

# The History of Jewish Christianity

*From the First to the Twentieth Century*



A FOURTH CENTURY JEWISH CHRISTIAN: EPIPHANIUS, BISHOP OF CONSTANTIA

Hugh Schonfield

# THE HISTORY OF JEWISH CHRISTIANITY

*From the First to the Twentieth Century*

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*An Old Hebrew Text of Matthew's Gospel*  
*The Last Book of the Nativity of John*  
*The Speech that Moved the World*

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## Introduction

Among histories of Christianity there has long existed a gap, which either has passed unnoticed or has been deemed of little consequence by Christian scholars. It is only where this gap is at its narrowest, in the early days of the Church, that any consideration has been paid to it, and then the treatment of the subject involved, the life and faith of primitive Jewish Christianity, has been of the most partial character. A common judgment has been expressed by the late Dr. Hort in his lectures on *Judaistic Christianity*. He describes the Jewish Church as;

“a natural product of the circumstances of the Apostolic Age, living on for some generations, and that probably not without times of revival, but becoming more and more evidently a futile anachronism as the main body of the Church grew up into a stately tree in the eyes of all men; and at length dying naturally away.”

This point of view can no longer be held by the serious investigator. Gentile Christianity has been intelligibly enough preoccupied with its own rise to power and influence, and in the first flush of that power it sought by anathema, suppression and wholesale destruction of documents to overthrow the witness of Jewish Christianity. If there was a death at all, which there is good cause to doubt, it was not natural one; it was matricide. Far from becoming a futile anachronism its spirit and human activity has persisted until the present day, and is even now undergoing a revival on a scale unknown since apostolic times.

Jewish Christianity has always existed to supply that of which the Church has stood in need — the Messianic vision. Gentile Christians in conversation with Jews have often spoken of Jesus as “our Savior, and your Messiah.” Yet Jesus is as much the Messiah of the Gentiles as he is of the Jews; only the Catholic Church has largely lost the sense of the meaning of that exalted office. If it were not so, if the true preaching of the Kingdom of God had been carried out according to the Gospel injunction, the horrors of warfare would have long since ceased between so-called Christian countries. The only diplomatic corps that Europe would require would be “ambassadors for Christ.”

A few Christian scholars who have been at pains to study the subject have deplored the lack of any text book to which the student could turn. Canon A. Lukyn Williams has written: “It is much to be wished that

some really trustworthy history of Christianity in relation to Jews were in existence.” And more recently Dr. Parkes in reviewing the available literature states: “Finally there is the question of the Judeo-Christians. A number of books are quoted dealing with the rise of the Gentile Church, but I doubt whether full justice has yet been done to this section of the early Church. At least, I have not been able to find an adequate study of the subject.”

Clearly, then, the gap is there to be filled; but the present work, constructive as it is, makes no pretensions to be exhaustive: it rather outlines the cavity and indicates the materials which are available to render it solid and permanent. It can claim, however, to be the very first attempt to provide a connected account of Jewish Christianity from the first to the twentieth century. There have been studies of limited periods, particularly of the first two centuries, and information of one kind and another is to be found scattered up and down the pages of a veritable library of ancient and modern authors, and where these are not mentioned in the text, I can only express a general indebtedness to the authorities consulted. I have taken care to give full and exact references, as these constitute the evidence for the statements made; and it on this account the book seems too much like a string of quotations the intention has been to anticipate criticism on

many controversial points and to provide the general reader with the actual words of documents with which he cannot be expected to be familiar, It is all the more necessary to chart the landmarks and principal features when entering unexplored territory for which no map is in existence. At least I have precedent of Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, whose *Ecclesiastical History* is so indispensable, and whose introductory words so well reproduce my own situation.

Acknowledging that it is beyond my power to present the work perfect and unexceptionable, I freely confess it will crave indulgence, especially since, as the first of those that have entered upon the subject, we are attempting a kind of trackless and unbeaten path. Looking up with prayer to God as our guide, we trust, indeed, that we shall have the power of Christ as our aid, though we are totally unable to find even the bare vestiges of those who may have traveled the way before us; unless, perhaps, what is only present in the slight intimations, which some in different ways have transmitted to us in certain partial narratives of the times in which they lived; who, raising their voices before

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us, like torchbearers at a distance and, as looking down from some commanding height, call out and exhort us where we should walk, and whither direct our course with certainty and safety. Whatsoever, therefore, we deem likely to be advantageous to the proposed subject, we shall endeavor to reduce to a compact body by historical narration. For this purpose we have collected the materials that have been scattered by our predecessors, and culled, as from some intellectual meadows, the appropriate extracts from ancient authors.

I have striven to be as impartial and just as a subject in which partiality and injustice have previously played so large a part will allow. I believe that I have fairly represented the attitude of the Gentile Church and of the Jewish people. I have not sought to gloss over the failings of the Jewish Christians, while freeing them from a great deal of misrepresentation. The measure of my faithfulness to what! deem to be the facts will be for the reader himself to judge. Criticism is likely to come because of my treatment of the early days of Christianity, but I trust that readers will be broadminded enough to concede my right of interpretation of the fragmentary data in the way that! have done. The evidences have been accumulating, and partly due to the painstaking if unpalatable researches of Dr. Robert Eisler, which tend to show that Jewish Christianity was a much more fundamental thing, politically, socially and spiritually than ecclesiastical historians have been disposed to admit. One day the whole story of Christian beginnings will have to be rewritten, and any day may bring to light again part of the vanished record. Even that very Gospel which the Nazarenes cherished may ere long be restored.

Having said so much by way of explanation of the nature and need for such a history, it is necessary to add that there are contributory factors which make the publication of this work both timely and essential. We can mark in our own day the beginnings of the return of the great Gentile Churches to the simpler faith and Christology of the early Jewish Christians. During the past century and a half there has been manifested a progressive re-orientation, a Zionism of faith. Not only those who are Israelites by race have turned their hearts towards Jerusalem. The attempts of the several denominations to model their government and order on what they believe to be the lines laid down in the primitive Church, the renewal of foreign missionary activity, phenomenal manifestations like the revival of prophecy and speaking with tongues, second

adventism, the intensified quest for the historical Jesus, the acceptance of their Messiah by thousands of Jews, all these and many more are signs to the discerning that the wheel has turned full circle, and that the message of salvation that went forth from Zion is returning to Zion again, parallel with the dispersion and restoration of the Jewish people. If it is permissible to coin a new word, this trend may best be described as the Rejudaissance of Christianity.

From the libraries of the Near East and the sands of Egypt many precious records of the early church are being brought to light which can assist us in reconstructing its history and beliefs, while the recovery of the ancient Gospel manuscripts enable the modern disciple to catch in ever clearer accents the utterances of his Master.

It is being increasingly recognized how impossible is the attitude which would divorce Christianity from its Jewish origin and associations. As Henry Ward Beecher wrote fifty years ago:

the ignorance and superstition of medieval Europe may account for the prejudices of the Dark Age. But how a Christian nowadays can turn from a Jew, I cannot imagine. Christianity itself sucked at the bosom of Judaism. Our roots are in the Old Testament. We are Jews ourselves gone to blossom and fruit; Christianity is Judaism in evolution, and it would seem strange for the seed to turn against the stock on which it was grown.

The state of affairs in Germany under the Hitler regime shows clearly that anti-Judaism is equally anti-Christianity. The only alternative to both is a revived Paganism, and this, while it is more blatantly flaunted by a section of the Nazis, is subtly reflected elsewhere in the Churches by a modern Neo-Platonism. History does have a way of repeating itself, and it is to be anticipated that before there can be a return to the original faith of the Prophet of Nazareth, there will be a recrudescence of many ancient heresies. Theosophy and Spiritualism have already restored Gnosticism to its place in the borderline of Christianity. The Church will do well to heed the admonition of Isaiah to "Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you."

As the times of the Gentiles run out it is probable that Jewish Christianity will steadily regain its original position of authority and will enunciate simple and universal principles of Christian belief in which the Unity of God and the Messiahship of Jesus will be the fundamentals, acceptable alike to Jew and Gentile. Jewish Christians will become the intermedi-

aries between East and West, the healers of old wounds, the heralds of the Kingdom of God. For these greater reasons which transcend the claims of scholarship the story of Jewish Christianity is deserving of the utmost consideration, and those of us who can look at history with the eye of faith may ask with Zangwill in his *Blind Children*:

Do we sport carelessly,  
Blindly upon the verge  
Of an Apocalypse?

Hugh J Schonfield



## Chapter I

### 1

When the early ministry of Jesus was finished there remained as the fruits of his teaching a number of Jews who were convinced that he was their expected Messiah.

Between these Jewish believers distributed among the towns and villages of Palestine, little or no connection at first existed. Their life remained unaltered; they worshipped in the synagogues with their fellow Jews, and were distinguished only by their adherence to the Galilean Wonder-Worker, whose claims they no doubt pressed as occasion offered. The driving force of the future Nazarene sect was concentrated in a small body of the Messiah's most intimate friends and some members of his family, who, according to the account in Acts, took up residence in Jerusalem in anticipation of his speedy and glorious return. This was the fundamental and the inspiration of their teaching — the resurrection and ascension of the Messiah and his coming again in due season to reestablish the kingdom of God and of Israel.

It was this belief, and the power of it, that invested the original community of humble persons, fishermen and artisans, with a dignity and confidence of utterance that was electrifying and contagious, and that ran like wildfire through the oppressed classes of the population and particularly attracted the patriots and religious zealots, already stirred and exalted by Messianic visions. This was the pregnant message, the “good news” for which they had been waiting, the great fact born of actual knowledge and experience which anchored indefinite hope to the strong rack of reality.

Under the leadership of Simon bar Yona [called Peter] the Galilean fanatics, as they were then known, carried on an energetic propaganda in the name of Jesus, proclaiming his Messiahship in the Temple courts, synagogues, markets, and everyplace of public assembly. As devout Jews, they were regular attendants at the diets of worship, while they sustained their cause by informal prayer and discussion at the houses of some of their number. To the Jewish authorities they represented one of the many “Ways” with which Jerusalem was vexed. The capital, at this time, was a hotbed of peculiar people offering infallible remedies for the nation's undoubted ills. They had to be tolerated for the sake of peace, and were only interfered with when that peace was endangered by their

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loud-voiced activities.

The first glimpse of the Nazarenes is then as rugged men with enthusiasm burning in their faces, with a thousand tongues to tell their Master's praise, proclaiming his coming to seething masses of their compatriots aggravated by the domination of Rome and the tyranny of the Saducean hierarchy. Figures become fanciful at such times, but there must be something in that first tale in the Acts of “three thousand souls added”....”five thousand men who had believed.”

Eisler has overstressed the political aspect, but there is undoubted truth in what he says, that:

the announcement of the resurrection was originally disseminated among the people by the Jewish Christians in connection with a purely political message and with a distinctly political aim. The resurrection of Jesus was originally preached, not to a circle of mystics, like the resurrection of the dying mystery gods or that of

the grass and corn spirit rising again from the earth, as an illustration and guarantee of the individual's immortality:

“Be of good cheer, O initiated ones: the god is saved, you too will find salvation in your pains.” No. The Jewish partisans of Jesus preached to the people that certainty of the impending “liberation from bondage”; nor did they mean, like Paul, liberation from the bondage of sin and wicked spirits, but quite literally liberation from the yoke of their well known worldly oppressors. Jesus was to return and liberate Israel from bondage in no other sense that King Arthur was believed by the Welsh of the Middle Ages to return to free his people from the Saxon and Norman oppressors.<sup>1</sup>

The mind of today can with difficulty conceive the sainted apostles of the Christian faith in the setting of incipient revolution, conducting a propaganda which was half a revivalist campaign and half a class war. To enter into the spirit of those days, to sympathize with the exuberant communism, the jubilant fanaticism, that turned the narrow streets of Jerusalem and the very steps of the Sanctuary into a battle-ground of explosive elements subversive of ordered government, a great many traditional conceptions have to be sacrificed. The canonical documents smooth away most of the rough edges, but the grim truth will not be gainsaid, and through diverse channels we obtain a picture more in keeping with the conditions as from the pages of Josephus and the Talmud we

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know them to have been.

In a fragment of the *Gospel of Peter* the disciples after the crucifixion are found in hiding for fear of the authorities, “for we were sought for by them as malefactors, and as desiring to burn the temple.”

An uncensored edition of the *Josippon* states that, “In those days (i.e., of the Emperor Caius), there were wars and quarrels in Judaea between the Pharisees and the brigands of our people who followed the son of Joseph.”

2

A very early tradition quoted by Clement of Alexandria from the *Preaching of Peter*, and supported by Appolonius, has it that Jesus said to the apostles:

If anyone of Israel wishes to repent, and by my name to believe in God, his sins shall be forgiven him. After twelve years go forth into the world, that no one may say, “We have not heard.”<sup>2</sup>

There is at least this much of truth in the saying that it would appear that the followers of Jesus in Jerusalem did not for a considerable time make any organized attempt to communicate with believers in the provinces. The success of their preaching in the capital must, however, have quickly necessitated some local organization. An indication of this may be found in Acts 6:1.

And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Hellenists (foreign-born Jews) against the Hebrews (home-born), because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations.

This led, we are told, to the appointment of seven *parnasim*, deacons, to deal with the distribution of alms. There is no direct evidence to show whether the adoption of this synagogal custom implies the establishment of a Nazarene synagogue; but there is a certain amount of indirect evidence to suggest it. Any group of Jews which comprised ten *batlanim*, men of leisure, could found a synagogue, and there were numerous synagogues in Jerusalem representing nationalities, trades, and no doubt “Ways” as well. Oesterley has proved that many elements in the early Christian liturgy derive from the liturgy of the synagogue,<sup>3</sup> and it is not, therefore, unreasonable to suppose that those of the “Way of Jesus” did, in fact, establish a synagogue of their own. Such a meeting house may have been situated, especially in view of the Hellenists, close by that of the Freedmen, Cyrenians and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, with

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whose members the deacon, Stephen, came into wordy conflict, with the result that he was accused of blasphemy and hailed before the Jewish Ecclesiastical Council. Saul of Tarsus, a Cilician, was quite possibly a prominent member of the very synagogue which laid information against him. It is expressly stated, that when Stephen was found guilty, Saul “was consenting unto his death,” and some acquaintance with the witnesses who stoned Stephen is clearly implied.

The authorities had already had to take notice of the Nazarenes through the outspokenness of Peter and John, and they were probably very glad of the opportunity to curb the growing influence of these disturbing element in the city. Their harshness in dealing with Stephen seems due to their determination to make an example of him. The outbreak against the Nazarenes which followed Stephen’s execution does not appear to have been authorized by the Council: Saul, himself, seems to have been the instigator of the attack. It was he, who “breathing out threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of ‘the Way,’ whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.”<sup>4</sup> The Nazarene Acts, reflected in the *Clementine Recognitions*, shows him breaking up a disputation between the apostles and the chief priests

like a madman, inciting everyone to murder, shouting, “What do ye? Why do ye hesitate? Ye sluggish and inert! Why do we not lay hands upon them, and pull all these fellows to pieces.” When he had said this, he first, seizing a brand, set the example of smiting.<sup>5</sup>

The same account goes on to relate that Saul even attacked James, the brother of Jesus, hurling him down the temple steps, and leaving him for dead; and that he set out for Damascus because he believed that Peter had fled there. In fact, however, the Nazarine leader had taken refuge in Jericho.

However caused, the riot temporarily scattered the Jerusalem community, with profound results on the development of Jewish Christianity; the disciples that were scattered abroad “went everywhere preaching the word.” Not only were new adherents gained from among the Samaritans and provincial Jews, but contact must also have been made with many who had come under the personal influence of Jesus during his ministry. The response gave the apostles a new vision. They sent Peter and John to

Samaria. The result was that in a very short time branches of the parent community had sprung up “throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria,” and we find Peter paying them an official visit, no doubt to organize the communities as well as to encourage them in their faith. Other disciples had gone as far as Phenice, Cyprus and Antioch, preaching to the Jews of the Dispersion. To meet this further development Saul, now an ardent adherent of the faith he had lately persecuted, was called from Tarsus by Barnabus and installed at Antioch, where the Nazarenes first began to be called Christianoi (Christians), the Greek rendering of Messianists.

So impressive had the Nazarene party now become that the civil authorities joined hand with the religious in a belated effort to suppress the movement. James, the son of Zebedee, one of the most active members of the Jerusalem community, was seized by order of King Herod Agrippa, and beheaded, while Peter was imprisoned, but providentially escaped. A touching incident connected with the death of James is recorded by Clement of Rome. He relates, “that the man who led him to the judgment seat, seeing him bearing his testimony to the faith, and moved by the fact, confessed himself a Christian. Both, therefore, were led away to die, on their way, he entreated James to be forgiven of him, and James, considering a little, replied, ‘Peace be with thee,’ and kissed him; and then both were beheaded at the same time.”<sup>6</sup>

It now became evident to the apostles and elders that a more elaborate organization was necessary if the scattered communities of believers were to be kept together. The movement was in every way a Jewish one, and its leaders were closely identified with Jewish affairs. There was no split with the Synagogue, and it was only natural that the government of the communities should be conducted on current lines. This required the establishment of local synagogues with their officials, president, deacons, precentor and teachers, three of whom would form a tribunal for the judgment of cases concerning money matters, thefts, losses, immorality, admission of proselytes, etc. This local council in turn would be responsible to the higher court in Jerusalem, to which graver charges and cases would be referred. The organization also provided for itinerant teachers sent out from the central authority, whose duty it was to exhort and expound the true doctrine, and also to collect dues for the maintenance of the organization. We gather that this system was adopted by the Nazarenes, the leadership of the visiting teachers being given to Peter, while

James the brother of Jesus was elected Nasi, or president of the supreme Council, both on account of his kinship to the Messiah and his noted piety. As Schweitzer rightly point out:

For the Christians of the churches in Asia minor and Greece, the Church at Jerusalem was an authority, in the same sense and to the same extent as the Sanhedrin was for the Synagogues of the Diaspora. The collection which they made for it was not so much a gift sent to the poor as a levy comparable with the Temple tax of the Jewish proselytes, which they paid to it.<sup>7</sup>

Some traces of what must have been prior to the disastrous war of A.D. 67-70 a very powerful and systematic organization still meets us a little later in the *Dedache*, a manual for the conduct of a Christian community, and the charge of Peter in the *Clementine Recognitions* to

observe the greatest caution, that you believe no teacher unless he bring from Jerusalem the testimonial of James the Lord’s brother, or of whosoever may come

after him. For no one, unless he has gone up thither and there has been approved as a fit and faithful teacher for preaching the word of the Messiah, unless, I say, he brings a testimonial thence, is by any means to be received.<sup>8</sup>

James is styled “the bishop of bishops, who rules Jerusalem, the holy Church of the Hebrew, and the churches everywhere excellently founded by the providence of God.”<sup>9</sup>

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An event now occurred which was to have far-reaching consequences for the future. The Antioch community decided to send out a trial mission to Asia Minor with the object of reaching the Jews of those regions and, if possible, the Gentiles also. The Antioch ecclesia itself seems from the first to have included a number of proselytes from heathenism, and the intention to evangelize those of their own blood is as intelligible as it is creditable. Saul, shortly afterwards known as Paul, and Barnabas were set apart for this enterprise, which had a precedent in the practice of the Pharisees. They started out by way of Seleucia, and then set sail for Cyprus. Travelling across the island they again set sail from Paphos, and proceeded via Perga in Pamphylia, Pisidian Antioch and Iconium, to Lystra and Derbe, meeting with many adventures, and receiving an unlooked-for response to their preaching on the part of the Gentiles. These Gentiles were among those already attracted to Ju-

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daim. Around every Jewish *proseuche*, or worshipping center, in the Roman provinces, were to be found many Gentiles attendant on a teaching which impressed them by its simplicity of theology and emphasis on personal holiness. To diem, the Messianic message, which promised personal salvation and Immediate reception into the fellowship of faith without circumcision and other restrictive rites, was doubly welcome. Paul and Barnabas were therefore able to return to Antioch well satisfied with their success. “And when they were come, and had gathered the community together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.”<sup>10</sup>

The conversion of the Gentiles, however, presented an acute problem. What was to be the status of these converts? Were they to be regarded as “proselytes of righteousness” (full proselytes), subject in all respects to the laws of Israel, or as “proselytes of the gate” (half proselytes), subject only to the primary Noahic laws? Opinion was divided, and feeling ran high. Being of such a grave character the question was referred to Jerusalem. Thither Paul and Barnabas, with some other, repaired. The supreme Council was immediately convened, presided over by James, and the whole matter was thrashed out. After hearing the arguments on both sides, the President gave judgment to the effect that (the evidence in accordance with the Scriptures warranted the conclusion that God was calling out from among the Gentiles a people for His Name, who, without becoming Jews, were to share with them all the privileges of the covenants of promise.<sup>11</sup> By this decision believing Gentiles were admitted to an associate-membership of the House of Israel, subject only to the Noahic laws, which satisfied all parties.

It was necessary, said the Nazarenes, that the Gentiles should be called into the room of those who remained unbelieving, so that the number might be filled up which has been shown to Abraham.<sup>12</sup>

It was agreed that the two organizations should be kept distinct, though closely allied to one another. James, Peter and John gave to Paul and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship; that the

latter should labor among the Gentiles, while the former went to the Jews.<sup>13</sup> The findings of the Council were embodied in the historic letter which became the charter of Gentile Christianity.

The apostles and elders and brethren send greetings unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia:

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Forasmuch as we have heard that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Be circumcised and keep the Law: to whom we gave no commandment; it seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men who have hazarded their lives for the name of the Lord Jesus the Messiah.

We have sent, therefore, Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same thing by word.

For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these essential things; that ye abstain from meat offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well.

Fare ye well.<sup>14</sup>

Thus happily ended this crisis in Jewish Christian history. The decree was delivered to the community at Antioch, “and when they had read it, they rejoiced for the consolation.” Shortly afterwards, Paul and Silas set out on a second missionary journey, confirming the Gentile believers in their faith and giving them copies of the decree to keep.

## Chapter II

## 1

Affairs In Judaea now began to assume an ominous appearance. Political and economic conditions had been growing steadily worse. Soon the mutterings of the coming storm were heard; mutterings of an enslaved people straining at its bonds.

The dread herald of the cataclysm was the gaunt spectre of want. The peasantry, already groaning under the combined tyranny of the civil and religious authorities, were driven to the verge of madness by a great famine which swept the country in the reign of Claudius Caesar. It is on record that the community at Antioch contributed according to their means to the relief of their brethren in Jerusalem,<sup>15</sup> and Josephus tells of the generous help given to the starving citizens by Helena, Queen of the Adiabene, a convert to Judaism.<sup>16</sup>

In this desperate situation the tax-yielded wealth of the Sadducean chief priests and Herodians, like that of the high Church dignitaries and nobility before the French revolution, became an ever increasing source of bitterness to the suffering populace, calling forth the denunciations of all right thinking men. Patriots, Zealots and Nazarenes, made common cause against the oppressors. There is some evidence to show that James the brother of Jesus was made unofficial leader of a united people's party. The title given him, *Oblias*, which Eusebius renders, "Protection of the People" (*perioche to lao*), the tenor of his Epistle, the fact that his influence was so feared by the high priestly party that they illegally put him to death, and that this caused such a popular outcry that the responsible high priest was deposed and the revolt accelerated, all point to this conclusion. Eisler goes so far as to suggest that the tradition that James wore the diadem (*petalon*) of the High Priest and had the right of entry into the sanctuary may be construed to mean that the brother of Jesus was in fact elected by the people to this holy office in opposition to the official high priest Ananias.<sup>17</sup> The evidence offered on this point though interesting is far from conclusive. It does, however, say much for the growth and power of Jewish Christianity, and far more than ecclesiastical and lay historians have ever allowed, that a brother of Jesus and head of the Jewish Christian communities, should be chosen as the mouthpiece and hope of loyal Israel — a prophet of the revolt. The records of this period of Jewish history are scattered and

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fragmentary. Not from the biased statements of Josephus alone, but from the New Testament, the Talmud, and the contemporary Jewish apocalyptic writings, must the picture or the great struggle for freedom and righteousness be drawn — a struggle in which Jewish Christianity played a not ignoble, though hitherto unrecognized, part.

As for the high priest Ananias (the younger), writes Josephus, he increased in credit every day...for he was a great money maker...He also had servants who were very wicked, who joined themselves to the popular bullies, and went to the threshing-floors, and took away, by force, the tithes that belonged to the priests, and did not refrain from beating such as would not give these tithes to them. And the chief priests acted in the same manner as the servants of Ananias, without anyone being able to prevent them. With the result that priests who were of old accustomed to be supported with those tithes, died of starvation.<sup>18</sup>

The Talmud has even preserved the people's cries, with which they besieged the high priest's palace:

Down with the Boethusians!  
Down with their bludgeons!  
Down with the Hananites!  
Down with their viper hissings!  
Down with the Cantherites!  
Down with the libels!  
Down with the family of Ishmael ben Phabi!  
Down with their blows with the fist!  
They themselves are high priests,  
Their Sons are treasurers,  
Their sons-in-law are captains of the temple,  
And their servants strike the people with staves.<sup>19</sup>

As the misery of the people increased, so much the brighter burnt the flame of Messianic hope. On every hand portents were seen, rumors were heard, false prophets and false Messiahs began to make their appearance, deluding the sufferers with extravagant promises. Calculations of the length of the tribulation were eagerly read; prophecies of stupendous miracles about to take place implicitly believed. Some there were who betook themselves to prayer and fasting that God might remember His people, others who looked to the strength of their own right hand for deliverance. Of the former were the noble R.

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Zadok and James the Just, of the latter were Eleazar bar Dinai and the descendants of Judas of Galilee.

We may imagine the Nazarenes of Jerusalem deeply moved and their own faith greatly strengthened by all that was taking place, going about with redoubled zeal, warning and exhorting. Others might speculate they *knew*. Jesus was about to descend from heaven at the head of the angelic hosts to take vengeance on the enemies and set up his glorious kingdom. Thousands of recruits rallied to the standard of the Messiah including a great company of the unfortunate priests. Through the haze of tradition and cryptic imagery the opposing forces are dimly seen — Michael and his angels battling with the Dragon and his angels; a Nazarene-Zealot alliance, the followers of Moses and the Lamb, a remnant of Israel 'which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of the Messiah Jesus' withstanding the Beast, the power of Rome, and the False Prophet, the apostate Jewish high priesthood

2

Despite imprisonment, banishment and execution of leaders the "party of liberty" continued to gain ground, and the later Procurators Antonius Felix and Porcius Festus found the situation more and more difficult to control. Whole the more peaceable of the Nazarenes and Zealots were content to fulminate against the oppressors, certain violent elements could not be restrained from taking the law into their own hands. Felix succeeded in capturing Eleazar bar Dinai by a trick and sending him to Caesar, but he took his place, and soon Jerusalem awoke to a new terror, the Sicarii, a desperate league of daggersmen, who did not stop at murdering the pro-Roman chief priests and wealthy citizens even within the sacred precincts of the temple. It is probable that it



was at this time that the Nazarenes assumed the designation of Ebionites, signifying the contrast between themselves and the avaricious apostates and claiming that they were the true heirs of the Messianic kingdom. The writings of the author of the Apocalypse of Baruch and James' epistle, which certainly reflect this period, can have done little to calm the passions that were aroused, in spite of the latter's plea for patience. And there are curious points of resemblance which further argue some association between the Zealots and the Nazarenes. It must have been exceedingly difficult of the followers of Jesus not to be caught up in the general excitement and carried away by the more militant revolutionaries. Take for instance the follow-

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ing passages:

Baruch

For that time will arise which brings affliction; for it will come and pass by with quick vehemence, and it will be turbulent coming in the heat of indignation. And it will come to pass in those days that all the inhabitants of the earth will be moved one against another, because they know not that my judgment has drawn nigh. For there will not be found many wise at that time, and the intelligent will be but few: moreover, even those who know will most of all be silent. And there will be many rumors and tidings not a few, and the words of portents will be shown, and promises not a few will be recounted, and some of them will prove idle, and some of them will be confirmed .... And whilst they are meditating these things, then zeal will arise in those of whom they thought not, and passion will seize him who is peaceful, and many will be roused in anger to injure many, and they will rouse up armies in order to shed blood, and in the end they will perish together with them. And it will come to pass at the self-same time, that a change of times will manifestly appear to every man, by reason of which in all those times they were polluted and practised oppression, and walked every man in his own words, and remembered not the law of the Mighty One. Therefore, a fire will consume their thoughts, and in flame will the meditations of their veins be tried; for the Judge will come and will not tarry.<sup>20</sup>

James

Go now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth eaten. Your gold and silver are cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold the hire of the laborers which have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Hosts. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton: ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth

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not resist you. Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and bath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your

hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the Judge standeth at the door.<sup>21</sup>

These utterances read almost like a commentary on the words of Josephus:

Now the affairs of the Jews grew worse and worse continually. For the country was again full of bands of robbers, and of impostors who deluded the multitude .... (The former) slew both their own enemies and those whom other men wanted them to kill for money, not only in other parts of the city, but some even in the temple itself, for they had the boldness to murder men there, without thinking of the impiety of which they were guilty. And this seems to me the reason why God, out of hatred of these men's wickedness, rejected our city, and no longer judged the temple sufficiently pure for him to dwell therein, but brought the Romans upon us, and threw a fire upon the city to purge it. And impostors and deceivers urged the people to follow them into the wilderness, and pretended that they would exhibit manifest wonders and signs that should be performed by the providence of God.<sup>22</sup>

On the other hand, promises of the pleasures of the Millennial Kingdom were held out to the stricken people.

The days will come, in which vines shall grow, each having ten thousand shoots, and on each shoot ten thousand branches, and on each branch, ten thousand twigs, and on each twig ten thousand clusters, and on each cluster ten thousand grapes, and each grape when pressed shall yield five and twenty measures of wine.<sup>23</sup>

It cannot be fortuitous that such a promise of abundance should be quoted by Papias as a saying of Jesus, and again in the *Apocalypse of Baruch*.<sup>24</sup> We can hardly fail to conclude that the Zealot-Nazarenes and the Zealot-Pharisees were drawn together during the struggle by a common aim and not very divergent expectations. In fact, the only real distinction was the Nazarene equation, the Messiah is Jesus.

But while this distinction was not of great moment to the bolder sort of

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Zealots, it was of enormous importance to the particularist Pharisees atid to the Sadducees: according to Old Russian version of Josephus it was the subject of an inscription set in the Temple balustrade, and it was the cause of the death of James the Just.

3

The Judean sky was heavily overcast with thunderclouds. The atmosphere was electric. The first hot drops that were to release the pent up fury of the elements came blood red from the mangled body of the venerable President of the Nazarenes. His martyrdom signalized the end of moderate counsels.

As Festus was now dead — writes Josephus — and Albinus (the new procurator) was still on the road, so he (the high priest Ananias) assembled the Sanhedrin of judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others, and having accused them as breakers of the Law, he delivered them over to be stoned. But those who seemed the most moderate of the citizens, and strict in the observance of the Law, disliked what was done; and secretly sent to King Agrippa, beseeching him to bid Ananias to act so no more, for what he had already done was not done rightly.<sup>25</sup>

A more elaborate account of the death of James is given by the second-century Jewish Christian historian Hegesippus:

As there were many therefore of the rulers that believed, there arose a tumult among the Jews, Scribes and Pharisees, saying that there was danger, that the people would now expect Jesus as the Messiah. They came together therefore, and said to James, We entreat thee, restrain the people, who are led astray after Jesus, as if he were the Messiah. We entreat thee to persuade all that are coming to the feast of the Passover rightly concerning Jesus; for we all have confidence in thee. For we and all the people bear thee witness that thou art just, and thou respectest not persons. Persuade, therefore, the people not to be led astray by Jesus, for we and all the people have great confidence in thee. Stand therefore upon a pinnacle of the temple, that thou mayest be conspicuous on high, and thy words may be easily heard by all the people; for all the tribes have come together on account of the Passover with some of the Gentiles also.

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These Scribes and Pharisees therefore placed James on a pinnacle of the temple, and cried out to him. O thou just one, whom we ought all to believe, since the people are led astray after Jesus that was crucified, declare to us what is the door of salvation. And he answered with a loud voice, Why ask ye me concerning Jesus the Son of Man? He is now sitting in the heavens on the right hand of Great Power, and is about to come again on the clouds of heaven. And as many were confirmed, and gloried in this testimony of James, and cried, Hosanna to the son of David, these same priests and Pharisees said to one another, We have erred in affording such testimony to Jesus, but let us go up and cast him down, that they may dread to believe in him. And they cried out. Oh! Oh! the Just himself is deceived, and they fulfilled that which is written in Isaiah, Let us take away the just, because he is offensive to us; wherefore, they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Going up, therefore, they cast down the Just one, saying to one another, let us stone James the Just.

And they began to stone him, as he did not die immediately when cast down; but turning round he knelt down saying, I beseech thee, O Lord God and Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. Thus they were stoning him, when one of the priests of the sons of Rechab, a descendant of the Rechabites spoken of by Jeremiah the prophet, cried out, saying, Cease! What are you doing? The Just is praying for you. But one of them, a fuller, beat out the brains of the Just with the club that he used to beat out clothes. Thus he suffered martyrdom, and they buried him on the spot, where his tombstone still remains, close by the Temple. He became a faithful witness, both to the Jews and Greeks, that Jesus is the Messiah.<sup>26</sup>

Reading between the lines of these accounts of the death of James, then is a strong suspicion of a premeditated conspiracy to destroy this important personality if his testimony should prove unsatisfactory, and to do so in a way that would appear to be accidental.

This last act of treachery on the part of Ananias and his partisans, however, alienated the sympathies of those who still venerated the chief priests on account of their sacred office. The murdered saint was speedily avenged; for in the early days of the war with Rome Ananias and

most of the other chief priests were slain by the Idumeans whom the zealots had brought into Jerusalem, and their bodies were cast out without burial.

## Chapter III

## 1

At this stage of affairs in Judaea it is necessary to digress a little, only however, to record circumstances of another kind, but equally unhappy, elsewhere.

After the Council of Jerusalem, Paul had set out with Silas on a second missionary journey, creating new Christian centers in Phrygia, Galatia, Macedonia and Achaia, under the terms of agreement reached at the Council. But after the lapse of some years strange tales began to filter through to Jerusalem. Paul, carried away by the success of his preaching to the Gentiles, had begun to magnify his office. He had declared that “the just shall live by faith,” and that “by the deeds of the Law shall no flesh be justified.”<sup>27</sup> He bade his converts not to be “entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” He was reported to have said, “Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, the Messiah shall profit you nothing.”<sup>28</sup> He was further quoted, but without foundation to have taught, “Let us do evil that good may come.”<sup>29</sup>

All this seemed bad enough, but soon other messages began to arrive telling of the unbridled licentiousness which had broken out among the Gentile Christians. To do Paul justice, the unexpected literalness with which his words had been taken, shocked him immeasurably.

The Epistles of St. Paul—writes S. Baring Gould — exhibit him grappling with this terrible evil, crying out in anguish against the daily growing scandals, insisting that his converts should leave off their “rioting and drunkenness, chambering and wantonness, strife and envying;” that their bodies were temples of the spirit of God, not to be defiled with impurity; that it was in vain to deceive themselves by boasting their faith and appealing to the freedom of Grace.<sup>30</sup>

On receipt of the sad news of the conditions prevailing in the Gentile communities, a circular letter was issued by the leaders of Jewish Christianity in the name of Peter, as one well-known to the Asiatic Christians. This letter it is unnecessary to quote at length, but the Gentile Christians are strongly warned against “those who have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who “allure through the lust of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error,” who “while they

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promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption.”<sup>31</sup>

Henceforth, by the bulk of Jewish Christians, Paul was anathematized as a apostate from the Law,<sup>32</sup> and his way and theirs lay ever apart.

## 2

The strain of these events told on the apostle of the Gentiles. Feeling his helplessness, he, who had for so long been independent, turned like a tired child to its mother, and made all haste to Jerusalem. Taking leave of the Ephesian elders at Miletus, he set sail for Palestine and landed at Tyre. When he reached Jerusalem, and the apostles saw the weary figure, they had nothing in their hearts but sympathy, and said to him:

Thou seest, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the Law: and they are informed of thee that thou teachest all the Jews which are

among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. What is it therefore, the multitude must needs come together for they will hear that thou art come. Do therefore this that we say to thee: we have four men which have a vow upon them; them take and purify thyself with them. That all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the Law.<sup>33</sup>

Paul willingly obeyed, and was not hypocritical in so doing, for though he had fought strenuously for Gentile liberty he had never advocated the giving up by Jews of their ancestral customs, and he himself remained an observant Jew to the end of his life. In his last recorded speech he could say with sincerity, "I have committed nothing against the people or customs of our fathers."<sup>34</sup> It is unnecessary to labor this point, but on at least two occasions Paul left his mission field to hasten to Jerusalem for an impending festival. This time, as the apostles had foreseen, while at worship in the temple, he was recognized by certain Jews of Asia, who at once made a clamor. Such a disturbance in those violent days was sufficient to rouse the whole city. And as they went about to kill Paul tidings came to the commander of the Roman garrison, ever on the alert, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar, who immediately took soldiers and centurions and succeeded in securing Paul and carrying him into the Castle of Antonia, overlooking the temple area, under the impression that he was an

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Egyptian false prophet who had lately been making mischief.

Josephus records of this man:

He was a cheat and impostor, and yet got credited as a prophet, and came to Judaea, and got together thirty thousand deluded men, whom he led round from the wilderness to the mount, which was called the Mount of Olives, and intended to break into Jerusalem by force from that place; and if he could but once conquer the Roman garrison and the people, he intended to domineer over them by the assistance of those bodyguards of his that were to break into the city with him. But Felix prevented his attempt, and met him with his Roman soldiers, and all the people assisted Felix against him, so that, when it came to a battle, the Egyptian ran away with a few others, but most of those that were with him were either killed or taken alive; and the rest of the multitude dispersed every one to their own homes, and there concealed themselves.<sup>35</sup>

Having made known his identity to the Roman commander, Paul was presently brought before the Council of the Priests, presided over by the insolent and high-handed Ananias. Hardly had he commenced his defence before this unworthy high priest, true to his character, ordered him to be smitten on the mouth. Realizing that there would be no justice for him in such an assembly, Paul attempted to create a division between the Pharisee and Sadducee members by claiming to be a Pharisee, and appealing to his faith in the resurrection, a doctrine which the Sadducee denied. The desired result was obtained, and the council broke up in disorder. Paul was taken back under guard into the Antonia.

The next day Paul's nephew brought information to the castle of conspiracy to assassinate him, upon hearing which the Roman commander determined to send Paul secretly to Caesar to Felix, and wrote the following letter in explanation:

Claudias Lysias, unto the most excellent governor Felix, greeting.

This man was taken of the Jews and should have been killed of them. Then came I with an army, and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman. And when I would have known the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him forth unto their council; whom I perceived to be accused of questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or bonds. And when it was told me how that the Jews laid wait

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for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accusers also to say before thee what they had against him.

