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BOOK NOTICES

Evangelicals United: Ecumenical stirrings in pre-Victorian Britain, 1795-1830, by Roger H. Martin. (Scarecrow Press, Metuchen, N.J. and London (1983): pp. xii. 230, \$17.50.)

This useful work by an American pupil of Dr. John D. Walsh has three principal weaknesses: it is hazy in its long-range perspective, suffers from a considerable trail of minor factual errors, and is inhibited in its pursuit of explanations by a total innocence of social history; but, at the end of all, it is not a negligible achievement. Much of the story of "catholic Christianity", the great age of undenominational evangelicalism, which is Dr. Martin's theme, is well known; but by working steadily through the archives of the London Missionary Society, the Bible Society, the Religious Tract Society and the Jews Society, he adds a good deal of valuable narrative detail to what is already known of those four important bodies. The last of his four is indeed not well-known; and his brief essay, necessarily ending in 1815 after the Jews Society became, in effect, an Anglican body, is welcome, both in itself and as the distant background to the mid-century concern with the Jerusalem bishopric. (To take out the first bishop, Alexander, it is amusing to note, the Royal Navy offered H.M.S. *Infernal*, and, this being rejected by the Primate, substituted H.M.S. *Devastation*!)

While he sticks to his plain tale, Dr. Martin is valuable, but he feels bound to set his subject in the framework of the pre-history of the ecumenical movement, and to derive from it some not very applicable lessons for that movement. This will hardly do! The author quotes, without drawing the moral, Sir James Stephen's aphorism that

for the cure of every sorrow by which our land or race can be visited, there are patrons, vice-presidents and secretaries. For the diffusion of every blessing of which mankind can partake in common, there is a committee.

The period indeed saw the application of contractual notions to the furthering of the work of God on an unparalleled scale, and necessarily evoked a protest from those pledged to a symbolic view of the Church—high churchmen, very Strict and Particular Baptists—even, in the end, Wesleyans whom, in his wilder flights of fancy, Alfred Barrett tried to get out of connexionalism and into a symbolic self-understanding. The ecumenical movement, heavily committed to the idea that there is no ultimate conflict between loyalty to denomination and loyalty to the "coming great Church", and hence committed to the discovery of symbolic foci of unity is, for good or ill, clearly on the side of the enemies of Dr. Martin's heroes and on the side of those who think it indecent to inquire too closely how far ecclesiastical machinery, denominational or ecumenical, serves the instrumental purposes for which it may be supposed to exist, or to have been created.

It would be wrong to overload a short review with lists of small factual errors, which in total do not affect the value of the author's main story; but, to give a sample, Zinzendorf was not an "ordained Lutheran" in the sense of being in Lutheran orders, Robert Hawker was vicar of Charles Church, Plymouth, not of Charles, near Plymouth, and Gossner worked from the Allgäu, not Swabia. Finally, no explanation of the revival of denominationalism is likely to convince which does not examine the social roots of tension within denominations. To blame Anglican intransigence

and the alleged fact that "'Moderate Calvinism' was Calvinism in decay" is to do justice neither to the scope of ecclesiastical intolerance nor to the variety of theology of which that intolerance could make use. But the final verdict to the student must be: use an undoubtedly useful book, but do not swallow it wholesale.

W. R. WARD.

Brothers in Ministry: The Story of Walter and Francis Bertram James, by David W. James. Price £1 50p. post free from the author at 21, Eaglehurst, Eagle Road, Branksoine, Poole, Dorset, BH12 1AP.

Brothers in Ministry contains brief biographies of the Rev. Walter and the Rev. Francis B. James—and much besides. David James, now a supernumerary after a full and busy ministry in India and in English circuits, has found time to gather together personal reminiscences of a family circle and tradition to which he is indebted and of which he is obviously proud.

"Parents and Sisters" (chapter 1) portrays the kind of family background, Anglican-Methodist and working-class, from which many a Methodist ministerial family sprang. Chapter 2 is a portrait of Walter James, necessarily brief because of his early death (1908) after just four intensive years of ministry. However, this chapter provides valuable (and amusing) insights into the rigorous ministerial discipline of the Wesleyan Conference even as late as the beginning of the present century.

