1954

# Why Judaeo-Christian Studies?

John M. Oesterreicher
*Seton Hall University*

wisdom is the worker of all things
hers is a spirit understanding holy
one manifold subtle eloquent sure
sweet loving that which is good quick
which nothing hindereth benificent

John M. Oesterreicher

# Why Judaeo-Christian Studies

wisdom is more active than all active
things and reacheth everywhere
by reason of her purity she is the
vapor of the power of God a pure
emanation of the all-ruler's glory
the brightness of eternal light the
unspotted mirror of God's majesty
the image of his goodness she re-
neweth all things she maketh the
friends of God and prophets she is
more beautiful than the sun and

Institute of Judaeo-Christian
Studies at Seton Hall University



compared with the light she is found
before it for after light cometh night
but no evil can overcome wisdom

# *Why*
# JUDAEO-CHRISTIAN STUDIES

*The Inaugural Lecture*
*of The Institute of Judaeo-Christian Studies*

by JOHN M. OESTERREICHER

*With an Introduction*

by JOHN J. DOUGHERTY



THE INSTITUTE OF JUDAEO-CHRISTIAN STUDIES
SETON HALL UNIVERSITY

Nihil obstat MSGR. PETER B. O'CONNOR *Censor Librorum*

Imprimatur ✠ THOMAS A. BOLAND, S.T.D., *Archbishop of Newark*

January eighteenth, 1954

Cover design by Elizabeth Brison

Text of the cover from Wisdom, ch. 7

Printed by the Carlos López Press

Published by THE INSTITUTE OF JUDAEO-CHRISTIAN STUDIES
Seton Hall University, 31 Clinton Street, Newark 2, N.J.

TO THE MEMORY OF

PIUS XI

When Hitler began his war of hate against Christian and Jews, and governments still were silent, the great Pope spoke out. Western civilization was born, he reminded all, with Abraham's loving sacrifice, and in the spirit, Abraham is every Christian's father.

## A BRIEF HISTORY

"The Old and New Testaments are joined in the one figure of Christ." These were the words of His Excellency Archbishop Thomas A. Boland, when, on October 7, 1953, he presided at the Inaugural Lecture of the Institute of Judaeo-Christian Studies, Seton Hall University. "May it be blessed," he prayed, "as God blessed the home of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."

The history of the Institute can be traced back to Vienna, where, in the early and middle thirties, Father Oesterreicher headed a similar work, the *Opus Sancti Pauli,* which enjoyed the support of Austrian, Czech, Swiss and French bishops. Later, in Rome in 1938, the present Holy Father, then Cardinal Pacelli, praised his past efforts and encouraged his future plans. Ever since his coming to the United States, Father Oesterreicher has been certain that the Holy Father's foretelling of "all things good and blessed" would come true. He hoped for a center which would help create a love-lit intellectual and spiritual climate, which would make many see the mystery of Israel as Saint Peter and Saint Paul saw it. Yet for a long time this seemed just a dream.

Suddenly, in the fall of 1952, the dream took on substance. Dr. John C. H. Wu, the Chinese scholar and convert, and Dom Leo von Rudloff, then prior and now abbot of the Dormition Abbey in Jerusalem, interested themselves in the idea of such an academic center and suggested Seton Hall University, alert and forward-looking, as its proper home. It was then that I learned of the plan, made it my own, and took it to Monsignor John L. McNulty, president of Seton Hall. Welcoming it as "a tremendous instrument for God," Monsignor McNulty brought it before His Excellency the Archbishop, who gladly gave his approval.

On March 25, 1953, the feast of the Annunciation, the Institute of Judaeo-Christian Studies was formally established, and on October 7, another of our Lady's days, the feast of the Holy Rosary, in an Inaugural Lecture at the Robert Treat Hotel in Newark, it presented itself, its ideas and its hopes, to the public. His Excellency the Archbishop honored the Institute by his presence, Monsignor McNulty was the host and I the chairman of the evening, while Father Oesterreicher spoke on "Why Judaeo-Christian Studies?" The response surpassed all expectation. Christians and Jews, priests and laymen, close to seven hundred people from as far away as Boston and Baltimore came to the Grand Ballroom of the Robert Treat to greet Seton Hall's new venture.

This warm response to the Institute's first message, and no less the catholicity of its beginnings —men of America, Asia and Europe, worked toward its establishment— speak well for its future. But what is more, our Lady seems to have taken it under her mantle, for several important dates of its history, the two we have named and others, fell on her feasts. Does it not tell of the guardianship of her who is "the glory of Jerusalem, the joy of Israel, the honor of her people"?

JOHN J. DOUGHERTY

## THE UNIVERSITY

Rt. Rev. Msgr. John L. McNulty, Ph.D., LL.D.
President

Rev. John J. Feeley, A.M.
Executive Vice-President

Rev. Thomas W. Cunningham, Ph.D.
Vice-President in charge of Instruction

Alfred D. Donovan, A.B., LL.B.
Vice-President in charge of Student Personnel Services

Rev. John F. Davis, M.B.A., S.T.L.
Vice-President in charge of Business Affairs

## THE INSTITUTE

Rev. John J. Dougherty, S.T.L., S.S.D.
Regent

Rev. John M. Oesterreicher, S.T.L.
Director

Mary Ruth Bede, A.B.
Secretary

### FELLOWS OF THE INSTITUTE

Rev. Joseph Bonsirven, S.J.
Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome

Rev. Paul Démann, N.D.S.
Editor of "Cahiers Sioniens," Paris

Rev. Alexander Jones
Upholland College, Lancashire

Msgr. Charles Journet
Grand Séminaire, Fribourg

Rev. Francois-Marie Lemoine, O.P.
Ecole Biblique, Jerusalem

Msgr. Wilhelm Neuss
University of Bonn

Dr. Kurt Schubert
University of Vienna

Dr. Karl Thieme
University of Mainz

Dr. Eugenio Zolli
University of Rome

Sister M. Honora, I.H.M., Ph.D.
President, Marygrove College, Detroit

Stephan Kuttner, J.U.D., S.J.D.
Professor of History of Canon Law
Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C.

Justus George Lawler, M.A.
Department of English, Loyola University, Chicago

Elizabeth M. Lynskey, Ph.D., Litt.D.
Department of Political Science
Hunter College, New York City

Sister M. Madeleva, C.S.C., Ph.D., Litt.D.
President, St. Mary's College, Notre Dame, Ind.

Jacques Maritain, Ph.D., LL.D.
Professor Emeritus, Princeton University, Princeton, N.J.

Rev. John F. McConnell, M.M., S.T.L., S.S.L.
Professor of Scripture, Maryknoll Seminary, Maryknoll, N.Y.

James V. Mullaney, Ph.D.
Head, Department of Humanities
Manhattan College, New York City

Rt. Rev. Msgr. Edward G. Murray, S.T.D., LL.D.
Pastor, Roslindale, Mass.

Kurt F. Reinhardt, Ph.D.
Department of Germanic and Romanic Languages
Stanford University, Stanford, Calif.

Rt. Rev. Abbot Leo von Rudloff, O.S.B., Ph.D.
Dormition Abbey, Jerusalem, and Weston Priory, Vt.

Rev. William Granger Ryan, Ph.D.
President, Seton Hill College, Greensburg, Penn.

Rev. Quentin Schaut, O.S.B., M.A.
Spiritual Director, Major Seminary
St. Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe, Penn.

Frank Sheed
Author and publisher, New York City

Rev. Gerard S. Sloyan, S.T.L., Ph.D.
Department of Religious Education
Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C.

Karl Stern, M.D.
Chairman, Department of Psychiatry
University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Ont.

Mother Kathryn Sullivan, R.S.C.J., Ph.D.
Department of History
Manhattanville College, Purchase, New York

Mother M. Thaddea de Sion, Ph. D.
Our Lady of Sion, Saskatoon, Sask.

Rev. Gustave A. Weigel, S.J., Ph.D., S.T.D.
Professor of Fundamental Theology
Woodstock College, Woodstock, Md.

