

## HARD QUESTIONS AND KEEPING THE FAITH

by Michael R. Ash

As Bill prepared an Elder's Quorum lesson, he vaguely recalled a quote from a past general conference, which, he thought, would enhance his lesson. Not remembering the exact quote, nor even who said it and when, Bill turned to the Internet and entered a search with a couple of key words and the word "Mormon." Bill perused the various "hits" returned by the search engine and found that some of the Web pages were hostile to the Church. Initially he simply ignored these pages and continued searching through faithful Web sites. At times, however, he found it difficult—upon an initial glance—to distinguish some hostile Web sites versus faithful Web sites. Some hostile sites appeared harmless until he read a little further. One site in particular caught his attention and he began to read more and more of the claims made by the Web site's author. At first Bill dismissed the claims—he had heard similar anti-Mormon arguments while on his mission and they hadn't affected him then. As he continued reading, however, he came upon more difficult questions; questions for which he had no answers. Some of the charges made against the Church, Joseph Smith, and the Book of Mormon were disturbing.

"These charges can't be true," Bill told himself, yet the article seemed to be well researched and was even footnoted. Bill reminded himself that he knew—by a spiritual witness from God—that the Church was true. Nevertheless, he felt an uneasiness in his stomach. Were there answers to these accusations? Bill fully understood that the greatest religious truths (such as the existence of God) must be accepted on faith, yet he wondered how the Book of Mormon could be true if what the critics were claiming was correct. Bill clung tightly to his spiritual witness but it had been shaken. He wished there was some intellectual answers to these criticisms.

While the foregoing story is fictional, it is nonetheless similar to the experience of at least a few members of the Church. Since Joseph Smith's First Vision, there have been some who have made it their goal to revile his name his work, and his legacy. And since before the Book of Mormon came from the printing press, there have been critics who have denounced it as fictional, delusional, or blasphemous. Why do some people assail the Church? Should we respond to critics? How should we deal with hard questions and accusations? Where can we find answers?

### WHY DO SOME PEOPLE ASSAIL THE CHURCH?

During Moroni's initial visit with Joseph, the angel told the seventeen year-old would-be-prophet that his "name should be had for good and evil among all nations, kindreds, and tongues, or that it should be both good and evil spoken of among all people."<sup>1</sup> This prophecy has certainly come to pass. Thomas Ford, who was governor of Illinois from 1842 to 1846 and was pivotal in the events leading to Joseph's martyrdom, claimed:

Joe Smith [was] the most successful imposter in modern times; a man who, though ignorant and coarse, ...was fitted for temporary success, but... never could succeed in establishing a system of policy which looked to permanent success in the future.<sup>2</sup>



Yet nearly two centuries later, the Church is over eleven million strong with temples dotting the globe. As non-LDS sociologist Rodney Stark noted in 1984, the Church shows all the signs of "the rise of a new world religion," and he predicted that "the Mormons will soon achieve a worldwide following comparable to that of Islam,

Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism and the other dominant world faiths.”<sup>3</sup> And in accordance with Moroni’s prophecy, we find that as the number of Saints increase, there is a growth in the number of detractors or critics.

Who are those who attack our faith? The term “anti-Mormon” was originally self-applied by members of a political party who were opposed to early Mormon bloc voting.<sup>4</sup> Today there are a variety of critics—from disbelievers, to detractors, to hard-core anti-Mormons. Some are former members and some have never been members. Some are so-called, or self-styled “intellectuals” who do not believe in God and some are ministers of other faiths.

Are all critics or disbelievers modern-day *anti-Mormons*? Certainly not. Disagreeing with LDS doctrine does not make someone an anti-Mormon, but there are certain critics who would like to see the demise of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. How can we differentiate between disagreeing nonbelievers and anti-Mormons? In some ways it’s difficult to set parameters to categorize such critics. Yet as Justice Potter Stewart once said about attempts to define pornography: “I know it when I see it.”<sup>5</sup> Anti-Mormons often disregard the facts, current research, and the sacred beliefs of Latter-day Saints. They frequently engage in techniques that are aimed at destroying the faith of tender-testimonied Latter-day Saints or investigators, and are not usually interested in dialogue or reaching the truth. Many critics often “poison the well” by getting non-LDS or perspective converts to shut their minds, hearts, and doors to anything presented by Mormons or missionaries. For such critics, winning the argument by proving Mormonism fraudulent is more important than actually understanding what Mormons really believe.<sup>6</sup>

