

MESSIAH—CHRISTOS.

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IN the February number of *The Open Court* Dr. Paul Carus published an article on "Christ and Christians," which has called forth many comments. No historian as yet has pointed out the exact time when the Messiah idea arose in Israel. The term *Moshiyah*,¹ Messiah, a derivation from the Niphal (passive) form of *masha'h*, "one that had been anointed," referred primarily to the High Priest, and after Israel had chosen a royal ruler it then referred also to the king.

The first and oldest oracle about a Messianic age to come we meet in Joel iii-iv. No person but the spirit of God is mentioned. (Cf. Acts ii. 16-22.) I desire to call attention to the fact that the prophecy of Joel refers to Jews only, and that the New Testament translates after the Septuagint (*ibid.* iii. 5): "And it shall come to pass whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved," *sothesetai*,² fut. pass. of *sozo*,³ which is misleading. The Hebrew word used is the Niphal of *malat*, "to escape," "shall (be enabled to) escape" (Germ. *entinnen*). If we compare Joel with Ezekiel xxxvi. 24-28 and Jeremiah xxxi. 31-34, we understand immediately that according to the (Jewish) conception of the Prophets the creation of a personal Messiah or a second God is excluded, that the *b'rith hadashah* cannot allude to Jesus and Christianity as Christian theologians wish to make believe, but that idolatry—a triune Godhead included—will disappear, all mankind will recognize and worship the One and only God, and as a consequence truth, justice and righteousness will triumph and sway man's conduct. That there was no thought of a Messiah or Saviour in person, a descendant of the house of David, can be easily deduced from 1 Kings xii. 16. The ten tribes, or their representatives, express themselves: "What

¹ מָשִׁיחַ² σωθήσεται³ σώζω

portion have we in David? nor have we any inheritance in the son of Jesse."

Only after Israel had been divided into two kingdoms could the idea of one "shepherd," one king, a *mashiya^{ch}* have been advanced. The many misfortunes both kingdoms had experienced gave rise to the comforting thought and word that a Redeemer, a man like Moses, would come to deliver them from physical oppression. As the greatest glory both in war and in peace was witnessed by Israel during the reign of David the idea of a personal Messiah was allied to the house of David. This promise was inspiring and consoling. But we find nowhere that he shall be deified nor does it appear anywhere that he shall be the son of God. On the contrary, it seems that in course of time the personage became a secondary consideration, and founded upon some tradition we hear that Samson was to be the Messiah, and we read about a "Mashiya^{ch} ben Joseph." In Suckak 52b we find, "And the Lord showeth to me four artificers (of brass, iron, stone and wood *cheresh*,⁴ Gesenius) Zech. ii. 3 Rashi, four *Meshichim*. The Rabbis ask, Who are they? Mashiya^{ch} ben David (of the house of David); Mashiya^{ch} ben Joseph (not the father's name but of Joseph's family); Elijah and the Cohain *Zedeq*, to which Rashi comments Elijah because he built the altar on Mount Carmel; and the last one is Sem who helped his father Noa^{ch} to build the ark. These four are to rear the temple at Jerusalem.

In this connection I may mention that the Rabbis maintain that Cyrus is called Mashiya^{ch} because God had appointed him to rebuild the sanctuary and to gather the exiles (Megillah 12a). The time of the advent of the Messiah was calculated. Rabba bar Joseph, president of the academy at Machusa, claimed that Daniel was mistaken (*ibid.*). The Rabbis also tried to find his name through application of some Biblical verses (Sanhedrin 98b). His name will be Shiloh (Gen. xlix. 10) or Jinnon (Ps. lxxii. 17) or ^eHaninah (Jer. xvii. 13) or Mena^{ch}em Paraclet (Lam. i. 16) (John xiv. 16). Hillel rejects all these calculations and speculations with three words *ain Mashiya^{ch} leyisrael*, "There is no Messiah for Israel" (to be expected) Sanhed. 98b-99a), to which Rashi adds: "The Holy One Himself will rule over them and he will redeem⁵ them." The word *Goail*⁶ appears as Redeemer many times (however in connection with dam blood as avenger), e. g., *Goail Jisraail* Isa xlix. 7, "Thus hath said the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel." The Septuagint renders Redeemer with *rysamenos*⁷ (fut. aorist part. of *ryomai*⁸).

