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VINE OF DAVID

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THE CHURCH AND THE JEWS

A QUARTERLY RECORD OF THE LONDON DIOCESAN
COUNCIL FOR WORK AMONGST THE JEWS
(E.L.F.J.)

Edited by PAUL P. LEVERTOFF, D.D.

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Editorial Notes

Two books likely to interest our readers have come to hand for review.

The first is by Martin Niemöller entitled "Of Guilt and Hope," and is published in New York by the Philosophical Library, Inc., 15 East 40th Street, and translated into English by Renee Spedheim. It consists of two sermons, a letter to his brother and an interview given to an American Army chaplain. The first sermon gives the book its title and is remarkable as the first public admission by a German of guilt. It is heartening to read, since, in spite of Niemöller's reputation as a leader in the Confessional Church movement, there was that uneasy knowledge that counteracted all his utterances, that when the Jews were persecuted nothing active was said or done, but when the Confessional Church was attacked then came the outcry. Here, however, he makes a definite statement. After saying that everyone likes to put the burden of blame on someone else, on the officials, on the commanders, on the Gestapo, on Himmler and Hitler, he continues: "The guilt exists, there is no doubt about it. Even if there were no other guilt than that of the six million clay urns, containing the ashes of burnt Jews from all over Europe.

"And this guilt weighs heavily on the German people and on the German name . . . Can we of the Confessional Church have nothing to do with it? Who spoke up? Perchance the Confessional Church? We cannot get out of it with the excuse: I might have had to pay with my life had I spoken out . . . We preferred to keep quiet. We are most certainly not without guilt, and I ask myself . . . what would have happened if 14,000 Evangelical ministers and Evangelical communities all over Germany had defended the truth with their very lives in 1933 or 1934, when there must have been a possibility? . . . I can

imagine that 30 to 40 thousand would have been shortened by a head, but I can also imagine that we would thus have saved 30 to 40 million lives.

"We have to do penance . . . we have all refused to serve, even I; for those who remained Christians and defended truth with their lives, those do not bear any heads on their shoulders any more.

"We cannot find peace with God if we refuse to confess our guilt to people who suffered because of it."

The whole of this sermon is truly great because it is a sincere and frank confession without any attempt to whitewash or excuse. From people who attended the Church in Basle, in Switzerland, where Niemoeller was officiating last summer, we gathered that he was held in high honour for his sincerity and humility.

The rest of this volume is of not outstanding quality, and the Advent sermon is startlingly commonplace. But knowing Germany even before 1914, and the German Church, and the type of sermon preached there, this Advent sermon even appears revolutionary, an awakening from cut and dry complacent pomposity.

The second book is of more permanent and wider value. It is by Leonhard Ragaz, a Swiss doctor of theology, who had been pastor of the Swiss Reformed Church in the Grison Alps, then in the Cathedral of Basle. He became theological professor in the University of Zürich; but eventually gave up both his ministry and his professorship to devote himself to writing and educational work among the workers of Zürich. He is a man with a message, and he is aflame with it.

He wants to see Judaism and Christianity unite to fight Paganism. He sees Judaism and Christianity as two trunks of a tree springing from one root—Israel—God's Kingdom. He sees the whole of the horror and unease of the world of today in the light of this fight which Paganism is putting up still to claim mankind, which gains the victory over mankind because Judaism and Christianity, instead of joining forces to fight this common foe through Jesus the Christ, are split and growing separately. It is well written and well reasoned and gives every thinking person food for meditation. It should appeal to Jews and Christians; and both, if they trouble to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest it, would benefit by its message.

"Israel, Judaism and Christianity," by Leonhard Ragaz, Dr. Theol. Gollanz. 3/6.

* * * * *

Jewish agricultural colonisation in Palestine began in 1870, when Charles Netter founded an agricultural school for boys at Mikweh Israel, near Jaffa, on behalf of the Alliance Israélite Univer-

selle of Paris. Scarcely ten years later the first agricultural settlements came into being. In the year 1878, some Jerusalem Jews acquired a stretch of land north of Jaffa and founded the village of "Petah-Tikwah," the oldest Jewish colony in the country. Following this, in 1882, some Russian Jews founded the colony Rishon-le-Zion south-east of Jaffa. Since that time progress has been rapid. The early colonies, among which Zikron-Yacob, Rosh Pinah, Rehoboth, Katra and Kastinieh should be mentioned, in addition to Rishon-le-Zion and Petah Tikwah, had at first to struggle with obstinate and discouraging difficulties. New ground had to be broken, ill-cultivated land improved, primitive methods and economic conditions in general to be modernised, the unhealthy state of many parts of the country, especially with regard to malaria, to be slowly ameliorated, and innumerable other obstacles to be overcome. Indeed, the condition of the settlers was only improved when Baron Rothschild took the latter under his wing and made it possible for the cultivation of oranges and grapes to be introduced. After that things were better, and gradually, very gradually, the first Jewish colonists who had been immigrating ever since the rise of the *Hoveveh Zion* (lovers of Zion) movement in Russia, found the struggle easier and reached a certain prosperity. The groves and vineyards were mainly worked by Arab labourers from neighbouring villages.

