

radical critics, he, in effect, is attacking all those who do not agree with *his* particular conservative positions. There are conservative scholars who would accept more of the results of these methodologies than he, without sacrificing a "high view" of Scripture.

His use of the critical methods will seem to be quite arbitrary even to some conservatives. He chooses where he will use criticism and where he will not. On p. 182, 2 Macc is cited and the miraculous event recorded there is considered as the "product of devout imagination, not sober history," but Ladd seems to feel that the exercise of critical judgment which is used to arrive at the above conclusion cannot be applied in the same way to the Bible. Many *conservatives* with a "high view" of Scripture would disagree with him. Again if a book is anonymous, Ladd is quite free to use all of his critical judgment in determining the author, but if a book claims to be written by someone, no critical judgment can be used. This claim must be accepted (pp. 116, 128). This will seem too arbitrary to some. Ladd's use of criticism seems too rigidly bound by presuppositions which restrict his integrity in its use.

One especially disturbing stylistic peculiarity is Ladd's use of the expression "in terms of." This is predominantly so in ch. 8. On the first page alone, it is used four times.

The author himself forecast that his book would meet with varying reactions from the theological right and left. Some will feel he has yielded too much ground, while others will feel he has not gone far enough. Liberals will feel that he seems to be fighting battles long since won and thus that he is "piddling with trivia." But they must be tolerant, for only those like Ladd can understand that to many conservatives this problem is not trivial. Besides, he is not addressing liberals in this book. A good group of conservatives who have looked at the inescapable phenomena of literary and historical criticism will in large part applaud the efforts of Ladd.

The criticisms offered above in no way invalidate the value of the book for its intended readers. It will fill a real need among conservative students for a handy volume discussing the relationship of conservative scholarship to these critical methodologies. Ladd's basically positive attitude to these methodologies and his judicious approach throughout will enhance its value.

Andrews University

SAKAE KUBO

Laeuchli, Samuel, *The Serpent and the Dove: Five Essays on Early Christianity*. Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1966. 256 pp.
\$ 5.95.

The Serpent and the Dove is in a sense a continuation of the author's *Language of Faith*. This is so although its form is that of a series of essays rather than a monograph and although these essays "represent at many points either a qualification or even a break with positions held

in the *Language of Faith*" (p. 16). The time period covered is from the death of Caracalla (A.D. 217) to the death of Constantine (A.D. 337)—a period which "gives us the decisive transition from pre-Nicene Christianity to the change which came about in the battle of the Milvian Bridge and its subsequent decades, containing the evolution from the theological climate of Origen and Tertullian to that of Athanasius, Donatus, and Antony" (p. 13).

As the title implies, this book deals with forces of good (dove) and forces of evil (serpent) which were so intertwined in the history of the early Christian church. The author has stated: "The form of this book was born from a desire to phrase the tentative and fragmentary character of both history and its interpretation. Partly through being involved in interdisciplinary debates, even debates with nontheological and nonhistorical interpretations, partly through reading contradictory yet pertinent studies on one and the same issue, I have come to appreciate, and I have attempted to express, the mysterious dialectic of events, that baffling identity, or at least proximity, of Christ and Anti-Christ in the history of the church. Time and again I have been fascinated by that intertwining of charisma and death, of theology and bigotry. The patristic church produced its basilicas and it produced Theodosius' witch-hunt. These two facts can be distinguished only partially; at times we can separate them, at times we cannot" (pp. 13, 14).

And so the author leads us through various facets of a tortuous and confusing stream of history, where the forces of good and of evil at times stand in opposition, at times seem to interchange, and at times blend—both inside the church and outside. His opening essay "Christ and Anti-Christ" (pp. 19-49) fittingly treats the matter of "peace" and "persecution" for the church. It is pointed out that peace had both positive and negative aspects. For example, the "peace under the soldier-emperors enabled the creation of Origen's magnificent opus—and it prepared the congregations of Carthage and Alexandria for treason. The victory under Constantine gave Christian history the superb basilica as a Christian sanctuary—and it brought about the faithless mob of Christian Rome" (p. 28). Moreover, the "peace before Decius and the peace after Constantine represent two different possibilities of a *modus vivendi* between Christian faith and the world" (p. 28). There is also an excellent discussion of the church's *external* peace and *internal* peace (pp. 31-33).

