

*Ransoming  
the  
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# *Ransoming the Time*

By ✓

JACQUES MARITAIN

TRANSLATED BY

HARRY LORIN BINSSE

"Look therefore carefully how ye walk,  
not as unwise, but as wise, ransoming the  
time, because the days are evil."

(St. Paul, Ephesians, v:16)

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that "Larceny, incest, the murder of children and of old people—all these have been counted virtuous acts."<sup>3</sup> Therefore (and this is where he makes his mistake) "nothing according to reason alone is just in itself. . . . Custom makes equity, for this reason alone: it is accepted."<sup>4</sup>

Finally, Jansenistic theology convinced Pascal that the sin of Adam changed man's nature and utterly corrupted everything in us. How can we seek thereafter a foundation for justice and reason in the earthly community and in the course of human events? "There are doubtless natural laws," he writes, "but that fine corrupted reason of ours itself has corrupted everything."<sup>5</sup> All our hierarchies, all the ties of our social life, are, in themselves, mere folly. "Yet true Christians yield to folly," he adds; "not that they respect it, but that they respect the will of God who, in order to punish men, has subjugated them to this folly."<sup>6</sup>

Thus a strange encounter: the Jansenistic theory of a corrupted nature, an imperious zeal for experience, a reaction against a reason which is impetuous and already rationalist—conspires to divert him from any consideration of the divine norms hidden in the depths of nature, converges toward the anti-metaphysical prejudice which is the great weakness of Pascal. As a result, there can be, here on earth, only ties of force and of opinion, subject to the caprice of men and to the accidents of the historical process. "He who obeys laws because they are just, obeys a justice of his imagination, not the essence of the law; law is altogether self-contained; it is law and nothing more."<sup>7</sup> "Not being able to bring it about that right should be might, men have brought it about that might is right."<sup>8</sup>

Here, then, we have Pascal and Rousseau agreeing on this major premise: there is no justice in that human community

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.* (page 217).

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.* (page 218).

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.* (page 217).

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, t. II, n. 338.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, t. II, n. 294 (page 219).

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, t. II, n. 298.

mutual respect and mutual understanding cannot be established? I prefer the word fellowship to "tolerance," for it connotes something positive—positive and elementary—in human relationships. It conjures up the image of travelling companions, who meet here below by chance and journey through life—however fundamental their differences may be—good humouredly, in cordial solidarity and human agreement. Well, then, for the reasons I have just mentioned, the problem of good fellowship between the members of the various religious families seems to me to be a cardinal one for the new age of civilization, the rough outlines of which are beginning to take shape in our present night. I should like to quote in this connection the words pronounced by Pope Pius XII at his coronation: "Our thoughts go out also in this solemn moment to all those who are outside the Church and who, we should like to think, will rejoice to learn that the Pope prays to Almighty God for them also and wishes them every possible good."

A deliberate attempt to bring closer together the believers of the various religious families is something relatively new. On a solemn occasion, Pope Pius XI called upon all men of good will to such an attempt. No doubt this attempt is partly due to the imminent dangers, to the spiritual evils threatening us: open atheism publicly warring against God, or pseudo-theism seeking to turn the living God into some protecting genius for the State or some demon of the race. If that is so, we must admit that it is a stern lesson for believers. Was it needful that God permit the frightful degradation of mankind that we are witnessing today, so many persecutions and so much suffering, to teach those who believe in Him to go down into the real depth of their own hearts, even into those mysterious regions where we more or less faintly hear the hand of the God of love knocking at our bolted doors?

Let me say immediately that this attempt at rapprochement might easily be misunderstood. I shall therefore begin by clear-

“non-violence” of the Indian is not the same as Christian “charity.” No doubt it is the privilege of the human intelligence to understand other languages than the one it itself uses. It is none the less true that if, instead of being men, we were patterns of Pure Ideas, our nature would be to devour each other in order to absorb into our own world of thought whatever other such worlds might hold of truth.

But it happens that we are men, each containing within himself the ontological mystery of personality and freedom; in each of us the abyss of holiness of the Supreme Being is present with His universal presence, and He asks to dwell there as in His temple, by manner of a gift of Himself to us. Well, each one must speak in accordance with his outlook. I suppose there are readers of this book who do not share my own creed. I shall try to tell them as briefly, but also as frankly and as precisely as possible—and this frankness is itself one of the characteristics of mutual confidence—how the paradox of fellowship I am at present examining can be solved for me, a Catholic, from the point of view of a philosophy which takes into account the data of Christian theology. I do not apologize for this excursion into the field of theology, it is required by the subject I am discussing.

THE CATHOLIC DOCTRINE CONCERNING  
THE STATUS OF NON-CATHOLICS BEFORE GOD

IT IS WELL known that, according to the Catholic Faith, God, after having spoken in various and imperfect ways through the prophets, spoke once and for all, in a perfect and final manner, through His own uncreated Word, who took flesh in the womb of a virgin of Israel in order to die for mankind. And that the deposit of this revelation of the Word of God was confided to a living and visible body, made up both of just men and of sinners, but specially assisted by the Spirit of God in its mission of truth and salvation. Thus authority plays a most im-

fellowship, then, is not a fellowship of beliefs, but the fellowship of men who believe.

The conviction each of us has, rightly or wrongly, regarding the limitations, deficiencies, errors of others does not prevent friendship between minds. In such a fraternal dialogue, there must be a kind of forgiveness and remission, not with regard to ideas—ideas deserve no forgiveness if they are false—but with regard to the condition of him who travels the road at our side. Every believer knows very well that all men will be judged—both himself and all others. But neither he nor another is God, able to pass judgment. And what each one is before God, neither the one nor the other knows. Here the “Judge not” of the Gospels applies with its full force. We can render judgment concerning ideas, truths or errors; good or bad actions; character, temperament, and what appears to us of a man’s interior disposition. But we are utterly forbidden to judge the innermost heart, that inaccessible center where the person day after day weaves his own fate and ties the bonds binding him to God. When it comes to that, there is only one thing to do, and that is to trust in God. And that is precisely what love for our neighbour prompts us to do.

There are some people who do not like that word, “love.” It embarrasses them, because it has become hackneyed, and because we hear it as well from lips that have gone to rot, or from hearts that worship themselves. God is not so squeamish. The Apostle John tells us that God is self-subsisting Love.

There is only one proper and fitting way through which peace and union can come to men, and that is through love: first, love springing from nature for beings—for those poor beings who have the same essence as we have ourselves, and the same sufferings, and the same natural dignity. But that love is not enough, for the roots of strife are too strong for it. There must be a love of higher origin, immediately divine, which Christian theology calls supernatural, a love in God and

for God, which both strengthens in their proper sphere our various inclinations toward one another in the natural order, and also transcends them to infinity. Charity is very different from that simple human benevolence which philosophers praise, which is noble indeed in itself, yet inefficacious in the end. Charity alone, as Bergson observed in his great book, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, can open the heart to the love of *all men*, because, coming from God who first loves us, charity desires for all men the same divine good, the same eternal life, as it does for ourselves, and it sees in all human beings the summoned of God, streaming, as it were, with the mysteries of His mercy and the prevenient gifts of His goodness.

I should like to dwell a moment on the inner law and the privileges of this friendship of charity, as regards precisely the relations between believers of different religious denominations (as well as between believers and non-believers). I have already made it sufficiently clear that it is wrong to say that such a friendship *transcends dogma* or exists *in spite of* the dogmas of faith. Such a view is inadmissible for all those who believe that the word of God is as absolute as His unity or His transcendence. I know very well that if I lost my faith in the least article of revealed truth, I should lose my soul. A mutual love which would be bought at the price of faith, which would base itself on some form of syncretism or eclecticism, or which, recalling Lessing's parable of the three rings, would say: "I love him who does not have my faith because, after all, I am not sure that my faith is the true faith and that it bears the device of the true ring," in so saying would reduce faith to a mere historic inheritance and seal it with the seal of agnosticism and relativity. Such a love, for anyone who believes he has heard the word of God, would amount to putting man above God.

That love which is charity, on the contrary, goes first to God,

life (and that is indeed quite another level) it is proper that the effort toward union should express itself in common activities, should be *signed* by a more or less close cooperation for concrete and definite purposes, whether it be a question of the common good of the political community to which we all respectively belong, or of the common good of temporal civilization as a whole.

