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Attacking Rather than Explaining

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ATTACKING RATHER THAN EXPLAINING

Cassandra Hedelius

Abstract: In his book on Mormonism, the Reverend Andrew Jackson claims to explain “the teaching and practices of the LDS Church,” with an intended audience of non-Mormon Christians but also “interested Mormons.” He doesn’t succeed well. Although his presentation of Mormon history is mostly fair, his discussion of the faith of Latter-day Saints devolves into the usual anti-Mormon tropes, to which he adds a celebration of a simplified evangelical theology. What might have been a useful, straightforward account of The Church of Jesus Christ and its history ended up, instead, as a clumsy attack. Reverend Jackson eventually re-released his book under a different title as a warning against what he considers Mitt Romney’s reticence to publicly explain his faith to the Reverend’s specifications. The later iteration of Reverend Jackson’s opinions was not even revised beyond a new introduction, making plain his basic antagonistic agenda.

Review of Andrew Jackson, What Latter-day Saints Teach and Practice: Mormonism Explained, Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books [a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers], 2008. 208 pp., with four appendixes, name index, and scripture index. \$29.64 (paperback).

Although *Mormonism Explained* is not the typical sectarian countercult diatribe on the faith of Latter-day Saints, the Reverend Andrew Jackson¹ has provided a vigorous attack

1. For Reverend Jackson’s education, employment, and travel, see <http://drandrewjackson.com/about/resume>. Subsequent comments on these matters

on the Church of Jesus Christ. Instead of relying, with a few exceptions,² on the dishonest and largely incompetent sectarian countercult criticisms, he builds his case on a somewhat more sophisticated literature. He indicates that “the primary non-Mormon books,” grounding his explanation/attack on the Church of Jesus Christ, “were Dr. Craig Blomberg’s writing in *How Wide the Divide? A Mormon & Evangelical in Conversation*, the book *The New Mormon Challenge: Responding to the Latest Defenses of a Fast-Growing Movement*, and Richard and Joan Ostling’s well-researched book *Mormon America: The Power and the Promise*” (p. 14). However, he ignores all the detailed responses to these books that have appeared, even though he is aware of the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship at Brigham Young University (see p. 186). The results of Jackson’s endeavor are rather disappointing. Part of his problem is that, as I will demonstrate, he lacks the qualifications and disposition to deal openly, honestly, and competently with what he calls “Mormonism.”

Setting Out Credentials

Who is Reverend Jackson? And, in his own opinion, what led and qualifies him to opine on Mormon things? His webpage indicates that he has been an associate pastor of two large churches: he worked at Kempsville Presbyterian Church in Virginia Beach (1986–1996) and then, with a Doctor of Ministry degree,³ at the Word of Grace Church in Mesa,

are taken from his website.

2. Reverend Jackson recommends Bill McKeever and Eric Johnson, *Mormonism 101* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), as well as their Mormonism Research Ministry (MSM) website (see pp. 188 and 186, respectively, in Jackson, *Mormonism Explained*). He also recommends the Institute for Religious Research (IRR), and Sandra (and the late Jerald) Tanner’s Utah Lighthouse Ministry (ULM) websites (p. 186).

3. In 1984 Reverend Jackson was awarded a Master of Divinity degree from Fuller Theological Seminary, after which he began employment as an evangelical pastor. In 1996, he was granted a Doctor of Ministry degree by Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, whose main campus is located in South Hamilton,

Arizona (1996–2008). He has a master's degree and PhD from respected seminaries. He is well traveled, having visited twenty-four countries. His special fondness for Turkey, with its connections to the New Testament, inspired him to lead and later organize biblical tours to Turkey.

How, then, came Reverend Jackson to acquire an interest in and expertise on the Church of Jesus Christ? He knew we'd ask that:

What are my qualifications to write a book on Mormonism? Many Latter-day Saints—although not all—will dismiss my book simply because I am not Mormon and have never been a Mormon. They seem to believe that only Mormons should have the privilege of writing about what the LDS teach and practice. For many Mormons, any “outsider” is seemingly suspect, if not outright labeled a deceiving enemy of their claimed restored gospel. Being called a religious bigot or Mormon-hater is not always the most pleasant experience. (p. 10)

Granted that he may have had some unpleasant experience with individual Mormons, it's quite a stretch to tar the whole of Mormonism with that same brush. If one is merely explaining Mormonism, why expect to be seen by Latter-day Saints as a bigot? He's on the attack already, implying that Latter-day Saints can't handle even a fair and neutral explanation. Latter-day Saints have no objections to competent, civil exchanges with both sectarian and secular scholars, as his own reading of *How Wide the Divide?* ought to have shown him.

