Book Reviews


The initial volume of the Methodist Union Catalog, an alphabetical listing by authors and covering entries beginning A-Bj, which is planned as a twenty-volume set, with additional index volumes listing subject, title and added entries, has been published. This promising and impressive enterprise has been compiled from cataloged holdings on Methodist subjects, broadly interpreted, found in over two hundred libraries, including the major collections of Methodism in the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Ireland, the Continent and Australia. In addition are entries from the notable Wesley bibliography and the "personal union catalog" of Methodistica found in British libraries which were compiled by Professor Frank Baker of Duke University. Also included are imprints from the "beginnings" of Methodism in 1729 through December 1975 inclusive. It is anticipated that when complete the Catalog will list over 100,000 entries, consisting of books, pamphlets and theses. Manuscripts are not included. Methodist periodicals and serial publications will be found in a companion volume: the Union List of United Methodist Serials, 1773-1973, edited by John and Lyda Batsel and published in 1974.

While limited to publications using the Roman alphabet, the Catalog reflects Methodism in its world-wide prospects. The literature of Methodism is interpreted comprehensively including the Wesleys, British Wesleyanism, American Methodism in its various forms, the Evangelical United Brethren, Black Methodism, the strands of the Wesleyan persuasion, and Methodism in other countries. It includes history, biography, doctrine, polity, education, missions, sermons and official publications issued by the various Methodist churches, conferences and organizations. The items listed will be indexed by subject, title and added entries—editors, compilers, persons, or organizations associated with or responsible for their publication.

The format of entries follow the Anglo-American Cataloging rules, North American text, 1967 edition. Bibliographical information includes full author (frequently with dates of birth and death), title, place of publication, publisher, date published, pagination, and, when required, series notation. Photocopies, microfilms, microforms, microfiche, photostat, Xerox copies are recorded with the original texts and are provided with "location" symbols. The bibliographical information is accurate and reliable.

One of the most useful features of the Catalog is that it locates in libraries items listed. In case of multiple locations as many as twelve libraries
are noted which are selected geographically to provide maximum convenience to potential users.

The Catalog constitutes a tool important to centers for research dealing with world history, biography, civilization, society, religion and the humanities. As such it is indispensable to the scholar, bibliographer, or librarian specializing in the Methodist tradition. It will be found useful for reference purposes, for collection building, for counselling in research, or in planning for research. It is an invaluable tool for assisting in inter-library loan. It should be found in the university, the college, schools of religion and seminary libraries, the historical and archival collections, and the personal collection of the special scholar of Methodism.

The project is well-conceived. The Catalog should prove instrumental in encouraging and assisting research and understanding of Methodism. It provides a comprehensive profile of the people called Methodists. The extent, wealth and variety of materials listed demonstrates how broad, diverse and inclusive Methodism is and has been. Yet certain common traditions persist in this diversity and assert themselves from generation to generation. It reflects the interests and emphases — evangelical and spiritual, social and individual — of Methodism, what interested Methodists, and what they deemed was the primary dynamic of their faith.

The publication reflects the cooperation of libraries scattered around the world. To enlist this wide range of interest and to implement their cooperation must be credited to the ingenuity, imagination, the unusual diligence, and the gifts of persuasion of the Compiler. The project is sponsored by the Commission on Archives and History of the United Methodist Church (U.S.A.), the Methodist Librarian's Fellowship (U.S.A.), and the Drew University Library.

The volume is well bound, convenient in size, employs a good assortment of type, is printed on paper stock of good quality, in double columns, and with wide margins. In layout and publication the Scarecrow Press, Inc., has done an excellent job.

The Compiler, Dr. Kenneth E. Rowe, is Assistant Professor of Church History and Methodist Librarian at Drew University. The project has grown out of Dr. Rowe’s work as curator of one of the most distinguished collections of Methodism in America.

We anticipate with great interest the appearance of future volumes and the index. This is a worthy enterprise, a standard bibliographical tool.

— Raymond P. Morris
  Professor of Religious Literature and
  Librarian Emeritus
  Yale Divinity School

This is an enlarged and revised edition of a book first published by Epworth Press, London, in 1950, which, in turn, was a reduced version of the author's M.A. thesis at Bristol University, England, entitled *The Forms and Psychology of Worship in the Free Church Tradition with Special Reference to Methodism*. The author served in British pulpits from 1931 to 1954 and since then has lived in New Jersey, receiving his Ph.D. from Drew University in 1958 and serving several churches in the Northern New Jersey Conference until his retirement in 1973.

