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## Book Review. - Literatur

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## Book Review

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All books reviewed in this periodical may be procured from or through Concordia Publishing House, 3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, Mo.

**The Basis of Millennial Faith.** By Floyd E. Hamilton. Wm. E. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 160 pages, 5½×7¾. \$1.00.

The writer of this book was a premillennialist who was led to see that a millennialism as defended especially by Dr. Machen avoids all difficulties connected with both premillennialism and postmillennialism. The results of his studies on the subject are offered in this timely book, which is to prove that premillennialism is in every way unscriptural. Of special interest the reviewer has found the chapters "Must We Interpret Old Testament Prophecies Literally," "The 'Rod of Iron' Rule by Christ," and "Does Revelation Chapter 20 Teach an Earthly Millennium?" This, however, does not mean that the other chapters are not worth studying. But let the reader peruse the book with care, for it contains many viewpoints and statements that are not in agreement with our Lutheran Confessions. The author, for example, places the coming of Antichrist just before the battle of Armageddon at the end of the world. (P.36.) Of the Jews he says that when they see Christ returning for the Last Judgment, they will "look on Him whom they pierced and repent and believe in Him instantaneously as their Messiah." (*Ibid.*) When he writes: "Whether the period following the resurrection is the eternal kingdom of God or a thousand-year millennium may be open to question" (p.50), he practically tears down all that he has tried to build up by his whole line of argument. Nevertheless, there is so much that is valuable in his studies, and his fundamental arguments against premillennialism are so altogether well founded that we recommend this new treatise on the subject of Chiliasm.

J. THEODORE MUELLER

**This Freedom — Whence?** By J. Wesley Bready. Published by the American Tract Society, New York. 365 pages. \$1.50. 1942. Illustrated. Indexed.

This volume is an abridgement and a revision of Dr. Bready's recent and fully-documented book *England: Before and After Wesley*. The author tells us: "That work already has been run through five large English editions and was chosen 'Religious Book of the Month' in England. The volume has been slightly condensed and in parts rewritten in the light of the fast-moving drama of contemporary events. However, nothing has been omitted which is essential to an intelligent understanding of the greatest moral, spiritual, and social epic the modern world has known." The author received his theological training in the United States and held several important pastorates both here and in Canada. He gave more than seventeen years of painstaking research to this monumental work. It was possible for him to spend five years of research in England through the creation of a special Religious Historical Research Trust Fund supported by two prime ministers, two

university chancellors, two university presidents, as well as several senators and cabinet ministers, and many others from all walks of life. In our opinion this Fund's investment in Dr. Bready has brought rich fruitage. His work is the best and most comprehensive study of John Wesley and the Methodist movement that has ever come into our hands. We only wish that as great an interest in such historical and theological research work might be found in our own circles, so that we might have a fund of this kind which would enable our own men to do exhaustive research work in the field of church history, archaeology, and other theological branches. As it is, certain work that should be done remains undone because the money is lacking to make the necessary research at home and abroad possible. The history of the Lutheran Church in America in general and the history of our own Synod in particular will never be properly studied and adequately presented until we can make the means available to the student and free him from other arduous duties, so that he can devote all his time and effort over a period of years to this work.

Dr. Bready's thesis is to show that the social, moral, and material development of our era, our whole scheme of democratic freedom stems from the great eighteenth century spiritual awakening inaugurated by John Wesley. He tells us how he was prompted to develop this thesis:

"My historical interest in the wider impacts of the Evangelical Revival developed indirectly. The years of research behind my book *Lord Shaftesbury and Social-Industrial Progress* forced upon me the conviction that never can the achievements of that inimitable reformer be understood or appraised apart from the mighty Evangelical Movement that inspired his 'humanity.' My later study in child welfare, *Dr. Barnardo: Physician, Pioneer, Prophet*, confirmed and deepened this conviction; for Shaftesbury and Barnardo are but representative of a glorious succession of reformers who, inspired by a common faith, enriched beyond measure the entire social heritage of the English-speaking peoples. Hence my interest in the present subject."

There are three general divisions to the thesis: 1. A close analysis of the social, political, economic, and religious conditions preceding this spiritual awakening. 2. A survey of the origin, development, and impact of the Evangelical Movement. 3. An examination of the unparalleled, practical fruits of that baptism of fire throughout the English-speaking world.

