

Clawson's memoir describes the details of prison life including an initiation ceremony, food, inadequate hygiene facilities, and the nuisance of bedbugs. Prison life was routine and monotonous. Inmates had plenty of spare time. Some read books, some tried their hand at writing and publishing poetry, played baseball, football, boxing, quoits, lacrosse, croquet, marbles, chess, checkers, dominoes, and cards. Others tried their hand at various crafts, including: making hair bridles, riding whips, gilded picture frames, ornamental wood boxes, flower carvings, ship models, canes, mats, fans, women's chains, and pincushions. Clawson who attended school at the University of Deseret worked for several months outside the prison wall tutoring the warden's two children.

After serving three years, one month, and ten days of his sentence, Clawson was pardoned by U.S. president Grover Cleveland. As a reward for defending the principle, Clawson received his second anointing and was appointed president of the Box Elder Stake. Clawson entered into a post-Manifesto union with Pearl Udall in 1904.

The Clawson memoir lacks the literary merit of Annie Clark Tanner's autobiography, *A Mormon Mother*. The memoir never achieves the quality of compelling storytelling found in Tanner's book. Characters in Clawson's

memoir are not fully developed. We do not see Clawson, the hero of the story, grow as the years pass. We are not shown what Clawson learned about his fellowman while in prison or how he changed as a result of his prison experience.

The memoir was written during an era of religious zealotry. The tone of this document, like the journals on which it was based, is formal and full of religious posturing. Clawson's rhetoric is stuffy and humorless. While the memoir is a testimony to Clawson's integrity, it also confirms his racist attitudes and class consciousness. Clawson's letters to his plural wife, Lydia, on the other hand, are intimate, playful, sensual, and endearing. They are compelling because Clawson writes for an audience he knows—Lydia.

Clawson's memoir and letters provide valuable insights into prison life. The book is an important volume in the history of Mormon polygamy. This is the story of a man committed to the principle of plural marriage: a man who lived it, suffered for it, and continued to live it. The book reminds the reader that the time "cohabs" spent in prison was more than a curious footnote in the history of Mormon polygamy. The memoir brings to life the prisoner's daily routine, it dramatizes his contentions, humiliation, and suffering at the Utah penitentiary.

Easy-to-Read: A Consumer's Report

Lynn Matthews Anderson. *The Easy-to-Read Book of Mormon: Based on the Work Translated by Joseph Smith, Jr.* Pitts-

burgh, PA: privately published, 1993. Includes Joseph Smith's story, testimony of the three and eight witnesses,

and "Words to Know."

Reviewed by Christian N. K. Anderson (no relation to Lynn), age thirteen and an independent Book of Mormon reader since age ten, organist for priesthood meetings in Whittier Ward, Salt Lake City.

THE *EASY-TO-READ BOOK OF MORMON* is a paraphrase of the authorized version of the Book of Mormon, created by Lynn Matthews Anderson of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, "in simple modern English . . . to help people know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Savior of the world." She wrote it originally for her three daughters, but it would help anybody who is just learning to read or learning to read English of whatever age.

One of the things Lynn does is to "include women in all the places where it seems right to include them." She says that the Book of Mormon often says only "brethren" or "brothers" and talks only about me, but that this change is important because "God wants all of us to think about and to live by the good things we can learn from the Book of Mormon." I think that's only fair.

I compared a doctrinal passage and an action passage to see what kind of changes had been made. The first passage is where Alma compares faith to a seed:

Alma 32:28-33

Authorized Version

Now, we will compare the word unto a seed. Now, if ye give place, that a seed may be planted in your heart, behold, if it be a true seed, or a good seed, if ye do not cast it out by your unbelief, that ye will resist the Spirit of the Lord, behold, it will begin to swell

within your breasts; and when you feel these swelling motions, ye will begin to say within yourselves—It must needs be that this is a good seed, or that the word is good, for it beginneth to enlarge my soul; yea, it beginneth to enlighten my understanding, yea, it beginneth to be delicious to me.

Now behold, would not this increase your faith? I say unto you, Yea; nevertheless it hath not grown up to a perfect knowledge.

But behold, as the seed swelleth, and sprouteth, and beginneth to grow, then you must needs say that the seed is good; for behold it swelleth, and sprouteth, and beginneth to grow. And now behold, will not this strengthen your faith? Yea, it will strengthen your faith: for ye will say I know that this is a good seed; for behold it sprouteth and beginneth to grow.

