

BOOK REVIEWS

The Church at the End of the 20th Century, by Francis A. Schaeffer. Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1970. 153 pages. \$1.95, pb.

One reviewer of this book writes: "If you are an evangelical looking for guidelines to revitalize a sagging church . . . if you are an evangelical looking for fresh new ways of communicating the Gospel to the contemporary mind . . . if you are disillusioned by the direction in which you feel the church is headed, then this book is for you."

Francis A. Schaeffer is an American now living in Switzerland. He has expanded his home in the Swiss Alps into a fellowship center called L'Abri, which is visited by a host of disillusioned and puzzled young men and women from all over the world. This is his fifth book in as many years.

The volume makes decisive affirmations which shake the mind and heart of the thoughtful reader.

1. Christians must renounce the contemporary "plastic culture." This is the culture of the majority of the middle class today. It is the culture of those who try to tell others what to do on the basis of their own values, but with no real ground for those values.

2. Students must beware of both the new Left and the Establishment, in a political sense, because both constitute a threat to freedom.

3. The contemporary church is under the pressures of the ecological crisis, the biological bomb, the loss of the concept of truth, the population explosion, and the manipulation of the common man by scientists, artists, and mass-media experts.

4. Christians must be revolutionary. True revolution, Schaeffer says, is a "revolution in which you are pitted against everybody who has turned away from God and His propositional revelation to men."

5. Evangelicals must take an honest look at themselves and their failures: (1) failure to relate to the character of modern society, (2) failure to enforce the silences of Scriptures about the structure of the church, (3) failure to look ahead and in resisting change,

(4) failure in what is often an unwarranted spiritual intolerance.

6. The church must be reformed and renewed. This must be done around the ideals of community and compassion. Schaeffer insists that we must specialize in "hot Christianity" in a day of cool communication. "Hot Christianity" is characterized by factual content.

This is truly a prophetic volume. It speaks to every churchman. Western culture is dying. Is the western church dying too? It speaks with particular relevance to the evangelical Christian who sincerely believes he has a divinely-appointed responsibility to aid in the renewal of the contemporary church.

Frank Bateman Stanger

Contemporary American Protestant Thought: 1900-1970, edited by William R. Miller. Indianapolis and New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1973. 567 pages. \$9.50 and \$4.75, pb.

The past decade has seen many surveys of the American theological scene. Some have dealt with creative personalities, others with identifiable movements. The value of an anthology depends largely upon the selection of its materials and its contributors, although format is likewise important. This volume, appearing posthumously, treats the theological history of our nation under four rubrics: the Progressive, the Optimistic Decade, the Years of Crisis, and "Toward the Modern Era." A section entitled "Bridging the Decades" is added.

The format involves the inclusion, presumably by the editor, of biographical sketches of representative theologians of the several epochs, followed by typical selections by these authors. The range included in this selection is surprisingly large, and the selections impress this reviewer as carefully made. Especially valuable to the continuing student is the section entitled "Bibliographical Essay," in which are listed the major creative thinkers included in the survey, together with their most representative writings.

It is seldom safe to attempt to summarize anything as mercurial as the "mood" of a volume as comprehensive as this one. However, certain traits do recur: applause for those who see contemporary man as somehow requiring "special" treatment; the avoidance of consideration of

the major thinkers identified with "The Theology of Crisis;" a general assumption of the autonomy of American theology (i.e., as affected minimally by European thinkers, particularly the crisis theologians); and a general optimism with respect to the future of theology in the post-modern era.

The reader who will bear in mind that this volume has its biases will find much that is stimulating as well as informative. The hardback edition will impress many buyers as being overpriced; the paperback issue is more nearly worth its cost. The evangelical will find his views treated almost not at all; references to historic Christianity usually occur as a foil to positions affirmatively expressed, and are not always stated objectively.

Harold B. Kuhn

The Doctrine of God in Jewish Apocryphal and Apocalyptic Literature, by Henry J. Wicks. New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1971. 371 pages. \$14.95.

This book is another volume in the KTAV reprint series—photo-mechanical reprints of important, but hard-to-find, books in the area of biblical studies. This work which first appeared in 1915 has remained in demand as a useful reference tool.

