

remember when, which could only be of use to few people, you admonished all the other Brothers, for the honour of God and the good of all Christians who knew the French language, and so that they might rid themselves of any false doctrine that debases the truth, saying that it would be most expedient and necessary to purify the Bible in French according to the Hebrew and Greek. Hearing this, our Brothers agreed joyously and good-heartedly, doing their utmost in all ways so that this undertaking might be realized" (218-219).

In Chapter 10, Audisio describes how the Barbes disappeared off the scene of history at the time of the Reformation. After meeting with the Reformers at Chanforan, the Waldensian Church was totally reorganized and there was no longer a need for the "Preachers by Night." Commenting on the significance of the Waldensian Barbes, Audisio notes that "It thus becomes clear that the long adventure of the Barbes, a saga with its epic overtones despite its rural characters and setting, still echoes on in collective memory today." At one time, the Waldensians were the only Reformist community left on Italian soil (248). Throughout the records of the Inquisition not a few witnesses stated that the Barbes were men of high integrity. One notation commented that "The Barbes lead apostolic lives which is why they must be believed more than the priests of the Church of Rome whose lives are too lax" (193).

Despite some bias, *Preachers by Night* is a work that offers one useful perspective among others on Waldensian history. It will appeal to both specialists and general readers with an interest in European cultural history, the origins of Protestantism, medieval dissent, and schisms in the Roman Catholic Church.

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Chilcote, Paul Wesley, ed. *Early Methodist Spirituality: Selected Women's Writings*. Nashville: Kingswood, Abingdon, 2007. xvi + 396 pp. Paper, \$39.00.

Paul Wesley Chilcote, President of the Charles Wesley Society, is the author/editor of at least ten books and many journal articles on the Wesleyan tradition and shares responsibility with Randy Maddox for editing volumes 12 and 13 on theology and doctrine in the *Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley*. Commencing with a doctoral dissertation in 1994 titled *John Wesley and the Women Preachers of Early Methodism*, Chilcote has investigated the neglected field of the role and experience of women in the powerful Wesleyan revival of the eighteenth century. Over the years, he has explored the relevant resources of the major archives of Wesleyan materials in both the UK and the USA and retrieved and published much that has previously been hidden. Furthermore, in so doing he has written insightful introductions that describe the work and contributions of each in a manner that uncovers not only the historical location and circumstances of women preachers' lives and work, but points to the deeper spirituality and devotion underlying their thought and ministry.

Titles, or parts of titles, of several of his previous publications reveal a dual focus in his work of bringing the inspiring lives of early women devotees to life with the purpose of encouraging and pointing the way toward spiritual

renewal and recovery of the Wesleyan vision. Among these are *She Offered Them Christ* (1993); *Praying in the Wesleyan Spirit* (2001); *Her Own Story: Autobiographical Portraits of Early Methodist Women* (2001); *The Wesleyan Tradition: A Paradigm for Renewal* (2002); *Recapturing Wesley's Vision* (2004); and *Changed from Glory into Glory: Wesleyan Prayer for Transformation* (2005).

If this analysis is correct, *Early Methodist Spirituality* might be regarded as another major study in the emerging Chilcote tradition. Written against this broad background, this volume builds upon and enriches the portraits of many of the women whose writings are presented in *Her Own Story: Autobiographical Portraits of Early Methodist Women* (2001). There is no duplication, but selections by fifteen of the twenty-seven women who appear in *Her Own Story* are among the entries of the forty-six women published in *Early Methodist Spirituality*. The lifespan of Mary Bosanquet/Fletcher (1739-1815), one of the greatest Methodist women preachers and spiritual leaders, serves to define the early Methodist period. Almost all of the women featured were her colleagues in one way or another.

The sixty-six entries in this volume, which reveal the intersection of theology, prayer, and practical Christianity in the lives of the authors, are arranged in three "Parts." In Part 1, "Autobiography as Theology," self-portraits of nine women who were central to the revival serve to portray the theological foundations of their faith and the depth of experience that informed and inspired their devotion and service to God and their fellow human beings.

