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The parting of the ways, 1957.

"THE PARTING OF THE WAYS"

A Symposium  
on the occasion of the  
50th Anniversary Celebration of the  
Dropsie College

April 29, 1957

DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER

I regard it as an extreme honor to have been invited by the President of the Dropsie College to participate in its celebration of the 50th Anniversary of its founding.

This great institution of learning has been a well-spring of Jewish scholarship and has made most valuable contributions to study and research in those areas of spiritual life which are so vital for the progress of mankind.

I should like to congratulate this noble institution upon completing a half century of creative work in the service of God and man.

I am also deeply honored in having been invited to share in a symposium with two of the great scholars of our country, Professor Solomon Zeitlin and Professor Morton Enslin. I am somewhat uncomfortable to be numbered among them, for my career, unlike theirs, has not been especially dedicated to the field of technical scholarship. In their presence I am a layman - and as a layman I speak this evening.

My views are more fully elaborated in my book MESSIANIC SPECULATION IN ISRAEL which was published in 1927 and WHERE JUDAISM DIFFERED which was published last Fall.

When we speak of the 'parting of the ways', referring, of course, to the separation of Christianity from Judaism, it is clear that all of us have in mind no competitive assessments. We are interested in an objective analysis of the differences which led these two great religions to follow independent courses through history, but we are all aware that though their courses and channels differed widely, all rivers run to the sea. Each system of thought has its own



texture and pattern and each faith its own perspectives. Differences should not obscure the underlying unity of the human race or the common needs of human life which all classic institutions and beliefs of mankind aim to serve or the urgency for their close cooperation to achieve their common purposes.

When Jesus came into Galilee, "spreading the gospel of the Kingdom of God and saying the time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God is at hand," he was voicing the opinion widely held that the year 5000 in the Creation calendar, which is to usher in the sixth millennium -- the age of the Kingdom of God -- was at hand. It was this chronologic fact which inflamed the Messianic hope of the people.

Jesus appeared in the procuratorship of Pontius Pilate (26-36 C.E.). The first mention of the appearance of a Messiah in Josephus is in connection with the disturbances during the term of office of the procurator Cuspius Fadus (c.44 C.E.). It seems likely, therefore, that in the minds of the people the Millennium was to begin around the year 30 C.E.

Be it remembered that it is not the Messiah who brings about the Millennium; it is the inevitable advent of the Millennium which carries along with it the Messiah and his appointed activities. The Messiah was expected around the second quarter of the first century C.E., because the Millennium was at hand. Prior to that time he was not expected, because according to the chronology of the day the Millennium was still considerably removed.

The central theme of the preachment of Jesus and of John the Baptist, whom Jesus hailed as the Elijah who was to announce the advent of the Millennium, as well as of the disciples of Jesus, was repentance. The day of repentance will precede the actual Millennium. Only those who would repent would be spared the purging and cleansing process antecedent to the Millennium -- "the wrath that is to come."

Jesus' essential mission was apocalyptic, not prophetic. His concern was not to reconstruct society but to save it from the winnowing and retributive judgment which was imminent in the van of the approaching Millennium. He sought to save men

from the birth-throes of the Messianic times. The ethical counsel which he gave to his followers was for a world in extremis and it was to help them survive the terrors to come and to be admitted into the Kingdom, the new order of existence which the Millennium would usher in.

Jesus was impatient because the people did not seem to realize its imminence: "Ye hypocrites, ye know how to interpret the face of the earth and the heaven; but how is it that ye know not how to interpret this time?" Though he would not, because he could not definitely state the exact hour of the coming of the Kingdom and advised against speculation upon the subject, he nevertheless was completely overwhelmed by the thought of its nearness: "And being asked by the Pharisees when the Kingdom of God cometh, he answered them and said, The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation (i.e. cannot be ascertained through the methods of calculation). Neither shall they say, Lo, here! or there! but lo, the Kingdom of God is in the midst of you." "Verily I say unto you, there are some of them that stand here, who shall in no wise taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom".

The crash and doom of the world was at hand and therefore there was no longer time for the ordinary pursuits of life, for its commonplace commerce and traffic, for concerns about food, raiment, and shelter: "Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink, or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?". The end is approaching! The unquenchable fires of Judgment are upon us! Therefore, "Seek ye first His Kingdom and His righteousness". A man must disencumber himself of all those things which are likely to keep his mind and soul entangled in the affairs of this perishing world. Wealth, Jesus felt, would of all things prove the most difficult obstacle in the way of men's preparation for the Kingdom. Wherefore he counsels a rich man who seeks after the perfection which will admit him into the Kingdom: "Sell that which thou hast, and give to the poor." There is no time to waste. A disciple cannot be spared from the desperately needed ministry of proclamation even long enough to go and bury his own father. Jesus does not permit himself the enjoyment of even a moment's relaxation in the bosom of his family.

He is convinced that many could be saved from the impending doom, but that there were too few "laborers for the harvest."

Jesus' attitude toward the Law was determined by his views concerning the approaching end. He did not oppose the Law in part or in whole. He did not seek to abrogate it. He did not wish to substitute for it. It was not necessary. The incoming Millennium would of itself do away with the Law entirely. This was the view commonly held by the contemporaries of Jesus. However, "until all things be accomplished," the Law must be obeyed. Not, however, as most men obey it, formally and mechanically, but with a soul-searching intent and intensity, so that it may prove a real help to that spiritual lustration required for initiation into the Kingdom. Jesus' real attitude to the Law is admirably summed up in Matt. 5.17-20:

Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the prophets; I come not to destroy but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, 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 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. But I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus proceeds to indicate what he means by a righteousness which exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. In no instance does he call for a new Law or the abrogation of the old Law, but for the correct "intensive" attitude toward the existing Law.

Why should men fulfill the law with such inner intentness? Not that they will thereby bring the Kingdom about. The Kingdom comes through the grace of God, not through the works of men: "For it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the

kingdom." Its advent is pre-ordained in the cosmic scheme. It is inevitable. It cannot be hastened or retarded. But those who will fulfill the Law in truth and in sincerity will be spared the "pangs of Messianic times" and will be privileged to enter the Kingdom.

There is nothing in all this that would bring about a parting of the ways with Judaism. While it was not an essential Jewish doctrine, it was a fairly familiar Jewish Agada whose time had finally come, according to the belief of Jesus and his followers.

But a parting of the ways did take place, and that fairly early, perhaps within half a century of the crucifixion. Why?

Paul, alone, is not responsible for the break. It would have taken place without Paul. Paul found Christians and even organized Christian societies already in existence in some of the cities which he visited in his missionary activities. These may still have regarded themselves as Jewish, but already as hyphenated - as Jewish-Christians -- and were swiftly moving toward the inevitable separation.

Paul insured the spread and, to a large extent, the survival of Christianity, by adding to the simple, unblended Messianic message of Jesus and of his followers in Jerusalem, a redemptive, salvationist message, more familiar and appealing to the Gentile world. He directed his message principally to the pagan world or to Jewish proselytes from the pagan world, who were fully acquainted, through the numerous mystery cults about them, with such salvationist hopes. By combining Judaism's monotheism, its relentless attack upon polytheism and idolatry, its lofty and cleansing moral idealism with a Messianic faith, strongly salvationist in character, whose major accent was upon redemption and the promise of immortality -- Pauline Christianity was able to make a strong impact upon the Greco-Roman world long in the throes of a spiritual crisis resulting from the break-down of its ancient beliefs. Where Judaism, in its proselytizing efforts -- and they were not inconsiderable -- could attain only a limited success, because it would not yield in its requirements for the full acceptance of the Law on the part of those who sought admission into the

house of Israel, Christianity of the Pauline school, making no such requirements, scored heavily.

But even without Paul, a parting of the ways would have taken place, earlier, of course, in the Diaspora, but not much later in Palestine.

A Messianic movement must either succeed, which in the very nature of things is not possible, or, failing to convert the parent body to its Messianic views, must separate from it or be rejected by it.

Messianic beliefs, in a variety of fluid forms, were current among Jews -- not necessarily all Jews -- around the beginning of the common era. Such beliefs are reflected in pre-Christian apocalyptic literature and are also to be found in the Dead Sea Scrolls. They made an especial appeal to the mystically-minded among the people. They were not frowned upon by the authoritative Judaism of the day, nor were they regarded as unorthodox. On the other hand they were not held to be essential teachings of the faith, denial of which was heretical. Some Jews rejected the whole Messianic complex; others were simply indifferent to it. As long as no Messiah appeared, and no practical consequences were drawn, the believer would go unchallenged by the normative Judaism of the day. It was a phase of folk-faith, of popular tradition, of Agada.

But the actual appearance of a Messiah meant, apart from its political and social implications, a concretizing of this revolutionary Agada, into a definitive creed, sect and discipline within the nation. This, official Judaism could neither ignore nor accept.

For very serious consequences for faith and practice flowed from such a Messianism, which had now been translated from an expectation but a reality.

The coming of the Messiah meant the ushering in of the Millennium. With the Millennium all the laws of the Torah as we stated above, are to be automatically abrogated.

There is no longer any need for them, now that the Kingdom of God had been established. The sole purpose of the ceremonial law, of rites and rituals, was



to purify the hearts of men. It is a matter of history that anti-nomism in one form or another timid or audacious, attended every important Messianic movement in Israel. In the very propaganda of such movements the abrogation of laws served the purpose of demonstrating that the Millennium was definitely on the way, if not actually arrived.

This was the case with the first Christian brotherhood in Jerusalem. There remained, for a longer or shorter time, conservative elements in it who hesitated to take the bold step of abrogating some or all of the basic ceremonial laws of the Torah. There were others who remained ambivalent in their attitude in their attitude, denying such freedom from the Law to themselves, but permitting it to Gentile converts. The strong trend, however, was by the very logic and dynamics of the Messianic movement, moving rapidly and inevitably toward abrogation. Paul himself wrestled torturously in his soul, long and unsuccessfully, with the problem of remaining loyal to the Torah and at the same time carrying on an energetic universal evangelism for his Christ faith. He finally concluded that the Gospel and the Law were irreconcilable, and that the coming of Jesus spelled "the end of the Law" (Rom. 10.4). He accordingly "died to the Law" (Galatians 2.19).

"Dying to the Law" meant a rejection of the Torah. A rejection of the Torah meant a decisive break with Judaism -- for no sect could remain within Judaism, or ever did remain within Judaism, that rejected the Torah completely. Paul's break came within two or three decades of the death of Jesus. Other Jewish-Christians and Jewish-Christian societies, in and out of Palestine, did not make the break -- and it was a voluntary break -- that early. They died to the Law more slowly -- the Ebionites, for example, as late as the second century -- but they died nevertheless. A Messianic movement, in the tense interior between the appearance of the Messiah and his expected early return to complete his mission, bent upon the rapid conversion of the Gentile world, would not long impede itself with a mosaic ceremonial law, so alien and so burdensome to the Gentiles, ~~Mosaic ceremonial law~~ -- a law which the approaching Millennium would anyhow soon do away with.

The parent body of Judaism did not accept the Messianic views of Jesus' followers. The latter remained a relatively small group within Palestinian Jewry; but it was from the start/<sup>a</sup>separate group, made so in the first place, not by any external pressure, but by the very fact of their distinct association which was built on a mystic union with their risen Lord; by their special programs of propaganda and recruiting, of initiation -- baptism and the Communion meal -- by their own special manuals of instruction, their prayer meetings as well as by the form of their group organization wherein they shared all their possessions in common. The Jerusalem fellowship was also linked with similarly-minded communities in the Diaspora and was dependent upon them for support. These communities, because of their large infiltration of Gentile converts, became increasingly less "Jewish" and less Torah-minded.

But there was also external pressures which presumably isolated this Jewish-Christian brotherhood. It was suspect and held in disfavor. Its Messianic faith was a discredited one in the eyes of the people for it had failed of its objective. The Messiah, whom the followers of Jesus proclaimed had been crucified, and the coming of the Millennium had not materialized. That this Messiah had risen from the grave and was now seated at the right hand of God and would soon return to judge the earth, -- the conviction now held by the disciples no longer as a vague abstraction and an anticipation, but as a fact focused in a specific personality -- a man by the name of Jesus -- must have outraged many Jews both Pharisees and Sadducees. Any Agada when taken literally has a way of doing just that. To the Sadducees especially, this faith was particularly obnoxious for the Sadducees denied the resurrection of the dead altogether.

Undoubtedly there were some among the Jewish-Christians in Jerusalem who shared views about the Law, such as Paul came to express so vigorously and to more receptive ears in the racial melting-pot cities of the Diaspora. Any such denigration of the Torah, or any attempt to abrogate any of its laws, either by the authority of a

new revelation, or by the technique of allegory employed to suspend the literal meaning of a law altogether, or to suggest that the Torah was temporary, would naturally arouse sharp hostility, especially in Jerusalem, though violent opposition and riots developed elsewhere. They would still further exacerbate the relations between this Messianic brotherhood and the rest of the Jewish people.

The Apostles and the early disciples in Jerusalem had come to claim, by virtue of the power given to them by Jesus, or through a direct revelation, or by the very fact of baptism, the gift of prophecy. This is an inevitable by-product of the Messianic age. On Biblical authority, it was held that in Messianic times God would pour out his "spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophecy; your old men shall dream dreams and your young men shall see visions; even upon the men-servants and the maid-servants in those days, I will pour out my spirit." (Joel 2.28-9) The miracle which occurred on Pentecost - the very day commemorating the giving of the Law at Sinai, - and which was attended by extraordinary natural phenomena reminiscent of Sinai -- and which is recorded in Acts 2, when the Holy Spirit suddenly descended upon the Apostles and some hundred and twenty disciples -- was intended to substantiate the belief that the Messianic age had actually arrived, and that the Apostles and disciples were now possessed of prophetic authority.

At the time of Jesus, the authoritative teachers of Judaism, while not denying the possibility of the reappearance of prophecy at any time, the Bible clearly certifying such a contingency - were no longer willing to stake the future of their faith on the chance appearance of men who might pretend to superior divine authority and who might utter prophetic oracles which would not be in keeping with the long established principles of Judaism, perhaps even in defiance of them. They were unwilling to base a law or doctrine or their abrogation upon reputed miracles which might be exploited to confirm heresies. They therefore maintained that prophecy had actually ceased in Israel with the last three Biblical Prophets, Haggai, Zachariah and Malachi. They held that, at the time of the destruction of the first Temple, prophesy was taken away from the prophets and given to the Sages. (B.B.12B) An



extreme view was expressed by one rabbi: "at the time of the destruction of the first Temple, prophecy was taken away from the prophets and given to fools and children," (ibid) -- this as if in pointed reply to Paul and other Christian preachers, who exhorted their followers to prophecy: "now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more, to prophecy." (1 Cor. 14.5). It might be noted in passing, that the Christian Church itself, which soon came to be plagued with false prophets, imposters and pretenders, who endangered its own orthodox doctrine, soon put prophecy under restraint.

The position came to be held in normative Judaism, that the sage, the skilled interpreter of the Torah, was superior to the prophet. (B.B.12A) The purpose of the rabbis was not to deny the prophetic spirit but to insist that whatever further truths or new insights were required by subsequent ages, could very well be drawn by trained and devout minds out of the deep well of the Torah itself, whose waters were inexhaustible.

The claim of the early Christians therefore to have come into possession of the gift of the Holy Spirit - to have prophetic authority and the authority of revelation - carrying with it the authority to abrogate or suspend all laws, was a direct challenge to the accepted views long held by the authoritative representatives of Judaism.

A prophet was assured privileges under the Law, which were not possessed by any other religious teacher. No prophet, of course, could advocate the abrogation of any fundamental Biblical law, such as the prohibition of idolatry, without branding himself a false prophet, deserving of death. But a prophet had considerable leeway in other matters. A prophet, whose credibility was well established, could, for example, order the temporary suspension of any law of the Torah in order to meet an emergency, and the people were obligated to obey him. (San. 90A) The claims of the early Christians was therefore a challenge not alone to Pharisaism, which was then energetically developing a system of Halacha, based on a carefully devised technique of interpretation -- not on new revelations -- but also of Sadduceism,

which would naturally resent any modification whatsoever of the Written Law.

The early Christians were, of course, aware that Jesus had abrogated no law of the Torah. But, as the need for relenting upon the rigors of the Law, especially the laws of Sabbath observance, circumcision and prohibited foods, became urgent in the rapid process of winning over Gentile converts, the authority of new revelations was rapidly invoked. The Gentile brethren in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia are informed by the Church in Jerusalem that on the authority of the Holy Spirit they need no longer practice the rite of circumcision. (Acts 15.28 (See also Col. 2.11). Peter sees a heavenly vision which declares unto him that all foods are permissible. (Acts 10.10 f.). And on the authority of Jesus, himself, it was soon maintained "that the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath" (Mark 2:28) and that, therefore, it is a matter of personal preference for Christians whether they wish to observe the Sabbath or not. (Rom. 14.5 f.)

The admission of Gentiles to full membership in the 'ecclesia' of the faithful without the necessity of observing any laws of the Torah except the so-called Noachian laws (Acts 15) and the free sharing by them of the Holy Spirit (Acts 10.) meant to all intents and purposes the early abandonment of the Law for nearly all its members. It would be found impossible to maintain a united fellowship -- one church -- the dream of all the faithful -- with one part committed to Torah observances and the other uncommitted, and, in fact, critical of them. The opening of the doors of proselytism to the Gentile world on the sole basis of faith in the resurrected Christ, (Rom. 10.4 f.), whose revelation accordingly superseded the Torah, in which Judaism was centered, was a critical innovation which was bound to turn what was at first a Jewish sect, into a new non-Jewish religion.

It is difficult to establish exactly when the concept of incarnation became part of the Christian faith, probably very early. Paul thinks of Jesus as the pre-existent Christ, identified with the Holy Spirit, who now had assumed a human body. "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8.3). John thinks of Jesus as the Logos - the Word which was

was made flesh, "and dwelt among us" (John 1.14). Matthew and Luke speak of Jesus "as begotten of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 1.18; Luke 1.35).

Certainly, no one who is acquainted with the determined and persistent struggle for the pure monotheistic faith among the people of Israel since the days of Moses and the Prophets could have assumed for a moment then or since that Judaism would find lodgement for the concept of a God who came down to earth, assumed human form, and suffered death for the salvation of men -- a doctrine which Jesus himself never taught. These ideas were known to the Jews long before the time of Jesus, and had been rejected by them. They were popular and current in the ancient world. Judaism had resisted these notions for centuries. The Jewish people could not but reject such a doctrine unless it were prepared to abandon the most treasured and essential conviction for which it had struggled through the centuries and of which it believed itself to be the covenanted guardian and spokesman to the world. It could not accept a renewed mythologizing of God, which it had resisted for a thousand years, even though the concept of a born, dying, and resurrected God might now be presented as a metaphysical idea and not as a concrete event which took place on a specific date in history or as a trinitarian conception of monotheism.

A contributing factor, too, to a parting of the ways, was the fact that the Jewish-Christians were pacifists, and would have no part in the people's resistance movement and culminating revolt against Rome. In the beginning of the Jewish revolt against Rome in 66 C.E., the Christian group in Jerusalem fled to Pella, a Gentile center in Trans-Jordan, as they did once again, later on, during the Bar Kochba revolt in 135 C.E.

The destruction of the Temple severed another important link between the Jewish-Christian and official Judaism. The event was quickly seized upon by their leaders as proof of God's displeasure with and rejection of Israel.

All these factors combined to surround the Jewish-Christians in Jerusalem with a host of enemies. Many clashes ensued. The first fateful outburst resulted in the slaying of Stephen.

Basically a parting of the ways was inevitable because normative Judaism of the first century was not apocalyptic in character, or salvationist, or pacifist or other-worldly. Its main concern was not with sin, grace, forgiveness and justification, but with a way of life which would express in practice the prophetic ideals of doing justly, loving mercy and walking humbly with God, and the building of the good society on earth.

In its historic evolution, Judaism moved not from prophecy to apocalypse but from prophecy directly to the men of the great synagogue, from the Torah to its interpretation at the hands of Scribes and Sages. The Five Books of Moses are not an apocalyptic text. There were of course mystic and apocalyptic elements among Jews of the Second Commonwealth -- Essenes, and other groups - "Anavim (the Humble Ones), Hashaim (the Silent Ones), Zenuim (the Chaste Ones) -- and their numbers probably increased in the turbulent post-Maccabbean centuries, but their numbers were always very small and their ideas never constituted the mainstream of Judaism.

