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Jewish opinion of Jesus since 1900.

Held, John Joy Randolph

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A Dissertation

JEWISH OPINION OF JESUS SINCE 1900

by

John Joy Randolph Held

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Approved by

First Reader  Edwin P. Booth
Professor of Historical Literature

Second Reader  Elwin F. Leslie
Professor of Hebrew and O.T. Literature
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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND THE APPROACH USED

Since the time in the first century A.D. when the Christian group became estranged from the Synagogue through persecution, a breach had continued to widen between Christianity and Judaism, and reached its climax around 135 A.D. with the Bar Cochba Messianic claims. The followers of Jesus could brook no competitor to the Messiahship which they claimed for their hero. With the downfall of Bar Cochba the chasm continued. From the first, the Christians were extremely zealous in evangelistic and missionary activity, always insisting that the Jews had lost their favor with God because of their rejection of Jesus as their Messiah. Later, during the Spanish Inquisition, effort was made to force Jews to become Christians on penalty of persecution of the cruelest sort. It seems that the Church has vacillated between efforts to evangelize the Jews wholesale and a feeling that the Jews are a lost and hopeless people fit only to be scourged from place to place. Within the present century an evangelistic movement within the Christian Church has manifested itself in a growing interest in the winning of the Jews to the Christian faith. Two groups have especially shown active concern for the conversion of the Jews—the Catholic Church and the Fundamentalist Protestant group. Father John M. Oesterreicher, a convert from Judaism, tells us that Protestants maintain almost seventy centers and
Catholics three to win Jews to Christ. He personally has received two-hundred twenty into the Catholic Church, and declares that it would be a lack of love for the Christian not to want to share his peace and bliss with the Jew.

David Goldstein, born of Jewish parentage but now a Catholic of many years standing, very well sets forth the attitude of both Catholics and Fundamentalists toward the Jew, his religion, and his conversion in his book Jewish Panorama. He describes Sargent's mural in the Boston Public Library which portrays the Synagogue as fallen and the sceptre broken, while the Church holds aloft the Eucharistic Chalice and the Monstrance. The Synagogue is represented by an old gray-haired woman, blindfolded, seated in an attitude of despair on the steps of the ruined temple, her crown fallen off and her power gone. This he holds to be the true picture of Judaism. When the Legislature, at the instigation of the Jews and others, voted to have the mural removed (which action was later rescinded), Goldstein says,

At the time the action impressed us as a denial that the sceptre had passed from Judah, that the Aaronic priesthood had ceased to function, that the veil in the Temple had been rent, that the Temple had been destroyed, that the mission of Judaism had been fulfilled.2

To him any denial that Judaism's power had passed away seems

2. Goldstein, JP, 186.
unthinkable. He continues by declaring that "the Jewish religion was God's religion, but it is so no more." The reason for the suffering of the Jews as a nation, he says, "must be based upon the recognition of the fact that judgment has fallen upon Jewry as a whole. . . . The crucifixion of Jesus was deicide." Moreover, the necessary way for Jews to become Christians is by looking on Jesus as a God.

Jocz quotes Israel Cohen as saying that at the International Missionary Conferences at Budapest and Warsaw, in 1927, there were represented forty-seven Protestant societies alone, employing seven-hundred twenty-four missionary workers at one-hundred sixty-nine stations for the purpose of winning Jews to the Christian Church.

Eckardt reveals that a Commission on the Christian Approach to the Jews of the International Missionary Council was set up in 1930, expressing the conviction that "all men should accept Jesus as the Christ, and in addition that conversion should involve membership in the empirical or general Christian Church." The Commission called for a Conference on the Approach to the Jews to meet in 1931, with the program to put Jesus Christ as Redeemer, supreme Revelation of God, and the only adequate way to the spiritual life; and declared

2. Goldstein, JP, 201.
5. Eckhardt, CGI, 103.
that they felt the compelling evangelistic purpose to present Jesus Christ to the Jews that they might accept him.

A different attitude has been manifested by more liberal Christians, however, and even by an occasional ultra-liberal Jew—such as Sholem Asch, that some sort of amalgamation of the two faiths might be effected, recognizing and retaining the major values of both. Jocz goes into detail in setting forth the workings of the Hebrew-Christian movement which seeks the winning of Jews to Christ while they remain Jews socially. Some who belong to this movement have not joined any Christian church, retaining their Jewish identity, being baptised only as a Christian. The lastest conference of the movement seems to have been held in Atlantic City, New Jersey in 1931. It is reported that a great deal of discussion took place relative to the program of the future, but no action resulted.

1. Eckhardt, CCI, 104.
2. Jocz, JPJC, 238.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem. The problem of this study is to discover the attitude of Jewry at large toward Jesus. This involves a consideration of Jewish opinion of Christianity, also, as the two are closely related in the Jewish mind. Growing out of the findings of the investigation a subsidiary
interest arises - that of the possibility of an organic union of the two faiths. The primary field of study lies within the area of liberal Judaism in its relationship to liberal Christianity.

**Extent of the dissertation.** The purpose of this dissertation is to set forth the findings of an investigation of the writings and pronouncements of Jewish leaders of all schools concerning the person and work of Jesus, in order to arrive at an answer to the problem stated above. The problem leads us into three very definite areas of investigation: (1) the place Jesus holds in modern Jewish religious thought; (2) the avowed reasons for the continued Jewish rejection of Jesus and the complete separation between Judaism and Christianity; (3) the Jewish attitude toward the possibility of a union of the two faiths on some liberal basis.

While the dissertation professes to investigate the Jewish attitude to Jesus, it is often found impossible to avoid confusing Jesus with Organized Christianity. Therefore, the Jewish attitude to the latter must also be taken into consideration. In fact, when the question of ultimate acceptance of Jesus is considered, it will necessarily involve the possibility of union between Judaism and Christianity as such.

**Setting of the problem.** In beginning our investigation we face with frank recognition the existence of a great chasm
separating Jew and Christian. This chasm consists of religious
g fanaticism and tenacity of customs on both sides, so-called
racial differences, a baseless resentment and mutual hatred
of long standing, an unbending tradition, and ignorance of
the culture and aspirations of each other. The Christian
looks upon the Jew as the rejecter and killer of him whom
the former holds to be both the Jewish Messiah and the divinely-
sent redeemer of the world. The Jew, in return, looks upon
the Christian as the instigator of all Jewish persecution, the
ghettos, the Spanish Inquisition, and the infamous stories of
Jewish atrocities and ritual murders of Christians in which
the blood of Christians was supposed to be mixed with the
dough of the Passover bread.

Our purpose is the search for any indication of a changing
and softening Jewish attitude toward Christianity and its
founder, Jesus. The place of the Jew in the Christian scheme
of salvation is always a matter of evangelical interest and
concern; but our present concern is the place of Jesus in the
Jewish scheme of religion.

The approach used. In the writing of this dissertation
there will appear a few duplications and overlappings of
material presented, due to the nature of the paper. In seeking
answers to definite questions the same statement occasionally
applies in more than one instance. Where this is necessary
attention will be called to such repetitions.
Again, due to the nature of the investigation—that of capturing Jewish opinion—it will be necessary to incorporate into its content many direct quotations from Jewish sources, some being rather lengthy. This seems advisable since the mere stating of the general opinion which the investigator gains from the reference might in some cases be unjust to the source, as it is always possible to misinterpret, to understate, or to overstate a position or an opinion being cited. It is the intent of this writer, therefore, to allow the Jewish source to speak for itself in most cases.

While most of the material drawn upon for Jewish opinion is derived firsthand from books and articles authored by prominent Jews, it has seemed advantageous to utilize the writings of two Christian authorities on Jewish thought who have brought together into their respective books a quite wide collection of Jewish opinion bearing on our problem. These are (1) The Jew and Christianity by Herbert Danby, Residentiary Canon of St. George's Cathedral in Jerusalem, and translator of Klausner's Jesus of Nazareth; and (2) Jewish Views of Jesus by Thomas Walker. Both books will be more fully discussed in Chapter II.

Besides these two collections there have also been used the writings of a few other Christian authors dealing with their own specific problems. The foremost among these writers and more extensively quoted are two converted Jews: David Goldstein (a Catholic), author of Jewish Panorama, and Jakób Jocz, author of The Jewish People and Jesus Christ.
In addition to a careful reading of all the Jewish books and articles that could be obtained which deal at all with the subject of Jesus directly or indirectly, personal interviews have been held with Rabbi Joseph Klein of Temple Emmanuel of Worcester, Massachusetts, and with a number of educated Jewish laymen in business and professions in Worcester and elsewhere. Communication by letter has been carried on with a considerable number of rabbis and teachers over the country. Among these are Professor Rabbi Morris Goldstein of California, author of Jesus in the Jewish Tradition, Rabbi Harry Richmond of Wichita, Kansas, Doctor Julius Gordon of St. Louis, Missouri, and Doctor Eric I. Lowenthal of Leominster, Massachusetts.

Twenty-two questionnaires were sent out to prominent Jewish leaders of the three schools of thought most generally recognized—Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform. The questionnaire was both general and specific in its questions to be answered. Among the most pertinent questions are the following, the answers to which will be mentioned and incorporated in later sections:

I. What are the major sources of pronouncements by Rabbis and other Jewish leaders concerning Jesus and Christianity in the Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform fields?

II. What difference, if any, is observable between European and American Jews in their attitude to Jesus?
III. What do you consider the major reasons for the continued rejection of Jesus and Christianity?

IV. Is there a general differentiation between Jesus and Christianity in the Jewish mind?

V. Do you feel that there can ever be a unification of Judaism with any liberal branch of Christianity? Why?

While the questions may seem simple, they are basic to the investigation, and the answers received have been of immense value to the investigator. The results in general, however, were not gratifying. No replies came back from Orthodox sources; and although a second letter and questionnaire were sent to the same people, there was still no reply. Only fifty percent of the known Conservatives replied. The Reform Rabbis and teachers, however, were most gracious and prompt, and many offered further assistance if needed. To all those who replied this writer owes much to their kindliness, patience, and ready cooperation.

Those who, in their replies to the questionnaire, contributed valuable information to the investigator are: Rabbi Joseph Klein, Worcester, Massachusetts; Rabbi Harry Richmond, Wichita, Kansas; Rabbi Morris Goldstein, San Francisco, California; Doctor Rabbi Julius Gordon, St. Louis, Missouri; Doctor Rabbi Eric I. Lowenthal, Leominster, Massachusetts; Mr. Jerry Cushman, librarian, Salina, Kansas; Herbert C. Zafren, Administrative Secretary of the library, Hebrew Union College.
Cincinnati, Ohio; Louis I. Egelson, Secretary of the Commission on Information about Judaism, Cincinnati, Ohio. Others replied, but their replies were too brief to be of great assistance.
CHAPTER II

A REVIEW OF THE FIELD

Before attacking the main problem of our investigation, it is our purpose to review what has already been done by others in the general field of our concern; to discover who the recognized spokesmen of the Jewish world are, and what authoritative pronouncements, if any, have been made relative to our problem; and in our case to distinguish the various schools of thought within the Jewish world community.

I. WHAT HAS ALREADY BEEN DONE

Apparently, the Jew has not yet become interested in what other Jewish thinkers have said about Jesus. This conclusion is based both upon the investigator's failure to find any extended discussion or compilation of Jewish opinion by Jewish writers on the subject, and upon the statement of Rabbi Joseph Klein that to his knowledge no such attempt had ever seriously been made. Only two Jewish investigations have been discovered, both minor as to extent.

The first, an article by Isador Singer in the North American Review, in 1910, entitled "The Attitude of the Jews Toward Jesus," 1 presents the findings of a questionnaire sent out by Rabbi Kohler in 1899 concerning Jesus. He discusses

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the viewpoints revealed by Kohler (then president of the Hebrew Union College at Cincinnati); Doctor Gustav Gottheil, Rabbi of Temple Emanuel, in New York; Doctor Morris Jastrow, a Jewish scholar and professor of Semitic languages at the University of Pennsylvania; Doctor Max Nordau, a French writer; Doctor Theodore Reinach, member of the French Parliament and formerly president of the Societe des Etudes Juives; Jacob H. Schiff, an American leader of Judaism, and a great banker and philanthropist; Harris Weinstock, an educated Jewish layman—a liberal-minded, wealthy merchant—who wrote a book entitled, Jesus the Jew. Because these men, in each instance, are so very unanimous in expressing their appreciation of Jesus and his work in glowing terms, the doubt is raised in our minds as to whether the pronouncements are truly representative of Jewish thought. They would appear to be highly selective, and as having no purpose of gaining a genuine over-all evaluation of Jesus such as this paper is attempting.

The other work is a book by Isaac Landman, Christian and Jew. It is a symposium dealing with a better understanding between Jews and Christians; and brings together under one cover several articles by Jewish leaders dealing with various phases of the general subject. Among the articles in the book three have to do with our immediate problem. They are: "The Horns of the Dilemma" by Claude G. Montefiore, dealing both with the Christian persecution of the Jew and with the kinship of Judaism and Christianity; "Calculated Unfriendliness" by
Stephen S. Wise, dealing with the breaking down of the barriers between members of the two faiths; and "Can a Jew and Christian Understand Each Other" by Doctor Abram Simon, a rabbi, who points out the factors keeping Jews and Christians apart, and the possibility and way of eradicating them. Landman's symposium, likewise, can scarcely be looked upon as a compilation of Jewish opinion about Jesus or Christianity. Rabbi Joseph Klein characterized the book to the investigator as being merely a gesture of goodwill, not an attempt to reveal attitudes. Such an evaluation of the book seems justified, in the light of our present effort.

It seems, therefore, that we must look to those outside the Jewish community for any extensive and critical attempt in the field. The next two books discussed, and which are extensively used in this dissertation, are written by Christian churchmen, and bring together a fairly large and varied cross-section of representative Jewish writers and speakers into a sort of synoptic view of Jesus.

The first, and by all odds the more valuable and authentic book, is The Jew and Christianity by Herbert Danby. In this work he discusses the point of view of six Jews of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries about Jesus. They are men who have greatly influenced present-day Jewish thought. The men discussed are (1) Joseph Salvador who wrote in Paris during the second quarter of the eighteenth century, showing Jesus to be dependent entirely on Judaism; (2) Abraham Geiger, a learned German rabbi who gave three lectures on Jesus, in
1864, in nearly the same vein as Salvador; (3) Heinrich Graetz, who brought out his *History of the Jews* in 1848, holding Jesus in high regard, but painting a black picture of Christianity from Paul's time on; (4) Joseph Jacobs, an English Jew, Orthodox, educated and sophisticated, who wrote *As Others Saw Him* in 1895—a fictitious but generous story of Jesus, purporting to be by an eyewitness; (5) Claude Montefiore, mentioned above, a liberal Reform Jew, active in the last decade of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, who held Jesus in highest regard; and (6) Ahad Ha-Am ("One of the People"), whose real name was Archer Ginzberg, a modern Jew, living in Jerusalem, who is strongly against any show of active friendship toward Christianity. Such friendliness as that shown by Montefiore he calls little short of denying the very fundamentals of Judaism, though he does not openly oppose Christianity. Beside these six men, Danby gives a very thorough digest of Klausner's *Jesus of Nazareth*, and follows with the reaction to the book as expressed by several individuals and publications. These include statements from *The Jewish World* of December 30, 1925, praising Klausner's book; a discussion of Rabbi Stephen Wise's sermon given before an audience of three thousand at Christmas time, 1925, in which he praised the book; the comments of Doctor Aaron Kaminka, an Orthodox scholar, in *Ha-Toren*, May, 1922, condemning the book; Montefiore's statements of commendation and criticism in *The Jewish Guardian*; *Der Tag* (an American

1. Danby, JC, 81.
Yiddish paper) in its scathing reply to Wise, December 25, 1925; and, finally, the devastating comment of The Jewish Chronicle (English), February 26, 1926, also concerning the latter's sermon.

The other book mentioned is the Jewish Views of Jesus by Thomas Walker, which presents in detail the Orthodox views of Paul Goodman as expressed in his book, The Synagogue and the Church, dated 1908; Gerald Friedlander in his book, The Jewish Sources of the Sermon on the Mount; the liberal views of the above-mentioned Montefiore, as expressed in his book, Some Elements of the Religious Teaching of Jesus According to the Synoptic Gospels, published as the Jowett Lectures for 1910; Joseph Jacob's book, As Others Saw Him; and Klausner's Jesus of Nazareth.

These seem to be the only attempts made by Jews or by Christians of reputable authority to present a generally representative collection of Jewish opinion about Jesus.

II. JUDAISM'S LACK OF OFFICIAL PRONOUNCEMENTS

Our attempt to find the Jewish opinion of Jesus in the modern day will be made more difficult by the fact that, unlike Catholicism, with its pope and councils as the authoritative voice of the Church, there is no unified voice of Judaism, and no official spokesman on any subject. This is emphasized by Rabbi H. G. Enelow who declares "It must be stated that there
is no official attitude of modern Jews to Jesus." No formal declaration has ever been made on the subject which professes to speak for all or any school of Judaism. Rather, in each instance there has been only a personal expression of opinion.

While Judaism does not speak with one authoritative voice, yet it is possible to distinguish three distinct major schools of Jewish thought, the followers of which respectively echo certain distinctive viewpoints, generally. These schools are the Orthodox, the Reform, and the Conservative of which a fuller description will be found in section III. A fourth group should be mentioned—Reconstructionism. The latter, however, cannot be said to constitute an independent school of thought. Rabbi Klein, mentioned above, declares that Mordecai Kaplan's Reconstructionism advocates nothing that Reform Judaism has not already done. While the answers given by each group concerning Jesus will be generally distinctive of that school, we shall see that individuals of each major grouping are capable of expressing attitudes completely independent of others of the same group. For example, we have but to point to the great works of Klausner: *Jesus of Nazareth* and *From Jesus to Paul*, both books being masterpieces of research and thought, and extremely fair and friendly representations. Klausner is reputed to be a foremost Orthodox scholar (he is a professor in the Hebrew University in Jerusalem), and an ardent Zionist; moreover, he is a friend and follower of Ahad Ha-Am, a strong opponent of Reform.

1. Enelow, JVJ, 170.
and, as stated above, condemnatory of any conciliatory consideration of Christianity. It was, indeed, a matter of greatest concern in Orthodox Jewish circles that Klausner should have written as he did about Jesus and Christianity. Danby quotes an unnamed writer (whom he declares to be of considerable repute) in Ha-Doar (an American Jewish weekly paper published in Hebrew), November 19, 1926, who says that "It is utterly inconceivable that Ahad Ha-Am should write such a book as that written by his disciple Klausner: to him the mere subject matter would be nauseous." The Jewish World likewise comments on this Orthodox scholar for having written such a book "after innumerable Jewish generations had come and gone without pronouncing the name of Jesus." In other words, here is a foremost representative of the Orthodox school breaking all precedents in writing so voluminous a book about Jesus.

