

CHAPTER TWO

THE CLASH WITH CHRISTIANITY

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION

The narrative of this chapter turns mainly upon the account given in Mark and in the Acts of the Apostles of the ministry of Jesus and the development of the early Church. It is claimed that these narratives give a logical, reasonable and satisfying picture of what occurred, and it cannot be too strongly urged that the main sources to be consulted are the narratives themselves, approached with an open mind instead of with some particular modern theory as to their corruption. While modern exegesis has rendered incalculable services to the elucidation of the texts, it has become so complicated and contradictory that we are in perpetual danger of forgetting that a reasonable amount of inaccuracy and forgetfulness on the part of their authors may be allowed without any need for a logical reason being given for this carelessness. The danger of the modern approach is nowhere more conspicuous than when it is the general atmosphere and picture of the original narrative which is under consideration, and not the exact implication of this or that point of detail.

This plea is urged, not with the intention of claiming any originality for my approach or conclusions, but because it is impossible to survey and assess all the different theories which might invalidate them. Something, however, needs to be said of the two books which have been mainly quoted. The essential accuracy of the historical narrative of Mark is defended by Burkitt, and I see no reason to forsake his conclusions for the new German theory of authentic scraps of teaching set in an imaginary framework, which is presented by Rawlinson. That so logical a development as Mark presents happened fortuitously seems to me impossible. And if it is not fortuitous, then, whether the author received it from eye-witnesses or together with the scraps of teaching, seems to me an utterly unimportant issue. The same is

true of the narrative of Acts. In both cases to imagine the framework to be a late composition embodying older traditions is to ascribe to the authors a prophetic realisation that people would one day wish to know exactly how the opposition between Judaism and Christianity arose, and a determination to answer the question, and this seems an entirely gratuitous complication of the problem. Further to consider that authors, writing an imaginary skeleton at a time when relations between Jews and Christians were at their worst, deliberately invented for us the data for exonerating the Jews from the charge of malicious blindness which the authors themselves make against them, seems to me still more absurd.

A word must be added to explain the omission of the fourth gospel from the study of the first period. I have removed it to the following chapter, not because I do not accept the authenticity of its picture of the esoteric teachings of Jesus, but because it seems to me to contain in its attitude to the Jews far more elements of the situation around A.D. 100 than of the situation in the lifetime of Jesus. A brilliant defence of a contrary view will be found in the work of Canon Raven (especially p. 203). But I do not find it convincing, for he seems to me to be certainly wrong in speaking of a 'synoptic attitude' as though the synoptic gospels were consistent in their picture, and he omits the speeches of Jesus to the Jews from this defence. It is, however, interesting that the reasons which he gives for accepting the Johannine picture in preference to that of the synoptists are exactly those which make me choose Mark in preference to John; in other words, that it presents a more real picture of human relationships. It may be, however, that one should accept the Johannine picture of the internal divisions of the authorities over Jesus as a valuable supplement to the general picture as sketched by Mark.

The attitude of Paul to the Law is mainly developed in his earlier epistles, which have been the object of a detailed study by Kirsopp Lake. While their dating is not an essential part of the argument, I have followed this order:

Galatians, on the journey to the council at Jerusalem mentioned in Acts, *c.* A.D. 50.

Thessalonians, during the second missionary journey, and probably from Corinth, *c.* A.D. 52.

I and II Corinthians, during the third missionary journey, *c.* A.D. 53-57.

Romans, from Corinth, *c.* A.D. 57.

The other books of the New Testament do not seem to need any special comment.

The relation of the teaching of Jesus to the currents of thought in the Judaism of His time is still a matter of controversy. We must, however, exclude those estimates of the opposition between Him and contemporary Jewish teachers which do not take account of modern researches, and which base their conceptions of Judaism exclusively on the gospel narratives. Whether they be accepted or rejected, the work of Travers Herford, Moore, Billerbeck and Strack, and Montefiore cannot be ignored. There are, however, a number of modern authors who, while recognising the inadequacy of the gospel portrait of Judaism, still hold to the traditional view of the *complete* originality of Jesus and His *entire* independence of and opposition to the Judaism of the Pharisees. The work of Bischoff belongs to this category; and Raven enunciates the view that while the teaching of Jesus is completely Jewish, it is completely 'un-Judaic'; which seems somewhat of a paradox. To a lesser extent the same view is held by Easton. The denial of originality in the teaching of Jesus will be mainly found in the Jewish biographies referred to in the general biographical introduction. An analysis of the differences in attitude revealed in the different gospels will be found in Branscombe.

The study of Saint Paul's attitude to the Law has not been undertaken with anything like the same thoroughness. An original point of view is presented in Montefiore's work on Saint Paul, but scholarship in general retains the position that the rejection of the Judeo-Christian compromise was essential to the development of Christianity, and consequently, while Saint Paul's views have been violently challenged by Jewish scholars, Christian scholarship seems to have felt little need to defend them. The theory that Christianity was founded by Paul has now too few advocates to be worth consideration.

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I. JUDAISM AND THE LAW

It is not part of this study to attempt a theological estimate of the relative merits of Judaism and Christianity. We are concerned with the clash of two religious organisations, and only indirectly with the conflict of theological conceptions which was involved. It is not Christian doctrine which has been the main external influence in the Jewish life of the last fifteen hundred years, but the Christian Church. The Jewish problem to-day expresses itself primarily in economic and political phraseology. False racial theories have been substituted for false readings of the Old Testament. Jewish observances are perhaps more coloured by Roman influences than by Christianity. Sephardic Judaism owes much to its contact with Arab civilisation. But the whole of the Jewish world even to-day bears the marks of the environment, friendly or hostile, created by the Christian Church. For throughout all those centuries a large portion of the Jewish people have lived under the domination of a Christian majority. The Jews of to-day are the direct inheritors of the life of mediaeval Jewry, and the life of mediaeval Jewry was built upon foundations laid in the earliest centuries of its daughter religion.

To trace the origin of the conflict we have to pursue two lines of enquiry simultaneously, the line of the historical development of the events, and the line of the historical development of the literature in which those events were recorded. An event related in the gospel of Matthew as occurring in the first months of our Lord's ministry needs to be considered from the standpoint of the date when the gospel was written, as much as from that of the time to which the event is ascribed. The most obvious example of this contradiction is to be seen in the reference to the different groups within Judaism. In the synoptic gospels it is now the Pharisees, now the scribes, now another party which is described. In the fourth gospel all are included together under the general term 'the Jews', and all are considered equally to be, and always to have been, the enemies of the new teaching.

It is not possible historically to trace this antagonism of the Christian to the Jew exclusively to the fact of the

crucifixion. Nor can the Jewish antagonism to Christianity be traced exclusively to the teaching of Paul. The origin of the profound difference which exists between Judaism and Christianity must ultimately be related to the teaching of Jesus, although He Himself lived and died a Jew. Even if we recognise, as we are bound to do, that many of the sayings attributed to Him in the gospels are either unauthentic or coloured by memory and intention, yet we cannot eliminate all the conflicts with other Jewish teachers or the denunciations contained in them unless we are prepared to deny their entire historicity. But it is very important to know exactly the nature of the conflict and what Jesus denounced, and to distinguish this from the colouring which belongs to the period of transcription rather than to the period of occurrence. He wished to change things in current teaching, but not to abandon Judaism itself. He attacked the Pharisees unsparingly, but His greatest predecessor was the Pharisee Hillel.

In view of the fact that the Pharisees, and therewith post-Christian Judaism, are almost universally judged by Christians on the basis of the twenty-third chapter of Matthew and Paul's Epistle to the Romans, it is essential to enquire further into the scope and causes of this opposition. We have no Jewish sources of the time of Jesus, except as they are embodied in the Talmud, and we are compelled to build up our knowledge of the Judaism of the first century largely from a disentangling of the teaching of earlier rabbis from the later material contained therein. But thanks to the researches of various modern scholars we can assess the Judaism of the first century with sufficient accuracy to be in a position to deny that there was so profound a difference between the Judaism of the first century and that of a hundred years later that the New Testament picture of the one and the Talmudic picture of the other can both be taken as equally accurate. It is, however, unwise to swing to the opposite extreme and condemn the whole New Testament picture without discrimination. The picture of the Jews in the fourth gospel may be completely invented. The synoptists and Paul cannot be so easily set aside, and they describe a real conflict.

