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## Book Reviews

GARY TOPPING. *Leonard J. Arrington: A Historian's Life*. (Norman, Oklahoma: Arthur H. Clark, 2008, 251 pp., notes, bibliography, index, \$39.95 cloth.)

Reviewed by James B. Allen, Professor of History emeritus, Brigham Young University. He also served for seven years as Assistant LDS Church Historian under Leonard J. Arrington.

During his lifetime Leonard J. Arrington was the most widely known and highly respected historian ever to come from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. As Gary Topping observes, his path-breaking *Great Basin Kingdom* (1958) “revolutionized Mormon studies and became one of the fundamental works in western American history” (61). It propelled him into the limelight among scholars everywhere and eventually contributed to his being appointed LDS Church Historian. His *Brigham Young: American Moses* was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award in 1985, and his prodigious publication record gained him numerous other accolades. He mentored many budding historians and, as a self-styled “historical entrepreneur,” effectively promoted the work of numerous scholars. Arrington clearly deserves a major, full-length biography. Gary Topping’s 250-page *Leonard J. Arrington: A Historian's Life* does not fill that bill. However, it fills an important niche by providing a kind of intellectual history of the man often dubbed the “Dean of Mormon history.”

Except for the first two chapters, the book is topical in nature. It begins with a quick overview and interpretation of Arrington’s early days as an Idaho farm boy. The next chapter briefly covers his higher education, marriage, military service, the beginning of his teaching career, and the origin of his research in the LDS Church’s Archives. It also includes a fine discussion of the religious, cultural, and intellectual influences that helped form Arrington’s perspective on life, religion, and career. Chapter 3 is devoted to a critique of *Great Basin Kingdom*. The next chapter, “Church Historian,” covers the most exciting and yet the most difficult period in Arrington’s life. This is followed by a chapter on Roland Rich Wooley and the three biographies funded by Wooley, then another on Arrington’s later biographies. In chapter 7, “The Later Histories,” Topping critiques four books: *Beet Sugar in the West*; *Building the City of*

*God: Community and Cooperation among the Mormons*, co-authored with Feramorz Fox and Dean L. May; *The Mormon Experience*, co-authored with Davis Bitton; and *Mormons and Their Historians*, also co-authored with Bitton. A final chapter briefly explores Arrington's role as a leader in the "New Mormon History" of the later twentieth century, then moves to a kind of social critique. There, Topping comments on such things as Arrington's questioning spirit, attitudes toward the modern world, tolerance, optimism, sense of historical balance, and liberal approach to religion.

One of the things Topping handles well is Arrington's spirituality. Though not a Mormon himself, he shows respect for the Mormon faith by the way he deals with Arrington's three transcendent, life-changing experiences. One came in his youth when, one night, he was overwhelmed with a "feeling of connectedness" and of "intimacy with the universe." This had great meaning, Topping observes, for it "enabled him to understand Joseph Smith's angelic visitations," thus validating his Mormon beliefs and giving him "the confidence to go ahead and attempt the things he wanted to accomplish in life" (30). A second mystical experience which came while he was serving in the army in Italy, convinced him that he was to become a teacher and a writer. A third such experience came while Arrington was working on his PhD in economics at the University of North Carolina. Topping includes what this reviewer considers a most important quotation from Arrington, for it elegantly captures his deep spiritual commitment to the history of his people. In describing the impact of that experience Arrington said, in part: "Regardless of frustrations and obstacles that came to me in years that followed, I knew that God expected me to carry out a research program of his people's history and to make available that material to others. Whatever people might say about this mortal errand, I must persevere, and do so in an attitude of faithfulness. My experience was a holy, never-to-be-forgotten encounter—one that inspired me to live up to the promises held out for those who receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (44). While Arrington's approach to Mormon history may have been unorthodox when compared with that of traditional Mormon writers, and to the attitudes of some employees at the Church archives, his spiritual commitment was solid.

In his final chapter Topping provides an insightful discussion of Arrington's religious liberalism and the nature of his orthodoxy. He quotes Arrington's son, Carl, to the effect that his father's beliefs were "clearly unorthodox" (207). However, he quickly observes that "Mormon orthodoxy is difficult to define, and in fact the religion contains a variety of schools of thought. . . . Certainly, Arrington saw enough flexibility in Mormon thought that he did not consider himself unorthodox" (207). In terms of how practice might reflect orthodoxy, many who knew Arrington best would not disagree.

