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Jesus and the Zealot Option

The Zealots have recently figured prominently in the study of first century Judaism.[1] There has, however, been no consensus on whether the Zealots constituted a distinct political or religious party or whether they were simply a group of people more or less dominated by religious zeal. Kaufman Kohler, who gave us the first thorough account of the Zealots in his article in the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, tended to see them as a distinct political party with some kind of continuity reaching back to the Maccabean period.[2] On the other hand the editors of *The Beginnings of Christianity* take their side with Josephus and tend to feel that his evidence is to be trusted, in which case the use of the name Zealot to describe a Jewish sect or party cannot be earlier than AD 66.[3] Consequently, they reject any idea of continuity between the Maccabean events and the various uprisings in Palestine against Roman rule and show no interest in analyzing why Josephus takes the position he does. While certain modern historians are somewhat caustically criticized by them, Josephus escapes such criticism and is accepted as an accurate scientific historian. Robert M. Grant in his *Historical Introduction to the New Testament* does recognize that 'one of the principal difficulties in New Testament study – one not fully analyzed at the present time – is that of determining the relation of Jesus' mission to the various revolutionary movements,'[4] but one looks in vain for any detailed discussion of the Zealots by him.

There is evidence that the analysis of Jesus' relation to the revolutionary movements is now beginning. The interest that New Testament scholarship of the twenties had in looking at socio-economic and political factors, as well as religious factors, has resulted in the ability to see some connections between the various protest movements in first-century Palestine.[5] W. R. Farmer has demonstrated that there is a continuity between the Jewish Nationalism of the Seleucid and the Roman period. He also demonstrated the points at which

1. Cf.: S. F. G. Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots* (Manchester: the University Press, 1967); Martin Hengel, *Die Zeloten* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1961); W. R. Farmer, *Maccabees, Zealots and Josephus* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956). The articles 'zelos ...' by Stumpff in Kittel, *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, II, 879–90; Rengstorf, 'lestes' in *ibid.*, IV, 262–7, and Otto Betz, 'sikarios,' *ibid.*, VII, 277–81. For an attempt to explore the relationship between the Qumranite movement and the Zealots see G. R. Driver, *The Judean Scrolls* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1965).

2. Kaufman Kohler, 'Zealot,' *The Jewish Encyclopedia* (New York, 1906), XII.

3. F. J. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, *The Beginnings of Christianity* (London, 1920), I, 421–5.

4. (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), p. 277.

5. W. R. Farmer, *Maccabees, Zealots and Josephus.*

[CJT, XVI, 1 & 2 (1970), printed in Canada]

Josephus can be considered reliable and those points at which we must be suspicious of his propaganda. Farmer concludes that Jewish nationalism in the Roman period was rooted, not in secularized self-interest as Josephus suggests, but rather in pious devotion to the God of the Torah who was also the God of the national sanctuary. 'So far as we can tell, these zealous Jews were no different in their motivation from their earlier compatriots, the Maccabees, of whom the author of II Maccabees was able to say that in their fanatic fight against the Seleucids they were, of course, motivated to some extent by fear for their families, "but greatest and first was their fear for the consecrated sanctuary." '[6] Finally, Farmer seriously tried to understand Jesus with the Zealot movement as part of his background, and made some preliminary efforts to place the War Scroll in the total context of Jewish Nationalism. He sees the turning point in the life of Jesus at the time of his arrest and feels that he 'made his final break with the Zealot-apocalyptic pattern of expectation at the moment he allowed himself to be taken into custody by the forces of collaboration. By this voluntary act he disassociated himself in an unmistakable way from the Zealots.'[7]

Since Farmer's work, a major historical analysis of the Zealot party has been provided by Martin Hengel in a book published in 1961. Hengel confined himself to the specific time period between Herod I and the Jewish war. He interpreted the developments within this period in the light of the religious viewpoints of late Judaism, fully aware of the fragmentary nature of his sources and that his results would have a certain degree of mere probability about them. Nevertheless he sought to arrive at a distinct picture of the Zealot movement. He began with a critical analysis of the sources, especially of Josephus, proceeded to a philological-historical investigation of the terms used to describe the freedom parties in Judaism, and then sought to arrive at an understanding of the movement led by Judas the Galilean. He saw the characteristic features of this new sect as the emphasis on the theocratic rule of God, the way in which God assists his people in the acquisition of their freedom, and in a total rejection of the census. In contrast to some of his predecessors, Hengel was led to conclude that the movement led by Judas the Galilean was primarily determined by religious factors.

