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AN INVESTIGATION
OF REPRESENTATIVE MODERN JEWISH ATTITUDES
TOWARD JESUS

By
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

AN INVESTIGATION OF REPRESENTATIVE MODERN
JEWISH ATTITUDES TOWARD JESUS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The genius of modernity has broken down the spiritual walls of the ghetto of Israel. The modern Jew has found himself in the cross-currents of twentieth century life at liberty not only to live according to the guidance of his own conscience, but also to express his views upon any desired phase of world thought.

Due to this new release of Israel, the silence of the centuries has been broken, and the contribution of the most influential Jew in human history is being considered by the scholars of his own people. Jesus of Nazareth has become a magnet of interest to many members of the modern Jewish forum, and their opinions concerning him run quite a gamut of variation. The novelty lies in the fact that there is an expression of opinion at all concerning him.

In view of its existence, it behooves the Christian to keep abreast with Judaism in its reactions to the One who is called "the glory of His people Israel." The present study will consist of a survey and an analysis of these recent critiques, and it should offer to the investigator a deeper conception of Jesus' Hebrew nature and background, as well as a more intelligent and appreciative

approach to the modern Jew in regard to the claims of his life and teaching.

A. Scope of the Present Study.

To discuss and analyze everything that has been said or written about Jesus by Jews in our day would be manifestly impossible: hence, certain limitations must be set for our present research.

Cognizance will be taken here of those opinions voiced by representative and outstanding Jewish theologians, who are recognized as leaders of thought within the field of Jewry. Only the views of those men who have lived within the twentieth century, and of those whose writings are printed either in English or in an English translation will be cited. Their estimate of the theology and institutions of Christianity will not be considered, but attention will be focused upon their analyses of the teaching and person of Jesus himself, and their conception of the place he should hold in relation to Judaic culture.

Since the different branches of Judaism have given no systematized expression to the Jewish conception of Jesus, the attitudes of these various groups must be determined from the writings of Hebrew theologians. Due to the fact that many more expressions of opinion have been made by the rabbinate of Reform than of Orthodox Jewry, a major part of our material must perforce be centered in these views. In each case, however, when at all possible,

record will be made of the Orthodox opinion, and it should be kept in mind that the major portion of the Jews in the world today are of Orthodox religious profession.

The views of scholars in the Conservative rabbin-ate, that is, the middle branch of American Jewry, will also be given whenever possible. However, very little on this subject has been written by them.

In many cases there is variety of opinion within these divisions of Israel, and these will be noted in relation to the various aspects of this study as they arise. With the exception of a pre-requisite negative attitude in regard to the Deity of Jesus, wide range is given to the Jewish rabbin-ate for diversity of opinion as to the value of his contributions.¹ Hence, any opinion expressed by a Jewish writer may obviously represent only approximately the ideas of his group as a whole.

B. Method of Procedure.

Any discussion of the teaching of Jesus made by modern Jews usually resolves itself into three well-defined limits: those aspects of his teaching which are at present acceptable to the Jewish mind, those which are not, and the question as to whether there is anything in the teaching of Jesus which might be considered an addendum to the traditional moral code of Judaism. Our first chapter will fall

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1. Cf. Year Book of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1901.

for this reason into these three natural divisions.

Jewish evaluations of the person of Jesus most often begin with a survey of the inadequacy of the Gospel sources for forming a complete conception of his character, and with explanations of the miraculous elements in his life history. Then, estimates are given as to his worth as an ethical ideal, and reflections are made as to the causes of his universal influence. The second chapter of this investigation will follow, therefore, that general outline.

The third aspect of the study will be a survey of statements made by individual leaders as to the relationship which the modern Hebrew should sustain toward the person and teachings of Jesus, and as to the probable place which he will eventually hold in relation to Israel.

In conclusion, a summary will be made with the end in view of suggesting to the Christian apologist a basis upon which the presentation of Jesus to the modern Jew should be made.

C. Sources of Study.

Although much has been said of late by modern Jews about the founder of Christianity, the complete works by Jewish writers on this subject are few.

A very important book which may not be discussed in the body of this thesis, due to its early date, but which should be mentioned here because of its influence upon later

writers is the work of Joseph Salvador, Jesus Christ et sa doctrine, histoire de la naissance de l'eglise, de son organisation et de ses progres pendant le premier siecle; 2 volumes, Paris, 1838.

Salvador was the first Jewish scholar of our age to stress the idea that the ethical precepts of Jesus were all to be found in the prophets or in contemporary Jewish sages.¹ Salvador pointed out, in the second place, the necessity of the ceremonial law as a defensive hedge for Judaism, drawing attention to the variance between the teaching of Jesus and traditional Judaism in this respect. For this reason, according to this author, the decisive majority of the Jews must reject his teaching.² As those conceptions are revoiced so often by the mentors of Jewish Orthodoxy, they must be noted at this place.

Another historically important Jewish work on Jesus written from the modern critical point of view is that of H. Graetz, Sinai et Golgotha, ou les origines du judaism et du christianisme, suivi d'un examen critique des Evangiles anciens et modernes; traduit et mis en ordre par Maurice Hess, 1867, Paris. The main substance of this work is contained within the chapter on Jesus in the History of the Jews by this same author (vol.III, pp.271-313).

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1. Salvador, opus cit. 355-6, vol. I.
2. Ibid. pp. 356-414, Vol.I.

The contention of Graetz is that Jesus was an Essene, and that Christianity was an outgrowth of this sect of Judaism.

Other notable omissions of books written by Jews in this field are Emil Ludwig's biography, The Son of Man, and Georg Brandes' work, Jesus a Myth. The views of these writers are omitted because they do not represent a distinctly Jewish outlook. They write as individuals for an international clientele rather than for Jewish readers in particular, and they make no claim to present a Jewish opinion. Ernest Trattner, a Rabbi of the Reform school, characterizes Brandes' book as the least valuable of his literary efforts, and asserts that it does not represent the Jewish point of view.¹

Any opinion expressed by Hebrew-Christian theologians are omitted for the same reason as the above. Their views represent the Christian outlook rather than the Jewish, and, hence, they would not be considered representative.

Brief mention will be made here of the outstanding works which will be utilized as sources for this study. Joseph Jacobs' book, As Others Saw Him, is a theological romance written in imagination by a contemporary of Jesus, one Meshullam ben Zadok, a former member of the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem. This work is important as one of the first

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1. Trattner, As A Jew Sees Jesus, p. 201.

complete biographies of Jesus written from the point of view of liberal Judaism.

The works of Claude G. Montefiore and Joseph Klausner have probably done more than any others to bring Jesus before the attention of the Jewish world--the former having been most influential within the fold of liberal, and the latter within that of Conservative and Orthodox Jewry. Their works are Jesus of Nazareth by Joseph Klausner, and a commentary, The Synoptic Gospels, by Claude G. Montefiore. Another important book by Montefiore is Some Elements of the Religious Teaching of Jesus.

An important source of the Orthodox view is found in Gerald Friedlander's rejoinder to Montefiore in The Jewish Sources of the Sermon on the Mount, and in a chapter on Jesus by Paul Goodman in his book, The Synagogue and the Church, bearing the subtitle, Being a Contribution to the Apologetics of Judaism.

Other books from the point of view of liberal Judaism to which extended reference will be made are: A Jewish View of Jesus by Hyman G. Enelow and As A Jew Sees Jesus by Ernest Trattner.

Our attention will not be limited, however, to the writings of these men alone, but the ideas of other representative Jewish theologians will be presented when pertinent to the subject under discussion.

CHAPTER II

ANALYSES OF THE TEACHING OF JESUS BY
REPRESENTATIVE JEWISH SCHOLARS

CHAPTER II

ANALYSIS OF THE TEACHING OF JESUS BY REPRESENTATIVE JEWISH SCHOLARS

A. Typical Jewish Elements

1- Causes for Expression of Jewish Opinion.

Recent Gentile biographers of Jesus have had a tendency to re-create his life in their own image, and thus to vaporize the Jewish elements of his character. An interesting reaction to the trend is a constant re-emphasis upon these very elements by modern Jewish scholars. Houston Stuart Chamberlain has been outstanding among those Gentile antagonists through his book, Die Grunslagen des Neunzehnten Jahrhunderts, 1899. In this, Jesus is presented as the Teutonic modernist, and an attempt is made to prove that his father was an Aryan, not a Semite. Other modern writers make Jesus appear as the aesthetic French dreamer, the Rugby hero, the social anarchist, the Catholic priest, and finally, in the journalistic effort of Bruce Barton, we find the "100% American"-- whose faith is to remove merchandise rather than mountains. Small wonder that a protest has been evoked from his Jewish brethren.

We have, on the other hand, the tremendous effort made by the German historico-critical school to replace Jesus in his own environment. This movement was given initial impetus by Hermann Samuel Reimarus in his epoch-making

work, Vom Zwecke Jesu und seiner Jünger, 1778, which presents Jesus as the Jewish Messiah, and was climaxed by the efforts of Julius Wellhausen and Eduard Meyer. While asserting that "Jesus was not a Christian: he was a Jew,"¹ Wellhausen presents his teaching as the antithesis and negation of Judaism, and is seconded by Meyer in his claim that by Jesus, the Jew, "Judaism in its essence, was overcome."² Needless to say, the results of such research are no more satisfactory to the defenders of Judaism than the fantastic efforts of biographers like Ernest Renan and Giovanni Papini.

The case against the critical school is well summarized by Joseph Klausner, thus:

"And when we look afresh into all that has been said of these three (the Gospels, Jesus, and Christianity), during the first twenty years of this century, we come to the conclusion that nearly all the many Christian scholars, and even the best of them, who have studied the subject deeply, have tried their hardest to find in the historic Jesus something which is not Judaism; but, in his actual history, they have found nothing of this whatever, since this history is reduced almost to zero. It is, therefore, no wonder that, at the beginning of this century, there has been a revival of the eighteenth and nineteenth century view that Jesus never existed. As to his teaching, the most they have found is the opposition of a Pharisee to other Pharisees--Pharisees who failed to fulfil the duties they had assumed. The best of the Christian scholars have so generalized this opposition as to make the opposition

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1. Wellhausen, Einleitung in die ersten drei Evangelien, Berlin, 1905, p. 113.
2. Meyer, Ursprung und Anfänge des Christentums, Stuttgart Berlin, 1921, Vol. II p. 432.

extend to the whole of Judaism; and thus there remains to them of Christianity nothing but--hatred of Judaism . . ."¹

Hence, we find, today, both Orthodox and Reform Jews not only claiming the Jewish heritage and character of Jesus, but drawing special attention to the many points of identity in his teaching with that of the religious leaders of his age.

2. Jesus on Jewish Background in the Moral Sphere.

Paul Goodman, an Orthodox scholar, makes the following statement:

"It is, however, too frequently overlooked by all schools of Christian thought that in the moral sphere Jesus stands on Jewish background."²

In support of this thesis, Gerald Friedlander, another Orthodox Jewish theologian, has written The Jewish Sources of the Sermon on the Mount. In this work, he attempts to show that not only the Sermon on the Mount but the entire Christian system (excluding its asceticism) is borrowed from the Old Testament, the Book of Ben Sira, the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, and other Jewish writings before the time of Jesus.

Friedlander's analysis of the Lord's prayer is typical--the universality in Judaism of the idea of the

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1. Klauser, Jesus of Nazareth, pp. 105-106.
2. Goodman, The Synagogue and the Church, p. 271.

"fatherhood of God" is first shown, and he denies that Jesus expounded this concept with more depth and intensity than the great prophets and teachers who lived before him. A parallel for the second phrase of the prayer is found in the opening phrase of the Kaddish,¹ "Magnified and hallowed be his name," derived from Ezekiel 38:23. He affirms that the pre-Christian literature of the Jews teaches identical lessons as to God's Kingdom, and the duty of man to do God's will. The petition for bread, Friedlander asserts, is a derivative from Israel's experience with manna, and the petition for forgiveness finds a source in the Testaments of the Twelve Prophets. In this writer's mind, the prayer as a whole is an outgrowth of Ezekiel 36:23-31, and he expressed the hope that a frank recognition of this fact may be made in the future by the Christians. It is his belief that it can lay no claim, whatsoever, to originality.²

Ernest Trattner, of the Reform school, reflects this same Jewish view in more poetic terms:

"The Lord's Prayer is a bouquet of Hebraic flowers sprung from Jewish soil. Each phrase is native to the land, and drips with the dew of Old Testament inspiration."³

The question of the originality of the teaching of Jesus is discussed at length by various Jewish scholars, and it will

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1. Doxology recited in the synagogue at the close of prayers.
2. Friedlander, The Jewish Sources of the Sermon on the Mount, pp. 127-164.
3. Trattner, As A Jew Sees Jesus, p. 74.

be treated at a later place in this study. For the present, it remains to outline the various elements in the teaching of Jesus which are pronounced as distinctively Judaic by these Hebrew writers.

3. Jesus' Positive Jewish Attitude toward the Torah.

The next problem, which confronts the analyst, is that of the attitude which Jesus assumed toward the Law. That it was more a positive one than a negative is the affirmation of the majority of those who undertake such a study. Dr. Klausner asserts that the positive attitude of Jesus toward both Prophetic and Pharisaic Judaism is made clear in the famous passage:

"Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil. . . Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished. Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:17-19).

Klausner then observes that in the words which follow, as well as in other cases when Jesus condemns the method in which the Scribes and Pharisees observe the law, his emphasis is merely upon the greater importance of the moral over the ceremonial law, and that it was never his intention to annul the latter--"these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone" (Luke 11:42).¹

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1. cf. Klausner, Jesus of Nazareth, pp. 366-367.

Commenting on these statements of Jesus concerning the Law, Dr. H. G. Enelow remarks:

"Such teaching was Jewish. It was founded on Jewish precepts and precedents. Its effort to penetrate and amplify the Law was in harmony with the practise and methods of Jewish teachers. Its motives as well as its aims were Jewish. Even where Jesus offered something in a new form or in a new way, it accords with his general aim to disclose the ethical and spiritual contents of the old Law."¹

He maintains this point by calling attention to the parable of the new wine in the old bottle, and the explanatory parable having a relation to it of the householder who brought forth from his treasure things new and old.² The proper interpretation of these parables, in Dr. Enelow's opinion, represents the very spirit of the method of teaching used by Jesus.

