

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



**PATREON**

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

**PayPal**

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *The Expositor* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_expositor-series-1.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expositor-series-1.php)

## CHRISTIANITY AND JUDAISM.<sup>1</sup>

### I.

IT has been well said that "the Old Testament does not merely contain prophecies: it is from first to last a prophecy." It is the record of the revelation of a religion of hope, of progress, of evolution. Through trial and failure and disappointment it looks steadily forward to an end, a consummation, a fulfilment. Its scope and reach are wide as the universe, for it opens with the vision of Creation, and bids us contemplate the idea of a world which in its Maker's mind and purpose is "very good"; the book which contains the quintessence of its spirit ends with a chorus of universal praise to that sovereign Lord:—"Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord"; while what is perhaps the latest writing in the whole collection closes by pointing forward to "the end of the days" as the goal of hope and patience (Dan. xii. 13).

But progress could not be in an unbroken line. Man disobeyed the sovereign will of his Maker. Sin entered into the world, and the history of the world must become the history of Redemption—redemption through discipline and suffering. While God "left not Himself without witness" among the other nations of the world, He chose the people of Israel to be the special trustee of His revelation of Himself, the herald of His salvation to the ends of the earth. Step by step He made known His character and His will through the teachings of lawgiver and prophet and psalmist and wise man; age after age through times of

<sup>1</sup> A sermon preached before the University of Oxford on Sunday, January 25, 1903, on the foundation of Dr. Macbride for a sermon on Messianic Prophecy, the text being Rom. x. 4:

"Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to every one that believeth."

anarchy and apostasy and exile and persecution He preserved and disciplined that people. Yet at the end of the Old Testament the curtain falls on apparent failure; on glorious promises unfulfilled; on splendid hopes unrealized. "I will give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth." . . . "Arise, shine! for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee" (Isa. xlii. 6; xlix. 6; lx. 1). Were not such glowing words of promise a mockery when Israel's religion was still merely national, and as a nation Israel was partly scattered in exile, partly struggling for bare existence as an insignificant province of one or other of the great heathen empires?

## II.

The Old Testament is a prophecy: if it stood alone, it would be a magnificent failure. But Christianity and Judaism both claim to "fulfil" it, to carry forward and develop its teachings, and so to accomplish Israel's mission to the world. Christian apologists would not lay so much stress now as they used formerly to do upon the fulfilment of particular and circumstantial prophecies as a proof of the truth of Christianity. They would appeal rather to the whole drift and tenor and tendency of the Old Testament; and the controversy between Judaism and Christianity at the present day is concerned not so much with the interpretation of particular prophecies, as with the relation of the whole New Testament to the whole Old Testament, or rather of the dispensation of which the New Testament is the record to that of which the Old Testament is the record. Still, as in the Apostolic age, the central question is, "Is Jesus indeed the Christ? is He in truth the Son of God?" To us, the paramount claims of Christianity are obvious; but Judaism maintains no less strenuously that it, and it alone, has preserved unimpaired the faith of a pure and lofty monotheism, and held fast to

the unshaken confidence that at last the God of Israel will be the God of the whole world.<sup>1</sup>

Let us consider then (1) the claim of Christianity, and (2) the position of modern Judaism.

1. In act and word, if the records of the New Testament are in any degree trustworthy, Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, and to stand in a position of authority towards the ancient law of Israel. Twice, at the beginning and at the close of His ministry, when He cleansed the Temple, He claimed in act to fulfil the prophecy of Malachi:—"The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His Temple."<sup>2</sup> Deliberately in His triumphal entry to Jerusalem He offered Himself to the people as the King whom Zechariah had foretold (Zech. ix. 9; Matt. xxi. 5). Though He seldom spoke to His disciples of Himself as the Messiah, the conviction grew upon them as they listened to His teaching and saw His working that He was indeed the fulfilment of Israel's hopes; and when growing faith sprang forth into open confession, He welcomed it as a Divine gift of insight (Matt. xvi. 13 ff.).

