JAMES B. ALLEN. *Trials of Discipleship: The Story of William Clayton, A Mormon.* Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987. xi; 383 pp. $22.95.

Reviewed by B. Carmon Hardy, professor of history, California State University, Fullerton.

James Allen's study of William Clayton is one of the most important Mormon biographies of our time. There are several reasons for this. The first has to do with the specimen nature of Clayton's life. Although Professor Allen prefers to focus on him as a study in discipleship rather than as a sample Mormon, the time period involved necessarily gives Clayton representative significance. During his years as a Church member, 1838–79, he witnessed many of Mormonism's most significant historical events. He was part of the impressive harvest of English converts brought into the Church in the late 1830s and 1840s. He participated in the saga of migration across the Atlantic to the Mormon Zion. He lived in Nauvoo and saw the Saints lose their prophet-leaders through violence. Clayton was a part of the vanguard of pioneers who first crossed the plains and entered the Salt Lake Valley. He contributed to growth of the Latter-day Saint commonwealth under the leadership of Brigham Young. And he saw the coming of the railroad and the commencement of the national crusade against Mormon polygamy.

More than this, however, because of his religious devotion and a gift for organization, Clayton's talents were often appropriated by the Church's leaders in important ways. While he participated as a local leader in England before emigrating and was later employed in certain lesser capacities by Brigham Young, it was the use of his abilities as a secretary and confidant of Joseph Smith for which he is best remembered. He also participated in musical affairs in both Nauvoo and the Salt Lake Valley and was the author of the well known hymn "Come, Come, Ye Saints." He was secretary to the Nauvoo Masonic Lodge, a member of the secret Council of Fifty, a coinventor of the roadometer, author of *The Latter-day Saints' Emigrants Guide,* founding secretary of ZCMI, Utah's first territorial auditor and recorder of marks and brands, and one whose diary became the basis for several passages in Joseph Smith's *History of the Church.* Even this does not exhaust his contributions.

A well-recorded and busy life does not by itself, however, a great biography make. It yet must be written. Allen does not disappoint us here. Admitting vulnerability to affective attachment

to Clayton and concerned with avoiding the infection of his own religious presuppositions into the material, Allen generally succeeds in working around both difficulties. Clayton is plainly shown, for example, as a man afflicted with bouts of paranoia, including fear that Church authorities were romantically interested in his wives. Neither does Allen spare Clayton as one maimed by the frailties of an excessive gullibility or difficulty with alcohol. And rather than yielding to a simple, faith promoting explanation of Clayton's discipleship—his continuing belief in the face of personal hardship, unfulfilled prophecy (as with millennial expectations associated with the Civil War), or insensitive demands upon his time by Church leaders—Allen turns to the aid of social science. Citing a 1955 study by Leon Festinger, Henry W. Riecken, and Stanley Schachter, *When Prophecy Fails,* Allen finds that William Clayton's perseverance in the faith can be explained by conditions that generate steadfast behavior in most religious groups most of the time (315–16).

It was Clayton's closeness to Joseph Smith, and the diary he kept while serving as Joseph's secretary, that are probably most interesting and, to some perhaps, most troubling. Allen gives us numerous glimpses, through Clayton's eyes, of the conflict between Joseph and his wife Emma over polygamy. When, with the Prophet's consent, Clayton began pursuing the younger sister of his first wife, he too incurred Emma's displeasure. Margaret Moon, the young woman involved, was engaged to another Mormon then on a mission for the Church. Although Margaret agreed to marry Clayton as a plural wife, she yet had feelings for her former fiancé, and the situation became complicated. Not only did Emma express ill will but Clayton's mother-in-law, living in Clayton's home, was also terribly distraught by the affair. When Clayton asked Joseph about it, the Prophet assured him that he had done no wrong and that, rather than fretting, Clayton had a right to all the wives he could get (193, 216 n. 4). Joseph also told Clayton not to worry about the possibility of public discovery. If necessary, he might have to be excommunicated. But that would be only a charade. Clayton could then be rebaptized and, Joseph said, advanced just as in the past. In his account of this matter, Allen engages in one of the few instances where, in my own view, he interferes to let the bullet pass. The Prophet's response, he says, was "obviously a bit of tongue-in-cheek" (194–95).