Why do these detractors want to see the Church fall? There are a variety of reasons. Some are bitter because they’ve been offended by members of the Church or because they have seen the human-side of LDS leaders. Others may attack the Church out of pride—pride in their supposed intelligence; they no longer need the “crutch” of religion. Others may recognize that they know more about early LDS history than is generally taught in Sunday School, Seminary, or Institute and thus come to believe that they also know more about spiritual things than the prophets. Such people often assume that they have the inside “scoop” to the real LDS faith and that only the naïve’ or uninformed could believe the stories told in Church. When pride replaces humility, criticism of others—especially leaders—is often a consort. President Kimball once noted

Apostasy usually begins with question and doubt and criticism. It is a retrograding and devolutionary process. The seeds of doubt are planted by unscrupulous or misguided people, and seldom directed against the doctrine at first, but more often against the leaders.<sup>7</sup>

Others resort to attacking the Church to hide their own sins. “Those who leave the Church, clothed in deeds of darkness,” note McConkie and Millet, are all too often “... found attempting to expose the Church or demean its doctrines—activities necessitated by their guilt, for they realize that if the Church is true they are servants of darkness and must needs repent.”<sup>8</sup>

Some may be led by the spirit of the adversary, and some are sincere people who believe they are doing mankind (or God) a service by exposing the supposed falsity of Mormonism. Sincere critics may feel that Latter-day Saints are deluded and misguided and need to be rescued from a false Christianity.

There are also some members who leave the Church simply because they no longer believe. Such people generally do not have a spiritual testimony and they are not able to reconcile what they see as difficult issues. Some of these former-members simply walk away from the Church and embark on their own search for happiness. Others depart from the Church but are drawn back to it in vengeance—angrily claiming that they had been duped or misled. They may want to draw others away from the Church to join them in their animosity toward Mormonism. As Elder Neal Maxwell expressed:

Church members will live in this wheat-and-tares situation until the Millennium. Some real tares even masquerade as wheat, including the few eager individuals who lecture the rest of us about Church doctrines in which they no longer believe. They criticize the use of Church resources to which they no longer contribute. They condescendingly seek to counsel the Brethren whom they no longer sustain. Confrontive, except of themselves, of course, they leave the Church, but they cannot leave the Church alone.<sup>9</sup>

Who is at risk of losing their testimony because of the words and writings of detractors?

For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; inso-

much that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.<sup>10</sup>

We don't generally think that this verse could apply to us. Who would accept a "false Christ" or "false prophet"? And what "great signs and wonders" could such a false prophet show that would lead a Latter-day Saint out of the Church?

What is a "false Christ"? A "false Christ" is someone or something that stands in the place of the *real* Christ. So a false Christ could be money, power, pride, a philosophy, or a host of other things. A false prophet, therefore, would be someone who would entice us to something other than Christ or into rejecting the true Christ. What types of "signs and wonders" might such a prophet have up his sleeve? Perhaps this might entail clever sounding arguments, or scientific or empirical data that might be incorrectly used in a way that suggests that Christ is not real, or that the Restored Gospel is false. We know that personal and group apostasies have happened in the past—among which we might include the loss of one third of the hosts of pre-mortal heaven, the apostasy of some of Joseph Smith's closest friends, and the loss today of some Church members who have been "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness."<sup>11</sup>

### SHOULD WE RESPOND TO CRITICS?

The answer would have to be "no" and a *qualified* "yes." "Confound your enemies," the Lord said, "call upon them to meet you both in public and in private; and inasmuch as ye are faithful their shame shall be made manifest. Wherefore, let them bring forth their strong reasons against the Lord."<sup>12</sup> While a few knowledgeable Latter-day Saints may be able to engage critics directly, there is generally little to be gained by debating detractors. However, responding to sincere seekers of truth, such as members or investigators who have been shaken by critical claims, can salvage testimonies by demonstrating the strength of the Gospel.

