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"A Course of Study in Comparative Religion  
for the High School Department of the  
Reform Religious School"

written by Milton Gerald Miller  
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### Summary

This thesis, "A Course of Study in Comparative Religion for the High School Department of the Reform Religious School" is a study of the needs in so-called comparative religion courses in the Jewish religious school, and the basis for a textbook designed to fulfill those needs. The thesis is divided into two sections: Section A, containing 17 pages; and Section B, containing 137 pages. The thesis also has a selected bibliography of three pages.

Section A is a survey of the Jewish religious schools affiliated with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations which have two hundred or more members. A postcard questionnaire, and a "follow-up" letter, were sent to all these congregations, requesting information regarding their comparative religion classes. Over one hundred congregations replied, and over fifty percent of those replying had some form of comparative religion class. Over eighteen hundred students were enrolled in those classes. A variety of texts were used, but a very large percentage used no text at all. The ninth and tenth grades had the greatest number of students in comparative religion courses. A questionnaire was then sent to all the congrega-

tions answering affirmatively, and the students were requested to fill out the questionnaire. Nearly six hundred questionnaires were returned. The most popular subjects selected were similarities and differences of Judaism and Christianity; the beginnings of religion; and the Catholic Church. Other subjects, such as lives of the religious leaders, differences between Christian sects, Hinduism and Mohammedism, had an indifferent response. As a result of this questionnaire the textbook, Section B, was written.

Section B, The Growth of Judaism and Christianity, is a textbook designed to meet these needs. The book opens in the newspaper office of a high school. The editor is informed that an inter-faith assembly will take place in a number of weeks and, after a discussion with the feature staff, a series of articles on the rise and development of religion is planned. The first "article" deals with the basis of religion, and its growth from primitive beginners. The roots of Judaism, Jesus and Paul, the history of the Roman Catholic Church, Roman Catholic rituals, Protestantism, and Judaism from the time of Christianity are discussed in further articles. The textbook ends with an inter-faith assembly scene. The Protestant minister, after consultation with the rabbi and Catholic

priest, outlines the similarities and differences  
of Judaism and Christianity.

A COURSE OF STUDY IN COMPARATIVE RELIGION  
FOR THE HIGH SCHOOL DEPARTMENT  
OF THE REFORM RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

by

Milton Gerald Miller

Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the  
Master of Hebrew Letters  
and Ordination

Hebrew Union College-  
Jewish Institute of Religion  
Cincinnati, Ohio  
January, 1953

Referee:  
Professor Sylvan Schwartzman

To  
My Beloved Wife,  
Sara

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**Section A**

**A SURVEY OF JEWISH RELIGIOUS SCHOOL NEEDS  
IN COMPARATIVE RELIGION COURSES**

One of the axioms of modern education is to base education on the student's interests; to use the interests of the students as a means, a vehicle of learning. The immense popularity of the driver-training program in the schools today is largely due to the fact that students feel a need and respond to an immediate gain, i. e., driving. Other courses that meet these demands based on foreseeable goals are equally successful. Religion, too, has recognized this need in its educational programs but, by and large, it has not been able to utilize it to the extent that the public schools have been able to do. The reason seems to be that religion is not dealing in tangibles: education for a livelihood, but, rather, in education for life, a life of belief in ethics, ideals and morals. Hackneyed though the phrase may be, we are living in a materialistic world, and the emphases of this world are the tangibles, rather than the intangibles.

In our own Jewish religious schools the insulation around Judaism as a separate entity has been wearing thin. We are, literally, Jews in a Gentile world, and our students increasingly feel the need to understand and comprehend the religions about them. We may

argue about the maturity of the conclusions reached in the ninth and tenth grades, where courses called "Comparative Religion" or "How Our Neighbors Worship" are taught, but the information usually is gained then, or never gained at all. Christianity, the Christianity of our neighbors, becomes a never-never land, based on childhood inculcated taboos and fears.

The textbooks used in these courses, while excellent for various other religious groups, or for college-age students, have been sadly wanting in information for the Jewish high school groups that have used them. Indeed, nearly half of the religious schools asked what textbook they used in their comparative religion classes replied that they used no fixed text, because no existing text met their needs.

When the decision to write some text for these comparative religion courses was made, the lack of any information was keenly felt. How many schools taught some course in comparative religion? If the number was too small, it would render a project such as a comparative religion textbook an unwise undertaking. What was the grade concentration of the students, so that some idea of the median grade level, and the level of the textbook, could be obtained? Once the information was forthcoming as to those schools that did teach comparative religion, a new problem arose -- the problem of the student's interests. Would they be mainly interested in

the more exotic religions, such as Buddhism? When dealing with Christianity, would it be better to speak of it as a separate entity or to compare it with the Judaism from which it sprang? Would the student be interested in the schisms between the Christian groups; or in a treatment of Christianity as a theological whole, with minor dogmatic differences? Would the student like to begin with the advent of religion, back to primitive times, and study the commencement of religion and religious life, or would he prefer to deal with religion from the time of Christianity?

The only method to obtain these responses was to gain them from the schools themselves. Double postcards with a mimeographed request for information were sent to over one hundred and fifty congregations who were members of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations with over two hundred members. They were requested to fill out the attached postcard and return it. The postcard (Appendix A) simply asked whether or not comparative religion was taught in the congregation's religious school; if so, at what grade level, how many students were in the classes and what textbooks was used. A follow-up postcard was sent in an enclosed letter to those congregations that had not yet responded (Appendix B).

Of the one hundred and three congregations that

responded, fifty-three offered comparative religion classes and fifty did not. The following number of students was enrolled in each grade level of those congregations that responded and that offered comparative religion courses:

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Number of Congregations</u>	<u>Number of Students</u>
5	1	45
7	6	108
8	12	533
9	13	551
10	20	390
11	8	162
12	6	164

The number of congregations is in excess of the fifty-three congregations named because some congregations offered two courses at different grade levels. The fifty-three congregations were then sent questionnaires (Appendix C) with a personal letter (Appendices D and E) to each, requesting that the enclosed questionnaires be administered to their students. Thirty-one congregations returned their questionnaires, with five hundred eighty-two questionnaires being returned, from a total of one thousand eight hundred and eighty-eight questionnaires sent out to the students of the various classes.



An analysis of the questionnaires reveals the following sectional and population breakdown:

NORTHEAST:	11
SOUTHEAST:	6
MIDWEST:	7
NORTHWEST:	2
SOUTHWEST:	5

The population areas included eleven from cities of one million or more, ten from cities of five hundred thousand to one million and ten from cities of under five hundred thousand population. Spot checks of questionnaires from various sections reveal little or no differences between the various geographical groups in the grade levels.

As stated previously, the earlier questionnaire revealed that nearly half of the fifty-three schools offering a course in comparative religion use no text. The most popular text used was Fitch's One God, with twenty-one congregations using this text, either alone, or in company with other materials. The text was used from the seventh grade to the eleventh grade, although the book was originally intended for the sixth and seventh grade child. Other texts used in any appreciable number were Browne's This Believing World (four congregations) and Gaer's How the Great Religions Began (two congregations).

Evidently there was need for a text in a field

which averaged at least eighteen hundred students a year. The responses to the student questionnaire, as tabulated in Table 1, revealed some interesting facts. Only those responses that indicated a strong choice -- either "Very Interested" or "Not Interested" -- were tabulated. The following results were obtained:

A. Questions one and six, which asked regarding the students' preference for articles on the similarities between Judaism and Christianity, and their differences, had the highest number of "Very Interested" replies. The two questions were intended to verify the results of each other, and they were rather close in net results, although a stronger preference was shown for the "differences" than the "similarities". All grade levels, from grades seven to twelve, were interested in the subjects.

B. Question nine, "How Religion First Began", also gained a large number of "Very Interested" replies. Here, also, there was no appreciable difference between the grade levels.

C. Question two, dealing with the Catholic Church, showed a moderate amount of interest in the lower grades, in proportion to the number of questionnaires received. In the tenth grade, however, one hundred and five out of one hundred and forty-two questionnaires evinced a strong interest in Catholicism. As noted below, the tenth grade demonstrated other marked differences

from the other grade levels.

D. Question three, dealing with the differences and similarities of Protestantism, gained a mixed response. Every group, with the exception of the tenth grade, gave more negative than positive responses to the topic. The tenth grade, however, out of one hundred forty-two questionnaires, gave seventy-one strongly affirmative replies, to fifteen negative answers.

E. Question five, "Why Protestantism Broke Away From the Catholic Church", had a strongly negative series of replies in all but the tenth grade. In the tenth grade, approximately forty per cent of the students gave strongly affirmative replies.

F. Question eight, "The Lives of the Great Religious Leaders", had negative responses from all but the seventh and tenth grades, where mildly affirmative choices were registered.

G. Questions four and seven, dealing with the Mohammedism and Buddhism, gained rather non-committal replies, with the seventh and tenth grades showing slightly more interest in the subject than the other grades.

The following conclusions can be derived from the results of this survey:

I. The number of congregations offering a course in comparative religion in the Jewish religious school and the number of students taking the courses make a textbook in this field desirable, if not imperative.

The texts available at present are usually adult texts, or, if they deal with religious groups from a grade level such as Fitch's One God, they are written from a Christian viewpoint, and with an undue interest in the exotic.

II. Such a comparative religion textbook should emphasize religion from its beginnings, and should concentrate on comparisons with Judaism as a basis, rather than a scientifically detached treatment.

III. Extensive discussion regarding differences between various Christian groups should not be the basis for a textbook of this type, the survey reveals. The lives and personalities of the leaders of religious movements should be included where they are integral to the story, but a historical development of religion, rather than the story of personalities alone, should be the basis for such a text.

IV. The Catholic Church should be treated in greater detail than the Protestant groups, this survey of student interest indicates. The students also show no overwhelming interest in an over-long development of the split between the Catholic and Protestant groups.

V. Buddhism and Mohammedism are not of any great interest to the student and, contrary to expectations of the writer prior to taking this survey, would not have too much relationship to the students' immediate interests.

VII. Further studies regarding religious interests of the seventh and tenth grades, which seem to depart from the results of other classes in the survey, would be of value. The writer is unable to explain why there was a positive reply by the tenth grade in questions that other classes tended to view negatively.

The accompanying textbook has been planned to meet these requirements.

TABLE I

Protestantism Catholics		6. Similarities of Judaism and Chris- tianity		7. Buddhism		8. Lives of Religious Leaders	
ry	Not	Very	Not	Very	Not	Very	Not
1	23	47	10	25	15	28	13
6	61	85	18	49	50	43	66
0	41	93	10	56	37	32	44
8	30	81	26	58	35	66	36
6	7	16	2	14	5	6	11
6	3	22	1	7	8	5	12

9. How Religion First Began		Number of Schools	Number of Replies
Very	Not		
46	6	3	66
89	23	7	166
83	18	8	149
94	18	9	142
17	3	2	28
17	5	2	31

Totals

31

582

Grade	1. Difference between Judaism & Christianity		2. Catholic Church		3. Difference & Similarities of Protestantism		4. Mohammedans	
	Very	Not	Very	Not	Very	Not	Very	Not
7	55	2	25	11	12	18	18	12
8	95	9	57	38	31	60	50	54
9	102	4	59	28	38	52	39	42
10	119	7	105	10	71	15	58	37
11	20	0	16	3	4	9	10	5
12	23	1	10	4	2	9	5	6

## APPENDIX A

### Message to Religious School Director:

Dear Sir:

Many religious schools today offer courses in comparative religion. The attached post-card will assist me in determining the needs of religious schools today for comparative religion texts and materials. This information will be used in my rabbinical thesis for the Hebrew Union College and, later, for a projected text. Could you please check or fill out the few questions and return the attached card to me? No postage or address is necessary, of course. Thanks for your kindness.

Sincerely,

Milton G. Miller

### Questions Asked of Religious School Director:

1. Does your religious school offer a course in comparative religion?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
2. Grade in which it is offered this year:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Number of students in class: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Text used: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Is there a syllabus or plan of study available? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:



APPENDIX B

2953 Boudinot Avenue  
Cincinnati 38, Ohio  
March 20, 1952

Dear Religious School Director:

A few months ago a postcard questionnaire, similar to the one enclosed, was sent to all congregations with two hundred or more members who are members of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

Here are some of the results:

Over seventy congregations answered the questionnaire.  
Over fifty per cent of those answering offer some course in comparative religion.  
Nearly fourteen hundred students are registered in these courses.  
Fitch's One God is the most frequently used text.

This material will be used for my rabbinical thesis at the Hebrew Union College and, later, for a projected textbook.

As yet I have not received your reply. Could you please fill out the enclosed postcard and return it to me?

Thank you for your kindness.

Sincerely,

Milton G. Miller

APPENDIX B (continued)

Postcard Enclosed in Letter to Religious School  
Directors:

1. Does your religious school offer a course in comparative religion?    ☐ Yes    ☐ No
2. Grade in which it is offered this year:   
Number of Students in class:
3. Text used:
4. Is there a syllabus or plan of study available?  
     ☐ Yes       ☐ No

Comments:

# APPENDIX C

## INFORMATION SHEET ON COMPARATIVE RELIGION

Would you please place a check mark ( ✓ ) in the column which best expresses your opinion about including the subjects below in a religious school textbook on other religions? For example: If you were very interested in the Mormon religion you would check the sample subject thus:

Very Much Interested	Somewhat Interested	Not Interested	
<u>✓</u>	—	—	The Mormon religion and its teachings.

The check mark appears in the space Very Much Interested. Please place only one check for each subject.

This questionnaire will be used as a guide in writing a textbook in comparative religion for Jewish religious schools.

<u>Very Much Interested</u>	<u>Somewhat Interested</u>	<u>Not Interested</u>	
—	—	—	1. The differences between Christianity and Judaism.
—	—	—	2. The Catholic Church and its Teachings.
—	—	—	3. The differences and similarities of the various Protestant groups.
—	—	—	4. The Mohammedan religion and its teachings.
—	—	—	5. Why Protestantism broke away from the Catholic Church.

Very Much  
Interested

Somewhat  
Interested

Not  
Interested

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. The similarities of Christianity and Judaism.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Buddhism and other oriental religions.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. The lives of the great religious leaders.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9. How religion first began.

## APPENDIX D

### Sample Letter of Follow-Up of Positive Replies From First Postcard

Dear Sir:

Thank you for your kind response to my postcard questionnaire on comparative religion some months back. Here are some of the results of the preliminary questionnaire:

The questionnaires were sent to all members of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations with two hundred or more members.

About ninety congregations have answered the questionnaire.

Over fifty per cent of those answering offer some course in comparative religion.

Nearly fourteen hundred students are registered in these courses.

Fitch's One God is the favorite text.

This material will be used for my rabbinical thesis at the Hebrew Union College and, later, for a projected textbook.

Your congregation was one of those members of the Union that offers a comparative religion course. Can I request a further favor of you? I am enclosing a check sheet that can be filled out in a matter of minutes. There are \_\_\_\_\_ questionnaires for the students of the class. I would be very grateful if you would have the instructor of the comparative religion class give out the enclosed sheets to the class members and have them follow the instructions on the top of the sheet. I am enclosing a stamped self-addressed envelope for your convenience in returning these questionnaires.

Thank you for your kindness.

Sincerely,

Milton G. Miller

## APPENDIX E

### Sample Letter of Follow-Up of Positive Replies from Second Letter

Dear Sir:

Thank you for your kindness in responding to my request for information regarding religious school comparative religion courses. This information will be used for my rabbinical thesis at the Hebrew Union College and, later, for a projected textbook.

Your congregation was one of those members of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations that offer some comparative religion courses. Can I request a further favor of you? I am enclosing a check list sheet that can be filled out in a matter of minutes. There are \_\_\_\_ questionnaires for the students of the class. I would be very grateful if you would have the instructor of the comparative religion class give out the enclosed sheets to the class members and have them follow the instructions at the top of the sheet. I am enclosing a stamped self-addressed envelope for your convenience in returning these questionnaires. If possible, could you also include the outline of your course?

Thank you for your kindness.

Sincerely,

Milton G. Miller

Section B

THE GROWTH OF JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY

A Textbook in Comparative Religion  
for the Jewish Religious School

## Chapter I

### INTRODUCTION

Georgia Murphy, new editor-in-chief of the Woodland High School News sat at her desk clearing out old papers left by the previous editor. She passed her hand occasionally through her brown hair, and bent down to pick up a dropped paper. About her were members of her staff. The staff room of the News, located in the basement of Woodland High, was adorned with pennants, old issues of the News, and prize certificates awarded to the paper in national competition.

"Georgia," a voice interrupted her, "the principal asked me to give you this note."

"Thanks, Frank," Georgia said to the messenger, and began reading the note.

Dear Georgia:

As you know, the school schedules special events every year for our assembly programs. This year, we are planning a new idea for Thanksgiving, a discussion of religion by Father Conlon of St. Theresa's Catholic Church, Reverend Smith of the Woodland Presbyterian Church and Rabbi Goodman of Temple Emes. We hope to have an hour assembly on the day before Thanksgiving on the three major religious groups of America, and you may want to devote some space to the assembly prior to the Thanksgiving week itself.

Frank Hughes, Principal  
Woodland High School



"Ed and Jack, here's something that might interest you," Georgia called out to the two members of the feature staff of the News working at a nearby table.

Ed Goldman, a tall, lanky youth with sandy hair and a perennial grin, strode over to Georgia's desk, and was followed by the assistant feature editor, Jack Bowns, a short, overweight boy who amused the staff by his imitations of teachers.

Ed picked up the note and, with Jack peering at it by his side, they both read the note.

Ed turned to Jack and said, "Well, Jack, it certainly could make a good series of feature articles, and we only have about two months before Thanksgiving."