It is most fortunate that, after being out of print for some years, this book is again available. No other book traces in such detail the origins and development of Methodist worship, and there is a wealth of information in it that is readily available nowhere else. The author's researches and pastoral experience in both Great Britain and the United States over such a long period of years give him a breadth of experience and perspective that would be hard indeed to match. He is a careful scholar and seasoned observer who has put us all greatly in his debt. We are especially fortunate that in this enlarged and revised edition he has included much new material giving a fuller account of the development of Methodist worship in the United States and taking into account the studies in worship that have been done in the past quarter century.

A strong word of caution, however, is necessary. Just because this book covers so much of Methodist worship, some may be tempted to consider it the definitive study of Methodist worship for our generation, which it is not. The author points out the limited scope of the book in the title, and this limitation is further underscored by the title of the thesis on which it is based.

It centers upon Methodist worship *in relation to free church worship*. While enough is told of the ecumenical history of Christian worship to give Methodist worship a broader setting, the treatment of Methodist worship in relation to Catholic/Anglican worship is not what would be called for in a comprehensive study of Methodist worship.

Furthermore, the British origins of the book are still evident, despite the additional material on American Methodist worship. A definitive treatment of Methodist worship would need a much more extensive treatment of Methodist worship in America in relation to the life and worship of the American frontier and to the whole range of distinctive elements in American worship. Certainly United Methodists will miss a treatment of our worship in relation to its Evangelical United Brethren roots.
A truly definitive book on Methodist worship today would also look at world Methodism as it has expanded beyond Great Britain and the United States and interacted with other national and religious traditions.

Of course, this book should not be faulted for not being what it was never intended to be, and it is a tribute to its many merits that one is tempted to make of it more than it is.

Several criticisms might be noted in passing. The author's original thesis dealt with "the forms and psychology of worship...." The psychologizing of worship on the pattern of Isaiah 6, so popular a generation ago, is too uncritically restated on pages 22ff in the light of more recent studies and experience. The discussion of the values of a lectionary on page 27 makes no mention of the ecumenical three-year lectionary which for the past several years has brought United Methodist interest in the lectionary to a new peak. The reference on page 53 to Scripture lessons in the Communion service as consisting of Epistle and Gospel without the Old Testament is now dated. It is not always true today that in Methodism the Communion elements are on the table during the Liturgy of the Word and "unveiled" at the beginning of the Liturgy of the Upper Room, as stated on page 56. The recommendation on page 58 that a slice of bread be broken at the Fraction is hardly adequate in view of the popular and growing use of a common loaf in the Lord's Supper. These, however, are minor matters.

This book, while not the text on Methodist worship, will certainly be a "must" for any serious student of the subject.

—Hoyt L. Hickman
Board of Discipleship


Here is a book the layperson can enjoy, the preacher can use for its illustrative material, and the scholar can turn to for both its lengthy bibliographies and its closely packed sections on "Folklore," "Folklore and Religion," "Methodist Folklore," and its summaries and conclusions.

Admitting that "folklore is a relative newcomer to the circle of the sciences," the author of this well researched volume points out that "within the last three decades...American Folklore has become the vocation of numerous avid students; several master's programs and two doctoral programs."

Through a quotation from Jan Harold Brunvand, the author defines
folklore as "those materials in culture that circulate traditionally among members of any group in different versions, whether in oral form or by means of customary example." He is quick to point out also that folklore is not confined to the past nor to rural settings. The folklore of a backward group may reappear in a different form in a more sophisticated community, and it often embodies itself in current expressions. For example, the author speaks of a belief among the Bantu tribe of Africa that forbids women from drinking milk since it is thought to cause sterility. A similar folk tale was transmitted during the Second World War when large numbers of women were involved in defense production and maintenance. Proximity to radar installations as well as prolonged use of welding equipment was said to cause sterility. Recently, the folklore has again reappeared vis-a-vis airline stewardesses: "repeated high altitude flights make stewardesses sterile."

