

man who speaks the truth about universal human experiences. No attempt is made to shape his experience or the Church to fit idealized preconceptions. Rather, we see an honest man who, like Joseph Smith, was satisfied from his own investigation that the competing religions of his day did not seem to have the truth. As he struggled with the routine challenges of life he kept an eye out for answers to his questions about higher matters. There is a world of difference in the level of sophistication of the world in which Pablo Choc was living when the missionaries found him and the world in which most missionary contacts live. But there is a similarity in feelings, the insights and the spiritual witness that he recounts when he observed the missionaries conducting a funeral for the mother of his Mormon friend, and then later as they came to his own humble home. As he tells of his conversion and his gradual affiliation with the Church, every honest reader will see his own experiences, his own life, his own temptations and his own victories. This story poses a challenge to wealthy and sophisticated

American and European members of the Church: For if one's heart is proud, and one despises the poor, here is a man he cannot despise. This uneducated Guatemalan Indian is our brother. He is an elder and a president of a branch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He has dedicated nineteen years of his life to the building up of the kingdom in his village. His oldest son, Daniel, was able to become a missionary with the support of \$100 a year which Pablo and others provided and his life was taken in an accident while he was helping members of the Church restore an earthquake-damaged home.

Palmer artfully joins diverse elements into an effective and coherent work. Although he does not raise the obvious questions that each reader must raise for himself, he seems to be saying that the membership of the Church around the world must ultimately embrace all their brothers and sisters in the equality of the Saints. Palmer's book carries many valuable messages, but this is one of the chief among them.

## *The Last Anecdotes*

*Deity and Death.* Edited by Spencer J. Palmer. Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1978, 156 pp. \$5.95.

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This book includes seven essays, divided into two groups. The first three essays, collected under the heading, "Death and Dying," deal with a variety of practices, attitudes and beliefs on the significance of death and appropriate ways of dealing with death. The last four essays, under the heading "Deity and the Divine", include a comparative study of ascension motifs, a comparison of the roles of reverence for life in Eastern and Western religions and studies on the origins and character of some major aspects of religious thought in Japan and China. While the range of topics discussed is very extensive, the combination is not

implausible. We might expect discussion of the institutions for dealing with death in a given society to reveal some important characteristics of predominant religious attitudes and beliefs in that society. And we might expect an investigation of religious attitudes and beliefs to explain some aspects of institutions dealing with death. All the essays are short, congenial and easily read. They tend to be anecdotal, with a potpourri of facts, conjectures and suggestions. The reader can come away with interesting tidbits such as he might gain from an evening's casual conversation with the authors. Such a conversation is not without its rewards, and if the collection is approached in anticipation of such rewards, it will be worth reading.

On the other hand, those who are seriously attempting to come to grips with the issues upon which these essays touch are likely to be disappointed. The information and suggestions could be made more sig-