Subsequently, in Part 2, twenty-nine relatively brief entries are presented under the title "Writings in Practical Divinity." These are organized in four sections: "Spiritual Instruction," "Hymns and Sacred Poems," "Prayers," and "Dreams and Visions." Entries in the first reveal the importance of the study of the Scriptures, of meditation and prayer, and of discipline in the devotional life. Entries in the following two sections open a window on the joy and fulfillment experienced by these women in their worship, private life, and discipleship. In the fourth section, "Dreams and Visions," entries by three of the most prominent and celebrated women in the movement reveal their dependence upon and the intimacy of their relationship with the Lord.

Twenty-eight brief entries are presented in Part 3 under the title "The Art of Living and Dying." Twenty of these, selected from the letters of fifteen prominent women (four by Mary Bosanquet), portray important aspects of their experience in living a purposeful and positive Christian life. The concluding section on "*Ars Moriendi*?" records accounts of the triumphal deaths of eight women. Some of the twenty-eight accounts are autobiographical; others are accounts written by companions. Fittingly, the final piece is an account of the calm and confident death of Mary Fletcher by Mary Tooth, her confidant and close companion.

The especial contribution of this volume consists not only in that it is a treasure chest of previously hidden and practically irretrievable writings of women who played a central role in the Wesleyan awakening, but its value and usefulness are enormously enhanced by Chilcote's introductory sections.

First, there is a fifty-eight page introduction to the volume that locates the Wesleyan revival in the context of significant contemporary currents of thought. Attention is given to the thought leaders and movements that had an influence on the Wesleyan revival. The theological foundations of the Wesleyan understanding of the way of salvation are explored, including the Wesleyan concept of grace as prevenient, convincing, justifying, sanctifying, and sacramental. There is fairly extensive exposition of the characteristics and salient features of Methodist spirituality. Spirituality is difficult to define. Chilcote here describes it as “a dialectic of movement inward and outward, of personal and social engagement—of an interior life with God manifest necessarily in external relationships of love. . . . It includes . . . not merely the techniques of prayer but, more broadly, a conscious relationship with God, in Jesus Christ, through the indwelling of the Spirit and in the context of the community of believers” (2). Realization of the spiritual life is promoted by immersion in Scripture, prayer and fasting, eucharistic worship, and works of mercy. He explores these fundamental themes in the early Methodist experience in some detail, and thus thoroughly equips the reader with the information needed to read and understand each entry in the light of the experience of its author.

This volume can be beneficially employed in many ways. First, it can certainly be used to enrich and fill a void in academic courses on the Wesleyan revival and the rise of Methodism, as regards both historical detail and the spiritual dimensions of the movement. It could also be used in personal devotions and in prayer and study groups. Evidence of the way these women lived and worked in the presence of their Lord is inspiring.

Wesley scholars and those interested in fostering a renewal of the Wesleyan vision are greatly indebted to Chilcote for making this material available and for providing the background material that brings it to life and makes it meaningful. In addition, his careful selection of articles and sections of articles and the way they are grouped together allows comparative analysis that adds to the significance of each entry and to the cumulative force of each section.

The study is equipped with extensive and often detailed endnotes, a selected bibliography, and both general and scriptural indices. Sources are given for each of the entries. Two minor mechanical additions would further enhance the usefulness of the volume. First, in the case of entries by women whose life and contributions have been described in previous sections, the reader is referred back to that entry for basic information by the phrase “see Part 1 above.” I frequently found myself turning back to the table of contents to locate the page number of the relevant entry. Insertion of the page number after each such reference would be helpful. In addition, and particularly because of the contribution the book makes to the history of the Methodist movement, the addition of a map (perhaps folded in the back cover) that identifies the important locations referred to in the texts and notes would be extremely helpful.