

Robert S. Wilson, ed. — *An Abiding Conviction: Maritime Baptists and Their World*. St. John: Acadia Divinity College and the Baptist Historical Committee of the United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces, 1988. Pp. x, 249.

This is the eighth volume to appear during the past decade in the ambitious series "Baptist Heritage in Atlantic Canada: Documents and Studies." Six of these volumes have been documentary — only the second, *Repent and Believe: The Baptist Experience in Maritime Canada* (1980) and this present volume consist of "study" papers delivered during the Baptist Heritage Conferences at Acadia University, in 1979 and 1987, respectively. All but one of the essays in *Repent and Believe* concentrated on Maritime Baptist history in the nineteenth century, especially the pre-Confederation era, and this latest volume maintains the same balance between its nine essays.

This volume opens with an intriguing piece of detective work by D.C. Goodwin, tracing the link between a deadly epidemic in the Yarmouth region of Nova Scotia, in 1828, and a successful religious revival that followed the epidemic almost immediately. Applying methods of quantitative analysis to local church records, the author shows how this revival shifted opinion and practice towards Regular Baptist polity and closed communion. In the second study, Philip Griffin-Allwood points out how the founding of Horton Academy and its successor, Acadian College, had a twofold goal — ministerial education and "the general education of Youth" — that was as much a reflection of the religious experience of Maritime Regular Baptists as it was a response to sociological change.

The third essay, by D.G. Bell, is a *tour de force* tracing the Allenite tradition in relation to the New Brunswick Christian Baptists. The author charts a clear path for the uninitiated across a theological minefield of denominational pluralism, and his conclusion is that the Free Baptists gained respectability only at the price of their distinctiveness. Similarly, H. Miriam Ross's study, "Shaping a Vision of Mission: Early Influences on the United Baptist Woman's Missionary Union" is an enlightening and entertaining account of "praying sisters" and the process of sophistication that came from organizing and travelling when Baptist women shaped their *own* response to the mid-Victorian call to evangelize the heathen. This author leaves her readers with missiological questions that should challenge a generation of researchers.

In "Joseph Crandall: Preacher and Politician", David Britton compares that hagiography that doth hedge a church father with the facts as documented, and the result is the death of another cherished historical myth. The next two papers — Robert Wilson on John Mockett Cramp as church historian and Margaret Conrad on Theodore Harding Rand — break new ground in educational history. Cramp, an acknowledged Renaissance man throughout his busy life, is here revealed as the Venerable Bede of Maritime Baptist history, thanks to his scrupulous methodology of using primary sources. Rand, like Cramp, had a full and interesting career but by contrast, he comes through as a man of action and influence, but not an original thinker.

The only disappointing essay in the collection is Allison Trites' "Calvin Goodspeed" — disappointing not in its fascinating subject or perspective treatment, but in its brevity. Goodspeed earned his international reputation as a theologian and biblical scholar and this reviewer regrets the decision of the editor and/or author to print only an isolated portion of a paper that had obviously dealt with the broader scope of Goodspeed's achievements. In the final paper of the collection, Douglas

Mantz produces an innovative literary-historical methodology. He asks the intriguing question, "Is there a paradigm for an aesthetic of Canadian Baptist poetry?", and then proceeds to compare the poetic themes and imagery of Kenneth Leslie (Governor General's Award winner of 1938), of Elizabeth Bishop, an "expatriate", of George Elliott Clarke, a contemporary Nova Scotian poet, and finally, of the multitalented Watson Kirkconnell. Mantz has discovered two possible paradigms — the one bible-based on the other more individualistic, satiric and empirically mystical — and invites others to test his hypotheses with other and non-Baptist poets.

The contents of this volume certainly add to the sum of our knowledge of a major component in the rich, varied and complex religious history of the Maritime provinces by using fresh and recent research to rework some older themes and several new ones. More importantly, the authors, by employing some novel and challenging methodologies, challenge other Canadian historians to re-examine similar themes on both regional and national bases.

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