Even before it finally banned all apocalypses, Judaism must have been suspicious of them because of their wildness of phantasy, their waywardness and randomness, as well as their over-emphasis on eschatology. The Book of Ezekiel was almost excluded from the Canon, or withdrawn from public use in schools and synagogues, because of its mystical and apocalyptic elements. (Hag. 13A). Prophetic and Rabbinic Judaism was predominantly interested in the mundane progress of man and society, while the apocalypses were interested in the time-table of the approaching End. The one sought a moral reformation of society; the other hoped for its miraculous transformation through divine intervention.

As we indicated earlier, there were expectations among Jews in the first century of the coming of the Messiah, due to a popularly entertained belief that the year 5,000, the beginning of the Millennium, was at an end. Many Jews entertained the hope of a national Messiah who would bring to Israel freedom and to mankind universal justice and peace. That this belief constituted the Keystone in the arch of first century Judaism is nowhere indicated. Nor that an Agada that the Messiah would, by

his death, atone for the original sin which Adam, by his disobedience, transmitted to all his descendants. There were rabbis as late as the fourth century who denied the coming of a Messiah altogether. "The Jews have no longer any Messiah to expect, for they have already had him in the days of Hezekiah" (San. 99A). There were others, like Rabbi Samuel, who stripped the Messianic idea of all of its apocalyptic accretions; "There is nothing that will be different in the Messianic times from the present, except freedom from foreign domination" (Ber. 34B). The social order will not be subjected to any radical change.

It is very significant, that while entertaining the hope of the coming of a Messiah, Judaism never accepted any specific Messiah. The Jewish people must have sensed that the idea, inspiring as a hope, was hopeless as a reality. An actual Messiah is always an unfulfillment, an anti-climax. His appearance in history has had, time and again disastrous consequences for the people. Judaism does not stand or fall with the belief in the Messiah.

Thus any group which made Messianism central in its belief would find itself inevitably drifting outside the mainstream of Jewish life and thought. Judaism, in spite of Messianic and eschatological hopes, which were maintained by some or by many Jews around the first century of the common era, continued as a religion dedicated principally to social progress and to the men's duties to reconstruct themselves and society to conform to the ethical precepts of the Torah. The Kingdom of God was definitely of this world. Jews were never summoned to renounce this world in order to fulfill their religious obligation. Salvationism, non-resistance to evil, asceticism, and other-worldliness, were never strong features in the pattern of historic Judaism, as they undoubtedly were in the pattern of first century Christianity.

A faith predominantly eschatological gives rise to a code of ethics quite different from one which has no such sovereign interests. The former will urge men to forsake this world, to live in it as prisoners awaiting deliverance -- in it, but not of it. It will urge them to abandon their possessions, to choose poverty, to



seek escape from the trammels of society in the life of religious seclusion, to avoid, wherever possible marriage and the begetting of children. It will instruct them not to resist evil nor revolt against any form of tyranny or slavery, for all these evils will soon pass away in the new world order which is swiftly coming to pass. Judaism, in which the eschatological element played no decisive role whatsoever would naturally reject such a code in its entirety and did.

Judaism is not constructed around any drama of redemption. There is no term in the Hebrew language for "salvation" in a sacramental, redemptive sense. The idea that man needs to be "saved" either from the toils of life or from some Original Sin or from the prison house of matter or from baleful astrological influences is not part of Judaism.

Saviour and Redeemer in the Christological sense are not to be found in the Bible.

Judaism's primary concern was to teach man not how sin came into the world, but how to avoid sin and how to repent of sin once having succumbed to it. All men are capable of sinning because all men are endowed with free will.

Because there is no Original Sin, there is no need for a Redeemer. The doctrine of atonement through the suffering of another is nowhere found in the Hebrew Bible.

Man does not need saviours. Nor does man need mediators between himself and God. "No one comes to the Father, but by me" (John 14:6) is a concept alien to Judaism. Man needs help in his moral struggles -- encouragement, hope, confidence. Such help comes from turning to God, and it is at all times available. Through repentance and amendment man's moral effort becomes the channel for the in-flow of the grace of God.

Nor is faith alone sufficient to make atonement for man's sins. It is "deeds which make atonement for men" (Ta'an. 16a).

In Judaism a man is made upright both by his faith in God and by his good works, the former being demonstrated by the latter. His spiritual life is not consummated by faith in God -- it begins there, and it is ethical conduct which brings him near

to God.

Christianity in its early centuries was overwhelmingly ascetic in outlook, and came increasingly to extol self-denial, poverty, and celibacy. Even marriage was disapproved of in the early Church. In fact, among the great religions of mankind, it is in Christianity and Buddhism that celibacy received its highest endorsement. At best marriage was tolerated as a concession to human frailty.

To marry and to beget children in order to preserve the race is a divine command in Judaism. "Be fruitful and multiply" (Gen. 1:28) is the first commandment of the Bible.

Judaism rejecting all forms of dualism did not encourage acts of mortification or self-removal from society as a way to holiness. One need not and should not renounce what is lawful.

In Jesus' mystical outlook, the world was fast coming to an end and there was no point in resisting evil. It would automatically cease with the Millennium and the imminent establishment of God's Kingdom. Man's chief concern should therefore be not to fight evil, but to prepare himself for the new age.

Normative Judaism did not subscribe to doctrines of nonresistance and pacifism. It demanded action from its devotees. It taught that there is evil in society and that it is man's duty to overcome it -- if need be, by force, though force is by no means the only way by which evil can be overcome. It is not enough to improve oneself; one must also seek to improve one's environment. The only refuge from the cruel wrongs of the world is in the effort to set them right. There is no ethics of resignation in Judaism.

When Jesus declared, "My Kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36), He correctly defined the nature of his gospel. But Judaism's Kingdom of God referred to the reign of the one true God on earth, to the conversion of all people to faith in Him alone, and to the establishment of universal justice and peace.

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THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

A Symposium on the occasion of the 50th anniversary celebration of the Dropsie College, April 29, 1957

When we speak of the "parting of the ways", in referring to the separation of Christianity from Judaism, it is clear that we do not have in mind comparative assessments. We are interested in an objective analysis of the differences which have led these two great religions to follow independent courses through history. Each system of thought has its own texture and pattern, and each faith its own perspectives. Differences should not obscure the underlying unity of the human race or the common needs of human life which all classic institutions and beliefs of mankind aim to serve or the urgency of their close cooperation to achieve their common purposes.

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Jesus appeared in the procuratorship of Pontius Pilate (26-36 C.E.). The first mention of the appearance of a Messiah in Josephus is in connection with the disturbances during the term of office of the procurator Cuspius Fadus (c.44 C.E.). It seems likely, therefore, that in the minds of the people, the millenium was to begin around the year 30 C.E.

Be it remembered that it is not the Messiah who brings about the Millenium; it is the inevitable advent of the Millenium which carries along with it the Messiah and his appointed activities. The Messiah was expected around the second quarter of the first century C.E., because the Millenium was at hand. The time spoken of in Daniel "for a time, times and a half", was now fulfilled. Prior to that time he was not expected, because according to the chronology of the day the Millenium was still considerably



removed.

The central theme of the preachment of Jesus and of John the Baptist, whom Jesus hailed as the ~~Messiah~~ <sup>N</sup> Elijah who was to announce the advent of the <sup>N</sup> Millenium, was repentance. The day of repentance will precede the actual <sup>N</sup> Millenium. Only those who would repent would be spared the purging and cleansing process antecedent to the <sup>N</sup> Millenium <sup>M</sup> - "the wrath that is to come."



Jesus' essential mission was apocalyptic, not prophetic. His concern was not to reconstruct society but to save it from the winnowing and retributive judgment which was imminent in the van of the approaching Millennium. The ethical counsel which he gave to his followers was for a world in extremis, and it was to help them survive the terrors to come and to be admitted into the Kingdom, the new order of existence which the Millennium would usher in.

Jesus was impatient because the people did not seem to realize its imminence: "Ye hypocrites, ye know how to interpret the face of the earth and the heaven; but how is it that ye know not how to interpret this time?" "Verily I say unto you, there are some of them that stand here, who shall in no wise taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom".

Jesus' attitude toward the Law was determined by his views concerning the approaching End. He did not oppose the Law in part or in whole. He did not seek to abrogate it. It was not necessary. The incoming Millennium would of itself do away with the Law entirely. However, "until all things be accomplished," the Law must be obeyed. Not, however, as most men obey it, formally and mechanically, but with a soul-searching intent and intensity, so that it may prove a real help to that spiritual lustration required for initiation into the Kingdom. Jesus' real attitude to the Law is admirably summed up in Matt. 5:17-20:

Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the prophets; I come not to destroy but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, 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 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. But I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees,

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[ ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus proceeds to indicate what he means by a righteousness which exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. In no instance does he call for a new Law or the abrogation of the old Law, but for the correct "intensive" attitude toward the existing Law.

Why should men fulfill the law with such inner intentness? Not that they will thereby bring the Kingdom about. The Kingdom comes through the grace of God, not through the works of men: "For it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." Its advent is pre-ordained in the cosmic scheme. It is inevitable. It cannot be hastened or retarded. But those who will fulfill the Law in truth and in sincerity will be spared the "pangs of Messianic times" and will be privileged to enter the Kingdom.

There is nothing in all this that would bring about a parting of the ways with Judaism. While these beliefs did not <sup>constitute</sup> ~~constitute~~ essential Jewish doctrine, they were part of a fairly familiar <sup>legendary lore,</sup> ~~lore,~~ whose time, according to the belief of Jesus and his followers, had finally come. gal 31

But a parting of the ways did take place, and that fairly early, perhaps within half a century of the crucifixion. Why?

Paul, alone, is not responsible for the break. It would have taken place without Paul. Paul found Christians and apparently even organized Christian societies already in existence in some of the cities which he visited in his missionary activities. These may still have regarded themselves as Jewish, but already as hyphenated Jews - as Jewish-Christians -- and were swiftly moving toward the inevitable separation.

Paul insured the spread and, to a large extent, the survival of Christianity, by adding to the simple, unblended Messianic message of Jesus and of his followers or by intensively stressing, - in Jerusalem, a redemptive, salvationist message, which was more familiar and appealing to the Gentile world. He directed his message principally to the pagan world or to Jewish proselytes from the pagan world, who were fully acquainted, through

the numerous mystery cults about them, with similar salvationist hopes. By combining Judaism's monotheism, its relentless attack upon polytheism and idolatry, its lofty and cleansing moral idealism, with a Messianic faith, strongly salvationist in character, whose major accent was upon redemption and the promise of immortality, Pauline Christianity was able to make a strong impact upon the Greco-Roman world, long in the throes of a spiritual crisis resulting from the break-down of its ancient beliefs. Where Judaism, in its proselytizing efforts — and they were not inconsiderable — could attain only a limited success, because it would not yield in its requirements for the total acceptance of the Law on the part of those who sought full proselytism, Christianity of the Pauline school, making no such requirements, scored heavily.

But even without Paul, a parting of the ways would have taken place, earlier, of course, in the Diaspora, but not much later in Palestine.

A Messianic movement must either succeed, which in the very nature of things is not possible, or, failing to convert the parent body to its Messianic views, must separate from it or be rejected by it.

Messianic beliefs, in a variety of fluid forms, were current among Jews — not necessarily all Jews — around the beginning of the common era. Such beliefs are reflected in pre-Christian apocalyptic literature and are also to be found in the Dead Sea Scrolls. They made an especial appeal to the mystically-minded among the people. They were not frowned upon by the authoritative Judaism of the day, nor were they regarded as unorthodox. On the other hand they were not held to be dogmatic teachings of the faith, denial of which was heretical. Some Jews rejected the whole Messianic complex; others were simply indifferent to it. As long as no Messiah appeared, and no practical consequences were drawn, the believer would go unchallenged. It was a phase of folk-faith, of popular tradition, of <sup>Haggada</sup> ~~Agada~~.

But the actual appearance of a Messiah meant, apart from its political and social implications, a concretizing of this revolutionary Agada, into a definitive creed, sect, and discipline within the nation. This, official Judaism could neither ignore nor accept.

For very serious consequences for faith and practice flowed from such a Messianism, now translated from an expectation into a reality.

The coming of the Messiah meant the ushering in of the Millennium. With the Millennium all the laws of the Torah as we stated above, are automatically abrogated.

~~There is no longer~~ any need for them <sup>when</sup> ~~now that~~ the Kingdom of God has been established. The sole purpose of the ceremonial law, of rites and rituals, was ~~to purify the hearts of men~~ <sup>to purify the hearts of men</sup> ~~It is a matter of history that anti-nomism in one form or another, timid or audacious, attended every important Messianic movement in Israel. In the early propaganda of such movements the abrogation of laws served the purpose of a symbolic demonstration that the Millennium was definitely on the way, if not actually arrived.~~

This was the case with the first Christian fellowship in Jerusalem. There were conservative elements in it who hesitated to take the bold step of abrogating some or all of the basic ceremonial laws of the Torah. There were others who remained ambivalent in their attitude, denying freedom from the Law to themselves, but permitting it to Gentile converts. The strong trend, however, moved by the very logic and dynamics of the movement rapidly and inevitably toward abrogation. Paul himself wrestled tortuously in his soul, long and unsuccessfully, with the problem of remaining loyal to the Torah and at the same time carrying on an energetic universal evangelism for his Christ faith. He finally concluded that the Gospel and the Law were irreconcilable, and that the coming of Jesus spelled "the end of the Law" (Rom. 10:4). He accordingly "died to the Law" (Galatians 2:19).

"Dying to the Law" meant a rejection of the Torah. A rejection of the Torah meant a decisive break with Judaism for no sect could remain within Judaism, or ever did remain within Judaism, which rejected the Torah completely. Paul's break came within two or three decades of the death of Jesus. Other Jewish-Christians in and outside of Palestine, did not make the break — and it was a voluntary break that early. They "died to the Law" more slowly — the Ebionites, for example, as



late as the second century <sup>1</sup> but they died nevertheless. A Messianic movement,

In the tense interim period between the appearance of the Messiah and his expected early return, which was bent upon the rapid conversion of the Gentile world, would not long impede itself with the Mosaic ceremonial law, so alien and so burdensome to the Gentiles <sup>1</sup> a law which the approaching Millennium would soon do away with anyhow.

The parent body of Judaism did not accept the Messianic views of Jesus' followers. The latter remained a relatively small group within Palestinian Jewry; but it was from the very start a separate group. It was made so in the first place, not by any external pressure, but by its own distinctive fellowship, as a mystic union with their risen Lord; by its special rites of initiation which probably developed very early <sup>1</sup> baptism and the Communion meal; <sup>and by</sup> by its own manual of instruction, and recruiting; its separate prayer meetings as well as by the form of its social and economic life, wherein all things were shared in common. The Jerusalem fellowship came to be linked with similarly-minded communities outside of Palestine and was dependent upon them for support. These communities, because of their large infiltration of Gentile converts, became increasingly less "Jewish" and less Torah-minded.

There were <sup>also,</sup> of course, also external pressures which progressively isolated this Jewish-Christian brotherhood. It was suspect and held in disfavor by many from the very first. Its Messianic faith was a discredited one in the eyes of the people, for it had failed of its objective. Jesus, whom his followers proclaimed as the Messiah, had been crucified, and the Millennium had not materialized. That this Messiah had risen from the grave and was now seated at the right hand of God and would soon return to judge the earth <sup>1</sup> a conviction now held by these Messianists, no longer as part of an indefinite and visionary saga, but as a present fact focused in the specific personality of a man by the name of Jesus <sup>1</sup> must have outraged many Jews, both Pharisees and Sadducees. Any <sup>Haggadah</sup> ~~legend~~, however inspiring and beautiful,

when suddenly presented as an actual and concrete reality, may grievously shock <sup>who had previously</sup> and offend even those ~~who~~ cherished it. To the Sadducees especially, this claim of the Jewish-Christians was particularly obnoxious, for the Sadducees denied the resurrection of the dead altogether.

Furthermore, there were some among the Jewish-Christians in Jerusalem who shared views about the Law similar to those which Paul came to express so vigorously and to more receptive ears in the racial melting-pot cities of the Diaspora. Any such denigration of the Torah, or any attempt to abrogate any of its laws, either by the authority of a new revelation, or by the technique of allegory employed to suspend the literal meaning of a law, would naturally arouse sharp hostility, especially in Jerusalem, though violent opposition and riots developed also elsewhere.

The Apostles and the early disciples in Jerusalem had come to claim, by virtue of the power given to them by Jesus, or through a direct revelation, or by the very fact of baptism, the gift of prophecy. This too was held to be an inevitable by-product of the Messianic age. The prophet Joel had proclaimed that in the latter end God would pour out his "spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; your old men shall dream dreams and your young men shall see visions; even upon the men-servants and the maid-servants in those days, I will pour out my spirit." (Joel 3:1-2). The miracle of Pentecost <sup>on</sup> ~~the~~ the very day commemorating the giving of the Law at Sinai <sup>which</sup> which was attended by extraordinary natural phenomena reminiscent of Sinai <sup>as</sup> recorded in Acts <sup>Chapter</sup> 2, when the Holy Spirit suddenly descended upon the Apostles and some hundred and twenty disciples <sup>was</sup> was intended to substantiate the belief that the Messianic age had actually arrived, and that the Apostles and disciples were now possessed of prophetic power and authority.

At the time of Jesus, the authoritative teachers of Judaism, while <sup>they did</sup> not deny the possibility of the reappearance of prophecy <sup>the</sup> the Bible clearly certifying such a contingency <sup>2</sup> were no longer willing to stake the future of their faith on the chance appearance of men who might pretend to superior divine authority and who might utter prophetic oracles which would not be in keeping with the long-established

and perhaps might even be principles of Judaism, ~~perhaps even~~ in defiance of them. They were unwilling to base a law or doctrine or ~~the~~ <sup>its</sup> abrogation upon reputed miracles which might be exploited to confirm heresies. They therefore maintained that prophecy had actually ceased in Israel with the last three Biblical prophets, Haggai, Zachariah, and Malachi. They held that, at the time of the destruction of the first Temple, prophecy was taken away from the prophets and given to the Sages. (B.B.12B). An extreme view was expressed by one rabbi: "at the time of the destruction of the first Temple, prophecy was taken away from the prophets and given to fools and children." (ibid) <sup>was</sup> ~~and~~ this as if in pointed rejoinder to Paul and other Christian preachers, who exhorted their followers to prophecy: "now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more, to prophecy." (I Cor. 14:5). It might be noted in passing, that the Christian Church itself, which soon came to be plagued with false prophets, imposters, and pretenders, who endangered its own orthodox doctrine, soon put prophecy under restraint.

The position came to be held in normative Judaism, that the sage, the skilled interpreter of the Torah, was superior to the prophet. (T.B. ~~B.B.~~ <sup>T.B. B.B.</sup> 12A). The purpose of the rabbis was not to deny the prophetic spirit but to insist that whatever further truths or new insights were required by subsequent ages, could very well be drawn by trained and devout minds out of the deep well of the Torah itself, whose waters were inexhaustible.

The claim of the early Christians therefore to have come into possession of the gift of the Holy Spirit, to have prophetic authority and the authority of revelation, carrying with it the authority also to abrogate or suspend Biblical laws, was a direct challenge to the accepted views long held by the authoritative representatives of Judaism.

A prophet was assured privileges under the Law, which were not possessed by any other religious teacher. A prophet, whose credibility was well established, could, for example, order the temporary suspension of any law of the Torah, short, of course, of the prohibition of idolatry, in order to meet an emergency, and the



people were obligated to obey him, (San. 90A). The claims of the early Christians ~~were~~ <sup>were</sup> therefore a challenge not alone to Pharisaism, which was then energetically developing a system of ~~Halacha~~ <sup>Halakah</sup> based on a carefully devised technique of interpretation, as ~~opposed~~ <sup>opposed</sup> to new revelations, but also ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> Sadduceism, which would naturally resent any modification of the ~~Written~~ <sup>Written</sup> Law.