#### Farewell

In due course Ananias with some of the elders arrived at Caesarea bringing with them an orator named Tertullus to state their case before Felix, accusing Paul of being a mover of sedition, and a ring-leader of the sect of the Nazarenes. Paul ably defended himself, but the case was adjourned. For the next two years he was kept in custody at Caesarea because he would not bribe Felix to release him. But after two years Porcius Festus succeeded Felix; “and Felix willing to show the Jews a pleasure left Paul bound.”<sup>36</sup> This attempt to placate the Jewish authorities, with whom Felix was in bad odor, was unsuccessful, and they sent a deputation after him to accuse him to Nero. From this he only escaped punishment through the influence of his brother Pallas.

No sooner was Festus installed in his office than further representations were made against Paul by Ananias and his adherents, upon which Paul appealed to Caesar, to whom accordingly he was sent not long after. But before his last journey westward, Paul had a unique opportunity of declaring his faith in the Messiah before no less a dignitary than Agrippa II, the last titular king of the Jews, who with his sister Berenice had come to Cæsarea to greet Festus.

About the same time that Paul arrived in Rome, it would appear that Peter in the course of his pastoral visitations had come there also. Tradition, at any rate, brings these two great Jewish Christians together before the curtain falls on their eventful lives. Each had contributed his share towards setting up the kingdom of God among men, and though often opposed to one another in policy, both were united in an undying devotion to the one whom they believed to be God’s Messiah. The *Acts of Peter and Paul* touchingly records their last meeting: “And seeing each other they wept for joy: and long embracing each other, they bedewed each other with their tears.” In the same document the Roman Christians declare: “We have believed and do believe, that as God does not separate the two great lights which He has made, so He is not to part you from each other, neither Peter from Paul, nor Paul from Peter.”

The two apostles are believed to have suffered martyrdom about the same time, Peter by crucifixion head downwards, and Paul by beheading. They had fought a good fight, they had finished the course,

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they had kept the faith: henceforth, there was laid up for them a crown righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give them at that day.

## Chapter IV

Under the next two procurators of Judaea, Albinus and Gessius Florus, the cup of Israel's misfortunes overflowed. These officials made common cause with the brigands who were overrunning the country, receiving a share of the spoils in return for official protection,

so that there were no bounds set to the nation's miseries; but the unhappy Jews, being unable to bear the devastations which the robbers made among them, were all forced to leave their own habitations and flee away, as if they could dwell better anywhere else in the world among foreigners. And why need I say any more — continues Josephus — for it was Florus who forced us to take up arms against the Romans, as we thought it better to be destroyed at once than little by little.<sup>37</sup>

Among those who now began to leave the Holy City until the indignation could be overpast were the majority of the Nazarenes and the moderate members of the Pharisaic party. The former, under the leadership of Ion(?) the son of Cleophas, a cousin of Jesus who had succeeded James, sought refuge in the neighborhood of Pella in the Decapolis; the latter, (?)er Jochanan the son of Zakkai, retired to Yavneh on the sea coast. What impelled both parties to take this course was a belief that the prophecies concerning the Last Days were being fulfilled before their eyes.

Ancient Scriptures had prefigured the destruction of the temple (the holy house built of cedars) in the doom of Lebanon. "Behold the Lord, the Lord of Hosts shall lop the bough with terror: and the high ones (?)ature shall be hewn down, and the haughty ones shall be humbled, and (?)anon shall fall by a mighty one .... Open thy doors, O Lebanon, that the (?) may devout thy cedars."<sup>38</sup> In addition, the Jewish Christians had the (?)r warnings of the Messiah.<sup>39</sup>

This is not the place to deal with such a controversial question, but to the (?)ter there seems to be strong evidence that the Nazareth of the New Testament was not situated in western Galilee, but across the Jordan in the Decapolis, and that it is for this reason that the Jewish Christians took refuge there, where their descendants remain to this day.

Soon, all too soon, the worst fears of the moderate citizens were justified. War with Rome was declared, and, after a temporary setback Roman arms, the forces of Vespasian like another Noahic flood, Swept over the country. Galilee fell, then northern Judaea, until on a day the

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watcher on the walls of Zion could catch the glint of sunlight on the Roman eagles in the surrounding valley.

The scope of this history excludes a description of those awful years. Jewish agony which culminated in the destruction of the Temple. Jewish reminiscences of the war reveal by their confused chronology, their vi(?) and exaggerated accounts of slaughter and slavery, how terrible was their impression of the ghastly tragedy left on the national consciousness. "For seven years," it is said, "the nations of the world cultivated their vineyards with no other manure than the blood of Israel."<sup>40</sup>

In light of these events the warnings of Jesus took on a contemporary coloring. According to one evangelist his prophecy had run:



And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days? For there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.<sup>41</sup>

This, however, is not the only Jewish Christian reference to war. The Book of Revelation, the interpretation of which is so disputed owing to the general ignorance of Jewish Christianity, message from one of the Nazarene leaders, deported like many others after the war, to the Christian communities in Asia Minor, explaining them, necessarily in cryptic language because of the Roman authorities the state of affairs in Judaea, and bidding them hold fast to their faith these calamities were signs of the Lord's speedy return. "These sayings are faithful and true," he writes, "and the Lord God of the holy prophets hath sent his messenger to show unto his servants the things which shortly be done." How the scroll was smuggled out of Patmos and reached its destination tradition does not record; but its contents are illuminating that no writer of Jewish Christian history can afford to neglect them.<sup>42</sup>

John, the author, explains that while in exile on the island of Patmos

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was commanded in a vision to write a book and send it to the seven strategic Christian communities of Asia, narrating the course of redemptive history, past, present and future. Each of the communities to whom the Revelation is sent receives a separate admonition accompanied by a warning to look for the real meaning underlying the imagery. "He that bath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."<sup>43</sup>

The first part of the Revelation follows the same lines as the preceding chapters of this work. All that has transpired since the Ascension is incomprehensible apart from the Messiah, who alone can open the book of God's purposes (ch. 5). The most significant events that preceded the war with Rome are briefly passed in review. The seer refers to the early conquests of the Faith, and then to the general unrest that prevailed in Palestine. He speaks of the famine in the reign of Claudius Caesar, and the misery and anarchy that followed in its wake: when Death stalked abroad, and men perished by the sword and hunger, and by the ravages of the brigands (the wild beast of the earth), who had come out of their mountain dens. Next comes an allusion to the persecution which the Jewish Christians suffered at the hands of the Jewish and Roman authorities, and their cry to God for justice in language reminiscent of the Epistle of James, ending with the forceful description of the reign of terror under the prouratorship of Gessius Florus (ch. 6). The judgments are now about to fall on Jerusalem, but not before the servants of God are sealed (ch. 7). A brief and dramatic pause follows, and then the trumpets of judgment sound, and the land reels under a deluge of hail and fire and blood (ch. 8). There is the clank of cavalry, the tramp of armies, all the denizens of the pit are let loose; mailed Romans, long-haired mercenaries, locusts and scorpions invade the unhappy country (ch. 9). The scenes in the detracted city are dealt with in chapter 11; the last witnesses are slain and their unburied bodies are cast out; earthquakes (assaults) shatter the walls; Jerusalem is to be trodden down of the

Gentiles for the prophetic period of a time, times, and a half.

As to the present, the seer writes that the Palestinean Jewish Christians are safe in the desert, having escaped the general destruction (ch. 12). Moreover, he says, Rome's triumph is to be short-lived. After the conquest of Palestine "all the world wondered at the Beast" "Who is like unto the Beast (Rome)?" was the universal cry. "Who is able to make war with him?" (13:3-4) Then comes the prophecy, "If any man have an ear, let him hear. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity;

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he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and faith of the saints" (13:9-10).

With this summary of past and present events the seer goes on to outline the future. The Roman Empire is about to feel the mighty hand of God; but before the vials of wrath are poured out a last opportunity of repentance is to be given the nations. "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to proclaim unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters" (14:6-7). The imagery of the succeeding chapters runs almost parallel to the judgments on Jerusalem, only with added horrors, illustrating the saying of Peter, "For the time of judgment is come that judgment must begin at the house of God; and if it first begin at us, what shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel of God?"<sup>44</sup> As in Judaea, so in the Diaspora, God has faithful servants "that had gotten the victory over the Beast, and over his image, and over his mark" (15:2). They stand on the shore of the Red Sea of Fire in which the armies of the neo-Egyptians (Romans) are perishing, and sing the song of Moses and the Lamb (15:2-4). Chapter 16 describes the judgments that are to overtake Rome. Pestilence strikes the adherents of the Beast; the waters are dyed crimson with the blood of the slain; thousands perish by fire and famine; the eastern powers rise in revolt; false counsellors urge on Rome and her allies to their doom at Armageddon, where East and West meet in a mutually destructive conflict. The chapter closes with an image of a "great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent," a good instance of a seer's crypticism of which the meaning has been preserved. It happens that Josephus, describing the siege of Jotapata by Vespasian, states, "Then simultaneously the catapults hurled lances with a great noise, and stones of the weight of a talent were thrown by the engines for hurling stones."<sup>45</sup>

The fall of Rome herself is foretold under the figure of Babylon (chs. 17-18). At her overthrow, the hallelujahs of the saints are heard; the Messiah rides forth at the head of the angelic hosts to complete the discomfiture of the enemy; the Millennium is ushered in (chs. 19-20).

The seer, however, has not finished his message. There is to be a final outbreak of rebellion by the forces of evil, instantly quelled, after which follows the Last Judgment and the creation of a new heaven and a new earth; the new Jerusalem "whose builder and maker is God" becomes a

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lasting habitation for the righteous (chs. 20-22).

Such in all too brief compass is this great Jewish Christian apocalypse, embodying the belief of the faithful Jewish followers of the Messiah, which nerved them in all their terrible sufferings of those days. "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so,

come, Lord Jesus.” Who shall say that their faith in the immediate judgment of Rome, and the return of the Messiah in glory, was unjustified! Had not Jesus himself, when on earth, stated categorically:

Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken; and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.<sup>46</sup>

Such was also the faith of the non-Christian Jewish exiles, based on the study of the prophetic writings. After the fatal words “Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one” did there not follow immediately “And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse”?<sup>47</sup> proving that the Messiah would come shortly after the destruction of the temple.

Nazarenes and Pharisee had yet to learn that “the Lord is not slack concerning his promises, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”<sup>48</sup>

## Chapter V

## 1

The political crisis in Jewish affairs engendered among the Churches of the Empire a coldness and aloofness towards the Jewish Christians, which, after the second Jewish revolt in the reign of Hadrian, led to almost complete separation. The Roman Christians could not be expected to sympathize with the national aspirations of the Nazarenes. For them, the destruction of Jerusalem and the cessation of the temple services meant the end of the Law. It came to them as a happy release from the incubus of Judaism and left them free to develop a Christian philosophy of their own better suited to the Gentile temperament.

But the old Nazarene community — to quote Baring Gould — the Church of James and Simeon, clinging tightly to its old traditions, crouched in exile at Pella, confounded by the Romans in common banishment with the Jew. The guards thrust back Nazarene and Jew alike with their spears, when they ventured to approach the ruins of their prostrate city, the capital of their nation and of their faith.<sup>49</sup>

Irenæus observes of these Jewish Christians: “They practise circumcision, persevere in the observance of those Customs which are enjoined by the Law, and are so Judaic in their mode of life that they even adore Jerusalem as if it were the house of God.”<sup>50</sup> Their Christology was a simple one. They believed that Jesus was the natural son of Joseph and Mary, elected to the high office of Messiah by virtue of his holy life and Davidic descent; that he had been so designated at his baptism by the entering in of the Holy Spirit, and the Voice which proclaimed, “Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee.” They also believed that after proclaiming the kingdom of God, he laid down his life for the salvation of Israel, was buried, rose again from the dead, ascended into Heaven, and would shortly come again to set up his kingdom, and reign over the house of Jacob forever.

The Gentile Christians, on the other hand, were ignorant of the meaning of the term “son of God” in its Messianic sense, but were familiar with its use in their mythologies to signify one begotten of a god in a supernatural sense. Thus Justin Martyr writes in his *First Apology to the Greeks*:

And when we say also that the Logos, who is the firstborn of God, was produced without sexual union, and that he, Jesus

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Christ, our Teacher, was crucified and died, and rose again, and ascended into Heaven, we propound nothing different from what you believe regarding those whom you esteem sons of Jupiter . . . . Moreover, the Son of God, called Jesus, even if only a man by ordinary generation, yet, on account of his wisdom, is worthy to be called the son of God; for all writers call God the Father of men and gods. And if we assert that the Word of God was born of God in a peculiar manner, different from ordinary things to you, who say that Mercury is the angelic Word of God. But if anyone object that he was crucified, in this also he is comparable to those reputed sons of Jupiter of yours, who suffered as we have now enumerated. . . . And if we even affirm that he was born of a virgin, accept this in common with what you accept of Perseus. And in that we say that he made whole the lame, the paralytic, and those born blind, we seem to say what is very similar to the deeds said to have

been done by Aesculapius.<sup>51</sup>

Thus by the pressure of political circumstances and racial antipathies Jewish and Gentile Christianity drew apart, each following the path of its inherited tendencies, and developing its beliefs along the lines of its own racial genius. Paul's great ideal of Jew and Gentile both one in Christ could not then be realized, because neither would acknowledge the right of the other to regard God's revelation from the standpoint of his own psychology.

The separation was not made without some bitterness being displayed. Jewish Christians charged the Gentiles with apostasy from the teaching of Jesus and his disciples. They stressed their designation of *Ebionim* "the poor of the world, rich in faith" and therefore the true heirs of the kingdom of God, in contrast to the comparatively wealthy but unfaithful Gentile Christians. Those, on the other hand, retorted that they did well to call themselves Ebionites, seeing that they held such poor opinions about the person of Jesus, or perhaps it was their own intellect that was poverty-stricken, or even the Law to which they adhered;<sup>52</sup> and they quoted Isaiah 54:1, "Rejoice O barren that didst not bear...for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife," to prove that the converts from among the Gentiles were both more numerous and truer than those from among the Jews and Samaritans.<sup>53</sup>

Looking back on the doctrinal development of what is termed the sub-apostolic age, the Jewish Christian historian Hegesippus wrote regretfully:

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The Church continued until then as a pure and uncorrupt virgin; whilst if there were any at all that attempted to pervert the sound doctrine of the saving gospel, they were yet skulking in dark retreats; but when the sacred choir of apostles became extinct, and the generation of those that had been privileged to hear their inspired wisdom had passed away, then also the combinations of impious error arose by the fraud and delusions of false teachers. These also, as there were none of the apostles left, henceforth attempted, without shame, to preach their false doctrine against the true Gospel.<sup>54</sup>

2

Apart from doctrinal issues, the sub-apostolic age found Jewish Christianity in a unique position, which has received but scant recognition at the hands of ecclesiastical historians. From the time of the martyrdom of James the Just, the Nazarenes had placed the government of their affairs in the hands of the surviving relatives of the Messiah. "There are, also," says Hegesippus, "those that take the lead of the whole Church as witnesses, even the kindred of our Lord. And when profound peace was established throughout the whole Church they continued to the days of the Emperor Trajan."<sup>55</sup>

Not only were these Desposynoi (heirs), as they came to be called, venerated by reason of their relationship to the Messiah, but also because of their Davidic descent, on account of which they suffered frequent persecution. They were justly proud of their lineage, and it is due to them that the genealogy of Jesus at the beginning of Matthew's Gospel was compiled. Mention is made of this by Julius Africanus in his famous letter to Aristides:

And these (Desposynoi) coming from Nazara and Kochaba, Jewish villages, to the other parts of the country, set forth the above-named genealogy, as accurately as possible, from the book of Chronicles.

Eusebius records several persecutions of the Jews in the reigns of the Emperors Vespasian, Domitian and Trajan, three of these instigated with the object of securing any members of the house of David, who might yet be alive, and thus obviating the risk of Messianic insurrections. In the second persecution, under Domitian, the two grandsons of Jude the brother of Jesus, James and Zocher, were arrested and brought before the

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emperor. Their interrogation by Domitian is reported by Hegesippus, and follows:

He put the question, whether they were David's race, and they confessed that they were. He then asked them what property they had, or how much money they possessed. And both of them answered that they had between them only nine thousand denarii, and this they had not in silver, but in the value of a piece of land, containing only thirty-nine acres; from which they raised their taxes and supported themselves by their own labor. Then they also began to show their hands, exhibiting the hardness of their bodies, and the callosity formed by incessant labor on their hands, as evidence of their own labor. When asked, also, respecting the Messiah and his Kingdom, what was its nature, and when and where it was to appear, they replied, that it was not a temporal nor an earthly kingdom, but celestial and angelic; that it would appear at the end of the world, when coming in glory he would judge the living and the dead, and give to everyone according to his works. Upon which Domitian, despising them, made no reply; but treating them with contempt as simpletons commanded them to be dismissed, and by a decree ordered the persecution to cease.<sup>56</sup>

In the third persecution, under Trajan, Simon the son of Cleophas, a cousin of Jesus and successor to James in the presidency of the Jewish Christian communities, fell a victim; betrayed it would seem by some evil disposed Gentile Christian sectaries. Hegesippus states that this venerable disciple of the Messiah, reputed to have been a hundred and twenty years old, was accused as a Christian and as a descendant of David.

After he was tormented many days, he died a martyr with such firmness that all were amazed, even the proconsul (Atticus) himself, that a man of a hundred and twenty years should bear such tortures. He was at last ordered to be crucified.<sup>57</sup>

Thus perished the second bishop of the Jewish Christian flock, probably the last of those who had seen and heard the Messiah, and who therefore had the best means of knowing the truth concerning his person and doctrine; a fact that must always be recognized in dealing with primitive Jewish Christian beliefs.

Another Jewish Christian, Justus, a recent convert, but not of the kindred of Jesus, succeeded Simon in the presidency. From this time, circa 110

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AD., the government passed from the relatives of Jesus, and it is possible from the numbers given that the presidency became an office of annual appointment. Until the second Jewish revolt in 133 A.D., thirteen Jewish Christian bishops of Jerusalem are mentioned. Their names are given as Justus, Zaccheus, Tobias, Benjamin, John, Matthias, Philip, Seneca, Justus II, Levi, Ephraim, Joseph, and Judas.<sup>58</sup>

In 133 A.D. another disastrous war broke out in Palestine. A change in the policy of Hadrian, hitherto pacific inwards the conquered people, produced an intolerable situation from the Jewish point of view. Cruel edicts were promulgated which outraged their deepest religious feelings, and led them to revolt a second time from Roman rule under the leadership of Bar-Kochba, a pseudo-Messiah. It would seem that the Jews were not wholly unprepared for the struggle, and before the revolt could be suppressed, Hadrian had to fetch his ablest general, Julius Severus, from Britain, to command the Roman forces. The Jewish Christians, although they suffered as much as their non-Christian brethren from the Roman persecutions, refused to join the ranks of the new Messiah. If Jesus had not at that time restored the kingdom to Israel, it was not in the power of such a one as Bar-Kochba to do so. Surely Jesus himself had said, "I am i come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive."<sup>59</sup>

Bar-Kochba found his greatest champion among the Jewish sages in Rabbi Akiba, who did not hesitate to proclaim him as the Messiah; but there were many among the old Pharisaic party who, equally with the Nazarenes, refused to acknowledge him. "Akiba," said one of them, "grass will grow out of thy chin before Messiah come." The traditions, favorable and unfavorable, reveal Bar-Kochba as a brave but utterly ruthless man. It is said that he commanded all his soldiers to cut off one of their fingers to prove their courage, and he did not hesitate to execute his aged uncle, Rabbi Eleazer of Nodeim, on the flimsiest evidence that he had played traitor. In striking contrast to the pious and heroic Judas Maccabaeus, Bar-Kochba could pray before a battle, "We pray thee, O Lord, give no assistance to the enemy; us thou needst not help!" His persecution of the Jewish Christians is in keeping with the rest of his conduct. Galled by their refusal to rally to his standard, he gave orders that if they would not deny Jesus, and execrate his name they were to be

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tortured.<sup>60</sup> Equally, the prey of friend and foe, the plight of the Nazarenes was indeed a desperate one.

As in the previous revolt, the fortunes of war went first in favor of the Jews, but after a prolonged struggle and heavy losses on both sides, Roman arms again triumphed, and Bar-Kochba was slain while defending the stronghold of Bethar. So grave, however, had been the Roman casualties in this last Jewish fight for freedom, that Hadrian, in reporting to the Senate the cessation of hostilities, omitted "the army" in the customary phrase, "I and the army are well."

The Jewish Christians had now nothing more to fear from their disillusioned nation, but their sufferings were by no means ended. Both Christian and non-Christian Jews were fugitives from Roman vengeance, sharing the same privations, hiding in caves and mountain fastnesses, enduring a common banishment. The cruel edicts which had occasioned the war were intensified; a plough was drawn over Jerusalem and a new city Aelia Capitolina rose on its ruins: all Jews were forbidden to approach their ancient capital on pain of death. On the site of the temple another edifice was erected and dedicated to Jupiter Capitolinus. A statue of Hadrian marked the spot where once the altar of Jehovah had stood; while over the Bethlehem gate a pig's head was wrought in relief. In this pagan city, from which Jewish Christians were barred, the Gentile Church constituted itself under a Gentile bishop, Marcu.

Jewish Christianity never regained its position of authority in the affairs of the Church. The Hadrianic war, which had wrung the death knell of Jewish hopes of political independence, had also relegated the Church of the apostles to the rank of a heretical sect. Henceforth the Jewish Christians, while they observed their ancestral customs, were practically excluded from the Catholic Church, and might only associate with one another in their own communities scattered about Coele-Syria and Transjordan, of whom the new orthodoxy could afterwards say "that while they will be both Jews and Christians, they are neither Jews nor Christians."<sup>61</sup>

The Synagogue too now joined hands with the Gentile Church in this policy of exclusion, and in order to prevent the attendance of Nazarenes at Jewish places of worship a curse against sectaries was inserted in a part of the daily ritual which every Jew was required to repeat.<sup>61</sup> This curse, composed by Samuel the younger, early in the second century, is still retained in a modified form in Jewish liturgical usage in the Shemoneh

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Esreh (Eighteen Benedictions). Originally, it is believed to have read:

Let there be no hope for the apostates,  
And let all the sectaries perish as in a moment.

Out of the agony of their experience, the Jewish Christians might well echo the words of the apostle Paul: "We both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place; and labor, working with out hands; being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat, we are made as the refuse of the world, the offscourings of all things, unto this day. [42/43]"



## Chapter VI

## 1

At this stage in the history of Jewish Christianity, it is necessary to devote some space to the methods of propaganda employed in carrying the Gospel both to Jews and Gentiles. The world as it was known to the geographers of the second century AD. was much smaller than it is today. The great continents of North and South America and Australia, large tracts of Africa, Asia and Northern Europe were still *terra incognita*. The borders of civilization were soon passed, and the travellers found themselves among uncouth and unfriendly tribes; it was indeed a venture of faith to brave the unknown dangers which lurked on every hand, calling for great courage and endurance and an indomitable spirit in those who set their faces towards the far horizon. To undertake such an enterprise without armed escort, or merchandise to purchase safe conduct, was to court disaster and death. Yet the command "Go and teach all nations," was obeyed to the letter by the Jewish disciples. Their only defensive weapon was the promise, "Lo, I am with you always"; their only merchandise was the bread and water of life contained in the sacred Hebrew scrolls which they bore with them. Before they left Judaea they had been furnished with copies of a small work, "a book of the word of God, and a narrative of the miracles and doctrines," written in the Hebrew tongue and, tradition says, compiled by Matthew.<sup>64</sup>

Many strange and wonderful tales are related concerning what befell the Apostles in foreign lands, but even eliminating a great deal that is embroidery by pious hands, enough remains to reveal the extent of their travels and the obstacles which they surmounted. Most of them were called upon to lay down their lives for their faith far from friends and kindred, but no worthier monument can be erected to their memory than that "the walls of the City of God had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb."<sup>65</sup>

In every place where converts were won, Christian synagogues were established with native pastors, and for the conduct of these Gentile congregations the parent community in Palestine issued a manual of instruction. A version of this precious document was found in the Jerusalem monastery at Constantinople and published in 1883. It is written in Greek and bears the title, *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*. The manual opens with a description of the Two Ways, of life and

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death, and urges the Christian to keep the commandments of Moses and Jesus to the best of his ability. Then follows instruction about baptism, fasting and prayer, and the celebration of thanksgiving at the beginning of the communal meal. Advice is given about the reception of apostles, prophets and teachers, and how to distinguish between the true and the false. Apostles must not remain longer than two days. Resident prophets are to receive the first fruits of all produce. The wayfaring disciple is to be cared for, but if he decides to settle he must earn his living. Other sections deal with diets of worship and the election of pastors and deacons. The Gospel is to be the final court of appeal in all matters. The *Teaching* closes with an admonition to be ready for the Messiah's return and a description of the signs of the end.

Jewish Christian propaganda among the Gentiles may be summed up in the words, "That they may know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."<sup>66</sup> The method of approach was largely through preaching. A prejudice existed in Jewish minds against committing

the Scriptures to writing in any other than the sacred tongue. The day on which the Old Testament was rendered into Greek was said to be as evil as that on which the golden calf was made. Pantaenus, visiting the Indies late in the second century, reported, "that he found his own arrival anticipated by some ... to whom Bartholomew, one of the apostles, had preached, and had left them the Gospel of Matthew in Hebrew."<sup>67</sup>

With the propagation of the Gospel among the Jews, the position was quite otherwise. Though preaching mainly in the form of disputation played an important part, the approach was largely through writing, and even the disputations centered round the interpretation of the sacred scrolls and resolved themselves into a searching of the Scriptures to see whether these things were so.<sup>68</sup> The situation may best be summarized in the words, "These things are *written* that ye might believe that Jesus is Messiah."<sup>69</sup> Paul expressed the distinction in a sentence: "Seeing it is one God which shall justify the circumcision out of (ek) their own faith, and uncircumcision through (dia) acquired faith."<sup>70</sup>

## 2

The methods of written propaganda employed in apostolic times were not always such as would commend themselves today. Polemic writers readily took advantage of the difficulty and expense of manuscript production. If an author had enjoyed a reputation

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among a certain group of people whom it was desired to influence, it was not thought iniquitous to secure a copy of his works and to insert in them, either in the margin or in the body of the text the ideas which it was intended to promote. Sectaries of all kinds freely interpolated one another's documents and so carried the war into the enemy's camp. A man who spoke with authority, and whose pronouncements were binding on a particular party, was made to voice sentiments which he never owned and to support doctrines to which, perhaps, he was completely opposed. This fashion of "pseudonymous propaganda," as Bate calls it, had first been set by Greek writers, but was later adopted by Jewish and finally by Christian authors.

In his introduction to the Sibylline oracles Bate deals with Jewish interpolations in these interesting books.

In the third and second century B.C. the Judaism of the Dispersion found itself in close and manifold contact with Hellenism. To the Alexandrian Jew the Hellenic world was both a friend and an enemy. He was attracted, influenced, enriched by its wisdom, its poetry, its history: he was challenged and repelled by its religion and (apart from the kindred influence of Stoicism) by its morals. The problem then arose how a Greek-speaking Jew could best maintain his place in two worlds so strangely diverse as those of Zion and Hellas: how he could commend his own faith and practice to the Greeks whose intellectual life he shared, and uphold their authority and prestige over against the cults and traditions of Hellas. In answer to these problems there came into being a considerable literature in which the names of Greek authors were used with a freedom which would now be considered less than honest. The works or fragments so produced had one of two motives always, and sometimes both: the propagation of the Jewish faith and the enhancing of the credit and status of Judaism. History was represented by a pseudo-Hecataeus, poetry by spurious verses attributed to Orpheus, Homer, Hesiod, Aeschylus,

Sophocles, Philemon, Menander. Orpheus was made to recant his polytheism and proclaim the one true God: Sophocles to foretell the end of the world by fire and the future blessedness of the righteous. All this was merely a forcible entry upon the heritage of the Hellenes; the major premiss underlying it was the genuine conviction that

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the creed revelation was in fact older and truer than the wisdom and worship of the Greeks. The Jewish “forgers” doubtless felt themselves to be merely rewriting Greek literature as it ought to have been written.<sup>71</sup>

A little later the same writer states:

It was the Jews of Alexandria who were the first after Berosus to adopt and amplify the Sibylline oracles for the purpose of their own religion. From about 160 B.C. to the end of the first century A.D. they continued to utilize them, nor did they entirely cease to do so till two centuries later. But the Sibyllines were destined to pass almost entirely out of Jewish hands. They were not retained among the apologetic weapons of Rabbinic and Talmudic Judaism; and if this was due in part to the deep cleavage which divided Judaism from Hellenism after the revolt of Bar-Cochba, it was in large measure due to the whole-hearted adoption of the Sibyl by Christian apologists, and the additions made by Christian writers to the Sibylline literature ... the Christian retouching of the oracles began at an early date, very possibly in the first century A.D.; and in the middle of the second century Celsus was able to tax the Church with the deliberate forgery of spurious oracles.<sup>72</sup>

A single example of a Christian oracle in the Sibyllines may be quoted in illustration of Bate’s remarks. In Book V, vv. 256-259 occurs the following passage:

And one chief man shall come again from the sky, who stretched forth his hands upon the fruitful tree, the beat of the Hebrew, who once shall stay the sun in its course, calling upon it with fair speech and holy lips.

The last words are a cryptic allusion to Jesus, by reference to Joshua (i.e. Jesus) the son of Nun.

Among the books most popular with the Jews after the war with Rome were the several apocalypses written in the names of ancient worthies of Israel, which prophesied the restoration of the Jewish people after their sufferings, and judgment on their enemies. These books of consolations contained references to the Messiah and the Messianic kingdom, and thus provided the finest possible medium for disseminating the Christian doctrine. Such writings as the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* and the *Apocalypse of Ezra* became the subjects of interpolation, and it is

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highly probable that the reference to Jesus in Josephus’ *Antiquities* was interpolated or altered by Jewish Christian scribes. The extent of this interpolative system may be gathered from the fact that by collecting and grouping the Christian references in these writings it is almost possible to construct a complete Gospel. The natural result was that the Jews ceased to read their apocalyptic books and put them under a ban. A typical example of Christian tampering with the text may be

given from the *Testament of Benjamin*. The interpolated passage is enclosed in square brackets.

Nevertheless, the temple of God shall be in your portion, and the last shall be more glorious than the first. And the twelve tribes shall be gathered together there, and all salvation in time visitation of the only-begotten prophet [And he shall enter into the temple, and there shall the Lord be treated with outrage, and he shall be lifted up and the Spirit of God shall pass on to the Gentiles as fire poured forth. And he shall ascend from Hades and shall pass from earth into heaven. And I know how lowly he shall be upon earth, and how glorious in heaven.

This form of propaganda was not confined to the extracanonical books. The margins of scrolls of the Law and the Prophets were utilized to show the fulfillments of the Scriptures in Jesus. And in the case of the Greek versions, prophecies relating to Christ were interpolated by Gentile Christians into the sacred text itself; so much so that unenlightened Christians were deceived into believing that the Jews had cut them out of the Hebrew copies.

Justin Martyr, in his *Dialogue with the Jew Trypho*, falls into this error, and as he flourished about 160 A.D., the interpolations must have been made almost in the first quarter of the second century. He says:

From the statements, then, which Ezra made in reference to the law of the Passover, they (the Jews) have taken away the following: "And Ezra said to the people, This Passover is our savior and our refuge. And if you have understood, and you have received it in your hearts, that we shall humble him on a standard, and thereafter hope in him, then this place shall not be forsaken forever, saith the Lord of Hosts. But if you will not believe him, and will not hearken to his words, you will be the laughing-stock to

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the nations."

And from the sayings of Jeremiah they have cut out the following: "I was like a lamb that is brought to the slaughter: they devised a device against me, saying, Come let us lay wood on his bread, and let us blot him out of the land of the living, that his name be remembered no more."... the passage from the saying of Jeremiah is still written in some copies in the synagogues of the Jews, for it was only a short time since they were cut out .... And again, from the sayings of the same Jeremiah these have been cut out: "The Lord God remembered his dead people of Israel who lay in the graves; and He descended to preach to them his own salvation." And from the ninety-fifth (ninety-sixth) Psalm they have taken away this short saying of the words of David: "From the wood." For when the passage said, 'Tell ye among the nations, the Lord hath reigned from the wood,' they have left, 'Tell ye among the nations, the Lord hath reigned.'<sup>73</sup>

Justin was possibly misled by the *Testimony Book*, which the Christians had compiled, and which strung together Biblical passages, with comments, believed to relate to Christ, as Tendel Harris has suggested, and which did not always give the source of a quotation, or only that of the prophet whose words were used to commence a subject section; so that a wrong ascription of authorship could easily be made, or even a Christian comment placed to the credit of an Old Testament authority.

In connection with the foregoing, however, certain passages in the Talmud are full of meaning.

The margins of the books of the Minim (Jewish Sectaries including Jewish Christians) they do not save, but these are burnt in their place, they and their memorials (the sacred names in the text). R. Jose the Galilean says, On a week-day one cuts out the memorials and hides them and burns the rest. R. Tarphon exclaimed, May I lose my son! If they come into my hand I would burn them and their memorials also. If the pursuer were pursuing me, I would enter into a house of idolatry, but I would never enter into their houses; for the idolaters do not acknowledge God and speak falsely concerning Him, but these do acknowledge Him and speak falsely concerning Him. And concerning them the Scripture saith. And behind the door and the doorpost thou hast set thy memorial (Isa. 57:8). R. Ishmael said, Whereas in order to make peace between a man and his wife, God says, Let my Name which is written in holiness be blotted out

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in water, how much more the books of the Minim, which put enmity and jealousy and strife between Israel and their Father in heaven, should be blotted out and their memorials also .... R. Meir called in *Aven-gilyon*.<sup>74</sup>

The first expression in the last sentence quoted means “margin of idolatry” and the second “margin of iniquity” both are a play on the word Evangelion (Gospel), and possible refer to the interpolative system by which the gospel message was introduced into current Jewish literature.

It must not be thought, however, that interpolations and marginalia were the only means by which Jewish Christians brought the teachings of the Messiah before the notice of their unconverted brethren. Copies of the Gospel itself were circulated among them. This Gospel indeed was not any of the four which became canonical, but the Hebrew Gospel, authorized by the Nazarenes, and of which fragments only now remain, and which, writes Eusebius, “they of the Hebrews that have received Christ love beyond any other” and in fact, “they took small account of the rest.”<sup>75</sup> The original manuscript of this Gospel was believed to have been preserved in the library of Pamphilus at Caesarea, and Jerome claimed to have translated it into Greek and Latin at the end of the fourth century; it seems to have been known in Europe down at least to the tenth century. A reference in the Talmud, tractate *Shabbat*, and another in Justin’s *Dialogue*, show that this Gospel was well-known among the Jews in the first quarter of the second century. In the former source a saying from the *Evangelion* is quoted: “I am not come to take away from the Law of Moses, neither am I come to add to the Law of Moses.”<sup>76</sup> In the latter, Trypho the Jew tells Justin, “I am aware that your precepts in the so-called *Evangelion* are so wonderful and so great, that I suspect no one can keep them; for I have carefully read them: Trypho’s words might have been echoed by many a Jew of his time.

The activities of Jewish Christians among their people were not limited to literary work; they engaged in disputations with the rabbis, sometimes quoted in the Talmud, and it is noted that R. Eliezer was greatly pleased with an otherwise unknown saying of Jesus quoted to him by a certain Jewish Christian called Jacob of Kefar-Sechanaya. But above all, they carried on their Master’s ministry of healing, and their services in this connection were so effective, and therefore in demand, that the rabbis tried to put a stop to them. As it was not always politic to use the name of Jesus openly in these ministrations, they used to quote the text in Exodus

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15:23. "I am the Lord that healeth thee," which by numerology is equivalent to the name Jesus in Hebrew. R. Akiba, therefore, a great opponent of Christianity, declared that "whoever uses this verse as a charm has no share in the life to come."

Thus, at home and abroad, Jewish Christianity was active in spreading the glad tidings by every available channel, among rude savages and learned theologians, among Jews and Greeks, Barbarians, Scythians, bond and free.

## ADDENDA TO CHAPTER VI

### 1. REMAINS OF JEWISH CHRISTIANITY IN THE TALMUD

Several references to the Talmud have been made in illustration of Jewish Christian activities, and as the Jewish literature generally is so little known and hardly ever utilized as a source for Christian history, some further references and comments may not be out of place. The nature of the material is very diverse, theology, healing and magical practices, and even humorous repartee, all find their place in this ancient literature. Not all the allusions to Minim and Minut (heretics and their heresies) are directed against Jewish Christians, but those which will be quoted, we believe, are so. The most complete collection of extracts with English translations is contained in Travers Herford, *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash*, a work which is now, unfortunately, out of print.

#### *Rabbi Eliezer is suspected of leanings to Christianity*

The case of R. Eliezer (c. 100 A.D.), who was arrested for heresy, and they brought him to the tribunal (bema) for judgment. The (Roman) governor said to him, Does an old man like you occupy himself with such matters? He replied, Faithful is the judge concerning me. The governor supposed that he referred to himself, but he was really thinking of his Father in heaven. Said the governor to him, Since you place yourself confidently in my hands, so let it be. Perhaps these societies err concerning these things. *Dimissus!* Behold, you are released.

When he had been freed from the tribunal, he was troubled because he had been arrested for heresy. His disciples came in to console him, but he would not take comfort. R. Akiba entered, and said to him, Rabbi, perhaps I can explain the cause of your grief. He answered, Say on. He said to him, Possibly,

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one of the heretics spoke a heretical saying to you, and it pleased you. He said, By heaven, you have reminded me! Once I was walking along the upper street of Sephoris, and I met Jacob of the village of Sichnin, and he quoted a heretical saying to me in the name of Jesus, and it pleased me<sup>77</sup>

A variant of the story gives a teaching of Jesus about purity in the temple. This passages is of the utmost importance to Christian antiquities. It offers strong corroborative evidence of the persecution instigated against the Christians in the early part of the reign of Trajan (98-117 A.D.), to which Simon the son of Cleophas, president of the Nazarenes, eventually fell a victim, and which prompted the famous letter of Pliny the Younger to the emperor while Governor of Bithynia. Eliezer was known to have associated with the Nazarenes in Galilee, and as the story shows, he afterwards recollected a conversation with a certain Jacob (James), evidently a well-known Jewish Christian, who is mentioned elsewhere in the Talmud. As the rabbi is described as

an old man, and his memory was at fault, his contact with the Nazarenes probably took place many years previously which would carry our external knowledge of Jewish Christianity back to about A.D. 80.

*The Temptation of a Christian "Philosopher"*

Imma Shalom was the wife of R. Eliezer, and sister of Rabbam Gamaliel. There resided in her neighborhood a "philosopher" who had a reputation for never taking a bribe. She and her brother sought to show him up. She sent to him a lamp of gold. They then brought a case before him. Said she to him, I wish the property of the women's house to be divided with me. He said to them, Divide it. They said to him, But for us is written, "Where there is a son, a daughter does not inherit." He said to them, from the day you were exiled from your land, the Law of Moses is invalid and the Law of the Gospel has been substituted, and in that it is written, "A son and a daughter shall inherit alike."

