A powerful figure—both in physical and spiritual stature—Heber C. Kimball was nearly always at the cutting edge of the Mormon’s turbulent and fascinating early history. In an age before planes and cars, and just after the advent of railroads, Kimball traveled thousands of miles to preach and protect his faith. He experienced all of the trials and tribulations of the early Mormon Church and was driven away from five different homes. A man of relentless drive and steadfast devotion, Kimball was fiercely independent as well as shrewd and compassionate.

To provide a comprehensive and objective biography of Kimball since 1888, Stanley B. Kimball, Heber’s great-great grandson, shows us the man in all of his many dimensions—missionary, pioneer, preacher, politician, farmer, father, and husband. Of special interest is the author’s thorough treatment of Heber’s forty-three plural marriages, which are discussed in detail with objectivity, respect, and even admiration. The author’s research and writing took nearly a full decade, led him to every important region connected with Kimball’s life, and gained him complete access to all church, public, and private sources relating to Kimball.

CLAYTON’S SECRET WRITINGS UNCOVERED—Extracts from the Diaries of Joseph Smith’s secretary William Clayton, Modern Microfilm Company, P.O. Box 1884, Salt Lake City, Utah 84110, softcover, $3.00 plus postage.

Until recently the Nauvoo diaries of William Clayton have been unavailable to the public being locked in the “First Presidency’s Vault” in Salt Lake City, Utah. A BYU graduate student, Andrew Ehat, obtained permission to examine these writings over an extensive period. He gave a copy of these notes to BYU religion instructor, Lyndon Cook, who kept them in his campus office. A member of a BYU ward bishopric, who uses the office on Sundays, made unauthorized copies of these notes. A big fuss was the result, with investigations by BYU security, etc. LDS Church leaders are quite concerned over this, and those who have announced intentions to publish or have published copies of these notes have been threatened with legal action.

Jerald and Sandra Tanner, who have for many years published material relating to the LDS Church, obtained a copy of these notes and determined that the public should know what was being suppressed by LDS Church leaders. They had discovered that the actual excerpts from Clayton’s diaries could not be copyrighted. They took Ehat’s typescipt and deleted his comments, etc., printed only the actual excerpts from the diaries. This volume is a very significant contribution to understanding the Nauvoo era of LDS History. Interesting comments about plural marriage are useful. For example, Clayton remarks: “Wednesday 16, this A.M. J. [Joseph] told me that since E. [Emma] came back fro St. Louis she had resisted the P. [priesthood] in toto & he had to tell her he would relinquish all for her sake. She said she would [sic] given him E. & E. P. [Emily and Eliza Partridge] but he knew if he took them she would pitch on him & obtain a divorce & leave him. He however told me that he should not relinquish any thing. O God deliver thy servant from iniquity and bondage.

Other remarks about the many leaders vying for control of the church after the prophet’s death give valuable insights.

This is a most interesting reference tool.

BEYOND THE END OF YOUR NOSE—A Stimulating Bible Study Guide (L. Douglas Waldorf) Mark 4:22 Press, P. O. Box 302, Elizabeth City, NC 27909, 400 pages, paperback, $8.95.

This newly published book presents the Mormon viewpoint on about 20 points of doctrine, all supported by biblical evidences. No Latter Day Scriptures are used. It is intended for convincing Christians of the truth of Mormonism.

The author states, “This analysis of Christ’s true church has been prayerfully prepared as a simple guide for the honest seeker of God’s holy will. The scripture references are all from the Holy Bible (we used the King James Version), and is intended to serve only as a personal study guide for those who want to understand what they read... It is not intended that this guide to the scriptures should contain every possible reference to every subject, or that it should convert you to some new doctrine. It is presented only to help you find for yourself what has been from the beginning the word of God.”

Had I not read Waldorf’s introductory letter, which is separate from the book, I would be greatly confused at his intent and conclusion. I did not note anywhere in the book where the author admits to his being a Mormon, or that all of these proofs were intended to show the truth of the Mormon church. Nevertheless, he has done a good job of pulling together some strictly biblical information.

MARTIN HARRIS LETTER REVEALED

As we are going to press, the announcement was made that once again, a valuable church history related document has been discovered. This time it is a letter written by Martin Harris on January 13, 1873 from Smithfield, Utah. By this time Harris had returned to Utah and rejoined the LDS Church in full fellowship. In the letter Harris reaffirms his witness to the divinity of the Book of Mormon. The collector who has possession of this letter said he had obtained it about nine months ago, but the LDS Church’s announcement over the Conference weekend of changing the name of the Book of Mormon to include that it was another witness for Christ inspired him to reveal the letter.