargantuan construction efforts (9:22). Solomon's projects may have magnified his greatness, and even God's — but it came at the expense of the people.

The dissolution of Solomon's empire, then, may be analyzed from a social and political perspective. When we look to the arguments put forth by Jeroboam to stir revolt, we can discern arguments whose roots were in the social upheaval caused by Solomon's expansion. When Solomon's son, Rehoboam, ascends the throne, God turned to Jeroboam the son of Nebat to be the catalyst that would split the kingdom (11:31-39). Jeroboam had directed the work efforts of an entire tribe (11:28) during Solomon's expansion, and was keenly aware of the toll it had taken in human terms. His challenge on behalf of the people to Rehoboam highlighted the popular discontent Solomon's expansion had aroused (12:4): "Your father made our yoke heavy. Now lighten the harsh labor and the heavy yoke which your father laid on us and we will serve you." When Rehoboam rejects the request of the people, they secede. Immediately after the succession, the people executed Adoram, who had been Solomon's chief officer for work projects, venting all their anger at the person who most directly symbolized the disruption of life that had been wrought by the expansion.

While Solomon's expansion produced social ill-effects, the period was one of great cultural upheaval as well. The Temple was universal in its scope, a place where gentiles were welcome to pray alongside Jews, a symbol designed to broadcast God's name to the entire world. The cultural ramifications of this openness were that under Solomon, Jerusalem became a cosmopolitan center, accessible to peoples from many different cultures. While the notion that the Temple is an ecumenical center for the whole of mankind is a lofty ideal, its implementation on the plane of reality brings with it the risk of cultural dilution. When a host country opens its doors to an influx of foreigners, the danger lurks that foreign influences will overwhelm or corrupt the indigenous host culture. When the Bible depicts Solomon's marriage to the daughter of Pharaoh, it offers no objections. Her entry into the Jewish king's court was a sign of political achievement, a royal marriage indicative of a political alliance. With time, though, Solomon became distracted from executing God's will, influenced by the women he had married from all

of the neighboring countries (11:1-4). The influence of foreign culture on the court had repercussions for the nation as a whole. Israel lost its own identity as God's nation, falling victim to foreign influence (11:33): "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: I am about to tear the kingdom out of Solomon's hands ... for they have forsaken Me; they have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Phoenicians, Chemosh the god of Moab, and Milcom the god of the Ammonites."

The lessons of the dissolution of Solomon's empire, then, are two. Ideally, the Temple is to be universal in its scope. But in welcoming the nations of the world to Jerusalem, the Jewish people must post a vigilant watch to maintain the purity and authenticity of Jewish values. The second lesson that emerges is that in the aspiration to build a great society — a healthy aspiration in and of itself — the Jewish people must maintain a sense of proportion that will safeguard against the social burnout that plagued Israel as a result of Solomon's expansion.

The Kingship of God — Kingship of the Davidic King

An issue that is critical for an understanding of the social and political dynamics surrounding the Temple is that of *kingship*. A dominant theme throughout the Bible is that God is the King of Kings. What, then, is the nature of the kingship of the Davidic king. In what senses are both man and God "king"?

In biblical as well as contemporary times, the fame and fortune of a nation is often associated with its leadership. Within the biblical scope, this means that when the Israelites are respected, the respect and credit focus on the king. From the perspective of the Bible, of course, the true glory is that of God. But in the eyes of men — Israelites and gentiles alike — the hand of God is not miraculously overt, and thus credit is given to the king. The biblical conception of a king, therefore, is that his kingship, or rule, is but an extension of the rule of the King of Kings, God himself. In this vein I Chronicles 29:23 can state, "Solomon successfully took over *the throne of the Lord* instead of his father David." Clearly, the Bible does not mean to say that Solomon superseded God. Rather, Solomon sat on the throne of God because his kingship was an extension of God's. It is in this light that the psalmist declares that God invites the king to sit with him, figuratively speaking, saying, "The Lord said to my lord (i.e. the

king), ‘Sit at My right hand, while I make your enemies your footstool’” (Psalm 110:1).¹² Credit to the king, therefore, is credit to God.

When David is told in II Samuel 7 that his descendants will rule dynastically, his tribute to God reflects the concept that the glory of the Jewish people and their king is only to be seen as the glory of God himself (II Samuel 7:22-26):

You are great indeed, O Lord God! There is none like You and there is no other God but You ... And who is like Your people Israel, a unique nation on earth, whom God went and redeemed as His people, winning renown for Himself and doing great and marvelous deeds for them [and] for Your land — [driving out] nations and their gods before Your people, whom You redeemed for Yourself from Egypt. You have established Your people Israel as Your very own people forever; and You, O Lord, have become their God.

And now, O Lord God fulfill Your promise to Your servant and his house forever; and do as You have promised. And may Your name be glorified forever, in that men will say, ‘The Lord of Hosts is God over Israel; and may the house of your servant David be established before You.

The concept that the kingship of the Davidic king is an extension of the kingship of God sheds great light on the relationship between the Temple and the king. The Temple is a house for the name of God: a structure that symbolizes His acclaim as sovereign in the world. But God’s power and virtue are expressed only through the agency of His people Israel, with the Davidic king leading them. It is through David and his descendants that God is accorded glory.

The integral link between the monarchy and the Temple is also exhibited in the account of the Temple’s construction in I Kings 6:1-7:51. Wedged within the narrative of the erection of the Temple, the Bible depicts the construction of Solomon’s palace (7:1-12) and heralds the completion of the Temple together with the completion of the palace in I Kings 9:1 and 9:10.¹³

12 Psalm 2:1-2 equates war against the king with war against God: Why do nations assemble/ and peoples plot vain things;/ kings of the earth take their stand,/ and regents intrigue together/ against the Lord and against His anointed.

13 See Jon Levenson, “The Jerusalem Temple in Devotional and Visionary Experience,” *Jewish Spirituality* [vol 1]: *From the Bible Through the Middle Ages*, ed.

Because the king's glory is so integrally linked to God's, however, a counterbalance is necessary to remind the mortal monarch of the limit of his hegemony. The king is sovereign over the entire country and all of its inhabitants — with the exception of one sphere: the Temple. In many of the surrounding cultures one of the primary roles of the king was to serve in the capacity of high priest to the local deity. In contrast, the Jewish king, a descendant of David, can never be the high priest, and is forbidden from performing any of the rites of the Temple service.

This dynamic of the relationship between the king and the Temple is seen in the conduct of the Judean king Uzziah. The Bible casts Uzziah as a king of exemplary conduct, a devout leader who was attentive to the prophets of his time (II Chronicles 26:4-5). In return, his campaigns to fortify the country and establish more secure borders were all successful (26:5-10). Following the account of these achievements, the Bible portrays in detail Uzziah's ensuing military build-up. It tells of Uzziah's 2,600 officers who commanded a standing army of 307,500 and of all the armaments that were allotted them (26:11-15). This build-up, however, had corruptive consequences (26:15-21):

His fame spread far, for he was helped wonderfully, and he became strong. (16) When he was strong, he grew so arrogant he acted corruptly: he trespassed against his God by entering the Temple of the Lord to offer incense on the incense altar. (17) The priest Azariah, with a brigade of eighty priests of the Lord followed him in (18) and confronting King Uzziah said to him, "It is not for you Uzziah, to offer incense to the Lord, but for the Aaronite priests, who have been consecrated to offer incense. Get out of the sanctuary, for you have trespassed; there will be no glory in it for you from the Lord God." (19) Uzziah, holding the censer and ready to burn incense, got angry; but as he got angry with the priests leprosy broke out on his forehead in front of the priests in the House of the Lord

Arthur Green (New York:Crossroad, 1986) 49. Levenson sees this idea expressed in Psalm 2:6: "But I have installed My king/ on Zion My holy mountain."

Psalm 78:68-69 also attests to the connection between the Temple and the monarchy: "He did choose the tribe of Judah/ Mount Zion, which He loved/ (69) He built His sanctuary like the heavens/ like the earth that He established forever." The choice of the tribe of Judah may be a geographic reference to Jerusalem and the site of the Temple, or it may refer to the choice of the Davidic line to rule over Israel. According to this second interpretation, verse 69 pairs the choice of the Davidic line with the choice of Mount Zion as the site of the Temple.

beside the incense altar. (20) When the chief priest Azariah and all the other priests looked at him, his forehead was leprous, so they rushed him out of there; he too made haste to get out, for the Lord had struck him with a plague. (21) King Uzziah was a leper until the day of his death. He lived in isolated quarters as a leper, for he was cut off from the House of the Lord.

What were the motivations that drove Uzziah to violate the sanctity of the Temple by entering its inner precincts? At first blush, it would seem that Uzziah's motivations were no different than those of the other kings who misused the Temple for the purposes of their own glory. In violating the sanctity of the Temple, Uzziah wished to demonstrate that he was above the law. Indeed, there are several indications in the passage that support this reading. His actions, according to verse 15, were motivated by haughtiness in the wake of his great military build-up. It is also evident that Azariah saw personal distinction as the driving force in the king's actions: "Get out of the sanctuary, for you have trespassed; *there will be no glory in it for you* from the Lord God (v. 18)." On the strength of these supports the midrash contends that Uzziah desired for himself the title of High Priest.¹⁴

An alternative reading is possible, however, that portrays Uzziah in a more favorable light. Recall, that the chapter opens by praising Uzziah for his loyalty to God. Even at the moment of infraction, the Bible hints at Uzziah's positive intentions: "he trespassed against *his* God by entering the Temple of the Lord (v. 16)." Uzziah's actions stemmed from devotion — albeit misplaced — to God. He is struck with leprosy — a most fitting punishment, for the primary law pertaining to the leper is that he may not enter the Temple complex. Uzziah unlawfully trespassed the precincts of the Temple. His punishment signals this to him by restricting his access to any part of the Temple complex while in his state of affliction. When he is struck with leprosy, the Bible notes, he rushes to leave, dutifully obeying the law of the leper, and compliantly suffers his punishment until the end of his life. If, in fact, Uzziah was acting out of misplaced loyalty, what was it that motivated his infraction? A second voice in the midrash plumbs Uzziah's motivations:

He was motivated not for the sake of personal aggrandizement, nor for the sake of personal glory, but for the sake of his

14 *Vayikra Rabbah* 17:3.

Master — for he said to himself, “It is good that a king should serve the Glorious King.”¹⁵

In one sense, Uzziah’s sentiments were quite appropriate; he seems to have realized that God’s glory is a function of how the king is perceived. Acting on this premise, he wished to publicly demonstrate by serving in the Temple that even a powerful sovereign is servile before God. What Uzziah failed to grasp was that the limits of a powerful sovereign are most sharply demonstrated by the law that a king may not serve in the Temple at all.¹⁶

God Destroys His Own House?

Many of the religious and social problems attendant with the Temple’s existence, arose out of the misconceptions of the kings of the period. Perhaps the greatest risk engendered through the presence of a Temple, however, is one that stems from a misconception of the masses. As a symbol of God’s acclaim in the world, the Temple can be misconstrued as inviolate, even during a period of waywardness. This is the focus of Jeremiah 7:3-12:

Thus said the Lord of Hosts ... (4) Don’t put your trust in illusions and say, “The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are these [buildings].” (5) No, if you really mend your ways and your actions ... (7) then only will I let you dwell in this place ... (9) Will you steal and murder and commit adultery and swear falsely, and sacrifice to Ba’al, and follow other gods whom you have not experienced, (10) and then come and stand before Me in this House which bears My name and say, “We are safe”? — [Safe] to do all these abhorrent things! (11) Do you consider this House which bears My name, to be a refuge of thieves? As for Me, I have been watching — declares the Lord. (12) Just go to My place at Shiloh, where I had established My name formerly, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of My people Israel.

Viewing the Temple through the eyes of Jeremiah, it is difficult for us to comprehend the mentality of his audience. Couldn’t they see the hypocrisy in their actions? Further, it is evident that they were aware

15 *Sifrei Bemidbar* 99.

16 See in this vein, Nachmanides, *Genesis* 49:10.

that they were behaving contrary to God's will. Jeremiah observes that they come to the Temple and declaim, "we are safe" — a declaration that implies a consciousness of guilt, a knowledge that offenses have been committed. How, then, could they think that God would be desirous of their visits to the Temple?

The people of Jeremiah's time were well aware that stealing, adultery, and the like were wrong. But they assumed that their actions could be atoned for if followed by proper action. Their premise was not entirely mistaken. God may look unfavorably at one who willfully commits an infraction. But a wrong committed in one sphere does not cancel out the merit of a right carried out in another. It is meritorious for a person to keep kosher, for example, even if he desecrates the Sabbath.

The value of Temple worship, however, cannot be viewed in such a compartmentalized fashion, where merits and demerits stand in separate columns of the tally sheet. There is a fundamental difference between Temple worship and the fulfillment of other ritual commandments. When a Jew is called upon to fulfill a ritual obligation he is called upon to *obey*. If he complies, he is considered meritorious, for with regard to that particular commandment he has done his duty; he has obeyed. The commandment to worship in the Temple, however, is not merely a calling to obey. As Jeremiah expresses it here in verse 10, to worship in the Temple is to come before God in His House. It is a step beyond complying with God's commands; *to come to the Temple is to address God directly*. If a person does not display fidelity toward God or if he acts immorally, then the very basis of his relationship with God is found wanting. Under these circumstances Temple worship not only loses its meaning; it becomes an abomination, because it is a statement that the individual has the audacity to address God directly in His House when the very core of the relationship has rotted.

By contrast, Jeremiah's audience saw Temple worship not only as a good deed that would stand unaffected by their transgressions but as the very key to their salvation. Aware of the significance of Temple worship, they assumed that an appearance in God's House would surely be enough to atone for even the most grievous offenses. Jeremiah's message to them, however, is that one can only contemplate coming to the Temple if the total scope of his behavior is upright. One can only appear directly before God if the totality of his relationship with God warrants it.

Jeremiah's admonition highlights a second aspect of the Temple's presence that the people had misconstrued. What perspective stands behind their statement, "the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the

Lord, the Temple of the Lord are these [buildings]”? Jeremiah’s audience mistakenly believed that if the acclaim of God in the world was represented by the Temple’s construction, then its destruction must symbolize God’s defamation. Thus, they reasoned, the Temple could never be destroyed — for why would God ever let His name be so defamed? Taking this one step further, the people of Jeremiah’s age assumed that since God’s Temple could never be destroyed, Jerusalem was therefore inviolable to enemy attack, and there was no need, therefore, to heed the prophets like Jeremiah who were forecasting impending doom. It was in this spirit that the people confidently declared, “The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are these [buildings].”

While Jeremiah’s contention that the Temple can be destroyed is apparent to us, there seems to be some merit in the claims of Jeremiah’s detractors. How can God allow the Temple be destroyed if that will lead to a defamation of His name?

This requires us to examine some of the basic premises concerning the conditions necessary for the Temple’s construction. The Temple could only be built once Israel’s actions and stature constituted a sanctification of God’s name in the world.¹⁷ But what happens when that level of achievement begins to deteriorate? The Book of Kings is a record of how Israel failed to maintain the standards achieved during the time of Solomon. Yet the Temple remained standing for over four hundred years. Apparently, then, the standards needed to sustain the Temple’s existence were not as high as those needed to warrant its erection.

This was so because Jeremiah’s detractors were, in fact, partially correct in their basic premise about the implications of the Temple’s destruction: when the Temple is destroyed, the name of God *does* suffer deprecation. In an age when the Temple stands but Israel sins, the Temple will not be destroyed quickly. Even if the people are no longer worthy of His presence in their midst, God will refrain from destroying the Temple because His name will be diminished amongst the nations. At a certain point, however, Israel’s iniquity becomes so great that her actions inherently constitute a defamation of God’s name.

The prophets regarded the relationship between God and Israel as a bond of marriage. The marriage paradigm is useful in understanding why the Temple stood for so long while Israel sinned. Generally, a couple will decide to marry only once each side has become convinced of the high merits of the other. Once married, however, the couple will remain

17 The process that culminated with the Temple’s construction is explored in chapter four of *The Temple: Its Symbolism and Meaning Then and Now*.

wed in spite of sever strains on the relationship. Had these strains expressed themselves during courtship the marriage would never have been consummated. But once the marriage exists, separation and divorce will only be a measure of last resort. Only when shared life becomes entirely intolerable will the couple move to separate.

Within this conception, we can return to the Book of Kings and offer an explanation of why the Temple stood for so long while Israel sinned. Although Israel's actions were wayward, they were not so corrupt as to warrant the Temple's destruction, for that would have led to a defamation of God's name. When Israel's very behavior became the cause of God's defamation, however, no further purpose was served by the Temple's standing. Whether the Temple stood or fell, God's name would be defiled by the actions of the Jewish people. Israel's highest covenantal calling is fulfilled when her actions are a tribute to God's name. Conversely, then, her greatest failure occurs when her actions lead to the deprecation of God's name among the nations. Under these conditions, God sees no purpose in the Temple's existence and leads the effort to bring about its destruction (Ezekiel 24:21):

Thus said the Lord God: I am going to desecrate My sanctuary, your pride and glory, the delight of your eyes, and the desire of your heart.

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“HOW LOVELY IS YOUR DWELLING PLACE”

A REVIEW OF DANIEL W. BACHMAN, “A TEMPLE STUDIES BIBLIOGRAPHY”

Shon D. Hopkin

Abstract: “A Temple Studies Bibliography,” located on the Academy for Temple Studies website (<http://www.templestudies.org/home/introduction-to-a-temple-studies-bibliography/>), boasts over 8,000 entries focused on ancient temples from the Mediterranean and the Near East and modern expressions of temple building and worship, primarily in the Latter-day Saint (Mormon) community. This review details the bibliography’s extensive strengths and comprehensive nature, identifies current limitations that will be resolved with full release of the resource, suggests future improvements, and gives examples of how this bibliography can be used to enhance scholarship in the growing field of temple studies.

This review hopefully will encourage readers to acquaint themselves with and take advantage of an extensive resource in the burgeoning field of temple studies. “A Temple Studies Bibliography” currently contains over 8,000 entries related to the temple, focusing on ancient temples from the Mediterranean area and the ancient Near East (Roman, Greek, Egyptian, Israelite, Jewish, etc.) and modern expressions of temple building and worship, primarily in the Latter-day Saint (Mormon) community. Daniel W. Bachman, the bibliography’s primary creator and editor, began the list in 2006 as an integral part of his own research on temples and has continued to build and improve it since that time. The bibliography was made publicly available on the website of the “Academy for Temple Studies” (www.templestudies.org) in October 2012. It has continued to receive significant additions and editing since 2012, with over 1,200 additional entries over that time and thousands of editing changes, including the addition, standardization, and refinement of key words that aid in the bibliography’s use and other helpful features such as the ability to identify recent additions to the bibliography.

Current Limitations

The list is still, to a certain degree, in its formative stages prior to full publication. This means that users must rely on search functions such as Control+F or Command+F. Advanced search capabilities, such as the ability to refine, maintain, and download or print search lists, are planned for the future. For now, users are limited to searching simple, precise words or phrases in the list. Because of the bibliography's length, it is maintained in three alphabetic sections, so users must search each of the three pages individually. Additionally, at the time this review is being written, the list shows no additions since late 2013. Thus, the bibliography currently contains limited listings from 2013 and no listings from 2014 or 2015. Bachman, however, has prepared a list of over 500 additional references (bringing total entries in the bibliography to over 8,500), which is scheduled for release concurrently with this review. This extensive addition will bring the bibliography almost completely up to date with the most recent contributions to temple scholarship. Published bibliographies are, by nature, outdated almost from the day of publication; from this perspective, "A Temple Studies Bibliography" is well ahead of its initial 2012 publication date and will continue to receive updates to stay abreast of the current state of the scholarly conversation. The introductory page of the bibliography requests assistance from those who find errors or those who can add additional sources to the list.

Benefits

Notwithstanding these current limitations, the bibliography is easy to use, provides immediate results that will rapidly lead its users to temple scholarship in their particular subset of research interest, and is remarkably clean of typos or other errors. Prepared by those with training and extensive experience in the field, it will save both the academic and the lay user countless hours of research time, will help ensure that relevant scholarship is not passed over or ignored, and will enable scholars to build more effectively on the foundation of what has gone before. For LDS scholars, there is at times a tendency to ignore the best of non-LDS scholarship in their writing and instead superimpose their own, modern viewpoints on ancient practices and settings. On

the other hand, there may be a tendency outside LDS circles to ignore or mistrust the vibrant, living insights that come from a modern, temple-building religious community. This bibliography can help bridge that gap and act as a corrective to those tendencies by including research on ancient temples side by side with publications on current temple practices within the LDS community. Using the search features can help researchers filter out content that is irrelevant for them, while the content is still accessible as needed. It should be noted that while the bibliography seeks for comprehensiveness, those who are unfamiliar with the scholarly literature on temple studies should not assume that all entries are of equal value or quality. Users will need to be discriminating in their decisions regarding what literature to use.

As a biblical scholar interested in Ritual Theory, the Day of Atonement, and the Divine Ascent, I was interested to explore how the list could aid my research. In a scan of the prepared list of key words, I immediately located search words that would rapidly lead me to the most-helpful sources and bypass other entries. The most important keywords for my unique approach to the topic include "ascent," "festivals," "liturgy," and "ritual." Several other keywords help point to specific aspects of the divine ascent on the Day of Atonement or point to texts and practices that prepared for, built upon, or connected with imagery and practices from that Jewish holy day. These include, among others, "ablutions," "anointing," "cosmology," "First Temple," "heavenly temple," "mountain," "preparation," "presence," "sacred space," "sacrifice," and "Second Temple." Additionally, some words or phrases that have not been listed as keywords are likely to show up in titles and can be easily searched, such as "atonement," "Day of Atonement," and "high priest."

When I pressed Control+F on my keyboard and searched "ascent," I located 129 references that dealt in some way with the topic. It took me about twenty minutes to scroll through the entire list and identify approximately fifteen articles that I had never found before and that fit my research interests most closely, providing me a focused and comprehensive bibliography (for my purposes) within less than half an hour. Having spent countless hours researching the topic, I was thrilled with these rapid results. Two references were of particular interest: a book from 2011 by Andrei Orlov that I was embarrassed to have missed in prior research, *Dark Mirrors: Azazel and Satanael in Early Jewish Demonology*, and a 1999 dissertation by Seth Sanders titled "Writing, Ritual, and Apocalypse: Studies of Ascent to Heaven

in Ancient Mesopotamia and Second Temple Judaism.” As I scanned the references, I was pleased to see the most important references that I had already located and relied on in my past research. A quick search into a secondary theme from the Day of Atonement, “sacred vestments,” provided 133 references, including about ten that appeared most helpful for my studies. A search for Day of Atonement provided twenty-two sources, a few of them new to me and almost all of them relevant. One article I wanted to check for inclusion was there as I had hoped: Belleli’s 1905 article on “The High Priest’s Procession on the Day of Atonement.” I also found an article discussing possible connections between Hebrews and the Day of Atonement, a topic of importance to me.

As mentioned earlier, a surprising and pleasant result of searching the bibliography for relevant resources was finding talks and books by LDS Church leaders that touched upon the subject. As a Latter-day Saint, I was interested to return to these sources to see how Church leaders had approached the topic. For a non-LDS researcher, they provide insight into how a religion that employs modern temple practices describes and relies upon those practices. Scanning and using the bibliography offered other pleasant surprises and side-benefits. For a number of years I have been interested in research on women and the Mosaic Law. Although the topic has clear connections to Israelite temples, I had never purposefully researched the topic using that lens. Since “women” is one of the keywords provided by the bibliography, I performed a quick search to see if any helpful sources would leap out and was pleased to uncover a number of useful references, including one that is most pertinent to my studies: Richard Whitekettle’s “Leviticus 12 and the Israelite Woman: Ritual Process, Liminality, and the Womb.”

Another unexpected side-benefit of using the bibliography was the way it expanded my view of the subject and encouraged me to explore aspects of temple studies that I had previously ignored. My research has always focused more on literature than on archaeology, but the addition of archaeological study is in many ways crucial to provide real-world examples of the often idealized or highly edited descriptions found in texts. The addition of literary studies is at times crucial to provide meaning and context for what is uncovered by archaeologists. My use of the bibliography, however, did not only encourage me to better explore new topics and avenues of research but also introduced me to new names in temple scholarship. As I reviewed the list and found an article title of interest to me, I often found that other articles by the same author were equally intriguing. George Ernest Wright was a name that was already

somewhat familiar to me, a scholar from 1930s–40s. Scanning the list of his temple-related publications encouraged me to explore his scholarship further. Scholars who have appreciated Margaret Barker's approach to temple studies can scan the list to make sure they have accessed the full range of her temple scholarship, and those who have not been introduced to her work can easily identify its importance.

Areas of Possible Improvement

In all, "A Temple Studies Bibliography" provides invaluable tools for researchers with a focus on the temple. Planned improvements — heightened search capabilities and fully up-to-date bibliographic additions — will continue to be put into place as the bibliography moves closer to its full release. As it continues to expand, there are areas that this researcher hopes will be considered for future inclusion, although they would require a significant addition of scholarly material. The material on modern Mormon temples and on ancient temples from the ancient Near East and the Mediterranean is very strong, but the intervening centuries could still benefit from additional attention. The concepts of sacred space (in churches, mosques, and synagogues), of priestly authority (whether priests, pastors, rabbis, or imams), and of ritual and liturgy throughout the centuries provide rich ground for continued temple research in Christianity (particularly in its Roman Catholic and Orthodox manifestations, but also in Protestantism), Judaism, and Islam. Much of the scholarship on these topics is not relevant to temple studies, but other scholarship is clearly connected to and sheds light on the influence of ancient temple practices. Additionally, although Mormon temples have been included as a prominent part of the list, certainly because they are one of the only modern religions that overtly builds upon biblical temple themes, other religious traditions could also provide fertile soil for research, either from a comparative standpoint or to investigate the possibility of ancient points of contact and influence. Again, much of the scholarship on sacred space/temples, religious ritual, and priestly authority from other religious traditions would not be relevant, but scholarship from Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Sikhism, Shinto, Baha'ism, and other world religions could provide useful insights for temple studies. The ability to filter, refine, and focus searches would greatly reduce any concerns of building a list that is too large or too inclusive. If needed, the list could also be tagged with a few headings that would allow users to easily create specialized lists

only including Mormon temple studies, Hindu temple studies, Israelite temple studies, etc.

While future possibilities for this list abound, the bibliography as it exists today provides a tool that is ready for use and is specifically targeted to the interests of those most heavily involved in temple studies.

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THE RETURN OF RHETORICAL ANALYSIS TO BIBLE STUDIES

Noel B. Reynolds

Review of:

Jack R. Lundbom, *Biblical Rhetoric and Rhetorical Criticism. Hebrew Bible Monographs 45* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2013), 354 pp., \$130.00.

Roland Meynet, *Rhetorical Analysis: An Introduction to Biblical Rhetoric. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 256* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 392 pp., \$200.00.

Abstract: There is now a growing consensus that the eighth and seventh centuries produced a distinctive Hebrew rhetoric that enabled writers, even down into New Testament times, to use both words and structures to communicate with readers in ways that have been largely invisible to modern Western interpreters. In this essay, the efforts of two leaders of this movement in Biblical studies to explain and defend their respective versions of this developing approach are reviewed.

Over the last six or seven decades, the stranglehold that nineteenth century historical or source criticism had established over advanced biblical studies was gradually loosened to the point that today many Bible scholars now see literary approaches in the ascendancy. I have selected these two authors' writings over the last two decades for a joint review because of the thoughtful and systematic treatments they give to these new approaches and their development. My larger agenda is to acquaint students of the Book of Mormon with developments in biblical studies that may significantly enhance in-depth readings of the Nephite scripture.

Book of Mormon readers benefitted from a jump-start in this direction famously provided by the 1960s discovery of chiasmus in that

text by John W. Welch — while serving as a missionary in Germany. But as biblical rhetorical studies have matured and developed more systematically in subsequent decades, we can now see that this rhetorical form is only one part of a much larger picture. We are now in a position to see chiasmus as one of a tool chest of rhetorical devices that had been developed by Hebrew writers in the eighth and seventh centuries — and which are on rich display in biblical texts such as Deuteronomy, Jeremiah, and the wisdom literature. Scholars who learn those rhetorical strategies are helping us to find much richer meanings and relationships within those biblical texts. Inasmuch as the Book of Mormon and the plates of brass come out of that same seventh century milieu, we might profitably ask to what extent their insights might help us understand that keystone Restoration scripture better as well.

Jack R. Lundbom

The collection of Jack Lundbom's papers published in 2013 by Sheffield Phoenix Press offers the best starting place for this joint review. Today Lundbom is a recognized leader in the approach styled "rhetorical criticism" ever since that label was proposed by James Muilenburg in his 1968 presidential address to the Society of Biblical Literature to signal that it was time to move on beyond the "form criticism" approach that he had championed to that point.¹ Lundbom positioned himself as an early leader in what has now become a substantial movement within biblical studies responding to Muilenburg's proposal. Using the methodology of rhetorical criticism, he has recently published a 1000-page commentary on Deuteronomy and is currently writing the Anchor Bible commentary on Jeremiah. Lundbom sees these two books exemplifying best the rhetorical techniques that developed among Hebrew writers in the two centuries before Lehi. *Biblical Rhetoric and Rhetorical Criticism* offers a convenient compilation of Lundbom's best published papers across a distinguished career and features those papers that explain and teach the methods of rhetorical criticism as it has developed for biblical studies.