He claimed authority to interpret the Law; to infuse new life and power into its enactments by pointing to the spirit which lay beneath the letter, and to the fundamental principles of which the several precepts were but single examples. He rose above the view of its obligations maintained by the religious authorities of the time, and dared to pronounce that some of its provisions were but temporary accommodations to the needs of the times at which they were given. He laid bare the inadequacy, the perversity, the falsity of prevalent ideas of religion as an interpretation of the Old Testament. To His disciples after the resurrection He interpreted the Scriptures, and showed them that a suffering Messiah was not contrary to their teaching.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Schechter, *Studies in Judaism*, p. 184.

<sup>2</sup> Mal. iii. 1: compare the context.

From the first the Apostles claimed that Jesus was the Christ, in whom the Old Testament was fulfilled. St. Peter and St. John strove to show the Jews how He united the types of the King and the suffering Servant, in accordance with what the prophets had foretold, and how His claims had been attested by His resurrection.<sup>1</sup> St. Paul affirms the continuity of his ministry with the Old Testament. "I stand unto this day, testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come; how that the Christ must suffer, and how that He first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles" (Acts xxvi. 22, 23). Throughout his Epistles we see how his mind is saturated with the Old Testament; he naturally speaks its language: far more than merely by direct quotation he implies that the Christian Church is the heir of the promises to Israel. Henceforth Israel is to be merged in the vaster unity of the Christian Church. Jew and Gentile are to be one. There must be no distinction of race or rank. All are one in Christ Jesus. The law was temporary, provisional; as a system it had fulfilled its work; a new era had opened, absorbing, enlarging, spiritualizing, confirming, all that was of permanent significance in the old dispensation. A new era, ushered in by a new fact, yet the true continuation and completion of the old, designed in the purpose of the one God from all eternity.

From a different point of view again the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews urged the same lesson, bidding the Christians of Palestine find in Christ the fulfilment of all that the ancient ritual of sacrifice and ordinances of priesthood had been meant to teach.

<sup>1</sup> Acts ii., iv. Note the R.V. rendering of τὸν παῖδα αὐτοῦ; *his Servant*, iii. 13, 26; cp. iv. 27, 30.

But I need say no more. To us Christians the thought is familiar that the New Testament from first to last maintains that Jesus was the goal to which the Old Testament had been pointing *πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως*, "by divers portions and in divers manners"; that by His Person and His work not less than by His teaching He fulfilled law and prophecy and psalm, and was Himself the Word and the Wisdom of God. He taught the Christian Church in principle how it was to absorb and expand all the permanent truth of the Old Testament, abandoning temporary, national, material elements, transmuting what was national and limited into what was universal and expansive. All the rays of light from every quarter find their focus in Him, to shine forth with new purity and intensity to illuminate the whole of humanity throughout the ages.

But when it is maintained that Christianity is the legitimate fulfilment and heir of the Old Testament, it is not meant that the course of God's dealings with men could have been clearly foreseen beforehand in exact detail; that law and prophecy would have enabled men to anticipate the miracle of the Incarnation. It was a new thing in the history of the world, that God who had spoken of old time in the prophets, should speak in the person of His Son. Looking back, men could see how the past had all been preparing for it; how it interpreted and unified the past; but the fulfilment utterly transcends all that prophecy could foretell beforehand, and brings a new power into the world. It is the re-creation of humanity.

2. But Judaism urges its claim not less strenuously to be the rightful heir and the true fulfilment of the Old Testament. But what is Judaism? One of the most learned of modern Jews pronounces this question to be not less perplexing than the problem, "What is God's world?" "Judaism," he says, "is also a great Infinite, composed of

as many endless units, the Jews. And these Unit-Jews have been, and are still, scattered through all the world, and have passed under an immensity of influences, good and bad. If so, how can we give an exact definition of the Infinite, called Judaism? ”<sup>1</sup>

If Dr. Schechter declines to give a definition of Judaism, how can I venture to attempt one? But there are at the present time two distinct types of Judaism, which are rival claimants to represent the true spirit of Jewish religion. Each no doubt has innumerable degrees and variations, but they represent two distinct and apparently irreconcilable tendencies. Reformed Judaism involves a mental attitude which is acknowledged by its adherents to be distinctly different from that of their orthodox co-religionists,<sup>2</sup> I would rather say, entirely incompatible with it. Let me quote two descriptions of these two schools of Judaism, one from a Christian scholar who has the most intimate and sympathetic acquaintance with Jewish thought and literature, and one from a Jewish source.

