

BOOK REVIEWS

J. Steven O'Malley, *Early German-American Evangelicalism: Pietist Sources on Discipleship and Sanctification*. Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1955. 351 pp. \$65.50.

Too little attention has been paid recently to the theological origins and development of the Evangelical United Brethren Church and its antecedents. J. Steven O'Malley, John T. Seamands Professor of Wesleyan Holiness History at Asbury Theological Seminary, has been one of the few scholars who have helped us understand and appreciate the theological heritage of this strand of United Methodism. His important books, *Pilgrimage of Faith: The Legacy of the Otterbeins* (Scarecrow, 1973) and *Touched by Godliness: Bishop John Seybert and the Evangelical Heritage* (Granite Press, 1986), have been major contributions illuminating significant facets of the Evangelical United Brethren.

In this volume O'Malley focuses attention on a group of Pietist authors whose work influenced Philip William Otterbein and Martin Boehm, founders of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ; Jacob Albright, founder of the Evangelical Association; and others associated with the earlier formation of these two churches. The author refers to this early band of United Brethren and Evangelical leaders as the "E.U.B. circle."

O'Malley has chosen Pietist sources which deal with two prominent themes, holiness and discipleship, because these figure so prominently in the life and theology of the E.U.B. circle and in the contemporary Methodist movement. The book's format includes brief, insightful introductory essays on the authors and selections from each, some of which are not available elsewhere in English translation. The selections are from the works of Philip William Otterbein (1726–1813), his brother Georg Gottfried Otterbein (d. 1800), Johann Christian Stahlschmidt (1740–1825), Gerhard Tersteegen (1697–1769), Friedrich Adolf Lampe (1683–1729), the radical Pietist authors of the *Berleburg Bible* which was published between 1730 and 1744, Samuel Collenbusch (1724–1803), and Johann Gerhard Hasenkamp (1735–1777). Along the way there are also frequent references to the Heidelberg Catechism and to the Evangelical United Brethren Confession of Faith.

This is an excellent selection of primary sources with carefully crafted, helpful introductions and footnotes. One minor fault is the author's assertion that there are two doctrinal standards mentioned in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* (p. 13). There are four. Nevertheless, anyone who wants to understand better the theological heritage of the Evangelical United Brethren and, therefore, The United Methodist Church, especially on the matter of holiness and discipleship, will find this a very valuable volume.

CHARLES YRIGOYEN, JR.
Madison, NJ

Christopher H. Owen, *The Sacred Flame of Love: Methodism and Society in Nineteenth-Century Georgia*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998. xxii + 290 pp. \$50.00.

Early in the 19th century, Methodism in Georgia was a tiny minority sect within an overwhelmingly secular society. By the end of the same century, Georgia Methodism was socially respectable and culturally powerful but also deeply divided along racial, theological, and class fissures. Christopher Owen carefully explores the growing importance of the Wesleyan faith in southern society and its simultaneous fragmentation into multiple denominations by focusing on a single, important southern state.

In the early decades of the 19th century, the Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian denominations all grew rapidly in Georgia, but the Methodists excelled as the “premier evangelicals” because of their Arminian theology and their embrace of camp meeting techniques (p. 16). To flourish in southern society, Wesleyans had to mute their denomination’s antislavery principles to gain substantial numbers of adherents from among Georgia’s slave-owning class. Stressing slave conversion rather than abolition, Georgia Methodism attracted a wider range of social groups but continued to enforce a strict standard of personal piety through church discipline.

After the 1844 division of American Methodism, the “southernization” of Georgia Methodists accelerated but remained incomplete even in 1861. During the Civil War, religious beliefs, Owen argues, both “contributed to and circumscribed the Confederate zeal of Georgia Wesleyans” (p. 94). During Reconstruction, when their political and other institutions were in the hands of others, southern white “churches often served as bastions of southern ideological independence” (p. 115). The nearly complete segregation of antebellum biracial churches, Owen rightly observes, was “the key religious consequence of the Civil War and Reconstruction” (p. 127). Some communities that had one Methodist church in 1860 had two white and as many as three black Methodist churches by 1875, each belonging to a different Wesleyan denomination.

In the 1880s and 1890s, as the pressures for sectional solidarity diminished, internal divisions along lines of theology, education, economics, and racial issues further divided Georgia Methodists. Conflict between Holiness advocates and their adversaries, for example, “struck Georgia Methodism like a tornado” (p. 160). Earlier in the century, Wesleyan theology and discipline had maintained “a spiritual link between all the state’s major social groups”; by the end of the century, Methodism’s ability to “transcend social divisions [had] deteriorated badly” (p. 187).

