

Book Reviews

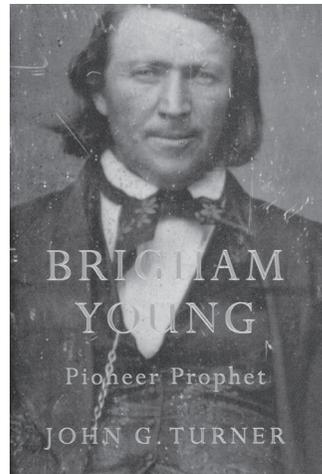
JOHN G. TURNER. *Brigham Young: Pioneer Prophet*. (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2012, viii + 512 pp., illustrations, index, \$35.00 hardback.)

Reviewed by Gene A. Sessions

To borrow from the old automobile commercial, this is not your father's Brigham Young. Indeed, John Turner's vision of Young suggests that barely a semblance of your father's Brigham ever existed at all. After dubbing it "the standard biography" of the great Mormon leader, *Library Journal* said, "There aren't enough superlatives for this book." As if rising to that challenge, dust-jacket reviewers (including Phillip Barlow and Richard Bushman) lavished it with such effusive terms of praise as "wonderful," "unsentimental, cogent, critical, and fair," "elegantly written," "superb," "meticulous," "sophisticated," and "at once informative, judicious, and profoundly engaging."

In the face of all this, a few readers, including this reviewer, are saying, "Not so fast." While Turner has definitely made a major contribution with this prolix and comprehensive attempt to capture the enigmatic and complicated "American Moses," a careful analysis of the volume suggests that this may not be such a definitive and praiseworthy work after all.

First of all, readers generally find themselves finishing this biography with a visceral dislike for its subject. Indeed, the overall effect of the book seems to be, as Doug Gibson noted in his column in the *Ogden Standard-Examiner*, that Young was "a great leader and an unpleasant man." Again, most of that impression comes in the form of a gut feeling, but the causes of it are not that difficult to discern. For example, Turner devotes some fifty pages chronicling complaints about Brigham's foibles and failures as a polygamous husband and comparatively few compliments for his successes. He excuses



this imbalance by stating the obvious: “Contented wives more rarely recorded their experiences within Young’s family” (193). The author ignores numerous opportunities to describe moving events that portrayed the loving side of the man, paying too little attention, for example, to his dedication to his children and his friends, a glaring omission to say the least. Turner’s persistent desire to help the reader see clearly the nastier sides of this complex human being makes one wonder why anyone would follow this guy across the street let alone across the country.

Early reviews have praised Turner for placing Young’s story into its historical context, but converse failures to do exactly that mar every chapter. For example, the author’s apparent fascination with the Thomas Lewis castration, which he mentions on more than a half dozen pages in almost as many places in the book, fails to set it within its historical context as an ubiquitous punishment across not only western but also general American and European history. Similarly, in the face of generally high praise among early reviewers for careful scholarship, there are significant lapses in this regard. A salient sample of this comes when Turner states that Joseph Smith in the early 1830s “had already moved sharply away from Protestant doctrines” (87), while most scholars of Mormonism place that veer later into the Nauvoo period. Ironically, a resort to the endnote for documentation of that revisionist statement references *only* William Clayton’s recollection of the teaching of the doctrine of God’s embodiment as “flesh and bones” among Smith’s Nauvoo discourses (433). In this connection, too many of the endnotes reference primary materials as they appear in secondary sources, a practice professors of history and the *Chicago Manual* try to discourage. Add to this the very selective use of some sources, and gaping holes in his familiarity with the basic literature of Mormon history, and the reader begins to wonder whether the author did the necessary research before turning from his earlier interest in the Campus Crusade for Christ to nineteenth-century Mormonism.

It is perhaps understandable that a devout Protestant who won the Alan M. Jackson Preaching Award while earning his master’s of divinity at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary would have little sympathy for Mormon doctrines and theology. While arguing at the outset that his study “is not an appraisal of contemporary Mormonism or an assessment of Mormonism’s religious tenets” (6), the author expends much ink pursuing exactly those ends. Perhaps forgivable as inevitable or simple naiveté on his part, such a promise seems particularly hollow in light of the largely negative portrayal of Young and his faith that sticks in the reader’s mind during a slog through more than four hundred pages of sometimes plodding narrative. In addition, even when seeming to attempt balance on a hot issue, such as the pioneer prophet’s

role in the Mountain Meadows Massacre, Turner cannot help but prosecute Young for malfeasance and downright evil, emphasizing in that case that even “three historians employed by the Church” agree with him that “Young bears significant responsibility for what took place at Mountain Meadows” (279–80). While that may be true in essence, what he is really doing becomes clear two pages later when he agrees essentially with anti-Mormon polemicists that Young “condoned the slaughter” (282), a highly debatable proposition among responsible historians.

In the final analysis, although all of this seems to add up to serious doubts about the aims and achievements of this new biography, the book deserves some of the praise it has garnered so far in terms of its scope and depth. Perhaps it is just a matter of tone. Sandwiched among all of the persistent criticisms of Young’s character and his faith are grudging celebrations of a few of his successes, such as inserting within a list of his failures (such as the Iron and Cotton Missions) a “share of success” with such ideas as the down-and-back system. Even this, however, he couches within a reminder that “the Perpetual Emigration [*sic*] Fund, the handcart companies, and the X.Y. Carrying Company had all failed to overcome the financial impediments to the church’s gathering” (313).