Reverend Jackson “admits” he does “not fully understand this Mormon mind-set” (p. 10), which he wrongly believes

Massachusetts. The D-Min degree is intended to enhance the careers of working pastors. Because it is not an academic degree, there are often minimal residency requirements, nor is a dissertation required.

treats all examination of LDS faith as the work of bigots filled with hatred. He adds that Mormons' negative reaction to criticism "strongly smacks of an unhealthy martyr complex, a form of anti-intellectualism, and a fear of scholarly evaluation or critique, whether by Mormons, non-Mormons, or ex-Mormons" (p. 10). The well thus tidily poisoned, Jackson gets specific:

Although I am not Mormon, I did not write this book in complete ignorance, in distant abstraction, or from a socially or theologically detached position. I have lived among and interacted with Mormons and Mormon culture for over a decade now as I serve as a pastor in a church in downtown Mesa, Arizona, which is one block down from the historic Arizona temple. As many of you know, the city of Mesa was pioneered and founded by the Mormons in January 1878. In fact, the large grassy park that separates our church campus and the Arizona temple is named "Pioneer Park," memorializing the early Mormon pioneers of Mesa. As a result of living in the East Valley of the Phoenix area, I have many Mormon neighbors, acquaintances, and friends. (p. 10)

Many use the "some of my best friends are . . ." gambit, but most don't write authority-claiming books about their friends, or imbibe special insights from park names. Reverend Jackson's familiarity is not thorough enough to prevent him from calling one of the Three Witnesses "David Whittier" (p. 33), claiming that "no proxy temple marriages [sealings?] are performed for the dead" in LDS temples (p. 202 n. 28), or stating that the Kirtland Temple is owned by the "Restored Latter-day Saints" (p. 193 n. 55). These kinds of silly mistakes, obvious to any of his Mormon "neighbors, acquaintances, and friends," and also easily correctable had he actually engaged with Mormons, are invisible to most non-LDS readers. In addition, genuine friends

don't claim to be *explaining* another's faith, when in fact they are making war against those beliefs.

Whom or What to Consult for the "Official" LDS Teachings?

Reverend Jackson complains about the difficulty in determining what exactly he ought to "research" on Mormonism, given that "average Mormons—*not unlike many Christians*—are simply not able to accurately and thoroughly provide a systematic explanation of their beliefs" (p. 11, emphasis added), LDS missionaries are also not trained in theology (p. 11), and LDS lay leaders are often not much more help (p. 11). He turned to email exchanges with volunteers at the Foundation for Apologetic Information and Research (FAIR) but was frustrated by their disclaimer of *official* status to speak for the Church of Jesus Christ (p. 12).

Despite this attention, Reverend Jackson is careless in keeping straight what is indeed official and what is mere speculation. Well aware that the only official source of LDS doctrine is the standard works and clarifications provided by the united First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve (p. 79), he states that "absolutely no one else in Mormonism—no matter how significant or educated—has the right to officially speak on behalf of the LDS Church" (p. 79). Why then, while professing such concern to find Mormonism's official statements, did he rely so heavily (at least forty citations) on Elder Bruce R. McConkie's *Mormon Doctrine* (p. 12)? Why not instead refer mainly to the LDS scriptures? And why prioritize the perspectives of non-Mormons such as the Ostlings⁴ and Craig Blomberg⁵ over the nonofficial perspectives of knowledgeable Mormons? If one aims to explain, isn't the insider perspective of greater worth?

