

The Tannaim regarded them as heretics (Jews who had accepted false beliefs) and restricted their influence as Jews, but they did not exclude them from the Jewish community. At Yavneh, the Tannaim, who wanted to unite the people after the war of 70 CE, barred Jewish Christians from officiating as readers in the synagogue by introducing the Birkath ha-minim into the Eighteen Benedictions, and pronounced against the sanctity of Jewish-Christian writings, whether copies of the Jewish scriptures written by Jewish-Christians, or Jewish-Christian texts (the Gospels and Epistles). These measures would naturally encourage Jewish-Christians to hold their own assemblies separate from the synagogue. However, Jewish-Christians were still regarded as Jews by Jews, and were not excluded from the synagogue.

Relations between Jewish-Christians and Jews deteriorated during the Bar Kochba Revolt (135 CE). Jewish-Christians regarded Bar Kochba as a false Messiah, and when they refused to join the revolt, they were attacked by Bar Kochba and some were executed. Because of this, and the general disruption of the war, Jewish-Christian numbers in Palestine declined. After the war, the Romans turned Jerusalem into Aelia Capitolina and banned Jews and Jewish-Christians from entry. The new Christian community in Jerusalem was therefore Gentile. For the first time, Jews in Palestine were faced with Christianity as a Gentile religion. These Gentile Christians did not conform to the definition of a Jew, and from this time, Jews treated Gentile Christianity, the only Christianity that survived, as a separate religion.

Schiffman's thesis about Tannaitic attitudes is independently confirmed by Kim-

elman, who also examines the Amoraic period (2nd-4th centuries CE), and shows that the term 'nosrim' refers not to Gentile Christians (as Schiffman and others suggest) but to the Jewish-Christian sect of the Nazoreans. The study demonstrates that during the Amoraic period, there is no unambiguous evidence that Jews cursed Gentile Christians during the statutory prayers. On the other hand, there is abundant evidence that Christians were welcomed in synagogues and received Jewish charity. So the introduction of the Birkath ha-minim does not represent a watershed in Jewish/Christian relations as some Christian scholars have suggested.

Space permits me to do little more than list the other articles. I' Dexinger provides yet another historical reconstruction of Samaritanism and sees the break between Jerusalem and Shechem as occasioned by political and economic factors. B S Jackson gives a detailed but tentative account of possible Roman Law influences on Jewish law. D W Halivni shows that Rabbi Judah's Mishnah was not accepted as a second Bible, that there was opposition to it and that some of its stipulations were ignored. A I Baumgarten reconstructs a history of relations between the followers of Rabbi Hillel and of Rabbi Akiba under the title: the politics of reconciliation.

It will be clear that this volume contains much interesting material, but its coherence would have been greatly improved had contributors taken into account the views of fellow-contributors and had categories and distinctions been worked out in more detail and more systematically. It is surprising that no study of the Septuagint is included. There are indices of passages cited and of authors, but there is no index of subjects.

MARGARET PAMMENT

THE CULT OF SAINTS: its rise and function in Latin Christianity

by Peter Brown, SCM Press, London 1981. £6.95.

The Cult of the Saints contains material first delivered as the Haskell lectures given in the Divinity School at Chicago University in 1978. Its style is that of the orator, full of grace and glory, carrying an audience along into a rich and many-coloured world where a seventeenth century lyric of profane love provides a chapter heading to a discussion of early Christian tombs and present day dealings with a *faiih* in Morocco proves a parallel for appeals to the saints in the late antique world. If at times the rhetoric seems overdone, too rich for the reader, this is the

fault merely of transferring a spoken style of almost magical power to the stark printed page. Some of the glory has necessarily departed, and since this is so, the attention is not so dazzled as it might be in class, and the content of the book has to bear the full weight of criticism.

Mr Brown deals with changes in the concept of the holy in late antiquity, measuring the pagan and Christian elements involved in the world around the Mediterranean and northwards into Gaul in the masterly fashion of the biographer of *St Augustine of Hippo*. Many of the

themes in *The World of Late Antiquity*, are developed again and the author refers to this work and to *The Making of Late Antiquity*, so that it seems that the three books form a trilogy, in which similar topics are discussed and expanded. This means that a new and fruitful dimension is added to certain themes, but at times it also means that defence of a controversial proposal is avoided by a reference to an earlier book, where the reader may feel that it is still a case of *non placet*. For instance: 'we must remember that the Christian church had risen to prominence largely because its central ritual practices and its increasingly centralized organization and financial administration presented the pagan world with an ideal community that had claimed to modify, to redirect and even to delimit the bonds of the kin' (p 31) is, we discover from the notes, to be "remembered" because Mr Brown has said so before elsewhere; perhaps a case of 'if I say it three times it is true'.

The first chapter contains an attack upon the 'two-tiered system' of previous scholarship, in which 'the views of the potentially enlightened few are thought of as being subject to continuous upward pressure from habitual ways of thinking cur-

rent among 'the vulgar' (p 17). Mr Brown presents the changes in the understanding of sanctity in late antique society as 'the common preoccupation of all' (p 22), rather than as a dialogue between two parties. While it may be that the case is overstated and does less than justice to scholars such as Delehay, this is a welcome approach, especially as it gives a better perspective in which to regard that vital source for the historian, the records of those who were not intellectually sophisticated. The rest of the book presents various kinds of relationship between men of the world of the sixth century and the dead, especially the saints, in their role as patrons and companions of the living. There is much here that is of great value and it is presented in a beguiling manner; perhaps a final chapter with a title such as 'Alive unto God' would fill out the picture with a consideration of the theology of the saints as the icons of Christ among whom the believer is 'compassed about by so great a cloud of witnesses' (Heb. 12:1), not only 'the searching and merciful presence of a fellow human being' (p 127) but the discovery of the possibility of transfiguration of men.

BENEDICTA WARD S L G

THE THIRD REICH AND THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES by Peter Matheson
T & T Clark, Edinburgh 1981 £2.95

Hitherto, much of the literature on the relationship between the churches and the Nazi regime has been handicapped either by its partisan apologetical nature or by its excessive concentration on the institutional aspects of the relationship. More recently, however, historians have turned their attention to the 'public opinion' reports of state and party officials at all levels in order to make a balanced assessment of the attitude of the German population towards the Nazi regime and its policies. Unfortunately, this new emphasis is not reflected in Peter Matheson's document collection.

To look on the positive side of things, almost any selection of documents in translation suitable for use by sixth-form students and undergraduates is to be welcomed. Matheson concentrates on the relationship between the institutional church — the clergy of both denominations and the national Protestant organisations and the Vatican — and the Nazi regime. His selection of documents brings out the divisions which paralysed the German

Protestant community during the early years of the Third Reich, and demonstrates the fundamental hostility of the churches towards the Weimar Republic, an hostility which was bound to compromise their capacity to resist the attempts of the Nazi regime to gain control of all areas of material, cultural and religious life. The obsessive fear of 'Bolshevism' which characterised the inter-war Catholic Church combined with its hostility towards the liberalism of the Weimar Republic to make it at least initially sympathetic towards the new regime; and the Protestant churches were hamstrung by their traditional association with the Prussian militarist authoritarian state. Positive enthusiasm for the Nazi regime on the one hand, and the attempt to secure the institutions of the church at the cost of a total withdrawal from politics on the other, were the perhaps predictable results of these attitudes.

This having been said, however, Mathe-