He was a firmly believing Latter-day Saint. This reviewer, for example, has prayed with him, observed him carefully preparing to give blessings to his children, was with him as he administered to the sick, and heard him say frequently that nothing he had found in any of his research ever gave him reason to doubt the authenticity of Joseph Smith's claims. His interpretation of some teachings and of how history ought to be written varied from those of ultra-conservatives, but on some of those issues, most of which are intellectual in nature, who is to say who is "orthodox" and who is not?

Topping's assessment of Arrington's years as Church Historian seems generally accurate, though he might have done more with the multitude of publications that eventually came from Arrington's colleagues as well as those who received fellowships and other support while he was Church Historian. He seems dismayed with the way Arrington's History Division was dismantled, but he nicely demonstrates the grace and dignity with which Arrington accepted the disappointing change. "Burning bridges," Topping writes, "was not Leonard Arrington's style" (125).

Topping is not enamored with Arrington's literary skills, but he comments on how much Arrington relied on the editorial skills of others. This is a good illustration of the communal nature of much of Arrington's writing—he saw it not just as *his* work but as the work of a community of scholars, and he always gave credit to those who helped him.

Topping's insightful critique of *Great Basin Kingdom* is good so far as it goes, though some of his criticism, such as the unnecessarily lengthy comment on the "Mormon village" concept, might have been reduced in favor of exploring numerous other aspects of the book. After reading this chapter, someone unfamiliar with *Great Basin Kingdom* will have little idea of the broad range of topics, experiments, and programs it deals with, except the few interpretations Topping chooses to consider. He is also slightly misleading at times. With respect to Arrington's emphasis on the role of central planning in nineteenth-century Utah, for example, Topping says that he "seemed to see the Mormons as the *only* Americans capable of cooperative endeavor" and that the way the Mormons settled the Wasatch Front was "the only way it could have been done" (73). This is an exaggeration, for Arrington does not go quite that far. He says that "it is doubtful that a substantial degree of progress could have been achieved except with the aid and direction of the dominant church" (*Great Basin Kingdom*, 411), but that hardly says that Mormons were the *only* people who could have made such progress, or that this was the *only* way the region could have been settled.

Topping is not highly complimentary of Arrington's biographies, though, surprisingly, he reserves his most severe criticism for the most important one, *Brigham Young: American Moses*. He sees it as a great achievement and brief-

ly praises it for the abundance of sources used, but then spends several pages on its shortcomings. This seems to boil down to the fact that Leonard Arrington liked Brigham Young, but Gary Topping apparently does not. He lambastes Arrington for softening the Mormon leader's image as a "dictator and tyrant" (160) and accuses him of being "disingenuous" (163) by emphasizing Brigham's softer side. There are, of course, conflicting sources on this, but anyone who knew Arrington knows that even though he played up the positive side of his subjects' characters he always took all sources into account and tried to create a responsible balance. In addition, Arrington's judgment was no doubt reinforced by the fact that he had access to more sources on Brigham Young than any previous biographer. To accuse him of deception is too harsh. Topping also criticizes Arrington's affirmation that Brigham Young's rhetorical bark was worse than his bite. This, too, is overkill, for other highly responsible and respected scholars say the same thing. (See, for example, Ronald W. Walker, "Raining Pitchforks: Brigham as a Preacher," *Sunstone* 8, no. 3, May-June 1983.) Arrington, in fact, notes that Brigham Young realized by the end of the 1850s that his bombastic, uncompromising rhetoric "could have disastrous consequences," and so he abandoned it (*Brigham Young: American Moses*, 300). "How could scholars like Arrington and his associates ever have claimed that words—especially the violent thundering of which Brigham was capable—had no effect on the actions of those who heard them?" (163) Topping indignantly asks. The fact is that neither Arrington nor his associates made that claim.

The most glaring problem in Topping's assessment of *Brigham Young: American Moses* is his criticism of how Arrington dealt with the Mountain Meadows Massacre. Topping seems to accept whole-heartedly the idea that Brigham approved the massacre. This erroneous view, rejected by Arrington, was promulgated by Will Bagley in his *Blood of the Prophets: Brigham Young and the Massacre at Mountain Meadows*. Unfortunately, Bagley is the only source Topping cites. Of course, the latest and most reliable book on the subject, *Massacre at Mountain Meadows*, by Ronald W. Walker, Richard E. Turley, and Glen M. Leonard, was not available when Topping was writing. But the results of these authors' research, demonstrating convincingly that Young was not involved in promulgating the massacre, were well known, for they had discussed it frequently in various public meetings and historical conferences. Topping may or may not have heard what they said, but at least he might have given some credence to three important reviews of Bagley published by Thomas G. Alexander, Lawrence Coates, and Paul H. Peterson (*BYU Studies* 42, no. 1, 2003), or the review by W. Paul Reeve and Ardis E. Parshall (*Mormon Historical Studies* 4, no.1 Spring 2003), or the extensive review by Robert D. Crockett (*Farms Review of Books* 15, no. 2, 2003).

