



MOUNT VERNON PLACE CHURCH, BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

This elegant Gothic structure, located on the northeast corner of Mount Vernon Place and built of green serpentine stone with brownstone trim, was the site of the 1884 Centennial Methodist Conference. Thomas M. Eddy, who was pastor of Charles Street Methodist Episcopal Church in 1870, originated the idea of building a church under the very shadow of the first monument erected in the United States to memorialize George Washington. It is said that the first plan for the church called for the central spire to be taller than the Washington monument, and consequently the plan was revised.

The cornerstone of the new church was laid on September 26, 1870, with Bishop Edmund S. Janes presiding. In the spring of 1872 the original 1843 charter of Charles Street Church was amended and the name of the corporation was changed to Mount Vernon Place Methodist Episcopal Church of Baltimore. The dedication service was held on November 21, 1872, with Bishop Randolph S. Foster delivering the dedicatory address.

Included in the 1843 charter of Charles Street Church was a clause which read, "for the purpose of erecting a house of worship to be prepared and furnished with pews or slips to be rented or sold." This, along with the introduction of organ music in 1850, caused considerable controversy. In

1921, preparing for the semi-centennial of Mount Vernon Place Church, the officials revoked the provision for pew rentals and adopted an "open-door" policy. The choir and accompanying organ music became quite famous and drew large crowds to regular services and special concerts.

Lynn Harold Hough, Oscar T. Olson, Albert E. Day and Harold A. Bosley are among the distinguished pastors who have served Mount Vernon Place. The church continues to minister to downtown Baltimore under the leadership of Edwin A. Ankeny.

BOOK REVIEWS

Richard Allen, *The Life Experience and Gospel Labors of the Rt. Rev. Richard Allen*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983. 93 pp.

Among the treasure of books issued for the Bicentennial of American Methodism is this reprint, first published in 1960 for the 200th anniversary of the birth of Richard Allen. After brief introductory comments by George A. Singleton, the volume includes Allen's autobiography, his articles of association for the operation of Bethel Church in Philadelphia, three short treatises on faith, hope and love, his apologetic on the actions of black people during the 1793 epidemic in Philadelphia, thoughts on slavery, and words of encouragement for black people and those who would help them.

Obviously, this material is valuable for understanding the life of one of the most important American church leaders in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Allen was a devoted Methodist whose discouragement with the white church resulted in the formation of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. The reader will be reminded that the disappointment and hurt experienced by Allen and caused by the racial attitudes of white Methodists is of long standing and, unfortunately, is not unknown to black people today in their contemporary experience.

Charles Yrigoyen, Jr.

Minutes of the Methodist Conferences in America, 1773-1813. Swainsboro, Georgia: Magnolia Press, 1983. 620 pp.

Harold Lawrence, a ministerial member of the North Georgia Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church, has succeeded in arranging for the reprinting of this very valuable set of the *Minutes* of early Methodism. Here the reader will find primary source materials for understanding early Methodist history in America as well as listings of all the preachers in the original conferences.