



**“1984” REVISITED: TOTALITARIANISM IN OUR CENTURY**, ed. by Irving Howe. New York: Harper & Row, 1983. Pp. x+ 276. \$10.95 (cloth); \$3.50 (paper).

Who better to recall George Orwell in this way than Irving Howe? With his newest anthology, he returns to Orwell for at least the third time in his distinguished career, earlier accounts having been rendered in *Politics and the Novel* (1949) and in a memorable review of Orwell's *Collected Essays, Letters and Journalism* that first appeared in *Harper's* (January 1969). In his recent autobiography, *A Margin of Hope* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982), Howe tells us how much he has been influenced, both as a critic and a citizen, by Orwell. We learn that he searched for his own prose voice, and a most lucid and compelling voice it is, with Orwell's exemplary prose in mind. And along with Edmund Wilson, Orwell became one of the critics whom Howe has most admired because they recognized, as Howe also has in his own work, the importance of literary criticism as a form of public discourse uniquely suited to a democracy. But more than this, Orwell is for Howe among those few writers who are our “crucial witnesses,” for having “listened to the time in which we live” as he did, for having been aware of the “special terribleness” of our century (349-350).

Some of the terribleness that Orwell captured in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* seems by now to have been lost from view, as more than one contributor to this collection observes. But this is a tribute to the vitality of Orwell's interpretation of our time, which is their point.

In 1949, for example, Howe characterized *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as a book that we would not normally return to because it is unforgettable in its terrible details: we neither want to, nor do we have to, reread it. By now, however, our experience with Orwell's story is different, because we have blandly accepted many of the things he warned us against. We should be shocked, but habitually are not, by the “familiarity” of what Orwell describes, for “we have come a long way in domesticating the idea of a total state” (5).

That the story no longer terrifies us is the point of departure for Mark Crispin Miller's intellectually dramatic essay, “The Fate of 1984.” The “disappearance” of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, he says, beneath the ceaseless flood of “brand-new atrocities” supplied by our public life, should show us that Orwell's vision is profoundly accurate: his novel “evokes...the very forces that have finally vaporized it” (20-21). But if today we no longer recognize the difference between the world of Orwell's story and our own, this fact reflects a cardinal feature of life in his Oceania, where there are “no differences,” a most important refrain in the story, as Miller so keenly points out. Thus “the trivialization” of Orwell's text in our day “makes our world seem no different from the world within the text” (43).

If we were to recover the differences about which Orwell cared, the ones that would enable us to be properly horrified by his story and otherwise to be discriminating about politics, we would first have to rescue our language from its present deplorable state. This is the subject of Bernard Avishai's fine essay, “Orwell and the English Language.” He reminds us in various

ways of how important a matter language is in Orwell's story, even concluding that "our permanent interest in Orwell does derive from his elaborate despair over the corruption of English" (71). Were he alive today, of course, he would have even more reason to despair, for we have not needed a Ministry of Truth to mangle words and destroy their meaning. Instead, we witlessly do this in other ways, often with help from our jargon-laden "disciplines" and from various institutions, among them schools, colleges, and universities, perhaps even seminaries.

It is a matter for regret that this stimulating anthology of Howe's is not also graced by John Wain's mature and rewarding essay, "Dear George Orwell: A Personal Letter" (*The American Scholar*, Winter 1982/83). But it is still a good collection, as it stands. Most of its essays, it should be noted, are not textual studies in any sense, some mentioning Orwell's story itself only in passing or not at all. But each of them deals, in one way or another, as Leszek Kolakowski does with particular distinction in "Totalitarianism and the Virtue of the Lie," with the question that Orwell posed, of whether totalitarianism is not the distinctive contribution of our century to the political history of the world.

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**A HOME FOR THE HOMELESS: A SOCIOLOGICAL EXEGESIS OF I PETER, ITS SITUATION AND STRATEGY**, by John Elliott. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981. Pp. 306. \$24.95.

Someone with the eyes of a sociologist looks over the landscape of early Christianity from a fresh vantage point. The new angle of vision takes in a larger panorama and reveals hitherto unseen contours and dimensions, thus leading to a reassessment of the topography. In recent years, some Biblical scholars have adopted a sociological perspective on the social organization, the social forces, and the social world of meaning of early Christianity. The insights resulting from this wide and illuminating point of view are a welcome advance in Biblical studies.

In this innovative study of I Peter, John Elliott unites several sociological approaches into a "sociological exegesis" in order to determine *what* the sociological circumstances of the text were, *why* the text arose, and *how* it was meant to function in context. Elliott claims a Petrine group in Rome wrote I Peter sometime between 73 and 92 (after Peter's death) to Christians in the predominantly rural provinces of Asia Minor north and west of Taurus in order to encourage them in the midst of conflict and at the same time to strengthen their own position of leadership in the church at large.

The key to Elliott's sociological exegesis is twofold: he considers I Peter's language about "aliens" to be a reference to the *social situation* of the recipients, and he interprets "household" terminology in the letter to be part of the author's *strategy* in responding to that social situation.

Elliott argues that I Peter's address to the readers as "aliens and strangers" (2:11) points not to a cosmological exile of Christians from their heavenly home (as traditionally understood)

but to the actual situation of the addressees in society—displaced aliens and visiting strangers in Asia Minor who have become Christians. In Roman society, aliens were politically and legally inferior, economically deprived, and socially outcast. According to Elliott, it is this social disjuncture of aliens in relation to society (not Roman persecution) which accounts for the suffering referred to in the letter. By virtue of their status, such aliens and visiting strangers were already in conflict with society and needing a community. It is these people, Elliott argues, who had come to make up the Christian sect which received this letter.