No doubt in that field it is not as believers but rather as members of a given fatherland, as men bound together by customs, traditions, interests and particular outlooks of a fleshly community, or as men having in common a given concrete historical ideal, that believers belonging to different religions are called upon to do a common work. But even in that common temporal task, ethical and spiritual values are involved, which concern the believer as such. And in that common temporal task itself, the mutual good will and fellowship I have been discussing remain factors of primary importance (I say primary; I do not say sufficient) for the pacification of men. In this sphere of temporal and political life, the most suitable phrase is not the phrase *love of charity*, but rather civic friendship, which is a virtue of the natural order, that must, however, be leavened by charity. It is a great pity that in an agonized world, men who believe in the supernatural, enchained as they are by so many sociological prejudices, should be so slow to broaden their hearts and to cooperate boldly in order to save from the inheritance of their fellows the elementary values of threatened humanity. From the English *Blue Book* anyone may learn about the atrocities and abominations committed in Nazi concentration camps, which blaspheme the image of God in the human person. But why were these things, that the British Government had known very well for many years, published only when war had already broken out? Anyone may also discover for himself the similar degradation of the human person practiced in Soviet prisons and concentration camps

or during the persecution of the Kulaks. If a true feeling for justice and friendship had, at the appropriate time, brought into play the firm intervention of free peoples against such indignities—not by war, but by normal political or economic pressure and for aims purely and truly disinterested—in place of their seeking business accommodations with butchers, maybe the world could have avoided today's dreadful convulsions.

It is impossible to exaggerate the vital importance, so little understood by the sectarian liberalism of the nineteenth century and by the paganism of the present, of the spirit of friendship in human society. Perhaps by force of contrast the extreme sufferings and the terrible conflicts that men are undergoing today will at least have the effect of awakening in a goodly number of them a feeling for friendship and cooperation.

The cruel anomaly with which we are concerned here lies in the fact that historically, as I have pointed out, religion seems to have done as much to divide men and sharpen their conflicts as it has to pacify them. This anomaly is linked with what is deepest in man's nature. If man is not drawn above himself toward eternal values, he becomes less than human; and when he makes use of these eternal values for the sake of his own world of weakness and sin, he uses them to feed and strengthen, and to hallow his passions and malice. To this contradictory situation there is only one key; that key is charity. Religion, like everything great and noble and demanding within us, increases the tension in mankind; and together with the tension, suffering; and with the suffering, spiritual effort; and with the spiritual effort, joy. *Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum* (So much evil could religion precipitate) said Lucretius of old in a formula after all amphibological. He should have added, and how necessary also is it to the very breath of humanity! And what great good it has been able to call forth, what hopes and virtues it has been able to inspire! Nothing that has been done through the substance of the cen-

turies has been lastingly useful to human beings without religion, at least without religion in its purest forms.

It is not religion that helps to divide men and sharpen their conflicts; it is the distress of our human condition and the interior strife in our hearts. And without religion we should certainly be far worse than we are. We see today how, when man rejects the sacred traditions of humanity and aspires either to free himself from religion by atheism, or to pervert religion by deifying his own sinful blood through a kind of racist pseudo-theism or para-theism, the darkest forms of fanaticism then spread throughout the world. Only by a deeper and purer religious life, only by charity, is it possible to surmount the state of conflict and opposition produced by the impact of religion upon human weakness. To bring to an end all fanaticism and all pharisaism will require, I believe, the whole of human history. But it is the task of the religious conscience itself to overcome these evils. It alone is capable of doing so. It is the religious conscience which, by spiritualizing itself in suffering, must gradually rid itself and the world of the leaven of the pharisees and the fanaticism of the sectarians.

I believe that when we think of all these things, we better perceive the dramatic greatness of our time. As has often been pointed out, a certain unification of the world is taking place on the subhuman level of matter and technique, whereas on the human level itself, the most savage conflicts come into being. In an apocalyptic upheaval, which imperils the very foundations of life, the advent of men to a new age of civilization is thus being prepared, which doubtless will indicate not only an historical transformation of great importance, for good as well as for evil, in the forms of consciousness and culture, but also the coming of a higher state of unity and integration. In the meantime—and it is this which lies at the root of our unhappiness—technical progress has outstripped the mind, matter has gone faster than spirit. And that leaves to those who would

Before passing to more concrete considerations, I shall first answer this question in my own philosophical language. We are all bound together by a more primitive and fundamental unity than any unity of thought and doctrine: we all have the same human nature and, considered in their extra-mental reality, the same primordial tendencies. That sameness of nature is not sufficient to ensure community of action, since we act as thinking beings and not simply by natural instinct. But it subtends the very exercise of our thought. And the nature we hold in common is a rational nature, subject intellectually to the attraction of the same fundamental objects; this unity of nature lies at the deepest foundation of what similarities our principles of action may have, however diverse they may be in other respects. Now, in order to do the same terrestrial work and pursue the same temporal goal, there must be a *certain community* of principles and doctrine. But there need not necessarily be—however desirable and obviously more effective this might be in itself—a strict and pure and simple *identity* of doctrine. It is sufficient that the various principles and doctrines between themselves should have some unity and community of similarity or proportion or, in the technical sense of the word, of *analogy*, with regard to the practical end proposed. Besides, this practical end in itself, although subordinated to a higher end, belongs to the natural order. And no doubt it will be conceived differently according to each one's particular outlook; but in its existential reality it will be placed outside each one's particular conception. Considered thus, in real existence, it will in a measure fall short of, and, at the same time, give actual reality to, each one's particular conceptions.

Therefore, men with different religious convictions will be able not only to collaborate in working out a technique, in putting out a fire, in succouring a man who is starving or sick, in resisting aggression. All that is obvious. But—and this is the problem that concerns us here—if there really is that “ana-

logical” likeness I have just mentioned between their principles, they can also cooperate—at least as regards the primary values of existence in this world—in a constructive action involving the right ordering of the life of temporal society and earthly civilization and the moral values inherent therein. I acknowledge this possibility at the same time—and the two things are not incompatible—as I realize even more keenly my personal conviction that a complete doctrine, based on all principles of Catholic teaching, is alone capable of supplying an entirely true solution for the problems of civilization.

I shall give an example of what I mean from the field I know best, namely Western Christianity, and an example which relates to the religious life itself. The practical problems connected with the relationship between the spiritual and the temporal, and their practical solutions, are so much alike for the Orthodox Church in the Soviet Union, for the Catholic Church and Protestant communities in Germany, that the experience and testimony of believers belonging to these different Christian families are, with their sufferings, a kind of common property. Another example can be drawn from the practical convergence which appears today, in connection with questions of civilization and the defense of the human person, between speculative outlooks as incompatible as Karl Barth's and my own. A Thomist and a Barthian will always clash in theology and philosophy; they can work together within human society.

But we must be even more precise. I have said that the basis of fellowship between believers of different spiritual families is friendship and the love of charity. I now add that it is the implications of love itself that supply us with the guiding idea we need and that make manifest for us the “analogical” likeness of practical thought I referred to earlier.

It is obvious in fact that, if I am right in what I have said, the primary and fundamental likeness between us is the acknowledgement of the fundamental and primordial ethical

are alike rejected as weaknesses and as the worst enemies either of the State or of the Revolution. The theorists of these movements make that abundantly clear in their writings.

The second implication is on the one hand the holiness of truth and on the other hand the eminent value of good will. If man can bend the truth to his own desires, will he not also want to bend other men in like manner? Those who despise charity are also those who think that truth depends, not on *what is*, but on what at each moment serves most effectively their party, their greed, or their hate. And those who despise charity also despise good will. The word to them seems pale and dangerously liberal. They forget—at any rate the Christians among them—that the word has its origin in the Gospels. It is true enough that good will is not sufficient, and that men who mistake that will which is good will for that willingness which is weakness cheat people. But good will is necessary and of primary necessity. It is useful in everything. Real, authentic good will indicates the sacred mystery which spells salvation for men and which makes it possible to say of a man that he is purely and simply good. It enables men to go out of themselves to meet their neighbours halfway. That is why the pharisees and the fanatics, walled up in their whited sepulchres, wherein they would like to enclose the whole world, are not only suspicious of good will; they detest the very idea.

