

A STUDY OF THE POLEMICS OF JOSHUA LORQUI,
PAUL OF BURGOS, THE TORTOSA DISPUTANTS,
AND JOSEPH ALBO,

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*microfilmed 1/12/71
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To my father who sees in his
son's career the realization
of his own thwarted ambition

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The purpose of this Thesis is to present the arguments employed by the parties noted in the title-page, an estimate of the materials used, and personal reactions.

PREFATORY NOTE TO JOSHUA LORQUI

The following letter is the one sent by Joshua Lorqui to Paul of Burgos, in 1390, after the latter's conversion to Christianity.

There are some who claim that this Joshua Lorqui later became the convert, Joshua Lorqui, also known as Geronimo de Santa Fe, the infamous instigator of the Tortosa disputation¹ in 1413.

The source for this account is to be found in Eisenstein's "Ozar Wikuḥim", pp. 98-103, taken from Landau's "Iggereth R. Jehoshua Halorki".

THE LETTER OF JOSHUA LORQUI

Joshua Lorqui writes Paul of Burgos in an attempt to discover the reasons why the latter converted to Christianity. It must have been done for some reason, he argues. Was it for honors or riches, or the satisfaction of a jaded appetite? Was it induced by the attractiveness of the Gentile women, or because of pure philosophical interest? Did he betake himself outside of the fold because of the many troubles that had befallen the Jewish people, or was he able to fathom those secrets of prophecy the answers to which had been denied all men, and choose that religion which he found to be absolutely true? To the solution of these queries Lorqui sets himself.

He dismisses the first, which he terms the worldly argument, by recalling that his friend had riches, and had been highly regarded because of his piety. As for the philosophical reason, that also does not stand inspection. Paul had been an able student of philosophy, distinguishing always between the kernel of a truth and its outer shell; knowing how to accept the former and reject the latter. The persecution and poverty of the Jews, then? It is known, says Lorqui, that there are many non-Christian countries in which the Jews dwell, where they suffer no hardships and live happy lives. The Jews who live in Christian lands are of the poorer element who came back with Ezra and Nehemiah; hence they are so destitute. And granted, that even if all the Jews in the Christian lands would be destroyed, there still would be many Jews left and there would be no weakening of the Jewish spirit.

So there is really nothing left to do but attack the problem from the last standpoint: that Paul had been led to conversion through analysis and knowledge of religion and prophecy.

Lorqui writes that Paul has the advantage over other Jewish sages in that he knows Christian theology, whereas the Rabbis did not. Moreover, Joshua had come upon a document written in Paul's handwriting and stating the fact that he (Paul) believed in "that Man", Jesus, who lived at the end of the Second Temple and who claimed that he was the Messiah for whom the people had waited. Paul, the document shows, seems to understand all the details of the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus and claims that they agree with the pattern for the Messiah.

And so, in his anxiety and doubt, he turns to Paul for enlightenment on several points, and to discover the reasons why Paul deserted the faith of his fathers. To facilitate matters, he divides his questions as to subject matter; having two divisions with two queries in the first and eight in the second; the first division dealing with the Redeemer himself and the second with the consequences of his coming.

Lorqui's statement of the first question is: It is well-known³ that the Messiah will be of the "sprout of Jesse", the multitude of passages on this point testifying to the legitimacy of that belief. Even if the Christian claim were true, that this man, Jesus, was the son of God, and that the husband of⁴ his mother was Joseph of the seed of David, how can the geneal-

ogy of Joseph, who is not his father and has no relationship to him at all, be applied to him since the Christians acknowledge that Joseph had no sexual relationship with his (Jesus') mother? And even if his mother be of the seed of David, is it not stated⁵ in the Torah that the mother's family is not counted in matters of genealogy?

The second part of the first division deals with the belief that the Messiah who comes will be a king and a ruler, as is written, "Behold, days come,....That I will raise unto David a.....shoot, And he shall reign as king.....and execute justice.....and Israel shall be saved....."⁶ Ezekiel, also, said,⁷ "And David, My servant, shall be their prince forever". This verse refers to the Messiah only; because after the time of Ezekiel who stated this and who lived during the Babylonian Exile, no Davidic king reigned, and none of the rulers who followed was of Davidic descent: the Hasmoneans were Aaronitish, and the Herodians were not Jewish. This man, Jesus, whom the Christians deified, did not rise to the rank of prince, let alone king. And how could he be called by this title, questions Lorki, if the people did not acknowledge him as king? since if there be no people, there can be no king. Furthermore, he was cut off in the midst of his days and left no offspring to continue his dynasty. Hence, in what manner does Jesus, as Messiah, fulfill the condition that the Messiah must be a king?

The second division brings forward further problems, the first of which is: It is well-known that the Redeemer

will come to save Israel, the people of God. "Would that I knew how this man saved Israel", says Lorqui. None of Israel, except a few worthless people who were insignificant because of their numerical poverty, believed in him, he continues to say. And if one should claim that the name "Israel" is given to everyone, be he of whatever nation, who follows the belief of Jesus, would that name designate the saved people? ⁸ Isaiah already had said that the saved will be actual Israelites. Furthermore, the prophets mentioned that redemption would come to all who believed in the Redeemer, whether they be Jew or non-Jew. From ⁹ the verse, "And many nations shall come to the Lord", it is evident that the main body of the people will be of Israel, and the remainder will be from other nations. Today, Lorqui continues, the situation is reversed, since the greater part of those who believe in the Redeemer are not Israelites, and hence, that condition set forth for the coming of the Messiah has not been fulfilled.

The second point in this division deals with the belief that when the Messiah comes he will gather the oppressed of Israel, scattered at the ends of the earth, from under the ¹⁰ rule of the Christians; for Isaiah mentioned that all the sheep will be gathered. Ezekiel also, who lived at the time of the ¹¹ Second Temple, had promised return from Exile to the Children of Israel scattered throughout the earth. But only a small portion of the people who were in Exile were gathered in. Shortly after the coming of Jesus, however, the people were again in exile and dispersed among the nations. Needless to say, also, that there were many Jews in other countries who were not gathered

unto Jerusalem at that time; hence it can be seen that the above-mentioned requisite of the Messiah's coming had not been fulfilled.

The third condition of the Messiah's coming deals with the settlement of Jerusalem and Palestine after his arrival; and the land's eternal peace and prosperity: Jeremiah promised that the city will be rebuilt,¹² and that it shall never again be¹³ destroyed.¹⁴ Furthermore, those who populate it shall be of Israel¹⁵ and, explicitly, "They shall dwell upon it forever". But the reverse of this had occurred: After the coming of the Messiah, Jerusalem was destroyed and remained so, but the lands about it were all settled. Very few Jews are in Palestine now, says Lorqui. The land is not "flowing with milk and honey". There is no prosperity in the land, and a Davidic king does not rule over it. And even if it be acknowledged that the Christians should be called the Israelites to whom the land will be given, how does it happen that they do not rule the land at all? Or, even if it be granted that Titus, Vespasian, and the Emperors of Rome believed in the new religion, Christianity, (which fact, says Lorqui, he has never found recorded), can these men be called Princes of the house of David? They ruled over the land a short time, and, at that, after its destruction, contrary to the testimony of the prophets. Lorqui claims that he cannot be comforted over the fact that the land, called a "holy and beautiful thing" by all nations and peoples, should be ruled over by the Moslems. And more astonishing is that the Christians do not deny this. The Mohammedans control the land; but nowhere in Palestine is there to be found the sovereignty of those redeemed by Jesus whom the Christians claim to be the Messiah.

The fourth question is: It is claimed that after the appearance of the Messiah, the understanding and knowledge of, and the seeking after, God will be spread throughout the world because all the peoples shall believe in His religion and follow His true principles; and all men shall know God, as is written, "And they shall no longer teach one another about God";¹⁶ "And the knowledge of God shall fill the earth as the waters cover the sea".¹⁷ But the opposite of these conditions is to be seen; for immediately after the coming of Jesus, only a few followed him; and those who did, did so only after the exhortations of his disciples who went from center to center of population. Furthermore,¹⁸ how has the prophecy, "They shall no longer learn war", been fulfilled? As to the prophecy that the entire earth shall be filled with the knowledge of God, we find that a majority of the world believes in Mohammedanism. This does not include the Jews and those who worship the sun, fire, and wind. So, according to the opinion of the Christians, all those peoples that constitute a greater part of the world, are, without doubt, non-knowers of God.

The fifth deals with the promise of the rebuilding of the Temple by the Messiah and the return of the Temple service to its original state with the priests of Levitical descent officiating, as is written, "Behold the man....and he shall build the house of the Lord",¹⁹ and, "The smelter and purifier shall come".²⁰ It is seen from this that the priests and Levites will not be distinguished from the rest of the people until the Messiah come and separate them, and cause them to enter into the Service and offer sacrifices. But, in actuality, the opposite is to be found: At the time of the coming of Jesus, the Temple was already built

upon its defined place, and the priests and Levites functioned as their wont; but after his coming all was destroyed; the Levites returned to the rank and file of the people with but their name and title themselves to distinguish them from the rest. Moreover, the followers of Jesus created for themselves priests and singers from all who came to offer their services; and they did not concern themselves with the Aaronitish descent of the applicants.

The sixth point deals with the claim that after the advent of the Messiah and increase will be noticed in the world of the influence of the Godly spirit and of prophecy. The prophet ²¹ said, "....and it shall come to pass.....that I will pour My spirit upon all flesh;....your sons and daughters....your old men.....your young men....shall see visions", and he added hyper-²²bolically, "and also upon the servants....will I pour My spirit". The meaning of this, claims Lorqui, is that even the most boorish men will be learned and be so influenced by true ideas that they will be prepared to accept a Godly influence and a prophetic-like spirit, just as in the case of the Israelites at the time of Moses. But the realization of events has brought an opposite picture, for, after the coming of Jesus, prophecy ceased for everyone. It cannot be argued that the intention was not to place His spirit upon all. It is known that prophecy is extreme perfectability and the most precious that is in man, following after the greatest good. ²³ The prophets transmitted this good to individuals after being certain that these individuals were fit, from the standpoint of their natures, to accept the truth. Yet, argues Lorqui, at the time of the supposed salvation through

Jesus-----that salvation whose intention it was to make man complete by giving him final perfectability, the gift of prophecy, so that he could inherit eternal life-----how did it happen that prophecy, which formerly had been so precious, should be lost and destroyed?

The seventh point under discussion in this division handles the question of the people of the world and the increase in peace, in general, after the coming of the Messiah: Isaiah said, "And the lion and the lamb shall lie down together",²⁴ and in case one should question this and call it a parable, the prophet said specifically, "They shall beat their swords into plowshares.....and they shall know no more war".²⁵ And today, notes Lorqui, the situation is reversed. For, from the time of the appearance of Jesus, wars and quarrels have increased immeasurably in the world. As for the Mohammedans, all their religious zeal is expressed mainly with the sword and spear.

In the eighth and final point of the second division, Lorqui takes up the statements in prophecy of wonderful events that will take place after the coming of the Messiah and his establishment in his kingdom. These are: the war of Gog and Magog;²⁶ Zachariah's prophecy of, "Behold, a day cometh for the Lord..... and all those who remain....shall celebrate....the feast of Succoth";²⁷ and that of Isaiah who said, ".....monthly shall they bow down before me...".²⁸ All these things have never happened because they are not minor matters, but major events pertaining to the advent of the Messiah. Had they occurred at any time in history, it is impossible that some record of them should not have been found in any book or story.

But Lorqui is not quite through; he is disturbed by other doubts.

