

## BOOK REVIEWS

Robert E. Chiles, *The Transition in American Methodism, 1790-1935*. Landham, Md: University Press of America, 1983. 238 pp.

This is a reprint and happily it has been kept available. I say this with some guilt. When I first heard that this book was to be reissued I thought, "but it is dated." After rereading it (once again, I have read it several times in the past) I am persuaded of the wisdom of the republication.

There are important reasons for the book's value. It concentrates on major figures and developing themes; it has a clear thesis; it critically assesses the Methodist tradition in ways which challenge and direct evaluation; and it continues to be a part of the ongoing discussion about the nature of the Wesleyan tradition. The volume retains importance and should be a continuing part of the repertory of interpretation for students of Methodism.

The volume itself requires evaluation. It is dated in that it was written at the height of and as a reflection of neo-orthodoxy in North American Protestant theology. Such theological self-consciousness adds sharpness to as it also characterizes the work. From this perspective the major themes are set and discussed. The transition Chiles finds is a devolution: "From Revelation to Reason," "From Sinful Man to Moral Man," "From Grace to Free Will." To note these changes is important and a prod to more theological seriousness by the tradition. But it is not the entire story.

Chiles' coverage is necessarily selective (he concentrates on Watson, Miley, and Knudson). It is significant that he does not include the systematic theologians of the mid and late nineteenth century, e.g., Thomas N. Ralston, T. O. Summers, or William Burt Pope, who represent counter-thrusts. The story, also necessarily limited, stops at 1939 just as a rediscovery of John Wesley (George C. Cell) is beginning and which will (with the work of H. Lindstrom and W. R. Cannon, Albert C. Outler, and Robert E. Cushman) reset some directions in the tradition as did the work of Edwin Lewis.

In sum, the stage is too narrow and the story too restricted for full interpretation of the transitions in Methodist theology, but the tight focus also sharpens details. For this reason the quality of the work holds up and its contribution continues to be considerable.

—Thomas A. Langford

Archie R. Crouch, editor, *Scholars' Guide to China Mission Resources in the Libraries and Archives of the United States*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983. 84pp. \$19.50.

This is the first fascicle in a series of bibliographical guides on Christian missions in China. It locates and describes collections which together contain more than one million documents and books in forty-two repositories in Pennsylvania. It includes union lists of serials, dissertations and reference works and is extensively indexed. Methodist references are few. Nevertheless, this volume and those forthcoming will be important.

—Charles Yrigoyen, Jr.

*Eerdmans' Handbook to Christianity in America*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983. 507 pp.

This is an attractively arranged and useful handbook on the history of Christianity in the United States and its antecedent colonies. There are four major sections: the colonial period, the Revolution through the Civil War, the Gilded Age through the 1920s, and 1930 to 1980. In addition to the narrative text there are a large number of brief articles appropriately interspersed throughout the volume which highlight important personalities, movements, and developments in American Christianity. More than 350 photographs, maps, charts and prints enhance the appearance of the book and its usefulness. Some Methodist churches and personalities are mentioned, but others are regrettably omitted, e.g., Jacob Albright and the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. The volume is helpful as an introduction to the subject.

—Charles Yrigoyen, Jr.

Frederick C. Gill, *Through the Year with Wesley, An Anthology*. Nashville: The Upper Room, 1983. 188 pp. \$5.50.

It was the singular contribution of Frederick C. Gill to introduce the practical and popular John Wesley to modern England. He published a travel guide to Wesley sites in the British Isles, *In the Steps of John Wesley*, that has become a near classic in travel literature. He highlighted Wesley as an Anglican priest in *John Wesley's Prayers*. He brought out an incisive anthology of excerpts from Wesley's diaries, sermons and letters called *Through the Year with Wesley*, arranged for devotional use with a meditation for each day of the year. It is this work which has been reissued by the Upper Room to introduce the American public to John Wesley during the Methodist Bicentennial.

