

CHAPTER THREE

THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION

The material for this chapter is taken from the patristic literature of these centuries. For English readers most of these are to be found in convenient form in the collection of Ante-Nicene Fathers, though in some cases the editions are not complete. This is particularly so for Origen, the most copious of the early writers. Together with patristic literature has been included the gospel of Saint John, to which reference is made in the bibliographical note of the previous chapter. There are also various writings of importance which are not included in the patrologies, in particular the early apocryphal gospels and certain heretical works, such as the Clementine Recognitions and the *Didascalia Apostolorum*.

To comment on all the fathers quoted is impossible in this note. There are, however, three classes of literature and certain special writers who deserve a remark.

The most important of all early sources is the Dialogue of Justin with Trypho the Jew, a work of the middle of the second century, by one of the most brilliant of the early Christian apologists. This dialogue, though perhaps not the first (the lost dialogue of Jason and Papiscus is probably earlier) is the model from which all later examples of this class of literature spring.

A second class of literature of particular importance is the 'Testimonies', collections of texts of the Old Testament to prove different claims connected with the person of Christ and the call of the Gentiles. For this the work of Rendell Harris will need to be consulted, though many scholars do not wholly agree with the early date to which he traces them back.

The third group of writings calling for special consideration are the sermons or homilies especially directed against

the Jews. Of these there are a considerable stream. In most cases they were not spoken *to* Jews, and in general it is not to be presumed that Jews were present at all at their delivery. They were warnings to Christians of the danger of intercourse with the Jews. Inevitably they all recall each other, for the ground to be covered in such addresses was relatively restrained. It is significant that without exception none of them are primarily, or in most cases at all, interested in the doings of contemporary Jews.

For our knowledge of actual relations we are therefore thrown back upon chance quotations in other writings. And for all our knowledge of the development of a theological attitude to the Jews we must look to the same sources, and not to the homilies expressly devoted to them. For this reason no special list of these homilies is included. It would be entirely deceptive.

Five writers deserve special mention, Justin, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Cyprian and Origen. The first was a native of Shechem in Palestine, and was trained as a philosopher, the second was an African and a lawyer, the third apparently a Roman, the fourth an African and teacher of rhetoric, and the fifth an Egyptian. They thus represent not only geographically but also in their trainings an astonishingly varied range of interests. Their different writings are of capital importance for the development throughout the Church of the absolute condemnation of the Jews which is characteristic of patristic literature as a whole.

In the list of books given below a number of local monographs are of particular interest for a more detailed survey of Jewish Christian relations in the centres with which they deal.

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.

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I. THE SEPARATION : JEWS AND CHRISTIANS IN PALESTINE

At the death of Paul, Christianity was still a Jewish sect. In the middle of the second century it is a separate religion busily engaged in apologetics to the Greek and Roman world, and anxious to establish its antiquity, respectability and loyalty. To decide on the date at which the separation took place is no easy task, for there are so many parties to be considered. When the armies of Titus approached Jerusalem, the Judeo-Christians retired to Pella. At the same time the rabbinical leaders retired to Jabne. The defence of Jerusalem was undertaken by the political and not by the religious leaders of the people. The fall of the city, however, reacted differently upon the two different groups. The rabbinical leaders might consider it to be a punishment for the sins of the people. But the Judeo-Christians went further, and saw in it a final 'departure of the sceptre from Israel'. The loss of the Temple meant that Judaism had now only the Law as a basis for its continued independence. Had the Judeo-Christians been the only members of the new faith, the breach between them and the Jews might have been healed, for they also desired to observe the Law. But the rabbis at Jabne were not unaware of their contact with Gentile Christians who did not observe the Law at all. They knew the teaching of Paul, and condemned it utterly¹. It was only a step from this condemnation to the refusal to accept as orthodox the conformity of the Judeo-Christians.

This step was taken by the insertion into the daily Blessings recited in the synagogue of a declaration about heretics so worded that the Judeo-Christians could not pronounce it. This declaration, the Birkath-ha-Minim, was composed by Samuel the Small, who lived in the second half of the first century. His exact date we do not know, but he was a contemporary of Gamaliel II, who presided at Jabne from 80 to 110, and was also acquainted with two rabbis who were killed in the capture of Jerusalem in 70. We may therefore conclude that he was somewhat older than Gamaliel, and date the malediction which he composed to between

¹ Kittel, *op. cit.*, Chapter I.

80 and 90¹. Of the actual wording of the original malediction we cannot be certain. Later forms only contain the word 'minim' or 'heretics', and it now only refers to 'slanders', but according to Jerome² it contained the express condemnation of 'Nazarenes'—a word which may well have been erased in the many censorings to which Jewish literature has been subject at the hands of Christian authorities. The purpose of the malediction is to detect the presence of Minim, for if they were invited to pronounce the Eighteen Benedictions they would inevitably omit that particular paragraph from them. The fact that the test was a statement made in the synagogue service shows that at the time of making it the Judeo-Christians still frequented the synagogue. There would be no point otherwise in trying to prevent them from leading the prayers. In other words, at the time when official Judaism, represented by the rabbis at Jabne, had decided that the presence of these people could not be tolerated, the Judeo-Christians, however much they disagreed from other Jews on the question as to whether the Messiah had or had not come, still considered themselves to be Jews; and it is not too much to suppose from this that there were also Jews who considered that a disagreement on this point did not make fellowship with them impossible. They must have been generally accepted, or it is incredible that they should have continued to frequent the synagogue. They were evidently there as ordinary members, since it needed the introduction of this formula to detect them.

A breach would, however, from their point of view, occur if the rest of the Jews decided definitely on another Messiah, and this is what happened in the time of Barcochba. Even though all the Jews did not by any means accept his claim, yet it was accepted by very influential leaders such as Aqiba, and the discussion round it would inevitably bring into relief the fact that they were at least agreed in refusing to accept Jesus as Messiah, whatever was thought of Barcochba. This would give a date well into the second century for the break from the side of the Judeo-Christians. So late a date would not, however, apply to all of them—and, indeed, there is no reason to suppose that all simultaneously came to the

¹ Travers Herford, p. 125.

² Jer., *On Isaiah*, v, 18. P.L., XXIV, 87.

same conclusion. Some had evidently come to it much earlier, even as Paul and other Jewish apostles had done. We may, however, accept the date of the malediction as that affecting the majority of those concerned. This would fit in with the addition in the first gospel of the words ' His blood be on us and on our children ', which implies a final separation ; and the date usually given for this gospel is between 80 and 90.

It is important to add that even if dates round the end of the first and the beginning of the second century are given for the official break between the two religions, yet, as long as there were any number of conversions from Judaism to Christianity, there were many places in which it would be difficult to draw the dividing line. The existence of much of the anti-Judaic literature of the early Church, and in particular such courses of sermons as those of Chrysostom at Antioch in 387, show that respect for the synagogue was by no means dead among some Christian groups. It was, however, regarded by orthodox theologians with absolute disapproval, and was also so regarded by the central authorities of Judaism. But these had moved before the end of the second century to Babylon, where their contacts with Christians were fewer than in the west.

II. THE SEPARATION: THE LETTERS TO THE SYNAGOGUES

It is reasonable also to date the letters and ' Apostles ' sent out to the Jews of the diaspora to the end of the first century. Through his emissaries the Jewish Patriarch of Palestine was able to keep in fairly close touch with the Jews in the rest of the world because of the annual collection which was made by all the synagogues to the central organisation. The decision which is marked by the inclusion of the test malediction on the heretics into the Eighteen Benedictions was an important one. The matter touched the diaspora even more closely than Palestine itself. We may therefore presume that before the end of the century all the synagogues of the diaspora had been informed of the new malediction and warned to have no dealings with the Christians.

It is important to attempt to define exactly the nature of the official instruction issued at this time. The frequent references in patristic literature make it certain that some such step was taken, but they differ in the contents which they ascribe to the letters sent. It is difficult, but necessary, to try to distinguish what was sent out officially from Palestine from what was spread abroad unofficially by individual Jews.

If we take the substance of what is told us by Justin, Eusebius and Jerome, we can make a fair reconstruction of the letter. It contained a formal denial of the truth of the Christian account of the teaching and resurrection of Jesus. Christianity was a denial of God and of the Law¹. It was based on the teaching of Jesus, who was a deceiver, and who had been put to death by the Jews. His disciples had stolen His body, and then pretended that He had risen again from the dead and was the Son of God. It was therefore impossible for Jews to have anything to do with such teaching, and His followers should be formally excommunicated². Jews were to avoid all discussions of any kind with the Christians³. It is probable that the letters also contained a copy of the Birkath-ha-Minim, with instructions to include it into the Eighteen Benedictions. For the daily cursing of Christ in the synagogue is very closely associated with the letters⁴. All three writers insist on the official character of these letters, and on their wide dispersion.

Many modern writers would have us also include in the official letters the broadcasting of slanders against both the person of Christ and the morals of Christians⁵. They accuse the Jewish authorities of spreading officially the stories to be found in the Sepher Toldoth Jeshu as to the illegitimacy of Jesus, and His evil ways. They believe that from this source came also the rumour of Thyestean banquets and Oedipean intercourse at the meetings of the Christians⁶.

¹ Justin, *Dialogue*, cviii, and Eusebius, *On Isaiah*, xviii, 1; P.G., XXIV, p. 213.

² Justin, *ibid.*, and Jerome, *On Isaiah*, xviii, 2; P.L., XXIV, p. 184.

³ Justin, xxxviii, and Origen, *Celsus*, VI, 27; P.G., XI, p. 1333.

⁴ Justin, xvi, xlvii, xcv, cxxxiii.

⁵ E.g. Harnack, see below, Ch. IV, Section I.

⁶ Cf. Origen, *Celsus*, VI, 27, and Section VIII below.

This seems exceedingly unlikely. It is natural that the step taken was bitterly resented by the Christians, but at the same time we cannot be surprised at its being considered necessary. The Church still contained many Jewish members who considered that belief in the Messiah could be reconciled with membership of the Synagogue, and the Gentile Christians were still probably largely recruited from the group of the 'metuentes Deum'. To make accusations which could easily be disproved would have been very bad policy. It would have discredited the entire letter, for those who received it would inevitably know that Christians might be in error, but were not leading immoral lives. If we exclude the charges of immorality, the charges against the personal character of Jesus fall also, for the two come from the same source. We can, in fact, legitimately conclude that it was a dignified but firm denunciation of the Christians, accompanied by an order to have no fellowship with them, and a copy of the new passage to be included in the service of the synagogue. For more than this we cannot hold the authorities responsible; and for acting thus we can neither blame them nor be astonished at them.

