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THE ECUMENICAL COUNCIL VATICAN II AND THE JEWS

By SOLOMON ZEITLIN

THE TEACHING OF THE CHURCH for over eighteen hundred years that the Jews were guilty of the crucifixion of Jesus, that they are deicides, was responsible for the spread and acceleration of anti-Semitism. We may say that the slaughter of the six million Jews was partly due to the evil effects of this accusation. The holocaust of the gas chambers led many Christians to examine the evil effects of this age old stigma that the Jews are deicides.

At the Second Session of the Ecumenical Council a summary of the draft on Jews was published in the *New York Times*, November 19, 1964, it read as follows:

The Jewish people should never be presented as one rejected, cursed or guilty of deicide. What happened to Christ in His Passion cannot be attributed to the whole people then alive, much less to that of today. Besides, the church held and holds that Christ underwent his Passion and death freely, because of the sins of all men and out of infinite love.

The death of Jesus has historical and theological aspects. By the historical aspect we mean the need to investigate the reason why Jesus was put to death and who crucified him. By the theological aspect we mean the presentation by the Church of the death of Jesus Christ, the Son of God who ransomed with his blood the sins of men.

The sources dealing with the events which led to the death of Jesus are the Gospels. But the Gospels are swathed about with theological clothes. Furthermore, the Gospels contradict each other in many essential facts regarding the events which led to the crucifixion. The Gospels were written more than

two generations after the death of Jesus. Even the Gospel according to Mark, which is the earliest, was written after the destruction of the Judæan State and this Gospel was based on logia. In his Epistles Paul makes scant reference to the crucifixion of Jesus.

The Apostolic Fathers mention only that Jesus was crucified under Pontius Pilate.¹

With regard to outside sources, the passage about Jesus in Josephus that he was crucified by Pilate, was interpolated by the Church Father Eusebius.² The Roman historian Tacitus, speaking of the Christian sect, wrote, "Christus, the founder of the name, had undergone the death penalty in the reign of Tiberius, by sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilatus."³ We would expect to find some reference to Jesus in the Palestinian Talmud but there is none. In the Babylonian Talmud there are some passages which make reference to the heresy of Jesus and to his crucifixion. These passages are of the period of the 3rd century CE and hence have no historical value.⁴

Thus sources, outside the Gospels do not give any historical material dealing with the events which led to the crucifixion of Jesus. The only remaining sources then are the Gospels. The historian dealing with the period of the crucifixion of Jesus must divorce the theological encasement from historical facts.

According to the Gospels, when Jesus was arrested by a

¹ Cf. Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans, 1, -2, "he is in truth of the family of David according to the flesh, God's son by the will and power of God, truly born of a virgin, baptised by John . . . truly nailed in the flesh for our sake under Pontius Pilate and Herod the Tetrarch. ἀληθῶς ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου καὶ Ἡρώδου τετραρχοῦ καθηλωμένον ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἐν σαρκί . . . Cf. also Epistle to the Trallians 9.

² Cf. S. Zeitlin, "The Christ Passage in Josephus," *JQR*, 1928, pp. 231-255, idem., *Josephus on Jesus*, 1931.

³ *Annals*, 15. 44. *Auctor nominis eius Christus Tiberio imperitante per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum supplicio adfectus erat.*

⁴ Cf. S. Zeitlin, "Jesus in the Early Tannaitic Literature" *Abhandlungen Zur Erinnerung An Hirsch Perez Chajes*, Wien 1933, pp. 295-308.

cohort and brought to the house of the high priest where a *synedrion* was assembled, the high priest asked Jesus, "Are you the Messiah, Christ, the Son of the Blessed (Son of God)?" Jesus replied, "I am and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of Power (God)." ⁵ When the high priest heard the words of Jesus he tore his clothes and said that there was no need for witnesses since he had heard with his own ears abusive language against God. Thereupon the entire *synedrion*, [assembly], thought such a man was liable to the death penalty. ⁶ Blasphemy, according to the Judaeian law, was not punishable by death. Only when a person cursed God with the name of God was he guilty of a capital crime, and was put to death. ⁷ By Claiming to be the Son of God, Jesus was not liable to capital punishment. Jesus' declaration that he would sit on "the right hand of Power [God]" cannot be considered blasphemy nor false prophesy. Many pious Judaeans looked forward to the future world where they would sit in the company of God and enjoy the Divine Glory.