One of them has to do with the compulsion to observe the Torah as it is, without adding to its laws or subtracting from them; the statutes of the Torah are eternal. Jesus came and nullified most of the commandments in the Torah, and added some that had not existed prior to his coming. Granted, that after he became the Messiah he had the right to institute new holidays to commemorate the miracles that happened because of himself, just as Mordecai and Esther did in establishing Purim-- let it not be forgotten that he established baptism as a covenant in his new religion in order to liken the latter to the Law of Moses which also has covenants. But why did his followers fail to nullify the covenant of circumcision? Jesus did not nullify it for he was already circumcized and baptized; and specifically, he said, "I come not to destroy, but to fulfill (the Law)". If this be so, then how did he dare to nullify those commandments whose nullification involves excommunication? Such matters as eating ^aleven on Passover and eating on the Day of Atonement come in this category. And how could he allow the eating of the forbidden foods in general, and the fat and the blood, and other matters which involve severe punishment; the keeping of which should have been dictated by the intelligence of the disciples? And even if the above matters were not written in the Torah, they are fit to be included in it, because of the great good that is derived from them for the benefit of body and soul.

Lorqui adds that he will mention nothing (sic) of the claim that Jesus was born of the word of God without in-

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tercourse of male, or of the matters of his death and resurrection, since he feels, so he tells Paul, that they are matters over which the divine power has rule and which he dare not discuss. Even the matter of the Trinity, says he, must be mentioned with the same delicacy; it is ancient knoweldge, and even Aristotle had something to say concerning it in his "Heaven and Earth".³²

All these matters mentioned above, continues Lorqui, granting that the Jews cannot believe in them, are yet possible of belief by one who so inclines his mind toward them. But what shall one say to the claim that the Messiah is of flesh and blood, eats and drinks, dies and lives, and that he himself is the true God, the First Cause, the Highest Thing; from the nobility of whose being are drawn the various senses that are not bodily, and have no power in the body, and whose dwelling is not with the flesh"?³³

There are other questions which the intellect also cannot fathom, says Lorqui cleverly in order to cast suspicion upon Christian beliefs. It is further stated, he says, by the followers of Jesus that the principle purpose of his coming on earth was to atone for the original sin of Adam. "Doth God pervert judgment?"³⁴ he asks. Was not the punishment for the crime already pronounced when Adam was driven from the Garden of Eden, and the earth cursed because of him? If this punishment does not suffice to atone for his sin, then Adam will receive the rest of it in the world to come. Shall the "fathers eat sour grapes and the teeth of the children be set on edge"?³⁵ The Torah says that the fathers shall not be put to death because of their sons, or the sons because of the fathers.³⁶

Shall all mankind suffer because of the sin of one man? Shall all humanity be condemned as guilty for a crime it did not commit?

Let it be agreed, continues Lorqui's argument, that the souls of all the righteous went to Hell until Jesus received death, and the sin was atoned for. It seems that the main reason for Jesus assuming a human form was to die, and so atone for that sin committed by Adam. If that is the case, then why was his death so harsh a thing? "And how they mourn over that death! And hate us because of it! until they have come to say that because of the crime of that death, we are in so long an exile, and it shall never be atoned for. And yet, by killing him, the early people fulfilled the intention of God and brought great salvation to the world!"

The doubts concerning Jesus' birth, death, and resurrection, together with the details of Jesus' discussions with his disciples and the men of his generation; and the great difference manifest between the marvelous miracles performed by the prophets openly and before all, and the miracles which are attributed to Jesus by the Christians and which cannot be displayed openly because of the many doubts connected with them; all still trouble Lorqui.

There is yet another question troubling him. Is it required, he asks, or is it proper, for a religionist, because he is a religionist, to inquire into, and investigate the cornerstone of his religion and belief in order to determine whether it is his religion that is the true one, or whether another aside from his is; or is he not obligated or permitted to do this? If religions are compared, with the object in view of

finding a common denominator between one's own religion and other religions, (as it seems that Paul may have done, notes Lorqui), then it would happen according to this belief, that no religionist in the world would at all be firm in his belief, but would be forever in doubt and distracted. Each man would form his own religion based upon his own opinions and no one would follow tradition. Then the word "belief" would not at all apply. This condition would necessitate Paul's being in that doubtful state now, instead of having definite opinions as required by Christianity. Paul has yet to investigate Mohammedanism, and might possibly come to the conclusion that not all of these three religions are divinity, and that divinity is different in each case.

From the other point of view, continues Lorqui: if it is proper that a man is not obligated to make the above-sort of investigation into his religion, two things will happen: one, that every religionist will be saved through his religion, because no religion will be considered better than the other; or, two, that God will act unjustly and punish everyone who does not believe in a certain specific religion. Now, argues Lorqui, if a religionist is not permitted to investigate the principles of his religion and compare them with those of other religions, but must believe in the religion into which he was born, be that faith true or otherwise; and if he is forced to worship God according to the precepts of his religion; perforce, then, he must be saved and succeed through that religion. If this success did not occur, then the ways of God would not be just. For how can God punish a man, should he follow evil paths, if he be forced to do so, and cannot thwart it?

From the foregoing argument, concludes Lorqui, it can be seen that Paul did not do rightly in what he did; and that he was not permitted to it, since⁷ he was a religionist.

Lorqui adds another argument to his barrage: Let us imagine, he says, a Christian in England, far from contact with Jews or Mohammedans, and a Mohammedan living away from contact with Jews and Christians. Each one of these was born and reared on the cornerstone of his religion and has never heard of other religions but his own. Each prospers in and with his religion. Each worships God through it according to his teaching. Surely one of these men is treading the evil path; and his forebears have bequeathed to him falsehood. How can either say that God will come and punish the other because he does not return to the true religion? Yet the paths to repentance are closed to him because he does not know of any other religion. The Christians solved the puzzle, claims Lorqui, by decreeing that he who is not baptized is not saved by any other means. And the truth be known, it is a strange thing, Lorqui wonders; how can God punish with eternal destruction a countless people that has been erring and not realizing its error.

These are the matters which have perplexed him, says the writer of the letter; and especially the last two points under discussion.

He begs for a speedy answer and hopes that his doubts will be quelled.

CONCLUSIONS

Lorqui's letter gives every evidence of being clever. The thinly-disguised attempt at naivete adds to this impression. There is an air of kindly maliciousness, a gentle teasing, that seems to say that the author is sure there is no escape. The questions he sets forth at the beginning, in an attempt to discover the reasons for Paul's conversion, have a sarcastic touch.

One feels certain that his feeling is that Paul was attracted to Christianity by the material things which he enumerates, and not by philosophic speculation. His argument that a religionist who investigates his religion must necessarily be always in a state of doubt (which condition Paul does not find himself in) lends assurance to the above opinion.

Lorqui's principal method of attack is to show that the conditions to be fulfilled with the coming of the Messiah have not come to pass. Thus he brings conclusive proof that the claims made for the Messiah have not come true. He uses one of the strongest forms of refutation----refutation by fact.

At times, he does not express himself openly, but merely hints at what he wishes to say, thus casting his doubts upon the matter without openly saying so. Thus it is, when he merely mentions his doubts concerning the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus, along with his queries on other matter not intelligible to him. He probably felt that the mere statement of a fact alongside of arguments used in refuting other facts of the same class, would be enough to drag the first fact into the mire.

His argument concerning the inhabitant of a land that is not Christian, is clever. His mentioning of it, and the acknowledgment that these people, too, have prosperity is enough to make Paul ponder the thought that salvation can be had only through Christianity. He shows the fallacy of the Christian doctrine of only one kind of salvation and only one kind of a belief in ascertain God.

Another hammer-like blow at Christian doctrine concerns the questions of Jesus' coming to earth. Lorqui argues that the Christians claim that Jesus assumed human form to atone for the sins of mankind through his death. If this be the case, then Christianity should be glad that Chrsit was killed. They should thank the Jews for aiding Christ to fulfill his mission on earth! He shows that the views of Christianity on this subject are directly contradictory.

Lorqui's remarks concerning the Moslem rule of Palestine seem to be wetted with crocodile tears. Mosled rule of the land probably was objectionable to the Jews. But in this case, Lorqui seems to mention it in order to make Paul feel uncomfortable; since a thorn in the side of Christianity was the great Moslem power which it couldnot break.

Lorqui makes a plea for traditio^an in religion. He realizes that without it, religion loses a powerful factor. He also holds the view that religion is^a/social and not an individual matter.

Joshua Lorqui must have possessed a fine education. His historical references are fairly accurate, and he is able to

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quote from Aristotle in the Arabic. He also wrote that he never found recorded that the Emperors of Rome believed in Christianity. This is evidence of knowledge of general history. It can be seen, in his references to the fine things that he had formerly found in the house of Paul, when the latter was Solomon Levi, that he was a man of culture.

The two men The two men must have been close friends before Paul's conversion took place; hence, Lorqui's ability to be thinly sarcastic without fear of harm. It is a private letter, and he can afford to be outspoken.

PREFATORY NOTE TO PAUL OF BURGOS

Solomon Levi, known later as Paul of Burgos, or Paul Burgensis, was born in 1352 and died in 1435, living eighty-three years.

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Graetz claims that he became converted after the massacres of 1391. Steinschneider states that the conversion took place in Solomon Levi's fortieth year, on July 21, 1390. One is inclined to accept Steinschneider's opinion as the correct one since he can quote the exact date from the MS. at his disposal.

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The following letter was written by Paul of Burgos in answer to, and in defense against the letter written to him by Joshua Lorqui, which letter has been dealt with in the preceding section of this thesis.

The beginning of the letter is missing. But we can safely assume that not much has been lost, since the letter gives evidence of not having been much longer than what we have left. It commences with an answer to the second part of Joshua Lorqui's letter.

The source for this letter is to found in Blumenfeld's "Ozar Nehmad", pp. 5-6; and also in Eisenstein's "Ozar Wikuhim", pp. 103-104.

THE ANSWER OF THE APOSTATE PAUL OF BURGOS

Paul of Burgos replies to Joshua Lorqui and says that he will not write about the eight questions about the coming of the Messiah that were mentioned by Lorqui. However, he will devote himself to the last part of his friend's letter wherein he is asked to concern himself especially about certain problems. Therefore, it is his intention to set down in what manner every believer should investigate the tenets of his own religion.

He holds that it is proper for one who "believes in the Torah of Moses, our master," to investigate Scripture and tradition as to who is the true Messiah; since one of the fundamentals of the Torah is the belief in the coming of the Messiah. This sort of investigation does not oppose belief, but strengthens it, and was the gate of hope through which Paul and his friends passed. Mohammedanism, he says, in answer to Lorqui's question, cannot be discussed in this connection because such investigation as mentioned above is not allowed in that religion.

A false religion, continues Paul, does not require an inner obligation; and because of that, no man is duty-bound to follow that kind of religion blindly and without questioning. Hence, a man born into a false religion is at perfect liberty to investigate the tenets of his religion to see whether they are true or not.

After the coming of the Messiah, says Paul, all the nations of the world will be required to adhere to his law, as it is said, "And the ^{isles} shall wait for his teaching". ⁴⁰

As to the question of how a man is to know whether the religion he is born into is false or not, since all the religions mentioned ascribe divinity to themselves, the answer to this is found in Maimonides who said that accurate knowledge⁴¹ concerning the Universe come from God; and that certain laws tend to improve the faith of man; these laws are divine. And according to this fundamental Christian point, it is not proper for the inhabitant of England, already mentioned,⁴² to investigate his religion, since, as Paul assumes "a priori", he already possesses the divine religion, Christianity; and since he need not investigate his own religion, he need not investigate the fundamentals of the other false religions whose tenets do not prescribe such searching. But since the obligation to investigate the requirements for the coming of the Messiah is required by all religions, then even the Mohammedan must investigate concerning the Messiah.

Lorqui had written that he hoped he would find and answer to all his doubts and questionings. Paul answers this plea by saying that a man's intelligence and knowledge are the factors that reveal to him that a truly divine faith leads to eternal life; this is the reason why a place was given to critical investigation in religion. Hence, implies Paul, all Lorqui need do is to exercise his critical judgment and he will discover the divine faith, Christianity. Then, all his questions will be answered fully.