To consider that Jesus dismissed the whole of Pharisaic Judaism as simply 'hypocrisy' is to attribute to Him an

impossible superficiality. He denounced what seemed to Him to be *pessima* because it was *corruptio optimi*. But if it had not been for the work of the Pharisees, Jesus would not have been born a Jew, because no Judaism would have survived until His time¹. The Pharisees had saved it, but in the externally and internally troubled centuries which followed Ezra its development had been extremely difficult; and since it was intricately involved with contemporary political and social questions, the result at the time of Christ was a mass of ill-adjustments². Fanaticism, meticulous insistence on detail, and narrow-mindedness are not the prerogative of the Pharisees, but are to be found in any intensely religious group fighting with its back to the wall, as was Judaism during these centuries. One would not go to the Scottish Covenanters or the Albigenses for a realisation of the broad charity of the Gospel. And like the Covenanters and the Albigenses, the Pharisees considered that their meticulous insistence upon certain acts and beliefs was, in the conditions under which they were living, essential for the development of the true mission of Israel, the worship of God according to Torah. The Pharisees, with their teachers everywhere, with their independence of the authorities at Jerusalem, the political and priestly leaders of the nation, wanted the *whole* of Israel to know Torah, for only in so doing would Israel be fulfilling its mission before God. In opposition to the Greek philosophers, who built their ideal city on slave labour, the Pharisees were completely democratic. Many of the most famous rabbis, especially of the earlier period, were themselves artisans. Jesus, as a village carpenter, would not inspire them with any contempt. It would not even arouse comment that He followed a trade.

The word Torah is only very imperfectly translated by 'Law'. To the Jew it has a far richer meaning, and does not in the least imply a slavish following of a written document, even if that document has final authority. 'It is near the truth to say that what Christ is to the Christian, Torah is to the Jew³.' It also could be spoken of as an 'Incarnation'

¹ *Pharisaism*, by R. Travers Herford, Chapters I and II.

² *The Synoptic Gospels*, by C. G. Montefiore, Introduction, p. lxxx ff.

³ *Pharisaism*, p. 171.

of the Divine, for it expressed the whole of the Divine will for, and thought about, man. It contained far more than mere 'precept' or laws, although even the precepts, by being Divine ordinances, brought men to God in the performance of them. Thus to have many precepts was not a burden; it only gave men so many more opportunities for doing expressly His will, and even if some of the precepts seemed trivial, it was not for man to judge the importance of what God had ordained. The task of the scribes was to study the written Law, which of itself was not always easy to understand in changing conditions, and to know its interpretation so that in everything which a man did he might please God. The written Law was thus the basis of Torah, but Torah itself was the complete revelation of the life of the holy community or nation through which the individual in every act could fulfil the purpose of God in His creation. Nor was this conception merely rational and intellectual, in spite of the continual emphasis on 'understanding'. It was in Christian language 'redemptive'. 'Torah' was a living creative force expressing itself through the Holy Community to the world as a whole. The scribes were not necessarily priests. Many or most were laymen, but laymen set apart by competent authorities because of their knowledge of Torah and of the guidance which previous interpreters had found in it. Torah was divine and final, and therefore it was essential for every new precept proposed to find its authority either in the work of a previously accepted scribe or interpreter of the written Law, or else in the written Law itself. Naturally enough in times of crisis and confusion their tendency was to interpret the written and oral Law more and more strictly, and to increase the wall of legal severance which separated Jew and Gentile, or, for that matter, the righteous from the unrighteous Jew. If 'it would be unfair to say that the Rabbis deliberately extended the ceremonial at the expense of the moral Law', yet 'it is true to say that their devotion to the non-moral side of the Law did occasionally produce evil results on the moral and spiritual side both in themselves and their followers¹'. Wherever there are external forms in a religion there is a danger of formalism,

¹ *The Synoptic Gospels*, Montefiore, Intro., p. lxxviii.

and even a group with no external forms such as the Society of Friends is not free from the danger.

When the spiritual reasons for doing certain acts are no longer accepted it is natural for it to seem mere hypocrisy to insist upon doing them. To those who see in 'the Law' merely 'the letter', it is natural to call it dead and powerless. But if it is necessary to understand something of the inner meaning of both religions to understand the tragic conflict which exists between them, it is no juster to go to Christian sources to understand Judaism than to go to the Jews to understand Christianity. Even those Christians who have re-examined the attitude of Christianity to Judaism still tend to see between the two religions a gulf which is unbridgeable. Travers Herford found that 'the conflict was one between two fundamentally different conceptions of religion, viz. that in which the supreme authority was Torah, and that in which the supreme authority was the immediate intuition of God in the individual soul and conscience. The Pharisee stood for one; Jesus stood for the other¹'.

But this opposition is only true upon the assumption of certain Protestant interpretations of Christianity. It would be truer to say that the Christian through Jesus, the Jew through Torah, sought the same thing—'the immediate intuition of God in the individual soul and conscience'—and that to preserve for succeeding generations the possibilities of that intuition each religion has 'hedged it round' with the discipline of a system and the humility of an authority.

Jesus attacked the scribes and Pharisees because they seemed to Him to obscure that direct relationship between man and God by falsifying the nature of Torah. He went further than they would ever have allowed in claiming that the written word of the Law itself could obscure that relationship. This was a fundamental point. But it was not a rejection by Jesus of 'Torah'. It was His Gentile followers a century later who, seeing in 'Torah' only a body of prescriptions, saw in Judaism only the observance of a dead law which Jesus had rejected.

¹ *Pharisaism*, p. 167.

II. THE TEACHING OF JESUS IN MARK

The opposition is not to be understood from a consideration of the recorded controversies alone. It lay in the manner of His teaching. Statements made by Jesus might be wise or good in themselves from the Pharisaic point of view, but He was neither a scribe nor did He quote the authority of accepted scribes for His utterances. To accept them as authoritative expressions of Torah was, in the minds of its official interpreters, to undermine the whole structure. The stages of this feeling are easy to trace in the gospel of Mark. When Jesus first preached in Capernaum the people were astonished 'for He taught them as having authority, and not as the scribes'¹. When on that, or more likely on a subsequent, occasion He healed a man in the synagogue, they were still more amazed at His 'authority'². That this 'authority' implied to Jesus no opposition to Torah is shown by the healing of the leper which occurred some time later. The leper is sent to the priest to have his health certified, and to perform all the ritual acts required³. Meanwhile the reputation of Jesus grew, and the scribes were troubled at it. When He returned to Capernaum, there occurred a fresh incident. Healing a man sick of the palsy, He said to him 'Son, thy sins are forgiven'. This caused the scribes still further anxiety. 'They reasoned in their hearts, saying, Why doth this man thus speak? he blasphemeth: who can forgive sins, but one, even God?'⁴ This cannot be called a hostile attitude, and the reply of Jesus is not hostile. It is plain and straightforward. He perceives they are questioning His action, and He justifies it to them.

So far it has been a question of authority, and the questioners—it is absurd to call them 'opponents' at this stage—are the scribes. The next incident introduces the Pharisees, and it is perhaps significant that it introduces a direct question of the strict observance of the Law. Jesus was eating with publicans and sinners. The scribes and Pharisees

¹ Mark i, 22.

² *Ibid.* 27.

³ *Ibid.* 44.

⁴ *Ibid.* ii, 6 and 7.

remarked upon it, and again He gives them a reasonable answer, and one which they could have accepted as adequate. 'They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick'¹. A little later the disciples of Jesus were not fasting, when those of John the Baptist and of the Pharisees were observing a fast. They ask Him to explain. He does so, but the answer contains a new note².

Naturally we have only the slightest summary in the gospels of a process which had been going on for several months at least. We cannot know what other conversations and discussions took place between Jesus and His disciples, and between Him and the Jewish teachers who followed with so much uneasiness His growing popularity. But we can see that there has been a change between the time when they found Him eating with publicans and sinners, and when they questioned Him about fasting. 'No man putteth new wine into old wine-skins' could be taken to imply a complete rejection of the old Law and tradition. His previous actions, although unusual, contained nothing explicitly illegal. Though the forgiveness of sins shocked them, yet, when Jesus proved His knowledge of the man by showing them that He had cured him, they could have reconciled this with their ideas. When they questioned Him about fasting, there is nothing in their words to show that they were other than anxious for information. But His reply must have greatly increased their disquiet. It seemed an admission that He looked at the matter from a frankly novel standpoint. They soon found their anxiety confirmed. On the Sabbath His disciples ate ears of corn as they passed through the fields. Here was a straight issue. Why, they asked Him, do your disciples do on the Sabbath day that which is *not lawful*? Jesus' answer is half a justification from the Scriptures, but He adds the revolutionary words 'The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath'³.

Such an answer, coming as a climax to a long development, decided them to take action. But they determined first to make sure of the correctness of their suspicion that He was

¹ Mark ii, 17. Graetz, English trans., Vol. II, Ch. 6, builds his whole conception of the mission of Jesus on this verse.

² Mark ii, 19-22.