## WHY JUDAEO-CHRISTIAN STUDIES

THIS IS a report, not of things done, rather of things to be done. Undoubtedly, it is easier and more pleasant to speak of achievements, but achievements speak for themselves while plans are mute. Hence they seek to be told, that friends may share in them. And such sharing is good, even necessary, it seems to me, for those engaged in research and scholarship need, more than most, the support of friendship. If they are to work well, they have indeed to work in seclusion, but unless they leave their retreats from time to time, they will hardly attain wisdom. Not cool isolation, not pretended self-sufficiency, only love's concern leads to truth.

You remember, I am sure, Gulliver's travels and his visit to Laputa, an island of learned men. This is how he described them: "Their Heads were all reclined to the Right, or the Left; one of their Eyes turned inward, and the other directly up to the Zenith." Every one of them was accompanied by a servant carrying a short stick, to which was fastened a bladder with little pebbles inside. With this he would softly flap his master on the eyes whenever, "wrapped up in Cogitation," he was in danger of bouncing his head against a post. And when two were together, it was the office of this servant gently to strike the mouth of the one and the ear of the other, for, to quote Swift, "the Minds of these People are so taken up with intense Speculations, that they can neither speak, or attend to the Discourses of others, without being rouzed by some external Taction upon the Organs of Speech and Hearing." Perhaps Swift's satire is

needed to remind us that someone so remote as to feel neither the desire nor the need to commune would be a caricature of a scholar and a mockery of man. For, to say it again: the man of learning must be a man of love.

Since it is the hope of the founders of the Institute of Judaeo-Christian Studies that, in God's good time, it will develop into a real center of research and publication, and only secondly of education, there may well be people who say: "Research? How impractical! The teaching of classes, which lead to a degree and help in a career, that's sensible. But research —what's the good of that?" The answer is simple. Though many men have made Communism what it is today, it might not have been at all were it not for one man who, day after day, sat in the British Museum reading and taking notes, writing and rewriting. The first volume of *Das Kapital* was published after almost two decades of study, the rest only after Marx's death. Few have read this massive book, and yet it has influenced millions. Quite apart from that, in this age of ours, which worships the useful, it might be good to do things that are not of immediate use, that cannot bear fruit today but only tomorrow or the day after tomorrow.

Frequently, scholarship —indeed, all things of the mind — are looked on not only as odd and impractical but also as suspect. Without question, there have been many who have misused their minds, who have used them only to rebel against truth and virtue, faith and love, against God, against Christ and His Church. Still, St. Augustine's counsel, *Intellectum valde ama,* "Greatly love the mind,"[1] holds true. The Church, in her wondrous respect for the gifts of God, declares with the firmness of dogma that the divinely given light of reason can arrive at the knowledge of God's

---

[1]St. Augustine, *Epist.* 120, iii, 13 (PL 33:459).

existence, can know of Him who is the Incomprehensible. It can, as it were, knock at the adamantine gates, the inviolable doors of heaven. No one can act in the name of the Lord or claim the Church as guide if he disdains the labor and the works of the intellect, for there is little virtue in letting a talent lie idle, a gift from the Giver of all good things. In our day, when the mind has been pressed into the service of the revolt against God, Creator and Redeemer, intellectual work is more imperative than ever. To offset the damage done by this revolt, to set truth against its errors, to bring our age back to Christ, the works of mercy are needed, but no less scholarship—in fact, a scholarship bolder, better, deeper, than that of the foes of faith.

If I have begun with a defense of the mind, with a plea for understanding of research, study and scholarly work, particularly for understanding and work here in our own country —it must be kept in mind that part of the question I set out with was, "Why *studies*?"

BUT WHY *Judaeo-Christian* studies? The best answer, I think, might be a discussion of the several meanings of the term "Judaeo-Christian." When we speak of the first centuries of the Church, the word refers to Christians of Jewish birth as distinguished from those of pagan origin. True, the distinction "Jewish Christian" and "Gentile Christian" carries with it unhappy memories of dissensions and heresies, of pride and envy on the part of both. And yet it is a fruitful distinction even today, if it is made not to work any separation but to emphasize unity. The Church has always known herself to be the House built of Jews and Gentiles and will never relinquish her knowledge and claim. It is Christ the Cornerstone, St. Augustine rejoices, who, in order to form His Church, has brought together the wall whose living stones are Jews and the wall whose living stones are

Gentiles.[2] Or, in the somewhat different picture St. Paul gives us: Christ is our Peace, He has made both (that is, Israel and the nations) one, He has broken down the wall that was a barrier between us (Eph. 2:14).

Early Christian art delighted to portray this union. The mosaics of San Lorenzo and Santa Pudenziana, for instance, show Christ enthroned, with Peter and Paul on His left hand and His right—St. Paul, who taught the nations, and St. Peter, who preached to his kinsmen at Pentecost. Together with the two Apostles, the two sacred cities appear in these ancient mosaics: Jerusalem, where Christ was proclaimed King of the Jews, and Bethlehem, where the Magi acknowledged Him as Ruler of the Gentiles. From several churches in the Eternal City, there look down the figures of two women, one Jewish, the other Roman, and they are called *Ecclesia ex circumcisione* and *Ecclesia ex gentibus,* the Church drawn from the circumcision and from all the peoples of the earth. Yet nothing, to the patristic age, bespoke this oneness of all in the Church more than the manner of Christ's dying. When He hung upon the cross, His arms were outstretched, so that with the one He might woo the House of Jacob and with the other draw all the world; they were outstretched that in a single embrace He might unite them.

"Judaeo-Christian," in this earliest sense, is a joyful reminder of the saints of the morning, when the kingdom of heaven dawned, telling first of the peerless maiden, whose words will never be surpassed: *Hineni shifechat Adonai, . . .* "Here I am, handmaid of the Lord; be it done unto me according to thy word" (Luke 1:38).[3] It speaks too of the

---

[2]St. Augustine, *Sermo* 137, 6 (PL 38:757-8).

[3]To suggest some of their original air, the Blessed Virgin's *Fiat* and the words of Elizabeth and Peter that follow are given here in Hebrew,

great Joseph, who in silent valor shielded the mother and the Child; of Elizabeth, the first to exclaim: *Berukah at banashim,* . . . "Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb" (Luke 1:42); of Anna the prophetess, who did not tire in prayer nor in making known the good news that redemption had come; of the venerable Simeon, whose arms were so favored as to hold the Desire of his days and of all the days of Israel, whose lips were so favored as to hail Him as the Light and the Glory: the Light appointed for the Gentiles, the Glory set in Israel (Is. 42:6; 46:12; Luke 2:32). Then was the hour when the gospel first sounded through the land of Israel as the clarion of redemption, like the *shofar* that brings in the New Year.[4] There were the Apostles and the disciples and the great women, who heard the call "Follow Me," and followed—Simon Peter, with his confession: *Atah hu ha-Mashiach Ben-Elohim chayim,* "Thou the Messias, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16); John, who even to his old age remembered the words and deeds which surrounded the Last Supper; Martha, to whom it was given to hear: "I am the Resurrection and the Life" (John 11:25); Mary, with her cry on Easter morning —or was it a whisper?— *Rabuni,* "Master" (John 20:16); Stephen, with his dying

---

according to Delitzsch's translation of the New Testament, though there is no doubt that Mary and the others generally spoke the common tongue of Palestinian Jews of their day, Aramaic, a language akin to Hebrew. But Aramaic is no longer spoken, while Hebrew is a living language.

[4]The *shofar* is an instrument like a tuba or clarion. Its voice was first heard out of the dense cloud that covered Mount Sinai, "exceeding loud, and the people feared" (Exod. 19:16). According to the Old Law, it is blown to announce the new moon and solemn feasts, also to proclaim the year of Jubilee (Num. 10:10; Ps. 80:4; Lev. 25:9). The *shofar* used on *Rosh ha-shanah,* the day of the New Year, is made of a ram's horn, a reminder of Mount Moriah, where God sent a ram and spared Abraham's son.

prayer: "Lord, do not lay this sin against them" (Acts 7:59); and Paul, with his assurance: "Who will separate us from the love of Christ?" (Rom. 8:35).