The compilation is divided into four sections. The first four chapters will be of great value to readers who want to learn the basic principles and methods employed in rhetorical criticism. In these, Lundbom discusses the development of a Hebrew rhetoric in centuries eight and seven and relates this to other contemporary literatures. He traces the growing

1 James Muilenburg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88 (March, 1969): 1–18.

recognition of this Hebrew rhetoric in the writings of eighteenth and nineteenth century linguists and Bible scholars, several of whom appear to have independently discovered the importance of parallelism in Hebrew writing. Englishman Robert Lowth has been widely appreciated for his late eighteenth century attempt to define various types of Hebrew parallelism. But as Lundbom points out in detail, we now know that a German scholar, Christian Schöttgen, had produced an even more sensitive analysis fifty years previously — demonstrating “the rhetorical nature of parallelism” and showing “how parallelism *functions* for the Hebrew poet.” (15)

In the third chapter, Lundbom goes on to provide us with a brief account of the twentieth-century revival of classical rhetoric as an area of study in the American university that provided a place for the birth of rhetorical criticism at Cornell around 1920. Distinguishing their program from *literary* criticism, *rhetorical* criticism focused on audience effect — going beyond all earlier rhetorical studies in trying to explain how rhetorical “figures *function* in discourse.” (20)

As Muilenburg and others forged the new approach, they distinguished their efforts from form criticism, which sought to identify known literary forms that may have influenced Bible authors, and from classical rhetoric, which looked for the rhetorical figures long studied in ancient Greek and Roman literature. They recognized that they were not just looking for the occurrence of standard forms or recognized rhetorical figures but were rather looking for the unique elements of a text that would allow them to identify the specific rhetorical devices invoked or created by any particular author. The key dynamic for launching rhetorical criticism emerged from James Muilenburg’s graduate seminar on Deuteronomy in San Francisco and led to his 1968 SBL address.

Muilenburg’s *modus operandi* was straightforward. He taught that the first step in analyzing a text would be to define the limits of the literary unit as the author’s themes would be introduced and resolved within those limits. The second step would be to “perceive the structure of the literary unit,” the “configuration of its component parts,” (24–25) by closely analyzing included poetry, keywords, figures of speech, and strategically placed particles or repetitions — including chiasmus. Once the structure is clarified, the interpreter can move on to discern author intent, thought development, and meaning. In chapters three and four, Lundbom helpfully illustrates how this methodology can be profitably applied throughout the book of Jeremiah — the long-time focus of his own studies. Although the *inclusio* and *chiasmus* are frequent structural

elements that delimit textual units, an extensive range of rhetorical devices can be demonstrated to provide structure at all levels of textual units in Jeremiah. Lundbom even includes a list of fourteen criteria that he uses in delimiting the textual units within this book and provides examples of all of them from the text.

The last three sections of the book illustrate different applications of rhetorical criticism to (1) the primary history, (2) the prophets, and (3) the New Testament. In the process, Lundbom develops and presents a detailed handbook or manual for those who would like to learn how to perform rhetorical criticism in their study of Hebrew scriptures or texts that, like the gospels, are heavily influenced by the Hebrew rhetorical style that permeates the Old Testament.

In chapter six, Lundbom uses a comparison of the theological presentations of Abraham and David in the Bible to illustrate the scholarly methodological evolution of scholars away from Julius Wellhausen's powerful nineteenth-century source criticism to other methods such as form criticism, tradition-historical criticism, and finally rhetorical criticism, which he feels is now the majority approach. Scholars using these methods generally assume key findings of the source critics but often find themselves rethinking old certainties when they see pieces of text assigned by source critics to different authors fitting together perfectly into rhetorical structures designed almost necessarily by a single author.

In chapter seven, the author explains the deep differences in the "hypotactic" rhetorical strategies of Greek and modern western writing and the indirect "paratactic" logic of Hebrew rhetoric as exemplified in the Bible. In chapter eight, Lundbom explores possible scribal contributions to Old Testament theology. Chapter nine takes up one infrequently used device of Hebrew rhetoric — the *idem per idem* used to terminate debate. In Exodus, God tells Moses "I will be what I will be" (3:14) and "I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy." (33:19) Esther closes discussion of her dangerous plan by saying, "And if I perish, I perish." (4:16) Book of Mormon readers will see this same pattern when Nephi concludes explanation of his writing decisions saying, "I, Nephi, have written what I have written..." (2 Nephi 33:3).

Chapter eleven powerfully illustrates Lundbom's success in identifying rhetorical structures that signal delimitations of Hebrew texts. He argues persuasively that Deuteronomy as originally written only included the first twenty-eight chapters of our modern version. His evidence for this consists in the discovery of two forms of repetition

used throughout those chapters to set off smaller and larger units of the text. “The *inclusio* is seen to be the pre-eminent closure device” in these chapters, and many times the concentric repetitions of chiasmus perform the same function.² (118) Consequently, he sees chapters 29–34 as addenda added to this text during the reign of Josiah (part of which could be the book of the law found in the temple) and dates the original as a probable product of the days of Hezekiah a century earlier. Lundbom sees the books of Deuteronomy and Jeremiah as classic exhibits of Hebrew rhetoric. Chapter thirteen provides further support for these conclusions by means of a detailed rhetorical analysis of Deuteronomy 32 — the Song of Moses. A similar approach to 2 Kings 2 provides a highly original interpretation of Elijah’s chariot ride in chapter fourteen.

Of great value to students of rhetorical criticism will be Lundbom’s chapter fifteen, which lists, explains, and provides textual examples of fifty rhetorical devices that scholars have identified in biblical Hebrew rhetoric. While many of these overlap classical rhetoric handbooks, most have distinctively Hebrew characteristics. Chapters 16–24 provide examples of detailed rhetorical analysis of passages from Amos, Hosea, and Jeremiah. The final two chapters present rhetorical analyses of passages from Matthew, Paul, and Mark to illustrate how the Greek-speaking Christians were in fact heirs to the Hebrew rhetoric of their traditional scriptures.

Roland Meynet

Less well known in the USA is the French tradition of “rhetorical analysis,” which also received its initial inspiration from the same eighteenth and nineteenth century British Bible scholars who focused on the dominant role of different uses of parallelism in ancient Hebrew rhetoric. Meynet lists mid-twentieth century predecessors Enrico Galbiati, Paul Lamarche, and Albert Vanhoye, with Marc Girard, and Pierre Auffret from his own generation. While there continues to be some sibling rivalry and effort to distinguish themselves from the blossoming “rhetorical criticism” embraced by American commentators, newcomers will not easily find important differences between the two approaches. In this 1998

2 It may be of interest to readers of this review that the *inclusio*, by which is usually meant the beginning and ending of a text unit by repetition of the same thematic word or phrase, has proved to be key to the identification of three authoritative expositions of the gospel of Jesus Christ in the Book of Mormon. See Noel B. Reynolds, “The Gospel According to Mormon,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 68 (2015, 2): 218–234.

exposition, Roland Meynet criticized the American inclusion of categories of classical rhetoric of the Graeco-Roman world and emphasized that the goal of *rhetorical analysis* is to establish “specific organizational laws of biblical texts,” and “to identify the rhetoric which presided over the composition of these texts.” (37–8) He describes the French tradition as focused exclusively “on the structure and composition of these texts” — and not concerned with figures of speech, other aspects of elocution, or the search for certain ideas in a text — as is standard in classical rhetorical studies. The examples Meynet offers do seem to support his claims to a difference of emphasis, but it is not hard to imagine that over time these two streams may merge as each recognizes the strengths and contributions of the other.

One of the principal contributions of Meynet’s volume is the compilation of key excerpts from the largely inaccessible writings of the early discoverers of Hebrew rhetoric. Meynet has selected long passages that seem to have the most lasting value to show the evolution of the rhetorical approach as it developed and expanded over three centuries. Any student of biblical rhetoric will appreciate the opportunity to read and study these early writers, including Robert Lowth; Christian Schöttgen, who discovered Hebrew parallelism; Johann-Albrecht Bengel, who recognized concentric parallelism (*chiasmus*); John Jebb and Thomas Boys, who are labeled respectively by Meynet as the inventor and founder of rhetorical analysis; and later nineteenth century scholars who embraced and elaborated the methodology, including Friedrich Köster, David Heinrich Müller, Johannes Konrad Zenner, John Forbes, and Ethelbert William Bullinger.³ In spite of Meynet’s protestations already mentioned, many of these did not abandon their training in classical rhetoric but included its insights as appropriate in their analyses of Hebrew writings. In chapter three, Meynet continues with the presentation of key contributions from the writings of twentieth-century scholars such as George Buchanan Gray, Charles Souvay, Marcel Jousse, and Nils Wilhelm Lund, whose massive study of the rules of *chiasmus* continues to inform and inspire contemporary scholars.⁴ “Lund’s great

3 For a much more expansive history of the rhetorical dimensions of biblical studies at different points in time and a broader presentation of the full range of literary approaches in recent centuries as the context of rhetorical criticism, see Phyllis Trible, *Rhetorical Criticism: Context, Method, and the Book of Jonah* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1994).

4 Nils Wilhelm Lund, *Chiasmus in the New Testament: A Study in the Form and Function of Chiastic Structures* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1942; repr., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992).

originality lies in the fact that he was the first to attempt to ascertain the organizational laws of the concentric structures.” (143) Finally, Meynet credits BYU’s own John W. Welch, whose 1981 book re-ignited chiasmus studies and helpfully provided the world of biblical scholars with the first complete bibliography of chiasmus publications, enabling contemporary scholars to get a grasp on the extent and quality of the work that had already been done.⁵

The impressive second half of Meynet’s book is offered as a first-ever effort to systematize all the important findings about Hebrew rhetoric and to reduce these to a handbook for those who would engage in rhetorical analysis. To that end, chapter five provides an exhaustive inventory “of the relationships which can exist between linguistic elements, at the successive organizational levels of language.” (183) The levels referred to here are 1) lexical, 2), morphological, 3) syntactical, 4), the level of rhythm, and 5) the level of discourse. Meynet’s object in this inventory is to show “that the linguistic elements at their different organizational levels can have a rhetorical function, on top of their semantic and syntactic functions.” By taking “into account the whole ensemble of elements,” the rhetorical analyst will be able “to detect those that are relevant on the rhetorical level, that is to say those that serve as marks in the composition of the text.” (198)

The paragraph introducing chapter 6 summarizes the formal assumptions of Meynet’s theory of Hebrew rhetoric and is worth reproducing here in full.

The linguistic elements in a relationship of identity or opposition are not distributed at random. Their position in the text does not only obey the syntactic and semantic rules and constraints; at all organizational levels of the text, it follows the structuring laws of discourse. The *position* of the related elements can confer on them a function of indication or mark of *composition*. Their disposition forms figures of composition which all obey the great law of symmetry. The two basic forms of symmetry are parallelism and, at the cost of creating a neologism, *concentrism*; parallelism when the related elements are reproduced in the same order, concentrism when they are reproduced in the reversed order. (199)

5 John W. Welch, *Chiasmus in Antiquity: Structures, Analyses, Exegesis* (Hildesheim, Germany: Gerstenberg Verlag, 1981).

Having inventoried the possible linguistic elements of a composition, Meynet now proceeds to classify the various ways in which these elements can be related in successively larger units of a composition. Meynet revises the earlier proposal of Albert Vanhoye and its nomenclature to produce a model of composition that can exhibit eight levels, beginning at the low end of rhetorical organization with the “member,” and rising successively through aggregation to the “segment,” the “piece,” the “part,” the “passage,” the “sequence,” the “section,” and finally, the “book.” The chapter systematically describes and explores, with actual textual examples, the various possibilities for rhetorical organization at each level. This is not casual reading. Meynet acknowledges that few practitioners of rhetorical analysis fully understand or exemplify this kind of systematic analysis, but he offers this manual as a means of taking the approach to an appropriate next level of formality and uniformity of practice.

In his final two chapters, Meynet discusses the actual process of rhetorical analysis and its fruits. The analyst must essentially rewrite the text with typographical formatting to show the rhetorical function of every word — producing “an objectivization that does not allow approximation.” (310) He further notes that this can only work completely when the original text is available as translations inevitably “deform the text, in that they mask or destroy the rhetorical figure.” (310) Those who are forced to work with a translation, should not expect their rhetorical analyses to be complete. No doubt, part of Meynet’s reservations about rhetorical criticism would be the disinclination of its practitioners to push their analyses to this level of microscopic detail for every line of text.

The literature of rhetorical criticism or analysis is now very large and continues to grow with new and better studies being published every year. Again, my motivation for reviewing these two volumes is the hope that students of the Book of Mormon may find enhanced support therein for their close readings of that text, which comes from the same time and cultural milieu as the Hebrew rhetoric that these scholars find in the Bible.

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IMAGE IS EVERYTHING: PAY NO ATTENTION TO THE MAN BEHIND THE CURTAIN

Kevin Christensen

Abstract: Soon after the appearance of my Interpreter review of Jeremy Runnells' Letter to a CES Director, he promised to provide his personal response. Although this response has not yet appeared, he did post an essay called "The Sky is Falling" by his friend Johnny Stephenson. After I read the essay closely in May, I realized that it provides, however unintentionally, a valuable set of discussion points with illustrative examples. My response begins with some preliminaries, surveys essential background issues concerning facts, ideology, and cognitive dissonance, and then addresses his historical arguments regarding the First Vision and priesthood restoration accounts.

Soon after the appearance of my *Interpreter* review¹ of his *Letter to a CES Director*,² Jeremy Runnells promised to provide his personal response.³ At this writing (May 2015), that personal effort has not yet appeared.⁴ However, in April 2015, Runnells posted an essay called "The

1 Kevin Christensen, "Eye of the Beholder, Law of the Harvest: Observations on the Inevitable Consequences of the Different Investigative Approaches of Jeremy Runnells and Jeff Lindsay," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 10 (2014): 175–238.

2 Jeremy Runnells, "Letter to a CES Director" <http://cesletter.com/Letter-to-a-CES-Director.pdf>.

3 Jeremy Runnells, posted on June 13, 2014 at <http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/eye-of-the-beholder-law-of-the-harvest-observations-on-the-inevitable-consequences-of-the-different-investigative-approaches-of-jeremy-runnells-and-jeff-lindsay/>

4 In the meantime, he has asked for financial donations to support a future effort in this regard (see Jeremy Runnells, <http://cesletter.com/ces-letter-at-the-crossroads.html>). For the record, I wrote my piece on at my own initiative, on my own time, solely using resources of my own.

Sky is Falling”⁵ by his friend Johnny Stephenson. After reading the essay, I realized that it provides, however unintentionally, a valuable set of discussion points with illustrative examples. My response begins with some preliminaries, surveys essential background issues concerning facts, ideology, and cognitive dissonance, and then addresses his historical arguments regarding the First Vision and priesthood restoration accounts.

Portraits and Poses

Runnells introduces his friend’s essay by saying: “We will list and debunk the numerous specific strawmans [*sic*] Kevin Christensen employs in his essay. Christensen crafts whole scenarios of what *he thinks* my position is, when it in fact is *not* my position at all. It is extremely disingenuous and arrogant on the part of Kevin Christensen to use such dishonest tactics in his attempt to discredit me and the *CES Letter*.” Runnells also comments: “So, this Mormon apologist stranger is qualified to accurately judge me, read my mind and tell us all what I was and was not disillusioned with?”

What was the point of publishing the “Letter to a CES Director” on the Web if not to permit strangers to read and judge your thoughts? And was not the point of the letter to explain to all and sundry exactly what Runnells was disillusioned with? If I had uncritically swallowed everything Runnells wrote, applauded, agreed with him, forgot everything I knew that his arguments did not address, publicly abandoned my faith, and donated to him what I saved in tithes, would he still be telling me that I was not qualified to judge his thinking because after all, we’ve never met? Are the qualifications of his uncritical readers any concern with respect to their capacity to judge the quality of his thinking? Is it my personal qualifications or my public conclusions that bother him?

Runnells says, “There are many schizophrenic instances where Christensen makes up ‘my’ argument himself and then answers it himself as if he was accurately representing my argument all along.”

I quote Runnells around twenty times in my essay, my intent being to let his own words demonstrate his positions on the points I chose to address. The only mind-reading I attempted involved my reading

5 Jeremy Runnells and Johnny Stephenson, “The Sky is Falling” at <http://cesletter.com/apologetics/the-sky-is-falling-part-1.html>. All quotes from Runnells (unless stated otherwise) and Stephenson are to the web article, which has no pagination.

and re-reading the thoughts that Runnells published for all to read. Runnells and Stephenson are free to say whatever they choose about LDS apologists. But freedom *of* speech is not the same thing as freedom *from* speech. Quite the opposite. We are free to consider not only how accurate their description is but also how comprehensive and coherent their overall explanation of Mormonism is.

Stephenson begins by explaining that Christensen “has written a long rambling folksy sounding diatribe about how Mormon apologist Jeff Lindsay’s ‘investigative approach’ is far superior to that of my friend Jeremy Runnells, because Lindsay did not come to a negative conclusion about Mormonism.”

I notice rhetorically helpful words like “diatribe” and “my friend.” Stephenson claims that I favor Lindsay’s approach because of the conclusions he reached. In truth, I favor Lindsay’s approach and example because I see his arguments and evidence as superior. I explicitly cite and mention Lindsay’s “LDS FAQ (for Frequently Asked Questions) which deals with all of the issues that Runnells raised and more. But Lindsay does so both at greater length, over a much broader span of time, consulting a wider range of sources, providing far more documentation, and including far more original research than Runnells.”⁶

If Runnells had offered arguments and evidence that I thought were superior, I could have been persuaded. (And I have often written about how values from Thomas Kuhn and Alma 32 should be employed in measuring superiority in this kind of debate.) But how can I possibly consider them superior when Runnells, to cite one conspicuous example, has nothing whatsoever to account for the Old World correlations in the Book of Mormon? Shall I let him pull a curtain of complete neglect over that? Of my summary of what Lindsay has accomplished since 1994 as compared to what Runnells offered after one year (two at this writing), Stephenson says, “Yes, one would think that someone who has been a Mormon apologist since 1994 and has had a website for that long would have more documentation and research. This is common sense. Yet it doesn’t stop Christensen from using this against Jeremy.” Heaven forbid that anyone would ever use common sense and superior documentation against any arguments that Runnells offers!

Stephenson describes my essay as “basically a set of elaborate strawman arguments, arrogant assumptions and the usual dodgy Mormon apologetic responses to critics.” Okay. Stephenson says, “In his introduction, Christensen calls Runnells ‘obsessive’ and contrasts that

6 Kevin Christensen, “Eye of the Beholder,” 176.

with Lindsay's 'boundless enthusiasm.' It is obvious where this is going right from the start." My obviousness seems to be a quality that goes against the grain of a claim that I am disingenuous.

Point of fact: Runnells describes his CES letter as the result of "an absolute rabid obsession with Joseph Smith and Church history."⁷ I would have thought that my repeating and quoting his self-description was not an academic crime. I was not attempting any shade of *ad hominem*, just being a reporter. Oddly enough, Stephenson does not mention my quotation of Runnells's self-description. Dare I call this a spin of omission?

He continues: "Recently, Jeremy and I completed a 458-page response to Brian Hales' attacks on him and others. One hopes that this might be enough to satisfy those like Christensen, but he will probably complain that it is too long."

It really depends on the quality of the content, doesn't it? I have, as it happens, read many lengthy books. Some of them I like a great deal and I have even re-read them. Length and persuasiveness are not the same thing. Nor are scandalous topics and foundational topics necessarily the same thing, nor, in my view, deserving of the same effort.

Stephenson says "Christensen claims in his essay that people are human and they evolve. But he won't give that to Jeremy in this instance." Actually, I do explicitly grant that to Runnells. And I invite both Runnells and Stephenson to continue to evolve in their views. Where they charge me with deliberate dishonesty, I said of Runnells:

And I understand how background assumptions shape his reactions to the information he does select to emphasize. Even so, I don't think that he is being intentionally deceptive, or betraying my trust. And my experience has been that those less-than-omniscient Sunday School teachers and manual writers, or whomever, who did not tell him about those sources and details, probably did not know either. It's just people being people as I have learned to expect them to behave, doing the best that they could, according to their lights and given their resources, rather than certifiably omniscient people violating a sacred trust by withholding information.⁸

7 Runnells, "Letter to a CES Director," 5, in Christensen, "Eye of the Beholder," 176.

8 Christensen, "Eye of the Beholder," 203.

Stephenson says, of my use of language regarding Runnells, that “He is ‘brittle’ (seventeen times) and ‘bitter’ because he does not accept Mormon apologetic spin and obfuscation.”

I searched my essay and I find the word *brittle* five times, which by my count, is not seventeen, and in context not always directed at Runnells in particular.⁹ Apparently Stephenson searched the online version of my article but did not check the instances individually to see the context nor notice that twelve instances of *brittle* happened in the online discussion of my essay,¹⁰ not the essay itself.

I use the word “brittle” in my essay not because Runnells rejects “Mormon apologetic spin and obfuscation,” but because in my view Runnells demonstrates mental brittleness in dealing with non-traditional readings and the contextual reframing that invites such readings. He does not consider the implications of my Ian Barbour quotation that “a network of hypothesis and observations is always tested together. Any particular hypothesis can be maintained by rejecting or adjusting other auxiliary hypothesis.”¹¹ Runnells puts new wine in old bottles, and complains that the bottle shatters and the wine spills.¹² He rejects our offer of more durable and appropriate new wine bottles on grounds they are not old wine bottles. I quoted Joseph Smith on the nature of some saints to “shatter like glass”¹³ upon encountering anything contrary to their traditional thinking, another image that applies to the Runnells’s account and suggests the word *brittle* to my mind.

Stephenson complains again of my reference to Lindsay’s twenty-plus years of substance and original research, complaining that “For this to be a really accurate comparison, he needs to give Jeremy another 18 or so years to catch up. But since when has FairMormon and its apologists ever been fair?”

Lovely rhetorical question, don’t you think? Blanket insinuation and condemnation about FairMormon without any need to consider specific individuals or address specific arguments. Is the issue acquiring more

9 For “brittle” see Christensen, “Eye of the Beholder,” 177, 232, and 234 (3x).

10 See <http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/eye-of-the-beholder-law-of-the-harvest-observations-on-the-inevitable-consequences-of-the-different-investigative-approaches-of-jeremy-runnells-and-jeff-lindsay/>

11 See Christensen, “Eye of the Beholder,” 215, citing Ian Barbour, *Myths, Models, and Paradigms: A Comparative Study in Science and Religion* (NY: Harper & Row, 1974), 99.

12 See Christensen, “Eye of the Beholder,” 178, citing Matthew 9:17.

13 See Christensen, “Eye of the Beholder,” 232–233, citing Joseph Fielding Smith, ed. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (SLC: Deseret Book, 1938), 331.

truth (that is, gaining better knowledge of things as they are, were, and are to come¹⁴) or fairness? Should we never have to deal with people who know more and have more experience in some area than we do? Should we outlaw parents or teachers or scholars or doctors or plumbers, for example, on the grounds that their experience, effort, training and tools provide an unfair competitive advantage over their children, pupils, readers, patients, or customers?¹⁵

Before Perception: The Importance of Perspective

The point of a comparison between Runnells and Lindsay is to actively try to help readers understand religious debates in general by considering the nature of differing approaches and their different results in relation to faith questions. The difference in their efforts, observations, assumptions, and conclusions provide a modern illustration of the insight and relevance of the Parable of the Sower. (Stephenson nowhere reports that the Parable of the Sower is foundational to my approach.) The same seeds (words) can produce widely different harvests, depending on the soil and nurture.¹⁶ Do not Lindsay's different soil and nurture lead to a different harvest, regarding the same issues that so trouble Runnells? Do not mine? And consider that at some point in our personal histories, Jeff Lindsay, Mike Ash, Neal Rappleye, Daniel Peterson, and many others, including yours truly, had spent less time exploring faith questions than Runnells has now. Something different in our approaches got us past the point where Runnells lost faith and kept us going for years afterwards. We did not just passively accept what we were taught in "approved" books and meetings, and we did not shatter on our encounters with critical sources. We even make original contributions to LDS scholarship. And, contra Stephenson, the difference is not just a youthful spiritual experience. In a previous volume of *Interpreter*, I reviewed a book in which the author reported his loss of faith despite an impressive spiritual experience.¹⁷ One of my comments in the *Interpreter* discussion of my "Eye of the Beholder" essay points out: "Having had a spiritual experience may give one person some reason to have patience with unresolved questions,

14 See D&C 93:24.

15 On this theme, read Kurt Vonnegut Jr., "Harrison Bergeron," at http://wordfight.org/bnw/bnw-unit_packet.pdf

16 Matthew 13:3–23, Mark 4:3–20.

17 Kevin Christensen, "Sophic Box and Mantic Vista: A Review of *Deconstructing Mormonism*," *Interpreter* 7 (2013): 113–179.

but another person may find that unresolved questions leads them to dismiss their spiritual experience.”¹⁸

Nowhere have I argued that because I had a spiritual experience when I was 19, Runnells must be wrong, so I don’t have to reply to his arguments.¹⁹ I have done a significant amount of reading in my life. My arguments were based on what I learned from books and life experience because I can more easily convey such information to another person. I could also point to another excellent response to the “Letter to a CES Director” by the well-informed Neal Rappleye, who is three years younger than Runnells.²⁰ Is that fair to consider, or does his three-year age advantage mean that Runnells should grant Rappleye’s arguments special immunity from serious criticism or consideration?

It bears remembering that much of the information that people like Lindsay and I sought and found has become much easier and more economical to find these days. I got started decades before the Internet, when it took more than an Internet connection to track down information. But even with the potential advantage provided by the Internet and several decades of additional research and many important publications, a person seeks and finds or does not seek and does not find. A person seeks to “make a man an offender for a word” (Isaiah 29:21) or seeks with “readiness of mind ... whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11). And where a person seeks, what they are looking for, how they process the information they find, and how they respond to what they find along the way, all matters to both the course their journey takes and where they end up.

Stephenson has this:

An observation: I noticed that Christensen has provided links to various places in his notes, like to FairMormon and to

18 Kevin Christensen, comment, 18 June, 2014, <http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/eye-of-the-beholder-law-of-the-harvest-observations-on-the-inevitable-consequences-of-the-different-investigative-approaches-of-jeremy-runnells-and-jeff-lindsay/>

19 Stephenson quotes a FairMormon Podcast interview with me. It is of interest that he takes my testimony regarding something that happened more than 40 years ago at face value, without bothering to check for contemporary reports in newspapers, radio, or TV, or confirming witnesses. Nor does he seek out every time I told the story to probe for potential contradictions.

20 See Neal Rappleye, “An Open Letter to Jeremy Runnells” part 1, <http://www.studioetquoquefide.com/2014/08/an-open-letter-1-to-jeremy-runnells.html> and “An Open Letter to Jeremy Runnells” part 2, <http://www.studioetquoquefide.com/2014/08/an-open-letter-2-to-jeremy-runnells.html>.

Runnells' works. The ones to FairMormon are all active, while the ones to Runnells' works are all inactive. (That means you have to copy the address and put it into your browser if you want to go to it).

I find this tactic Orwellian and shady. Anything to make it harder to get information Christensen/apologists do not want their readers to access. What kind of equation could we write for that kind of mentality, I wonder?

I imagine that if Winston Smith, the unfortunate protagonist of George Orwell's *1984*, was threatened with the need to copy addresses for his browser searches, rather than, say, pursuit by Secret Police, imprisonment, malnutrition, physical abuse, and a face cage containing hungry rats, he might have found himself far more able to resist the pressure to conform to Big Brother. Winston Smith's dystopian world did not include Google, nor anything remotely comparable to the Joseph Smith Papers project. But who knows? Perhaps the need to copy and paste is a fate worse than death to some. What equation accounts for that mentality?

Opening the Curtain on Different Equations

Stephenson complains about the equations with which I set out my basic approach. My intent was to describe how Runnells appears to deal with information. Here is my first equation:

Runnells (or anyone) + Questions + Facts = Inevitable Final Negative Conclusion

Stephenson offers his revision of my equation, stating that this brings us closer to "truth and reality."

Jeremy Runnells (or anyone) + Questions + Facts (not Apologist spin) = Conclusion that Joseph Smith and the Church are not what they claim to be based on evaluating the evidence.

That Stephenson can suppose that by attaching his parenthetical "not apologist spin" he gets us closer to "truth and reality" is wonderfully revealing. To Runnells and Stephenson, spin and ideology is apparently something that happens to other people. Facts are self-evident and evidence speaks for itself. The side we are on is alone enough to demonstrate whether a person is right or wrong. It is also clear that

Stephenson's revision amounts to an affirmation that my description was accurate albeit while insisting that Runnells's approach to facts is correct.

What Stephenson urges on his readers here is a form of thinking that Ian Barbour describes in *Myths, Models, and Paradigms*: "During the 1930s and 1940s there was a wide acceptance of the positivist contention that science starts from indubitable data which can be described in a *neutral observation* language independent of all theories."²¹

But since that time, Barbour explains, philosophers of science such as Kuhn, Hanson, Polanyi, and Feyerband looked more carefully at the real work of scientists and realized that:

There are no bare uninterpreted data. Expectations and conceptual commitments influence perceptions, both in everyday life and in science. Man supplies the categories of interpretation, right from the start. The very language in which observations are reported is influenced by prior theories ... The presuppositions which the scientist brings to his inquiry are reflected in the way he formulates a problem, the kind of apparatus he builds, and the type of variable he considers important. Here the emphasis is on *theory* and the way it permeates observation.