³ *Ibid.* 27.

adopting an unorthodox attitude to Torah. Jesus went into the synagogue and found there a man with a withered hand. It is quite likely that his presence was deliberate. In any case 'they watched Him, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath day; that they might accuse Him'¹. Jesus recognised the challenge, and accepted it. 'Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath day or to do harm?' The Pharisees did not answer. They were there to observe His action, not to indulge in a controversy. And Jesus 'looked round about on them with anger, being grieved at the hardening of their hearts', and proceeded to cure the man. 'And the Pharisees went out, and straightway with the Herodians took counsel against Him how they might destroy Him.' Jesus, on His side, withdrew from the region.

Though the question at issue seems a slight one to a Gentile, it went directly to the heart of the whole Pharisaic conception of Torah. For they did not admit that there could be a question of relative gravity in a deliberate and unnecessary breaking of its precepts.

The scribes admitted that in cases of life and death it was lawful to set aside the laws of the Sabbath. But in the first case, that of plucking the ears of corn, and in the second, that of healing the man with the withered hand, no such urgency could be alleged. The question 'Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath day?' seemed to the Pharisees beside the point. The man could just as well be healed on the next day. He was in no danger, and therefore there was no legitimate ground for breaking the Sabbath. To postpone the cure by a day was neither 'to do harm' nor 'to kill'. From the point of view of the Pharisees Jesus was undermining the whole structure of Torah by such an action. The divergence between them in practice was slight. But so long as Jesus defended His action just on its own basis and did not interest Himself to explain it as a legitimate interpretation of the written Law, so long was He to their minds really doing harm and not good by His conduct. For however long the process of interpretation, every good thing was included in the written Law which was the basis of Torah².

¹ Mark iii, 2-6.

² Cf. *Pharisaism*, p. 152.

There follows a period when Jesus was left in peace, and He on his side seems deliberately to have avoided disturbing the authorities. Those whom He healed 'He charged much that they should not make Him known'¹. But it was impossible that the situation could continue thus indefinitely, and it appears that the local scribes and Pharisees fearing, perhaps, to act on their own initiative against anyone who enjoyed such popularity, asked the advice of the authorities at Jerusalem. Perhaps also they attempted to persuade His friends and relations to restrain Him. In any case, at some point unmentioned, we find both His friends attempting to put Him under restraint as mad, and 'the scribes which came down from Jerusalem' condemning His miracles as the work of the devil². This attempt was felt by Jesus to be so grossly unjust that it moved Him to His severest condemnation. To cavil at His attitude to the Law was one thing. To ascribe His healings to the devil was a very different matter. It was blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Perhaps His reply abashed them, for they left Him in peace for a long while. But it could only be a truce, and when they returned, it was again to challenge Him on the direct observance of the prescriptions of Torah³. This time He replied to them in detail, and opposed in formal argument their traditions with the Mosaic Law itself. He accepted their challenge, and admitted that He did not observe their prescriptions. But he did not by a single word suggest that He rejected Torah itself. It was the other way round. He charged them with nullifying it.

Into the further details of the conflict it is not necessary to enter. The other gospels add many other details, and confuse the historic development of the picture. But they do not substantially alter it. The Sermon on the Mount in the first gospel gives in much greater detail the teaching of Jesus and allows us to see His attitude to the Mosaic Law, and to its development. After insisting that He came not to destroy but to fulfil it, He goes on to interpret it. The method which He adopts, that of setting one precept side by side with another in order to mitigate the rigour of the first, is

¹ Mark iii, 12.

² *Ibid.* 21-29.

³ *Ibid.* vii, 1-23.

the normal method of rabbinic teaching. But the rabbis did it impersonally. If the contrast in the sermon—‘Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time . . . but *I* say unto you’—is accurately reported, and is not a Greek version of a not completely understood Aramaic original, then here also He went further than any Pharisaic teacher would permit himself to do.

III. THE ACCOUNTS IN LUKE AND MATTHEW

The gulf which was thus created was never bridged by either side. Jesus made no concession which the Pharisees might have accepted, and they on their part were not prepared to withdraw their opposition to a teacher who would not conform to the accepted rules of interpretation, and who presumed on His own authority to discriminate between what should be observed and what could be neglected. It is no part of our task to judge between them¹, and it is to-day a purely academic question whether either side could have bridged the gulf created. But it is important to attempt to define as exactly as possible the extent of the conflict, and to disentangle from the narrative what belongs to the event, and what reflects the period of the writer. This is essential from both sides, from the Christian side as it concerns the unmeasured denunciations in the later ministry of Jesus, and from the Jewish side in relation to the events leading up to the condemnation of Jesus by Pilate, and His Crucifixion.

There is an unmistakable increase in hostility in the tone of the three synoptists if they are read in the historical order of their appearance. Mark deals with explicit questions, shows a reasonable historic development, and allows the conflict to be accurately traced. There are certain difficulties, but nothing which interrupts the essential realism of the picture. Each incident related is connected with an actual example of conflicting opinion. There is no general and apparently unprovoked attack upon them. With Luke there is a frequent colouring of the incidents recorded by Mark. Mark relates that the people of Nazareth were offended at Him. Luke adds the story of their attempt to cast Him over

¹ Cf. *Pharisaism*, p. 167.

a cliff, and places it at the very beginning of His ministry, when there was no reason whatever for such hostility¹. Additional emphasis is given to the incident of the healing of the palsied man². It cannot be said that this reflects any deliberate intention on the part of Luke. He records several occasions on which Jesus was invited to a meal by a Pharisee³, and though these occasions are used to illustrate the conflict, they imply a certain spiritual fellowship. Further, Luke alone gives the incident of the Pharisees warning Jesus of an intention of Herod to seize Him⁴. The most important addition which he makes to the Marcan narrative is the strong condemnation in the eleventh chapter of formalism and its accompanying vices.

With Matthew there is a much more noticeable bias. The gospel was written to convince the Jews that in Jesus 'the promises made to Israel' had passed from the Jews to the Christian Church. The change in tone is illustrated at the very beginning of the gospel. Luke and Matthew both record the preaching of John the Baptist. In Luke it reads:

He said therefore to the multitudes that went out to be baptised of him, Ye offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? . . .

In the version of Matthew there is this change:

Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan; and they were baptised of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. But *when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism*, he said unto them, Ye offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? . . .⁵

In all the incidents which he takes from Mark there is some slight change accentuating the opposition between Jesus and the Jewish authorities. The incident of the centurion's servant, with its condemnation of the lack of faith in Israel, is set at the very beginning of the narrative

¹ Mark vi, 4, and Luke iv, 28.

² Mark ii, 6, 7, and Luke v, 17 and 21.

³ Luke vii, 36; xi, 37; and xiv, 1.

⁴ *Ibid.* xiii, 31.

⁵ *Ibid.* iii, 7, and Matthew iii, 5-7.

immediately after the Sermon on the Mount¹. Even before any encounter with the scribes or Pharisees is recorded there is a strong condemnation of them in the sermon itself, although they are not mentioned by name, but only as 'the hypocrites'². In the incident of the man with the palsy, the question of Jesus: 'Why reason ye in your hearts', becomes 'Wherefore think ye *evil*'³. In the answer which He gives them on fasting, the words are added: 'go ye and learn what this meaneth, I desire mercy and not sacrifice'⁴. The hostility of the Pharisees is emphasised by the doubling of the accusations that Jesus healed by diabolic power⁵. No references to hospitality offered by or accepted from the Pharisees are recorded. Finally there is nothing in Mark or even Luke which corresponds to the violence, bitterness and thoroughness of the famous denunciations of chapter twenty-three, which even if it opens with the recognition that they 'sit in Moses' seat' sees nothing but corruption and hypocrisy in all their works.

Much depends on the manner and setting of the incidents. Neither in Luke nor in Matthew have they the naturalness of Mark. There is only one passage in Mark which goes beyond a condemnation of formalism, and of the Pharisaic attitude to the Law, and that passage presents certain difficulties⁶. Jesus accuses them of rejecting the commandments of God that they may keep their traditions. The illustration which Mark proceeds to give of this is the law of 'Corban'. But the attitude which Jesus condemns was also condemned by Pharisaic Judaism, and that which He approves is the Pharisaic interpretation of the original. It is only possible to imagine that the error comes from Mark, who was not a Jew, and who confused what he received.

When the violence of the conflict between Jews and Jewish or Gentile Christians, which existed at the time when the gospels were being written down, is realised, it ceases to be surprising that there is this additional vehemence in the

¹ Matthew viii, 5 ff.

² *Ibid.* vi, 2, 5, 16.

³ *Ibid.* ix, 4.

⁴ *Ibid.* ix, 13.

⁵ *Ibid.* ix, 34, and xii, 24.

