

## Religion

27-5088 Orig  
Al-Abidin, Imam Zayn. *The psalms of Islam: Al-Sahifat Al-kamilat al-Sajjadiyya*, by Imam Zayn al-'Abidin and 'Ali ibn al-Husayn; tr. by William C. Chittick. The Muhammadi Trust of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (Dist. by Oxford) 1989 (c1988). 301p bibl index ISBN 0-946079-51-X, \$79.00

A devotional manual of the highest quality stressing the innermost dimension of Islam, these petitionary prayers will be dismissed by some as Shi'i or "heterodox" rather than Sunni or "orthodox." They are, on the contrary, suitable for all Muslims, just as they are worthy of note for all students, be they students of the transcendent spirit or students of that mundane academic discipline labeled "religion." This volume makes available a 14th-century literary compilation of 54 prayers orally transmitted from the 7th and 8th centuries and attributed to the great-grandson of the Prophet Muhammad, Zayn al-'Abidin. Prior to Chittick's exceptional labor, no one has made an English translation of "The Perfect Book of al-Sajjad [or the prostrator, a name given to Zayn al-'Abidin because of his devotion]." The Arabic pages of the original interface their English (slightly Victorian) rendition. All is set forth on gilt-edged vellum paper, which makes the asking price seem low, especially since p.2-259 are double-counted, i.e., the book actually totals more than 600 pages. Recommended for all levels of users.—*B. B. Lawrence, Duke University*

27-5089 BR526 89-31134 MARC  
*Between the times: the travail of the Protestant establishment in America, 1900-1960*, ed. by William R. Hutchison. Cambridge, 1989. 322p index ISBN 0-521-36168-0, \$39.50

Twelve historians examine the first six decades of this century as the period of transition from the mainline Protestant establishment to religious pluralism and secularism. Among the specific themes considered are the local congregation, the educational arena, the media, Protestant ecumenism, social reform, women, blacks, relations with Roman Catholics and Jews, secularization, religious pluralism and other religions, and conservative evangelicalism. Hutchison frames these studies with helpful essays and introductions. The stated purpose of the book is to "launch a close examination of the Protestant establishment's agenda for American society and the ways in which 'others' related to it." Even though the book is the product of 12 contributors, the style and format are consistent and readable. Each section includes notes and a select bibliography. There are some interesting photographs and there is a useful general index. Because of its insightful, systematic, and in-depth treatment, this book adds considerably to one's understanding of the American Protestant establishment during the period 1900-60, and it should be in all libraries with collections in American religion and history.—*R. L. Massanari, Alma College*

27-5090 BS2098.C37 89-23653 CIP  
*Bible. N.T. English. Cassirer. God's new covenant: a New Testament translation*, by Heinz W. Cassirer. Eerdmans, 1989. 494p ISBN 0-8028-3673-9, \$19.95

This translation of the New Testament is the work of an eminent classicist and philosopher who had not read any of the Bible before the age of 49. Once having delved into the sacred texts, however, Cassirer spent the next 21 years of his life studying them and eventually prepared this complete and painstaking translation. It has been published posthumously as edited by Ronald Weitzman. Because Cassirer himself was of Jewish descent, he was especially attentive to aspects of the text expressing or touching upon Jewish sensibilities. To read his translation is thus to see the New Testament through Jewish eyes, as well as through the eyes of a scholar who came into Christianity (Anglicanism) later in life. The quality of the translation, which the author in no sense wanted to be viewed as a paraphrase, lies in its clarity and simplicity, yet carefulness of English expression. For example, Matthew 5:9 reads: "A blessing rests on those who are bent on establishing peace; 'Sons of God' is the name that shall be given them." This fine work would be an excellent addition to collections used by those doing comparative translation work—e.g., graduate students and faculty in theology/religious studies.—*F. M. Gillman, University of San Diego*

27-5091 BX809.G72 87-40615 C  
Brown, Alden V. *The Grail movement and American Catholicism, 1940-1975*. Notre Dame, 1989. 229p bibl index ISBN 0-268-01015-3, \$21.95

With the exception of the Catholic Worker movement, which has been examined in detail in Mel Piehl's *Baking Bread* (CH, Apr'83), several other books, and numerous articles, the history of the American Catholic laity has been neglected by historians of American religion. The present study represents one sensitive, scholarly effort to fill the breach. Brown recounts the history of the American branch of the Grail, an international Catholic laywomen's movement, from its beginning in Holland in the early 1920s, through the heyday of "Catholic Action" movements (c. 1930-1960), and into the period of self-scrutiny and renewal that followed the Second Vatican Council. In so doing, Brown touches upon a broad range of developments that are of interest to everyone seeking a better understanding of the American Catholic community in the 20th century—e.g., the Catholic revival, the liturgical and rural life movements, the rise of Catholic feminism, and the laity's escalating outreach to the poor, both in the US and in Third World countries. For libraries serving graduate students, upper-division undergraduates, and general readers.—*D. Campbell, Colby College*

27-5092 BL2525 89-35770 C  
Butler, Jon. *Awash in a sea of faith: Christianizing the American people*. Harvard, 1990. 360p index afp ISBN 0-674-05600-2, \$29.50

Butler's pathbreaking, iconoclastic work in the study of early American religion, hitherto known largely to specialists, now appears as a broader study that is designed to appeal to a wider audience. Professor of history, religious studies, and American studies at Yale, Butler shares the interpretation advanced by his predecessor, Sydney Ahlstrom, that derives the character of American Protestantism from its New England Puritan roots. Instead, Butler describes a complex tradition whose formative period lasted from 1680 to 1820 and included a number of separate influences, among them a reassertion of state-church authority, popular belief in magic and the occult, and an African-American "spiritual holocaust" that systematically destroyed the traditional religious systems of 18th-century slaves. Though this book covers the period from colonization to 1865, it is anything but a textbook, and read with no previous exposure to the religious history of early America should be advised to begin elsewhere. Anyone beyond the introductory level, however, will find Butler's interpretations indispensable, and his gracious writing style and extensive annotations contribute further to the book's usefulness. Appropriate for students at and beyond upper-division undergraduate level.—*L. B. Tipson, Gettysburg College*

27-5093 BT83.55 89-33953 MARC  
Chopp, Rebecca S. *The power to speak: feminism, language, and God*. Crossroad, 1989. 167p indexes ISBN 0-8245-0940-5, \$17.95

Chopp has already made a major contribution to feminist liberation theology in her earlier book *The Praxis of Suffering: An Interpretation of Liberation and Political Theologies* (CH, Jan'87). In the present book she forthrightly contends that earlier forms of feminist theology utilizing a hermeneutic of suspicion to demolish patriarchy and metaphysical dualism are no longer sufficient. Using as her key the "emancipatory transformation," Chopp contends that language is a political activity and that what is desperately needed today is the promulgation of a new language, indeed a new Word to and for the world. This will mean a radical revision of the roles of the Bible, theology, and Church, a revision that does not hesitate to insist from a hermeneutic of marginality that the Christian faith today requires a different social symbolic order, one that literally and poetically transforms "the ruling principles, orderings and substance of language, subjectivity, and politics." In a calm, sustained style, the author breaks new ground in ongoing feminist theological pilgrimage, one that will make traditionalists squirm and liberationists cheer.—*D. W. Ferm, Colby College*

27-5094 BS1235.2 89-7149 C  
Cohen, Jeremy. *"Be fertile and increase, fill the earth and master it": the ancient and medieval career of a Biblical text*