Book Reviews

Stout, Henry S., *The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism*. Library of Religious Biography. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991. xxix, 301 pp. ISBN 0-8028-0154-4.

A volume without the normal scholarly apparatus of footnotes and fulsome references to secondary literature would not normally merit a review. *The Divine Dramatist* is clearly an exception. Written by one of the premier scholars of American religious history, this biography of Whitefield is not to be passed over lightly. In this work, Stout proffers a daring interpretation of the evangelist and of his role in England, Scotland and America. It is a decidedly American interpretation which minimizes the importance of Whitefield's theological perspectives and develops him as the foremost salesperson of religion in a market economy. If the arguments presented here are sustained by later research, the common understanding of Whitefield, his role in the revivals of the eighteenth century, indeed, even the scholarly treatment of the revivals themselves, will need to be revised.

Stout begins his analysis with a quote from Whitefield's diary which points, quite without subtlety, to parallels between his life and that of Jesus (as in the biblical infancy narratives), including the importance of the role of his mother in his calling to ministry. Before ministry came an aggressive participation in theater, in which Whitefield acted with significant success. After theater came an equally intense participation in the Oxford Methodist group under Wesley's tutelage. Stout's thesis is that Whitefield's life is to be understood as an effort to fulfill his mother's explicitly stated goals for upward social mobility, within the context of the church, and that the theatrical presentation of the gospel—geared to the realities of the market and promoted as a consumer product—informed the Wesleyan love/hate relationship with the established church, propelled him into evangelistic stardom and a role as an American hero who sympathized with and spoke for the fractious colonists.

Throughout the volume, Stout asserts that intellectual pursuits were only guild requirements—that Whitefield was a mediocre student, a preacher who never prepared sermons, a leader who had no inclination or ability for theological reflection. Whitefield's primary goals, argues Stout, were to preach to as many people as possible, promote, interpret and insure his success, and to gain the attention and approbation of the rich and powerful. His charitable activity and preaching are presented as sincere but as calculated for public relations

value as well as for ministry. A comparison, one suspects, with Edwards's turgid scholarly prose lies behind these judgements.

The carefully detailed discussion of Whitefield's work in America provides the data for Stout's appreciation of his role as an "American icon," and is perhaps the most important contribution of the volume. It was he, it is suggested, who taught the owners of the newly deregulated newspapers how to use them to control images and market a personage and/or ideas. This—combined with careful advance preparation of the contexts of future evangelistic campaigns, extemporaneous preaching, the use of controversy, the refined theatrical presentation of the gospel and the publication of his diary in various media—guaranteed his success and the reinforcement of his reputation.

In this the mutually beneficial and supportive relationship with Benjamin Franklin (chapter 12), characterized as "an uncommon friendship," is illuminating. Their sincere efforts to grapple with social realities (Whitefield sought conversion and piety; Franklin sought reasoned life and civic virtue) drew them together into an intimate friendship, shared methods and mutual assistance. Both, Stout suggests, were quintessentially American.

Four features of the volume cause concern even when one, as this reviewer does, grants the essential thesis as sustained by the data. First, can a highly stylized diary which is avowedly self-promoting and first written as publicity for his evangelistic efforts—be accepted, without supporting data as revelatory of Whitefield's character and youth? Probably not! Are there, for instance, tax and court records which would support or bring into question Whitefield's narration of his youth? No (published) effort has been made to explore this possibility. Second, it would appear inappropriate to give Wesley such a minor role in the Whitefield story in favor of an expanded role for Jonathan Edwards. Here Stout's commitment to the New England thesis of American religion and society excessively colors the analysis.

Third, if Whitefield was, as Stout repeatedly suggests an essentially shallow evangelist intellectually (over against most interpretations), how does one explain the extended and heated debates between Calvinist and Arminian Methodists? Stout offers no answer; but, from his "market" perspective, options would be that Whitefield's Calvinism was only a badge to distinguish himself from Wesley, a foil to gain access to the pulpits of Scotland as well as those of high church Anglicans and Presbyterians in America, or the means to lay claim to the Lady Huntington's largess. Or, do the sources suggest that the intellectual development of an itinerant evangelist, dependent on the popular press and orality (Whitefield preached 40-50 hours per week), requires an analysis different from the scholarly, sedentary Edwards or the Anglican divines? It would seem that popular culture research suggests the latter. It would appear, as it is presented, that the ideological structures of Whitefield are inadequately addressed.

Fourth, the book in its subtitle would appear to promise reflection on "the rise of modern evangelicalism." While implicit parallels to the present will suggest themselves to most readers, the comparison and formulation of trajectories of development are left to another volume or author.

These caveats aside, Stout has produced a scintillating and suggestive new interpretation of the life and ministry of Whitefield. It will, of necessity, be considered in

all future work on the evangelist and will probably be the vehicle by which most students of American religious culture meet Whitefield. The book is refreshing and provocative. Franklin and Whitefield would have approved.

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Bebbington, David, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain; A History from the 1730's to the 1980's*. London: Unwin Hyman/Routledge, 1989; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992. xi, 364 pp. ISBN 0-8010-1028.

