

# William M. Horton

## The Church and Anti-Semitism



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# The Church and Anti-Semitism

By Walter M. Horton  
OF OBERLIN COLLEGE

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# The Church And Antisemitism

WHEN THIS COMMITTEE met in 1937 at Vienna, antisemitism was already a vast sinister power, opposed to everything we loved and planned, and threatening to destroy the people we longed to save. A year afterward, at the time of the *Anschluss*, antisemitic hoodlums with Nazi armbands invaded the Swedish Mission where we met, and rifled the safe. In the intervening year, antisemitism has succeeded in its destructive designs far beyond our worst fears, far beyond what the very devils in hell might have been supposed to have dared to contemplate. The deliberate, systematic murder of a whole people, exterminated like plague-bearing rats in every retreat to which they fled, throughout Europe, and thrown into vast incinerating ovens like so much refuse — history knows no real parallel to such a crime. In the face of this appalling and unprecedented tragedy, we must first pause to determine what persons and causes are responsible for it, before proceeding to inquire how the survivors can be protected from a similar fate.

Martin Niemoeller has claimed for his church and his people a heavy share of the guilt. As an American Christian, I must confess to you that I dare not let any German, or any European bear the whole weight of that burden. We, too, have been accomplices in that crime. We refused, for example, to admit sufficient Jewish refugees when to admit them or not to admit them was literally a matter of life and death. The Jewish problem is not a German problem or a European problem alone but a world problem. In all parts of the world, including my own country — now sharing with Soviet Russia the honor of being the principal center of Jewry in the world — relations between Jews and Christians have been and still are tending to deteriorate. This worldwide state of tension is undoubtedly the basic underlying cause of the almost unbelievable events which took place in Europe during these last years. I am impressed and convinced by the solemn words of Sholem Asch, addressed to the Christians by one who

loves us and loves our Lord, and who brought this charge against us only after sleepless nights in which he repeatedly weighed the accusation:

With no other people did Hitler dare to do what he did with the Jews. When he robbed another people of its freedom, its wealth, when he put tens of millions of free men in chains and sent them to work as slaves in his factories, when he transformed whole peoples into inferior races, he still spared their lives. He permitted himself the physical annihilation of the Jewish people only.

For this exception which Hitler made of the Jews, for this choice which he conferred upon them, for the freedom with which he could slaughter a whole people, for this election of the Jews, for this crying sin, the guilt is carried, the accessory guilt if not the full one, by the whole Christian world.

(SHOLEM ASCH, *ONE DESTINY: AN EPISTLE TO THE CHRISTIANS*, PP. 34-35.)

To this solemn charge, I can only say “Amen! It is the truth!” It seems to me that all of us who have even indirectly encouraged that sinister and diabolic trend called antisemitism, or given unintended aid to it by the unconscious implications of our words and the unskilful method of our Christian teaching, or (and this comprehends most of us) not seen it for the truly monstrous thing that it is, and so not fought against it as hard as was really necessary to bring it under control — all of us who are in any of these positions are personally linked to the tragedy of the Warsaw Ghetto and the horrors of Buchenwald, and thousands of miles of land and sea between us and the scene of the crime are not enough to prove an alibi. Being thus really implicated, we are called upon to atone in some fashion for what we have done or not done; and the first necessary step toward such atonement and reparation as is possible seems to me to be a closer study of the factors which have produced and are producing the antisemitic menace, and the methods by which the Church might overcome them.

## **I. Causes of Antisemitism**

The causes of antisemitism lie on two main levels: a more superficial level, where the same economic, social, political, racial factors operate which cause friction between many other social groups: and a deeper level, where moral and religious factors operate that are almost unique in the case of the Jews. The Church is indirectly responsible for some of the more superficial



factors, which she has failed to control through lack of concern or loss of moral influence; she is directly involved, more deeply than any other institution, in the factors which operate at the deeper, spiritual level.

## **1. Economic, Social, Political, Racial Factors In Antisemitism**

The phenomenon of disliked and disinherited minority groups is an all too familiar phenomenon in many parts of the world. In Europe, some of these minority groups are now being uprooted from their ancestral homes, and herded into camps for “displaced persons.” In America, they are subjected to varying degrees of discrimination and social ostracism, with Negroes and Orientals (not Jews, except in a few places) at the bottom of the caste system. The analogy of other minority groups helps explain a great many factors that are contributory causes of antisemitism. In the working of each such factor there is a vicious circle: pressure from the majority group generates attitudes in the minority group which are “peculiar” and “offensive,” and are then cited by the majority in justification of its own oppressive conduct.

