



Approaching Zion

Hugh Nibley, Don E. Norton (Editor)

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Approaching Zion is LDS scholar and social critic Hugh Nibley's most popular book. More accessible than many of his scholarly works, it is replete with Nibley's trademark humor and startling insights into history, religion and life.

Well known and beloved in its text form, most of the essays in this book were originally delivered as speeches. This audio version, read by the author's son, Thomas Hugh Nibley, evokes the original delivery of Hugh Nibley the speaker with his slashing wit, profound scholarship, and burning faith.

In Approaching Zion, Hugh Nibley gives thinkers reason to believe, and believers something to think about.

Approaching Zion Details

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From Reader Review Approaching Zion for online ebook

Aaron says

Nobody returns to Eden; upon expulsion, the destination is Zion. But what does it look like? And how do we build it? In what may have been the least popular of his works (Ayn Rand would've detested it), Nibley expounds on the proper relationship between faith and diligence, as well as the role of gifts in the economy of heaven and earth. He counsels those who worry about their careers (don't) and examines the individual's definition of surplus. He dissects those enigmatic phrases attributed to Zion: one heart, one mind, no poor, laborers laboring for its sake.

Split into essays; great Sunday read.

Ren says

I admire Hugh Nibley for his autodidact style of learning. But regarding the subject of this book, I admire him even more. He challenges the cultural financial customs of our religion and condemns it by walking his talk. Truth is hard and he delivers it. Am I guilty of it? Yes, guilty as charged. But as they say the first step is admitting fault and having a strong desire to change. Therefore I take no offense and can only applaud him for going against the grain. My favorite kind of person.

Karrie Higgins says

As a non-Mormon living in Salt Lake City, I have spent the past several years trying to figure this place out. As a psychogeographer, I knew I had to get to the heart of this place through its geography. I became fascinated and obsessed with the layout of the city and the original Zion Plat. This inquiry led me to Nibley, where I not only confirmed some of my intuitive interpretations of this place, but also discovered a whole new way of seeing and understanding Zion, faith, and "place" in a broader sense. Nibley has become an essential part of my personal philosophy and way of knowing the world, even though I do not share his faith, and I think that is pretty amazing. He also happens to write beautiful prose with stunning, revelatory insights.

Teri says

This is the first work I've ever read by Hugh Nibley (and it is a collection of various speeches, so there is quite a bit of repetition and rough organization from speech to speech). I went into it with no preconceived notions, and I didn't know anything about his political leanings. But after the first page, it was pretty clear where he stood. After reading Nibley (on the political left) and Cleon Skousen (political right)-- two men I see in parallel, though they are on opposite sides of the political spectrum-- all I can say is there are times when we need to be careful about framing our doctrinal interpretations through a modern political lens. Both men are guilty of this. Both provide ample scriptural (and sometimes obscure general authoritative) evidence to support their points. The reader needs to discern the truth behind their propositions and not defer their own

ponderings on the subject just because both are great scholars. Even scholars can get it wrong (if you're a hammer, everything looks like a nail...)!

One such proposition of Nibley's was that we should all return to an agrarian lifestyle like Adam had. He believes it's what the Lord intended for man. While I find the "Little House on the Prairie" lifestyle as romantic as the next person and wouldn't mind living that way myself, I don't think it's practical; nor does it take in to account the gifts and stewardships of those reserved for these latter technological days-- surely the Lord has prepared the current generation beforehand for the current work, just as surely as He prepared earlier generations for theirs. And, to my knowledge, Nibley was not a farmer, himself! Yet he tells us that that's what we should all be. Sniff!

Nibley was anti-wealth as well. I was somewhat amused and somewhat horrified by Nibley's story about his father, how he cut down the redwood trees on their property for short-term wealth, thus depriving future generations of these magnificent trees. I don't know if I was more horrified by the loss of such trees, or by how Nibley was willing to throw his own father under the bus to make a political point! For all his talk about the evils of the pursuit of wealth, I couldn't help notice that his books have a very high price tag... even the Kindle edition of this book is \$23 (and most of his other books are even higher). So much for the evils of the pursuit of wealth! I can only presume that at these prices, Nibley did quite well for himself.

