

idealism. His father helps with a natural parable, "‘Maybe you think that the hawk is free as an angel,’ he said, ‘but he don’t get far from home,’" (p. 186) and by sending the boy on a mission as part of his planned trip to Salt Lake City: "‘After Mr. Burns takes you to Temple Square,’ he said, ‘tell him to let you walk down Second West Street. Go alone, and don’t you be afraid. Don’t you say anything or think anything bad about the people you see. And if someone comes up to you and asks you for a quarter, I want you to give him a dollar. Promise me right now you’ll give him a dollar’" (p. 190).

Most of these writers, like Wright in his probably autobiographical sketch, are more comfortable with the grace of moral passion than with the grace of spiritual

energy and conviction. But their honesty and hope, their desire "to enhance life rather than to depress it," as well as their professional skills and experience with great literature, lead them to allow both kinds of grace to show through in their stories. They are writing, in the main, "faithful fiction," fiction that compellingly images the courage to rebel, to be free of the compulsions and absurdities of orthodox religion—indeed of any structure. But it is fiction that just as effectively, and increasingly, images the greater courage to stay within a carefully chosen structure and to fight there for the only freedom that ultimately redeems, that which remains in tension with structure and which thus must be paid for with the terrible price of making covenants and keeping them.

From Mold Toward Bold?

A Woman's Choices: The Relief Society Legacy Lectures (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1984), viii, 189 pp., \$7.95.

Reviewed by Dianne Dibb Forbis, who holds a degree in commercial art from BYU and is marketing coordinator for a national wedding stationery firm based in Rexburg, Idaho.

THE SIGHT OF seventeen venerable women smiling confidently from the dust jacket is intimidating. I know I'd better like this book. Please let me like this book!

Well, it did prove motivating. One day after reading quickly through the first six lectures I launched myself into a frenzy of cleaning the likes of which my house had never known. On a second day I meandered to the end of the book, then found myself writing in my journal—not about the book but about me. Later that day I mused upon and poked at the beginning lines of an in-the-works poem that had lain inert for weeks.

Were my reactions due to inspiration or anger? Probably some of both. Here

was a concentration of the best of any pep talks for LDS women that are periodically heard through traditional Church channels. Here were the assurances in black and white, sanctioned by the august accomplishments of the women who mouthed the truisms: Each woman is important. Yes, there are difficult times. But, look, we all struggle with problems. Endure. Know yourself. Build on your strengths. Overcome your weaknesses. Choose to succeed.

It's all so heartening. It's all so sickening.

It made me glad. I've been assured again loudly that all wonderfulness is possible. And then again it made me mad. Those women make succeeding sound so easy, so blithely systematic in spite of trials.

This is a book to snack at, not swallow. But I did enjoy the snacking. The flavor seems right. I loved Beppie Harrison's reasonable look at the mother-in-the-home/mother-in-the-marketplace controversy. I appreciated her insights paralleling struggles at home with struggles in other arenas. Like Beppie, I am tired of hearing about spending quality time with children. I

enjoyed her comments on the benefits of quantity time. I have an inclination to memorize her entire essay and bestow special gems of thought upon my teenage daughters at opportune moments. In fact, immediately after reading the piece, I summoned to my side my seventeen-year-old prima donna and read to her:

I want to let all these young women, forming their ideas and looking forward to their lives, into a very well-kept secret. Nothing they can choose to do will *not* have moments of drudgery or boredom, maybe even of feeling trapped. Unfortunately, that is what most of life is all about: making the best of being bored, getting through the drudgery, finding internal freedom when our circumstances have us trapped. It all happens anywhere. It happens at home; it happens on the job; it happens simply because we're human beings in an imperfect world, surrounded by other human beings (p. 56).

She groaned. She's heard it all before. Is that why I so liked certain parts of the book? Because LDS women who had worked and chosen their ways into satisfying situations in life were saying things that I already believed? Is that why I was irritated at times by the book? Because I knew all this and hadn't yet acted to follow fully the magic formulas?

Predictably, in some of the lectures, much attention is given to the subject of how a woman can influence young people for good. A glance through the index verifies that the editor(s), at least, felt there were more memorable references to "children" than to any other topic. I disagree. Only five of the fifteen lectures dealt with adult-child relationships to any great extent.

