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The Problem of the Two-Covenant Theology

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Jesus says, according to John 14:6: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me."

In Jesus' parable about the prodigal son, the father in the parable says to his eldest son, "Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours" (Luke 15:31).

Franz Rosenzweig says, with an allusion to John 14:6 and Luke 15:31:

"We are wholly agreed as to what Christ and his church mean to the world: no one can reach the Father save through him.

No one can reach the Father! But the situation is quite different for one who does not have to reach the Father because he is already with him. And this is true of the people of Israel (though not of individual Jews)"¹

Introduction

In the world of faith, the ultimate issues dealing with God are not subject to *proof*. They are *testified to* – and rejected or received in faith. If this essay contains a hidden agenda, it is not to prove that faith in Jesus is *the truth* for Jews, nor is it to give a testimony about my own faith – though I neither deny the former nor am ashamed of the latter. The purpose is a more limited one, namely to *show* that if the New Testament still has a decisive word about determining what Christian faith is and for whom faith in Jesus is relevant, then a two-covenant theology creates more problems than it solves.

But naturally the reverse also applies: if the New Testament does *not* have the decisive word about the content and the addressee of Christian faith, a two-covenant theology, or perhaps even better, a "multi-covenant theology" might be the solution to the ever tense relations between the religions, and consequently to the relations between Judaism and Christianity.

Theology, Jewish as well as Christian, grapples with a multitude of issues full of complexity and mystery. For the God of Israel will not be reduced to mathematical formulas. The New Testament writers do not do that either. Yet, it is relatively easy to relate to the main question if two-covenant theology is considered in the light of the New Testament, even if some advocates of the theory simplify matters unduly and sometimes happen to obscure the consequences for Christian faith. From a Christian perspective the theory is not under any circumstances a minor concern. And I do not hesitate to admit that there are many theological issues of great complexity in the wake of the answers given below. They are certainly complex and full of mystery to me as a Christian theologian. These matters will not be dealt with here. My fundamental position is that, theologically speaking, a discussion of the mystery of Israel – seen from a Christian viewpoint – must have its basis in New Testament Christology, because Christology is the basis of all Christian theology.² When making this assertion I can already hear some cry "anti-Judaist". But this assertion neither makes me an anti-Judaist nor an anti-Semite. I share the conviction that anti-Semitism is a sin against God.³

The crux of the matter is, as we are now going to see, Jesus.

I The Issue

Above is a quotation by Franz Rosenzweig, a Jewish philosopher who died in 1929. Below we shall return to Rosenzweig, whose name has often been attached to the origin of two-covenant theology. It is not my intention to give a profound analysis of Rosenzweig's ideas and philosophy. That would require more space than is available here. What will be examined here is the nature of arguing and its implications for the view of Jesus and mission to Israel. Other theologians will be included, but attention is going to be concentrated on him. It is my contention that if we realize his way of arguing, it will be easy to see through similar arguments in others, even in those representatives of two-covenant theology whose theological and philosophical bases are different from Rosenzweig's but whose way of arguing can nevertheless be compared to his. They also arrive at solutions of the relationship between Judaism and Christianity similar to those he suggested. This approach implies that this essay will conclude with a few clues that elucidate the Christological consequences for Christian advocates of two-covenant theology.

The crux is: What is the theological foundation of the view that the gospel of and by Jesus is for non-Jews *only*? And

is it possible to maintain the New Testament's view of Jesus if two-covenant theology is recognized?

The term "two-covenant theology" is here, and has probably come to stay. Therefore it will also be used here, although it sometimes seems to cover philosophy rather than theology. Some opponents of this "theology" take great pains to refer to it as "two-covenant *theory*".⁴ Others, however, prefer the term "two-covenant-*communities* theology", "because these theologians argue in one form or another that we must understand Judaism as a divinely guided religion that is *parallel* to Christianity, not superseded by it or fulfilled within it".⁵ Others speak about the two *ways*.⁶ Again, others distinguish between a *single covenant school*⁷ and a *double covenant school*.⁸ But the differences between the single and double covenant schools – and whatever shades and overlaps there may be in between – do not affect what the two schools are fundamentally agreed about, namely that in order to be saved the Jew does not need to believe in Jesus – to state the matter very simply.

But that is the very heart of the matter! Anyway, that is how some Christians view the matter.

It is true that the doctrine of the two covenants to many has the ring of "Good News". At long last a solution has been found to the difficult relationship between Judaism and Christianity. Both religions are equal (that is the way the matter is often portrayed), both have the same right, both are willed by the same God, and both have a divine mission in the world. Therefore it is not for them to compete about "souls", which is the reason why the church's mission among Jews can stop. The Christian church need no longer have a bad conscience because it has failed to bring the gospel to the Jews so that they would believe in Jesus. The church has been released from what it used to believe was its obligation. And this has happened, not through something negative, a prohibition, but – it seems – thanks to a positive theological argument. And if it is possible to talk about superiority here, it is no longer the question of the superiority of Christianity over Judaism but, on the contrary, the superiority of Judaism over Christianity.

Conversely, the concept of two-covenant theology has a negative ring in the ears of many others, and certainly in the ears of those who are actively involved in Jewish evangelism. The concept as such has clearly derogatory connotations. When the term is used, it is implied that "two-covenant-theology" and "Jewish evangelism" are mutually exclusive concepts. Advocates of two-covenant theology deny that Jews need the gospel in order to be saved. And conversely, advocates of Jewish evangelism go against two-covenant theology, which denies – no matter what is the specific basis or version of this "theology" – that Jews need Jesus as Messiah.