In Part One, entitled "An Age of 'Expiring Hopes,'" we have first the anti-Puritan purge following the accession of Charles II, the expulsion of the nonjuring bishops who called William III a "pretender," and then the suppression of Convocation by George I—three tragedies which according to Dr. Bready contributed lamentably to the moral and spiritual stagnation of pre-Wesleyan England. Secondly, he shows us the Church of England at its nadir during the reigns of the first three Georges, when greed, corruption, and politics permeated the bishops and the state officers, when "bishoprics and deaneries were solicited from the Prime Minister of the day with unblushing importunity." Hence Cowper's scathing couplet

To make the symbols of atoning grace  
An office-key, a pick-lock to a place.

Thirdly, the author goes on to show how the corruption of the clergy was reflected in the demoralization of society, as evidenced by the slave traffic, kidnapping, "bound labor," transportation of convicts, and in the gambling fever that made possible the "South Sea Bubble" and other get-rich-quick schemes. Fourthly, he pictures to the reader in vivid colors the period of notorious political bribery and corruption ushered in by Sir Robert Walpole, the vicious criminal laws and their administration, the barbarous prison system, the hanging shows, etc. Finally, the panorama is completed by the inclusion of a scene showing the depth to which private and public morals had fallen in "the coarseness prevalent in the eighteenth century, the gross indecency and ribaldry of its songs, of the daily and common talk which makes itself felt in the whole of its literature—in the plays, the poems, the essays, the novels . . . the grossness belonged not only to the poor wretch of a harlot, but to all classes alike." Ignorance, lawlessness, lasciviousness, godlessness, and superstition everywhere prevailed, although at the coming of John Wesley the spirit of reform was already in the air.

In Part Two, entitled "A People Finds Its Soul," we have an excellent survey of the rise and work of John Wesley. From his early boyhood, when he was miraculously rescued from the burning Epworth rectory, he felt that he had been plucked as "a brand out of the burning" because the hand of destiny was upon him, although at first it seemed as if his life would be a failure. True, his work at Oxford laid a foundation of solid scholarship, but his work as a colonial missionary did nothing to inspire him. He went home dejected. Then on May 24, 1738, he was converted and "impregnated with spiritual fire that he might set England ablaze for God." He had on that day heard the leader of the meeting at Aldersgate read Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. "I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for my salvation," he said. Now he began to feel his way into his real work. We find him on the Continent, visiting the Moravians, attending Lutheran services, meeting Count Zinzendorf, etc. Wesley was not particularly impressed with German church life, excepting that of the Herrnhuters. Dr. Bready tells us:

After attending Sunday worship in a Lutheran Church at Meissen, he writes: "I was greatly surprised at all I saw there: at the costliness of apparel in many, and the gaudiness of it in more. . . . The minister's habit was adorned with gold and scarlet, and a vast cross both behind and before. Most of the congregation sat (the men generally with their hats on, at the prayers as well as sermon). . . . Alas, alas! what a reformed country is this!" Lutheranism, as a whole, he found rigid and frigid; and commenting on a Rhine boat trip, he says: "I could not but observe the decency of the Papists above us who are called Reformed." The pomposity, too, of German civic officials and the inhospitality of German cities toward foreigners, did violence to Wesley's expanding conception of human brotherhood. In some towns he was refused lodgings, and repeatedly he was detained at city gates for hours, being bundled, "with the usual impertinent solemnity," from one "magistrate or officer to another." "This senseless, inhuman usage of strangers!" is his designation of the treatment he and his friends received "at almost every German city." "A breach of all the common, even the heathen laws of hospitality," he again defined it. At Weimar, after prolonged detention outside the gate, he was carried before some

great man ("I believe the Duke") and submitted to a regiment of further questions. Finally came the query, "Why are you going so far as Herrnhut?" Wesley, with a droll thrust, replied: "To see the place where the Christians live."

Upon his return to England he started to preach in churches where they would admit him, at society meetings, in prisons, and finally also in open fields. Now began the great crusade in spite of much and virulent opposition, methodistic societies were organized, class meetings regulated. It was agreed "(1) That every member of the Society, who was able, contribute a penny a week. (2) That the whole society be divided into little classes—about twelve in each. (3) That one person in each class receive the contribution of the rest and bring it to the stewards weekly."