On the other hand, as liberal as is the Reform school, many leaders of this group, as expressed to the writer by Rabbi Klein, feel that such men as Sholem Asch, Ludwig, and even Montefiore can scarcely be looked upon as expressing Jewish views at all. They are "marginal" in their thinking. This is confirmed concerning Montefiore by Danby. 3

1. Danby, JC, 118 (note).
2. Danby, JC, 110.
3. Danby, JC, 79.
others who write popularly for the non-Jewish reading public largely, Klein declares, are writing merely what a Christian reading public wants to hear, in order that their books may become best-sellers. It would appear that the criticism levelled at Asch might be true. He was an early disciple of Ahad-Ha-Am; but when he discovered that his writings were being well-received by the non-Jewish reading public he decided to write about Jesus, himself. The result was the naively beautiful book, The Nazarene, which had a phenomenal sale both among Jews and Christians. This was followed by The Apostle, and Mary. It would be more difficult, however, to accuse Montefiore of publicity-hunting. His sincerity in dealing with Jesus and Christianity appears too genuine to be a mere play for popularity among Christians.

Perhaps the most consistent thinker is the Conservative Jew, who neither clings too tenaciously to tradition, unchanging and unchangeable, nor expansively goes over to the extreme liberal ideas of the Reform group.

What has been given here at least demonstrates that every Jewish thinker is a law unto himself in his attitude toward Jesus. He is bound by no theological dogmas beyond a loyalty to the concept of monothesism. Although the Law holds a central position in all Jewish thinking, it is subject to such free and varied interpretation that what the Law means is dependent upon the person or group interpreting it at the given moment. Stinging
criticism from his fellow religionists is his only punishment. For that reason the views presented in this dissertation can be looked upon only as those of individual leaders of Jewish thought: they cannot be held as speaking for Judaism. They may be typical, but they are not authoritative.

III. SCHOOLS OF HEBREW THOUGHT

Rabbi Klein, in a conversation with the writer, declared that it is a mistaken notion that there is a sharp cleavage between the various schools of thought in Judaism in the way there is between Christian denominations. One may belong both to an Orthodox synagogue and hold membership in a Reform Temple. Many such Jews attend both types of services, he declared. In other words, one may cling to tradition in one area of thought, and be a liberal in another. It is in the light of this information that we shall discuss Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist Judaism.

The Orthodox school is popularly described as that predominantly large group of Jews—many originally from Eastern Europe—who cling stubbornly to the past; who are intolerant of all change or deviation from traditional patterns; and who deny that Judaism has ever undergone any sort of development. This is not, however, an accurate characterization of Orthodoxy.

of the present day, according to Rabbi Klein. Many changes and modifications are taking place, he stated in an interview with the investigator in March, 1951. Among the modifications seen is the adoption of a late Friday evening worship service to accommodate those who find it inconvenient or impossible to attend the sundown service. Some Orthodox synagogues are instituting English prayers in place of the ancient Hebrew. Another interesting innovation is the use of automobiles as a means of conveyance to the synagogue—for formerly, the Orthodox Jew walked.

Many Orthodox Jews neglect or ignore the dietary laws, although this is in no way an official procedure. In other words, among Orthodox Jews there are both "practicing" and "non-practicing" individuals—both being in good standing.

At any rate, it is recognized that Orthodoxy is slow to make changes. It holds about the same position in Judaism that Fundamentalism holds in Protestant Christianity. Jocz declares that since Orthodox Judaism is naturally marked by the faithful adherence to tradition (and this is generally true), its attitude to Jesus is already predetermined for it by the fact that in the past centuries its attitude was one of complete silence. We must always keep in our mind, however, the interest shown by Klausner and by Martin Buber, both demonstrating a thorough knowledge of Christian literature.

1. Jocz, JPJC, 111.
Among the leaders of Orthodoxy today, who are prominent writers and scholars, may be mentioned David de Sola Poole and Herbert Goldstein, both of New York, Joseph Lookstein, Leo Jung, Irving Miller, and Samuel Rosenblatt. Earlier in the century Paul Goodman, Gerald Friedländer, and Joseph Klausner held the stage. Martin Buber may also be listed, although his frank appraisals of Christianity are not in keeping with the Orthodox viewpoint, generally, as issaid also of Klausner's writings.

Orthodoxy has two outstanding schools: Yeshiva University in New York, and Hebrew Theological College in Chicago.

The Reform School. According to the Jewish Encyclopedia, the Reform movement in its earlier stages was merely a more or less thoroughly executed attempt to regulate public worship in the direction of beautifying it and rendering it more orderly. The length of services was shortened, and sermons were preached in the vernacular. It aimed at the aesthetic regeneration of the synagogue liturgy, rather than at the doctrinal readjustment of the content of Judaism.

Gordis further informs us that Reform Judaism denies the nationhood of Israel; and declares that Jews are members of a religious sect, with no aspirations for the restoration of Palestine as the national homeland of the Jews. It surrenders

completely the so-called binding authority of the traditional Jewish law. The basis of Reform Judaism is found in the Pittsburg Platform adopted in 1886, which also laid the groundwork for a new prayer book, almost entirely in English. Although Gordis is a Conservative Jew, he praises Reform for welcoming the truths of modern science, thought and beauty; and for having helped to bring the Jewish heritage into the mainstream of human progress. He declares, however, that Reform Judaism is lacking in emotional warmth and intellectual zeal. This, of course, Reform Jews deny. At least, Reform Judaism is more in step with modern life and its needs and values, than many of the traditional forms of Orthodoxy.

Reform Judaism boasts among its adherents such men as Claude G. Montefiore, H. G. Enelow, Kaufmann Kohler, Ernest Trattner, Isaac Landman, and Sholem Asch (if the latter may be called truly Jewish).

The schools of Reform Judaism are two: Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, and its associate, The Jewish Institute of Religion in New York City.

**Conservative Judaism.** Gordis gives a very brief but pungent definition of Conservative Judaism, saying that it is "the modern interpretation of traditional Judaism." In opposition

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to the Reform break with historic Judaism, a small group of English-speaking rabbis of traditional sympathies decided to create a theological seminary to stand on the program of loyalty to traditional Judaism. The school was opened in 1887 and lasted for ten years, to be re-opened in 1902, from which time it became the center of Conservative Judaism. This movement seeks to restore the flexibility and power of adjustment in Judaism.

The goal of Conservatism is stated as loyalty to an evolving law, which is the will of God as revealed through the experiences of Israel. It feels a strong sense of comradship both with Orthodoxy and with Reform; and recognizes that in spite of differences, the factors that unite them are far more significant than those that tend to separate them—"A basic faith in God and man, a great tradition from the past, and the consciousness of a common destiny." The purpose is to make the Jewish heritage function as a vital and creative factor in human civilization as a whole.

The outstanding representatives of Conservative Judaism or those who have influenced its formation considerably are given by Gordis as being: Zechariah Frankl (1801-1875), a German rabbi and scholar, Solomon Schechter (1847-1915), Ahad Ha-Am (1856-1927), a cultural Zionist, Professor Israel Friedlander

(1876-1920), Doctor Louis Ginzberg (b. 1873), "The greatest living scholar in the world", and Professor Mordecai M. Kaplan (b. 1881), now a Reconstructionist. To this list may be added the name of Louis Finkelstein.

The Reconstruction Movement. The Reconstruction movement is the product of the thinking of Mordecai M. Kaplan, and is set forth admirably in his book entitled, The Future of the American Jew. Kaplan declares that "the traditional version of Jewish religion is adequate only for the rapidly dwindling number of traditionally-minded Jews." That version, he continues, is unrelated to the needs of contemporary life. The purpose of Reconstructionism is to make religion of practical use in the life of the people. The traditions and sancta of a religion must be "relevant to the needs of that generation." He declares that the Jewish religion should "discountenance the use of ritual for the purpose of influencing the course of events in other ways than by its influence on the mind and heart of the worshipper." No ritual that is morally or esthetically offensive should be retained merely because in an earlier state of Israel's culture it was commanded. "We must encourage the writing of new devotional literature, prayers, meditations, and hymns that express the religious experiences

of our generation."¹ Whereas in the old Jewish religion belief in God included the physical appearances of God, miracles, an infallible Torah delivered to Moses, today belief in miracles is no longer held, and God is not as he was once thought to be. The other-worldly emphasis in religion must go, and the emphasis must be placed on making this world a better place in which to live. Likewise, the idea of the Jews as God’s "Chosen People" must go. The idea of election is not necessary for survival. The purpose of Reconstructionism, then, appears to be the movement to eliminate or reinterpret those elements of Judaism which are not necessary for the best sort of living. Judaism is to become a functional force in human life and endeavor. To date, it seems that Kaplan is the only prominent Jewish leader interested in such a movement.

It would seem a reasonable question to ask the relative influence and strength of the three major schools of Judaism. Statistics of 1940 show that out of approximately four thousand congregations in this country, 307 are Reform, 275 are Conservative, while 3,418 are Orthodox. The numerical strength of each respectively may be seen when we discover that the adult membership per congregation averages 250 people.³ It would appear that the Orthodox viewpoint predominates the stage when considering the Jewish opinion of Jesus. This, however, is not as true

1. Kaplan, FAJ, 49.
as the figures make it seem on first glance. Among the Orthodox Congregations are many members who reject or seriously question the old traditional views, and insist on modern outlooks. The present writer has found many of the prominent younger Jews of Worcester, Wichita, and other places, to have been from Orthodox parentage and background, but who now consider themselves to be free-thinkers or liberals in regard to the Christian religion and Jesus—while yet, perhaps, retaining their membership in some Orthodox synagogue.
CHAPTER III

JEWSH OPINION OF JESUS AS A HISTORICAL CHARACTER

Our procedure here will be to take the word of the Orthodox Jew first; to move to the extreme and discover what the Reform Jew thinks; and finally to return to the position of the Conservative school, if there is any difference to be found there. Our problem is not to deal with theology at this time, but to take the simplest approach for this chapter, i.e., the consideration of Jesus purely as a man, a citizen of Palestine, one of the many artisans and religious genuses which Palestine has produced throughout the centuries.

I. THE ORTHODOX OPINION

As stated previously, frank evaluations of Jesus by Orthodox Jews are not numerous. Rabbi Enelow says that to the old-fashioned Jew a discussion of Jesus is a forbidden subject. Such a consideration is regarded as a sign of weakness, if not of disloyalty, particularly if one shows symptoms of admiration for Jesus. Our attention is again called, also, to the fact that as late as 1925 The Jewish World commented on Klausner, as the foremost Orthodox scholar of the time, having written such a book as his Jesus of Nazareth after innumerable Jewish generations had come and gone without pronouncing the name of Jesus.

1. Enelow, JVJ, 1.
2. Danby, JC, 110.
Much of what the Orthodox Jew thinks of Jesus, then, will need be learned indirectly from such sources as the criticisms found in Jewish publications about Rabbi Wise's sermon in which he referred to Klausner's book in very warm terms, and launched out into a eulogy of Jesus, himself, calling him a brother Jew. Wise was bitterly attacked by Orthodox Jewry for his remarks. Goldberg well characterized the matter in the title he gave his article about the sermon in *Outlook*, calling it "Rabbi Wise Stirs up a Hornet's Nest." It was a case of the old Orthodox Jewish abhorrence of any Jew who dared to turn his thoughts toward Christianity and its founder. In the same connection, *Der Tag*, an American Orthodox Yiddish paper, is quoted by Danby as declaring in an editorial on December 25, 1925:

"Does not Doctor Wise know how much of our blood has been shed for the God whom he now wants to adopt? Does not Doctor Wise know that the 'soul of our soul' has kept us in burning tongs since the time when this 'soul' was invented? Instead of reading the English clergyman's translation of Doctor Klausner's book, would it not be advisable that Doctor Wise should look through the Jewish History again?"

Another quotation by Danby from the English *Jewish Chronicle* of February 26, 1926, reveals the same devastating attitude:

For a Jew to preach—in any form—to Jews on Jesus is an abomination, it is 'death' or betrayal of the soul. . . the very name of the world-historic phenomenon, such as is the figure of Jesus, ought to fill the heart of every true Jew with trepidation. Is it not for nigh upon twenty centuries that the blood of innocent thousands of Jewish men, women and children has been, and still is, spilt for Christ's sake?1

Again, Danby quotes another caustic comment, this time from Ha-Doar, an American Jewish paper published in Hebrew, dated November 19, 1926, saying,

It is a proof of feebleness in many of our younger writers—the obvious pleasure they take in using words like 'crucifixion', 'Golgotha', and all that class of word. . . I have always admired Ahad Ha-Am for his dislike of Christianity for both its content and its form. It is utterly inconceivable that Ahad Ha-Am should write such a book as that written by his disciple [Klausner]: to him the mere subject matter would be nauseous. We have to shut our eyes tight even against the source of the matter (innocuous though it may have been originally) because of the mass of terrible foulness which it has since accumulated owing to a fatal confusion. . . If any poet of our day, even a Christian, approaches some creative idea and takes Jesus as subject in the old-fashioned way, it only proves his limited outlook and stuffy mentality. Jesus must never again cross our minds [Italics in the original].2

Finally, the Orthodox scholar, Doctor Aaron Kaminka, writing in Ha-Toren in May, 1922, bitterly declares,

Primarily we must protest in the name of our faith and our clear conscience against this presentation of the legendary figure of the founder of the Christian faith as the central figure in the events of the time of the spreading of the New Testament, and against exalting 'that man' on high, and the respect paid to him as a lofty ethical personality truly fitted for the propounding of anew Torah, and to be a 'light to the Gentiles'—implying explicitly or implicitly that our fathers were smitten with blindness in that they failed

1. Danby, JC, 113.
2. Danby, JC, Note 1, p. 118.
to perceive this holy phenomenon and the Messiahship of 'that man'. . . The whole order of the book, and the prevailing spirit of it, are a truckling and kow-towing to the Christian religion and an assertion of great affection for the foggy figure of its founder, a denial of the healthy sense of our saintly forefathers, those enthusiastic Hebrews devoted heart and soul to the service of the one God, creator of heaven and earth, who rejected with loathing those fables and inventions, knowing the hero of those stories to have been no more than a 'mocker at the words of the wise', 'a seducer and beguiler', a hater of the people of Israel, and one who sought the nation's destruction.¹

It will be noted that this condemnation was levelled at no less a personage than Klausner, himself, upon the publication of his Jesus of Nazareth (in Hebrew) in 1922. The criticism reveals clearly the Orthodox attitude to the historic Jesus. (When we say "Orthodox", we do not include those, even who yet belong to the Orthodox synagogues, but who have largely broken with the old viewpoint. The reference is to that yet fairly large class which still clings to the traditional attitudes in the most faithful fashion. This explanation seems necessary in the light of the relaxations and modifications taking place in Orthodoxy particularly in America.)

Danby declares that some Orthodox Jews attacked Klausner's book for bolstering up the superstition that there ever was such a person as Jesus. This is an extreme attitude, for even the Orthodox Jews generally do not question Jesus' actual existence. That there are those who do question his historicity,

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¹ Danby, JC, 103.
² Danby, JC, 102.
however, is well attested and illustrated by Georg Brandes in his *Jesus--A Myth*. Brandes classes the whole story of Jesus along with such stories as that of William Tell, whom, he declares, never existed at all, and gives evidence for his statement. He insists that all that is told of the life and person of Jesus is found in other connections, either in the Old Testament or in the Inter-testamentary literature. In other words, the Jesus story is a sort of piecing together of what was already said of a possible coming person who would redeem Israel, and a building of it into the mythological person of Jesus of Nazareth. This book is, to the writer's knowledge, however, the only extended Jewish denial of Jesus' existence; and its arguments are not convincing. It is no more representative of Jewish thought, either, than similar attempts on the part of free-thinking and ultra-liberal non-Jews is representative of so-called Gentile thought.

Goldberg, in an article in *Outlook*, confirms the investigator's opinion that Brandes is not representative of any Jewish group in his denial of Jesus' existence, by declaring that no Jew ever doubts the existence of Jesus; but he gave as the reason for his declaration the belief that Jesus is mentioned in the Talmud.2 Rabbi Goldstein would weaken this argument, however, by raising the serious question as to whether

any mention of Jesus in the Talmud can be maintained. True, references are found there which have been thought to be applicable to Jesus, but Goldstein devotes chapters I and II of his book, Jesus in the Jewish Tradition, to denying each specific so-called reference.

Goldberg, however, in the same article, continued by declaring that Orthodox rabbis were indignant, and the Jewish press unfavorable concerning Rabbi Wise's sermon mentioned above. "Rabbis", he states, "usually do not preach on Jesus." Trattner confirms this by saying in an article in Scribner's that "I have little recollection of hearing much about Jesus until I reached the higher grades of grammar school." He adds in the same connection that Rabbi William S. Friedman, of the fashionable synagogue in Denver, spoke often of Jesus—but that the Orthodox brethren did not like it. No one of the Jewish faith had ever spoken publically that way in Denver before. He says, again, that the traditional attitude of Judaism is one of silence about Jesus; and tells an interesting story out of his childhood experiences in the matter. One day, he relates, "an old gentleman with a whitish beard gave me a sound boxing on the ears for expressing my approval of a rabbi who dared to discuss Jesus in the synagogue."

1. Goldstein, JJT, Chapters I, II.
3. Trattner, Art.: Scribners, 87:386.
Doctor Isador Singer, in writing of the attitude of the Jews toward Jesus, tells us that when he was a boy in Moravia (c. 1870) to have heard the name of Jesus uttered from the synagogue pulpit a Jew "would immediately have left the building in indignation, and the rabbi would have been summarily dismissed."

Klausner, in his *Jesus of Nazareth*, discusses the early and persistent legend that Jesus was born of an illicit union between his mother and a Roman soldier, Pandera, or Pantera; but declares it to be unfounded and untrue. Rabbi Goldstein in his *Jesus in the Jewish Tradition* gives a full discussion of the subject. In at least one passage in Hebrew writing (the Tosefta), he declares, Jesus is referred to as "Yeshua ben Pantera", or "Pandera." He says, also, that Origen (c. 248 C. E.) quotes the title from Celsus, who in turn claimed to have gotten it from a Jew; but concludes with Origen that the name Pantera referred to a panther, and was an ancestral name of Joseph, Jesus' father. This conclusion would tend to disprove the legend of Jesus' illegitimate birth, which if it were true, would discount Jesus in Jewish estimation.

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Gerald Friedlander in his book, *The Jewish Sources of the Sermon on the Mount*, quoted by Walker, gives the common Orthodox opinion of Jesus, when expressed at all, saying,

Jesus was no prophet, but rather an apocalyptic dreamer and teacher who in the course of time applied his own teaching to himself and believed himself to be the Messiah... To the Jew he is disqualified as a prophet since he sought to alter the Mosaic Law. ... and took on himself the authority to forgive sins.¹

It is interesting to note, however, the Orthodox Klausner expressing his attitude to Jesus in a far different tone, as he declares that "If Jesus had not been a remarkable personality, who did remarkable deeds and spoke remarkable words, he would have faded from the memory of his disciples."²

In another connection, the same author writes almost as glowingly of Jesus as any liberal has done. He declares that "Jesus is for the Jewish nation a great teacher of morality and an artist in parable. He is the moralist for whom in the religious life morality counts as everything."³ With his tenderness, gentleness, humility, and kindliness of heart in contrast to a most violent passion concerning his own mission, Klausner sees Jesus in character akin to the Prophets. He further says that because of Jesus' raising the lighted torch of the Law of Israel to the Gentiles, "No Jew can, therefore, overlook the value of Jesus and his teaching from the point of view of universal history."⁴

1. Walker, JVJ, 36.  
5. Klausner, JN, 413.
The references stated above give a quite accurate picture of the Orthodox Jewish attitude toward Jesus. As stated above, the Orthodox school generally ignores the subject entirely today as they have continued to do in the past. Rabbi Joseph Klein confirmed this opinion in the progress of an interview which the writer held with him in December, 1950. Any information relative to the Orthodox position, he said, will have to be gained from occasional indirect reference, or may be surmised from their silence on the matter. In other words, the Orthodox Jew makes very few direct statements that would recognize the existence of Jesus as a problem in the world of thought or religion. We may sum up the matter by saying that the attitude of the Orthodox Jew toward Jesus has been, and still is, one of ignoring him almost completely, if not one of actual antagonism and open animosity. This characterization does not, of course, include such rare individuals as Klausner, who approaches the question very openly and in a most fair manner; as Paul Goodman, who speaks of the charm of Jesus' personality; and Martin Buber, who calls Jesus the "central Jew."  