The next day he (R. Gamaliel), in his turn, sent a gift to him of a Lybian ass. He (the philosopher) said to them, I have looked further to the end of the book, and in it is written, "I am not come to take away from the Law of Moses, and I am not come to add to the Law of Moses," and in the latter is certainly written,

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"Where there is a son, a daughter does not inherit." She said to him (meaningly), Let your light shine as a lamp. R. Gamahiel said to her, The ass has come and trodden out the lamp.<sup>78</sup>

The story dates from about 80 A.D., and the R. Eliezer, the husband of Imma Shalom, is the same as in the previous extract. Here we have a very valuable witness to the Jewish Christian Gospel, traditionally compiled by Matthew. The Christian "philosopher" is probably a Gentile, who had become a convert to a broad form of Nazarenism, or perhaps one like Justin Martyr, who continued to wear his philosopher's robe after his conversion, and was well acquainted with the Jewish Christians and used their Gospel in a Greek translation. It may have been the second section devoted to miracles and doctrines described in the *Acts of Barnabas*, which the Christian was using as his authority. The first quotation from it about the Law of Inheritance is otherwise unknown, but may rest on a saying of Jesus which served as a basis for the community of goods practised by the primitive communities. The second quotation, however, is very close to Matthew 5:17. The lady's hint, "Let your light shine as a lamp," is also very near to Matthew 5:16. But what are we to make of the sneer "The ass has come and trodden out the lamp"? There is clearly more in it than a triumphant indication that the philosopher was corrupt after all. For elucidation of the expression we have to turn to the statement of Justin Martyr that the Jews, "sent out chosen men through all the land to tell that the godless heresy of the Christians had sprung up, and to publish those things which all they who knew us not speak against us."<sup>79</sup> Among the slanders put forth one concerned the association of Jesus with the ass on which he had ridden into Jerusalem. A Midrash speaks of, "the ass of that wicked one." This the Greeks linked up with an old anti-semitic libel of the Alexandrian rhetoricians, and concluded that the Christians indulged in ass-worship. "Like many others," Tertullian addresses the Greeks, "you have dreamed that an ass's head is our god ... he is depicted with the ears of an ass, and with one

of his feet hoofed, holding in his hands a book, and clothed in a toga.”<sup>80</sup> Here we have the Christian lampooned as an ass-headed philosopher with the Gospel in his hand, an illuminating

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commentary on our passage. But there is more to it: to Jewish malice is attributed the slander that the Christians held promiscuous intercourse in their secret assemblies, and which brought against them the charge of viciousness. Justin Martyr alludes to “those fabulous and shameful deeds, *the upsetting of the lamp*, and promiscuous intercourse and eating of human flesh.”<sup>81</sup> R. Gamaliel’s final word is thus a summing up of the whole situation, as much as to say, “You see, how utterly corrupt these Christians are.”

*The Nazarenes practice healing in the Name of Jesus*

A man shall have no dealings with the heretics, nor be cured by them, even for the sake of an hour of life. There was the case of ben Dama, nephew of R. Ishmael, whom a serpent bit. There came Jacob, the heretic of the village of Sechanya to cure him, (in the name of Jesus); but R. Ishmael would not allow him. Ben Dama said to him, R. Ishmael, my brother, do allow him, that I may be cured, and I will produce a text from the Law to prove that this is permitted. But hardly had he finished his discourse, when his soul departed, and he died.<sup>82</sup>

The grandson of R. Joshua b. Levi had something stuck in his throat. There came a man and whispered to him in the name of Jesus, and he recovered. When the healer came out, R. Joshua said to him, What was it you whispered to him? He said to him, A certain word. He said to him, It had been better for him that he had died rather than that.<sup>83</sup>

R. Akiba said, He who reads in external books, and he who whispers over a wound, and says, “None of the diseases which I sent on Egypt will I lay on thee, I am the Lord thy Healer” (Ex. 15:26), has any share in the world to come.<sup>84</sup>

These quotations confirm the evidence that we have from other sources that the Jewish Christians practised healing in the name of Jesus. In view of the first extract it is interesting to note in the longer ending to Mark’s Gospel, that “these signs shall follow them that believe; *in my name* shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.”<sup>85</sup> Epiphanius informs us that he was told by the Jewish Christian Joseph that before his conversion,

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when lying dangerously ill, one of the elders, a student of the Law, whispered in his ear, “Believe that Jesus the son of God was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and that he will come again to judge the living and the dead.” This kind of thing was of frequent occurrence, writes the Bishop of Constantia, and mentions another Jew, who told him that once when on the point of death, he heard a whisper in his ear from one of those who stood by, that “Jesus Christ who was crucified, the son of God, will hereafter judge thee.”<sup>86</sup> By means of their healing art, the Jewish Christians were thus able openly or secretly to reach and influence their brethren. McNeile has well explained R. Akiba’s condemnation of those who whisper Ex. 15:26, over wounds. The last words, “I am the Lord that healeth thee,” have the numerical value of the name Jesus, and would be used by crypto-Christians as a substitute, when they dared not pronounce the name of Jesus



openly.<sup>87</sup>

### *The Nazarene Day*

On the eve of the Sabbath they did not fast out of respect to the Sabbath; still less did they do so on the Sabbath itself. Why did they not fast on the day after the Sabbath? R. Johanan says, Because of the Nazarenes.<sup>88</sup>

### *The Nazarenes worse than Gentiles*

Gentiles, and those that keep small cattle and those that breed the same (i.e. Jewish farmers of forbidden animals), are neither helped out (of a pit) nor cast into it. The heretics and the apostates and the informers are cast in and not helped out.<sup>89</sup>

This passage is a relic of the Hadrianic persecutions. The Nazarenes had become a menace to the consolidation of Judaism in those critical times. Their militant Messianism and condemnation of the Oral Law struck at the very foundations of the faith which the rabbis were reformulating. They are classed with the apostates and informers who had sold themselves to Rome, and who did not scruple to betray their brethren who continued to practise their customs contrary to the imperial edicts. It is only fair to say, however, that the Nazarenes suffered equally in this respect.

### *R. Abahu and a Jewish Christian*

A certain heretic, whose name was Sason (joy), said to R.

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Abahu, You will draw water for me in the world to come, for it is written (Is. 12:3), With *joy* shall ye draw water from the well of salvation. Abahu said to him, If it were written *for* joy, it would be as you say: but it is written *with* joy; we shall therefore make a waterskin of your hide, and draw water with that.<sup>90</sup>

## 2. Longer Fragments of the Gospel of the Hebrews

It would occupy far too much space to enter into a discussion concerning the date and authorship of the *Gospel of the Hebrews*, and the several texts which evidently went under that name. Here it will suffice to say that the surviving fragments have come down to us mainly from the quotations preserved in the writings of Jerome and Epiphanius, and as indicating Jewish Christian tradition regarding the life and teaching of the Messiah, extracts may be given under the headings of Hieronomian and Epiphanian texts respectively.<sup>91</sup>

### *Hieronomian Text*

Behold, the mother of the Lord and his brethren said unto him: John the Baptist baptizeth unto the remission of sins; let us go and be baptized of him. But he said unto them: wherein have I sinned, that I should go and be baptized of him? unless, peradventure, this very thing that I have said is (a sin) of ignorance.<sup>92</sup>

And it came to pass when the Lord was come up out of the water, the whole fount of the Holy spirit descended and rested upon him, and said unto him: My son, in all the prophets was I

waiting for thee that thou shouldst come, and I might rest in thee. For thou art my rest, thou art my first begotten son, that reignest forever.<sup>93</sup>

If thy brother (saith he — Jesus)<sup>94</sup> have sinned by a word and made thee amends, seven times in a day receive thou him. Simon, his disciple said unto him: Seven times in a day? the Lord answered and said unto him:

Yea, I say unto thee, unto seventy times seven times. For in the prophets also, after they were anointed by the Holy spirit, the word of sin was found.

The second of the rich men said unto him: Master, what good thing can I do and live? He said unto him: O man, perform the law and the prophets. He answered him: I have kept them. He said unto him: Go, sell all that thou ownest, and distribute it to the poor, and come, follow me. But the rich man began to scratch his head, and it pleased him not.

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And the Lord said unto him: How sayest thou, I have kept the law and the prophets? For it is written in the law: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, and lo, many of thy brethren, sons of Abraham, are clad in filth, dying for hunger, and thine house is full of many good things, and nought at all goeth out of it unto them. And he turned and said unto Simon his disciple, who was sitting by him: Simon, son of Joanna, it is easier for a camel to enter in by a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.<sup>95</sup>

Now the Lord, when he had given the linen cloth unto the servant of the priest, went unto James and appeared to him (for James had sworn that he would not eat bread from that hour wherein he had drunk the Lord's cup until he should see him risen again from among them that sleep) .... Bring ye, saith the Lord, a table and bread. And he took bread and blessed and brake and gave unto James the Just, and said unto him: My brother, eat thy bread, for the son of Man is risen from among them that sleep.<sup>96</sup>

And when he (Jesus) came to Peter and those who were with Peter, he said to them: Lo, feel me and see that I am not a bodiless spirit. And forthwith they touched him and believed.<sup>97</sup>

#### *Epiphanian Text*<sup>98</sup>

It came to pass in the days of Herod the king of Judaea, when Caiaphas was high priest, that there came a certain man John, by name, baptizing with the baptism of repentance in the river Jordan, who was said to be of the lineage of Aaron the priest, child of Zacharias and Elizabeth, and all went out unto him.

John was baptizing, and there went out unto him Pharisees and were baptized, and all Jerusalem. And John had raiment of camel's hair and a leathern girdle about his loins: and his meat was wild honey, whereof the taste is of manna, as a cake dipped in oil.

After the people were baptized, Jesus also came and was baptized by John; and as he came up from the water, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Holy spirit in the likeness of a dove that descended and entered into him: and a voice from heaven saying: Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased: and again: This day have I begotten thee. And straight-way there shone about the place a great light, which, when John saw it he saith unto him: Who art thou, Lord? And again there was a voice from heaven, saying unto him: this is my beloved son in whom lam well pleased. And then John fell down before him and said: I beseech thee, Lord, baptize

thou me. But he prevented him, saying: Suffer it; for thus it behoveth that all things should be fulfilled.

There was a certain man named Jesus, and he was about thirty years old, who chose us. And coming into Capernaum he entered into the house of Simon who was surnamed Peter, and opened his mouth and said: as I passed by the lake of Tiberias, I chose John and James, the sons of Zebedee, and Simon and Andrew and Thaddaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the Iscariot and thee, Matthew, as thou satest at the receipt of custom I called, and thou followedst me. You, therefore, I will to be twelve apostles for a testimony unto Israel.

## Chapter VII

## 1

The records of Jewish Christianity towards the end of the second century and during the third do not indicate any improvement in the relations with Gentile Christianity. With both sides it was a period of hardening, of crystallization. The Gentile Church, or, as we may now call it, the Catholic Church, had canonized the four Gospels now contained in the New Testament, while the Nazarene Church as stoutly clung to their own Hebrew Gospel. All the traditions of the elders and the reminiscences of those who had heard them had been gathered up, and the beginnings of a definite dogmatic statement of faith were in evidence. In the Jewish world, also, the same process was going on. The rulings of the earlier rabbinical authorities were brought together in the collection known as the Mishna (repetition) with the Tosephta (additions), and all parties tended to become more rigid and less open to a friendly exchange of opinions. Controversy continued, but it was on a lower plane, and cruel and bitter reproaches were frequently exchanged. The Catholic fathers wrote treatises *Against the Jews* and compiled unfair *Testimonia* from the Old Testament in support of the rejection of the Jewish people and in proof that the Church was the new Israel: they also upbraided the Jewish Christians with the poverty of their Christianity and their continued adherence to Jewish customs. The Jews retorted on their opponents by inventing or elaborating slanderous stories about Jesus, which supplied useful weapons of offence to such noted pagan polemical writers as Celsus. The Nazarenes in their turn were denouncing the apostasy of the Catholics, and vilifying Paul, saying that he was a Greek who had turned Jew in hope of marrying the high priest's daughter; but because his suit was rejected, he wrote against the Sabbath and Circumcision.<sup>99</sup>

Naturally, the more numerous passages-at-arms were between the Nazarenes and the Rabbinites, and we are fortunate in having preserved to us a number of these things in the Talmud and Midrashim on the one hand, and Jerome's writings on the other. The Scriptures were ransacked by both faiths for suitable weapons, and the following quotations may be taken as representative of their polemical exegesis.

*The Rabbinites*

"I will render vengeance to mine adversaries" (Dt. 32:41),

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these are the Cuthin (Samaritans) ...." and "I will recompense them that hate me," these are the minim (Nazarenes); and thus God saith (Ps. 139:21-22) "Do I not hate them which hate thee, O Lord? I hate them with a perfect hatred; they have become mine enemies."<sup>100</sup>

Everywhere that "hypocrisy" occurs in a verse, the Scripture speaks of minuth (Nazarenism); and the common element in them all is indicated by Isaiah 33:14, "The sinners in Zion are afraid; trembling hath seized the hypocrites."<sup>101</sup>

*The Nazarenes*

"And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living

should they consult the dead?” (Isaiah 8:19). The Nazarenes explain this passage as follows: When the Scribes and Pharisees say that you should hearken unto them, who do everything for their belly’s sake, and who mutter in their incantations after the fashion of wizards in order to deceive you, answer them thus: Is it no marvel that you follow your traditions; every nation consults its own idols. We, therefore, need not consult your dead about the living things for God has given us a magic of our own, the Law and Testimony of Scripture, which if you follow not you will never have the light, but the darkness will always oppress you as it passes over your land and your doctrine; as also those who are deceived by you will see themselves in error, suffering a hunger for the truth. Then shall they fret themselves and be angry and curse you, whom they thought of as gods and kings. And they shall look towards heaven and earth in vain, and shall abide in darkness and be unable to escape from your insidiousness.<sup>102</sup>

“That watch for iniquity .... that make a man an offender for a word” (Is. 39:20-21). The Nazarenes testify against the Scribes and Pharisees, wherein they fail through their Mishna, who first deluded the people through their very bad traditions: they watched day and night in order to deceive the simple, and caused men to sin through (Misrepresenting) the word of God, so that they should deny the Messiah.<sup>103</sup>

Jerome gives several further extracts from what was evidently a Naza-

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rene Targum on the Prophets, now unfortunately lost, which those who are interested may see in their place. But we may note in connection with what has been said above in Chapter 6 about the rabbinical play on the word *Evangelion*, that the Nazarenes also were not averse to punning at the expense of their opponents; Hillel and Shammai, the founders of the two famous Jewish schools of thought, they designated as Hillul (profane) and Shammah (devastator), because these in their opinion had profaned the word of God, and made it of none effect.

But in spite of a certain acrimoniousness in debate, the impression made by the Jewish Christians on their own nation was very profound. The influence of the Hebrew Gospel, especially, was difficult to resist, copies of it even finding their way into the Jewish archives at the patriarchal center of Tiberias, together with the Nazarenes *Acts of the Apostles*, a different document to the canonical Acts, and the Hebrew *Apocalypse of John*.<sup>104</sup> In an attempt to discredit this important witness, as the writer has elsewhere shown, the rabbis published a parody, the *Toledot Yeshu* (the generations of Jesus), which took its title, as was customary in Jewish usage, from the opening words of the Hebrew Gospel.<sup>105</sup> This work satirizing the Gospel narrative, and partly based on independent tradition, has been a thorn in the side of the Jewish people ever since its composition. Secretly transcribed again and again down to modern times, embellished with fanciful details which held up Jesus and his followers to ridicule, it encouraged the Jews to resist the fiery persecutions of the Catholic Church, while at the same time the knowledge of its existence only added fuel to the flames of fury that assailed them. Better for thousands of martyred Hebrews if it had never been written.

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Of the conduct of Jewish Christian affairs from 135 AD, until the conquest of Palestine by the Mohammedans in the seventh century, we have no means of knowing. Who were their patriarchs and great men? History is silent. We learn from Epiphanius that they had numerous communities

scattered throughout Coele-Syria, the Hauran, Batanea, the Decapolis, and even as far east as Mesopotamia.<sup>106</sup> The east Jordan land seems, indeed, to have been their special territory ever since the destruction of Jerusalem. Epiphanius is also witness that the Nazarenes continued to have synagogues and elders, exactly like the Jews,<sup>107</sup> with whose rites their own remained closely akin, and the Talmud refers to their

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places of worship as Beth Nizraphi, a term of etymology. There is evidence that their performance of circumcision and the weekly fasts were on different days than was the custom among the rabbinites. This was a result of the growing religious antagonism which ousted them from the Synagogue and brought them in the end to repudiate even the name of Jew. Their communities subsisted frugally by agricultural labor, and they lived in daily expectation of the return of the Messiah to restore the kingdom to Israel, in which for their constancy they would have a ruling part.

Towards the end of the second century we mark the beginnings of a break in the ranks. Origen speaks of "the twofold sect of Ebionites, who either acknowledge with us that Jesus was born of a virgin, or deny this, and maintain that he was begotten like other human beings." To a section of the Jewish Christians, particularly in Syria, where there was a closer contact with the Catholic Church, which had made outcasts of the descendants of the founders of the great churches of Antioch and Damascus, the position was intolerable. In consideration of fraternal relations extended to them, they were prepared to accept some of the dogmas of the new orthodoxy. Certain individual Jewish Christians had already associated themselves with the dominant Church, but group action was a new move. The phase was a most important one, for its genesis produced at Antioch the *Gospel of Matthew* as we now have it.

The phase extended even further. The native Syrian Christians were willing to allow the antiquity of the Nazarenes, and to accept the fact that they possessed genuine independent traditions regarding the life of Christ, which they were avid to learn and utilize. The imparting of this information, chiefly concerning the childhood of Jesus and certain incidents connected with his crucifixion and post-resurrection appearances, led to a whole literature of Infancy and other sectional Gospel narratives, claiming authority from original Hebrew sources, which continued to be multiplied and elaborated for centuries. For one instance among many, the prologue to the *Gospel of Nicodemus* has it:

I Ananias, etc., found these memorials written in Hebrew, and by the favor of God have translated them into Greek of the information of all who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

One wonders in reading some of these texts whether the Nazarenes had not been practising a little edifying leg-pulling at the expense of the

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credulous Syrians. Traces, however, of valuable historical facts do remain in the old syriac Gospels and sacred literature of the Eastern Church, which otherwise would have been irretrievably lost.

The lapse from the true faith of some of their number was bound to react on the rest of the Nazarene communities, who became in consequence more rigid and exclusive, and in a short time completely lost touch with the great body of believers, finding consolation instead with

contacting other bodies of Jewish sectaries who had made their abode in the regions which they inhabited. The resultant medley of beliefs will have to be considered in a later chapter. Three legacies, at least, they left to the Syriac and Greek-speaking churches before they withdrew into the background of Christian affairs, the Clementine Romances, the *Odes of Solomon*, and the Greek translation of the Old Testament by Symmachus.

The Clementine Romances, the *Homilies* and *Recognitions*, take as their basis the history of Clement, a Roman convert to Jewish Christianity, and how he became reunited to his parents and brothers from whom he had been separated by an ill fate. He becomes attached to Peter, and follows him in his pursuit of arid disputations with the arch-enemy, Simon Magus. Opportunity is given in the numerous discussions and dialogues of the narrative to restate the true faith in opposition to Greek and other heresies put into the mouth of Simon, who sometimes bears a strange likeness to the apostle Paul. Other works have also been drawn upon by the compiler, including the ancient *Preaching of Peter* and the *Ascents of James*. The teaching is definitely Jewish Christian, and the Gospel references introduce a number of uncanonical sayings and traditions.

The *Odes of Solomon*, discovered in a Syriac text by Dr. J. Rendel Harris, consist of a collection of forty-two hymns. There has been much scholarly controversy over their authorship, but the writer from a close study considers that there is conclusive evidence that the collection represents a part, at least, of the Nazarene hymn-book. As such the work is of enormous importance, first because it reveals the elevated character of Jewish Christian theology, and makes plain many obscurities relating to their beliefs and traditions, and second, because a Church with a hymnary is a living church, and not a moribund institution as many would suppose Nazarenism in the third century to have been. Two of the Odes are reproduced here from Dr. Harris' translation; in the second it is the Messiah who is speaking.

#### *Ode 6*

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As the hand moves over the harp, and the string speak, so speaks in my members the Spirit of the Lord, and I speak by His love. For it destroys what is foreign, and everything that is bitter: for thus it was from the beginning and will be to the end, that nothing should be his adversary, and nothing should stand up against Him. The Lord has multiplied the knowledge of Himself, and is zealous that these things should be known, which by His grace have been given to us. And the praise of His name He gave us: our spirits praise His Holy Spirit. For there went forth a stream and became a river great and broad; for it flooded and broke up everything and it brought water to the Temple: and the restrainers of the children of men were not able to restrain it, nor the arts of those whose business it is to restrain waters; for it spread over the face of the whole earth, and filled everything: and all the thirsty upon earth were given to drink of it; and thirst was relieved and quenched: for from the Most High the draught was given. Blessed then are the ministers of that draught who are entrusted with that water of His: they have assuaged the dry lips, and the will that had fainted they have raised up; and souls that were near departing they have caught back from death: and limbs that had fallen they straightened and set up: they gave strength for their feebleness and light to their eyes: for everyone knew them in the Lord, and they lived by the water of life forever. Hallelujah

*Ode 36*

I rested on the Spirit of the Lord: and the Spirit raised me on high: and made me stand on my feet in the height of the Lord, before His perfection and His glory, while I was praising Him by the composition of His songs. The Spirit brought me forth before the face of the Lord: and although a son of man, I was named the Illuminate, the son of God: while I praised among the praising ones, and great was I amongst the mighty ones. For according to the greatness of the Most High, so He made me: and like His own newness He renewed me; and He anointed me from His own perfection: and I became one of his neighbors; and my mouth was opened, like a cloud of dew; and my heart poured out as it were a gushing stream of righteousness, and my access to Him was in peace: and I was established by the spirit of His

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government. Hallelujah

In the second of these two hymns, the Nazarene belief of the acquired divine attributes of the Messiah, who was born a man amongst men, is clearly seen. He was anointed by God with the Holy Spirit and with Power: one Nazarene reference rather beautifully puts it that the anointing was with oil taken from the Tree of Life.

Symmachus appears to have been, like Clement, a convert to Jewish Christianity, and may have been of Samaritan origin. He flourished towards the end of the second century. His object in undertaking a new translation of the Old Testament is believed to have been to provide a rendering in idiomatic Greek, free from semitisms. His version was one of those embodied by Origen in his *Hexapla*, and its influence still remains, as it was largely made use of by Jerome in his revision of the Latin Bible. Eusebius mentions that in his own day (fourth century) there were *Commentaries* of Symmachus still extant, in which it would seem that he criticized the Greek version of Matthew's Gospel, which had lately been accepted by the Gentile Church.

3

Undoubtedly, the most outstanding name among Jewish Christians of this period was Hegesippus, often called the first ecclesiastical historian, Born in Palestine about 140 A.D., he kept closely in touch with all sections of the Church, though he himself held to the Nazarene faith. He travelled widely throughout the west, and came to Rome during the bishopric of Anicetus. Subsequently, he wrote his *Memoirs*, in five books, now unfortunately lost. But fragments have been preserved chiefly in Eusebius' quotations, and many of them have already been drawn upon in this history. They show him to have been a sedulous collector of traditions regarding the lives of the apostles and those related to them, and it is to him that we owe much of our knowledge of primitive Christian history. He is reported by Eusebius to have quoted largely from the *Gospel of the Hebrews*, which to him, as to his co-religionists, was the final authority on the life and teaching of Jesus. He is also said to have stated that certain books of the *Apocrypha* had been forged during his own lifetime.<sup>108</sup> He was evidently a liberal minded man ever ready to note the best in the life of his fellow Christians, and this chapter may fittingly close with the only autobiographical fragment of his work which has survived.

The Corinthian Church has continued in the true faith until

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Primus, now Bishop of Corinth. I conversed with him on my voyage to Rome, and stayed many days with the Corinthians. during which time we were refreshed together with true doctrine. Arrived in Rome, I composed the succession (of bishops) until Anicetus, whose deacon was Eleutherus. After Anicetus succeeded Soter, and afterwards Eleutherus. But with every succession, and in every city, that prevails which the Law and the Prophets and the Lord enjoin.<sup>109</sup>

## Chapter VIII

## 1

The fourth century dawned full of promise for the Christian faith. "And now a bright and splendid day," writes Eusebius, "with no overshadowing cloud, irradiated the churches in the whole world with its celestial light."<sup>110</sup> The miracle had happened. The Emperor Constantine had submitted to the grace of baptism. But for those who still clung to the observances of the Law of Moses, whether Nazarene or Pharisee, that day was one of darkness and gloom. The era of persecution by Pagan Romans was passing away, only to be succeeded by the more terrible and prolonged persecutions by Christian Romans. Incited thereto by a vengeful and fanatical clergy, drunk with liberty and power. Constantine commenced to pursue a policy of cruel restriction against the Jews, embodied in a series of edicts, which the populace were not slow to construe as a policy bordering on extirpation.

We desire to have nothing in common with this so hated people, for the Redeemer has marked out another path for us. To this we will keep, and be free from disgraceful association with this people.

So ran the imperial will. Massacres became frequent, and burning synagogues a Christian recreation.

Under these conditions, Palestine gradually lost its Jewish population, which took refuge further east in Persia and Mesopotamia where there was a better prospect of enjoying freedom of conscience. The rabbinical colleges at Sura and Pumbedith took over authority from those of Tiberias and Sephoris. and abandoned synagogues were rededicated to Christian worship. The name of Nazarene, formerly honored by every follower of the Man of Nazareth, was now wholly discarded by the Catholic Church, and reserved exclusively for the "heresy" of the faith which he had founded. A few of the Fathers there were, like Jerome, who still gave credit to the ancient testimony of the Jewish Christians. He associated with them in Beroea (Aleppo), and translated their Hebrew Gospel into Greek and Latin, suffering the accusation of, "having forged a fifth Gospel." It is in large part due to his writings that we owe our slender knowledge of the Nazarene opinions.

In the west, at this time, we mark the beginning of a new phase, which after the virtual disruption of the Nazarene Ebionite communities was to

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carry on the torch of Jewish Christianity through a succession of individual converts to the Catholic faith until their organization should at length be reconstituted.

The scene is Rome, and the occasion a disputation held before Constantine and the saintly Queen Helena between the Jews and Christians. Argument had failed to be convincing to either side, and at length, so runs the legend, the Jews had recourse to magic. They commanded an ox to be fetched, and the ineffable Name of God being whispered into its ear by Sambres, the Jewish leader, it at once fell dead at the emperor's feet. The Jews were triumphant; but the famous wonder-working Pope Sylvester was a match for them. Would the Jews believe if the ox came to life again at the name of Jesus? They would. Sylvester raised his eyes to heaven, and with a loud voice cried: "If He be the true God whom I preach, in the name of Christ, arise, O ox,

and stand upon thy feet!” The ox sprang to life, and began to move and feed. The astounded Jews gave in and were all baptized.

2

We have now to consider a new type of Jewish Christian, willing or unwilling convert to Catholicism, having no relationship with the old Nazarene groups, and in many cases as bigoted and intolerant in their attitude towards them and the Jewish people as were those of Gentile birth. Of this new type, two were prominent in the fourth century, Epiphanius, Bishop of Constantia, and Count Joseph, and the last is our chief informant about the second.

Epiphanius was born about 303 A.D. in the village of Bezanduca in Palestine. He was of Jewish parentage on both sides. His father died when he was very young, and his widowed mother was not in good circumstances. A wealthy Jew, a friend of the family, adopted him and later married him to his only daughter. Almost immediately, however, he lost his wife, and his father-in-law dying soon after bequeathed to him his extensive property. While on a visit to some of his possessions he was impressed with the charity of a monk whom he met, and resolved to become a Christian, an example that was followed by his sister. After a course of instruction, both were received into the Catholic Church.

Epiphanius, in his fervor for his new-found faith, parted with his wealth and became a monk. Many legends surround his later life, due to the enthusiasm of his two disciples, John and Polybius, but the following facts

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may be regarded as fairly well established. On a visit to Egypt he came into contact with certain Christian Gnostics, apparently of antinomian tendencies, from whom he escaped in horror. Returned to Palestine, he founded a monastery near his native village. The next few years find him engaged in violent controversy with the school of Origen, particularly in the person of John, Bishop of Jerusalem. About 368 he was made Bishop of Constantia in Cyprus, where he became widely known for his learning. In 382 he was summoned to Rome by the emperor to give his opinion in an ecclesiastical dispute. The year 394 found him again in Jerusalem, where he betrayed something of his Jewish origin in denouncing the use of images which he found painted on a cloth in a Christian church. “Such material,” he said, “would be better employed for charity than for ceremony.”

Soon after this he retired to Bethlehem, from where he journeyed once more to Constantinople in his old age to attend a synod convened to reprimand the famous John Chrysostom for sheltering some Egyptian monks expelled for adopting Origen’s views. Epiphanius, however, did not wait of the synod to sit, and died at sea on his way back to Cyprus at the advanced age of a hundred years. He was a sincere, though somewhat over-zealous and imprudent churchman, who followed the orthodoxy of his day with commendable loyalty. It is unfortunate that he was out of sympathy with his Nazarene brethren, but this was probably due to his early conversion and training in monastic circles. He never appears to have been in direct contact with either Nazarenes or Ebionites, whom he castigates unmercifully. He had read the Ebionite text of the Gospel in a Greek translation, and his quotations from it preserve what little we know of its contents.

Epiphanius’ principal work is his voluminous *Panarion*, which has been described as an encyclopedia of heresies. In it he combats nearly eighty Christian and Jewish sects. The

*Panarion* will always remain one of the most valuable possessions of Christianity because of the mass of material on primitive Christian beliefs which it contains: many of the traditions recorded by Epiphanius have come down to modern times exclusively through his diligence. He also wrote a treatise on *Biblical Weights and Measures*.

The Bishop of Constantia, as we have said, is our authority for the romantic history of another Jewish convert, Count Joseph, called by his former co-religionists, “the Apostate.” He was a rabbinical student of

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Tiberias, attached to the person of the Jewish Patriarch Hillel II. According to his own account, he had witnessed the Patriarch’s deathbed confession of faith in Christ. Through the joints of the door, he had seen him receive the sacrament from the Bishop of Tiberias, who had attended him as physician. After Hillel’s death, Joseph found among his effects, Hebrew texts of *Matthew*, *John* and the *Acts of the apostles*, which he read and was strongly convinced of the truth of Christianity. He did not, however, make a public confession of his faith. Other circumstances in later life increased his conviction, and a severe illness determined him no longer to postpone his baptism. On his recovery his fear of the consequences of his act made him still delay openly to avow himself a Christian. At this time he was appointed official collector of the patriarchal revenues in Cilicia, and he made the acquaintance of a bishop near whose house he was staying. The suspicions of the Jews were aroused, and they one day surprised him in the act of reading the Gospels. They dragged him to the synagogue, and would have beaten him to death, had not the bishop intervened. When he was about to leave the city, another attempt on his life was made, and he was thrown into the river Cydnus. Again he escaped, and soon after made a public confession of his faith in Jesus. His interesting story came to the ears of Constantine, who made him a Comes, or Count, of the Roman Empire.

Little more of Count Joseph is known, except that the emperor employed him on several commissions, and that he devoted his life to building churches in towns which had large Jewish populations, at Tiberias, Nazareth and Sephoris (Dio Caesarea). Inscriptions recording his foundation still remain. He sheltered some priests fleeing from Arian persecution, and it was about this time in his old age that Epiphanius heard this story from his own lips while he was a guest in his house.

Epiphanius tells us in his *Panarion* of other Jewish converts to Catholicism, but the anti-Jewish policy of the Church, which manifested itself ever more strongly from this time onwards, must have tended steadily to decrease the numbers of genuine conversions and make the name of Jesus to be hated by his own people. Those who did take the step were the objects of bitter Jewish persecution, so much so that Constantine decreed death at the stake for those guilty of “pursuing with stones and other violence” the baptized Jew. But if the outraged Synagogue could not vent its bitter wrath on those who seemed to have gone over to the ranks of its enemies, it could and did endeavor to wean from their Christian faith

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newly converted pagans, by pointing out the far-fetched Biblical exegesis of the Church, especially in relation to Messianic passages. In order to obtain their evidence at first hand from the lips of Christian preachers, Jews were even willing to come to church; so that the Church of Jerusalem at a synod had to complain of “Jewish serpents and Samaritan imbeciles listening to

sermons in church like wolves surrounding the flock of Christ.”

The Catholic Church, with the whole of the Roman Empire given to it, at least in name as a Christian territory, and by no means sure of its ground, worked itself up into an acute state of hysteria over an imagined Jewish peril. Even to the more enlightened ecclesiastic, the Jew was a perverted being laboring mysteriously and mercilessly to restore pagan domination and undermine the Church's authority. The few cases where Jews had succeeded in persuading pagans of the weakness of the state religion were magnified into an organized effort to overthrow the Church. The humor of the situation, if humor it can be called which involves the extreme of human passions, was, that to anyone who knows the Jews at all well their greatest and self-realized weakness is their inability to co-operate and act in concerted harmony in any major policy. Yet, again and again, down to our own day, the scare has been raised of the existence of a sinister and secret Jewish world organization with anti-Christian objects, which has served as a useful bogey to authority uncertain of its hold on the people. The most casual study of Jewish history would show the utter impossibility of any such threat if on no other ground, on the ground of inherent Jewish lack of self-co-ordination, which even in modern Palestine, with the ideal object of the establishment of a Jewish National Home, has brought such a large measure of frustration through disunity and divergent counsels.

As in twentieth-century Germany under Nazi rule, the fourth-century Church authorities felt that isolation of their adherents from Jewish influence was the best policy to adopt, and they set to work with zeal to build again the middle wall of partition that had been broken down. East and West Church Councils met and promulgated strange decrees which in their terms throw an interesting light on the good relations which must have subsisted between many a Christian community and its Jewish neighbors.

The so-called *Apostolic Canons* decreed:

If an clergyman shall enter into a synagogue of Jews or heretics

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(i.e. Nazarenes) to pray, let him be deposed. If a layman do so, let him be excommunicated.”<sup>111</sup>

If any bishop, presbyter or deacon, or any one of the list of the clergy, keeps fast or festival with the Jews, or receives from them any of the gifts of their feasts, as unleavened bread, or any such things, let him be deposed. If he be a layman, let him be excommunicated.<sup>112</sup>

If any Christian brings oil into a temple of the heathen, or into a synagogue of the Jews, or lights lamps, let him be excommunicated.<sup>113</sup>

At Elvira (Elibris) near Granada in Spain, nineteen bishops, thirty-six presbyters, and more deacons, met in 324 A.D. to enact, among other matters:

Landholders are to be admonished not to suffer the fruits which they receive from God with the giving of thanks, to be blessed by the Jews, lest our benediction be rendered invalid and unprofitable. If anyone shall venture to do so after this interdiction, let him altogether be ejected from the Church.<sup>114</sup>

If any person, whether clerical or one of the faithful, shall take food with the Jews, he is to abstain from our communion, that he may learn to amend.<sup>115</sup>

It is rather surprising to trace as one of the causes of Christian persecution of the Jews, the discovery of the real or reputed relics of the Jewish Christian saints and of the Savior himself. "At that time (i.e. fourth century)," writes the Bishop of Saragossa in 620 A.D., "many things came to light which had not been recorded, such as the bandages and the shroud in which the body of our Lord was wrapped." The saintly Queen Helena was herself led to the discovery of the wood of the true Cross by a Jew, Judas, who is said to have become a Christian. The Jewish Rabban Gamaliel, the teacher of St. Paul, is reported to have directed the finding of the relics of the martyr Stephan, by appearing in vision to Lucian of Caphargamala.

These latter relics were destined to play a part in the conversion of the Jews of Minorca, to which island they had been brought by Orosius. Severus, Bishop of Minorca, has left his own highly colored account of the incident in a letter, from which we learn that frequent

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disputations took place between the bishop and Rabbi Theodore, head of the Jewish community of the little town of Magona. Eventually the bishop led his congregants to the synagogue on a fateful Sabbath on the plea that the Jews had stored up arms there. A disturbance resulted in which the Christians burnt down the sacred edifice and bore off the scrolls of the Law in triumph. Three days later, the Jews gathered together within the ruined walls and their rabbi exhorted them in an eloquent address in vindication of the Law to which the Christians listened with dismay. At last they raised a shout, "Theodore, believe in Christ!" which the unfortunate Jews misunderstood as "Theodore believes in Christ." and fled in despair from the spot. The rabbi yielded to the pleas made to him, and was baptized, and was followed shortly afterwards by most of his congregants. The triumphant bishop was convinced of the efficacy of the bones of Stephen as directly responsible of the victory, and he points with pride to the mild methods by which it was possible to win the Jews to Christ.

In Crete also where were many conversions, the outcome of the activities of a pseudo-Messiah name Moses, who had promised the Jews that like his famous namesake, he would lead them dryshod through the sea to the Promised Land. The day of the expected miracle arrived, and crowds of the deluded Jews assembled on the shores of the Mediterranean. "The impostor directed them to throw themselves into the water, which many doing were either drowned or picked up by Christian vessels. When the rest of the Jews turned to revenge themselves on their prophet, Moses had conveniently disappeared. As a result, a number were willing to be convinced that in Jesus the true Messiah must have already come, and consented to be baptized.

From this time, however, until the modern period, the approach to the Jews in Europe was less by reason and charity and more by compulsion, intimidation and active violence. Their continued existence outside the pale of the Church was thought of as an insult to the Savior, which must be wiped out by the waters of baptism or their own blood.<sup>116</sup>

#### ADDENDUM TO CHAPTER VII

##### Some Profession of Faith Required of Jewish Converts<sup>117</sup>

##### *From the Church of Constantinople*<sup>118</sup>

As a preliminary to his acceptance as a catechumen, a Jew "must confess

and denounce verbally, the whole Hebrew people, forthwith declare that with a whole heart and sincere faith he desires to be received among the Christians. Then he must renounce openly in the church all Jewish superstition, the priest saying, and he, or his sponsor if he is a child, replying in these words:

“I renounce all customs, rites, legalisms, unleavened breads and sacrifice of lambs of the Hebrews, and all the other feasts of the Hebrews, sacrifices, prayers, aspersions, purifications, sanctifications, and propitiations, and fasts, and new moons, and Sabbaths, and superstitions, and hymns and chants and observances and synagogues, and the food and drink of the Hebrew; in one word, I renounce absolutely everything Jewish, every law, rite and custom, and above all I renounce Antichrist, whom all the Jews await in the figure and form of Christ; and I join myself to the true Christ and God. and I believe in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Holy. Consubstantial and Indivisible Trinity, and the dispensation in the flesh and the descent to men of the Word of God, of the one person of the Holy Trinity, and I confess that he was truly made man, and I believe and proclaim that after the flesh in very truth, the Blessed Virgin Mary bore him, the Son of God; and I believe in, receive, venerate and embrace the adorable Cross of Christ, and the holy images: and thus, with my whole heart, and soul, and with a true faith I come to the Christian Faith. But if it be with deceit and hypocrisy, and not with a sincere and perfect faith and a genuine love of Christ, but with a pretence to be a Christian that I come, and if afterwards I shall wish to deny and return to Jewish superstition, or shall be found eating with Jews, or feasting with them, or secretly conversing and condemning the Christian religion instead of openly confuting them and condemning their vain faith, then let the trembling of Cain and the leprosy of Gehazi cleave to me, as well as the legal punishments to which I acknowledge myself liable. And may I be anathema in the world to come, and may my soul be set down with Satan and the devils.”

