

Reviews.

Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, by Gersham G. Scholem.
Schocken Books, New York. Original edition 1941, Revised
1946.

The book is based on the Hilda Sroock Lectures for 1938, and the author speaks of the book as intended not only for the research student, but for the much wider circle of those who take an interest in questions of Jewish history and religion. It should be said, however, that the research student will find this book of immense value, both for the material of the lectures, and for the valuable notes and bibliography. Not only the Jew, but the Christian also will acknowledge his debt to Professor Scholem for this penetrating and sensitive study of Jewish religion throughout the Christian era.

The book opens with a discussion of the general characteristics of Jewish Mysticism. Whatever the idiosyncrasies of the particular mystic, or mystical school, the governing factors are always the positive contents of Judaism. Even in its heretical forms, the mystic seeks to interpret the classical faith expressed in the scriptures. It is as a member of the community of the people of God that the mystic walks the mystic way, and he seeks to explain his living experience and intuition in terms of the faith in the Unity of God Who manifests Himself in Creation, Revelation and Redemption, Who has revealed Himself in the Torah. The use that is made of allegorisation, symbolism and myth in the interpretation of the Torah find their counterparts in much Christian mystical literature. It is the necessary straining of language to meet the needs of a real experience.

Then follows a chapter on Merkabah Mysticism and Jewish Gnosticism, which covers the period up to the 10th century A.D. and discusses the literature especially of the Hekhaloth books. The characteristic form of expression is that of the celestial chariot of Ezekiel, and the passage through the seven heavenly palaces. The dangers of the mystical experience are recognised, and it is in this connection that use is made of magical elements to preserve the soul on the mystic way. Yet the concern is not to practise magic, but to come into the presence of the Holy Majesty of God. The Movement is a small aristocratic sect whose secret knowledge is not to be made public. A notable feature of this school is its "apocalyptic nostalgia," natural enough during a period of Jewish persecution.

The chapter on Hasidism in Mediaeval Germany (12th and

13th centuries) describes a movement of decisive importance for an understanding of the religious development of German Jewry. Notable features are its eschatological interest, and its emphasis on asceticism, ataraxia or "serenity," and extreme altruism ("What is mine is yours, and what is yours is yours—that is the way of the Hasid"). The devotion of the Hasid is movingly described on page 95 in a quotation from *Sefer Razi'el*, "The soul is full of love of God and bound with ropes of love, in joy and lightness of heart . . . For when the soul thinks deeply about the fear of God, then the flame of heartfelt love bursts in it and the exultation of innermost joy fills the heart. . . all the contemplation of his thoughts burns in the fire of love for Him." A remarkable development of Hasidism is its doctrine of hypostatic distinctions within the Godhead—The Divinity Who "maintains His silence and carries the universe," the visible Glory by which He reveals Himself to the mystic, and the Holiness or the hidden presence of God in all things.

Lecture IV discusses Abraham Abulafia and the doctrine of prophetic Kabbalism. The aim of this movement is to release the soul from all sensory absorption by concentration on abstract spiritual matters, that thus there may be an intimate union and conformity of the human and divine will (*Devekuth*). This, rather than the ecstatic experience, is the purpose of Kabbalistic practice. To this end much use is made of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet as having no apparent content which can bind thought. Abulafia produced methods of meditation, by permutation and combination of the letters, leading to controlled modes of association whereby the mind is enlarged and liberated to apprehend the Divine. When the mystic reaches the summit of the mystic ladder, he enters upon the stage of prophetic vision. While it must be admitted that Abulafia's teaching could and did become perverted to the exercise of magic, it was for him, and the great Kabbalists, a way of mystic contemplation of the holy names. He vigorously repudiated magic as a perversion of true mysticism. The long quotation on pp. 147-155 is a fine study in mystical practice.