⁶ Mark vii, 9-13.

denunciations put into the mouth of Jesus. As to His own teaching, we can be certain that He did denounce unsparingly that attitude which did not discriminate between one law and another, and which demanded unquestioning obedience of the whole. He did not reject the idea of interpreting the Law, for He interpreted it freely Himself, but He did reject some of their actual interpretations, and refused to give 'their traditions' the force of Torah itself.

IV. THE CRUCIFIXION

Jesus and the Pharisees differed on the question of authority in the interpretation of Torah. Because the attitude of each side hardened in the half century which followed His death, the separation between Judaism and Christianity became inevitable. It was the Law and not the Crucifixion which was the basis of this separation. It is only later that the words (which typically enough are to be found only in Matthew) 'His blood be on us and on our children' came to assume their terrible importance, and that the Christian hostility to the Jews was based upon the Cross. It is evident that the Pharisees were decided not to accept the authority of Jesus. But it is a long step from the refusal to accept the teaching of a new preacher to the plotting of His death. It is to be noted that in the account from the betrayal to the Cross there is no mention of them. The 'scribes' are included by Mark, but omitted by Matthew. But neither mentions the Pharisees. It was not the teaching of Jesus which led to His death. It was the fear of His Messianic claims by the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem, the fear that it would lead the Romans to remove what little privileges they still enjoyed.

The actual facts of the arrest and trial are exceedingly difficult to establish. Since the disciples are all recorded to have forsaken Him and fled, there is no certain basis for the narratives which follow the scene in the garden of Gethsemane. Moreover none of the evangelists were, so far as we know, experts in legal questions, and here they are describing a serious trial ending in a capital sentence. Consequently some modern writers have attempted to deny all authenticity

to the gospel narratives¹. It is true that the process related does not conform to the known juridical procedure of the time. But this would probably be so with an amateur report of any great modern trial—especially when the author was not himself present—and the existence of this confusion does not justify a total rejection of the narrative. For the main outlines are clear. The initiative was taken by the Jewish authorities at Jerusalem, though it is evident that Jesus Himself foresaw the danger in coming there, and expected His death. But while the authorities were unwilling to risk their precarious autonomy for a teacher whose teaching they did not accept, it is also clear that they did not wish to endanger their own position with the populace who thronged Jerusalem for the feast, by themselves executing some sentence upon Him. They secured themselves both with the Jewish crowd and with the Roman government by their action in first condemning Him and then handing Him over to Pilate for sentence.

Such seems to be the actual outline of the events. It satisfies the narrative and the known conditions better than either of the two alternative hypotheses, which would ascribe the whole responsibility either to the Romans or to the Jews. It would seem at first to be an argument for total Jewish responsibility that the purely Jewish story of the death of Jesus, to be found in the *Sepher Toldoth Jeshu* and in the *Talmud*², ascribes the whole action to the Jews, gives stoning (the Jewish punishment) as the cause of His death, and omits all reference to the Romans. But it is probable that the acceptance of responsibility (which involved no moral condemnation to the Talmudic rabbis, for they insist that He had a fair trial) is due to the frequent Christian charge that this responsibility had, in fact, been theirs. But if the whole responsibility had, in fact, been Jewish, it is incredible that the Romans were ever introduced into the narratives at all, for at the time at which they were written the Church was desirous of cultivating the friendship of Rome. If, on the other hand, the entire responsibility had lain with Rome, then the vehemence of anti-Jewish polemic in the earliest

¹ For a fully documented exposition of this view see Juster, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 134, note 2. A full bibliography is there given.

² *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash*, pp. 78-80.

period becomes incomprehensible, because so unnecessarily offensive to the Jews. For, after all, the Church desired to win the Jewish acceptance of the Messianic claims of Jesus, and it would be the height of folly to repel them by pinning to them so terrible an accusation without any cause.

Each of the narratives presents special characteristics, and again it is Mark who gives the most reasonable account. Luke, who emphasises throughout the universal appeal of Jesus, is clearly anxious to present the Romans in as favourable a light as possible. Pilate *twice* attempts to free Jesus, and even Herod is introduced to support him. Matthew is equally interested to present the Jews in an unfavourable light, and adds the words already referred to.

V. THE INFANT CHURCH AND THE ADMISSION OF THE GENTILES

The Law and the Cross, these are the two rocks on which Christianity and Judaism divided, but it must not be thought that the separation became immediately apparent. It is possible to see the gulf widening in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistles of Saint Paul. In his first speech after the Resurrection Peter carefully avoids insisting upon Jewish responsibility for the Crucifixion by emphasising first the 'determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God', and then by ascribing the act itself to the 'hands of lawless men'¹. In the second speech he goes a little further, but after saying 'whom ye delivered up, . . . when Pilate was determined to release him', he adds 'I wot that in ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers'². He uses the same guarded language in his prayer of thanksgiving after his release from his first imprisonment: 'against thy holy Servant Jesus, whom thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, were gathered together, to do *whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel fore-ordained to come to pass*'³.

¹ Acts ii, 23. The latter words may be a summary in Lucan language, but they appear to reflect accurately the development of ideas.

² *Ibid.* iii, 13 and 17.

³ *Ibid.* iv, 27.

The Jews also only gradually came to believe in the irreconcilable nature of the new religion. When Peter was arrested for the first time they were content to forbid him to speak in the name of Jesus, and to let him go¹. The second time he was arrested Gamaliel undertook his defence. His speech as recorded in Acts exactly reflects what we should expect of this first contact with the leaders of the new sect. He is clearly uncertain whether their teaching is true or not². We learn that at this time 'a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith'³. Violent antagonism did not manifest itself until Stephen began to preach. Then it was not the Palestinian Jews whom he offended, but the 'Libertines, Cyrenians, and Alexandrians', Jews of the diaspora, who were more sensitive to the possible dangers to Judaism than were the Jews of Jerusalem. Stephen was accused of stating that Jesus would destroy the Temple and would 'change the customs which Moses delivered unto us'⁴. Brought before the High Priest, Stephen abandoned all the tact with which the Apostles had so far spoken before the authorities, and after a lengthy introduction on Israelite history, suddenly burst into a violent denunciation: 'ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? and they killed them which showed before of the coming of the Righteous One; of whom ye have now become betrayers and murderers; ye who received the law as it was ordained by angels, and kept it not'⁵. What Stephen had said about the Law we do not know, and what he was leading up to before he broke off is also uncertain, except that he was obviously going to taunt them with not having kept it themselves⁶; but in any case the priests decided to take energetic measures to suppress the new heresy. The commission to do so was entrusted to Saul⁷.

¹ Acts iv, 21. The idea that the two arrests are a doublet seems to me to be false.

² *Ibid.* v, 38, 39.

³ *Ibid.* vi, 7.

⁴ *Ibid.* vi, 14.

⁵ *Ibid.* vii, 51.

⁶ Cf. *Ibid.* vii, 39.

⁷ *Ibid.* viii, 1-3; cf. xi, 19.

Events at the same time took place within the Christian community which were bound to strain relations still further. As a result of a vision, Peter accepted a call to go to Joppa to visit a 'God-fearing' Gentile, Cornelius. There he became convinced that God had called the Gentiles also, and that 'he should not call any man common or unclean', for 'God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him'. With the consent of the Jewish Christians present—called for the first time 'they of the circumcision'—he baptised Cornelius directly into the Christian Church. The Christians at Jerusalem, when he reported the matter to them, after some opposition accepted his action, and 'glorified God, saying: then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life'¹.

The admission of the Gentiles inevitably brought the question of the Law into prominence, but there is as yet no question of the Law not being valid for Jewish Christians. Nor was Jewish opinion at this period itself unanimous that Gentiles ought to observe either circumcision or the whole of the Law. 'There were those who held and believed that the true circumcision was of the heart rather than of the flesh, and who were willing to argue that, for the proselyte at least, such spiritual circumcision was all that God required or that man should ask. They were anxious to throw the moral laws of the Pentateuch into strong relief, so that the dangerous multiplication of ritual and ceremonial enactments might be counteracted'². The synagogue was surrounded by large numbers of 'God-fearing' Gentiles, and so long as the leaders of the Christians remained Jews, it is possible that it was not clearly understood by other Jews that the Christians had in fact eliminated all distinction between Jews and Gentiles within the Church. They may have been aware that a conflict of opinion was in progress, but it is unlikely that they realised its outcome before the Christians themselves, and it was some time before a decisive step was taken by the Church. The Christians had clearly become a party whom they would need to watch. But they were a 'party', not a separate religion.

¹ Acts x and xi.

² Montefiore, *op. cit.*, lxxix.

