

ling in numbers and in functional power. As they emerged from the public school system, the more talented sons began to find their way in an open and egalitarian society in the University which their fathers had been denied in the Clubs. The New Social Science repudiated the old Darwinism, suggesting that J. P. Morgan, Henry Ford, and their like illustrated the survival, not of the fittest, but of the foxiest. The Social Gospel spread the conviction that withheld opportunity, not inferior heredity, explained lagging performance of immigrant minorities. Then with the advent of the New Deal these minorities suddenly discovered themselves coagulated into a majority, possessed of national power yet shunned by the dispossessed but prestigious patricians. Thus the author's thesis: 'that in order for an upper class to maintain a continuity of power and authority, especially in an opportunistic and mobile society such as ours, its membership must, in the long run, be representative of the composition of society as a whole. . . . A crisis in moral authority has developed in modern America largely because of the White-Anglo-Saxon-Protestant establishment's unwillingness, or inability, to share and improve its upper-class traditions by continuously absorbing talented and distinguished members of minority groups into its privileged ranks' (pp. xi, x).

This study betrays its venue (author Baltzell is associate professor of sociology at the University of Pennsylvania); one wonders whether ethnic identity has the same forceful effects in the rest of the nation which it has in the various 'ports of entry' (New York, Boston, Philadelphia, etc.), where the first and second generations of most immigrant groups co-exist in massive ethnic blocs, before moving out into the more amalgamated society in the rest of the land. Also, the book chooses to give heavy emphasis to the anti-semitic features of the

WASP establishment, with much less attention given to anti-Catholic and none to anti-Negro features. This last would have been particularly interesting, since the Negro, unlike the Jew or Catholic, has been denied access, not only to the upper class, but also to the leadership elite.

Sociology today has split into two breeds: statistical and anecdotal. Dr Baltzell here presents an almost pure strain of the anecdotal variety. It is certainly more pleasant to read and evaluate his fetchingly presented catena of personal vignettes, conversations overheard in tearooms, and comparisons of *Who's Who* with the *Social Register*, than to suffer through successions of graphs and tables. Yet in the absence of systematic experimental control, one is always afraid that this is education by parable, rather than by evidence.

Lastly, this reviewer wonders how desirable and indeed how feasible would be the sort of aristocracy herein praised. In any aristocracy, wealth is hereditary but talent is not. In the post-feudal world, wherein education was guaranteed to the wealthy but not the talented, advancement, power and leadership would naturally tend to accumulate within the aristocracy. But since the educational system has been completely restructured to provide maximum advantages for the talented, has not mobility of advancement been accelerated to such a point that new leaders will rise so fast as not to leave much room for the mediocre sons of the previous leaders? Opportunity now provides so swift an access to the leadership elite that one doubts the capacity of any hereditary group to provide for conservation and transmission of cultural values. The French nobility, though withdrawn into a caste, long survived, it is less probable that an American WASP caste will long maintain even an anachronistic prestige before being swept aside.

JAMES TUNSTEAD BURTCHAELL, C.S.C.

WE JEWS AND JESUS by Samuel Sandmel. *Victor Gollantz Ltd. 1965 28s.*

*We Jews and Jesus* is the concise work of a liberal rabbi and professional scholar. It is destined to help thoughtful Jewish people and especially college-age students to a better understanding of Jesus and a reasonable Jewish attitude to him. The 'recurrent Jewish and Christian question: Who and what was Jesus?' is discussed in non-technical language *sine ira*

*et studio*. The gradual reversal of historic attitudes in the last 150 years necessitates the treatment of the subject in three distinct sections: A resume of pre-modern Jewish approaches; an account of the findings of Jewish and Christian biblical scholarship of the last century and a half, and finally some comments on the implications of that approach

for Christian-Jewish relations. With admirable forbearance the author gives the historical background of the anti-attitudes on both sides, and clears the ground for a dispassionate appraisal of the attempts of both Christian and Jewish scholars to isolate the 'man' Jesus. He is aware of the fact that the separation of the human Jesus from the Christ 'goes against the grain of historic Christianity'. And after a brilliant exposition of the efforts of scholars on the one hand to separate Jesus from Christianity by claiming him for Judaism (Graetz and Geiger) and on the other hand of de-judaizing him completely (Renan and the later Strauss) he reaches the conclusion: 'We can know what the Gospels say, but we cannot know Jesus' (p. 124). As a Jew the author has more sympathy with the liberal and 'Social Gospel' schools of Protestant biblical scholarship, than with the neo-orthodox school (R. Niebuhr) which is more concerned with Jesus the Christ. The last two chapters: 'The Jewish reader and the Gospels' and 'Toward a Jewish attitude to Christianity' are valuable personal documents. By probing into what the Gospels are basically saying the Jewish scholar finds three basic themes about which both Christianity and Judaism revolve: There is a will of God. Man can and does know the will of God, because God has revealed it to him. Man can abide by this will – the shameful Christian actions of the past are put into proper perspective by one in

whose native land pogroms were ushered in by the ringing of Church bells, and who was baited by fellow pupils as a Christ-killer. 'The persecutions of Jews by Christians ought to be seen as one of the many horrors with which the history of mankind has been unduly filled' (p. 146). But the ugly question remains whether the outrages of the past are 'of the essence of Christianity or only a reflection of particular historical occasions?' (p. 142) – the difference between the Jewish and the Christian approach to religion is seen to lie in the Christian emphasis on faith from which actions result, while 'the Jewish way has been to ask, what shall a man do, holding that what man does illuminates the antecedent, and even tacit, faith' (p. 74). There are pertinent remarks in this book which are illuminating to the Christian reader: the emphasis that Christianity is, of course, a monotheism; the warning not to entrust the dialogue with Jews to converts from Judaism; the remark that in the controversy about the Hochhuth play the Christian obligation to save Jews was acknowledged on both sides. The Catholic reader may regret that Professor Sandmel mainly encountered Christianity in its Protestant form. But he can learn a great deal from this fascinating study which certainly removes obstacles to mutual understanding and is written in a conciliatory spirit.

IRENE MARINOFF

SIMONE WEIL: SEVENTY LETTERS. Translated and arranged by Richard Rees. *Oxford University Press* 30s.

There is something awesome about Simone Weil; a spine-chilling quality about many of her actions. She did whatever she wanted with utter dedication and regardless of difficulty or danger to herself. Heroism on this scale is frightening to ordinary flesh and blood. A blue-stocking in ill-fitting dungarees, she forced herself to work in frustrating jobs in spite of her clumsiness and poor physique. Her letters on the conditions of work and the mentality of the industrial workers are full of interesting and challenging ideas. It is not entirely surprising to learn that she had leanings towards Catharism; she drove herself to death with a dedicated rashness that one cannot help admiring. Her letters however reveal a humanity, a compassion as well as a capacity for enjoying simple things that one would hardly suspect from her

other writings. There is a Franciscan quality about her love of poverty. One of the reasons why she felt she couldn't identify herself completely with the Catholic Church was because it was not manifestly on the side of the poor.

Her deepest admiration was for the classics and more especially for the Greek tragedies; she gives the impression of being closer to Antigone than to Abraham or Christ. She could only embrace Christianity as an ideal: 'I think it is a sacrament simply to look at the host and the chalice during the elevation . . .' Just as she neglected her body and thought it of secondary importance she underestimated the value of the sacraments as physical realities for the healing of the whole man.

Only the heroic attracted her and she couldn't tolerate weakness: 'In reality it seems