

Hatch, Nathan O. *The Sacred Cause of Liberty: Republican Thought and the Millennium in Revolutionary New England*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977. 197 pp. \$12.50.

This slim volume makes a significant contribution to the rapidly growing literature on American millennialism and civil religion. By examining the sermons of New England ministers between 1740 and 1800 Nathan O. Hatch, who teaches history at Notre Dame University, helps us see continuity between Puritanism and the early republic where previous historians have seen largely discontinuity.

Hatch argues that the convergence of millennial and Republican thought is a central theme of the period and provided a new foundation "for the tottering structures of Puritan collective identity." The conflict with France, beginning with the capture of Ft. Louisbourg in 1745, shifted apocalyptic hope from viewing the millennium as a time of vital religion to seeing it as a period of liberty. In opposing papal France, England was aligned with the cosmic forces of good against the antichrist. But with the passage of the Stamp Act in 1765 New Englanders saw that the battle between Protestants and Catholics was but part of the larger conflict between liberty and tyranny. In reinterpreting the millennium as political, however, these ministers had not shed their religious assumptions about the moral nature of society. As a result, with the emergence of the free republic they called for a balanced freedom that threw the weight of restraint against the forces of anarchy. Thus their Federalism of the 1780s is continuous with their previous political and religious thought. Nevertheless, they had concluded that because liberty must precede the kingdom and the American republic was the seat of liberty, their nation was therefore God's primary agent in history.

The author has presented a tightly knit argument that cannot be faulted. The main questions arising out of it are problems of how the evidence from ministers, primarily Congregational, in a small section of the country relates to evidence more widespread both socially and geographically. In a closing note on the sermons Hatch argues forcefully that those sermons that were printed were done so mostly by popular demand and therefore reflect a considerable popular opinion. He recognizes, however, that New England may have been a more distinctive than typical culture. Its Federalism, for instance, held decidedly little appeal elsewhere. As a result, this book suggests the need for examining millennialism and republicanism in other geographical and denominational contexts.

Hatch's volume also holds interest as a case study in the secularization of the ministry. These ministers took seriously the need to relate their theology to the political issues of their day, but in time these issues dominated and shaped their theology. It was not to be the last example of politicized religion in American history.

Well written and nicely produced, *The Sacred Cause of Liberty* is necessary reading for all scholars interested in the revolutionary era and in American religious history. It teaches us, furthermore, that if we ignore the intersection of religion and politics we are neglecting a vital area of American life.

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GARY LAND

Hick, John. *Death and Eternal Life*. New York: Harper and Row, 1976. 495 pp. \$15.00.

The objective of this book is to formulate what its author defines as "a global theology of death," that is, an interpretation of human destiny which draws upon the

full range of philosophical and religious concepts of death and afterlife, rather than developing the view of only one particular tradition. Accordingly, the major portion of the book is devoted to analyzing an enormous range of attitudes toward, and conceptions of, life after death, including such topics as parapsychology and spiritualism, as well as the more obviously relevant concepts of reincarnation and resurrection. No mere survey, however, the book also undertakes to examine the relative plausibility of these different views, and in its final, and most provocative, section, to integrate their major insights into a coherent, though tentative, conception of human destiny.

Hick's own argument for life after death takes the form of a response to the problem of suffering. If human existence is meaningful, he maintains, then suffering requires moral justification. However, such justification is adequate only if the individual himself participates in the ultimate good to which his suffering contributes, rather than, say, merely passing on the benefits to subsequent generations. The moral justification of suffering thus requires the individual survival of bodily death.

Behind this argument lies a view of human existence which largely determines the outcome of Hick's attempt to formulate an interpretation of human destiny. Developed extensively in his earlier work, *Evil and the God of Love*, it is a view whose roots he attributes to the Irenaean, as opposed to the more prevalent Augustinian, interpretation of human history within the Christian tradition. The latter accounts for human suffering in terms of a primal fall from an ideal state, regarding it as more or less accidental. In contrast, the Irenaean view regards suffering as integral to the eventual achievement of God's purpose for human life; it plays an essential role in the long process of soul-, or person-, making.