In addition Hengel gives major attention to the whole concept of zeal. Here his starting point is the understanding of the figure of Phinehas in the Jewish tradition. He also inquires about the meaning of zeal in contemporary Judaism and looks at the specific form that zeal took in the Zealot movement under the two aspects of zeal for the law and zeal for the sanctuary. He sees this zeal primarily as an eschatological intensification or radicalization of the law. Hengel also examines the various eschatological aspects of the Zealot movement in connection with late Jewish eschatology. The elements that are of primary importance here are prophetic enthusiasm and the conception of a pre-Messianic time of suffering and from these aspects he understands such

6. *Ibid.*, p. 122.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 198.

concrete behaviour patterns of the Zealots as their willingness to part with property, their flight into the desert, and their unconditional preparedness for martyrdom. If the Messiah is to rule eventually, the only way this can happen is through the Holy war, after which Israel will rule over all the world.

In the last part of Hengel's study he provides a sketch of the historical development of the Jewish resistance movement. He sees it as beginning with the murder of the robber leader, Hezekiah, by Herod the Great. The rule of Herod the Great then forms the preparation for the later unrest which broke out after his death. Yet at that time the organizational and ideological synthesis was missing for the rebels. This synthesis was brought into being through Judas the Galilean and from the time of Judas the Zealots formed a distinct party standing very close to Pharisaism, but whose history is hard to trace because of the fragmentary reports that we have from Josephus. The goal of the Zealot party was reached in the beginning of the Jewish war; however, through the surprise murder of its leader Menahem, the son of Judah, the party was split into two groups. It was therefore impossible for them to embark upon one course of action. Through his research Hengel was brought to the conclusion that, 'The Zealots are a relatively fixed movement with individual religious viewpoints, which significantly influenced the history of Palestinian Judaism in the decisive time between the years 6 and 70 AD.'[8] Hengel did not carry his research into the area of making comparisons with the New Testament itself or the teachings of Jesus. This was too big an order and apart from making a few suggestions in the last few pages of his book, he left this work for someone else.

In 1967 S. G. F. Brandon published his book, *Jesus and the Zealots*, in which he built upon the research of Hengel and others and with painstaking care sought to trace the relationships of Jesus to the Zealots. He accepts the position of Farmer and Hengel, that the Zealots constituted a major force in first century Judaism and that they must be taken seriously in any study of the Jesus of history. There is every reason, he believes, to assume that Jesus during his youth and early manhood grew up with a close acquaintance of the Zealots and their aims and activities. The memory of Judas was treasured by the Galileans who would have seen in him a martyr for the sacred cause of Israel's freedom. It is likely that many Galileans had taken part in the revolt of AD 6 and Jesus would have known some of the survivors and the families of those who had perished. 'To a Galilean boy or youth those martyred patriots would surely have been his heroes and doubtless he would often have listened enthralled to tales of Zealot exploits against the hated Romans.'[9] Brandon notes the evidence of Josephus that Zealotism appealed to the youth of the country and that it was essentially a popular movement embodying both the religious and social aspirations as well as the resentments of the people of the land. This is an important factor in evaluating the attitude of Jesus and his disciples toward Zealotism.[10]

8. Martin Hengel, *Die Zeloten*, p. 5.
9. S. F. G. Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots*, p. 65.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 68.

Brandon accepts the emerging consensus that Jesus had at least one disciple who was a professed Zealot and that others of his disciples were deeply influenced by the Zealot movement. Although the gospels are strangely silent about the events that convulsed Jewish life during the years concerned, there are bits of evidence in them that Jesus was aware of these developments. Indeed Brandon says 'across this background of violence Jesus appears to move untouched and unconcerned by the deep feelings of those whom he sought to prepare for the coming of the kingdom of God.'[11] It is Brandon's thesis that 'Matthew and Luke elaborated the Marcan portrait of Jesus into that of the pacific Christ, which became the established tradition of Christianity.'[12] It is impossible here to take up all the elements in Brandon's argument – for example, his theory of an Alexandrian origin of the gospel of Matthew – but it is necessary to plant the seed of caution in our minds. It is questionable whether we can discard so easily the evidence that prior to the writing of Matthew and Luke and perhaps Mark, 'there already existed a tradition of Jesus as the Messiah who did not seek an earthly kingdom and its acquisition by force of arms.'[13] Where, for example, is the evidence that some 'pacifist Pharisees made charges against actions of Jesus deemed politically provocative' which would call for the pacifist traits introduced into the temptation story?[14] Brandon may be correct that in later Christian thought the development of the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, and his role as the saviour of all mankind made it impossible to contemplate that he could have involved himself in Jewish national affairs, especially of a revolutionary kind.[15] But is the evidence in the gospels really that clear? Do they actually represent him as 'living aloof or insulated from the political realities of first century Judea' and did the evangelists really 'fabricate for their own particular apologetic needs a representation of him which would be confirmed and sanctioned and become doctrinally imperative?'[16]