The third implication contained in fraternal amity is the dignity of the human person with the rights it implies and the realities on which it is based. I refer to the spirituality of the human soul and its eternal destiny. In the text from which I have already quoted, Gandhi also pointed out that, "It [*Satyagraha*] is called also soul-force, because a definite recognition of the soul within is a necessity, if a *Satyagrahi* is to believe that death does not mean cessation of the struggle, but a culmination." I as a Christian know very well on what my faith in the immortality of the soul and the dignity of the human person is

## CHAPTER VI

### *THE MYSTERY OF ISRAEL*<sup>1</sup>

#### I

I SHOULD LIKE to preface the following reflections with some preliminary remarks.

The essay which forms this chapter was written in France in 1937. At that time, certain racist publications of very low quality had already dishonoured the French press, but the eventuality of any anti-Jewish legislation in France seemed impossible. (In fact, the anti-Semitic decrees promulgated later were treason against the French spirit, imposed by the Vichy government, under German pressure, upon a defeated nation.) At that time the vast majority of French people were nauseated by anti-Semitic trends. It was possible then to consider the Jewish problem in a purely philosophical, objective and dispassionate manner. I do not know whether at the present time I could maintain this manner. I do not know whether, in the face of the anti-Semitic nightmare spreading like a mental epidemic even among some groups of democratic people, it is fitting to speak of such questions except to utter our indignation at the iniquity and spiritual wretchedness now assaulting minds and nations.

Yet the publication of these pages, written during a less

<sup>1</sup>My study, *A Christian Looks at the Jewish Question* (New York, Longmans, 1939), on the trials now suffered by Israel in certain countries, contains material which complements from the historical point of view the considerations of a philosophical nature set forth here.

consequences of the drama of Calvary regarding the relation of Israel to the world. They were mistaken. I am perfectly aware that before agreeing with the statements proposed in my essay, it is necessary to admit, as a prerequisite, the whole Christian outlook; therefore it would be inconsistent to hope for any agreement from a reader who does not place himself in this perspective. I do not intend to try to convince such a reader, but, for the sake of mutual understanding, I think it would perhaps be interesting for him to know how a Christian philosopher considers this question.

I should like to add that such words as "penalty" or "punishment," which we are obliged to use when we seek to elucidate human matters from the viewpoint of the divine conduct of history, must be deprived of any anthropomorphic connotations, and that they become pitifully inadequate if we fail to do so. In any case, there is no more absurd abuse than to believe it to be the affair of poor creatures to foster their pride and injustice by applying to their neighbours, as if they were the police force of God, "penalties" and "punishments" which concern only the Creator in His intimate dealings of love with those who have been called by Him.

On the other hand, it is to be noted that in this essay the word "Church" is not used in the common sense that it conveys in the unbeliever's language, where it designates only an administrative organization—or the administrative organizations of various denominations—charged with the dispensation of religious matters. This word is used in the strict sense it conveys in the language of Catholic faith and theology. It designates a reality both visible and invisible, both human and divine, the mystical Body of Christ, which is itself a mystery of faith; which bears in itself the blemishes and sins of its weak members, and yet is, in its very essence, life, and inspiration—which it receives, in so far as a living whole, from its divine Head—without any blemish and rust and contamination of the

devil; to which all the baptized, gathered together in Catholic faith and discipline, visibly belong, and to the vivifying soul of which all men in good faith and good will, living by divine grace, invisibly belong.

Finally, I should like to point out that the most impressive Christian formulas concerning the spiritual essence of anti-Semitism may be found in a book recently published by a Jewish writer, who seems himself strangely unaware of their profoundly Christian meaning. I do not know whether Mr. Maurice Samuel shares even in Jewish piety; perhaps he is a God-seeking soul deprived of any definite dogmas, believing himself to be "freed" from any trust in divine revelation, either of the Old or the New Covenant. The testimony that he brings appears all the more significant. Because prophetic intuitions are all the more striking when they pass through slumbering or stubborn prophets, who perceive only in an obscure way what they convey to us.

"We shall never understand," Mr. Maurice Samuel says, "the maniacal, world-wide seizure of anti-Semitism unless we transpose the terms. It is of Christ that the Nazi-Fascists are afraid; it is in *his* omnipotence that they believe; it is *him* that they are determined madly to obliterate. But the names of Christ and Christianity are too overwhelming, and the habit of submission to them is too deeply ingrained after centuries and centuries of teaching. Therefore they must, I repeat, make their assault on those who were responsible for the birth and spread of Christianity. They must spit on the Jews as the 'Christ-killers' because they long to spit on the Jews as the Christ-givers."<sup>2</sup>

The simple fact of feeling no sympathy for the Jews or being more sensitive to their faults than to their virtues is not anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism is fear, scorn and hate of the Jewish race or people, and a desire to subject them to discriminative

<sup>2</sup>Maurice Samuel, *The Great Hatred*, New York, Knopf, 1940.

*against a foolish nation I will anger you. But Isaias is bold, and saith: I was found by them that did not seek me. I appeared openly to them that asked not after me. But to Israel he saith: All the day long have I spread my hands to a people that believeth not and contradicteth me. . . .*<sup>4</sup>

"I say then: Did God cast off his people? God forbid. . . ."<sup>5</sup>

"I say then: Have they so stumbled, that they should fall? God forbid! But by their lapse salvation is come to the Gentiles, that they may be emulous of them. Now if the misstep of them is the riches of the world and the diminution of them the riches of the Gentiles: how much more the fulness of them? For I say to you, Gentiles: As indeed the apostle of the Gentiles, I will honour my ministry. If, by any means, I may provoke to emulation them who are my flesh and may save some of them. For if the dispossession of them hath been the reconciliation of the world, what shall the reintegration of them be, but life from the dead? For if the first fruit be holy, so is the lump also: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken and thou, being a wild olive, wert ingrafted among them and with them partakest of the root and of the fatness of the olive tree: boast not against the branches. And if thou boast, still it is not thou that bearest the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then: branches were broken off that I might be grafted in. Well: because of unbelief they were broken off. Thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear. For if God hath not spared the natural branches, fear lest perhaps also he spare not thee. See then the goodness and the severity of God: towards them indeed that are fallen, the severity; but towards thee, the goodness of God, if thou abide in goodness. Otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the wild olive tree, which is natural to thee; and, contrary to nature, wert grafted into the good olive tree: how much more shall they that are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree?"

<sup>4</sup>Rom. x:19-21.

<sup>5</sup>Rom. xi:1.

historical sense of "race") and *jointly leading or aspiring to lead a political life*. Yiddish has not the characteristics of a national language.<sup>7</sup> It is the language of misery and dispersal, the slang of the Holy City scattered into pieces among the nations and trampled by them. A small number of Jews (500,000 in 1940), gathered together in Palestine, constitute a nation, and Hebrew is their national language. They are a special and separate group bearing witness that the other Jews (there are about sixteen millions in the world) are not a nation.

The Jews of the Palestine homeland are not merely a nation; they are tending to become a state (a complete or "perfect" political whole). But the great mass of Israel obeys a totally different law. It does not tend in any way to set up a temporal society. By reason of a deep vocation and by its very essence, Israel is disinclined—at least, so long as it has not brought to completion its mysterious historic mission—to become a nation, and even more, to become a state. The harsh law of exile, of the Galuth, prevents Israel from aspiring toward a common political life.

If the word "people" means simply a multitude gathered together in a determinate geographical area and populating that region of the earth (*Daseingemeinschaft*), the Jews are not a "people." To the extent that the word "people" is synonymous with "nation," they are not a "people." To the extent that it is synonymous with "race" (in the ethico-historical sense), they are a people, and more than a people; to the extent that it indicates an historical community characterized, not, as is a nation, by the fact (or desire) of leading a political life, but by the fact of being nourished with the same spiritual and moral tradition and of responding to the same vocation, they

<sup>7</sup>It might be called a national language in a different sense; in the sense that, like Ladino, it is a criterion of Jewish nationality in several countries. It is well known that Yiddish developed in Southern and Central Germany, in the twelfth century.

are a people, the people of peoples, the people of God. They are a consecrated tribe; they are a *house*, the house of Israel. Race, People, Tribe—all these words, if they are to designate the Jews, must be made sacred.



