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The Christian/Jewish Tradition, and what threatens it in the
Modern World, 1936.

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THE CHRISTIAN-JEWISH TRADITION -
AND WHAT THREATENS IT IN THE MODERN WORLD

WRHS

Delivered By
Dr. Abba Hillel Silver

At
The Temple



On
Sunday morning, May 17, 1936

That a new paganism is sweeping over the world is readily apparent to any one who watches the development of nations today and the new complex of ideas which is captivating the minds and imaginations of hosts of people in the world today. And that new paganism hates both Judaism and Christianity. It is bitterly hostile to the great religious institutions represented by these two causes. For this new paganism recognizes that there exists an irreconcilable antithesis, an opposition between the two worlds represented by the old religious tradition of Judaism and Christianity and by the new heresy of the new paganism of our present day.

It recognized that no conciliation is possible between the two. Either the one or the other must rule the world and guide the destinies of men and nations. When you keep this fact in mind you will understand why a writer like Dr. Alfred Rosenberg, leader of the Nazi movement writes in the twentieth century the following: "The Old Testament as a Book of Religion must be done away with, once and for all. In this way we shall bring to an end the vain effort of the last 1500 years to transform us mentally into Jews...."

The real leaders of the new paganism as represented in the extreme in Nazi Germany tried to do away with both Judaism and Christianity not merely because both religions are a creation of the Jewish religion and therefore anathema to the Nazi belief, but also and more so because these two religions represent a code of life, a code of morals which are the direct opposite of that preached by the new paganism. They would like to do away with the personality of Jesus because he was Jewish. But the figure of Jesus is or

has become so much a part of the thought pattern of the Germanic people, so much engraved in the life of their people that they can not totally reject Jesus. So they would like to rehabilitate, transform Jesus into a sort of militant propounder of Nazism - a Nordic born in Gallilee from Aryan stock.

In what way are these two worlds irreconcilable? You take, for example, the Christian-Jewish tradition with reference to the state or the nation or the people and contrast it with the Fascist-Nazi concept of state, nation and you will at once see how vast is the chasm which separates these two points of view.

In Judaism and in Christianity there is a moral law which transcends states, nations, individuals, an eternal moral law which is binding alike upon all men, individually and men collectively. Because there is this eternal transcendental moral law, individuals may be guilty of violating this moral law.

The prophets of Israel, over and over again denounced people collectively for their sins: "Oh, you sinful nations, you people laden with iniquity." Not merely an individual can perpetrate a crime but nations can sin against eternal law. Classes, the high and the lowly, the noble, the rich - even the proletariat and the poor - even that class can be guilty of sinning against that moral law. Our kings, fuehrers and il duces can be guilty of breaking this moral law.

No one is above the law. A Samuel could therefore approach King ^{SAUL} Solomon and say: "You have violated the law of God and because thou didst reject the word of the Lord, therefore, I will reject thee from ruling the people." Because there is this transcendental law

binding upon everyone, therefore a prophet who is the spokesman of God - a prophet like Nathan could approach a King David who sent a soldier to war so that he might possess himself of his wife and he could say: "Thou art the man!" "Thou art guilty of greed and God's punishment will fall upon you. Because great religions recognize the supremacy of this great moral law, a prophet like Elijah could summon Ahab to dread accounting. Therefore a Jeremiah could confront a Zedekiah and pronounce down upon him because he humbled not himself before Jeremiah who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Now this is a basic fundamental classic of religion - particularly Judaism and Christianity.

Today there is a new concept - a new concept is challenging the people of Germany, Italy and Austria - of all dictatorships. In all dictatorship lands, the state is deified, it is itself ethics, right, power and the state can do no wrong. The only sin that a state can perform or a nation can be guilty of is the sin of defeat in battle. That is the greatest crime that can happen to a nation. And in dictatorial countries like Germany and Italy, the leader can't do any wrong. Children in the schools are being taught that Mussolini can do no wrong. This growth in the authority and prestige of the state is of relatively recent development. The Renaissance and Reformation gave it impetus. In the 19th century, Hegel and Fichte preached a doctrine of a romanticised state which is a divine incarnation of perfection and the worship of the state. "Nothing outside or above the state, nothing against the state, everything within the state, everything for the state."

Moral law, what becomes of that? Nothing more than that it is made to serve the ends of the state. Man becomes a tool in the hands of the state instead of the state existing for the sake of men. The whole autonomy of the individual, his loyalty - the whole spiritual autonomy of man - his moral sovereignty - in a sense also his moral responsibility is diminished because his freedom, his moral freedom is taken away from by the state. And so there is this tremendous conflict going on, perhaps not apparant to everyone, but it is the major conflict of our day between Judaism and Christianity and the new paganism /- the supremacy of the moral law which is binding alike upon individuals and nations.

