

Book Reviews

Michael Hurley, S. J. (Editor), *John Wesley's Letter to a Roman Catholic*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1968. 64 pages. \$2.25.

What makes this letter of Wesley important enough to be republished? To answer that question, the reader of it must remember that it was written nearly ten years after the author's direct involvement in the evangelical revival that had begun with field preaching near Bristol. Strident opposition had not caused him to despair. Pulpits in his beloved Anglican Church had been closed to him, and severe criticism mounted against the use of new ways of proclamation and nurture; but undeterred he had continued his ministry and rejoiced in the multiplying fruits in England.

Since landing in Ireland April 15, 1749, he had been faced both with mob violence and caustic charges that his movement was "all Jesuitism at the bottom." Nevertheless he had seen a number of persons converted to faith in Christ; encouragement to previously established societies had brought joy to all concerned; and he had established several new societies. Then on July 12 he had preached to a very large congregation which seems to have included Anglicans, Dissenters, and Roman Catholics. To his great surprise there was no mob violence. *A Letter to a Roman Catholic* came from his pen six days later. It conveys, among other things, his growing yearning for accord and unity among Christians so as to open the way for a more effective Christian mission to the unreached.

Members of some denominations committed to the ecumenical movement are known to wonder if ecumenism is not a modern fad for which there is no biblical support and little evidence in the history of Christianity. John Wesley not only underscored the importance of the unity of Christians in his preaching ministry, but in this *Letter* he so compassionately and clearly sets forth the essential marks of unity that participants in the contemporary ecumenical movement find the letter fresh in its appeal and practical in its recommendations for action.

The practice should long since have ended, Wesley says, when historic churches perpetuate old suspicions and distrust of one another. Moreover, renewal movements instead of inadvertently causing a schismatic and sectarian spirit should be welcomed as prime promoters of such increased understanding and charity as to evoke endeavors "to help each other on in whatever we are agreed leads to the kingdom." Although our ecumenical vision may be more comprehensive in scope than Wesley's, his guiding principle anticipated that expressed both by the Faith and Order Conference at Lund in 1952 and by the more recent Decree on Ecumenism of the second Vatican Council, namely, "collaboration according to conscience."

How very contemporary the power of Wesley's appeal is for all Christians to begin cooperating so as to more effectively undergird the Christian enterprise is evident in the fact that this republication of the *Letter* is edited and has an introduction by Michael Hurley,

an Irish Jesuit, and that it has prefaces by Bishop Odd Hagen, President of the World Methodist Council, and by the late Augustin Cardinal Bea, first President of the Vatican Secretariat for Christian Unity.

Surely every United Methodist interested in helping to manifest a church "truly evangelical" and "truly catholic" will want not only to be nurtured by Wesley's insights on unity, but also be encouraged to recommend the use of it as a stimulus for Catholic-Protestant dialogue. It is an unusually appropriate document for such a time as ours.

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- METHODIST UNION CATALOG (History, Biography, Disciplines, and Hymnals), preliminary edition, edited by Brooks B. Little, softback, 1967, 478p., \$10.00.
- UNION LIST OF METHODIST SERIALS, second checking edition, compiled by John D. Batsel, softback, 1968, 156p., approximately 1500 titles, \$10.00.
- HISTORY OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA METHODISM, by Elmer T. Clark, Parthenon Press, hardback, 1966, 197p., \$3.25.
- HISTORY OF THE INDIANA CONFERENCE NORTH (Evangelical United Brethren), by Harry O. Huffman, softback, 1968, 316p., Evangel Press, Nappanee, Indiana, \$3.00.
- FOREVER BEGINNING, Methodist Bicentennial Historical Papers, softback, second printing, 1967, 254p., \$2.50.
- THE METHODIST TOURIST GUIDEBOOK, by George H. Jones, Tidings, softback, 1966, 300p., \$2.00.
- THE DRAMATIC STORY OF EARLY AMERICAN METHODISM, by Frederick E. Maser, Abingdon Press, softback, 1965, 111p., \$.75.
- FILM STRIP: "Live or Die, I Must Ride," 80 frames, 1966, limited supply, special price—\$5.00.
- THE WARM HEART OF WESLEY, by Elmer T. Clark, hardback, 1950, 78p., \$.75 (few copies remain).
- GRAVE MARKER, (see inside back cover), bronze marker, \$20.00; in quantity of five or more, \$15.00 each.
- PAMPHLETS: "How to Write and Publish The History of a Methodist Church" by Wallace Guy Smeltzer, 1967, 13p., single copy free; additional ones, \$.10 each or \$1.00 per dozen.
- "Francis Asbury" by Elmer T. Clark, Second Edition, 1966, 19p., \$.05 each.
- "Susanna Wesley" by Frederick E. Maser, 1967, 31p., \$.05 each.
- "John Wesley" by Maldwyn L. Edwards, Second Edition, 1966, 22p., \$.05 each.
- "Thomas Coke" by Warren T. Smith, Second Edition, 1964, 24p., \$.05 each.
- "Charles Wesley" by Elmer T. Clark, Second Edition, 20p., \$.05 each.
- "The Fourteen Original Historical Shrines of The United Methodist Church," reprinted by permission of Together Magazine, 1966, 16p., \$.45 per dozen.

BI-CENTENNIAL MEDALLIONS, bronze, show the four earliest church structures in American Methodism erected in the 1760's, \$1.00.

OF MANY THREADS, sound filmstrip, history of The Evangelical United Brethren Church, 73 frames, record (33 1/3 rpm), \$7.00.

COLOR PRINTS of Susanna Wesley, Charles Wesley, Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury, taken from the Frank O. Salisbury portraits, and John Wesley, taken from the John Jackson portrait, \$.25 per set.

COLOR SLIDES of the five portraits listed above and the World Methodist Building, Lake Junaluska, N.C., three for one dollar.

DAUNTLESS IN MISSISSIPPI, The Life of Sarah A. Dickey, 1838-1904, by Miss Helen Griffith, Dinosaur Press, second printing, 1966, softback, 174p., \$1.95.

THE HISTORIES OF THE PENNSYLVANIA AND CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA CONFERENCES (EUB), now known as the Susquehanna Conference, by Charles R. Miller and William L. Raker, The Craft Press, Chambersburg, Pa., 1968, hardback, 660p., \$6.00.

A HISTORY OF NORTH MISSISSIPPI METHODISM, 1820-1900, by Gene R. Miller. \$4.25 pp.

CASTINGS FROM THE FOUNDRY MOLD, A History of Foundry Church, Washington, D. C. 1814-1964, by Homer L. Calkin. Hardback, 359 p., bibliography and index, \$6.25.