Despite his criticisms, Topping clearly admires Arrington. Unfortunately, however, the last two sentences of the book seem misleading, if not demeaning. “If he cast a large shadow over Mormon historiography,” says Topping, “perhaps it is time for his disciples to step out into the same sunlight that made that shadow possible. Nothing would have pleased Leonard Arrington more” (275). The implication here is that no one has matched Arrington’s originality. That may be partially true, but it ignores that fact that many of his “disciples” (he would have called them *friends* and *co-workers*) have stepped into the sunlight with their own well-received publications. Topping might have observed that Arrington was highly pleased with what these people were doing and that no doubt he would continue to be pleased with them. They include students he mentored earlier, colleagues in the Historical Department, and others who received fellowships from the department or were otherwise encouraged by him. A few that come to mind are Richard L. Bushman, Thomas G. Alexander, Ronald W. Walker, Glen M. Leonard, Jill Mulvay Derr, Dean C. Jesse, Ronald K. Esplin (managing editor of the remarkable Joseph Smith Papers project, which is something Arrington would enthusiastically approve), William G. Hartley, David J. Whittaker, Jessie L. Embry, and the late Dean L. May. A look at their publication records at <http://mormonhistory.byu.edu> will only illustrate the point.

Topping’s study, despite some weaknesses, is well worth reading. However, we still await the full biography Leonard Arrington so richly deserves.

LU ANN TAYLOR SNYDER AND PHILLIP A. SNYDER, eds. *Post-Manifesto Polygamy: The 1899–1904 Correspondence of Helen, Owen, and Avery Woodruff*. (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2009, xiv + 196 pp., illustrations, bibliography, index, \$34.95 hardback.)

Reviewed by Jessie L. Embry, Associate Director of the Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, Brigham Young University. She is the author of two books and a number of articles on Mormon polygamy.

Lu Ann Taylor Snyder’s excitement over the letters of Helen, Owen, and Avery Woodruff was contagious. As she researched their post-Manifesto polygamous lives, she was full of questions and ideas, and sharing her research interest in LDS polygamy, I always enjoyed discussing them with her. After Lu Ann’s tragic death from cancer, I feared her project would die with her. But as her husband Phil recalls, “Lu Ann would want me to note, as she often did during the last months and always with a twinkle in her eye, that it is possible

for certain extraordinary people to publish *after* they have perished (xii). It is a tribute to Phil that he fulfilled Lu Ann's wish.

The Snyders' book is a love story full of high and low points, which include touching together moments, separation, disease, and death. After describing the Owen Woodruff Collection, the book provides a brief introduction to Mormon polygamy before and after the Manifesto, ending the practice issued by Owen's father, LDS Church President Wilford Woodruff. It then summarizes the lives of Owen, Helen, and Avery, including their marriages and life on the "underground" to avoid attention. All three suffered, but it was especially hard on Avery, who could not acknowledge her marriage. The introduction ends with the tragic deaths of Helen and Owen who died of small-pox in Mexico.

Most of the book consists of the letters the Woodruffs wrote to each other from 1899 to 1904. All three corresponded with each other, although many letters no longer exist. As Avery wrote to Owen in November 1900 before their marriage, "I must not forget to tell you that I have burned all letters and will continue to do so, although it seems like destroying valuable literature" (21). To hide Owen and Avery's marriage, the Woodruffs used code names for each other, which are now identified in the book.

While most of the letters are routine, there are touching passages of love and support. For example, Helen wrote to Avery: "I think you made up your mind that you would be content when you left home, and that I know has a great deal to do with your present spirit of peace and happiness. We can make our lives just about what we will and if we are continually looking for something to feel badly about and for some body to treat us unjustly we can always find plenty to worry about and make ourselves miserable. On the other hand if we look for blessings and look to the future for the realization of our hopes we can be contented wherever we are." After this "preaching," though, Helen added, "I have gone off on a tangent, . . . and you do not need preaching to one bit; . . . it is myself that I need to labor with" (112).

