

quire a celibate clergy. Finally, if a Uniate jurisdiction were created in America, Eastern priests would be subject to their own hierarchy rather than to the local bishop. Neither Ireland nor his episcopal colleagues wanted this trespass on their authority. The Uniate schism that began in Minnesota, when Father Alexis Georgievich Toth and 365 of his parishioners joined the Russian Orthodox church, later swelled into a mass exodus, as a quarter of a million or more Uniates in various parts of the country broke with Rome. O'Connell concludes, "if Ireland's advocacy of the blacks displayed him at his best, his belligerence toward the Uniates showed him at his bull-headed worst" (271).

O'Connell depicts Ireland as a man of action rather than a man of thought. Though certainly not on a par with the European intellectuals previously studied by O'Connell, Ireland was far more reflective than this biography suggests. His conviction that it was necessary to distinguish between essential beliefs and historical accidents was an important element at the very heart of his Americanist ideology. Eager to move his church into a more positive relationship with the advancing tide of knowledge, Ireland wanted his church to abandon certain human, accidental features and to speak to modern men and women in a language they understood. This conditioned his response to Modernism — a diverse movement that tried to form a synthesis of Catholic theology with modern biblical and philosophical inquiry. For much of his long and distinguished career, Ireland strove for balance. He advanced certain ideas, such as the philosophy of immanence, that he found useful in defending his church while rejecting others that would, at least from his perspective, imperil Catholic dogma.

In general, this is an eminently worthwhile and useful biography. No review can possibly do justice to the vast scope of this important work since it sheds light on a host of fascinating topics of interest to scholars and lay persons alike. The Minnesota Historical Society is to be congratulated on the production of such a handsome and well-edited volume. O'Connell's monumental study will long remain the standard biography of John Ireland and an essential book for students of religion in America.

*Joseph Smith III: Pragmatic Prophet*, by Roger D. Launius. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988. xii, 394 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliographical essay, index. \$24.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY SAMUEL C. PEARSON, SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

This first biography of Joseph Smith III, son and namesake of the founder of Mormonism, is as much a study of Mormonism in the after-

math of the founder's murder and of the formation and development of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints as it is a study of the man. The focus is appropriate, for it is Smith's role in the development and transformation of Mormonism that gives his life sufficient significance to justify a biography. The author observes that "this is in large part a study of the uses and limits of power within an organization" (xi). This is certainly true, but when the president is son and namesake of a charismatic founder and periodically claims for himself the authority to deliver divine revelation, the uses of power are extensive, and the limits are modest.

In 1844 when Joseph Smith, Jr., the founder of Mormonism, was murdered, Nauvoo was the center of Mormon life; but small congregations of Saints could be found in communities spread from New England and Ohio to Wisconsin, Illinois, and Missouri. In the crisis that followed the founder's death, a variety of individuals emerged claiming rights of succession. The majority of Mormons followed Brigham Young, a dramatic and charismatic leader in his own right, to Utah; but many refused to go. Some insisted that leadership of the church should pass to a lineal descendant of the founder. Several rival groups developed, each claiming to be the legal successor to the church established by Joseph Smith, Jr. The most important institution to emerge among these non-Utah Mormons was the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, which began to take institutional shape in the early 1850s. Joseph Smith III became president of the Reorganized Church in 1860, serving in that capacity until his death in 1914.

Tension between the Smith family and Young developed over the Smith papers and estate and especially over Young's insistence and the widow's denial that Joseph Smith, Jr., taught and practiced plural marriage. Emma Smith, the widow, separated herself from church affairs until she joined the Reorganized Church with her son. It was in this environment that Joseph Smith III grew into manhood. After briefly studying law, Smith settled in Nauvoo, married, became a businessman and farmer, and began to become involved in politics. An experience that he interpreted as divine revelation prepared him to respond favorably to overtures from the leadership of the Reorganized Church; at an 1860 church conference, Smith declared that he was called by "a power not my own."

Smith and the Reorganized Church shared many views. Where they differed Smith was generally successful in imposing his views on the larger body. They affirmed belief in the divine nature of the Book of Mormon; in continuing revelation, and in the imminent return of Jesus Christ to usher in a millennial reign. Smith also believed that he had a special mission to present his father's work to the world and to correct

what he regarded as misconceptions of it. Most important of such misconceptions was the idea that Joseph Smith, Jr., taught and practiced plural marriage. Against overwhelming evidence to the contrary, the son held and taught that plural marriage was an idea introduced by others and unknown to the founder. Believing that Utah Mormonism's plural marriage doctrine and theocratic organization were both wrong and the source of hostility to the movement, Smith devoted special attention to opposing them through persuasion and political action.

The Reorganized Church itself grew modestly, moved its headquarters from Plano, Illinois, to Lamoni, Iowa, established a liberal arts college, and began to plan for an eventual move to Independence, Missouri. A faction emerged in the 1870s opposing Smith's legalism, literalism, and administrative authority; but Smith successfully challenged it and maintained control of the church. Before he died, the church named his son Frederick to succeed him in the presidency. Launius believes that Smith made the Reorganized Church "a practical, viable institution" (369). This may be true, but a reader less sympathetic to Joseph Smith III will find in his personality and leadership some of the explanation for the failure of Reorganization to flourish.

Launius has written extensively on Mormon history, and this carefully researched biography grew out of his Louisiana State University dissertation. It traces Smith's public career chronologically, examines his personal and family life, and offers a positive assessment of Smith's leadership. Facts are almost always correct, though Beaver Island is in Michigan, but interpretations and generalizations do not always ring true. For example, the image of Smith that Launius creates is far more legalistic and autocratic than he seems willing to admit. Nonetheless, Smith was certainly an honorable man who lived an interesting life and deserves a biography. Those who know only the Mormonism of Utah will understand the movement and its history better after reading this volume.

*Spirit Fruit: A Gentle Utopia*, by H. Roger Grant. DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1988. xiv, 203 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$22.50 cloth.

REVIEWED BY CARL J. GUARNERI, SAINT MARY'S COLLEGE OF CALIFORNIA

This affectionate, well-researched little book chronicles the story of a religiously inspired midwestern communal group that remained largely intact at three successive locations from 1901 to 1930. Spirit Fruit's founder, Jacob Beilhart, blended the Social Gospel, Theosophy, and laissez-faire sexuality into "Universal Life," a vague Christian commu-

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