I did enjoy the 11th chapter of this book (Three Degrees of Righteousness from the Old Testament). This is where Nibley shines for me, when he brings in the scholarly historical works and the meanings of the original Hebrew texts. This is the material I'm personally looking for and where I find the most benefit, and not in the commentary that supports a modern political ideology. I was also somewhat disappointed that very few of these speeches actually dealt with the concept of Zion, which is why I bought the book in the first place.

Greg says

I find the repetition in this book tedious. Whole sections are lifted from one talk and included in another verbatim.

Nibley's disdain for hard work and self reliance flies in the face of much that I hear in General Conference. His myopic black and white view of everyone who pursues an occupation versus giving themselves over to full-time study, as Nibley did, is a bit off-putting.

I don't consider Spencer W. Kimball wicked for owning a radio station or being an insurance salesman. I don't think Gordon B. Hinckley was evil while working as an employee of the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad. I believe there can be a difference between seeking riches and working hard at your job. I don't find this distinction noted in *Approaching Zion*.

Nibley has some good ideas, but his presentation lacks objectivity and balance. I appreciate that as we seek for riches we distance ourselves from Zion, but I believe we do the same when we shirk responsibility for providing for our families.

He frequently quotes, "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin..." without ever including, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread..." The gospel I believe in embraces both concepts of hard work and trying to bring about Zion.

Wow, now he is bashing Reagan and those who unthinkingly voted for him over Mondale in 1984. Apparently Reagan winning 49 of 50 states just shows how stupid the majority of the country was. Of course, Nibley was in the brilliant, but limited minority. I guess even geniuses can be woefully wrong.

Deanna says

Reread 2015

This book has had me thinking and discussing with my husband and some friends for weeks. This book has changed the way I look at the world. I've had to dig deep inside myself and ask myself the hard questions of my own and my family's pursuit of Zion.

You could read and read this and get something new out of it every time. I'm so glad that I read it.

There are a couple of things that I don't know how I feel, but I could be just not "there" yet either. I can see a danger perhaps of looking beyond the mark. All things in moderation.

Regardless this has changed my perspective and given me too many "a-ha's" to count.

Chris says

Nibley writes interesting stuff. When I first read some of his work on Mormons and political economy, I was a little offended. At the time I was still stuck in my conservative world-view, so nothing he said rang true.

I think Nibley has many interesting things to say about how Latter-Day Saints ought to engage our economy. I disagree that it should be fundamentally based in agriculture, but some of the principles he discusses, such as cooperation in investing in capital (instead of a combine, perhaps neighbors could share a nice lawnmower or something?). He does spend a lot of time wishing the economy was more like it "used to be," and he'd probably downplay the insights of modern political economy applied to his ideas (as well as the ones he lifts from Brigham Young and other LDS leaders).

Nibley may play a little too fast and loose with his quotations and conclusions from speeches given by the leaders of the church. He argued that S.W. Kimball opposed the MX missile being placed in Utah as well as favoring environmentalism. The citation given, to a First Presidency message in the Ensign, neither clearly opposes the missile system nor endorses environmentalism. He similarly treats a snippet from a Steven L Richards talk at BYU which becomes the jumping off point for Nibley's treatise on anti-careerism. Richards said something about how being career minded was a bad thing, and Nibley bemoans BYU's shift toward supporting "careerism" and the singlemindedness of being in the same career for one's lifetime. Nibley might be on to something, but arguing that one line in a Steven L Richards talk at BYU doesn't reflect the "old" perspective at BYU.

In the end, his ideas are worth reading, if nothing else, as a check on the libertarian economic spirit that

seems to go hand in hand with many folks' idea of what it is to be a Latter-day Saint.

JJ says

This is not the smoothest compilation of the Hugh Nibley Collected Works series. There is more repetition and less organization in this one.

However, I gave it a high score, because its message is so powerful, and actually changed my world view significantly.

Of all of his works, I think Approaching Zion has more personal opinions expressed by Nibley, including some of his political views related to current events, which stand in stark contrast to his normal scholarly approach.

However, the book is more likely to change your life for the positive than any of his other books.

Peter Wolfley says

Hugh Nibley is my academic man crush. The man is equal parts intelligence and wit. This book has been a real perspective changer for me. It has helped me come to terms with my choice of major and start thinking and focusing on things which are of eternal importance. Reading this collection has given my scripture study a major boost. It has rekindled my religious curiosity and commitment to Zion.