Harold B. Lee once said:

The term "elder," which is applied to all holders of the Melchizedek Priesthood, means a defender of the faith. That is our prime responsibility and calling. Every holder of the Melchizedek Priesthood is to be a defender of the faith.<sup>13</sup>

Likewise, Joseph Fielding Smith once said: "Every member of the Church ought to know that... [the Book of Mor-

mon] is true, and we ought to be prepared with an answer to all those critics who condemn it."<sup>14</sup> Through the years the Church has either published rebuttals to anti-Mormon charges, or has urged certain members to respond to detractors. The *Messenger and Advocate*, for instance, which was somewhat like the *Church News* for the Ohio period of the Church, often printed responses to anti-Mormon attacks.<sup>15</sup> George Q. Cannon (counselor to four prophets) frequently sent letters to national newspapers defending against anti-Mormon editorials.<sup>16</sup> George A. Smith (first counselor to Brigham Young) said that since he was a young lad he had been an "advocate of the Book of Mormon, and have never suffered it to be slandered nor spoken against without saying something in its favour."<sup>17</sup> At other times, Church leaders have encouraged knowledgeable Latter-day Saints to refute attacks on the Church.<sup>18</sup> The Church's official Web site ( has also recently posted articles dealing with claims by some detractors that DNA research refutes the historicity of the Book of Mormon.<sup>19</sup>

Why then the *qualified* "yes" as to the question of whether we should respond to detractors? There are at least four qualifiers to consider.

### 1. The Spirit, not Argument, Converts

It is important to understand that spiritual things must be spiritually discerned. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets," said the Lord, "neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."<sup>20</sup> During Christ's mortal ministry Peter was taught directly from the Lord, yet his testimony of the Savior came not from the mortal Messiah but rather from Heavenly Father. "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."<sup>21</sup> A testimony of Christ and His Gospel cannot be transmitted from one person to another; it must come by direct and individual revelation. "The time will come," said Heber C. Kimball, "when no man nor woman will be able to endure on borrowed light. Each will have to be guided by the light within himself. If you do not have it, how can you stand?"<sup>22</sup>

"No man can say that Jesus is the Lord," wrote Paul, "but by the Holy Ghost."<sup>23</sup> Likewise, John wrote: "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."<sup>24</sup> Neither the existence of God, nor the reality of the Resurrection, nor the divinity of Christ, nor the authenticity of the Bible or the Book of Mormon as the word of God, can be determined strictly by secular means. Archaeology, for instance, has not yet confirmed the existence of any Old Testament prophets. And while it is conceivable that archaeology

might some day provide evidence a prophet actually lived, it could never prove or disprove that prophet's claim of visions or revelation.<sup>25</sup>

This same rule applies to the Book of Mormon and Joseph Smith. As B.H. Roberts wrote: "The Power of the Holy Ghost... must ever be the chief source of evidence for the truth of the Book of Mormon. All other evidence is secondary.... No arrangement of evidence, however skillfully ordered; no argument, however adroitly made, can ever take its place."<sup>26</sup>

## 2. Priorities

"Our main task," noted President Benson, "is to declare the gospel and do it effectively. We are not obligated to answer every objection. Every man eventually is backed up to the wall of faith, and there he must make his stand."<sup>27</sup> Some questions can be answered, other answers must wait. "It is impossible," writes Glenn Pearson, "to learn all the pat answers one would need [to respond to critics]. Even if he learned all the hundreds he would need today, there will be hundreds more needed tomorrow."<sup>28</sup> To answer all anti-Mormon charges "would engross too much of our attention," explained Charles Penrose, "to the exclusion of subjects that are more profitable."<sup>29</sup> George A. Smith once commented:

We have been asked a good many times, "Why do you not publish the truth in regard to these lies which are circulated about you?" We might do this if we owned all the papers published in Christendom. Who will publish a letter from me or my brethren? Who will publish the truth from us? If it gets into one paper, it is slipped under the counter or somewhere else; but it never gets into a second. They will send forth lies concerning us very readily. The old adage is that a lie will creep through the keyhole and go a thousand miles while truth is getting out of doors; and our experience has proved this. We have not the influence and power necessary to refute the falsehoods circulated about us. We depend on God, who sits in the heavens.<sup>30</sup>

## 3. Is a Response Needed?

Some things don't need to be defended. Some critics, Elder B.H. Roberts observed, support their allegations quoting from "the commentaries of men, which often express only individual opinion."<sup>31</sup>

Only those books which are held by the Church to be Scripture—the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price—are the Elders bound to defend. These books have been accepted by the Church as containing the word of God, and these books the Elders at home and abroad should maintain as absolutely true. As for the rest, they may be very useful and instructive, but are not of the same dignity as the four books named, and are only acceptable as they agree with our books of Scripture.<sup>32</sup>