From Owen’s nuanced study of the interrelationship between Methodism and society in Georgia, the reader learns much more about southern society’s influence on Methodism than the reverse. However, Owen succeeds at his goal of providing “a building block for constructing a fuller, truer, and more complex portrait of southern religion” (p. xv). Owen’s extensive

and careful research allows him to sharpen and to refine rather than to overturn some of other historians' broader claims about the nature of southern religion.

DANIEL W. STOWELL
Springfield, IL

Daniel W. Stowell, *Rebuilding Zion: The Religious Reconstruction of the South, 1863–1877*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998. Index. 378 + viii pp. \$65.00.

Readers of *Methodist History* will find this volume useful for the three comparisons it sustains. Stowell, first, puts into a common frame the work and utterances of Methodists, Presbyterians, and Baptists—both black and white. Like other observers of the southern scene, from H. Shelton Smith, Samuel Hill, Donald Mathews, E. Brooks Holifield, C. C. Goen to Katharine Dvorak, William Montgomery and Reginald Hildebrand, Stowell finds Methodists to behave much like their evangelical competition, a useful and well-documented reminder.

He secondly draws attention to the worldview and theological assumptions, particularly on God's providence, shared between races and among the three denominations *and* then contrasts sharply the way southern whites, northern whites, and African-Americans, extrapolated from their common starting points to different understandings of the Civil War and southern defeat, to divergent theodicies and to distinct reconstruction policies. The latter he designates for the three groups respectively, restoration, purification, and creation and spends much of the book illustrating.

The illustration derives much of its vividness from the final (third) contrast he makes, namely between the outworking of these understandings and policies in two southern states, namely, Georgia and Tennessee, a deep-south and border state, with some shared and some very different experiences during and after the war. Stowell does not limit his attention to these two states. Indeed, he really ranges over the full life of all three denominational families for this period. When characterizing the northern Methodist attitudes, for instance, he draws extensively on statements and official pronouncements made in the north, by individuals, at conferences or by general conference. However, he also treats northern (MEC, AME, and AMEZ) actions and policy on the ground, particularly in these two southern states. The contrasts and comparisons between and among neighbors constitute the most important contribution of the book. Why Stowell decides to employ the derogatory

phrase “religious scalawag” as short-hand for the southerners cooperating with northern missionaries was not clear or I thought particularly helpful. I would say, whatever Stowell’s own sympathies, his treatment of southern white views, in all their complexity, is a significant contribution. At any rate, this on-the-ground state-level perspective makes the second of his comparisons—among the religious visions and reconstruction ambitions of southern whites, northern whites, and African-Americans—especially compelling. Into the competition, politics, chaos and violence which forged post-slavery race relations and racial policy Stowell takes the reader.

The three comparisons are what this book is about. Stowell does get into view the terribly important developments in education—Sunday schools and colleges—and the longer saga of Methodist union. However, he does not attempt to give an overview of religion in the south during this period. One would know little about the fierce competition between Methodists and Baptists, of Landmarkism among Baptists, of the complicated role that the Holiness movement played in southern Methodism, of changes in Methodist theology and praxis, of temperance as program and social critique, of Anglo-saxonism and other ideological and cultural “enrichments” of racism, of the new parts that laity and especially lay women sought to play, of the war’s contribution to centralized and eventually bureaucratized polity or even of the larger aspirations that drove unification talks. Still, for what the book accomplishes it deserves careful attention from Methodist readers.

RUSSELL E. RICHEY
Durham, NC

IF SADDLEBAGS COULD TALK:
METHODIST STORIES AND ANECDOTES

by

FREDERICK E. MASER AND ROBERT DREW SIMPSON

Sponsored by the General Commission on Archives and History
United Methodist Church

\$12.00 INCLUDING SHIPPING

"These stories are the history of a family. . . . A collection of our Methodist stories that will bring laughter to the reader's lips, while warming the heart."
—Ernest S. Lyght, Bishop New York Area United Methodist Church

"Frederick E. Maser and Robert Drew Simpson are well acquainted with the history of the United Methodist Church and its predecessors. Both have written extensively about Methodist history, including the stories of the people and events which are central to its heritage. Therefore, it is fitting that they have combined their talents and knowledge to produce this delightful volume of historical vignettes."—Charles Yrigoyen, Jr., General Secretary General Commission on Archives and History The United Methodist Church

"Maser and Simpson delight us by focusing down from the generalizations of academic history to the level of the common man and woman, the personal and domestic reality. . . . This book is a delightful read."—Kenneth Rowe, Professor of History, Drew Theological School.

ORDER FROM

THE GENERAL COMMISSION ON ARCHIVES AND HISTORY, THE
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, P.O. BOX 127, MADISON, NEW
JERSEY 07940.