Informed by the work of the Oxford sociologist Bryan Wilson, Elliott hypothesizes the features of the “conversionist” Christian sect reflected in the letter: a familial-like community, voluntary and egalitarian, yet nonetheless demanding absolute allegiance, and separated from ordinary societal ties. Paradoxically, joining such a strange, exclusive, and proselytizing sect—a sect probably perceived as potentially dangerous to the public order and welfare—would only have exacerbated the already offensive “alien” status of its members. The main difficulty of this situation addressed by the letter, according to Elliott, was that societal hostility and pressure to conform were creating a sharp external conflict between the sect and society and also threatening to undermine the internal cohesiveness of the sect.

According to Elliott, the “strategy” of the letter as a response to the situation was to use the social conflict (rather than avoid it) as a way to solidify the group and enable it to have an identity in con-

trast to society. The letter does so by emphasizing the group’s distinctiveness as God’s elect over against the world. By depicting Christians as a “holy nation” and “royal priesthood,” I Peter encouraged aliens to see their separate, alien status as a divine vocation in the world. The letter also encouraged love, hospitality, and household service as a means to promote group cohesion. The authors hoped that the resulting behavior among group members as well as the willingness to endure innocently society’s persecutions would not only unify the group internally but would also serve as a witness to convert those in society.

Elliott argues that the primary ideological means to accomplish this strategy was to promote the Christian community as the “household of God.” The letter uses household language—including talk about husbands, wives, children, slaves and servants, and household codes—to depict the Christian community on the model of a household. This strategy of the letter addresses the socially estranged condition of the recipients and their need as aliens by offering them “a home for the homeless.” Such a Christian experience enabled members to see the answer to their alien estate to be a place within the Christian family. In this way, the letter simultaneously solidified the community over against the outside world and also unified it internally. Elliott claims that Christianity prevailed in the ancient world partly because the experience of Christianity as a close-knit household was an appealing alternative not only in relation to an isolated alien status but also in comparison to the temple, the synagogue, or the Roman family.

Elliott’s book makes many contributions. His sociological exegesis expands the common model of exegesis (inferring the situation from the letter and then asking how the letter addresses it) by dealing with social forces of conflict, the larger societal picture, and sectarian analysis, as well as by analyzing the “strategy” (rather than intention) and the “ideology” (instead of

theology) of the letter. His historical and sociological studies of ancient households and of alien status in the Roman Empire are extremely helpful. [The J. P. V. D. Balsdon book, *Romans and Aliens* (Chapel Hill, 1979) was not available.] The result is a fresh and illuminating interpretation of I Peter.

Although Elliott's book is quite readable, it is marred by repetition. Also his heuristic use of sectarian models is somewhat simplistic, since early Christianity shares characteristics not of just one but several sectarian "types" treated in Bryan Wilson's sociological analysis. Nor does Elliott fully use the tools of "sociology of knowledge" in order to put the ideology of household into the larger conceptual world of the letter, especially in relation to its apocalyptic mentality. But these criticisms are not substantive for a book which is innovative both in its method and content.

Happily, Elliott's study of I Peter is not only for Biblical scholars and those interested in sociology; it is also an offering to the church. Ministers will benefit from this study of such an important dimension of early Christian experience. For in an age of rootlessness and mobility, an image of the church as the household of God's family is urgently needed.

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**THE EVOLUTION OF CHRISTOLOGY**, by Thor Hall. Nashville: Abingdon, 1982. Pp. 128. \$5.25 (paper).

Can traditional Christological formulations be maintained in light of contemporary understandings of reality indebted to Einstein and the heightened appreciation of religious pluralism? If not, what sort of Christology is appropriate in our present situation? Thor Hall, a Norwegian Methodist who teaches at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, believes that it is necessary to rethink Christology in response to our present situation (12, 29). *The Evolution of Christology* is his endeavor to indicate how this might be done.

One of Hall's basic presuppositions is that all theology is relative to the life-situation in which it is formulated. As such, Christological reflection is a dynamic and developing process, which must continue into the present (28-29,

12). To facilitate this process Hall endeavors to analyze the dynamics of the early church's Christological reflection in order to inform his own proposal for a Christology that is relevant to our contemporary situation and faithful to the Christian tradition (29-30, 12). The initial chapters of *The Evolution of Christology* are devoted to this project. Hall identifies and analyzes four distinct stages in the New Testament's development of Christology (30-32). Then in the final chapters he proceeds to sketch the rudiments of his own proposal. In essence he proposes to make Christology more relevant to our present situation by "broadening" it and related doctrines, so that Christology includes *all* manifestations of God's redemptive activity in the universe. In so doing he posits a kind of "cosmic Christ principle" with Jesus as only one of many manifestations of this principle (108, 124, 27). A number of problems emerge for this reviewer

from this seemingly innocent proposal.

First it must be said, however, that although the problem addressed by this book, and its constructive proposal for dealing with the problem are not original, the book possesses several attractive features. It nicely poses the challenges raised for Christian faith by religious pluralism, the theory of relativity, and space science. These issues will not easily be ignored by theologians and pastors once they have read the book. Another attractive feature is the engaging style and imagery with which Hall writes. This factor coupled with Hall's avoidance of much technical language suggests that the book can be read with profit by non-specialists. He writes so persuasively in his analysis of the development of New Testament Christology that these chapters of the book (2-5) could function as a kind of introduction to the topic.

