

A Divine Dichotomy

"Daily Life in the Time of Jesus," by Henri Daniel-Rops, translated from the French by Patrick O'Brian (Hawthorn. 510 pp. \$6), and **"The Death of Jesus,"** by Joel Carmichael (Macmillan. 274 pp. \$4.95), view the question of the divinity of Christ from diametrically opposite poles. Leonard Cottrell's studies of the Biblical period include *"Life Under the Pharaohs."*

By LEONARD COTTRELL

THERE is an innate difficulty in reviewing any book dealing with the Christian religion. If the author is an avowed Christian and the reviewer an agnostic, Christian readers will view his comments with suspicion. If, on the other hand, the author is non-Christian, or at least unorthodox in his approach, a Christian reviewer's attitude can hardly fail to be critical, thus alienating agnostics, while an agnostic reviewer will be suspected of partiality by Christian readers. Since the books under review take diametrically opposite points of view on the divinity of Christ, your reviewer, who hovers unhappily between these two poles, may at least be as well qualified to judge their quality as those who sit firmly on one or the other side of the fence.

M. Daniel-Rops is a Frenchman and, I judge, a liberal Catholic, since his book exhibits humanity, tolerance, humor, and casually worn scholarship. Mr.

Carmichael is an Oxford graduate who started his study under a scholarship in ancient Oriental languages. He takes as his theme Albert Schweitzer's statement that "we must be prepared to find that the historical knowledge of the personality of Jesus will not be a help, but perhaps an offense to religion." In Schweitzer's words, he "tried to bring Jesus to life at the call of love, and found it a cruel task to be honest." Carmichael's view, briefly summarized, is that the historical Jesus, far from being the divine transmitter of a new message of universal love and forgiveness, was in fact a political revolutionary who tried to establish the "kingdom of God" on earth; that he was a warlike Messiah, "King of the Jews" who led an insurrectionary mob into Jerusalem, was betrayed, then tried and condemned by the Romans (not the Jews) as an agent of sedition.

Mr. Carmichael seeks to explain away the Gospel view of Jesus by suggesting that the founders of Christianity, despairing of winning hostile Jews to the universal, divine, and glorified meaning of the Crucifixion, turned for converts to the pagan masses of the Roman Empire; that they deliberately suppressed the historical Jesus in order to create the image of an all-loving Father with a universal message of divine love and redemption. Jesus, he thinks, "thought of himself as no more than the herald of an imminent material transformation of the world . . . his message was addressed to the Jews of his time and to no one else,

and upon the failure of the kingdom of God to appear he embarked on an altogether different course of action which led to his violent death."

By contrast M. Daniel-Rops patiently and successfully builds up a picture of life in Palestine in the time of Christ, based partly on written records, partly on the results of archeological research, and partly on his own observations in modern Israel. For me the Catholic apologist, with his tolerance and humanity, carries far more conviction than Mr. Carmichael's sharply-argued rationalism. Of course, the French author has the advantage of a secure and confident faith. "This was," he writes, "something extraordinarily original, something that made Abraham's descendants a nation truly unique in the world, the recipients of an incomparable revelation and thus the Chosen People, the People of the Covenant. The pride of the humblest Jew had no other cause than this: that he knew that he was the ally of God."

If the sceptical mind rejects this pietism, it is immediately reassured by lines which make it clear that M. Daniel-Rops looks at the Jewish social and political system with a clear and candid eye. A lyrical description of the Palestinian countryside is followed by such realistic passages as these:

Daughters were no addition to the family fortunes, since as soon as they were married they belonged to other families. "Girls are but an illusory treasure" observes the Talmud, and then adds "besides, they have to be watched continually." . . .

The woman suspected of adultery was put to that same ordeal of bitter water that fiancées had to suffer . . . It is described exactly in the Book of Numbers. She had to drink a horrible mixture, in which the chief ingredient was dust from the Temple floor, and if she vomited or felt unwell her guilt was taken as certain. If she were taken in the act itself she was . . . "dragged . . . by the neck of her gown" before the people and killed.

The brutal savagery of the ancient Hebrews towards their womenfolk repels, and so does their criminal code:

The forms of execution were many and various . . . burning was carried out by the condemned person being thrust into a dunghill as far as his waist while his upper half was surrounded by tow and two executioners forced open his mouth to thrust a lighted stick into it . . . A son who had struck his father was strangled; so was a false prophet; and this was done with a garrott.

