

*Personal Knowledge. Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy.* MICHAEL POLANYI. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958. Pp. xiv, 428. In this volume based on his Gifford Lectures 1951-52, Professor Polanyi rejects the ideal of strict or complete objectivity for science in particular and knowledge in general. He argues that "into every act of knowing there enters a tacit and passionate contribution of the person knowing what is being known, and that this coefficient is no mere imperfection, but a necessary component of all knowledge" (p. 312). The alternative to the false ideal of reducing all knowledge to impersonal terms is "Personal Knowledge."

The author whose erudition and philosophical discernment are evident throughout this volume urges a radical modification of the conception of knowing, one based, in large measure, on the findings of Gestalt psychology and one which repudiates the traditional dichotomy of objective and subjective (as well as analytic and synthetic). Personal knowledge, expressed in the fiduciary mode, requires a framework of commitment. What saves personal knowledge from subjectivism is the fact that intellectual commitment represents "a responsible decision . . . an act of hope, striving to fulfil an obligation within a personal situation . . . [where] this hope and this obligation are expressed in the universal intent of personal knowledge" (p. 65). Subjectivism calls attention to the accidents of personal existence which provide the occasions for making responsible commitments. That our hopes are only hopes need not be discouraging, because our belief in commitment is itself a commitment such that "if its justification be questioned, it finds confirmation in itself" (p. 324). In the end, the author attempts to work out the ontological implications, especially those concerned with mind and society, of his epistemological views.

In admitting that his book is a written declaration of his own personal commitments, Professor Polanyi leaves himself open to criticism from those whose personal commitments differ from his. Even so, his *Personal Knowledge* stands as an important contribution to the theory of knowledge.

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*Judaism and Christianity.* LEO BAECK. Translated, with an introduction, by Walter Kaufmann. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1958. Pp. 292.

We are indebted to the publisher and translator for making available in excellent English these essays by Rabbi Leo Baeck, a leader of German Jewry until his death in 1956.

Two essays constitute the major portion of the book. One is entitled "The Gospel as a Document of the History of the Jewish Faith." Speaking generally, it is the kind of study with which every serious student of the New Testament is familiar, an effort to exhume the "original Gospel" from later accretions. Speaking less generally, not every New Testament student is prepared for Baeck's conclusions. Baeck contends that this "original Gospel" of Jesus and his disciples can be recovered. The original is not in truth a Christian work at all. Underneath its foreign attire, it is a Jewish book because "a Jewish spirit and none other lives in it; because Jewish faith and Jewish hope, Jewish suffering and Jewish distress, Jewish knowledge and Jewish expectations, and these alone, resound through it - a Jewish book in the midst of Jewish books."

The other long essay by this modern Jewish preacher, "Romantic Religion," has a different way of saying that Christianity debased the original coin. The "essence of the Christian Church," we are told, is romanticism - passive, amoral, subjective, sentimental, casuistic, authoritarian, relying upon a miracle.

Baeck's argument is sometimes plausible, always informed. The purpose of the essays is the age-old purpose of all distinctively Jewish writing: to maintain the identity of the Jew and the integrity of the one true revelation of God.

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*Raison et existence chez Karl Jaspers.* JEAN PAUMEN. Bruxelles: Les Éditions du Parthénon, 1958. Pp. 337.

One gathers from this scholarly book ample evidence that Jaspers is a philosopher of considerable stature. One comes away from the book convinced that he deserves now considerably more attention and that eventually this will follow.

As the title implies, Paumen is chiefly concerned to communicate the way reason and existence complement each other in Jaspers' work. It is part of the service of this book that it explores the connections between Jaspers and Kant much more fully than any book this reviewer has seen. More familiar connections with Descartes, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Hegel, Schelling, and Heidegger are supplemented with Jaspers' relation with Max Weber. These connections are used to clarify difficult concepts, such as the concept of Transcendence.

One finds fresh reason in Paumen's book for wondering why Europe has been so long in discovering the existentialism in William James. James had most of the qualifications which are found so absorbing in