We must recall that every one of the synoptic gospels depicts Jesus as proclaiming his mission in baldly political terms. There is after all nothing more political than the term kingdom and to say that 'Jesus pursued his mission curiously insulated from current political events' seems to be a serious misreading of the evidence.[17] What seems most surprising is that Brandon assumes that the concept of the pacific Christ quickly became the established tradition, 'particularly since it was required theologically; the incarnated Son of God who died to save mankind, obviously could not have involved himself in contemporary Jewish politics, which no later Christian theologian understood or had the slightest interest in understanding.'[18] There are some fundamental problems with this. First of all, Christian theology has not shown any reluctance in later centuries to reject the pacific Christ. Must we assume that the events of AD 66 – AD 72 were so overwhelming that the early Christian community had to create a pacific Christ? Or could there not have been strong

11. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 285.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 310.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 314.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 320.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*, p. 323.
18. *Ibid.*

theological considerations derived from the Old Testament itself, which could have permitted them to go either the way of pacifism or violence? Faced with the option of taking either the violent Zealots (Phinehas-Elijah-Mattathias) as models or the non-violent servant of Isaiah, the early church chose the suffering servant. Why did they do so? Is it only because of the events of AD 70 or is it because Jesus himself had made that choice? This question is all the more important when it is recognized that Pharisaic Judaism had a somewhat ambivalent attitude towards Phinehas and his manner of expressing loyalty to the Torah. Against some of the attacks against Phinehas the Gemara says: 'Moreover the Holy One, blessed be he, said to Moses, "Be the first to extend a greeting of peace to him," as it is written: Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace; and this atonement (that Phinehas has made) is worthy of being an everlasting atonement.'[19] It may perhaps be misleading to assume that Jesus himself did not participate in this choice. Perhaps he himself chose between the models given to him and took his position with those Pharisees who rejected the atonement of Phinehas. Instead of taking the lives of those who were unfaithful to the Torah, Jesus chose to give his life for them and in that way make atonement for his people. Hermeneutical choices are generally not made by groups but by strong individuals. Is it conceivable that Jesus himself made this choice?

Brandon concludes that 'there seems to be nothing in the principles of Zealotism, as enunciated by Judas of Galilee, that we have definite evidence for knowing that Jesus would have repudiated.'[20] Brandon sees 'conservative scholars' objecting to this statement with the disclaimer 'that Jesus would not have resorted to violence' but he says this objection cannot be maintained 'in the face of the evidence of Jesus arming his disciples and his attack in the temple.'[21]

The question here is not whether the scholar who objects to this is conservative, for it surely could be argued that the rejection of violence beginning with Socrates and even up till the time of Martin Luther King is not a characteristic of the conservative mentality. Indeed, one could argue the opposite, but the pertinent question is whether these two examples as interpreted by Brandon give us two clear examples of Jesus' acceptance of Zealot principles and practice. Did Jesus arm his disciples? Did he attack the temple?

It would seem evident that the scholar has no need to discount Jesus' connections with the Zealots; however, he does not need to magnify them. Surely he cannot argue, as Brandon does, that 'the presence of a Zealot among his disciples means that Jesus deliberately chose a professed Zealot for an apostle, which, in turn, indicates that the profession of Zealot principles and aims was not incompatible with intimate participation in the mission of Jesus.'[22] Does

19. Borge Salomonsen, 'Some Remarks on the Zealots with special regard to the term "Qannaim" in Rabbinic Literature,' *New Testament Studies*, 12 (1966), 164–76, especially 173.

20. *Jesus and the Zealots*, p. 355.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 355, n.3.

22. *Ibid.*

this mean that because Jesus also chose Levi the profession of a tax collector with all that involves was not incompatible with intimate participation in the mission of Jesus? Does it mean that because Jesus apparently enjoyed the presence of prostitutes that, therefore, the profession of prostitution with its principles and aims was not incompatible with intimate participation in the mission of Jesus? Here it appears that a major leap has been made which considerably weakens the thesis that Brandon has established.