"I thought it might be a good idea," Georgia said, "if we ran articles on Judaism and Christianity on the feature page of the paper before Thanksgiving. Of course, Ed, since you're feature editor, that'd be up to you."

"Sure," Jack said, "since Ed is president of his temple youth group, he could write the articles on Judaism, and, since I lead a Methodist youth group, I could talk to my minister and write articles on Christianity."

"I have a better idea than that," Ed said.  
"Let both Jack and me write the articles together."

That way I could help him with the articles that dealt mainly with Judaism, and he could help me with the articles on Christianity."

"That's a fine suggestion," Georgia said. "I think a series like that, by a Christian student and a Jewish student working together, would mean more as an introduction to a brotherhood assembly than a separate article about your own religion."

"But we'd need an article to start the series off," Jack suggested. "Something to tell the readers what religion is and how it began."

"Well, Jack, let's start by writing an article together on the beginnings of religion," Ed added. "We can have that article appear next week. Then, in the weeks following, we can run our articles on Judaism and Christianity."

"That sounds fine, Ed," Georgia said enthusiastically. "These articles should help make the Thanksgiving assembly a great success."

That week's edition of the News contained an article regarding the forthcoming religious program of Woodland High School:

RELIGIOUS PROGRAM ANNOUNCED  
FOR THANKSGIVING WEEK

-----

Father Conlon, Reverend Smith  
and Rabbi Goodman to Speak

-----

Series on America's Religions  
Begins in this Issue of News

-----

A religious discussion program for Thanksgiving assembly was announced this week by Principal Frank Hughes. Mr. Hughes stated that Father Frank Conlon of St. Theresa's Church, Reverend Jack Smith, of the Woodland Presbyterian Church and Rabbi Robert Goodman of Temple Emes will speak at the assembly.

"This program," said Mr. Hughes, "will help our students realize the deep religious roots to the observance of Thanksgiving."

The News will begin a series this week on the roots and growth of the religious groups in America.

Edward Goldman and Jack Bowns of the News feature staff will collaborate on the series of articles, which will deal with the growth of Judaism and Christianity. The first article of the series appears on the feature page of this week's News.

## Chapter II

## WHEN RELIGION FIRST BEGAN

The Mountain God Speaks

The big rock tumbled down the mountain and bounced each time it hit another boulder. Gathering speed, smaller rocks assembled in its wake, then other rocks and dirt began moving and rumbling. The small human figure in animal skins walking at the bottom of the mountain in search for deer looked upward fearfully as he heard the rumble and then, seeing the landslide a mere hundred yards from him, huddled under a sheltering precipice. The mass of rocks, stones and earth roared with an ear-shattering crash past the precipice and, while the man watched in awe and terror, continued down the slight incline at the foot of the mountain. Waiting for a few minutes, until the last stones had passed him, the man looked up at the mountain which had so recently threatened his destruction and then, wordlessly, sank to his knees and thanked the mountain god for his life.

Animism -- the Beginning of Religion

Many scientists think that religion first began when man started to think, when man began to fear the unknown. The tiger that hunted him, the deer that he hunted, the trees and hills about him: all

these had souls, all these were alive. He prayed to the mountains which could kill him with their landslides, or could feed him with fruits, berries and animals living on its slopes. This type of religion the scientists called animism from the Greek word "animos," "soul". According to primitive man, everything had a soul and the world was peopled by spirits, both evil and good. A special god lived in each mountain and each hill; a particular diety had his home in each tree. Traces of this animism may still be found in present-day religion. In Judaism, some scholars think that Mount Sinai was the home of a powerful mountain god called Sin, and that the early concepts of the God of Moses came from the worship of this mountain god. Christianity has always felt that Calvary, the hill on which Jesus was crucified, had special sanctity. Buddhists still have a holy tree which they revere as one of the places where Buddah preached.

#### Totemism -- The Next Stage

Wild wheat and barley began ripening in the fields, and curious primitive man tasted it and found it good. He built skin tents or lived in caves near the fields where the grain ripened, and fed himself and his family on the produce of the land. Soon he began building huts, and learned how to sow the grain. He became settled in areas where other families

lived, since grain grew best on flat level land, and the amount of level land was limited. Slowly but surely a community began to grow up. The women met to discuss their children, their husbands, food, homes -- probably many of the same things that women discuss today. And the men busied themselves with hunting, fishing, planting and harvesting. But man also had time to think. Perhaps he suggested to his neighbors: Let's join together and have sacrifices and worship our gods together. The crops have been sown, and they need water to grow. If we pray together, the gods will send rain."

The first man who made that remark in a meeting of primitive men started what we might call "organized" religion. Until that time, man's religion was his personal concern only. Now religion became a community matter, and religion shared the community beliefs. To primitive man the dead were as real as the living and all spirits -- the spirits of the dead, and the spirits of the non-human elements about them: the wild beasts, the rivers, the mountains -- all these spirits had to be respected. And so a community religion, a religion that included prayers for rain and health, marriage and birth -- everything that was part of the life cycle -- grew up. Some animal or object closely related to the group became the symbol - and the object of worship -

of the whole tribal religion. Thus, a tribe that depended largely on buffalo for food, fur for clothing and skin for tents, would use the buffalo to symbolize its worship. Others would erect poles with symbols of various animals, faces, and signs on them -- poles called totem poles, probably derived from an Algonquin Indian word meaning brother-and-sister relationship. Scientists coined the term totemism from the word totem for this stage of primitive religion -- the stage in which the whole life of the tribe was bound up in their religion. We still have some small elements of totems in the use of coats-of-arms, heraldic devices on shields which, by use of animals, symbols and colors, represent the life of the family who designed the coat of arms.

#### How Religion Changed

Religion, however, changed as life changed for the people. As people lived together, specialists emerged. Some were better hunters, some were better farmers, some were better fishermen. And, some were better worshippers. They knew all the ceremonies: how to get rain, how to ask the gods for a better crop, how to keep the thunder god from killing them.

Gradually, the members of the tribe began to depend on these particular people to intercede for

them with the spirits of the dead and the gods about them. A professional priesthood began, a priesthood that knew all the ceremonies and all the rites. These specialists in religion were looked up to by the members of the tribe; they were thought to possess special powers to get favors from the gods. Special chants and prayers were used. The faces of the dancers in the ritual dances for the gods had to be painted in a certain way; sacrifices and prayers had to be done in a particular manner; the exact times and seasons for certain rites had to be observed. Religion grew so complicated, and the priests were kept so busy, that the priesthood could no longer fish or hunt, and so the people began to support the priests.

They brought the priests food and drink, clothed them, and kept them happy so that the priests would pray to the gods for them. The knowledge of the religious rites and customs of the tribe were guarded jealously by the priesthood, and passed from father to son. The members of the tribe who were not priests knew less and less about how to pray to the gods, and depended more and more on the priests to tell them what to sacrifice, how to gain better crops and trap more animals in their hunting expeditions. The growth of a professional priestly class had begun -- a group whose only, or major, occupation



was praying to the gods. An example of this primitive priestly class is the medicine man in African and American Indian tribes, a powerful man in the tribe who is charge of religious dances and sacrifices, as well as praying to the gods for the health of sick tribesman and treating them for illness with old ritual medicines.

### National Religion

As more people began to band together into tribes, the amount of land that could be used for tribal purposes began to be somewhat limited. There was only so much land that was desirable; that had water, fertile soil, good climate. Tribes began to fight with one another, when, for example, a strange tribe tried to move into an area that the tribe living there considered its own. Alliances were made between two or three weak tribes to defeat one strong tribe. Some tribes were defeated in battle and became part of the conquering tribe.

In these, and many other ways, two or more tribes joined together and claimed a certain territory. But a problem arose. Each tribe claimed that its god should be the god of the tribe. Usually, one god was chosen, or one family of gods; the gods that used the section as their home. The gods of the Aztecs in Mexico: Huitzilopochtli, god of agriculture

and war; Tezcatlipoca, god of law and justice; Quetzalcoatl, god of culture and good living -- these gods were not the same gods as the gods worshipped by the Incas or Peru: the sun god, and the gods Viracocha and Pachacamac.

The success and survival of the new group of tribes depended on whether the people believed in the gods of the group, and felt the gods would protect them. This group of tribes possessing a certain area of land -- which we call a nation -- prayed and sacrificed to a particular group of gods for success in their undertakings. When the nation was particularly successful in warfare, they felt that their gods had won the battle for them. One of the oldest sections of the Bible is the song of Deborah after the victory over Sisera. In the song in the fifth chapter of Judges, Deborah thanks the god of the Hebrew tribes for fighting for them. She says: "The stars in their courses fought against Sisera."

When a tribe or a nation was conquered, the other nation felt that their god had defeated the god of the other nation. When the Jews were carried off into captivity into Babylonia after Judea was destroyed in 586 B. C. E., they were expected to abandon the worship of the god of the Hebrews and worship the god of the Babylonians, Marduk. The Babylonians argued that, since the God of the Hebrews

had been defeated by the God of the Babylonians, they certainly should accept the god of Babylonia, the great and powerful Marduk. Possibly only the argument of the prophets -- that this was the god of Israel's intention, that He planned to have the Hebrews defeated -- saved the Jewish religion from being absorbed by Marduk-worship.

This type of religion, a religion bound up with one particular nationality or people, is called a national religion. Though today most nations recognize the same god, rather than separate national gods, there are still remnants of this national god idea and national religion concept in our modern religious life. The ruler of Great Britain, for example, has as one of the royal titles, Protector of the Faith. The "Faith" is the Church of England, the state religion of Britain, a religion supported by the British government. Most of the Scandinavian countries have state-supported Lutheran churches. Though these churches recognize the general beliefs of Christianity, they still are largely limited to members of a particular nation and, therefore, are state, or national, churches.

#### The Beginnings of Universalism

But, slowly, a dawning realization came to the thinking men in the various nations in the

world. They began to realize that the same help and protection that they sought of their gods was sought by other nations from their own gods. Travel became more common and commerce became an important factor. The thinking man saw many similarities between his worship and the worship of his neighbors. He realized that what he was afraid of, his neighbor also feared. He observed that doing good generally was the best way for people to live in peace, that evil usually resulted in the downfall of the evil-doer. If he travelled, he observed that the changes of seasons, the growth of crops, the laughter of children, and the sorrow of mourners, was the same in other nations as it was in his nation. He began to realize that there were certain universal laws, laws that operated in nature without respect to color, nation, or religious belief.

Thinking men in various religions began to ponder about life and, while their approaches varied, some of their conclusions are startlingly similar. An example is the so-called "Golden Rule", which is often called the foundation of all religious belief. Hillel, one of the great teachers of rabbinic Judaism who lived around 30 B. C. E., when asked what the foundation of Judaism was, answered: "What is displeasing to yourself do not do to your fellowman." An apocryphal book of the

Hebrew Scriptures, the Book of Tobit, written about 200 B. C. E., has Tobit giving similar advice to his son Tobias. Jesus, in Matthew 7.12, says, "All things therefore whatever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them:" Confucius, living in the sixth century B. C. E., was asked by Tsekung, one of his disciples, for a single word to serve as a guide to life. Confucius replied, "Perhaps the word 'reciprocity' (shu) will do. Do not do unto others what you do not want others to do unto you."

The idea that God, and God's laws, go far beyond national borders and national religion, became widespread. The belief in a God of all mankind, and a series of natural laws that apply to all men, is called universalism. Christianity, Judaism, Mohammedism, Buddhism and Confucianism, the major religions of the world, all feel that they are universalistic religions, religions that apply to all men and all nations.. Many individual groups have not reached beyond national borders, but the founders of all the major religions envisioned a world united by common laws and a common God.

#### Religion Today

Though religion in modern times strives for universalism, many of the early roots of re-

ligion remain. Christian groups still retain national churches in many countries. Judaism, though it extends its beliefs to all mankind, still includes within its prayers a mention of "the God of Israel." Though Buddhism is a universalistic religion, most of the Buddhist sects of India are animistic and feel that the cow and other animals have souls and should be cherished and worshipped.

It is from these roots of animism, totemism, and national religion that both Christianity and Judaism developed.

Christianity and Judaism: two great religions -- came from these simple roots.

How did they start?

What were the origins of Judaism?

How did Christianity develop from Judaism?

Why?

These are questions that should be answered if true understanding of religion is to be attained.

## Chapter III

## JUDAISM SETS THE STAGE

The Jews Remain Loyal

At the waters of Babylon,  
There we sat, yea we wept,  
When we remembered Zion.

There they that led us captive  
Asked of us mirth ...

How can we sing the Lord's song in  
a foreign land?

Thus did the Psalmist mourn the deportation of the Jews to Babylonia after their defeat by the thundering armies of Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B. C. E. According to the general practice of the times, the Jews were expected to become Babylonians in all respects: worship the Babylonian gods, sing Babylonian songs, eat Babylonian food. Yet these captives, rather than admitting the complete defeat of their national god, the god of Israel, and accepting the god of Babylon, Marduk, remained true to the religion of Israel and the god of Israel. Up to this time the Jews believed that there could only be a national religion, tied to the land of the god they worshipped. The Jews had felt that the God of Israel was powerful only in Israel, and was powerless in the land of the god, Marduk, the god of the

conquering Babylonians. What happened to change the religion of the Jews from a national to a universal religion, from a religion of the Jews in Palestine to a religion for people all over the known world?

### Stirrings After Defeat

This was, indeed, a revolutionary idea in mankind, the idea that a God was not limited to one area, but was powerful enough to include all men. There had been hints of such beliefs in other religions previous to that, but this was the first time that it became a main belief in a religion.

Judaism before the exile in 586 B. C. E., despite the ethical ideas of the Temple, was not too much different from the religions about them. It was true that no images were permitted in the Temple, that human sacrifices were prohibited, that the ethical teachings of Judaism were much higher than the morals of the religions about Palestine. But Judaism was the religion of the Temple. There was a priestly class, a professional priesthood, which passed the traditions from father to son. The people could not even enter the Temple during periods of sacrifice; they were forced to stand outside in courts. Sacrifices of animals occurred daily, and the way a poor man "prayed" was to give pigeons or sheep to a priest to sacrifice for him. The religion



was a national religion, so national that the Ark of Covenant, thought to contain the spirit of the God of Israel, was brought out on the battlefield during times of critical warfare, to fight for the Israelites against their enemies. Rage against these practices the prophets might, but the overwhelming majority of the people felt that this was Judaism: sacrifices, a national god, the Temple, a hereditary professional priesthood.

Suddenly, with the marching armies of Nebuchadnezzar, this was all changed. The Temple was burned, sacrifices could no longer be offered, the nation that the God of Israel was supposed to have protected was flattened under the heels of the Babylonian armies. The hereditary priesthood was exiled with the rest of the Jews to Babylonia, without a Temple, without sacrifices, without even the glimmer of the hope of return. Judaism, for all practical purposes, was dead -- just as the state of Israel, the land of the god of Israel, was now a Babylonian province.

But among the exiles huddled by the waters of Babylon, some men could stand and say "I told you so!" These were the followers of the prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, who preached before and after the destruction of the Temple in 586 B. C. E., although scholars disagree as to their exact

dates. These prophets had warned the people before the Babylonians came. They told them that reliance on sacrifices and burnt offerings, on the Temple and on the belief of the saving of Jerusalem, was a false hope. They had preached a belief in all mankind as children of the God that the Jews worshipped, and that this God would punish His children for their trespasses. Jerusalem, they predicted, would be destroyed and yet, surprisingly enough, this would be a victory for the God of Israel. This was not a victory for the Babylonians, the followers of the prophets said; but it was a victory for the God of Israel, who was punishing His children for their unfaithfulness.

### The New Judaism

A new Judaism was being forged in Babylonia; a Judaism based on the vision of the prophets. The old priestly class was discredited -- but a new group began to rise. They were called rabbis, which means "teacher" in Hebrew. Their family background was not important; what was important was their ability as scholars and teachers. They began to discuss the Law of Moses and the teachings of the prophets. Jews came to hear them, and that way academies grew up. People met together and, since they did not have a Temple to offer sacrifices, they

prayed to the God of Israel. Books, rather than sheep and cows for sacrifice, became the basis for this new Judaism, a Judaism outside of the home of the God of Israel, a Judaism that was now worshipping God without sacrifices, but with prayer; without a noble priestly class, but with an educated group of rabbis.

A number of new ideas, therefore, came from the Exile in Babylonia. They were all revolutionary ideas, for there was little, if any, hint as to their origins in the religions about them. They included:

1) The Synagogue. A plain room or building for worship and prayer, rather than an elaborate Temple for sacrifices.

2) The Rabbis. Men selected for their learning, rather than for their priestly family background. Anyone who was learned could become a rabbi. It was an aristocracy of learning, rather than the past priestly aristocracy of birth.

3) Prayer. Asking God's help by prayer and worship, rather than by burnt sacrifices, was a completely new idea that developed from the Exile.

4) Study. A bet hamidrash, a house of study, was usually attached to the synagogue, and study of the ethics, the

morals and the laws of Judaism was considered as much a part of worship as attendance at services.

5) Books for Guides. The Jews were beginning to become the People of the Book. The Biblical books that already had been written were carefully preserved and read. A book-based religion, rather than a temple- or priest-based cult, was a radically new idea.

Universalism in religion did not become a force until the Jews in Babylonia demonstrated how religious observance could exist without a Temple, without a nation, without a priestly class. It was as great a revolution in the ideas of man as the discovery of fire was in the living habits of humanity. It was a new Judaism that would begin to return to the destroyed Jerusalem around 500 B. C. E., a religion changed in the crucible of history.