III. THE SEPARATION: JEWS AND CHRISTIANS IN THE DIASPORA

Before considering the effects of the receipt of this letter upon the synagogues of the diaspora, we must consider what the general situation was in the communities which received it. It is natural to assume that the initiative in the development which took place was due to the Christians. When they denounced, the Jews reacted. To suppose an initiative on the part of a majority, which was very occupied with other matters, is to suppose an unnatural order of events. The Church has never declared a movement heretical until the movement has made a statement which is unacceptable. To propose the contrary order in this case is to propose something inexplicable and unique. But, in fact, we know that the Christians gave continual provocation. The whole development of teaching in the sub-apostolic period was inevitably infuriating to the Jew. The fact that the Christians

considered it essential to the explanation of their position does not alter this truth.

Although Judaism rallied with extraordinary speed from the blow struck at the Jewish religion by the destruction of the Temple and of all the ceremonial of which it was the centre, and though the Jews in the diaspora had long been accustomed to centre their religion round the synagogue, yet it cannot but have left a sense of tragedy and humiliation upon the generation which witnessed it. It was a point which they would have liked to pass over in silence, until time had healed the scars. But the Christians never allowed them to forget it. In all the literature of the period there is only one reference in which the destruction of the Temple is not cast up at them as a gibe, as a proof that their glory had departed. This one reference is in the *Didascalia Apostolorum*, a work remarkable throughout for the lack of hostility which it shows to the Jews. It calls Christians also to fast over the fallen city: 'for their sake we ought to fast and to mourn, that we may be glad to take our pleasure in the world to come, as it is written in Isaiah, "rejoice all ye that mourn over Zion" . . . so we ought to take pity on them, and to have faith, and to fast and to pray for them'¹.

The more usual attitude to the Jews is that expressed in the addresses to them in the fourth gospel, or, fifty years later, in the *Dialogue of Justin with Trypho*. It is possible to read the beginning of the gospel of Mark without knowing how the discussions with the Pharisees are going to end. The fourth gospel opens with a statement of the rejection of Jesus by the Jews. 'He came unto His own, and they that were His own received Him not.'² On His first visit to Jerusalem He cleanses the Temple, and thereby puts Himself openly in opposition to the authorities³. Nicodemus the Pharisee is afraid to come to Him by day⁴. Jesus is afraid of their possible interruption of His ministry as soon as He knows that they have heard that His disciples are baptising those who come to Him, and withdraws from Judaea⁵. The

¹ See *Horae Semiticae*, II, xxi, p. 96.

² John i, 11.

³ *Ibid.* ii, 13 ff.

⁴ *Ibid.* iii, 2.

⁵ *Ibid.* iv, 1, 3.

first Sabbath controversy leads to a persecution, and immediately after it the Jews seek to kill Him¹. Then follows one of the long and unsympathetic denunciations of the Jews which mark the gospel, and which contain words which accurately reflect the situation at the time when they were written, but which would seem strange in one of the earlier gospels: 'ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life, and these are they which bear witness of Me and ye will not come to Me'². The speech continues: 'think not that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one that accuseth you, even Moses, on whom ye have set your hope. For if ye believed Moses ye would believe Me, for he wrote of Me'³.

From this moment onwards every time that Jesus is made to speak to the Jews He appears deliberately to mystify and to antagonise them. He does not attempt to win them, for He knows His own, and treats the rest with hostility and unconcealed dislike. The Jews themselves are represented as perpetually plotting to kill Him, and afraid to do so, because of His moral power⁴. Even when Jesus addresses those Jews 'which had believed on Him', He says of them that they are of their 'father the devil'⁵. In the middle of His ministry the Jews decide to expel from the Synagogue any who believe in Him⁶, so that people are afraid to speak openly of Him⁷. All this is redolent of the atmosphere which must have existed at the end of the century, when, indeed, confession of Christianity meant expulsion from the Synagogue, and exposure to the unknown dangers of Roman persecution. The whole content of the addresses to the Jews is self-justification to those who have already made up their minds, and not pleading with those who are not yet enlightened. The temper is fundamentally different from that shown by the synoptists, or by Paul, but it is very close to the gibes of Justin: 'circumcision was given you as a sign,

¹ John v, 16 and 18.

² *Ibid.* v, 39 and 40.

³ *Ibid.* v, 45 and 46.

⁴ *Ibid.* vii, 1, 19, 25, 30, 45; x, 31, 39; xi, 53.

⁵ *Ibid.* viii, 44.

⁶ *Ibid.* ix, 22.

⁷ *Ibid.* vii, 13.

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that you may be separated from other nations, and from us, and that you alone may suffer that which you now justly suffer, and that your land may be desolate, and your cities burnt with fire. These things have happened to you in fairness and justice ¹.

It is not surprising that such an attitude caused acute resentment, and it is equally to be expected that resentment, would quickly develop into violence. But these attacks were merely the surface expression of a more deep-seated contradiction. With the destruction of the Temple the Christians were convinced that all that there was of promise and encouragement in the Old Testament had passed to them². They disinherited the Jew from his own sacred books at the very moment when these provided his only comfort. All the Law and the promises led on to Christ the Messiah. Rejecting Him, the Jew lost also all share in them. 'Judaism', says Ignatius, 'is nothing but funeral monuments and tombstones of the dead.'³ The Christian did not even allow him any further merit in the actual observance of the Law. It was only a mass of frivolities and absurdities, except as a preliminary to the Gospel⁴. By some mysterious process all that was good in Judaism had become evil. To Ignatius it was merely human ideas, for on its 'funeral monuments' were human names alone⁵. The whole of the epistle of Barnabas is an exposition of the Church as the true Israel. It is heresy even to try and share the good things of promise with the Jews. In tones of unusual gravity, and with a special appeal, the author warns his hearers against such mistaken generosity: 'This also I further beg of you, as being one of you, and loving you both individually and collectively more than my own soul, to take heed to yourselves, and not be like some, adding largely to your sins, and saying: "the covenant is both theirs and ours" '⁶.

¹ Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho*, Chapter xvi.

² See further, Section IX.

³ Ignatius, *To the Philadelphians*, vi, 1.

⁴ *Epistle to Diognetus*, Ch. iv; P.G., II, p. 1172.

⁵ Ignatius, *Epistle to Philadelphians*, Ch. vi, 1. The shorter version calls them 'monuments'.

⁶ Ch. iv.

If such was the attitude of the Christians, we cannot be surprised if Tertullian is right in saying that the Jews attached infamy to the name 'during the interval from Tiberius to Vespasian'¹. The evidence of violent hostility on the part of the Jews of the diaspora belongs almost exclusively to this period. The actual content of the persecution of the Christians by the Jews will be considered later², but it is evident that the temper on both sides was such that in the diaspora also we may date the separation to the generation following the destruction of Jerusalem. From this time onwards Christianity would have to make its own peace with Rome, and would be little likely to be protected by the Synagogue in case of trouble with the Roman authorities.

IV. THE SEPARATION: THE ROMANS, RAMSAY'S VIEW

In the consideration of the date of the separation between the Church and the Synagogue, we have to consider not only the parties already discussed, the Palestinian Jews and Judeo-Christians, and the diaspora Jews and Gentile Christians, but also the Romans. As long as Christianity was a Jewish sect it enjoyed the protection extended to Judaism, and the attitude of Gallio was the only one possible. When they were recognised as separate, the Christians were exposed to the possibility of suppression. The whole question of the beginning of the persecution of Christianity by the Romans is involved in violent controversy. It turns on two points: when did the Romans first become conscious of the organised existence of Christian Churches, and, when they did, for what precise crime did they persecute them? It is impossible to state all the different opinions which have been expressed. It will be of more value to the present purpose to summarise somewhat fully two contrasting points of view, that of Dr Ramsay, which is exposed in *The Church in the Roman Empire before A.D. 170*³, and that of E. T. Merrill in *Essays in Early Christian History*⁴.

¹ *Answers to the Jews*, Ch. xiii; P.L., II, p. 637.

² See Ch. IV.

³ Hodder and Stoughton, 1893.

⁴ Macmillan, 1924.

Dr Ramsay, basing his main argument on the efficiency of the Roman provincial organisation, decides for a very early recognition of the existence of the Christian Church. Starting from the fixed point of the correspondence between Pliny and Trajan, of which the date is 112, he states that 'Trajan clearly regarded the prescription of the Christians as a fundamental principle of imperial policy which he did not choose, or shrink from altering'¹. The question to decide is the date from which this policy became 'fundamental'. Some say from the time of Domitian, but this is to ignore the full account of the persecution under Nero, which is given by Tacitus and confirmed by Suetonius. The theory that Tacitus is only describing a single isolated event is contradicted by the form of mention in Suetonius, who refers to the persecution of the Christians among other acts, not of a temporary character, but 'of the nature of permanent police regulations for maintaining order and good conduct'². The fair and natural interpretation is that Suetonius considered Nero to have maintained 'a steady prosecution of a mischievous class of persons', which 'implies a permanent and settled policy'. Properly considered, the account in Tacitus also shows more than casual action. The first charge was incendiarism, but when the public got disgusted at the cruelty inflicted on the prisoners they were charged with *odium humani generis*, which was not an abstract charge, but meant an attempt to destroy Roman society. This is supported by the first epistle of Peter³. Moreover, Tacitus speaks of an *ingens multitudo*, which must mean more than a short attack on a few incendiaries. 'On these grounds we conclude that if Tacitus has correctly represented the authorities, the persecution of Nero, begun for the sake of diverting popular attention, was continued as a permanent police measure under the form of a general prosecution of Christians as a sect dangerous to public safety.'⁴

The charge was not yet 'the Name' as it was in Pliny's time, but *flagitia cohaerentia nomini*, the accusations of disgraceful immorality and cannibalism, to which the

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 226.

² *Ibid.* p. 230.

³ I Peter ii, 12: 'they speak against you as evil doers'.

⁴ Ramsay, p. 241.

apologists constantly refer. When Nero had once established the principle in Rome it would be naturally followed in all the provinces. 'There is no need to suppose a general edict, or a formal law. The precedent would be quoted in every case where a Christian was accused.' But 'between 68 and 96, the attitude of the state towards the Christians was more clearly defined, and the process was changed, so that proof of definite crimes committed by the Christians was no longer required, and acknowledgement of the name alone sufficed for condemnation. Nero treats a great many Christians as criminals, and punishes them for their crimes. Pliny and Trajan treat them as outlaws and brigands, and punish them without reference to their crimes'¹.