Israel is a mystery. Of the same order as the mystery of the world or the mystery of the Church. Like them, it lies at the heart of the Redemption. A philosophy of history, aware of theology, can attempt to reach some knowledge of this mystery, but the mystery will surpass that knowledge in all directions. Our ideas and our consciousness can be immersed in such things; they cannot circumscribe them.

If Saint Paul is right, we shall have to call the *Jewish problem* a problem *without solution*—that is, until the great reintegration foreseen by the apostle, which will be like a "resurrection from the dead." To wish to find, in the pure, simple, decisive sense of the word, a *solution* of the problem of Israel, is to attempt to stop the movement of history.

What made the rationalist-minded "liberal" position of the nineteenth century intrinsically weak, despite its great historical merit, when it was confronted with this problem, was precisely that it set itself up as a decisive solution.

The solution of a practical problem is the end of tension and conflict, the end of contradiction, peace itself. To assert that there is no solution—in an absolute sense—to the problem of Israel is to ensure the existence of struggle. There are two methods for this: an animalistic method, which is one of violence and hate, of war that is open or covert, prudent or furious, a war of the flesh aimed at the extermination, the riddance, or the enslavement of the Jews, a war of the world, of the *animalis homo* against Israel. This is the *anti-Semitic* method. The other is the Christian method. It consists in entering through compassion into the sufferings of the Messiah and

through the intelligence of charity into a spiritual struggle aimed at accomplishing the work of man's deliverance, the struggle of the Church and of the *spiritualis homo* for the salvation of the world and the salvation of Israel. This is the *Catholic*, the Pauline way, which furthermore would have us take part at the temporal level in the constant work of the concrete intelligence which neither definitively resolves nor overcomes antinomies, but at each moment in time discovers whatever is needed to make them bearable and more supple.

## III

IT IS DIFFICULT not to be struck by the extraordinary baseness of the leading themes of anti-Semitic propaganda. The men who claim the existence of a world-wide conspiracy of Israel for the enslavement of all nations, the existence of ritual murder, the universal perversion of the Jews effected by the Talmud; or who explain that Jewish hysteria is the cause of all the woes suffered by the blue-eyed dolichocephalic blond (a characteristic of those superior races where brown eyes and brown hair unfortunately are more often met with); or who explain that the Jews are united in a scheme to corrupt morally and to subvert politically all Christendom, as it appears in an obviously forged document, the Protocols of the Elders of Zion; in short, who know that all Jews are excessively rich and that the earth would prosper again if only we could once and for all do away with this monstrous race;—such men seem to prove that it is impossible to hate the Jewish people and at the same time remain an intelligent being. (In this they curiously resemble those who hate priests and cite the *Monita secreta* of the Jesuits, or the fact, well known in certain isolated districts of the United States, that Catholic priests have cloven hoofs.) To a mind sufficiently alert, this baseness itself seems disquieting: it must have a mystical meaning. Stupidity pushed too far im-

pinges upon mystery and hides the demonic instinct of the shadow world of the irrational.

It has been said that the tragedy of Israel is the tragedy of mankind; and that is why there is no solution to the Jewish problem. Let us state it more precisely: it is the tragedy of man in his struggle with the world and of the world in its struggle with God. Jacob, lame and dreaming, tireless irritant of the world and scapegoat of the world, indispensable to the world and intolerable to the world—so fares the wandering Jew. The persecution of Israel seems like the sign of the moments of crisis in this tragedy, when the play of human history almost stops at obstacles that the distress and moral weakness of nations cannot surmount, and when for a new start it demands some fresh horror. There is a supra-human relation between Israel and the world as there is between the Church and the world. It is only by taking into account these three terms that some idea of the mystery of Israel can, even obscurely, be formulated. A kind of inverted analogy with the Church must serve, I believe, as our guide. Through trying to perceive a mystery of suffering by the light of a mystery of grace, we are led to use in an improper meaning ideas and expressions properly belonging to an altogether different object.

Jewish thought itself is aware that Israel is in its own way a *corpus mysticum*.<sup>8</sup> The bond which forms the unity of Israel is not solely the bond of flesh and blood, nor of an ethico-historical society; and yet it is not the bond of the communion of saints, the bond which forms the unity of the Church, through faith in the incarnate God and through the possession of His heritage. (Of course Israel understands the meaning of the communion of saints and longs for it! But if it is true that its Christ came and that Israel failed to recognize Him and thus, on that day, failed in its own faith and in its own mission, so

<sup>8</sup>Cf. Erich Kahler, *Israël unter den Völkern*, Humanitas Verlag, Zurich.

straightway it lost the trust of dispensing to souls, through the signs of the Ancient Law, the grace of the Christ to come, while at the same time it repudiated the office of dispensing to souls, through the efficacy of the New Law, the grace of Christ already come; in other words, it repudiated the bond which would have really made the communion of saints its unity within a mystical body.) The bond of Israel remains a sacred and supra-historical bond, but a bond of promise, not of possession; of nostalgia, not of sanctity. For a Christian who remembers that the promises of God are without repentance, Israel continues its sacred mission, but in the night of the world which it preferred to God's night. (There are many Jews who prefer God to the world and many Christians who prefer the world to God. But I am referring to the choice which the religious authority of Israel made when it condemned the Son of Man and rejected the gospel.) Blindfolded, the Synagogue still moves forward in the universe of God's plans. It is itself only gropingly aware of this its path in history.

Kingdom of God in the state of pilgrimage and crucifixion—the Church is in the world and is not of the world; and, however much she suffers from the world, she is free of the world and already delivered.

People of God famished for the Kingdom, and who would not have it—Israel is in the world and is not of the world; but it is attached to the world, subject to the world, in bondage to the world. One day Israel stumbled and was caught in a trap; it stumbled against God—and in what an encounter, never to be repeated! Israel did not know what it was doing; but its leaders knew that they were making their choice against God. In one of those acts of free will which involve the destiny of a whole community, the priests of Israel, the bad watchers in the vineyard, the slayers of prophets, with excellent reasons of political prudence, chose the world, and to that choice their whole people was henceforth bound—until it changes of its

own accord. A crime of clerical misfeasance, unequalled prototype of all similar crimes.

If the concept of Karma is wrong in that it transfers punishment from the moral to the purely physical order, the Western idea of punishment is too often weighted with a juridical anthropomorphism. Penalty is not the arbitrary contrivance of some wound inflicted from without upon an unimpaired being to satisfy the law. It is—in the moral order itself—the fruit of the wound inflicted on a being through his own freedom voluntarily at fault, and this natural fruit *is* the satisfaction of the law. The penalty is the working out of the fault; our punishment is our choice. It is terrible to fall into the hands of the living God, for those hands give to each man what his will has settled on.

The Jews (I do not mean the Jews individually, but the mystical body of Israel at the moment when it struck against the rock) the Jews at a crucial moment chose the world; they have loved it; their penalty is to be held captive by their choice. Prisoners and victims in this world which they love, but of which they are not, will never be, cannot be.

The Church is universal, spread throughout all civilizations and all nations like a transcendent unity or community whereto from the depths of temporal diversity each man and all men may be lifted, in order to be made sons of God's lineage through the vivifying blood of the Son of God. The mystical body of Israel is that of a specific people; its basis is temporal and involves a community of flesh and blood. If it is to spread in the universe, it must do so disjointed from itself, broken and dispersed. The diaspora—already begun before the Christian era—is the earthly and bruised counterpart of the universality of the Church.

The mystical body of Israel is a Church fallen from a high place. It is not a "counter"-Church, any more than there exists a "counter"-God, or a "counter"-Spouse. It is an unfaithful

Church (such is the true meaning of the liturgical phrase, *perfidia Judaica*, which does not at all mean that the Jews are perfidious).<sup>9</sup> The mystical body of Israel is an unfaithful and a repudiated Church (and that is why Moses had figuratively given forth the *libellum repudiū*)—repudiated as a Church, not as a people. And ever awaited by the Bridegroom, who has never ceased to love her.



She knows that she is awaited, but knows it obscurely.

