

life—questions posed to induce reflection rather than to accuse or to threaten. Stressed are two life tasks: learning to love other people and acquiring knowledge. One is often reluctant to return to mortality and thereafter holds life more precious and no longer fears death.

Moody's writing is unpretentious and restrained. These qualities may enhance his credibility in the twentieth-century scientific community, which remains generally skeptical about after-death existence. Witness the fate of Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, the pioneer in death and dying. When she first sought to interview terminal patients on the medical wards in Chicago, the attending physicians glibly informed her that they had no patients who were dying. She persisted, acquired international fame, and has had her stages of dying become dogma in the field. But now that she has turned her attention to life after death, the recurrent murmur in the audience is that she has now flipped out and has lost her scientific credibility.

Moody takes pains to abstract general phenomena from descriptive accounts without adding excessive speculations or forcing the narratives to conform to preconceived notions. This sets *Life After Life* a niche above most other current writings on the topic. The out-of-body experience of Moody's medical school professor, Dr. George G. Ritchie (*Return From Tomorrow* [Carmel, New York: Guideposts, 1978]), is more detailed but remains an individual account. The purported dictation of William James through the spiritualist, Susy Smith (*The Book of James* [New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1974]) has fascinating thoughts but

lacks clear separation of original phenomenologic observations from interpretations and explanations. The observations are in accord with Mormon beliefs, but the conclusions, presumably drawn by James himself, might well represent the thoughts of a brilliant man in a lower order of existence who is not privy to the inner working of the entire plan. Less suspect and more readily available to the Mormon audience is the thick book of Duane Crowther (*Life Everlasting* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1967]). We find many of his accounts interesting but mistrustful because of uncritical mixing of folklore, hearsay and doctrine and because the material is forced into a preconceived Mormon belief system. For example, Crowther's introduction claims divine manifestations are available to a hierarchy of Saints from prophets down through stake presidents to faithful lay members of the Church—oblivious to non-Mormons and to the not-particularly faithful who also tell of life after life.

Moody explicitly says that he is "not trying to prove that there is life after death." However, most Mormon readers will most likely take literally the blurb from the cover jacket of the Bantam book edition and read his account as one that "actually gives history that reveals there is life after death." We view his description as a fugitive blink at another sphere of existence and not as an attempt to prove continuity of the soul. The accounts of life after death edify the believer, but could whet curiosity that distracts from the fullness of loving and learning here and now. We recommend this book but hope it does not make anyone so heavenly bound that they are no earthly good.

Herbs, Beeswax or Horsetail

Is Any Sick Among You? by LaDean Griffin. Provo: Biworld, 1975, 228 pp., \$8.95.

No Side Effects: The Return of Herbal Medicine by LaDean Griffin. Provo: Biworld, 1975, pp., \$7.95.

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These two books from our own Mormon culture are typical of a large number of similar publications in the lay press. Well meaning people who have found that modern medicine cannot cure everything are too easily attracted to the "testimonials" of other well meaning friends that there is a cure not known (or used) by conventional medical practitioners.

We all know how harmful "hearsay" or "gossip" can be, but these attempts to find unique or unusual medical cures can be considered little more. These, and similar publications, take advantage of how little the average person knows concerning the function of his own body. When such "herbal cures" are used for the treatment of the common cold little harm is done. For the diabetic patient, on the other hand, to believe that "golden seal acts like insulin" could lead to discontinuance of a life-saving medication and the unnecessary death of a parent or child.

Of particular danger to the Mormon population is the interweaving of church doctrine with "old tales" of cures by herbs, bees wax, or horse tail. Being a forward looking people we believe there

is much to be learned. That knowledge will come, however, through hard work and the inspiration which comes to those who have applied themselves to the knowledge which has already been given us, not to dreamers or self-styled healers.

If we believe in any type of science, the electricity that runs our homes, the engineering that produces our automobiles, or the chemistry that produces photographs, we should believe in the same science which gives us modern medicine. If on the other hand, we desire to return to infant deaths by the thousands from typhoid, whooping cough and pneumonia, we will turn our backs on the knowledge of modern science and medicine.

Every physician has felt sorrow for the patient who has been misled by such "home cures," who has postponed proper therapy for cancer or other serious disease until it was too late. The answer for those who have diseases not subject to cure by medical practice as we know it today is in the priesthood, not in those who would lead us to believe there is a middle cure somewhere in between.

COMING IN *Dialogue*

More on Medicine and the Mormons

"New Biology and Old Theology" by James L. Farmer, William S. Bradshaw and F. Brent Johnson

"Quackery and the Mormons" by L. Kay Gillespie

"Mormonism, Moral Epidemics and Homeopathy"
edited by Lester E. Bush, Jr.

"Living With Opposition in All Things" by Marvin Rytting

"Shifts in Restoration Thought" by Howard J. Booth

"The Supreme Court, Polygamy and the Enforcement of
Morals in Nineteenth Century America" by James L.
Clayton

"How Firm a Foundation" by Hugh Nibley