VI. THE ACTIVITY OF SAINT PAUL AND HIS TEACHING ABOUT THE JEWS

In A.D. 49 or 50, when Paul set out from Antioch on his first missionary journey in Asia Minor, he began his preaching quite naturally in the synagogue, and though he stated openly that Jesus had been crucified by the Jews 'that dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers', he was invited by the congregation to return the next Sabbath and continue his preaching¹. During the week they apparently thought better of it, and when he began to preach on the following Sabbath there was a disturbance, attributed by the author of the Acts to the jealousy of the Jews at his influence over the Gentiles². Paul replied 'seeing ye thrust it [the Word of God] from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles'. The importance of this statement is great. But it was not a final or exclusive decision of policy. In the next city, Iconium, He again preached in the synagogue on his arrival. Apparently his preaching caused a great division of opinion, and he was ultimately forced into flight by the opposition to it³.

The question of the Law very soon became an internal question of the Church, affecting the relations between Jewish and Gentile Christians, and it was decided that Gentiles did not need to observe its precepts long before it was felt that they were not valid for Jewish Christians either. The Apostles took the basis on which the Jews accepted 'the proselytes of the gate', the 'Noachian commandments', and made them the basis of Gentile participation in the Church, but with this difference, that the observance of these regulations admitted the Gentiles to full membership and not only to partial adherence to the fellowship. But when Peter is referred to by Paul⁴ as living 'as do the Gentiles', it meant no more than that he no longer observed the rigid separation of Jew and Gentile at meals, and that he consented, as he had already done in the case of Cornelius, to eat with the Gentiles. It did not mean that he ceased to observe the Law in so far

¹ Acts xiii, 42.

² *Ibid.* xiii, 45.

³ *Ibid.* xiv, 1 ff.

⁴ Gal. ii, 14.

as it affected his own conduct apart from contact with the Gentiles, nor did Paul himself at this time think of laying aside his own obedience to the Law, though we should know more clearly where he stood if we had any idea of the meaning of his reference to the circumcision of Titus¹. That he was firmly convinced that observance of the Law was in general unnecessary *for the Gentiles* is clear from the Epistle to the Galatians which was written at this period. In this Epistle he makes the definite statement that 'if righteousness is through the Law, then Christ died for nought'², and again 'Abraham had two sons, one by the handmaid, and one by the free woman. . . . These women are two covenants: one from mount Sinai, bearing children unto bondage, which is Hagar. Now this Hagar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to the Jerusalem that now is: for she is in bondage with her children. But the Jerusalem that is above is free, which is *our* mother. . . . Now we, . . . are children of promise'³.

Taken by itself the whole argument would suggest that Paul himself no longer observed the Law. But we know that this was not the case. When he says that he 'through the law died unto the law that I might live unto God'⁴, it would, if we had no other evidence, appear unquestionable. But, in fact, among Jews he accepted even rigid observance of the Law. Such a position could be only transitional, for as he himself says, 'every man that receiveth circumcision is debtor to the *whole* Law', and Jewish Christians could not permanently pick and choose what they should obey of its ritual and ceremonial observances. It is evident from this epistle that many of them had not accepted the compromise for which all the Apostles had first stood at Jerusalem, and that the party which considered Christianity to be only

¹ Gal. ii, 3 ff. 'But not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised; and that because of the false brethren privily brought in, . . . to whom we gave place in the way of subjection, no, not for an hour.' It is impossible to say either from this passage, or from Paul's position at this time, if he did or did not circumcise Titus. It would, of course, be known to his hearers, who would have known if the emphasis was on '*compelled*', meaning he was circumcised, or on '*not even*' (*i.e.* though he was my companion), meaning he was not.

² *Ibid.* ii, 21.

³ *Ibid.* iv, 22.

⁴ *Ibid.* ii, 19.

a Jewish sect was a strong one. We cannot even be sure of Paul's own attitude, in its entirety, to these Jewish Christians. We have neither sermon nor epistle to this section of the Church. Peter and James, in addressing Jews, do not raise the issue. The first writing addressed to them in which it receives full treatment is the epistle to the Hebrews written nearly twenty years later.

On both his subsequent journeys, though it is evident that the tension was growing steadily greater, Paul always began his preaching with the Jews in any centre visited, and at one, Ephesus, he was so well received that he was asked to stay for some months. But there, as at Corinth, he finally 'went to the Gentiles' and left the Jews in open opposition to his teaching¹. During this period he elaborated considerably his doctrine of the Law and of the relation of the Church to the Jews, which he had foreshadowed in his epistle to the Galatians. In contrast to one violent outburst to the Thessalonians (from whom he had certainly received bad treatment)², in which he denounces the Jews 'who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove out us, and please not God, and are contrary to all men, forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved; to fill up their sins alway: but the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost'³, he usually speaks with great restraint and with 'great sorrow and unceasing pain'.

Since the doctrines enunciated by Paul in these epistles, particularly in the epistle to the Romans, have provided the doctrinal basis for the attitude of the Church to the Jew throughout the centuries, it is important to give them in some detail. Since Paul and Jesus are in certain schools of theology set in stark opposition to each other, it is also important to note that in this respect Paul is logically following

¹ Acts xviii, 4-7 (Corinth) and Acts xviii, 19; xix, 8-9 (Ephesus).

² *Ibid.* xvii, 5.

³ I Thess. ii, 14 ff. It seems to me likely that the last verse is a gloss added after the destruction of the Temple. If it is genuine, it is difficult to see to what event it could apply about A.D. 52, unless it is a reference to their final damnation (cf. II Thess. i, 8: 'them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus; who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction'), in which case it is an outburst of rage in complete contrast to his real view of the future of the Jews set out in his epistle to the Romans. See *infra*.

to their conclusion the denunciations of the Pharisees in the gospels.

According to Paul, the Law itself is 'holy, and the commandment holy and righteous and good'¹, and it was a privilege to the Jews to have received it—'What advantage then hath the Jew? . . . Much every way: first of all that they were intrusted with the oracles of God'². All this is again summed up in the sentence 'my kinsmen according to the flesh; who are Israelites; whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh'³. The Gospel itself was first given to the Jews⁴, and only when they refused it was it given to the Gentiles⁵.

The rejection of the Gospel by the Jews raised several new problems. The Jew felt that he had no need for the Gospel because he had all that he required in the Law. Paul, with his belief in the universal significance of Christ, could not possibly admit such a claim. Nor could he admit two alternative schemes of salvation. Having decided that salvation was according to Jesus, he was forced to conclude that the Law was incapable of bringing salvation⁶. Safeguarding as well as he could its holy character, he attempts to explain its failure in practice by saying that 'the Law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin'. The Law showed him what was good, but because of sin, he was powerless to do the good which he saw⁷.

An alternative explanation, and one which won more general acceptance, was that the Law had not saved Israel, because Israel had never understood it. 'Israel, following after a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by works.'⁸ The real function of the Law had been

¹ Rom. vii, 12.

² *Ibid.* iii, 1, 2.

³ *Ibid.* ix, 3, 4.

⁴ *Ibid.* i, 16.

⁵ *Ibid.* ix, 19, to end of xi, especially xi, 17 ff.

⁶ *Ibid.* iii, 20.

⁷ *Ibid.* vii, 14-25.

⁸ *Ibid.* ix, 31.

to be our 'tutor, to bring us unto Christ'¹; and instead, the Jews had elevated into a final and eternal dispensation what was meant as temporary and imperfect².

Even more difficult to explain were the 'promises', which were made both to Abraham and to later generations through the prophets. It was inevitable that Paul should claim that the promises now belonged exclusively to the Church, and that therefore Israel was, at any rate so long as it persisted in refusing to accept Christ, excluded from them. The promises of God could not lapse. The failure of the Jews could not make the word of God ineffective³. Nor could they claim that the promises depended on the Law, for the promise to Abraham preceded the giving of it⁴. The Gentiles, accepting Christ, became the true inheritors of them. 'They are not all Israel, which are of Israel.'⁵ Here he is attacking directly a Pharisaic argument that the promises applied finally and exclusively to Israel, and that the worst Israelite was better than the best Gentile⁶. God did not cast off Israel, but Israel failed to see in Christ the fulfilment of the Law. 'By their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.'⁷ As a result of this provocation Paul was convinced that ultimately the Jews also would be gathered in, and this he looked forward to as the culmination of the Gospel. 'For if the casting away of them is the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? And if the first fruit is holy, so is the lump: and if the root is holy, so are the branches. But if some of the branches were broken off, and thou, being a wild olive, wast grafted in among them, and didst become partaker with them of the root of the fatness of the olive tree; glory not over the branches: but if thou gloriest, it is not thou that bearest the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, Branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. . . . Be not high minded, but fear:

¹ Gal. iii, 23-24.

² II Cor. iii, 11 and 15. Rom. iii, 21.

³ Rom. iv and xi.

⁴ *Ibid.* iv, 10-12.

⁵ *Ibid.* ix, 6 ff.

⁶ See Sanday and Headlam, *Epistle to the Romans*, p. 246.

