

no other single event in Ellis's life so challenged her role as a physician, a mother, and a wife, but McCloud writes only that "According to family records . . . Burt Reynolds Shipp died. There is no mention of this in Ellis's notes or journals" (p. 139). Further research would have disclosed an incredible set of circumstances surrounding this son's death and the reason Ellis did not write of it.

An unpublished manuscript by Nellie Shipp McKinney tells this story, which Ellis's granddaughter, Lenore McKinney Hoskins, repeated in an interview to me. When Ellis left for medical school in Pennsylvania she had given birth to five children; only three survived. Leaving her ten-month-baby, Burt, devastated her, and she worried constantly over him. She would miss half of his life by the time she returned home. Soon after her return, Ellis was living with her children in her apartment-office when she received a despairing call from her husband. Thirteen of his children by his other wives had diphtheria. "Please come," he pleaded, "there is no one else." This cruel reality was true as so few doctors were available during this merciless epidemic, and many families were in quarantine. Ellis was willing to go but there was no one to leave her own children with, and somehow they had, so far, escaped the disease. Ellis prayed, pleaded, and agonized over reaching the only decision she could. She would put her children "in God's care" and go. She successfully nursed Milford's thirteen children back to health but her own son, Burt, was taken. Her grief went beyond her written

word. It was one of the few times, her family recalls, when she went to her knees asking, "Why, oh why, oh why?" Ultimately she was blessed with acceptance and was able to continue her life without bitterness.

McCloud merely skims the surface of the last half of Ellis's life, indicating that she must be unaware of the wealth of information available. Though no journals exist, numerous other sources in letters and in living descendants are available.

Nothing is said, for instance, of eighty-six-year-old Ellis hitchhiking around the West to organize nursing classes, preaching the gospel as she went. In a poem titled "The Wanderer," now in the possession of a granddaughter, Lucille Musser Jackson, Ellis gives us insight into these lonely years.

No home — No place on earth
to call my own . . .
Oh God in love, in mercy
from above
Send solace to thy
wandering child.

Not in Vain may leave the reader feeling that Ellis was an unhappy person. She was not. Her daughter Nellie remembered that her mother was not above a good practical joke. McCloud obviously has deep feeling for Dr. Shipp and transmits that feeling to the reader, but I felt as though I was reading a historical novel. *Not in Vain* is inspiring, well-written, and worth reading. However, because it is incomplete and sometimes inaccurate, its value as a historical document is limited, and the book cannot be considered an accurate or complete biography.

Faithful History

The Heavens Resound: A History of the Latter-day Saints in Ohio, 1830-1839 by Milton V. Backman, Jr. (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1983), 479 pp., \$13.95.

Reviewed by William D. Russell, chairperson of the Division of Social Sciences at Graceland College, Lamoni, Iowa.

MILTON BACKMAN, a professor of Church history and doctrine at Brigham Young University, has written a history of Mormonism in Ohio in the 1830s. He appears to have consulted virtually all of the primary sources pertinent to his subject. What emerges is a portrait of a people of great faith who experienced some very powerful

religious experiences. Their faith was so strong that they were willing to do whatever their prophet asked them to do—be it sell their homes and farms and move to another location, go on a mission, work on the construction of a temple, or enlist in a church militia and march halfway across the United States to fight their enemies.

Backman's intended audience—and probably those who will most enjoy the book—appear to be Mormons who are interested in the history of the Church. The uninitiated reader, though, sometimes requires explanations of unique terms which the author does not give. Non-Mormons who want to understand the faith of the early Mormons will find it a little tedious but useful, as the author concentrates a great deal on the revelations, doctrines, and spiritual experiences of the men of the Church during the Kirtland period.

The focus of the book is so much on the male Church leaders that the sensitive reader will wonder how Mormon wives responded to the expectations the Prophet made upon their husbands—and ultimately on them—as the wife must have ended up the primary breadwinner in many families. One is struck by the burden the women must have borne during all of this, but the author does not address this question.

Even the Prophet's wife goes almost unnoticed. Emma is first mentioned on page 44 where she merely "accompanied" her husband on the migration to Ohio. On page 150 we find her "in charge of sewing and cooking for the workers" on the temple. The third and final mention of her is in regard to the hymnal which she was called by revelation to prepare. In Backman's account she seems incompetent and reluctant to perform her task. The high council has to push her to get the job done, and they appoint W. W. Phelps to revise what she prepares before they have seen it. Contrast this portrait to that of the energetic and independent Emma in Linda Newell and Valeen Avery's *Mormon*

Enigma: Emma Hale Smith (New York: Doubleday, 1984).