Even today it is often said, as it was in Wicks' time, that late Judaic and especially Rabbinic conceptions of God are manifestly inferior to those of Christianity. It is held that His transcendence was stressed to the exclusion of His immanence; that His justice was directed to the Jewish nation only; that the concept of God's grace was lacking. Wicks' purpose was to test these generalizations by means of an inductive study of the later Jewish literature. In order to keep the size of the work manageable, he excluded Rabbinic literature.

Having grouped the various apocryphal and apocalyptic books according to date and place of writing, the author traced the three themes mentioned above through the three centuries represented, second B.C. to first A.D. On each theme the results of his research are presented in full, first in the individual books and then in summary.

The conclusions are interesting in that they support some of the generalizations, but raise questions about others. Wicks found no support for the decrease in God's immanence. In fact, there was more evidence for angelic mediators in the earlier works than in the later ones. With respect to God's justice, he did see an increasing tendency to limit God's concern to the Jewish nation; however he did not find evidence to support the idea of an unconditional election for the Jews. Finally, he discovered that God was believed to be forgiving and that there were numerous means in addition to repentance by which this forgiveness might be obtained. However, he also found a strong stress upon the merits of external righteousness.

Probably the major value of the book is in its careful detailing of each book's attitude upon these subjects. Although it will not be of interest to many other than specialists, it will be of great value to them. KTAV is to be commended for making it available again.

John N. Oswalt

Sacrifice in the Old Testament, by George Buchanan Gray. New York: KTAV, 1971. xxxv + 434 pages. \$16.95.

The publishers are to be commended for again making available this most important volume. It is now enhanced with an excellent prolegomenon by Dr. Baruch Levine, professor of Near Eastern Studies at New York University, which contains biographical data regarding George Buchanan Gray, a survey of Gray's scholarly contributions, and a bibliographical essay of additional research and methodological trends in the study of Israel's cultus. A bibliography of Gray's writings (unfortunately in fragmented bibliographical form and poorly organized) and an elaborate, comprehensive set of indices add to the value of the volume.

This study, published in 1925 three years after the author's death, derived from the author's lecture notes. Most of the issues raised by Gray nearly fifty years ago have yet to receive definitive treatment. The work, as Levine notes (p. vii), is

. . . still an important research tool, for two main reasons: it established a sound methodology for the study of the

cult, and it is among the last fairly comprehensive statements of the subject before the advent of the archaeological revolution.

Gray investigated four major facets of the Israelite cultus: sacrifice, the altar, the priesthood, and festivals. He began in each instance with an examination of the technical terminology, proceeding to the exegesis of pertinent biblical texts and finally to other data, considering both archaeological evidence and the evidence of comparative sources. He takes into account materials ranging from the early Israelite period to the Christian and early Rabbinic periods. Throughout the discussion, the text is given primary significance. This saves him from the excesses of subjectivity and imagination that often characterize research in an area where there is a paucity of information.

Gray's exploration of the concept of sacrifice has not been superseded, although the efforts of René Dussaud, Rudolph Schmid, R. J. Thompson, and Thorkild Jacobsen deserve mention as does that of Robertson Smith. It is against Smith's "kinship theory" (animal offerings are propitious because certain animals have a kinship relation to deity) that Gray reacts. His investigation of the terminology and biblical record leads him to conclude the servant-lord relationship is that which underlies the concept of sacrifice. The offering of something personally valuable is similar to offering oneself, typified as "more often eucharistic than propitiatory," an outgrowth of the concept of covenant relationship now considered by many a central axis for Old Testament interpretation.

This tome is not a "must" for every minister's library. However, anyone doing serious study of sacrifice in the Old Testament will find here a wealth of lexical, exegetical, and historical material.

David D. Bundy

Sermons in American History. edited by DeWitte Holland. Nashville: Abingdon, 1971. 542 pages. \$11.95.