The remaining two-thirds of the book is devoted to Francis B. James, and concludes with a selection of ten of his "For the Quiet Hour" articles which graced the pages of the *Methodist Recorder* for some thirty years. Francis (Frank to his friends) was a fine product of the Wesleyan tradition at its best—a man who would undoubtedly have enjoyed a warm friendship with the Wesleys. "Methodists are a reading people," claimed John Wesley, and Francis James was one of this select band. He was deeply read in "our literature"—the Wesleys' journals, letters, and hymns in particular. His apt quotations were a stimulus to many post-Union Methodists of the non-Wesleyan traditions to begin their explorations of that literature for themselves.

Yet, proud as Francis James was of his Methodist heritage, he was completely ecumenical in his reading. His knowledge of Catholic and Reformed spiritual writing was immense, and enabled many Methodists to find rich pastures in traditions other than their own. Those who share his love of reading owe a debt to Francis for his many "introductions"—particularly to the English mystics.

It seems unlikely that the four volumes of selections from "For the Quiet Hour" articles (*For the Quiet Hour* (1937), *Still with Thee* (1940), *Heart speaks to heart* (1946), and *With God and His friends* (1950)), nor his *The Way of Prayer*, will ever be reprinted. We can but hope that the many copies which must still remain on Methodist shelves will not be destroyed, but treasured and read by Methodist generations to come.

Though nearly two-thirds of this book, which includes two family photographs, is concerned with Francis James, his wife Louie, his daughter Margaret (a distinguished teacher and headmistress) and his many friends, W. Russell Maltby (whose *Obiter Scripta* he so painstakingly edited), Leslie Weatherhead and others are also recalled. As one whose personal devotional life and reading owes much to F. B. James, it is a joy to commend this splendid little book.

EDWIN THOMPSON.

Where I used to play on the green : A Novel, by Glyn Hughes. (Golancz (1982) : £7 95p.; Penguin (1983) : £2 50p.)

The title of Mr. Hughes's novel, and the poem by William Blake from which it is taken and which appears as the epigraph to the work, would not suggest to the casual observer a biographical study of William Grimshaw, the eighteenth-century evangelical curate of Haworth and active spirit in the celebrated Haworth Round. Mr. Hughes has come to Grimshaw as a prominent figure in that part of the Yorkshire-Lancashire Pennine border country whose character he explored in *Millstone Grit* (1975) and as a man whose career might be depicted as a focus not only of the tensions in the life of that area created by industrialization, but also the perennial tensions which Blake celebrated between innocence and the trappings of religion. Hughes acknowledges some debt to Frank Baker's life of Grimshaw (1963), but does not pretend to follow Dr. Baker in interpretation. He also makes acknowledgements to E. P. Thompson's radical critique of Methodism. Blake's sensitive evocation of the human predicament is too fugitive to provide a model for the sort of enterprise that Hughes has undertaken, but Hughes's writing is at its best and most perceptive in a few incidents where this sensitivity escapes from the strait-jacket of his dogmatism. Thompson's stereotypes—sometimes abridged by Hughes to the point of caricature—are too rigid to provide a tool for describing the behaviour of "Methodism" in the partly rural, partly industrial, partly pagan and wholly brutal and brutalizing environment of the frontier society in which Grimshaw ministered.

At times it seems that there is a television script straining to get out of this novel (a mixture of *Emmerdale Farm* and *Whoops Apocalypse*?), and although false Methodist piety may be embarrassed by some of the scenes which Hughes presents—protracted class meetings symbiotic with orgies—a sense of irony should save the historian in an area which has no place for the squeamish.

There is a place for use of the historical novel in attempting an understanding of the past, but for such an enterprise to be successful it needs to be governed by a more accurate scholarship than Hughes deploys—it is not good enough to transpose incidents from Edinburgh courts to the Leeds of earlier decades—and by an exercise of the imagination which has undergone the real discipline of "emptying itself" out of the present into the past. Such an exercise would show respect for the changes that occur from place to place and from decade to decade which Hughes does not pretend to; it will not do justice to the material to throw into one promiscuous jumble random instances of "man's inhumanity to man" from all over the place. Hughes has something to say—E. P. Thompson has said it better in some of his Christmas poems—but this sort of novel is not the best way of saying it. Methodist historians should note this book, and may be mistaken if they do not take it seriously. They themselves may be partly responsible for the garbled versions of Methodism which too often appear to fill the gaps left by reticence. A. N. CASS.

The Sunday Service, 1784, by A. Raymond George. (The Friends of Wesley's Chapel Annual Lecture No. 2 : pp. 12 plus cover, 70p. from Wesley's Chapel, City Road, London, E.C.1.)