In N. R Hanson's oft quoted words, '*All Data are theory-laden.*' The procedures of measurement and the interpretation of the resulting measurement and interpretation of the resulting numerical values depend in implicit theoretical assumptions. Most of the time, scientists work within a framework of thought which they have inherited ... But, says Feyerband, when the background theory itself is an issue, when the fundamental assumptions and basic concepts are under attack, then the dependence of measurement on theoretical assumptions is crucial.²²

This understanding is exactly what Stephenson fails to address and consider anywhere in his response. In debates about religion, background theory is the issue, fundamental assumptions and basic concepts are at stake, and therefore, the dependence of measurement and observation on those assumptions is crucial. This theory-dependence was exactly

21 Barbour, *Myths, Models, and Paradigms*, 94.

22 Barbour, *Myths, Models, and Paradigms*, 95.

the reason for, and substance of, my whole approach. It is why I cited the Parable of the Sower and the Parable of the Wine Bottles. It's why I cite Kuhn and Barbour and Goff. My response to Runnells's use of a Roman Britain paradigm as a basis for his expectations for equally distinctive Nephite evidence in New York demonstrates exactly this issue in operation. That Stephenson appears to appreciate none of this suggests either that he is arguing in bad faith or that he has completely failed to follow my argument. Kuhn says: "Obviously then, there must be a conflict between the paradigm that discloses anomaly [consider Runnells's Roman Britain model] and the one that later renders the anomaly law-like" [compare Brant Gardner's 'The Social History of the Early Nephites' at FairMormon.]²³

The whole concept of paradigm debate and the influence of theory on experiment design, testing, and interpretation has also been a prominent theme in my LDS writings since my first publication in 1990. And Stephenson's conspicuous failure to address that basic underlying premise means that the beam in his own eye remains in place to obscure his vision. Everything that follows in his essay suffers thereby.

My second equation is my own frank acknowledgment of how all data is theory-laden:

Investigator [+/-] Preconceptions/(Adaptive or Brittle interpretive framework) x (Questions generated + Available facts/Selectivity + Contextualization + Subjective weighting for significance/Breadth of relevant knowledge) * Time = Tentative Conclusion²⁴

Notice that my second equation has general application, not just pointed at one side of the debates, but toward everyone involved. I am an investigator. We are all investigators. It is not that something like what he calls apologetic spin cannot exist. It is, rather, that he does not comprehend that his thinking is inescapably under exactly the same kinds of influence, i.e., his own obvious spin. Everyone has preconceptions that

23 Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd ed. (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1970), 97. For the Roman Britain paradigm for Book of Mormon evidence, see Runnells, "Letter to a CES Director," 8, quoted in Christensen, "Eye of the Beholder," 208-209. For Gardner, see <http://www.fairmormon.org/perspectives/fair-conferences/2001-fair-conference/2001-a-social-history-of-the-early-nephites>

24 Christensen, "Eye of the Beholder," 177. Compare my discussion in "Paradigms Crossed," *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 7/2 (1995): 187-208.

affect the questions they ask and what they can even imagine. Everyone's approach is mediated through paradigm-directed selectivity and given currently available information. Everyone contextualizes in ways that influence meaning. And everyone subjectively weighs the results of their inquiries based on a combination of their personal desires and expectations, the breadth of their knowledge and the time they spend. And because we all come short of omniscience, all of our conclusions ought to be somewhat tentative. As Alma 32 explains, our "cause to believe," whatever it is at any given moment, always falls short of perfect knowledge.

But Stephenson misses the universality of our common condition and writes this: "First, to really be accurate here .. the second equation should say 'Apologist,' not investigator, since Christensen is not speaking about investigators but, in his own words."

Well, I disagree with his subsequent digression, but more to the point, I find it utterly misdirected. In my second equation, I was emphatically speaking about everyone, not just apologists. But I don't think he is being dishonest, disingenuous, schizophrenic; or laboring under deceptive or arrogant assumptions. I think his assumptions are faulty, yes. I don't think he's reading my argument correctly or grasping the concepts at issue. And his failure to do so may also call into question his ability to parse the other data about which he makes blithely confident declarations.

Stephenson says, "Christensen seems to forget that he is an apologist for a Church which claims that Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon by 'the gift and power of God' with a peepstone that he put in a hat so he could see the shiny letters that somehow appeared on the stone. This same Church that wants you to read the Book of Mormon and make a decision on its truthfulness based on some kind of a spiritual experience. The same way that Christensen claimed to know that Moroni was real."

Likewise, Stephenson seems to forget that he is an apologist for Jeremy Runnells and their mutual unfaith, which claims that Joseph Smith fabricated the Book of Mormon. Their conclusions are at as much risk of bias and distortion as mine are — but Stephenson apparently cannot see this. He is objective and rational; all who disagree are merely schizophrenic apologists.

Notice the rhetorical effects that Stephenson applies, juxtaposing "gift and power of God" with the skeptical outsider term "peepstone."

The Book of Mormon recommendation for deciding on the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon is much more complex, interesting, and viable than the one Stephenson's report provides. We read in Alma 32:35-38:

[A]nd now behold, after ye have tasted this light is your knowledge perfect? Behold I say unto you, Nay; neither must ye lay aside your faith, for ye have only exercised your faith to plant the seed that ye might try the experiment to know if the seed was good.

And behold, as the tree beginneth to grow, ye will say: Let us nourish it with great care, that it may get root, that it may grow up, and bring forth fruit unto us. And now behold, if ye nourish it with much care it will get root, and grow up, and bring forth fruit.

But if ye neglect the tree, and take no thought for its nourishment, behold it will not get any root; and when the heat of the sun cometh and scorcheth it, because it hath no root it withers away, and ye pluck it up and cast it out.

Alma calls for experimenting upon the word, the goal of the experiments being to enlighten the understanding, to expand the mind, to increase our ability to discern and comprehend what we read. Compare this passage in Alma with this from Kuhn:

At the start a new candidate for a paradigm may have few supporters, and on occasions the supporters' motives may be suspect. Nevertheless, if they are competent, they will improve it, explore its possibilities, and show what it would be like to belong to the community and be guided by it. And as that goes on, if the paradigm is one destined to win its fight, the number and strength of persuasive arguments in its favor will increase.²⁵

My personal experiments extended far beyond a momentary spiritual experience at age 19. After an intellectual awakening during my mission, (in 1974, reading Nibley's *An Approach to the Book of*

25 Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 159. Compare John Clark, "Archeological Trends and Book of Mormon Origins," *BYU Studies* 44/4 (2005): 83-104.

Mormon on a P-day in Morecambe, Lancashire), I subsequently began a serious effort in the succeeding four decades to become better informed and to keep abreast of LDS scholarship and critical arguments. I have learned many things from a range of scholars that impress me, not just adding bricks to my existing stack of preconceptions, but sometimes radically changing the paradigm I had previously adopted. Occasionally I found that I could make some original contributions. I compared Alma's conversion with modern near-death experience accounts and aftereffects, leading to a Sunstone talk, and a 1993 *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* essay. Before that work, I could wonder, were Paul and Alma too special? Later in 1999, I listened to Howard Storm's NDE account. Did the non-LDS former atheist Howard Storm plagiarize Alma while nearly dying in France? I saw that Storm's conversion from atheist to Christian and his subsequent changed thought, behavior, and expression resembled Alma's far more than Alma's did Paul's. I saw that Alma demonstrates in detail an authentic response to a recurrent kind of human experience. My puzzlement led to a satisfying solution, rather than to increased dissonance. On a different track, I noticed how closely Mircea Eliade's description of the ancient Year Rite matched the events in 3 Nephi.²⁶ (Did Eliade borrow from Joseph Smith in writing *Cosmos and History: Myth of Eternal Return*?) I compared the epistemology in Alma 32 to Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. I read Robert Alter on *The Art of Biblical Narrative* and let that illuminate my reading of the stories of women in the Book of Mormon. I compared the scholarship of Margaret Barker on First Temple theology to the content of the Book of Mormon. Even Margaret was surprised and impressed. I have published several things in a range of journals and books, including an essay in a volume from Oxford University Press. During those years, as I felt prepared, I began testing my own expanding world view against a wide range of skeptical writings and perspectives. I read Brodie, the Tanners, *Wife No. 19*, *The Godmakers*, *Indian Origins and the Book of Mormon*, the Roberts Study, *View of the Hebrews*, *New Approaches to Book of Mormon Study*, *American Apocrypha*, *The New Mormon Challenge*, *Deconstructing Mormonism*, and several others.

Stephenson and Runnells fail to mention this personal intellectual effort on my part in accounting for my commitments. Neither does Stephenson recognize that Jeff Lindsay is a working scientist with a PhD.

26 See Kevin Christensen, review of *Indian Origins and the Book of Mormon* by Dan Vogel, *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 2 (1990): 248–253.

It is just possible that mentioning that sort of thing would undercut their portrait of LDS apologists as money-seeking spin doctors.

Remember that in his “Letter to a CES Director” Runnells had complained:

I was amazed to learn that, according to these unofficial apologists, translate doesn’t really mean translate, horses aren’t really horses (they’re tapirs), chariots aren’t really chariots (since tapirs can’t pull chariots without wheels), steel isn’t really steel, Hill Cumorah isn’t really in New York (it’s possibly in Mesoamerica), Lamanites aren’t really the principal ancestors of the Native American Indians, marriage isn’t really marriage (if they’re Joseph’s marriages? They’re just mostly non-sexual spiritual sealings), and prophets aren’t really prophets (only when they’re heretics teaching today’s false doctrine).²⁷

I quoted this statement by Runnells in my essay because I thought it was a good snapshot of Runnells’s mental and emotional responses. I find that the passage is informative and instructive from several angles. In addition to the comments I made in my “Eye of the Beholder” essay, I also notice that Barbour’s observations show that progress in science via paradigm shift typically involves exactly the kind of transformation in meaning that so disturbs Runnells in religion. Here is more from Ian Barbour to compare with the statement in Runnells: “Feyerband maintains that in the switch from Newtonian physics to relativity there was a *change in meaning* of all the basic terms. Time, length, mass, velocity, even the notion of simultaneity, were redefined in the new system.”²⁸

And what drives that *change in meaning* are the factors included in my second equation: changes in subjectivity, selectivity, context, expectations, and time. Stephenson and Runnells refuse to consider or accept the advantages of recognizing that such changes in meaning derive from subjectivity, selectivity, context, time, and expectations. By labeling it “apologetic spin,” and presumptuously proclaiming that their own beliefs come from simply facing facts, they provide their own rather unimaginative spin. As Stephenson reports, “By the time I was 18 I had over a thousand books in my library. I met Hugh Nibley and went to

27 Runnells, *Letter to a CES Director*, 80; quoted in Christensen, “Eye of the Beholder,” 233.

28 Barbour, *Myths, Models, and Paradigms*, 95.

BYU and went on a mission. All of that made little difference when I discovered evidence that I was able to evaluate without all the apologetic spin.”

For my part, I have been enlightened and felt my mind expand as I encountered such changes in meaning: when I learned the definitions of *translate*, when I read of the evidence for horses as we understand them and the possibilities in the common practice of loan shift; that the Hebrew for chariot means “riding thing” and does not require wheels; that steel swords have been found in ancient Israel dating to Lehi’s times, also that the word *steel* was applied to what we now call steel because a pre-existing word meant “to harden”; that New World languages preserve words for metals that predate most of the known evidence for metals; that in correlating the Book of Mormon to real-world locations, there is a correspondence between the availability of ores in specific locations and the mention of metals in the text corresponding to those locations; that if you bother to Google “Olmec Iron” you easily find evidence that seldom gets accounted for by critics; that the Book of Mormon descriptions of Cumorah/Ramah do not fit the New York hill; that the Grijalva is the only river in the Western hemisphere that fits the textual description of the Sidon; that “principal ancestors” was never binding scripture or doctrine justified by a close reading of the text, but a disputed choice by a mid-20th-century editorial committee’s introduction; that when I looked for myself back in 1995,²⁹ I found many indications of “Nephi’s Neighbors,” and Matt Roper found even more;³⁰ that patent-holding LDS DNA scientists knew far more about the significance of DNA and the complications of New World ancestry in the Book of Mormon than the critics; that DNA testing has so far failed to demonstrate that any of Joseph Smith’s plural wives bore him children; and that there are twenty-eight biblical tests for true and false prophets that I find helpful in improving my judgment of what is and is not significant in testing them.

It turns out that Stephenson’s second equation is a drastic replacement of mine. Unlike his first equation, it is not a revision of mine or even a considered response to mine. He replaces my equation’s general applicability to all people on all sides of any debates with a narrow set of claims directed only at Mormon apologists, implicitly suggesting that none of this applies to him.

29 See Christensen, “Paradigms Crossed,” 165–170.

30 See Matthew Roper, “Nephi’s Neighbors: Book of Mormon Peoples and Pre-Columbian Populations,” *FARMS Review* 15/2 (2003): 91–128.

Mormon Apologists + Faithful Version of Church + Facts
 doctored by apologetic spin + Cognitive dissonance +
 Testimony (vested interest, monetary compensation, lifestyle
 choice, family, church activity/religious gratification etc.) =
 Conclusion that the Church is true and critics are wrong.

In this view, apologists's facts are doctored by apologetic spin powered by financial and social incentives, and the implication is that, in contrast, critics like Runnells see unadulterated, self-evident facts. We should look at the disrespect given to testimony (which is dismissed as merely tied to social pressures, as if there were no social pressures in Stephenson's and Runnells's anti-Mormon circles). He provides a healthy dose of *ad hominem*, including the ironic charge of "monetary compensation" as motive. For the record, I get nothing from my apologetic writing, and LDS membership is expensive, restrictive, time-consuming, and unpopular from the point of view of the larger society. If anything, I have an ongoing financial and social incentive to abandon my faith. I live in one of the lower per-capita LDS areas in the United States, far away from most of my family. Nothing in Stephenson's replacement equation addresses or even acknowledges the existence or the effect any of the general issues I brought up in mine.

Would it be fair, one wonders, to point out and dismiss Stephenson's and Runnells's abandonment of their faith because of potential secular rewards? Does it matter that Runnells himself is making efforts to be paid for his full-time work on the CES Letter, becoming in essence a paid professional anti-Mormon apologist? "I'm willing to work full-time on just the CES Letter project," he tells donors, "if there's enough monthly support — until I have completed all of the needed tasks to get the CES Letter project where it needs to be."³¹

If the charge that making money biases authors is fair, as Runnells and Stephenson appear to believe when falsely applied to "apologists" who make no money, why should we listen to them when Runnells *does* seek to make a living at such things? And, if it isn't fair to apply this reasoning to Runnells and Stephenson, why is it permissible for them to appeal to such claims against their opponents?

Frankly, what Stephenson provides here is an ideological smear, obvious propaganda, rather than a considered analysis. It involves no

31 <http://cesletter.com/ces-letter-at-the-crossroads-faqs.html> (accessed 15 June 2015).

self-reflection, no consideration of even the possibility of eye-beams before launching into a blanket assault on Mormon “apologists.”

The Art of Dissonance Management: Labeling Versus Comprehension

Stephenson says: “Christensen appears to be unable to grasp that flexibility does not change facts while cognitive dissonance can allow you to live with and ignore them.”³²

In this view, I demonstrate cognitive dissonance; they don’t. They perceive the facts; I don’t. And cognitive dissonance, whatever that is (Stephenson does not explain), is something that explains how I both live with and ignore facts.

It would be helpful to define terms.³³ Cognition is “the action or faculty of knowing,” that is “the acquisition and possession of empirical factual knowledge.” Dissonance is “a lack of agreement.” Wikipedia provides a helpful explanation of the combined term as referring to: “mental stress or discomfort experienced by an individual who holds two or more contradictory beliefs, ideas, or values at the same time, or is confronted by new information that conflicts with existing beliefs, ideas, or values.”

Leon Festinger’s theory of cognitive dissonance focuses on how humans strive for internal consistency. An individual who experiences inconsistency (dissonance) tends to become psychologically uncomfortable, and is motivated to try to reduce this dissonance — as well as actively avoid situations and information likely to increase it.³⁴

The use of “cognitive dissonance” theory as a rhetorical tool in LDS circles began in 1990. Edward Ashment, in “Reducing Dissonance: The Book of Abraham as a Case Study” invoked the notion of “cognitive dissonance” theory as an explanation of Mormon apologetic behavior.³⁵

32 Stephenson, “The Sky is Falling.”

33 I’ll use *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford, Clarendon Press 1993), in two volumes.

34 Wikipedia, s.v., “Cognitive Dissonance,” online at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cognitive_dissonance

35 Edward H. Ashment, “Reducing Dissonance: The Book of Abraham as a Case Study” in *The Word of God: Essays on Mormon Scripture*, ed. Dan Vogel (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1990), 221–35. Interesting to compare John Gee and Stephen D. Ricks “Historical Plausibility: The Historicity of the Book of Abraham as

He drew on Festinger's study of the responses of William Miller's followers when his predictions for the Millennium came and went. Ashment reports on "disillusionment [as] a manifestation of cognitive dissonance" of Millers followers as a manifestation "which occurs when the opposite of a belief follows from the premise on which it is based."³⁶

At a FAIR conference in 2005, LDS psychologist Wendy Ulrich explored the term.

Decades ago Leon Festinger created cognitive dissonance theory to explain why people hold on to religious beliefs despite the failed prophecies of their leaders. He found that many members of a group he studied who anticipated the end of the world on a given date actually became even more committed when the date came and went with no apocalypse in sight.³⁷

Ulrich goes on to explain alternate theories, and comments on a detail that Ashment mentions but for which he does not see the key significance.

People who put cognitive dissonance forward as the explanation for the high level of commitment and sacrifice among some Mormons ignore that by the time the prophecy of the world ending in Festinger's study had failed three times virtually everyone left the group, cognitive dissonance theory or no. People may rationalize their behavior and beliefs for a time, but they will not continue to do so indefinitely unless their beliefs are producing the expected payback—as long as they have reasonable choices about what to believe.³⁸

a Case Study" in *Historicity and the Latter-day Saint Scriptures*, ed. Paul Hoskisson (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 2001), 63–98, and William Schryver, "The Meaning of the Kirtland Egyptian Papers" FAIR Conference 2010, Part 1, <http://www.fairmormon.org/perspectives/fair-conferences/2010-fair-conference/2010-the-meaning-of-the-kirtland-egyptian-papers-part-i>, and Part 2, <http://www.fairmormon.org/perspectives/fair-conferences/2010-fair-conference/2010-the-meaning-of-the-kirtland-egyptian-papers-part-ii>

36 Ashment, "Reducing Dissonance," 221.

37 Wendy Ulrich, "Believest thou ...?': Faith, Cognitive Dissonance, and the Psychology of Religious Experience," FAIR Conference, 2005, <http://www.fairmormon.org/perspectives/fair-conferences/2005-fair-conference/2005-believest-thou-faith-cognitive-dissonance-and-the-psychology-of-religious-experience>

38 Ulrich, *Ibid.*

Stephenson does not recognize the existence of significant payback in my intellectual biography or among LDS apologists in general. That means that I experience dissonance when comparing my actual history to his portrait. And as Ian Barbour explains: “Religious paradigms, like scientific ones, are not falsified by data, but are replaced by promising alternatives. Commitment to a paradigm allows its potentialities to be systematically explored, but it does not exclude reflective evaluation.”³⁹

Ashment cited Festinger for “several ways a person may try to reduce dissonance:”

1. “change one or more of the beliefs, opinions, or behaviors involved in the dissonance”;
2. “acquire new information or beliefs that will increase the existing consonance and thus cause the total dissonance to be reduced”; or
3. “forget or reduce the importance of those cognitions that are in a dissonance relationship.”⁴⁰

This reminds me of Thomas Kuhn’s description of three different ways that science handles key anomalies that lead to paradigm crisis. The order is different, but the ideas are similar.

- First, normal science handles the crisis.
- Second, the problem is labeled and set aside for a future generation.
- Third, a new paradigm emerges with the ensuing battle for acceptance.⁴¹

All of this digression is to explain that Stephenson does not use the term *cognitive dissonance* correctly. For him cognitive dissonance provides the means by which apologists like me ignore “facts.” But cognitive dissonance refers to the discomfort a person feels upon encountering facts that don’t fit their expectations: the more significant the fact, the more discomfort, and the greater the need to resolve the tension in some way. So cognitive dissonance is an uncomfortable response to some fact or event or circumstance and, by definition, is not the means

39 Barbour, *Myths, Models, and Paradigms*, 172.

40 Leon Festinger, Henry W. Riecken, and Stanley Schachter, *When Prophecy Fails: A Social and Psychological Study of a Modern Group that Predicted the Destruction of the World* (New York: Harper & Row, 1956), 26, as quoted in Ashment, “Reducing Dissonance,” 221.

41 Adapted from Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 84.

to make such discomfort go away. If a person makes the uncomfortable facts go away by ignoring their existence or by accounting for them by means of a working paradigm, he or she then experiences no cognitive dissonance. So to be accurate Stephenson ought to talk about *dissonance management* in light of Festinger's cognitive dissonance theory. And it would help, as Ulrich does, to mention competing theories that include the importance of ongoing rewards that support commitment, or, as Kuhn says, "fruitfulness" and an ongoing consideration of which "problems are more significant to have solved."⁴² For example, in their separate responses to the CES letter, Daniel Peterson and Neal Rappleye both mentioned Old World evidences for the Book of Mormon that Runnells does not address. That important omission on Runnells's part turns out to be a demonstration of dissonance management. Once again, Runnells and Stephenson are at least as vulnerable to the intellectual sins they discern in their opponents.

Kuhn talks about the importance of being able to deal with the ongoing mismatches between expectation and measurements. He refers to normal science as "puzzle solving" in which the point of ongoing research is to find solutions within the current paradigm. "[E]very problem that normal science sees as a puzzle can be seen, from another viewpoint, as a counterinstance, and thus as a source of crisis,"⁴³ that is, you could say, a source of cognitive dissonance. "[S]ome men have undoubtedly been driven to desert science because of their inability to tolerate crisis. Like artists, creative scientists must occasionally be able to live in a world out of joint ... the 'essential tension' is implicit in scientific research ... the puzzles that constitute normal science exist only because no paradigm that provides a basis for scientific research ever completely resolves all its problems."⁴⁴

That is, there are always facts that don't fit the paradigm, always something that generates "cognitive dissonance" if you care to look. (If Runnells and Stephenson see no problem with their current stance, that is strong evidence that they haven't looked at it very closely — much as they claim not to have looked at their Mormon paradigm very closely before their current enlightenment.) And this mismatch between theory and expectation is exactly where the majority of normal scientific research happens. It provides the context for the ongoing work of puzzle definition and puzzle solving. One of the criteria for a competing

42 Ibid., 110.

43 Ibid., 79.

44 Ibid., 78–79.

paradigm is not just that it resolves a few specific puzzles but that “the new paradigm must promise to preserve a relatively large part of the concrete problem-solving ability that has accrued to science through its predecessors.”⁴⁵

I can think of several facts that caused me discomfort when I first encountered them — and many that still do. But as Kuhn observes, there are three possible responses to the existence of those dissonant facts: [1] resolve them within the current framework, [2] defer the solution to a later time, or [3] change to a paradigm that can better account for them. He also states that paradigm choice always involves deciding “Which problems are more significant to have solved?” I’ve used all of these responses and have learned thereby why Kuhn refers to “the essential tension” in science. It is also why Lehi refers to “opposition in all things” (2 Nephi 2:11), and why Joseph Smith observed that “by proving contraries, truth is made manifest.”⁴⁶ For instance, one of the things that prepared me to recognize the significance of Margaret Barker’s *Temple Theology* is that I had long been aware of the claim that the Book of Mormon is “too Christian before Christ.”⁴⁷ Stephenson uses the label of *cognitive dissonance* as a rhetorical club, as something that only happens to other people, rather than as an occasion for an honest consideration of the beam obscuring his own vision. This tells me much about why he says “Christensen appears to be unable to grasp that flexibility does not change facts while cognitive dissonance can allow you to live with and ignore them.”

Isn’t it ironic that Stephenson misuses the term *cognitive dissonance* as means to manage his own discomfort? One of the key concepts that Stephenson fails to grasp is that “facts” can and do change.

Approaching Facts and Exposing Ideology

In 1989, Peter Novick, the author of *That Noble Dream: Objectivity and the American History Profession*, spoke to a Sunstone audience that included many LDS historians.⁴⁸ His comments illuminate the underlying but unexamined assumptions of Stephenson’s approach to facts.

45 Ibid., 169.

46 Joseph Smith to L. Daniel Rupp, 5 June 1844, printed in *History of the Church*, 6:428.

47 See Kevin Christensen, “The Deuteronomist De-Christianizing of the Old Testament” *FARMS Review* 16/2 (2004): 59–90.

48 See the account of the context and circumstances of Novick’s talk by Louis Midgely, “Editor’s Introduction: Knowing Brother Joseph Again” *FARMS*

For historians, even more than scientists, a fetishism of “the fact” is one of the hallmarks of the objectivist consciousness. While, early on, historians were confident that they could achieve historical objectivity, later, more chastened generations regarded it as perhaps unattainable but continued to hold it out as an approachable ideal. The conception remained the same: to approximate, if not reach, a neutral, undistorting mirror of the past. [This is precisely what Stephenson and Runnells claim to provide.] An objective account would at least attempt to account for all of the evidence. The goal of the objective historian, even if one could not quite achieve it, was to tell it like it was — if not without preconceptions, with as few as possible, minimizing as much as possible any ulterior didactic motives. Even if one could not completely eliminate partisanship or bias, one could try to keep what remained under as tight a control as possible. If one could not eliminate outside influences, one would struggle against them with all one’s strength. But above all — and if I repeat myself, it is because it bears repetition — the objective historian was to cleave to one goal and one goal only, mirroring to the best of her powers the past as it really was.⁴⁹

That Stephenson depicts himself as facing facts and Mormon apologists as somehow unable to honestly accomplish this essential task shows that he embodies the kind of thinking that Novick addressed. Happily, Novick points out the essential problem with such thinking:

I will only report that to an ever-increasing number of historians in recent decades it has not just seemed unapproachable, but an incoherent ideal; not impossible, in the sense of unachievable (that would not make it a less worthy goal than many other goals that we reasonably pursue), but meaningless. This is not because of human frailty on the part of the historian (that, after all, we can struggle against), not because of irresistible outside pressures (these too we can resist with some success, if not complete success). No, the principal problem is different, and it is laughably simple. It is the problem of selecting from

Review 18/1 (2006): xlv–lx, at <http://publications.maxwellinstitute.byu.edu/fullscreen/?pub=1446&index=1>

49 Peter Novick, “Why the Old Mormon Historians Are More Objective Than the New,” Sunstone Symposium, 1989, 4 (transcript in my possession).

among the zillions and zillions of bits of historical data out there the handful that we can fit in even the largest book, and the associated problem of how we arrange those bits that we choose. The criterion of selection and the way we arrange the bits we choose are not given out there in the historical record. Neutrality, value-freedom, and absence of preconceptions on the part of the historian would not result in a neutral account, it would result in no account at all, because any historian, precisely to the extent that she was neutral, without values, free of preconceptions, would be paralyzed, would not have the foggiest notion of how to go about choosing from the vast, unbelievably messy chaos of stuff out there.⁵⁰

The criterion of selection and the way that Runnells and his apologists select and arrange the bits of data are not given in the record, nor are they given by the data. The data are always “theory-laden” as Hanson explained. Barbour points out, “Theory is revisable in light of observation, but observation may also sometimes need to be reconsidered in light of theory.”⁵¹ I illustrated that circumstance several times in my response to Runnells, for instance, when I cited Benjamin McGuire’s careful studies of *The Late War*⁵² and other claimed sources for the Book of Mormon based on a naïve approach to literary parallels.⁵³

Spin is not something that only happens to other people. So one key issue is not whether a person has a guiding ideology, but whether a person is conscious of the implications of their guiding ideology, whether they comprehend the implications of the beam in their own eye before setting out to perform eye surgery on someone else.

As Alan Goff pointed out:

The primary function of an ideology is to conceal from the person who adheres to it the fact that he or she is operating

50 Novick, *Ibid.*

51 Barbour, *Myths, Models, and Paradigms*, 97.

52 Benjamin L. McGuire, “The Late War Against the Book of Mormon,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 7 (2013): 323–355; <http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/the-late-war-against-the-book-of-mormon/>.

53 Benjamin L. McGuire, “Finding Parallels: Some Cautions and Criticisms, Part One,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 5 (2013): 1–59; <http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/finding-parallels-some-cautions-and-criticisms-part-one/>; “Finding Parallels: Some Cautions and Criticisms, Part Two,” 61–104; <http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/finding-parallels-some-cautions-and-criticisms-part-two/>.

under the influence of that ideology. The creed works, in other words, by convincing the subject that he or she knows how the real world works and that the others who disagree are apologists or are otherwise operating under a false set of beliefs: “Ideologies can be seen as more or less systematic attempts to provide plausible explanations and justifications for social behaviour which might otherwise be the object of criticism. These apologia then conceal the truth from others, and perhaps also from the rationalizing subject itself.” An ideology conceals from the ideologue the fact that he or she adheres to a fundamental belief that structures the way he or she experiences the world and attempts to reorganize that world to conform to its preference. Making someone’s ideology explicit is always hazardous because those ideologies are fundamental commitments and work best when they are concealed from the apologist. “Ideologies are actively engaged in furthering ends that are best furthered by not acknowledging their true natures.” So the ideologue — the apologist — must not only conceal from others the ideology at work but must also delude him- or herself.⁵⁴

There is a difference, then, between operating under a set of explicit assumptions and operating under a set of hidden assumptions. We can openly consider the critical implications of explicit assumptions, but not the critical implications of hidden assumptions. And we can flatter ourselves and our ideological allies that we are not governed by any of the biases and assumptions that so afflict our opponents.

