

Noll, Mark A. *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Company, 1992. xvi + 576 pp. Cloth \$39.95; paperback \$29.95.

Mark A. Noll, professor of church history at Wheaton College and prolific writer on topics in ecclesiastical history, has recently enriched the literature on the history of North American Christianity with a comprehensive work that in an admirable way covers the great variety of Christian experience in the New World. Starting with the early Catholic activities in New Spain, New Mexico, Quebec, and Maryland, he chronicles the Protestant beginnings in their Puritan and other forms. In the subsequent main sections he covers the period from ca. 1700 up to the time of the evangelical mobilization of the early nineteenth century; the period of Protestant hegemony from the time of the Second Great Awakening to the early decades of this century; and finally, developments from World War I to the present. In this last section—more than in the previous parts—Noll sketches trends and does not so much deal with public events as with profiles of communities and remarkable personalities who helped shape twentieth-century religious life in North America.

Though not as detailed as the widely acclaimed work by Sydney E. Ahlstrom which appeared about twenty years ago (*A Religious History of the American People*; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), this new book provides a well-organized, balanced, and stimulating account of Christian life in America. As would be expected from an evangelical scholar, Noll deals extensively with the roots and further developments of his own tradition. Once in a while his evangelical orientation shines through, as, for instance, in his assessment of modern life in North America as a "moral wilderness" (425). But nowhere does he appear to be biased against other traditions. He writes with the assumption that "if historical figures and groups call themselves 'Christian,' and if they are recognized by others as 'Christians,' they should be treated that way in a textbook history of Christianity" (4).

Noll ably describes how religious and denominational patterns shifted as time went by and how contemporary religious pluralism resulted from earlier developments. Repeatedly he draws lines from the past to the present. A good example is his comment on the relationship between nineteenth-century revival techniques and modern political campaigning. In telling his story, Noll pays attention to regional differences, while not forgetting the role of women, Blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans. At the same time he does not neglect the way in which religion (especially Protestant) has influenced American society and illustrates how many religious traditions have been thoroughly Americanized. The hymns at the beginning of each chapter and the over 200 illustrations give the book a special charm and, to some extent, make it a "people's history."

One might, however, question whether the author fully succeeds in delivering what the title of his book promises. He intends to cover all of North American Christianity. While his treatment of Catholicism is quite sympathetic and evenhanded, he does not always give it proportionate attention. The same is true of the geographical emphases of his book. For example, Noll successfully

demonstrates how Canada provided a "third way" between the traditionalism of Europe and the innovations of the United States (130), but his treatment of Canada's church history is not nearly as complete as his account of religious developments in the United States.

In a work that seeks to deal with the complex history of so many religious traditions over several centuries, not everything can receive due attention. But at times the reader might wonder why certain facts and names have been included, and why other events and persons have remained unmentioned or have received very scant treatment. Orthodox Christianity definitely seems to be underreported. Noll finds room to devote a few paragraphs to Noyes's Oneida experiment, but hardly mentions the different groups of Amish Christians. Or, to give another example, the rather important phenomenon of transcendentalism is mentioned only in passing.

Noll is not always convincing in his arguments as to how earlier events influenced later trends. It seems questionable whether it can indeed be demonstrated that the communal experiments of the nineteenth century "became an inspiration for further efforts at building separate religious communities in America during the counterculture movement of the 1960s and 1970s" (199).

The suggestions for further reading given at the end of each chapter and the biography of general works at the end of the book are useful. However, they are more limited than one would expect in a work of this scope.

The book has been carefully edited, but at least one name has been misspelled. William Miller's lieutenant was Joshua V. Himes, and not Joseph V. Himes. The few criticisms one might have, however, in no way detract from the superb overall quality of the book.

St. Albans, Herts., England

REINDER BRUINSMA

O'Grady, John F. *Pillars of Paul's Gospel*. New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1992. 178 pp. \$9.95.

John F. O'Grady is a pastor and a scholar—formerly priest of the diocese of Albany, New York, currently Professor of Biblical Theology and Dean of Barry University in Treasure Coast, Florida. He holds doctoral degrees in theology and biblical studies—in theology from St. Thomas University and in Sacred Scripture from the Pontifical Institute, both in Rome.

Professor O'Grady considers that Galatians and Romans are the pillars of Pauline theology. In this book he studies these two epistles together in an attempt to interrelate Paul's personality, writings, and history.

The book is divided into four sections. The first deals with Paul's environment—his background, religious experience, relationship to Jerusalem, and encounter with the gospel. The second section, on the epistle to the Galatians, contains an introduction followed by a consideration of Paul's gospel, his theology of salvation by faith, and freedom in the Christian life. The third