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# the SIMON GREENLEAF



# LAW REVIEW

**A Scholarly Forum of Opinion Interrelating  
Law, Theology & Human Rights**

**featuring  
in this Inaugural Number  
the text of**

***The Four Gospels  
from a Lawyer's Standpoint  
(1899)***

**by  
Edmund H. Bennett, LL.D.  
Late Dean of  
The Boston University School of Law**

**VOLUME I**

**ACADEMIC YEAR 1981-82**

A publication of The Simon Greenleaf School of Law,  
Orange, California and Strasbourg, France

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**THE SIMON GREENLEAF LAW REVIEW**  
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**Law, Theology & Human Rights**

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## CONTENTS

Editor's Introduction to this Inaugural Issue and to Bennett's <i>Four Gospels</i> .....	1
<i>The Four Gospels from a Lawyer's Standpoint</i> (1899) by Edmund H. Bennett, LL.D., Late Dean of the Boston University School of Law .....	15
An Examination & Critique of Thomas Paine's <i>Age of Reason</i> , By Joseph P. Gudel .....	75
Books from France: The Trial of Jesus; Human Rights After Helsinki; Jacques Ellul .....	103
Coming in the Next Issue .....	107

## BOOKS FROM FRANCE

*The Simon Greenleaf School of Law conducts a unique European program: each summer, in conjunction with the annual Study Session of the world-famous International Institute of Human Rights, Strasbourg, France, Simon Greenleaf holds its International Seminar in Theology & Law, offering students the opportunity to study law and human rights from a biblical standpoint amid the historical and contemporary glories of the French Rhineland. Recent French publications in the School's fields of interest — now available in The Simon Greenleaf Library — are worthy of being brought to the attention of our readers.*

### THE TRIAL OF JESUS

Jean Imbert, *Le procès de Jésus* ("Que sais-je?," No. 1896; Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1980), 128 pages. Price: 16 French francs (FF).

Many books — good, bad, and indifferent — have been written concerning the historicity and legality of the trial of Jesus. Prior to Imbert's volume, the best analysis was certainly Blinzler's German treatment of the subject, available also in French and English translations. The worst was doubtless Haim Cohn's *Trial and Death of Jesus* (English translation from the Hebrew published by KTAV in 1977), an expansion of his article that originally appeared in 2 *Israel Law Review* 332-79 (1967). For Cohn, the Romans were solely responsible for Jesus' execution, since (in his view) first century Jewish legal procedure would clearly have been violated had Jesus been treated as the Gospel writers say he was. Cohn — a Justice on the Israel Supreme Court who has represented Israel on the United Nations Commission on Human Rights — tendentiously ignores



independent historical evidence that the Jewish leaders of Jesus' time were perfectly capable of violating their own legal standards! In contrast, Imbert, like Blinzler, finds both the Roman and the Jewish leadership responsible for Jesus' death, and leaves no doubt in the reader's mind that the Gospel accounts ring true historically and juridically. Imbert is a prolific legal scholar, not a theologian (he is professor of law at the University of Paris), and his approach and conclusions remind one of A.N. Sherwin-White, who twitted liberal theologians and practitioners of form-criticism with the fact that the four Gospels give a better historical base for Jesus' life than Tacitus, Suetonius, Velleius Paterculus and Cassius Dio provide for the biography of Tiberius Caesar (*Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963]).

#### HUMAN RIGHTS AFTER HELSINKI

*Liberté Religieuse et Défense des Droits de l'Homme*, Vols. I-V (Paris: Istina, 1977-1979), various paginations. Prices of the 5 volumes: 31 FF, 43 FF, 40 FF, 58 FF, 60 FF.

This continuing series is extracted from the journal ISTINA (45, rue de la Glacière, 75013 Paris), and consists almost entirely of documentary evidence on human-rights violations in Eastern bloc countries since the Helsinki accord. Vol. I deals with the U.S.S.R.; Vols. II and V with Czechoslovakia; Vol. III into Poland and Lithuania; and Vol. IV with the U.S.S.R. and Romania. The record speaks for itself and utterly gives the lie to the Socialist claim that one should leave the question of alleged violations of human rights to the internal policing of the sovereign national states in question. By signing the Helsinki final act (to say nothing of the United Nations Covenant on Civil and Political Rights), Socialist bloc states placed themselves beyond national sovereignty in the human rights area. Their hypocrisy is plain for all to see in the legal documents, pleadings,

and testimony (often smuggled out from behind the Iron Curtain at great personal cost) now made accessible in French translation.

#### JACQUES ELLUL

*Jacques Ellul: A temps et à contretemps*. Entretiens avec Madeleine Garrigou-Lagrange (Paris: Le Centurion, 1981), 209 pages. Price: 59 FF.

Jacques Ellul should need no introduction to the readers of *The Simon Greenleaf Law Review*. One of the most provocative social critics of our day, author of thirty-six books translated into some twelve languages — and member of the Board of Reference of Simon Greenleaf's European program at the International Institute of Human Rights — Ellul epitomizes the Christian intellectual who seeks to present Christ as the only answer to a fallen society. The volume under review consists of interviews with Ellul conducted by one of France's best and most sensitive Christian journalists. The result is a superb insight into the way Ellul — law professor and lay theologian — handles the interrelation between biblical truth and social-political reality. Interview topics include: "The Gospel and Marx's *Das Kapital*," "The Gospel Is Revolutionary," "Church and Spirit," "The Christian Is Always Out in Front," "Altering Pastoral Training," "With Youth in the Streets," "Theology and Technology," etc., etc. Here is a single example, to whet the reader's appetite: "Sad to say, the Christian is always behind, when he ought to be in front. It's his prophetic mission to try to use his head before events become fatalities. . . . What particularly discourages me is the radical incapacity of Christians to intervene when situations are fluid, and their habit of reaching passionate commitment when the outcome is already inevitable: they push and shove the wheels of vehicles already rolling down the slope." Not, however, Ellul: his career (from his association with the French Resistance in World War II to his identification with

Simon Greenleaf) displays a passion to intervene just when radical commitment to revelational standards and objectives can make a difference to a world in need of divine law and saving grace.

J.W.M.

**THE NEXT ISSUE**



## COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE

Volume Two (Academic Year 1982-83) of the Simon Greenleaf Law Review will feature the hitherto unpublished texts of three lectures delivered in France in the summer of 1980 by Professor Elmer Gelinas (B.A. in Philosophy, University of Western Ontario, M.A. and Ph.D., University of Toronto), Chairman of the Department of Philosophy, St. Mary's College, California. Professor Gelinas' lectures were sponsored by Simon Greenleaf's International Seminar in Theology & Law, held conjointly each year with the International Institute of Human Rights in Strasbourg, France. The three lectures — which were received with great enthusiasm by Simon Greenleaf students and guests — deal with "Thomas Aquinas and the Law," "Hobbes' Philosophy of Law and Politics," and "The Ethical Foundations of Legal Theory." They are guaranteed to stimulate your thinking, as will the other articles, features, and reviews in Volume Two. Why not subscribe today?



Professor Gelinas (left), Dean Montgomery, and two students on the Bastille Day outing in medieval Riquewihr during the 1980 Simon Greenleaf summer session (Alsace, France).