Stephenson cannot help but demonstrate how a hidden ideology lurks behind his arguments.

So, point of view determines truth? What does point of view have to do with it?

For years, Joseph Fielding Smith denied that Joseph Smith used his peepstone to translate the Book of Mormon. He also called black people “an inferior race.” Did his evaluation of the evidence and *point of view* make these things true? Or Joseph Fielding Smith a true prophet?

54 Alan Goff, “Dan Vogel’s Family Romance and the Book of Mormon as Smith Family Allegory,” *FARMS Review* 17/2 (2005): 335–336.

What does Joseph Fielding Smith's denial regarding the historical use of a peepstone (seer stone, if labels applied by the people involved matter) have to do with his being a true prophet? What do his views of race have to do with his being a true prophet? Should I assume that the answers are self-evident, or should I actually ask the question and consider that such a question is most appropriate only from January 23, 1970 to July 2, 1972, when the office of prophet was actually his? I'll hazard the risk of making my own ideology explicit so you can see what happens when I do it.

In my *Interpreter* response to Runnells, I quoted D&C 1:6, 24–28 on the formal limitations on LDS leaders.

Behold, this is my mine authority, and the authority of my servants. ... These commandments are of me, and were given unto my servants in their weakness, after the manner of their language, that they might come to understanding. And inasmuch as they erred, it might be made known; And inasmuch as they sought wisdom, they might be instructed; And inasmuch as they sinned, they might be chastened that they might repent; And inasmuch as they were humble they might be made strong, and blessed from on high and receive knowledge from time to time.

My *Interpreter* essay also referred to my FairMormon essay on “Biblical Keys for Discerning True and False Prophets.”⁵⁵ There, I make my own ideology explicit, and therefore, open to critical examination.

Claims a True Prophet Must Make

- Revelation and Vision
- Witnesses
- Chosen by God
- Ordained by prophesy and the laying on of hands by those in authority

Teaching of Christ

- Christ ordained by God to judge all men
- Teaches belief on him for remission of sins
- Testifies that Jesus is “come in the flesh”

55 Kevin Christensen, “Biblical Keys for Discerning True and False Prophets” at http://en.fairmormon.org/Biblical_Keys_for_Discerning_True_and_False_Prophets

- Apostles and prophets given “till we all come in a unity of the faith”
- Accepts the Biblical God

Character of Teaching

- Preaches Repentance
- Teaches of one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of all
- Teaches by the spirit, so that your faith stands in the power of God
- Opens understanding of the scriptures
- Teaching consistent with scripture
- Provides knowledge of the heavenly council
- Provides knowledge of the Lord’s covenant
- They teach their followers to expect trials in this life

Personal Character

- Seeks to please God, not men
- Teaches with authority, and not as a scribe
- They lead as willing ensamples to the flock, not for filthy lucre
- Recognizes and is united with authorized prophets
- They admit to being men of passion, like us, liable to sin

Evidences Provided

- God bears them witness with signs and gifts of the Holy Ghost according to his own will
- A prophet may do works none other man did
- Teaches that the investigators must keep his words to learn the truth of them.
- Prophecy
- Teaches that we must pray
- Over time, arguments against a prophet fail, and demonstrate confusion

None of the biblical keys condemn Joseph Fielding Smith as a potential prophet. He actually comes out looking very good by these measures. His racial views and mistakes on points of history, his behavior before he became the prophet, and his age and behavior when

he was the prophet, all have a historical context and biblical precedent.⁵⁶ According to the biblical criteria and the D&C 1-supported expectations from leaders that I bring to the question, the points Stephenson brings to the question are largely irrelevant.

“By their fruits shall ye know them” refers to the recognition of a characteristic fruit as the key to identification. So if you happen to spot unripe, fallen, bruised, or wormy fruit, if you know the fruit’s identifying characteristics, even they will do. A grape with a blemish is not a thorn, nor is even a perfect thorn any kind of fruit. A fig that has been pecked by a bird is still a fig, and a flawless or fashionably popular thistle is still a just a thistle (see Matthew 7:16–17).

If Stephenson wants to dismiss or reject these biblical criteria, his alternative ideology resorts to a subjective appeal to emotional hot-button issues argued on the unacknowledged basis that Smith represents behavior and attitudes that are “not the way I would arrange it if I were God.” Such an argument suffers from the inescapable limitation that Stephenson is not God. Notice that if Stephenson had openly stated that his use of these criteria depends on the reasoning that the situation is “not the way I would arrange it if I were God,” that opens his reasoning to critical examination in the same way my listing of biblical tests opens them to critical examination. Rather than be swept up by the emotional wave of impassioned disapproval of Joseph Fielding Smith as a person — which flatter the reader as enlightened and demand no mental or emotional effort — such as offered by Stephenson as an apparently objective and decisive set of self-evident facts, he’d have to admit that they are grounded on the claim that if he were God he wouldn’t permit such behavior in a true prophet. The effectiveness of the argument therefore depends on concealing these assumptions and forestalling any undesirable critical consideration from his audience about who is clearly not God.

Many years ago, I made a study of the reasons that biblical peoples gave for rejecting Bible prophets. I came up with about seventy different arguments. I was startled to realize that none of them had gone out of date. Later I realized that they all boiled down to a person saying, “it doesn’t agree with what I think,” or “it’s not what I desire.” While

56 On the cultural background of the racist teachings, see Stirling Adams, review of *The Curse of Ham: Race and Slavery in Early Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, by David M. Goldenberg; and *Noah’s Curse: The Biblical Justification of American Slavery*, by Stephen R. Hayes, *BYU Studies* 44/1 (2005): 157–169, <https://byustudies.byu.edu/showtitle.aspx?title=7674>. Consider also Acts 10 and Acts 15.

watching Joseph Campbell on *The Power of Myth*, I was impressed by his explanation that the entrances of ancient temples were guarded by two figures representing Fear (what you think is so, your chosen society's orthodoxy) and Desire (what you want). To enter the Real, you had to be willing to offer up what you think, to admit that you don't know everything already, and admit that what you desire may not actually be the most important thing in the long run, or even good for you and the people you care about. This notion of Fear and Desire as the temple guardians we must pass to enter the Real corresponds to the 3 Nephi 9:20 account of a required sacrifice of a broken heart and a contrite spirit before the listeners gather at the temple. To enter the Real, we have to be willing to offer up what we think and desire. A refusal of the risk shows up in statements that implicitly or explicitly insist, "I won't give up my current thought" and "I won't let go of my current desires."

Stephenson's two arguments here exemplify these basic obstacles to human discovery of what is Real. "It's not what I think. It's not what I want." He argues based on a premise that a prophet wouldn't make or perpetuate a mistake in history. And a prophet wouldn't reflect any of the now embarrassing prejudices of his time and culture.

It happens that Ian Barbour's term for a distinctive type of religious experience is "reorientation and reconciliation,"⁵⁷ which is, quite simply, a change in thinking and a change in feeling. Those who will not or cannot offer the sacrifice of a contrite spirit and a broken heart cannot experience the differences brought by reorientation of thinking and a reconciliation of feeling. Mind and heart should both be fully engaged, open to continual repentance. I found that all of the scriptural passages that describe how prayers are answered can be divided according to whether the answer addresses the mind or heart.⁵⁸ And it turns out that one of the most conspicuous after-effects of near-death experience is a sense of the importance of love and an increased hunger for knowledge.

So it turns out that everyone has an ideology — and no one more so than those who insist they have none. What can we do about it? The Perry Scheme for Cognitive and Ethical Growth observes a set of responses to the discovery of the relativity of knowledge:

There are seven ways a person can go.

57 Barbour, *Myths, Models, and Paradigms*, 54.

58 See Kevin Christensen "A Model of Mormon Spiritual Experience" http://dl.dropbox.com/u/22100469/model_of_experience.pdf

- *Transition 1.* The person can make the transition by modifying dualism drastically to where one no longer trusts authority to have any answers, and they think it will be a long, long time before they will; therefore, there is really no way to be judged by them. Bitterness sets in, as it seems as if rewards don't come by hard work and rightness, but by good expression and arbitrary factors. With an inability to distinguish between abstract thought and "bull", disillusion settles and blinds the person to where they become dangerously cynical and take advantage of any opportunity to get gain.
- *Transition 2.* The person could decide that, if there are so many different answers a[ll] depending on individual perspective, that it is impossible for any true judgment; therefore anything goes. All is of equal value. To have an opinion makes it right.
- *Transition 3.* Same as above, except it dawns that there are some facts that, if known, can make for a better choice among the many.
- *Transition 4.* Anger and frustration win out. Instead of becoming cynical and opportunistic, person acts out negatively.
- *Transition 5.* The person is moving closer to accepting relativity. He trusts authorities to have valid grounds for evaluations. To get along, one needs to accept that authorities are using reasonable information in making their answers. So the person tries to discover what it is authorities think and want.
- *Transition 6.* Person realizes that on some matters, reasonable people reasonably disagree, that knowledge is qualitative and is context-dependent. They begin weighing factors and approaches in ways that force comparison of patterns of thought, they think about thinking and this occupies the foreground. But they still tend to want to conform so much that they have trouble thinking independently.
- *Transition 7.* This position between multiplicity and relativity is now closer to relativity. The person sees that thinking

relatively isn't just what the authorities he has been dealing [with] have reasoned out and want him to accept, it is the way the world works, in most cases.

Now uncertainties or diversities multiply until they tip the balance against certainty and homogeneity, precipitating a crisis that forces the construction of a new vision of the world, be it one marked by cynicism, anxiety, or a new sense of freedom.⁵⁹

To Build on Sand or Rock

Back in 1995, I wrote this:

Opponents in the debates about Mormon history and scripture typically criticize each other for having preconceptions and methods that influence their approach to the evidence. But merely to point out an opponent's assumptions, though it raises issues, neither disproves the opposition's case, nor settles the case for the defense. The current debate needs discussion of the means by which we decide why one set of assumptions and methods should be preferred over another.⁶⁰

Kuhn says it makes a great deal of sense to ask which paradigm is better and which problems are more significant to have solved. Any judgment of "better" requires comparison, a wrestle with the opposition in all things. As Joseph Smith observed, "by proving contraries, truth is made manifest."⁶¹ He did not say to limit our approach to truth by simply asking, "do you preach the orthodox religion?" or "Do you preach the most popular and fashionable secular ideology?" He did not refer anyone to a closed "Big Book of What to Think." To say "better" is to make a value-judgment, and the ideology upon which those judgments are based is important in constructing and making comparisons and subsequent decisions. There is always a danger that the judgment will be self-referential, based on the assumption of that one's paradigm is better, which is the very issue that we ought to be questioning.

Fortunately, Kuhn has identified a set of values that are not paradigm dependent, not self-referential, and serve as constraints to provide a structure for scientific revolutions, i.e., that signal progressive changes in

59 Email on the Perry Scheme of Cognitive and Ethical Growth, from Veda Hale, online at <http://dl.dropbox.com/u/22100469/Perry%20Scheme.pdf>

60 Christensen "Paradigms Crossed," 148.

61 *History of the Church*, 6:428.

knowledge. The values that Kuhn identifies as underlying the structure of scientific revolutions are comparable to those given in Alma 32: puzzle generation and solution, accuracy of key predictions, comprehensiveness and coherence, fruitfulness, simplicity and aesthetics, and future promise.⁶² Greg Smith observes that “it must be admitted that even these depend upon a paradigm under which the world is fundamentally susceptible to rational investigation and analysis, that the search for truth is worthwhile, that puzzle generation and solution are valuable activities, that aesthetics have some relationship to truth and reality, and so forth. Happily, such assumptions are widely shared, and so not subject to much debate in the present case, one hopes.”⁶³

So, in my view, it pays to be wary of arguments based on “not what I think, or what my preferred society thinks” or “not what I desire, or what my preferred society desires.” Rather, consider which paradigm better accounts for evidence in terms of puzzle generation and solution, accuracy of key predictions, comprehensiveness and coherence, fruitfulness, simplicity and aesthetics, and future promise.

Some Specific Complaints: On Revelation to “Others”

So, with the parameters of a productive approach defined, I will now consider some of Stephenson’s specific complaints about my essay. For several years I have read D&C 1:18 as referring to “others” besides Joseph Smith to whom God spoke. He objects as follows: “How can God have given commandments to others when he claims that Joseph Smith and his followers were ‘the *first* laborers in this last kingdom?’”

Priesthood is a distinctive aspect of “this last kingdom,” but not everyone who serves God does so under formal priesthood direction via the church organization, or for that matter, is even known to the church members. In March of 1831, a revelation referred to “holy men that ye know not of” (See D&C 49:8).

There is the issue of formal authority versus good work, and revelation within the formal organization of a church, and revelation and good work outside of the formal church. Matthew 12:30 declares, “He that is not with me is against me; he that gathered not with me, scattereth abroad.” Compare with Mark 9:39: “But Jesus said, forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name that can lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is on our part.”

62 Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 152–159, 185–186.

63 Greg Smith, personal correspondence, 16 June 2015.

The difference in the gospel passages has to do with context. The Matthew text describes formal “gathering” by chosen disciples, called to preach and baptize. The Mark text describes how those disciples should accept the performance of good works by anyone, even one not called and ordained as part of the formal gathering.

Stephenson misses the significance of the phrase *this last kingdom*, in comparison to other D&C verses such as 88:36–37, with “and there are many kingdoms; and is no space in which there is no kingdom.” D&C 88:61 refers to “all these kingdoms [plural], and the inhabitants thereof.” D&C 88:51–61 is a parable explaining different kingdoms, in which the Lord visits different laborers each “in his own order, until his hour was finished” (v. 60). Kingdoms have boundaries. Not everything good happens within the boundaries of the formal LDS organization. Sometimes the kingdom is among us, and we do not see it (Luke 17:20–21). The kingdom can be any place where God’s will is “done, in earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10).

Stephenson constructs his context for reading the D&C 1 passage on “others” as referring to the early members in the church. That reading is possible, but the term has an inherent ambiguity in context. In a previous *Interpreter* essay, I offered this instructive set of Book of Mormon quotations that expand the context I bring to my reading:

“the Lord doth grant unto all nations of their own nation and tongue, to teach his word, all that he seeth fit that they should have” (Alma 29:8). Nephi remarks that God “speaketh unto men according to their language, unto their understanding” (2 Nephi 31:3), which explains how “he remembereth the heathen, and all are alike unto God, both Jew and Gentile” (2 Nephi 26:33), how “all things which have been given of God from the beginning of the world unto man are the typifying of him,” (2 Nephi 11:4), and how there are “divers ways that he did manifest things unto the children of men which were good” (Moroni 7:24).⁶⁴

I should have included the description in Alma 32:23 of how “he imparteth his word by angels unto men, yea, not only men, but women also. Now this is not all; little children do have given unto them many times which confound the wise and learned.” My own readings in comparative religion, near death experience research, and personal

64 Christensen, “Sophic Box and Mantic Vista,” 154–155.

experiences with people of many faiths has left me both confident and comfortable with the notion that God speaks to “others.”

Joseph Smith famously said, “Have the Presbyterians and truth? Yes. Have the Baptists, Methodists, etc., any truth? Yes. They all have a little truth mixed with error. We should gather all the good and true principles in world and treasure them up, or we should not come out true ‘Mormons.’”⁶⁵ Notice what happens to Mormon thought itself if you read this statement in light of the formal description of LDS authority in D&C 1. It should be clear that Mormons also get by on truth mixed with error. The issue is, as Joseph Smith expresses it, will we set about to learn the truth of all things, or will we set up stakes, and say, “Hitherto thou shalt come, and no further.”⁶⁶ We are people in process in a church in process, subject to ongoing correction, encouraged to continue in our learning.

Looking at the Vision

Stephenson’s most focused and substantial challenge applies to a specific argument regarding the First Vision. He quotes this passage from me:

Look at his [Jeremy Runnells] complaints about the various First Vision Accounts and the priesthood restoration. On page 22 of his Letter, Runnells claims that “there is absolutely no record of a First Vision prior to 1832.” The FairMormon website response points out an article in the Palmyra *Reflector* from 1831 that indicates discussion of Joseph’s vision as early as November 1830. They also point to the allusion in D&C 20, which dates to April 1830.⁶⁷

In response Stephenson has this:

This is the real issue. Is there any evidence of discussion about the claimed 1820 vision before 1832 when Joseph first penned it? The answer is no. The FairMormon article that Christensen quotes is wrong. Why? Because the two missionaries that the newspaper article describes are referring not to any claimed 1820 vision but rather the visit of Moroni three years later.

65 Joseph Fielding Smith, ed., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1974), 316.

66 Smith, ed., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 327.

67 Citing Christensen, “Eye of the Beholder, Law of the Harvest,” 204.

Christensen links to a FairMormon article that is not only incorrect but completely deceptive as well.

One check on whether the FairMormon article is correct or deceptive is to read the newspaper article cited. Matt Roper has reproduced the *Reflector* February 14, 1831 for the archive of “19th-Century Publications about the Book of Mormon”:⁶⁸

Our Painesville correspondent informs us, that about the first of Nov. last, Oliver Cowdery, (we shall notice this character in the course of our labors,) and three others arrived at that village with the “New Bible,” on a mission to the notorious Sidney Rigdon, who resides in the adjoining town. Rigdon received them graciously — took the book under advisement, and in a few days declared it to be of “Heavenly origin.” Rigdon, with about 20 of his flock, were *dipt* immediately. They then proclaimed that there had been no religion in the world for 1500 years, — that no one had been authorised to preach &c. for that period — that Joe Smith had now received a commission from God for that purpose, and that all such as did not submit to his authority would speedily be destroyed. The world (except the New Jerusalem) would come to an end in two or three years. The state of New-York would (probably) be sunk. *Smith (they affirmed) had seen God frequently and personally* — Cowdery and his friends had frequent interviews with angels, and had been directed to locate the *site* for the New Jerusalem, which they should *know*, the moment they should “step their feet” upon it.

Notice that the newspaper describes four missionaries, not two. Matthew Brown identifies them as “Oliver Cowdery, Parley P. Pratt, Peter Whitmer Jr., and Richard Ziba Peterson.”⁶⁹ Why does Stephenson miss this? Well, for one thing, in his essay he doesn’t deal directly with

68 <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/BOMP/id/544/rec/1>

69 Matthew B. Brown, *A Pillar of Light: The History and Message of the First Vision* (American Fork: Covenant Communications, 2009), 196. Also compare Richard L. Anderson’s treatment of the same issue and evidence in “Circumstantial Confirmation of the First Vision Through Reminiscences,” *BYU Studies* 9/3 (Spring 1969): 373–404. And for more details on the four missionaries, see Richard Lloyd Anderson, “The Impact of the First Preaching in Ohio,” *BYU Studies* 11/4 (Summer 1971): 474–496.

that specific issue of the *Reflector*. Part of his approach is to look at other newspaper accounts reporting on different LDS missionaries that did not mention theophanies, but rather focused on the more sensational story of the angel and the book.⁷⁰ And he compares those accounts with Cowdery's 1834 history, Lucy's later history, and a letter from William McLellan, none of which mention theophany, but focus on the angel and the book. That is, he looks to them as paradigmatic, rather than the one with the clear evidence that contradicts Runnells's original claim of "absolutely no evidence" before 1832. What he does not do is cancel out or explain the reason for the existence of the distinctive themes in the February 1831 *Reflector*. He writes as though reticence and variations in personal knowledge in other reports about such experiences could never be a factor in who said, or reported, what when.

Stephenson says:

Who wrote the 1832 history? Joseph Smith and Frederick Williams. Not Oliver Cowdery. Therefore, Jeremy's argument that Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery made no such claim until 1834 is exactly correct. That is when they both jointly published Joseph's history in a series of letters for the *Messenger and Advocate*. Writing a partial history in secret and abandoning it in the back of a letterbook is not making any "claim". There is absolutely no evidence that Cowdery knew anything about the claimed 1820 vision.

Notice Runnells's argument of "no such claim" regarding the vision, and the use of Boolean logic by Stephenson here to define the problem in terms of a specific combination of people, rather than the most important question, which is, "Did Joseph have a vision in 1820?" I also note his appeal to secrecy regarding the 1832 history and a declaration of "absolutely no evidence" of Cowdery's knowledge. This last runs directly into Matthew Brown's 2009 book, *A Pillar of Light: The History and Message of the First Vision*, which continues a line of thought dating at least to Richard L. Anderson in *BYU Studies* in 1969. Brown quotes Cowdery's declaration that in producing his 1834–1835 histories, he would draw on assistance from Joseph Smith, and use "authentic

⁷⁰ He says "in 1832 the *Fredonia Censor* published that two Mormon missionaries, Lyman E. Johnson and Orson Pratt, were teaching" about a prayer, and angel, and Gold plates.

documents now in our possession.”⁷¹ Brown then offers a careful comparison of what Cowdery produced in 1834 with what Joseph Smith and Frederick Williams had created in 1832 and shows that Cowdery actually used the 1832 account. This means, *contra* Stephenson, there is good evidence that Cowdery knew about Joseph’s 1820 vision, which also means, there is good evidence that the statement in the *Reflector* has an authentic source behind it. That source is most likely Cowdery, and therefore the report in the *Reflector* has a reason for existing.⁷²

These conclusions raise the question of why Cowdery did not expand on the vision in the 1834-35 articles.⁷³ Opinions differ on this of course, but Brown and Anderson, among others, have proposed sensible solutions.⁷⁴ Any argument that Cowdery knew nothing does not account for the content of *Reflector*’s report from the Painesville correspondent. Nor does it explain Cowdery’s consistent testimony even while out of the church. If a contradiction in Joseph’s accounts is so clear-cut to Runnells and Stephenson at two centuries’ removed, would it not have been even more clear to Oliver Cowdery? Why, then, did Oliver not expose the hoax once he was disaffected from the Church and Joseph?

Stephenson cites accounts by Cowdery, Lucy Smith, and others that did not mention the theophany in the grove, but none of them ever contradicted Joseph’s vision accounts when they had opportunity to do so, even those who separated from the church. Why did the charge that Joseph was late in inventing a theophany not appear until decades after his death? It seems that a certain historical distance was required before such a claim could be at all plausible, since Joseph’s contemporaries had heard the story from very early on.

Stephenson cites the report of William Smith, who appears to mix elements from 1820 and 1824 in an 1883 article. But in the same article, William twice referred to Joseph’s own history: “a more elaborate and accurate description of his vision, however, will be found in his own history,” and “a particular account of his visions and life during this period will be found in his biography, and therefore I will omit it

71 Oliver Cowdery quoted in Brown, *Pillar of Light*, 110. Also quoted and discussed in Anderson, “Circumstantial Confirmation,” 393–398.

72 See discussion in Brown, *A Pillar of Light*, 110–112, and detailed comparison, 217–220.

73 See, among others, Brown, *A Pillar of Light*, 110–112. Also Anderson, “Circumstantial Confirmation,” 393–398.

74 Also see Roger Nicholson, “The Cowdery Conundrum: Oliver’s Aborted Attempt to Describe Joseph’s First Vision in 1834 and 1835,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 8 (2014): 27–44.

here.”⁷⁵ Notice that William Smith gives a logical reason for omitting information.

Ronald Barney spoke at the FAIR Conference in 2013 on Joseph Smith’s unfolding approaches to sharing his visions:⁷⁶

So what I am asserting is that:

1. initially, Joseph had personal instincts that precluded him from publicly sharing his experiences
2. despite this instinct, in his youth he apparently shared the vision with people he thought would sympathize with his circumstances
3. being subject to rejection and disdain from these confidences he learned his lesson thereafter and protected his experiences
4. eventually he sensed the need of informing his intimates of what had happened to him
5. later his audience broadened to others outside his immediate circle
6. he made an early attempt to establish his story in writing in 1832 but the project stalled for reasons about which we can only speculate
7. finally, recognizing the necessity of publishing his story as a counter to his contemporary critics to advance the cause of the Church, he had prepared what we now know as the *History of the Church*.

In 2003, Mark Ashurst-McGee in *The FARMS Review* also discussed Smith and Cowdery’s motives for both reticence and publication:

Similarly, Smith and Cowdery may have begun providing the details of priesthood restoration in response to the bad publicity caused by the publication of Howe’s *Mormonism Unveiled*. It may be that Palmer [another critic] has made a historical contribution not in identifying the cause for

75 See “William Smith on Mormonism,” quoted in Francis W. Kirkham, *A New Witness for Christ in America: Attempts to Prove the Book of Mormon Man-Made*, 2 vols. (Independence, MO: Zion’s Printing and Publishing, 1951), 2:414–417, quotes from pp. 415 and 417, respectively (capitalization altered).

76 Ronald Barney, “Joseph Smith’s Visions: His Style and His Record,” FairMormon Conference, 2013; online at <http://www.fairmormon.org/perspectives/fair-conferences/2013-fair-conference/2013-joseph-smiths-visions-his-style-and-his-record>

inventing the priesthood stories, but in identifying a reason for Smith and Cowdery making them public. They had initially kept them confidential in order to avoid persecution, but after the publication of *Mormonism Unveiled* they may have found that false reports “put in circulation by evil disposed and designing persons” were a form of persecution that outweighed the persecution they would receive from publicizing the details of priesthood restoration. The reason for keeping the story to themselves became the reason for sharing it.⁷⁷

Kinds of First Vision Evidence

Regarding the 1820 First Vision, Stephenson comments: “Unfortunately, no contemporary evidence has come to light to support this claim; and Joseph Smith himself did not document this supposed event until more than 12 years later.”

Notice the important qualification of “no contemporary evidence.” Contemporary evidence (that is Spring of 1820) is not the only kind of evidence. (What contemporary evidence do we have for the Big Bang or the Creation of Life or for Shakespeare’s authorship of his plays or for my Dad’s participation in the battle at Hill 609 in Tunisia or of my childhood success at playing Risk with my brothers in the basement of our home?) If the question is “Did Joseph Smith have a vision in 1820 that affected the course of his life?” rather than “What contemporary evidence is there that Joseph Smith had a vision in 1820?” the methods, problem fields, and standards of solution change radically. Stephenson might claim that “if Joseph Smith did have a vision, we would have abundant contemporary evidence,” but that claim itself is open to investigation. It is not a fact, but a premise that we can test only indirectly. Notice that Stephenson is perfectly willing to accept my oral report of an experience I had when I was 19 years old, a short time before my mission, of a vivid spiritual impression while reading Ether 12:39. What is his evidence that the event happened? Well, he listened to a FAIR Podcast that I recorded. It happens that the podcast happened over forty years after the event. I didn’t write the experience down at the time. I don’t remember telling anyone about it until much later. My parents were in a different part of the U.S. I don’t even remember who my Bishop was, and have no memory of

77 Mark Ashurst-McGee, “A One-Sided View of Mormon Origins,” *FARMS Review* 15/2 (2003): 352.

telling any leaders. I don't even remember when I began to tell the story. I have written it up on occasion, posting on internet message boards, and relating it in testimony meetings and a podcast or two. Have I told the story differently at different times? Perhaps I have. I doubt if I can narrow the day of the experience down to more than July to September 15th 1973. Does Stephenson worry at all about this lack of contemporary external confirmation or supportive witnesses or imprecision in the exact day? Remember, he also says that I'm dishonest. Why then does he take my report of a forty-year-old personal experience at face value? He doesn't agree with the validity of my experience, but he bases a whole line of argument on the fact of such an experience. Obviously he accepts the existence of my personal account is a kind of evidence that he accepts as persuasive enough to use, even by itself. Among other things, my report makes sense within the LDS culture and if I did have an experience, it helps him explain important aspects of my behavior.

Here's another personal experience. When I lived in California (between 1983 and 1994) I read Raymond Moody's *The Light Beyond*, a study of Near Death Experience research and got excited. So I read several other books on the topic and started writing an essay that eventually got into the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 2/1 in 1993. In the Sunnyvale Ward one Fast Sunday, I discussed some of my findings during testimony meeting. Afterwards, an investigator approached me and asked some questions. He then told me of an experience he had around 20 years before, several years before Raymond Moody's first book, *Life after Life* had appeared. That meant that at the time, neither he nor the surrounding culture had a framework in which to sympathetically explain what happened to him. He told me that when he was in the Air Force in Texas, his sergeant had him out running on a hot summer day when the red warning flag was up to ensure that no one was out running. As he came to the end of the run, his running partner looked at him, and asked, "Are you all right?" He fell flat on his face, and felt himself outside of his body, looking down as the sergeant ran over to revive him with an ammonia inhaler taken from the hatband of his "Smokey the Bear" style hat. Watching from above and behind, he reports that he thought this was the funniest thing he had ever seen. "I'm not even breathing," he thought to himself. "What good will an inhaler do?" He watched as he was loaded onto an ambulance, and then the scenery changed, and he found himself drifting over an open field like golden wheat. In the distance, he saw a bright light, and moved toward it. As he got closer, he saw a personage in the light, and thought, "Is that the Lord?" At that

moment he heard, “It’s not your time,” and he found himself back in his body. He immediately began to speak of it to the physicians, who told him he ought not to talk about such things if he preferred to be considered sane. His wife told him he had best keep quiet for the same reason. So more than twenty years came and went until the lobby of an LDS church turned out to be a hospitable environment where he could share and compare his story. After a silence of more than twenty years, he related it to me. Then the next week, he told the elder’s quorum. At the next Fast and Testimony meeting, he told the ward. I learned by personal experience that a person could have a profound experience and respond to personal rejection by being quiet about it in most circles for decades. He told me about it because he knew from my interest in NDE accounts that I would not reject his story out of hand. And when I heard it, I did so with enough background to be able to evaluate it for consistency with broad research and a wide range of similar accounts. While listening to his account, I was dealing with several kinds of evidence, none of which, I recognize, were contemporary with the original experience. None of the evidence is the same thing as proof. But that is not the same thing as no evidence at all.

