

BOOK REVIEWS

A Hidden Revolution: Ellis Rivkin; Abingdon, Nashville, 1978. 336 pp. \$12.95.

Prof. Rivkin, who teaches at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute or Religion in Cincinnati, has written a volume which addresses a series of related questions of interest to both Jewish and Christian communities. Who were the Pharisees? When and under what circumstances did this group, whom most Christians know primarily from their frequent and largely negative appearances in the New Testament Gospels, have its origin? What enduring values did the Pharisees leave behind?

The author attempts to answer the first two questions by examining texts from the only three bodies of writing capable of providing any information at all: Josephus, the New Testament, and the Jewish Tannaitic Literature (the Mishnah, the Tosefta, and the Tannaitic Midrash). In addition, Ben Sira and his silence concerning the Pharisees is used as a negative type of evidence. Rivkin's conclusions are that the Pharisees arose at the time of the Hasmonean revolt as a group who assumed the spiritual authority heretofore exercised by the priestly caste and who inaugurated a revolution by which the oral Law was thrust into equal prominence with the written (biblical) Law, the latter having served as the basis of the now vanished (or at least greatly diminished) priestly authority. By the time of the first Christian century, the Pharisees' interpretation of Judaism had become normative for all except relatively minor groups such as the Sadducees and Essenes.

In Rivkin's view, the outstanding contribution which the Pharisees made was in their internalizing of the Law of God. It was the very inflexibility of the legal codes in the Bible which had called forth the Pharisaic revolution in the first place, and this rigidity they now replaced by a system of Two-Fold Law which had its roots in the past (written, biblical Law) but which could be shaped and modified to meet present needs (the oral Law).

Because of the Pharisees' contribution "the Jews alone of all the peoples of antiquity had *internalized* (author's italics) a system of law for which they were willing to lay down their lives. Unlike the laws of the Greek city states or the laws of Rome, the twofold Law was binding on the individual wherever he might be, whether in Jerusalem, or Antioch, or Corinth, or Ephesus, or in Rome itself." (p. 296)

The author also points to the fact that in certain of their operational devices (such as the "proof text" method of using Scripture) and in their basic conceptual framework the Pharisees laid the foundation for Christianity (in which an internalized Christ takes the place of an internalized Law) and for Islam (in which that which is internalized is the will of God as revealed to Mohammed). The debt to the Pharisees on the part of Jesus and Paul is described in some detail.

Prof. Rivkin's painstaking scholarship and his thorough knowledge of the subject leave the reader deeply in his debt. The fair-minded reader of

Book Reviews

the book who is also Christian will welcome this positive portrait of a group of spiritual leaders whose treatment by the New Testament must from this distance be judged partial and polemical.

Yet serious and fundamental questions remain, perhaps thrown into even sharper relief by Prof. Rivkin's analysis. If the Pharisees were the champions of the internalized law, why is it that it is precisely on the grounds that they were not such champions that Jesus levels some of his most scathing criticism (Mt. 23:27f)? If the transition from Phariseism to Christianity was smooth and logical, as Rivkin seems to say, why is the evidence of the New Testament so decidedly contrary?

This reviewer came away from *A Hidden Revolution* with a deepened awareness that the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees arose over Jesus' insistence that in order to be open to the Kingdom of God, the Pharisees must renounce their "Phariseeness" and therefore their Jewishness (as they understood it). In order to understand why they refused, we need only substitute for "Phariseeness" our own term ("Presbyterianness," "Christianness," "whiteness," "SCLCness,"—or whatever) by which we draw the line between "us" and "them."

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Small packages often contain big surprises. So it is with the two "little" books, one in Bible, the other in Church History, noted here.

Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978. Pp. 127. \$4.95 (paper).

Walter Brueggemann, Academic Dean and Old Testament Professor at Eden Theological Seminary in Missouri, gives a challengingly new interpretation of Jesus' ministry in relation to that of the Old Testament prophets, and that with important consequences for the church's prophetic ministry today. From Moses through Jesus into today's ministry, prophetic witness is viewed as that which brings a radically new perspective to one's contemporary world view. The God of Israel and of the church is here proclaimed as rejecting what society has generally accepted as the basis of stability and order, and as calling the faithful to hold to a radically different set of values as the basis of reality.

