friend, and gentleman. How he accomplished so much in so many areas, seemingly always having generous time for students, friends, and others, amazed those who knew him well. Ambitious for excellence, he worked himself harder than he worked his students. He especially excelled in his teaching, and he was unusually adept in public addresses having both substance and relevance. His mimicry of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Al Smith, Claude G. Bowers, and others earned Holman popularity, especially among students. Hamilton’s students enthusiastically pursued and imitated his principles and practices; hence, the essays in this volume are noted for style, organization, and readability. They also illustrate the mentor’s conviction that the proper writing of national history requires much and deep plowing of state and local history.

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Leonard I. Sweet’s book is an important contribution both to women’s studies and to the history of nineteenth-century evangelical Protestantism. Noting that women occupied a central place in American Protestant churches of the nineteenth century and that religion in turn was intimately intertwined with both the public and private roles of women in that same era, Sweet has focused these broad concerns by studying the historical evolution of the minister’s wife, a figure who has long eluded careful examination by professional historians.

Sweet constructs a threefold typology which he argues shaped the roles of ministers’ wives throughout the nineteenth century. In rough chronological order these nineteenth-century models were: the Sacrificer, who “clasped her hands in pious resignation, asked little of her husband . . . and ‘hindered him not in his work’”; the Assistant, who “became her husband’s right arm, sharing many pastoral responsibilities and functioning as an extension of his ministry”; and the Partner, who “ministered with both her hands, developed a ministry alongside her husband, and often served as the pastor’s pastor” (p. 3). This thesis when fully fleshed out clearly becomes an argument that as the century progressed evangelicalism often served as a liberating force for women. Sweet arranges his interpretive models yet more specifically around the figures of three women—Peggy Dow, wife of the famed itinerant Lorenzo Dow, and the first two wives of Charles Finney, Lydia
and Elizabeth. The vivid contrasts between Peggy Dow and Elizabeth Finney make clear an emerging feminist consciousness within evangelicalism. Sweet has taken definite sides in the now-familiar debate about the role of religion in shaping (or negating) early feminism in this country; his argument is detailed, wide-ranging, and persuasive. He is also persuasive in his somewhat more speculative explanations for the decline of the “Partner” image in the last third of the nineteenth century.

A few nagging doubts persist about his study. An opening chapter, describing Protestant ministers’ wives from the sixteenth through the eighteenth century, is too brief and hurried a survey. Typology is a dangerous device to be used in historical analysis. It may produce an overly schematic interpretive structure that blurs the complexity of historical reality. Sweet takes this possibility into account early on (pp. 4-5), but the difficulties implicit in his analysis are never entirely overcome. The author has mined very effectively the magnificent archival collection at Oberlin College for some of his most illuminating insights, but one sometimes wonders how “representative” the women of Oberlin, a widely recognized center of theological and social radicalism, were for many mainstream evangelicals during the antebellum era.

In conclusion, however, this extremely well-written and thorough monograph remains a stimulating analysis of women within evangelical Protestantism. For anyone interested in the history of women in nineteenth-century America this is a key book to read and savor.

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James Findlay


In line with his premise that “the social history of a people in a given historical period must begin with the testimony of the people themselves,” Robert S. McElvaine has reproduced in this volume 173 letters from the “forgotten men, women, and children of the 1930s” (p. [xi]). The sources from which this material is drawn are the files of the President’s Emergency Committee on Employment, the President’s Organization for Unemployment Relief, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, and the Civil Works Administration, plus the Eleanor Roosevelt, Robert F. Wagner, and Norman Thomas papers. The editor read approx-