⁷ Rom. xi, 11.

for if God spared not the natural branches, neither will He spare thee. Behold then the goodness and severity of God: toward them that fell, severity; but toward thee God's goodness, if thou continue in His goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they continue not in their unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wast cut out of that which is by nature a wild olive tree, and wast grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which are the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?"¹

While, naturally, no Jew would accept his diagnosis of their situation, yet they could not accuse him of hasty and violent denunciation. He himself was convinced of their ultimate salvation, which meant to him their acceptance of the Gospel, for salvation under any other terms was unthinkable. This he expressed in the Isaianic doctrine of the remnant. 'God did not cast off His people which He foreknew. Or wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elijah? How he pleadeth with God against Israel. Lord, they have killed thy prophets, they have digged down thine altars: and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have left for myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to Baal. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. . . . Now if their fall is the riches of the world, and their loss the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?'² These two statements are important, for they preserved the Jews during the Middle Ages from complete extinction. For it was argued that if they were completely extinguished there would be none to provide the converted remnant which was to be the final crown of the Church.

In so far as his own position was concerned, Paul never ceased to regard himself as a Jew. 'I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin'³, but he observed the Law, not because he any longer felt it to be necessary, but in order to win the Jews. 'For though I was free from all men, I brought myself under bondage to all,

¹ Rom. xi, 15-24.

² *Ibid.* xi, 2 ff.

³ *Ibid.* xi, 1.

that I might gain the more. And to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, not being myself under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law.'¹ It was on this principle that he acted during his final visit to Jerusalem, when he found the Jewish Christians very troubled by the reports which they had heard of his activities. 'Thou seest, brother,' they said to him, 'how many thousands there are among the Jews of them which have believed; and they are all zealous for the law: and they have been informed concerning thee, that thou teachest *all the Jews* which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.'² To show them his orthodoxy he 'took a vow', and accepted responsibility for four other men who had taken the same vow, involving particular attendance at the Temple. But there he was recognised by some Jews from Asia, and his presence caused a riot from which he was only saved by Roman intervention. There followed his arrest, his long imprisonment, and his appeal to Caesar.

If we accept the Jewish Law by its own standards, then we cannot be surprised at their refusal to accept the idea of 'becoming a Jew to save the Jews'. It is rather astonishing that the Apostle had been so long able to maintain such an attitude³. The Jewish Christians at Jerusalem were apparently contented when he showed his personal obedience to the Law. But those who knew him on the mission field were not so easily satisfied. In the same way, when he was brought before the council for trial, he was able to bring some of the Pharisees over to his side by raising the question of the resurrection. They protested that 'We find no evil in this man: and what if a spirit hath spoken to him, or an angel?'⁴ But the majority was against him, and he remained a prisoner under the charge of the Roman authorities. We cannot be certain of the exact nature of the accusations against him. According to Acts⁵, he was 'a mover of

¹ I Cor. ix, 19.

² Acts xxi, 20 ff.

³ Cf. I Cor. vii, 18-20.

⁴ Acts xxiii, 9.

⁵ *Ibid.* xxiv, 5 and 6.

insurrections among all the Jews throughout the world', 'a ring-leader of the sect of the Nazarenes' and a profaner of the Temple. But the original charge must have been more specific.

That Paul in his attack upon the Law was doing it less than justice can be said without detracting from the greatness of the Apostle. 'The Christian will probably say in reply: Did not Paul himself know all about it? Was he not born and bred a Jew? Was he not a "Pharisee of the Pharisees"? Had he not been "zealous beyond those of his own age in the Jews' religion"? Was he not "as touching the law, blameless"? Who could be a better and more reliable witness upon the question of what the Jews' religion really was? Yes. And did not Paul abandon the Jews' religion? Did he not write about it long years after he had been converted to a different religion? And is it not common knowledge that a convert seldom takes the same view of the religion he has left as those who remain in it?'¹ The fact remains, however, that the Christian Church adopted without enquiry the Pauline estimate of the Jewish religion. The ultimate redemption of Israel on which Paul pinned his deepest faith was rarely referred to by Patristic writers. The inadequacy of the Law, and the forfeiture of the promises, was their continual accusation against the Jews. By the time the Book of Revelation was written at the very end of the century, it was already possible to speak of the redeemed of the Church in terms of the twelve tribes of Israel without it appearing strange².

¹ Herford, *op. cit.*, p. 175. Compare also *Judaism and S. Paul*, by C. G. Montefiore, where it is argued that Paul did not really know full rabbinic Judaism, or he could not have so completely misrepresented it, particularly by leaving out entirely the Jewish doctrine of forgiveness, and by ignoring the intimate and personal relationship with God under the Law in Jewish thought.

² Rev. vii, 4-8.

VII. THE JEWS IN THE REST OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

The epistles of Paul, even when dealing with Jewish questions, were addressed to Gentiles who were in danger of being influenced by the prestige of the Jewish Law. But the New Testament also contains letters directly addressed to Jewish Christians. The epistle of Peter is addressed from Rome to 'the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion, in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia'. The epistle of James is addressed generally to the 'twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion', while the epistle to the Hebrews, in view of its contents, is almost certainly addressed to Palestinian Jewish Christians familiar with all the daily ritual of the Temple services.

The epistle of Peter, while it makes hardly any reference to the Jewish origin of its recipients, condemns the whole of the old dispensation almost contemptuously as 'your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers'¹. The right of the Christians to the 'promises' is also clearly and exclusively stated in the emphasis of the words: 'to whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto you, did they minister these things, which now have been announced unto you through them that preached the gospel unto you'².

In contrast to the rest of the literature of the Apostolic Age, the epistle of James contains no polemic at all. Its calm and quiet tone, and its exclusive preoccupation with the building up of practical saintliness, impress the reader at once. The absence of Christological argument has led some scholars to see in it a Jewish epistle adapted for Christian purposes³. While this view is not generally accepted, it is a commentary on the self-contradiction of conventional views of Judaism that this, in many ways the most attractive of Apostolic writings, should be attributed by anyone to Jewish authorship without it being realised that such an attribution condemned the view that Judaism was arid and dead. It is

¹ I Peter i, 18.

² *Ibid.* i, 12.

³ E.g. F. Spitta in *Zur Geschichte u. Literatur des Urchristentums*, Vol. II.

impossible to tell what was the attitude of the author to the Law. He accepts perfectly the situation of the people to whom he was writing, in so far as it was concerned. As we do not know the details of its date nor the occasion of its composition, all that we can safely deduce from it is that the question of the Law was not so universally a burning issue as we might be tempted to think from the works of Paul.

The third document addressed to Jewish Christians is the epistle to the Hebrews, and here the situation is very different. It has been conjectured, with a fair amount of probability, that it was addressed to Palestinian Jewish Christians during the war with Rome from A.D. 68 to 70. It reflects a time of crisis and of difficult decision which best fits this period. Its insistence on the priesthood and on sacrifice shows the Temple to be still standing. Its recipients were familiar with every detail of its ceremonial. The purpose of the letter is clear. It is written to convince them that they are no longer members of the Old Covenant, and that, therefore, the defence of the Temple and the Holy City is no affair of theirs. Its argument is precise. The Law made nothing perfect, and is cancelled because it is weak and unprofitable¹. It was only the copy and shadow of heavenly things². Its dignity is only stressed when the author wants to contrast the still greater dignity and glory of the New Dispensation³. The sacrifices and priesthood of the Old Dispensation are similarly thrown into shadow by the perfect sacrifice and priesthood of the New⁴. God's own intention to cancel the Law is proved from Jeremiah⁵. Such language is even stronger than that of Paul himself, who nowhere speaks of God 'finding fault with the Law'. To emphasise its weakness still further the author contrasts it with the faith of those who had lived before and after it had been pronounced⁶. The list goes straight on through the heroes of the Old Testament, making no distinction, and thereby implying that those who lived after the issue of the Law were

¹ Hebrews vii, 18, 19.

² *Ibid.* viii, 5.

³ *Ibid.* ii, 2 and ix, *passim*.

⁴ *Ibid.* x and vii.

⁵ *Ibid.* viii, 8-13.

⁶ *Ibid.* xi.

themselves only justified by the same faith as those whose lives preceded it. And of all alike he underlines the fact that 'all died in faith, *not having received the promises*'¹. To make his rejection of the whole outlook of life of the Jew still more distinct, he says of these heroes of faith, many of whom, such as Gideon, Samson, David and the Maccabees, had lived and died in the struggle for national independence and for the sacred soil of Palestine, that they 'confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth', and not 'mindful of that country from which they went out'². From this it was easy to deduce that the promises belong to the Christians, and refer only to a heavenly Jerusalem.

