JUDAISM & CHRISTIANITY:

THEIR ORIGINAL IDENTITY

AND

SUBSEQUENT DIVERGENCE FROM EACH OTHER.

A LECTURE

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

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BY THE

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It is for a twofold reason that I publish this lecture in pamphlet form. First — I was asked to do so by several Christians, including a clergyman, who were amongst the large audience that did me the honour to listen to the lecture when it was delivered. Secondly—An impression has gone forth that, from a Jewish standpoint, the lecture contains radical views. I deny that, and invite the public to judge for themselves whether that impression is in any way warranted. The subject, moreover, is so comprehensive and of such deep interest, that to those who desire to master it fully I would say—read, mark, and inwardly digest. This, however, I freely confess, if the lecture should in ever so slight a degree tend to bring some of the followers of the two great historic religions into closer harmony I should be delighted.

Synagogue Buildings,
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IN drawing a sketch of the birth of Christianity and the progress which that religion made during the first century of its existence, the student, if he desires to be historically correct as well as impartial, has to lay down for his guidance the following canons of criticism :—

1. He must accept nothing as historical which does not fit into the spirit of the time. Every age is characterised by a certain drift of thought which, in itself, forms a harmonious whole and does not tolerate heterogeneous elements. The tendency of the time when Christianity was ushered into the world is well known and any statement, from whatever source it may be derived, that does not harmonise with that tendency must be rejected as historically unreliable.

2. In reading the New Testament, he must remember that the authors of those books, whoever they were, had one, to them, all important object in view, which was to make converts to the new faith. Hence many of their statements have that object in the background and lose thereby much of their historical value.

3. He must read the New Testament side by side with the earlier parts of the Talmudical literature, viz., the older *Midrashim*, the *Targumim* and the *Mishnah*. These books, it is true, were not all published at one and the same time, and none of them

probably long before the earliest of the Gospels; but being only compilations of traditions then already several generations old, they reflect the religious thought of the last century before, and the first of the Christian era, and supplement each other in throwing light upon the rise and development of Christanity.

4. He must discard every pre-conceived notion concerning supernatural powers alleged to be possessed by persons coming under his notice. Careful and impartial inquiry may or may not bring out and establish such claims; but at first the student must regard historical personages as mere human beings performing more or less important offices in the history of their time.

With these rules constantly before our mind, we shall now endeavour to show that primitive Christianity was in every respect identical with Judaism, and that it was only later on that the new religion, for reasons stated hereafter, departed more and more from the parent stem.

During the last half-century before the commencement of the present era, the Jewish people, or those of them who had their domicile in Palestine, presented a deplorable appearance. The Maccabean dynasty so promising at the beginning had ended ignominiously. Herod, the Idumean, now held the reins of the government, and though himself a vassal of the Romans, he knew how, by bribery and all sorts of meanness, to make himself the supreme ruler over the people. His life was one uninterrupted chain of despicable crimes. If towards his superiors he could affect an almost incredible submissiveness, towards those beneath him he was the very incarnation of tyranny. Under his rule murder and assassination were every-day occurrences, in most of which he was directly implicated. Not even his flesh and blood did he spare. Seven of his relatives—Marianne, the most beautiful woman in Judæa, amongst the rest — suffered an unmerited death at his hand. Perhaps the only redeeming feature in his carreer was the fact that he made great improvements in Jerusalem and other places in Judæa. Supported by Roman authority, he extended the borders of the country and attracted

many foreign merchants to its sea-ports. The Temple, too, rose in renewed splendour, though the worship performed therein exhibited no longer that monotheistic purity for which the Jews had so long and so persistently contended.

But even this superficial splendour vanished with Herod's death. Under his successors the last spark of national independence was lost, and the Jewish body, already loosely enough joined together, became more and more disjointed. Class was pitted against class. The rich, or those who considered themselves the aristocracy, had lost all national sympathies. They were Roman both in thought and feeling. So far from cherishing the traditions of their race they had adopted Roman, or rather Grecian, culture and habits, and were at all times, and at any sacrifice, ready to wipe out whatever distinguished them from their Gentile neighbours. The people in the country were the very opposite. Their educational status was extremely low, owing to the principal seats of learning being in the larger cities, notably in Jerusalem, communication with which was by no means easy in those stormy days. Moreover, through the long war and continuous strife that raged in Judæa, the rural population had become quite demoralised. There were even freebooters amongst them, and it is, indeed, a matter of astonishment that under so many disturbing and degrading influences the morality of the people generally was not even worse than it was. This result must be attributed chiefly to the Pharisees —an ill-appreciated and much-maligned sect. That there were insincere men, hypocrites, amongst them we will not deny; there are black sheep in every flock. Nor does it admit of any doubt that some of them attached greater importance to the letter than to the spirit of the Law. Still, as a religious sect they were not nearly as bad as they are pourtrayed in the New Testament. The fierce denunciations of them contained therein and attributed to Jesus were certainly not uttered by him, but by some one of a much later period. At his time no one would have dared to hurl such anathemas against the Pharisees, who were then the ruling party. Indeed, notwithstanding all their faults, they exercised a

