pret this inspiration as God's hand helping those engineers who have prepared for it through "study and preparation." Thus, while they do not directly address the idea that we can see "God as Engineer" in the processes that shape our universe, they strongly believe that in trying to understand and apply the laws that govern the universe we emulate God—and, hence, help fulfill His work in bringing to pass the eternal life of man.

This book is fascinating, frustrating, but ultimately worthwhile; it should find its way onto many LDS bookshelves (and especially that of every LDS engineer). There is a great need for scientists and engineers to engage with, instead of criticize, the faith community. *Parallels and Convergences* might have been a groundbreaking work that greatly contributed to that engagement. It is not. But it is a very useful attempt.

Notes

1. Although Sir Francis Bacon would doubtless disagree, having been credited with the well-known saying: "A little science estranges a man from God. A lot of science brings him back."

2. See Mitsuo Gen and Runwei Cheng, *Genetic Algorithms and Engineering Optimization* (New York: Wiley-Interscience, 2000); John R. Koza, et al., *Genetic Programming III: Darwinian Invention and Problem Solving* (San Francisco: Morgan Kaufmann Publishers, Inc., 1999); Singiresu S. Rao, *Engineering Optimization: Theory and Practice* (New York Wiley, 2009) and Aimin Zhou, et al. "Multiobjective Evolutionary Algorithms: A Survey of the State of the Art." *Swarm and Evolutionary Computation* 1:1 (March 2011): 32–49.

Rethinking the LDS Aversion to the Cross

Michael G. Reed. *Banishing the Cross: The Emergence of a Mormon Taboo*. Independence, Mo.: John Whitmer Books, 2012. 171 pp. Appendix ("Early Christians and the Cross"), index. Paper: $19.95. ISBN: 978–1934901359.

Reviewed by Boyd Jay Petersen

Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are often perplexed when they are accused of not being Christian. We

worship Christ, acknowledge him as the divine Son of God, and believe our hope for salvation centers on the atonement made possible by his sacrifice. Christ is central in Mormon scripture: his birth, death, and atonement are foretold by Book of Mormon prophets, revealed through terrestrial signs, and revealed in the flesh in Christ's ministry to his "lost sheep" of the New World. Mormons celebrate Christian holy days such as Easter and Christmas. The very name of the Church points to Christ as our center. As Nephi says, "we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ" (2 Ne. 2:26). Those who reject Mormonism as Christian typically cite the significant theological differences between LDS theology and creedal Christianity (e.g., rejection of the Trinity, belief in an embodied God, a theology of deification, etc.) and our acceptance of additional scripture and a living prophet. While Latter-day Saints intently seek to counter these objections, quite often subtle, subliminal messages speak louder than our words. As Robert Rees has argued, one of the "very large stumbling blocks" keeping other Christians from accepting Mormons as Christian is our rejection of the central symbol of Christianity: the cross.[1] The symbol is not found on Mormon places of worship, on LDS hymnals or scripture, or on jewelry worn by members of the Church. In fact it is often viewed with suspicion, as a sign of apostasy.

President Gordon B. Hinckley repeatedly emphasized his respect for other churches that use the cross, but emphasized that "for us, the cross is the symbol of the dying Christ, while our message is a declaration of the Living Christ."[2] Unfortunately, this argument rings hollow, perhaps even condescending, to other Christians, since they too worship the Living Christ. The cross reminds them not only of Christ's death, but of his atoning sacrifice—his life, death, and resurrection—and of their complete dependence on that expiating force. In short, the cross represents not Christ's death, but his *overcoming* death. This symbolic force of the cross is lost on Latter-day Saints. The cross's absence leads creedal Christians to suspect that Latter-day Saints are not, indeed, Christians. Yet for the average Mormon, LDS antipathy to the cross may seem doctrinal, perhaps foundational, dating back to teachings from Joseph Smith. However, as Michael Reed aptly demonstrates in his new book *Banishing the*

Cross: The Emergence of a Mormon Taboo, this history is much more recent and quite complex.

