

the end of the Old Kingdom, but to a time following the catastrophic collapse of the Middle Kingdom (J. Van Seters, *JEA*, L [1964], 13-23; followed by Albright, *BASOR*, No. 179 [1965], 41). The Gudea statues and inscriptions are not to be dated as being contemporaneous with the Third Dynasty of Ur (p. 31), but to a time preceding Ur-Nammu (S. N. Kramer, *The Sumerians* [Chicago, 1963], pp. 66-67). Finally, the seven tablets of the Babylonian Creation epic, *Enuma elish*, probably are not to be dated to the first Babylonian dynasty (pp. 37, 38), but to the fourth dynasty when Nebuchadrezzar I (ca. 1100 B.C.) raised Marduk to the supreme position in the Babylonian pantheon (W. G. Lambert, "The Reign of Nebuchadrezzar I: A Turning Point in the History of Ancient Mesopotamia," *The Seed of Wisdom, Essays in Honour of T. J. Meek* [Toronto, 1967], pp. 3-13).

The above criticisms are not meant to distract from the value of the study under review. As a popular work it remains a unique and needed contribution. Undoubtedly the book will arouse in many a desire for a deeper study into the history of antiquity. The "Selected Bibliography" (pp. 177-179) should thus be expanded to include not only such histories as are published under the "Ancient Peoples and Places" series, but also the pertinent fascicles of the revised edition to *The Cambridge Ancient History*. Other general works, such as Sir Alan Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs* (Oxford, 1961); Sabatino Moscati, *The Face of the Ancient Orient* (Garden City, N.Y., 1962); Martin Noth, *The Old Testament World* (Philadelphia, 1964); A. L. Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia* (Chicago, 1964); and Georges Roux, *Ancient Iraq* (London, 1964), are but a few suggestions to be added to the list.

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Vahanian, Gabriel, *No Other God*. New York: George Braziller, 1966.

xxi + 114 pp. Paperbound. \$ 1.50.

Vahanian begins by asking the question whether the age of religion has come to an end. His answer is an unambiguous "no." He feels Bonhoeffer made a mistake when he replaced the dichotomy between faith and religion with the dichotomy of atheism and theism, the religious and the secular, thus substituting the traditional transcendental millenarianism with an inner worldly millenarianism (p. 21). In affirming the secular, the inner worldly, Bonhoeffer rejected the religious. Vahanian's intent is to make the religious relevant again.

The problem with the religious has been that it has been conceived either as sacral or as supernatural, and therefore it has been denied relevance in the religious life of the world. Bonhoeffer, then, in an attempt to establish the relevance of Christianity for the world, treated with contempt "the religious." The result has been that his disciples have become eager to proclaim the necessity of a secular, atheistic Christianity.

Against this, Vahanian affirms that faith is not "the juxtaposition

of belief and unbelief." Faith does not bridge the gap between belief and unbelief, rather it bridges the gulf between God and man (p. 22). The great danger in this time of cultural turmoil is that a "simulacre" of Christianity should be presented as the answer to the challenge of atheism (p. 23). It is impossible to have faith in Christ without God. Jesus cannot be "some kind of substitute for God" (p. 34). The Word of God has through Jesus and through the Bible become a phenomenon in the world, but it cannot be recognized for what it is unless it becomes "established." Here Vahanian is leaning heavily on Heidegger II in order to establish "the verbal nature of reality." So that what comes out is that Jesus does not become the Christ, "except where man is also asserted through that act of faith by which alone he can legitimately assume his contingency. What the Greeks called nature becomes here the domain of faith. And what they considered to be reason or the sense of proportion becomes here that iconoclastic quality of faith by which man assuming his contingency can improvise his destiny" (p. 40).

