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THE JACOB STORY IN THE WRITINGS OF SOME EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITERS

MICHAEL MAHER

THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF
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CHAPTER I:

INTRODUCTION

Even a superficial knowledge of the origin and development of the Church shows that three cultures contributed, each in its own way, to the formulation of the Christian faith and to its theology. Christianity had its roots in Judaism, spread rapidly in the Greco-Roman world, and took on a special character among the Syriac-speaking converts of Northern Mesopotamia. Each of the three cultures, the Jewish, the Greco-Roman, and the Syrian, left its mark on Christian belief and doctrine.

The link that united the Jews with all Christian communities was, of course, the Scriptures. But the interpretation of the Scriptures as carried out by different communities of Jews and Christians reflects the different attitudes and interests of each. Within Judaism, for example, the biblical interpretation of Philo of Alexandria differs from that of first century Palestinian Jewry. On the Christian side the exegesis of Clement of Alexandria has little in common with that of the Syrian Fathers who flourished about a hundred years later. And yet Jews and Christians addressed themselves to the same Hebrew Scriptures from which they drew their own particular doctrines. The Christian's acceptance of Christ and of the New Testament did indeed add a new dimension to his understanding of the Old Testament, but the fact remains that he did argue from the Scriptures which the Jew regarded as sacred.

My purpose in the present paper is to examine how some

of the Fathers of the early Church interpreted the Genesis story of Jacob and Esau, and to draw attention to areas where their understanding of the biblical narrative may have been influenced by, or may have influenced, the Jewish interpretation of the same story. Since, however, the dating of Jewish texts and traditions of the early Christian centuries is precarious, we are very rarely in a position to say that such and such a Christian author borrowed from such and such a Jewish source, or that a particular Jewish statement is a reaction to a given Christian assertion. But there are many passages in the Jewish literature of the first Christian centuries that can with great probability be regarded as echoing rabbinic controversy with the exponents of the Christian faith, and we hope to see some of these in the course of our study.

When we think, for example, of the Christian claim that the Jews had lost their position as the chosen people and that the Gentiles had replaced them as the covenant people, we naturally expect a Jewish reaction to that claim. Now, since the Fathers frequently regarded Jacob, the younger brother, as a symbol of the Church, the new people of God,[1] and since the Jewish teachers regarded Esau as a symbol of Rome, and therefore, at least after Constantine, of the Church,[2] we should expect to find in Jewish and Christian exegesis of the Jacob-Esau story some echoes of the claims and counterclaims that were made by the spokesmen for the two faiths.

In the hope of detecting these echoes I set about examining the works of some of the early Christian writers who

in one way or another directed their attention to the Jacob-Esau theme. I chose to start with St. Paul, who drew his own particular lesson from the fact that the younger Jacob acquired the birthright of his older brother. I then take up the Letter of Clement to the Corinthians, a letter which shows the Roman Church already holding a position of authority and intervening in the internal affairs of the Corinthian Church. I next turn my attention to the so-called Letter of Barnabas, which seems to have been written in Alexandria about the year 135 and which formulates many arguments that were to be used by many later authors in anti-Jewish polemic. We return to Rome to hear the witness of Justin Martyr, especially in his Dialogue with Trypho, where he develops many typological interpretations of the Old Testament which were designed to show that the Church was the true spiritual Israel.

I next focus attention on Tertullian, the first great Christian writer to express himself in Latin, and a representative of the Church of Carthage. Still in North Africa, but moving to Greek-speaking Alexandria, we examine the works of Clement of Alexandria, who borrowed so freely from the Jew Philo. Finally, I take St. Ephrem as a representative of the Syrian Church, paying special attention to his commentary on the Jacob-Esau story in Genesis. As I examine the writings of these different Fathers, I will be looking out for points of contact between them and Jewish literature, and I will be trying to discover in the Jewish texts that have come down to us passages that seem to represent the rabbinic

reaction to the Christian claims.

The exploratory nature of my study is obvious, and I am well aware that even in the works of the Fathers whose writings I examine in this paper there are other passages which treat of the Jacob-Esau theme. But in examining the works of writers who represent several important Churches of the early Christian centuries -- the Roman Church, the Greek-speaking community of Alexandria, the Church of Carthage where a Christian literature in Latin first flourished, and the Church of North Mesopotamia where Christianity had a special flavor -- I have found ample support for the thesis that the Jacob-Esau story had an important place in the Christian confrontation with Judaism. The relation between the Patristic texts and Jewish teaching may not be as clear as one might wish. But I have been able to identify some possible points of contact between the two bodies of literature, and I am convinced that further examination of the Jewish and Christian sources can show that there was a definite interplay between Jewish and Christian positions in the early centuries of the Church's existence.

CHAPTER II:

ST. PAUL'S DILEMMA

In the Epistle to the Romans, Paul refers to the Jews as his brethren and kinsmen, and, calling them by the honorific title "Israelites" which God himself had given them (cf. Gen 32:28), he goes on to enumerate the privileges with which God had blessed them: "They are Israelites, and to them belong the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and of their race according to the flesh is the Christ" (Rom 9:4-5). In these verses Paul acknowledges that God had elected Israel as his first-born son (cf. Ex 4:22; Is 1:2; Hos 11:1), and that the cloud of divine Glory was present to the people in the wilderness (cf. Ex 16:10) and in the Jerusalem Temple (cf. 1 Kings 8:10-11). If we read "covenants" in the plural as in the Revised Standard Version quotation above, Paul is referring to the covenants with Abraham and Moses (cf. Gen 15:18; Ex 24:7-8) and possibly with David (cf. Ps 89:3; 2 Sam 7:5-17). But if we follow the important manuscripts that read "covenant" in the singular, we must take Paul to refer to the Sinai covenant which had such an important place in the lives of all Israelites. Although Paul in other passages minimizes the glory of the Law by reducing its role to that of custodian until Christ should come (cf. Gal 3: 23-24), in the passage quoted above from Romans he sees it as one of God's gifts to his people and as a revelation of the

divine will to Israel. When Paul refers to the "worship" as one of his people's glories he is, without doubt, referring to the splendid Jerusalem cult that was still flourishing in his day and which was of a fine and noble character when compared with the cults of the neighboring peoples. The term "the promises" does not have an Old Testament background, and Paul seems to use it here to refer to the messianic promises that formed the basis of Israel's hopes and expectations (cf. Gal 3:16; Rom 4:13). Among the gifts which Israel received from God Paul counts the Patriarchs, the glorious ancestors of the nation, on whose merits the Israelites set such store.[3] For Paul, the Christ "according to the flesh" is the descendant par excellence of the Jewish race, and in him the Jew Paul could boast, and it grieved him that his fellow-countrymen could not accept Jesus as the Messiah.

In Eph 2:11-12 Paul reminds his Gentile readers that before their conversion they were "alienated from the covenant of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope." Here too Paul clearly implies that membership of the covenant and cultic community of Israel was something desirable, something to be proud of. Israel alone had formed God's covenant people, his commonwealth, the קהל יהוה, and she alone had the covenants and promises that gave her hope of salvation. Paul regarded it as an unspeakable advantage for the Gentiles to become "fellow heirs" (cf. Eph 3:6) to the privileges that belonged to the people of Israel since their origins.[4]

However, the fact that the majority of his fellow-Israelites did not accept Jesus as the Messiah was a shattering blow for Paul. He was overcome by great emotional strain at the thought that the Christ came to his own (cf. John 1:11) who rejected him, and he yearned for the conversion of his people (cf. Rom 9:1-2). How could it happen that in spite of all God's favors and promises to his people they could fail to accept the Messiah? Paul solved the dilemma by declaring that "not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, and not all are children of Israel because they are his descendants" (Rom 9:6-7). Paul clarifies this point by adding that only the children of Isaac (and not those who are descended from Abraham through Ishmael) are the legitimate descendants of Abraham (vv. 8-9). Thus, suggests Paul, mere descent through the flesh from the Patriarchs does not necessarily constitute one a member of the chosen people.

Paul then takes up the story of the twins in Rebekah's womb (Gen 25:21-23) in order to prove the same point. In the case of Isaac one might say that he inherited from Abraham because he was the son of Abraham's wife, not of his concubine, as was Ishmael. But Isaac's children were twins, the sons of his only wife. According to the natural order of events Esau, the first-born, should have inherited the blessings from his father. But even before the twins were born, before they could have any personal merit, God freely chose the younger Jacob to take precedence over the older Esau. He did this, says Paul, that his own purpose of free election

might continue (cf. Rom 9:11). He decreed that the elder should serve the younger (v. 12), that the natural order of things be overturned by his free choice.

Paul uses this story only to show that by divine decree Jacob, the younger brother, and not Esau, the older, was the heir, the authentic descendant of Isaac and Abraham. For Paul the Jews are obviously the descendants of Jacob, and therefore heirs to the divine promises and blessings. But they owe their privileges to God's choice of Jacob, and not to mere natural descent from him; for had God not chosen Jacob instead of Esau, then the descendants of the elder Esau would be the children of the promise. This insistence on God's freedom and choice then allows Paul to go on to show that God chose the Gentiles to become sharers in his gifts to Israel. God could freely incorporate into his people those who had not been his people (cf. v. 25; Hos 2:23), and he could accept as his own those who pursued righteousness through faith (Rom 9:30). Paul's attention, then, was focused on God's freedom, and his aim was to show how God could choose the Gentiles to become recipients of the blessings which the Jews had refused.[5]

In using the example of Rebekah's twins Paul never suggested that the Jews were not the children of Jacob and the privileged of God. But this same example was to become a favorite text of Christian apologists who used it to defend their claim that the privileges of the older people, Israel, had been transferred to the younger people, the Church. From the early second century onwards the story of Jacob's choice

over Esau was to be used in a manner that Paul had not foreseen.

CHAPTER III:

CLEMENT OF ROME

In his Epistle to the Corinthians, which was written about the year 96, Clement of Rome remains close to Paul in that he acknowledges the privileges of the people from which the Church originally sprang. In a passage in which he urges his readers to holiness of life, Clement bases his appeal on that fact that God

> . . . has made us his chosen portion. For it is written: "When the Most High divided the nations, when he scattered the sons of Adam, he set up the boundaries of nations according to the number of the angels of God. His people, Jacob, became the portion of the Lord; Israel was the allotment of his inheritance." And in another place He[6] says: "Behold the Lord takes to himself a nation from the midst of nations, as a man takes the first-fruit of his threshing floor, and from that nation shall come forth the Holy of Holies."[7]

One notices that Clement recognizes Jacob-Israel as still being God's chosen people and that he does not suggest that Israel's privileges are a matter of past history. He leaves us with the impression that his "us", the Christians, are simply given a share in the chosen status of Israel. His thesis is that the Christians are "a portion of the Holy One," and that this honored status brings with it certain moral obligations. But Clement does not deny the glory of Israel, nor does he suggest that the Christian community is heir to the blessings which Israel has forfeited. "When he [Clement] speaks to the Corinthians about Israel, he does not refer, as the Apologists and Fathers would later distinguish, to

the Israel of the flesh but to the Israel of God. He insistently recalls that all the prophecies are fulfilled in Christianity which is now the people of God. Here was a favorable occasion to refute Judaism, and yet he shies away from it."[8]

Clement gave to Jacob the somewhat surprising title "our father."[9] Christian writers, including Clement (cf. 31:2), following St. Paul (cf. Rom 4:11,16; Gal 3:7) confer that title on Abraham, but it is very unusual to apply it to Jacob, and it has been suggested that the title "our father Jacob" comes from a Jewish-Christian environment.[10] At a later time and in a different environment, and perhaps again under the influence of Jewish tradition, Aphrahat will also apply the title "our father" to Jacob.[11] Clement gives a place of honor to Jacob, and he proposes him as a model for the Christians. Having proclaimed that Abraham acquired justice through faith, and that Isaac was willingly led forth as a sacrifice, Clement goes on to say:

> Jacob went out from his own country with meekness[12] because of his brother, and went to Laban and served him, and the twelve tribes of Israel were given to him. And if anyone will examine fairly each example he will recognize the greatness of the gifts given by God. For from him [i.e. from Jacob] come the priests and the Levites who minister at the altar of God; and from him comes the Lord Jesus according to the flesh (Rom 9:5); from him came the kings and rulers and leaders in the line of Judah. And the other tribes are in no slight honour, since as God promised [cf. Gen 15:5; 22:17; 26:4]: "Thy seed shall be as the stars of heaven."[13]

Although Jacob is here portrayed as a model of humility, his real dignity is said to stem from the fact that he was the

father of the twelve tribes. One notices the curious fact that Jesus is placed between the descendants of Levi and those of Judah. Clement obviously wished to place him among the priests and the kings, the more noble descendants of Jacob. One notices also that the promises concerning numerous descendants were spoken to Abraham (Gen 15:5; 22:17-18) and to Isaac (26:4) and to Jacob (28:14). From Clement's text one might get the impression that they were spoken to Jacob alone.

