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Reviewer: Rev L J J Nell

In his introduction to his book, the author states that his aim is to encourage reflection on the central themes in Christian tradition that were conceived in the Old Testament and continued in the New Testament. His way of doing this is to stress the fact that Christianity and Judaism share common roots, but differ in the interpretation of these. The difference is then presented in such a way that it most certainly could serve towards a better understanding by both parties of each other's way of thinking and doing.

Dialogue inevitably means that one should reveal some of one's innermost thoughts and feelings about a specific subject. Ucko encourages this by introducing the Christian reader to the way in which Judaism regards the Scriptures. In this process it is clear that Ucko has either through experience or a careful study of his subject gained an intimate knowledge of Judaism.

One realizes anew the importance of the relationship between the Jewish people, their sense of election and the Promised Land or Land of Israel. This brings into focus the identity and calling of a minority in the next chapter. Ucko sheds new light on the meaning of the commandments in the life of Israel

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and one realizes that certain concepts one has held be less than valid. Interwoven with the facts about Jewish life and religion the writer constantly comments on the Christian reaction to many perceptions of Jewish traditions.

On the other hand, being a Christian himself, one cannot help but gain the impression that Ucko is honest about what are seen as shortcomings of the church to the point of being overly critical. The statement in chapter five, under the heading 'In God's Image', that the church regards the Old Testament as subservient to the New Testament cannot be valid for the church as a whole.

In conclusion, the reader is left with the realization that Judaism is more a way of life than a set of dogmas. Ucko urges the church to realize that the gospel that Jesus is the Christ should be more people related or social. This again opens the way for recognition not only of the values of Judaism for everyday life but for an inclusive view of all religions. He poses the question: 'Am I being asked to make a choice between revelation and experience?' The tension underlying this question he finds in the fact that God seems to keep the doors to all religions open while the Christ of the church seems to close them, and in this process the question is posed whether the Christ of the church has in fact diminished God.

Ucko poses sharp and disturbing questions, mainly in the realm of the Christology of the church. In this regard one can agree with him on his closing statement that Christology, as much as theology, is a process and not a finished product. But the reader is left with the feeling that, having benefited so much from the author's knowledge of Judaism, the essence of what he has learned of Christianity is that it owes a debt to people all over the world for being exclusive in its confession that Christ is Lord and the only way to the Father.

A stimulating and sometimes disturbing book with statements from which the dialogue between Christians and Jews will undoubtedly benefit. Recommended reading for the serious theologian.