But the turn of the century had marked the beginning of a new era in Jewish settlement. With the aid of the Jewish Colonisation Association a number of colonies had been founded in Lower Galilee. In these colonies there were no plantations, but open fields, where each settler worked a correspondingly large area of land. The second *Aliyah*—immigration—had brought a new type of immigrant into the country. This type did not only want to be a farmer but actually do the work himself. He did not only want to possess land—he also had an ideal of redeeming it by the work of his hands. The first Jewish labour organisation came into being at that time. As there was no Jewish industry as yet, nor urban workers, this new organisation aimed exclusively at providing, or better, creating possibilities of work for the Jewish labourer in the colonies. Through work on the land, so they thought, the Jews would grow close to the soil, draw new strength from it and find a new and this time irrevocable connection with Palestine. In order to enable these workers, who as a rule had organised themselves into closed groups living and working together, *Kvutzot* in Hebrew, to settle on their own, the Zionist Organisation began in 1908 with the creation of a number of new settlements, among them Kinereth, Dagania, Ben-Shemen, Hulda and Merhaviah. These settlements are based on mixed farming, i.e. wheat and other cereals, together with dairy farming, vegetables, poultry, bee-keeping, etc.

The years immediately following upon the first war brought a third new wave of immigration. Enthusiastic pioneers—*Halutzim*—came with the idea of settling on the land and creating a fairer and juster life in Palestine where the old unhappiness and miseries of Eastern Europe would be forgotten. The Foundation Fund of the Zionist Organisation and the Jewish Agency, the *Keren Hayesod*, was founded in 1920 and began work the following year. By appealing to the Jews of all countries, it enabled the settlement institutions to have far greater means than heretofore at their disposal. The Land Redemption Fund—*Keren Kayemeth Leisrael* (Jewish National Fund)—of the Zionist Organisation acquired large tracts of land, especially in the Vale of Jezreel, which stretches from Haifa to the Jordan and divides Samaria and Galilee. The next immigration consisted mainly of colonists with private means, who settled down in the plantation zone, partly in the old colonies which thus grew rapidly, and partly in new ones founded by themselves. This "colonisation of the middle class" concentrated in the first instance on oranges. Soon the "Jaffa Orange" began to acquire an excellent reputation on the world market. Its splendid quality made it a unchallenged favourite, first of all in England, then in Germany and other countries. The area cultivated with oranges grew amazingly from year to year. Orange plantations proved an excellent investment and many Jews outside the country now own large groves. Socially the new settlements after the war fell into three types. First, there were settlements like the old colonies and therefore like European villages, with the usual independent system of property and work. Second, there were *Kvutzot*, run on the basis of communal life, work and production. Third, there was an intermediate type of the *Moshav Ovdim*—Small-holders' settlement—run on individual lines, but tempered by far-reaching co-operation in all branches of production and consumption, and based upon the principle of "Self-work," i.e. to the exclusion of outside wage labour. When the land belongs to the *Keren Kayemeth* all of it remains the latter's property, but the settlers enjoy contractual hereditary tenure. Most of the settlements supported by *Keren Hayesod* are on land of the *Keren Kayemeth*, only a few on land privately owned.

Since the war much has been done by the Jewish Agency, with the aid of the *Keren Hayesod*, in providing for the social, cultural, and health requirements of the settlers. It is the *Keren Hayesod* which is responsible for the maintenance-budget of the schools. Even though there is no legal compulsion all boys and girls visit schools. Every settlement has a Health Station served by doctors or nurses. In the central points of larger settlements, or in the neighbouring towns, one finds ambulances and hospitals which belong to the American Zionist Organisation, *Hadassah*, or to the workers' Sick Fund, *Kupat Holim*, which is partly supported by

the *Keren Hayesod*. Everywhere there is a lively dramatic and literary activity. There are two theatrical troupes: the famous "Habimah," which has made successful tours of most Europe and America, and the "Ohel," the theatre of the Jewish labour movement. Several great Jewish artists, such as Heifetz and Hubermann, have visited the towns and also some of the settlements and given concerts there. Nearly all Jewish villages enjoy the advantage of occasional lectures and educational courses, while library facilities can compare favourably with many parts of Europe. Special care is devoted to children and to young people in all the settlements, but especially in the *Kvutzot* and *Moshaveh Ovdim* of the labour movement. Visitors to these latter places are invariably astonished by the beautiful appearance and development of the children. As a rule, trained nurses and kindergarten mistresses take charge of the children at a very early stage and help to bring them up according to the most modern pedagogic principles. In the educational training of youth, handicraft and agricultural training are specially stressed. In all Jewish settlements Hebrew is the sole language of school, public business, and everyday life.

The Glory of God

"For God, Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ."

—II COR. IV, 6.