This book is a companion volume to *Preaching in American History*, published in 1969. The former volume was intended to describe and analyze some of the major topics of the American pulpit from 1630 to 1967. The purpose of *Sermons in American History* is to describe and

analyze preaching itself and to present representative sermons on the major issues covered in the first book. In both volumes the focal point is issues.

Both volumes were prepared under the auspices of the Speech Association of America. The editor of this book is Dr. DeWitte Holland, Associate Professor of Speech at Temple University. He holds a B. D. degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and a Ph.D. degree from Northwestern University. The volume is a valuable contribution to the history of preaching. It is more than an average anthology. It singles out a series of national, civil, and religious concerns from the story of America; and after a competent analysis of each issue, sermons representative of varying positions are included. Among those whose sermons are included are John Cotton and Roger Williams, William Jennings Bryan and Henry Ward Beecher, Dwight Moody and Washington Gladden, Harry Emerson Fosdick and Clarence E. Macartney, Eugene Carson Blake and Carl F. H. Henry, J. Irwin Miller and Carl McIntire.

Students of the place of religion, particularly the pulpit, in American life will find in this volume valuable source material and a balanced interpretation of the interaction of preaching and the major issues of three hundred years of our history.

Frank Bateman Stanger

Dictionary of American Philosophy, by St. Elmo Nauman, Jr. New York: Philosophical Library, 1973. 273 pages. \$9.75.

This volume seems intended to supplement two earlier works, *Dictionary of Philosophy* by Dagobert G. Runes and *Who's Who in the History of Philosophy* by Thomas Kiernan, both by the Philosophical Library. The present volume consists mainly of biographical sketches, supplemented by brief digests of the respective philosophical emphases and competences. Interspersed are a few brief characterizations of philosophical movements.

It is not easy to give an overall characterization of the entries which comprise the major part of the work. The structure of the entries suggests the author's interests. If one may evaluate philosophers by the

length of the entries descriptive of them, he would judge that Jonathan Edwards, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Charles Sanders Peirce, Albert Einstein, and Joseph Priestly were America's foremost thinkers. (Some of these were without doubt outstanding.)

The volume contains a number of portraits which add to the ability of the author to cause his heroes to live. The style is generally vivid, at times genial, at others somewhat caustic. Certainly no one interested in the general course of philosophical enquiry in America will be bored by the book. The inclusion of "the living among the dead" tends to afford continuity, not only to the format of the volume, but to the general philosophical enterprise as well. This is a valuable handbook for the person seeking to be well informed with respect to the intellectual climate of America.

Harold B. Kuhn

Pharisaism in the Making, by Louis Finkelstein. New York: KTAV, 1972. 495 pages. \$19.95.

During the last two centuries of the Second Jewish Commonwealth, the prominence of the Pharisees is attested by Josephus, the New Testament, and Rabbinic Literature. They were labeled by their enemies as the "separated ones." Pledged to strict Levitical purity, avoidance of association with the ignorant and uncultured, and to scrupulous observance of tithing, they have been the target of continual criticism. In the words of one recent writer, "The Pharisees have had 'bad press' ever since the first Christian century."

The labors of several important Jewish scholars are devoted to giving a more balanced, critical estimate of the Pharisees—based on the literary products of the Pharisaic followers. Along with A. Geiger, H. Grätz, Ginzberg, and Zeitlin, the work of Louis Finkelstein has been seminal.

Finkelstein's earlier book *The Pharisees: The Sociological Background of their Faith* (3rd ed., 1962) carried forward the economic-sociological thesis of Ginzberg.

Contrary to the common theory dating the origin of the Pharisees in the time of the Maccabees, associating them with the Hasideans, Finkelstein in 1969 demonstrated the Pharisaic movement to be in

full vigor as early as the fourth century B. C. The movement was primarily an effort to establish the authority of lay scholars whose main following was drawn from among the lower classes of Jerusalem. The merchants and workers joined the scribal class in opposing the authority of the priests and the aristocracy.

The Pharisees never regarded themselves as a sect, but considered their teachings as "Judaism." Only in debate did they distinguish themselves as "Pharisees," and probably meant by that "ascetic" (also signified by the word *parosh*).

