

PREFACE

Allow me to dedicate this issue of *Immanuel* to the memory of our dear friend and collaborator, Professor Uriel Tal, who departed us on the Festival of Shavuot, leaving a great void among the circle of his friends and among those who work for a better, more lucid understanding, marked by greater good-will, between Jews and Christians. He left behind a body of work of great value, particularly within the field involving German-Jewish philosophy and the understanding of the tragic history of antisemitism in Europe. I hope that *Immanuel* will be able to publish in the near future some of his contributions to our common task. *Zikhrono le-verakha*.

This issue, number 18, is somewhat later in appearing than we had hoped. You will easily understand that this delay is not unrelated to the economic difficulties besetting Israel. Nevertheless, we are able to continue our work, of which this number is an example. It will shortly be followed by another issue, whose contents are already in print.

The Anti Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, whose assistance in the past has enabled us to balance our budget, will help us even more in the future, taking upon themselves the role of co-publishers of *Immanuel*. We are most grateful for this more-than-ever necessary assistance. We are pleased to welcome Dr. Leon Klenicki, Director of the Interfaith Affairs Department at the main office of ADL-B'nai B'rith in New York, as a consultant to our editorial board. His participation expresses the link of cooperation which already exists between the Ecumenical Fraternity and the ADL in the joint enterprise of *Immanuel*.

From a number of reports which have reached us, we know that *Immanuel* is more and more widely known and appreciated by all those who work in the various fields included in our program. We wish that all those who are interested in our work will contribute to making its existence known, and share its benefit with other readers. Were we not limited by economic imperatives, we could easily publish an issue of *Immanuel* each month, since there is abundant material of high quality, as a fruit of the literary and doctrinal productivity developing in Israel, which we would be happy to make known to the outside world.

As an expression of the increasingly serious academic standards to which we strive, beginning with this issue the sub-title of *Immanuel* is "a journal of religious thought and scholarship in Israel." We hope to express by this a certain maturation of our self-understanding. Unlike the earlier issues of this periodical, which focused upon brief bulletins, containing summaries and reviews of major scholarly studies, we today include many more serious, full-scale articles and

studies, alongside briefer summaries and informative notes (such as those found in the recently-introduced “Bulletins” column at the end of each issue).

Four articles in this current issue are particularly clear examples of this tendency, in that each one constitutes a discussion of key issues in their respective disciplines. Wesley Brown’s article (which may be viewed as a kind of farewell to his formal task in *Immanuel*) deals with one of the central ideological-exegetical issues facing Christendom today — the nature of our eschatology and its relation to issues of war and peace, as well as our relationship to the Jewish people and to Israel. Finhas Peli’s article on “Contemporary History and Principles of Judaism” deals with a somewhat similar issue from a Jewish perspective. Tamar Ross’ review-essay presents a major debate that has recently agitated the Israeli academic community concerning the interplay between historical interpretation and essential issues of the nature and essence of Judaism. Finally, Binyamin Uffenheimer’s essay on the political theory and practice of the classical prophets is a more strictly historical essay constituting a lucid and original introduction to one of the central themes of Biblical religion and thought.

The contents of this issue are significant from yet another point of view: namely, *Immanuel’s* function as the organ of the Ecumenical Theological Research Fraternity. At the fraternity’s monthly meetings, held in Jerusalem during the course of the academic year, lectures are delivered on a variety of topics pertaining to Jewish-Christian relations, etc., the majority of which, if not all, are of considerable scholarly and intellectual merit. The two articles in Section IV of this issue, by Bernhard Erling and Wesley Brown, represent significant contributions originally presented at that forum. Other outstanding fraternity lectures are planned for publication in the next two issues, and we hope to follow this practice more frequently in the future.

If the team which is behind *Immanuel*, the Jews and Christians responsible for the different sections, continues its work in the same spirit, its makeup has recently undergone several changes. This is undoubtedly the law of every living organism. To our great regret, Dr. Wesley Brown, who as Chairman of the Ecumenical Theological Research Fraternity had assumed moral responsibility for the publication of *Immanuel*, and was the consulting Christian of section V, has had to leave Jerusalem, called by his church to a very important task, as President of the American Baptist Seminary of the West, an affiliate of the Graduate Theological Seminary at Berkeley, California. We are consoled in his absence by the thought that, in his new post, he will certainly be able to make *Immanuel* known in the American university community.

Thus, despite the delay, *Immanuel* is alive. We hope during this year to resume our regular publication schedule.

Marcel J. Dubois, O.P.