*Of Uncertain Eastern Origin, attached to the Clementine Recognitions*

“It is my desire today to come from the Hebrew to the Christian faith. I have not been brought by any force, necessity, fear, annoyance or poverty; nor because of a debt, or of an accusation lodged against me; nor for the sake of worldly honors, of advantages, of money or property which has been promised me by anyone; nor for the sake of its useful consequences,

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nor to obtain human patronage; nor because of any quarrel or dispute which I have had with people of my own religion; nor for secret purposes of revenge on the Christians, by a feigned admiration for their law, nor because I have been wronged by them: but I have been brought by a wholehearted love of Christ and of faith in Him.

I renounce the whole worship of the Hebrew, circumcision, all its legalisms, unleavened bread, Passover, the sacrificing of lambs, the feasts of Weeks, Jubilees, Trumpets, Atonement, Tabernacles, and all the other Hebrew feasts, their sacrifices, prayers, aspersions, purifications, expiations, fasts, Sabbaths, new moons, foods and drinks. And I absolutely renounce every custom and institution of the Jewish laws.

Moreover, I place under anathema the heresies among the Jews, and the heretics themselves. I anathematize the Sadducees, who are called just, who blaspheme the Holy Spirit, who attack

the resurrection of the dead, and deny the existence of angels. I anathematize the Pharisees, the separate ones, who fast on the second and fifth days, who pretend to sexual abstinence at definite times, and afterwards despise all continence, who foretell the future, and waste their time on astrology. I anathematize the Nazarenes, the stubborn ones, who deny that the laws of sacrifices was given by Moses, who abstain from eating living things, and who never offer sacrifice: I anathematize the Osseans, the blindest of all men, who use other scriptures than the Law, and reject most of the prophets, and who boast in a man as master, one Elzai, that is 'the hidden virtue,' and who worship, as Gods, two women of his offspring. Marthonis and Marthana: I anathematize the Herodians, who worship as Christ a foreign king of the Jews, Herod, who was eaten of worms. I anathematize the Hemerobaptists, who believe as do the Pharisees, but also teach that a man cannot be saved without daily washing. I anathematize the scribes, or doctors of the Law, who are not content to live according to the Law, but of their own free will perform more than is prescribed by the Law, and devising washing of vessels and cups and platters and other articles of furniture, and frequently wash their hands and their feet; and who call all these many traditions they have added to the Law 'Deuteroses,' as though they were a second series of Divine Laws, and they falsely ascribe the first to Moses, and the second to Rabbi Akiba, and the third to Annas who is also called Judas, and the fourth to the sons of the Hasmoneans, who even violated the Sabbath in battle.

Together with all these Jewish heresies and heresiarchs, deuteroses and

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givers thereof, I anathematize those who celebrate the feast of Mordecai on the first Sabbath of the Christian fast, hanging the effigy of Haman on a gibbet, and mingling the sign of the cross therewith, and burning all together, and subjecting the Christians to every kind of curse and anathema.

II. Together with the ancients, I anathematize also the Chief Rabbis and new evil doctors of the Jews, to wit, Lazarus the inventor of the abominable feast which they call Monopodaria, and Elijah who was no less impious, and Benjamin, Zebedee, Abraham, Symbatius and the rest of them. Further, I invoke every curse and anathema on him whose coming is expected by the Jews as the Christ or Anointed, but is rather Anti-Christ, and I renounce him and commit myself to the only true Christ and God. And I believe in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Holy consubstantial and Indivisible Trinity; I confess the Incarnation and the coming to man of the one of the Holy Trinity, to wit, the only begotten son and Word of God, begotten of the Father before all the centuries, through Whom all things were made. I believe Him to be the Messiah foretold by the Law and the prophets: and I am convinced that He has already come into the world for the salvation of mankind; that He was truly made man, and did not surrender His Divinity, that he is truly God and truly man, without confusion, change or alteration, of one person and two natures. I believe that He suffered all things of His own will, and was crucified in the flesh, while His Divinity remained impassable, and was buried, and rose again on the third day, and ascended into heaven, and shall come again in glory to judge both the living and the dead.

And I believe and profess the Blessed Virgin Mary, who bore Him according to the flesh, and who remained a virgin, to be truly and actually the Mother of God, and I venerate and honor her truly as the Mother of God Incarnate, and as the Lady and mistress thereby of all creation.

I am convinced and confess and believe that the bread and the wine which is mystically



consecrated among Christians, and which they take in their sacred rites, is the very body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, transmuted by His Divine power reasonably and invisibly, in His own way beyond all natural understanding, and I confess that in taking the sacrament I am taking His very body and blood, to the gaining of life eternal and the inheritance of the Kingdom of heaven which belongs to those who receive them in perfect faith.

Finally, I beg for Christian baptism, out of a pure and a spotless heart and mind, and a sincere faith, truly persuaded that it is the true spiritual

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washing, and regeneration of the soul and body.

III. I receive, honor and accept as symbols and indications of their prototypes, the venerable Cross of the true Christ and God, no longer the instrument of death and crime, but of liberty and eternal life, and the sign of victory over death and Satan; likewise, I receive the hitherto venerated images of both the Word of God according to the flesh among men, and likewise, of the most pure and ineffable Mother of God, of the holy angels, and finally of all the saints.

I honor and venerate with the honor due to them the blessed angels and all the saints, not only the patriarchs and prophets, but the apostles, martyrs, confessors, doctors, saints, all indeed who pleased Christ when he came, as His servants and faithful followers.

Wherefore, with my whole heart and mind and with deliberate choice, I come to the Christian faith.

But if I make this statement falsely and deceitfully, and not on the witness of my whole conviction and in love for the Christ who has already come, but because of some compulsion, necessity, fear, loss, poverty, debt, accusation brought against me, worldly honor, dignity of any kind, money, promised gifts, or to serve some end, or for human protection, or because of dispute and quarrel with some of my own faith, or to revenge myself thus on the Christians, feigning respect for their law, or if I pretend to become a Christian because of some injuries suffered from them, and then revert to Judaism, or be found eating with the Jews, or observing their feasts and fasts, or speaking secretly with them, or defaming the Christian faith, or visiting their synagogues or oratories, or taking them under my protecting, and do not rather confute the said Jews and their acts openly, and revile their empty faith, then may there come upon me all the curses which Moses wrote in Deuteronomy, and the trembling of Cain, and the leprosy of Gehazi, in addition to the penalties by law established, and may I be without any hope of pardon, and in the age to come may I be anathema and double anathema, and may my soul be set down with Satan and his demons.”

## Chapter IX

## 1

It has been said that what is hated long enough will in the end become hateful, and this aphorism is so far exemplified in the history of the Nazarenes that having been continually treated as heretics, they did eventually become heretical. Cut off from communion with their brethren by race on one side, and faith on the other, their resistance to Gnostic influences was steadily worn down, and their doctrines became more and more divergent from the tradition which had supported them for nearly five hundred years.

Already in the fourth century, the separation between the Syrian and Transjordanian Jewish Christians seems to have become absolute: the former suffering a slow extinction and in part being absorbed by the Gentile Syrian Church, while the latter were well nigh submerged by the strange sects of the eastern deserts.

In order to understand the causes of Ebionite-Nazarene disruption, one has to go a long way back to the genesis of the Hasidic movement in the second century B.C. At that time there came into existence a body of "purists" or "pietists" as a protest against the hellenization which was undermining Jewish allegiance to the ancestral beliefs.

After the Maccabean struggle in which they actively participated, they retired altogether from public affairs, and about B.C. 72, were joined by the Zaddokites, who were being persecuted by the Pharisees.<sup>119</sup> These followers of a certain Zadok, or perhaps the righteous priest of that name in the reign of David, were antagonistic to doctrines inferred from the Law and not implicit in it, and so opposed to the Pharisee interpretations which resulted in the Oral Law. In the quiet places of their choosing in the wilderness of Engedi, the Hasidic groups, better known as Essenes, developed a kind of theosophy in which a knowledge of angelic powers played a part. They practised healing and laid great stress on personal purity, which demanded frequent ablutions. It is a critical question how far the movement headed by John the Baptist drew its inspiration from this source. Names by which different groups became known, Hemerobaptists, Masbotheans, etc., attest the manner of life which they adopted. In the early days of Christianity, another group became prominent, followers of a certain Elzai or Elkesai, supposed to mean "the hidden virtue," but whose name may have been taken on the pattern of the Zaddokites from

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the ancient Jewish high priest Hilkiah.

The Jewish Christian refugees from the overthrow of Jerusalem were thrown into close proximity with these offshoots of Judaism, and only the strength of their convictions prevented an early amalgamation with the Jewish sectaries with whom they had so much in common. The Elkesean propaganda shows clear traces of infiltration of Nazarene ideas, and Epiphanius tells us the founder of this heresy was greatly honored by the Nazarenes and Ebionites who highly esteemed his book.<sup>120</sup> To many of the rabbinical Jews, the tenets of the eastern gnostics made a strong appeal. They caught them on the reaction from the frustration of their political hopes. The *Sephar Yetsirah* (Book of Formation) and the mystic lore of the *Merkhagaqn* (the Heavenly Chariot) bear witness to this influence, which in orthodox Judaism finally led to Kabbalism.

Gentile Christianity also suffered from Egyptian gnostic seductions, which assumed a form

agreeing readily with the new Christology, and it took all the thunder of eminent divines like Irenaeus, Hippolytus and Tertullian to vanquish the intruder. The first Epistle to Timothy closes with a warning against “profane and vain babblings, and the antitheses of the Gnosis, falsely so-called: which some professing have erred concerning the faith.”<sup>121</sup> The doctrine of the Pairs and Opposites (antitheses), the successive emanations from the Godhead, was a common feature of all the gnostic systems. According to the greatest of the gnostics, Valentinus, there were fifteen of these.

In the Jewish form of gnosticism, these emanations are represented by the ten *sephiroth*, which telescope out of each other or branch out from the Tree of Life. We find Jewish Christianity affected with this doctrine, and these words are put into the mouth of Peter in the *Clementine Homilies*:

Hence therefore God, teaching men with respect to the truth of existing things, being himself One and sole God from the beginning, having made heaven and earth, day and night, light and fire, sun and moon, life and death. But man alone amongst these he made self-controlling, having a fitness to be either righteous or unrighteous. To him also he hath varied the figures of combinations, placing before him small things first, and great ones afterwards, such as the world and eternity. But the world that now is, is temporary: that which shall be, is eternal. First is ignorance, then knowledge. So also has he arranged the leaders of prophecy. For, since the present world is female, as a mother

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bringing forth the souls of her children, but the world to come is male, as a father receiving his children; therefore in this world there come a succession of prophets, as being sons of the world to come, and having a knowledge of men. And if pious men had understood this mystery, they would never have gone astray.<sup>122</sup>

In the so-called *Gospel of the Egyptians*, a gnostic Gospel, Egypt being the spiritual home of the mysteries, Jesus is made to say, “I have come to destroy the works of the woman” i.e., the works of this world. The same Gospel develops the idea of Christ transforming the present cosmos, typified by a woman, Salome, into the male world-to-come by an androgynous process in which male and female are reunited in one body as at the beginning of the creation when God made man male and female. The doctrine reached full development in the Sophia literature, erring Wisdom, she who had to be redeemed by the descent of Christ from on high and restored to her rightful place in the celestial hierarchy. The theme was an elevated one and had a wide appeal, so that it could produce a worthy hymnology of which the following example may be quoted:

First, there was Mind the generative Law of all.  
Second to the firstborn was liquid Chaos.  
Third, soul, through toil received the Law:  
In misery she enters the labyrinth of ills.  
and Jesus said: O Father, I will descend.  
Through aeons universal will I make a path,  
Through mysteries all I'll open up a way,  
And forms of gods will I display.  
The secret of the holy path I will hand on,

And call it Gnosis.

In this hymn the link with the Pauline school can be clearly seen.

Christ is the head of the Church: and he is the Savior of the body .... Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it .... that he might present it .... not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing .... For this cause shall a Man (Christ Jesus) leave his Father (God) and mother (Holy Spirit), and be joined unto his wife (the Church), and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.<sup>123</sup>

In the *Gospel of the Hebrews*. Jesus also speaks of die Holy Spirit as his Mother, and says. "My mysteries are for me and the sons of my house." There grew up an esoteric doctrine of the Savior revealed only

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to the initiated, and of which naturally we now know very little.

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In its more ascetic and unworldly forms, Gnosticism was distinguished by celibacy and vegetarianism.<sup>124</sup> In the Catholic church through the teaching of Clement of Alexandria and the school of Origen, this gave rise to monasticism.

It was these ideas which peopled the deserts of Nitria and Scete with myriads of monks wrestling with their bodies, those prison-houses of the soul, struggling to die to the world of matter, that their ethereal souls might shake themselves free.<sup>125</sup>

We know little about celibacy among the Jewish Christians, but vegetarianism in time became an essential of their faith, so that they were even driven to altering their Gospel to support their doctrine, omitting locusts from the dietary of the Baptist, and changing the saying of Jesus to his disciples before the last supper to, "Have I desired to eat this flesh of the Passover with you?"<sup>126</sup> A stage in the development of this prejudice against animal food is found in the belief that the sacrificial system had been done away in Christ, to be replaced by thanksgiving (eucharist), and Scriptures such as Psalm 50:13-14, 69:31 were quoted as proof. It was said that by the grace of baptism Jesus had extinguished the fire on the priest's altar, and he was made to say in the corrupted Hebrew Gospel, "I came to destroy the sacrifices, and if ye cease not from sacrificing, the wrath of God will not cease from you." In allusion to which, the rabbis nicknamed Jesus *Thodah* (thanksgiving).<sup>127</sup>

It has been necessary to treat of Gnosticism at such length because it is directly due to its subtle influence that the downfall of independent Jewish Christianity must be attributed. The Christology of the Ebionites had become, in the fourth century, a curious blend of old and new conceptions. According to Epiphanius, they said:

That Jesus was begotten of the seed of man, and was chosen; and so by the choice he was called son of God from the Christ that entered into him from above in the likeness of a dove. And they deny that he was begotten of God the Father, but say that he was created, as one of the archangels, yet greater, and that he is the lord of angels and of all things made by the Almighty.

The Christ (above), they say, is a manlike figure, invisible to men in general.<sup>128</sup>

They also seem to have held that it was possible for any of their number to attain to Christhood by leading a life of equal sanctity.

## 3

There is a deep tragedy in the end of the once powerful and respected Church of the Apostles. No sudden and merciful extinction was granted to the ancient communities of Jewish Believers; but a slow decay set in which in the course of time reduced their number to a few fragmentary groups who had almost forgotten their own origin. We would like to know more about those closing scenes, but the successive waves of Persian and Arab invasion which swept over Syria and Palestine made even Gentile Christianity a hunted thing so that the records are well nigh silent. We do hear casually that a Persian commander on one occasion asked the Byzantine general, Belisarius, to postpone a battle as it would have taken place during the Passover, when the Jews and Nazarenes would not willingly fight;<sup>129</sup> so that early in the seventh century the Nazarenes were still fairly numerous.

The venerable text of the Hebrew Gospel preserved in the Pamphilian Library at Cesarea was itself reduced to ashes in the sack of the city by the Mohammedans in A.D. 653, and almost the latest traces of it at present known are a few marginal readings from "the Jewish" in the so-called Zion group of manuscripts.

A few of the Nazarenes may have joined the standard of the Prophet; for some of the Christian references in the Koran appear to rest on Jewish Christian apocrypha: but such references as the Arab writers offer us point to the lingering on of isolated and eccentric groups. We have a statement of the En-Nadim about the Mughtasila, or "Washers," who in the tenth century still revered a prophet called Al-Hasih, evidently the old Elkesai of the Ebionites and Hemerobaptists, and possibly the Nazarene-Mandaites of the Euphrates valley even today preserve vestiges of the ancient traditions. Recently the writer has obtained evidence in Palestine which may identify with the Nazarenes another small group inhabiting the Transjordanian highlands in the little village of El-Husn. These Arabs, as they call themselves, keep Sabbath and circumcision, are vegetarians and non-smokers, reject image worship and govern their lives by the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount. They look for Christ to return and reign for a thousand years.

With the rise of Islam, the real work of Jewish Christianity in the East

had finished. It had left in possession at least a faith in which the Unity of God was a fundamental principle and in which Jesus was recognized as a great and true prophet. The story is told of the Emperor Heraclius, that being warned in a dream that his power would be destroyed by "the circumcised" he ordered the compulsory baptism of all the Jews in his realm: he did not realize that "the circumcised" were really the Arabs.<sup>130</sup> From this time the future of Jewish Christianity lay in the West until the times of the Gentiles should be fulfilled.

## Chapter X

## 1

The history of Jewish Christianity from the seventh century to the represent day is principally a record of individual converts, who, such was the intolerance of the times, scarcely dare acknowledge their Jewish extraction for fear of persecution on the ground of sympathy towards their former co-religionists. Bitter accusations have been brought against Jewish Christians by Jewish writers, of fanatically persecuting their brethren, and it is sad to relate but honest to confess that in a great many instances these charges are true. When, however, the religious and social conditions are taken into consideration certain circumstances appear which explain many of these unhappy occurrences,

A large number of so-called converts were compulsory Christians, whom the Jews classed as *Anusim*, as distinguished from *Meshumadim* Apostates), who had been baptized in order to escape confiscation of their goods, if not the loss of their lives, or had adopted the Christian faith from motives of self interest. Such converts had their every action scrutinized by a vigilant and bigoted clergy ever on the look out to discover the least signs of relapse into Judaism; and immunity from espionage was often only purchased by a zeal for Jewish conversion and persecution of those who resisted the Christian claims. The crime of Judaizing, which sometimes meant nothing more than saying a word in favor of the Jews, was punished by heavy fines, confiscation of property, lifelong imprisonment, or death, according to the heinousness of the offence. The instinct for self-preservation may thus be pleaded in extenuation of much that Jewish people suffered at the hands of Christianized Jews.

In the case of sincere Jewish Christians, who must always be distinguished from Christianized Jews, the real motive which animated them was the desire to open the eyes of their brethren to the saving truth that Jesus is the Messiah. The efforts of these converts, however, were too often frustrated by the clergy supporting them, who with great zeal but little understanding went beyond the gentler arts of persuasion and demonstration to use harsher methods to soften obdurate hearts. Many a mission, which might have proved successful if the Jewish converts had been left alone to present their case in their own way, was turned into a massacre by ecclesiastical interference or popular malice, to the great sorrow of those who were unwittingly responsible. In the instances of

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definite fanaticism which have to be recorded, the harsh polemics and burnings of the Talmud, one must remember that blasphemy was a much more grievous sin in those days, that the torment of the damned in hell was a reality that made any present suffering worth while if it could secure immunity, and that cruelty in word and act was less tempered by social custom.

The Jews themselves were by no means guiltless of acts of violence, though with more excuse, especially when goaded to madness by persecution, and they frequently behaved so vengefully towards converts as to bring down retributive measures on their own heads. One can only read with shame some of their penitential prayers and their obscene libels on Jesus and his mother which they wrote and studied in secret.

As for those ghouls of Jewish race, mercifully few, who batted on their people's misery, and used Christianity as a cloak to enrich themselves by the spoilation of their brethren, no words can

express their infamy, which is as much a disgrace to Judaism as it is to Jewish Christianity.

Considering the persecutions which the Jews in Europe endured at Christian hands, and the corrupt state of the Christian religion, it is a great wonder that there were any sincere converts at all, instead of the love of Christ the Jew saw only undying hatred. The methods which were employed in his attempted conversion could not but confirm him in his detestation of so barbarous a faith.

Every passion was in arms against them. The monarchs were instigated by avarice; the nobility by the warlike spirit generated by chivalry; the clergy by bigotry; the people by all these concurrent motives. Each of the great changes which were gradually taking place in the state of the world seemed to darken the condition of this unhappy people, till the outward degradation worked inward upon their own minds. Confined to base and sordid occupations, they contracted their thoughts and feelings to their station. individual and national character must be endowed with more than ordinary greatness if it can long maintain self-estimation after it has totally lost the esteem of mankind; the despised will usually become despicable.<sup>131</sup>

There is a considerable element of truth in this statement, though it is straining the facts to suggest that the Jews ever sunk into a state of complete degradation. Surprising as it is they were able to give of their best during the dark night of persecution, and their sweetest poetry and most profound

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philosophy was penned under the awful conditions of their existence.

One cannot help feeling to a certain extent that the church in desiring Jewish conversion was not so much concerned that this people might share in the blessings of Christ, but that a sore and excrescence on the Christian body politic might be removed. Popular superstition even had it that the Jew was possessed of an offensive odor, which disappeared on his baptism. At the best, Jewish survival was a challenge to Christian supremacy, and the war on Judaism was a war on an enemy of the State. To employ a modern American expression, the Jew was Christendom's Public Enemy No. 1.

But the object of this history is not to record the sufferings of the Jewish people, which have been fully dealt with by many writers, yet in justice to those who might have been Christ's but for Christendom, one cannot omit in the course of the narrative some account of Christian methods of propaganda among the Jews.

One may say indeed that a reference to these methods is essential to the history; for the story of Jewish Christianity is almost inextricably intertwined with that of the Jewish people. It is a curious kind of history with little of logical sequence; a stepping from century to century and from place to place through all the lands of Israel's dispersion, examining the archives for evidence of Jewish believers in Jesus Christ, and noting the part they played in their day and generation. Occasionally one lights on a family or group that offers a more protracted picture, a beacon that burns a little longer than others before it is swallowed up in the surrounding darkness. Yet a beacon is a static thing, and our chain of believing Israelites is marching with the centuries, a procession of torchbearers.

For many hundreds of years, long anterior even to the fateful fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, a Jewish population had been building up in the great western peninsular of Spain. The country

had suffered in the early fifth century the ruthless invasion of the barbarian hordes that swept across Europe, vandals, Alani and Suevi, but by A.D. 429 the two first had retired to Africa and the last had been entirely subdued by the Visigoth Theodoric in 456. Although nominally the reoccupation of Spain was for the Roman emperor, it was not long before the Visigoths had established a kingdom free from any allegiance to Rome. Jewish non-resistance to the invaders had preserved them from some of the worst severities of the struggle, and under the earlier Visigothic kings who favored the Arian interpretation of Christianity they multiplied and prospered. A change

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took place with the adoption by a later king Recared of the Nicene Creed, and it was in this reign that the first laws adverse to the Jews were passed, A.D. 589.

But these decrees were as nothing compared with what was to follow twenty-five years later. Inspired by the Byzantine Emperor, Heraclius, the compulsory conversion of all the Jews in the Visigothic kingdom was decreed by King Sisebut in A.D. 614. The proclamation, as preserved in the Spanish code *Fuero Jusgo*, runs as follows:

Whereas Truth itself instructs us to ask, and to knock, assuring us that the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence: it cannot be doubted that whosoever fails to approach it with an ardent desire, is a despiser of the proffered grace.

Wherefore, if any of those Jews as yet unbaptized, shall delay to be himself baptized, or neglect to send his children and slaves to the priest for baptism while it is offered, thus abiding without the grace of baptism, for the space of one year from the issue of this decree: every such transgressor, wherever found, shall be stripped, and shall suffer one hundred lashes, as likewise the due penalty of exile: his goods shall be forfeit to the king; and in order that his life may be the more painful, if unamended. such goods shall become the perpetual property of those on whom the king shall bestow them.

The decree fell like a bombshell on the Jewish communities, and even a famous contemporary churchman, St. Isidore of Seville, felt that the king had exceeded his duties. "Sisebut," he wrote, "by urging the Jews into Christianity, had indeed 'a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.' For he forcibly compelled those whom he should rather have persuaded by arguments of the faith."<sup>132</sup>

The protests of the Jews were in vain. The author of the *Shevet Yehudah* (The Scepter of Judah) has given an argument put forward by one of the learned representatives. He thus addressed the king:

It is written in our Law, that Israel formerly despised the great gift of God, the land flowing with milk and honey. I ask, O king, what should be the penalty of those who despise the gift of God? The king replied: "That too is wisely stated in your law; the loss of what they despise. See then, O king," said the rabbi, "to what thou hast said. Thou hast offered us in baptism

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a life everlasting. Be then the penalty for its neglect the loss of that blessing." But the king answered, "Compulsion is unjust in matters concerning the body, and that goodly land related to the body; but in things spiritual, it is proper, just as a child is coerced in its



learning.”

The wholesale baptism of the Jews followed. Some fleeing for refuge to the neighboring kingdom of the Franks, found to their horror and distress that a similar decree had been enacted there by the reigning monarch, King Dagobert.

Thus was begun that pernicious policy which peopled Spain and Portugal, except for the interval of Moorish rule, with crypto-Jews down to the present day. Bound to Christianity by baptismal water, their faith had not more substance than water. Outwardly conforming to the rules of the Church, they led a life of painful and fearful hypocrisy. No less than 90,000 Jews are said to have submitted to Sisebut's Christening.

Nineteen years later, when the Gothic throne was seized by Sisenand with the help of the Franks, there was a short respite from compulsory conversion. At the fourth Council of Toledo it was decreed:

Concerning Jews, this holy synod has resolved to compel no one hereafter to accept our faith. For God has mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will, he hardeneth: and such persons are not saved without consent, but willingly, that the attribute of justice may be kept secure. For as man by his own freewill, in yielding to the serpent, did perish; so when the grace of God doth call, each man is saved in believing, by the conversion of his own mind. Therefore, they are not to be urged by constraint, but persuaded through the free faculty of the will into conversion.

Respecting those already forced into Christianity, as was done in the time of the most religious prince Sisebut, since it is evident that they have been partakers in the Divine sacraments, have received the grace of baptism, have been anointed with the chrism, and have received the body and blood of our Lord, it is right that these be obliged to retain the faith which, although under compulsion and necessity, still they have undertaken, lest the name of God be blasphemed, and the faith which they have assumed be accounted worthless and despicable.<sup>133</sup>

We have given this Canon in full, but there are others of the same

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Council from which extracts must be quoted, for it is only in the very words of these old decrees that we can obtain a true historical insight into the workings of the minds of the creators.

Many who were formerly exalted to the Christian faith, are now known not only in blasphemy against Christ to perpetrate Jewish rites, but have even dared to practise the abomination of circumcision.... Transgressors after this sort, being apprehended by authority of the prelates, shall be recalled to the true worship according to Christian doctrine: so that those whom their own will cannot amend, may be coerced by sacerdotal correction.<sup>134</sup>

We decree that the sons and daughters of Jews are to be separated from their parents, lest they likewise be involved in their errors.<sup>135</sup>

Let there be no further communion of Jews who have been transferred to the Christian faith, with such as adhere to their ancient rites; lest perchance, by mingling with them, they be subverted.<sup>136</sup>

Jews having Christian wives, are to be admonished by the bishop of their diocese, that if

they desire to abide with them, they must become Christian; and if, being so admonished, they refuse to obey, they shall be separated.<sup>137</sup>

Jews who were formerly Christian, but are now deniers of the faith in Christ. are not to be admitted in evidence at law, although they declare themselves Christians.<sup>138</sup>

Can testimony be clearer as to what was the aim of these enactments? Judaism and the very name of Jew was an abomination, and must be rooted out of any Christian country. Wives are to be separated from husbands, children from parents, baptized Jew from obdurate Jew. What room was there here for true acceptance of Christ? Hearts broken with grief. Minds tortured with suffering. If Christ was incarnate anywhere, surely it was in the souls of those who stoutly resisted him. But perhaps it was not Christ, but another in the shape of the outraged Nazarene. One remembers Brownings's passionate lines:

“Thou! if thou wast He. who at mid-watch came,  
By the starlight, naming a dubious name!  
And if, too heavy with sleep -- too rash  
With fear -- O Thou, if that martyr-gash  
Fell on Thee coming to take thine own,

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And we gave the Cross, when we owed the Throne --

“Thou art the Judge. We are bruised thus.  
But, the Judgment over, join sides with us!  
Thine too is the cause! and not more Thine  
Than ours, is the work of these dogs and swine,  
Whose life laughs through and spits at their creed!  
Who maintain Thee in word, and defy Thee in deed!

“We withstood Christ then! Be mindful how  
At least we withstand Barabas now!”<sup>139</sup>

## Chapter XI

## 1

Another reign passed, and a sixth council sat at Toledo. There must be no half measure this time. All Jews, willy-nilly, must be swept into the kingdom of God.

The inflexible perfidy of the Jews comes at length to be subdued by piety and the divine grace. For by inspiration of the Most High God, our most excellent and Christian prince (Chintila), inflamed with ardor for the faith, together with the clergy of his kingdom, has resolved to eradicate to the uttermost their prevarication and superstition, not suffering the residence of any one in the land, who is not a Catholic. For which zeal we render thanks to the Almighty King of Heaven that he has created a soul so illustrious, and endued it with his wisdom. May he bestow upon him a long life in this world, and glory everlasting in the future.<sup>140</sup>

Piety? Divine grace? Inspiration? One can only echo the words in mockery. And what is the product of such wise and gracious counsels? A Christianized Jewish population, cowed and desperate, from which all the attributes of manhood have fallen away, leaving a cringing creature whom our eyes can only look upon with pity. Yet because these Jews profess somehow the faith of Christ we must number them in our story, and present this relic of them, which surely is the strangest and saddest document one can find. It is an address presented to King Reccesuinth in A.D. 653.

To the most clement and serene,  
our lord the King Reccesuinth  
we Hebrews of Toledo and all Spain,  
as under subscribed and sealed.

Well, indeed, and justly, do we remember to have been compelled to draw up an agreement in the name of the memory of King Chintila, of the observance of the Catholic faith: and this we did. But forasmuch as the perfidy of our obstinacy, and the inveteracy of our ancestral error, have impeded our true belief in the Lord Jesus Christ. and sincere adhesion to the Catholic faith -- we do now freely and cheerfully vow to your glory, for ourselves, our wives, and our children, by this our declaration,

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that henceforward we will retain no marriage usages or observances against the rules of the Church.

We will not associate with the ever-to-be-execrated company of unbaptized Jews.

We will not contract marriages within the sixth degree (of consanguinity) as we have done.

We will not contract marriages with our own nation, neither ourselves, nor our sons, nor our posterity: but in each sex will hereafter marry only with Christians.

We will not practise circumcision, or celebrate Passover, Sabbath, or other festival according to Jewish rites.

We will make no discrimination of food, nor in any way observe the abominable usages, customs, or conversation of Jews.

But with sincere faith, grateful mind, and full devotion, will believe in, confess, and

adore, Christ the Son of the Living God, according to the evangelical and apostolical doctrine.

We will truly keep, and sincerely embrace, all the usages of the holy Christian religion, regarding holy days, marriage and diet, and every other observance, with no reservation, objection, or false argument on our part, by means of which we might hereafter practise what we hereby renounce, or fail to fulfil what we hereby promise.

Concerning swine's flesh, we thus engage ourselves, that, although on account of long habit we are not able to endure it, yet we will eat without horror or disgust, of such meats as are dressed along with it.

And if, in any of these matters aforesaid, we be found transgressors in the least degree; or shall presume to act contrary to the Christian faith; or shall delay to accomplish in word or deed such things as are agreeable to the Catholic religion -- we swear by the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, One in Trinity. and the true God, that every singly transgressor among us may be punished with fire and stoning: or if the clemency of your glory should spare his life, both himself and all that pertains to him may be bestowed in slavery on whomsoever you may please: or whatever else you may command to be done with him or his goods, shall be performed; not only by virtue of your sovereign power, but also by the ratification of this our solemn agreement.

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Done at Toledo, 21st of March,  
in the sixth year of your glory.  
In the name of God.

Poor Christianized Jews. Straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel; accepting the whole Nicene Creed, but still rejecting the flesh of swine!

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But God can make even the wrath of man to praise Him; and at this very time a boy was growing to manhood of Jewish birth, who was to become Primate of all Spain, and one of the spiritual and intellectual lights of his age, "a rose among thorns," as one of his biographers. Isidor de Bejah, calls him.

The parentage of Julian, Archbishop of Toledo, is unknown, and even the exact date of his birth is uncertain; but it is probable that he was the son of one of Sisebut's compulsory converts. He was educated at a religious institution in Toledo. We know little of his youth, except that there sprang up between himself and a fellow student Gudilan, a sweet friendship. which developed into a mutual aspiration after holiness. Both were inclined to an ascetic life, and desired to enter a monastery. But this wish did not materialize, for in 656, Julian was appointed Archdeacon of the Cathedral of Toledo, and Gudilan became a priest. Their friendship. however, continued until Gudilan's death in 679.

Soon the fame of Julian's learning was spread abroad, and ere long he was designated as successor to the Archbishopric, to which he was eventually appointed in 680. In this capacity he anointed Ervigio, King of Spain, and presided at the twelfth Council of Toledo. One wonders how he must have felt at the insistence of the members of that Council on further harsh enactments against the Jews. He could not have been altogether a party to them, for his charity of

mind was well known. His successor in the see spoke of him as a man who came very near to the ideal of a servant of Christ. As an instance of Julian's friendly relations with the Jews, one may relate how he once sent a copy of his book on the future life to Bishop Idalus of Barcelona by the hand of a Jewish acquaintance, named Restitutus, to the grave displeasure of the recipient, who wrote to the author marvelling that so orthodox an authority could entrust a spiritual writing to "an infidel and godless Jew; and make as it were an animal a bearer of light."

Julian was a man of many brilliant gifts. His *Apologeticum Fidei*

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expressed his own independent views on the Trinity to the Pope, and caused annoyance at Rome. As an historian, his name lives as to the author of the *Historia Rebellionis Pauli*. But for our purpose his work designed to convert the Jews is of more importance. The *De Comprobatione Aetatis Sextae Contra Judæos* was written in 686 at the request of King Ervigio, to combat the Jewish claim that the Messiah was not to come until the sixth millennium after the Creation, and that therefore Jesus could not be he. Julian's refutation of the Jewish argument rested on the chronology of the Greek Septuagint version of the Bible, which was deemed by the Church to be a purer text than that of the Jews, the Massoretic Hebrew. He cannot, however, have felt that his opponents would be greatly influenced, for in his dedication to the king, he remarks that "if the Jew be not improved by the book, at least the Christian may derive some benefit from it." Yet his prophetic position is strong enough. "Dost thou seek the kingdom of the Jews? he exclaims. "There is none! Seekest thou the altar of the Jews? There is none! Seekest thou the sacrifice of the Jews? It is no more! Seekest thou the priesthood of the Jews? It no longer exists! Everything is gone of which Daniel of old prophesied that it would cease when the Most Holy was anointed!" Out of his heart he cries to his own flesh and blood, "*Viam perdidisti, viam ergo sequere, ut per viam venias ad salutem*" (Thou hast lost the way, therefore seek the way, that by it thou mayest come unto salvation).

Julian of Toledo died on March 6th, AD. 690, full of years and honor, and mourned by all Spain.

3

In Europe the Church held such undisputed possession of the religious field, that it was able to tyrannize over the whole population from the king downwards, and to conduct its missionary propaganda with unmitigated severity backed by the secular arm. But in the East the state had not so wholly delivered itself into ecclesiastical hands even in Christian countries, and the existence of rival religions provided a healthy competition of souls, which in part toned down the physical manifestation of *odium theologicum*. Of slander and vituperation there was plenty; but hard words break no bones, and apart from isolated instances of aggression in the instruments of warfare were largely the tongue and the pen. It remains for the apostles of Islam to make an onslaught on opposition in any

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way comparable to the methods of the Western Church, and even so the followers of the Camel-driver were less intolerant than the followers of the Carpenter, and allowed a man to retain his faith in that faith did not provoke acts of hostility to the dominant regime.

The approach to the Jew of the Eastern Church was therefore through disputation, so beloved of the oriental mind; and when this practice was followed in Europe, it was largely at the

instigation of Jewish Christians.

The accounts of these disputations which have become available to us date almost entirely from the seventh century, before the overwhelming conquests of Islam. There was the disputation between Herbanus the Jew and Gregentius, Archbishop of Tephren in Ethiopia. The victory of the Church in this case was due to a miracle. It was argued by the Archbishop that Jesus was yet alive, and the Jews therefore, seeing a loophole for escape from the discussion, promised to believe in him if they see him. Through the prayer of the Archbishop, the heavens are opened with a clap of thunder, and the revelation is made, striking all the Jews with blindness. Herbanus, however, exclaims: "When a man beholds his God, he receives a blessing therefrom. But we, when we behold your God, receive evil. If such are the gifts He bestows on those who come to Him, certainly he does not share the goodness of his Father." "It is your blasphemies which have blinded you," replies the Archbishop. "If He renders evil for evil, to whom are you committing us?" "At the font you will receive your sight." "And if we are baptized and remain blind?" "I will baptize one and he will see; if not, do not believe." Herbanus agrees. The baptized Jew receives his sight again, and Herbanus and all the other Jews follow his example.

A second disputation is of more interest to us as it took place between Jewish Christians and their brethren. The time is that of the Emperor Heraclius, when many Jews were forced into Christianity. One, Jacob, had escaped baptism by pretending to be a Christian, until he was found out by an exclamation made by him when falling down a flight of stairs. He was then taken and baptized, and took his faith in such earnest, that he convened a series of meetings with other forcibly baptized Jews, and reasoned with them that the religion they had acquired was indeed the true one. The meetings are interrupted by the intrusion of an unbaptized Jew, who creates a sensation by attacking Jacob's character as a former scoundrel, and by claiming that the Messiah is yet to come: he also states that in any case the converts are in error from having been baptized at the

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wrong season. Finally after some turbulent gatherings, the Jew is silenced, and Jacob continues his exposition without interruption to such effect that the Jew is convinced and asks for baptism. He receives it, and sets out to win other Jews to Christ.

There are other disputations to which it is not necessary to refer here, but which may be studied in Dr. Parkes' monumental work, from which the two examples quoted above have been taken.<sup>141</sup>

4

The conquest of Spain by the Moors initiated a time of peace for the Jews, which they were not again to enjoy for several centuries. The breath of the old-wise East blew softly across Europe, bearing learning and enlightenment, and with wisdom came a measure of toleration. A golden age dawned for Judaism. In the new humanitarian atmosphere the repressed genius of the Hebrews blossomed and flowered, and produced distinguished scholars, poets and physicians. To this state of general well-being the liberal Carlovingnian kings greatly contributed. Pepin, Charlemagne and Louis le Debonnaire eased the Jewish burden, so that the populace began to regard the former outcasts again as, "the only people of God." Charlemagne chose as one of his ambassadors to the famous Caliph, Haroun al Rashchid, a certain Isaac, so that "Europe and Asia

beheld the extraordinary spectacle of a Jew conducting the political correspondence between the courts of Aiz-la-Chapelle and Baghdad.”<sup>142</sup> Louis, in turn, had as his most confidential adviser Zedekiah, a Jewish physician. It was in vain for such fanatical churchmen as Agobard, Bishop of Lyons, to protest against the royal favor extended to an “accursed” people; he was only snubbed for his pains. The times were more in sympathy with the scholarly calligrapher, Alcuin.