While there is much about the First Vision account that is beyond the reach of history, much of it can be tested and has been tested in various ways. Matthew Brown’s book, *A Pillar of Light: The History and Message of the First Vision* is an excellent example. Don Bradley’s talk at the 2013 FAIR conference made a fresh contribution by considering whether the content of the vision reflected the concerns of Joseph’s home life in 1820, or the Kirtland concerns of 1835–38, when people like Fawn Brodie and Grant Palmer argue for the later social concerns as the source. Bradley observes:

If Latter-day Saint belief about the First Vision is correct, Joseph’s narrative reports a memory of his early experience. If, on the other hand, Vogel, Palmer, and other skeptical interpreters were to be correct, Joseph’s narrative was created to meet his needs as a church leader in the 1830s, bolstering his authority as prophet.

These two radically different understandings of the First Vision lead us to two radically different predictions about how well Joseph’s First Vision accounts will align with the events of the early 1820s. On the first, the believing, view, Joseph’s narrative should match the 1820s context in some detail. On

the second, skeptical, view, his narrative should match the claimed 1820s context poorly or only superficially.

Because these two views lead to such different predictions, we can determine which view is correct by testing those predictions. And this is what we'll do today.⁷⁸

Bradley's conclusion is that:

As our examination shows, the First Vision fits its reported 1820s context hand in glove.

The argument that Joseph Smith crafted the First Vision narrative to address church problems of the 1830s thus fails ...

The original context that gave rise to Joseph Smith's First Vision was not the church he created but the family that created him. And the First Vision was not a product of his prophetic role, but the *source* of that role. Joseph Smith entered the Sacred Grove a boy and left it a prophet and seer.⁷⁹

Stephenson worries about the silences from 1820 to 1832 and beyond, but some of the silences after that are telling. None of the people who lived through those silences regarding the First Vision with Joseph raised the kinds of complaints we hear from Stephenson. That too is evidence that must be accounted for in one way or another. And besides the D&C 20 reference that Stephenson wrestles with, and the *Reflector* article that he dances around, I must consider the presence of reminiscent accounts besides those provided directly by Joseph Smith or his close associates. For instance, in 2011 Tim Barker posted an essay on "The First Vision in the Formative Years of the Church" that includes a surprising number of such accounts, several of which, while written down later, point before the unpublished 1832 report.⁸⁰

78 Don Bradley, "The Original Context of the First Vision Narrative: 1820s or 1830s," FairMormon Conference, 2013, online at <http://www.fairmormon.org/perspectives/fair-conferences/2013-fair-conference/2013-the-original-context-of-the-first-vision-narrative-1820s-or-1830s>

79 Bradley, "Original Context of the First Vision Narrative."

80 See, Tim Barker, "The First Vision in the Formative Years of the Church" at LDS Studies: A Personal Study of Mormon Scripture, Doctrine, History, and Culture, 4 July 2011, online at <http://lds-studies.blogspot.com/2011/07/first-vision-in-formative-years-of.html>

The *Reflector* is evidence that someone quite early on, almost two years before the 1832 account was written, knew something about theophanies, angelic visitations, and divine commissions, and the need for authority. The silences that Stephenson discusses in the sources he quotes amount to his display of dissonance management relative to the *Reflector*. Silences elsewhere don't explain how such ideas got into the *Reflector*. He fails to even mention the existence of reminiscent accounts such as those reported by Tim Barker. They are evidence to appreciate, deprecate, or ignore, depending on the direction of one's cognitive efforts or dissonance management relative to that sort of evidence. Note too how my paradigm can account for all the evidence (including "negative" evidence, such as a lack of contemporary accusations that Joseph fabricated the First Vision later), while Runnells's cannot.

Concerning Priesthood Restoration

In Runnells's original letter, he said, "Although the priesthood is now taught to have been restored in 1829, Joseph and Oliver made no such claim until 1834." Stephenson makes a number of arguments regarding the priesthood restoration accounts, eventually turning to David Whitmer's late reports on the topic. He targets this statement from my essay:

It should also be obvious that the Book of Mormon is very clear about the need for priesthood authority, and that provides important context for the other earlier priesthood restoration documents, as well as consistency with what became the official accounts. Runnells also overlooks the important essays in the 2005 volume, *Opening the Heavens: Accounts of Divine Manifestations, 1820–1844*, which includes "Seventy Contemporaneous Priesthood Restoration Documents." Several of these accounts also predate Palmer's claim about an 1834 invention.⁸¹

Stephenson responds:

This doesn't address anything either. It simply diverts the reader to a book. Does Christensen think anyone will be impressed by the title without him providing any evidence? He doesn't even give any examples from the book. If this is such great evidence, why doesn't he mention any of it?

81 Christensen, "Eye of the Beholder," 206.

I had thought that naming the book and giving the title of a relevant essay was a useful mention and far more substantial than waving a blank sheet of paper in the manner of Senator Joe McCarthy. The priesthood articles in the book include 48 pages of material, including both introductory historical analysis, and quotation of seventy primary sources. I admit that the notion of retyping all of it myself seemed daunting as well as redundant and unnecessary for my purposes. But, if Stephenson had looked at the book he would have noticed that number 6 on the list of primary sources is Joseph Smith (1832), which, it happens, I not only mentioned because it is great evidence but quoted. Number 32 on the list is the 1831 Palmyra *Reflector*, which I have quoted in this essay. And here is Number 20 on the list, from the December 7 1831 *Painesville Telegraph*.

About two weeks since some persons came along here with the book, one of whom pretends to have seen Angels, and assisted in translating the plates. He proclaims destruction upon the world within a few years, — holds forth that the ordinances of the gospel, have not been regularly administered since the days of the Apostles, the said Smith and himself commenced the work. ... The name of the person here, who pretends to have a divine commission, and to have seen and conversed with Angels is *Cowdray*.⁸²

Why did I mention the Book of Mormon on authority? Because it was in reading passages on authority during the translation that Joseph and Oliver asked the questions that led to their experiences with angelic messengers.

Stephenson quotes from Alma 13:10–16 on the priesthood (an important source), and concludes:

Notice that it says “these ordinances were given after this manner, that thereby the people might look forward on the Son of God, it being a type of his order, or it being his order, and this that they might look forward to him for a remission of their sins.”

82 *Painesville Telegraph*, December 7, 1830, reprinted in Brian Q. Cannon and BYU Studies Staff, “Documents of the Priesthood Restoration,” in *Opening the Heavens: Accounts of Divine Manifestations, 1820–1844*, ed. John W. Welch with Erick B. Carlson (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press/SLC, UT: Deseret Book Company, 2005), 241.

This “order” was to be fulfilled in Christ, according to the Book of Mormon. That is why there was [sic] no priesthood ordinations when the Church was first organized ...

Again, Stephenson’s grasp of the textual data is lacking. Contrary to his claim, 3 Nephi 12:1 refers to 12 “who had been called, and received power and authority to baptize,” and providing this authority is almost one of the first things that the risen Christ does (3 Nephi 11:21–23). In 3 Nephi 18:5 Jesus says “Behold there shall be one ordained among you, and to him I will give power that he shall break bread and bless it and give it unto the people of my church.” Third Nephi 18:37 tells of how “the disciples bear record that he gave them power to give the Holy Ghost.” Immediately thereafter, the disciples baptize each other and the multitude (3 Nephi 19:11–13) and 3 Nephi 27:1 later describes “the disciples ... baptizing in the name of Jesus.” In 4 Nephi 1 we learn how “the disciples of Jesus had formed a church of Christ. ... And as many as did come unto them, and did truly repent of their sins, were baptized in the name of Jesus; and they did also receive the Holy Ghost.” Moroni later makes it clear that priesthood authority even in his day was passed on by ordination (Moroni 3). It is also clear that not all priesthood authorities had the right to conduct all ordinances — priests and teachers are ordained by elders, while only elders and priests administer the sacrament (Moroni 4:1). Stephenson’s ignorance of these basic themes in LDS scripture is great but perhaps not surprising.

Cannon’s essay on “Seventy Contemporary Priesthood Restoration Documents” cites “William E. McLellan’s journal entry for October 25, 1831” which “speaks of ‘the High-Priesthood’ and ‘the lesser Priest-Hood.’”⁸³ The same page also refers to McLellen in 1878 saying while he heard the stories of the angel and plates many times in 1831, he didn’t hear about the angelic priesthood ordinations until a “year” afterward, that being 1832.⁸⁴

Stephenson neglects this and quotes from David Whitmer’s late interpretation as expressed in his 1887 “An Address to All Believers in Christ.”

High priests were only in the church before Christ; and to have this office in the “Church of Christ” is not according to

83 Brian Q. Cannon and BYU Studies Staff, “Seventy Contemporaneous Priesthood Restoration Documents,” in *Opening the Heavens*, 227 n. 2.

84 Cannon et al., “Seventy Contemporaneous Priesthood Restoration Documents,” 227 n. 4.

the teachings of Christ in either of the sacred books: Christ himself is our great and last high priest. Brethren — I will tell you one thing which alone should settle this matter in your minds; it is this: you cannot find in the New Testament part of the Bible or Book of Mormon where one single high priest was ever in the Church of Christ.

The thing is, while Whitmer is quite sincere in his belief and remaining an important witness of several events, he happens to be wrong about high priests being in the church only before Christ. Margaret Barker observes that both John and James were high priests:

The Church preserved the world view of the temple, and two of the early leaders were described as high priests. James the brother of Jesus used to enter the holy place wearing linen garments and pray for the forgiveness of the people's sins, which is immediately recognizable as the role of the high priest on the Day of Atonement. James was also called, 'the Righteous One', as was Jesus (Acts 3.14), and this had been a title of the ancient high priests. 'Zadok' meant 'the righteous one'. This information about James was recorded in the early fourth century by Eusebius in his *History of the Church*, but he was quoting from Hegesippus 'who belonged to the first generation after the apostles'. Epiphanius, writing later in the fourth century, also used Hegesippus and said that James wore the *petalon*, the golden plate worn by the high priest on his forehead, inscribed with the Name. John also had been a high priest, according to Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus at the end of the second century. When he wrote to Victor, bishop of Rome, he said that John was buried in Ephesus and he too had worn the *petalon*. Thus Hegesippus and Polycrates writing in the second century, were describing the great church leaders of the previous century as high priests.⁸⁵

Barker's work on the "Angel Priesthood" explores the role and symbolism of the high priests. And if we take knowledge of the roles and symbolism to our reading of the New Testament and the account in 3 Nephi, it becomes very clear that the functions and symbolism continues

85 Margaret Barker, *King of the Jews: Temple Theology in John's Gospel* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2014) 16.

as an essential element and key to what occurs there. For instance, in *The Great High Priest*, Barker explains:

When he was anointed, the high priest was marked with the sign of the Name, described by the rabbis as a *chi* (*b. Hirayoth* 12a), but in the time of Ezekiel described as a *tau* (Ezek. 9.4) in each case, a diagonal cross. [Compare Jacob 4:14 on “the mark” and remember that Jacob is a consecrated temple priest contemporary with Ezekiel.]

This cross was to become the mark of Christian baptism, as can be seen from the references in the Book of Revelation, where the redeemed have the Name on their foreheads (Rev. 14.1), described elsewhere as the seal of the living God, which must be a reference to the ‘seal’ of the Name worn by the high priest (Rev. 7.3). All those thus marked become the priests, serving in the sanctuary with his Name on their foreheads, and seeing the Face (Rev. 22.4).⁸⁶

Barker explains that “Jesus was depicted as the great high priest throughout his ministry, taking away sins and making the broken whole. He was living the great Day of Atonement, bringing the excluded back within the bond of the covenant. This duty extended to all the baptized; those who bore the name and had been renewed, had themselves to make others new.”⁸⁷ That is, the role of the Christians is to carry on the work of the high priests. How can we do that without the high priesthood? As 1 Peter 2:5 says, “Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”

Stephenson, apparently unaware of this, relies on Whitmer’s account, which continues:

The office of an elder is spoken of in many many places, but not one word about a high priest being in the church. This alone should convince any one, and will convince any one who is without prejudice, that the office of high priests was established in the church almost two years after its beginning by men who had drifted into error. You must admit that the church which was to be established in this dispensation, must

⁸⁶ Margaret Barker, *The Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy* (London: T&T Clark, 2003) 138–139.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

be “like unto the church which was taught by Christ’s disciples of old.” Then the Church of Latter-Day Saints is unlike the Church of Christ of old, because you have the office of high priests in the church. The office of a high priest as you have it, is of more importance than the office of an elder; then why is not something said about this high office being in the Church which Christ came on earth to establish at Jerusalem and upon this land? Why is there not something said about this important office, and so much said about an elder?

Stephenson concludes that “Even David Whitmer understood that there were no high priests in the Church of Christ in the Book of Mormon. Those that are mentioned in Third Nephi are all wicked and not followers of Christ.”

The problem is that Whitmer’s understanding is incorrect, as is Stephenson’s. There is evidence relevant to the question that he did not consider (as Barker shows) and experiences relevant to the question, from church history that he did not personally witness, as the accounts from Smith and Cowdery show.

Regarding 3 Nephi, we recall that in ancient Israel, the high priest was the one who entered the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement and beheld the face of the Lord. John Welch has shown how much more clearly we can understand the significance of the 3 Nephi account when we read with a temple understanding.⁸⁸ And I personally don’t think that everything had to be done all at once.

In 3 Nephi 17:2–3, Jesus says, “I perceive that ye are weak, that ye cannot understand all my words.. go ye into your homes, and ponder upon the things which I have said, and ask of the Father in my name, that ye may understand, and prepare your minds for the morrow, and I come unto you again.” One thing I noticed in reading the New Testament and the Doctrine and Covenants while still on my mission was that neither the Apostles, nor Joseph Smith got everything in one big pile, presorted and labeled, on the first day. I learned that God engages in processes that take time to accomplish the results he has in mind (see especially Isaiah 55:8–11). If high priests were not established publicly in the church at first, I also notice that the Temple was not completed and dedicated until 1836. People and buildings and human minds all take time.

88 John W. Welch, “Seeing Third Nephi as the Holy of Holies of the Book of Mormon,” *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture* 19/1 (2010): 36–55.

And there is evidence from Whitmer on the priesthood from earlier accounts that Stephenson did not report. Kenneth Godfrey has shown that “David Whitmer himself was not free from inconsistency when recounting his views on the priesthood. For example, David H. Cannon reported that in 1861 when he visited Whitmer, the two men with others stood beside the grave of Oliver Cowdery. Whitmer declared that he had heard Oliver say, ‘I know the Gospel to be true and upon this head has Peter, James and John laid their hands and conferred the Holy Melchizedek Priesthood.’ Whitmer also displayed for the group how this was done.”⁸⁹

On Disillusion and Enlightenment

Stephenson titles his essay “The Sky is Falling” because I referenced the fable of Chicken Little as a supplement to understanding the point of the Parable of the Sower. The fable illustrates a point of the Parable, that the same information can be interpreted in crucially different ways, depending on soil and nurture. Stephenson skips over the presence and importance of the Parable of the Sower, and illustrates his essay with a cartoon of a chicken, labeled, Mormon Apologists, having been bonked on the head by an acorn labeled truth. The illustration sets the tone, but is it a fair representation, a fitting metaphor?

Runnells reports his own response to learning unexpected things:

When I first discovered that Joseph Smith used a rock in a hat to translate the Book of Mormon, that he was married to 11 other men’s wives, and that the Book of Abraham has absolutely nothing to do with the papyri or facsimiles .. I went into a panic. I desperately needed answers and I needed them 3 hours ago. Among the first sources I looked to for answers were official Church sources such as Mormon.org and LDS.org. I couldn’t find them.

My own response when I encountered such questions and claims decades ago was generally been along the line of “Oh .. that’s interesting. I did not know that. I wonder where I can go to learn more?” I can’t help notice the frankly admitted presence of panic in Runnells’s own report

89 Kenneth W. Godfrey, “David Whitmer and the Shaping of Latter-day Saint History,” in Stephen D. Ricks, Donald W. Parry, and Andrew H. Hedges, eds., *The Disciple as Witness: Essays on Latter-Day Saint History and Doctrine in Honor of Richard Lloyd Anderson* (Provo: Foundation of Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 2000), 241-242.

and no memory of such panic anywhere in my own history. If you think about that circumstance, you might be able see what about the cartoon that I find truly amusing and ironic.

When I was home from my mission in 1975, and getting interested in questions, I couldn't go to LDS.org or FairMormon, because at that time they did not exist. But I made an effort to use the resources I had, and I gave things time. I never assumed that I was being lied to because I never assumed that the people teaching the lessons knew everything either. And I soon realized that I could not assume that the people writing the books I was reading knew everything. But there were bookstores and libraries and sources out there that I could explore. There were, I knew, differences in knowledge among the saints, and differences in quality in various books. The Tanners and Brodie took the role of the faith-boogies in those days, willing to lead me into the safety of their caves. But frankly, since I was never in a state of panic, I didn't bother to take their offer, though I eventually read their books under conditions of much better lighting. So, it was a matter of seeking "out of the best books words of wisdom" (D&C 88:118). Notice that the famous passage does not necessarily direct us to "approved books."

I nurtured my seeds and have seen what I consider to be amazing growth and fruitfulness. Answers came to me in a constant steady stream over time, some of which changed the way I saw everything else.

Stephenson says, "What Christensen seems unable to answer is why there are so many others like Jeremy with the same concerns and questions with Church history and doctrinal problems / inconsistencies."

The older I get the more powerfully impressed I am with just how ably the Parable of the Sower accounts for why there are so many people like Jeremy, with the same concerns and questions. What grows in panic that does not grow with open-ended, patient study? Indeed, Neal Rappleye represents a contemporary peer for Runnells who has successfully navigated the contemporary concerns. He titled an April 2015 blog post "Patient Faith and Expanding Knowledge: Some Reflections on My Journey with the Book of Mormon (and an Invitation)."⁹⁰

Stephenson concludes by insisting that "Truth is not determined by the eye of the beholder. Rather, it is inviolable and incontrovertible." From my perspective, he sounds like he's in Position 2 of the Perry Scheme:

90 See Neal Rappleye at <http://www.studioetquoquefide.com/2015/04/patient-faith-and-expanding-knowledge.html>

POSITION 2 - Multiplicity Prelegitimate.

Now the person moves to accept that there is diversity, but they still think there are TRUE authorities who are right, that the others are confused by complexities or are just frauds. They think they are with the true authorities and are right while all others are wrong. They accept that their good authorities present problems so they can learn to reach right answers independently.⁹¹

According to LDS scripture, “truth is a knowledge of things as they are, as they were, and as they are to come.” How is knowledge of the things as they are, as they were, and as they are to come acquired, if not through the efforts of beholders? I agree that the truth is out there, but the issue that concerns me is how much of it gets in here? How can I get hold of it? Ontological truth does not change, except of course with respect to the ongoing processes over time, but our knowledge of the truth, including those processes, does and should change. Take, for example, Alfred North Whitehead:

When I was a young man in the University of Cambridge, I was taught science and mathematics by brilliant men and I did well in them; since the turn of the century I have lived to see every one of the basic assumptions of both set aside; not, indeed, discarded, but of use as qualifying clauses instead of as major propositions; and all this in one life-span — the most fundamental assumptions of supposedly exact sciences set aside. And yet, in the face of that, the discoverers of the new hypotheses in science are declaring, “Now at last, we have certitude.”⁹²

The Tanners titled their most famous book, *The Changing World of Mormonism*, based on the entirely dubious foundational premise that any change is inherently scandalous. Notice what happens to the scandal if the subject is the Changing World of Science, or Astronomy, or Computing, or Politics, or History, or Education, or Music, or Botany,

91 Email on the Perry Scheme of Cognitive and Ethical Growth, from Veda Hale, online at <http://dl.dropbox.com/u/22100469/Perry%20Scheme.pdf>

92 From Alfred North Whitehead, in Charles P. Curtis, Jr., and Ferris Greenslet, comps., *The Practical Cogitator, or the Thinker's Anthology* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1945), 112.

or Paleontology, or whatever . It turns out that in most fields of learning and areas of life, the fact of change is not at all scandalous. We expect it.

It would be nice if all church manuals and church art were better, but I have to ask, does God really want me to grow up sure in the knowledge that everything my teachers and formal leaders say is absolutely correct and unchanging and all I have to do is sit and listen to approved thoughts? If that is where I end up, have I really grown up?

And there is the issue of how we chose and signal out membership in the communities in which we participate. “Like the choice between competing political institutions, that between competing paradigms proves to be a choice between incompatible modes of community life.”⁹³

One of the defining characteristics of the ex-Mormon community these days happens to be a shared exit narrative.⁹⁴ And telling the story a particular way is a way of explaining how a person happens to belong in the community they choose. There are scripts to learn, and roles to play. It happens that telling the story through a sense of disillusion and betrayal is a community-licensed way of interpreting an experience. But my point is that a different approach to the same discoveries can lead to a sense of enlightenment and faith. The narrative in which the information is placed decisively colors how it is experienced and what it means for defining the community in which one chooses to live.

The Man Behind the Curtain

Stephenson includes a picture of Ray Bolger in his scarecrow makeup from the 1939 *Wizard of Oz*. His intent is to illustrate the straw man fallacy, which has to do with the debate tactic of knocking down a weakened, inauthentic representation of an opponent’s argument. Readers can and will — and for that matter, must — judge for themselves on this matter.

93 Kuhn, *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 94.

94 See helpful discussions by Rosemary Avance, “Seeing the Light: Parallels in Mormon Conversion and De-Conversion Stories,” FAIR Conference, 2012 <http://www.fairmormon.org/perspectives/fair-conferences/2012-fair-conference/2012-seeing-the-light-parallels-in-mormon-conversion-and-de-conversions-stories>, Seth Payne, “Why Mormonism Matters: Pastoral Apologetics and the LDS Doubter,” FairMormon Conference, 2013 <http://www.fairmormon.org/perspectives/fair-conferences/2013-fair-conference/2013-why-mormonism-matters-pastoral-apologetics-and-the-lds-doubter> and Gregory L. Smith, “The Return of the Unread Review” (Interpreter Foundation, 2012) <http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/SMITH2-Return-of-the-Unread-Review.pdf>.

I also selected my title, drawing on another *Wizard of Oz* reference, taking my own deliberately ironic approach to the same theme. At a key moment in the film, while the terrifying head and smoke and light and booming voice has Dorothy and her friends all quaking and frustrated, Toto pulls aside the curtain, and shows the man who has been creating the image. This image-making, it happens, is something that we all do. It's an inescapable aspect of the human condition. One thing that we ought to realize while we watch that scene is that behind the memorable image of the befuddled wizard, embarrassed and exposed for the flawed and imperfect human that he is, are the combined and overlapping efforts of Frank Morgan, the actor, Victor Fleming, the director, and L. Frank Baum, the original author, all striving with all of their art and skill to distract us from thinking about their contribution to the image creation. By showing us the image of Toto pulling aside one curtain, they distract us from thinking about the equally important curtains we define in our own minds.

And that is the point of my title. We ought to bring to our investigations the realization that we create images in our minds. Try this. Find a ruler or measuring tape, even better, just use your own hand. Stand in front of a mirror at normal shaving or teeth-brushing distance, and estimate the size of the image of your face in the reflection. After you estimate, use the ruler or extend your hand and use your fingers to measure the size of the actual image. Then draw your hand or measurement to place beside your own face. Then think about what is always going on behind the curtain of our own heads.

We create images of reality in our minds, based on partial knowledge, and subject to the perspectives we adopt. Knowing that, we first ought to work on the beams in our own eyes. Then shall we see clearly and not before.

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WAS JOSEPH SMITH SMARTER THAN THE AVERAGE FOURTH YEAR HEBREW STUDENT? FINDING A RESTORATION-SIGNIFICANT HEBRAISM IN BOOK OF MORMON ISAIAH

Paul Y. Hoskisson

Abstract: The brass plates version of Isaiah 2:2, as contained in 2 Nephi 12:2, contains a small difference, not attested in any other pre-1830 Isaiah witness, that not only helps clarify the meaning but also ties the verse to events of the Restoration. The change does so by introducing a Hebraism that would have been impossible for Joseph Smith, the Prophet, to have produced on his own.

The English text of the Isaiah verse in 2 Nephi 12:2 contains a variation that is not found in any English translation of Isaiah 2:2 or in any Hebrew text.¹ The variation may at first glance seem to introduce an awkward, even puzzling reading, possibly leading some to wonder what Joseph was thinking. Yet at the same time it opens up the text to a hitherto unrecognized Hebraism in the Book of Mormon that places Isaiah's prophecy clearly in the context of the Restoration.

The King James translation of this verse reads (with King James accidentals): "And it shall come to pass in the last days, *that* the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it."²

1 For that matter, the variant is not found in the Syriac, the Latin Vulgate, or Greek Septuagint translations.

2 This verse also appears in Micah 4:1: "But in the last days it shall come to pass, *that* the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it." The Hebrew version of Micah differs from the Hebrew version of Isaiah only in a slightly different word order and vocabulary and therefore does not contribute to the discussion here.

As the italicized *that* indicates, the Hebrew (i.e., Masoretic) text lacks any lexeme that corresponds with the English *that*.³ The King James translators supplied the *that* to help make the English text read smoothly. With or without the added *that*, the King James version makes perfect sense as a string of independent clauses that will find fulfillment “in the last days.”

English translations of Isaiah prior to the King James Bible are mixed with regard to the need for *that*. For example, the Wycliffe Bible — which was translated from the Latin Vulgate and not from the Hebrew — did not insert a relative pronoun. It reads “And in the laste daies the hil of the hous of the Lord schal be maad redi in the cop of hillis, and schal be reisid aboue litle hillis. And alle hethene men schulen flowe to hym.” However, both the 1537 Matthew Bible and the 1560 Geneva Bible insert *that*, without italics, where the King James also supplies *that*.⁴

Post King James translations are also mixed with regard to inserting *that*. Some translations include *that*, while others omit it. The three modern translations that follow, each from rather different types of Bibles, all omit the *that*: *The New English Bible* reads, “In days to come the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be set over all the other mountains, lifted high above the hills. All the nations shall come streaming to it.”⁵ *The Holy Bible: Contemporary English Version* reads, “In the future, the mountain with the Lord’s temple will be the highest of all. It will reach above the hills. Every nation shall rush to it.”⁶ *The Jewish Study Bible* (Jewish publication Society TANAKH translation) reads, “In the days to come, the Mount of the Lord’s House shall stand firm above the

3 Neither the Syriac version of Isaiah nor the Vulgate contain a lexeme corresponding to *that*. The Septuagint does have “ὅτι, *that*,” but it is placed at the beginning of the verse and not where the intrusive *that* of the King James is inserted.

4 *The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), and *Matthew’s Bible 1537 Edition* (Peabody MA: Hendrickson, 2009). As the introduction to the King James Bible states, the translators were to use the previous English translations, which would have included the Geneva and Matthew Bibles. It should be noted here that the Hendrickson 2010 reprint of the 1611 King James Bible does not italicize *that*. However, the Phinney Bible printed in Cooperstown, NY, 1843, does italicize *that*, just as the 1979 LDS King James does.

5 *The New English Bible* (New York, NY: Oxford, 1971).

6 *The Holy Bible: Contemporary English Version* (New York, NY: American Bible Society, 1995).

mountains and tower above the hills; and all the nations shall gaze on it with joy.”⁷

Given this emphasis on the mixed treatment of *that* in English translations, the reader already suspects that therein lies the tale of whether Joseph knew Hebrew or not.

If Joseph had been even moderately educated for his day, he might have known that italicized words in the King James Old Testament Bible of his day were added to aid in the translation. The italicized words are not translations of any Hebrew words, but were important to help make the English text read like English. Therefore, he could have simply, without much thought, omitted in the Book of Mormon version the italicized words of the King James translation and thereby could have created a text that was more Hebraic than the King James. In fact only twenty-nine percent of King James Isaiah italics was altered in the Book of Mormon renderings of Isaiah in the Book of Mormon version,⁸ which indicates Joseph was not mindlessly changing italicized words in the text.

In fact, in the Isaiah sections of the Book of Mormon, besides omitting italicized words, “many times the italics in the [King James Version] are replaced with other words.”⁹ Such is the case in the verse in question. Joseph’s dictated text omits the *that* in this verse and substitutes a different relative conjunction *when* in the place of the King James *that*: “And it shall come to pass in the last days, when the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it.” This reading goes out on a rather precarious limb where no English translation — or any other translation that I am aware of — has gone. The Book of Mormon reading with *when* is unique among all Isaiah witnesses.¹⁰ If nothing else, Joseph can be credited with a daring emendation.

7 *The Jewish Study Bible* (Oxford: Oxford, 1999).

8 Royal Skousen, “Textual Variants in the Isaiah Quotations in the Book of Mormon,” in *Isaiah in the Book of Mormon*, ed. Donald W. Parry and John W. Welch (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1998), 382.

