

times refers to an object of the spatio-temporal order, sometimes to cultural patterns as initiated by modern science, and again to a way of viewing nature and culture (cf. p. 18 and ch. 4). Much play is given to "nothingness," but the dramatic effect of this existentialist term slips off into these puzzling statements: "He is the Christ precisely because this nothingness was his being as a man. . . . The man Jesus of Nazareth . . . took the nothingness and lostness of the whole human world upon himself as his fate . . ." (p. 28; cf. also pp. 59, 67).

Gogarten's attempt to free Luther from the slightest tinge of subjectivism runs into heavy weather in the light of Luther's daring comment that faith is the creator of the deity of God in us. In explanation Gogarten writes: "It (the statement) simply says that God is God only to the believing person" (p. 153). But this helps matters very little, because, according to Gogarten, nothing can be known of God except in faith (cf. p. 152). Hence there is no point in the tacit distinction between the deity of God as it appears in faith and the deity of God in Himself (cf. pp. 136-7). If faith is the creator of the deity of God in us, then it is difficult to see this conclusion as anything but "subjectivism" in some form. God cannot bring or evoke faith because He is not God—except to the person already in faith!

We are indebted to Carl Michalson and his group of co-workers for the translation which helps English-speaking students to come abreast of Gogarten's recent thought. Many rewarding insights are imbedded in this book, but they must be dug out by concentrated effort. Gogarten certainly is a theologian with whom the theological world must reckon seriously. A fuller understanding of his position should be made available by more English translations of his major works.

CLYDE A. HOLBROOK

*Oberlin College*

*Judaism and Christianity*. Essays by LEO BÆCK, translated by Walter Kaufmann. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1958. 292 pages. \$4.00.

Dr. Leo Baeck was a very scholarly rabbi who was the religious leader of the German Jewish community in Berlin for over thirty years. He was at home with the Greek of Aristotle and the New Testament, with the Hebrew of the Old Testament, and with the religious thought of the Talmud, of Luther and the German philosophers. Professor Walter Kaufmann, the translator of these essays, observes that unlike Kirkegaard, Baeck did not merely criticize indifferent Christians but aimed at Christianity itself. "And unlike other critics he did not attack religion in general, but only what he called 'romantic religion.'" In the essays relatively little is said by way of comparing Christianity and Judaism, but the translator makes it clear that Rabbi Baeck's point is that Judaism is distinctly superior to Christianity. Professor Kaufmann adds, "the essays in the present volume are militant in spirit, though so polite that those who merely browse in them might miss that fact."

Of the five essays, the first two, "The Son of Man" and "The Gospel as a Document of the History of the Jewish Faith," are notable for their scholarship, their clear thought, and for the manner in which the author brings to a focus elements essential to his thesis. He shows how the narratives of the Old Testament became elaborated by writers who not only handed on traditions but also felt the wish to explain and to instruct. In the same way, each of the disciples of Jesus had his own ears and his own mind and recorded his own understanding of the Gospel message. With his wide knowledge of the subject matter, Dr. Baeck is able to elucidate apt parallels, as, for example, the models of the "Lord's Prayer" as these are found in Matthew vi, Luke xi, and Marcion's Gospel. Of course, this shrewd analysis of the manner in which the Gospel narratives are distorted

by accretion is really intended to prepare the reader for the gentle, but forceful "de-mythologizing" which follows. His contention is that stripped of myths and accretions, the old Gospel tradition belongs "in the Jewish cultural environment with all its peculiarities, and it has to be understood in terms of these special features of Jewish tradition" (p. 62). Each disciple, he adds, preserved the essentially Jewish traditional teachings, "for it is as a teacher that Jesus appears first of all," but every disciple and every disciple's disciple had his own ears and mind, his worries and longings, and imagination that saw and created. The complete stripping away of what are regarded as the views of the disciples leaves a Jesus who is only a teacher of ethical righteousness. The whole message and mission of Jesus are thus oversimplified: "We are confronted by a man who won his disciples among his people: men who had been looking for the messiah . . . who had been promised; men who clung to him and believed in him until he finally began to believe in himself, and thus entered into the mission and destiny of his age . . ." (p. 101). "This man could have developed as he came to be only on the soil of Judaism . . . a Jew among Jews" (p. 101).