We see the same mildness manifested to the Jews in England, where William Rufus summoned a convocation of Jewish rabbis and Christian bishops at London to argue their respective creeds before him, and swore that if the Jews gained the victory, then by St. Luke’s face he would embrace Judaism. The issue, however, was indecisive, in spite of a thunderstorm and an earthquake, which the Christians construed as a sign from heaven in their favor. A further account of King William’s relations with the Jews is given in Holingshed’s *Chronicles*, and illustrates Jewish Christianity in this reign.

The king being at Rhoan (Rouen) on a time, there came to him

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divers Jews who inhabited that city, complaining that divers of that nation had renounced their Jewish religion, and were become Christians: wherefore they besought him that, for a certain sum of money which they offered to give, it might please him to constrain them to abjure Christianity, and to turn to the Jewish Law again. He was content to satisfy their desires. And so, receiving their money, called them before him; and what with threats, and putting them otherwise in fear, he compelled divers of them to forsake Christ, and to turn to their old errors. Hereupon, the father of one Stephen, a Jew converted to the Christian faith, being sore troubled for that his son was turned a Christian (and hearing what the king had done in like matters), presented unto him sixty marks of silver conditionally, that he should enforce his son to return to his Jewish religion: whereupon the young man was brought before the king, unto whom the king said: “Sirrah, thy father here complaineth that without his license thou art become a Christian: if this be true, I command thee to return again on the religion of thy nation, without any more ado.” To whom the young man answered: “Your grace (as I guess) doth but jest.” Wherewith the king being moved, said: “What! thou dunghill knave, should I jest with thee? Get thee hence quickly and fulfil my commandment, or by St. Luke’s face, I shall cause thine eyes to be plucked out of thine head.” The young man, nothing abashed thereat, with a constant voice answered: “Truly I will not do it; but know for certain that if you were a good Christian, you would never have uttered such words; for it is the part of a Christian to reduce them again to Christ which are departed from him, and not to separate them from him which rejoined to him by faith.” The king, herewith confounded, commanded the Jew to get him out of his sight. But the father, perceiving that the king could not persuade his son to forsake the Christian faith, required to have his money again. To whom the king said, he had done so much as he promised to do; that was, to persuade him so far as he might. At length when he would have had the king deal further in the matter, the king, to stop his mouth, tendered back to him the half of his money, and kept the other himself. All which increased the suspicion men had of his infidelity.

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In this age of revival of letters in Europe, in which the Jews played so prominent a part, it would be surprising if there were no contribution from a Jewish Christian. Nor are we disappointed; for there flourished at Huesca in Aragon, newly recovered from the Moors, that

distinguished servant of Christ, Moses Sephardi. Born at Huesca in 1062, he was baptized in his native city on June 29th. 1106, King Alfonso I of Aragon and VI of Castile standing godfather to him. It being St. Peter's Day, and in honor of his royal sponsor, Moses took the baptismal name of Petrus Alfonsi. He was made physician-in-ordinary to the king: but it is not on his medical skill that his fame rests, but as the author of the *Disciplina Clericalis*, a work consisting of a series of moral stories, some of them of Arabian origin. The stories became quickly popular, and their influence may be traced far and wide for generations. They enriched that other famous medieval collection, the *Gesta Romanorum*; several of them were incorporated by Chaucer in his *Canterbury Tales*, and some are found at the end of the great printer Caxton's translation of *Æsop's Fables* as thirteen apologues of "Alfonse."

Petrus Alfonsi also wrote a controversial work consisting of twelve Dialogues between Pedro and Mose, i.e., himself before and after conversion, in which he attempted very lovingly and humanely to influence his own people towards Christ. From the text it is clear that he belonged to the school of thought which interpreted the prophets spiritually, and he believed that his nation had been misled through treating them *carnaliter*, in a material sense. Alfonsi died in 1110, at the early age of forty-eight, and was fortunately spared witnessing some of the sufferings that were again to fall on the Jews of Spain.



## Chapter XII

## 1

The era of peace and tolerance was all too soon ended. The voice of a strange fanatic was heard in Europe, a voice which was to herald the rape, torture and murder of thousands of Israelites. Peter the Hermit was calling men to the First Crusade.

Surely one of the strangest anomalies in Christian history was this setting forth of thousands of Christians to deliver the sepulchre of the Jewish Savior with their hands imbued with Jewish blood. Even the heroic knight Godfrey de Bouillon declared that he would avenge the blood of Jesus on that of the Jews. A madness seized the cities of the Rhine.

The abominable Germans and French rose up against them (the Jews), people of a fierce countenance that have no respect to the persons of the aged, neither have they mercy upon the young, and they said: "Let us be revenged for our Messiah upon the Jews that are among us, and let us destroy them from being a nation, that the name of Israel may be had no more in remembrance: so shall they change their glory and be like unto us; then will we go to the East."

So runs a Jewish record. The bishop, Engelbert, who received at his palace the wretched survivors of the massacre of Treves, greeted them with the words: "Wretches, your sins have come upon you: ye who have blasphemed the Son of God and calumniated his mother. This is the cause of your present miseries — this, if ye persist in your obduracy, will destroy you body and soul forever." Some in despair accepted baptism as the price of life, but most refused to be "defiled by the proud waters." Fathers rather killed their wives and daughters, brother slew brother.

Barely had the first tempest of destruction passed over, than another succeeded it. The fanatical cry of *Hep! Hep!* — *Hierosolyma est perdita* (Jerusalem is lost) — rang again through the land. R. Joseph ben Joshua ben Meir records in his *Chronicles*:

That year (1146) was also unto the house of Jacob a time of sorrow and oppression, of emptiness, desolation and destruction.... For the priest Rudolph came into the land of Ashkenaz (Germany) to search out, and to mark with the warp and the

woof (the red cruciform cloth badge of the crusaders) those which would join themselves to go unto Jerusalem. And he spake falsehood against the Jews, the remnant which was left from the first persecution.... And in all places he passed through, he stirred up the dogs in them, saying: "Avenge ye our Lord's vengeance on his enemies who are before us: after that we shall go." And when the Jews heard it ... they cried unto the Lord, and said:

"Alas, O Lord! behold fifty years, like the years of a Jubilee, have not passed by, since our blood was spilt like water for the sanctification of Thy great, mighty and fearful Name, in the day of the great slaughter. If Thou forsake us forever, what wilt Thou do for Thy great Name? Wilt Thou appoint misery a second time?" And the Lord heard their cry, and remembered His covenant ... And He sent after this Belial, the Abbot, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, a city which is in Tzarphath (France). And he called also after

their manner, saying: "Come, let us to up unto Zion, to the sepulchre of their Messiah; but take ye heed that ye speak to the Jews neither good nor bad; for whoever toucheth them is like as if he touched the apple of the eye of Jesus: for they are his flesh and his bone...." And he took no ransom of the Jews, for he spake good of Israel from his heart .... If it had not been for the compassion of the Lord in sending this priest, there would have none escaped nor remained of them, Blessed be He who ransometh and delivereth! Amen.<sup>143</sup>

Bernard wrote many letters in defence of the Jews, in one of which the Archbishop of Mainz, he asks: "Does not the Church obtain a richer victory over the Jews by daily bringing them over from their errors and converting them, than if by the sword she had destroyed them all at a blow?"

On through the Second and Third Crusades the trail of Jewish ruin runs, of which it is needless further here to speak.

It is mercy to record that only one Jewish convert to Christianity turned against his brethren in this time of terror — Nicholas Donin of Paris. So far as Judaism was concerned he was a free-thinker, almost as heinous an offence to the Jew as becoming a Christian, and he rejected the Oral Law as enshrined in the Talmud. For the years he lay under a ban of rabbinical excommunication put upon him by the famous R. Jehiel of Paris. During those years he nursed his grievances and become increasingly embittered against his co-religionists. At length he was persuaded to embrace

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Christianity, and his motive in so doing seems to have been one of revenge. We have to deal here with a warped soul, not a true convert. Donin's actions after his "conversion" show only too clearly the state of his mind. His harsh words are believed to have instigated the crusaders to a massacre of the Jews in which 3,000 persons perished, and some 500 accepted the alternative of baptism. He joined the Franciscan order, and as a monk he pursued his further design to destroy all copies of the Talmud to which he had for so long been opposed. It is probable that this object was indeed his main reason for adopting Christianity. In A.D. 1238 he went to Rome, and there laid charges of blasphemy against the Talmud before Pope Gregory IX. The accusations were accepted, and copies of Donin's indictment under thirty-five heads were sent to Church authorities with instructions that all copies of the Talmud should be seized forthwith, and if the matter complained of appeared, the books were to be burned.

In France, Donin's native country, the order was carried out with great ruthlessness, and the King, Louis IX, even ordered Donin's old enemy, R. Jehiel of Paris, together with three others, Moses of Coucy, Judah ben David of Melun, and Samuel ben Solomon of Chateau-Thierry to meet him in a public disputation (1240). When the arguments on both sides had been heard, Donin was held to have proved his case, and no less than twenty-four wagon-loads of Talmuds and Commentaries thereon were publically burnt. This, before the age of printing, was a terrible blow to the Jews; but the venerable R. Jehiel, it is said, continued his talmudic lectures, reciting his authorities from memory.

2

The Western Disputations, which have now to be considered, were of a different order to those held in eastern countries in that they were held by command of the secular and religious

authorities, and the Jews were not voluntary participants. As a rule, we are thankful to say, the Jewish Christians, who were the prime movers in these engagements, were of a different quality to Nicholas Donin.

Nevertheless, the temper of the times, as we have elsewhere stated, did not always permit of that mildness of demeanor and conciliatory spirit which should have been brought to the discussion of sacred subjects. We cannot blame the Jewish Christian protagonists overmuch when we find them lacking in a tolerance which was equally absent from some of the most sainted Christians of their day, as well as from their Jewish opponents

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in debate. Severity seemed to go hand in hand with sweetness, and harshness with humanity. It is difficult to understand how the same fountain could send out both bitter and sweet waters; but we must accept the fact, and not try to confuse the issue by regarding the circumstances from our own more enlightened viewpoint. Of one sin, perhaps, the Jewish Christians of medieval times were as guilty as some of them are today, the sin of arrogance, as if their safer state backed by the powerful authority of the Church gave them the right to address their own kinsman in a derogatory and contemptuous way. All the more credit is due to those Jewish rabbis who were required to answer them in the presence of ecclesiastical authority with the knowledge that a too frankness of speech might be visited on their heads in dire punishment, and that at the least they were fighting to retain the faith with which they were satisfied against a threat of compulsory conversion.

Less than twenty-five years elapsed from the date of Donin's dispute with R. Jehiel before a second took place, this time between the convert Pablo Christiani and the famous R. Nahmanides in the presence of James I of Aragon and his court.

Christiani hailed from Montpellier in France, and after his conversion became a monk of the Dominican order. He was in great favor with his general, Raymond de Penyaforte, and after an abortive missionary campaign among the Jews of Province, he desired to make a further effort in Aragon. He felt that if the presence of the Jewish religious heads was assured, he would have a better chance of success. Raymond de Penyaforte, therefore, obtained the consent of the king, and Nahmanides and some others were summoned to a public disputation at Barcelona, held in the palace from July 20 to 24, 1263. The terms of the debate were threefold:

- [1] Whether the Messiah has appeared.
- [2] Whether the Messiah announced by the Prophets was to be considered as a god, or as a man born of human parents.
- [3] Whether the Jews or Christians are in possession of the true faith.

Christiani's method was to carry the war into the enemy's camp, and to attempt to prove from the Talmud itself that Christianity was true. But he was no match for the skilled talmudist who opposed him, and Nahmanides completely disarmed the attack by expressing his own disbelief in the Haggadic (homiletic) passages in the Talmud on which Christiani

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relied. The rabbi was cautioned by the Jews about following up the attack as likely to lead to trouble, but intrepidly, with the king's permission, he carried on, and certainly had the better of the discussion, as a typical passage on the Trinity shows:

Fra Pablo asked me — wrote Nahmanides -- whether I believed in the Trinity. I said to him, “What is the Trinity? Do three great human bodies constitute the Divinity?” “No.” “Or are there three ethereal bodies, such as the souls, or are there three angels?” “No.” “Or is an object composed of the four elements?” “No.” “What then in the Trinity?” He said: “Wisdom, will and power.” Then I said: “I also acknowledge that God is wise and not foolish, that He has a will unchangeable, and that He is mighty and not weak. But the term *Trinity* is decidedly erroneous; for wisdom is not accidental in the Creator, since He and His wisdom are one, He and His will are one, He and His power are one, so that wisdom, will and power are one. Moreover, even were these things accidental in Him, that which is called God would not be three beings, but one Being with these three accidental attributes.” Our lord the king here quoted an analogy which the erring ones had taught him, saying, that there are also three things in wine, namely, color, taste and bouquet, yet it is still one thing. This is a decided error; for the redness, the taste and the bouquet of the wine are distinct essences, each of them potentially self-existent; for there are red, white, and other colors, and the same statement holds good with regard to taste and bouquet. The redness, the taste and the bouquet, moreover, are not the wine itself, but the thing which fills the vessel, and which is, therefore, a body with the three accidents. Following this course of argument, there would be four, since the enumeration should include God, His wisdom, His will, and His power, and these are four. You would even have to speak of five things; for He lives, and His life is apart of Him just as much as His wisdom. Thus the definition would be — God, living, wise, endowed with will, and mighty; the Divinity would therefore be five-fold in nature. All this, however, is an evident error. Then Fra Pablo arose and said that he believed in the Unity, which, none the less, included the Trinity, although this was an exceedingly deep mystery, which event the angels and the

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princes of heaven could not comprehend. I arose and said: “It is evident that a person does not believe what he does not know: therefore, the angels do not believe in the Trinity.” His colleagues then bade him be silent.<sup>144</sup>

In spite of Nahmanides’ able reasoning, the Dominicans claimed the victory, and Nahmanides was forced in his own defence to publish the proceedings. The matter did not rest there, however, for Christiani, securing a copy of the work, marked certain passages as blasphemous. A formal complaint was made to the king which resulted in the burning of the pamphlet and a two-years exile of its author.

Pablo Christiani further obtained a bull from Pope Clement IV (1264) for a censorship of the Talmud, and himself sat on the commission appointed to expunge offending passages. On the same commission sat Raymund Martini, author of that well-known polemical work against the Jews the *Pugio Fidei* (Poignard of Faith). Christiani also obtained from Louis IX of France an edict requiring Jews to wear distinguishing badges, which took the form of a small cloth circlet. Even if his misguided efforts resulted in some annoyance and distress to his own people, they laid the foundations of a better Christian appreciation of Jewish thought and belief.

Another Jewish Christian, but far more learned, who helped to make Jewish literature better known, was Abner of Burgos (1270-1348). He graduated as a physician at the early age of

twenty-five and had a taste for the peripatetic philosophy and astrology. His conversion caused quite a stir in the Judaeo-Spanish communities, and curiously in a Hebrew essay *Iggeret ha-Gezerah* (Epistle of Fate) addressed to a Jewish friend, he attempted in part to justify his action on the ground of planetary influence. Abner was a prolific writer, and among his works which have been preserved, either in Hebrew or Spanish, are the following: *Moreh Tzedek* (Teacher of Righteousness), *T'shubot al-Sepher Milhamot Adonai le-Kimhi* (Reply to Kimhi's Book on the Wars of the Lord), *La Concordia de las Leyes* (Harmony of the Laws, i.e., of Moses with the Gospels), *Libro de las Tres Gracias* (Book of the Three Graces), and *Minhat Kenaot* (Offering of Jealousy). He was appointed Sacristan of the Metropolitan Church of Valladolid.

Nearly a century after the disputation of Barcelona, another took place at Burgos, where the protagonists were on the one side a Jewish Christian convert of Abner of Burgos and the Jewish Christian John of Valladolid, and on the other side, Moses haCohen of Tordesillas. The disputation

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was held in the presence of Archbishop Gomez of Toledo.

John of Valladolid (b. 1335) attempted to demonstrate from the Bible, the Messiahship and Divinity of Jesus, the dogma of the Trinity and other doctrines. He employed some extraordinary methods of exegesis, claiming, for instance, that the closed letter "mem" in the Hebrew word *l'marebeh* (Isa. 9:6) "of the *increase* of his government and peace there shall be no end" indicated the perpetual virginity of Mary.

The disputation was a wind-up to a preaching tour of the Castilian provinces under an order given by King Henry of Castile, whereby John hoped to be able to persuade his own people of the truth of Christianity if the Jews were compelled to listen to him. He made the mistake, so often repeated, of basing his argument on petty points of hermeneutics instead of on the wider sweep of the evangelical message. The Jewish rabbis were easily able to evade the real issue when it came to a battle of texts and the construction of words.

By far the most important of the disputations was that which occupied sixty-nine sessions, and lasted from February 1413 to November 1414. It was held at Tortosa in Aragon, in the presence of the antipope Benedict XIII (Pedro de Luna) and a large gathering of dignitaries both of the Church and Synagogue. The solemn convocation had been convened to hear the convert Joshua ben Joseph ibn Vives Al Lorqui (Geronimo de Santa Fe). Supporting him was the Jewish Christian Andreas Baltram, afterwards Bishop of Barcelona. On the Jewish side, ready to answer such questions as were put to them, were twenty-two (the Jewish records only give sixteen names) of the most distinguished rabbis and scholars of Aragon under the leadership of Don Vidal ben Benvenista. Benedict welcomed them in these words:

Men of the honored Hebrew race, the people whom God selected, though now cast off on account of transgression. Fear nothing in this disputation, when I the Pope bid you be of good courage. None shall injure or molest you, but speak freely and boldly for your cause, repressing and fearing nothing. Geronimo has boasted to me his capability of proving, even from your Talmud, that Messiah is come. Fear not in disputing with him, but freely open your minds, because in a controversy, both parties ought to enjoy an equal right of speech, and be accounted of equal standing.<sup>145</sup>

In Joshua Al Lorqui, Christianity had a worthy Jewish

representative. He was a man of great attainments, a physician and dialectician of no mean skill. His conversion came about as a result of correspondence with another great Jewish Christian, Paul of Burgos, of whom we shall speak presently, and with whom he remonstrated for changing his faith. He devoted his talents and wealth to convincing his people of their errors, and received from them the unmerited nickname of *Megaddef* (the slanderer) from the initials of his baptismal name *Mæstro Geronimo de Santa Fe*. His best known work is his *Probationes N.T. ex V.T. per quas doctinia Talmud improbitur, et dicitur liber contra errores Judæorum*.

The disputation was carried on in a much better spirit. It had been agreed beforehand that all disputed meanings were to be submitted to Baltram for decision, on account of his acknowledged Hebrew and Chaldee scholarship. At the end, all but two of the Jewish disputants signed a declaration that they had been fairly beaten, and more than five thousand Jews accepted Christ and were baptized. The Jewish records are ominously silent about the result.

These discussions had one very important outcome. It was largely due to them that the practice, carried on chiefly by the Dominicans, of compelling attendance at missionary meetings originated. A decree of James II of Aragon (Dcc. 18, 1297) is in these terms:

We also desire and ordain, that the brethren of the Order of Preachers (the Dominicans) do offer the Word of God to the Jews and Saracens of both sexes, by preaching, arguments, conversation, or declaration of the Christian faith. These shall assemble at their call, and listen without interruption to the preaching. Also, to avoid the possibility of their suppressing the conviction of the truth by stubborn silence, they shall reverently answer to the interrogations or objections of the said brethren; they shall also be compelled, when desired, to give access to their books for the investigation of any matters, that so the truth may be the better sifted by a mutual exhibition and collation of writings, and thus be brought to more open light.

Whether or no the practice was a wise one is difficult to judge at this interval of time. The Jews could hardly be expected to make a voluntary audience. But this at least must be said in favor of the method; it gave opportunity to the Jewish religious leaders to offer publicly a clear statement of their faith with full liberty of speech, under safeguards, before

Gentile ecclesiastics who were deeply ignorant of Judaism. It helped to make patent to the most bigoted that the Jew was a thinking sentient human being with a deep religious consciousness, and not a godless pariah, whom to slay was a Christian service. It substituted the argument of reason for stupid cruelty and lust. The age of disputations marks a definite turning point in the treatment of the Jews, which was to head up to humanism.

From that time, massacres gradually ceased, at least in civilized countries, and the ghetto walls, if they isolated, also protected the son of Abraham. Jewish Christianity, albeit unwittingly, had saved Israel from some of the more terrible aspects of anti-Semitism.

## Chapter XIII

## 1

Despite the general antipathy to the Jews in the Middle Ages, many of them were allowed to hold high offices of state, especially those who had accepted the Christian faith. Neither did the most noble houses disdain to give their daughters in marriage to eminent Jewish Christians. Baptism appeared to exercise an almost magical power in removing the semitic "taint," so that while the genius of the Hebrew remained and guided the policies of many parts of Europe, the Jewish flesh and blood which had inherited that genius underwent a metamorphosis, and the supposed injurious qualities were neutralized. As the conversions during this period, whether compulsory or real, were numerous, it came about that in the principal Jewish centers, and especially in Spain, few of the patrician families could say that they had not Jewish blood in their veins. As late as the eighteenth century in Portugal, when King Joseph I thought of publishing an edict commanding all who were of Jewish descent to wear a yellow cap, his minister the Marquis de Pombal presented himself before the monarch with three of the caps. "What are these for?" inquired the king. "One is for your Majesty, one for the Grand Inquisitor, and one is for myself." was Pombal's reply. The pure Aryan ancestry demanded by modern Germany, would practically exclude the whole German population if traced back far enough. The ridiculous side of the Nazi inquisition is exposed by a story they tell. Little Red Riding Hood is walking in the Grunewald, when she meets the wolf. "Where are you going?" asks the wolf. "To look for my grandmother," replies Red Riding Hood. "Ah!" says the wolf, slyly, "there are many people looking for their grandmothers these days." Even the royal house of the Hapsburgs, tracing its ancestry through the Counts of Avinion to the Pierleoni, would be of Jewish Christian origin.

It is instructive to follow the fortunes of two eminent Jewish Christian families, who may be taken as representing — the Pierleoni of Italy, just mentioned, and the Carthagenas of Spain.

The Pierleoni family was founded in the eleventh century by one Baruch, a wealthy Jewish banker of Rome. On becoming a Christian, he latinized his name to Benedictus Christianus and married the daughter of a Roman nobleman. His son Leo de Benedicto Christiano became a powerful figure in Roman political life, affiliating himself with the papal

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party, and owning a castle in Trastevere. His epitaph quoted by Baronius under the year A.D. 1111 shows the esteem in which he was held. It is noticeable that the Jewish side of his paternity is omitted in the epitaph, only his noble Roman mother is mentioned.<sup>146</sup>

Leo's son, Petrus Leonis, from whom the family took its name of Pierleoni, was even more distinguished and appears to have attained the rank of consul. This Petrus Leonis continued his father's policy, controlling the Isola Tiberina in addition to the castle in Trastevere, and having another castle opposite the Tiber bridge near the old theater of Marcellus, which was included in the fortifications. He was the leader of the papal party and the most faithful and powerful protector of the popes. Urban II died in Petrus' castle, and the latter defended the cause of Paschal II against the antipopes and the emperor. When Henry V came to Rome, Petrus Leonis was at the head of the papal legation which effected a reconciliation between the pope and the emperor, but Paschal's attempt to make the son of Petrus prefect of the city caused a riot.<sup>147</sup>

Petrus assisted in the liberation of Pope Gelasius II, and took a prominent part in the election

of Calixtus II. The latter pope signified his recognition of this service, by appointing his son Petrus Pierleoni, head of the papal legation to France, and afterwards using him for several important missions. Petrus died in 1128, having seen his son created Cardinal Pierleoni, and a daughter married to King Roger of Sicily.

Two years later a remarkable event happened. On the throne of the Jewish Christian, apostle Peter, sat another Jewish Christian of the same name — Petrus, Cardinal Pierleoni, had been elected pope as Anacletus II. There was opposition, for a rival faction at Rome had elected Innocent II. Anacletus was vilified by his enemies, who even accused him of incest. The Archbishop of Ravenna stigmatized his tenure of office as, “*Judaicæ perfidæ heresis*” (the heresy of Jewish unbelief): but even so saintly a man as St Bernard of Clairvaux, who upheld the claims of Innocent, and was not unfriendly to the Jews, did not realize the irony of his remark in an epistle to Lothair, that “to the shame of Christ, a man of Jewish origin was come to occupy the chair of St. Peter.” Despite calumination, however, Anacletus remained in office until his death in 1138. Afterwards the Pierleoni family made peace with the rival party.

So many honors heaped upon its members might be thought to have sufficed for any one family: but further distinction was to follow, for a brother of Anacletus, Jordan Pierleoni, was elected Senator, and a little

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later as Patricius became in 1144 head of the Roman Republic. So, for a time in this Jewish Christian house, Rome and Jerusalem were reconciled. In the same century, another brother, Leo Pierleoni, was papal delegate at Sutir (1142) together with a nephew, Petrus. Cencius Pierleoni, some years afterwards, was scriniarius of the Church, and John Pierleoni was appointed Elector by Pope Innocent III, and in this capacity chose Gregory Petri Leonis Rainerii as Senator, The family continued to extend its influence for many subsequent generations.

The second family with which we are concerned is that of the Carthagenas in Spain, founded by the celebrated Rabbi Solomon Halevi, afterwards Bishop Paul of Burgos.

Solomon Halevi, son of Isaac Halevi, was born at Burgos about 1351, and became one of the wealthiest men of that city, besides being deeply learned in the Talmudic literature. He officiated as Rabbi of Burgos and was highly praised for his scholarship and piety by Isaac ben Sheshet with whom he carried on a lengthy correspondence.<sup>148</sup> Abarbanel also, in his commentary on Isaiah 34, calls him a wise man. In 1376 he married, and his wife bore him four sons and one daughter. When in his fortieth year he began a serious study of the claims of Christianity, being led thereto by his intercourse with Christians and the loan to him by a friend of Thomas Aquinas’ treatise *De Legibus*. He was induced to notice the Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament, especially *Jeremiah* 31, and from this point he went on to read the New Testament, and particularly the Pauline Epistles. It was these that finally brought about his conversion, as he afterwards said, “*Paulus me ad findim convertit.*”

On July 21, 1390, Solomon was publicly baptized in the Cathedral of Burgos, together with his mother and children, and took the name of Paul de Santa Maria: his brothers Pedro Suarez and Alvaar Garcia were also baptized, but his wife Joanna, whom he dearly loved, would not then be convinced, and he was forced for a time to separate from her. She was reconciled later, and when she died in 1420 was buried in the Church of S. Pablo, built by her husband.

Forty years of age as he was, well versed in philosophy and theology. Paul did not disdain to



sit among the young theological students of Paris to acquire his Doctorate of Divinity. On one occasion at this time, he was privileged to preach before Pedro de Luna, afterwards Pope Benedict XIII.

After Paris came a visit to London, from which city he sent to Don Meir Alguades a Hebrew satire on the Jewish feast of Purim. Returned to his

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native land, he was soon appointed Archdeacon of Trevino and in 1402 was made Bishop of Carthgena, having been for three years Canon of Seville. He had not forgotten his own people, and through his instrumentality, many Jews were won for Christ, including the famous Dr. Joshua Al-Lorqui, already mentioned. As the Spanish chronicles say, "*copiosas frutos de conversione*" were granted to him.

By this time the fame of his learning and Christian piety had reached the ears of King Henry III of Castile, the invalid, who, on his death appointed Paul by will Keeper of the Royal Seal in succession to Don Pedro Lopez de Ayala, and tutor of his infant son and successor, John II: he was also made a member of the Council of Regency with the Queen-Mother Donna Catalina and the Infante Don Fernando during the young king's minority. He continued in high favor at court, and rendered important state service until his death.

In 1414, the Archbishopric of Burgos fell vacant, and Paul was appointed to the seat. It was a great day of rejoicing in the city of Burgos when the new Bishop came with bells ringing to his palace in the place of his birth. Among those who awaited him there were his old mother, Maria, and his now believing wife, Joanna. These were not long spared to him, however, for his mother died in 1416 and his wife in 1420. He himself lived on until April 29, 1435, and saw with pride his son Alfonso elevated to his own bishopric during his lifetime. He died at the advanced age of eighty-three, and was buried in the family vault that he had built.

The saintly man left a testament to his son that speaks well for the sincerity of his faith and his deep devotion to the service of Christ. As it is the fullest personal memorial of any Jewish Christian of this period, we may usefully quote a fairly lengthy extract.

What would you most wish, my dearly beloved son, that I should leave as a legacy to you at my death? What could be better than to add to the knowledge you already possess of Holy Scripture, which will strengthen your feet in the path of a well directed zeal for Christian truth?

It is this which I bear in my heart, of which I make confession with my lips, and concerning which I understand the words of the prophet "The father shall teach his children thy truth."

I was not myself thus taught in the days of my youth, but was brought up in Jewish blindness and incredulity; while learning Holy Scripture from

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unsanctified teachers, I received erroneous opinions from erring men, who cloud the pure letter of Scripture by impure inventions, as such teachers have been wont to do. But when it pleased Him whose mercies are infinite to call me from darkness to light, and from the depth of the pit to the open air of heaven, the scales seemed as it were to fall from the eyes of my understanding, and I began to

read Holy Scripture with my mind in part released from the bonds of prejudice and unbelief. I began to seek for truth, no longer trusting to the power of my own intellect, but with a humbled spirit, praying God from the heart to make known to me what might be for the salvation of my soul. Day and night I sought help from Him, and thus it came to pass that my love for the Christian faith so much increased, that at length I was able openly to confess the belief which my heart had already received. Afterwards, as time passed on, I devoted myself yet more to the study of Holy Scripture, reading both the Testaments. hearing the words of living teachers, and consulting the writings of holy men, our predecessors: thus I, who was formerly a teacher of error, am become, by the grace of God, a learner of truth, and have continued to the great age I have now attained. I can say in truth that amid the pressure of worldly business, and the cares of my bishopric, which have occupied much of my time, there is no consolation to be compared to that I have found in the contemplation of the Eternal God by the study of His holy and spotless word.

One circumstance, however, I cannot pass over in silence, that to us, the descendants of Levi, have been fulfilled the promises written so many hundreds of years ago: “Wherefore there shall not be for the Levite a portion or inheritance among his brethren: the Lord Himself is his inheritance, as the Lord thy God has said to him.” Truly God Himself is our inheritance. Christ is our portion, who has said of old time that He shall cleanse the sons of Levi and purify them, and they should be the Lord’s, to present this offering, which He will not only look upon, but accept at our hands. It is useful and necessary that you should know all the mercies of my God towards me, and a true and sincere memorial of them cannot be taxed with pride. To you, in particular. I address these recollections, that what you have not seen with your eyes may yet be engraven on your memory as coming from the lips of your father, that in your turn you may tell those who are younger than you, and they to their descendants, not to forget the

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words of the Lord nor cease from the study of His Holy Word.

LaFuente says of Paul of Burgos, that he was, “the most eminent and the wisest man that Spain produced in the fifteenth century, and he may also be regarded as the most eminent in the Church.” It is difficult to imagine that such a man could be associated with the twenty-four harsh enactments against the Jews issued by the Council of Regency in 1412 in the name of the youthful King John, and one must look to the arrogant bearing of some of the local Jewish magnates for extenuating circumstances. That he loved his own brethren cannot be doubted, and in his best known work, *Dialogus Pauli et Sauli Contra Judæos, sive Scrutinium Scripturarum* he wrote:

As for the remnant of Israel, which shall remain at the coming of Christ, we firmly believe that when the delusion of Antichrist has been made manifest, they will turn in truth to the Messiah, and for his sake endure much persecution, continuing to the end steadfast in the faith .... Thus at last shall the whole nation of Israel be brought to the faith in Christ.

He thus shows himself to have had the same hope as his apostolic namesake, whom also in

other respects he so closely resembled, Paul is further remembered for his *Addenda to the Postills of the Bible* of Nicolas de Lyra.

Paul of Burgos was worthily followed by his four sons. The second, Don Alfonso de Carthagenia (1385-1456), first studied law and philosophy, and was made successively Deacon of Santiago and Segovia, Archdeacon of Composstella, and eventually as we have seen followed his father as Bishop of Burgos. Together with this elder brother Don Gonzalo Garcia de Santa Maria, he represented Spain at the Council of Basle (1431), and was treated with great respect for his learning. He was spoken of as “the joy of Spain and the delight of religion.” At one time, Pope Eugenius IV, hearing that he was about to pay a visit to Rome, remarked in full conclave “that in the presence of such a man he felt ashamed to be seated in the chair of St. Peter.” Don Alfonso published numerous works including: *A Chronicle of the Kings of Spain*, a treatise on Christian morality. entitled *Instruction for Knights and Memorials of Virtue*, translations of several books of Seneca and Cicero into Spanish, and a commentary on the twenty-sixth Psalm.

The eldest brother, Don Gonzalo Garcia de Santa Maria (1379-1448), was hardly less distinguished. He was a student both of the classics and

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of rabbinical literature. Gonzalo represented Aragon at the Councils of Basle and Constance. He was in turn Archdeacon of Briviesca, Bishop of Astorga, Bishop of Placentia, and Bishop of Sigüenza.

The third son, Alvar Garcia de Santa Maria, was for some time secretary to John II of Castile, and later to John's uncle, Don Fernando, on his becoming King of Aragon. He wrote the *Chronicles of John II* down to the year 1420.

The fourth son, Pedro de Carthagenia, did not enter the Church, but is known as a noble knight and courageous soldier. At a tournament held in the presence of King John of Castile, he won the prize in jousting with the flower of Spanish chivalry. He was one of the knights who played a valiant part at the battle of Granada, 1431. Don Pedro occupied the position of member of the municipality (the Cortes) of Burgos, and as late as the eighteenth century, according to Da Costa, the family, perpetuated through him, “still preserved in Spain the rank and high esteem which their ancestors formerly obtained.”<sup>149</sup>

During the civil war which took place in the reign of Henry IV of Castile, the Carthagenas sided with the Velascos, Counts of Haro, against the Manricos, Counts of Trevino. In one of the skirmishes, Don Alvar de Carthagenia, son of Don Pedro, was killed.

Such in brief is the record of these two distinguished Jewish Christian families who faithfully served their day and generation.

2

During this period, we hear little of Jewish Christians in the Eastern Church, but undoubtedly there were a considerable number among the Nestorians and Jacobites. One name, however, is outstanding of a man who was greatly honored by his contemporaries and is still held in the highest esteem, Gregory Abu'l Faraj, surnamed Bar-Hebraeus, Maphrian (Primate) of the Eastern Church.

Born at Melitena in 1226, Gregory was the son of a Jewish physician name Aaron, who seems to have embraced Christianity. In his early childhood he already gave promise of greatness, and besides mastering the Greek, Syriac and Arabic languages, he also studied philosophy, theology and medicine. His father was instrumental in curing a disease from which Saurnavinus, a Tartar general, was suffering; and this led to the migration of the family to Antioch. Here Gregory commenced the life of an anchorite, and was visited in his cave by Mar Ignatius, Patriarch of Saba,

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who was to become his great friend and supporter. It was Ignatius who ordained him Bishop of Gubos, on September 14, 1246, when he was only twenty years of age. After many other preferments, it was Ignatius again who created him Maphrian of the eastern Church with his scat at Tagrit on the Tigris, about A.D. 1266.

W.E.W. Carr in a short biography<sup>150</sup> writes of Gregory that:

During his forty years' episcopate, he was never known to have received a farthing from anyone. When the faithful brought purses of money to him as a means of expressing their thanks, he always refused to receive them, and if they were left in his chamber he would always say to the first of his disciples who happened to come: "Take these things out of my sight."

He possessed the Jewish whole-heartedness and love of thoroughness in the discharge of his work. He was a man whose religious zeal was founded upon conviction which had only taken root in his soul after the deepest upheavals and fierce struggles with despair and unbelief. He knew how to tackle the most delicate situations in the spirit of the true gentleman. He was possessed of a saving sense of humor and knew the importance of the occasional relaxation of the mind from the strain imposed by work and study. While his own mind was clear and resolute on the matter of the doctrine and discipline of the church, theological and ecclesiastical disputes were his abomination.

Gregory was very much impressed with the way in which his life seemed to have been marked out in exact periods. "The year in which Saturn and Jupiter were in conjunction in Aquarius," he wrote, "was that in which I was born. Again, twenty years later, when they were in conjunction in Libra, I was consecrated Bishop. After another twenty years, when they were in conjunction in Gemini, I attained the rank of Maphrian, and after another twenty years, when they are again in conjunction in Aquarius, I think my time has come to depart this life." Nor was he mistaken, for he passed away on July 30, 1286. His last words to his disciples were: "Abide in love, and be not separated from each other, for when ye are gathered together in charity, I will be in the midst of you." His funeral at Maraga was on a vast scale, all shops were closed, and everyone vied with the other to pay him a last tribute. The sterling qualities of his mind have been perpetuated in a whole catalogue of scholarly works, of which perhaps the best known are his Syriac Chronicle and his Syriac Grammar.

## Chapter XIV

## 1

Honors did not always reward the Jewish converts, and in some countries they were deprived of all their possessions on baptism. This was because as Christians, they ceased to be lawful prey of the ruler. The test at least established the sincerity of their professions of faith, but it frequently left them in the direst poverty. The situation led in England to the establishment of that interesting institution the *Domus Conversorum*, or Converts Home. The first of its kind appears to have been built in the neighborhood of Southwark by Richard of Bermondsey in 1213: it was known as "The Hospital of Converts." Later, there was a *Domus* both in Oxford and London founded by Henry III, the former about 1234 and the London house some two years earlier.

Wood (City of Oxford) speaks of the Oxford *Domus* as:

a place for those Jews and infidels that were converted to the Christian faith in Oxon to reside in and have sufficient maintenance from the King and other pious well-disposed people. In a short time after it was so brought about and no small number of these converts had their abode in this place and were taught and instructed in the doctrine of the church, and had an orthodox and learned priest to govern them. Mention of these converted people I often find in records stiled by the sir-name *le convers* and, more particularly, in St Frideswyde's register wherein in divers charters there be the names of Eve convers, Eilliam le convers and Nicholas le convers and Ailb le convers and the like.

The Home was situated near what is now Blue Boar Street.

Of far greater importance and with a long and eventful history was the London *Domus*. The original Charter of Henry III (translated from the Latin) runs as follows:

The king to the archbishops, etc., greeting. Be it known that we, by the institution of God, and for the safety of our soul, and of the souls of our predecessors and of our heirs, have granted, and by this our charter confirmed for us and for our heirs to the house which we caused to be built in the street which is called New Street, between the old and new temple of London, for the maintenance of the converted brethren, and those to be converted from Judaism to the Catholic faith, and for the aid of the

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maintenance of these brethren that dwelt in the said house, the houses and lands which belonged to John Herberton, in London, and are in our possession as forfeited (except the garden which belonged to the said John in the aforesaid New Street, and which we granted formerly by our charter to the venerable Father Rudolph, of Chichester, our Chancellor), and all other forfeitures which in our time, by felony, or from any other cause, will fall to us in our city. or in the suburbs of our city, London. Wherefore we wish, and firmly injoin for us and for our heirs, that the aforesaid house have and hold freely, and quietly, and in peace, for the maintenance of the converted brethren, and those to be converted from Judaism to the Catholic faith, in aid for the maintenance of these brethren that dwell in the same house, the houses and lands which belonged to John Herberton, in London,

and are in our possession, as if our forfeiture (except the garden which belonged to the same John in the aforesaid street, New Street and which formerly by our charter we granted to the venerable Father Rudolph, Bishop of Chichester, our Chancellor), and all other forfeitures which in our time, by felony, or from whatever other causes, will fall to us in our city, London, as we have beforesaid, etc.<sup>151</sup>

The street in which the *Domus* was situated eventually became Chancery Lane, and the building itself finally came to be used as a storehouse for the rolls of Chancery, and its chapel became the Rolls Chapel. For a considerable period, from about 1330, the office of Master of the Rolls was combined with wardenship of the Jewish Converts' Home, and in these capacities Thomas Cromwell, vicar-general of Henry VIII, resided there. Had the *Domus* continued to function into the nineteenth century. a professing Jew, Sir George Jessel, made Master of the Rolls in 1873, would have been its warden. By this time, however, the buildings had been demolished, and an Act of 1891 removed the last legal traces of its functions.