In its approach the epistle to the Hebrews belongs to the period of the first gospel. It is an argument to people not yet convinced. The insistence with which both documents build up their proofs that Jesus was the Messiah of prophecy and the High Priest of a New Dispensation imply a period when proof was still needed. Jews were shown in the gospel that Jesus was the Jewish Messiah. Jewish Christians are shown in the epistle that they are no longer members of the Jewish faith. The other book to be considered belongs to a later phase. The fourth gospel assumes without argument that the separation has already taken place. It is no further use arguing with the Jews. They are assumed to be the enemies of Christianity: and Christianity itself is a universal and not a Jewish religion. A careful reading of the book shows an amazing contrast in spiritual tone between the discourses addressed to the disciples and those addressed to the 'Jews', and while the former constitute some of the most exquisite treasures of Christian literature, the latter are unreal, unattractive, and at times almost repulsive. We can attribute the one, even if indirectly, to a personal memory. But the other is a reflection of the bitterness of the end of the first century, and will be discussed in the following chapter.

¹ Hebrews xi, 13.

² *Ibid.* xi, 13, 15.

VIII. JEWISH RELATIONSHIP WITH THE EARLY CHURCH

We have ample documentation for tracing in detail the growth of the hostility of the growing Church to its parent Judaism. It is more difficult to trace the estrangement from the other side. The Christians were, after all, a very small sect, and there is no reason why a contemporary Jewish writer should devote much time to them. Talmudic literature reflects the existence of early hostilities, but we cannot trace in it any exact development. We are compelled to make use of the New Testament, and in particular of the Acts of the Apostles, and we must use the evidence with caution, not because of any intentional mis-statement, but because Jewish motives and feelings were, naturally, much less known to the author than were the reactions of his Christian brethren.

It is, however, abundantly clear that it was the question of the Law which was the principal cause of conflict. It is therefore inherently probable that the first serious trouble arose over the preaching of Stephen, in which there appears to have been outspoken condemnation of its observance. In any case something compelled the Jewish authorities to see that the new movement had to be taken seriously, and the commission to root out the new sect was entrusted to Saul. It is to be noted that Stephen's preaching first aroused opposition among the Jews of the diaspora¹, and that it was to a Jew of the diaspora that the commission to exterminate the new sect was entrusted. Again, when Saul has become Paul and has returned for the last time to Jerusalem, it is the diaspora Jews who stir up the riot against him for his non-observance of the Law. The reason is probably to be found in the fact that the diaspora Jews, living among the Gentiles, were quicker to see the menace to the Law in the new teaching than were the Jews living in Palestine, where observance of the Law, by being universal, aroused less interest.

To understand the significance of the mission entrusted to Saul it is necessary to describe in greater detail the authority of the Jewish High Priest in the Roman empire. He was

¹ Acts vi, 9.

recognised by the Roman authorities as the supreme head of all the Jews of the empire, and in all matters of religion or custom he had absolute authority so far as the Romans were concerned. Even after the destruction of Jerusalem, the Patriarch had the same position.

But while Judaism was a recognised religion—or while the Jews were a recognised nation, for there was no distinction between the one conception and the other—it was not necessarily possible, without certain risks, for any Roman or other non-Jew to declare himself a Jew. The severity with which this was regarded differed at different epochs. For a short period under Hadrian, and after the time of Constantine, it became a punishable offence to become a convert to Judaism under any circumstances. The privileges given by the Romans to the Jews, though in fact given to the Jews originally as a 'nation', were confined to practising Jews¹, so that by excommunication the Jewish authorities could deprive a Jew of his legal privileges. After A.D. 70, when all Jews were compelled to make a payment to the *fiscus judaicus*, this payment formed the recognition of the fact that an individual was a Jew.

Until the time of Constantine it was not a crime in itself to become a Jew, but to do so exposed the proselyte to a charge of atheism. In the case of a man this would not necessarily be known, so long as he did not hold any public office. As master of his household, his family worship was to some extent his own affair. But his conversion would necessarily be made known if he occupied an official position requiring participation in public sacrifice, though, probably, some proselytes took to heart the lesson of Naaman². A woman could only become a proselyte with the consent or at least the connivance of her husband, since her absence from domestic worship could not be concealed from him. In the main such proselytism could only be revealed by a system of spies, and the first emperor who made use of such was Domitian³, who extracted large fines from poor persons convicted of becoming proselytes, and executed wealthy ones

¹ Edict of Lentulus, Jos., *Ant.*, XIV, 10, § 13 ff.

² II Kings v, 18. Among the Egyptian papyri are a number of certificates that sacrifice had been offered, *i.e.* by either Jews or Christians.

³ Suetonius, Domitian, xii, and Dion Cassius, lxvii, 14.

in order to confiscate their estates. His successor, Nerva, immediately stopped the work of the spies¹, and the proselytes were again left undisturbed until the time of Hadrian's law against circumcision². This was repealed in favour of Jews *by birth* by Antoninus³, but proselytes were to be punished with banishment or death, and proselyte slaves were to be set free, as having been 'mutilated' against their will.

It was always possible for the Roman authorities, without undermining the privileges extended to genuine Jews, to punish efforts on their part to make proselytes. This they seem to have done as early as 139 B.C.⁴, and the expulsions from Rome recorded by Tacitus and Suetonius in the reigns of Tiberius and Claudius were probably connected with their missionary activities⁵.

While proselytes would, of course, come under Roman law, if the Romans wished to punish them, the Jewish authorities could punish Jews who offended Jewish law as did the Jewish Christians. The narrative in Acts contains nothing impossible in the statement that the Jerusalem authorities sent Paul with a mission to uproot the new heresy in certain synagogues of the diaspora. The only uncertain point is that they apparently exercised the right of extradition, since Paul was to bring his captives 'bound to Jerusalem'. Apart from this text, there is no evidence that the High Priest possessed this right, which was very rarely conceded by the Romans, and had only been granted to Herod as a special favour⁶. There is, however, no definite evidence that the right did not exist, though in this particular case it is difficult to see why the High Priest should want the prisoners brought to Jerusalem, a somewhat costly procedure, when all that was required was to give instructions that they should be punished wherever they were found. The Jews had the right of flagellation; and this is the

¹ Dion Cassius, lxviii, 1, 2.

² Vita Hadriani, xiv, 2.

³ *Digest*, 48, 8, 11.

⁴ Valerius Maximus, I, 3, 3: 'Judaeos qui Sabazi Jovis cultu Romanos inficere mores conati erant, repetere domos suas coegit'.

⁵ *Annals*, II, 85. Suetonius in Reinach, 185-186.

⁶ Juster, Vol. II, p. 145, and note 5.

punishment which would probably have been applied in this case, since it is extremely unlikely that they would have thought of putting a large number to death, even if they had the power to do so¹, as they seem to have had. If it had seemed sufficiently grave it is more likely that they would have been excommunicated and thereby lost the privileges they enjoyed as Jews.

It will be thus seen that at the beginning Judaism had the whip hand of Christianity, in that it was the Jews who decided what a Jew was, and who had the right to be admitted to the privileges they enjoyed. By the simple act of excommunication they could expel a Christian from these privileges and report against him as an atheist. Moreover, so long as the Christians chose to remain—officially, at least—a Jewish sect, they were subject to the discipline of the synagogue. How rigidly this discipline was applied we have no means of knowing, but that more happened than is recounted in the Acts of the Apostles is seen by Paul's declaration in the second epistle to the Corinthians (xi, 16-29) 'in prisons more abundantly, in stripes above measure, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, . . . in perils from my countrymen, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren'².

IX. JEWISH ATTITUDE TO SAINT PAUL

Both the information we possess and a consideration of the circumstances would lead us to expect hostility at this stage to be directed against the leaders of the new sect. The sudden dispersion which followed Stephen's murder seems to have been an isolated incident. The real danger lay with the ring-leaders, and as long as the issue lay in the question of the Law, the most dangerous man was Paul. At first the opposition manifested itself in sudden violence, which was rather

¹ The question of whether the Jews at this time had the right to administer capital punishment depends on the credibility given to the narrative of John (xix, 31) that the Jews delivered Jesus because they could not execute Him themselves. This is not mentioned by the synoptists, or by any other authority. See Juster, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 133.

² See also Ch. IV, section III, and Appendix Five.

mob action than official condemnation. On the first journey, at the Pisidian Antioch, 'the Jews urged on the devout women of honourable estate, and the chief men of the city, and stirred up a persecution against Paul and Barnabas and cast them out of their borders'¹. At Iconium the 'Jews that were disobedient' stirred up the souls of the Gentiles and 'made an onset both of the Gentiles and of the Jews with their rulers to entreat them shamefully and to stone them'². At Lystra they actually did stir up the mob to stone them³. The same 'mob violence' stirred up by the Jews is reported on the second journey at Thessalonica⁴ and at Corinth⁵. At Philippi they got into trouble, as Jews with the Roman colonists, but there is no statement that the Jews had any hand in their arrest. But at Corinth the Jews bring them before Gallio the proconsul.