The Flavians continued the policy laid down by Nero, and Ramsay accepts the authenticity of a council held by Titus before the capture of Jerusalem². 'In Titus' speech the difference between Judaism and Christianity is fully recognised, but the fact was not grasped that the latter was quite independent of the Temple, and of Jerusalem as a centre.'³ When this latter fact was recognised, 'the enmity which underlies the speech of Titus would be carried into vigorous action'—action based on the extensive reports on the Christians which Ramsay assumes would exist in the imperial archives.

The policy of Titus was naturally followed by Domitian, and it is only because of his anti-Christian bias that Dio Cassius says that Clemens and Domitilla, whom Domitian exiled, were Jews, whereas really they were Christians. It is quite impossible that the government could still be confusing the two, and the treatment of Jews was quite different.

The silence of Christian writers about this steady and continual persecution is to be referred to their lack of interest in history at this early period. There has also been misrepresentation of the references which are to be found. The author of the first epistle of Peter says to his readers: 'Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evil-doer,

¹ Ramsay, p. 245. Ramsay argues that the persecution in Bithynia had nothing to do with the law against *sodalitates*, as the Christians, by giving up their common meal, had conformed. *Ibid.* p. 213.

² Sulpicius Severus, *Chron.*, II, xxx.

³ Ramsay, p. 254.

or as a meddler in other men's matters: but if a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this name '¹. This implies official action, since only the governor could execute capital sentence. The Apocalypse of John refers to Rome as 'drunk with the blood of the saints', and is full of references to persecution². Clement refers to 'the examples which belong to our generation' as 'a vast multitude of the elect'³, and Ignatius speaks of Ephesus as the highway of the martyrs to Rome '⁴.

It is evident that persecution could not have preceded the separation of the Church and the Synagogue, so that, on Ramsay's view, we should have to date this separation back to the time of the Apostles themselves, and presume that the attitude taken by Paul was both understood and followed by the immense majority of his converts.

V. THE SEPARATION: THE ROMANS, MERRILL'S VIEW

E. T. Merrill, writing as a classical scholar and not as a Church historian, finds that there has been a perpetual tendency to exaggerate the persecutions altogether, and to accept as evidence statements which would not be accepted in any other branch of research. He considers that the Church historians have come to believe in persecution 'for the Name' because of its 'persistent affirmation'; and in spite of the fact that, firstly, such a condition would be inexplicable in Roman law, and that, secondly, other explanations are possible. 'In the presence of a considerable number of isolated but evidently cognate phenomena there is a natural tendency in the trained human intellect to relate them together into a system, and to find a single rule to explain all the allied cases, a single cause to account for all results.'⁵ As we know of no Roman legislation condemning 'the Name', modern scholars invent the theory that Christians

¹ I Peter iv, 15 and 16.

² See *e.g.* vi, 9; vii, 14; xii, 11; xiii, 15; xvi, 6; xvii, 6; xviii, 24; xx, 4; etc.

³ 1st Epistle of Clement, vi; P.G., I, p. 220.

⁴ Epistle to the Ephesians, xii.

⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 132.

were treated as wild beasts, enemies of humanity, outlaws and so on. Further confusion has been created by the statement that Christianity was *illicita*, and this has been taken to correspond to the modern idea of *illegal*, whereas it only means *unincorporated*. It is quite absurd to think that all members of such groups, of which many existed, were treated as outlaws.

It is equally incredible to suppose that the high officials of the empire were aware of the existence of Christianity until the middle or end of the second century¹, at which time a concerted policy began to appear. But even then persecution was not for 'the Name', but for the crimes which these particular *collegia* were alleged to practise.

As to the persecution under Nero, there is no evidence in pagan or Christian writers that it extended outside Rome, or that an *ingens multitudo* perished in it. Tacitus was fond of such rhetorical exaggeration, and in another passage he has an even stronger phrase to describe an event in which we know from Suetonius that there were twenty victims². The persecution in Rome arose from the need of finding a culprit for a particular event, and Christians were selected because it was known that they were unpopular with the masses. Jews might have equally well been taken had they not had influence at court, in the person of Poppaea. The account in Tacitus makes it quite clear that arson was the legal charge, and the *odium humani generis* only added to give it plausibility. The crisis once over, Nero had no further interest in the sect. Turning then to examine the accounts said to exist in Christian documents, Merrill notes that no details would be known to us at all of this persecution, if it were not for the pagan writer Tacitus. Evidently, therefore, it did not make so profound an impression upon the Church as is supposed. The evidence of I Peter and the Apocalypse he considers to be 'misinterpreted and sometimes misdated'³.

Sporadic action in different provinces was all that took place for many years. Pliny's action in Bithynia was obvi-

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 56 ff.

² *Ibid.* p. 101. The twenty victims are described as 'immensa strages, omnis sexus, omnis aetas, illustres, ignobiles, dispersi aut aggerati'.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 113-124 for a discussion of the texts.

ously such, for Mellito, Bishop of Sardis in the vicinity, writing more than fifty years after it had happened, had never heard of it. 'When all possible concessions have been made regarding the influence of precedent in Roman legal procedure, there is to be found in all the history of Roman law and administration no precedent that would justify the assumption of a pronouncement or other action that could possibly be regarded as putting any class of Roman citizens or subjects once for all outside the pale of the law. The whole spirit and tendency of Roman law and administration was in precisely the opposite direction.'¹ As a matter of fact, even the rhetorician and lawyer Tertullian makes no such absolute charge as modern writers have attempted to do².

The persecution under Domitian he discredits entirely. The opening of Clement's letter to the Corinthians, on which so much is built, is absurdly exaggerated in its interpretations. Clement says that he has been delayed in writing 'through unexpected and repeated troubles and hindrances'. 'The language sounds curiously like an apologetic introduction to a modern letter—"I really meant to write you long ago, but all sorts of bothering things have interfered".' The allegation that Clemens and Domitilla were Christians, and that Dio Cassius concealed the fact through prejudice, is absurd, and Dio's prejudice a myth. There is no reason why he should have had much information about an obscure sect, and still less why he should conceal it. Dio's supposed statement apart, the first evidence of persecution is seventy-five years later, and unconvincing. As to the Apocalypse, it can only be said that historical data cannot be studied in such poetical and apocalyptic dreams³. In dealing with the Bithynian persecution, he replies point by point to the argument of Ramsay⁴, and finds that it was, and was considered by Pliny and Trajan to be, simply a question of the existence of a *sodalitas*, when such had been forbidden. It was so far from being a crime to be a Christian apart from

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 143.

² *Ibid.* p. 134.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 158-159.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 199 ff.

other evidence, that Trajan, hearing of the nature of this particular *sodalitas*, gave it special favours.

Merrill is not concerned with the date of the separation between the two bodies. His interest is the persecution of Christianity by the Romans, and his conclusion would be that we cannot get any useful evidence from Roman action for settling the date of the separation, whatever we may deduce from the internal relations of the two groups.

VI. THE DATE OF THE SEPARATION

In the light of the previous discussion it is possible to conclude that the definite separation into two religions took place towards the end of the first century. Some of the leaders on either side had decided upon its inevitability, or necessity, much earlier. In some cases the link was kept much later, but in general we can say that at the end of the first century Christianity began to stand upon its own feet theologically and socially. Such a conclusion is supported by the appearance of the Birkath-ha-Minim, and by the development of the attitude of the Gentile Christians to Judaism. The only arguments against this date are those of Ramsay. For it is clear that however excellent the Roman State Archives, and however much time the emperors spent in studying them, it is somewhat extravagant to assume that the Romans were aware of the emergence of a new cult before its own sectaries, and before its parent body had realised it. A number of Christians were certainly executed by Nero. But it was not a persecution of the Church or of Christianity. It was an isolated event, even if Suetonius thought that it was a declaration of routine policy. If we recognise this, then we can also recognise that Titus, if he really held a council before Jerusalem in which he declared that the destruction of the city would lead to the destruction of Judaism and Christianity, did not recognise that two different faiths were involved, and that he still considered Christianity merely to be a Jewish sect. In the same way all argument for the bias of Dio Cassius disappears, and we can accept at its face value his statement that Clemens and Domitilla were Jews. Whether Domitilla became a

Christian later in life does not concern us. Robbed of all the supports which ultimately rest on a persecution under Nero of Christianity as such, the arguments of Ramsay collapse, for the references in epistles and in the Apocalypse are not enough by themselves to prove a persecution of *Christianity* in the first century.

But we need not go as far as Merrill and suppose that the high officials were unaware of the existence of Christianity before the middle or end of the second century. The references in the epistles and Apocalypse do mean something. Christians were looked on with disfavour, from whatever source that disfavour came. The second century apologists clearly felt the need for a defence of Christianity to the pagan world. Disturbances within the Jewish community took place as far west as Rome as early as the days of Claudius. They were aroused by the missionary journeys of Paul, and doubtless of other Apostles. These would demand no more than police action to preserve order. But if we imagine them to have continued, as they probably did, throughout the half-century in which the separation was taking place, then we can safely say that the evidence of the epistles and Apocalypse is adequately accounted for, and that so far as the Roman evidence is concerned, the end of the first century is the time of the definite emergence of Christianity as a new religion.

VII. THE JUDEO-CHRISTIANS AFTER THE SEPARATION

There is one group to whom it has been already implied that the preceding argument does not wholly apply—the Judeo-Christians. There is no more tragic group in Christian history than these unhappy people. They, who might have been the bridge between the Jewish and the Gentile world, must have suffered intensely at the developments on both sides which they were powerless to arrest. Rejected, first by the Church, in spite of their genuine belief in Jesus as the Messiah, and then by the Jews in spite of their loyalty to the Law, they ceased to be a factor of any importance in the development of either Christianity or Judaism. It is conventional to state that they would have permanently confined

Christianity to the Jewish world, that they wished to impose conditions which were impossible for the Gentiles, but we only possess the evidence against them. And they on their side might well say—paradoxical as it may appear to us now—that the Gentile Church by its attitude made the acceptance of the Messianic claims of Jesus impossible to the Jew; and that the perpetual statement of the Gentile leaders that the Jews continued to reject Christ was fundamentally untrue, because they were being offered Him only upon conditions which were false and impossible for a loyal Jew to accept—in other words, an attitude to the whole of Jewish history and to the Law which was based upon Gentile ignorance and misunderstanding, and was quite unsupported by the conduct of Jesus Himself.