In fact, I was disappointed with the indexing. A book such as this, if it is to be taken seriously, should assume importance as a resource work. LDS women should be able to find useful quotes for supporting the female slant on standard tenets and personal tendencies. As it stands, each

reader might have to rework the index for her own uses. As I read through the book, I noted page locations of some favorite concise statements. Then I went to the index to see if these were pinpointed under logical subject headings. They were not. I feel that the indexers skimmed the pages of this book and jotted down what might interest the stereotyped LDS woman of maybe twenty years ago.

One overall message of the book seems to be: You don't need to fit into a mold; explore and experiment—within the bounds of propriety. "If we want to live in . . . a blissful state here on earth, we . . . need to become converted—not to quilting or physical fitness or food storage or genealogy, but to the Savior and His ways, and to be His servants in bringing others into the light of the Gospel" (p. 178).

The reader is encouraged to find the best and then get involved deeply. "Mortality is our friend. We mustn't speed-read it, skimming its pages" (p. 110).

While checking again through the book to review what had struck me as especially powerful or clever, I was interested to find that many of those statements were quotations from other sources. Interested, I checked on just how many quotes from outside sources had been used.

The count averages to maybe one quote for every other page in the book. The quotes are not, of course, evenly dispersed throughout. Some of the women have depended heavily upon quotes; often a particular subject matter lends itself more naturally to such an approach. Other Legacy Lecture women seem to wing it happily without many footnoted securities, apparently confident that what they have to say needs little sanction from anyone else. One of my favorite pieces was the panel discussion, "Writer's Craft: Delight in the Ordinary," with Ardeth Greene Kapp, Vernice Pere, and Marilyn Arnold. These three women delighted completely in their own thoughtful discoveries. The only quotes were two short introductory quips. Sally

Brinton, talking about "The Blessing of Music in the Home," relies on no documentation from experts (other than one phrase from the thirteenth Article of Faith) to put across her points.

As long as I was tallying up outside quotes, I thought it might be enlightening to note from what general sources these admirable LDS women were pulling words of wisdom and direction. There are about ninety quotes in the book. These added-for-impact quotes originate quite evenly from three sources: scriptures, latter-day prophets and other Church leaders, and miscellaneous sources running the gamut from Willa Cather to Ronald Reagan to Zig Zigler.

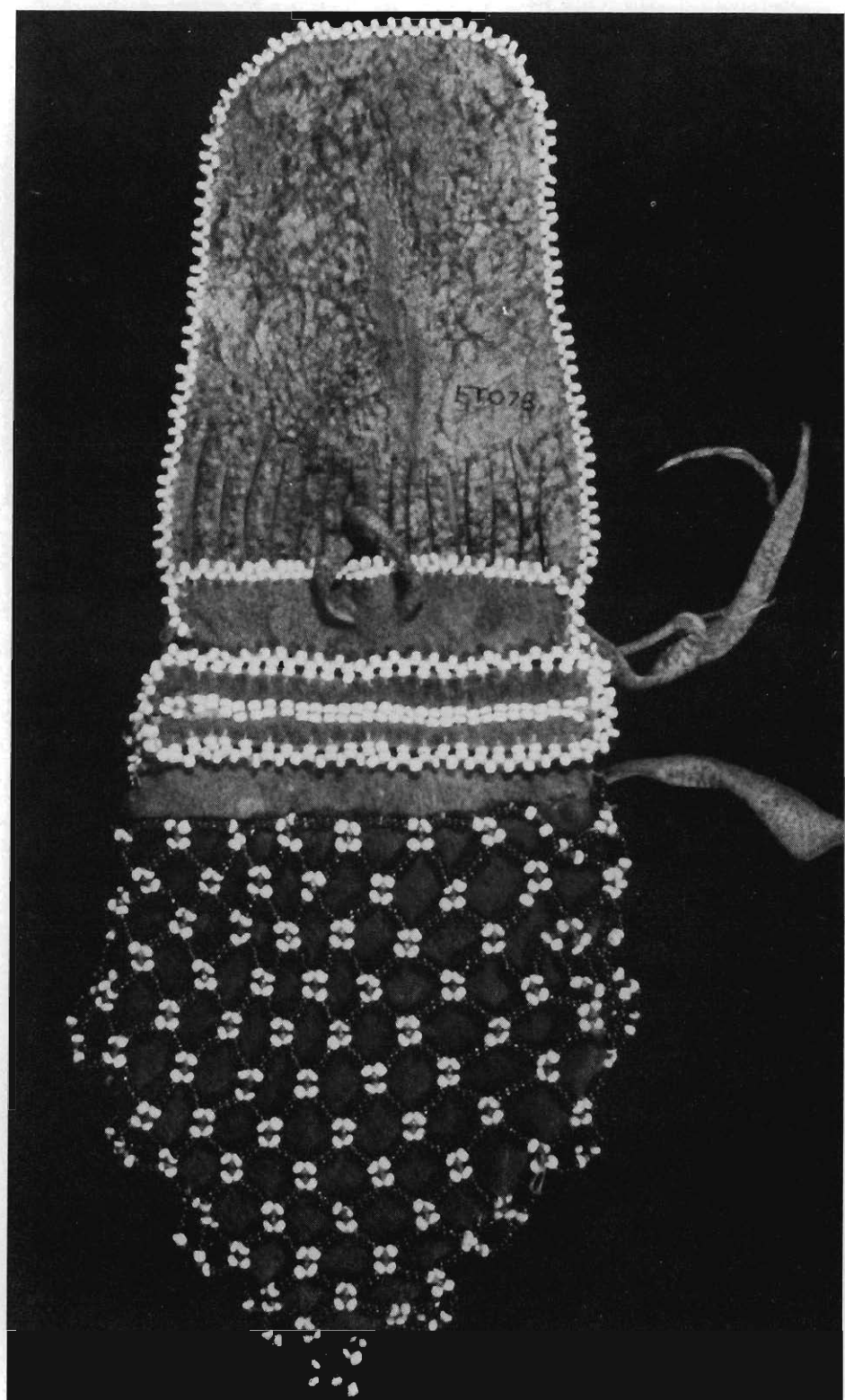
The Relief Society Legacy Lecture series, from which the fifteen selections for this book were drawn, began in March of 1982 and continued into the following year. The series was planned as part of the 140th-year anniversary celebration of the founding of the Relief Society. I didn't attend any of the Legacy Lectures, so, I came to this book cold.