Without doubt the most telling chapter in the book is “The Soul and Mainspring of the West” (Chapter 13), in which the author relentlessly concludes his blatant humiliation of Brigham Young. Certainly the events of his last few years provide easy fodder for such bludgeoning (the Ann Eliza Webb affair, “the Amelia Palace,” his indebtedness, and the John D. Lee trials and execution), but Turner seems to relish particularly writing about the “hastily and poorly conceived” United Order movement, which he labeled “a desperate rearguard action” (401). Although such may be so, the language here illustrates vividly the sniping tone of the entire volume. Such language combines with a pattern of tortuous scholarship to paint a very ugly portrait of the indefatigable Mormon leader.

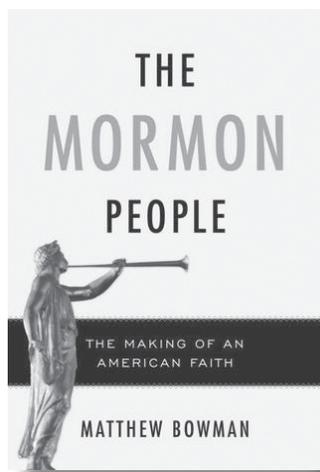
The overall message of this biography seems to be that Brigham Young in the final analysis was a coarse, deceitful, malevolent, rude, violent, profane, and arrogant man who just happened to have some remarkable leadership ability. While the book certainly provides a different perspective on Young’s life than any treatment before it, its lack of balance undermines its general contribution to Utah/Mormon history in significant and unfortunate ways.

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MATTHEW BOWMAN. *The Mormon People: The Making of an American Faith*. (New York: Random House, 2012, xxi + 328 pp., bibliography, index, \$26.00 hardback.)

Reviewed by Jonathan Moyer

Mormonism has long both intrigued and repelled the American public, and its core elements seemingly defy comprehension. But the fascinating tale of Mormonism is engagingly told in Matthew Bowman's *The Mormon People: The Making of an American Faith*. An expert on American evangelicalism, Bowman received his PhD from Georgetown University and teaches at Hampden-Sydney College in Virginia. In eight crisp chapters, Bowman synthesizes much of the latest scholarship, aiming "to weave it into a coherent narrative" (xxi). He covers Mormon origins, adversity, and the faith's metamorphosis to a respectable church that counts millions of members around the world, and includes influential politicians and popular entertainers in its ranks.



The author tracks the trajectory of Mormonism's continuities, from its founder Joseph Smith and his exuberant visions of Zion and godly perfection, to his successors. Through the personalities of the church presidents, Bowman also describes the changing definition of what it has meant to be a Mormon. From Brigham Young's aspirations for an independent "Israel" in the West, to a bureaucratic hierarchy reflecting corporate America, readers will find Bowman a trusty guide. He follows Mormonism's shift from a "visionary and apocalyptic sect . . . into a church among churches, an institution of offices rather than leaders" that acquiesced to the world instead of transforming it (91). Polygamy, celebrated as the holiest of unions, was abandoned; and its significance was eclipsed by a new definition of marriage that meshed with American sentiment. Charismatic gifts, once cherished as a manifestation of God's favor, were in time regarded with suspicion. No longer would Saints "fall into fits and trances" or "swing from the rafters" during meetings (44). Church leaders shunned ecstatic demonstrations of the spirit, favoring instead "the ability to sit still," glossed as *reverence*, as "the greatest manifestation of spirituality" (187). The hierarchy became the only trusted source for spiritual gifts.

The Mormon People gives ample space to the faith's fraught relationship with politics. Joseph Smith lauded the Constitution, but after the troubles in Missouri "would never quite trust" American institutions again (62). Bowman says that "The Mormons were never comfortable with American politics; they tended to see the political process through the narrow lens of their self-interest and in basic conflict with their dreams for a community of universal brotherhood." Though speaking of electioneering in frontier Illinois, his observation is equally apt for later generations: "Their numbers made them valuable to politicians, but their utopian religion made them difficult partners to keep" (69). The Saints struggled with politics, from the seating of Reed Smoot to Ezra Taft Benson's extremism and the church's notorious support for California's Proposition 8. Bowman, however, resists facile stereotypes of Mormons as mindless conservative dupes. Even as he recounts the church's decisive role in defeating the Equal Rights Amendment, Bowman also relates the Church's opposition to Reagan's MX missile program. As he writes, "Kimball's declaration reminded his people and the nation of the countercultural potential of Mormonism—that it still possessed the capacity to defy the national mood in pursuit of what it deemed higher laws" (212).

