

planations than those presented by Nibley.

I have enjoyed reading Nibley's publications in the past. His efforts to make the advances and dangers of philology available to the lay reader are often insightful and always entertaining. When he deals with a specific and restricted historical problem within his area of expertise, he

can be coherent and direct. However none of these qualities is present in this latest work. It is unfocused, plodding, disorganized, confusing, and lacking a clear thesis or line of argument. It is unfortunate that such a prodigious collection of information could have been presented in a way that does more harm to his cause than good.

Unity in Diversity

Literature of Belief: Sacred Scripture and Religious Experience, edited by Neal E. Lambert, Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1981, 274 pages, \$8.95.

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Religion is, undeniably, an ever-present part of human life. And the several eastern and western religions are like colors of the same rainbow of spiritual and moral truths. The literatures of belief and faith that have grown organically with the religions are profoundly significant spiritual documents that have continually shone when man was lost in darkness.

Should there be one single world religion? Is it confusing for man to be surrounded by varieties of religions and types? To such similar questions, William James's answer was an emphatic "No." His reason: "I do not see how it is possible that creatures in such different positions and with such different powers as human individuals are, should have exactly the same functions and the same duties." I do not wish to surmise whether religions give rise to sacred books or whether scriptures produce the religions. Whatever be the case, I do recognize that "people derive their identity from a sacred book." It is from this point of view that I have carefully studied *Literature of Belief*, fifth in the Religious Studies

Monograph Series of Brigham Young University's Religious Studies Center, a collection of thirteen articles that focus on the world's leading ancient and modern religious traditions — Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, and Mormonism. All the readers of this rich collection, I am sure, will have experienced a religious odyssey by covering all the essays.

The editor of this volume, Neal Lambert, has shrewdly and sensibly arranged the diverse essays — both the papers presented originally at the Symposium on the Literature of Belief sponsored by BYU's Religious Studies Center in March 1979 and five additional studies prepared under other auspices — with a succinct introduction to each.

Part One of the book deals with Jewish, Christian, and Islamic scriptures and religious thought. Herbert Schneidau in his presentation on "Biblical Style and Western Literature" argues that "the character of literature in the West follows the biblical pattern in much more important respects than it follows the Homeric or mythological." Relying heavily on Erich Auerbach's *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, Schneidau chastises Western critics for assuming that "the so-called classics, that is, the literary works of the Hellenistic world, were the matrix and nurturer of our literature. These critics seem not to have read Auerbach." Though polemical in nature, Schneidau's views demonstrate a need for a new approach for an evaluation of western literature in the context of biblical thinking.

Of the thirteen essays, four specifically relate to typology. Gerald Lund's "Old Testament Types and Symbols," loaded with informative details is addressed to the beginning student with helpful guidelines, and tells the reader how a given event should be interpreted typologically. He asserts that "the Old Testament is not pre-gospel but primary gospel" and that "the Old Testament, especially in its types and symbols, will richly reflect that gospel, the gospel of preparation for faith in Christ." The article particularly appeals to the common reader both because of its simplicity and discussion of special holidays and festivals.

Placed appropriately next to Lund's essay is Richard L. Anderson's "Types of Christian Revelation," a convincing examination of several types of revelation—spiritual gifts and visions, the ministry of angels, direct manifestations of the Lord, and guidance by the Holy Spirit—in New Testament times. "It would be possible for the outsider to see the Holy Ghost simply as the Christians' name for the spirit working with all men's minds and enlightening those in many religions," he observes. As a non-Christian, I find Anderson's statement appealing and satisfying.

Part One concludes with Fazlur Rahman's "Elements of Belief in the *Qur'an*." Rahman, a leading authority on the culture and religion of Islam, writes in a nonscholarly fashion, perhaps deliberately, keeping in mind his western audience. Though the essay seems introductory, it does carry tremendous appeal inasmuch as it specifically focuses on God and his doings and benevolence. "No nation, no people, no community in the world may claim exclusive rights over God." The *Qur'an* says, "God's guidance is not limited to Jews and Arabs. God has been sending these messages all over the world to all people in all nations. . . . Every people has had an invitation to goodness and a warning against evil." It is interesting to know that the *Qur'an* emphasizes man's success or failure, reminiscent of the Hindu concept of karma or the Christian ethical view of "as you sow, so shall you reap."