The early Christians were, of course, aware that Jesus had abrogated no law of the Torah. But, as the need for relenting upon the rigors of the Law, especially the laws of Sabbath observance, circumcision, and prohibited foods, became urgent in the rapid process of winning over ~~gentile~~ <sup>gentile</sup> converts, the authority of new revelations was rapidly invoked. The ~~gentile~~ <sup>gentile</sup> brethren in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia are informed by the Church in Jerusalem that on the authority of the Holy Spirit they need no longer practice the rite of circumcision, (Acts 15:28). (See also Col. 2:11). Peter sees a heavenly vision which declares unto him that all foods are ~~permissible~~ <sup>permissible</sup> (Acts 10:10ff.). And on the authority of Jesus, himself, it was soon maintained "that the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath" (Mark 2:28) and that, therefore, it is a matter of personal preference for Christians whether they wish to observe the Sabbath or not, (Rom. 14:5ff.).

The admission of ~~gentiles~~ <sup>gentiles</sup> to full membership in the ~~ecclesia~~ <sup>ecclesia</sup> of the faithful without the necessity of observing any laws of the Torah except the so-called Noachian laws (Acts 15) and the free sharing by them of the Holy Spirit (Acts 10) meant to all intents and purposes the early abandonment of the law for nearly all its members. It would be found impossible to maintain a united fellowship <sup>of</sup> one church, the dream of all the faithful <sup>with</sup> with one part committed to Torah observances and the other uncommitted, and, in fact, critical of them. The opening of the doors of proselytism to the ~~gentile~~ <sup>gentile</sup> world on the sole basis of faith in the resurrected Christ, (Rom. 10:1ff.), whose revelation superseded the Torah, was a critical ~~innovation~~ <sup>innovation</sup> which was bound to turn what was at first a Jewish sect into a new non-Jewish religion.

It is difficult to establish exactly when the concept of Incarnation became part of the Christian faith, probably very early. Paul thinks of Jesus as the pre-existent Christ, identified with the Holy Spirit, who had now assumed a human body: "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8:3). John thinks of Jesus as the Logos <sup>the Word</sup> which was made flesh, "and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). Matthew and Luke speak of Jesus "as begotten of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 1:18; Luke 1:35).

Certainly, no one who is acquainted with the determined and persistent struggle for a pure monotheistic faith among the people of Israel since the days of Abraham, Moses, and the Prophets could have assumed for a moment then or since that Judaism would find lodgement for the concept of a God who came down to earth, assumed human form, and suffered death for the salvation of men <sup>a</sup> doctrine which Jesus himself never taught. These ideas were known to the Jews long before the time of Jesus, and had been rejected by them. They were popular and current in the ancient world. Judaism had resisted these notions for centuries. The Jewish people could not but reject such a doctrine unless it <sup>were</sup> prepared to abandon the most treasured and essential conviction for which it had struggled through the centuries and of which it believed itself to be the covenanted guardian and spokesman to the world. It could not accept a renewed mythologizing of God, which it had resisted for a thousand years, even though the concept of a born, dying, and resurrected God might now be presented as a metaphysical idea and not as a concrete event which took place on a specific date in history or as a trinitarian conception of monotheism.

A contributing factor, too, to a parting of the ways was the fact that the Jewish-Christians were pacifists, and would have no part in the people's resistance movement which culminated in the revolt against Rome. In the beginning of the Jewish revolt against Rome in 66 C.E., the Christian group in Jerusalem fled to Pella, a Gentile center in Transjordan, as they did once again, later on, during the Bar Kochba revolt in 135 C.E.

The destruction of the Temple severed another important link between the Jewish-

Christian and official Judaism. The event was quickly seized upon by Christian propagandists as proof of God's displeasure with and rejection of Israel.

All these factors combined to surround the Jewish-Christians in Jerusalem in quick time with a host of enemies. Many clashes ensued. The first fateful outburst resulted in the slaying of Stephen.

Basically a parting of the ways was inevitable also because normative Judaism of the first century was not apocalyptic in character, or salvationist, or pacifist, or otherworldly. Its main concern was not with sin, grace, redemption, and justification, but with a way of life which would express in practice the prophetic ideals of doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God, and the building of the good society on earth.

In its historic evolution, Judaism moved not from prophecy to apocalypse but from prophecy directly to the man of the great synagogue, from the Torah to its interpretation at the hands of Scribes and Rabbis. The Five Books of Moses are not an apocalyptic text. There were of course mystic and apocalyptic elements among Jews of the Second Commonwealth, <sup>the</sup> Essenes, and other groups <sup>the</sup> Anavim (the Humble Ones), <sup>the</sup> Hashaim (the Silent Ones), <sup>the</sup> Zenuim (the Chaste Ones) — and their numbers probably increased in the turbulent post-Jaccabbean centuries, but their numbers were always very small and their ideas never constituted the mainstream of Judaism.

Prophetic and Rabbinic Judaism was predominantly interested in the mundane progress of man and society, while the apocalyptists were interested in the timetable of the approaching End. The one sought a moral reformation of society; the others hoped for its miraculous transformation through divine intervention.

As we indicated earlier, there were expectations among Jews in the first century of the coming of the Messiah, <sup>because of</sup> ~~due to~~ a popularly entertained belief that the year 5,000, the beginning of the Millennium, was at an end. Many Jews entertained the hope of a national Messiah who would bring to Israel freedom and to mankind universal justice and peace. That this belief constituted the keystone in the arch of first-century Judaism is nowhere indicated. There were rabbis as late as the fourth

century who denied the coming of a Messiah altogether. "The Jews have no longer <sup>T.B.</sup> any Messiah to expect, for they have already had him in the days of Hezekiah" (San. 99A). There were others, like Rabbi Samuel, who stripped the Messianic idea of all of its apocalyptic accretions; "There is nothing that will be different in the Messianic times from the present, except freedom from foreign domination" <sup>T.B.</sup> (Ber. 34B). The social order will not be subjected to any radical change.

It is very significant, that while entertaining the hope of the coming of a Messiah, Judaism never accepted any specific Messiah. The Jewish people must have sensed that the idea, inspiring as a hope, was hopeless as a reality. An actual Messiah is always an unfulfillment, an anticlimax. His appearance in history has had, time and again, <sup>had</sup> disastrous consequences for the people. Judaism does not stand or fall with the belief in the Messiah.

Thus any group which made a materialized Messianism central in its belief would find itself inevitably drifting outside the mainstream of Jewish life and thought. Judaism, in spite of Messianic and eschatological hopes, which were maintained by some or by many Jews around the first century of the common era, continued as a religion dedicated principally to social progress and to the <sup>duty of men</sup> ~~man's~~ duties to re-construct themselves and society to conform to the ethical precepts of the Torah.

Judaism is not constructed around any drama of redemption. There is no term in the Hebrew language for "salvation" in a sacramental, redemptive sense. The idea that man needs to be "saved" either from the toils of life or from some Original Sin or from the prison house of matter or from baleful astrological influences is not part of Judaism.

"Saviour" and "Redeemer" in the Christological sense are not to be found in the Hebrew Bible.

Judaism's primary concern was to teach man not how sin came into the world, but how to avoid sin and how to repent of sin once having succumbed to it. All men are capable of sinning because all men are endowed with free will.

Because there is no Original Sin, there is no need for a Redeemer. The doctrine

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of atonement through the suffering of another is nowhere found in the Hebrew Bible.

Man does not need saviours. Nor does man need mediators between himself and God. "No one comes to the Father, but by me" (John 14:6) is a concept alien to Judaism. Man needs help in his moral struggles <sup>1</sup>/<sub>M</sub> encouragement, hope, confidence. Such help comes from turning to God, and it is at all times available. Through repentance and amendment man's moral effort becomes the channel for the inflow of the grace of God.

Nor is faith alone sufficient to make atonement for man's sins. It is "deeds which make atonement for men" <sup>M. Ta'anit</sup> (Talm. 16a).

In Judaism a man is made upright both by his faith in God and by his good works, the former being demonstrated by the latter. His spiritual life is not consummated by faith in God <sup>1</sup>/<sub>M</sub> it begins there, and it is ethical conduct which brings him near to God.

Ascetism, non-resistance to evil, and otherworldliness, were never strong features in the pattern of historic Judaism, as they undoubtedly were in the pattern of first-century Christianity.

(C) A faith predominantly eschatological gives rise to a way of life and a set of precepts different from one which has no such sovereign interests. The former will urge men to forsake this world, <sup>to</sup> be in it, but not of it. It will urge them to abandon their possessions, to choose poverty, to seek escape from the trammels of society in the life of religious seclusion, to avoid, wherever possible, marriage and the begetting of children. It will instruct them not to resist evil nor <sup>to</sup> revolt against any form of tyranny or slavery, for all these evils will soon pass away in the new world order which is swiftly approaching. Judaism, in which the eschatological element played no decisive role whatsoever, would naturally reject such a code in its entirety <sup>1</sup>/<sub>N</sub> and did.

Christianity from the outset was overwhelmingly ascetic in outlook. Even marriage



was disapproved of in the early Church. In fact, among the great religions of mankind, it is in Christianity and Buddhism that celibacy received its highest endorsement. At best marriage was tolerated as a concession to human frailty.

To marry and to beget children in order to preserve the race is a divine command in Judaism. "Be fruitful and multiply" (Gen. 1:28) is the first commandment of the Bible.

Judaism, rejecting all forms of dualism, did not encourage acts of mortification or self-removal from society as a way to holiness. One need not and should not renounce what is lawful.

In Jesus' mystical outlook, the world was fast coming to an end and there was no point in resisting evil. It would automatically cease with the Millennium and the imminent establishment of God's Kingdom. Man's chief concern should therefore be not to fight evil, but to prepare himself for the new age.

Normative Judaism did not subscribe to doctrines of nonresistance and pacifism. It demanded action from its devotees. It taught that there is evil in society and that it is man's duty to overcome it (if need be, by force), though force is by no means the only way by which evil can be overcome. It is not enough to improve oneself; one must also seek to improve one's environment. The only refuge from the cruel wrongs of the world is in the effort to set them right. There is no ethics of resignation in Judaism.

When Jesus declared, "My Kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36), he correctly defined the nature of his gospel. But Judaism's Kingdom of God referred to the reign of the one true God on earth, to the conversion of all peoples to faith in Him alone, and to the establishment of universal justice and peace.

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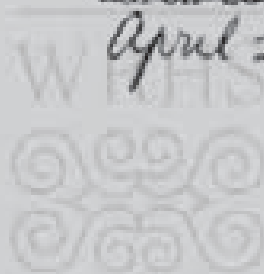
DROPSIE COLLEGE SYMPOSIUM

"JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY AT THE PARTING OF THE WAYS"

New York City

~~March 20, 1958~~

April 27, 1957



"THE PARTING OF THE WAYS"

A Symposium  
on the occasion of the  
50th Anniversary Celebration of the  
Dropsie College

April 29, 1957

DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER

I regard it as an extreme honor to have been invited by the President of the Dropsie College to participate in its celebration of the 50th Anniversary of its founding.

This great institution of learning has been a well-spring of Jewish scholarship and has made most valuable contributions to study and research in those areas of spiritual life which are so vital for the progress of mankind.

I should like to congratulate this noble institution upon completing a half century of creative work in the service of God and man.

✓ I am also deeply honored in having been invited to share in a symposium with two of the great scholars of our country, Professor Solomon Zeitlin and Professor Merton Enslin. I am somewhat uncomfortable to be numbered among them, for my career, unlike theirs, has not been especially dedicated to the field of technical scholarship. In their presence I am a layman - and as a layman I speak this evening.

My views are more fully elaborated in my books MESSIANIC SPECULATION IN ISRAEL, which was published in 1927 and WHERE JUDAISM DIFFERED, which was published ~~in~~ Fall of 1956

✓ When we speak of the 'parting of the ways', referring, of course, to the separation of Christianity from Judaism, it is clear that all of us have in mind no competitive assessments. We are interested in an objective analysis of the differences which led these two great religions to follow independent courses



through history. Each system of thought has its own texture and pattern and each faith its own perspectives. Differences should not obscure the underlying unity of the human race or the common needs of human life which all classic institutions and beliefs of mankind aim to serve or the urgency for their close cooperation to achieve their common purposes.

When Jesus came into Galilee, "spreading the gospel of the Kingdom of God and saying the time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God is at hand," he was voicing the opinion widely held that the year 5000 in the Creation calendar, which is to usher in the sixth millennium -- the age of the Kingdom of God --

was at hand. It was this chronologic fact which inflamed the Messianic hope of the people. *Evidence is at hand that the Jews used, as well, expected some great upheaval at about this time based on certain astrological calculations, which would usher in a new*

Jesus appeared in the procuratorship of Pontius Pilate (26-36 C.E.). The first mention of the appearance of a Messiah in Josephus is in connection with the disturbances during the term of office of the procurator Cuspius Fadus (c.44 C.E.). It seems likely, therefore, that in the minds of the people the Millennium was to begin around the year 30 C.E. *under the*

Be it remembered that it is not the Messiah who brings about the Millennium; it is the inevitable advent of the Millennium which carries along with it the Messiah and his appointed activities. The Messiah was expected around the second quarter of the first century C.E., because the Millennium was at hand. The time spoken of in Daniel *3 1/2 x 360 x 24 x 60* "for a time, times and a half" was now fulfilled. Prior to that time he was not expected, because according to the chronology of the day the Millennium was still considerably removed.

The central theme of the preaching of Jesus and of John the Baptist, whom Jesus hailed as the Elijah who was to announce the advent of the Millennium, was repentance. The day of repentance will precede the actual Millennium. Only those who would repent would be spared the purging and cleansing process antecedent to the Millennium -- "the wrath that is to come."

Jesus' essential mission was apocalyptic, not prophetic. His concern was not to reconstruct society but to save it from the winnowing and retributive judgment which was imminent in the van of the approaching Millennium. The ethical counsel which he gave to his followers was for a world in extremis and it was to help them survive the terrors to come <sup>the 01/11/25</sup> and to be admitted into the Kingdom, the new order of existence, which the Millennium would usher in.

Jesus was impatient because the people did not seem to realize its imminence: "Ye hypocrites, ye know how to interpret the face of the earth and the heaven; but how is it that ye know not how to interpret this time?" "Verily I say unto you, there are some of them that stand here, who shall in no wise taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom".

Jesus' attitude toward the Law was determined by his views concerning the approaching End. He did not oppose the Law in part or in whole. He did not seek to abrogate it. It was not necessary. The incoming Millennium would of itself do away with the Law entirely. However, "until all things be accomplished," the Law must be obeyed. Not, however, as most men obey it, formally and mechanically, but with a soul-searching intent and intensity, so that it may prove a real help to that spiritual lustration required for initiation into the Kingdom. Jesus' real attitude to the Law is admirably summed up in Matt. 5.17-20:

Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I come not to destroy but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, 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 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. But I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees,

ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven. *2012-10-18*

Jesus proceeds to indicate what he means by a righteousness which exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. In no instance does he call for a new Law or the abrogation of the old Law, but for the correct "intensive" attitude toward the existing Law.

Why should men fulfill the law with such inner intentness? Not that they will thereby bring the Kingdom about. The Kingdom comes through the grace of God, not through the works of men: "For it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." Its advent is pre-ordained in the cosmic scheme. It is inevitable. It cannot be hastened or retarded. But those who will fulfill the Law in truth and in sincerity will be spared the "pangs of Messianic times" and will be privileged to enter the Kingdom.

✓ There is nothing in all this that would bring about a parting of the ways with Judaism. While these beliefs did not constitute essential Jewish doctrine, they were part of a fairly familiar Agada whose time, according to the belief of Jesus and his followers, had finally come.

But a parting of the ways did take place, and that fairly early, perhaps within half a century of the crucifixion. Why?

Paul, alone, is not responsible for the break. It would have taken place without Paul. Paul found Christians and apparently even organized Christian societies already in existence in some of the cities which he visited in his missionary activities. These may still have regarded themselves as Jewish, but already as hyphenated Jews - as Jewish-Christians -- and were swiftly moving toward the inevitable separation.

Paul insured the spread and, to a large extent, the survival of Christianity, by adding to the simple, unblended Messianic message of Jesus and of his followers in Jerusalem, (or by intensively stressing) - a redemptive, salvationist message, which was more familiar and appealing to the Gentile world. He directed his message principally to the pagan world or to Jewish proselytes from the pagan

world, who were fully acquainted, through the numerous mystery cults about them, with similar salvationist hopes. By combining Judaism's monotheism, its relentless attack upon polytheism and idolatry, its lofty and cleansing moral idealism with a Messianic faith, strongly salvationist in character, whose major accent was upon redemption and the promise of immortality -- Pauline Christianity was able to make a strong impact upon the Greco-Roman world, long in the throes of a spiritual crisis resulting from the break-down of its ancient beliefs. Where Judaism, in its proselytizing efforts -- and they were not inconsiderable -- could attain only a limited success, because it would not yield in its requirements for the total acceptance of the Law on the part of those who sought full proselytism, Christianity of the Pauline school, making no such requirements, scored heavily.

But even without Paul, a parting of the ways would have taken place, earlier, of course, in the Diaspora, but not much later in Palestine.

A Messianic movement must either succeed, which in the very nature of things is not possible, or, failing to convert the parent body to its Messianic views, must separate from it or be rejected by it.

Messianic beliefs, in a variety of fluid forms, were current among Jews -- not necessarily all Jews -- around the beginning of the common era. Such beliefs are reflected in pre-Christian apocalyptic literature and are also to be found in the Dead Sea Scrolls. They made an especial appeal to the mystically-minded among the people. They were not frowned upon by the authoritative Judaism of the day, nor were they regarded <sup>as unorthodox</sup> as unorthodox. On the other hand they were not held to be dogmatic teachings of the faith, denial of which was heretical. Some Jews rejected the whole Messianic complex; others were simply indifferent to it. As long as no Messiah appeared, and no practical consequences were drawn, the believer would go unchallenged. It was a phase of folk-faith, of popular tradition, of Agada.

But the actual appearance of a Messiah meant, apart from its <sup>serious</sup> political and social implications, a concretizing of this revolutionary Agada, into a definitive

creed, sect and discipline within the nation. This, official Judaism could neither ignore nor accept.

For very serious consequences for faith and practice flowed from such a Messianism, now translated from an expectation into a reality.

The coming of the Messiah meant <sup>as stated</sup> the ushering in of the Millennium. With the Millennium all the laws of the Torah, as we stated above, are automatically abrogated. וְלֹא יִהְיֶה כֹהֵן וְלֹא יִהְיֶה זֶבֶח וְלֹא יִהְיֶה מִזְבֵּחַ There is no longer any need for them, now that the Kingdom of God had been established. The sole purpose of the ceremonial law, of rites and rituals, was לְקַדְּשׁ אֶת הַלֵּב (Lev. 10:14) to purify the hearts of men. It is a matter of history that anti-nomism in one form or another, timid or audacious, attended every important Messianic movement in Israel. In the early propaganda of such movements the abrogation of laws served the purpose of a symbolic demonstration that the Millennium was definitely on the way, if not actually arrived.

This was the case with the first Christian fellowship in Jerusalem. There were conservative elements in it who hesitated to take the bold step of abrogating some or all of the basic ceremonial laws of the Torah. There were others who remained ambivalent in their attitude, denying freedom from the Law to themselves, but permitting it to Gentile converts. The strong trend, however, moved by the very logic and dynamics of the movement, <sup>more</sup> rapidly and inevitably toward abrogation. Paul himself wrestled tortuously in his soul, long and unsuccessfully, with the problem of remaining loyal to the Torah and at the same time carrying on an energetic universal evangelism for his Christ faith. He finally concluded that the Gospel and the Law were irreconcilable, and that the coming of Jesus spelled "the end of the Law" (Rom. 10:4). He accordingly "died to the Law" (Galatians 2:19).

"Dying to the Law" meant <sup>the</sup> a rejection of the Torah. A rejection of the Torah meant a decisive break with Judaism—for no sect could remain within Judaism, or ever did remain within Judaism, which rejected the Torah, completely. Paul's break came within two or three decades of the death of Jesus. Other Jewish-Christians



in and outside of Palestine, did not make the break--and it was a voluntary break--that early. They "died to the Law" more slowly -- the Ebionites, for example, as late as the second century -- but they died nevertheless. A Messianic movement, in the tense interim period between the appearance of the Messiah and his expected early return, which was bent upon the rapid conversion of the Gentile world, would not long impede itself with the Mosaic ceremonial Law, so alien and so burdensome to the Gentiles -- a Law which the approaching Millennium would soon do away with anyhow.