Bowman is especially good at highlighting the ironies and unintended consequences of Mormon policies. Joseph Smith hoped that he could unite a disparate people through economic communitarianism, but found even the most faithful Saints resisted his dictates (61). Likewise polygamy, "the practice that in the imagination of Joseph Smith and Orson Pratt created familial relationships in heaven more glorious than any on earth tore apart many families in Utah" (132). Brigham Young's Reformation of 1856–57, though an attempt "to revive the old utopian communalism" of Mormonism, instead "drew the Mormons closer to Protestant worship services" (138). The twentieth-century hierarchy embarked on an ambitious program of "correlation," which emphasized "strong, centralized institutional authority . . . and a growing suspicion of theological innovation in favor of an emphasis on correct behavior" (190–91). Even as correlation instilled uniformity within the faith, "Mormonism's adherents grew more diverse" (217). The correlation program "allowed the faith to maintain internal consistency and preserve strong hierarchical authority" although this sometimes resulted in "rigidity and conformity" (218). Correlation also required foreign Saints to abandon local dress and traditions in favor of Utah culture. Bowman concludes that "while Mormonism may be a global religion . . . it is not yet a world religion," because it has not "found a way to adapt its forms to share its meaning in a panoply of cultures" (221–22).

I have one minor point of criticism to note. The author explains that "at the heart of the faith a radical and transformative vision still lurks" because,

despite conservative trappings, the Mormon prophet may “receive divine revelation” that would require Mormons to trade their staid conformity for something that would again put them at odds with the nation (251–52). In principle this might be true, but one wonders, given Bowman’s assessment of correlation, how a “radical” message would fare among contemporary Mormons.

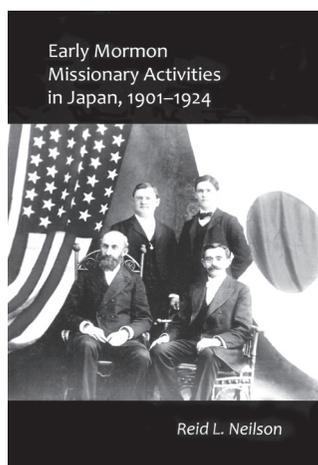
Bowman’s treatment of all these subjects is for the most part fair and even-handed. He does not shy away from the tragic and unsettling aspects of Mormonism, but he also shows that the story of the Mormon people is more than the sum of these controversies. Readers looking for a good brief introduction to Mormonism can do no better than this book. Specialists will likewise find themselves challenged and impressed with the author’s perspectives and interpretations. All who read this excellent overview of Mormonism will eagerly anticipate more insights from this promising author.

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REID L. NEILSON. *Early Mormon Missionary Activities in Japan, 1901–1924*. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2010, xiv + 214 pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography, index, \$29.95 paperback.)

Reviewed by Aaron Skabelund

On December 23, 1907, Elder John L. Chadwick recorded in his journal an uncomfortable experience familiar to many Mormon missionaries, especially those who have served in Japan, where people remove their shoes before entering homes. While tracting that afternoon, Chadwick had the rare fortune of being invited inside. “I was invited in and had a nice talk,” he wrote, “although I didn’t feel at ease as I had a large hole in my sock and tried to keep it covered up” (92). This anecdote, as told by Reid L. Neilson, former assistant professor of Church History and Doctrine at Brigham Young University and current Managing Director of the Church History Department, in *Early Mormon Missionary Activities in Japan*,



1901–1924, illustrates the challenges, both universal in nature but also particular to Japan, that which Mormon missionaries faced while evangelizing in Japan during the first quarter of the twentieth century.

The efforts of LDS missionaries in Japan, like those of other LDS missionaries throughout the world in the early twentieth century, did not result in the conversion of tens of thousands that had dramatically increased Church membership from six individuals in 1830 to over a quarter million by 1900. Yet their lack of success was stark compared to their contemporary LDS peers laboring elsewhere. Mormon missionary success in Japan also lagged behind that of American Protestant missionaries who were evangelizing in that country at the time, including Seventh-Day Adventists, who had arrived just five years earlier than the Mormons. The eighty-eight Latter-day Saints who served in Japan between 1901 and 1924 baptized only 166 Japanese, many of whom soon fell away (83–84). Neilson argues that the first Mormon mission in Japan failed because of an “unvaried sense of evangelism propriety and practices” that was grounded on a Euro-American model that “hindered Mormon missionaries from adapting their message” to Japan and other Asian cultures (xi).

In two parts composed of three chapters each, Neilson explicates and supports his thesis. In Part I, he offers a comparative conceptual framework and introduces nineteenth-century worldviews and developments that set the stage for the establishment of the mission. Chapter 1 compares how early Mormon and Protestant leaders “imagined their religious traditions in relation to those from Asia” (5); Chapter 2 explores Mormon encounters with Asians, from encounters with diplomats passing through Salt Lake City, the “cross-roads of the West,” to migrant workers settling in Utah; and chapter three introduces what Neilson calls the “Euro-American Mormon missionary model,” an approach that initially brought the faith’s evangelists great success in those areas but “hampered LDS missionary efforts in non-Christian, non-Western nations” (35). Part II narrows the focus to Japan while maintaining a comparative perspective. Here, due in part to his careful reading of missionary papers, Neilson’s narrative picks up speed. In three chapters he tells of the opening of the Japan mission led by Heber J. Grant, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, deftly compares Mormon missionary practices to those of Protestants in Japan, and evaluates the decision by Grant in 1924 (then the president of the Church), to withdrawal all missionaries from the country.