⁴ הרש

⁵ ויגאלם

⁶ גאיל

⁷ ὁ ρυσάμενος σε ὁ θεός

⁸ ῥύουαι

Dr. Carus is mistaken when he says, "The Hebrew language does not possess the word 'saviour.'" The Hebrew language has several words that cover the idea according to Jewish conception, as in Is. xliii. 11, "I, I am the Lord and beside me there is no *moshiya*⁹ (Saviour)." The Septuagint renders it with *sozon*.¹⁰ The passage Habackuk iii. 13 *leyaisha et mechihekha*, which the Rev. Mr. Kampmeier seems to have overlooked is given in the Greek version *ton sozai ton christon sou*,¹¹ and the preceding *leyaisha* as *soterian*.¹² The same verb in Ex. xiv. 13-30, is *errhysato* from *ryomai*. The Greek translators, or rather interpreters, made some fine distinctions in the communication of ideas contained in the Hebrew words or in the context. Thus Deut. xxii. 27, where the same term *Mashiya* appears, they apply *boetheo*.¹³ There can be no doubt that *Moshiya* is to denote Saviour. The words *goail* and *moshiya* are retained in the doxology in the sense of Redeemer or Saviour. Still another word containing and conveying the idea of redeeming, saving, preserving, is *padah*¹⁴ (Is. i. 27; Ps. xxxiv. 23; Deut. xiii. 2. *Rophai*,¹⁵ "I the Lord am thy healer," (Ex. xv. 26); "I wound and I heal," (Deut. xxxii. 39); "Heal me and I shall be healed, save me and I shall be saved (Jer. xvii. 14). Christian theology has distilled God of his essence and has instilled the *quiddity* of the Father into the only begotten son. If salvation be wrested from the Father, why not also the power and wisdom to heal? That is logic. The idea that God is Saviour stood Godfather at the birth of Judaism. God saved Israel from Egyptian bondage and brought them freedom. The sages maintain *Benissan migalu benissan attidin leyigal* (Rosh Hashanah iib), "as Israel was redeemed in Nissan (month) so they are destined to be redeemed in Nissan." Perhaps the Messiah myth of Jesus has some connection with that opinion of our Rabbis. Jesus died and reappeared in Passover (Nissan).

The description of the millennial age in the Bible is different from what it is now after Jesus had been proclaimed as a Messiah and adored as a God. Evil will be conquered (Is. xi. 9); all ills and diseases will be healed (Ex. xxiii. 25); death shall be overcome (Is. xxv. 8); man reconciled with God (Lev. xvi. 30); no war (Micah iv. 4). Nation borrowed from nation not only words and coined them in their own mint according to their own form and

⁹ מושיע

¹⁰ σώζων

¹¹ τοῦ σωσαι τὸν χριστόν σου

¹² σωτήριαν

¹³ βοηθῶ

¹⁴ פָּדָה

¹⁵ רפָּא

sound, but also the ideas they contained which had to undergo the same process in the mint of the mind.