#### The Return to Palestine

Loud cheers for Cyrus, the conqueror of the Babylonians, the great Persian general, filled the streets of Babylon as his chariots and horses thundered past the freed captives of the Babylonians, the millions of people deported from their conquered homelands by the armies of Nebuchadnezzar. "Home,

we're going home!" sighed an old man, a Jew deported seventy years before as a child from Jerusalem. But many years passed before some Jews were able to return to Palestine, and many -- in fact, most -- never went back. Judaism had found a home in Babylonia as well as in Palestine, and Babylonia for many centuries remained as one of the great spiritual centers of Judaism.

Under the prodding of Ezra and Nehemiah, two Jewish leaders, and with the consent of Cyrus, the Jews formed a small group of pioneers who would attempt to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple. When the Jews arrived in Jerusalem around 500 B. C. E., all they found were ruins and hostile peoples who, after the long absence of the Jews from Palestine, felt that the Jews were invaders rather than people returning to their homes.

Slowly, arduously, the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt, and the Temple was erected once again. But this time, a rival group, the rabbis, gradually made its influence felt in the new Jerusalem. During the long years of exile in Babylonia, the leaders of the Temple, the priests, had no function. When the Temple was restored the old leaders of the Temple thought they could again become the spiritual rulers of the Jews, but the rabbis, the teachers of the Jews in exile, were more interested in prayer

and study than in pomp and sacrifice. The rabbis, in many respects, were the universalists in Judaism, while the priests were more interested in a national religion. The rabbis felt that they had few ties to the Temple, that the importance of Judaism lay in prayer and study, in virtues such as kindness and charity, which were common to all men. The priests, on the other hand, felt that the worship of the God of Israel was in the Temple, that the aristocratic priestly class was the true leader of Judaism, that the teachings of the rabbis should be shoved to the background.

The opposition between the priests and the rabbis resulted in the formation of separate social groups as well as religious groupings; the priests usually being on the side of the wealthier landowners, the rabbis usually supporting the poorer people. The rabbis formed a political party called the Pharisees, from the Hebrew word p'rash, meaning either "separate" or "interpret". They were separatists in that they believed in keeping apart from all prohibitions in Jewish law. They were expounders because they did not take the Bible as the only revealed word of God, but believed in interpreting it for their generation. The priests called their party the Sadducees, named after the founder of the

priestly line, Zadok. They believed in the literal and complete interpretation of the Law of Moses, rather than the liberal views of the Pharisees.

### The Struggle for Religious Freedom

Since the Sadducees supported the priestly class and the royal house, they were always looked upon with favor by the rulers of Palestine. The party of the rabbis, the Pharisees, were usually regarded with suspicion. Both groups tolerated each other with more or less bad grace until a force from the outside, the Syrians under Epiphanes Antiochus, attempted to suppress all Judaism around 165 B. C. E. All Jews, Sadducees and Pharisees, joined in armed rebellion against the invader, who was setting up idols in the Temple and sacrificing unclean animals there. Differences were forgotten and the Jewish troops under Judas Maccabee, a son of a village priest, drove the Syrians out of Palestine. The first battle for religious freedom in history was fought by the Jews, and Jews to this day celebrate that freedom with the festival of Chanuko, the rededication of the Temple by the forces of Judas Macabbee. A new idea, that man should fight for freedom of religion and the right to worship as he sees fit, was added to the contributions of Judaism since the exile.

### The Jews Become Missionaries

The ethical ideas of Judaism were in startling contrast to the religious ideas of the rest of the world at the time. People sacrificed their children, performed strange rites, worshipped idols and kings: all in the name of "religion". The Bible records customs of people in Palestine who burned their children to a god called Moloch, and the Bible warned the Jews not to follow their practice. As Jews traveled about the known world, non-Jews began to hear more and more about these unusual people, who worshipped a god they could not see, who refused to bow to kings and princes, and who were more interested in prayer than sacrifice. Titus, a cruel king of Rome, according to an old story, did not believe the reports he had heard that the Jews worshipped a god they could not see. When he conquered Jerusalem, he thrust a sword into the Holy of Holies in the Temple, trying to kill the God that "lived" there.

More and more non-Jews began to adopt the ideas of the Jews. Some became full converts and others came to accept some portions of Judaism and observed the ethical ideas while not following the dietary rules or the laws of circumcision. Many converts were made throughout the known world,



and Jewish missionaries traveled to convince other peoples to adopt the religion of the God of Israel. The New Testament states that these missionaries would "compass sea and land to make one convert." The Book of Jonah is the story of a missionary who refused to convert the city of Ninevah because he felt that the people of Ninevah were enemies of Jews. He was forced to return to Ninevah and effect their conversion.

All major Latin and Greek writers, including Cicero, Horace, Seneca and Tacitus, mentioned the zeal of these missionaries. The Jewish missionaries were so eager to maintain and enlarge the numbers of Jews in the world that they gained the displeasure of the Roman authorities and, on two occasions, were expelled from Rome for missionary activity.

#### How Judaism Differed from Other Religions

Judaism, indeed, became a religion that aroused the wrath and fear of all the ruling nations of the world. It was a unique religion, a religion unlike any other of the world at the time. Besides the differences noted in practice, such as study, private prayer, and ritual cleanliness, they demonstrated major differences in basic ideas with the religions about them. Some of these differences

were:

1) Unwillingness to compromise. The Jews felt that their religious beliefs were correct, that no compromise could be reached with other religions that worshipped pantheons, or families of gods, that permitted every indecent act to pass in the name of religion. The Jews suffered many indignities because they did not permit the statue of the king to appear in their temple, or worship other dieties while living in strange lands.

2) Religion and ethics were inseparably united. All Judaism, in effect, was imitatio dei, the imitation of God. "Be ye holy, for the Lord, your God is holy," was the injunction in the Bible, and the Jews followed it. Other religions about them would support the ruler no matter who he might be; Judaism opposed unjust rulers and unjust acts despite persecution and deprivation. Judaism taught that doing right was the essence of all religion, that giving to the poor and needy was the basis of the Torah. Oppressing rulers fought Judaism more as a political force than a religious movement, for its ethics

and beliefs were one and the same.

### 3) An urge to teach and proselytize.

Proselytization, the conversion of non-Jews to Judaism, was considered of paramount importance. While the Jewish "heretical" ideas of religion might have been tolerated if they kept them to themselves, rulers looked with fear upon Jewish missionaries who told their people that there was only one God who could not be seen, that a king should be obeyed only if he was just, that the aim of all mankind was to bring humanity closer to God.

### Jewish Missionary Activity Ends

The Jews in Jerusalem were under heavy attack by the Romans at the beginning of the Christian era and, slowly, they began to cease their missionary activity. The Jews constantly rebelled against Rome and Rome feared Judaism as a religion of revolutionaries. As Christianity gained more adherents among non-Jews, Jewish attempts at conversion were strongly discouraged and, by the fourth century C. E., with the Edict of Constantine, which made Christianity one of the official religions of the Roman Empire, Jewish missionary attempts were com-

pletely forbidden.

### Judaism Sets the Stage

It was the universal ethical teachings of Judaism and the continual missionary attempts of the Jews that set the stage for the growth of Christianity. Christianity had fewer national aspects than Judaism; it did not insist on circumcision or dietary laws; it was more adaptable to the customs of other nations; and it incorporated non-Jews as leaders of its group, so that it was more attractive to non-Jews than the Judaism from which it began. But, without the background of Judaism, Christianity would have never gained the foothold it acquired.

### Christianity Enters a Vacuum

About the beginning of the Christian era, the whole world was in religious chaos. The old families of gods, the ancient idol worship, the corrupt priesthood, seemed to hold less and less attraction to the masses. The concepts of Judaism, looking to a world of truth and justice, were accepted by many thinkers. The Roman Empire had been integrated under the reign of warrior emperors, but a dissatisfaction with the brutality and avariciousness of the Roman emperors was felt

throughout the Empire. Greek ideas and concepts were considered superior to Roman ideas; and Greeks often spoke of Plato's idea of a god that ruled the world. A vast unrest filled the world of the time; an unrest that waited for a message of hope.

A carpenter walked the streets of Jerusalem with a small group of ragged followers surrounding him. Hungry, cold, scorned, even these few followers deserted the carpenter in his hour of trial. Yet the teachings of this humble man became the basis for a religion that would fill the moral vacuum of most of the world in those days. The teachings of this carpenter, Jesus of Nazareth, was to become the foundation for the majority religion of the western world.

Who was this Jesus of Nazareth?

What did he teach?

## Chapter IV

## JESUS OF NAZARETH

Who Was Jesus?

The discussion among the farmers who had traveled to Jerusalem to spend the Passover was loud and heated.

"I tell you, Isaac, I saw this man Jesus, and he may very well be the Messiah, the man who will lead the Jews out of captivity," expostulated one red peasant from Galilee.

"Jonathan, he's just a carpenter, a poor ignorant man who has surrounded himself with other poor ignorant people who believe he is the Messiah. When the Romans get wind of his ideas they'll kill him just like they did every other man who tried to lead us in rebellion against Rome," Isaac, a short dark peddler from Northern Palestine said.

"He's entering Jerusalem, now, and we may see redemption this very year. Jesus has spoken in my section of Palestine, and many of our people believe him,"

responded Jonathan.

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It is possible that discussions like this between many pilgrims to Jerusalem on the Passover may have occurred. The annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem on Passover that year was marked by a feeling that this Jesus, or some other messiah of the Jewish people, would conquer the Roman armies then occupying Jerusalem and restore the Jewish people to their past glory. This simple man, Jesus, had his brief moment on the stage of history, and then, for a number of years, practically slipped from sight. Who was he, and why, suddenly, one Passover around 35 C. E. did he suddenly attract attention in pilgrim-thronged Jerusalem?

#### What Do We Know of Jesus?

Jesus was born at a period of time when historical records were carefully kept. Rabbinic writings and Roman records were written and scrupulously preserved in Palestine at the beginning of the Christian era. It is surprisingly that there is so little contemporary evidence of Jesus' existence and his impact on the Jews of Jerusalem. The few references to Jesus in rabbinic writings are of a doubtful nature, and nothing is said of him in Roman records.

The major source, therefore, is the New Testament, a collection of letters and documents gathered and edited long after Jesus' death. The very vagueness of the evidence for Jesus' existence has led some reputable Christian scholars to say that Jesus never existed. We know very little about Jesus. What did he look like? We are not told. There are conflicting statements about where he went, what he did and what he said in the New Testament. For example, Jesus' last words are variously reported. Matthew and Mark quote his last words as "My father, my father, why hast Thou forsaken me?" Luke reports them as "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." John says the last words were "It is finished."

#### The New Testament

What is this New Testament which we depend upon for our story of Jesus? It is a book about one-third as long as the Hebrew Scriptures, which Christians call the Old Testament. It deals with the life and teachings of Jesus. It generally is divided into four sections:

1) The Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. These books are concerned with the life and teachings of Jesus.

2) The Acts of the Apostles: This book



relates the story of the work of the Apostles, or teachers of Christianity. They mainly deal with the activity of Peter and Paul in spreading the new religion among the Jews and Gentiles of the Mediterranean area.

3) The Epistles or Letters. These books are letters, some allegedly written by Paul, that add to our knowledge of the work of the supporters of the new religion and comment upon the meaning and importance of the teachings of Jesus.

4) The Revelation or Apocalypse. This book is a vision of the new kingdom of God under Jesus which the followers of Jesus may look to as a world of eternal bliss.

This division of books, and the books contained in both the "Old" and New Testament, is the Protestant version. The Catholic Bible includes books that are excluded from the Protestant version, and differs in other minor respects from the Protestant Bible.

#### Who wrote the books of the New Testament?

Many authors combined to write the New Testament.

Only Paul, who is generally admitted to be the author of some of the Epistles, emerges as a definite individual from the many individuals who wrote the New Testament.

#### When, where and in what language were the

books written? The New Testament was probably written between 50 and 150 C. E. It was written in various portions of the eastern Mediterranean area: Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, Antioch, and other eastern Mediterranean cities. Jesus spoke Aramaic, the Semitic dialect which was the spoken language of the people of Palestine at the time of Jesus. His remarks were translated into Greek, and, together with the comments of the writers of that time they have been transmitted to us in the Greek language.

What is the difference between the New Testament and Hebrew Scriptures? The Hebrew Scriptures is the story of a people. It has preserved in prose and poetry the history, the legends, the ideas and emotions of the Hebrews. It is interested in the many problems of human existence. The New Testament is the book of the Christian religion. It is concerned mainly with the meaning of the Christian religion which, it preaches, will lead to the salvation of man from sin.

It is from the pages of the New Testament, the story of Christianity, that we must depend for our life of Jesus. It is this story that scholars have pieced together from varying accounts. Actually the story is not at all certain.

### Jesus' Early Life

Jesus was born of Jewish parents, Joseph and Mary, in Nazareth, <sup>or Bethlehem,</sup> Palestine, about the year 2 B. C. E. He had four brothers and two sisters. He was brought up in the typical surroundings of the Jewish people in northern Palestine, learning something of the Bible and of rabbinic methods of telling parables and stories, although he did not appear to be interested in the study of Jewish law. His first thirty years are practically unreported in the New Testament. We can assume that he lived a typical Jewish life of the time, attending synagogue, earning his living as a carpenter. He was an observant Jew, living among the poorer people in Galilee, Palestine.

### Baptism and Conversion

In his thirtieth year, Jesus began to feel vague stirrings. Coming to the Jordan river, he met John the Baptist, a Jew who preached the coming of the Messiah -- a man who would save the Jews from Roman oppression -- and practiced baptism, or emersion in water, which was supposed to wash away the sins of all those who were immersed. Teachings regarding the coming of the Messiah had been rife in Judaism during periods of oppression, and they drew their origins from statements in the Hebrew

prophetic works of Isaiah, Hosea and Daniel.

Immersion in water was mentioned numerous times in the Hebrew Scriptures as a means of cleaning oneself from touching unclean animals, etc. Jesus was baptized by John and was enormously influenced by this baptism. He began to meditate and, after intense inner conflict, began to believe that he was the Messiah, the deliverer of the Jews, whose forerunner, or Elijah, John the Baptist was.

#### Jesus' Message

Jesus attracted some following among the poor people of Galilee and gathered<sup>to</sup> himself a number of believers in his message, his disciples. For one to three years -- estimates vary -- Jesus wandered about Palestine, preaching the coming of a Messiah and of a Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Jesus spoke in the spirit of the rabbis and the prophets except that, unlike the rabbis, he was a mystic and was certain of the approaching end of the world. He did not worry about the practical needs of society, and asked the rich to give up their wealth. Reports of cures and miracles by Jesus gathered more followers to his banner.

Jesus Enters Jerusalem

Jesus' idol, John the Baptists, was be-headed by Herod, ruler of Palestine, and Jesus, fearing for his own life, escaped from Palestine to Tyre and Sidon. In Sidon he revealed himself to his disciples as the Messiah. Finding a favorable reception to the announcement, Jesus decided to go to Jerusalem and there announce himself as the Messiah, the son of David. Proceeding by way of Jericho, he entered the city five days before the first night of Passover. He entered on an ass, in keeping with the statement of the Hebrew prophet Zechariah regarding the Messiah. The next day he visited the Temple and drove out the money changers and the fowl dealers from the outer court of the Temple. The money changers changed money from the coin of Rome to the money of the Temple, since Roman coin could not be used on Temple grounds, and the fowl dealers sold birds that could be used for sacrifices. When asked about his actions, Jesus claimed that, as Messiah, he could perform such deeds.

Jesus antagonized some elements among the Jews when he was reported to have favored the destruction of the Temple. When asked about paying taxes to Rome, he did not give a clear-cut denunciation of the practice, and lost most of his popular

support, who assumed that the Messiah was intended to deliver the Jews from the Roman overlordship. Jesus was heartsick, for he had made a bad impression in Jerusalem. He retired to celebrate the Seder, the Passover evening meal, or, as some believe, to observe the Sabbath.

### Arrest and Crucifixion

While Jesus was celebrating what came to be known as the Last Supper, Jesus' enemies in Jerusalem supported the attempts of the Roman government to dispose of the new claimant to the Messiahship. Pontius Pilate, the Roman procurator or governor, had Jesus arrested on a charge of treason and condemned him to death as a revolutionary and a self-styled King of the Jews. The Gospels report that the aroused Jewish leaders forced Pilate to make this decision, but Pilate was probably thankful for the opportunity to make an example out of the newest Jewish trouble-maker. Jesus was crucified, according to the Roman practice of the time, and, after his death, he was removed from the cross and buried by a member of the Sanhedrin. Following his death, Jesus was reported by his disciples to have risen from the dead, and to have urged his followers to continue to believe in him as the son of God.

### Jesus' Influence

These ideas about Jesus' life are all open to question by scholars. The story told above is what most believing Christians would relate about the life of Jesus. It is not a scientific story -- or a story that is consistent even in the pages of the New Testament. It is beyond these statements regarding Jesus, doubtful though they may be, that the story of Jesus enters the field of pure belief, or faith. The bare bones of Jesus' life story do not amply explain Jesus' influence on his followers. People believe that Jesus must have possessed a great and moving personality to maintain the belief in him and his teachings long after his death. Jesus was able to teach in parables, stories that contained moral teachings, that were so pithy that they appealed to the masses of people. Jesus, for example, predicted the coming of the end of the world by likening the world in his day to a fig tree that puts forth leaves. Just as the leaves on the tree indicate that the summer is near, Jesus said, so the signs of the times indicated that the end of the world was near. In those days, when the Roman Empire's corruptness and greed seemed certain to overturn her, Jesus' statements about the end of the world and the need for love, charity, and com-

passion must have made an impact on his circle of followers. He must have possessed a warm and generous nature. In many of his talks to his disciples, he implied that he was more than just a man; that he was on earth through the commands of God.