Again, according to the Gospels, Jesus was brought to the house of the high priest where the *synedrion*, [council], assembled. ⁸ The question arises—why was Jesus brought to the house of the high priest and why was a *synedrion* summoned when the ordinary procedure would have been to bring Jesus to the court house where the *Bet Din* tried religious cases?

According to Matthew and Mark, the scribes and the elders were assembled in the house of the high priest Caiaphas, and there Jesus was examined and indicted. According to Luke, Jesus was interrogated on the morning following his arrest when the elders, the high priests and the scribes assembled and brought him "into their *synedrion*." ⁹ Luke does not mention that the high priest accused Jesus of blasphemy;

⁵ Mat. 26. 46-64; Mark 14. 43-62.

⁶ Ibid. 64-67.

⁷ Cf. M. San. 7.5.

⁸ Mat. 26. 57, Mark. 14. 53-55.

⁹ 22. 65.

Mark, on the other hand, does not record the crime of which the high priest accused Jesus before Pilate. Luke does state the accusation which the multitude brought against Jesus was that he perverted the nation and forbade the people to pay tribute to Caesar by saying that he himself was "a Christ, a King." When Pilate asked Jesus, "Art thou the king of Judaea?" Jesus answered, "Thou sayest it."¹⁰ According to John, when Pilate asked the people, "Shall I crucify your King?" the chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar."¹¹ The fact that the high priest had to assert again and again that they have no other king but Caesar indicates that the crime of Jesus was political. The inscription which Pilate ordered to be inscribed on the cross in Hebrew, Greek and Latin was—*Iesus Nazarenus, Rex Iudaeorum*, "Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Judaeans." This inscription clearly indicates that Jesus was crucified as a political offender for claiming to be the King of the Judaeans. It was a Roman custom to write and explain the reason for the execution.¹²

In presenting a case an impartial historian as well as a jurist must pierce through all available documents without prejudice. Notice must be taken of contradictions and discrepancies in those documents. The motive which led to the commission of the act must be carefully scrutinized and investigated. With regard to the motive involved in the death of Jesus, the religious leaders of Judaea had no reason to put Jesus to death. Jesus in proclaiming himself the Messiah did not commit a religious offence. Many followers of the Pharisees—Apocalypticists looked forward to the day when the Messiah would reveal himself and redeem the Judaeans from the Roman yoke.¹³ As was noted before, the sources for the trial and

¹⁰ 23. 1-3.

¹¹ 19. 15.

¹² Cf. Suetonius, *Caligula* 32, *praecedente titulo qui causam poenae indicaret per coetus epulantium circumduceretur.*

¹³ Cf. The psalms of Solomon 17.

crucifixion of Jesus are the Gospels. They contradict each other and there are irreconcilable discrepancies.

For an impartial historian there can be but one conclusion—the Jews had no part in the death of Jesus. The accusation was theologically motivated; historically it is a false and libelous accusation.

The Gospels, although they contradict each other, are in agreement that the high priests and their *synedrion* plotted the death of Jesus. Two points must be considered. First—The Gospels, as stated above, are not historical books; they have a theological slant. Further, they were written after the destruction of the Judaean State. In the first centuries after the death of Jesus the Christians were a small group and they had to fight for their very existence. Many of them, if not the majority, were Jews who believed that Jesus was the true Messiah who arose from the dead. In their propaganda to prove that Christianity was the true religion, that they were the true Israelites, they claimed that the Jews, previously the chosen people, were no more. God had forsaken them. The Jews are the accursed people, responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus. For this God had punished them by the destruction of the State and the burning of the Temple. The early Christians asserted that God punished the Jews for their rejection of Jesus as their true Messiah and blamed them for the crucifixion. As long as the Jews do not recognize Jesus as the Christ, they are an accursed people. They can be redeemed of the guilt of the crucifixion only by accepting Jesus as the Messiah. The charge of the Church Fathers that the Jews are deicides, the killers of Christ, has been the Church's battle cry since the Second Century.

