ditions or the direction of a highly educated clergy. This process had "less to do with the specifics of polity and governance and more to do with the incarnation of the church into popular culture" (p. 9).

Revivals, gospel music, the printing press, and the camp meeting all played a part in making the churches democratic. The Second Great Awakening did much to divide the American clergy between those who sought a noncreedal religion and those who ministered to the established churches. The success of the revivalistic clergy "may have been the most profoundly democratic upheaval in the early republic" (p. 226) (although Charles G. Finney, the leading evangelist during the Awakening, appealed also to congregations in the established churches, whom he influenced to democratize their churches).

By the early nineteenth century, the Christian Churches movement called "for a populist hermeneutic premised on the inalienable right of every person to understand the New Testament for him- or herself" (p. 73). Although in time, the Christian Churches developed their own theology, the belief that religious truth had to come from the people has continued to be an important legacy of their movement.

The Methodist move toward democratization came through lay preachers and the elimination of formal trappings. The Baptist preacher John Leland sounded like Thomas Jefferson when he argued against the value of creeds. He saw the common people as more like those who were attracted to Jesus during his ministry.

Following the Revolutionary War, large numbers of blacks were converted to Christianity. Black churches taught their members that they should be free and offered them dignity. When black ministers took charge of black congregations and successfully filled their pulpits, an important juncture in the history of the democratization of American Christianity had occurred.

After considering Joseph Smith's life and categorizing him as a visionary populist, Hatch gives considerable attention to the Book of Mormon. He contends that recent interpretations have failed to understand that the Book of Mormon made a strong case against the powerful, the rich, and the educated.

These two excellent books provide a comprehensive survey of an important but limited segment of religion in American history. At times each of these studies moves into the territory of the other. In one case, Hughes and Allen point out that certain churches in the South interpreted primordial times to justify slavery and, later, segregation; while Hatch presents evidence that the same churches were democratized by the influence of their black members. In another case, Hatch's study of the Methodists indicates clearly that they could have been included in Hughes and Allen's study of primitivism in American history.

Hughes, Allen, and Hatch have made here important contributions to the understanding of religion in American history, buttressing the argument that any effort to separate the study of religion from our understanding of society is to do violence to American culture.

BRIEF NOTICES

"Wild Bill" Hickman and the Mormon Frontier by Hope A. Hilton (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1988), xii, 144 pp., index, $9.95.

LOOKING BACK at the early days of the Church in the West, it is often difficult to sort out just what kind of lives our forebears lived. How much "wild West" was there in the West, how much frontier experience, and how much was tempered by the efforts of Church members to

import the amenities of the various cultures represented among those who came to Zion? Some of the early Saints had access to considerable "civilization," even though the vagaries of crops and weather imposed unavoidable hardships. Others, by choice or otherwise, had to deal with Indians and frontier elements in ways that were very much a part of the free-spirited, wilder "mountain man" traditions.

Hope Hilton has tried to sort out the contradictions that surround one of her ancestors, William A. ("Wild Bill") Hickman, who gained such a reputation as an outlaw that members of his family in later generations were often reluctant to mention his name. Motivated initially by curiosity about discrepancies between family traditions and Hickman's autobiographical *Brigham's Destroying Angel*, Mrs. Hilton has searched widely in original sources and has put together a fascinating and believable picture of a significant life on the Mormon frontier.

William Hickman was a convert to the Church in the early Missouri days. When he moved to Nauvoo to meet Joseph Smith in 1839, the Prophet was so impressed that he had the twenty-four-year-old Hickman immediately ordained to the Council of Seventy. Hickman joined Hosea Stout and Orrin Porter Rockwell as bodyguards for Smith. After the martyrdom, Hickman and a few others continued in a similar assignment for Brigham Young and other leaders during the move west.

By turns cattleman, wagon-train master, gold miner, lawman, lawyer, legislator, ferryman, and gang-leader, Hickman moved from close association with Brigham Young to increasing involvement with the rougher elements of the community. Excommunicated in 1868 and increasingly bitter, he vented his spleen in a "rough book" that accused President Young and many former associates of all kinds of malfeasance. He died in 1873 in poverty and pain in Lander, Wyoming. In 1934, with the approval of the First Presidency, a nephew performed a proxy rebaptism, almost one hundred years after Hickman's original decision to join the Latter-day Saints.

And the Moon Shall Turn to Blood, And the Earth Shall Reel to and Fro, And There Shall be a New Heaven and a New Earth by Anthony E. Larson (Orem, Utah: Zedek Books, 1983), 130–153 pp. and appendices, not priced.

WITH ONE EYE on the scriptures and the other on the sky, the author attempts to clarify enigmatic passages in the Old Testament and the Book of Revelation by comparing them with unconfirmed prehistoric accounts of solar system movements. He claims that the scriptures would not use idle imagery—the horrors and wonders spoken of have already or will eventually occur: planets on near collision courses, atmospheric activity resulting in manna and fire, the earth reeling, beautiful and frightening celestial configurations.

Irregular planetary movements and resultant worldwide disasters could possibly explain widespread early religious practices and symbolism. For instance, the nearly universal worship of Ba'al, the god of storm and destruction, could argue for consideration of Larson's theories. Scientists, of course, are skeptical about using scriptural and folkloric references to verify unusual cosmological events.

Myth, legend, and tradition, however, are rich in descriptions of celestial battles and do indeed chart the heavens controversially. Relying heavily on the 1950s writings of physician Ivan Velikovsky, Larson asserts that Jupiter and Saturn left their orbits in ancient times. Larson, following Velikovsky's research, assembled a significant body of examples of ceremonial activities from many cultures that seem to refer to planets out of alignment according to contemporary astronomy. Despite the scientific community denounciation and vilification of Velikovsky, Larson supports his conclusions.

Not for the casual reader, this highly speculative commentary on mythic traditions and symbolic systems requires

knowledge of the metaphors upon which religion is based. Compelling and thought-provoking, the triology challenges current scientific theories and may illuminate some esoteric biblical language.

The Political Theory of Liberation Theology: Toward a Reconvergence of Social Values and Social Science by John R. Pottenger (Albany: State University of New York, 1989), 264 pp., cloth, $44.50; paper, $16.50.

LIBERATION THEOLOGY emerged in Latin America during the late 1960s as a merger of Christian moral theology and radical, often Marxist, politics aimed at overturning the inequitably distributed wealth and oppressive governments in the Third World. Through the 1984 silencing of Leonardo Boff, a leading liberation theologian, and the recent closing of two seminaries advocating liberation theology in Brazil, the Catholic Church has repudiated the movement's excesses. Nevertheless, it remains a potent force within both Catholicism and Latin America.

Mormon thought has so far remained uninfluenced by liberation theology, but Mormon missionaries in Latin America have sometimes run afoul of the movement indirectly when they have been accused of being agents for imperialistic American policies and institutions. Thus, it would seem desirable for Mormons to become aware of the forces causing turbulence in that area of the world. Pottenger's book, though high in price and academic in tone, is one possible source of such information on the intellectual foundations of liberation theology, its history, and its leading advocates.