During the long period of the Home's activities numerous Jewish Christians of both sexes were inmates, and one, Martin, son of Henry Woodstock (1413-1468) lived there for fifty-five years. Two women, a mother and her daughter -- Joanna and Alice of Dartmouth, who came to the Home in 1409, remained for nearly as long, forty and forty-five years respectively. The number of Jewish Christians who availed themselves

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of the protection of the *Domus* from the date of its foundation ran into several hundreds, and among the more interesting names mentioned in the records are the following:

Elizabeth, daughter of Rabbi Moses "*episcopus Judaicorum*," 1339. Remained seventeen years and married a London tailor named David Pole.

John de Santa Maria (1371-1405). Perhaps a relative of the Bishop of Burgos.

Nathaniel (formerly Jehudah) Menda (1598-1608). He hailed from the Barbary States, and was publicly baptized in London by John Foxe, author of *The Book of Martyrs*.

Philip Ferdinand from Poland (1598-1600). He had been professor of Hebrew at Oxford and Cambridge. and later of Leyden University.

The records end in 1608, though as late as 1717 a Jewish Christian of London petitioned King George I for a grant from the funds of *Domus*. From the time of the expulsion of the Jews from England in 1290 until their restoration by the Protector Oliver Cromwell, Jewish Christians were about the only Jews the citizens of London ever saw.

The original grant to each inmate was 1 1/2 d. for males, equal today to about 2s. 6d., and 1d for females. The total annual grant from Henry III's treasury was about £4,000, but this was not always forthcoming and the converts were in great distress. A supplementary income was therefore granted, raised by a poll-tax, called the *chevage*, on all unconverted Jews above the age of twelve.<sup>152</sup>

One Jew, who might have become an inmate of the *Domus*, was forced to leave England with Edward I's banishment of the Jews — Nicolas de Lyra (or Nicolas of Lynn), who was to become the heralds of the Reformation. "*Nicolaus Lyrannus ex Judæorum genere Anglus*," writes Bale; but it is only right to state that his Jewish birth has been contested. There are good grounds, however, for believing that he was a Jew. Having been educated at Oxford, he went to Paris,

where he was baptized and joined the Franciscan order at Verneuil in 1291. Later he became Doctor of Theology and taught at the Sorbonne until 1325, when he was appointed Provincial of the Franciscans in Burgundy. Well versed in Talmudical literature, he favored the literal interpretation of Scripture after the method of the great Jewish commentator Rashi. For him, the intention of the author was the most important canon of exegesis, and he set himself in his chief work *Postillæ, Perbetuæ, sive Brevia*

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*Commentaria in Universa Biblia* to explain the Old and New Testaments on what he held to be the corrected principles, not sparing in the course of the work to castigate the abuses prevailing in the Church. These commentaries proved of such service to Martin Luther, that Pflug, Bishop of Naumberg, was moved to write the famous couplet:

*Is Lyra non lyrasset,  
Lutherus non saltasset.*

Other writers, after Niclas' death in 1340, made additions to the Postills, among them, as we have already noted being the Jewish Christian Bishop Paul of Burgos. Nicholas also wrote a work for his own brethren entitled, *De Messia Ejusque Adventu Præterito*.

Thus behind the Reformation, as behind almost every spiritual and political movement of note, one finds the personality of a Jewish Christian.

2

Our history now halts for a brief space in its progress to watch the passage of a strange procession across the face of Europe from the Caucasian mountains to the Alps.

When Ebionitism ceased to be an active force in Christian affairs, it bequeathed, at least its mantle, to whoever would protest against the trinitarian concept of the Gentile Church. Already in the late third century, Jewish Christianity had communicated some of its foundation and apostolic beliefs to the Syrian Christians. In those days flourished Paul of Samosata, Patriarch of Antioch, anathematized for his belief that the man Christ Jesus had attained to perfection through obedience, and had won through to union with God through subjugating his own will to the will of God. Paul wrote in his *Treatise to Sabinus* that

in fixity and resoluteness of character, Jesus likened himself to God; and having kept himself free from sin, was united to God and was enabled to grasp the power to work wonders. These miracles show that over and above the will, he possessed one and the same activity with God; he thus won the title of Redeemer and Savior....

By struggle and hard work he overcame the sins of our forefathers: he succeeded in perfecting himself and through his moral excellence was united to God, having attained to unity and identity of will and activity through advances on the path of good works.... Thus he inherited the name which is above all names, the

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prize of love and affection vouchsafed to him in grace.... We do not allot praise to those who obey merely in virtue of their nature; but to those in good measure who submit because their attitude is one of love.

This was perhaps the doctrine of the apostle Paul, who held that "Jesus was made perfect

through the things that he suffered”: certainly it was that of the Jewish Christians of the third and fourth centuries, who believed that by living the Christ life all men could attain to Christhood. From Paul of Samosata the sect of Paulicians took its name and many of its tenets, and with some Gnostic admixture, continued through several centuries in Armenia to propagate its iconoclastic and adoptionist faith. The old Jewish Christians had found a voice with which they might still speak through the mouths of men of another race.

Out of the Paulicians came the Thonrake, Josephinists, Bogomils, Cathars, Albigensis, and Waldenses, and all their off-shoots, changing their names in their manifold manifestation, but scarcely their basic doctrines, as the stream of missionaries made their way through Bulgaria, Gosnia and Hungary, along the Carpathians to the Alps and Pyrenees.

We may fairly regard these groups as part of one movement, a protesting movement, preserving alive the elemental spirit of Jewish Christianity until the Catholic Church should be ready again to renew its contact with its Jewish antecedents. Their *Key of Truth* laid emphasis on the baptism of Christ: “then it was that he became Savior of us sinners, and was filled with godhead; then was he sealed, anointed, called by the Voice, addressed as the Beloved One.”<sup>153</sup> They denied the pre-existence of Christ, attacked Mariolatry and Transubstantiation; their congregations were composed of the “elect,” and it was in the power of any of their number to attain to Christhood.

The Bogomil manifestation was chiefly in Bulgaria and Bosnia from the tenth to the thirteenth century, whence the sectaries were also known as Bulgaria or Bougres (*Bulgarorum hæresis*). Jewish converts were among its propagandists, drawn largely from the literalist Jewish sect of Karaites. One, a certain Zachariah of Kiev, succeeded in influencing with Jewish views some of the highest ecclesiastics of Russia and even the Tzar Ivan III. The conversion of the kingdom of the Chazars to Judaism was another cause that made the slavie peoples incline favorably to Jewish and Cristo-Jewish doctrine. A Byzantine Jewess Sarah (Theodora) even became Tzarina of Bulgaria (1335-1355) as the wife of Ivan

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Alexander. She had voluntarily embraced Christianity, and according to Poppof, a Bulgarian ecclesiastical historian, her reign encouraged both Jews and heretics to profane icons and the eucharist.

Further west the protesting movement manifested itself a Catharism early in the eleventh century, with headquarters in the neighborhood of Toulouse. Here as in Bosnia and Bulgaria, the simplicity and earnestness of the lives of the sectaries appealed to the people in contrast to the pomp and worldliness of the prevailing Church. The Cathars recognized two orders, the *credentes*, the ordinary believer, and the *perfecti*, the elect who acted as ministers. A *credens* became a *perfectuis* after undergoing the rite of consolation (*consolamentum*), when he was named Peter, a common practice both in the eastern and western branches of the movements.

In the rite of full initiation, the Perfect (who admits the novice like the Master of the Freemasons' lodge) delivers an address calling him (as in Armenia) by the name Peter, and explaining the adoption and indwelling of the Spirit in the elect. He repeats and comments on the Lord's Prayer clause by clause. Then comes the Renouncement, not only of Satan and his kingdom on earth, but of his babylonish church, its magical rites, carnal baptism, and the sign of the cross impressed on the



forehead. A true spiritual baptism follows, with a book of the Gospels laid on the head by the Perfect's hands: and while passages of Scripture are recited, the newly admitted brother receives the apostolic power to bind and loose.<sup>154</sup>

For several centuries the Cathars of Albigenses, as they came to be called from Albi a fief of Toulouse, carried on a losing fight with the papacy, and it is worthy of notice that the institution which was primarily responsible for Jewish tribulation and expulsion from Spain and Portugal — the Inquisition -- was called into existence for the extermination of a heresy which owed its origin to Jewish Christianity. When the massacre of Piedmont put an end to the protesting movement a new spirit was aflame in the Church. Milton's prayer was already in course of fulfillment

“Avenge, O Lord. Thy slaughtered saints, whose bones  
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;  
Even them who kept Thy truth so pure of old,  
When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones.”

## Chapter XV

The fifteenth century in Europe witnessed the apotheosis of clericalism. A dictatorship by clergy, almost more powerful than the pope, dominated the lives of kings and people. At the best bigoted, at the worst brutally debased, the clergy stood solidly in the way of enlightenment and progress. Scarcely subject to any laws but their own, they menaced the security of every state and individual. Every element of opposition was ruthlessly trampled down. Having suppressed the Cathars, they once more turned their attention to unyielding Jews.

During the long course of centuries, the clergy acted upon one undeviating line of policy, uninfluenced by wars, change of dynasty, or personal feelings, to drive the Jews into the bosom of the Church. Since the time of Sisebut the Goth, all direct compulsion in the matter of baptism had been discountenanced by papal authority and general sentiment. But, notwithstanding the dictates of abstract right and reason, bishops and friars had plundered and murdered such as refused to be converted, while civil penalties and restrictions were likewise heaped upon the recusants. An exemption from all this might be purchased by enduring the sprinkling of a few drops of water; yet this trifle in itself, was the "crux fidei" to a Jew, as was the burning of a few grains of incense before a senseless idol to the primitive Christian, with the alternative of the lions of the amphitheater. The temptation was in each case intensely seductive, but the iniquity of the Spanish churchman, with his organized Inquisition to preclude the possibility of receding, was altogether unparalleled in pagan persecutions. Aware of the varied unrighteousness of the means employed to gain their proselytes, the end, according to their morality, justified the means, and murder, with every other violation of Christianity, was engaged to secure the retention of their unlawful seizures.<sup>155</sup>

The Christianized Jews in Spain, Portugal, and their dominions, had grown so numerous that they formed a distinct class by themselves -- the New Christians, or more particularly, Marranos (damned). or Mallorca, Chuetas. The latter were the products of a mass conversion effort in 1435 after an anti-semitic uprising on account of an Eastertide blood libel accusation. Not a single unbaptized Jew was left on the island: but

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despite the Inquisition, the Chuetas never wholly lost the cognizance of their Jewish descent, and in 1932 the Mayor of Palma and nine out of the thirty Councillors were Chuetas, besides a considerable percentage of the population, some of whom celebrate the coming of the Friday evening services. It was the suspicions of the clergy that many of these New Christians secretly practised Jewish rites while outwardly conforming to the ordinances of the Church, suspicions in many cases fully justified, that led them to call in the aid of the Inquisition.

The prime movers in the petition for Inquisitorial interference were those troublers of Israel, the Dominicans. The doubts and fears of Ferdinand and Isabella, then occupying the throne of Spain, were overcome, and the Holy Office (a travesty of holiness) was set up at Seville in 1483 with Thomas de Torquemada, it need hardly be said, a Dominican, as Inquisitor-General. The avowed object of the Inquisition was the purification of the Church from heresy, but particularly

from the pernicious doctrines of Judaism. The methods employed in “smelling out” the crypto Jews would have been the wonder and envy of the African witch-doctors could they have been there to see it. No one was safe from the highest in the land to the lowest. Prelates and princes trembled for their safety, however orthodox and irreproachable their faith.

Many of the noblest families were degraded by beholding some one of their members wearing the san-benito, as confessed and pardoned heretics. Though their chief victims were selected from those who were suspected of secret Judaism, yet the slightest taint of Judaism in the blood (and among the Aragonese nobility — the nobility of all Spain — this was by no means rare) was sufficient to excite suspicion, and, if possible, the vengeance of the Inquisitors.<sup>156</sup>

Don Alfonso, son of the King of Aragon, had married a Christian Jewess, Esther, daughter of Abiathar ha-Kohen of Sarragossa. Her sister Leah was married to Martin Sanchez, a Marrano. Secret denunciations were encouraged, and at any time the black-robed officers of the Inquisition might suddenly apprehend a man and hale him before the dread tribunal.

The results of such an examination may be gathered from the fact that at Seville alone in the course of a single year, 280 persons were burned alive, 79 were condemned to lifelong imprisonment and 17,000 received sentences of varying severity. At the burning of Jewish girl, Philip III could not refrain from shuddering. The Inquisition said that this crime

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could only be atoned for by his blood. The king was forthwith bled, and the blood solemnly burnt by the executioner.

In some palaces they were not content with burning the living; their insatiable vengeance warred on the dead. Sepulchres were broken open, and the bodies of suspected Jews, which had wickedly intruded themselves into consecrated ground but had long slumbered in peace, and their souls gone to their account, were torn up and exposed to shame and insult.<sup>157</sup>

One of the earliest decrees of the Inquisition provided that no bishop or other priest of Jewish descent should have a seat in the court. Twenty-seven indications of secret Judaism were drawn up, including the following: — Expecting the Messiah; Hoping for justification by the Law of Moses; Keeping the Sabbath by wearing better clothes or not lighting fires on that day; Observing distinction of meats; Celebrating the Jewish festivals or fasting on Jewish fast-days; Showing joy on the Fast of Esther; Or bewailing the destruction of Jerusalem on August 9 (ab); Singing psalms in Hebrew without adding *Gloria Patre* (the Christian doxology); Performing any Jewish rites such as circumcision; Retaining Jewish marriage or burial customs; Interring the dead in Jewish cemeteries.

Judah ben Virga, Rabbi of Seville, typified the state of affairs under the Inquisition by placing in his window three doves, each bearing a Hebrew inscription. The first bird which was dead and plucked bore the legend, “These are the detected”; the second which was plucked but alive carried the statement, “These are the temporisers”; while the third dove alive and fully fledged was described as “The best of all.” By these birds the rabbi illustrated the lot of the New Christian convicted of Judaism, the Jew who dissembled, and the loyal Jew. For a time indeed the unbaptized Jew had the best of it, for he could not be charged as a relapsed Christian; but the Inquisition did not long suffer him to remain secure. At Granada, newly recovered from the

Moors, an edict was issued in 1492 ordering the expulsion of all unbaptized Jews from Spain in four months time. It was useless for the Jews to protest, or for Rabbi Abrabanel on their behalf to offer 30,000 ducats for the privilege of remaining in the country, which in spite of persecution they dearly loved. Thomas de Torquemada held up a crucifix before Ferdinand and Isabella, crying, "Behold Him whom Judas sold for thirty pieces of silver. Sell ye Him now for a higher price, and render an account of your bargain before God,"

Look they move! No comrades near but curses;

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Tears gleam in beards of men sore with reverses'  
Flowers from fields abandoned, loving nurses  
Fondly deck the women's raven hair.

Faded, scentless flowers that shall remind them  
Of their precious homes and graves behind them;  
Old men clasping Torah-scrolls, unbind them  
Lift the parchment flags and silent lead.

Mock not with thy light, O sun, our morrow'  
Cease not, cease not, O ye songs of sorrow;  
From what land a refuge can we borrow,  
Weary, thrust-out, God-forsaken, we?<sup>158</sup>

Yet many did find a refuge, in Africa, in Persia, in the Levant. Large numbers, including many New Christians, fled to the Netherlands. Da Costa quotes a Jewish author of Amsterdam to the effect that,

Many of the canons, inquisitors, and bishops on Spain are of Jewish descent; some are still Jews at heart, though, for the sake of temporal advantages, they feign themselves to be Christians; some of these at times repent and leave the country as best they can. In this city of Amsterdam. and in other countries, there are Augustines, Franciscans, Dominicans, and Jesuits, who have cast off idolatry. In Spain there are a great many distinguished bishops and monks, whose parents, brothers and sisters, live in this town and elsewhere, where they can profess Judaism.<sup>159</sup>

When Christopher Columbus set out on his voyage that led to the discovery of the New World. there were boatloads of Jewish refugees in the harbor, and there were Jewish Christians among the members of his own crew. But if the North American continent was to prove a blessing to thousands of a later generation of Israelites, it was long before this could be true of South America. So long as there was an Inquisition, so long was the Jewish Christian unsafe in any Catholic country. As recently as the eighteenth century emissaries of the Holy Office in Brazil arrested and sent to Lisbon a batch of citizens on the charge of being crypt-Jews. In the same century in the Portuguese capital auto-da-fes continued to be held, and still largely with the same object, the detection and punishment

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of those who secretly practised Jewish rites. On the occasion of an auto-da-fe, it was customary to preach a sermon to the sufferers in hope of moving them to an eleventh-hour repentance. As a specimen of the pious sentiments expressed at such a time, the following extracts are taken from an actual address delivered to a convicted company of New Christians by the Archbishop of Cranganor at Lisbon, September 6, 1705.

O degraded remnant of Judaism, unhappy fragments of the Synagogue! the last spoil of Judæa! opprobrium of the Catholics! abhorrence and laughing-stock of your fellow Jews! it is to you I address myself, ye misguided men!

You are the abhorrence and laughing-stock of the Jews; for your ignorance is such that you know not how to observe the very Law you profess. You are the opprobrium of the Catholics; for, being born within the pale of the Church, your voluntary apostasy has banished you from its bosom. You are the last spoil of Judæa; for — to our shame -- your lot is cast here in Portugal to disgrace and scandalize us in the opinion of the whole world — in our quarter of the globe as well as in your native East. You are the wretched fragments of the Synagogue; for all its former greatness is come to an end in your present misery. Finally, you are a degraded remnant of Judaism, the wretched off-shoots of Israel, who, since the destruction of your country, have spread throughout Europe to infect whole nations by your presence ....

How greatly do I pity your degradation. O children of Israel! How many tears of blood do I shed through compassion for your misfortunes, contemplating what you are at this day, and what you formerly were. In ancient times the inheritors of that affection which your continued obstinacy did not deserve; this day the objects of well-merited anger, which fulfills in you a just retribution: this day the scaffold is the theater of your contumely; formerly your tabernacles were the boast of your religion. In ancient times, the waters held you in respect, and no less the flames; this day fire will feed on you, and your ashes, cast into the sea, will find a tomb in the waters ....

This day, the anniversary of your feast of Purim, is the day when you are to abjure and make atonement for your sins in the yellow and scarlet colors of your penitential dresses --the em-

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blems of the fire which will consume your dwelling places, unless these dresses be changed for another color before being committed to the flames. In former times, on the day of Atonement for your sins, the scarlet thread that was bound on the horns of the goat which was to be sacrificed on that day was changed into white, to show that God had pardoned your sins. In former times your inheritance was the unalienable property of your families; now the public treasury is your heir ....

Truly. O children dear to my soul, the condition in which you are at the present day compared with what you were in times past would soften a heart far more obdurate than mine; for though we may not be of the same blood, we are all your brethren through the blood of Jesus Christ who redeemed you, and through the holy water of baptism, wherewith you have been sprinkled ....

You yourselves see how you are dispersed all over the world, and scattered throughout every land; and either from necessity or inclination hold yourselves apart from one another, so that even if you meet privately to perform the rites of Judaism, you avoid each other in public, in order to deceive those who charge you with being Jews. You yourselves bewail your misfortunes, and complain to us Catholics that your enemies ensnare you, and draw you so suddenly and indiscriminately into the meshes of our Holy Office, that all of your lineage are exposed to the same calamity; and although you mutually proclaim your afflictions to one another, there is no one who has the power to rescue you therefrom ....

The sermon closes with a prayer of which the following are the concluding lines:

You called to them in kindness, but they made an ungrateful return for Your favors. Seek now to win them to You by chastisement, however little chastisement has hitherto benefited them. Cause them to acknowledge with perfect sincerity, that in their present miserable state they have no other remedy than to repent for the time they have lost in their false expectations, by bewailing their errors, abhorring their sins, abominating their superstition, and renouncing their contumacy; so that, being regenerated by the waters of their penitent eyes, they may be born again Your children, as already by baptism they have become.<sup>160</sup>

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Wretched Christianized Jews! having to listen to this and much more of hateful piety and crocodile tears while standing on the brink of a tortured entry into eternity. Even the blood of an impartial historian may boil at such a horror. Such was the "*Misericordia et Justitia*" — the mercy and justice — which the Inquisition proudly emblazoned on its banner, and which it did not mete out to the New Christians, many of whom were no doubt sincere enough believers in Christ, yet could not altogether forsake their own people nor the customs that time had hallowed. And what was there wrong in their standpoint? We may ask today. Yet we know that even now with all the liberality of faith that has come with more enlightened days, the Jewish Christian who wished to retain his national and ancestral practices, while utterly loyal to his Savior, is looked upon askance, and the genuineness of his Christian convictions is doubted. But in the darker days, the mere fact of Jewish origin was, in itself, often sufficient to call down the jealous vengeance of an apostate Church. God save us from trial by clergy! The tragedy of it all has been well set forth by Israel Zangwill in his poem *Moses and Jesus*.

In dream I saw two Jews that met by chance,  
One old, stern-eyed, deep-browed, yet garlanded  
With living light of love around his head,  
The other young, with sweet seraphic glance.  
Around went on the Town's satanic dance,  
Hunger a-piping while at heart he bled.  
Shalom Alechem (peace be with you), mournfully each said,  
Nor eyed the other straight, but looked askance.

Sudden from Church out rolled an organ hymn,  
From Synagogue a loudly chaunted air,

Each with its Prophet's high acclaim instinct.  
Then for the first time met their eyes, swift-linked  
In one strange, silent, piteous gaze, and dim  
With bitter tears of agonized despair.

## Chapter XVI

## 1

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the religions and intellectual life of Europe was entirely changed by two great movements, the Reformation and the Renaissance, whose combined effect led eventually to the emancipation of the Jewish people. The change of attitude towards the Jew was not, however, conspicuously evident at the first. Not until the nineteenth century did the forces of humanity and enlightenment bring about any real amelioration of the Jewish lot over any considerable part of Europe. But the flames gradually died down, and the rack and thumbscrew ceased to be considered as potent arguments in the service of religion.

The condition of the Jewish Christians under Roman Catholic domination has been sufficiently described; it remains to be shown how they fared under Protestantism. Martin Luther, the great reformer, in the expectation that the Jews would gladly receive the Christian faith in the purer form which he advocated, began by extending to them the utmost toleration. In a book which he published in 1523, under the title *Das Jesus em Gerborene Jude Gewesen* (That Jesus was born a Jew) he has a remarkable passage:

Those fools the papists, bishops, sophists, monks, have formerly so dealt with the Jews, that every good Christian would rather have been a Jew. And if I had been a Jew, and seen such stupidity and such blockheads reign in the Christian Church, I would rather be a pig than a Christian. They have treated the Jews as if they were dogs, not men, and as if they were fit for nothing but to be reviled. They are blood relations of our Lord; therefore, if we respect flesh and blood, the Jews belong to Christ more than we. I beg, therefore, my dear Papists, if you become tired of abusing me as a heretic, that you begin to revile me as a Jew. Therefore, it is my advice that we should treat them kindly; but now we drive them by force, treating them deceitfully or ignominiously, saying they must have Christian blood to wash away the Jewish stain, and I know not what nonsense. Also we prohibit them from working amongst us, from living and having social intercourse with us, forcing them, if they would remain with us to be usurers.

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But like Mohamed, finding that the Jews made hub response to his overtures, Luther changed his tune. Forgetful of his former counsels, he published twenty-one years later another book entitled *Von den Juden und ihren Jugen* (Of the Jews and their Lies), in which he exhibits none of his earlier friendliness. He vents his disappointment in the utterance: "Doubt not, believed in Christ, that after the Devil you have no more bitter, venomous, violent enemy, than the real Jew. the Jew in earnest in his belief." He urges his followers:

(1) Burn their synagogues and schools; what will not burn, bury with earth, that neither stone nor rubbish remain. (2) In like manner, break into and destroy their houses. (3) Take away all their prayer-books and talmuds, in which are nothing but godlessness, lies, cursing and swearing. (4) Forbid their rabbis to teach on pain of life and limb. (5) Forbid them to travel: as they are neither lords nor officials, nor merchants, they should stay at home. (6) Interdict all usury: we are not their subjects, but they ours. (7) In the hands of all young Jews and Jewesses should be



placed flails, axes, mattocks, spades, distaffs, spinning-wheels, and let them get their livelihood in the sweat of their brow, as should all the children of Adam.

Among other things Luther in his *Schem Hamphoras* (The Ineffable Name) attacked the *Toledoth Jeshu*, the Jewish Life of Jesus, 'vluich already for several centuries had been a fruitful cause of Jewish persecution. True, this ancient work had become more and more libelous and scandalous as bitterness dictated further fanciful embellishments; but only a very limited number of Jews set any store by it. By most it was even at this time regarded as a jest, a dubious after-dinner tale for Christmas eve, and those who retailed its sordid details only faintly associated the principal character with the Jesus of the Christians.

Calvin, another of the reformers, though he came little into contact with Jews was by no means tolerant towards them, though less vehement than Luther. Certainly the immediate result of the Reformation was not to lighten the Jewish burden.

Protestant Germany took up the tale of persecution in the sixteenth century where Catholic Germany had left off in the fifteenth. The Jews were given the alternative of baptism and banishment in Berlin, were expelled from Bavaria in 1553, from Brandenburg in 1573, and in the tragedy of oppression was

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carried on through the ensuing centuries.<sup>161</sup>

Prejudice dies hard, but on the whole it may be said that the purer faith of the Protestants and their abstention from the more violent and cruel forms of anti-semitism were more conducive to awakening a spirit of inquiry in Jewish minds than had been possible under Roman Catholicism. Since the sixteenth century that spirit of inquiry has increased in direct proportion to the toleration and love shown by the Christian to the Jew. Little by little, as the full rights of citizenship have been accorded him, and his equality in all that pertains to human intercourse recognized, his interest in the one who has effected this transformation has awakened. The moral is not far to seek. A Messiah "who walketh about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" could not be the promised Savior of the Scriptures. The Messiah for whom Israel has besought the Heavenly Fattier with anxious tears "shall not hurt or destroy." The Man of Sorrows had an appeal to the People of Sorrows infinitely greater than the Christ of the Inquisition. The lesson had to be learned in the bitter experiences of exile and martyrdom, but it had not been in vain; for the Jew of more enlightened times could clasp the wounded hands, in tearful understanding if not yet in sincere repentance.

2

The Renaissance also had played its part in opening the way for Jewish acceptance of Christ. The ecclesiasticism which had kept the thought of Europe flowing in fixed channels had become more flexible and assimilative. It is unpleasant to have to record that a Jewish convert to Christianity was one of those who attempted to stay the march of process. Johann Phefferkorn (1469-c. 1521) will always be remembered as the tool of the Dominicans in their last bid for power in Germany. Jacob van Hoogstraaten, Prior of the Order in Cologne, where Phefferkorn was baptized in 1505, used him in attacks against the Jews, and particularly against their literature deemed inimical to Christianity. The Emperor Maximilian was induced to publish an edict of confiscation and destruction, and later to appoint of inquiry to consider the accusations of Phefferkorn. Among those who sat on this commission were Victor of Carben, a more

enlightened Jewish Christian, Hoogstraaten and Johann Reuchlin. Reuchlin, the great Humanist, dared to report in favor of the Jews and the edict was suspended. Pfefferkorn was furious. Victor of Carben retired from public life acknowledging his

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dislike for religious controversy.

Then began a fierce intellectual battle with Pfefferkorn and Reuchlin as the protagonists, which involved the most learned scholars of Europe. Tracts and counter-tracts were heatedly composed, *Der Aungenspiegel*, *Der Augenspiegel*, *Der Brandspiegel*, etc. The Dominicans eventually gained a barren victory in the papal condemnation of Reuchlin. But the better sense of thinking men had been awakened, and the Humanists had really won the day. The outcome of the struggle was a new interest on the part of Gentile scholars in the Hebrew language and literature. The accumulated wisdom of Israel began to be laid under contribution to enrich the world. A large part of the Jewish literature of this period was devoted to Kabbalistic lore, and this was found specially attractive. Reuchlin himself was enchanted with the occult and philosophical speculations of this system, and in his wake followed Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa, Paracelsus, and Robert Fludd. while on the expository and linguistic side of Hebrew learning such men as the elder Buxtorf did yeoman service. The new interest in Hebrew even produced renderings of the Gospel into the sacred tongue by Sebastian Munster.

But if Jewish Christianity seemed to darken in the light with such a blustering fanatic as Pfefferkorn, it made ample compensation with many another convert who helped in disseminating Hebrew literature and learning. Mention may be made of a few representative personalities.

Three Jewish Christians were employed by Cardinal Ximenes to assist him in preparing his famous Complutensian Polyglot Bible (1514-1517). Their names are Paul Nunez Coronas, Alfonso de Zamora and Alfonso d'Alcala. The two former were both professors at the University of Salamanca. Dominico Irosolimitano, a Rabbi of Safed, became famed as a doctor and was summoned by the Sultan to be court physician at Constantinople. After embracing Christianity he taught Hebrew at Rome.

Giovanni Baptista Jonas, also a Palestinian from Safed (1588-1668), came to Europe and was, for a time, assistant rabbi in Hamburg. He was converted in Poland in 1625. Thereafter he went to Italy and was appointed Professor at the University of Pisa, and later one of the Vatican librarians. He made a Hebrew translation of the Gospels and compiled a Begrea-Chaldee lexicon: he is noted for many other works.

Two grandsons of the famous Hebrew grammarian, Elias Levita. became Christians, and were employed in expurgating and editing Jewish

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books.

Paul Riccio, a German Jewish Christian of the first half of the sixteenth century, became Professor of Philosophy in the University of Pavia, subsequently he was physician to Maximilian I. He was a friend of Erasmus, and held a controversy with Eck on astronomical subjects. He sought the spiritual welfare of his Jewish brethren, and imparted to Christians much information about Jewish literature. His best known book is his *De Posta Lucis R. Josephi Gecatilia*

(Augsburg 1616), which is a free translation of a part of the Kabbalistic work *Sha'are Orah* by Joseph Gekatila. Jerome Riccio, Paul's son, sent a copy of the work to Reuchlin, who utilized it in the composition of his *De Are Cabbalistica*. Riccio relates that he was ordered to prepare a Latin translation of the Talmud. All that has come down of it are the translations of the tractates of *Berechoth*, *Sanhedrin*, and *Makkoth* (Augsburg 1519), which are the earliest Latin renderings of the Mishnah known to bibliographers.<sup>162</sup> Riccio also wrote an introduction to the Kabbalah which went through four editions.

Johannes Isaac Levita Germanus, baptized in 1546, was for a time Professor of Hebrew in London and subsequently in Cologne.

John Immanuel Tremellius (1510-1580) was educated at the University of Padua, and became a Christian through the influence of Cardinal Pole. The following year he gave his allegiance to Protestantism, and settled down as a Hebrew teacher at Strasburg. Later, as a refugee from the religious wars in Germany, he came to England and found asylum with Archbishop Cranmer at Lambeth Palace. In 1549 he became Regius Professor of Hebrew at Cambridge University. When Queen Mary came to the throne he returned to Germany, where for a time he was Professor of Old Testament at Heidelberg. Finally he removed to the College of Sedan, where he remained until his death. He made a Latin translation of the Bible from Hebrew and Syriac, which ran into several editions. He also translated into Hebrew Calvin's Catechism (Paris, 1551), and wrote a Syriac and Chaldee grammar (Paris. 1569).

An interesting personality is Mark Raphael, an Italian Jewish Christian of the first half of the sixteenth century. Henry VIII of England sought his help in his matrimonial difficulties, and he was asked to advise on the legality of Henry's levirate marriage to Queen Catharine according to Jewish Law. He came to England in January, 1551. He upheld the legality of the marriage, but suggested that there would be no wrong in the

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king taking a second wife during the lifetime of the first. Naturally, such advice was rejected; of [so?] Raphael changed his view and now contended that the object of a levirate marriage was to continue the deceased brother's line, and as no male heir had resulted from the union, the king could not have had this intention, and the marriage was therefore invalid. His opinion was included with others in the memorial to Parliament, and Raphael was suitably rewarded by a grateful monarch.

The record of sixteenth-century Jewish Christians of note would be incomplete without some account of Dr. Rodrigo Lopez, Physician to Queen Elizabeth, and believed by Sir Sidney Lee to be the original of Shakespeare's Shylock. A very full and able account of him has been written by R. Ackerman,<sup>163</sup> and because of the important part he played in the affairs of his day, his story, as well for its dramatic quality, is worthy of some detailed consideration.

Lopez hailed from Portugal, and settled in England in 1559, most likely as a refugee from the Inquisition. He is described in the census of foreigners living in England in 1511 as "Dr. Lopus, a portingale, householder, denizen, who came into this realm about twelve years past to get his living by physike." His wife Sarah and a brother Lewis are also mentioned. The date of his conversion to Christianity is unknown. He speedily rose to eminence in his profession and was elected a member of the College of Physicians; he was also the first man to hold the appointment of house physician at St Bartholomew's hospital. A colleague, William Clowes, praised him as

one who “showed himself to be both careful and very skilful, not only in his counsel in dieting, purging and bleeding, but also for his direction of Arceus’ apozema.” His fame and practice grew rapidly. In 1571 he attended Sir Francis Walsingham, the Queen’s Secretary; in 1575 his name appears near the head of the list of the chief London doctors published by Stowe. Ten years later he was a physician to the Earl of Leicester; then he was attached to the household of the Earl of Essex; and finally in 1586 he was made physician to Queen Elizabeth, who in 1589 granted him the valuable monopoly of importing seed and sumach into England.

Through his lucrative practice Lopez rapidly amassed a fortune. In 1593 he had a house in Holborn gifted to him by a grateful patient. He had two daughters living at home and a son at Winchester. Naturally there were many to envy him his good fortune, especially as he was a Jew. “He is none of the learnedest or expertest physicians in the

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court?” wrote Gabriel Harvey, “but one that maketh a great account of himself as the best, and by a kind of Jewish practice as well with ye queen herself as with sum of ye greatest Lords and Ladyes.”

But life at court quickly involved the worthy doctor in the prevailing intrigues and proved his undoing. Being fluent in the Portuguese and Spanish tongues, his services as an interpreter were in constant requisition at a time when Essex had espoused the cause of Don Antonio, pretender to the throne of Portugal, against Philip II of Spain. After an abortive expedition, however, which Elizabeth had unwillingly sent to Lisbon, Don Antonio’s cause lost favor and Essex remained as practically his only distinguished supporter. Lopez had fallen out with Don Antonio, and then for the worse quarrelled with Essex, who thereafter set himself to compass his downfall. The doctor unwisely allowed himself to be drawn into the opposite camp and became associated with the agents of Philip. He was by no means partial to Spain, as is evidenced by the fact that he offered his services to Walsingham, who employed him to spy on the Spanish court. In this dangerous position he was taking money from Philip and obtaining his goodwill, while actually serving the interests of England. Essex saw in this situation the opportunity which he required, and sought by every means to obtain proof that Lopez was really working for Spain. Estban Ferreira, a former servant to Don Antonio, who resided with Lopez, was arrested at Essex’s instigation, and later Lopez’s house was searched, but Sir Robert Cecil related to the Queen “that there was no matter of malice, for in the poor man’s house were found no kind of writs of intelligences of which he was accused, or otherwise, that hold might be taken of him.” Dr. Lopez, meanwhile, had been arrested and was confined in Essex’s house, with Ferreira and others. By tormenting these men with question, Essex at length forced them into a false confession of a conspiracy against the Queen in which Dr. Lopez, in the pay of Spain, was to have brought about her death by poison.

Essex was triumphant, and unfortunately Walsingham, who could have cleared Lopez of the preposterous charge, was dead. Lopez was brought to trial at the Guilhall on February 28, 1594. Essex presided and Coke, the Solicitor-General, prosecuted. The result was inevitable, in spite of the prisoner’s steadfast plea of innocence. Coke exclaimed against him as “this perjured and murdering traitor and Jewish doctor,” and he was condemned to be hanged, drawn and quartered at Tyburn. Elizabeth still seems to have believed him innocent, and delayed three months before

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signing the death warrant.

The last scene was enacted with all the barbaric cruelty of the time. The wretched doctor, when the shouts of the huge crowd that had collected were silenced for a moment, was heard to cry out again his innocence and that he loved the Queen as well as he loved Jesus Christ, “which expression,” Camden writes, “coming from a Jew, put the spectators into a pleasant fit of laughter.”

3

Though many Jewish Christians might rise to eminence in their chosen professions, the majority remained at the opposite end of the social scale. In vain for Luther to urge that they be made to till and sow; tenure of land was forbidden them, and often no alternative but to drift into beggary, and join the ragged crew of gypsies, mendicants, and vagabonds, who swarmed over Europe at this period. The sterling qualities of their race degraded by centuries of persecution and ill-usage into low cunning and plausibility, and their native wit further sharpened by hunger, they acquired an aptitude in wheedling a precarious livelihood out of a simple and superstitious peasantry. An English tract published in 1625 contains the observation: “A store of Jews we have in England, a few in Court; many in the city, more in the Country.” The tract is significantly entitled *The Wandering Jew Telling Fortunes to Englishmen*. From this statement it will be remarked that, contrary to modern conditions, the majority of the Jews were located in the country and not in the towns, where they subsisted by fortune-telling, quackery, peddling and begging: Most of these Jews were at least nominally Christian.

In Germany, about 1509, there was published a curious work the *Libre Vagatorumn* (Book of Vagabonds),<sup>164</sup> a kind of who’s who of Begging Orders, to the 1528 edition of which Luther contributed a Preface. One or two passages are worth quoting:

The twenty-third chapter is about the Veranerins. These are women who say they are baptized Jewesses and have turned Christians, and can tell people whether their fathers or mothers are in hell or not, and beg gowns and dresses and other things, and have also false letters and seals.

*Item*, beware of the peddlers who seek thee at home, for thou wilt buy nothing good of them, be it silver, haberdashery, spicery, or any other wares. Beware, likewise, of the doctors who travel

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up and down the country, and offer theriack and roots, and make much ado about themselves, and especially some blind doctors. One called Hans of Strasburg, has been a Jew, and was christened at Strasburg at Whitsuntide; years ago his eyes were bored out at Worms, but he is now a physician, and tells fortunes, and travels from place to place, and cheats and defrauds everybody. How? I need not say, I could tell welt enough.