Eusebius, Hilary and Chrysostom, in their writings, charged the Jews with the crucifixion of Jesus, and declared that the blood of Jesus was perpetually on the hands of the Jews. Chrysostom considered the synagogues dens of idolatry and abodes of devils, even though there were no images in them. ¹⁴

¹⁴ See *C. Judaeos* i, 4, 6.

The Jews, he said, used to murder their offspring with their own hands and were worse than wild beasts. "Even if they no longer murder their own children," he continued, "they murdered Christ, which is worse."¹⁵ They do not worship God but worship devils. "God hates them," he added in a later section; and indeed He always hated them, but since the murder of Jesus he allows them no time for repentance. These homilies and writings poisoned the minds of Christians who came to look upon the Jews not as children of God but as children of devils, responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus, for whom there was no repentance and no redemption unless they accepted Jesus as the Christ.

In 1096 the first crusade was organized by the Christians against the Moslems to retake Jerusalem and the Holy Sepulchre. When the crusaders began to march towards Palestine the chronicle relates that they said, "While we are on the way to recover the Holy Sepulchre and take revenge on the Moslems, we find in our midst Jews who crucified Christ. Let us take revenge on them and destroy the Jews here unless they accept our religion."¹⁶ This determination of the crusaders was a normal reaction resulting from the propaganda of centuries that the Jews were deicides, Christ killers. The crusaders saw the absurdity of the situation. They were going to retake the holy sepulchre and to die for it, while having in their midst the guilty ones who crucified their Lord.

It is true that many of the Christian hierarchy tried to protect the Jews from the crusaders. Bishop Johannes of Speyer sought to protect the Jews and to punish the crusaders but to no avail.¹⁷ The masses could not understand why they were not permitted to kill the Jews since they had been taught that the Jews were deicides who killed their Lord.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ הנה היהודים היושבים בינינו אשר אבותיהם הרגוהו וצלבוהו ... ננקמה מהם תחילה ונכחידם מגוי ולא יזכר שם ישראל או יהיו כמנו ויודו בבוך ..

¹⁷ Julius Aronius, *Regesten zur Geschichte der Juden*, p. 84.

They were going to fight and die for the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre; was there not more reason to kill the Christ killers at home?

With the period of the crusades the dark ages of the Jews began. Pope Innocent III, one of the most powerful popes, in his bulla to the archbishop of Sens and the bishop of Paris, set forth the policy of the Church towards the Jews in these words, "The Jews...by their own guilt are consigned to perpetual servitude because they crucified the Lord."¹⁸ Thus the Jews became the servants of the Church because of their alleged crucifixion of Jesus. In another bulla he made the following statement, "Thus the Jews, against whom the blood of Jesus Christ calls out, although they ought not to be killed lest the Christian people forget the Divine Law, yet as wanderers they ought to remain upon the earth until their countenance be filled with shame and they seek the name of Jesus Christ, the Lord."¹⁹ He compared the Jews to Cain who had killed his brother Abel and upon whom God had set a sign so that he should not be killed by any one who found him but should wander from place until the end of the world. Like Cain the Jews also were branded so as not to be slaughtered but to be doomed to wander from place to place. The policy that the Jews were perpetual slaves because of the crucifixion of Jesus was reaffirmed by Pope Gregory IX.

It is true that a number of popes protected the Jews from persecution. Pope Innocent IV said in his bulla that the charge against the Jews of using human blood for religious rites was false since the Jews, were prohibited from using even the blood of animals.²⁰ The good will of Innocent IV and other popes did not greatly improve the conditions of the Jews in Europe since for centuries the leaders of the Church held that the Jews were guilty of deicide, the killers of Christ, and there-

¹⁸ Cf. Solomon Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews in the XIIIth Century*, pp. 114 f. *Etsi Judaos, quos propria culpa submisit perpetue servituti cum Dominum crucifixerint.*

¹⁹ Grayzel, *op. cit.* pp. 126 f.