LDS critics, for example, frequently reference the *Journal of Discourses*; a compilation of (mostly) nineteenth-century talks transcribed for Saints living outside of Utah. Such critics fail to appreciate, however, the context in which these sermons were given and recorded (hand written), as well as the fact that the *Journal of Discourses* is not part of the LDS canon. In earlier days of the Restored Church, nearly all sermons were given extemporaneously. It was virtually unthinkable in nineteenth century Mormonism to give a memorized or pre-written sermon.<sup>33</sup> The early Saints felt that they should preach strictly by the Spirit. This led to some interesting sermons, and as Orson Pratt noted, sometimes he—and probably other speakers—gave sermons when their "mind[s] seemed to be entirely closed up...." Recalling such an incident, Pratt remarked, "What few words I could stammer forth before a congregation, were altogether unsatisfactory to my own mind, and I presume to those who heard me."<sup>34</sup> Little wonder that some things in the *Journal of Discourses* seem out-of-place in what we currently know of Gospel principles.

## 4. Avoid Contention

And thou shalt declare glad tidings, yea, publish it upon the mountains, and upon every high place, and among every people that thou shalt be permitted to see. And thou shalt do it with all humility, trusting in me, reviling not against revilers.<sup>35</sup>

For verily, verily I say unto you, he that hath the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil, who is the father of contention, and he stirreth up the hearts of men to contend with anger, one with another. Behold, this is not my doctrine, to stir up the hearts of men with anger, one against another; but this is my doctrine, that such things should be done away.<sup>36</sup>

As Bruce R. McConkie explained,

Our divine commission is to declare glad tidings to the world, not to quarrel with others about the meaning of texts. There are, of course, answers to all of the false claims of those who array themselves against us... but conversion is not found in the dens of debate. It comes rather to those who read the Book of Mormon in the way Moroni counseled. Most members of the Church would be better off if they simply ignored the specious claims of the professional anti-Mormons.<sup>37</sup>

“We encourage all our members,” wrote Elder Marvin J. Ashton, “to refuse to become anti- anti-Mormon.”<sup>38</sup> Elder Ashton explains:

Whether accusations, innuendos, aspersions, or falsehoods are whispered or blatantly shouted, the gospel of Jesus Christ reminds us that we are not to retaliate nor contend.<sup>39</sup>

Never will peace and hatred be able to abide in the same soul. Permanent peace will elude those individuals or groups whose objective is to condemn, discredit, rail at, or tear down those whose beliefs are different from their own. These people live by hatred and would destroy others insofar as it is in their power to do so. True Christians have no time for contention. Lasting peace cannot be built while we are reviling or hating others. Those who preach hate, ridicule, and untruths cannot be classified as peacemakers. Until they repent they will reap the harvest to which those engaged in the business of hatred are entitled. Feelings of enmity and malice can never be compatible with feelings of peace.<sup>40</sup>

Where there is contention, the Spirit cannot abide. Contentious argument will not cause anyone to accept the Gospel or to reject anti-Mormon falsehoods.

How then should responses be made to anti-Mormon claims?

### DEALING WITH HARD QUESTIONS

And as all have not faith, seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by *study* and also by *faith*.<sup>41</sup>

“We gain knowledge from two sources,” wrote Elder James Faust. “One is the divine and the other is secular.

Rex E. Lee has referred to them as ‘the rational process and the extra rational process.’”<sup>42</sup> Rational, non-contentious, argument can open minds (and thereby hearts) to the testimony of the Spirit. Citing C.S. Lewis (a famous non-LDS defender of Christianity), Wm. Clayton Kimball noted,

If we are not prepared to defend our position, if “intellectuals” do not come to the defense of the faith, this betrays the uneducated and lays them open to the attacks of evil men. “Good philosophy must exist, if for no other reason, because bad philosophy needs to be answered.” The learned or intellectual life, thus, for some becomes a duty. It becomes our offering to God, and it is our way of serving our brethren [*sic*].<sup>43</sup>

Also writing about C. S. Lewis, Austin Farrer once declared,

Though argument does not create conviction, lack of it destroys belief. What seems to be proved may not be embraced; but what no one shows the ability to defend is quickly abandoned. Rational argument does not create belief, but it maintains a climate in which belief may flourish.<sup>44</sup>