"The Ethics of Anonymity Among the Pharisees" indicates anonymity as a firm tenet of early Pharisaism. There was only one view—"Judaism," and all agreed regarding the obligations of each Jew. Usually no more than two scholars in each generation were known. Finkelstein suggests the resultant anonymity could not have been accidental but central.

In his analysis of early sources, the author basically ignores the positive contributions of form criticism and with uncritical enthusiasm accepts the material as received. Acceptance of the economic-sociological thesis has been challenged as poor historiography. Therefore, although his work is very important, it must be read in light of a work like Jacob Neusner's *The Rabbinic Traditions About the Pharisees Before 70* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971).

All criticisms aside, Finkelstein's work will need to be consulted by the serious student of Judaism and early Christian origins.

David D. Bundy

Moses, The Servant of Yahweh, by Dewey M. Beegle. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972. 368 pages. \$7.50.

This fresh research into the Pentateuch, by the Professor of Old Testament at Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington, D.C., finds Moses to be essentially the historical leader these sources claim him to be. The author's purpose is to recover not only the real man behind the traditions, but also to provide a pattern for responsible hermeneutic.

He is committed to avoiding an uncritical use of literary sources on one hand and a hypercritical negativism on the other. This exercise in methodology appears to be basic, the focus on Moses being a means to that end. Another stated purpose, however, that of applying to current events the principles disclosed by a study of the Pentateuch, receives little attention. The text is well documented; two indices and maps on the end jackets add to the attractiveness of the volume. The author's travels in Bible lands and his participation in three archaeological expeditions (Balatah, Gezer, and Heshban) enhance the credibility of the presentation.

Few books on Moses enter more engagingly into the sequence of events in which Moses was the central figure. The retelling of the episodes, supplemented by on-the-spot descriptions and effective use of extra-biblical sources, greatly assists the reader in envisioning the life-situations recorded. The biblical accounts are enriched and often clarified by noting relevant geographical and historical data. The result is that the account does "come alive" for the Bible student: it is in this area that the author achieves his greatest success.

Beegle takes very seriously the documentary hypotheses of Pentateuchal origins. At every point he is at pains to identify the varied and complex strands which allegedly have been woven together to form the extant records: J, E, D, and P documents finalized between the tenth and sixth centuries B.C. After pointing out the excesses of Wellhausen, the author reviews the form-critics led by Gunkel, followed by the varied reactions (Cassuto, Allis, Kitchen) and continuing as redaction and rhetorical criticism. He is always discriminating, usually avoiding the "simplistic" conservatism of men like Allis, and the negativism of radicals like Noth, while adopting a mediating position like that of Albright.

Beegle's own prejudice, he confesses, ". . . is that the crucial episodes of the Old Testament were in fact actual events in which Yahweh, the God of Israel, made himself known in special ways" (p. 132). However, he distinguishes between events crucial and non-crucial, the latter being of doubtful historical veracity. In the author's words, "The biblical claims have a core of historicity, but . . . in most instances God used natural events, timed providentially, to accomplish his purpose" (private correspondence, January, 1973). Beegle is sure, for example, that an actual exodus occurred through the muck of the Red Sea effected by a powerful southeast wind. The abating of the wind, resulting in a return of the water, mired the chariots of the pursuing

Egyptians; and the fugitives viewed with relief the corpses of the drowned on the lake shore. The author concludes that such details as the "wall of water" on either side, the **division** of the waters, and the claim that "none" of the Egyptians survived are later literary embellishments not to be taken literally. He concludes, "The biblical narrative claims only that Yahweh performed his wonder of deliverance by natural means of his own creation" (p.161).

He finds the traditions of the plagues to be a combination of J and P documents, and accepts most of the conclusions of Greta Hort (1957-58): that the plagues have an historical core and that their sequence is causally related. On the basis of an Egyptian text, which reports the occurrence of the blood-red Nile, Beegle concludes that the redness of the Nile, in this instance, was caused by a flood which washed down red soil from Ethiopia; this soil, together with toxic red algae, would account for the death of the fish. The miracle, concludes the author, lay in its timing. The dead fish resulted in poisonous anthrax bacillus which brought about the migration of the frogs to the houses and their subsequent death.