"This was the humble origin of what gradually developed into one of the world's greatest systems of voluntary finance." Nor were the class units intended merely to raise funds. They became a vehicle for the personal supervision of every member of the societies. The sexes were kept separated, intimate problems of life discussed, one encouraged the other to fight a good fight. "The stimulus afforded by these countless Class Meetings to the moral uplift, spiritual growth, educational development, and organized social endeavor of the disinherited multitudes of England, it is impossible to calculate." But the results were in consonance with Wesley's principle: "Christianity is essentially a social religion; to turn it into a solitary religion is indeed to destroy it."

The creation of local and itinerant preachers was forced upon the movement by the march of events, since most churches were closed to the Methodists. Wesley alone finally was directing some seven hundred local and itinerant preachers, and their heroism forms one of the romances of history. Of them Southey says: "St. Francis and his followers did not commit themselves with more confidence to the care of Providence nor with more entire disregard of all human means."

These preachers, who for the most part had no formal theological training, have often been decried as ignorant. However, if we look at the program of study outlined for them by Wesley, this charge will hardly hold water. Wesley not only supervised the education of his preachers, he also insisted that they become teachers of their flocks. He enjoined upon them the necessity of spending at least five hours daily in reading the most useful books, the fifty volumes of his *Christian Library* were edited specifically for the general education of his preachers, helpers, and followers. "No man in the eighteenth century," says the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, "did so much to create a taste for good reading and to supply it with books at the lowest prices."

In the chapter entitled "The Preaching of Social Righteousness" the author discusses Wesley's attitude on slavery, on war, on the use and abuse of money and privilege. He was no pacifist, but he believed war to be the "sorriest curse men know." He avers: "War is a horrid reproach to the Christian name, yea, to the name of man, to all reason and humanity. In all the judgments of God the inhabitants of the earth learn righteousness. In famine, plague, earthquake, the people see the hand of God. But when war breaks out, God is forgotten."

In the section on the use and abuse of money, an unwarranted attack is made on Luther, when Dr. Bready quotes Professor Tawney as follows: "Luther's utterances on social morality are the occasional explosions of a capricious volcano, with only a rare flash of light amid the torrent of smoke and flame, and it is idle to scan them for a coherent and consistent doctrine." To make such a charge is to confess that one is not acquainted with the writings of Luther. One need only read Luther's two Catechisms, the small and the large, to realize how well and soberly the great Reformer understood the true Biblical principles that must underlie all social morality. Some writers cannot escape the folly of belittling others in order to magnify the greatness of their own hero. Surely John Wesley was not less great because Martin Luther was greater.—Wesley's famous money rule was: "Gain all you can. Save all you can. Give all you can." That he himself practiced what he preached in this respect is well known. Although his writings gave him a good income, he never retained more than a few odd pounds. All went to the needy. He never spent more than an average of twelve shillings a week on himself, wore the cheapest and plainest clothes, and dined on the humblest fare.—In the chapter "Reassertion of the Christian Ethic," Wesley's views are given on the liquor traffic, political affairs, on economics, and religion. What he had seen of the vicious liquor traffic in England made him plead for the complete abolition of all spirituous liquors for beverage purposes, as a duty of the State. The Methodists were instructed not to buy or sell or drink spirituous liquors. The preachers were strictly forbidden the use of them at any time. His social and economic teaching was based on the following articles:

1. The spiritual brotherhood of man under the Fatherhood of a loving and moral God, who, with high purpose, has granted to His children a large degree of free will.

2. This free will, though necessary to the moral and spiritual development of man, is capable of dire abuse, thus causing perplexing social problems.

3. All social problems are fundamentally spiritual and ethical; and persons who fail to dedicate mental equipment and material power to spiritual-ethical ends, are enemies of the Kingdom of God—anti-social citizens, who needs must be restrained by humane law.

4. In a really Christian society, men will recognize that they are stewards of God, the Creator and Owner of all: human "possessions," accordingly, are a self-acquired delusion, and private "riches" a dangerous snare. Service, not material acquisitions, being a real standard of human attainment, fellowship, co-operation, and a truly equalitarian spirit are the genuine marks of a Christian society; wherein the strong, motivated by sympathy and love, will rejoice to assist their weaker brethren, as parents rejoice to assist their children.

