

Book Notes

CHARLES Y. GLOCK AND RODNEY STARK. *Religion and Society in Tension*. Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1965. Pp. 316. \$6.00.

The vitality of religion in a changing world is the central subject of a series of statistical studies and essays by the Survey Research Center at the University of California, Berkeley. More questions are raised than answered. The authors view religion as the product of social conditioning and even challenge the compatibility of social science and religion as systems of truth on the ground that religion makes man ultimately accountable for acts that sociology shows are determined by environment. The conflict is overstated to the degree that the book overstates sociology as a "science." Generalization is also a problem: The inverse ratio of academic achievement and religious conviction is not necessarily true for every religion, since Mormon belief evidently stimulates rather than impedes scientific careers (cf. p. 287). Nevertheless, the book tends to show that traditional religion is not dominant as the source of values and social control in modern society. This may be evidence that a real reformation of popular religion is taking place, quite apart from ecclesiastical and theological conferences.

The most original part of this work is the chapter on "The New Denominationalism," which rests on a random sample of 3,000 Northern Californians and makes possible an up-to-date discussion of the anatomy of belief. The secularization of society discussed in other chapters is evident, as are also wide differences of belief within denominations that make the authors sociologically pessimistic of any widespread Protestant ecumenical action. Of interest to Latter-day Saints are the following trends: An obviously necessary high rate of belief in God and Christ by American Christians continues. However, inconsistency is evident in the application of certain doctrines, and most of all among liberalizing churches: Congregationalists, Methodists, and Episcopalians. Only about a third of the members of these groups accept Biblical miracles or have

basic confidence in the Second Advent. Yet the more theologically centered denominations—Presbyterians, Lutherans, and Baptists—are precisely those who are less likely to see love for or good to one's fellowmen as essential to salvation. So American Protestantism poses the dilemma of choosing between the first and second commandments, an election between theology and ethics that Latter-day Saint belief has always opposed. In fact, about 40% of American Protestants and Catholics see no relationship between salvation and love for or good to others, and when questioned as to their degree of certainty in finding "the answers to the meaning and purpose of life," approximately the same number of both groups are uncertain. This data, plus the normal human inaction in applying stated beliefs, raises doubts about the effectiveness of traditional religions to apply Christ's commands to assist those in need. As far as the economics of good will, about 10% of American Christians think that tithing is necessary to salvation. Despite a lack of theological sophistication in framing these questions, this survey undoubtedly illustrates current trends in applied religion.