There is another fundamental opposition. Judaism and Christianity exist to preserve law and order. Now every individual has other relationships with men and God over which the state has absolutely no power of veto, over which the state has no power to dictate. With the new paganism the state exists to make war and to carry on conquest, not cooperation. The religious tradition of Judaism and Christianity maintains that the state exists in order to insure law and order. Under the new paganism, the state exists to carry on wars of conquest. Hitler in his book Mein Kampf, writes as follows:

The goal of all education, therefore, inasmuch as the foreign policy is to carry on war - the goal of all education of the rising generation is "wehrhaftigkeit" - a military preparedness, the ability to fight at the drop of the hat and the new spirit is the "Wehrgeist" - the military spirit. "Battle is the divine business of every German and the children of the schools of Italy and Germany are given textbooks which tell them that the supreme destiny of every human being is to be a soldier and fight the battles of his country. The mailed fist, the crushing blow, power, that is being extolled in the world today.

The Christian-Jewish spirit which is struggling for mastery in the world today is "Blessed are the peace-makers." The Christian-Jewish tradition proclaimed the redemptive and healing/love. "Love thy neighbor! Love the stranger." Love your enemy!" Now that wasn't a soft sentiment injected in to the world. That was a dynamic principle in the world.

Today where you hear "Fuehrer, Duce, you hear of hate, class struggle, fear and potential enemies. Hate is the legacy of the new paganism.

Along with this principle of love were other principles - the principle of humility, the existence of humbleness: "Blessed are the humble in spirit. "The meek, the humble will inherit the earth. Men have been taught to be modest, modesty with men and nations as a way of reconciliation. But the new paganism doesn't believe in this tradition. The new paganism preaches hate, brute force, class struggle, and the most vulgar sort of national arrogance and self-praise. Read the speeches of Goebbels, Goering, Mussolini - they are filled with the cheapest kind of self-praise and adulation and it all goes with that

spirit of militarism, hate which the great religions of mankind have sought to eradicate from the face of the earth.

I point to another tradition which is being threatened by the new paganism. Judaism and Christianity conceive the highest destiny of man as being what? What is the goal of life? The goal of life, according to the classic tradition of religion, is spiritual salvation. To lose one's soul - that is the greatest tragedy in the world and to unfold one's inner life in justice, good - that is a supreme gain in life - to find one's soul, if it means losing the whole world.

This is not at all the thesis of the new paganism. The new paganism in the totalitarian state sets as man's destiny conquest and grabbing and as the destiny of nations - territorial expansion and increased population. How blind and stupid that conception of greatness and merit is! It is all part of that worship of race, of force, of number. That is paganism - the new paganism.

And finally, my friends, the religion of Isaiah preaches the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man - one father and all people on earth are his children and therefore brothers. In the New Testament we read: All races are one on the continent. There are no racial distinctions. A man ^{who} accepts principles of Judaism and sought admission into the Jewish fold was admitted as a full fledged member of the House of Israel and there is no difference between proselyte and native born. These religions preached international brotherhood.

What does the new paganism preach? Doctrinairism! In the Germany the race madness was already in evidence before the war. But never have they received an expression in law, never has this pseudo-science been carried out with such ultimate, infamous extreme as has the present-day paganism in Germany.

Judaism and Christianity have attempted not with great success, earnestly through its greatest leaders and spokesmen to preach the ideals of international reconciliation, of cooperation, not the idea that people must surrender its own native culture - that all nations can find one basis of cooperation, retaining these characteristics on the basis of mutual understanding and good will.

The new paganism is a hate producing, a feud stimulating movement in the modern world. So, my friends, this is the struggle which goes on today, tomorrow. The Christian-Jewish tradition is definitely being threatened and challenged today by powerful forces, by governments and that tradition is proclaiming the sovereignty of human spirit which denounces the idea of , love race equality in the profoundest sense of the word. That great tradition is fighting today for its very life in the modern world and the outcome is ~~more~~ clear that if tradition succumbs, mankind will face a new dark age which will be far more dark than ever before.

But with tradition broken and destroyed by the all powerful and ruthless absolutist state, with education of youth being taken over by this pagan state, mankind may face a dark age, a very dark havoc.

It behooves men who believe in the Christian-Jewish tradition men of faith, disciples of Judaism and Christianity to fight - and we must fight desperately for the preservation of these ideals in the modern world. To be men of faith today requires much more than the acceptance of doctrines of faith. One must be persistently in defense of these ideals which are being threatened in the modern world.

That there is

New Paganism - hates & fears J. & Ch.

(1)

Recognize irreconcilable antithesis.

No reconciliation possible - Either one or the other must rule the world.

Hence - Dr. Alfred Rosenberg - "Myth, the 20th C."

"The O.T. as a book & religion must be done away with, once and for all. In this way we shall bring to an end the vain effort, the last 1500 years to transform us mentally into Jews..."