salutary influence. They it was who in troublesome times saved the Law from falling into desuetude. On the one hand, they fought hard against their rival sect, the Sadducees, who, while disregarding all time-hallowed traditions, gave the Law their own arbitrary interpretation; on the other, they could not identify themselves with the views of the Essenes, who, going beyond the requirements of the Law, imposed upon themselves irksome and wholly unnecessary restrictions. Equally uncompromising was their attitude towards the avowed friends of the Romans. As the conservative, or national party, the Pharisees could have no sympathy with such sentiments. Their main object was to preserve the national element both in religion and politics, and they, on that account, spurned the introduction of foreign ideas, manners and habits. For similar reasons they kept aloof from the *Am-ha-arets*, the ignorant person or boor. To the Pharisaic mind intimate acquaintance with the Law was of the utmost importance, and in that conception they were certainly right, since a religion that is intended to shed a sacred halo round every action of man and situation in life requires to be well-known in order to be conscientiously carried out. Still their forbidding attitude towards the *Am-ha-arets* was neither in accordance with the spirit of the Law, nor calculated to bring the various sections of the Jewish body into closer harmony.

Such, then, was the religious and moral condition of the Jews shortly before the commencement of the Christian era. While class stood up against class, and sect against sect, there was, in addition to this unfortunate state of affairs, a sense of insecurity upon all minds arising from the fear that every moment the Roman governor might commit some fresh outrage upon the hapless Jewish people. Dissatisfaction filled every mind, but it was highly dangerous to give expression to it. United action against the oppressive yoke was simply impossible. The days of the Maccabees had long gone by, and there was no Matathias to raise the national standard as the signal for revolt. Hope—the hope for better times—was the only source of comfort left to the people. The Scriptures, then already complete, promised that

God would "neither forsake nor destroy" His people. Many a time when they were on the brink of national collapse a deliverer had been sent to them. Dry bones had been vivified. Abject slaves had been restored to the highest form of freedom. Why should that not happen now when the people were low enough in every respect? For such a purpose the ancient prophets had foretold the advent of a deliverer, or Messiah, and the belief in such a one had lived amongst the people for centuries past. Was not the time most opportune for the Messiah to appear? True, the ideas as to the nature and office of the Messiah were not at all times the same, but often differed widely. Even at that time each class or sect had its own conception of the Messiah, expecting that his chief object would be to vindicate its own views or realise its own aspirations. Yet for all that there was a silent longing for a Messiah in all minds which grew stronger from day to day in proportion to outward oppression and inward strife.

It was at that most opportune time that Jesus of Nazareth made his appearance on the historical stage. His advent, we are told, had been vaguely predicted by John the Baptist, and this seems quite possible. John was, beyond doubt, a member of the Essenes. All that is related of him harmonises with their religious practices. They led a life of seclusion, and so did he. They wore rough garments, lived on the plainest food, and despised riches, and so did he. From the frequent ablutions which they took, especially early in the morning, they were known as the *Tobli Shachar* or "morning divers," and we find John observing the same rite. Purity of life and repentance being the fundamental principles of the order, it was natural that at the time when the hope for the coming Messiah was so universal and so strong in all minds, the Essenes should have been the first to exhort the people to prepare themselves for the great event which, according to their view, was to be the inauguration of peace and good will on earth. Hence we find John proclaiming "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." "The Kingdom of Heaven," or "the Kingdom of the Almighty" was, however, an old phrase, and quite common in the prayers of the Jews. If

from all this it follows that John was certainly a member of the Essenes, there is, in addition, a probability that even Jesus had some connection with the order. If we remember that the Essenes, as the name (being derived from the Aramaic word *Assai*, "healer," Greek Therapeutæ) indicates, practised the art of healing diseases, and that similar acts are recorded of Jesus, not to speak of some principles which he held in common with them, the connection between him and them becomes at least probable. At any rate, it was while engaged in baptising the people, that is, while in the company of the Essenes, that John for the first time met Jesus.

Jesus' educational status cannot have been very high. Born and reared in Galilee he had not the opportunity of acquiring knowledge of any kind, and this being known, it was quite natural that when he first attempted to preach, his countrymen met him with the remark, "Is not this the carpenter's son? and is not his mother called Mary, and his brethren James and Joses and Simon and Judas?" But what he lacked in knowledge was amply compensated for by his amiability of character, his gentleness and deep sympathy with his fellowmen. In point of character he somewhat resembled Hillel. The latter died when Jesus was about ten years old and it is therefore unlikely that the two ever met. But in as much as Hillel was known far and wide, and as his name and fame lived long in the memory of the people, it is possible that Jesus took him for a pattern, though we do not for a moment think that he equalled him. Was Jesus the expected Messiah? Not one of the classes or sects accepted him as such. He did not answer the special requirements of any of them. Those that expected the Messiah to upset the existing political order of things were most disappointed, for he told them at once, "My Kingdom is not of this world," that is to say, "I have nothing to do with politics." Nor was he as a Messiah acceptable either to the Pharisees or the Sadducees. But if he was not the Messiah—and at first he himself laid no claim to that office—he was at least a teacher. The two principal sects did not of course require him; nor was it in the least his intention to devote his labours to the heathen world. He