5. Faith in the justice of God, in Heaven, and in the immortality of the soul, are essential inspirations of any stable, happy society: all human institutions, therefore, including those of politics and economics, must be impregnated with spiritual values, if they are to serve the highest interests of man, and fulfill the will of God.

6. If men persist in perverting the grace of free will, refusing to recognize that they are stewards of God and their brothers' keepers, then Providence *must* resort to catastrophic means to upset their vain plans and force them, in chastened mood, to build anew.

With Wesley's death came the rebirth of the English people. Says Dr. Bready:

The baptizing fire of the unique Revival he led overleapt all class and denominational barriers. It permeated the dry bones of Old Dissent and, injecting into them a pulsing life, created a new and Evangelical Nonconformity. Similarly, despite contumely and persecution, it revived vision and initiative among thousands within the National Church; while, yet more important, reclaiming multitudes of religious outcasts who long had been beyond the pale of any spiritual influence, it transformed the tone and tenor of the National life.

In Part III, "An Era of Epic Reforms," the author outlines the Wesleyan influence in the abolition of slavery in the Empire and in our country, the humanizing of the prison system, the reform of the penal code, the impetus given to Protestant foreign missions, the emancipation of industrial England, the labor movement, trade unionism, etc. He traces our American liberties to the influence of Wesley, quoting President Coolidge's statement: "America was born in a revival of religion. Back of that revival were John Wesley, George Whitefield, and Francis Asbury." While we can readily admit that there is a measure of truth in this statement, it can hardly be denied that these liberties were the culmination of principles set in motion by the Reformation of Martin Luther in the sixteenth century.

In the author's conclusions, as stated in the following paragraphs, there is much food for thought:

Materialistic "naturalism," the so-called philosophy of most modern "Totalitarianism," appeared first in England under the guise of "Deism" in Restoration times. That "philosophy," the product of a slave-trading and loose-living age, served first as a cloak for scepticism, avarice, and immorality, and later as a cause of them. In the words of Pope it glibly prated:

"Thus God and Nature formed the general frame,  
And bade self-love and social be the same.

\* \* \*

One truth is clear, Whatever is, is right."

By the early decades of the eighteenth century, this cynical "naturalism" had quite gained control of the intellectual life of Britain, while also it was practically dominant in her religious life, especially within the State Church, which then regarded itself as a branch of the civil service. Under the sway of this arid, soulless "philosophy," England's social life sank rapidly from bad to worse, till finally, by the fourth decade of that century, it reached its nadir of moral degradation. And when that nadir was reached, Church and State were in the grip of a proud oligarchy who regarded the poor as outcasts; and "the poor" to them meant all the laboring multitudes of the land.

By the unique labors of Wesley and the Evangelical Revival, wrought in the teeth of malignant opposition, this national pestilence was conquered, and the common people of England experienced the greatest Christian Renewal the modern world has known. The Revival behind that renewal was nothing less than a spiritual revolution; it created a "New England" for the common people on Old England's soil. It laid low the power of a nepotistic oligarchy and set the feet of a nation marching in confidence, amidst new and jubilant strains of Christian song, toward the goal of "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity." But these words, in a revival atmosphere, had more than theoretic meaning; they were vibrant with spiritual content, and the aspirations they symbolized were founded not on mere humanism, but on a living Faith.

Under the impact of that Revival, as a direct result of its sensitized conscience and its socialized will, came the Century of the *Pax Britannica*—the most creative period, perhaps, in the annals of man. For during that century of comparative peace, through the leaven of Christian influence, there flowered the epic era of social and political reform, when Britain was transformed from a factious, slave-trading aristocracy into a free, educated, and Christian democracy. While as for the British Empire, already planted on the seven seas, it, in this purged atmosphere, was peacefully evolving into a Commonwealth of Free Peoples, each enjoying liberty of conscience and all co-operating for common ends.

W. G. POLACK

**Great Women of the Bible.** By Clarence E. Macartney. Published by Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, New York. 207 pages, 5½×7½. \$1.50.