Lack of faith, continues Paul, embodies two views. The first is: a complete rejection (of faith) as happens with children before they attain intellectual majority. These do not have, in their lack of faith, a transgression which amounts

to a sin; but they have a punishment only. They are set aside without merit. The second: acquisition of faith, as happens with older people who have attained their intellectual majority. With these, the lack of faith becomes a great transgression; for in the heart of each man there is planted the desire to preserve whatever he can. The opinion of the sages of religion is, that every intelligent man should understand his religion as best⁴³ he can; to try to the utmost of his ability, and without relaxing, that his religion bring him happiness. And even though he be at the other ends of the earth, he shall not desist from influencing others concerning the (Christian) religion and the salvation of the soul. Thus Paul weakly answers the clever⁴⁴ charges of Lorqui.

And, continues Paul, even if the man not be baptized with holy water, due to lack of understanding, he shall be purified by baptism with the Holy Spirit; but if he intentionally omits this baptism, he is a wicked man, and shall die because of his sin. The ways of God will be established, for the ways of God are upright, and the righteous shall walk therein.

He closes with a plea to Lorqui not to consider the literary structure of the letter, but merely the sentiments embodied, since, in truth, he is turning away from his Hebrew studies and is busy with his new work so that he has not the time to write in a better style.

"This be my ending: Solomon Levi, who became unfit in his first serving and is seeking a second, and will

be sanctified through the holiness of Aaron. Formerly, in Israel, God did not know Solomon Levi; but now that his eyes have beheld God, he is called Paul of Burgos."

CONCLUSIONS ON PAUL OF BURGOS

Paul does not answer the eight questions asked him by Lorqui, but he devotes himself to the two final questions asked and over which Joshua shows much concern. Paul attempts to justify his position, but he does not seem to do so. His excuse for not writing a longer and better letter, ~~due to lack~~ of time, is a lame one.

His closing sentence concerning his former non-consequence and his present recognition, give a clue to the reason for his conversion. We can recognize the cause as a desire for self-aggrandizement. Furthermore, an acceptance of the 1390 date ⁴⁵ for his conversion would strengthen this opinion, and would refute the belief that he turned Christian because of the 1391 massacres. And added support for our opinion is gotten from the fact that Joshua Lorqui, in his letter to Paul of Burgos, lays very little stress upon the misfortunes of the Jews as the cause for the conversion, and is more inclined to give the reason as personal ambition.

Paul's insistence upon the necessity and obligation of investigation, by a religionist, of his religion, seems suspicious. It strikes one as an apologetic for the step he had taken.

His statement, that lack of faith in children is due to non-majority of intellect, is not true. Psychologically, we hear of "faith simple as a child's".

His speaking of "Moses, our master", is a very clever touch if done intentionally. It disarms suspicion.

It indicates that Paul does not consider himself completely detached from his former religion. If it is mentione^d unconsciously, it would show that he had not as yet completely shaken off his former surroundings.

The answer of Paul is not convincing. He does not reply to the questions directly. His style is the stilted theological manner we are accustomed to associate with rote answers to theological questions. There does not seem to be the freshness about it that one would expect from a man who has just achieved a great experience, such as he claims to have so recently acquired.

PREFATORY NOTE TO TORTOSA

The famous disputation at Tortosa began on January 9, 1413, and lasted until November 12, 1414. The affair was spread over sixty-nine sessions. This information is gleaned from the account in Rodigrz de Castro's "Bibliotheque Espanole", pp. 207-214, not available to me, but quoted in Loeb, in Graetz, and Kobak's "Ginze Hanistoroth", p. 45, note 1. This latter work contains an account of the disputation at Tortosa, edited by Halberstamm, which seemingly was unknown to Graetz, and was discovered later, being mentioned in the Hebrew translation of Graetz.

The latter account of the happenings at Tortosa is a fuller statement of some of the Jewish arguments during the disputation. It is a short account, breaking off in the middle, and differs from the Avenstruc account (see below) slightly in regard to names and chronology.

The account used as the basis for the following text of arguments is the one by Avenstruc, to be found in "Shevet Yehudah" of Ibn Virgo, and quoted in Eisenstein, "Ozar Wikuhim". These two texts were used as the basis for this work.

The Avenstruc account includes only a few days of the disputation. Whatever else is known concerning the affair is gained from the above-mentioned work by de Castro, and the "Annales d'Aragon", vol. 3, p. 206, (quoted by Graetz in his notes, but unavailable to me), which carry the Christian account of the affair in its entirety.

THE TORTOSA DISPUTATION

The Jews were brought to a disputation through the efforts of Joseph Lorqui, who had become converted to Christianity from Judaism, and had assumed the name of Geronimo de Santa Fe. He was also called "Megadef". His thesis was that the Messiah had already come and that he was Jesus; and he endeavored to prove these propositions from the Talmud. Avenstruc states that his own purpose in writing of the affair is, "so that ye shall know what to answer the unbeliever".

THE DISPUTATION

Twenty-two delegates reached the appointed place, Tortosa, on January 1, 1413, or a little thereafter. Among them were the delegates from Aragon, whom Lorqui had asked that they especially come under any circumstances. The list of representatives and their cities is given as follows:

Saragossa: R. Zerachiah Halevi, Don Vidal Beneviste, R. Mattathias Hayizhari.

Calatajud: the Nasi Don Samuel Halevi, R. Moses ben Moshe.

Huesca: Don Todros Mordecai Alkustentin.

Alcaniz: Don Joseph ben Ardut, Don Meir Alchagjua.

Daroca: Don Astruc Halevi.

Monreale: R. Joseph Albo.

Monzon: Don Joseph Halevi, R. Yom Tob Carcosa.

Montelban: Bon Aviganda.

Belcite: Don Joseph Albalag, R. Bangoa.

Gerona: Todros ben Yechia.

The delegates met among themselves and decided who was to be their spokesman and, who was to be the first speaker. Their choice fell upon Don Vidal Beneviste of Saragossa because he was learned and knew Latin well. They also agreed not to interrupt each other during the debate but to let each man speak his piece; to keep calm; not to become overwrought; and to lend moral support one to the other.

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On February 7, 1413, the delegates presented themselves before the Pope in his palace at Tortosa and were well-received. The Pope asked them whence they came and ordered their names be recorded. The delegates were suspicious of this procedure, and upon inquiry from the secretary, they were told that this was customary and that the Pope did this as a record for his archives.

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The Pope then addressed the delegates saying, "Notables of the Jews----a nation chosen of the Creator in former times, and now despised through its own fault----do not harbor fear of the disputation because you will not come to harm at my hands. Let your minds be at ease, and speak with stout hearts... Behold, Maestro Geronimo said that he wishes to prove that the Messiah has already come, and that the proof is taken from your Talmud; and he will prove before us whether he speaks the truth or fancies a dream. And as for you, do not be frightened of the debate, for in it, you are all equal. Now, go rest in your lodgings, and tomorrow come to me". He immediately commanded that they be supplied with lodging and whatever food they were permitted to eat. Some were joyous over the words of the Pope;

others were sad, ("as is the way with Jews", significantly remarks Avenstruc).

On the second day, that is, February 8, 1413, the delegates came before the Pope and found the entire courtyard, where the Colloquium was to be held, hung with tapestries. Seats had been arranged for about seventy Cardinals, Bishops⁵⁸ and Archbishops. Ferdinand I, King of Aragon, was also there. A large crowd had assembled, composed of soldiers, officers and the populace of the city. This was the setting for the dis-⁵⁹putation during most of its duration.

The Pope opened the assembly by addressing the Jewish delegates, saying in part, "Know, you wise men of the Jews, that you did not come here, and I did not send for you, in order to prove which of the two religions is true. I well know that my religion is the true one, and that your Torah once was true, but was nullified. You came only because Geronimo has claimed that he will prove from your Talmudists, who know more than you, that the Messiah has already come. Therefore you shall speak before me of this alone". He then turned to Geronimo commanding him to begin the debate.

Geronimo began by quoting, "Come, let us reason⁶⁰ together.....and if ye refuse, ye shall receive the sword".

Thereupon, Don Vidal Beneviste began the "arenga" (forum) in Latin and the Pope was well-pleased with his wit and language. During his speech, he murmured against Geronimo, claiming that it was not proper for one who came to debate to enter the fray with hatred and malice; for Geronimo had explicitly said, "If ye refuse, ye shall receive the sword", and as yet.

he had not proven a thing and was already acting the part of judge and avenger.

The Pope answered that Don Vidal was right, but that he should not mind this evil, since Geronimo himself had been one of the Jews.

Don Vidal commenced his speech by saying, "We have come to you, because you are our lord". Don Samuel Halevi said, "Our lord, give us of your graciousness and salvation". At the finish of their speeches they both begged of the Pope that he release them from this debate since the Jews were not accustomed as was Geronimo, who was expert in this fashion, to argue according to analogy (hekesh) and logic (higayon); for the matters of the Jews were all settled according to tradition. They were asked by the Pope whether their objection was due to the fact that they were afraid, and if so, he reminded them that he had already given them his promise of safety. But if it was merely because they did not know the procedure of "hekesh" or "higayon", then he empowered them not to answer Geronimo should he base his arguments on this method. But should he bring proofs from tradition, then they should answer with the procedure of tradition.

After this, because the preliminaries took so long, the Pope ordered that they go home and return the next morning; and so they did. The Pope ordered an escort. The delegates only hoped that end would be like the beginning. They then went to the Synagogue where there was a large crowd gathered, and prayed to God that He bring them out of darkness

into the light; and that they should not say anything that would prove to be atumbling-block before all these lions ready to pounce upon them. Then, before a large crowd of heavy heart and drooping spirit, R. Zerachiah Halevi began to preach, and ended with a prayer and supplication.

The disputation proper began on the third day, February 9, 1413. Geronimo was the beginning speaker. He stated: "The Talmud says that the world will exist for six thousand years, having two thousand years of void, two thousand of Torah, and two thousand of the days of the Messiah. From this statement it is clear that the Messiah has already come in the last two thousand years. Who is he, but the Savior, Jesus?"

Geronimo expatiated on this at will until the Pope said to him, "Maestro Geronimo, I have known for a long time that you are an orator and an expounder, but keep to the subject". Then he bade the Jews to answer the statement in the Talmud.

Don Vidal Beneviste answered: "Let us first decide upon the conditions necessary for the coming of the Messiah; for if he had already come and it is found that the conditions have been fulfilled in him, then even we will will acknowledge it". To this the Pope answered saying, "This is not the answer to the question, for the subject was not concerning the conditions of the coming of the Messiah, but as to whether he has already come. You are beginning to act like typical Jews in a debate, for if one question is asked of you, you exchange it for another".

Don Vidal spoke up and said, "We commence as learned men do; for first it is proper to discuss the main point and then its details.....but if you do not want us to, we will proceed with your way. And we reply that Geronimo took from that statement that which pleased him and that which supported his argument, while dismissing that which is opposed to it. At the end of the statement it is said, 'Because of the multitude of our sins, such things happened as did happen'. This proves conclusively that he has not as yet come".

Geronimo retorted, "Either you did not understand my statement or pretended that you did not comprehend the phrase, 'Two thousand years are the days of the Messiah'. This is the estimate of Elijah the Prophet, who told it to his disciples; who, in turn, said it in his name, as the language of Tanna de bai Elijah shows. This is well-known to the Tamudists; and these men of the Talmud, who gave a definite place to it in their books, said, 'Because of our sins which were many'. This they said because of their denial of Jesus as the Messiah. But Elijah, who was a prophet, and knew the truth, said that two thousand years are the day of the Messiah as was revealed to him through prophecy."