No attempt will be made in this essay to build a bridge between two-covenant theology and Jewish evangelism. That is, quite simply, not possible. And this is something advocates of two-covenant theology, roughly speaking, agree about whether they are Jews or Christians. Yet it may be important to point out the reasons why a Christian theology, rooted in the New Testament message, must reject two-covenant theology. It affects the very heart of genuine Christian theology, indeed, it not only affects it, it removes it.

When all is said and done, it is not difficult to understand why a great many Jews subscribe to the idea of a double covenant. For the "second" covenant does not really challenge their position. Nor is it very difficult to understand why liberal and radical Christian theologians support this view, when it is considered how these have reduced and transformed Jesus in relation to the New Testament. However, it is not only remarkable but nothing less than a contradiction in terms that this theory has gained advocates among evangelical Christians, which we are going to see some examples of below. Although most Jews state that they do not missionize and that they do not have a need to missionize among non-Jews, they have nevertheless, to a certain degree, succeeded in convincing many Christians that Jews have their own covenant with God, which for them makes belief in Jesus unnecessary. That is also a kind of "mission". Unlike some Jews who do not recognize the Christian church's right to missionize Jews, I for one fully recognize Jewish people's right to influence Christians and fight for the cause, the truth, they as Jews are convinced about. To fight for the "truth" *with arguments* is a human right. I am even impressed with the efficiency achieved by Jews, involved in the Jewish-Christian dialogue, when it comes to asserting that Jews have no need for faith in Jesus. Seen against that background, it is no wonder that Jews, involved in this dialogue, urge Christians to give their testimony only within the framework of the Jewish-Christian dialogue.⁹ So far, what testimony there may have been within that framework has proved a relatively harmless affair for Jews.

The *covenant-concept* as such in the Tenakh (or the so-called Old Testament) and in the New Testament will not be discussed in detail here. Nor is it necessary for our limited purpose. A few things, however, do require mentioning.

In the Old Testament there are several successive covenants between God and Israel, and prior to these covenants there is the covenant between God and Noah, which includes the whole of mankind (Genesis 9:9–11). Among the so-called unconditional covenants we find the Abrahamic covenant, the Davidic covenant, and the new covenant, which the prophet Jeremiah – and others – refer to (Jeremiah 31). On the other hand the Mosaic covenant is a conditional one.¹⁰

It cannot be emphasized strongly enough that in the Hebrew Bible – e.g. in the prophet Jeremiah – a new covenant is anticipated. For that means that no matter what was the relationship between the earlier covenants and the new covenant, then there is something "more", something more "far-reaching", or at least a "renewal" in the new covenant. These

consciously vague expressions have been chosen with a purpose: I want to point out that Jews and Christians who want to take the prophet Jeremiah seriously can share the idea of a new covenant, although there is also here some difference of opinion, for according to a Christian viewpoint already now some aspect of the covenant is in effect. Barry R. Leventhal says to this that "when the Lord instituted the Lord's Supper, He did not apply all of the provisions in the New covenant. He only applied the single provision of the forgiveness of sins (Matt. 26:27-28). All of the various provisions remain in abeyance, awaiting their ultimate fulfillment in Israel's Messianic kingdom." Leventhal also argues that "Jesus Himself ratified the New covenant by his sacrificial death (1 Cor. 11:25) and, therefore, became the Mediator of the covenant (Heb 8:6; 9:15-17; 12:24)."¹¹ From a Jewish point of view it has often been argued that one cannot see that the promised redemption has come with Jesus. To this may be said that the New Testament admits the presence of a tension: redemption *has* come with Jesus and yet the ultimate redemption still belongs to the future, a tension which Oscar Cullmann, among others, describe in this way: "already fulfilled" and "not yet completed".¹²

So the problem for genuine Christian theology is not a reluctance to recognize covenant and election as fundamental theological concepts. Nor is the problem that the New Testament requires of the theologian that he asserts that the Christian church is the "new Israel" and that Israel has been rejected and that the unconditional covenants have been annulled – although it must be admitted that there are still theologians who subscribe to this interpretation. The problem is that according to the New Testament, covenant and election are concepts that can only be understood in relation to Jesus. If the concepts are seen in isolation, the consequence will be a reduction of the New Testament Jesus. In the New Testament these concepts are to be understood in the light of Christology. One does not arrive at a genuine Christian understanding of these concepts by bypassing Jesus and the New Testament's doctrine of election *in him*. According to the New Testament this election in Jesus took place before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:4).

When the New Testament mentions the "new covenant", there can be no doubt that it is a reference to the covenant mentioned by Jeremiah. And furthermore: no matter how the New Testament writers look upon covenant and election, it does not challenge the fundamental concept that the new covenant in Jesus includes Jews. On the basis of this one observation, it seems as if two-covenant theology has embarked on a collision course with one principal New Testament concept. Substantially, the new covenant in the New Testament is combined with the concept of redemption through Jesus' death and the resulting forgiveness of sins for all – Jews as well as non-Jews. That at least some Jews today seem to have diverged radically from the Hebrew Bible's idea of atonement is perhaps understandable, as the Jews no longer have a place of sacrifice.¹³ Nevertheless, a Christian cannot help being surprised when some Jews argue that they do not need a "covenant of grace". Marc Angel is quite unambiguous: "Judaism does not teach that one must be 'saved' by a special act of God's grace."¹⁴ And, in the same context: "Any suggestion by Christians that God's covenant with Israel has been transferred to a 'new Israel' is obviously offensive to Jewish belief."¹⁵ It is probably equally "offensive" to argue, as is being done here, that God has *not* annulled his covenant with Israel, but that with *Jesus* a new covenant has been established which is also for Jews, and that if there is such a thing as a "new Israel" it consists of Jesus-believing Jews living in the new covenant, and that non-Jews, by God's grace and for Jesus' sake, have been allowed to share its benefits.