frankly declared that "They that be whole need no physician, but they that are sick." He did not consider it right to "take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs." His attention was to be devoted solely to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," meaning the ignorant and demoralised masses in the country. What was he to teach them? Certainly nothing new. Any such attempt would have been doomed to failure from the very outset. Only that which to some slight extent was familiar to them they were likely to accept from a new teacher. Nor was there any need for Jesus to go for material outside the doctrines and morality of Judaism. It supplied all that he could possibly wish to impress upon the people. Though he himself, as we stated before, was not learned in Jewish law, yet in his days it required but little to be acquainted with the fundamental principles of the faith. And it was these that he presented to them as "the bread of life." As far as doctrines were concerned he did not in the slightest degree deviate from those that were generally accepted by his co-religionists. He strongly emphasised the Unity of God when he declared that "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is ONE God," was the first commandment (or fundamental principle) to which he justly added, as Moses had done before him, "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," etc., etc., etc. He repeatedly declared his belief in the permanence of the Law and exorted his hearers to comply with its provisions. "Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least Commandments and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven." When asked by a young man what he should do that he might have eternal life, Jesus replied, "Keep the Commandments." Nor was the doctrine of God's fatherhood a new truth. It was taught centuries before Jesus. Not only had Moses declared "For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty and a terrible which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward; He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow and loveth the stranger in giving him food and raiment. Love ye therefore the stranger, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt," but also the prophet Malachi had put it as clearly as

language is able to do when he exclaimed, "Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us?" Holding this conception of God, Jesus was fully justified in calling himself "the Son of God." Centuries before him had Moses said to the Israelites "Ye are the children of the Lord your God," while David in a highly poetical phrase had asserted of himself "The Lord hath said unto me, thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee." Used in the original sense the phrase contained nothing objectionable, nothing that could be construed as antagonistic to the pure monotheism taught by the Jews. So it was with "the Holy Ghost" or *Ruach Hakodesh*, a phrase much used among the Jews, meaning simply inspiration, without any personification being attributed to it; or with "the son of man"—*Bar Nash*, a term equally common meaning no more than "man." In all this Jesus departed not one iota from the accepted views of his co-religionists. Nor was it in the least astonishing that He laid great stress upon the commandment "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Was it not known in his days that Hillel had once said to a heathen who wanted to be converted in the shortest time possible, "Do unto others as you would have them do to you. That is the whole Law, all the rest is interpretation;" and who could speak with greater authority on questions of law than Hillel? It is quite possible than in reference to the Sabbath Jesus made the observation that "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath;" but then it was only a reiteration of an old Jewish tradition which is still extant and which says, "The Sabbath is handed over to you, but you are not handed over to the Sabbath." (*Mechiltha*, Edit. Weiss, p 110.) Jesus adopted even the religious policy, if we may so term it, in use amongst the Jewish sages of the time. As they made "hedges" round the Law, so did he. The whole passage (Matthew v. 27—45) is a striking illustration of the hedging-in principle so common amongst the Jewish teachers ever since Ezra's time (*Aboth i.* 1). No less was Jesus' method of teaching important truths by means of parables of Jewish origin. It constitutes one of the chief features of the *Agada*, and the various *Midrashim*

abound in illustrations of it. With regard to his love of children, Jesus was quite in unison with the Jewish sages. Amongst them likewise children were the object of great solicitude, so much so that it became proverbial to say, "It is by the breath of the children at school that the world is sustained." If further proof were necessary to show that in point of religious observance, as well as doctrine, Jesus was in accord with his co-religionists, and that he never dreamt of teaching a new religion, it would be found in the fact that he raised no objection to sacrifices although this form of worship had long been much abused, and had, on that account, been condemned by the ancient prophets; and further, that he even believed in fasting if carried out in a right spirit. It is also noteworthy that he impressed upon his disciples the old Jewish rule that it is better to pray little with devotion than to pray much without. What is known as "the Lord's Prayer" consists entirely of Jewish phrases which were then, as they are now, found in the liturgy of the Jews. Certainly there are many things recorded as having been done by Jesus which were opposed to Jewish law and practice, but most of those statements, if not all, are interpolations of after times to which we shall refer later on.