Brueggemann's interpretation of "prophetic ministry," however, is not simply based on our usual understanding of prophetic judgments of doom which undermine a corrupt *status quo*. In the first place he notes that the challenge is more profound in that it attacks the whole system, the total world view such as represented in Moses' cry to imperial Egypt to "Let my people go!" and in Jesus' confrontation with First Century Pharisaic Judaism. Secondly, and here is his real contribution, the author presents

the prophets and Jesus as offering—demanding—an alternative total consciousness which replaces the former easy and dead-end “enculturation” of *status quo* mentality.

This biblical analysis is made with an eye to helping the church define its prophetic ministry for today. Brueggemann acknowledges the impact of sociologists Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman upon his thinking. He thus writes in order to explore the hypothesis that

“The task of prophetic ministry is to nurture, nourish, and evoke a consciousness and perception alternative to the consciousness and perception of the dominant culture around us.”

The exciting as well as refreshing approach in this book is its emphasis upon the nurturing and energizing work of the divinely inspired alternative consciousness. It does not stop with the prophets’ judgment which serves to dismantle the generally accepted view of reality. We are helped to appreciate the upbuilding (shepherding/pastoral) role of prophetic ministry along with its characteristic biting critique. Key categories for such a total ministry become what Brueggemann calls—in chapter headings—the “Criticism and Pathos” and the “Energizing and Amazement” as found in Jesus’ ministry.

This is a readable and versatile book, equally valuable for sermon preparation, Bible study, discussion group use and basic reading for pastoral as well as parish social action programs.

David M. Dean, *Defender of the Race: James Theodore Holly, Black Nationalist Bishop*, Boston: Lambert Press, 1979. Pp. 150. \$14.95.

David M. Dean, Professor of History at Frostburg State College, Maryland, opens the reader’s eyes to the too little recognized greatness and achievements of the first black bishop of the Episcopal Church. James Theodore Holly (1829-1911) is a modern day saint, who by virtue of his intense loyalty to and unstinting work for his people and his church deserves a place on the church’s liturgical calendar.

Dean’s book is remarkable in that in relatively short compass one is given a complete picture of this man’s life, work and importance. It offers a sweep of Holly’s life from the early years of pursued freedmen in Ante-bellum America to his single-handed struggles for and with the church and his death and legacy in Haiti. Dean helps us see the person, the black nationalist and the loyal churchman as essentially one being with one mission in life, the finding of the place where black dignity would be respected and assaults upon black humanity cease. Holly’s father was a shoemaker in Washington, D.C. James Madison was inaugurated in 1809 wearing shoes made by James Overton Holly. Yet harassments drove the Holly’s to New York, to Vermont and finally to Canada. Later, working out of New Haven, Connecticut, James Theodore embarked upon a life’s work of finding a home for black folk in Haiti.

It was in Haiti that Holly made his mark. There he garnered a string of “firsts.” He founded and nurtured Haiti’s own national church, the Orthodox Apostolic Church, which body as the world’s first autonomous

Book Reviews

Anglican church can be called the precursor and first church of what was to become the Anglican Communion. Holly was consecrated as the Episcopal Church's first black bishop on November 8, 1874 in Grace Church, New York City. While attending the 1878 Lambert Conference, he became the first black person to preach in Westminster Abbey. Later in the century he became one of the founders of the Pan-African Movement.

Though fact-filled, *Defender of the Race*, reads well and throughout assesses the work of Holly. By one scale it can be said that Holly failed in his Haiti immigration effort and never received the support of the Episcopal Church, yet on another—and here Dean is to be commended—we are given a portrait of one whose life created and nurtured an idea, a church whose true significance is only now beginning to be recognized. This biography helps strangers to this remarkable life know that he ranks with his better-known contemporaries and colleagues such as Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, Edward W. Blyden, Martin Delany, Henry McNeal Turner and Alexander Crummell. David Dean helps us appreciate Holly's pioneer role in linking the dignity and destiny of black folk with his dream of a national church within a free black state.

This book could well be used as Christian biography for Christian Education purposes, Lenten and other devotional reading, as well as a text for those interested in Church History and the story of black folk in America and the Episcopal Church. This founder of a living church through *Defender of the Race: James Theodore Holly* can serve as inspiration to all concerned with advancing the cause of human dignity. This reviewer hopes that others will recognize that this exemplary Christian belongs in the Calendar of the Church Year.

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THE MORAL TEACHING OF PAUL. Victor Paul Furnish. Nashville: Abingdon, 1979, 143pp. \$14.95pb.