Instead of explaining Mormonism through its official sources, which would have been the most appropriate course,

4. The Ostlings are cited sixteen times.

5. Craig Blomberg is cited thirteen times.

and then supplementing with commentary from knowledgeable sources, labeled as such, when necessary, Reverend Jackson has turned this on its head. His citations to scripture are haphazard and unhelpful, sometimes referencing an entire chapter or section as support for a statement of his own (p. 28 n. 52), omitting a citation to scripture when one should have been specified (p. 190 n. 11) or mis-citing scripture entirely (p. 198 n. 39 and p. 195 n. 6). He resorts frequently to critical works by the Ostlings, Blomberg, and others, without that those sources have been shown to be problematic in their use of historical facts (Ostling) and presentation of LDS doctrine (both). In the end it seems his complaining about unofficial sources and anti-intellectual Mormons was a blind designed to inoculate himself against any charge that his book only explains what people say about Mormons, sometimes from a very hostile point of view.

In summary, Reverend Jackson is a cut above the latest regurgitation of the work of Walter Martin or the Tanners, but that's a low standard, as readers of the *FARMS Review* know.

The Audience for . . .

In his introduction to *Mormonism Explained*, Reverend Jackson states that he wrote the book “primarily for the broad Christian audience,” but also for “interested non-Christians and Mormons” (p. 9). Why would Latter-day Saints need a Protestant pastor’s help in understanding their own faith? He justifies:

Many—if not most—Mormons were born into LDS families, live their daily lives inside the culture and world of Mormonism, and really do not think a lot about the intricacies and theological validity of LDS teaching and practices. They seem content and happy being Mormon, and exert little energy in thinking through and evaluating the details or truthfulness of their faith. (pp. 9–10)

Of course, this may be correct in many cases. But this line of argumentation could easily be applied to his own flock, since most evangelicals are not trained in theology, probably cannot articulate their faith in anything approaching a systematic way, and may not spend much time evaluating the truth of what they believe. Like many sectarian critics of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Jackson does not realize that it is wise to allow others to define their own faith.

. . . and the Protestant Pitch

Nothing in the introduction to *Mormonism Explained* indicates a real bias of intention one way or the other, except for the well-poisoning dismissal of “anti-intellectual” Mormon critics of non-Mormons who dare to write about the church. But just a few pages further on one notices slip-ups here and there, all in the same direction—easy to guess which. For example, Reverend Jackson uncritically repeats the Ostlings’ (and hence Wesley Walters’s) conclusion that Joseph Smith was “found guilty of disorderly conduct and treasure-hunting” (p. 25), a charge that has been shown to be false. Jackson is also confident that the Three Witnesses to the plates left the Church (p. 27), but he neglects to mention that two returned and that none of the three ever denied their testimonies of the truth of the Book of Mormon and the manner of its coming forth. He also implies that Joseph Smith confessed to seriously “wayward teen years” (p. 21), leaving out the highly relevant instruction that we needn’t suppose any sin greater than levity. Jackson cites the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* to support his tendentious statement that Joseph Smith established the Council of Fifty because he “desired to establish God’s political kingdom over non-Mormons in preparation for the second coming of Christ” (p. 48), though the essay he cites makes it clear that

the Council did not, and did not intend to, “challenge existing systems of law and government (even in Nauvoo).”⁶

Despite these lapses, Reverend Jackson’s brief summary of LDS history in part 1 of his book (pp. 17–59) isn’t terrible. It covers a lot of ground with broad strokes and is for the most part a straightforward account, especially when compared to the usual sectarian version of LDS history. But it soon becomes clear that he is not content to merely explain Mormonism—instead, he can’t help but argue evangelicalism. In this, the book becomes just another banal sectarian exercise in boundary maintenance.

Apostasy?

In part 2, “What Mormonism Teaches and Why” (pp. 63–122), Jackson is emphatically on the attack against Latter-day Saints, as he is when he addresses in part 3 (pp. 125–72) what he calls “The Salvation of Mormonism” (which is his awkward way of referring to how the Saints understand redemption from death and sin). In these portions of his book, he measures the faith of the Saints from the perspective of a narrow slice of contemporary Protestant theology. In doing so he distorts LDS belief in an effort to score points with fellow Protestants and to justify the silly charge that the Church of Jesus Christ is “a major cult” and hence not Christian at all. He complains:

Since the LDS Church continually accuses Christians of wrongly and unjustly excluding it from being Christian and strongly publicizes its dismay and disgust toward Christians who identify it as *a major cult*, the Mormons’ exclusive assertion that they are the earth’s only true church is not only bold, but to many Christians also offensive, prideful, and very disingenuous. (p. 65, emphasis added)

6. See Kenneth W. Godfrey, “Council of Fifty,” *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: MacMillan, 1992) 1:327.

