

BOOK REVIEWS

Kathryn W. Kemp. *God's Capitalist: Asa Candler of Coca-Cola*. GA:Mercer University Press, 2002. 312pp. \$35.00.

Given today's climate and attitude toward corporate America, it is surprising to find a sympathetic account of the life of southern capitalist and founder of Coca-Cola, Asa Candler. Ms. Kemp has done just that in her biography. She neither denigrates nor glorifies Candler, but describes him within the context of his culture and time. She documents the life of an important figure in the rise of the New South and corporate culture. Her biography covers Candler's life beginning as a child on a Georgia farm, his move to Atlanta to become a druggist, and then the development of his business, beginning with Coca-Cola, his interest in philanthropy and finally his move into politics at the end of his career. Her research is based on solid work in primary archival sources as well as references to significant material from public archives, Emory University, and Coca-Cola.

Kemp covers old ground in some places, such as describing the founding of Coca-Cola, and documents how Candler understood society, at a time of the development of the Jim Crow Laws. Her most interesting discussion, from a United Methodist Studies perspective, is her attempt to show how Candler integrated his religious beliefs into his personal and professional life. Her chapters on Candler as *steward*, as *philanthropist*, and as *capitalist*, throw significant light on the integration of religious values and capitalist practices during the Progressive Era. She shows how Candler understood his religious faith and how he put it into practice. Candler was a hard nosed capitalist who did not not necessarily practice a "What would Jesus do?" type of ethic. If he could do some good, and still make a dollar or two, he did it. Yet, when he did a *good deed* he often did it in a very big way, such as the financing of Emory University, or providing loans to Georgia cotton farmers in 1914.

In several places more detail would have been helpful or useful. In the chapters on Candler as an *elitist* and a *candidate* where issues of labor, women, and race are raised, more information on Atlanta of the day would have been helpful.

Overall this is an excellent introductory biography to a fascinating and important figure of the early 20th century. It is a study into how individuals understood their religion, society, and business.

L. DALE PATTERSON
Madison, NJ

Ladies First, Saints All, by Philip B. Turner, New Ireland Press, 217 Aberdeen St. Fredericton, N. B. E3B 1R6 \$16.95 (190 p.-photos, and indexed) ISBN 1-896-775-20-9 add \$2.00 for mail orders. **Also available from History and Records. Gray Memorial UMC, P. O. Box 69, Caribou, ME 04736.**

Whenever we see or hear of a church which bears the name of an individual, our first inclination is often to assume that the church is named for a beloved previous pastor. More often than not, however, the church is named for a woman, either a pastor's wife or a woman who left a bequest to the church or was actively involved at one period or another. Such is the case of the Gray Memorial United Methodist Church in Caribou, ME, named not for the Reverend James Gray but for his wife, Bessie Gray.

After church historian, Philip Turner, discovered this, he decided that Bessie's story needed to be told. Like many women of her generation, little factual information is actually available about Bessie's life. What is known is that she was born in Port Elgin, New Brunswick, Canada on March 31, 1873, that she married the Reverend James Gray on July 6, 1892, and traveled with him to Massachusetts where he attended the Boston School of Theology, then went with him to Maine where he served a number of churches in the East Maine Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. We also know that Bessie never had any children and suffered throughout her life with poor health.

With these facts, Turner has woven Bessie's story in a most engaging way through the pages of her dairy. There she records her most intimate thoughts, her desire to be a strong support for her husband through her own ministry, and her struggles to understand why she could not become pregnant and bear a child. In addition, Turner has tied Bessie's story with the current events of the times and records Bessie's reaction to these events, living as a Canadian in the United States.

Though primarily a work of fiction, the book is rooted in fact and well-grounded in the context of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, creating a delightful and thoroughly believable portrait of both Bessie Raworth Gray and her husband the Reverend James Gray and their ministry in the East Maine Annual Conference.

PATRICIA J. THOMPSON
Morrisville, VT

Roy Hattersley, *A Brand From The Burning: The Life of John Wesley*. London: Little, Brown, 2002. 451 pp. £20.

This is the most recent biography of John Wesley and appears on the eve of the 300th anniversary of Wesley's birth. The author, a British politician and columnist, has written several books including a biography of William and Catherine Booth, the founders of the Salvation Army.

Hattersley succeeds in presenting a lively narrative of Wesley's life. There are some striking interpretive statements about Methodism's founder. Early on, for example, he states, "Women were [John Wesley's] weakness, doctrinal promiscuity his abiding sin" (p. 4). Obviously, Hattersley's work includes insights into Wesley's Epworth family, the important relationship with his brother Charles, and the early history of the Methodist movement.

The book is marred by a number of errors of fact. A few examples will suffice. The conversion experience of Charles Wesley took place on May 21, 1738, not May 19 of that year. Charles Wesley is erroneously credited as the co-author of the *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament*. The *Notes* were published by John. Chapter 16, which deals with the origins of American Methodism, has several errors which could have been avoided by having someone more familiar with Methodism in the New World check the author's text before publication. For example, Robert Strawbridge is five times referred to as Robert Sawbridge. The Fluvanna conference of 1779 is misspelled Fulvanna. Edward Drumgoole is misspelled Drumgoode. The Birstall meeting house is misspelled Birdsall. Wesley's long-lost "Little Sketch" for American Methodism is wrongly identified as a document related to worship and liturgy (p. 372).

The "Protestant Episcopalian Church" (p. 380) should be the Protestant Episcopal Church. Albert Oulter should be Outler (p. 412 and index). Furthermore, it is misleading to speak of Wesley's "Letter to a Roman Catholic" as an expression of his antagonism toward Rome. In fact, this publication appears to be the most irenic piece he published about Roman Catholics and their faith. One wonders if the author read it.

When all is said and done, however, the book reads quite enjoyably as an interpretation of Wesley's life and ministry. It is an attempt to present Wesley as both a flawed and effective Christian leader. It is not, however, a replacement for Henry Rack's authoritative biography.

Hattersley closes with a comment about Wesley's influence. "Not in his own lifetime, but certainly by proxy during the hundred years which followed his death, Wesley was one of the architects of modern England. John Wesley's Second Reformation created a new Church and helped to build a new nation" (pp. 410-411). When one surveys the significant Wesleyan/Methodist community around the world, it is clear that his influence was considerably more widespread. The book has a useful index, although some errors, including those mentioned above, have made their way into it.

Charles Yrigoyen, Jr.
Madison, NJ