The communion of this mystical body is not the communion of saints; it is the communion of earthly hope. Israel passionately hopes for, awaits, wants the advent of God in the world, the kingdom of God *here below*. It wants, with an eternal will, a supernatural and unreasonable will, justice in time, in nature, and in the community. Greek wisdom has no meaning for Israel: neither its reasonableness nor its felicity in form. The beauty Israel seeks is ineffable, and Israel wants it in this life of the flesh, today.

A faith which would do violence to the seeming plan of the world in order to give a man today, tangibly, the substance for which he hopes and the accomplishment of the desire which God has planted in him, and hence would have him recapture everything spiritual and temporal—such is the faith of Israel. It is such a faith Israel is burning to have, and at the same time doubts it has (for if Israel had it, it would have all justice and

<sup>9</sup>*Cf.* Erik Peterson, *Perfidia Judaica*, in *Ephemerides Liturgicae*, 1936. The author shows that in patristic literature the word *perfidia* is used in the sense of "unbelief" or "infidelity," particularly in connection with the Jews, and that such is the original meaning of the liturgical expression, *perfidia Judaica*; it is by a subsequent change of meaning that in the Middle Ages this phrase assumed in popular usage the sense of *perfidious*, at the same time as crept in (ninth century) the omission of the genuflection in the prayer for the Jews on Good Friday. It is to be hoped that an innovation made in the ninth century can be changed again in the future.

plenitude). In modern times this faith has progressively weakened as rationalism has increased. Of such a notion of faith, which seems to me profoundly Jewish, Chestov's philosophy affords us incomparable evidence.

And Jewish charity is also a virtue fallen from a high place. I do not mean in any way that it is a false love. Divine charity can be present in it, as it may be absent from it. Nor is it Lutheran pity, nor Slavic pity. It is an active and, on occasion, a relentless love of the creature as such; it grapples the creature, torments it, never lets it go, so as to oblige it to become aware of its evil and deliver itself from its evil.

Of earthly hope the Jews have an excess; and of this virtue many Christians have not enough. The basic weakness in the mystical communion of Israel is its failure to understand the Cross, its refusal of the Cross, and therefore its refusal of the transfiguration. The aversion to the Cross is typical of that Judaism of the Exile, which does not mean Christianity's first outline and imperfect beginning, as Judaism is by essence, but which indicates the spiritual pattern which shapes Israel's severance from its Messiah. With all Jews in whom grace dwells, as with all souls of good faith and good will, the work of the Cross is present, but veiled and unperceived, and involuntarily experienced. Despite himself, and in an obscuring mist, the pious Jew, the Jew of the spirit, carries the gentle Cross, and thus betrays Judaism without realizing what he does. The moment he begins to be aware of this mystery of forgiveness and of this putting off of self, he finds himself on the road to Christianity.

In Jesus alone and in His mystical Body taken as such, the devil plays no part. He does play his part in Israel, as in the world, but Israel struggles against him. The drama of Israel is to struggle against the Prince of this world while yet loving the world and being attached to the world; and while knowing better than anyone else the value of the world.

Israel plays a dual part with regard to the history of the world and the salvation of the world. In what *directly* concerns

this salvation, Israel has given the Saviour to the world; and now it remains a witness. It preserves the treasure of the scriptures (it must not be forgotten that the Church took unto herself for her own use the labour of the rabbis and the Masorettes for the establishment of the text of scripture, just as she used the work of the philosophers and of Aristotle for her theology); and Israel is itself, throughout time, a living and indestructible depository of the promises of God.

In what *indirectly* concerns the salvation of the world, Israel is obedient to a vocation which I think above all deserves emphasis, and which supplies a key for many enigmas. Whereas the Church is assigned the task of the supernatural and supratemporal saving of the world, to Israel is assigned, in the order of temporal history and its own finalities, the work of the *earthly leavening* of the world. Israel is here—Israel which is not of the world—at the deepest core of the world, to irritate it, to exasperate it, to *move* it. Like some foreign substance, like a living yeast mixed into the main body, it gives the world no quiet, it prevents the world from sleeping, it teaches the world to be dissatisfied and restless so long as it has not God, it stimulates the movement of history.

The passion of Israel is not, like that of the Church, a passion of co-redemption, completing what is lacking in the sufferings of the Saviour. This passion is not suffered for the eternal salvation of souls, but for the stimulation and emancipation of temporal life. It is the passion of a scapegoat, enmeshed in the earthly destiny of the world and in the ways of the world mixed with sin, a scapegoat against which the impure sufferings of the world strike back, when the world seeks vengeance for the misfortunes of its history upon what activates that history. Israel thus suffers the repercussion of the activation it produces, or which the world feels it is destined to produce.



to Israel, since through its fault it has left to others the care of the kingdom of heaven, is, under the contrasting forms wherein good and evil are intertwined, the acceleration of the movement of temporal things, and the hastening of the world's business, in view of the account which the world must settle with God. Consider, in this connection, of what richly symbolic value is the famous fondness of the Jews for business, and the fact that, since the Babylonian captivity, commerce is their principal occupation, wherein they do not merely excel, like other oriental peoples, but wherein they find the mental stimulation which they need, and even a sort of *spiritual* satisfaction.<sup>11</sup>

Let us consider once more this strange inter-crossing symmetry which holds our attention. As to Christians, the Church follows her divine vocation, and it is not Christianity, it is Christendom, the Christian world, which has failed (in the temporal order) without being willing to hear the voice of the Church who, while she directs men toward eternal life, also requires them to help the development of life on earth along the lines of the Gospel. For the Jews, it is Israel as a Church, it is Judaism which has failed (in the spiritual order); and it is Israel still as the chosen people, it is "Jewdom" which pursues in history a supernatural (yet ambiguous) vocation.

## IV

LIKE THE WORLD and the history of the world, the mystical body of Israel and its activity in the world are ambivalent activities, and what I have already said may permit us to under-

<sup>11</sup>"They feel happy in an atmosphere of risk and uncertainty, illumined by hope. . . . The Jew never foregoes hope, and it is this which permits him to adapt himself to new conditions. He is not beaten down by reverses, and always expects things to get better. . . . This frame of mind is especially useful in the uncertainties of trade. . . ." Arthur Ruppin, lecturer on Jewish sociology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, *Les Juifs dans le Monde Moderne*, Paris, Payot, 1934.

characteristics and inclinations, there will always be reason to exalt Israel, and reason to debase it. Those who want to hate a people, never lack pretexts; particularly when that people's vocation is extraordinary and its psychology contrasting. Tactlessness, ostentation, self-esteem, an almost artistic feeling for success and a loud bewailing of suffered injury—many defects are charged to this tenacious people and make some of them irritating. Jews are on the average more intelligent and quicker than Gentiles. They profit thereby; they do not know how to make people forgive them their success. The traffic of the money lender or the merchant, the various non-productive businesses and occupations which, indeed, they are not the only ones to practice, but which have become perforce for them an hereditary habit,<sup>15</sup> and at which they are unbeatable—are not designed to attract the favour of people, themselves as eager for gain but less expert.

When they gather in the high places of culture to worship the idols of the nations, Jews become corrupted. And as with other spiritual groups, it is only rarely that the best of them mount the stage of politics and show.

These are pretexts against the Jews; and whenever they would appear to justify hatred or discriminatory measures, such allegations are always unjust. If men could tolerate each

aspects and that, bearing the misery of the centuries, it infinitely suffers.

"The teaching of the Church throughout all times indicates that holiness is inherent in this exceptional, unique, and imperishable people, protected by God, preserved as the apple of His eye, in the midst of the destruction of so many peoples, for the accomplishment of His ulterior Purpose. Even the abasement of this race is a divine omen, the very visible omen of the permanence of the Holy Spirit in this so scorned a people, who must rise up in the Glory of the Comforter on the last day." Léon Bloy, *Le Vieux de la Montagne*, 2 janvier 1910.

<sup>15</sup>Under certain historical conditions they turn preferably to certain kinds of professions, above all the liberal professions. Under different historical conditions they turn elsewhere. The Zionist Colony is only one example, proving a "return to the land" and agriculture is possible for many Jews.

other only on condition that no one bear grievance against another, all sections of a country would constantly be at war.