We have now to consider Jesus' ethical teaching. Did he enunciate a new morality, or an improved version of the old code? The burden of his teaching in this respect lies in the Sermon on the Mount, to which must be added numerous other, though similar, sayings, scattered all over the gospels. As regards the Sermon on the Mount no critical student will take it as the production of one and the same mind. It contains too many contradictions to warrant such an assumption. First of all, Jesus is represented now as upholding, now as rejecting the Law. Then again, it sadly misrepresents the Old Testament by stating, "It hath been said . . . hate thine enemy." No such injunction is to be found in the Mosaic Law. Again, it is only Matthew that has the Sermon on the Mount complete. Mark does not know it at all, and Luke only fragments of it. To our mind the Sermon on the Mount consists (1) of moral precepts which Jesus undoubtedly enunciated

though he did not originate them, because they were of Jewish origin; (2) of views and ideas borrowed from the Essenes and known as *Middoth Hassidim*, "manners of the saints," to which Jesus may have given utterance; and (3) of interpolations of a later period reflecting the bitter animosity between the Jews and the early Christian sects. We shall now proceed to place some of the moral sayings which were undoubtedly uttered by Jesus in juxtaposition with the Jewish sources whence they were derived :—

Jesus' Moral Teachings.	Jewish Sources.
Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.	Whosoever has compassion with mankind will find compassion before God. (*Sabb.* 151*b*.)
Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake.	It is better to be the offended than the offending party. Let others revile you and do not retort. (*Gittin* 36*b*.)
Swear not at all, &c., &c.	Let your "yea" be "yea" and your "nay" "nay." (*Baba Mez.* 49*a*.)
When thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.	Give (alms) in such a manner that thou mayest not know who receives it and that the recipient may not know who has given it. (*Baba Bath.* 10*b*.)
If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.	Sins between one man and another cannot be forgiven on the Day of Atonement until the offended party has been pacified. (*Yoma* vii. 9.)
Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.	This saying occurs *literally* in *Berachoth* 9*b*.
Judge not that ye be not judged.	Judge not thy neighbour until thou comest to be in his situation. (*Aboth* ii. 4*b*.)
First cast out the beam out of thine own eye, &c., &c., &c.	This saying occurs *literally* in *Erachin* xvi.*b*. From the context it appears that the saying was very common in those days.
The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few.	The day is short, the labour great, and the labourers are slothful. (*Aboth* ii. 15.)
Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth where moth and	These are substantially the words which the Talmud (*Baba Bathra*)

rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal.	11*a*.) attributes to Monabazus, a convert to Judaism, in reply to his relatives who remonstrated with him for having distributed amongst the needy a large portion of his wealth in years of famine. Monabazus could not have derived this saying from his former co-religionists, who were pagans, but must have learnt it from his Jewish teachers.
The workman is worthy of his meat.	In proportion to thy trouble will be thy reward. (*Aboth* v. end.)
But if he (the offended brother) will not hear thee, then take with thee two or three more.	Exactly the same advice as is given by the Jewish sages in *Yoma* 87*a*.
When two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them.	Three who have eaten at one table and have conversed about the Law are regarded as if they had eaten at God's table. (*Aboth* iii. 14.)
In the resurrection they neither marry or are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in Heaven.	In the future world there will be neither eating, nor drinking, nor marrying, but the righteous, crowned with virtue, will dwell in the presence of the Divine Majesty (*Berochoth* 17*a*.)

The foregoing are only a few instances in which the sources whence Jesus derived his moral teachings are perfectly clear; but the list could be considerably extended if necessary. It may be said that many of the Jewish sources referred to above are later than the Gospels. But on due consideration it will be found that the argument will not hold good. As stated before, at the time when the Talmud was written its substance was already generations old. Traditions which were floating in the air, as it were, and which had been transmitted verbally from master to pupil and from one school to its successor were simply collected. Moreover, at that time there was already so much strife between Jews and Christians that any tradition, the origin of which was in the least doubtful, would have been rigorously excluded. With regard to the age of the Gospels, it has been shown by Hildgenfeld that Matthew is the oldest, but that in its present form it was not written till a little over a century after Jesus' death, about 136, and that it is the elaboration of different periods.

The 24th chapter seems to be the echo of the revolution under *Bar-Kochba*, "the abomination of desolation" standing "in the holy place" referring plainly to the idol that was set up in the Temple by Hadrian's authority. In style the earlier portions of the Talmud and the Gospels bear a strong likeness to each other. As one remarkable fact we may mention that in Luke xv. 21, as well as in the *Mishnah Aboth* i. 3 and the Jerusalem *Targum*, Numbers xxvi. 1. the word "Heaven" is for the first time metaphorically used for "God." With regard to views and ideas which Jesus derived from the Essenes, we may mention his strong aversion to riches, to matrimony, to taking an oath and his approval of rules of conduct which, in practical life, no one would care to adopt; which, in fact, would upset all social order. (Compare Matthew v. 39, 40; vi. 25, 28, and parallel passages.)

