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The Church and the Jews

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VINE OF DAVID

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... THE ...
CHURCH AND THE JEWS

A QUARTERLY RECORD OF THE EAST LONDON FUND
FOR WORK AMONGST THE JEWS

Edited by

PAUL P. LEVERTOFF, D.D.

No. 146

JANUARY, 1946

No. 146

Editorial Notes

Reminiscences of Holy Trinity

The Purpose of Israel

The Star of Jacob

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Editorial

Perfect in beauty, Zion, how in thee
Do love and grace unite!
The souls of thy companions tenderly
Turn unto thee: thy joy was their delight,
And weeping, they lament thy ruin now.
In distant exile, for thy sacred height
They long; and towards thy gates in prayer they bow,
Thy flocks are scattered over the barren waste,
Yet do they not forget thy sheltering fold;
Unto thy garments' fringe they cling, and haste
The branches of thy palms to seize and hold.

(From "Ode to Zion" by RABBI JEHUDA HALEVI,
born 1086.)

* * * * *

The Primate and Palestine

Dr. Fisher has written as follows in the *Canterbury Diocesan Gazette*: "The recent Government statement on the Jewish problem is most important and must be of special interest to Christian people both because it concerns the fortunes of those sorely tried Jews of Europe who have survived the deliberate attempt of the Nazis to exterminate their race, an attempt which brought vile treatment and death to many millions of Jews, and also because it concerns the land which to Christians is always the Holy Land. The statement is to be welcomed for several reasons. One is that it makes clear that a solution of the Jewish problem cannot be found only or even mainly in Palestine. . . . It is a bounden duty to make provision for the Jews in Europe who have been the first and worst sufferers in the last ten years. As the statement says, it is not to be accepted that none of them can again find security and happiness in the countries in which they have suffered. Some will take their part in and contribute their gifts to

the prosperity of Europe. The finding of new homes for those who do not remain in Europe must be the concern of many nations and will require their united action. What part Palestine can take in providing homes is a matter for dispassionate consideration and is not to be settled on emotional grounds. It is wholly to the good that the Government of the United States has agreed to co-operate with our Government in examining the question of European Jewry and in reviewing the Palestine problem. . . . This is no place for an analysis of the problem of Palestine, and where violent passions are so easily excited it is most necessary to be restrained. The opposing arguments and interests are well known. What seems to me the central core of the matter is this: after the last war we undertook to make a national home for Jews in Palestine on the condition that we would not thereby prejudice the interests of the existing inhabitants. The task of reconciling the undertaking and the condition has indeed proved difficult, but this much is clear. In fulfilment of the undertaking, we created a minority problem in Palestine, a problem always stubborn and difficult: but the minority we created must, in fulfilment of the condition, remain a minority in justice to the existing inhabitants."

* * * * *

Europe is still haunted by a million spectres. They are the legions of the persecuted Jews. They tread the streets of liberated capitals, disputing their future with themselves. They wander in the no-man's land between the frontiers, seeking pitiful entrance. Mothers have forgotten the lineaments of their children, husbands their wives' embrace. Yet there are still "anti-semities" outside Germany, even among those who call themselves "Christians," who make common cause with the Nazis in their hatred of the people "of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came."

* * * * *

Recently I received a letter from a German friend, professor of Theology at Tübingen University, informing me that the Leipzig Lutheran Mission to the Jews ("Evangelisch-Lutherischer Zentral Verein für Mission unter Israel") has started its activities again! I intend to write to him that before we attempt to bring the Jews to Christ we should endeavour to bring Christ to the Jews, by presenting continually to our Jewish neighbours the Christian spirit. The Christian should be the visible portrait of the invisible Christ.

* * * * *

We wish all our friends and supporters a brighter New Year; and the Jewish people and all suffering peoples a truly *New Christian Order*.
P.P.L.

Reminiscences of Holy Trinity, Shoreditch

I

A dull November evening, with a thin drizzle of rain is not pleasant under any circumstances, but the young man who had just turned into Old Nicol Street, Shoreditch, drew his coat collar closer around his neck and muttered forcibly. He condemned enterprising editors, root and branch, and "Jew-catchers" came in for even more of his ire. The street at this hour was practically empty. It was not far from 8 o'clock.

"Church, church," he muttered, as he gazed about him, "I see nothing like a church in this street." He has proceeded hurriedly along, but now pausing, he stands under a lighted window. He is not conscious of the fact, because the window, which is very large and of stained glass, is situated a story above him. Yet, suddenly he starts, gazes around and above. He stares at the window, amazed in his eyes.

"Hello, I never knew there was a synagogue here," he exclaims, and then quickly moves to the doorway, which he sees a few steps to the right. As he ascends the stone stairs, the sound of chanting of Psalms increases in volume. He turns to mount the last lot of steps, and, reaching the floor, stares about him frankly and gasps.

He has arrived in the church he sought, he realises after a moment. This is a Christian church without a doubt. There are all the signs of that "abomination," even to the shining of the Cross on the Altar. Yet . . . !

At the organ is seated an elderly clergyman, quite absorbed in the task of playing familiar Synagogal Psalm melodies. On the steps at the altar rail stands another clergyman with a prayer shawl round his neck over his surplice and cassock (only the young Jew has no name for these garments), on his head is a little cap. In the seats before him are Jews, and of obviously different grades and classes. But each and every one of them is absorbed in the business in hand, and is singing away lustily.

"O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand. To-day, oh that ye would hearken to His voice! Harden not your hearts as at Meribah, as in the day of Massah in the wilderness; when your fathers tempted me, and proved me, although they had seen my work. Forty years long I was wearied with that generation, and said, it is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways. Wherefore I swear in my wrath, that they should not enter into my rest." Psalm xcvi. And the change to:

"O sing unto the Lord a *new song*: sing unto the Lord, all the earth. Sing unto the Lord, bless His Name; proclaim His *salvation from day to day*" (Psalm xcvi.), that psalm full of joy and praise.

Following it the next familiar psalm "The Lord reigneth; let the earth be glad, let the many coast-lands rejoice." Psalm xcvi.

"O sing unto the Lord a new song; for He hath done marvellous things." Psalm xcvi.

"The Lord reigneth; let the peoples tremble: he sitteth above the cherubim; let the earth be moved." Psalm xc.

The chanting continued through them all, ending with "Give unto the Lord, O ye children of the mighty, give unto the Lord glory and strength." "The Lord will bless his people with peace."

With his eyes closed the young man could fancy himself in any synagogue.

The clergyman at the altar steps proceeds to the reading desk and reads from the Prophets.

Then the beautiful Sabbath hymn rings out. "Come, my friend, to meet the bride; let us welcome the presence of the Sabbath," and on the service goes in the dear old familiar way. The young man forgets his mission and is lulled by the music into forgetting even the unfamiliar surroundings. His complacency is all at once shaken, for in the verse:—

"Shake thyself from the dust, arise, put on the garments of thy glory, O my people! Through the son of Jesse," he is startled to hear "Through Jesus, the Bethlehemite, draw Thou nigh unto my soul, redeem it."

"Ah, ha, so that is the 'cloven hoof' eh?" he says to himself, and forthwith pays eager attention to every word from henceforth, his critical faculty fully awake now to seek such snares. But, for all his vigilance he detects no other foreign assertion to the end of the hymn.

Again the Scriptures are opened. "What is this? What is he reading? It has a kind of familiar ring and yet it is not at all familiar." Suddenly it dawns on him. "The New Testament! Good heavens, how horrible! And all these Jews sitting there smugly listening." He feels he wished he might stand up and protest against such sacrilege. But then, this is no synagogue, the man has a perfect right to read and do whatever he likes in this place, it is he who does not 'belong' here. But these Jews! Words fail him. He has not listened to the reading after the first few lines, his indignation was too overpowering. He half rises to go out, then he reflects he has an article on this expected from his pen, by a voracious editor, all eager for sensations. "And, my word! he shall have the sensation of his life in next week's issue." He determines to pay close attention now in order to be able to "serve it up all hot."

By this time the priest is in the pulpit preaching his sermon. The young man listens attentively, eager to pick out the weak places, rejoicing secretly on the very surety of there being more "weak places" than strong. Yet, as he listens, he finds his heart stirred

in a new and strange fashion. Never has he heard the faith of the Christians presented in this way before. The man is obviously sincere. A glance at the faces of those around him irritates him tremendously. Their gaze is ardent and interested. It might be said that they all "hung on the lips" of the preacher. In disgust and contempt he transfers his gaze to the preacher with a renewed resolve to find pitfalls for innocent and unwary Jews in the words. In spite of all his efforts he is soothed and edified.

The sermon over, all join in singing an English hymn "O God of Abraham praise" to a synagogal tune. The young man cannot forbear a smile when he reflects on the original words to that tune, for it is one that is very anti-Christian.

"Our Father, which art in Heaven." What a truly Jewish ring there is to this. In spite of himself again, he finds this wonderful prayer touches something within him painfully.

Another English hymn. Then the Aaronic Blessing, which is said in the Synagogue only on special occasions, and the service is over.

The priest vanishes from sight and the congregation quietly files out. He follows. On the stairs a young man addresses him in Yiddish, asking him to come to some room below. In a strange state of conflicting emotions he follows the others and finds himself in a long room where the Sabbath table is set and candles burn brightly on it. A closer scrutiny shows him that the room is well built, but bare and poorly furnished, as is also the case with the Sabbath table. Some fruit, the three Sabbath loaves and tea and cocoa, "a wretched Sabbath feast indeed!" his mind registers. derisively. But the beaming good fellowship on every side is too much for him, unconsciously he thaws sufficiently to find himself seated at the table.

The priest enters the room and the young man automatically stands up with the rest. His amazement is great, when the priest, going to the head of the table, make Kiddush in the usual manner of the Master of a house on Sabbath evening before the Sabbath meal is eaten.

"Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who createst the fruit of the vine," and here the celebrant links this up with the words of Jesus whom he calls "Our Messiah." And again "Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who bringest forth bread from the earth." Again these words are dealt with in a like manner.

No one present objects. Evidently this is usual!

Then the meal begins, and with it friendly talk which sometimes resolves itself into discussion. The young man takes this opportunity of studying the company. The first thing that strikes him is the predominance of youth, male and female, and from their talk, he judges them to be ardent Zionists. As they are. He

marvels to see such people interested in religion. To most Zionists, Zionism is a sufficient religion, for they pronounce the age-old religious beliefs and customs of their people "stuffy old rubbish," "out-of-date formulas." But here, they form a most enthusiastic nucleus of seekers after truth. Their questions come like hail and are often "posers," but with unfailing readiness they are answered, if not always to the *satisfaction* of the questioners, at any rate with logic and finality that is unquestionable.

What a mixed company!

Beside him is the young man who spoke on the stairs, broad and blonde, with large blue eyes shining behind strong eye-glasses. He could be taken for a German but for his most Yiddish tongue. Beside him is a dark young man with melancholy eyes and a deep dimple, who speaks well in a quiet, rather staid, manner, and who, he afterwards learns, has lost his means of livelihood by having connections with this community. He found, too, that this remarkable young man did not regret the fact. The quiet young man beside him again, he finds to be a student of Jewish College, a man who is preparing himself for a Rabbinical diploma, and is sincerely pious. The stout lady in very fashionable clothes is the wife of the chairman of a well-known Jewish club of vast dimensions. The girl with the Romney head and her brother are children of a well-known Jewish family which has always interested itself more in letters and learning, than business. The two young men with a *petite*, curly-headed girl are ardent Zionists and their questions and talk turn to that subject continually. The man beyond them is an artist, full of a certain naive vanity and some science and philosophy; he smiles with much amusing superiority upon his neighbours as he airs his very distinct views. The white-haired, tall man, with a stoop in his shoulders next to him, smiles quietly at him and his extravagances, indulgently, as at a child. When he speaks, it is but shyly and modestly, but at once the pleasant voice, the quiet good sense of his words, is obvious, he is clearly well-read and widely. The listener gathers that this is a regular attendant and much sorrow is being felt because he is soon returning to Poland, since he cannot find work in England. He hears of him afterwards that he is a man who has starved uncomplainingly, feeding himself on philosophy and these meetings in this church, for many many weeks, until a rebellious body had become too insistent.

The talk was interspersed with the singing of hymns, and at these periods a man brought out his violin to accompany them, or sometimes played, on a strange stringed instrument of his own invention, plaintive Jewish melodies. A little thick-set man beside him, of shabby appearance and a shock of very black straight hair, beats time on the table with his finger as he beams up through his large spectacles, and a very closely cropped elderly man beyond again

watches them both with amused eyes. This latter speaks excellent English and had evidently but recently lived in the remote parts of South Africa. Some English ladies and three clergymen complete the company. The square burly man is reminiscent of the sea in spite of his garments. The thin, grey-haired one had played the organ with such zeal and taste in the church, and the one beside him with the bushy, beetling brows, seems inattentive, but on raising his lids reveals eyes with such vivid twinkles that they would show he had not lost a word of anything around him, if his talk did not immediately reveal both his keen interest in, and knowledge of, things Jewish.

