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"In this groundbreaking and important volume Brown delves deeply into the many streams of thought that informed Smith's formulation of the life hereafter . . . a masterful look at this intriguing aspect of the Mormon worldview. This is must reading for students of the American religious tradition."

—*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

"[An] ambitious reinterpretation of the oft-misunderstood faith that [Joseph] Smith established."

—*Booklist*, starred review

"Brown ably tackles Mormon beliefs about death in a highly readable series of connected essays . . . He has covered the primary sources in depth and unearthed little-used materials to support his argument. Students of American religious history will be interested in this readable book as will a more general readership."

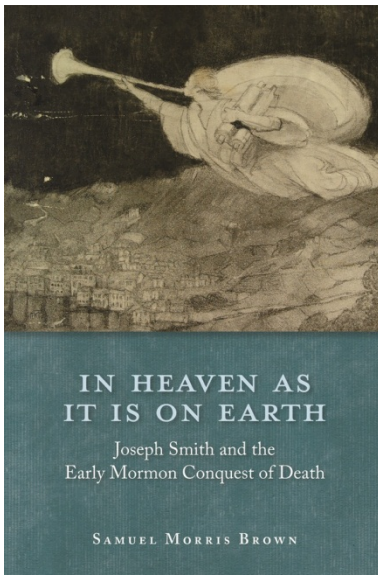
—*Library Journal*

"[T]his book is one of the most significant Mormon titles to come out in a while . . . an interesting and well-researched version of Mormon history . . . Brown's work is a major accomplishment and an example of where Mormon historiography is headed."

—*The Association for Mormon Letters*

IN HEAVEN AS IT IS ON EARTH

Joseph Smith and the Early Mormon Conquest of Death by Samuel Morris Brown



A compelling new interpretation of early Mormonism, Samuel Morris Brown's **IN HEAVEN AS IT IS ON EARTH: *Joseph Smith and the Early Mormon Conquest of Death*** (Oxford | January 5, 2012) views this religion through the lens of founder Joseph Smith's profound preoccupation with the specter of death and paints a detailed portrait of the social and religious milieu in which Smith proclaimed his new religious tradition and his very specific responses to the world.

Revisiting historical documents and scripture from this novel perspective, Brown offers new insight into the origin and meaning of some of Mormonism's earliest beliefs and practices. The world of early Mormonism was besieged by death—infant mortality, violence, and disease were rampant. A prolonged battle with typhoid fever, punctuated by painful surgeries including a threatened leg amputation, and the sudden loss of his beloved brother Alvin cast a long shadow over Smith's own life. Smith embraced and was deeply influenced by the culture of "holy dying"—with its emphasis on deathbed salvation, melodramatic bereavement, and belief in the Providential nature of untimely death—that sought to cope with the widespread mortality of the period. Seen

in this light, Smith's treasure quest, search for Native origins, distinctive approach to scripture, and belief in a post-mortal community all acquire new meaning, as do early Mormonism's Masonic-sounding temple rites and novel family system. Taken together, the varied themes of early Mormonism can be interpreted as a campaign to extinguish death forever. By focusing on Mormon conceptions of death, Brown recasts the story of first-generation Mormonism, showing a religious movement and its founder at once vibrant and fragile, intrepid and unsettled, human and otherworldly.

IN HEAVEN AS IT IS ON EARTH addresses the following questions:

- How did death affect the first generation of Mormons?
- What did these believers find in Smith's "dispensation" of divine light to prepare them for their encounter with the King of Terrors?
- What would their prophet's innovations and modifications of cultural themes have meant for them personally?

A lively narrative history, **IN HEAVEN AS IT IS ON EARTH** illuminates not only the foundational beliefs of early Mormonism but also the larger issues of family and death in American religious history.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Samuel Brown is Assistant Professor of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine at the University of Utah/Intermountain Medical Center and the translator of Aleksandr Men's *Son of Man*.

IN HEAVEN AS IT IS ON EARTH: *Joseph Smith and the Early Mormon Conquest of Death*
By Samuel Morris Brown, will be published, in hardcover, by Oxford University Press on
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