Part Two concentrates on the eastern religious thought and sacred scriptures of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Taoism. P. Lal's presentation, "The Hindu Experience: An Examination of Folklore and Sacred Texts," though richly embellished with parable and personal anecdotes, does not really examine the Hindu sacred texts because Lal denies that India has a "literature of belief." First, Lal's title for the essay is partly misleading; secondly, his denial is disputable. What about the Vedas? What are the Upanishads? Is the *Bhagavad Gita* merely an oral piece passed on from one generation to the other? Is it not a literature of belief, of philosophy? Yes, Lal explains Hindu experience wittily, gracefully, and half-ironically. I wish he had included an appendix on Hindu scriptures at least for publication purposes.

Joseph Campbell, a renowned world authority in comparative mythology, in his "Masks of Oriental Gods: Symbolism of Kundalini Yoga," offers a tongue-in-cheek definition of mythology ("mythology is *other* people's religion") and explains the steps of India's greatest gift to the world, "the Kundalini yoga." (A working definition of yoga is "the intentional stopping of the spontaneous activity of the mindstuff.") This essay is demanding.

I immensely enjoyed Wing-tsit Chan's "Influences of Taoist Classics on Chinese Philosophy," which explains lucidly Taoism's history and philosophy, resemblances and differences between Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism and between Taoism and Western philosophy. Once again as with Campbell's essay, this presentation deserves a studied reading. Interestingly enough, this is the only paper in the collection that doesn't rest on footnotes. The charm and wit of Wing-tsit Chan, patriarch of Chinese scholars in the U.S., radiates from the essay and energetically demonstrates how the Taoist classic shaped the spirit of Chinese philosophy and religion.

Out of all the essays in the book under review, Richard B. Mather's article, "The Impact of the *Nirvana Sutra* in China," seemed most difficult. Though Mather

with his manifestly impressive knowledge adroitly sorts out a tangled argument, it fell far on the technical side of the spectrum and seemed designed for scholars, not a lay audience.

All five essays in Part Three, "Latter-Day Saint Scripture," are highly scholarly, and thoroughly researched and documented; they focus on the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the modern Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price.

Boldly subjecting a small portion of a Mormon text "to the same sort of comparative study which we are willing to apply to other texts, believing that this can be an illuminating venture, rather than a reducing exercise," Adele McCollum in her "The First Vision: Re-Visioning Historical Experience" examines Joseph Smith's account of his first vision in the Pearl of Great Price and concludes that a religion must be polytheistic to survive in our present-day pluralistic society and culture.

Steven P. Sondrup investigates the Articles of Faith, yet another document in the Pearl of Great Price, in his cogent essay "On Confessing Belief: Thoughts on the Language of the Articles of Faith." Sondrup's explanation of "I believe" and "we believe" in the larger context of *agree*, *trust*, and *faith* is fascinating and meaningful. His analysis of the contrast between the Articles of Faith and Catholic and Protestant creeds further provides scope to study comparative features of religions including the linguistic significance of the scriptural texts.

The three remaining essays in this part deal with typology in the Book of Mormon. I disapproved of the editor's sequence. From the reader's point of view, it would have read more smoothly to have George S. Tate's essay, "The Typology of the Exodus Pattern in the Book of Mormon" precede Bruce Jorgensen's "The Dark Way to the Tree: Typological Unity in the Book of Mormon," and Richard Rust's "All Things

Which Have Been Given of God . . . Are the Typifying of Him': Typology in the Book of Mormon," because Tate's article details the meaning and significance of typology before it begins to discuss the Exodus pattern. Because of the growing attention to typological approaches to literary investigations in the Book of Mormon, Mormon readers should find these essays enlightening.

Let me tell my reader that he should, after a careful reading of the essays, come back to Gerald Bradford's informed and insightful introduction. It is both engaging and rewarding. Bradford comprehensively grasps the varied subject matter and skillfully weaves the several strands into a rich fabric.

Since the volume under consideration is primarily based on the papers read in a symposium, the reader inevitably recognizes a certain unevenness in tone, in style, and even in scholarship in the essays—the range is from murky to enlightening, simple to complex, informal and personal to formal and academic, general to specific. Despite their uneven nature, however, on the whole they reinforce the strength of my belief in the perennial value of sacred texts in the affairs of humankind.

The purpose of this book is not to rehabilitate any religion nor to discuss the supremacy of any religion. Its purpose is to present a global perspective on "the religious dimension of our common human heritage." A rich fare! A splendid collection! A bold venture! Congratulations are due the directors and the advisory board of the Religious Studies Center of BYU for organizing the symposium and publishing the volume of essays.

I highly recommend this book to my readers. This is a book for the Mormon and the non-Mormon alike, for the Christian and the non-Christian, for the common man and the specialized, and for the libraries.