Reverend Jackson is troubled because Latter-day Saints believe that soon after the death of the original apostles there was a gradual apostasy from the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ and that the Church of Jesus Christ has been restored by God through the Prophet Joseph Smith. He understands this to mean that the Church of Jesus Christ “bases its absolute exclusive status on its belief that *a complete and universal apostasy*—a falling away from God—took place immediately following the death of the New Testament apostles” (p. 65, emphasis added). He cites no source for the “and universal” description because there is none. It may suit Reverend Jackson’s purpose to outrage his evangelical audience by telling them that Mormons believe that Christian faith “totally disappeared from the face of God’s globe” in “the second and third centuries AD” (p. 65), but the LDS Church does not teach it. In fact, Joseph Smith said that many individuals described in Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs* were “honest, devoted followers of Christ,”⁷ and in recent years LDS general conference has seen a swelling in laudatory references to figures like Wycliffe and Tyndale, specifically emphasizing their sincerity and Christianity.⁸

According to Reverend Jackson, “the LDS Church believes that every major branch of global Christianity—Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox—is unsound and incomplete in its teachings and practices” (p. 64). Does he believe that each of these has always been and is now entirely and fully *sound* and *complete*? If so, how does he explain the Protestant Reformation or his own Calvinist faction or

7. Edward Stevenson, *Reminiscences of Joseph, the Prophet* (Salt Lake City: the author, 1893), 6.

8. See, for example, Boyd K. Packer, “On Zion’s Hill,” at <http://www.lds.org/general-conference/2005/10/on-zions-hill?lang=eng>; Robert D. Hales, “Preparation for the Restoration and the Second Coming: ‘My Hand Shall Be Over Thee,’” at <http://www.lds.org/general-conference/2005/10/preparations-for-the-restoration-and-the-second-coming-my-hand-shall-be-over-thee?lang=eng>.

the other Protestant churches, sects, denominations, and movements spawned by Martin Luther's efforts to reform Roman Catholicism?

Reverend Jackson insists that the LDS Church must demonstrate that all vestiges of Christian faith evaporated in the second and third centuries. If it can't manage to do that, he assumes that there was no need for a restoration, only a bloody protest and reformation, and that the faith of the Saints is fatally flawed. This explains his marshaling of Stephen Robinson's remarks about the "blind spot in Christian history"—when the lights went out on the primitive church and we hear the sounds of a muffled struggle and then find a Christianity radically altered (p. 69)—as evidence *against* an apostasy. He has Professor Robinson admitting that "we" don't know much about those blind hundred years, and there is therefore no evidence of apostasy, only Mormon guesswork (p. 69).

Against the teaching about the apostasy that he invents and then ascribes to Mormons, Reverend Jackson claims that "Christians today stand strong, trusting in God's absolute faithfulness and sovereignty, knowing that he will build his church on the rock of Jesus Christ, and the gates of hell cannot stand up against it" (p. 69). Does Jackson believe that God intended for his church to take the turbulent course from Orthodoxy to Roman Catholicism to Protestant Reformation to present? Surely Jackson rejects the authority that Catholicism and Orthodoxy claim for themselves. If God did indeed intend history to produce Reverend Jackson's current church and beliefs in the way that it did, how is that much different from the actual LDS belief that Christianity left its moorings and needed to be set right?

Reverend Jackson neglects to explain why he thinks there had to be a Protestant Reformation, given such things as indulgences and inquisitions, crimes and crusades, and so forth. He merely claims that "most Christians believe that even dur-

ing the most corrupt medieval period of the Roman Catholic Church, there were still true and genuine followers of Jesus Christ” (p. 194 n. 16). The LDS view, of course, quite agrees. It does not, however, believe that those “genuine followers of Jesus Christ” in the so-called Great Church were somehow proto-Protestants, or that their genuine belief made a restoration of gospel fullness unnecessary.

Are Latter-day Saints Even Christian?

“It is,” Reverend Jackson says, “clear that Mormonism has set itself totally apart from all Christian churches, whether Protestant, Roman Catholic, or Eastern Orthodox, and itself affirms that it is not Christian as Christianity has always been historically understood” (pp. 75–76). He relies upon and strongly endorses Craig Blomberg’s *New Mormon Challenge* chapter concluding that Mormons are not Christian (p. 75). But certainly the Emperor Constantine’s “church” was neither Protestant nor at all like the evangelical movement that emerged in the United States after World War II.