The Apostle Paul is making an important point in Romans 9-11, namely that even if Israel as such, as a people, have rejected Jesus as their Messiah, then God's election is irrevocable. For Paul – often the butt of abuse by Jews as well as Christians – Israel's election has not been annulled, even though they have not received Jesus as Messiah. Israel continues to have a place in God's plan of salvation. But this belief – filled as it is with the mystery of Israel – does not cause Paul to refrain from proclaiming the gospel of Jesus to Jews.

When Paul speaks about "Israel's advantages", it is important to note that these advantages is something that has been given by God, and not a *quality* in Israel as such. For Paul, Israel's advantages do not imply that they do not need Jesus. On the contrary, in the first part of Romans he advances the argument that both Jews and non-Jews are saved by grace through faith in Jesus. This is due to all men's sin – Jews included. Therefore covenant and election, in their biblical context, first and foremost tell us something of God. Those concepts, and the inherent reality, are no guarantee that the covenant-people and the elected cannot decide to go their own ways: biblical history has a great many examples of this. In the Hebrew Bible a faithless people is met by a God whose anger and wrath are kindled against them, but this does not entail the abrogation of the covenant with Israel. It should be possible for a Christian to repeat this without be accused of being offensive or anti-Semitic.

That the issue of two-covenant theology is of more than academic interest and indeed a delicate question among many Jews and some Christians, will now be shown with an example.

II The Positions

In evangelical circles involved in Jewish evangelism today it is affirmed that the people of Israel is God's covenant-

people and that the Jewish people has an ongoing part in God's plan,¹⁶ but they deny that this covenant renders faith in Jesus unnecessary for Jews. The obligation to take back the gospel to the Jewish people is therefore still in force and has not been annulled. Not even after the Holocaust.

In Jewish circles it is affirmed that God's covenant with the people of Israel has not been annulled, and as a rule it is denied that this covenant can include faith in Jesus for Jews; some Jews recognize that non-Jews can reach the Father through Jesus. The Christians have no obligation to reach the gospel to the Jewish people – and certainly not after the Holocaust.

The evangelical position was expressed in two important documents in 1989. The shorter version is to be found in the *Manila Manifesto* from Lausanne II in Manila. With a clear reference to the so-called two-covenant theology the Manifest has the following to say:

It is sometimes held that in virtue of God's covenant with Abraham, Jewish people do not need to acknowledge Jesus as their Messiah. We affirm that they need him as much as anyone else, that it would be a form of anti-Semitism, as well as being disloyal to Christ, to depart from the New Testament pattern of taking the gospel to "the Jew first...". We therefore reject the thesis that Jews have their own covenant which renders faith in Jesus unnecessary.¹⁷

The longer statement is to be found in the document *The Willowbank Declaration on the Christian Gospel and the Jewish People*, which was made in April 1989, approximately three months before the Consultation on World Evangelization arranged by the Lausanne Movement, in Manila. The Willowbank Declaration is introduced with two Scripture texts from Paul's Letter to the Romans: "The Gospel is the power of God for salvation, to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16), and "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved" (Romans 10:1). With these references to Paul, the Jesus-believing Jew, a clear signal has been given that the gospel is a message *for* Jews. In the preamble to the Declaration this is developed with the following statement:

Some church leaders have retreated from embracing the task of evangelising Jews as a responsibility of Christian mission. Rather, a new theology is being embraced which holds that God's covenant with Israel through Abraham establishes all Jews in God's favor for all times, and so makes faith in Jesus Christ for salvation needless so far as they are concerned.

On this basis, it is argued that dialogue with Jews in order to understand each other better, and cooperation in the quest for socio-economical shalom, is all that Christian mission requires in relation to the Jewish people.

Continued attempts to do what the Church has done from the first, in seeking to win Jews to Jesus as Messiah, are widely opposed and decried by Christian as well as Jewish leaders.¹⁸

The reactions to this declaration were prompt. They do not only reflect theological disagreement, however, but also a verbal harshness which one had hitherto tried to avoid in the Jewish-Christian dialogue. In an interview Rabbi A. James Rudin, National Director of Inter-Religious Affairs for the American Jewish Committee, called the Declaration a "blueprint for spiritual genocide that is shot through with the ancient Christian 'teaching of contempt' for Jews and Judaism".¹⁹ Elsewhere Rudin refers to the Declaration as "wrong-headed" and "arrogant".²⁰ Rabbi Alexander Schindler, President of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, describes the Declaration as "retrograde and primitive".²¹ In an article entitled "Jewish Leaders Call on Evangelicals to Repudiate Their Conversion Goals" Schindler is quoted as labelling the Declaration as "a desperate attempt to stop the clock of progress in inter-religious relations". Rudin calls the Declaration "the worst kind of Christian religious imperialism".²²