II. THE REFORM EXPRESSION

When we move from the realm of Orthodoxy into that of Reform, we traverse, as it were, the extremes. The Reform Jew opens his mind to modern science and modern thought in

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2. Jocz, JPJC, 117.
a way that the Orthodox has refused to do. In so doing, he
gives free and unrestrained consideration to Christianity
and its founder, as says Abram Sachar in his book, *A History
of the Jews*. As was noticed previously, some individuals of
the Reform group go so far in eulogizing Jesus, and even
Christianity, that others of their group, more temperate in
their attitude to Jesus, repudiate them as speaking for Reform
Judaism.

We shall hear from as many representative writers as
possible, allowing them to express themselves in their own
words. While in other connections these same men may offer
words of caution concerning relations with organized Christianity,
it is to be noted that all speak in nearly the same vein about
the person of Jesus.

Let Ernest R. Trattner lead off with his almost eulogistic
words in his book, *As A Jew Sees Jesus*, saying,

There was something in the character of the man that
was overwhelming—a flood of measureless and resistless
attractiveness. Unschooled folk from the common walks
of life were drawn to him in bonds of personal attach­
ment.2

"To me", he adds, "because I am a Jew—this is an amazing thing,
for nothing quite like it has ever happened on so large a scale
in the annals of man."3 He further speaks of Jesus as "the
most influential Jew the world has ever seen."4 Speaking of

1. Sachar, HJ, 125.
2. Trattner, AJSJ, ix.
3. Trattner, AJSJ, x.
4. Trattner, AJSJ, 1.
his unique personality, Trattner says that without Jesus there would have been no Christianity: "Out of his life there issued a world religion"—he did not found one purposely. In a little different connection, speaking of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, he declares that

There stands out of the Sermon the personality of a man that is altogether unique. Any attempt to minimize his towering faith seems to be born of an incapacity to realize that here was, in the fullest sense, a creative soul.² Finally, the same writer quotes the late Rabbi Emil G. Hirsch as saying in a lecture in Chicago in 1893, that "Jesus was a noble character, that in him quivered the fullest measure of spirituality."³

What has been said above becomes even more interesting to us when we realize that Rabbi Trattner is considered one of the more truly representative leaders of Reform Judaism. He is not looked upon as belonging to the overly-liberal fringe, as is Asch. The same comment may be made concerning the next writer to be quoted, H. G. Enelow, who is always listed at the top of the roster of the leading Reform Jews.

In spite of our usual belief that Jewish interest in Jesus is a late development, and certainly it has flowered since the turn of the present century, Enelow tells us that the interest of Jews in Jesus was never dead; it may have

1. Trattner, AJSJ, 94.
2. Trattner, AJSJ, 94.
3. Trattner, AJSJ, 175.
been temporarily misdirected or suppressed by persecution. He declares that the "modern Jew realizes the ethical power and spiritual beauty of Jesus. In this regard Jesus takes his place among the noble teachers of morality and the heroes of faith Israel has produced." He adds these fine words: "Nor can the modern Jew fail to glory in what Jesus has done for the growth of the ethical and spiritual life of humanity." He further asks,

Who can compute all that Jesus has meant to humanity? The love he has inspired, the solace he has given, the good he has engendered, the hope and joy he has kindled—all that is unequaled in human history. Among the great and good that the human race has produced, none has even approached Jesus in universality of appeal and sway. He has become the most fascinating figure in history. In him is combined what is best and most mysterious and most enchanting in Israel—the eternal people whose child he was. The Jew cannot help glorying in what Jesus thus has meant to the world.

Again, Enelow declares that Jesus has become the most popular, most studied, most influential figure in the religious history of mankind; and adds, "Whether we like it or no, Jesus has fascinated mankind."

Speaking of the greatness of Jesus, Enelow says,

He was a man of vision, a revealer, a spiritual perceiver and a dreamer, a man who sought to point out the eternal things of life—the things that mean most in the universe. More and more he realized the insignificance of the outward and the temporary, and

2. Enelow, JVJ, 176.  5. Enelow, JVJ, 4.
3. Enelow, JVJ, 179.
the supremacy of the spiritual. And that conviction and realization he expressed through his life and death. That is what made him the fascinating figure he has formed in human history.

And again he adds,

The importance of Jesus lay in that he gave another expression and was another incarnation of that great principle which the Jewish soul at its best has continually impressed upon the world.

The consistent praise which these two men give Jesus is not the faint kind that damns; it is a genuine appreciation of his personality and contribution to the religious and moral world. It will be noted, however, that no reference is made by either to any theological or Messianic claims made by or for Jesus. What we have is an evaluation of Jesus merely as a fellow Jew.

Another leading voice of Reform Judaism is that of Professor Max Schoen who declares in the foreword to his recent book, The Man Jesus Was, that "The writing of this book was prompted by reverence for the man Jesus and the conviction that in his spirit and teachings lies the only remedy for the numerous afflictions of the present social order." He adds that "Jesus comes as the inevitable culmination of that development of the religion of Israel. There had to be a Jesus."

When Professor Schoen says that it is in his spirit and teachings that the remedy for the world's afflictions lies,

1. Enelow, JVJ, 42.
2. Enelow, JVJ, 56.
4. Schoen, MJE, 10.
he is not thinking, of course, of organized Christianity, but of the mind and heart of the great Nazarene. We shall notice time after time how the Reform Jew distinguishes between Jesus and Christianity.

Emil Ludwig, also in the preface to his book, *The Son of Man*, gives the reason for the writing of his book as, "My aim [in writing the book] is to convince those who regard the personality of Jesus as artificially constructed, that he is a real and intensely human figure." ¹ A little further on he adds, "A prophet was to be portrayed, a man greater than all his contemporaries, and nevertheless unable to cope with the world into which he had been born." ² The strength of Jesus, for Ludwig, however, lay not in his great teachings and intellect, but in the very soul of the man. He declares that "The key to his nature is found, not in his genius, but in his human heart." ³

Rabbi Morris Goldstein of Congregation Sherith Israel of San Francisco, professor in the Pacific School of Religion, and author of the book, *Jesus in the Jewish Tradition*, gave his evaluation of Jesus to the investigator in a letter dated December 28, 1950, as "a great teacher and an inspiring example for godly living." No finer tribute to Jesus could have been given than this brief statement by so eminent a Jewish writer and scholar.

¹ Ludwig, SM, xiv.
² Ludwig, SM, xiv-xv.
³ Ludwig, SM, xv.
Finally, we come to the statements of two ultra-liberal Jewish writers—Montefiore and Sholem Asch. Danby quotes Montefiore as saying, in 1894, that Jesus was

The most important Jew who ever lived, one who exercised a greater influence upon mankind and civilization than any other person, whether within the Jewish race or without it. . . . A Jew whose life and character have been regarded by almost all the best and wisest people who have heard or read of his actions and his words, as the greatest exemplar of every age.¹

It was this and other statements of Montefiore which promoted Ahad Ha-Am to declare that Montefiore and other like him show not merely an innocent Jewish appreciation of Jesus, but are ceasing to be Jewish and are already half assimilated to Christianity.² The critic speaks, of course, not from the Reform point of view, but from that of a conservative Conservative!

Sholem Asch refers to Jesus as "this incomprehensible personality, which has become for the entire Christian world the symbol of the coming of the Messiah."³ He continues by declaring that "his utterances rank with those of the Psalmist and the Prophets as the highest achievement of the Jewish genius."⁴ Further he adds that "Jesus of Nazareth was not merely a rabbi of his time; had he been he would have been

¹. Danby, JC, 79.
². Danby, JC, 82.
³. Asch WIE, 104.
⁴. Asch WIE, 106.
nothing more." And, finally, he declares that "He was no longer a rebel against a petrified law in the name of a higher law; he was a rebuilding of the law." ¹

Doctor Joseph Silverman, in an essay entitled, The Jewish Conception of Jesus, read before the Free Religious Association of America, at Boston, Massachusetts, May 31, 1901, calls Jesus the second Moses. He adds, "taking him all in all, he must have been a man of great religious fervor, of strong independent character, of sterling purity of mind and heart." Finally, he concludes by declaring that the Jews never hated or maltreated Jesus, but that "they could only have admired and loved a man so gentle, so pure-minded, so self-sacrificing, so humble. He was as meek as Moses." ²

Abram Sachar expresses one of the truly great statements concerning the importance of Jesus in his History of the Jews, saying that "His /Jesus'/ career was destined to change the history of the world more profoundly than that of any other single individual who ever lived." ³ Of course, these words could be elicited from any honest person, regardless of his personal attitude toward Jesus, but from the pen of Sachar they are words of high appreciation.

As seen from the above statements and quotations, the almost unanimous Reform opinion of Jesus is one of highest

Esteem. This does not, as mentioned previously, include any estimate of Jesus from a theological viewpoint. Whatever has been given here bears only upon a consideration of Jesus as a man and religious genius who lived in Galilee—not as the Christ as the later Church portrayed him.

III. THE CONSERVATIVE OPINION

While in many respects the Conservative school of Judaism is considerably less liberal than is the Reform branch, yet in its opinion of Jesus as expressed by one of its leading thinkers, Rabbi Louis Finkelstein, there is no perceptible difference. He declares that:

It is, therefore, a customary observance with me that the man of Nazareth wrought a double kindness to the world: On the one hand he supported the Torah of Moses... On the other hand... he brought much good to the Gentiles... for he forbade idol-worship and removed the image-deities, and he held the people responsible for the seven commandments... He sought to perfect them with ethical qualities that are much harder even than those of the Law of Moses. 1

The Reconstruction Movement of Mordecai Kaplan is so recent in its inception that no one following its trends has spoken concerning Jesus, therefore we can make no representation as to the opinion or attitude which it may develop.

IV. CONCLUSION

The true Orthodox Jew avoids all mention or consideration of Jesus—but his reticence is due to the long centuries of

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1. Finkelstein, RD, 32, 33.
persecution which the Christian Church has waged against Jewry. In America, particularly, and in some parts of Western Europe, where favorable conditions have existed for some generations, Reform is replacing Orthodoxy. The Reform Jew has never known, or has forgotten the ghetto and Christian cruelties. It is clearly seen that, as mentioned above by Enelow, persecution has been the chief, if not the only reason why Orthodox Jews have been silent about Jesus; and why Reform Jews are so outspoken in their recognition and praise of Jesus. The liberal Jewish opinion of the latter is universally favorable; and as Orthodoxy yields more and more to the benign influence of American democracy, its adherents take a growing and not unfriendly cognizance of Jesus as a Jew. The future, if it remains as favorable to the Jew as it is today, will likely see a disappearance of the Orthodox reticence in the presence of a discussion of the Nazarene.

1. Enelow, JVJ, 167, 168.
CHAPTER IV

THE JEWISHNESS OF JESUS

It may be noted that those Jews who have spoken or written of Jesus in terms of appreciation have done so because they saw him to have been a faithful representative of Judaism. This makes clearer the reason for the friendly expressions which we continue to hear concerning Jesus by modern Jewish leaders and writers.

Conversely, when we find an Orthodox expression deprecating and maligning Jesus, it is likely because that Jew sees not the Jewish Jesus, but the un-Jewish Christ of the Church, and views him as being an enemy to all that Judaism has always held dear. It was such a Jew, Kaminka (discussed earlier in this paper), who protested against exalting 'that man' on high, and against the respect paid to him as a lofty ethical personality 'truly fitted for the propounding of a new Torah', and to be a 'light to the Gentiles'—which Klausner had done, he declared, in his Jesus of Nazareth. The reason for this scathing denunciation of Klausner and the Jesus he wrote about was, as we noted above, that he saw Jesus as one who was not Jewish, but who was a 'mocker of the wise', 'a seducer and beguiler', and a hater of the people of Israel, and one who sought the nation's destruction.¹

¹. Danby, JC, 103.
If the relationship of Jesus to the religion of his nation is so important in a Jewish evaluation of his person and his teachings, it is well for us to examine just what men have said about that relationship. Except for Klausner and a few others of his broad sympathies, the Orthodox Jew follows in Kaminka's train, and repudiates Jesus as having been a loyal and devout adherent and teacher of Judaism. With great interest, however, we discover that almost to a man Reform Jews see Jesus as being entirely Jewish, and true to the Torah. Sometimes he is so closely identified with his milieu that his uniqueness and originality as a teacher are lost sight of.

One even so friendly to the Christian faith as is Montefiore is quoted by Danby as saying that "To each individual striking utterance of Jesus it is likely enough that a good parallel can be found in the Rabbinic literature." 1 The same man (Montefiore) in an article in the Hibbert Journal declares that Jesus had little original to say to the Jews, and that they could have gotten along without him. 2

Danby, again, carries us back to 1838, in his book, The Jew and Christianity, and lets us hear Joseph Salvador say in Paris that Jesus laid down no original precepts; that all he taught is to be found in the Old Testament; and that the Sermon on the Mount is taken from Ecclesiasticus. In the same connection Danby points to Abraham Geiger in Germany, who said in

1. Danby, JC, 80.
1864 that Jesus had no original ideas; that he taught nothing contrary to the Pharisees.  

The weightier evidence, however, is on the more positive side. Asch declares that Jesus gained his following, not through any other thing than "the claim that he holds in his hand the authority of the Messiah, given to him by his father in heaven." 2 (The idea of the Messiah is definitely Jewish). Danby brings us another quotation, this time from Joseph Jacobs, an English Orthodox Jew, as saying that Jesus was the most Jewish of all Jews. 3 Jacobs was one of the few Orthodox Jews who, as early as 1895, had recognized the fundamental Jewish character of Jesus, and expressed it, as quoted here by Danby, in his book, As Others Saw Him.

The Orthodox Klausner, in his liberal manner, was very out-spoken in his portrayal of Jesus as being truly Jewish. He declared that "Jesus remained steadfast to the old Torah: to his dying day he continued to observe the ceremonial laws like a true Pharisaic Jew;" 4 and he reiterates further on that "Jesus was a Jew and a Jew he remained till his last breath." 5

In combating the idea that Jesus was the son of a Roman Soldier who had illicit relations with Mary, a Jewish woman, Klausner declares that

1. Danby, JC, 70-72.  
2. Asch, WIB, 112.  
3. Danby, JC, 76.  
5. Klausner, JN, 368.
There is not the slightest hint in the Gospels that Gentile blood flowed in Jesus' veins... It is, therefore, manifest that Jesus was a true Jew of Jewish family... There could be no stronger proof of his Jewishness than his essentially Jewish character and manner of life.1

Finally, Julius Wellhausen, in his Einleitung in die drei ersten Evangelien, is quoted by Klausner as saying that

Jesus was not a Christian; he was a Jew. He did not preach a new faith, but taught men to do the will of God; and in his opinion, as also in that of the Jews, the will of God was to be found in the Law of Moses and in the other books of Scripture.2

In the same tone, Sachar declared that "The martyred prophet lived and died a Jew. At no time during his ministry... had he any intention of separating himself from his people."3 Solomon Zeitlin's word is the same, also, as he declares in his Who Crucified Jesus? that "Jesus was born a Jew and died a Jew. Throughout his entire ministry he preached his doctrines and ideas to no people other than his own, the Jewish."4

In an article in North American Review in 1910, Singer avows that today one often hears synagogue sermons eulogizing Jesus; and that

Nobody except a few Pharisaic followers of the neo-Romantic school of Judaism, thinks in earnest of protesting against claiming, with some dogmatic reservations, of course, Jeshua ben Joseph as one of the noblest twigs of the old branch of Judah.5

3. Sachar, HJ, 133.
In the article Singer quotes Rabbi Kohler as saying that Jesus "was one of the best and truest sons of the Synagogue." And again, he quotes Doctor Morris Jastrow as declaring that "From the historical point of view, Jesus is to be regarded as a direct successor of the Hebrew Prophets."

Still quoting from Singer's article, Doctor Max Nordau, a French Jew, goes even farther in describing the Jewishness of Jesus in most enthusiastic terms, saying that

Jesus is soul of our soul, as he is flesh of our flesh. Who, then, would think of excluding him from the people of Israel?... Putting aside the Messianic mission, this man is ours. He honors our race, and we claim him as we claim the Gospels—flowers of Jewish literature, and only Jewish.

Another Frenchman, Doctor Theoldore Reinach, also quoted in the same article, writes in like terms of Jesus, saying that

Although we know very little with certainty concerning the life and teaching of Christ, we know enough of him to believe that, in morals as well as in theology, he was the heir and continuator of the old prophets of Israel. There is no necessary gap between Israel and Jesus.

Finally, Harris Weinstock, an educated liberal Jewish layman, is quoted by Singer as saying in his book, Jesus the Jew, that

The progressive Jew looks upon the Nazarene as one of Israel's great teachers, who had a potent influence on civilization, whose words and deeds have left an undying imprint upon the human mind... No Jewish education can be complete that does not embody within it a comprehensive knowledge of Jesus the Jew, His life, His teachings and the causes which led to his death.

Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, in an article entitled, "The Life and Teachings of Jesus the Jew", declared that Jesus was not only a Jew, but he was the Jew—the Jew of Jews. He again refers to Jesus as the "elder brother" of the Jews, and states that "We accept Jesus for what he was, not for that which Christianity has mistakenly sought to make him—a Jewish teacher, a prophet in Israel." The author, in the same article, adds a significant comment, saying that "Neither Christian protest nor Jewish lamentation can annul the fact that Jesus was a Jew."

There has, indeed, been both protest and lamentation!

Ernest Trattner affirms that Jesus is "the most influential Jew the world has ever seen"; while Sholem Asch declares that "Everything that afterwards became the 'Sinai' of the Christians was Jewish in character, in significance, and in form."

In a pamphlet, entitled Judaism and Unitarianism, one in the "Popular Studies in Judaism" series, Rabbi Abraham Feldman says of Jesus' Jewish background that "What he taught we learned where he learned it, and long before he did," and adds that Judaism does not see in Jesus an unusual or extraordinary being. Whatever Jesus gave to the world he gave of that which is 'the heritage of the Congregation of Jacob'. He has given nothing that he did not find in the storehouses of Israel, and therefore, whatever the world may think of him, we [italics in the original] see in him just one of the great galaxy of loyal sons of Israel which has enriched mankind.

4. Trattner, AJJSJ, 1.
5. Asch, WIB, 121.
In fact, so Jewish was Jesus, that Feldman can say: "Stripped of the pagan elements that were added later, the human Jesus spoke as he lived, that is, as a Jew. We feel that we speak through him." While Feldman holds Jesus in high esteem, he can yet say that "so far as Israel is concerned, and so far as the religion of Israel is concerned, these are complete without Jesus."  