“Evidence,” writes LDS scholar John Welch, “is ...useful in articulating knowledge and defending against error and misrepresentation. Scholars can serve important roles ‘as articulators’ of evidence, and when combined with ‘submissiveness and consecration,’ solid academic research can be useful ‘to protect and to build up the Kingdom.’”<sup>45</sup> Likewise, B.H. Roberts noted: “To be known, the truth must be stated, and the clearer and more complete the statement is, the better opportunity will the Holy Spirit have for testifying to the souls of men that the work is true.”<sup>46</sup> Finally, as Elder Neal Maxwell has declared: “‘The Church’” will not “‘be outdone by hostile or pseudo-scholars’”<sup>47</sup> and the critics should not be permitted to make “‘uncontested slam dunks.’”<sup>48</sup> “Let us be articulate, for while our defense of the kingdom may not stir all hearers, the absence of thoughtful response may cause fledglings among the faithful to falter. What we assert may not be accepted, but unasserted convictions soon become deserted convictions.”<sup>49</sup>

“Sometimes it is wise to ignore the attacks of the wicked,” wrote LDS scholars Hyrum M. Smith and Janne M. Sjodahl, “at other times it is necessary to meet them, fearless-

ly and with ability.”<sup>50</sup> “It is necessary,” observed Charles Penrose (counselor to two prophets), “that the Saints should know what is said against them, and that some one should show the other side. When the Church is belied there ought to be a refutation of the misstatements.”<sup>51</sup> In an October 1910 Conference address, Elder Anthony W. Ivins, remarked:

It is not often that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints pays attention to misrepresentations, but, when their doctrines are ridiculed, when they are misrepresented, when they are spoken of with contempt, and when these things are published and sent broadcast to the world, by which men and women follow after the falsehoods which are told, it becomes necessary, sometimes, to correct them, and expose the false basis upon which men reached conclusions in regard to the faith of the Latter-day Saints.<sup>52</sup>

Who are the Latter-day Saints who refute the critics? “The pat answers” writes Brother Pearson, “eventually come from our scholars; but they are always behind in their work.”<sup>53</sup>

*Apologetics*: the term means, “defending one’s position or faith” and comes from the Greek *apologetikos* (from whence we also derive the word “apology”). Those who engage in apologetics are not apologizing for what they believe, but rather *defending* what they believe. Many other Christian faiths have engaged in apologetics in defending Christian tenets, and some Latter-day Saints are similarly engaged in defending Mormonism against those who would assail our beliefs. Good apologists form rational arguments demonstrating that particular beliefs are *plausible* (“proof” of spiritual things will not come by secular means), and defensible. LDS apologists often take a similar approach to that of Elder B.H. Roberts when he encountered charges by critics: “I do not propose to dismiss the charges in any such fashion. I propose to grapple with them, and meet them....”<sup>54</sup>

Since few Latter-day Saints are familiar with apologetics let alone engaged in apologetics, where does the average member find answers to hard questions?

### **1. Let the Spirit teach truth**

Pray. Study the scriptures. Search for—and bring to memory—spiritual experiences. Live a life whereby the Holy Ghost may be a constant source of strength and inspiration.

With a strong spiritual witness to the divinity of Christ, the prophetic mission of Joseph Smith, and the power of the Book of Mormon, hard questions can often be set on a shelf until an answer is found. With a firm testimony of the Gospel, comes a firm foundation for belief.

Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.<sup>55</sup>

The learning of the world continues to grow—some of the *facts* of yesterday, become the *fallacies* of tomorrow. If we put our trust in the “arm of flesh” we will find that things change very frequently. If, for instance, a nineteenth century Saint would have left the Church over the obvious (obvious to critics, that is) use of the female name “Alma” to designate a male in the Book of Mormon, that same Saint may have lost eternal blessings only to find that twentieth century research confirms that “Alma” was indeed an authentic ancient Semitic male name.<sup>56</sup>

Sometimes secular evidence seems convincing for one side one day, and unconvincing the next day. With a spiritual witness, we can weather out the times when the tide seems to go against us. It’s also important to remember that some spiritual truths seem to fly in the face of current scientific understanding. Jesus’ ability to walk on water and rise from the dead is contrary to what the laws of science demand—they must be accepted on faith.