The two lectures on the *Zohar* are of great importance. The first consists of an argument in which it is shown that the book is substantially a unity and that the author is Moses ben Shemtob de Leon, and that it was written between 1275 and 1300. The following lecture discusses its theosophy, i.e. its mystical doctrine of the workings of God. The innermost Being of God, *En-Sof*, the Infinite, is unknowable. Nevertheless He is active throughout the universe and thus has certain attributes which represent stages of the divine Being. There are ten such fundamental attributes, which are at the same time stages through which

the divine life pulsates back and forth and thus manifests Himself to the Kabbalist. In the Zohar, the Torah is a *corpus symbolicum* of that hidden life in God, in which every word may become a symbol. It is worthy of note that the love-symbolism which appears in so much non-Jewish mysticism, appears also here, but in a characteristic way. It is not used for the union of man with the divine, but for the relation of God to Himself in the world of the Sefiroth. "Every true marriage is a symbolical realisation of the union of God and the Shekinah," and the Shekinah is the archetype of the mystical community of Israel. We have here a striking parallel to St. Paul's thought. The spiritual outlook of the Zohar is defined as a mixture of theosophic theology, mystical cosmogony and mystical psychology and anthropology.

In the lecture on Isaac Luria and his school we are shown the influences of the persecution and expulsion of the Jews from Spain during the 15th century. There is a new interest in apocalyptic and Messianism. The aim of the mystic is to evoke and release those powers that shall bring about the "End". Expulsion and suffering are interpreted as redemptive, the birth-pangs of the Messianic era; the Jewish community must be prepared.

Then follows a discussion on Sabbatai Levi and his prophet Nathan of Gaza, and the movement that sprang up in Palestine, and spread to many parts of Europe. It is not in the direct line of Kabbalism, but a tragic offshoot. Its Messiah was a maniac-depressive and apostate to Islam. In its extreme forms it was deliberately anti-nomian. Yet its motive was to defeat sin—from within, in order that there might be a restoration of all things to God. The ninth Lecture deals briefly with Hasidism; the latest phase. This movement of Polish and Ukrainian Hasidism has nothing to do with the earlier Hasidism in Germany. It begins with Israel Baal Shem about the middle of the 18th century and is still a factor in Polish and Russian Jewry. The remarkable feature of this movement is that it is an attempt to transform Kabbalism into a popular movement while at the same time eliminating the exaggerated Messianism of earlier movements. Connections are traced between this movement and moderate Sabbatianism, although the fact seems not to have been apparent to the leaders of the new Hasidism. It is marked by its charismatic quality and a kindling of the emotions. It has produced a remarkable number of saint-mystics, and they in turn became leaders and teachers in the Jewish communities in which they lived. "The original contribution of Hasidism is bound up with its interpretation of the values of personal and individual existence. General ideas become individual ethical values." "Personality takes the place of doctrine." It began as the product of direct, spontaneous religious experience.

It needs only to be added that Professor Sholem has brought to his task wide learning, penetrating and honest criticism, and a sensitiveness without which no book on Mysticism can be of value. The book is not easy reading, for the nature of the subject would make that impossible except for the initiate. It contains some misprints, most of which are noted on a separate "Errata" slip. Sometimes a happier phrase might have been used, e.g. p. 83 speaks of religion and theology being "suspended in the vacuum of Revelation." But these are small points, and one would wish to express deep gratitude for a study, finely conceived and finely executed.

A. S. HERBERT.

Philip of Spain and the Netherlands, by C. J. Cadoux.
(Lutterworth Press, 18s.)

Roman Catholicism and Freedom, by C. J. Cadoux. (Independent Press, 7s. 6d.)

Though it was completed in 1944, the first of these books did not appear until some weeks after the deeply regretted death of its author in August of last year. Dr. Cadoux had been since 1933 Vice-Principal and MacKenna Professor of Church History at Mansfield College, Oxford. His scholarship was wide and meticulous. In spite of strong currents flowing in a contrary direction, he held firmly to what he called "evangelical modernism" and to pacifism. He was a doughty controversialist, an ardent champion of Protestantism, a generous and devoted Christian man with many engaging personal qualities. Baptists were indebted to him not only for the important series of books which bear his name, but also for the tutorial help he so readily gave to students of Regent's Park College.