It is all these, says Monseigneur Charles Journet, of the Grand Séminaire in Fribourg, one of the Fellows of this Institute, who give direction, fervor, fire, to the whole manner of life of later Christians. And he calls them "the first heartbeats of the Church, which decide the whole rhythm of the Christian life to come."[5] "What abundant thanks we owe to these converted Jews, the Apostles and first disciples of Christ," writes Père Louis Richard of the Society of Saint Sulpice, "who, in the midst of obstacles so great were yet so docile to the light of the gospel, so generous in following Christ, in risking all, . . . in letting themselves be carried away by the breath of His Spirit, in believing in His Church, of which they were builders."[6]

"Judaeo-Christian" takes us back to the days when the Church was young, to the little flock in Jerusalem. But am I really right in calling it "little"? For it was thousands, and not a mere handful, who joined the Apostles at Pentecost, and again thousands when they began their preaching. Day by day the infant Church grew, "daily the Lord added to their company those called to salvation," the Acts rejoice (2:47). St. Augustine, for one, is struck with wonder, not only at their increase, but at the strength of their love. "All at once," he said, "there were first three thousand, then five thousand, all living in unity, all selling their goods and laying the price at the feet of the Apostles that it might be distributed to each as each had need, all having one soul

---

[5]Charles Journet, *Destinées d'Israël* (Paris: Egloff, 1945), p. 112.

[6]Louis Richard, P.S.S., "Israël et le Christ," in *Israël et la Foi chrétienne,* by Henri de Lubac, S.J., and other professors of the School of Theology in Lyons (Fribourg: Editions de la Librairie de l'Université, 1942), p. 108.

and one heart toward God."[7] Here was a joy and simplicity in sacrifice never to be seen again in so many at once; here, exclaimed St. Augustine, was a "humanity full of force and beauty," here the "newness of spiritual life Christ had bidden."[8]

It would be interesting to follow Jewish Christians through the first four hundred years and through the centuries since. Like any other, it is a history of heights and depths, of fidelity and errancy. Not to speak of the doubtlessly many believers in Christ hidden within the Synagogue, there were in the first few centuries, in the main, three groups. To start with those at variance with the spirit of the New Testament and thus outside the Church: the Ebionites saw in Jesus merely the "man of men," the Messianic Prophet, the New Moses, but no more. Discarding some of the rites and ceremonies of the Old Law and keeping others with utmost rigor, they saw in the works of their own choosing the means of salvation.[9] A second group, which some call "Nazarenes," placed their whole hope in Christ as the One who saves, but still observed many of the Mosaic precepts, for what seem sentimental rather than religious reasons. Justin the Martyr, in his *Dialogue with Trypho,* looked on them as weak brethren. While not approving of their weakness, of course, he thought that, so long as they did not seek to impose the Law on others, they ought to be received into the full communion of the Church; members of the one family, he called them, kinsmen,

---

[7]St. Augustine, *Enarr. in Psalm.* 101, 15 (PL 37:1303-4).

[8]St. Augustine, *De Catechiz. Rud.* I, xxiii, 42 (PL 40:340).

[9]The most comprehensive recent study on the Ebionites is Hans Joachim Schoeps, *Theologie und Geschichte des Judenchristentums* (Tuebingen: Verlag J.C.B. Mohr, 1949).

brethren.[10] Then there were those, thank God! who believed in, and followed, Christ, God of God, the one Savior, and were beyond question in every way genuine members of the Catholic Church: in the words of Isaias, "the remnant," "the true stock of holiness" (Is. 1:9; 6:13).[11]

St. Jerome's tutor in Hebrew was one of these last. *Frater qui ex Hebraeis crediderat,* he called him, "a brother who, from the Hebrews, had come to believe." A letter by St. Jerome tells of his life in the desert. "Walled in by its solitude," he found his mind surging with evil thoughts. "To subdue its turbulence," he asked this "brother from the Hebrews" to teach him his tongue. He speaks of much labor spent in learning his letters anew, of how difficult it was, so that he often despaired, and how eagerly he started again. "But I thank the Lord," he concludes, "that from this seed of learning sown in bitterness I now cull sweet fruits."[12] The "sweet fruits" were his Latin translation of Holy Scripture, the Vulgate. So we might say not only that all the sacred writers, except for St. Luke, were Jews, but that we owe even the Vulgate to the assistance of a Jewish Christian. There is no time now to speak of other Jewish Christian figures throughout the centuries, figures great and small. I wish I could at least give one by one the long list of priests

---

[10]Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 47, 2 (PG 6:576-7). The name "Nazarenes" for this second group, though inexact, seems at one time to have been the popular usage. But it is rather confusing, for "Nazarenes," *Nozrim,* was the first name by which Christians were known (Acts 24:5). For an interesting analysis of the origin and meaning of the word, see Eugenio Zolli, *The Nazarene* (St. Louis: Herder, 1950), pp. 7-60.

[11]A discussion of "Hebrew Christianity" and its various groups is to be found in Jakób Jocz, *The Jewish People and Jesus Christ* (London: S.P.C.K., 1949), pp. 146-200. See also Marcel Simon, *Verus Israel* (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1948), pp. 277-314.

[12]St. Jerome, *Epist.* 125, 12; cf. *Epist.* 18, 10 (PL 22:1079, 367-8).

and nuns today who are of Jewish descent. Offhand, I can think of about twenty priests and of a number of Benedictines, Augustinians, Carmelites and Franciscans soon to be ordained, of some Carmelite nuns, Dominican and Maryknoll Sisters, some Religious of Notre Dame de Sion, of the Good Shepherd, and of many, many others.

In closing this all too sketchy discussion of the historically first use of "Judaeo-Christian," let me say again that when it is used of someone today, it must not be a term of separation but of unity, telling as it does the happy news that one of Christ's "own," as St. John calls the Jews (John 1:11), has accepted Him. And it ought to be a term of love, catholic love, for the true Jewish Christian, while surrendering entirely to Christ, while giving his full devotion to the Church, does not, must not for a moment desert his kinsmen. He must bear for them that spiritual affection which animated St. Peter when he spoke before the Cenacle and again before the Beautiful Gate of the Temple. In every word and gesture the Vicar of Christ, he let his love address them as "men of Israel," "my brethren" (Acts 3:12; 2:29). There must stir in him the same spiritual affection which made St. Paul write to the Romans: "They are my kinsmen according to the flesh .... and my heart's innermost wish, my prayer to God, is for them." Even in their rejection of, their enmity to, the gospel, he saw them "dear, beloved, for the sake of the fathers" (Rom. 9:3; 10:1; 11:28).

THERE IS another use of the term "Judaeo-Christian," quite distinct from the first, rather new and yet the most often met. When contemplating the foundations of Western culture, philosophers, historians and sociologists speak of "the Judaeo-Christian heritage, or tradition," or of "Judaeo-Christian values." Though the phrases are recent, the reality

and the knowledge of it are old. When, in the middle of the fourth century, Julian the Apostate staged his attack on the Church, in the frantic hope of reviving paganism, he sneered at Christianity as "the Galilean superstition," as the worship of "the crucified Jew." The gospel was to him a weak version of the weak teachings of that "God-forsaken race, the Jews." Weakness was the Emperor's name for forgiveness and mercy, which are the light and the strength of Old and New Testaments. Julian the Apostate thought he would laugh our Lord to scorn by making Him say: "He that is a seducer, he that is a murderer, he that is stained with the corruption of sacrilege, let him approach fearlessly. With this water I shall wash him and at once make him clean."[13] Yet the mighty Emperor lost his war against mercy, and the "weak," forgiving Christ triumphed, for, despite all the brutalities of the last two thousand years, twice-blessed mercy is the doorsill to Western civilization.