And the Jews have more good qualities than defects. Those who have frequented them enough to have shared in their life know the incomparable quality of Jewish goodness. When a Jew is good, he has a quality and a depth of goodness rarely encountered among people whose natural sharpness has been less matured by suffering. They know of what virtues of humanity, of generosity, of friendship the Jewish soul is capable. Péguy made famous his Jewish friendships. It is among "grasping" Jews that one can meet the most unreasonable examples of that natural propensity for giving, which perhaps comes not so much from the wish to be a benefactor as from the utter lack of protective boundaries and defenses against pity. Nothing is more disarmed, more tender than Jewish goodness. Jews have done more in the world for Knowledge and Wisdom than for commerce and trade. A very high feeling for the purity of the family and for the virtues which follow in its wake, has long since characterized Jews. They have the fundamental human virtue of patience in work. They have an innate love for independence and liberty, the abiding flame of the ancient prophetic instinct, the intellectual fire, the quickness of intuition and abstraction, the faculty of passionate dedication and devotion to ideas. If it is true, as Psichari dared to say, that God prefers sin to stupidity, then His liking for the Jews (and for some others) becomes understandable. One is never bored with a Jew. Their nostalgia, their energy, the naïveté of their finesse, their ingenuity, their knowledge of penury are all rare tonics for the mind. I remember with what joy, in a large city of the United States, after lectures and university gatherings, I, who am a *goy*, would go to the home of Jewish friends to refresh myself in the vitality of that tireless pathos and the perpetual motion of ideas which vivified for me long centuries of painful refining of the soul and the intelligence.

But it is above all important to note that the various special causes to which an observer may attribute anti-Semitism,<sup>16</sup> from the feeling of hatred for strangers which is natural—too natural—in any social group, to the social dislocations created by large-scale immigration, and to the various grievances I have already described,<sup>17</sup> serve to hide an even deeper root of hatred. If the world hates the Jews, it is because the world is well aware that they will always be *supernaturally* strangers to it; it is because the world detests their passion for the absolute and the unbearable activation with which this passion stimulates it. It is the vocation of Israel which the world execrates—a hatred which can turn against the race bearing that vocation, or against the various forms of temporal manifestation which outwardly express and mask this vocation. *Odium generis humani*. Hated by the world, this is their glory, as it is also the glory of those Christians who live by faith. But Christians—by virtue of their Mystical Body—have overcome the world<sup>18</sup> and the Jews have not; that is why for a Jew to become a Christian is a double victory: his people triumphs in him. Woe to the Jew—and to the Christian—who is pleasing to men! And the time is perhaps coming, has already come in certain countries, when the witnessing of the one and the witnessing of the other being alike judged intolerable, both will be hated and persecuted together. And, united in persecution, they will together be brought back to their sources.

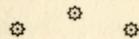
The Jew is lost if he settles down, and by *settling down* I

<sup>16</sup>A good sociological analysis of these causes will be found in the already quoted work by Arthur Ruppin.

<sup>17</sup>For the various shallow, half-baked or sophistic arguments commonly used in anti-Semitic propaganda, see my book, *A Christian Looks at the Jewish Question*, pp. 3-9.

<sup>18</sup>True Christians have overcome it for eternal life. God's commandments are not grievous, wrote Saint John, "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and the victory which overcometh the world is our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, if not he who believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" (I John v:4-5).

mean a spiritual phenomenon, like the loss of a stimulating disquiet and the failure of a vocation. *Assimilation* involves an altogether different problem, in the social and political, not spiritual, order. An "assimilated" Jew may be one who is not "settled." Assimilation is not the solution of Israel's problem, any more than is Yiddishism or Zionism; but assimilation, like autonomy and Zionism, is a partial accommodation, a compromise solution, good and desirable to the extent that it is possible. Assimilation took place in the past on a large scale in the Hellenistic and Hispano-Arabic periods. Yet it carries with it a risk—as does also Zionism (as a state)—the risk of the Jews becoming settled, becoming *like others* (I mean spiritually). It is the risk of losing the vocation of the house of Israel. Their God then strikes them down by the vilest of instruments. Never had there been Jews more assimilated than the German Jews. They were all the more attached to German culture for its having in part been their achievement. They had become totally Germans, which did not make them either more discreet or more humble. They were not only assimilated, but settled down, conciliatory and well reconciled with the Prince of this world. Jews who become like others become worse than others. (When a Jew receives Christian grace, he is less than ever like others: he has found *his* Messiah.)

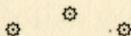


"The Jews [wrote Charles Péguy<sup>19</sup>] know what is the cost of being the fleshly voice and the temporal body. They know what is the cost of bearing God and his agents, the prophets. His prophets, the prophets. Then, obscurely, they hope that one need not begin anew. . . . They have fled so often, and in so many and such dire flights, that they know how precious a thing it is not to flee. They have pitched their tents, they have entered a little into modern peoples; how much they would

<sup>19</sup>Charles Péguy, *Notre Jeunesse*.

versally against God.<sup>20</sup> In both, the same absolute naturalism, the same detestation of all asceticism and of everything transcendent comes to light. Enough of God's constraint; let us now try man's,—we shall see whether it is sweeter. No more slave morality—morality of the weak, the suffering, the impotent disguised as the merciful. We shall see if the morality of blood and the morality of sweat are not the moralities of free men. The mystical life of the *world* will now blossom forth heroically; every *corpus mysticum* set apart from the world must be rejected as such.

But what has happened? History has so *intoxicated* them with Judæo-Christianity that they cannot help wishing to *save the world*. The racists remain the debtors of the Old Testament as do the Communists of the New. It is from the Jewish Scriptures that the former have taken—only to corrupt it—the idea of a predestined race; it is from the Gospel that the latter have taken and distorted the idea of a universal emancipation and human brotherhood.



As much hated by the world as is the Jew, and equally out of his place in the world, but himself grafted into the olive tree of Judah, and member of a mystical body which is the Body of the Messiah of Israel victorious over the world, the Christian alone can assign its proper dimensions to the Jewish tragedy. It is with feelings of brotherly love, and not without fear for himself, that he should look at the men involved in this tragedy. From the one side and from the other, Jews and Christian answer each other. If both of them are pious and good, they know one another, they smile at meeting on the premises of the Prince of this world and on the roads of Jahveh.

<sup>20</sup>The Soviet régime takes pride in its radical opposition to anti-Semitism. Yet on the religious plane, Judaism has suffered as much in Russia as Christianity, and has offered far less resistance to the anti-religious campaign. Cf. *A Christian Looks at the Jewish Question*, pp. 44-46.

The reflections which make up this chapter have as their object the explanation, in some measure, of the pathos of the position of the Jewish people. Perhaps such reflections help us to understand how, often despite itself, and at times manifesting in various ways a materialized Messianism, which is the darkened aspect of its vocation to the absolute, the Jewish people, ardently, intelligently, actively, give witness, at the very heart of man's history, to the supernatural. Whence the conflicts and tensions which, under all kinds of disguises, cannot help but exist between Israel and the nations.

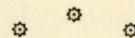
It is an illusion to believe that this tension can disappear (at least before the fulfilment of the prophecies). It is base—one of those specimens of baseness natural to man as an animal (be he an Arab, and himself of the lineage of Shem, or a Slav, or a Latin, or a German . . .) and a baseness of which Christianity alone can, to the degree that it is truly lived, free mankind—to wish to end the matter by anti-Semitic violence, whether it be of open persecution, or politically “mitigated.” There is but one way, and that is to accept this state of tension, and to make the best of it in each particular case, not in hatred, but in that concrete intelligence which love requires of each of us, so that we may agree with our companion—with our “adversary” as the gospel says—quickly while we are with him on the way;<sup>21</sup> and in the awareness that “all have sinned and have need of the glory of God”—*omnes quidem peccaverunt, et egent gloria Dei*. “The history of the Jews,” said Léon Bloy, “dams the history of the human race as a dike dams a river, in order to raise its level.”<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup>Matt. v:25.

<sup>22</sup>Léon Bloy, *Le Salut par les Juifs*. Among Catholic contributions to the study of the problem of Israel, I should like to mention the study by Erik Peterson already cited, *Le Mystère des Juifs et des Gentils dans l'Église*; and the penetrating pages written by Charles Péguy in *Notre Jeunesse* and in *Note Conjointe sur M. Descartes*; also Louis Massignon, *Pro Psalmis* (*Revue Juive*, 15 mars, 1925); Jean de Ménasce, *Situation du*

This permanent tension appears in two very different manners—one on the spiritual level, the other on the temporal.