For some time the young man did not speak himself, but at last he was moved so strongly as to be unable any longer to restrain himself. His very vehemence and indignation gives him a quiet hearing. But as he finishes, he can almost *see* the words on everyone's lips to answer him, for he had applied the lash pretty freely and liberally all about him. All give way, however, to the priest at the head of the table, and he speaks as convincingly as ever, and as soon as he ends, a clamour of tongues arises which is soon quelled, and then separate voices take up their theme in turn. And presently he learns that though many there do not agree on every point with the Leader, yet, there is a wonderful loyalty to him, and a profound respect for that which he is trying to teach in all sincerity; also a very real desire to probe into, understand and give it a fair hearing and real consideration.

Time flies on magic wings. It is half-past eleven when they all are saying "Good-night."

The young man goes solemnly up to the priest who greets him in the most friendly fashion in spite of all the barbed things he had let fall that night. His heart is moved as it has never been moved before, and he admits it to the man whom he had come to criticise and deride. He feels ashamed of himself as he tells how he had been sent by the *Jewish* ——— to make a stinging article for the next number.

* * * * *

The young man went out into the damp dark streets, ran into a pillar box, got his umbrella entangled with that of another man, but his mood was changed, he no longer cursed these inconveniences. His mind was too full to be aware of them.

* * * * *

The article did not appear.

It is Saturday morning.

On the altar the candles are burning. Some of those Jews and Christians who were present at the Friday Service are here again sitting quietly in meditation, or turning over the leaves of the Hebrew Service of Holy Communion. At the west end the font is

open and prepared for baptism. Presently, the priest comes down the church, and a group of men and women forms around the font to witness the baptism of a young Jew. The service is conducted in Hebrew and it is a remarkable thing to record that Jews, themselves unbaptised, and not yet even convinced of the validity of the Messiahship of Jesus, should be there and, should without a murmur of protest, witness such a baptism. They know that the young man himself had applied for baptism, and had not been forced to it by anyone connected with the work at Holy Trinity.

The service is particularly solemn and touching and these influences are felt by all there present.

Then follows the Celebration of the Holy Eucharist in Hebrew. To-day this service too seems to become even more spiritual than usual, and those Jews, who only witness it, feel some remarkable power present to uplift and bless all together.

BEATRICE LEVERTOFF.

The Purpose of Israel—III

It is not the purpose of this article, which is the third of a series bearing the same title, to be a rehash of the arguments that have gone before—that would be merely tedious.

The last two articles were meant to show that modern Jewry, in so far as it has kept faith in the religious sense, is both one in spirit and in flesh with the old Israel—the same Israel that gave Christ to the world. Also that “it was His intention to offer them a further tenure of office as a new Israel with Him as their King and they His servant nation in the common cause of world redemption” (PURPOSE OF ISRAEL II).

It may not be given to us to know for certain what kind of role these descendants of the old Israel as a people, were meant to play in the new dispensation.

In the previous articles I have hazarded a guess as to that, which may well be wide of the mark and I dare not call such flights of fancy by the dignified name of “prophecies”: for without any direct revelation on this particular matter, such speculations can only be guesswork. Perhaps therefore I ought not to have indulged myself to the extent of committing my ideas on that subject to paper. Yet I maintain that they fit in with the character of this great people who are still paddling in the backwaters of God’s holy religion and also of that religion itself, exhibiting as it does an unbroken continuity from the present day to the very foundations of the world: “In the beginning God created.”

As to that then my guess is as good as my neighbours, be he pope, prelate or dustman. But what is no guess is that the cause of God is retarded by the failure of Jewry to play her part, whatever it may be, that He still wills them to perform. All this is more

than adequately summed up in the Editorial of the July quarter of the “Church and Jews.”

“So, too, the rediscovery of her vocation by Israel, at first through re-dedication to her own heritage and then, we hope, by acceptance of the truth as it is in Jesus, will bring to the Jewish people that fulness of life which they crave half unconsciously and provide them with new purpose and new hope. Then and only then, will they be able fully and voluntarily to become, no longer an enigma, but an equal among nations, co-operating for the common good, whether as a compact national group or as a cultural leaven working in and accepted by, the community of races which will find their unity in Christ and in the family of His Church.”

The church has always taught that the redemption of mankind is a two-handed affair. First God wills our restoration and fulfills certain essential conditions that we could never accomplish of ourselves, and then man is invited to co-operate with Him and so do for himself those other things that even God cannot do for him. To lay the emphasis on one aspect of his truth at the expense of the other is to present the world with a lopsided theology. The man who strikes his breast and boldly proclaims that he is the captain of his soul is speaking a half truth and therefore something of a liar, so also is the man who is content to leave everything to God without exercising any conscious effort on his part. We may, I think, sum the whole process up to a nicety in the phrase “God initiates and man responds.”

For example, in order that the world should be reconciled again to God, it was necessary that He should walk again in it as He did in the days of paradisaical man. To this end God planned to enter into communion with us again in the most intimate fashion possible—to be a Man like ourselves—to be one of us—but in order to do this He had to be invited to share our humanity.

We know that it fell to the lot of that branch of the human family—the Jews—the seed of Abraham—to act as His host and some 2000 years ago their invitation was most graciously accepted.

Jewry is herefore the yardstick of our righteousness and we who are gentiles owe our exalted position as sons of God to their good offices.

How much the world owes to Jewry can never be measured. Gratitude is however one of those virtues that do not come easily to most of us, perhaps because the knowledge that we owe our good fortune to the industry of others seems to place us under an obligation which in our human state so frequently fosters distrust and even dislike. We feel that there may be a price to pay that will prove more than we wish to shoulder. Indeed, in this particular case there is a price to pay, and one that on our own account we cannot possibly square. To be sons of God is a costly affair with tremendous obligations and responsibilities.

There is however a vast difference between our Jewish benefactors and any other kind of benefactor the world has ever known, in that they also have to bear the same responsibilities. In effect they have invited us to share their great traditions—to be incorporated into the very soul of Israel—but the heart of the tragedy is that they have done this by force of circumstances outside their control, rather than by willingly opening their doors to the outer world through grace and in the power of Christ. For this breach of goodwill they still continue to pay heavily.

Yet, we gentile Christians who are sufficiently well grounded in the faith to recognize the source of our great heritage must long for their return into the fullest fellowship again with their God and cannot rest content so long as they choose to remain within the narrow confines of their prison.

The purpose of this article is to analyse the cause of their fall from grace, partly so that we may know how best to help them in their present distress, and partly to be a salutary warning to us, should we find ourselves tempted as they were tempted, which I hope to show is more than a vague possibility.

It will be best to concentrate upon the latter aspect of the case, that is to consider what ought our approach to be rather than the other way about, for in all matters where two parties are concerned it is almost always useless to try and think for the other side—what is their affair must always remain their affair—in the last resort they will either play or not play and there the matter must end.

There are two chief reasons, which ought to receive careful consideration, that account for their unhappy state, both of which ultimately spring from the same root cause.

First, Jewry was not ready to receive God when He came; that of course is not a fault peculiar to the Jews, indeed in some respects it is less applicable to them than it is to other people—it is a fault common to all humanity—with few exceptions all of us, whether singly or collectively, are seldom ready to receive Him—the parable of the foolish virgins has world wide application—we have seen how complete human restoration necessitated God's re-entry into our world—yet such is our malaise that we want Him rather as a sick child needs the doctor whose presence however is not very welcome.

Yet the Bible story shows us plainly enough that the common people for the most part welcomed Him and would have gladly have taken Him to their hearts if they had been allowed to—but they were evilly lead at the time.

It is always fascinating to speculate how the course of the world's history would have changed if the great leaders of the past had possessed different characters. Would Germany be lying in

ruins to-day, if Hitler, while still a great leader, had been a really good man? The world is full of examples of this kind in which a specific lead at a given moment has left an indellible mark upon human affairs.

If Caiphas, Israel's high priest and leader of the Sanhedrin, had been a saintly man, as well he might have been, he could not have helped but be irresistably drawn to the person of Jesus, and who can tell what everlasting blessings would have been showered upon Israel as a consequence; instead of which he was the worst kind of ecclesiastical politician—the prototype of all those other political ecclesiastics who have since blasted their way through the world—the Christian Church has had her full share of them. The Jews have paid heavily ever since.

No doubt the sum total of human guilt inspired as ever by the unseen forces of evil would have devised some other means to wreak its vengeance upon the work of God if Caiphas had been other than he was, and none can tell what form it would have taken. But few will deny that Caiphas held the destiny of Israel in his hands at the most crucial moment of her destiny.

The principle of a delegated authority with its power for good or evil stretching far forward into the future and which is only curbed if officially repented of and rescinded, is inherent in the natural order—indeed the hierarchichal order of grades and responsibilities seems to be an echo of a heavenly pattern—"therefore with Angels and Archangels"—we cannot escape from it even if we should wish to.

The Incarnation is without doubt the greatest example of this in the whole history of the world—yet there are some Christians to whom this doctrine in all its stark reality is something of a difficulty, though they would scarcely admit it. Apart from any honest intellectual difficulties about it, the fact remains that the idea of God crashing in upon us, so that His arrival and departure is a matter of history, is very disquieting and therefore resented—we would rather that He kept a respectful distance—the other side of the clouds—and just leave us His image to look at in a stained glass window. The hysterical and hostile outcry against the performance of Miss Sayers radio play "Man born to be King" by a noisy but small section of Christians is, I think, symptomatic of this.

In that play this point is admirably demonstrated—in an imaginary conversation between Nicodemus and Caiphas, Nicodemus haltingly hints at the fearful possibility that Jesus, whom they have just disposed of, might have been all He claimed to be "the Son of God not in figure, but literally—the right hand of the power and equal partner in the glory," but admits he dare not allow himself to think this, to which Caiphas replies: "Quite so, you have only to state the case to expose its absurdity—God is one and God

is spirit. Do you think there is a host of gods and half gods walking the earth, and subject to human frailty, as in the disgusting fables of the heathen?"

Faith and morals are interrelated and our intellect is often made to serve a doubtful morality.

If it is true that the fate of the world depended upon the proper response to God of the descendants of Abraham, it is equally true that all, literally all (for one brief moment), hung upon the will of a mere girl! It would have gone hard with us all if Mary had not chosen to accept the angel's reply to her very natural query. Theologically speaking the world owes its ultimate salvation to the holiness of an obscure Jewish girl, while the Jews owe their present misery, in part at all events, to the infidelity of Caiaphas.

It is strange how those who seem by both knowledge and tradition to be best equipped to lead are so often the least prepared of all, and this brings me to the second and perhaps most important contribution to their downfall.

In a nativity play by Miss Sayers, called "He that should come," there is a very interesting dialogue between a Greek, a Jewish gentleman and a pharisee.

The conversation between the Greek and the Jewish gentleman has been running something on these lines. The Greek, being well versed in his heathen mythology is quite familiar with the idea of a God or Gods walking the earth and is interested to learn about this Jewish Messiah who is to come. He is however at a loss to understand how His appearance on earth can be a benefit to all the nations of the world, as the Jewish God seems to be exclusively interested in His chosen people. The Jewish gentleman admits his apparent exclusiveness, but nevertheless insists that He is the God of all the people of the earth, and can reasonably be expected to take an interest in His outlying dominions, and somehow feels that when the Son of God does come He may also fulfil some of the pagan prophecies as well. At this moment, the pharisee, who is acknowledged by his co-religionist to be the theologian of the party, reappears on the stage and is called to give his opinion on this weighty matter. The Greek puts the question to him in these words: "You have come in time to settle a theological argument. My friend here says that the God of Israel is Lord of the whole earth, and in consequence the Messiah will be the saviour of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews. Do you support that opinion?" And this is how he replied. "Certainly not. It is blasphemous and ridiculous. He will set his foot upon the necks of the nations, and the heathen will be cast into outer darkness with wailing and gnashing of teeth. I hope you are answered."

That attitude of mind typifies the spirit that all but completely destroyed the old Israel and successfully prevented her from participating in the glory of what was to come.

M. Maritain, in the first chapter of his book on St. Paul, puts his finger right on the spot. He writes: "Blindness of the heart joined to an overbearing ardour for religion and to a subtle intelligence and a hatred of error and to that tireless desire to make oneself morally beyond reproach, *just by oneself*—that which has remained the most commonly recognized characteristic of Pharisaism—is one of the mysteries of our human weakness, whenever it hardens itself in order to raise itself up." The keynote is, I think, in the words "just by oneself." They believed that by a precise and exact performance of their religious duties, they set themselves beyond any doubt and for ever, eternal salvation. It was in fact their doing and not God's—they accounted themselves righteous in their own right.

Earlier in this article I said that our human redemption was a two-handed affair—that first God initiates and so leads the way and then man must respond to Him, and that to emphasize one aspect of that truth at the expense of the other is to present the world with a lopsided theology. I ought perhaps to have added "and may lead to Hell." The Pharisees did think in their hearts that they were the captains of their souls, or to put it in another way, that their close observance to the niceties of their religion was the cause rather than the result of their calling.

They were not wrong, because they knew what they believed and cared about it; for it is perfectly true that the law and the ceremonies and rites of their religion were the setting in which was enshrined, perhaps imprisoned would be a better word, certain eternal truths; nor were they wrong, though possibly treading on dangerous ground, because they were proud to be of the seed of Abraham through which the world was to be so richly blessed. But they were wrong, mortally wrong, in the attitude of mind they adopted to their truths which they feigned to preserve.