Mercy, so significant a part of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, yet derives its name from the Latin. A giving of the heart from the heart, such is the meaning of mercy—but the Latin *merces,* from which our English word "mercy" stems, means "reward," "hire," or "pay"." It is amazing how often our language obscures the main source of our civilization. The words "virtue", "morality," "religion," "art," "science," have their roots in the tongue of ancient

---

[13]Julian, *Epist.* 39, 380D; *In Galilaeos,* 335B, 202A, 209D-E, 213A, 218B, 221E; *The Caesars,* 336A-B (ed. Heinemann). Though to Julian, Moses was "that Jew without talent," whose Books teemed with error, though he held the Jews in contempt as barbarian and as all the more vile because it was among them that Christianity had arisen, at times, in his even greater contempt for the Christians, "those Galileans," he would show favor to the Jews. In this the Emperor was typical: as hatred of Jews often tries to hide behind the name of Christ and pretends to champion the cause of the Church, so hatred of Christ likes to pose as advocate of the Jews.

Rome, "ethics" and "philosophy" are Greek in origin, yet their contents, or at least their impetus, come from the inspired wisdom of patriarchs and prophets, deepened and heightened by Christ. Many might object: Of course, there can be no doubt that our religion and morality have their cradle in the Holy Land. Even amoralism bears witness to that, for it acknowledges that what stand in the way of man's whims, what prevent mere statistics of sin from becoming the norm of goodness, are Judaeo-Christian values, or, as it prefers to call them, "taboos." But how can you say, my objectors might continue, that our art and science have received a creative impulse from the wisdom of Israel? Western art certainly springs from ancient Greece; the Jews, after all, had hardly any, being forbidden, for fear of idolatry, to make graven images. And Western science is fairly modern and has all too often been set forth as a new religion to take the place of the old.

This is all very true, I should like to answer. But, not to speak of the great stimulus Western art has received from the Christian mysteries, there towers before it the knowledge given to the old Israel that beauty is not just a quality but a Person, not something but Someone.[14] Israel's poverty in works of art was the first step, and Western art the second, in this knowledge that all earthly beauty mirrors Him whose name is Wonderful. (Is. 9:6; Judges 13:18). As for Western science, there would never have been any were it not for the Bible's reverent and glad conviction that a good order governs the universe. "Thou hast ordered all things in measure, number and weight," the Book of Wisdom admires (11:21), and it is this admiration which led Western man to explore the secrets of the physical world,

---

14Claude Tresmontant, *Essai sur la Pensée hébraïque* (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1953), pp. 67-68.

to search for its design, to retrace its course.[15] The giant panel on the face of Seton Hall's new Science Building well illustrates this point. The hand of Him who fashioned all things lovingly throws into existence three interpenetrating worlds: the great cosmos of the stars, the little cosmos of the atom, and the realm of man's sciences. The three are one, and their center is the Chi Rho, for all things revolve around Jesus Christ, the Lord in the Flesh.

We, the sons of many generations shaped by Judaeo-Christian wisdom, can hardly imagine how original the vision of the universe is that shines forth from the first pages of Scripture. When confronted with most of the myths of the nations or with the teachings of many philosophers, the message of Genesis is altogether new, indeed, revolutionary. According to many a pagan legend and speculation, the origin of the world was a downfall, a degradation, the result of rivalry and quarrels among the gods. Something goes wrong in their abode—and things come into existence. Or else the *one,* the first principle of being, is pulverized into the *many*. But for the Hebrews, and so for us, the visible world is not a falling down but a rising up. Nothing went wrong, all went right when the world was made. And the Creator looked on the work of His hands and called it "good," "very good." The earth and the heavens bear —in spite of man's sin, which the Bible never makes light of—

---

[15]This, of course, is not to say that the Biblical vision of the universe is in any way like some scientists' notion of a fixed, tightly locked world, in which everything is explained or explainable, in which necessity rules, in which laws take the place of God. Rather is it a universe where the Breath of God blows where He wills; a universe of wonder, of the unexpected. This was the people's experience in their Exodus, so that Psalm 113, and with it the Jewish Passover ritual, can sing: "When Israel came forth from Egypt, . . . the sea beheld and fled; Jordan turned back. The mountains skipped like rams, the hills like lambs of the flock."

the seal of God's benediction.[16] To the pagan, then, the birth of the universe is sorrowful, if not evil, but the story the first pages of the Bible tell of creation is a hymn. Often mistaken for a scientific chronology of the events leading to the world as we know it, it is really a poem in praise of God, who is before, beyond and above the world; of God, who in goodness made all things great and small. Thus Holy Scripture begins with a song, a song of the goodness of the Creator and the goodness of all He created. True, it cries out against the gravity, the very horror, of sin, with a cry that will never cease ringing in the ears of man, with an anguish and ardor found in none of the sacred books of other peoples. Still, the song and joy of the beginning are sustained throughout.

This singing has specially empowered Western man to make other creatures sing. No doubt, the sounds he has produced have often been shrill; some of his recent inventions are ugly and destructive—accursed, with a curse he himself puts on them. But his technical discoveries are, or ought to be, variations on the melody which pervades the beginning of Holy Scripture. The vocation of the West to technical advance has been a call to spread the blessing with which God blessed the newness of the world. While most other societies have been more or less static, the West, largely through the Judaeo-Christian impulse, has been dynamic, changing, in motion. The very idea of progress is Judaeo-Christian, for all that in the last few hundred years it has been put to the service of false idols.[17]

---

[16]Tresmontant, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-18.

[17]Perhaps some contrasts will illustrate the tremendous difference between the two ideas of progress. The Biblical idea sees man grow *in* time, the modern *through* time. For the one, time is the theater of growth; for the other, it is a magic. To "modern man," or should I say, to the secularist, the mere passage of time—the turn of a century, even

When the gospel was first preached around the shores of the Mediterranean, philosophers—St. Augustine called them "philosophers of this world"[18]— were teaching that history moved in meaningless cycles, that events repeated themselves endlessly. No less despairing was the legend of the Golden Age of long ago: all bliss was in the past. Contrary to the Nietzschean dream and the embittered propaganda of neo-pagans about "gay antiquity," there was sadness in Athens and in Rome, a sadness which made Horace write: "Years glide away and are lost to me, lost to me."[19] Not without reason did Maurice Baring call it "the most poignantly melancholy of all lines."[20] All the man of antiquity could see when he looked at time was its fleeing, that it runs away from us: a race toward death. The Biblical man, however, believes that time grows, that it matures and moves toward a goal. Thus he prays: "Thy kingdom come." History has meaning and there is life before us, a future more glorious than the past; there is hope.[21] "O God our Savior," the Psalmist exclaims, "the Hope of all the ends

---

the spin of the hands of a clock—spells improvement: what is later seems the better. Not so to Biblical man, and no change can obliterate his reverence for what went before. Indeed, for him the past lives, works and quickens, while for the other it is "just dead and gone." The "wave of the future" inevitably carries us to new horizons, "modern man" exclaims, and yet likes to call himself "master of his fate." What is here mechanical necessity is for the Biblical world above all a loving gift: all true progress springs from grace to which freedom responds; it is the work of God and man. "Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it. Unless the Lord guard the city, in vain does the guard keep vigil" (Ps. 126:1).

18St. Augustine, *De Civ. Dei* XII, 13 (PL 41:360-1).

19Horace, *Odes* II, 14 (translated by R. H. Barham).

20Maurice Baring, *Have You Anything to Declare?* (New York: Knopf, 1937), p. 61.

21Tresmontant, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-38.

of the earth and of the distant seas" (Ps. 64:6). It was in time that the timeless God revealed Himself, in time that He spoke to Abraham, to Moses, that He spoke in Christ Jesus. It is in time, the meeting ground of God and man, that man works out his salvation. One dares to say that to the Israel of old, time and history were sacramental, for in visible events the invisible God visited His people. All this has deeply influenced our thought, our whole way of life. Even many of today's unbelievers, who think they have discarded the Judaeo-Christian heritage, live by it. Even the enemies of faith, who preach false progress, false hope, could not preach their errors had they not been nourished by the very thing they condemn.