Despite these virtues several hard questions pertaining both to Hall's method and his conclusions must be raised. There are some troublesome matters in regard to his use of Scripture in the analysis of New Testament Christology. It is never really made clear to what extent the Synoptic accounts, upon which he bases his own proposal, are grounded in history or are mere myth. This disclarity is no doubt related to Hall's methodological ambiguity about the relationship he envisions between Christian symbols and human experience. At times one is led to suspect that he posits Christian symbols and human experience as dual criteria for theology in a kind of "critical correlation" akin to that of Schillebeeckx, Tracy, or even Ebeling (111, 29). At other points he seems to ground Christian faith in experience (10, 56, 87-88) as thoroughly as Tillich's method of correlation, which he eschews (22). Such disclarity is made more problematic by Hall when he notes affinities between his understanding of religious experience and that of Feuer-

bach (121). Contrary to Hall's intentions the reader is often led to the unsavory conclusion that the author has reduced Christian faith to mere human experience, to a kind of naturalism. These suspicions are further heightened by Hall's own Christological and Trinitarian proposals. They are perhaps the most troublesome part of the book.

Thus in his effort to "enlarge" the doctrine of Holy Spirit in order to deal more effectively with religious pluralism and challenges of the space-age Hall suggests that the Spirit should be regarded as poured out on all creation, not merely as a gift given only to believers (108, 126). It does not seem possible to identify this proposal with the New Testament's witness to the eschatological and Christological character of the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:17, 23; Jn. 14:16ff.). More troublesome, though, is Hall's suggestion that Christ be regarded as a cosmic principle, so that Jesus of Nazareth is seen as one but not the only incarnation of God in the universe (108, 124-125). Little remains here of the distinct character of Christian faith. In its place Hall has offered a naive natural religion with a god who seems to be revealed by all dimensions of the universal order, and so is accessible apart from Jesus of Nazareth. Precisely why a new space-age appreciation of the immensity of the universe excludes the possibility that God has redeemed the universe through unique events on an insignificant planet like earth is a question which Hall does not consider. His failure to deal with this issue seriously compromises the book's value for the Christian community.

In fairness to Hall it must be noted that he does not portray his constructive proposals as complete, but as mere outlines for a theology for the future (104, 107). Nevertheless further

elaboration of his proposal would be welcome in order to clarify the unhappy conclusions of this otherwise worthwhile book.

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**GOD-CHRIST-CHURCH: A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO PROCESS THEOLOGY**, by Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki. New York: Crossroad, 1982. Pp. 237. \$9.95 (paper).

This book is a very practical application of the process approach to central theological issues. The dynamic and often complex perspective on God and the world that is drawn from Whitehead's process philosophy is put forward in a clear and down-to-earth manner. Professor Suchocki is at her very best when she is reaching for concrete illustrations which can illuminate both process categories and the Christian faith.

The author proceeds by developing, in the first two chapters, a relational model for thinking about faith, and then applies that model with notable consistency to the central set of Christian theological doctrines. Sin, revelation, God, Christ, church, social justice and prayer are all major topics. Her use of the process model in respect to all of these is illuminating. In some cases the treatment is exceedingly helpful. For example, her use of the social inheritance features of process thought to interpret the classic Christian doctrine of original sin is especially impressive. The section on prayer is also an unusual contribution to current discussions of that facet of the life of faith. In every case, her treatment opens up issues, and even when I didn't agree with her conclusion (as in the proposal that we dispense with Father, Son and Spirit language because of its historical relativity) I found her approach generating new insights.

Books of this sort may be well described by a set of positive and critical reactions that show their impetus for further dialogue.

#### *Positive*

1) The use of process thought is much more exploratory and less doctrinaire than one might expect. The author is not imposing process categories dogmatically, but inviting us to see what they can help us notice and articulate. She invites us to look again at our faith and experience with the help of process philosophy as a tool.

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2) Traditional theological concerns control the content of the book, rather than letting technical philosophical problems or language take center stage. This book is a serious, systematic approach to theology, and not primarily an introduction to process thought. Its appeal to concrete experience in examples makes theological insights available whether or not one is sold on the philosophical perspective.

3) God is not restricted in this presentation in the way that sometimes happens in process discussions. The world has an effect on God, but the insistence that God is limited to the persuasive mode of activity or to a given metaphysical system does not overpower the classic Christian frame of reference.

*Critical*

1) The process model seems to work well for the issues that are more dependent on general revelation. Sin, knowledge and the ‘question’ of God work out better than the atonement and Christology. My impression was that too much was being expected of process thought, so at times some turn to complementary thought forms might be essential. Indeed, the author’s appeal to qualitative differences at the end of the book might be just such a qualification of process insights.

2) At the point of Christology, I had serious problems with the author’s claim that nothing strictly human could be attributed to the Divine (104). Throughout the book a definition of idolatry is at work which takes the elevation of anything finite to ultimate worth as inappropriate. While such a view has hosts of supporters in the theological world, the incarnation can also be understood as the radical affirmation of a permanent identification of God with the human. In that case, Christianity carries the burden of anthropomorphism gladly.