The appearance of the above should receive a warm reception from students, clergy, and informed laity alike who are concerned with contemporary moral issues and Biblical faith. In this work a variety of topics of contemporary interest on which Paul gave concrete moral teaching, e. g., Sex: Marriage and Divorce (Chapter II), Homosexuality (Chapter III), Women in the Church (Chapter IV) and Christians and the Governing Authorities (Chapter V) are examined in a highly unbiased and informative way by a leading interpreter of Pauline theology and ethics. In the work it is Furnish's intention to demonstrate that Paul's concrete moral teaching, given to his churches in the past, is still of value for the contemporary church. At the outset, however, Furnish cautions the reader against two erroneous approaches to Paul's moral teaching,

the 'sacred cow' and the 'white elephant' approach (Chapter I), which have been employed with regularity in the past and persist to the present time. In the former instance Paul's moral teaching is regarded as a codified set of timeless, culturally unconditioned and universally binding moral truths, while in the latter instance it is regarded as a quaint, interesting curiosity but of little or no value for the contemporary world due to social/cultural conditioning, and to be sure, the eschatological influence on Paul. Herein lies one of the chief values of the book, namely, the methodological soundness with which Furnish recovers the underlying issues within the cultural and religious setting in which Paul's moral teaching was given. In the instance of I Corinthians 7: 1ff., for example, Furnish does not interpret the text from the standpoint of Ephesians and Colossians, which Paul did not write, nor from the perspective of a Pauline treatise on the subject of marriage. On the contrary, Furnish argues, and in this reviewer's opinion, quite correctly, that the moral teaching of I Corinthians 7 was given within the context of debating factions within the Corinthian church not over the issue of marriage *per se* but over the issue of sex within the Christian marriage. As such the moral teaching of I Corinthians 7 is a forceful affirmation of mutuality and shared responsibility between two persons of equal status by an Apostle who is more frequently stereotyped as one who demeans the intimate relationship between husband and wife. What emerges from this work, therefore, is a refreshing and positive appreciation for the relevance of Paul's moral teaching for the present day.

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BLACK WOMEN IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY AMERICAN LIFE: THEIR WORDS THEIR THOUGHTS THEIR FEELINGS. Edited with an Introduction by Bert James Loewenberg and Ruth Bogin. University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University, 1976. 355pp. \$7.95.

Bert James Loewenberg and Ruth Bogin have provided academic and scholarly communities with an important insight into the values and attitudes of some not too renowned black women of the 19th Century. Captured in *Black Women Nineteenth-Century American Life* are the writings of such little known ladies as Jarena Lee, Susie King Taylor, Fannie Barrier Williams and Anna Julia Cooper. Like most of those included in this volume, each of these women was articulate in her specific arena of black struggle. Divided into four substantive chapters, Loewenberg and Bogin categorize the women's writings into topics of family, religion, responsibility and education. The collection is significant because it contains materials from women who, though definitive in their fields, have been obfuscated in the racist, sexist and classist orientations of American research and scholarship. The prevailing assumption of

Book Reviews

these orientations has been that history is encapsulated in the activities of prominent, white, male actors. Such an assumption has produced an almost complete void of knowledge on black women's involvement in the social relations which shaped both black America and the nation as a whole. For scholars and students pursuing clarity on issues of women in history, *Black Women In Nineteenth-Century American Life*, is a helpful beginning.

This collection of writings from twenty-four women, born before or during the Civil War, should prove exceptionally helpful to those attempting to understand 19th Century black women's attitudes about issues of black struggle as well as their attitudes toward "women issues." The women speak about home and family life, the right of women preachers, education and black women, the "religious duty of the negro," atrocities of lynching, the inhumanity of slavery and categories of issues which this reviewer has certainly over-looked. Although the reader is presented with thoughts from Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman and Ida Well Barnett, a major value of the collection is that it presents writings on the issues from the less renowned e.g. Mary Stewart, "perhaps the earliest American-born woman who delivered speeches still in print"; Susie King Taylor, a nurse, teacher and laundress during the Civil War and Amanda Berry Smith, preacher and evangelists. Without a doubt, these are persons whose thoughts can contribute to our knowledge of black women's involvement in 19th Century American life.

A weakness of this over-due documentary collection lies in the editors' choice to focus on the writers' "individuality" as opposed to those linkages in condition, status and/or life patterns shared by most who struggle for black freedom, justice and humanity. Although the introductory essay is devoted to a presentation of some socio-cultural considerations to 19th Century issues of black women's identity, the editors have provided little actual clarity on the commonality of social realities which motivated the authors to their particular positions and writings. In many instances, these ladies had experienced similar life events, had shared common platforms and were sometimes familiar with each other and/or their work. Unfortunately, the illumination of those socio-cultural factors and issues which gave birth to the women's involvement in the black struggle has not been achieved by Loewenberg and Bogin. A look at the Chapter on religion, "An Arrow From The Bent Bow Of The Gospel," can help illustrate this short coming.

