BOOK REVIEWS


Since the day of Plutarch, men have recognized in biography history’s most intimate form. Because each of us views its events from an individual perspective, biography is history in its most natural form. All others pretend to an unfamiliar transcendence of the limits of space and time. Yet, much that passes for biography is not good history.

O. Lester Brown’s *Gilbert T. Rowe: Churchman Extraordinary* tells the story of a leading Southern Methodist clergyman. Gilbert Theodore Rowe was born in 1875, the son of a Methodist minister in the North Carolina piedmont. He studied at Durham’s Trinity College in the early 1890’s and, from 1896 to 1920, served as Methodist pastor in Albemarle, Asheville, Concord, Greensboro, Hendersonville and elsewhere. After six months as editor of the *North Carolina Christian Advocate,* he became editor of the *Methodist Quarterly Review* in Nashville. In 1928, Rowe returned to North Carolina to join the faculty of Duke University’s School of Religion, where he taught until retirement in 1948.

Brown’s biography of Rowe will be serviceable to future historians insofar as it fleshes out this brief sketch, but it is badly in need of an editor’s skillful touch. Repeatedly, the author distracts his reader with lengthy and repetitious quotations, irrelevant asides and uncritical tributes to his subject. Moreover, Brown is obviously unfamiliar with the large body of literature on which he might have drawn for placing Rowe in historical context. Had he been acquainted with the work of C. Vann Woodward and George B. Tindall, Brown might have sketched in the important social and political background to Rowe’s career. Greater familiarity with what was going on in the church and society in the period might have enabled Brown to develop material to which he only obliquely refers, such as the interesting story of the Methodist pastor to the laboring men of Winston-Salem, Tom P. Jimison, who was defeated in a race for mayor in the years just prior to 1920. Had he known the work of Kenneth Bailey, Wilma Dykeman, Hunter D. Farish, Samuel S. Hill, Robert M. Miller and others, Brown might have located Rowe in the currents of Southern Methodist history. As his own evidence indicates, it is a story worth telling, for Rowe was a part of an important group of clergymen and teachers at Vanderbilt, Duke and Emory, including Will W. Alexander, Plato T. Durham, Edwin Mims, Wilbur F. Tillett and Willis D. Weatherford, who exercised a liberating influence on Southern Methodist theology and social thought in the decades after 1900. Occasionally accused of heresy, Rowe’s tendency toward theological liberalism, under the influence of both Borden Parker Bowne’s personalism and the theological empiricism of Douglas Clyde Macintosh and Henry Wieman, was evident in his two books, *The Meaning of Methodism* and *The Reality of Religion.*

Edith Patterson Meyer, now editor for children’s books at Abingdon Press, tells her own story in *For Goodness’ Sake! Growing Up in a New England Parsonage* and a charming one it is. Those who know—or who knew—of this way of life will recognize in these reminiscences a warm representation of its trials and triumphs. Here are the rhythms of par-
sonage life from morning devotions to evening homework, each week's efforts finding fruition in Sunday's services. There is rhythm, too, in the shuttle between two points on a charge and the periodic move from one charge to the next. Edith Meyer's story of the Ladies Aid Societies, church socials and summer picnics in the early twentieth century rings true. Aside from the public life of a parsonage family, she tells of a private life which the congregation constantly threatened. Regardless of cost, the minister's family was expected to do business with Methodists whenever possible. The parsonage family was, in turn, "patronized" by the congregation. While she clearly values the experience, Edith Meyer knows the trials of a preacher's child, constantly reminded of the necessity of setting a good example. She knows the pervasive moralism of American Methodism. She wrote the book for goodness sake!

Brown's Rowe and Edith Meyer's memoir will serve as raw material for the professional historian's mill. Students of race relations will note evidence of a movement from white supremacy toward a Southern racial liberalism in Gilbert Rowe's thinking on the subject and, while the New England family adhered to a racial egalitarianism, there was evidence of a persistent anti-Catholicism in the New England parsonage. More importantly, these books, especially Edith Meyer's reminiscence, suggest that a significant study of the nineteenth century Methodist family might be immensely fruitful. In their work on the family, Edmund Morgan and John Demos taught us much about seventeenth century New England. The nineteenth and twentieth century ground remains to be broken.

—Ralph E. Luker
Allegheny College


An important primary source for data about a Cherokee Methodist Church and its minister in North Carolina a hundred years ago is available in this booklet. It was edited and annotated by the late Jack Frederick Kilpatrick of Oklahoma and Southern Methodist University and his wife, Anna Gritts Kilpatrick, who now lives in Tahlequah, Oklahoma.

The 111-page booklet tells, among other things, about the Echota Methodist Mission in Soco Valley, apparently on or very near the site now occupied by the stone Methodist church on Highway 19. It existed as early as September 1850, and had a Sunday school and a singing class. Its pastor was Inoli, a very able full-blood Cherokee, who spoke no English, and who filled nearly every position of honor among his people including that of keeping the town records. He was licensed as a local preacher on August 25, 1849, by the quarterly conference of the Waynesville, N. C., Methodist Church.

Inoli was born about 1830 and died in 1885. The account lists the names of members of the church and of the singing class. Quotations are included from the Bible in Cherokee, probably taken from the Cherokee translation made by the early Congregational and Presbyterian missionaries.

Among names of members of the Wolftown community is Wa:sida?ni, the youngest son of Tsa:li (whose name was the Cherokee equivalent of Charley), the Removal martyr whose touching story is retold every
summer at Cherokee, N.C., in the drama, "Unto These Hills." Wa:si-da?ni, being the youngest son of Tsa:li, was not executed as were his father and brothers.

Among the Methodist members listed was one who was listed as Deacon, the literal Cherokee meaning for which is "he hunts those who belong, to get them to come to church."

—Walter N. Vernon
Nashville, Tennessee

Wallace Guy Smeltzer, The History of the Jumonville Training Center. Published 1973 by the Jumonville Training Center, Inc., RR #1, Box 743, Hopwood, Pa. 15445. 125 pages. $1.35 by mail.

On May 28, 1754 in what is now the southwestern corner of Pennsylvania, a French scouting party commanded by Ensign Coulon de Jumonville was engaged by a Company of Virginia Militia and some Indians under the command of Lt. Col. George Washington. Jumonville was killed as were nine of his men, and the remaining twenty-one were taken prisoner. This skirmish marked the beginning of The French and Indian War. The battle site, known as "Washington's Rocks" and containing Jumonville's grave, is a National Historic Site within the grounds of the "Jumonville Training Center" of the Western Pennsylvania Annual Conference.

Guy Smeltzer, continuing his efforts to chronicle the history of Methodism in Western Pennsylvania, has written a clear account of the historical events related to this site, and tells the story of the Training Center with obvious first-hand knowledge and appreciation for the ministry that "Jumonville" has made possible in the lives of thousands of persons since it was chartered in 1941. A number of photographs from his personal collection are included.

Of interest to persons associated with "Jumonville" or to those who have seen the giant illuminated cross atop Dunbar's Knob, this small volume will also be of value to students of American History for the story it tells of the Pennsylvania Soldiers' Orphan School which was operated at the site from 1875 to 1908.

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