"Out of his spiritual treasures, Jesus brought forth things new and old, as they served the great purposes of his ministry. In this respect, he did what every great Jewish teacher of his time sought to do."³

That it was not the intention of Jesus to abrogate the ceremonial law, these scholars seek to prove further by pointing to the incident in which Jesus commands the cleansed leper to observe its ritual details, and by an analysis of his treatment of the Sabbatical laws. In regard to the latter, Ernest Trattner says:

"Jesus is arguing (as all the prophets argued) against the great sin of official religion, which is the sin of

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1. Enelow, A Jewish View of Jesus, p. 70.
2. Matt. 9:17; 13:51-52.
3. cf. Enelow, opus cit. p.72.

disproportionate emphasis. It is this attitude that gives him an unchallengeable position in the moral culture of mankind."¹

Scholars of the Reform school of Judaism in particular recognize the spiritual lineage of Jesus with the prophets of the Old Testament, and recognition is also made of the fact that in the age of Israel's great prophets, the ceremonial law had not assumed the crystallized and authoritative form which it had gained in the age of Jesus.²

Jesus' answer to the Scribe, as to the greatest of the commandments, is characterized by Trattner as a typical Pharisaic response, made by conjoining two Mosaic laws (Deut. 6:4-6; Lev. 19:18).³

The evangelists are accused of having a pro-Gentile bias in their portrayal of the Pharisees, and, in the opinion of quite a number of Jewish authors, Jesus was much more kindly disposed to the Scribes and rabbis of his day than is made evident even by the Synoptists.⁴

A passage, which is often cited as an evidence not only of the Jewishness of Jesus, but also of his strict monotheism and conception of himself as nothing more than man, is his answer to the rich young ruler concerning that

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1. Trattner, As A Jew Sees Jesus, p. 93.
2. cf. Montefiore, Some Elements of the Religious Teaching of Jesus according to the Synoptic Gospels, pp. 30 ff.
3. cf. Trattner, opus cit., p. 105.
4. cf. Trattner, opus cit., p. 48.
Enelow, opus cit., p. 97.
Klausner, opus cit., p. 365.

which is good (Matt. 10:18; Luke 17:19; Matt. 9:16-22). Joseph Klausner accounts for the variation in the account of Matthew with the other Synoptists by saying that Matthew must have perceived the contradiction between this and the Christian doctrine of the Trinity and, hence, changed the words to make them more conformable to the dogma.¹

Another strong proof of Jesus' positive attitude toward the law is seen in the history of the Jewish Christian Church. Trattner argues, thus:

"Here then is the significant problem: If Jesus' object had been to abolish or annihilate the Law, how then are we to explain that the Jerusalem Church continued to be strictly Jewish? Why did James, Peter and John, and other personal followers denounce Paul's short cut to salvation? How did they argue that Jesus was the Messiah for the Hebrews only and not for the Gentiles, with whom Yahweh had never made a covenant? Surely, if it had been the Galilean's express desire to demolish the Jewish religion, it is exceedingly queer that his most devoted followers should have zealously maintained that a Gentile, who desired to become a Christian, must enter through the gate of Judaism."²

Joseph Klausner points to the Acts of the Apostles as "tangible and irrefutable" evidence that Jesus remained a Jew in his attitude, and also points to James 2:10 as another expression of the outlook of the early church--"For

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1. Cf. Klausner, opus cit. pp. 364-365.
2. Trattner, opus cit. p. 54.

whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all"--thus advocating a severer standard than did even the Pharisees.¹

4. Jesus' Voicing of the Jewish Apocalyptic Hope.

Jesus' concept of "the kingdom of heaven" is adduced as another line of evidence for his Judaic world-view. In the opinion of Ernest Trattner, Jesus was more closely related to the Jewish people of his day by this overmastering thought of his career, than in any other respect, and by his promulgation of this doctrine he demonstrated how far he was from being independent of contemporary ideas and problems.²

The intensity of the desire for political and spiritual freedom, for release from the talons of the Roman oppressor, gave impetus to this concept in Jewry. In the earlier stage of this Messianic hope, the Jews looked for a great military deliverer like David or Judah Maccabee. But as they beheld the crucifixion of one after another of the Jewish patriots, who attempted to liberate them, gradually the feeling arose among them that deliverance must come through the intervention of God Himself on their behalf, and that unaided human effort was futile. John the Baptist was the outstanding

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1. Cf. Klausner, opus cit. p. 367.
2. Trattner, opus cit. pp. 35-38.

preacher of this newer doctrine, and Jesus followed in his steps. Their very belief in the imminence of the coming kingdom was an outgrowth, according to Dr. Abba Hillel Silver, of the cardinal belief of the ancient rabbis, that the world would last six thousand years, and the thousand years prior to the destruction of the world would be years of universal blessedness. In the times of John and Jesus, Palestine was agog with expectations of a cataclysmic change, and, Jew that he was, Jesus shared this popular rabbinic teaching.¹

Trattner's essential contention in relation to this seems to be that it was

"in defense, not in defiance, of his Jewishness that the man of Galilee framed his message in an apocalyptic setting. The ancient Prophets had foretold a glorious future when God would reign, and when His mysterious dealings with His chosen people would be explained and justified. They pictured a New Age, sharply discontinuous from the Old, which God Himself would inaugurate by a colossal display of supernatural means. Such was the apocalyptic hope of the Hebrew peoples."²

5. Summary.

From the preceding analysis, it would appear that in the minds of these modern Jewish scholars, Jesus was not far adrift from the predominant trend of Judaism in his outlook upon the spheres of ethics, theology, ritual, and the

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1. Cf. Silver, History of Messianic Speculations in Israel, pp. 6-10. Cf. Trattner, opus cit. pp. 35-38.

2. Trattner, opus cit. pp. 60-61.

philosophy of the social hope. Religionists of the Orthodox school lay special emphasis upon his accord with Judaism in regard to moral behavior, while those of the more liberal branch are inclined to regard his teaching as distinctly Jewish in the broad sweep of its content.

B. Non-Jewish Elements in Jesus' Teaching.

Notwithstanding this new recognition by Jewish leaders of the concepts which Judaism holds in common with Jesus, there is invariable mention of the points concerning which they are at variance. These matters of disagreement bear marked resemblance to those held by the rabbis of his own time.

1. Opposition Crystallized by Paul.

Joseph Klausner, in beginning a chapter, which is devoted to a discussion of these points of opposition, says:

"Ex nihilo nihil fit: had not Jesus' teaching contained a kernel of opposition to Judaism, Paul could never in the name of Jesus have set aside the ceremonial laws, and broken through the barriers of national Judaism. There can be no doubt that in Jesus Paul found satisfying support."¹

2. Jesus' Conception of Himself.

The most important factor of contention is found in the conception which Jesus seems to have held of himself.

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1. Klausner, opus cit., p. 369.

While opinion is divided as to the extent of the Messianic consciousness of Jesus, many believe that he conceived his relationship with Deity to be somewhat unique.

Paul Goodman, expressing the opinion of Jewish Orthodoxy, in his apologetic work, The Synagogue and the Church, states the case thus:

"The argument of the Jews against the claim of Jesus is now practically the same as the objection with which certain of his contemporary opponents replied to him: 'For a good work, we stone thee not, but for blasphemy, and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God' (John 10:33)."¹

And, again, he says:

"Nor is it admitted that he gave a unique significance to the Fatherhood of God. It is true, Jesus did realize this idea in a manner that is given to few of our kind to attain. But he raised himself to the Sonship of God by such a tremendous effort of spiritual exaltation that he left all his followers wonderingly watching his ascension: till in their eyes he eclipsed the glory of the Eternal, whose majesty was henceforth hidden from sight. It was only by the reflected lustre of the Son that the Divine Father was to be revealed to his human children."²

In the opinion of Joseph Klausner, however, it would have been quite inconceivable for Jesus to believe that he was the Son of God in the Trinitarian sense during the period of the Second Temple. Like every Pharisaic Jew, Jesus would have believed in the absolute unity of God. Although the concept of the Fatherhood of God, was exceedingly common in the Talmudic literature and a strictly Jewish

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1. Goodman, opus cit. p. 253.
2. Ibid. p. 277 ff.

conception, Klausner, nevertheless, admits that Jesus made far more use of such expressions as "Father", "My Father", "My Father in heaven", than did the Pharisee and Tannaim, and, often, when he employed it, he gave it an excessive emphasis. The reason, according to this writer, is plain:

"From the day he was baptized by John, Jesus looked upon himself as the Messiah, and, as the Messiah, he was closer to God than any other human being . . . Arising out of this exaggerated sense of nearness to God is Jesus' constant emphasis and insistence in 'But I say unto you', as opposed to 'them of the old time', i.e. the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and, also, the Pharisees. A danger lurked in this exaggeration: it unwittingly confused Jesus' pure monotheism; it gave the impression that there was one man in the world with whom God was exceptionally intimate, and for whom God bore especial love . . . Such a conception of the messianic title 'son of God' signifying that he is nearest to God of all men (a fundamentally Jewish notion), Judaism was unable to accept. Jesus' own teaching is poles apart from the Trinitarian dogma, but it contained the germ which, fostered by gentile Christians, developed into the doctrine of the Trinity."¹

Ernest Trattner explains this sense of Sonship in Jesus by drawing attention to the ancient mode of Hebrew thought, which read into the expression the "Son of God" no more than into the "Son of man." According to this modern rabbi, Jesus was not in variance with strict Judaism in this conception. He says:

"The views of Jesus were Jewish views uttered with purity, depth, and intensity. . . But it is true Jesus gave these concepts a fine intensity and an appealingly mystic quality. His sense of the nearness of God, which was full of an overflowing emotional effect, was also a part of his messianic consciousness: and just as the Jews looked upon themselves

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1. Klausner, opus cit. pp. 378-379.

as the first-born among all the races of men, so Jesus regarded himself as the first-born among his own fellow men."¹

All schools alike, however, emphasize here the un-historical nature of the gospel of John and its inadequacy as a source for studying Jesus' conception of himself.

3. Jesus' Relationship to the Ceremonial Law.

a. Elements Which Paved the Way to Rebellion.

Again, there is the question of Jesus' relation to the law. While admitting that Jesus recognized the eternity of the written law, elements are seen implicit in his teaching, which Paul made explicit in his gospel. Ernest Trattner compares Jesus and Paul to Erasmus and Luther. Like Erasmus, Jesus joined battle with the schoolmen of his day, but as Erasmus did not intend to precipitate an open revolt against Rome--no more did Jesus intend to bring about a nullification of Israel's time-honored Torah. Yet, that there were elements in their ideas which paved the way to rebellion is not to be denied.²

Jesus disregarded ritual separatism by eating and drinking with publicans and sinners; he healed diseases which were not dangerous on the Sabbath day; while, not abrogating the Sabbatical laws, he is said to have esteemed

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1. Trattner, opus cit. pp. 74-78.

2. cf. Ibid. pp. 109-111.

them lightly. He attached little importance to the "washing of hands" and permitted the eating of forbidden foods. Unlike the Pharisees and John, Jesus did not fast often, and he subsequently admits the impossibility of combining the old and the new. When asked how to attain eternal life, Jesus enumerated six only of the Ten Commandments--those which embodied human ethical principles--not those which comprised the known ceremonial duties.¹

Klausner continues this analysis, by saying:

"Such is the sub-conscious attitude of Jesus towards traditional Judaism. It is instinctive rather than conscious: by his parables and by certain acts of his disciples, which he leaves unrebuked, sometimes also by his own doings . . . above all, by his indiscriminate attack on the Pharisees--by these means he so decries the value of the ceremonial laws as to make them of secondary importance compared to the moral laws, and almost to nullify them. But only 'almost', Jesus never carried his teachings to their conclusion. He himself observed the ceremonial laws (though not with the scrupulous pedantry of the Pharisees) till the last night of his life."²

b. The Reactions of Jewish Writers.

The reactions of Jewish thinkers to this stand taken by Jesus reflect in large measure their outlook upon Judaism.

(1) Views of Claude G. Montefiore.

Claude G. Montefiore, the great leader of Reform Judaism, points out that the intense opposition which Jesus

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1. cf. Klausner, opus cit. pp. 367.

2. Ibid. pp. 370-371.

incurred by his attitude toward the ceremonial law was due to the fact that the Mosaic law had now assumed an authoritative, divine form, which it did not have in the days of Hosea and Amos. These prophets were more at liberty to denounce the hyper-ceremonialism of the religionists of their day. Accounting for Jesus' attitude toward the Sabbatical laws, Montefiore says:

"Jesus seems fighting for a principle which he can hardly enunciate or formulate: either that deeds of love and charity must never be put off for the sake of ritual enactments; or, perhaps, that the rule and rest of the Sabbath must be interpreted by its spirit, and by the higher law of righteousness and compassion. It is also possible that Jesus in his conflict with the Rabbis about the Sabbath, may have said, 'I recognize that the Pentateuchal Law of the Sabbath is divine, but what I deny is the authority and divineness of your additions. To heal is not to work; to crush and pick ears of corn is not to work!'"¹

But Montefiore proceeds then to show that Jesus' opposition to the ceremonial law was not merely confined to an attack upon these human commentators and casuists.

"Jesus was driven on, by the inner necessities of his prophetic temperament, and by the conditions and facts which he saw around him to advance half unconsciously from an attack upon persons, and upon certain things, which they did, to an attack upon the system or upon certain parts of the system on the basis or authority of which those things were done."²

Jesus' statement that nothing can defile a man religiously except his own consciously committed sin (referring to Mk. 7:1-23) is, in the view of Montefiore,

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1. Montefiore, Some Elements of the Religious Teachings of Jesus According to the Synoptic Gospels, p. 42.
2. *Ibid.* p. 44.

"a noble, a liberating utterance. Things cannot defile persons. The spiritual personality can only be spiritually defiled. Yet, highly as we may sympathize with the doctrine, it is impossible not to realize that given the divinity and perfection of the Law, the utterance of Jesus could not be regarded as either true or inspired."¹

Commenting further upon this attitude, Montefiore says,

"Logically and consistently the right was on the side of the rabbis, but universally, ultimately, and religiously, the right was on the side of Jesus."²

He also affirms that although Jesus did not intend to dispute theoretically the divinity of the Law, the inspiration of his thoughts and words by the divine Spirit in the stress and strain of the moment was even more divine.³

(2) The Views of Joseph Klausner.

The view expressed by Joseph Klausner in this connection more perfectly represents the orthodox position, and hence it is more typical of that of world Jewry. After presenting the stand taken by Jesus, he says,

"But Judaism could not agree with such an attitude. For the Jews, their religion was more than simple belief, and more than simple moral guidance: it was a way of life-- all life was embraced in their religion. A people does not endure on a foundation of general human faith and morality; it needs a 'practical religiousness,' a ceremonial form of religion which shall embody religious ideas, and also crown everyday life with a halo of sanctity."⁴

Klausner is an historian, and as such he is an ardent Hebrew Nationalist, eager to maintain the personal

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1. Montefiore, opus cit. pp. 49-50.
2. Ibid. p. 50.
3. Cf. ibid. p. 46.
4. Klausner, opus cit. p. 371.

identity of Israel among the nations, and to perpetuate the uniqueness of its rich culture and heritage. His opinion as quoted above is characteristic of the Hebrew Nationalist, and it is that of the orthodox upholders of the ceremonial law in Israel. Jesus, according to Klausner, failed to see the national import of the ceremonial law; he failed to see the relationship of national and human history;

"he entirely lacks the wider political perspective shown by the Prophets, whose sweeping vision embraced kingdoms and nations the world over. Hence, all unwittingly, he brought it to pass that part of the 'house of Jacob' was swallowed up by those other nations who, at the first, had joined themselves to that part . . ."1

This scholar of the Talmud, then, speaks of the fact that the science and art of ancient Israel was one with its religion, and that its scribes and teachers of religion were also laymen, judges, doctors, and statesmen. All the culture of the state was largely incorporated in the Talmud and in the religious writings of the day, and for this Jesus offered them no substitute.²

"What did Jesus do? Had he come and said: Instead of religion alone, I give you here science and art as national possessions independent of religion; instead of scripture, commentaries--learning and poetry, likewise independent of religion; instead of ceremonial laws--grown so oppressive as to crush the warmer religious feelings--a practical and theoretical secular culture, national and humanistic. Had Jesus come with such a Gospel, his name would have endured as a blessing among his nation."³

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1. Klausner, opus cit. p. 372.
2. Cf. *ibid.* pp. 372-3.
3. *Ibid.* p. 373.

(3) Views of Ernest Trattner.

Commenting upon the Sermon on the Mount, Ernest Trattner, representing more nearly the view of Reform Judaism, gives an interesting answer to this whole line of thought. After noting the timeless and universal appeal of the ethics of Jesus if released from their apocalyptic framework, he proceeds to denote his greatest contribution by the very name which Joseph Klausner has used in speaking of the great omission in the dowry of Jesus--"a way of life."

Thus:

"When the Beatitudes finish telling us the kind of people who are to make up the spiritual kingdom, the rest of the Sermon concerns itself with elucidating this new way of life. The language used in this connection is characteristically Jewish, oriental, parabolic--full of luminous interpretation. Jesus does not discover for his hearers the kernel of truth--they are to do that for themselves. He indicates a way of life for them, not a set of details fit for regimentation."¹

Trattner expresses the opinion that Jesus' attitude toward the ceremonial law was influenced by his conception of the fast-approaching kingdom of God:

"All those writers, who zealously strive to picture Jesus in the role of iconoclast, overthrowing the religion of his birth, fail to realize that, to Jesus, the new advent of the kingdom would automatically bring about the consummation of the old. There was no need for abolishing the Law- not even as much as a jot or tittle!"²

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1. Trattner, opus cit. p. 93.
2. Ibid. p. 108.

4. The "Pure to the Point of Unpractical" Ethic of Jesus.

Yet, there are other elements in the teachings of Jesus, which are not universally palatable to the Hebrew taste. These are well summarized by Lady Magnus in her dictum that the morality of Jesus was

"pure to the point of unpracticality; on which point it differs from the Jewish ethics, which were its inspiration."¹

And, here again, we find a variance of opinion between the Orthodox and Reform views.

The Orthodox school takes exception to Jesus' views on non-resistance, his condemnation of all swearing (for how could any national state endure on such a basis?), his so-called disallowance of family life, his tendencies toward asceticism, his position on the question of divorce, and his other-worldly attitude about God's providence for the affairs and needs of daily life.²

Having summarized these various failings in his message, Klausner, nevertheless, admits,

"In all this Jesus is the most Jewish of Jews; more Jewish than Simeon ben Shetah, more Jewish even than Hillel. Yet, nothing is more dangerous to national culture than this exaggerated Judaism; it is the ruin of national culture, the national state, the national life." ³

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1. Magnus, Outlines of Jewish History, B.C. 586 to C.E. 1885. ch. 9, p. 51.
2. cf. Friedlander, opus cit. pp. 52-67.
cf. Goodman, opus cit. pp. 281-282.
cf. Klausner, opus cit. pp. 373-374.
3. Klausner, opus cit. p. 374.