The parent body of Judaism did not accept the Messianic views of Jesus' followers. <sup>constituted</sup> The latter remained a relatively small group within Palestinian Jewry; but it was from the very start a separate group. It was made so in the first place, not by any external pressure, but by its own distinctive fellowship, ~~as~~ a mystic union with their risen Lord; by its special rites of initiation which probably developed very early -- baptism and the Communion meal -- by its own manual of instruction, and recruiting, its separate prayer meetings as well as by the form of its social and economic life wherein all things were shared in common. The Jerusalem fellowship came to be linked with similarly-minded communities outside of Palestine and was dependent upon them for support. These communities, because of their large infiltration of Gentile converts, became increasingly less "Jewish" and less Torah-minded.

There were, of course, also external pressures which progressively isolated this Jewish-Christian brotherhood. <sup>which</sup> It was suspect and held in disfavor by many from the very first. Its Messianic faith was a discredited one in the eyes of the people, for it had failed of its objective. Jesus, whom his followers proclaimed as the Messiah had been crucified, and the Millennium had not materialized. That this Messiah had risen from the grave and was now seated at the right hand of God and would soon return to judge the earth -- a conviction now held by these Messianists, no longer as part of an indefinite and visionary saga, but as a present fact focused in the specific personality of a man by the name

of Jesus -- must have outraged many Jews both Pharisees and Sadducees. Any Agada, however inspiring and beautiful, when suddenly presented as an actual and concrete reality, may grievously shock and offend even those who had previously cherished it. To the Sadducees especially, this claim of the Jewish-Christians was particularly obnoxious; for the Sadducees denied the resurrection of the dead altogether.

Furthermore, there were some among the Jewish-Christians in Jerusalem who shared views about the Law similar to those which Paul came to express so vigorously and to more receptive ears in the racial melting-pot cities of the Diaspora. Any such denigration of the Torah, or any attempt to abrogate any of its laws, either by the authority of a new revelation, or by the technique of allegory employed to suspend the literal meaning of a law, would naturally arouse sharp hostility, especially in Jerusalem, though violent opposition and riots developed also elsewhere.

The Apostles and the early disciples in Jerusalem had come to claim, by virtue of the power given to them by Jesus, or through a direct revelation, or by the very fact of baptism, the gift of prophecy. This too was held to be an inevitable by-product of the Messianic age. The prophet Joel had proclaimed that in the latter end God would pour out his "spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophecy; your old men shall dream dreams and your young men shall see visions; even upon the men-servants and the maid-servants in those days, I will pour out my spirit." (Joel 3.1-2) The miracle of Pentecost - the very day commemorating the giving of the Law at Sinai -- which was attended by extraordinary natural phenomena reminiscent of Sinai -- recorded in Acts 2, when the Holy Spirit suddenly descended upon the Apostles and some hundred and twenty disciples -- was intended to substantiate the belief that the Messianic age had actually arrived, and that the Apostles and disciples were now possessed of prophetic power and authority.

At the time of Jesus, the authoritative teachers of Judaism, while not denying the possibility of the reappearance of prophecy -- the Bible clearly

certifying such a contingency - were no longer willing to stake the future of their faith on the chance appearance of men who might pretend to superior divine authority and who might utter prophetic oracles which would not be in keeping with the long established principles of Judaism, perhaps even in defiance of them.

They were unwilling to base a law or doctrine or its abrogation upon reputed miracles which might be exploited to confirm heresies. They therefore maintained that prophecy had actually ceased in Israel with the last three Biblical Prophets, Haggai, Zachariah and Malachi. They held that, at the time of the Destruction of the first Temple, prophecy was taken away from the prophets and given to the Sages.(B.B.12B). An extreme view was expressed by one rabbi: "at the time of the destruction of the first Temple, prophecy was taken away from the prophets and given to fools and children," (ibid] — this as if in pointed rejoinder to Paul and other Christian preachers, who exhorted their followers to prophecy: "now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more, to prophecy." (1 Cor. 14.5). It might be noted in passing, that the Christian Church itself, which soon came to be plagued with false prophets, imposters and pretenders, who endangered its own orthodox doctrine, soon put prophecy under restraint.

The position came to be held in normative Judaism, that the sage, the skilled interpreter of the Torah, was superior to the prophet. (B.B.12A). The purpose of the rabbis was not to deny the prophetic spirit but to insist that whatever further truths or new insights were required by subsequent ages, could very well be drawn by trained and devout minds out of the deep well of the Torah itself, whose waters were inexhaustible.

The claim of the early Christians therefore to have come into possession of the gift of the Holy Spirit - to have prophetic authority and the authority of revelation - carrying with it the authority also to abrogate or suspend Biblical laws, was a direct challenge to the accepted views long held by the

authoritative representatives of Judaism.

X A prophet was assured privileges under the Law, which were not possessed by any other religious teacher. A prophet, whose credibility was well established, could, for example, order the temporary suspension of any law of the Torah, short, of course, of the prohibition of idolatry, in order to meet an emergency, and the people were obligated to obey him. (San. 90A). The claims of the early Christians were therefore a challenge not alone to Pharisaism, which was then energetically developing a system of Halacha, based on a carefully devised technique of interpretation, as opposed to new revelations — but also of Sadduceism, which would naturally resent any modification of the Written Law.

The early Christians were, of course, aware that Jesus had abrogated no law of the Torah. But, as the need for relenting upon the rigors of the Law, especially the laws of Sabbath observance, circumcision and prohibited foods, became urgent in the rapid process of winning over Gentile converts, the authority of new revelations was rapidly invoked. The Gentile brethren in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia are informed by the Church in Jerusalem that on the authority of the Holy Spirit they need no longer practice the rite of circumcision. (Acts 15.28. See also Col. 2.11). Peter sees a heavenly vision which declares unto him that all foods are permissible. (Acts 10.10 f.). And on the authority of Jesus, himself, it was soon maintained "that the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath" (Mark 2:28) and that, therefore, it is a matter of personal preference for Christians whether they wish to observe the Sabbath or not. (Rom. 14.5 f.).

The admission of Gentiles to full membership in the 'ecclesia' of the faithful without the necessity of observing any laws of the Torah except the so-called Noachian laws (Acts 15) and the free sharing by them of the Holy Spirit (Acts 10.) meant to all intents and purposes the early abandonment of the Law for nearly all its members. It would be found impossible to maintain a united fellowship -- one church -- the dream of all the faithful -- with

✓ one part committed to Torah observances and the other uncommitted, and, in fact, critical of them. The opening of the doors of proselytism to the Gentile world on the sole basis of faith in the resurrected Christ, (Rom. 10.4 f.), whose revelation superseded the Torah, was a critical innovation which was bound to turn what was at first a Jewish sect, into a new non-Jewish religion.

It is difficult to establish exactly when the concept of Incarnation became part of the Christian faith, <sup>God assuming a human body</sup> probably very early. Paul thinks of Jesus as the pre-existent Christ, identified with the Holy Spirit, who had now assumed a human body. "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8.3). John thinks of Jesus as the Logos - the Word which was made flesh, "and dwelt among us" (John 1.14). Matthew and Luke speak of Jesus "as begotten of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 1.18; Luke 1.35).

Certainly, no one who is acquainted with the determined and persistent struggle for a pure monotheistic faith among the people of Israel since the days of Abraham, Moses and the Prophets could have assumed for a moment then or since that Judaism would find lodgement for the concept of a God who came down to earth, assumed human form, and suffered death for the salvation of men -- a doctrine which Jesus himself never taught. These ideas were known to the Jews long before the time of Jesus, and had been rejected by them. They were popular and current in the ancient world. Judaism had resisted these notions for centuries. The Jewish people could not but reject such a doctrine unless it were prepared to abandon the most treasured and essential conviction for which it had struggled through the centuries and of which it believed itself to be the covenanted guardian and spokesman to the world. It could not accept a renewed mythologizing of God, which it had resisted for a thousand years, even though the concept of a born, dying, and resurrected God might now be presented as a metaphysical idea and not as a concrete event which took place on a specific date in history or as a trinitarian conception of monotheism.

✓ A contributing factor, too, to a parting of the ways, was the fact that the Jewish-Christians were pacifists, and would have no part in the people's



resistance movement which culminated in the revolt against Rome. In the beginning of the Jewish revolt against Rome in 66 C.E., the Christian group in Jerusalem fled to Pella, a Gentile center in Trans-Jordan, as they did once again, later on, during the Bar Kochba revolt in 135 C.E.

The destruction of the Temple severed another important link between the Jewish-Christian and official Judaism. The event was quickly seized upon by Christian propagandists as proof of God's displeasure with, and rejection of Israel.

All these factors combined to surround the Jewish-Christians in Jerusalem in quick time with a host of enemies. Many <sup>1</sup>clashes ensued. The first fateful outburst resulted in the slaying of Stephen.

Basically a parting of the ways was inevitable also because normative Judaism of the first century was not apocalyptic in character, or salvationist, or pacifist or other-worldly. Its main concern was not with sin, grace, redemption and justification, but with a way of life which would express in practice the prophetic ideals of doing justly, loving mercy and walking humbly with God, and the building of the good society on earth.

( In its historic evolution, Judaism moved not from prophecy to apocalypse but from prophecy directly to the men of the great synagogue, from the Torah to its interpretation at the hands of Scribes and Sages. ) The Five Books of Moses are not an apocalyptic text. There were of course mystic and apocalyptic elements among Jews of the Second Commonwealth — Essenes, and other groups — "Anavim (the Humble Ones), Hashaim (the Silent Ones), Zenuim ( the Chaste Ones) — and their numbers probably increased in the turbulent post-Maccabbean centuries, but their numbers were always very small and their ideas never constituted the mainstream of Judaism.

Prophetic and Rabbinic Judaism was predominantly interested in the mundane progress of man and society, while the apocalyptists were interested in the time-table of the approaching End. The one sought a moral reformation of

of society; the others hoped for its miraculous transformation through divine intervention.

As we indicated earlier, there were expectations among Jews in the first century of the coming of the Messiah, due to a popularly entertained belief that the year 5,000, the beginning of the Millennium, was at an end. Many Jews entertained the hope of a national Messiah who would bring to Israel freedom and to mankind universal justice and peace. That this belief constituted the keystone in the arch of first century Judaism is nowhere indicated. There were rabbis as late as the fourth century who denied the coming of a Messiah altogether. "The Jews have no longer any Messiah to expect, for they have already had him in the days of Hezekiah" (San. 99A). There were others, like Rabbi Samuel, who stripped the Messianic idea of all of its apocalyptic accretions; "There is nothing that will be different in the Messianic times from the present, except freedom from foreign domination" (Bar. 34B). The social order will not be subjected to any radical change.

It is very significant, that while entertaining the hope of the coming of a Messiah, Judaism never accepted any specific Messiah. The Jewish people must have sensed that the idea, inspiring as a hope, was hopeless as a reality. An actual Messiah is always an unfulfillment, an anti-climax. His appearance in history has had, time and again disastrous consequences for the people. Judaism does not stand or fall with the belief in the Messiah.

Thus any group which made a materialized Messianism central in its belief would find itself inevitably drifting outside the mainstream of Jewish life and thought. (Judaism, in spite of Messianic and eschatological hopes, which were maintained by some or by many Jews around the first century of the common era, continued as a religion dedicated principally to social progress and to the men's duties to reconstruct themselves and society to conform to the ethical precepts of the Torah.)

Judaism is not constructed around any drama of redemption. There is no

term in the Hebrew language for "salvation" in a sacramental, redemptive sense. The idea that man needs to be "saved" either from the toils of life or from some Original Sin or from the prison house of matter or from baleful astrological influences is not part of Judaism.

Saviour and Redeemer in the Christological sense are not to be found in the Bible.

Judaism's primary concern was to teach man not how sin came into the world, but how to avoid sin and how to repent of sin once having succumbed to it. All men are capable of sinning because all men are endowed with free will.

Because there is no Original Sin, there is no need for a Redeemer. The doctrine of atonement through the suffering of another is nowhere found in the Hebrew Bible.

Man does not need saviours. Nor does man need mediators between himself and God. "No one comes to the Father, but by me" (John 14:6) is a concept alien to Judaism. Man needs help in his moral struggles -- encouragement, hope, confidence. Such help comes from turning to God, and it is at all times available. Through repentance and amendment man's moral effort becomes the channel for the in-flow of the grace of God.

Nor is faith alone sufficient to make atonement for man's sins. It is "deeds which make atonement for men" (Ta'an. 16a).

In Judaism a man is made upright both by his faith in God and by his good works, the former being demonstrated by the latter. His spiritual life is not consummated by faith in God -- it begins there, and it is ethical conduct which brings him near to God.

Ascetism, non-resistance to evil, and other-worldliness, were never strong features in the pattern of historic Judaism, as they undoubtedly were in the pattern of first century Christianity.

A faith predominantly eschatological gives rise to a way of life and a set of precepts different from one which has no such sovereign interests.

The former will urge men to forsake this world, be in it, but not of it. It will urge them to abandon their possessions, to choose poverty, to seek escape from the trammels of society in the life of religious seclusion, to avoid, wherever possible marriage and the begetting of children. It will instruct them not to resist evil nor revolt against any form of tyranny or slavery, for all these evils will soon pass away in the new world order which is swiftly approaching. Judaism, in which the eschatological element played no decisive role whatsoever would naturally reject such a code in its entirety — and did.

Christianity from the outset was overwhelmingly ascetic in outlook. Even marriage was disapproved of in the early Church. In fact, among the great religions of mankind, it is in Christianity and Buddhism that celibacy received its highest endorsement. At best marriage was tolerated as a concession to human frailty.

To marry and to beget children in order to preserve the race is a divine command in Judaism. "Be fruitful and multiply" (Gen. 1:28) is the first commandment of the Bible.

Judaism rejecting all forms of dualism, did not encourage acts of mortification or self-removal from society as a way to holiness. One need not and should not renounce what is lawful.

In Jesus' mystical outlook, the world was fast coming to an end and there was no point in resisting evil. It would automatically cease with the Millennium and the imminent establishment of God's Kingdom. Man's chief concern should therefore be not to fight evil, but to prepare himself for the new age.

*- even as the A.D. - the Antichrist to end times.*

Normative Judaism did not subscribe to doctrines of nonresistance and pacifism. It demanded action from its devotees. It taught that there is evil in society and that it is man's duty to overcome it -- if need be, by force, though force is by no means the only way by which evil can be overcome.

It is not enough to improve oneself; one must also seek to improve one's environment. The only refuge from the cruel wrongs of the world is in the effort to set them right. There is no ethics of resignation in Judaism.

When Jesus declared, "My Kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36), he correctly defined the nature of his gospel. But Judaism's Kingdom of God referred to the reign of the one true God on earth, to the conversion of all peoples to faith in Him alone, and to the establishment of universal justice and peace.

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"THE PARTING OF THE WAYS"

A Symposium  
on the occasion of the  
50th Anniversary Celebration of the  
Dropsie College

April 29, 1957

DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER

I regard it as an extreme honor to have been invited by the President of the Dropsie College to participate in its celebration of the 50th Anniversary of its founding.

This great institution of learning has been a well-spring of Jewish scholarship and has made most valuable contributions to study and research in those areas of spiritual life which are so vital for the progress of mankind.

I should like to congratulate this noble institution upon completing a half century of creative work in the service of God and man.

I am also deeply honored in having been invited to share in a symposium with two of the great scholars of our country, Professor Solomon Zeitlin and Professor Morton Enslin. I am somewhat uncomfortable to be numbered among them, for my career, unlike theirs, has not been especially dedicated to the field of technical scholarship. In their presence I am a layman - and as a layman I speak this evening.

My views are more fully elaborated in my book *MESSIANIC SPECULATION IN ISRAEL* which was published in 1927 and *WHERE JUDAISM DIFFERED* which was published last Fall.

When we speak of the 'parting of the ways', referring, of course, to the separation of Christianity from Judaism, it is clear that all of us have in mind no competitive assessments. We are interested in an objective analysis of the differences which led these two great religions to follow independent courses through history. Each system of thought has its own texture and pattern and each

faith its own perspectives. Differences should not obscure the underlying unity of the human race or the common needs of human life which all classic institutions and beliefs of mankind aim to serve or the urgency for their close cooperation to achieve their common purposes.

When Jesus came into Galilee, "spreading the gospel of the Kingdom of God and saying the time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God is at hand," he was voicing the opinion widely held that the year 5000 in the Creation calendar, which is to usher in the sixth millennium -- the age of the Kingdom of God -- was at hand. It was this chronologic fact which inflamed the Messianic hope of the people.

Jesus appeared in the procuratorship of Pontius Pilate (26-36 C.E.). The first mention of the appearance of a Messiah in Josephus is in connection with the disturbances during the term of office of the procurator Cuspius Fadus (c.44 C.E.). It seems likely, therefore, that in the minds of the people the Millennium was to begin around the year 30 C.E.

Be it remembered that it is not the Messiah who brings about the Millennium; it is the inevitable advent of the Millennium which carries along with it the Messiah and his appointed activities. The Messiah was expected around the second quarter of the first century C.E., because the Millennium was at hand. The time spoken of in Daniel *SD! p 236/4 34/4* "for a time, times and a half" was now fulfilled. Prior to that time he was not expected, because according to the chronology of the day the Millennium was still considerably removed.

The central theme of the preachment of Jesus and of John the Baptist, whom Jesus hailed as the Elijah who was to announce the advent of the Millennium, ~~as well as of the disciples of Jesus~~, was repentance. The day of repentance will precede the actual Millennium. Only those who would repent would be spared the purging and cleansing process antecedent to the Millennium -- "the wrath that is to come."

Jesus' essential mission was apocalyptic, not prophetic. His concern was not to reconstruct society but to save it from the winnowing and retributive judgment which was imminent in the van of the approaching Millennium. The ethical counsel which he gave to his followers was for a world in extremis and it was to help them survive the terrors to come and to be admitted into the Kingdom, the new order of existence which the Millennium would usher in.

Jesus was impatient because the people did not seem to realize its imminence: "Ye hypocrites, ye know how to interpret the face of the earth and the heaven; but how is it that ye know not how to interpret this time?" "Verily I say unto you, there are some of them that stand here, who shall in no wise taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom".

Jesus' attitude toward the Law was determined by his views concerning the approaching End. He did not oppose the Law in part or in whole. He did not seek to abrogate it. It was not necessary. The incoming Millennium would of itself do away with the Law entirely. However, "until all things be accomplished," the Law must be obeyed. Not, however, as most men obey it, formally and mechanically, but with a soul-searching intent and intensity, so that it may prove a real help to that spiritual lustration required for initiation into the Kingdom. Jesus' real attitude to the Law is admirably summed up in Matt. 5.17-20:

Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the prophets; I come not to destroy but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, 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 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. But I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees,

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Jesus proceeds to indicate what he means by a righteousness which exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. In no instance does he call for a new Law or the abrogation of the old Law, but for the correct "intensive" attitude toward the existing Law.

Why should men fulfill the law with such inner intentness? Not that they will thereby bring the Kingdom about. The Kingdom comes through the grace of God, not through the works of men: "For it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." Its advent is pre-ordained in the cosmic scheme. It is inevitable. It cannot be hastened or retarded. But those who will fulfill the Law in truth and in sincerity will be spared the "pangs of Messianic times" and will be privileged to enter the Kingdom.

There is nothing in all this that would bring about a parting of the ways with Judaism. While these beliefs did not ~~constitute~~ <sup>constitute</sup> essential Jewish doctrine, they were part of a fairly familiar Agada whose time, according to the belief of Jesus and his followers, had finally come.

But a parting of the ways did take place, and that fairly early, perhaps within half a century of the crucifixion. Why?

Paul, alone, is not responsible for the break. It would have taken place without Paul. Paul found Christians and apparently even organized Christian societies already in existence in some of the cities which he visited in his missionary activities. These may still have regarded themselves as Jewish, but already as hyphenated Jews - as Jewish-Christians -- and were swiftly moving toward the inevitable separation.

Paul insured the spread and, to a large extent, the survival of Christianity, by adding to the simple, unblended Messianic message of Jesus and of his followers in Jerusalem, <sup>or by intensively stressing,</sup> a redemptive, salvationist message, which was more familiar and appealing to the Gentile world. He directed his message principally to the pagan world or to Jewish proselytes from the pagan world, who were fully acquainted, through



the numerous mystery cults about them, with similar salvationist hopes. By combining Judaism's monotheism, its relentless attack upon polytheism and idolatry, its lofty and cleansing moral idealism with a Messianic faith, strongly salvationist in character, whose major accent was upon redemption and the promise of immortality -- Pauline Christianity was able to make a strong impact upon the Greco-Roman world, long in the throes of a spiritual crisis resulting from the break-down of its ancient beliefs. Where Judaism, in its proselytizing efforts -- and they were not inconsiderable -- could attain only a limited success, because it would not yield in its requirements for the total acceptance of the Law on the part of those who sought full proselytism, Christianity of the Pauline school, making no such requirements, scored heavily.