Now, if, as we contend, Jesus was in belief and practice thoroughly Jewish; if he intended no more than to teach the religion in which he was born and brought up, why was he crucified? It arose through a misunderstanding—aye, a misunderstanding deeply to be regretted by all right-thinking men to the end of days. It was as a teacher that he first appeared in public. We have seen to what class of people he addressed himself. His natural sympathies drew him to the ignorant and neglected masses, to publicans, to sinners of both sexes, in short to all who were generally despised. These, most of all, were in want of a teacher and to them Jesus devoted his chief attention. His success was undoubtedly great. His warm, sympathetic words opened every heart. There was something in his manners, in his bearing, in his speech which inspired confidence. Soon the masses learnt to love him with filial love. They followed him everywhere. They doted upon him. They feasted on every word that escaped his lips. The more they saw of him, the more they loved him. Gradually veneration grew into adoration. He appeared to them as a man gifted with supernatural powers, able to open every heart and to raise men from the lowest depth of degradation. The air was impregnated with Messianic expectations. Could it not be that he was the true and looked for Messiah? The idea suggested itself to

one or the other of his disciples. Still he had not declared himself as such. But perhaps he was too meek to disclose his Messiahship to the multitude. The belief grew stronger from day to day, till at last his disciples broached the matter to him. Then, as if he himself was not clear on the point, he asked them, "Whom do men say I, the Son of man, am?" "Some say that Thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremias or one of the prophets," was the reply. Peter alone suggested that Jesus was the Messiah—"the son of the living God." Nevertheless, Jesus himself could not have been sure in his own mind concerning the matter, for he neither affirmed nor denied Peter's assertion, but simply praised him for the good answer. But as the belief in Jesus' Messiahship became more confirmed amongst his followers, he himself began to share it. Still there would have been nothing objectionable even in that. Some might believe it, some might not. There was no harm either way. It was, however, unfortunate that Peter had added "the son of the living God." Soon it was commonly believed by the masses not only that Jesus was the Messiah, but that he was also the son of God. Not, indeed, in the original and harmless sense of the phrase, but in quite a different, a carnal sense. Such a belief was strictly opposed to the doctrines of Judaism, and when the report of it reached the *Sanhedrim*, it was held that there was sufficient ground for an inquiry. So Jesus was arraigned on a charge of blasphemy, for that was what his reputed claim to the sonship amounted to in the eyes of the Jewish law. Asked by the High Priest, the President of *Sanhedrim*, whether he asserted that he was the son of God, Jesus gave an ambiguous answer. "Thou sayest it," he replied, which may be taken affirmatively or negatively. By-the-way, we may mention that in each of the Gospels the answer is given differently, showing that, when the Gospels were written, the exact answer was already doubtful. The *Sanhedrim* might have given the accused the benfit of the doubt and declared the case to be one of "not proven;" but they did not. They considered the charge proved out of the mouth of the accused himself, and accordingly the High Priest pronounced the sentence

of death upon Jesus—the punishment set upon blasphemy. Whether guilty or not of the offence with which he was charged, Jesus was undoubtedly responsible for the result by his want of frankness.

The carrying out of the death sentence required, however, the assent of the Roman Governor. Pilate, in Jesus' case, had no desire to uphold the authority of the Jewish Law, and for that reason alone he would not have carried the sentence into effect But there were other reasons that induced him to do so. Owing to the mystery in which Jesus' true character and self-imposed mission were shrouded, the report had spread, especially amongst the Romans, that Jesus professed to be the king of the Jews. Pilot questioned him on the point, saying, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" This was the only matter in which Pilate was concerned. The alleged sonship was of no consequence to him. Here Jesus again gave the ambiguous answer, "Thou sayest it." As Pilate considered that there was sufficient reason to fear political disturbances likely to undermine Roman authority, he ordered the sentence to be carried out, and, let it be remembered in a strictly Roman fashion. Had it rested with the Jews or their *Sanhedrim* crucifixion would have never been chosen as the mode of putting Jesus to death. It was totally opposed to Jewish law, which recognised only these four modes of putting to death—strangulation, decapitation, burning and stoning. Crucifixion was absolutely foreign to it. Nor were the Jews in any way connected with the deplorable insults and unnecessary hardships inflicted upon the condemned man as he was taken to Golgotha. These came from the Roman soldiers who were quite equal to conduct of that sort. The Jews, on the contrary, were accustomed, according to their laws, to be as lenient as possible with condemned men, to refrain carefully from inflicting needless suffering upon them. (Compare *Tosefta Sanhedrim*, ch. iv.) But Jesus being once in the hands of the Romans, the Jews could not interfere, and so he had to submit to their cruel way of treatment. That Pilate should have evinced great reluctance to confirm the death sentence, as stated in the Gospels, is just as

unlikely as that he should have observed the strictly Jewish, and to him foreign, ceremony of washing his hands (Deut. xxi. 6) as a sign of innocence. Thus did Jesus die, in the year 33 of the common era, on the eve of the Jewish Passover (*Erev Pesach*). The occurrence, however, created so little sensation at the time that contemporaneous historians make no mention of it. The brief passage in Josephus (Antiqu. xviii. 3) is commonly held to be an interpolation of a later time. What follows in the Gospels immediately upon the crucifixion? Jesus' supposed rising from the dead, and similar miracles we pass over as being irrelevant to our purpose. We have so far shown that Jesus and his followers up to the time of his death, were in every sense of the word, Jews, in belief as well as in practice. It now remains for us to show how Christianity proper sprang up and, in course of time, diverged more and more from the parent religion.