### **a. Economic Factors.**

Economically under-privileged groups sometimes accept a very low and degraded standard of living, and then become a menace to the higher standards of their neighbors, wherever they congregate in large numbers. Sometimes, on the other hand, their more alert members become exceptionally skillful and eminent in such professions and trades as are open to them, and make themselves so eminent and indispensable that they awaken jealousy, and are charged with “aggressiveness” and “sharp practice.” Both these phenomena appear in the case of other than Jewish groups.

The case of the Chinese is very instructive. Through long centuries of deprivation, they have learned to live under conditions that practically no one else can stand, making a living by means that others disdain. The Japanese can undercut the American standard of living — hence the existence of strong anti-Japanese feeling in California — but the Koreans can undercut the Japanese standard, and the Chinese can undercut the

Korean standard. No one can undercut the Chinese: they are the survivors of the survivors of centuries of famine and flood. On the other hand, in certain areas like Java, Malaya, and Siam, Chinese bankers and merchants have carved out fortunes for themselves by shrewd industry, and become so indispensable to the whole economic system as to evoke much jealousy and hostility. There have been periodic riots and massacres directed against Chinese in various port cities of the Far East, which remind one of antisemitic pogroms. When I was in Siam [Thailand] in 1938, a speech had just been made in the Siamese legislature, declaring that the government ought to treat the Chinese minority (very numerous in Bangkok) exactly as Hitler was treating the Jews in Germany. Armenian Christian bankers and merchants in Turkey have been the objects of much the same hatred and persecution, on much the same groups. The fundamental cause in all such instances is the exclusion of some minority group from equal status in the economic field, which makes many of them lapse into squalor and others push aggressively ahead in the few fields where they manage to get a foothold.

Against this background, there is nothing unique or surprising in the economic position of Jewry. Excluded for centuries from equal economic opportunity, Jews have learned perforce to live on very little if necessary, and to prove themselves twice as able, brilliant and diligent as others, in fields like law, medicine and commerce. (A Jew must be twice as clever as his competitor to be on an equal footing with him.) As for the proverbial sharp bargaining practices of Jews, they are in part the product of the same defense-reaction just described, and in part the conventional practices of the East. A tourist setting out from Britain finds that he leaves fixed prices behind when he crosses the Channel. As he visits France, Italy, Greece, and finally Egypt and Syria, he finds a sort of crescendo in sharp bargaining the further East he goes; and if he continues to India and China, he will lose his indignation about Syrians, Armenians and Jews. A Chinese rickshaw boy can outbargain a Jew or a Scotchman. But give any of these economically aggressive groups an equal chance at wealth, leisure and culture and the fury of the drive diminishes in the next generation. I know more than one successful Jewish merchant in the U.S.A. who is heartbroken to discover that his son has no business sense, and no interest in money. Comfort and wider opportunity have taken away his aggressiveness.

## **b. Social Factors.**

Wherever any minority group is large and strong enough to communicate its social customs to the community to any perceptible degree, the majority group feels threatened and reacts with hostility. Friction is usually in proportion to the size of the minority. The Anglo-Saxon majority in America is anti-Irish in Boston, antisemitic in New York, anti-Negro in Detroit, and anti-Japanese in Los Angeles. In any of these cities, a very small minority is treated with courtesy; it is the big minorities that are resented. They are resented most acutely when children of the majority group come home from school with phrases or habits borrowed from the minority.

Jews know, of course, that the sovereign remedy against this sort of hostile resentment is *assimilation*. No majority feels threatened by a minority which has adopted majority customs. The difficulty is that complete assimilation is practically impossible in their case, for reasons that will appear as we proceed. There is a vicious circle here; persecution makes a group self-conscious and prevents its easy assimilation, while lack of assimilation gives ground for resentment and persecution. The Jews have been so constantly persecuted that even the most assimilated Jew asks himself uneasily, "How long will this toleration last. When comes the next pogrom?" This makes it hard for him to be really assimilated; and even if he achieves the impossible, he is sure to have relatives and friends who have not got to the same point. Must he not cut himself off from his relatives and friends if he is to be socially accepted? But this is humiliating; this is disloyal; no one has the right to ask such a thing of him! No, on second thought, he is not assimilated as much as he thought he was!

