

BOOK REVIEWS

Mark A. Noll, David W. Bebbington, and George A. Rawlyk, eds., *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and Beyond, 1700–1990*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994, xv + 430 pp.

George A. Rawlyk & Mark A. Noll, eds., *Amazing Grace: Evangelicalism in Australia, Britain, Canada, and the United States*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993. 429 pp.

Most of these chapters began as papers delivered at a conference on “Evangelicalism in Transatlantic Perspective” at Wheaton College. Together they represent a recent flowering of historical scholarship on the evangelical movement. Mark Noll’s Introduction to *Evangelicalism* and Larry Eskridge’s Bibliographic Afterword to *Amazing Grace* are especially helpful in providing orientation to this burgeoning field. These volumes demonstrate the quality and direction of evangelical studies in this generation.

Since, as David Bebbington has said, evangelicalism “is not to be equated with any single Christian denomination,” but is “a wine that has been poured into many bottles,” the phenomenon itself requires some definition. (*Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989, 1) The working definition for these volumes is Bebbington’s: “All those displaying conversionism, activism, biblicism, and crucicentrism are evangelicals. There can be no doubt that groups with these characteristics . . . are outgrowths of a single movement.” (*Evangelicalism*, 367)

Readers in any of the Methodist traditions may sense a bit of irony in the considerable space devoted to Calvinist dimensions of the movement. To us, “conversionism” has always required the recognition and exercise of a free human response to God’s universal grace. Thomas Oden has wrestled admirably with this concern in *The Transforming Power of Grace* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993). Yet from the beginning many Calvinist preachers and churches have embraced the evangelical vision, sometimes reinterpreting (Edwards, Whitefield), sometimes moving well beyond (Finney) their roots in order to make sense of that vision and pursue it within their theological tradition.

A prominent issue in these papers is the role of cultural context in shaping and diversifying this international movement. Several authors discuss the distinctive Scottish, Irish, Canadian, Australian, and other variations on what remains a recognizably common theme. In every case, while influences from England and the United States are clearly evident, the resulting products bear their own stamp and have in turn influenced the larger evangelical world. Other subjects include the role of anti-

and an account of his work as chaplain in the Ohio State Penitentiary. Relying heavily on this primary evidence, the author also provides an extensive bibliographical essay, analyzing relevant primary and secondary sources.

Painting a vivid picture of frontier preaching, Professor Cole accurately describes and evaluates not only Finley's ministerial contributions but also uses Finley's writing to portray the homiletic endeavors of his circuit-riding colleagues. Some of their crowds, particularly at camp meetings were boisterous and Finley sometimes engaged in muscular rhetoric when he confronted those "Lewd fellows of a baser sort." Some critics of the robust circuit riders accused them of either "preaching heaven into their hearers or beating hell out of them."

As a champion of Indian rights, Finley's most eloquent, vituperative denunciations struck at government officials and "greedy traders and land-hungry speculators" for their "sinful treatment" of the Indians. Yet, he also managed to bridge the wall between church and state, negotiating in person with President Monroe and Secretary of War John C. Calhoun to secure funds for the Wyandot mission church and school at Upper Sandusky, Ohio. Despite his fervent appeals in their behalf his beloved Wyandot converts were forced in 1843 to settle in Missouri.

Cole analyzes the division of Methodism over slavery in which Finley played a key role. It was his "mild and moderate" motion that finally drove the southern churches to secede. Using speeches, letters, and manuscripts, the volume traces Finley's struggle to reconcile his antislavery convictions with his early anti-abolitionist views.

Throughout the biography a clear, accurate portrait emerges, not only of the "Lion of the Forest" but also of circuit-riding rhetoric on the Ohio frontier. Readers will discover fresh insights into religious and political issues during this tumultuous, antebellum era in the history of Methodism.

PAUL H. BOASE
Oberlin, Ohio