

veled the country lecturing on Mormon misdeeds, including the experiment with polygamy. Yet, even after publication of his *History of the Saints* (1842) and two years of campaigning against them, he tried to gain control of the movement following Joseph Smith's assassination in 1844.

In later years, Bennett associated with the Hinklites (a splinter group of the Mormons) and then with Voree Strang (the self-proclaimed successor to Joseph Smith) before finally forming a poultry and stock company and moving to Iowa in 1853. He finished out his years living a comfortable life in Polk City, Iowa, where neighbors considered him one of the town's better citizens.

Smith has done a fine job of recounting Bennett's story. The book is well researched and decently written. At times, the detail becomes burdensome, but, for the most part, the story being told is worth the telling.

Reverend Joseph Tarkington, Methodist Circuit Rider: From Frontier Evangelism to Refined Religion, by David L. Kimbrough. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1997. xxi, 218 pp. Illustrations, notes, appendix, bibliography, index. \$35.00 cloth.

REVIEWED BY FRANK E. JOHNSON, MIDAMERICA NAZARENE UNIVERSITY

David Kimbrough has written a clever biography, casting the central figure as a minor player in a grand drama. Kimbrough argues that Joseph Tarkington was a significant figure in the development of Methodism in Indiana. This combination of biography and denominational history will be of particular interest to regional and religious historians. While scholars will appreciate Kimbrough's work, it is suitable for undergraduate students and lay historians as well.

Kimbrough's thesis is that Tarkington (1800-1891) personified nineteenth-century Methodism. Tarkington resided in Indiana for all but the first fifteen years of his life. Licensed to preach in 1824, he remained an active minister, filling numerous assignments throughout the state, until the late 1880s. He served as a circuit rider well beyond the typical four-year "probation" period. With the blessing of his presiding elder, Tarkington married Maria Slawson in 1831; together, though more Maria's responsibility than Joseph's, they raised seven children. Genealogists will delight in Kimbrough's exploration of Tarkington family history. In many respects a mirror image of the denomination, the Tarkingtons struggled to rise above inauspicious origins and achieve social respectability. Tarkington, and Methodists

in general, were keenly aware that material gain could jeopardize spiritual welfare and Christian witness. Despite such misgivings, they pursued both objectives with evangelical zeal.

While there is much to commend in this biography, there are two weaknesses. Kimbrough, in attempting to establish context for his analysis, allows Tarkington to disappear on occasion. In one such example, despite presenting a fine synopsis of how slavery affected antebellum evangelicalism, Kimbrough overlooks his subject for nearly eight pages (122-29). Second, though charting Tarkington's quest for respectability, Kimbrough stops short of developing the incongruity between Tarkington's perceived indebtedness near the end of his life and the reality of his "sizeable estate" (149). To be fair, though, these are minor flaws. In the main, Kimbrough seems ever conscious of his mission. If anything, he entices readers to explore the issues in greater detail on their own.

Kimbrough's biography is rich in detail and anecdote. He mines Tarkington's autobiography with great success. Moreover, he demonstrates a facility with the secondary literature (the footnotes and bibliography should not be overlooked). The twenty-five illustrations are an added bonus. One cannot help but be struck by the forcefulness of the photos of pioneer Methodists such as Tarkington and his collaborator Allen Wiley.

In sum, David Kimbrough has produced an excellent volume. This is an important work for two reasons. Kimbrough successfully argues that Joseph Tarkington was a significant figure in the development of Methodism in Indiana. Moreover, Tarkington's life provides an excellent lens for examining the maturation of evangelicalism in the nineteenth-century Midwest. One wishes that Kimbrough had developed the latter in greater detail, but he has challenged others to pursue this end.

Rocky Mountain Radical: Myron W. Reed, Christian Socialist, by James A. Denton. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997. x, 206 pp. Illustration, notes, bibliography, index. \$45.00 cloth.

REVIEWED BY JACOB H. DORN, WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY

Originally a doctoral dissertation, James A. Denton's study of Myron W. Reed (1836-1899) emphasizes the interplay between the controversial minister's social and political ideas and conditions in Denver, Colorado, as it experienced transformation from a mining camp into a metropolis. A transplanted New Englander who served churches in

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