There does not exist any authentic portrait of Jesus. The New Testament says nothing of our Lord's outward appearance, and the early Christian writers made contradictory statements about it. Whilst, for instance, Justin, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Tertullian conceived our Lord according to Isa. lii and liii, as "without form or comeliness," Chrisostom and Jerome picture Him according to Psalm xlv, 3, and the Transfiguration narrative, as "fairer than the children of men." But our concern is not with the origins of the different presentations of Christ in Christian art, but with what the "Face of Jesus" meant to St. Paul. Whether it can be inferred from II Cor. v, 16 ("even though we have known Christ after the flesh") that St. Paul had actually seen our Lord in the days of His flesh, as J. Weiss suggests ("Das Urchristentum," p. 137), is not certain, but that the words "hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" allude to the apostle's experience on the way to Damascus, there can be no doubt. There he beheld the veiled glory, the *kabod*, of God, the Shekinah, manifested in the "face of Jesus Christ." To this vision of the exalted

Messiah he himself ascribes the turning point in his life and thought, his 'crisis' (Gal. i, 15; I Cor. ix, 1; xv, 5—9; II Cor.; Rom. i, 1, and other passages). Christ, then, was to him the Shekinah, the luminous glory of the ineffable, invisible God of Israel which abode above the Cherubim in the holiest place of the Tabernacle and the Temple, and which at certain moments made itself more widely manifest. These manifestations of the Shekinah in the old Covenant were a sort of foretaste of the Incarnation, when, veiled in our flesh, the All-great revealed Himself as the All-loving in Christ, "in whom dwelt all the fulness of the God-head bodily." And when He withdrew from earth into the unveiled glory of God, still He is manifested, and His life and action are perpetuated, on earth by His Spirit dwelling in the Church, which is His body. Christ is the Lord of glory, He participates in God's glory (I Cor. ii, 8; II Cor. iv, 4). God "exalted Him," and gave Him the Name that is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, and every tongue confess 'Jesus Christ is Lord,' to the glory of God the Father." What in Isa. xl, 3, is said of God is applied by St. Paul to Jesus. It has recently been suggested that the whole Christological passage (Phil. ii, 6—11) of which the above quotation forms a part, is a pre-Pauline hymn arranged in two strophes of three verses each. Each verse has a threefold division, or three lines, and each line has a triple beat, the 3:3:3 metre occasionally found in Old Testament poetry as a variant of the more usual 3:3 metre, or the 3:2 (Qina).^{*} But whether it is pre-Pauline or Pauline, the significant fact is that it is permeated by Shekinah motifs. "The Name," for instance, and "the Lord" undoubtedly mean YAHWEH. And it is well known with what solemn awe and reverence the Jews always regarded this ineffable and sacred name of God. When the scribes in the writing of their manuscripts came to the mystic letters of this ineffable and sacred name of God, they either wrote them with another pen, or carefully cleansed the one they had been using, and asked a special blessing to preserve them while they wrote. Little by little, all speaking of the awful word was disallowed in common conversation; and in the reading of the Scriptures, whether in private or public worship of the Synagogue, whenever the sacred name Jahweh occurred, the reader did not pronounce the letters with the right vowels that belonged to them, but gave to them the vowels of either Elohim

^{*} Cf. W. K. Lowther Clarke, *New Testament Problems*, pp. 143-150, and my transliteration of a rendering unto Galilean Aramaic of the supposed hymn on p. 148.

or Adonay, that is, did not pronounce the real word at all, but, by the altered vowels, made an entirely different sound. After a time, however, even this using of the consonant was abandoned, and the word Adonai, Lord, was employed, instead of any form of the true Name itself. As the true Word thus passed out of common use and hearing, its use at all would naturally come to be regarded with increased solemnity and awe. It was for a time employed in certain benedictions of the Temple Service, and by the High Priest when he went into the inner Holiest on the great Day of Atonement. But after a while it was wholly discontinued in all public worship of the Temple, and was never uttered, save on one day of the year, and by one man, namely, by the High Priest on the Day of Atonement, and then only in the awe-inspiring silence and secrecy of the outer and inner Hobbies of the Sanctuary. It was pronounced in the outer Holy, according to Jewish tradition, to the one who was next in succession to the High Priesthood, and was called the Deputy or Segan, lest any calamity might happen to the officiating High Priest during the performance of the Day's solemnities, by reason of any failure or impurity upon his part; or lest he might die before the recurrence of the next occasion for its use, and thus the Holy Word be lost for ever. When the High Priest had thus provided for the preservation of the Sacred Name, He passed into the Holiest of Hobbies, and, in the blinding presence of the Shekinah, he there offered the expiating blood, burnt the rich incense in token of the ascending supplications of the waiting people, and called, by Name, upon the God of Israel to receive them, as He had promised, as an Atonement for the sins of all the tribes of Israel.

Whatever the origin and nature of the Tetragrammaton may be, the Jews interpreted it as a compound form of the three tenses of the verb *haya*—to be, and found its interpretation in the name given in the Apocalypse: "He who was, and is, and is to come" (Rev. i. 4). The Palestinian Jews derived from it the idea of God's eternity and immutability and His entering into a historical relation with Israel,^{*} and the Hellenistic Jews derived from it the abstract metaphysical concept of His absolute nature (already in the LXX).

Thus Christ was to St. Paul, as to the whole Primitive Church, the Lord of reality, the Lord over all spirits, principalities and powers. Whenever His Name is mentioned in faith, He is present as the Shekinah, in His saving and life-giving power. All that God does for us He does in and through Christ. In Him we are in contact with the eternal truth and being of God. St. Paul is casting upon all creation and redemption the steadfast and unwavering light of the Divine Presence, the Shekinah.

^{*} Cf. Ber. 9b.

There is a Rabbinic saying that "the face of the Shekinah lights up the whole universe." We are reminded of the words in the Prologue of the Gospel according to S. John: "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." But alas! "The light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not."

"Judas (not Iscariot) saith unto Him: 'How is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world?'"