British Evangelicalism, in all its facets except Methodism, has generally been neglected by historians of British religious culture. Bebbington seeks to redress the problem with a magisterial survey of a century and one-half of the complex collection of institutional and voluntary associational participation identifiable as "evangelical." These are defined as groups which reflect the qualities of conversionism, activism (regarding the expression of the gospel), biblicism (albeit rarely subscribing to American-style inerrancy theories) and crucicentrism (stess on the sacrifice of Christ on the cross). The Wesleyan revivals provide the initial benchmarks of the definition, although the Wesleyan (and other's) emphases on developmental spirituality are curiously downplayed. This functional definition of Evangelicalism allows Bebbington to provide an evenhanded scholarly approach to the range of phenomena normally understood as Evangelicalism and helps him avoid the ideological pitfalls into which many American scholars fall. This phenomenological approach cannot be too highly praised.

The thesis which governs the volume is that Evangelicalism, quite in contradistinction to its own self-perception, is "allied with the enlightenment." It is a thoroughly modern movement which "has altered enormously over time in response to the changing assumptions of western civilization" (p. 19). Chapter two describes the first century of the tradition. The Wesleyan phenomena dominate this chapter. Wesley's heritage in Puritianism, continental Pietism, the philosophers of the Enlightenment and "high church" Anglicanism is presented. Unfortunately the work of the Caroline divines, which arguably provided the grounds upon which the "evangelicals" would find latitude to function within the Anglican tradition, is not mentioned. Such consideration would have required some nuancing of the assertion that the "Evangelical Revival represents a sharp discontinuity in the protestant tradition (p. 74)."

After chapters suggesting the changing theological and social emphases of the evangelicals, Bebbington devotes a chapter to the Holiness movement in Britain focusing on Keswick. He is careful to note the early American contacts, the prefectionistic elements and the roots in the interdenominational Mildmay conferences of William Pennefather.

The Keswick convention receives perhaps too much credit for the period prior to 1895 when F. B. Meyer began his campaign to baptistify Keswick and the efforts of the American A. T. Pierson to create a "Keswick movement" over the protests of most Keswick leaders. Surveys of the periodicals *The Way of Faith, The Christian* and *The King's Highway* suggest Keswick was one of many annual (or more frequent) conferences devoted to the promotion of "scriptural holiness." Insufficient attention is devoted in this chapter to the role of R. C. Morgan and his periodical *The Christian* in defining the evangelical reality. It is arguable that, more than any other factor, *The Christian* defined Evangelicalism in the British empire. The roles of Primitive Methodism, Free Methodism and The Salvation Army are not discussed in this context.

It is also interesting that the development of Pentecostalism in Britain receives minimal attention (pp. 196-198) and that the development of the "house church" movement of the 1950s and since is discussed on p. 230. The religious developments within the black communities or other immigrant groups (mostly Pentecostal and/or Holiness) are not discussed. This despite the assertion that Pentecostalism brought "vigorous reinforcement to the conservative wing of Evangelicalism" (p. 198). How was this the case? The treatment does not take into account most research on Pentecostalism from either within or outside the tradition. For example, Hollenweger's extensive analysis of British Pentecostalism is not cited (*The Pentecostals* [London: SCM, 1972] and *Handbuch der Pfingstbewegung*, Diss. Zurich, 1965).

Many specialists will want to quibble with the treatment given a particular group, idea or event in Bebbington's volume—as I have done! However, all of us will continuously use this work as the standard treatment of the whole against the backdrop of which all future research on British Evangelicalism must be set. Most scholars have examined the pieces. The major contribution of Bebbington is that he develops a thesis which can contain the whole. It is to be expected that Bebbington's effort will spawn a number of dissertations, scholarly articles and books which examine the role of individual movements, networks and the structures of interaction including publishing.

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Dayton, Donald W. and Robert K. Johnston, eds. *The Variety of American Evangelicalism*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991. 285 pp. ISBN 0-87049-659-X.

This volume grew out of a multi-year effort, within the context of the Evangelical Studies Group of the American Academy of Religion (AAR), to describe the parameters of "Evangelicalism" within the context of American culture. It is a recent contri-

bution to the ongoing discussion of the nature of the phenomenon, arguing against the sufficiency of Reformed Fundamentalism as the essential normative core of the tradition and/or as the definitive intellectual framework expressive of Evangelicalism. A stellar cast of contributors surveys the role of Premillennialism (T. Webber), the influence of Fundamentalism (G. Marsden) and Pietism (C. J. Weborg), as well as Pentecostalism (D. Dayton), Adventism (R. Staples), Wesleyan/Holiness (P. Bassett), Restorationism (R. T. Hughes), African American religion (M. G. Sernett), Baptists (E. H. Ohlmann), Mennonites (C. N. Kraus), Reformed theology (M. Noll and C. Niemczyk) and Lutheranism (M. Ellingsen). Dayton and Johnston frame these chapters with an introduction and two chapters about the doubtful usefulness of the term "Evangelical" (Dayton) and suggestions for viewing the phenomenon sociologically as well as theologically as an "extended family" (Johnston).