Suppose idolatry is not elevating something finite to divine worth. If humans have no choice but to use something from their experience to characterize God, then idolatry could be the use of less appropriate human and finite characteristics. Calling God unfaithful would be inappropriate; calling God faithful would be appropriate. Both of these statements attribute something experienced in people to God. The issue is which one!

3) In the end, I was concerned that Jesus didn’t turn out to be decisive for the world view expressed. Sometimes it seemed like the real ground for our confidence in God’s love was process philosophy and the impressive ‘harmony’ of its categories. For example: “The dynamics of the process model force a strict application of the revelation on the cross to the nature of God” (106). I would think it ought to be the other way around. The cross calls for a strict application of its revelation of the nature of God and if process can help—fine. I believe that this ties in with the previous critical concern. If the human Jesus as one particular, finite person does not give us a new understanding of God as permanently bound to the human, then Jesus is more dispensable than Christians have thought. Indeed, he can seem to be a barrier to the universality of faith just because of his historical and human features. The author seems to want to keep Jesus in the center, yet without allowing his particularity to make any other claim about God ‘wrong,’ or even ‘unredemptive.’ She seems to take comfort in a universality that waters down all particularity, including the pivotal character of Jesus. That helps us get beyond some traditional sexism, but I think it needs to be looked at again. Even in terms of process philosophy, one could take another approach in which precisely the uniqueness of Jesus is the ground for celebration of the diversity of an human beings. In order for Jesus to be Savior he will not have to be black, or female, or modern to liberate. Neither will it help much for him to be beyond all historical distinctions. He will have to be the particular human he was in order to demonstrate effectively God’s affirmation of an of us. Because of him we can an be ourselves—in new circumstances and with our appropriate ‘uniqueness.’

It should be evident from my remarks that this book touches issues that go well beyond process thought. It makes me want to converse with the author—what more can you expect of a book?

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**SPIRIT AND MARTYRDOM**, by William C. Weinrich. Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1981. Pp. 334. \$11.75 (paper).

This is a slightly revised version of a dissertation submitted to the faculty of the University of Basel, with Bo Reicke as advisor and Oscar Cullman as reader, which examines the role of the Holy Spirit in the contexts of persecution and Christian martyrdom up to Tertullian (d. 220-240).

Weinrich first discusses Old Testament and inter-testamental literature in which references are found to Spirit, but he concludes the Spirit had little to do with persecution in pre-Christian Jewish literature. Then he examines the role of the Spirit in the New Testament, and points out that the Spirit is always associated with ideas of proclamation and judgement, together with a Christological emphasis. Throughout the New Testament the lordship of Christ forms the background of the Spirit's work in the context of persecution. In Ignatius of Antioch there is a close connection between the Eucharist and participation in Christ's passion, seen as part of Ignatius' polemic against the docetists. It was refreshing to read an account which finds Ignatius basically sane and theologically coherent; this seems to be rare among patristic scholars. In treating Polycarp's martyrdom, the author first offers an exhaustive treatment of the commentaries which have been written on Polycarp, and concludes that his death was in keeping with God's call to obedience and faithfulness, and that his death was for the strengthening and edification of the Christian community. All early martyrdoms had an ecclesial and Christological foundation, which of necessity included the dimension of the Holy Spirit.

The martyrs of Lyons and Vienne represent a commentary on Romans 8:18, in that the sufferings of this present age cannot compare to the glory which shall be revealed. The glory is that of Christ who conquered death and Satan, but who is now the resurrected Lord of the Church. When dealing with Perpetua, Felicity and their friends, he suggests the martyrology was not a Montanist writing, and that Tertullian had no hand in its composition, thereby calling into question what has been accepted teaching among many students of the early church. In dealing with Tertullian he finds a distance from earlier themes. Tertullian, and to some extent Perpetua and Felicity, see Christian martyrdom essentially as the obedience to have no other gods, but the Spirit is not involved. For Tertullian, martyrdom was essentially a gladiatorial combat which the believer faces alone in order to prove worthy of reward. He concludes that the earlier Christological and eschatological perspective began to wane by 200 A.D., as martyrdom began to be seen as a courageous exercise of human will on behalf of the truth, which tended to ignore the Holy Spirit and the community.

This is an impressively scholarly treatise and makes significant contributions to the study of early Christian martyrs. Because it retains the dissertation format, being photo-reproduced by University Press of America with all the necessary footnotes of a doctoral thesis, together with some extended passages in foreign languages, it may not recommend itself to the "average" reader. The conclusion that in two centuries the Church's martyrology went from a more Pauline concept of identification with Christ and the Spirit to one of gladiatorial combat for rewards is intriguing. However, one cannot help but feel a gnawing sense of unease when Ignatius sees his martyrdom as "getting to God," "becoming a man," or "becoming a true Christian."

Weinrich displays a mastery of source material and an impressive command of the literature on the topic. His seventeen-page bibliography is the best I have seen on the subject of

martyrdom. This work is a solid contribution to studies in early Christianity. I hope, however, that he will find the time to offer his scholarship in a more readable and popular edition, dispensing with the scholarly apparatus, in order to permit more readers to have access to this important story. It is timely, as there have been more martyrs for the faith since 1900 than in all the previous years. Weinrich has the knowledge and the skill to tell us this story.

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**GUILT AND GRATITUDE: A STUDY OF THE ORIGINS OF CONTEMPORARY CONSCIENCE**, by Joseph Amato. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982. Pp. 218. \$27.50.

