BOOK REVIEWS


This is an absolutely superb book, perhaps the most important synthesis of American theology since Perry Miller, clearly a major contribution to historical theology. Virtually any reader of this review must tackle Holifield’s essay.

The importance of the book derives from its scope. Holifield does indeed provide a history of pastoral care. As is perhaps appropriate for that area of ministerial concern, he devotes almost half of the volume to 20th century developments. Each chapter establishes its connection with the actual care of souls through a prototypical counseling verbatim. Yet, he places those case studies and the entirety of pastoral care in broader contexts that make his discussion of immense importance to those with limited interest in the cure of souls or its history. For each period, Holifield sets forth the dominant understanding(s) of the psyche (the anthropology of that period); he locates that/those understanding(s) in the theology of the day; he treats both theology and psychology in terms of social-cultural trends; and he probes the style(s) of ministry shaped accordingly.

The book might best be termed an intellectual history. However, unlike many intellectual histories which concentrate so on ideas that they ignore social context or, perhaps worse, attempt social analysis with ideas as the only data, Holifield attends carefully to factors of class, role, authority, influence that affect the place of minister and theology in society. Holifield has synthesized the best of the new social history with his own penetrating reading of historical theology.

Given the scope of the book, some will be disappointed in what Holifield omits. Holifield does not attempt an essay in inclusivity. Those wishing discussion of pastoral care as exercised by women and minorities will not find it here. Careful readers should see that interpretive issues raised in women’s studies, liberation theologies and Black history do, in fact, decisively inform his construction of the past. Most notably, he examines pastoral theories concerning and pastoral relations to women and Blacks and explores ministerial identity sensitive to factors of sex and race. Nevertheless, the focus remains on mainstream Protestantism (with occasional references to Roman Catholic parallels).

Methodist patterns do not loom particularly large until Holifield reaches the 20th century. Then Methodist contributions, like personalism, do receive substantial attention as he charts the therapeutic revolution which has so decisively affected theological education and the cure of souls.
“It is an oversimplification,” he insists, “to trace a neatly defined movement from self-denial to self-love, from self-love to self-culture, from self-culture to self-mastery, and from self-mastery to self-realization.” (351) Holifield does succeed in isolating the driving aspiration of successive styles of pastoral care, in capturing the tensions and nuances that made each style plausible, in pursuing the intellectual and societal developments that altered those styles, and thus in showing the reader how American ministry has unfolded. *A tour de force!*

—Russell E. Richey


After a decade of research, Harold Lawrence, a ministerial member of the North Georgia Conference of The United Methodist Church, has succeeded in publishing an invaluable listing of all the Methodist preachers in Georgia from 1784 to 1900. The entries include name, dates, church, personal data and comment, ordination data, appointments, and primary and secondary bibliographic information. In his preface Lawrence admits the dangers and pitfalls in publishing a work of this type. One of the major problems concerns the inaccuracies and inconsistencies in Annual Conference journals and denominational periodicals on which one must heavily rely in a work of this scope. Historians, genealogists and others interested in Georgia Methodism will find this a very useful work. It may be ordered from the publisher at 1549 Prospect Road, Lawrenceville, GA 30245. Add $1.25 for postage and handling.

—Charles Yrigoyen, Jr


This lively book, the middle volume of a trilogy which Edwards calls “the first ecumenical history of English Christianity,” picks up the story in the latter part of Henry VIII’s reign and carries it down to approximately 1750. Protestants and Roman Catholics, theological controversies and the great game of politics, exemplary piety and courage in the face of persecution, church architecture and religious music—all are to be found here. John Wesley is mentioned in passing and George Whitefield not at all; apparently Edwards is saving the evangelical revival for his final volume. Be
that as it may, persons interested in the English background of the Methodist movement will find this book to be an engaging and sometimes provocative guide.

Edwards uses an array of devices to capture and hold the attention of his audience. For instance, he moves back and forth between narrative sections which summarize institutional developments during a decade or more, and sketches of the lives and achievements of distinguished individuals. From one point of view, this is a "literary" history; more often than not, these figures are Christians well-known for the quality of their writing, persons such as George Herbert, Milton, Bunyan and John Dryden. While this dialectic adds a valuable dimension to Edwards' book, in one sense it is counter-productive. Thanks to this constantly changing point of view, the reader may find the chronology somewhat difficult to follow.