#### After Jesus' Death

When Jesus died, his disciples were completely scattered and disorganized. Jesus, their leader and Messiah, had been crucified. For all practical purposes, the movement was finished. Then stories began circulating that Jesus was not dead, that he had risen from the grave and exhorted his followers to continue to spread his teachings. The disciples, overcoming their fear of the Romans, began meeting again, attending the Temple and synagogue. They spread the word that the Messiah for whom the Jews were praying had already arrived. The other Jews in the synagogue and Temple disagreed with the Nazarenes, as they called the new Jewish sect. They asked the Nazarenes why, if Jesus was the Messiah, were they still oppressed by the Romans? The Nazarenes asked for faith in their movement, assuring the Jews that evidence of God's deliverance would soon come. While the other Jews did not agree with the Nazarenes, the followers of Jesus of Nazareth, they did not stop them from wor-



shipping in the synagogue. There were many movements in Judaism, the synagogue leaders felt, and this new group of Nazarenes was just another minor cult.

### Paul Appears

Gradually, the movement gained a few converts in the Near East, and other converts in Rome. The movement was growing slowly, but it still adhered to the Jewish laws of circumcision and dietary provisions. It had only added the belief in Jesus as the Messiah.

A former enemy of the Nazarene sect was converted to the group, and his conversion changed the whole orientation of the new Christians. One Saul of Tarsus, whose name in Greek was Paul, was so influential in changing the direction of the new group that the resulting religion is called Paulinian Christianity by scholars.

Who was Paul who made the great change in Christianity from a minor Jewish sect to an international religion?

Would there have been Christianity as we know it without Paul?

## Chapter V

## PAUL, THE NEW LEADER

Saul of Tarsus Goes on a Mission

The road to Damascus was hard and difficult, but the Jew walking along the rocky path was not intent on where he was walking. Saul of Tarsus, a Jewish teacher, a Roman citizen, was going to Damascus to protect his Jewish faith from the new Nazarene sect which had sprung up there. If possible, he would bring those who had transgressed against Judaism back with him, bound, to Jerusalem. Suddenly, he heard a voice speak to him and tell him to go to Damascus and wait until he was told what to do. Feeling that he had heard the voice of Jesus, whose followers he opposed, Saul went into Damascus and fasted. On the third day of his fast a Nazarene named Ananias came to Saul and asked him to be baptized in the new Christian faith. Saul did so, and joined the new sect in the synagogues in Damascus.

This, simply, is the story of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus as told in the Book of Acts. Christianity has, since then, considered the conversion of Saul, or, as he was known by

his Greek name, Paul, one of the most momentous events that had occurred in the history of world religion. Paul's mission of opposing the new Christian group, the group that had taught of the messiahship of Jesus, had been changed to that of conversion to, and outspoken advocacy of, the Christian group.

#### Paul's Ministry

Paul, if we accept the story in the Book of Acts, had turned from persecutor to champion of the new Christian faith. He believed that Jesus had done God's will, and that he had risen from the dead and was sitting at God's right hand. Paul began a cycle of visits to the Near East, talking in synagogues and attempting to convince all those who would listen to him of the need to accept the new faith. In Syrian Antioch he settled down and began an extremely fruitful mission to the non-Jews of Antioch. Since Paul had not insisted on circumcision as a means to salvation, the local church at Antioch was extremely disturbed at the departure from past Christian custom. It urged Paul to submit the argument to the mother church in Jerusalem. Paul, realizing that he had to justify his actions, left to speak to the church leaders in Jerusalem and present his reasons for this

radical departure.

### The Break With Judaism

This was an extremely important step -- and Paul probably realized it. Circumcision, more than any other act, was considered basic to Jewish identification and practice, and was a major block to conversion of Gentiles to Christianity. If Paul's new practice was accepted by the mother church of Jerusalem, established Judaism would reject the converts of the new Jewish sect as Jews. If Paul's converts had to be circumcised, it would set-up a formidable stumbling block to the growth of Christianity outside of the Jewish group.

The success of Paul's policy with the converts of Antioch was too evident to the leaders of the church in Jerusalem. While the Nazarene leaders in Jerusalem still adhered to strict Jewish law, they permitted Paul to accept converts from the Gentiles based on faith in Jesus, rather than the Mosaic law. The converts still had to observe a few practices of traditional Jewish belief, but Paul had won a great victory for his view of Christianity as a religion in its own right, rather than as an offshoot of Judaism.

### Paul Continues His Mission

Paul maintained his visits to the Near Eastern churches, and in the spring around 60 C. E., he went from Corinth to Jerusalem to deliver a contribution to the mother church in Jerusalem. There he was asked to go up to the Temple and demonstrate that he respected the Law of Moses, thus disproving the charge that he was attempting to dissuade the Christian Jews from following the Mosaic Law. Paul was attacked by a mob at the Temple and a Roman garrison had to rescue him. He was accused of attempting to overthrow Judaism and seeking to aid in rebellion by the government but, after a number of years of intermittent hearings, he appealed to Caesar in Rome to hear his case. Roman law gave all Roman citizens this privilege, and Paul was sent by boat to Rome. He was received cordially by the Christian group in Rome and was given freedom to speak and preach. It is thought that Paul was released after a first trial before Nero, but, in a second trial, he was sentenced to death around 65 C. E.

### The Contributions of Paul

The story of Paul, as presented here, is based mainly upon the Book of Acts, in the New Testa-

ment, a book which scholars believe was written much later. The ministry of Paul resulted in a decided change in the character of the new Christian sect. It had previously been a small sect of Jews, as zealous in the performance of Jewish law as any Pharisee. When Paul converted non-Jews to the Nazarene sect without insisting on circumcision, the new group took on a completely different hue. It became a dominantly Gentile group, in many respects more antagonistic to its Jewish parent than to the pagan world about it. It began growing by leaps and bounds, since the strictness of Jewish law, which had prevented Gentiles from joining the group, was now removed. The preaching of the approaching end of the world, of the need to accept a Messiah who would care for all mankind, was an attractive doctrine to the oppressed masses of the Roman Empire. It became more and more estranged from Judaism. Judaism looked upon the semi-pagan practices of the new Christians as a perversion of the Jewish faith, and the Christians, realizing this, opposed the Jews openly.

The early days of the Christian sect were spent in the synagogue; its later days were being devoted to an attempt to discredit the faith from which it came. Yet it is very doubtful that Paul was an enemy of Judaism. He probably observed the

very Mosaic laws that he did not regard as necessary in non-Jewish converts. Paul is usually thought of as having made three major contributions to the beliefs of the Christians:

- 1) Insistence on freedom from the Law.  
He believed that the paramount belief of importance in Christianity was the mystical union of the believer with Jesus: salvation through faith.
- 2) Adherence to Jewish moral standards, rather than the degenerate practices of the pagan world.
- 3) The brotherhood of all Christians throughout the world with one another, the so-called universal Christian brotherhood.

#### The Jewish Contributions to Christianity

Though we come to the parting of the ways between Christians and Jews, Christianity could not have developed without its Jewish base. We often do not realize the many unique ideas of God and worship that Christianity gained from Judaism. They would fill many pages, but these are some of the most important:

- 1) The idea of one God, who could not be represented or imagined by the mind of man.

- 2) Ethics and religion wed to one another; doing justice and righteousness the true pursuit of godliness.
- 3) The synagogue, which became the basis for the Protestant church, and the Temple, the basis for the Catholic church. The synagogue, especially, was a uniquely Jewish institution, a house of worship, rather than of sacrifice.
- 4) The Sabbath, a day of rest for man and beast.
- 5) Scriptures as a guide to life and to God.
- 6) Prayer rather than sacrifice.
- 7) The fraternity of all believers.

#### The Parting of the Ways

From the time of Paul onward the Christians and the Jews went their own separate ways. No longer did the Christians and the Jews worship in the same synagogue; no longer was the Christian group a Jewish sect that disagreed with other Jews regarding the coming of the Messiah. A sharp cleavage on the necessity of Jewish law, regarding belief of a mystic Messiah who was both man and God, caused friction to grow and resulted in the parting of the ways. The Christianity of Paul



could not be reconciled with the Judaism of a beset people. When the Romans burnt the Temple in 70 C. E., with the Christian group not helping the Jewish armies, the last ties between Judaism and Christianity snapped. The Roman ruling class was beginning to recognize that Christianity was a potentially useful religious tool; that its emphasis on a future world gave the Roman oppressors much leeway in the conduct of affairs in this world. Christianity was growing and expanding, and the persecutions by some elements in Rome were a stage that soon would be past. Christianity had grown far beyond the small numbers of Jews that had adhered to it in its beginnings and, though it looked nostalgically backward from time to time, it did not falter in its forward march.

## Chapter VI

## THE CATHOLIC CHURCH COMES TO POWER

The Martyrs

The shabby, disheveled people in the arena in the Coliseum in Rome trembled as the shout went up from the thousands assembled in the gigantic sports stadium: "Christiani ad leones!" ("The Christians to the lions!") Emperor Nero and his court looked on with intense interest as hungry lions, deprived of food for a number of days and molested to increase their ferocity, were let loose in the vast arena. For a moment both the lions and the Christians eyed each other uncertainly and then, with a chorus of roars, the lions leaped upon their defenseless prey ...

The scene described above occurred many times during the first three hundred years of Christianity. Nearly twenty thousand Christians were martyred, or slain for their faith, in Rome alone, according to church records, during the persecutions of the Roman emperors. Christianity, with its solid front of faith and absolute belief, defied a Roman Empire that was torn by strife and dissention. The severest persecutions by Nero,

around 70 C. E., and by Diocletian, in the beginning of the fourth century C.E., were marked by extreme bloodshed and numerous martyrdoms, but it did not shake the belief of the Christian Church which, despite these persecutions, continued to grow in strength and solidarity.

### Paul the Basis for Christian Solidarity

Without the organizing ability of Paul, this church, which withstood the mightiest onslaughts of Rome, might have crumbled with ease. Paul, unlike the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem, felt that the whole Mosaic Law was replaced by the coming of Jesus. He made acceptance of Christianity based on two factors:

- 1) Recognition that Jesus was the Messiah, the son of God, who died for the sin of mankind. This recognition was accompanied by baptism, in which the past sinfulness of the convert was washed away. Baptism occurred only once during the life of the convert.

- 2) Participation in the Lord's Supper or communion. This consisted of partaking of wine and bread, which, at the time of the service, is changed to the body and blood of Jesus. This custom

is based on the scene reported in the Gospels during the Last Supper, where Jesus raised wine and bread and, pointing to the wines, said, "This is my blood," and, indicating the bread, stated, "This is my body." Participation in communion occurs frequently in the life of a Christian.

Fortified by these twin rituals, the Church could maintain itself despite attacks from without.

#### The Church Hierarchy

During the Roman persecutions, the Church began to depend more and more upon leadership, a hierarchy -- from the Greek words hieros, "sacred" and arkes, "ruler". This system of "sacred rulers" was very primitive at first. Jesus probably did not envision a more complicated religious organism than that of the synagogue; that is, a teacher, or rabbi, and pupils or followers. At the beginning of the second century, a form of organization in the growing church began to develop. As in any other human organization, officers were appointed, a board of overseers called episcopoi or bishops. The bishops, in turn, were dominated by single individuals, who demoted their fellows to the

position of presbuterol, or "elders".

The office of Pope, or head of the whole Church, did not develop at once, but gradually evolved from the needs of the times. Each area had its own bishop, the bishop of Rome, the bishop of Athens, etc. But Rome was the most important city in the world at the time, and the bishop of Rome acquired more and more power over his fellow bishops. A tradition that Peter, first bishop of Rome, was appointed to be the head of the church was to strengthen the hands of the Pope throughout history. The real power of the Pope (from the Greek pappas "father") did not begin until the third and fourth centuries, C. E.

#### Constantine Recognizes the Church

Strengthened by a powerful faith and a strong hierarchy, the Church withstood persecutions, emerging from the fire of Roman intolerance stronger each time. Gradually, the Roman rulers began to realize that it was to be a choice between this faith founded by a Galilean carpenter, and utter ruin for the Empire. Persecutions had not shaken the Church, but had made it stronger.

Constantine, Emperor of Rome from 306-337 C. E., finally recognized the Christianity could not be fought any longer, that it had to be

recognized as an equal religion with the old religious cults of Rome. In 313 he issued the Edict of Toleration, permitting the Christians to worship on an equal level with all other religions of the Empire. Yet Constantine was far from being a Christian in the true sense of the word, though he did consent to baptism on his death bed. He kept the pagan title of Pontifex Maximus and never openly insulted the pagan religious cults of Rome. One of the strangest acts of his reign was his calling the Council of Nicea in 325. A non-Christian, he commanded the Christians to convene and settle a dispute in the Church that was causing a wide split in its ranks. Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria, held a theory that the persons of the Trinity, the Father (God), the Son (Jesus) and the Holy Ghost (the Spirit of God), were not all equal, but that God, the Father, was the Supreme Being. Most of the Church opposed him and this "heresy" was eliminated in a Council called and directed by a non-Christian.

#### Augustine and Thomas Aquinas: Church Philosophers

During the period of the early development of the Church, there had been little, if any, attempt to gain a system of thought. Christianity, a new religion, grew before it could have a definite

philosophy. The concept of the Trinity, the relationship of God to man, the meaning of sin: all were developed long after Jesus' death. We have discussed the first of the great thinkers of the Church: the Apostle Paul. Two other figures loom head-and-shoulders above other Church thinkers in shaping the Church: Augustine and Thomas Aquinas.

Augustine came upon the Church scene when all Christianity was torn by immense theological conflicts. The relationship of the Father to the Son, of sin and salvation, was tearing the Church apart. Augustine was one of the great figures that helped save the church. Both Augustine's father and mother were Christians, although his father was converted later in life. Augustine became a follower of Manichaeism, a Persian philosophy that emphasized the fight between two world powers, good and evil. However, after nine years of membership, Augustine abandoned the philosophy, finding no answers to his intense inner conflict.

In 383 Augustine left Carthage for Rome. His mother, a pious Christian who was later made a saint by the Church, followed him. Augustine presently found himself more and more attracted to the beliefs of the church and, in 387, he was baptized in the Church together with his illegitimate son. He returned to North Africa and there

became presbyter and then bishop of Hippo. His major works, The City of God and Confessions, revealed both his conflict within and his attempt to make order out of the theological chaos in the Church. He died, full of honors, in 430.

Augustine taught that the true Church was characterized by four qualities: unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity. The church had to be united, it had to be world-wide, and it had to maintain the apostolic succession, i. e., it had to keep the chain of tradition going down through the ages from the time when Jesus first appointed his apostles or teachers. Augustine also proposed that the Church coerce non-Christians to come into the Church; it was the duty of the Church to "force them to come in." This philosophy led to the Inquisition and other persecutions of non-believers.

Probably the greatest scholar in the Catholic Church, Thomas Aquinas, entered the stage of history over eight hundred years after Augustine, in the thirteenth century. He was of noble birth, having descended from the family of the counts of Aquino in Naples. Joining the Dominican order, he traveled about Europe, engrossing himself in his studies to such a degree that his fellow students in Cologne, weary of his silence, called him the



"Dumb Ox." He spent his whole life studying and lecturing, defending Catholic doctrine. He died in 1274, having written a multitude of books, the most important being a series called Summa Theologia ("The Height of Theology").

Aquinas in Catholicism was much like Maimonides in Judaism, since he did not originate as much as he organized. He took the great mass of Catholic doctrine and belief, organized it into a system of thought based on the philosophy of the Greeks, as well as the dogmas of the Church Fathers. His philosophy is so logical and so ordered that, it is said, once one of his basic ideas is accepted, the reader is obliged to continue with Aquinas' philosophy until the Church is accepted.

#### The Roman Empire Falls: The Church Reigns

The barbarian mercenaries entered Rome in 476 C. E., sacking and burning the city. The last occupant of the throne of the Roman Empire was, by a strange coincidence, named the same as the legendary founder of Rome, Romulus. As the Roman Empire ended, the Church was in tremendous turmoil. Libraries hundred of years old lay in ashes. Schools and colleges were destroyed. All learning, which had stemmed from Rome and the Roman Empire, slowed and then stopped. The period which historians

called the Dark Ages had begun.

Yet the Church rallied during the destruction. Monasteries and cloisters became the last refuges of culture in the Western World for the masses of people. Judaism and Mohammedism were entering their finest and most intellectual era; Christianity had lost the light of culture and refinement, Rome. Instead it substituted intense study of the Church Fathers and Christian theology. It became the depository for the new religions of the West.

The power of the Church during the Middle Ages, 500-1500 C. E., was best typified by its ability to make and break kings. Previous to the fall of the Roman Empire, the Church was tolerated only so long as it helped maintain the power of the emperor. Now, the will of the Pope was paramount in maintaining a ruler. The Pope had the power to excommunicate, to forbid the ruler from enjoying the sacraments of the Church. Besides condemning the ruler to everlasting torment after death, it made him an outcast during his lifetime. Believing Christians would not speak to him; people avoided him on the street.

One of the most pathetic stories of the kind occurred in a monumental battle between king and Pope in the eleventh century. Henry IV, emperor

of the Holy Roman Empire, attempted to fill a church office in his realm. Gregory VII, the pope of the time, forbade Henry to do so. Henry retaliated by repudiating the authority of the pope and calling upon him to abdicate. Gregory then took the stand stated in Augustine's City of God; that the Pope was absolute ruler on earth, responsible only to God. When Gregory refused to resign as Pope, Henry deposed Gregory as Pope. Gregory retaliated by excommunicating the king, and denying him authority over the Empire and his subjects.

