

point is questionable. Mandell and Freedman read into Herodotus the coming Peloponnesian wars, though the book ends with the Greek victories over Persia. This is hardly equivalent to the Babylonian exile of Judah.

Both works are characterized by vividness which, apparently, is not compatible with true history (70). Both works treat the gods or God as real and involved in human events, rewarding and punishing nations and leaders (155-157), another "unhistorical" element. Divine fate, dreams, and other revelations are very important in both works. Herodotus and PH are treated as Greek-style tragedies with *hybris* playing an important role in the tragic flaw of the characters. In spite of a possible misuse of parallels, the relationship between the two works does seem to exist. In fact, this study may have contributed inadvertently to our understanding of ancient historiography. The common elements which Mandell and Freedman describe as *not* history may help define history as known in ancient Greek and Jewish cultures.

Most of the parallels are attributed to influences on Herodotus himself, who was born under Persian rule and may have traveled almost as much as his narrator persona claims. Included in his travels is a trip up the Nile as far as Elephantine (home of a Jewish-Persian garrison) and a trip through the Levant. However, the nine-book division of Herodotus was done by later grammarians influenced by PH in translation, either in a hypothetical Aramaic targum or in the Septuagint. This is an astounding claim for the influence of Jewish historiography on classical culture, and only time will tell how much of this influence the scholarly world will accept.

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Mather, George A., and Larry A. Nichols. *Dictionary of Cults, Sects, Religions, and the Occult*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993. xii + 384 pp. \$24.99.

This popular but well-researched book examines the larger, better-known religious movements which originated—mainly in the nineteenth century—outside of mainstream American Christianity, as well as lesser-known fringe groups of more exotic and/or recent vintage. Without attempting to be complete, it contains comprehensive articles with relatively detailed sections about the history, beliefs, practices, and demographics of important groups. But it also offers a substantial number of shorter cross-referenced articles with brief definitions. The descriptions of the various movements and groups are followed by evaluations from an evangelical Protestant perspective. In their effort to avoid a specific denominational bias in these criticisms, the degree of adherence to and conformity with the ecumenical creeds of early Christianity has been used as the main criterion.

The authors have also included articles about the world religions. They correctly argue that the newer religious movements are usually related to or derived from these religions. As might be expected, they also incorporated a major article on Christianity. In addition to this there are numerous entries

about early and medieval heresies, the important divisions in Christianity, and important theological terms. One looks in vain, however, for articles on the important subdivisions of Protestantism and for more recent currents in Christianity. There are, for example, entries about Albigenses, Waldenses, Puritans, and Pietists, but not about Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, or Pentecostals. Although the Millerites and the Great Disappointment each merit a short article, Seventh-day Adventists do not. Likewise there is no comprehensive article on the Roman Catholic Church, while there are separate entries for a number of Catholic orders.

Checking which sects and cults are included in this dictionary brought few surprises. The work mentions most major groups that evolved from Christian origins, the syncretistic movements imported to the United States, and movements characterized as occult. The (extremely critical) attention given to Mormonism is somewhat disproportionate; the main article is supported by dozens of shorter articles scattered throughout the book. On the other hand, I looked in vain for an entry on the Black Muslims. Later I found them under their official name: World Community of Ali Islam in the West. The omission of the Universal Peace Mission of Father Divine was likewise a surprise. More serious, perhaps, is the fact that Freemasonry remains unmentioned. For some organizations the headquarters office address is given; for others it is not.

The book offers a lengthy bibliography of relevant literature for many of the groups covered in the text. The inclusion of a section on "gay theology" may have been caused by some irrepressible dislike on the part of the evangelical authors for gays and their culture, but is not required, considering the content of the book.

Any one-volume dictionary of a few hundred pages obviously has its limitations; and a listing and description of religions, cults, and sects cannot escape some form of bias. This book is no exception. But in spite of its limitations and presuppositions, it offers a wealth of excellently organized information and is well worth its price.

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McGrath, Alister E., ed. *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Thought*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1993. 720 pp. \$94.95.

The publication of *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Thought* (hereafter referred to as BEMCT), composed under the accomplished editorial workmanship of Alister E. McGrath, signals the genesis of a new generation of reference works that provide needed orientation in the changed theological terrain. One year after the publication of *A New Handbook of Christian Theology*, edited by Donald W. Musser and Joseph L. Price (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1992), the BEMCT has set new standards for one-volume encyclopedias that will make it a much-sought-after reference work well into the next century.