In the earlier pages of the book Paul seems to be considered kindly. "Conversion" Dr. Baeck considers an inadequate term to describe his experience; he prefers to call it an inward revolution, a transformation. In general, the mystical element in the vision on the Damascus road is toned down but allowed to stand as essential. Of the writer of Acts and varied accounts, the observation is made that "there is no doubt that he invents details." Later we are told that Paul departed from Judaism when he preached the doctrine of "by faith alone," and in the latter part of the book what seemed to be a brilliant analysis of Paul's thought and an admirable restraint in the description of Paul's interior development are lost, and he is judged de-

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rogatorily and with polemical force. Like all romantics, we are told, Paul was not a creator but only a connector of ideas. As a romantic he saw all things in their fantasy: ". . . he sees images which the eye never saw and hears words which the ear never perceived; in which he can feel redeemed from this world and its harshness. . . . Thus he lives in the beyond which transcends all things . . . where only faith can reach and only miracles can take place." Again: "Faith is valid for faith's sake . . . Pauline romanticism might be labelled . . . *la foi pour la foi*" (p. 204). Dr. Baeck does not use the words, but the gist of his meaning is that Paul lived in a fool's paradise of his own creation.

The outstandingly brilliant essay is the last one, on "Romantic Religion." By that label is designated any religion which is immersed in reverie and fancy and dream; the romantics implore, "accord me lovely illusions" (p. 191). In many pages of impressive rhetorical artistry Dr. Baeck analyzes the religion of the romantic, he for whom "reality becomes mere mood; and moods, eventually, the only reality" (p. 191). "Only out of this emotional experience which for him becomes the measure of all things, does he derive what is good and evil for him" (p. 193). St. Paul is singled out as the ideal example of the religious romantic. It was largely through him that Christianity came early to accept the romanticism of other religions, Greek and Oriental—"whatever in it is non-Jewish"—and thus got mired in the vague subjectivism of later theologians like Luther. It was in the cults of Mithras, Adonis, Attis and Serapis, that we find the teachings of a heavenly being who had been born, died and was resurrected; concepts of resurrection and apotheosis, instruments of grace and consecration. With these romantic illusions, the thought of St. Paul is saturated. The victory of Christianity is in reality the victory of romanticism. Paul substituted faith in Jesus for the faith of Jesus; the Gospel or tidings of the

messiah were romanticized into the tidings of the god-man. Rabbi Baeck's contention, by way of contrast, is that the "classical religion" (Judaism) is free from this dreamy romanticism and is one which strives to unify all men to follow the commandments of God.

The great contribution of this book is that it presents a clear, logical and telling analysis of romantic religion, the religion where dream and sentimentality cloud over fact and truth and eventually replace them. This would apply whether such a religion is Christianity or any other, even though Dr. Baeck's special target is Christianity. However, there are many pages where it is difficult to tell whether he is dealing a venomous sting or merely puncturing the egotistic balloon which some theologians have inflated under the guise of Christianity. As one reads the book, he cannot but feel that this is what a convinced Jew, a serious scholar and one who is heir to all that Jewish tradition has bequeathed, really believes with regard to Jesus and his claim to having come from above, from the world of the Father, and of his return to that world; also what he believes about the mystical claims in the epistles of Paul and John. Other Jewish writers, in trying to be conciliatory, often pass over the points where Jew and Christian part company; Dr. Baeck meets the problem head on, as a scholar who has reflected and investigated the history of these things would meet it. For such a clear statement of where the roads separate, Christian readers cannot but be grateful.

The question in the mind of this reviewer is whether, with such an ingrained bias against Christian mysticism, the rabbi really understood the spiritual claims of Jesus or the mysticism of Paul. That the latter went through a transformation or interior revolution, he grants, but he only understands it in a mental way. One wonders whether Dr. Baeck really believes that Paul, from the time of the Damascus road experience, really saw Christ and was in living touch with him and was

guided by him, or whether this "transformation" signifies merely a change from a convinced Jew to an eclectic "romantic." The fact that he lumps together Hindu Yoga, Sufi "sensual enjoyment," and the "sin bravely" of Luther, as if these were evidences of one and the same things, seems to indicate that when he is forced to go outside of Judaism, the "classical" religion of ethical commandment, his grasp of things is limited and even superficial. Being bound to a religion of commandment, he cannot grasp a different experience because he lacks sympathy with it.

JOSEPH POLITELLA

*Kent State University*

*Modern Revivalism.* By WILLIAM G. McLOUGHLIN, JR. New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1959. vii + 551 pages. \$6.50.

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