The topic of the 1983 annual lecture, the second in the series, is one on which the lecturer is an acknowledged authority. However, he confesses in the opening paragraph that what he presents is "a largely factual paper

which really contains nothing new for those who are fully acquainted with the subject"; but there must be many of our readers who do not come in that category, and to whom this lecture will be new and refreshing.

The story of Wesley's Prayer Book (for such indeed was *The Sunday Service*) begins just two hundred years ago (in 1784), when John Wesley "set apart" Thomas Coke to superintend the work in America and equipped him with a service-book which was simply a revision of the Book of Common Prayer. This service-book, however, eventually gained a wider use, especially in Britain, where it came to be known as "Mr. Wesley's Abridgement".

After this historical review, Mr. George then goes on to discuss three relevant points:

- (i) the reason why Wesley revised the Prayer Book as he did; was it purely practical, i.e. simply to shorten the service, or were there theological motives?;
- (ii) the nature of textual variants, and by whom they were made;
- (iii) what is the "Sunday service" of the Methodists?

All these issues are discussed with the clarity one always associates with our Society's President, and the lecture concludes with a comment on the current *Sunday Service*—a phrase of Wesley's which "has now been put to fresh use".

It is to be hoped that those of our readers who have not access to the many articles which have appeared in these *Proceedings* on the subject of Wesley's service-books will avail themselves of this excellent summary.

JOHN C. BOWMER.

A Mountain Road: An Autobiography, by Douglas W. Thompson.
Published by Marg[aret] Thompson at 3, Ashmore House, 12, High Street, East Hoathly, East Sussex, BN8 6DP (1983): pp. vii. 192,
£3 50p.

One's only negative comment about this book concerns externals, and it is fair to dispose of it first. It relates less to those responsible for its publication than to the commercial publishers who judged that it would not sell, and to the situation in which their judgement was taken. The result is that, although it is attractively produced and printed, it has not benefited from fully professional copy-editing and proof-reading.

This having been regretfully said, the book from every other point of view is sheer joy. Douglas Thompson's widow says simply in her Preface: "He enjoyed writing his autobiography"; and it shows. "Gentle" is not perhaps the first word one would choose to describe his life, either inwardly or outwardly, but otherwise "the elements" were indeed

So mix'd in him that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world, "This was a man!"

Psychologists could doubtless say the same thing less attractively. In common language, each of his many qualities seems to have been balanced by its converse; yet not by subtraction or even by way of paradox, but by a natural complementation which, like "normal vision", is rarely achieved in real life.

After a Steinbeckian succession of secular jobs, Douglas Thompson experienced conversion as liberation; soon after, was called to the ministry; and thereafter devoted himself single-mindedly to the work of a Methodist preacher in the most varied situations: from central hall to rural circuit,

from troubled pre-revolutionary China through Stalag Luft 3 (which as he describes it sounds not unlike a war-time central hall) to a newly-created post at the head of the Methodist Missionary Society, and "Wesley's Chair" during the last great period of restructuring.

It is a fine story, grippingly told. It is also a valuable source for the history of World Methodism. Yet, not surprisingly, and although Douglas Thompson had nothing to hide, it is not the whole truth about him. For one thing, it is an action story—a book about people and events; there is almost nothing about the books which, from the almost Narnian *Mystery of the White Stone* to his life of Donald Soper, that kindred spirit, are their own monument. For another, his life was simply too full to be packed into less than two hundred pages. The reviewer remembers him best as a much senior colleague at the Mission House, dazzling and sometimes baffling fellow-workers who thought they could understand any proposition; occasionally even infuriating more reflective members of the staff by an instant, instinctive judgement which (unforgivably) often proved right; and, like Karl Barth, sometimes taking a course "against the stream", as on the issue of black churches in Britain, whose apparent illogicality was in reality based on a deep synthesis of lived experience which he had neither the time nor the inclination—perhaps not even the temperament—to argue out step by step. PAUL ELLINGWORTH.

The March of Methodism in Singapore and Malaysia, 1885-1980, by Theodore R. Doraisamy. (Methodist Book Room, Singapore 0617: pp. iv. 110, hard cover, US\$8; soft cover, US\$6.)

What hath God wrought: Motives of Mission in Methodism from Wesley to Thoburn (same author and publisher: pp. xx. 132, US\$10.)