Neilson deserves immense praise for integrating the Mormon missionary experience into the larger field of American mission history. His analysis is compelling because of the comparative context which he provides. Yet, at times I came away wanting more. One can see in this case study evidence of Neilson’s stint as a business consultant and his training in business adminis-

tration, his familiarity with Japan from his experience as a missionary, and his considerable skills as a professional historian. All of this makes for a masterfully written, well documented, structurally sound narrative. But I wish the book had not been quite so efficient. Neilson argues that the missionaries in Japan were a homogenous group, and this contributed to their lack of success but more descriptions of their experiences in Japan (like Chadwick's) and a fuller picture of the elder *and* sister missionaries (little is said about the latter) as three-dimensional figures would have enriched the text. Likewise, more attention to reception—how the missionaries and their message were received or rejected by the Japanese—would have been welcome. These absences do not necessarily weaken the book's arguments, but the inclusion of more material gleaned from Neilson's extensive reading of missionary journals and a serious consideration of more Japanese sources would have enhanced his account. Sometimes I wished that he would have paused for more analysis and contextualization. Chapter 4, for example, begins with an epigraph, a quote by the Apostle George Q. Cannon in 1900 in which he refers to Mormon missionaries as soldiers of Christ who will take the "message of salvation" to Japan. Cannon continues by declaring, "Our young men go [to] the Philippines and to Cuba, and they have been willing to lay down their lives for their country. Young men from this State have done so, and have thus shown their patriotism. Let us in like manner show our patriotism to the kingdom of God and for the salvation of Jesus Christ, our great leader" (61). Neilson returns to this statement later in the chapter, but only refers to the first part of the quote and does not contextualize the rising sense of nationalism in Utah which helped set the stage for the establishment of the mission in Japan and connected Mormons with their Protestant missionary compatriots who were also motivated by manifest destiny. Finally, I was puzzled by the title *Early Mormon Missionary Activities in Japan, 1901–1924*. Although it summarizes precisely what the book is about, why did Neilson (or the press?) drop "Strangers in a Strange Land," the lead title of his University of North Carolina dissertation? As Neilson highlights, it is an expression which many missionaries in Japan used to describe their situation, and one which he uses effectively to remind readers of his principal argument throughout the book. Why not put it on the cover? The addition of these elements would have only added just a few more pages and made the book even more appealing. Yes, I quibble, but not very efficiently.

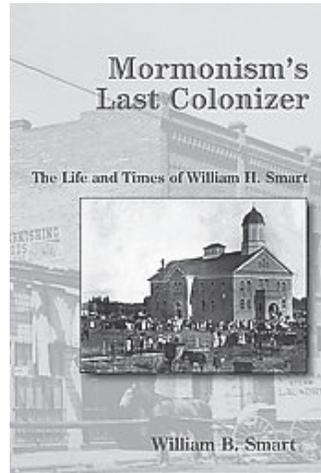
Neilson has written an excellent study that fills a gap in American religious and missionary historiography, while making an important contribution to Mormon history. The book deserves to be widely read by historians and interested general readers, including LDS missionaries who have been called to, or who have labored in Japan.

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WILLIAM B. SMART. *Mormonism's Last Colonizer: The Life and Times of William H. Smart*. (Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 2008, vii + 347 pp., illustrations, appendices, bibliography, index, CD-rom, \$44.95 hardback, \$36.00 e-book.)

Reviewed by Gary L. Boatright Jr.

William B. Smart's *Mormonism's Last Colonizer: The Life and Times of William H. Smart* is a welcome addition to the field of Mormon studies. The book's strength is a result of the voluminous material left by the author's grandfather and subject of the biography, William H. Smart. The fifty volumes of meticulously detailed journals cover a span of more than fifty years and, when combined with his personal correspondence, provided the author with a wealth of material on the life of this significant pioneer. With this information, Smart, a former editor of the *Deseret News* and author of *Over the Rim: The Parley P. Pratt Exploring Expedition to Southern Utah, 1849–1850*,



sets out to write an objective and honest biography of his illustrious ancestor. In the opinion of this reviewer, Smart succeeds.

William H. Smart also provided the author with an excellent case study for exploring several important themes affecting Mormonism as it transitioned from the nineteenth to the twentieth century. As a polygamist, Smart struggled with conforming to Mormonism's official ending of the practice. His twenty-two years of service as a stake president reveals the changing dynamics of the lower-tiered leadership of the Church. Perhaps the most important contribution of the book is the author's account of Smart's role as leader of the twentieth century colonization efforts of the Church in Utah and his part "in the long, sad history of displacing Native Americans" (318).

William H. Smart's early life is filled with self-doubt, addiction, and torment. "For a man who accomplished so much, who was so focused, goal-oriented, decisive, and self-assured in later life," the author writes, Smart's young adulthood was "surprisingly ambivalent, irresolute, self-indicting, and . . . wracked with guilt over his inability to stop smoking and drinking" (31). These issues led to struggles during his service as a young missionary in Turkey. Despite the faith Church leaders placed in him and his trust in them,

Smart's mission came to a self-imposed early ending, characterized by the author as a "painful failure" (74). The next eight years of Smart's life, particularly a second stint as a missionary, serving in the Eastern States Mission, became the turning point which molded him into the man he later became.