²⁰ Cf. *idem*, *ibid.* pp. 268-271.

fore must remain in degradation. When a community or state suffered some calamity the masses vented their wrath upon the Jews. It must be said also that the policy of the Church formulated by Innocent III and Gregory IX, that the Jews must not be entirely annihilated but remain as a living witness to the truth of Christianity, made possible the physical survival of the Jews during the Dark Ages. The popes, vicars of Christ, in pursuing their theology that the Jews, guilty of the death of Christ and therefore rejected by God, had to live in suffering and degradation as living witnesses to the truth of Christianity, thus they protected the Jews in many instances from total annihilation by various kings and demagogues.

In modern times political freedom was granted to the Jews in Western Europe. The political freedom was granted to them on the principle that the Jews were a religious community. This emancipation was not successful. Although the Jews were given political rights as a religious group, the old accusation against the Jews,—that they were deicides—continued. The masses looked upon them as Christ killers. This is one of the reasons for the failure of the emancipation. The Jews were emancipated politically but not religiously.

In Eastern Europe the hatred against the Jews as the killers of Christ prevailed. When the Russian senate in 1742 enacted a statute to allow some Jews to transact business in Russia because it would greatly benefit the Russian people, the Empress Elizabeth commented in these words, "From the enemies of Christ I do not desire any benefit." With the ascent of Czar Alexander III to the throne there was an outbreak of pogroms against the Jews and harsh restrictions imposed upon them. On March 6th, 1890 Baron Horace Gunzburg personally submitted a memorandum to Alexander III, asking him to improve the economic conditions of the Jews and remove the political restrictions imposed upon them. In this memorandum Baron Gunzburg made clear to the Czar that these restrictions gave the impression to the masses that the government itself was interested in making the Jew a

sufferer and a wanderer. The Czar did not reply to this memorandum but wrote on the margin that it was proper for the Jews to suffer because they killed Christ, and their ancestors had said, "His blood be upon us and upon our children," and therefore the Jews were destined for suffering.²¹

The theology of the crucifixion, which the Church emphasized, that the Jews killed Christ, that they are deicides and thus accursed, destined to suffer and live in degradation as eternal witnesses to the truth of Christianity brought immeasurable suffering and death to an innocent people. It was a cruel libelous accusation against the very people who gave Jesus to the world. It may be said without exaggeration that the seed of the propaganda that the Jews are deicides was also instrumental in helping the Nazis to slaughter six million Jews. The first physical outbreak against the Jews in Germany was the destruction and the burning of synagogues.

From its beginnings the Church stressed the Crucifixion as the cornerstone upon which Christianity was founded, that God in His infinite mercy gave his Son to be crucified as ransom for sinners. In the Epistle to Diognetus its anonymous author wrote, "Himself gave His own Son as ransom for us, the Holy for the wicked, the innocent for the guilty, the just for the unjust, the incorruptible for the corruptible, the immortal for the mortal."²² Justin Martyr said that Christ was the paschal lamb, "For the pascha (paschal lamb) was Christ who was afterwards sacrificed as also Isaiah said 'He was led as a sheep to the slaughter' . . . and as the blood of the pascha saved those who were in Egypt, so also the blood of Christ will deliver from death those who have believed."²³

²¹ This memorandum was never presented by the czar to the government. During one of my trips to Russia I found it in the private archives of the Romanoff family and I made a photostat of this important document.

²² 9. . . . αὐτὸς τὸν ἴδιον υἱὸν ἀπέδοτο λύτρον ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν τὸν ἅγιον ὑπὲρ ἀνόμων τὸν ἄκακον ὑπὲρ τῶν κακῶν . . .