The *persecutions* of the early church, Laeuchli sees as "a fight between two claims of salvation that could not endure coexistence" (p. 34). But his suggestion that persecution "was an expression of despair" on the part of Rome and that "the emperor cult had no religious significance" (p. 38) may be questioned. Was Roman religion as dead as is often assumed? (See now, *e.g.*, Herold Weiss, "The *Pagani* Among the Contemporaries of the First Christians," *JBL*, LXXXVI [1967], 42-52.) And is it accurate to claim lack of religious significance on the part of the Roman imperial cult by asking, "Indeed,

did anyone ever address a prayer to the soul of Titus whose apotheosis is depicted in the vault of his triumphal arch?" (p. 38)? Moreover, does any help come from the further comment that "Pliny was a priest of the 'deified Titus' (*C.I.L.* V. 5667)—which he does not mention once in his letters" and that "he [Pliny] prayed for the living emperor (*Ep.* 10.13-14), but he never prayed in the name of a dead augustus" (p. 38, ft. 41)? Is not the difficulty in all this simply the fact that Laeuchli here fails to make a necessary distinction between the eastern mentality which was generally ready to pay *divine honors* to a *living* emperor and the western mentality (especially the Roman itself) which at first was quite unwilling to do so (and therefore had apotheosis and worship of the *numen* or *genius* instead)?

Laeuchli's discussion of the Christian side of persecution — persecution which was at times "a judgment on both sides, the persecuted and the persecutor" (p. 43)—is indeed stimulating, and the chapter concludes with an analysis of the drama of "peace—persecution—peace persecution—peace" (p. 44) in several "disturbing" aspects, including its opaqueness and its lack of closing scene.

The second essay "The Heresy of Truth" (pp. 50-101) begins with observations on the Nicene debate and then proceeds to examine "the relationship between heresy and truth in both pre-Nicene and post-Nicene theology" (p. 51). In the next essay "The Milvian Bridge" (pp. 102-150), the author uses Constantine's claim of success as an instrument of God as a backdrop for dealing with the question of a Christian interpretation of history. He endeavors "to show in the course of this chapter certain possibilities for a historical encounter, in the postpositivistic and postexistentialist age of historical consciousness" (p. 103). After considering three metaphysical possibilities "which repeatedly recur in patristic thought"—rational naturalism, dualism, and transcendental monism—and interpreting the life of Constantine in the light of them, he then analyzes four possible interpretations of Constantine's claim: Christ's *presence*, Christ's presence in only *qualified* manner, Christ's *absence*, *ignoring* the question altogether (pp. 103-123). He is now ready to lead us into a challenging study of hermeneutic. "The three conflicting metaphysical possibilities and the four conflicting types of interpretation," he says, "have made it quite clear that the age of Constantine does not provide us with a consistent answer to the problem of *evil*. The three concepts and the four interpretations of God have collapsed because behind them lurk conflicting interpretations of evil. If history could give us an explanation of evil, it could give us a consistent understanding of God" (p. 123). Ignoring history is not the solution, however: "Contrary to the temptation to evade the issue by nonhistorical categories we believe that it is the dialogue of history itself—the dialogue with the dialectic event—that does lead us on" (p. 123).

The treatment of methodology is thought-provoking. The categories of *evidence*, *dimensions of our speech*, *reenactment*, *critical evaluation*, etc. (pp. 133 ff), are familiar ground, but the application of such a

category as *creation/fall* (pp. 126 ff) may not seem so familiar. In fact, to some it may appear quite inappropriate in spite of its rather intriguing aspects.

In this chapter (which seems quite central for the author's theme), one could heartily endorse the attention given hermeneutical principles which lead to sound reconstruction of past events. One would also certainly wish to recognize the importance of the challenge of those events to us. Moreover, the author has done a service by placing squarely before us the "mysterious dialectic of events." However, may not the "dialogue with the dialectic event" hold within it negative as well as positive aspects (contain both the "serpent" and the "dove"), especially if utilized too exclusively as a hermeneutical approach? Also, how does this interpretation relate to the attitude toward history evidenced in the Biblical literature? Inasmuch as the discussion is not simply historical, but theological as well, might it not have been appropriate (even though not necessarily essential) to explore this question quite fully, regardless of whether the answer would be positive, negative, or an admixture of both?

The final two chapters of this book consider the Christian and church in two aspects: "Communio Peccatorum" (pp. 151-195) deals with the Christian in his humanity, loyalties to church and empire, and "the influence of the individual on the development of penance during this period" (p. 184). "The Broken Altar" (pp. 196-246) treats the question of where and where not the unity lay in the patristic church before and after Nicea.

The Serpent and the Dove abounds in informative detail and thought-provoking interpretations and insights. There is certainly much with which to agree, and there may be some things with which we would wish to disagree. It has even occurred to the present reviewer that should the author produce another book as a continuation of this one, he might present "either a qualification or even a break" with some of the positions held in the volume under review. But that is the genius and value of scholarship. And *The Serpent and the Dove* is most definitely a product of scholarship by a genuine scholar. But it is more than that. It is an eminently readable piece of literature—one which the present reviewer found hard to lay down once he had begun to read it.

Andrews University

KENNETH A. STRAND

Larson, Martin A., *The Essene Heritage or the Teacher of the Scrolls and the Christ*. New York: Philosophical Library, 1967. xviii + 237 pp. \$ 4.95.

Here is another book which tries to prove that Christianity is nothing but a warmed-up Essene religion. According to Larson the "Teacher of Righteousness" had been put to death *ca.* 70 B.C. by the Jewish authorities. His followers then declared him to have been