It inevitably followed from this, that they must convince themselves that the world was made for them rather than that they were made to serve it. They lost all sense of humility and with it all sense of charity, the very essence of which is to wish others well; this they could never do; instead they were glad that they were not as others were.

I would only weary you if I were to quote from the many passages in the New Testament in which our Lord condemns in so forthright and terrible language the mind of the Scribes and Pharisees—let one suffice—"Unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and the Pharisees ye shall in no way enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5, 20).

That spirit or frame of mind is apparently so deadly a thing that the possessor of it is utterly damned. Unhappily, the fortunes of Israel were at that time guided by that devil-born spirit instead of by wiser and more saintly councils.

It cannot be too clearly and emphatically stated that this evil spirit of Pharisaism is not, repeat *not*, the sole prerogative of Jewry—it is a manifestation of the sin of sins to which all humanity is subject and which the Church calls Superbia or Pride.

False racial theories, such as in Naziism, all political fanaticism and intolerance and all religious bigotry are but the every day example of this foul thing. It thrives on dissension and hate and shrivels before affection and love.

When God singled Jewry out for His special purpose, He saddled them with tremendous responsibilities towards the whole earth, and, as with all great positions of trust, it carried with it privileges as well. Israel fell from grace because she devoured the privileges and scorned the responsibilities.

But the time may come sooner or later when Israel will repent and, like the prodigal son, return sorrowing to his Father's house, and we Christians, the second born of the Father, must be careful that we don't follow that story too closely. For if it is true, as I believe it is, that the old Israel now in exile and always the first-born is meant to play some role in the Christian dispensation peculiar to her genius, it may well be that her return may involve us Christians relinquishing some authority or some function which till now we have held in trust as it were; and which may seem by long standing to have become the prerogative of the present Christian society.

In short, we may be tempted as they were tempted. I have found that last paragraph most difficult to write, because I can sense the misinterpretation that is so easy, not to say inviting, to put upon it. But whatever we Christians may be called upon to hand back to the returned sheep of Israel, cannot hurt the Church nor lessen her authority and prestige, for we shall all be one—rather it will broaden the family of God and awaken new sympathies and will be in keeping with the hierarchical principal that underlies the whole universe.

All will, I suppose, depend again upon how well we are lead at the time and how Christian we really are. "For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief, even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy" (Rom. xi, 30-31).

RUDYARD WHITEHEAD.

The Star of Jacob

(A LITTLE APOCALYPSE.)

There are stars in the heavens whose light has come from that firmament where all the stars are fixed. In that firmament there are one hundred windows with their lintels, some are on the East and some at the South side of the firmament. At each window there is one star. And when the sun enters into these windows, over the lintels in the firmament, he breaks into rays of many-coloured light. The stars catch up these rays of the sun and are coloured by them; some take on the red of brass, some the yellow of gold; and for this reason some stars shine red and some with a yellow gleam. The windows are divided into fifties, and as we have said, in each one is a star. The windows in the East catch the yellow rays, while those in the South catch the red. The completeness of the Tabernacle structure is unified in them. The stars mix at night with those that proceed from that firmament and they sparkle and shine, ruling over the elements of this world, some rule over brass, some over yellow gold, and these elements increase and develop through the power of the stars. These stars rule over twenty-five and a half points of the night which are in the division of an hour. Those stars which are appointed over brass are red, and they sparkle and burn, and when they shall have diffused their light three times towards the East, or five, or seven times, then the Kings of the Gentiles will rise against the East and from that region all gold and riches will disappear. When they sparkle one, two, four, six, one after another, then fear and trembling will assail and settle in that region. Clapp, trapp, capp, clapp, trapp, capp . . . ! For there is vibration and a stirring before the Holy One in connection with those angel princes who have charge over the nations of the world. And a similar stir takes place on the other side.

"Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are His. And He changeth the times and the seasons" (Dan. ii, 20, 21). All things are in His hands, and He liberated His holy people from the power and dominion of the stars and planets; the which have become for the nations objects of worship; but Jacob has no portion in them, because he belongs to Him who is the Creator of all things. There is a firmament high above all these firmaments, hidden, concealed, and the seal of the Tabernacle reigns over that firmament, which is called "Hall of the Tabernacle." There all those windows are to be found, on this side and on that, and it unifies all the grades of all things in the Tabernacle. Six of the windows are greater than all the others, and one, which is concealed, rules over them all. One of these seven is called "the window of light" and into it the star which the wise

call "Yad," "a hand," enters, which hand stretches out to the domain of the tribe of Judah. This does not mean that that tribe has any part in it, since the tribes of Israel are not under the dominion of the stars, but the tribe of Judah rules over that star, and not the star over it. When members of this tribe became corrupted in their ways and turned away from the Holy One, then they began to divine their fate by contact with that window and the star that dwelt in it, saying: "It is the *hand* that conquers all the nations"; for concerning Judah it is written: "Thine *hand* shall be in the neck of thine enemies" (Gen. xvix, 8), and they followed the star and worshipped it. Concerning which it is written: "And Judah did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord" (I Kg. xiv, 22). When that star comes out it stretches out five rays, which are five fingers, which sparkle and shine in that window. Sorcerers and astrologers, one and all, go in fear and awe of this region, for when this star reigns the predictions of all sorcerers and astrologers become confused and come to naught. If it should be said: if that firmament is hidden, how is it that they have knowledge concerning it? the answer to this is that the astrologers and sorcerers gain knowledge of it from a sign which they have, outside that concealed region which yet can proclaim to them the periods when that star is in the ascendant, and they fear it, and at such periods their incantations do not succeed. Thus it is that there are times when people are lucky in connection with this star, and times again when they are unlucky in connection with it. For this reason the number of astrologers and sorcerers decreases in the world, because they lose their wits when their incantations and predictions fail and then they no longer know the sign which warns them of the ascendancy of that star, and the knowledge is lost. But the ancient astrologers knew the sign and studied the movements of the star from the outside.

The second window is called "the window of the claw," because it has the form of a claw, and the star which enters into it is known to the wise as "Viper," since when this star reigns severe judgment prevails. Like a viper, it has a head and a tail to kill. From that window six hundred thousand myriads of spirits proceed, which spirits rule over the toe-and-finger-nails of men when the nail-parings are thrown away instead of being burnt, for these nail-parings are used by the sorcerers for the divinations. All those who throw away their nail-parings, or use them for witchcraft, while this star is in the ascendant, cause death, and increase the power of sorcery.

The third window is called "Breastplate." A star enters into it, called "Bright Light." It sparkles more brightly than any other and it watches over every spirit, and rest, redemption, and goodness are in it, with no trace of the accusing element or severity in it. When it is in the ascendant all is repose and light, for peace, satisfaction and harmony prevail in all the worlds.

The fourth window is called "Calix of flowers," and the star which enters into it is called by the wise "Cluster of Cypress flowers" (cf. S.S. I, 14: *eshkol ha-kopher*, but it is uncertain whether the Zohar takes it in this sense), because it comes out like a *cluster* (*eshkol*) and spreads its light like a cluster of Cypress flowers. It awakens mercy in the world; and it removes afar off and brings the good near. Much procreation takes place in the world at this time. Men are not rebellious on account of their dependence on one another. Peace and joy are awakened in the world.

The fifth window is that which is called "Cistern," because the star which enters it always "draws" and is therefore never at rest, therefore the wise of heart are bewildered and can never divine the truth of its way, since it never remains still, as it is continually being drawn from. They therefore endeavour with all their powers to discover something about that region, studying its depths with diligence.

The sixth window is called "Venus" (*Nagha* lit. "brightness"), and a star enters into it called "*Gasran*," because when it reigns over the world it is a sign of judgment, which reveals itself in many severe decrees (*gesoroth*) and many punishments. Every day new decrees of evil are enacted against the world, and even before these have been completely carried out fresh ones are enacted. In the present dispensation this star is not often in the ascendant, but when the days of the Messiah draw nigh it will dominate the world, and as a consequence, wild animals will ramp and rage about the world, and deadly diseases will appear in the world in all their sinister power, great tribulations will constantly be renewed, and Israel's woe will be very great. But when they are thus oppressed in the darkness of exile, the Holy One will cause the daybreak to appear for them "and the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the Kingdom . . . shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High" (Dan. xii, 27), and the reign of the heathen nations will be broken and Israel shall rule over them, and that which is written shall be fulfilled: "Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun" (Isa. xxx, 26), and then will this cause the seventh window to open to the whole world, whose star is the "Star of Jacob," concerning which Balaam said: "There shall come a star out of Jacob" (Nu. xxiv, 17). This star will shine for forty days and forty nights, and when King Messiah shall be revealed and all the nations of the world shall gather around Him, then will the Scripture be fulfilled which says: "And in that day the root of Jesse which stands for an ensign of the peoples, to it shall the Gentiles seek: and His rest shall be glorious" (Isa. xi, 10).

(From the Zohar. Translated from the Aramaic by P.P.L.)

Intercessions

In Thy grace have pity on Israel, O our Rock. May those who are hungering after Thy goodness, thirsting after Thy grace, longing for Thy salvation, recognise and know that to the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness. Save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance. By Thy good Spirit make us share Thy tender compassion for them, and show us what Thou wouldst have us attempt for their salvation, and enable us earnestly to accomplish the same, to Thy glory and the establishment of Thy Kingdom for ever and ever. Amen.

* * * * *

O Lord, God of our fathers, Who in the days of old didst show Thy power through the triumphs of the Gospel, we thank Thee for the manifestation of Thy Presence in our own days, and we pray that by the guidance of Thy Holy Spirit we may not hinder the fulfilment of Thy purpose, but by prayer, by witness and by the offering of our lives, we may promote Thy glory and the establishment of Thy Kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

* * * * *

O Lord, we beseech Thee, pour Thy Holy Spirit upon all Jewish Christians and members of persecuted communions, that, as Thou hast begotten them again unto a lively hope, so they may ever be followers of Thee as dear children. Make them to be ready to do every good work for the salvation of those around them; keep them steadfast in the hour of persecution; that so, by the innocency of their lives and the faithfulness of their testimony even unto death, they may glorify Thy Name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Grant, O Lord, we beseech Thee, that those who are cast off by their friends for their faith in Christ may be comforted and blessed.

* * * * *

Almighty and everlasting God, Who hast given Thine only Son to be the Saviour of the world, grant us grace to reveal Him both as a light to lighten the Gentiles and as the glory of Thy people Israel, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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WHAT WE OWE TO THE JEWS.

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1.—OUR SAVIOUR. Jesus was a Jew, born of a Jewish maiden in the Jewish town of Bethlehem.

"Hosanna to the Son of David!" (Matt. xxi. 9). "Thou art the King of Israel" (John i. 49). "Israelites . . . whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came" (Rom. ix. 5). "A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel!" (Luke ii. 32).

2.—OUR CHURCH. The Christian Church is a continuance of the Jewish Church; the Church of God under the New Covenant is the perfected form of the Church of God under the Old Covenant. The Apostles were all Jews; the first converts were Jews; the centres of conversion throughout the Roman Empire were composed of Jews.

3.—OUR BIBLE.—Both the Old Testament and the New were written by Jews. The only exception is the third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles, written by a Gentile, but who derived his material from Jewish sources.

4.—FORMS OF PRAYER. Set forms of prayer were used in the Temple and Synagogue, and there is clear evidence in the New Testament that such was the case in the Apostolic Church.

5.—THE TWO LESSONS AND SERMON. Two lessons were read in the Synagogue Service—one from the Pentateuch, and one from the Prophets, followed by a discourse. Our Lord acted as Reader and Preacher in the Synagogue at Nazareth (Luke iv. 16-21).

6.—BAPTISM.—The Jews practised Baptism for ritual purification. A Gentile who desired to become a "child of the Covenant" had to submit to baptism as a cleansing from the impurity of idolatry, and that he might be "born anew" and so become a "new creature."

7.—CONFIRMATION. Jacob laid his hands on the heads of Joseph's sons to bless them (Gen. xlviii. 14). This custom is in use among the Jews at the present day. It was the custom in Jerusalem to take boys in their thirteenth year to the priests and elders that they might bless them.

8.—ORDINATION. In Palestine, Rabbis were ordained by the laying-on of hands, a custom derived from the Old Testament rite (Num. xxvii. 23, Deut. xxxiv. 9). For use in the Apostolic Church, see Acts vi. 6; xiii. 3; 1 Tim. iv. 14; 2 Tim. i. 6.

9.—HOLY COMMUNION. The Holy Communion was instituted at the Paschal Supper, and parts of the ritual of that meal have been continued in the Service. "In truth (the Last Supper) was a real Passover, though not the Passover of the old, but of the new Law." "For our Passover is sacrificed, even Christ (1 Cor. v. 7). "And they continued steadfastly . . . in the breaking of bread and in the Prayers" (Acts ii. 42).

... THE ...
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Edited by

PAUL P. LEVERTOFF, D.D.

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Editorial Notes

"For many shall come in My Name saying, 'I am Christ,' and shall deceive many."—St. Matthew xxiv, 5.