Clement's interest in Jacob, and the significance he gives to him, are quite remarkable considering the importance given to Abraham by St. Paul (cf. e.g. Rom 4:1-25), and considering the place which Abraham as the model of faith was to have in later Christian literature. Indeed, so common did the Christians' claim to be the true descendants of Abraham become that the Rabbis frequently taught that God's choice began with Jacob and not with Abraham.[14]

CHAPTER IV:

PSEUDO-BARNABAS

We use the term Pseudo-Barnabas since it is commonly agreed today that Barnabas, who is mentioned several times in the Acts of the Apostles (cf. e.g. 14:4,14), cannot have been the author of this epistle or tract as it might be more properly called. A. Marmorstein[15] remarked that among the polemical works directed against Judaism, the Letter of Barnabas holds pride of place, not only chronologically, but also by reason of the influence it exercised on later Christian literature. After the New Testament it is one of the oldest examples of early Christian literature, and although scholars have failed to date it precisely it is generally agreed that it antedates the middle of the second century.[16] Alexandria would seem to be the most probable place of its origin.[17]

The author's main thesis is espressed in chapter 4,6-8:

> Be careful for yourselves now, and do not become like some; do not add to your sins and say that the covenant is both theirs and ours. Yes! It is ours; but they [the Jews] thus lost it forever when Moses had only just received it. . . . But they by turning away to idols lost it. For the Lord speaks thus: "Moses, Moses, come down quickly, for thy people . . . have broken the Law" [Ex 32:7]. And Moses understood and threw the two tablets out of his hands, and their covenant was broken in order that the covenant of Jesus, the Beloved, should be sealed in our hearts by the hope which faith in him gives.[18]

Further on Pseudo-Barnabas repeats his thesis, declaring that God indeed had given the covenant to Israel: "But they were not worthy to received it because of their sins. . . .

Moses received the covenant, but they were not worthy."[19] According to Pseudo-Barnabas, then, there was apparently only one covenant (cf. 13,1). The Jews were first to receive it, but when they proved unworthy of it by their sins Jesus came to form a new people (cf. 5,7) that would be the true heir of the covenant (cf. 13,1-6).

But, one might ask, if Pseudo-Barnabas believed that the Christian community inherited the Sinai covenant, how could he and the community ignore the observances that are so clearly inculcated in the Old Testament? He adopted a spiritual or allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament which allowed him to retain the Jewish Scriptures while declaring that Jewish customs were obsolete. Thus, for example, he could say that circumcision had no value in itself and that among the Jews it had only been a sign or type of "circumcision of the heart" (cf. chap. 9,1-8). Similarly, the Sabbath, which was ordained at creation and enjoined on the Israelites at Sinai, was only a foreshadowing of the coming age of salvation which the Son of God will inaugurate (cf. chap. 15,1-9). This typological interpretation of the Old Testament was to become the Fathers' strongest weapon in their controversy with Judaism, and it enabled them to claim that Christ and his Church were foreseen by the Scriptures which the Jews regarded as sacred.[20]

REBEKAH AND HER TWINS

It was this typological interpretation which allowed Pseudo-Barnabas to interpret the story of Rebekah's twins

(Gen 25:21-23) in such a way as to find in it a prediction of the fact that the Church would replace Israel as God's chosen people. The author begins his thirteenth chapter with the words: "Let us see whether this new people or the former people is the heir."[21] He then goes on to quote Gen 25:21-23 (in a version that is clearly related to the Septuagint[22]) which ends with the words: "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples in your belly, and one people shall overcome the other people, and the older shall serve the younger." Pseudo-Barnabas then adds the rather laconic remark: "You must understand who is Isaac and who is Rebecca, and in whom He has shown that this new people is greater than the former" (13,3).

We understand, of course, that Isaac is the bearer of the promises that were originally given to Abraham, and we know that Rebekah is the mother of his children, one of whom will be heir to the divine blessings. We also understand that the new people which is greater than the former is the Church which supersedes Israel. Pseudo-Barnabas does not say explicitly that Esau, the elder of Rebekah's twins, represents Israel, the older people, nor does he identify Jacob with the Church in so many words. But his meaning is clear.

Having used Gen 25:21-32 to illustrate his point, Pseudo-Barnabas (chap. 13,4-5) adds the story of Jacob's blessing of the younger Ephraim instead of Manasseh (Gen 48:13-19) as a further proof. Kraft[23] notes that Philo had already linked Gen 25:21-23 and Gen 48:13ff., although he treated them very differently from Pseudo-Barnabas. It is very probable that

Pseudo-Barnabas knew of this association through Hellenistic Judaism, but he gives a specifically Christian interpretation to both passages.

L. W. Barnard[24] suggests that in using the Gen 25:21-23 passage Pseudo-Barnabas was not drawing directly from Paul (Rom 9:10-13), but that the Genesis text had already been in use in anti-Jewish polemic and that it formed part of the "Testimonia"[25] or proof-texts from the Old Testament which circulated in the early Church. If Gen 25:21-23 were in fact in common use in argument against the Jews before the time of Pseudo-Barnabas, this would explain why he did not have to explain his symbolism to his readers. In any case, this particular Genesis text was to become a locus classicus in Jewish-Christian controversy, and we find it used again and again by the Fathers to show that the Church had replaced Israel as God's chosen people, and that the rights and privileges of the older people had passed on to the younger.

RABBINIC RESPONSE

One can see that the Christian claim must have sounded outlandish to the Jews, and one can understand why the Rabbis would not have been slow to counteract that claim. A. Marmorstein[26] has pointed out that a passage in the Midrash Tanhuma[27] represents such a rabbinic reaction to the Christian assertions. This particular Midrash, explains Marmorstein, combines Ex 6:11 and Ps 50:7 to show that God had already contracted a covenant with the Patriarchs, and that it was vain for the

Christians to claim that the covenant with Moses was broken. God had chosen Israel at the time of their ancestors and his promises to these ancestors would not fail. Marmorstein[28] also cites Sifre to Deut 32:1[29] as another example of rabbinic reaction to such claims as those made by Pseudo-Barnabas. This Sifre Haggadah represents a polemic between a Jew and a Christian in which the Christian assertion that the Jews are no longer the people of the covenant is counteracted by the statement that the Jews still bear the name "Israel" and that God has not repudiated them.

E. Mihaly[30] has shown that Sifre to Deut 32:9[31] has the same polemic intent. The Sifre author defends the statement that "God's portion is his people" (Deut 32:9) and he supports his assertion that Israel is God's elect by quoting Deut 14:2: "For you are a holy people unto your God, and the Lord your God has chosen you to be his treasure." Even after the Golden Calf episode Israel remains God's people, and even if God seems to punish his chosen ones he has not abandoned them, for their portion is different from that of other nations (cf. Jer 10:16). Jacob remains God's beloved son, and it is Israel's duty to respond to God's choice and to cooperate in bringing about God's plan of salvation for the world.

It is interesting to note that Jewish tradition attributes to Rabbi Akiba, who was a contemporary of the author of the Letter of Barnabas, the following saying:

> Beloved are Israel, for they were called children of the Omnipotent; but by a special love was it made known to them that

> they are called children of the Omnipotent, as it is said, "Ye are children unto the Eternal your God [Deut 14:1]. Beloved are Israel, for to them was given the desirable instrument; [but] still greater was the love since it was made known that to them was given the desirable instrument wherewith the universe was created. . . .[32]

In thus reaffirming his audience's conviction about their chosen status and about the particular value of the Law which was theirs, Akiba was countering the Christian thesis that the Christians were now the chosen people and that the Jewish Law was no longer valid.

A parallel sentiment to that of Akiba is also expressed by the opposing school of Rabbi Ishmael: "Beloved are the Israelites, for the Holy One, blessed by He, has given the heathen nations as a ransom for their souls."[33]

Texts like these show that the Rabbis were not indifferent to the Christian claims, and that they discreetly confirmed their audiences in their faith in the ancient traditions which were being challenged by the new faith. We cannot, of course, say that the Rabbis addressed themselves directly to the Letter of Barnabas, but we can see that they responded to the ideas which that document expresses, ideas which were to be repeated by the Fathers of the Church for centuries.

CHAPTER V:

JUSTIN MARTYR

The facts about Justin's life that are known to us are scant, and can be gleaned from his own testimony in his writings. He was born in Flavia Napolis, the modern Nablus, and was of Gentile stock. His conversion to Christianity probably took place sometime before the Bar Khochba rebellion. He moved to Rome about the year 150 and there he taught and wrote. He died a martyr's death about the year 165. Although several writings have been attributed to Justin, modern scholars generally regard only his two Apologies and the Dialogue with Trypho as authentic.[34]

Justin shows a great familiarity not only with the Old Testament but also with post-biblical practices and exegesis.[35] Although the identity of Trypho cannot be discovered, and although he is obviously a spokesman for Justin, he combines "the culture of an inquiring spirit of the Hellenistic world with a wide knowledge of Scripture and Haggadic interpretation, and he represents, not the strict Judaism of the Pharisees, nor the Judaism of the extreme hellenizers, but a mediating Judaism, perhaps native to Palestine."[36] Since, of course, Trypho cannot be portrayed in the Dialogue as having greater knowledge of Judaism than the author of the Dialogue possessed, it follows that Justin was quite familiar with the Jewish thought of his day.

A. H. Goldfahn[37] has drawn attention to many passages in

the Dialogue which seem to reflect a knowledge of rabbinical lore. W. A. Shotwell[38] has taken up several of Goldfahn's ideas in order to show that Justin was familiar with rabbinic lore and that he often followed rabbinic methods of interpretation of Scripture. However, as Neusner notes,[39] the dates of collections in which supposed parallels to Justin's works occur are generally ignored by Goldfahn and Shotwell, so that the so-called parallels between Justin and the Jewish Haggadah deserve further examination. Since, however, none of the parallels noted by Goldfahn refers to the Jacob story, they are not of immediate interest to us.