Chapter II is a presentation of selected materials written by four women active in the religious arena of black America. From reading the editor's brief descriptive introduction to the individuality of each writer, as well as the women's account of their religiosity and labors in the "Lord's vineyards," one is left with the distinct impression that these women were not only exceptional, but unique for their times. No editorial discussion is given to the fact that Jarena Lee and Elizabeth, for example, lived and travelled during the same time period and in many of the same states. Indeed, black female evangelists were not an uncommon sight for Pennsylvania, Maryland, New York and New Jersey communities during

The Journal of the I.T.C.

the first half of the 1800's. Even Jarena indicate that she was not a lone female preacher in spreading the Lord's gospel:

In November I journeyed for Trenton, N. J. . . . Sister Mary Owan, who had not laid aside all the cares of the world, went with me. We had no means of travelling but on foot. . . p. 22

A good sister accompanied me, we conversed with Mrs. M., sung an appropriate hymn and my friend supplicated the throng of grace in her behalf. p. 31

The Elder and Preachers of Baltimore with one accord, gave me appointments, and we had prosperous Meetings. We had a female speaker there, who seemed very zealous I asked permission to take her into the pulpit, which was granted, and she spoke much in the spirit of God. p. 61

The editors have chosen to de-emphasize these and other linkages between 19th Century black women. They have developed images of their writers through a prism of individual human speciality. Sadly, this perspective misses the significance and impact of the black experience on the lives of its participants. It is an experience which incorporates several different but common social and cultural realities. From this reality, the black experience insures a multi-faceted but singular continuum of struggle for freedom, justice and humanity. More importantly, the black experience guarantees the development of *many* warriors in a given arena at a given time . . . warriors whose lives, thoughts and feelings are distinct but have developed from that common reality, for that singular struggle. Loewenberg and Bogin have not enhanced our understanding of these definitive aspects of black women in the 19th Century though they have given us an exceptionally fine introduction to what further explorations can reveal.

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ON BEING HUMAN: Principles of Ethics. Andrew C. Varga, S.J., New York, N.Y. Ramsey, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1978, 151 pp. \$2.95.

This book provides a concise and easy to read natural law approach to the study of ethics. The author defines his task as that of getting beyond a survey of ethical systems to present a consistent theory, and a set of guidelines and moral directives for contemporary everyday life. This goal is more or less accomplished through the development of the thesis that morality is based upon human nature.

An affinity with natural law ethics of Roman Catholicism is apparent, yet the author seeks to avoid any strong philosophical identification with particular theological or non-theological systems of moral decision-making. In the process of developing the thesis that human nature is the foundational criterion of morality, Andrew Varga classifies ethical theories into four categories, mainly, emotive, intuitive, those proposing extrinsic and those proposing intrinsic criteria. The brief summaries of important insights and contributions made in these groups of theories to

Book Reviews

the search for a valid ethical norm are particularly well adapted for the introductory study of ethics as a discipline. It is against this backdrop that Dr. Varga moves to substantiate a natural law answer which is not ostensibly bound to any of the traditional ethical systems whether they be Catholic or Protestant, religious or non-religious, personal or social in their orientation. The objective norm or criterion of morality for this author is human nature—directed by intellect and will toward its proper end, toward the completion of the highest and best human potentialities. This objective and proximate norm is interpreted by the author as being “tacitly and implicitly” regarded as valid in most ethical systems.

With reference to the question of free will and determinism, human beings are viewed by the author as “dynamic, creative, self-transforming and self-transcending beings.” Human beings can intervene in their own nature, notwithstanding the fact that complete control is beyond human grasp. This situation suggests some manner of ultimate dependency which converges on the question of obligation. For the non-religious ethicist Dr. Varga allows that this ultimate dependency can be posited in the blind forces of the universe. For the theological ethicist ultimate dependency, and consequently ultimate obligation, is upon God the creator of human nature. Here again, the author’s inclusion of alternative explanations seeks to avoid foreclosure upon an ideologically distinct system of ethics.