As Smart's life gained focus and meaning, he continued to show a strong spirit of independence. This characteristic is frequently seen in his vocal opposition to Church policies. In the years following the 1890 Manifesto ending polygamy, Smart sought to take a second wife, but the would-be father-in-law refused the concept of his daughter taking second place. Undeterred, Smart continued to be a strong advocate of plural marriage into the twentieth-century. In 1902, he began courting another woman, but "in his unusually thorough and detailed journals, he gives no hint of the kind of woman he was wooing and wrote nothing about his courtship other than the terse recording of his visits, in which he refers to her [Mary Wallace] as 'M'" (143). Smart married Wallace on June 3, 1902, "a fact known only by the absence of five pages of Smart's journal for that date, torn out years later by a son in a misguided attempt to protect his father's reputation" (143).

The author's account of Smart's role in the settlement of the Uintah Basin in eastern Utah is particularly engaging. As preparations were being made by the U.S. government to open the Ute Indian Reservation to settlers, Smart saw this as the last opportunity to expand Mormon settlement in Utah. The author wrote: "From his ecclesiastical seat [as stake president] in Heber, [Smart] envisioned this case, soon-to-be opened area as Mormon country, and set about seeing that it was. On his own initiative, without his usual practice of consulting with church general authorities but with the rubber-stamp approval of his stake presidency, he made the first of many exploring trips of the Uintah Basin" (155). Smart would later pen a letter encouraging fellow Mormons to seek out the best places to live in the basin before the government had officially opened the land for settlement. Seizing the opportunity, the *Salt Lake Tribune* attacked Smart and the Church for these "illegal actions aimed at grasping 'absolute control of the Uintah Basin and the Indian reservation'" (165). Once legally opened for settlement, Smart spent a good portion of the remainder of his life "organizing, encouraging, and assisting Mormon congregations and communities scatter throughout his wide spread stake," all of which took a toll on his family life and their financial security (217). Thanks to the meticulous record keeping of his grandfather, Smart details the history of this overlooked era of Mormon colonization. Today, unlike many other communities where founders are remembered and honored, Smart's efforts in the Uintah Basin are largely forgotten.

Despite the strengths of the work, two items should be mentioned. First, Smart's effort to share an objective history of a close relative is a praiseworthy accomplishment. However, in so praising, the author seems to swing the pendulum so far that he tends to focus on Smart's trials and personal shortcomings, primarily in the first four chapters of the book. For example, writing of the struggles during Smart's first mission, the author wrote, "Smart's unwillingness to follow counsel . . . reflects the difficulties of the mission, his lack of faith in it, and his own frequently mentioned episodes of depression aggravated by his burden of guilt" (70). While the author may have done this to highlight the significant change that occurred in Smart's life, it is frequently heavy handed and overemphasized.

The second drawback to the work is the exclusion of maps. Residents of the Uintah Basin would be familiar with the places, but most readers will likely be unacquainted with the towns and locations referred to in the book. Readers would greatly benefit by the inclusion of a few maps to help them understand the geography of the area Smart worked to settle.

Mormonism's Last Colonizer is an excellent contribution to the field of Mormon studies. The book provides great insight into the workings of a man who frequently on his own initiative defied Church leaders, yet at the same time won their commendation, particularly in leading the last colonization effort of the LDS Church in Utah. The book is an example of a successful family history that also serves as a fine example of scholarship detailing episodes of Mormon history that have been largely overlooked.

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SCOTT C. ESPLIN and KENNETH L. ALFORD, eds. *Salt Lake City: The Place Which God Prepared*. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company in cooperation with the Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 2011, xiii + 362 pp., illustrations, index, \$23.99 hardback.)

Reviewed by W. Randall Dixon

In 2010, the Department of Church History and Doctrine at Brigham Young University set its sights on Salt Lake City as part of its biennial *Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History* series. Faculty members focused their research on the city and its role as headquarters of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This book is the result of those efforts.

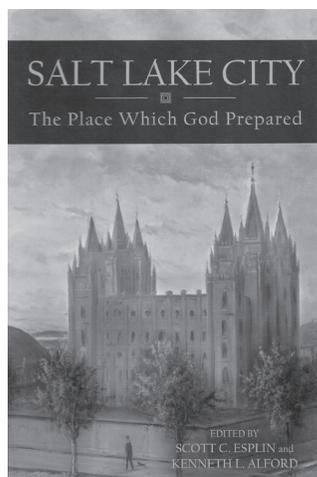
The volume is not a conventional history but consists of seventeen chapters or essays. Rather than taking a strategic approach to telling the city's history, the book is made up of articles addressing random topics, some of which are only loosely related to Salt Lake City.

The first selection includes the remarks of Elder Marlin K. Jensen, former Church Historian of the LDS Church, at the dedication of the new Church History Library in 2009, followed by an essay by Craig James Ostler that ties the role of the Church headquarters in Salt Lake City to revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants.