In the early years of American society, contempt for Catholicism was rampant. As immigration to the United States from Catholic nations rapidly increased in the first half of the nineteenth century, Catholicism was seen as a threat to both democracy and true Christianity, and tensions between Protestants and Catholics grew. With titles like *Awful Disclosures of the Hotel Dieu Nunnery* (1836), *Rosamond; or, A Narrative of the Captivity and Sufferings of an American Female under the Popish Priests, in the Island of Cuba* (1836), or *Six Hours in a Convent: or The Stolen Nuns!* (1854), Anti-Catholic tracts of the nineteenth century recall those of anti-Mormon writers of the period. Female captivity narratives proliferated around Catholicism just as they did around the Mormon practice of plural marriage. Likewise, Catholic rituals, thought strange and secret, inspired the same dread that Mormon temple rituals did.[3] The cross, seen as the central symbol of Catholicism, was regarded as papist, un-American, and idolatrous. This prejudice gave birth to iconoclasm, as Reed points out, which focused on the cross as a symbol of popish sentiment: a church in Philadelphia was destroyed by arson; a cross was torn down from the steeple of a Boston chapel (29).

As Reed documents, many early Mormons shared their neighbors' anti-Catholic sentiments, identifying the Catholic Church as the "mother of harlots and abominations" spoken of in the book of Revelation (17:5). Reed notes, however, that "despite [Mormons'] employment of Protestant anti-Catholic rhetoric, the condemnation of the cross is noticeably absent in the writings of early Mormonism" (33). Reed offers three explanations for why early Mormons embraced the cross: their involvement with folk magic, their connections with Freemasonry, and their interest in pre-Columbian archaeology that they believed confirmed the veracity of the Book of Mormon.

One of the most interesting chapters of Reed's book focuses on the influences of folk magic and Masonry on Mormon views of the cross. Following the work of historians such as D. Michael Quinn and Richard Bushman, who document the impact of folk magic in early Mormonism, Reed notes the centrality of the cross

in folk magic symbolism and identifies crosses on several magical parchments belonging to the Smith family. He goes on to show that the cross was also a part of Christianized Masonry, where the pentagram, for example, symbolizes the five wounds of Christ and the Masonic five points of fellowship. Likely influenced by Masonic symbolism, Reed argues, the decorative cruciform stonework surrounding the pentagram windows in the Nauvoo temple brings together the shape of the cross and the pentagram, directly alluding to Christ's crucifixion. He further notes the decorative cross emblazoned on Joseph Smith's walking cane. Reed shows that the cross is found in both magic and masonry, and that early Mormons were comfortable and conversant in both.

Reed next shows how pre-Columbian discoveries supported Mormon acceptance of the cross. Beginning with the LDS *Times and Seasons'* publication of excerpts from John L. Stephens and Fredrick Catherwood's *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan* in 1841, Mormons have looked to Mesoamerican discoveries for proof of the Book of Mormon's authenticity. The discovery of cross symbols in Mayan carvings was greeted by many Mormons as proof that Christ had visited the New World, just as the Book of Mormon declared. As Reed puts it, "Mormons perceived Pre-Columbian crosses as evidence vindicating the Book of Mormon narrative that Christianity was practiced among native Americans in ancient times" (66).

One of the most wonderful aspects of Reed's book is its bountiful supply of illustrations, and chapter five, "Mormon Crosses before the Institutionalized Taboo," provides plentiful documentation that Mormons once embraced the cross as a symbol of faith. Reed provides photos of crosses in quilts, in the stained glass in LDS chapels, in funeral arrangements (at John Taylor's funeral, no less!), and in jewelry worn by prominent Mormons (one of Brigham Young's wives and two daughters). It was even emblazoned on the spine of an 1852 European edition of the Doctrine and Covenants. The images throughout the book, especially in this chapter, were so good, so important to Reed's thesis, I wished for better production values. I would love to have an over-size coffee table edition of this book. Any reader unconvinced by Reed's argument would find it difficult to remain unconvinced when confronted with his visual evidence.

Clearly demonstrating that the official Church openly accepted the cross is Reed's discussion of a proposal in the early twentieth century to erect a cross on top of Ensign Peak as a tribute to the Mormon pioneers. The proposal was put forward by B. H. Roberts at a Pioneer Day commemoration in 1915, when he noted that the "ensign which shall yet float from yonder peak is the ensign of humanity; the ensign of Christ in which every nation shall have part" (87). A year later the Church petitioned the Salt Lake City council for permission to erect the monument. Opposition to the plan came initially from a non-Mormon state legislator who thought it was disingenuous for the LDS Church to portray itself as Christian. "It is evident that the oriental crescent of the Mohomedan is a better exhibit for the Pioneer as a monument," he argued (89). The first documented instance of anti-cross sentiment from within the Mormon community emerged at this time too, as some members felt that a cross was not an appropriate tribute to their pioneer ancestors. One of the Mormons who protested the monument wrote that that cross was a symbol of the Catholic church which "seeks to dominate every institution in the City, State and Nation" (90). While LDS Church leaders eventually abandoned their efforts to erect the monument on Ensign Peak, in 1917 they instead erected a wooden cross at the mouth of Emigration Canyon to commemorate the place where Brigham Young first viewed the valley.