Henry's empire began to go to pieces. No one would talk to him. But there was one resort that he could undertake. He could exercise the privilege of all penitents. He could go to the Pope and beg forgiveness. In the midst of winter, after four weeks of unbelievable hardships crossing the Alps, Henry arrived in Canossa, in northern Italy, where Gregory was on his way to a council. Henry asked forgiveness, stating that he was willing to accede if the excommunication was removed. Gregory refused and Henry then underwent the severest trial a monarch probably ever underwent. In a coarse woolen shirt, barefooted, bareheaded, Henry walked through the deep snow to the castle gate and begged to be admitted. Gregory kept the king shivering out-

side the gate for three days before he was permitted to enter. Henry prostrated himself before the pope and, not until then, the pope absolved the emperor of his excommunication and blessed him. Thus <sup>was</sup> the power of the Church in medieval times!

### The Division Between East and West

Since the earliest beginnings of the Church, there had been a division between East and West, between the seat of the bishop of Rome and the bishop of Constantinople. There was a marked language difference between the eastern and western church: the eastern churches used Greek for services while the western ones mainly utilized Latin. Even their scriptures were in different languages. The ties between the churches were nebulous because of distance and, even though the eastern churches recognized the overlordship of the bishop of Rome, the Pope, in practice they generally ignored it.

The patriarch of Constantinople and the pope of Rome were at odds more than they were at peace. The establishment of the Holy Roman Empire with the help of the pope, established a political barrier to union of the two branches of Christendom. Finally, in 1054, Pope Leo IX excommunicated

Michael Cerularius, patriarch of Constantinople, and the breach was complete.

The major points of disagreement between the Greek Orthodox churches and the Roman Catholic Church are:

- 1) The Father is superior to the Son in the Trinity, in the Greek Orthodox Church.

- 2) The Eastern group rejects the absolute authority of the Pope.

- 3) Marriage is permitted priests and deacons before ordination but bishops are selected from the monastic, or celibate, orders in the Greek Orthodox Church.

- 4) The Eastern Orthodox used leavened, rather than unleavened, bread, for communion.

The patriarchs of the Eastern Church are invested by the government, although appointed by the church, and the patriarch may be deposed by the government. Patriarchs today are heads of the church in Constantinople (now Istanbul, Turkey), Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem and Moscow. Russian Orthodox and Greek Orthodox churches are the major branches of the Eastern Churches. Today, there are over a hundred million followers of this branch of the Church.

### The Crusades

Despite the split between the eastern and western branches of the Church, a sense of dedication to the ideals of Christianity made the foundation of the power of the Pope secure. The Mohammedan faith had gained the allegiance of millions in the East and a new group, the Seljuk Turks, took over the Moslem Empire and pressed on towards Constantinople. At the end of the twelfth century, the head of the Byzantine Empire, an Eastern Orthodox Center, appealed to the Pope, Urban II, for aid.

Urban was eager to assist, for a number of reasons. He believed that this was the golden opportunity to reunite the Eastern and Western churches, since, if the Pope could save the tottering Byzantine Empire, it would be the most obvious lesson of the Roman Catholic group's superiority. He also felt that the Moslems were endangering Christianity in the West for, if the Byzantine Empire fell, then it would be the West's turn to feel the Turkish onslaught. But a cause was needed, a cause that would rally the princes of Europe to the banner of the Pope.

A wild-eyed tattered monk named Peter the Hermit came to Rome at that time and began to

tell of atrocities committed by the Turks against the Catholics in Palestine, which the Moslems had captured. Urban had an audience with Peter and was greatly impressed by the story of the monk. He hastened to a council of the Church being held in France, and there he preached a sermon urging the freeing of the Holy Land that brought a most amazing response. At first a mixed horde of people moved forward, killing Jews and other non-Christians as they marched to Jerusalem. These Crusaders (from the Latin cruciata, "marked with a cross," from the cross on the garments of the Christian army) were joined by skilled warriors from nations all over Europe. Finally, in 1097, the weary Crusaders captured Jerusalem after a hard siege. Jews and Moslems were killed ruthlessly.

The conquest of Jerusalem by the Crusaders marked the high point of the Middle Ages. Unlike men with the same religion had joined arms together for a holy cause, though they carried it out with the utmost ruthlessness. The Crusaders began arguing shortly after their great victory, and even Jerusalem fell to Saladin, a Moslem leader, less than a hundred years after its dramatic capture. Crusade after crusade, holy war after holy war, since that time, did not establish the fever pitch of religious excitement that the First

Crusade had done. It has been said that "the Crusades were the foreign policy of the Papacy"; they were more than that. They established a way of life, a goal, for all Europe for the next two hundred years. In both the religious and the political sphere in western Europe, the Pope was supreme.

#### Francis and Loyola: Soldiers of the Spirit

While the Pope established his political power in Europe, the church as an organism was suffering from the usual disease of an group too long in power. Corruption and decadence became the rule rather than the exception. Priests sold "tickets of admission" to heaven; monks, vowed to lives of poverty, ate and drank as well as the upper nobility. The Church that had idolized the humbleness of a Galilean carpenter became a by-word for avarice and greed. The greatest writers of the Middle Ages, among them Dante, Chaucer and Boccaccio, all good Catholics, devoted space in their writings to the abuses of the clergy. Two men, nearly three hundred years apart, helped to remind the Church of the humility it had forgotten: Francis of Assisi and Ignatius of Loyola.

Francis of Assisi (1182-1226) was the son of a rich merchant of Assisi, Italy. Although



Francis was taken into the business by his father when he was fourteen years old, at the age of twenty-four, he suddenly abandoned his old friends and began a life of penance and poverty. Fellow townsmen joined him and Francis envisioned an order of men devoted to poverty, obedience and chastity, renouncing every personal possession and living on alms. Innocent III, then Pope, agreed to permit the organization of the Friars Minor, as the order was called, although it was not formally approved until seven years after the first agreement was given. The movement grew, and Francis' writings, gems of humility and simplicity, became treasured works. Francis died at Assisi 1226 and two years later was canonized by Pope Gregory IX.

Another figure, at the time when the German church was breaking away from the Papacy, was Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556). During his first thirty years he lived a typical life of the period, drinking, fighting, and generally enjoying himself. As a captain in the Army of the Duke of Najera he was wounded seriously and, during his convalescence, began reading books on Jesus and the lives of St. Francis and St. Dominic. After his convalescence, he renounced his military career and began nursing the sick,

while living in a cave. At the age of thirty-three, he decided to begin studying and traveled throughout Europe attending school. In Paris he formed a society which later became the Society of Jesus or Jesuits. They went to Venice, intending to go to Palestine to convert to Moslems. They were unable to go because of the war between the Christians and the Turks, so they volunteered to do any tasks that the Pope might assign them. The pulpits of churches throughout Italy were offered to his followers, and, in 1539, Ignatius asked for papal approval of his order, which was given. He established homes for the unfortunate, and attempted to have some of the abuses against Jews remedied. While his writings were few in number his Exercitia Spiritualia, or "Spiritual Exercise," became the model for Catholic missions and retreats.

#### The Inquisition

Between the time of Francis and Ignatius of Loyola, a new problem began to present itself in the Church: the problem of the Christians entering the Church from Jewish converts in Spain and Portugal in the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries. These Jews, forced into Catholicism by the pressure of the Church and Christian rulers

were secretly practicing Judaism. In addition, new anti-Catholic Christian sects were springing up throughout Europe. As the Catholic Church points out, the Inquisition was not used against non-Catholics, but against Catholics that had committed heresies against their faith.

The Inquisition was an attempt to prevent the further disintegration of the Church and its loss of power among its followers. It is notable that the Inquisition never gained the force in France, England and Germany that it demonstrated in Spain and Portugal, largely because a death sentence had to be carried out by the civil authorities, and, in those countries the civil authorities were not especially eager to cooperate.

The Inquisition attempted to discover the heretics among the Catholics. Torture and secret trials were used to gain information. In most cases, the punishment was penance or imprisonment, rather than death. In case of a sentence of death, the prisoner was turned over to the civil authorities for execution. After the sixteenth century the Inquisition lost most of its power, since it could not longer order the death of heretics, and had to depend on spiritual punishment, i. e., excommunication.

### The Catholic Reformation

The hammer-blows of the Protestant Reformation were felt most intensely by the Church. The Church had to admit many of the Protestant accusations against it. It had been too worldly wise, too much a meddler in politics and in the petty dealings of monarchs. It had sold indulgences and its clergy too often had been corrupt. Finally, in 1545, the Council of Trent -- Trent was a city in Southern Germany -- was convened. The Council, at first formed because of the urgings of Luther, dealt with Protestants and Protestantism only briefly. In the main it was interested in reestablishing its position in Europe.

At this council, held with interruptions between 1545-1563, the whole area of basic Catholic belief was re-examined. The basic belief of Catholicism were clearly defined, including the organization of schools, authority of the hierarchy, and the collection of fees for indulgence, i. e., church forgiveness for sins. The work of the Council was so far-reaching that only the dogmas concerning Mary and the infallibility of the Pope have been added since then. The position of the Council of Trent is basically the position of the Catholic Church today.

And -- The Catholic Church Today

The Catholic Church, having lost its sources of power in much of Europe, was forced more and more to rely upon spiritual forces. In the nineteenth century it lost its last hold on Italy, when the Papal States were added to the new state of Italy. A small "city-within-a-city", Vatican City within the city of Rome, became the last piece of earth that still flew the papal flag.

Yet, despite the loss of political power, the Pope and the Catholic Church are as powerful as ever. The years have welded the Church into a vast organization, carefully disciplined and tightly controlled. Its priests, bishops and cardinals, more than ever before, are responsive to the will of the Pope. Protestantism, recognizing the power of the Catholics, has also realized that it must gain some unity to withstand the Church. The Catholic Church, in the future, may be faced with a united Protestant Church. Meanwhile, secure in the great numbers of its hierarchy and its followers, it is confident that, more than ever, the future is hers.

## Chapter VII

## HOW THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH WORSHIPS

The Church's Influence.

The great audience in the concert hall applauded again and again after the great singer concluded singing Ave Maria. In a London Museum a hushed group filed past Michaelangelo's painting, "Entombment of Christ." At the same time, a group of American school children in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York were being shown Jacob Epstein's sculpture of Madonna and Child. A literature class was studying the Nun's Priest Tale by Geoffrey Chaucer.

Although all these works of art are based on the Roman Catholic religion, few, if any of them, draw upon the welter of theology and history that we have discussed. Instead they are inspired by the poetry of the Catholic mass, or service, by the decorations of the cathedrals and churches that dot the landscapes of Christian nations; and by the singular devotion of the Church's clergy. It is the Church, in practice, rather than in theory, that has served as a stimulus to art for

the past nineteen centuries.

### The Mass

One of the greatest incentives to artistic creation has been the home of Catholicism, the church or cathedral, and the ceremony celebrated there, the Mass. The decorations of the church, statues of the saints, the garments of the priests, the very music sung during the service: all these have been sources of inspiration to innumerable artists.

If we examine a Roman Catholic church, we will notice that it is in the shape of a cross. The service is conducted in the cross bar of the "cross", while the worshippers are seated in the upright section of the "cross". We may notice that all worshippers entering the church, when they come in sight of the altar in front of the church, genuflect, or bend the knee, meanwhile making the sign of the cross on their body with their right hand. On occasion a censer will be burning incense -- derived from the Temple worship when incense was "a sweet savor to the Lord." Holy water, or water blessed by the priest, is used at different times during the ritual, for this blessed water is supposed to have the power to ward off evil.

If we have entered during a solemn mass,

we will notice that most of the service is sung and chanted by a choir and the ministers conducting the mass. If the priest is not assisted by other ministers, it is called a high or sung mass. And, if the service is not chanted, we are attending what is known as a low mass. All eyes are upon the altar, which is made of stone, and contains relics of the martyrs, usually small pieces of bone. The priest celebrating the mass, who is known as the celebrant, follows a strict ritual in approaching the altar. The celebrant wears long flowing robes, supposedly derived from the garments at the time of Jesus. Different colors are worn at different seasons by the celebrant, and draped on the altar. Black, for example, is used on Good Friday, when the Church is mourning the crucifixion of Jesus. If we consult the missal, or prayer book, we can discover why a particular color is being worn on the day we attend.

Now that we have become accustomed to the semi-darkness in the church, we notice that there are niches in the wall, with statues of saints in them. These saints usually have candles that people have brought burning in front of them. These candles are burnt to the saints as a mark of respect and worship. The saints are people who performed great deeds for the Church and who, the Church



is sure, have gone to heaven. People pray to these saints to intercede for them with God.

The mass is divided into two sections: the mass of the Catechumens derived from the worship of the synagogue, and the Mass of the Faithful, added by the early Christian church. The Mass of the Catechumens is completed and now, the climax of the Mass is being reached. The priest has taken a cup made of silver and gold, called the Chalice, and a rounded bread wafer, called the Host, from the small covered tabernacle on the altar. During the prayers over the chalice, which contains wine, and over the host, an event called transubstantiation supposedly takes place. This transubstantiation, or changing of the substance of the wine and the bread, is the height of the Mass. According to Catholic doctrine, when Jesus, during the Last Supper, raised the bread and wine and said "This is my blood" and "This is my body" a miraculous event happened. The bread became the actual body of Jesus; the wine became his blood. It is the deepest mystery of the Church, and one which few non-Catholics are able to grasp or understand. The Church believes that the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross is repeated for mankind every time this transubstantiation takes place.

The Host is broken up and distributed

among the people who attend the Mass. Those people partaking of the Host are taking communion, and they have not eaten that day. The celebrant partakes of the wine, but does not give this to the laymen taking communion. Shortly before the close of the service, the deacon calls out "Ite, missa est", in Latin, meaning "Go, it is the dismissal!" and, from the word missa comes our English word Mass.

As we leave the church we may have many questions. One matter that bothers many people is the use of Latin in the service. It is not infrequent for non-Catholics to leave a Mass saying "I don't understand a single thing that went on!" Latin is used because it was the language of the people during the time of the Roman Empire and the use of Latin has stabilized the language of the service. In a similar way, Jews use Hebrew; Mohammedans, classic Arabic; and Hindus, Sanscrit. Another factor that causes many questions is the relative non-participation by the congregation. While there are congregational responses, the bulk of the service is conducted by the priesthood, and laymen are not permitted on the altar. The Church feels that only those who have taken sacred orders should approach the altar, for it has the greatest respect for the Eucharist, or the transub-

stantiated wine and bread.

### The Church Calendar

The whole Catholic service and ritual is fixed by the church year cycle. The vestments of the priests, the prayers that are chanted, the very mode and tone of the service, are set by the particular holiday or saint's day being celebrated. The Church year is highlighted by the feasts of Christmas and Easter. Advent, from the Latin word adventus, "coming" (of Christ), begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas. It is a time for sombre reflection and preparation, and celebrations and weddings are avoided. Christmas, celebrating Jesus' birth, halts the period of mourning and changes it to joy.

Lent, so called because of "lengthening" of the days of spring, begins forty days before Easter, and commemorates Jesus' forty-day fast in the wilderness. During this period Catholics abstain from certain foods and pleasures. During the final week of the forty day period the religious services begin to gain in solemnity and mourning. Palm Sunday commemorates the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem and palm branches are carried, as they were by the people in Jesus' day. Holy Thursday commemorates the Last Supper,

and, in remembrance of this, white vestments are worn at the mass. On Good Friday, on which Jesus was crucified, the mass is not celebrated, but a special service is held. Holy Saturday begins to partake of the joy of Easter. Easter Sunday is the time reported for Jesus' rising from the dead; the cry "Christ has risen!" dispels the gloom from the Lenten season and changes it to the joy of the Easter service.

Scholars have generally noted that both Advent and Lent are connected with the past pagan rites from winter and spring, and that many of the terms used, Easter, for example, come from old pagan rituals of the time. Christianity, in its early days, was constantly in conflict with paganism and, as it became a state religion, it attempted to adapt various pagan ceremonies to Church practice.

#### The Sacraments

The Roman Catholic Church treats the life span of the individual as a religious whole. From birth to death, ceremonies, or sacraments, sanctify the life of the believing Catholic. Withholding these sacraments is the worst punishment that the Church can visit on one of its communicants, the punishment of excommunication. The sacraments are:

1) Baptism: the sprinkling of water on the infant, symbolizing the washing away of the original sin of Adam. A layman, or even a non-Christian, can perform a baptism.

2) Confirmation: This is the completion of the act of baptism when the child reaches the age of reason, usually twelve years old. The minister is usually a bishop who "lays on hands" on the confirmand.

3) Penance: Confession of sins in the presence of a priest and absolution, or forgiveness, is given in God's name by the priest.

4) The Eucharist: The acceptance of the Host, and participating in the Mass, as already explained in the section on the Mass.

5) Holy Orders: Ordination into the ministry.

6) Holy Matrimony: The wedding rite.

7) Unction: Last rites before death. The dying person is anointed with oil by a priest.

### Priests and Nuns

One of the most noteworthy factors in the persistence and growth of the Roman Catholic Church has been the steadfast loyalty of its clergy. Serving for no more than food, lodging and a few comforts, living and dying unmarried, going wherever the Church might send them; the Catholic clergy has been a continual source of strength to the Church.

A priest is a member of different orders with different tasks within the church. The Jesuits, for example, are usually the scholars; the Trappists devote themselves to prayer and meditation. Each order has its place in the Church and performs specific functions.