The Reform branch of Judaism gives a more liberal interpretation to these teachings. Trattner makes special recognition of the contrast between John the Baptist and Jesus in the matter of asceticism. Although Jesus gave up the comforts of a settled home life, unlike John, he came 'eating and drinking,' to this extent he was closer to the fundamentals of Jewish teachings.¹

In regard to the matter of divorce, Montefiore again says that Jesus was right from a world-historic and universal standpoint, even though from a narrower and literal standpoint his opponents had their temporary justification.²

5. Jewish Need of a More Heroic Ethical System.

Perhaps, the most interesting change of emphasis made by Reform Judaism, however, is recognition of the fact that men need this very quality of unpracticality of teaching as an inspiration to heroic living as well as more practical homilies for everyday life. This outlook is splendidly reflected by Dr. Montefiore in his commentary, The Synoptic Gospels. Speaking of the spirit, which pervades the teaching of Jesus, he says,

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1. Cf. Trattner, opus cit. p. 41.
2. Cf. Montefiore, Some Elements of the Religious Teachings of Jesus according to the Synoptic Gospels, pp. 38-45.

"That spirit has the characteristics of genius. It is great, stimulating, heroic. One may not always agree with it, it may not always be 'practical', but it is always, or nearly always, big and grand . . . We need both the Rabbinic compendium and the Gospels. For the life of everyday, we need both. The great, heroic teaching, and the details and more average teaching. We want them both. The teaching which demands the most complete self-sacrifice, which is inspired by the most thorough-going idealism and the teaching which is not so far removed from, and addresses itself more directly to the average righteousness and the average wickedness of ordinary and everyday life . . . In hours of comfort and peace, these idealisms are needed all the more. Persecutions and misery supply to a great extent their own idealisms; they transfigure the ordinary into the heroic . . .

"Just ordinary people need, in addition to the admirable sayings and exhortations of the Rabbis, the ideal and heroic spirit which inspires the teachings of the Synoptic Gospels. 'A man's reach must exceed his grasp'--just upon earth must it be so, even for non-angelic beings that we are. We know that 'little deeds of kindness and charity well within our power' make the wheels of life run more smoothly. But little deeds are not enough. We must not be satisfied with them. Or rather to keep them sweet and clean, to multiply and preserve them, one needs the great deeds too. Or, at least, the desire for them, the appreciation of them. We require the heroic teaching and the example of heroes to stimulate and call out our own poor powers to the full. We require them to make us conscious of our own failures, to destroy conceit and self-righteousness, to purge us of anything like moral Philistinism or religious snobbery. Religion and ethical teaching must produce not merely right and excellent actions, but also (and above all) noble character . . .

"It is in a country like England, where the Jews have full rights and complete liberty, that the large demands and the heroic stature of the Synoptic teaching would be of advantage for the production of people who grandly are, as well as those who only rightly do."¹

No adequate conception of the modern attitude of the Jew toward Jesus and his teaching can be obtained

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1. Montefiore, The Synoptic Gospels, Introduction, cxlii-cxliii.

without taking into consideration the full import of these epoch-making words by Dr. Montefiore. Their influence has been tremendous, being reflected not only in utterances by rabbis in the great majority of the Reform pulpits of Judaism, but also in their indirect impact against the whole of modern Jewry. For this reason, it has been necessary to quote them at length, and, although one must necessarily keep in mind that Reform Judaism forms the minority branch in Israel, these opinions and others expressed in this great commentary symbolize the launching of a whole new attitude toward Jesus and his teachings by his people, Israel.

6. Summary.

In reality, the points in the teaching of Jesus from which Judaism draws away, in spite of the fact that they are characterized as "an exaggerated Jewishness", mark the dividing line between traditional Judaism and Christianity. It is recognized by most that "the religion about Jesus" must have found some source in "the religion of Jesus", and it is for this reason that orthodox Jewish rabbis are most wary of receiving him as a great teacher in Israel.

As has been seen, the ideas, which arouse most dissidence, are Jesus' exalted conception of his own mission, his failure to stress the ceremonial law, and the

hyperbolic idealism of his principles for ethical conduct. The scholars of Reform Judaism often give the best rejoinders which can be made to these contentions, and their attitudes are frequently identical with those of the Christian apologete. They point to his high conception of his own personality as an evidence of his sense of prophetic inspiration, his attitude to the ceremonial law as an ability to sense that which was most vital in Judaic culture, and they would use the challenge of his exalted moral code to fill a gap in the ethical culture of the Hebrew race.

C. Extent of Originality in the Teaching of Jesus.

The significant opinion of Dr. Montefiore, quoted above, leads us into the question of the extent to which Jesus' teachings are a contribution over and above the ethical instructions of the Hebrew Prophets and Rabbis of his age, as well as to what extent his words were influenced and formulated from them. The problem is important, due to the fact that one of the chief reasons given today by Jews, of both the orthodox and conservative schools for finding no need either to quote from or to study the teachings of Jesus, is that all those, which are acceptable to Judaism, are paralleled in equally poignant statements in their own prophetic and rabbinic literature.

1. Negative Attitude of Orthodoxy.

This contention, as we have observed above, forms the chief theme of Gerald Friedlander's work, The Jewish Sources of the Sermon on the Mount, which indeed was written as a rejoinder to Montefiore's commentary, The Synoptic Gospels, and represents very largely the point of view of Jewish orthodoxy. This author attempts to draw parallels for practically the whole system of Christian ethics, and he attempts to prove its dependence upon the Old Testament, the Book of Ben Sira, the Testaments of the Twelve Prophets, Philo of Alexandria, and the earlier portion of the Talmud and the Midrash. When it is objected that the Mishna, Gemara, and Midrashim were committed to writing subsequent to the time when the Gospels were written, the author culls parallels from the extra-canonical books, Ecclesiasticus, Tobit, the Psalms of Solomon, the book of Enoch, and the Secrets of Enoch. That for which no parallel can be found is regarded as undesirable to Jewish ethics.

2. Qualities of Originality Found by Reform Jewish Scholars.

While all Jewish scholars recognize the great resemblance of many of Jesus' teachings with those of the advance guard of rabbinic teaching in his age, the scholars of the Reform school frequently find a certain plus quality in the sermons of Jesus which does not characterize those of the contemporary Rabbis.

a. Views of Joseph Jacobs.

Joseph Jacobs devotes a chapter in his book, Jesus As Others Saw Him, to a reprinting of the Catechism of the Two Ways, which is a pedagogical summary of the law as expressed by Hillel and compiled by one of his disciples as a textbook for the heathen. The author, then, remarks,

"Now in all the teaching of Jesus which I heard of about this time, he seems to have expanded, but in no wise modified, the teaching of 'the Two Ways'."1

Mr. Jacobs, also, records the following reaction & propos of an imaginary hearing of one of Jesus' earlier discourses:

"Each of our Sages prides himself on this--that he has said some maxim of wisdom that none had thought of before him, so each of them is remembered in the minds of men by one or more of his favorite maxims. But it is rare in a whole life time a sage sayeth more than one word fit to be treasured up among men. Yet was this man Jesus dropping pearls of wisdom from his mouth in prodigal profusion. As each memorable word fell from his lips a murmur of delighted surprise passed round the synagogue, and each man looked to his neighbor with brightened eyes. Some of the thoughts, indeed, I had heard from other of our Sages, but never in so pointed a form, surely never in such profusion from a single sage."2

b. Views of Hymon G. Enelow.

Dr. Hymon G. Enelow, another Reform rabbi, says that the originality of Jesus lay in the fact that he made religion a personal matter in that religion and personality were to him altogether one.³ Yet this same writer maintains

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1. Jacobs, Jesus As Others Saw Him, p. 50.
2. Ibid. p. 45.
3. Enelow, A Jewish View of Jesus, p. 26.

elsewhere that Jesus would have cared very little for this dispute over his originality, and that like the great Prophets, he felt that his ministry was not to give a distinctly new message to the people, but rather to give new and living expression to the old truths, which had been revealed already by God. Jesus, according to Dr. Enelow, did try to teach the essential truths and beauties of the religious life through his own experience and by his own personal life--and, "wherever we find true personality, we have originality. Supreme personality is greatest originality."¹

c. Views of Claude G. Montefiore.

The views of Claude G. Montefiore on the subject under discussion, again, have had tremendous influence in the trend of modern Jewish thought, and, hence, must be treated in some detail. According to this thinker, Jesus' conviction of his own inspiration by God is one of the greatest elements in his originality, as distinguished from his rabbinic contemporaries. Although Jesus does not preface his speeches with a, "Thus saith the Lord," Dr. Montefiore feels that he was, nevertheless, in the prophetic line in so far as he believed that the divine spirit impelled him to his work, and directed his words. Otherwise, he would not have become the Judge of the Law, rather than strictly its servant.²

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1. Enelow, opus cit. pp. 14-18.

2. Montefiore, The Synoptic Gospels, Introduction, p.cxx.

This writer, also, asserts that it is quite futile to draw parallels between the teachings of Jesus and those of rabbis such as Hillel, because the prophetic touch and spirit are entirely lacking in the latter, and these are everything. He points out, also, that in Jesus, there was a new combination which was not found in the rabbis; he was teacher, pastor, and prophet in one--and in this he was more or less unlike his contemporaries.¹

Unlike the prophet as well, Montefiore finds that Jesus dealt with individuals rather than with the community as a whole. He was able to announce to certain ones, whom he met, release from the bondage of sin--and this, too, was different.²

Montefiore draws attention to the stress which Jesus put on his mission to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 15:24), and, also, to the fact that his message to them was not merely one of denouncement.

"He goes among them and eats with them. He will touch their heart in a number of different ways: he will touch it by arousing admiration, hope, and love, by encouragement and consolation, by powerful suggestion that the bonds of sin can be, or have been broken, and that a new life can be, or has been begun . . . He will bind up that which was broken, and strengthen that which was sick. This we may regard as a new, original, and historic feature in his teaching."³

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1. Montefiore, opus cit. Introduction, p. cxx.
2. Ibid. p. cxxi.
3. Ibid. p. cxvii.

This recognition by a Jewish leader of the redemptive element in the teaching of Jesus is an important one, and one which must be fully realized in any adequate presentation of Jesus to the Jewish mind today.

Dr. Montefiore continues by saying that Jesus' contemporaries found his teaching, new, inspired, prophetic, and that this was due to the spirit, the unity, the fervor which characterized it rather than to any specific word. The Rabbis spoke of pity, faith, love, trust, but the fire and glow which he finds in Jesus was lacking in them.

"They did not, perhaps, quite in the same way, demand all for the Highest. They did not preach the same impassioned doctrine of sacrifice. They did not show the same yearning to save the sinner from the morasses of sin, or from the physical and mental evils, which, in those days, were so closely connected with sin. It was in these more indefinable and subtler ways that the teaching, like the hearing, of Jesus was new, inspired, prophetic, rather than in any novelty of doctrine or in any one definite particular."¹

3. Religious Value of the Study of the Gospels for the Modern Jew.

But Dr. Montefiore has even more to say as to the definite religious value of the Synoptic teachings for the modern Jew. The important question, to him, is not that of the originality of the individual sayings of Jesus-- although he makes the significant statement here that when the Talmud and the Gospels are paralleled the "originality

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1. Montefiore, opus cit. Introduction, p. cxxxv.

is almost always on the side of the Gospels."¹ The most important value of the Gospels is found in the study of them as composite wholes, rather than as compendiums of fragmentary statements and unrelated incidents. In the following quotations, one notes a marked congeniality of spirit in the views of Dr. Montefiore with those of Dr. Wilbert Webster White, with his great emphasis on the whole method of Bible study.

Here, we must, perforce, quote verbatim, in order to reproduce faithfully the spirit of the words of this great scholar:

"Jewish apologists have a habit of breaking the Gospel into fragments. But a great book is more than its own sentences taken singly or disjointedly. A great personality is more than its teaching, and teaching is more than bits of it taken one by one. It must be judged as a whole--so far, at least, as this is possible. It has a spirit, an aroma, which evaporates when its elements or fragments are looked at separately. This piecemeal way of looking at a book, a teaching, a person is, perhaps, one of the evil results of Jewish legalism. Virtue, as Plato would say, is cut up into pieces and made into mincemeat. It suffers in this process. Virtue is more than a parcel of virtues; character is more than its elements. A man is more than the sum of this, that, and the other. Righteousness is more than a number of excellent positive commands and excellent negative ones.

"There is a certain spirit and glow about the teachings of Jesus which you either appreciate or fail to appreciate. You cannot recognize or do justice to it by saying, 'The teaching of Jesus comprises the following maxims and injunctions. Of these, some are borrowed from the Old Testament, and some are paralleled by the Talmud, and a few are impracticable.' The teaching of Jesus, which has had such gigantic effects upon the world, is more than a dissected list of injunctions."²

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1. Montefiore, opus cit. Introduction, p. cxli.
2. Ibiâ. p. cxlii.

And, again, Montefiore says:

"Even if you could find separate close parallels for 970 out of the 1000 verses in the Gospels in which Jesus is the speaker, and even if you put them together and made a nice little book of them, you would not have produced a substitute of equal religious value. The unity, the aroma, the spirit, the genius would all have fled. Or, rather, you could not infuse them into your elegant collection of fragments and tid-bits. Morceaux-choisis remain just morceaux-choisis."¹

4. Summary.

In summary, the originality of Jesus, as viewed by these modern Jewish thinkers, resides in the touch which his genius and contagious personality lent to the well known truths which he uttered. As has been seen, however, recognition has also been given to that new thing which he brought into the thought of Israel. This is to be seen in his emphasis upon the personal and redemptive elements of faith, and in the part which he as an individual played in the plan of God for man's release from the bondage of sickness and sin.

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1. Montefiore, opus cit. Introduction p. cxlii.

CHAPTER III

JEWISH ANALYSES OF THE PERSON OF JESUS

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A. The Influence of Historical Criticism upon the Jewish Attitude.

1. Jewish Attitudes toward the Sources.

a. Unauthenticity of the Records.

Practically all modern Jewish scholars agree that to look at Jesus through the Gospel history is to look through lenses which are decidedly colored by the mists of missionary efforts and theological dogma. All alike recognize the difficulty of actually catching a glimpse of the historical Jesus from the records at hand.

The difficulties of obtaining an historical outlook upon the life of Jesus according to Claude G. Montefiore are fourfold:

"It is a life: (a) Of which we know very little, and only during some eighteen months in all. (b) Of which the incidents are very few. (c) Which is very uncertain, and much mixed up with miracle and legend . . . (d) Which is recorded by biographers who seek to eulogize and exalt to the utmost of their ability."¹

b. Complete Rejection of John as a Source.

Opinion is practically unanimous among Jewish scholars in rejecting the gospel of John as an adequate source for the life of Jesus. Joseph Jacobs, in his

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1. Montefiore, The Synoptic Gospels, p. 170, vol. I.

article on Jesus in the Jewish Encyclopaedia, characterizes this Gospel as a "'Tendenz-Roman,' practically a work of religious imagination, intended to modify opinion in a certain direction."¹ Joseph Klausner asserts that

"the Fourth Gospel is not a religio-historical but a religio-philosophical book. It was not composed until about the middle of the second Christian century, at a time when Christians were already distinct from Jews (at least as a special party) with no dealings with official Judaism, and after many pagans had been converted . . . It may well include a few historical statements handed down to the author (who was certainly not John the disciple) by tradition; but, speaking generally, its value is the theological rather than historical or biographical."²

For this reason it will be seen that all statements made in regard to Jesus by the writers quoted in this study will be based on the records found in the three Synoptic Gospels.

c. Historicity of Jesus.

In spite of these difficulties, the predominating point of view held by both Orthodox and Reform Judaism today is that Jesus of Nazareth was an actual historical personage, and that much of that which is recorded of him in the New Testament had its foundation in actual historical facts. As mentioned above, Ernest Trattner makes the statement that the contention of Georg Brandes in Jesus, a Myth is superficial, and "does not represent the Jewish point of view."³

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1. Jewish Encycl., Art. on Jesus of Nazareth by Joseph Jacobs, p. 160, 1904.
2. Klausner, Jesus of Nazareth, p. 125.
3. Trattner, opus cit. p. 201.