The taboo against the cross likely crept into Mormonism as later generations lost touch with the symbols of folk magic and masonry and as Mormons began to assimilate into larger American culture. Reed also documents growing tension between Mormons and Catholics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century as a series of missteps and miscommunication: In 1916, the Catholic bishop of the Utah diocese criticized Mormons for holding dances on Good Friday. In 1930, Catholics aired a series of radio shows on LDS Church-owned KSL to strengthen their parishioners' faith, which was misinterpreted by the Mormon leadership as an attempt to convert Mormons. And in 1948, Catholics published a tract entitled "A Foreign Mission Close to Home" and Mormons misunderstood the use of the word "mission" as an effort to proselyte rather than to designate a small, underfunded

parish. This increasing tension combined with some anti-Catholic prejudices of some Church leaders led to an official antipathy toward the symbol of the cross. Mark E. Petersen saw it as nothing but a cruel form of torture, Joseph Fielding Smith saw it as "repugnant and contrary to the true worship of our Redeemer," and Bruce R. McConkie called it the "mark of the beast" (118–20). The taboo against the cross became solidified as President McKay warned of the "two great anti-Christs in the world: Communism and that [Catholic] Church" (115).

Reed's penultimate chapter briefly documents the status of the cross in both the Community of Christ (formerly RLDS), where leaders have worked to embrace the symbol, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Strangites), where it has not been banned but is not fully embraced. Finally, in an appendix, he discusses the use of the cross in early Christianity. These sections of the book, though less detailed, add depth to his argument.

While many Mormon historians have noted correctly that early Mormons echoed the anti-Catholic attitudes and polemics of their nineteenth-century neighbors, Reed conclusively shows that early Mormons had no aversion to the cross. He persuasively demonstrates that the taboo against the cross arose as Mormons lost their connection with folk magic and masonry, as anti-Catholic bias grew within both the membership and leadership of the Church, and as relations between Church leaders and Salt Lake area Catholics grew more tense. What is fascinating about Reed's analysis is that the institutionalization of the taboo occurred quite late in Mormon history and is not based on any strong theological reasoning. With contemporary Mormonism's more ecumenical focus, a tremendous lessening of anti-Catholic rhetoric, and greatly improved relations between all denominations of Christianity and the LDS Church, it is not hard to imagine a world where Mormons can once again embrace the symbolic power of the cross. Reed's book is a wonderful addition to Mormon history and a helpful guide in rethinking our contemporary aversion to the central symbol of Christianity.

Notes

1. Lynn Arave, "Cross Called a 'Stumbling Block' for Mormonism,"

Deseret News, August 11, 2008, http://www.deseretnews.com/article/705381404/Cross-called-a-stumbling-block-for-Mormonism.html? pg=all.

2. Gordon B. Hinckley, "The Symbol of Our Faith" *Ensign,* April 2005, 2. President Hinckley made similar comments in messages delivered as early as 1975.

3. Compare, for example, Susan M. Griffin's *Anti-Catholicism and Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) with Terryl Givens' *Viper on the Hearth: Mormons, Myths, and the Construction of Heresy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

Toward a Mormon Culinary History

Brock Cheney. *Plain but Wholesome: Foodways of the Mormon Pioneers*. Salt Lake City, Utah: University of Utah Press, 2012. Paper: $19.95. ISBN: 978–1607812081.

Reviewed by Christy Spackman

Brock Cheney's history of Mormon food, *Plain but Wholesome: Foodways of the Mormon Pioneers* does much to fill a surprising lacuna in Mormon history. Although a number of books on food and religion exist,[1] there is little academic exploration of the role that food played in the shaping and development of Latter-day Saint culture. While Cheney's work reads a bit like a church potluck, lacking the unity of a well-constructed menu, it nonetheless provides interested readers and academics alike with a variety of tempting morsels to inspire further exploration.

Plain but Wholesome explores a variety of culinary-related tropes. The book begins with the material artifacts and culinary memorabilia that allow one to peer back in time, and then travels through the practices of searching for, gathering, planting, harvesting, preserving, and producing food. Structurally, each of the main chapters begins with an anecdote or story, and then builds off one of the themes previously mentioned. These vignettes seek to situate readers in the time period and topic to be explored, and are followed by an interesting collection of historical facts, photographs, and recipes, drawing extensively from the archival resources of the Daughters of Utah Pioneers.