Jon says

For some reason I've been drawn to Nibley's books since I was undergraduate at BYU many years ago. Recently a friend told me about the subject matter in this particular one and I decided it was time to read this.

This book touched me more deeply than any book other than holy writ itself. That was a surprise. Mr. Nibley discusses things that I don't hear anyone else talk about. He fearlessly calls out the evils of materialism in all of its forms. The beautiful Wasatch Front has sacrificed its beauty for some short-term monetary gain. He doesn't even spare his own grandfather, whom he actually speaks very favorably of.

My experience reading this book surprised me, to put it mildly. Some have complained about the repetition of the stories and examples from chapter to chapter. Get over that and absorb the subject matter. This wasn't written as a book; it's a compilation of talks given over many years. So naturally he may use of the same explanations. From my point of view, nobody else talks about these things so convincingly and with such passion. So I was happy to read through many of his examples multiple times to help me understand what he was saying.

Be advised that this book is freely available broken into chapters from the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship website hosted by BYU. (Just do a search using these words and you'll easily find it.) They are the holders to the copyright, so I guess they are happy to share. You can copy the chapter, paste it into a word document, then e-mail it to your Kindle. (Now maybe there's a way to drop a donation to them

for providing such wonderful words for free!)

Claudia says

I listened to this book on my IPOD while traveling. I think it may be an abridged version. It was very thought-provoking and since I had the book on my shelf, I decided to read it so I can make notes in the margin, underline, etc.

Whew! I just completed this book and I'm glad. It contains 18 chapters, each a transcript of various talks given by Nibley in a variety of venues. They are not edited to avoid repetitions and there are plenty of repetitions. I found it tedious reading the same things over and over and found myself thinking "Not this again" numerous times.

Nibley is definitely outspoken and I don't agree with him on everything but the book is thought provoking.

Carole says

Hugh Nibley was a very highly-regarded scholar in the Mormon church. This is a long book, so it gets a long review.

He did not originally write this as a book. It's a collection edited by FARMS of all the lectures that Hugh Nibley has given related to the Law of Consecration - the idea that the true practice of Christianity should be in a utopian society. Since it's intended to be a complete collection of lectures, it can be pretty repetitive - if he gave a nearly identical lecture to two separate audiences, both versions are included.

It was kind of cool and refreshing to see how Hugh Nibley was a total radical. He was pretty outspoken in his criticism of specific political and business leaders in Utah (maybe even to the point of being uncharitable?). He was very critical of BYU, but stops short of actually criticizing the Church itself. It's fun to read talks from a prominent Mormon in the 1980s that is so anti-capitalism, anti-war, and environmentalist. That alone probably made it worth reading - just for the validation that my liberal views are consistent with my religious beliefs (Ha! I knew it!)

A lot of what he says gets pretty extreme - he seems to condemn the pursuit of any profession that wouldn't be useful in a perfect utopian society (he's especially got it in for Lawyers, but he even calls out dentists). I almost felt like he was saying that any career outside of academia or the arts shows a lack of faith in God's willingness to provide for all of one's needs.

It could be that he expressed himself in such extremes in order to counter what he saw as the even more extreme prevailing attitude among members of the Church: that God wants us to seek wealth and that wealth is a reward for -and therefore sign of- righteousness. He points out that the scriptures do not support this idea in any way and that the pursuit of wealth is absolutely incompatible with serving God. In several of these lectures, he mentions that the meaning of the word, "Mammon" as in "You cannot serve God and Mammon" is "business."

Which brings me to another problem with the readability of the book. The mammon thing was helpful, but a

lot of the pages and pages of linguistic and historical side-notes are not. They're fun trivia and it's impressive that he is so knowledgeable, but for me at least, it bogged down the discussion and tended to distract from rather than reinforce his point. It almost gives the book sort of a stream-of-consciousness quality. This would work better in a lecture than in a book - which is what this book originally was, so that makes sense.

There were a lot of little things here and there that I tended to disagree with, but if I had to summarize the point of the whole book, it would pretty much boil down to two points that did resonate with me.

- 1) The reason we are here on this earth is to acquire knowledge, experience, and wisdom. Not money.
- 2) You can't follow God half-way. God expects total commitment.

