

two-edged pen reveals the returnee as not only educated but also snobbish and insensitive.

Although Marshall's characters tend to be provincial, they emerge as believable, familiar people, and their foibles are shown with no more malice than would occur in parlor talk about absent relatives held in affection.

The time of the stories is the recent present, but there is a pervading sense of past tradition and habit. The pioneer ancestors of the characters are there as ghosts in the background, and the feeling is enhanced by Marshall's occasional photographs of old Utah homes. These help, together with a few of his poems, to give the book a sense of unity.

The style of the stories is varied, and ranges from echoes of Sinclair Lewis, J. D. Salinger, and Sherwood Anderson to a manner reminiscent of the previously mentioned Lardner, Jewett and Howells. But such comparisons are not really fair. Marshall's own strong voice comes through constantly, and he has an uncanny ear for rural speech and an eye for significant detail in scene and artifact.

Some stories are stronger than others, but I doubt that readers will agree on which are the best. Plainly it is the best collection of stories about Mormon life that has yet appeared—another evidence of the naissance of Mormon literature.

James E. Talmage: A Personal History

JAMES B. ALLEN

The Talmage Story; Life of James E. Talmage—Educator, Scientist, Apostle. By John R. Talmage, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1972. 246 pp. \$3.95.

James E. Talmage was one of the most significant Mormon leaders in the early twentieth century. Internationally known scientist, outstanding educator, Apostle, and author of some of the most enduring theological works in the Church, Talmage has had permanent influence on the lives and thought of the Mormon people, and his life is one of those most worth studying.

The Talmage Story is a sympathetic, heart-warming, intensely interesting account of the life of James E. Talmage, written by his youngest son. It is not a scholarly work in the sense that scholars would expect interpretive analysis of the times and circumstances related to Talmage's career. Indeed, the author specifically denies any attempt at such interpretation, "this being the field of historians, who have devoted a great deal of attention to this era and doubtless will devote a great deal more in the future" (p. 88). But once scholars overcome their first blush of dismay at these omissions they, along with most other readers, should find much enjoyment from the book.

The omission of much historical analysis is serious enough, however, to warrant brief comment on what one might look for in a more searching biographical study of such a prominent Church leader. Only sixty-four pages are devoted to the twenty-two years that Talmage was a General Authority of the Church, while sixty-six pages are given to the first twenty-six years of his life and 108 to what might be termed the twenty-three middle years. The result is that the period in which he performed his most note-

worthy service to the Church is covered the most sketchily. This book is primarily concerned with Talmage's personal attributes: his perseverance, integrity, great capacity for work, and faith and loyalty to the Church. A more critical biography would discuss in some detail the great social, economic, and administrative problems confronting the Church in this period, and would consider not only Talmage's attitude toward them but also his role in the various approaches taken to them. It would also be concerned not only with the experiences involved in writing such important works as *The Articles of Faith* and *Jesus the Christ*, but also with the content of these works and what they contributed to Mormon theology. In addition, the historian might ask how these important treatises related to the great theological controversies in America at the time as well as to any theological discussions or controversies which may have been taking place among the Mormons themselves. One controversy, for example, which undoubtedly was of greatest interest to Talmage himself was the impact of Darwinism on American thought. The author of *The Talmage Story* alludes to it throughout, but makes no adequate analysis of the intellectual cross-currents which may have influenced or at least challenged people like Talmage. The author devotes two interesting pages (231-33) to Talmage's view on science and religion, but offers no adequate explanation of the origin, nature, or significance of the controversy. He reproduces some excellent quotations from Talmage to the effect that both science and religion are searching for truth and therefore ultimately must be reconciled, although he fails to tell us where these quotations came from. He might well have explained the tremendous secular challenge presented to Mormon theology by the theory of evolution and tell of some of the discussions in Church circles involving such prominent leaders as John A. Widtsoe and B. H. Roberts. He might then have observed that these significant statements by Talmage came from an important address given in the Tabernacle on August 9, 1931. The address, entitled "The Earth and Man," was considered important enough to print in the *Deseret News* on November 21, and then to reprint in pamphlet form. It concerned scientific theories on the origin of man and the doctrines of the Church, and Talmage discussed the contributions and inadequacies of both fields in understanding the story of man. Since Talmage had studied and taught geology, the address must have been a major one to him, even though he knew that it was controversial. Yet his son does not even mention it, let alone analyze its content and significance. To set the story of a man against a background of his times is an essential task of a great biography. That is why this work, as interesting and important as it is, only opens the door for a more thorough study of this great man.

In spite of this weakness, the reader should enjoy and appreciate *The Talmage Story* for the insight it gives into the character and personality of a truly impressive man. He was born in England and emigrated to Utah with his family when he was not yet fourteen years old. He was always an avid student, and at an early age came to the attention of the leadership of the Church because of his fine scholarship and outstanding ability as a lecturer. He attended Brigham Young Academy in Provo, became well acquainted with Karl G. Maeser, and then, after seeking the advice of the President of the Church, John Taylor, decided to further his education at

Lehigh University in Pennsylvania and later at Johns Hopkins University. A well-organized and dedicated student, he apparently left little time for social activity, but he did find time to successfully court the lovely Merry May Booth. The tender love between this couple is one of the touching stories in the book.

Talmage's professional career included being a teacher in the Brigham Young Academy, head of the Salt Lake Stake Academy, which soon came to be known as the Latter-day Saints College, a teacher at the University of Utah, and for a short time the president of that institution. He traveled to Europe to attend various scientific meetings, and was elected to a number of important scientific societies. During all this time he considered his duties to the Church as of primary importance, and he became a noted and sought-after lecturer in Utah on both scientific and religious subjects. Even before he became a General Authority of the Church he had published several items, including *The Articles of Faith*, *The Great Apostacy*, and *The House of the Lord*, that have taken their place among the most important works in Mormon literature.

John Talmage does an excellent job of impressing his readers with the tenacity, perseverance, and dedication of his father. James E. Talmage's personal study habits and devotion to duty could well be emulated by modern students, and his financial struggles while going to school and in his early days as a teacher will certainly strike a note of empathy among young scholars today. In addition, there are enough bits of humor to add the human touch so essential to appreciate such a man. In 1898, for instance, he was in England for scientific purposes and was asked to give a series of lectures to help the missionaries. This he agreed to do, but as he prepared to go to Glasgow, Scotland, he had to take a later train. It was clear that he would not arrive on time. Equally important, he would not be able to go to a hotel and clean up before being whisked off to his meeting, but he was dirty with soot and cinders and felt that he must somehow get clean before he arrived at Glasgow. Since it was a rainy night, there was nothing left to do but strip to the waist and have his companion hold his feet as he leaned out the compartment window and washed in the rain, so that by the time they arrived in Glasgow he looked "every inch the suave and polished platform performer." (p. 151)

One of the most intriguing contributions of this book is the fact that the author quotes extensively from the personal journals of James E. Talmage. Talmage was meticulous in keeping his journals and they are still apparently very much intact. Such journals are indispensable to the study of the history of the Church, and Talmage's in particular will throw most significant light on many important developments during his lifetime. Since he was always a man of integrity, his journals can make a positive contribution to the writing of the history of the Church. We look forward with anticipation to the day when the Talmage family will see fit to make them available for study in the Historical Department of the Church. Meanwhile, *The Talmage Story*, though falling short of the definitive study the subject deserves, is well worth reading.