It is possible that Rudin's mention of "spiritual genocide" may have a certain effect on Christians who are weighed down by guilt caused by the awareness of the Christian church's crimes perpetrated against Jews down through history – a history that reached a cruel, indeed, blasphemous climax with the Holocaust.²³ Theologically speaking, the Holocaust is *also* for Christians an insoluble problem. The answers that are offered must necessarily be tentative, and to try to give the definite answer to the Holocaust is to belittle the problem. The Christian church – the institution as well as individuals – has an obligation to preserve the memory of the Holocaust so that this disaster will not be repeated. The Christian church, including the part of it that is engaged in mission to the Jews, cannot possibly ask Jews to forget history, although the Christians in questions have no personal responsibility for the Holocaust. History endows a people with an identity. But when Christians help to preserve the memory of the church's bloody history with the Jewish people and the memory of what this people has suffered in so-called Christian countries and *at the same time* speaks about the church's obligation to take the gospel to the Jewish people, then they have chosen the most difficult solution imaginable. Less radical solutions either belittle the church's history and behave as if the Holocaust is only a problem for Jewish people, or they belittle the Lord of the church who has obliged his church to mission – to all peoples. The choice of the difficult solution is a signal to those who have ears to hear that mission to Jews is not an easy task and that it cannot be carried out in a triumphalistic way, nor is it based in Gentile triumphalism. It is furthermore an indication of how much Jesus, the Jew – the Christ of

the church – means to the Christian when, in spite of all difficulties, he does not dare to keep to himself the very best he has received from the Jewish people.

When Rudin refers to the Willowbank Declaration as a "blueprint for spiritual genocide", it is an exceedingly sharp statement against what the Christian church regards as an obligation, entrusted to it by the Lord of the church, namely that the gospel *is* for Jews and therefore should be reached to Jews. It is worth noting that Rudin does not just attack a way of evangelizing. The *ways and methods* in Jewish evangelism are of course not above criticism.

As to the way, in 1978 there seemed to be agreement between Rabbi A. James Rudin and Leighton Ford, the chairman of the Lausanne Movement, for Rudin writes in the book, *Evangelicals and Jews in Conversation* (1978) the following: "Evangelical Christians were urged by Leighton Ford to 'reject the neurotic approach which would select out Jews alone as some uniquely needy objects for proselytism.' Christians need to dissociate themselves from all forms of evangelistic methods 'that involve force or manipulation or deception'."²⁴

From the fact that the gospel is "for the Jew first" evangelicals do *not* conclude that it is not for Gentiles. Attempts have been made to classify the problem in the following way: "missionize everyone, including Jews; missionize everyone, especially Jews; missionize everyone except for Jews."²⁵ The usefulness of this classification is certainly open to debate. For the two first views overlap. And even those who, for historical and theological reasons, emphasize the second view ("especially Jews") do not reject mission to non-Jews.²⁶ But the fact that some, in the interest of seriousness and for practical reasons, concentrate on Jewish evangelism, just like others concentrate on Muslims or Buddhists should not in itself be suspect or "neurotic", which I am sure Leighton Ford does not mean. However, David Berger feels it incumbent on him to tell us that Billy Graham, in 1973, said that he (Graham) has never singled out Jews as Jews and is opposed to "coercive proselytizing".²⁷

An important element is often overlooked in the discussion of the justification of mission to Jews, and in the view of evangelical thinking as such. Mission is not – or rather, should not be – directed only to "the others". Evangelical thinking, when it is best – which it is not always! – is even so radical that it requires that there is a constant call for repentance of fellow evangelicals. Indeed, according to evangelical thinking the person who passes on the gospel to others must himself constantly hear and receive the gospel. For the Christian believer who has done begging and thanking for the forgiveness of sins, which is granted by faith in Jesus, is done for as a Christian.

This element implies a fundamental "no" to all forms of religious imperialism. Genuine mission is the extension of self-criticism. Together with those who receive the gospel you subject yourself to God's judgement, and together with those who receive the gospel you yourself receive God's grace for Jesus' sake. Extended self-criticism is necessary for the reality of salvation to be extended to others.

The other statement, that Christians need to dissociate themselves from methods "that involve force or manipulation or deception" is also a self-evident prerequisite for evangelical mission thinking. It may be possible, by manipulation, to create a Christian lifestyle in others and oneself. But a genuine Christian faith lies outside the realm of manipulation. That calls for a completely different kind of power, the Word of God and the power of the Holy Spirit.

The question remains, however, if some Jews are not too quick to use the term "deception" for example about some Christian Jews' use of traditional Jewish symbols and customs in order to meet other Jews with the gospel.²⁸ Various things could be said about that, e.g.: that which today appears as traditional Jewish may not be so very Jewish if we look at its origin; there are no copyright laws for the use of symbols in the world of religions, and finally, a great number of today's Jesus-believing Jews are aware of themselves as Jews. Add to this that there is no criticism of the (Gentile) Christian church's use of Jewish symbols; rather the opposite seems to be the case: from certain Jewish quarters the church is often criticized for being "un-Jewish" and for cutting off its Jewish roots. When Daniel F. Polish, for example, sees it as an expression of deception that Christian Jews invite other Jews to Passover Sedarim and Shabbat services which culminate in the celebration of the Eucharist,²⁹ it should be noted that, for Christian Jews, this is theologically meaningful, and that these practices are no more deceptive than the use of a (church) organ in certain Jewish Reform Congregations in the last century, though the organ by most people was felt to be part of the Christian church service. Both parties will have to learn to live with loans like that. Such is life. If Polish's example were to be followed, Christians might attack Jews for having adopted the custom with a Christmas tree, only they call it a Chanukka bush. But if Jews feel like adopting this Christian *tradition*, whose origin can in no way be motivated by the New Testament, it is up to them, and it is certainly not my business to decry it as an instance of Jewish deception.

Rudin concluded the aforementioned article from 1978 with the following words: "The evangelical-Jewish encounter, at its best, promises to break exciting new ground for both our 'Peoples of God'."³⁰ If he really expected all evangelical Christians give up the idea of taking back to the Jews the gospel which non-Jews received from the Jews, then he must have been disappointed.

