

In Silence, She Speaks

Not in Vain by Susan Evans McCloud (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, Inc., 1984), xi, 209 pages, \$8.95.

Reviewed by Carolynne Cecil Berrett, registered nurse currently staff nurse for Upjohn, mother of six children, Young Adult Gospel Doctrine teacher, and lecturer on early Mormon medicine, including Ellis Shipp.

DR. ELLIS REYNOLDS SHIPP closed her unpublished autobiography with the words, "Great minds are they who suffered not in vain. . . . I do not feel my spirit great, but oh, I have suffered — and I pray it has not been in vain." From this statement by the second woman physician in Utah, McCloud chose her title. A study of Ellis's life, including the deaths of five of her ten children, reveals no hyperbole in her statement.

I am impressed with the way McCloud unravels the events of Ellis's life up to her years in medical school. From then on I am continually aware that she leaves more unsaid. It is apparent that McCloud's research is superficial and incomplete, sometimes causing her to make false assumptions.

For example, Ellis returns to medical school in Pennsylvania, pregnant. Her professors urge her to have an abortion. McCloud writes, "Ellis endured her Gethsemane. She prayed all through the night for strength and guidance, on her knees in her little attic room. As dawn broke through the window her answer broke through the veil of darkness. She knew what she had to do. She could answer them now, 'I came to learn how to save life, not to take it!'"

(p. 126). This narrative is misleading. Her own story makes it plain that she did not even consider abortion and instead immediately responded to her professors: "I came to save life, not to destroy it." She did indeed spend the night in prayer, but not as a result of indecision.

McCloud also neglects another significant incident that occurred during this tumultuous time. According to Nellie Shipp McKinney, Ellis's daughter, Ellis dreamed that her baby would be a girl born with one arm. This dream was disturbing as well as prophetic. Even though the baby, a girl, was not handicapped, years later Ellis would take into her home a young orphan girl named Augusta who had only one arm. Ellis wrote of her,

A little bird flew to my nest . . .
I clasped her fondly to my breast . . .
Each day she grew more dear . . .
She was a wounded, gentle dove . . .
[that] Now nestles 'neath my sheltered wing.

Ellis's story is not complete without Augusta, but McCloud does not mention her.

McCloud's meticulous precision in recording dates and putting the events of Ellis's life in chronological order is admirable, yet she treats those events without regard to their relative importance. On the one hand, she devotes considerable space to telling us about Ellis's trip to the Salt Lake Theatre to see *Camille*, describing the building itself in lavish detail (pp. 54-56) while covering some of the most significant experiences in Ellis's life in two or three short paragraphs, if at all.

An example is McCloud's treatment of the death of Ellis's child, Burt. Probably