The Orthodox theologian, Gerald Friedlander, after briefly reviewing Arthur Drews' book, The Christ Myth, and J. M. Robertson's works, Pagan Christs, and Christianity and Mythology, says,

"Whilst I am not prepared to go quite as far as Drews and Robertson in denying the possibility of the existence of Jesus, I cannot ignore the fact, confirmed by recent historical criticism, that it is impossible to extract from the Gospels, sufficient incontestable evidence necessary for a biography of the Gospel hero. In brief, my view is, that, probably 1900 years ago, a teacher and a claimant to the Messiahship, named Jesus, the son of Joseph and Mary, lived in Galilee. His apocalyptic dreams, and his eschatological discourses induced his followers to recognize his Messianic claims, and this led to conflict with the ruling authorities, i.e. the Roman Procurator.

"The death of Jesus did not destroy the movement he had set foot. His followers awaited his Parousia, and meanwhile they remained within the camp of Pharisaic Judaism. This state continued until the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E.¹ In the early years of the second century the Gospels were written and Christianity arose as a new religion."²

This is the Orthodox point of view and was expressed by this author in 1910. In this year also was published the book by the Orthodox scholar, G. Klein, entitled Ist Jesus eine historische Persönlichkeit. This author attempts to show that all ancient Jewish literature proves that Jesus was a real individual, though he recognizes the difficulties of piercing through the addenda of the Evangelists to obtain a clear portrait of him.

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1. Common Era.
2. Friedlander, The Jewish Sources of the Sermon on the Mount, Preface, p. xviii-xix.

More recent works on Jesus by Jewish scholars are inclined to accept greater portions of the Gospel records as authentic. The great contribution of Joseph Klausner to modern Jewish criticism is the evidence for the historicity of large portions of the Gospel records, which he presents from a wide knowledge of Talmudic literature, and other contemporary sources of the times of Jesus.

After a thorough discussion of these sources, and the history of the higher criticism of the Gospel records, Klausner makes the following conclusions concerning the Gospel records:

"But to cast wholesale doubt on the historicity of the Synoptic Gospels becomes more impossible the more widely we study all the branches of Judaism during the period of the Second Temple. Notwithstanding all the efforts of the Gospels to stress the great opposition between Jesus and Pharisaic Judaism, every step that he took, every word he spoke, all recall to us--chiefly by the confirmation, though sometimes by contradiction--the Palestine of his time and contemporary Jewish life and Pharisaic teaching."¹

From this point of departure, Klausner begins a critical and selective reconstruction of the life, the times, and the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth.

2. Jewish Attitude toward the Miraculous.

In this process of reconstruction, which is attempted not only by Klausner, but also by other modern Jews, the life of Jesus is carefully shorn of all its miraculous

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1. Klausner, Jesus of Nazareth, pp. 126-127.

framework, and careful explanations of the reason for their presence in the records are frequently offered.

This is interesting in so far as it was chiefly in the role of a performer of miracles and worker of magic that Jesus left any impression upon rabbinical tradition.¹ Klausner offers a five-fold explanation of these miraculous accounts which is comprehensive enough to cover practically all those offered by other scholars, and hence will be cited in full:

"Since modern science cannot imagine an effect without an external or internal cause, it is unable to rest content with the simple answers offered in the age of the Encyclopedists--that all the miracles attributed to Jesus, as well as to other great men in the world, are mere inventions deliberately contrived by cunning priests. The miracles of Jesus can be divided into five types:

(1) Miracles due to a wish to fulfil some statement in the Old Testament or to imitate some Prophet (Mk. 5:22-43).

(2) Poetical descriptions which, in the minds of the disciples, were transformed into miracles (Mk. 11:13-14).

(3) Illusions (Mk. 6:47-51).

(4) Acts only apparently miraculous (Mk. 4:35-41).

(5) The curing of numerous 'nerve-cases' . . . Jesus obviously had a power of 'suggestion' of influencing others to an unusual extent. Had not this been the case his disciples could never have held him in such veneration, remembering and teaching every word he spoke; nor could they, in their turn, have so influenced thousands and tens of thousands by the power which they had derived from him.

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1. Cf. Kohler, K., Moses and Jesus, Lecture. Jewish Encyclopaedia, art. on Jesus of Nazareth in Jewish Legend, pp. 170-171. The Toldoth Yeshu.

This force, which Jesus had, comprises some secret, some mystical element, still not properly studied by the ordinary psychologists and physicians and scientists, who are conversant only with the laws of nature so far determined by science."¹

Yet, the very detail in which Klausner is involved through these explanations demonstrates his sense of the close connection between the teaching of Jesus and the wondrous deeds which he performed. This historian recognizes that there is more here than the mere waving of the magician's wand, and that the acts ascribed to Jesus are not those ascribed to an ordinary miracle-monger. His discountenance of any superficial explanation of these events bespeaks a realization of something unusual and beyond the natural which entered into the power which Jesus exerted over his contemporaries.

Nevertheless, the careful explanation offered by him and by other Jews is also a witness to the determination of modern Jewish scholarship to see in Jesus nothing more than man.

3. Jewish Explanation of the Resurrection.

In regard to the resurrection of Jesus, although Jewish scholars are agreed in denoting it as legendary, their accounts for the source of the fiction are varied. Klausner in his explanation of this point of the gospel

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1. Klausner, opus cit. pp. 267-270.

history gives special emphasis to a thesis which is carried through a great part of his study:

"deliberate imposture is not the substance out of which the religion of millions of mankind is created . . . There can be no question but that some of the ardent Galileans saw their Lord and Messiah in a vision."¹

Klausner then attempts to prove that the vision was a spiritual rather than a material one.

Joseph Jacobs in Jesus as Others Saw Him through his mouthpiece, Meshullam ben Zadak, an imaginary scribe of the time of Jesus, finds the key to the account of the resurrection in a mystical experience which this scribe is supposed to have had after his own contacts with the Galilean. He describes his experience in this way:

"Now I will tell thee of a most strange event that happened with me and this Jesus. A day or two after this I was sitting in my room and studying the words of Torah, and had fallen into a deep thought on the things of this life and the next, and gradually I fell to thinking of certain words that I had heard from Jesus the Nazarene, as I have before told you. Hast thou ever felt, Aglaophonos, as if some one was gazing upon thee, and thou couldst not refrain from looking around to see who it was? So I felt at this moment, and I looked up from the sacred scroll, and lo! Jesus the Nazarene stood before me, gazing upon me with those piercing eyes I can never forget. His face was pale and indistinct. but the eyes shone forth as if with tenderness and pity. Then he seemed to lean forward, and spoke to me in a low tone yet piercing voice these words: 'Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead, and the Christ shall shine upon you.' I had shrunk back from his gaze, and was, indeed, in all amaze and wonder that he should be in the room; but when I looked again, behold, he was gone, there was no man there . . .

"I know not what to think; but I have heard that, even after his death, those who were nearest and dearest to Jesus

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1. Klausner, opus cit. p. 359.

saw him, and heard him even as I did. Nor do I wonder at this, after what had occurred to myself."¹

However, the more universal Jewish point of view is simply that the Gospel writers heard of the event more as a current rumor turned into a tradition than as an actual occurrence of which they knew the actual facts. The contradictions in the four narratives are pointed out, and a complete mythological tone is given to the whole.²

Hence, we see that the obstacles which confront the mind of the modern Jew in his effort to revision the historical Jesus are many. One wonders that an attempt is made to see beyond them at all. The records are, to his notion, both inaccurate and inadequate, and yet in spite of these difficulties, we find these many modern Jewish efforts to reconstruct the life of Jesus at surprising length.

B. Jewish Estimates of the Worth of Jesus as a Moral Ideal.

In the mind of the Reform Rabbi Kaufmann Kohler, the difficulties in getting a clear portrait of Jesus somehow enhance rather than detract from his moral worth. This writer makes the following significant comments:

"The history of Jesus is so wrapped up in myths, and his life as told in the gospels is so replete with contradiction, that it is difficult for the unbiased reader to arrive at

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1. Jacobs, Jesus as Others Saw Him, pp. 97-98.
2. cf. Goodman, The Synagogue and the Church, pp. 251-261.

the true historical facts. But as the clouds in the sky holding the orb of day, rising in the East, reveal its brilliant magnificence rather than obscure it, so do the legends clustering around a popular hero disclose rather than obscure the presence of a great personality impressing the people with power and charm. So do the beautiful tales about Jesus of Nazareth show that there was a spiritual daybreak in that dark corner of Judea of which official Judaism had failed to take sufficient cognizance. The stone that the builder rejected became the corner stone of a new world. In this light must we view the life of that personality whose very name was destined to divide human history in two."¹

But does this view represent that of the major portion of Jewry today? Could the figure which the modern Jewish eye sees through the mists find its emblem in the sunrise, or does it indeed signify more to them the closing in of Israel's long night?

To many orthodox Jews, it is a question not worth a great deal of consideration. Paul Goodman expresses the opinion that no mere sympathetic appreciation of the moral excellences of Jesus by Jewish writers could ever bridge the gulf between the synagogue and the church--especially so long as the church regards Jesus as God in the flesh.

"Jesus Christ is to the Christian theologian beyond any comparison, whatever, and the language about him is, therefore, pitched in the highest possible key."²

1. Jewish Analyses of Deficiencies in the Character of Jesus.

Yet there are considerations which prevent some Jewish scholars from seeing Jesus even as a moral ideal.

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1. Kohler, The Origins of the Synagogue and the Church, 211.
2. Goodman, The Synagogue and the Church, p. 234.

The first difficulty is found in what may be called the inconsistencies of his character with his teachings. Since these may afford to the Christian apologist a challenge in the field of exegesis, they will be listed.

a. Inconsistency.

This idea of the inconsistency of Jesus is one of the principal contentions in Friedlander's work, The Jewish Sources of the Sermon on the Mount. According to this author, Jesus taught that men should not seek public notice, but then asked his disciples, "Whom do men say that I am?"; he taught that men should not pray at length, but he himself prayed whole nights at a time; he taught that men should love their enemies, but he denounced the Pharisees in hatred; he said "Judge not," but he judged his opponents with harshness; he said "Swear not at all," but he himself said "Amen, Amen," which is an oath according to the Talmud.¹

b. Mistaken Conception of Demonology and the Coming Kingdom.

Paul Goodman finds the greatest evidences of the fallibility of Jesus in his obvious belief in demons, and also in his mistaken hopes concerning the imminency of the coming kingdom; he concludes his arguments against the divinity of Jesus with this paragraph:

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1. Friedlander, The Jewish Sources of the Sermon on the Mount, pp. 108-122.

"We, who live nineteen centuries after the first disciples of Jesus, know that they were absolutely wrong in their expectation that there would be fulfilled the solemn promises of their Master: 'Verily, I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away till all these things be accomplished.' (Matt. 24:34; Mk. 13:30; Lk. 21:32) But if we have been able to test by the perfect certainty of our irrefragable experience the fallacy of this declaration of Jesus, and now know how vain was the hope of the believers in him, what faith can we have in their views of his divine nature, or in the fulfillment of the promises of Jesus in regions beyond our touch and ken?"¹

c. Policy of Non-resistance.

The flaws which Reform Judaism finds in the character of Jesus are slightly varied from these cited above. Kaufmann Kohler in a comparison of Jesus with Moses finds the idealism of Jesus too idyllic to meet the needs of life.

"Considering the terrible catastrophe that soon afterwards befell Judea and was already fast approaching, we are amazed at the almost idyllic life the Nazarene saint passes in the midst of his followers on the beautiful lake of Genezareth, perfectly listless and unconcerned, while a world around him sinks into ruins."²

According to Kohler, Jesus gave his disciples a deep sense of love, but he lacked a sense of justice and truth, and in his doctrine of non-resistance paved the way for the entrance of much evil into the church. Dr. Kohler hopes the ideals of Judaism and Christianity will supplement each other in a union which will form the perfect goal of humanity.³

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1. Goodman, opus cit. pp. 294.
2. Kohler, Moses and Jesus, pp. 11.
3. Ibid. pp. 12.

d. Harshness toward his Opponents and his Mother.

Other writers find in Jesus a deep sense of social righteousness, and a vehemence in denouncing evil and injustice which to them amounts almost to arrogance. Klausner in describing Jesus' cleansing of the temple comments,

"Here, too, and here most of all, do we miss Jesus 'the gentle,' 'the meek,' which Christianity has endeavored to portray. What Jesus does, he does by sheer force; the fourth Gospel records that, on this occasion, he wielded a 'scourge of cords.' In contradiction to his familiar law which Tolstoy made the foundation of his teaching, Jesus 'resisted evil' in active and violent fashion."¹

Joseph Jacobs portrays his conception of this side of Jesus' character by a vivid mental picture of this scene, by using again Meshullam the scribe as his spokesman:

" . . . I hurried to the gate, and when I entered the Court of the Gentiles, I found all in confusion. The tables of the money changers had been overthrown and the men were gathering their moneys from the ground. And in the midst I saw one with a scourge in his hand. His face full of wrath and scorn, his eyes blazed, and on his left temple stood a vein all blue, throbbing with his passion. He was neither short nor tall, but of sturdy figure, and clad in rustic garb."²

But Joseph Jacobs does not fail to recognize here the gentler strain in the character of Jesus, and does so in the following manner:

"Now as the money changers were escaping from his wrath, one of them ran against a little child that was in the court, and it fell screaming. The fellow took no heed, but he went on his course. But the man with the scourge went to the little child, and raised it to its feet, and pressed

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1. Klausner, opus cit. pp. 318.

2. Jacobs, opus cit. pp. 11.

it to his side; the hand that rested on the curly head was that of a workman, with broken nails, and yet the fingers twitched with the excitement of the man. But, looking to his face, I saw that a wonderful change had come over it. From rage, it had turned to pity and love; the eyes that had flashed scorn on the money changers now looked down with tenderness on the little child. I remember thinking to myself, 'This man cannot say the thing that is not; his face betrayeth him.'¹

Claude G. Montefiore also finds imperfection in the character of Jesus in his attitude toward his mother and his opponents.²

e. Chauvinism of Jesus.

Other writers take issue with what they term the "chauvinism" of Jesus. As noted above, Klausner fails to find the wide political vision of the prophets in Jesus,³ and in other cases accuses him of unwarranted nationalism. The so-called harsh treatment of the Canaanitish woman is always pointed out, and his statement, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Mt. 15:24). Klausner also comments that the expression 'as a Gentile and as a publican' is with Jesus the strongest term of condemnation, and that he speaks of the Gentiles as not praying but as using 'vain repetitions' (babbling), (Mt. 6:7).⁴

In this relation, however, Jesus' deep love for his compatriots and sympathy with them is also recognized.

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1. Jacob, opus cit. pp. 12.
2. Montefiore, The Synoptic Gospel, vol. I, p. 170.
3. Klausner, opus cit. pp. 374.
4. Ibid. pp. 364, and Trattner, As A Jew Sees Jesus, pp. 57-58.

Regardless of what the historic attitude of the church may have been to the Jew, Hebrew students of the Gospels do not fail to see that in spite of Jesus' criticism and condemnation of some of the national practices, he conceived his mission as being pre-eminently directed toward his own people.

Dr. H. G. Enelow notes especially the fact that

"his most solemn admonitions were addressed to the Jewish people, and his most tender words were spoken concerning the Jewish people (Mt. 23:37). Jesus would not have been Jesus if he had not loved first and last the people from which he sprang and from whose heart his life-blood was drawn--if he had not been gratefully conscious of his heritage."¹

f. Claim of Divinity.

Greater than any of these objections to the Jewish mind, however, was the claim made either by Jesus or for him of his unique Sonship and relation to God. Heinrich Heine once said that it would be forever impossible for Israel to embrace Christianity if for no other reason than the utter impossibility of getting one Jew to believe that another Jew was divine. This statement is frequently quoted by Jewish writers and represents their stand quite clearly. Their opinions in this respect have been treated more fully in Chapter II of this study, but it must be remembered that after all this is the greatest of all stumblingblocks to the Jew in his attempt to reevaluate the life of Jesus.

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1. Enelow, A Jewish View of Jesus, pp. 13.

g. Summary.

Obviously, then, Jews of every school do not hesitate to point out those aspects of the character of Jesus which hinder their faith in his Deity, or in their acceptance of him as a moral ideal. In brief, they find blocks of stumbling in what they term a lack of harmony between his precept and his practice, his limited world view and his mistaken idea concerning demonology. The scholars of Reform Judaism are much more inclined to receive the Galilean as a moral Titan, and yet many of them recognize in him a figure slightly too idealistic for the work-a-day world in which men find themselves.