Each discussant of an individual tradition made an effort to provide a careful theological analysis of the tradition, attempting, as it were, to "read" the specific tradition in light of its own sources, in order to ascertain and describe the inner logic of the system. The result of this inquiry is then compared and contrasted with what the individual author understands Evangelicalism to be. The lack of a comparative base line, while probably unavoidable, makes the informed reading of the volume a formidable exercise.

As in any anthology, the contributions are far from equal. The most striking inequality relates to the comprehensiveness of the vision for the particular evangelical tradition being examined. For example, Ellingsen was, astonishingly, able to discuss Lutherans and Evangelicalism with no discussion of the Missouri Synod and its role in American culture. Even more improbably, Ohlmann is able to discuss Baptists and Evangelicals with no attention to Southern Baptists. Weborg's chapter on Pietism gives minimal attention to the actual outworking of the pietist impulses in American society. Also curiously missing is a chapter on Methodism, which has retained a significant, well-documented evangelical and/or fundamentalist populace.

The chapter of primary interest to the majority of *Asbury Theological Journal* readers is, perhaps, that by Paul Bassett, professor of history of Christianity at Nazarene Theological Seminary, entitled, "The Theological Identity of the North American Holiness Movement: Its Understanding of the Nature and Role of the Bible." He begins by noting Harold Lindsell's generally unheeded 1977 call for the Holiness movement to join the "evangelical" Battle for the Bible, insisting that, despite "its presumed, even self-conscious identity with evangelicalism, the North American holiness movement, strictly speaking, inherits and propagates a history and a spirituality that finally make impossible...any essential synonymity, except in a very broad grassroots way..." (p. 72).

Bassett initially defines the Holiness movement institutionally; that is, as those which are part of the CHA (Christian Holiness Association), IHC (Interdenominational Holiness Convention) and the CHF (Canadian Holiness Federation). The only problem with this definition, as applied, is that it excludes the entire range of African American Holiness movements, the Holiness movements which became Pentecostal while retaining the Wesleyan-Holiness distinctives, such as the Church of God (Cleveland) and the Holiness Pentecostal Church. Such an expansion of the canon would have made Bassett's task more difficult. Even within the more narrow

definition of CHA/IHC/CHF, Bassett accurately depicts the diversity of ideas—even mutually exclusive doctrines and liturgical practices—of those who (1) adhere to the "Wesleyan doctrine of entire sanctification" and (2) recognize each other. Interestingly, there is no discussion here of the importance of the Keswickian view of sanctification and the tendency of the tradition to evolve toward that position.

Bassett then takes Phoebe Palmer and H. Orton Wiley as paradigmatic of the tradition and argues that their use of the Bible is on a significantly different trajectory from that of Reformed Evangelicalism. The analysis of Palmer and Wiley is magisterial and accurate. The only difficulty is the attribution of paradigmatic status. The analysis would, of necessity, be significantly nuanced by inclusion of Church of God (Anderson) and The Salvation Army writers, as well as theologians of the more conservative branches of the tradition such as Bowie, Joseph H. Smith, Stephen Paine and Charles Carter. It could also be argued that the nuanced approach of Wiley was lost on the generations which used his three-volume work as an introduction to theology as well as those who read his other writings in different contexts.

While I think Bassett's analysis is essentially correct, the reality of the tradition is much more complex. At the same time, one has to start somewhere. Bassett's effort is, even given the reservations expressed above, more adequate than any other to date as a paradigm for describing the phenomenon. It is probable that even expanding the base of analysis would not change Bassett's conclusion that, "Here, then, is the center of holiness theological logic: not orthodoxy, but sanctidoxy. Not the enlightenment of the saints but the love of the Holy One"(p. 95). Bassett's contribution is an important milestone in Wesleyan/Holiness historiography in addition to its crucial role in the present volume.

This is only one of the stimulating, sometimes provocative articles which the Evangelical Studies Group, under the leadership of Dayton and Johnston, produced. Taken together, they comprise a reliable guide to the evangelical landscape. The volume will be an essential part of the canon of the historiography of North American Evangelicalism.

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Rightmire, R. David. *Sacraments and The Salvation Army: Pneumatological Foundations* Metuchen, New Jersey: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1990. 327 pp. Hardback, ISBN 0-81 08-2396-9.

Professor Rightmire is well qualified to write on this subject. He brings both his understanding of The Salvation Army as well as his theological training and own careful scholarship to bear on the issues involved in this book, and he writes with both

skill and insight. *Sacraments and The Salvation Army: Pneumatological Foundations* is a fitting addition to the Studies in Evangelicalism series published by The Scarecrow Press, and correctly places the theological development of The Salvation Army within the context of nineteenth-century Evangelicalism.