The overwhelming evidence of studies of the Zealot movement is that Jesus was deeply attracted to their high view of the law, their high view of the sanctuary, and that he shared their zeal for the sovereignty of God over the lives of men. The gospels seem to indicate that the one option which confronted him almost daily was to take the Zealot way of changing society. That he rejected this way argues for his own creativity and the courage he had to select that part of the Old Testament which, together with some elements of Greek philosophical teaching, had found a better way than violence to bring about justice in human society. Matthew's quotation of Isaiah in chapter 12 makes it clear that justice is a goal of Jesus' work, but the total passage from Isaiah also makes it clear that non-violence is the means by which that goal is achieved.

When we look at the two incidents that Brandon cites, namely, 'the arming of the disciples' and the 'attack upon the temple,' we are confronted with notorious difficulties of interpretation. According to Luke 22:35–58, Jesus reminded his disciples of their earlier mission and asked them whether at that time they lacked anything. When they reply that they do not, he says, 'Things are different now, whoever has a purse had better take it with him, and his pack too; and if he has no sword, let him sell his cloak to buy one.' He then quotes a line from Isaiah 53 to indicate that he will find himself among the outlaws. Their reply: 'Lord, Lord we have two swords,' is impatiently rejected with the words: 'Enough of this kind of talk.' The Greek, *hikanon estin*, judging from a similar expression in Deuteronomy 3:26, indicates a misunderstanding of the metaphor and a desire to terminate the discussion.

Difficult as it may be to understand the full meaning of this incident it would seem to be relatively easy to reject Brandon's interpretation of it. If indeed this was a call to arms then Jesus must have been very naïve to assume that two swords were enough. It would seem rather that we have here another instance of that use of violent metaphor that we find elsewhere in Jesus.[23] The background may be the Jewish debate whether swords would be needed in the Messianic kingdom and the answer given by some rabbis that they would serve a decorative purpose since war would be abolished. Luke's purpose can hardly have been to note that Jesus wanted his disciples to be armed to the teeth for shortly thereafter when Peter uses one of the two swords Jesus rebuked him. If Jesus did have the reputation of being the leader of a robber band then it seems passing strange that the authorities were not more repressive in their measures to eradicate the disciples after the crucifixion of their

23. G. B. Caird, *Saint Luke* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1963), p. 241.

leader. Adolf Schlatter, who made the first extensive source analysis and study of this passage, concluded that Jesus had in mind personal attack of the kind the Sicarii were noted for. His idea that the disciple will willingly give up his life as a witness for Jesus, after he has warded off the murderer as long as he can, seems a little far-fetched.[24]

It is also difficult to believe that Jesus would contradict everything he had said and done in the earlier part of his life in this brief moment. There is no manual of warfare in what he left for his disciples, there is no exaltation of the heroes of violence such as Phinehas, Mattathias, or Judas the Galilean and all the Zealots that seemed to have gathered around him departed from their earlier commitment to the Zealot methods. At least we have no evidence that they participated in the Zealot revolt at any time in the first century.

Whatever we may make of this incident, whether we assume that the word sword is to be taken metaphorically, or whether we see the term *machaira* as signifying a knife, it seems clear that the doctrine of the two swords derived from this passage by the later church has to be rejected as well as any assumption that this passage means that Jesus invited his disciples to arm themselves. The holy war concept has its place in the thought of Jesus but the book of Revelation seems to have understood it most clearly when it sees the Holy war as something in which the followers of the Lamb do not participate except insofar as they suffer in history.[25] The Lamb, the leader of the Holy war, wins it by the way in which he suffered and any pain he inflicts proceeds from the sword which he bears in his mouth and which has more power to heal than to destroy.

There remains, then, the 'attack upon the temple' as additional evidence that Jesus was influenced by the Zealot movement. It is clear that Jesus shared with the Zealot movement a deep concern for the Temple. It is also clear that, like the Zealots, he confronted the Temple establishment rather than withdrawing into the wilderness to purify the Temple. It is further obvious that the behaviour of Jesus in the Temple contrasts sharply with the traditional portrait of Jesus as a kind of effeminate Mr Milquetoast, complacent about his surroundings and inviting only the abuse of others. All the gospels depict him as one who was angry and who gave expression to his anger by means of this direct confrontation.