What Vahanian laments is that theology has desacralized and spiritualized the world, and the result has been the secularization of Christianity. And since the word has "always an iconoclastic function," now literature, "the orphan of the orphans of the world," has usurped the prophetic task once identified with the function of theology (p. 45). The tragedy is that Christianity, by fostering and finally surrendering to secularism, has forfeited its iconoclastic vocation in the modern period. Biblical iconoclasm was directed against "idolatry in all its forms from superstition to legalism or dogmatism and literalism—against anything that preaches the deification of man, the divinization of culture or history or reason and religion as well as against anything that sacralizes symbolic events or institutions." But modern iconoclasm is directed against God; therefore, the death of God means that faith has no sphere of action other than *secularity* (p. 47), and Christianity must adjust to this fact of life in a post-Christian world.

In contrast to secularism, which results from secularizing Christianity for the benefit of a desacralized world, "secularity" refers to "the attitude by which the Christian affirms faith as presence to the world at the same time that he affirms the original goodness of the world" (p. 18). In a secular world there is no "valid dichotomy between the sphere of religion and the sphere of literature" (p. 48) (see Cleanth Brooks, *The Hidden God*, 1963). The death of God as a cultural phenomenon, then, signifies the transition from radical monotheism to radical immanentism, it points to the fact that "eschatological existence is not one aspect of the human reality but pervades it through and through"; and in order to preserve "the iconoclastic function of the word as an icon," eschatological existence may appear to become completely secular (p. 47).

Finally Vahanian addresses himself to the question of a theological method for a post-Christian world. Here by means of a gymnastically exhilarating *tour de force* he abandons Bultmann in order to take up

Calvin. In the *Institutes* he finds the four marks of theology for today. These are: knowledge is theonomous, theology is Christological, theology is pneumatic, and theology is ecclesiastical.

This little volume is worthy of serious consideration as an attempt to salvage Christianity for a post-Christian era, but it suffers greatly because of its unashamed optimism about the nature of man. The book does deal with great questions, but in sweeping generalizations that make one wonder at the intentionality of what is being said. Consider this sentence: "Indeed, if the sacralist tendency represents in general the surnaturalist deviation of Catholicism, and the spiritualizing tendency represents the moralizing deviation of Protestantism, both nevertheless attain the same result: Christian life is viewed as based on the idea of a separation from the world rather than of an action that manifests its eschatological vocation within the world through the very socio-cultural structures of the present world" (p. 20). Poetry may hint at reality. Theology, when dealing with the mysteries of faith, may legitimately do likewise. But this book is not this kind of theology; rather, it is a chapter in the relationship between religion and culture. The presentation, which is in itself most tantalizing and makes manifest its author's amazingly broad cultural background, could have profited by a more explicit description of the phenomena at hand and a more controlled use of cryptic paradoxes whose function is at times overestimated in existentialist circles. It is to Vahanian's credit that, having sensed this, he provided the reader with an appendix in which he tries to explain himself by means of diagrams.

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Wanke, Gunther, *Die Zionstheologie der Korachiten in ihrem traditions-geschichtlichen Zusammenhang*. "Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft," 97. Berlin: Verlag Alfred Töpelmann, 1966. v + 120 pp. DM 28.—.

This traditio-historical study (a 1964 dissertation presented to the Vienna University) treats the "Psalms of Korah" (42-49, 84, 85, 87, 88), a collection of songs that originated from outside of as well as from within the Korahite collectors. The special concern of this investigation is those Korahite Psalms that are preoccupied with Zion-Jerusalem (42/43, 46, 48, 84, 87). Wanke provides for each of these "songs of Zion" a critical translation with text-critical notes and a discussion of its structure, meter, literary form, and *Gattung* (type). Ps 46 is notable, classified as a national psalm of trust (*Volksvertrauenslied*).

The Korahites of these Psalms appear to be Levites according to the Priestly Tradition and the Chronicler knows them also as temple singers (2 Chr 20:19). It is thus argued that the Korahites gained significance or even originated first in post-exilic times and were prominent at about the fourth century B.C. The theology of the Korahites