Zerachiah Halevi spoke up before the Pope and said that it is required of anyone who comes to prove anything, that he do so by persuasive proofs and evidence, and not by means of anything that is subject to several interpretations. Geronimo said, he claimed, that the Talmudists made the last part of the statement. Geronimo interpreted this according to his own

opinions, while his opponent claims that both the end and the middle were both said by Elijah, continued Zerachiah. Now, Geronimo set up his opinion of the statement as opposed to that of his adversary; and if neither of them has a proof or even an indication as to the verity of his opinion and interpretation, then, at all events, let the matter rest in doubt. And how then, can Geronimo prove from that which he wants to prove? For both parties have their own interpretation. "And if you ask me, 'Where do you get yours?', I will answer, 'And where do you get yours?'" Furthermore, since Geronimo uses the Talmud as a weapon, he knows full well that the method of the Rabbis is as follows: If the interpretation given is not persuasive, they set up in opposition that which is against it, and say "And perhaps..."; and if it is not answered, then the matter remains deferred until the interpreter goes and seeks another support for his contentions. Also, it is more proper that one man be credited with a statement, than two; since it is known that the Talmudists were accustomed to say, "R. Ashi said...." or, "So-and-So said...." that "Because of our sins did whatever had happened happen". It is because of this, Zerachiah Halevi said, that the delegates had asked at the beginning whether he that has come has fulfilled the conditions of the Messiah or not.

For if there is found fulfilled in him the conditions for the Messiah, then the interpretation is according to Geronimo. And if not, then the Jewish interpretation is correct.

The delegates' interpretation is this, he continued: "Tow thousand years of void" refers to the time that was without Torah or knowledge of God, even though some of the men in gh

men in that generation, such as Methuselah and Noah, were righteous. Many people afterwards, fulfilled the commands that were given to the sons of Noah. Therefore, there was not complete "tohu", or confusion. It is true that the Tann de bai Elijah wishes to say that from the time of Creation, two thousand years passed during which most of the people followed the "tohu" and the majority of them did not recognize God; until Abraham came at the beginning of the second two-thousand-year period and called upon men to worship God and to spread His name among the multitude. And then time went on, until God appointed Israel, redeemed him from Egypt, and gave him the Torah in the year 2448. Time passed again, until the Temple was destroyed in 3828. This Tanna believed that the length of time of the Exile, ⁶⁴ from the time of the Second Temple, would be 172 years, even as the Babylonian Exile was of 70 years' duration. This is opposed to the belief of the Christians who hold that their ⁶⁵ Messiah was born in 3760, or 240 years before that; which are not the "days of the Messiah". Therefore, Jesus is not the Messiah because he came before the specified time, according to their calculations. And according to the Jewish calculations, it is claimed that he was born at the time of King Alexander ⁶⁶ Jannai and was the pupil of Joshua b. Perachiah; ⁶⁷ and if we figure his days, we find that his death came 120 years before the ⁶⁸ Destruction; he lived 36 years, so he was born in ⁶⁹ 3672. Therefore, he came 328 years before the four-thousand period which is the date of the coming of the Messiah. And this is decidedly opposed to the belief of the Christians.

Zerachiah Halevi went on further to say that just

as in the first two-thousand-year period of "tohu" some righteous men lived, so did some idolators live during the two-thousand-year period of the Torah. The days of the Messiah are not complete, but are merely a preapration for the Messiah who is to come if Israel be worthy of it. But before that time, there was no period of the Messiah, and there was no hope that he would come. For it is a Talmudical principle that if one should come and say, "I am the Messiah", he is not believed; for the time of the coming of the Messiah is not before the four-thousand-year period; and he would not be yielded to or listened to. But after that, in the last two-thousand-year period, if a Messiah fulfills all the conditions laid down by the Torah and the Prophets, then he will be believed in, and his deeds will testify for him. "And as for the two-thousand-year period of the Messiah", concluded Zerachiah Halevi, "I wish to say, that they could really be the days of the Messiah if only we repented and were worthy of it".

The Pope agreed with the speaker that whoever wishes to prove something must do it with evidence that does not suffer several interpretations. Geronimo said that he did not depend on that statement only, since he had many others. Of this, the Pope said concerning Geronimo, "He has already ceased to be a Christian disputant and has again become a Jewish disputant who flees to the other side when his first position becomes weakened. Geronimo must answer the Jews on this statement".

Geronimo again began, "Many times did Elijah come before the Jews were exiled. And perforce, we must say that the end of the statement, 'And because of our sins which were many',

was said by one of the Talmudists in Exile".

Don Vidal was willing to grant this, and took up the statement of Elijah: "And the days of the Messiah shall be two thousand years". He claimed that if the Messiah had already come, Elijah should have said, "At the end of the year 4000 the Messiah will come", or, "At the beginning of the year 5000, the Messiah will come", or, "At such-and-such a time, the Messiah will come". But what Elijah actually said was that the days of the Messiah will be in the two-thousand-year period, so it is possible that he will come at the end of this period.

To this Geronimo answered that he (Geronimo) had meant to say that all the period of the two thousand years will be the time of the (coming of the) Messiah; and that at the beginning of the seven-thousand-year period, the world will be destroyed.

Joseph Albo answered that this point was already settled since the Pope had acknowledged that there was another interpretation and that Geronimo's interpretation had no force to it. Furthermore, the Talmudists, from whom Geronimo drew his arguments, fixed this statement in the Talmud; and they surely would not have included anything that was contrary to their beliefs and opinions. They said that the Messiah had two periods in which to come: either that time of which God promised Israel that He would redeem him, or, the time that Israel shall be desirous (of redemption) and repent. Therefore, the statement

sets no definite time, but merely says, "the days of the Messiah....", that is to say, prepared for the days of the Messiah. If the Jews are not ready for him at the beginning of the period, but will be ready at the middle, he will come then. But those two thousand years will not pass without his coming.

The Pope then asked concerning this last statement, "Why don't you say that if the Christians will be ready for it, he will come immediately; and if not, then the period will be prolonged until the end of that two thousand years?"

The delegates answered by saying that the Redeemer will come only to those dwelling in exile and slavery. Of this, Geronimo queried, "Why don't you say according to my interpretation?"

The delegates countered with the same question, adding that the Pope had supported them in their contention that non-persuasive evidence could not be used as proof. Furthermore, Rashi, whose merit Geronimo recognizes, interprets this phrase as the Jews do.
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Geronimo then said, "I say that the Messiah has already come, and you say that he has not; therefore it is up to you to prove it".

The delegates answered, "Let the prelates, the understanders of the truth, decide who has to bring proof. For on the contrary, we have received the Law of Moses so long before that he who wishes to take it out of our possession must be the one to bring proof". The prelates agreed with the Jews and expressed their astonishment with Geronimo who had promised to bring the proof.
at the beginning

The Jews reiterated their pleasure at the gracious reception given them by the Pope and the prelates in contrast with the threatening words of Geronimo, adding, "It is thought that we have insisted upon ~~the~~ upholding our religion because of the successes and rulership that would accrue to us through its preservation. But you have all this and have reached the heights of greatness, and yet you do not accept our Torah". The Jews, they continued, cling to the Torah because it was given to them by God with signs, before sixty myriads of people, and they have no right to foresake it except if the Giver Himself, among the identical circumstances, came to them and said, "Believe in So-and*So". But surely they will not foresake it because Geronimo comes to them and say, "Leave it!". "And his (Geronimo's) intention in saying it is that perhaps he will receive honor from your Highness; but He Who searches the heart knows what is in his heart". Geronimo again repeated, "What is in my heart is exactly what I have said, that the Messiah had already come". He also claimed to have other statements in support of his contention, but the Pope reminded him that a good argument needed no support. The session was then dismissed, and the Jews left for dinner, happy, for on that day Geronimo had received no encouragement (from the Pope).

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On the fourth day, February 10, 1413, Geronimo
 began the discussion by citing the following passage: ⁷³ Elijah
⁷⁴ said to Rabi Judah, brother of Rav Sala, the Pious, 'The world
⁷⁵ counts no less than eighty-five jubilees, and in the last jubilee, the Messiah will come'. Geronimo was asked whether the Messiah will come at the beginning or end of this period, and

he answered that he did not know.

R. Mattathias Hayizhari spoke up saying, "This does not at all prove that Jesus was the Messiah, since he did not come at all in 4250 (323 C.E.)".

Geronimo answered that he did not say that Jesus was the Messiah but that the Messiah had already come, and were it for ten years or ten days it would all be the same. The delegates appealed to the Pope asking him to decide whether it was not Jesus who was regarded as having all the signs of greatness; and if not him⁷⁶ was it then ~~xxxxx~~ any other person by whatever name he went? To which the Pope replied that he was surprised that they did not understand that Geronimo, who was one of their own people, had come to them with a serious charge; and that if the Jews say that the Messiah has already come, then the dispute is ended. And if they say that it is possible that he has already come but is not Jesus, then Geronimo would have the right to question them as they did him, saying, "Is it anyone ~~with~~ such-and-such a name?". The delegates acknowledged the correctness of this and added that they "did not realize what hatred and bad counsel demanded".

Then R. Mattathias said to Geronimo, "Before bringing proof from the Talmud that the Messiah has already come, bring proof to refute the opposite of that statement; for it is written, 'May the breath of them that think about the End be blown out'".⁷⁷ The Pope said that he had always wanted to know the meaning of this statement. It was explained

to him that the literal interpretation is taken, and that is, that he who calculates and announces when the Messiah is coming is cursed, for through him great harm comes to the nation. For if the time arrives for the Messiah's coming and he does not appear, then the people will give up hope of redemption and the hearts of those who hope for salvation will weaken and they will be bereft of all hope. Furthermore, God has hidden it from all the sages and prophets, and this man, Geronimo, wishes to reveal it.

The Pope became very angry with this and cried, "Woe! nation of fools and despicable people; woe! foolish Talmudists; can it be said of Daniel who calculated concerning the End, that his breath will be blown out? Now in truth, it can be seen that both you and the Talmudists are transgressors and rebels". Don Todros then asked the Pope that if the Talmudists were so foolish in his eyes, why did he use them to prove that the Messiah had already come? One brings no proof from fools, he added. The Pope became more angry at this, and was appeased only when Don Vidal tactfully suggested that it was not fitting for his Holiness to become angered during the dispute, and that the Jews had not been careful of their speech; it was because of such things they had asked the Pope, "Show us, our lord, thy kindness". But the Pope insisted that they answer the statement, "May the breath....be blown out". Don Vidal explained that the word "mechashve" in the verse, indicates one who calculates; but a prophet who speaks with the Holy Spirit is not termed a "mechashev" but a "roeh", for it was said

concerning a prophet, "Is this the home of the 'roeh'?"⁷⁸ The Pope was satisfied.

The delegates left, but a strong quarrel broke out between themselves and R. Mattathias and Don Todros because the latter were not careful of what they said.

When they returned to the debate, they said to Geronimo, "Our wise lord! Before bringing proof from the Amoraim that the Messiah has come, why not bring proof from their last leader, Rav Ashi, who said, 'Until now, do not hope for him; from now on, hope for him'".⁷⁹ From this it can be seen that he had not come up to that time".

Geronimo repeated that proof cannot be brought from one who does not believe that the Messiah has come, for he speaks according to his own belief. But the first statement was made by Elijah who was a prophet, and therefore he knew the truth. The delegates then asked Jerome to tell them if Rav Ashi was a wise or wicked man, righteous or foolish; to which Geronimo answered that there was no question but that he was a wise and pious man. If so, questioned the Jews, how dared he then contradict the words of Elijah the prophet? Then perforce, one of two things must be deduced: either that Elijah was not Elijah the prophet and Rav Ashi became confused in that opinion; or, that he is Elijah and that Rav Ashi understood the meaning of the prophet's statement and that his interpretation of it is correct; for were he doubtful about the matter, he would have been inclined to the stricter interpretation of the prophet's statement. And why should anyone seek to be wiser than this man?