The author adds, "Anyone pointing out to a stewardess the folk nature of her belief...would probably meet with a surly reaction....Members of a folk group are characteristically disposed to regard their folklore with any objectivity....other people are superstititious. but we have beliefs. Others are credulous but we know. Primitive people have folklore: modern people do not."

The author lists numerous ways in which the study of folklore may be of use to historians, and then delves deeply into the subject of Methodist folklore, cataloguing his folklore and stories under two general heads: "Remarkable Providences" and "Humor and Heroes". Under the first head he traces tales of Dreams, Remarkable Judgments, Remarkable Conversions, Remarkable Deliverences, Remarkable Encounters, Remarkable Providences Effected by Prayer, and Clairvoyance. Under "Humor and Heroes" he lists: On the Circuit, Preachers, Controversy, and Giants and Heroes.

He packs into his volume all the favorite stories that have ever been written or told by and about Methodist Circuit Riders and their people. Here, for example, is the story of Father Abbott saving souls as he preaches from the text, "I know thee to be an oyster man." When he is later told that he had misread the text which was, "I know thee to be an austere man," Father Abbott merely answers, "Never mind, oyster or austere. I got what I was after - souls converted."

For the scholar, the Introduction and the various conclusions contain the meat of the volume. I wish that these portions of the book had been more fully developed. The following sentence, for example, cries out for clarification and elaboration. "Stories of remarkable providences offer fresh grounds for reassessment of the role of traditional beliefs in the Second Great Awakening, and beyond that phenomenon in American religion as a whole." A kindred question has to do with the meaning of folklore for the so-
called believer and the way it was used and its subsequent effect on human life and conduct. Other questions suggest themselves to the reader as he or she pursues his or her way through a mass of entertaining material.

The book is well worth buying both for its content and for its extensive bibliographies scattered throughout the volume. It is number 6 in the ATLA Monograph Series edited by Dr. Kenneth E. Rowe, distinguished Methodist Librarian and Assistant Professor at Drew University, Madison, New Jersey. The author, Donald E. Byrne, Jr. has studied at St. Paul Seminary and Marquette University and received the doctorate from Duke University. He currently serves as Assistant Professor of Religion in Lebanon Valley College, Annville, Pennsylvania.

—Frederick E. Maser


This important book has been reviewed so widely and probingly that the only justification for the inclusion of a review in this journal is to note its particular significance for students of United Methodist history. Such justification is provided amply by several major aspects of the work.

First, the recent development of studies of Christian missions by secular historians has here been given confirmation and prestige. Done under the editorship of the leading historian of Chinese-American relations, with a key article by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., the book must be taken seriously. Yet it only marks the high point in the growing attention of persons outside the missionary movement itself studying the movement. This trend has a double value. It has provided a more critical look at missions than was provided by the earlier advocacy histories. It has called attention also to missionary history in the larger histories of countries or regions both for the provision of added resources and for observing the importance of missionary-influenced components.

Second, this treatment also adds depth and excitement to both missionary and other history by its affirmation that missionary history was not a one-sided affair of missionaries doing their thing in China. The book underlines this by its organization into three main parts. Part one looks at the American scene and influences which gave birth to missions to China. Part two deals with the interaction in China between these American-sent missionaries and Chinese who responded to or resisted their message. Part three brings the result of that interaction back to America to show what happened there as a result of this involvement in Chinese history. Since the individual chapters deal with the particular interests of the contributors one may wonder whether these were the most crucial topics for understanding
the interactive process. Nevertheless, they are windows into the subject and how much more needs to be investigated. Indeed, Fairbank takes two paragraphs in the introduction to suggest the range of topics which calls for further research. Meanwhile, from this book one gets the strong feeling that a better view of history is provided by a range of perspectives on an interactive process than by the attempt to provide a neat synthesis.

Third, not only does the work shed light on history by presenting it by interaction and perspectives, but also by disclosing the importance of one’s own theories of interpretation. Awareness of the influences of interpretation can enable one to take advantage of the perspective without being enslaved by it. Schlessinger does this best in his article on “The Missionary Enterprise and the Theories of Imperialism.” After reading this chapter one wants to go back and note the differing biases of the other authors. For while there is limited evidence of anti-missionary bias, it is clear that some are less willing than others to trust the motivation of missionaries. Here again the variety provides the corrective.