Though thus isolated, they lingered on in Palestine for centuries. For them, the critical years were not so much from A.D. 70 to 100, as from 70 to 135, and the final destruction of Jerusalem under Trajan. Until the Jews had in large numbers decided for another Messiah, they might continue to hope that they would accept Jesus. But when, led by the famous Aqiba, the bulk of the population followed Barcochba, then the position became hopeless. Though the Birkath-ha-Minim dates from thirty or forty years before these events, yet we know of no actual persecution of them by the Jews between the death of James and the outbreak of the revolt in the time of Trajan. Then indeed they suffered severely for their refusal to accept Barcochba, and to share in the defence of the city, and many were put to death¹. After the defeat of the revolt, when the Jews were formally prohibited from entering Jerusalem, for the first time a Gentile bishop was established in the city. As the choice of Barcochba confirmed the refusal of the Jews to accept Jesus, so the presence of a Gentile bishop emphasised the break from Judaism of the new religion.

Just as it is conventional for Christian historians to consider that the history of the Jews up to the Incarnation is to be considered as a preparation for the Gospel, and that Jewish history in some way stops when Christian history begins, so also the Judeo-Christians are regarded as ceasing to be of importance when their defeat by the Gentile

¹ Justin, *First Apology*, Chapter xxxi; P.G., VI, p. 375.

Christians was assured. But the Church of the second century was no more the Church of the fourth than was the Judaism of the second century the complete Judaism of the Talmud. Neither had yet absorbed or rejected various intermediate groups which existed at the earlier period.

The interesting fact about this period is that from the two poles of Catholic and Rabbinic orthodoxy stretch an unbroken stream of intermediate sects. For there were some groups which had both Christian and Jewish representatives, such as the Gnostics and the Ebionites, and among the Jewish believers in Christ there appear to have been a number of different groups varying in their conception of the amount of the Law which should still be obeyed. We shall see when we come to consider the action of the councils, and the denunciations of the fourth century, that there is every reason to believe that the common people were much more friendly with each other than the leaders approved of, and this is reflected in some of the popular literature which has survived, and which lacks the bitterness of the more intellectual theologians.

The disputation between Peter and the Apostles on the one side and representatives of the different Jewish parties on the other, which is related in the *Clementine Recognitions*, shows no special bitterness towards the Jews, and the discussions themselves are said to have taken place at the request of the High Priest¹. Even more striking are the Acts of Philip², a production of the third century. Philip goes to a town called Nicetera in Greece, and when the Jews hear of his presence there 'they say hard things of him as of a corrupter of the Law'. They agree, however, readily to the proposal of the chief among them, Hiereus, that he should undertake to argue with Philip. Hiereus does so with much courtesy, and is converted by Philip, and after some resistance on the part of his wife, from whom Philip demands that he shall live separated, she is converted also, and Philip makes his home with them. This situation lasts for some time, and then when Philip preaches again, the Jews and pagans get very angry, and summon him to the court. Philip appears, and the mob wish to stone him. But again a Jew intervenes

¹ *Clementine Recognitions*, I, liii; P.G., I, p. 1236.

² *An. Boll.*, Vol. IX, 1890.

and undertakes to argue with him. He questions Philip on the interpretation of the Prophets, and on the virgin birth, and professes himself satisfied with Philip's replies. He then takes the credit to himself for Philip not being stoned by the mob, and for this presumption Philip afflicts him with a number of ailments, of which Hiereus subsequently heals him in the name of Jesus. This double miracle instils fear, if not affection, into the Jews, and they make no objection when Philip proceeds to convert and baptise all the inhabitants, themselves apparently included.

The hostility of the Jerusalem authorities was always presupposed, but the apocryphal Acts, which began to appear in the second and third centuries, saw nothing strange in the general conversion of the Jewish people. In another version of the Acts of Philip¹, he goes to Athens, and is pursued thither by Ananias and an army of five hundred men. These are converted by Philip's miracles, while Ananias himself, for his refusal to be so, is swallowed up in the ground—by stages—bravely protesting his refusal at each stage. In the Acts of Peter², of the second century, there is the strange contrast of the fourth gospel repeated. 'The Jews' believe, but are afraid to confess it for fear of 'the Jews'. In the later apocryphal works the hostility is much more marked, and no Jewish conversions are expected.

While, therefore, we may correctly date the actual separation from the end of the first and the beginning of the second century, we should be wrong to assume that the distinction which we can now observe between Christians and Jews represents the situation as it appeared to those living at the time.

VIII. THE CREATION OF AN OFFICIAL ATTITUDE TO JUDAISM

If there be any justification to be found for the picture of the Jews and of their history drawn in the writings of the Fathers, it would be that they believed the influence of the Jews to be a perpetual and present danger to their flock,

¹ *The Apocryphal New Testament*, p. 439.

² *Ibid.* p. 90.

that they saw in the Jews the opponents of orthodoxy, and the deceivers of the simple. It must be admitted that very little evidence of the truth of this supposition is to be found in the literature remaining to us. We hear of heretical Christian sects influencing the orthodox, but we hear nothing about such influence being exercised by Jews. It is not a charge made by Justin, or in any writing deliberately addressed to them. The usual charge is inveterate hostility, which is something essentially different. But in view of the fact that such a situation did apparently occasionally exist in the fourth and fifth centuries¹, it is, perhaps, reasonable to believe that it existed in the second and third centuries also.

By the second century the controversy over the Law had ceased to play the rôle which it had played at the earlier period. The Church had become predominantly Gentile in membership and almost exclusively so in leadership. Justin refers pityingly to some few Gentile Christians who, from weakness, still observed the Law, and as a magnanimous concession on his part admitted that they might be saved², but he adds that other Christians would not venture to have any intercourse whatever with such persons. The compromise arranged in Acts, and the concessions made by Peter and Paul, had absolutely no further validity³, and the actions of the Apostles, approved in the first century, would, as Jerome and Augustine later agree, have been the rankest heresy once the Church was properly established. The field of controversy has shifted from the Law to the 'promises', in other words, to the whole question of the fulfilment of all prophecy in the person of Jesus Christ.

We may at first wonder why the attempt to prove the reality of the Divinity of Christ made it necessary to falsify the whole of Jewish history, as the Gentile Church undoubtedly did, but if we study their approach to the problem we see that they were led on inescapably by the method of their own argumentation from the first legitimate assumption to

¹ See Ch. V, Section VII, on the influence of Jews on catechumens.

² Justin, *Trypho*, Ch. xlvii.

³ Cf. the correspondence between Jerome and Augustine on this point. Letters 28, 40, 75, 82 in the Edition of Augustine's letters by Marcus Dodds, or P.L., XXXIII, same numbers.

the last and most extravagant fabrications. Unhappily, historical criticism did not exist for either party in the struggle, and the system which the Church used to support her claims was in manner, though naturally not in matter, the same as that used by the Jew to refute them. Historically, Jesus during His earthly life was linked to Jewish history and to the Jewish scriptures. The Church, in spite of all its philosophising, never lost sight of the actual historical reality of the Incarnation, and unhesitatingly rejected all those views which tended to reduce to a plane of secondary importance the events of the earthly life of Jesus. The Fathers insisted on His relation to Jewish prophecy and the divine history of His people. But in safeguarding themselves against an identification of Jesus with a Greek demigod, or with the mythical saviour of a mystery religion, they were compelled to interpret the whole of the Jewish scriptures in such a way as to support their own view¹. We have already seen how the writer of the epistle to Barnabas feared that his readers would be tempted to share the scriptures with the Jews. The only alternative was to claim the whole of it for themselves and to antedate the rejection of the Jews and the emergence of the Church to the beginning of revealed history, by emphasising the position of Abraham as the father of many nations, of whom only one, and that themselves, was chosen.

It is therefore not surprising to find Justin saying of the Bible to Trypho: 'your scriptures, or rather not yours but ours, for you, though you read them, do not catch the spirit that is in them'². The writer of the epistle to Diognetus, in speaking of the spirit of the Church, says, in the most natural way possible, 'the fear of the Lord is chanted, the grace of the prophets is recognised, the faith of the gospel is established, the tradition of the apostles is guarded, and the joy of the Church rejoices'³, without any feeling of break between the first two clauses and the rest. Lactantius, the most Greek of the early fathers, speaks casually of 'our

¹ This action apparently attracted the comment even of certain pagans. Cf. Eusebius, *Prep. Evan.*, I, ii-v; P.G., XXI, p. 28 ff.

² *Trypho*, xxix.

³ Ch. xi; P.G., IV, p. 1184. Actually this chapter seems not to be by the author of the rest, but it is contemporary.

ancestors who were the leaders of the Hebrews ¹, and every martyr refused to dishonour his obedience to the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob. Tatian, who lived about the middle of the second century, in his *Address to the Greeks*, claims Moses as proof of the antiquity and respectability of Christianity². That he should wish to claim such antiquity is perhaps natural when we remember that Josephus wrote the whole of his *Antiquities of the Jews* to disprove the pagan gibe that Judaism was an upstart faith. Antiquity appeared to have been highly valued in the ancient world. Theophilus, bishop of Antioch from 168 to 181 (or 188), in his letters to Autolycus, after relating the story of creation, and of the flood, and after pointing out pagan ignorance of these events, adds 'and therefore it is proved that all others have been in error, and that *we Christians alone have possessed the truth*'³. He also is distressed by the accusation that Christianity 'has but recently come to the light'⁴.

But it was not enough to make a general claim to the whole of the Scriptures. It was necessary to claim each particular advantage offered in it, both in relation to Christ and, as a deduction therefrom, in relation to themselves. Once the Messianic question became a point of controversy, the Christians had to deal with a primary Jewish objection that a man crucified could not be the Messiah, for the Law said explicitly 'he that is hanged on a tree is accursed of God'⁵. So far as we know, the manner of the Crucifixion excited no controversy in apostolic times. There is only one reference to it in the Pauline correspondence⁶, and then it does not appear as a subject needing defence. But in the second century Christians had to think out an answer to the reproach that a man cursed by the Law could not possibly be the Messiah. Trypho puts the question directly to Justin, and Justin's answer is at first evasive⁷. But later Trypho returns

¹ *Divine Institutions*, Bk. IV, x; P.L., VI, p. 470.

² Chs. xxxi and xxxvi-xl; P.G., VI, p. 868.

³ Bk. II, xxxiii; P.G., VI, p. 1105.

⁴ *Ibid.* III, iv, p. 1125.

⁵ Deut. xxi, 23, in the translation of the Septuagint.

⁶ Gal. iii, 13.