"Jesus answered and said unto him: 'If a man love Me, he will keep My words, and My Father will love him, and we will come and make out abode with him. He that loveth Me not, keepeth not My saying.'"—John xiv, 22, 23. P.P.L.

Jesus and Jewish Discipleship

BY A JEW.

Is the above superscription not a contradiction in terms? Could a conscious Jew in the full meaning of the term avow himself a follower of the Nazarene? Have not two thousand years of history proved the incompatibility of the two? Is it not an established fact that as a people we suffer from an anti-Jesus complex? Are Jews who place themselves under the tutelage of the Galilean Messiah not rotten branches who the sooner they are cut off the better for the tree? Is not a Jew who questions—if only in theory—the conscious isolation of Israel and its national relation to Jesus *ipso facto* a traitor?

Some years ago I attended a trial of a court of honour sitting in Lwow (Poland). A Hebrew Weekly attacked the late S. J. Horowitz, the Editor of the *Haathid*, because Dr. Paul Levertoff wrote approvingly in his Introduction to the "Life of Christ" of Horowitz's criticism of political Zionism.

S. J. Horowitz claimed his honour and the defence brought as its chief witness the nestor of Hebrew literature (a free thinker) to whom the very essence of Judaism consists in opposition to the Rabbi of Nazareth and the faintest fairness to Him, a symptom of infection with the missionary bacillus. Horowitz came out with flying colours. The accusation was baseless and mean. He was quite innocent of Nazarean discipleship.

But suppose he had been found "guilty," he would have been finished for all time with all schools of thought in Jewry.

Only recently two leading Jews who are very far from following the "Christ," who only attempted to be just, had been bitterly

and scurrilously attacked not by Agudistic Rabbis but by men who overflow "with tolerance and progress."

How dare I, then, on the face of these overwhelming facts, speak of Jesus and Jewish discipleship?

Yet in spite of all that, and in spite of the superior pose of the average Jewish journalist—there are some exceptions—there is at present a growing number of spiritually minded Jews to whom Rabbi "Jeshuah" is the Master par excellence, which no amount of cheap and forced sneering, nor pretended contempt, nor good old-fashioned vulgar abuse could undo.

I am not dealing with those Jews who are members of various Christian denominations, though even among them are some who are Jews of the Jews and whose conception of the crucified Messiah is specifically Jewish to the backbone. I am speaking of those who have never dreamed of leaving the Synagogue or even to organize themselves as separate units within the camp (there are a number of such organisations in countries with large Jewish populations). I am concerned mostly with those who do not wish to be anything else but Jews without qualification, and who accept Jesus as their sole and only Leader.

Strange as it may seem to the Philistines, there are again as of old, *crypto Minim** in the Synagogue and a future Sanhedrin will have to invent new means of detection. Jesus is tried again by Jewish souls who have realized the awful mistake of their ancestors in choosing Barabbas instead of the Nazarene; Jesus is retried by those in Israel who are still capable of hungering and thirsting for righteousness.

Far-seeing men in Jewry are raising boldly the banner of the prophets and Jesus of Nazareth, carrying high the flag of the Messiah, who is the champion of the small, the weak, the sick, the despised, who is indeed the Prince of peace and love.

* Jewish Christians.

* * * * *

Saw, and hated thee? They did not see,
They saw Thee not, that saw and hated thee:
No, no—they saw not thee, O Life, O Love!
Who saw aught in thee that their hate could move.

CRASHAW.

The Confusion of Saints

(Cont.)

By W. D. WATSON

5. THE ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY

The chief object of the enquiry which we have undertaken has been to discover what Christianity is in its essence, in view of the confusion which greets one who examines the different answers to that fundamental question, as given by those who profess to be Christians. We have sought an answer by considering the conflict of Jesus with those who opposed Him during His life, and finally caused His death. A careful analysis of that conflict should first have made clear what Christianity is not. It is not merely a verbal message, given by means of an extension of the Hebrew scriptures. It is not, in its essence, a hierarchical organisation similar to the Jewish community into which Jesus Himself was born. The ethical teaching of Jesus was quite in accordance with the Hebrew scriptures and the rabbinical system; and He did not form His followers into an organisation opposed to the Jewish community, to which He and they belonged. They were, up to the time of His death, no more than a group of disciples, such as any rabbi might gather around himself. The opposition which Jesus encountered was neither due to the substance of His teaching nor to the fact that He gathered disciples around Him: it was primarily the consequence of what He was in His Person. It was His own absolute authority which could not be tolerated by those who already recognised as absolute the authority of the Jewish law and the hierarchy.

Jesus did not deny the authority of the Old Testament and the Jewish hierarchy; in fact, He taught and practised allegiance to them. After His death, when His followers began to proclaim a definite message, and to form an organised community, they believed that they were still perfectly entitled to call themselves loyal Jews; and those of them who remained at Jerusalem until its destruction were apparently accepted as a section of the Jewish community, after the first conflict had subsided, following the conversion of their chief opponent, Saul of Tarsus. It was, in fact, only with difficulty that they could be persuaded to allow gentiles to become followers of Jesus, without first undertaking as proselytes the full obligations of the Jewish way of life.