²³ *Dialogue with Trypho* 111. Ἦν γὰρ τὸ πάσχα ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ τυθεὶς ὑστεροῦ . . . ὡς δὲ τοὺς ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ ἔσωσε τὸ αἷμα τοῦ πάσχα οὕτως καὶ τοὺς πιστεύσαντος ῥύσεται ἐκ θανάτου τὸ αἷμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

Since Jesus was the paschal lamb he had to be sacrificed on a definite date, namely on the fourteenth day of Nisan when the paschal lamb was slaughtered or the fifteenth day of Nisan when the Hebrews were saved. The Church Father Irenaeus wrote:

It is clear that the Lord suffered death in obedience to His Father, upon that day on which Adam died while he disobeyed God. Now he died on the same day in which he did eat. For God said, 'in that day on which ye shall eat of it, ye shall die by death.' The Lord therefore recapitulating in himself this day underwent His suffering upon the day preceding the Sabbath, that is the sixth day of the creation, on which day man was created; thus granting him a second creation by means of his passion, which is that (creation) out of death."²⁴

Jesus was crucified to redeem mankind from the Original Sin. Thus he had to be crucified on a definite day—the day that Adam committed the Original Sin, Friday.

These two theologies based on the Crucifixion are in conflict. This conflicting theology was drafted at the Ecumenical Council Vatican II and was adopted by a great majority. It was said in the schema that the Jewish people as a whole during the time of Jesus was not responsible for the Crucifixion, "What happened to Christ in his Passion cannot be attributed to the whole people then alive, much less to that of today." Hence the Jewish people of today are not guilty of deicide. This means that *some Jews* at the time of Jesus were responsible for the Crucifixion. In the same schema it was further said, "The church held and holds that Christ

²⁴ *Contra Haereses* 5. 23. *Manifestum est itaque, quoniam in illa die mortem sustinuit Dominus abediens Patri, it qua mortuus est Adam inobediens Deo. In qua autem mortuus est in ipsa et manducavit. Dixit enim Deus: 'In qua die manducabitis ex eo, morte moriemini' Hunc itaque diem recapitulans in semetipsum Dominus venit ad passionem pridie ante sabbatum, quae est sexta coditionis dies in qua homo plasmatus est.*

underwent His Passion and Death freely, because of the sins of all men and out of infinite love." If Jesus went to his death freely and out of infinite love and to ransom the sin of men how can even some Jews be accused of the Crucifixion? Historically, the Jews were not guilty of the death of Jesus.

Modern Christians recognize that the guilt of deicide, is the root of hatred. They also recognize that anti-Semitism is a cancer gnawing at the vitals of civilization. Although the Jews are the real victims of this disease ultimately this pestilence will strike civilization as a whole. The slaughter of six million Jews by the Nazis, the burning of multitudes in the gas chambers, moved the conscience of modern Christians. To ameliorate the condition of the Jews many Christians and Jews endeavor to establish good will societies.

John XXIII, a great humanitarian and saintly pope, in the dark days of the holocaust interceded whenever he could and saved the lives of many Jews. With his deep love and compassion for all people he made changes in the liturgy to improve the relationship between the Church and the Jews. On Good Friday the Catholics, in praying for all peoples, have a prayer *pro perfidis Judaeis* and they ask God to have mercy on the *Judaica perfidia*. Pope John XXIII ordered the words *perfidis* and *perfidia* be omitted. He contemplated calling an Ecumenical Council in which the theology of the Crucifixion in its relation to the Jews was to be discussed and possibly revised. His successor Paul VI summoned the Ecumenical Council. Some Jews, when they learned that the Ecumenical Council would reconsider the theology of the Crucifixion in relation to the Jews made pilgrimages to Rome and petitioned the Vatican. Among them was a professor, a theologian. It is to be assumed that those who ran to the Vatican did not go to instruct the Pope in the Church theology on the Crucifixion. They went to the Vatican to plead for "exoneration" and "forgiveness." Exoneration from what? Forgiveness for what? Historically, the Jews were not guilty of the crucifixion of Jesus. Jesus was crucified by the Romans

as a rebel. It is not the Jews but the Christians who have to atone for the libelous accusation against the Jewish people.