A preacher will find suggestions and material in this book for Sunday evening and weekday services, also for talks to his ladies society or to the young people. Dr. Macartney, minister of the First Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh, Pa., draws valuable lessons in his biographical sketches; he also shows that in every sermon Christ can be preached, which, after all, is the purpose of preaching. For instance, when preaching on Rahab, he brings his sermon to a close by saying, "How can our faith in the Cross of Christ, that scarlet cord of mercy which God has flung out from the windows of heaven, save us from death and reconcile us to God and bless our lives with unending joy and happiness hereafter? Yet that is the promise of the Word of God. Have you taken God at His word when He says, 'He that believeth . . . shall be saved'? Is the scarlet thread of the Cross, of Christ's blood, over your soul? Is it over your home and your household? Are you concerned for that household as Rahab was for hers? . . . Is the scarlet thread of your faith in the redeeming blood of Christ waving in the window of your soul? God has made His eternal promise that he that believeth in the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved. He will keep that promise as faithfully as Joshua did when he destroyed Jericho, but spared the house of Rahab the harlot, where the scarlet cord was waving. Is the cord there today? Are you trusting in the Cross? One day the trumpets of Judgment will sound, as they sounded of old over ancient and doomed Jericho. But where the scarlet cord waves, there is safety and refuge. 'The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin.'" (Pages 58 and 59.)

J. H. C. FARRZ

**Doran's Minister's Manual.** By the Rev. G. B. F. Hallock and the Rev. M. K. W. Heicher. Published by Harper and Brothers, Publishers, New York. 505 pages, 6×8½. Price, \$2.00.

The purpose of this *Manual*—its eighteenth annual issue—is to furnish texts, sermon material, outlines, illustrative material, and prayers to preachers for the Sundays and festivals of the church year and for various occasions. That it was not intended to be distinctive in doctrine is indicated in the foreword, the aim having been "to create an inter-denominational handbook." Paging through the book, one looks in vain for clear presentations of the great fundamental truths of the Christian religion. That is the chief defect of this *Manual*.

Another defect is that it presents a method of sermonizing that does not make for good Biblical preaching. The book presents short texts



and fragments of texts that lack in sufficient sermon material and fail to make the preacher and the hearer thoroughly acquainted with Scripture. The topical sermon method, which this book presents, has very little merit. It came into the Church after the twelfth century, when strict adherence to the Word of God was no longer the *forte* of the Church. Topical preaching met with much opposition for two hundred years. Phelps in his *Theory of Preaching*, p. 47, quotes Roger Bacon praying to God to "banish this conceited and artificial way of preaching from His Church." In our own time entire books have been written against the topical method and in favor of the *expository* method. Even homileticians, who in their treatise on homiletics present the topical method, point out its weakness. Knott says, "The topical sermon is the easiest kind to prepare and is, generally speaking, the least effective."

J. H. C. FRITZ

**Proceedings of the Third Convention of the Southeastern District.**  
Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 55 pages, 5½×8½.  
18 cents.

**Proceedings of the Twentieth Convention of the English District.**  
Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 129 pages, 5½×8½.  
26 cents.

In the *Proceedings of the Southeastern District* a sermon lecture by the Rev. L. F. Frerking on "Christian Education" is offered on pages 8 to 12. Prof. A. M. Rehwinkel's essay on "The Flood of Noah" is to be published in full and distributed as widely as possible in the District by the District Board of Directors, "since there is an admitted need of such material in our Church."

The report of the English District presents two instructive essays, that of Dr. J. T. Mueller is of a doctrinal nature on "The Christian Assurance of Faith in the Light of the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions." Pastor A. H. A. Loeber read an essay on a practical subject, "The Value of the Matured and Experienced Ministry," in which he warns against the increasing practice of calling young and inexperienced men to large congregations, since such a practice is detrimental to the welfare of both the congregation and the young pastor.

TR. LAETSCH

#### BOOKS RECEIVED

*From Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.:*

**No Greater Love.** Daily Devotions December 5, 1942, to January 21, 1943. No. 43. By H. W. Gockel. 63 pages. Price: 5 cents per copy, postpaid; 48 cents per dozen, postage extra; \$3.00 per hundred, postage extra.

**Weissagung und Erfuellung.** Kurze Andachten fuer die Zeit vom 5. Dezember 1942 bis zum 21. Februar 1943. By Joh. Schinnerer. Price: Same as above.

**Concordia Collection of Sacred Choruses and Anthems for More Ambitious Choral Organizations.** No. 57: *If Ye Love Me* (John XIV). For Mixed Voices. By Francis Coombs. 5 pages, 7×10¼. Price, 25 cents.