The education of a priest is a long and arduous task. A Jesuit priest, for example, begins his studies at eighteen years of age. Before entering the order he pursues courses equivalent to a college degree of Bachelor of Arts. He spends his first two years in study and contemplation. His first year includes a period of thirty days spend in absolute silence, and, every year thereafter, he devotes eight days to the same purpose. At the end of two years the candidate takes simple vows of chastity, poverty and obedience. Five years

are then devoted to study of the humanities, philosophy, etc. At the completion of these seven years the young Jesuit is sent to teach for five years in a Jesuit college. After the period of college work, the Jesuit studies theology for three years, and then is advanced to holy orders. For one more year theological studies are continued, and then opportunities are given to the priest for mission work and spiritual employment, after which a final year, called the third year of probation, is observed. After the final year of probation the candidate is admitted to solemn vows and is called a professed father. If the candidate is eighteen years old when he entered the order, he would be thirty-three years old before he reached the final goal of his order.

The nun is a member of an order modeled after the men's orders: Benedictine, Cistercian, Franciscan -- for example. They are mainly concerned with active charitable work among the poor, the sick and the ignorant. The nun, who wears distinctive medieval dress, takes vows of chastity *abstinence* and poverty. The climax of her period of probation is her symbolic marriage to Jesus. Nuns do not conduct the Mass, but assist in taking care of the priest's vestments and the special vessels used in the Mass.

## Chapter VIII

## THE PROTESTANT AGE

The Rise of the Middle Class

A new era was dawning in the world in the fifteenth century, an era of freedom and expansion. Columbus and Cabot had sailed tiny boats to discover lands that would take care of Europe's crowded millions for centuries to come. Galileo and Copernicus were to demonstrate that the earth was just a small body circling the sun, despite the Church's interpretation of the story of Creation which, they felt, made the earth the center of the whole universe. The old barons and nobles were slowly being pushed out of their lands and a new, shoving group of merchants and adventurers was taking their place. Armour and bow-and-arrow were giving way to the crude, but enormously effective, cannon with gunpowder. In a few years Shakespeare, Johnson, Marlowe, and other writers would give the barbaric English language a literature never to be equaled. Latin, as a language of scholars, would gradually lose its importance. Nations, rather than the small dukedoms under the influence of the



Pope, would wage wars against one another. A new world was coming, indeed!

In this western world that was shaking itself awake from the slumber of one thousand years since the destruction of Rome, religion, too, was changing. The Catholic Church, still great and still powerful, was beset by enemies on all sides. Kings and barons, who once had jumped to do the Pope's bidding, grudgingly aided the Pope's causes and complained at the amount of money being sent to Rome to maintain the Catholic Church's headquarters in the Vatican. Great splits between various papal parties, that actually resulted in three popes occupying the papacy at the same time in one period of history, were widening and deepening. The Catholic Church, in many respects, was growing corrupt -- and it was not until the Council of Trent that this trend would be reversed.

More important than what was happening inside the Catholic Church was what was occurring in the world at the time. The new merchants looked upon the great tracts of land owned by the Church as a drain upon their country's economy, since no taxes were paid on these lands. Funds going from countries throughout Europe to the Catholic capital in Rome were badly needed for the upbuilding of the cities that sent the funds. A nationalistic age,

an age in which nations were being formed, rather than small cities with minor rulers, looked with ill-concealed dismay at an international church controlled from outside the nation. The limitations that the Catholic Church had placed on religious expression also chafed the more independent religious leaders in countries under Catholic dominion.

We cannot speak of Protestantism and its growth without understanding the times that gave rise to the growth of the Protestant religious groups. As education and literacy became more widespread, as national pride grew, people began asking why they could not make their own religious decisions. A few great religious leaders arose at the time they were needed, welded the vague feelings of discontent into a mass movement, and changed the whole religious picture of Europe. Only the Mediterranean countries of Spain, Portugal and Italy were relatively unaffected by the wave of religious revolution that swept Europe.

It is these religious leaders, and the religious groups they founded, that we will discuss. Protestantism is split into too many groups to mention all of them, but most of them drew their inspiration from Thomas Cranmer, leader of the Church of England; Martin Luther, founder of Lutheranism; John Calvin, father of Calvinism; and John

Wesley, spiritual forerunner of Methodism. Other major religious movements in the United States, such as the Baptists and Congregationalists, descended from the other major Protestant bodies. With the great number of sects in Protestantism, it is impossible to cover all the groups, but Cranmer, Luther, Calvin and Wesley best typify the leaders of the Protestant revolution, the beginners of the Protestant Age.

### The Church of England and Episcopalianism

#### Thomas Cranmer

In the history of religion Thomas Cranmer does not occupy a large place. He was, in a word, too human. He had all the weaknesses, the uncertainties, the doubts, the fears that normal men have and -- also like most normal men -- he had his moments of greatness. Without Thomas Cranmer the Church of England might have very well foundered after Henry VIII's death -- but we are getting ahead of our story.

Henry VIII, king of England, had a problem, a very great problem. He was in love with a beautiful girl named Anne Bolyn, but, unfortunately, he was married. In the Roman Catholic Church of that time, a divorce could not be obtained, but an annul-

ment, a papal decree saying the marriage never really existed, could be gotten. Henry had written to the Pope for an annulment, but the Pope had refused. In 1534, Henry met Thomas Cranmer, a young professor from Oxford, who gave him a bit of advice. Cranmer suggested that the king appeal to the university faculties, who were prominent churchmen, to give him permission to gain a divorce from his present wife. Cranmer wrote out a case that was presented to the faculties of Oxford and Cambridge, who ruled in the king's favor. Parliament agreed with the findings of the university faculties and the new Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer -- for he was given this highest position in the church by Henry -- made Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn man and wife. From the day of the marriage of the monarch to his love, to this day the Church of England has been outside of the Roman Catholic Church, with the exception of the six years of the reign of Mary of Scotland.

Cranmer believed that the king was the head of the church, and that the king's decisions were absolute. Despite the immorality of Henry's married life -- he had six wives -- Cranmer never changed or varied his course. He gave his wholehearted support to his monarch to the day of Henry's death. Following Henry's death, Cranmer felt free

to attempt new religious experiments. He helped organize the Book of Common Prayer, a book based on the Catholic mass, but eliminated many religious statements that Cranmer opposed. Most important, the Book of Common Prayer was written in English, so that all the people could understand it. The archbishop distributed copies of the Bible in English translation so that all could read it. He permitted the people to partake of the wine in communion, which the Catholics did not allow, and said it was in remembrance of Jesus' death, rather than using the mystic doctrines of transubstantiation, the changing of wine and bread into blood and flesh.

When Mary, Queen of Scots, became queen, she deposed Cranmer and returned the Catholic Church to its full power in England. Two of Cranmer's most faithful bishops, Ridley and Latimer, were imprisoned in the Tower of London with him. Cranmer saw them burnt at the stake and, in a frenzy of fear, wrote seven recantations, taking back all his teachings of his lifetime. But this did not save his life. The queen decided that Cranmer could not be trusted and he was to be executed. The man who was afraid for his life was afraid no longer. He announced that he was recanted out of fear, and he was ashamed of himself. He denounced the Pope and

the Catholic Church. And -- when he was led to the stake and the faggots were put on fire, he stretched the right hand that had written the recantations into the flames, crying "This hand hath offended, let it first be burned." Thus died Thomas Cranmer, a weak man under some situations, but a pillar of strength at his death.

### The Church of England

The Church of England, which Crandall helped to found, was not based, as is generally supposed, on the desire to a king to divorce his wife. If were true, the Church would have returned to the Catholic fold immediately after Henry's death. The king gave the Church of England an excuse to separate from the Catholic Church but it had long been at odds with Rome. English heretics such as John Wycliffe and William Tyndale opposed Rome many years before Henry became king. Over one-fourth of the nation's wealth was controlled by the Catholic Church. Rome was far away and its attempts to control England were deeply resented. Many doctrines of the Catholic Church, including the celibacy of the priesthood, transubstantiation, separation of priesthood and laymen, special regard for Mary as the mother of God, etc., seemed not to be in keeping with the feelings of

the times. The new nationalism of England demanded a church that reflected the English spirit, and Henry VIII and Thomas Cranmer helped to bring it about.

The Church of England is divided into two groups, the "high church" and the "low church". The low church does not permit confession of sins to their ministers and recognizes only two sacraments, baptism and communion. They do not pray to Mary or the saints. The high church is often called Anglo-Catholic, because it resembles the Catholic Church in most respects. The service of communion is called the Mass, the ministers are called "priests", and they may hold confession.

In America, the Church of England gave birth to the Episcopalian Church, divided into various sects. They agree with either the "high" or "low" church of England, although they have only slight allegiance to the Church of England in the British Isles.

### Luther and Lutheranism

#### Martin Luther

More than twenty years before Thomas Cranmer gained a divorce for Henry VIII, a different and much more basic religious revolution was beginning

in the town of Juterbog, Germany. In a spring day of 1517, the people thronged to their small parish church to hear a famous Dominican preacher, Friar Tetzel. The Cathedral of Saint Peter in Rome was being built, and Friar Tetzel offered forgiveness for sins in exchange for funds to build the great cathedral. This forgiveness, or "indulgence", could also be obtained for dead relatives and friends. A member of the Augustinian order of the church, a young professor at the University of Wittenberg, Martin Luther, heard of the preachings of Friar Tetzel. He carefully prepared three pages of parchment, with ninety-five points of objection to the sale of indulgences and posted them on the local church door.

The news of the ninety-five articles spread throughout the towns about Wittenberg, and young Friar Luther found himself the storm center of the community. Attempts by the Church to silence Luther did not avail. Finally, in the winter of 1619, John Eck, a famous Catholic theologian at Lepsig, challenged Luther to a debate. Eck forced Luther to admit that John Hus, a "heretic" who had been burnt at the stake, was correct in some of his beliefs. Luther also denied the supremacy of the bishop of Rome, the Pope, and stated that the Eastern Orthodox churches could not be considered out-



side of the Christian fold. The die was cast, and Luther's expulsion from the Catholic Church was not far away.

Luther then began writing his ideas down for the German people. With the invention of the printing press, his works could be circulated far and wide. His works attacked the corruption of the Church, reduced the number of sacraments from seven to two, and called for a mystical ideal of indifference to worldly affairs and occupation with God.

In 1521 Luther was called to answer for his heresies before the Imperial Diet of the Holy Roman Empire. Luther refused to change his stand, and, reportedly, said "Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise: God help me. Amen." He found, however, that his powerful friends in Germany protected him from being burnt at the stake, and he was permitted to continue his studies. Luther continued to preach and study and, before his death, he found many people turning to his new religion, which his followers called Lutheranism. Luther was a great religious personality, but also was very harsh when it came to his religious enemies. He hated other Protestant movements with nearly the same enmity that he reserved for Catholicism. In many ways, he was more conservative than the other

Protestant reformers that swarmed through Europe. But he gave the whole Protestant world a basis on which to grow. Some of Luther's services to Protestantism included:

- 1) He broke the monopoly that the Catholic Church had held in Christianity in Europe.
- 2) He appealed to the highest conscience of man. In his German translation of the Bible, he permitted all men to read Scripture and to decide as to the truth and falsehood.
- 3) He abolished monastic vows and priestly celibacy.
- 4) He declared that labor was an important element in the divine scheme of affairs, and encouraged mankind to busy themselves in the material improvement of their lot. This broke the other-worldly hold of the Catholic Church which it had exercised for over a thousand years.

#### Lutheranism

The Lutheran Church which developed from Luther's teachings has become a state church in Germany, Finland, Sweden, Norway and Iceland. It

is a very conservative church, in comparison with other Protestant denominations. It holds a doctrine close to the Catholic belief of transubstantiation in communion, believes in the Trinity, and has a fixed ritual. It feels that both the Old and New Testaments are infallible guides to conduct, and follows the Catholic Church Fathers where they are not in conflict with Luther's teachings.

The Lutheran Churches are organized into synods, which every church joins. However, the churches are left free to choose their own ministers and decide in which/<sup>way</sup>they will conduct their affairs. In America nearly one-eighth of all Protestants are Lutheran -- and some Lutheran churches in the United States still worship in German, Swedish, or other languages of the European Lutheran churches.

### Calvin and Presbyterianism

#### John Calvin

The rector of the University of Paris, Nicholas Cop, stood in the pulpit delivering his inaugural oration, written for him by his good friend, John Calvin. The people that came to hear the new rector that day in 1533 were shocked, for

the rector's speech was an attack on the Catholic Church and an approval of many of the doctrines of the "heretic", Martin Luther. Calvin and Cop were forced to flee for their lives.

Calvin traveled throughout Europe and, in 1536, he published his Institutes of the Christian Religion in Basle, Switzerland. The Institutes were a fervid defense of the new Protestant beliefs, and attempted to prove them from both the Bible and history. During his travels Calvin passed through Geneva, Switzerland, and a friend of his, William Farel, asked him to help organize the people of Geneva into a good Protestant federation.

So, at the age of twenty-seven, Calvin began what was to be known as the "City of God" -- from the book written by Augustine over a thousand years previously -- in Geneva, Switzerland. Calvin enforced strict rules of conduct, prohibiting card playing, drinking and dancing. But the strict rule of Calvin gradually began to pale on the people, and in 1536, after a dispute about communion, Calvin was exiled. After two years, however, the people of Geneva realized that the rule of Calvin had meant stability for the small city, and they begged him to return. For twenty-three years afterwards, Calvin dominated the city of Geneva, and, at the early age of fifty-five, he died from tuberculosis.

### The Presbyterians

Calvin's ideas of religion had won him friends far beyond the small city of Geneva. The ideas of Calvin, drawing in great part on the great Church Father, Augustine, were based on the concept that everything man does comes from God. Since God rules all, everything is predestined, or decided by God for man. God is the final decider of the course of history, according to Calvin.

This idea of predestination highly influenced many Protestants in Europe and England. Only of Calvin's great friends, John Knox, organized the Scotch Presbyterians. The name was derived from the Greek word for "elder", and a system of elected elders ruled the church. From these Scotch Presbyterians the Presbyterian Church in the New World began.

The Presbyterians are extremely staunch followers of their faith, and have maintained a strict hold on their doctrine. From the time of Calvin, who burnt a "heretic", Servetus, at the stake, to the present, the Presbyterian group has kept a strict watch on their followers. At each level of the church, from individual church, to presbytery to synod to general assembly, the Presbyterians have preferred an organization directed

by a few elected individuals and ministers, rather than the congregational organization of most other Protestant groups.

Their church buildings are simple, compared to the elaborate structures of the Catholics and Episcopalians. They do not use organ music, and permit only choral music in their churches. Their practices regarding communion and the Trinity are, in general, in keeping with the concepts of the Lutherans. Their clergy has always been a highly educated group, with many seminaries and colleges initiated by them. Princeton University was first begun as a Presbyterian seminary.

### Wesley and Methodism

#### John Wesley

John Wesley probably never believed that he was founding a new religious group when he began to deliver the sermons the length and breadth of England in the eighteenth century. He was a member of the Church of England, and remained so until the day of his death. But Wesley's fervid preaching, his use of rhythmic hymns, his emphasis on spirit rather than form: all these helped bring about the birth of the religious group known as the Methodists.

John Wesley was the son of an Anglican minister who attended Oxford University and devoted himself to religious activities while going to school. After his graduation he volunteered to go to Savannah, Georgia, to minister to the church there. However, a false scandal forced him to leave for England. When thirty-five years old, Wesley realized that a great new light had entered his life. He said it simply in his journal: "I felt I could trust in Christ, Christ alone for my salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."

With this doctrine of "justification by faith", Wesley went throughout England, preaching in churches and out-of-doors. He preached a gospel of social justice, asking his followers to give generously to the poor and hungry. He opposed smoking, drinking and dancing. His more fervent followers today still abstain from alcohol, tobacco and dancing. In 1791 Wesley died, but he left behind him a movement that continued to grow in strength and influence.

#### The Methodist Church

The Methodists, who derive their name from the fact that they are supposed to have a God-

like "method" in living, follow John Wesley's Methodist Discipline to this day. Though his rules are revised from time to time, they still are the foundation of the church. They prohibit drinking, gambling, alcohol, dancing and card playing, theatre-going, and all forms of extreme living.

The Methodists have had few differences with one another regarding doctrine, largely because the church emphasizes few doctrines outside of "justification by faith". Social justice, and right living have been also urged by the church, but the extent of their practice is usually left to the discretion of the individual church members.

The ministers, on the other hand, are very strictly controlled by the church. All appointments to churches and handled by bishops in charge of a certain area. A Methodist minister can be removed or placed in a position by his bishop. Each minister is held responsible for a certain share of work, and is called on to report to his bishop regarding its execution.

Methodism also depends, in large part, on its excellent system of education throughout the world for maintaining its membership. This list of Methodist-founded institutions in this country is long, and includes Vanderbilt University, the



University of Southern California, and Duke University.

## Chapter IX

## WHAT HAPPENED TO JUDAISM?

Did Judaism Change After Jesus' Time?

Judaism, to Christians, has often been called "the cradle of Christianity". It is the religion from whence Christianity came. Christians never tire of pointing out that most of the writers of the New Testament, the Apostles, and Jesus himself were Jewish. Matthew endeavored to strengthen Jesus' claim to being the Messiah by tracing his descent back to King David, first great Jewish king. Yet, despite the good intentions of Christian friends of Judaism, Christians frequently make an error in defining Judaism today. They identify Judaism today with the Judaism of Jesus' time. They often fail to realize that modern Judaism is not the Judaism of two thousand, or even two hundred, years ago.

