

literalism is Boyd K. Packer's 1988 talk at Brigham Young University entitled "The Law and the Light." In this speech, Elder Packer stakes out a position sharply opposed to certain fields of modern science, such as evolution. Although the published version of this speech is prefaced by a clearly worded disclaimer, it is being cited by some as

justification for an antagonistic stance toward modern science. In Paul's book, this influential talk was given only fleeting mention in a note.

In spite of this, *Science, Religion, and Mormon Cosmology* is a much needed and very well executed piece of modern Mormon scholarship. I heartily recommend it for thinking Latter-day Saints.

## A Question of Perspective

Marjorie Newton. *Hero or Traitor: A Biographical Study of Charles Wesley Wandell*. Independence, MO: Independence Press, 1992.

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MARJORIE NEWTON'S 60-PAGE BIOGRAPHY of Charles Wesley Wandell, *Hero or Traitor*, inaugurates the John Whitmer Historical Association's scholarly monograph series. Those who have read her prize-winning *Southern Cross Saints: The Mormons in Australia* will be especially interested in Wandell who could be considered a founder of both the LDS and RLDS churches in Australia and the RLDS church in Tahiti.

Born in 1819, Wandell joined the LDS church in New York in 1837. He served as a Mormon missionary and in the church historian's office in Nauvoo, Illinois. When the majority of Saints went west after Joseph Smith's death, Wandell remained behind, becoming inactive in the church. By 1849 he was in California where he renewed his Mormon church activity. Two years later he and John Murdock opened Australia to

Mormon missionary work, and by 1853 Wandell led the first group of Australian Saints to Utah. He lapsed again into inactivity upon his return to California but later filled positions of responsibility in the LDS church. He subsequently lived in Beaver, Utah, and Pioche, Nevada, by which time he was again inactive in the church. He then moved to California where by March 1873 he had begun his association with the RLDS movement. The following November he and missionary companion Glauod Rodger sailed for Australia, stopping in Tahiti where they converted apparently abandoned LDS members to the RLDS church before continuing their work in Australia in 1874. By March 1895 Wandell was dead and his body was buried in Sydney.

While Newton was hampered by a lack of primary documents on Wandell—his journals were lost in a fire—her careful work is in evidence. She uncovers discrepancies pertaining to Wandell in the work of Juanita Brooks and Robert Cleland and discusses Wandell's own inconsistencies in his attempts to explain his disaffection from the RLDS church. "Minor character"

though Wandell may have been, the 3,933 RLDS in Tahiti today and the 3,755 in Australia attest to his ongoing influence.

RLDS historian Roger Launius explains in his foreword that whether one sees Wandell as hero or traitor depends on one's religious perspective. Newton, a member of the LDS church, rightly describes her subject as an enigma, which is how she also leaves him. Both she and her readers are left to ponder the influence Wandell's mining interests had on his religious life, the role the temple played in his disaffection from the LDS church, how plural marriage and his own two civil marriages impacted his faith, and what part the democracy-versus-theocracy issue had on his final decision to become part of the RLDS movement. Finally, can an increasing neurosis explain Wandell's dissatisfaction with his first church and his difficulty getting along with the California members of his new one? While it would be gratifying to have more answers than we are given in her book, Newton has acquainted us with the significance of these issues in the life of Charles Wesley Wandell.

There are some minor flaws in *Hero or Traitor*. For instance, Newton tells us Wandell was born in Courtland in northeastern New York. But there is no town by that name there now, and the one which used to exist near present-day Peekskill was spelled Cortlandt. Also Newton tells us Wandell lived in Pioche, Nevada, for four and a half years but has him moving there in 1866 and leaving in 1873, seven years later.

Furthermore, Newton quotes J. N. Rawling as saying, "[T]he Utah Church before 1890 did not regard the parties to a plural marriage as committing sexual sin . . . provided such a marriage complied with strict conditions and was per-

formed by the First Presidency or their consent" (33). Since Newton does not correct Rawling we can only infer her position on the matter. But B. Carmon Hardy in *Solemn Covenant* argues that on three separate occasions LDS church president John Taylor said authority to perform plural marriages had been delegated to hundreds of men and that such ceremonies could be performed almost anywhere. "Plural marriages," said Hardy, "both with and without the sealing ordinance continued to be performed almost anywhere" (53-54). The strict conditions and consent described by Rawling and allowed to stand by Newton are idealized versions of actual plural marriages as practiced by LDS.

Finally, Newton's conclusion appears somewhat naive when she writes, after trying to resolve what may have been a difference between Wandell's private and public persona on plural marriage: "if we accept that Wandell knew polygamy was practiced by church leaders in post-assassination Nauvoo and in Utah and yet steadfastly denied that it was an official doctrine of the church, we must assume that he held the church and its post-assassination leaders to be in apostasy" (34). Mormon delusiveness relative to its private practice and public position on plural marriage is well documented from Joseph Smith to Joseph F. Smith. Nor is "lying for the kingdom" a phenomenon of the religious only in modern times. Consider Abraham and Pharaoh when the latter asked the identity of the prophet's wife in Genesis 12.

But this is perhaps quibbling. Newton is a thoroughgoing professional. Her writing that there "is overwhelming evidence that Joseph did indeed reveal 'the principle'" contradicts the public position of the RLDS church and demonstrates the courage of the historian to