“Judaism,” writes Dr. Dalman, “is very far from being the religion of the Old Testament. Jewish orthodoxy is based on the Talmudic tradition of the post-Christian period, and is therefore in many respects of more recent origin than Christianity. Reformed Judaism either is or aims at being the most improved form of Jewish religion; it sees in the mediaeval religious philosophy, and moreover in Talmudism, earlier stages of the evolutionary history of the religion which finds its completion in reform itself. Just as orthodoxy judges the Old Testament according to the standard of Rabbinic tradition, so Reform substitutes its special Jewish religious conceptions for the thoughts of the Old Testament.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Schechter, *Studies in Judaism*, p. 184.

<sup>2</sup> Simon in *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, vi. 265.

<sup>3</sup> Dalman, *Christianity and Judaism*, tr. by Box, p. 38 (1901).

Now listen to a comparison of Orthodox and Reformed Judaism from a Jewish writer.<sup>1</sup>

“Rabbinical Judaism is ‘law.’ The law is twofold, written and oral. Every command of the written law in the Pentateuch, and of the oral law as codified in the *Shulchan Aruch*,<sup>2</sup> is equally binding. The ceremonial law has equal potency with the moral commands. Reformed Judaism, on the other hand, claims that there is a vast difference between the universal precepts of religion and morality and the enactments arising from the circumstances and conditions of special times and places. . . . No ceremonial law can be eternally binding.” Rabbinical Judaism maintains that the laws whose fulfilment is dependent on residence in Palestine are not abrogated, but only suspended. The burden of its thought is national. It prays for the restoration of the Jews to Palestine under a ruler of the house of David, for the rebuilding of the Temple, and the restoration of sacrificial worship. Reformed Judaism “contends that the Jews are a religious community only; that the national existence ceased when the Romans set the temple aflame and destroyed Jerusalem. With the dispersion of the Jews all over the world the universal mission of Judaism began.” Again “Rabbinical Judaism believes in the coming of a personal Messiah; reformed Judaism places its hope in the coming of the age of universal peace and good will among men. . . . Not a Jew, but *the Jew*, is the Messiah. Israel is the Messiah of the peoples of the earth.” Circumcision need no longer be considered a *conditio sine qua non* for admission into Judaism.

<sup>1</sup> D. Philipson, *The Progress of the Jewish Reform Movement in the United States*, *J.Q.R.* x. 52 ff. (1898). Compare the articles on *Reformed Judaism* by O. J. Simon in *J.Q.R.* vi. 262 (1894), and on *Liberal Judaism in England*, by C. G. Montefiore, *J.Q.R.* xii. 618 (1900).

<sup>2</sup> “The Table arranged,” a compendium of Rabbinical law and usage, compiled by R. Joseph Karo, in the sixteenth century.



An expression of belief in the distinguishing doctrines of the faith on the part of the would-be proselyte is all-sufficient for entrance into the religion.<sup>1</sup>

### III.

Thus, on the one hand, the attitude of orthodox Judaism is that of strenuous and rigid conservatism. This, it is acknowledged, is the attitude of the majority of Jews in England, who nevertheless are far from being sufficiently strict to satisfy the rigorism of many of their continental co-religionists. "Many Jews from abroad decline to partake of meat-food at the table of *any Jewish minister* in this country."<sup>2</sup> The Authorised Daily Prayer-Book of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Empire still retains the Thirteen Principles of the Faith as formulated by Maimonides in the 12th century, which include professions of belief in the integrity and immutability and permanent validity of the Law, in the coming of the Messiah, and in the Resurrection of the dead. It contains numerous prayers for the restoration of Israel to the Holy Land, the rebuilding of the Temple, and the re-establishment of sacrificial worship.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *J.Q.R.* x. 92 ff.      <sup>2</sup> *J.Q.R.* vi. 307.