Msgr. Newton, in his review of my book *'Who Crucified Jesus'?* in the *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, April, 1943, wrote that my book is modern Israel's cry of not guilty. In my reply in the same journal, January, 1944,²⁵ I wrote, "If the book could be held to make a charge, that charge would refer to the cry of guilt to the Christian world for using the crucifixion of Jesus as a pretext for enslaving and persecuting the Jews throughout the ages. Modern Christians should recognize that the charge is a libel against a whole innocent people."

This running to the Vatican by some Jews, including the Jewish professor, was not only bad judgment and a type of *shtadlenot* below the dignity of modern Jewry, but was also harmful. Pleading for "exoneration" and "forgiveness" is to admit that the ancestors of modern Jewry were responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus. Some fundamentalists do want the Jews to assent to the fact that their ancestors were guilty of the crucifixion of Jesus. James Daane, Associate Editor of *Christianity Today*, in an article, "The Anatomy of Anti-Semitism," in the issue of March, 1964, wrote:

The Jewish people could help eliminate anti-Semitism if they would admit, as honesty could do without violating the terms of the Jewish faith, that they did destroy a man. There is little, if anything, of such an admission in current Jewish concern about anti-Semitism. Let Jews, if they must, regard Christ as only a man; but let them admit that honesty and integrity demand—the destruction of a man by their ancient leaders's insistence that he be put to death.

Daane follows with advice to the Jews that as the Gentile was saved by accepting Jesus so the Jew can also be saved by accepting him. He propagates. "The reunion of Jew and

²⁵ Pp. 105-110.

Gentile in the oneness of the Church.”²⁶ This is the logical conclusion of Daane and those who still maintain that the Jews at the time of Jesus were responsible for the Crucifixion, but wish to exonerate the Jews of today of this guilt. By this they hope to unite the Jew and the Gentile into the oneness of the Church.

The lobbying of some Jews for some amendment in the theology of the Church on the crucifixion is harmful historically. Judaism and Christianity are two different religions with different theologies. It is morally wrong to interfere with other theologies. The theology of the Church is a matter for Christians. The theology of the Synagogue is a matter for Jews.

The Jews can only expect that the forthcoming session of the Ecumenical Council will erase *the guilt of the Church* for the defamation of an innocent people, the people of the prophets.

The Apostolic Fathers who flourished during first century C. E, a generation or two after the crucifixion of Jesus, did not accuse the Jews of the Crucifixion. The Apostolic Father Ignatius, hostile to Judaism and the Jews, in his Epistle to the Magnesians, wrote, “It is monstrous to talk of Jesus Christ and practice Judaism.”²⁷ In speaking of the death of Jesus he said that Jesus was persecuted under Pontius Pilate.²⁸ He did not accuse the Jews of the death of Jesus. Historically the Jews were not responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus.

The guilt of the Jews for the crucifixion of Jesus was brought forward by the early Christians when they were a small group that had to fight for their very existence. They strove to prove that Jesus was the true Messiah, Christianity the true religion, and the Jews no longer were the Chosen People of God. The Judaeen State was destroyed and the

²⁶ Cf. S. Zeitlin, “The Crucifixion, A Libelous Accusation Against the Jews,” *JQR* July, 1965, pp. 8-22.

²⁷ ἄτοπὸν ἐστὶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν λαλεῖν καὶ ἰουδαίζειν.

²⁸ Epistle to the Trallians 9, ἀληθῶς ἐδιώχθη ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου. Cf. above note 1.

Temple in Jerusalem was burned. These were interpreted as punishments for their guilt of the death of the true Messiah, the Son of God. The theological teaching that the Jews were responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus aimed to prove that the Jews are living witnesses to the truth of Christianity and the falsehood of Judaism. But Christianity today no longer needs witnesses for its existence; it is well established. The Synagogue does not fight the Church. Jews are friendly towards Christians; Jews and Christians have much in common. Now Christianity has other enemies as does Judaism. Indeed, both Church and Synagogue have a common enemy.