Walker, in his book, *Jewish Views of Jesus*, quotes Paul Goodman, an Orthodox Jew, as saying that Christian morality is Jewish, and was proclaimed by the Prophets much earlier than Jesus. "With all the unstinted admiration and high respect we ought justly to entertain for the ethics of Christ," he avers, "it is to the Jews that it owes its existence and moral force." Goodman further states that Jesus was a Jew who felt it laid on him to proclaim such a new era to be at hand as the ancient Hebrew Prophets had foretold. Continuing, he says that

The charm of his personality has sent its rays all over the world, and infused countless hearts with the spirit and love and self-sacrifice... yet the roots of the life and thought lie entirely in Jewish soil.

Jesus, he warns, added no important original element to the religious and moral assets of the Jews.

1. Feldman, JU, 6, 7.
2. Feldman, JU, 8.
In an attempt to prove the Jewishness of Jesus, Enelow sets forth those characteristics which, taken together, demonstrate conclusively that he was a Jew of the truest sort. In the enumeration he says that Jesus was born a Jew, and was always conscious of his Jewish descent. He regarded himself as sent to teach and help his own people, recognizing the spiritual distinction of the Jewish people. He loved them, was loyal to them in every way, even though, in the vein of the true prophets, he criticised them for their spiritual slowness and blindness. He was typical of the great Jewish teachers: teaching love, justice, goodness, purity, holiness. Jesus, as were the Prophets before him, was ready to perish for his ideals, teachings, and beliefs. He quoted from the Jewish scriptures, particularly in the great crises of his life; and expressed a gentle feeling for Jerusalem. Jesus did what the Prophets had done: he gave a fresh interpretation of the laws governing the spiritual life, a fresh message concerning the meaning and the purpose of religion; a new illumination of the sense and the objective of the old law and of the old prophetic utterances. Here lay his genius and originality. He was entirely Jewish!

CONCLUSION

Beyond the few who cling to the traditional aversion to Jesus, and therefore refuse to see anything in him that relates

1. Enelow, JVJ, 38.
2. Enelow, JVJ, 60.
4. Enelow, JVJ, 18.
him to the stream of Judaism, the general opinion of Jewish thinkers is that Jesus was not only Jewish in life and teachings, but so Jewish that nothing unique or unusual appeared in him.

So far as the problem of our consideration is concerned—which is the possibility of ultimate fusion of the two faiths—this opinion works two ways. On the one hand, the fact that Jesus is so intimately a part of the Jewish tradition causes the continual rejection of him to seem unreasoning and illogical—a matter of sheer stubbornness. On the other hand, since Jesus is so Jewish, and not at all unique in what he was and offered, the common attitude is one of questioning the value of formally accepting Jesus as Christianity presents him. To accept him is to accept Christianity; and that in turn, even today, means breaking with the age-old customs and traditions of one's fathers—the Jewish people—all for nothing. The Jews already possess in their scriptures and writings all that Jesus taught; and what is not Jewish about him is not wanted. Under the circumstances, the only apparent hope for organic union is for Christianity to surrender all the non-Jewish, and therefore, non-essential accretions added to the person and work of Jesus by the later Church, rather than asking Judaism to surrender any of its traditions.
CHAPTER V

THE JEWISH EVALUATION OF JESUS AS A TEACHER

The investigation in the above chapter reveals to us the opinion which the Jew holds concerning Jesus, purely as a historical character. It must be borne in mind, however, that the meaning of Jesus for the Jew does not lie in his being a divine personage or the Messiah, as it does for most Christians; but it lies in him as being a teacher. This evaluation is based, necessarily, upon his teachings as recorded in the New Testament. Actually, therefore, when a Jew expresses an opinion of Jesus, he is thinking of the moral and spiritual pronouncements made by him to his disciples and others about him. In order for us to grasp the full significance of Jewish opinion of Jesus, then, we need to hear what Jews say about his teachings. That is the purpose of this present chapter.

When we seek the Orthodox Jewish evaluation of the teachings of Jesus, we discover, largely, the same result as we did when we sought an opinion concerning his person—silence. By many individuals the matter is not mentioned pro or con, much less discussed with the end in view of expressing an opinion. Of this extreme group the nearest representative opinion is perhaps that expressed by Kaminka in regard to Klausner's book, Jesus of Nazareth. As we pointed out before, Kaminka, with his entirely antagonistic attitude, did not regard Jesus as a
valid Jewish teacher, but as an upstart, a malevolent beguiler away from the truth and from obedience to the Torah.\(^1\) It is not to be expected that we should find an interest among these Jews in discussing the teachings of such a character. It must be emphasized that we must take this, however, as being representative of only the most sternly and most traditionally Orthodox.

It is only fair and desirable that we hear from an Orthodox Jew of the more liberal type—Klausner. In this writer we have two distinct, even opposing evaluations given. In the first place, he declares that "In his ethical code there is a sublimity, a distinctiveness and originality in form unparalleled in any other Hebrew ethical code," and opines that

If ever the day should come and this ethical code be stripped of its wrappings of miracles and mysticism, the Book of the Ethics of Jesus will be one of the choicest treasures in the literature of Israel for all time.\(^2\)

Klausner adds that "Jesus is, for the Jewish nation, a great teacher of morality, and an artist in parable."\(^3\) These words are certainly in great contrast to those of Kaminka.

On the other hand, however, in words almost in the vein of those uttered by Kaminka, Klausner declares that he sees in Jesus an impracticability that would enervate and destroy Judaism. His real criticism is that Jesus' teachings are too other-worldly, whereas the Jews were intensely interested in

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1. Danby, JC, 103.
this present world of today. His teachings were completely detached from this world and its problems; and it was this very detachment that Klausner sees as Jesus' downfall. While the "main strength of Jesus lay in his ethical teaching," he declares, "he both annulled Judaism as the Life force of the Jewish nation, and also the nation itself as a nation." He adds that "Both the instinct for national self-preservation and the cleaving to the great humanitarian ideal, emphatically demanded that Judaism reject this ethical teaching, severed as it became from the national life." His interest in the world to come seemed to cause Jesus to adopt a negative attitude to this world, especially to the political ideals of his own nation, avers Klausner. Though he thinks that Jesus' teachings surpassed even those of Hillel in ethical ideals, and that Jesus concerned himself more with ethical teaching than did the great Hillel, yet "his teaching has not proved possible in practice." In fact, Klausner declares Jesus' teachings to be so extreme that only those interested wholly in religion can be interested in them, "while the rest of mankind pursue a manner of life that is wholly secular or even pagan." Moreover, Klausner felt that the teachings of Jesus contained a kernal of opposition to

1. Klausner, JN, 393.
2. Klausner, JN, 381.
5. Klausner, JN, 393.
Judaism, itself; and insisted that had it not done so, "Paul could never in the name of Jesus have set aside the ceremonial laws, and broken through the barriers of national Judaism." 1

Klausner's criticism demands a little inspection, itself. Apparently, he conceived of the teachings of Jesus as being a body of beautiful moral and spiritual ideals, but as being so impractical that it would have meant the end of Judaism to have adopted them for the nation. In other words, love and self-remanciation are opposed to nationalism—which exists in a world of people and nations which are not idealists. It would seem that he had forgotten, for the time, the fate, in 70 A. D., of that nation so soon after it rejected the "impractical" teachings of Jesus, and chose nationalism as its religion. Had the Jewish leaders been content that their's should be a nation of prayer and good-will, as the teachings of Jesus would have led them, and have given up the attempt at regaining national sovereignty and political greatness, the history of the Jews might have been far different from what it was through the last two millenia. If Klausner saw Jesus' teachings to be so impractical that their adoption would have meant the end of Judaism, he evidently closed his eyes to the fact that their rejection did not save the nation from almost complete eclipse within perhaps forty years. Let us see what other Jews have to say about those teachings, however.

Sholem Asch declares, apart from any reference to the political situation, that "the vast majority of them \( \text{The Jews in America} \) recognize the authenticity of the authority of \( \text{Jesus} \) as coming from God. Asch accords him high rank as a Jewish teacher, averring that his teachings are incomplete accord with the men of learning of his time, and adds that "His utterances rank with those of the Psalmist and the prophets as the highest achievement of the Jewish genius."  

Enelow does not go quite as far as does Asch in praising the teachings of Jesus, but neither does he adversely criticize them. He sees Jesus's teachings as entirely harmless—the work of a mystic, and declares:

Arose Jesus with his Gospel of gentleness, of love, of a dreamy detachment from the material world, with his affirmation of the supremacy of spiritual institutions, discernments, and devotions.  

It is difficult, however, not to recognize that Enelow sees the same fault in Jesus that Klausner saw—that of an extreme other-worldliness; although he echoes no criticism of it. He says that Jesus

Stood for prophetic religion as against mechanical religion, for a spiritual and not a material faith; he stood for Jewish mysticism rather than for Jewish politics.  

Then he adds these words:

2. Asch, WLB, 106.  
4. Enelow, JVJ, 92.
No student of the words of Jesus can possibly hold him responsible for such application or construction of his utterances as led to the excision of his name from Jewish history. ¹

He declares that Jesus

Did what the prophets had done: he gave a fresh interpretation of the laws governing the spiritual life, a fresh message concerning the meaning and the purpose of religion, a new illumination of the sense and the objective of the old law and of the old prophetic utterances.²

In the same vein, still recognizing the pure spirituality of his teachings, Kohler is quoted by Singer as declaring that,

Jesus, the living man, the teacher and practiser of the tenderest love for God and man, the paragon of piety, humility and self-surrender, whose very failings were born of overflowing goodness and sympathy with the afflicted, the Jews had no cause to reject.³

He thought Jesus to be more than an ordinary teacher and healer of men: that he went to the very core of religion and laid bare the depths of the human soul.

From the same source, Jastrow is quoted by Singer as averring that

From the historical point of view, Jesus is to be regarded as a direct successor of the Hebrew prophets. His teachings are synonymous with the highest spiritual aspirations of the human race.⁵

And further, Singer quotes Weinstock as saying that,

The progressive Jew looks upon the Nazarene as one of Israel's great teachers, who had a potent influence on civilization, whose words and deeds have left an undying imprint upon the human mind.⁶

¹. Enelow, JVJ, 165.
². Enelow, JVJ, 17.
Finally, Graetz, in his *Popular History of the Jews*, declares that what Jesus lacked in knowledge was compensated for by his greatness of soul. "He must have been distinguished by a profound earnestness and by the sanctity of his life," is his word for it.

**CONCLUSION**

Apparently, as we noted from Asch's statement, most Jews hold the teachings of Jesus in high regard so far as their beauty, their sincerity, and their spirituality are concerned. However, not only Klausner, but all the Jews who have commented on the teachings feel that they are too ethereal and too negative of life to be acceptable and applicable to the Jewish struggle for existence. While, as we have been informed previously, Judaism contains in its scriptures and writings all that Jesus taught, he carried the matter to an impractical extreme. Such criticism, of course, is not limited to Jewish spokesmen. Many Christians have long felt and said essentially the same thing. Some have held Jesus' teachings to be based on an "interim ethic"—meant for a limited few (his followers) and only for that preparation period between his death and the final consummation of all things. Others, without so much rationalization, merely ignore the actual application of the ethics. On the one hand, then, the attitude to Jesus' teachings is growing to become an almost mutual one between liberal Jews and liberal Christians. At first glimpse, it would appear that at least one barrier to union is being circumvented, if not eliminated. However, we must see, on the

other hand, a persistent and serious difference. For the Christian it is doctrinely necessary for him to the teachings, nominally, along with the divine person of the Christ. If the two are inextricably bound up together, the Jew is at once excluded. To the latter, Jesus and his teachings are both merely matters of admiration. For the Jew to make any overt acceptance of the teachings of Jesus, then, awaits the willingness of the Christian Church to dissociate the ethic of Jesus from all doctrinal associations.
CHAPTER VI

DIFFERENTIATION OF JESUS FROM CHRISTIANITY IN JEWISH OPINION

Christianity, with its doctrines built around the Christ-figure, is both unintelligible and revolting to the Jewish mind. If this were all that the Church could offer the Jewish world, all hopes of eventual unity or even of a consideration of Jesus would be blighted ere they blossomed. The saving element, however, is that most modern Jews see a distinct difference between the man Jesus (the Jesus of History) and the Christ of Christianity.

As we saw before, the Jesus of History is a Jewish figure—one that can be understood and appreciated. While some Orthodox Jews, so Jocz tells us, hold that Jesus and Christianity are so closely related that to accept one is to accept the other, the weight of evidence is on the side of those who see Jesus as being distinct from Christianity. Jocz assures us that the "Jewish effort is directed to reclaiming Jesus, the Jew, from the Gentile Church, and to reinstating him to a place of honor in Jewish history;" but this fact does not signify any tendency to formal acceptance of Jesus in the Christian manner; he warns us, for "It must . . . be remembered that Jewish interest in Jesus has little spiritual and no religious significance. The whole emphasis

1. Jocz, JPJC, 8.
is upon the historical Jesus," he avers. He, then, quotes Gosta Lindeskog as declaring that "The Christ of the Church, who owes his existence to Greek philosophy and Jewish apocalyptic speculations, has nothing in common with the great Nazarene." 2

Abram Simon tells us that "What certain Jewish leaders objected to at that time, and what they later on refused to accept, was the coalescence of Jesus, the man, with Christ, the Divine Atonement." 3

Klausner, too, saw the distinction—which many other Orthodox Jews failed to see—and believed it to be in the mind of Jesus, also. He declared that

So far was Jesus from teaching the dogma which later arose—that he was the Son of God and one of the three persons in the Godhead—that when someone hailed him as 'Good Master', Jesus replied, "Why callest thou me good? There is none good save one: God." 4

This statement, purported to be authentic, is doubly significant since it is found in all three of the Synoptic gospels. While the wording is different in Matthew, Mark and Luke give it as Klausner quotes it; and Major, in The Mission and Message of Jesus, holds that Mark's is the original form, and that it is authentic. Klausner says again that it is most obvious that Jesus never regarded himself as God, nor did he regard himself

2. Jocz, JPJC, 7, 8. 5. Major, MMJ, 130.
as Son of God in the later Trinitarian sense. He points out that Judaism does not associate the Messiah with the Godhead, nor attribute to the Messiah a deciding role in the day of redemption: Judaism knows nothing of redemption through an intermediary or intercessor between God and man. The Jews, as a whole, could not, therefore, accept Jesus; howbeit, Jesus himself being as he was a Jew, did not regard himself as God nor think of himself as a sacrificial ransom. ¹

In this statement Klausner was, without doubt, right. The whole Christology of the Church would have been repugnant to a good Jew—which Jesus must have been.

Trattner, likewise, after saying that Jesus was the most influential Jew the world has ever seen, proceeds to declare that:

The supernatural Jesus of the Gospels is a dated figure. He is the product of the first century A. D., when the pagan world believed in savior gods, virgin births, incarnations, healing miracles and atoning effects of sacrificial blood. Marvels are told of him in the language of that period. ²

Then he adds that:

The divinity of Jesus—by which is meant his deityship—will always strike the Jew as illogical. It was Heinrich Heine, I believe, who said that it would be forever impossible for Israel to embrace Christianity, if for no other reason than the utter impossibility of getting one Jew to believe that another Jew was divine. ³

Then Trattner adds this significant statement:

I have long been convinced that Jews of the twentieth century possess an admiration for the personality of Jesus which is utterly unrelated to the dogma of Christ as expressed in the ponderous theologies of the historical churches of Christendom. ⁴

This declaration is confirmed by Voorsanger, who says:

2. Trattner, AJSJ, 94.  
3. Trattner, AJSJ, 156.  
4. Trattner, AJSJ, 179.  
5. Trattner, AJSJ, 386.
that, shorn of all theological attributes, "The majestic character and figure of the Nazarene are intelligible enough to a Hebrew." Feldman, too, says, as noted above, that "Stripped of the pagan elements that were added later, the human Jesus spoke as he lived, that is, as a Jew." Enelow adds his word in this connection, saying that "Jesus may have been a great teacher, but he was not the Messiah, nor did he bring about the happy state his people expected." He continues by saying that the Jews do not find it possible to accept him as the Messiah, for the ideas associated with the Messiah were not fulfilled by Jesus, nor have they been as yet; but that the modern Jew realizes the "ethical power and spiritual beauty" of Jesus he is sure, and that he is given his place "among the noble teachers of morality and heroes of faith Israel has produced." As stated previously, he declares that the modern Jew cannot fail to "glory in what Jesus has done for the growth of the ethical and spiritual life of humanity."

Rabbi Wise thinks that the Christian doctrines built around Jesus could have resulted only from ignoring of some of Jesus' own specific teachings, and significantly states that

We may reclaim Jesus as our own and yet reject the dogmatic teachings of Christianity originate by Paul and later developed and elaborated into the Christian

3. Enelow, FI, 88, 89.
4. Enelow, JVJ, 172.
5. Enelow, JVJ, 176.
6. Enelow, JVJ, 179.
scheme, through the abatement of certain teachings of Jesus.  

Danby tells us that Heinrich Graetz, in 1848, in writing his History of the Jews, had high regard for Jesus, but painted a black picture of Christianity from Paul on.

The statement of Ludwig in the preface to his book, Son of Man, fits into this group of pronouncements very significantly, also. He declares that his purpose in writing is to deal only with "Jesus", and that he has not a word to say about "Christ."

"The author," he says, "does not meddle with theology; that arose later, and he does not pretend to understand it."  

"Jesus' Christianity," states Nadage Dorée, "consists not in church persecution, routine forms and senile dogmas, but in deeds of self-sacrifice and love--these show the heart's-attachment to the religion of Jesus." She freely reckons Jesus as on a par with Moses. In the same vein Rabbi Abraham L. Feinberg, in an address in Denver in 1939, set forth the prevailing modern Jewish attitude in clear terms when he said: "Jesus we accept, but Christ never." And Rabbi Joseph Silverman avers that

What the Jews rejected and still reject is the Jesus of Dogma, the Jesus of the Christian Church, the so-called Messiah of the world, the alleged Son of God who died to save mankind. Such a doctrine

2. Danby, JC, 3. 5. Dorée, JC, 90. 128.
was and is contrary to the teachings of Judaism and therefore can never be accepted by Israel.¹

CONCLUSION

Contrary to the traditional Orthodox viewpoint, that Jesus and Christianity are inseparable, the majority of modern Jews distinguish Jesus from the Christ of dogma, and admire him as a great Jewish personality and teacher, apart from any consideration or admiration for Christianity.

We must not be misled by this, however, into thinking that Jewish thought has materially changed toward the Church. As long as the Church clings to its dogmas about the Christ, the Virgin Birth, Atonement by the Cross, and the Messiahship of Jesus, and continues to insist that the Church alone holds the keys to God's kingdom and favor, the Jewish world will show no consideration for the Church. The Jewish concern is for Jesus the Jew, only. Him, they hold in high regard—but only as a man.

¹ Silverman, JCJ, 8.
CHAPTER VII

THE JEWISH EVALUATION OF CHRISTIANITY

As we have seen, most modern Jews, whether Orthodox or liberal, recognize that the Jesus of History and the Christ of Faith are not one and the same figure; and today, freely discuss Jesus, the Jewish teacher, as distinct from the religion built up around his name and person. It must be borne in mind, however, that in the Christian mind, at least, in order to accept Jesus, the Jew will necessarily have to enter the fold of the Christian Church—if the Christian dogma is to be satisfied. In the last analysis, then, if the Jew thinks seriously of accepting Jesus as his spiritual and ethical leader he must also think in terms of accepting Christianity. Even the Hebrew-Christian Alliance, which allows the Jewish Christian to remain culturally a member of his original group, demands acquiescence in the Christian dogmas of baptism, public confession of Christ's saviorhood and deityship; and as Jocz tells us, leads usually to the joining of the church in which the Jew was baptised. Since any movement of the Jew toward Jesus requires a consideration of Christianity, therefore, it behooves us to investigate what the Jew thinks of Christianity.