On the spiritual level, the drama of love between Israel and its God, which makes Gentiles participate in the economy of salvation, and which is but one element in the universal mystery of salvation, will be resolved only in the reconciliation of the Synagogue and the Church. In the important text quoted at the beginning of this chapter Saint Paul says to the Gentile Christian: “See, then, the goodness and the severity of God, towards them indeed that are fallen, the severity, but towards thee, the goodness of God: if thou abide in goodness, otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.” Considering the condition of the world, and the way in which the nations give witness that they *abide in goodness*, one is tempted to wonder whether tomorrow will not see the resolution. In any case nothing requires us to think that the resolution will come at the end of human history, rather than at the beginning of a new age for the Church and the world.



On the temporal level, even if there is no solution in the pure and simple meaning of the word, before the fulfilment of the prophecies,—no truly decisive solution for the problem of Israel, there are nevertheless *certain* solutions, partial or provisional, particular answers to the problem whose disentanglement—*Sionisme* and *Quand Israël aime Dieu* (*Le Roseau d'Or*); the Rev. Joseph Bonsirven, *Sur les ruines du Temple, Juifs et Chrétiens, Les Juifs et Jésus* (I hope that the lectures on Judaism given by the same author at the Institut Catholique of Paris in 1938 may one day be published); O. de Férenzy, *Les Juifs et nous chrétiens*; the article published in *Die Erfüllung* (1937) under the title *Die Kirche Christi und die Judenfrage* and signed by several Catholic writers and teachers (translated in part and published in pamphlet form by National Catholic Welfare Conference, Washington); and the periodicals, *La Question d'Israël* (a bulletin published by the Fathers of Our Lady of Zion) and *La Juste Parole* (Paris). See also Rabbi Jacob Kaplan's work, *Témoignages sur Israël*, Paris, 1935.

ment is the duty of political wisdom and which it is the task of various historical periods to attempt.

The Middle Ages tried a "sacral" solution, in accordance with the typical structure of the civilization of that time. This solution, which was based on the presupposition that a sacred penalty, inflicted by God, not by men, weighed on the destinies of Israel, and which gave Jews the status of foreigners in the Christian community, the solution of the ghetto,<sup>23</sup> was hard in itself and often iniquitous and bloody in practice. Yet it proceeded from a high concept, and was in any case better than the bestial materialism of the racist laws initiated in our own day by Germany. It was on the religious, not at all on the racial, level. It recognized the privileges of the soul, and the baptized Jews entered as a matter of right into the full fellowship of the Christian community. This mediæval solution has gone, never to return, like the kind of civilization from whence it sprang.

The emancipation of the Jews, brought about by the French Revolution, is a fact which civilized people, to the extent that they remain such, should consider definitive. If indeed this emancipation was in itself a just and necessary thing (and a thing which corresponded to a Christian aspiration) nevertheless the hopes which the rationalist and bourgeois-optimist way of thinking, forgetful at once of the mystery of Israel and of supra-individual realities, had based upon this emancipation to *extinguish* the Jewish problem, were soon to prove vain.

It looks as if the time into which we are entering is called upon to try another experiment. The régime of which I am

<sup>23</sup>The ghetto itself did not become obligatory until the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. I use this word as the symbol of a certain politico-juridic conception. Concerning this, see P. Browe, S.J., *Die Judengesetzgebung Justinians (Analecta Gregoriana, VIII, Rome, 1935)*. On the doctrinal controversies and mediæval *apologiae*, see the important work of A. Lukyn Williams, *Adversus Judæos (A Bird's Eye View of Christian Apologiae until the Renaissance)*, 1935, Cambridge University Press.

thinking and which far from having been conceived for the particular case of Israel, answers in a general way to the kind of civilization whose historic ideal suits our age, can summarily be described as *pluralist* and *personalist*.<sup>24</sup> In utter contrast to the insane Hitlerian parody of the mediæval way, shamefully accepted by the unhappy rulers of a crushed France, I think of a pluralism founded on the dignity of man, and which, on the basis of a complete equality in civic rights and of effective respect for the liberties of the person in his individual and social life, would accord to the various spiritual families participating in the fellowship of the temporal community a proper ethico-juridical status for the questions described as mixed (impinging on the spiritual and the temporal). Such a pluralism would represent, along with other advantages, for the nations that might be capable of this kind of civilization, an attempt at the organic ordering of the Jewish question best suited to our moment in history. By means of direct agreements with the Jewish spiritual community—as with the different Christian churches—a community institutionally recognized, such questions as concern this community and the common good of the political whole would be resolved.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup>Cf. *True Humanism*. Chapters IV and V.

<sup>25</sup>It is needless to say that in such a conception which relates to the temporal and socio-political fellowship of various spiritual families in the profane community, it is the *spiritual* not the *racial* which differentiates the statuses in question. In becoming Catholic or Protestant, a Jew would thus quit the juridical status of the Jewish spiritual family: which is not to say that he would quit Israel and its vocation.

Inversely, the Zionist homeland or the eventual Jewish State in Palestine being of a profane kind and based on nationality, not on the Israelite religion, it is logical that it makes room for baptized Jews who shall enjoy the full liberty of their religious life and shall be able to found colonies. It is well known that in 1933 the "Association of Christian Hebrews" whose headquarters are in London and which is made up of converted Jews, acquired lands in Southern Palestine, with a view to establishing baptized Jews there in agricultural colonies. (A. Ruppin, *op. cit.*, p. 16.) Cf. Simon Marcovici-Cléja, *Le Problème juif mondial*, Paris, 1938.

who will flee the lands where anti-Semitic persecution rages. This is not the place to examine the question of Zionism, to which no mind aware of the unfolding of prophecy throughout history could be indifferent. Since it may be called upon to become one day the animating centre for all dispersed Jewry, Zionism seems to me to have an historic importance of the first order. But it does not yet represent deliverance from exile: the return to Palestine is but the prelude to such deliverance. No more than individualist liberalism or than the pluralist régime we have been discussing, can the Zionist State do away with the law of the desert and of the Galuth, which is not consubstantial with the Jewish people—this law *will* come to an end—but is essential to the mystical body and the vocation of Israel in the state of separation.

## VI

IT IS WHEN they obey the spirit of the world, not the spirit of Christianity, that Christians can be anti-Semitic. Much historical confusion, in the works of careless or impassioned writers, arises on this score from the fact of the intertwining, in mediæval civilization, of the things of the Church and of the things of a sacrally constituted temporal community, where earthly interests and all the good and all the evil of human social life were steeped in religion. If this confusion is avoided, it is possible to see that in a temporal civilization, where the régime of the ghetto—let alone the drama of the muranos and the Spanish Inquisition—encouraged (above all in the later Middle Ages and in the decay of feudalism) the worst anti-Jewish passions and excesses, the Church herself, apart from certain of her ministers, is not responsible for these excesses. It is well known that the Popes time and again defended the Jews, especially against the absurd accusation of the crime of ritual murder, and that the Jews were ordinarily less unhappy and less ill-treated in the Papal States than elsewhere.

which such a damaged conscience believes justified by religion, it seeks for itself a kind of alibi.

In truth, we are dealing here with a sort of collective "lapse," or with a substitute for an obscure and unconscious passion of anti-clericalism, or even of resentment against God. For, do what we will—or even do what it will—the people of Israel remains the priestly people. The bad Jew is a kind of bad priest; God will have no one raise his hand against either. And even before recognizing Christ, the true Israelite, in whom there is no guile, by virtue of an unbreakable promise, wears the livery of the Messiah.

It is no small thing for a Christian to hate or despise, or to wish to treat in a debasing way, the race whence issued his God and the immaculate Mother of his God. That is why the bitter zeal of anti-Semitism always at the end turns into a bitter zeal against Christianity.

"Suppose [wrote Léon Bloy], that people around you should continually speak of your father and your mother with the greatest scorn and treat them only to insults or outrageous sarcasm, how would you feel? Well, that is exactly what happens to Our Lord Jesus Christ. We forget, or rather we do not wish to know, that our God-made-man is a Jew, in nature the Jew of Jews, the Lion of Judah; that His Mother is a Jewess, the flower of the Jewish race; that the Apostles were Jews, as well as all the Prophets; and finally that our Holy Liturgy is altogether drawn from Jewish books. How, then, can we express the enormity of the outrage and blasphemy which lie in vilifying the Jewish race?