At the time of Jesus' death his followers numbered about 120 in Jerusalem, and 500 in Galilee. His principal disciples, known as the twelve apostles, though their names are differently given by the various writers, continued the work of their Master, healing the sick, driving out devils, and resuscitating dead persons. Like Jesus, they despised riches, and founded with their fellow-believers a sort of communistic brotherhood, as was the practice of the Essenes. From their self-imposed poverty they acquired the name "Ebionites," meaning "poor people." Otherwise they were in no way differentiated from the Jews. They observed the principal Jewish rites, such as circumcision, the Sabbath and the dietary laws, and were from time to time seen in the Temple. To them Jesus was as yet no more than a divinely-inspired person, and though some of them may have given credence to the rumour about his resurrection, in support of which they had only the testimony of a few women, and, perhaps, that of Peter, all giving various and widely-differing accounts of it, yet the belief in "the Incarnation" was up to that time totally foreign to them. Nor was the practice of "faith-healing" or exorcising demons in itself sufficient to separate them from the Jews, many of whom were familiar with similar practices. In this respect, even amongst the

Jews, some latitude was allowed to individual views. In another direction, too, they followed the practice of the Jewish sages. One of the sayings of the Men of the Great Synagogue was, "Train up many disciples," and also Hillel had enjoined upon his disciples "to love mankind and to *seek to bring them near to the Law.*" This advice was not lost upon the Apostles. They therefore endeavoured, Peter foremost, to make converts to the belief in Jesus' Messiahship both amongst Jews and Gentiles. It was besides reported that Jesus, *after* his resurrection, and contrary to his previous instructions, had commanded his disciples "to go into all the world and preach the gospel to *every creature.*" But here the question at once arose, how were the Gentiles to be admitted? Was it necessary for them to undergo circumcision, and to practise the rites and observances incumbent upon Jews, and adhered to by the Apostles themselves? From Acts xv. it would appear that, principally on the advice of Peter, it was decided that the practice of the Jews in similar cases should be adopted. They, according to the rabbinical law, sometimes admitted half-proselytes, or "strangers at the gate," from whom no more was demanded than compliance with the seven laws of Noah, viz., to shun idolatry, blasphemy, murder, the eating of blood and things strangled, fornication and incest, robbery and theft, and disobedience to the civil authority. This practice was adopted by the Apostles in order to pave the way to the reception of the heathens. It seems, however, as if their missionary zeal gave offence to the rest of the Jews, for we are told that some of the Apostles, or all, were put in prison, but were soon afterwards released, chiefly on the recommendation of the then President of the *Sanhedrim*, Gamaliel I., who is reported to have said, quite in accordance with his peaceful character, "Refrain from these men, and let them alone, for if this counsel or work be of men it will come to naught, but if it be of God you cannot overthrow it."

Nevertheless, within the first ten years or so, the new sect, if we may so call it, made but little progress. It required a more energetic or bolder leader—a man with far-seeing eyes and an indomitable will, to turn the new movement into wider channels

and to give it a significance of which its most sanguine followers had never dreamt. This man at length appeared on the scene in the person of Saul, better known as Paul of Tarsus. He was in truth the founder of Christianity. Paul had seen little or nothing of Jesus. A native of Silicia, though of Jewish descent, he removed early in life to Jerusalem, where he became a promising pupil of Gamaliel I., at the same time carrying on the trade of a tentmaker as a means of earning a livelihood. It is not unlikely, considering his natural impetuosity, that, as we are told, he was at first a zealous leader in the persecution of the Apostles; but suddenly, while on a journey to Damascus, a change of mind came over him. All at once he began to believe in Jesus and his resurrection, and so strongly that the whilom persecutor turned into a staunch defender of the new sect. What natural cause or causes produced this change in Paul will probably remain a mystery to the end of days. If we may be permitted to venture some solution of this extraordinary phenomenon, we would say that Paul's better nature began to recoil from the cruel persecution to which he had lent himself. His master, as stated before, had set him a better example, and it is quite possible that, when Stephen suffered martyrdom on which occasion Paul was present, if he did not take an active part in it, the latter began to see that it was time that such cruel treatment should cease. He may have felt sorry for what he had done hitherto, or the patient endurance of the Apostles may have commanded his respect, and at length, as is often the case with men, he fell from one extreme into the other. Paul was no half-hearted worker; the cause he once embraced he pursued with unflinching zeal. Having adopted the career of an apostle, he soon perceived that under existing circumstances the new sect could make but little headway. The system of receiving proselytes did not satisfy him. The Gentiles so admitted might consider themselves partial followers of Judaism; the Jews won over would still remain Jews. "No man can serve two masters." To Paul's mind it was not at all satisfactory that Jews should be believers in Jesus, and yet continue to live under the old dispensation. The