2. Jewish Explanations of the Influence of Jesus.

Yet, confronting the modern Jew is the problem of explaining the influence and change wrought in this same world of everyday by the protean figure of Jesus. Recognition must be made by them of the fact that the influence of Jesus far surpasses that to be expected from the character of the Man as they analyze it. To some this phenomena of history is quite inexplicable. Rabbi Abraham J. Feldman makes note of the Jewish wonder on this score in a statement made in a recent sermon:

"Jesus did catch the fancy of the world perhaps as our other sons did not. Frankly, we wonder why that happened. We wonder why the ado about Jesus. We are not displeased but we do not understand. We are not displeased because we feel that in the significance which Jesus acquired in

the lives of the millions and millions through all the centuries of Christendom there is the fulfillment of the promise unto the Patriarch Abraham . . . 'in thee and thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.'"¹

One of the outstanding statements made about Jesus by a Jewish Rabbi of our day is that of Solomon B. Freehof in his essay on Jesus in the recent work, Stormers of Heaven. He marvels at the unexcelled dynamic of the personality of Jesus in the world.

"The secret of the influence of Jesus will perhaps always remain a mystery. After painstaking scholarship has explained all that is explicable, the secret of his power remains unsolved. Scores of men have believed themselves to be the Messiah and have convinced many of their contemporaries, but those who believed Jesus to be the Messiah have built a great church upon the rock of their belief. There were plenty of miracle workers in ancient times, but the miracles of Jesus have been retold to countless nations and are still remembered.

"Perhaps the mystery is to be referred to a second mystery--that of personality. Whatever else piety believes him to have been, the man must have been unique as a man. Only one generation after his death, Paul was able to convince thousands that Jesus was superhuman, that God was his Father, that He was resurrected from the grave, that all men can now find salvation through Him . . . He could hardly have convinced his contemporaries of that unless there was a living memory of the godlikeness of Jesus . . .

"It may be that historical circumstances conspired to perpetuate the magic of his personality. The world was ripe for the adoration of just such a teacher of prophetic morality. His fellow Jews, who were ever critical of their leaders, could not adore him. The Roman world, accustomed to worship even its sinful emperors as gods, was swept away in adoration of the Godlike teacher of righteousness. Be that as it may, the consciousness of the presence of God has come to millions of men and women through Jesus.

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1. Feldman, If I Were a Jew, (Preached Jan. 2, 1951), pp. 99-100.

"That it is personality which is the essence of his power should be evident to every objective student of Christian literature. It is not merely that legends have been woven around his name. Every great religious genius has been en-haloed with loving legend. The significant fact is that time has not faded the vividness of his image. Poetry still sings his praise. He is still the living comrade of countless lives. No Moslem ever sings, 'Mohammed, lover of my soul,' nor does any Jew say of Moses, the Teacher, 'I need thee every hour.'

"The genius of Jesus is not one of doctrine nor of organization. These things were added to him. It is distinctly one of direct influence. He brought God near to men, through his presence. He made the Divine personal for myriads of worshipers, and posterity in gratitude has made his personality divine."¹

Paul Goodman recognized this influence, and he found a partial solution in the grasp Jesus had of essentials and the love and sacrifice which characterized his life. Before beginning his treatise in justification of the Jews' perennial rejection of Jesus' claims, he remarks,

"Jesus is now acclaimed by vast masses of the most civilized and progressive of our fellow-men as having been the incarnation of God on earth. His figure stands out like a beacon in whom they find security and comfort. The charm of his personality has sent its rays all over the world, and infused countless human hearts with love and self-sacrifice. His message comes to them often like an elemental force, proclaiming its ringing admonition: 'What does it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' Yet, imbued with an exceptional touch of tenderness for the 'publican and sinner,' and full of promise to those who believe in his power to save them from sin and evil."²

Other writers of the Orthodox school would explain the rise and influence of Christianity through an analysis of the world currents of Hellenism and Paganism into which

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1. Freehof, Stormers of Heaven, pp. 208-211.
2. Goodman, The Synagogue and the Church, p. 68.

Paul led the Judeo-Christian church rather than through any special virtues found in the life of Jesus, and Goodman also gives full recognition of the force of historic circumstance.¹

The historian, Joseph Klausner, also of Orthodox profession, finds other elements in the personality of Jesus to account for his astonishing influence. These he believes are to be looked for in the complex nature of his personality and in the pointed and easily remembered form of his teaching. Jesus, in the mind of Klausner, was humble and lowly-minded, and yet possessed such an exalted sense of his own mission as to amount to self-veneration. He was both a "man of the people," and yet a teacher, expert in the Scripture. He was indulgent and forgiving, and yet at another time unbending and protesting. At times his vision was clear and sane: at other times he was an unworldly visionary.

"Only such a man, mighty in forgiveness and equally mighty in reproof, could exert such an influence on all those who came in contact with him."²

Dr. Samuel Schulman, Rabbi of Temple Beth-El in New York, however, criticizes Klausner for not giving Jesus sufficient credit in his teaching for the doctrines which later clustered around his person. He argues, thus:

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1. Cf. Goodman, opus cit. Ch.X.
Cf. Friedlander, Hellenism and Christianity.
2. Klausner, Jesus of Nazareth, pp. 410-412.

"Now I hold that it was the uniqueness of Jesus, his claim to be more than man, that from the start drew his disciples to him, and not merely his moral teachings or his acts. For the gospel which Klausner quotes very significantly says that Jesus asks his disciples, 'Who do you think I am?' And Simon, called Peter, answered, 'The Messiah,' and Jesus praised him highly for the recognition.

"It is a great mistake as some modernists are doing to draw a distinction between the 'religion of Jesus' and 'the religion about Jesus' . . . I hold that every dogma about Jesus, that developed later, was only the fruit and seed of the religion of Jesus himself. In other words you cannot tear Jesus from the development that followed."¹

Other rabbis of the liberal branch of Judaism such as Claude G. Montefiore, Kaufman Kohler, Morris Lazaron, and Ernest Trattner, explain the tremendous influence of Jesus by pointing simply to the magnitude of his personality coördinating with the temper of his time.

Ernest Trattner in the Foreword of his work on Jesus gives an expression of this latter point of view:

"There was something in the character of the Man that was overwhelming--a flood of measureless and resistless attractiveness. Unschool'd folk from the common walks of life were drawn to him in bonds of personal attachment. Beyond the grave of their buried hopes they clung desperately to his message.

"Jesus himself never wrote a book--not so much as a line--yet it is estimated that more than sixty thousand volumes have been written about him. Eight hundred languages and dialects tell his story. Such is the incomparable grandeur of his influence that for nineteen centuries he has held the unjaded interest of men."²

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1. Schulman, Judaism, Jesus, and the Decadence in the Reform Jewish Pulpit, p.7.
2. Trattner, As A Jew Sees Jesus, Foreword, p. ix.

3. Jewish Appraisal of Jesus as an Ideal.

Claude G. Montefiore after considering the character of Jesus remarks that he finds it not difficult to understand why those reared in a Christian environment should idealize and amplify the character of Jesus. He then quotes Jowett's statement "An ideal necessarily mingles with all conceptions of Christ."¹

Some modern rabbis have even gone further and found in Jesus the perfect ideal created by humanity for itself. Morris Lazaron expresses this view in glowing terms,

"In creating Jesus, the most profound influence in Western civilization, Mankind, dreaming of the perfect human being, dowered him with the highest it could know; the noblest it could hope to be. The Jesus of history represents man as he yearned to be."²

The outstanding Reform Rabbi, Emil G. Hirsch reiterates this same view, and calls Jesus a work of art created by the very soul of the Jewish people.³

Solomon Schechter, the great scholar of Conservative American Judaism, also reflects this point of view in a review of Jacob's book, As Others Saw Him. Commenting upon the statement of Meshullam, "Jesus is greater than any of his sons," Dr. Schechter says,

"Almost all the epithets and metaphors indicative either of the meekness of Jesus or of his communion with God were

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1. Montefiore, The Synoptic Gospels, p. 170.
2. Lazaron, Seed of Abraham, Essay on Jesus, p. 111-112.
3. Cf. Hirsch, My Religion, pp. 33-46.

originally applied to Israel, from which they were transferred by his pupils to the founder of their sect, and we have no doubt that a thorough study of Jewish literature will lead to the conviction that Jesus was less meant as an incarnation of God than as an incarnation of Israel."¹

Regardless of the purpose this writer had in these statements, one cannot be indifferent to the tribute which these modern rabbis pay to Jesus when they thus portray him not only as a great Jew, but as the very incarnation of the soul of Israel.

4. Summary.

And, thus, they see Jesus. To many he is a figure not perfect indeed, and yet withal having mystical qualities of greatness, of personality, and of character which are difficult to explain. Some find the secret of his influence in the complexity and depth of his nature, some in his sense of his unique mission in the world, while others can explain his power only by saying that the Jesus of the Gospels is a living expression of the creative genius of the Hebrew people.

These views of the Nazarene bear upon then the scent and savor of recent historical criticism, and they are distinctly formed in the alchemy of the modern world. They could hardly have been in existence one hundred years ago. The Jewish scholar accounts for them by pointing to

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1. Schechter, Studies in Judaism, Third Series, p. 45.

the church's recent quest for the historical Jesus, to the shift of theological interest from the creeds of Christendom to its Founder and to the new tolerance of conflicting opinions in regard to him.

They bear marked change from those of traditional Judaism. Jesus was known to the ancestors of the modern Hebrew as "The Tolah" or "Accursed One." To them, he was a man of ignoble birth and character--a beguiler and seducer of the people. His name was the symbol of the persecution and anguish brought upon Israel by his professed followers. This view still finds an occasional re-echo in the ghetti of Orthodox Jewry. Yet, independent of the question as to whether the Jew should recognize Jesus or not, the predominant tendency in all of modern Judaism is to recognize that Jesus was a Jew of high character, who deeply loved the people from which he sprang, and that his influence in the world must redound to the praise of Judaism itself.

CHAPTER IV

THE RELATIONSHIP OF JESUS
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A. Shall Jesus Be the Barrier or the Bond Between Judaism and Christianity?

That Judaism, whether liberal or conservative, does not in any sense accept the Deity or Messiahship of Jesus is known to all. The problem which shall concern us in this chapter is to determine exactly what place modern Jews consider that Jesus will be assigned in relation to Hebrew life and letters. Shall the cross still mark the cross-roads between Judaism and Christianity as it has down the centuries, or may Jesus be that one who will break down "the middle wall of partition" between the two?

B. The Contribution of Joseph Jacobs.

The first important book of our day to present the attitude of the liberal Jew concerning the role of Jesus in Israel is that of Joseph Jacobs, As Others Saw Him. Dr. Israel Abrahams in the Preface to the 1925 edition of this volume made the following comment concerning the author:

"Across the ages Joseph Jacobs stretched a comrade's hand--an impotent gesture, perhaps, but a gesture inspired by the lovable and tolerant spirit of the modern Jewish scholar who made it."¹

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1. Jacobs, As Others Saw Him, Preface, vi.

The contribution of Jacobs is especially valuable in that he combined a deep admiration of Jesus the man, with an appreciation of what Jesus owed to his background. He concludes his memoire thus:

"But Israel is greater than any of his sons, and the day will come when he will know thee (Jesus) as his greatest. And in that day he will say unto thee, 'My sons have slain thee, O my son, and thou hast shared our guilt.'"¹

These words might be marked as a keynote which has constantly been resounded by liberal Judaism since the day of Jacobs. Yet, according to Dr. Abrahams it was not this author, but Claude G. Montefiore

"who won a hearing for Jews regarding the great Oriental whom the West reveres . . . and was the destined spokesman of Jewry as to the Jewish side of the heart and mind of Jesus."²

C. Contribution of Claude G. Montefiore.

Not only did Montefiore win a hearing for Jews in regard to Jesus by his monumental volumes on the Synoptic Gospels, published in 1909, but he also contributed greatly toward winning an audience for Jesus in the thinking of the modern Jew.

1. Challenge of the Jew to Study the New Testament.

In the Introduction to his commentary, this Anglo-Hebrew scholar lists six reasons why Jews should study the New Testament in addition to the Rabbinical

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1. Jacobs, opus cit. p. 217.
2. Ibid. Preface, p.v.

literature. They are the following:

(1) "There are things in the New Testament which are not to be found in the Rabbinical literature.

(2) "Whereas in the Rabbinical literature the great things are scattered around and among a huge mass of third and fourth class material, in the New Testament, they are found knit together in a small compass, emphasized, concentrated, and condensed.

(3) "The great utterances in the Rabbinical literature are often the casual utterances of a hundred different authors, whereas, in the New Testament, they, to a great extent, form an essential part of the teaching of one or two great minds, and they are strikingly and splendidly expressed.

(4) "The Rabbinical literature is unwieldy, huge and suited for the specialist only; whereas the New Testament is small and short, instinct with genius, first-class literature, and, as regards the Gospels, quite suited for modern readers. Being first class, it bears translation. Being the work of a genius, it is a book not for one age, but practically, like Shakespeare or Homer, for all time.

(5) "The average Jew is not acquainted with the Rabbinical literature, even if it could supply the place, which it cannot, of the New Testament and the Gospels . . .

(6) "(And this is perhaps the most important of all) the religious value of the teaching of the Synoptic Gospels for the modern Jew is not to be measured by the presence or absence of parallels to the various sayings of Jesus in the latter Rabbinical literature."¹

Montefiore then proceeds with his discussion of the religious value of the Synoptic Gospels which has been reviewed in the second chapter of the present study. In conclusion, he says,

"Especially for those who feel that Liberal Judaism is largely prophetic Judaism, will the prophet of Nazareth-- as his contemporaries with true instinct entitled him-- be cherished and admired. Perhaps in the future Christianity

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1. Montefiore, The Synoptic Gospels, 2d Edition, Introduction, pp. cxl-cxli.

and Judaism will be able to shake hands over the Sermon on the Mount and the fundamental elements in the moral and religious doctrine of Jesus."¹

2. Challenge for Jewish Acceptance of Jesus as a Prophet.

a. Positive Attitude of Jewish Liberals.

And Joseph Jacobs was just one of those many liberals in the modern synagogue who felt inclined to feature the Nazarene in this prophetic garb. He gives the following description of Jesus while in the process of bearing the Torah:

"The eyes of the Nazarene became fixed upon the ark, and a veil of mysterious tenderness seemed to come over them, as if he were in communion with the Shekinah, or Glory, itself."²

In another place, he says,

"As Jesus was saying these words, and many like unto them, his form seemed to expand, his eyes flashed with the light of prophecy, and all men were amazed at the power of his words."³

b. Negative Attitude of Jewish Conservatives.

These statements of Montefiore and Jacobs, however, have by no means remained unanswered by their coreligionists. Commenting upon the above cited passage in Jesus As Others Saw Him, Solomon Schechter said,

"These are personal impressions to which Meshullam is most welcome. But from an admirer to a believer is only a short step."⁴

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1. Montefiore, opus cit. Introduction, p. cxliv.
2. Jacobs, opus cit. p. 90.
3. Ibid. p. 115.
4. Schechter, Studies in Judaism, vol. III, p. 25.

Paul Goodman goes even further in rejecting their point of view by saying:

"The most rational attitude of the Jews toward Jesus is a purely negative one . . . there can be no place for Jesus in the religion of Israel. He is indissolubly bound up with the Christian dogma of the Trinity, and instead of being one of our flesh and blood, who has raised our kind to divine heights, he has been turned into a deity, who like many of his predecessors, walked the earth, and by his virtues and death is supposed to have saved mankind from perdition. The real point at issue between Judaism and Christianity on the personality of Jesus is this: Was he God, or was he a man? We have clear evidence that, so far from being God Himself, he was not only a man with very human failures, but that he was liable to gross errors."¹

Gerald Friedlander seconds this view, and also maintains that the prophetic claims put forth by Jesus or for him by the Evangelists are so closely involved with the questions of the Sonship and the Messiah, that the Jew cannot accept them.²

3. Challenge for Jewish Acceptance of the Teachings of Jesus.

The second contention of Montefiore, that the Jew and the Christian may eventually find a common meeting ground in the Sermon on the Mount, seems to be more generally acceptable to Judaism.

a. View of Harry Austryn Wolfson.

In an introductory essay prefaced to the 1925 edition of Jesus As Others Saw Him, Harry Austryn Wolfson asserts that this indeed will be the only way in which the

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1. Goodman, The Synagogue and the Church, p. 291.