The ensuing plagues were natural phenomena, resulting from these conditions, and extending from September until the following spring. The mosquitoes, resulting from the puddles left by the flood, were followed by the flies hatched from the rotting vegetation of the flood; the cattle were poisoned from grazing where the frogs had been, and flies carried the anthrax spores which infected humans and livestock during January. The plague of hail came in February. Locusts were brought later by the *sirocco* wind from the moistened regions to the southeast. In March, winds from the desert caused a blinding sandstorm and the three days of darkness, the hills protecting the land of Goshen from that darkness. The death of the firstborn is presumed by Beegle to have resulted from a plague caused by "perhaps some infection related to the anthrax of the previous plagues."

The sudden death of Korah and 250 rebels, described by the Bible as caused by the earth opening to swallow them alive (Num. 16:15-34) is interpreted by Beegle as death by an unknown cause. As to the budding of Aaron's rod, the author finds it impossible to determine even "the core event." Repeatedly, however, he finds it necessary to protest against the conclusions of negative critics, such as Noth; he insists on the historical nucleus of the event, yet seldom adheres to a literal acceptance of the narrative. Much time is spent in trying to unravel the various literary stands and in deciding which critical theory,

if any, is preferable. Exodus and Numbers receive most of the author's attention; less time is spent on Deuteronomy and very little on Leviticus. Seldom is the New Testament invoked as an aid in interpreting the Pentateuch. On the basis of internal evidence, Beegle concludes that Moses was directly responsible for about one-fifth of the Pentateuch; the five books are "Mosaic," but not by Moses.

As evidence that much of Deuteronomy reflects ideas of the kingdom period, rather than originating with Moses, the author lists the command to worship at only one sanctuary and to bring the tithes to a central sanctuary. Also the prohibitions against the king's amassing gold, horses, and wives were apparently ignored until the excesses of Solomon and his resultant apostasy. Likewise, prohibitions against association with Moabites (Deut. 23:3-6) were ignored by Naomi and David (I Sam. 22:3,4). (The Book of Ruth, incidentally, is regarded by many critical scholars as post-exilic.) Beegle recognizes that "some of the so-called assured results of critical study are actually based on very slippery, subjective reasoning," while "archaeology has shown that the biblical tradition is essentially reliable" (p.30).

In 1952 Beegle argued (*Inspiration of Scripture*) that evangelicals need not, and cannot honestly, adhere to the view of biblical inerrancy. Now he seeks to demonstrate that scholarship which deals honestly with all the evidence ends up with a Bible that is credible in "essentials".

Many will feel that he gives too little evidence to the super-natural and too much to the timing of natural events. In Beegle's judgment, are the "mighty acts" of Yahweh, which ancient Israel attributed to a miraculous intervention by their God, more than natural events providentially timed? How can timing alone account for the impression which these events made on posterity? If Beegle can accept New Testament claims regarding the Virgin Birth and the physical resurrection of Jesus, why can he not accept more of the Old Testament claims? He believes that "the critics have not given a satisfactory answer" to the disciples' change of conduct after Pentecost (private correspondence, January, 1973), but has he given a satisfactory explanation of the profound influence of the Exodus and attendant "mighty acts" on Old Testament poetry, prophecy, and apocalyptic? Does he avoid the "slippery, subjective reasoning" he deplores in others? To what extent does Beegle share the perspective of the New Testament writers, e.g., the assessment of Balaam's character (II Pet. 2:13; Jude 11; Rev. 2:14)? To draw upon sources contemporary with the Pentateuch is most commendable, but should not he have noted in passing the

influence of the Exodus, the brazen serpent, and the “prophet” (Deut. 18:15) on writers of the New Testament (e.g., I Cor. 10:1–14; John 1:21; 3:14)? Does his **Moses** give due recognition of the priority of Abraham over Moses in New Testament theology (e.g., John 1:17; 8:39, 56; Rom. 4:1–5; Gal. 4:13–22; James 2:21)? On balance the book presents a constructive approach; it will probably have a wide circulation.

George A. Turner