This incident has been almost as much disputed as the trial of Jesus Himself. Those who for one reason or another doubt the credibility of Acts point out quite logically that, as the Jews had their own jurisdiction, they had no reason for bringing Paul before the Roman authorities. But Luke clearly realises this also, for in his account Gallio refuses to hear the charge on exactly this ground. Luke's accuracy might have been suspect had Gallio acted differently, but as Luke shows himself aware that the Jews were not *compelled* to bring Paul before the Roman court, there seems little reason for doubting his narrative when he states that they did so. Actually it seems not to have been the first time that the Jews brought Christianity to the notice of the Romans, though they do not figure in the story of the trial and imprisonment at Philippi. If when in writing to the Corinthians Paul says that he has thrice been 'beaten with rods', then it must be assumed that, apart from Philippi, he had twice appeared in a Roman court. In other words, though Acts makes no reference to them, it seems that there had been other incidents similar to that at Corinth at other periods of his missionary journeys. Nor is this inherently unlikely

¹ Acts xiii, 50.

² *Ibid.* xiv, 5.

³ *Ibid.* xiv, 19.

⁴ *Ibid.* xvii, 5.

⁵ *Ibid.* xviii, 6 and 12 ff.

if there is any probability in the statement that the Jews of Corinth dragged Paul before the Romans. The charge they brought was that Paul was trying to persuade them to 'worship God contrary to the Law'. This is certainly a charge with which they could technically have dealt themselves. The situation is the same as it was in the trial of Jesus. The New Testament in both cases informs us that the Jews preferred to lay the responsibility on the Romans for deciding what to do.

In the first case it has been suggested that they did so in order to transfer the odium, which they might incur from the crowd, from themselves to Pilate. This can scarcely be the reason in this case. There is, however, a possible explanation. The teaching of Paul had both in Corinth and elsewhere been attracting a good deal of attention, and had been making 'proselytes' to Christianity. These were not 'proselytes' in the Jewish sense that they thereby became circumcised or observed the Law without performing that rite. But the Church itself was still a Jewish sect in the minds both of Jews and Romans. Though the Jews were tolerated, though becoming a proselyte was not in itself a crime, yet it is evident that it was not officially looked on with favour by the Romans. It was not so many years since the Jews had been turned out of Rome because of their proselytising activity. The Roman colonists of Philippi, as soon as they found that Paul was trying to make proselytes of them, raised a disturbance, and though the magistrates could not find it to be a crime, they asked him to leave the city.

It seems legitimate to assume that Paul was felt by the Jews to be endangering their position with the Roman authorities at Corinth. He was attracting more attention than they desired. If this be so, then it was natural that they should attempt to dissociate themselves from him, not by the privacy of a condemnation in their own courts, but by the publicity of denouncing him to the proconsul. There is all the more ground for saying this if we realise that already on five occasions Jewish communities had—without the slightest success—attempted to silence Paul by condemning him in their own courts. Nor can it be said that the fact that Paul had already left them and 'turned to the Gentiles' in any way freed them from the embarrassment in which he

placed them. Paul himself was still a Jew, and, moreover, he was elaborating a doctrine that those who believed his teaching were the true Israel. He was making the situation altogether too complicated, and the best way out was to show the Romans that they at all events had nothing to do with him.

Their attempt failed, because actually it was difficult for them to make a precise accusation against him. Beneath the brief words that he taught men to 'worship God contrary to the Law', almost any complaint that they could make would be included. Their speech might have been something like this:

'This man is causing a great deal of trouble to our loyal Jewish community. He calls himself a Jew, and has been preaching here for some time, both in the synagogue and outside; but his teaching is absolutely unorthodox, and he has five times been condemned by different synagogue courts for it. Our Law is the basis of the privileges which we enjoy under your beneficent rule, and you know well that the Law enjoins us to be good and obedient citizens. But this man preaches an incomprehensible rigmarole against the Law itself, and is perpetually claiming his privilege as a Jew to do it.

'There is another point. We are a peaceable community, and if a proselyte does join us from time to time, you have always kindly looked the other way, for you know that by making him observe the Law we guarantee that he will remain a good citizen. But this man spends all his time making proselytes out of anyone he meets, and does not enjoin upon them the keeping of the Law, in addition to the fact that they are not taken from the most reputable elements among the population¹, and some of them lead lives which we should never allow. When these people get into trouble, as they are sure to do, it is we who will be blamed for it, for they will call themselves Jews, and claim our privileges. But they know nothing about the Law on which these privileges are based and are even taught to despise it. We beg you to forbid this Paul to call himself a Jew, and to go on abusing

¹ This is based on the evidence of the character of the early Church in Corinth as revealed in the epistles.

our Law, and also to recognise that neither he nor his precious following have anything to do with us. We might mention that we understand that there would be some precedent for scourging him.'

Such an accusation, which seems to me to represent the attitude of the Synagogue to the Church as it was beginning to define itself, might well have been dismissed by Gallio as nothing to do with him; for actually they could not accuse Paul of any legal Roman crime. Why they took and beat Sosthenes at the conclusion of the proceedings we shall never know; perhaps because he was a Christian, and is the same as the Sosthenes who greets the Corinthians in the opening salutation of the first epistle; perhaps because he put their case badly.

In the narratives of the imprisonment and trials of Paul before different Roman-Palestinian authorities there is little new to be learnt. Evidently, in spite of his declaration that if he had committed any crime he was prepared to die for it¹, he preferred to be judged by Rome and not by his own courts. The accusations of the priests have somewhat the same vagueness, in so far as actual crime is concerned, as those at Corinth. The most noteworthy point of the whole affair is the passion with which Paul insists that he himself had done nothing against the Law².

X. THE ISSUE STILL CONFUSED

It is made evident that the Jewish authorities had not worked out a concerted plan for dealing with the new sect by the reception which Paul received at Rome. The local Jewish leaders were aware that Christianity was 'everywhere . . . spoken against'³. But they had received no instructions about it, and had heard no evil of Paul himself. On the contrary, they express a desire to hear Paul's own view of the matter. The original mission of Saul was local, and of short duration. The enemies of the Church were also local—or

¹ Acts xxv, 11.

² *Ibid.* xxii, 3; xxiii, 1; xxiv, 14; xxvi, 5, 22; xxviii, 17.

³ *Ibid.* xxviii, 22.

parties within it¹. The Jewish people might approve when Herod killed James, the brother of John, and attempted to seize Peter², but here also it was an attack upon the ring-leaders, not upon the rank and file that was made.

It was possible for either side to seize upon single points or persons, but neither had yet a general policy towards the other. Though a mediaeval Christian, if he were asked what was the substance of his hostility to the Jews, would undoubtedly place first the Crucifixion, yet in the conflicts of this period it lies outside the field of debate. Even before a developed Christology arose it was felt to be part of the 'fore-ordained purpose of God'. It was always spoken of by Jesus Himself as a necessity for the accomplishment of His mission. Paul only once accuses 'the Jews' of responsibility for His death³, and that in a moment of anger. In the whole of the long argument in Romans there is no single verse which ascribes the death of Christ to the Jews. Foakes Jackson, in summing up the period, says: 'What the apostles are said to have preached is that His Resurrection proved His Messiahship. This was a cause of offence to the ruling priestly aristocracy, on grounds purely political; the people seem to have received the message with some approval. The impression left by a candid perusal of the Acts is that the Judaism of the time was not intolerant of opinions. The real battle was the question of observing the Law. The least weakening on this point aroused a storm of indignation, as it had done during the ministry of Jesus'⁴. But on the Law also neither side occupied a consistent position towards the other. A Jew could not easily condemn outright a sect which contained so many blameless followers of all its prescriptions, and the Judeo-Christians had not yet sunk to the unhappy position which they occupied in the second century. Nor did all Christians go so far as Paul appeared to do—indeed, it was difficult for them to do so in view of his inconsistency. The time had not yet come when Christians felt so strongly about it that they could doubt whether a Christian who

¹ Cf. I Thess. ii, 14.

² Acts xii, 1-3.

³ I Thess. ii, 15.

⁴ *The Rise of Gentile Christianity*, p. 83.

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observed the Law had any chance of salvation¹. So far, Gentile and Jewish Christians lived in mutual toleration.

External events were soon to compel a clearer attitude on both sides. The generation of Jews and Christians which followed the destruction of Jerusalem, not the generation which first heard the preaching of Christianity, is responsible for the completion of the separation. That accomplished, it still required several centuries for the beliefs of each party to crystallise into the forms which they have historically assumed.

¹ Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho*, xlvii.