Both the books before us were the fruits of Dr. Cadoux's concern about Roman Catholicism and its record. *Philip of Spain* has as its sub-title "An Essay on Moral Judgments in History." The historian, Dr. Cadoux argues, ought not "to leave unused his ethical judgement," though he must obviously be very careful in his apportionment of praise or blame. In the second chapter he deals with what he calls "Catholic Revaluations in History," suggesting that even in the pages of the *Times Literary Supplement* there may be traced a subtle tendentious favouritism towards books which whitewash persons and episodes rightly condemned by an earlier generation of historians. He singles out in particular Mr. R. Trevor Davies's *The Golden Age of Spain* and Dr. W. T. Walsh's *Philip II*, and in the remainder of the

book submits their treatment of their subject to a searching critical examination. In the course of his argument Dr. Cadoux deals with the main personalities in the struggle between Spain and the Netherlands in the second half of the sixteenth century—Philip II, the Duke of Alva and William of Orange; and also discusses the character of the Inquisition and the nature of the resistance offered by the Dutch. His final conclusions are in the main in line with those of Motley.¹ It may be questioned whether the method adopted by Dr. Cadoux was the best one for his purpose. He seems often to fall between the stools of a plain historical narrative and a controversial essay. Nevertheless, there is much that is interesting and important in these pages. We doubt whether Dr. Cadoux gave sufficient attention to the part played by the Anabaptists in the period under review; their numerical strength was considerable, particularly in the early stages of the struggle; they were themselves consciously taking a line different from that of Lutheranism and Calvinism; and they were notable pioneers in the claim for that religious tolerance and freedom so dear to Dr. Cadoux.

The second of these books first appeared in 1936 and this is a fourth edition. It is a vigorous hard-hitting plea, heavily documented, for vigilance in the face of Roman claims and methods. Dr. Cadoux offers detailed evidence for his belief that, had she the power, the Roman Church would again persecute, even in this country. The book belongs to a type of controversy and an attitude of mind to which many are now antipathetic on both the Roman and Protestant sides. It was well, however, that at least one so painstaking, alert and well-equipped as Dr. Cadoux should have gathered together the facts set down here and in his larger and more important volume, *Catholicism and Christianity*.

ERNEST A. PAYNE.

History of the Homeland, by Henry Hamilton. (George Allen and Unwin Ltd. 18s.)

This is the fourth in the series "Primers for the Age of Plenty" edited by Launcelot Hogben. Professor Hogben's contributions to the series, *Mathematics for the Million* and *Science for the Million*, have achieved a remarkable popularity. To say that the last in the series is competently written is only

¹ The Oxford University Press has recently published a lecture by the Duke of Berwick and Alba entitled *The Great Duke of Alba as a Public Servant*. It is a skilful eulogy of the type which so distressed Dr. Cadoux, but it promises the speedy issue of many new contemporary documents.

what one would expect from the Jaffrey Professor of Political Economy in the University of Aberdeen. It is unlikely, however, to be a "Social History for the Million"—Trevelyan is more like to achieve that distinction.

The aim of the book, say the publishers, "is to deal with the history of some of the things that matter most to people to-day . . . it traces the background of social questions which are of burning topical interest to the ordinary citizens of today. It deals with Human Needs. There are chapters on the Land, on Food, on Dress, on Health. It records the Rise of Capitalism in Britain and America" etc., etc. The author in his introduction says that he believes, "that history can furnish us with rational grounds for hope in the future of the human experiment; but it can do so if, and only if, it helps us to shed traditional beliefs and customs which obstruct a lucid recognition of what is essentially new." One has the impression that the traditional beliefs and customs to be shed are those of the Christian religion. It is significant that while he thinks dress and the specialist in British society are important enough for a chapter each, there is no chapter on the place of religion. Religion comes into the story. It is not that we have "Hamlet" without the Prince of Denmark. But almost every time he shows himself, he is heckled and pelted for ruining the play!