To suggest that those sections of the book dealing with polygamy are nothing but compilations of spicy intrigue would be grossly inaccurate. Not only does Allen handle the materials relating to Clayton's polygamy in Nauvoo with restraint, but his

account of Clayton's subsequent marital life is sensitive biography at its best. Clayton had ten wives and forty-two children. Three of the women divorced him. Through it all, there were many trials. There were also many happy moments. The courtship and marriage to Diantha Farr (sister of the man to whom Margaret Moon was engaged) is tenderly told. It leaves no doubt that romantic feelings were possible in plural contractions. Similarly, the conflict felt by another wife, Maria Lyman Clayton, when her father, Apostle Amasa Lyman, was excommunicated for his involvement with the Godbeites, is described with compassion for those on all sides. This episode provides Allen with another example of Clayton's discipleship because, despite the great regard and friendship for his father-in-law and the affection felt for Maria, he was willing to sacrifice both rather than forsake an orthodox devotion to his church.

Another topic of interest to contemporary Mormon historians is the fascination Clayton displayed for astrology and alchemy. Allen makes the point that we must not be too judgmental here because, not only were many other Americans of the time, including some Mormons, interested in such things but they were believed to have a foundation in scientific truth. Clayton was not only a subscriber to astrological literature but dabbled in its use and hoped to match astrological castings with Church prophecy. His brief connection with alchemy involved an attempt to organize a Utah branch of the British Metallic Mutual Association, an alchemic society, and several unsuccessful tries at transmuting one metal into another. Clayton was not only deceived in this but was bilked out of a fair amount of money.

Part of what makes the volume so readable is less the strategic commentary William Clayton's life permitted on such things as Joseph Smith's private affairs, polygamy, and astrology than its thoughtful record of the mundane: the grit of daily account keeping on land, tithing, and temple building in Nauvoo; personal dilemmas arising from the prickly business of sorting out private financial interests, dealing with the Smith family, and settling the question of the Church's leadership after the deaths of Joseph and Hyrum; the frictions, delays, and misunderstandings generated by the logistics of movement to the Rocky Mountains; Clayton's melancholy descent from the center of things, of "Remembering Joseph but Following Brigham"; the disappointment of a mission to his homeland marred by error and an unfortunate experience with alcohol. More than a window on the lives of the leaders, Allen's work is overwhelmingly the life of William Clayton, nineteenth-century Latter-day Saint.

Finally, something needs to be said about sources. Allen makes it clear that the Clayton diary used for the period through early 1842 is in the BYU library. This was the volume that he and Thomas Alexander edited and published as *Manchester Mormons: The Journal of William Clayton 1840–42* (Santa Barbara and Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith, 1974). And Clayton's record of the overland journey from Nauvoo to the Great Salt Lake in 1846–47 was published by the Clayton Family Association in 1921. While Allen refers throughout to other papers and letters found predominantly in the Church's archives in Salt Lake City, the important diaries for the period 1842 to 1846 are not discussed except in a footnote on page 105 (n. 3). There the reader is told to "see" Clayton's journals for those years but is then informed that they are in "private custody" and that Allen was given their use by "special permission" only. So far as I could find, there was no other commentary on these particular documents anywhere in the book. Information about Clayton's unpublished papers is little more than cryptic throughout. Some greater account of provenance, location, and conditions surrounding these materials would have been both interesting and an aid to further scholarly inquiry. Aside from this, however, the book's documentation is ample, clearly described, and helpful. The work contains photographs of Clayton and eight of his wives.

Allen's engaging portrait of William Clayton not only allows us to share in the trials of a Mormon "disciple" but evokes a sense of recognition and empathy for him as a fellow man.

RICHARD E. BENNETT. *Mormons at the Missouri, 1846-1852: "And Should We Die."* Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987. 347 pp. $24.95.

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Richard E. Bennett, archivist at Elizabeth Dafoe Library, University of Manitoba, has done what archivists do best. He has marshalled an enormous collection of facts, quotations, and references on Mormons at the Missouri River between 1846 and 1852. In so doing, Bennett has served notice on LDS historians that they can no longer ignore that nebulous place between Nauvoo and Salt Lake City.