The basic argument, which is both well developed and well sustained throughout the work, is that The Salvation Army's non-sacramental practice, which was instituted some eighteen years after the founding of the Christian Mission in 1865 (the forerunner of The Salvation Army), evolved primarily for theological reasons rather than for practical ones alone. Indeed, it is argued that even the apparently practical considerations had rootage in an ecclesiology. The author clearly states at the outset of the book that "the thesis of this work is that The Salvation Army's abandonment of the sacraments is theologically grounded in its pneumatological priority and the practical orientation of its missiology (p. ix)."

This is critical for at least two reasons: first, there is certainly institutional misunderstanding about the eventual non-sacramental position and practice of The Salvation Army. The most common misunderstanding is that the Army abandoned the sacraments for practical considerations only, and the theological history has either not been perceived or has been lost in some rather odd institutional historiography. Second, and related to the first, there is generally a lack of awareness of, and therefore appreciation for, the theology and history of The Salvation Army within the broader history of the Church, and even within the more narrowly defined history of Evangelicalism. This work illuminates, I think, a very important aspect of such history.

David Rightmire's thesis is developed basically within the context of the nineteenth century in the three settings which shaped Salvation Army thinking—the Victorian world, the Wesleyan tradition, and the nineteenth-century Holiness movement. One chapter diverts from that focus—chapter four deals with affinities with sixteenth- and seventeenth-century spiritualist theology, and the contents of that chapter are helpful, especially when considering some implicit influence which the Quakers had upon Catherine Booth, one of the founders of The Salvation Army and a chief architect of the non-sacramental position. Apart from that chapter, however, the central attention of this book, and rightly so, is upon the nineteenth century.

There is excellent analysis of both the historical/theological context, and of the leading advocates who guided the Army from the observance of both baptism and the Lord's Supper to a non-sacramental position, fully declared in 1883. The theological issues are constantly kept in view, especially as the author supports his thesis that pneumatological priorities eventually dominated the ecclesiology of the Army, and that the mission of the Army to the poor was governed by pragmatic revivalistic concerns.

The early leaders of the movement were not unaware of such subtle shifts, and due notice is given to the influence upon William Booth (the co-founder of The Salvation Army) by Catherine Booth, Bramwell Booth (the eldest son of William and Catherine and successor to William Booth as the second General of The Salvation Army), and George Scott Railton (a Wesleyan Christian attracted to the rigorous and forthright evangelism of The Christian Mission and one of the most important early leaders of The Salvation Army). Also, the concentration on Christian holiness as sacramental living was articulated carefully well into the twentieth century by an American Methodist

who joined The Salvation Army, Samuel Logan Brengle. Rightmire is correct in pointing out what these people held in common, such as "the interrelatedness of Booth's pragmatism and pneumatology in terms of sacramental living" (p. 167). He likewise made the proper connections, which many have missed, between the doctrine of holiness, the concern for holy living, and the Army's postmillennial theology in which sacramental living became the great present eschatological sign for the future kingdom.

Rightmire's basic thesis is an important corrective for some misinterpretations (including Begbie's, in his two-volume work entitled *The Life of General William Booth*) that Booth dropped the sacraments because such observances detracted from the central message of conversion and from the emotional drama of conversion. On the contrary, it was Booth's eventual understanding of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and the mission of the Army, rather than his understanding of regeneration, which led him to a non-sacramental position. Booth's successors were not as clearly theologically oriented, and so developed an apologetic for a non-sacramental position which was often weak. Rightmire points out such weaknesses.

The book concludes by providing some helpful suggestions for a proper theological framework for a contemporary reevaluation of the issue of sacraments and The Salvation Army. The question needs to be raised, however, as to whether the theological shifts in the Army's pneumatology are more subtle and less dramatic than Rightmire suggests, thus raising the subsequent question as to the viability of reconsidering the Army's sacramental theology. Is the case compelling enough to demand such reconsideration?

In summary, this is an important book not only because it raises critical questions and provides excellent analysis for institutional historical and theological awareness. It is significant also because it provides the broader academic world with more insight into an intentionally non-sacramental community of believers within the wider Body of Christ.

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Dunnavant, Anthony L., ed. *Poverty and Ecclesiology; Nineteenth-Century Evangelicals in Light of Liberation Theology*. Collegeville: Michael Glazeer/Liturgical Press, 1992. 104 p. ISBN 0-8146-5024-4

It is unusual when a volume comprised of essays surpasses the individuality of the separate contributions to actually develop and maintain a thesis. This book, which may be described as *multo in parvo*, edited by Anthony L. Dunnavant, associate professor of Church history at Lexington Theological Seminary, drew together the work of five noted scholars. The thesis and resulting analysis may be discomfiting both to evangelicals and to liberation theologians. The authors clearly demonstrated that there is a remarkable

correspondence between the concerns and rhetoric of contemporary Latin American liberation theologians and nineteenth-century evangelicals, and that in those similarities may lie ecumenical possibilities between mainline churches, which eagerly hear the liberation theologians, and the often-mocked evangelicals who are heirs to and maintain these traditions of social awareness and activism in a context dominated by the mainline churches. All of the authors were careful not to overdraw the comparison between the different "theological, social, historical and cultural" milieux of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. They managed the comparative historiography with skill.