2. Cf. Friedlander, The Jewish Sources of the Sermon on the Mount, Chapter I, Was Jesus a Prophet?

Jews will ever reclaim Jesus. Since this statement of Wolfson's represents a very prevalent Jewish attitude, it will be cited at length here:

"The Jewish reclamation of Jesus will not be brought about by efforts of evangelical piety on the part of some Jews, or by a sentimental yearning for what we haven't got, or by a servile imitation of the more powerful element in our environment. It will come about as a result of a wider and more comprehensive conception of the scope of Jewish learning, and Jewish literature and of a general restoration of our lost literary treasures. When the works of Josephus, and the Apocrypha, and the Hellenistic writings have all been restored by us and given a place beside the hallowed literature of our tradition, then the works of Jesus also will find a place among them. It is not as a returning hero that Jesus will be restored, not as a beautiful saint--we shall not regret the past nor shall we apologize for our forefathers. But when with the revival of Jewish culture and Jewish learning under free and unhampered conditions in a Jewish environment, painstaking Jewish scholars, in an effort to reorganize and to reclassify our literary treasures, will come to compile anthologies of the wise sayings and inspiring teaching of our ancients, they will include among them the sermons and parables of Jesus the Nazarene, the Galilean Rabbi who, like Philo and Josephus, by force of historical circumstances has been for centuries better known among non-Jews than among Jews . . . The sayings of Jesus together with the sayings of other rabbis will win their way into the speech of the people, will become blended and interwoven, and misquoted, after the manner of such things--for they all breathe the same spirit. His sayings will be considered as part of the maxims of the anonymous body of the wise, of blessed memory, who express the national genius of the people, not as those of an inspired individual to be worshiped and exalted above all others."¹

b. View of Joseph Klausner.

Joseph Klausner, while denying to Jesus a place in the line of Hebrew prophets, also recognizes the permanent value for Israel of his ethics in the concluding

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1. Jacobs, opus cit. Introductory, pp. xiv-xv.

paragraph of his book:

"But in his ethical code there is a sublimity, distinctiveness and originality in form unparalleled in any other Hebrew ethical code; neither is there any parallel to the remarkable art of his parables. The shrewdness and sharpness of his proverbs and his forceful epigrams serve, in an exceptional degree, to make ethical ideas a popular possession. If ever the day should come, and this ethical code be stripped of its wrappings of miracles and mysticism, the Book of the Ethics of Jesus will be one of the choicest treasures in the literature of Israel for all time."¹

c. The Wise-Schulman Controversy.

The preceding statement by Klausner has aroused quite a bit of comment from the Jewish rabbinate. Soon after the publication of Jesus of Nazareth in English translation, Dr. Stephen S. Wise, Rabbi of the Free Synagogue of New York City, delivered his memorable address on Jesus & propos of reviewing this book. In this sermon he made four leading propositions: (1) Jesus was; (2) Jesus was a Jew; (3) Jesus was a man; (4) Jesus was not a Christian. He characterized Klausner's work as the most notable thing which has ever been written by a Jew on this subject, and ended with the assertion that the Jews should accept Jesus as an ethical teacher.²

This sermon stirred American Jewish Conservatism quite deeply, and, as a result Dr. Wise, was asked to relinquish the chairmanship of the United Palestine Appeal, an important committee of the Zionist Organization.

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1. Klausner, Jesus of Nazareth, p. 414.
2. Cf. Review of Reviews, vol. 73, p. 203. Outlook, vol. 142, p. 62. Christian Century, vol. 43, p. 26.

Dr. Samuel Schulman, Rabbi of Temple Beth-El in New York-- also a Reform synagogue, preached a sermon in rejoinder, immediately following that of Dr. Wise. It bore the title, "Judaism, Jesus, and the Decadence in the Reform Jewish Pulpit." In this, he asks the privilege to add a fifth 'was' to the list enumerated by Dr. Wise: namely, "Jesus was mistaken." Commenting on this he says,

"That is the Jewish point of view. Jesus was mistaken, according to their notion, in his belief about himself. But it was just the belief about himself which proved such a great attraction to the first disciples who were drawn to him. Therefore, the historic difference between Judaism and Christianity turns around the person of Jesus. And it is a difference which can never be compromised. If Judaism accepted Jesus as a teacher, it would cease to be . . ."1

Dr. Schulman proceeded with his argument by saying that Dr. Wise omitted the things in Klausner which would have impaired the eloquence of his appeal to the Jews to see in Jesus, "soul of our soul." He referred, then, to Klausner's demonstration of the effect the acceptance of Jesus' teaching would have on the breakdown of Jewish nationalism. He criticizes Klausner's book, however, on the score of lack of originality, and he says that it is involved with contradictory statements. By way of illustration, the statements of Klausner, concerning the impossibility of building up human society and living normal human life on the basic principles of Jesus, are contrasted with his opinion quoted above that the Ethics of Jesus will become one of the most beautiful

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1. Schulman, Judaism, Jesus, and the Decadence in the Reform Jewish Pulpit, p.8.

pearls in Jewish literature of all time. According to this rabbi, the two views cannot be swallowed in the same breath.¹

Dr. Wise is then challenged with three questions, which are to be answered with either "yes" or "no":

"Does he believe that Jesus of Nazareth was the greatest teacher produced by Israel? Secondly, does he believe that the ethics which Jesus taught are superior to the ethics of Moses and the Hebrew Prophets and our sages, like Hillel and Akiba, and all the great spirits that followed them? And thirdly, does he believe that the Jews are ethically inferior, because for the last nineteen hundred years they did not have the benefit of the teachings of the gospels to which he would now introduce us, since there seems to him to be something lacking in us? If he answers these questions with 'yes', then I say his place is not in a Jewish pulpit. And if he answers, 'no,' then I say, why do you make such a fuss, and why do you make such sensational, superficial, and facetious statements? If he does not mean what he says, why say it?"²

This controversy between Dr. Wise and Dr. Schulman is particularly interesting in so far as it demonstrates that the Jewish disagreement about the attitude toward Jesus does not resolve itself into one of the differences between the Orthodox and Reform branches of Judaism. Although Rabbis of the Reform school are usually inclined toward a more liberal view, the subject is largely one of individual opinion, and both liberal and conservative scholars are found within every wing of Jewry.

Dr. Schulman closed his sermon with the following assertion, and this represents very clearly the position

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1. Schulman, opus cit. pp. 9-12.
2. Ibid. pp. 10-11.

of conservative Judaism in regard to Jesus:

"Jesus divides Christians and Jews. If they are ever to be united, the belief in one God will bring about the union. The hope of the Jew is that in the name of God, someday, someday the world will be united. With respect to the personality of Jesus, the Jew must necessarily wait. When the world will cease to call Jesus, God, Israel will know what to do with him."¹

D. Summary.

1. Conservative View: Jesus a Dividing Line.

This, then, is the conservative view, as doubtless would be expressed by one who holds it: We cannot accept Jesus as a prophet in Israel not only because he does not measure up to prophetic criteria, but also due to the narrow margin between admiration and adoration in regard to the person of Jesus. We may not even take his interpretations of our ancient code, lest in restating our ethics, he bring in with him his theology.

2. Liberal View: Jesus a Bond of Union.

Other voices are heard today in Jewry, however, saying that Jesus, the Jew, must not mark a division between the people whom he loved, and the races of the Gentiles. Rather he must unite them as none other.

Hyman G. Enelow concludes his study of the life of Jesus by saying:

"The Jew cannot help glorying in what Jesus thus has meant to the world; nor can he help hoping that Jesus may

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1. Schulman, opus cit. p. 19.

yet serve as a bond of union between Jew and Christian, once his teaching is better known and the bone of misunderstanding at last is removed from his words and his ideal."¹

Discussing this changing attitude of the Jew toward Jesus, Ernest Trattner makes the following comment:

"What of the future? If I may venture a prophecy, I believe that the Jewish world will move toward a progressive appreciation of Jesus in proportion as the Christian world turns its back on the whole abracadabra of mediaeval theology. When that day arrives, men will set new levers to raise the universe."²

A Jewish idealist of another age, dreaming in a Roman prison of a new world-wide spiritual community, ventured this:

"He is our peace,
He who made Jew and Gentile one people,
Yea, who broke down that party-wall of severance,
Who in His crucified body destroyed the cause
of our enmity,
To wit, the Law--a thing of ordinances embodied in
enactments--
That He might recreate the two, in union with
Himself into one new man,
So making peace,
And might reconcile us both, Jews and Gentiles,
In one corporate body, to God,
By means of His cross, slaying our enmity upon it."³

Their vision is the same--their method for attaining it as far removed as East from West. To the mind of Paul of Tarsus, the secret of racial harmony is to be found beyond the life and teachings of his Lord--in his death. For Paul, the cross of Jesus marked not the cross-road between the Jew and the Gentile, but the highway which must lead both to God.

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1. Ebelow, A Jewish View of Jesus, p. 181.
2. Trattner, As A Jew Sees Jesus, p. 180.
3. Ephesians 2:14-16. Arthur S. Way Translation.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION: THE BASIS OF AN APOLOGETIC
TO THE MODERN JEW

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A. An Apologetic Based on Expert Knowledge and Deep Understanding.

"The Gibraltars and the Verduns of the non-Christian world require the highest strategy if they are to be won for Christ."¹ The issues between Judaism and Christianity are complex and involved; only expert knowledge and undaunted faith in God's eternal purposes and power will avail for their solution. Yet, if it is true that from the beginning Christianity has been a venture in the impossible, the immensity of the task need not be overwhelming. The fact that Jews today are more concerned than ever before with the place of Jesus of Nazareth in their history constitutes an unprecedented challenge and opportunity to the Christian who has found the goal of life's quest in this same Jesus. Not only highest strategy, but deepest sympathy and understanding will be demanded of the Christian who would present Jesus to the "whole house of Israel," as the One "whom God hath made both Lord and Messiah."²

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1. Zwemer, Samuel, *Leadership in the Jewish Field and How It Can Be Secured*, p. 93, in Christians and Jews, the Report of the Conference on the Christian Approach to the Jews, 1931.
2. Acts 2:36.

B. An Apologetic Centered in Jesus Himself.

Since the interest of the modern Jew is focused upon Jesus himself, the Christian apologetic must also be centered in him and in his work. Christianity stands or falls with him.

As we have reviewed the many expressions of Jewish opinion, it has become obvious that there are polar differences between the present position of Judaism and that of evangelical Christianity. Yet there have been also evidences of a rapprochement which must be recognized and utilized by anyone who would make an intelligent approach to the Jew of today concerning Jesus.

It has also become apparent through this study, that the arguments advanced by these various Jewish theologians frequently cancel each other. The best ground of approach to the liberal Jew often may be found in the words of the conservative Jew, and vice versa.

1. Apologetic Use of Estimates of Jewish and Non-Jewish Characteristics of Jesus.

That the Jew now recognizes the essential rapport which Jesus held with Judaism has been a notable step forward. Equally important, however, is their sense of the degree to which he deviated from the common line of inspiration. That Jesus, the Jew, was an intense lover of his own people is a fact which has been submerged all too long by the fires of pogrom and persecution. And yet, that

Jesus was far more than a good and patriotic Jew--far more even than a mighty prophet in Israel, is the ground which the Christian must consistently hold, if he is to possess a Gospel which will be synonymous with "good tidings of great joy."

2. Apologetic Use of the Problem of Jesus' Messianic Consciousness.

Although some liberal Jews assert that Jesus' concept of himself was no more than that of any great master of men and ideas who holds a high sense of his own mission and destiny, other Jews see quite clearly that Jesus' exaltation of his own place in Israel was unique, and an explanation for his dominant influence.

The Christian apologist must re-emphasize this view of the more conservative group, and point to the fact that the Jesus who "lifted empires off their hinges, and turned back the stream of centuries in its course" was not the gentle Nazarene, not the wise sage of Galilee, but rather, the One whom those who forsook all to follow proclaimed as "God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God."¹ The evidential value of the great Christological passages of the Synoptic Gospels must be given full consideration in regard to Jesus' expressed opinions concerning himself. His position as Law-Giver, Forgiver of Sins,

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1. The Creed of Constantinople.

the Sinless One, and the importance which he attached to his death in these three Gospels must also be considered. The dilemma must ever be faced as to whether Jesus was a deceiver of the people, a hopelessly deluded fanatic, or all that which he claimed. Joseph Klausner's thesis that "deliberate imposture is not the substance out of which the religion of millions of mankind is created"¹ must be brought strictly to bear in this relation.

3. Apologetic Use of the Problems raised by Historical Criticism.

The critical problem is certainly the greatest hazard which the Jew must cross before he may arrive at any true conception of Jesus. The Jew should be challenged anew to study the close relationship between the life and miracles of the Christ, and to consider the hall marks of human truth borne both by the accounts of the miracles and of the resurrection.

The result of the Jew's rejection of the Gospel according to John as an adequate source must be taken into full account. The attention of those having this critical bent may well be centered upon the portrait of Jesus given in the Synoptic Gospels, since they offer adequate evidence of the uniqueness of Jesus' life and work. To those seeking a deeper comprehension of Jesus' life and influence, the Johannine picture should be presented, and the self-revealing honesty of its author should be noted.

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1. Klausner, Jesus of Nazareth, p. 357.

Jewish scholars strongly accuse Jesus' anti-semitic and romantic biographers of re-creating his life in their own image. Yet the Jew should not be blind to his own unscientific tendency to do this identical thing. Jesus, as he appears in these modern Jewish estimates is preeminently a good rabbi--a good Jew--bearing noticeably those characteristics which the Jew admires in his leaders and prophets. This concept of Jesus can only be obtained by completely discounting the Gospel of John and those passages in the Synoptics which bear too plainly similarities to the later Christological theology. These are denoted as the interpolations of the Evangelists. These they ask a progressive Christianity to discard. Yet these very elements are those which constitute the uniqueness of historic Christianity and these it denotes as the source of its beneficial influence in the world.

4. The Imperative for a Whole Gospel.

This fact has been recognized by Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver in his arresting book, Religion in a Changing World. Dr. Silver says:

"Quite apart from the question of the divinity of Jesus, it is an indisputable fact that the personality of Jesus has been a luminously radiant fact in the life of Christianity. It has profoundly stirred the lives of many generations. It has moved myriads to emulation, to self-sacrifice, and to martyrdom. This unique personality which is so focal in the faith-life of the Christian means less, much less to the Buddhist, the Mohammedan, the Confucianist, and the Jew. To ask of Christianity to reduce

and attenuate this personality so as to make it acceptable to others would be to deprive it of that which is its prime distinction and its specific contribution to mankind."¹

To take away from Jesus those elements which prevent his being a typical and an ideal Jew would be to remove those things which make him Lord of the universe-- those things which make the Gospel of Jesus Christ "the power of God unto salvation." This step historic Christianity is unable to make.

5. Problems to be Met in Regard to Jesus' Character.

As to the flaws which Judaism finds in the character of the human Jesus, it has been seen that Hebrew scholars are by no means at one in those which are selected, and those which one group condemns another often extols. These conflicting opinions should be carefully alligned against each other in the Christian polemic. The arguments advanced as to Jesus' mistaken ideas, concerning demonology and the imminent kingdom, must be taken into account and answered by the Christian scholar. The quality of appreciation which, according to Dr. C. G. Montefiore, is a pre-requisite of any study of the life of Jesus must be emphasized.²

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1. Silver, Religion in a Changing World, p. 110.

2. Montefiore, The Synoptic Gospels, Introduction, p. cxli.

6. Problems to Be Met in Regard to Jesus' Teaching.

a. Question of Originality.

The much deliberated question as to the originality of Jesus' teaching, the Christian should be prepared to leave more or less at rest. The arguments, reviewed above, of men like Dr. Montefiore and Dr. Enelow form probably the best answers which can be advanced in reply to the negative charges made on this question. While the Christian holds that Jesus Christ was the greatest of all creative teachers, he does not advance any brief to the effect that the Spirit of Truth which dwelt in Jesus had not spoken through other men before him, and full recognition is given to the fact that he was the member of a race which had been for centuries the recipients of the Divine Revelation. Far more important than the question of the originality is the question of the truth of his teachings, and the two must not be confused. And far more important even than his teachings is the efficacy of his life and death; and the Christian apologist must have a clear eye to discern the essential in his presentation.

Effective use should be made of Dr. Montefiore's plea for the study of the New Testament records as composite and unified wholes, as well as his stress upon the need in Judaism for the redemptive heroism in the Christian Ethic.

b. Question of Impracticality.

The objections raised by Jews concerning the impractical nature of many of Jesus' teachings may be turned into a challenge to place before the objectors. It should be made clear that these high standards of living are attainable only through the dynamic given by Christ himself to those who hold their citizenship on that new plane of life which has been a reality to Christian heroes down the ages. The person who knows the living Jesus as the Redeemer from the power of sin will be able to cry: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."¹

c. Question of Redemption.

No more important emphasis can be made to the modern Jew than this distinctive feature of redemption in Christian doctrine. The life changing power given to the individual grappling with indwelling sin and the constancy of Jesus as a personal companion in the lives of millions of his followers--these are facts which, as we have seen witnessed by the admissions of Jewish writers themselves, are the inescapable challenges of Christianity to the Jew as well as to all others.