The letters provide a clear lens through which to view what post-Manifesto polygamy meant to a family (which included an apostle) in their daily lives. Unlike other histories that are screened by time and memory (positive and negative), the letters show the routine, the heartache, and the joy of three people's relationships. Because of the letters' first-hand accounts, the book is an important contribution to the understanding of Mormon polygamy. Lu Ann's background in women's studies and history prepared her to understand and edit the letters, and Phil's understanding of English and editing allowed him to complete the project.

Although the edited letters have strengths, there are some glaring weaknesses. The introduction is too sketchy and does not show the complex prob-

lems of post-Manifesto polygamy. While organizing the letters and Avery's autobiography by years makes some sense, I wish the autobiography had been kept together to show how the parts relate to each other. The list of characters and annotated notes are too brief and do not give enough details about the people mentioned in the letters and how they relate to the Woodruffs. And having them at the end of the book is awkward. Many letters report common, everyday life. While these details provides a flavor for how the family lived, the constant references to events that are not described lead to more questions than answers. And they are tiresome.

Despite these problems, the book does meet its objective—to show the impact of post-Manifesto polygamy on three lives. I recommend this book for general reading and as a college text. It will be on my bookshelf as a loving tribute to Lu Ann Snyder, an outstanding historian.

EDWARD LEO LYMAN. *Amasa Mason Lyman, Mormon Apostle and Apostate: A Study in Dedication*. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2009, xvi + 646 pp., illustrations, endnotes, index, \$39.95, hardback.)

Reviewed by Gary James Bergera, managing director, The Smith-Pettit Foundation, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Leo Lyman's biography of his great-great-grandfather is an impressive testament to Lyman's own storied, four-decades-long career as an award-winning historian of the nineteenth-century American West. In this newest work, the author seeks not only to narrate the life story of one of the LDS Church's major early leaders, but, more importantly, to salvage, even celebrate, the reputation of a man once lauded as a modern Apostle of Jesus Christ but later condemned as a bitter apostate. Thus the narrative is both informed and colored by the author's over-arching drive at rehabilitation. Such an approach endows Lyman's necessarily revisionistic presentation with an urgency and emotion that can be invigorating.

As usual, Lyman has done his research. His trademark encyclopedic knowledge of sources and history, context and subtext is readily apparent. Like a master craftsman, he arrays his materials expertly to chronicle both the life and thought of his ancestor. Born in 1813 in New Hampshire, Amasa Lyman joined the LDS Church in Ohio in 1832. He subsequently filled several proselytizing missions, participated in Zions Camp (1834), was arrested for treason (but never convicted) in 1838, ordained an apostle in 1842, called to the First Presidency in 1843, joined the Quorum of Twelve Apostles in 1844, and traveled with the first wave of Mormon pioneers to the Great Salt Lake

Valley in 1847. From 1851 to 1857, he helped to settle San Bernardino, California, and from 1860 to 1862 managed Church affairs in England. He later settled in Fillmore, Utah. In 1867, he was relieved of his apostleship for teaching false doctrine, and in 1870 was excommunicated. He subsequently practiced spiritualism, held mediumistic séances, and publicly affiliated with the Godbeite reform movement. He died in Fillmore in 1877. His Church membership, including priesthood and temple blessings, was restored in 1909. He was a thoughtful champion of what he saw as the fundamentals of Mormonism, especially the teachings of Church founder Joseph Smith. Equally important, he was also an articulate, energetic critic of many of Brigham Young's policies.

Lyman mines his source well and knows what he's talking about. Not surprisingly, he devotes considerable deserved space to discussing Amasa's heresy and apostasy. Briefly, by about the early 1860s, Amasa had begun taking a somewhat humanistic view of Jesus, particularly his atonement, when prevailing orthodoxy asserted that Jesus personally bore the full weight of humanity's cumulative and individual sins. The resulting pain and suffering, according to this view, was so intense that Jesus bled from every pore. Amasa came to believe that Jesus' contribution to humanity lay not in his spilled blood but in his exemplary life, that men's and women's salvation depends more on their individual acts than on Jesus' suffering and death. This belief, which Amasa promulgated in Great Britain and in the Rocky Mountains, was the ostensible primary reason for, first, his loss of priesthood, and later his Church membership. As Lyman explains, Amasa "was often not sufficiently careful when he chose to stress individual responsibility to abandon sin, because in so doing he tended to deemphasize the role of Jesus Christ in achieving individual remission of sin and salvation" (398).