If, as we have just seen, there are authors who claim that Justin was familiar with Jewish Haggadah, it has also been said that "Justin's knowledge of the Jews is taken wholly from Scripture."[40] By the time of Justin, in fact, the Church's rupture with Judaism was complete,[41] and it is very probable that Justin had no direct dealings with the Jews and with their Rabbis. Justin himself accused the Jews of open hostility to the Christians:

> . . . You have murdered the Just One and his prophets before Him; now you spurn those who hope in Him and in Him who sent Him . . .; to the utmost of your power you dishonour and curse in your synagogues all those who believe in Christ. Now, indeed, you cannot use violence against us Christians, because of those who are in power, but as often as you could, you did employ force against us.[42]

Trypho shows that the Jews were forbidden to enter into communication with Christians concerning religious matters, and he seems to regret his failure to observe that regulation

when he says:

> It would be better for us to have obeyed our teachers who warned us not to listen to you Christians, nor to converse with you on these subjects... . .[43]

JACOB AND ESAU

Justin saw the animosity that existed between Jews and Christians sumbolized in the hatred that separated Esau from Jacob:

> Jacob was always hated by his brother [Gen 27] just as we and our Lord himself are hated by you and, in general, all other men who are brothers by nature.[44]

The Jews, on their part, simply reversed the accusation and declared that:

> It is an axiom that Esau [Rome] hates Jacob [Israel].[45]

Although Justin's attitude to Judaism was less radical than that of Pseudo-Barnabas,[46] he too was convinced that the Christians

> . . . are the true spiritual Israel, and the descendants of Judah, Jacob, Isaac and Abraham, who though uncircumcised, was approved and blessed by God because of his faith and was called the father of many nations.[47]

According to Justin it was Christ who conferred upon Jacob the name Israel, "announcing thereby that all who came to the Father through Him [Christ] are part of the blessed Israel."[48] We shall return in a moment to see something about Justin's use of the story about Jacob's change of name, but for the moment we will take another text to show how he explained how the Christians are the true children of the promise.

> Notice how he [God] makes the same promises to Isaac and Jacob. . . . But he does not address his blessing to Esau, not to Reuben, nor to any other, but only to them from whom Christ was to come. . . . If you were to think of the blessing of Judah you would see what I mean. For the seed is divided after Jacob, and comes down through Juda and Phares and Jesse and David. Now, this was a sign that some of the Jews would be certainly children of Abraham, and at the same time would share in the lot of Christ; but that others, also children of Abraham, would be like the sand on the beach, which though vast and extensive, is barren and fruitless.[49]

Here once again we find the by now familiar argument that natural descent from the Patriarchs does not automatically make one a member of the true Israel, and the equally familiar assertion that only "some of the Jews," namely, those who believed in Christ, are children of the promise, while the others are like the sand on the seashore, barren and fruitless.

Justin's claim that the Church is the true Israel brought from Trypho the shocked reaction: "Do you mean to say that you are Israel . . . ?!"[50]

THE SCRIPTURES POINT TO CHRIST

Justin was convinced that the Old Testament points forward to Christ,[51] and he frequently asserted that it was the Rabbis' failure to understand the Old Testament spiritually that prevented the Jews from seeing that their Scriptures had spoken of Jesus and of the Church.[52]

Justin's own allegorical interpretation of the Bible allows him to discover many references to Christ and to the Church in the life of Jacob, whom he calls the Holy Patriarch Jacob,

whose name was later changed to Israel.[53] Jacob was "a type of Christ,"[54] and the Patriarch, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, foresaw events in Christ's life,[55] and in his actions "certain divine plans were mysteriously fulfilled."[56]

One is surprised to find that Justin almost casually remarks that "Christ is called both Jacob and Israel."[56] "Justin calls the Logos or Christ 'Israel' and 'Jacob,' and is evidently fond of using the two titles together. He expounds the names as signifying only a parallelism between Jacob, who was surnamed Israel, and who gave his name to the Israelites, and Christ from whom the Christians have received their name."[58] Thus Justin can say:

> Therefore, as your whole people are called after that one Jacob, surnamed Israel, so we who obey the precepts of Christ, are, through Christ who begot us to God, both called and in reality are, Jacob and Israel and Juda and Joseph and David and true children of God.[59]

Thus in Justin's thought Christ is the new Jacob or Israel, who has founded a new people, a new Israel, that takes the place of the ancient Israel that was physically descended from the Patriarchs. Justin's language is somewhat difficult to follow since he sometimes uses the terms Israel and Jacob to designate an individual and sometimes to refer to a people. But his meaning is quite clear: the true Israel is a spiritual reality that is perpetuated, not by physical descent from the Patriarchs, but in the community of those who put their faith in Christ.

At this point we may note that the Christian application of the name "Israel" to Christ, and especially to the Christian

community, may explain the Rabbis' preference for the name "Jacob" as the specific designation of the Jews.[60]

Justin repeats several times that it was the Word that appeared to Jacob in the various theophanies that are recorded in his story. It was the Word who appeared to the Patriarch in a dream in Mesopotamia (cf. Gen 31:10-13), and who wrestled with him at the Jabbok (32:22-31), and who spoke with him on his return to Bethel (35:6-10).[61] Justin explains that it could not have been the Creator of all who dwells in heaven who appeared in these visions since

> . . . no one with even the slightest intelligence would dare to assert that the Creator and Father of all things left his super-celestial realms to make himself visible in a little spot on earth.[62]

In Dialogue 86[63] Justin lists a series of events in the Old Testament that symbolized the Cross. In that list we find the statement that "Jacob, by placing rods in their drinking-places, caused the sheep of his mother's brother to conceive, so that he might gain possession of their young." A similar idea is taken up in a later chapter where we read that

> . . . Jacob served Laban for the spotted and speckled sheep [cf. Gen 30], and Christ served, even to the servitude of the Cross, for men of different colours and features from every nationality, redeeming them by his blood and the mystery of the Cross.[64]

The idea that the "spotted and speckled sheep" acquired by Jacob symbolize the peoples of different colors and nationalities is not at all strained in terms of Patristic typology. But it is a curious and far-fetched exercise in typology that finds in the rods erected by Jacob at the drinking places a symbol

of the Cross of Christ. In fact, this particular piece of typology does not seem to have been adopted by later Fathers, although we do find an echo of it in Ephrem's works.[65]

Justin found another type of Christ's death in the story of the injuring of Jacob's thigh (Gen 32:25):

> By touching Jacob's thigh and making it numb, Christ showed that He, too, would grow numb [that is, in physical and mental suffering], at His crucifixion.[66]

CHRIST THE STONE

In several places[67] Justin says that Christ is spoken of in the Scriptures as "Stone," and he develops this idea somewhat in Dialogue 86:[68]

> And when Jacob poured oil over a stone at the same place [cf. Gen 28:12-18], God appeared to him and told him that he had anointed a pillar in honour of the God he had seen. We also have proved that in many scriptural passages Christ is symbolically called a Stone.

Jesus himself had made the word "rock" or "stone" (כיפא) into a proper name when he applied it to Peter (cf. John 1:42; Mt 16:18), and in their search for types of Christ in the Old Testament the Fathers applied many texts that mention the word rock to Jesus. Several "Rock" or "Stone" texts occur in the Testimonia that circulated in the early Church,[69] but Justin's idea that the stone which Jacob anointed symbolized Christ did not become common, although we do find it in Cyprian.[70]

JACOB'S MARRIAGES

The marriages of Jacob to two wives and two concubines

(cf. Gen 29:21-30) would naturally raise problems for the Fathers of the Church who were such staunch defenders of monogamy. But Justin was not embarassed by the apparently shocking matrimonial arrangements of Jacob, for he found in them a mystical meaning.

> I will explain what divine design and prophecy were accomplished in the marriages of Jacob. . . . The marriages of Jacob were types of what Christ would do. [Justin then recalls how Jacob acquired Rachel and Leah as wives.] . . . Now, Leah represented your people and the Synagogue, while Rachel was a figure of our Church. And Christ still serves for these and for his servants that are in both.[71]

> Wherefore Jacob, as he was also a type of Christ, married also the two slave girls of his two free wives and had sons by them, to indicate in advance that Christ would welcome into his company as children and co-heirs, together with the free sons, even the Canaanites who are among the race of Japheth. Now, we are the children and co-heirs of Christ. . . .[72]

Of course, the allegory of the Patriarch's wives representing different peoples and covenants appears in St. Paul (cf. Gal 5:21-28) where it is applied to the wives of Abraham. The idea that Rachel and Leah represent the Church and the Synagogue respectively was taken up by several later Fathers.[73]

The Rabbis, too, were bothered by Jacob's marriages which contravene the Law that was later to be revealed to Moses, and they felt that because of these marriages his heavenly bliss was somewhat diminished:

> In the heavenly banquet Jacob will not be able to say grace. He will say "I cannot grace, because I married two sisters during [both] their lifetimes, whereas the Torah

was destined to forbid them to me.[74]

It has been said that "Justin's writings constitute the first attempt which has been made to justify Christianity before the bar of the ancient religious powers, Heathenism and Judaism."[75] In his confrontation with the Jews Justin regularly used the weapon of allegory, and he found in the Book of Genesis a most useful source in which he discovered many types that pointed to Christ and to the Church. His interpretation of the Jacob story reflects both the Alexandrian allegorical approach to the Scriptures and the Palestinian midrashic approach,[76] and by using both methods of interpretation he was able to find a justification for his theology in the Genesis Jacob story.

It may be noted that Justin never excludes the Jews of his day from God's plan of salvation. Christians, he often says, are co-heirs with the Jewish people to the ancient promises. Only a remnant of the Jews of his day believed in Christ, but the way was open to all of them to faith in Christ. "It may be surprising that a gentile Christian living in the second century seriously considers that the Jews still have a part in God's salvation, and moreover, that this is being fulfilled in his own days, given the history of Jewish-Christian relations. No other Christian writer of the second century seems to take into account the statements of Scripture concerning the escathological remnant."[77]

CHAPTER VI:

TERTULLIAN

Tertullian (died after 220) was the first great writer of the Latin Church. The son of a pagan Roman captain, he was born in Carthage, but received a good education in Rome where he was converted to Christianity. He returned to Carthage about 195.

At that time Carthage had a large Jewish community, and Tertullian often mentions the Jews in his writings.[78] He had some knowledge, direct or indirect, through reading or through personal contact with Jewish teachers, of rabbinic texts.[79]

Like Paul, Tertullian acknowledge the privileged status of the Jews whom God had enriched with many favors,[80] and, like Paul, he says that we Christians have been grafted on to the olive tree that is Israel.[81] He regarded the Scriptures as the common heritage of the two religions,[82] but at the same time he could claim that the Scriptures were the property of the Church.[83] Although Tertullian sometimes speaks of the Old Testament dispensation with some disdain, as, for example, when he speaks of "the wide licence of these days,"[84] he holds that there is a continuity between the Old Testament and the New, and he believes that Christ is announced everywhere in the Jewish Scriptures.[85] He knew that the Jews laughed at the Christian interpretation of Scripture, but he attributed this to their hardness of heart.[86] He understood the "broken cisterns" that cannot hold water (cf. Jer 2:13) to refer to the

Jewish synagogues that cannot hold the Spirit and cannot therefore interpret the Scriptures correctly.[87]

THE JACOB STORY

In discovering figures of Christ in the Old Testament Tertullian uses many of the texts which his predecessors Pseudo-Barnabas, Justin, and Irenaeus had employed, although he often brings an original twist to these texts.[88] However, in his use of the story of Rebekah's twins (Gen 25:21-26) he remains very close to the application of that passage which we find in Paul and Pseudo-Barnabas. Nevertheless, his application of the passage is worth quoting since it exemplifies the way in which the text was to be used by many later writers.