On the other hand, Jesus, although He endorsed the authority of the Jewish law and the hierarchy, reduced them to a relative position, subordinate to the authority of His own Person. This He did, not so much by asserting His own claims, but rather just

by being what He was. It was because there was in His Person an absolute authority that the inadequacy of the Jewish law and the hierarchy was revealed; it became evident that they lacked the absolute sufficiency and reliability of an authority which claims the allegiance due to God Himself.

The essence of Christianity, therefore, must be found, not in the Bible, nor in the Bible supplemented by tradition, nor in membership of a hierarchical community, but in the absolute authority of the Person of Jesus. The outcome of that episode in history, in which Jesus played the principal part, was a demonstration of the imperfection not only of the Old Testament and the rabbinical tradition, but of any attempt to express the revelation of God in human language. It revealed also the inadequacy, not only of the Jewish hierarchy of that time, but also of any attempt to establish the absolute rule of God by means of legal codes, religious ceremonial, and human leadership. In short, the primary authority in the Christian religion is neither the Bible, nor the Church, but the Person of Jesus Christ. The only absolute authority is the authority of God Himself: no human authority can be absolute, nor can the authority of God be absolute, if it is conveyed to men by an imperfect medium. The disciples of Jesus found in His Person an authority which they recognised as absolute, and consequently described as divine; and because His opponents also realised that He was exercising such an absolute authority, they condemned Him as One who made Himself equal with God, in spite of His own reluctance to assert His claims.

Although it is in the Person of Jesus that Christianity finds the absolute divine authority, it recognises rightly other limited and relative authorities, as did Jesus Himself. The sacred scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments have the authority of human words resulting from a definite meeting between God and man. For the Hebrew writers were men who experienced a real spiritual relationship with almighty God; and that relationship influenced their thoughts, and so moulded the words used by them. Those words, however, were subject to the limitations of the human mind, and needed interpretation, application, and development. The Church accepted the authority of the Old Testament, and added to it the teaching of Jesus and the Apostles, together with accounts of His life, death, resurrection, and ascension, and the beginning of its own history; thus the New Testament received the authority accorded by the Jews to the Old. Subsequently the Church built up its own tradition, on account of the necessity of interpreting the meaning and significance of the sacred text.

Closely connected with the authority of the sacred text and the tradition is the Christian community, which likewise derives its authority from its relationship with God. It was the community which received the scriptures, defined the canon, and built up a tradition. It was able to do so because of its unique corporate relationship with God. Both the Jewish community and the Church have rightly exercised such an authority. Just as Jesus recognised the authority of the Hebrew scriptures, and initiated, through His own teaching, additional Christian scriptures, so He recognised the unique position of the Jewish community in the divine purpose, and laid the foundation of a new community, with a similar messianic function.

The sacred scriptures and the messianic community would have no authority whatever, and would be dangerous illusions, if a relationship between God and man were not possible. If God were entirely transcendent, standing completely aloof from His creation, no human medium, such as a book or a community, could serve in the slightest degree as a means by which man might come to know Him. The human mind, being finite, could not in any way comprehend God's nature; human history, being subject to the limitations of time, could not reflect the divine purpose.

The acceptance of authoritative teaching, and the idea of a community related to God's purpose, are only possible on the assumption that God is also immanent in His creation, able to have dealings with His human creatures, and sufficiently in control of the universe to work out a plan in the world's history. The writers of the Old Testament saw in history, particularly in the history of Israel, evidence of God's work in the created world; and they were themselves conscious of being closely related to God in their personal experience. They did not, however, find complete satisfaction in a belief in the divine providence. Some of the sufferings of God's people could not be explained as chastening for their own faults.

Jesus, in His teaching, confirmed the Jewish belief in God's providence. He spoke of the heavenly Father's care for His children.¹ This idea of the Fatherhood of God is sometimes claimed as the particular revelation of Jesus; but He did not originate it. It is implicit in the whole conception of God's care for Israel, and is clearly stated in the Old Testament.² Rabbinical teaching developed it considerably. The Hebrew writers, however, did not give this belief such prominence as it finds in the teaching of Jesus. They were aware of the difficulty of holding such a belief, in view of the mystery of apparently undeserved suffering. It was only by degrees that the Jewish thinkers were

¹ Matthew 6: 24-34.

² e.g., Malachi 2: 10.

able to accept that belief in spite of experiences which seemed to deny it. They did, however, succeed in doing so, although at the same time they developed a belief in the future intervention of God through the Messiah; for it is impossible to believe in God's care for His creation without also recognising that there are certain limits to His control over it. The existence of evil shows that God's purpose is being to some extent thwarted. It is inconceivable how He could be a loving Father, and at the same time acquiesce in the existence of forces which prevent Him from exercising complete care over His children. It is certainly apparent that at present His control over His creation is limited, and belief in His love is illogical, unless it is assumed that the present condition of the world must be temporary; ultimately His absolute love and power must be vindicated by the elimination of evil.

God, if He is God at all, must be absolute in His sovereignty; if His authority is limited it must be so by His own will, and for a purpose which will ultimately prove to be good. Our finite minds cannot altogether grasp the mystery of that self-limitation of God, which is the cause of the existence of evil; but it must be accepted as a fact. We can see how God has given to man a share in the task of overcoming evil in the world. It is this great task which exalts man to a position of such dignity, making him able to co-operate with God in the work of delivering the world from evil, and to do so as a free agent; for God's self-limitation has made it possible for man to act independently of His will. If there were no evil in the world, all would automatically obey God's purposes. All would serve Him, but by compulsion, not through love. It is the possibility of co-operating with God in the freedom of love which makes man capable of sharing in the nature of God Himself, and of being His son.