### **2. Avoid taking a fundamentalist approach to the scriptures and prophets**

Recognize that the purpose of the scriptures is to help people understand the Gospel and to open their hearts to the promptings of the Spirit. As LDS apologist Ross Baron once said, “The Church is not based on the Bible. The Church is based on what the Bible is based on: revelation through prophets.”<sup>57</sup> The scriptures are a means to an end; they are not the source of our salvation. They are not “histories” in the traditional sense of the word, but rather a record of God’s dealings with His people. They are not scientific journals, nor do they contain all the answers to all questions (if they did, there would be no need for continuing revelation). According to the prophet Mormon, the scriptures occasionally contain mistakes—in other words they are fallible. So likewise, prophets (past and present)—though inspired leaders, directed by God—are

also fallible men. President Lorenzo Snow, who had a firm testimony that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, once said:

“I saw the imperfections in [Joseph Smith] ...I thanked God that He would put upon a man who had those imperfections the power and authority He placed upon him... for I knew that I myself had weaknesses, and I thought there was a chance for me... I thanked God that I saw these imperfections.”<sup>58</sup>

Prophets and General Authorities, just like you and me, are also entitled to their own opinions. As noted in the Church-sanctioned *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*:

There are many subjects about which the scriptures are not clear and about which the Church has made no official pronouncements. In such matters, one can find differences of opinion among Church members and leaders. Until the truth of these matters is made known by revelation, there is room for different levels of understanding and interpretation of unsettled issues.<sup>59</sup>

### **3. Familiarize yourself with those who have answers to difficult question—LDS apologists**

A partial list of sources for such answers include:

- LDS.org. The official site for the Church is an unbelievable resource for information. You can research information from the scriptures, current and past Church magazines such as *Ensign*, *Liahona*, and more. You can also find conference addresses, Priesthood and Relief Society Manuals, and lesson material. In a section entitled, “Mistakes in the News” (under “News Media Resources”) you can access a limited selection of articles refuting some popular anti-Mormon issues.
- FARMS (The Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies). This foundation, which began independently in 1979 and was brought under the umbrella of BYU in 1997, is probably the most scholarly of all LDS-related organizations. LDS scholars with training in ancient languages and cultures, anthropology and archaeology, philosophy and history, contribute regularly to works defending Mormon beliefs and helping Latter-day Saints understand LDS

scriptures and LDS issues. The FARMS Web site, , offers a free section with many articles and multimedia presentations, as well as a subscriber section with current and past issues of the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* and *FARMS Review*, as well as a gold-mine of other valuable information.

- FAIR (The Foundation for Apologetic Information and Research). This grass-roots, international, non-profit organization began in 1997 and has quickly grown as the most prominent on-line LDS apologetics Web site. FAIR has produced conferences, articles, multi-media presentations, and books dealing specifically with the hard questions and accusations presented by LDS critics. Their Web site, [www.fairlds.org](http://www.fairlds.org), offers free on-line materials that deal with most every argument put forth by critics. They also host an e-list of faithful LDS apologists to whom hard questions can be sent for answers.
- Independent LDS apologetic-related Web sites, including (but not limited to) [www.Mormon-Fortress.com](http://www.Mormon-Fortress.com), [www.SHIELDS-Research.org](http://www.SHIELDS-Research.org), and Jeff Lindsay’s LDS FAQ ([www.jefflindsay.com/LDSFAQ/](http://www.jefflindsay.com/LDSFAQ/)).

“For it must needs be, that there is opposition in all things.”<sup>60</sup> Hard questions are part of the challenges of life and faith. If secular evidences pointed to a divinely restored Gospel, there would be no need for faith. It is important to recognize that there are satisfactory and intelligent answers to hard questions. We need not worry or despair when faced with hard questions for which we have no answers. Some answers take time; some answers are already available but need to be discovered. LDS scholars and apologists have answered and continue to answer the accusations of detractors. Such answers are available from a number of printed and electronic sources. Foremost, we must strengthen our relationship with our Heavenly Father so we can remain in tune with the Holy Spirit. The power of testimony will sustain us when answers temporarily elude us. The truths of the Gospel—the divinity of Jesus Christ, the commission of Joseph Smith, and the power of the Book of Mormon—while often supported (and regularly defended) by secular evidence, can fully be recognized only by the power of the Holy Spirit. “And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things.”<sup>61</sup>

## FURTHER READING

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Smith—History 1:33.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Ford, *History of Illinois* (New York: S.C. Griggs, 1854), 354-355.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted by George W. Cornell, *Church News, Deseret News* (April 18, 1987), 10.

