

*The Golden Years of the Hutterites* is a well-written and authoritative work that not only enriches our understanding of an important segment of Anabaptist history, but also touches our hearts. Perhaps it can even spur us into a renewed sense of what Christian mission is all about. In any event, it provides instructive and enjoyable reading, which should prove rewarding to any reader, regardless of specific religious persuasion. Not only is the author to be congratulated for providing this fine work, but the general editor of *Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History*, Cornelius J. Dyck, and his editorial board deserve our heartfelt gratitude for including this volume in their prestigious series.

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Jackson, Jeremy C. *No Other Foundation: The Church Through Twenty Centuries*. Westchester, Ill.: Cornerstone Books, 1980. 304 pp. \$12.95.

This well-written, clear, and non-technical volume provides an unusual, but stimulating, presentation of church history. The title and subtitle highlight the concept that Jesus Christ is central to church history from the ancient church to the present day.

The twenty-two chapters of the publication, except for chap. 4, are "substantially the transcription of a series of lectures given at South Presbyterian Church, Syracuse, New York, on successive Sunday evenings from September 1974 to June 1975." The author "was mindful . . . that there is a difference between regular academic teaching" and this sort of address to the members of one's own church. It is not "that the standards of accuracy or scholarly integrity are different," but rather that "the purpose is different." Thus, Jackson was "not only conveying information but also, in faith, instructing God's people" (pp. 7-8).

The author is a social historian, rather than a church historian, his specific interest being the social history of Europe between 1400 and 1800. According to his own statement, he "had no particular expertise in church history," but has written "as a social historian with broad interests both in time and subject matter." He feels that inasmuch as the church "is always imbedded in society, it is not such a bad idea for a social historian to scrutinize the church in that society" (pp. 8-9).

Actually, the volume begins with a short chapter entitled "Old Testament Problems and Precedents" (pp. 11-19). Then the Christian era is covered in twenty-one further chapters with the following titles: "New Testament Structures"; "Expansion and Heresy: The Principles of Practice"; "Persecution and the Church's Life: The Practice of Principles"; "Canons, Councils, and a Catholic Church"; "Fathers, Monks, and Barbarians"; "The Church Renewed"; "The Church in Medieval Life"; "The

Church and the Intellect"; "The Church Betrayed"; "The Reformation: Revival and Reform"; "Catholics, Protestants, and Skeptics"; "Religion and Society: The Puritan Problem"; "Orthodoxy, Pietism, and Latitudinarianism"; "Wesley, Whitefield, and Samuel Johnson"; "The Revival Tradition in America: From Coast to Frontier"; "The Enlightenment, the French Revolution, and Non-Christian Society"; "The Church Under Attack: Apes and Theologians"; "A Mission Reaffirmed: Las Casas, Wilberforce, and Hudson Taylor"; "The Dynamics of Contemporary Theology"; "Orthodoxy in a Pagan Setting: Illusion and Reality"; "The Reversed Scenario: Anti-Christ and Anti-Church in Late-Twentieth Century Perspective."

The foregoing titles indicate the breadth of coverage; and at least until the recent period, most major movements, events, and persons in church history are mentioned, however briefly this may be. Of necessity, there is selection of material, and the author makes "no apology for omitting events, people and movements which find a place in the textbooks" (p. 8). This procedure is his prerogative, and under the circumstances understandable. It does mean, however, that this book should not be considered a textbook in general church history. For a systematized and comprehensive coverage of the Christian centuries from apostolic times to our day, a volume such as Williston Walker's *A History of the Christian Church* (or any of a number of other excellent titles) should be consulted. In fact, to appreciate properly the present publication, a prior knowledge of general church history is desirable—not because the present volume is difficult reading (it is not!), but because persons, events, and movements are treated in such a cursory fashion that their import may not be truly grasped without additional background material.

Any lack in the foregoing respect finds adequate compensation in Jackson's insightful analysis of church history as a social phenomenon, always related to the central concept of Christ as the church's Foundation. Obviously, the human beings and human institutions that have formed the church throughout the centuries have varied in their loyalty to that Foundation. Although the author's Protestant bias is obvious throughout the volume, he does not fail to point out *both* strengths and weaknesses of the church during its different periods of history and in its various and varying emphases. This balance in presentation is a virtue.

The book is filled with numerous helpful insights. As but one example, we may note that in dealing with the Protestant Reformation in chap. 11, the author keeps in mind both doctrine and life. He states that there "is no revival without painful reexamination of the Truth, without a preparedness to obey the Truth. And there is no true Reformation unless accompanied by the reviving work of the Spirit of Truth within us" (p. 129).

As a church historian I do have some difficulty, however, with many of Jackson's oversimplifications. For instance, in his discussion of early-church heresies, the key ones are noted—including gnosticism, Pelagianism, Donatism, docetism, Nestorianism, and Arianism (not necessarily in chronological order)—; but Jackson focuses on these from basically only one particular perspective: the denial of "either Christ's humanity or his divinity," "a refusal to accept the Incarnation" (pp. 36-37). This analysis leaves the reader with a very limited understanding of what these heresies were really all about (i.e., what were their historical backgrounds and roots, their development, their *various* features, their impact, etc.?).

At times, the author makes statements which, in their oversimplification, may even leave the reader with an erroneous idea. An example is his treatment of infant baptism. Is it reasonable to assume, as Jackson appears to do, that infant baptism created, originated, or spawned such a plethora of practical and theological problems as he has introduced as its results on pp. 94-95: the "credit" concept of "good works," the idea of purgatory, the veneration of saints, the development of a system of merits, the impetus toward having an elite clerical society, etc.?

My misgivings with such generalizations (and with quite a few other items) do not, however, preclude a strong recommendation that this book be read. This volume provides many refreshing insights, and at times sets forth certain especially pertinent lessons or questions for our own day. The reader will be rewarded with pleasurable reading, enlightening discussion (even though at times controversial), and a fresh, appealing perspective. The very fact that this book constantly calls us back to the centrality of Christ and the biblical revelation for a meaningful Christianity sets it apart as vital reading.

The book has a brief "Bibliographical Note" on p. 295. This pays tribute to Michael Green's *Evangelism and the Early Church* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1970); Jeffrey Burton Russell's *A History of Medieval Christianity* (Arlington Heights, Ill.: AHM, 1968); and Alec R. Vidler's *The Church in an Age of Revolution: 1789 to the Present Day* (Harmondsworth, Eng.: Penguin Books, 1972). There is an Index (pp. 297-304), the best use of which requires a reading of the introductory note on p. 297. Another helpful feature of the volume is the inclusion at the end of each chapter of several select bibliographical references that are succinctly annotated.