the wider context of the Church or society. Hence, the stories often fit into neat categories: politics, social activism, Church, etc. The difficulty with this approach is that the stories of many people (men and women) have never been adequately explored because they do not fit any particular category. Such was the life of the subject of this biography, Baptist Wriothesley Noel. Born into an aristocratic family, Noel served as a priest in the Church of England from 1826 to 1848. He was a royal chaplain and became recognised within the Church as a leader among Evangelical Anglicans. In 1848, however, Noel seceded from the Anglican Church and became a Baptist. He then served as a pastor of a Baptist church in London from 1850 until his retirement from local pastoral ministry in 1868. Philip Hill points out that despite taking a leading role in the foundation of the London City Mission and writing over ninety published works, Noel has not received due attention from either Baptists or Anglicans. Hill thus helpfully seeks to offer an account that presents Noel as an Evangelical minister who throughout his life was seeking to work co-operatively with Anglicans and other Christians. While Noel's theological views are well covered by the author, social historians will wish for more information on family life and friendships. Hill includes details about Noel's parents and claims that Noel's wife, Jane, shared her husband's interest in social reform. However, tantalisingly, Hill claims that Noel and his wife, Jane were part of a network of friendships that included Queen Victoria and that 'Mrs Noel remained in her elevated circles' and in the Anglican Church even after Noel became a Baptist minister. Perhaps there is still research to be undertaken which will shed further light on Baptist and Anglican relationships in the nineteenth century.

CARDIFF UNIVERSITY KAREN E. SMITH

A Black American missionary in Canada. The life and letters of Lewis Champion Chambers. By Hilary Bates Neary. (Studies in the History of Religion, 97.) Pp. xxii + 272 incl. 12 ills and 2 maps. Montreal & Kingston–London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2022. £29.99. 978 0 2280 1446 1

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In this book Hilary Bates Neary's commitment to the preservation of Black history in London, Ontario, contributes to the intersecting fields of Black history, Canadian history and church history. Neary's volume is both an edited collection of Chambers's letters (housed in the Archives at Amistad Research Center, Tulane University, New Orleans) and a source for contextual framing of those letters and the Black missionary experience in Canada. Neary suggests that Chambers's letters shed new light on mid- to late eighteenth-century Canadian history by telling the story of populations pushed to the historical margins. More broadly, she urges historians to consult Chambers's life and legacy as part of ongoing work that connects histories of people, institutions and nation states in order to historicise contemporary (re)constructions of race and religion.

Neary's introduction frames Chambers's life and times by providing helpful context for the letters he penned to the Reverend George Whipple, a New York Congregationalist minister and secretary for the American Missionary Association. Neary adds detail to Chambers's life as a formerly enslaved person who fled to

Canada to avoid the devastating repercussions of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 and later returned to the United States following the American Civil War. She argues that this broad arc typifies the experience of many nineteenth-century Black Americans and, as such, asserts that Chambers's 'rough and ready' letters written from his position as a Black missionary provide a deep well of source material. Neary urges historians to draw from that well in order to construct a scholarly foundation that considers the larger Black experience in both Canada and the United States, accounting especially for the role of faith and religious institutions in those histories.

Chambers began his life enslaved in Maryland. After purchasing his freedom, he married and started a family, joined and was ordained in the American Methodist Episcopal Church (AMEC), purchased and farmed land in New Jersey, then fled to Canada in the face of the Fugitive Slave Act in 1854. In 1858 Chambers was ordained by the British Methodist Episcopal Church (BMEC) and commissioned by the American Missionary Association (AMA) to serve as a missionary in Canada West (present day Ontario). During this era of ministry and beyond Chambers wrote frequently to his friend, colleague and supervisor, the Revd George Whipple, recounting the peaks and valleys of his ministerial experience. Chambers's letters provide insight regarding how a Black, American minister, serving Black, often American, congregations, interacted with world events (like the American Civil War), encountered racism in the Canadian context, and strove to use his limited resources to meet the social, religious and educational needs of the people he served. Chambers and his family eventually returned to the United States where he served as an AMEC minster in and around Philadelphia. The length of his life and ministry (and the extensive paper trail he left behind) makes Chambers an instructive central character through whom historians can refract ongoing efforts to understand the history of Canadian Africans and the patterns and prejudices that influenced their lives.

