

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.

Andrews University

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