<sup>3</sup> Principle viii. "I believe with perfect faith that the whole Law now in our possession is the same that was given to Moses our teacher; peace be unto him."

ix. "I believe with perfect faith that this Law will not be changed, and that there will never be any other law from the Creator, blessed be His Name."

xii. "I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah, and though he tarry I will wait daily for his coming."

xiii. "I believe with perfect faith that there will be a resurrection of the dead at the time when it shall please the Creator, blessed be His Name, and exalted be the remembrance of Him for ever and ever." (*Prayer-Book*, ed. S. Singer, p. 90).

In the *Evening and Morning Service for Sabbaths* the following prayer is used (*ib.* pp. 119, 142): "May it be Thy will, O Lord our God and God of our fathers, that the temple be speedily rebuilt in our days, and grant our portion in Thy Law. And there we will serve Thee with awe, as in the days of old, and as in ancient years. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in ancient years."

See also the *Services for the Day of Atonement*, p. 265, and *Grace after Meals*, pp. 282, 285.

On the other hand the attitude of Reformed Judaism is a critical eclecticism, guided by the influence of modern thought, of Western civilization, and in some respects even of Christianity. It is not only prepared to abandon the Rabbinical developments of Judaism, but it speaks of the ritual laws of the Pentateuch in language which the majority of believing Christians would regard as irreverent. It claims the right "to pick and choose among the ceremonies and the rites and the beliefs which have become associated with Judaism in the course of centuries."<sup>1</sup> It feels that orthodox Judaism is powerless to accomplish what it believes to be the mission of Judaism to the world. "Any influence of Judaism upon the outer world," it sadly confesses, "any active witnessing to God, is impossible, so long as its pure doctrine is overshadowed and overcrusted by a mass of oriental, restrictive, and in their origin superstitious observances."<sup>2</sup> "A convert to the *dogmas* of Rabbinical Judaism is in the present day an impossibility."<sup>3</sup> The "amazing idealization of the Law," which has been the unifying power in Judaism, "is slowly breaking down, when the Pentateuch is being estimated at its actual historic worth, and subjected to the scalpel of a criticism which disintegrates its unity, and bereaves it of its supernatural glamour."<sup>4</sup> In consequence Judaism is losing the one unifying power, which has linked together the fragmentary and often inconsistent elements of its religious teaching—the love of the Law. Reformed Judaism can, it would seem, only hope to accomplish the mission of Judaism to the world by abandoning much of what has always been regarded as essentially characteristic in the rites and beliefs of Judaism, by stigmatizing as puerile and absurd, much of the Law which Jews have always been taught to regard as divine and

<sup>1</sup> *J. Q. R.* vi. 309.<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* viii. 412.<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* vi. 311.<sup>4</sup> Montefiore, *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 550.

eternal, and by relinquishing as a foolish illusion hopes which they had been taught to cherish as their consolation and their glory in the midst of obloquy and persecution. It is an attitude toward the Law far less reverent than that of St. Paul, whom they condemn as the great misinterpreter and traducer of the Law.

#### IV.

The attitude of Christianity towards the Old Testament is in strong contrast to the attitude alike of Orthodox Judaism and of Reformed Judaism. While it maintains that "the old things have passed away," nay, rather "are become new," transfigured in the light of a new revelation, it sees in that old order not puerilities and absurdities and survivals of pagan superstitions, but a scheme of divinely ordered preparation for a higher order and a larger truth. It is to the Christian mind pathetic to find Reformed Judaism confessing the impotence of Rabbinic Judaism—and that means the faith of the vast majority of Jews at the present day—to fulfil the mission of Judaism to the world, and desiring exactly what Christianity has to offer—a unifying and interpreting principle, which may take the place of the love of the Law, and enable it to discriminate with authority between what was temporary, propædeutic, national, and what is eternal, permanent, universal. It feels "the want of a dominant and consistent doctrine, adequate and comprehensive, soul-satisfying and rational, which can set forth and illumine in its entire compass the relation of the individual to society and to God."<sup>1</sup> Such a comprehensive doctrine is not to be found, as this writer suggests it might be, by combining a selection of "the words attributed in the Gospels to Jesus" with "the highest religious teaching in the Old Testament and the early Rabbinical literature." The unifying, harmonizing,

<sup>1</sup> Montefiore, *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 550.

interpreting principle and power must be sought for, not in any eclectic body of doctrines, but in the Person of Jesus Christ. In Him is to be found the unity of the past and the future, the unity of all humanity, the unity of the individual and society, the unity of the seen and the unseen, the unity of man and God.