⁷ *Trypho*, lxxxix.

to the charge, and then Justin replies by the parallel of the brazen serpent¹. This was the answer generally accepted in the Church, and it is still conventional to represent as symbols of the Old and New Dispensations the brazen serpent and the Cross. It is to be seen in innumerable stained-glass windows. Tertullian and Hippolytus both admit that the question as to whether the Messiah has come is the only issue between them and the Jews². The question was vital for the obvious reason that it was not commonly held possible that there should be two Messiahs. If, therefore, Jesus was the Messiah, the only person for whom the Jews could be waiting would be, by their own method of arguing also, the Antichrist³. Moreover, a prophecy could not be fulfilled twice, and Jacob of Serug, a writer of the fifth century, rubs in the implication of this by stating, after he has proved that Christ fulfilled all prophecies, that even if the Jews did obtain a Messiah, he could not claim any of the Old Testament prophecies on his behalf, for 'Our Lord, when He came, fulfilled the totality of prophecy. And He gave no opportunity for another to come'⁴.

As a result of this necessity to prove the reality of the Messianic claims of Jesus from prophecy, the Church turned the whole of the Old Testament into a vast quarry with no other function than to provide, by any exegesis however far-fetched, arguments for His claims. A large portion of the Dialogue with Trypho turns on this point. Trypho and Justin pit text against text, and differ only in the interpretation which they give to them. It is probable that by this time various collections of texts were already in existence in order to give Christians a handy compendium of arguments for possible controversies. One such collection has survived, compiled by Cyprian⁵, but many others were probably in existence⁶. In Cyprian's collection over seven hundred

¹ *Trypho*, xcii and xciv.

² Tertullian, *Apologet.*, xxi; P.L., I, p. 391; and Hippolytus, *Refutation of all Heresies*, Bk. IV, xiii-xxv; P.G., VII, p. 1006 ff.

³ Cf. Pseudo Hippolytus, *Discourse on Last Things*, xxviii; P.G., X, p. 932.

⁴ *First Homily against the Jews*, line 283. Cf. Ch. VIII, Section III.

⁵ *The Testimonies against the Jews*, P.L., IV.

⁶ On the use of such collections see Rendell Harris in *The Expositor* for Nov. 1906 and June 1910. He considers that they were already in use by the time the present gospels were written (*Expositor*, Sept. 1905). See also Glover, *The Conflict of Religions in the Roman Empire*, Ch. VI.

texts are collected, dealing with every possible subject of controversy.

The Messianic question once settled, there was an inevitable deduction to be made by the Christian writers. If Jesus was the Messiah promised to Israel, then they were the true Israel¹. It is here that we see how inevitable was the defamation of the actual history of the Jews, for if the Gentiles were the true Israel, then the Jews had all the time been sailing under false colours. That they were the true Israel they proved by innumerable passages from the prophets, in which God speaks of His rejection of His own people and His acceptance of the Gentiles². Little by little the Church was read back into the whole of Old Testament history, and Christian history was shown to be older than Jewish history in that it dated from the creation³, and not from Sinai, or even Abraham. Continual references to Christ were found in the Old Testament, and it was 'the Christ of God' who 'appeared to Abraham, gave divine instructions to Isaac, and held converse with Moses and the later prophets'⁴.

In order to justify this reading of history, they were compelled to challenge the Jewish conception of the Law. The Pauline doctrine that it was good in itself, and divine, was not universally respected. The Old Testament as the embodiment of a complete conception of a community, and of the place of religion in common life, which is to the modern scholar the fascination of the Law and the prophets, had no meaning for the writers of the early Church. Gentiles themselves, they missed entirely the moral and corporate significance of the Mosaic legislation. Unconscious that they themselves were creating a ritual and a rule almost as complicated as the priestly code, they saw in the observances of Judaism something comic and contemptible. Their descriptions of Judaism, though probably perfectly sincere, read to us like a deliberate parody. Justin puts into the mouth of Trypho the following summary of his religion: 'first be circumcised, and then observe what ordinances have been

¹ Bonwetsch, *op. cit.*, passim.

² Trypho, cxxiii.

³ Eusebius, *Ecc. Hist.*, I, iv; P.G., XX, p. 76.

⁴ *Ibid.*

enacted for the Sabbath and the feasts, and the new moons of God, and in a word do all the things which have been written in the Law, and then, perhaps, you may obtain mercy from God'¹. A little later Justin draws attention to the collapse of all the sacrificial ritual with the destruction of the Temple, and asks Trypho what he considers now to be valid of the Law. Trypho replies that it remains 'to keep the Sabbath, to be circumcised, to observe months, to be washed if you touch anything prohibited by Moses, and after sexual intercourse'². The writer of the epistle to Diognetus, while admitting that 'in so far as they are monotheists, they are better than the heathen', adds that 'their sacrifices are absurd . . . their scruples about the Sabbath ridiculous, their vaunting of circumcision nonsense, and their festivals folly'³. Such attacks might be legitimate criticisms of one side of Judaism in those who showed also a knowledge of its positive moral content. As an inclusive summary it was an inexcusable absurdity. Those who had such a strange ignorance of Judaism had no difficulty in considering the Law to be an unimportant portion of the Scriptures, a temporary addition to a book otherwise universal and eternal, added because of the special wickedness of the Jews⁴.

Those who still clung to the Pauline conception of its dignity had two other courses open to them. They could claim that the Jews never observed it, or they could claim to interpret it allegorically. The latter method is that adopted by the epistle of Barnabas in a detailed review of many of its enactments. It was also followed by Hippolytus⁵, and comes to its full flower in later centuries in works such as the amazing commentary of Gregory the Great on the book of Job. Those who wished to claim that the Jews had never observed the Law had only to refer to the Golden Calf,

¹ *Trypho*, Ch. viii.

² *Ibid.* xlvi.

³ Chs. iii and iv (abridged); P.G., II, p. 1174.

⁴ *Trypho*, xix-xxii. Jerome (Ep. CXXI) in the fourth century goes so far as to say that it was a deliberate deception of them by God to lead them to their destruction.

⁵ See especially his interpretation of the Blessings of Jacob in Gen. xlix, in *Fragmenta Exegetica in Genesim*, P.G., X, p. 588 ff., and *Adversus Judaeos*, *ibid.* p. 788.

to the murmuring in the wilderness, and to the many other passages in the historical and prophetic books in which the difference between the real and the ideal is expressed. In later writers it is generally this line which is followed, for it made it easier to map out a consistent history of the Church in the Old Testament by contrasting it with every lapse from the ideal, while the sum of these lapses made up the whole of the history of the Jews. This method of rewriting history led later to the conclusion that the Jews were heretics, or apostates. 'For it is clear that they have deserted the Law, who have not believed in Him whom the Law proclaims to be alone sufficient for salvation. They should be considered apostates, for denial of Christ is essentially a violation of the Law.'¹ All the writers who wrote catalogues of heresies included under that heading many Jewish sects. While in pre-Christian Judaism they only include divagations from orthodox Judaism, for contemporary times they include all Jews. This is but another instance of their claim to possess whatever is honourable in Old Testament history². In fact, it is occasionally denied that the Jews had ever known God at all, 'for they who suppose that they know God, do not know Him, serving angels and archangels, the month and the moon'³.

The tendency to treat Jews as heretics, who knew the truth and refused it, is very evident in the apocryphal gospels which began to appear about the middle of the second century. Naturally, the critical period which needed to be rewritten was that immediately following the miracle of the Resurrection, though a later group also attach great importance to the incidents which are alleged to have accompanied the burial and assumption of the Virgin. In its earliest form the story is found in the *Gospel of Peter*. After the Crucifixion the Jews are filled with terror and remorse, beating their breasts and saying 'if these very great signs have come to pass at His death, behold how righteous He was'. They therefore ask Pilate to put a guard on His tomb. In spite of the guard many are witnesses of the Resurrection,

¹ Pseudo-Ambrose, *On Romans*, ix, 27; P.L., XVII, p. 139.

² Cf. Epiphanius and Philastrius.

³ Fragments of the *Preaching of Peter*, collected in *Apocryphal New Testament*, p. 17.

and would believe it if they were not afraid of being stoned by 'the Jews'¹.

The next development is that the High Priest, also impressed by the events of the Crucifixion, calls a meeting to examine carefully whether the prophecies really prove that Jesus was the Messiah. The meeting finds that He was; and their decision comes to the ears of Pilate, who sends to them to adjure them to tell him the truth. They admit that He was the Messiah, but say that they have decided to conceal the fact, 'lest there should be a schism in our synagogues'. They implore Pilate to keep silence. Pilate, however, writes to the emperor Tiberius that 'the Jews through envy have punished themselves and their posterity with fearful judgments of their own fault; for their fathers had promised that God would send them His Holy One, and when He came, and performed marvellous works, the priests through envy delivered Him to me, and I, believing them, crucified Him'². In the Acts of Philip the scene of the conversion of the Jews is laid at Athens, and all are convinced except the High Priest himself, who is swallowed up by the earth for his unbelief. The various Assumptions of the Virgin carry on the tradition for several more centuries. In one of the many versions of it³, the 'Prince of the Priests', struck blind on trying to overthrow the bier, exclaims: 'Do we not believe in Christ, but what shall we do? The enemy of mankind hath blinded our hearts and shame has covered our faces that we should not confess the mighty works of God, especially when we did curse ourselves, crying out against Christ "His blood be on us and on our children"'. The same suggestion that the Jews secretly believe is to be found in the Arabic History of the Patriarchs⁴.

¹ *Gospel of Peter*, vii, 25, and viii.

² *Acts of Pilate*, Latin version. It is a short step from this to make Tiberius, and ultimately Pilate himself, believe in Jesus, and the emperor propose His acceptance by the Senate as a God. All these stages seem to have been gone through before the time of Constantine. Cf. also *Gospel of Nicodemus*.

³ *Apocryphal New Testament*, pp. 196, 201, 214. Cf. also P.O., II, the *Coptic Gospel of Twelve Apostles*, in which Pilate wishes Jesus to be made King, and on the death of the Virgin the High Priest is openly converted.

⁴ P.O., Vol. I, p. 122; see Ch. VIII.