And now, behold, are ye sure that this is a good seed? I say unto you, Yea; for every seed bringeth forth unto its own likeness.

Therefore, if a seed groweth it is good, but if it groweth not, behold it is not good, therefore it is cast away.

And now, behold, because ye have tried the experiment, and planted the seed, and it swelleth and sprouteth, and beginneth to grow, ye must needs know that the seed is good.

Easy-to-Read Version

Now, the gospel is like a seed. If you make room in your heart for a seed to be planted, and if you do not throw it away by not believing or by fighting against the Spirit of the Lord, it will begin to grow, if it is a good or true seed. And when you feel it begin to grow in your heart, you will say to yourself, "This must be a good seed," or "this gospel is good, because it is beginning to make my soul grow. Yes, it is beginning to help me understand, and it feels good to me."

Wouldn't that make your faith grow? I tell you, Yes. But it still has not

become a perfect knowledge.

But as the good seed gets bigger and sprouts and grows, then you must say the seed is good, because it is getting bigger, and it is sprouting and growing. Won't this make your faith stronger? Yes, it will make your faith stronger, because you will say, "I know this is a good seed, because it has sprouted and begun to grow.

Then are you sure it is a good seed? I tell you, Yes, because every seed grows into whatever living thing it came from.

So if a seed grows, it is good. But if it does not grow, it is not good, and it is thrown away.

You have begun the test, and planted the seed, and it has gotten bigger and sprouted and begun to grow, so you know the seed is good.

The authorized version is not particularly unclear, but it seemed to repeat itself a lot, and I had to think twice to figure out what "unto its own likeness" meant. The ETR version makes that part very clear. It also helps to use "has" instead of "hath" and "you" instead of "ye," and to drop the "yea's" and the "-eths" off verbs. Now none of those words are particularly hard to understand. Still, if you were young or struggling with English, you'd be learning so many new words anyway that it would be a real break not to have to learn any more.

I liked the fact that the ETR version has quotation marks where Alma is saying what he thinks the audience would be saying as they ask themselves questions and give answers about this seed. Since Alma is giving a sort of dialogue here—himself on one side and the seed-grower on the other side—I can see that it might confuse an early reader about who's talking.

And the final difference is tone of voice. Alma in both versions sounds

very serious and sincere, but in the authorized version he also sounds kind of stern and strict, really laying down the law ("I say unto you, Yea . . ."). I can see him shaking a finger at the listening people and maybe even yelling a bit. In the ETR version, he sounds more kindly and concerned. He sounds like the teacher who asks a question, waits for the student to answer, and then repeats the answer back to him or her, maybe adding a little more information. I never thought about that before because we usually read the scriptures out loud as a family. I hear them in my voice or the voice of my parents; but when I stopped to think what *Alma's* voice sounded like, if I were reading it on my own, I could see that the Authorized Version might not sound quite so friendly.

The other thing I did to this passage was to run a "fog analysis" on it. The fog index comes out as a grade level. The formula is: $(SP + PS) \times .4 = \text{fog index (grade level)}$. SP means sentence pattern, or average words per sentence. PS means polysyllables, or number of words with three or more syllables. The fog index for the authorized version of the passage above is a 14.7, meaning that it's about right for a college sophomore or junior. The fog index for the ETR version is 8.

The second passage I compared is Nephi killing Laban:

1 Nephi 4:6-13, 18

Authorized Version

And I was led by the Spirit, not knowing beforehand the things which I should do.

Nevertheless I went forth, and as I came near unto the house of Laban I beheld a man, and he had fallen to the earth before me, for he was drunken with wine.

And when I came to him I found that it was Laban.

And I beheld his sword, and I drew it forth from the sheath thereof; and the hilt thereof was of pure gold, and the workmanship thereof was exceedingly fine, and I saw that the blade thereof was of the most precious steel.

And it came to pass that I was constrained by the Spirit that I should kill Laban; but I said in my heart: Never at any time have I shed the blood of man. And I shrunk and would that I might not slay him.

And the Spirit said unto me again: Behold the Lord hath delivered him into thy hands. Yea, and I also knew that he had sought to take away mine own life; yea, and he would not hearken unto the commandments of the Lord; and he also had taken away our property.

