

ticularly at the diocesan and national levels. One may find this regrettable, but it seems virtually unavoidable in an institution claiming universality, and consequently needing to keep pace with rationalizing tendencies in "outer-world" society.

The book is not easy to read; its style is curiously undistinguished, ungrateful, and stodgy. But it does throw a useful light on the role of Catholicism within American society as a whole; and in general on the state of the Church in an exceptionally difficult time of transition.

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Edward H. Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews, Twenty-Three Centuries of Antisemitism*, A Stimulus Book, Paulist, New York/Mahwah, 1985 vi + 369 pp., paper.

This volume, which is an extensive revision of the author's 1964 work, is a history of antisemitism, with emphasis on the Christian role in the physical and ideological persecution of the Jews. The new version appears to have benefited from comments, corrections and bibliographical suggestions from various sources, particularly from Jewish histories. It concludes with a chapter reviewing recent manifestations of antisemitism.

The study is aimed at the educated Christian (especially Roman Catholic) non-specialist, and as such it would be unfair to assess it by strictly scholarly standards. Those who are familiar with the subject will find little that is new, and much of the information is culled from secondary sources. Our appraisal will, then, limit itself for the most part to questions of approach, presentation, and the author's evaluations of the facts which he presents.

Among the most successful chapters were those dealing with non-Christian antisemitism, which were probably included because of the perspective that they lend to evaluating the degree of uniqueness in the Christian variety (chapters are similarly devoted to other non-Christian strains of antisemitism, such as the Soviet and Arab types). The brief chapter on the Hellenistic writers is remarkably well presented. One can feel the terrific self-control that must have constrained F. in digesting a large body of complex material and selecting only those sources which were most relevant to the issue at hand, and in not permitting himself to indulge in detailed analysis of all the possible interpretations of this very controversial and ambiguous question. In all, he presents a reasonable assessment of the attitudes of the Hellenistic world to the Jews. This self-control and reasonableness is typical of most of the book.

F. is generally very cautious in trying to determine whether a given

phenomenon is in fact a manifestation of antisemitism—meaning a bigoted, malicious hatred of Jews—or some other form of hostility to Jews built upon political, ideological, or other grounds. Thus, he distinguishes carefully between those early Christian writers which attack *Judaism* as a religion (part of a legitimate polemic, however bitterly argued, which was carried on by both sides), as against attacks of the Jews as a people, often depicted as inherently perverse or hypocritical. The borderline is often very obscure, and F. tends generally not to brand a writer as antisemitic as long as there is some other possibility of explaining his anti-Jewish statements. This of course does not stop him from making clear-cut charges against several prestigious Christian thinkers, such as John Chrysostom and others.

In the light of the author's general outspokenness and fairness, it comes as something of a surprise that he devotes little more than a page to the question of antisemitism in the New Testament (see p. 33). After a brief classification of various types of anti-Jewish utterances which are not to be considered strictly speaking antisemitic, F. concludes that "in the light of such a definition, it is the opinion of the writer that the New Testament cannot be considered antisemitic...." At no point does F. present any proof of this claim, nor does he try to refute any of the standard accusations which have been directed against "the later editors of John, writing last, are unrelenting in their anti-Judaism." Having shown that he does recognize the existence of different attitudes to the Jews within the New Testament writings, an outline of these attitudes should have found a place within a study of this sort. Such a central issue certainly deserved to be tested according to the same standards which he applies to other writings.

Once we have passed beyond the world of Antiquity, the book becomes, for the most part, a chronicle of persecutions, most of the information taken from standard histories. Of especial value for readers who are unfamiliar with the subject are the author's discussions of the legal, social, and economic status of the medieval Jew (including the question of Jewish money-lending), the blood libel, and other recurring phenomena. One might have wished to have found more reliance on Jewish records, many of which testify to the sublimely spiritual quality of their martyrdom. It is frustrating to find the Jews depicted purely as passive victims, without sufficient recognition of their heroism, or of the positive achievements of their culture. But such distortion is not really a failing of the book, but a consequence of the fact that it has limited itself to a single theme.

On the whole, the study is an accurate one, and succeeds in its goal of presenting to the non-specialist a concise sketch of the ideology and practice of antisemitism.

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