The answer to the above problem comes in a four-fold form, each side of which is recognized by all Jews as being

1. Jocz, JPJC, Chapter VI, 201-261.
a valid approach, but which different schools of Hebrew thought emphasize variously: (1) Christianity is a Greek-Pagan religion which has deified Jesus; elevating, thereby, a man to the position of God. It has built up a scheme of redeemer-god, the approach to whom is through something similar to the Mystery religions. This part of Christianity the Jew of any school categorically rejects. (2) Christianity represents that large group of people (Gentiles) who persecute the Jew for religious reasons. (3) Christianity is a class of people who profess in word to follow Jesus, but who in fact deny him and all that he stood for. (4) Christianity is a movement which expresses and carries Jesus' teachings—which are Jewish—to the Gentile world; and thereby, in spite of its theologies and Christologies, spreads the ethics of Judaism throughout the world. This the Jew holds to be a good thing. Let us take up these approaches in the order as given above.

I. CHRISTIANITY AS A GREEK-PAGAN RELIGION

Trattner declares that early Christian theology prevented the Jews from properly appraising Jesus and His teachings. He continues by saying that the Council of Nicea deified Jesus which to the Jew is illogical and blasphemy. His dating of the deification of Jesus is wrong, for the process started far earlier—even by the time the Fourth Gospel was written. The

1. Trattner, Art.: Scribners 87:391.
2. Trattner, Art.: Scribners 87:392.
fact, however, remains that it was the deification process which made the Christian Jesus utterly unacceptable to the Jew. Voorsanger insists that Christianity was essentially Jewish, but when "the infusion of Greek philosophy and Egyptian gnosticism" came into it, "the Jew drew back in affright." He, too, mentions the deification of Jesus, and declares, as did Trattner, that it was unintelligible to them; and adds that "the dogmas of Christianity are still unintelligible to us."  

Danby quotes Ahad Ha-Am as insisting that Christianity denies the three most fundamental characteristics of Judaism: (1) Judaism puts the good of society first, while Christianity thinks only of the individual; (2) Judaism wants no veneration of a human being, which Christianity puts to the forefront; (3) in Judaism the ethical basis is absolute justice, while in Christianity it is asceticism. Ahad Ha-Am can be excused for being an opponent of Christianity, but no man is excusable for being unfair in his pronouncements about the thing he dislikes. What he has done is to pick out the unfavorable aspects of the Christian religion—which are almost negligible today—and sets them up as being the prime characteristics of our religion. He fails to recognize both the "Social Gospel", with its insistence upon social justice and welfare, and the great institutions engendered by the Church for the good of society.

4. Danby, JC, 82.
Once, perhaps, the individual and his salvation was most important; but not so today. Nor, at least for the Protestant Christian group, is asceticism looked upon as being the real ethical basis of religion—rather, it is service. Perhaps it is an ignorance of the spirit and aims of Christianity which holds the Jew aloof, rather than an actual difference of teaching and practice.

Zeitlin quotes Kohler as saying in his *Jewish Theology* that Judaism differs from Christianity on three points, also, namely:

1. in Christianity, articles of faith formulated by the founders and heads of the Church are the conditions of salvation, while Judaism does not know salvation by faith in the sense of Paul;
2. Christian theology rests on a formula of confession, the symbol of the apostolic church, which alone makes one a Christian, while Judaism has no such formula of confession which renders a Jew a Jew; and (3)

   Creed is the sine qua non of the Christian Church: to disavow is to cut oneself loose from membership in the Church. Judaism is quite different: the Jew is born into the faith and even after renunciation he is considered an apostate Jew. Dogma is not held by Jews.

While this statement is an expression of Jewish opinion, and that is, after all, what we are after, yet we cannot let it go by without challenge. The emphasis is placed upon dogma, which seems to mean the work of the later Church. Apparently, Kohler has not read his history carefully; for the break

1. Zeitlin, DW, 71, 72.
between Judaism and Christianity took place before dogma can be said to have existed. It would seem that in the early Church, while certain beliefs about Jesus were being propagated, true, the whole matter was in too much of a state of mere sermon kernels to have been crystallized into dogma. It was at this very time that the break took place. If Grayzel is correct, as pointed out above, the complete break was effected by the attitude of the Christians at the time of the Bar Kochba revolt in 135 A.D. We cannot, however, overlook the fact that these Jewish writers are attempting to make a case against Christianity on the basis of its non-Jewish theology. Their point is well taken, even if their data is a bit inaccurate.

II. CHRISTIANITY AS THOSE WHO PERSECUTE JEWS

Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, though very friendly to Jesus, declares that

Through the centuries it has been almost impossible for a Jew to bring himself calmly and judicially to consider anything connected with the life and teachings of Jesus, whose name has been made one of terror to his people because of the cruelly unjust attitude of Christendom towards Israel for nearly nineteen hundred years. Wise adds in the same paragraph that

During the centuries ... an oftentimes Christless Christendom has made it impossible for the Jew to look upon Jesus as a Jewish teacher.

1. Grayzel, HJ, 212.
Trattner declares that persecution of the Jews by Christians caused them to be silent about Jesus in whose name they were persecuted. "Lying in a pool of blood", he says, "they nursed their wounds—in silence," then adds that the ghetto Jews are especially silent about Jesus. In another connection, Trattner makes a most interesting observation that "Yet, even today it makes all the difference in the world in his attitude toward Jesus whether a Jew was born in the ghetto or outside of it." The memory of the ghetto causes "many a rabbi in America today frankly to admit that it is the overwhelming wish of his congregation that no mention be made of Jesus from the pulpit."

Voorsanger points out that to save the soul of the pagan the Christian Church threw him to the wild beasts and forced Jews into ghettos; so, "the Jews remained. . . only total strangers to the doctrine of a church which persecuted them." It is not certain what he means when he speaks of throwing pagans to the wild beasts, for there is no record that the Christian Church ever did such a thing. The persecutions and tortures of the Spanish Inquisition are understandable, but these he does not mention. However, we know the Church did force the Jews into ghettos, and this is the part in which we

1. Trattner, Art.: Scribners 87:388.
are interested. The same writer declares that "had Christianity remained the downtrodden and oppressed sect it was in the time of the Roman emperors the probabilities are that a fusion between Jews and Christians would have been effected." This statement, too, has a peculiar ring. He apparently forgets that the Jews waged the first era of persecution against the Christians; and at no time under the Roman emperors was there any indication that the Jews desired to unite with the Christians.

The statement, from the same article, is also difficult to understand, when he states that "When Christianity became a Greek power it became a Greek master" and persecuted the Jews. Apparently he means that when the Church broke with Judaism it became a Greek religion; but there is no sense in which it became a "Greek power" or a "Greek master". It did, of course, persecute the Jews; and that may have been caused by the Greek turn to Christian theology which made Jesus a deity. We shall let it go as a Jewish position taken in regard to Jesus, although it is, in some respects, a false one. In this dissertation we cannot hope to change the Jewish mind—we can only record it. It is with these perversions of the truth, however, that we must deal in seeking to effect some sort of unity between the two faiths. They do, indeed, form real obstacles to progress.

Even Asch can declare that "at an early date, when Christianity became a militant power, the official Church began to persecute the Jews, so that a fiery wall was erected between the two faiths." 1 Danby, too, insists that the Jew is still repelled by Christian institutions and dogma, for they represent for the Jew the persecution and murder of fellow Jews.

It is averred by Enelow, also, that persecution of Jews by Christians created antagonism to Jesus among the Jews. 2 While he declares that Jewish curiosity about Jesus was never dead, he insists that it was

Thwarted and directed into hostile channels by those untoward conditions which were responsible for the gradual elimination of Jesus from the history of his own people: on the one hand, by the ideas about Jesus, that were taken over from non-Jewish sources and finally triumphed over the Jewish ideas; and on the other hand, by the persecution of the Jews on the part of the people that called themselves followers of Jesus... It was thus that the Jews' natural interest in Jesus was either suppressed or misdirected. 3

Finally, Rabbi Abraham L. Reinberg phrases it thus, saying that he does not use the word "Christ" because

The term is such a deep challenge to my sub-conscious mind, so closely bound up with the past experience of my people, so incarnadined with the blood of my forefathers who died in countless ghettos and in countless forms of torture because they would not accept the 'Christ', that I find it difficult even at this late date, to utter it at all with equanimity. 4

Christianity, then, seems to be identified with that group of people who call themselves Christians, and who have been, and still are to an extent, the perpetrators of all sorts of indignities and even persecutions against the Jew. To the Jew this is a serious identity.

III. CHRISTIANITY SEEN AS THOSE WHO PROFESS TO FOLLOW JESUS IN WORD, BUT DENY HIM IN FACT.

Danby tells us that one of the charges against Klausner’s Jesus of Nazareth was that "the time is not yet ripe: as long as the adherents of Christ do not accept the teachings of Jesus the Jews must be silent." ¹ This came from an American Zionist publication, he tells us without naming the paper.

Jastrow, quoted by Singer, declares that while the Jews have been accused of rejecting Jesus, the Christians have not followed his teachings, either. ² This is echoed by many Jewish writers. The entire book of Nadage Doré, Jesus’ Christianity, is built on the idea that the failure of the Christians to follow Jesus’ teachings is that which has resulted in the persecution of the Jews. Only by repentance and regeneration can the Christians become worthy followers of Jesus, she thinks. ³ Freely are used by her the words "mock Christians," ⁴ "leprous Christians," ⁵

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¹ Danby, JC, 104.
³ Dorée, JC, 89.
⁴ Dorée, JC, 57.
⁵ Dorée, JC, 67.
"would-be Christians," "Christless Christians," and "Christian monsters" (the persecutors). She concludes by saying that

The religion of the future—the religion when Christianity shall have awakened from its long nightmare of greed, selfishness and persecution, to a higher plane of consciousness, the religion that Moses and Jesus preached will not be formal, but simple. It will be the religion of love and deeds, which will speak to the heart of the common people, so that they will hear gladly.

It appears that Miss Dorée pretty well sums up the attitude of many Jews to Christianity—as those who profess to follow the Nazarene, but who fail to do so in actual deed. She, and others who echo her sentiments, are not altogether wrong, of course. Much of Christianity has placed a far greater premium on the acceptance of proper credal beliefs and points of view than upon the following the Sermon on the Mount. There is room for such an opinion of what constitutes the Christian movement.

IV. CHRISTIANITY AS A MOVEMENT FULFILLING THE MISSION OF JUDAISM.

There is a growing number of Jews who look upon Christianity as a movement so closely akin to Judaism that the two faiths work together in carrying the ethical teachings of Judaism out into the pagan world. In that way, they feel close bonds of friendship and common purpose binding them to their sister religion.

1. Dorée, JC, 87.
2. Dorée, JC, 88.
3. Dorée, JC, 63.
4. Dorée, JC, 128.
This admission, however, must not be pressed too far: it is not a bid for union.

Asch declares that

If men speak today of a Christian civilization, I, a Jew, feel myself a part of it. Its course has been devious... but for all that, its spirit was drawn from the sources which feed my soul. It was given by the God of Israel to my forefathers, it was warmed by the fires of my prophets, and paid for by our thousand years of pain; and therefore it is blood of my blood, bone of my bone.¹

In another place he sees Christianity as a means of carrying Judaistic ideals and religion to the Gentiles.² "Through the body of Jesus," he says, "Paul brought to the Gentile world the spirit of the God of Israel."³ He continues: "Through Jesus the Gentiles were wedded to Judaism... Judaism and Christianity stood together under the bridal canopy," and no matter the bitter quarrel between them, "The marriage has not been broken off. It cannot be."⁴ "It is not Judaism and Christianity which represent two separate authorities;" he insists, "They stand under a single authority issued in separate forms. They are founded on the same principles and derive from one source, which is God."⁵ Asch climaxes his fine statement about Christianity with these words: "Whosoever stretches out his hand against it Christianity stretches out his hand against the sanctities of my soul."⁶

Enslow informs us that

Even in the Middle Ages, Jewish teachers were not wanting who, with Maimonides, pointed out the merits of Christianity as a divine factor in spreading the ideals of religion and morality in the world.¹

Landman, also, has a quotation here from Montefiore which speaks along the same line: "Christian ethical ideals are closely akin to, as they are indubitably based upon and developed from, Jewish ethical ideals. Christian Theism is near akin to Jewish Theism."²

Voorsanger, after his inaccurate statements above, expressed his own feeling toward Christianity in these words: "Respect and reverence I, as a believing Jew, gladly yield to Christianity, a system that I fully understand as a religion, but fail to comprehend as a theology."³ "The dogmas of Christianity are still unintelligible to us," he concludes.⁴

Jocz, in his The Jewish People and Jesus Christ, has a short section on the Jewish view concerning the Church. In it he declares that "Traditional Judaism looked upon Christianity as it looked upon Mohammedanism, as an error."⁵ Because of the attitude of the Christian Church to Jesus—deifying him—Trypho accused the Christians of worshipping a man. The attitude of the Church toward the Law confirmed the Jewish view that

¹. Enslow, JWJ, 164.
². Landman, CJ, 142.
⁵. Jocz, JPJC, 315.
Christianity was a delusion worse than paganism, and that the righteous pagan would fare better before God than the Christian. Jocz recognizes the change that has taken place in later years, however. He quotes H. J. Schoeps as saying in his book, Jüdisch-christliches Religionsgespräch (1937), that it is the Jewish opinion that Christianity must be regarded as the God-effected way of salvation for the Gentile world; and that the Jew must take Christianity seriously, for though it has no meaning for the Jew, it does for the Gentile. He recognizes both the Old Testament and the New Testament as being God's word to humanity. God spoke to the Jew at Sinai and to the Christian in Jesus Christ. The New Testament is not for the Jews, however. Jocz continues by quoting Franz Rosenweig, who published his Der Stern der Erlösung (1921), as saying that the Gentiles come to God through Jesus, but that the Jews are already with God and do not need him or Christianity.

Perhaps the best summary of the above views would be that Christianity is good for the non-Jews, but it holds nothing for the Jew. What is not already in Judaism he does not need—because he is a Jew.

CONCLUSION

It is immediately apparent that no one statement of Jewish opinion concerning Christianity can suffice to express the widely

differing views. While we are greatly interested in what all Jews think of our religion, so far as relates to the possibility of a union of the two faiths, even on a limited scale, only those views which are favorable are our immediate concern. In the concluding chapter we shall discuss further the possibility of correcting many of the causes which foster such critical opinions of Christianity as held by these and other Jewish leaders.

It is such attitudes as those expressed by Dorée, Asch, Montefiore, and Enelow which seem to confirm the possibility of creating an even more favorable attitude on a large scale among Jews. Dorée expresses, not an attitude of bitterness and stubborn rejection, but one of regret—almost the pleading of an old-time evangelist condemning the wickedness of his people, yet with the announcement that repentance will bring salvation. She seems to imply that if Christianity will clean up her own back yard, Judaism would no longer be alienated. How many Jews hold this feeling is not, of course, known; but if the number were considerable, the hope of union would not be too far away.

The expression of Asch, though it sounds on the surface even more hopeful of union, yet seems to express more nearly the relation of husband and wife than of actual unity or oneness. In spite of indissoluble marriage bonds, the man and woman are still two distinct individuals—they do not become in reality one person. Our hope is not that Christianity and Judaism shall be two faiths closely harmonized, but that they shall unite into
one single religion. If Asch really feels about Christianity as he professes to feel, one wonders why he has not taken the final step of acceptance. The answer may be, of course, that Christianity demands more of the Jew than it has a right to do. Perhaps, if the Church were as kindly and liberal to Judaism as Asch is to Christianity the union would be consummated speedily. At least, many Jews see in Christianity a branch still closely related to the parent vine—Judaism.
CHAPTER VIII

THE PROGRESSIVE CHANGE IN JEWISH ATTITUDE TOWARD JESUS

While it is true, as stated by several Jewish leaders, that the modern freedom of expression concerning Jesus saw a distinct upturn about the beginning of the present century, interest was expressed in the subject far earlier. We saw that even Maimonides, as far back as the twelfth century A. D., was interested in and welcomed Christianity as a divine factor in spreading Judaism. Danby, also, records, as mentioned previously, the statements of Salvado, Geiger, Graetz and Jacobs—all of the nineteenth century—who gave large consideration to Jesus, friendly or neutral. While these form a small minority, yet they serve to prove that Judaism was not totally bereft of interest in Christianity before the twentieth century. Let us see what Jewish writers have to say about the growing interest in Christianity which we see in evidence.

The Jewish World (not a liberal paper), in its issue of December 30, 1925, recognized the changed attitude, and gave praise to Klausner's Jesus of Nazareth, remarking with welcome the change that has come about in the last twenty years in the attitude to Jesus of the younger generation of Jews in Eastern Europe. This change the writer attributes to

1. Enelow, JVJ, 164.
2. Danby, JC, 70-78.
The pogrom year of 1906 which brought a revival of religion to the Eastern ghetto. Hopes for freedom turned them to God. The younger writers of the Jews in the East of Europe discovered the figure of Jesus.¹

The book just referred to was hailed as of the first magnitude, and the reason given for its importance was that

For the first time in nineteen hundred years a rabbinical Jew discusses the life of Jesus without prejudice... representing the Founder of Christianity as the embodiment of religious and ethical idealism.²

Trattner thinks that the interest of the modern Christians themselves in pushing back beyond the theology of the Church in an effort to reconstruct the real Jesus of History has played a large part in effecting the change in the Jewish attitude to Jesus. He says that "The rediscovery of Jesus, by Christians, from the myth of the Middle Ages has made it possible for Jews once more to notice Jesus frankly."³ In another connection the same author declares that the Jew's mention of Jesus today is the result of the modern Christian desire to find the historical Jesus.⁴ Again, he says that the Jew can now talk freely about Jesus for he does not any longer fear persecution. As outstanding examples of the changed attitude he gives Klausner's Jesus of Nazareth and Ludwig's Son of Man.⁵

In the article mentioned previously, Singer writes that

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2. Danby, JC, 110.
3. Trattner, AJJSJ, 11.
4. Trattner, AJJSJ, 176.
5. Trattner, art.: Scribners 87:390.
Thousands, yes, tens of thousands, of educated and noble-minded Jews in our day, while firmly standing upon the monotheistic platform of the Synagogue, are gradually giving up the attitude of their forefathers toward the central figure of Christianity—it was a pathetic mingling of ignorance, antipathy, and fear.1

This ignorance is being gradually dispelled by the rabbis themselves, as he tells us: in the words of Harris Weinstock:

This change of sentiment toward Jesus is largely due to the intelligent and progressive preaching of our modern rabbis, who seem to appreciate the glory Jesus has shed upon the Jewish name, and the splendid work He did in broadening the influence of the Jewish teachings.2

Jocz writes that today

The Jewish effort is directed to reclaiming Jesus the Jew from the Gentile Church and to reinstating him to a place of honor in Jewish history. This process of reclamation has continued for over a century and has been greatly accelerated in recent years.3

Jewish attention, however, he tells us, is concentrated not so much upon the person as upon the teaching of Jesus and its relation to Judaism.4 Perhaps a better way of putting it would have been to say that attention is paid to the person of Jesus because of his strictly Jewish teachings, for certainly the person of Jesus has come in for its share of consideration.