Needless to say, the reaction with which Jews will meet this line of evidence will be strongly colored

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1. Phil. 4:13.

by knowledge of the lives of individual Christians. Jewish missionary records amply attest the fact that those Jews who are led to receive Christ as Saviour are in most cases won through their glimpsing of the living Jesus in the lives of their Christian friends. No line of evidence will ever take the place of this one.

C. An Apologetic Centered in the Idea
of Fulfillment.

1. Jesus the Fulfillment of the Law.

We have seen that the negative attitude held by conservative Judaism toward the person of the Nazarene is largely due to the fear that acceptance of him in any way would bring an end to the national genius and distinction of Israel in the world.

The Jews must be led to see in Jesus, not the negation but the fulfillment of their national destiny. The orthodox Jew who clings tenaciously to the Law of Moses must be guided to realize that if that Law is to endure, it will be through its fulfillment in the teaching and work of Jesus. What fragment of ethical truth found in the Law has not been conserved in the teachings of Jesus? Have not those things which were relative and transient in it been made absolute and permanent in him? Where indeed may we find the existence and fulfillment of the Levitical offerings and priesthood if not in the sacrifice of his death and in the priestly work as described in the Epistle to the Hebrews?

2. Jesus the Fulfillment of Prophecy.

To Prophetic Judaism should be raised the query: What cosmic figure will more completely fulfill that which was foretold of the coming Messiah by their ancient seers? Who might be more worthy of the role of Israel's Suffering Servant than that One through whose death so many peoples have come to worship Israel's God? Does not the old dispensation with its many unexplained symbols, unfulfilled prophecies, and its unsatisfied longings find its solution and its fulfillment in the New Covenant made at Calvary?

D. Conclusion.

In review, we conclude from the preceding study that the following apologia for Jesus may be presented to the modern Jew:

1. The argument from the conflicting and self-annuling views in the forum of Judaism itself.

2. The argument based on the adequacy of the evidence in the Synoptic Gospels to present Jesus as the Messiah and the Son of God.

3. The argument based on the a priori conclusions made by Jewish scholars in their treatment of the Christological documents, and their tendency to treat them as fragments rather than composite wholes.

4. The argument based on the self-evincing trust-worthiness of the same documents.

5. The argument based on the Jewish need for the redemptive energy of the Christian evangel.

6. The argument based on Jesus' perfect fulfillment of the demands of the Law and the Prophets.

We have seen through the mists of the centuries that the Hebrew people begin to look anew at the figure of the Man of Nazareth. As he is lifted up by those who hold dear his Name, the hearts of the men of Israel must surely go out to him.

"Oh times of weak and wavering faith
That labour pleas in His defence,
Ye only dim Him with your breath
He is His own best evidence."¹

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1. Smith, Walter C.

APPENDICES

APPENDICES

Introductory Statement

The following pages give the report of personal interviews conducted by the writer with representative leaders of Jewish thought in Greater New York. Their names were suggested to her through the kindness of Dr. Joshua Bloch, head of the Jewish Division of the New York Public Library.

The interviews were based on the following questions, designed to cover those points pivotal in the modern Jewish attitude toward Jesus:

- (1) What original elements do you find in the life and teaching of Jesus?
- (2) What contribution do you think he has made to the race?
- (3) What is your own opinion of the personality of Jesus?
- (4) What conception do you think He held of Himself?
- (5) Do you consider that there is an anti-nationalistic force in His teaching?
- (6) How would you compare Him to the Hebrew prophets of the Old Testament?
- (7) Do you think the Jewish people should reclaim Jesus as a great teacher and leader?

The opinions of these leaders as they discussed the foregoing issues were recorded carefully. Their views, as herein reported, retain as far as possible the original phrasing.

DR. DAVID DE SOLA POOL--Orthodox Rabbi of the Spanish-Portuguese Synagogue, 70 Central Parkway West, New York. (This is the oldest synagogue in America.)

1. What original elements do you find in the teachings of Jesus?

So far as we are able to tell from the records that we have, Jesus spoke in his own name with personal authority instead of with the "Thus saith Jehovah" of the prophets or with the "in the line of Jewish tradition" with the rabbis.

The emphasis on the imminent end of the world was also distinctive in Jesus' teaching. This teaching colored his whole ethical outlook and his expectation of the end of society influenced his attitude toward wealth, poverty, and other things.

The secondary emphasis which he placed upon families is also in contradiction of Judaism--as evidenced by such sayings as "Follow me, and let the dead bury their dead!"

While many of the words of Jesus can be paralleled by individual utterances of the rabbis, the emphasis on the eschatological concept has brought into Jesus' teaching elements which are distinctly not paralleled by the main line of Jewish teaching. His was an "other-worldly ethic."

2. What contribution do you think he has made to the race?

The contribution of Jesus has been tremendous in that his teachings have reached the millions of the Gentile world. This influence which he has exerted is, from this point of view, unique in the world's history.

3. What is your own opinion of the personality of Jesus?

You realize, of course, that we know very little of Jesus as a man. We have recorded in detail only some incidents of a few months of his life, and from these it is not easy to form a conception of the man himself. Making allowances, however, for the limitations in the record, what impresses me most about him is the personal magnetism that inevitably attracted a following of devotees. His personality seems to be characterized by a passionate indignation with insincerity and hypocrisy, the missionary enthusiasm for the coming of the kingdom of heaven. Some of his teachings are in the nature of poetic expression.

I am also impressed by the sadness and loneliness of his life, the sense of the frustration of his ideals, and his fiercely combatant spirit. But after all, of his real personality we know so very little . . .

4. What conception do you think he held of himself?

A religious teacher . . . whose duty it was to bring about God's kingdom on earth by leading people to repentance. No, he did not think of himself as the Messiah--that is, certainly not during the greater part of

his life. It is possible that during the last few months of his life, the suggestion made to him so often by others was accepted by him.

He thought of himself as son of God only in the sense that every Jew is a son of God.

5. Do you consider that there is an anti-nationalistic force in his teaching?

No, I do not consider any anti-nationalistic force to be in his teaching.

6. Would you compare him to the Hebrew Prophets of the Old Testament?

Is he in the line of prophetic inspiration?

Yes . . . and no.

Yes--in his fervor and religious intensity.

No--in so far as he gave his message in his own name. The prophets never did this. "Ye have heard of the old time," Jesus would say, "but I say unto you"--and then he would give a message which was different from the Law.

7. Do you think the Jewish people should reclaim Jesus as a great teacher and leader?

The Jewish people cannot reclaim Jesus so long as the world regards him as the Christ. We feel that Jesus was once ours, but that he has been taken from us, and has become the divine Christ.

Even should the church become completely modernized, it would be feasible to worship together only on

occasion. The Jew and Christian can worship together in a non-sectarian service, but Judaism, having its own ceremonial observances, ritual, and the Hebrew language, could not identify its worship with that of an ultra-modern church without sacrificing that which makes it Jewish.

DR. HERBERT GOLDSTEIN--Orthodox Rabbi.

I cannot answer your questions categorically as the problem of Jesus doesn't concern the Orthodox Jew. Our congregations are not in touch with Christianity as are the Reformed Synagogues, and hence we do not have to bother with this problem. Jesus doesn't enter our thinking at all. We have an isolated attitude toward him, and we are not interested in him. We do not accept him either as a great teacher or leader. We want to have nothing to do with him.

As to the other questions, I would rather not commit myself, as it might only stir up more anti-semitism. Some person reading your thesis might say, "There is the Jew again--still continuing in his century-old rejection of Jesus." Indeed, it is not against Jesus himself, perhaps, that we turn so strongly, but only the atrocities which have been committed against us in his name. It is a thing of the present as well as the past. Consider Poland and Germany! And even at so civilized a place as Columbia University, the anti-semitic sentiment is very keen, and only a limited number of Jews are admitted as students.

Jesus, himself, of course, was a Jew, but the Paulinists broke away from Judaism in every way. For this reason, I believe that the Seventh Day Adventists and the Seventh Day Baptists are much nearer the true religion of Jesus than are other Christian denominations. Jesus observed the Sabbath Day.

The anti-nationalistic element in Jesus' teaching does not concern me. I am not a strict nationalist myself. But to recognize Jesus would be to give up all the things which make me a Jew, and which are most sacred to me. For this reason, we cannot say to Christian missionaries often enough, "Leave us alone! We want to be left alone so far as Jesus is concerned!"

DR. MORDECAI KAPLAN--Professor at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. Conservative position.

1. What original elements do you find in the teachings of Jesus?

I find it difficult to find anything original. The Sermon on the Mount, while striking, has Jewish precedents. The teaching of Jesus represents the advance of Jewish thought upon its own self.

In so far as historically the original teachings were not the cause of the part Jesus has played in the world, which was rather traceable to the conjuncture of historical forces, they are not important.

Every idea of his has its analogue in contemporary Jewish thought, and whatever was an advance was not confined to the group identified with Jesus. His Ethic may be original in its formulation, but literary criticism hesitates here, ascribing many additions to his disciples. Parables had already become common as a mode of teaching in Judaism.

2. What contribution do you think he has made to the race?

His contribution is the same as that of any great teacher who gives expression to the highest and most advanced thought of his age, and who gives us evidence of the latent possibilities in man.

3. What is your own opinion of the personality of Jesus?

Other-worldly, saintly, spiritual, weighed down by a sense of sin in his environment, keenly sensitive to social injustice. It takes a person of keenly sensitive nature to identify himself with a message of that kind. He undoubtedly possessed tremendous spiritual power, which led his disciples to believe in his resurrection. He must have possessed something extraordinary such as you find in a man like Ghandi. Ghandi always calls up to me the type of Jesus. His ability to inspire confidence makes us characterize him as a moral genius.

4. What conception do you think he held of himself?

He had moments of doubt, and he was not sure of himself at all times. Of course, in his moments of certainty he regarded himself as a successor of the Prophets-- in a sense the last of the Prophets in that he was the final herald of the coming Kingdom of God. Certainly, he did not think of himself as divine or as the semi-divine *Λόγος*. All this was a later interpretation.

5. Do you consider that there is an anti-nationalistic force in his teaching?

Jesus came at a time when the apocalyptic hope prevailed. He took up the old strain that the day was at hand, and cried, "Repent, Repent." The language of fear and miracles was the only language known. The tendencies in his message are more important than the teachings of Jesus himself. He gave opportunity to Paul, who

was the real founder of Christianity. Paul was the mediator between the episode of Jesus in the history of Judaism and the European world which was in search for a more adequate religion. Paul himself was not brought up in Palestine, but he was a Roman citizen and an Hellenist Jew. As such he was the ideal personality to interpret and transmit Jesus to a world looking for a new revelation of Deity. Even Rome itself was experimenting. Here was Paul who comes with the news of a revelation which seemed to satisfy the yearning for a supernatural revelation. Out of this synthesis—the episode of Jesus, European-Roman search for religion, Constantine the Great—came Christianity. There is no anti-nationalism in the teaching of Jesus itself.

6. How would you compare Jesus to the Hebrew Prophets of the Old Testament?

He was like the Prophets in that he sounded the apocalyptic hope. He was sure of a great world cataclysm when all the prophecies would be fulfilled. Yet the work of the canonical Prophets was essentially different from his. Their task was to develop and to enlarge the concept of God which has made the Jewish religion the great historical religion it has become. Jesus came in the same spirit, but the conception of God had attained a sufficiently spiritual character to need no further refinement. Jesus simply acted the part of the announcer of the coming of the Kingdom of the Lord. He added nothing new to their message.

7. Do you think the Jewish people should reclaim Jesus as a great teacher and leader?

The message of apocalypticism has no lasting appeal to the Jew. I think we should be adjusted to our environment; hence, the Jews should study to understand the meaning of the life of Jesus. Yet, we should not look to him but rather to ourselves and our teaching to help create a better world.

I am a great believer in progress, and our hope should be in the future rather than in the past. The men of the ancient world were necessarily intolerant and narrow in their world-view. Their messages rarely meet our needs. Both Jew and Gentile should look ahead rather than look backward. No one in the past has made any permanent contribution. But anyone who found life worth-while and who taught men to look to the future whether in the right or the wrong sense--looked in the direction of the kingdom of God.

ERNEST TRATTNER--Reform Rabbi and author of As A Jew Sees Jesus, The Autobiography of God, and Unravelling the Book of Books.

1. What original elements do you find in the life and teachings of Jesus?

Most of my ideas concerning Jesus are found in my book on this subject, which represents the progressive Jewish view. His teachings were reproduced from the Rabbis in the main, and his originality lay in his life itself. Jesus said nothing new.

2. What contribution do you think he has made to the race?

We cannot discern the true contribution of Jesus when he is wrested from his historical setting. One must distinguish between the religion of and the religion about Jesus. The religion of Jesus was Judaism in its essence, and we have no quarrel with his teachings. He was a reformer within the synagogue. If Christians believed the teachings of Jesus it would transform the world. If every one in New York acted upon these teachings, this city would be changed into a new world. His greatest teaching was that of love to your neighbor--ἀγαπή--and if the Christians really knew Jesus they would teach Christian love. But behold the way the Christians hate the Jews; look at the way the Catholics and Protestants hate each other; look at the 250 sects in Christendom. All the evidences of Christian love which I have seen so far are ridiculous. Do you think that I could sit down at a love-feast with Adolf Hitler?

3. What is your opinion of Jesus as a man?

I would speak of Jesus in the most highly exalted terms. He was a unique and exalted character. The flaws in his character are only those due to his humanity. As a man he was subject to human frailties, and he was the product of his age. No man can escape his age.

4. What conception do you think he held of himself?

He conceived of his work in an apocalyptic setting, and thus considered himself to be the Messiah. He felt that he was the Son of God, in so far as he was a unique instrument in God's hand for serving his own people. In like manner, Mussolini considers his mission to be unique as a savior of the Italian people.

5. How would you compare him to the Hebrew Prophets of the Old Testament?

He was both a great Prophet and a great teacher.

6. Do you think the Jewish people should reclaim Jesus as a great teacher and leader?

No, not by any public reclamation. The teachings of Jesus, however, can only be of beneficial influence if they are seen in their proper historical perspective.

HERBERT BLOOM-- Reform Rabbi

1. What original elements do you find in the life and teaching of Jesus?

His originality lay entirely in his own personality. His sources were rabbinic, apocalyptic, and his greatest source was the Old Testament. Even as Shakespeare used old plots and transformed them with the stroke of his genius, Jesus took old truths and made them new by the light of his personality. His emphasis upon humility might be said to be original. On the other hand, meekness was one of the leading teachings of the Essenes. The negative Golden Rule as set forth by Hillel is preferable to that of Jesus since it is more human and practical. Jesus said, "Love your enemies," but classic Judaism says, "Have no enemies." The latter doctrine is certainly the most preferable one. His attitude toward the Pharisees is not different or amazing. The Talmud itself states that there are seven kinds of Pharisees, and only two of these are acceptable to God.

2. What contribution do you think he made to the race?

On this point, I wish to be emphatic. While I recognize in Jesus a great religious teacher, in no sense do I accept the Christian theory of Atonement--and I see in Jesus neither the Savior or the Messiah of the race.

3. What is your own opinion of the personality of Jesus?

He was one of the greatest Jewish teachers, but he was in line with certain ethical tendencies of his time. He was linked with the aesthetic group of the Essenes, whose doctrine and attitudes, traditional Judaism has renounced.

I object, however, to the conception of Jesus as the "prince of peace." He brought not peace, but a sword, and his vituperative against the Scribes can hardly be matched. He was decidedly a man of temper.

The priests accused Jesus of arrogance, and Jesus was arrogant. They were displeased because he gave no other authority than his own to his scriptural interpretations, and, perhaps, because of his interference with the temple trade. This, however, would never have led to his crucifixion as other great teachers had objected to the traffic in the Temple.

4. What conception do you think he held of himself?

He held the Messianic doctrine common to his time, and, indeed, he was one of the greatest Messianic teachers. He finally conceived of himself as the Messiah, but when and how this consciousness dawned, I do not know. He never conceived of himself as a God, and this addition to Christian theology was made by Paul and his later followers.

5. Do you think there is an anti-nationalistic force in his teaching?

No, I do not. I would not hesitate to use his name or his teaching in my ministry if they were à propos to the subject at hand.

6. How would you compare him to the Hebrew Prophets of the Old Testament?

Jesus was more in the rabbinic line than in the prophetic. I do not place him above R. Hillel, and Akiba ben Joseph is spiritually equal to the Nazarene. Like other Pharisees, his emphasis was upon the synagogue rather than the Temple.