The next several selections are devoted to essays treating the history of some major landmarks and buildings in the city. Some of these—Ensign Peak, the Salt Lake Temple, the Salt Lake Tabernacle, and the Salt Lake Theater—have been written about extensively elsewhere. While the authors write a good overview on these topics, there is little new path-breaking information for many readers.

Fortunately, other chapters cover topics that are less familiar. David F. Boone analyzes death and the pioneer burial grounds—both public and private—in the city. He also includes burial information on all the presidents of the Church. Kenneth L. Alford writes about Camp Douglas (now known as Fort Douglas) established on the city's east bench during the Civil War and the conflicts between the local populace and the soldiers. Fred E. Woods describes the reception of immigrants on their arrival to the city and explains how they had been accommodated before reaching their final destination. Matthew O. Richardson gives the history of the Church Administration Building, completed in 1917, near the end of President Joseph F. Smith's administration. He provides important details regarding its construction and its use over the succeeding years.

A group of essays follow on the history of a number of important Salt Lake City-based Church programs and institutions. Michael A. Goodman gives an overview of the Correlation Program. John P. Livingstone treats LDS Family Services. The history of the radio and television program *Music and the Spoken Word*, is given by Lloyd D. Newell, its longtime narrator. Kip Sperry examines the Church's genealogical efforts, focusing on the roots of the Family History Library and its development over the years. A concluding



piece authored by Craig James Ostler shows how the plan of Salt Lake City was based on Joseph Smith's 1833 "plat of Zion."

While the selections are all well documented with endnotes and are accompanied by useful illustrations, the volume is uneven in its breadth and depth. Should the Religious Studies Center choose to publish additional books or publications about Salt Lake City in the future, there are still many additional stories to be told about the city's Church related buildings, institutions, and people.

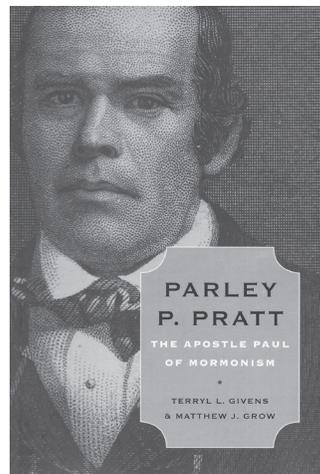
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TERRYL L. GIVENS and MATTHEW J. GROW. *Parley P. Pratt: The Apostle Paul of Mormonism*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011, ix + 499 pp., endnotes, photographs, maps, appendices, index, \$34.95 hardback.)

Reviewed by Alexander L. Baugh

Award-winning authors Terryl L. Givens, the James A. Bostwick Chair of English at the University of Richmond; and Matthew J. Grow, former associate professor of history at University of Southern Indiana and current director of the Publications Division for the LDS Church Historical Department in Salt Lake City, have produced a candid and engaging biographical narrative of Parley P. Pratt one of early Mormonism's most important and influential figures.

Born April 12, 1807, in Burlington, New York, of Puritan stock to Jared Pratt and Charity Dickinson, Parley Parker Pratt became an ardent disciple of Joseph Smith and one of Mormonism's most conspicuous actors. On September 1, 1830, Pratt was baptized into the Church of Christ (later The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints). He remained a lifelong adherent of Mormonism, devoting the rest of his life to what he believed was the fullness of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. Pratt's missionary zeal led to his calling in February 1835 to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. In that capacity, he labored for the next twenty-two years, serving no fewer than eleven



proselytizing missions for the Church—mainly in the eastern United States, but also Great Britain, California, and Chile.

As an Apostle, Pratt ably expounded and defended Mormonism in the press—as editor of two Mormon newspapers (the *Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star*, published in Great Britain; and the *Mormon*, published in New York City) and as a pamphleteer, book author, essayist, hymnist, and poet. His most significant publishing endeavors (in terms of doctrinal expositions) include *Voice of Warning* (New York: W. Sanford, 1837), which appeared in twelve editions during his lifetime (including French, German, and Danish) and ranks “second only to the Book of Mormon as an instrument of conversion” (119); and *Key to the Science of Theology* (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855). The authors contend that these two books were “the most influential noncanonical volumes in nineteenth-century Mormonism” (331). In addition to his doctrinal treatises, Pratt completed a full-length autobiographical manuscript, though it did not appear in print until seventeen years after his death (*Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, New York: Russell Brothers, 1874). The book has been through numerous printings and continues to be widely read, particularly in LDS circles. In short, Pratt’s productivity as a writer and author led his biographers to conclude that he was “the most prolific Mormon writer of his age” (114) and “the first theologian of Mormonism” (169). Arguably, however, current Mormon historians and scholars could take issue with these assessments in light of the doctrinal and theological contributions and writings of other early Mormon contemporaries of Pratt, individuals such as Sidney Rigdon, William W. Phelps, and Oliver Cowdery.

