

with those of four earlier hymnals, a more extensive examination is needed to clarify the elements of continuity and change.

Also, because the hymns were set to music, which, as Sizer notes, added a further dimension to the organization of emotion, an analysis of their musical settings is necessary for a fuller understanding of these songs. Although this music may have been related to the genteel tradition, as Sizer suggests, it seems more clearly akin to the waltzes, marches, and sentimental songs of the music hall, a connection that contributed to its popularity.

Finally, Sizer's suggestions of the ties between revivalism and the political situation and the contribution that this revivalism made to American civil religion, need further development and documentation. At this point they are provocative speculations that conclude an otherwise thoroughly researched and stimulating book.

Andrews University

GARY LAND

Stannard, David E. *The Puritan Way of Death: A Study in Religion, Culture, and Social Change*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1977. x + 236 pp. \$14.95. Paperback (1979), \$3.95.

During the past decade, death has received increasing attention from a number of disciplines, now including history. David E. Stannard of Yale University has chosen the Puritans as a means of beginning the task of examining American perceptions of the life cycle, because their culture "was sufficiently homogeneous for an extended period of time to permit perhaps more responsible generalization than would be possible in most other American cultural settings." The result is a most interesting book.

Stannard begins with a short sketch of Western attitudes toward death up to the Puritans. Although the concept of immortality assuaged the fear of death, the Christian belief in divine judgment encouraged that fear. The tradition of *contemptus mundi*, however, helped relieve inner tensions until it began encountering resistance during the Renaissance. Despite the modernizing trend, the Puritans were intellectually close to the Middle Ages and carried a deep sense of insecurity regarding their individual salvation. Puritan children repeatedly heard that their existence was precarious, their nature depraved, and their salvation uncertain. Puritan adults regarded death as both punishment and reward; their vision of death and attitude toward the process of dying coexisted in a terrible tension.

As the years passed, however, changes took place. The austere funerals that characterized the first generation became more ritualized for their

descendants, as pessimism about their mission produced tribalism. In the eighteenth century, optimistic sentimentalism began appearing and revivalism taught the possibility of certainty regarding one's salvation. At the same time, the sense of community declined. In the nineteenth century, as life became compartmentalized, self-indulgence, sentimentalization, and ostentation emerged as Americans began losing a sense of death's reality. By the twentieth century realism returned and secularism took over, but paradoxically, death was both avoided and denied. "Death," Stannard concludes, "cannot be abstracted from life and still retain its meaning" (p. 196).

It is obvious that Stannard has covered considerable ground in the space of but a few pages; five of his seven chapters address the Puritans, while the others examine attitudes both before and after that movement. The Puritans, in other words, are simply a focal point by which to discuss the American concept and practice of death. The book, as the author says, is "tentative," "frankly speculative," and "designed . . . to open a field of inquiry to questions rather than one claiming to dictate answers" (p. vii).

Stannard fulfills his purpose in a sophisticated fashion. While drawing on the expected literary sources and examining such artifacts as gravestones (of which the book contains pictures), the author has also illuminated his findings by applying the insights of scholars from a number of fields. Work by Phillippe Ariès, Mary Douglas, Clifford Geertz, and Anthony F. C. Wallace, among others, has enabled the author not only to interpret the Puritans but to relate them to general human experience. This interdisciplinary approach enables the historian to become more confident, for example, in saying that the Great Awakening and accompanying changes in the attitude toward death were in part a culture's internal response to its own decline.

The author presents his interpretation in broad strokes that readers need to regard as suggestive rather than definitive, and therefore questions abound. How did Puritan concepts compare with those of other New Englanders and those in other American colonies? What kinds of changes were taking place among these other peoples? What was happening among the Puritans and among other groups who remained in England and therefore did not partake of the American experience? Did a growing Arminianism always bring with it greater assurance, or did its emphasis on personal responsibility create additional sources of anxiety? How extensive was the sentimentalism of the nineteenth century, and what other sources did it have? Such are a few of the questions that this study suggests. Stannard himself is engaged in researching a larger work on American perceptions of the life-cycle that should provide some answers,

but other researchers with a narrower focus will need to refine and more fully document the author's assertions.

*The Puritan Way of Death* is necessary reading for anyone who has to deal professionally with death and dying. It reminds us that death, along with birth, perhaps the most individual of human experiences, has a history of which we are the inheritors.

Andrews University

GARY LAND

Strauss, Gerald. *Luther's House of Learning: Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978. xii + 390 pp. \$20.00.

Gerald Strauss, one of the best known Americans working in the field of German Reformation studies, has written a precise and compelling study about the Lutheran attempt to transform individuals by providing them with "a Christian mind-set, motivational drive, and way of life" (p. 307). Hence his analysis approaches the question of the success of the Protestant Reformation from a different perspective than that usually adopted by historians. He defines success in terms of the total transformation of lifestyle advocated by the most enthusiastic of the Reformers.

Although Strauss is concerned with the role of both the home and the school in effecting this transformation, he concentrates his attention upon the educational system of Lutheran Germany, for the Reformers rapidly concluded that the indoctrination of the young provided the best method for transforming individuals into genuine Christians. The vernacular school system had largely been established by the Reformers who ensured the priority of religious goals. As a result, Strauss points out, the object of education became the forging of "a motivational link between inner purposes and outward actions" through internalizing "the rules of Christian life as a set of guiding precepts originating in the intellect and the will" (p. 237). Despite their most earnest efforts, Strauss concludes, the Reformers failed in their attempt to turn sinners into saints—a failure graphically recorded in the visitation records surviving in various German archives (see especially chap. 12). Therefore he feels justified in asserting that "a century of Protestantism had brought about little or no change in the common religious conscience and in the ways in which ordinary men and women conducted their lives" (p. 299).

Strauss's explanation for this failure is of interest to students of church history and religious education as well as to historians of the Reformation. First, he notes the paradox between the doctrine of total