But even without Paul, a parting of the ways would have taken place, earlier, of course, in the Diaspora, but not much later in Palestine.

A Messianic movement must either succeed, which in the very nature of things is not possible, or, failing to convert the parent body to its Messianic views, must separate from it or be rejected by it.

Messianic beliefs, in a variety of fluid forms, were current among Jews -- not necessarily all Jews -- around the beginning of the common era. Such beliefs are reflected in pre-Christian apocalyptic literature and are also to be found in the Dead Sea Scrolls. They made an especial appeal to the mystically-minded among the people. They were not frowned upon by the authoritative Judaism of the day, nor were they regarded as unorthodox. On the other hand they were not held to be dogmatic teachings of the faith, denial of which was heretical. Some Jews rejected the whole Messianic complex; others were simply indifferent to it. As long as no Messiah appeared, and no practical consequences were drawn, the believer would go unchallenged. It was a phase of folk-faith, of popular tradition, of Agada.

But the actual appearance of a Messiah meant, apart from its political and social implications, a concretizing of this revolutionary Agada, into a definitive creed, sect and discipline within the nation. This, official Judaism could neither ignore nor accept.



For very serious consequences for faith and practice flowed from such a Messianism, now translated from an expectation into a reality.

The coming of the Messiah meant the ushering in of the Millennium. With the Millennium all the laws of the Torah as we stated above, are automatically abrogated.

There is no longer any need for them, now that the Kingdom of God had been established. The sole purpose of the ceremonial law, of rites and rituals, was to purify the hearts of men. It is a matter of history that anti-nomism in one form or another, timid or audacious, attended every important Messianic movement in Israel. In the early propaganda of such movements the abrogation of laws served the purpose of a symbolic demonstration that the Millennium was definitely on the way, if not actually arrived.

This was the case with the first Christian fellowship in Jerusalem. There were conservative elements in it who hesitated to take the bold step of abrogating some or all of the basic ceremonial laws of the Torah. There were others who remained ambivalent in their attitude, denying freedom from the Law to themselves, but permitting it to Gentile converts. The strong trend, however, moved by the very logic and dynamics of the movement rapidly and inevitably toward abrogation. Paul himself wrestled tortuously in his soul, long and unsuccessfully, with the problem of remaining loyal to the Torah and at the same time carrying on an energetic universal evangelism for his Christ faith. He finally concluded that the Gospel and the Law were irreconcilable, and that the coming of Jesus spelled "the end of the Law" (Rom. 10.4). He accordingly "died to the Law" (Galatians 2.19).

"Dying to the Law" meant a rejection of the Torah. A rejection of the Torah meant a decisive break with Judaism -- for no sect could remain within Judaism, or ever did remain within Judaism, which rejected the Torah completely. Paul's break came within two or three decades of the death of Jesus. Other Jewish-Christians in and outside of Palestine, did not make the break -- and it was a voluntary break -- that early. They "died to the Law" more slowly -- the Ebionites, for example, as

late as the second century -- but they died nevertheless. A Messianic movement, in the tense interim period between the appearance of the Messiah and his expected early return, which was bent upon the rapid conversion of the Gentile world, would not long impede itself with the Mosaic ceremonial law, so alien and so burdensome to the Gentiles -- a law which the approaching Millennium would soon do away with anyhow.

The parent body of Judaism did not accept the Messianic views of Jesus' followers. The latter remained a relatively small group within Palestinian Jewry; but it was from the very start a separate group. It was made so in the first place, not by any external pressure, but by its own distinctive fellowship, as a mystic union with their risen Lord; by its special rites of initiation which probably developed very early -- baptism and the Communion meal -- by its own manual of instruction, and recruiting, its separate prayer meetings as well as by the form of its social and economic life wherein all things were shared in common. The Jerusalem fellowship came to be linked with similarly-minded communities outside of Palestine and was dependent upon them for support. These communities, because of their large infiltration of Gentile converts, became increasingly less "Jewish" and less Torah-minded.

There were, of course, also external pressures which progressively isolated this Jewish-Christian brotherhood. It was suspect and held in disfavor by many from the very first. Its Messianic faith was a discredited one in the eyes of the people, for it had failed of its objective. Jesus, whom his followers proclaimed as the Messiah had been crucified, and the Millennium had not materialized. That this Messiah had risen from the grave and was now seated at the right hand of God and would soon return to judge the earth -- a conviction now held by these Messianists, no longer as part of an indefinite and visionary saga, but as a present fact focused in the specific personality of a man by the name of Jesus -- must have outraged many Jews both Pharisees and Sadducees. Any Agada, however inspiring and beautiful,

when suddenly presented as an actual and concrete reality, may grievously shock and offend even those <sup>who had formerly</sup> ~~who~~ cherished it. To the Sadducees especially, this claim of the Jewish-Christian, <sup>was</sup> particularly obnoxious; for the Sadducees denied the resurrection of the dead altogether.

Furthermore, there were some among the Jewish-Christians in Jerusalem who shared views about the Law similar to those which Paul came to express so vigorously and to more receptive ears in the racial melting-pot cities of the Diaspora. Any such denigration of the Torah, or any attempt to abrogate any of its laws, either by the authority of a new revelation, or by the technique of allegory employed to suspend the literal meaning of a law, would naturally arouse sharp hostility, especially in Jerusalem, though violent opposition and riots developed also elsewhere.

The Apostles and the early disciples in Jerusalem had come to claim, by virtue of the power given to them by Jesus, or through a direct revelation, or by the very fact of baptism, the gift of prophecy. This too was held to be an inevitable by-product of the Messianic age. The prophet Joel had proclaimed that in the latter end God would pour out his "spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophecy; your old men shall dream dreams and your young men shall see visions; even upon the men-servants and the maid-servants in those days, I will pour out my spirit." (Joel 3.1-2) The miracle of Pentecost - the very day commemorating the giving of the Law at Sinai -- which was attended by extraordinary natural phenomena reminiscent of Sinai -- recorded in Acts 2, when the Holy Spirit suddenly descended upon the Apostles and some hundred and twenty disciples -- was intended to substantiate the belief that the Messianic age had actually arrived, and that the Apostles and disciples were now possessed of prophetic power and authority.

At the time of Jesus, the authoritative teachers of Judaism, while not denying the possibility of the reappearance of prophecy, <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~ Bible clearly certifying such a contingency - were no longer willing to stake the future of their faith on the chance appearance of men who might pretend to superior divine authority and who might utter prophetic oracles which would not be in keeping with the long established

principles of Judaism, perhaps even in defiance of them. They were unwilling to base a law or doctrine or ~~their~~<sup>its</sup> abrogation upon reputed miracles which might be exploited to confirm heresies. They therefore maintained that prophecy had actually ceased in Israel with the last three Biblical Prophets, Haggai, Zachariah and Malachi. They held that, at the time of the destruction of the first Temple, prophecy was taken away from the prophets and given to the Sages. (B.B.12B). An extreme view was expressed by one rabbi: "at the time of the destruction of the first Temple, prophecy was taken away from the prophets and given to fools and children," (ibid) -- this as if in pointed rejoinder to Paul and other Christian preachers, who exhorted their followers to prophecy: "now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more, to prophecy." (1 Cor. 14.5). It might be noted in passing, that the Christian Church itself, which soon came to be plagued with false prophets, imposters and pretenders, who endangered its own orthodox doctrine, soon put prophecy under restraint.

The position came to be held in normative Judaism, that the sage, the skilled interpreter of the Torah, was superior to the prophet. (B.B. 12A). The purpose of the rabbis was not to deny the prophetic spirit but to insist that whatever further truths or new insights were required by subsequent ages, could very well be drawn by trained and devout minds out of the deep well of the Torah itself, whose waters were inexhaustible.

The claim of the early Christians therefore to have come into possession of the gift of the Holy Spirit - to have prophetic authority and the authority of revelation - carrying with it the authority also to abrogate or suspend Biblical laws, was a direct challenge to the accepted views long held by the authoritative representatives of Judaism.

A prophet was assured privileges under the Law, which were not possessed by any other religious teacher. A prophet, whose credibility was well established, could, for example, order the temporary suspension of any law of the Torah, short, of course, of the prohibition of idolatry, in order to meet an emergency, and the



people were obligated to obey him. (San. 90A). The claims of the early Christians ~~was~~<sup>were</sup> therefore a challenge not alone to Pharisaism, which was then energetically developing a system of Halacha, based on a carefully devised technique of interpretation, as apposed to new revelations -- but also of Sadduceism, which would naturally resent any modification of the Written Law.

The early Christians were, of course, aware that Jesus had abrogated no law of the Torah. But, as the need for relenting upon the rigors of the Law, especially the laws of Sabbath observance, circumcision and prohibited foods, became urgent in the rapid process of winning over Gentile converts, the authority of new revelations was rapidly invoked. The Gentile brethren in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia are informed by the Church in Jerusalem that on the authority of the Holy Spirit they need no longer practice the rite of circumcision. (Acts 15.28) (See also Col. 2.11). Peter sees a heavenly vision which declares unto him that all foods are permissible. (Acts 10.10 f.). And on the authority of Jesus, himself, it was soon maintained "that the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath" (Mark 2:28) and that, therefore, it is a matter of personal preference for Christians whether they wish to observe the Sabbath or not. (Rom. 14.5 f.).

The admission of Gentiles to full membership in the 'ecclesia' of the faithful without the necessity of observing any laws of the Torah except the so-called Noachian laws (Acts 15) and the free sharing by them of the Holy Spirit (Acts 10.) meant to all intents and purposes the early abandonment of the Law for nearly all its members. It would be found impossible to maintain a united fellowship -- one church -- the dream of all the faithful -- with one part committed to Torah observances and the other uncommitted, and, in fact, critical of them. The opening of the doors of proselytism to the Gentile world on the sole basis of faith in the resurrected Christ, (Rom. 10.4 f.), whose revelation superseded the Torah, was a critical innovation which was bound to turn what was at first a Jewish sect, into a new non-Jewish religion.



It is difficult to establish exactly when the concept of Incarnation became part of the Christian faith, probably very early. Paul thinks of Jesus as the pre-existent Christ, identified with the Holy Spirit, who had now assumed a human body. "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8.3). John thinks of Jesus as the Logos - the Word which was made flesh, "and dwelt among us" (John 1.14). Matthew and Luke speak of Jesus "as begotten of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 1.18; Luke 1.35).

Certainly, no one who is acquainted with the determined and persistent struggle for a pure monotheistic faith among the people of Israel since the days of Abraham, Moses and the Prophets could have assumed for a moment then or since that Judaism would find lodgement for the concept of a God who came down to earth, assumed human form, and suffered death for the salvation of men -- a doctrine which Jesus himself never taught. These ideas were known to the Jews long before the time of Jesus, and had been rejected by them. They were popular and current in the ancient world. Judaism had resisted these notions for centuries. The Jewish people could not but reject such a doctrine unless it ~~was~~ prepared to abandon the most treasured and essential conviction for which it had struggled through the centuries and of which it believed itself to be the covenanted guardian and spokesman to the world. It could not accept a renewed mythologizing of God, which it had resisted for a thousand years, even though the concept of a born, dying, and resurrected God might now be presented as a metaphysical idea and not as a concrete event which took place on a specific date in history or as a trinitarian conception of monotheism.

A contributing factor, too, to a parting of the ways, was the fact that the Jewish-Christians were pacifists, and would have no part in the people's resistance movement which culminated in the revolt against Rome. In the beginning of the Jewish revolt against Rome in 66 C.E., the Christian group in Jerusalem fled to Pella, a Gentile center in Trans-Jordan, as they did once again, later on, during the Bar Kochba revolt in 135 C.E.

The destruction of the Temple severed another important link between the Jewish-

Christian and official Judaism. The event was quickly seized upon by Christian propagandists as proof of God's displeasure with and rejection of Israel.

All these factors combined to surround the Jewish-Christians in Jerusalem in quick time with a host of enemies. Many clashes ensued. The first fateful outburst resulted in the slaying of Stephen.

Basically a parting of the ways was inevitable also because normative Judaism of the first century was not apocalyptic in character, or salvationist, or pacifist or other-worldly. Its main concern was not with sin, grace, redemption and justification, but with a way of life which would express in practice the prophetic ideals of doing justly, loving mercy and walking humbly with God, and the building of the good society on earth.

In its historic evolution, Judaism moved not from prophecy to apocalypse but from prophecy directly to the men of the great synagogue, from the Torah to its interpretation at the hands of Scribes and Sages. The Five Books of Moses are not an apocalyptic text. There were of course mystic and apocalyptic elements among Jews of the Second Commonwealth — Essenes, and other groups — "Anavia (the Humble Ones), Haskaim (the Silent Ones), Zenuim (the Chaste Ones) — and their numbers probably increased in the turbulent post-Maccabbean centuries, but their numbers were always very small and their ideas never constituted the mainstream of Judaism.

Prophetic and Rabbinic Judaism was predominantly interested in the mundane progress of man and society, while the apocalyptists were interested in the timetable of the approaching End. The one sought a moral reformation of society; the others hoped for its miraculous transformation through divine intervention.

As we indicated earlier, there were expectations among Jews in the first century of the coming of the Messiah, due to a popularly entertained belief that the year 5,000, the beginning of the Millennium, was at an end. Many Jews entertained the hope of a national Messiah who would bring to Israel freedom and to mankind universal justice and peace. That this belief constituted the keystone in the arch of first century Judaism is nowhere indicated. There were rabbis as late as the fourth

century who denied the coming of a Messiah altogether. "The Jews have no longer any Messiah to expect, for they have already had him in the days of Hezekiah" (San. 99A). There were others, like Rabbi Samuel, who stripped the Messianic idea of all of its apocalyptic accretions; "There is nothing that will be different in the Messianic times from the present, except freedom from foreign domination" (Ber. 34B). The social order will not be subjected to any radical change.

It is very significant, that while entertaining the hope of the coming of a Messiah, Judaism never accepted any specific Messiah. The Jewish people must have sensed that the idea, inspiring as a hope, was hopeless as a reality. An actual Messiah is always an unfulfillment, an anti-climax. His appearance in history has had, time and again disastrous consequences for the people. Judaism does not stand or fall with the belief in the Messiah.

Thus any group which made a materialized Messianism central in its belief would find itself inevitably drifting outside the mainstream of Jewish life and thought. Judaism, in spite of Messianic and eschatological hopes, which were maintained by some or by many Jews around the first century of the common era, continued as a religion dedicated principally to social progress and to the men's duties to reconstruct themselves and society to conform to the ethical precepts of the Torah.

Judaism is not constructed around any drama of redemption. There is no term in the Hebrew language for "salvation" in a sacramental, redemptive sense. The idea that man needs to be "saved" either from the toils of life or from some Original Sin or from the prison house of matter or from baleful astrological influences is not part of Judaism.

Saviour and Redeemer in the Christological sense are not to be found in the Bible.

Judaism's primary concern was to teach man not how sin came into the world, but how to avoid sin and how to repent of sin once having succumbed to it. All men are capable of sinning because all men are endowed with free will.

Because there is no Original Sin, there is no need for a Redeemer. The doctrine

of atonement through the suffering of another is nowhere found in the Hebrew Bible.

Man does not need saviours. Nor does man need mediators between himself and God. "No one comes to the Father, but by me" (John 14:6) is a concept alien to Judaism. Man needs help in his moral struggles — encouragement, hope, confidence. Such help comes from turning to God, and it is at all times available. Through repentance and amendment man's moral effort becomes the channel for the in-flow of the grace of God.

Nor is faith alone sufficient to make atonement for man's sins. It is "deeds which make atonement for men" (Ta'an. 16a).

In Judaism a man is made upright both by his faith in God and by his good works, the former being demonstrated by the latter. His spiritual life is not consummated by faith in God — it begins there, and it is ethical conduct which brings him near to God.

Ascetism, non-resistance to evil, and other-worldliness, were never strong features in the pattern of historic Judaism, as they undoubtedly were in the pattern of first century Christianity.

A faith predominantly eschatological gives rise to a way of life and a set of precepts different from one which has no such sovereign interests. The former will urge men to forsake this world, be in it, but not of it. It will urge them to abandon their possessions, to choose poverty, to seek escape from the trammels of society in the life of religious seclusion, to avoid, wherever possible marriage and the begetting of children. It will instruct them not to resist evil nor revolt against any form of tyranny or slavery, for all these evils will soon pass away in the new world order which is swiftly approaching. Judaism, in which the eschatological element played no decisive role whatsoever would naturally reject such a code in its entirety — and did.

Christianity from the outset was overwhelmingly ascetic in outlook. Even marriage



was disapproved of in the early Church. In fact, among the great religions of mankind, it is in Christianity and Buddhism that celibacy received its highest endorsement. At best marriage was tolerated as a concession to human frailty.

To marry and to beget children in order to preserve the race is a divine command in Judaism. "Be fruitful and multiply" (Gen. 1:28) is the first commandment of the Bible.

Judaism rejecting all forms of dualism did not encourage acts of mortification or self-removal from society as a way to holiness. One need not and should not renounce what is lawful.

In Jesus' mystical outlook, the world was fast coming to an end and there was no point in resisting evil. It would automatically cease with the Millennium and the imminent establishment of God's Kingdom. Man's chief concern should therefore be not to fight evil, but to prepare himself for the new age.

Normative Judaism did not subscribe to doctrines of nonresistance and pacifism. It demanded action from its devotees. It taught that there is evil in society and that it is man's duty to overcome it -- if need be, by force, though force is by no means the only way by which evil can be overcome. It is not enough to improve oneself; one must also seek to improve one's environment. The only refuge from the cruel wrongs of the world is in the effort to set them right. There is no ethics of resignation in Judaism.

When Jesus declared, "My Kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36), he correctly defined the nature of his gospel. But Judaism's Kingdom of God referred to the reign of the one true God on earth, to the conversion of all peoples to faith in Him alone, and to the establishment of universal justice and peace.



# Judaism and Christianity at the Parting of the Ways

Solomon Zeitlin

Professor of Rabbinic Literature

The Dropsie College

Morton S. Enslin

Professor, Biblical Languages and Literature

St. Lawrence University, Canton, N. Y.

Abba Hillel Silver

Rabbi, The Temple, Cleveland, Ohio

Chairman

Julius Mark

Senior Rabbi, Congregation Emanu-El

Moderator

Abraham A. Neuman

President, The Dropsie College

## PROGRAM



The Dropsie College for Hebrew and Cognate Learning

*cordially invites you to attend a*

**Symposium**

**on**

**Judaism and Christianity at the Parting of the Ways**

**Thursday evening, March 20, 1958, at 8:30**

**in the Assembly Hall of**

**Temple Emanu-El**

**1 East 65th Street**

**New York**

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p. 16 and 19

FOUNDER'S DAY  
50th ANNIVERSARY

The Dropsie College for Hebrew and Cognate Learning

ADDRESSES

PRESIDENT ABRAHAM A. NEUMAN

DAVID SARNOFF



PHILADELPHIA

May 22, 1957

FOUNDER'S DAY  
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## SYMBOL AND PROMISE

### ADDRESS

BY ABRAHAM A. NEUMAN

President of The Dropsie College

**T**HIS YEAR OUR FOUNDER'S DAY marks the fiftieth anniversary since the College received its Charter from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. It is an historic landmark in the life of the College, and we are grateful to you, our honored guests, and our friends, for participating with us in our historic celebration.

The Dropsie College was born in faith and reared to robust health despite an early era of doubt and skepticism. Moses Dropsie, doomed to blindness in his later years, saw a vision. This vision became the dream of his life. It inspired him with a faith so arduous that he dedicated all his earthly possessions to vindicate this dream and faith.

The essence of his dream was in consonance with the spirit of the early fathers of our country, namely that the strength of a nation lies in its faith; that the sanction of democracy lies in the teachings of the Hebrew bible; that the dignity of man is derived from the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man whose source is to be found in the Book of Genesis. Therefore, reasoned Moses Dropsie, the knowledge of the bible in its intrinsic character in respect to languages, history, ancient civilizations and all that flows from these sources are a vital ingredient of a healthy American civilization.

