

A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain. Volume Three. Edited by Rupert Davies, A. Raymond George and Gordon Rupp. Epworth Press. 1983. pp.ix, 404. £20.

If we wish to understand what one contributor to this volume calls "the typical 'Jesus religion' school of recent Methodism", we must read the whole book. It consists of five chapters analysing the development of Methodism since 1850, together with five others on specific aspects of the Methodist story since Wesley's day. As the third volume of the official denominational history, it is still to be followed by a fourth containing a full bibliography and illustrative documents.

A long (116 pp.) opening chapter by the late Allen Birt-whistle covers Methodist foreign missions since their beginnings. Here there are welcome quotations from original sources, a helpful summary of the often neglected non-Wesleyan missions and a detailed case-study of the work of T. B. Freeman, a pioneer missionary in Ghana between 1838 and 1890. If there is too ready an acceptance of the belief that 'colonization and missionary expansion went hand in hand' (they were often in sharp conflict, as in the case of Tahiti), the importance of the relationship of missions to imperialism is quite properly stressed. Other themes that are covered from their eighteenth-century origins form the subjects of chapters on Irish Methodism, in which Eric Gallagher brings the story right down to the troubles of the 1970s; Welsh Methodism, in which Griffith Roberts points to the fissure between Welsh- and English-speaking sections of the denomination; Scottish Methodism, in which Skevington Wood concentrates chiefly on early developments; and education, in which F. C. Pritchard reveals something of the multiple pressures on denominational policy over schools.

The remaining chapters, the core of the book, focus on the evolution of Methodism since 1850. Henry Rack offers a detailed analysis of the Wesleyans in the late nineteenth century, well placing particular happenings like the creation of a fund for extension in watering places (1861) in the context of social change. Although this chapter was written in 1968, there is a useful epilogue discussing more recent publications in the field. John Wilkinson contributes a supplementary survey of the non-Wesleyan traditions, among which the Independent Methodists and the Wesleyan Reform Union are not forgotten. William Strawson writes illuminatingly on Methodist theology, giving prominence to nineteenth-century figures like William Arthur, W. B. Pope and Hugh Price Hughes, but treating twentieth-century authors even more fully. Newton Flew emerges as a scholar of great stature, and Russell Maltby, with a warm personal devotion to the historical Jesus, as a powerful influence in the denomination. J. M. Turner, in a judicious, thorough and well-documented chapter, examines the state of Methodism in the first third of the twentieth century. Social and political concerns are treated as capably as more specifically ecclesiastical affairs. Finally, Rupert Davies, one of the general editors, gives a more impressionistic sketch (less research has been done on the recent past) of developments since Methodist union in 1932.

Overall, what strikes the Baptist reader? Apart from points of detail like the cheerful Methodist habit of quoting the hymns of Charles Wesley, there is the picture of a centralised structure. Thus foreign missions have been run by the central administration - or, more accurately, the central administration for long consisted primarily of the secretaries of the foreign missionary society. The other major point is the tendency of the Methodist mainstream (though not the Cliff College tradition) to flow into liberal Evangelical channels in the twentieth century. Most inter-war Baptists followed a trajectory parallel to that of conservative Evangelicalism in the Church of England, but Methodists (at least at the higher levels) were closer to the Anglican Evangelical Group Movement - closer, indeed, than this volume recognises. But in the task of looking for similarities and contrasts with other Christian bodies, it is now invaluable to have this substantial Methodist compendium.

D. W. BEBBINGTON

What Happens in Worship by Jamie Wallace. The Baptist Union, London, 1982. pp.vi,50. £1.00.

Public worship is a complex and diverse phenomenon, the analysis of which calls for imaginative and broadly based procedures. Jamie Wallace demonstrates that the application of analytical techniques developed in the social sciences can be productively employed in forming a basis for critical and constructive discussion of worship.

The booklet comprises three main sections, 'What Happens in Worship', 'What Happens in Baptist Worship', and 'Understanding Order'. These are prefaced by a consideration of the place of worship in Christian life, and followed by a coda reiterating the 'mystery' of worship. Questions for discussion appear at the end.

The first section examines worship as a type of 'happening'. The inadequacy of the 'public meeting' and 'sacred drama' models leads to the suggestion of a transactional model, paradigmatically expressed in the 'business of the market place'. Transactional analysis is then employed to explore the contents of worship as perceived against this model.

An investigation into what makes Baptist worship 'Baptist' constitutes the second section. Baptist liturgical diversity renders 'style of worship' a very poor indicator. The author suggests as an alternative a characterisation of Baptist worship through identifying archetypal 'tensions' within it, thereby making attitude, as distinct from liturgical habit, the evaluative criterion.

In the final section three ways of thinking about 'Order' are examined: patterned thought (understanding worship through its components), scenario thought (understanding worship through its internal dynamics), and behavioural thought (understanding worship through a series of trans-pattern and trans-scenario activities). The fundamentally prescriptive nature of the first two contrasts with the structural flexibility of

the last, and is presented as the most productive analytical category.

This is a thought-provoking study. It would, however, be wrong were such methodology met by a tacit and uncritical acceptance by those concerned with worship. Great care needs to be taken that the techniques used are appropriate to the task in hand. For example, what are the theological implications of viewing worship in transactional terms? Does thought about God set limits upon the application of the method? Such questions aside, however, this book was written not for the minister's shelves but for the whole congregation. Its style and presentation are highly suitable for both individual reflection and group study. In this sense it is a significant contribution to collective thought about worship.

JOHN ELLISTON

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HISTORY OF LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE BAPTIST CHURCHES

In 1987 the 200th anniversary of the foundation of the Lancashire and Cheshire and Yorkshire Associations will be celebrated, since it was in 1787 that the formative meeting called by Dr John Fawcett was held at Colne. The celebrations will include the publication of a book telling the story of the Lancashire and Yorkshire churches. It will be edited by Dr Ian Sellers, assisted by the Rev. Ernest Clipsham, the Rev. John Nicholson, and the Rev. Keith Jones. Anyone with particular expertise on the churches in this area and who feels that he/she could usefully be consulted on any aspect of the period 1600 to the present day, should contact: Rev. Keith Jones, 1 South Parade, Headingley, Leeds LS6 3LF.

STUDY TOUR OF THE AMERICAN BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The American Baptist Historical Society have arranged a study tour for about thirty of their members, 'Discovering Our Baptist Heritage', in Great Britain during 11-27th July 1984. They will be staying at various centres in Scotland, Wales and England during this period, including Pitlochry, Manchester, Cardiff, Bristol, Oxford and London. Anyone who wishes to meet them during their itinerary, or to join them at any points of interest, will be very welcome. Details of the programme are available from the Editor.

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SUMMER SCHOOL 1985

This will be held 11th - 14th July 1985 at Bradford University. The price, inclusive of full board and lodging, will be £70-00. Saturday, 13th July, will be a special day on Yorkshire Baptist life.