This prophecy of our Lord has been literally fulfilled. The story of the false Messiahs is one of the most tragic in Jewish history. In Christendom little is known about these men, yet it is very instructive to study their lives and claims, and their influence on the Jewish people, in order to understand how it is that the Messianic hope, which is the centre of the Jewish religion, has lost its appeal to the masses of the Jewish people, notwithstanding the fact that it still forms one of the "Thirteen Articles of Faith." We can also see, in studying the history of these pretenders, the difference between them and the true Messiah. They are from below, He is from above. They lead away from God, He is the way to the Father. They bring falsehood, He is the Truth. Their wages is death, His gift is eternal life.

The most outstanding "Messiah" found an adherent in such a great Rabbinic authority as Rabbi Akiba, who lived in the time of the Emperor Hadrian. The name of this "Messiah" was Simon Bar-Kochba*. The embers of the Messianic hope burst again into flame in the time of Hadrian. He prohibited circumcision, and also, in the place of the Holy City, he built a new city with the name *Aeolia Capriolina*. When he left Syria, about 132 A.D., the seed of rebellion which was sown in previous years by some patriotic Rabbis, was ripe. The most zealous of these Rabbis was Rabbi Akiba. On his journeys to Babylon, to different provinces of Asia Minor, and to Rome, he used

* This name is so spelt in the Patristic literature (compare Justin, Eusebius, Jerome). In Jewish sources he is either called Bar Ko-siba or Ben Ko-siba, which means, either "the son of Kosiba," or that he was born in a place called Kosiba. The interpretation of Bar Kosiba as the "son of a lie" originated later, the first one who mentions it is Rabbi Yehuda, "the Prince," editor of the *Mishnah*, about 200 A.D.

the opportunity of preparing the Jews of the Diaspora for the revolution. Everything was prepared, even the right man. For, when Rabbi Akiba saw the giant Bar-Kochba, he was convinced that he was the Messiah, and openly applied to him the words "A star will rise from Jacob" (Numbers xxiv, 17) (Kochba=Star). Even the opposition of famous Rabbis did not shake him in his faith. It is reported that even when Rabbi Yochanan Ben-Thurta said to him, "Akiba, sooner will grass grow from thy chin than that the Son of David cometh"; he did not give up his conviction. And the people believed him. After a fearful struggle which lasted three years, the Jewish rebellion was quelled. Bar-Kochba fell in the last battle, also Rabbi Akiba found his death there. According to Jewish tradition (compare Ber. 61 b), he was cruelly mutilated, but recited the Shemah ("Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God the Lord is One") and at the last word he gave up the ghost. According to Dio Cassius (lxix, 4), about six hundred thousand Jews were killed on that occasion. According to the Midrash (Echa R.), Bar-Kochba's army had consisted of four hundred thousand men, half of whom cut off their thumbs as a sign of courage, whilst of the other half each uprooted a cedar of Lebanon as a display of strength. Those Jews who had not recognized his messiahship, and especially the Jewish-Christians, were most cruelly assassinated (compare Justin, Apolog. I. 31).

When his uncle, Eleazar of Modiim, was suspected of pro-Roman tendencies, Bar-Kochba had kicked him so that he fell dead. Then, so the Jewish legend tells us, Bar-Kochba heard a voice from heaven: "Thou hast broken the arm of Israel and blinded his eye—thine arm will be broken, and thine eye shall be blinded."

But the messianic hope was not quenched in Israel. The first after Bar-Kochba who claimed to be the second Moses was Moses of Crete. In the time of the younger Theodosius (434) all the Jewish communities of Crete were urged by this Moses to leave all and follow him. As Moses of old led the children of Israel through the Red Sea, he would lead them to the promised land. And he succeeded in persuading them to follow him. On an appointed day Moses and thousands of women and children proceeded towards the sea. He led them to a hillock on the seashore and demanded of them that they should plunge into the waters. Christian fishermen who were near by saved some and warned others. But Moses was not there. . .

Also in Ethiopia and in Samaria, in the reign of the Emperor Justin, several "Messiahs" arose. There was something wild and sinister about these oriental "deliverers." The Persian Jew, David Alrui, stood fearlessly before the Sultan, saying that he could imprison him if he liked. According to the Jewish traveller, Benjamin of Tudela, after three days imprisonment, when the Sultan was sitting in Council with his ministers, the messianic pretender suddenly appeared before him.

In Baghdad two impostors showed the people letters of David, in which he gave the exact date of the Redemption of Israel, and promised

that all his followers would fly in the air from Baghdad to Jerusalem; there they should put on green garments and wait on the roofs of the houses for the moment of Redemption. With great joy the Jews gave away their possessions to these two men in order that they might distribute the whole among the poor. The night came, crowds were gathered on the roofs with great expectation, children wept, all moved in a peculiar fashion in the attempt to fly, until at last they realized that they had been tricked. The rogues had disappeared with the spoil, and ever after that year was known as "the year of flying" (Aom-el Tajaran), and the years were reckoned according to that episode.

Devid Alrui did not give up his messianic claims. Eventually his own father-in-law assassinated him while he slept. For which deed he received ten thousand gold pieces from the Turkish Governor Amadias (compare Shebet Yehuda), but some of his followers did not cease believing in him even then.

The philosophical work of Moses Maimonides, "More Nebuchim," studied not only by Jews but also by Mohammedans and Christians, and which had a great influence on Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas; together with the cabbalistic classic, the Zohar, are books which greatly influenced the religious thought of mediaeval Jewry. In Moses de Leon, the compiler of the Zohar, we find the syncretism of philosophical and cabbalistic ideas in its final form. Moses ben Nachman, due to his great talmudic scholarship and piety, and impressed by the great cabbalistic work, Bahir, also enjoyed a large following. In Joseph Chiquitilla, Isaac ibn-Latif, and Abraham Abulaphia, who were contemporaries, the mysticism of numbers, letters and vowels, gained the victory over the philosophy of Moses Maimonides. The latter of the trio believed himself to be the Messiah. He was born in Saragossa in the year 1240. His father instructed him, until his eighteenth year, in biblical and talmudic literature. After the death of his father, Abraham, who was then twenty years old, left Tudela, where his family had settled soon after his birth, for the East. Perhaps it was due to the reports spread, especially among the Spanish Jews, at that time concerning the legendary river, Sambation, on the shores of which the ten tribes had an independent kingdom, or to the longing for more knowledge, perhaps also to the Messianic hope, that he was led thus to wander. He went first to Greece, where he got married, but the longing for the promised land was too great for him. He left his wife and went to Palestine, and arrived in Acre. Probably the conviction that he would not be able in time of war (the Mongols had invaded Palestine at this time) to reach the ten tribes, caused him to return to Greece. From there he went to Italy and settled in Capua, where he devoted himself to the study of Maimonides' philosophy, in which he became very proficient. In the year 1271 we find him absorbed in the study of Cabbala. Philosophy did not satisfy him, but even Jewish mysticism did not quite quench his thirst after knowledge. He longed for a revelation, which he at last believed himself to have received from God. In one of his writings Abulaphia gives a detailed account of how to

receive such a revelation from God. The first condition is asceticism; then, dressing in white garments and wearing phylacteries and Talith, and deeply concentrating on the unspeakable Divine Name of God, fall into ecstasy. The soul then almost separates itself from the body, the Divine fulness unites itself with it in a spiritual embrace. Then comes the revelation.

He taught not only in Barcelona, but also in Bruges and Medina-Celi, in Castille, and had many eager disciples. Yet it was not in Spain, but in Italy, in Urbino, that he published, in the year 1279, his first prophetic writing. In it he proclaims that the word of the Lord was revealed unto him, that he was the Messiah, "who came to raise up the tabernacle of David, and close up the breaches thereof, to lighten the eyes of the sons of his people through the vision of the true Deity." In the course of a few years he wrote twenty-six cabbalistic works, and twenty-two prophetic writings. In one of these he delights to call himself Raziel (mystery of God) or Zechariah. The numerical value of these words is identical with the name Abraham, and in that he found a suggestion of his messiahship. When he was forty years of age he went to Rome with a sure expectation of performing miracles there. He desired nothing less than to convert the Pope. The Pope at that time was Nicholas II, to whom Dante in his *Divina Comedia* gives a place in hell. He was at that time in Suriano, near Rome, and on hearing of Abulaphia's plan, he commanded that he should not be allowed to enter the palace, but be captured and burnt at the gates of the city. The Pope's officials hastened to fulfil the command of their master, and put up sentries at the gates. On the 22nd of August, 1280, Abulaphia was on the way to Suriano. A miracle happened. He passed through and, lo, as soon as he touched the grounds of Suriano, the news came that the Pope had died suddenly.

From Rome Abulaphia went to Messina, and also there he proclaimed himself Messiah. The Redemption would begin in the year 1290. His message found credence everywhere. But Rabbi Solomon ben Aderet warned people against him. Abulaphia had to leave Sicily. In the island of Commina, near Malta, he ultimately settled in the year 1288. In that year he wrote an apocalyptic treatise called *Sepher ha-Ot*. In this he describes his lack of success among Jews and non-Jews; the Lord commanded him to speak to the Gentiles, who are of uncircumcised hearts and of uncircumcised flesh. He preached to them and they believed the message of the Lord, but they did not turn to Him, because they trusted too much in their swords and bows. The wise men of Israel, on the other hand, say: "Why should we count the letters of the Name of the Lord? What help will it be to us? Is it not more profitable for us to count silver and gold?" How, and when, Abulaphia died we do not know, but it is certain that it was not before the year 1291.

One of his disciples, Samuel of Medina Celi, proclaimed in prophetic utterance to the Jews of the small town of Ayllon, near Segovia, the approach of the messianic era. At the same time a Jew,

whose name we do not know, promised that Redemption was near. He mentioned the last day of the fourth month of the year 1295. Many Jews prepared themselves by fasting and good works for this day of Redemption. At the appointed time they waited in the synagogue for the Messiah, but in vain. However, a miracle did happen. They suddenly discovered on their garments small crosses. As they could not explain their origin, some of them lost their mental balance, and some became Christian (Alphonso de Spina, *Fortalitium fidei*, lib. 3). Nothing more is known about this prophet.

In the year 1400, a man with the name of Jacob Alkorzano proclaimed himself as messiah in the small Castillian town Cisneros. Even the philosopher Chasdai Crescas who, as I have tried to show in another place (*Die rel. Denkweise d. Chasidim*), had a great influence on Spinoza, believed in his messiahship, and proclaimed it openly in the synagogue. What became of him, is not known.

Joseph Ibn-virga tells in his *Shebet Yehuda* (paragraph 32) of a Persian Jew who gave himself out as Messiah. He was very warlike, and gathered round him a large following. When he, with his large army, started a rebellion, the Sultan threatened to exterminate all the Jews in the kingdom. When the Jews appealed to the "messiah," he said: "I am here to save you, but you do not wish to be saved. Whom do you fear, miserable ones? Who will be able to stand against my glance? Are you afraid of the Sultan of Persia, whom I can, at the mere pronouncement of my name, at the mere sound of my arms, put to flight?" When asked to give proofs of his messiahship, he said that it was not necessary to give other proofs than those of his success. When it was pointed out to him that other claimants to messiahship had failed, he flung them off angrily. Yet, on the next day when the Jews surrounded him again, pointing to the little children, to soften his heart, he said that he was prepared to cease hostilities if the Sultan would pay him the expenses of the war. The Jews, in tribulation, repaired to the Sultan to explain this, and he declared his willingness to pay these expenses. Thus the "messiah" ceased war and went on his way. It was the Jews, however, who suffered, for they were forced later to pay back the whole sum to the Sultan in taxes.

* * * * *

"Whither Jewry?" asks the "Jewish Chronicle."

Once again Jewry itself faced with a major dilemma. In many respects it is not a new crisis, nor has it suddenly appeared. What has happened is that recent events have brought it violently to the fore. The King David Hotel crime has done far more than destroy valuable lives and property; it has shaken Jewry's moral foundations. And on top of the explosion has come the British Government's proposals for a federated Palestine, a plan which is intended to produce a final settlement of the problem which Great Britain shouldered when, in November, 1917, in a burst of righteous enthusiasm, she issued the Balfour declaration. That was a moment of splendid exaltation not only for the Jews all over the world but also for many Christians. Three

years later, Sir Herbert Samuel was appointed first High Commissioner for Palestine and the stage seemed to be set for a new and happier act of the Jewish drama. Peace had again come to the world, and the Jewish National Home was to be built under the aegis of Jewry's staunchest friend, England. And now? Less than 30 years have gone, and all that is changed. Another great war has passed, the fighting is over, but peace seems far away. Jewry has lost six million of its people—relatively the greatest casualty list of any nation—and the National Home, its greatest hope, is in dire peril.

"Come my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the Lord cometh forth. . ." (Isa. xxvi, 20-21).

Engelberg : A Study

From Sarnen on the lake of that name we decided to go to Engelberg because we had learned that in that spot many Jewish refugees were living such lives as were left to them, in this Swiss beauty-spot.

It was a glorious Saturday afternoon and we drove there in a car, my husband and I, our two hostesses in whose flat we were spending the first part of our holiday, our daughter, and two ladies, strangers to us, who were staying at the Peterhof Hotel in Sarnen for their holiday. The chauffeur took us through Kerns, the next village to Sarnen, winding about at the foot of the Stauserhorn, which towered handsomely above us.

