

New Translation of the Bible” provides a bird’s-eye view of the work. A brief history of the translation, along with a discussion of the types of changes made by the Prophet, helps in understanding the larger work. Also included is a brief note on how the translation has been used in the LDS Church. “The New Translation and Latter-day Saint Doctrine” discusses the impact of the work on the development of doctrine in the LDS Church. “The New Translation Materials Since 1844,” written by a scholar from the RLDS (Community of Christ) tradition, is a fascinating look at the ownership, publication, and use of the materials outside the LDS tradition, and the eventual permission given to the Utah church to utilize the work. The “Scribes” chapter identifies the men and women responsible for the transcription of the Joseph Smith translation. “Transcription Methods” discusses the awesome responsibility that confronted the editors of the present volume in transcribing the manuscripts. “The Sequence of the New Translation” presents, in table form, a chronological view of the translation. It reconstructs, as carefully as the record permits, the date, scripture reference, name of the scribe and where the translation was done. Scholars of the LDS scriptural tradition will find a gold mine of information and insight in this book.

—Jeffrey Needle

*The Book of Mormon: A Reader’s Edition*, ed. Grant Hardy (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003)

Grant Hardy, chair of the history department at the University of North Carolina at Asheville and specialist in Chinese history, has produced for the University of Illinois Press a useful edition of the Book of Mormon. Over the years various editions of the

Book of Mormon have been produced outside The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, most recently the 2004 Doubleday edition, which was advertised as the first trade edition. Depending upon how one defines “trade edition,” it would appear that the University of Illinois anticipated Doubleday by a year, to say nothing of a number of other editions produced in the last decade (see an appendix in the Illinois edition). The original text of the Book of Mormon has been in the public domain for over a century and, given its importance, it is not surprising that various types of editions should be published. What is perhaps surprising, given the University of Illinois Press’s long tradition of publishing scholarship on various aspects of Mormonism, an Illinois edition has not come out before now.

Hardy used the text of the 1920 edition of the Book of Mormon that is found in the public domain (the Doubleday edition uses, with permission, the 1981 text of the official Church edition). Hardy has typeset the text beautifully, dividing the chapters into paragraphs and setting poetic passages as poetry. He added quotation marks and two levels of headings in larger type, which guide the reader and ease the finding of particular sections, but otherwise the text has not been changed. Typography does make a difference to the reading experience, and this edition is well set, as befits a “reader’s edition.” Hardy’s typesetting also appropriately places this edition squarely in the tradition of modern Bible typography.

In addition to the text of the Book of Mormon, Hardy includes an introduction and appendices containing the testimonies of various witnesses to the Book of Mormon, a chronology of its translation, a discussion of the poetic

forms found in the text (including chiasmus and other forms of parallelism), a listing of the significant variations of the different manuscripts and editions, genealogical tables, chronologies, maps, a glossary of names, and an up-to-date bibliography.

Hardy says, “This edition is intended to help non-Mormons understand what it is that Mormons see in this sometimes obscure text” (vii–viii). The book will also be useful to Church members seeking greater understanding of one of the foundational documents of their religion, or simply seeking to enjoy the scripture in a more readable setting.

—Robert L. Maxwell