Part of his vision seems prophetically inspired, for far ahead of his time he visualized that free America would some day become the happy home of the largest aggregation of the people of his own Jewish faith. Destiny decreed, so he thought, that on this soil a unique center of learning would arise rooted in Hebraic traditions and open to all seekers of truth without regard to race or creed.

He visualized the renaissance of Jewish culture in America rivaling the ancient centers of Jewish learning whose influence radiated to all areas of western civilization especially in the realms of philosophy, ethics and religion.



Toward this end, he bequeathed all his earthly possessions for the establishment of a college for Hebrew and Cognate Learning. The institution was, of necessity, to be of advanced character. He therefore prescribed that the institution which he planned was to be a non-professional graduate college exclusively, whose prime aim was to engage in original investigation and research in those branches of learning which were basic to the historic religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

This is the genesis of the Dropsie College. There were few in Dropsie's generation who shared his faith. Among the few elect, however, were men of vision to name but a few: Cyrus Adler, the organizer and first president of the College; the wise and learned jurist, Mayer Sulzberger; and Oscar Straus, Secretary of Commerce and Labor in the United States Government, in whose cabinet office the College was formally established.

As we gaze back upon the fifty years of the existence of the College, we behold Dropsie's faith gloriously vindicated. The record of our alumni, drawn literally from all parts of the world, and functioning in academic institutions spread over four continents; their writings and the writings of the famed scholars on our faculty, who are also a spiritual composite of the best that diverse cultural centers of the world offer, would even in normal times have constituted a significant contribution to Jewish, to American and to world scholarship. But who can forget, in the tragic era of the past half century, the devastation that was wrought upon the ancient centers of learning in the war-torn countries, and particularly the blight of physical, spiritual and intellectual death that extinguished every spark of life in the schools of sacred learning that were once the pride and the glory of Judaism.

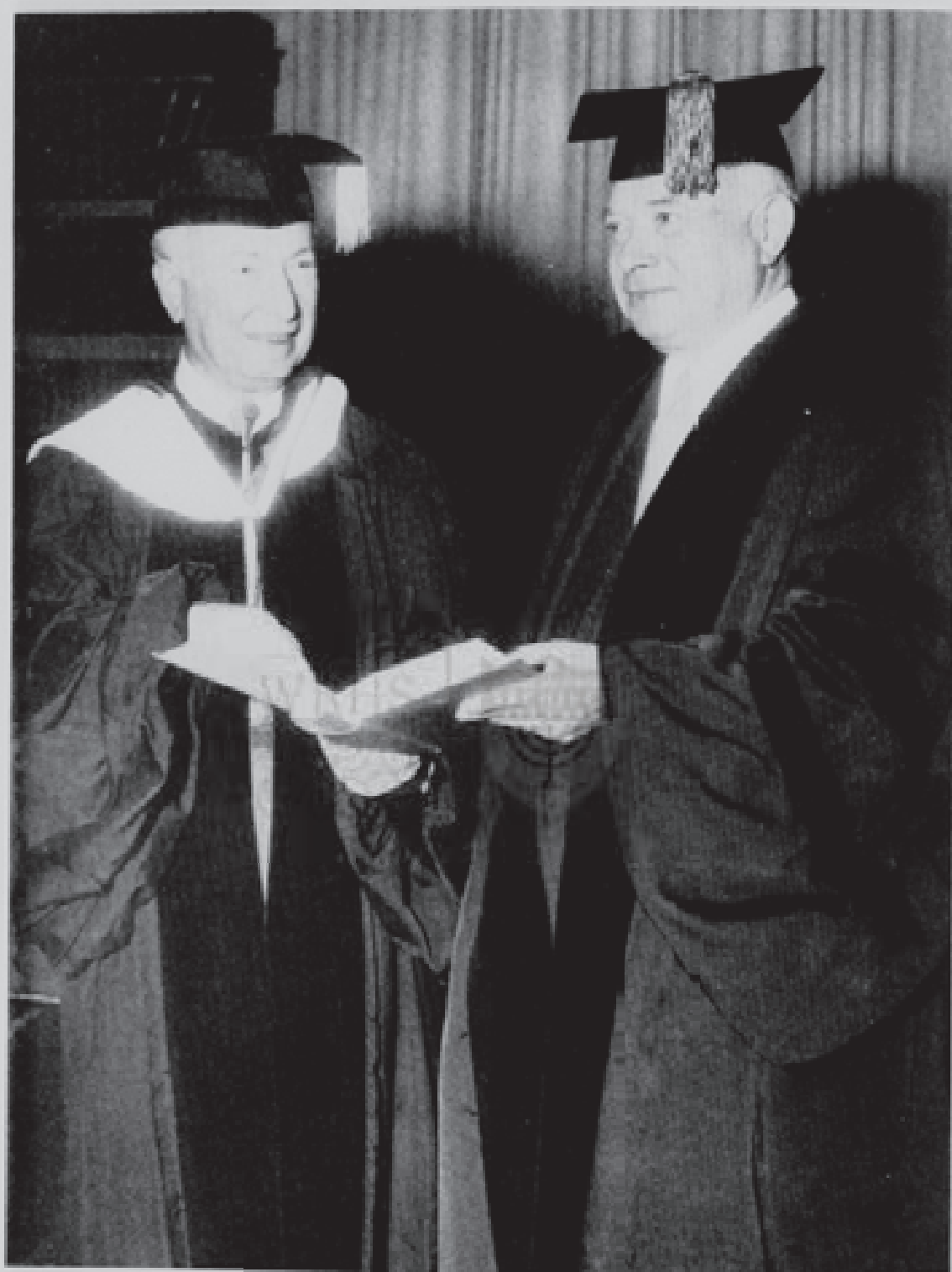
Aside from the miraculously restored center in the State of Israel — nobly and fittingly represented on this dais by the presence of its brilliant ambassador to our government and the United Nations — aside from the renewed stirring of the fountain of the living waters even as they once welled forth in prophecy, psalmody and wisdom — the responsibility for keeping alive the cultural and spiritual heritage of the Hebraic genius devolves upon our generation and those who will succeed us.

In this light the Dropsie College is more than another academic institution. It is a spiritual symbol and an historic promise. Important as the accomplishments of the past half century have been, it is the future of the College that will be the test of destiny.

Let me therefore say, in behalf of the Governors and the Faculty of the Dropsie College, that we have entered upon this celebration not in

a spirit of self-congratulation or institutional vainglory. We feel deeply the challenge that lies ahead and correspondingly our overwhelming responsibility. At this hour we are filled with a sense of profound gratitude for having been privileged to play a part in bringing the College to its high estate as of this day. And we humbly pray for divine wisdom and guidance for ourselves and our successors to see the day when the potential hopes that inhere in this institution will be fulfilled through that degree of scholarly achievement and integrity which reveals the truth that heals, or in the words of the Sages "increases peace in the world."





*President Abraham A. Newman of The Dropsie College (left) and David Sarnoff, Chairman of the Board, Radio Corporation of America.*

THE DROPSIE COLLEGE  
FOR HEBREW AND COGNATE LEARNING  
PHILADELPHIA

C I T A T I O N


DAVID SARNOFF, Brigadier General, Army of the United States Honorary Reserve; Chairman of the Board, Radio Corporation of America. Inventor and industrialist, you have proved valiant in defense of our country and its ideals. Realist and mystic, you have mastered the art of harnessing the mysteries of science for the betterment of man's fate and destiny.

You have been decorated by governments and honored by celebrated institutions of learning. This College, on the occasion of its Jubilee celebration, joyously joins in the chorus of praise. We, in particular, acclaim you as a historic symbol. For you symbolize the flowering of human personality, made possible in the spiritual climate of free, dedicated America.

In you there is vindicated the dream cherished by the Founders of our Republic and likewise the hope and prayers for a better world cherished by the prophets and seers of the people of Israel. David Sarnoff, we gladly embrace you as an honorary son of this College.

By a unanimous vote of the Faculty of this College, approved by a unanimous vote of the Board of Governors, we gladly admit you to the Degree of Doctor of Laws, honoris causa, and declare that you are entitled to all the Honors, Rights and Privileges to that Degree appertaining. In token whereof, I hand you this diploma.

May 22, 1957

  
ABRAHAM A. NEUMAN  
President

## THE PAST AS A GUIDE TO THE FUTURE

### ADDRESS

By DAVID SARNOFF

Mr. President, Members of the Faculty, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I AM DEEPLY GRATEFUL for the privilege of taking part in these Founder's Day exercises of the Dropsie College for Hebrew and Cognate Learning and for the signal honor you have bestowed upon me on this significant occasion. I shall always cherish the memory of this day.

By coincidence, the time-span of fifty years you are commemorating today has a personal significance for me. A few months ago, it happens, my friends and colleagues saw fit to mark the anniversary of my completion of half a century of work in the radio and electronics industry. So I have a keen fellow-feeling, as it were, for any person or institution that has weathered the storms and stresses of the same period of time.

I allude to the coincidence, however, not in vainglory but because it does have implications beyond the personal.

At first glance there would seem to be little relation between the achievements of science and technology involved in *my* anniversary and the achievements in learning involved in *your* anniversary. What possible elements of identity or interplay could there be, one might ask, between electronic research and biblical research, between the advent of nuclear energy and the exploration of Semitic cultures?

But on closer examination it becomes apparent that the relationships are close and significant — maybe, as one looks at the front pages just now, too close for comfort.

In 1907, when this college was founded, the Arabic world was infinitely remote from Philadelphia. The only news that could be expected from its parched and enigmatic lands had to do with archaeological discoveries. Those Americans who sought to know that ancient world more intimately and more accurately seemed eclectic, if not eccentric. They seemed to be escaping into regions far removed from the day-to-day challenges and problems of the period.

Yet now, five decades later, the Middle East has become one of the focal centers of history in the making — a fact made doubly dramatic by the emergence of a Jewish state in Eretz Yisroel. The area has be-



come a critical arena of political struggles and one of the vital theatres of conflict in the world-wide duel between freedom and communism.

Far from escaping the pressures of immediacy, those engaged in studying the history and tongues and cultures of the Judeo-Arabic world find themselves at the very heart of contemporary events. The disciplines which your college pursues have suddenly become indispensable to an America compelled by destiny to play a decisive role in those regions. Thus what had looked like a luxury of abstract erudition has turned into a necessity.

And this extraordinary transformation, of course, can be explained only in terms of the progress of science. It is the development of modern communications and transportation that has yanked the Middle East into the center of the world stage. For distance has been all but obliterated. Geographical areas that had been romantically far-off suddenly find themselves on the main highways of current history.

Half a century ago, it called for exceptional imagination to foresee the amazing advances of science and technology. We rightly honor the men whose minds, projecting the present into the future, could discern, beyond the horizons of their day, the things to come.

Intellectual vision of the same high order was needed to foresee the ever-expanding importance of scholarship regarding the Middle East. That was the kind of vision possessed by Moses Dropsie, when he assigned his fortune to this college, and by Cyrus Adler, its first President, whose warm friendship I had the privilege to enjoy. They and those associated with them in the courageous enterprise richly deserve to be honored as we are doing today.

In my small way, therefore, as one who has toiled in the vineyards of modern science and technology, I have taken part in the processes that have made the work of this college increasingly meaningful. In these circumstances, I feel a sense of kinship with you at today's celebration.

There is, I think, another important element of identity between your specialized world and mine — one in which yours has long offered leadership by example. It is an element that men like Moses Dropsie and Cyrus Adler recognized and accepted from the outset as self-evident. But it has yet to be fully grasped in the scientific area.

I refer to the emphasis on fundamental or abstract learning and knowledge, as against applied and narrowly utilitarian knowledge.

In America especially, because of our strong pragmatic bent, effort in scientific research has been heavily focused on applied research, on engineering and immediate usefulness. Not enough attention has been devoted to pure or basic research. In consequence, there have been serious

lapses in the fundamental knowledge from which technical accomplishments flow.

To put the matter at its simplest, practice has tended to get priority over theory. Exploration and discovery have usually been judged less by what they added to the treasure-house of knowledge and understanding than by what they added to industry and everyday life. The scientist devoted to basic inquiries into the unknown has been given relatively little credit and, certainly, not enough cash.

Today there is a growing realization of the dangers of this neglect, but it is still not easy, either in industry or government, to justify increased appropriations for pure research. One still meets the question, "Of what value is a program of abstract science without a definite and 'useful' goal?" More and more of the men responsible for research are beginning to acknowledge the fallacy of that question. It is becoming increasingly clear to them that the pursuit of knowledge as an end in itself, the passionate urge to vanquish some segment of ignorance, is justified, in the long run, even in terms of utility.

Some years ago, for instance, few in aviation saw much point to basic studies of the upper atmosphere, far beyond the ceilings of the highest flying airplanes at that time. But soon enough the development of aircraft capable of climbing to vastly higher altitudes made what had been pure research vitally pertinent and practical. In radio, to cite another example, we are constantly having to use frequencies before we know their characteristics and behavior as electro-magnetic waves in space.

The gulf between fundamental and applied knowledge in many fields is growing too wide to be ignored. The scientific community has spoken out vigorously on this score in the past year. Because pure science is the foundation of engineering and technology, it cannot be underrated or neglected without ultimately weakening our entire scientific edifice.

Dropsie College belongs among those institutions that do not need advice on this score. It has always cultivated an appreciation of fundamental scholarship, without too much regard for the bookkeeping of obvious utility. Fifty years of activity on that basis have amply justified its dedication.

If anything is clear today it is that a profound understanding of Semitic cultures — of the traditions of Semitic peoples and the ancient world from which these have sprung — is highly relevant to the problems of our time. We must have dependable insights into the mentality of the modern Arabs. There are tens of millions who speak Arabic dialects whom we will understand only as we penetrate the mysteries of their Koran.

We can hope to make Western ideals comprehensible to Moslem

populations only if we discover the equivalents in their own spiritual and intellectual background. It is a job of cultural translation.

Our own country, as the leading Great Power and the shield of freedom on this earth, must know intimately the Arabic and Islamic literature. In the Middle East it plays the role that our own sacred and historical documents — from the Old Testament to Washington's Farewell Address and Lincoln's Gettysburg Address — play in the West.

Even the politics of the ancient world are not irrelevant to the world we live in today. Against the background of the current turmoil, it is well to recall that for thousands of years the ancient land of Israel, including Transjordan, was the scene of recurrent conflict between Mesopotamia and Egypt, and that the causes were not too unlike those of our own day.

President Nelson Glueck of Hebrew Union College has shown brilliantly how much we may learn about the possibilities of settlement in the modern Negev from study of the ancient Negev. The ancients, it appears, chose certain sites because they were safe, had access to water and ready communication with the outside world. These, after all, are among the considerations in choosing sites for settlement in our own time. The people of Israel, I am told, have saved themselves considerable labor, many errors and many failures by promoting archaeological study of their country.

To appreciate the depth and the nature of the struggle in the Middle East, we must do essentially what Dropsie College has been consistently doing. We must see that area in its larger historical perspective. The lands involved were already ancient at the time the Normans invaded England.

It can be helpful in dealing with present-day rulers of Egypt, for example, to grasp that in their own minds they are the successors to the great Pharaohs — that they crave a position on the modern scene commensurate with that proud succession.

When Napoleon marched his European legions before the pyramids of Egypt, he reminded them that 4,000 years of history looked down upon them. The Egyptians themselves, then or now, have needed no such reminder. Nasser's people are aware, without having to articulate the thought, that they have sprung from a most ancient and creative civilization.

By the same token, of course, the literal-minded who check off Israel as a "new" country do not begin to understand its mood. The people of Israel see themselves as heirs to the glories of the kingdoms of David and Solomon, as sons of the Macabees, and even the atheists among them deep in their hearts cherish the idea of Divine sanction. No matter

how much Israelis may say about the Balfour Declaration and United Nations decisions, it is in deep-rooted tradition and Biblical prophecy that they find their strongest impulses to survival.

Whether in reference to Egypt or Israel, these emotional factors cannot be dismissed as unrealistic or illogical. They must be comprehended and reconciled. To the extent that scholars pursue that task of understanding they demonstrate again the importance of pure learning. No political structure, in the last reckoning, can endure unless it rests on a foundation of stone-hard knowledge.

The Near and Middle East, the scene of millenia of struggle, achieved some centuries of peace under the *Pax Romana*, imposed by the military force of Roman generals and later of Moslem leaders. In today's world, unhappily, force is still a major element in the equation of international affairs. But it is steadily yielding ground to statesmanship and persuasion.

Perceptive men in the Middle East and elsewhere dare look ahead to a regional federation of independent nations somewhat on the pattern of the Pan American Union among our hemispherical neighbors. May we not dare to hope that from the present turmoil there will at last come a *Pax Democratica*?

In the ideas and ideals held by the various Mideast peoples, perhaps half-consciously apprehended even by the most lowly, must be found the building blocks for turning the vision into a structure of reality. The disciplines of institutions like Dropsie help discover and define those building blocks.

As a non-sectarian institution, Dropsie College is fulfilling the American spirit of its founder. Indeed, it is significant that in these days of teacher shortage, ninety per cent of your graduates take up active careers as teachers in colleges and universities at home and abroad. I am told that yours is one of the outstanding sources of professors of Hebrew and Old Testament for the Protestant theological seminaries in America.

It is my understanding that the Judeo-Christian cultural origins hold first place in the curriculum and educational philosophy of your college. There may be those who will question the justice of this emphasis. Yet a special concern for the literature and lore of this great epoch seems entirely proper.

The Islamic world, in part because it has long included functioning political states, boasts a number of first-rate institutions of scholarship devoted solely to the daughter Arabic cultures. Judaism, by contrast, has been singularly lacking in equivalent institutions and it was their recognition of this dearth which fired the zeal of your founders.

Beyond that, there is the intrinsic importance of Hebrew and all it connotes to Western civilization. I alluded to the millions who are

psychologically conditioned by the Koran. A far greater number — either directly or through Christianity — are conditioned by the Hebrew Scriptures and the literature based upon it.

Can it be entirely accident that a people who make up only one-half of one per cent of the human race should have made such an impact upon world civilization? How are we to grasp this phenomenon of the colossal influence of a numerically tiny race throughout history — except by research-in-depth into Judaism? Quite aside from the inherent beauty of the Prophetic and Talmudic word, it is an intellectually compelling field of study.

Rarely before has mankind had such urgent need for the guidance and healment of spiritual insights, because rarely before has man been so confused and frightened. Where the ancient Greeks were preoccupied with esthetics, the Jews were deeply concerned with ethics — with the Divine spark in mortal man. Because of their genius for moral law, Palestine was the seed-bed of great religions.

Surely in this time of so much moral ambiguity, so much erosion of ethical values, we would do well to return to first principles in the domain of conduct. Modern man has been trapped in a maze of communist amorality, Nietzschean nihilism, and materialist obsessions. He seems to have lost his ethical compass. Under his confusions there is a positive nostalgia for those simple, clear-cut moral certitudes that have always been basic in the Hebraic philosophy of life.

We live in the midst of a great crisis, in which our whole Judeo-Christian civilization is at stake. The Communist adversary, pledged to destroy all we hold most precious, has overrun a third of the human race and reaches out greedily for the other two-thirds.

In this predicament, I believe, we must cling more resolutely than ever to the fundamental values being menaced. We dare not concede that these values are expendable or can be safely watered down. If we do, we shall be on the high road to total defeat. And it will matter little whether the defeat is imposed by brute force or by demoralization from within.

It has been the weakening of moral frontiers, more than anything else, that opened easy roads for conquest to the totalitarian monstrosities of this half-century. Our most vital task, therefore, is to repair the dividing line between Good and Evil, between right and wrong, and restore the basic moral imperatives. Unless that is done, we shall continue to appease Evil in the name of shabby expediencies that bring us only temporary illusions of peace.

Too many in our generation have made Pilate's cynical question, "What is truth?" an alibi for ugly falsehoods. They proclaim that moral-



ity is at best a relative thing, and bid us to "understand" the devil. Too many have accepted the pernicious fallacy that Good and Evil can be averaged up; that wisdom consists of splitting the difference between decency and depravity. But this middle-of-the-road logic, when applied to moral questions, undermines integrity and in the end makes us bed-fellows of despots and arch-criminals.

To make matters worse, this willingness to live in peace with Evil, is often decked out as broad-mindedness and liberality. Recently someone argued in print that in dealing with the Kremlin we should reject what he called "the devil theory of history." After all, he said, "the verdict of history" may "alter the heated judgment of the moment."