9 Royal Skousen, in a personal email to the author, dated 19 April 2015.

10 If there is a version of Isaiah somewhere with the relative conjunction *when* in this verse, I could not find it. And if I could not find one, it is unlikely that Joseph Smith could have found one from which to derive the unusual reading in 2 Nephi 12:2.

At this juncture, it is not important here to speculate whether this *when* might indicate that the *Urtext* — the brass plates on which 2 Nephi 12–24 is based — could have contained a textual variant not attested in any Hebrew witness, or whether this *when* is simply an interpretation of how to understand this verse in English. For example, the *when* in the King James translation of Genesis 4:8, “and it came to pass when they were in the field,” is not a literal translation of a Hebrew subordinate conjunction. Rather, it is the translation of a Hebrew verb form meaning “and it was.” On the other hand, the *when* in the King James translation of Genesis 12:12, “Therefore it shall come to pass when the Egyptians shall see thee that they shall say, This is his wife, and they will kill me,” does reflect the Hebrew conjunction *kî*. (This verse provides a fitting analogue in my analysis of 2 Nephi 12:2.) Therefore, the important task at hand here is not to speculate on what might have been in the *Urtext*, but rather to explore what the otherwise unattested presence of *when* in an English text of Isaiah is doing there.¹¹

The first issue is that the reading with *when* instead of *that* creates its own awkward syntax by changing the intelligible King James text into a difficult to understand construction. The subordinate clause, “When the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains,” does not appear to be resolved by a main clause. In technical terms, the protasis does not seem to have an apodosis. To resolve the awkwardness, one of the subsequent phrases should begin with *that* or *then* in order to resolve the *when*, much like the verse in Genesis 12:12 quoted above. Instead, all we have are two remaining instances of *and* in 2 Nephi 12:2, the same two *ands* that are in the Hebrew text.¹²

There is, however, a possible Hebraism hiding behind the awkwardness of the Book of Mormon English text of this verse. Note that for a Hebraism to be acceptable, it is not enough that it make sense within the meaning of the pericope; it must also be congruous with Standard Biblical Hebrew grammar. To produce a Hebraism hidden in the English text by inserting *when*, an otherwise unattested reading of this Isaiah verse, would seem like an impossible task for Joseph Smith, given that he had much less schooling than the average reader today. Yet that is exactly what he produced.

11 I thank the two anonymous reviewers who suggested that I clarify whether or not the *Urtext* might have had a textual variant.

12 The dependent clause could also be resolved if the second *and* were eliminated in the English text, which is exactly what some modern translations of the Hebrew do. See two of the three modern translations quoted above.

The resolution to the missing apodosis can be found in that venerable grammar of biblical Hebrew, *Gesenius*, as it is affectionately called. It was first published more than two hundred years ago in German and has been revised numerous times. The standard English edition first appeared in 1910 and is a revision of the 28th German edition.¹³ As a budding young prophet, Joseph Smith must have had *Gesenius* on the top of his must-read list if he were going to create a Hebraism. In any case, §112 contains a lengthy explanation of the grammatical structure of the Hebrew main clause, that is, the apodosis.

Rather than going into the minutia of technical Hebrew grammar in this paper, it is sufficient to say that the Hebrew lexeme *waw*, usually translated as *and*, can have several other meanings, including *even*, *that is*, *even so*, *but*, *or*, *then*, *therefore*, etc.¹⁴ These meanings are necessary when translating from Hebrew because *and* in English does not usually introduce the main clause, the apodosis, after a preceding dependent clause, the protasis. For example, Genesis 24:8 literally reads, “And if the woman will not come to go after you, and you are freed from this my oath.”¹⁵ The conjunction *and* that introduces the actual main clause in Hebrew does not make sense in English. Therefore, the King James translators, clearly understanding the conditional nature of these phrases, translated *then* instead of *and*, “And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then [*< and*] thou shalt be clear from this my oath.”¹⁶ Here the Hebrew conjunction *waw* introduces “the second part of a conditional clause”¹⁷ and means *then*.

As Royal Skousen has pointed out, the Hebraism *and*, meaning *then*, to introduce an apodosis occurs several times in the earliest received

13 *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, ed. and enlarged by E. Kautzsch, 2nd English edition revised in accordance with the twenty-eighth German edition (1909) by A. E. Cowley (Oxford: Clarendon, 1910). Sometimes this tome's designation is shortened to GKC.

14 See Ludwig Kohler and Walter Baumgartner, *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, CD-ROM, 2nd Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), for ו, hereafter cited as HALOT.

15 The author's own translation.

16 Hebrew does not always use *and* to introduce an apodosis. In Genesis 13:16, the King James slips in an italic *then* to introduce the apodosis, indicating that the *then* does not translate any word in the Hebrew text, not even a *waw*.

17 HALOT, 23, ו.

text of the Book of Mormon.¹⁸ Beginning with the 1837 edition of the Book of Mormon, many such occurrences were edited out, no doubt because *and* does not introduce an apodosis in English. The most prominent example comes from Moroni 10:4. The *and* that can be found in the printer's manuscript and in the 1830 edition between *Christ* and *he* was eliminated.¹⁹ If this *and* were the translation of a *waw* in a Hebrew vorlage, then Moroni 10:4 could have been read, "if ye shall ask with a sincere heart ... *then* (< *and*) he will manifest the truth of it unto you."

Some *when* ... *and* pericopes in the Book of Mormon are long and complicated and others are simple. The shortest example, 3 Nephi 23:8, contains just three clauses (reading with the corrected printer's manuscript): "and when Nephi had brought forth the records & laid them before him & he cast his eyes upon them & said." The sense of the pericope is: "And when Nephi had brought forth the records and laid them before him, *then* (< *and*) he cast his eyes upon them and said." A more complicated example of the Hebraistic construction in which *and* means *then* is found in Alma 8:13.²⁰ Following my normalization of the printer's manuscript, the verse reads, "Now when the people had said this and withstood all his words and reviled him & spit upon him and caused that he should be cast out of their City and he departed thence."²¹ The final *and* really means *then*. Therefore, this verse could be read, following the reading and accidentals of the 2013 edition, except for the Hebraism, "Now when the people had said this, and withstood all his words, and reviled him, and spit upon him, and caused that he should be cast out of their city, then he departed thence."

With this lengthy introduction to the *when* ... *and* Hebraism out of the way, it is time to return to 2 Nephi 12:2, with Joseph Smith's unique introduction of *when* in place of the King James version *that*. As remarked earlier, the placement of *when* seems to create an unresolved syntactical issue. The dependent clause created by *when* does not seem to be resolved, at least not if an appeal to English syntax is made. However,

18 "Towards a Critical Edition of the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies* 30/1 (1990): 42–3.

19 Royal Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon* (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 2004–2009), 6: 3950–1; hereafter *ATV*.

20 Royal Skousen, *ATV* 3:1739.

21 For the uncorrected text, see Royal Skousen, ed., *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, Part One (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 2001), 427.

the simple solution is to read the second *and* as a Hebraism for *then*. Thus the verse would read, “And it shall come to pass in the last days, when the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, *then* [*< and*] all nations shall flow unto it.”

Read thus, the missing apodosis appears exactly where it would be expected. In fact, our verse here complies with all the Book of Mormon examples of Hebraistic *when ... and* clauses listed by Royal Skousen, in that all of them insert at least one other subordinate clause between the initial *when* subordinate clause and the main clause beginning with *and*.²²

Not only does 2 Nephi 12:2 with its unique insertion of *when* make perfect sense when the final *and* is understood as *then*, but the passage aligns perfectly with Restoration doctrine: When the Lord’s restoration in the latter days has introduced the saving ordinances, including especially temple work, then will people of all nations flow to the temples of the Restoration. After all, Isaiah 2:2 is talking about the Restoration in the latter days, and reading *when ... then* resolves the meaning in a manner that astonishingly reflects the actual history of the Restoration.

Being the first Latter-day Saint — as far as I know²³ — to suggest the meaning *then* in place of the final *and* in 2 Nephi 12:2, some may accuse me of imagining Hebraisms where none really exist. However, I am not the first person who has read the *and* before the last phrase in Isaiah 2:2 as *then*. For example, the Anchor Bible translation reads, “It will come to pass in the days to come that the mountain, Yahveh’s house, shall be established at the top of the mountains, raised high over the hills. Then all nations shall stream towards it.”²⁴ The New Jerusalem Bible also translates with *then*: “It will happen in the final days that the mountain of Yahweh’s house will rise higher than the mountains and tower above

22 ATV 1:107–8.

23 I could find no mention of the Hebraism under discussion here in John A. Tvedtnes, *The Isaiah Variants in the Book of Mormon* (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1981); Carol F. Ellertson, *The Isaiah Passages in the Book of Mormon: A Non-Aligned Text*, Master’s Thesis, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT, 2001; or in any of the chapters in *Isaiah in the Book of Mormon*, ed. Donald W. Parry and John W. Welch (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1998).

24 *Isaiah* 1–39, Anchor Bible, trans. Joseph Blenkinsopp (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 189.

the heights. Then all nations will stream to it.”²⁵ The Book of Mormon version, dating back to at least 1829, creates the same temporal connection between its protasis and apodosis that more modern English translations make. How smart was Joseph Smith?

In returning to that question, as posed in the title of this paper, “Was Joseph Smith Smarter Than the Average Fourth Year Hebrew Student?” I have to admit that the question was a red herring. The translation of the Book of Mormon was not a product of Joseph’s intellect or any other mortal skills. Whether he understood Hebrew grammar or not is totally irrelevant. Joseph Smith produced, by the gift and power of God, not by any native abilities he might have possessed, a unique reading of Isaiah that also contained a prediction of future Restoration events enclosed within a possible, obscure Hebraism, years before its fulfillment. As the next verse prophesies, “And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths” (2 Nephi 12:3).

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25 *The New Jerusalem Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1998).

A VITAL RESOURCE FOR UNDERSTANDING LDS PERSPECTIVES ON WAR

Morgan Deane

Review of Duane Boyce, Even Unto Bloodshed: An LDS Perspective on War (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2015). 312 pp., including appendices and index. \$29.95.

Abstract: Even Unto Bloodshed: An LDS Perspective of War by Duane Boyce is a thorough and engrossing philosophical discussion describing the failure of secular and spiritual pacifism. Boyce provides a detailed summary of secular views regarding just war and pacifism, and systematic rebuttals of almost every major pacifist thinker in LDS thought. The text is far more brief describing the LDS theory of just war, but remains an essential resource for creating that theory.

Our age isn't unique in facing dangerous threats and deadly conflicts, and Latter-day Saints no doubt hear the phrase *wars and rumors of wars* often enough. Thankfully, in addition to clichés and predetermined positions, there is a growing body of Mormon literature on war. Most of this literature, such as the Greg Kofford volume *War and Peace in Our Time: Mormon Perspectives*¹ tends to focus on anti-war strands in LDS thought.² Others, such as my volume *Bleached Bones and Wicked Serpents: Ancient Warfare in the Book of Mormon*,³ focus on a historical approach. In his new book, *Even Unto Bloodshed: An LDS Perspective on*

1 Patrick Q. Mason, J. David Pulsipher, and Richard L. Bushman, eds., *War and Peace in Our Times: Mormon Perspectives* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2012), 267.

2 Full disclosure: I contributed to this volume, though I was defending the notion of preemptive war using the Book of Mormon. See Morgan Deane, "Offensive Warfare in the Book of Mormon and a Defense of the Bush Doctrine," in *War and Peace in Our Times*, 29–39.

3 Morgan Deane, *Bleached Bones and Wicked Serpents: Ancient Warfare in the Book of Mormon* (Sudbury, MA: eBookit, 2014).

War, Duane Boyce offers a substantive philosophical contribution to this field. Boyce argues that the framework for secular and spiritual pacifism fails and seeks to replace it with an LDS framework for just war theory (2). Because of his methodical approach, succinct style, and profound insights, he succeeds beautifully in contesting the rationale for pacifism, though the work remains too brief to do full justice to a full LDS just war theology.

The book is divided into three sections. In the first, Boyce examines secular arguments for both pacifism and just war theory. He provides concise, insightful, and thorough descriptions and reasoning. This section is particularly helpful since every argument within Mormonism is built upon this “complex, intricate, and largely unarticulated web of other beliefs, assumptions, predispositions, and preconceptions” (213). He includes clear and substantive sources as varied as Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, international law, Emmanuel Kant, and Howard Zinn. This section has little direct relation to Mormon thought but is an excellent primer on the intellectual waters in which Mormons swim.

Boyce also sets the foundation for just war theory by explaining the stark moral difference between the actions of an attacker and those of a defender (23–30). Boyce did this through a somewhat complicated but still accessible discussion of an individual’s rights and their obligations towards each other. When somebody violates our rights, such as the right to life, those violators forfeit the obligation we owe to them. Thus the defender has the moral right, and Boyce would argue in many cases, the obligation to fight back; the violent acts committed by the respective aggressor and defender are not morally equivalent.

Think ... of Cain. He attacks Abel, seeking to kill him, and this he obviously has no right to do. He is not free to use Abel in this way, and his killing of Abel is murder. But what about Abel? Is he free to exercise violence against Cain in self-defense? If every person has the right not to suffer violence, then Cain would also share this right. ... [But Cain] is seeking to kill Abel, and this he has no right to do. Cain thus forfeits his right not to suffer violence. ... [B]ecause he has no right to [murder], he has no right not to be attacked if that is required to prevent him from [murdering]. (29–30).

The second section constitutes the bulk of the book. Here Boyce summarizes and then dismantles the arguments of almost every major pacifist writer in Mormon thought. Particularly commendable is his

criticism of Hugh Nibley's arguments against warfare. Nibley was an excellent, groundbreaking scholar in many different fields, but too many Latter-day Saints have relied upon his light instead of developing their own insights, to the point that his words are sometimes quoted like scripture. For example, Nibley often argued that conflicts were often fought in the Book of Mormon between bad guys and other bad guys. Boyce explained the moral difference between Nephites and Lamanites, even citing Nibley when he said "all Book of Mormon wars take place on Nephite property, not on Lamanite" (76). Boyce also critiques the ideas that the Ammonites were pacifists, a narrative reading of the Book of Mormon as an anti-war text, the immutable covenant found in Doctrine and Covenants 98, and Eugene England's pacifism.

Boyce's discussion of D&C 98 illustrates his ability to explain complex ideas in plain but engrossing prose. Here he explains how the ambiguity of section 98 precludes the definitive and workable injunction against war that many assign to it:

The matter of definition is especially important when we consider the trespass of one state against another. ... When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor in 1941, the assault occurred in two waves and involved six aircraft carriers and more than three hundred fifty planes. During the attack the Japanese damaged or sank sixteen U.S. ships, destroyed some one hundred ninety planes, killed twenty-four hundred Americans, and wounded twelve hundred more. Now, which of these numbers is most pertinent to the commandment that an aggressed party (the United States in this case) must suffer "trespass" three times before responding? Would this assault on Pearl Harbor fall short of that threshold altogether since it was only a single attack and occurred in only two waves? If we saw the matter this way, then it would seem that the United States was obligated to suffer two more attacks from the Japanese before being justified in declaring war in response. (156–157)

The third section describes an LDS framework for just war theory. This section's brevity is disappointing. The first chapter is largely a summary of section two and why pacifism fails as a moral framework. The second and third chapters expound on fundamental LDS texts regarding war including the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7), Alma 48, and Gordon B. Hinckley's 2003 talk concerning the war in

Iraq.⁴ Here, again, the author spends considerable effort dismantling counterarguments based on D&C 98 and Spencer W. Kimball's "False Gods" talk.⁵ These chapters continue his strong emphasis on analytical precision and profound thought, so they are still an enjoyable read. But explanation of LDS just war theory covered merely seven explicit pages (271–278) in the last chapter and eight features of war in Alma 48 found in the previous chapter (241–250). This rather thin coverage seemed inadequate to the task.

In a similar vein, the author included only scattered historical application throughout his book. As quoted above, he cites Pearl Harbor, and at several other places he referred to historical events. Outside of a detailed, but still fairly short, case study of the Grenada invasion (192–205), Boyce did not provide any substantive discussion drawing on historical case studies. For example, he defended preemptive war conceptually (247–249) but didn't comment upon the Iraq War. He did, however, reprove those that "reproach without evidence" (171–173), a technique used by many pacifists towards ancient and modern prophets while they advance their theories. Since much of the glibness and mutual reproach between just war and anti-war advocates involves discussions of contemporary American foreign policy, this seemed to me a missed opportunity to apply his framework to the Iraq War in practical terms. As somebody who has personally suffered from the "reproach without evidence" method and been called a war-mongering, brainwashing, propagandizing sophist who twisted the scriptures in support of the Iraq War, I would have appreciated this as well.

The author also failed to discuss many of the current texts used (and misused) by LDS anti-war authors, including J. Reuben Clark's words and David O. McKay's General Conference statements from World War II. Boyce argues that since neither was serving as Church President at the time, such remarks do not merit discussion (224). I disagree. Any practicing Mormon knows the semi-doctrinal aura that attaches to any formal apostolic remarks. So Boyce's decision to exclude a discussion of these texts seems odd.

These are, however, still relatively minor complaints that arise at least in part because his analysis was so superb for every topic which he *did* address. It seems a pity we did not get that same analytical ability applied to texts that anti-war theorists have relied upon.

4 Gordon B. Hinckley, "War and Peace," *Ensign*, May 2003.

5 Spencer W. Kimball, "The False Gods We Worship," *Ensign*, June 1976.

Even Unto Bloodshed is a critical text for anybody that wishes to understand Mormon thought on war and stands as a much-needed reassessment of pacifist ideas. To use the example of apologetics clearing the weeds of doubt so the seed of faith may grow, this book does an excellent job of clearing away our natural antipathy towards any form of violence and allows for the growth of LDS theories of just war. The development of this framework remains preliminary, but Boyce's book stands as a vital resource for any wishing to develop it further.

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“HE IS A GOOD MAN”: THE FULFILLMENT OF HELAMAN 5:6-7 IN HELAMAN 8:7 AND 11:18-19

Matthew L. Bowen

Abstract: Mormon, as an author and editor, was concerned to show the fulfillment of earlier Nephite prophecy when such fulfillment occurred. Mormon took care to show that Nephi and Lehi, the sons of Helaman, fulfilled their father’s prophetic and paranetic expectations regarding them as enshrined in their given names — the names of their “first parents.” It had been “said and also written” (Helaman 5:6-7) that Nephi’s and Lehi’s namesakes were “good” in 1 Nephi 1:1. Using onomastic play on the meaning of “Nephi,” Mormon demonstrates in Helaman 8:7 that it also came to be said and written of Nephi the son of Helaman that he was “good.” Moreover, Mormon shows Nephi that his brother Lehi was “not a whit behind him” in this regard (Helaman 11:19). During their lifetimes — i.e., during the time of the fulfillment of Mosiah’s forewarning regarding societal and political corruption (see Mosiah 29:27) that especially included secret combinations — Nephi and Lehi stood firm against increasingly popular organized evil.

At the time that he instituted the momentous change in Nephite society from monarchy to hierarchical judiciary, King Mosiah II forewarned: “Therefore this shall ye observe and make it your law — to do your business **by the voice of the people**. And **if the time comes that the voice of the people doth choose iniquity**, then is the time that the judgments of God will come upon you; yea, then is the time he will visit you with great destruction even as he has hitherto visited this land” (Mosiah 29:27). Mosiah II had recently translated the twenty-four plates of Ether (see Mosiah 28:11–19) and knew what secret combinations portended for his own society (as Moroni eventually confirms in Ether

8:21).¹ The destruction detailed in this record was at least one motivating factor in his decision to end monarchy among the Nephites.²

Mormon informs us that Nephi the son of Helaman lived during the time of the entrenchment of secret combinations within Nephite society and the fulfillment of king Mosiah's prophecy³ in which the Nephites saw a great deal of destruction: "For **as their laws and their governments were established by the voice of the people, and they who chose evil were more numerous than they who chose good**, therefore they were ripening for destruction, for the laws had become corrupted" (Helaman 5:2). Mormon's care as a narrator is evident in his deliberate use of the phrase "voice of the people" in specifically recalling Mosiah 29:25-29, but so too in his use of words translated "evil" and "good." I submit that his use of both terms here constitutes a play on the name "Nephi." In this short note, I will propose two additional instances in which Mormon incorporates onomastic wordplay involving the meaning of the name "Nephi" from his sources in order to demonstrate the fulfillment of prophecy and parental hope.

The name "Nephi," which is best explained as a derivation from Egyptian *nfr* (later pronounced *neh-fee*, *nay-fee*, or *nou-fee*),⁴ means

1 Ether 8:20-21: "And now I, Moroni, do not write the manner of their oaths and combinations, for it hath been made known unto me that they are had among all people, and they are had among the Lamanites. And they have caused the destruction of this people of whom I am now speaking, and also the destruction of the people of Nephi."

2 Others included the recent experience of Alma's and Limhi's peoples with King Noah's monarchic evil (see Mosiah 11-24; see especially Mosiah 23:6-13 and Mosiah 29:13-24) and the refusal of Mosiah's own sons to accept the throne after him (see Mosiah 28:10: "Now king Mosiah had no one to confer the kingdom upon, for there was not any of his sons who would accept of the kingdom").

3 In Helaman 4:21-22 Mormon makes it clear that he sees this period of time as the fulfillment of Mosiah's prophecy in Mosiah 29: "Yea, they began to remember the prophecies of Alma, and also the words of Mosiah; and they saw that they had been a stiffnecked people, and that they had set at naught the commandments of God; And that they had altered and trampled under their feet the laws of Mosiah, or that which the Lord commanded him to give unto the people; and they saw that their laws had become corrupted, and that they had become a wicked people, insomuch that they were wicked even like unto the Lamanites."

4 John Gee, "A Note on the Name Nephi," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 1/1 (1992): 189-91. Idem, "Four Suggestions on the Origin of the Name Nephi," in *Pressing Forward with the Book of Mormon*, ed. John W. Welch and Melvin J. Thorne (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2009), 1-5.

“good,” “goodly,” “fine,” or “fair.”⁵ Nephi’s abdication of the chief judgeship marked a transition point for the Nephites, the “goodly” or “fair ones,”⁶ to a new public morality in which the majority chose “evil.” The “good” man — Nephi — who had been their chief judge had become weary of their “iniquity” (Helaman 5:4; cf. Mosiah 29:27) or “evil” and could no longer bear it. Consequently, Nephi “delivered up”⁷ or “yielded up” the chief judgeship in order to “preach the word of God all the remainder of his days, and his brother Lehi also, all the remainder of his days” (Helaman 5:4).

At this axial moment in Nephite history, Mormon recalls the fatherly paranesis⁸ of Helaman to his sons Nephi and Lehi in which he explained the giving of their names:

Behold, my sons, I desire that ye should remember to keep the commandments of God; and I would that ye should declare unto the people these words. Behold, I have given unto you the names of our first parents who came out of the land of Jerusalem; and this I have done that when you remember your names ye may remember them; and when ye remember them ye may remember their works; and when ye remember their works **ye may know how that it is said, and also written, that they were good.** Therefore, my sons, **I would that ye should do that which is good, that it may be said of you, and also written, even as it has been said and written of them.** (Helaman 5:6–7)

Helaman here manifests an awareness of the meaning of the name Nephi — “good.” Mormon, too, is aware of this meaning.⁹ Where had it

5 Matthew L. Bowen, “Internal Textual Evidence for the Egyptian Origin of Nephi’s Name,” *Insights* 22/11 (2002): 2. See also idem, “‘O Ye Fair Ones’: An Additional Note on the Meaning of the Name Nephi” *Insights* 23/6 (2003): 2. Cf. Raymond O. Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1999), 131–32.

6 Ibid.

7 Helaman 5:1.

8 Paranesis (or paraenesis, from Greek *parainesis*) is a rhetorical term designating speech or discourse containing advice, counsel, or exhortation, particularly of a religious nature.

9 There is abundant evidence in the Book of Mormon that the Nephites saw themselves in terms of “good” or “fair ones.” See especially Mosiah 9:1; Alma 21:5;

3 Nephi 2:16; 4 Nephi 1:10; Mormon 6:17–19; cf. Mosiah 19:13. See further Bowen, “O Ye Fair Ones,” 2.

been “said, and also written” that their namesakes and “first parents,” Lehi and Nephi (and their works), were good? One such place¹⁰ was in 1 Nephi 1:1 where Nephi states autobiographically:

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 (1 Nephi 1:1).

In language that plays on his own name,¹¹ Nephi describes his father as “goodly,” i.e., of “good” or fine moral quality. In other words, Nephi is “good” or “goodly” on account of his “goodly” father and his father’s teaching him and inspiring him to acquire a “great knowledge of the goodness and mysteries of God.”

One of Mormon’s literary and editorial aims in the Book of Helaman (specifically) is to show how Helaman’s words come to fulfillment — how that in doing “good” it came to be said and written of Nephi and his brother Lehi “that they were good,” just as it was said and written of Lehi and Nephi their first parents. After detailing Nephi and Lehi’s participation in one of the most notable miracles recorded in scripture in which many Lamanites and Nephite dissenters were converted (Helaman 5:14-52) and detailing the societal corruption evident in the Nephites’ embrace of Cainitic¹² “secret combinations,” Mormon includes the “Prophecy of Nephi.”¹³ This incident begins with Nephi’s public lament atop a tower in his own garden. Nephi’s accusations of

10 There may have been other instances in which Lehi and Nephi were called “goodly” or “good” in the records on Nephi’s large plates or Mormon’s abridgment of the same, which are unfortunately unavailable to us.

11 Bowen, “Internal Textual Evidence for the Egyptian Origin of Nephi’s Name,” 2.

12 I.e., “secret combinations” have their ultimate source in Cain’s ancient pact with Satan and the “secret combination” formed at that time (see Moses 5:29-33). On the influence of the pre-biblical Cain/“get gain” etiology on the authors of the Book of Mormon (especially Mormon and Moroni) and the wordplay on the name “Cain” throughout the Book of Mormon (including the Book of Helaman), see Matthew L. Bowen, “Getting Cain and Gain,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 15 (2015): 115–141.

13 See especially Helaman 7–9.

corruption against the people and the judiciary are met with immediate anger by some of the corrupt judges:

And it came to pass that thus they did stir up the people to anger against Nephi, and raised contentions among them; for there were some who did cry out: Let this man alone, for **he is a good man**, and those things which he saith will surely come to pass except we repent. (Helaman 8:7)

Here Mormon mentions that it was now “said” of Nephi that he was “good” in fulfillment of Helaman’s hope for his sons (see Helaman 5:6–7). By virtue of Mormon’s preserving this incident from his written sources in writing, it was also *explicitly* “written” that Nephi was “good” (as more or less implied in Helaman 5:2), in a marvelous play on the meaning of the latter’s name. Nephi was living up to every expectation that his father had for him.

What of his brother Lehi? In Helaman 11:18–19, Mormon records the public acclaim that Nephi and Lehi’s “good” works garnered:

And behold, the people did rejoice and glorify God, and the whole face of the land was filled with rejoicing; and they did no more seek to destroy Nephi, but they did esteem him as a great prophet, and a man of God, having great power and authority given unto him from God. And behold, Lehi, his brother, was not a whit behind him as to things pertaining to righteousness. (Helaman 11:18–19; cf. 9:40–41)

Here Mormon is careful to show that what has been “said and also written” about Nephi is “said and also written” of his brother Lehi. While the wordplay on “Nephi” and “good” is not directly invoked here as previously (recall Helaman 8:7), the clear implication is that Lehi was “not a whit behind [Nephi] as to things pertaining to righteousness”; that is, he was *every whit* as “good” as his brother. Both had become sons that had, in every measure, lived up to their father’s hopes for them. Furthermore, they were descendants who, in every measure, came to live up to the “good” legacies of their “goodly” first parents (1 Nephi 1:1). Nephi and Lehi both stood courageously against the “evil” of Gadianton and Kishkumen’s secret combination as it spread throughout Nephite society, destroying their society as they knew it just a generation later (see 3 Nephi 7) and eventually helping to make a final end of it (Helaman 2:13–14), just as such combinations had of the Jaredites before them (Helaman 6:28; Ether 8:20–21). Nephi’s own son, Nephi, became a “just

man” who “did many miracles in the name of Jesus” because he was “cleansed every whit from his iniquity” (3 Nephi 8:1) and was privileged to assist the Lord in ushering in a new dispensation among the Lamanites and Nephites.

For his part, Helaman — like his ancestor Lehi — had demonstrated that he was a “goodly parent” by his faithful fatherly paranesis — his sons had “been taught in all the learning of [their] father” (cf. 1 Nephi 1:1; Helaman 5:5-13). Helaman was a fortunate father in that his “good” sons hearkened to his paranesis. Many other “goodly” parents — like Lehi with respect to his older sons Laman and Lemuel — are not always as fortunate.

Special thanks go to Jeff Bradshaw and Parker Jackson.

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VANQUISHING THE MORMON MENACE

Stephen O. Smoot

A review of Mason, Patrick Q. The Mormon Menace: Violence and Anti-Mormonism in the Postbellum South. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. pp. 252 + xi, including notes and index. \$31.95.

Abstract: Patrick Mason has offered a fascinating look at the history of nineteenth century anti-Mormonism in the American South with his 2011 volume The Mormon Menace: Violence and Anti-Mormonism in the Postbellum South. Situating nineteenth century Southern anti-Mormonism in its historical context, Mason narrates a vivid account of how Mormons at times faced violent opposition that stemmed from deep cultural, religious, and political differences with mainstream American Protestants. Mason's volume is an excellent resource for those interested in Mormon history.