<sup>4</sup> Dennis Rowley, "The Mormon Experience in the Wisconsin Pineries, 1841-1845," *BYU Studies*, 32:1-2 (Winter and Spring, 1992), 158.

<sup>5</sup> See <http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/scripts/getcase.pl?court=US&vol=378&invol=184> (thanks to Kevin Barney for alerting me to this quote).

<sup>6</sup> For examples of factors which generally indicate an anti-Mormon publication, see Davis Bitton, "Spotting an Anti-Mormon Book," at Meridian.com <http://www.meridianmagazine.com/historybits/030922spotting.html>, or FAIR, <http://www.fairlds.org/apol/antis/200301.html>

<sup>7</sup> Spencer W. Kimball, *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, edited by Edward L. Kimball (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982), 462.

<sup>8</sup> Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1987-1992), 1:122.

<sup>9</sup> Neal A. Maxwell, "Becometh As a Child," *Ensign* (May 1996), 68.

<sup>10</sup> Matthew 24:24.

<sup>11</sup> Ephesians 4:14.

<sup>12</sup> D&C 71:7-8.

<sup>13</sup> Harold B. Lee, *Conference Report, April 1970*, General Priesthood Meeting, 54. When President Lee said that "elder" means "defender" he was not speaking of the etymological definition of "elder" but rather as a defining characteristic of those who are elders.

<sup>14</sup> Joseph Fielding Smith, "The Book of Mormon, A Divine Record," *Improvement Era* (December 1961), 925.

<sup>15</sup> See Peter Crawley, "A Bibliography of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in New York, Ohio, and Missouri," *BYU Studies* 12:4 (Summer 1972), 494.

<sup>16</sup> Craig Foster, "The Unchanging Ways of Anti-Mormons" 2003 FAIR LDS Apologetics Conference address. Video copy in author's possession.

<sup>17</sup> George A. Smith, "Joseph Smith's Family, Etc.," *Journal of Discourses*, reported by G.D. Watt 2 August 1857, Vol. 5 (London: Latter-Day Saint's Book Depot, 1857), 103.

<sup>18</sup> Gilbert Scharffs' *The Truth About "The God Makers"* for example, was written at the request of Church leaders (see Gilbert Scharffs, *The Missionary's Little Book of Answers* [American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, 2002], 1). See also Richard Turley's response to John Krakauer's *Under The Banner of Heaven* at <http://www.lds.org/newsroom/showrelease/0,15503,3881-1-17190,00.html>

<sup>19</sup> See <http://lds.org/newsroom/mistakes/0,15331,3885-1,00.html>

<sup>20</sup> Luke 16:31.

<sup>21</sup> Matthew 16:17.

<sup>22</sup> Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball* (Salt Lake City: Kimball Family, 1888), 450.

<sup>23</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:3.

<sup>24</sup> Revelation 19:10.

<sup>25</sup> Hugh Nibley, "Archaeology and our Religion," (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1984), 6.

<sup>26</sup> B.H. Roberts, *New Witnesses for God*, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1909), 2:vi-viii, as quoted in John Welch, "Good and True," *Expressions of Faith: Testimonies of Latter-day Saint Scholars*, ed., Susan Easton Black (Salt Lake City, Utah: FARMS and Deseret Book, 1996), 233-234.

<sup>27</sup> Ezra Taft Benson, "The Book of Mormon Is the Word of God," *Ensign* (May 1975), 65.

<sup>28</sup> Glenn L. Pearson, *The Book of Mormon, Key to Conversion* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1963), 4.

<sup>29</sup> Charles W. Penrose, "Remarks," 6 October 1891, in *Collected Discourses*, comp. and ed. Brian H. Stuy (Sandy, Utah: BHS, 1988), 2:270-271. Several of the early pro-apologetic quotes used in this paper were



first referenced in Matthew Roper's, "Unanswered Mormon Scholars," a response to Jerald and Sandra Tanner, "Answering Mormon Scholars: A Response To Criticism Raised by Mormon Defenders," *FARMS Review of Books* 9:1 (1997), 87-145.

<sup>30</sup> George A. Smith, *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886), 13:178.