As the subtitle of the book implies, the authors identify three similarities or parallels between Pratt and the ancient Christian apostle Paul. Like Paul who sought to preach the Christian religion to both the Jews and the Gentiles throughout the pagan Roman empire, Pratt played a major role in expanding Mormonism throughout the United States, parts of Canada, Great Britain, and Latin America (although his attempt in this last region was unsuccessful). Additionally, Pratt “traveled thousands of miles, braved imprisonment and hardship for the gospel’s sake, and gladly suffered the contempt of his contemporaries for his part in ‘turning the world upside down’ and overthrowing the idols of what he saw as a benighted religious culture” (393).” Pratt’s “extensive missionary travels,” the authors contend, “help put [Mormonism] on the path from small sect to worldwide religion” (7).

Second, the authors note that just as Paul’s writings “popularized Jesus’s teachings” (5), Pratt’s theological treatises on Mormon teachings distinguish him “as the principal expounder and shaper of the doctrines Joseph Smith proclaimed” (395), adding that he “did more than any other man to turn

Joseph Smith's prophetic declarations into a full formed new religious system" (393). Some of Smith's teachings that Pratt expounded upon in his writings include the necessary exercise of faith, repentance, baptism, and receiving the Holy Ghost; the need for ordinances to be performed by proper authority; the manifestation of spiritual gifts (particularly healing) by true believers; the validity of the Bible and the Book of Mormon; the rejection of original sin (Mormons believe that because of the atonement of Christ, humankind is not subject to punishment for Adam's transgression and that infants do not need baptism); the literal gathering of the house of Israel; and the inauguration of the Millennium by Christ's Second Coming. Pratt, however, propounded more unorthodox dogma, including the concept of preembodied spirits, the rejection of ex nihilo creation, the eternal nature of matter, God being subject to law, God as an anthropomorphic being (and later God's actual physicality), eternal marriage, the rationale for plural marriage, and eventual human deification. While the authors acknowledge that Pratt clearly learned many unconventional concepts from Joseph Smith, "it is possible that Pratt propounded his highly unorthodox notions to Smith, who later embraced them and confirmed them" (172).

Finally, Paul gloried in religious persecution and tribulation (Rom. 5:3), and "distresses for Christ's sake" (2 Cor. 12:10). Likewise, Pratt viewed his public maltreatment (which included an eight-month imprisonment in Missouri's jails) to be like that of the ancient apostle. Furthermore, while Christian tradition holds that Paul suffered martyrdom for the Christian faith, as Pratt lay dying from McLean's violent assault, an eyewitness reported him as saying: "I die . . . a firm believer in the Gospel of Jesus Christ as revealed through the Prophet Joseph Smith. . . . I know that the Gospel is true and that Joseph Smith was a prophet of the Living God." His last words were, "I am dying a martyr to the faith" (383). The entire Latter-day Saint community considered him a martyr as well.

Another major contribution of the book is Givens and Grow's chapter on Pratt's relationship with his polygamous wives and the social and family dynamics (i.e., living arrangements, financial matters, division of labor, interpersonal relationships among the wives and children, property, etc.) associated with this radical order of marriage (chapter 12). Pratt fully embraced the concept of polygamy. All told, he had twelve wives and fathered thirty children, twenty-three of whom lived to maturity. The authors' examination illustrates to some degree the difficulties associated with those who tried to live the principle. Understandably, some plural marriages failed, including two of Parley's. Soon after the death of his first wife, Thankful Halsey, in 1837, Pratt married Mary Ann Frost Stearns, a widow and mother of one daughter. The couple enjoyed genuine marital love and devotion

until shortly after Parley began taking additional wives (1843), when the relationship became strained. Mary, who believed and accepted the principle of plural marriage, eventually separated but remained married to Parley until 1853, when the divorce became final. Mary never remarried but remained a committed Latter-day Saint single the rest of her life. Martha Monks, another polygamous wife, became disillusioned with polygamy and Mormonism and left Parley in 1849, relocating in California. Yet, in spite of his two failed marriages and all the difficulties associated with the practice, Parley did his best to “treat his plural wives on an equal basis” (327). The authors conclude that “his household was generally . . . happy and harmonious,” and as evidence that polygamy was successful—at least in the case of the Pratt family—“most of his adult children, both sons and daughters, entered into polygamous families as well” (330).

Givens and Grow should be commended for their scholarship and objectivity in providing historians and religion scholars a remarkable narrative that explores, in breadth and depth through the life of Parley Parker Pratt, the historical and religious underpinnings of early Mormonism.

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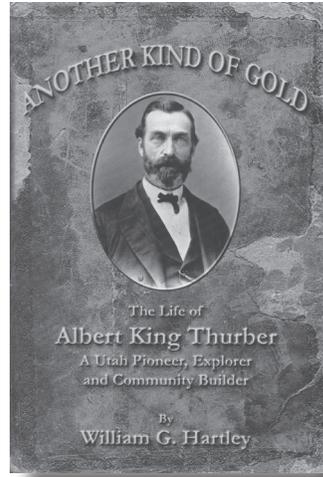
WILLIAM G. HARTLEY. *Another Kind of Gold: The Life of Albert King Thurber, A Utah Pioneer, Explorer and Community Builder*. (Troy, ID: C.L. Dalton Enterprises, 2011, xiv + 592 pp., maps, illustrations, index, DVD included, \$24.95 hardback.)