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The faithful will hold with Rav Ashi who compiled the Talmud, and who said that the Messiah has not come.

Geronimo answered: "Even if I acknowledge that this is the meaning of that statement, what will you say about the second statement concerning the jubilees; for it has no other interpretation than that which I gave it".

Joseph Albo became excited and said that the meaning of it was that the world will not exist less than this number of years but perhaps more. For instance, he argued, if a man says that he will not sell an article for less than a certain amount, let us say, twenty coins, it is not required that he should not sell it for less than forty or fifty; but it is possible that it could be more and more. In the last jubilee the Messiah will come.

The prelates then asked, "Then according to this, there is no definite time for the Messiah's coming?". To which R. Mattathias answered that that was no wonder to the Jews, for even according to the first statement there was no definite time mentioned, it merely stating that the days of the Messiah will be two thousand years.

In the midst of all this the delegates noticed that the secretary was copying carefully what they were saying; and they became very frightened. They feared that the secretary would falsify their remarks, and that later the Pope would accuse them of saying certain things, and they would be ensnared by their own words. And if so, they could not accuse the secretary for he was trusted by the Pope. They decided from then on to

be very careful of what they said and to speak as little as possible. But they could not do that because they were commanded to answer Geronimo; and if they did not answer alike, they would be killed. So they decided that only one of their number would speak. If theyPope accepted his statement, all well and good; if not, they would then say that his was not the opinion of the entire group and that he had made a mistake.

The next day, the delegates appeared with fear⁸¹ in their hearts. Geronimo started with another passage: A Jew was plowing his field when an ox snorted. And Arab happened by and told him to put aside his ox and plow, for the Temple of the Jews had been destroyed, and the reason he knew of it was because the ox had snorted. While they were yet talking, the ox made a sound once again. The Arab told the Jew to tie up both his ox and plow, because the Deliverer of the Jews had come. Upon being asked what the latter's name was, the Arab answered, "Menachem", (comforter), and that He came from Bethlehem in Judea.⁸² R. Yudan, continued quoting Geronimo, claimed that proof (of the Destruction and the Messiah's coming) need not be sought from the Arab since there was an express statement in Scripture which⁸³ says, "And Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one", and directly after it is written, "And there shall come forth a shoot from out⁸⁴ of the stock of Jesse". Geronimo claimed that it could not be denied from this that in the day of the Destruction, the Messiah was born.

Astruc Halevi explained that this matter had already⁸⁵ been discussed in a disputation between Nachmanides and Pablo

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Christiani before King Don Pedro, during which Christiani attempted to prove that it was correct to call the Jews Canaanites because they had taken over some of the Canaanitish civilization and dwelt in the Canaanitish land; hence, it is also correct to call the Christians Jews because they supplanted the latter, Nachmanides had answered that if one takes another's place, it is correct for him to take the other's belongings also; but if that be the case, then why hadn't the Christians taken over Prophecy, Fire from Heaven, Urim and Tummim and the like? Therefore it is seen that the intention of the Giver was to keep these things until He saw whether the Jews had repented, and then He would return them to the Jews as at the beginning. Astruc Halevi also claimed that Christiani did not answer Nachmanides on this point. The Pope then commented that neither the King nor Pablo were wise, since they could have answered that the Christians had no need of those things after the Savior had arrived and promised salvation of Souls. But whatever these arguments, said the Pope, they do not answer the contention that the Messiah has already been born.

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Vidal answered that Nachmanides did not interpret it to mean that Jesus was born in labor; and even should it be acknowledged that he was born in labor, it is possible that he was born on the day of the destruction of the Temple and lived in the Garden of Eden. Also, Maimonides wrote that the Messiah was not born on the day of the Destruction; but he wished to say that from that day on, in each generation, there is a man born who is fit to be the Messiah if Israel be ready for Redemption.

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The purpose of this statement was, to awaken their hearts to repentance, and to point out to them that the Messiah does not depend upon a specific time as does the Babylonian Exile.

The Pope, angered, told them that he did not care what the others had said, but what they themselves were saying. "What have I to do", he said, "with the last scoffing interpretation that says he was born but did not come? For, if the matter depends upon the Jews, why was he born ahead of time? Let the matter be delayed and he be born on the day that they are ready for him". To which the delegates answered that if today were ready for it, and he would be born today, could a day-old baby lead them? And Moses at eighty needed the help of God, his brother, and seventy elders. The Pope answered that the Israelites at that time were so numerous that they needed seventy elders and even more.

A slight digression took place concerning the need for wisdom and judges, which discussion was brought to a halt by the Pope.

Solomon Maimon of Tortosa arose and begged permission from the Pope to discuss a point. His colleagues tried to dissuade him, but the Pope bade him speak. His discussion concerned the word, "d'isyolid", found in the Agada under discussion,⁸⁹ in which he attempted to prove that there was the intention that "a shoot shall come forth" after the "Lebanon shall fall mightily". It is not necessary, he added, that it happen immediately; but it has the possibility of happening in days to come. Scripture

came to comfort Israel upon the loss of the Temple and to say that they still will return to their former state. If this be the interpretation of the verse, he asked, who then gave Geronimo permission to say that the Messiah will come immediately (upon the fall of the Temple)? But it is seen that the Messiah had the intention to be born. And so said the Talmudists, that ⁹⁰ seven things preceded the creation of the world, and one of them was the name of the Messiah. They spoke of Creation, and it was not yet in the world; but they to denote by it that the intention for creation was there. So it was with the Messiah on the day of the destruction, argued Maimon; the intention was for the creation of the Messiah, but Israel was not prepared that he come immediately, for ^m Israel still needed release from the Exile for their first sins, and to bring to an end all iniquity and sin.

The next day the delegates returned bringing additional proof that the meaning was intention, quoting, "Behold, ⁹¹ a son is destined to be born to the son of Jesse". This will happen after three hundred years. Geronimo answered saying, that that the word "nolad", in question, could not be taken as an indication of time, for it wishes to say "shall be born" or "has been born".

The Jews immediately claimed that what Geronimo had said was evidence for their contentions; that its interpretation was "shall be born"; and that now there was no force to Geronimo's interpretation and that his entire structure had fallen. Geronimo tried to correct himself, but could not, realizing what he had said.

When the delegates realized that they had the upper hand, they tried to break away, and sought to bribe the Pope's retinue to get Geronimo to cancel the debate. But they were unsuccessful. The prelates contended that Geronimo would have to prove what he had promised to prove.

On Saturday morning, Parashath Zachor, the Pope declared that the Jews spoke confusing things, for what intelligent man would believe that the Messiah was born and lived in Eden fourteen hundred years? He was answered that Christians had already asked the same question and was replied to by Nachmanides who said that Adam lived a thousand years, and if it is possible to live a thousand years, it is possible to live a few hundred years more. According to tradition, Enoch and Elijah are still living in Eden. The Pope retorted that this was like answering one question with another one, for even this was the result of analogy.

Astruc Halevi jumped up and said, "Lord Pope: just as you believe many far-fetched things about your Messiah, permit us to believe of our Messiah one thing!". The Pope became wroth with them for this, and was appeased with difficulty only after the delegates had claimed that his opinion was not their own.

When they got home, they turned upon Astruc and accused him of placing a weapon in the hands of the enemy, and reminded him forcibly that they had promised each other not to talk the way he did. Up to then, everything had been going fine and even the Pope was inclined toward them; now, with the Pope

liable to be angry, there was no one to guard them except God. But "there is no relying on a miracle in a place where merit is in doubt".

The next day, Geronimo attempted to prove that the Messiah was already revealed, bringing proof from Isaiah and the Targum thereto, as quoted in the Talmud by R. Samuel. The delegates countered that the words of R. Samuel and the Targum were not on an equal plane, and that the intended meaning was that when the Messiah will come, he will come suddenly, like a woman giving birth suddenly; and this was the intention of the Targum and also of the Talmud.⁹²⁹³⁹⁴ The Pope said that he interpreted the statement of the delegates to mean that they believed that the Messiah had already come. They protested this, saying that they were misunderstood, and that the belief of the Jews everywhere is: that if someone should come and gather the scattered of Israel and rebuild the Temple, and all the nations be gathered unto him, and all call in the name of One God, then he would be acknowledged as the Messiah. Further, the Statement quoted by Geronimo said that the Temple shall be built; and where is the Temple built in the time of Jesus? Geronimo could not answer this, and seized upon other things to speak of at length.

The proceedings were suspended until February fifteenth.

The Pope sent for them once more, and the Apostate commenced with the statement of Samuel which said that the Messiah was already born.⁹⁵ The Pope then said that he had been thinking about the matter and realized that he had been misled by the

statement of the Jews that the word, "nolad", had a double meaning, and that its meaning was "shall be born" or "was born". How can that be, when it is a fact that Jesus was born much before the Destruction, he asked? He was born in 3760 and the destruction of the Temple was in 3828; hence he was born 68 years before the Destruction. Don Vidal answered that the Jews had an agree-
⁹⁶ment in the Talmud that even if there be ever so many interpretations of a verse, there is never a chance for anyone to deny the literal meaning, and that no Biblical verse is taken outside of its literal meaning. Geronimo cannot deny this. The Pope
⁹⁷was invited himself to examine the verses in question and see that they do not speak concerning the Christian Savior. Furthermore, how could it have been stated, "Ye shall be comforted in
⁹⁸Jerusalem", and after Jesus' birth Jerusalem was destroyed?

Geronimo, the Megadef, then offered to prove his point from Scripture. He quoted, "No sceptre shall depart from Judah nor the ruler's staff from between his feet as long as
⁹⁹men come to Shiloh", which the Targum translates as, "until the Messiah comes". And the Jews have neither sceptre nor lawgiver, then how can it be said that it "shall not depart"? R. Astruc answered that they had previously claimed that every verse had several interpretations, and that there was no compulsion to the truth of an opinion or belief. Two explanations are offered. The first, that the sceptre will not depart from Judah forever but that at ~~times~~ times Judah will have it, and at other times, another will have it; this condition continuing until the Messiah comes, and then ~~then~~ there will no longer be an interruption. The
 second

second, deals with the halting accent, ("y'siv"), found under the word "ad" in the text, which indicates that the sceptre shall never depart from Judah until the Messiah comes.¹⁰⁰ Geronimo refused the latter explanation, arguing that one is not required to accept the accents of the Torah since they were not given with the Torah. To which Don Vidal answered that Geronimo believed only that which he wanted to believe; and he brought proof from¹⁰¹ another verse to show that "ad" means "until"; It is like a a king who says to one of his servants, "I will not leave you until I have made you an important officer", the meaning of which is not that he will leave him after he has done this. Hence, the meaning of the verse is that no ordination or rulership will depart from the Jews until the time comes that the Messiah reaches Shiloh and "unto him shall the obedience of the nations be".¹⁰² Geronimo insisted that he would rather believe Moses the Darshan as quoted in Rashi to this verse¹⁰³ and who¹⁰⁴ claimed that the "sceptre of Judah" was the Chamber of Hewn Stone given to Judah, and that "lawgiver" means the Sanhedrin; and since the Sanhedrin, which was in the chamber, departed, so did the sceptre depart from Judah.

To this interpretation, the delegates took exception, claiming that Moses the Darshan was not a Talmudist and that the real interpretation is.....

("Thus far was it written, and the rest was not found. But tradition has it that the delegates went forth with great honor¹⁰⁵ despite the fact that many hardships passed over them;

and the communities hoped for their salvation"-----Editor's
Note).

CONCLUSIONS ON TORTOSA

The Disputation at Tortosa, at least as far as the Christians were concerned, was a gala affair. The "arenga" as it was called, or forum, was opened with pageantry. The Princes of the Church arrayed in their finery; the soldiers aflame with the colorful uniforms of the time; the crowds that attended the opening; all point to a sort of holiday for the populace.