The principal bearing of this view upon the question of immortality has to do with the phase of this process that extends beyond the present life. Hick observes that in this world hardly anyone approaches, let alone attains, the goal of human life, which is fellowship with God, with the exception of a few saints and buddhas. So he postulates the further development toward this objective in a succession of numerous future lives, lived in "other times and other spaces." Unlike the traditional Christian view, one does not immediately enter his ultimate state when he dies, but continues toward it beyond death. And unlike the classical conception of reincarnation the succession of future lives takes place, not on this earth, but in other spheres of existence.

Hick's understanding of eternal life thus includes two central elements: an eschatology proper, which describes the ultimate goal of human life, and a "pareschatology," which describes the course of human development between this life and the eventual achievement of the ultimate goal. The "possible pareschatology" to which the major religious traditions point, according to Hick, is "a series of lives, each bounded by something analogous to birth and death, lived in other worlds in spaces other than that in which we now are" (p. 456). And the central idea in the "possible eschatology" he proposes is that of an intimate corporate unity of humanity in which perfected human beings have become so open with others that each represents "a personality with egoity." This "wholeness of ultimately perfected humanity beyond the existence of separate egos," exists in a state which is "probably not embodied and probably not in time" (p. 464).

On the whole, this work exhibits rather vividly the major strengths and weaknesses with which readers of Hick's other works are familiar. On the positive side, the discussion here is both well informed and exceedingly informative. Hick certainly "covers the territory," and those currently interested in the question of immortality will be hard-pressed to find a more comprehensive review of this topic. In addition, the exposition is clear and careful, with just the right attention to detail. Hick's

analyses are never simplistic, yet the reader is never overburdened with unnecessarily involved explanations. And the study is filled with insights, as when e.g., Hick dispels the popular opinion that belief in afterlife represents the product of wishful thinking.

On the negative side, there are numerous points at which Hick's observations and conclusions invite criticism. For instance, his effort to show that the affirmation of divine love is incompatible with any view other than universal salvation, neglects the possibility that God genuinely wills something, such as universal reconciliation, but does not succeed. However, the principal defect of the project as a whole lies in the level at which Hick is characteristically content to let the argument rest, namely, that of "possibility," as in a "possible pareschatology," or a "possible eschatology." Admittedly, any portrayal of life after death must of necessity remain highly speculative. And admittedly too, any attempt to synthesize elements in the major religious traditions of East and West is bound to strike some as merely contrived. Nevertheless, Hick's repeated appeals to what is "not logically impossible" does not suffice to establish his conclusions, and in the final analysis he offers little to support the truth of his claims. So, in spite of the impressive scope of topics treated and the helpful insights accumulated along the way, his constructive proposal fails to do more than show that its author is entitled to his opinion.

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Kasper, Walter. *Jesus the Christ*. London: Burnes and Oates; New York: Paulist, 1977. 289 pp. Paperback, \$5.95.

This volume was originally published in German in 1974. An English translation appeared in hardback in 1976 and this present volume is the paperback edition. The author is a Catholic theologian teaching at Tübingen and is indebted to the Catholic Tübingen School represented by Karl Adam and Joseph R. Geiselmann. These theologians not only emphasize the biblical but also the ecclesiastical tradition, although the latter as something living in confrontation with the current issues of the time. Influenced by these men, Kasper calls for "an unrelentingly profound and systematic reflection on the principal themes of tradition and of novel contemporary approaches; a study and investigation of these themes; and an attempt at a new, systematic treatment which responsibly confronts modern thought with the riches of tradition and the results of the ongoing debate" (p. 10). What he calls for he admirably succeeds in doing.

• Most books on Jesus have been written by NT scholars and emphasize historical aspects and methods while Kasper, a theologian, comes to his subject from a philosophical and theological orientation. He is thoroughly familiar with the literature on the subject though he generally neglects literature in English. While usually arriving at relatively conservative positions, by his careful logic and reasoning he makes these positions respectable. He has a way of setting forth the issues so that one is confronted with the ultimate questions and can see that the more liberal positions do not suit the real essence of Christianity.

The first part of the book he entitles "Jesus Christ Today." Under this heading he has three chapters dealing with "The Problematics of Contemporary Christianity," "The Historical Quest for Jesus Christ," and "The Religious Quest for Jesus Christ." In these first chapters, the author shows the need for an appropriate Christology for this age, discusses the basic approaches of Christology, the limits of the old and new quest of the historical Jesus, and the weaknesses of secular thought which pervades modern thinking with its emphasis on subjectivity and freedom. The author argues