> . . . We have God Himself as an adequate engager and faithful promiser, in that He promised . . . that out of the womb of Rebekah "two peoples and nations were about to proceed," -- of course those of the Jews, that is, of Israel; and of the Gentiles, that is ours. Each, then, was called a people and a nation; lest, from the nuncupative appelation, any should dare to claim for himself the privilege of grace [ne de nominis appelatione privilegium gratiae sibi quis audeat defendere]. For God ordained "two peoples and two nations" as about to proceed out of the womb of one woman: nor did grace make distinction by the nuncupative appelation, but in the order of birth; to the effect that which ever was to be prior in proceeding from the womb, should be subjected to "the less," that is, the posterior. For thus unto Rebecca did God speak: "Two nations are in thy womb . . . and the greater shall serve the lesser." Accordingly since the people or nation of the Jews is anterior in time, and "greater" through the grace of primary favour in the Law, whereas ours is understood to be "less" in the age of times, as having in the last era of the world at-

> tained the knowledge of divine mercy; beyond doubt, through the edict of the divine utterance, the prior and greater people -- that is, the Jewish -- must necessarily serve the less; and the less people -- that is, the Christians -- overcome the greater. For, withal, according to the memorial records of the divine Scriptures, the people of the Jews -- that is, the more ancient -- quite forsook God, and did degrading services to idols, and abandoning the Divinity, was surrendered to images. . . . [Here Tertullian recalls the worship of the Golden Calf (Ex 32) and the sin of Jeroboam (1 Kings 12:25-32).] . . . Whence is proved that they have ever been depicted . . . as guilty of the crime of idolatry; whereas our "less" -- that is, posterior -- people, quitting the idols which it formerly used slavishly to serve, has been converted to the same God from whom Israel . . . had departed. For thus the "less" -- that is, posterior -- people overcame the greater people while it attains the grace of divine favour, from which Israel had been divorced.[89]

There is not much in this statement that has not been mentioned in other writers since Paul. But Tertullian is explicit in linking Israel's fall from divine favor with her sins.[90] The assertion that Israel has been divorced from grace([gratia] a qua Israel est repudiatus) is very forceful, and the theme of the older people (Israel) serving the younger (Christian) people was to be a recurring theme in patristic writings.[91]

We find something new in Tertullian's reflections on the blessings given to Jacob and Esau respectively:

> When Isaac blesses his son Jacob with the words, God give to thee of the dew of heaven and of the fatness of the earth [Gen 27:28], are not these indications of both kinds of bounty [i.e. of heavenly and earthly blessings]? In fact one must here take note of the structure of the blessing itself. For in respect of Jacob, who is the type of

> God's later and more honourable people, that is, of ourselves, the first promise is of the dew of heaven, the second of the fatness of the earth. For we ourselves are first invited to heavenly [blessings] when we are rent away from the world, and so it appears that we are also to obtain earthly ones. Also your own Gospel has, Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and these things shall be added unto you [Luke 12:31]. But to Esau he promises an earthly blessing, and appends a heavenly one, when he says, Thy habitation shall be from the fatness of the earth and from the dew of heaven [Gen 27:39]. For the Jew's covenant is in Esau, as they are the sons prior by birth but inferior in affection, and having begun with earthly benefits through the law, is afterwards by an act of faith led to heavenly things through the Gospel.[92]

Here again we have an explicit identification of Jacob with the Christians and of Esau with the Jews. It is interesting to notice how Tertullian focuses on the actual wording of the blessings in order to extract from them his theological lesson. The "dew of heaven" which Jacob hears of first represents the heavenly or spiritual gifts which the Christians enjoy and to which material blessings, the "fatness of the earth," are added. Esau-Israel first hears of the blessings of the earth, and only afterwards of the gifts of heaven. This, explains Tertullian, means that the Jews first received the (lesser) benefit of the Law, and only later did those of them who believed in the Gospel receive heavenly blessings. We may notice here how Tertullian combines attention to the literary structure of the text with an allegorical interpretation of it.[93]

Tertullian continues the passage which we have just quoted above with some comments on the story of Jacob's ladder (Gen 28:

12-22). For him the ladder symbolizes "that road to heaven, by which some arrive there, but from which others fall away," and he who appeared above the ladder was "Christ the Lord, who is the temple of God and also the gate, for by him we enter heaven."[94] The symbolism of the ladder was to have an important place in Christian spiritual and mystical writings,[95] and the idea that it was Christ who appeared at the top of the ladder -- an idea we have already encountered in Justin[96] -- also became common in patristic writings. A similar idea occurs elsewhere in Tertullian where he states that when Jacob said "I have seen God face to face" he was not referring to the Father, the invisible God, but to the Son, the visible God.[97]

Tertullian's ingenuity in discovering typological indications in the life of Jacob is indicated by his finding in the Patriarch's act of blessing his grandsons a symbol of the Cross. In giving this blessing (cf. Gen 48:14) Jacob stood

> . . . with his hands laid upon them and interchanged, and indeed so transversely slanted one over the other, that, by delineating Christ, they even portended the future benediction into Christ.[98]

This particular piece of typological interpretation is not wildly extravagant since Jacob's crossed arms can be seen to form the first letter of χριστος while at the same time forming a Cross, the symbol of Christ's salvific activity.

RABBINIC REACTION

Tertullian's claims for the Church represented by Jacob

would certainly provoke counter statements from the Rabbis, and the rabbinic texts which we quoted or referred to in our comments on Pseudo-Barnabas[99] could certainly be seen as rejecting the claims made by Tertullian for the Christian community. M. Simon[100] draws attention to a text in the Jerusalem Talmud which would seem to be particularly appropriate as a response to Tertullian's statement that Esau represented the Jews while Jacob represented the Christians.

> Rabbi Aha says in the name of R. Huna: Esau the wicked will put on his tallith and will sit among the just in Paradise in the time to come. And the Holy One, blessed by He, will root him out from there, and cast him out.[101]

R. Aha lived in the first half of the fourth century, but the saying here attributed to him, or at least the idea contained in it may be much older. In any case it represents a rabbinic reaction to the kind of claim we have seen in Tertullian. Since in the Talmud Esau frequently represents Rome, R. Huna is in effect saying that Rome, now Christian, is claiming the rights and privileges of Israel and its cult which are symbolized by the tallith, but that these claims are worthless and rejected by God himself.

Tertullian's assertion that the Jews were rejected because of their sins was implicitly countered by a statement like the following which assures the Israelites that God is always ready to blot out their sins: "Happy are ye, O Israel, before whom do ye cleanse yourselves, and who cleanses you [from your transgressions]? Your Father that is in Heaven."[102]

CHAPTER VII:

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

"Clement may be called the first Christian scholar. He was not only familiar with Holy Scripture and almost the whole Christian literature before him; his citations, taken from more than 360 profane authors, prove that he also had an extensive knowledge of the philosophical and classical literature based on independent study, though much of his material was taken from learned manuals and florilegia."[103] Although born at Athens, most probably into a pagan family, Clement moved to Alexandria sometime about the year 180 where he became head of the catechetical school. Forced to leave Alexandria in time of persecution, he seems to have died in Antioch not later than the year 215.

Clement began at Alexandria the task of presenting the Christian faith in a scientific manner, and of bringing that faith into touch with Greek philosophy. His approach to the Scriptures was openly Philonic. Although he very rarely mentions Philo by name, he frequently uses his writings, sometimes copying directly, and very often adopting his allegorical interpretation of individual Biblical passages.[104] As J. N. S. Alexander notes,[105] Clement accused the heretics of "not looking to the sense but making use of the mere diction" of Scripture, but proceeded to indulge in the same abuse himself.

JACOB

In Clement's references to Jacob he certainly paid more

attention to the diction than to the literal meaning of the Genesis account of the Patriarch's life. Like several writers before him Clement taught that it was the Word, or Christ, who appeared to Jacob in the various theophanies which the Patriarch enjoyed. But for Clement Christ appeared as παιδαγογος,[106] as one who educated or trained Jacob in virtue. The following passage is a typical illustration of Clement's approach to the Jacob story and it gives us an insight into the way in which he brought Philonic and Greek ideas to bear on the character of Jacob:

> He[107] manifests Himself plainly as the Educator of Jacob, too. For example, He said to him: "I will be with you and protect you. . . [Gen 28:15]. He is also said to have wrestled with him: "Jacob remained behind, all alone. Someone wrestled with him," that is, the Educator, "until the break of dawn" [Gen 32:25]. This is the Man who leads and who carries, He who wrestled with Jacob and anointed him for his toil as an athlete. But because the Word was not only the wrestling Master of Jacob, but also the Educator of all mankind, when Jacob asked," as Scripture says, "What is your name?" He answered: "Why do you ask my name?"[Gen 32:30]; He was saving His name for His new people, the little ones. The Lord God still remained without a name, since He had not yet become man. However, "Jacob named the place Phanuel, saying: I have seen a heavenly being face to face, yet my life has been saved" [Gen 32:31]. The face of God is the Word, for God is revealed by Him and made known. Jacob also received the name Israel from the time that he had seen the Lord [Gen 32:29]. It was God the Word, the Educator, who said to him on another occasion: "Do not fear to go down to Egypt" [Gen 46:3]. See how the Educator follows a just man, anoints the athlete, and teaches him how to overcome the adversary.[108]

This passage shows immediately that Clement, like Justin,[109] and other Fathers of the first three centuries, regarded the

Old Testament theophanies as revelations of the Word. Furthermore, the Word is here portrayed primarily as a παιδαγογος, as one who supervises moral training and character formation. Jacob is depicted as an "athlete," as one who is continually training and striving for moral perfection.

The phrase rendered above as "the Man who leads and who carries" is a direct translation of the Greek,[110] but it has little meaning in English. The French translation by M. Harl[111] conveys Clement's idea more clearly: "C'était lui, l'homme qui combattait, qui luttait à ses côtés." This Man, the Educator, who struggled with Jacob in order to train or exercise him also "anointed him." The verb here used[112] is frequently used in the sense of anointing or oiling for gymnastic contests. And in fact Jacob is presented precisely as an athlete or exerciser,[113] a term that is often applied to him by Philo.[114] Philo, following Greek philosophical ideas, distinguished three ways by which one can acquire virtue and knowledge of God: by learning, by natural gifts, and by practice. These three methods of advancing in knowledge and virtue Philo found exemplified in Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob respectively.[115] Clement adopts these ideas of Philo,[116] so that in the passage above he can refer to Jacob as ασκετες, exerciser or athlete, as one who trains and strives to acquire perfection. The translation above ("anointed him for his toil as an athlete") fails to convey an idea that is explicit in Clement's original, namely, that Jacob was prepared by the Educator to struggle against the Evil One (or against Evil).[117] Jacob thus becomes a model for all those who

must continually struggle against evil in order to advance in virtue, and who are supported by the Word in their efforts. Clement actually goes on to state explicitly that the Logos who trained Jacob for his struggle is the trainer of all mankind.

Clement explains the Word's refusal to reveal His name to Jacob by saying that the strange wrestler "was saving His new name for His new people, the little ones." Implicitly Clement here joins those (e.g. Pseudo-Barnabas and Justin, as we have seen) who identified those who bear Christ's name with the new people, the little ones, who have been won for God. Only when the Lord God would become man would he receive a new personal name.[118] Explaining the name "Peniel" or "Face of God" which Jacob gave to the place of the theophany, Clement clearly identifies the "Man" who had struggled with the Patriarch by observing that "the face of God is the Word, for God is revealed by Him and made known."[119] This comment expresses what Christian theology came to regard as the revealing function of the Word, or as Christ's role of making God known to the world.

Clement's explanation of Jacob's new name Israel (cf. Gen 32:28) is directly borrowed from Philo,[120] and is repeated several times in Clement's writings.[121] This explanation is based on a false etymology which understands the word Israel to derive from איש ראה אל.[122]

Having recalled how God, the Word, the Pedagogue, encouraged Jacob to set out for Egypt (cf. Gen 46:3), Clement ends the passage we are examining with the remark that the Pedagogue

always accompanies the just Jacob, trains him for his exercise in virtue "and teaches him how to overcome his adversary." The verb translated as "overcome"[123] literally means "supplant" and is obviously inspired by Gen 27:36 where Jacob is said to have "supplanted"[124] his brother. Stählin retains the biblical flavor of Clement's comments when he translates the phrase as follows: ". . . indem er ihn lehrt, den Gegner an der Ferse zu packen." Here then the verb "supplant," which in the Genesis story had a negative connotation, is given a very favorable meaning, in that Jacob, and everyone like him who strives for virtue, must be always striving to "supplant" everything that is hostile to progress in virtue. The same idea occurs elsewhere in Clement,[125] and it ultimately goes back to Philo.[126]

In this whole passage, then, we see how very closely Clement follows Philo. We see how his allegorical interpretation led Clement to ignore almost completely the literal meaning of the text. We see Jacob portrayed as the , as the "Exerciser," who patiently strives to acquire virtue. But in his struggle Jacob experienced the presence of the Word who trained him for his battle against evil. Thus Jacob becomes the model for the person who is striving to make progress on the road to perfection, and the ideal of the Christian who is supported by Christ in his efforts to overcome evil.