And it came to pass that the Spirit said unto me again: Slay him, for the Lord hath delivered him into thy hands;

Behold the Lord slayeth the wicked to bring forth his righteous purposes. It is better that one man should perish than that a nation should dwindle and perish in unbelief. . . .

Therefore I did obey the voice of the Spirit, and took Laban by the hair of the head, and I smote off his head with his own sword.

Easy-to-Read Version

The Spirit led me, since I did not know ahead of time what I should do.

As I got closer to Laban's house, I saw a man who had fallen down from drinking too much wine.

When I got closer to him, I saw it was Laban.

I saw his sword and took it out of its sheath. Its handle was pure gold, very well made, and the blade was made from the best steel.

Then the Spirit told me to kill Laban, but I said in my heart: "I have never killed any person." I did not

want to kill him.

But the Spirit said to me again: "The Lord has given you this way to defeat him." I knew Laban had tried to kill me. I knew he would not do what the Lord commanded, and that he had taken our money.

The Spirit said to me again: "Kill him. The Lord has given you this chance."

"The Lord sometimes kills evil people for good reasons. It is better for one person to die than for a whole nation not to believe in God. . . .

So I obeyed the Spirit, and took Laban by the hair, and cut off his head with his own sword.

The fog indices for these passages are 11.7 (authorized) and 5.8 (ETR). Now, I'm not quite sure what "constrained" means. But I know what "restrained" means. So it sounds almost as if Nephi wasn't free to make a decision about whether to kill Laban or not. I like it that Lynn says "told," because that means the Spirit is giving Nephi information, not just ordering him to do it. Nephi doesn't want to (naturally), but he doesn't argue with the Spirit either. Instead, he tries to understand why the Spirit might be giving him these instructions. That's why he thinks of three good reasons for killing Laban. I also like the fact that the ETR version explains that "the Lord sometimes kills evil people" because you don't have to be very old to realize that the Lord doesn't always kill evil people. In fact, it's usually the evil people killing others. The ETR version is less confusing, then, because it doesn't say something that sounds unrealistic. All of the "thereofs" in the authorized version are a little annoying, since you can leave them out without changing the meaning at all.

But I still like the authorized version better for the action. "Slay" and

“smote” are great words—kind of romantic and powerful. “Dwindle and perish” are terrific words, too. Besides that, the ETR version just stops with not believing in God, rather than explaining what happens as a result. I like the elaborate language, the code words, the old-fashioned flavor of the authorized version. It makes it seem more solemn, more important, and more holy. Being impressed by the language of the scriptures isn’t as important as understanding what they say. The best combination, of course, is to do both; and I think the ETR can help get people ready for the authorized version.

I know that the First Presidency has made a statement discouraging modern-English versions of the Book of Mormon (*Church News*, 20 Feb. 1993), but I honestly don’t see what they’re upset about. After all, the church itself puts out those comic-book type illustrated stories of the scriptures, which are obviously for very young children. They’re *really* boring. They don’t even have any dialogue to make them interesting. And I sat through *lots* of cartoon versions of Book of Mormon stories in Primary. Obviously, nobody thought they were going to wreck my testimony.

I think that anything that helps make the Book of Mormon familiar, important, and understandable for kids and other beginning readers is all to the

good and will ultimately lead them to the book itself. It sounds to me as if the general authorities think the real Book of Mormon is so boring that no one will ever read it if they have any alternative.

My folks buy me comic-book versions of Shakespeare and I’ve been in three Shakespeare plays put on by my fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-grade classes using easy-to-read, paraphrased scripts. Nobody ever tried to tell me that I “knew” Shakespeare as a result and wouldn’t want or need to read (or see) the real plays. I haven’t started reading Shakespeare yet; but when I do see movies of the real plays, I’m much more interested because I understand the plot, who the characters are, and don’t have to struggle so much to understand the language. (By the way, we use a modern language version of the Bible for family scripture study, too.)

I think the most efficacious methodology is a smorgasbord. Keep numerous versions around the house. Let the kids experiment with all of them and gravitate to the ones they want. After all, if the scriptures are one of the main mechanisms by which the Holy Ghost communicates to us, then we should facilitate numerous opportunities for that to happen.

And the fog index for that paragraph is 10.3.

Women’s Rights

James R. Baker. *Women’s Rights in Old Testament Times*. Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992.

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THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN ARE A CON-