The roads are fine and the country beautiful everywhere. The hay was being cut for the third crop already. Grain crops were ripening, the apple and pear trees bent under their loads of fruit. Over the scattered farm houses the grape vines flourished and promised a heavy harvest. The farmers were all busy in the fields, their bodies bronzed to dark copper colour with sun and wind.

From the flat we began to mount and up and up, the road winding among the pine woods, everywhere the sound of running waters made music, as streams and water falls made their hurried way to the valleys. At one spot we crossed the line of the funicular railroad up to the heights. Then the road turned about, and we could see the railway over away beyond us, and the little train climbing up like a small caterpillar. About and about, with woods and green wooded valleys, gleaming streams, wild flowers starring grassy plots, breath-taking beauty everywhere. Then, arrival suddenly in a sophisticated town with clean paved streets, high impressive houses, shops full of luxurious wares, a little Paris, or a Monte Carlo, perched up high on the mountain top, or near it. Handsome hotels, tennis courts, gardens full of bright flowers. A huge church and monastery dominate the place, with all its multifarious buildings round a vast courtyard.

Our hostesses were themselves Jewish-Christians, one of them the mother of two of our students from the Hostel of Holy Trinity, Shore-ditch. Both these ladies have lost all, their homes, their belongings and their relations in this debacle of recent years. Some of their friends, likewise made destitute, were now living in Engelberg.

What is the plight of these people? How do they continue to exist? Who cares for them and how? These were the questions that we had come to Engelberg to investigate.

The Jews have made an arrangement with the Swiss Government to use some of the hotels in Engelberg for these poor refugees. They have, I understand, bought one hotel outright, and in it are housed the old and elderly people who no longer have any homes of their own anywhere. They are too old to be able any longer to pursue their former occupations, some are no longer in a fit state of health, mental and physical, to do any work. Most of them no longer have even any living relations, as far as they know. These are now given a home here in this lovely spot with every kind of convenience, as in a luxury hotel. A nurse and a doctor are in attendance and there they remain until life has done with them. They cannot be said to live, they exist merely, in their gilded cage, hemmed in by painful memories. Their lives are naturally regulated by certain restrictions inherent in a communal life, and their circumstances restrict their movement away from Engelberg. The hotel, that houses them, is in the main street and its windows command a view of the passing crowd, which at first sight looks very gay and colourful. It must not be forgotten that they are, through no fault of their own, become elegant paupers.

We saw some of them sitting on a seat on the terrace of the hotel. An old couple were the first we saw. With sad unseeing eyes they looked on us all. They were fortunate, since they were two, husband and wife. Most of them are widows who live here, whose husbands and children have been lost, or known to have been murdered sadistically in Belsen and Dachau. It was early afternoon and most of the older people were having their siesta.

We went on, up the street, when we had alighted from the car, and made our way to another hotel nestling in the side of the mountain. Here, two friends of our hostesses were living. The one of these is a maiden lady, an artist. Of all her family, two young people remain, one niece is in Oxford and had just become engaged there to an Englishman, an occasion of great happiness to the artist. The other niece is in San Paolo, whither she had been lucky enough to flee. To this niece, now married, she hopes, before long, to travel and make a home again. Since her arrival in Engelberg, in spite of all its beauty and the leisure of her life, she has not been able to paint at all. The weight of sorrow, her own and that of her companions, has paralysed her. She came to meet us in the hall, into which we had been ushered to wait for her together with another woman, a tall, dark Jewess. This lady has a son in Hemel Hempstead whom we hope to meet soon.

As we passed the tennis courts, she said: "That man looks so like

one of my brothers." It was spoken sadly. Then, after a pause, she sighed and added casually—"Three of them were murdered"—and we passed on.

We walked together back to the main street and along it to the church. A handsome building, it stands in a paved court to which beautiful wrought iron gates open. A gay rock garden lines the foot of the high wall on one side of the court, on the other is a burial space all gay with flowers, and a low wall separates it from the monastery grounds and buildings. A flight of wide white steps lead up to the porch with its massive doors. Inside, evensong was going forward, and about 50 or 60 monks formed the congregation. Some of these were visiting clergy, come up for rest and refreshment, for it is a preaching order of Carmelites. The singing was impressive and the organ fine. The ritual was most unusual and spectacular, going on with precision of a ballet.

The artist excused herself from accompanying us into church because it was Sabbath. Any other day, she explained, she would go in, but not on Sabbath. We respected her idiosyncrasy and left her in the churchyard. The other Jewess accompanied us into church and stayed with us there, remarking of the artist that she could not understand such an attitude. When we rejoined the artist she explained to my husband how her family had always kept Sabbath at home. My husband then informed her that what we had been hearing in there were the Jewish Psalms chanted by the monks. She could not believe it. My husband tried to explain to her the services of the Church and how it is all based on the Jewish Scriptures, and how great a part they actually play in the life of the Church. It was to her as if a window had been opened on a new country. She had been telling us, earlier on, of a wonderful piece of work executed by one of the lay brothers and was eager to show it to us. She now led the way to the monastery workshops for this purpose!

This was a truly marvellous piece of work, which consisted of a table about 2 yards square, the top of which was divided crosswise with 4 triangles into which exquisitely worked scenes from the N.T. were inlaid. There was the Last Supper, the flight into Egypt, the Cleansing of the Temple, etc., etc. It had taken 12 years to complete, for each minute piece of wood had had to be specially treated. I have seen exquisite inlaid work in museums but nothing to equal this for workmanship and imagination. We all felt it was a privilege to shake hands with, and thank the genius whose work it was. He turned out to be a humble peasant brother, whose labour is entirely one of love, and whose modesty is proverbial in Engelberg. Seldom can he be made to show his work, and when it has been shown, seldom can he be caught to be thanked and praised. The artist was triumphant on this afternoon to have been able to show us both the work and the worker. She enthusiastically had drawn our attention to the details of each scene and showed knowledge of the subjects and understanding of their sig-

nificance. Yet her own religious life obviously consisted in keeping, almost superstitiously, the negative side of Sabbath!

We then returned to the street and repaired to an open air café. Here we met a young couple who had escaped from Warsaw, and as we had lived in Warsaw years ago they were delighted to become acquainted. The husband had escaped from a concentration camp, just as he had been led out to be shot with a batch of other unfortunate Jews. His young wife had saved him. She was an Ukrainian Jewess and spoke Russian and was very happy to speak to my husband in that language. She and her husband had been baptised and confirmed in the R.C. Church in order to save their lives! Their little child had been born in Engelberg, a lovely intelligent little thing, who had almost cost her mother's life. They were hoping daily to be able to go to Australia to start a new life. The young man was very embittered by his experiences. He was in his early thirties and was not exactly looking forward to his unknown future. He had held a responsible post as lecturer on Economics in the Warsaw University, and had been able to give his wife, and had hoped to have given his child, a secure future. But he must now be ready to do any kind of work that turned up in a country new to him, and of which he did not even know the language. Yet, it was the only opening for him. Even that was being so long delayed that life was an irritation to him, seeing time fly past so inexorably. He and his wife and child had been living for over a year in one of these hotels and communal life was getting him down. "Oh these petty quarrels and bickerings!" he exclaimed. "One wants the window open, the other wants it closed. One has the salt and forgotten to pass it to the other. These things assume world shattering importance and create feuds and factions. One has to live, whether one wishes, or not, with all sorts and conditions of men and women. "Good for democracy," you will say. I wonder. It makes me less democratic every day. I have spent the best years of my youth qualifying for a certain kind of work. It is wrested from me for no reason at all. I am thrown on the world with those I took upon myself to protect and care for. I am forced to forgo with every kind of incompatible fellow creature. I am able and eager to work and I am kept here in gilded idleness. Can any man remain sane in such circumstances?"

How can words comfort such a case? I felt like the spectator at the Zoo come to look at the King of Beasts in his captivity. Could I point out to him the sin of joining the Church in which he did not have an iota of belief? Surely, it was not for me to judge him. But I could not help remarking how much lighter his chains would have been to him, and with how much greater kindness he could have viewed his fellow-prisoners if he had known the true significance of the Christian Faith which he had so lightly professed.

His wife had a different spirit and was more aware of the Truth. She had, doubtless, accepted it all heedlessly, putting the safety of her dear ones first; but deeper things were working in her heart, and when

I said I would not forget her and would pray for their speedy release and their future, she wrung my hand hard with tears in her eyes.

Two old ladies sat watching the tennis as we repassed. One was a writer of repute in old Vienna, the other a once famous doctor. Now they are derelicts in lovely Engelberg.

The westering sun gilded the homeward way, turning the woods and the streams to enchanted country, but now its added beauty made it sadder to think that in such a spot lived hearts heavier with sorrow and despair and in a greater number than ever before in the world's chequered history.

Man is indeed wolf to man. All the kindness in the world cannot restore to these suffering souls anything that we have taken from them. For we are all responsible for this tragedy. The Church, especially, is responsible, all over the world. Let us never lose sight of this fact.

And this fact was specially brought home to us, for in the hotel where the artist and her friend live we met a Uniat Priest who is hoping to go to Canada with his three sons to join the Ukrainian Uniats there. He was so happy to speak in his own language to my husband and so interested to hear how he had taken part in translating our Prayer Book into Ukrainian for use in Canada. He told us that in the hotel was also a priest of the Russian Orthodox Church, but he would have no dealings with him. And the monks in Engelberg monastery would have no dealings with either. Meanwhile the Jews among whom they now live look on.

We were touched by the gratitude of the Ukrainian priest. He met us again in the street and came to my husband to speak to him and he wrote to us later again. We took the opportunity to tell the little Ukrainian Jewess too who he was. They had lived in the same house for a year and not known one another! She was enthusiastic in her determination to get acquainted. At least we used our short stay to try to promote some understanding among some of them.

The Uniats, the R.C.'s and the Orthodox make a triangle of feuds. It was once said of Meyerbeer's opera—the Huguenots—the Christians quarrel and the Jew makes the music! Truly. Here is an unprecedented opportunity for the Church of Christ to influence the Jews and lead them to their Messiah, and all they can do is promote old quarrels. Can anything exceed this for sinful folly?

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!

BEATRICE LEVERTOFF.

(from "A Visit to Switzerland," July, 1946.)

The Confusion of Saints

(Cont.)

2. THE REVELATION OF GOD

When it is, as at present, difficult to decide which of the current interpretations of Christianity is the authentic Gospel, the most obvious means of solving the problem is to discover the message which was proclaimed by Jesus Himself, and by those whom He trained. In attempting to do so, we do not necessarily assume that the revelation of God, which came to mankind through Jesus of Nazareth, consisted of a fixed and complete verbal statement. We may, however, justly question any subsequent expositions which appear to be incompatible with the form in which the Christian revelation first appeared.

It is generally agreed by scholars that the Gospels bearing the names of Matthew, Mark, and Luke as their authors were compiled from written and oral accounts of the sayings and deeds of Jesus. Apparently the method used by oriental teachers was to make their pupils learn their lessons by heart; for when books were few this was the most effective way of passing on knowledge from one generation to another. By such a system of education a most retentive memory was developed. It is not unreasonable, therefore, to assume that Jesus first taught the apostles in this way, and that they, in turn, passed on to others the teaching which they had learnt, with oral accounts of His life and deeds compiled from their own memories. Moreover, if the method of memorising was used, there is no reason for supposing that the oral accounts became inaccurate through being passed on from one to another, until they were eventually written down.

It is also generally agreed by scholars that the Gospel according to St. Mark is the earliest of the four extant records; and it may be accepted with good reason as the best starting point for our investigation. It opens with the words, "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ." That is a significant beginning, as showing that the author did not intend merely to write about the Gospel, but to set forth the Gospel itself. It suggests also that the Gospel is not really a verbal statement, but a Person, Jesus Christ; and the book itself confirms this, by being concerned more with what Jesus did than with what He said.¹ Moreover, it is remarkable that the writer, although he writes about a Person, makes no attempt to describe His appearance, nor His character, and devotes a very large part of his work to the conflict between Jesus and the Jewish authorities, and to its outcome in His death.

Although the writers of the other Gospels provided further information, not given by St. Mark, they did not substantially alter his

¹ On the other hand it may be argued that Mark, who frequently referred to the teaching of Jesus, had no need to describe it, because his readers were already familiar with it, through their knowledge of oral, and perhaps written, versions of it already in existence. It is just as likely, however, that Mark wrote in order to correct a false emphasis on the teaching of Jesus, due to insufficient knowledge of His Person.

emphasis on the Person of Jesus Christ, as being Himself the Gospel, and on His conflict with the Jewish authorities and subsequent death and resurrection. The attention given by each writer to the conflict and death of Jesus was reasonable, in view of their belief in His resurrection. They would naturally have been particularly interested in His death, and in the conflict which led to it; for they were convinced that the struggle, which apparently ended in His destruction by His enemies, really brought final victory to Him. The strength of the belief of the first Christians in the resurrection of Jesus is shown by the very fact that they made no attempt to conceal the opposition of the Jewish authorities to Him, and could write so calmly and objectively about His death. They described how reluctant they themselves had been to believe that He had indeed risen from the dead: in fact, their own conviction, and their ability to persuade large numbers of people throughout the world to believe the story of the resurrection, can hardly be explained except on the assumption that it really happened.