THE SONS OF JACOB

Clement introduces a curious distinction between "the seed of Abraham" and the "sons of Jacob." In the Stromata we read:

> But in the case of the Gnostic, after that which is reckoned perfection in others, his righteousness advances to activity in well-doing. And in whomsoever the increased force of righteousness advances to the doing of good, in his case perfection abides in the fixed habit of well-doing after the likeness of God. For those who are the seed of Abraham, and besides servants of God, are "the called;" and the sons of Jacob are the elect -- they who have tripped up (πτερνίσαντες) the energy of wickedness.[127]

The term "Gnostic" here has no heretical connotation, but simply refers to the believer who has acquired true "gnosis" or a higher and more profound Christian knowledge that goes beyond the ordinary catechesis and who strives for a higher standard of righteousness in his life. The idea that a distinction exists between these more advanced Christians and others who have made less progress in knowledge and virtue occurs in other passages in Clement's writings also.[128] In the above passage, then, Clement seems to regard the average Christians, who are indeed servants of God and the called, as the "seed of Abraham," while he calls the elect, the "gnostics" who are advanced in knowledge and good living, "the sons of Jacob." It seems to me that this idea may stem from Clement's vision of Jacob as "the Exerciser," the one who is always making progress in truth and virtue, and who is therefore a model for the "gnostic" who has set his sights on higher goals. Clement's terminology, however, his choice of the words "the called" and "the elect" (or "the chosen"), was inspired by the words of Jesus.[129] In the final words of the passage just quoted ("they who have tripped up the energy of wickedness") the verb used (πτερνιζειν, "to supplant") is the same as that employed in Paeda-

gogus I,56-57, which we considered above.[130] Just as Jacob "supplanted" his older brother, so must "the sons of Jacob" "supplant" every force of wickedness.

JACOB: MODEL OF MODERATION

In Book II of Paedagogus, where Clement lays down many practical norms for moderate living, we come upon a passage where the author reminds his readers of the need for temperance in their sleeping habits and for frugality in their choice of bedding. Having referred to the unpretentious couch of Odysseus, Clement goes on to say:

> But what further example do I need, when Jacob slept on the ground with a stone for his pillow [cf. Gen 28:11]. It was then that he was accounted worthy of beholding a vision beyond the power of man.[131]

By stating that the Patriarch was accounted worthy of the vision of God as a result of having slept in such an austere fashion, Clement is declaring that anyone who wishes to attain the vision of God must live moderately and avoid unnecessary comfort even in sleeping. Once again it must be remarked that Clement is here borrowing from Philo who had written:

> Jacob had a stone for a pillow [Gen 28:11]. The literal narrative inculcates toil and endurance. For he does not deem it worthy of one whose heart is set upon virtue to live sumptuously.[132]

JACOB'S WIVES

Like Justin and many other writers,[133] Clement interpreted the story of Jacob's several wives (cf. Gen 29:21-30) allegori-

cally. But Clement's interpretation takes him in quite a different direction, for, not surprisingly, he adopts a Philonic approach to the text. Having interpreted the story of Abraham's marriages to Sarah and Hagar, and having mentioned that Isaac had only one wife, Clement goes on to say:

> And Jacob is said to have consorted with several,[134] his name being "Exerciser." And exercises are engaged in by means of many and various dogmas. Whence, also, he who is really "endowed with the power of seeing God" is called Israel, having much experience and being fit for exercise.[135]

This text, which on first reading sounds somewhat incoherent, becomes clear in the light of some Philonic texts. Philo, for example, speaks of the Practicer or Exerciser who continually exercises his mind with many different truths which are symbolized by several wives.[136] In another passage Philo speaks of Jacob as

> . . . the man of Practice who receives for his special reward the vision of God. For having been in touch with every side of human life and in no half-hearted familiarity with them all, and having shirked no toil or danger if thereby he might descry the truth, a quest well worthy of such love. . . .[137]

In both Philo and Clement, then, Jacob is portrayed as the "Exerciser," who eagerly examines all truths and ideas, which are symbolized by wives, in order to reach the vision of God.

Although Clement says that Jacob (like Abraham and Isaac) "gave many clear utterances respecting present and future things"[138] he does not discover in Jacob or in his words or deeds foreshadowings of Christ or of the Church. Neither does he see the Church as the new Jacob-Israel, the new people of God. In this

he differed greatly from his predecessors and from many of his successors, including his most illustrious pupil, Origen. Neither does Clement's work show any resemblance to the midrashic type of interpretation which we normally find in rabbinic texts, since his contact with Judaism seems to have been only with its Alexandrian version as represented by Philo.

CHAPTER VIII:

EPHREM THE SYRIAN

Having so far studied the works of Fathers who wrote either in Latin or in Greek, we now turn to Ephrem, whose mother tongue was Syriac, and whose works, together with those of Aphrahat, his contemporary, rank among the classics of that language. Born in 306 in Nisibis in Mesopotamia, his education was fostered by the Bishop of that city. After the occupation of Nisibis by the Persians in 363, Ephrem moved to Edessa, where for some time he was active as a preacher. Later he became a hermit in the mountains near Edessa where he continued his literary activity. He died in 373.[139]

Christianity in Babylonia began with the conversion of Jews, and the writings of Ephrem contain many echoes of Jewish tradition, and especially of Jewish biblical interpretation. Jewish exegesis flourished in Mesopotamia at about the time of Ephrem; the schools of Nehardea (destroyed 259), Pumbedita, and Sura formed centers of intense Jewish scholarly activity. At about the same time Theodore of Mopsuestia and St. John Chrysostom, writing in Greek, gave glory to Antioch as a center of Christian biblical study. The Antiochene writers reacted against the exaggerated allegorism of Origen that had so much influenced Christian biblical scholarship. Ephrem, and his older contemporary Aphrahat, wrote at approximately the same time, taking up what can be called a mediating position between the literalism of the Antiochenes and the typo-

logy of the Alexandrians.

Since Ephrem knew little Greek it seems that he was not influenced by the earlier Antiochene writers. It is also true that he knew little if any Hebrew, so that although he incorporated many Jewish haggadoth into his writings, it cannot be proved that he borrowed directly from Jewish masters. It seems likely that many Jewish traditions that appear in his works formed part of the Church tradition which he had made his own, or had become part of the Syrian Church's understanding of Scripture.[140]

COMMENTARY ON THE JACOB STORY

Unlike the Fathers we have considered so far, Ephrem has left us a commentary on Genesis,[141] or rather what we might call a semi-continuous commentary, since he does not give an exegesis of every verse in a given passage, but only of selected verses which he regarded as important or as requiring comment. Ephrem is rather sparing in his comments on the Jacob-Esau story, but his remarks do give us a good insight into his understanding and application of the narrative.

When the biblical narrative states that Rebekah conceived when Isaac prayed on her behalf (cf. Gen 25:21), Ephrem adds the remark that she conceived after twenty years (after her marriage to Isaac).[142] This conclusion can, of course, be drawn from the data given in Gen 25:20-26. But it is interesting to note that like Ephrem, a Jewish commentator draws the reader's attention to the exact number of years between

Rebekah's marriage and the birth of her first child.[143]

The words "two peoples are in your womb" (Gen 25:23) drew from Ephrem only the simple comment: "the peoples are the Edomites and the Hebrews."[144] Here one notices immediately that Ephrem makes no mention of the allegorical interpretation of this verse which was current since Pseudo-Barnabas and which saw in Jacob and Esau types of the Church and of Israel, respectively. Here was an opportunity for Ephrem to introduce a polemical note into his exegesis, but he avoided the temptation.

Commenting on the words "she went to inquire of the Lord" (v. 22), Ephrem says: "When treating above of Melchizedek we said to whom she went to consult: she went to consult Melchizedek."[145] Now, in commenting on the Melchizedek episode (Gen 14:18-20), Ephrem had identified Melchizedek with Shem, and said that he lived until the time of Jacob and Esau, and that Rebekah had gone to consult him.[146] In Bereshit Rabbah[147] we read that Rebekah went to the college of Shem and Eber to consult about the strange struggle that was taking place in her womb.[148] We also find Melchizedek identified with Shem by other Jewish teachers.[149] It seems then that Ephrem is echoing a Jewish tradition when he teaches that Rebekah went to consult Melchizedek. Where he got that tradition, whether from Jewish scholars or from Jewish tradition that had become current in the Church, we cannot say.

Ephrem explains Jacob's eagerness to acquire Esau's birthright (cf. Gen 25:29-34) by stating that "Jacob saw that Esau despised his birthright and he studiously planned to take it

from him, relying on God who had said, 'The elder shall serve the younger' (Gen 25:23)."[150] Thus it is shown that Jacob is not to be condemned for his eagerness to take the birthright that belonged to Esau. Since Esau despised his rights Jacob was not harming him by taking them. Furthermore, it was God's intention that Jacob should have the birthright, so that in acquiring it, Jacob was only cooperating in the divine plan. The Rabbis too cleared Jacob of guilt in this matter and explained that in striving to get the birthright he was acting from very high motives. Thus, for example, the midrash explains that Jacob wished to acquire the right of the firstborn simply because Esau was unworthy to offer sacrifice, a duty which then fell to the eldest son.[151]

If Ephrem defends the nobility of Jacob, he does not spare Esau. Having quoted Gen 25:33-34 which tell us that Esau swore to Jacob and sold him his birthright and that they then ate, Ephrem adds:

> . . . And that Scripture might show that Esau did not sell his birthright because of hunger it said: After he ate "Esau got up and went away, despising his birthright." Therefore, it was by no means because of hunger that he sold them [his rights as firstborn]. Rather, it was because he regarded them as valueless, and as nothing, and [therefore] he sold them for nothing."[152]

Here we might add that Ephrem differs on this point from Aphrahat who said that it was because of gluttony and avarice that Esau lost his birthright,[153] and from the Jewish midrash which portrayed Esau as asking Jacob to pour the pottage into his mouth so that he could gulp down plenty of food quickly.[154]

In any case Ephrem is making the point that Esau was a crass individual who had no appreciation for his birthright, and at the same time he is showing that Jacob did not act unjustly in taking from him the rights he despised.

The Syrian Father was also interested in saving Rebekah's reputation, for he shows that her scheme to get the birthright for Jacob was no mean trick, but a positive action "to ensure that the rights of the firstborn would not go to Esau against the word of God,"[155] who had promised that the older would serve the younger (cf. Gen 25:23).

