

Less closely related to the theme of the volume, though the author takes pains to make some relations, the last two "pieces" deal with the "American theme" of Nature versus civilization, and the persistent American question, can an errand be run indefinitely?—in other words, the problem, associated with earlier civilizations' eschatology, of the "End of the World." These swirls in the current of American ideas are important contributions to the present broad concern with American civilization, a more general look than the earlier essays at some persistent ideas about the nature of America.

Though no book for those who are not philosophically inclined and ready to struggle rigorously with the blocks of ideas Miller piles one on the other, the volume has much for the student of ideas, much that is hard, but the reader is amply repaid for his effort by the matchless flashes of clarity that are characteristic of the author. We need more, nevertheless, of the kind of insight that Perry Miller provides if we are to achieve correct perspective on the basic elements that went into the formation of the later United States.

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*American Catholicism.* By John Tracy Ellis. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956. Pp. xiii, 208. Notes, index. \$3.00.)

This volume is the published form of a series of lectures delivered at the University of Chicago in January, 1955, on the Charles R. Walgreen Foundation for the Study of American Institutions. It is the second in a projected series called "The Chicago History of American Civilization" under the editorship of Daniel J. Boorstin. These studies of American civilization are planned so as to make available both a "chronological" and a "topical" account of American life. The hope is that, in this way, the study and the writing of history may be delivered from the narrative and statistical tedium too often and too long associated with history. The reader is thus to discover "one of the neglected pleasures of history, both as experienced and as written."

Monsignor Ellis is professor of church history at the Catholic University of America, managing editor of the *Catholic Historical Review*, and secretary of the American

Catholic Historical Association. His volume belongs to the "topical" group projected by Professor Boorstin for the purpose of dealing with "varied and important aspects of American life." Among these aspects is "the place of religion" which historical scholarship here recognizes as part of its responsibility and task. Father Ellis' volume is to be followed by similar treatments of American Judaism and American Protestantism.

The story of American Catholicism could scarcely be more authoritatively and winsomely told. The author's authority stems from his singular competence in the discipline of historical research and from the integrity of his commitment to the Church and the faith about which he writes. The winsomeness of these pages stems from the author's felicity of style and from the kind of mastery of the materials which make felicitous selection and authentic interpretation possible. Here is, in brief compass, the story of Roman Catholicism in the United States from the inside, as informed and responsible Roman Catholics see it.

The theme of the narrative is that Americans have become accustomed to a one-sided view of their origins as a people, owing to a disproportionate attention to Anglo-Saxon colonization of the eastern seaboard. There is another "colonial America," residually evident in place names that stretch from St. Augustine to San Francisco. This other colonial America is, of course, Spanish and Catholic. And when "Spanish America" is brought into relation with "French America," under the aegis of historical perspective and research, the religious origins of the United States take on a broader and quite different aspect than they have been conventionally wont to assume. Indeed, Catholics came to America from the same predominant motive as that which "had prompted the Puritans to settle in Massachusetts and the Quakers in Pennsylvania." The motive was that they might freely worship God, out of reach of the hampering restrictions of England's penal laws. Some ambiguity accompanies Monsignor Ellis' narrative at this point because this answer to the general question, "why did Catholics come to America?," does not cover his earlier account of the Spaniards and the French who appear to have been motivated more by the missionary impulse than by the desire for freedom of

worship. However this may be, Catholicism was to encounter from the first an ugly and deep-seated "anti-Catholic bias" which overshadows the whole Catholic story in America.

Nevertheless, the growth of Catholicism in America has been slow but sure, from "scarcely more than 25,000 Catholics" in 1785 to 33,574,017 in 1956. Plagued by the "anti-Catholic" bias from the outside, this growth represents a triumph also over a difficult problem from within. This was the problem of immigration which during the whole of the nineteenth century, and virtually to the present day, has so absorbed the attention and energies of the Church as to prevent its coming adequately abreast of the intellectual, cultural, and social life of the rest of the nation. This "cultural lag" is now being happily and hopefully overtaken as American Catholicism comes of age, a phenomenon recognized as early as 1908, when Pope Pius X detached the Church in the United States from the jurisdiction of the Congregation de Propaganda Fide and recognized its equality with "such ancient churches as those of Italy, France, and Germany."

However, the central paradox of the story of American Catholicism is the one which for a century now has increasingly illuminated the past and troubled the present and future. The paradox is that "the most disliked and suspect of all the American churches was on the way to becoming the largest and strongest single denomination in the land" (p. 81).

Monsignor Ellis says repeatedly that American Catholics find this paradox difficult to understand. Apparently he finds it difficult to understand also. One can only acknowledge with respect and admiration the irenic and informed sincerity with which he tries to set the record straight as the basis on which the constructive aims and achievements of Catholicism in America may be recognized and accepted. Monsignor Ellis rightly notes that "American Catholics are here to stay" and that if Catholics and their critics would conduct their relations "with more regard for the ancient patristic maxim, *In necessariis, unitas; in dubiis, libertas; in omnibus, caritas*, it would be a gain for all concerned." It may be hoped, therefore, that a reservation or two about his own attempt to adhere to this maxim, as he tells the story here under review, may not be set down by him or his co-religionists as making "a career out of criticism" but as an indication, in the same spirit, of what makes it difficult

for some of us who are non-Catholics to be sure that the olive branch is not being extended in a mailed fist.

On balance, the story here unfolded appears to be not so much history as an *apologia pro vita catholica*. The two are not necessarily exclusive. But the present narrative does not achieve their happiest correlation. Catholicism, according to these pages, has been the real protagonist of religious toleration in the United States. Catholicism has made the solution of the school question possible by the proposal of a constructive compromise (pp. 109f.). Catholicism, out of regard for the custom of the land, was constructively abolitionist during the Civil War; whereas "Abolitionism" was more often than not fractious and disruptive of social peace. Protestantism is the spearhead of "nativism" which feeds upon and nourishes the anti-Catholic bias in the land. As an historian, Monsignor Ellis is, of course, careful to single out some "Protestant ministers"; but the innuendo involving Protestantism as a whole will not escape the careful reader.

Perhaps the principal barrier to the Catholic understanding of the anti-Catholic bias is the lack of self-criticism so manifest in these pages. It is as though there were no Reformation lying behind colonial America; no connection at all between Catholicism in the United States, and Catholicism in Spain, Italy, France, not to mention Latin America. Does Father Marquette's devotion to the Blessed Virgin really belong in a necessarily highly selective version of the Catholic story? Is this history? Or is it part of the mystique which makes it possible to tell the story of American Catholicism without any reference to Catholicism as a system of power? Irenicism without self-criticism makes for propaganda, not history, not even "committed history."

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*The Indiana Conference of the Methodist Church, 1832-1956.*

By Herbert L. Heller. Published under the auspices of the Historical Society of the Indiana Conference, 1957. Pp. 452. Appendix, maps, graphs, index. \$3.00.)

It is no small assignment to undertake the writing of a book about the history of a church conference. This fact becomes especially apparent when one appraises the latest work of Herbert Heller. The author has attempted to pres-