Neary arrives at Chambers's story *via* her work to preserve the London chapel where Chambers served as a minister and missionary to the city's Black population. This public historian-oriented approach results in analysis that is more concrete than theoretical. While Neary is correct in urging historians to draw on Chambers's letters to expand the story of Canadian Black communities and churches, she does not extend this analytical call to broader and more complex conversations of settler colonial history in the American and Canadian contexts. Given Chambers's history of land ownership, farming and his interest in Black commercial success within nineteenth-century racialised capitalism, his letters are a rich text for historians interested in weaving together religion, race and settler colonial history in both Canada and the United States. Chambers's letters also include a limited number of missives penned by his wife, Ann, regarding her efforts to open and sustain a school for Black children in St Catherines. Historians concerned with gendered and religious labour will find these letters of particular note. Unfortunately, while Neary includes Whipple's limited annotations (that hint at drafts of written responses to Chambers's letters), this collection does not include Whipple's or the AMA's responses to Chambers's many letters. The conversation the book provides is thus fruitful, albeit one-sided.

Taken together, Chambers's letters and Neary's meticulous work in fleshing out their context and characters function as a rich text for historians of Black religious

history in Canada and the United States. Chambers's unfiltered discussion of poverty (both his own and his congregants'), illness, death, evangelicalism and racism convey the mundane and exceptional challenges faced by Black migrants to Canada leading up to and during the American Civil War. The letters Neary includes directly and indirectly interact with historical themes and episodes including the Emancipation Proclamation (and its social significance among Black communities), the Underground Railroad, racial uplift politics, African colonisation activism, anti-lynching organisations (particularly the National Citizens' Rights Association), temperance movements, Black politics and Black church history. Historians in search of source material that integrates personal and theological reflection within these broader trends and events will benefit from consulting Neary's work and learning from Chambers's experience.

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY EMILY MORRELL

Heretical Orthodoxy. Lev Tolstoi and the Russian Orthodox Church. By Pål Kolstø. (Ideas in Context.) Pp. x + 306. Cambridge–New York: Cambridge University Press, 2022. £75. 978 1 009 26040 4

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This thoughtful book examines a seemingly familiar topic: Lev Tolstoy's relationship to the Orthodox Church in which he was raised, which he tried to embrace intellectually and emotionally, and which he then rejected, just as intellectually and just as emotionally. It repaid him by rejecting him in kind. That, at least, is what we think we know. But did he in fact reject it? And did it in fact reject him?

Pål Kolstø argues that, despite Tolstoy's own disavowals and despite the 1901 public statement by the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church acknowledging that Tolstoy had placed himself outside its fold (they avoided using the term excommunication), the man and the church body remained far more intertwined. Given Tolstoy's Christian formation, his lifelong grappling with what forms that Christianity ought to take, and above all his enduring intimacy with the Russian Orthodox tradition, it might be more appropriate to describe their mutual love-hate attitudes with the social media status of 'in a relationship'.

Appropriately for a series called 'Ideas in Context', Kolstø sets both Tolstoy and the Orthodox Church in their late imperial Russian *milieu*. To understand something of the passions Tolstoy prompted, one has to understand what society regarded as normal, whether in a good or unexceptionable way (Christian ideals in general), or in a negative way (the overwhelming and apparently uncritical support the Russian Orthodox Church offered the imperial apparatus). Kolstø provides these details. He considers Tolstoy as a practising Orthodox Christian, illustrating his arguments with abundant extracts from Tolstoy's letters and diaries. These selections, which trace Tolstoy's personal trajectory, might be even stronger if Kolstø devoted more attention to explaining why some things are important. For example, when he quotes Tolstoy as praying the Our Father, the Hail Mary and the 'O Most Holy Trinity', it might be worth noting that these are relatively standard prayers, and that Tolstoy's inclusion here of the less standard 'Gates of Mercy' (from Great Compline) might be an indicator of greater-than-usual knowledge and devotion (p. 10). In his early years Tolstoy emerges as an exemplar of what