As far as the actual speaking is concerned, we do not gain the impression that the disputation was along formal lines. It was the older version of the modern "round-table" discussion, but on a grand scale and the threat of compulsion to distinguish from its modern relative. We find that the delegates interrupted whenever they wished, even though they had been commanded by the Pope to answer any question brought by de Santa Fe. The "hegmonim" or prelates, we see, interrupted the discussions at any time. The delegates turned to them at times for approval. The Pope himself said that this was not to be a disputation but merely an opportunity to show that the Talmud explicitly says that the Messiah had already come.

The principal players in this tragic drama with all of its elaborate scenery, were three; the Pope, the apostate Geronimo, and the Jewish delegates.

The purpose of the Pope in calling the assembly was the expression of a hope. He was the anti-Pope Benedict XIII. He cast about for means with which to strengthen his claim to the papacy. If, by a "coup d'etat", he could gain the conversion of a great

of a great number of Jews, and the leading Jews at that, his cause would gain handsomely. Therefore, we can understand why he was so solicitous about the welfare of the Jewish delegates and saw to it that they were lodged comfortably and given proper food. He intentionally treated them well, for he had need of them later

The Pope was kindly disposed to the Jews at the beginning of the sessions. We do know, however, from the reports of the end of the meeting, that he turned against them and even ordered the confiscation of the Talmud. But this only after he failed to achieve his ends.

We gain the impression from his opening remarks, in which he sets forth the purposes of the debate, that he was arrogant. He brooked no opposition. Such arrogance is not surprising, though, when we realize the power he commanded and the aspirations he cherished. This is borne out, also, by the statement that he had been accused of several heinous crimes, of immorality, bloodshed, piracy, and traffic in penances.

The Pope took part in the dispute, more as a matter of prerogative, it seems, than as an evidence of knowledge. Not that he was ignorant----for very occasionally he would interrupt to get the meaning of a phrase. From the accounts that we are dealing with, which we must remember, tell only of the first few days, we gather that he was quite fair to the Jewish delegates. We are disinclined to attribute this to a sense of fairness, but rather to one of two causes, or both. They are: his deliberate attempt to gain the favor of the Jews;

and a probable dislike for Geronimo de Santa Fe, the apostate. Of the latter point, more later.

The Pope was easily aroused in anger. Several times, during the course of the discussions, when becoming displeased at the turn of an answer or an attitude, he plainly showed it. No doubt, he was easy to anger; as a person lusting for power usually is. And no doubt, his natural tendency to anger was added to by his slow realization that the Jews were not such easy prey as he had imagined.

The opening words of Geronimo indicate his own attitude, as well as that of the public, against the Jews. They show a bellicose mien, boding evil. Jerome could not afford to show favor, even should he have wished to do so. He himself was under suspicion, as we shall see.

Despite the fact that the Church openly sought converts, once it had acquired them, it looked upon them with distrust. It is evident from the material at hand that the apostasized Solomon Levi was not accepted whole-heartedly. He had to prove his worth.

Geronimo was not the hero of the day even with his own side. The Pope too often reminded him of his Jewish origin, and accused him of employin so-called Jewish tactics. He speaks to the Jews of Geronimo as, "one of you". The refusal of the prelates to get de Santa Fe to cancel the debate, (after the Jews had carried a point), insisting that he would have to prove what he set out to prove, indicates that they were just

as much interested in seeing Geronimo prove his contentions as in seeing the Jews lose. Geronimo still had to prove his worth to them, despite his high office. The feeling among the Jews that up to a certain juncture the Pope had been well-inclined toward them, indicates that the affair was just as much a test for Geronimo as it was for the Jews.

Geronimo, at times, gives the impression of being petulant; especially with his insistence that since the Jews had contradicted his statement, they would have to prove it. Or, when he cries, "What is in my heart is exactly what I have said..." His petulancy shows a realization of the weakening of his position.

The manuscript in Kobak indicates that Geronimo had written, some time before, a book concerning the coming of the Messiah. This would account, perhaps, for the reasons of his selection of the question of the Messiah for the debate. It was the subject with which he was most familiar.

The Jews, as to be expected, did not look favorably upon this former Jew. Their statement to the Pope that they "did not realize what hatred demanded", shows their attitude toward him.

The unwilling actors in the drama, the Jews, came mainly from Aragon. Geronimo had specifically requested this. The reason for it may have been that the power of Benedict was concentrated in this region. He was the Avignon anti-Pope.

The delegates must have been men well-versed in

secular culture, Don Vidal making his opening speech in pure Latin, which even the Pope commended. They showed a fair knowledge of non-Jewish history. The language used was the Spanish dialect, hence these defenders of the faith must have had a facility with the language; and attendant upon that, an acquaintance with secular culture.

A great part of the group must have been formed of men of strong characters. A group, having one or two strong men, and the rest weaklings, would not have to decide first among ~~itself~~ who should be its spokesman, nor have to promise themselves to keep calm. The very character of the men in the group would determine the leader. With a weak group, and one or two strong personalities in the group, there would be a natural selection without having to agree upon the man. There would be no need of a decision for calmness; the even temper of the group would do away with the necessity for such an agreement.

The delegates were not meek men. At times, during the debate, they flared up at a statement, and could not hold their tongues in check. They were no even-tempered men. They quarrelled among themselves. Unity was a hard thing to keep. They spoke out of turn, contrary to their agreement with one another. Don Todros spoke daringly, and almost brought disaster upon the group.

The decision of the delegates to keep calm, not to interrupt one another, and not to become overwrought, may indicate the the Spanish Jews were an excitable people.

An indication of the attitude of the popular mind to the Jew is found in the remark made to Geronimo by the Pope, in which he says that Geronimo has ceased to be a Christian disputant and had turned into a Jewish disputant who flees to the other side when his first position is weakened. The Pope said this so glibly, that we can accept it as a popular conception concerning the Jews. The Pope's speech shows that the belief was very evident among the Christians that the Jews were a despised people.

The Jewish delegates found themselves in no easy situation. They had come because they dared not refuse. They were forced into a debate intended to change their minds upon a subject that for them was already settled.

A lesson learned through long race-experience told them what to do at the beginning. They flattered the Pope. They asked of him to show them his mercy and kindness. This was both earnest prayer and sychophancy. They certainly did desire that a ¹kindly attitude be shown by the Pope; but they also knew that flattery was their necessary weapon, since they were dependent upon his favor.

Fear and suspicion mingled in their hearts. They knew not what the next day would bring. They only hoped that the end would be like the beginning. The expulsion from France was fresh in their minds. They knew not when such a fate might strike them; they were suspicious of the very debate. Who knows but what it may be a trap? Their expression of fears, when they noticed a scribe carefully taking down their words, clearly shows

this. And yet, they dared not refuse to answer, for if they did so, "they would surely die", says Avenstruc. This remark may be an exaggeration, but still it show plainly their haunting fear. Though they were well-received, they could not remove their suspicions when they were asked to register before the disputation began. They could not trust to the good graces of their host. They were at a highttension, fearing evil at every turn.

There are other notices of their nervousness. Astruc Halevi's rebuke of the Pope, given near the end of our account, shows that the happenings so preyed upon him, that he could not help but blurt out, even though he knew that he was endangering himself by doing so. A man under stress will attempt to seek relief no matter at what cost. The quarelling among themselves is another indication of the high nervous pñtch at which they were. Each man was afraid that both he and his neighbor would not be careful, and say the wrong thing. They realized that they were under a terrible responsibility to the rest of Jewry.

There is no doubt, that at the beginning, the Jews felt that they had more to fear from Geronimo than they did from the Pope. But they thought to take the sting out of his bite by getting into the good graces of the Pope. They were reassured by the Pope, that in this debate, both they and Geronimo were equal. The fact that the Pope had to reassure them of this, shows that they felt that they were not considered equal.

They resolved among themselves to lend "moral

support one to the other". It was a realization and knowledge that their task would be difficult and heartbreaking. But they gathered courage to meet the situation. Though the underdog, they had enough spirit to protest against Geronimo's bellicose attitude, and to defend themselves valiantly.

There is an interesting sidelight on a supposedly Jewish characteristic. The Pope accused the delegates of "beginning to act like typical Jews in a debate", when they countered one question directed at them by another. This is a statement made concerning Jews even to this day.

Avenstruc also makes a remark concerning a Jewish characteristic. He speaks of the delegates returning to their lodgings, "sad, as is the way of Jews". This sadness seems to be a part of the universal Jewish psyche. Avenstruc recognized it as a common and persistent trait among Jews.

There is another interesting point to be noticed in the accounts as we have them.

There is one meeting for the purposes of debate that took place on a Sabbath. The accounts given in "Shevet Yehudah" and in Eisenstein, say merely that a meeting took place on that day, even giving the title of the Torah portion^{customarily} read on that Saturday. The account in Kobak, however, adds the significant words, that they went to the meeting on that day, "because the Pope desired it".

If we assume that the Sabbath was very important to the delegates, and that they were Sabbath observers, surely

Avenstruc would have mentioned the fact that they were forced to attend a session of the disputation on that day. There would have been some mention as to how they held their prayer-service on that day. It surely can be agreed that had there been some opposition to such a meeting on that day, on the part of the delegates, the matter would have been stated by Avenstruc. Since the accounts that we have are interested mainly in presenting the Jewish side of the affair, surely there is nothing of more Jewish interest than a forced violation of the Sabbath. Even the account in Kobak does not aid us, since it indicates a matter-of-fact acceptance of the meeting on that day. Hence, one come to the conclusion that the delegates were not ardent Sabbath observers, and that the keeping of the Sabbath did not rest upon them heavily. And if this be the opinion reached concerning the leaders of the Jewish community, then one must be forced to conclude that the observance of the Sabbath among the rest of Jewry was not very punctilious.

It was only with the greatest difficulty that harmony was kept among the delegates. Disunion threatened many a time. But, even with all this, they were able to present their arguments well.

The Jews must have had experience with the question of the debate beforehand, or at least knew of it, because they were able to argue fluently and to present names and chronologies. It may be, that if it is correct that Geronimo had written a book concerning the coming of the Messiah sometime before (as mentioned above), then the Jews were able to prepare their arguments

basing them on this book. Whatever the circumstances, we must admit, that according to our accounts, the Jews were well-prepared. Needless to say, of course, that Geronimo was prepared with whatever he had to present.

The arguments presented do not show much originality. There are references back to Nachmanides, indicating that few or no new arguments had really cropped up. The Jews endeavored to trip up Geronimo as he tried to catch them. He succeeded once, when the Jews were forced into the admission that the Midrashic interpretation of a verse is not accepted, and thus to a certain measure causing them to deny tradition. The Jews also forced Geronimo into a situation from which he could not escape. The word in question had two meanings; ^{but} /at the outset of the sessions, ^{had} the Jews/insisted that Jerome not bring any evidence that was subject to various and several interpretations. No mention is made at all that this word in question, and the meanings given to it, violated the conditions set down.

The impression is, though, that the Jews used a much more clever line of questioning that did their adversary. At times, they asked simple questions that were innocent by themselves, but assumed a greater importance in a different context. The arguments concerning Rav Ashi are a case in point.

To protect themselves, they employed a sly ruse of having one spokesman, who, if he should be judged as wrong by the Pope, would be repudiated by the rest of the delegates. They were able to employ this situation once, when one of their number spoke out of turn.

PREFATORY NOTE TO JOSEPH ALBO

The following section, to be found in Eisenstein, pp. 111-115, is from the "Sefer Ikkarim" or "Book of Principles" written by Joseph Albo and completed in 1428. The material following is to be found in the twenty-fifth chapter of the Third Book.

The "Book of Principles" is a presentation of the roots of the Jewish faith. The section under discussion deals with the answers of Judaism to Christianity.

There is no clue that this section was written as a result of the Disputation at Tortosa in which Albo participated. The replies he made there, and the arguments presented here, have no similarity. But it may be that the experience he had at Tortosa may have induced him to include a section such as this in his work.