Reviewed by Mark Edwin Miller

In his work on Albert King Thurber, a noted but often overlooked Utah pioneer, William G. Hartley, retired professor of history at BYU and past president of the Mormon History Association and Mormon Trails Association, has created a lovingly told and well researched historical biography. Hartley brings to the biography a lifetime of expertise on Mormon and Western history, weaving Thurber’s story into the larger narrative of Utah history and the pageant of the American West.

Hartley organizes the book in an easy-to-follow chronology. It begins with Thurber’s early life in Rhode Island (b. 1826), illuminating his Puritan roots, his experience in farming and comb-making, and his early interests in bookkeeping, management, and religion. This last curiosity would ultimately determine his destiny with the Latter-day Saints. While the first

part of the text will be of interest mainly to family members, most readers will enjoy the section in which Hartley traces Thurber's experiences going west with the California gold rush, his stop in Salt Lake City, and his conversion to Mormonism. Dropping off from his Forty-Niner party to stay in the Great Basin, Thurber was soon called to be a "gold mining missionary" for the Church. Using Thurber's diary and other sources, Hartley provides fascinating details of Thurber's and other Latter-day Saints' experiences in the "diggings" of the Sierra foothills during the gold rush. Throughout, readers are treated to absorbing details about mid-nineteenth century travel as Thurber treks the over-land trails, crosses the Great Plains on the transcontinental railroad, takes stages and a steamship in the Midwest, and (in conjunction with missions to England) twice crosses the Atlantic by steamship. Initial chapters provide important insights into everyday life in early Salt Lake City and the experiences of a young, single male convert in the "City of the Saints."



Thurber's story reflects the idea that bonds of friendship and kinship often determine life's outcomes. Through a friend from the gold fields, he met and married Thirza Berry in 1851, when she was fourteen and he twenty-four. During the urgent days of the Mormon Reformation, Thurber selected Caroline Hicks, the thirteen-year old daughter of a close friend as a plural wife, only to have her run away with her boyfriend before the union. In 1867, he married Agnes Brockbank (b. 1851 in England) as his second wife when she was sixteen and he forty-one. With Thirza and Agnes, he fathered eleven children who lived to maturity. (A detailed appendix traces the lives of the children.) And although he wrote extensively, he was not a man prone to religious expression or to revealing his deep feelings. Because of the limitation of existing sources, readers may be disappointed that the views and feelings of both Thirza and Agnes are largely absent from the book.

In the territorial militia (he rose to brigadier-general), Thurber participated in the Walker, Utah, and Black Hawk Wars. As a "peace maker" with the native peoples of Utah, he learned the Numic languages, negotiated peace treaties with leaders such as Chief Tabby, worked on Indian farms, and was known as a trusted friend of local Indian peoples.

As a community builder and a tireless public servant, Thurber served as mayor of Spanish Fork, county selectman, and trusted legislator in the

territorial assembly, representing Sanpete and Sevier Counties. He also explored and mapped much of the canyons, deserts, and plateaus of central and southeastern Utah, which paved the way for Mormon settlement in the region. The town of Bicknell, Utah, was once named Thurber in his honor.

Thurber served an exemplary life as a prominent local LDS Church leader, and his story is inextricably entwined with the history of the Church in early Utah. He spent about a third of his life in Spanish Fork, Utah, where through his Church callings he became friends with Brigham Young and Daniel H. Wells of the First Presidency; Apostles Orson Pratt, Erastus Snow, Amasa Lyman, George A. Smith, Brigham Young Jr., and Wilford Woodruff, with whom he enjoyed fishing outings. He also became close friends with local Church stalwarts Abraham O. Smoot, George Washington Bean, Canute Peterson, and the Utah poet Hannah Cornaby. He served as an LDS bishop in Spanish Fork, and later Sevier County (1859–1874), distributing thousands of dollars in tithing moneys. He also spent the last fourteen years of his life as a counselor in the stake presidency, acting stake president, and finally president of the Sevier Stake. In his ecclesiastical positions he was instrumental in establishing cooperative schools, the United Order, and the Relief Society organization. He also contributed to the construction of the Manti and St. George Temples. But his faith and his religious callings also brought heartache. His experiences with the United Order stretched his finances and interpersonal relationship to the breaking point, and his plural unions forced him to go on the underground—a trauma that his family believed broke his health and contributed to his rather early death at age sixty-one. Through his life, readers will see how important the role of bishop and stake president was to frontier settlements, shouldering the responsibility and well-being of the entire community in civil and spiritual affairs.

Following his death in 1888, the *Deseret News* published a piece that fittingly summarized his life: “Brother Thurber’s devotion to public service was pre-eminent, allowing himself so little time to devote to his own, that he never gathered around him more of life’s comforts than was absolutely necessary to enable him to subsist. He had a sympathetic heart, as evidence of which we have seen his large, kindly eyes moisten under the influence of a tale of distress” (428).

The author is to be commended for the effective way in which he weaves Thurber’s life story into the larger narrative of Utah history and the monumental events of the history of the American West. This fascinating and detailed biography should be of interest to Latter-day Saint scholars and Utah history students, since it provides an important window into early Utah history and the struggles and achievements of early pioneers.

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