At the end of this fascinating and revealing little volume there is a Vocabulary of sixteenth-century beggar’s slang, of which Luther says in this Preface: “Truly, such Beggars’ Cant has come from the Jews, for many Hebrew words occur in the Vocabulary, as any one who understand that language may perceive.”<sup>165</sup> Instances given are the following:

*Adone*, God — Hebrew, *Adonai*, the Lord

<i>Acheln,</i>	to eat	— Hebrew, <i>Akal</i>
<i>Betzam,</i>	an egg	— Hebrew, <i>Beytzah</i>
<i>Boss or Bett,</i>	a house	— Hebrew, <i>Beth</i>
<i>Bosshart,</i>	meat	— Hebrew, <i>Basar</i>
<i>Bosshart-Vetzer,</i>	a butcher	
<i>Bsaffor,</i>	a letter, a cipher	—Hebrew. <i>Sepher</i>
<i>Galle,</i>	a parson	—Hebrew, <i>Kahal</i> , a priest
<i>Gatzam,</i>	a child	—Hebrew, <i>Gatam</i> , puny
<i>Gfare,</i>	a village	—Hebrew, <i>K'far</i>
<i>Joham,</i>	wine	—Hebrew, <i>Yahyin</i>
<i>Lehem,</i>	bread	—Hebrew, <i>Lehem</i>
<i>Schochern,</i>	to drink	—Hebrew, <i>Schachar</i>
<i>Sefel,</i>	din	—Hebrew, <i>Shafar</i> , mean

The subject is undoubtedly worthy of a special monograph, and offers an interesting sidelight on the Christianized Jew in contemporary society.

## Chapter XVII

## 1

The seventeenth century passed and the opening decades of the eighteenth without any notable name being added to the roll of eminent Jewish Christians, though voluntary conversions, real and assumed, were numerous both to Catholicism, Protestantism, and to the Orthodox Greek Church. Nevertheless, for historic Jewish Christianity, this period was one of the most remarkable since the triumph of the Gentile Church in the fourth century. The tide which had carried Christianity steadily further away from the Jewish apostolic faith was now at its turn, and thousands not of the Hebrew race began to turn their eyes Zionwards, literally and spiritually.

Despite intolerance, which again and again reared its jagged barriers against the waves which swept in towards the Palestinian shores, the process could not be stemmed. In Poland and Transylvania the teaching of Fausto Sozzini (Socinus) had gained a footing for an energetic antitrinitarianism, which initiated the Unitarian movement, granting to Jesus rather the courtesy title of God than actual Deity, and sublimating the personality of the Holy Spirit into a spiritual influence. In Britain, the publication of the Authorized Version of the Bible became the inspiration of Puritanism and Biblical speech and nomenclature so permeated the national life that it seemed as if the true People of the Book were the inhabitants of the islands. In Holland the Reformation Church was no less active in promoting an almost Jewish domestic life and faith. Indeed, at one and the same time Jewish ideas were deeply influencing the two great Christian groups, Kabbalism among the Catholics and Propheticism among the Protestants. The Old Testament took a new hold on the religious consciousness. Men began to find in the Law of Moses the divinely appointed rule of conduct, and to study the Prophets for Light on the last days. Jew and Christian drew nearer together than they had done for many centuries past.

The whole of Christendom was strangely unquiet, filled with Messianic expectations and forebodings of coming Judgment. A.D. 1666 was set as the crucial apocalyptic year, and there were no lack of pamphlets predicting the time of the end. The night skies were searched for signs and portents, and stern pastors painted lurid pictures of the last days for their trembling flocks. The Jews themselves impressed by the attitude of their

Christian neighbors, and by their own mystical speculations, began to lift their heads in expectation. David Reubeni, who had arrived in Europe a century before with talk of a Jewish kingdom in the East, had not been forgotten. Antonio de Montesinos was claiming that the North-American Indians were the lost Ten Tribes. Manasseh ben Israel was petitioning of the settlement of the Jews in England and Sweden on the ground that their restoration could not take place until they were completely dispersed throughout every land.

As the apocalyptic year drew near, the tension increased among Jews and Christians. The national conversion of the Jewish people no longer appeared as a dim and distant prospect, still less as an unattainable goal. The Dutch led the way in founding a Jewish mission. In Germany, Esdras Edzard constituted himself apostle to the Jews, and was instrumental during his long life in leading more Jews to Christ than any other single person. He was followed by Professor John Henry Callenberg at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and later in 1728 the famous

Callenberg *Institutum Judaicum* was founded. Reineck in 1713 declared. “The general topic of conversation and discussion at the present day is about the conversion of the Jews.” There is no question that Cromwell was influenced in favor of Manasseh ben Israel’s petition for the readmission of the Jews to England by hopes of their conversion. Addressing an assemblage of clergy and merchants in long gallery at Whitehall, he said: “Was it not, then, our duty in particular to encourage them to settle where they could be taught the truth, and not to exclude them from the light, and leave them among false teachers, papists, and idolaters?” There were rumors that the Jews had offered the Protector half-a-million pounds for St. Paul’s Cathedral to become their synagogue, and one writer suggested solving the Irish problem by making that country over to them.

Then in distant Smyrna a Messiah appeared — Shabbathai Zevi. Not since Bar-Kochba had any claimant to the throne of David found such a following. Yet in personality, the two were poles asunder. Bar-Kochba was a warrior, pure and simple. Shabbathai Zevi was a mystic. a Kabbalistic visionary. Yet each was suited to the Jewish temperament of his day. Shabbathai, born on the fateful 9th of Ab, did not avow himself openly as the Messiah until he was forty years of age, and it would seem that he was rather compelled to the declaration by the enthusiasm of his disciples. Yet some years before he had dared to pronounce the

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Ineffable Name of God, which might be interpreted as an indication of his belief that he was the promised deliverer. So enwrapped was he in an atmosphere of exalted mysticism, however, that this incident cannot be urged as proof that he made any claim on his own behalf before he was driven to it. But with Nathan of Gaza as his energetic prophet. he did finally proclaim himself, and the tidings spread swiftly to the West. Jewish merchants in Amsterdam began to close their businesses preparatory to returning to the Land of Israel. Whole communities of Jews got ready to depart. Prayers for “our Lord and King Shabbathai Zevi” were read in orthodox synagogues. Men and women and even children fell into prophetic ecstasies. And although many rabbis doubted and opposed the movement the Jewish people would not be balked of their triumph, and rejoiced that the long night of sorrow was nearly ended. Christians began to wonder what these happenings could portend. Was Shabbathai Zevi the real Christ? Was he the Antichrist? The wildest rumors gained currency. To the north of Scotland a ship had been sighted with sails blazoned with the words, “The Twelve Tribes of Israel,” manned with sailors who spoke only the Hebrew tongue. On the heels of fancy followed terrible reality. 1665 was the Plague Year, and in 1666 came the great fire of London.

How shocking to the Jews was the tragic disappointment when Shabbathai, pressed to fulfill the prediction that he should take the crown from the head of the Turkish Sultan, arrived at Constantinople and was first imprisoned and later on threat of death turned Mussulman. Long afterwards the Jewish communities were still rent and torn by controversy because some yet clung to the vain hope that in an unexplained miraculous manner their hero would be restored to them and fulfill his destiny. While in the Near East, the Donmeh sect still survives, whose members practise a faith half Muslim half Jewish, looking for the return of their Messiah, a pale reflection of what Nazarenism was in the early Christian centuries.

2

As had happened on similar occasion in the past the reaction brought about by the failure of a Messianic claimant drove numbers of Jews into the Church. It also led to the formation of many



borderline sects, particularly in eastern Europe, which on the one hand discarded much of rabbinical dogma and ceremonial; and on the other hand flirted with

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Christianity in their mystical Messianism. Chief among these new groups were the Frankists. Jacob Frank was born in Poldolia about 1726, the son of one who was himself expelled from the local Jewish community for being a *Shebs* (follower of Shabbathai Zevi). As a merchant he spent much of his early life in Salonika and Smyrna, where the Shabbathaian influence was still very strong. About 1755 Frank returned to Poldolia and gathered about him a body of local sectaries to whom he began to proclaim the revelations he had received from the Shebs-messianists. In place of the Talmud, the sect revered the Kabbalistic Zohar, and styled themselves Zoharists. In their secret gatherings, the conditions prevailing in the primitive Corinthian Church were repeated, where religious exaltation became degraded by licentiousness; with the result that the Frankists were put under a severe ban by the scandalized rabbis, and every effort was made to expel them from the Synagogue.

The persecuted Frankists sought protection from the Bishop of Kamenets-Podolsk on the ground of their rejection of Talmud, and that the Zohar which was their authority recognized the doctrine of a divine Trinity of which the Messiah was a member. They did not explain that for them the Messiah was Shabbathai Zevi. The protection was granted, and as long as the bishop lived the sect remained fairly secure. According to Da Costa, the Frankist tenets were as follows:

“That no religion can possibly exist without the knowledge of God: all other religion is an outward service or works: piety and the love of God are the effects of a profound acquaintance with His nature, and this must be sought in the study of His law, where it is found as within a kernel, from which it must be deduced by means of tradition: the doctrine of Moses and the Prophets has an inward meaning far deeper than that of the letter, without which it is only a dead letter, and the source of errors and mistakes, the cause of the dangerous doctrines of the Talmud; according to the pure doctrine of the Word of God, there is only one God, the Creator and Preserver of all things, but revealed in three persons; God has appeared from the beginning upon earth in human form, but after the entrance of sin, He laid aside this form, and has since taken it again of the expiation of sin. As for Jerusalem, it will never be rebuilt, and a terrestrial Messiah is not to be expected.<sup>166</sup>

In 1759 Frank entered on a new stage in his career. He claimed that his revelations showed the necessity for himself and his followers to adopt the

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Christian faith as part of the process of realizing the world Messianic religion. Accordingly, he and some five hundred members of the sect were received into the Church by baptism. Frank, to whom Augustus III stood godfather, received the baptismal name of Joseph. Later, however, when it was perceived that the Frankists were as heretical as Christians as they had formerly been as Jews, proceedings were taken against them, and Frank himself was arrested and confined in a monastery for thirteen years. Eventually he was released through the advance of the Russian armies, and after an adventurous career died at Offenback in 1791. His daughter, who survived him, carried on the leadership of the sect until 1816, when the members were scattered and

merged with the Catholic Church.

The movement is noteworthy for the attempt to combine mystical Judaism with Christianity. The mystics of all religions have a certain kinship which enables them to draw near to one another and sink doctrinal differences in a common supermundane language and conception, and Jewish mysticism has by far the closest ties with mystical Christianity. As a result, since the Frankist movement, many Jewish converts have come from the ranks of the Chassidim of Poland and Galicia. The tendency of this type of Jewish Christian, naturally, is away from realistic Nonconformity and towards the High Church and Roman Church which best satisfy their aspirations. At the present day a revival of Chassidic Christianity, though in an orthodox form, has been attempted by Dr. Paul Levertoff, who characteristically has assisted in translating the Zohar into English. Undoubtedly there is a place in the Christian Church for the Jewish mystic, and his contribution can be a valuable one even if it must be limited to the few who have a capacity for such a transcendental faith.

3

It has already been noted to what an unusual extent the Christians of this period were concerned with the Jewish problem. Among the books which were written, and which still have some reputation, not always of a savory character, were Wagenseil's *Tela Ignea Satanæ*, Eisenmenger's *Entdecktes Judenthum*, Lightfoot's *Horæ Hebraicæ et Talmudicæ*, a commentary on the Gospels and some of the Epistles from Jewish sources, Surenhuysius' *Mishna*, Bartlocci's *Bibliotheca Magna Rabbinica*, and Basnage's *L'Histoire et la Religion des Juifs Depuis Jesus Christ Jusqu'a*

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*Present.*

What is of particular importance from the point of view of this history is that this scholarly activity in the domain of Hebrew learning was directly preparing the way of the revival of organized Jewish Christianity. Representative of the more enlightened attitude is the statement of Surenhuysius, quoted with approval by Canon Danby.<sup>167</sup>

He who desires to be a good and worthy disciple of Christ must either first become a Jew, or first learn thoroughly the language and culture of the Jews, and become Moses' disciple before he joins the Apostles, in order that he may be able through Moses and the Prophets to convince men that Jesus is the Messiah.

Unwelcome as conversionist attention was to the Jew, he was quickly responsive to a reasonable Christian approach which respected the merits of Jewish teaching. In return he could give a blessing to the faith which has cursed him for so many centuries. Thus Jacob Emden, the famous Jewish controversialist of the eighteenth century, could write:

Christianity has been given as part of the Jewish religion by Apostles to the Gentile world: and its Founder has even made the moral laws stricter than are those contained in the Mosaic law. There are, accordingly, many Christians of high qualities and excellent morals who keep from hatred and do harm to none, even to their enemies. Would that Christians would all live in conformity with their precepts! They are not enjoined, like the Israelites, to observe the laws of Moses: nor do they sin if they associate other beings with God in worshipping a trinitarian Godhead. They will receive reward from God for having propagated a belief in

Him among nations that never heard His name: for “He looks into the heart.” Yea, many Christians have even gone forth to the rescue of Jews and their literature.<sup>168</sup>

Our highest tribute must be reserved for a Gentile author often falsely described as a freethinker when he should have been described as an advanced thinker, for he was fully two hundred years before his time. It was John Toland, who, in his *Nazarenus* published in the second decade of the eighteenth century, first perceived and set forth the fundamental difference in the constitution of Jewish and Gentile Christianity. If his wise words had received the attention that was their due, how much of the suffering would have been spared to hundreds of Jewish Christians cut off from their racial heritage by the Church’s insistence that by acceptance of

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Christ they had ceased in any sense to be Jews. What agonies of soul, what broken hearts, have resulted from the Gentile fear of Judaizing! How many Jewish homes have mourned a lost son or daughter, because it was believed on Christian authority that their converted child had become a *goy*! Thorny has been the path of the Jewish Christian who desired to remain loyal to his people and to their God-given institutions. Romanism tortured his body, but Protestantism tortured his soul. No wonder that there have been backsliders, while such a perversion of truth could stand for Christian doctrine, and Jewish souls were hunted to death to the tune of “Free from the Law, O happy condition!”

Considerations of space unfortunately prevent any detailed quotation of Toland’s closely reasoned arguments, but at least an extract from the Preface to his work must be given as a memorial of a Christian man of vision and of faith.

From the history of the Nazarenes. and more particular from the evident words of Scripture, I infer in this discourse a distinction of two sorts of Christians, viz. those from among the Jews, and those from among the Gentiles: not only that in fact there was such a distinction (which nobody denies) but likewise that of right it ought to have been so (which everybody denies) and that it was so designed in the Original Plan of Christianity. I mean that the Jews, though associating with the converted Gentiles, and acknowledging them for brethren, were still to observe their own Law throughout all generations; and that the Gentiles, who became so far Jews as to acknowledge One God, were not however, to observe the Jewish Law: but that both of them were to be forever after united into one body or fellowship, and in that part of Christianity particularly, which, better than all the preparative purgations of the Philosophers, requires the sanctification of the spirit, or the renovation of the inward man; and wherein alone the Jew and the Gentile, the Civilized and the Barbarian, the Freeman and the Bondslave, are all one in Christ, however otherwise differing in their circumstances. In comparison of the New Creature, Circumcision and Uncircumcision are as nothing: which yet no more takes away the distinction of the sexes; since it is likewise said in the same sense, and in the same place, that in Christ there is neither Male or Female. This fellowship in Piety and Virtue is the Mystery that Paul rightly

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says was hid from all other ages, till the manifestation of it by Jesus; and this union without uniformity, between Jew and Gentile, is the admirable Economy of the Gospel. Now, this Gospel consists not in words but in virtue; tis inward and spiritual, abstracted from all formal and outward performances: for the most exact observation of externals, may be without one grain of religion. All this is mechanically done by the help of a little book-craft, whereas true religion is inward life and spirit. So that something else besides the Legal Ordinances, most of them political, was necessary to render a Jew religious: even that Faith, which is an internal participation of the divine nature, irradiating the soul; and externally appearing in beneficence, justice, sanctity, and those other virtues by which we resemble God, who is himself all Goodness. But the Jews generally mistook the means for the end: as other, who better understood the end, would not only absurdly take away the names: but even those other civil and national rites which were to continue always in the Jewish Republic (as I particularly prove) thus confounding political with religious performances. From this doctrine it follows (tis true) that Jesus did not take away or cancel the Jewish Law, in any sense whatsoever, Sacrifices only excepted; but neither does this affect any of the Gentile Christians now in the world, who have nothing at all to do with that Law. It follows indeed that the Jews, whether becoming Christians or not, are forever bound to the Law of Moses, as now limited; and he that thinks that they were absolved from the observation of it by Jesus, or that 'tis a fault in them still to adhere to it, does err, not knowing the Scriptures; as did most of the converts from the Gentiles, who gave their bare names to Christ, but reserved their Idolatrous hearts for their native superstitions. These did almost wholly subvert the True Christianity, which in the following Treatise I vindicate; drawing it out from under the rubbish of their endless division, and clearing it from the almost impenetrable mists of their sophistry. So inveterate was their hatred of the Jews (though indebted to them for the Gospel) that their observing of any thing, however reasonable or necessary. was a sufficient motive for these Gentile converts to reject it .... I do here teach a very different doctrine,

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more consonant (I am persuaded) to the mind of Christ and his Apostles, and is more agreeable to the Law of nature and the dictates of Humanity.<sup>169</sup>

## Chapter XVIII

## 1

The intention of this history clearly excludes any detailed account of Christian Missions to Jews, and a voluminous literature already exists on the subject published by the various societies themselves and by individuals who were closely connected with their activities. It must be clearly recognized, however, that the Missions to the Jews, mainly founded in the nineteenth century, paved the way directly for the reconstitution of Jewish Christianity as an organic spiritual community, not only because their high-souled efforts won thousands of Jews for Christ and so provided the living materials for such a reconstitution, but because some of them sponsored and assisted the first hesitant steps of Jewish Christians to unite with one another in a corporate existence. The debt of Jewish Christianity to the modern Protestant missions is indeed an overwhelming one, and can only be repaid by the utmost endeavor to realize in function the vision of so many saintly Gentile Christians of a national Jewish witness for Jesus the Messiah that in the dark hour of almost universal unbelief would hold aloft the torch of faith, and fulfill the historic mission of Israel to the world by showing forth the pattern of a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

In the contemplation of such a glorious prospect it is possible to lose sight of, and even to forget, the fevers and stresses which have marked the journey to the mount of vision, the bitternesses of brethren and the opposition of foes. What we may remember with gratitude is, that despite temporary setbacks due to lack of understanding, jealousies, and a rigid adherence to sectional formulas, there was a steady striving and progress towards the goal. It could not be expected of the Jewish people that they would in any way countenance either the objector methods of the Christian propaganda, which to them, and not without reason, represented a disruptive force aiming at the piece-meal destruction of their racial integrity. We say, not without reason, because the "All one in Christ" partisans in the Church continued to use the beautiful Pauline conception as an axe to sever the Jewish Christian wholly and completely from his former co-religionists.

The Jewish Christians themselves, especially the missionaries, partly inspired by zeal for their new faith and partly by fear that their sincerity would be called in question, as a rule have been outspoken in denunciations of Judaism, so that they have become strangers to their brethren and have

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ceased to be associated with any Jewish interests, even of a non-religious character. When not disowned through Jewish prejudice they have disowned themselves through Christian prejudice.

The nearer we approach to our own times the more difficult it becomes to view events and individuals in a true historic perspective. It is not only that we have ample records to contrast with the scanty relics of past ages, or that a few names have swelled to thousands, but that the task of deciding who and what events are really significant is complicated by actual or supposed personal bias. If our history had been one of Jewish Christians and not of Jewish Christianity, there would be no difficulty, as all that would be required would be a rewriting of expansion of Bernstein's *Some Jewish Witnesses for Christ*. But our aim being what it is, a reference to the majority of very estimable Jewish converts of the nineteenth century, many of whom attained to

great distinction for piety or learning, would be entirely out of place: they belong to the Jewish Christian roll of honor, and their names, no doubt, are written in heaven, but they have contributed nothing to the Jewish Christian movement. The names that will live in Jewish Christian history will be those of men who were not always highly thought of by their own generation and who were frequently distressed and discouraged, but who by their steadfast adherence to their racial obligations as Jews have sought to restore what Toland realized was the Original Plan of Christianity.

2

The clarion call to a new conception of Christian duty to the Jew was sounded by Callenberg in 1732. "Will God save all mankind, He does not exclude the Jews." The Church was awakening to the Gentile need of Christ in far off lands, but the Apostolic order "To the Jew first," had so far touched few Christian consciences. Muller's *The Light at Eventide*, and Goldney's *Epistle to the Jews*, "wheresoever scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth," were exceptional tracts. It had to wait for Jewish Christians to plead the cause of their brethren before any real active work was started. Joseph Samuel Frey (1711-1837) and Ridley Herschell (1807-1864) were the inspirers of the London Society and the British Society, respectively, for Promoting Christianity among the Jews. Many other societies were subsequently formed, and by the end of the nineteenth century there were nearly a hundred agencies working among the Jews in different parts of the world. The results of their work is shown by the fact

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that at least a quarter of a million Jews were won for Christ during this century.<sup>170</sup> Nor was their quality negligible. Twenty names only may be given here as representative.<sup>171</sup>

- Karl Paul Caspari (1814-1892), professor of theology at Christiania.
- Paulus Cassel (1821-1892), German writer and preacher.
- Isaac Da Costa (1789-1860), Dutch historian.
- Benjamin Disraeli, Lord Beaconsfield (1804-1881), British statesman and writer.
- George Ebers (b. 1837). German Egyptologist.
- Alfred Edersheim (1825-1889), English theologian and writer.
- Emin Pasha (1840-1892), African explorer.
- Ferdinand Christian Ewald (1801-1874), German divine.
- Christian David Ginsburg (it 1821), British theologian.
- Bishop Isaac Hellmuth (1820-1901), Canadian divine.
- Sir William Herschel (1738-1822), English astronomer.
- Moses Margoliouth (1818-1881), Jewish historian.
- Karl Marx (1818-1883), German socialist.
- Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1809-1847), German composer.
- Johann August Wilhelm Neander (1789-1850), professor of ecclesiastical history, Berlin.
- Sir Francis Cohen Palgrave (1788-1861), historian.
- Bishop Samuel Isaac Johseph Schereschewsky (1831-1906), sinologist and divine.
- Henry A. Stern (1820-1885), missionary and traveller.
- Joseph Wolff (1795-1862), missionary and traveller.
- Sir Moses Ximenes (b. 1762), English high sheriff.

Jewish Christianity does not boast of numbers, and it is only right to add that De le Roi's figures include many thousands of Jews who were converts of expediency, especially in Germany, where the professing Jew had little chance of advancement. It cannot be said, however, that Jewish emancipation, which took place in so many countries during the nineteenth century, made the Jew less willing to listen to the Gospel message. Rather is it striking that when all compulsion and necessity for Christian baptism was removed there was an increase and not a diminution of conversions. The spirit that had steadily resisted threats and persecutions was ready to surrender to love.

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3

One of the most significant of Christian missionary enterprises to the Jews inaugurated during the nineteenth century was the Hebrew Christian Testimony to Israel founded in 1893 by David Baron and C.A. Schonberger in the East End of London. These two saintly men were anxious to impress the Jews with the fact that they did not represent any particular Church or sect or party, but that Jewish Christians as such were bearing testimony that they had found in Jesus of Nazareth their Messiah and Savior. Their aim was not to convert Jews to a creed, but to bring as many as possible into living relationship with God, in Christ, and to testify to both Jews and Gentile Christians that Christ and Israel are inseparable; that Christ is still to be "the King of the Jews," and that the Jewish nation is in a peculiar sense "His own." David Baron once stated:

What we continually press upon the Jews is that we believe in Christ as the Son of Man and the Son of God, *not in spite of, but because we are, Jews*. We believe that Jesus is the Divine King of our people, the sum and substance of our Scriptures, the fulfiller of our Law and our Prophets, the embodiment of all the promises of our covenant. *Our testimony is that of Jews to Jews*.

Such a position would have been an impossible one even in the previous century. The emancipation of the Jews also brought with it the emancipation of the Jewish Christian. No longer need he deny his race, but could openly proclaim himself for what he was.

## Chapter XIX

Twelve weary centuries had passed since Jewish Christianity lost its corporate existence, twelve centuries in which any suspicion of Jewishness any convert was condemned as Christian apostasy and punished with all the cruelty of the times. Like a peaceful village over which the tide of battle has flowed and retreated, and the villagers are returning one by one to their ruined homesteads and devastated fields to build and to plan again and to live together, so Jewish Christianity began at first hesitatingly, but gradually with more confidence, to reorganize and reconstruct. Yet things could not be as once they had been. Times had changed, suffering had taught new lessons, it was not possible or politic to rebuild on the old plan, to restate the faith in quite the same terms. Nevertheless, it was on the same basis that the foundations had to be laid, a Jewish Christian basis, quite distinctive from that of the Gentile Christian, though in many respects akin.

There were those who wished to build on the plan of the places of exile, or the pattern of the Christian sects to which they had become attached. There were others who had lost all desire for religious repatriation, and held aloof. Others again denounced the work as contrary to Divine intention: the destruction, they claimed, was proof that a communal Jewish Christianity had been done away with, and that assimilation to the universal Church was the design of the present dispensation.

The arguments that have been used, and are still being used, are not new, neither are they justifiable. No doubt they were employed by the Jews of Babylon when the faithful remnant set out to return and build the walls of Zion. The great work is still in its infancy, foreign influences are still strong, there are many Sanballats to impede the work and to attempt to bring it to naught, the loyal Jewish Christian must still be ready to pause in his building to defend his new found liberty. The cry is raised: "What do these feeble Jews?" It will yet be seen what God will do.

A portent of the new era for Jewish Christianity was visible in the consecration to the newly-created Anglican See of Jerusalem of Bishop Michael Solomon Alexander in 1841, the first Jewish Christian Bishop of Jerusalem since A.D. 135.

Alexander was born at Schonlanke in Posen in 1799. and grew to manhood in an orthodox Jewish home. He came to England in 1820,

being at that time wholly unacquainted with Christianity. At Colchester, where he had settled as a tutor, he happened to see a handbill notifying the annual meeting of the London Jews' Society, and this so aroused his curiosity that he obtained and read the New Testament. Later he became rabbi of the Jewish congregation at Norwich, and subsequently at Plymouth. where in 1821 he married a Miss Levy of that town. The instrument of his conversion was the Rev. B.B. Golding, curate of Stonehouse, to whom he gave lessons in Hebrew. He was eventually baptized in 1825, and it was his joy to discover that his wife quite unknown to him had been a secret inquirer. After ordination as deacon, and then as priest, he became a missionary of the London Jews' Society (1827-1841). During part of this time he held the post of Professor of Hebrew and Rabbinical Literature in King's College, London. In 1840. Professor Alexander's name appeared at the head of a list of sixty Jewish Christians who had subscribed to a formal "protest of



Christian Jews in England” against the Blood Libel, that Jews used Christian blood in their Passover rites.

In 1841 King Frederic William IV of Prussia, desiring to ameliorate the condition of Protestants in the Holy Land, proposed to Great Britain, through Chevalier Bunsen the establishment of a joint episcopal representative at Jerusalem. The suggestion was cordially accepted. Parliament passed a Bill to found and endow a Bishopric, which received Queen Victoria’s assent on October 5, 1841.

The offer of the Bishopric was made, in the first instance, to Dr. McCaul, who declined it on the ground that a Jewish Christian ought to occupy the position. Alexander was thereupon selected and consecrated as first Bishop of the new see on Sunday, November 7, 1841, in Lambeth Palace by the Archbishop of Canterbury in the presence of a distinguished company. The next morning the new Bishop celebrated Holy Communion in the Episcopal Jews’ Chapel, and in the evening preached his last sermon before his departure from England. prophetically as it afterwards transpired from the text: “And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem. not knowing the things that shall befall me there.”

Jerusalem was reached on January 21, 1842, and it was a day of great rejoicing when the Jewish Bishop entered the city of his fathers. In conformity with instructions received from Constantinople, proclamation was made in the mosques that, “he who touches the Anglican Bishop will be regarded as touching the apple of Pasha’s eye.” In his last annual

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letter, written in 1845 just before he started on the journey to Cairo which resulted in his death, Bishop Alexander referred to that great event in his life. He spoke of that day as;

much to be remembered, even when the results, which have already followed in this short period, be alone taken into consideration; but a day which we trust will yet prove one of the most remarkable in the history of the Church, when the Lord “shall bind up Zion, and appear in His glory.” and when all, who now mourn for her, seeing her desolate and trodden down, shall rejoice for joy with her; and when God’s people shall be delighted with the abundance of her glory.

His tragic death occurred in the desert at Ras-el-Wady on the road to Egypt, by the rupture of a blood vessel, on November 26, 1845, after a brief episcopate of only four years. His remains were brought back to Jerusalem and interred in the English cemetery. The highest testimony to his life and example was that contained in a letter of condolence to Mrs. Alexander, signed by thirty-one Jewish Christians of Jerusalem, who had acknowledged their Messiah through the bishop’s instrumentality. The signatories said:

Next to yourself and your dear family, we consider ourselves the chief mourners; for we feel both collectively and individually that we have lost not only a true father in Christ, but also a loving brother and a most kind friend. The suavity and benignity of his manner, which so greatly endeared him to all, and which gained him the highest and most entire filial confidence of every one of us, tend much to increase the keen sense we feel of our loss. The affectionate love he bore to Israel, which peculiarly characterized him, could not fail to render him beloved by every one who had the privilege of being acquainted with him; while his exalted piety, and most exemplary life and conversation, inspired the highest reverential esteem.

He was a burning and shining light; and when he was raised to the highest dignity in the Church, he conferred the most conspicuous honor on our whole nation, but especially on the little band of Jewish believers. With him captive, Judah's brightest earthly star has set, and the top stone has been taken away from the rising Hebrew Church.<sup>172</sup>

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It was in London, in Palestine Place, for so many years an oasis for wandering Israelites, that the first exclusively Hebrew Christian Association was formed. Here in the Jews' Chapel on September 9, 1813, a group of forty-one Jewish Christians met together to constitute themselves an association called *Beni Avraham*, Children of Abraham, who undertook to meet for prayer every Sunday morning and Friday evening: to attend divine worship at the chapel and to visit daily, two by two in rotation, any sick member, to pray with him and read the Bible to him; and on Sunday, all who could were to visit the sick one.

In 1835 the ministry of this association was extended, and it was now known as the episcopal Jews' Chapel Abrahamic Society, for visiting and relieving Jewish converts and inquirers. Twenty-five years later this Society's beneficent work was still being carried on.<sup>173</sup>

Another body which for many years served to unite Jewish Christians in a spiritual fellowship was the Hebrew Christian Prayer Union, founded in 1882 by Dr. H.A. Stern. Its objects were the promotion of unity, piety and brotherly feeling amongst Jewish converts, by means of mutual prayer and religious intercourse. Prayer was offered privately by each member on Saturday, and there were general meetings for prayer in London at stated seasons. Stern was the first President. The membership rose from 143 in 1883, to 600 in 1890; and branches were formed in Germany, Norway, Rumania, Russia, Palestine and the United States.<sup>174</sup>

But while these movements have interest as expressing the need of Jewish Christians for mutual dependence both in prayer and charity, they have no claim to be regarded as forerunners of a revived Jewish Christianity. The first united stand of Jewish Christians, as such, was made in 1866 when Dr. C. Schwartz, minister of Trinity Chapel, Edgware Road, London, built by another Jewish Christian, Ridley Herschell, formed a Hebrew-Christian Union. The objects are stated to have been:

- 1 To promote a social and frequent personal intercourse among Christian Israelites by meeting together at stated periods.
- 2 To stir up and stimulate one another in the endeavor of uniting with, and caring for, our brethren.
- 3 To search the Scriptures together relating to Israel and Israel's King.

The opening verse of Psalm 133 "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity," was taken as the motto of the

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Union.

Dr. Schwartz also commenced to edit in January 1866, the first Jewish Christian periodical, *The Scattered Nation*.

The great forward step was taken on April 25, 1866, when the following circular letter was issued to Jewish Christians.

Dear Brother,

It has occurred to us that it would be desirable and profitable that as many Israelites who believe in Jesus as can be brought together should meet in London on the 23rd of May.

Our object is to become acquainted with one another, and to be built up in our holy faith. There are special ties which bind us together as descendant of Abraham. and we believe that this conference for prayer and consultation might issue in a permanent union of Jewish Christian brethren in this land.

We do not come before you with any definite plan for action, but would simply say that, as there exists an Evangelical and a Jewish, an Hebrew-Christian Alliance also might be formed.

We trust that you feel with us the desirableness and importance of such a meeting, and that we may reckon your presence and on your prayers.

An early reply, sent to the address of Dr. Schwartz, would greatly oblige.

With the prayer that the Lord may bless us all.

Dear brother, yours very sincerely,

A.D. Herschell  
H. Liebstein  
M. Margoiouth  
T.E. Neuman  
A. Pitowsky  
J. Steinhardt  
A. Saphir  
C. Schwartz

The Rev. A. M. Meyer, Dr. M. Schulhof, and other brethren, have promised to attend.

Eighty Jewish Christians met on the day appointed, and Dr. Schwartz afterwards wrote: "We may boldly say that such a gathering of convened Jews exclusively had not been witnessed since the early days of the Christian Church."

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On the motion of Rev. A. M. Meyer, seconded by Dr. Ginsburg, Dr. Schwartz took the chair. The Rev. A. M. Meyer introducing the subject of the desirability of a Hebrew-Christian Alliance, said:

Let us not sacrifice our identity. When we profess Christ, we do not cease to be Jews; Paul, after his conversion, did not cease to be a Jew: not only Saul was, but even Paul remained, a Hebrew of the Hebrews. We cannot and will not forget the land of our fathers, and it is our desire to cherish feelings of patriotism.... As

Hebrews, as Christians, we feel tied together; and as Hebrew Christians, we desire to be allied more closely to one another.

It was unanimously resolved that a Hebrew-Christian Alliance be formed. The proceedings on this occasion were in private; but the following year a crowded public meeting was held at Willis' Rooms, King Street, St. James', on May 14, 1867, under the presidency of Dr. Schwartz, when, among the resolutions passed was the following:

That though the members of the Alliance belong to different Churches, they all feel united in Christ, and they declare before their Jewish brethren that they have found in Jesus, the Messiah, to whom the Law and Prophets bear testimony, that they have peace in His blood, and look for His coming in glory as the Hope of Israel.

It is evident from its history, which has now reached the Psalmist's span of life, that the Hebrew-Christian Alliance represented no temporary burst of enthusiasm, but was the outcome of a real desire for corporate witness for Christ as Jews, a desire that has only increased with the passing of the years. Among the distinguished Presidents have been men like Dr. Rosedald, Aaron Bernstein, Ben-Oliel, Isaac Levinson, Samuel Schor and E. Bendor Samuel. In 1915, the movement crossed the Atlantic and the Hebrew Christian Alliance of America was founded under the presidency of the Rev. S. B. Rohold.

3

The Jewish Christian movements which we have been considering were associations within the bounds of the established churches. The members owned allegiance to one or other of the Christian denominations. It remained for Joseph Rabinowitz in 1882 to found the first Jewish Christian communion in modern times which belonged to no definite denomination, but was rather in the nature of a synagogue of Jewish believers in Jesus.

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The story of Rabinowitz is a remarkable one. He may without unfair comparison be described as the Herzl of Jewish Christianity.

Rabinowitz was born at Resina on the Dniester, September 23, 1837, the son of David ben Ephraim. Owing to the early death of his mother, he was taken into the family of his maternal grandfather, Nathan Neta, where he remained until he was eleven years of age. At the age of six, he could repeat the Song of Solomon by heart.

His youth was spent in Chasidic circles, and he showed great promise of literary ability. At thirteen he was betrothed, though he did not marry until six years later. It was his future brother-in-law, Jehiel Hershensohn (Lichtenstein) who first introduced him to the New Testament by lending him a Hebrew copy, at the same time remarking that perhaps Jesus of Nazareth was the true Messiah. Rabinowitz was greatly surprised at this suggestion, but its only apparent effect on him was to cause him to leave the Chasidim and earnestly to study the Bible. He returned with his grandfather to Orgeyev and took up law as his profession so that he could practise as a solicitor among his own people. He took an active interest in communal affairs, and was a frequent contributor to the Jewish newspapers: he also gave lectures at Kischineff in which he advocated reform and progressive ideas. In 1878 he wrote an article in the Hebrew paper *Haboker Or*, in which he urged on the rabbis to improve the conditions of Russian Jewry by sponsoring agricultural training, and he himself set an example by putting his garden under cultivation. Shortly afterwards, when a wave of persecution broke out, he went to Palestine on a

mission of inquiry with a view in establishing a Jewish colony there. The Hebrew New Testament given to him many years before went with him as a guide book. When he reached Jerusalem and saw the miserable state of the Jewish inhabitants, he was deeply depressed; but before he left the Holy City he ascended the Mount of Olives. Sitting there and viewing the Mosque of Omar, where formerly the Temple stood, his mind went back over the tragic history of his people. What was the meaning of the age-old tale of Israel's suffering? In a flash the answer came to him: "The key to the Holy Land is in the hands of our brother Jesus."

Filled with the glory of a great vision, Rabinowitz returned to Kischineff, and with great power and enthusiasm set forth his belief. In a short time he had gathered around him numerous adherents to his doctrine not only in Kischineff, but in many other towns of Bessarabia. The faith of the movement, which called itself "Israelites of the New Covenant," was

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set forth in thirteen articles of faith on the model of those drawn up by Maimonides.

In 1885 Rabinowitz took the decisive step of being baptized in Berlin; and although this restricted his work to some extent, owing to Jewish prejudice against baptism, his labors continued unabated. He was invited to join the Lutheran Church and also the Russian Church, but he was wholly loyal to his people and would not attend a place of Christian worship where a crucifix was displayed. Subsequently he built a hall which became a Jewish Christian Synagogue. A Christian minister, Mr. Faber, saw his work and brought back this description:

Rabinowitz is a preacher of the Gospel in the spirit of the Jewish nationality: a preacher gifted, so versed in the Scriptures, so deeply rooted in the Divine Word of the New Covenant, as the Jewish nation has not possessed since the days of the Apostles. This is his great importance. His sermons published in Hebrew, Russian, and the jargon (Yiddish), reach, in ten thousands of copies, the masses of the Jews in Eastern Europe. They find eager readers in the most remote districts of Siberia, and in the secluded valleys of the Carpathian mountains. The writer of these lines has had personal opportunities of seeing the profound influence of Rabinowitz's pamphlets in Galicia and Lithuania.

Jewish antagonists of the movement spoke of Rabinowitz as the Babbling, but it was noticeable that the general attitude towards the person of Jesus was much improved. A Committee in Great Britain was formed to support the work, but there were many Christians who looked askance at this combination of Judaism and Christianity as if the hydrogen of the Old Covenant and the oxygen of the New Covenant did not naturally combine to produce the Water of Life. The old fear still persisted.

Rabinowitz died in 1899; but in Bessarabia his name and memory continue to be honored, and a steadily increasing Jewish Christian organization now incorporated as the Hebrew Christian Alliance of Bessarabia perpetuates his pioneer efforts to bridge the gulf between Church and Synagogue and to bring back the Scattered Nation to its proper allegiance.

