

places. Many denominations have published Bible dictionaries each reflecting a unique theological stance.

Cambridge University Press granted the Church permission to use its Bible dictionary as a base, to be amended as needed. It was changed in three major ways: 1. Entries considered to be in error or of insufficient value were omitted. 2. Entries that were incomplete, because they were based on the Bible alone, were complemented by information from the BOOK OF MORMON, the DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS, the PEARL OF GREAT PRICE, and the teachings of the Prophet Joseph SMITH. This affected such entries as the FALL, ZION, URIM AND THUMMIM, ADAM, SACRIFICE, CIRCUMCISION, and TEMPLE. 3. New entries were added, including discussions on such matters as DISPENSATION OF THE FULNESS OF TIMES, AARONIC PRIESTHOOD, MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD, writing, and the family.

The dictionary provides new information in the light of such discoveries as the Dead Sea Scrolls, and explains language and cultural items, including several English words used in the Bible whose meanings have changed. Another major help is a harmony of the events in the life of Christ that includes not only the four Gospels but also 3 Nephi in the Book of Mormon and other references to latter-day REVELATION. The dictionary also contains an eleven-page world history chart of the major events that pertain to the Old and New Testaments and a chart of the main New Testament quotations that have Old Testament origins. The work totals 196 pages with 1,285 entries. It is not a declaration of the official position of the Church, but represents LDS perspectives as related to the products of ongoing scholarship that may be modified by further discovery and by future revelation.

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BIBLE SCHOLARSHIP

Latter-day Saints recognize Bible scholarship and intellectual study of the biblical text. Joseph Smith and his associates studied Greek and Hebrew and

taught that religious knowledge is to be obtained by study as well as by faith (D&C 88:118). However, Latter-day Saints prefer to use Bible scholarship rather than be driven or controlled by it.

The Prophet Joseph Smith suggested certain broad parameters for any LDS critical study of the Bible: "We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God" (A of F 8). Because Latter-day Saints prefer PROPHETS to scholars as spiritual guides, and the inspiration of SCRIPTURE and the Holy Ghost to the reasoning of secondary texts, Bible scholarship plays a smaller role in LDS spirituality than it does in some denominations.

A fundamental operating principle of "revealed" religions is that all truth cannot be completely discovered through human reason alone. Without God's aid, no one can obtain the vital data, proper perspectives, and interpretive keys for knowing him (*see* REASON AND REVELATION). Because Latter-day Saints believe that their religion is revealed through living prophets of God, they subordinate human reason to revealed truth.

In this latter connection, Latter-day Saints show some affinities with contemporary conservative Roman Catholic and evangelical Bible scholarship. They accept and use most objective results of Bible scholarship, such as linguistics, history, and archaeology, while rejecting many of the discipline's naturalistic assumptions and its more subjective methods and theories. In those instances where Bible scholarship and revealed religion conflict, Latter-day Saints hold to interpretations of the Bible that appear in the other LDS scriptures and in the teachings of latter-day prophets.

These observations suggest three basic operating principles for Bible scholarship among Latter-day Saints:

1. Approaches to the Bible must accept divine inspiration and revelation in the original biblical text: it presents the word of God and is not a merely human production. Therefore, any critical methodology that implicitly or explicitly ignores or denies the significant involvement of God in the biblical text is rejected. With minor exceptions, such as the Song of Solomon, which Joseph Smith judged not to be inspired (cf. *IE* 18 [Mar. 1915]:389), the text is not to be treated in an ultimately naturalistic manner. God's participation is seen to be significant both in the events them-

selves and in the process of their being recorded. His activity is thus one of the effects to be reckoned with in interpreting the events and in understanding the texts that record them.

2. Despite divine inspiration, the biblical text is not uninfluenced by human language and not immune to negative influences from its human environment, and there is no guarantee that the revelations given to ancient prophets have been perfectly preserved (cf. 1 Ne. 13:20–27). Thus, critical study of the Bible is warranted to help allow for, and suggest corrections of, human errors of formulation, transmission, translation, and interpretation of the ancient records.

3. Such critical scholarship, in addition to recognizing the divine origins of the Bible, must in its conclusions take account of the teachings of the BOOK OF MORMON and the other revelations to modern prophets included in the DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS and the PEARL OF GREAT PRICE, since for Latter-day Saints such sources not only have priority over revelations recorded in antiquity (cf. D&C 5:10) but also aid in interpreting the biblical text.

Latter-day Saints insist on objective hermeneutics, that is, they maintain that the biblical text has a specific, objective meaning and that the intent of the original author is both important and largely recoverable. For this reason, LDS scholars, like other conservatives, have tended toward the more objective tools of Bible scholarship, such as linguistics, history, and archaeology—recognizing that these tools themselves have to be evaluated critically—and have generally avoided the more subjective methods of literary criticism.

The most influential LDS Bible commentators include James E. Talmage, Bruce R. McConkie, Sidney B. Sperry, and Hugh W. Nibley, though Talmage's work was completed prior to many important discoveries, and McConkie's work is concerned less with critical exegesis than with understanding the New Testament within the overall body of LDS doctrine.

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BIOGRAPHY AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY

From the earliest decades members of the Church have adhered to the Puritan tradition of writing spiritual autobiographies, often for reasons similar to those of their forebears, namely, to express their faith and to justify their actions in the light of that faith. New models and counsel also influenced the Latter-day Saints in this regard: the Book of Mormon, one of the first documents of the Church, begins autobiographically—"I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents . . ." (1 Ne. 1:1)—and it contains long sections of both biography and autobiography. A version of Joseph SMITH's autobiography is canonized in the PEARL OF GREAT PRICE (see JOSEPH SMITH—HISTORY), and the Doctrine and Covenants injunction that "a record [be] kept among you" (D&C 21:1) has been interpreted in practice to apply to Latter-day Saints individually as well as institutionally.

In 1977 the annotated *Guide to Mormon Diaries and Autobiographies* listed nearly 3,000 such documents published or available in various libraries and archives. About half are retrospective autobiographies, as distinguished from journals of daily entries. As a result of the general LDS interest in FAMILY HISTORY, encouraged especially by President Spencer W. KIMBALL, that number multiplied in the 1980s. In addition, countless personal accounts and family histories remain in family possession throughout the Church.

The variety of Mormon autobiographies is vast, ranging "from conscious virtuosity to self-conscious artifice, from unconscious brilliance to dull-minded monotony" (Lambert, p. 69). In the classic *Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt* (1874), Pratt artistically portrays himself variously as mystic, recluse, proselyte, jokester, preacher, acolyte, and apostle, each presented in form and language suited to the posture. In contrast, the equally well-known *A Mormon Mother: An Autobiography*, by Annie Clark Tanner, is less artful but more introspective, revealing a complexity of unresolved questions in its author. Mary Goble Pay's short autobiography (in Cracroft and Lambert, pp. 145–53) well represents the life-writing