And it seems almost ironic that Rabbi Alexander Schindler, who in no uncertain terms was to oppose the Willowbank Declaration, in 1978 called upon *Jews* to undertake a program of outreach to "unchurched Americans"³¹ David Berger's

comment on this is that "the idea remains unpalatable to most non-Reform Jews, partly because of religious principle, but also because it appears to undercut the moral basis for Jewish opposition to Christian missionizing."³² The last statement cannot help giving occasion for further reflection. From a Christian point of view it may be said that of course it is for the Jews alone to decide if they want to missionize among Christians. Not until they decide to do so will there, in this area, be equality between Jews and Christians.

I believe some positions have now been made clear and that they can shed some light on the tensions that arise when two-covenant theology is rejected and when Christians still feel an obligation to take the gospel back to the people that passed it on to other peoples.

When genuine Christian theology, in the face of great difficulties, maintains that Jews need Jesus, it is not an idea that originated with Gentile Christians. Theologically this idea is deeply rooted in that gospel which non-Jews received from Jews and which to Jews and Gentiles alike is folly (1 Cor. 1:22-25), that gospel which, historically, first came to Jews, and whose principal character is Jesus, the Jew, who was convinced that his relationship to the God of Israel was unique.

Evangelical theology is therefore of the opinion that neither the Jew Jesus nor the Jew Paul wanted to cause a "spiritual genocide". It is possible to understand the harsh words against Jews in the New Testament within the framework of Jewish debate and self-criticism, which rules out that they should be anti-Semitic. If that were the case, the criticism levelled against the covenant-people in the Hebrew Bible by several Jewish prophets would also have to be stamped as such. The book dealing with, on the one hand, Jewish prophetic self-criticism and Jewish movements' criticism of fellow Jews immediately before and after the fall of the Second Temple, and on the other hand, the so-called anti-Judaistic or anti-Semitic statements in the New Testament has not yet been written.

The following is an attempt to investigate what, according to New Testament theology, is at stake when the so-called two-covenant theology is accepted, whether it is Franz Rosenzweig's model or the reasons stated for it are different from his.

III Franz Rosenzweig and Two-Covenant Theology

Hardly any Jew before Franz Rosenzweig (1886-1929) ever spoke with such appreciation of *Christianity and the Christian Church*. Rosenzweig had a positive attitude to the church's role in the world. Therefore he has been extremely influential for the development of the doctrine of the two covenants.

The path Rosenzweig had to walk to arrive at his positive attitude to Christianity and the church's importance for non-Jews cannot but make a certain impression. A person who through his struggle with himself and his God at last finds himself in his own tradition – while retaining faith in his God – such a person commands our respect and sympathy. Rosenzweig is that man. His principal work, *The Star of Redemption*, which he began writing on army postal cards at the end of August 1918 on the Balkan Front is the expression of a personal need and is not determined by "objective, theoretical speculations", as mentioned by Nahum N. Glatzer.³³ It would, however, be a premature conclusion to assume that the work is devoid of "theoretical speculation".

Raised in an assimilated Jewish home in Germany Rosenzweig found his way back to his Jewish heritage, the heritage which he had only got a glimpse of in his adolescence through his grandfather Adam Rosenzweig. In 1905 Rosenzweig began studying at university, first medicine but from 1907 he also studied history, philosophy, theology, and in 1914 he finished his doctoral thesis entitled *Hegel und der Staat* (published 1920). While at university he had thoroughgoing discussions about Judaism and Christianity with Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, professor of law and sociology, and with his two cousins Hans and Rudolf Ehrenberg, who had both become Christians and who made a strong impression on Rosenzweig.

The result of these conversations was that Rosenzweig, in 1913, was convinced that he ought to be baptized. A conversation with Rosenstock had led him from his "relativistic position into a non-relativistic one".³⁴ But he declared that he could turn Christian only "*qua* Jew – not through the intermediate stage of paganism". "I considered this reservation purely personal, and you approved of it, remembering early Christianity," he writes to Rudolf Ehrenberg.³⁵ While talking to his mother, who realizes that he plans to be baptized, he points to the New Testament which he is holding in his hand: "Mother, here is everything, here is the truth. There is only one way, Jesus".³⁶

However, it did not end with baptism. On 11 October 1913 he celebrated Yom Kippur in a small synagogue in Berlin. What was supposed to have been a farewell to Judaism became the inauguration of a new life for him *as a Jew*. The service on the Day of Atonement revolutionized his life, or, in the words of Nahum N. Glatzer: "What that day conveyed to him was that essential as a mediator may be in the Christian experience, the Jews stand in no need of a mediator. God is near to a man and desires his undeviated devotion."³⁷ Franz Rosenzweig, the "near-believer" became "a traditional Jew", as Louis Goldberg puts it.³⁸ On 23 October 1913 he writes to his mother: "I seem to have found the way back

about which I had tortured myself in vain and pondered for almost three months.³⁹ On 31 October the same year he writes to his cousin Rudolf, after acknowledging that the non-Jew cannot reach the Father save through Jesus, that "the situation is quite different for one who does not have to reach the Father because he is already with him ... Chosen by its Father, the people of Israel gazes fixedly across the world and history, over to that last, most distant time when the Father, the One and Only, will be 'all in all'. Then, when Christ ceases to be the Lord, Israel will cease to be the chosen people. On this day, God will lose the name by which only Israel calls him; God will then no longer be 'its' God."⁴⁰ In this letter he also writes that he is not going to be baptized: "After prolonged, and I believe thorough, self-examination, I have reversed my decision. It no longer seems necessary to me, and therefore, being what I am, no longer possible. I will remain a Jew".⁴¹

By birth Franz Rosenzweig *was* a Jew. He did not *become* a Jew. But he became aware of what he already was, namely a Jew. Judaism was no longer an anachronism. In passing it may be mentioned that his new experience as *experience* is comparable to what some Jesus-believing Jews describe when they say that to them Judaism was an anachronism, but that through their faith in Jesus they have re-found their Jewish identity.