This kind of reasoning, all too familiar in our time, amounts to a plea that we tolerate the intolerable, on the theory that we can't know for sure what is wrong and evil anyhow. But I venture to doubt that history will alter its current judgments on Hitler's gas chambers or Stalin's human slaughter-houses or the recent Soviet butchery in Hungary, any more than it has altered its judgments on Hamam and Gengis Khan.

Few men have lost moral sensitivity to the point where they could look upon the murder of a friend or a neighbor and say, "Oh well, maybe there's another side to it. Let's wait for the verdict of history." Yet the same men find it possible to look with a certain complacency upon the murder of millions in concentration camps.

Having lost their faith in moral truth, they have also lost the capacity for righteous indignation in the face of hideous crimes. And all of this gives the right of way to the new barbarians behind the Iron Curtains who oppress their own people and menace the rest of us.

The great Prophets and Teachers, those whose lives and labors you study here, were stubborn and uncompromising on essential principles. Where age-old truths were at stake, they never sought safety in the middle ground of compromise. They did not countenance the modern heresy of tolerance of the intolerable.

Had the Democracies, after the last war, stuck stubbornly to simple Judeo-Christian principles, the world, I believe, would be in a better position than it is today. Evidence of vital spiritual strength that accepts a challenge to basic moral principles unafraid would make the military and economic strength of the free part of the world more meaningful to its enemies.

More than anything else mankind needs today a consistent view of the good society and the good life — and the courage stoutly to defend it. That view is not to be found in the sophistications of those who sneer at moral values. It resides in the total experience of the human race, as expressed in its noblest literature and moral systems.

In that search for dependable certainties, all of you in this unique college have a primary responsibility and a great opportunity. That, it seems to me, is what Moses Dropsie foresaw in making such an institution possible. That is what the men who implemented his vision, from President Adler to President Neuman, accepted as their assignment. Now, at the end of half a century, that assignment is more urgent and more significant than ever before.

I salute you, Justice Stern, and you, Dr. Neuman, on this jubilee. It marks the culmination of a great period of achievement and the beginning of a new period of service to mankind. To meet the challenge of the future, our imagination must be bold; but it must be balanced by wisdom based on knowledge.





*Left to Right: Harold Willis Dodds, President, Princeton University; Professor Solomon Zeitlin, Dropsie College; Rabbi Solomon B. Fraebos, Pittsburgh; Dr. Abraham A. Neuman, President, Dropsie College; George N. Shuster, President, Hunter College; David Sarnoff, Chairman of the Board, Radio Corporation of America, and Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, Cleveland, Ohio, at Dropsie College Founder's Day exercises, May 22, 1957, Philadelphia, Pa.*

# Citations

PRESIDENT ABRAHAM A. NEUMAN

TO

HONORARY DEGREE RECIPIENTS

HAROLD WILLIS DODDS, President, Princeton University. You are descended from a family noted for religious faith and civic conscience. You belong to the Woodrow Wilson tradition, combining theory and practice, blending education with the philosophy of government.

Your amazing record of public service is eloquent testimony of your basic philosophy of education. You have expounded deeply rooted convictions on the function of the American college, and conversely the inescapable obligations of the public to maintain the colleges free and independent; that "free enterprise" applies alike with equal force to colleges as well as to commerce and industry.

Under your administration, the Princeton tradition toward biblical subjects and religious literature has been given renewed emphasis. An invisible bond unites our respective institutions in our attitudes toward the role of biblical tradition in human civilization.

We feel privileged, through you, to salute Princeton University on our Jubilee celebration and to express our esteem for all that you represent as a moving spiritual force in American education.

By a unanimous vote of the Faculty of this College, approved by a unanimous vote of the Board of Governors, we gladly admit you to the Degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*, and declare that you are entitled to all the Honors, Rights and Privileges to that Degree appertaining. In token whereof, I hand you this diploma.

\* \* \*

ABBA EBAN, Ambassador of Israel to the United States and the United Nations. Scholar, soldier, diplomat. You are a dramatic representation of Israel's embattled struggle amidst the nations for the right to life, to freedom under a reign of universal justice and peace.

Your matchless eloquence is not solely the eloquence of majestic language. Your voice reverberates with the peals of prophetic thunder. It is the voice of Israel's prophets, sages and martyrs that has sought for endless ages to break through the conscience of the nations of the world.

With the pitiless bright lights of modern contrivance glaring upon you, you have faced the world self-possessed, undaunted, fearless, even as the people whom you so nobly represent.

Abba Eban, we honor ourselves by conferring upon you the honorary degree of our College.

By a unanimous vote of the Faculty of this College, approved by a unanimous vote of the Board of Governors, we gladly admit you to the Degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*, and declare that you are entitled to all the Honors, Rights and Privileges to that Degree appertaining. In token whereof, I hand you this diploma.

\* \* \*

SOLOMON BENNETT FREEHOF, Rabbi and Scholar; Theologian and Bible commentator; author of a learned work on rabbinic responsa.

You have maintained the high traditions of the rabbinate in the pursuit of Torah. A youthful member of the Faculty of the Hebrew Union College, your personality left its impress on a generation of disciples.

As president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, your influence was exerted in the cause of peace and conciliation in a period of storm and stress in the camps of Israel.

We honor you, Solomon B. Freehof, for your scholarly and literary contributions; for your devoted service to our country and to the personnel in its armed services, related to your ministration. We are happy to adopt you as an honored son of this College.

By a unanimous vote of the Faculty of the College, approved by a unanimous vote of the Board of Governors, we gladly admit you to the degree of Doctor of Literature, *honoris causa*, and declare that you are entitled to all the Honors, Rights and Privileges to that Degree appertaining. In token whereof, I hand you this diploma.

\* \* \*

GEORGE NAUMAN SHUSTER, President, Hunter College.

Your literary contributions range widely over the fields of German history, English literature, and contemporary religion. Because of your religious convictions and ancestral loyalties, you were ideally cast for the role of a conciliator in the midst of ideological tensions and a defender of human rights.



You rendered distinguished service in the cause of international education and political conciliation. In recognition of this fact you were awarded Columbia University's prized Butler medal, and you were elected to membership in the Legion of Honor.

We are honored to adopt you, George Nauman Shuster, as an honorary son of this College.

By a unanimous vote of the Faculty of this College, approved by a unanimous vote of the Board of Governors, we gladly admit you to the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*, and declare that you are entitled to all the Honors, Rights and Privileges to that Degree appertaining. In token whereof I hand you this diploma.

\* \* \*

ABBA HILLEL SILVER, scholar, statesman, rabbi.

Your life-work is distinguished in many ways. Outstanding is your power to fuse theory and practice; theological doctrine and practical service. You have the gift of inspired speech that sways human emotions and the dynamic realism that is the essence of political leadership and statesmanship.

Your social philosophy is written into the liberal social legislation of your state. Your Jewish philosophy influenced by your deep study of Messianism and fused mystically with the poetry and love of Zion has moved tens of thousands to loyalty and sacrifice.

You are honored where Zion is loved. We of the Dropsie College are happy to embrace you as an honorary son of our College.

By a unanimous vote of the Faculty of this College, approved by a unanimous vote of the Board of Governors, we gladly admit you to the Degree of Doctor of Literature, *honoris causa*, and declare that you are entitled to all the Honors, Rights and Privileges to that Degree appertaining. In token whereof, I hand you this diploma.

\* \* \*

SOLOMON ZEITLIN, Professor of Rabbinic Literature in this College; colleague and friend.

You are an illustrious son of this College which conferred upon you the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in course. Your writings are marked by originality of thought, keen historic penetration and the courage to battle valiantly for the truth as you see it.

Your combined knowledge to an extraordinary degree of rabbinic, hellenistic and patristic literature has established for you a world-wide reputation as the leading authority of the Second Jewish Commonwealth covering a portentous period in the evolution of the religious forces of Judaism and Christianity.

By a unanimous vote of the Faculty of this College, approved by a unanimous vote of the Board of Governors, we gladly admit you to the Degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*, and declare that you are entitled to all the Honors, Rights and Privileges to that Degree appertaining. In token whereof, I hand you this diploma.



# The Temple Bulletin

Published Weekly by  
The Temple  
Cleveland, Ohio



Vol. XLIII

MAY 5, 1957

No. 31

## Sunday Morning Service

10:30 o'clock

**RABBI ABBA HILLEL SILVER**

will speak on

## With Our Eyes Toward The Future

The address which Dr. Silver delivered before the General Assembly of the  
— Union of American Hebrew Congregations in Toronto, Canada, last Wednesday

Friday Evening Services  
5:30 to 6:10

Saturday Morning Services  
11:15 to 12:00

*see p. 4*  
*Mother Day*  
*① Sister had Service -*  
*in the Synagogue*  
*② Main Altar*  
*Turn*  
*a Bapt*  
*Flower*

# The Temple Bulletin

## The Temple

Congregation Tifereth Israel  
(Founded 1850)

### Rabbis:

Abba Hillel Silver, D.D., Litt.D., D.H.L.

Daniel Jeremy Silver, A.B., M.H.L.

Associate Rabbi  
Director of Religious Education

Asst. Director of Religious Education  
MILDRED B. EISENBERG

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### MUSIC FOR SUNDAY

Organ	
Fantasia in D Minor	Merkel
In Springtime	Stebbins
Opening Psalm—Mah Tovu	Algazi
Bor'chu (Congregational)	Sulzer
Sh'ma - Boruch (Congregational)	Traditional
Michomocho (Congregational)	Sulzer
Kedusha	Grimm
Silent Devotion—May the Words	Mann
Mr. Humphrey and Choir	
Before the Address - Duet	
My song shall be ever	
of Thy mercy	Mendelssohn
Miss Wischmeyer, Mr. Humphrey	
Olenu - Vaanachnu	Goldstein

### MAKE-UP SERVICE ELEMENTARY DEPARTMENT

Pupils of the Elementary Department of the Religious School will have an opportunity to make up one absence by attending services on Saturday, May 4th at 11:00 A.M. in The Temple.

Students are requested to sign up for credit in the School Office immediately after attending the Service.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The flowers which will grace the altar on Sunday morning, May 5th are contributed by Mr. and Mrs. William E. Newman, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, in memory of their beloved daughter, Patricia Anne.

## HEBREW CLASS GRADUATION

On Saturday morning, May 11th, the Special Hebrew Department of The Temple Religious School will present the Class of 1957 for graduation. These students have attended Special Hebrew Classes from the third through the ninth grades, both mid-week and on the Sabbath.

The graduation Services will take place at 11:00 A.M. in The Temple. The new graduates will conduct a Special Sabbath Morning Service under the direction of Mrs. Lillian Barben, Supervisor of the Temple Hebrew Department.

The following are members of the 1957 graduating class:

RUTH AMSTER  
ENID BARON  
PAULA BLOCH  
GAIL MALEVAN

SUSAN SCHWARTZ  
MARC STERN  
BARBARA VICTOR  
ELAINE ZIPP

### HIGH SCHOOL ORATORICAL CONTEST

The Annual Oratorical Contest of The Temple High School was held in Gries Memorial Chapel on Sunday morning, April 21st.

The discussions were based on the subject "The Significance of the Bible Today." Peter Bergman, First Prize Winner, selected "Pathways to Peace" for his oration; Bruce Friedman, who won Second Prize, spoke on "The Three Menaces"; Joyce Hurwitz, Third Prize Winner, and David Polatsek, who received Honorable Mention, spoke on the respective subjects "From Faith to Faith" and "The Message of The Bible."

The Judges, Mrs. Morton Bialosky, Dr. William B. Levenson and Mr. Norman Sugarman commended all of the contestants and it was the opinion of many that this was one of the finest Oratorical Contests ever held, not only because of the excellent choice of subject matter, but also because of the excellent performance by all of the participants.

### RELIGIOUS SCHOOL COMMITTEE ANNUAL LUNCHEON MAY 13

On Monday, May 13th at 12:30 P.M. at the Wade Park Manor, the Religious School Committees of The Temple will hold their annual luncheon.

The Temple is grateful to the many members of these Committees who devote so many hours of time to the work of our Religious School. Included in their various responsibilities are assistance with enrollment of new pupils, hospitality at all parent-teacher meetings as well as at all social functions of the School, costuming for the various programs throughout the year, a special Holiday Committee which sets up the miniature Succah Contest, assists in the outdoor Succah, etc., an active Committee for the Annual Father-Son and Mother-Daughter affairs, Room Mothers for the entire Religious School, and assisting the confirmands on Confirmation Day, to mention only a few.

Co-chairmen of the Religious School Committee for the Elementary and Junior High Departments are Mrs. Edward Friedman and Mrs. Allyn Kendis; and for the High School Department, Mrs. Abe E. Amster and Mrs. Carl Friedman.

### TEMPLE HIGH SCHOOL WEEK-END

Camp Wise, Painesville, Ohio

Friday, May 3 — Sunday, May 5

Social . . . Athletic . . . Recreational . . . Religious

## MR. AND MRS. CLUB SHOWS WIN APPLAUSE



### "TALENT SHOW"

On Wednesday evening, April 24th, the Mr. and Mrs. Club of The Temple opened its 1957 Talent Show, "Tomorrow Night" in Mahler Hall at The Temple.

Those in attendance were rewarded with a delightful evening of song and comedy.

The show, which was a take-off on the Steve Allen TV show "Tonight" was presented by a fine cast composed of Gladys Schoen, Ruth Hahn, Marleen Siegel, Sue Schlessel, Marilyn Caplane, Marlene Kurson, Robert Deutsch, Lionel Greenbaum, Marvin Dorfman, Larry Caplane, Stan Morgenstern, Ken Schlessel, Michael Art, Al Bcrowitz, Beverly Rabnick, Jerome Levy, Hinda Apple.

The Special Committee in charge of the evening were Allyne and Isabell Gottlieb, Chairmen; Marshall and Sue Nurenberg, and Irving and Gloria Fine, Vice-Chairmen.

The Show was written by Irving Fine, Mort Smith, Bernard Wyner, Al Borowitz, Sanford Curtiss, Nelson Lackritz, and Roland Kraus; Produced by Bernard Wyner and Directed by Allyne Gottlieb and Irving Fine.

To the long list of participants, both seen and unseen—advisors, Business managers, technical and musical directors, choreographers, costume and make-up staffs, audio and lighting directors, typists, decoration, refreshment, telephone, and publicity committees, as well as the Orchestra and the Ushers. The Temple extends thanks for the fine effort and tireless work which produced this very entertaining evening.

### ARTS AND CRAFTS SHOW

As an added attraction to the "Talent Show" program, awards for the prize winning entries in the First Arts and Crafts Show of the Mr. and Mrs. Club, which was featured during the week of April 21st in the Temple Museum, were presented.

Professionally judged by Mr. Paul Travis, the following winners were selected from the many excellent entries:

#### OIL PAINTING:

- 1st Prize—Max Balkin
- 2nd Prize—Molly Teitelbaum
- 3rd Prize—Pauline Biskind

#### PHOTOGRAPHY:

- 1st Prize—Robert Selden
- 2nd Prize—Stanley Levy
- 3rd Prize—Martin Fried

#### ENAMELING:

- 1st Prize—Dick Gilson
- 2nd Prize—Abe Gerson
- 3rd Prize—Myrtle Givelber

#### WATER COLORS:

- 1st Prize—Max Balkin
- 2nd Prize—Rae Phillips

#### CERAMICS:

- 1st Prize—Esther Litt

#### JEWELRY:

- 1st Prize—Terry Kovel
- 2nd Prize—Ralph Kovel

#### ETCHING:

- 1st Prize—Joe Rosin

#### CANDLE MAKING:

- 1st Prize—Elaine Gross and Beverly Wallach

#### MISCELLANEOUS

#### TELESCOPE:

- 1st Prize—Stanley Kempner

#### WOOD BLOCK:

- 1st Prize—Dr. Myron Levenson

Much appreciation is extended to the contestants and the "behind the scenes" workers for their fine work in making this first Arts and Crafts show so successful: Chairmen, Al and Helen Borowitz; Vice-chairmen Theodore and Idarose Luntz; Publicity, Morris and Phyllis Levine; Hanging, Art and Lee Friedman; Telephone, Allan and Jan Newman and to Martin Fried who made the above picture available to the Bulletin.

## THANK YOU MR. SPIVAK

The Temple Building Fund Committee acknowledges with thanks the contribution of Mr. Lawrence E. Spivak to The Temple Building Expansion Fund which he made following his visit to The Temple as guest of The Temple Men's Club on the "Meet the Press" program.

Accompanying Mr. Spivak's contribution was his comment:

" \* \* \* Your Temple is one of the most beautiful I have ever seen, and I am sure the addition will be just as beautiful. I would like very much to own a brick or two in the new project, and I would be grateful if you would use the enclosed towards that end.

Cordially,

/s/ Lawrence E. Spivak."

### THE TEMPLE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Friday Evening

May 10, 1957 — 8:30 P. M.

### MARVIN HELF

### "INSIDE RUSSIA"

Slides will be shown

at the home of  
Margaret Leuten  
23750 South Woodland

### CONFIRMATION REHEARSAL DATES

Saturday	May 11	9:00 a.m.
Thursday	May 16	4:30 p.m.
Thursday	May 23	4:30 p.m.
Friday	May 24	4:30 p.m.
Saturday	May 25	9:00 a.m.
Friday	May 31	4:30 p.m.



## "THE PARTING OF THE WAYS"

A Symposium

on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary Celebration of the Dropsie College

April 29, 1957

DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER

I regard it as an extreme honor to have been invited by the President of The Dropsie College to participate in its celebration of the 50th Anniversary of its founding.

This great institution of learning has been a well-spring of Jewish scholarship and has made most valuable contributions to study and research in those areas of spiritual life which are so vital for the progress of mankind.

I should like to congratulate this noble institution upon completing a half century of creative work in the service of God and man.

I am also deeply honored in having been invited to share in a symposium with two of the great scholars of our country, Professor Solomon Zeitlin and Professor Morton Enslin. I am somewhat uncomfortable to be numbered among them, for my career, unlike theirs, has not been especially dedicated to the field of technical scholarship. In their presence I am a layman—and as a layman I speak this evening.

My views are more fully elaborated in my book **MESSIANIC SPECULATION IN ISRAEL** which was published in 1927 and **WHERE JUDAISM DIFFERED** which was published last Fall.

When we speak of the 'parting of the ways', referring, of course, to the separation of Christianity from Judaism, it is clear that all of us have in mind no competitive assessments. We are interested in an objective analysis of the differences which led these two great religions to follow independent courses through history. Each system of thought has its own texture and pattern and each faith its own perspectives. Differences should not obscure the underlying unity of the human race or the common needs of human life which all classic institutions and beliefs of mankind aim to serve or the urgency for their close cooperation to achieve their common purposes.

When Jesus came into Galilee, "spreading the gospel of the Kingdom of God and saying the time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God is at hand," he was voicing the opinion widely held that the year 5000 in the Creation calendar, which is to usher in the sixth millennium—the age of the Kingdom of God—was at hand. It was this chronologic fact which inflamed the Messianic hope of the people.

Jesus appeared in the procuratorship of Pontius Pilate (26-36 C.E.). The first mention of the appearance of a Messiah in Josephus is in connection with the disturbances during the term

of office of the procurator Cuspius Fadus (c.44 C.E.). It seems likely, therefore, that in the minds of the people the Millennium was to begin around the year 30 C.E.

Be it remembered that it is not the Messiah who brings about the Millennium; it is the inevitable advent of the Millennium which carries along with it the Messiah and his appointed activities. The Messiah was expected around the second quarter of the first century C.E., because the Millennium was at hand. The time spoken of in Daniel "for a time, times and a half" was now fulfilled. Prior to that time he was not expected, because according to the chronology of the day the Millennium was still considerably removed.

The central theme of the preachment of Jesus and of John the Baptist, whom Jesus hailed as the Elijah who was to announce the advent of the Millennium, as well as of the disciples of Jesus, was repentance. The day of repentance will precede the actual Millennium. Only those who would repent would be spared the purging and cleansing process antecedent to the Millennium—"the wrath that is to come."

Jesus' essential mission was apocalyptic, not prophetic. His concern was not to reconstruct society but to save it from the winnowing and retributive judgment which was imminent in the van of the approaching Millennium. The ethical counsel which he gave to his followers was for a world in extremis and it was to help them survive the terrors to come and to be admitted into the Kingdom, the new order of existence which the Millennium would usher in.

Jesus was impatient because the people did not seem to realize its imminence: "Ye hypocrites, ye know how to interpret the face of the earth and the heaven; but how is it that ye know not how to interpret this time?" "Verily I say unto you, there are some of them that stand here, who shall in no wise taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom."

