

A Challenging New Perspective on the Life of Jesus



"Maccoby's own exceptional knowledge of Jewish customs, beliefs, and history casts a light on the events, as described in the Gospels, which no author writing on the subject has, to my knowledge, been able to match. . . . Maccoby states his case with admirable clarity and quiet wit in contemporary terms." —*The Spectator*

Revolution in Judaea

Jesus and the
Jewish Resistance
by HYAM MACCOBY

Revolution in Judaea is the story of Jesus projected against its Jewish background, a point of departure rarely taken in New Testament studies. In dealing with the many vexing questions raised by the Gospels, Hyam Maccoby, a distinguished historian, offers a startling and eminently readable reinterpretation of Jesus's life that will be of enormous interest both to Christians and Jews.

"To those who are interested in the historical Jesus I recommend this book It convincingly represents Jesus as a leader of the Jewish resistance against the Roman occupation." —A.J. Ayer, *Times Literary Supplement*

256 pages, \$9.95, now at your bookstore, or send check or money order to Tapingher Publishing Co., Inc., 132 West 22nd Street, N.Y., N.Y. 10011. Please add \$1.00 for postage plus sales tax where applicable.

TAPLINGER

Books

MICHEL FOUCAULT: THE WILL TO TRUTH

by Alan Sheridan

(Methuen; 225 pp., \$8.95 [paper])

Edith Kurzweil

By now Parisian intellectuals eagerly attend every utterance of Michel Foucault and buy his books as they come off the press. His interviews in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, his involvement with prison reform, his lectures at the Collège de France have helped make him a popular hero too. Foucault is, indeed, one of the most talented and idiosyncratic thinkers among French intellectuals—none of whom has ever been accused of conformity. Difficult to read, to understand, and to interpret, he is fluent in history, philosophy, psychology, psychoanalysis, linguistics, psychopathology, anthropology, and a few other disciplines. He mediates among these fields, using and undercutting them all as he moves from the treatment accorded the insane since the Middle Ages to the changing location of sickness; from the invention of new scientific languages to a theoretical analysis of them; from a lumping of all "deviants" (beggars, criminals, the mad, vagrants, the unemployed) to a classification and separation of them; from the economy of crime and its changing quality to the management of prisoners; from theories and practices of racism to the deployment of sexuality in the family. Foucault covers every base—there are overt and covert relationships between all phenomena, knowledges, and actions—in writing the "chapters" of his "History of Systems of Thought."

Alan Sheridan, the English translator of most of Foucault's works, has now provided a readers' digest: *Michel Foucault: The Will to Truth*. As Sheridan tells us unashamedly in his introduction, he has come to praise Foucault and to create new readers. Given the enormous complexities of the Foucault "originals," he has provided an excellent guide for the novice and a coherent argument for the initiate.

Sheridan quotes, paraphrases, and explains the intricacies of the master's "general history," its connections to very specific present-day events, and

the unflagging concern with truth—truth that exists beneath accepted wisdom and can only be extracted with the help of the method perfected in *The Archeology of Knowledge* (1972). Sheridan summarizes the successive books, beginning with *Histoire de la folie* (1961), Foucault's examination of the exclusion of the "mad": Their treatment was connected to the rise of psychiatry and to the "tyranny of reason over madness." It was in the first preface to this book, Sheridan points out, that Foucault first raised the need to examine questions of repression, of tolerance, and of sexual prohibitions in Western thought—questions he began to explore actively fifteen years later in *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction* (1978), the first of a six-volume oeuvre. This relationship of reason and science to power becomes more explicit in the books Sheridan groups under *The Genealogy of Power*. In *I, Pierre Rivière, having killed my mother, my sister, and my brother...* (1975) and in *Discipline and Punish* (1977), Foucault reconstructs the emergence of the secret codes of knowledge, that continue to dominate us and to which psychiatrists and lawyers alone have access. Concomitantly, he demonstrates how crime and criminality change in relation to modes of punishment and surveillance; how political expediency and bourgeois pretension and power conspire, how the art of rectifying is confused with the right to punish, allowing power-hungry judges to hand down "therapeutic" sentences that help perpetuate the norms of corruption along with the crime. And sexuality—separated from sex in legal codes, the treatment of "deviant" sexuality from sodomy, homosexuality cannot obliterate the repression rooted in our institutions and modes of behavior.

But Foucault does not merely assert such findings. He meticulously documents every step of his thinking. Sheridan's précis does explain all the as-

sumptions, as well as changes in method, and the continuing affinity to Nietzsche's "will to knowledge." For Nietzsche, along with Freud and Marx, is an important reference point for many French intellectuals. Those philosophers who interpret these figures differently allegedly "misunderstand" Foucault. And because his "general history" undercuts "conventional history" that is not based on the temporal succession of events or on separate political, economic, or cultural history, he is attacked by historians. He places Marx in nineteenth-century thought rather than at the head of a revolution and thus upsets all the Marxists. Essentially, "Foucault believes [that] radical attempts to undermine the primacy of the subject have been countered not only by outright opposition, but also by a recuperational process at work within. Thus Marx is turned into a historian of totalities and an apostle of humanism, Nietzsche into a transcendental philosopher of origins, and Freud into a means of individual 'fulfillment' in a context of moral and social conformity."

Sheridan is incensed at insinuations that Foucault is a structuralist, even if, particularly in his theoretical works, *The Order of Things* (1970) and *The Archeology of Knowledge*, he uses structuralist terminology like *sign* and *signifier* or expects to find the roots of cultural knowledge through the examination of language. After all, he explicitly denies allegiance to this "journalist's invention" in the introduction to *Archeology of Knowledge*. Sheridan rebuts the Althusserian Dominique Lecourt, among others, who allegedly tried first to prove Marxist structures in Foucault's archeology in order to dismiss him later as an idealist. Incensed at the "false certainties of historical materialism," Sheridan states that "Foucault's 'political anatomy' constitutes a radical break with all previous conceptions of power, whether of the 'right' or of the 'left.'"

His loyalty to Foucault may itself stem from the respect and admiration genius commands. It should not then be held against Sheridan if, occasionally, as he seeks to demonstrate the coherence of details in Foucault's works, the will to truth is slightly bent. For he is probably correct in his belief that this man whom Gilles Deleuze calls "a slayer of dragons" is one of the greatest writers living today. [WV]

Major New Critical Studies from Eerdmans

"Of the explicators of my work whom I have read," says Updike, "Hunt seems to be the most scrupulous and ingenious in tracing the religious/philosophical veins within the corpus . . . I have been more than once startled, many times enlightened, and constantly grateful." *Cloth, \$13.95*

JOHN UPDIKE

**AND THE THREE GREAT SECRET THINGS:
SEX, RELIGION, AND ART** by George W. Hunt

"Hunt's book on the religious and philosophical aspects of Updike's work is outstanding."

—JOHN CHEEVER



"... the fullest and fairest demonstration of Solzhenitsyn's position I have yet seen."

—ROBERT CONQUEST

"Recommended . . ."
—*Library Journal*



SOLZHENITSYN

THE MORAL VISION By Edward E. Ericson, Jr.
Foreword by Malcolm Muggeridge

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, whose fame as a novelist has nearly been overshadowed by his prominence as political critic, stands firmly in the tradition of Christian humanism, insists Ericson in this work-by-work analysis. It is in this strong moral vision that Ericson finds the underlying unity and power which inform Solzhenitsyn's literary as well as political expression. *Cloth, \$12.95*



At your bookstore

WM. B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING CO.
255 JEFFERSON AVE. S.E. / GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN 49503