It is difficult for those who do not share the Christian experience to do justice to the Christian achievement. Armed with a Freudian psychology, they find it impossible to believe that men have acted from even remotely pure religious motives. Prof. Hamilton's treatment of the Pilgrim Fathers is typical of his judgments on religion. "The Pilgrim Fathers had started a great wave of emigration of those who sought a land where freedom of conscience was permitted; but economic motives were ever present and it was a combination of these two that accounts for the steady flow of colonists down to about the Restoration." (p. 376.) Speaking of earlier attempts at colonization in the New World he says ". . . nearly all colonial schemes gave prominence to the missionary value of their work. Though this was doubtless a secondary consideration the prominence given to it shows that it was politic to make as much of it as possible." (p. 369).

If by "economic motive" he means that they wanted to make a living, that is reasonable enough. The Separatists could not make a living in England while worshipping God according to their conscience. But if by "economic motive" he means—and we feel that this is what he does mean—that the most powerful urge in men is to make money, why did not those simple people compromise their consciences and make a fortune in England?

Why choose—we use his own words—“the expectation of a terrifying journey across the Atlantic and settlement in a land about which all sorts of alarming and uncanny stories circulated. . . . It is not surprising that people did not rush to exchange the comparative security of life in England for the risks of disease and death attending emigration.”

Many will feel that in this judgement of motives, John Masefield is nearer the truth when he says in his preface to the *Chronicles of the Pilgrim Fathers*: “They were plain men of moderate abilities, who, giving up all things, went to live in the wilds, at unknown cost to themselves, in order to preserve to their children a life in the soul.”

There are many other points at which readers in the Christian tradition will be at variance with Dr. Hamilton. For example, of Wesley he asserts: “They will say, and rightly so, that Wesley’s appeal to the common people, to whom the state as yet guaranteed no safeguard of freedom of ignorance through the medium of public secular education, was due as much to the fact that he shared their superstitions as to the fact that he interpreted their worldly aspirations.” (p. 550.)

Or on slavery. Without wishing in any way to minimise the contribution of other Christian bodies, it is at least a partial truth to say, “Quakers, Wesleyans, Evangelicals all played a notable part in the movement, but it is to the first perhaps that the greatest credit is due.” (p. 453.) Baptists and Congregationalists may claim some credit for the abolition of slavery in Jamaica, but to be able to write a chapter on the abolition of the slave trade and never mention David Livingstone suggests a somewhat narrow historical outlook.

On a question of fact, Baptists will wish to challenge Lecky, whom the author quotes with approval, when he says, “The persecution of which every Protestant Church was guilty was measured by the same ruleThe Protestant persecutions were never as sanguinary as those of the Catholics.” (p. 543.) We would begin with the first declaration in English history of the principle of toleration presented to James I by Thomas Helwys in 1612, go on to Roger Williams, of whom J. B. Bury has said, “To Roger Williams belongs the glory of having founded the first modern State which was really tolerant” through a continuous assertion of the principle of complete liberty of opinion, speech and writing, to the present day.

This is history with a purpose. The author believes that the study of history, “can give to young people, and those who teach them, courage and confidence to face an unknown future without the impediments of outworn traditions. Instead of stultifying and discouraging an adventurous curiosity about human destiny it can

fire human beings with faith in themselves and in the capacity of man to establish peace and prosperity on earth." (p. 14.)