Like other religious philosophers – Jewish as well as Christian – Rosenzweig is difficult to put a label on. In *The Star of Redemption*, his magnum opus, he has three major subjects: creation, revelation, and redemption. He is, in Phillip Sigal's words: "nonorthodox in style, existentialist in philosophy and immersed in romanticism" – and add to this that he also "rejected historicism".⁴² Nahum N. Glatzer calls him "one of the most undogmatic thinkers of his time",⁴³ which makes it close to impossible to assess Rosenzweig as a religious philosopher on a few pages. But the following can be said about the matter which is relevant in this context:

For Rosenzweig, the difference between Jews and non-Jews is that the Jew, because he is a descendant of Abraham, does not need to be reborn, which non-Jews need to. The Jew is born a Jew. It is different with the pagans. When a non-Jew receives Jesus he is reborn. "A Christian is made, not born". As for the Jew, "the individual is born a Jew. He no longer needs to become one in some decisive moment of his individual life".⁴⁴ The fundamental difference between Jewish and Christian is that "the Christian is by nature or at least by birth – a pagan; the Jew, however, is a Jew".⁴⁵ A Jew is born into the faith-community that was instituted between God and Israel on Sinai, it is a natural phenomenon; in contrast, pagans have to undergo a rebirth.

In the words of Frank Ephraim Talmage's: "Judaism is the Life – the faith that was with the Father at the beginning – while Christianity is the way toward the Father of those who are not yet with him. Judaism is the fire, Christianity the rays."⁴⁶ The fire, Judaism, is already with God, the Father; Judaism is at the goal, not on the way, as Christianity is. Therefore Judaism does not need a salvation history.⁴⁷ "Whether Christ is more than an idea – no Christian can know it. But that Israel is more than an idea, that he knows, that he sees. For we live. We are eternal, not as an idea may be eternal: if we are eternal, it is in full reality".⁴⁸

As complementary entities Judaism as well as Christianity have a God-willed function in the world. Rosenzweig has the following to say about this: "Before God, then, the Jew and Christian both labor at the same task. He cannot dispense with either. He has set enmity between the two for all time, and withal has most intimately bound each to each. To us [Jews] he gave eternal life by kindling the fire of the Star of his truth in our hearts. Them [the Christians] he set on the eternal way by causing them to pursue the rays of that Star of his truth for all time unto the eternal end." In the same passage Rosenzweig goes on to say: "The truth, the whole truth, thus belongs neither to them [the Christians] nor to us." But this does not challenge his position that Judaism is superior to Christianity as the Star is primary in relation to the rays. The Christians "are in any event already destined for all time to see what is illuminated, and not the light".⁴⁹ But exactly Christianity's inherent "paganism"⁵⁰ qualifies the Christian to convert the pagans. "The Christian credo had to accommodate itself to a pagan impulse in order to win over the pagans, and this impulse is quenched by the worship of God in the Spirit and the truth, by the promise that Spirit would lead Christendom".⁵¹ While Judaism does not need to missionize, it only needs to be, and is already a testimony of God through its very being, it is a different matter with Christianity. "Christianity must proselytize".⁵²

But Christianity holds no decisive message for Jews. To Rosenzweig, Jewish Christians have only a historical right as an early-church phenomenon and a dogmatic right in Christian eschatology. In the first case as an anachronism, he argues, and in the last as a paradox.⁵³

IV Comments on Rosenzweig's Theory and its Further Development

1. "The pride of the Jew"

Whatever positive opinions Rosenzweig may hold of Christianity, Rosenzweig does not hide his pride in Judaism. This fact is not always made clear when Rosenzweig's name is mentioned. His pride is derived from his conviction that as a

Jew he knows the truth. Rosenzweig says about this: "The metaphysical reason for this pride can be formulated thus: (1) that we know the truth; (2) that we have reached the goal; (3) that at the bottom of his heart any Jew will consider the Christian's relationship to God, and hence his religion, a meager and roundabout affair. For to the Jew it is incomprehensible that one should need a teacher, be he who he may, to learn what is obvious and a matter of course to him, namely to call our God our Father. Why should a third person have to be between me and my Father in heaven? This is no invention of modern apologists but simply Jewish instinct ..."⁵⁴

The theological content of the quotation, not least point three, is quite revealing of Rosenzweig's views of man and his sin, of Jesus' redemptive death and of the nature of salvation, all of them views whereby he places himself in a remarkable contrast to what the first Jesus-believing Jews believed, as it is described in the New Testament. The question suggests itself if it is "only" through a "reduced" Jesus of this kind that non-Jews can come to the Father. It is also worth noting that even if Rosenzweig sees the interrelationship of the two religions, Judaism and Christianity, as a complementariness, then this is "one of unequals in his scheme", which John T. Pawlikowski⁵⁵ very properly states and which is confirmed by the quotation above. But while it becomes a reason for Pawlikowski to reject Rosenzweig's model, for me it becomes something positive that a person who has a living faith expresses himself in the terms that Rosenzweig uses. It is not offensive to me, a Christian, that a Jew – or anybody else – thinks that he is in possession of the truth and that his faith is superior to mine. On the contrary, it is something I respect. But then I also expect Jews not to feel offended when I tell them that I know the truth because I believe in Jesus, who said about himself that he was the Truth. About Rosenzweig's own view of the relationship between Judaism and Christianity Frank Ephraim Talmage has the following comment: "If neither is the true religion, Christianity is less true than Judaism; the new thesis of equal validity is destroyed, and with it the new desire for dialogue on equal terms."⁵⁶