Any given study of anti-Mormonism typically takes one of two forms: (1) an apologetic response to anti-Mormon claims or (2) an investigation into anti-Mormonism as a strictly historical or cultural phenomenon. This is not to say that these two categories do not in some ways overlap, but broadly speaking, most treatments fall into one or the other. Some premier examples of the apologetic response would be the 1992 volume *Offenders for a Word: How Anti-Mormons Play Word Games to Attack the Latter-day Saints* by Daniel C. Peterson and Stephen D. Ricks¹ and the 2008 volume *Shaken Faith Syndrome: Strengthening One's Testimony in the Face of Criticism and Doubt* by Michael R. Ash.² The second category (the historical or cultural phenomenon of anti-Mormonism), however, has seen a number of

1 Daniel C. Peterson and Stephen D. Ricks, *Offenders for a Word: How Anti-Mormons Play Word Games to Attack the Latter-day Saints* (Provo: FARMS, 1992).

2 Michael R. Ash, *Shaken Faith Syndrome: Strengthening One's Testimony in the Face of Criticism and Doubt* (Redding, Calif.: Foundation for Apologetic Information and Research, 2008). Ash's volume was revised and expanded in 2013.

recent and important contributions by scholars associated with the burgeoning academic field of Mormon Studies. The important works of Terryl Givens and Sarah Barringer Gordon in the late 1990s and early 2000s,³ to name two examples, set a new generation of Latter-day Saint historians on a path toward focusing their study on the phenomenon of anti-Mormonism in a broader American religious, political, and cultural historical context.

It is to this second category that Patrick Q. Mason's 2011 contribution, *The Mormon Menace: Violence and Anti-Mormonism in the Postbellum South*, belongs.⁴ Published shortly before J. Spencer Fluhman's important 2012 treatise on the history of anti-Mormonism,⁵ Mason (PhD from the University of Notre Dame, the Howard W. Hunter Chair of Mormon Studies, and associate professor of religion at Claremont Graduate University) focuses his attention on the often volatile and occasionally blood-soaked experiences of Latter-day Saints living in the southern United States in the second half of the nineteenth century. With a careful historian's craft and gripping prose, Mason tells the story of the religious, cultural, political, and even moral factors that exacerbated tensions between nineteenth-century Latter-day Saints and their largely Protestant and nativist non-Mormon Southern contemporaries. It is a story that is fascinating from a historical perspective, inspiring from a Latter-day Saint perspective, and ultimately tragic from a humanitarian perspective.

Mason begins his volume with an account of the murder of Parley P. Pratt (the heralded "Apostle Paul of Mormonism"⁶) at the hands of Southerner Hector McLean in 1857. Pratt was sealed to McLean's estranged wife Eleanor in 1855 by Brigham Young "despite

3 Terryl L. Givens, *The Viper on the Hearth: Mormons, Myths, and the Construction of Heresy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Sarah Barringer Gordon, *The Mormon Question: Polygamy and Constitutional Conflict in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002). Oxford University Press republished Givens's work in 2013, attesting to an abiding interest in Mormon history in mainstream academia.

4 Patrick Q. Mason, *The Mormon Menace: Violence and Anti-Mormonism in the Postbellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011). Citations from *The Mormon Menace* are followed here in parentheses.

5 J. Spencer Fluhman, *"A Peculiar People": Anti-Mormonism and the Making of Religion in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

6 Terryl L. Givens and Matthew J. Grow, *Parley P. Pratt: The Apostle Paul of Mormonism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

the fact that she was not legally divorced from Hector” at the time of her sealing as Pratt’s twelfth wife (p. 3). Shortly thereafter, Eleanor traveled to New Orleans to “retrieve her children” and begin a new life in Utah (p. 3). Hector, however, was alerted to his wife’s quest and Pratt’s proximity in the area. He wasted no time hunting down the champion of Mormonism, catching up to him “twelve miles north” of Van Buren, Arkansas (p. 4). A discharged pistol and several stabs later, Elder Pratt lay dead on the ground, butchered by Eleanor’s enraged husband, whose sense of Southern honor and morality had been grievously wounded by Pratt’s taking Eleanor as a plural wife (pp. 4–7). Latter-day Saints reacted by canonizing Pratt as a martyr of the faith while Southerners insisted that McLean, not Pratt, was “the real victim” (p. 4).

The causes leading up to Pratt’s death are an obvious microcosm for the violence and persecution heaped upon Southern Latter-day Saints in the nineteenth century. Not only was Pratt a Latter-day Saint and thus perceived as subverting the quintessential Protestantism cultivated by years of Southern religious tradition, but he was a polygamist who was seen as flagrantly undermining Southern morality. This is Mason’s central thesis in *The Mormon Menace*: Latter-day Saints were targeted not merely as theological opponents (which would only warrant condemnation in polemical tracts and over the pulpit) but as a moral and cultural threat that earned vigilante justice because of their immediate danger to Southern lifestyle and ideals. Latter-day Saint plural marriage in particular stood as the foremost reason for much of the Southern anti-Mormon vigilantism in the nineteenth century. “The Latter-day Saints’ peculiar institution of plural marriage provided more than enough objectionable ‘manner’ as well as ‘matter’ to inspire the transformation of anti-Mormonism from a relatively localized phenomenon into a veritable national pastime,” Mason explains (p. 6). His evidence throughout *The Mormon Menace* fully justifies this thesis.

Publicly announced as a practice of the faith by Latter-day Saint leaders in 1852, plural marriage scandalized practically every level of the American (and Southern) public and was undoubtedly one of the main factors behind the anti-Mormonism of the nineteenth century. Mason documents the “allegations of LDS missionaries’ licentiousness” leveled by Southern anti-Mormons as well as the “religious competition introduced by active Mormon proselytization” (p. 19). These factors directly contributed to the death not only of Parley P. Pratt, Mason argues, but also of Joseph Standing (the “lustful lout,” as he was deemed in the press [p. 31]) in Georgia in 1879 (pp. 21–34) and John Gibbs at

Cane Creek, Tennessee, in 1884 (pp. 33–56). Although there was no evidence to substantiate anti-Mormon claims of Mormon libertinism, the caricature of Latter-day Saint men as sensual and libidinous sexual predators (which, incidentally, traveled across the Atlantic and became the popular perception of Mormons by inhabitants of Great Britain and elsewhere⁷) became so ingrained in the minds of many that strong distrust, suspicion, and outright antagonism toward Latter-day Saint elders (and their sympathizers) were guaranteed. Mason explores the popular nineteenth-century perception of Latter-day Saint polygamists as lustful criminals bent on subverting American morality (pp. 57–78) and captures the basic attitude of most nineteenth-century Southern anti-Mormons. Quoting an issue of the *Alabama Baptist* published in 1882, Mason summarizes, “Nothing short of complete victory, meaning the eradication of polygamy — and the entire Mormon religion if need be — would be sufficient in defending Southern homes from ‘the fiend of lust and crime set up under the garb of religion’” (p. 78).

It should be noted, as Mason does (pp. 127–148), that actual violence against Latter-day Saints (such as the murders of Parley P. Pratt and Joseph Standing and the Cane Creek Massacre) was relatively sparse, and threats of violence were made much more often than actually committed. Likewise, while certainly not meant to diminish the public mocking, political coercion, and extralegal violence experienced by hundreds of Latter-day Saints in the South during the nineteenth century, Mason explains that Southern anti-Mormonism can be effectively seen as more than mere “persecution born of religious bigotry.” “Though not without merit,” Mason writes, “this argument is ultimately insufficient in explaining the extent and nature of Southern anti-Mormonism” (p. 127). Rather, Mason sees this movement as part of “the long tradition of American vigilantism that retained a special hold in the post-bellum South” (p. 128). Latter-day Saints were not the only group targeted by Southern vigilantes, as Jews, Catholics, and, of course, Blacks experienced varying degrees of vigilante pressure and oppositional rhetoric during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As with Latter-day Saints, these minority groups were targeted not simply for their identities as such but also for social, political, economic, cultural, and racial factors. It is in this context that Mason stresses we should primarily view Southern anti-Mormonism (pp. 171–194).

7 See generally Craig L. Foster, *Penny Tracts and Polemics: A Critical Analysis of Anti-Mormon Pamphleteering in Great Britain, 1837–1860* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2002).

To be sure, nineteenth-century Latter-day Saints were right to bemoan an unrelenting national religious bigotry toward Mormonism that went all the way to the highest levels of the federal government, and, as Mason shows (pp. 149–170), the very real anti-Mormon antagonism suffered in the courts, in the press and by gangs of vigilantes was highly influential in shaping nineteenth-century Mormon identity. Likewise, the extralegal violence meted out to Latter-day Saints in the South was by no means justified. Nevertheless, Mason emphasizes that nineteenth-century anti-Mormonism was born out of more than simply blind prejudice against Mormons. Only by understanding all of the complex factors behind Southern anti-Mormonism (including a fair share of non-violent political and religious opposition [pp. 102–126]) can we begin to make sense of the tragic episodes explored in *The Mormon Menace*. Just as Latter-day Saints (rightly) insist that such events as the tragic Mountain Meadows Massacre were more than a mere display of brazen Latter-day Saint fanaticism driven by an intrinsically violent, dangerous, and blindly irrational theology (the arguments of a popular American nature/adventure writer notwithstanding⁸), so too it would be wise to understand Southern anti-Mormonism in a fuller historical context.⁹

8 Jon Krakauer, *Under the Banner of Heaven: A Story of Violent Faith* (New York: Doubleday, 2003). For reviews of this problematic work, see Craig L. Foster, “Doing Violence to Journalistic Integrity,” *FARMS Review* 16/1 (2004): 149–74; “Church Response to Jon Krakauer’s *Under the Banner of Heaven*,” online at <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/commentary/church-response-to-jon-krakauer-s-under-the-banner-of-heaven> (accessed July 30, 2015). Max Perry Mueller has offered some interesting commentary on the impact of Krakauer’s work for Mormon Studies in general but also points to many “problematic sources and faulty interpretations of theology” in the book. See “Mormonism and the Problem of Jon Krakauer,” online at <http://religionandpolitics.org/2015/07/14/mormonism-and-the-problem-of-jon-krakauer/> (accessed July 30, 2015).

9 Interestingly, the LDS Church’s “Gospel Topics” essay on nineteenth-century violence committed upon and by Latter-day Saints invokes many of the same historical factors mentioned by Mason to explain such incidents as the Mountain Meadows Massacre, including the deep-rooted nineteenth-century tradition of American vigilantism and extralegal violence. “Much of the violence perpetrated by and against Latter-day Saints fell within the then-existing American tradition of extralegal vigilantism, in which citizens organized to take justice into their own hands when they believed the government was either oppressive or lacking. Vigilantes generally targeted minority groups or those perceived to be criminal or socially marginal. Such acts were at times fueled by religious rhetoric.” See “Peace and Violence among 19th-Century Latter-day Saints,” <https://www.lds.org/topics/>

To that end, I judge Mason's work a success. With *The Mormon Menace*, Mason has provided a fascinating historical narrative that explores the complexities of the sometimes violent inter-religious and inter-cultural competition that largely drove the Mormon/non-Mormon conflicts of the nineteenth century. By viewing anti-Mormonism in a more nuanced historical context, a robust picture emerges that helps us understand the motives of the perpetrators and appreciate and remember the experience of the victims.

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A MODERN VIEW OF ANCIENT TEMPLE WORSHIP

Julie J. Nichols

Review of Matthew S. Brown, Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, Stephen D. Ricks, and John S. Thompson, eds., Ancient Temple Worship: Proceedings of the Expound Symposium 14 May 2011 (Orem and Salt Lake City, UT: The Interpreter Foundation/Eborn Books, 2014). 293pp., \$24.95 (hardcover)

Abstract: This well-produced, noteworthy volume adds to the growing number of resources available to help make more meaningful the complex and historically rich experience of the temple.

When I was first endowed, I found that for me, official church publications about the background and meaning of the ceremonies enacted in the temple were full of reverence but limited in scope. For years I looked for — and, to be honest, actually found — clues and indicators about the covenants and symbols I encountered there. I had to put pieces of the puzzle together, go back to the temple to verify my own hypotheses about the meaning of this or that structural or symbolic element, and keep at it bit by bit.

Now, wonderfully, we're seeing more meaty publications that provide scholarly and spiritually edifying information about the meaning of the various elements of the temple. Even Deseret Book is offering more solid material, but we also have access to such publications as Martin J. Palmer's *The Temple Concept* (Eborn Books, 2015), *Temple Theology* (and other related works discussing the ancient understanding of temple worship) by Margaret Barker, and many other volumes indicating that, as the Interpreter Foundation puts it:

The ancient Hebrews did not believe that the temple concept originated in the time of Moses. Rather, they taught that temple rituals and doctrines originated with Adam and were handed down among the biblical patriarchs. This is precisely what the Prophet Joseph Smith tried to teach the world during the 1800s,

that the gospel of Jesus Christ is eternal and has been on the earth since the beginning.¹

The Interpreter Foundation is an independent, nonprofit entity not owned or controlled by the Church but having the goal:

to increase understanding of scripture through careful scholarly investigation and analysis of the insights provided by a wide range of ancillary disciplines. ... We hope to illuminate, by study and faith, the eternal spiritual message of the scriptures — that Jesus is the Christ.²

Ancient Temple Worship: Proceedings of the Expound Symposium 14 May 2011, the book under review here, is “the [first] volume of the Temple on Mount Zion series published by the Interpreter Foundation and Eborn Books. The purpose of the series is to increase understanding and appreciation of temple rituals and doctrines, and to encourage participation in the redeeming work of family history and temple worship.”³ That first and only Expound symposium was conceived and arranged by Matthew B. Brown, a Latter-day Saint author and historian whose emphasis was “on the history and doctrine of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young” (from the dust jacket), whose name is among the editors of this collection and who died tragically on Oct 5, 2011, at just 47 years of age, only a few months after his Symposium came to fruition.

A second book in this series is titled *Temple Insights – Proceedings of the Interpreter Matthew B. Brown Memorial Conference – The Temple on Mount Zion Series 2 – September 2012, Hardcover (2014)*,⁴ and the third volume of the series will appear in the coming months.⁵ It would seem that colleagues and friends carried Brown’s work forward. In any event, be warned: neither volume is for the first-time templegoer who simply wonders what awaits her or him. The eleven chapters contained in *Ancient Temple Worship* are scholarly, specific, and narrowly but

1. http://www.amazon.com/Temple-Insights-Proceedings-Interpreter-Conference/dp/1890718505/ref=sr_1_2?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1439408950&sr=1-2&keywords=ancient+temple+worship

2. <http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/mission-statement/>

3. http://www.amazon.com/Temple-Insights-Proceedings-Interpreter-Conference/dp/1890718505/ref=sr_1_2?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1439408950&sr=1-2&keywords=ancient+temple+worship

4. <http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/youtube-videos-of-the-temple-on-mount-zion-conference/>

5. See <http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/events/2014-temple-on-mount-zion-conference/>

brightly illuminating regarding the deep heritage temple-goers access when they do work there for themselves or for the dead.

A survey of some of the titles and their authors will make my point: “Understanding Ritual Hand Gestures of the Ancient World,” by David Calabro, a recent PhD in ancient Near Eastern studies; “The Sacred Embrace and the Sacred Handclasp in Ancient Mediterranean Religions,” by Stephen D. Ricks, long-time professor of Hebrew and cognate learning at BYU; “Ascending Into the Hill of the Lord: What the Psalms Can Tell Us About the Rituals of the First Temple,” by David J. Larsen, whose PhD dissertation at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland was titled “The Royal Psalms in the Dead Sea Scrolls”; “Temples All the Way Down: Some Notes on the Mi’Raj of Muhammad,” by Daniel C. Peterson, professor of Islamic studies and Arabic at BYU; and “Nephite Daykeepers: Ritual Specialists in Mesoamerica and the Book of Mormon,” by Mark Alan Wright, assistant professor of ancient scripture at BYU.

Though the authors seem to be mostly local to Utah, the citations are plentiful, the scholarship convincing, and the themes impressive. Without speaking directly of delicate topics, every single article connects ancient practices, texts, and archaeological artifacts to aspects of the LDS ceremony recognizable to any templegoer.

As an example, the first of the essays in the collection, Brown’s own “Cube, Gate, and Measuring Tools: A Biblical Pattern” (1-26) argues that the geometry — the structure — of the Holy of Holies of the Tabernacle of the Old Testament corresponds to the geometry of the vision in Revelation, that that geometry is assured in both texts by means of sacred measuring tools, and that certain standards are required of anyone intending to pass through the portal into the Holy of Holies, or into the presence of God, the Creator, who uses those same measuring tools to bring the world to order out of chaos. Passages from the Psalms, Job, Luke 13, and certain early Church writers are compared with the relevant passages from Exodus 25-26 and Revelation 21-22 to support the thesis that “the covenant people of the Old and New Testaments were interconnected” — and, without explicitly saying, so too the covenant people of this dispensation. Images from ancient art work provide further evidence. Brown provides an appendix of relevant passages and eight pages of notes. The templegoer who has wondered what it means to stand at the veil and enter into the presence of the Lord will be enlightened by this paper. This kind of focused scholarly information can be expansive and rewarding.

My one complaint about *Ancient Temple Worship* is that there is no foreword or preface providing background for the Symposium itself, guiding principles behind the editing of the collection, acknowledgment of the limitations of the Symposium or plans to address them in further conferences, or critical contexts to any of the essays. No website for the Symposium can be found — I assume, as I have said, that Brown's death collapsed the plans for further symposia into the FairMormon and Interpreter Foundation entities, so that the difficulty in finding a website is justifiable and correctable by looking at www.fairmormon.org and www.mormoninterpreter.com.

For the time being, however, add this well-produced, noteworthy volume to the growing number of resources available to help explain and clarify the sometimes-enigmatic but historically and spiritually rich experience of the temple.

Adapted for the Interpreter journal with the kind permission of the Association for Mormon Letters.

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NEPHI'S GOOD INCLUSIO

Matthew L. Bowen

Abstract: As John Gee noted two decades ago, Nephi is best explained as a form of the Egyptian word nfr, which by Lehi's time was pronounced neh-fee, nay-fee, or nou-fee. Since this word means "good," "goodly," "fine," or "fair," I subsequently posited several possible examples of wordplay on the name Nephi in the Book of Mormon, including Nephi's own autobiographical introduction (1 Nephi 1:1: "I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents ... having had a great knowledge of the goodness and the mysteries of God"). It should be further pointed out, however, that Nephi also concludes his personal writings on the small plates using the terms "good" and "goodness of God." This terminological bracketing constitutes a literary device, used anciently, called inclusio or an envelope figure. Nephi's literary emphasis on "good" and "goodness" not only befits his personal name, but fulfills the Lord's commandment, "thou shalt engraven many things ... which are good in my sight" (2 Nephi 5:30), a command which also plays on the name Nephi. Nephi's autobiographical introduction and conclusion proved enormously influential on subsequent writers who modeled autobiographical and narrative biographical introductions on 1 Nephi 1:1-2 and based sermons — especially concluding sermons — on Nephi's "good" conclusion in 2 Nephi 33. An emphasis in all these sermons is that all "good"/"goodness" ultimately has its source in God and Christ.

According to Nephi's own account, the Lord's commandment to make the small plates came as follows: "Make other plates; and thou shalt engraven **many things upon them which are good** in my sight, for the **profit** of thy people" (2 Nephi 5:30). As John Gee first proposed, the name Nephi is best explained as a form of the Egyptian word *nfr*, which was later pronounced *neh-fee*, *nay-fee*, or *nou-fee*,¹ especially during and

1. John Gee, "A Note on the Name Nephi," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 1/1 (1992): 189-91; idem, "Four Suggestions on the Origin of the Name Nephi," in *Pressing Forward with the Book of Mormon*, ed. John W. Welch and Melvin J. Thorne (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2009), 1-5.

after Lehi's time. The word *nfr* denotes "good," "goodly," "fine," "fair."² Since Nephi's scribal training was in "the language of [his] father" which included or "consisted of the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians" (1 Nephi 1:2), Nephi conceivably heard the echo of his own name in the Lord's injunction to him regarding the making of the small plates (in 2 Nephi 5:30), which he called — along with his large plates — "the plates of Nephi" (1 Nephi 9:2). Royal Skousen has pointed out that the "books" of 1 and 2 Nephi were both called "the Book of Nephi."³ The literary framing of Nephi's personal writings suggests that both books of *Nephi* can be seen as a single "good" book; or, put another way, they constitute a single, unified testimony of "the goodness of God" (1 Nephi 1:1; 2 Nephi 33:14).

The Lord's use of "good" in 2 Nephi 5:30 thus seems to have suggested an overarching theme for Nephi's small-plates account, as Nephi begins and ends his writings on those plates with the threefold repetition of forms of the term "good." This repetition at the opening and closing of his account constitutes a framing device sometimes called *inclusio* or an envelope figure.⁴ In the short study that follows, I propose that this clustering of "good" terminology not only reflects Nephi's autobiographical wordplay on his own name, but also highlights two of Nephi's main themes: the importance of having a knowledge of and partaking of the "goodness of God" and doing "good." I will also briefly sketch the influence and impact that Nephi's thematic focus on "good" and "goodness" had on later Book of Mormon writers, particularly Amaleki, Mormon, and Moroni.

Opening Frame: "Goodness" Taught and Learned

The first threefold repetition of "good" terms occurs in the very first verse of the Book of Mormon, and in the beginning of Nephi's autobiography:

2. Raymond O. Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1999), 131-32. See also Adolf Erman and Hermann Grapow, *Wörterbuch der Aegyptischen Sprache* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1971), 2:252-63.

3. Royal Skousen, "How Joseph Smith Translated the Book of Mormon: Evidence from the Original Manuscript," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 7/1 (1998): 28. In Helaman 2:14, Mormon refers to the entirety of the large plates as "the Book of Nephi." Like 1 and 2 Nephi, 3 and 4 Nephi were also titled "the Book of Nephi." See idem, *Earliest Text*, 564, 642.

4. For some biblical examples of this literary device, see *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry, and Writings*, ed. Tremper Longman III and Peter Enns (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 323-25.

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. (1 Nephi 1:1)

The first of these “good” terms is Nephi’s own name. As I have noted elsewhere,⁵ this suggests deliberate autobiographical wordplay on — or play on the meaning of — Nephi’s name. The wordplay suggests that Nephi’s name (*nfr* > *nfi* = “good,” “goodly,” “fine,” “fair”) is appropriate because of the “goodly” quality⁶ of the parenting that he received: he “was taught somewhat in all the learning of [his] father.” While

5. Matthew L. Bowen, “Internal Textual Evidence for the Egyptian Origin of Nephi’s Name,” *Insights* 22/11 (2002): 2.

6. Old English *gōdlic*, whence “goodly” derives, denoted “excellent” (i.e., of “excellent” or “good” quality), but also “comely, fair” (see J.R. Clark, *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, 4th ed. [Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1984], 158). In other words, its semantic range overlaps considerably with Egyptian *nfr* (“good,” “goodly,” “fine” [quality], “fair”). Imitating Nephi’s language, Enos (Enos 1:1) explains that he knew his father was “a just man — for [i.e., because] he taught me in his language and in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” Enos’s education was proof of his father being “just” or righteous (see further below). Perhaps the best endorsement of the idea that “goodly” in 1 Nephi 1:1 means “good” as in “of good quality” is Joseph Smith’s adaptation of Nephi’s biography:

“I was born in the town of Charon [Sharon] in the <State> of Vermont North America on the twenty third day of December AD 1805 of goodly Parents who spared no pains to instruct<ing>me in <the> christian religion[.]”

(See Karen Lynn Davidson, David J. Whittaker, Mark Ashurst-McGee, and Richard L. Jensen, eds., *The Joseph Smith Papers: Histories, Volume 1: Joseph Smith Histories, 1832-1844* [Salt Lake City, UT: The Church Historian’s Press, 2012], 11; emphasis in the original, underlining mine; hereafter cited as JSPJSH). When the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible uses the term “goodly” it usually does so in the sense of “good” quality — i.e., fine or excellent quality (see, e.g., Genesis 27:15; 49:21; 39:28; Leviticus 23:40; Numbers 31:10; Deuteronomy 3:25; 6:10; Deuteronomy 8:12; Joshua 7:21; 2 Chronicles 36:10; Psalms 80:10; Jeremiah 11:16; Ezekiel 17:8; Ezekiel 17:23; Joel 3:5). In some instances, “goodly” refers to appearance, i.e., “good” to look at or “fair” (see, e.g., Genesis 39:6; Exodus 2:2; 1 Samuel 16:12; 2 Samuel 23:21). However, in not one instance does “goodly” connote or denote “wealthy.” It should be noted that both of the aforementioned senses of “goodly” fit well within the range of meaning of Egyptian *nfr*; whence Nephi most plausibly derives (see further Matthew L. Bowen, “‘O Ye Fair Ones’: An Additional Note on the Meaning of the Name Nephi,” *Insights* 23/6 [2003]: 2-3. In light of this evidence

that education included at least something of the “knowledge of the **goodness** and mysteries of God” — Lehi himself had a testimony of God’s “goodness”⁷ — we read that Nephi also had, in contrast to his brothers, a desire to gain this testimony (via confirmatory revelation) for himself (see 1 Nephi 2:15).⁸

Closing Frame: Persuading and Teaching to Do Good and to Partake of God’s Goodness

In 2 Nephi 33, Nephi returns to the kind of autobiography with which he began his record (1 Nephi 1:1ff.). Nephi apprehends that in order to live up to the “good” or “goodliness” that was so evident in his father’s life (whose heir he was)⁹ and to live up to his own name, he must be willing to persuade to others — especially his people, the Nephites (“good[ly] ones,” “fair ones”),¹⁰ to do good, which he does ceaselessly throughout his life: “And I know that the Lord God will consecrate my prayers for the gain of my people. And the words which I have written in weakness will be made strong unto them; for it **persuadeth them to do good; it maketh known** unto them of their fathers; and it speaketh of Jesus, and **persuadeth** them to believe in him, and to endure to the end, which is life eternal” (2 Nephi 33:4).

Notably Nephi refers to “the words which [he has] written” collectively as “it” and uses a singular form of a verb rendered “persuadeth” — “it persuadeth them to do good” — a grammatical phenomenon sometimes called “deflected agreement.”¹¹ The change of pronoun + verb to a singular construction emphasizes Nephi’s “words” as a single unit.

— especially the testimonies of Enos and Joseph Smith — the idea that “goodly parents” means “wealthy parents” cannot be sustained, in my view.

7. See, e.g., 1 Nephi 1:14; 5:4.

8. 1 Nephi 2:16: “And it came to pass that I, Nephi, being exceedingly young, nevertheless being large in stature, and also **having great desires to know of the mysteries of God**, wherefore, I did cry unto the Lord; and behold he did visit me, and did soften my heart that I did believe all the words which had been spoken by my father; wherefore, I did not rebel against him like unto my brothers.”

9. See 2 Nephi 1:28-29 and 5:1-13.

10. Bowen, “O Ye Fair Ones,” 2-3; see also Matthew L. Bowen, “Not Partaking of the Fruit: Its Generational Consequences and Its Remedy,” in *The Things Which My Father Saw: Approaches to Lehi’s Dream and Nephi’s Vision: The 40th Annual Brigham Young University Sidney B. Sperry Symposium*, ed. Daniel L. Belnap, Gaye Strathearn, and Stanley A. Johnson (Salt Lake City/Provo, UT: RSC and Deseret Book, 2011), 240-63.

11. For more on the phenomenon of deflected agreement, especially as found in the Book of Mormon, see Andrew Smith, “Deflected Agreement in the

Nephi's writings — his “words” — are subdivided into two “books,” though they can be viewed as a literary whole. The deflected agreement emphasizes that they are, in a sense, really one “book” — Nephi's “good” book.

A few verses later, Nephi invokes “good”-terminology again:

And now, my beloved brethren, and also Jew, and all ye ends of the earth, hearken unto these words and believe in Christ; and if ye believe not in these words believe in Christ. And if ye shall believe in Christ ye will believe in these words, for they are the words of Christ, and he hath given them unto me; and they **teach all men** that they should **do good**. (2 Nephi 33:10)

Nephi characterizes his writings as “the words of Christ [that] he hath given ... unto me,” as if to leave no doubt as to their provenance. Moreover, he widens his scope from “persuading” his people to “do good” to “teaching” his “beloved brethren” the Lamanites, to the Jews (and their descendants), and “all ye ends of the earth” (which would include the Gentiles). His words “teach all men” — i.e., all three of these groups — “that they should do good.” We may further note here that the word “believe” is repeated five times in 2 Nephi 33:10 alone. Nephi wishes his people, the Nephites, to do “good” and thus remain “good” and that they will not “dwindle in unbelief” (1 Nephi 12:22-13; 26:15-19; or “dwindle and perish in unbelief,” 1 Nephi 4:13)¹² as the Lamanites already dwindled.

What “good” did Nephi want them to “do”? Nephi further declares that “it [the body of his writings] speaketh of Jesus and persuadeth them to believe in him and endure to the end, which is life eternal.” Nephi *meristically*¹³ alludes to the “doctrine of Christ”¹⁴ — i.e., having faith in Jesus Christ, repenting, being baptized, receiving the Holy Ghost,

Book of Mormon,” *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture* 21/2 (2012): 40-57.

