gine chrétienne et, bien que constitué de deux parties, unitaire. Il remonte aux groupes de prophètes chrétiens, qui n'ont pas l'âme tendre envers les structures de l'Église naissante. Il est, comme le souligne P. C. Bori, pré-montaniste. La christologie, dont M. Simonetti souligne le caractère archaïque, n'est pas faite pour démentir cette hypothèse. La pneumatologie de l'écrit, nous dit E. Norelli au bout d'une longue analyse, la confirme elle aussi, ainsi que son utilisation plus tardive (A. Acerbi). Dans son excellente contribution qui ouvre le volume, Mauro Pesce fait le point sur ces vues communes à son groupe, un groupe qui, comme le démontre ici L. Perrone, part d'une analyse philologique rigoureuse.

Mais que faire de ces traces bien embarrassantes d'interpolation dans la deuxième partie du récit, la "Vision d'Isaïe"? Et que faire aussi de ces allusions dualistes que pourtant A. Acerbi aurait tendance à nier? Une vue discordante, celle d'I. P. Culianu, qui voit dans la "Vision" un écrit judaïque, intercalé par des chrétiens appartenant peut-être à ces milieux dont parle le "groupe de Bologne", intercalé aussi par une main gnostique. Un point de vue conciliant, celui d'Ugo Bianchi: l'"Ascension d'Isaïe" est loin du dualisme gnostique, quoique, parfois, il y ait certaines interférences. C'est un jugement équilibré, qui passe aussi dans le "Document final" accepté par tous les participants au colloque. Ce "document final" voit triompher l'approche du "groupe de Bologne", contre les anciennes recherches qui fragmentent arbitrairement le texte de l'"Ascension". Enfin, une remarquable contribution ne saurait être passée sous silence: celle de Gherardo Gnoli, qui démontre péremptoirement que, loin de représenter une influence iranienne dans le Judaïsme, le motif du martyr du prophète Isaïe est un motif typiquement judaïque qui a passé dans des écrits iraniens plus tardifs.

I. P. Culianu


The main objectives of this book are to stress the historical development of Jewish law, and the range of factors which have influenced that development, as against the fundamentalist image of a divine law revealed once-and-for-all at Sinai (albeit through the dual medium of the oral and written laws), that divine law being a form of infallible and demonstrable truth rather than the product of human criteria of argument. The author's chief concern, as he indicates, is with the post-Talmudic halakha and most of his material falls outside the principal periods of interest of this journal. Nevertheless, the Babylonian Talmud necessarily forms a central focus, because of its privileged status in fundamentalist halakha. Occasionally, reference is made to earlier sources, not always happily. For example, the
historicity of the talmudic statement that "In former times there were no controversies in Israel" (Hullin 107b), and the attribution of the beginnings of such controversy to the period of the Houses, is taken as the basis for enquiring why there was this move "from apparent certainty to the kind of uncertainty that demands debate and controversy for its resolution" (pp. 23f.). Since the "former times" were in reality marked by a far more intense sectarianism than characterised the period of the Houses, the question ought perhaps to be reformulated in terms of why rival views were not deemed worthy opponents with which to engage in controversy in the earlier period, unlike the later. Elsewhere, Rabbi Dr. Jacobs invokes social pressures in explanation of the development of the halakhah; the same might very well have been done here.

After examining the status of the Talmud as a source of halakhah (ch. 1), and briefly discussing the role of values within the halakhah (ch. 2), Rabbi Dr. Jacobs turns to his main theme. He discusses exemptions from and extensions to the law (ch. 3, with particular emphasis upon takkanot and gezerot), the influence of philosophy (ch. 4, including the theological propositions of the law, and the use of analytical methods (not defined) and some philosophical and logical terms), the influence of mysticism and kabbalah (ch. 5), the influence of Hasidism (ch. 6), responses to the gentile world (ch. 7, including both reactions against the use of gentile courts, and the influence of some gentile principles and customs), halakhic reactions to sectarianism (ch. 8), responses to changed conditions (chs. 9-10) including community willingness to adhere to aspects of the law, response to technological changes (ch. 11), the influence on the halakhah of ethics (ch. 12) and "good manners" (derekh eretz, ch. 13), "halakhah and psychology" (ch. 14, noting halakhic assumptions regarding attitudes and intentions likely in particular situations), halakhah and custom (ch. 15).

There is little surprising in the specific historical claims made in these chapters, each of which deals in very summary form with a list of examples, many of which would repay more leisurely study. The author's purpose, however, is to marshal such historical data in support of a normative/theological view, most directly expressed in the Introduction and the final chapter, the latter being entitled "Toward a Non-Fundamentalist Halakhah", i.e. one which does not rely upon a fundamentalist view of the Pentateuch as the word of God, divinely dictated on a single occasion. This reviewer is not convinced that Orthodox Judaism, even though it makes such claims, actually needs to rely upon them for its view of the authority and normative validity of the halakhah. Moreover, both the author's characterisation of the traditional view as one which confines the halakhic process to "pure legal theory" to the exclusion of "extra-legal considerations", and his own alternative, adopting a particular historical model of explanation, could profit from closer conceptual refinement in terms of modern legal philosophy.