Edwards has a gift for synthesizing the views of others, which rarely fails him. Occasionally, however, a hasty generalization or an anachronistic reference slips into the text. An author who defines his task in such broad terms is bound to confront the problem of selection and emphasis in a particularly acute form. One may quarrel a bit with several of Edwards' choices. More might have been done with local church life and the role of women. The Anglican theorists of religious toleration seem to be slighted. The ways in which the Christian tradition influenced the new natural philosophy could have been developed. Surprisingly, liturgy and worship are assigned a rather low priority. For a comprehensive treatment of these subjects, one must turn to Horton Davies' series, "Worship and Theology in England."

Irenic, scholarly, well-written: Each of these adjectives apply to Edwards' work. His carefully conceived footnotes are valuable guides to further study. All in all, this book can be heartily recommended to general and academic readers alike.

—John C. English
Baker University


This brief book was originally written as a D.Th. thesis at Serampore College in Singapore by T. R. Doraisamy, Bishop of the Methodist Church in Malaysia and Singapore. The task of the book as an "... effort to examine, elucidate and, to a limited extent, evaluate the motives of mission in the history of Methodism from John Wesley ... to James M. Thoburn." (xi). That all of this is attempted in 116 pages (the other 24 pages are bibliography and index) points to the fact that this is the briefest of surveys.
Doraisamy divides the work into five chapters; two on John Wesley and British Methodism, one on American Methodism and two chapters cover the work in China, India, Malaysia, and Singapore.

It should be emphasized that this book is not a psychological account of the motives that led men and women into missions, nor does it deal substantively with the social, economic, or cultural motives that often covertly guided the motives for missions. Doraisamy’s work is essentially a listing of the motives, or reasons, for doing missionary work given by the missionaries themselves. From this point of view it is not surprising that one of the primary reasons for missions is the glory of God. Other motives for mission, which Doraisamy finds, are: Christian charity; the fact that Methodists see the world as their parish; understanding the essence of the church as missionary and finally the acknowledgment that all mission work is under a divine agency (p. 116).

The fact that some of the missionaries studied, such as Richard Watson (p. 42), reveal a nationalistic or economic motive for mission shows the need for a fuller treatment of the history of missional theology. Doraisamy is to be commended for allowing us to see how the missionaries perceived themselves, and their task. He has whetted our interest for a fuller treatment.

—L. Dale Patterson


This full scale historical study of Wesley Theological Seminary written by Douglas R. Chandler covers the first one hundred years of this institution so vital to Methodists, especially those of the mid-Atlantic states. Dr. Chandler’s association with Westminster, and later Wesley, extends over half a century. He received his S.T.B. degree from the seminary in 1929, three years before Hugh Latimer Elderdice resigned from his long presidency, and has continued his relationship even after retirement as professor of church history in 1973. He covers this long period of institutional history with incredible depth and insight. By concentrating on the presidents, faculty, and students, Dr. Chandler has avoided the danger of dry cataloging and thus makes the reader feel the excitement of campus life as it oscillates between crisis and success.

Douglas Chandler deserves praise for the prodigious task which he has performed. He writes with skill from personal acquaintances with many of the outstanding personalities of the school. He trained under Dr. H. L. Elderdice who graduated from Western Maryland College in 1882 and who with several other students started the movement resulting in the founding of Westminster Theological Seminary. Dr. Chandler also served
on the faculty with Dorothy Elderdice, daughter of the long-time president and connecting link between the first and present generation of alumni.

A criticism of institutional history is that there is often little analysis of responsibility for either success or failure. That pitfall has certainly been avoided here as there is no attempt made to glamorize the leading personalities in the development of the seminary. Their strengths and weaknesses along with their idiosyncrasies are graphically portrayed. Anyone who has been associated with a church-related educational institution can sense the emotional impact when on several occasions the seminary’s very existence was threatened.