This paradox, the reality of God's care for His children and the continuance of the suffering which contradicts His love, is found in the teaching of Jesus, as in the Hebrew scriptures. In fact, Jesus makes the acceptance of suffering a condition of discipleship.¹ Moreover, the experiences of Jesus Himself demonstrated the self-limitation of God, as well as His absolute authority. The absolute authority, which the disciples of Jesus recognised in Him, and later explained as being due to His divinity, was limited to such an extent that only a few accepted it. It was not, however, altogether obscured. Jesus expressed His divine authority by using a human medium, His ministry as a Jewish Teacher. As we have seen, the instruction of the mind, and the training of disciples through experience, by the formation of a community, are only imperfect means of bringing men into relation to God; they are limited by the intellectual and physical weaknesses of

¹ cf. Mark 8: 34.

human nature. In using those means, Jesus imposed a limitation on His own divine power; His teaching, and the training which the disciples received as members of the apostolic community, did not bring them into absolute and direct relation to God. Something further was required before that could be achieved. The effect, however, of that medium which He used as a human Teacher, was to bring the disciples gradually to an appreciation of the mystery of His Person. They acknowledged in Him the prerogatives of God; they accepted His absolute claims, and yielded to Him the complete allegiance, which cannot with safety be given to any mere man.

It is evident, however, that they did not experience, through His ministry as a human Teacher alone, a real union with God. They depended upon His physical presence with them, and often failed completely when He was not there in Person, as when He left some of them to ascend the mountain, where He was transfigured.¹ Their failure became most apparent when He was taken from them for His trial: when He was arrested, they all forsook Him, and fled.² If they had really been brought into union with God by the end of His ministry, they would surely have overcome their fears, and been as staunch in the face of opposition as they were later.

Until the time of the death of Jesus, their recognition of His divinity, in so far as they acknowledged it at all, was largely an intellectual conception. It was only after His death that its implications entered into their personal experience. Union with God cannot be experienced through a finite medium, through mind or matter. Only essences which are of the same order of being can truly unite. God is not finite and temporal like the human mind and body, but is infinite Spirit. Man, however, is not composed solely of what is finite; he has a mind and a body, but has also a spirit. Man's spirit is of the same order of being as God Himself, and so is capable of real union with Him. Consequently it was only through receiving the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost that Jesus' disciples entered into the experience of an absolute relationship with God: for man, although he possesses a spirit, is by nature incapable of rising above the level of self-sufficient isolation or sub-human degradation, to which his failure to fulfil God's purpose condemns him.

Although John the Baptist had spoken of the Messiah as One who would baptise people with the Holy Ghost,³ which John himself was incapable of doing, Jesus apparently did not refer to that prophecy in His teaching, except in His apocalyptic discourse, when He spoke only of the future.⁴ St. Luke, it is true, does

¹ Mark 14: 50.

² Mark 1, 8.

³ Mark 1: 8.

⁴ Mark 13: 11.

mention two occasions on which Jesus, according to his record, referred to the Holy Spirit as a more immediate experience of the disciples;¹ but each of the sayings in which the reference occurs is given in a different version by St. Matthew, without any mention of the Holy Spirit.² It is probable, therefore, that St. Matthew's is the original version in each case. St. John, in a parenthesis, states, with reference to a saying of Jesus, that the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.³ He also gives an account of a long discourse by Jesus just before His betrayal, explaining that the gift of the Holy Spirit would be made possible by His return to the Father, and describing the spiritual union of the disciples with God as a result of that gift.

The Gospels thus make it clear that Jesus could not bring His disciples into full union with God until after His death and resurrection, which made that union possible. The reason for this is obvious. Man is in his natural state destined for an absolute union with God, but is unable to experience that spiritual relationship until certain hindrances have been removed. Separation from God is the common experience of all men by nature; and the whole of man's being is involved in this separation. Although it is in the spiritual part of man that absolute union with God is possible, the result of a union of spirit should be to bring the whole person into relation to God. Our minds and bodies, being finite, cannot be absolutely united with God. They can, however, be brought into a kind of indirect relation to Him. For man is himself a unity: his mind and body cannot be separated from his spirit, nor from each other, without making him cease to be a complete human person. When the human spirit is in union with God, the mind and the body must be affected by that union, unless the human personality itself is divided.

Conversely, the human mind and body can affect the spirit, and impede the union with God, which is its primary function. In order to establish a true union of man with God, the whole person must be brought into relation to Him, although only the spirit is capable of an absolute and direct union with God. In regard to the physical part of man's being, it is the fact of death which causes a consciousness of separation from God, from whom all life originates. Again, in a man's mind, it is the knowledge of evil which makes him aware of separation from God. Evil, in this connection, includes sin, but is by no means limited to that one aspect. All that fails to fulfil the divine purpose is evil, which

¹ Luke 11: 13, and 12: 12.

² Matthew 7: 11; and 10: 19.