The editor's "Introduction" reflects upon the genesis of the project, presents the thesis and describes the methodology employed. The first essay, by the famed historian Justo L. Gonzalez, "The Option for the Poor in Latin American Liberation Theology" (pp. 9-26), argues convincingly that the Latin-American Catholic concern for the poor and oppressed does not begin with the liberation theologians. Sacrificial concern for the marginalized as well as for evangelism, he insists, has been a continuous, even determinative, part of the Christian presence in Latin America since the initial colonization by the Spanish and Portugese.

Dunnavant's case study, "David Lipscomb and the 'Preferential Option for the Poor' Among Post-Bellum Churches of Christ" (pp. 27-50), explores the views of Lipscomb on the church and the poor, seeking to ascertain personal and ministerial priorities of the person who could be described as the founder of this primarily Southern, conservative ecclesial coalition. Out of his personal experience of devastating poverty after the Civil War, Lipscomb developed a sophisticated analysis of poverty and the churches' role in ministry. Dunnavant argues that Lipscomb recognized that "Christ is personified in the poor" (p. 32), valued a church of the poor, insisted that the poor are the more effective evangelists, invoked the *kenosis* theory as a model for Christian service to the "masses," and pleaded for a ministry which "lived poor" and associated with the poor. He warned that riches, and the social material tastes cultured by wealth, corrupt the church and its testimony.

The second case study is an essay entitled, "Benjamin Titus Roberts and the 'Preferential Option for the Poor' in the Early Free Methodist Church" (pp. 51-67), was written by William C. Kostlevy, special collections librarian at Asbury Theological Seminary. Kostlevy begins his analysis of the social theories and ministerial imperatives of the founder of The Free Methodist Church with a quote from the 1903 *Doctrines and Disciplines*, which asserted that Free Methodist "mission is two-fold—to maintain the Bible standard of Christianity, and to preach the gospel to the poor." This essay clearly demonstrates that the church had more than words of "Good News" in mind when the phrase was penned. By 1903, this Holiness church—founded over both social justice (free pews, ministry of women, anti-secret societies, anti-slavery) and theological issues (sanctification)—had labored for nearly a half century both in evangelism and in social ministry. For them there was no bifurcation.

Kostlevy describes the experiential and theoretical bases from which Roberts and other Free Methodist social/missional theorists worked. The historical circumstances and the expulsion of Roberts from The Methodist Episcopal Church are well known. Less discussed in the post-McCarthy era church are the severe critique of capitalism, the accumulation of wealth by members, the display of privilege, and deflationary money policies.

Roberts argued, as do liberation theologians, that the proof of easily-mouthed doctrinal assertions is in the self-sacrificial pouring out (he used the term *kenosis*) of life and goods for the poor. Roberts also lashed out against classism based, interestingly enough, on either social, material or religious attainments. To be a Free Methodist was to be a radical Christian. Writers such as Mary Alice Tenney, George Allen Turner, L. R. Marsten and Howard A. Snyder have continued this tradition of social and religious thinking.

Kostlevy has carefully documented his presentation of Roberts and has at numerous points compared and contrasted his findings with a reading of key liberation theoloians and documents. It is hoped that others will further explore the Free Methodist ethical tradition as well as the attitudes and practices of Roberts, whose personal papers became available to scholars just after Kostlevy finished this important and suggestive essay. Unfortunately, many among the later generations of Holiness churchpersons have been so personally irritated with the "prudentials" of the tradition which made it impossible to be "like" the mainline churches, that they have failed to recognize a truly significant tradition of social, missional and theological analysis in their own church.

Bill J. Leonard, professor of religion at Samford University, contributed the final case study, "*Comunidades Eclesiales de Base* and Autonomous Local Churches: Catholic Liberationists Meet Baptist Landmarkers" (pp. 68-89), an analysis of another primarily southern evangelical church. It is an excellent essay in comparative ecclesiology.

The "Epilogue," provided by Donald W. Dayton, professor at Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, makes explicit what has been implicit throughout the volume. That is, the stereotypes of evangelicals as passively oblivious to social and ecclesial injustices are untenable. He suggests that the term evangelical has become so contested and value laden that it has lost its usefulness and should be abandoned in favor of a concept of "radical Christianity."

The editor and contributors have made a carefully reasoned, meticiously documented argument. The parameters of the discussion could easily have been extended to the Lutherans, for example, when, after the Civil War, Pietist evangelicals in that tradition were officially persecuted because of their radical egalitarian social vision. Others, such as the pentecostal churches (for example, the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, the Filadelfia Churches [Sweden], the Church of God [Cleveland] and the Assemblees de Deus of Brazil) and Holiness churches (for example, The Salvation Army, Wesleyan Church, Church of the Nazarene, Church of God [Anderson]) have traditions congruent with those studied here. To note that these were not examined is not a criticism, but a recognition of the historiographical contribution of the volume. It is hoped that, following suggestions of Dunnavant, et al., the sterotypes which have divided American Christianity into opposing religious cultures will be reexamined and overcome.