According to Reverend Jackson, Professor Robinson has provided the Mormon answer to the crucial question of “whether Mormons are Christians” by admitting that “Latter-day Saints do not seek to be accepted as historically ‘orthodox’ Christians or as Evangelicals” (p. 76). This out-of-context quote is a favorite of countercultists online (you can google it) because, by itself, it leaves the impression that Robinson admits the Church of Jesus Christ is not Christian. But all Robinson did was correctly distinguish the faith of the Saints from other versions of Christian faith. The Saints have always believed that their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Redeemer is unique and not reducible to some exterior theological categories, since it depends on divine special revelations and not the chains of speculations emitted over time by churchmen or theologians.

In addition, when Roman Catholics point out that their faith must not be confused with Orthodoxy or Protestantism, such an assertion is not to be read as an admission that they are not Christians. And when Protestants insist they are not Roman Catholics, they are not admitting they are not Christians.

Failure to Engage in a Real Conversation

There are a number of assertions in *Mormonism Explained* that don't explain much and that obscure important issues. I will list a few.

- Reverend Jackson evidences no effort to grapple with the efforts of Latter-day Saints to defend their faith, and he also simply dismisses their scriptures. There is, for example, no mention of Terryl Givens's treatment of the recovery of the Book of Mormon,⁹ nor is the scholarship published by the Maxwell Institute ever engaged. He argues, instead, that "the unfolding saga of the book of Abraham affirms that Mormons embrace their scriptural books—including the *Book of Mormon*—not based on historical authenticity but through an irrational faith" (p. 91). Unwillingness to alert readers to a competent literature contradicting one's points is sloppy or duplicitous, but in any case weak.
- Specific elements of the faith of the Saints are brushed aside by Jackson. For example, he states the "belief in a preexistent heavenly family originates *mainly* in modern LDS revelation and not in the teaching of the Bible" (p. 100, emphasis supplied). The weasel word *mainly* hides the fact that belief in a premortal life was known among early Christians but was subsequently suppressed

9. See Terryl L. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon: The American Scripture That Launched a New World Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

in the same way that deification has been rejected or ignored by most contemporary Protestants.

- Although he is familiar with work of writers like Stephen Robinson and Robert Millet, as well as the publications of the Maxwell Institute, Jackson betrays no sign that he has taken any of this literature seriously. Hence the following: “Latter-day Saints believe that each person’s eternal destiny will match what he or she has merited through good or bad works; the person will be rewarded or condemned according to what God determines he or she deserves” (p. 131). Here we see the common cavil directed at the faith of the Saints, who are often falsely accused of “works righteousness,” or the absurdity that they believe they can save themselves from death and sin. Jackson does not acknowledge that the Book of Mormon teaches emphatically that God is the sole author of salvation and that only through the merits and mercy of the Holy One of Israel can mortals in any sense be saved.

The Hostile Agenda

Reverend Jackson eventually gives up any pretense of “explaining” and falls back on cheerleading for his own views. In challenging the LDS understanding of deification, he asserts that

Christians are clear and resolved. We are created finite humans who worship a one-of-a-kind eternal God, filled with God’s eternal hope and power that enables us to escape the corruption of this evil world (2 Peter 1:4). As followers of Christ, we have hearts set on fire with the future hope of enjoying God for eternity. . . .

It is unthinkable, repulsive, and even blasphemous to Christians for anyone to spread the teaching that humans can become fully equal to the eternal God we worship. (p. 122)

In rebutting the idea that God might require behavioral standards such as the Word of Wisdom, in addition to other more crucial commandments, Jackson is right that “our human righteousness—no matter how heroic it might be—falls short of the glory of God. Biblical salvation is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit” (p. 157). Does he imagine that the Saints are not aware that even the best of humans fall short of divine excellence? Do none of his many Mormon friends belie this caricature of Mormons as so prideful as to think otherwise?

What started out as a promising effort to explain Mormon beliefs and practices in terms others could understand ends up as just another evangelical inoculation against the Church of Jesus Christ.