I approached my reading assuming that I would find here a bolt of unbleached muslin. Instead I found a patchwork quilt. There is the expected, maybe scratchy, plain strong bland material; there are a few frilly eccentricities; there are bright as well as earthy tones; and there is the refinement of and reflection upon finely woven achievement. I recall with admiration the struggles and hard work recounted by Carolyn Rasmus and Eleanor Knowles.

Some LDS women might find within this work swatches of thought with patterns they have never before considered. "All for the good," JoAnn Ottley would sing. "Life as a singer has taught me some things about risks. We Mormons are a conservative lot—sometimes, I fear, unexplored. I think we need to be just a bit bolder, not *in spite* of commandments but *because* of them. I think we need to risk failing a little more" (p. 93).

Most of the women whose writings (lectures) are included in this book took that risk. More and more LDS women are taking such risks. Bravo!





ART CREDITS

Cover: Navajo rug from the Chinle area, c1900, Berrate pattern (modified eye dazzler); p. 142, Navajo rug with modified storm pattern, c1940. Courtesy Linda King Newell and L. Jackson Newell. Photographed by Jess Allen Photography, 1120 Richards Street, Salt Lake City.

Artifacts courtesy Utah Museum of Natural History:
p. 24, Beaded bag purchased at Fort Hall, Idaho, in 1912,
p. 80, Ceramic vessel, origin unknown; p. 88, Shoshoni basket, late 1900s; p. 118, Ute toy or souvenir, early 1900s;
p. 152, Navajo "yei" rug, Lukachukai, Arizona, mid-1900s;
p. 173, Northern Ute necklace, possible souvenir, late 1900s;
p. 182, Paiute wedding basket in Navajo design, early 1900s;
p. 203, Anasazi ceramic, A.D. 800-1100, Alkali Point, Utah;
p. 204, Northern Ute bag, late 1800s.

Artifacts courtesy Glenn C. Anderson, Sun Dance Gallery, 251 South State Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84111: p. 69, Painted elk hide, c1895, attributed to George Washakie, a Shoshoni, depicting the annual Sun Dance for the return of the buffalo; p. 92, Ghost Dance Shirt, muslin, c1890, painted by Northern Plains Indians. Photographed by Jess Allen Photography, 1120 Richards Street, Salt Lake City.

Photography by Don Thorpe, 1087 South 1100 East, Salt Lake City, UT 84105, p.144, Lacey Harris.

