

## BRIEF NOTICES

by Gene A. Sessions

*A Companion to Your Study of the Doctrine and Covenants* by Daniel H. Ludlow. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1978, two volumes, 1124 pp. \$16.95.

Designed to coincide with the adult Sunday school's study of the Doctrine and Covenants, this two-volume set provides a short-cut past D&C background one might discover with considerably more effort in the *History of the Church* or in Roberts. It also hopes to help the average gospel doctrine student make up for his teacher's inadequacies by providing some explanatory materials as well as a compendium of definitions. Volume two contains appendices, analyses of words and phrases, and brief biographies of most of the persons whose names appear in the D&C. Late of the LDS Church Correlation Committee, Dan Ludlow certainly represents the orthodox view of this intriguing piece of Mormon canon, and when contemplated with this in mind, *Companion* becomes at least as worthwhile as his work on the Book of Mormon of two years ago.

*Having Your Food Storage and Eating It, Too.* Provo, Utah: Ezra Taft Benson Agriculture and Food Institute, 1978, 16 pp. \$1.00 (pb).

Drawn from scholarly papers of the Food Science and Nutrition Department at BYU, this pamphlet strikes a velvet blow against the hysteria that resulted from President Kimball's 1976 call for food storage. Among other things, it outlines the Church's family preparedness program, of which food storage is only a part, and carefully urges the reader to exercise care in his approach to following this particular part of the Prophet's word of warning. The booklet's most impressive quality is its concise statement of necessity and its clear guidelines for proper use and control of food storage supplies. A wide readership would help reduce the number of "doomsday" food storage bilks. The address of the Benson Institute is 475 WIDB, Provo 84602.

*Others* by Blaine M. Yorgason and Brenton G. Yorgason. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft Publishers, 1978, xiv+135 pp., index. \$4.95.

Among the more soporific books to come along in some time, *Others* reads like an hour-long sermon sounds. Designed specifically for those who never get enough on Sunday afternoon, this book gets as close to being a general-authority book without being one as it can. Indeed, the reader can easily picture one of its authors, with his elbow propped on the pulpit, trying his best to sound like a combination of Thomas Monson, Paul Dunn, and LeGrande Richards. As it tells us one melodramatic and quasi-humorous tale after another about service to our fellow beings, this team of brothers (a *double-entendre* inasmuch as both work in the church education system) proves once again that some Mormons will endure *anything* if someone calls it spiritual.

*The Season to Prepare: An Open Letter to Young Mormon Women* by Daryl V. Hoole. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1978, 17 pp., \$1.50 (pb).

For Hoole, getting through the teenage years for young Mormon women is simple: Keep your room clean (in preparation for successful housekeeping), take child development classes (in preparation for motherhood), and organize your life (so that you may become a more effective wife). In other words, writes Hoole, every girl can be happy if she recognizes her place and does those things during her adolescence that will help her become most effective in that place. Somehow, Hoole is ignorant of or chooses to ignore certain powerful facts, such as that women tend to live some forty years after that set of comfortable roles no longer exists, and that a great many Mormon women will find themselves, either by choice or otherwise, single. For them all, the season of preparation will largely have been wasted.

*How To Be a Perfect Wife and Other Myths* by Afton Day. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft Publishers, 1977, 112 pp. \$3.50.

More to the point in this business of a woman's place is this little dissertation on how Mormon women should "cope" with the difficulties, as noble as they are, of being a good wife and mother. Critic Jama Y. Falsone applauds Day's book as a step in the right direction. At least it confesses that there may be some problems in the set of expectations placed upon a Mormon woman within the prescribed role structure of the patriarchal system, but Falsone finds the work disappointing beyond that. For example, Day's basic message is that failure to find success as a housewife demands compensation in the form of outside activities. As Falsone reads Day, the story is an old one: "A woman cannot have both worlds [work and home] and be successful. . . ."

*The Gentle Touch* by Ardith Greene Kap. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1978, x+104 pp. \$3.95.

Kap's gentle touch has something to do with teaching children through sweetness. Parents more prone to use the swift kick might benefit from this Lady Bountiful approach, but for most Mormons there is little in this book they cannot get either from Elliot Landau or in mother training lessons at Relief Society. *Men* should read *Gentle Touch*. But then, Kap carefully explains that it is the woman's place to teach the children in the home, perhaps with some help from the father whose job it is to use the swift kick (in keeping with *his* place).

*Brigham Young and Me, Clarissa* by Barbara Williams. New York: Doubleday & Co., 1978, 80 pp. \$6.95.

Here is a delightful children's book composed by a granddaughter-in-law of Clarissa Young Spencer, fifty-first child of Brigham Young and one of the more interesting. Williams is probably the most successful Mormon writer of children's books, and this one, while unique in its approach, is certainly the best of her work. There is, unfortunately, some serious danger in "Clarissa's" account of life in the family of the great and enigmatic Mormon leader. In bookstores throughout Utah, the Williams tale finds itself called "the book on Brigham

Young by his daughter." The same kind of thing has happened with regard to Irwin Wirkus's imaginary autobiography of Emma Smith (see review in this issue). While Williams worked carefully with what she knew about her husband's grandmother from family lore and with what fragments of historical evidence she possessed, what she gives the children in *Clarissa* can be neither history, autobiography or reminiscence. The *Roots* phenomenon of "faction" has thus invaded Mormondom. Historical fiction is a legitimate way of exploring the past as long as readers recognize it for what it is. Had Clarissa (or "Clint," as her childhood friends called her) written this memoir, it would have been "a book on Brigham Young by his daughter." But since she did not, it is not. It's as simple as that.

*111 Days to Zion* by Stanley B. Kimball and Hal Knight. Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1978, 253 pp., index. \$3.95.

A light survey of the day-by-day happenings of the trek of the original Mormon Pioneers (Brigham Young party) in 1847, this work first appeared over a period of months in serial form in the *Deseret News*. Promotional materials admit that its author was really Knight, a veteran *News* reporter, who worked from historian Kimball's notes and with his advice. In addition, the two traveled the route together and surveyed important sites. The journalistic flavor comes through clearly. The reader should expect neither careful history nor much analysis. *111 Days* is simply an enjoyable account of the journey, colorfully written and easily read. While it falls into the category of light reading, students of Mormonism might find it useful for its chronological quality if for nothing else.