## **c. Political and Racial Factors.**

Race is not a dynamic factor at all in what is falsely called the race problem. There is no clear evidence of any natural repulsion, biologically innate, which makes people of different colors dislike each other on sight. Curiosity, not dislike, is the first normal reaction of children to those of other races. Intermarriage between those of different races occurs in Brazil and other Latin cultures without evoking any such reactions of horror and aversion as are common in Anglo-Saxon cultures. Race becomes a factor in

intergroup conflict only where it is the easily distinguishable badge of a group which for some other reason is feared or disliked, or felt to be alien. Some of these reasons have already been mentioned. To them, one more real factor can now be added: the political. If a minority group has been excluded from political power, but now by reason of growing numbers or rising educational standards threatens to gain political power, there is friction. Again, if an excluded minority group feels so much outside the nation where it lives that it has little sense of national loyalty, but feels itself a nation within the nation, a state within the state, such a situation breeds mistrust — which of course makes the group draw apart still more, breeding more mistrust, and so on ad infinitum.

The Jewish problem cannot correctly be described as a race problem, but it is in part a political problem. There is no such thing as a pure Jewish race; though the prohibition of intermarriage, observed by strict Jews since the days of Ezra, has produced a kind of semi-race with recognizable sub-types like the Ashkenazim and Sephardim, which might have become races if complete isolation could have been maintained for long enough. The recognition of a Jewish quasi-racial type would however not result in any inevitable antagonism, if these typical features did not constitute the badge of a group feared or disliked for other reasons. One reason for fear and dislike is undoubtedly political. The Jews are found in all nations, but are not fully of any nation — a situation which Christians, who are supposed to be in the world but not of the world, holding their citizenship in heaven rather than in any earthly country, should find it easy to understand. There is one important distinction between Judaism and Christianity at this point, however: Judaism has remained a national religion with universal aspirations, while Christianity is a universal religion adaptable to various national cultures. Those Jews who lose their ancestral faith tend to make a religion of Jewish national culture. Whether for religious or for secular motives, Jews tend then to form a close-knit national group, bound more tightly to other Jews in other nations than to non-Jews in the same nation.

This situation was aggravated by the Ghetto system which forcibly segregated the Jews for so many centuries. Since their emancipation from the Ghetto in Western Europe at the end of the eighteenth century, many Jews have become so loyal to their adopted fatherlands, that they have excelled their fellow citizens in patriotism. Mary Antin expressed an attitude typical of the liberal attitude of American Jews a generation ago, in

her autobiography, *The Promised Land*. Not Jerusalem but Boston, not Palestine but America, seemed to this young girl from the Ghettos of Eastern Europe to be the holy land of God's promises to Israel. She kissed its soil when she landed, and she found much in her experiences to justify her high hopes. But she has recently written, in a sadder vein, that she would not now be able to meet Christian Americans on such friendly terms as when she landed, because so many hotels, summer resorts and organizations now are restricted to "Christian clientele." In America as in other lands, the hope of the Jews for really equal treatment is being frustrated, and they are being (often with real reluctance) driven to Zionism as the only form of patriotism really open to them. The terroristic fury of present day political Zionism is a fury largely born of bitter disappointment. If their offer of patriotic devotion had been acceptable to Germany, many German Jews would not now be such Zionistic zealots.

There are some who hope that with the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, Jewish minorities in other countries would cease to be sources of political friction, or that the friction would be reduced to the level illustrated by other emigrants who have a national homeland. I do not believe this would follow. The Jewish sentiment of religious nationality and the Jewish condition of world-wide dispersion are too unique for comparison. I would like to see a small Jewish state established, under peaceful conditions, not because I see the hope of Israel in political Zionism, nor because I think the Jewish problem could be settled that way, but because the Jews will be in a hysterical state of mind until the experiment is tried; and it is only when they have found by experience that political Zionism does not satisfy them that they will be ready to look in other directions.