To return to the first pages of the Bible—incidentally, with all deference to Dr. Hutchins and Dr. Adler, it is *the* Book, the one great book, and not one of the hundred—there is, in what I have called the hymn on God's majesty, a melody that is like the sound of silver trumpets signaling the birth of a prince: "Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness" (Gen. 1:26). This is why the Judaeo-Christian tradition has been able, as has no other, to see the worth of each and every man; to see that all are God's likeness and each one unique, with a name, a task all his own; to see that a man is not a passing ripple in a stream but an island in a great sea. Together with, or, to be more exact, crowned by the gospel, the solemn announcement of man's creation has given to Western civilization its special character. Christ's parables of the lost —the lost coin, the lost sheep, the lost son—all of which portray God's search for man; the parable of the Samaritan, the true neighbor, which, among other things, reveals man's need for man; the Lord's Prayer; the whole Sermon on the Mount—they all have brought out the deepest meaning of "the likeness of God." Never could the full dignity of the

person have been formulated without Genesis and Gospel; never could there have been the Rights of Man, never our own Declaration of Independence. Never, without Genesis and Gospel, without Isaias and Ezechiel, could the brotherhood of men and of nations have been preached. "Even the remote corners, the very ends of the earth, shall see the salvation of our God" (Is. 52:10). True, it was far from easy for the Jews of old to understand that the earth is one as the Lord is one. (But is it not painful, even now, for many of us?) Still, our sense of catholicity goes back to the prophets, to words all-embracing like "Blessed be My people Egypt, and Assyria, the work of My Hands, and Israel, My inheritance" (Is. 19:25).

In presenting man as the Divine likeness, the Bible breaks the spell of the clan, the birth-to-death grip of the collective. Each man, however intimately a part of the community, is responsible for his deeds: his crimes are his own. Though maligned, though seen as a rule of vengeance rather than of justice, the *lex talionis,* "life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe" (Exod. 21:23-25), helped to assert the dignity even of the lowliest. The eye of the poor man is worth as much (or ought one say, at least as much?) as the eye of the rich, and the burns of another hurt as sorely as my own. Through the law of "retaliation," the spirit of tribal revenge gave way to equity. And let us not forget freedom, so longed for today by the "silent peoples," so hated by its enemies, so misunderstood by some of its friends. What a precious part of the Judaeo-Christian heritage!

> Our wills are ours, we know not how;
> Our wills are ours to make them Thine,

Toynbee quotes in his preface to the work of Dom Columba

Cary-Elwes on *Law, Liberty and Love.*[22] For freedom is found in its fullest where it is born of obedience and gives birth to a more fervent embrace of the Creator and His creatures. Does not the Psalmist sing: "Freely shall my feet tread, if Thy will is all my quest .... Fain would I have all my comfort in Thy law, which I love" (Ps. 118:45,47)? It is from the Psalter, then, which the Church made the prayerbook of the world, that the world learns the triad: law, liberty, and love.

Our passion for social justice, too, is fired by the passion of Moses, the passion of the prophets. Just listen to this from the book Leviticus, most of which the Church reads in preparation for Easter: "The Lord spoke to Moses, bidding him give the whole company of Israel this message: .... I am the Lord your God. Do not steal, and lie, and deceive one another. Do not violate the honor of thy God by swearing falsely in My name; the Lord's name. Do not wrong thy neighbor or despoil him by violence; do not withhold the wages of thy hired servants till morning comes. Do not miscall the deaf, or put a stumbling-block in the blind man's way; thou hast the vengeance of thy God to fear; the Lord's vengeance. Do not pervert justice by giving false awards, taking a man's poverty into account, or flattering the great; give every man his just due. Do not whisper calumnies in the public ear, and swear away thy neighbor's life; the Lord hears thee. Do not nurse resentment against thy brother; put thyself in the right by confronting him with his fault. Do not seek revenge, or bear a grudge for wrong done to thee by thy fellow-citizens; thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself; thy Lord is his .... Rise up from

---

22Quoted by Arnold Toynbee in his Preface to *Law, Liberty and Love,* by Columba Cary-Elwes, O.S.B. (New York: Devin-Adair, 1951), p. 9.

thy seat in reverence for grey hairs; honor the aged, as thou dost fear God, the Lord thy God. If an alien comes to dwell in your land, and settles down among you, do not treat him disdainfully; welcome him as if he were native born, and do him kindness as if he were one of yourselves, remembering that you were aliens once, in the land of Egypt; the Lord your God remembers" (Lev. 19:1,10-18, 32-34). "Keep true to My commandments! I am the Lord your God" — no cold imperative, the moral law is, according to the Judaeo-Christian tradition, rooted in God, sovereign and loving. Here also is the uniqueness of the God of Israel. True, the wise of many nations rose to a lofty concept of God, but He remained, to Socrates or Plato, for instance, little more than the object of high speculation. The God of Scripture, however, the true God, loves and is loved, speaks and is answered, reveals Himself and is adored.[23]

The modern pattern is always the same. As with progress, so with social justice, those today eager for it but pursuing it away from, or even in defiance of, God would be nothing without the zeal they borrow, empty without a passion not their own but the Bible's. Moses and the prophets were the forerunners of Christ; they walked before Him to prepare His way. But when the Good News was brought to the

---

[23]When God, rich and Master of all things, speaks, He often uses men as His instruments, in such a way that they, His saints, and their lives are part of His message. No less His utterance are the events of sacred history, those which Old and New Testaments call *magnalia Dei*, the Lord's mighty deeds, His works marvelous and terrible (cf. Deut. 10:21 and Acts 2:11). The Bible, "the Word of God," might as truly be named "the Acts of God," G. Ernest Wright, of the University of Chicago, suggests in his most interesting, though in many ways one-sided, study *God Who Acts: Biblical Theology as Recital* (London: SCM Press, 1952, p. 12). Cf. *Blackfriars* XXV, 288 (March 1944), pp. 111-117; XXVII, 316 (July 1946), pp. 247-248. For a profound treatment of this and the whole of Biblical theology, see Louis Bouyer, Orat., *La Bible et l'Evangile* (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1951).

nations, Moses and the prophets followed after. And so the Old Testament with the New became a leaven of society. It did not take long in the West to outlaw infanticide, child murder as a social policy. It took longer for the dignity of woman and of marriage to enter people's minds. And though centuries had to pass for the leaven to work, centuries in which Christians themselves were hideously guilty of torture as a judicial instrument, or of the buying and selling and owning of men, all these and much more that outrages our conscience today were abolished, and wherever they are gone, their abolition we owe to one leaven and no other. That Gandhi was able to pray and labor for the freeing of the Untouchables, that he was able to call them *harijans,* "the children of God," is due, so we gather from his own testimony, to the working of this yeast: it is proof of the liveliness of the leaven.[24] Such is the power of the Judaeo-Christian tradition that it can never die, and nothing but sullen awareness, envy, of this immortality can explain why the assaults of Nazism and Communism against

---

[24]"Jesus Christ is a bright revelation"; "He occupies in my heart the place of one of the great teachers who has had considerable influence on my life," Gandhi said. Still, he cannot be called a Christian, since he saw in Jesus only "one among the mighty teachers that the world has had." The New Testament gave him "comfort and boundless joy," yet he saw no difference between the Sermon on the Mount and the Bhagavad Gita, one giving the law of love in wonderful, graphic language, the other reducing it to a scientific formula. However, three days before his death, he admitted to Vincent Sheean: "I must warn you that my interpretation of the Gita has been criticized by orthodox scholars as being unduly influenced by the Sermon on the Mount." It is this, his own "warning," more than anything else, which reveals the springs of his thought and action. See C.F. Andrews, *Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1929), p. 66; *Gandhigrams,* compiled by S. R. Tikekar (Bombay: Hind Kitabs, 1947); *Mahatma Gandhi, Essays and Reflections on His Life and Work,* edited by S. Radhakrishnan (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1949), p. 475; and Vincent Sheean, *Lead, Kindly Light* (New York: Random House, 1949), pp. 44, 45, 290.

it have been so violent. It is indeed unique and yet it is universal. Thus it was able in the past to assimilate Greek, Roman and other elements, and thus it will in the future draw to itself and incorporate the wisdom of China and India and other lands.

