

AMONG THE MORMONS

A Survey of Current Literature

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"OF MAKING OF BOOKS there is no end." These words from Ecclesiastes could as well be applied to the more than thirty thousand doctoral dissertations and an even larger number of master's theses completed in the United States in 1977. The tendency toward irrelevance and triviality sometimes evident in the "dissertation-mill" has been frequently commented upon in recent years. In the 16th Century, Erasmus made a similar observation:

I must acquire the absurd title of 'Doctor.' It will not make me a hair the better, but as times go no man can be counted learned unless he is styled 'Doctor.' If the world is to believe in me, I must put on the lion's skin. I have to fight with monsters and I must wear the dress of Hercules.

Although the scholarship in this survey of Mormon-related works seeks to avoid these pitfalls, it is inevitable that not all of it will endure, that most of these titles will fade into footnotes. But, taken together, they denote the growing concern of American scholars with every aspect of Mormon life and doctrine, past and present, and they underscore the continuing vitality of Mormon studies.

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