The Husk edition of Albo's "Ikkarim", (Philadelphia, 1930), with its careful notes, was a great help in the handling of this section.

JOSEPH ALBO

Albo claims to have had a discussion with a Christian scholar during which the latter stated that a thing must be tested by its (1) material, (2) formal, (3) efficient, (4) final, causes. The Torah, the Christian said, tested by these standards, proves itself defective in all four causes.

In elaboration, this man claimed that the Torah was defective in regards to (1) matter, because the Torah contains stories and other matters which are not Torah, that is, Teaching and instruction. The teachings of Jesus, however, are instruction only. As to the (2) formal cause, it is defective because a law should embrace three things: a) relation between man and God; or, ceremonial; b) relation between man and man; or, judiciary; c) relation between man and himself; or, moral. It is defective in all these three, because in the Torah, the a) ceremonial, deals with the sacrifices which are dirty; while Jesus prescribed bread and wine, which are clean; b) the judiciary permits interest which is destructive of social life. Also, there are discrepancies in the application of the laws of unintentional homicide, the punishment of one person sometimes not being as severe as the second. But in the law of Jesus, all depends upon the opinion of the judges; c) in regard to the moral, the Torah commands right action only, and says nothing concerning the purity of the heart. The law of Jesus demands purity of heart and thus saves man from Gehenna.

Concerning the (3) efficient cause, the Christian said that the Torah expresses itself in a very veiled manner about

the Trinity; while Jesus clearly taught that God is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and that all are One. As to the (4) final cause, the Torah is deficient because it says nothing about spiritual happiness which is the purpose of man, and speaks only of material happiness. The teachings of Jesus promise spiritual happiness.

With this as a preface, Albo launches upon his answer and refutation.

All the statements are untrue, he says, and are based upon a lack of understanding and insight into the ideas of the Torah. He sets as his preliminary premise, the fact that anything that is a subject of belief must be conceivable by the mind. Natural impossibilities, such as the dividing of the Red Sea, the turning of the rod into a serpent, are things that can be conceived by the mind, and hence we can believe that God has the power to produce them. But a matter of which the mind cannot conceive, such as: that a thing should and should not be at one and the same time; or that a body can be in two places at the same time; or that a number is both odd and even, cannot be a subject of belief and hence God cannot be conceived of as being able to do it. Since the mind cannot conceive it, God cannot do it, as it is inherently impossible. If the mind does not affect belief, he argues, then reason would have been given to man for no purpose and man would have no superiority over the animals.

The statement that the Law of Moses is defective in regard to its matter shows ignorance of the Law of Moses, he claims, insisting that there is not a word or narrative in the Torah that is not essential either to inculcate an idea or a moral, or t

or to explain one of the commandments.

If we examine the 'law of Jesus, Albo continues, we do not find that he gave a law. On the contrary, we find that he commanded his followers to keep the Law of Moses. The Gospels are not law, but an account of the life of Jesus. The miracles he performed are similar to those performed by the prophets who did not promulgate any law. The principles of conduct set forth in the Torah are not obscured as they are in the parables; this being expressly said by God to Moses, since it was not proper that Moses should speak like prophets of an inferior grade, because a statement made in allegorical form is not perfect, since it needs explanation. It is clear that a law must represent the very highest degree of prophetic message, and for this reason, the Bible praises the prophecy of Moses. It is evident from the Biblical statement, in which God says that He does not speak with Moses in "dark speeches", that any legislative matter expressed subtly is defective. Hence a conclusion opposite to that of the Christian polemist is come to,

Albo answers the claim that the Torah is defective in regard to efficient cause, because it does not describe the attributes of God. He says that the Torah expressly emphasized the dogma of the unity, incorporeality and physical non-apprehension of God. Also, the Torah declares that the conception we have of God come from the qualities shown in the government of his creatures. Moses said to God, "show me Thy ways", and God replied with the Thirteen Attributes which man may know more or less, dependent upon the individual; but the essential attributes

of God cannot be known.

The Torah says nothing about the Trinity, continues Albo, since it is not true from the standpoint of reason, and the Torah does not inculcate an idea which is not true, such as three are one, and one is three, while remaining separate and distinct. The only way that the thought of the Christians can be accepted is by believing that two contradictories can be true at one and the same time; but this is opposed to the primary axioms, and inconceivable by the mind. And for the same reason, that it is inconceivable by the mind, does the Torah reject corporeality, saying, "For ye say no manner of form...."¹¹¹

Concerning the claim that the Torah is defective from the standpoint of its final cause, or purpose, because it does not speak of spiritual happiness, Albo declares that this statement is not true. The Torah, he continues, was given to all people, great and small, wise and foolish, and therefore it must contain those things calculated to inspire belief and be understandable to all. Those things seen by the senses of everyone inspire strong belief; those apprehended by the intellect only and not seen through the senses, do not inspire belief at all. People say that that which cannot be perceived by the senses is improbable and untrue; hence the Torah promised explicitly as rewards, corporeal things which are perceived readily by the senses of everyone. The intellectual things, understood only by the intelligence, are received through allusion. The purpose is that each person may understand according to his individual ability, that through the Torah are received all corporeal and

spiritual happiness. More than that; corporeal rewards which cannot be gotten through ordinary means, are evidence of spiritual rewards.

Providence in this world, Albo goes on to say, proves to be happiness in the world to come; and especially when extraordinary miracles take place in the life of a nation. Miracles, such as continuous prophecy, took place constantly in the life of the Jewish nation. The Christians have no continuous miracle to prove the truth of their belief. However, they bring forward the material prosperity of their believers as evidence of the truth of their belief. This is no proof at all, since we find that nations were prosperous even before the coming of Christianity; and the Moslem certainly is prosperous. The real proof of the truth of a faith is the continuity of miracles as we find in Israel when he lived on his own land.

The final charge that the Torah is defective in respect to its form is untrue. It is perfect in all its three parts, claims Albo.

a) The ceremonial, which is the relation between God and man has as one of its commands, prayer. The Rabbis, commenting on the verse, "And thou shalt serve the Lord, thy God,
¹¹²
 and He will bless thy bread and thy water", say that the service
¹¹³
 here means prayer. Also, the Torah commands the love and fear
¹¹⁴
 of God.

As to the claim that the offering of sacrifices is unclean, it can be agreed that the purpose of sacrifices is to purify the intentions and to keep people away from offering to

idols. A further idea is to call man's attention to the fact that he will be destroyed in the same manner as the animal which he now sacrifices, that was once a living thing, but is now burnt and destroyed, except for that part which God wishes, except he do those things which the Lord wishes him to do. This makes man do good, and achieve for himself immortality, which is the real perfection of man. Or, the purposes of sacrifices may be, as the Cabala claims, to unite the lower with the upper. Even that is acceptable because it is pleasing to God. Fire from heaven
 115
 consumed the fat on the altar; fire came down for Solomon in the
 116
 Temple. The Christians cannot prove such a continuous and public sign from God.

Also, their claim that sacrifices benefit the soul is not proved either by the senses or by the intellect.

The sacrament of bread and wine is not an offering to their God, but it is the body of their God. This transubstantiation takes place at every altar. The mind rejects this idea because, 1), it demands a belief in the instantaneous motion from the highest heavens to the earth; 2), it requires a belief in the simultaneous presence of the same body on two or more different places; 3), it necessitates the belief that the body of the Messiah goes up and down without breaking through the heavens, (and the heavens cannot be broken through); 4), it demands the belief in the conversion of the bread and wine, (which do not, in the process, increase or diminish in quantity), into the body of the Messiah who existed from eternity.

All these things not only deny the first principles, but are in conflict with the senses.

The Christian claim is that the bread and wine are not food and do not nourish the man who partakes of them; while Albo claims that if taken in enough quantity, they certainly will. The Christians say that these articles turn into the body of the Messiah; these are things, says, Albo, which the reason cannot conceive of, nor the mouth utter, nor the ear hear. How can they believe those things which the mind rejects, and the senses contradict? Therefore, a Jew cannot accept these things, since his true opinions are founded upon the Laws of Moses which are not in conflict with the senses.

It is difficult to believe that Jesus was the
 Messiah the son of David; for that is uncertain. ¹¹⁷ Matthew traces the ancestry of Joseph to Solomon and David and says he was
¹¹⁸ of royal descent; Luke says he was not of kingly lineage. Both of these genealogies concern Joseph alone, and the claim is made that he knew not Mary before the birth of Jesus or after.
¹¹⁹ But Matthew indicates that he knew Mary after the birth of Jesus.
¹²⁰ He also states that Jesus had brothers, which would lead us to the same conclusion about the relationship between Mary and Joseph. The whole genealogy does not benefit Jesus at all. And how, adds Albo, do we know the genealogy of the Messiah?

How can a Jew believe in Biblical passages per-
 verted to prove a point? ¹²¹ "The 'almah' shall conceive" is quoted
¹²² in Matthew to prove the virgin birth of Jesus. Even a child

knows that this was said to Ahaz concerning the destruction of Israel and Syria, about six hundred years before the birth of Jesus, and that the Kingdom of Judah would remain under the kings of Davidical lineage. How could Jesus' birth of a virgin be a sign to Ahaz? There are other verses quoted wrongly.¹²³

b) As for the judiciary, Albo claims that the Law of Moses is more perfect than any other kind of law. It enjoins love of mankind, forbids hatred, cares for the stranger, and allows interest to be taken only from a foreigner who worships idols.¹²⁴ In the defence of the last, Albo says that surely, if it is permitted to take the life of an idolator,¹²⁵ it is permitted to take his property.¹²⁶

In other respects, the Torah is more perfect than other laws. It measures the punishment according to the magnitude of the wrong. The Torah permits the blood avenger to seek to retaliate in order that people should be very careful. The reason for making the return of the murderer dependent on the death of the high-priest is that the high-priest may pray for his contemporaries that no wrong may occur on account of them.¹²⁷

The wonder of it all is that anyone should say that the Laws of Moses, which are divine, are completed by the laws of Jesus. The latter has no civil law governing human relations. How can man improve on divinely made laws?

A more important consideration is that people should criticize only that which they know. The Apostles were not familiar with the Laws of Moses. They made several grievous

130
errors. The Jews cannot be accused of falsifying the text; for this does not concern religious belief, but only the familiarity of the Apostles with the Bible.

And even if the Apostles changed the civil laws, who gave authority to the Pope to change the Sabbath? he asks. The Sabbath is essentially holy through the power of God, and not because it is a day of rest. 131 It is one of the Ten Commandments, and no man can abolish it. Jesus and his disciples observed the Sabbath.

It is clear that the charge of imperfection against the true laws of the Torah is not at all sufficient to abolish these laws.

c) Answering the fourth claim concerning morals, Albo states that the charge that the Law of Moses prescribed only correct action, and not a pure heart, is not true. Right action is commanded because purity of heart is of no account unless 132 practice is in agreement with it. The important thing is the intention to do good, as David said, "Create in me a clean heart". 133

It is clear from the foregoing that the Torah is perfect in all manner of perfection and not imperfect as was 134 claimed. "The Law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul", quotes Albo. This praises the Law in all its four causes:

1) "Law" refers to the material cause, and shows that all in the Torah was put there as rule and regulation and guidance, and and for no other purpose. 2) "Law of the Lord", shows that it is perfect in respect to the efficient cause; and since the

efficient cause is God, it cannot have any of the defects which exist in human law. 3) "Perfect", means perfection of form. 4) "Restoring the soul" refers to perfection of purpose; the happiness of the soul.

Hence it is shown that the Torah is free from all defects, and is perfect in all manner of perfection.

CONCLUSIONS ON JOSEPH ALBO

There is a calmness about the polemical portion of Albo's "Book of Principles". The arguments were not brought forth at the moment in the heat of a debate, but are the product of quiet reflection. He speaks with the sober detachment of a philosopher, which he is. There is no hurtling invective; merely even reasoning. Albo attacks each problem separately and without confusion.