James Davis says

Friends who love the gospel and identify issues with left/right politics kept recommending this book so I thought it would at least be an interesting read. It was. However, I found that, while true that snippets of Nibley's independent thinking periodically shone through, for the most part he was trying to mesh the distorted philosophies of modern liberalism with the purity of the gospel. Just like many other philosophies, while there is some overlap there are some major flaws.

Nibley's main thesis is that if we have faith in God then God will provide for our needs. He advocates strict and total consecrationism as the only true and holy economic system that a righteous people ought to live by. I agree with all of this. These are basic doctrines of Mormonism. Where Nibley starts losing me is when he contradicts himself, the scriptures, the prophets, and engages in logical fallacies.

- D&C 121 and Nibley himself point out that force is not God's way and yet, when it comes to economics, much like today's statist - Nibley advocates and alludes to some policies that require the aggression/violence of government to enforce on peaceful people.
- He never explains how we can escape Babylon and live on this free lunch. He himself was never Babylon-free. Gandhi was and, while he wasn't perfect, it gave him moral authority when he preached it.
- Nibley fails to counter-argue some very basic Mormon beliefs that aren't convenient to several of his arguments: It's a commandment that by the sweat of our brows we shall eat our bread (Moses 5:1); Private property, which Nibley decries, is advocated in canonized scripture as a Mormon belief: D&C 134:2 as well as by multiple modern-day prophets/general-authorities (read Marion G Romney's conference talk which the first presidency asked him to give titled Socialism and the United Order); He never brings up the fact that two people can mutually benefit by peacefully exchanging goods or services with each other. He consistently reviles any business transaction or market economy as extortion and evil. Not only is this faulty logic, it also contradicts the teachings of every modern-day prophet that we ought to be industrious and not live on the dole.

Some of Nibley's fallacies are as follows:

- *Some business men are scummy who will take advantage of anyone for their own gain therefore all business is reprehensible.* (faulty cause fallacy; sweeping generalization fallacy, straw man fallacy)

- *If you engage in any sort of occupation outside of education or the arts then you're working under Satan's system.* (bifurcation fallacy)
- Only criticizing republican politicians and business people but never anyone else (ad hominem fallacy).
- He deplored private property in the context of slavery but then went on using the same term when referring to ownership of any sort of property (equivocation fallacy)
- *Brigham Young has my back that equality and the law of consecration is good therefore any opposition to government equality is disagreeing with God* (appeal to authority fallacy). Interestingly, even though Nibley uses much of Brigham Young's criticism of greed and advocacy of consecration, he left out any of Brigham Young's free-enterprise quotes.
- *The scriptures don't advocate property rights and its writings are constantly warning against the rich impoverishing the poor THEREFORE property ought to be owned and controlled communally* (non-sequitur). As pointed out previously, he's outright wrong about this. The scriptures and prophets have taught us that individuals ought to have the right and control of property.

Joseph says

What I love most about Nibley is that he rails on mormon culture, and he's in every position to do so. Nibley opened my eyes to the sin of extortion, in the old sense of the word, not modern day extortion. The sin runs rampant in the world, especially in the riches-seeking communities of Mormondom. Its taught at BYU as a good principle, better known as "smart business". Maximize profits. Get rich. Increase the income gap. Get yours. The question "Do you oppress the hireling in his wages?" used to be asked of the members of the Church, but not anymore, and good thing too because nobody would have a temple recommend. I could go on about this book, because extortion is just a small part of it. I guess why I like this book so much is because it opened my eyes to many things that I've been taught growing up in Utah Valley as "good things", when actually they're quite not.

Alan says

Rating: 4.5 stars

Pros and Cons

Cons:

-The book is apocalyptically repetitive. 600+ pages probably could have been reduced significantly. The reason for the repetitiveness is that the book is a collection of speeches or essays given by H. Nibley; therefore, you get some cross contamination. I would have given the book 5 stars if it weren't for this.

-Some of the book is very "scholarly" and may not be for everyone.

Pros:

The book is extremely insightful in relation to the progression of the LDS Church.

Main message of the book: Zion & Bablyon, oil & water, they don't mix. We will never build Zion while being in Satan's power (Bablyon).

I will quote a few passages from the book to demonstrate some of the ideas put forth.

Is the Church, anywhere near ready to go and build Zion? He quotes Brigham Young at length...

