

tary talent and professionalism but suggests the American taste for survival led to ultimate victory. It was a leadership that, in the view of Mazlish, lacked charisma and the traits of revolutionary asceticism found elsewhere. But, he suggests, neither were vital to a revolution which was not national (as with France in 1789) and had no feudal system to overthrow. Mazlish acknowledges the colonists' fear of corruption, a fear he believes led to restraints on the leadership rather than (as in France) the lavish grants of power to those believed incorruptible.

But there are additional insights to leadership to be gleaned from the psychohistorian. Why was Washington so cold and remote? Perhaps he was rejected by his mother, who also discouraged his military ambitions; and so he moved from rejection by his mother to rejection by the British army, followed eventually by his rejection of his mother country and a new military career. Obviously Mazlish does not argue that Washington or any Revolutionary leader can be accounted for exclusively in Oedipal or other psychological terms. But he does raise important questions, which if developed with a firmer grasp on historical realities and the Revolutionaries' self perception, can enlarge our understanding.

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Slavery and the Churches in Early America, 1619-1819. By Lester B. Scherer. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975. Pp. 163. Notes, index. \$5.95.)

In this book Scherer explores the relationship between the organized religious traditions of early America and the developing institution of chattel slavery. He confines his examination to the two hundred years following the arrival of the first black slaves in Virginia. His volume proceeds in chronological fashion, separating the period into three parts with divisions at 1700 and 1763. Scherer directs his attention successively to the changing nature of slavery during the colonial, provincial, and revolutionary-early national eras and to the evolving attitudes of various religious communities in the same periods. He concludes that during these years the churches of the land for the most part uncritically accepted the dehumanizing institution of slavery.

There are few surprises in Scherer's study, and for good reason. He has drawn extensively upon the standard literature in the field including the prize winning works by David Brion Davis and Winthrop D. Jordan. The result is a readable but far from exhaustive treatment of the interaction of religion and society on the issue of slavery. One of his most interesting suggestions—though not well documented—is that the Great Awakening had at best only a slight impact upon the Christianization of blacks in America, contrary to the usual depiction of the revival as a major impetus toward conversion of the slaves. Unfortunately Scherer bases his judgment principally upon reflections by the revivalists George Whitefield and Samuel Davies. One might wish for other corroborative evidence such as that derivable from local congregational records.

The strength of this book lies in its clear presentation of the manner in which the churches came more and more to accept the cultural assumptions supporting slavery. With the primary exception of the dissent expressed in Quaker societies and occasionally in other communities, the churches with one voice sanctioned the developing social and economic order. The preachers worked out theological rationalizations for slavery, and the slave owners in turn utilized the religious formulations as devices for social control. In this way the churches contributed to the establishment of a system which exploited the "faith in America's whiteness" and the "fear of blackness" (p. 120).

Scherer's volume is helpful because it summarizes a wide range of literature in a short compass. In the process it also quietly indicts the religious traditions of early America for their part in the unplanned conspiracy which deprived Africans of their freedom and burdened American society with a legacy of racial attitudes and institutions.

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Correspondence of James K. Polk. Volume III, 1835-1836.

Edited by Herbert Weaver; associate editor, Kermit L. Hall. (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1975. Pp. xxxvi, 836. Maps, notes, illustrations, index. \$25.00.)

The high standards established in the two preceding volumes of Polk's correspondence are maintained in volume