While to the old-fashioned Jew the subject of Jesus is still forbidden, Enelow declares, "it is... impossible for

them to ignore a subject which is part of the very fabric of the life around about them.\(^1\) Again, he says that "The spirit of enlightenment and sympathy has brought about a new era in the relation of the Jews to Jesus."\(^2\) This latter statement seems to confirm the belief that ignorance has been the divisive factor between Jews and Christians.

According to Danby, Rabbi Wise expressed thankfulness in the presence of his large congregation that the time had come when such a book as Klausner's *Jesus of Nazareth* could be written, published and read. "Thank God," he said, "the time has come when men are allowed to be frank, sincere, and truthful in their beliefs."\(^3\) In an article, Wise said again that

> It is a sign of the times that it is possible for a Jewish teacher to speak frankly and forthrightly about the life and teachings of Jesus the Jew... and few will take exception to the honest utterances of a Jew respecting Jesus.\(^4\)

It is Sholem Asch who, after noticing the change in Jewish attitude to Jesus attempts another answer as to the cause of that change. He says that

> In the minds of the greatest number of Jews, especially among ourselves in America, a revolutionary change of opinion has taken place about the personage who is the symbol of the Christian faiths, as it has, too, about the Christian faiths themselves.\(^5\)

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1. Enslow, JVJ, 3.
2. Enslow, JVJ, 169.
3. Danby, JD, 110.
4. Danby, JD, 110, 111.
6. Asch, OD, 82.
The cause for the changed attitude, he states, is the fact that at no other time in history has the Christian element shown such concern and friendliness for the Jew as present. As evidence he points out the way Christians have helped the suffering Jews, especially in France, Holland, and Poland. Those Jews in Nazi Europe who were spared, he declares, owe that preservation to the Christians from the Quakers to the pope, himself, who cared for the unfortunate Jews at their own expense and with danger to themselves at the hand of Hitler.

CONCLUSION

While there have been a few Jews all through the centuries who have expressed liberal tendencies toward Jesus, and while a growing number appeared in the nineteenth century, it is readily apparent that at the beginning of the present century a great change from the traditional attitude began to take place in earnest. Leaders of all the schools of Judaism are, today, discussing Jesus freely; but especially those of the Reform movement are taking a most lively interest in him. They appear to feel that the Jews ought to find some way of incorporating his teachings and spirit into modern Judaism.

1. Asch, OD, 78, 79.
The causes which have resulted in this change of attitude seem quite varied. Major among those mentioned by Jews who have written on the subject are the following:

1. Traditional Jewish ignorance of Jesus and Christianity has been dispelled by educated and progressive rabbis; and with ignorance have gone the old inborn antipathy and fear.

2. Except for the Nazi pogrom in Europe, America and Europe have been free of Jewish persecution for many years, now. With the passing of persecution the Jew not only has lost his fear of the Christian Church and its founder, Jesus, but has also lost his fear of expressing himself on the subject of Jesus.

3. One writer, as we saw, believed that the harsh persecution of 1906 turned many Jews to seek God; and in doing so they found the figure of Jesus.

4. Jews in Europe being persecuted by Hitler, during his regime, were helped and shielded by Christians of all varieties. Those who were spared owe their preservation to the Church. This caused the Jews to form a new respect and appreciation of Christianity, and of course, of Jesus, its head.

5. On the theological plane, Christian scholars, themselves, became interested in discovering the Jesus of History, the man of Galilee, as seen apart from the theological dicta of the Church through the centuries.

6. A recognition that one, if he wishes to appear intelligently, cannot remain willfully ignorant of such an important
factor in his environment as Christianity is in the American culture.

We see, therefore, that the change in attitude to Jesus did not just happen; but that it rests upon a secure and permanent basis, or bases. Christianity, itself, has been largely responsible for the change; and it may be that it holds the key to the solution of the entire problem of the possible union of Judaism and Christianity. That is, the barriers between the two faiths may be those erected by the Church rather than those erected by Judaism. If this is true, then we Christians should give immediate and serious thought as to the way of removing them.
CHAPTER IX

REASONS WHY THE JEWS REJECT JESUS

In spite of all the fine words spoken and written by Jewish leaders and thinkers about Jesus, one fact still persists: the Jews continue to remain separate and apart from Christianity. Danby points out a matter of surprise to us who have been led to believe that all serious animosity to Jesus had disappeared in our part of the world, saying that "Hostility to Christianity and its founder, stifled or only masked by the age-long habit of the closed mind, still persists to a very great extent among ordinary western Jews."¹

It has always been the noble Christian hope that the Jew will eventually accept Jesus in some form of active discipleship. Why he does not is our question of the moment. As we have pointed out previously, however, any such acceptance would almost of necessity include a close relationship to Christianity. Many Jews are ready to accept Jesus as a fellow-Jew, and as one of their great teachers and ethnists, but the matter goes no further. Doctor Morris Goldstein, Rabbi of Congregation Sherith Israel, in San Francisco, states in reply to the questionnaire sent him that he and other Jews accept Jesus and the religion of Jesus, but reject the religion about Jesus, which is, of course, Christianity. This statement is confirmed on every hand by Jewish speakers and writers.

¹. Danby, JC, 78.
This attitude, however, does not meet the Christian expectation and hope. It is the purpose of this study, then, to discover the causes for the Jewish rejection of Jesus as their actual spiritual and moral leader as he has become, nominally at least, for the Christian. We shall find that in many instances the answer given will be colored greatly by the attitude to the Church—which claims Jesus as its peculiar possession.

The causes of this rejection of Jesus seem to fall into six different categories, which we shall discuss in order.

I. JESUS FAILED TO MEET MESSIANIC EXPECTATIONS

When we ask why the Jews did not accept Jesus as their Messiah, we must also ask whether Jesus fulfilled the Jewish expectations of the Messiah. True, the Church has called Jesus, Messiah; but in most ways the characteristics emphasized in regard to his Messiahship are not those which the Jews held to be required to prove his validity.

Sholem Asch declares that the only reason why the Jews refused Jesus' claim to authority as the Messiah was because he did not give a clear and categoric answer—the sign of the advent of the Kingdom of Heaven: "The wolf shall lie down with the ram."¹ The Jews were bound to the authority

¹. Asch, WIB, 109, 110.
which had been given to Moses on Sinai. "They could not pass to the new authority without the sign which should proclaim that the old had been cancelled and the new validated." ¹

Goldstein strengthens this view by declaring that the Jews did not assent to the Messiahship of Jesus because they did not regard the required Messianic conditions as fulfilled with his coming.²

These unfulfilled hopes are set forth by Rabbi Isaac ben Abraham of Troki, quoted by Jocz, as follows:

1. The reign of the Messiah was to be universal.
2. The Hebrew religion was to become a universal religion.
3. Idolatry was to disappear.
4. All evil was to disappear.
5. Universal peace was to reign.
6. Peace would reign in the animal world.
7. Israel would experience great prosperity.
8. Israel would be restored to her national sovereignty.

None of these things took place with the coming of Jesus, nor have they taken place as yet, declare the Jewish leaders. Other aspects of Jesus' failure to fulfill expectations are

¹. Asch, WIE, 110.
². Goldstein, JJT, 233.
³. Jocz, JPJC, 413, note 143.
set forth, also. For the Jews the Messianic expectation was on a national scale—all Jews would reap the benefit of his coming; while for Jesus and the early church it was a matter of individual selection and election. Jesus is reported as having said, in Matthew 7:21, that "Not all who saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of heaven." The Kingdom of heaven was co-equal with the Messianic blessedness. Jocz says that "It was the individualistic character of the Messianic movement which contributed to the alienation of the followers of Jesus from the leaders of Judaism." Again, the Messiah was popularly expected to be a political hero whose kingdom was entirely of this world. Jesus renounced this idea, saying, "My kingdom is not of this world." (John 18:36a). The crucifixion, also, presented a serious barrier. This meant either that he was not the Messiah, or that his sufferings were propitiatory. Vicarious suffering was unknown to the Jews; therefore both the suffering and the sufferer were rejected. Once more, the Messiah was to bring blessing to Israel by atoning her sin, but her sons only; while in John 1:29 it is announced that Jesus is to take away the sin of the world—non-Jews, also. Finally, the Messianic kingdom is to be entirely this-worldly; and it will not be the end of all things or of the age. For Jesus, however, the Messianic kingdom was to be entirely other-worldly.

2. Jocz, JPJC, 284.
Apparently, therefore, in the light of the above arguments, it would be difficult or impossible for a Jew to look upon Jesus as the Messiah. Moreover, the Reform Jew of today no longer thinks in terms of a personal, historic Messiah to usher in the Messianic age. The Messiah is but a symbol of an age that is brought in by the faithfulness of the Jew in the keep-1 of the Law. This is confirmed by Rabbi Klein, also, and several others who have discussed the matter with the investigator.

II. REJECTION IS CAUSED BY LONG PERSECUTION

Whatever Christians have done or said that have alienated Jews from the Church, the most potent was the persecution of dissenters from her doctrines and dogmas. As we look back over the long stretches of history made bloody and dark by religious persecution, especially the persecution of Jews by Christians, it is not a matter of surprise that Jews reject Christianity, but that they tolerate it at all.

The words of Rabbi Stephen S. Wise are worth quoting again in this connection, in which he declares that

Through the centuries it has been almost impossible for a Jew to bring himself calmly and judicially to consider anything connected with the life and teachings of Jesus, whose name has been made one of terror to his people because of the cruelly unjust attitude of the Christendom towards Israel for nearly nineteen hundred years. . . During the centuries. . . an oftentimes Christless Christendom has made it impossible for the Jew to look upon Jesus as a Jewish teacher.1

Danby's quotation from the Jewish Chronicle confirms this opinion. The writer quoted says that "The very name of the world-historic phenomenon, such as is the figure of Jesus, ought to fill the heart of every true Jew with trepidation." Then he gives the reason: "Is it not that for nigh upon twenty centuries the blood of innocent thousands of Jewish men, women, and children has been, and still is, spilt for Christ's sake?"

Jocz tells us in this connection that during the fifteen years in which Frey Tomas de Torquemada was inquisitor-general (beginning c. 1483), he sent thousands of Jewish heretics to the stake and tens of thousands of others to lesser penalties.

Enelow's words are also worthy of consideration again, here, in which he declares that when Christianity became adopted by the Roman Empire, the Christians began to persecute the Jews; and that this persecution created among the Jews the antagonism to Jesus. He further states that whatever curiosity the Jew had for Jesus was thwarted by persecution, and Jesus was gradually eliminated from the history of his own people.

Trattner adds his word, also, saying that one of the reasons for the reserve of Judaism for Christianity is the fierce persecution Christianity has waged against the Jews.

Jocz declares that

1. Danby, JC, 113. 4. Enelow, JVJ, 168.
2. Jocz, JPJC, 91. 5. Trattner, AJSJ, 6, 7.
3. Enelow, JVJ, 163, 164.
The Christian record of Jewish wrongs and suffering is the most incriminating testimony against the Church. This explains why, to the Jew, Christianity became a synonym for Jew-hatred. It is commonplace for the Jew to associate the name of Jesus with the Ghetto, the Badge, and the Inquisition. To the Jews of Eastern Europe the Cross to this day is the symbol of persecution.

Again he says that "The memory of the terrible wrongs suffered at the hands of Christians has deeply entered the Jewish consciousness." 2

From all that has been said above it might be surmised that Jewish persecution is a dark memory from the past, and nothing more. Such an opinion would be entirely false. Jocz hurries to preclude any such false assumptions, saying:

But it is not to be inferred that the present attitude towards Christianity is simply determined by past history. . . . Jewish experience is not only colored by past events handed down by tradition. Every generation has added its own bitter knowledge to the common stock. 3

Then he speaks of the Russian persecutions in the early part of the present century.

Nadage Dorseé knows something about these persecutions, also. She builds the argument of her whole book, Jesus' Christianity, around the terrible persecutions of the Jews in Russia around the period including 1904, in which year her book was published. Her statement on the matter is: "The special anti-Semitic laws cunningly devised and enforced by the Christian persecutor, is the most damming blot on Christianity." 4 It is to be remembered

2. Jocz, JPJC, 93.
3. Jocz, JPJC, 94.
4. Dorée, JC, 117.
that the cruel oppressions by the Church in Russia was one of the contributing factors in the Bolshevik revolution, and forms a very good ground for Communism.

That this type of persecution, based on false and malicious ideas of Jewish ritual murders and other dark doings, is not a thing of the past, is revealed in a story of the very near present, in the book edited by Landman, Christian and Jew. He tells us that at Massena, New York, on Saturday, September 22, 1928, little four-year old Barbara Griffith disappeared from her hom. Due to the ignorance and gullibility of the mayor and a state trooper, a rumor spread that the Jews probably had kidnapped the child for ritual purposes. At noon next day, Rabbi Berel Brennglass and officers of the Synagogue were confronted by a state trooper with the question whether Jews offer human sacrifices on a holiday, implying the old ritual murder charge which caused so much misery to the Jews through the early ages. The child was found in the woods where she had wondered and feared to return alone home. Governor Al Smith took the trooper to task for the offense to the Jews, but the story illustrates the readiness of Christians in this enlightened day to place the Jew in jeopardy of his life for baseless reasons.

It is not to be wondered at that Jocz can say that "Between Jesus and the Jews stands the Christian Church."

2. Jocz, JFJC, 96.
In spite of the weight of evidence already presented that persecution is one of the strong factors in the Jewish rejection of Jesus, Rabbi Harry Richmond, of Temple Emanuel, Wichita, Kansas, declared in reply to the questionnaire sent out that he thinks anti-Semitism is not a factor at all in the present-day rejection, or attitude to Christianity. This opinion is also borne by Rabbi Klein of Worcester, Massachusetts, as expressed in conversation with the present writer. It could, perhaps, be explained that for the Orthodox Jew the age-old persecution serves as a valid cause of rejection; but for the liberal Jew this is not true. Other factors are much more important for him.

III. REJECTION WAS BASED ON JESUS' FAILURE TO SHOW NATIONAL FEELING.

Klausner is the main exponent of the idea that the rejection of Jesus was based on his lack of national concern; but he is not the only one who thinks so, as we shall see. He quotes Salvador, writing in Paris in 1838, as saying that Jesus, caring only for the religious and moral life of the individual, gave no thought to the possible impact of the social and ceremonial laws of the Torah in their capacity of a defensive hedge guarding Jewish nationalism. This constitutes the difference between the teaching of Jesus and contemporary traditional Judaism; and just because of this difference the decisive majority of the Jews rejected his teaching.

We hear again from Klausner, this time from his own point of view:

The Judaism of that time... had no other aim than to save the tiny nation... from sinking into the broad sea of heathen cultures... Judaism is not only ethics: it is the sum-total of all the needs of the nation placed on a religious basis... Judaism is a national life, a life which the national religion and human ethical principles... embrace without engulfing. Jesus came and thrust aside all the requirements of the national life... He ignored them completely... in their stead he set up nothing but an ethical-religious system, bound up with his conception of the Godhead. In the self-same moment he both annulled Judaism as the life-force of the Jewish nation, and also the nation itself as a nation. 1

He points out that inevitably this attitude of Jesus brought to pass his rejection by his own nation; and adds that

A religion which possesses only a certain conception of God and a morality acceptable to all mankind, does not belong to any special nation, and, consciously or unconsciously, breaks down the barriers of nationality. 3

Klausner continues by saying that

Both the instinct for national preservation and the cleaving to the great humanitarian ideal, emphatically demanded that Judaism reject this ethical teaching severed as it became from the national life: the breach which all unintentionally Jesus would have made in the defenses of Judaism, must needs have brought this Judaism to an end. 4

Jesus began to adopt a negative attitude to the life of this present world, after the strong opposition set in, Klausner informs us. Life in this world, for Jesus, is valueless: nothing is to be gained by resisting evil or striving for one's rights; let one desist from all efforts to keep property. This ethical

teaching is so extreme that only those interested in religion can be interested in it, he thinks, "while the rest of mankind pursue a manner of life that is wholly secular or even pagan."  

"The Christian religion has stood for what is highest ethically and ideally, while the political and social life has remained at the other extreme of barbarity and paganism," Klausner avers; and concludes that "Beyond this ethical teaching Jesus gave nothing to his nation."  

Klausner may have been overly severe in his criticism of Jesus' teachings and his attitude toward the nation. It is difficult to feel that Jesus purposed to disregard his nation's needs or aspirations. Rather, let us say, he envisioned a greater purpose and calling for his people than mere national sovereignty. He saw that its safety and strength lay, not in national aggrandizement, but in righteousness, love, and in the spiritual pursuits. But, after all, we are dealing with what Jews have said about the matter, and we must hear them out.  

Schoen advises us that "Outwardly much of what Jesus did and said amounted to the heresy of national suicide."  "A young and self-appointed rabbi," he points out, "son of a carpenter and himself a carpenter... threatened to undermine every stronghold of Israel by preaching heresies to the multitudes."  

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puts himself above the Law, above Moses, and above the prophets," he concludes. At least, there seems to be a case possible against Jesus' overemphasis on the other-worldly. Men in all ages seem to place more value on things here and now than upon the higher moral and spiritual components of a culture. This seems to have been the condition which Jesus found to exist in his day. His message was unpleasant to the crass ears of many of his nation.

IV. JESUS REJECTED BECAUSE OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

Co-equal with persecution as the major causes of the Jewish rejection of Jesus is his deification by the Church. The strict monotheism of the Jew precludes the least possibility of any consideration of Jesus as anything more than a human being. As long as the Church insists that in order to accept Jesus and benefit by his life and teachings one must profess him to be divine, the Jew can never accept him.

Trattner, in order to show the extent and effect of the deification of Jesus, says that there was a time in early Christianity when Jesus was looked upon as the god of the Gentiles as opposed to Jawveh of the Jews. This was before the fusion of Father and Son in Christian theology. This, he says, is the word of Professor A. C. McGiffert, in a lecture before the Yale Divinity School. The Jews, he declares, naturally looked upon

1. Schoen, MJW, 7.
Jesus as a rival God. This condition led to a "bitter estrangement that not only thwarted the normal Jewish interest in the Nazarene, but directed into hostile channels whatever good feeling his fellow-kinsmen may have entertained about his teaching and character." It is possible that to the Jews of the time Jesus did appear as a rival god, since the early Church was in the process of relating him to the God-head in some manner. It seems incredible, however, that the Christians themselves, though they in a manner deified Jesus, would have considered him as a god in the same manner as they considered Jahweh. "The divinity of Jesus—by which is meant his deityship—will always strike the Jew as illogical," however, Trattner avers. It would, according Heine, as mentioned previously, be impossible to get one Jew to consider worshipping another Jew as divine.

Doctor Abram Simon is quoted by Landman as saying that "What certain Jewish leaders objected to at that time and what they later on refused to accept, was the coalescence of Jesus, the man, with Christ, the Divine Atonement." This statement seems to well express the matter from the standpoint of the Jew in his regard to Christian theology.

