

Mormon in this book either acts like Dudley Doright in tight underwear or secretly rejects the Church.

Some would defend this portrayal of Mormons on the grounds of artistic license. If I wrote a novel portraying the typical Afro-American as an oversexed, dim-witted yet cunning drug dealer, I suppose I could try to hide behind the label of "author." But I would earn another label as well: "bigot." Simply put, *Baptism for the Dead* is little more than bigotry masquerading as entertainment. Admittedly, it is the fashionable bigotry of our times, the unconscious bigotry of those who simply cannot believe that anyone who believes in modern prophets can really have it all together upstairs—but it is bigotry all the same. Irvine has kept the prejudices of his audience firmly in mind. His contempt for his subject matter seems to be reflected in a comment by Moroni Traveler's father: "Who can figure Mormons? Or real people either for that matter" (p. 196).

I find it irritating that people will take this book as an accurate, if fictionalized, account of Mormons and Mormonism. The blurbs proclaim that "Irvine . . . knows his subject matter"; the author note indicates that "like the hero of *Baptism for the Dead*, Robert Irvine was

born in Salt Lake City, Utah." I suppose that this is an argument for "authority by proximity." As it happens, for several years I have lived in a city which is well over half black, but I would not presume to write a novel involving black characters without trying to penetrate the stereotypes.

Usually, I make it a point to review books I can recommend. Life is too short to spend on bad books. (My favorite button, from the Gotham Book Mart in New York City: "So many books, so little time.") Unfortunately, being published by Pocket Books, there are probably more copies of this novel around than there are LDS missionaries in the world. There comes a point, when bad literature is so widespread, that one feels obliged to take up the cudgels and try to beat it back a little.

Irvine is certainly capable of good work. His descriptions of the inner tensions of Moroni Traveler are much more sophisticated than his cardboard descriptions of his Mormon characters (although that wouldn't be difficult). The author note indicates that he is working on his next Traveler mystery. But unless he is going to do a better job than the straw Saints he depicts here, I suggest that he give Moroni Traveler his walking papers.

## BRIEF NOTICES

*Unveiling Biblical Prophecy: A Summary of Biblical Prophecies Concerning Christ, the Apostasy, and Christ's Latter-day Church* by Lenet Hadley Read (San Francisco: Latter-day Light Publications, 1990), 183 pp.

"TYPES," OR EVENTS and prophecies in the Old Testament that foreshadow the mission of Christ, the apostasy, and the restoration, was a system popular among Puritan theologians but which captured the imagination of contemporary Latter-day Saints largely as a result of its use by Bruce R. McConkie in his *Messiah* series. In this slim volume, designed as a com-

panion to the study of the Bible, Lenet Hadley Read moves chronologically and systematically through the Old Testament, documenting "types and shadows" in that volume of scripture that foreshadow the future.

For example, Jacob's second name, Israel, has two meanings: "Prince of God" and "Man who is God," suggesting that "there ought to be strong witnesses of Christ in Jacob's life." Just one such witness from his life is his removing the covering of the well when Rachel, his future wife, brings her flock to water. Read explains: "While this appears to be a simple act, it was actually pro-

phetic. . . . Remember a bride is often a symbol for Christ's covenanted people. . . . Centuries later, Christ appeared at a well called Jacob's well. In response to a woman's question as to whether he was greater than Jacob, the Savior taught, ' . . . whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; . . . the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.' . . . Christ's presence and words at Jacob's well implies his fulfillment of a greater watering of bride and sheep than Jacob could ever have performed" (pp. 30-31; author's emphasis).

Information on prices and copies are available from Latter-day Light Publications, 1215 Greenwich, #4A, San Francisco, CA 94109.

*A Time to Kill: Reflections on War* edited by Denny Roy, Grant P. Skabelund, and Ray C. Hillam (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1990), xii + 288 pp., paper, \$12.95.

*A TIME TO KILL* REPRESENTS Signature Books' first venture into oral history; and what they offer here is significant. The book has three stated purposes: to "[1] preserve the experiences of men who participated in events that have shaped the world. . . . [2] describe war . . . through the eyes of actual participants. . . . the

terror, brutality, confusion, heroism, adventure, strength of character and sorrow . . . and [3] describe the religious faith of combatants under extreme stress—the majority of whom . . . are life long members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints" (p. xiii).

Using excerpts of interviews with sixty veterans of five conflicts—World Wars I and II, Korea, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and Vietnam—the editors portray war as it has impacted real people—fathers, brothers, friends, and neighbors. Most excerpts are brief, two to six paragraphs each, and cover seven topics: going to war, fighting on the ground and in the air, killing and being killed, living on foreign soil, being a captive, and being a leader. A few particularly powerful accounts run for several pages. Ray Matheny's experience as a flight engineer shot down over Germany and sent to a prisoner of war camp in Austria was singularly moving, as was Howard Christy's description of a fight with the Viet Cong and its impact on Vietnamese civilians.

Many of those interviewed appear in more than one of the seven sections, and the editors have provided a brief biographical footnote the first time each veteran appears. Forty-one photographs enhance the book's value as a testament to those who fought and a documentary of our times.