According to Brandon, the attack on the Temple constituted a most radical challenge to the authority of the sacerdotal aristocracy 'and it was a truly revolutionary act, for the High Priest held his office and authority from the Romans, and was thus an essential factor of the Roman government in Judea. To challenge the rule of the High Priest was thus, in effect, to challenge the Roman rule.'[26] The depiction of the gospels that Jesus did this alone, Brandon

24. The best study of the passage is A. Schlatter, *Die beiden Schwerter* (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1916).

25. Otto Betz, 'Jesu Heiliger Krieg,' in *Novum Testamentum*, 2 (1957), 116–37. See also W. Klassen, 'Vengeance in the Apocalypse,' *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 28 (1966), 300–11.

26. *Jesus and the Zealots*, p. 332.

argues, can scarcely approximate the truth. With the Temple police present the only way this could have happened was for a group of Jesus' followers to pitch in and the incident must have been 'attended by violence and pillage.'[27]

That the cleansing of the Temple had revolutionary significance may no doubt be accepted. Whether indeed it was accompanied by the violence and pillage, as Brandon thinks, is a moot point. It seems inappropriate, however, to argue either that therefore Christians should also engage in destruction of property as certain people did at the Uppsala Assembly of the World Council of Churches or that this justifies Christian participation in nuclear warfare. Anyone can justify such actions on whatever grounds he wishes but he cannot find any direct support in either the teaching or actions of Jesus of Nazareth. Neither, however, can Brandon use it as evidence that Jesus followed the Zealots in this regard for there simply is no evidence that he used the same methods in the Temple as did the Zealots and, although we may accept with Brandon that our gospel accounts are edited, we need not accept his position on the direction in which they are edited. For one always wonders why the editors did not remove entirely any such references if they were embarrassing to them. Given their historical situation, did they not do a curiously bad job of concealing Jesus' relation to the Zealots, if indeed they had any desire to conceal it at all?

The Greek does not force us to conclude that Jesus used violence on the people, for the preponderant usage of *te-kai* in the New Testament must lead us to the translation 'Jesus drove them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle' (John 2:14). The whip crudely constructed at the moment, perhaps from the halters of the animals, would be a necessity for the bulls would have been untied in order to remove them from the temple enclosure and therefore would have presented a threat to human safety. John, in describing the scene, was thinking primarily of the bulls for they gave a dramatic character. Since Jesus also used the whip on the sheep he adds in apposition, 'the sheep as well as the bulls.' It is as if he were saying, 'it is not only the bulls that Jesus drove out with his whip but also the sheep.' The word 'drove them out' (*exebalen*) has always been translated to place the emphasis on the violence of the situation, whereas the verb may properly be translated (as Jean Lasserre has noted) simply by 'he caused them to go out' as it is in Mark 5:40 and Matthew 9:38.[28]

Lasserre concludes that no gospel writer indicates that Jesus used violence on the people except insofar as the overwhelming force of his personality expelled them from the Temple environs. To be sure, anyone freeing the bulls in the Temple would have frightened the people who were doing commerce there; John's grammar allows the interpretation of the whip being intended for the bulls who had to be expelled with some kind of force. The fact that most translations have not rendered this passage similarly is a result of their dependence upon the Latin rather than the Greek; more recent translations

27. *Ibid.*, p. 333.

28. Jean Lasserre, 'Un Contresens tenace,' in *Cahiers de la Reconciliation*, 10 (Paris, October 1967).

are finally breaking through to a better rendering of the Greek. And even if Jesus had used physical violence to expel the people who profaned the Temple there is still a world of difference between the act of Jesus of Nazareth and the assassination of the High Priest Jonathan and other magnates by the Sicarii[29] during the procuratorship of Felix (AD 52–60) or the seizure of the Temple in 66 and the election of a new high priest. One cannot imagine two more disparate methods of cleansing the Temple.

It thus seems evident that a fuller understanding of first-century Judaism can only be obtained when we take seriously the Jewish resistance movement which had its origin in the Seleucid period and which was fed by the daring example of Phinehas in Numbers 25. Both Jewish and Christian scholars have made progress in taking the Zealot movement seriously and studying it as a part of the total scene in the first century. There has also been some progress in realizing that Josephus, as an historian, gives us only a one-sided picture of the Zealots. Furthermore, we can only gain by seeing this movement as an important part of the world in which Jesus came to manhood and made his choices. The total religious outlook of the Zealots comes very close to that of Jesus himself and there is every reason to believe that many elements of the Zealot theology must have held some attraction to him at various points in his life.