³ John 7: 39.

thus includes much that belongs to the lower forms of life, as well as wrong behaviour on the part of man himself.¹

Accordingly, in order to bring the physical part of the human person into relation to God, death must first be overcome. It is not, however, essential that death should be altogether eliminated; it is only when the human body is subject to death as its ultimate end that it is incapable of being brought into relation to God. When a man has become conscious, in his physical being, that death is not the final experience, but that beyond death is eternal life, in a perfected physical state, then a new power is in him, linking him with God. So long as he remains in a state of imperfection, his physical relationship with God cannot be absolute; but it can be real and definite, if it is dominated by a spirit directly linked to God.

Again, in order to bring a man's mind into relation to God, the first necessity is to overcome the fear that evil, in himself and in the world, indicates the existence of an insuperable barrier between man and God, and between the whole creation and its Creator. The fact of evil suggests to our finite minds that God is not absolutely sovereign, but is frustrated in His good purposes. No rational argument can avoid this conclusion, without assuming either that evil is unreal, or that God does not exist. Only a word from God Himself can remove a man's fear of the consequences of his own imperfection, and his doubts concerning God's absolute sovereignty. So long as such fears and doubts remain, the human mind continues to be aware only of a barrier between man and his Creator; it cannot be brought into relation to God.

We can now see the significance of the death and resurrection of Jesus, and how those events prepared the way for the coming of the Holy Spirit to the disciples. His rising from the dead removed from them, in their physical consciousness, the sense of death as a barrier between man and God; it brought into their whole physical frame a new power, which, although it did not at once remove every defect from their bodies, made their predominant experience the fact of life as the ultimate reality. It created the vitality by which they endured hardships, and turned martyrdom into triumph.

It is true that some, who have not been brought into contact with Jesus, can overcome the consciousness of death. The Jews, in particular, have held firmly to a belief in the resurrection of the body, and in consequence have triumphed over the physical

¹ It is important to distinguish God's cosmic purpose from His desires concerning particular units in the universe. When elements in the universe are considered in isolation from the whole cosmic process, imperfection may be found in them; but God is responsible for the universe as a whole, regardless of time and space.

limitations, by which those who do not experience the power to overcome death are enslaved. But it is above all through the Church that the awareness of death, as limiting man's physical existence, and separating him from the realm of the divine Being, has been largely overcome.

It should be made clear, in this connection, that a mere belief in the immortality of the soul does not provide a means of overcoming, in physical experience, the barrier which death imposes between man and God. Jesus rose from the dead, not as a disembodied soul, but as a whole Person. He took care to show His disciples after His resurrection that He was still a Person, with a body as well as a spirit, although apparently His physical appearance was altered, and He was freed from the usual physical limitations of the human body.¹ When they thought He was a spirit, He told them to touch Him, and then took food before them, to show that His body was real.² Many in modern times doubt the historicity of the appearances of Jesus after His resurrection; but their value for our purpose does not depend upon their historical reality. The fact that the first Christians believed in those appearances, and recorded them, shows the existence of the power to overcome death physically, which they acquired from contact with Jesus. A mere belief in immortality, without reference to the body, does not affect the physical welfare of those who hold it; it does not bring the material order of existence into relation to the realm of divinity.

The death and resurrection of Jesus have also been the greatest means (though not the sole means) by which the knowledge of evil, and the consequent fears and doubts, have been overcome. His disciples realised, through their physical contact with Him, and through listening to His teaching, that He was divine. When, therefore, He was put to death on a cross, it meant that human sin, and all the powers of evil, were being let loose against God Himself. He deliberately limited His divinity, and became subject to evil. He identified Himself so completely with mankind that He Himself experienced, in His human nature, that separation from God, which is the effect upon man of his knowledge of sin and evil.³ Although he thus identified Himself with sinful man, and endured the full power of evil, He prevailed in the end; and His triumph was the victory of God over evil. The knowledge of that victory, as proclaimed in the Gospel, gives to those who accept it the assurance that the apparent limitation of God's sovereignty is not final, and that man, even when he is dominated by evil, is not beyond God's reach. Indeed a new purpose is discovered in

¹ cf. John 20: 19; Acts 1: 9.

² Luke 24: 36-43.

³ Mark 15: 34.

evil itself, since it is seen to have been used by God, in the death of Jesus, to demonstrate His power to overcome it. The moment in history when evil appeared most of all to have triumphed, became the source of good news for all mankind.

We have considered the physical and rational elements in the death and resurrection of Jesus; there remains the spiritual realm. There also the victory was won by the Cross. The human spirit is not only a means of union with God; it is also a link between man and man. Physically, men, though related, are separated from one another. Although it is possible to reach by rational thinking the truth that the human family is one whole, our minds are also the means by which we become most aware of our personal differences, since no individual person has thoughts and ideas identical with those of another person. In the human spirit, however, there is a deep consciousness of the community of the human race. This consciousness depends upon a definite spiritual union with God, although no trace of it remains even where there is no such union. There can be no barriers between those who are all truly united with the one heavenly Father. Every individual man has a soul, a personal existence which gives him his identity, and distinguishes him from other individuals as a "self," an "ego." When, however, a man's spirit is moribund, so that he is dominated by his soul, he loses any real sense of union with other men in the community of mankind; when his spirit is revived by union with God, and the rest of his being subordinated to its supremacy, he is thereby linked also with the whole human family.