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Rivers, Isabel. *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment: A Study of the Language of Religion and Ethics in England, 1660-1780* Vol. 1: *Whichcote to Wesley*. Cambridge Studies in Eighteenth-Century English Literature and Thought, No. 8. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991. xiii, 277 pp. ISBN 0-521-38340-4.

Isabel Rivers is a fellow of St. Hugh's College, Oxford University, and is the author of *The Poetry of Conservatism, 1600-1745* (Cambridge, 1973) and *Classical and Christian Ideas in English Renaissance Poetry* (London, 1979). Her "subject is the language of religious and moral prose" (p. 2) from the sermons of Benjamin Whichcote (1609-1683) to the sermons and other works of John Wesley (1703-1791). Her "methods are those of the literary historian of ideas" (pp. 2-3); but she adds that her "aim has been to cross twentieth-century disciplinary boundaries and to encourage [her] readers to do the same" (p. 4).

An introduction and short first chapter are followed by four longer chapters. Chapter one provides historical background for the subsequent chapters, and covers the period of approximately 1640 to 1660. The second chapter treats a group of Anglican divines labeled "latitudinarians" or "laititude-men," the first of whom was Whichcote. Chapter three addresses the nonconformist reaction to the latitudinarians, and focuses on Presbyterian Richard Baxter (1615-1691) and Baptist John Bunyan (1628-1688). The subjects of the fourth chapter are congregationalists and dissenters Isaac Watts (1674-1748) and Philip Doddridge (1702-1751). Chapter five "looks at the thought of John Wesley from the 1730s to the 1780s and his attempt, drawing on many different traditions, to reform the Church of England from within and to create a new synthesis of the competing elements his predecessors had juggled with" (p. 2).

An overly-simple method of classifying the characters of this book (though Rivers is not herself guilty of such over-simplification) is to place each somewhere on a continuum between the poles of Calvinism and Arminianism. Whichcote's Calvinist teacher Anthony Tuckney (1594-1670) is introduced in Chapter one. Whichcote and most of the latitudinarians were trained as Calvinists, but became Arminians. Then, "in the 1660s, with the re-establishment of the Church of England, Calvinism came to be perceived very largely as nonconformist and Arminianism as conformist doctrine" (p. 12). Bunyan held "orthodox Calvinist beliefs" (p. 104); but Baxter adopted an "Aristotelian mediocrity" (p. 131) between the extremes of Calvinism and Arminianism. Watts and Doddridge followed Baxter in the "middle way of moderate Calvinism" (p. 203). Wesley was nearer the Arminian end of the spectrum.

Although Rivers provides structure for her analysis of the many texts she discusses, this structure suffers from a degree of imprecision. According to the first sentence of the Introduction, "this book is the first of two volumes dealing with the changes in which the relationship between religion and ethics was perceived" between 1660 and 1780 "and the kinds of language in which these changes were expressed." Rivers then identifies "two crucial shifts in ideas" that took place during this period: "The first is an emphasis in Anglican thought on the capacity of human reason and free will to co-operate with divine grace in order to achieve the holy and happy life. This optimistic portrait of human nature represents a rejection of the orthodox Reformation tradition,

which stresses the depravity of human nature and God's arbitrary exercise of his free grace in electing the few to salvation." The second shift, "which in part arises from the first," is "the attempt to divorce ethics from religion, and to find the springs of human action not in the cooperation of human nature and divine grace but in the constitution of human nature alone." The suggestion is that these two shifts correspond to the two volumes of *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment.*

Rivers then adds: "Volume I deals with the rise in the second half of the seventeenth century of Anglican moral religion and the reaction against it of movements which attempted in different ways to continue or return to the Reformation protestant tradition in response to what was seen to be its betrayal by the Church of England. This volume essentially explores the tension between the languages of reason and grace. Volume II [not yet available at the time of this review] will deal with movements which took up ideas implicit in Anglican moral religion and developed them in the direction of naturalism, scepticism, and sentimental ethics, to which Anglican thinkers were necessarily hostile although they had to some extent prepared the ground which made these developments possible. It will essentially explore the tension between the languages of reason and sentiment" (p. 1)

But to say that both volumes deal with changes in how the relationship between religion ,and ethics was perceived slights the central role of beliefs about human reason in the story Rivers tells. And to say that Volume I is about the languages of reason and grace downplays its concern with changing beliefs about ethics. I believe that a passage in the first chapter offers a more helpful way of organizing the ideas presented in the book. Rivers identifies two routes to atheism: "Those on the Calvinist wing warned of a slippery slope leading from Arminianism, Socinianism and Pelagianism to infidelity and atheism; conversely, those on the Arminian wing saw a different but equally dangerous slope leading from Calvinism and antinomianism to irrationality, enthusiasm, libertinism, and atheism" (p. 9). She then adds: "The disputes, which are essentially about the nature of the relationship between man and God, centre on the respective parts played by *reason and faith* as the basis of knowledge of God, and by *faith and works* as the basis of the Christian life" (pp. 9-10, emphasis added). The texts discussed in the four main chapters also contain many references to the roles of *reason and works*. Supplying this third side and constructing a faith-reason-works triangle is, I believe, the best way to approach these four chapters.