Yet there were also fundamental points at which Jesus did not share their theology, and these elements go back to the most sure foundation we have been able to find in the gospel tradition. For within the earliest materials and throughout all of that tradition runs the consistent report that Jesus associated freely with sinners and harlots. W. R. Farmer has called attention to the fact that this is a fundamental point at which Jesus diverges from the Zealots. Zealot wrath focussed not on the Gentile but on any member of God's covenant people who ought to have known better but who was collaborating with the enemy. These collaborationists were to be killed for they were the real enemies of God's cause. These same people become the specific objects of Jesus' activity and he defied the ritual laws in his relations with them. This is clearly in contrast to Zealot theology and practice. A different view of God and his holiness appears to be operative here. At the bedrock of gospel tradition stands this element which is in direct conflict with Zealot theology.

Side by side with the Zealot point of view there was the withdrawal strategy of the Essenes; while Jesus accepted much of their point of view he rejected withdrawal, choosing rather to live in the world, with all its violence and hypocrisy. Some of the Essenes were finally influenced by the Zealots and resorted to violence; Jesus, although numbered among violent men, was

29. There is still no agreement on whether the Sicarii are a group within the Zealot movement sharing the same ideology but advocating a different method (so Betz, 'sikarios,' pp. 278f.) or whether their differences are more basic (as argued by G. Baumbach in 'Zeloten und Sikarier,' ThLZ 90 (1965), cols. 727–50 and in his article, 'Das Freiheitsverständnis in der zelotischen Bewegung,' in Fritz Maass, ed., *Das Ferne und das nahe Wort: Festschrift Leonhard Rost* (Berlin, 1967), pp. 11–18).

deeply influenced by the tradition of the suffering servant and never condoned violence or participated in it. He took the risk of being identified with the violent men rather than retreating from the conflict. He challenged the structures of power and sought to gather around himself men who would seek a deeper and more pervasive power and who would be able to use this power for the advancement of a different kind of kingdom; a kingdom whose very difference would make it incomprehensible to many, as it remained for his immediate disciples and as it became objectionable to many of his followers. The clearest evidence of this is his emphasis on love for one's enemies. No Zealot ever taught this; they died with a curse on their lips. In this Jesus not only fully lived what he himself had taught his disciples but also made a decisive break with the Zealots and the Qumran community.

Some thirty years after the crucifixion a group of Zealots took their last stand at Masada. They had their own way of getting vengeance against their enemies. For many they remain today a noble example of great courage. But history has yet to judge whether the example of Socrates – who died because he believed that 'it is never right to harm anyone,'[30] and rejected injustice because of the harm it does to the one who is unjust[31] – and the testimonies of Isaiah and Jesus are preferable to that of the Zealots. That verdict cannot be made when we wipe out the lines of difference between them for we have seen too clearly in our own day that it is possible for men who live in a violent society to raise their voices against violence without retreating into seclusion. To be sure, men who dedicate themselves to such a programme of action and teaching walk a lonely road and are often accused of fomenting violence. Men find it hard to differentiate between people, working for a certain end, who are committed to violence and those, working for the same end, who are committed to non-violence. Yet who would seriously put Malcolm X and Martin Luther King in the same category? For all that was common to them, there was much more that divided them; although both were gunned down, the effects of their deaths have been quite different. Jesus too lived in a complex society where violence was on the increase and where religious heroes were used to support violence. He had a deep affinity with Zealot religion and its concern for change in society. He too wanted God's rule established and he too was willing to die for the cause. Did he share their willingness to kill for the cause of God's kingdom? It is clear from recent studies that the Zealot option would have been appealing to him. He confronted it repeatedly if not daily. As a Jew who took the kingdom seriously and devoutly wished to serve God he must have been attracted to the measure of their devotion. Nevertheless the question still remains: Did he exercise the option of becoming a Zealot, or did he reject essential features of their theology and methodology?

30. Plato, *Republic* II, 1, 335.

31. Plato, *Republic* V, 2, 366. This theme in Plato is dealt with superbly by R. Guardini, *The Death of Socrates* (New York, 1962), p. 67 and also by E. Benz, *Der gekreuzigte Gerechte bei Plato, im Neuen Testament und in der alten Kirche* (Wiesbaden, 1950), esp. p. 8.