Such, then, was the Gospel of Jesus Christ in its most primitive form: the story of a Jew of humble birth, who, at the age of about thirty years, began to preach and work miracles amongst the people; almost immediately He came into conflict with the authorities of His own race, who eventually handed Him over to the Roman governor for execution; but on the third day after His death He rose again from the grave, convinced His followers of the fact, and sent them to bear the good tidings into all the world. If the Gospels are fiction, their authors must have been most remarkable men; but the simplicity of the accounts, and their straightforward style, indicate that the authors, at least, were firmly convinced of the truth of what they described. The four Gospels show an independence of authorship, but agree in all the essentials of the story. Moreover, the expansion of the Church throughout the world, and its influence, which is by no means confined to its own members, is not easy to explain on the assumption that it was established by means of a myth.

In the absence of complete proof, however, it is always necessary to accept the accounts of the Gospel as a hypothesis, which only experience can corroborate: and it is not likely that any one would desire to do so, unless it seemed to have some obvious connection with his own life. The fact that One who lived nearly two thousand years ago died and rose again has no obvious bearing upon our own existence in the twentieth century; and there is many a professing Christian to-day who does not give very evident signs of the effect of the Gospel upon his own life and conduct, and upon the problems which he meets in his day to day existence.

There are some Christians who try to make the Gospel applicable to the circumstance of the present day by concentrating on the teaching of Jesus, and showing its relevance. That has now been well tried, and, although the value of certain ethical standards derived from the teaching of Jesus is generally recognised, it cannot be said that such a presentation of the Gospel has the dynamic effect of the primitive

emphasis on His Death and Resurrection. Moreover, much of His teaching seems to the modern man too idealistic to be of much practical use.

For the first Christians there was an inevitable connection between the Death and Resurrection of Jesus and the circumstances of their own lives. Before His death they had themselves shared His conflict with the religious and political leaders in their own land; and the evidence given by the Resurrection of the ultimate triumph of Jesus committed them to a continuance of the same struggle. It was His conflict and Death, which showed to His followers the practical significance of His Resurrection in connection with their own lives. For that reason it was natural that Christian theology, when it first took shape in the writings of St. Paul, was concerned principally with the Death of Jesus. "I determined," wrote St. Paul to the Corinthians, "to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified."¹ The Resurrection of Jesus can be simply stated, as an historical fact: its practical significance, its universal application, and the demands which it makes upon every person in each generation, can only be elucidated by means of a special science.

We must, therefore, direct our attention chiefly to the conflict in the life of Jesus, and to His consequent Death, if we are to discover the significance for our own age of the facts concerning Jesus proclaimed in the primitive Gospel.

If the conflict between Jesus and the Jewish authorities was due to questions of interest only to the Jews, and involved His followers after His Death in a similar controversy merely because they were themselves Jews, then Christianity would have been confined to a sect of the Jews; in fact it became a universal religion. Furthermore, it was made universal by those who were themselves Jews, especially by Saul of Tarsus, the Pharisee, who became the apostle, St. Paul. The reason for such a remarkable development was principally the conviction of the Jewish Christians that the conflict, which had led to the Death of Jesus, was directly related to the universal struggles of humanity: it was a conflict not merely with narrow-minded Pharisees and reactionary priests, but with the very root of evil in the world and in human nature.

This universal application of the victory of Jesus was facilitated by the peculiar sense of national destiny, which was already in those who first became His followers because they believed Him to be the promised Messiah. The Jewish people had been given what may be described as a messianic consciousness, as a result of the long periods of suffering and exile, through which the nation had passed. They believed that God had chosen them for a peculiar destiny, to be the means by which His rule over the whole human race would eventually be established. This belief was no proud imperialism, although it was capable of being distorted into racial ambition: it was the belief that

¹ I Corinthians 2: 2.

the One God was to rule over all nations, by establishing His authority first over Israel, and then extending it to the whole world. This universalism is found throughout the Jewish scriptures, which show how the peculiar destiny of that people began with Abraham, the forefather of the whole race, to whom God gave the promise, "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed."¹ Its supreme expression is the picture of the glorious universal reign of God, through the Messiah and Israel, as described by the later Hebrew prophets.

Many modern scholars would deny that Jewish universalism originated as early as is stated in the biblical records. The question, however, has little bearing upon the study of the beginnings of Christianity: it does not matter much whether the sense of a universal mission came to the Jews by means of a divine revelation early in their history, or developed later as a result of their experiences. It certainly came to them before Christ was born; and in His day there was a widespread belief in the coming of a Messiah, who would deliver the Jews from their Roman rulers, and bring all nations into subjection to God's Law.

When John the Baptist called upon the Jews to repent, because the Kingdom of heaven was at hand, those who heard him must have associated his message with the popular belief in the coming of the Messiah. When Jesus began His public ministry, after being baptised by John and apparently recognised by him as the Messiah, He did not immediately make any claims concerning Himself, but proclaimed the same message as John himself, calling for repentance in view of the nearness of the Kingdom.²

We may wonder why Jesus did not immediately claim to be the Messiah. After John had been imprisoned by Herod, he appears to have been mystified by the silence of Jesus in regard to His being the Messiah, and sent messengers to enquire whether it were really true. Even to those messengers Jesus gave no very definite answer.³ The conclusion that He was the Messiah was evidently reached only by a few of those who were His constant companions, and even to them it came as a special revelation from heaven.⁴

It is by no means difficult to suggest an explanation of the strange reluctance of Jesus to announce Himself as the Messiah, in spite of the fact that He based His own teaching on the messianic idea, which was already in the minds of His listeners. He knew that the people to whom He preached had a very imperfect conception of the messianic hope, and it was necessary to correct their ideas first. If He had immediately announced Himself as the Messiah, they would have ascribed to Him the role which they wrongly expected the Messiah to fulfil. He knew that the true conception could not be put into their minds merely by His teaching; He realised that the revelation of God does not come primarily through the intellect, but by supernatural means, as it came to Saint Peter, when he discovered that Jesus was the Messiah.

¹ Genesis 12: 3.

² S. Mark 1: 15.

³ S. Matthew 11: 2-6.

⁴ S. Matthew 16: 13-17.

Moreover it comes in its completeness only as the result of experience: it was through the experience of the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus, as those events affected themselves, that the apostles at last reached a true conception of the Messiah.

One of the most obvious corrections which had to be made in the popular view of the messianic hope was the necessity of associating suffering with the Messiah. This had already been indicated by the Hebrew scriptures, and the second part of Isaiah contains the description of the suffering servant of the Lord, which is the classical expression of the theme. It is true that most Jewish commentators, and many modern Christian scholars, apply the passages describing the suffering servant, not to the Messiah in person, but to the Jewish people. The Messiah Himself, however, is very closely connected with the messianic people, the Jews. It is, in fact often said that the Jews to-day have largely abandoned the belief in a personal Messiah, but remain a messianic people. Similarly, after the Death of Jesus, Christians in their sufferings found a close link between themselves, as members of the messianic community, and Jesus Himself in His cross and passion. Thus S. Paul spoke of himself in his sufferings as filling up that which was behind of the afflictions of Christ in His flesh, for His body's sake. Just as the messianic hope had been conceived in the sufferings of the Jewish people, so it was their share in the sufferings of Jesus which gave to the first Christians their fullest appreciation of His messianic role.

These considerations make it clear that there is the deepest significance in the fact that Jesus was born a Jew. In a very special way the Jewish people had been prepared for His coming. Their history has been marked by an almost unbroken conflict: and the peculiar characteristic of that conflict is the fact that it has arisen, not merely from man's universal struggle against the forces of nature, nor from the clash of nations, but primarily from the relationship between that people and Almighty God. It was with profound insight that the Hebrew writer recorded the fact that the name Israel was given to Jacob, because he wrestled with the angel of God, and would not let go until the break of day.¹ The conflicts and sufferings of the Israelites have arisen directly or indirectly from their religious way of life. Indeed we may truly say that their faith was shaped like the metal between the hammer and the anvil, through their constant sufferings. Their history is not yet at an end, and their destiny awaits its ultimate fulfilment; but that is a subject which cannot be pursued here. Our attention must be confined to that point in the history of the Jewish people at which, as Christians believe, God was manifested in the Person called Jesus, a Jew.

Even a cursory glance at some of the chief elements in the Gospels must surely lead to the conclusion that there was a special and important significance in the fact that Jesus was a Jew. He entered into a definite

¹ Genesis 32: 24-28.

heritage; He completed a process of revelation, which had been developed during the whole history of the Jewish race; He fulfilled the Law and the Prophets. The manner in which God was revealed in Jesus of Nazareth was determined by the form of the revelation given to Israel and commenced long before His coming. That revelation to Israel had come by means of a threefold process: it had come through a direct, spiritual contact between God and man; it had come also through vital experiences in the course of history; and it had come by means of spoken and written words. In each of these ways it had come both to individuals, and to the people as a whole: for not only were there amongst the Jews those who had, like the prophets, a close personal relationship with God, but in a unique sense the whole people was linked with God, particularly during those periods when Israel was under definitely theocratic government.

The revelation which came to the first Christians through Jesus was the result of a similar threefold process. They found through Him a means of direct contact with God Himself as their Heavenly Father. They came to know Him as such, not only in theory, but in an experience which cannot be adequately described. St. Paul, for instance, refers to it when he writes about 'the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.'¹ In preserving the Aramaic word "Abba," he suggests a reference to the agony of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, since the Aramaic word is again found together with the Greek, in St. Mark's account of the prayer which Jesus addressed to His Father in heaven.² St. Paul evidently means to suggest that Christians enter into the same deep relation to the heavenly Father as Jesus Himself, a relationship of which the most profound manifestation was the agony in the Garden on the night of His betrayal.

Secondly, the divine revelation came to the first Christians as a result of the experiences of those who were with Him, sharing a common life, particularly in the events of His final conflict, Death, and Resurrection. Thirdly, they learnt from the words of His teaching. According to the Gospels, when He preached to the people He spoke principally in parables, and did not attempt to explain the nature and character of God by means of explicit statements. This can be understood, if we appreciate the fact that the human mind is incapable of comprehending God in His perfection, so that words describing God and His purpose would not be an adequate means of revealing Him to man. The function of words in this respect is particularly limited, when those who hear them, like the majority of the listeners whom Jesus addressed, have not entered into that essential spiritual relation to God, which opens the door of the understanding.

Such an explanation at least gives some meaning to the difficult passages in the Gospels, which describe the popular preaching of Jesus, and report His own comments on the fact that He spoke to the people only in parables.³ The disciples who formed the inner circle of His

¹ Romans 8: 15; cf. Galatians 4: 6.

² St. Mark 14: 36.

³ St. Matthew 13: 10-17.

followers, and had a definite personal relationship with Him, were able to receive His exposition of the meaning of some of the "mysteries" enshrined in the parables, although even they appear to have been slow to learn. Some biblical critics even maintain that the explanations of some of the parables, as recorded in the Gospels, were not really given by Jesus Himself at the time, but interpolated by some commentator afterwards. There is no evidence for such a theory, but, if it should be true, it would give additional reasons for supposing that it was not by the teaching of Jesus alone that the full revelation came through Him to the first Christians. Before they could enter fully into that revelation the Crucifixion and Resurrection had to take place; for only by that means could a new and more intimate spiritual relationship between God and man become possible. When God was manifested in the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, He came as close to men as one person can be to another; but on the Cross He broke through even those barriers, which divide the human race into millions of distinct, self-centred individuals. For without the Cross, Jesus, as a human Person, was unable to unite to Himself fully even to those who were most intimate with Him. Finally, through the Holy Spirit that union of God and sinful man, which had been accomplished in Jesus by means of the Cross, became the common experience of Christians, and was manifested in their individual lives, and corporately in the Church.

That experience of the Holy Spirit was for them the beginning of a new life, of which the essential basis was a real union with God. It was not just an inner relationship confined to the spiritual part of their being; it was a total life, including the mind and body, and all that is in man. For the Holy Spirit gave to them a union with the Jesus whom they had known in the flesh, whose teaching they had tried to understand, and whose lifelong struggle they had shared. Moreover, since they had for a while shared with Him a total life, which included corporate relationships, they regarded the same life, total and corporate, as being continued after His resurrection, in the Church and its relationships with human society. Thus their knowledge of God grew constantly by this threefold means, through their spiritual union with God, in the experiences of life and its conflicts, and by the exercise of minds occupied with the Holy Scriptures and the Gospel of Christ.

Any reader who questions this summary of the manner in which the revelation of God came to the first Christians cannot be expected to accept it on such slender evidence. It serves, however, as a means of indicating the significance, in relation to the vital problems of to-day, of a more detailed examination of the biblical evidence of the origins of Christianity, and affords some encouragement as we proceed with the task.

A revelation of God coming in this threefold manner, nor merely in the form of intellectual conceptions expressed through words, but also at a deeper level in a spiritual relationship with God, and in the experiences of life (particularly its conflicts and suffering) would of necessity involve the whole of man's being, and the totality of his life.