Those of us who are RLDS should recognize that in the great schism of 1847–48, Brigham Young was loyal to Joseph while the dissidents who broke with the Prophet were the kind of people who later became RLDS. The RLDS Church ultimately rejected much of the Nauvoo period's products by Joseph Smith but has always been hesitant to admit it.

Also, isn't it time that all of us Mormons recognize as untrue our oft-repeated assertion that traditional Christianity held that revelation had ceased with the end of the apostolic age (pp. 4, 56)? Over the centuries Catholicism had many mystics as well as the doctrine that God spoke through the popes and the church Fathers. Protestantism also has a long tradition of contemporary revelation: the rise of pietism, the Quaker "inner light," the Great Awakening, and most importantly for Mormonism, the Second Great Awakening. Mormonism arose in the midst of an awakening in America in which persons were seeing visions, speaking in tongues, and giving physical expression to what were seen as divine manifestations.

I wonder how a historian can believe that the gospel preached by the early Mormons "was not new, but had been taught to the children of God in every dispensation, beginning with the first man, Adam" (p. 223). Mormons have seemed inconsistent here. On the one hand, we have taught that our pre-1844 church is a restoration of New Testament Christianity and that the true gospel was taught from antiquity. On the other hand, we believe in the need for continued revelation. Historians of the Judeo-Christian tradition recognize that New Testament Christianity and Mormonism cannot be equated, and historical evidence for the "antiquity of the gospel" is virtually nonexistent. Why not assert the obvious—that the religion that emerged in Palmyra, Kirtland, and Nauvoo was a creative new approach to religious

questions and organization? Why diminish the role of continued revelation by making it simply a restoration of that which was supposedly "lost"?

The book is "faithful history," and Backman is a good practitioner of the art. He sees the events in Ohio through the eyes of faith, especially faith in the Prophet Joseph Smith. When the Prophet announces revelations, they are clearly from heaven, accurately understood and explained by the Prophet. There is never a suggestion that the revelations might have reflected Joseph Smith's personality or interests. Problems within the Church are never the fault of its leaders, even when Joseph's illegal economic actions caused severe financial losses among the Saints. Rather, the people are proud and selfish, or don't fully understand the Prophet or his doctrines. Opposition from non-Mormons is the fault of non-Mormons, or, at worst, caused by the mistakes of *individual* Mormons acting on their own rather than marching in step with their prophet. The reader may wonder if the prophet ever erred.

As is generally true of faithful history, the author's central concern is for the institutional church. For Mormonism, this usually means a strong desire to protect the reputation of its leaders and especially the prophet. Such history can hinder the Church because it produces a misplaced faith in the humans who lead the institution rather than in God. By not allowing the prophet to err in his role as prophet and by being even somewhat reluctant to let him err in his human capacity (if we can separate the two), the faithful historian perpetuates the tendency in Mormonism to make gods of the men who lead us. For many, the result is ultimately disillusionment, when they become aware of the humanity of their leaders.

We should seriously consider whether Ezra Booth was right when he objected to the idea that people should pattern their lives after the revelations that one man received. Booth felt it would lead men into

a "state of servitude" and result in an "unqualified vassalage" (p. 95). For Backman, however, there is no question that the prophet acted properly when he extinguished the revelations of a woman named Hubble and limited to himself the power to receive revelations for the Church. That places tremendous power in one man. Backman does not comment on the political significance of this centralization of power or on the happy agreement between the content of the revelations and the Prophet's political self-interest. Might this exclusive authority have contributed to some of the abuses of power that occurred in Nauvoo? What were the internal effects of terming the newly created seventies a quorum "equal in authority to that of the Twelve" (p. 252) but then clarifying their place in the hierarchy as lower than that of the high priests, to say nothing of the apostles? (p. 253)

Another question which might profitably have been explored is who was or was not influential during various stages of the Church's development through this period. One might expect a discussion of Sidney Rigdon's influence on Joseph Smith. Did Rigdon's relationship to Alexander Campbell influence the decision in March 1831 to switch from the Old Testament to the New Testament in the translation of the Bible? Did the Campbellites's belief in the restoration of the New Testament Church come into Mormonism through Rigdon? Was early Mormon communitarianism influenced by the communitarian group previously existing in Kirtland under Rigdon?

The author also underplays human influences on the Prophet when he labels the Second Great Awakening "a powerful series of revivals in New England and frontier communities in Kentucky and Tennessee" but fails to mention the revivals in the state of New York in the 1820s by the greatest revivalist of the period, Charles G. Finney (p. 20). Any student of Mormonism should find Finney's *Memoirs* very interesting.

What does Joseph Smith's supreme confidence tell us? When certain Kirtland