

tion are often confusing. Not until the end of the volume, for example, is there an attempt to explain a few weaving terms which may have confounded the reader throughout the work. And certainly the nonprofessional after reading the book will be no more able to distinguish among a single jaquard, a double jaquard, or an overshot coverlet than he was before. It is undoubtedly unfair to expect to do so, since providing this kind of knowledge was not Montgomery's intent, but it is frustrating all the same. Whatever the book's few technical problems, however, its contributions to Indiana history in general and to professional weaving in particular are myriad. It is a refreshingly informative and interesting volume.

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Oscar Carleton McCulloch, 1843-1891: Preacher and Practitioner of Applied Christianity. By Genevieve C. Weeks. (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1976. Pp. xvii, 248. Illustrations, notes, sources, index. \$7.50.)

In this age of impersonal social service bureaucracies it is refreshing to encounter the life of a person whose solitary human efforts made a difference in the quality of life for the poor and underprivileged. Genevieve C. Weeks, a professor in the School of Social Service, Indiana University, has revealed such a person in her loving, thorough, and well documented biography of Oscar McCulloch.

As minister of the Congregational Plymouth Church and as president of the Indianapolis Benevolent Society from 1877 until his death in 1891, McCullough was the most energetic leader of humanitarian reform in Indianapolis. Whatever the issue—urban poverty, housing and health, the right of labor to organize, strike, and win an eight hour day, kindergartens, child care and fresh air camps, or nurses' training, prison reform, and juvenile justice—McCulloch was in the thick of things. When not delivering a sermon on "Problems of Poor Relief" or "Some Things I Want the Legislature to Attend To" (there were many), the indefatigable minister was out in the city raising funds for his countless projects, organizing the consolidation of charity societies in Indian-

apolis, and conducting studies to determine the causes of poverty.

Like other Social Gospel clergymen, McCulloch introduced progressive ideas of science, theology, and social reform to his largely upper middle and upper class congregations, and he assumed that a plethora of paternalistic programs might alone usher in the kingdom of heaven on earth. His efforts represented applied Christianity at its best—and most paternalistic. And here Weeks might have described less and analyzed more. McCulloch sought to attract workingmen and women to his “Open Door” church by offering lecture series, evenings of music and art, and sermons illustrated with slides. He even invited three workers—once—to give sermons. These overtures were genuine, but Plymouth was hardly a working person’s church, nor was McCulloch, as Weeks claims, “a Christian socialist” (p. 155). Plymouth’s programs clearly aimed for the middle class: a literary society, a ladies volunteer charity work group, an institute to provide culture for youth, a book club, and a travel club featuring trips to Europe each winter. To McCulloch’s funeral came the directors of the Commercial Club, of which he was a member, the mayor, the governor, and other representatives of the corporate and political elite of Indianapolis. To be sure, there were letters of sympathy from labor organizations, but also a telegram from President Harrison. The Social Gospel, it seems, was not so antithetical to the Gospel of Wealth.

Weeks presents McCulloch as a “doer” (p. 81), not given to troubled introspection or ambiguity, and utterly without flaws. Yet there are hints in his diaries that he was a much more complex and multidimensional person than this rather straightforward biography presents him to be. One example, passed by almost without comment, is a remarkably intense and self questioning reaction to Theodore Parker at a critical juncture in McCulloch’s earlier life (p. 43). Nevertheless, Weeks has rescued an influential “preacher and practitioner of applied Christianity” from historical oblivion, one who, a friend said, had done “more real practical good than any other minister in the state of Indiana” (p. 163).

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