

1886 grew to have three times more subscribers than the *News*. Pressed by both the competition of the *Tribune* and its criticisms of the Church, the *News* in the 1880s abandoned a long-time practice of restraint and lashed out in vitriolic editorials. While polygamy and Church domination of the intellectual life of the Saints were the earliest topics for *Tribune* editorial attacks, more earthy issues intensified the debate. According to McLaws, the battle between the two antagonists peaked in 1884 over coverage of the lynching of a black man, the trial of a well-known polygamist and an abortion case. Despite these adolescent quarrels, the *News* and *Tribune* matured and grew to be substantial corporations. By the time this book was published the two newspapers were sharing publishing facilities, circulation departments, and advertising staffs.

Although primarily concerned with the analysis of Mormon journalism, the writer also provides some fuel to provoke debate among historians. Hubert Howe Bancroft, in his 1890 *History of Utah*, offered the thesis that the Church and its newspaper supported the Union cause when Civil War broke out in 1860.

McLaws questions that conclusion. Relying on editorials in the *Deseret News* both prior to and during the war, McLaws suggests the argument that the Church was closely aligned with the Southern attitude toward slavery and states rights before the war and did not shift to a positive support for the North until Northern victories in 1863 made the outcome of the war inevitable. In another excursion into historiography, McLaws is very critical of Hirshson's *The Lion of the Lord*, (1969). Hirshson's sin is his uncritical use of eastern newspapers as primary sources.

Although the author sometimes moves unsteadily from a topical to a chronological approach and back, this interpretation of Mormon journalism adds a needed dimension to our understanding of the Church. His analysis of frontier journalism is the strength of the book, however. McLaws admits that frontier journalism was often personal and prejudiced. The strength of the book is the author's willingness to apply that premise to his subject. Historians often become too familiar with their subjects to be totally objective. This writer makes a creditable effort.

## Brief Notices

GENE A. SESSIONS

*Holy Smoke: A Dissertation on the Utah War.* By Paul Bailey. Los Angeles: Westernlore Books, 1978. 139 pp., illus., biblio., index. \$5.95.

In order to dispel any notion that this book might be a serious historical study, one need look only at the ostentatious bibliography in the back. Writing a book about the Utah War of 1857-58 without citing Norman Furniss's bread-and-butter work on *The Mormon Conflict*, for example, is akin to climbing Mount Everest in sneakers and tennis shorts. The result in both cases can amount to no more than a tall tale. Indeed, Paul Bailey's aim in this "dissertation" seems to

be just that. He wanders about the landscape of the quasi-war, recounting all the old stories of valor and Mormon heroism. Seldom does the real danger of a bloody holocaust escape from the thick pages of *Holy Smoke*, as if the jaunty gutsiness of Lot Smith and his boys could have held off the United States Army indefinitely. Historians given to contemplating the "what ifs" of history would wonder whether Bailey actually believes the events around which he writes really occurred, for he treats the entire perilous episode as a glorious fairy tale in which the good guys prevailed against the bad guys despite all odds, saving, through sheer determination, their wives, their

children and their homes. Perhaps Bailey deserves credit for grasping the perception of his audience and for understanding that the general LDS readership is less interested in careful history than it is in good old faith-promoting stories, no matter how tired and narrow they may be.

*The Highest in Us.* By Truman G. Madsen. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1978. ix+107 pp., index. \$5.95.

Through this compilation of some of his lectures, devotionals, church magazine articles, and the like, the BYU theologian hopes to counteract some of the pessimism about the nature of man he has encountered during his career and travels. Madsen holds high the Mormon doctrine of man as the race of God, and in these essays attempts to find in man the elusive seed of godliness. Given the current state of the world, it is no wonder that this doctrine of Brother Joseph's more than any other has brought the derision the Prophet was promised upon his head and upon those of his followers. Indeed, it is this concept in Mormonism that leads most Christians to deny membership in the Body of Christ to Latter-day Saints. Nevertheless eloquently and consistently, Madsen argues that Joseph was right, and that evidence to the contrary is only anomaly and the product of misshapen values in a dark world. Although fashioned after the standard general-authority collection of sermons, this one is a winner and a mover. Reaffirming the noblest aspiration of Mormonism, it helps place the more earthy aspects of the movement into needed perspective.

*Nibley on the Timely and the Timeless.* By Hugh W. Nibley. Foreword by Truman G. Madsen. Bibliography by Louis C. Midgley. Religious Monograph Series Vol. I. Provo: Brigham Young University Religious Studies Center, 1978. xxviii+305 pp., biblio., \$5.95.