I say "ostensible" because Lyman believes that the actual reasons for Amasa's "supposed personal rebellion-apostasy" (285) and excommunication were multifaceted. Not the least of these factors were what the author perceives as Brigham Young's bullying personality and personal animus, the latter stemming from, but not limited to, Amasa's involvement in settling San Bernardino. "Young's aggressive confidence remained so constant," Lyman writes, "that it seems to be a reasonable question whether, at least at times, he could exercise the Christ-like humility that would seem essential to his prophetic office" (147). According to Lyman, "Young's lack of empathy and compassion toward Lyman [especially during the San Bernardino years] is both perplexing and chilling. Over the wide span of years, Orson Hyde, Orson Pratt, and perhaps others within the church hierarchy challenged President Young's patience on more than a few occasions. But there is no known historical parallel for his persistent dislike, amounting at times almost to repug-



nance, for Lyman” (229). For Lyman, the primary source of Young’s dislike is simple:

I propose again that Brigham Young’s hostility stemmed partly from his jealousy. Lyman’s leadership at San Bernardino, with the community’s success and the sterling religious commitment of most of its participants, may have loomed as an embarrassing contrast to some aspects of Brigham Young’s Utah regime. It demonstrated that both spiritual and temporal success could be attained without such strong, direct supervision as often existed in Salt Lake City. Although Young scorned these California Mormons as less faithful, approximately two-thirds impressively demonstrated their willingness to sacrifice all they had to obey his instructions. He never honorably released them or acknowledged their faithful service. Their devotion and sacrifice in San Bernardino was in no measure behind that of their Utah co-believers, yet Young persistently denigrated their efforts and expressed his belief that both their faith and their colony would fail. From my perspective that did not happen. Young allowed his biases to dictate a destructive policy that resulted in killing what might have been the Mormon Church’s most flourishing regional center outside of Utah. (244; see also 385.)

In pursuing disciplinary proceedings against Amasa, Lyman suggests that Young “displayed more than a little pettiness, probably some jealousy and vindictiveness, and perhaps even a measure of conscious attempt to marginalize the dissident apostle for his own purposes” (382). While I question my own competence to offer an evaluation of Lyman’s criticisms of Young, my understanding of Young benefitted from Lyman’s insights and arguments. The extent to which he may be correct or mistaken remains for other historians to determine.

Young is not the only object of Lyman’s judgment. He also censured Charles C. Rich (234–35), George A. Smith (355), Valeen Tippetts Avery (466), and especially Loretta Hefner, whose earlier studies of Amasa come under special condemnation (see 231, for example). It would be interesting to know how Hefner might respond.

Finally, Lyman finds much to recommend in Amasa’s decision following his expulsion from the LDS Church to embrace the Godbeite critique of Brigham Young’s economic policies. “[T]he Godbeite resistance to Young’s theocracy was a valid and sincere effort to redress perceived deficiencies in the Mormon Church,” Lyman writes, “and Amasa Mason Lyman’s willingness to stand courageously and publicly in the forefront of that movement is—and should be treated as—an honorable and most significant facet of his biography. He made a fervent and good-faith crusade in a direction that, whatever its realistic chances of success, must be recognized as aiming at greater theological and personal freedom for his brethren and sisters in the region” (469).

Lyman's biography is a first-rate, thought-provoking contribution to the history of the LDS Church, the presidency of Brigham Young, the colonization of southern California, and especially the life of Amasa Lyman. It is also a valuable and insightful case study of dissidence in an authoritarian religious community. For anyone interested in serious Mormon studies, it is required reading.

**POLLY AIRD. *Mormon Convert, Mormon Defector: A Scottish Immigrant in the American West, 1848–1861*.** (Norman: Arthur H. Clark, 2009, 320 pp., illustrations, bibliography, index, \$39.95 hardback.)

Reviewed by Jeffrey Nichols, associate professor of history at Westminster College.

The 1850s were a tumultuous period for the Latter-day Saints. Utah's Mormon settlers struggled to build their Kingdom in the face of drought, famine, internal dissent, and external pressures. In *Mormon Convert, Mormon Defector*, Polly Aird offers us a fascinating perspective of this era when it seemed likely that the U.S. Army might crush the Mormon world.