Gill's selections display an encyclopedic knowledge of Wesley. It is hard to imagine a better way for anyone to have an initial encounter with

the father of Methodism. Wesley is revealed as a writer and preacher with a rare command of many facets of eighteenth century culture, from medicine to needed social reforms. The book is highly readable and inexpensive. It is not designed to be read in one sitting, but each piece is to be lifted out for reflection, either in daily devotions or, as a book to be placed by the bedside or on a coffee table, to be savored in spare moments.

—Charles A. Sayre

Frederick E. Maser, *Robert Strawbridge, First American Circuit Rider*. Baltimore: Strawbridge Shrine Association, Inc., 1983. 86 pp.

If you are interested in a highly readable and interesting account of an often mentioned but little known circuit rider, Fred Maser has spoken to your need. He has rendered a useful service in bringing together much fragmentary data about Robert Strawbridge in one informative and definitive volume. This biography is as complete as it can be at this time and with the current level of research into early American Methodist sources. No one is a better craftsman in piecing together scattered and disparate sources and then placing them into an effective narrative than Fred Maser, former Executive Secretary of the World Methodist Historical Society.

The book's six chapters, totalling 86 pages, cover Strawbridge's Irish roots and his coming to the colonies; his travels and work; and his role in "The Sacramental Controversy." The critical apparatus is adequate with full notation of sources and an ample bibliography. The usefulness of the book is enhanced by a good index. Most of the photographs are helpful but I question the need to print copies of illegible legal documents.

The book does well in fulfilling what I perceive to be its purpose: to provide the layperson who visits the Strawbridge Shrine with a complete picture both of the life and work of Robert Strawbridge as well as the preservation of buildings, property, and relics related to that ministry, which is the work of the Shrine Association. Give the book four stars for placing the extensive local data in the context of the larger Methodist movement and with providing the Shrine Association with a first rate historical resource. Robert Strawbridge will never be well known but now he will be better known.

It may be unfair to fault the book for its failure to advance Methodist historiography. The book adds little to what can be found in the *Encyclopedia of World Methodism* or in other sources about Strawbridge that is essential to understanding his role in planting Methodism. The book seems tentative in making historical judgments on limited facts but Maser does give Strawbridge the credit for founding the first Methodist society in America. I would have appreciated a little more depth on the sacramental controversy which threatened to divide Methodism during the Revolutionary War. Unfortunately, documents indicating that Straw-

bridge brought Methodism to Central Pennsylvania came to light after the publication of this work. This new information will enlarge the territory Strawbridge is known to have covered in his extensive travels. One looks forward to this material being added to Maser's fine biography of the "first American circuit rider."

—Robert J. Williams

William G. McLoughlin, *Cherokees and Missionaries, 1789-1839*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984, 375 pp.

Here is a fine piece of research and writing on one of the most poignant episodes in American church history. It does not deal with the actual migration, the "Trail of Tears," but rather with the dismal developments, despicable deeds, and courageous commitments which accompanied the campaign for removal of the Cherokees from their old homelands in Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee and their resettlement in Oklahoma at the end of the 1830s. It covers the period between the arrival of missionaries and the removal of the Indians, and it includes the work of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (Congregational and Presbyterian), the Moravians, Baptists, and Methodists. The heaviest weight of material deals with the American Board. Methodists are dealt with in more general and cursory fashion.

The book is well populated with heroes and villains, although the author frequently leaves open the question of who belongs to which group. Baptists Isaac McCoy and Evan Jones, American Board Daniel Butrick, Elizur Butler, and Samuel Worcester, Moravians John Gambold and Henry Clauder, and Methodists Dickson McLeod and James Trott were caught up in events beyond their control, along with Native Americans John Ross, Big Cabbins, Elias Boudinot, and Sequoyah. They squirmed, struggled, compromised, rationalized, and finally for the most part took firm and courageous (not necessarily right) positions.

The arch-villain, adored on the western frontier, was President Andrew Jackson. There were no pure heroes. The local oppressor was the state of Georgia. Although many missionaries remained firm in their support of Indian rights, the boards and agencies caved in under huge governmental pressures.