2. Many ways to the same result

Even with a different point of departure it is possible to reach a result which is similar to Franz Rosenzweig's. Martin Buber is an example of a philosopher with a different point of departure. In the course of his conversation with the Christian professor Karl-Ludwig Schmidt in 1933 Buber said: "God's doors are open for all. In order to come to God, the Christian need not go through Judaism nor the Jew through Christianity."⁵⁷ C.G. Montefiore may be adduced as an example of the tolerance of a liberal Judaism whose biggest problem was not the possibility of several ways to God. Montefiore writes, in 1930: "Both the 'righteousness' of the Rabbis and the 'righteousness' of Jesus are excellent righteousnesses. Each thought that the other was quite inadequate for the entering into the Kingdom of Heaven. Yet surely here were Jesus and the Rabbis equally in error: For both righteousnesses, honestly pursued, are acceptable unto God."⁵⁸

I only want to attach this comment to Montefiore's viewpoint that he honestly admits that Jesus – and the rabbis – in his assessment were wrong.

3. Rosenzweig's symbolic world

In an article from 1931 Gerschom Scholem compares Rosenzweig's symbolic world to "mystical astronomy". Few works have been as provocative as *The Star of Redemption* "since the appearance of the *Guide of the Perplexed* or the *Zohar*. In this work there is "something new", indeed, "it challenged us and, why not admit it, perplexed us," Scholem says. He finds that Rosenzweig's new interpretation of the world stands in opposition to the classical theology of a Maimonides or a Hasdai Crescas. "To begin with it moves from the position of reason to a theistic mysticism and gives support to strictly mystical theologoumena ... More important, it dares as well to set in the center of its theological anthropology a comparative analysis of Judaism and Christianity which ends in a *non liquet*, and therefore with a dictum that from the point of view of orthodoxy must seem rash and nearly blasphemous."⁵⁹

While Nahum N. Glatzer will not use the term mystic about Rosenzweig, he nevertheless contends that in Rosenzweig there is a "renaissance of theological concepts that were last alive in the long forgotten sphere of independent, dialectical Kabbalah"⁶⁰ – a parallel first recognized by Scholem. According to Scholem orthodox theology has "suffered from what one might call 'Kabbalah-phobia'".⁶¹

4. Rosenzweig's metahistoric religion

About Rosenzweig's view of Judaism Nahum N. Glatzer writes: "As a metahistoric religion, Judaism cannot be known by its external fate and by its external expressions. It can be understood from within only. 'For now,' Rosenzweig writes to Eugen Rosenstock, 'I would have to show you Judaism from within, that is, in a hymn'."⁶²

From his own Christian stance John T. Pawlikowski finds that Rosenzweig in basically removing the Jewish people from the historical process "does violence to one of the basic hallmarks of the Jewish spirit – its rootedness in the flow of history which is the locus of human salvation".⁶³

Arthur A. Cohen is one of Rosenzweig's Jewish critics who is not any milder in his criticism: "Rosenzweig, seeking as

he did to ground a metaphysics which was structurally prior to faith and, in fact, demanded faith as a noetic principle, was obliged to ontologize historical realities. The Jews and the Christians cease in his analysis to be historical and become hypostatic. The Jew is beyond time and history, eternally present with God, and, therefore, always symbolically at the End, living in the condition of redemption. And though such a Jew is redeemed, his redemption is not complete since it is redemption through revelation, and creation remains, as it was before, untransformed. It is the Christian, always on his way from paganism to the Christ, who is bound to history and, by implication, whose task it is to unite creation with the *eschaton*. The Jew is the image of redemption which the Christian is obliged to pursue. Understandably, therefore, Rosenzweig suggests that the Parousia for the Christian may well be the first coming for the Jews, that the reconciliation will take place at the last moment when the Jew's virtual existence becomes actual in eternity and the Christian has been enabled by Christ to offer history back to God."⁶⁴

To Rosenzweig the Jewish faith is free of "the curse of historicity"⁶⁵. While the historicity of the gospel within the framework of a modern, Christian, existentialist interpretation is considered a matter of minor importance, historicity in a New Testament perspective is in no way a curse, on the contrary if anything. God is the God of history, he intervenes in and reveals himself in history, and according to the New Testament the revelation of Jesus and his redemptive death are in the nature of once-and-for-all events. When "Judaism" to Rosenzweig is Judaism after the destruction of the Second Temple, and the categories of history do not impinge upon the Jew's inner life, so that Glatzer can say: "It goes without saying that Rosenzweig does not refer to biblical Israel with its national history and historiography and not the Second Commonwealth with its political involvements"⁶⁶ – the way lies open to an ahistoric view of Christianity which – all dependent on which way the wind blows – may easily become Marcionite in content, and in consequence of this, cut off its Jewish roots. To a Christian it is not self-evident that Jews can regard the historicity of biblical history as a curse, while Christians are admonished not to forget the Jewish roots of the New Testament.