THERE IS still another use of our phrase, as in "the Judaeo-Christian revelation," different and deeper because here we are not on a sociological or cultural, rather on the religious, level. It is a use which shows the oneness of the Old and New Covenants, for when Christ came, He did not come to wreck but to build, not to destroy but to fulfill. "Do not think," He declared, "that I have come to set aside the Law and the Prophets. I have not come to set them aside but to bring them to perfection" (Matt. 5:17). In the early sixteenth century, the great Matthias Gruenewald painted an altar for the church of Issenheim, the main part of which is a Crucifixion. On the crude cross Christ is in agony, every member aching, every inch of His body in pain. At His right there is His dear Mother in the arms of the Beloved Disciple; at His feet, Mary Magdalene, grieving, almost desolate. But there is also in this picture a figure we do not expect beneath the cross: at the Lord's left, upright and calm, stands John the Baptist. Though the Baptist had died before, this is no error, of course, rather is it suprahistorical. For he is present here as a symbol, the last of the prophets in the name of all those who had gone before him, patriarchs, princes and prophets, the saints of the Old Covenant. Thus his right arm is lifted and, in an arresting line, his right hand stretches forth a finger longer than any human finger could be, all this to show that he, like the whole Old Testament, was a finger pointing forward, an arrow seeking, searching, and that Christ is the Desired One, He whom Abraham and his children awaited, whom

the men of God foretold. In his left hand the Baptist holds the writings of Israel, which record God's dealings with His people. The Holy Book is open, for its secrets are now revealed; its deepest, ultimate meaning is now manifest, manifest in Christ the Saviour.

A little while ago we said that the timeless God revealed Himself in time. Likewise, that in the end He might redeem all, God, who is Spirit, boundless and infinite, first and for ages made His habitation within the confines of one people. Why this people? Why the Jews? You may have heard the little verse:

How odd
Of God
To choose
The Jews.[25]

Yes, it is odd; it is astounding, humanly speaking, incredible, that He should choose at all. There is only one answer to the question as to why He chose the Jews—that He so chose. He loves because He loves. It is the token of His majestic freedom, His sovereignty, that God, who loves all, who is the Master of heaven and earth, singled out one people, small and despised, to be custodian of His truth, bearer of His saving design, nursery of His Christ. From Abraham to David, from David to the captivity in Babylon, from the days in Babylon to the fullness of time, when Mary brought forth her Son, generation on generation wove the fabric, prepared the humanity, that was to be His. Similarly, generation on generation prepared Christ's Mystical Body. Indeed, we can say that the Jews of old were the Catholic Church in the making; indeed, that the Church is the House of Jacob, now without limits, the Israel of Newness, made

---

[25]Stevenson's *Home Book of Proverbs, Maxims and Familiar Phrases* attributes this jingle to William Norman Ewer, a British journalist.

new in the mystery of the cross. When the Lord of majesty came in the weakness of the flesh, and when, having suffered and risen from the dead, He crowned dust with glory, all things were renewed: Israel became the matrix for the shaping of the pagans. But in order to be ready for the molding, the matrix itself had to be reshaped by fire.[26]

All through the centuries, the Church has seen herself in this light. Origen, for instance, warned the learners of the faith against delaying their baptism: "Do not remain catechumens too long. Rather hasten to receive the grace of

---

[26]Israel of Newness, or, as St. Paul says, Israel of God (Gal. 6:16), are not vague figures of speech implying some tenuous bond between the people of the Old Covenant and that of the New. Rather do they refer explicitly to the manner of the Church's birth, which determined her nature forever. That man is not saved in isolation but in the company of his brothers, in the communion of love—in short, the very idea of the Church—comes from the Jews, as de Lubac has pointed out in his *Catholicism* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1950, p. 23). Likewise, the name St. Paul so often gives her, *ekklesia tou Theou,* Church of God, is a translation of the Old Testament *qahal Jahve* (cf. 1 Cor. 10:32; 15:9; Gal. 1:13, and others). Indeed, Matthew 16:17-19, the charter which establishes the primacy of the Roman bishop, is steeped and drenched, every part of it, in Semitic color. "Binding" and "loosing" were common rabbinical terms; "flesh and blood," "the gates of hell," "thou art the rock," "the keys of the kingdom," all bear the Aramaic imprint. Further, Christian baptism was prepared for by the Jewish baptism of proselytes; the Lord's Supper keeps close to the Paschal meal of the Old Covenant; the Church's anointings have their model in the anointing of Aaron and his sons (Exod. 30:30), her imposing of hands to transmit spiritual power in the laying of hands on Levites or on Josue, as told in the Book of Numbers (8:10 ff.; 27:18); our feasts and fasts, our prayers and chants, the reckoning of holy days from the evening before, the keeping of the day of rest—these and much more go back to the Israel of old. Hence we can say, with Gerhard Kittel and many others, that before the young Church entered the Greek world, her dominant features had already been formed and fostered by her Jewish mother soil (*Die Probleme des palaestinensischen Spaetjudentums und das Urchristentum,* Beitraege zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament, III, 1, 1926, p. 2). The Church is truly the Israel of Newness, and this whether she wears a Roman or Russian, a Chinese, Indian or African, garment.

God, that you too may be numbered among the Church of the sons of Israel."[27] And since olden times she has prayed that the peoples of the world may join the ranks of Abraham's descendants. In the second Collect of the Easter Vigil, the fourth of the former rite of Holy Saturday, she remembers first how in our day the ancient miracles shine anew: the freedom God's right arm once worked for the One People suffering under Egypt's bondage, He works now for the Gentiles in the waters of rebirth. Then she continues: "Grant that the world in its fullness pass over to the sonship of Abraham and the dignity of Israel." One does not know where to begin or where to end in giving the evidence for the Church's conviction that she is the Israel of Newness. Eusebius, for example, speaks of the patriarchs and princes of the Jews as "our fathers, our forebears,"[28] while the liturgy calls Abraham "father of all nations"[29] and *patriarcha noster,* "our patriarch."[30]

In many prayers with which the Church lovingly adorns the sacraments and sacramentals, she expresses this oneness of God's love, the economy of salvation unbroken. At the baptism of adults, she pleads for the protection of the candidate. And to whom does she plead? To God, the "God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, God who appeared to Moses, His servant, on Mount Sinai and delivered the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, appointing an angel of His love to guard them by day and by night." After confirmation, the bishop dismisses the newly anointed: "From Sion hence may the Lord send you His blessing,

---

[27]Origen, *Hom. in Libr. Jesu Nave* 9, 9 (PG 12:878).

[28]Eusebius, *Praep. evang.* 1, 5 (PG 21:46).

[29]Collect after the Third Prophecy on Holy Saturday.

[30]Ordinary of the Mass. On Abraham's dignity, as the Fathers and the liturgy see it, cf. John M. Oesterreicher, "Abraham Our Father," *Orate Fratres* XXV, 11/12 (October-November 1951), pp. 559-573.

so that all the days of your life you may gaze on the good things of Jerusalem, and may come to possess life everlasting." Or think of the dear wish of Mother Church for bridegroom and bride: "May the God of Israel join you in one and be with you, that God who of old had mercy on Sara and Tobias."[31] And the prayer over the bride: "Let holy women ever be her pattern. May she be, like Rachel, dear to her husband; like Rebecca, prudent; like Sara, faithful and long-lived." Then the Communion of the Nuptial Mass: "Mayest thou live to see thy children's children, and peace resting upon Israel" (Ps 127:6). Finally, the blessing over both: "The God of Abraham, God of Isaac and God of Jacob be with you and fulfill His blessing in you." The glory which hovers over marriage also abides on homes and schools. In each one of them the Church sees the tent where God visited Abraham, where Isaac was born, where Jacob bowed for his father's blessing, the tent where the little kingdom of heaven grew. So she asks the Lord to let His favor rest on our dwellings as He did on that of the patriarchs.