The story is dramatic, and depressing. It is a story of failures—of the governments to honor their obligations, of the missionary organizations to spread the gospel, of the missionaries to succeed in their efforts, and of the Cherokees to keep their lands and traditions. It is easy to point an accusing finger.

To McLoughlin's credit is his effort to let the story point the moral. Although he details the failures and troubles, he tries to avoid "J'accuse."

The author is least successful in relating the Methodist involvement, which comes out as largely a bumptious proselytizing competition with the other agencies. None of the missionaries is singled out as a significant leader. Methodists are categories, not persons—circuit riders, exhorters, class leaders. The Tennessee Annual Conference is another villain. This may all be justified, owing in part to the loss of records by fire and difficulty of access to church papers. The story is not edifying, and here it is incomplete.

The strength of the book lies in the even-handed treatment of all the missionary bodies and personnel and in the diligent and careful research. One of the best parts is the bibliographical essay at the end.

—Frederick A. Norwood

Rosemary Radford Ruether and Rosemary Skinner Keller, eds., *Women and Religion in America, Volume 2: The Colonial and Revolutionary Periods. A Documentary History*. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983. 434 pp. \$24.95.

This second volume in a series of three (Volume 1 covering the nineteenth century was published in 1981 and Volume 3 on the twentieth century will appear in 1985) offers a rich sampling of primary sources documenting the variety of religious beliefs and experiences of women living in North and South America during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The aim of this volume, according to the editors, is to “illustrate the cultural pluralism of the colonial scene (p. xiii),” and this they do admirably, presenting the reader with nine interpretive essays, accompanying the primary sources, by women scholars who are experts on the different groups of women making up this cultural diversity. A special effort has been made to include unfamiliar sources which give readers an insight into the religious worlds of European women settlers in French and Spanish America, Indian women, and black women, as well as the slightly more familiar religious terrain of first-generation Puritan women and those in the southern British colonies, members of sectarian and Utopian communities, and participants in eighteenth-century Puritan and Wesleyan revivals. A final section, dealing with the crucial transitional period when the thirteen British colonies became an independent nation, shows women’s participation in the articulation of an American civil religion based on values of public morality and civic virtue.

In both of the published volumes of this series, the editors’ thesis is that religion plays an ambiguous part in women’s lives. It offers the possibility of freedom to develop roles of leadership and positions of authority and equality with men in both private and public spheres. And yet, at the same time, it gives a different, repressive message, one which teaches that women are to be subordinate to men, and can fill only limited roles within the religious/cultural system. The essays and documents in

volume 2, like those in the first volume, demonstrate this ambiguity. As one reads the primary sources one is left with the overwhelming impression of women's powerful and deeply moving interior piety which is allowed to surface for the most part only in restricted forms acceptable to a male dominated culture: the good wife who supports and defers to her husband, the "republican mother" whose task is to inculcate ethical virtues in sons who will be the true citizens of the American democratic experiment, the highly intelligent and intellectually able nun who must defend the education of women. However there are examples of women's religious activities—more the exception than the rule during the centuries under consideration—which break the boundaries of acceptability and hint at a broader range of religious roles for women, often possible among members of sectarian communities outside of the religious mainstream. Here one finds women preaching and instructing men and women, interpreting the Bible for themselves, even in a few cases leading religious communities. The editors see the seeds of conflict over women's proper religious roles being sown during the colonial period. Yet they discover no serious challenge to women's subordinate place in religious life erupting until the nineteenth century. This volume's great importance lies in providing readers with the basis from which to understand women's nineteenth and twentieth-century struggles for fuller participation within the religious life of their communities, as well as making available through primary sources and essays the complex world of women's religious experience in colonial America.

—Carolyn De Swarte Gifford

Dacia Custer Shoemaker, *Choose You This Day: The Legacy of the Hanbys*, edited by Harold B. Hancock and Millard J. Miller. Westerville, OH: Westerville Historical Society, 1983.