It is particularly interesting that, at a time when the relativist theory of value has gained the ascendancy and has consigned the idea of conscience to the historical scrapheap, a historian should revive this apparently antiquated notion and should define modern consciousness in terms of it. "Divided conscience," argues Joseph Amato, professor of history at Southwest State University in Marshall, Minnesota, "is itself the condition of being a contemporary" (xix).

The question which this book addresses is, Who owes what to whom? Is our indebtedness primarily to the past and to the sacrifices made on our behalf by those who have preceded us? If so, then the origin of conscience and that which gives shape both to conscience and to culture is gratitude. Or, is our indebtedness directed toward the future, toward the idea of progress and unfulfilled potentialities? If this is the case, then, argues Professor Amato, conscience originates in guilt over the fact that we have not actualized the good sufficiently. If the American Legion symbolizes conscience shaped by gratitude for past sacrifices, then those who undergo the discipline of education in the liberal arts tradition symbolize the conscience which is future-oriented and shaped by guilt. The author argues that, in fact, every person's conscience, as well as the cultures of Western Europe and the United States, is shaped by the competing and conflicting claims of guilt and gratitude. To live in the modern, industrialized West is to live caught up in the divisive claims of guilt and gratitude.

Amato traces the source of this conflict to the 18th century philosophers of the Enlightenment, the founders of modern secular culture. The philosophers of the heavenly city challenged the traditional culture of gratitude by positing the belief in progress as a new religious faith and by replacing the *corpus mysticum Christi* with the *corpus mysticum humanitas*. Salvation now consisted in transcending the past and its claims of gratitude and moving into the promising future. "Conscience was torn from the past and thrown into the future. The only gratitude they recognized as being legitimate was that which could be repaid by service to the future. The only guilt worthy of having was that which pushed them to make humanity all that it could be" (69). The Enlightenment supplied the vision, Romanticism extended the sympathies of the human heart to include all humanity, and the French and Industrial Revolutions removed all doubt that humanity was indeed its own creator and redeemer.

The new conscience, with its forward-looking optimism and its dream of constructing a purely immanent Kingdom of God, became the driving force of the socialist visions proclaimed by Saint-Simon and Marx, but it showed up again over a century later, argues Amato, in the New

Frontier proclaimed by John Kennedy and in the counter-cultural movements of the 1960s. The United States, it is contended, is the official creation, the *magnum opus*, of the 18th century philosophical vision. American mythology portrays this nation as the innocent servant of universal redemptive history. The history of the 19th and 20th centuries in Europe and America is the story of the nationalization of the 18th century philosopher's vision. The heavenly city has been transmuted into the modern nation-state with its frightening acquisition of power, its manipulation of national symbols, and its call to the bloody sacrifices of war. Amato views the Vietnam War as a watershed of sorts. This event called America's messianism into question when it exposed the tragic waste of that war. During the 1960s, the guilt of the children collided with the gratitude of the parents.

Professor Amato writes from a perspective he calls tragic optimism, a perspective shaped by his studies of Emmanuel Mournier and Henry Adams. He calls for a conscience for our time which is characterized by humility and tolerance and which he hopes will lead us away from the terrible strangeness which exists among us.

*Guilt and Gratitude* is a fascinating and creative interweaving of many themes drawn from European and American history of the past three hundred years. Amato has brought together an aston-

ishing array of scholarly insights from a variety of fields in this admirable analysis of modern Western experience. He has, in effect, extended the work of Robert Bellah by connecting American civil religion with the past three hundred years of European history. The reader will also be interested in Amato's depiction of the peasant's response to the rising power of the nation-state, particularly in fascist Italy.

To those of us who cut our theological eyeteeth on the theology of hope, it may sound strange to hear the future being described in terms of guilt. And we may wonder about the author's affirmation of a faith in progress at the end of the book as a necessary wager in the face of cynicism. I think, however, that the discussion of these two themes in the final chapter of the book should help us as theologians avoid a too facile proclamation of hope and an equally facile dismissal of the idea of progress. *Guilt and Gratitude* makes for interesting and necessary reading for an understanding of the context in which we minister.

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**SELF-ESTEEM: THE NEW REFORMATION**, by Robert Schuller. Waco: Word Books, 1982. Pp. 177. \$7.95.

This is a hard book to put down. In America, self-esteem and success have joined the flag, motherhood, and apple pie as unassailable values, unquestioned goods.

There is a kind of elusive charm to this book's systematic ambiguity. Its conceptually iridescent notions of ego, sin, the Cross, self-esteem and success are played and replayed under a variety of guises. If the reader is patient, doubtless some cloaking will please him or her.

For instance, Schuller says success may be "that happy and humble feeling of pride and

self-esteem we feel when we have helped someone else along life's way" (120). Or it may be being "at the top of the ladder" (85). The reader is told that the "Cross sanctifies the ego trip" so that "if we follow God's plan for our lives as faithfully as we can, we will feel good

about ourselves. That's success!" (75, 76). Success is also the result of learning to "hatch, harbor, and handle creative thoughts" (85).

Schuller warns that "ambitious possibility thinkers are a threat to the less motivated" (121) but he says that the peak human experience, the "self-affirming success experience," can come only with cross-bearing. To bear the cross is also to risk willingly a publicly humiliating failure, but just as Jesus, the world's greatest possibility thinker, risked and shouldered it, so should the faithful Christian. "Jesus was enthusiastic about the success potential of the enterprise," and "by extension so too should people today be enthusiastic about the success potential of their enterprises" (119).