But, Christianity, in borrowing itself as O.T. in accepting Jewish Bible - became itself a "Jew. Religion"

Would like to do away with both J. & Ch. - not only be Jewish -

Jesus - too much - that fabric - unimpaired - Nordic - Militant Personality

2. Why irreconcilable?

I. Attitude towards State, Gov't, Nation -

Moral Law - above - binding all

① Nations can rise - 1832 or 1833 or 1834

- Classes - Rich - Priests - Proletariat

- Kings - rulers - Sand

State - Moral Law above State

rejected (2)

Samuel - Saul -

Nathan - David -

Elijah -

Ahah -

Jeremiah -

Zechariah -

לפניו יצא כל איש ויטה לו עולמו
לפניו יצא כל איש ויטה לו עולמו

לפניו יצא כל איש ויטה לו עולמו

לפניו יצא כל איש ויטה לו עולמו

before Jeremiah speaks in the name of the Lord"

II. To-day.

Nation - idealized - can do us wrong
except - fail in Battle.

classes - above law -

Duce - Führer - "can do us wrong"

III. Growth of State - Renaissance - Reformation

- 19c - Hegel - Fichte - "Divine Incarnation"

State is itself Ethics, right, power

IV. Demands "absolute intell. + moral surrender"

"Nothing outside or above the state, nothing against
the state, everything within the state, everything for the state"

V. Morality becomes a matter of compromise to each of

VI. Religion = Plan is the end of the State

VII. Autonomy of Ind. Personality - "But that ethics, religion"

3 Function of State - 2. Law & Order

War - Conflict

Foreign Policy - no cooperation - (Just)

Goal of all education - "Wehrhaftigkeit" -
military readiness.

New Spirit - "Wehargeist"

"Battle is the divine business of every German"
Children -

"A morbid and mystical exaltation of Force" -

"Blessed are peace makers" - "calls the children, fool"
1 x x x 1

4. Power of Love - 20/11 - highlight - Prayer -
Enemy -

Hate - Class Struggle -

5. Humility - 20/11 - "Power in Spirit"
- "For this is the Kingdom of Heaven"
Amorgane.

6. - Goal of life - for men & nations - Sp. Salvation ⁽⁴⁾

What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world & lose his own soul?

Conquest - grabbing - Expansion

Expansion & little countries

7. - Race . Purity & Superiority

Goliusians - Houston St. Chamberlain

Before War - Hegel to Treitschke -

Destined to conquer & rule

Dangers of Racial contamination -

✓ I. "Off on Blood"

end?

✓ II. One Father - Brotherhood - Interwoven
- Spontaneous - Men of alien blood - perfect

8. Internationalism

9. Struggle to-day -

- (1) Supremacy , Moral Law
- (2) Freedom , Kind -
- (3) Peace - Love - Neutrality
- (4) Sp. Destiny , Man
- (5) Brotherhood -

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THE CHRISTIAN-JEWISH TRADITION - AND WHAT THREATENS IT IN THE MODERN WORLD.

The new paganism which has entrenched itself in some of the countries of the Western World hates and fears both Judaism and Christianity. It recognizes an irreconcilable antithesis between the world outlooks.

The Christian-Jewish tradition ~~XXXXX~~ proclaims a moral law which is supreme, binding alike upon individuals and nations. The source of the moral law is the will of God unfolding itself in the conscience of men. In the light of this supreme moral law, states, peoples and classes, ~~x~~ just like individuals, may be guilty of sin and in need of repentance. The religious tradition does not idealize the state, the nation, or the people and does not grant to the state the right to demand absolute spiritual and intellectual surrender to the state bureaucracy or its program. There are vast areas in human life over which the state has absolutely no power. Man does not exist to serve the state but to serve God and his fellow men.

The religious tradition of Judaism and Christianity maintains that the state exists in order to insure law and order. Under the new dispensation, the state exists to carry on wars of conquest. The goal of all education in the totalitarian state today is "Wehrhaftigkeit" - military preparedness. Its spirit is the "Wehrgeist" - the military spirit. The religious tradition which is struggling for mastery in the world is "blessed are the peace makers."

The religious tradition proclaims the power of love in the lives of men and nations to heal and to reconcile and the way of humility as a way of reconciliation. The blatant paganism of our day preaches hate, brute force, class struggle and the most vulgar sort of national arrogance and ~~selfish~~ self-praise.

The goal of life, according to the classic tradition of religion, is

spiritual salvation - the victories of the inner life - to find one's soul even if it means losing the whole world. The new paganism sets as man's destiny conquest and grabbing and as the destiny of nations, territorial expansion and increased populations. The greatest peoples of history, however, have been small peoples inhabiting small countries.

Finally, the Christian-Jewish tradition is one of universalism, international brotherhood and racial equality. The new paganism proclaims the vicious, pseudo-scientific theories of race purity and race inequality which are calculated to divide and to disrupt humanity.

The twentieth century witnesses a bitter struggle between these two irreconcilable philosophies of life. For the time being, the new paganism is scoring numerous victories. That is why Europe is so sick today.