The Christian picture of Judaism as the Judaism of the Hebrew Scriptures, or the Judaism of Jesus, assumes that the Hebrew religion stopped growing and changing after a particular point in history. This is not so! Judaism has been a constantly growing and changing religion throughout its long history, and is still changing today. Only

within the last few years have Christian scholars begun to realize the development of the Jewish religion after Jesus. James Parkes, one of these Christian scholars, terms this new phase of Christian research, "the rediscovery of Judaism." George Foote Moore, another Christian scholar, has devoted much of his time and energy to a friendly, scientific analysis of Judaism after the time of Jesus, and his two volume work, Judaism, is of great interest to both minister and laymen. What is this post-Christian Judaism that is gaining more and more attention from devout Christian scholars?

The Fall of the Temple and Yochanan ben Zakkaï.

The great battering rams of the Roman Army were being brought into position to smash down the walls of the besieged city of Jerusalem. Flaming arrows and spears were hurled into the city by the mighty armies of Rome that had been drawn about the city of rebellious Jews in the year 70 C. E. Only funeral parties bearing the dead were permitted to exit from the city by the encircling armies. Slowly, one funeral party wended its way past the Roman lines, to bury the noted rabbi, Yochanan ben Zakkaï, who supposedly had died during the siege.

Once past the Roman lines, Yochanan's students opened the coffin, and the rabbi, stiff

from his long confinement in the casket, stepped out. The only exit from the doomed city of Jerusalem was by burial, and Yochanan had succeeded in using this ruse to avoid the searching Roman sentries. Yochanan took leave of his students, and then hastened to see the Roman general, Vespasian, who was soon to be made emperor of the mighty Roman Empire. Vespasian knew Yochanan and was impressed by his learning and courtesy. When Yochanan requested permission to begin a small school in Yabne, a port town of Palestine, Vespasian gave his permission. Little did the great general know that this small school would serve as the center about which Judaism was to regain strength and outlast the Roman armies, which were shortly to destroy the temple city of Jerusalem!

This is the story that the Talmud, the great books of Jewish law and legend which we shall shortly describe, tells about Yochanan ben Zakkai and how he founded the school of Yabne. It was barely forty years from the time of Jesus' death that Jerusalem was destroyed. Judaism again faced the same problem that had existed in 586 B. C. E., when the Babylonian armies destroyed the Temple.

But now the problem was even more serious. The Romans, unlike the Babylonians, realized that Judaism was a religion that worshipped only one

king, God. The only way to humble the continually rebelling Jews was to wipe out Judaism. The hope for deliverance from Rome was a far-off, distant dream. Judaism and the Jews were scattered throughout the Roman Empire, and were not located mainly in one place, as they were in Babylonia after the victory of Nebuchadnezzar. Yochanan began building a new Judaism, a Judaism for Jews outside of Jerusalem and the Temple.

It was hard and painful work. Yochanan, like the rabbis of Babylonia during the Exile, substituted prayer in the synagogue for sacrifice in the Temple. Many ceremonies observed in the Temple were transferred to the synagogue. The small group of rabbis and students in Yabne became the center of authority for Judaism. From Yabne, rabbis travelled throughout the known world, preaching patience and tolerance to the beset Jews. From the small beginnings of a tiny school in a seaport town, Yochanan ben Zakkai, the man who was smuggled out of Jerusalem in a coffin, had made Judaism live again!

#### Mishna and Talmud

The group of rabbis were speaking together in the small room of the school. "Now," said one,

"I have a tradition from the great Rabbi Akiba about the law regarding the Passover sacrifice!"

"I never heard of such a tradition," answered one of the other rabbis. "Neither have I!" responded another.

To a Judaism growing up outside of Jerusalem and Temple, traditions were very important. Learning was transmitted from person to person, and books were few, since they had to be written by hand. Each rabbi transmitted to his students a set of traditions, and these students handed them down to their students. These traditions were repeated and recited over and over again, so that they could be memorized. Mishnas -- from the Hebrew word meaning "repeat" -- were handed down from one generation of rabbis to another.

As the number of Mishnas grew, the controversies increased. Each rabbi had a school and students that supported his Mishna. Judaism needed a great rabbi to unite all these traditions and bring out a Mishna that would be accepted by all groups of rabbis.

Such a man was Judah ha-Nasi, or Judah the Prince. Judah, who lived approximately from 135 to 220 C. E., was head of the Sanhedrin, or central Jewish court. Everyone respected Judah, and other rabbis followed his opinions. Judah

realized that arguments about traditions would greatly harm Judaism. He gathered all the Mishnas of other rabbis and organized them into a new Mishna, the Mishna of Rabbi Judah the Prince. Gradually, this Mishna became known as the Mishna, as other Mishnas were used less and less. All Jewish law developed from the Mishna of Judah the Prince. Scholars still disagree as to the role that Judah played in editing this Mishna, but the Mishna bearing his name unified the arguing parties of Judaism. The Mishna was divided into sections on agriculture, holidays, laws regarding women, law suits for damages, and other phases of Jewish law. It was written in a Hebrew dialect, and included a large number of Aramaic, Latin and Greek words.

Over a period of centuries more and more material was added to the store of Jewish knowledge. Stories and laws from great rabbis were handed down from one rabbi to another, from one generation to the next. As in the case of the Mishna, at first the decisions of the rabbis was passed from mouth to mouth, so that it was known as the "Oral Law". The rabbis opposed writing down this new learning. They felt that, if they wrote down the "Oral Law", the traditions of the rabbis, it would have the same authority as the "Written Law", the

Bible. They were afraid that people would consult it on the same level as the Bible, and it could not be altered for changing conditions in different times. So great was the opposition to writing down the new Oral Law after the Mishna that it was not until three hundred years after the writing of the Mishna that the new and later learning was compiled in one great series of books, the Talmud.

This Talmud, supposedly edited by Rab Ashi, head of the great school of Sura in Babylonia, around 400 C. E., consisted of the Mishna of Judah the Prince,; and the teachings of the rabbis that were not included in the Mishna -- the Gamora.

The rabbis in Palestine wrote a Talmud of their own, but, since most Jews lived outside of Palestine and looked to the schools of Babylonia for guidance, the Talmud of Rab Ashi of Babylonia became the final guide for religious matters. The Babylonian Talmud had material added to it by the followers of Rab Ashi, and it was not until the beginning of the sixth century that the Talmud was completed.

What is this Talmud? It is composed of many large volumes containing stories, laws, arguments, biographies -- all the remembered sayings of rabbis of five hundred years or more of Jewish history. This great series of books was actually intended to be a commentary on the Mishna,



explaining what the Mishna meant by certain obscure statements. However, the rambling discussions of the Talmud touched upon all the problems of life and living for the Jews of the times. It has become known as one of the greatest series of books on religion, social customs and history ever written.

But the Talmud was more than just another series of books; it kept alive a tradition that was in danger of dying through ignorance. Judaism became a religion of scholars and philosophers and great students were made through the analysis of the knotty problems of the Talmud. To decide what Jewish Law said under certain circumstances more than a thousand years before became a feat of imagination and brilliance. It was in the sea of the Talmud that Judaism emerged itself for centuries to come.

#### The Karaites and Saadia

"The rabbis are destroying the Law of Moses. The Mishna and Talmud are completely contrary to everything that has been taught to us in the Hebrew Scriptures. We must return to the original source of Judaism -- the five books of Moses." The speaker was a scholar of the eighth century, Anan ben David.

The stories surrounding Anan ben David have been colored by time and by the prejudices of those telling the stories. Anan ben David, it is related, was defeated in the attempt to head one of the great schools of Babylonia and he went to Palestine. There, it is said, he founded a new religious movement, Karaism -- from the Hebrew word for "Scriptures." He violently opposed all the traditions of the rabbis and demanded that Jews return to the teaching of Moses -- without the rabbis' interpretations of these teachings.

A large number of Jews who opposed the Judaism of the rabbis joined the Karaite movement. Even after Anan's death, the movement maintained its power and influence. Great scholars joined the new group and, increasingly, it became a menace to rabbinic Judaism. Few rabbis could combat it for few had the learning to demonstrate that rabbinic Judaism was a natural development from the teachings of Moses and the other great Jewish prophets. Not until two hundred years after the founding of the Karaite movement did a towering rabbinical figure challenge the new movement successfully.

Saadia ben Joseph was not a weak man. He did not fear authority or other men. When he felt that he was in the right, he would defy even

the strongest rulers. Throughout his lifetime, this great Jew fought for his interpretation of Judaism as a growing, adaptable religion, founded on the past, but looking toward the future.

Saadia ben Joseph was born in Egypt of a noble Jewish family. At the early age of twenty years, Saadia ben Joseph began his writing of works that would lay the groundwork for the defeat of the Karaites. He issued a scientific Hebrew dictionary that defined Hebrew words in the Bible. While this work was mainly of scholarly importance, it also helped the rabbis who were fighting the claims of the Karaites. It demonstrated that the interpretations of the rabbis regarding the Hebrew words of the Bible were correct, and not taken out of thin air, as Anan and his followers claimed.

Three years after his dictionary was issued, Saadia began the full-fledged counter-attack against the Karaites. In his writings, he pointed out that the whole Bible was intended to be interpreted by teachers and priests, and that the rabbis had been following the intentions of the founders of Judaism. His knowledge of Hebrew grammar and the Hebrew language permitted Saadia to challenge many of the statements of the Karaites regarding the Bible.

But Saadia was not only a scholar. He was

a vigorous, forceful leader. His work became so famous that the head of the Babylonian Jewish community, the mighty Exilarch, David ben Zakkai, invited Saadia to come to Babylonia from Egypt and take charge of the academy of Sura there. The Exilarch expected Saadia to be his faithful servant, as were all the previous heads of the academies of Sura and Pumpedita, the great rabbinical schools of Babylonia. But, a mere two years after Saadia took his office, he became embroiled in a hot argument with the Exilarch. The Exilarch wished Saadia to sign a ruling that the head of the academy at Pumpedita had already approved. Saadia refused and, in a rage, the Exilarch excommunicated him. Saadia, fearful for his safety, fled to Bagdad and, for seven long years, he remained there. Finally, however, the absence of the great scholar at the academy in Sura felt so strongly that Saadia was permitted to return as head of the academy.

During his lifetime Saadia wrote one of the great works of Jewish literature, Emunot v'De'ot, "The Book of Faith and Doctrines". In this book Saadia set forth in detail the main beliefs of rabbinic Judaism. Though Saadia died when he was only fifty years old, he left a heritage from his life of scholarship and study that has

remained to this day.

Were Saadia and the rabbis successful in their fight against Karaism? Some believe that the Karaites defeated themselves. Their attempts to return to the Biblical commandments in all details were well-nigh impossible. Whereas the rabbis permitted Jews to keep food warm for the sabbath, Anan and his followers refused to eat hot food on the Sabbath. Their dwellings were darkened on the Sabbath since they permitted no light. No one could leave his home on the Sabbath, except for prayer or absolute necessity. In every case of Biblical interpretation, Anan and his followers followed as strict a policy as possible, in contrast to the attempt of the rabbis, through interpretation, to be as lenient as the Bible would permit them to be. The attempt of the Karaites to enforce the Biblical laws of primitive tribal days was impossible in the world of the tenth century. As a result, the Karaites had to make so many compromises and interpretations that they soon created an unwritten Talmud of their own. There are still Karaites in the Soviet Union, Turkey and a few other countries, but they probably number no more than ten thousand members today.

Unconsciously, the Karaites helped Judaism more than they harmed it. They forced Jewish scholars

to support the rabbinic tradition and, in this fight, the Jews maintained a heritage of scholarship to present times. More important, the Karaites, by their very example of attempting to stop the progress of religion, were an object lesson to Judaism. Judaism realized that only by constant interpretation and adjustment to the needs of the day could their faith survive new times and new difficulties. The gradual destruction of the Karaite movement because of its unwillingness to change served as a warning to the main body of Judaism: Advance or die!

#### Maimonides -- Philosopher of Judaism

The city of Cordova, Spain, had fallen into the hands of a fanatic group of Mohammedans and they were giving the inhabitants the choice between acceptance of their religion or death. Among the Jewish families fleeing from the city disguised as Arabs was the family of Moses ben Maimon. A young boy, he left his home with his family and fled for his life to North Africa. Everywhere the family went, they were fearful for their lives, for they were still observant Jews in the midst of Mohammedan believers. Fleeing across North Africa, the family finally settled in Fostat, a suburb of Cairo, Egypt.

As Moses ben Maimon or Maimonides grew up in Egypt, he added to his knowledge of his religion and the world about him. He gained knowledge in astronomy, philosophy, theology, medicine, and many other fields. He was so excellent a physician that he was appointed to be the court physician of Saladin, ruler of Egypt. But Maimonides' greatest efforts were reserved for his people, the Jews.

Maimonides, a man accustomed to order and neatness, was appalled by the state of Jewish scholarship. Jewish scholarship in Talmud and Jewish law had become more and more difficult, since the Talmud had no real scheme of organization. The Talmudic discussion on Passover might also include references to methods of slaughtering animals, observing various holidays, having good ethics and morals. A scholar would have to devote his whole life to Talmud in order to be able to discover where the original law was, for many of the sections were practically useless. Maimonides wrote a code, Mishna Torah, "The Repetition of the Law", that permitted Jewish scholars to find all the references in Jewish law in specific categories. Rules regarding the Passover were all under one heading; ethical beliefs were under a different heading. Jewish law was greatly simplified by Maimonides, and his guide to it is used to this day.

Maimonides was a very close student of Aristotle, the great philosopher of the Greeks, and he felt that the rules of philosophy that Aristotle developed should be used by the Jews. Maimonides wrote the Moreh Nebuchim, "The Guide to the Perplexed", in an attempt to unite Aristotelean reason and Jewish faith. For example, Maimonides analyzed the various passages in the Hebrew scriptures regarding the soul based on Aristotle's concept of the soul, and found Biblical verses to prove his theories. Maimonides felt so strongly about Aristotle that he stated that he would not follow any Jewish teaching if it was proven that it conflicted with Aristotelean logic. Of course, he tried to prove that everything in Judaism was logical and, therefore, was not forced to deny any of its teachings.

Maimonides was strongly opposed by many rabbis, who felt that his teachings were too liberal, and that they depended too much on Greek philosophy, rather than on Jewish teachings. But Maimonides' great learning far overshadowed the arguments of his enemies. He became known as the outstanding Jewish philosopher of the ages. When Thomas Aquinas wrote his books on Catholic philosophy, he often referred to the teachings of Moses ben Maimon, affectionately calling him "Rabbi Moses". Both Christian and Jewish



thinkers since the time of Maimonides have been greatly influenced by his logical, clear development of ethics and religion.

### Joseph Caro and the Code of Jewish Law

The inhabitants of the city of Safed, Palestine, tip-toed when they passed under the window of the great rabbi, Joseph ben Ephraim Caro. For twenty years, Caro had been laboring on a grand code of Jewish law, one that would combine and explain all the other codes of Jewish law. The people of Safed looked with amazement at the stream of visitors to Rabbi Joseph Caro's home, and they walked quietly while passing his house so as not to disturb the great scholars in his home.

When Joseph Caro finally issued his code of Jewish law in 1542, he called it the Shulchan Aruch, "The Prepared Table," for it had all the codes of law and rabbis' decisions within it. It was indeed a "prepared table" -- for no longer was Jewish law a difficult matter for people who were not scholars. They could look up the Shulchan Aruch, and there the decisions of all the thirty-two great Jewish scholars who wrote codes of law were summarized.

Previous to the Shulchan Aruch, a Jew anxious to find a law regarding his wedding night

have had to consult codes by Maimonides, Moses of Coucy, Alfasi, and many other authorities. He would have had to consult with learned rabbis, whose decisions would often conflict. Jewish law was the matter of a lifetime of study, and then, because of the great number of authorities, nothing was really final. Now, instead of consulting thirty-two different works, one work, the Shulchan Aruch, contained a whole summary of Jewish law. The educated layman, as well as the rabbi, could study Jewish law and discover which was the opinion that should be followed. When Joseph Caro died in 1575, he had lived to see his work become the standard guide on matters of Jewish practice. Today, rabbis seeking answers in Jewish law still quote the Shulchan Aruch as the final word.

#### The Joy of the Torah and the Baal Shem Tov

No one would imagine that the simple Polish clay-digger would have more influence on Judaism than the great Jewish scholars, Saadia, Maimonides and Caro. A simple, and apparently ignorant, man, this Polish Jew of the eighteenth century, Israel ben Eliezar, was to begin a movement that would shake the very foundations of rabbinic Judaism and force it to re-examine its teachings, and re-interpret Judaism to a generation weary of Talmudic arguments.

This Polish clay-digger and innkeeper. lived in the Carpathian woods, studying and contemplating the nature of God. In his thirty-sixth year, he had a revelation regarding God and the Torah, and traveled through Eastern Europe, spreading his message.

Israel ben Eliezar knew little of Jewish law, but he knew much about the inner spirit of religion. He felt that dry discussions about Jewish law were not leading mankind any closer to a spiritual understanding of God; that genuine piety had to proceed from the heart. He became known as the Baal Shem Tob, "The Master of the Good Name", and he preached and taught throughout Poland. He taught that emotional prayer, dancing, religious song: all these brought man closer to God. The Baal Shem did not oppose rabbinic Judaism as did Anan ben David and the Karaites. He insisted, however, that worshipping in joy and gladness was as important as a knowledge of Jewish law. His followers became known as Hasidim or "pious ones".

To attend a Hasidic service is to realize what the Baal Shem Tob attempted to do for all of Judaism. Hasidic services are often very emotional, featuring singing by the whole congregation and, on occasion, even handclapping in time to music, and dancing. Much of the music used in all synagogues

today is derived from the Hasidic songs.