The bitterness which infects these attacks can be seen from the remark of Justin on circumcision, quoted above, or from the even bitterer sarcasm of Tertullian on the same subject¹, in which he identifies it with the Roman prohibition against Jews entering Jerusalem, and suggests that God ordained it to the end that they might be more easily identified. It would be a mistake to imply that such unworthy bitterness is to be found continually in patristic literature, but it is to be found unhappily frequently, and it is not confined to one or two authors. The attack upon the Jews which is included in the works of Hippolytus begins with the exhortation:

‘ Hear my words, and give heed thou Jew. Many a time dost thou boast thyself that thou didst condemn Jesus of Nazareth to death, and thou didst give him vinegar and gall to drink, and thou dost boast thyself because of this. Come therefore and let us consider together whether perchance thou dost not boast unrighteously, O Israel, whether that small portion of vinegar and gall has not brought down this fearful threatening upon thee, and whether this is not the cause of thy present condition, involving thee in these myriad troubles. . . . Listen with understanding, O Jew, to what Christ says: “ they gave me gall to eat, and in my thirst vinegar to drink ”. And these things he did endure from you. Hear the Holy Spirit tell you also what return he made to you for that little portion of vinegar. For the prophet says as in the person of God: “ Let their table become a snare and a retribution ”. Of what retribution does he speak? Manifestly of the misery which has now got hold of thee.’²

One would never gather from this passage that the giving of vinegar and gall was a service organised by the charitable women of Jerusalem to dull the pain of the punishment!

The final seal was set upon the Church’s adoption of the Scriptures of the Jews by the assimilation into Christian hagiology of all the heroes and religious leaders of the Old Testament. The mother and her seven sons who braved the

¹ Tertullian, *Answers to the Jews*, Ch. iii; P.L., II, p. 642.

² *Adversus Judaeos*, Chs. i and v; P.G., X, p. 789.

wrath of Antiochus¹ were already celebrated by a feast in the fourth century². The story formed the basis of Origen's great *Exhortation to Martyrdom*. Later on at different periods the others were added, until the memory of every reputable character in the Old Testament was associated with the past of the Church rather than with the ancestors of contemporary Jews. Abraham, Lot, Moses, Miriam, Aaron, Job, Shemaiah, Elijah, Elisha, Tobit, and all the prophets were included. The intention of the Church in thus adopting these figures is well expressed in the commentary which accompanied the account of the Maccabean martyrs, and was read on their feast day in the Jacobite Church:

'It is right that thou shouldst know, O listener, that our Christian fathers have established the rule to hold a feast in memory of the just of the Law of Torah, that we may know that we have not abandoned the work of the Law of Torah by rejecting it, but by passing to a better Law. We admit the just of the old Law in their rank: we do not honour them more than the fathers of the New who have done much more than they.'³

The great characters of the Old Testament having been thus removed, this is the final résumé of Jewish history as the Church presented it to her congregations:

'Moses they cursed because he proclaimed Christ,
 Dathan they loved because he did not proclaim Him;
 Aaron they rejected because he offered the image of Christ,
 Abiron they set up because he opposed Him;
 David they hated, because he sang of Christ,
 Saul they magnified, because he did not speak of Him;
 Samuel they cast out because he spoke of Christ,
 Cham (?Egypt) they served, because he said nothing of
 Christ;
 Jeremiah they stoned while he was hymning Christ,

¹ II Macc. vii.

² Both Chrysostom and Gregory of Nazianzen preached sermons in their honour, and the latter refers to their feast as not yet very widely observed, so that we may presume it to be a fourth century innovation.

³ S.A.J. in P.O., Vol. XVII, p. 712.

Ananias they loved while he was opposing Him;
 Isaiah they sawed asunder shouting His glories,
 Manasseh they glorified persecuting Him;
 John they slew revealing Christ,
 Zechariah they slaughtered loving Christ,
 Judas they loved betraying Him.¹

No people has ever paid so high a price for the greatness of its own religious leaders, and for the outspoken courage with which they held up an ideal and denounced whatever seemed to them to come short of it. If they had known the use that was to be made of their writings, then, indeed, many of the prophets might have obeyed literally the sarcasm of Irenaeus when he says that 'the Jews, had they been cognisant of our future existence, and that we should use these proofs from the Scriptures which declare that all other nations will inherit eternal life, but that they who boast themselves as being the house of Jacob are disinherited from the grace of God, would never have hesitated themselves to burn their own Scriptures'².

IX. THE CREATION OF AN OFFICIAL ATTITUDE TO CHRISTIANITY

It might be thought, and it is claimed by certain writers, that the fact that Christianity now stood out as a Gentile religion would have led to a change in the Jewish attitude³, and apparently it did lead to a certain softening of their attitude to the Jewish Christians⁴. The strongest argument for this ignoring of Gentile Christianity is the paucity of reference to it in the Talmud⁵ during the second and third centuries, the centuries during which the Church com-

¹ Pseudo-Cyprian, *Adversus Judaeos*, C.S.E.L., III, iii, p. 135.

² Irenaeus, *Contra Haereses*, III, xxi; P.G., VII, p. 946.

³ *E.g.* Israel Abrahams in *Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels*, Vol. II, p. 57: 'The synagogue had far less quarrel with Gentile Christianity, . . . and Christianity as such was not the object of much attention, still less of attack'.

⁴ Travers Herford, *op. cit.*, Div. 2, Ch. II.

⁵ The only reference found by Travers Herford is the one which refers to the time of the triumph of the Church in the fourth century, *op. cit.*, p. 210.

plained bitterly of the attitude of the Synagogue to Christianity. But in spite of this silence it is impossible to believe that the Jewish authorities, at least in the diaspora, were uninterested in the progress of Gentile Christianity. No organised group could be expected to pass over in silence such perpetual libels on their history as were being produced by Gentile theologians. But there was a still more serious reason. The Synagogue had by no means ceased from its missionary activity. Even in turning to the Gentiles, the Church was competing for influence over the same personalities. In the second century it is possible that a much smaller proportion of its converts came from the ranks of the 'metuentes Deum', for the Christian no longer had easy access to the synagogue; but the type of pagan likely to be attracted by either religion was the same. Though the terms upon which they offered it were different, both offered a life of discipline and of hope, and the promise of future happiness. Both emphasised morality, and fought against the corruption of the surrounding world.

The extent to which proselytism was encouraged by the authorities of the Talmudic period has been much discussed, and the remark of Rabbi Helbo, a Babylonian who taught in Palestine in the third century, has frequently been quoted as though it were final—'a proselyte is as harmful to Israel as a scab to the skin'. A detailed study of the evidence, however, suggests that the quotation of this remark four times in the Talmud, and the stories of Shammai's hostility to prospective converts, are inserted because general opinion was against them, and that throughout the period in which the Babylonian Talmud was being composed, the main Jewish opinion was in favour of proselytism. In a detailed survey, M. Israel Levi, the chief Rabbi of France, comes to this conclusion. 'There is no doubt that in its attitude towards proselytes there are two tendencies in Judaism. Nor is it questionable that those in favour of proselytism were more powerful outside Palestine, in the diaspora. It is also probable that the missionary volunteers in the diaspora were not recruited from among the rabbis. It is therefore not surprising that in rabbinic literature there are unquestionable traces of the tendency hostile to these conversions. What is surprising is to find so much evidence of the opposite

view. Was the favourable tendency the stronger of the two? Yes; unquestionably. But in a particular milieu, that of the Hagadists, or preachers. Among them the note is almost always consistent. In preaching, the tendencies are not opposed to each other as they are in the legislation. One note alone dominates the Palestinian Midrashim, that shapeless collection of popular sermons spread over several centuries. It is the attitude of those who proclaim the example of Abraham, the father of proselytes. Now, where does one find the ideal of a religious body, in its *corpus juris* or in its preaching, in its canon law or in its literature? Is the spirit of Christianity to be found in the gospels or in the *Leges Visigothorum*?¹ There were throughout the first centuries many half-way houses from Christianity to Judaism, and it is fair to suppose that something in them was due to the activity of contemporary Jews, and not only to the written word of the Bible.

If the Jews were still interested in making converts in the Roman world, it is obvious that they must have been ready with detailed answers to the Christian approach to the same individuals. These answers would be of two kinds, a statement of the Jewish interpretation of passages in the Old Testament used by the Christians, and comments upon the New Testament from a Jewish standpoint. There is evidence in the Talmud for both of these answers, and traces of them can also be found in Christian literature. The Messianic belief having passed into a definition of the doctrine of the Trinity, most of the Talmudic texts deal rather with the assertion of the unity of God, than explicitly with the claims of the Christians about Jesus. For in this way the denial of the claim to divinity of Jesus was involved without direct reference to it². In the Church of the fourth and later centuries the Hebraic interpretations of disputed passages of prophecy were well known, and the commentaries of Jerome are full of them. The interpretation of a passage accepted as genuine by both sides was not the only issue. Jews and Christians disputed as to what the actual text contained. The Jews did not accept the Christian translations,

¹ *R.E.J.*, Vols. L and LI.

² Travers Herford, *op. cit.*, pp. 239 and 291 ff., and the homilies against the Jews of Jacob of Serug, *passim*.

and few Christians could read Hebrew. The interpretation of the passage of Isaiah referring to the Virgin Birth was, naturally, the most hotly disputed of these passages, but even as early as Justin others existed¹.

Just as Christians show a knowledge of post-Christian Judaism, so also the rabbis show a knowledge of the New Testament and of the details of the life of Jesus. The gospels are known as 'Aven-gillayon' by Rabbis Meir of Jabne and Jochanan. The word is an offensive pun meaning 'revelation of sin' or 'falsehood of blank paper'². There is a discussion reported as to what shall be done with 'external books', which would doubtless include primarily Christian books. Rabbi Meir says that they are not to be saved from the fire, but to be burned at once, even with the names of God in them. Rabbi Jose says that on a week-day the name of God ought to be cut out and hidden away. Rabbi Tarphon invoked a curse on himself if he did not burn the books, names of God and all³.

While the references to the life of Christ are few in the Talmud, they are inevitably insulting. Jesus was the illegitimate child of a soldier called Panthera. He performed His miracles by magic, which He had learnt in Egypt. After His death, which was a legal condemnation in which He was given every chance to prove His innocence, His body was stolen by His disciples in order to invent the story of the Resurrection⁴. He was a 'deceiver of Israel' and His teaching was evil. The Talmud and Midrash have little more than this, but it is evident that common Jewish stories went far further, and that all the main elements of the 'Sepher Toldoth Jeshu' were in existence from a very early date. There are explicit references in Origen to some of the stories. Jesus collected a band of malefactors around Himself, and with these He lived the life of a bandit up and down Palestine⁵. More references are to be found in Tertullian, who speaks of the libels on Jesus as the 'son of a carpenter or

¹ *Trypho*, xliii and lxxi-lxxiii. Cf. H. A. Hart in the *Expositor*, Nov. 1905.