## Chapter XX

## 1

There could be no doubt that Rabinowitz and his movement had caused a fluttering in Christian circles. Here was no imposing of the Christian faith on Jews from without, but an adoption, or rather reclamation, of Christianity by Jews from within. The churches could stand by, but they could not participate in this domestic matter. It was clear that Jesus must be something more to the Jew than he could be to the Gentile, for he was the legal King of Israel. It was like watching the growth of a royalist party within an old-established republic.

The same spirit which led Theodore Herzl to seek the solution of the Jewish problem in a revived Jewish State had led Joseph Rabinowitz to seek a solution in a Jewish divinely controlled Kingdom, with Jesus as the sovereign. In both cases it was the manifestation of anti-semitism that was the influential cause. It must be remembered that the New Testament was a sealed book to thousands of Jews, and never having read it they judged the book by the deeds of those who claimed to be bound by its teaching. It was in desperation that they turned to it now to find the exact authority which lay behind the pogroms and blood-libels. The situation is exemplified by the experience of Rabbi I. Lichtenstein, district rabbi of Tapio-Szele in Hungary. In a pamphlet called *Judenspiegel* he wrote:

I used to think that Christ was the plague and curse of the Jews, the origin and promoter of our sorrow and persecution. In this conviction I grew to years of manhood, and still cherishing it I became old. I knew no difference between true, and merely nominal Christianity; of the fountain head of Christianity itself I knew nothing. Strangely enough, it was the horrible Tisza-Eszlar blood accusation which first drew me to read the New Testament. This trial brought from their lurking-places all the enemies of the Jews, and once again, as in olden times, the cry reechoed, "Death to the Jew!" The frenzy was excessive, and among the ringleaders were many who used the name of Christ and his doctrine as a cloak to cover their abominable doings. These wicked practices of men, wearing the name of Christ only to further their evil dangers, aroused the indignation of the true Christians, who, with pen on fire and warning voices, denounced the lying rage of the anti-semites. In articles written

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by the latter in defence of the Jews, I often met with passages where Christ was spoken of as he who brings joy to man, the Prince of Peace, and the Redeemer, and his Gospel was extolled as a message of love and life to all people. I was surprised, and, scarcely trusting my eyes, I took a New Testament out of its hidden corner; a book which some forty years ago I had in vexation taken from a Jewish teacher, and I began to turn over its leaves and to read. How can I express the impression which I then received? Not the half had been told me of the greatness, power, and glory of this book. formerly a sealed book to me. All seemed so new to me, and yet it did me good like the sight of an old friend, who has laid side his dusty, travel-worn garments, and appears in festal attire.

In another pamphlet *Judenthum und Christenthum* he says:

A sudden glory, a light, flashed through my soul. I looked for thorns, and gathered roses: I discovered pearls instead of pebbles; instead of hatred, love; instead of vengeance, forgiveness; instead of bondage, freedom; instead of pride, humility; instead of enmity, conciliation; instead of death, life, salvation, resurrection, and heavenly treasure.

Rabbi Lichtenstein began to quote the New Testament from his pulpit to the scandal of some of his congregants, who accused him to the chief rabbi of Budapest of heterodoxy. The outcome was that Rabbi Lichtenstein admitted his faith in Christ, and had to resign his office. His voice could not be stilled, however, and he went on preaching the amazing truth that had been revealed to him. He would not be baptized, and remained with the Jewish community until his death at the advanced age of eighty-five, on October 16, 1909.

Lichtenstein and Rabinowitz were no isolated cases: they had their contemporaries and their immediate successors; they were, indeed, representative of an entirely new generation of Jewish Christians more on the pattern of the original Nazarenes. The position of these New Covenant Jews raised an acute problem in the Christian Church. They would not be absorbed, they would not be assimilated. They claimed the right as Jews to maintain the name and customs of their race. They held that they had not forsaken Judaism, but crowned it with Jesus, the chief corner stone. Understanding Christians welcomed and sympathized with the manifestation: it answered to their own scriptural convictions that Israel

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would return to its allegiance with resultant revival of true faith among all believers. They looked to the Jewish Christians to proclaim a purer Christianity, uninfluenced by the doctrinal controversies which had rent the Catholic Church. Others, fearful that an independent reading of the New Testament by the Jews, untutored by Gentile traditional interpretations, would undermine the structure of their faith, raised a loud cry of Ebionitism. If Jewish Christianity would not submit to be poured into their peculiar denominational mould, they were determined to wreck it by branding it as a heresy. The liberty which the apostle Paul had won for the Gentiles they were unwilling to grant to the Jews. A particularly insistent evangelical group raised the standard of what they called "dispensational truth" in an effort to prove that until the second advent of Jesus it was impossible for the Jewish people to be converted, and therefore that any attempt to found a separate national Jewish Christian communion was outside of the Divine Plan, and foredoomed to failure.

On this 'Ebionite' issue the battle was joined. The old theology apportioned the Biblical blessings to the Church and left the curses to the Jews. One cannot help feeling that much of Gentile Christian anxiety was now lest the tables should be turned, and that Jacob would somehow trick Laban out of his birthright of the Promised Land and leave him only the barren Mount Seir. Jewish Christianity would have both the Law and the Promises and Gentile Christianity would be relegated to the position of the poor relation accepting the spiritual charity of Israel.

One very vital aspect of the situation the Gentile Christians entirely ignored, and that was the injury they were doing to the simple enthusiastic faith of the Jewish Christians by embroiling them in their doctrinal controversies. Many a Jewish convert entered the Church in the naive belief that all Christians were brethren. They had no prior knowledge of the subtler denominational distinctions, and the discovery was a grave shock to their idealism. Even worse,

they frequently found that they were not wanted in the Church, and were frozen out by ill-disguised dislike. The Jewish temperament, so susceptible to atmospheric feeling, wilted with the chill of Christian austerity. The convert, who had dared all for Christ's sake, and expected the warmth of his new brethren to solace him for what he had lost, was subjected to the torture of a loneliness which only the deepest faith could support. With a wry smile the Jewish Christians touched the limp hand of charity, shuddering inwardly at the contact. Gladly do we admit that his bitter experience was not

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universal. There were Gentile Christians who were friends of Israel in deed as well as in name, and who poured themselves out in love to bring comfort to the stranger. These received their reward in a very passion of gratitude and responsive affection.

Among the mistakes of the Church in dealing with Jewish Christians has been a too ready action on the principle that all converts should of necessity become missionaries to their own people, whether they were qualified for this work or otherwise. The desire for witness is always strong among those who have found a great truth, which appears to them to give form and meaning to chaotic and inexplicable circumstances: it springs mainly from a high-souled and wholly good desire to share the blessings we enjoy with others less fortunate. Missionary service often however, works a subtle change in motive and transforms a beneficent instinct into something that partakes of spiritual arrogance and in time becomes a quite indefensible mania for proselytism. Very few, and only those who live in the closest contact with God, are able to resist this process. How utterly true are the words of Paul: "And how shall they preach, except they be sent?"

The situation has been particularly difficult for those Jewish Christians whose former life has been spent in enclosed Jewish surroundings. By accepting Christ they have not only been cast out of their homes, but out of their places of employment. Some have been scholars and knew no trade. In any case, their Jewishness made engagement by a Gentile employer difficult. The Mission door opened up a way not only of keeping body and soul together, but of expressing devotion to Christ in practical service. It has only been realized later that service to Christ has become servitude to a Committee, and to break away meant untold hardship not only to self but to wife and children, which family love — so strong in the Jew — dare not contemplate. Some Missions have been wiser than to insist on the convert becoming a missionary, when he has had no vocation, and they have established trade training-schools and workshops with a view to making him self-supporting and independent. Such efforts are all to the good, but the relief is still small, having no regard to the growing numbers of Jews who are finding their spiritual peace in following their Messiah. It is plain that the real solution to the problem can only come when Jewish prejudice has sufficiently abated, and the much vaunted Jewish tolerance is no longer an impressive but quite unsubstantial argument in contrasting Christianity with Judaism, but is real and manly enough to give liberty of conscience to Jewish

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Christians and so to banish forever the pain of the broken family circle. One knows that the root cause is the Jewish fear of assimilation, which sees in the cutting off of the offending member the only means of safeguarding the integrity of the race. When this fear is removed by the superlative Jewishness attached to Jewish Christianity, then it is to be anticipated that a better state of affairs will result.



At a series of missionary conferences from the close of the nineteenth century to the outbreak of the Great War in 1914 the Ebionite theme recurred again and again and was dealt with according to the convictions of the various speakers.

Mark John Levy, a sturdy advocate of the loyal Jewish Christian position and founder of the Christian Jews' Patriotic Alliance, succeeded in bringing the subject before the British Hebrew Christian Alliance in the 'nineties; but his resolution was "tabled" undoubtedly because of its supposed danger to the servants of the missionary societies. Dr. Rosedale, the president, actually confessed to Levy that "The Hebrew Christian missionaries are dependent on the Gentile Christians for support and they cannot afford in justice to their families to risk the charge of Judaizing."

Elsewhere others were raising the standard of Jewish Christian independence; in Galatia there was Christian Theodore Lucky: in Hamburg Paulus Grun through the columns of his magazine *Ephratha*, organ of the Jewish Christian Association, and again in South Africa Philip Cohen, who edited *The Messianic Jew* for the Jewish messianic Movement. Cohen gives three cogent reasons for a change of attitude on the part of Jewish Christians:

- 1 Deep love to our own nation, to its history and its traditions.
- 2 A deep conviction that we who are Hebrew Christians can best serve the cause of Christ by demonstrating to our people that we still belong to them.
- 3 The conviction that Jewish Christianity can only impress the Jewish mind by taking on a distinctively Jewish coloring.

Lucky in an impassioned speech at a Jewish Christian Conference in Stanislaw in 1903 stated:

I do not demand from my fellow-believers the complete and

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strict observance of all Jewish customs at any price. Here is a brother who says, "We live in exile and are not our own masters, and though I would like to keep the entire ceremonial law, and all the more because I am a disciple of Jesus, I cannot do it. I am a soldier and must eat barrack fare. I must rest on Sunday and work on the Sabbath for the sake of my daily bread." Well, he is my brother nevertheless. I do not judge his conscience, nor is he to let me be a conscience to him in the matter of meals, or of the Sabbath, all of which are only a shadow of that of which we have the substance in Christ. On the other hand, another says, "Because I believe in Christ therefore I give up the Sabbath." Well, he is no less acceptable to God on that account, and I do not despise him for it nor condemn him. But I am sorry for him, and it hurts me to the depth of my heart because he too is a child of Israel and should help us to build up the walls of Jerusalem.

Mark Levy, in 1907, addressed an appeal to the General Assembly of the Episcopal Church of the United States, in which he pleaded for the restoration of the original Hebrew Christian branch of the Church, and for the public proclamation of the Scriptural truth.

That the Church does not require its Jewish members to forsake their own people, but leaves them in their Christ-given liberty to have their children circumcised according to God's covenant with Abraham, should they so desire, and to observe all the other customs inherited from their fathers, provided it be clearly understood that neither Jew nor Gentile can be saved through the works of the Law, but solely through the sacrifice and atonement of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

The General Assembly responded with a resolution in that sense, retaining the exact words that Levy had used.

Neither were there wanting Gentile Christians who fully appreciated the need for the establishment of a revived Jewish Christian communion. That famous Hebraist, the late Canon B. H. Box, said at the London Missionary Conference of 1903:

I venture to beseech Jewish Christians to take this question into their prayerful consideration. I know full well that many of them are affectionately attached to Gentile Christian communities, and that it will be fairly difficult to find a common

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basis. But I would ask them at least to set this unity before them as their goal. And should a homogeneous Hebrew Christian Church be formed centering round a liturgy which is informed with a certain adaptation to the national and historic Jewish spirit, may those who cannot give their full and hearty allegiance to such a Church at least refrain from putting hindrances in the way of its free development.

The Rev. Th. Lindhagen at the International Jewish Missionary Conference at Stockholm in 1911 rightly stated:

It cannot be denied that up to now the relation of the Jewish Christians to their people has been far from altogether satisfactory. The reproaches which have been levelled against them and against the missionaries who work among them are unfortunately only too well grounded. It is quite true that there are Jewish Christians and missionaries to the Jews who make an altogether vicious use of Paul's word to the Galatians, "There is neither Jew nor Greek." The apostle cannot have meant these words as advocating the annihilation of their nationality .... It is equally true that the Gentile Church has helped to estrange Jewish Christians from their own people through calling them "proselytes." an unscriptural term in direct opposition to the pronouncements of Paul in Romans 11, where he speaks of the Jews as the natural branches, and the Gentiles as branches of a wild olive which had been grafted on to the good tree against all natural tendency. In this respect a thorough-going change of policy and practice is necessary. "I am verily a man which am a Jew, a Hebrew of the Hebrews" — there is much need for these words to be heard and spoken once more without shame among our Jewish Christian brethren. That the ideal of an autonomous Jewish Christian Church is closely connected with these aspiration regarding the right attitude of Hebrew Christians to their people is self-evident.

So the struggle went on, the pangs which heralded the coming birth of a new Jewish Christianity. The fact that the issue was so widely discussed, and that feeling ran so high, was in

itself sufficient indication that no mere academic question was being dealt with, but that there was a definite quickening, a separate Jewish Christian consciousness was taking form.

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Then came the World War, and for a time the tribulation of Jewish Christianity was submerged in the tribulation of the nations. Yet the war itself was to be linked with this strange history in the mysterious purposes of God.

## Chapter XXI

## 1

There are many earnest Christians who consider that the most important outcome of the terrible World War of 1914-1918 was the wresting of the Holy Land from the Turks and the British Balfour declaration guaranteeing to the scattered Jewish people a national home in Palestine. These events, whatever may be the view of the reader on the subject of prophecy, were of the utmost significance to those who believed that the age described in the Scriptures as “The Times of the Gentiles” was drawing to a close. Before the great culmination it was necessary for the Jews to be gathered back to their own land, where finally they would repentantly accept Jesus as their true Messiah and become a missionary nation to the whole world. The war was thus regarded as an instrument for the carrying out of the divine plan, another instance of God making the wrath of man to praise Him. Such an interpretation of historic happenings is of a piece with the whole story of the Jews, in so many respects unique. Nations have made history; but what other nation has had its history written for it in advance? Unbelief may scoff, but it cannot deny the mysterious march of the cavalcade of God.

The Jew suffered in the war as acutely with every belligerent country, but especially in eastern Europe where the tide of battle flowed back and forth across their habitations, and they were regarded as the legitimate spoil of whichever army was for the time in occupation. Yet the war brought them a measure of freedom in places where this had previously been denied to them. Revolutions swept away ghettos as well as dynasties. There was a great turning away from the old ways and the old traditions. For some Jews liberty led to atheistic Communism, for other it led to nominal Christianity. When it became possible to gather reliable statistics, it was found that 97,000 Jews had joined the church in Hungary, 17,000 in Austria, 35,000 in Poland, 60,000 in Russia, over 20,000 in America, and smaller numbers in other countries. Spontaneous movements of a deeply spiritual character were to be noted expressing devotion to Jesus. but distinct from any missionary endeavor — the “Seekers after God in Russia,” the “Christ-Believing Jews” in Hungary.

The situation was watched with the keenest interest by the various Jewish Christian bodies. It was clear that some steps ought to be taken with a view to guiding and coordinating the greatly increased body of

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Jewish Believers. The initiative was taken by the Hebrew Christian Alliance of America (founded in 1915). They suggested as a preliminary measure the convening of an International Hebrew Christian Conference. Mark John Levy crossed the Atlantic several times in the interests of the proposal. After protracted discussion and correspondence with the British Hebrew Christian Alliance (founded in 1866), a joint letter of invitation was sent to Hebrew Christians in all parts of the world. In its way, the letter was as significant as that famous epistle to the Gentile believers issued by the first Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15). It was dated for March, 1925, and read as follows:

Dear brethren in the Lord Jesus our Messiah,

We, members of the Hebrew Christian Alliances of Great Britain and America send you hearty greetings.

Since the days of the Apostles, Hebrew Christians have been scattered units in the diaspora, ostracized by our unbelieving brethren and lost among the nations. We believe, however, that the times of the Gentiles are king fulfilled and that the God of our fathers, according to His gracious promise, is about to restore Israel to her ancient heritage. We also believe that as Hebrew Christians, though a remnant weak and small we have a share in the building up of “the Tabernacle of David that is fallen down.”

We deem it an opportune time to meet and confer together, seeking Divine guidance by prayer and the Word of God.

We have therefore decided to hold D.V. an INTERNATIONAL HEBREW CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE in London. England, this year from Saturday, September 5 to Saturday, September 12, and to this we heartily invite you.

Many living in distant parts, maybe prevented from joining us by the heavy travelling expenses, but it is hoped that the Hebrew Christians of various towns or countries may be willing to raise the means and send delegates to represent them at the Conference; they will then be able to take back a report of the proceedings.

The Hebrew Christian Alliance of London will, however. during the period of the Conference. September 5-12, give themselves the pleasure of providing hospitality to all delegates who will have registered beforehand and will have received cards and badges. To such delegates full particulars, together with the

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programme, will be sent in due course.

With cordial greetings,

On behalf of the Hebrew Christian Alliances of Great Britain and America,

Yours in our Common Master,

Samuel Schor, *President*

J.J. Lowe, *Treasurer*

E. Bendor Samuel, *Hon. Secretary*

The Conference duly met at the Wilson Memorial Hall, Islington. the only shadow over the proceedings being the absence of The Rev. Samuel Schor, owing to illness. Rarely can there have been witnessed such a fervent gathering. Eighteen countries were represented. On the rostrum are proudly displayed die Union Jack and the Jewish Flag, while between them hung the Jewish Christian motto, “How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.”

It was on September 8 that the historic resolution was carried unanimously:

That we Hebrew Christians from different parts of the world standing for the Evangelical Faith now met in Conference, re-affirm our living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, as our Messiah, and our oneness in Him; and do hereby declare that we now form ourselves into an INTERNATIONAL HEBREW CHRISTIAN ALLIANCE.

At the election of office-bearers Sir Leon Levinson was honored with the first presidency of the newly-formed Alliance, and the wisdom of that choice became at once evident in his presidential address which showed an immediate grasp of the great task to which he had been called and to which he dedicated his service.

The first duty which the Executive Committee of the I.H.C.A. had to undertake was to draw up a Constitution. The aims of the Alliance, as set forth in the completed document, are given as follows:

- 1 To foster a spirit of fellowship and co-operation among Hebrew Christians throughout the world.
  - a) By the establishment of local Alliances wherever possible.
  - b) By watching over the spiritual development and general welfare of converts, and encouraging them to be witnesses for Christ among Israel in every sphere of life,

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- and thus to set up again under Divine guidance “the candlestick” of witness within Jewery.
- 2 To present a untied witness on behalf of Christ, not only to the Jewish people, but to the world.
  - 3 To interpret the spirit of the Jewish people to the Christian world, and the spirit of the Christian Gospel to the Jews.
  - 4 To make it possible for Hebrew Christians, who may desire to do so, to share in the activities of Zionism, and to claim for them equal rights in terms of the Balfour Declaration.
  - 5 To aid Churches and Societies in their selection of Hebrew Christian candidates offering themselves forth Ministry, and supplying them with information regarding Converts as occasion may arise.
  - 6 To identify Hebrew Christians with the Jewish People in the defence of their just rights in countries in which these rights are denied them, and, when necessary, to protest against the spirit of Anti-Semitism.

The Constitution provided for the creation of National Alliances which should be affiliated to the International body, and under “membership” opened the door for Christians not of Jewish birth to become associate members, enjoying full rights except the power of voting. It was also made quite clear that the I.H.C.A. would not come under the jurisdiction of any Christian denomination.

2

From 1925 the history of Jewish Christianity becomes in effect, the history of the I.H.C.A. One of the immediate results of its constitution was that many secret Jewish believers in Jesus, including a number of rabbis, began to communicate with the Executive. It was the breath of life to them to learn of a Jewish Christian fellowship. To such a body they could confide their inmost convictions, where they had difficulty in approaching a Mission or a Gentile Church.

Within two years National Alliances had been formed in twelve different countries and had been affiliated with the International. These comprised Great Britain, America (including Canada), Germany, Russia, Poland, Latvia, Sweden, Denmark, Austria, Hungary, Switzerland and Palestine. In later years the number has risen to eighteen by the addition of Holland, Rumania, Yugoslavia, Danzig, Portugal, and Australia.

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At the Budapest and Warsaw Conferences held under the auspices of the International Missionary Council in April 1927, attended by the President and other members of the Alliance, it was put on record that :

The Conference has learned with great interest and sympathy of the formation and growth of the I.H.C.A., and expresses the hope that it may serve in uniting Christian Jews throughout the world in an enriching spiritual fellowship and become a blessing for the Jewish people, as also of the Christian Church.

The I.H.C.A. has held its own International Conference every three years since its formation, and at these gatherings subjects of the highest importance for the future of Jewish Christianity have been dealt with. Among them, it has been proposed to establish industrial and agricultural colonies of Jewish Christians in Poland and Palestine, and plans are far advanced towards putting these schemes into operation. At the 1931 Conference a Commission was set up to inquire into the desirability and practicability of forming a Hebrew Christian Church. As a result of the findings of this Commission reported to the next Conference, a momentous decision was taken in the passing of a resolution. "That this Conference approves the principle of the establishment of a Hebrew Christian Church."

One of the most interesting events in the history of the Alliance happened in 1933, when, during one of his visits to Palestine the President, Sir Leon Levison, received in Jerusalem a deputation representing the Marranos of Portugal, descendants of the many thousands of Jews who were compelled to accept the Christian faith in the days of the Inquisition. Work was initiated among the Marranos, and before long they formed themselves into a Portuguese Hebrew Christian Alliance.

When the terrible massacres of Jews by Arabs in Palestine took place in 1929, the Alliance raised over £1,500 as a Relief Fund to succor Jewish families, and on many occasions a protest has been made against anti-semitic propaganda.

The accession to power of the Nazi party in Germany initiated a bitter period of Jewish persecution which still continues. The deliberate ousting of all Germans with Jewish blood in their veins from their employment produced untold hardship and suffering. Hundreds of thousands, who were wholly divorced from the Synagogue, and did not even know that they were of Jewish extraction, were ruthlessly penalized, and their plight created an acute problem for the Alliance. Organizations were quickly

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set up to ameliorate the lot of the Jewish sufferers, but the Jewish Christians and non-Aryan Christians were largely denied relief from these sources, and their pitiful appeals came before the I.H.C.A. Almost every other consideration had to be abandoned in an effort to raise funds for German relief and to endeavor to place as many as possible in employment in other countries. But all that could be done was like a drop in the ocean, and it has become clear that more definite

action must yet be taken if the situation, unparalleled since the Middle Ages, is not to develop for the worse.

The common distress at least has had the effect of partially bridging the gulf between the non-Christian and the Christian Jew. In Jewish circles it used to be asked facetiously, "Where and what are the Jewish Christians?" Today, the I.H.C.A. is the sufficient answer. A measure of actual co-operation has been achieved which augurs well for the future, and even in the Church the Alliance has brought recognition that the Jewish Christian has a special position to occupy in the economy of the Kingdom of God. Basil Mathews has stated:

From the Christian side, we do not believe it to be in the purpose of God that the Jewish Christian should be deprived of full opportunity of making his own distinctive racial and cultural contribution within the Christian Church. We should not seek in any way to detach him from his own heritage, and should gladly receive from that heritage all that will enrich our own faith.<sup>175</sup>

The change in the condition of Jewish Christianity which has taken place within the last century, and particularly within the last decade, is little short of miraculous. One by one the positions lost in the age-old triumph of the Gentile Church have been regained. A revived Jewish Christian independent religious communion is within measurable distance of achievement. The wheel has turned full circle.

To what purpose is all this? It is that Jewish Christianity with its accumulated experiences of human passions and Divine love has a potent message to give to a world crying aloud for light and truth? Is it that these patient followers of the King Messiah have a leading part to play in the restoration of peace and international brotherhood to a world sown with dissension and distrust? Is there after all something in the Mosaic vision of "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation," playing a mediatorial part between the nations and their God? Those who seek an answer to these

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questions must go to the Fountain-head and to the word of His revelation.

Beat by beat Jewish Christianity has followed the music of the great prophetic strains in Handel's Messiah, steadfast in the hope that one day the Hallelujah Chorus will ring out, and mighty voices as of a great multitude, as the voice of many waters, shall cry:

The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Messiah; and He shall reign for ever and ever.<sup>176</sup>

#### Addendum to Chapter XXI

Extracts from Sir Leon Levison's Address on being elected First President of the International Hebrew Christian Alliance, September 9, 1925:

My dear brethren and sisters, I am deeply moved by the great honor you have seen fit to confer on me. I can hardly find words adequately to express my gratitude to you. I know my shortcomings; I know how onerous and how great is the position to which you have elected me; and I pray God, Who alone sees my heart, that He will direct me and you in the great work that lies before us. Brethren, you have perhaps little idea at present of what a body such as we have constituted can and will do: but, please God, if we each and all of us go back to our own places



as ambassadors of this great Conference, determined to organize, coordinate, and unite the various believers in Christ from amongst the Jews into bodies, which shall be affiliated to this International, so that they may thereby be cheered and comforted and strengthened, you will find that in a few short years you will yourselves be rewarded by God in seeing the beauty of unity and the grandeur of love when it permeates, and is allowed to work freely in the hearts of the followers of Christ, who is the very essence of love itself.

To my colleagues I would say, first of all, that so far as I am concerned, I can promise you that you shall never be let down. I will always be at your beck and call, doing my utmost in anything that you might have to suggest, in so far as it is going to advance the Kingdom of God amongst the Jews, or in any assistance that I might be able to render by way of coming and bringing cheer and comfort and help: and I do trust that, if you want this International to be a success, you will give me and the International Hebrew Christian Alliance your utmost loyalty. If the officer-bearers stand by each other, and are permeated with a great desire and zeal

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for Christ and his Kingdom, we shall be able to bring life and comfort and joy into the hearts of the scattered members of our race who are believers in Christ, throughout the world.

What are we to work for? What are we to be loyal to? I think that the body which has now come into being has a great variety of interests, in which, if we try to contribute all that is best and highest in us, we shall find that we may become a power in the world as well as amongst our own Hebrew Christian brethren. To be a power in the world, we must try to have a clear outlook, a Christlike outlook. We must try and avoid those narrow, bigoted, prejudiced feelings and ideas which would curb us and distract us and hinder us from going onward and upward and on to victory. Therefore we must pray — and when I say pray, I mean we must work and pray -- if we are to make it really effective, that we may see each thing in its own proportion, as God would have it....

Our relationship to each other must be maintained in unity, because, as I said yesterday, we are a twice-despised and twice-exiled people — exiled along with the Jewish race, and exiled from the Jewish race because of our belief; despised like the Jewish race, but despised by the Jewish race because of our belief. Therefore, the great need that we all have is just a warm-hearted, deep love for one another that shall stand us in stead of everything and make up far all things, because Christ has promised to bless such in the cause with his own love....

Then our relationship with the Jews, and for the Jews, with the Church — I feel, brethren, that antisemitism would have been three thousand percent more severe than it is today, had it not been for the fact that something like three hundred to six hundred missionaries, Hebrew Christian missionaries or missionaries working among the Jews, are going about in America, in Great Britain, in Germany, everywhere, week in and week out, preaching and pleading before Christian people the cause of Israel. and that propaganda must make the Jews realize what it means.... We are going into churches, drawing-rooms, chapels, prayer meetings, prayer unions, and conferences and places of all kinds and descriptions where Christian people meet, and we are the ones who make people realize that a Jew is a human being like themselves, that he has a soul and affections ... a man who has got a home and a home life, and one from whom they can learn a good deal if they try to study him.... We can do much by sending representatives from our International Hebrew Christian Alliance to the Church; we can more effectively call the attention of the Christian world

than the Jews can, and we are going to do it, and to show the Christian world that we believe in Jesus Christ, and are happy to love and to serve him — and just as happy to die for him.

Yet that does not mean betraying our race. It does not mean forsaking our Jewish brethren; it means, on the contrary, that we are prepared to do more for their welfare spiritually than all the Rabbis put together. You may feel that this is rather an exaggerated remark, but I make it advisedly, my brethren, because, in my own experience, I know of Hebrew Christian missionaries and Hebrew Christians here, there, and everywhere, who have gone round for years and years on a starvation wage, some of them having no pay and seeking no pay, while others have had just enough to maintain themselves, yet who have received such treatment that no Rabbi would ever remain a Rabbi for three days if he had to put with it. Our missionaries, in the name of Christ and in the strength of his love, have continued in spite of it all to this day .... We have got a great love because we have got a great Christ, a great a great Savior, a great Example on the Cross; and therefore we must, and we can, as we have the means now, put it to our people that by accepting Christ, it is a question of “God and myself,” not a question of My race, and my people.”

I think that we cannot blame the Jews altogether. They do not understand us. What we must aim at now is to let them realize that we belong to no band or captain save Jesus Christ, who was a Jew, who came to the House of Israel, whom we have discovered, and who we love and serve, and that we are of their own flesh and blood, as we come to them. If we put it to them aright, we shall get to them in two ways. When we come to Zionism, we shall show we have a unity of sentiment that is not confined to London alone, but extends throughout the world, and, being a community instead of an individual, we shall be treated as community. They are not asking the Christians of Palestine that, as a condition of being in Palestine, they shall first become Jews. They say they must first adhere to the principles of the League of Nations, that in Palestine there is to be freedom of conscience. Well, that is all we ask -- freedom of conscience. We want to help them to build up Palestine, and they should give us the opportunity....

You and I have been spared by Almighty God in a most wonderful way. Everything that reason tells us should have preserved us was not there to aid us; we should have been annihilated long ago, and our names should have been but a memory. You and I have been preserved and our

race has been preserved under God for a great cause, and I believe we shall see that great cause for which we are preserved, coming more largely into our vision, and we shall serve that cause in God's own time and way, but only if we are strong and remember that God who works, means to work through us. If we remember that, I am confident we shall succeed.

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|----|---|----|--|
| 1  | <i>The Messiah Jesus</i> , pp. 539-540  | 33 | Acts 21:20-24                          |
| 2  | <i>Strom.</i> 6:5; Euseb. HE. 5:18  | 34 | Acts 28:18                             |
| 3  | <i>The Jewish Background of the Christian Liturgy.</i>  | 35 | Wars II, 13:5                          |
| 4  | Acts 9:1-2  | 36 | Acts 23:26-30                          |
| 5  | Recog. 1:70-71  | 37 | Antiq. 20, 11:1                        |
| 6  | Euseb, H.E. 2:9   | 38 | Isaiah 10:33-34; Zech. 11:1            |
| 7  | Mysticism of St. Paul p. 156  | 39 | Matt. 24                               |
| 8  | Recog. 4:35   | 40 | Gittin 57a                             |
| 9  | Ep. Clem, ad Jac.   | 41 | Luke 21:20-24                          |
| 10 | Acts 14:27  | 42 | Rev. 22:6                              |
| 11 | Acts 15:13-21   | 43 | Rev. 1:9; 2:19                         |
| 12 | Recog. 1:42; Rom. 9:17-22   | 44 | 1 Pet. 4:17                            |
| 13 | Gal. 2:8  | 45 | Wars 3, 9:3                            |
| 14 | Acts 15:23-29   | 46 | Matt. 24:29-30                         |
| 15 | Acts 11:27-29   | 47 | Isa. 10:34; 11:1                       |
| 16 | Antiq. 20, 2:5  | 48 | 2 Pet. 3:9                             |
| 17 | <i>The Messiah Jesus</i> , po. 540 ff. Cf. Epiphanius. Haer 29:4; 78, based on traditions preserved in the <i>Hypotyposeis</i> of Clement and the <i>Hypomnemata</i> of Hegesippus. | 49 | <i>Lost and Hostile Gospels</i> , p.35 |
| 18 | Antiq 20, 9:2   | 50 | <i>Adv. Haer.</i> 1:26                 |
| 19 | Pesach 57a  | 51 | <i>Chs.</i> 21-23                      |
| 20 | 48:31-39  | 51 | Test. <i>De Praescr.</i> 33            |
| 21 | James 5:1-9   | 53 | Justin. <i>1st Apol.</i> 53            |
| 22 | Antiq. 20, 8:5-6  | 54 | <i>Euseb. H.E.</i> 3:32                |
| 23 | Iren. Haer 5:33   | 55 | Ibib                                   |
| 24 | Bar. 29:5   | 56 | Ibib 3:20                              |
| 25 | Antiq. 20.9:1   | 57 | Ibib 3:32                              |
| 26 | In Euseb. H.E. 2:23   | 58 | Ibib. 4:5                              |
| 27 | Rom.3:20  | 59 | John 5:43                              |
| 28 | Gal. 5:1-2  | 60 | Justin 1st <i>Apology</i> , 31         |
| 29 | Rom. 3:8  | 61 | Jerome <i>Ep. ad Aug.</i>              |
| 30 | Lost and Hostile Gospels. p. 29   | 62 | Justin <i>Dialoguec. Tryph.</i> 96     |
| 31 | 2 Peter 2   | 63 | I Cor. 4:11-13                         |
| 32 | Iren. Haer. 1:26  | 64 | <i>Acts of Barnabas</i>                |
|    |   | 65 | Rev. 21:14                             |
|    |   | 66 | John 17:3                              |
|    |   | 67 | <i>Euseb. H.E.</i> 5:9                 |
|    |   | 68 | Acts 17:11                             |

- 69 John 20:31
- 70 Rom. 3:30
- 71 *S.P.C.K.* ed. pp. 18-19
- 72 *Op. cit.*, 31-32
- 73 *Dial.* 72-73
- 74 *Shabb.*, 13a; 116b
- 75 *H.E.* 3:25,27
- 76 Cf. *Mtt.* 5:17: and see the addendum to this chapter.
- 77 *T. Hull.* 2:24
- 78 *Shabb.* 116a
- 79 *Dial. c. Tryph.* 17
- 80 *Apol.* 16
- 81 *Apol.* 26
- 82 *Abod. Zar.* 27b
- 83 *Shabb.* 14b
- 84 *Sanh.* 10:1
- 85 Mark 16:17-18
- 86 *Panar.* 30
- 87 *F.B.L.* vol 41, pp. 122-124
- 88 *Tann.* 27b
- 89 *Tos. Bab. Mez.* 2:33
- 90 *Succ.* 48b
- 91 See James. *Apocryphal New Testament*
- 92 *Jer. Dial. c. Pelag.* 3:2
- 93 *Jer. Cornm. in, Isa.* 11:2
- 94 *C. Pellag. Supra*
- 95 Ps. Orig. in Matt.
- 96 *Jez. De Vir. Illust.* 2
- 97 *Ibib.*, 16
- 98 Cited in his *Panarion*
- 99 *Epiph. Panar.* 30:36
- 100 *Sifra* 140a
- 101 *Ber. B.* 48:6
- 102 Jerome, *Comm. in loc.*
- 103 *Ibib.*
- 104 See *Epiph. Panarion.*
- 105 Cf. *Matt.* 1:1
- 106 *Panar.* 39:7
- 107 *Ibib* 30:18
- 108 Euseb. *H.E.* 4:22
- 109 *Ibib*
- 110 *H.E.* 10:1
- 111 *Canon* 64
- 112 *Ibib.* 70
- 113 *Ibib.* 71
- 114 *Ibib.* 49
- 115 *Ibib.* 50
- 116 *Socrat. H.E.* 7:38
- 117 Quoted from Parkes *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue*, pp. 397-400
- 118 Asaemani, *Cod. Lit.*, I, p. 105
- 119 Cotton. *V. Macc.* 32
- 120 *Panar.* 53
- 121 1 Tim. 6:20-21
- 122 *Clem. Hom* 15
- 123 *Eph.* 5:23, 25, 21, 31-32
- 124 1 Tim.4:3
- 125 Baring Gould, *Lost and Hostile Gospels*, p.231.
- 126 *Epiph. Panar.* 30:22
- 127 B. *Sanh.* 43a
- 128 *Panar.* 30
- 129 Parkes, *Conflict of Church and Synagogue*, p. 260
- 130 Parkes, *Conflicts of Church and Synagogue*, p.265
- 131 Milman, *Hist. of the Jews*, Vol. II. p.295
- 132 *Chronicle of the Goths.*
- 133 *Canon* 57
- 134 *Canon* 59
- 135 *Canon* 60
- 136 *Canon* 62
- 137 *Canon* 63

- 138 *Canon 64*
- 139 *Holy Cross Day*
- 140 *Canon 3*
- 141 See *The Conflict between the Church and the Synagogue*, pp. 283-291
- 142 Milman, *Hist. of the Jews*, Vol. 2 p. 277
- 143 Trans. Bialloblotzky, Vol. 1, pp 117-119
- 144 *Milhemet Hobah*, p. 13a *J.E. art. Trinity*.
- 145 Finn. *Sephardim*, pp. 356-363
- 146 Hic jacet in tumulo, vir per cuncta fidelis  
Sedis apostoliese tempore quo viguit,  
Romae natus, opum, dives, probis et satis alto,  
Sanguine materno nobilitatus erat.  
Prudens et sapiens, et coelo pene sub omni  
Agnitus et celebris, semper in urbe manens,  
Virgo ter senis fuerst cum sole diebus  
Quando suum vitae finierat spatium.
- 147 *J.E. art. Pierleoni*.
- 148 *Responsa* 183-192
- 149 *Israel and the Gentiles*, p. 325
- 150 In his translation of Bar-Hebreus' *Commentary on the Gospels*, pp. 33-44
- 151 For the original Latin see Margoliouth, *The Jews in Great Britain*, pp. 224-225
- 152 For further details of the Home and its inmates, see *J.E. aare. Domus Conbersorum*, by R. Michael Adler.
- 153 Trans. F.C. Conybeare.
- 154 Bussell, *Religious Thought and Heresy in the Middle Ages*, p. 713
- 155 Finn. *Sephardim*, pp. 380-381
- 156 Milman, *Hist. of the Jews*, Vol. II, p. 399
- 157 Milman. *loc. cit.* p. 389
- 158 Frankl, *The Expulsion from Spain, 1492*, trans. M.D. Louis
- 159 *Israel and the Gentiles*, pp. 367-8
- 160 Mocatta, *The Inquisition and Judaism*
- 161 Abbott, *Israel in Europe*, p.227
- 162 Berstein, *Jewish Witnesses for Christ*
- 163 *The Conspiracy of Lopez the Jew, Jewish Chron. Suppl. Sept., 1929*
- 164 Eng. trans. by John Camden Hotten, p. 29
- 165 *Ibib.*, p. 47
- 166 *Israel and the Genties*, pp. 513-4
- 167 *The Jew and Christianity*. p. 58
- 168 Danby, *op. cit.* pp. 59-60
- 169 Toland, *Nazarenus*, pp. iv-vii
- 170 De le Roi, *Jewish Baptisms in the Nineteenth Century*.
- 171 See further Bernstein, *Some Jewish Witnesses for Christ*, and *J.El art. Converts to Christianity, Modern*. Not all these were converts of the missions.
- 172 Gidney, *Biographies of Eminent Hebrew Christians*, No. IV
- 173 *History of the L.J.S.*, pp. 43, 160, etc.
- 174 *Ibib.* p. 424
- 175 *The Jews and the World Ferment*, p. 151
- 176 Rev. 11:15

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