No doubt that the Jews had appropriated pagan ideas concerning God, universe, and man, but they were reformed and remodeled and harmonized with the fundamental principle of the Unity of God, the first and second commandments. The incarnation idea is purely pagan, and, as expressed, for instance, in John i. 14-18, was rejected by the Jews at all times. Dr. Carus says, "When Christians speak of Christ as the Messiah they mean that the Jews ought to abandon their Messianic hopes of a restoration of Israel, and that they ought to believe in Jesus Christ as the international Saviour who by a fulfilment of the Law has abolished it." The Jews have given up those Messianic hopes long ago, and still they refuse to believe in Jesus as the *international Saviour*. The reasons are obvious. These prophets upon whose words Christian theology rear the Jesus Messiah pillar predict that the Messiah is sent for the sole purpose to gather all the Jews—even a single one that may be living in some forlorn hamlet—and to bring about the restoration of Israel in its pristine glory. "Who by fulfilment of the law has abolished it" is simply verbiage, phraseology not worthy to be considered. Which law or laws did he fulfil and which did he abolish, and by whose authority? Nor did Jesus assume such authority (Matt. v. 17-19). Some of the Mosaic laws bear the injunction *B'rith olam* or *ʿhuqath olam*. Fact and truth testify that not a single law was fulfilled nor did Peter and his followers abrogate the law immediately after Jesus's resurrection. They had to meet in council to consider the proposition (Acts xv. 1, 5-6). The question is open. How can a law be fulfilled by one or more persons to such a degree that it is to lose its intrinsic force? Can God himself abolish the laws of nature? Again we have to deal with an utterance of the Rabbis, "All laws will be abolished in the time of Messiah," which means that all mankind will be filled with the Spirit of God. "They will do no harm nor hurt on his mountain"; accordingly all laws, religious, ceremonial, criminal, etc. will not be necessary.

Christian theologians place Hebrew words into the Procrustean bed and stretch them to make them read as they please "that it might be fulfilled." The word *notzri* with regard to Jesus cannot be construed as Saviour because firstly *natzar* nowhere appears in the sense of saving, but means the German *bewahren*, *beobachten*, and secondly it refers to his birthplace, and the construction is like *Moabi*,¹⁶ a Moabite. I am surprised that as yet it has not been

pointed out that Jesus is to be understood by *notzair* in Ex. xxxiv. 7. The word Nazarene originated from the Greek of Matt. ii. 23, "And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, he shall be called a Nazarene." I confess I am unable to find which prophet said so and where in the Bible this is mentioned. The Gospel writer had perhaps the word *naitzer*,¹⁷ "a sprout," in view (Is. xi. 1). Delitzsch translates Nazareth with the Hebrew *Nezareth*,¹⁸ an inhabitant thereof, *Notzri*, plur. *Notzrim*. In the New Testament the Greek is spelled with a zeta¹⁹ contrary to custom which renders the sade²⁰ with sigma.²¹ A sect of Nazarenes did not exist before the time of Jesus, but a society *Nasirites*²² (Amos ii. 11-12.) *Minim*²³ was the term for heretics and not a special appellation for Christians (See Zunz, *Gottesdienstliche Votr.*, p. 380).

According to Jewish commentators 1 Kings xix. 16, Is. lxi. 1 and Ps. cv. 18 denote *Einsetzung, Weihe*. Septuagint applies *chrlein*.²⁴ Prophets were not anointed, accordingly it means also consecrated. It must be taken into consideration that all the tales concerning the illustrious men told in the Scriptures are united in Jesus. All the moral laws which the Rabbis taught long before Jesus are given as original of him, and ascribed to him. Pharaoh's command to kill all male children and the saving of Moses is unhistorically replaced by Herod. Elijah revives the dead, Elisha heals the sick, feeds a multitude with little, and so on. The golden rule was pronounced by Hillel the Old probably one hundred years before Jesus (Sabbath 31b). Measure for measure (Sanhedrin 100a), and there is not a single ethical precept in the New Testament that could not be traced to its original source in Talmud or Midrash. Jesus was neither king nor high priest and therefore not anointed, but if he felt called upon to preach the word of God to all classes of (Jewish?) people, his mission is represented as *Christos* in imitation of Is. lxi. 1, "The spirit of the Lord is upon me because the Lord *masha'h* hath anointed (consecrated) me to announce good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted to proclaim liberty to captives," etc.

Meshiya'h Jehovah, Lam. iv. 20 (also omitted by Mr. Kampmeier) rendered by the Septuagint as *Christos Kyrios*—both words in the Nom., *der Gottgesalbte*—bear out clearly that no such person as Jesus could be understood by this designation.

17 נָצֵר

18 נְצִרָת

19 ζ *Naζapér*

20 צ

21 Σ

22 נֹזֵר Plur. *nesirim*

23 מִיִּנִים

24 χρίειν