² *T. B. Sabb.*, 116, a, foot.

³ W. M. Christie in *J.T.S.*, Vol. XXVI, p. 361.

⁴ Travers Herford, pp. 35 and 51. Strack, pp. 18-46.

⁵ Origen, *contra Celsum*, I, xxxii, xxxviii, and lxii; P.G., XI.

furniture maker, the destroyer of the Sabbath, the Samaritan possessed of a devil'¹. Eusebius expresses his disgust that 'when a writer belonging to the Hebrews themselves [Josephus] has transmitted from primitive times in a work of his own, this record concerning John the Baptist and our Saviour, the Jews should proceed to forge such memoirs against them'². The passage he is referring to is that alluding to Christianity which many now think to be original and not an interpolation. In any case, it existed in the copies of Josephus in the fourth century.

There are also many references in the Talmud to the Judeo-Christians under the name of 'Minim'³. As the word 'Minim' is often found associated with the word 'Mosarim', which means traitors or betrayers, it is probable that most of the bitterness against them is to be associated with the war under Hadrian, when the Jews were forbidden to study the Law and the Judeo-Christians were accused of betraying those who did to the Romans. In the Gentile Christian the Talmud shows practically no interest. It is, however, one of the most serious charges made by Tertullian and Origen that the Jews stirred up the pagans against the Christians. The former makes the general statement that the synagogues were 'the seed-plot of all the calumny against us'⁴. Origen is much more explicit and says that Celsus has acted 'like the Jews, who when Christianity first began to be preached, scattered abroad false reports of the Gospel, such as that Christians offered up an infant in sacrifice, and partook of its flesh, and again that the professors of Christianity wishing to do the works of darkness used to extinguish the lights, and each one to have sexual intercourse with any woman he chanced to meet'. These calumnies, says Origen, 'have long exercised, although unreasonably, an influence over the minds of many, leading those who are alien to the Gospel to believe that Christians are men of such character, and even at the present time they mislead some, and prevent them from entering into the simple intercourse of conversation

¹ Tertullian, *de Spectaculis*, xxx; P.L., I, p. 662.

² *Ecc. Hist.*, I, ix, 9; P.G., XX, p. 105.

³ Travers Herford, *op. cit.*, and Strack, pp. 47-80.

⁴ *To the Nations*, I, xiv; P.L., I, p. 579.

with those who are Christians'¹. It is, of course, impossible to deny that individual Jews may have taken a share in spreading such calumnies against Christians. But before accepting this picture given by Origen and Tertullian as *generally* reliable, it is necessary to consider the evidence on the other side. Although this is negative it is extensive. We possess no less than eight complete 'Apologies' addressed to the pagan world during the second century²; in other words, the century of the greatest Jewish unpopularity, and in which it would have been a telling argument to say: 'Why do you believe the Jews of all people?' Two of the authors who wrote Apologies also wrote against the Jews. All of them mention the unpleasant accusations made against the Christians. But none of them ascribe the accusation to Jewish sources. Yet these apologists come from all parts of the Christian world—Asia, Rome and Africa—and all wrote in the second century.

But in addition there is positive evidence that the libel did not come from Jewish sources. Justin speaks of it to Trypho, and asks him if he has believed it; and Trypho replies: 'These things about which the multitude speak are not worthy of belief. Moreover, I am aware that your precepts are so wonderful and great that I suspect that no one can keep them'³. Athenagoras, in his *Plea for the Christians*, is still more definite. When he says that 'it is not wonderful that they should get up tales about us such as they tell about their own gods', he is clearly implying a heathen source of the statement⁴. It is also significant that these statements have almost always to be searched for in odd corners in writings which have nothing to do with the Jews. They are not to be found in the many writings addressed to them. While, then, no man can prove that *no* Jew ever repeated them, it is clear that the evidence is against the accuracy of the statement of Origen that the *main* source of the more unpleasant accusations against the Christians was Jewish. On the other hand, it is not to be expected that when a Jew

¹ *Contra Celsum*, VI, xxvii; P.G., XI, p. 1334.

² By Aristides, Justin (2), Minucius Felix, Theophilus of Antioch, Athenagoras, Tatian and Tertullian.

³ *Trypho*, Ch. x.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, Ch. xxxii. Cf. Ch. ii ff.; P.G., VI, pp. 894 and 964.

was asked his opinion on the Christian Church he should load it with praises; and if we possessed copies of addresses given by local Jewish preachers, it is probable that we should find in them plenty of uncomplimentary references to Christianity.

The written 'Altercations' yield astonishingly little precise information upon the discussions which must have frequently taken place. They are arranged to give the victory to the Christian or to the Jew, and the arguments of the other side are given little weight. Only in one Christian Altercation does the Jew make a really good stand, and that is the seventh century Altercation of Gregentius and Herbanus¹. But that the Jew was not without ammunition is shown *en passant* in two stories in the Acts of the Martyrs. From these it appears that one Jewish defence was to claim a superiority of their miracles over those of the Christians. After Donatus, bishop of Istria, who was martyred in Egypt, had made a great apologetic speech which had led to the conversion of seven philosophers, eleven lawyers, and two hundred and eighty-two others, the Jews began to make trouble. When Donatus spoke of the miracle of the raising of Lazarus, they admitted it was a miracle, but claimed it was inferior to one reported in the Old Testament. Christ had been alive when He raised Lazarus, but the very bones of Elisha had performed a similar miracle². In the same strain, when the martyr Romanus at Antioch is about to be burnt, the Lord sends a miraculous storm to quench the fire in case there are any Jews standing about who might compare the event contemptuously with the safety in the flames of the Three Holy Children³.

It would appear that the latter event was a strong point in Jewish apologetic, for there are many other references to rival miracles as evidently designed to put it in the shade. Saint Maris, who converted Persia, where the original miracle took place, had a special furnace constructed, through which he walked *twice*, and then began to *extinguish the fire*⁴.

¹ See Ch. VIII, Section V.

² II Kings xiii, 21.

³ *A.S.*, May, Vol. V, p. 145.

⁴ *An. Boll.*, Vol. IV, p. 99.

It is a disputed question whether there are relics of long discussions between Jews and Christians in the Talmud. Naturally, when a discussion is referred to, the Jew wins, but according to Dr. Marmorstein, a full discussion is to be found in *Sifre*, which bears out the evidence of Christian writers as to the method followed. 'One day the community of Israel will say: Master of the universe, my witnesses are still living (and can testify in my favour), as it is said: This day I take the heaven and earth to witness. (Deut. xxx, 19.) To which he (the Christian) replies: I will create a new heaven and a new earth. (Is. lxv, 17.) Master of the universe, I look with repentance on the places where I have sinned, and I am ashamed, as it is said: Consider thy conduct in the valley, and recognise what thou hast done. (Jer. ii, 20.) But he replies: every valley shall be exalted, and every hill shall be brought low. (Is. xl, 4.) Master of the universe, my name still survives. But he: I will change it, as it is said: They shall call thee by another name. Master of the universe, Thy name is spoken of with those of idols. But he: I will make to disappear the names of Baals from their mouth. (Hos. ii, 19.) Master of the universe, hast thou not written: If a man repudiates his wife and she leaves him to marry another. And he replies: I have written "if a man", but of me it is said: I am God and not man. (Hos. xi, 9.) Are you separated from me, Israelites? Is it not written: Where is your mother's bill of divorcement, by which I have sent her away? Where is the creditor to whom I have sold you?' By the last sentence of this somewhat confused battle of texts, the victory of Israel in the encounter is evident¹.

There is also evidence of discussions with Christians held by Rabbi Hoshaye of Caesarea, a contemporary of Origen², and by Rabbis Simlai and Tanhouma at Antioch. But more complete than any references in the Talmud is a Genizah fragment³, which gives the anti-Christian polemic with a directness which no censor of the Talmud itself would

¹ *Sifre*, ed. Friedmann, fol. 130b, quoted from A. Marmorstein in R.E.J., Vol. LX. It should be added that other Jewish scholars see in this passage only a discussion between a saddened Israelite and his God. Even so it may have been the memory of Christian propaganda which saddened him and framed his questioning.

² J.Q.R., Vol. III, p. 357.

³ Article by Dr. Krauss in R.E.J., Vol. LXIII, p. 63.

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have allowed to survive. The actual fragment is late, for it includes a reference to the dishonour of riding on an ass which must belong to either the Mahomedan or Byzantine periods, when Jews were not allowed to ride on horses. But the material it contains is likely to go back to the beginning. Various items in the life of Jesus are discussed. His attitude to His parents and their disbelief in Him are contrasted with the commandment to love father and mother. Moreover, it is absurd to say that God could have a mother. Jesus Himself says that He was a man, and He was known in Nazareth as an ordinary individual. His pure humanity is proved by His sufferings upon the Cross, by the fact that He fasted, and that He was tempted by the devil. Somewhat irrelevantly it is then pointed out that a young ass would not be strong enough to bear a man—Christian tradition insisted that the ass had never been ridden before—apart from the dishonour of riding an ass at all. As to His divinity, the author insists passionately on the unity of God, and asks how it is possible that if the heavens could not contain His glory, He could be contained in the womb of a woman?

The two lines of argument, that the miracles of the Old Testament are superior to those of the New, and that the personality of Jesus was inferior to that of the prophets, are joined together in a speech of the Jewish High Priest in one of the apocryphal gospels¹. There it is pointed out that whereas the prophets worked more wonderful miracles than Jesus, they did not preach a new law, they did not speak in their own name, and they did not call themselves God. Jesus, on the other hand, did everything for ostentation, abused everyone else indiscriminately, and showed throughout a character inferior to the best of the prophets.

If we compare the situation of the Jews and the Christians, we can see that it is probable that the Jewish attack on Christianity would be less violent than that of the Christians on Judaism. The Christians were claiming the promises in a book which was composed of promises and denunciations. The denunciations, therefore, must belong to the Jews. But they, on their part, were only compelled to adopt a negative attitude, the refusal to accept the Christian claim as to the person of Jesus, and though this naturally involved

¹ Hebrew Gospel of Matthew, A.S., Feb. 24.

disputing His perfection and the two miraculous events concerned with His life, the Virgin Birth, and the Resurrection, there is not much evidence in these first centuries that their attack went further. The stories contained in the Sepher were in existence, but apparently not widely known. For one reference to it (in Origen) we have a dozen or more to the purely negative approach, that Jesus was *not* what the Christians claimed Him to be.