Dialogues between Jews and Christians have become popular. This is contrary to the history of true Judaism. The Jews never indulged in dialogues with Christians. It is true that during the Middle Ages there were dialogues and disputations between Jews and Christians. They were enforced upon the Jews and the Jews were compelled to defend their religion. The dialogue between the Jew Trypho and Justin Martyr never took place.²⁹ Justin, in order to refute some of the arguments of the Jews and to prove the truth of Christianity, composed this dialogue. He placed in the mouth of Trypho arguments and charges against Christianity so that he might refute them. In the dialogue he proved that Jesus was the true Messiah whose coming was foretold by the ancient prophets, Christianity the true religion, the Jews were no longer the Chosen People of God, and Judaism was not the true religion.

The Jews do not wish to convert the Christians to Judaism nor be converted to Christianity. The Jews respect Christianity as it brought monotheism to the pagan world. Even in the Middle Ages when the Jews were persecuted by the Christians, Maimonides held that Jesus helped to prepare the way for the true King Messiah.³⁰

The Jews are grateful to the Church for its preservation of

²⁹ Cf. S. Zeitlin, "Anti-Semitism" *Crozer Quarterly*, April, 1945.

³⁰ Cf. *Mishne Torah, Hilkot Melochim*, ch. 11.

great treasures of Jewish literature such as the Apocrypha—Apocalyptic literature, the writings of Josephus, and the writings of Philo. Were it not for the Church, the Hebrew Bible would have remained a book for the Jews alone, as is the Talmud. By its adoption by the Church the Hebrew Bible became a universal book which has had a tremendous influence on western civilization.

Jews and Christians are members of one human society. Having a common interest in the welfare of their country, they are members of one fellowship though they are separated by their religions. The Jews respect Christianity and against interfering with the theology of Christianity. The Jews follow the eternal words of the Prophet Micah.

Let all the people walk each one in the name of his God, but we will walk in the name of Adonai, our God forever and ever. ³¹

Dialogues between Jews and Christians are wrong historically. There may be dialogues between Jews and Jews but not between Jews and Christians. If there are zealots among Jews to make converts to Judaism they can find a field of activity in Asia and Africa where there still are tribes who worship idols.

There is a great need for the enlightenment of Christians about the true spirit of Judaism, particularly of the development of Judaism at the time when Christianity arose. There is also a great need to present the historical background of the *Parting of the Way*. Jews also need this enlightenment as many do not have a true conception and significance of the *Parting of the Way*. This can be accomplished by authoritative historical works that present the true spirit of Judaism.

³¹ 4.5.

ADDENDUM

VERSION DEBATED IN THE COUNCIL SEPTEMBER 28-30, 1964 ³²
32. (On the inheritance common to Christians and Jews.)
The Church of Christ gladly acknowledges that the beginnings of its faith and election, in accordance with God's mystery of salvation, are to be found already among the Patriarchs and Prophets. Indeed, all Christians believe that, as sons of Abraham by faith (*cf.* Gal. 3, 7), they are included in this Patriarch's vocation and that the salvation of the Church is mystically prefigured in the exodus of the chosen people from the land of bondage. Nor can the Church as a new creation in Christ (*cf.* Eph. 2, 15) and as the people of the New Covenant ever forget that it is a continuation of that people with whom God in his ineffable mercy once designed to enter into the Old Covenant and to whom he chose to entrust the revelation contained in the Books of the Old Testament.

Moreover, the Church does not forget that from this Jewish people were born Christ, according to the flesh, the mother of Christ, the Virgin Mary, as well as the Apostles, the foundation and the pillars of the Church.

Further, the Church was always mindful and will never overlook Apostle Paul's words relating to the Jews, "whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants and the giving of the law, and the service, and the promises" (Rom. 9, 4).

Since such is the inheritance accepted by the Christians from the Jews, this Holy Council is resolved expressly to further and to recommend reciprocal understanding and appreciation, to be obtained by theological study and fraternal discussion and, beyond that, in as much as it severely disapproves of any wrong inflicted upon men wheresoever, it equally deplores and condemns hatred and maltreatment of Jews.

