

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.

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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

God himself, considered his death as an atoning sacrifice for the elect, and believed that he had risen from the grave and returned to heaven, and after a short time would send a representative to earth. The author, furthermore, believes that Jesus had been a full-fledged member of the Essene order, also that the core of the Christian community consisted of Essenes who had defected to this community soon after the crucifixion of Jesus, and that Essenes joined Christianity in large number after the destruction of Jerusalem (pp. xiv, xv). In his views the author follows in part A. Dupont-Sommer and John M. Allegro, in part also writers such as A. Powell Davies.

The author reconstructs an artificial history of Essenism according to his own interpretation of the scanty historical evidence extant in the Qumran scrolls and in other ancient records, and then dates all the extra-Biblical Qumran literature accordingly. It goes without saying that his dates often disagree with those arrived at by the foremost scholars in Qumran research. His main arguments for the Essene origin of the Christ story and of Christian theology is based on *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (especially that part of it known as the *Testament of Levi*), a pseudepigraphical Jewish work which contains many Christian interpolations. Larson believes that "*The Testaments* in their entirety, as known in the Christian Church, were actually Essene writings" (p. 112, n). He therefore declares the statements in the *Testament of Levi* referring to Christ, which have always been recognized as Christian interpolations, to be of Essene origin, and believes that they refer to the "Teacher of Righteousness." He thus maintains that he has documentary evidence for the support of his arguments, referred to above, that Christianity has taken over all its basic concepts from the Essenes.

The fact that fragments of the *Testaments of Levi* and of *Naphtali* have come to light in Qumran caves is taken by Larson as evidence that these books in their entirety, as presently known, are of Essene origin. That only fragments of the *Testament of Levi* have been published which do not contain material that could be disturbing to Christians today, while other *Testament of Levi* fragments of Cave 4 remain unpublished many years after their discovery, has made Larson suspicious. He believes that the scholars involved in the publication of the scrolls are reluctant to publish this material since it might shake the pillars of Christian faith (pp. xvi-xviii). In support of his suspicion he quotes Allegro, who claims that he is no longer permitted to see the scrolls, and Larson speaks of the failure of his own efforts to obtain photographs of the unpublished fragments of the *Testament of Levi* from Cave 4.

This suspicion is unfounded, although it must be admitted that many students of the Dead Sea scrolls and of the Bible share Larson's frustration that serious studies of the scrolls are still hampered by the fact that most of the Cave 4 scroll fragments remain inaccessible 16 years after their discovery. Yet there are valid reasons for this delay: (1) the scholars entrusted with the publication of the scroll material

have other full-time jobs and do most of their work on the scrolls in their spare time (to their credit it must be said that they have already published all scroll material from Caves 1-3 and 7-10, and also one scroll from Cave 11); (2) the nature of the fragments makes their study, decipherment, identification and interpretation a slow, drawn-out process; and (3) the publication of each volume takes several years, even after a manuscript has been submitted to the printer. That access to the scrolls has been denied to Allegro is probably due to a breach of faith, which the editor-in-chief of the scroll publications, Roland de Vaux, has described, and which occurred in connection with the publication of the text and translation of the copper scrolls (*RB*, LXVIII [1961], 146, 147). The allegations of Allegro (*Harper's Magazine*, August, 1966, pp. 46-54) and Larson are therefore without basis. There is no reason to question the honesty of a scholar such as Frank M. Cross, Jr., who has worked on the scroll material of Cave 4 almost from the time of its discovery as a member of the team entrusted with its publication. Being well acquainted with the published as well as the unpublished Cave 4 scroll fragments of the *Testament of Levi*, he still believes with all scholars competent in this subject that the *Testaments* are "indeed Judeo-Christian editions, in part reworked, of older Essene sources" (*The Ancient Library of Qumran and Modern Biblical Studies* [1958], p. 118, n. 99).

Since Larson's basic premises are not valid, his far-reaching conclusions must be rejected as equally baseless and invalid. Books like his may satisfy readers who want to justify their rejection of the originality of Christianity, but they cannot be considered serious attempts to explain the amount of influence which Essenism had on Christianity.

The book also contains a great number of historical errors in details. The following from Chapter II are referred to by way of illustration: The conquest of Babylon by Cyrus took place in 539 and not in 538 B.C. (p. 12); Seleucus was murdered by Ptolemy Keraunus, the oldest son of Ptolemy I, who never occupied the throne of Egypt, while the author gives the impression that Seleucus was killed by Ptolemy I, the only Ptolemy whom he mentions a few paragraphs earlier (p. 13); the king who ascended to the throne in 223 was not "Antiochus II the Great," but Antiochus III (p. 13); Herod's territory was not divided after his death "among four tetrarchs" (p. 17), but among three of his sons, of whom one received the title "ethnarch," and two the title "tetrarch"; the Jewish-Roman war lasted from 66-70 (or from 66-73 if the fall of the last fortress is included), but not from 68-70 (p. 18); and the destruction of Jerusalem did not take place after "eight terrible months" of chaos. This period was either $4\frac{3}{4}$ months long (Nisan 14 to Elul 8, A.D. 70), if the Roman siege of the city is meant, or much longer than eight months if reference is made to the period of internecine warfare between the various Jewish factions inside the city.