Fourth, this variety of views of the missionaries adds up to a much more realistic and human picture than the usual pro or anti missionary writer. Their intentions and effectiveness are credited. The importance of their religious motivation is acknowledged. Their devotion to the Chinese people and their openness to Chinese culture is demonstrated. At the same time, one sees many of them wanting force used against the Chinese out of hopes for greater evangelistic opportunity. One sees them failing to raise up Chinese with ability to find Christian answers to Chinese problems. Above all, and explanatory of all, they were children of the American culture of their time and they could not quite escape that. One does not learn all this from one article, but here again the range of perspectives does the work.

Finally, the United Methodist historian needs to be aware of the book for its references to one’s own mission history. Inevitably John R. Mott appears in the articles on “Evangelical Logistics” and the S.V.M. An entire essay is devoted to Young J. Allen (M.E. Church, South) and his development of a Christian periodical in Chinese as a way to communicate the Gospel in the Chinese idiom. Persons interested in the Board of Missions will want to check out the discussion of the Board’s policies in response to Chinese nationalism in the late 1920’s, discussed in the article, “Why They Stayed”.

For all these reasons United Methodist historians need to be aware of this example of a new style of writing missionary history.

—Calvin H. Reber, Jr.
Professor of Missions
United Theological Seminary

This volume is the history of one of the oldest and most prestigious United Methodist churches in the South. It is well written and thoroughly researched, with the text documented by 274 footnotes printed at the bottom of the page, and the excellently printed text is illustrated with 40 cuts. Its author, Dr. Archie Vernon Huff, Jr., is a native South Carolinian who served as the Associate Pastor of the Washington Street Church, 1962-1965. A trained historian, with his doctorate in the field of history, he is currently the Assistant Professor of History in Furman University, Greenville, South Carolina.

The contents of the volume are arranged in six chronological chapters carrying the story from the planting of Methodism in South Carolina in 1785 down to 1974. Simultaneous with the planting of Methodism in the State the legislature took action to move the capital from Charleston to a new inland location. This action was in 1786 and the new town was named Columbia. The Santee Circuit was created in 1786 and in 1787 the Circuit preacher, Isaac Smith, preached the first Methodist sermon in Columbia. There is no research on the Circuit existence of the Columbia Class. The first report of Columbia in the *General Minutes* of 1806 shows 89 white and 20 black members, for a total of 109. The Santee and Catawba Circuit for the year before, 1805, reported 838 white and 478 black members, a total of 1,316. The first 16 years of Methodism in Columbia, from 1787 to 1803, is ignored by the author except for the mention of Isaac Smith.

Famed John Harper is recognized as the founder of the Washington Street Church, in 1803. Harper, ordained an elder in 1787 by Wesley, had served as an itinerant in England, the West Indies, and, after 1795, in the United States. In 1802 he located and fixed his residence in Columbia. As a local elder, on December 15, 1803, he organized the Methodists in Columbia as a Society, separate from the Circuit, and ministered to them through the time of the erection of their first Church in 1804. In 1805, in the South Carolina Conference session, Bishop Asbury appointed the first itinerant preacher to Columbia as a station appointment.

As a leading congregation in the capital of a leading southern state, the story of the Washington Street Church is set against the background of southern national and Methodist history. It early became a leading pulpit in the Conference, and several of its pastors were elected to the episcopacy. Many of the state's political, educational and business leaders worshipped in this congregation and gave lay leadership to it. The division of the Methodist
Episcopal Church in 1844-1845 is reflected in its history as it became an appointment of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. In the tragic War between the States Columbia lay on the route of Sherman’s march “from Atlanta to the Sea” and the beautiful antebellum church, built in 1832, was burned in 1865, along with two-thirds of the city. This is the occasion for the title of the book, Tried by Fire.

The trauma of the post-war years of the nineteenth century began to fade as the Washington Street Church played her part in the new agencies and institutions that arose in Methodism and the nation. With the emergence of the “New South” in the twentieth century, and the development of Columbia into a city of over 100,000, Washington Street reached a peak membership of nearly 2,200 by 1963. The fourth church building was erected in 1871-1875 and several supplementary building programs have maintained this church as a leading institution in downtown Columbia.