In Jesus the Spirit was supreme; He surrendered His power to live in a self-centred, independent existence to the complete supremacy of the divine purpose. Consequently He was not only united absolutely as Man with God; He was also conscious of the solidarity of the whole human race. That was expressed in the title, 'Son of Man,' by which He usually called Himself. In suffering death on the Cross, therefore, Jesus was united spiritually with all mankind. The burden in His conscience was not any sin of His own, since He had lived in perfect harmony with the divine purpose: it was the sin of mankind which He bore in its totality. The problem which perplexed His mind was not that He was Himself frustrating the divine purpose; for He knew that He was fulfilling it. It was evil in its essence with which He wrestled, and its power to sever the spiritual link between God and His creatures.

In His conflict on the Cross Jesus was spiritually linked with the whole human race, in its separation from God; but He was also one with God in the divinity of His Person, which could not be

destroyed by the whole force of evil. Consequently He forged through the Cross a complete spiritual link between man and God; those who are spiritually linked with Jesus are also spiritually united with God, and with humanity itself, as Jesus was. Although historically the crucifixion of Jesus belongs to the past, those who are, in any period of history, spiritually united with Him, share with Him all that was involved in the Cross. That event, although it occurred at a certain place, and at a definite time, is not confined by the limits of geography and history; it belongs to all men in every age, because in it the infinite and the eternal were brought into relation to the created world. All barriers between God and man were broken down, not only in the Person of Jesus Himself, but also for all those who come into relation to Him. Through that relationship they are involved in the same struggle against evil, which they find in themselves and in the world, and are given a share in the same victory over evil.

When the disciples of Jesus received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, their union with Him was completed. Until then they had experienced only an imperfect relationship with Him, affecting their bodies and minds, through physical companionship with Him and through His teaching respectively. The Holy Spirit, however, was not a Being other than Jesus, but the divine Spirit of Jesus Himself. The essence of Christianity is union with Jesus; and union with Jesus is union with God. The union is, on account of our imperfection and the existence of evil, absolute only in the spiritual realm; but it is a union which involves the whole person, since Jesus was not a disembodied spirit, but a complete Person. Those who are disciples of Jesus, but have not begun to experience union with Him through the Holy Spirit, are only Christians in a relative, not in an absolute sense; but those who are absolutely united with Him in the Spirit need also to bring mind and body, and all their being, into relation to God.

§ § §

R. Hiya the Great once visited the masters of the (esoteric) lore to learn from them. He came to the house of R. Simeon ben Yochai and found it shut off by a curtain. R. Hiya felt bashful and said: "I shall stand here and listen to what he says." And he heard R. Simeon say: *Flee away, my beloved, like the gazelle, or like a young hart on mountains of spices* (S.S. viii, 14). This signifies the longing of Israel for the Holy One, blessed be He: she implores Him not to depart from her to a distance, but to be even as a gazelle and a young hart. These animals, unlike all others, do when running go but a little way, and then look back, turning their faces toward the place from which they came, then

running on, do again turn round and look back. So the Israelites say to the Holy One, blessed be He: "If our sins have caused Thee to flee from us, may it be Thy pleasure to run like a gazelle or like a young hart, and look back on us!" And, indeed, is it not written: "And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly" (Lev. xxvi, 44)? Furthermore, a gazelle sleeps with one eye closed and the other one open, and so Israel says to the Holy One, blessed be He, "Be unto me like a gazelle also in this!" Yea, verily, "He who keepeth Israel neither slumbereth nor sleepeth" (Ps. cxxi, 4).

Hearing all this, R. Hiya said: "Behold, supernal beings are present in this house, and do I stay outside? Woe is me." And he commenced to weep. But R. Simeon, hearing him from within, said: "Verily, the Shekinah is outside. Who will go out to bring Her in?" Said R. Eleazar his son: "Though I burn, I shall not burn any more than the phoenix, for the Shekinah is there outside. Let her enter here, in order that the fire may be perfect." Then he heard a voice: "Not yet have the pillars been set up nor have the gates been fixed, and he is of those who are too young for the spices of Eden which are here." So R. Eleazar did not go out. R. Hiya, still sitting without, sighed and recited: "Turn, my beloved and be thou like unto a gazelle, or like unto a young hart upon mountains of disruption" (S.S. II, 17)." Then the dividing curtain opened, but R. Hiya did not enter. R. Simeon lifted up his eyes and said: "He who is without has, by a clear sign, been permitted to enter and do we remain here!" He stood up and lo, as he rose a fire began to move from the place where he stood to a place where R. Hiya was. Said R. Simeon: "A spark of radiant light is without and I am here within." R. Hiya could not open his mouth. When he entered, he dropped his eyes and looked not up. Said R. Simeon to R. Eleazar his son: "Arise and pass thy hand over his mouth, for he is unaccustomed to these surroundings." R. Eleazar arose and did so. Then R. Hiya opened his mouth and said: "My eyes now see something they have not seen before. I have reached a height that I did not dream of. It is good to die in the fire kindled by the good gold, at the place where sparks fly on every side, each one ascending to three hundred and seventy-five rows of angels, and each of which spreads itself to thousands and myriads, until they reach the Ancient of Days, who sits upon the Throne. The Throne trembles, and the trembling thereof penetrates through a hundred and sixty worlds until it reaches a place which is called 'the delight of the righteous,' and it is heard throughout all the firma-