Bishop Doraisamy, formerly Principal of the Singapore Teachers' Training College, is devoting his retirement to historical research, and these two books are part of the result. Both are attractively produced and well documented, and the second has the added advantages of a bibliography and index.

The essentially American perspective is right and proper in the account of a mission that stemmed from and was sustained by American Methodism, but becomes something of a hindrance in his study of missionary motivation. Here, beginning with Wesley and Coke, he carries his story down to the era of Bunting and Watson in the early nineteenth century; but, as these names indicate, his focus is on the motives of those who promoted and supported mission rather than on those of the missionaries themselves. There is then a rather abrupt switch to an examination of later American missions. An analysis of the differences of motivation between British and American missionaries working in India would have been interesting at this point. Instead, the final "review and summary" does not quite succeed in bringing coherence and unity to the study.

JOHN A. VICKERS.

"*Our Hymns*": *A Commentary on Methodist Hymnology, 1737-1984*, compiled by Kenneth Mankin (duplicated typescript, pp. [i. 31]).

The publication of the 1983 *Hymns and Psalms: A Methodist and Ecumenical Hymn-book* has been the occasion of local launching festivals in many parts of the Connexion, in some cases with accompanying literature; and the Rev. Kenneth Mankin has compiled a useful chronological handlist of some 140 hymn-books, tune-books, hymn-and-tune books and minor collections of hymns published by the various sections of

Methodism from John Wesley's "Charlestown" hymn-book of 1737 (see *Proceedings*, xxxi, pp. 186-93) to the present day, though he has not included several quite well-produced "mission" hymnals (words and music) published by both Wesleyans and Primitive Methodists, c. 1875-1925. Explanatory notes and comments are appended to the principal entries, and all are grouped under denominational headings, occupying 27 pages. In addition there is a 4-page list of titles in chronological order.

Inevitably some typing errors have appeared, and so we read "God of Conceit" (1) for Dick Jones's "God of concrete . . .", and there is the surprising spelling of Whatts for Watts throughout the 27 pages. On page 25 what should have been 1969 *Hymns and Songs* has come out as *Hymns and Psalms* (hard enough already to avoid slips of the tongue here!).

Nevertheless, Mr. Mankin has performed a useful exercise in setting out for present-day Methodists the lengthy pedigree of what they sing, covering almost two hundred and fifty years. ALFRED A. TABERER.

Y Diwygiad Mawr [The Great Revival], by Derec Llwyd Morgan (Llandysul: Gwasg Gomer (1981), pp. xvi. 320, £6 75p.) is a study of the Calvinistic Methodist revival in Wales during its earliest period (1737-1790/1), the age dominated by Howell Harris, Daniel Rowland and William Williams, Pantycelyn. Written entirely in Welsh, its publication is a reminder of the continuing flow of Welsh-language material relating to the history of Calvinistic Methodism.

The standard history of the movement during the eighteenth century is contained in the first two volumes of the *Hanes Methodistiaeth Galfin-aidd Cymru*, edited by Gomer M. Roberts. Although there is inevitably some overlap with this work, the principal aim of *Y Diwygiad Mawr* is to provide a detailed analysis of the thought and imaginative life of the revival as these are revealed in the *published* writings of the revivalists. The book contains frequent references to the Wesleys, to Whitefield, and to the theological tensions between the various manifestations of eighteenth-century Methodism in Wales and England.

Rowland Wardle Burroughs

THE Methodist Church and this Society have suffered a great loss through the death of Rowland Wardle Burroughs on 30th May 1984. Roy, as he was known to his numerous friends, was a local preacher for 53 years and a keen Methodist who closely followed the affairs of the Connexion. He was a dedicated supporter of village Methodism, and for many years had worshipped and worked in village chapels, which he valued for their witness and their contribution to rural community life.

Roy was a member of this Society for over thirty years, and had a keen interest in and a wide knowledge of Methodist history. Although not an officer of the Society, he was always ready to give his professional services when needed, and the Executive Committee came to regard him as their legal adviser. In this capacity he successfully brought to a conclusion the application of this Society to be registered by the Charity Commissioners. It is principally, however, as a loyal friend that he will be remembered. To quote the announcement of his death, he was "a faithful servant of his Master and his Church".

We remember Mary his widow, and his son and daughters, assuring them of our sympathy in their sad loss. R.C.S.