"Anti-Semitism . . . is the most horrible slap in the face suffered in the ever-continuing Passion of Our Lord: it is the most stinging and the most unpardonable because He suffers it on *His Mother's Face*, and at the hands of Christians."<sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup>Léon Bloy, *Le Vieux de la Montagne*, 2 janvier 1910.

## VII

LÉON BLOY also said that the "veil," to which Saint Paul refers and which covers the eyes of Israel, is now passing "from the Jews to the Christians." This statement, which is harsh on the Gentiles and on the Christian distorters of Christianity, helps us understand something of the extensive and violent persecution to which the Jews today are victim, and of the spiritual upheaval which has been going on for years among many of them, denoting deep inward changes, particularly in respect to the person of Christ.

The growing solicitude in Israel's heart for the Just Man crucified through the error of the high priests is a symptom of unquestionable importance. Today in America representative Jewish writers like Sholem Asch and Waldo Frank are trying to reintegrate the gospel into the brotherhood of Israel. While not yet recognizing Jesus as the Messiah, they do recognize Him as the most pure Jewish figure in human history. They themselves would be disturbed to be considered as leaning toward Christianity. Yet while remaining closer than ever to Judaism, they believe that the gospel transcends the Old Testament and consider it a divine flower issuing from the stem of the Patriarchs and the Prophets. Never forgetful of the conflicts of history and of the harsh treatment received by their people, the authors of *Salvation* and of *The New Discovery of America*, have long studied and loved mediæval Christianity and Catholic spiritual life. They agree with Maurice Samuel that "christophobia" is the spiritual essence of the demoniacal racism of our pagan world. Many other signs give evidence that Israel is beginning to open its eyes, whereas the eyes of many self-styled Christians are blinded, darkened by the exhalations of the old pagan blood suddenly, ferociously welling up once more among Gentiles.

"Jesus Christ is in agony until the end of the world," said

gradually to conform His people to Him. If there are any in the world today—but where are they?—who give heed to the meaning of the great racist persecutions and who try to understand that meaning, they will see Israel as drawn along the road to Calvary, by reason of that very vocation as stimulus of history which I have described, and because the slave merchants will not pardon it for the demands it and its Christ have implanted at the heart of the world's temporal life, demands which will ever cry "no" to the tyranny of force. Despite itself Israel is climbing Calvary, side by side with Christians—whose vocation concerns the Kingdom of God more than the temporal history of the world; and these strange companions are at times surprised to find each other mounting the same path. As in Marc Chagall's beautiful painting, the poor Jews, without understanding it, are swept along in the great tempest of the Crucifixion, around Christ, who is stretched

*Across the lost world . . .  
At the four corners of the horizon  
Fire and Flames  
Poor Jews from everywhere are walking  
No one claiming them  
They have no place on the earth  
To rest—not a stone  
The wandering Jews. . . .*<sup>28</sup>

The central fact, which has its deepest meaning for the philosophy of history and for human destiny—and which no one

<sup>28</sup>A travers le monde perdu . . .  
Aux quatre coins de l'horizon  
Feu et Flammes  
De pauvres Juifs de partout s'en vont  
Personne qui les réclame  
Ils n'ont plus de lieu sur la terre  
Pour se reposer pas une pierre  
Les Juifs errants. . . .

Raïssa Maritain, "Chagall" (*Lettre de Nuit*, Paris, 1939).

or hates it. Yet in such case one is only considering nature in the concrete conditions of existence in which it effectively finds itself.

How could a philosopher, inoculated with *separatist* prejudices, fail to be confronted with the Jewish problem as with a matter eminently created to scandalize him? For herein, and from the beginning and before Israel stumbled and by a unique privilege, there has been a supernatural election which involved a people in its temporal history, a race in its very ethico-social destiny. Code of social life, national tradition, temporal history, race, people *set apart* for God. Priest-people. If certain Jews cultivate an exasperating racial pride (even though it is in part rendered excusable by the extraordinary succession of persecutions under which their ancestors have suffered) we must see here the effect of a naturalistic corruption of the memory of this divine election. The ingenious anti-Semites who vituperate "Jewish racism" forget that the first one responsible for the concept of an elect race, that concept being taken at its pure source, is the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob, the God of Israel—*your God*, dear Christians who turn yourselves against the chosen olive tree into which you were grafted. In any case it is to the Bible and to Moses that Mr. So and So should impute first of all the supernaturalism he has contrived. It is only too evident that he is lost before the astounding interweaving of the natural and the sacred, of the supernatural and the temporal, presented by the unique case of Israel.

Our writer is scandalized that I should regard the choice of Israel as permanent and the mission of Israel as still continuing in a certain manner, after its lapse. Let him hold it against Saint Paul and against the apostolic affirmation that the vocation and the gifts of God are without repentance. (And indeed he holds it against Saint Paul, whose words he vainly seeks to extenuate.) What Saint Paul reveals to us is precisely that Israel, even though

manent prerogative? Let Israel desist from its obstinacy, and the course of the world is changed; indescribable spiritual riches is the joy of the Gentiles. In this sense Israel holds in its hands, in the power of an act of its free choice, the "riches of the Gentiles": "If . . . the diminution of them [is] the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness?" And again (xi:15): "For if the dispossession of them hath been the reconciliation of the world, what shall the reintegration of them be, but life from the dead?" Concerning this Saint Thomas writes that "their spiritual abundance or their multitude converted to God will make the riches of the Gentiles, according to the saying of Ecclesiastes: *My dwelling place is in the fulness of the Saints*. And thus if God has permitted for the utility of the entire world the misstep and the dispossession of the Jews, how much more generously will He restore their ruins to the advantage of the entire world. . . . And what will be the effect of their reintegration, if not to call back to life the Gentiles, that is to say the lukewarm faithful, when *on account of the progress of iniquity, the charity of a great number shall have waxed cold* (Matt. xxiv: 12)?"<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup>St. Thomas, in *Ep. ad Romanos*, cap. xi, lect. 2 (on xi:12 and xi:15). Bossuet for his part wrote: "The Saviour whom Zion did not recognize and whom the children of Jacob had rejected, will turn toward them, will wipe away their sins and will restore to them that understanding of the prophecies which they will for a long time have lost, that it may go down from hand to hand unto all posterity and be never again forgotten until the end of the world and for as much time as it will please God to make it continue after this marvellous event." (*Hist. Univ.* II, 20). "When you will see us coming into the Church and approaching you," says the Abbé Lémann, "it will not be as heralds of death, but as heralds of life. We shall come, not to announce the end but to prevent it. The Apostle St. Paul, that converted Jew who saw so clearly into the destinies of our people, calls the conversion of the Jews the *riches of the world*: again he calls it a *life from the dead*. Hence it will not be with the end of the world, but rather with the most astonishing splendour of the world that will coincide the conversion of the Jews." (*Question du Messie*, p. 150).

say of the greater number of us that what each detests most of all after the executioner is his victim? That is indeed a very *natural* feeling. I cannot fail to appreciate at its worth this sort of inglorious necessity of the moment; I merely maintain that this is not the moment for Christians to betray the Christian spirit.

I say that in a time wherein anti-Semitic persecutions have assumed an unheard-of proportion, wherein thousands upon thousands of miserable people have been put outside the law, subjected to brutalities and humiliations beyond description, to slow death, to the "spontaneous" violence of the mob or to the horrors of concentration camps, in a time when every day we hear that the epidemic of suicides among Jews continues in Vienna and elsewhere, or that, in the winter of 1938 cold and hunger decimated entire train loads of Jews stopped at forbidden frontiers, or that, as is true at the moment of writing these paragraphs boatloads full of Jews are dying of want, as they wander about the Mediterranean Sea, from one port to another, everywhere repulsed—in such a time the only *realism* which matters, not only to a Christian, but to all men still endowed with a natural feeling for the *caritas humani generis*, is not to speak a word, not to write a word which could serve as any excuse whatever for degrading hatred, and thereby to find oneself some day accused of the blood or the despair of creatures of God.