This book about a United Brethren bishop and his son illuminates the heritage of the "United" in United Methodist from a number of interesting viewpoints and shows their direct contributions to pressing social issues of a by-gone era both within the church and within the social milieu of most of the decades that make up the nineteenth century. The first part of the book relates the life of Bishop William Hanby from his early years as an indentured apprentice in Western Pennsylvania to his death in Westerville, Ohio in 1880. The second section narrates the life of Benjamin Hanby, the song writer and minister who voluntarily surrendered his ministerial credentials in order to reach children with the Christian message through singing schools. This book is filled with touching events that could well be made into significant video moments of history. At least four for the father come to mind. First, William, the eight-year-old, "bound" by his impoverished widowed mother to a Quaker family; then,

at the age of fifteen, his own indenture to an ex-convict harness maker and his subsequent flight to avoid abuse because he would not deliberately lie to save his master. Second, William Hanby, the publishing agent, exhaustingly working to save the denomination's paper, *The Religious Telescope*, from bankruptcy. Third, William Hanby, the secret operator of a station on the Underground Railroad passing fugitive slaves to freedom in Canada. Fourth, his aggressive involvement in the Westerville Whiskey War of 1875-1879, the result of which was the burning of his barn and harness shop by enemies. He died penniless.

Benjamin Hanby's four video moments include the following: First, his writing of "Darling Nellie Gray" which was called by some the "Uncle Tom's Cabin of Song" and was popular both in the north and south during the Civil War period. In fact, "The Confederate General, George A. Pickett, loved its haunting melodies and had his band play it in Chambersburg when he was on his way to participate in the battle of Gettysburg." (p. 73). Second, his love for children and his creative use of music in reaching the children and youth of his day with the Christian message. Third, the tale of rescuing his authorship of the Christmas song, "Up on the Housatop," from total obscurity. Fourth, Benjamin Hanby and his hymn, "Who Is He In Yonder Stall."

The editors have produced a well written narrative account from the manuscript of the author. This book documents how a balance can be struck between evangelical piety and social action. It reveals the nineteenth century United Brethren life style at its best. And finally, it introduces one to a denominational song and hymn writer of the last century. Pastors will find here an excellent quotable source book on the United Brethren heritage.

—William C. Beal

Robert G. Tuttle, *On Giant Shoulders*. Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1984. 135 pp.

This pioneering attempt to record the history, role and influence of the evangelist in Methodism is a well documented didactic. It makes a case for evangelists per se as a past and present need in the denomination, although the author does not ignore the one-sidedness of much late 19th century evangelistic preaching and practice. He holds that living the Christ-centered message of the Gospel is needful and that evangelism involves both personal and social aspects.

The pattern of the work is models evoked by a study of the writing and ministry of John Wesley, Asbury, Otterbein, Albright, and latterly, of E. Stanley Jones. In each of these evangelists Tuttle finds a laudatory Christocentric approach. Besides abstracting liberally from Wesley's teaching, Tuttle notices the raising of lay persons for evangelism through their response to the prevenient grace of God, their inner transformation

by the Holy Spirit and empowerment to witness to their experience. He also recalls travelling ministry origins in early Methodist conferences and in Wesley's questions yet asked of ministerial candidates, and that women are presupposed in ministry by Wesley's brief use of women evangelists. The continuum from lay evangelists through Wesley's ordinations for America is traced through to the sacrificial and suffering service of early itinerants.

Asbury, like Wesley, was steeped in scripture and prayer, and although self-taught, he was well rounded both socially and theologically in his preaching. Otterbein's contrasting background, but likemindedness in evangelistic spirit with Asbury and Albright, is fleshed out and his ecumenical bent delineated. Organizational styles of antecedent denominations are contrasted in relation to evangelistic outreach and 20th century unity is sketched.