Aird is an independent historian who has published intriguing articles about Scottish converts and individuals who left the LDS Church during this period. The book under review tells the story of her distant relative, Peter McAuslan, who converted to Mormonism in Scotland, emigrated to Utah in 1854, fell away from the faith by 1859, and left for California, where he lived the rest of his life. Although McAuslan was an obscure individual, his proximity to important events, his perspicacious assessment of those events, and Aird's extensive research and narrative skill make this a valuable study of the Scottish working class as well as the rank and file of nineteenth-century Mormonism. Aird uses McAuslan's writings, journals and diaries of contemporaries, and other primary sources to fill out a plausible account of his life within the context of the momentous events around him.

The author's method is especially effective as she explores the factors that influenced Peter McAuslan's development, including widespread literacy, class resentments, religious competition, labor radicalism, and economic dislocations in the Scottish textile industry. Like many other working-class Brits, several members of his family responded to the message of Mormon missionaries, especially Orson Pratt. In 1854, Peter and his wife Agnes followed relatives to Utah, where they eagerly anticipated helping to build Zion under the direction of a living prophet. While mostly engaging, the depth of

detail that Aird provides on their trip is sometimes overdone, and nearly one-half of the volume has passed by the time the couple arrive in Salt Lake City.

The heart of the book covers the five years that Peter lived in Utah, especially the disruption and violence of this period. Those years included the Mormon Reformation, during which time LDS officials delivered blistering discourses condemning sin, backsliding, and apostasy. Some leaders, including Brigham Young and especially his First Counselor Jedediah Grant, spoke of sins so heinous that the transgressor's blood must be shed to atone for their sins—a concept subsequently labeled “blood atonement.” The McAuslan family lived only a few miles from Springville, where in March 1857, two men by the name of Parrish, seeking to leave the LDS Church and emigrate to California, were allegedly murdered under the auspices of blood atonement, at the orders of the local LDS bishop. Another man, a non-Mormon named Henry Forbes, was murdered in Springville a few months later, and a man and his mother named Jones were murdered in Payson in April 1858. In September 1857, news came north of the horror at Mountain Meadows, where Mormon militia and Paiute Indians slaughtered about 120 members of an emigrant party. Even greater violence seemed in the offing. The Mormons expected the U.S. Army to invade the territory in fall 1857 or the following spring. The McAuslans and thousands of other Saints abandoned their homes and fields to “move south” away from the threatened invasion, and Peter took his place within the Mormon militia that expected to confront the invaders. Although the confrontation ended peacefully, Peter's faith had been shaken by these events. At a special conference in November 1858, he was among those excommunicated from the LDS Church, and he left under the protection of a U.S. Army escort the following spring.

Aird does a fine job telling the larger stories of drought and famine, the Reformation, the murders, the threatened invasion, the move south, and the eventual peaceful settlement. She draws on recorded discourses, newspaper articles, tithing records, census records, diaries, official LDS records, and autobiographies to create a compelling narrative. One of the most useful of the latter sources is the life story of George A. Hicks, Peter McAuslan's militia superior, who likewise reacted against the violence and demands for obedience he witnessed. The author's specific subject, however, sometimes seems peripheral to these crucial chapters, numbers 11–16. Aird cites in these six chapters material from five of Peter McAuslan's later letters, and she sometimes must resort to inference or proximity to put him in the larger story. She notes, for example, that McAuslan wrote years later to a relative about the Parrish murders and Mountain Meadows, but not the Forbes or Jones murders, and never wrote directly about his excommunication.

Aird's chief source for McAuslan's reasons for his departure from Utah is a letter he wrote in 1860 to Robert Salmon, a friend in Scotland whom McAuslan had baptized. Aird prints the letter in its entirety, and the space she gives it is justified. McAuslan cites the alleged murder of the Parrishes for renouncing the LDS faith and the atmosphere of threat and violence that existed during the Reformation. "The Mormons do intertain doctrins [that] when they are put in force are destructive of the rights of there fellow man" (280). To Salmon's dismay, McAuslan concluded that Brigham Young was "no more inspired by the Almighty than many other men are" (278). Perhaps even more important, McAuslan objected to demands for obedience to superior authority in all things. He insisted "that I clame [claim] it as a right to judge all things for myself, feeling as I do that I shall have to give an account for *myself* of the course I persue in this life" (279). But McAuslan also declared his respect for faithful Mormons and made no direct effort to persuade Salmon to leave the faith.

Aird ends her excellent book with a brief description of Salmon's life. Robert Salmon eventually came to Utah with his family and served in religious and secular offices for the rest of his life. Like her subject, Aird evidently believes that every person has the right and duty to choose for himself, his spiritual course. Polly Aird has given us the portrait of a thoughtful man who yearned for transcendence but insisted upon reason, evidence, and the exercise of free agency.