In its history this church reflects the conservative theological, political and social outlook of the deep South. The reader senses the problem of race relations in the background of the story throughout the history from slavery to integration. But the major purpose of the author is not in these areas, but rather to provide for the congregation an appreciation of their goodly heritage and an understanding of the struggles, sacrifices and contributing personalities across more than 170 years of time. The book has a value also for the general reader as it paints a picture of the vicissitudes of seven generations of change in a Methodist church of the deep South.

— Wallace Guy Smeltzer
Historian of Western Pennsylvania United Methodism


American Methodism added its own spice to the perfectionist stew of Wesleyan eighteenth century theology, according to the author of Perfectionist Persuasion. Dr. Jones concludes that American perfectionism drew distinctive ideas and practices from Phoebe Palmer and her associates more than from John Wesley. The sincerity of these nineteenth century holiness teachers’ desire to follow Wesley did not guard them from early Puritanism and its influence on their doctrines of death to self and the eradication of sin.

The very earnestness of the perfectionists led to separation and division in Methodism. The author examines with fine sensitivity the separatism which led to the beginnings of the holiness churches which have roots in
American Methodism. He treats fairly the tensions of the period which gave birth to the Wesleyan Methodist Connection, the Free Methodist Church, the Pilgrim Holiness Church, the Church of the Nazarene, and other denominations. Methodists who, in this period of history, were committed to scriptural holiness were given inconsistent treatment by those in authority. In some areas holiness teachers were supported and aided by bishops and others in high position in the church. In other areas they were severely dealt with. Some were expelled. Neither faction in the disputes of this period had a monopoly on excess and intolerance, according to the author.

The best appraisal of this tragic period, I believe, has been quoted by Bishop Leslie Ray Marston, of the Free Methodist Church, in his book, A Living Witness (Light and Life Press, 1960; page 247). Dr. Ray Allen summarized his evaluation of this period of Methodism's history in his address to the Genesee Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church on the occasion of its one hundredth anniversary in 1910. He said, "This heroic treatment might have seemed necessary at the time, but looked at half a century later it seems unjust and therefore exceedingly unwise. Those expelled brethren were among the best men the conference contained, and scarce anyone thought otherwise even then." I could wish that Dr. Jones had researched the work of Marston to better appraise the loyalty of most of the Methodists who separated from the mother church in this divisive period.

With his early roots in the Church of the Nazarene it should be expected that the author give high priority to the origins and development of that movement in America. The Pilgrim Holiness Church gets careful attention too. Both denominations rose out of the camp meeting movement of the nineteenth century, a phenomenon which deeply interests Dr. Jones. Perfectionist Persuasion is a rich source for those who wish to study the camp meeting movement.

Both the Wesleyan Methodist Connection and the Free Methodist Church were founded prior to the period studied by the author. It is significant that these denominations were radically abolitionist in sharp contrast to the silence on slavery of Phoebe Palmer and other holiness leaders who remained in the Methodist Episcopal Churches, both North and South. The compromise on this issue in the larger Methodist bodies during this period has been well documented elsewhere. This compromise was a more important factor in the separation of these denominations than Jones notes.

Perfectionist Persuasion offers many valuable contributions as a historical source. The events which led to the movement from the church to separatist sects and the development of institutionalized denominations are faithfully summarized. The monograph is too short to be comprehensive, however. The richest lode is to be mined by one who is willing to dig into the
references, notes, and appendixes, which make up at least 40 percent of the book.

As a social commentary upon the evolution of the holiness churches, *Perfectionist Persuasion* seems too simplistic. The author charges the holiness leaders with being out of touch with the "real" situation in American Methodism then emerging in the great cities. Holiness teaching is seen by Jones, as it has been viewed by others, as "the poor man's doctrine." He believes the holiness churches served best in aiding impoverished rural people in adjusting to urban changes which often seemed threatening.

Many of these leaders, however, were city pastors with university and graduate degrees who came from the Methodist Episcopal Church to identify with the poor. Many of the laymen who supported these ministers were affluent businessmen, as Jones himself tells us in his record of the campmeeting movement. Could it be that the radical call to reform and the rigorous demands of scriptural holiness, which gave hope to the poor, troubled most those who were powerful and secure? Many are called. Few, it seems, are chosen.

— Bishop Paul N. Ellis
Free Methodist Church
Winona Lake, Indiana


Donald Dayton has done historians an invaluable favor in gathering together and republishing these 5 sermons by Luther Lee which first appeared in pamphlet form over 100 years ago.

