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Women and Christianity. v 3, From the Reformation to the 21st century

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offered over against the class, power and success driven empire of Rome and its clients. However, it is Mahlon H. Smith's "Israel's Prodigal Son: Reflections on Reimagining Jesus" which stands out in the arena of creativity. Dr. Smith suggests that the glaringly unique story of the Prodigal Son might provide the one example of Jesus' autobiographical reflections that we have. The author derives this position from the many passages that portray the hostility and misunderstanding toward Jesus from members of his own family, especially the relation between James the Just and Jesus before and after his death. Am I convinced? No, I am cautious, but I am also intrigued. It is a compelling and appealing suggestion.

So I encourage all readers interested in the work of the Jesus Seminar to pick up *Profiles of Jesus* and give it a try. The readings are both erudite and enjoyable. All in all Hoover's collection provides a great appetizer for introducing the Jesus Seminar through its own voices.

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**Women & Christianity:
From the Reformation to the 21st Century (Vol. III)**

Mary T. Malone

Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books and Novalis, 2003

334 pages, \$36.14 Hardcover

This book marks the completion of Dr. Mary Malone's monumental three-volume *Women & Christianity* work. In these three books Dr. Malone has contributed to the field of Christian history a basic textbook that has no equal. To be sure, there are a handful of other studies on Christian women that trace their role in the two thousand year period in which Christianity has walked across the pages of history, but none can compete with Malone in terms of depth and breadth. Add to this a fine literary touch and you have a comprehensive series that is both erudite and artistic. This is not to discount the extensive and deeply scholarly work of other historical scholars in the field such as Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza and

Rosemary Radford Ruether, who are pioneers in their own right and who continue to write high quality studies. However, they and others have contributed more specialized classics, whereas Malone has created for us an overview that becomes the quintessential textbook in the field of feminist history of Christianity.

What I have found particularly helpful is the way in which Malone has provided a basic context of patriarchy both religiously and socially. Although she creates vignettes about those women who stand out historically the reader is always able to see their achievements within a context that continually oppresses them. I find her first two volumes flawless, and any critiques I could muster would be so petty and picayune as to border on the absurd. I would be hard-pressed to choose which of the first two volumes was the better of the two.

I'm saddened, then, to find that Volume III is unable to achieve the near perfection of Volumes I and II. At the same time, it must be said that Dr. Malone's final volume remains a notable contribution to the field quite worthy of her standards as an excellent historian. I cite some of those qualities. As in the first two works, her third sustains the fine literary quality of the earlier efforts. Her study from the Reformation to the present remains a compelling and engaging read, and she strives mightily to do the impossible: namely in one volume to cover the vast global and pluralistic expressions of Christian women in the last five hundred years. In some instances she proves highly successful. Especially powerful was her compare-contrast of Mother Teresa and Dorothy Day. She manages to bring them both to life while at the same time showing that they are paradigms of two different ways Catholic women have found their vocation within patriarchal ecclesiastical institutions. Also, Malone has sustained, almost to perfection, that fine balance between exposé of patriarchal traditions and a careful nuance and fairness of analysis. Her many years spent within the Catholic tradition have not generated an unfairness toward Protestants, yet she still manages to demonstrate with great clarity that both Catholic and Protestant reforming impulses were not good news for women. As usual, Dr. Malone has resurrected particular women whose profound witness had been repressed; I was moved especially by the story of Sister Juana Ines de la Cruz.

Nonetheless, I have three critiques of her third volume: First, I found her presentation of the wider social and political settings

significantly more sketchy and hasty than in her earlier works, i.e., the French and Industrial Revolutions, the roles of war and colonialism. To be sure, they were not ignored, but I wished for more integration. Second, although I heartily agree with Dr. Malone that the values and actions which emerged from Enlightenment thinkers and the French Revolution remained patriarchal, at the same time, it must be underscored that women's emancipatory movements found in these values and the governments which emerged from them more fertile soil for their organizing. Third, I found Volume III's coverage of Protestant women rather disappointing. In no sense do I criticize her work as anti-Protestant; it is decidedly not. However, in her handling of Protestant reformers Dr. Malone writes little about the reigning Protestant or semi-Protestant queens who impacted seriously the spread of new movements. Also, Protestantism produced a number of women pamphleteers and activists, and although she highlights the Quakers and Margaret Fell, one fails to see important coverage of the vital role played by British women in the Methodist movement. Nineteenth-century America embodied an explosion of women's movements within Protestantism – missionary societies, teaching in higher education, abolition, suffrage, temperance, working class reform, Pentecostalism (black and white), and working class reform. More contextual analysis is called for here. Deservedly we read of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Sojourner Truth, but where are Frances Willard (the progressive head of women's most influential global movement, the WCTU) and Jane Addams, the leader of a group of radical Chicago Christian women in settlement house work? Certainly authors must make choices, and any given reader may wish other choices, yet I feel certain omissions constitute voids which must be pointed out.

In spite of these criticisms Dr. Malone's third volume completes a monumental work much needed and much welcomed in the field. It stands as a classic not only of women's history, but of the history of Christianity in general. For historians to ignore it is not only continued patriarchy but shoddy scholarship as well.

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