

didly as any author's confession of method I've seen. Read her collection with the following apology in mind:

I like to explore time warps, the edges of sanity, impressionism, experimental language, oblique approaches to the subject of humanity. I like subtlety more than dramatic intensity. I believe that truth is found in small places, not always in heroic epics. I am attracted to stories with barely discernible plot lines. Maybe this is because I, as a woman, have learned to survive by not being

obvious. It threatens me to be seen too clearly. Sometimes I adopt bizarre imagery and situations in my fiction, maybe hiding behind a veil of obfuscation. Maybe this could be considered a female ploy—an invitation to "Come in and find me." (1990, 118-19)

If Phyllis Barber's fiction is deliberately obscure, it is never coy. Go into *The School of Love* and find her; go in and find yourselves.

Kimball's Diaries

On the Potter's Wheel: The Diaries of Heber C. Kimball, edited by Stanley B. Kimball (Salt Lake City: Signature Books in association with Smith Research Associates, 1987), 224 pp., \$59.95.

Reviewed by Ronald W. Walker, senior historical associate, Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Church History, and professor of history, Brigham Young University.

A CLERGYMAN VISITING Salt Lake City was invited to the Tabernacle where Heber C. Kimball addressed the congregation. The minister was so disturbed by Kimball's impish and impious ways that had his own family been seated in the Tabernacle, he claimed, he certainly would have led them out of the building. It was easy for those who scarcely knew Kimball to be offended by him. Robust, eager, at times utterly unrestrained by convention, Brigham Young's first counselor did not fit the mold of traditional sanctimony. But those who knew him best generally held a favorable opinion. In a 14 July 1867 sermon, Brigham Young recognized and praised Kimball's more traditional qualities. "Does he always speak the words of the Lord?" he asked. "No, but his honesty and integrity are as sterling as the Angel Gabriel's" (Historical

Department Archives, Brigham Young Papers, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City).

Sometimes admiration for Kimball came from unexpected quarters. Intellectual dissenters William S. Godbe and E. L. T. Harrison held him in high regard. When the Godbeites began their 1869 "reform" of Mormonism, they sought the guidance of Kimball's departed spirit in fifty New York City séances.

Stanley B. Kimball's edition of Elder Kimball's holograph diaries (diaries written in his own hand) helps modern readers judge the man for themselves. Kimball kept four journals, scrawled between 1837 and 1845 in common writing notebooks, four by six and a half inches each. To these, Professor Kimball adds three supplements. The first is the record of Elder Kimball's brief and occasional musings, jotted down during and after his arrival in Utah in 1847. The second appendix has the churchman's 1835 memories of Zion's Camp and the calling of Mormonism's first Twelve Apostles, while a third records Kimball's reminiscences of the Missouri turmoil. Although outside the scope of Professor Kimball's self-imposed "holograph diaries" restriction (most of this supplemental material has been heavily rewritten by others), these addenda have been included pre-

sumably as additional evidence of Heber C.'s work and personality.

What kind of man was he? Professor Kimball's transcripts retain enough of their original form to suggest a clear picture of Elder Kimball's personality. Spelling is often a phonetic, upstate New York, Yankee affair. Grammar is happenstance. Paragraphing and verb selection are random and inconsistent. Historical and literary allusion are either awkward or absent. The man clearly was unschooled, and it is apparent that he had to labor mightily to write a readable sentence. Equally apparent is his disposition. He forever frets over first wife, Vilate, and her children yet expresses little feeling for his many plural wives (perhaps because of the Nauvoo prohibition against speaking of such things). He revels in Brigham Young's companionship, and vice versa. "Brother Heber and I hate plaguedly to be separated," Young later testified. ("Remarks of Brigham Young Extracted from General Minutes Collection," 15 May 1855, Fillmore, Utah. Historical Department Archives, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City). They are companions, friends, *alter egos*. As his later Utah reflections document, Kimball is frustrated, alarmed, and despairing when Daniel H. Wells, also President Young's counselor, appears to have driven a wedge between them.

Above all, Kimball is devout. Carrying little hint of his public antics, the diaries are serious-minded testimonials. Repeatedly he pauses to express zeal. May we "never bring a wound upon the Preasthood, or a stane upon our caricters but that we may be keep pure in Thy Sight," he wrote (p. 32). He repeatedly is at his devotions, sometimes recording actual words: "O God the Eternal Father in the name of Jesus Christ of Nasreth wilth Thou fore give me all the sins that I have ever done since I have come here on this Thy foot stool, and let my heart be sure in Thy sight" (p. 51). He sees events as providential. The hand of God is visible when he leads the 1837 Mormon van-

guard to Great Britain or when the Saints rush to complete the Nauvoo Temple before the exodus west. He ascribes Godly significance to each of his frequent dreams. Peculiarly, many have Kimball flying above events, as though the burdens of life and mission are beyond his stamina to bear. This look at the private, subconscious man reveals that beneath the rough exterior, there is vulnerable sensitivity. He seems unsure of himself.

Important biographically, the diaries also tell Mormonism's early story, sometimes as the only or primary source. We find glimpses of events and people: early proselyting, Zion's Camp, Nauvoo's Holy Order, female faith healing, meeting routines, and the melancholy scene when the eastern missionaries learn of Joseph Smith's murder. Men like Sam Brannan, Stephen Douglas, or Sylvester and William Smith briefly and often revealingly occupy the stage. It is the drama of a newly created religion in the male-dominated nineteenth-century American culture.

Of course much has been told before. The diaries have been previously published in various forms, but never *in toto*. To make the chronicle more intelligible, Professor Kimball supplies a useful biographical chronology and several maps. But unfortunately annotation is bare bones. Having completed a biography of his subject, the editor could tell us much. Instead, he generally tries to have the often spare text speak for itself. That plan may work for the specialist, but the rich texture of background events may escape the general reader. Kimball's publishers have done him a disservice by not requiring more.

Purists will also be discomforted by the middle path of the editing. While retaining original orthography, Professor Kimball aids readability by supplying some paragraphing, punctuation, and capitalization and by silently deleting cancelled line-outs and erasures. Some of Elder Kimball's idiosyncracies are lost in the process, opening the possibility of a