X. INFLUENCES OF CHRISTIANITY ON JUDAISM

It may well be that there was a subdued note in Jewish apologetic during the second century, the century of the triumphant Christian apologists, and that even if we had as much material from the Jewish as we have from the Christian side, we should still find fewer violent insults to the opposing faith. For Judaism had been more severely shaken by the tragic events from 70 onwards than is generally realised. Though in the end rabbinical teaching not only survived, but succeeded in doing more than salving a wreck, yet inevitably the terrible failures of those years tried severely the faith of the simple and unlearned. Doubtless, too, the growing arrogance of the Christian Church and its obvious successes would not only nerve the Jew to greater efforts on his own behalf, but would also cause him to cast wistful eyes at those doctrines which seemed to enshrine the rival power of Christianity. The doctrine of forgiveness and the mediatorial power of Christ, so potently preached by the Church, must have caused anxious searchings in many Jewish hearts. Origen tells us that in his day Jews told him that 'as they had no altar, no temple, no priest, and therefore no offerings of sacrifices, they felt that their sins remained with them, and that they had no means of obtaining pardon'¹. Dr. Marmorstein, in a close examination of numerous rabbinic texts of the third century², has found ample evidence of this preoccupation with the question of how to achieve forgiveness apart from sacrifices. Innumerable solutions of varying spiritual value were proposed. Some

¹ *Hom. on Num.*, x, 2; P.G., XII, p. 638.

² R.E.J., LXXI, p. 190.

said that the blood of circumcision was itself a sacrifice, others that Elijah offered continual sacrifices in heaven; yet others offered more deeply spiritual explanations to comfort the faithful, and stressed the redemptive value of suffering—a natural development in a century so full of suffering for the Jews. Others took the line that prayer and repentance were in themselves creative of forgiveness, which is the teaching which Judaism has retained.

Still more interesting was the attempt to provide an alternative mediator to Christ. Rabbis of the second and third centuries found a parallel to the Cross in the sacrifice of Isaac. In the book of Jubilees, which is pre-Christian, the sacrifice of Isaac is said to take place on the fourteenth day of Nissan, the day of the Passover, and to be a type of the paschal lamb¹. Post-Christian Jewish writers associate his sacrifice with the ceremonies of forgiveness of Rosh Hashanah; and the horn that is blown is symbolically connected with the horns of the ram caught in the bush. In one of the prayers of that day Israel demands that the merits of the sacrifice of Isaac cover it and save it from the consequence of its faults. As Abraham suppressed his feelings as a father, so they appeal to God to forgo His righteous anger. Rabbi Jochanan (Palestine, third century) makes Abraham say ‘when the descendants of Isaac are guilty of transgressions and evil actions, remember the sacrifice of Isaac and have pity’². In another version Abraham says, ‘when the descendants of Isaac are in danger, and there is none to intercede for them, be Thou their defender, remember the sacrifice of Isaac and have pity’³. Isaac is called the ‘expiator of the sins of Israel’⁴, and emphasis is laid on his willingness to be offered up—a detail which is not explicit in the Biblical narrative⁵. Rabbi Isaac says that at the moment all the angels marvelled at his acquiescence and interceded with God that he might be spared⁶.

¹ Chs. xvii and xviii.

² *Ber. Rabba*, 56. *Ps. Rabb.*, XXIX, 1.

³ *Taanit*, 65d.

⁴ *Cant. Rabba*, I, 14.

⁵ *Ber. Rabba*, 56.

⁶ I. Levi, in R.E.J., Vol. LXIV. The Talmudic quotations are all taken from the same source.

Although no doctrine of the vicarious sacrifice of Isaac has ever been an official part of Judaism, it appears that it is still a favourite subject for sermons in the synagogue. The parallel between Isaac and Jesus is, on the other hand, one which is rarely used by the Fathers. It is used by Origen, and his use of it suggests that he knew it was quoted in the synagogue¹. Irenaeus, Clement and Tertullian, who belong to the second century, also make use of the parallel². But, considering how apposite the parallel is, it is surprising that it is not used more frequently. It may be that this silence is due to the fact that they were aware that it was used by the Jews, and that therefore they were unwilling to emphasise the similarity.

XI. RELATIONS OF CHRISTIAN SCHOLARS WITH JEWISH SCHOLARS

Inevitably the borrowings of Christianity from Judaism were of a different kind. The main transference took place in the first century. What Christianity required from its parent religion it had taken at that time. Its spirit in the second century was scarcely such that it would be prepared to admit that contemporary Judaism had anything to teach it. Yet it had to go to Hebrew masters for help in interpreting the Scriptures, and there is much evidence in fathers such as Justin, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Aphraates, Ephraim the Syrian, and above all Jerome, of knowledge which must have been the result of hours of patient discussion. It is impossible to believe that these were never carried on in the tranquil spirit of the student. Many of the writings which are left to us show extensive knowledge of Jewish legend and story which are not included in the Old Testament. Many interpretations given in the endless homilies on the Scriptures of the period show considerable acquaintance with the work going on, side by side with that of Christian scholars,

¹ *Hom. on Gen.*, viii; P.G., Vol. XII, p. 203.

² Irenaeus, *Contra Haereses*, IV, 5; P.G., VII, p. 893. Clement, *Stromata*, II, 5; P.G., VIII, p. 952. *Paedagogi*, I, 5; P.G., VIII, p. 277. *Tertullian adv. Judaeos*, x; P.L., II, 626. Cf. also Paulinus of Nola, Ep. XXIX, 9; P.L., LXI, p. 317. Some of these passages are discussed in the article of Levi.

in the rabbinical schools¹. The accusation made that the Jews falsified texts, and the contrary determination to get accurate texts from the Jews, inevitably imply contacts and discussions of the passages concerned.

Christians also needed Jewish teachers for learning Hebrew—and Jerome complains that they charged a great deal for their lessons. But if all relations were such as a first reading of the literature which remains would suggest, it is doubtful if any Jew would have consented to teach a Christian at all. Eusebius² refers to the Jewish teachers of his time as ‘people gifted with an uncommon strength of intellect, and whose faculties have been trained to penetrate to the very heart of scripture’. Doubtless in many of the discussions which took place the Jew gave as good as he received, and even won the victory. There is an air of reality about the remark of ‘Zacchaeus’ in discussion with ‘Athanasius’, who has taunted him with the loss of Jerusalem, that ‘insults are not a serious form of argument’³. It is reasonable to assume that, since human nature is generally better than it appears to be, this was a protest which did not need constant repetition from either side.

XII. JEWS AND CHRISTIANS

So far it has been mainly polemic and apologetic literature which has been discussed, but it is obvious that there must have been many day to day contacts between Jews and both Jewish and Gentile Christians when they did other things than hurl abusive texts at each other’s heads. In daily practice their common attitude to the surrounding paganism must often have drawn them together, and their common interests must often have been more important to ordinary folk than the disputes of the theologians. Even in those days every man did not live with a book of proof texts in his pocket.

¹ See articles of S. Krauss in J.Q.R. for Oct. 1892, Oct. 1893, and Jan. 1894.

² *Prep. Evan.*, XII, i; P.G., XXI, p. 952.

³ *Dispute of Athanasius, Archbishop of Alexandria, and Zacchaeus, a teacher of the Jews*, edited by F. Connybeare, Oxford, 1898. The dialogue is probably a re-edition of the second-century dialogue of Papiscus and Jason.

Though there is no evidence of Christianity adopting any practices of post-Christian Judaism, yet relations with contemporary Jews were continual, and are shown by the number of centuries which it took to separate the Jewish Passover from the Christian Easter. It was not until the time of Constantine that a formal decision was taken, and even in later centuries councils had frequently to prohibit Gentile Christians from celebrating Easter on the same day as the Jews celebrated the Passover. In other matters also it is evident that many, apart from Christians of Jewish birth, were powerfully influenced by the teaching and practice of the Synagogue. Though this provoked the furious denunciation of such bishops as Chrysostom¹, it is significant that he has no definite moral charges to bring against the Christians who were involved, and it seems to have been fear of Jewish influence which caused his violence more than anything else. Jerome refers to Christian women using phylacteries for covering religious objects as a mark of special reverence². The importance attached by many Christians to observing Jewish dates³ is a frequent cause of abuse and of differences between heretics such as Novatian and the Catholics.

Of Jewish life at this period comparatively little is known, and what is known suggests that there was nothing special to distinguish it⁴. It was in no way specialised as it was in the mediaeval ghetto. Various professions are referred to casually, but there is no suggestion of special importance attaching to the reference. Jerome refers to the wealth of the Jews of Palestine, but as he also says that it is legitimate to relieve the wants of poor Jews from Christian alms if there is anything over, they were obviously not all rich. Christianity and Judaism, viewed from outside, probably appeared very much alike: they were distinguished in their doctrines, but neither in their social status nor in their attitude to the

¹ *Adversus Judaeos*, eight sermons preached at Antioch in 387.

² In Matt. xxiii, 6; P.G., XXVI, p. 174.

³ There is frequent conciliar legislation at much later dates than this to prevent Jews and Christians from celebrating their religious feasts together.

⁴ Cf. Justin, *Trypho*, xvi: 'You are not recognised among the rest of men by any other mark than your fleshly circumcision'.

heathen world. There is no evidence of any emperor or governor being favourable to one and hostile to the other. He might persecute the Christians for the crime of atheism, which was not a crime allowing of persecution for the Jews. But that implied no special affection for the Jews. Even Julian, though to begin with he liked the Jews because they offered sacrifices, ended by disliking them as heartily as he did the Christians.

To each other they were still rivals for the conversion of the pagan world around them, but there the scales were heavily weighted for ritual and later for political reasons in favour of the Christians. Judaism was still making proselytes in the second and third centuries, but there were difficulties which more than compensated for its doctrinal simplicity. The confused and quarrelsome theology of the early Church must have been a great moral hindrance, but the link between Judaism and the nation of the Jews was a greater one. Christianity at least made no distinction between clean and unclean, and had not yet rites which were an unlearnable complication to those who were not born in them. There was probably also a real difference in their attitude to their missionary task. Judaism proclaimed, indeed, that God forgave sin, but Christianity proclaimed that God redeemed sinners.

Yet even so the Church never really ceased to fear the rival influence of Judaism, and the contact of Christians with Jews. As late as the thirteenth century in Poland the Charter of Boleslav of Kalish provoked violent protestations from the clergy because of the danger of settling Jews among the newly converted Poles. It is significant that the first law which the Church imposed upon the newly Christian empire was the prohibition to the Jews to make converts, and from this time onwards Judaism became more and more a closed faith until proselytes came to be considered more a danger than a blessing.