If, therefore, Christianity in its most primitive form thus originated, there need be no fear lest the Gospel should prove not to be as comprehensive as is demanded by the modern situation, which requires a divine revelation extending over the whole range of human life. It follows, also, that where the beliefs and practices of Christians seem to deny the comprehensive character of the Gospel, as when they tend to confine religion to one aspect of human existence, or when they fail to give a corporate expression of the Christian faith, they must be regarded as perversions of true Christianity.

Moreover, it is possible to show that such perversions probably arose through the exaggeration of one aspect of the relationship between God and man to the exclusion of the others. For example, in Graeco-Roman civilisation there was much confidence in the power of the human mind, and in the possibility of organising human society effectively by means of legislation based on rational principles. The Church came into conflict with the most undesirable elements of that civilisation, such as the worship of the State in the person of the Emperor, and ultimately succeeded in eliminating them. When, however, the external fabric of that civilisation collapsed, its underlying philosophy, with its trust in man's rational powers, was passed on into the new society, which took its place. During the decline of Graeco-Roman civilisation the Church had become increasingly prominent; but its success, which made it the dominant influence in the new society that emerged from the ruins of the old, was partly due to the fact that it had itself absorbed much of the philosophical outlook of the old order. We may suspect that the Church was so exhilarated by its apparent victory, that it mistook its conquest of the most blatant evils of pagan civilisation for a total success: it did so because it had begun to regard as absolute and complete a revelation of God in the form of intellectual conceptions and verbal formularies, having lost sight of the other elements in God's dealings with those to whom He revealed Himself. Those other elements were forgotten, presumably, because the significance of that original relationship between Jesus and the Jews, and between His Church and the Synagogue, was overlooked when the centre of the Church's struggle moved from Palestine to Greece and Rome. The relationship between Jesus and the Jews had consisted partly of a continuance of the process of revelation, which had begun long before in the history of the Jewish people; and partly of a conflict with false ideas amongst them, due to the partial and incomplete development of the process at the time when Jesus appeared. If its significance had still been appreciated at the time when the Church became absorbed in its clash with the paganism of the Roman Empire, the fatal compromise, which was the price paid for the Church's eventual predominance, would have been more easily avoided. Since the evil effects of that compromise remain to this day, it is by a re-examination of the original relationship between Jesus and the Jews that they can be most effectively discovered and obliterated. When a stream has become defiled through flowing in a contaminated channel, in order to obtain pure water it is necessary to return to its

original source, and divert it through a new channel. If, therefore, the Church was indeed contaminated by the paganism with which it struggled for its existence, it is necessary first to go back to the primitive source, and then to find means by which the Gospel, in its original purity, may be applied to the modern world. The Reformation sought to return to that original Gospel; but its effect was also limited by a failure to grasp the full scope of the divine Revelation. If the Reformers had realised the limitation of human words, they would not have placed such reliance on the words of the Bible as an absolute and complete means of revelation; they would have given due weight to those other means, which God uses in His relationships with men.

It is true that Protestant Christianity has not entirely ignored the revelation of God to man through the Holy Spirit, at a deeper level than the human mind, nor the function of human experience as a means to the knowledge of God. These other means, however, have been subordinated by Protestants, as a general rule, to the revelation through human words. The general tendency has been to concentrate on the study of the Bible, as the sole and absolute authority, until Christianity has become merely a question of giving intellectual assent to its supposed doctrines. Sometimes the sterility of such a barren intellectualism has produced the desire for a deeper spiritual experience, and a life of devotion to God: as a result sects have arisen, emphasising the need for a spiritual awakening, a new birth, resulting in a life of total obedience to God's will, under the direction of the Holy Spirit. Usually, however, such movements have either reacted so strongly against the former intellectualism, that they have eventually produced an unbalanced and extravagant spirituality, and an other-worldly pietism, or they have lapsed eventually into the former emphasis upon the human word and the intellect. For where the Bible is regarded as the sole or predominant means of revelation, the function of the Holy Spirit is limited to inspiring the original text, and giving to the believer the necessary power to obey the inspired word. Certainly, in the experience of the first Christians, the Holy Spirit provided such a power; but He was regarded as a Person in the Divine Trinity, through whom man could enter into an immediate relation to God, regardless of his limited intellectual faculty. In fact the revelation came first to the primitive Church by means of the Holy Spirit, before any of the New Testament scriptures had been written.

It may, therefore, be argued that the Holy Spirit is the primary means of revelation, and that the inspired word should be regarded as subordinate and relative to the spiritual channel of union with God. Since, however, this conclusion might lead to the extravagances of those sects, which have stressed the doctrine of the Holy Spirit to the exclusion of all else in the divine revelation, it should be pointed out that our aim should be not to decide which of the means of revelation is subordinate to the others, but to see the mutual relationship of them all. It may be added, therefore, that, although the first Christians experienced union with God through the Holy Spirit before there were

any specifically Christian scriptures, they had already both the written Hebrew scriptures and the oral teaching of Jesus stored in their minds. They had also passed through the experiences of a life shared with Jesus, during the years of His ministry and the period of His final conflict, so that the whole of their being had already been involved in a relationship with God, which was consummated in the coming of the Holy Spirit and the creation of the Church. Our need is to see in proper perspective the whole of God's revelation of Himself, by distinct, but mutually related means: then we shall find that the full revelation concerns the whole of man, and embraces the totality of human life. Man, like God, is a Trinity: sin disturbs the harmonious balance of his parts; only when we enter into a total union of ourselves with God, by receiving His composite revelation of Himself, can we live fully in accordance with the purpose for which we were created.

W. D. WATSON.

(To be continued)

Bibliotheca Rabbinica

Fragments from Rabbinical interpretations of Scripture.

Edited and translated,
with explanatory notes,

by

PAUL P. LEVERTOFF

I. MEKILTA

(the earliest Rabbinic commentary on the book of Exodus)

MEKILTA (Aramaic "Measure," "Rule") is the earliest Midrash (i.e. collection of scribal Scriptural interpretation) on the book of Exodus. It is not possible to give here an introduction to Rabbinic literature in general and to this Midrash in particular. That has already been done by the late Canon Box in his introduction to my edition of a similar Midrash on the book of Numbers (Midrash Sifre on the Book of Numbers. Translations of Early Documents, S.P.C.K.). That it is valuable as a source of first importance for the understanding of the religious concepts of Pharisaism, goes without saying. But it also offers abundant illustrations to the New Testament writings, especially to the Fourth Gospel.

1. THE CALL OF MOSES (Ex. iii).

Says Rabbi Shimeon ben Jochai¹: "Why did the holy One, Blessed be He, reveal Himself from the heavens unto Moses in the *bush*? Because, of all trees, a thorn-bush is the most difficult (lit. "the hardest") to get into, for no bird lodging

¹ Galilean Rabbi (beg. of second century).

in it departs from it undamaged in wing or limb. So in like manner, the slavery which Israel underwent in Egypt was more difficult than any imaginable slavery.

Whence do we know that Israel's bondage in Egypt was the most unbearable? From the expression "*seeing I have seen the affliction of my people*" (ibid. v. 7). For, after having drowned the little sons of the Israelites, the Egyptians took the bodies and enclosed them in their buildings.² It is like unto two persons being beaten at the same time. God as it were suffered together with Israel in Egypt: "*for I know their sorrows.*" (ibid.)

Rabbi Elieser³ says, "Why did the Holy One, Blessed be He, descend from the heavens to speak with Moses from out the bush? Because, as the bush is the lowest of all trees, so had the Israelites come down very low, and the Holy One, Blessed be He, came down, in order to redeem them; as it is said (ibid. 8), "and I *came down* to deliver them from the hands of the Egyptians."

Rabbi Joshua⁴ says: "Why did the Holy One, Blessed be He, reveal Himself to speak to Moses from the bush? When the Israelites came down to Egypt the Shekinah went with them; as it is said (Gen. xlvii, 4) 'I will go down with thee' (with Jacob to Egypt). And now when they were about to come out of Egypt the Shekinah also was about to go out with them, as it is said (Dt. i, 31) 'and in the *wilderness* thou hast seen' (allegorically interpreted to mean that the Israelites actually *saw* the Shekinah in the wilderness.) Rabbi Hiya and Rabbi Juda (2nd cent.) say: "Come and see the loving-kindness (lit. "pity") of Him, who spake and the world became. Whenever human beings are in distress God Himself is also in distress as it were: '*in all their afflictions He is afflicted*' (Isa. lxiii, 9). Now, this deals with the affliction of the community only, but whence can it be derived that the affliction of the individual affects God in the same way? '*I am with him in affliction*' (Ps. xci, 15). Rabbi Judah (2nd cent.) says concerning the expression: 'he who touches you touches the apple of His eye': the

² Perhaps this alludes to the immuring of children in buildings; cf. Hiel's conduct in the rebuilding of Jericho, as recorded in I Kings xvi, 34.

³ (ben Hyrcanus), first and second centuries.

⁴ First century.

proper reading should be in the first person: 'My eye,' meaning that he who causes any pain to a righteous man is, as it were, giving God Himself pain. But when the righteous dwell in freedom and security, the Holy One, Blessed be He, dwells with them in freedom and in joy." Says Rabbi Gamaliel⁵: "Why did the Holy One, Blessed be He, reveal Himself in a thorn-bush? Because the thorn-bush is a pure tree, unpolluted by idolators, not thought by them to contain a god."

2. THE INSTITUTION OF THE PASSOVER (Ex. xii. 1-29)

The Lord said unto Moses and unto Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying. From this it would appear⁷ that the Word came to Moses and Aaron. And yet we read, "on the day when the Lord spake unto Moses." So it was to Moses only that the Word came! How are these conflicting passages to be reconciled? The Divine speech was made direct to Moses, but Aaron was also to be a recipient of it. Yet why did God not address also Aaron directly? That the dignity of Moses should not be diminished (lit. because of the honour of Moses). Thus we find that, except on three unavoidable occasions⁸, Aaron was never addressed directly by God.

Another interpretation. Why does it say, "to Moses and Aaron"? It is written, "Behold I have made thee (Moses) a judge (lit. a god) unto Pharaoh," which passage would suggest that Moses only was made a "judge" unto Pharaoh; therefore it says, "Unto Moses and Aaron"; for in relation to Pharaoh Moses and Aaron were to be of equal importance, and as Moses stood without fear in the presence of Pharaoh, so did Aaron.

Yet a third interpretation. "To Moses and Aaron." From this it would appear that the first-named was the first in importance (lit. "he who preceded in Scripture, preceded in

⁵ Probably R. Gam. ii, grandson of Gam. i, teacher of St. Paul (first and second cent.).

⁶ The above passages are not found in the usual editions of the Mekilta, but there can be no question that they belong to the authors to whom they are ascribed. Although the exegesis will sound strange to Christian readers, yet the thoughts concerning God's condescending love could be considered as a "Preparatio Evangelica." For later mystical developments in Judaism, cp. my "Religiöse Denkweise der Chassidim," and "Love and the Messianic Age."

⁷ Lit. "I hear that"; cf. "ye have heard" in the "Sermon on the Mount."

⁸ Lev. x, 8; Num. xviii, 1; Num. xviii, 8.

act"). But when it says further on "*these are Aaron and Moses,*" it shows that they were equal in status. Similarly, it is written, "God created heaven and earth." Does this mean that heaven is of greater significance than earth? It says, "on the day when the Lord God made earth and heaven" (Gen. ii, 4), which shows that it is not so. Again it is written "*I am the Lord of thy fathers, the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac*" (Ex. iii, 6); are we to gather from this that the first mentioned was greater than the other? Does it not on another occasion say (Lev. xxvi, 42) "*And I will remember my covenant with Jacob, also my covenant with Isaac, also my covenant with Abraham*"? Thus they were all equally great. Again, in one passage (Ex. xx, 12) it is written, "*Honour thy father and thy mother,*" and in another (Lev. xix, 3), "*Ye shall fear every man—his mother and his father*"; to show that they are both of equal importance.

"*In the land of Israel*"; outside the inhabited places (consecrated to idolatry). Could it not also have been inside? But Moses said to Pharaoh: "*When I leave the city I will spread out my hands* (in prayer) to the Lord" (Ex. ix, 28). Now, if prayer, which is merely man speaking to God, had to be uttered outside the city, much more so is it true of the speaking of God to man! And why did He not speak inside the city? Because it was full of abominations.

Before the land of Israel was chosen (by God), all lands were pure (eligible) and possible for God's appearance and speech; but since the land of Israel was chosen, all other lands have been excluded (from Theophanies). Before Jerusalem was chosen, the whole of the land of Israel was eligible for sacrificial worship; but since Jerusalem was chosen all other places have been excluded (Deut. xii, 13, 14). Before the Temple (lit. "the house of eternity," cf. I Kings viii, 13) was chosen, any part of Jerusalem was fit for the Shekinah to dwell in, but since the Temple was chosen the presence of the Shekinah was limited to that place only: "*this is my resting place for ever*" (Ps. cxxxii, 14). Before Aaron was chosen, all the Israelites were

⁹ There is a certain significance in the choice of examples taken, viz. Moses and Aaron, the saviours of Israel; heaven and earth; the fathers, the progenitors of Israel; father and mother: Redemption, Creation, and natural relationship; in all these, the lesson is taught, there is equality, nothing is higher or lower in God's activity, or in man—appointed to accomplish the Divine purpose.

eligible for the priesthood (the first-born of the family, or the head of the tribe), but since Aaron was chosen the others were excluded (Num. xviii, 19). Before David was chosen, all Israelites were eligible for kingship, but since he was chosen all others were excluded (2 Chr. xiii, 5).