In explaining the statement that "Esau lifted up his voice and wept" (Gen 27:38) on hearing that his father had blessed Jacob, Ephrem says:

> . . . This [he did] not because he had lost spiritual blessings but because he was deprived of the good fruits of the blessed earth; nor was it because from then on he could not be justified, but because he was not able to subjugate his brothers; nor was it because he would not inherit immortal life, but because the land of Canaan would not be his portion.[156]

Esau is here presented as a crass materialist who has no sense of values. He has no saving grace, so that in spite of the fact that he was so abominably deceived by his mother and his brother, he does not win our sympathy. We may recall that the Rabbis too consistently portrayed Esau in a bad light and attributed all kinds of wickedness to him.[157]

Commenting on the account of Jacob's arrival in Bethel (Gen 28:10-11), Ephrem says that "the sun set and [Jacob] spent the night there; and instead of the pillows which were spread

in his mother's tent he placed a stone as bolsters, sighing, and he slept. . . ."[158] We noticed earlier that Clement of Alexandria, borrowing from Philo,[159] took Jacob's austere bedding arrangements as a model of moderation. The ascetic Ephrem does not follow up this line of thought, but is satisfied to draw attention to Jacob's distress over the uncomfortable situation in which he finds himself. A later Syrian writer[160] refers to the scene at Bethel in the same tone as Ephrem when he writes: "Humbly, like a poor man, Jacob slept."[161]

Ephrem teaches that in the angels who descended and ascended on the ladder at Bethel (cf. Gen 28:12),

> . . . [God] clearly revealed to him [Jacob] how great was the solicitude which he had for him. For not only did God look after him while he was awake, but, behold, even in his sleep angels protected him, and they ascend and descend to defend him. The secret care which God had for him he clearly showed to him by means of the vision of the ladder. For he who in his dream believed that he slept in a region far from God, when he awoke and saw how great his solicitude was for him in the desert, he said "It is as if I slept in the house of God and lay before the gate of heaven."[162]

In order to show that this is the real meaning of the text, Ephrem goes on to say:

> . . . And that [God] might show that they [the angels] descended and ascended to protect him he said: "Behold I am with you to protect you. . . ." Gen 28:15 .[163]

Here, then, we see the exegete Ephrem at work, seeking the original meaning of the text and making its message explicit.

In his very next comment, however, Ephrem leaves the literal meaning of the verse and seeks in it a symbolic meaning.

Without actually quoting the text which tells how Jacob erected a pillar and poured oil on it (cf. Gen 28:18), Ephrem says:

> However, the oil which he poured upon the pillar, either he had it with him or he brought it from the town. However, in the oil which he poured on the stone he symbolized the mystery of Christ who was foreshadowed in it.[164]

Obviously Ephrem asked himself the question "Where did Jacob get oil in that isolated spot?" and he came up with a very practical answer.[165] If in the passage just quoted Ephrem saw in the oil which Jacob poured on the stone a symbol of the mystery of Christ, he could, in another work, identify the stone itself with Christ who was enclosed by a stone in the tomb (cf. Mt 27:6).[166] Returning to the commentary on Genesis we find that in his remarks on Gen 28:19-22 which (in Ephrem's version) tells that Jacob made a vow on the stone saying that if God brought him back safely, the stone would be for him the house of God and he would offer tithes to God, Ephrem says: "Again in the stone the mystery of the Church was signified through which the vows and offerings of all nations were to come."[167] A somewhat similar idea occurs in a hymn where Ephrem writes that Jacob anointed the stone that by this anointing he might consecrate it to God as a type of your bodies (i.e. of Christians) which are sanctified with oil to become temples of God.[168] It is clear that the symbolism of the stone which Jacob erected and the oil which he poured on it was particularly meaningful for Ephrem and that he liked to dwell on the idea that they represent Christ, the Church, and the individual members of the believing community that make up the Church. We may note

that Aphrahat too was impressed by the symbolism of the stone and the oil which, he believed, foreshadowed Christ, the Church, and several aspects of the Christian's life.[169]

Having remarked how providentially God had led Jacob to the shepherdess Rachel at the well (cf. Gen 29:1-3), Ephrem goes on to say that

> . . . [Jacob] performed a mighty deed in her presence when, through the Son who was hidden in him, he rolled the stone which could scarcely be moved by many. And after he had espoused her to God by a miracle he [Jacob] espoused to him [self] with a kiss.[170]

But the idea that Christ was active in the Patriarch as Ephrem states in the passage just quoted is new to us. However, Aphrahat does say that it was in the strength of Christ, "the Shepherd who was hidden in his loins," that Jacob moved the stone,[172] and it is worth noting that only these two authors seem to have this idea. It has been remarked that it is characteristic of Ephrem to show that the Lord intervened in a miraculous way in the lives of the Patriarchs to show his special concern for them and to guide their activity.[173] In the case of Jacob's encounter with Rachel the miraculous feat of moving the huge stone was, according to Ephrem, taken by the Patriarch as a sign that this was the girl who was destined by God to be his wife. The Rabbis, too, we may note, liked to represent God as intervening in the lives of the Patriarchs. We find in the case of Jacob, for example, that God miraculously caused the sun to set prematurely so that he could speak in privacy with the Patriarch.[174]

We may note here that in another context Ephrem says that

the fact that Jacob was espoused to Rachel near the waters of a well was "a type of Our Lord who espoused his Church at the waters of the Jordan."[175] In view of the fact that the Rabbis found a rich symbolism in the well in question,[176] one is perhaps somewhat surprised to find that Ephrem does not dwell at any length on the Christian symbols that he might have discovered in it.

Like Justin and Clement[177] and other writers, Ephrem, who while acknowledging the dignity and goodness of marriage regarded celibacy as the ideal for the Christian,[178] was somewhat troubled by the fact that Jacob had several wives. However, the ascetic Father does not condemn Jacob but rather explains the situation as follows:

> Lest Leah remain in the house of the idolator Laban, and the descendants of the righteous one [Jacob] embrace idolatry there, and lest he deceive his wife Rachel -- for a woman who is espoused to a man is his wife -- he took the latter to wife lest he deal faithlessly with her, and the former lest he sin against her and her children. But if [Laban] had not denied him Rachel, and if he had said "work with me seven years for Leah," he would not have agreed to work seven days for her, not however because she was deformed, but because he did not wish to become the husband of two wives.[179]

Here, then, the celibate Ephrem explains that the polygamist Jacob is above censure, since he had married one wife to save her from idolatry, and he had taken the other lest he be guilty of injustice toward her. However, Ephrem makes it clear that it was only with great reluctance and because there was no other option that Jacob married the two sisters. Nevertheless, Ephrem's problems with Jacob's marital situation were not

yet solved, since the Patriarch had children by his wives' two maids. Ephrem explains this by saying that it was only with great reluctance, and in order to pacify his wife who was daily asking him for children, that he agree to have Bilhah to wife (cf. Gen 30:1-4).[180] Similarly, it was only to remove Leah's distress, and to avoid bickering between her and Rachel that the Patriarch took Zilpah to wife (cf. Gen 30:9).[181] Furthermore, the fact that God rewarded Leah with children because she had given Zilpah to her husband (cf. Gen 30:17-18) was, says Ephrem, a sign that God approved of his marriage to the latter.[182]

On one occasion, however, Ephrem allows himself to make a comment about Jacob's marital experience that betrays the author's esteem for celibacy. Commenting on the words "Reuben, you are my first-born" (Gen 49:2), Ephrem says: "[This] shows that until the day he married Leah, for eighty-four years, he persevered in virginity."[183]

Ephrem's moral sensitivity shows itself again when he deals with the way Jacob grew rich in Laban's territory (cf. Gen 30:25-43). Lest one might accuse Jacob of deceit and underhand dealing Ephrem says:

> God, who saw Laban defrauding of his wages to him to whom he had sworn "I will go down with you and bring you back" [cf. 28:15], enriched Jacob from the flocks of Laban without in any way injuring Laban.[184]

In this one comment Ephrem shows God's provident care for his chosen one, his justice even toward the crooked Laban, and the integrity of Jacob who was enriched simply because he was bless-

ed by God.

Again Ephrem saw that Rachel's stealing of her father's idols and Jacob's tacit approval of her theft raise problems for the morally sensitive. But Ephrem assures us that

> . . . Jacob rightly loved Rachel, who loved his God and despised her father's idols, not indeed because she stole them: she despised them as useless things, and made of them a menstruant's seat on the day they were sought. As for Laban, he could not consult his gods on the morning after the revelation of God's truth that had been made to him in the evening [cf. Gen 31:24].[185]

Thus Ephrem saves Rachel from the accusation of base theft and shows that in taking her father's idols she was showing her hatred of idolatry and depriving her father of the gods that occasioned his pagan worship. It is interesting to note that the Rabbis took a very similar view of Rachel's theft, stating that Rachel's intention in stealing the gods was to save her father from his idolatrous ways.[186]

ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATIONS

In our examination of Ephrem's treatment of the Jacob story we have seen that he generally directs his attention to the literal meaning of the text. But he can also make discreet use of typology, especially in his hymns where he introduces biblical texts to support his particular argument, and where he allows the original meaning to fade into the background. Even in his exegesis Ephrem can on occasion allow his imagination rather than his critical sense to be his guide.

This happens, for example, in his commentary on Gen 48:9-14.

This passage tells how Jacob crossed his hands and blessed Ephraim the younger of his grandchildren instead of the older Manasseh, thus transferring the rights of the firstborn from Manasseh to Ephraim. In his comment on this text Ephrem says:

> Thus too the Cross is clearly symbolized, so that the mystery of him through whom Israel went out might be forefigured, like Manasseh the firstborn, while the nations grew great like Ephraim the younger.[187]

This particular piece of symbolic interpretation, which we already found in Tertullian,[188] occurs again in Ephrem's Hymn on Virginity[189] where the author says explicitly that Ephraim is a type of the Gentiles who have now become God's firstborn.

We saw above[190] that Justin saw in the rods erected by Jacob at the watering-places of Laban's flocks (cf. Gen 30:37-42) a symbol of the Cross. This symbolism also appears in Ephrem who writes in the Hymn on the Epiphany:

> In the rods figures are expressed and in the sheep types.
> In the rods the Cross is prefigured, and in the sheep, souls.
> The wood of Jacob was a symbol of the wood of the Cross,
> And his flock was a symbol of our flock.[191]

The idea that the rods erected by Jacob were a sign or foreshadowing of the Cross occurs again, but implicitly, in a later passage of the same hymn[192] and in the Commentary on the Diatessaron.[193]

In another hymn Ephrem sees in the flock which Jacob led back to the homeland he had left many years before (cf. Gen 21:31) a symbol of the Christians who must patiently make their way to the home of their heavenly Father and who must not allow them-

selves to be distracted or tempted on the way:

> Conduisant son troupeau
> Jacob le mena jusqu'au toit paternel;
> Symbole pour qui jugent,
> Parabole pour qui savent,
> Tel est ce cheminement vers le toit paternel;
> Revenons, nous aussi, au toit de notre Père,
> Sans nous laisser, ô frères,
> Séduire par l'amour
> De la terre qui passe.[194]

From our examination of the passages in which Ephrem comments on the Jacob story or in which he takes up themes from that story, we see that he can combine a literal interpretation of the biblical text with an imaginative approach to it which allows him to express his thought symbolically rather than in the type of logical interpretation that characterizes western writers. Like all the Fathers he was convinced of the harmony that exists between the Old Testament and the New, so that he could discover in the Hebrew Bible many symbols of Christ and the Church.

We have seen several points of contact between Ephrem's commentary and Jewish midrashic themes, but we cannot say that the Syrian Father borrowed from Hebrew teachers. In his commentary on the Jacob-Esau passage Ephrem shows no animosity towards the Jews and does not polemicize against them. In his hymns, as we saw, he does occasionally use themes from the Jacob story to make the point that the Christians have replaced Israel as God's chosen people.

CHAPTER IX:

CONCLUSION

As far back as 1955 R. Loewe, addressing the Second International Conference of Patristic Studies at Oxford, welcomed the decision of those arranging the conference to establish a section specifically concerned with Jewish matters, and he expressed the conviction that rabbinic and patristic studies can prove mutually fertilizing in the field of biblical exegesis.[195] I have for some time shared Loewe's conviction, and my work in this paper has confirmed my view that rabbinic and patristic methods of exegesis are not as totally different as one might think. Reading the patristic texts with an eye out for possible relations between a given Church Father and Jewish sources is a somewhat different experience from reading the Fathers in order to get to know a particular writer's stance on some point of Christian theology, which is the way in which I have often read the Fathers. On the other hand reading Jewish texts with an awareness that the authors may have been addressing themselves to particular Christian traditions adds a new dimension to rabbinic statements. With regard to the Jacob-Esau story the present study has shown me how Jacob-Israel gradually took on a symbolic meaning in Christian literature, and has given me an insight into some rabbinic texts which, as I noted, seem to reject that symbolism and all it entailed.

