

Book Reviews

F. MARK MCKIERNAN. *The Voice of One Crying in the Wilderness: Sidney Rigdon, Religious Reformer, 1793-1876*. Lawrence, Kansas: Coronado Press, 1971. 190 pp. \$7.50.

(Reviewed by William D. Russell, an associate professor of religion and history at Graceland College, Lamoni, Iowa, and co-editor of *Courage: A Journal of History, Thought, and Action*.)

In a paper presented at the Spring 1971 meeting of the Mormon History Association and later published in *Courage* (vol. 2, no. 1, September 1971), Mark McKiernan argued that Sidney Rigdon has not been given proper respect by religious historians because his search for truth was not compatible with any organized religion of his time. Since Rigdon separated himself from the Baptists, Campbellites, and the Mormons, historians from these three traditions have tended to discount his importance.

Historians should therefore welcome this biography of Rigdon, based on McKiernan's Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Kansas. McKiernan, formerly a professor of history at Idaho State University and now with Restoration Trails Foundation, has done considerable research on Rigdon and deals sympathetically with this important associate of Joseph Smith. McKiernan demonstrates Rigdon's importance to the rise and development of Mormonism. Therefore *The Voice of One Crying in the Wilderness* should help correct the tendency to underestimate Rigdon's role in the early history of Mormonism.

It has been this reviewer's opinion that members of all branches of Mormonism need to learn to deal more maturely with those people who separated themselves from the Church. Sidney Rigdon provides a good example. Historians of Mormonism will particularly welcome the chapter on Rigdon before his contact with Joseph Smith and the concluding chapter on Rigdon from 1844 until his death in 1876.

McKiernan seems to grasp what this reviewer thinks is the key to understanding the effectiveness of the Book of Mormon in winning people to the Church. He portrays Rigdon and Parley P. Pratt, for example, as finding the Book of Mormon convincing because, as he says of Pratt, it "contained answers for many of the problems which had plagued him" (p. 30).

McKiernan's book does have some significant weaknesses, however. The author makes statements which seem stronger than the evidence will support. For example, "Smith had always kept men like Parley P. Pratt and Brigham Young in distant areas so that he could be the complete master of his own religious household" (p. 126); "Rigdon changed the entire course of Mormon history when he persuaded Smith to move the headquarters of the Church from New York, where it was stagnating, to the Western Reserve" (p. 12); and Rigdon "seized upon the doctrine [of the coming millennium] and heralded it everywhere" (p. 27). Similarly, while Robert Flanders' *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi* is an excellent book, one wonders if McKiernan isn't too flattering when he calls his former professor's book "the finest work on the early Mormon Church" (p. 178).

Organizational slips occasionally occur. For example, in his very useful bibliographical essay, the final paragraph should have been placed much earlier (p. 179), and a paragraph on Smith's sense of humor is concluded with a sentence that is out of place (p. 70).

There are a number of places where greater editorial care could have helped prevent unclear or confusing statements. McKiernan has a very confusing paragraph on Joseph Smith's revision of the Bible, for example (p. 45). He indicates that Rigdon had denounced the Church's participation in the Masonic order (p. 133), but earlier he mentioned that Rigdon became a Master Mason (p. 111). Unfortunately, he does not explain the apparent contradiction.

Other examples where clarity is needed are: he seems to use the terms "Calvinism" and "revivalism" synonymously (p. 16); he says Sidney and his wife "lived together in harmony" for ten years after Sidney's death (p. 17); in the first chapter Rigdon retires from the ministry in 1824, but at the beginning of Chapter 2 we find Rigdon in that year establishing "a reformed Baptist church at Pittsburgh with the aid of a young

school teacher named Walter Scott" (p. 25); rather than stating that Smith later claimed that on 21 September 1823 he had been visited by an angel, McKiernan has Smith claiming on 21 September 1823 that he had received the angelic visitation (p. 32); he says that many of Smith's followers, "including Rigdon, shared the animosity and wrath of the anti-Mormon" (p. 33), which gives the impression that Rigdon was one of Smith's antagonists; it is unclear as to who terminated correspondence between a Mr. Barr and Rigdon (p. 72); he has Rigdon's influence on Mormonism a popular topic among anti-Mormon writers from 1832 until 1947, but the reader is not told why these two dates were selected (p. 171); in addition, McKiernan has Joseph Smith sanctioning Rigdon's "salt sermon" (p. 86), but later refers to "Rigdon's denunciation of Smith's policies in the 'salt sermon'" (p. 99).

When McKiernan quotes the revelations of Joseph Smith, he uses the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants. It would be more appropriate to have taken his quotations from the 1833 *Book of Commandments*, since many of these revelations were revised for the 1835 edition, including some that McKiernan uses. He also quotes from the 1955 RLDS Book of Mormon when it would have been more appropriate to use the 1830 edition (pp. 151-152) and from the 1952 Salt Lake City Pearl of Great Price when he could have used the original 1851 Liverpool edition. These original editions are easily available, and in fact McKiernan does cite the 1830 Book of Mormon at one time (p. 61).

McKiernan says that the RLDS Church does not have Utah Section 115 in its Doctrine and Covenants because its Doctrine and Covenants is based on the 1852 edition, which does not contain this revelation. But Richard Howard, in *Restoration Scriptures: A Study of Their Textual Development* (Herald Publishing House, 1969) says that the first RLDS edition of 1864 was based on one of the Nauvoo editions (p. 223) and was largely a duplication of the Nauvoo editions, which were published in 1844, 1845, and 1846.

Occasionally McKiernan seems to show an RLDS bias, as when he writes, referring to Independence, Missouri: "Although the headquarters of the Church would change throughout the years, the location of Zion could never be changed" (p. 59). He also seems to accept uncritically the RLDS

contention that Joseph Smith "set apart" his son, Joseph III, at the Liberty Jail in 1839 (p. 127). The statement he cites from the memoirs of Joseph Smith, III, written many decades later, is rather vague.

Though marred by such imperfections, *The Voice of One Crying in the Wilderness* is nevertheless a book that most students of Mormon history will find both interesting and useful.

WILLIAM G. DYER. *The Sensitive Manipulator*. Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1972. 219 pp. \$5.95.

(Reviewed by Neil J. Flinders, director of educational research for seminaries and institutes of religion.)

If the reader avoids stumbling over the multiple interpretations of the title, he will find *The Sensitive Manipulator* a unique and comprehensive collection of concepts associated with the process of change as it relates to human behavior. The author has attacked the difficult problem of cognitively discussing an affective subject with a gutty freshness. From his earthy anecdote of the strained relationship created between two college roommates because one habitually ". . . kicked off his shoes, peeled off his socks, and with obvious relief began to systematically clean the accumulation of dirt and grime between each toe with his forefinger" (pp. 3-4), to the nostalgic recall of "over the river and through the woods to grandmother's house" (p. 165) as illustrative of the current stress on family contiguity, Dr. Dyer has attempted to link the vitality of his subject to the sterile world of psychological and systems jargon.

The effort to tie the content of the book to one's family life makes this text a commendable contribution to the field of social psychology. It is a marked shift from the bland profit-centered or free-yourself-from-personnel-problems approaches that usually pervade such subject matter. Aside from a few awkward overstatements that inaccurately attribute start and stop characteristics to dynamic processes such as, "Unfortunately, most people have not learned to be interdependent with others" (p. 45), or "The couple needs to develop together a whole new set of norms, roles, and expectations" (p. 20), the book is a well-organized and pithy treatment of the process of change. Compared with treatments of the subject by other