

for themselves in the former city of the Saints. The author also discusses the 1860 establishment of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in the Midwest, and efforts by Emma, the Prophet Joseph's widow, to create a new life for herself in Nauvoo.

Bial goes on to accurately summarize the history and growth of the LDS Church in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Appropriately enough, he brings the story full circle and concludes his history with a discussion of efforts, beginning in the 1960s, to restore Nauvoo. The author of several children's histories, Bial has written an even-handed yet very sympathetic and moving history of Nauvoo. His book is appropriate not only for children but for anyone new to LDS history.

—John M. Murphy

*The Politics of Jesus: Rediscovering the True Revolutionary Nature of the Teachings of Jesus and How They Have Been Corrupted*, by Obery M. Hendricks Jr. (New York: Doubleday, 2006)

Obery Hendricks Jr. is a professor of biblical interpretation at the New York Theological Seminary and an ordained minister in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. As a young man, Hendricks withdrew himself from Christian religions; his discovery of what he calls the "revolutionary Jesus" brought him back.

This book analyzes Jesus' teachings in light of the social, economic, and political conditions of his day. From this analysis, Hendricks outlines and explains seven political strategies that Jesus employed, namely: treat the people's needs as holy, give a voice to the voiceless, expose the workings of oppression, call the demon by name, save your anger for the mistreatment of others, take blows without returning

them, and do not just explain the alternative but show it. In the latter half of his book, he applies these political strategies as well as his own personal opinions to analyze and criticize current political practices in the United States.

For readers interested in a non-LDS perspective of the role of Jesus and other biblical prophets as political revolutionaries, this book will be especially interesting. In particular, the political critic who appreciates new, contemporary, even controversial views of Jesus' politics and their application in the world today will be rewarded.

—Saul A. Speirs

*Astronomy, Papyrus, and Covenant*, ed. John Gee and Brian M. Hauglid, volume 3 in *Studies on the Book of Abraham* (FARMS: Provo, Utah, 2005)

This volume's twelve articles analyze the Book of Abraham, contributing significantly to needed research on this scripture. Most of the articles were presented at a FARMS conference in 1999 and are published now for the first time. Here serious scholarly study of the Book of Abraham is made accessible to nonspecialists. Topics covered include the historicity of the Book of Abraham, meanings and symbols in covenants, and literary aspects of the text.

The first two articles deal with astronomy in the Book of Abraham. John Gee, William Hamblin, and Daniel Peterson combine to argue skillfully, on six grounds, that the view of stars and of the heavens found in the Book of Abraham is completely at home in the geocentric cosmic view that held sway from the time of the Egyptians down to the time of Copernicus, before the worldview became dominated by a heliocentric cosmology. J. Ward Moody, professor of physics

and astronomy, and Michael Rhodes, professor of ancient scripture, successfully bring their two worlds together in “Astronomy and the Creation.” This very interesting article offers a satisfying understanding of the processes and duration of the creation that fits both modern science and the scriptural accounts, including comments on evolution and the seven creative periods in Abraham 4.

Studies by E. Douglas Clark and Jared W. Ludlow build on pseudepigraphic works such as the *Genesis Apocryphon* and the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, and Peter Nadig analyzes sources relevant to the Jewish experience in Egypt during the Persian and Ptolemaic periods, in order to draw symbolic and cultural comparisons with phrases or materials relevant as ancient Jewish backgrounds to the Book of Abraham.

The next section of the book discusses the Joseph Smith papyri. John Gee argues convincingly that Facsimile 3 and the Book of the Dead 125 are not parallel images, leaving open the task of looking for its real parallels. The article “The Facsimiles and Semitic Adaptation of Existing Sources” by Kevin Barney begins with the important acknowledgement that the papyrus Joseph Smith held in his hand was not the very papyrus touched by the hand of Abraham but had been copied over time. This allows for the possibility of intervening redactors who may be credited with the introduction of “Semitic adaptations” that transformed older themes in an underlying stratum of the writings of Abraham. Barney’s theory places the final form of the Book of Abraham facsimiles where they belong textually—centuries after Abraham wrote his original text.

The concluding articles in this collection relate the Book of Abraham to

Muslim traditions about Abraham, to covenant aspects of women under the Abrahamic covenant, to the Israelite theology of redemption, and finally to American receptions of Abraham in the first half of the nineteenth century.

This nicely bound and edited volume should find a welcome place not just on the shelves of libraries but in the minds of all serious students of the Book of Abraham. This work is an excellent resource for beginning and longtime scripture scholars. It continues many ongoing conversations and opens several new points of inquiry. As its editors state, no attempt has been made “to harmonize the various viewpoints and interpretations expressed in these articles.” These differences not only illustrate “the variety of interpretations of scripture that can come from a common background of faith” (viii), but also ensure that this book will add significantly to the growing body of scholarly literature about the Book of Abraham.

—Jennifer Hurlbut