The above quoted passages are
(Continued on page 37)

Your Literary I. Q.

Conducted by John T. Winterich

TEN BY TEN BY TEN

Here, submitted by Walter G. Leight of San Diego, California, are ten ten-letter anagrams each of which contains the word *ten*. Tension is relieved on page 32.

1. Ten deer sit
2. Mid ten deer
3. Ten A.L. stars
4. Our ten axes
5. Relay me ten

6. Ten ratings
7. A long ten, Pa.
8. Ten rams (*sic*)
9. Ten do spend
10. Rises at ten.

The Foremost Federalist

"The Papers of Alexander Hamilton," Vols. V and VI, edited by Harold C. Syrett and Jacob E. Cooke (Columbia University Press. xiv, 609 pp. xiii, 629 pp. \$12.50 each), document the statesman's fight for ratification of the Constitution and for a sound system of public finance. American historian Richard B. Morris edited "The Basic Ideas of Alexander Hamilton."

By RICHARD B. MORRIS

THESE two volumes give us authoritative documentation on a little over two years, 1788-90, that were critical for the building of the American nation as well as for the evolution of the political thinking of Alexander Hamilton, one of its foremost architects. Long identified as an avant-garde nationalist, he who had been insistent upon concentering on the central government powers in keeping with its responsibilities, Hamilton devoted the full measure of his talents to supporting the new Constitution. Even though that document by no means mirrored his own thinking, he carried on the battle for its ratification, and endeavored to build a system that would insure its perpetuity.

Readers of the preceding pair of books in this distinguished multivolume edition may refresh their recollection on what Hamilton really proposed in the Philadelphia Convention. How serious Hamilton was in pressing his proposals of June 18, 1787, for a President to serve during good behavior and possessed of an absolute veto, we shall never know. Although Hamilton probably turned over to Madison his draft of a constitution near the close of the Convention, as the editors insist, it certainly did not reflect his revised thinking by that date. In a letter to Timothy Pickering, written in 1803, Hamilton not only defended his June propositions as "experimental," and offered with the expectation that they would be "received merely as suggestions for consideration," but flatly denied that he had ever proposed a President or a Senate for life.

Hamilton's memory failed him here, as it was to regarding the attribution of authorship of certain disputed "Federalist" letters.

All accounts, including Hamilton's own, show that he had advocated life tenure, both in his June 18th speech and in his draft of a Constitution. But his memory was not entirely at fault, for on September 6th he had already swung around to the view that the President should be elected for a short term of years, and publicly opposed a seven-year term as too long. By that date he was advocating re-eligibility for election to the Presidency provided the term was short.

Indeed, Hamilton was too much a pragmatist to feel himself restricted by certain tentative views he had once expressed on the Constitution. Regardless of his reservations about republican institutions and the democratic processes and his equivocal stand on setting up a monarchy in America, Hamilton plunged, with sensational results, into the fight for ratification. His major contributions were his "Federalist" letters, previously published in this new edition, and his series of effective speeches before the New York Convention at Poughkeepsie, presented here in volume V, in their variant versions.

The sixth volume deals primarily with the formation and administration of the Treasury. The variety of problems which faced the first Secretary of that department, and the topics upon

which he was consulted by President Washington, ranged far beyond narrow fiscal matters and gave ample scope for Hamilton's statecraft. Most notable of the documents included in this volume is his Report on Public Credit, with its detailed provisions for refunding the inherited debt of the Confederation. In a learned note the editors suggest that, although Hamilton was influenced by a number of British and Continental political economists, as well as by Americans like Robert and Gouverneur Morris and William Bingham, much that we find in that masterly report carries the authentic Hamiltonian stamp. As early as 1779-80 Hamilton had urged the federal government to set up a sound system of public finance, and a number of the ideas found in this paper reflect his earlier thinking.

Suffice to say, this state paper constitutes a watershed in American history. It marked the end of an era of bankruptcy and repudiation, while at the same time it exposed a deepening cleavage between the Hamiltonian nationalists on the one hand and the proponents of states' rights on the other. In the latter camp we now find James Madison. This cleavage led to the formation of the Federalist and Jeffersonian Republican parties.

Professors Syrett and Cooke continue to provide us with a meticulous text, and are to be particularly felicitated upon these last two volumes, which involve some especially taxing scholarly problems and a good deal of editorial ingenuity. Their annotations are erudite and illuminating, if terse, and demonstrate a capacity to distinguish between the trivial and the significant.