Rabbi Goldstein, Rabbi Klein, and Rabbi Richmond all agree, in their answers to the questionnaire, that it is on the grounds of this deification rather than that of persecution that alienates

1. Trattner, AJSJ, 9, 10. 3. Trattner, AJSJ, 179.
the Jew and causes him to continue rejecting Jesus. This seems to be the one prominent cause. What the Jewish response will be to the gradual movement of Christianity to the Unitarian point of view is uncertain. Other factors, of course, will need to be considered.

V. PERSONAL PREJUDICE AS A FACTOR IN THE REFUSAL.

The arguments to be cited in support of personal prejudice as a factor in the rejection of Jesus are not long or many, but the point is well taken by Doctor Abram Simon in Landman’s book, Christian and Jew. He declares that

The conclusion is justifiable that the source of the ill-will lies in the individuals as Jews or as Christians, rather than in their religious interpretations. In other words, it is not religion that is the divisive element. It is personalities, social relationships, accumulated racial deposits with their inevitable claims of superiority and prestige that accentuate these differences and separate us into unfriendly camps. The prejudice is not against Judaism, the religion, but against Jews, as individuals and as representing certain social and ethnic types and traits.¹

It is true that many non-Jews, Christians and otherwise, hold individual Jews in low repute. That Jews look upon Christians in the same way is not so readily verifiable. Jewish pride in being Jews and the Chosen People does not necessarily mean the same as personal prejudice and ill-will. This seems one of the weaker factors in the rejection of Jesus, but it may play a fairly important part, indirectly.

¹. Landman (ed.), CJ, 244, 245.
VI. THE FAILURE OF CHRISTIANS TO BE REALLY CHRISTIAN

Danby declares that the Christians have failed to represent Jesus in their own lives—so have lost the Jews. This, Dora would heartily endorse in her Jesus' Christianity. It is her constant complaint that Christians do not follow the teachings of Jesus. If they did they would not persecute the Jews, she declares.

Perhaps it is true that until we Christians really follow Jesus ourselves, we have no right to show astonishment that Jews do not follow him. The Jew, however, has no more right to expect all Christians to be devoted followers of Jesus and his teachings than he does that all Jews shall be devoted and conscientious keepers of the entire Law. Perfection is not likely ever to be found on either side; therefore, this is not a logically valid reason for rejecting Jesus.

Here we have presented the six major reasons assigned by Jewish writers for the rejection of Jesus and of Christianity. Our problem is to discover the way to remove these barriers to the acceptance of Jesus.
CHAPTER X

Before the final conclusions of our investigation are stated, it is necessary that we attempt to answer some of the more important arguments against the Jewish acceptance of Jesus and Christianity as presented in the preceding chapter. From this we shall move on to a discussion of the possibility and ways of breaking down what appear to be the major barriers to such an acceptance. Finally, we present the outlook for future relations between Judaism and Christianity, which outlook is based on the findings of this study.

I. SOME ARGUMENTS ANSWERED

It would be illogical to attempt to ignore the six barriers set forth by various Jewish writers to the acceptance of Jesus. They exist, at least in the mind of many Jews. Over and over mention is made of Jesus’ failure to meet Messianic expectations, the cruel persecutions which the Church has waged against Jewry through the ages, Jesus’ lack of interest in the practical affairs of national and civil life, the deification of Jesus, the personal prejudice factor, and the failure of Christians to follow the teachings of Jesus. These we must take into serious consideration. That is not to say that they must be considered as final and unanswerable. Only two of them appear really valid: the one based on the problem of Messiahship, and the one based on the deification of Jesus. Even the former of these lends itself to considerable dispute. It is our purpose to examine the major
arguments, and put their validity to a test.

When it is argued that the Jews reject Jesus as the Messiah because he did not meet the expectations of Messiahship, one needs but ask whose expectations he failed. There were many Messianic ideas in existence in Jesus' day; and that a large number of Jews did not see the justification for rejection for such a reason as argued is demonstrated by Jocz. He declares that

The Messianic movement scored considerable success amongst the Jewish people, notably in the period between the destruction of Jerusalem and the Bar Cochba rising, and affected Judaism considerably. It was only after the Bar Cochba incident, when national survival became the sole consideration that the initial success of Christianity abated.¹

In other words, a great many Jews saw nothing wrong with a Messiah who emphasized the spiritual above the material. Jocz continues by saying that "It was the individualistic character of the Messianic movement which contributed to the alienation of the followers of Jesus from the leaders of Judaism."² "Both Jesus and Hebrew Christianity," he affirms, "were firmly planted upon Jewish soil, and their Messianic faith gave no real cause for hostility."³ Then a word of explanation is added. He avers that it was Jesus' universal interest which appeared in his teachings that caused this opposition on the part of the Jewish leaders. After 70 A. D., Judaism had to center itself upon itself or be

2. Jocz, JFJC, 3.
lost in a Gentile world. Christianity's universal outlook constituted a menace to the integrity of traditional Jewish life. This was not a denial of the Messiahship of Jesus on the basis of failure to meet expectations that were in the popular mind, but it was a denial of the emphasis which he gave to it. His was a Messiahship of the individual, spiritual and other-worldly type; and was accepted by those of a mystic turn of mind.

In connection with the mystic turn to Jesus' idea of Messiahship Trattner says that "Jesus was a mystic, an apocalyptic, a millenarian;" and adds that he was more of a mystic than a prophet. Enelow also contributes a point of view, here, when he declares that the Kingdom of God for Jesus was not political, but spiritual; a fulfilling of the Law. Jesus, apparently, believed that the true Messiah would lead in this direction rather than in the direction of political affairs.

In regard to the accusation, more particularly Klausner's, that Jesus had no concern either for the nation, as such, or for the practical affairs of life, the same answer may be given this as may be given to the one above. While Klausner points out that a general following of Jesus' teachings would have meant national suicide—and therefore he could not have been the Messiah—

1. Jocz, JPJC, 44.
2. Trattner, AJSJ, 45.
3. Enelow, JVJ, 130.
he is inconsistent in his criticism. In his From Jesus to Paul, Klausner admits that Jesus also thought of the emancipation of his nation. This emancipation, however, was not to be by the force of men, it was to be by repentance, and by a divine intervention. In another connection, Klausner declares that Jesus' first objective was a spiritual revival. In the light of this, there is no conclusive evidence that Jesus did not have a genuine concern for nation; but like the prophets, he felt that it is righteousness that is the strength of a nation, and to that end his teachings were turned. It is highly probable that the ethics which he taught was an interim ethik, meant as a means of preparation for the coming of the Kingdom—or, what the Jews referred to as the restoration of the Kingdom. This being true, the accusation launched against Jesus is invalid.

Klausner also, as we saw, levelled the criticism against Jesus that he adopted a negative attitude to life, and undermined all efforts at property, legal justice, and resistance to the attackers of one's person or his property. Either of two attitudes may be taken to his teachings in this regard. It must be admitted, of course, that these negative aspects were there. In the first place, however, if we accept the interim ethik viewpoint, he considered none of these things to be of any importance in the light of the immediate coming of the apocalyptic Kingdom.

2. Klausner, JN, 312f.
of Heaven, or Kingdom of God. That Jesus was mistaken, we must grant; and to that extent Klausner was right. But, on the other hand, like the prophets again, his ethical pronouncements may have taken an idealistically exaggerated form and were never expected to be taken in their full literalness. If they were too austere and negative for the Jews of Jesus' day, or any day, they have been so for many Gentiles, also—if we may give credance to the complaints frequently heard.

We may summarize the answer to the Messianic failure argument by throwing the responsibility for the rejection of Jesus' Messiahship back upon the tenacious nationalistic expectation of the Jews in a finally restored political Israel. If the Jews ever become willing to surrender the "Chosen People" idea, Klausner's strong opposition to the Messianic claims of Jesus will lose its force as a factor in the rejection of Jesus.

It is easy to see how the long and cruel era of Christian persecution of Jews could function as a livid scar on the Jewish memory to cause a revulsion at the thought of friendly relations with Christianity, or Jesus as its founder. Yet, as seen above, Rabbi Richmond points out that in his estimation the persecution story, and even modern anti-Semitism, play little or no part in the Jewish rejection of Jesus. The fact is borne out by history that men forget easily. At any time in the past, the persecution of Jews and the ghetto experiences may have been sufficient to cause Jews to reject any serious thought of acceptance of Jesus, but not so today in America.
The only argument that is serious enough to be considered a valid cause of the rejection of Jesus is that based on Christian theology. The deification of a man, and his elevation to the place of worship poses a drastic barrier between Judaism and Jesus. As we have seen, it is utterly inconceivable even to the most liberal Jew. While this is, indeed, granted to be a most serious and persistent problem, the investigator believes there is a way out. This way out, based on the sources studied, will be given full consideration in the section dealing with the outlook for the future as pertains to the possible Jewish acceptance of Jesus.

II. HOW BARRIERS CAN BE BROKEN DOWN

Based on the six avowed causes of the rejection of Jesus, the following proposals are made by the investigator for the breaking down of these barriers to unity:

The argument that Jesus failed to meet Messianic requirements is not one which can be met by the opposite argument that he did all the Jews denied. There are two ways of opening an avenue of harmony here. The first is a logical one: let Christians cease stressing the Messiahship of Jesus, since the Messiah, for the Gentiles, has no primary significance. It is a Jewish concept, and can have little or no real meaning for non-Jews. There is, therefore, no point in insisting that the Jew acknowledge Jesus as fulfilling an expectation which has no relationship at all to the Gentile. The second is less obvious, but is
just as valid. As pointed out previously, liberal Jews no longer hold the expectation of a personal Messiah of a political type. Let us both, then, view Jesus as a spiritual leader (a universal spiritual Messiah, if one wishes), eliminating all reference to the traditional political figure who was to usher in the Messianic age. By thus changing the Messianic concept, the difficulty should automatically be relieved. Since neither Jesus nor we, nor even the liberal Jew, think in terms of a personal political Messiah, Jesus' failure to be one should cause no embarrassment or alienation.

If anti-Semitism does still function as a serious cause of disaffection on the part of some Jews toward Jesus, the Christian Church should devote itself wholeheartedly to eliminating the evil. Anti-Semitism is ages old, but certainly has no place in the enlightened western world of today, especially in the Church or among Christians.

For those Jews and Gentiles who question the concern of Jesus for the practical needs of men, we need only point out the great number of institutions and programs of social action which are, today, engendered of the Christian Church. If Jesus made no specific positive pronouncements concerning the ordinary human needs, there must have been, nevertheless, dormant in his teachings the germ of all this practical activity which later developed in his name. We count the hospitals, schools, homes for the aged and for children, medical missionaries, sanitation, agriculture, and home-making activities sponsored by the churches
among the less-favored folk of the world, and feel that nothing is more practical in its application than the teachings of Jesus.

The deityship of Jesus is not only an alienating factor for the Jew, but is for many liberal Gentile Christians a matter of perplexity and even embarrassment. In order to ease, if not completely erase the difficulty, the Church should carefully review its dogmas in the light of modern philosophical reasoning and scientific knowledge; and should re-state its theology in a more liberal vein. The Unitarians settled the matter generations ago by denying to Jesus any of the attributes of deity. The Church could well examine the practical efficacy of baptism as a requisite for Christian discipleship; and in the spirit of compromise propose to Judaism that the latter surrender its traditional practices that are seemingly non-essential, such as ritual circumcision and the dietary laws, while the Church surrenders the demand for baptism. Thus, by silencing its dogma of the divinity of Jesus, and by not insisting on baptism, the Church would have eliminated the greatest barrier to Jewish acceptance of Jesus.

If personal prejudices between individual Jews and Christians is based on ignorance of each other's cultural aspirations and contributions, then this prejudice should be dispelled by a mingling of Jews and Christians in as many mutual activities as possible. The Church should make it a part of its policy to bring both groups together at every opportunity. It has been the happy experience of the investigator to exchange pulpits
frequently with liberal rabbis, to the mutual enlightenment of both congregations.

Finally, the problem of insincerity and unchristian actions on the part of those who profess to follow Jesus is one that plagues the Church and alienates Gentiles as well as Jews from Jesus. Unfortunately, perhaps, the human element makes it impossible for the Church to regulate the conduct of its members. The Jew, probably, is aware that not all his fellow-religionists keep the Law perfectly, either. Fair and honest judgment is the only answer here.

Arguments are not successfully met by arguments. Under the circumstances it is impossible for the Christian to say to the Jew that his religion, his beliefs and his practices are all false, while those of Christianity are all true; and that the Jew must give up Judaism and accept all the doctrines and practices of the Church. In order to effect the Jewish acceptance of Jesus and the coalescence of the two faiths requires a willingness to re-think beliefs and practices on both sides, and to come to a compromise position. Let us see what representative Jews think of the possibility of such a move.

III. THE OUTLOOK FOR THE JEWISH ACCEPTANCE OF JESUS, AS SEEN BY JEWS

It is, again, difficult to consider the problem of the Jewish acceptance of Jesus without also relating that acceptance
in some manner to the Christian Church. Therefore, the views presented in this section will contain opinions which involve both.

The one statement which we have to offer that promises the greatest willingness to unite Judaism with Christianity under one roof comes from Sholem Asch. He says that "I ask myself: why should not I, the 'remnant of Israel' who 'have not bowed the knee to Baal,' unite in a single congregation of believers?" He apparently is attempting to say that both faithful Jews and faithful Christians belong to that group which has remained true to monotheism and to the Law, and should unite on this great principle. This is a statement that should gratify any person who hopes for an eventual union of the faiths.

Most Jewish writers, however, make the prospect of such a union contingent upon a radical theological change on the part of Christianity. In this connection, Trattner avers that

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

Jostrow, quoted by Singer, declares that "The long hoped-for reconciliation between Judaism and Christianity will come when once the teachings of Jesus will have become the axioms of human conduct." Apparently, he means to say that when the

1. Asch, WIB, 196.
2. Trattner, AJSJ, 180.
moral teachings of Jesus become the important concern of both Christian and Jew, rather than theology, then this reconciliation will take place.

Voorsanger also adds a similar word, saying that

When the church, instead of holding the sceptre of power simply ascends the cathedra, and gives utterance to the wise words of its illustrious Founder, Hebrews begin to understand its purposes.1

A significant word is given by Rabbi Wise when he says that "When the time comes when history is written in the light of truth, the people of Israel will be known not as the Christ-killers, but as the Christ-bearers." The allusion is being made to the Jewish argument that it was Rome, and not the Jews, who put Jesus to death; that the Jews, on the whole, were really favorable to him.

Singer quotes Rabbi Gustav Gottheil who, as he thinks of Jewish persecution, says,

Why should we Jews not glory in Him? Show us the man, help us to understand his mind, draw from his face the thick veil behind which his personality has been buried for the Jewish life by the heartless zeal of his so-called followers, and you will find the Jewish heart as responsive to truth and light and love as that of all other nations.2

Landman declares that

It cannot be said that ethnic distinctions have created an unbridgeable chasm between Christian and Jew; for racial differences are spanned by the sense of kinship which unites humanity more and more. Nor

can it be said that their religions have wrought this horrible state between Christian and Jew, but misunderstanding their religions: for the true Jew cannot be anti-Christian; the true Christian cannot be anti-Jewish.  

On the other hand, Klausner appears not to believe that any sort of union can ever exist between the Christian movement and that of Judaism. He says,

My deepest conviction is this: Judaism will never become reconciled to Christianity... nor will it be assimilated by Christianity; for Judaism and Christianity are not only two different religions, but they are also two different worldviews.

In another connection he avers that:

He [Jesus] cared not for reforming the world or civilization, therefore to adopt the teaching of Jesus is to remove oneself from the whole sphere of ordered national and human existence—from law, learning and civics... From life within the state, and from wealth in virtually all its forms. How could Judaism accede to such an ethical ideal?

Klausner should remember, however, that it is only an ideal; and that ideals are seldom practised to their full implications even by their own promulgators.

What, then, can we expect in the way of union between the two great faiths? In the Journal of Religious Psychology for October, 1912, Jacob Kaplan presents the findings from one hundred questionnaires sent out to Reform Jews, asking the question concerning unification of Judaism and Christianity. The first question was: "Do you think that Reform Judaism leads to an ultimate assimilation of Jew and non-Jew?" In percentages,

1. Landman, CJ, 5.
65% said no; 35% said that in some cases they believed it would, providing the Christians would believe in the unity of God (re-nounce the deityship of Jesus); perhaps in centuries to come; then only with sects similar to Judaism, not with sects widely divergent.

Another pertinent question asked was: "Do you believe that Unitarianism and Reform Judaism could permanently unite in one congregation?" The answers revealed that 82% believed it impossible, largely because Unitarianism has no historical background as does Judaism; 18% said they could if Christ were done away with completely, since even Unitarians have a "Christ" slant that is lacking among the Jews. Only one of the people answering in the 18% category said they thought it could really be done.

The third question with which we shall deal was: "Do you believe a complete assimilation of Jew and non-Jew would be a loss or a gain to the spiritual forces of civilization?" 48% said it would mean a serious loss. 9% believed it impossible of accomplishment at all. 9% felt themselves unable to answer; while 21% believed it would result in a distinct gain, since it would kill prejudice. But the whole possibility rested on the qualification that strict monotheism must be kept. It can be seen from this that if union is to be effected, a great and sweeping change will have to take place in the Christian world—which perhaps could never be perfectly brought about.

Lewisohn declares that any hope that Jews will cease to be Jews is a false hope. While Armond Cohen avers that

As for the attempt of the clergy and missionaries to persuade Jews to believe in Jesus as the Savior, unrestrained candor again compels the bold statement it is a waste of time and effort inevitably resulting in vexed frustration. There is no likelihood of the majority of Jews ever becoming Christians.  

He quickly adds, however, "Don't let Jesus stand between our being good friends; that is the last thing he would have wanted."

The study we have just made does not leave too much room for optimism that any large-scale union of Judaism and Christianity will take place. Perhaps about all that can be hoped for is some form of affiliation based on understanding and the spirit of cooperation. Landman expresses this idea when he says that

Both Judaism and Christianity are inspired by a common ideal and are endeavoring to reach the same goal. Is it too Utopian to believe that the boon of the future lies in the destruction of the barriers that separate nation and nation, religion and religion, man and man? America is the one hope in the world-turbmoil of hostility and contention where Christian and Jew may come to that fuller understanding which will inaugurate the era of genuine mutuality.

The word seems to be "mutuality" rather than "union" that will be realized. Probably nothing more can be hoped for. A sincere attempt to understand each other may lead us further, however, as Rabbi Abram Simon says, as quoted by Landman: "Jews and Christians are apart because they have made no efforts toward mutual understanding."

Feinberg, too, seems to think only in terms of mutuality when he says that

When the name of Jesus is on the prayerful lips of a large portion of the human race. . . Then Christianity and Judaism, sister religions, grounded on the same basic spiritual impulse, will go hand in hand down the vista of the ages to come. . . Then the Jew will turn to the Christian and say: 'Thou art my friend," and the Christian will turn to the Jew and say: "Thou art my brother," and the most exquisite hope of humanity will be matured."

This certainly speaks not of union, but of cooperation, as two sister religions or faiths on the basis of our own denominational relationships in the Christian movement. This is expressed by Rabbi Goldstein in answer to the questionnaire sent out, who says that he does not believe that union can be effected organizationally, but cooperatively; ultimately, but not under the designations presently used.

