

The lasting value of Falk's work is that she goes one step further than all other popular English translations of the Song (including the ones that recognize the original is verse): She combines sound scholarship with what she calls "conscious poetic craft and sensibility." Her work is not a commentary, but it will be more widely usable than many of them. It is not idiosyncratic like Marvin Pope's monumental Anchor Bible volume on the Song, which interprets it as a funerary cult liturgy; nor does it have the critical depth of Roland Murphy's "Towards a Commentary on the Song of Songs" (*CBQ* 39 [1977]: 482-496). But it does sensitively portray the Song as a thoroughly non-sexist view of heterosexual love, one which affirms and celebrates mutuality where there is no male domination or female subordination or stereotyping of either sex. The book has something new to teach us about how to redeem sexuality and love in our fallen world, about a bonding which gives the individual courage to stand alone. Some after reading this book may be inspired to rejuvenate the Sephardic tradition of chanting the Song every Sabbath evening!

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Gaustad, Edwin S., ed. *A Documentary History of Religion in America: To the Civil War*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1982. xx + 535 pp. Paperback, \$16.95.

Gaustad, Edwin S., ed. *A Documentary History of Religion in America: Since 1865*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1983. xx + 610 pp. Paperback, \$16.95.

Edwin S. Gaustad has sifted through a massive amount of primary material to produce the most comprehensive collection of documents yet published on religion in America. Unlike its two-volume predecessor, *American Christianity: An Historical Interpretation with Representative Documents*, edited by H. Shelton Smith, Robert T. Handy, and Lefferts A. Loetscher two decades ago, Gaustad's work reaches beyond the confines of the Christian tradition to represent the non-Christian as well as the Christian forces in American religious history.

Gaustad had three purposes in developing his documentary history. First, he wanted to "enable every reader to be his or her own historian" (2: xv). Operating on the assumption that the further a person moves from the documents, the less reliable the historical reconstruction, Gaustad sought to provide the "building blocks" "to enable the 'amateur' to reconstruct the religious history of America" (1: xv). While his assumption

regarding the relationship between the documents and correct generalizations is indubitable, his methodological conclusion is not justified. After all, the "amateur" is at the mercy of Gaustad (or some other biased expert) to collect the "building blocks," abridge them, contextualize them with introductory remarks, supply titles and sub-titles, and put them in some kind of order. After this is done, one is hardly working with raw material. To the contrary, several significant steps have been taken in the development of a particular historical viewpoint. Thus Gaustad's first purpose, as it is stated, is impossible for him or any other editor to achieve. On the other hand, he did collect a remarkable set of documents that puts each of his readers into contact with the "stuff" that goes into the making of history. Because a collection of documents is not completely predigested for its readers, Gaustad's anthology has gone a long way toward helping the historical neophyte become "his or her own historian." Gaustad achieved this more modest goal admirably.

His second aim was "to be faithful to America's religious variety" (1:xv). By not confounding religion and Christianity, Gaustad reached this goal as well as could be expected. The real problem he faced was the immense variety of religion in both historical and contemporary America. One of his greatest challenges was "not so much to be faithful to pluralism as to avoid being drowned in it" (2:xv). The problem centered around giving adequate space to the great traditions of American religion, while still providing satisfactory representation to minority movements. The achievement of this purpose was evident throughout both volumes, beginning with documents relating to primitive Indian religion and moving up through a sampling of the religious variety of the 1960s and 1970s.

Gaustad's third purpose was "to allow, as often as possible, the private and passionate voices to be heard" (1:xi). His selections, therefore, represent a conscious attempt to present materials that express "the cry of the heart" rather than the "impersonal thud of bureaucracy" whenever a choice existed (*ibid.*). The result is a highly readable collection of documents that helps its readers to catch some of the dynamism and excitement of historical events.

In addition to the collected documents, Gaustad's interpretive introductions are insightful and his bibliographic essays provide starting places for the study of almost any topic in the field of American religion. While his indexes are adequate, they would have been more useful if the index for vol. 2 had integrated the material for both volumes. *A Documentary History of Religion in America* will undoubtedly become a standard reference work in its field.