## **2. Moral and Religious Factors in Antisemitism**

*All* of the real factors so far discussed, tending to create inter-group tension between majority and minority groups of various sorts, are operative in antisemitism. Is it, then, sufficient to say that the Jewish problem is unique just because of the number and complexity of the economic, social and political pressures which it involves? I think not. The Jewish problem has a mysterious depth, which no multiplication of purely secular causes can explain. Jerusalem stands among the cities of mankind — crushed and ruined as so many of them are today — crying as of old, "Behold and see if

there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow?” And still the answer is, No. There is no suffering people that has endured, repeatedly, recurrently, rhythmically, world without end, such woes as Israel. No, not even the Negroes, nor the Chinese. Israel is *the* despised and rejected people, *the* people of sorrows, acquainted with grief. There must be deep moral and religious reasons for this unique fate.

The answer which leaps to the mind at this point is a fateful answer, written in fire and blood in the annals of Jewish-Christian relations: the sufferings of the Jews, it is said, are a moral retribution for their rejection of the Messiah when he appeared among them, and for their part in his crucifixion. This is a theory to which no sensitive Christian can subscribe in a spirit of moral complacency. That little Jewish boys and girls should be spat upon and called “Christ-killers,” by people called Christians, that bitter humiliation should be inflicted upon them from which they will never fully recover to the end of their days — call that retributive justice if you can! No one at any rate would think of calling it Christian compassion! In the name of the Christ who forgave His persecutors from the Cross, for His followers to pursue their descendants as relentlessly as the Greek Furies, and even demand their blood in the name of justice, like Shylock whetting his knife to carve out the pound of flesh — surely no malicious slander ever caricatured the Christian faith so grotesquely as that! Small wonder that Jews against whom such enormities have been committed in the name of Christ and His Cross, should find the Cross of Christ still an offense and a stumbling block!

In all penitence and humility for the part they have sinfully played in widening the gap, Christians have to recognize that there is a moral chasm at the foot of the Cross, which deeply divides Israel from Christendom, and helps to account for antisemitic animus. Here as everywhere, there is a vicious circle: because persecuted in the name of Christ, Jews find it hard to see any good in Christ; seeing no good in Christ, they are automatically excluded from full participation in Christian civilization, all of whose highest values center in Christ. This “re-crucifixion of Christ,” as it has been called, is an inevitable source of tension between Jews and Christians; and some of the means taken to bridge the resultant chasm only make it wider. It may be questioned whether conservative Jews, who flatly declare Christ to have been a false prophet, reject him any more decisively than liberal Jews, who claim that he was in perfect harmony with prophetic

Judaism, and said nothing but what had been said a thousand times before. “New and not true” (the conservative formula) and “true and not new” (the liberal formula) are equally effective ways of saying, “We will not have this Man to rule over us.” Christians must sorrowfully confess that their own attitude toward the Jews has helped to engender this new rejection of Christ; but rejection it is, and it means that Jews can never be quite at home in Christendom, never really aspire to become assimilated citizens of Christian nations. This is all the more tragic because, as Joseph Klausner points out, Jews *feel* more at home in Christian culture where the Hebrew Scriptures are respected, than they have ever felt in India or China. They are both drawn to and repelled from Christendom, with a lively sense of kinship and a despairing sense of alienation. Who shall deliver them from this state of torment?

While the ancient and modern rejection of Christ has much to do with Jewish suffering and persecution, it is not sufficient to explain the whole mystery. *Antisemitism began long before Christ*; that fact alone is enough to force us to probe more deeply. It was rampant in ancient Alexandria; it was common in Rome; in the end, it enveloped the Jewish and Christian communities in one great wave of common hatred, expressed in slanders of a very familiar sort, directed indiscriminately at both. The root of this hatred lies very close to the root of the unique Hebrew-Christian revelation. It springs from the basic insistence that there is but One God, who alone is worthy of all worship, and this One God has concretely revealed His will in the events of Jewish history, and chosen Israel for the unique mission of communicating this exclusive knowledge of God to all mankind inclusively. If the Jews (and the Christians) would only grant that every nation has the right to make itself an image of God *nach seiner Façon* (as Frederick the Great would say) they never would have been persecuted so furiously by the ancient Romans or the modern Teutons. But being bound by the firm conviction that there are “none other gods” but One and they are his chosen people, they are bound to suffer for their conviction in a naturally polytheistic and idolatrous world, which demands tolerance for its idols. They have so suffered and will so suffer. Even those who have lost this conviction are involved in the same Messiah tribulations. That is to say, in the last analysis antisemitism springs from the fact that the Jews are truly God’s Messianic people, through whom He offers salvation to the world;

while the world (including worldly Jews) does not want to be saved, and is forever ready to crucify its saviors.