<sup>31</sup> B.H. Roberts, "Answer To Ministerial Association Review," *Improvement Era* (July 1907), 703.

<sup>32</sup> B.H. Roberts, "Some Objections To the Book of Mormon Answered," *Improvement Era* (March 1902), 347-348.

<sup>33</sup> Davis Bitton, "'Strange Ramblings': The Ideal and Practice of Sermons in Early Mormonism," *BYU Studies* 41:1 (2002), 8.

<sup>34</sup> Orson Pratt, "Spirit of Light and Truth, Etc.," *Journal of Discourses*, reported by David W. Evans 24 November 1872, Vol. 15 (London: Latter-day Saint's Book Depot, 1873), 229.

<sup>35</sup> D&C 19:29-30.

<sup>36</sup> 3 Nephi 11:29-30.

<sup>37</sup> Bruce R. McConkie, *Sermons and Writings of Bruce R. McConkie* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1998), 233.

<sup>38</sup> Marvin J. Ashton, *Be of Good Cheer* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1987), 10.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

<sup>41</sup> D&C 88:118; italics added.

<sup>42</sup> James E. Faust, *Reach Up for the Light* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1990), 24.

<sup>43</sup> Wm. Clayton Kimball, "The Christian Commitment: C.S. Lewis and the Defense of Doctrine," *BYU Studies* 12:2 (Winter 1972), 194, citing C.S. Lewis, "Learning in War-time," *The Weight of Glory* (New York: Macmillan, 1949), 43-54.

<sup>44</sup> Austin Farrer, "The Christian Apologist," in *Light on C.S. Lewis*, edited by Jocelyn Gibb (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1965), 26.

<sup>45</sup> John W. Welch, "The Power of Evidence in Nurturing the Faith," *Nurturing Faith through the Book of Mormon: The 24th Annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1995), 157.

<sup>46</sup> B.H. Roberts, *New Witnesses for God*, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1909), 2:vi-viii, as quoted in John Welch, "Good and True," *Expressions of Faith: Testimonies of Latter-day Saint Scholars*, edited by Susan Easton Black (Salt Lake City: FARMS and Deseret Book, 1996), 234.

<sup>47</sup> John Welch, "The Power of Evidence," 156-157, citing Neal A. Maxwell, "The Disciple-Scholar," *On Being a Disciple-Scholar*, edited by Henry B. Eyring (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1995), 5; and Neal A. Maxwell, *Deposition of a Disciple* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 49.

<sup>48</sup> Quoted by Gilbert W. Scharffs, "I Have a Question," *Ensign* (January 1995), 60.

<sup>49</sup> Neal Maxwell, "'All Hell Is Moved,'" *1977 Devotional Speeches of the Year* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1977), 179, as

quoted in *The Neal A. Maxwell Quote Book*, edited by Cory H. Maxwell (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1997), 343.

<sup>50</sup> Hyrum M. Smith and Janne M. Sjodahl, *Doctrine and Covenants Commentary* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978), 423.

<sup>51</sup> Penrose, "Remarks," *Collected Discourses*, 2:270-271.

<sup>52</sup> Anthony W. Ivins, *Conference Report, October 1910*, Second Day—Morning Session 41-42.

<sup>53</sup> Glenn L. Pearson, *The Book of Mormon, Key to Conversion* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1963), 4.

<sup>54</sup> B.H. Roberts, "Answer To Ministerial Association Review," *Improvement Era* (July 1907), 703.

<sup>55</sup> Matthew 7:24-25.

<sup>56</sup> Jeffrey R. Chadwick, "Sariah in the Elephantine Papyri," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 2:2 (Fall 1993), 199-200.

<sup>57</sup> Ross Baron, "Feeding the Multitudes: Being Fishers of Men," FAIR 2001 LDS Apologetics Conference address, <http://www.fairlds.org/pubs/conf/2001BarR.html>

<sup>58</sup> Neal A. Maxwell, "Out of Obscurity," *Ensign* (November 1984), 10.

<sup>59</sup> M. Gerald Bradford and Larry E. Dahl, "Doctrine," *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4 vols., ed. Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 1:395.

<sup>60</sup> 2 Nephi 2:11.

<sup>61</sup> Moroni 10:5. Special thanks to Kevin Barney and Allen Wyatt for their helpful comments and suggestions.

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