12. The Spirit's words to Nephi in 1 Nephi 4:13 already hint ominously at the Lamanites as a “nation” that dwindled and perished spiritually in unbelief. They lost access to the Brass Plates at Nephi's departure from them (2 Nephi 5:12; cf., e.g., Mosiah 10:16; Alma 20:13).

13. *Merismus* is a rhetorical device in which a whole is referred to a whole by one or several of its parts.

14. Noel B. Reynolds, “The Gospel of Jesus Christ as Taught by the Nephite Prophets,” *BYU Studies* 31 (Summer 1991): 31-50; idem, “The True Points of My Doctrine,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 5/2 (1996): 26-56; “; see also idem, “How to Come unto Christ,” *Ensign* 22 (September 1992): 7-13; and most recently,

and enduring to the end which evokes the promise of the Father “Ye shall have eternal life.”¹⁵ Nephi has just expounded the “doctrine of Christ” at length in 2 Nephi 31–32. Thus, the “good” that Nephi’s “good” book “persuadeth” his people to “do” is identified here specifically as obedience to the “doctrine of Christ” — or, put another way, “hearken unto these words and believe in Christ” (2 Nephi 33:10).

Finally, Nephi closes his personal writings with an invocation of the phrase “the goodness of God” that matches his use of the phrase “the goodness and mysteries of God” (1 Nephi 1:1). He declares:

And you that will not partake of the **goodness of God**, and respect the words of the Jews, and also my words, and the words which shall proceed forth out of the mouth of the Lamb of God, behold, I bid you an everlasting farewell, for these words shall condemn you at the last day. (2 Nephi 33:14)

Nephi’s expression “you that will not partake” means “you that are not willing to partake” or “you who do not want to partake,” recalling Lehi’s statement regarding his sons, Laman and Lemuel, “they would not come unto me and partake of the fruit” (1 Nephi 8:18).¹⁶ As Jennifer C. Lane has observed, “We must be careful in how we read the modal verb ‘would’ in this sentence [in 1 Nephi 8:18]. In modern-day English we use ‘would’ or ‘will’ to express future tense, but *will* also means ‘what we want’; its root is the German verb *willen*. Laman and Lemuel did not come because they did not want to come.”¹⁷ These same observations can and should be applied to 2 Nephi 33:14: those who “will not partake of the goodness of God” are those who do not *want* to partake of the goodness of God — i.e., they are unwilling. If we do not partake of God’s goodness, it is because we do not want to partake.

Moreover, Nephi equates “partak[ing] of the goodness of God” with “respect[ing] the words of the Jews,” respecting his [Nephi’s] words, and respecting “the words which shall proceed forth out of

idem. “The Gospel According to Nephi: An Essay on 2 Nephi 31,” *Religious Educator* 16/2 (2015): 51–75.

15. 2 Nephi 31:2; cf. 2 Nephi 31:15.

16. On Laman and Lemuel’s unbelief and their refusal to partake of the fruit of the tree of life, see Bowen, “Not Partaking of the Fruit,” 240–63.

17. Jennifer C. Lane, “The Presence of the Lord,” in *The Things Which My Father Saw: Approaches to Lehi’s Dream and Nephi’s Vision* (2011 *Sperry Symposium*), ed. Daniel L. Belnap, Gaye Strathearn, and Stanley A. Johnson (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2011), 130.

the mouth of the Lamb.” This constitutes Nephi’s final invocation of the “law of witnesses”¹⁸ — the Israelite law governing capital cases (Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15). Nephi explicitly describes Judgment Day (“the last day”) as the legal setting, when the world — including the members of the latter-day Church of Jesus Christ¹⁹ — will be on trial. Nephi invokes three scriptural witnesses that will be present at that trial: the words of the Jews (the Old and New Testaments), Nephi’s words (including those spoken and recorded by his descendants in the Book of Mormon), and “the words which shall proceed forth out of the mouth of the Lamb of God” which would presumably include latter-day scripture (e.g., the Doctrine and Covenants) and the words of all true prophets, ancient and modern. Thus, the “goodness of God” of which we are commanded to partake includes the “words of the Jews” (the Bible), the Book of Mormon, and “every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord” (Deuteronomy 8:3; Matthew 4:4; Moroni 7:45; D&C 84:44; 98:11).²⁰

Imitating and Adapting Nephi’s “Good” Words

The influence of Nephi’s writings on subsequent Book of Mormon writers can scarcely be overstated. Enos imitates Nephi’s biographical introduction including the latter’s use of wordplay²¹:

18. On Nephi’s use of the “law of witnesses” in 2nd Nephi, see Bruce A. Van Orden, “The Law of Witnesses in 2 Nephi,” in *Second Nephi, The Doctrinal Structure*, ed. Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate Jr. (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1989), 307–21; idem, “‘We Prophesy of Christ’: The Law of Witnesses in 2nd Nephi,” *Ensign* 20 (February 1990): 22–25.

19. Ezra Taft Benson (“A New Witness for Christ,” *Ensign*, November 1984, 8) stated to the entire Church at the October 1984 conference: “We do not have to prove the Book of Mormon is true. The book is its own proof. All we need to do is read it and declare it! **The Book of Mormon is not on trial — the people of the world, including the members of the Church, are on trial as to what they will do with this second witness for Christ.** I testify that the Book of Mormon is the word of God; and therefore Jesus is the Christ, Joseph Smith is a prophet, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is true, with its authorized servants to perform the ordinances of salvation today, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.”

20. D&C 98:11: “And I give unto you a commandment, that ye shall forsake all evil and cleave unto all good, that ye shall live by every word which proceedeth forth out of the mouth of God.”

21. See Matthew L. Bowen “Wordplay on the Name Enos,” *Insights* 26/3 (2006): 2; idem, “‘And There Wrestled a Man with Him’ (Genesis 32:24): Enos’s Adaptations of the Onomastic Wordplay of Genesis,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 10 (2014): 151–160.

1 Nephi 1:1	Enos 1:1
I, Nephi [Egyptian <i>nfr</i> (<i>nfi</i>) = good(ly)] having been born of goodly parents therefore I was <i>taught</i> somewhat in all the <i>learning of my father</i>	I, Enos [Heb. <i>ʿēnôš</i> = “man”] knowing my <i>father</i> that he was a <i>just man</i> for he <i>taught</i> me in <i>his language</i>

Although Enos shifts the wordplay to his own name, the textual dependency of Enos’s biography on Nephi’s is as clear an example of textual dependency as one could wish to find in the Book of Mormon. Enos’s personal name is appropriate for the same reason that Nephi’s is: on account of “goodly” or “just” parentage — Enos’s father Jacob was a “just” man, as Lehi and Sariah were “goodly” parents. Proof of the parental righteousness — the quality of being “just” — and the parental “goodness” of Lehi, Sariah, and Jacob consisted in their education of their children “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Enos 1:1). Moreover, Nephi and Enos could point to their own names as constituting such evidence: Nephi was “good” and Enos became a “man” whose “soul hungered” after righteousness (Enos 1:4).²²

Zeniff, who like Enos, evidences a Nephite (royal?) scribal education in his autobiographical prologue,²³ also imitated Nephi’s self-introduction including his “good[ly]” autobiographical wordplay:

1 Nephi 1:1	Mosiah 9:1
I, Nephi , [Egyptian <i>nfr</i> (<i>nfi</i>) = good(ly)] having been born of goodly parents therefore I was <i>taught</i> somewhat in all the learning of <i>my father</i> ... yea, <i>having had a great knowledge of the goodness</i> and the mysteries of God, therefore I make a record of my proceedings in my days.	I, Zeniff [cf. “Zenephi,” Moroni 9:16] having been taught in all the language of the Nephites and <i>having a knowledge of the land of Nephi</i> or the land of our fathers’ first inheritance and having been sent as a spy among the Lamanites that I might spy out their forces, that our army might come upon them and destroy them — But when I saw <i>that which was good</i> among them I was desirous that they should not be destroyed

Zeniff’s royal autobiographical introduction exhibits a similar wordplay on “Nephi” and “good” in explaining why he had resisted a

22. Cf. 3 Nephi 20:8; cf. Matthew 5:6; 3 Nephi 12:6.

23. Bowen, “Not Partaking of the Fruit,” 246-248.

pre-emptive genocidal war against the Lamanites. If the name Zeniff is a form of, or related to, the name Zenephi (attested in Moroni 9:16, “he of/ the one of Nephi,” or “son/descendant of Nephi,” the an even richer wordplay emerges.²⁴ When compared with his ancestor Nephi’s autobiography upon which his own autobiography is stylistically and literarily modeled, Zeniff’s statement that he found “that which was good” among the Lamanites has important implications for their having been descended from “goodly” ancestors or “born of goodly parents” (the Hebrew term *’āb* means both “father”/“parent” and “ancestor”). Zeniff recognized there was still much that was “Lehite” or “Nephite” in their culture. In other words, not every heritage of their “goodly” ancestors (1 Nephi 1:1) had been abandoned (cf. Jacob 3:5-7).

King Benjamin also gave his sons a scribal education just as his forefathers had given their sons:

1 Nephi 1:1 and Enos 1:1	Mosiah 1:2
<p><i>I, Nephi [Egyptian <i>nfr</i> (<i>nfi</i>) = good(<i>ly</i>)] having been born of goodly parents therefore I was <i>taught</i> somewhat in all the learning of <i>my father</i></i></p> <p><i>I, Enos [Heb. <i>’ēnōš</i> = “man”] knowing <i>my father</i> that he was a just man for he <i>taught</i> me in his language</i></p>	<p>And it came to pass that [Benjamin, v. 1] had three sons [Heb. <i>bānīm</i>] And he called their names Mosiah, and Helorum and Helaman And he <i>caused that they should be taught in all the language of his fathers</i> that they might become men [<i>’anšê < ’ānāšīm</i>] of understanding [<i>binā</i>] that they might <i>know</i> concerning the prophecies which had been spoken by the mouths of their <i>fathers</i>...²⁵</p> <p>Benjamin (<i>bēn/bin + yāmīn</i>) = “son of the right hand” — note: King Benjamin’s wordplay on his own name in terms of “sons and daughters” of the “right hand” in Mosiah 5:6-12 (cf. 5:5-15).²⁶</p>

Mormon’s description of King Benjamin’s education of his sons probably draws on a first person account written by Benjamin himself, apparently modeled on Nephi’s and Enos’s autobiographies. And, as John Tvedtnes has noted, there is additional language evidencing the textual

24. See the Book of Mormon Onomasticon entry <https://onoma.lib.byu.edu/onoma/index.php/ZENEPHI>.

25. Matthew L. Bowen, “Becoming Sons and Daughters at God’s Right Hand: King Benjamin’s Rhetorical Wordplay on His Own Name,” *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture* 21/2 (2012), 2-13.

26. Ibid.

dependence of Mosiah 1:2-6 on 1 Nephi 1:1-2.²⁷ A similar phenomenon may be detectable in the narrative biographical introductions of Alma²⁸ and Abish,²⁹ respectively:

1 Nephi 1:1 and 1 Nephi 2:16	Mosiah 17:2 and Alma 19:6
<p><i>I, <u>Nephi</u>, having been born of <u>goodly</u> parents, therefore I <i>was taught</i> somewhat in all the <i>learning of my father</i> [Hebrew 'ābî]. (1 Nephi 1:1)</i></p> <p><i>I, <u>Nephi</u>, being exceedingly <u>young</u> (i.e., an 'elem), nevertheless being large in stature, and also having great desires <i>to know</i> the mysteries of God, wherefore, I did cry unto the Lord, and . . . he did . . . soften my heart that <i>I did believe</i> <i>all the words which had been spoken by my</i> <i>father</i> ['ābî]. (1 Nephi 2:16)</i></p>	<p>But there was one . . . whose name was Alma, he also being a <i>descendant of <u>Nephi</u></i>. And he was a young man (Heb. 'elem) <i>and he believed the words which Abinadi</i> <i>[perhaps “My-Father-is-generous”]</i>³⁰ <i>had</i> <i>spoken.</i> (Mosiah 17:2)</p> <p>... save it were one of the Lamanitish women, whose name was Abish [“Father is a man”] she having been converted unto the Lord for many years, <i>on account of a remarkable vision of <u>her father</u></i> (Alma 19:6)</p>

Although the emphasis of the wordplay in the latter two passages, as in the case of Enos 1:1, changes to fit the name, all of these biographical and autobiographical descriptions ultimately owe a literary debt to Nephi's “goodly” autobiography (1 Nephi 1:1-2). Acknowledging that literary debt makes these passages appreciably more beautiful and meaningful in terms of the impact that parents and ancestors have upon faith and conversion.

Perhaps as impactful as Nephi's autobiographical introduction, however, was his conclusion with its emphasis on doing “good” and on the “goodness of God.” Amaleki commences his conclusion of the Book

27. John A. Tvedtnes, “A Note on Benjamin and Lehi,” *Insights* 22/11 (2002): 3.

28. Matthew L. Bowen, “‘And He Was a Young Man’: The Literary Preservation of Alma's Autobiographical Wordplay,” *Insights* 30 (2010): 2-3.

29. Matthew L. Bowen, “Father is a Man: The Remarkable Mention of the name Abish in Alma 19:16 and Its Narrative Context,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture*, 14 (2015): 77-93.

30. The first onomastic element in Abinadi is absolutely clear: -'ābî (“my father”). The second element is less clear. Cf. Arabic *nadʷ* (“generous, willing”). Other possibilities are noted here: <https://onoma.lib.byu.edu/onoma/index.php/ABINADI>.

of Omni and the small plates with language that is almost entirely taken from the latter part of 2 Nephi (30-33):

And it came to pass that I began to be old; and, having no seed, and knowing king Benjamin to be a just man before the Lord,³¹ wherefore, I shall deliver up these plates unto him, exhorting all men to come unto God, the Holy One of Israel, and believe in prophesying, and in revelations, and in the ministering of angels, and in the gift of speaking with tongues, and in the gift of interpreting languages, and in **all things which are good**; for **there is nothing which is good save it comes from the Lord; and that which is evil cometh from the devil**. And now, my beloved brethren, I would that ye should come unto Christ, who is the Holy One of Israel, and **partake of his salvation, and the power of his redemption**. Yea, come unto him, and offer your whole souls as an offering unto him, and continue in fasting and praying, and endure to the end; and as the Lord liveth ye will be saved. (Omni 1:25-26)

Amaleki's emphasis on "good" here has its source in 2 Nephi 33 and Nephi's persuading and teaching all to do "good" and the "goodness of God" and the implicit notion that God is the source of all good. Moreover, the phrase "partake of his salvation and the power of his redemption" constitutes Amaleki's formulation of Nephi's "partak[ing] of the goodness of God."³² Amaleki's use of the phrase "endure to the end" helps us recognize that everything that precedes it — i.e., coming unto Christ, offering the whole soul like a burnt offering, and continuing in fasting and prayer — pertains to what Nephi called the "doctrine of Christ" (faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism by immersion for the remission of sins, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost and enduring to the end in faith, hope, and charity, until the final pronouncement of salvation).

Likewise, Mormon's sermon on faith, hope, and charity (preserved for us in Moroni 7) owes much to 2 Nephi 31-33 (see, e.g., 2 Nephi 31:20) and Omni 1:26-27. Mormon prefaces his discussion of faith, hope, and charity with a discussion of how to discern good from evil. In Moroni

31. Cf. Enos 1:1-2.

32. Cf. Jacob's formulation of Nephi's idea of "partak[ing] of the goodness of God": "Wherefore we labored diligently among our people, that we might persuade them to come unto Christ, and partake of the goodness of God..." (Jacob 1:7). Jacob's language is borrowed from the end of 2 Nephi (e.g., 2 Nephi 25:23; 33:14).

7:5-28 alone, Mormon uses “good” twenty-six times.³³ Mormon develops at length the ideas of “good” first emphasized by Nephi in his *inclusio* (and elsewhere in his work, e.g., 2 Nephi 26) and mentioned by Amaleki (“all things which are good; for there is nothing which is good save it comes from the Lord; and that which is evil cometh from the devil,” Omni 1:25).

Moroni’s final exhortation, wherewith he concludes the entire Book of Mormon, evidences dependence on the texts of Nephi, Amaleki, and his father Mormon — the latter two themselves, of course, dependent upon Nephi. In this final exhortation, Moroni invokes the word “good” seven times. Like Nephi, Moroni is writing to a future “Lamanite” audience and his first use of “good” in his exhortation establishes a terminological link with his ancestor Nephi and his work: “Now I, Moroni, write somewhat as seemeth me **good**; and I write unto my brethren, the Lamanites; and I would that they should know that more than four hundred and twenty years have passed away since the sign was given of the coming of Christ (Moroni 10:10). In a way, Moroni’s exhortation is an extension of 2 Nephi 33, updating the latter in terms of what has happened to the Lamanites and Nephites since that time as a paranesis for their Latter-day audience, including descendants of the Lamanites and Nephites.

Moroni’s second and third uses of “good”-terminology, like Nephi’s use of “good”-terminology in 2 Nephi 33, identify that which is “good” with the Savior Jesus Christ, who is the author of all good: “And **whatsoever thing is good is just and true**; wherefore, **nothing that is good denieth the Christ**, but acknowledgeth that he is” (Moroni 10:6). Moroni’s fourth use of “good” does the same: “And I would exhort you, my beloved brethren, that ye remember that **every good gift cometh of Christ**” (Moroni 10:18).

Moroni’s fifth invocation of “good” is negative and looks forward to the Great Apostasy, while the sixth looks forward to the Restoration:

And now I speak unto all the ends of the earth — that if the day cometh that the power and gifts of God shall be done away among you, it shall be because of unbelief. And wo be unto the children of men if this be the case; for there shall be **none that doeth good among you, no not one**. For if **there be one among you that doeth good**, he shall work by the power and gifts of God. (Moroni 10:24-25)

33. Moroni 7:5-6 (3 x); 10-17 (12 x); 19-22 (5 x); 24-26 (5 x); and 27 (once).

The phrase “none that doeth good” is a quote or paraphrase of Psalms 14:3 (Psalms 53:3): “They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one” (“Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one”). This ancient temple text describes apostasy. According to the Prophet Joseph Smith’s 1832 account, the Lord described the Great Apostasy with this very text.³⁴ On the other hand, Mormon’s statement, “if there be one among you that doeth good” may be interpreted as an allusion to or prophecy of the Prophet Joseph Smith, who did “work by the power and gifts of God.”

Finally, Moroni concludes his exhortation and the entire Book of Mormon with a seventh instance of “good” that perhaps looks forward to the Restoration: “And again I would exhort you that ye would come unto Christ, and **lay hold upon every good gift**, and touch not the evil gift, nor the unclean thing” (Moroni 10:30). The phrase “laying hold upon” recalls the language of Lehi’s and Nephi’s vision of the Tree of Life, especially the “rod of iron” and Nephi’s equation of “the rod of iron” with the “word of God”³⁵ and his later adaptation of it as the “word of Christ.”³⁶ Zion will be established in its fullness when Lamanite, Jew, and Gentile forsake evil and “lay hold upon every good gift.”

34. “Joseph <my son> thy sins are forgiven thee. go thy <way> walk in my statutes and keep my commandments behold I am the Lord of glory I was crucified for the world that all those who believe on my name may have Eternal life <behold> the world lieth in sin and at this time and none doeth good no not one they have turned asside from the gospel and keep not<my> commandments they draw near to me with their lips while their hearts are far from me and mine anger is kindling against the inhabitants of the earth to visit them acording to thir ungodliness and to bring to pass that which<hath> been spoken by the mouth of the prophets and Ap[o]stles behold and lo I come quickly as it [is] written of me in the cloud<clothes> in the glory of my Father and my soul was filled with love and for many days I could rejoice with great Joy and the Lord was with me but could find none that would believe the hevnlly vision nevertheless I pondered these things in my heart about that time my mother and but after many days [p. 3]” (Joseph Smith Letterbook 1, pp. 1–6, Ms., handwriting of Joseph Smith and Frederick G. Williams, LDS Church Archives). See JSPJSH 1:13.

35. 1 Nephi 11:25; 15:24–25; cf. 1 Nephi 17:26, 29; Helaman 3:29. See Matthew L. Bowen, “What Meaneth the Rod of Iron?” *Insights* 25/ 2 (2005): 2–3.

36. Jared T. Parker, “The Doctrine of Christ in 2 Nephi 31–32 as an Approach to the Vision of the Tree of Life,” in *The Things Which My Father Saw: Approaches to Lehi’s Dream and Nephi’s Vision (2011 Sperry Symposium)*, ed. Daniel L. Belnap, Gaye Strathearn, and Stanley A. Johnson (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2011), 161–78.

Conclusion

Nephi's framing or bracketing of the body of his writings with clusters of the term "good"/"goodness" (1 Nephi 1:1; 2 Nephi 33:4, :10, 14) constitutes a literary device known as *inclusio*. Nephi's use of this device establishes "good" — including doing "good" and "the goodness of God" — as arguably the key theme of his small plates record, which is particularly appropriate given that Nephi's own name is best explained as a form of the Egyptian word *nfr*, forms of which denote "good," "goodly" and "goodness." Nephi thus fulfilled the Lord's commandment regarding the making of the small plates with exactness: "Make other plates; and thou shalt engraven many things upon them which are **good** in my sight" (2 Nephi 5:30).

It is clear that Nephi's successors imitated both his "goodly" autobiographical introduction as well as his "good" conclusion, but perhaps the overriding point is that the writings of Nephi taught and influenced his successors and descendants to teach that the Lord Jesus Christ is the source of all good. They exhort us to partake of his goodness. Furthermore, their writings help us to use the spirit to discern between good and evil as well as any writings in existence. The Book of Mormon, like all scripture, is the "good gift" and the "word"/"rod" on which we are to "lay hold."³⁷

Finally, no better endorsement of Nephi's "good[ly]" writings can be offered than that of the prophet Joseph Smith himself, who used Nephi's autobiography as the model for his 1832 autobiography: "I was born in the town of Charon [Sharon] in the <State> of Vermont North America on the twenty third day of December AD 1805 of goodly Parents who spared no pains to instruct<ing>me in <the> christian religion[.]"³⁸ Many prophets like Nephi and Joseph Smith have been the beneficiaries of "goodly parents," who educated them and prepared them for their life's callings. Other prophets, like Abraham, became "goodly parents" through faith and faithfulness in spite of what their own fathers/parents had not been.

37. Bowen, "What Meaneth the Rod of Iron?" 2–3.

38. See again JSPJSH 1:11.

The author would like to thank Suzy Bowen, Daniel C. Peterson, Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, Tim Guymon, and Parker D. Jackson.

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UNDERSTANDING GENESIS AND THE TEMPLE

TB Spackman

Review of John H. Walton, The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press Academic, 2009). 192 pp. \$9.85.

Abstract: Genesis 1 meant something very particular to the Israelites in their time and place. However, because that contextual knowledge was lost to us for thousands of years, we tend to misread it. Walton offers an interpretation of Genesis 1 that juxtaposes it with temple concepts, simultaneously allaying some of the scientific issues involved.

In *The Lost World*, Hebrew Bible professor John Walton (Wheaton College) lays out an in-depth argument and accessible argument for a new reading of Genesis chapter 1, with serious implications for religion, education, and politics. He argues that creation therein is *functional*, not *material* or *physical*. Though easy to grasp once explained, this concept is difficult to summarize concisely. In Genesis 1, God does not create everything materially *ex nihilo* but is instead organizing and assigning function(s) to matter and objects (sun, moon, etc.) that have a material existence *prior* to Genesis 1. Walton provides several clear and useful analogies to explain what he means by functional creation as well as to demonstrate the extent to which materialist assumptions unconsciously pervade the modern worldview.

Walton further asserts that this functional reading is the literal and original interpretation, representing an Israelite understanding of Genesis 1; moderns unconsciously misread the text because we no longer share its worldview nor are we even aware of it. This is the lost world Walton attempts to recover and explain.

Walton organizes his book into eighteen propositions. Each is well supported with careful analysis of the Bible and ancient Near Eastern sources, clear analogies, and suggestions for further reading. Nearly every chapter offers fresh perspectives and intriguing ideas. For

example, Walton proposes that in spite of the obvious focus on creation, Genesis 1 is actually temple-centric and that the most important day to the Israelites was the seventh day, in which nothing is created. Deities rested in temples and only in temples; that God rested on the seventh day meant that he had entered the cosmic temple “constructed” in the previous six days, that God “is taking command, that he is mounting his throne to assume his rightful place and his proper role” (74). Stability, order, and life result. Walton here likens functional creation and the Sabbath to “getting a new computer and spending focused time setting it up (placing the equipment, connecting the wires, installing the software). After all of those tasks were done, you would disengage from the process, mostly so you could now engage in the new tasks of actually using the computer. That is what it had been set up for.” (75) He further offers a devotional aspect of this understanding of the Sabbath. God asks us on the Sabbath “to recognize that he is at the controls, not us. When we ‘rest’ on the Sabbath, we recognize him as the author of order and the one who brings rest (stability) to our lives and world. We take our hands off the control and acknowledge him as the one who is in control” (146).

If Walton’s proposal is correct (and I believe his arguments merit serious consideration), several modern conflicts seen as pitting science against religion effectively disappear, as do other questions that assume material creation, such as “how can there be light before there is sun or stars?” In later chapters, Walton addresses the doctrinal and political/educational implications for evolution and Intelligent Design, as well as one LDS sticky wicket, the question of death before the Fall. Walton also explains why concordism, the attempt to align current scientific ideas with ancient scripture (an impulse also found among LDS) is misguided.

Although Walton is an Evangelical speaking to a like-minded audience, LDS will find much to appreciate in this affordable paperback, all the more valuable because of its clarity and readability. Walton has since published a more technical version for an academic audience, *Genesis 1 as Ancient Cosmology* (Eisenbrauns, 2011) as well as a follow-up covering Genesis 2 and 3, *The Lost World of Adam and Eve: Genesis 2–3 and the Human Origins Debate* (IVP, 2015).

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THE OLD TESTAMENT AND PRESUPPOSITIONS

TB Spackman

Review of Peter Enns, Inspiration and Incarnation- Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament, Second ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015). 197 pp. \$19.99.

Abstract: Peter Enns identifies three problematic assumptions Evangelicals make when reading the Old Testament. LDS readers tend to share these assumptions, and Enns' solutions work equally well for them.

Trained at Harvard in the Hebrew Bible, Peter Enns was fired from Westminster Theological Seminary over this book in spite of his tenured status. This second edition, published for the tenth anniversary of the first, contains an added preface and postscript looking back at its purpose, reception, and controversy. Enns tries to answer the question, “How do we incorporate certain data with full integrity without sacrificing the truth that the Bible is God’s book for his people?”

He wrote *Inspiration and Incarnation (I&I)* for “lay readers for whom standard critical issues are obstacles for their faith and for whom conventional explanations are not helpful”¹ and “to provide a theological paradigm for people who know instinctively that the Bible is God’s Word but for whom reading the Bible has already become a serious theological problem — perhaps even a crisis” (15). In other words, this book is for people with faith in scripture who are finding that faith undermined by some of the details. *I&I* includes a glossary, an index of scriptural and non-biblical citations, and a topical index. Each chapter concludes with an annotated list of further reading.

Though addressed to his fellow Evangelicals concerning the Bible, the general assumptions and problems Enns deals with are equally found among LDS readers and how they approach the expanded LDS canon, leading to similar problems. These issues are not abstractions

1 See his discussion at <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/peterenns/inspiration-and-incarnation/responding-to-critics/ii-and-westminster-theological-seminary/the-audience-of-ii/>, last accessed 09-05-2015.

imposed on scripture by theologians but “are generated directly by the Bible itself” (16).

Enns addresses three main topics that challenge the reader and which he feels have not been treated well in conservative scholarship. Along the way he offers general critiques of those treatments as well as observations on various unjustified assumptions shared by laypeople and scholars, both conservative and liberal.

First is the common assumption of the absolute uniqueness of revelation, that because scripture is revealed, it should not bear any resemblance to its environment. The problem is that the more one studies the Bible in its historical and cultural context, the more it resembles the cultures around it. “How can we say logically that the biblical stories are true and the Akkadian [Assyrian/Babylonian] stories are false when they both look so very much alike?” (40).

Second is the assumption of the absolute unity or harmony of scripture. If revelation comes from God, should not God have one opinion on something? Should not all revelation be unified in its outlook on theological or doctrinal issues? Why, then, does inspired scripture include differing doctrinal approaches to certain issues?

Last, Enns treats the difficult issue of the New Testament authors’ treatment of the Old Testament. Put briefly, neither Jews nor Christians until the Middle Ages thought the proper way to understand scripture was to read it in historical context. Authors of later Old Testament books (such as Daniel), the Dead Sea Scrolls, the New Testament, the Book of Mormon, and Rabbinic texts all interpreted scripture through the same non-contextual method, the same method we today delegitimize and call proof-texting. How, then, should we understand the interpretations of the Old Testament found in the New?

The individual treatment of these three topics will prove quite helpful to LDS readers, but Enns’s overall strategy is less likely to. Enns proposes an incarnational model, that as deity (God) became human (Jesus) in Christ, scripture too has both divine and human aspects. The human aspect does not cancel out the divine or vice-versa. There are no doctrinal issues with that proposal from an LDS perspective, but because Mormons lack the habit of talking about the incarnation in such a way (setting aside differences in understanding the nature of man and deity), it will likely have less of an explanatory impact than it does for Evangelicals. Nevertheless, LDS seeking a deeper understanding of the Old Testament will find much good to think about with Peter Enns’s *Inspiration and Incarnation*. Highly recommended.

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