

PREFACE

Currebant autem duo simul : sed Joannes praecurrit citius Petro. Venit prior admonumentum, et ingredi non praesumpsit. Venit ergo posterior Petrus, et intravit. . . . Quid ergo per Joannem nisi synagoga, quid per Petrum nisi ecclesia designatur ? . . . Currunt ambo simul : quid, ab ortus sui tempore usque ad occasum, pari et communi via, etsi non pari et communi sensu Gentilitas cum Synagoga cucurrit. Venit Synagoga prior ad monumentum. . . . Homilia 22 sancti Gregorii Papae in Evangelia.

Loofy Levonian, as a Fellow of Woodbrooke, Selly Oak and later as a lecturer at the Selly Oak Colleges, wrote two books¹ on the relationship between Islam and Christianity, of which he said that "while they make no claim to be exhaustive in the study of their problems, they indicate a new direction and a new attitude." The present book, which also emanates from the Selly Oak Colleges, is an attempt of the same kind with regard to Judaism.

The author is not a Jew. He is not a rabbinic scholar. He has never taken part in any missionary work concerning the Jews. He has been, however, in close contact with them, not only through literature, but through many personal friendships. He owes his discovery of Jewish spiritual values mainly to Aimé Pallière, a Christian who became a Jewish preacher, and to Paul Levertoff, a Jew who became a Christian minister. The memory of the Jewish Refugee Students from Vienna, with whom he has spent the last two years in the East End of London, and from whom he has been separated by their internment in the Dominions, has never left his mind while these pages were written. If sympathy were a sufficient justification for writing about the Jews, this book would be amply justified. But there are other reasons. The opinion of somebody who (without having ever been a missionary) has attained, as an outcome of his own experience, very definite views about the Christian approach to the Jews, may seem the impertinent conceit of an outsider ; it may also possess some objectivity and originality and, if humbly offered, not be quite useless. Such is my hope. I am, moreover, a priest

¹ *Moslem Mentality. A Discussion of the Presentation of Christianity to Moslem* (London, 1928) and *Studies in the Relationship between Islam and Christianity* (London, 1940). The sentence quoted here is taken from the introduction to this last work.

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of the Russian Orthodox Church. The Orthodox Churches have a heavy historical guilt towards Judaism; in the persecutions of the Jews, chiefly in Russia and Rumania, they have often sinned either by their silence or by their acquiescence or by their incitements.¹ I would here, as far as an individual can do it, atone for this guilt.

European Judaism is now (1941) in danger of being exterminated. Its present situation offers Christians a most serious opportunity for rethinking their relationship to Israel. It would be too early to discern in the vicissitudes of European Jewry any definite change of the religious or intellectual order. But the material changes have been so decisive that they are bound to have some spiritual repercussions. The recent hardships have purified and strengthened all that was best in Israel. To help the Jews in their plight is a necessary task, but other—and new—tasks of a religious order, lie in front of us. Could I say of the present book, as Levonian said of his own, that it indicates “a new direction and a new attitude”? None of the ideas contained here is really new. Only they have always been the ideas of a small minority and they have never obtained a wide hearing among the Christian public; they may therefore seem new to a certain number of people.

I am advocating two main ideas. One is the idea of a “dialogue” substituted for the idea of a one-sided “mission” to the Jews. By dialogue I mean that, if Christianity has a definite message to bring to Judaism, Judaism also has a message to bring to Christianity. The other idea is the “communion” of Jews and Christians either in the same personal Messiah (this total communion is a distant goal rather than an immediate possibility) or in Messianic values common to both of them (this partial communion can be reached to-day and progressively enlarged). It does not mean that the differences between Judaism and Christianity should be

¹ Some notable exceptions ought to be remembered. During the pogrom of Tomsk (1905) a young monk ran to the pogromists, raised a cross and said loudly: “Why do you beat my brother?” The crowd turned aside. During the Kiev pogrom of October, 1905, Bishop Platon organized a solemn procession through the streets of the Jewish quarter and, falling on his knees before the mob, begged them to spare the life and property of the Jews. Likewise, Bishop Parfenyi of Podolia told his priests to array themselves in their vestments and with their crosses to go before the mobs engaged in pogrom and to calm their fury. See J. Shelton Curtiss, *Church and State in Russia. The Last Years of the Empire, 1900–1917* (Columbia University Press, 1940), chiefly Ch. VI. Russia's great religious philosopher, Vladimir Soloviev (1853–1900) opposed the anti-Jewish attitude of the Slavophil Party and is said to have prayed for the Jews on his death-bed. (F. Getz, *Der Philosoph W. Solowjew und das Judentum*, 1927).

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obliterated or minimized. Egerton Swan is perfectly right in saying "Judaism and Christianity are nearest to an agreement when Judaism is most unambiguously Jewish and Christianity most unambiguously Christian."¹ But Jews and Christians alike have to acknowledge and even to experience in their spiritual life the immanence of Israel in Christianity. A new and fruitful meeting between Judaism and Christianity implies a certain Judaization of the Christian's as well as a certain completion of the Jew's Judaism. I look forward to a revival of Jewish spiritual values among Christians; and, if I had to express the trend of his book in terms of the New Testament, I would write here these two verses: "... and, as his custom was, He went into the synagogue on the sabbath day and stood up for to read" (Lk. iv. 16), and: "... they, continuing daily with one accord in the Temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart" (Acts ii. 46). The whole programme of the Christian approach to Judaism is there.

This is not a "learned" book. As far as scholarship is concerned, I have only tried to give some accurate information and up-to-date references. (Many defects or omissions are caused by the circumstances of the war which prevented me from using the London libraries.) The book is not written for scholars, but for ministers, theological students, and this fraction of the general public which may be interested in Jewish questions. Sometimes I have had to explain things which, to the specialist, may seem elementary. If I am read by Jews they will disagree with some (perhaps not many) of these pages. But they will recognize, I hope, that none of the problems raised is to be dismissed lightly. I hope also that they will perceive that the book was not written by a controversialist, but by a friend. I tried indeed less to impart knowledge, to expound concepts or describe history, than to enter sympathetically into the sentiments of Judaism, to feel its emotional undertone, and to enable the reader to realize, at least a little, "how it feels to be a Jew."

I wish to express my thanks to the Department of Missions of the Selly Oak Colleges, founded by Dr. Edward Cadbury, which granted me a research fellowship and made possible the publication of this book; to Professor Godfrey E. Phillips, head of the department, whose personal friendship and interest

¹ Page ix of the symposium *In Spirit and Truth. Aspects of Judaism and Christianity*, edited for the Society of Jews and Christians by G. Yates, London, 1934.

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in my subject have been a precious encouragement and stimulus to me ; to Dr. H. G. Wood, Professor of Theology at the University of Birmingham, whose initiative and suggestions opened me the way to Selly Oak ; and to Miss Helen Stevens, who kindly assumed the task of revising my foreigner's English.

In 1914 a Jewish rabbi named Abraham Bloch, serving in the ranks of the 14th French Army Corps, where I also was serving, happened, in the midst of the battle, to be mistaken by a wounded soldier for a Roman priest. The soldier asked the rabbi to give him a cross to kiss. The rabbi ran to find one, and then ran back to the soldier with the cross. When the ambulance people arrived they found the wounded man and the rabbi lying dead by his side.¹ With this " Jewish Christian " vision I shall close my foreword.

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¹ This episode was reported even by a remote newspaper like the Russian *Novoye Vremia*. W. Birkbeck (*Life and Letters*, published by his wife, London, 1922, p. 300) wrote that the rabbi's name " quite deserves to be remembered ".