

Not discouraged, however, Professor Farley suggests that the spontaneity which is necessary for genuine piety will be generated in one who responds to God, becomes radically transformed and concerned for the essential characteristics of being *human*, and aware of the problems of his world, carries out a rigorous discipline in response to God and the demands of the moment. The "new man" will, in short, enjoy God's creation while working and fighting for a better world. Although the book contains much that is undoubtedly worth saying, it does not ask what the intellectual and social changes which the author notes may mean for a complete re-evaluation of the bases for Christian as opposed to non-Christian action. In fact, Farley has really not demonstrated that there should be any distinction although he assumes it. This is to say that the "contemporary search for the Christian life" will not be ended by following suggestions couched in language that sounds too much like that which has already proved irrelevant. It is very difficult to explain the meaning of such phrases as "radical transformation" and "the conjunction of a contemporaneous Word and present decision" (p. 122) in a world that moves because of "Black Power" or one that moves not at all, secure in its patriotic sanctity. Professor Farley's book can probably be read with profit by a few church study groups, but it will be introductory to more basic, demanding works.

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YOU SHALL BE AS GODS: A RADICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AND ITS TRADITION, by Erich Fromm. 240 pp. New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966. \$4.95.

This is a book which theological specialists may be tempted to ignore, but they will ignore it at some peril. It is the work of a renowned psychoanalyst who dares not only to formulate an evangelical philosophy but to relate it to the whole length of Jewish tradition as well. On many details his views may be disputed, but he succeeds in raising or freshly focusing a number of questions of moment for Judaism and Christianity.

Briefly, Fromm sets out to argue that his vision of "radical humanism" stands in genuine continuity with the traditions of the Old Testament, apocalypticism, rabbinism, and Hasidism. Too sophisticated in his knowledge of the traditions to contend that they expressed his views "only in other words," the author believes his philosophy the logical outcome of the traditions. Hence he sets out to reinterpret the Jewish heritage as one who regards it with more than nostalgia.

"Radical humanism" is an optimistic view of man's capacities involving a value syndrome (affirmation of life, love, justice, freedom, and truth) and resting on an "x experience" which may be conceptualized nontheistically as well as theistically. The God-concept is merely an outdated symbol of the human reality behind this experience, and Fromm in his first major chapter maintains that this is the proper deduction to draw from the development of that concept in Jewish tradition: an authoritarian and anthropomorphic deity gradually became nameless and essentially indescribable. Theology must therefore give way to psychological anthropology (p. 61). The central chapters then take up Jewish ideas of man and history, dwelling on mankind's liberation from the ties of mother, blood, soil, human authority, and God. There follow chapters on the meaning of sin and repentance, *halakhah*, and the biblical psalms. A short summary and an appendix complete the volume.

Fromm's arguments against the existence of God are neither novel nor systematically marshaled, but some of the texts cited as expressing man's *relative* independence vis-à-vis God give food for pondering. Conventional exegetes will blink at many of the book's interpretations—for example that according to the Old Testament sin is "nothing to be depressed by" (p. 169). Some of the problems in Fromm's hermeneutical approach are suggested by his view that the "biblical philosophy" prefers the serpent over "the patriarchal jealous God of Adam" (p. 129). On the other hand, there is much that is illuminating in the discussions of the positive ethical values of Judaism, the psychological-political dynamics of the Exodus story, and the paradoxical hope of messianism. Above all the book is important as a serious effort to understand an ancient faith in the light of modern man's longing for independence, self-fulfillment, and ideals without illusions.

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THE NEW THEOLOGIAN, by Ved Mehta. 217 pp. New York, Harper and Row, 1966. \$5.95.

NEW DIRECTIONS IN THEOLOGY TODAY, Volume I, *Introduction*, by William Hordern. 170 pp. Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1966. \$1.95.

The New Theologian is a Cook's tour of contemporary Protestant thought. So theology has arrived! Barth, Tillich, and Pike have made the cover of *Time*. And now Harper has a book on theology for readers