The story of the move from a small rural town to the nation’s capital is most vividly portrayed. Those who remember Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam will appreciate the narrative of his aggressive leadership in this episode. The reader can identify with the feeling of nostalgia, the trauma of the physical move, and finally the overflowing joy of new beginnings.

Many of the names mentioned are surprisingly familiar even to those who are not alumni of Wesley Seminary. For older alumni the work is a must. Recent graduates will discover with joy the names of their district superintendents, college professors, former pastors, and favorite seminary professors. This well-written, timely, attractive volume containing more than seventy illustrations should be in the library of every graduate and friend of Wesley Theological Seminary. This centennial history will, no doubt, become an increasingly valuable resource.

—Allen B. Clark


Using the private papers of forty women sent by Congregational and Methodist mission boards to China from the 1890s through the second decade of the twentieth century as the basis for her work, Jane Hunter reconstructs for readers the complex world of relationships between single missionaries both male and female, married missionaries, their children, family members back home in the United States, the European community in China, and the Chinese themselves. She demonstrates how women missionaries sought to fulfill the goal of many Victorian era women to “make the world home-like,” a slogan popularized by Frances Willard, W.C.T.U. president, and carried to the ends of the earth as women sought to recreate the American home wherever they went. Spreading the “gospel of gentility” primarily through modeling it rather than preaching it, missionary women played a crucial part in furthering the policy of cultural imperialism which the United States pursued in China during the period.
Hunter has profiled both single and married women missionaries in painstaking detail, and the result is a stunning portrayal of what it meant—and sometimes what it cost—to be an American woman in China. The religious motives which brought these women to the mission field; the nature of the support systems they developed, ranging from the traditional one of marriage to the less usual one of female bonding between single women missionaries; the ambiguous attitudes they held toward the Chinese whom they both loved and looked down on; and the interior conflicts women faced as they sought to adjust their fairly conservative understanding of women's roles to the realities of the Chinese scene which allowed them some degree of power and authority especially in relation to their Chinese students, converts, and servants—all of this experience is closely examined and sensitively interpreted. One would hope for more studies like this on women serving in other mission fields. Taken together, they could offer a basis for a deeper understanding of the American mission effort and women's place in it.

—Carolyn De Swarte Gifford


In this volume the author has collected and published biographical or autobiographical excerpts which describe the personal religious experiences of one hundred Americans over four centuries. They are presented in chronological order. In the introduction the author describes religious experience as a "transit of consciousness" for which he finds a common pattern which may be traced in the selections. This pattern consists of four stages which Alexander identifies as: (1) a "discovery or encounter" which challenges the subject's understanding of things; (2) the struggle of the subject to reconcile this "discovery or encounter" with his or her present self; (3) a "miraculous moment" in which there is a leap to new life; and (4) a new consciousness which provides new hope and faith for the subject.

Among the personalities selected there are several Methodists: Richard Allen, James B. Finley, Peter Cartwright, William Capers, Josiah Henson, Sojourner Truth, Phoebe Palmer, Amanda B. Smith, Frances E. Willard, Georgia Harkness, and Mary McLeod Bethune. Those interested in religious biography and spiritual formation will find this a helpful and interesting volume.

—Charles Yrigoyen, Jr.
Methodism and Politics in British Society, 1750-1850
DAVID HEMPTON

The historical importance of Methodism is widely accepted, but this is the first book to make a detailed assessment of the role and influence of Methodism on British culture. Charting the political and social consequences of Methodist expansion in the first century of its existence, the author shows how social and political tensions were translated into religious forms, and how popular religious aspirations helped to change the face of British society. Although the primary context is political, Methodism is also located in the context of European pietism, Enlightenment thought, 18th-century popular culture, and John Wesley's own theological and political opinions. Much attention is given to the 1790's, when Methodism lost its founder, experienced serious internal and external conflicts, and yet managed to grow more rapidly than ever before. Methodism is treated on a national scale, but the book also stresses the regional and religious diversity of Methodist belief and practice. In particular, the Irish dimension of Methodism is brought to the fore, showing how the considerable stake in Irish protestant missions brought Methodism into increasing conflict with Catholicism. $27.50

Stanford University Press