A bishop about to be consecrated is asked: "Dost thou believe that there is one Author of both the New and the Old Testaments, of the Law, the Prophets and the Apostles: God, the almighty Lord?" And one of the prayers brings to mind how, in intimate converse, God taught His servant Moses about priestly vesture, and how He ordered that, during the sacred functions, Aaron, His chosen one, should be clad in robes of mysterious meaning, for the garments of the priests of old signify the inner brightness of the creature in Christ. Her deacons the Church compares to the sons of Levi and her priests to the seventy ancients Moses chose to be his helpers. Again, when an abbess is consecrated, God

---

[31]Introit of the Nuptial Mass.

is implored to lead her and her spiritual family to eternal glory, as He brought safely to the shore Moses' sister Miriam, who, with tambour and dance, led the other womenfolk through the Red Sea.

In travellers and pilgrims, the Church, herself on pilgrimage, sees an image of "the sons of Israel walking dryshod through the Red Sea." She has them pray also: "O God, Thou didst lead Thy servant Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees, shielding him from harm on all the roads of his wanderings; deign likewise to guard us, Thy servants."[32] Then there is the preparation for the last journey. When the priest commends a departing soul to God, he asks, among that of other saints, for Abraham's intercession: "Holy Abraham, pray for him." And later he begs: "Deliver, O Lord, the soul of Thy servant, as Thou didst deliver Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees. Deliver Thy servant, O Lord, as Thou didst deliver Isaac from being sacrificed at the hand of his father, Abraham. Deliver, O Lord, as Thou didst deliver Lot from Sodom and the flames of fire; as Thou didst deliver Moses from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; as Thou didst deliver Daniel from the den of lions; as Thou didst deliver the three youths from the fiery furnace and from the hands of the wicked king; as Thou didst deliver Susanna from the false accusation. Deliver, O Lord, the soul of Thy servant, as Thou didst deliver David from the hands of King Saul and Goliath."

There is another prayer for deliverance, the Rite of Exorcism. In it the Church addresses Satan: "Christ shalt thou fear, who in Isaac was sacrificed, in Joseph was sold, in the lamb was slain." And later: "Yield then to God, who, in Pharaoh and his army, did drown thee and thy malice through His servant, Moses, in the depths of the sea.

---

32*Itinerarium,* Roman Ritual.

Yield to God, who, through David, His faithful servant, singing holy canticles, banished thee from the heart of King Saul." To come to a close, at a burial, the priest, that is, the Church, prays: "May Christ, who has called thee, receive thee, and may the angels lead thee into Abraham's bosom." Heaven —God's sharing His glory with His children out of all the nations— heaven is called "Abraham's bosom." What words could be more telling, what words better explain what is meant by "Judaeo-Christian"?

IN A SENSE all three uses of "Judaeo-Christian" apply to the Institute, though the second more than the first and the third even more than the second.[33] Having given them, I have also given, I hope, the basic answer to the question:

---

[33]To promote good will, some speakers and writers, particularly in this country, use "Judaeo-Christian tradition" to denote that body of truths common to Christians and Jews of today. There is in this usage —which is quite different from the three meanings given in this lecture — the danger of oversimplification, for it blurs the many delicate differences between Christianity and post-Biblical Judaism, and the one cardinal distinction of belief or disbelief in Jesus the Christ. Indeed, only recently some Jewish theologians have spoken out against it. In an article on "The Nature of Man in the Judeo-Christian Tradition," Rabbi Robert Gordis, for all that his interpretation of Christian views is not always correct, rightly speaks of the many "nuances," "the subtle differences in emphasis and timbre," "the substantial margins of difference," which separate Christian and Jewish understanding of the Bible, their visions of God, their concepts of man, of law and of sin (*Judaism*, II, 2, April 1953, pp. 101 ff.). Jacob Taubes, writing in *Commentary* for December 1953 on "The Issue Between Judaism and Christianity," with the subtitle "Facing Up to the Unresolvable Difference," puts it in these terms: "Christian theology is based on Christology, which means that all things, human and divine, achieve relevance only as they relate to Jesus the Christ. Judaism, based on the Law, grants relevance to all things, human and divine, only as they relate to Halachah (the legal part of Jewish tradition)" (p. 532). Though it may be disputed that the issue between Judaism and Christianity is best summed up as "commandments versus Christ" or "law versus love," and though the parallels Mr. Taubes draws between Christianity

Why an institute devoted to Judaeo-Christian studies? For, to speak with Jaques in *As You Like It,* "the 'why' is plain as way to parish church." The Old Dispensation is literally the way to parish church. Our personal faith is incomplete, imperfect, unless we know the way God's love has travelled through the ages, unless we lovingly retrace the steps that led to the table in the Upper Room and thence to our altars all over the earth. The holy men and women of the Old Covenant line the road to parish church; no, more than that, they are fully with us in our worship, for their lives are not dead past but living reality. Therefore it is that the Patriarchal Diocese of Jerusalem celebrates the feasts of Abraham, patriarch and confessor; of Moses, lawgiver and confessor, and of Aaron, high priest and confessor; of Elias, prophet and confessor; of David, king, prophet and confessor; and of Isaias and Jeremias, prophets and martyrs.

Why Judaeo-Christian studies? Because Christ the Lord links Christians of all times to the Jews of old. But not only does He tie us to the Jews of old, also to the Jews of today. The great Pius XI condemned anti-Semitism because, in his now famous phrase, "through Christ and in Christ, we are of the spiritual lineage of Abraham. Spiritually, we are Semites,"[34] and thus related in a special kinship to the Jews, even over the gap of faith. Long before, St. Catherine of Siena wrote a letter to Consiglio, a Jew, "her best beloved brother." Like all her letters, it is full of urgency: "As the hart in his thirst pants after living water, so my soul yearns

---

and Sabbatianism are poor taste and poor history, any attempt to clarify the issue is to be welcomed. For never must, indeed, never can misty thinking be the basis of good will between Christians and Jews. How says the Psalmist? "Kindness and truth shall meet, justice and peace shall kiss" (Ps. 84:11).

[34]Pius XI to Belgian pilgrims in September 1938; cf. J. M. Oesterreicher, *Racisme, Antisémitisme, Antichristianisme* (New York: Editions de la Maison Francaise, 1943), pp. 104-106.

to see you approach the light of baptism." And with the urgency of love, she calls him, a Jew unbaptized: *O carissimo fratello in Cristo Gesù,* "Dearest brother in Christ Jesus."[35]

Why Judaeo-Christian studies? Today in the United States, and particularly here in the East, such millions as never before of Christians and Jews are living side by side. Should they not know more of one another than what the newspapers provide? Judaeo-Christian studies are needed because the events of recent years seem to carry a special word of God. When the Church was young, Jews persecuted Christians. In the Middle Ages, Christians often persecuted Jews. But in our day, Christians and Jews are being persecuted together. Hitler directed his war of extermination first against the Jews and then against Christians; Stalin first against Christians and then also against the Jews. There must be a meaning in this common suffering. And meaning too in the establishment of the State of Israel, for no one, whatever he thinks of it, of its past, present or future, can fail to see that here is no mere political accident, rather a significant event. Though God's design may still be hidden, this much is clear: here is a stirring call to every Jew and Christian: "Return, O Israel, to the Lord thy God" (Osee 14:2). To speak of events in the spiritual order which urge us: More than a hundred years ago, on January 20, 1842, our Lady appeared in S. Andrea delle Fratte in Rome to Alphonse Ratisbonne, an Alsatian Jew. Nothing was spoken at this first in the line of recent apparitions, yet all the truth he needed to know was in her eyes. Again, Pope Pius XI has taught us to pray on the feast of Christ the King: "Look down with Thine eyes of mercy upon the children of that stock so long Thy chosen people . . ." When inaugurating

---

[35]*Lettere di S. Caterina da Siena,* ed. P.M.L. Ferretti (Siena, 1918), I, 76-79.

the year of Jubilee, Pope Pius XII said: "We open the Holy Door for all those who adore Christ—not excluding those who sincerely but vainly await His coming and adore Him as the one promised by the prophets and still to come—and extend to them a fatherly welcome."