love of kindred and old associations might at any moment induce them to throw off the new belief and return, with undivided affection, to the old fold. If the new sect was to have any future at all, it was to proceed on different lines; it was to draw a sharp line of demarcation between itself and the parent religion. And even if its position would become antagonistic to the latter, Paul was not the man to shrink from the responsibility. He, therefore, declared with an almost incredible boldness, that the provisions of the old covenant were no longer binding upon the members of the new sect; that the observance of the Sabbath, circumcision, dietary and other essential laws of Judaism were abolished. Justification by faith, not by compliance with the Law, was Paul's chief and new doctrine. The belief in Jesus frees from all sins, both past and future. "Before faith came we were kept under the law . . . . but after that faith is come we are no longer under a schoolmaster." The law has been the cause of sin. "I had not known lust except the law had said, thou shalt not covet." "No man is justified by the law in the sight of God." (Compare Galat. iii.) Jesus is the mediator between God and man. Individual goodness avails nothing; the belief in Jesus and that alone procures salvation. "No man cometh unto the Father, but by him (the son)." This then, briefly stated, was Paul's conception of the new faith; this the initiation of Christianity proper. Of all this, the first three synoptics know, of course, nothing; it is only John that promulgates these views and this for reasons which we shall state further on. In endeavouring to make good his position, Paul's Talmudical education stood him in good stead. Almost throughout his controversies he adopted the *Agadic* style. For instance, when he wished to prove that the blessing of Abraham should come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ he called attention to the fact that to Abraham's *seed* not *seeds* the promise was made, and that "seed" in the singular can only mean Jesus. This was exactly the method of the Jewish sages, who held that every word, syllable or particle in the Scriptures had its good reason, and conveyed some meaning which close study alone could bring to light. It would be impossible for any man to

more closely imitate the dialectics of the Jewish doctors than Paul did.

But his departure from the old lines, his promulgation of entirely new ideas, occasioned not only astonishment, but even strong opposition on the part of those who had been intimately connected with the Master. It was clear that Paul's teachings presented a striking contrast to those of Jesus. Had not the latter more than once assured his followers that it was not his intention to upset the Law of Moses, that not one jot or tittle should pass away from it. And those that had heard these assurances out of Jesus' own mouth were fully justified in asking how dare any man calling himself a follower of Jesus so flagrantly contradict his behests? Who has the first claim on our allegiance, Jesus or Paul? The Apostles, James, Jesus' brother foremost, called Paul to account for what they considered, and not without good reason, false views; indeed, they called him a heretic, and spread all sorts of ugly rumours concerning the cause of his breaking away from the old dispensation. He, however, persisted in the course he had adopted for the promulgation of the Gospel and retorted upon his opponents by declaring, "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." Thus it was that a split was created in the camp of the new sect, and this within less than half-a-century after the Master's death. Henceforth we find two distinct sects, viz., Jewish Christians and Heathen Christians, or, as they were called in the phraseology of those days, followers of circumcision and followers of uncircumcision. The former continued to observe the Jewish rites and ceremonies, the latter departed more and more from the religious belief and practice of Jesus. Indeed, having once broken with the old religion, they had opened the door for the admission of foreign ideas, such as fitted into their religious views, and gave the new sect a more distinctive tone and colour. In Alexandria the attempt was made to reconcile Grecian philosophy with Jewish thought and doctrine. Philo, though a staunch believer in Judaism, and a valiant defender of its laws, enunciated the idea of the "Logos,"

the active, Divine reason, the spirit of God, the consummate power of all powers, standing between the infinite and the finite and uniting both. This idea was eagerly grasped by the Heathen-Christians and their leaders. The first chapter of John furnishes the most conclusive proof of this fact. The "Logos" or "the word," as John calls it, became the son of God, or Jesus whose "sonship" was now, once for all, firmly established. The belief in the Holy Ghost, as a separate entity having been previously mooted, though not generally adopted, was then likewise taken in, and thus we have the Trinity complete—the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. This marked the end of the transition from Judaism to Christianity. The strictly monotheistic standpoint having been abandoned by Paul and his followers, Jews and Christians proper, as far as doctrine was concerned, had no longer anything in common.

Before long quarrels broke out between the Jewish and Heathen Christians. Both parties sent out missionaries to make converts amongst the heathens, each party insisting that its own views were correct and those of the other party false. They spoke most disparagingly of each other, and did their very best to spoil each other's cause. Paul naturally came in for a good deal of condemnation from the Jewish Christians. They gave him a nick name, Simon, the sorcerer (as C. F. Bauer of Tübingen ingeniously points out), and discredited his sincerity generally. The gospel of love, peace and good will, so impressively preached by Jesus, was foreign to both parties. In fact, the Heathen Christians put words into Jesus' mouth—condemnations of the Pharisees and the Jewish teachers generally—which it was well nigh impossible for him to utter. Worse still, those alleged sayings of Jesus were afterwards embodied in the Gospels, though they were out of all harmony with his peaceful character. Was it a wonder that intending converts hardly knew with which sect they should cast in their lot? Many showed a disposition to start new sects according to their own views. One said, "I am of Paul," another, "I of Apollos," a third, "I of Cephas," a fourth, "I of Christ,' and so forth (Galatians i. 12). To be sure, had this process of