The Most Recent Iteration

All of this makes it thoroughly unsurprising that when events—the Mitt Romney campaign—presented an opportunity to sell more books and publicize his message, Reverend Jackson retitled and reissued his ersatz *Mormonism Explained* as *The Mormon Faith of Mitt Romney*.¹⁰ This time around, it suited both his agenda and his marketing strategy to be much more forthcoming as to his intentions.

On 4–5 January 2012, several publications ran a press release trumpeting the stern warning “Conservative Christian Cautions Mitt Romney: ‘Want Our Vote? Don’t ‘Spin’ Your Mormon Faith!’”¹¹ The “Conservative Christian” was Reverend Jackson. The press release announcing the book’s publication

10. Andrew Jackson, *The Mormon Faith of Mitt Romney: What Latter-day Saints Teach and Practice* (n.p.: Kudu Publishing, 2012). Kudu is a self-publishing, print-on-demand, electronic publisher.

11. Matthew Green, “Christian Conservative Cautions Mitt Romney: ‘Want Our Vote? Don’t ‘Spin’ Your Mormon Faith!’,” at <http://www.ereleases.com/pr/christian-conservative-cautions-mitt-romney-want-vote-spin-mormon-faith-71829>.

affects a helpful tone, advising Romney that if he does not tell voters “how his Mormon faith will affect his presidency” he faces trouble, but that voters will “embrace an honest heart that speaks straight to them, without pretense or spin.” Time will tell the soundness of Jackson’s political judgment; what is immediately apparent is that the pretense and spin are Jackson’s own. The press release directs readers to another document, “10 Key Questions Reporters Should Ask Mitt Romney About His Mormon Faith,” released by the book’s publisher. This document not only suggests entrapping Romney with Professor Stephen Robinson’s so-called admission that Mormons are non-Christian, but it also demands that Romney disclaim any intention of being sworn in on the Book of Mormon because he finds the Bible so error-laden. In other words, the guise of friendly advice was merely an excuse to call more attention to Romney’s faith in ways that will cement uninformed dismissals of Latter-day Saints as beyond the pale of Christianity. Jackson leaves no doubt about this plan in his introduction to *The Mormon Faith of Mitt Romney*: “I believe,” he proclaims, “voters have a right to know from Mitt Romney how his Mormon faith will shape and affect his presidency. What is there to be afraid of?” What, indeed? Perhaps his own fervent hope, expressed a mere six paragraphs later:

I do not worry about the LDS church growing in influence if Mitt Romney becomes our president because it is my belief that it would actually have the reverse effect. It will expose the specifics of the official teaching and practices of Mormonism as greatly lacking in the light of biblical truth. Could a Romney presidency help the LDS church reassess its historical teaching, and actually move it toward more biblical foundations? It is possible, and it is my prayer.

That's the game. Disguise a contrived exposé as a neutral, expecting it will shame the Church of Jesus Christ into jettisoning distinctive truth claims, and reform along lines more to Jackson's liking.

Little has changed between *Mormonism Explained* and *The Mormon Faith of Mitt Romney* (though, to his credit, Reverend Jackson did correct a few obvious errors), and so we can draw two important conclusions. First, protestations of evenhandedness and good faith are worth little from Reverend Jackson when he gives his opinion about the faith of Latter-day Saints. Today's purported benign is tomorrow's shot across the bow. Second, Jackson lacks confidence in his own artillery. If mere were sure to isolate and "reform" Mormonism, why the inability or unwillingness to avoid obvious mistakes through engagement with LDS scholars and scholarship? Why all the question-begging? Why the obvious failure to grapple with LDS responses to evangelical accusations, despite citing several books chock-full of such answers?

Reverend Jackson's endeavors show how evangelical anti-Mormonism must engage in such tactics, or else it would quickly run out of steam. He may well have genuinely intended to write the benign explanation his first title promised, only to realize it would present his non-Mormon audience with a more rational and appealing case than he could stomach. It is gratifying to know that in the baser tactics of our critics, we can discern an acknowledgement that fair explanation would leave their position so perilous that they will not hazard making it.

Cassandra S. Hedelius studied political science and mathematics at the University of Oklahoma and law at the University of Colorado. She has practiced domestic and business law for profit, and researches and writes about Mormonism for pleasure. Her main focus is the interaction of the LDS Church with modern media and political activism, with additional interest in religious freedom and public policy.