As Dayton says in his introduction (which incidentally provides much important background on Lee and his sermons): "The sermons were obviously called forth by unusual circumstances and are probably not typical of the usual fare enjoyed by Lee's congregations."

Lee was an Abolitionist. He left the M. E. Church because his views were unpopular with some of his brethren. He joined the Wesleyan Methodists in 1843, and became the first President of its General Conference in 1844. He later taught theology at Adrian College, and returned to the M. E. Church in 1867.

Three of the sermons were preached on the deaths of Abolitionists: the Rev. Elijah P. Lovejoy, who died at the hands of a mob at Alton, Ill.: the Rev. Charles L. Torrey, who died a martyr's death in a Maryland prison: and John Brown, who was hanged by the state of Virginia. These sermons, along with a tract, "Slavery: A Sign Against God", set forth clearly and forcefully how one Abolitionist preacher thought, and how he used the
pulpit and his Christian insights to fight slavery.

The other two sermons deal with other interests which concerned many Abolitionists as well. "Woman's Right to preach the Gospel" was preached in 1853 at the ordination of Miss Antoinette L. Brown to the ministry of the Congregational Church at South Butler, N.Y. She was probably the first woman ever ordained. In the light of the present controversy in the church over ordaining women, his sermon makes interesting reading.

The other sermon deals with "Prohibitory Laws". It, too, is valuable in giving insights into how a past generation viewed what is still a present problem, the sale of alcohol, and saw one of the functions of the state as dealing with "...the suppression of vice, and the support of virtue."

Get this book. It will introduce you to some stimulating thinking, and to a man this reviewer feels we all need to know more about!

— C. Wesley Christman, Jr.
Hudson, N.Y.


William Linn, pastor of a Dutch Reformed Church in New York City, wrote to a friend in 1793: "I am of the opinion the Methodists will never gain ground where there is a watchful & faithful ministry.... The only way to counteract them, is to out-pray & out-preach them." At the time of the American Revolution prospects for Methodism in the United States were not promising. John Wesley made things difficult through A Calm Address to the American Colonies, published in 1775, by opposing American interests and independence. The address was not received calmly in the colonies. Despite difficulties Methodism prevailed, and out-prayed and out-preached most of the more patriotic denominations of the 1770s and 1780s.

Frederick A. Norwood, Professor of the History of Christianity at Garret Theological Seminary, has written for us a Bicentennial survey of American Methodism. Attractively and appropriately, the volume comes in red, white and blue with the image of the circuit rider on the cover. Norwood writes of a great people and of efforts to spread gospel holiness over the land and throughout the world. In doing this he has updated William Warren Sweet's Methodism in American History (rev. 1953), and he has drawn upon the fresh information and insight of more recent studies, for example, the massive The History of American Methodism (3 vols., 1964). Since Sweet wrote, the United Methodist Church has come into existence. Norwood has incorporated into his story the histories of the United Brethren and the Evangelicals in a felicitous manner. Although a biography of one people, the story is a very rich one. Members of other denominations will
profit from reading this survey, and in discovering similarities and differences in our various stories.

Norwood begins this volume with autobiography, and by telling us something of the perspective he brings to his work as an historian. Methodism was born in England. The author continually calls to the attention of the reader the continuities and the discontinuities between Methodist experiences in the Old World and in the New. Methodism grew with evangelical fervor. The author shows how Methodists have been constantly concerned with the spread of the gospel and the growth of the church. Methodism was a westward folk movement. The author shows how it was a vital social process and how it developed its “working theology” in the American environment. Methodism had a “close and continuing love affair, for better or worse” with the nation. The author shows how it shaped and was shaped in turn by the American ethos. At one point Norwood suggests that Methodism became the “most American of the churches.” He is not very clear about what he means in this statement. He does not have to make it in order to demonstrate the importance of Methodism in American life.

In remembering things past, Norwood gives attention to a number of current interests. For one example, he tells of the quest of the laity, male and female, for rights and representation in Methodist affairs. In doing this he also exposes his own history as clerically dominated. If, as Norwood suggests, Methodism was a westward folk movement and a vital social process, then he might have done better in showing how the laity participated in the story. For another example, Norwood writes about the different racial and ethnic groups within Methodism -- the Blacks, the Indians, the Spanish-speaking, and those of German and Scandinavian descent. The integration of these histories into the story of Methodism is one of the most valuable aspects of this book, despite the wish of this reviewer to know more about the relations with the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Given space limitations, Norwood has done well in getting as much of the history as he has between his two covers.