Also in the compilation genre is this collection of essays by the BYU institution Hugh Nibley. Containing as well a new autobiographical essay, *Timely and the Timeless* offers cogent insights into the man who has served as the intellectual guru of cranial Mormonism for three decades. Most of the contents of this

book has appeared in print in such places as the defunct *Improvement Era*, but when combined with Midgley's comprehensive bibliography of Nibleyaiana, they comprise an invaluable tool for the use and understanding of this great scholar's mind and work. While students of Mormonism may not always agree with Nibley's incessant academic apologetics, they cannot ignore him nor can they afford to be unaware of his monumental labors in behalf of his own unique marriage between faith and reason.

*Columbus, Explorer for Christ.* By Helen Hinckley. Independence, Mo.: Herald House, 1977. 115 pp. \$6.00.

After traveling in Spain, Portugal, and Latin America, this well-published Southern California history teacher decided that the apparent evidence of Columbus' religious motivations and the connecting passage about the Holy Ghost's role found in First Nephi needed more exposition than historical and scriptural reference would allow. Consequently, she determined to produce this "biography" of Columbus, drawn in a small way from history and scripture and in a large way from her fertile and faithful imagination. What emerges from the tragic and enigmatic figure of the great explorer is a transformed "dry Mormon" who walks about in a righteous trance, continually praying that he may be a useful tool in the hand of God. Hinckley's mythical Columbus never understands the full meaning of what he is doing, but, like the searching "golden investigator" of Mormon missionary lore, knows that he is in a position to serve the Lord and accomplish his purposes, even though he may not be aware of the broader spectrum in which he moves. Historical fiction may serve many exciting purposes, but it cannot make apples out of oranges. To accept Nephi's vision of Columbus is one thing, but to refuse to acknowledge that literally every European explorer of the age credited God for his successes as an expected courtesy (whatever were his actual motives) is to use literary license to perpetrate nonsense.

*Lanai.* By Ruth Tabrah. Photographed by Kenneth P. Emory and Robert B. Goodman. Honolulu: An Island Heritage

Limited Edition, 1977. 120 pp. \$19.95.

This beautifully photographed "coffee table" book on the island of Lanai in Hawaii has raised anew the old controversy over whether the famed Mormon excommunicant Walter Murray Gibson was a saint or an outright scoundrel. In three of fifteen chapters, Tabrah discusses Gibson in a favorable light, accepting without much change Gmynn Barrett's revisionist view of Gibson that portrays him as a misunderstood populist leader who was railroaded by the Church because of his popularity among the Hawaiians and his ambitious plans for the progress of the Hawaiian Kingdom as a prime power in the Pacific. Alf Pratte, coordinator of the Church's Hawaii Communications Council, launched a merciless attack upon Tabrah and Barrett in a full-page review of *Lanai* that appeared in the *Hawaii Record-Bulletin* in January 1978, and in a letter to *Dialogue* worried about "a growing revisionist tendency to interpret Gibson [favorably]—some of this writing by Mormons." Insisting that both Mormon and non-Mormon historians who have condemned Gibson were correct, Pratte concluded his review with the following revealing statement: "Walter Murray Gibson was and still is a rascal—albeit he was one of the nicest rascals we have been privileged to have in Hawaii and on the island of Lanai." It is indeed difficult to dislike a man who dreams big dreams for his people, even when those dreams are self-serving. (See also "Another Visit with Walter Murray Gibson" by R. Lanier Britch, *UHQ* Vol. 46, winter 1978, p. 65–78.)

*The Golden Dream: Suburbia in the 1970s.* By Stephen Birmingham. New York: Harper & Row, 1978. viii+214 pp., index. \$10.00.

A tremendously successful writer such as Stephen Birmingham has the power to reach more minds with a single book than does the Church's Public Communications Department with all of its press releases, gadgets, and mannequin-staffed visitors centers. It is therefore horrifying to find Birmingham's chapter on Salt Lake City, "Wide Streets," so full of mistruths and outright nonsense. Though he claims to have visited all of the cities about which he writes, Birmingham knows no more about Salt Lake City and its people than Jules Verne knew about the moon. In a recent review of *Golden Dream* in the *Salt Lake Tribune*, Harold Schindler catalogues such an embarrassing list of inaccuracies in the Utah chapter that one finds it difficult to believe that an author of Birmingham's stature could be so misinformed, fatuous, or both. Example: The Church, says Birmingham, sends missionaries all over the world except to Catholic countries. Another: "Trolley Square has not been successful and is deserted after 5 p.m." Still another: "Mormon families keep their children so busy with planned activities . . . [that] by the time a Mormon teenager collapses into bed at night he is, so the theory goes, too exhausted to masturbate." And we all thought J.H. Beadle was dead.