## V.

Yes, in Jesus Christ; but to-day, as of old, that is the obstacle. Jesus the Son of God! The very thought is blasphemy. A crucified Messiah! The bare notion is an offence and a stumbling-block. It was and is the trust committed to Judaism to maintain a pure and strong and spiritual monotheism, in the face of a corrupt polytheism, a nerveless agnosticism, a soulless atheism. Never was the witness more needed than in this twentieth century, with its chaos of beliefs and half beliefs and unbeliefs.

“God spoke, and gave us the word to keep,  
Bade never fold the hands nor sleep  
Mid a faithless world—at watch and ward,  
Till Christ at the end relieve our guard.  
By His servant Moses the watch was set:  
Though near upon cockcrow, we keep it yet.”<sup>1</sup>

And though many of the Jews only look for the coming of Christ in the spread of civilization, they would still maintain their trust.

But did that trust exclude the possibility of a new revelation, based upon, yet extending, the old revelation?—a revelation of the destiny of man by the union of God and man, a revelation of the inherent nature of the Godhead so far as man may understand that mystery, a revelation of life and restoration for humanity through a supreme act of sacrifice? Were there no preludings and hints of such possibilities in the Old Testament? not intelligible before-

<sup>1</sup> R. Browning, *Holy-Cross Day*.

hand indeed, but enough to show after the event that the Incarnation and the Passion were parts of the same Divine plan?

1. Was not man originally made in the image of God, after His likeness? Did not the name Immanuel suggest the possibility of a Presence of God among His people in some permanent way? Does not the Messianic King of prophecy bear Divine titles?—Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace? Yes, even *Mighty God*. “In such passages the Old Testament revelation falls into a self-contradiction, from which only a miracle has been able to deliver us, the Incarnation of the Son of God. . . . Even in the time of the old covenant the Spirit of God was consciously striving after the goal that we see reached in the new.”<sup>1</sup>

2. Law and Prophecy combine to teach the profound principle of Atonement through suffering and death. The great sacrificial system, according to the Christian view of it, was designed to impress on Israel the needful lesson of the guilt and hatefulness of sin. The prophecy of Isaiah liii., interpret it in detail as you will, is the most profound exposition of the redemptive virtue of representative suffering. Not without reason does the New Testament claim that sacrifice and prophecy alike pointed forward to the Death of Christ and receive their fulfilment in it.

## VI.

It was and is a tremendous demand to ask a Jew to believe that Jesus is the Son of God; that the Man who hung upon the cross of Calvary is the Messiah. Was it harder, one asks, for the Jew who had known Jesus familiarly, walked and talked with Him as a friend, seen Him hungry and tired, watched Him agonizing in Gethsemane and dying upon the cross; or for the modern

<sup>1</sup> Orelli, *O. T. Prophecy*, E. T., p. 274.

Jew, in an age of materialism which resents mystery, after eighteen centuries through which his faith has kept its watch and ward until it seems treason to all that he holds dear even to doubt its truth? The Jew of the Apostolic age had the witness of the resurrection as a fresh and familiar fact, to confirm the claims of Jesus; the Jew of the twentieth century has the historic witness of the spread of Christianity as the religion of the world.

Strong evidence indeed must have been needed to convince St. Peter and St. James, St. John and St. Paul, that Jesus was God and Lord, to be addressed in prayer, to be "associated with the Father as the ground of the Church's being, the source of spiritual grace, and as co-operating with Him in the providential ordering of events." Yet so it is: in the earliest of his Epistles, written less than twenty-five years after the Ascension, St. Paul attributes to the Son a co-equal Godhead with the Father, and that "not as though he were laying down anything new, but as something which might be assumed as part of the common body of Christian doctrine."<sup>1</sup> The Apostles speak of Him, they address Him, in language which would have been simply blasphemous if they had not believed Him to be Divine, co-equal with God, God in the truest sense as the Son of God, distinguished from the Father, yet one with Him, in a mystery which human language is inadequate to describe, human thought too weak to fathom. What can have brought those monotheist Jews to that tremendous conclusion but the Lord's own teaching, confirmed by the fact of the Resurrection, which set God's final seal to His teaching and His work?