Pg 35

"They have not learned 'a' concerning Zion; and we have been traveling now forty-two years, and have we learned our a, b, c's? . . . I will say, scarcely. Have we seen it as a people? How long shall we travel, . . . how long shall God wait for us to sanctify ourselves and become one in the Lord, in our actions and in our ways for the building up of the kingdom of God, that he can bless us?" "How long, Latter-day Saints, before you will believe the Gospel as it is? The Lord has declared it to be his will that his people will enter into covenant, even as Enoch and his people did, which of necessity, must be before we shall have the privilege of building the Center Stake of Zion."

This was one of the last public addresses of the prophet Brigham, and the people were still not ready to go all the way. They still wanted to mix Babylon and Zion; or, as he put it, "Some of the Latter-day Saints had an idea that they could take the follies of the world in one hand and the Savior in the other, and expect to get into the presence of the Lord Jesus." 28 Such heaping up gold and silver would prove their destruction. 29 Again and again the Lord had to rebuke even Joseph Smith for little concessions to the world: "You have feared man and have not relied on me for strength as you ought" (D&C 30:1). "Your mind has been on the things of the earth more than on the things of me, . . . and you . . . have been persuaded by those whom I have not commanded; . . . you shall ever open your mouth in my cause, not fearing what man can do, for I am with you" (D&C 30:2, 11). "How oft you have transgressed the commandments and the laws of God, and have gone on in the persuasions of men. For behold you should not have feared man more than God" (D&C 3:6-7).

Pg 333-334

This is one of the last speeches Brigham Young gave: "Many professing to be saints seem to have no knowledge, no light to see anything beyond a dollar or a pleasant time, or a comfortable house, or a fine farm." These have their place, but what do we enjoy? "O fools, and slow of heart to understand the purposes of God and his handiwork among his people."

Go to the child, and what does its joy consist in? Toys, we may call them, . . . and so it is with our youth, our young boys and girls; they are thinking too much of this world; and the middle-aged are striving and struggling to obtain the good things of this life, and their hearts are too much upon them. So it is with the aged. Is not this the condition of the Latter-day Saints? It is. What is the general expression through out our community? It is that the Latter-day Saints are drifting as fast as they can into idolatry.

This was all Brigham Young could preach in his last year: "fast into idolatry, drifting into the spirit of the world and into pride and vanity." "We wish the wealth of things of the world; we think about them morning, noon and night; they are first in our minds when we awake in the morning, and the last thing before we go to sleep at night." "We have gone just as far as we can be permitted to go in the road on which we are now traveling. One man has his eye on a gold mine, another is for a silver mine, another is for marketing his flour or his wheat, another for selling his cattle, another to raise cattle, another to get a farm, or building here and there, and trading and trafficking with each other, just like Babylon. . . . Babylon is here, and we are following in the footsteps of the inhabitants of the earth, who are in a perfect sea of confusion. Do you

know this? You ought to, for there are none of you but what see it daily. . . . The Latter-day Saints [are] trying to take advantage of their brethren. There are Elders in this Church who would take the widow's last cow, for five dollars, and then kneel down and thank God for the fine bargain they had made." This is the great voice of the economy of Babylon. It does not renounce its religious pretensions for a minute. Many in it think they are identical with a pious life.

Now to Brigham's final word—his last speech, as a matter of fact:

Now those that can see the spiritual atmosphere can see that many of the Saints are still glued to this earth and lusting and longing after the things of this world, in which there is no profit. . . . According to the present feelings of many of our brethren, they would arrogate to themselves this world and all that pertains to it. . . . Where are the eyes and the hearts of this people? . . . All the angels in heaven are looking at this little handfull of people, and stimulating them to the salvation of the human family. So also are the devils in hell looking at this people, too, and trying to overthrow us, and the people are still shaking hands with the servants of the devil, instead of sanctifying themselves, [given a choice between the two].

We are being pulled in two directions, he says; all the powers of heaven are looking to us, waiting for us to perform our mission; the devils are looking at us to fail in it, and we are shaking hands with them, instead of the other way around. "When I think upon this subject, I want the tongues of seven thunders to wake up the people."

Does the LDS Church have enough people that have sufficiently worthy to enter into a covenant like Enoch did? Can you or I honestly say we are ready to abide the presence of the Lord in Zion? It is our responsibility to prepare ourselves to become a Zion people...