splitting up continued much longer, the days of Christianity would have been numbered. In one or two generations all the small sects would have forever lost their identity, and Judaism would have welcomed back all her once straying children. At that critical juncture, however, an event supervened which gave the new religion a fresh and long lease of life. This was the destruction of the Temple. We can well understand that this catastrophe made a sad impression even on the minds of the Jewish Christians. In all vital matters they were at one with the Jews and as these were greatly exercised in their minds as to what they should do without the Temple and required all the eloquence of a Johannan Ben Sacci to convince them that works of benevolence are equivalent, if not superior, to sacrifices, so the Jewish Christians likewise felt that a great epoch had arrived in the history of Judaism. One of its essential parts, sacrificial worship, was no longer practicable, was it not possible that the time had come when other parts too should be set aside? Perhaps, the rival sect was after all right in its contention that the old covenant was no longer binding, that "faith" had taken the place of law? It was reported that Jesus had predicted the destruction of the Temple, as any man judging rightly of events, which happened in his time, might have done. Perhaps it was pre-ordained that this sad event should come about and that Jesus' death was to be the substitute for the passing away of the sacrifices. The Scriptures were searched with the intention of giving this dawning idea some support, and, the wish being the father to the thought, it was easy to construe some vague utterances of the ancient prophets into predictions and types foreshadowing the event. In course of time, what was at first a mere surmise ripened into conviction, and thus arose the doctrine of the Atonement, one of the pillars of Christianity. It is indeed astonishing to note what strange ideas were, within a short time, tacked on the new belief by one or the other of the sects which afterwards passed either for undeniable truths uttered by the Master, or for well authenticated occurrences in his short, but eventful life. The doctrine of the transubstantiation is a striking instance of this kind. The initiation of what is called the "Lord's

Supper" forms one of the greatest difficulties in the New Testament. Only the first three synoptics have an account of it; John is absolutely silent with regard to this, to Christianity, all-important matter. No one can possibly question the fact that Jesus was crucified on the Eve of the Jewish Passover, that is on the 14th of *Nissan*, which statement is corroborated in the Talmud. The Jews were commanded (Exodus xii. 6) to prepare the *Paschal* lamb on the 14th of *Nissan*, and to eat it in the evening of that day. Yet Jesus, contrary to all usage, sends Peter and John, on the *previous* day, to prepare the Passover, and in the evening of that day (the 13th) he observes the rite in the presence of his twelve disciples. It is, however, only a portion of it which he observes, viz., the wine and the bread; the *Paschal* lamb he omits entirely, though it was the chief ceremony enjoined in Scripture. How could Jesus act in a manner quite at variance with the practice of his co-religionists, and if he purposely omitted the *Paschal* lamb, why does he not state the reason, as his disciples could not but wonder at this strange procedure? There can be but one explanation of all this and that is that the accounts were written down long after the destruction of the Temple, when wine and unleavened bread formed the chief features in the celebration of Passover. And further, the accounts were written down by Jewish Christians, who, quite in keeping with their general tendency, transferred the commemoration of the first Passover upon Jesus at a time when they had come to regard his life and works as being of greater importance than their own traditions. But it escaped their notice that in making Jesus celebrate the Passover a day too soon, they committed an anachronism which would betray the nature of the whole account. The Gospel according to John, however, has no account of "The Lord's Supper," because the writer of that Gospel was a member of the Heathen Christians, to whom the celebration of the Passover was entirely foreign. It was in this and many similar ways that the Jewish Christians, abandoning more and more their former standpoint, came closer to the Heathen Christians, until the two sects became ultimately merged. The breach between Judaism and

Christianity was now complete. Christianity, owing to the zeal of its apostles and missionaries, spread rapidly, while Judaism, though occasionally making converts in foreign lands, remained substantially stationary, chiefly in consequence of the crippled position of its dispersed followers.

One word more and we have done. Will that breach between Judaism and Christianity last for ever? Will Jews and Christians for ever proceed on diverging lines? Judging from the signs of the times, we think not. Already there are many points of contact between the followers of the two religions. The wide extended and ever growing platform of brotherly love, peace, charity and good will is sacred to both. Civilisation has done, and is still doing, its work, and candour compels us to add that Christianity has largely contributed toward it, though, no doubt, through the humanising truths borrowed from Judaism. What the mother, by God's inscrutable wisdom, was precluded from doing personally, though she possessed all the necessary machinery for it, has been and is still being accomplished by her daughter. The more Christians come back to the pure religion of Jesus which, as we have shown, comprised merely the fundamental principles of Judaism, the more likely it is that the two religions will again run in the same groove, the sooner will arrive the time when there shall be ONE GOD and ONE HUMANITY.

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