## VII.

It is a tremendous demand to ask the Jew to accept the Christian doctrine of the Person and work of Christ: yet

<sup>1</sup> Comp. Sanday in *Hastings' Dict.*, ii. 624.

I cannot but feel that Judaism, even at its best, misunderstands Christianity, not less perhaps than Christianity misunderstands Judaism, and that if Judaism would but study the Christian faith seriously and dispassionately, many obstacles might disappear. Doubtless Christians are partly to blame: they have too often misrepresented their own faith themselves, and given occasion to their opponents to speak evil of it.

1. But it is startling to find one of the most learned and liberal of Jewish theologians implying (unless I quite misunderstand his meaning) that Christianity is polytheism. "Every Israelite," writes Dr. Schechter, "was able to be in perfect communion with his God by means of simple love, without the aid of any supposed self-condensation of the Deity, which, in spite of all attempts at explanation, is at the bottom nothing else than a pretext for the most undiluted polytheism. Judaism did most excellently well without all these modern theological appliances."<sup>1</sup> Christian theology, he must surely know, has ever guarded itself most carefully against the heresy of tritheism. Nor on the other hand has Christian theology ever been content to regard the "Persons" of the Trinity as mere "aspects" of the Divine nature. It does not pretend that human language can adequately express the infinite; it does not imagine that the language of the creeds, which guards the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Trinity against the misrepresentations of heresy, *explains* these profound mysteries; it does maintain that the doctrine which it holds, and that alone, satisfies the language of the New Testament, and that it is consonant to reason, if transcending reason.

2. Again it is but a shallow conception of the meaning of the Atonement when it is alleged that "it was a retrogression on the part of Paul when he stooped to represent

<sup>1</sup> Schechter in *J. Q. R.*, vi. 645.

God with human passions, requiring a compromise between the demands of His justice and the demands of His mercy.”<sup>1</sup> Doubtless theologians of a certain school have given too much cause for such a travesty of the teaching of the New Testament; but Reformed Judaism at any rate seems to be dangerously wanting in acknowledgement of the truths which the death of Christ teaches, in any deep sense of man’s need of the Redemption which it effects. It seems to possess little deep realization of the seriousness of sin, or the need for humanity of a great act of sacrifice which should at once condemn sin and proclaim the love of God, making it possible for Him to pardon without fear of being misunderstood, and exhibiting the infinite attraction of supreme self-sacrifice. To a Christian there is something painfully flippant in the suggestion that among articles of belief for modern Judaism, “one would not even object to accept the article . . . that we have to look upon ourselves as sinners” . . . for “morbid as such a belief may be,” it might have a wholesome effect.<sup>2</sup> Admittedly Judaism is deficient in that sense of sin which is a necessary factor for human progress; and it is just that sense of sin, and the realization of the love manifested in the sacrifice of the Cross, which makes Christianity so tender, so gentle to the sinner, so earnest in its efforts to raise the fallen and restore the lost. The sacrificial system of the Law ought to have taught Judaism something of the need of atonement; but Reformed Judaism seems bent on regarding the Levitical sacrifices as survivals of superstition rather than as significant, though temporary, ordinances, through which God designed to educate His people and the world.

3. Once more, Christian faith is not, as Judaism often seems to think, a blind and credulous acceptance of irrational dogmas, but allegiance to the Person of Jesus Christ,

<sup>1</sup> Simon in *J.Q.R.*, vi. 275.

<sup>2</sup> Schechter, *Studies in Judaism*, p. 219.



uniting the believer to Him in His death and in His life, that he may share that death and that life, so that it may be reproduced in his own experience. It is a principle of power; an effective means of righteousness, of holiness, of salvation in the largest sense of the word.