Pg 29

"When we conclude to make a Zion," said Brigham Young, "we will make it, and this work commences in the heart of each person." Zion can come only to a place that is completely ready for it, which is to say Zion must already be there. When Zion descends to earth, it must be met by a Zion that is already here: "And they shall see us; and we will fall upon their necks, and they shall fall upon our necks; . . . and there shall be mine abode, and it shall be Zion" (Moses 7:63-64). Hence, President Young must correct a misunderstanding among many of the Saints who "gather here with the spirit of Zion resting upon them, and expecting to find Zion in its glory, whereas their own doctrine should teach them that they are coming here to make Zion,"⁴ that is, to make it possible. "The elements are here to produce as good a Zion as was ever made in all the eternities of the Gods."⁵ Note that Zion is an eternal and a universal type and that the local Zion, while made of the substances of this earth, "shall come forth out of all the creations which I have made" (Moses 7:64). "I have Zion in my view constantly," said Brother Brigham, making it clear that Zion for this earth is still an unrealized ideal of perfection. "We are not going to wait for angels, or for Enoch and his company to come and build up Zion, but we are going to build it,"⁶ so that we will be ready. If we did not have a responsibility for bringing Zion, and if we did not work constantly with that aim in view, its coming could not profit us much—for all its awesome perfection and beauty, Zion is still our business and should be our constant concern.

Over time, is the Church converging with Babylon or with Zion? Is it coming closer to Zion or further away? Is money, wealth, power, and glory becoming a larger part of the lives of the members or a lesser?

Pg 279-280

"Israel, Israel, God is calling," we often sing, "Babylon the great is falling." But we have taken our stand between them; Brigham Young speaks of Latter-day Saints who want to take Babylon by one hand and Zion by the other—it won't work. Since World War II, it seems that we have been steadily converging with

Babylon while diverging from some of the old teachings.

Well, it has all been foreseen and prophesied. "Wherefore, fear and tremble, O ye people, for what I the Lord have decreed . . . shall be fulfilled" (D&C 1:7). I find it highly significant that all the prophecies of the Millennium specify that it must be immediately preceded by tremendous destructions, a royal house-cleaning, with the vapors of smoke covering the earth and all the tribes of the earth, no matter how far removed, in mourning.

Pg 401

So what is our present condition? Can you imagine a more horrendous paradox than "Zion, the Fraud Capital of the World"? Saith the Lord, "You have many things to do and to repent of; . . . your sins . . . are not pardoned, because you seek to counsel in your own ways. . . . Your hearts are not satisfied. And ye obey not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness" (D&C 56:14-15). What unrighteousness? The explanation follows: "Wo unto you rich men, that will not give your substance to the poor, for your riches will canker your souls [the scriptures call wealth a cancer, a pernicious, malignant growth]; and this shall be your lamentation. . . . The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and my soul is not saved!" (D&C 56:16). This time of probation is to be taken seriously, for the poor as well if they too seek riches (D&C 56:17). What the Lord insists on is that all who qualify must be "pure in heart" (D&C 56:18).

Overall, H. Nibley makes a convincing case of our awful state before the Lord. How many of the LDS faithful assume that we at some arbitrary point are all to be called to go to Zion to build it up? Or will the call be issued when we have enough Zion worthy people?

Additionally, H. Nibley is very critical of our capitalistic economic system as we know it (aka Babylon, aka the adversary's kingdom, i.e. "you can buy anything in this world with money"); however, I do not believe he is advocating some kind of socialistic economic system as a replacement. Zion is something different altogether, i.e. something that can only exist with a group of Zion worthy individuals. He doesn't advocate a broken socialistic system built on corruption like the one we are sold as an alternative to our capitalistic system, but something much much greater. What we have here on this earth essentially amounts to two bad choices from the Adversary, i.e., Babylon vs a ridiculous Zion counterfeit (pseudo Babylon).

Furthermore, he makes several pleas in the book for an implementation of the Law of Consecration in the Church. I think he might be a little more optimistic than I am since I believe the Church has digressed since the last time we tried implementing the Law, therefore, what hope do we have over our ancestors. I believe the only hope we have is to live the Law on an (albeit incomplete) individual level before we can live it on a collective level.

At the very least, this book brought my own obsession with Babylon out of obscurity. If the Church is to ever build Zion, then it has A LOT of work to do, and will need to cast off its obsession with Babylon; otherwise, we are all in for a very rough ride.