Methodists produced a watchful and faithful ministry. With prayer and preaching they gained ground in America. Norwood suggests that Methodists gained ground at a cost to internal discipline and integrity of their witness. He hopes that this survey history of the trials as well as the triumphs of American Methodism may be therapeutic. He has written the story of a great Christian people. In doing this he has given to members of his own denomination and to all interested in American religious history a rewarding Bicentennial birthday present.

—James H. Smylie
Union Theological Seminary
Virginia
Seldom does a book such as *Black Religion and American Evangelicalism* arrive at one's desk creating such a curiosity as the work mentioned. There is an immediate desire to actually know its content and discern just how the writer would attempt to treat such a subject.

All too frequently, however, one who stands outside the author's thinking may well misinterpret his goals in presenting such a work and totally overlook the purposes involved. In this light to attempt to evaluate can do a major disservice both to the author as well as to all posterity.

In this Bicentennial year there is a distinct desire to uncover the varied contributions or effects ethnic groups have had on our nation's history. Anyone who undertakes to describe or interpret the submissions of black people faces a difficult task simply because of the lack of an abundance of documents or like materials. The unlettered slave, for example, was privileged to keep no journal or diary which revealed the mind or the thinking of the individual. Whenever the desire arose to write or hand down to posterity this thinking, in many instances ghost writers had to be employed. So, in the beginning Sernett was faced with the difficult task of somehow revealing this thinking through limited means.

He turns aptly to the scant records at hand to reveal his purpose. If there happens to be no other result from his writings than the uncovering and preservation of these records, the work would be worthwhile. The Negro, or, as it appears so appropriate to say, the black people of the United States have a mandate to reveal to themselves, as well as to our fellow citizens, the type of contribution made to the commonwealth we call America.

We thoroughly agree with the author as he returns again, and we wonder if this was his intent, to the title *Negro*, lending belief we entertain to the lasting nature of that designation, at least until the age of amalgamation has arrived.

We noted in advance certain areas we expected the author to deal with. As, with avid interest, we turned the pages there were moments when a sinking feeling presented itself that the writer would not deal with some situations which to us provided a rounding out of the total picture. In almost every instance the author eventually got around to satisfying our interest and allaying our fears.

It might be well to express some desires which were not met. However,
they should not stand as deep criticisms simply because, as stated before, the inclusion of them may not have been in the author's thinking.

In this age when it is so vitally necessary that a true Christian approach be brought to all subjects written from the black viewpoint, students of our history must demonstrate the element of fair appraisal. In this light we had hoped that the work would have included a clearer reflection of the Asbury-Coke attitude toward slavery, and coupled with this type of approach would have been the reasons for their change of attitude as violent opposition developed or the economic trends brought increasing pressures to bear.

A second area has to do with the opposition to Methodist leadership and preaching over against the contained community idea where Baptist and Presbyterian forces were concerned. Is there a legitimacy in the belief that attendance at Annual Conferences, with its exposure to thinking beyond the local community, handicapped Methodism? An interpretation to the opposition noted in instances would have proved helpful.

Finally, the actions of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, surely had a bearing on the situation. There had to be important controversies over slavery and important decisions. Along this line Joshua Soule is recalled as one of the persons who may have had a great deal to say about Southern Methodist action.

Sernett points out many significant areas of black religious history which cannot be mentioned here, but one reading his work cannot help but have a great admiration for his research. For example, where the Zion (A.M.E. Zion) Church is concerned, the slowness in which this denomination grew is noted. No doubt this was based upon the origin and the slowness in which it has written epochs of its history. Along with this conclusion is its unwillingness to accept certain factors of its development, among them being the suggestion that it was a lay-inspired church rather than, as Bethel, one developed by preachers. Sernett's Peter Williams, Jr., for example, is the son of Peter Williams, a prime founder of the Zion Methodist movement in New York City.

It is to be hoped that this work will find its way into the library of every student of black religious history.

—David H. Bradley, Editor
A.M.E. Zion Quarterly Review
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