Rivers opens chapter two by explaining that "the terms 'latitude-men' and 'latitudinitrian' were first used pejoratively...to describe an influential group of men who in terms of doctrine wanted to reduce the Christian religion to a few plain essentially moral fundamentals...and in terms of discipline were prepared to accommodate themselves to the church government of the day" (pp. 25-26). They believed that Christianity is reasonable, and "were united in their opposition to what they regarded as atheism, enthusiasm, and superstition, which they believed to be mutually supporting intellectual evils undermining rational religion" (p. 34). In the words of latitude-man Simon Patrick (1626-1707), "there is an eternal consanguinity between all verity; and nothing is true in Divinity, which is false in Philosophy, or the contrary" (p. 68). They also believed that "faith contains the idea of works" (p. 74), and "held man to

have been created and to remain, despite the effects of sin, a rational being endowed with innate knowledge of God, good and evil, and moral duties" (pp. 59-60).

Baxter and Bunyan disagreed concerning the relationship between reason and faith. "Like the latitudinarians, Baxter is interested in the place of reason in religion and in the relationship between religion and philosophy" (p. 124). Bunyan, however, was suspicious of the role of reason in Christianity, as is suggested by his "caricature of the latitudinarian point of view in the shape of Mr. Worldly Wiseman" in *The Pilgrim's Progress* (p. 87). Concerning the relationship between faith and works, however, "there is no dispute between them: the life of faith is the life of holiness" (p. 151). "Reason for Baxter is the means not only to knowledge but to putting knowledge into practice" (p. 145). Bunyan, however, "is altogether more suspicious of the head" (p. 146).

Rivers begins chapter four with a hint of what was later to become a serious problem for the reason-faith relationship: "Two basic tendencies can be observed in the attitudes and language of dissent in the first half of the eighteenth century, the first rational, the second evangelical" (p. 165). Both Watts and Doddridge "wished to combine rational free thought with evangelical orthodoxy" (p. 170). Unfortunately, however, "by the end of the century there was a gulf between rational dissent on the one hand and evangelicalism in its various manifestations on the other" (p. 204). The eighteenth-century protestant dissenters believed in a close relationship between faith and works: "True Christianity of the heart manifests itself in purity of life" (p. 195). One manifestation of the evangelical tendency in the tradition of old dissent was a decreased role for reason and an increased role for the passions or affections (used synonymously) to play in Christian ethics: "The function of reason is to judge and test, but it is too slow and weak to bring about action; the passions play no part in speculation or judgement, but they are essential to action" (p. 188).

As Rivers interprets Wesley, faith, reason, and works are all essential: "Faith working by love is a process in which grace and reason, faith and works, Scripture and experience, religion and ethics are indissolubly linked in order to produce the holy and happy life, the life of perfection, here on earth" (p. 252).

The phrase "holy and happy life," which occurs in the first and last paragraphs of the book, raises a problem closely related to that of the relationship between reason and works: the relationship between self-interest and morality. The two relationships are closely related, because there is a long tradition according to which it is rational to pursue one's self-interest.

In chapter two Rivers identifies Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) as one of the chief opponents of the latitudinarians: "The latitude-men had no doubt of the dangerous increase in atheist, infidel, materialist, Epicurean, and libertine views, stimulated by the influence of Hobbes" (pp. 44-45). And she correctly points out that they responded to Hobbes by appealing to the authority of Aristotle: "The latitude-men explicitly repudiate the Hobbesian view of the state of nature as a state of war, and associate themselves instead with the Aristotelian, anti-Hobbesian understanding of human nature as being in tension with their oft-repated statement that it is in one's interest to be virtuous: "From one point of view this constant harping on prudence, profit,

advantage, and interest is extremely calculated, and it perhaps sits rather oddly with the latitudinarian conviction of the innately benevolent disposition of man. To some extent it may be seen as an attempt to undermine the persuasiveness of Hobbesian ethics by using Hobbes's vocabulary. This is obviously a different method from the simple stating of man's sociability as a fact in opposition to Hobbes's view of man's selfishness" (p. 85).

But to see a difference of method here is to ignore Aristotle's distinction (Nicomachean Ethics, IX, 8) between the true self-love of virtuous persons and the false self-love of vicious persons. Aristotle's belief that humans are naturally social is inseparable from his belief that it is in one's true self-interest to promote the good of other persons. The real problem with the latitudinarians' understanding of ethics is that they maintain both that it is one's self-interest to be ethical and that ethics is opposed to self-interest, without making the Aristotelian distinction between virtuous and vicious self-love. For example, in a passage that Rivers does not cite, Whichcote warns Christians to "be wary of self-interest: for a man should not trust himself, where he is concerned; we may take it for granted, that we love ourselves well enough; all the danger is on the other side, whether we indifferently hear what is alledged against our interest" (*Works,* 1751, 11, p. 69). In their attempt to refute Hobbes, the latitude-men contributed to the Christian ethical tradition's rejection of the belief that living rightly involves loving oneself properly (as in, for example, Matthew 6:19-20) and adoption of the belief that right living requires opposition to self-interest.