The contemporary evangelist is found by Tuttle in E. Stanley Jones, three fingers uplifted, teaching in a Christian ashram, "Jesus is Lord," witnessing from pen and podium to lives transformed and spirit filled, to caste, race and class forgotten in a projected "United Church of Jesus Christ." From personal experience of thirty years' contact with "Bro. Stanley," this reviewer can endorse all that Tuttle avers of the breadth, length and depth of the scriptural and practical understanding of this giant among evangelists.

Finally, Tuttle holds that evangelists have "come of age" in "attempting to achieve balance without compromise," which stance he commends. This interesting volume could well fuel discussion for a six or twelve-week training course for lay witnesses or others interested in evangelism.

—Edwin Schell

Gordon S. Wakefield, editor, *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1983. 400 pp. \$20.95.

This is an important addition to the dictionaries already published by Westminster Press on Christian theology, non-Christian religions, Christian ethnics and church history. It includes short articles on the key themes of Christian spirituality, some of its more prominent theologians and movements, and the expressions of spirituality found in the major Christian traditions. Those especially interested in the Wesleyan and Methodist heritage will find articles on John and Charles Wesley, Methodist spirituality, the Caroline Divines, the Nonjurors, Puritan spirituality, Anglican spirituality, W. E. Sangster, Leslie Weatherhead, Pietism, Pentecostalism and the charismatic movement, holiness, experience, evangelical and American spirituality, and a host of other important topics. This is an excellent reference work for clergy, laity, students and church libraries.

—Charles Yrigoyen, Jr.

Walter L. Williams, *Black Americans and the Evangelization of Africa, 1877-1900*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982. 259 pp. \$27.50.

Walter L. Williams is Associate Professor in the Department of History at the University of Cincinnati. One of his primary areas of interest is inter-ethnic relations. He has written a plethora of articles, some of which have been published in the *Journal of American History*, *Journal of Negro History*, *Phylon*, and *Pan-African Journal*.

The historical document reviewed here provides a new and thorough perspective for understanding the role of black missionaries in isolation to the early beginnings of Pan-Africanism. Williams contends that while Pan-Africanism is more accepted as a twentieth-century phenomenon, black women and men played a significant part in its early formation and development. The writer provides a historical context for the reader to understand the meaning of evangelization without undue sentimentality. He draws from primary sources, although not exclusively, to tell a story which has been ignored by the vast majority of historians.

The first half of the book deals with the missionary movement of blacks. Much attention is given to the role of the church in response to this effort.

Williams gives excellent historical images of what life was like and how individual leaders from various denominations attempted to promulgate the gospel in the nineteenth century. He identifies the reasons why white missionaries sought to establish missions in Africa, and compares and contrasts those reasons with those of black missionaries. Also, Williams presents a strong case that had it not been for both black and white church involvement, missionary activity in Africa would not have become an "expansionist" movement.

One of the ways in which Williams surfaces the issue of racism in this first part of the book is by drawing from the fields of psychology and sociology and identifies behavioral models to interpret to the reader why missionaries did what they did.

The second half of the text details specifically the values of black missionaries. Much of the content describes and explicates the struggle to adjust to an African culture from which they had been removed. What Williams does is to set forth the social and political picture of the mission movement, and how black missionaries responded to such efforts. What Williams suggests is that black missionaries, although westernized, remained more sympathetic and supportive of African peoples than white missionaries. Questions of identity, status and role were concerns that would still be unresolved for years to come for the black missionary. How the black American missionary would reconcile his culture with the African culture would perhaps be the perennial question.

The book is a major contribution to the understanding of black Americans and their role in the evangelization of Africa before 1900. The documentation is clear and cogent. The writer is objective in his analysis and introduces historical themes and content which have been ignored and neglected. His claim that Christian ideology oppressed black missionaries and denied them the right of self expression and cultural consciousness is one indication that Williams understands the nature of systemic oppression.

This text could be useful to students of history and to those who are in preparation for the ministry. It tells another part of an untold story that can no longer be ignored. After reading this book, one could not help but see how the African mission movement shaped historical and religious events of the Nineteenth Century.

—Julius E. Del Pino