Albo purports to answer a four-ply statement of a Christian scholar. It is very probable that these statements had been made to him, since Albo would have no need to falsify and set up a straw-man for himself to answer.

There is no evidence that the disputation at Tortosa influenced his arguments. The debate of 1413 in which he took part, discussed only one question, that of the Messiah. Indeed Albo does deal with it in this section, but the arguments are not similar. He treats, though, of the main questions that could be asked. His work can be used as a basis for most any question of a theological nature that could arise.

His basic statement that the mind cannot believe what the mind cannot conceive, is psychologically true. This foundation gives a firmness to his arguments. He does not speak out of the vagaries of theological arguments but bases his claims upon evidence acceptable to common sense. This method gives a wider range to the influence of his words, for they are based upon the thought processes of the common man. His reference to

what "people say" is an argument based upon the strongest support.

Albo, in setting down the principle that a thing, to be accepted, must be amenable to the senses, or the intellectual faculties, repeats that which was the basis for Maimonides' works.
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His speaking about the Messiah impresses one as being a digression. He could not, though, afford to pass up the opportunity of expressing himself on this vital topic. The justification for this lies probably in the fact that it appears in the discussion of the relations between man and God.

Albo mentions one fact, which to us at least, seems to be overlooked by many polemicists. It is, that the Gospels are not law, but a biography of Jesus.

Though Albo perhaps added nothing to what was probably known at his time, yet he can be said to be important for these two reasons: The first, because he emphasized the primary principle that anything which is the subject of belief must be conceivable by the mind; and the second, because he classified, for all who cared to read, the theological arguments against Judaism, and the answers thereto.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The material of this thesis covers from 1390 to 1428, a period of close to forty years.

Avenstruc's purpose in writing of the Tortosa affair, "so that ye shall know what to answer the unbeliever", may indicate that the trend of events could be foreseen. Certainly, conditions for the Jews in the land were not becoming any better. More of the same sort of trouble as at Tortosa could be expected at any time. Avenstruc feels reasonably certain that the same stock arguments and questions would arise as did occur in the Tortosa debate.

All this may indicate a general literature at the time, dealing with disputations with Christians. It may also indicate that the leaders of the Jewish communities felt duty-bound to be prepared to enter a dispute at any moment. Hence the necessity of having a handy reference of the questions that were sure to arise. The fact that Albo feels compelled to enclose a refutation of certain Christian arguments concerning Judaism, points to the need felt for such a literature. Furthermore, we know that anti-Jewish works were being circulated, (Geronimo's book, for instance). It may well be assumed that the Jews were not lax in issuing counter-arguments for circulation.

The disputants at Tortosa referred to Nachmanides, showing that the accounts of the various disputations were studied. There probably were no new arguments brought forth.

It is difficult to say who, of the men or groups we have

we have studied, borrowed from whom. Several instances of overlapping and repetition can be noticed. The Tortosa disputants were limited to one question. Joshua Lorqui covered a major part of the field and included this one questions. So did Albo. In the theological battlefields of Judaism and Christianity, the question of the Messiah and his coming is very important. Albo's digression to include this subject shows that it was considered as vital.

From the material at hand, we can reach the conclusion that there are two main points about which a disputation can center. The one is the question of the Messiah, as elaborated above and which was the center of attention at Tortosa, and and written about by Lorqui and Albo. The other, limited to these latter two, and Paul of Burgos, is the question of the truth of the Torah, with its corollary of truth of faith.

These two questions, in one form or another, still crop up whenever Judaism and Christianity meet today.

Paul Boyer

NOTES

1. See the German Graetz, Vol. 8, note 3, on the two Joshua Lorquis. The apostate Geronimo de Santa Fe, as a Jew, was known by the name of Joshua Alorqui, that is, of the city of Lorqua. The writer of the letter to Paul of Burgos had the same name. AMS. (Leyden Codex, Catalog, p. 354) has a superscription on the letter indicating that this Joshua Lorqui later became an apostate. Graetz does not believe that the two men were identical, claiming, that for psychological reasons, it is impossible to believe that a man who wrote such an anti-Christian letter as Lorqui did, would later become converted and become the apostate de Santa Fe. Furthermore, he claims that the writer of the letter knew Arabic, while the apostate at Tortosa showed a knowledge of Latin but none of Arabic.
2. cf. Kiddushin 69b and 71b---"Jews sifted as fine flour".
3. Isaiah 11:1.
4. Matthew 1:6ff; Luke 1:32.
5. Num. 1:20.
6. Jer. 23:5,6
7. Ezek. 37:25b
8. Isaiah 41:8; 45:17
9. Zech. 2:15
10. Is. 40:11
11. Ezek. 37:21
12. Jer. 30:18
13. ib. 31:39
14. Ezek. 28:25,26
15. ib. 37:25
16. Jer. 31:33
17. Is. 11:9
18. ib. 2:4
19. Zech. 6:12
20. Mal. 3:3

21. Joel 3:1
22. ib. v.2
23. Lorqui follows Maimonides on this point. See "Moreh Nevuchim", part II, chapter 36; ed. Friedlaender, p. 225.
24. Is. 11:6
25. ib. 2:4
26. Ezek. 39:6
27. Zach. 14:1, 16
28. Is. 66:23
29. Deut. 4:2
30. Matt. 5:17
31. See John 1:1ff, 14
32. I cannot locate the source of this, but the translation of the passage quoted by Lorqui is: "...the roots of this number are in nature; and the meaning of it and its answer are a law unto us; and through (because) of this number, we demand of ourselves to love very much (adore) the One God, the Supreme Creator of all things".
33. Dan. 2:11
34. Job 8:3
35. Jer. 31:28
36. Deut. 24:16
37. See p. 11, note 32 of this thesis.
38. See Eng. Graetz, v. 4, p. 183.
39. See Steinschneider, "Cat. Bodleian", p. 2087.
40. Is. 42:4
41. Probably "Moreh Nevuchim" part II, chap. 40.
42. See p. 14 of this thesis.
43. An instance of Eisenstein's corrupt text: he has, *veij nre s'pek* "The religion through which he received salvation". But Blumenfeld in his "Ozar Nechmad", p. 6, has more correctly, *keij*, meaning "carries", or, "professes"; and changing the meaning entirely.

44. See p. 14 of this thesis.
45. See p. 18 of this thesis.
46. Margolis and Marx, p. 455; Graetz, Eng. iv:207.
47. Isadore Loeb in "Revue de l'Histoire des Religions", v. 17.
48. "Geshichte" of Graetz, vol. 8, note 3, p. 416, mentions only two sources: the one indicated and Avenstruc's. The Hebrew Graetz vol. 6, p. 410, makes a note of an additional source, to be found in Kobak. See text.
49. ed. Wiener, #40, p. 67ff.
50. pp. 104-111; the transcription is careless.
51. Note in Husik, p. xv; Graetz, Ger. vol. 8, p. 127.
52. Called so by the Jews. The name means "blasphemer" and is formed of the first letters of his Hebrew name.
53. See Kobak, p. 45, note 2; but see Husik, Introduction.
54. De Castro, in "The Jews in Spain", p. 100 claims that Astruc and thirteen others became converted at the end of the affair. There is no Jewish record of it. He probably took it from the Christian source. I cannot testify as to its validity, but it seems to be a gloss.
55. Only sixteen delegates listed. Kobak, p. 45, also states that twenty-two came, but he does not give the names.
56. Eisenstein had 1473, obviously a mistake. "Shevet Yehudah" p. 68, does not have a date.
57. Peter de Luna, known as anti-Pope Benedict XIII since 1394.
58. Reigned 1412-1416.
59. Of course, Avenstruc takes us merely into a few days of the debate. But we know that as the debate wore on, even the Pope failed to appear at times. See Eng. Graetz, vol. 4, p. 212.
60. Is. 1:18, 20.
61. Avodah Zarah 9a; Sanhedrin 97a bott; Rosh Hashonnah 31a, a partial statement. (Eisenstein lists Avodah Zarah 81, which does not exist).
62. Avodah Zarah 9a; Sanhedrin 97b top.
63. Avodah Zarah, loc. cit.

64. 3828 plus 172 equals 4000, the beginning of the third two-thousand-year period.
65. That is, before the 4,000-year period.
66. Reigned as High-Priest and King, (103 B.C.E.-76 B.C.E.).
67. ca. 135ff. B.C.E.
68. i.e., ca. 50 B.C.E.
69. i.e., 86 B.C.E.
70. Sanhed. 98a
71. See Rashi, commenting on this, Sanhed. 97a.
72. Husik, in his Introduction, says third day, that is Feb. 9th.
73. Sanhed. 97b top.
74. Shevet Yehudah omits this phrase.
75. i.e. 4250 years old.
76. The names used in the Hebrew text are the equivalent of our phrase, "Tom, Dick, and Harry".
77. Sanhed. 97b; should be ~~be~~ *be* and not ~~as~~ *as* in Shevet Yehudah.
78. I. Sam. 9:18
79. Sanhed. 97b.
80. ca. 400 C.E.
81. Talmud Yerushalmi, Krotoshin, 2(5a) and Lamentations Rabbah to v. 1:16b. Only first line quoted in Eisenstein and Shevet Yehudah.
82. Yerush. and Rabbah have "r. Abun".
83. Is. 10:34.
84. Ib. 11:1
85. In Barcelona, 1263.
86. No mention made of this statement in Eisenstein pp. 86ff. See also Kobak, p. 53, note 19 noting the absence of this statement in the account of the Nacmenides disputation.
87. Should be, Jayme I
88. ?
89. See above, note 81

90. Pesachim 54a
91. I Kings 13:2
92. 66:7 and Targum thereto.
93. Sanhed. 97b.
94. loc. cit.
95. loc. cit.
96. Sabbath 63a
97. Is. 66:7ff.
98. ib. v. 13.
99. Gen. 49:10.
100. cf. Ibn Ezra to above.
101. Gen. 28:15
102. Gen. 49:10b
103. cf. Rashi to above.
104. Meeting place of the Sanhedrin.
105. ~~Sanhedrin 97b; Targum thereto.~~ Aveénstruc probaly means that the delegates were honored among their own people.
106. See Heb Graetz, vol. 6, p. 112.
107. Num. 12:8
108. Ex. 33:20
109. ib. v. 13
110. Ex. 34:6
111. Deut. 4:15
112. Ex. 23:25
113. Babba Kamma 92b; Baba Mezia 107b.
114. Deut. 6:5; 13; Lev. 19:14
115. Lev. 9:24.
116. II Chron. 7:1
117. 1:6
118. 5:11

- 118. 3:31
- 119. 1:25
- 120. ib. 12:46; 13:55
- 121. Is. 7:14
- 122. Matt. 1:22
- 123. See Jer. 31:15 in Matt. 2:16-18
- 124. Lev. 19:18
- 125. ib. 17.
- 126. Deut. 10:19; 14:21
- 127. ib. 23:21
- 128. ib. 20:16
- 129. The Christian argued that one may be in hiding longer than the other if the matter of his release depended upon the death of the High-Priest. Albo does not meet this argument. (See also Husik, p. 239, note.).
- 130. Acts 7:14-16: Joseph brought to Egypt with seventy-five souls; buried in Shechem in cave brought from sons of Hamor. cp. Gen. 46:8-27, Deut. 10:22. Acts 13:21: Saul ruled 40 years; I sam. 13 indicates 3 or 4 years. This last statement is Albo's; but I Sam. 13:1 says "two years".
- 131. Concerning the manna; Ex. 16:29
- 132. Deut. 10:16; 6:5; Lev. 19:18.
- 133. Ps. 51:12
- 134. ib. 19:8
- 135. See M. Friedlaender, "Moreh", introd. p. xxv, wherein the translator sets forth "aimonides' views.

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