But that some move toward closer relationships is in the air is recognized by Weinstock, and quoted by Singer. He says that Synagogue and Church feel that

Spring is near and that the doors are opened wide to let out the musty air of the centuries and let in the fresh breeze of religious harmony. A new Theology 2 is knocking at the pulpits of priest, pastor and rabbi.

Then the writer asks:

Is the time ripe for Hebrew scholars to take up the study of the New Testament with the earnestness and zeal with which Christian scholars study the Old Testament?

1. Feinberg, JN, 8.
Apparently, many liberal Jews are anxious and expectant of some movement by which Judaism may freely make use of the teachings and inspiration of Jesus—while at the same time maintaining the essential and historical elements of their own faith. It is left up to Christianity to meet the Jew half-way. This may be more foundation-shaking for the Church than for the Synagogue, but it must come if the Church hopes to win the Jew to any sort of close relationship.
CHAPTER XI

CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this study is to discover the possibility of a union of Judaism and Christianity. The study itself deals with the opinions which twentieth-century Jews hold concerning Jesus and Christianity. Eight major conclusions are reached as the result of our investigation. They are as follows:

1. Jesus is, with but very few exceptions, looked upon by Jews as having been a historically real figure. The attitude of Orthodoxy, clinging as it does to the traditions of the past, is one largely of silence. Certain members of the school, however, such as Joseph Klausner, have spoken freely and in a friendly manner of Jesus. Reform Judaism is almost universally friendly to the subject of Jesus, though not to organized Christianity. The Reform Jew looks on Jesus as being one of the great prophets and religious geniuses of Israel; and as the most influential Jew the world has seen. Conservative Judaism is far more reserved in its expressions concerning Jesus and Christianity, since it is interested primarily in Judaism as it is.

2. Jesus was entirely Jewish in his life and teachings. Whatever has been said in praise of Jesus by Jewish writers was said in recognition of his Jewishness—his faithfulness to Judaism and to the Law; and those who ignore or malign him do so on the grounds of his non-Jewishness. The general opinion of liberal
Jewish thinkers is that Jesus was not only Jewish entirely, but that he was so Jewish that there was nothing unique about him or his work. They hold that Judaism includes in itself all that Jesus thought or taught.

3. The teachings of Jesus are being carefully and critically evaluated by most Jews today. The Orthodox school either ignores Jesus as a teacher, however, or looks upon his teachings as contrary to and destructive of the very essence of Judaism. The liberal Jew, on the other hand, sees Jesus’ teachings to have been consonant with Hebrew ethics; and many rank him with Moses and the prophets and psalmists as a Jewish genius. Still others, as Klausner, find his teachings to be so other-worldly that they are inimical to the practical and national welfare of Israel in its struggle for existence.

4. Both the Christian and the Jewish world is beginning to disentangle the historical character of Jesus from the theological dogmas of the Church. While the Orthodox Jew looks upon Jesus and Christianity as being too closely related to be distinguished one from the other, most Jews draw a broad line of distinction, recognizing that Jesus of Nazareth is not synonymous with the Christ of the Church. They believe that Jesus was not divine, nor did he consider himself to be so any more than all men have a spark of divinity in them. His deification was effected by the Greek and pagan elements in the early Church. Most liberal Jews are willing to accept Jesus as a great Jewish teacher and
spiritual leader, but not as Son of God, as Christ, or even as the Messiah. Their monotheism forbids deification of a man.

5. The Jew has had to be cognizant of organized Christianity in his environment for many centuries. He has evaluated and re-evaluated it in terms of the relationships he has experienced with it. Today, Jews view Christianity from some one or more of four general viewpoints. (1) It is viewed as being a Greek-pagan religion, which early deified Jesus, and severed itself from Judaism. (2) It consists of that group of people who have mercilessly persecuted the Jews throughout the centuries because of their rejection of Jesus. (3) It is that group of people who profess to follow Jesus, but who ignore his teachings in actual practice. (4) Christianity is looked upon by a growing number of modern Jews as being an ally of Judaism in carrying Jewish morality and monotheism into the Gentile world—"A light unto the Gentiles." This makes Judaism and Christianity sister religions, working for the same ends, and largely travelling the same road.

6. A progressive change in Jewish attitude toward Jesus is taking place. While a few Jews have been interested in Jesus in every generation, a revolutionary change of opinion has taken place since the beginning of this century, and an increasing number of Jews are turning to a study of Jesus. There are several reasons given for this upturn in interest in the Nazarene: Christians have come to the aid of persecuted Jews in Europe; many
theologians of the Christian faith are themselves reforming their opinions of Jesus, seeking the real Jesus of History in contrast to the Christ of medieval theology. Thousands of Jews are living in harmony with their Christian neighbors in America, and the old ignorance that once caused intense antipathy is being dispersed. We are told, however, that the Jewish interest in Jesus is purely historical, not religious or spiritual. This statement has yet to be proven, for many Jews seem spiritually interested in him.

7. Six major reasons for Jewish rejection of Jesus are given. (1) Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, but he failed to meet the Jewish expectations of what the Messiah would do. (2) Many of the older Jews still remember their lives in the ghetto, and the cruel persecutions perpetrated by the Church against them; and have a feeling of revulsion against anything Christian. (3) Klausner and others feel that Jesus failed to show any national concern; that his teachings were such as to have destroyed Judaism and the nation as well. He was too otherworldly, and taught an unrealistic attitude toward possessions, armies, and the rights and aspirations of the nation and of its citizens. (4) Jesus is rejected because of his deification by the Church. No Jew can believe that a fellow-Jew is a god. (5) Personal prejudice between Christians and Jews as individuals causes the two groups to draw away from one another. (6) The Christians, themselves, have failed to follow the teachings of
Jesus. Unless the Christian believes enough in them to make them the rule of his life, it is difficult to convince the Jew that he should follow Jesus' teachings.

3. The opinion among Jews with regard to the possibility and desireability of union with Christianity runs all the way from Sholem Asch's readiness to "unite in a single congregation of believers, to Klausner's statement that he thinks no sort of union can ever exist between the two faiths—they have two irreconcilable world-views. A great many serious barriers, we grant, appear to block the way to harmony and union; but they are not insurmountable. Every argument raised against the Jewish acceptance of Jesus can be met and, at least to the satisfaction of the investigator, invalidated—except that relating to the deification of Jesus. Even here it is possible for liberal Christianity to so re-think and re-state its theology that this objection may be silenced. Also.

The final conclusion. Many prominent Jewish leaders envision and anticipate a far closer cooperation between Christianity and Judaism in the future. While a rare few seem willing to unite under one roof, most of them see only close mutual relations—a walking hand-in-hand, but not a coalescence. The final conclusion of this study is that organizational unity is now far beyond the horizon, if it ever arrives at all. It will depend upon the Church's surrender of the dogma of deification of Jesus, which has characterized its theology since the early formation of the
Church. We are moving, however, into the era of such a close cooperation between the two bodies that antagonism, suspicion, and prejudice will be dispelled forever. The two bodies—liberal Christianity and liberal Judaism—will travel in as close harmony as exists between the different denominations of Protestantism. Probably the harmony will be much closer than now exists between Catholicism and Protestantism, or even between Fundamentalist and liberal Protestantism.
An Abstract of a Dissertation

JEWSH OPINION OF JESUS SINCE 1900

by

John Joy Randolph Held

(A. B., Baker University, 1929; B. D., Drew University, 1939)

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

1951
I. THE PROBLEM AND THE APPROACH USED

The problem of this study is to discover the attitude of Jewry at large toward Jesus. This involves also a consideration of Jewish opinion of Christianity since the two are closely related in the Jewish mind. A subsidiary interest arises to which we give attention - the outlook for an organic union of Judaism and Christianity. In seeking the answer to the problem we must enter three areas of investigation: (1) the place Jesus holds in modern Jewish religious thought; (2) the avowed reasons for the continued Jewish rejection of Jesus and the separation between Judaism and Christianity; and (3) the Jewish attitude toward the possibility and desirability of a union of the two faiths.

The procedure used was to read every available book, pamphlet, and magazine article bearing on Jewish opinion of Jesus; personal conferences were held with Rabbis and Jewish laymen; and letters and questionnaires were sent out to twenty-two Jewish Rabbis and laymen of all schools of thought.

II. A REVIEW OF THE FIELD

While many Jews show a great interest in Jesus, no Jewish writer has attempted, beyond the authors of a magazine article and one book (which scarcely comes under the category of such a compilation), to bring together the opinions of fellow Jews on the subject. Two Christian churchmen, however, Herbert Danby,
in The Jew and Christianity, and Thomas Walker, in Jewish Views of Jesus, bring together representative opinions of Jesus from all the schools of Jewish thought. These are, apparently, the only attempts that have been made.

One problem which makes our task difficult is that there is no official voice of Judaism: no person or school speaks for all Jews on any subject. There are usually recognized three distinct schools of thought, with their respective general viewpoints: Orthodox, Reform, and Conservative. A fourth is in the forming—Reconstructionism, under the direction and genius of Mordecai Kaplan. It is too young as yet to have made any significant pronouncements about Jesus. Rabbi Abraham J. Klausner of Temple Israel, Boston, Massachusetts, however, questions the validity of such classifications. It must be noted that Rabbi Abraham Klausner represents the viewpoint of liberal Judaism of 1951, often in opposition to the views held earlier in the century.

III. JEWISH OPINION OF JESUS AS A HISTORICAL CHARACTER

The attitude of Orthodoxy toward Jesus is one largely of silence. It clings to the traditions of the past, and since the traditional attitude has been that of silence, Orthodoxy remains silent. However, certain members of the group, such as Joseph Klausner, in his Jesus of Nazareth, have become vocal concerning Jesus.

Reform Judaism is almost universally friendly to the subject of Jesus, although not always to organized Christianity. The
Reform Jew, on the whole, looks on Jesus as being one of the great prophets and religious geniuses of Israel. He views him as the most influential Jew the world has seen, and he sees Christianity as an ally of Judaism in spreading monotheism and Jewish ethics among the Gentiles.

The attitude of Conservative Judaism toward Jesus appears to be the same, in general, as that of Reform, but perhaps not quite so open and frank. Conservatism is concerned primarily with Judaism, alone.

IV. THE JEWISHNESS OF JESUS

Whatever Jewish writers say in praise of Jesus is said in recognition of his Jewishness—his faithfulness to Judaism and the Law; and those who ignore or malign him do so on the basis of his alleged non-Jewishness. Except for that group of Orthodox Jews who hold a traditional aversion to Jesus, and who refuse to see anything in him that relates him to the stream of Judaism, the general opinion of Jewish thinkers is that Jesus was not only Jewish in his life and teachings, but was so Jewish that there was nothing unique to Judaism about him or his work.

On the other hand, men like Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, Trattner, and Enelow, look upon Jesus' fresh interpretation of Jewish Law and scriptures as the very essence of originality.

V. THE JEWISH EVALUATION OF JESUS AS A TEACHER

The Orthodox Jew either ignores Jesus as a teacher, or looks upon his teachings as contrary to and destructive of the essence of Judaism.
The liberal Jew sees Jesus' teachings to have been consonant with Hebrew ethics. Many rank him with Moses and the prophets and psalmists as a Jewish genius.

Still others, as Klausner, find his teachings to be too other-worldly and, therefore, inimical to the national, economic and social welfare of Israel in its struggle for existence.

VI. DIFFERENTIATION OF JESUS FROM CHRISTIANITY IN JEWISH OPINION

While the Orthodox Jew looks upon Jesus and Christianity as too closely related to be distinguished one from the other, most Jews draw a broad line of distinction, recognizing that Jesus of Nazareth is not synonymous with the Christ of later Christianity. The Christ figure is held to be the product of Greek philosophy and paganism. Jesus was not divine in any way more than an ordinary Jew considers himself to possess the spark of divinity; and his deification by the Church is treated as being completely foreign to the thought of Jesus, himself. Most liberal Jews are willing to accept Jesus as a great Jewish teacher and spiritual leader, if not the greatest; but never as Christ, Messiah, or Son of God. The strict monotheism of Judaism, of course, forbids any multiplication of the God-head.

VII. THE JEWISH EVALUATION OF CHRISTIANITY

Jewish thought looks upon Christianity from four points of view: (1) it is a Greek-pagan religion, which deified Jesus,
and severed itself from Judaism, its forms and traditions; (2) it is that group of people who have persecuted the Jews throughout the centuries; (3) it is that group which professes to follow Jesus, but which ignores his teachings; (4) some modern Jews look upon Christianity as an ally in carrying Jewish morality and monotheism into the Gentile world—"A Light unto the Gentiles." While no Jew closes his eyes to the partial truth of the first three view-points, the majority of liberal Jewish thinkers seem to adopt the fourth view-point.

VIII. THE PROGRESSIVE CHANGE IN JEWISH ATTITUDE TOWARD JESUS

A few representative Jews have been interested in Jesus in every generation. But a revolutionary change of opinion, as Sholem Asch tells us, has taken place since 1900 in the minds of the larger number of Jews concerning Jesus. He believes the cause of this is the changing attitude of Christians throughout the world toward Jews, as manifest in their coming to their aid in the countries where they have suffered at the hands of their enemies.

Trattner thinks the change is due largely to theological reasons—Christians, themselves, are reforming their own opinion of Jesus, seeking to recover the Jesus of History. The books by Klausner, Jesus of Nazareth, and From Jesus to Paul, are an indication that Jewish scholars with Orthodox backgrounds are beginning to take a lively interest in Jesus; although, Jocz
warns us, the interest is entirely historical, not religious or spiritual.

Singer declares that tens of thousands of educated Jews are giving up their traditional antipathy and ignorance of Jesus. The lack of persecution in America has aided in this change of opinion.

IX. REASONS WHY THE JEWS REJECT JESUS

Six major reasons are given by Jewish writers for the continued rejection of Jesus by Jews:

1. Jesus set himself before the people as being the Messiah. The Jews reject his claim, declaring that he failed to fulfill the Messianic expectations: he did not restore the national sovereignty, he did not bring prosperity to the nation, and the "wolf" did not "dwell with the lamb" (Isaiah 11:6).

2. The long centuries of persecution by the Christian Church closed the mind of most Jews to Christianity and to Jesus. The name of Jesus spoke terror to the hearts of millions of Jews. It is difficult for the older Jews, especially if they lived in ghettos, to free their minds from this fear and hatred.

3. Klausner declares that Jesus failed to show any national feeling; but that his teachings lent themselves to the destruction of Judaism and the culture built upon it. Jesus was too other-worldly: he taught against those things upon which modern nations are built—possessions, armies, national and individual rights.
4. Jesus was rejected, and still is, because of what Jews believe to be his deification by his followers. As long as Jesus is looked upon by his followers as a God, or Son of God, no Jew can have any religious interest in him.

5. Personal prejudice is a factor in the modern refusal. It is not so much that Christians do not like Judaism, or that Jews do not like Christianity, but some Jews do not like Christians, and some Christians do not like Jews, on racial and social grounds.

6. The Christians have failed to follow Jesus' teachings and ethic. The Jew fails to see the modern Christian attitudes as outgrowths of Jesus' teachings.

X. THE OUTLOOK FOR THE FUTURE

The opinion among Jews with regard to the possibility and desirability of union with Christianity runs all the way from Sholem Asch's readiness to "unite in a single congregation of believers," to Klausner's statement that he thinks no sort of union can ever exist between the two faiths—they have two irreconcilable world-views. A great many serious barriers, we grant, appear to block the way to harmony and union; but they are not insurmountable. Every argument raised against the Jewish acceptance of Jesus can be met and understood—except, perhaps, that relating to Christology. Even here it may be possible for liberal Christianity so to re-think
and re-state its theology that this objection may be given further consideration.

The argument based on the Messianic failure of Jesus is countered by the fact that until the Bar Cochba incident of 135 A.D., many Jews accepted his Messiahship. There were many forms of Messianic expectation inexistence. Jesus stressed the spiritual and eschatological idea, while the Jews after 70 A.D., and especially after 135 A.D., became concerned only with the political survival of the present Israel. Naturally Jesus' spiritual emphasis was too other-worldly for their national interests. Jesus' so-called negative attitude to life was not based on his blindness to the material bases of a culture; but upon his conviction of the immediacy of the coming Kingdom of God. His ethic became, then, an interim ethic, and lost contact with practical affairs, because in his mind they were no longer of any importance. The memory of old-world persecution is fast passing; and with no such conditions existing in America, the persecution argument loses its force, too.

Christology is the only serious factor which alienates the Jew, after these others have been invalidated. The Church, here, has a real obligation to re-state its theology in a more liberal vein.

There remains, then, the cultural and traditional separation between the two faiths. This can soon be erased by a mingling of Jews and Christians in many of the activities of the communities in which they live side by side.
The investigation brings us to see that many prominent Jewish leaders envision and anticipate a far closer cooperation between Christianity and Judaism in the future. While a few seem willing to unite under one roof, most liberal Jews see in the future only a close mutual relationship—a walking hand-in-hand: not an actual coalescence. The conclusion of this part of the study is that organizational unity is now far beyond the horizon, if it ever arrives. From the point of view of such Jewish leaders, it will depend upon the Church's rethinking and restatement of its Christology. We are moving into an era in which possible closer cooperation between the two bodies may dispel antagonism, suspicion, and prejudice. The two groups—liberal Christianity and liberal Judaism—may travel in as close harmony as exists between the different denominations of Christianity.
After the completion of the above dissertation, a fresh bit of information came to the writer from Rabbi Abraham J. Klausner of Temple Israel, Boston, Massachusetts. He criticizes all reference made of Joseph Klausner as an "Orthodox" Jew; and declares that modern Jews reject Klausner as being representative of any phase of Judaism. Rather, he insists, Klausner is a secularist. The basis of the references made in the dissertation is a quotation which Danby takes from The Jewish World, of December 30, 1925, which reads as follows:

For the first time in nineteen hundred years a rabbinical Jew discusses the life of Jesus without prejudice. . . He does not propose that the Jews should accept Jesus as Christ, but . . . that they should accept him as a great ethical personality. The evolutionary character of this proposal can only be understood and appreciated when one realizes that it was made in Jerusalem by the foremost Orthodox Jewish scholar of our time—after that innumerable Jewish generations had come and gone without pronouncing the name of Jesus.

The opinion expressed as to Klausner in the above quotation is concurred in by Rabbi Morris Goldstein and Rabbi Harry Richmond, both of whom, in 1950, gave Klausner as the chief representative of Orthodoxy in the literary world.

There is some difficulty in classifying Jewish scholars due to the complexity of Jewish organization. The Boston Rabbi's comment on the non-orthodox character of Joseph Klausner's work should be given serious consideration.

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AUTobiography

John Joy Randolph Held, b. December 20, 1902, Mount Vernon Indiana. Father: John H. Held; Mother: Anna M. Randolph.

Schools attended: Mount Vernon High School, Mount Vernon, Indiana; graduated 1922. Evansville College, 1924-1925.

Baker University, 1925-1926, 1927-1929; graduated 1929, A. B. degree. Drew University, 1930-31, 1937-1939; graduated 1929, B. D. degree. Graduate studies: Drew University, autumn 1939; Wichita University, summer 1945; Iliff School of Theology, summer 1946; Boston University, summers 1947, 1948. Residence for Ph. D. degree completed at Boston University, 1948.

Minister in the Methodist Church. Member of the Central Kansas Conference.

Professor of Religion and Philosophy, Kansas Wesleyan University, Salina, Kansas, 1946-1950.