7. Do you think the Jewish people should reclaim Jesus as a great teacher and leader?

I hope for the so-called millennial era of brotherhood, peace and mutual love. This will be brought about through the co-operation of all peoples; yet, I do not believe in the obliteration of cultural and social differences. I detest the word "toleration," but I am a great believer in co-operation.

There is no question as to whether we can get together about Jesus. We can never get together about the metaphysical concept of the Christ. The Jews have a passion for unity--both as to the government of the universe and as to the brotherhood of man. For this reason, we could never accept the doctrine of the Trinity.

DR. SAIO BARON--Professor of Jewish Literature, History and Institution at the Graduate School of Columbia University.

1. What original element do you find in the teaching of Jesus?

While the separate statements in the teaching of Jesus can be duplicated in the rabbinic literature, the combination and emphasis which he gave to them represent a novel and an original approach.

2. What contribution do you think he has made to the race?

The contribution of Jesus came out of the social revolt in the days of Herod and after, especially from the conflict between Galilee and Judaea, between the illiterate people of the land and the educated leaders. The social unrest, due to fiscal oppression, unemployment, and an overcrowded population, had assumed a religious significance rather than a strictly political one. Another factor was that Palestine had become predominantly Jewish by this time, but the Jews were in large part descendants of converts to Judaism made under the first Maccabean household. Many were Jews by faith not by race. Out of this unrest arose many sectarian currents--the Pharisean and Sadducean conflict, the sect of the Essenes, and the sect of Damascus. Such a sectarian conflict was that led by John the Baptist and developed much further by Jesus.

However, the synthesis between Judaism and Hellenism as represented by early Christianity was not contemporary with Jesus. Neither was it the work of Palestinian Jews, but was rather an outgrowth of the cultural and social anarchy of that segment of Hellenic Jewry concentrated in the northeastern part of the Mediterranean in contrast to the best known sector of Hellenic Jewry, Egypt. It was helped by the destruction of the second Temple by the loss of national independence and a national center in Palestine. This northeastern sector, out of which emerged Paul, became the decisive element in the subsequent development of Christianity. As a whole, within the Palestinian scene alone, Jesus' message, however profound and original, would have been limited to a sectarian current within the Jewish people, and most likely would have remained a part of Judaism rather than a new religion.

It was only after the first Palestinian period, and the second Hellenic Jewish period that the Roman element entered and to these three stages correspond the development of Christianity from a Jewish sect to an independent religion to the Catholic Church.

The contribution of Jesus is the same as that of any creative personality focusing in itself the tendencies of an age, thereby epitomizing the spiritual outlook of a people. That the governing class of Judaea had to reject many of his teachings and oppose his revolutionary agitation

is understandable as is the attitude of any governing group towards revolutionary principles. The trial of Jesus was essentially a Roman affair, however, and the contribution even of Jewish leaders to the crucifixion was doubtless smaller than it appears in the biased accounts of the Gospels. These are simply reversions of the original reports in an anti-Jewish spirit. This is also understandable in the light of the period.

3. What is your own opinion of the personality of Jesus?

Jesus was a man of great vision, great courage, ready to sacrifice all for his convictions. He was the typical leader of the people with the consequent shortcomings of leadership, fanaticism, and hereticism.

Essentially, I am greatly attracted to his personality, and he certainly did not foresee the sufferings he would bring upon his people by his work. Neither was he responsible for the misconceptions of his followers. Indirectly, he checked the expansion of the Jewish people which had been under way within the Hellenistic and Roman Empire, and thus forced the resurrection of Jewish nationalism.

4. What conception do you think Jesus held of himself?

If he thought of himself as God's Son, he differs from the prevailing Pharisean idea. While it is true that the idea of the suffering son of God appears in Second

Isaiah and in a few of the rabbinic teachings, its essence is a departure from the predominant trend in Pharisaism.

This idea was strongly influenced by the Greek mystery religions. Hence, it influenced the Hellenistic Jews most. The worship of Jesus is altogether a non-Palestinian affair. The evangelists rewrote the Gospels after a century of the cultic worship of Jesus.

5. Do you consider that there is an anti-nationalistic force in his teaching?

There were both nationalist and universalist tendencies in Judaism. The work of the great Prophets, from Amos to Second Isaiah, was a certain unique synthesis of the two. In the religious fermentation of the post-Maccabean age, the two elements became separated to a certain extent. The nationalistic element was represented by the Sadducean party, and the universalistic by the cosmopolitan Essenes, the Hellenistic Jews, and others. The Pharisees tried to maintain a middle road between the two. Jesus' own contribution was a much stronger emphasis on universalism than any of his contemporaries without a radical departure from Jewish nationalism. Jesus believed that the Jewish race had still a distinctive mission to bring its religion to the Gentile world. He only thought, as did others, that with the advent of the Messianic Age, the difference between the Jew and the Gentile would disappear. The Messiah, having come, nationalism and universalism would merge.

6. How would you compare Jesus to the Hebrew Prophets of the Old Testament?

Official prophecy expired in Palestine with Malachi or with second Zechariah. Prophecy had fallen into disrepute and a discerning man refused the name. There were no more prophets in the technical sense. However, if one called a prophet a man with a message from God--such existed in many nations--in this sense, Jesus was certainly a great prophet. But, in so far as he claimed to be the Messiah, he was different--this is foreign to the spirit of the line of Hebrew Prophets. Most of the Gospel passages in this connection, however, date from a later period, but there must have been certain elements in his teachings which enabled his followers to make such a claim in his name.

7. Do you think Jesus should be reclaimed by the Jewish people as a great teacher and leader?

As far as Jesus' thinking was concerned, he was only a radical Pharisee, but the results of his work have been in many ways detrimental to the Jewish people, and would necessarily hinder the Jewish people from reclaiming him. I am not in favor of the Jew and the Christian joining in worship, as I think the Jewish religion with its nationalist elements should survive for the sake of maintaining the distinctive culture of our race.

MR. ISAAC ROSENGARTEN -- Editor of The Jewish Forum.
Orthodox Position.

1. What original elements do you find in the teachings of Jesus?

The teaching of Jesus which impresses me most is his injunction to show the other cheek - to do good to the enemy and thereby attempt to convert him to a higher life. I do not know, however, of a single Christian in all history who followed that teaching. If anyone, the Jew has been compelled to follow it. Whatever is serviceable in the Sermon on the Mount, I believe, is taken from Jewish teachings, since Jesus himself thought his teachings were in general harmony with Judaism.

2. What contribution do you think he has made to the race?

Indirectly, through his disciples, Jesus had helped to spread the conception of the Fatherhood of God, and so, in theory, he helped to promote the idea of the brotherhood of man. It is not his fault, of course, that in practice Christians interpret his teachings wrongly. Jesus also gave emphasis to the insistence of the prophets upon the spirit as well as the letter of the Law.

3. What is your opinion of the personality of Jesus?

I consider him to have been a spiritual Bolshevik. He tried to make his life a protest against the materialism and the injustice of the times.

From the Jewish point of view, his failure to regard the letter as of sufficient importance in one's daily

routine of life prevents his being classed as a modern. By this I mean that he did not have an adequate appreciation of the laws of habit. When we can get our routine work to be a matter of the sub-conscious, the better our preparation for life's higher tasks. I find another short-coming in his character in his readiness to let people attribute divinity to him in order to enhance his own prestige.

4. What conception do you think he held of himself?

I believe he thought himself as a defender of the undeveloped against the oppressor. I do not think, however, that he wanted to start a new religion. Those who came after him did that without consulting him. They put words into his mouth which he never said. He did not conceive of himself either as the Messiah of Israel or as the Son of God. The apostles who had mixed with the heathens brought that conception into his biographies years after he died. As a Jew, he could not have thought of himself as forming a partnership with God as the ruler of the universe. He called himself a "son of man" not of God. The other ideas were a compromise with the heathen to get them to adopt the religion promulgated by the apostles.

5. Do you consider that there is an anti-nationalistic force in his teachings?

No, I believe he considered Israel as the chosen people of God, having superior teachings to impart to the rest of the world. He merely wanted these teachings to be

more evidenced in their daily life so that they could the better teach religion to mankind. He meant to bring salvation to the world through Judaism not through any other form of civilization.

6. How would you compare him to the Hebrew prophets of the Old Testament?

In comparison with them, I regard Jesus as superficially endowed. He succeeded in acquiring some of their teachings but he was not thoroughly conversant with the Law. I don't think he had sufficient opportunity to study the Law, and I cannot conceive of this learning flying into his head of its own accord.

7. Do you think the Jewish people should reclaim Jesus as a great teacher and leader?

So long as injustice continues between the majority element of the Christians and the Jew, so long will the Jew feel a negative attitude toward the ethical teachings of the so-called founder of Christianity. A religion which does not measure up to the standards of justice and of the brotherhood of man, the Jew will not consider adding unto the religion which he already has. He will, therefore, not think of reclaiming what he never claimed before, except in so far as the teachings of Jesus have already been a part of his belief and life.

DR. LEO JUNG -- Orthodox Rabbi

1. What original elements do you find in the teachings of Jesus?

I know of no original element which Jesus introduced into the religion of Judaism, unless it is his idea of the necessity of an intermediary between God and man.

2. What contribution do you think he has made to the race?

He has brought the ideas of the Hebrew nation to the whole world. He has scattered the good seed of Judaism among the nations.

3. What is your own opinion of the personality of Jesus?

I have no clear notion of the personality of Jesus since I cannot distinguish between the Jesus of the Gospels and the Jesus of Paul. I think, however, that he did not understand the Pharisees in that he blamed the group for the sins of individuals.

4. What conception do you think he held of himself?

I don't think that he looked upon himself as a god, but he rather thought he was a special teacher of faith and of cheer to the poor of the people.

5. Do you think there is an anti-nationalistic tendency in his teaching?

Not altogether, although there was a tendency in that direction. He did not recognize the possibilities of the non-Jewish woman who addressed him, and then there are

his words as to "casting pearls before swine."

6. How would you compare him to the Hebrew prophets of the Old Testament?

He does not add to their teaching but he popularized it. He is self-contradictory, however, if we are to believe Paul. He said that the Law was not to pass away, and yet it was through him that it was abrogated.

7. Do you think that the Jewish people should reclaim Jesus as a great teacher and leader?

No. They should recognize that he was a teacher to the Gentiles but not to the Jews. He did bring the message of Judaism to the world, and thus added a factor toward the achievement of the messianic age.

DR. ALEXANDER LYONS -- Reform Rabbi.

1. What original elements do you find in the life and teachings of Jesus?

I don't regard Jesus as being original so much as having carried to a higher degree of emphasis both in teaching and in conduct the ideals he gained from Jewish tradition. Accordingly, I should consider him to be more of an emphazizer than an originator.

2. What contribution do you think he has made to the race?

To the extent that Jesus himself has been a pattern of piety, he has made an immeasurable contribution in the way of spiritual stimulus and moral momentum.

3. What is your opinion of the personality of Jesus?

Taking Jesus as we find him in the New Testament, he was predominantly a God-centered soul, bent at any cost to do what he believed to be the will of his Father in heaven. From this standpoint I find him to be a perfect representation of what a human being should strive to be. Jesus, as a sublime embodiment of spiritual and of regal righteousness is the pattern of all real Christian operation, as he is, and acknowledged to be both by Jews and Christians, the progeny of the deepest reaches of pure Jewish piety. No intelligent and informed Jew rejects Jesus to the extent that he is a representative of much of the best in Jewish idealism and aspiration, any more than such a Jew rejects scientific fact. When Christians generally shall have come

to view and emulate Jesus as a moral and spiritual reality, and not predominantly as a theological manufacture, the difference between Jews and Christians will be practically negligible and the discordance between them completely disappear.

4. What conception do you think he held of himself?

The dominant desire and effort of Jesus was to effectuate a universal brotherhood in spiritual and moral submission to a common heavenly Father, not to inspire a religion around himself. That he was anything more than man at his best is a theological fabrication which owes its impulse to Paul, and on which Christians themselves are unanimously disagreed and divided.

5. Do you consider that there is an anti-nationalistic force in his teaching?

I do not think that Jesus would harmonize with a political conception of nationality that had any narrowing and exclusive connotation. As a teacher of spiritual and ethical universalism, I see no reason why he should not be included among the greatest.

6. How would you compare him to the Hebrew prophets in the Old Testament?

I should place Jesus among the prophets of the Old Testament but inferior to them in that he simply carried on what they initiated. Their's was a greater originality. However, he continued the line of inspiration.

7. Do you think the Jewish people should reclaim Jesus as a great teacher and leader?

I think the Jews should welcome Jesus as a great teacher and leader, and so save him from many misconceptions in the non-Jewish world.

DR. CHAIM TCHERNOWITZ -- Professor of Talmudic Literature
in the Jewish Institute of Religion.

1. What original elements do you find in the teachings of Jesus?

The New Testament is based on the Old, and I do not see a great difference between the two. So far as ethical teaching is concerned, the New Testament is based on Judaism and is supposed to interpret Jewish thought as it is analyzed in the Bible. As a faith, Christianity could accept Judaism, but Judaism could not accept Christianity. I distinguish between the teachings of Jesus, and those of the church. Christianity does not eliminate Judaism, but it supplements it. The supplementary element Judaism cannot accept. The conception of Jesus as a deity is opposed to the principles of Jewish belief. In the main, some people consider that Judaism is justice and Christianity is love. God as expressed in the Bible is both love and justice. Christianity emphasizes love only. Jesus was not, however, a discoverer of ideas. For a Talmudist, his teachings were not new. He repeats only, and he accentuated only one angle of Judaism, i.e. the ideas expressed by the Essenes - a sect of Judaism which was later absorbed into Christianity. His ideas were common to that school.

2. What contribution do you think he has made to the race?

He was not a deity or holy. Judaism knows the teacher and the prophet. He was not a prophet since

prophecy had closed at the end of the Second Temple. Jesus may have been accepted as a teacher if Christianity had not become a religious sect.

Eliminating from his life the element of miracle and wonder, we see Jesus as a higher type of man, a teacher and a type of a saint. It is difficult to answer your question, because we know of Jesus only through the New Testament. We know very little of him since there we know him as God, not as leader.

He probably attracted people to him through his personality but perhaps by his teachings. I don't know really whether he had an historical existence or not. He may have existed, but not in the form in which he existed in the New Testament.

4. What conception do you think he held of himself?

They expected a Saviour or a Deliverer for the Jewish nation at that time and Jesus considered that he was to act in this role. From the standpoint of Judaism, the Messiah does not have to be a super-human being. He is rather a great hero or a political leader.

For example, Akiba believed that the revolutionary hero-general, Bar Kochba, was the Messiah.

5. What contribution do you think he made to the race?

His main contribution was that he gave a religion to the barbaric world, the belief in the One God to the

polytheistic Roman Empire. The Church misconceived his teachings, and thereby became a mixture of paganism and Judaism. It was a misfortune to Christianity, that the world was not ready to accept at that time the pure form of Judaism which Jesus taught.

5. Do you consider that there is an anti-nationalistic force in his teachings?

Yes, to a certain extent, because Christianity is an international religion. The Bible is an "ius gentium" which is not the possession of the Jewish people exclusively. The Talmud is more "ius civilis." In its element there is no reason why Judaism should not become as universal as Christianity. Historically, it so happened that Christianity has become the international religion.

6. How would you compare him to the Hebrew prophets in the Old Testament?

We don't accept Jesus as a prophet at all because prophecy had closed with the first period of the Second Temple. His trial was probably centered around the problem of his claiming to be a prophet and a Messiah. He was not accepted as such, on the legal basis that he spoke against the Torah. The legal penalty for this was stoning.

Exactly what prophecy is, we do not know. The prophet was not a law-giver, and it was not necessary for him to show wonders. He was an ordinary man with a mission. Jesus' prophetic claims were based on his faculty for

creating so-called wonders. This is not Judaism, but something new, and one of the main differences, historically, between Judaism and Christianity. It was not essential to the Hebrew prophet that he create wonders. The fact that Jonah was swallowed by the fish did not make him a prophet. Jeremiah, the greatest of the prophets, did not create miracles. The religion of Jesus was based on the fact that he created wonders.

Judaism is a rational religion, and although it contains mysticism, it is a rational mysticism.

7. Do you think the Jewish people should claim Jesus as a great teacher and leader?

Nothing would have happened if Judaism had accepted Jesus as a teacher at the beginning. He would not have changed a feature of Jewish life. But now to accept him would be an elimination and means of giving up Judaism. He does not exist today as an ethical teacher; he is a god.

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