"Public secular education" is a "safeguard of freedom from ignorance." But the really important question is whether secular education, whether life without religion, can give us not merely knowledge but wisdom. There is little in recent history to justify optimism. We may not agree that "history teaches that history teaches nothing," but reviewing the post-war years, the struggling United Nations, the emergence of another world of poverty in the midst of plenty, we may well doubt whether knowledge is enough. We know how to feed our people. We know that another war will exterminate the people of these islands and perhaps bring civilisation to an end. But is the effect of this knowledge making for a world community which Dr. Hamilton sees as desirable and necessary? We doubt whether it is. The optimism of writers like Dr. Hamilton leads in the end to the bankrupt pessimism of H. G. Wells in his last phase—"Mind at the end of its tether." The optimism of the Christian has reckoned with man's failure to will what he desires and in the love of Christ offers a dynamic which can carry men past these otherwise insuperable barriers. "In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek . . . but all are one."

History of the Homeland is nevertheless a stimulating book and brings together a great deal of material to be found only in specialist studies. It is enriched by 114 illustrations, many of which are taken from contemporary prints and really do illustrate the text. The name of J. F. Horrabin is a guarantee that the maps are excellent and a series of time-charts by Mr. B. C. Lewis helps in the appreciation of events and their interconnections with the social background.

C. B. WHYATT.

The Orthodox Rebel, Roger Lloyd, (Latimer House, 10s. 6d.)

This is a new edition of a book, first published in 1932, with the title of *The Stricken Lute*. Because of his conviction that such a description in no way truly epitomises the character of Abelard, Canon Roger Lloyd has renamed his revised edition *The Orthodox Rebel*.

At first sight, the new title is subject to the same criticism as the old. Although Abelard by no means regarded himself as a heretic, by his Church's standard of orthodoxy he was condemned. Nor did a more submissive "rebel" than he ever adorn the index, for Abelard was ready to retract what he had written, at the behest of authority, even when he could himself see nothing wrong with it!

Canon Lloyd, however, means his title to declare the intention of his book—to vindicate Abelard's orthodoxy and to demonstrate his greatness. To this end, it attempts to estimate Abelard's thought in relation to his career and the problems of his day. It tells vividly the romance and tragedy of Abelard's life and the reader cannot fail to be moved by the sufferings of the attractive genius whom Canon Lloyd portrays with great sympathy and understanding.

The real disadvantage of its method is that, in so short a book, any attempt to estimate Abelard's significance must suffer from the attention the author gives to the details of his sad and romantic story. This has resulted inevitably in a somewhat arbitrary use and interpretation of his material—notably of the Abelard-Héloise correspondence.

Yet, within the rather too brief compass Canon Lloyd has allowed himself for so controversial a subject, he has succeeded remarkably in capturing the atmosphere of Abelard's life and times. His brief review of the Scholastic controversy in particular is admirable.

W. THOMAS WILLIAMS.

John Clifford: A Fighting Free Churchman, by G. W. Byrt. (Kingsgate Press, 6s.)

The younger generation "just missed" John Clifford and there are so many of our seniors to whom he is still vivid that we are made deeply aware of how much we missed. If Mr. Byrt's book heightens that feeling, it also brings John Clifford to life for those who could not know him in the flesh. It makes satisfying and stirring reading. Bold and clear in its lines, it gives the impression of being a balanced portrait though one could have wished for a final chapter attempting the (perhaps difficult) task of a general appraisal. At all events a well-told story such as this should not peter out at the graveside. A particularly valuable feature of the book is its quotations in which Clifford himself speaks. That is no reflection on Mr. Byrt's own descriptive powers. Without ever becoming merely eulogistic, he makes us realise how great was Clifford's stature. Some of the outstanding impressions gained are those of the breadth and depth of his ministry, his forthrightness on issues calling for the prophetic voice and conscience, his delicacy in situations which called for and found the statesman. Above all his Christlike humility, zeal and love. This book should be very widely recommended and read, but especially by young men and not least those who are at the beginning of, or preparing for, the ministry.

G. W. RUSLING.