As we moved along in our study from St. Paul and St. Clement of Rome, who drew no conclusions from the Jacob-Esau story

about the rejection of Israel, we came to Pseudo-Barnabas, who clearly asserted that the Church, symbolized by Jacob, had acquired the rights and privileges of Israel that was represented by Esau. This interpretation of the biblical text which was to become common in the Church inevitably provoked a response from the Jewish side, and we mentioned some texts which may be part of that response. Justin's long Dialogue with Trypho gave him ample opportunity to develop a typological interpretation of the Jacob-Esau theme, an interpretation that provided him with many proofs that the Church is "the spiritual Israel." Tertullian identified the Christians as the descendants of Jacob, and the Jews as the children of Esau, and we were able to draw attention to rabbinic texts that possibly represent reactions to his assertions. Clement of Alexandria did not take up the idea that Jacob-Israel represents the Church, but instead focused on Jacob as a model for the individual who strives to attain moral perfection. We noticed that Ephrem could combine a literal interpretation of the biblical narrative with occasional typological applications of the Jacob theme. Of all the writers we have discussed, he most frequently echoes Jewish haggadic traditions and shows a familiarity with Jewish exegesis of the Jacob story.

From the time of Pseudo-Barnabas onwards, Jacob gradually became for Christians a symbol of the new people of God, a type of the younger people who replaced the older Israel as the privileged people of God. This Christian claim drew a sharp rejoinder from the Rabbis, who went on to say that not Jacob, but

Esau, was the representative of Rome and of the Church. Thus Jacob and Esau became symbols for both Jews and Christians, but symbols that received contradictory interpretations from the spokesmen of the two religions.

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1. See below, p. 30, no. 91.

2. Cf. G. D. Cohen, "Esau as Symbol in Early Medieval Thought," in Jewish Medieval and Renaissance Studies, ed. A. Altman (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), pp. 19-48.

3. At a later time Tertullian will state that Israel owed all its privileges and blessings to the justice and faith of the Patriarchs; cf. Apologeticum 21,4.

4. Cf. Franz Mussner, Traktat über die Juden (Munich, 1979), pp. 45-48.

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6. Or "it;" the text that follows is a conflation of several Old Testament passages: Deut 4:34; 14:2; Num 18:27; Ez 48:12.

7. "The Letter of Clement to the Corinthians," in The Fathers of the Church, trans. F. X. Glimm (Washington, 1947), vol. I, chap. 29,1-3, pp. 32-33.

A. Jaubert, in her translation of this text (Clément de Rome: Introduction, texte, traduction, notes et index [Paris, 1971], [Sources chrétiennes no. 167], p. 149) takes the words "holy of holies" to refer to the new people, the Christians that arose from Israel. It seems more likely, however, that Clement had in mind the Messiah who came from the Jewish people; cf. the quotation from chap. 31 (see p. 11 below) where the Lord Jesus according to the flesh is said to descend from Jacob.

8. J. Alvares, Studia Patristica 13 (1975), p. 70.

9. Epistle to the Corinthians 4,8; Glimm, p. 12.

10. Cf. A. Jaubert, op. cit., p. 107.

11. Aphrahat, Demonstration 16,1, in Patrologia Syriaca, ed. P. Graffin (Paris, 1894), vol. I,i, pp. 759-760.

12. μετα ταπεινοφροσυνης - cf. ταπείνωσις , Gen 31:42.

13. Epistle to the Corinthians, 31,4 - 32,2; Glimm, p. 34.

14. Cf. E. Mihaly, "A Rabbinic Defence of the Election of Israel," in Hebrew Union College Annual 35 (1964), pp. 103-135, especially pp. 111-113; 117-119; 107, no. 8.

15. A. Marmorstein, in Revue des Études Juives 60 (1910) p. 213.

16. Cf. R. A. Kraft, in Journal of Biblical Literature 79 (1960) p. 213.

17. Cf. e.g. R. A. Kraft,"The Epistle of Barnabas: Its Quotations and Their Sources,"(Ph. D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1961) pp. 12-14.

18. "The Letter of Barnabas," in The Fathers of the Church, Vol. I, translated by F. X. Glimm. (Washington, 1947), p. 195.

19. Chap. 14,1-4; Glimm, op. cit., pp. 213-214.

20. Cf. M. Simon, Versus Israel (Paris, 1948), pp. 177-187.

21. Chap. 13,1; Glimm, op. cit. p. 212.

22. Cf. R. A. Kraft, op. cit., pp. 246-250.

23. Idem., in Journal of Theological Studies 13 (1962) pp. 318-320.

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26. A. Marmorstein, op. cit., p. 215.

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28. Marmorstein, op. cit., pp. 215-216.

29. Edition Friedmann, 130b.

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35. Cf. L. W. Barnard, op. cit., pp. 42-52.

36. Ibid., p. 25.

37. A. H. Goldfahn,"Justinus Martyr und die Agada," in Monatschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums 22 (1893), pp. 49-60; 104-115; 145-153; 194-202; 257-269; cf. also S. Krauss, "Jews in the Works of the Church Fathers," in Jewish Quarterly Review 5 (1892), pp. 123-134.

38. W. A. Shotwell, The Biblical Exegesis of Justin Martyr (London, 1965), pp. 71-93.

39. J. Neusner, Aphrahat and Judaism (Leiden, 1971), p. 189, no. 3.

40. Cf. Robert Wilde, The Treatment of the Jews in the Greek Christian Writers of the First Three Centuries (Washington, 1949), Catholic University of America Patristic Studies Vol. 81, p. 104.

41. L. W. Barnard, op. cit., pp. 52-53.

42. Saint Justin Martyr, The Fathers of the Church Vol. VI, translated by T. B. Falls (Washington, 1965), pp. 172-173; see also Dialogue 26 (Falls p. 186); Dialogue 95 (Falls p. 299); Dialogue 96 (Falls p. 299); Dialogue 108 (Falls pp. 315-316); Dialogue 123 (Falls p. 339); Dialogue 133 (Falls p. 354); I Apology 31 (Falls, p. 67); I Apology 36 (Falls p. 73). Other writers also mention the fact that the Synagogue persecuted the Church: cf. e.g. Tertullian, Scorpiace 10,10; Ad Nationes I,14,2; Adversus Marcionem III,23,3; Epistle to Diognetus 5; Epiphanius, Haereses 29,9; Jerome, on Isaiah 52:5; Commentary on Amos, Book I, chap. 2. Jewish tradition too records that the Jews cursed heretics (Christians?), cf. b. Berak. 29a and the twelfth Prayer of the Shemone Esre; see Jewish Quarterly Review 11 (1899) 654; Simon, op. cit., p. 235; Wilde, op. cit., pp. 141-147.

43. Dial. 38 (Falls p. 204).

44. Dial. 134 (Falls p. 356).

45. Sifre to Numbers 69, edition Horowitz, p. 65.

46. Cf. J. Dani lou, A History of Early Christian Doctine, Vol. II: Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture, translated by J. A. Baker (London, 1973), p. 200.

47. Dial. 11 (Falls p. 165).

48. Dial. 125 (Falls p. 343).

49. Dial. 120 (Falls pp. 332-333). In Dial. 135 (Falls pp. 357-358) we find a similar argument ending with the words: "So we must here conclude that there were two seeds of Judah, and two races, as there are two houses of Jacob; the one born of flesh and blood, and the other of faith and the Spirit."

50. Dial. 123 (Falls p. 339).

51. Cf. L. W. Barnard, op. cit., pp. 68-74.

52. Cf. Dial. 29 (Falls p. 191); 55 (Falls pp. 230-231); 112 (Falls pp. 320-322); 113 (Falls p. 322); I Apol. 31,5 (Falls p. 67); cf. J. Daniélou, op. cit., pp. 202-203.

53. Dial. 78 (Falls p. 273).

54. Dial. 140 (Falls p. 363).

55. Dial. 53 (Falls p. 228); 54 (Falls p. 229); 69 (Falls p. 259).

56. Dial. 134 (Falls p. 355).

57. Dial. 100 (Falls p. 303); cf. Dial. 75 (Falls 267); 123 (Falls p. 340); 125 (Falls p. 343); 126 (Falls p. 343); 134 (Falls p. 356).

58. Cf. E. G. Goodenough, op. cit., pp. 171-172.

59. Dial. 123 (Falls p. 340).

60. Cf. E. Mihaly, op. cit., p. 133, no. 55.

61. Dial. 58 (Falls pp. 239-241); 59 (Falls p. 241); 60 (Falls p. 242-243); cf. 126 (Falls pp. 343-344). In Dial. 86 (Falls p. 285) Justin says: "We have shown by the scriptures" that it was not the Father whom Jacob saw on the ladder. We do not know where Justin had already shown this unless it was in the vague reference in Dial. 60 (Falls p. 243). Probably Justin is referring to a passage that has been lost.

62. Dial. 60 (Falls pp. 242-243); cf. 127 (Falls p. 345).

63. Cf. Falls p. 285.

64. Dial. (Falls p.).

65. See below, p. 54.

66. Dial. 125 (Falls p. 343).

67. Dial. 34 (Falls p. 198); 76 (Falls p. 268); 100 (Falls p. 304.

68. Falls p. 285.

69. Cf. R. Murray, Symbols of Church and Kingdom (Cambridge, 1975), pp. 294-297; L. W. Barnard, op. cit., pp. 115-122.

70. Ad Quirinum 1,18; Testimonium 2,16; see also Ephrem, Commentary on Diatessaron 21,21.

71. Dial. 134 (Falls pp. 355-356).

72. Dial. 140 (Falls pp. 362-363); cf. also Dial. 141 (Falls p. 365).

73. Cf. Irenaeus, Adversus Haereses 4,21,2; Origen, Peri Archon 4,2,2; Commodianus, Instructiones 1,39,1; Ephrem, Comm. in Genesis 29:26-27; Augustine, Contra Faustum 22,47-50. These explain that Jacob did not sin in marrying several wives, but they do not see Rachel and Leah as types.

74. B. Pesahim, 119b.

75. Cf. S. Krauss, op. cit., p. 126.

76. Armstrong, op. cit., pp. 49-50.

77. Cf. T. Stylianopoulos, "Justin Martyr and the Mosaic Law," (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Montana, 1975), p. 42.

78. Cf. C. Aziza, Tertullien et le Judaisme (Nice, 1977), pp. 15-43.

79. Ibid., pp. 171-172.

80. De Paenitentia 2,4; Apologeticum 21,4; De Pudicitia 8,7.

81. De Testimonio Animae 5,6; cf. Rom 11:17-24.

82. Apologeticum 19 , 2; De Testimonio Animae 5,6.

83. De Praescriptione Haereses 37,3ff.

84. Ad Uxorem I,2,3.

85. Cf. Apologeticum 20,2; Adversus Marcionem II,26,4; II,27,3 and III passim; cf. T. P. O'Malley, Tertullian and the Bible (Nijmegen-Utrecht, 1967), pp. 123-125; H. Trankle, Q. S. F. Tertulliani Adversus Judaeos, mit Einleitung und Kritischem Kommentar (Wiesbaden, 1964), pp. LXIX-LXXX.

86. Adv. Judaeos 10,14,

87. Ibid.

88. Cf. Armstrong, op. cit., p. 93.

89. Adv. Jud. 1,3-8, translation from The Ante-Nicene Fathers, edited by A. Roberts and J. Donaldson (New York, 1899), pp. 6-7.

90. Cf. Pseudo-Barnabas, above pp. 13-14.

91. See the texts referred to in B. Blumenkranz, Die Judenpredigt Augustins (Basel, 1946), p. 170, no. 26; and M. Simon, op. cit., p. 224, no. 5, to which several other texts could be added, e.g. Origen, Homily XII on Genesis; St. Jerome, Epistula XXXVI, 11,16-17.