Beyond its use as an introductory text to the study of western ethics, this book could well serve as a syllabus for the more detailed study of ethics. The presentation of different theories in four basic classifications facilitates critical analysis, comparison, and reflection. The documented references, ranging from the classical Greek to contemporary theories, provide a reservoir of reading materials for the advancing student. The timely illustrations and concrete problems and issues in contemporary personal and social life are well-focused.

Despite the wider implications for all of humanity in the content of this book, a critical assessment of several sections reveals significant inconsistencies and cultural biases. For example, African and far east Asian philosophies and philosophers go virtually unmentioned. This is a failure of perspective which distorts history and misrepresents the contributions of non-European peoples. The critiques of non-theological assumptions, principles, and systems of ethics are more incisive than are the critiques of Western and Christian assumptions, principles, and systems. These inconsistencies and cultural biases would not likely go without notice by serious students of human societies and cultures.

This book constitutes a helpful general reader and college text. It is less useful for theological education in the seminary context, except as a good reference to be recommended for insight into the natural law perspective in western ethics.

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WOMEN AND THE WORD: SERMONS. Helen Gray Crotwell, ed. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978. 134 pp. \$4.25.

Books of sermons are not always noteworthy; a suggestion of pride and pretension taints most decisions to entomb the spoken and inspired word permanently in print. But women have been so often silenced by accusations of pride and pretension that the publication of a book of sermons by women is a welcome corrective.

Helen Gray Crotwell's preface is an unnecessary apologia for this act of publication, already dated by its premise that "people have few opportunities to hear a woman preach" (p. 1). Opening such a sermon collection in 1978 with Samuel Johnson's hackneyed eighteenth century analogy of woman preachers with dogs walking on their hind legs is offensive to women in ministry. We have heard the quotation and its ramifications *ad tedium* from men; why mar the first page of *Women and the Word* with it?

After the preface, the book improves. There are some fine sermons here by outstanding women (Valerie Russell, Phyllis Tribble, Carter Heyward, Letty Russell, Rosemary Radford Ruether, Peggy Ann Way, Dorothee Soelle, and Beatriz Melano Couch). The collection is organized in an approximation of the church year, including sermons preached for advent, epiphany, lent, Easter, and other times and occasions (two sermons are for ordination services). This liturgical format is helpful, and its conclusion in Helen Gray Crotwell's Ascension sermon, "Broken Community," is both impressive and satisfying.

Unfortunately, most of the contributors to *Women and the Word* are white (Beatriz Melano Couch is the Hispanic representative and Valerie Russell the black) and members only of mainline denominations. Eight of the nineteen sermon authors are identified as ordained, a surprising minority in a book designed to be "helpful for . . . ministers" (p. 4) and illustrative of women's homilectical style. But the acceptance of sermons by unordained preachers affirms the feminist stance of equality and serves as a subtle reminder of the history of discrimination against women, of the times when ordination was not permitted to any of us. Three of the sermons here are by Roman Catholic women, who of course still suffer the traditional discrimination and cannot be ordained. In this way, *Women and the Word* is an excellent witness to solidarity among Christian women, who are messengers of the word whether clergy or lay. As Rosemary Ruether says in her sermon "You Shall Call No Man Father," we must recognize that "the church has used the title 'minister' and 'servant' for its leadership, while in fact developing princely and hierarchical power roles for these servants. The revolutionary meaning in the word *minister* is lost precisely as it becomes a title of power!" (p. 94).

Another consistent witness offered by the sermons in *Women and the Word* is the practice by all its contributors of non-sexist language about people and God. An important model is thus provided for those who still struggle to avoid speaking of God as "He," or who claim that such revision is grammatically impossible. The spiritual power of such revision is grammatically impossible. The spiritual power of such revision is

Book Reviews

demonstrated in statements like these from the sermons: "God calls us out to be the people God created us to be" (p. 15); "God's Yes to us and in us is stronger when God's No is honored in our lives" (p. 34); ". . . love is the verb that names God for us because in that verb we encounter God's most characteristic action" (p. 65); "Service is God's gift because it is God who serves us" (p. 87). This consistency in language about God reflects a theological consistency also of the female hermeneutic out of which these sermons are developed. Images and structures from the female experience inform the sermons organically, most notably in Peggy Ann Way's beautiful "Fools, Clowns, and Temptations."

So *Women and the Word: Sermons* is much more than an experiment; it is an important and inspiring series of models for preaching and theologizing, of interest to male and female clergy and laypeople. Perhaps the best use for the book is as devotional material. Read in the experience of worship, the sermons will continue to live and to give life as they were spoken to do.

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