The message of *Self-Esteem* is a mass-market potpourri with something for everyone. At its heart, Schuller's message is a theology based on something like the needs of the life-insurance industry. Selling life-insurance is for most a daunting task and, given that most people do not want to see insurance salesmen, the salesmen need to be motivated. A whole American industry has arisen to provide such salesmen with support and to create in them enthusiasm for their task. Larger applications of this are possible, as Amway and Schuller illustrate.

As with all good marketing, demand determines product and product reinforces demand. There is, in America, a strong market for optimism, good feelings, and cheerfulness. But ironically, cheerfulness and its associates are harsh gods, as Chesterton's Father Brown remarked. If it is God's plan that everyone have high self-esteem and great success, then it follows that those who don't have no one to blame but themselves. In his Church Leadership series, Schuller proclaimed that no one was born a genius or retarded; who one is is the product or projection of determined will on one's environment. With the correct positive mental attitude, anyone can do anything. If one is poor, dull, or invalid, apparently that is what the person has determined for himself or herself. Apparently, finitude can be overcome by possibility thinking.

Evil for Schuller is lack of self-esteem, lack of possibility thinking, lack of trust. Self-esteem is the universal hope (145). There is no place for the tragic dimension.

One might note that the religion of the Cross has always lived with the multiple meanings of "sanguine" but, in this book, with Schuller's "self-esteem crowned by possibility thinking," unbridled California cheerfulness conquers all.

I suspect that it is a practical advantage that the author displays no dialectical sense, no hint of the tensions that lurk in concepts like "ego," "success," "guilt," "self-esteem," and even "the Cross." In entrepreneurial religion, one does not prosper by calling TV audiences to live courageously with terrible tensions of faith when easy answers will suffice.

The importance of a book such as this is that it reveals important cultural and theological phenomena. Schuller should be studied as an incarnation of a certain type of middle-class consciousness, aspiring and anxious, death-denying and failure-denying. He represents the ethos of limitless aspiration in the land of endless summer.

He constructs this ethos by denigrating pre-Schuller church life and theology; previous thought and practice is dismissed as shallow and as "negative thinking." His claim is that this

theology of self-esteem ushers in a new and finally well-grounded church and age.

Martin Marty once remarked that Schuller was giving optimism a bad name. In this book, self-esteem—essentially undistinguished from unbridled ego, pride, *hubris*, and *chutzpa*—is likewise tarnished.

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**OUR STORY ACCORDING TO ST. MARK**, by William H. Barnwell. Minneapolis: Winston, 1982. Pp. 298. \$9.95 (paper).

The author sets himself a challenging task: to weave together a commentary on the entire Gospel of Mark, to share a number of personal experiences relating

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them to phrases and pericopes in the Gospel and to prepare a set of discussion questions and exercises for groups reading his book. This is all attempted in less than 300 pages of large type. Considering these severe parameters it is not surprising that there are some successes, some failures and some components in between.

At times the commentary on the Gospel is very helpful, particularly when it fills in the historical background of a narrative. Tacitus' account of Nero's persecution (9), the synagogue in Capernaum (42) and farming in Palestine (94) are several examples. Elsewhere there is not enough discussion and clarification. This is true particularly in the passion narrative. Inevitably there are interpretations with which the reviewer does not agree. Probably the most noteworthy one is the conclusion that it is not completely clear from Mark whether Jesus was consciously instituting the Eucharist (245). In general, the commentary would have been better with less interpretative paraphrasing of the text itself and more relevant historical background.

The second strand in this work is "personal response" and it is certainly the most interesting. On every second or third page is a story, reflection or observation from the author's own life and experience. Many of them come from his personal life, his work in prisons and hospitals and his involvement in the civil rights and anti-war movements of past decades. These contemporary pericopes are his contribution to "our story" and are intended to encourage a similar sharing of personal responses from the readers.

It is probably not fair to render any kind of judgment on someone else's personal responses. Each member of the body of Christ is unique. But, it did concern the reviewer that the point of comparison was not always the point which the Gospel itself was making. The personal responses often failed to recognize the uniqueness of the story told in the Gospel and the person who stands in the center of it. There is a definite once-for-all dimension to the healings, the transfiguration, the person of Christ and his suffering, death and resurrection. The story of Christ cannot be merely imitated. It is the good news that has happened *for us*. It was a disappointment that no commentary or personal response appeared after a key text (10:45): "For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Mark was an evangelist telling the special good news about the unique person. It is the lack of sensitivity to

this central reality which makes Barnwell's work a disappointment.

It is difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of the questions and exercises without trying them out in a group. They seem to be quite promising. One of the most intriguing exercises (266) was the suggestion that a study group read the passion history in short sections with a five minute period of silent meditation after each pericope. After the silence each person in the group shares his or her response with no discussion or evaluation by others in the group. Most of the discussion questions ask the readers to share their personal responses to a viewpoint in the book. At the end of the book is a helpful outline of learning objectives for each of the twelve chapters.

The Christology which emerges from this work leaves the reviewer troubled. It is a viewpoint which permeates many of the interpretations and finally becomes explicit in the summary (272-279). Jesus asks, "But who do you say that I am?" The author attempts to avoid what he calls the extremes of the Docetics and Arians and his difficulties with the formulations of the councils of the fourth and fifth centuries. His solution is to conclude that what makes Jesus divine is the fact that he and God are *one in love*. "I say you are God's love made flesh.. As I walk through life to the going down of the sun, your love will keep me safe" (279). The confession of the church says more than this!