Until Jews learn to read Isaiah 53 in the light of the Cross, and to see their own destiny in the light of the Cross, they will not understand the deepest meaning of their sufferings. Not retribution and punishment, but vicarious atonement, explains their tragedy most deeply. While Christian pogroms veil from them the light of the Cross, perhaps they may catch a glimpse of the truth in Socrates, the Greek antetype of Isaiah 53. Socrates was the “gadfly” of the Athenians, who killed him rather than accept the truth he personified; the Jews are the gadflies of mankind, a community so irregular, so irritating, so unassimilable except in an ideally fraternal society that they will go on stinging, and getting whacked for the pains they inflict, until the Kingdom of God shall come.

The same hard fate, the same high destiny, belongs to the Christian Church, the New Israel; but the rise of the Church does not divert the whole flow of divine Providence into the new channel. I believe that Martin Luther was a prophet sent of God to cleanse the Church, but I do not believe that Protestantism alone represents God’s Providence in the world today. Catholicism, too, has a mission, which must run separate from Protestantism’s for God knows how long. Similarly, Judaism has a divine mission in the world, even since its tragic split with Christianity. Maritain has defined this mission as follows: “While the Church is assigned the labor of supernatural and supertemporal redemption of the world, Israel, we believe, is assigned, on the plane and within the limits of secular history, a task of earthly activization of the mass of the world . . . like an alien body, an activating ferment.” (*A Christian Looks at the Jewish Question*, p. 29). While this follows out the idea just expressed, as to the irritating “gadfly” function of the Jewish people, it hardly seems worthy of divine Providence to confine the mission of Christians so exclusively to heavenly affairs and of Jews so exclusively to earthly affairs! Christian social action contradicts the first half of this theory; Jewish mysticism contradicts the second. Doubtless God knows His own plan best; what we may trust is that in the end He will bring good Jews, good Catholics and good Protestants together at one great Messianic banquet, with one Messiah (not three) presiding at the table and one destiny tying three lines of history at last into one.



## II. What the Church Can and Cannot Do About Antisemitism

We have come to the end of our diagnosis of the causes of antisemitism, probing downward from the superficial level of economics and politics until we finally reached the mysteries of divine Providence. Let us now ask what the Church can do, consistently with her nature and calling, to remedy such of these causes as are within her power to cure.

Economic, social, political, racial tensions are matters over which the Church has at present little direct control, either positive or negative. She can neither be accused of causing them, in most parts of Christendom, nor expected to remedy them. This whole situation, however, is one for which the Church is indirectly responsible, through allowing Christendom to become secularized, and letting province after province of life slip away from her controlling influence.

Now that the Church knows to what an awful conclusion the unchecked trend of secularism leads — Buchenwald, where a sign boldly declares, “Here there is no God,” and the ultimate consequences of godlessness are ruthlessly deduced — she has no longer any excuse for declaring that secular affairs are outside her province. Repentant for her blindness, she is now addressing herself with zeal and thoroughness, in several important new movements, to the sociological analysis of her secular environment, and to the education of her laymen in the responsibilities of their secular calling. I have been immensely impressed with what I have seen and heard of the work being done along these lines at such centers as The Church and World Institute in Holland, Iona in Scotland, Sigtuna in Sweden, to name only three of the many experimental stations which the movement for revival of Christian civilization has so far founded.

The ideal pattern for a Christian civilization is given in St. Paul’s parable of the body and the members, in I Corinthians 12: “If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it.” In this portrait of a New Testament Church, drawn from life, the separate individuality of each part is perfectly balanced by the sensitiveness of each part for the welfare of each other part. While this ideal is so imperfectly realized among the churches, whose denominational rivalry is still a scandal, it cannot be expected to be realized in society at

large in a vary high degree; yet the Church is bound to preach it to society, in word and in deed. Any society which permits a particular group to be so scorned, humiliated and ignored that its joys are a matter of jealousy to others and its sorrows a matter of indifference or derisive delight, is a sick society, afflicted with a cyst which may at any time become a malignant cancer. Whether it be the tyranny of a minority or the tyranny of the majority which creates such a cyst, the Christian Church must denounce such a tyranny, and identify itself sympathetically with the fate of the oppressed group, even as Christ in the days of his flesh identified himself with the poor and the outcasts. By so doing, the Church may appear to be seditious, but actually will be helping to save that society from impending destruction.

