

from the desk of Denver Snuffer

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Wednesday, October 23, 2013

Understanding How To Read PTHG

If you are going to read *PTHG*, then read the words in the text rather than overlaying your own fears and conclusions. Your reaction to the book is not indicative of what I wrote.

There is very little of me in the book. Nor does the book represent all of what I think or know about the topics covered. It is an overview, not a comprehensive treatment.

The book assumes it is competing with another tradition taught to us by the church, and only suggests there may be another way to view events. It does not claim to be right. That is left to the reader to decide. In many specific topics the material reaches a "tie" and leaves it to the reader to choose the result.

Careful readers have claimed I am "wishy-washy" because I refrain from making conclusions. Others who read carelessly have instead damned me for their own conclusions, using "Snuffer claims" or "Snuffer views" and "Snuffer wrongly assumes" to substitute their internal reactions for what I have written.

It is not until Chapter 15 that I move from recounting what scripture and church leaders wrote or said to assume the proposed new view is true. That chapter opens with this explanation: "For purposes of this chapter, I am going to assume the church never obtained the fullness offered by the Lord in Nauvoo." Then I give all the reasons why I would choose to believe, and remain faithful to the church. That is the point at which my voice emerges into the narrative. It comes to quiet alarm, reassure belief and to muster support for the church.

Eventually the furor will calm down and the book will have a dispassionate reading. When we finally get there, people will wonder why the reactions were so overwrought. I hope the many things now written by the pseudo-defenders of Mormonism remain available, so they can inform future saints on how to react with less fear toward unwelcome ideas.

The purpose of *Passing the Heavenly Gift* it to awaken all of us to how delicate a proposition it is to live faithfully. Perhaps the most offensive character treatment is given to Heber J. Grant. The offense is taken from his own hand, recorded in his own diary, preserving his own mother's criticism of him. But those are his words and the words of his mother. I defend him and praise his candor and honest introspection. My voice praises the man; his condemns. The distinction between these two voices is altogether lost on at least one of the most harshest reviewers of *PTHG*. His quarrel is not with me. It is with others.

I would suggest that it is better to take a look at the source material and consider that, and leave me out of the equation.

The Nauvoo Temple was not complete. Ever. Nor did they perform any endowment in a completed structure. When they left Nauvoo after shutting down the rites, they prayed to be allowed to complete the Temple so they might be able to dedicate it. The next day the attic caught fire and the area where the endowment had been performed was badly damaged. While they re-covered the roof, the attic was not repaired. Finally they abandoned work and "considered it complete enough to dedicate." These events are chronicled and the sources quoted. In light of Section 124, those events matter. I was hoping to provoke some effort to examine those facts. Instead all I see are personal attacks directed at me borne out of ignorance and insecurity. Your insecurities do not belong to me. When you react to the book by attacking me, you expose your own doubts.

We should confidently state the case for Mormonism. I've done that in *PTHG*, even with historical lacunas in our story lines. If a reviewer wants to react to the events, then it would be a better service to everybody, myself included, to fill in the missing connections.

Posted by [Denver Snuffer](#) at [8:45 AM](#)



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