92. Adv. Marc. 3,24,8-9; translated by E. Evans (Oxford, 1972), Vol. I, pp. 249-251.

93. Cf. Armstrong, op. cit., p. 133; J. N. S. Alexander notes that Tertullian can be sometimes literal, sometimes wildly fanciful in his interpretation of Scripture, cf. Interpretation 12 (1958), p. 275.

94. Adv. Marc. III,24,9-10.

95. See e.g. R. Murray, op. cit., pp. 45 and 165, no. 10.

96. See above p. 24 no. 62.

97. Adv. Praxean, chap. 14.

98. De. Bapt. 8,2; translation from The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. III, p. 672; Ephrem in his comment on Gen 48:14 has the same symbolic interpretation as Tertullian, and he goes on to identify the elder Manasse with Israel and the younger Ephraim with the Gentiles; cf. Sancti Ephraem Syri in Genesim et in Exodum Commentarii, R.-M. Tonneau (Louvain, 1965), Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, Vol. 153, pp. 93-94.

99. See above, pp. 15-18.

100. Op. cit., pp. 223-224.

101. J. Nedarin 3,8.

102. M. Yoma 8.9; translated by P. Blackmann, Mishnayoth (New York, 1963), Vol. II, p. 312; see also Pesikta Rabbati, edition Friedmann, 146a; translation in W. G. Braude, Pesikta Rabbati (New Haven, 1968), pp. 613f.

103. B. Altaner, Patrology, translated by H. A. Graef (Freiburg, 1958), p. 215.

104. Cf. Der Clemens von Alexandreia, Mahnrede an die Heiden. Der Erzieher (Munich, 1934), Bibliothek der Kirchenväter, II, VII, I, pp. 17; 51-52; translated by O. Stählin. R. P. C. Hanson, Allegory and Event: A Study in the Sources and Significance of Origen's Interpretation of Scripture (London, 1959), p. 117; J. Dani lou, op. cit., pp. 237-255; S. Krauss, op. cit., pp. 134-139.

105. Cf. op. cit., p. 278.

122. Cf. e.g. E. Sachsse, "Die Etymologie und älteste Aussprache des Namens Israel," in Zeitschrift für alttestamentlichen Wissenschaft 34 (1914), pp. 2-3.

123. πτερνιζειν.

124. ἐπτερνικεν.

125. Cf. Strom. VI,60,3, and see above, p. 39.

126. Cf. Leg. Alleg. III,90.

127. Strom. VI,60,3; translation from The Ante-Nicene Fathers Vol. II, p. 494.

128. Cf. Strom. VI,107,2; Paed. III,7,8; Quis Dives Salvetur 36; and note the paradoxical way in which Clement expresses himself in this latter passage.

129. Cf. Mat 22:14.

130. See above, p. 37.

131. Paed. II,78 (Wood, p. 160).

132. De Somniis I,120; translation by F. H. Colson (Loeb Classical Library) Vol. 5, p. 361.

133. See above, pp. 25-26.

134. I.e. with several wives; cf. Harl: "Jacob eut des rapports avec plusieurs femmes."

135. Strom. I,31,4; translation from The Ante-Nicene Fathers Vol. II, p. 306.

136. Cf. De Congre. Quaer. Erud. 34-37;

137. De Praem. et Poen. 36, translation by F. H. Colson (Loeb Classical Library) Vol. VIII, p. 333.

138. Strom. I,135,3.

139. B. Altaner, Patrology, translated by H. C. Graef (Edinburgh-London, 1960), pp. 401-405; S. Hidal, Interpretatio Syriaca. Die Kommentare des Heiligen Ephräms des Syrers zu Genesis und Exodus (Lund, 1974), pp. 3-5.

140. Cf. Hidal, op. cit., pp. 28-36; 134-140; S. Krauss, op. cit., pp. 88-89.

141. Sancti Ephraem Syri in Genesim et in Exodum Commentarii, R.-M. Tonneau (Louvain, 1955 and 1965), Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium) Vol. 152, Tomus 71 (Syriac) and 72 (Latin). We shall refer to these as Tonneau, and the translation will be from the Latin with reference also to the original.

106. The word "Paedagogos," which is the title of one of Clement's most celebrated works, is also a title which he applies to Christ. The Greek word is difficult to render in English, and it is sometimes translated as "the Instructor," or "the Educator;" see Clement of Alexandria, Christ the Educator (New York, 1954), The Fathers of the Church Vol. XXIII, translated by P. Wood, pp. XIV-XV. (I will refer to Clement's work as Paed., and I will follow Wood's translation.)

107. I.e. the Word, cf. Paed. I,55: "For our Educator is the holy God, Jesus, the Word guiding all mankind" (Wood, p. 51).

108. Paed. I,56-57 (Wood p. 52).

109. See above, p. 22 no. 61.

110. ὁ ἄγων καὶ φέρων.

111. Harl, M., & Marrou, H. I., Clément d'Alexandrie: Le Pédagogue. Introduction, notes, et traduction (Paris, 1960), Sources chrétiennes no. 70, p. 213. Stählin's translation (see above, no. 104) is even more expressive: "Die war der Mann, der ihn als Beute mit fortschleppen wollte, der sich mit ihm übte..." p. 254.

112. ἀχεῖφων.

113. ἀσκητης.

114. Cf. e.g. De Ebrietate XX,82; De Migrat. Abrah. 199; De Praem. et Poenis 27 and 36.

115. Cf. De Congr. Quaer. Erud. 34-37; De Abrah. 52; De Mutat. Nom. 84.

116. Κατα τοῦ πονηρου; Harl: "contre le Mauvais;" Stählin: "gegen den Bosen."

117. Cf. e.g. Strom. I,31-35.

118. Comp. Strom. V,82,1.

119. Comp. Strom. V,34,1; VII,58,3; Excerp. ex Theod. 10,6; 12,1; 23,5.

120. Cf. e.g. De Abrah. 57; De Cong. Quaer. Erud. 51; De Ebriet. 82.

121. Paed. I,77,2; Strom. I,31,4; II,20,2; IV,169,1; Excerp. ex Theod. 56,5. The explanation that "Israel" means "seeing God" became quite common among Christian writers; cf. e.g. Eusebius Caes. (d. 399), Praepar. Evang. XI,6; Demonstr. Evang. V, XI; Didymus the Blind (d. 398), De Spiritu Sancto XI,6. However, Jerome rejected this interpretation as a false etymology; cf. Comm. in Gen. 32:27-28 (Patrologia Latina 23, p. 1039).

142. Cf. Tonneau, Sect. XXIII,1; Syr. p. 86; Lat. p. 71.

143. Cf. Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer, ch. 32, Warsaw edition p. 60; translated by G. Friedlander (New York, 1970), p. 235.

144. Cf. Tonneau, Sect. XXIII,1; Syr. p. 86; Lat. p. 71.

145. Ibid.

146. Tonneau, Sect. XI,2; Syr. p. 68; Lat. p. 55.

147. Ber. R. 63,6.

148. See also ibid. 20,6; 45,10.

149. Cf. e.g. Jerus. Targum to Gen 14:18; b. Nedarim 32b; A. Levene, The Early Syrian Fathers on Genesis (London, 1951), pp. 299-300.

150. Tonneau, Sect. XXIII,2; Syr. p. 86; Lat. p. 71.

151. Cf. Ber. R. 63,13; Midrash Tanhuma, Buber edition, 63b.

152. Tonneau, Sect. XXIII,2; Syr. p. 86; Lat. p. 72.

153. Cf. Demonstr. 14,40 and 627; comp. Jerome on Is 1:11: "(Esau) cuius edulio primogenita perdidit."

154. Cf. Ber. R. 63,12; Midrash Tanhuma, Buber edition, 63b.

155. Tonneau, Sect. XXV,1; Syr. p. 87; Lat. p. 72.

156. Ibid., Sect. XXV,3; Syr. p. 88; Lat. p. 73.

157. Cf. e.g. Ber. R. 63,12; Baba Bathra 16b; Pesikta de Rab Kahana 3,1; Pesikta de R. Eliezer chaps. 35 and 49; see L. Ginsberg, The Legends of the Jews (Philadelphia, 1913-1938), Vol. V, p. 276, no. 37.

158. Tonneau, Sect. XXVI,1; Syr. p. 88; Lat. p. 73.

159. See above, p. 40.

160. Jacob of Sarug, Bishop of Batrae near Edessa, d. 521.

161. Cf. "Mimro de Jacques de Sarûg sur la Vision de Jacob à Bethel," French translation by F. Graffin in L'Orient syrien 5 (1960), pp. 225-246; the line quoted is line 59, p. 230.

162. Tonneau, Sect. XXVI,1; Syr. pp. 88-89; Lat. pp. 73-74.

163. Ibid., Sect. XXVI,2; Syr. p. 89; Lat. p. 74; Diodorus and Theodore of Mopsuestia interpreted the vision in much the same way as Ephrem, seeing in it a guarantee of the divine help which Jacob would receive on his journey to Mesopotamia; cf. Hidal, op. cit., p. 50.

164. Tonneau, Sect. XXVI,2; Syr. p. 89; Lat. p. 74.

165. L. Ginsberg, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 352, records that a Jewish tradition taught that the oil came from heaven, but he gives no reference.

166. Cf. Commentary on the Diatessaron 21,21; see text in Éphrem de Nisibe: Commentaire de l'Évangile Concordant ou Diatessaron. Introduction, traduction, et notes (Paris, 1966), Sources chrétiennes no. 121, p. 386.

167. Tonneau, Sect. XXVI,3; Syr. p. 89; Lat. p. 74.

168. Cf. Hymni in Festum Epiphaniae 3,9; see Sancti Ephraem Syri Hymni et Sermones, edited by T. J. Lamy (Malines, 1882), Vol. I, p. 34; also see Hymnus de Virginitate 5,15.

169. Cf. Aphrahat, Demonstr. IV,5-6, where Aphrahat develops these themes at some length.

170. Tonneau, Sect. XXVII,1; Syr. p. 89; Lat. p. 74.

171. For Justin, see p. 24 above, and for Clement of Alexandira, pp. 34-38 above.

172. Demonstr. IV,6.

173. Cf. D. Gerson, in Monatschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums 17 (1868), p. 23.

174. Cf. Ber. R. 68,10.

175. Commentary on the Diatessaron 3,17; see Leloir, op. cit., p. 91.

176. Cf. e.g. Ber. R. 70,8.

177. See above, pp. 25-26 and 41.

178. See R. Murray, op. cit., p. 12.

179. Tonneau, Sect. XXVII,3; Syr. p. 90; Lat. p. 75.

180. Ibid., Sect. XXVIII,1; Syr. pp. 90-91; Lat. pp. 75-76.

181. Ibid., Sect. XXVIII,2; Syr. p. 91; Lat. p. 76.

182. Ibid.

183. Ibid., Sect. XLII,2; Syr. p. 111; Lat. p. 93.

184. Ibid., Sect. XXIX,1; Syr. p. 92; Lat. pp. 76-77.

185. Ibid., Sect. XXIX,4; Syr. p. 93; Lat. pp. 77-78.

186. Ber. R. 74,5.

187. Tonneau, Sect. XLI,4; Syr. p. 110; Lat. p. 95.

188. See above, p. 41.

189. Hymn on Virginity 20,9; quoted by R. Murray, op. cit., p. 46.

190. See above, pp. 25-26.

191. Cf. Hymni in Festum Epiphaniae 7,1-2; Lamy, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 64.

192. 15,6; see Lamy, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 64.

193. 21,9; Leloir, op. cit., pp. 378-379.

194. Hymn on Paradise 14,7; translation in Éphrem de Nisibe, Hymne sur le Paradis. Introduction, notes, et traduction. (Paris, 1968), Sources chrétiennes no. 137, pp. 179f.

195. Studia Patristica 1 (1957), p. 492.