Should it be argued that to some prophets God did at times speak *outside* the Land of Israel,¹⁰ it was because of the merit of the matriarch (lit. "the Fathers"). However, though God did speak at times outside the Land because of the merit of the fathers, yet it was always in a pure spot near water; as it is written (Dan. x, 4), "And I was at the side of the great river Hidekel . . . and saw the vision." Also (Ezek. i, 1-3) "I was captive among the captives by the river Chebar, and the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God . . . the word of the Lord did come unto Ezekiel." Yet some say, it was inside the Land as well as outside the Land that God spake to Ezekiel, because of the expression "coming did come"; "coming" refers to inside and "did come" to outside, ("coming" containing the idea of frequency, and "did come" of rarity of occurrence). Rabbi Eliezer ben Zaddock says: "it is written (Ex. iii, 22), 'Arise, go into the valley,' which shows that the valley was also a fit place for God to reveal Himself."

Know that the Shekinah does not reveal Herself outside the Land, for it is written concerning Jonah, "*but Jonah rose up to flee unto Tashish from the presence of the Lord*" (Jon. i, 3); also "*for the men knew that he fled from the presence of the Lord*" (Jon. i, 10). But is not God present everywhere? "whither shall I flee from thy presence" (Ps. cxxxix, 7), "the eyes of the Lord are in every place" (Prov. xv, 3), "though they dig into Sheol" (Amos ix, 2), "there is no darkness" (Job xxxiv, 22). What Jonah really meant was this: "I will go into a place outside the land of Israel, where the Shekinah does not *reveal* Herself" (i.e. he differentiated between God's omnipresence and His special manifestation).

The men of Nineveh were near repentance, but Jonah did not wish to help them to repent, in order not to cause Jeru-

¹⁰ e.g. Jer. xxxi, 14-15: "A voice is heard in Ramah (outside the Holy Land), Rachel is weeping for her children . . . refrain thy voice from weeping," says the Lord.

salem's guilt and punishment (i.e., lest the repentance of Nineveh should raise her spiritually above Jerusalem, lit. "in order not to make Jerusalem guilty"). It is like unto the slave of a priest who fled from his master. He said: "I will flee to the burial-ground, whither my master cannot follow me (because of defilement)." But his master said: "I have emissaries like unto thee" (i.e., those who could enter a burial-ground without being defiled, and could catch him). In like manner Jonah said: "I will go away from the land of Israel to a place where the Shekinah does not reveal Herself" (for the men of Nineveh were near repentance, etc.). But the Holy One, Blessed be He, said, "I have emissaries like unto thee" ("*the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea and there was a mighty tempest in the sea,*" Jonah i, 4).

Of the three prophets, Jeremiah, Elijah and Jonah, one sought the honour of the Father and the son (Israel); one sought the honour of the Father, but not that of the son; while the third sought the honour of the son but not that of the Father. Of the first, Jeremiah, it is written (Lam. iii, 42), that he said: "We have transgressed and rebelled, Thou hast not forgiven."¹¹ Therefore his prophesying was increased (i.e., he was permitted to continue longer than God originally intended), for it says (Jer. xxxvi, 32), "and many words like these were added to them" (the words of prophecy). Of the second, Elijah, it is written (I Kings xix, 14), "And he said: I have been very jealous for the Lord . . . for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant," etc. But the Lord said unto him, "Go, return thy way . . . and Elisha, the son of Shaphat, . . . shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room." Now "in thy room" is superfluous, but it suggests: "Go. I do not desire thy prophecies any more"¹² (i.e., God was angered that the prophet had not more consideration for His son, Israel). Of Jonah, the third, it is clear that he was concerned only with the honour of the son, and so it is written (Jonah iii, 1) "and the

¹¹ That Jeremiah was concerned with God's honour, is shown by the first half: "We have transgressed" against God, and the reproach against God is found in the expression "Thou hast not forgiven."

¹² i.e. God was angered that the prophet had not more consideration for his son, Israel.

word of the Lord came unto Jonah *the second time*," but not a third time.¹³

Rabbi Jonathan says that Jonah's intention was to commit suicide (in order to avoid witnessing the humiliation of Israel through the conversion of the Ninevites), as it is written, "Take me and throw me into the sea" (Jonah i, 12).

And so we find (lit. "thou findest") that Moses and the prophets gave themselves (were willing to sacrifice themselves) for Israel. Of Moses it says (Ex. xxxii, 32), "yet *now* if thou wilt forgive; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of Thy book" (cf. also Num. xi, 15). Of David (2 Sam. xxiv, 17), "Lo, I have sinned . . . but these sheep, what have they done? Let Thine hand, I pray thee, be against me and against my father's house." Thus we see that Moses and the prophets gave their lives (lit. "their souls") on behalf of Israel (cf. St. John x, 11; xv, 13).

"*Saying*," Rabbi Ishmael says, "that means, 'go and tell them at once'" (concerning the Passover sacrifice); but Rabbi Eliezer says, "it means, 'go and tell them and bring me an answer,' as it is written (Ex. xix, 8), 'and Moses reported the words of the people unto the Lord,' and again (Ezek. ix, 11), 'he reported the matter, saying, I have done as thou hast commanded me.'" And again (Job xxxviii, 35), "Canst Thou send forth lightnings and they go and they say unto Thee: Here we are?" The last passage suggests that man's messengers have to report themselves, but God's messengers have no need to do so, for He is found in every place, wherever they go on His errands; in order that the words should be fulfilled (Jer. xxiii, 24), "Do I not fill heaven and earth?"¹⁴

"When God decrees good or evil against Israel, they (the messengers) come back (to report themselves) when the decisions are good, but they do not return when they are bad.

¹³ i.e. God only gave him this last chance, and would never let him prophesy again.

There is significance in the idea that Elijah, who thought only of God's honour, should be more severely punished by Him than Jonah who showed less consideration of God's honour than of Israel's. Cf. John v, 23.

¹⁴ For the expression "in order that it should be fulfilled," used in the New Testament in a similar manner, especially in the first Gospel, see my note on Mt. i, 16, in the New Commentary.

This can be gathered from the fact that the angelic being clothed in linen with the inkhorn by his side, who was told to set a mark on those who took no part in the abominations, alone returned to report his doings, while of the rest, who were bidden to slay without mercy, none returned to report on theirs (Ezek. ix, 1-11)." Thus Rabbi Josiah.

Shimon ben Asai says, "the expression 'saying' means 'go tell them in the same voice as thou hearest'" (i.e. imitate the tones of God's voice). Rabbi Akiba says, "it means 'go and tell them that I speak to thee for their (Israel's) sake'" ; for during all the thirty-eight years when Moses was angry with Israel, God did not speak to him, as it says (Deut. ii, 16), "when all the men of war were consumed and dead . . . the Lord spake unto me, saying."¹⁵

Rabbi Shimon ben Asai says, "It is not as if I wished to argue, or disagree with my master (R. Akiba), but I only wish to add to his words. It was not only in the case of Moses that God spoke for the sake (merit) of Israel, but it was true of all the prophets; e.g. Ezek. (iii, 15) said, 'and I sat there among them seven days astonished or desolate and at the end of seven days the word of the Lord came unto me saying.'¹⁶ The same is true of Jeremiah (Jer. 1, 4 and 7), 'Now the word of the Lord came to me'; and 'for to whomsoever I shall send thee thou shalt go.' Thus, the word of the Lord came to him for the sake of Israel. The same is found concerning Baruch, son of Neriah, who complained before God, saying: "Woe is me now, for the Lord hath added sorrow to my pain, . . . and I find no rest" (Jer. xiv, 3). What he meant was: 'I am different from all the rest of the disciples of prophets; for Joshua served Moses and the Holy Spirit rested on him'¹⁷; Elisha served Elijah, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. Why am I alone different from all such disciples of prophets? I am weary with my groaning and I find no rest.' "Rest" means "prophecy," as it is written (Num. xi, 25, 26), 'the Spirit rested upon them and they prophesied,' also: 'the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him' (Isa. xi, 25, 26)). Come and see how the Lord answered him

¹⁵ Rabbi Akiba differentiates between "spake" and "said": "and the Lord said," i.e. in a far-off general manner; but "and the Lord spake," i.e. intimately, as to a dear friend.

¹⁶ i.e. for seven days the prophet was without Divine communication.

¹⁷ The Holy Spirit is always connected with prophecy; it means "he prophesied."

(Baruch): 'That which I have built I will break down, and that which I have planted I will pluck up . . . and seekest thou great things for thyself?'¹⁸ God said, in effect: when there is no vineyard there is no need of a hedge; when there are no sheep there is no need of a shepherd. For behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh."¹⁹

From all this we can gather that the prophets prophesied only for the sake of Israel (since if there were no Israel, there would be no prophecy).

This section, like the whole treatise of the Mekilta, and, in fact, the whole Rabbinic literature, shows the method of the scribal Scriptural interpretations. A sentence is dissected minutely, one idea leads to another and is followed like a will-o'-the-wisp. Then with a jerk we are brought back from some irrelevancy to the original sentence, only to start off again on another chase. The quotations and arguments are often merely hinted at sometimes by one word only, premising in the hearers a thorough knowledge of Scripture.

It is interesting to gather up these Rabbinical fragments not only for their own sake but because they throw light on the style of literary composition among the Jewish contemporaries of the Apostles and Evangelists.

(To be continued.)

Some Jewish Thoughts on Prayer

In the Talmud prayer is described as "Abodath ha-leb," "the service of the heart." Kawana (intention); hithlahabuth (enthusiasm, ecstasy); are the chief characteristics of true prayer. It means the concentration of the whole mind on God. True prayer, we read in many a Jewish mystical writing, does not consist in asking God for this or for that, but in the concentration on Himself. (Cf. the saying of Mme. Acarie, "He asks too much to whom God is not sufficient.")

The following parable is given as an illustration. A king made a proclamation. He invited his subjects to come and lay before him the greatest desires of their hearts. They came in great numbers. Some asked for wealth, others for honours; some for wisdom, others for

¹⁸ "Great things" meaning prophecy, Jer. xxxiii, 3.

¹⁹ i.e., should God destroy all Israel, then Baruch, if he should prophesy, would have himself alone as audience.

health and beauty. But one man came, who, though he looked poor and wretched, asked for none of these things. What he desired was, to have the privilege of seeing the king each day and of speaking to him personally, knowing that should the king grant him this request, all the other things would be his as well.

When we concentrate all our intellectual and spiritual faculties on God, He concentrates His infinite creative power and love for us.¹

In a candle flame there are two parts: the outward yellow flame and the inner blue one; so it is also with the flame of the divine fire in our hearts. The outer flame is kindled by our understanding, namely, when we realise the sublimeness of God. When we meditate on His majesty and power, then a love is begotten in us which is "powerful as death, whose flames are flames of fire."² But the inner flame is at the centre and depth of our heart. The love burning there is of a higher quality than that love which arises only from the knowledge of God's power. For, just as when we are strongly moved by something, so that the innermost centre of the heart is touched, we act and speak without reflection, so it is when we commune with God at prayer. True worship emanates from the depths of our personality, illumined not by our wisdom, but by the *Wisdom* from above, which passes all understanding and knowledge. In this Divine Wisdom *the Life of God Himself is enwrapped and hidden.*³

The restoration of the sacrificial system in the days of the Messiah will mean the freeing of the divine 'spark,' imprisoned in this aeon even in animals and, in fact, in all creation. The coming of the Messiah will mean the restoration of all things, the ascending of all beings.⁴ But prayer worth the name has even in the present dispensation a sacrificial character. If only Israel would pray "out of the depths" they would hasten Messiah's coming.⁵

Hebrew Guild of Intercession

Almighty God, we pray Thee to encourage and guide Thy Church in all its relationships with the Jewish people. May they be delivered from superstition, unbelief, and materialism. Grant, O Lord, that the Hebrew Guild of Intercession may be a means of uniting, in prayer, study, and service, those who seek the welfare of Israel; and hasten the time when Jew and gentile shall be one flock under one Shepherd, even Thy Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

¹ Cf. Kuntras ha-hitpaaluth (Essay on Ecstasy), p. 25.

² Cant. viii, 6.

³ Prov. iii, 19, is used as a technical term to express this "Logos" idea; "God Himself (is) in (His) wisdom."

⁴ Tora Or. 96. Cf. Eph. i, 10; "That in the dispensation of the fullness of time He might gather together in one all things in Christ."

⁵ Often in Talmudic and mediaeval literature. But see especially Salman, Siddur, Section on Prayer.

O Lord, of Thy mercy,
 Forgive the un-Christlike actions of so many who call themselves
 Christians.
 Remove the scandals which such actions have caused.
 Soften Jews who have been hardened and embittered by perse-
 cution.
 Make wars and cruelties to cease.
 Inspire Jewish Christians to make their own special contribution
 to the life of Thy Church.
 Give rest to the souls of the departed members of our Guild and
 of the many Jewish Christians who have witnessed for Thee
 unto death. For Christ's sake.
 Blessed is our God always, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

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