

never really knew and a father hard to approach. In such stories there is no laughter, only wonder and compassion, when a character is in travail, frustrated, disappointed, faced with loss, experiencing pain. Then there is no satiric penetration of the hard crust of Mormon dogma or tickling of the soft underbelly of Mormon sentimentalism. Only pathos. These are not faith-promoting stories so much as life-enhancing.

Chandler, who can play with the sensuous possibilities of language like a Nabokov, is a master of lyric, usually ironic, closure, the action coming to rest

as quietly and inevitably as water closing over a drowned object. In sum, Chandler, with his good ear for cant, whether religious or secular, is a resonant voice among the Mormons, possibly their court jester capable, like Lear's fool, through his irreverent wit and wayward wisdom, of twitting us into some common sense conclusions about ourselves, believers and backsliders alike. Like Emmett, his precocious teenager resolved to be a writer, Chandler must know, as his admirers surely know, that "he is really on to something."

## The Rise of the Church in Great Britain

*Mormons in Early Victorian Britain* edited by Richard L. Jensen and Malcolm R. Thorp (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1989), 282 pp., index, \$25.00.

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MORMONS IN EARLY VICTORIAN BRITAIN, volume 4 in the University of Utah's Mormon Studies series, is a significant contribution to the understanding of Mormon history in both the United States and Great Britain. As the title suggests, the book focuses on Mormonism in "early Victorian Britain," the two decades following the summer 1837 arrival of the first Mormon missionaries in Britain. Jensen and Thorp have included sixteen quality essays illuminating Mormon activities in Great Britain during these two decades.

A revisionist theme filters through the book. Many of its essays mirror Malcolm Thorp's theme in "Early Mormon Confrontations with Sectarianism." He notes:

One of the difficulties involved with this essay is that it frankly clashes at some points with the "traditional" Mormon accounts, both past and present. [And Thorp continues in a footnote on the same page.] Traditional Mormon history is written with the avowed purpose of promoting a faith-

ful view of the past and is not necessarily concerned with critical examination of sources. For Mormonism in Britain, an example of this approach is Richard L. Evans, *A Century of "Mormonism" in Great Britain* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1937). This has been superseded by V. Ben Bloxham, James R. Moss, Larry C. Porter, eds., *Truth Will Prevail; The Rise of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the British Isles 1837-1887* (Solihull, England: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1987). While this latter work is useful, the contributions are uneven in quality. (p. 50)

This said, Thorp examines the sectarian situation in Britain and the fluidity that allowed for easy changes in church membership between 1837 and 1840, as well as Mormon attempts to draw a significant number of new members from the ranks of three nonconformist sects. New converts from the Primitive Episcopal Church and the Aitketites were attracted most by Mormon claims to sacerdotal authority.

The state of religion and society in Great Britain during this era is explored in essays by John F. C. Harrison, Grant Underwood, and Robert L. Lively, Jr. Harrison's essay, originally delivered as the Tanner Lecture at the Mormon History Association Convention in Oxford in 1987, examines diaries of common people who became Mormons, noting that those

who wrote journals emphasized events much like their counterparts who did not become Latter-day Saints. In the thirty-five diaries that Harrison examined, baptism into the Mormon Church was the most significant event noted. Underwood examines "The Religious Milieu of English Mormonism" by illustrating the context in which religion functioned at the beginning of Victoria's reign. The gospel as preached by Mormon missionaries seemed familiar to the British, even though some only recognized fragments.

When we arose to preach unto the people repentance, and baptism for the remission of sins, the cry of "Baptist, Baptist," would be rung in our ears. If we spoke of the Church and body of Christ being composed of Prophets and Apostles, as well as other members, "Irvingites, Irvingites," would immediately dash into the mind. If in the midst of our remarks, we even once suffered the saying to drop from our lips, "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy," "O you belong to Johanna Southcote," would be heard from several places at once. If we spoke of the second coming of Christ, the cry would be, "Aitkenites." If we made mention of the Priesthood, they would call us "Catholics." If we testified of the ministering of angels, the people would reply, "The Irvingites have their angels, and even the Duke of Normandy is ready to swear that he has the administering of angels every night." (p. 47-48)

Ronald K. Esplin's essay on the 1840-41 mission to England and the development of the Quorum of the Twelve suggests that this mission marked the beginning of the Twelve as a united and effective entity. Brigham Young gained much needed experience in directing the group, and both British and American Saints came to look upon the Twelve with more respect—"as effective and trustworthy leaders" (p. 90). Esplin's essay fits nicely with others that detail organizational matters in Great Britain: Richard L. Jensen's "Church Councils and Governance" and William G. Hartley's "LDS Pastors and Pastorates, 1852-55." Although Jensen's essay gives important information

about Church governance, growth, and excommunications, it sometimes divides its focus with such confusing comparisons as that between the governance of the Church in Great Britain and in Denmark. Mining only the rich soil of Mormonism in Britain would have been more effective. Beginning in 1852 under the administration of Franklin D. Richards, and for nearly a decade, the British Mission was served by experienced elders, called "pastors," who were called to supervise from two to five conferences. Hartley examines the concept of pastors, their role in administering the British Mission, and the move by Amasa Lyman, Charles C. Rich, and George Q. Cannon in 1860 to change their title to "district president."

Five essays trace the growth of Mormonism in different areas of Great Britain: Bernard Aspinwall discusses Scotland, D. L. Davies Wales, Andrew Philips the Essex Conference from 1850 to 1870, John Cotterill the West Midlands from 1840 to 1877, and Susan Fales the Mormons of Leeds and their nonconformist neighbors. David Whittaker's bibliographic essay on "Mormonism in Victorian Britain" guides the interested reader through the sources of the era in a judicious and helpful manner. Ray Jay Davis's essay on law and nineteenth-century Mormon emigration from Great Britain examines nineteenth-century British and American emigration laws.

Both Richard Poll's essay, "The British Mission during the Utah War, 1857-58," and Paul Peterson's essay on the 1857 Reformation in Great Britain examine rebaptism and reform as well as the conflicts in Great Britain caused by the Utah War. The 1857 reformation, the Utah War of 1857-58, and the public announcement of plural marriage all combined to slow to a crawl the dramatic growth of Mormonism in Britain which had begun in 1837.

As with any set of essays, these are a bit uneven. Together, however, they weave a history of Mormonism in Great Britain that is better than any we have. They raise