In many ways the Baal Shem helped to rejuvenate a Judaism that was smothering to death from its imprisonment in ghettos and the continual dry discussion of Talmud. The watchword was "Joy in the Torah!" -- a rejoicing in the Law of God. After the Baal Shem Tob's death in 1760, his followers continued his beliefs. Members of special families of hasidim became known as zaddikim or "wise men", and were thought to be endowed with the ability to reach God for their followers. Men travelled many miles to speak to the zaddik and to ask him questions.

Although the major impact of the Hasidic movement has died down, largely because of the destruction of the Jews in Poland by Hitler and the gradual loss of leadership of the zaddikim, Hasidic congregations can still be found in every major city in the United States, and in other cities throughout the world. The Hasidic music has added immeasurably to Jewish song. Their doctrine of joy in worship has forced the more sedate groups in Judaism to re-examine their means of worship. Hasidism, through new groups influenced by Hasidic teachings, still exerts a great force in Judaism today.

### Reform and Conservative Judaism

Judaism had, for over one thousand years, been the religion of the ghetto. The Jews were herded into small sections of cities, forbidden to work except as money lenders and other despised tasks, and often persecuted and killed. The French Revolution in 1789, however, began a movement that was to set the Jews free from the ghetto.

The armies of Napoleon in the early 1800's made a policy of breaking down ghetto walls upon conquering an enemy city for France. Jews revelled in their new found freedom. But, soon, a reaction set in. Some Jews began leaving Judaism and becoming Christians. Some felt that the laws of Judaism were outdated; that Judaism no longer had any meaning for free men. But, most important, was the problem of dealing with the outside world. The ghetto, the area where Judaism and the Jew was supreme, had been destroyed. Some Jews decided to enter the universities, to seek positions in the Christian world. Suddenly, their road was blocked. Unless they were Christians, they discovered that many doors of opportunity were closed to them. Heinrich Heine, a former Jew who became a Christian and one of the greatest German poets, explained his conversion by stating frankly that his baptismal certificate was his passport to intellectual German

circles. Jewish scholars throughout Europe began struggling with the problem of adapting Judaism to the new conditions.

One phase of this movement became known as Reform Judaism. A German Jewish businessman, Israel Jacobson, began a worship service in his school in Seesen, and later in a temple in Hamburg. From these humble beginnings, Reform Judaism began. German, the spoken language of the people, was extensively used in the prayers; worship was shortened; men and women sat together; there was instrumental music; confirmation of girls as well as boys was instituted. But, unfortunately, Germany became more and more undemocratic, and Reform Judaism, based on democratic recognition of all groups, languished there. Fortunately, a new Jewish community was being built in America, and, through the teachings of rabbis such as Isaac Mayer Wise, David Einhorn and many others, the Reform Jewish group spread throughout the United States. Its influence in the field of Jewish worship and belief has been felt in all groups. Although it has done away with some of the traditional Jewish beliefs, it has attempted to keep within the Jewish stream of scholarship and piety. It is a great and increasingly powerful force in Judaism today.

In 1854 Zacharias Frankel was appointed

president of the Breslau Seminary in Prussia, and it is from his appointment that the beginnings of the movement known as Conservative Judaism are usually dated. Frankel attempted to steer a course between the traditional, or orthodox, Jews and the Reform Jews. Conservative Jews felt that their movement is a school of thought within Judaism, rather than being a separate group. They recognize the authority of Jewish law throughout the ages, but feel that the Law is subject to change and development. Because of the unwillingness of the leaders of Conservative Judaism to establish principles that would be at variance with the body of Orthodox Judaism, it is extremely difficult to define the exact practices of Conservative Judaism. Some groups, which lean towards the Reform interpretation, have seating of men and women together, the use of organ music, many prayers in the language of the people, and many other practices that were introduced by Reform Judaism. Indeed, in a few of the Conservative synagogues, the only difference readily observed between Conservatism and Reform is the use of a head covering, which most Reform congregations do not use. On the other side of Conservatism, with the exception of a few leniencies, the service and the practice in certain Conservative synagogues is identical with Orthodoxy. In America,

the Conservative movement has continued to grow and prosper. It has attracted many Jews who have felt that, while Orthodoxy no longer met their religious needs, Reform Judaism was too radical a break with the past. Increasingly, however, students of the movement are noting more and more of a shift of the Conservative group back to the Orthodox position.

Despite the differences of opinion, and sometimes even violent controversy between these different group of Jews, all groups are intent on one goal: maintaining Judaism in the modern world. While Orthodoxy, the group maintaining a strict, unchanging allegiance to the old traditions of Judaism, has the greatest Jewish membership, Conservative and Reform Judaism have built great synagogues and temples with the support of their followers. The divisions between Jewish groups is somewhat different from the separation between -- for example -- Methodists and Baptists. Jews of all groups associate together, marry one another and join the same Jewish organizations. Some Jews even belong to a Reform and an Orthodox Jewish congregation at the same time.

#### The Jewish Holidays

Unlike Christianity, which bases its holidays on events in the life of Jesus, the Jewish



holiday cycle draws its inspiration from the festivals observed by Jews as reported in the Hebrew Scriptures and, in a few cases, from later Jewish festivals. It is important to note that there are differences in observance of holidays by different Jewish groups. Orthodox and Conservative Jews, for example, observe two days of Jewish New Year, and other Jewish holidays, while Reform Jews usually observe only one day. Reform Jews are not as strict regarding the observance of the Sabbath as are Orthodox and Conservative Jews. However, all groups of Jews understand the importance and holiness of the Jewish holidays. The most important Jewish holidays are:

The High Holidays: Rosh Hashonah (New Year) and Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement). These holidays fall in September or October. Rosh Hashonah begins the Ten Days of Repentance. It is the beginning of the Jewish calendar year, based on the moon cycle, rather than the solar cycle, as is our secular calendar. Rosh Hashonah is marked by the use of the shofar or ram's horn, the ancient Jewish war trumpet, which is blown in the synagogue. Yom Kippur is a day of extreme inner searching. According to Jewish tradition,

all of man's sins in the past year are judged on that day. Yom Kippur, which marks the end of the Ten Days of Repentance, is a day of fasting and prayer. At the end of the day, the people wait anxiously for the sound of the shofar, a loud clear call that terminates the period of fasting and prayer.

The Pilgrim Festivals: During Temple days, Jews were supposed to visit the Temple three times a year. These three festivals are called pilgrim festivals. Succoth, or the Feast of Booths, the first festival, comes shortly after Yom Kippur. It commemorates the observance of the harvest festival by Moses and the Israelites in the wilderness. Booths of grain, decorated with fruits and vegetables, are built in synagogue and home. The festival is concluded by another holiday, Simchas Torah, the Joy-in-the-Law, where the annual cycle of the reading of scroll of the Law, the Torah, is completed. The last verses of the book of Deuteronomy and the first verses of the book of Genesis are read on Simchas Torah, and the Torah schools are marched

around the synagogue, while the congregation rejoices in the completion of another cycle of readings from the Torah. The next festival is Pesach, Passover, celebrated in commemoration of the freeing of the Jews from slavery in Egypt. During this festival, only matzos, unleavened bread, is eaten. The festival is opened by a Seder, meaning "order," in which various ceremonies remind the Jew of the greatness of the deliverance from Egypt and his obligation to teach the lessons of freedom to his children. The final pilgrim festival is Shavuot, or the Feast of Weeks. This festival occurs in May or June, and is exactly fifty days after Passover. Shavuot is both a harvest festival and the time for the celebration of the giving of the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai. In many congregations, confirmation is given to members of the religious school, who pledge to observe the laws of Judaism and of the Torah.

The Minor Festivals: The minor festivals are times for rejoicing, and generally have little of the solemnity of the High Holidays or the Pilgrim Festivals.

The most important of these festivals are Chanuko and Purim. Chanuko, or the Festival of Rededication, occurs around December, and celebrated the freeing and rededication of the Temple by Judas Maccabeusin 165 B. C. E., after its profanation by Syrian armies. Candles are lit for the eight nights on a menorah, or candelabra, gifts are given, and the whole period is marked by joy and lightheartedness.

The real Jewish "fun festival" occurs around March, and is called Purim, or the Feast of Lots. Purim celebrates the deliverance of the Jews from Haman, a Persian prime minister who plotted to kill him. The Book of Esther, the queen who helped save the Jews, is read in the synagogue, and everytime the name of Haman is mentioned, noisemakers used by the congregation fill the synagogue with their din. Gifts, plays, parodies and other activities mark the joy of the occasion.

The Sabbath: The holiest day on the Jewish calendar, with the possible exception of Yom Kippur, is the Sabbath, celebrated from Friday evening to Saturday

evening. It is marked by rest and worship. Candles are lit on Friday night, and blessings over wine are said. In Jewish homes, it is a time for rest and relaxation. The day of the Sabbath is observed as a memorial of the seventh day on which God rested after performing all His labors in the creation of the world.

#### The Life Cycle of the Jew

The Jewish religion has always attempted to sanctify the important occasions of the life of the Jew. At the age of eight days, the newborn male child is circumcised, as a recognition of his entering into the Covenant of Abraham. In many congregations the child entering the religious school participates in a consecration service, at the time of Simchas Torah. The boy who reaches the age of thirteen is Bar Mitzvah, literally "a son of the commandment"; signifying that he is able to participate fully in the activities of the congregation. He reads the Torah portion for the week, and usually gives a short speech. In some congregations, a similar ceremony is observed by the girls. Confirmation takes place for many congregations in the eighth to twelfth grade of religious school. Confirmation

takes place during Shavuuous, or on the Friday evening closest to Shavuuos. In this observence, the confirmands are pledged to follow their faith and its teachings. Judaism has always hallowed all events of life with religious ceremonies, from the time of birth, when the child is named in the synagogue, to death, when the mourner's service is said at the grave.

## Chapter X

## JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY: SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

A Conference with Mr. Hughes

Back at the News, the staff was readying the student newspaper for printing and distributions before Thanksgiving. A "cut" of a turkey, used each year in the Thanksgiving issue, had been dug out of the files by Ed Goldman, the feature editor, and was to grace the masthead of the paper. Editor Georgia Murphy called to Ed as he busied himself with cleaning the "cut" of the turkey from the dust that had accumulated on it in the past year.

"Say, Ed, would you come here for a second?" Georgia asked.

Ed carefully stepped over the galley proofs of the News that were spread about on the floor of the office.

"Yes, Georgia, what is it?"

"Ed, Mr. Hughes, our principal, saw me in the hallway yesterday and congratulated you on your series on religion. He also wanted a favor from you. He said that, since you had helped write the series on religion, he'd like a suggestion about what the speakers at the Thanksgiving assembly should talk

about in the open forum after their talks. He didn't think questions from the floor are too good, because they usually get far away from the point. He'd like to see you about it sometime today."

"I'm really complimented, Georgia," Ed answered. "I'll bring Jack Bowns along with me, since he helped me with the series."

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#### The Assembly Opens

The Thanksgiving assembly speakers, Father Conlon, Reverend Smith and Rabbi Goodman, had just concluded their talks on "What Makes Religion Live". Mr. Hughes approached the speakers' stand and nodded to the applauding students for quiet.

"I want to thank the speakers who were so gracious in coming here to speak to us. Yesterday I had a chat with Ed Goldman and Jack Bowns of the News about the question period after the talks. All of us felt that an open question period would not be as informative as a sort of 'directed' question. Jack, Ed and I agreed on this question: 'What are the main similarities and differences between Judaism and Christianity?' Our speakers met together before their appearance here and, after agreeing on certain beliefs, selected Reverend Smith as their spokesman. Reverend Smith, the floor is yours."



### The Similarities of Judaism and Christianity

Reverend Smith, a handsome man of thirty-five, stood before the assembly. "I do not know if I can do full justice to the meeting of religious minds," he said, while looking over at Rabbi Goodman and Father Conlon and smiling, "but I think we have agreed on certain principles. We agreed on the following major similarities between the two groups:

" 1) The Hebrew Scriptures or Old Testament. Both Jews and Christians reverently regard this work as the basis for their religions. All religious teachings, both groups agree, began from the inspirations of the Jewish seers and sages.

" 2) Synagogue and Church. An institution for worship without animal sacrifices was one of the great contributions of Judaism to religion. Prayer and worship in that synagogue influenced Christianity to such an extent that the founder of my religious group, the Presbyterians, returned to the simplicity of the synagogue. Our Catholic brethren, on the other hand, while adhering more to the solemn ritual of the Temple, still follow Jewish practice in having prayer and not using animal

sacrifices.

" 3) Ethics and Morals. A religion of ethics, of rightdoing, was the great discovery of the Jewish sages of the Bible. All Christian religion is based on this great discovery, that worshipping God is intimately connected with doing good.

" 4) Brotherhood of Believers. Judaism began the concept of a holy community of believers in a common God. They separated themselves from the idolatry of the nations about them in doing so. Christianity has borrowed that concept of the brotherhood of believers and incorporated it into its own religion, although, in Christianity, we make more of a distinction between believers and non-believers than does Judaism.

" 5) One God. I place this idea last because it includes within it all the other ideas. Judaism, which said 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One', and made it the center of Jewish faith, gave the greatest gift to man with his revelation. The concept of one God, who cares for man and cannot be

described or imagined, is the cornerstone for all Christian belief.

### The Differences Between Judaism and Christianity

"The differences between the various groups cannot be stated as easily as the similarities. We were always conscious of differences between various Christian groups, but the following differences seem to be the main points of disagreement between Judaism and Christianity:

" 1) The New Testament. The New Testament, being the story of Jesus, is not accepted as Scripture by Judaism. The claim that Jesus did away with the legal provisions of the Hebrew Scriptures is also disputed. We, as Christians, feel that the New Testament is, in many ways, a fulfillment of the Old Testament. Jews do not agree with that claim.

" 2) Original Sin. Judaism feels that there is no inner evil in man; that man is basically good and his sins are merely weaknesses. Christianity feels that sin is inherent in man; that man can do little about the sin that he was born with. Many Christians groups trace this sin back to the story of Adam and Eve, and say that

Adam committed this sin by eating the forbidden fruit. These Christians feel that, since we are unable to purge ourselves of this sin, we must not hold mankind responsible for it.

" 3) The Messiah. Judaism has usually held that the messiah was to be a man, a decendent of David, who would rule over the Jews and bring them back to the land of Palestine. Christianity claims that the messiah was to be a supernatural being, intimately connected with God, who was to deliver not only the Jews, but all men who recognized him. This messiah we call Jesus. Jesus is to cleanse man from the original sin of the first man, Adam. Connected with this concept is the idea of Jesus as the son of God. Judaism, feeling that this belief impairs the belief in the One God, will not accept a second person in the Godhead.

" 4) Sacraments. There is only one major sacramental act in Judaism, the act of circumcision. Protestantism has at least two, baptism and communion, and our Catholic brethren have seven sacraments. The differences in sacraments have been

one of the major points of dispute between Judaism and Christianity, and, in fact, between different groups of Christians.

" 5) Rabbi and Minister. The rabbi in Judaism is a teacher, with the same position in regard to Jewish practice as a layman. In most Christian groups, the minister is more of a priest, gives communion and baptism, and laymen generally are not permitted to administer either, unless there is an emergency. The priest in Catholicism, of course, has many more powers in the Catholic Church than the minister in the Protestant groups.

" 6) Salvation. Judaism believes that all men are eligible for salvation, for the world to come, provided they live good lives. Christianity holds out the hope for salvation only to those who accept Jesus as their savior, although Catholicism softens this slightly by stating that non-believers who do not know they are sinning may be accepted by God.

" 7) The Holidays. Judaism, in the main, celebrates the Biblical cycle of holidays, based on the agricultural

year of Palestine. Christianity observes the seasons of Advent and Lent, connected with the events in the life of Jesus.

Christianity, perhaps unfortunately, has attempted to separate its religious holidays from those of Judaism. The Sabbath, the day of rest of Judaism, has also been changed, to our present Sunday.

"We had another points of agreement and disagreement, but we generally agreed on the items mentioned," Reverend Smith concluded.

#### Final Words

Father Conlon rose. "I'd like to add," he said, "that I'm always surprised that, when I discuss religion, how many basic beliefs Catholics, Protestants and Jews can agree on. I would like to point out one difference between Catholicism and other religions that has not been mentioned, however. Catholics believe that the Catholic Church is the designated agent of Christianity, and that the Pope is its head. Since this concept is not held by non-Roman Catholic groups, it cannot be considered as a difference between Christianity, as a whole, and Judaism."

"I think that is a good point, Father Conlon," Mr. Hughes said. "Rabbi Goodman, would you

you like to add anything?"

"No, I don't believe so. I would like to close this meeting with an observation, however. One of the oldest stories of the rabbis deals with a sheep-herder who used to pray: 'Lord, if you had sheep and wanted me to take care of them, I would do it for nothing, though I take pay for others.' Some rabbis were shocked at this prayer when they overheard it, and taught the ignorant man the rituals of Judaism. The poor man, being ignorant, forgot the prayers the rabbis taught him and was afraid to repeat the simple prayer he used to say. An angel, we are told, made the rabbis return to the sheep-herder's camp and inform him that his prayer was acceptable to God. I do not believe that the individual beliefs of the worshipper are as important as the manner in which he directs his prayer. Some of us pray like sheep-herders; others like rabbis, priests or ministers, steeped in religious learning. Either way, religion has many paths and, in the words of the Bible, 'all His paths are peace.'

"At the same time, we must realize that the road to God is important to the various religious groups. Customs and ceremonies, ways of worship, even particular groups of people, grow up around a method of ceremonial prayer. Their path to God becomes a holy highway. We must protect

the right of each group to follow the path it chooses to reach God, and not insist on our own particular way of worship. Only then can worship of God be free."



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