

V. BEN BLOXHAM, JAMES R. MOSS and LARRY C. PORTER, eds. *Truth Will Prevail: The Rise of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the British Isles, 1837–1987*. Corporation of the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1987. xvii; 462 pp. Illustrations, photographs, appendixes, index. \$15.95.

Reviewed by Ronald G. Watt, an archivist working in Salt Lake City.

This is a well-designed and carefully assembled book. The fourteen chapters are arranged in three sections: "The Apostolic Foundation," "Building the Kingdom," and "Looking Forward." The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints funded and published the book as part of sesquicentennial celebration of the church's introduction into the British Isles. Apostle Russell M. Nelson wrote the forward.

Beginning with an article about Canada, the book next introduces the missionaries into Britain. The reader follows the missionary work throughout the British Isles, the emigration of the Saints to America, the struggle of the Church in Great Britain in the latter nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and finally the rebuilding and rise of the Church once again in the middle of this century. Maybe a better subtitle would have been "The Rise, the Fall, and the Rise of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."

This book, which supersedes Richard L. Evans's *A Century of Mormonism in Great Britain*, has sold well in Britain. No doubt it has helped the British Saints to better understand their Mormon heritage and helped as well the American Saints understand their British heritage.

The main problem of the book is the unevenness of the chapters, a common fault with a multiple-authored volume such as this. It is difficult to assemble such a volume unless the editors are very conscious of this danger and take great care to prevent it.

In the first section, "Apostolic Foundation," Larry Porter's article on Canada and Malcolm Thorp's articles on Preston and its Victorian background are the highlights. James Moss's and Ben Bloxham's chapters, both overviews of Mormonism in the British Isles during the early period have difficulties. Moss's article tends to consist of quotes hung together with his own summaries. Although the editors are very careful to eliminate redundancies between the other articles, the Thomas Webster incident is related in detail in both these articles. Both articles, however, do explain well the tremendous growth of the early Church in Great Britain.

The best articles overall are in the second section on "Building the Kingdom" This title, though, is actually a misnomer. A

better name for the entire section is part of the title for Fred Buchanan's article, "The Ebb and Flow." Richard Jensen's article on emigration explains the decline of the Church in Britain. Jensen does very well in detailing the mechanics of the emigration. Richard Cowan's article is a well-balanced essay, giving an overview of the Church in Britain from 1841 to 1914. His title, "Church Growth," is another misnomer; a better title would have been "Church Decline." Also the editors are to be commended for finding authors who could write about the Church in Wales, Scotland, and Ireland. Ronald Dennis's article on Wales is intriguing because he follows the Mormon and anti-Mormon publications that were printed in Welsh. It is an interesting story that possibly only Dennis, as a Mormon scholar trained in Welsh, could relate. The Brent Barlow article is less helpful, perhaps because Ireland has always been so cold to the gospel and there is little to report. The Fred Buchanan article on Scotland is the best in the book. He gives an excellent background, using statistics well and showing who was converted and why. His article is primarily about people, and he makes them come alive.

In the last section, "Looking Forward," the first two articles, which are by Louis B. Cardon, are good historical essays. He uses primarily the *Millennial Star* to explain what happened to the Church from 1914 to 1950. In a way he has brought this period out of darkness for most Latter-day Saints, so we can all realize that this was the foundation period for the later growth. He also explains how the Church began to use public relations to develop a more positive image for Latter-day Saints in the British press. With the end of the war, Britain's LDS church population was ready to expand—thus the story of the last two chapters: how the Church grew and how the programs are being used by the British members. The lack of documentation makes these two chapters rather weak. Moss primarily uses the *Millennial Star*, the *Deseret News*, and *The Improvement Era* as information sources to explain the building of the temple, the expansion of missionary work, and the development of Church programs in the British Isles. The Anne Perry article, deemed necessary by the editors, is more impressionistic than historical. But Perry, the only Britisher of the writers, does bring an interesting perspective to the book.

Too often Mormon historians try to relate only the Mormon story without providing the world or societal context that affected that story. The book lacks a chapter on the changes in Britain that helped the Church grow. For example, there could have been an explanation of the secularization of society, especially the secularization of the established religion. The twentieth-century Britisher,

generally, does not care much about religion. This change helped make the Church's public relations effort successful with British newspapers, even with the yellow-press tabloids. The press in the nineteenth century was a religious press fighting for souls against what they saw as an ungodly group; the secular press today is more tolerant.

Another problem in the book is the lack of notes or a bibliography. While the notes and bibliography are available upon request at the Religious Studies Center at Brigham Young University, the editors opted for a condensed form of the note in the body of the text.

The other problems in the volume are minor. For example, the only place one can find something about the authors is on the dust jacket, and that is usually something that gets thrown away. The use of the day and month, such as, 23rd of January, is archaic. The picture on page 89 is labeled incorrectly: the second name was really "Darling," not "Darlington." The table on page 60 adds up to more than the stated 280, thus skewing the percentages slightly. A little more care would have prevented this mistake.

Nevertheless, the book accomplishes its ends. The editors set out to produce a volume that tells the experience of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from its beginnings in Britain to the present day, and it does that reasonably well. The book does detail and celebrate the British Mormon experience.