³² *The Third Session*, Xavier Rynne, New York, Farrar, Straus & Giroux; *New York Herald Tribune*, September 30, 1964.

It is also worth remembering that the union of the Jewish people with the Church is a part of the Christian hope. Accordingly, and following the teaching of Apostle Paul (*cf.* Rom. II, 25), the Church expects in unshakable faith and with ardent desire the entrance of that people into the fullness of the people of God established by Christ.

Everyone should be careful, therefore, not to expose the Jewish people as a rejected nation, be it in Catechetical tuition, in preaching God's Word or in worldly conversation, nor should anything else be said or done which may alienate the minds of men from the Jews. Equally, all should be on their guard not to impute to the Jews of our time that which was perpetrated in the Passion of Christ.

II. REVISED DRAFT DECLARATION ON THE CHURCH'S RELATIONSHIP TOWARD NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS, APPROVED IN A FIRST VOTE ON NOVEMBER 20, 1964³³

... As this sacred synod searches into the mystery of the Church, it remembers the bond that ties the people of the New Covenant to Abraham's stock.

With a grateful heart, the Church of Christ acknowledges that, according to God's saving design, the beginnings of her faith and her election were already among the Patriarchs, Moses, and the prophets. She professes that all who believe in Christ-Abraham's sons according to faith—were included in the same patriarch's call, likewise that here salvation is typically foreshadowed by the chosen people's exodus from the land of bondage.

The Church, therefore, cannot forget that she received the revelation of the Old Testament from the people with whom God in His ineffable mercy concluded the former Covenant. Nor can she forget that she feeds upon the root of that cultivated olive tree into which the wild shoots of the Gentiles

³³ *The Third Session* Xavier Rynne, New York; *New York Times*, November 19, 1964; *The Catholic Herald*, London, Dec. 4, 1964.

have been grafted (*cf.* Rom. 11, 17-24). Indeed the Church believes that by His Cross Christ our peace reconciled the Jews and Gentiles, making both one (*cf.* Eph. 2, 14, 16).

The Church, keeps ever in mind the words of the Apostle about his kinsmen: "Theirs is the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. Theirs are the patriarchs, and of them is the Christ according to the flesh," the Son of Mary the Virgin (Rom. 9, 4-5).

No less does she recall that the Apostles, the Church's mainstay and pillars, as well as most of the early disciples who proclaimed Christ's Gospel to the world, sprang from the Jewish people.

Even though a large part of the Jews did not accept the Gospel, they remain most dear to God for the sake of the patriarchs. This is the witness of the Apostle as is the utterance that God's gifts and call are irrevocable (*cf.* Rom. 11, 28f). In company with the prophets and the same Apostle, the Church awaits that day, known to God alone, on which all peoples will address the Lord in a single voice and "serve Him shoulder to shoulder" (Soph. 3, 9; *cf.* Is. 66, 23; Ps. 65, 4; Rom. 11, 11-32).

Since the spiritual patrimony common to Christians and Jews is of such magnitude, this Sacred Synod wants to support and recommend their mutual knowledge and respect, a knowledge and respect that are the fruit, above all, of biblical and theological studies as well as of fraternal dialogues.

Moreover, this synod, in her rejection of injustice of whatever kind and wherever inflicted upon men, remains mindful of that common patrimony and so deplures, indeed, condemns hatred and persecutions of Jews, whether they arose in former or in our own days.

May all, then, see to it that in their catechetical work or in their preaching of the word of God they do not teach anything that could give rise to hatred or contempt of Jews in the hearts of Christians.

May they never present the Jewish people as one rejected, cursed, or guilty of deicide. All that happened to Christ in His passion cannot be attributed to the whole people then alive, much less to that of today.

Besides, the Church has always held and holds now that Christ underwent His passion and death freely, because of the sins of all men and out of infinite love. It is, therefore, the burden of Christian preaching to proclaim the Cross of Christ as the sign of God's all-embracing love and as the fountain from which every grace flows.