In this cause, Jews and Christians can often work together, and in such work exchange their deepest thoughts. The wisest leaders of Jewry know that there is no hope of justice for the Jews except in a generally just society; and so they work not only for Jewish rights but also for the rights of other oppressed minorities. So, for example, Julius Rosenwald has addressed himself to the improvement of the condition of the American Negroes, and other American Jews have addressed themselves to the general problem of intergroup conflict as a threat to American democracy. When Jews take their stand on this high ground, in accord with the best teachings of the prophets of Israel, they ought to receive hearty support from Christians who take a similar stand in the name of Christ. In their endeavors to rebuild Christian civilization, Christians would be unforgivably sectarian if they refused to cooperate with non-Christians whose hopes and ideals approximate to their own. And in the case of the best Jews, the approximation between what they think and we think to be God's will for a just society in our time, is often so close as to form a basis for deep spiritual fellowship. There are no circumstances under which a Jew is more apt to see Christianity in a favorable light than when seeking God's Kingdom and His righteousness, side by side with Christian friends and allies. After a hard-fought battle for justice, whether won or lost, the confidences exchanged by comrades-at-arms may go very deep and have great consequences.

While Christians and Jews together, with all the allies they can muster, have a long, hard, uphill fight on their hands, against the economic, social, political conditions that breed antisemitism, there is a task more

immediately within the power of Christians, to which they must set their hands without further delay: the revision of Christian teaching so as to eliminate the moral and spiritual causes of antisemitism as far as possible, within the Christian Church and between Church and Synagogue.

Some things, of course, the Christian Church cannot do without compromising the very basis of her existence. She cannot deny the Lordship of Jesus Christ simply because it is a rock of offense to the Jews; and she cannot cease her missionary endeavors to convert the Jews and all other human beings to faith in Christ. But without denying her charter of existence at either of these two essential points, she can so preach Christ to her own members as to guard against unconscious antisemitic implications being left in their minds; and she can so preach Christ to the Jews as not to bring His name into needless disfavor through downright discourtesy or unloving tactlessness in the manner of presentation.

At both the points mentioned, the danger is real. Much Christian preaching and teaching draws such a sharp contrast between the Old and New Covenants as to give the impression that the Law is simply set aside and abrogated by the Gospel. Where the Ten Commandments are constantly repeated, and the Psalms constantly used in public worship, as in the Church of Scotland, no such impression arises. It is noteworthy that antisemitism is very uncommon in Scotland among church members, and there is a strong interest in missions to the Jews on a basis of love, respect and fellow-feeling. I do not mean to suggest that Calvinists are wholly immune to antisemitism, or Lutherans sure to succumb to it — the remarkable work of the Swedish Lutheran missionaries would belie any such statement — but I do suggest that there is an important difference of emphasis between the “Old Testament Christianity” of the Calvinists and the Pauline “New Testament Christianity” of the Lutherans and other Evangelicals. “New Testament Christians” have to guard their teachings with special care against unconscious antisemitic implications which the Apostle Paul himself (together with Augustine and Luther) would have rejected with horror and amazement.

Again, it is necessary for Christians of all denominations to exercise great care in rehearsing the events of Holy Week, lest modern church members should get impressions about the Jews in general and the Pharisees in particular, which the early Christians would never get from the same narrative. *They* knew that our Lord was at one with the Pharisees on

some of the most important issues; but modern church members have to be reminded of it. *They* knew that the first disciples and most of their own members were Jews; but since the decay of Jewish Christianity and the triumph of Gentile Christianity, Gentile prejudices against Jews have poisoned the perspective of Christians. *They* knew that our Lord forgave his persecutors from the Cross, and the notion of retaliatory vengeance by Christians against Jews was far from their minds; but modern Christians are apt to remember “His blood be upon us” and forget “Father forgive them.” All these faults of perspective tend to be corrected in a measure by careful historical scholarship; but the Christian layman, knowing little of that consensus of Christian and Jewish scholarship which has so remarkably illumined the history of Christian origins in recent years, is still in danger of getting anti-Semitic impressions from careless homiletical interpretations of the meaning of Holy Week, or even from the unadorned New Testament narrative itself, viewed through the haze of two thousand years of misunderstanding.