4. Again, one of the fundamental objections of Judaism to Christianity is, we are told, that it claims to be "final." It is said that "there is and there can be no such thing as finality in religion."<sup>1</sup> Let it be granted. But in what sense does Christianity claim to be "final"? Not surely in the sense that its meaning is exhausted in certain stereotyped formulas, that it possesses no vital power of expansion and adaptation to the ever growing needs of humanity. Christ is indeed "He that should come," and we "do not look for another"; but we claim that the revelation centred in His Person grows and will grow in significance as it meets the needs of every man and every nation and every age until the end of time.

### VIII.

What is the verdict of history upon the controversy between Judaism and Christianity? Must it not be that Judaism has been sterile, while Christianity has been fruitful? Judaism has remained the religion of a race; Christianity has spread throughout the world. *Ante Christum* and *Anno Domini* are no mere arbitrary chronological distinctions. It is a simple fact of history that a new era began with Jesus Christ. What was the cause? Whatever view be taken of the Person of Christ, it cannot be denied that with Him came "a new teaching with authority" which changed the face of the world. With all its failures, with all its crimes—not least those crimes of which it has been guilty against the ancient people of God; of which, to the shame of civilized Europe be it spoken, it is still guilty,

<sup>1</sup> Montefiore in *J.Q.R.*, xii. 740.

though now it is as a rule not the Church but the State which is the persecutor—Christianity has been expansive, progressive, cosmopolitan. What would the world have been without Christ? Was there the smallest probability that if Christ had not come, Judaism would have reformed the world? The Old Testament predicts an universal religion; Christianity realizes it; Judaism has remained national, particularist. Admittedly Orthodox Judaism cannot fulfil the mission of Judaism to the world. Can Reformed Judaism possibly do it, by dropping characteristic doctrines and practices of Judaism as a concession to modern progress, and incorporating some few Christian ideas? No. It lacks the vital strength of Christianity, for that vital strength is devotion to Christ.

## IX.

Has Judaism then no future? "Hard it is," writes one of its defenders, "to discern the purpose of God. But for my own part I do not believe that the religious mission of the Jewish race terminated with the production of Christianity."<sup>1</sup> Most heartily do I echo his words. "The Jews have," to quote one to whom students of the Old Testament as well as the New owe a deep debt of gratitude, "their purpose still to fulfil in the Divine plan. The well known answer to the question 'What is the chief argument for Christianity?'—'The Jews'—reminds us of the continued existence of that strange race, living as sojourners among men, the ever present witnesses to a remote past which is connected by our beliefs intimately with the present. By their traditions to which they cling, by the Old Testament Scriptures which they preserve by an independent chain of evidence, by their hopes, and by their highest aspirations, they are a living witness to the truth of that which they reject."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Montefiore, *J. Q. R.*, xii. 650.

<sup>2</sup> Sanday-Headlam, *Romans*, p. 345.

But I cannot rest in the belief that till the end of time they are to remain merely as external witnesses to the salvation for which they laid the foundation. I cling to St. Paul's hope that "when the fulness of the Gentiles is come in, all Israel shall be saved" (Rom. xi. 25, 26). And "if their fall is the riches of the world, and their loss the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness!" (Rom. xi. 12). Can it be that Israel will indeed be the Messianic nation, bearing God's salvation to the ends of the earth? It can only be, if they turn to the Lord, and accept Him as their Redeemer. It seems impossible, incredible; yet not more impossible, more incredible than the coming of Christ would have seemed a year before He came. Only through Christ, at once Son of God and Son of Man, the revelation of the Father, the representative of humanity, the Redeemer of the world, the pledge and giver of eternal life, can Israel's mission be fulfilled. Judaism may think that it can absorb the best teachings of Christianity "without believing that Jesus is God, or that His body rose out of the tomb in which it had been buried";<sup>1</sup> but it cannot appropriate its power. The centre of Judaism, we are told, round which its ideas and ideals concentrate themselves, is Dogma.<sup>2</sup> The centre of Christianity is a Person, in Whom its ideas and ideals are summed up; a living Lord, who has once for all united man to God. That living Lord, working through His Spirit in His Church and in the hearts of men, is perpetually revealing the Father to men, and establishing His kingdom in the world, until in the fulness of the times the final purpose shall be revealed, and God shall be all in all.

<sup>1</sup> Montefiore in *J.Q.R.*, xii. 742.

<sup>2</sup> Schechter, *Studies*, p. 221.