Finally, every author serves his or her reader well by bringing new perspectives and appreciation. This review would be incomplete unless that fact is recognized. One insight is a heightened awareness of the situation facing Mark's first readers living through persecution and fear in the city of Rome. It is like reading the Gospel from a whole new point of view—one

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which lies close to revelation. Another emphasis is the revolutionary atmosphere which existed in Jerusalem when our Lord entered the city for his final days.

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**AN INTRODUCTION TO PROTESTANT THEOLOGY**, by Helmut Gollwitzer.  
Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982. Pp. 240. \$12.95 (paper).

Helmut Gollwitzer, well known student and friend of Karl Barth, and once his successor to the chair of theology at Bonn University, concluded his regular teaching in the summer of 1975 at the Free University in Berlin. This book contains his lectures from that last term. It is really a summary and record of Gollwitzer's own theological venture. He calls it "a balancing of accounts." In separate chapters he discusses the Bible, Christ, God, the church, grace, faith and prayer, and calls for an interfaith dialogue between Christianity and Judaism. This gives his volume the scope to justify the title, but his particular interest is the understanding of theology and theological existence, the Kingdom of God, and the church's task in the world.

Gollwitzer, like his teacher Barth, views theology as an inquiring and critical science bound to the witness of scripture. Only when theology is free to ask questions and provide new formulations can it truly serve the university discipline and the evangelical function of the church. Theology must be free and remain free, says Gollwitzer, because the church stands in

continual need of new theoretical formulations. The theologians' labors are never done. The Christian community cannot depend on earlier declarations and theories. "All human words and sentences must ever anew be pressed into the service of this ever new reference," meaning Jesus Christ (29). Without such inquiry and critical analysis, the church's message for the world could only be an inadequate and even reactionary word. Good theology, Gollwitzer asserts, will be done in an interdisciplinary context, i.e. in conjunction with philosophy and other special disciplines. On this point he departs a little distance from Barth.

It is when Gollwitzer examines the context of theology and the theologian's existence today that the sparks begin to fly. He writes bitterly. He is frustrated because most theologians in Europe and North America belong to the privileged class in society. Because of their education, skills, and positions, theologians have lived their lives apart from the poor and uneducated. He deplores the clerical domination over the unlettered and the poor and sees this "theological oppression" over the laity as having a harmful effect on theological work. Gollwitzer's indignation is no less directed toward whole theological faculties, which he labels "institutions for the education of the owners of the preaching monopoly" (38). Such elitism, says Gollwitzer, can be channeled into social justice and true community only when the theological community will say with Paulo Freire, "In order to give up the role, in order to become a real brother, I must change the whole of society" (41).

This is a stanza in Gollwitzer's swan song. His melody is consistently unhappy and joyless, quite different from the simple and beautiful concern of Barth's farewell lectures in *Evangelical Theology: An Introduction*. Gollwitzer truly believes that a comprehensive change in society that would abolish every privileged status would make for a better world. The only signs of hope on the horizon are the Third World churches and their theologians. "They stimulate us to create a theology in our society which may counteract the dominion of experts and social privilege" (35). Surprisingly, he states all of this without naming names and giving specific examples. Whom are we talking about? At whom shall we point our fingers and who shall receive our distant praise?

The same uneasy tones are expressed by the author in his explication of the Kingdom of God, "the heart of the Gospel" (140). Although he does not equate completely the Kingdom of God with any political or economic system, it is clear to him that the genuine socialist state is a better approximation of or environment

for the ultimate Kingdom of God. He writes,

The Kingdom of God is thus identical with a human way of life, both individual and social. So the promise of the Kingdom of God looks for a wholly new society, with a new social way of living...we cannot make the *absolute utopia* of the Kingdom of God our program, but we can make our program the *concrete utopia* of a society still stamped by sin and death—a society no longer torn asunder into classes with opposing interests. (78, 152)

Gollwitzer, of course, believes the major obstacle for realizing this new way of living is the capitalistic system. Capitalism is all darkness. Conflict, competition, privileged status,

personal antagonism, greed, injustice and war are all the result of the capitalistic system. He states in almost drastic terms: “We are so deformed by the capitalistic society...that we become incapable of living in a genuinely socialist society, even incapable of wishing it” (147). One wonders if the converse of this statement might apply to Gollwitzer. To avoid the “murderous conflict” that capitalism promotes, the Christian church should be an advocate of a better socialist order—this is Gollwitzer’s deepest passion and desire. He is confident that such a society will cause more solidarity and togetherness, more equality and fraternity among people. The world order of the socialists’ vision will not be perfect, according to Gollwitzer, because the world will still be populated by sinners. But the socialist state will be a better world in which to live. How shall Christendom then move toward realizing this new order? First, Christians must cooperate with anyone who seeks to replace a capitalistic life style of society through proper socialist legislation. Second, Christians must enter into an alliance with modern humanism, including the intentions of its most militant and aggressive representative, Marx. Such is the dream of Helmut Gollwitzer.