As for the preaching of Christ to Jews, I need not say in this presence that it requires infinite tact and delicate consideration of the feelings of those addressed. Such tact and consideration are necessary in all missionary work. A missionary to India must understand the religion and culture of India in all its nuances, and in his preaching speak as an Indian to Indians, even as St. Paul became all things to all men, and our Lord “became as we that He might make us as He is.” Why should it be assumed by some missionaries to the Jews that no such effort is necessary to understand the Jewish mind; or that it is perfectly proper to quote the Scriptures to Jews *in their Christian meaning*, without first understanding what a different meaning they have to Jews.

Above all, how necessary it is for Christians to understand that Jewish adherence to the Jewish meaning of the Scriptures may often spring from something deeper than mere stubbornness or spiritual blindness a sentiment of loyalty to God’s calling, a sense of unique mission to mankind! Jews share with Christians the conviction that the One God who is over all nations has revealed His Holy Name and His Holy Will to them; and they are bound to stand firm as witnesses to this revelation, until the end of the age. As loyal Christians cannot easily be convinced of the claims of Mohammed, or Mrs. Eddy, or any new prophet that may arise, to supersede or supplement the revelation of God to which they are bound in Christ, so

loyal Jews cannot be expected easily to grant that the revelation to which they are bound in Moses and the prophets needs correction or amplification in any way. That sentiment of loyalty must be respected by Christian missionaries, for it is one that we share. Only as the fulfillment of the hope of Israel can Christianity be presented to loyal Jews; *disloyal* Jews cannot make good Christians. Alienated Jews must recover their loyalty to their fathers' God, and ours, who is both the God of Abraham and the God and Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ. This loyalty — with which Israel's unique continuing mission and unique continuing suffering are both deeply connected — must be the deep tie through which every truly Christian approach to the Jews is made. If this is respected, no unkind word will be spoken, no tactless violation of Jewish feelings will occur. If it is not respected, the chances of a real and enduring conversion to God through Christ are practically *nil*.

A final word as to the present and future prospects of antisemitism. There can be no doubt that signs of a new wave of antisemitism are already manifesting themselves in this post-war period, so soon after the pre-war wave broke with such unprecedented fury! Jewish terrorism in Palestine is provoking unfavorable reactions against Jews in many parts of the world. Jewish revengefulness against Germany, expressed in the Morgenthau plan and in the behavior of Jewish officers in the American occupying forces, is making many Germans feel easier in their consciences about their previous crimes against the Jews. Jewish preoccupation with the relief of their fellow Jews, in areas of general distress, has made some Christians who aided Jews during the war turn cool toward the Jews, since the end of the war. Some Christians, in areas where these hard feelings are rising, are already beginning to make a fatal distinction, reminiscent of the early days of Nazi antisemitism. They are saying that antisemitism can be justified on *political* grounds, though not on Christian grounds.

What ought Christians to do in the presence of this new danger? They ought not, of course, be so unrealistic as to deny that Jews sometimes give real cause for dislike and opposition. Nor should they deny that terrorism must be firmly dealt with by any government responsible for public order and justice. But they must make it clear to the enemies of the Jews that even the maddest, most horrible deeds of Jewish terrorists are a natural and practically inevitable consequence of the fact that this people has been made to feel wholly helpless, wholly abandoned, wholly outside the pale of

humanity in these last terrible years. There is no final cure for this dangerous mood of nihilism except in costly, patient friendliness that will convince this people that they are cared for, respected, loved; and finally, make them feel at home somewhere. Missionaries to the Jews must share in these deeds of friendship and take first place in protecting Jews from unfair attacks, or their preaching and teaching will have little effect.

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# How Can You Find Peace With God?

The most important thing to grasp is that no one is made right with God by the good things he or she might do. Justification is by faith only, and that faith resting on what Jesus Christ did. It is by believing and trusting in His one-time *substitutionary* death for your sins.

Read your Bible steadily. God works His power in human beings through His Word. Where the Word is, God the Holy Spirit is always present.

Suggested Reading: [New Testament Conversions](#) by Pastor George Gerberding

## Benediction

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen. (Jude 1:24-25)

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