Why Judaeo-Christian studies? Even if all these challenging events had not taken place, the God-given joy of searching for, and knowing, the truth would be reason enough, the thrill of seeing how God built Himself a house on earth and us a home. In the last fifty years, there have been works of new and deep insight into the mystery which surrounds the children of Abraham: Léon Bloy's *Le Salut par les Juifs* (Salvation Is from the Jews), Jacques Maritain's "The Mystery of Israel" in his *Ransoming the Time,* Monseigneur Journet's *Destinées d'Israël* (Destinies of Israel), Erik Peterson's *Die Kirche aus Juden und Heiden* (The Church out of Jews and Gentiles), the writings of Père Joseph Bonsirven of the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome, of Père Paul Démann of Paris, and of others. Still, there are many fields as yet untouched, although their exploration is very much needed. To give a few instances as they come to mind: We have no history of the Jews from Abraham's days to our own written by a Catholic, written with the understanding a Catholic could bring to it. No Scripture scholar worthy of his name can do his work without the *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* (Commentary on the New Testament from Talmud and Midrash) composed by Strack and Billerbeck, two German Protestant scholars, for this commentary throws light on the meaning of many words and passages—but there has been no similar effort by a Catholic scholar. In another field, early Jewish theology, there have been two works in French, one by Père Lagrange, *Le Judaïsme avant Jésus-Christ* (Judaism Before Jesus Christ), and one

by Père Bonsirven, *Le Judaïsme Palestinien au Temps de Jésus-Christ, Sa Théologie* (Palestinian Judaism at the Time of Jesus Christ, Its Theology), but the main work in English is *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era* by the Harvard historian, George Foot Moore. If you wish to make a scholarly study of the Pharisees, a topic so important for a proper insight into the drama woven through the Gospels, you have to consult Rabbi Louis Finkelstein's two volumes or *Pharisaism* by R. Travers Herford; there is no Catholic authority. The Jewish antecedents to our sacraments, the Jewish patterns for Holy Mass, the Divine Office and the Church year, in brief, the roots of the *opus Dei* in the services of Temple and synagogues, are most stimulating and fruitful to study. And yet we have nothing to put alongside *The Jewish Background of the Christian Liturgy* by the Anglican W.O.E. Oesterley and *The Influence of the Synagogue upon the Divine Office* by the Oxford scholar C.W. Dugmore. Nor has there been anything like the work there should be on the saints and the Jews, on St. John Chrysostom, St. Augustine, St. Bernard, St. Ignatius, Don Bosco, for instance—research objective and warm hearted, with a theological and historical eye.

To many a Jew, if not to all, the Middle Ages are a great stumbling block, and numerous works have dealt with their treatment of the Jews, some picturing the darker, others the brighter, side. But we still lack a scholarly and sympathetic analysis from a Catholic pen. Strange to say, the most readily available source book on papal bulls concerning the Jews, many of them for their protection, is a Jewish work, Solomon Grayzel's *The Church and the Jews in the XIIIth Century.* There have been of late various writings, among them the volumes of James Parkes, *A History of Antisemitism,* and Malcolm Hay's *The Foot of Pride,* which lay the blame for anti-Semitism at the door of the Church. But

no Catholic scholar has answered them, nor sifted truth from untruth. On the other hand, the help and shelter given by pope, bishops, priests, nuns and laypeople, to individual Jews hunted by Hitler's brutalities was in many cases heroic —I do not wish to say that it was sufficient, for "we can never love enough"— it was heroic, and yet we have not, and probably never will have, a complete record of these glorious deeds.

Except for the loving little volume *Quand Israël Aime Dieu* (When Israel Loves God) by Jean de Menasce, there has been no Catholic attempt to evaluate Hasidism, a Jewish religious movement, in some ways akin to the Franciscan, which sprang up in Russia in the middle of the eighteenth century. Nor have Catholic philosophers taken sufficient notice of modern Jewish thinkers like Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig, and the American Will Herberg. Again, are we not remiss in not having turned hopeful attention to the new, almost revolutionary attitude toward Jesus of many contemporary Jewish scholars, thinkers and writers? Joseph Klausner sees in Him "*the* teacher of morality, a force and influence for which history has no parallel,"[36] Claude Montefiore speaks of "the lovableness of Jesus,"[37] Sholem Asch hails Him as the one whose every word "has value for us today,"[38] Martin Buber calls Him "my great brother"[39] —to quote only a few. Comments on this most significant change have appeared in French, German and Hungarian, but none in English.

---

[36]Joseph Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth* (New York: Macmillan, 1943), pp. 414, 411.

[37]Claude G. Montefiore, "The Significance of Jesus for His Own Age," *Hibbert Journal* X, 4 (July 1912), pp. 773-774.

[38]Sholem Asch in an interview given to the *Christian Herald,* January 1944.

[39]Martin Buber, *Two Types of Faith* (New York: Macmillan, 1951), p. 12.

I think I had better stop, for you will be tired of my repeated "nothing in English." It will be the endeavor of the Institute little by little to remedy this lack of literature—but you will understand my stressing "little by little," for *ein gut Ding will Weile haben,* "a good thing needs leisure to grow in." The first step we plan is the publication of an annual, which we should like to call *The Bridge: A Yearbook of Judaeo-Christian Studies.* It will gather together essays and articles by scholars from here and abroad, among them those who have done us the honor of becoming Fellows of the Institute. To suggest its scope, let me mention a few of the many topics we have in mind: "The Old Covenant, Covenant of Fear or Love?", "Abraham's Sacrifice—as Seen by the Rabbis, Kierkegaard and the Church," "Moses and the Common Good," "Michelangelo, Painter of the Prophets," "Israel's Past and Future According to the Parables," "The Drama of the Crucifixion," "St. Thomas and Maimonides," "The Portrait of the Jew in Medieval and Modern Literature," "Between Heaven and Earth: Franz Werfel's Theology," "The Enigma of Simone Weil," "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion," "The Socio-Economic Structure of American Jewry," "Soviet Russia and the Jews," "The Finaly Case." In short, each successive volume will be a little compendium of the whole area of Judaeo-Christian studies, from theology and history to sociology and letters. With its various departments of The Bible, The Times, Ideas, with its reports on interesting but comparatively inaccessible foreign studies, which might otherwise remain unknown to American readers, the Yearbook's appeal will be, if I am not mistaken, to many among the few for whom thought is life. It will encourage, we trust, a spiritual climate corresponding to St. Paul's treatise on the Jews in the Epistle to the Romans.

This treatise, though it comprises but three chapters of the Epistle, calls for a separate and extensive commentary,

since it contains the Apostle's theology of the Jews, his teaching on their role in the economy of salvation. In it, with the glowing passion that was his own, he set forth the triple mystery of Israel's election, failure and restoration, which is at bottom the mystery of man. We like to think that such a commentary, and—to speak of a quite different topic—"Modern Jewish Artists Look at Christ," will be among the full-length monographs to be published in due time by the Institute. In addition to these, we shall encourage the translation into English of European books on various questions within the area of Judaeo-Christian studies. Popular pamphlets will round out our literary activities. But the printed word must not stand alone. Among our long range plans are a variety of lectures and courses, Advent sermons, summer seminars for seminarians from all over the country, workshops for Brothers and Sisters, two-week courses in Catholic colleges on "The Jews Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow." It is our prayer that all this, the printed and the spoken word, will evoke a loving response in the hearts of many and will overflow into action hallowing the name of the Lord Jesus.

Am I too confident in daring to think that you feel with me how great the need is for work such as we plan, and that you also feel how tremendous a task is ahead of us? The road to our goal is long, but still we must travel it, and courageously. One day, Marshal Lyautey, the famous French general, who conquered Morocco and tied North Africa to France, ordered his gardener to plant a very rare and valuable tree in his front garden. "But, sir," objected the gardener, "this kind of tree takes a hundred years to grow." "Well then," the Marshal replied, "we must not lose a minute."