

for some of us who are non-Catholics to be sure that the olive branch is not being extended in a mailed fist.

On balance, the story here unfolded appears to be not so much history as an *apologia pro vita catholica*. The two are not necessarily exclusive. But the present narrative does not achieve their happiest correlation. Catholicism, according to these pages, has been the real protagonist of religious toleration in the United States. Catholicism has made the solution of the school question possible by the proposal of a constructive compromise (pp. 109f.). Catholicism, out of regard for the custom of the land, was constructively abolitionist during the Civil War; whereas "Abolitionism" was more often than not fractious and disruptive of social peace. Protestantism is the spearhead of "nativism" which feeds upon and nourishes the anti-Catholic bias in the land. As an historian, Monsignor Ellis is, of course, careful to single out some "Protestant ministers"; but the innuendo involving Protestantism as a whole will not escape the careful reader.

Perhaps the principal barrier to the Catholic understanding of the anti-Catholic bias is the lack of self-criticism so manifest in these pages. It is as though there were no Reformation lying behind colonial America; no connection at all between Catholicism in the United States, and Catholicism in Spain, Italy, France, not to mention Latin America. Does Father Marquette's devotion to the Blessed Virgin really belong in a necessarily highly selective version of the Catholic story? Is this history? Or is it part of the mystique which makes it possible to tell the story of American Catholicism without any reference to Catholicism as a system of power? Irenicism without self-criticism makes for propaganda, not history, not even "committed history."

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The Indiana Conference of the Methodist Church, 1832-1956.

By Herbert L. Heller. Published under the auspices of the Historical Society of the Indiana Conference, 1957. Pp. 452. Appendix, maps, graphs, index. \$3.00.)

It is no small assignment to undertake the writing of a book about the history of a church conference. This fact becomes especially apparent when one appraises the latest work of Herbert Heller. The author has attempted to pres-

ent a descriptive picture of the significant events that have transpired within the 124-year history of the Indiana Conference of the Methodist Church. Yet he has woven into his picture the political, social, and economic history of Indiana and the nation that had an influence in shaping the history of this Conference. Then, too, Mr. Heller adds to our understanding of this church conference history by relating significant developments and changes that were transpiring within the history of American Methodism. While this book is primarily written as a history of a single conference, it can be interpreted in a broad sense as being a history of Methodism in the United States.

The early history of the Conference is graphically told in the oft-quoted diaries of the circuit riders. The hardships and toils of these early ministers is an impressive story, and constitutes the principal content of chapter one. The numerous geographical divisions of the Conference during the period 1836 to 1920, along with a chronological treatment of the significant developments within the Conference, comprise chapter two. Mr. Heller's ability to portray vividly and accurately these geographical changes of the Conference boundaries represents in itself a significant scholarly contribution to Methodist Church history in Indiana. A detailed reporting of the Minutes of the Indiana Conference, which served as a significant source of data for Mr. Heller's study, would have been impossible. In many places the work of specific organizations or churches within the conferences could be given only slight attention. However, in two of the chapters the author attempts to separate the work of specific functions and organizations of the Conference from the general chronological history of the Conference. In these chapters he gives a more detailed description of their origin and development. The specific histories of the camp meetings, historical societies, the Methodist women's organization, the Methodist men's organization, the Methodist youth organizations, the Methodist hospitals, the Methodist children's homes, the Methodist home for the aged, as well as the Goodwill Industries and Fletcher Place Community Center are discussed.

The author includes in his study a history of the Methodist educational institutions that existed within the Conference boundaries. While the histories of these institutions are brief, they are based on the few primary sources of data that are

known to exist. Such descriptions provide an interesting picture of southern Indiana secondary and collegiate educational history from the period 1850 to 1875. The schools that existed in this area were New Albany Methodist Seminary, Indiana Asbury Female College, DePauw College for Young Ladies, Rockport Collegiate Institute, White Water College, Brookville College, Indiana Female College, New Lebanon Male and Female Academy, Moores Hill College, Evansville College, and DePauw University.

In addition to providing a history of the Conference, the author has attempted to present valuable information in the form of statistics and itemized listings concerning numerous topics relative to the history of the Conference. There is a statistical table giving a chronological record of church membership in the Conference from 1832 to 1956. There is also a record of the dates of the districts and circuits of the Conference from 1800 to 1831. Another table furnishes information concerning the number of churches formed in the present day districts during the past thirty-one years. There are also tables listing the names of ministers who have served as members of the Conference, as presiding elders and district superintendents of the Conference, as well as delegates to the General Conferences of the Methodist Church.

The history of the Indiana Conference is an impressive one. As Mr. Heller says, "The story of the Indiana Conference reveals with clarity the stand of the Church in Indiana against every form of evil and human weakness, from its earliest days to the present. This historical fact is the greatness of the Church. In this, the Methodists have justification for great pride and satisfaction."

At times there appears an overemphasis of the political and social history of the state as well as the history of American Methodism. This often results in minimizing the major purpose of the book which was the Conference history.

The book draws to an abrupt conclusion without making any attempt to tie together many of the significant developments of the Conference history. Since so many tangents seemed necessary to the author, it might have been desirable for him to provide a summary chapter highlighting the major contributions of this Conference. But while such a chapter might have been an improvement, its omission does not seriously detract from the general value.

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