Anyone interested in the history of Protestant moral theology, and especially anyone interested in Wesley's understanding of the relationships among reason, faith, holiness and happiness, will profit from reading Rivers. As she puts it: "The reader of Wesley must always bear in mind the particular emphases of his various opponents" (p. 207).

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Padgett, Alan G. *The Mission of the Church in Methodist Perspective.* Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1992. Pp. vi + 180.

For several years the Wesley Fellows program has been supporting United Methodist scholars who are pursuing doctoral studies in the range of theological disciplines out of a vital commitment to the Church and the historic Christian faith. The present volume reflects the type of fruit that this effort promises to bear. All of the contributors are Wesley Fellows who are now taking their places in theological education and scholarship.

While the initial stimulus for this volume was surely their collegial connection, the

authors are to be commended for successfully gathering their individual contributions around a focal theme—offering Wesleyan perspectives on the mission of the Church. A distinct part of the credit for this coherence no doubt goes to Alan Padgett, who edited the volume and weaves the pieces together in his introduction.

The first essay is by Joel B. Green, a New Testament scholar. Green's specific focus is a study of the theology of Christian mission in the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles. His central (and very Wesleyan!) theme is the wholeness of God's vision and, thus, the wholeness of the mission given God's people in scripture. A significant sub-theme running through the essay is Green's argument that, just as Christian mission should be rooted in and gain its bearings from scripture, serious biblical interpretation must be informed by and tested in the arena of that mission.

In the second essay, Ted A. Campbell considers "John Wesley on the Mission of the Church." Campbell develops his discussion in the context of the current Western debates over foreign missions as cultural imperialism. His major claim is that Wesley—like other early evangelicals—was less prone to impose his British culture blindly in the process of evangelizing other peoples, precisely because Wesley was sensitive to the "heathenism" in his own culture. This is why Wesley cast the Church's mission as first to reform his nation and then the world. Campbell also reflects on the implications of Wesley's affirmation of preventing grace for missions, and his insistence on the role of communities of accountability in nurturing progress in the "way of salvation."

Wendy J. Deichmann next provides an historical account of the development of missions structures within the predecessor bodies of United Methodism. Her account highlights the theological implications of the emerging institutionalization of Methodist missions—emphasizing particularly 1) the transition from understanding missions as the entire purpose of Methodism to structuring missions as one task among others, 2) the move from preoccupation with "home" missions to growing focus on world missions, and 3) the eventual structural separation of the tasks of evangelism and missions. Deichmann leaves for the reader to ponder which of these developments were inevitable and which inappropriately segmented or distorted the Wesleyan vision of the mission of the Church.

L. Gregory Jones and Michael G. Cartwright combine forces in the fourth essay. Actually, they combine individual essays that each published previously (the only previously published material in the book). The basic thesis of their combined work is the need for The United Methodist Church to recover the type of "community" that Wesley nurtured in the early Methodist movement. One prong of this thesis is directed to the "Doctrinal Standards and Our Theological Task" statement adopted at the 1988 General Conference— contending that a renewed practice of accountable community is necessary for recovering authentic theological reflection in the Church. The other prong of the thesis relates to the Vital Congregations/Faithful Disciples initiative launched by the United Methodist bishops in 1990—in this case arguing that the initiative does not adequately appreciate or recover the crucial role of discipline (via the General Rules, class meeting, etc.) in nurturing vital community life in the Church. While the interweaving of these two theses is not always smooth, the insight

into the multiple dimensions of the importance of authentic Christian community makes the effort worthwhile.

The next contribution is a survey of recent discussions of mission in ecumenical, evangelical, and Roman Catholic circles by Garry O. Parker. Parker highlights areas of both tension and convergence between these different arenas. He places particular emphasis on their convergence around the need for a more holistic sense of mission.

Alan Padgett then presents a concise and rigorous Wesleyan critique of the church growth movement. Padgett raises serious questions about apparent limitations or distorting directions in the movement, particularly the tendency to separate evangelism from social action or justification from sanctification. He contrasts these tendencies with some specific Wesleyan counter examples.

The final essay is by Roald Kristiansen, a Norwegian Methodist, who takes up the modern debate over the relationship of the mission of the Church to interreligious dialogue. Following a survey of the various proposed ways of dealing with religious pluralism, Kristiansen offers a defense of the need for and contribution of dialogue to the mission of the Church. He grounds this defense in a theology of God's embracive covenants (with parallels to Wesley's Prevenient Grace). Kristiansen is clear that authentic dialogue must include witnessing to one's faith in Christ, though some readers will wonder if he is too reticent to advance any claim for the preferability of Christianity.

This collection of essays is a welcome addition to discussion of the mission of the Church. It also bodes well for the future vitality of debate over the theological dynamics of the Wesleyan tradition.

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