Jesus' attitude toward the Law was determined by his views concerning the approaching End. He did not oppose the Law in part or in whole. He did not seek to abrogate it. It was not necessary. The incoming Millennium would of itself do away with the Law entirely. However, "until all things be accomplished," the Law must be obeyed. Not, however, as most men obey it, formally and mechanically, but with a soul-searching intent and

intensity, so that it may prove a real help to that spiritual lustration required for initiation into the Kingdom. Jesus' real attitude to the Law is admirably summed up in Matt. 5.17-20:

Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the prophets; I come not to destroy but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, 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 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. But I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus proceeds to indicate what he means by a righteousness which exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. In no instance does he call for a new Law or the abrogation of the old Law, but for the correct "intensive" attitude toward the existing Law.

Why should men fulfill the law with such inner intentness? Not that they will thereby bring the Kingdom about. The Kingdom comes through the grace of God, not through the works of men: "For it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." Its advent is pre-ordained in the cosmic scheme. It is inevitable. It cannot be hastened or retarded. But those who will fulfill the Law in truth and in sincerity will be spared the "pangs of Messianic times" and will be privileged to enter the Kingdom.

There is nothing in all this that would bring about a parting of the ways with Judaism. While these beliefs did not contribute essential Jewish doctrine, they were part of a fairly familiar Agada whose time, according to the belief of Jesus and his followers, had finally come.

But a parting of the ways *did* take place, and that fairly early, perhaps within half a century of the crucifixion. Why?

Paul, alone, is not responsible for the break. It would have taken place without Paul. Paul found Christians and apparently even organized Christian societies already in existence in some of the cities which he visited in his missionary activities. These may still have regarded themselves as Jewish, but already as hyphenated Jews—as Jewish-Christians—and were swiftly moving toward the inevitable separation.

Paul insured the spread and, to a large extent, the survival of Christianity, by adding to the simple, unblended Messianic message of Jesus and of his followers in Jerusalem, a redemptive, salvationist message, which was more familiar and appealing to the Gentile world. He directed his message

principally to the pagan world or to Jewish proselytes from the pagan world, who were fully acquainted, through the numerous mystery cults about them, with similar salvationist hopes. By combining Judaism's monotheism, its relentless attack upon polytheism and idolatry, its lofty and cleansing moral idealism with a Messianic faith, strongly salvationist in character, whose major accent was upon redemption and the promise of immortality—Pauline Christianity was able to make a strong impact upon the Greco-Roman world, long in the throes of a spiritual crisis resulting from the break-down of its ancient beliefs. Where Judaism, in its proselytizing efforts—and they were not inconsiderable—could attain only a limited success, because it would not yield in its requirements for the total acceptance of the Law on the part of those who sought full proselytism, Christianity of the Pauline school, making no such requirements, scored heavily.

But even without Paul, a parting of the ways would have taken place, earlier, of course, in the Diaspora, but not much later in Palestine.

A Messianic movement must either succeed, which in the very nature of things is not possible, or, failing to convert the parent body to its Messianic views, must separate from it or be rejected by it.

Messianic beliefs, in a variety of fluid forms, were current among Jews—not necessarily *all* Jews—around the beginning of the common era. Such beliefs are reflected in pre-Christian apocalyptic literature and are also to be found in the Dead Sea Scrolls. They made an especial appeal to the mystically-minded among the people. They were not frowned upon by the authoritative Judaism of the day, nor were they regarded as unorthodox. On the other hand they were not held to be dogmatic teachings of the faith, denial of which was heretical. Some Jews rejected the whole Messianic complex; others were simply indifferent to it. As long as no Messiah appeared, and no practical consequences were drawn, the believer would go unchallenged. It was a phase of folk-faith, of popular tradition, of Agada.

But the actual appearance of a Messiah meant, apart from its political and social implications, a concretizing of this revolutionary Agada, into a definitive creed, sect and discipline within the nation. This, official Judaism could neither ignore nor accept.

For very serious consequences for faith and practice flowed from such a Messianism, now translated from an expectation into a reality.

The coming of the Messiah meant the ushering in of the Millennium. With the Millennium all the laws of the Torah as we stated above, are

automatically abrogated. There is no longer any need for them, now that the Kingdom of God has been established. The sole purpose of the ceremonial law, of rites and rituals, was to purify the hearts of men. It is a matter of history that anti-nomism in one form or another, timid or audacious, attended every important Messianic movement in Israel. In the early propaganda of such movements the abrogation of laws served the purpose of a symbolic demonstration that the Millennium was definitely on the way, if not actually arrived.

This was the case with the first Christian fellowship in Jerusalem. There were conservative elements in it who hesitated to take the bold step of abrogating some or all of the basic ceremonial laws of the Torah. There were others who remained ambivalent in their attitude, denying freedom from the Law to themselves, but permitting it to Gentile converts. The strong trend, however, moved by the very logic and dynamics of the movement rapidly and inevitably toward abrogation. Paul himself wrestled tortuously in his soul, long and unsuccessfully, with the problem of remaining loyal to the Torah and at the same time carrying on an energetic universal evangelism for his Christ faith. He finally concluded that the Gospel and the Law were irreconcilable, and that the coming of Jesus spelled "the end of the Law" (Rom. 10.4). He accordingly "died to the Law" (Galatians 2.19).

"Dying to the Law" meant a rejection of the Torah. A rejection of the Torah meant a decisive break with Judaism—for no sect could remain within Judaism, or ever did remain within Judaism, which rejected the Torah completely. Paul's break came within two or three decades of the death of Jesus. Other Jewish-Christians in and outside of Palestine, did not make the break—and it was a voluntary break—that early. They "died to the Law" more slowly—the Ebionites, for example, as late as the second century—but they died nevertheless. A Messianic movement, in the tense interim period between the appearance of the Messiah and his expected early return, which was bent upon the rapid conversion of the Gentile world, would not long impede itself with the Mosaic ceremonial Law, so alien and so burdensome to the Gentiles—a Law which the approaching Millennium would soon do away with anyhow.

The parent body of Judaism did not accept the Messianic views of Jesus' followers. The latter remained a relatively small group within Palestinian Jewry; but it was from the very start a separate group. It was made so in the first place, not by any external pressure, but by its own distinctive fellowship, as a mystic union with

their risen Lord; by its special rites of initiation which probably developed very early—baptism and the Communion meal—by its own manual of instruction, and recruiting, its separate prayer meetings as well as by the form of its social and economic life wherein all things were shared in common. The Jerusalem fellowship came to be linked with similarly-minded communities outside of Palestine and was dependent upon them for support. These communities, because of their large infiltration of Gentile converts, became increasingly less "Jewish" and less Torah-minded.

There were, of course, also external pressures which progressively isolated this Jewish-Christian brotherhood. It was suspect and held in disfavor by many from the very first. Its Messianic faith was a discredited one in the eyes of the people, for it had failed of its objective. Jesus, whom his followers proclaimed as the Messiah had been crucified, and the Millennium had not materialized. That this Messiah had risen from the grave and was now seated at the right hand of God and would soon return to judge the earth—a conviction now held by these Messianists, no longer as part of an indefinite and visionary saga, but as a present fact focused in the specific personality of a man by the name of Jesus—must have outraged many Jews both Pharisees and Sadducees. Any Agada, however inspiring and beautiful, when suddenly presented as an actual and concrete reality, may grievously shock and offend even those who cherished it. To the Sadducees especially, this claim of the Jewish-Christian was particularly obnoxious; for the Sadducees denied the resurrection of the dead altogether.

Furthermore, there were some among the Jewish-Christians in Jerusalem who shared views about the Law similar to those which Paul came to express so vigorously and to more receptive ears in the racial melting-pot cities of the Diaspora. Any such denigration of the Torah, or any attempt to abrogate any of its laws, either by the authority of a new revelation, or by the technique of allegory employed to suspend the literal meaning of a law, would naturally arouse sharp hostility, especially in Jerusalem, though violent opposition and riots developed also elsewhere.

The Apostles and the early disciples in Jerusalem had come to claim, by virtue of the power given to them by Jesus, or through a direct revelation, or by the very fact of baptism, the gift of prophecy. This too was held to be an inevitable by-product of the Messianic age. The prophet Joel had proclaimed that in the latter end God would pour out his "spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophecy; your old men shall dream

dreams and your young men shall see visions; even upon the men-servants and the maid-servants in those days, I will pour out my spirit." (Joel 3.1-2) The miracle of Pentecost—the very day commemorating the giving of the Law at Sinai—which was attended by extraordinary natural phenomena reminiscent of Sinai—recorded in Acts 2, when the Holy Spirit suddenly descended upon the Apostles and some hundred and twenty disciples—was intended to substantiate the belief that the Messianic age had actually arrived, and that the Apostles and disciples were now possessed of prophetic power and authority.

At the time of Jesus, the authoritative teachers of Judaism, while not denying the possibility of the reappearance of prophecy, the Bible clearly certifying such a contingency—were no longer willing to stake the future of their faith on the chance appearance of men who might pretend to superior divine authority and who might utter prophetic oracles which would not be in keeping with the long established principles of Judaism, perhaps even in defiance of them. They were unwilling to base a law or doctrine or their abrogation upon reputed miracles which might be exploited to confirm heresies.

They therefore maintained that prophecy had actually ceased in Israel with the last three Biblical Prophets, Haggai, Zachariah and Malachi. They held that, at the time of the destruction of the first Temple, prophecy was taken away from the prophets and given to the Sages. (B.B.12B). An extreme view was expressed by one rabbi: "at the time of the destruction of the first Temple, prophecy was taken away from the prophets and given to fools and children," (ibid)—this as if in pointed rejoinder to Paul and other Christian preachers, who exhorted their followers to prophecy: "now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more, to prophecy." (1 Cor. 14.5). It might be noted in passing, that the Christian Church itself, which soon came to be plagued with false prophets, imposters and pretenders, who endangered its own orthodox doctrine, soon put prophecy under restraint.

The position came to be held in normative Judaism, that the sage, the skilled interpreter of the Torah, was superior to the prophet. (B.B. 12A). The purpose of the rabbis was not to deny the prophetic spirit but to insist that whatever further truths or new insights were required by subsequent ages, could very well be drawn by trained and devout minds out of the deep well of the Torah itself, whose waters were inexhaustible.

The claim of the early Christians therefore to have come into possession of the gift of the Holy Spirit—to have prophetic authority and the authority

of revelation—carrying with it the authority also to abrogate or suspend Biblical laws, was a direct challenge to the accepted views long held by the authoritative representatives of Judaism.

A prophet was assured privileges under the Law, which were not possessed by any other religious teacher. A prophet, whose credibility was well established, could, for example, order the temporary suspension of any law of the Torah, short, of course, of the prohibition of idolatry, in order to meet an emergency, and the people were obligated to obey him. (San. 90A). The claims of the early Christians was therefore a challenge not alone to Pharisaism, which was then energetically developing a system of Halacha, based on a carefully devised technique of interpretation, as apposed to new revelations—but also of Sadduceism, which would naturally resent any modification of the Written Law.

The early Christians were, of course, aware that Jesus had abrogated no law of the Torah. But, as the need for relenting upon the rigors of the Law, especially the laws of Sabbath observance, circumcision and prohibited foods, became urgent in the rapid process of winning over Gentile converts, the authority of new revelations was rapidly invoked. The Gentile brethren in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia are informed by the Church in Jerusalem that on the authority of the Holy Spirit they need no longer practice the rite of circumcision. (Acts 15.28) (See also Col. 2.11). Peter sees a heavenly vision which declares unto him that all foods are permissible. (Acts 10.10 f.). And on the authority of Jesus, himself, it was soon maintained "that the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath" (Mark 2:28) and that, therefore, it is a matter of personal preference for Christians whether they wish to observe the Sabbath or not. (Rom. 14.5 f.).

The admission of Gentiles to full membership in the 'ecclesia' of the faithful without the necessity of observing any laws of the Torah except the so-called Noachian laws (Acts 15) and the free sharing by them of the Holy Spirit (Acts 10.) meant to all intents and purposes the early abandonment of the Law for nearly all its members. It would be found impossible to maintain a united fellowship—one church—the dream of all the faithful—with one part committed to Torah observances and the other uncommitted, and, in fact, critical of them. The opening of the doors of proselytism to the Gentile world on the sole basis of faith in the resurrected Christ, (Rom. 10.4 f.), whose revelation superseded the Torah, was a critical innovation which was bound to turn what was at first a Jewish sect, into a new non-Jewish religion.

It is difficult to establish exactly

when the concept of Incarnation became part of the Christian faith, probably very early. Paul thinks of Jesus as the pre-existent Christ, identified with the Holy Spirit, who had now assumed a human body. "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8.3). John thinks of Jesus as the Logos—the Word which was made flesh, "and dwelt among us" (John 1.14). Matthew and Luke speak of Jesus "as begotten of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 1.18 Luke 1.35).

Certainly, no one who is acquainted with the determined and persistent struggle for a pure monotheistic faith among the people of Israel since the days of Abraham Moses and the Prophets could have assumed for a moment then or since that Judaism would find lodgement for the concept of a God who came down to earth, assumed human form, and suffered death for the salvation of men—a doctrine which Jesus himself never taught. These ideas were known to the Jews long before the time of Jesus, and had been rejected by them. They were popular and current in the ancient world. Judaism had resisted these notions for centuries. The Jewish people could not but reject such a doctrine unless it was prepared to abandon the most treasured and essential conviction for which it had struggled through the centuries and of which it believed itself to be the covenanted guardian and spokesman to the world. It could not accept a renewed mythologizing of God, which it had resisted for a thousand years, even though the concept of a born, dying, and resurrected God might now be presented as a metaphysical idea and not as a concrete event which took place on a specific date in history or as a trinitarian conception of monotheism.

A contributing factor, too, to a parting of the ways, was the fact that the Jewish-Christians were pacifists, and would have no part in the people's resistance movement which culminated in the revolt against Rome. In the beginning of the Jewish revolt against Rome in 66 C.E., the Christian group in Jerusalem fled to Pella, a Gentile center in Trans-Jordan, as they did once again, later on, during the Bar Kochba revolt in 135 C.E.

The destruction of the Temple severed another important link between the Jewish-Christian and official Judaism. The event was quickly seized upon by Christian propagandists as proof of God's displeasure with and rejection of Israel.

All these factors combined to surround the Jewish-Christians in Jerusalem in quick time with a host of enemies. Many clashes ensued. The first fateful outburst resulted in the slaying of Stephen.



Basically a parting of the ways was inevitable also because normative Judaism of the first century was not apocalyptic in character, or salvationalist, or pacifist or other-worldly. Its main concern was not with sin, grace, redemption and justification, but with a way of life which would express in practice the prophetic ideals of doing justly, loving mercy and walking humbly with God, and the building of the good society on earth.

In its historic evolution, Judaism moved not from prophecy to apocalypse but from prophecy directly to the men of the great synagogue, from the Torah to its interpretation at the hands of Scribes and Sages. The Five Books of Moses are not an apocalyptic text. There were of course mystic and apocalyptic elements among Jews of the Second Commonwealth—Essenes, and other groups—"Anavim (the Humble Ones, Hashaim (the Silent Ones), Zenuim (the Chaste Ones)—and their numbers probably increased in the turbulent post-Maccabean centuries, but their numbers were always very small and their ideas never constituted the mainstream of Judaism.

Prophetic and Rabbinic Judaism was predominantly interested in the mundane progress of man and society, while the apocalyptists were interested in the time-table of the approaching End. The one sought a moral reformation of society; the others hoped for its miraculous transformation through divine intervention.

As we indicated earlier, there were expectations among Jews in the first century of the coming of the Messiah, due to a popularly entertained belief that the year 5,000, the beginning of the Millennium, was at an end. Many Jews entertained the hope of a national Messiah who would bring to Israel freedom and to mankind universal justice and peace. That this belief constituted the keystone in the arch of first century Judaism is nowhere indicated. There were rabbis as late as the fourth century who denied the coming of a Messiah altogether. "The Jews have no longer any Messiah to expect, for they have already had him in the days of Hezekiah" (San. 99A). There were others, like Rabbi Samuel, who stripped the Messianic idea of all of its apocalyptic accretions; "There is nothing that will be different in the Messianic times from the present, except freedom from foreign domination" (Ber. 34B). The social order will not be subjected to any radical change.

It is very significant, that while entertaining the hope of the coming of a Messiah, Judaism never accepted any specific Messiah. The Jewish people must have sensed that the idea, inspiring as a hope, was hopeless as a reality. An actual Messiah is always

an unfulfillment, an anti-climax. His appearance in history has had, time and again disastrous consequences for the people. Judaism does not stand or fall with the belief in the Messiah.

Thus any group which made a materialized Messianism central in its belief would find itself inevitably drifting outside the mainstream of Jewish life and thought. Judaism, in spite of Messianic and eschatological hopes, which were maintained by some or by many Jews around the first century of the common era, continued as a religion dedicated principally to social progress and to the men's duties to reconstruct themselves and society to conform to the ethical precepts of the Torah.

Judaism is not constructed around any drama of redemption. There is no term in the Hebrew language for "salvation" in a sacramental, redemptive sense. The idea that man needs to be "saved" either from the toils of life or from some Original Sin or from the prison house of matter or from baleful astrological influences is not part of Judaism.

Saviour and Redeemer in the Christological sense are not to be found in the Bible.

Judaism's primary concern was to teach man not how sin came into the world, but how to avoid sin and how to repent of sin once having succumbed to it. All men are capable of sinning because all men are endowed with free will.

Because there is no Original Sin, there is no need for a Redeemer. The doctrine of atonement through the suffering of another is nowhere found in the Hebrew Bible.

Man does not need saviours. Nor does man need mediators between himself and God. "No one comes to the Father, but by me" (John 14:6) is a concept alien to Judaism. Man needs help in his moral struggles—encouragement, hope, confidence. Such help comes from turning to God, and it is at all times available. Through repentance and amendment man's moral effort becomes the channel for the in-flow of the grace of God.

Nor is faith alone sufficient to make atonement for man's sins. It is "deeds which make atonement for men" (Ta'an. 16a).

In Judaism a man is made upright by his faith in God and by his good works, the former being demonstrated by the latter. His spiritual life is not consummated by faith in God—it begins there, and it is ethical conduct which brings him near to God.

Ascetism, non-resistance to evil, and other-worldliness, were never strong features in the pattern of historic Judaism, as they undoubtedly were in

the pattern of first century Christianity.

A faith predominantly eschatological gives rise to a way of life and a set of precepts different from one which has no such sovereign interests. The former will urge men to forsake this world, be in it, but not of it. It will urge them to abandon their possessions, to choose poverty, to seek escape from the trammels of society in the life of religious seclusion, to avoid, wherever possible marriage and the begetting of children. It will instruct them not to resist evil nor revolt against any form of tyranny or slavery, for all these evils will soon pass away in the new world order which is swiftly approaching. Judaism, in which the eschatological element played no decisive role whatsoever would naturally reject such a code in its entirety—and did.

Christianity from the outset was overwhelmingly ascetic in outlook. Even marriage was disapproved of in the early Church. In fact, among the great religions of mankind, it is in Christianity and Buddhism that celibacy received its highest endorsement. At best marriage was tolerated as a concession to human frailty.

To marry and to beget children in order to preserve the race is a divine command in Judaism. "Be fruitful and multiply" (Gen. 1:28) is the first commandment of the Bible.

Judaism rejecting all forms of dualism did not encourage acts of mortification or self-removal from society as a way to holiness. One need not and should not renounce what is lawful.

In Jesus' mystical outlook, the world was fast coming to an end and there was no point in resisting evil. It would automatically cease with the Millennium and the imminent establishment of God's Kingdom. Man's chief concern should therefore be not to fight evil, but to prepare himself for the new age.

Normative Judaism did not subscribe to doctrines of nonresistance and pacifism. It demanded action from its devotees. It taught that there is evil in society and that it is man's duty to overcome it—if need be, by force, though force is by no means the only way by which evil can be overcome. It is not enough to improve oneself; one must also seek to improve one's environment. The only refuge from the cruel wrongs of the world is in the effort to set them right. There is no ethics of resignation in Judaism.

When Jesus declared, "My Kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36), he correctly defined the nature of his gospel. But Judaism's Kingdom of God referred to the reign of the one true God on earth, to the conversion of all peoples to faith in Him alone, and to the establishment of universal justice and peace.

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