For over a decade, the writings of Karl Barth have encouraged and helped my theological reflections in ministry. I was acquainted with Gollwitzer only by knowing that he was one of Barth’s favorite students and a dear friend. Unfamiliar with his writings I have been surprised by the radical nature of his socialist views. Gollwitzer has noble intentions, but there are many blind spots in this work. His animosity and almost fundamentalistic belief that there can be only one political-economic social system is as troublesome as it is frightening. In spite of my own concerns with Gollwitzer’s one-sided views on capitalism and socialism, I recommend this book to both sides. To those who advocate a democratic capitalism (Novak, Benne, *et al.*), this book will serve as a challenge and point of contact for discussion and debate. To those who see democratic socialism as the way for a better world,

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Gollwitzer’s contribution here will serve as an affirmation and word of encouragement.

We are still left with a question: Is it true, as Tillich once said and as Gollwitzer asserts, that any serious Christian must be a socialist? Let the debate continue. An observation: When Barth concluded his active teaching career he ended his final lecture with the Gloria Patri. How helpful if Gollwitzer could have echoed his mentor once more as he concluded his own teaching career.

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**THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE LAND OF ISRAEL: FROM THE PREHISTORIC BEGINNINGS TO THE END OF THE FIRST TEMPLE PERIOD**, by Yohanan Aharoni. Translated by Anson F. Rainey. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1982. Pp. 336. \$27.50/18.95 (paper).

Yohanan Aharoni, who died in 1976, was one of the leading archaeologists and historical geographers of the modern state of Israel. The present volume, published originally in Hebrew in

1978, has here been edited by the author's wife, Miriam Aharoni, and given an excellent translation by Anson Rainey. In it are summed up not only much of the recent state of archaeological activity in this area, but also many of Aharoni's personal views, which he held tenaciously and often in the face of great criticism.

As the title indicates, the work includes more than archaeological results related specifically to the Bible, since it begins with a brief but valuable presentation of prehistoric research. Readers who are new to the study of the archaeology of this land will be interested in finding out that some of the most significant data available on the cultures of the Stone Age (including something similar to Oldowan, followed by Acheulian and Mousterian) are represented. A further section deals briefly with the important but little known Chalcolithic Period, which bridges the last part of prehistory proper and the beginnings of what can with appropriate qualifications be called modern civilization.

The two largest sections of the book are devoted to what the author terms the Canaanite and Israelite Periods, the first from approximately 3200 to 1200 B.C., the second from 1200 B.C. to the fall of the Judean state in 587 B.C. I find the choice of these two designations misleading, although it is popular today to use them in Israel. The more usual terms employed internationally are technological ones, the Bronze and Iron Ages, and whereas these also have their problems, they are certainly more representative than the two chosen in this book. In any case, readers will do well not to let such titles become a straitjacket, because the "Land of Israel," either in the time of the Canaanites or Israelites, was never one which possessed a homogeneous culture or witnessed monolithic statehood. Undoubtedly Aharoni meant these designations in a broad way, but they are capable of fostering misconceptions about the course of events, which the substance of these two chapters shows to be much more pluralistic.

A drawback of this volume for those new to the subject is that it often concentrates on problems which belong to arcane disputes between field archaeologists. Only those familiar with these controverted matters will appreciate the intensity behind the author's words. On the other hand, there are interpretations, particularly in the chapter on the Israelite period, which are provocative enough to interest even the most uninitiated of readers. Take the discussion of the 40 m. deep well at Beer-sheba, cleared during excavations directed by the author himself. Aharoni has no doubts that this is the well ascribed to the patriarchs in Genesis 21:25 and 26:25, but since it is stratigraphically impossible that it was dug earlier than the conquest period, he concludes that the patriarchal narratives associated with Beer-sheba can be no older than the period of the Israelite settlement (168), certainly a conclusion with implications for the interpretation of these texts.

Another example, based again in part on Aharoni's own excavations at sites in the Negeb, is his development of the

theory of two waves of Israelite conquest (173). A further illustration is his interpretation of the Solomonic temple and its architecture, which the author compares with the small temple at Arad, also excavated under his direction (232). This latter problem and the proposals made by the author should be of particular interest to those dealing with the worship of ancient Israel, since there can be little doubt that the Arad temple offers new and important comparative material which can be placed against the meager descriptions of the Solomonic temple in the Old

Testament, although, as Aharoni shows, its real value may lie in illuminating the tabernacle traditions attributed to the pre-temple period.

It would be out of place to preempt this review with lengthy discussion of conclusions which are doubtful. The ascription of the so-called “collared-rim jar” to Israelite invention is a case in point (174). Enough examples of this form are now known from Iron Age sites which cannot have been Israelite to make it nearly certain that this type of jar was used by various peoples of the period. I cite this case only to indicate that the discussion is often preoccupied with noting architecture and artifacts which can be identified as Israelite. While efforts to establish ethnic connections for archaeological features are legitimate (the identification of Philistine wares is an example of a solidly based connection, see 183-85), such efforts cannot be validly made apart from methodological rigor. In looking for peculiarly Israelite features, it seems the author often sets forth as conclusive fact what really belongs in the realm of personal impression. We may hope that some younger students, using statistical tests and newer analytical methods, will soon be able to move the matter out of the area of speculation, because it would be of great interest to biblical students to know something more precise about the material culture of ancient Israel.

On the whole, this book offers the most up-to-date overview of results of numerous excavations now available, although Wright’s *Biblical Archaeology* (specifically the unabridged edition) still remains a classic. The volume is amply illustrated with drawn figures and contains a series of clearly reproduced photographs. It is sometimes bothersome that a photo or figure referred to in the text is absent in the illustrations and in a number of cases references to figure numbers in the text are incorrect. The interested reader, however, will be richly rewarded.

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