5. Rosenzweig's terminology

Shortly after having reversed his decision about baptism, Rosenzweig writes in a letter to Rudolf Ehrenberg: "You will see that I no longer borrow my concepts from Christianity (linguistically and terminologically I still do, but no movement can be autonomous in these matters)."⁶⁷ That no one can be "autonomous in these matters" is immediately intelligible. And that the New Testament is not "autonomous" but uses Old Testament concepts – interpreted in the light of the Christ event – should also be evident. However, in popular descriptions – often intended for Christian readers – it is far from always made clear that Rosenzweig uses this terminology differently from the way Christians use it.

But in any event, when Rosenzweig speaks about redemption he is not dealing with the guilt of sin, as is the case in Christian theology. In 1913 he writes, in the same letter: "In the most important points, especially regarding the doctrine of sin, where I had most strongly disagreed before, I am now in complete agreement with Jewish doctrine ...". That Paul the Jew with his Jewish doctrine of sin, of atonement and redemption in the blood of Jesus, in short with his doctrine of salvation, has a different view of these things should, against this background, be evident.

Arthur A. Cohen characterizes Rosenzweig's ideas as "heady doctrine and not without considerable merit. It provides the Jew at last with a means of explaining to the Christian, in essentially Christian terms, why it is that the promise of Jesus to the Jews isn't really interesting. The Jews do not need redemption in the same way as Christians for eternal life, as the Sabbath liturgy affirms, is already 'planted in our midst'," he argues. "The Jew cannot understand how the Christian can speak of redemption in Christ when the world of men and events, even that portion of the world which is baptized out of paganism, so constantly, so meticulously falls back into paganism."⁶⁸

I see no reason to challenge Cohen's pointing out that the Christian world falls back into paganism. Regretfully, this happens far too often. But may I submit then, with all due respect: this is not only a Christian problem. To Christians this testifies to the reality of sin and therefore to the need for a mediator between God and man. And although it is true that Rosenzweig uses biblical terms, to him they have a different content than to the New Testament writers. While Rosenzweig the Jew thought that a Jew need not be reborn, Jesus said to Nicodemus the Jew that no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born anew (John 3).

6 The abyss

It appears from what has been said above that to Rosenzweig there is an abyss between Christians and their church, on the one hand, and every Jew on the other – "an abyss that will never be filled up". And he continues: "That 'connection of the innermost heart with God' which the heathen can only reach through Jesus is something the Jew already possesses, provided that his Judaism is not withheld from him by force; he possesses it by nature, through having been born one of the Chosen People ..." With all possible force Judaism has rejected "the notion that he has already arrived through whom their historic mission is to be fulfilled; it is still waiting for him and will continue to wait so long as there is Judaism. The development of Judaism has by-passed him whom the heathens call 'Lord' and by whom 'they reach the Father'; it does

not pass through him."⁶⁹

Advocates of two-covenant theology have diligently emphasized Rosenzweig's positive view of the church's task. But they have not asserted with equal vigour that there seems to be an abyss between Rosenzweig's understanding of the true nature of Christ's mission and the New Testament's understanding of it.

7. Inspiration of Judeo-Christian humanism

Arthur A. Cohen, who advocates "a Judeo-Christian humanism", does not consider this a "simple restatement of Franz Rosenzweig's teaching of the two covenants", although he does not deny "that much of the impetus to my view is owed to Rosenzweig, but no less is owed to earlier Jewish teachers – Maimonides and Jehuda Halevi – who regarded Christianity and Islam as mimetic faiths, compromised in their understanding of God, but clearly preferable in morality and discipline to the theological chaos of paganism."⁷⁰

How it is possible for Cohen both to adopt elements from Rosenzweig and dissociate himself from him becomes clear in the following: "The Jew need not learn to hear the Christian speak of the Christ nor must the Christian learn to hear the Jew speak of the dominion of Torah in the time of the Messiah; but both must come to hear in each other the sounds of truth – that the prayer of the Jew is not alone for Jews, but for all men, that the prayer of the Christian is not only for the faithful in Christ, but for all men. It is the commonalty of human suffering that is the commonalty of Christian and Jew."⁷¹

8. Rosenzweig's doctrine: a step backward?

Emil L. Fachenheim is an example of Jewish rejection of Rosenzweig's main thesis. He says: "I never could accept Rosenzweig's famous 'double covenant' doctrine, according to which all except Jews (who are already 'with the Father') need the Son in order to find Him. How can a modern Jew pray for the conversion of the whole non-Jewish world to Christianity when even pre-modern Jews could pay homage to Moslem monotheism?" Also Fachenheim combines the issues of "double covenant" and Christian mission: "Rosenzweig's doctrine seems altogether outmoded at a time when Christians themselves are beginning to replace missionary efforts with inter-religious dialogue, and I wonder whether even for Rosenzweig this doctrine was more than a stage in his self-emancipation from modern paganism."⁷²

Apart from the fact that "Rosenzweig's scheme is not Church-oriented but Israel-oriented" (or even better perhaps: Judaism-oriented), which Maurice G. Bowler calls to our attention in connection with this quotation of Fachenheim and thereby rightly shows that in Rosenzweig the church has been "brought into the picture in order to relate it to a centrally-placed Israel and not vice-versa"⁷³ – and apart from the fact that not all "missionary efforts" today have been replaced by inter-religious dialogue, it is interesting that Fachenheim sees Rosenzweig's two-covenant theology as a step backward when compared to the fact that "pre-modern Jews could pay homage to Moslem monotheism".

Fachenheim's observation leads us to the next section in which a modern two-covenant theology will be considered in the light of "pre-modern" Judaism's view of the relationship between Judaism and Christianity.

V Preparatio Messianica and Maimonides

"Franz Rosenzweig was an advocate of the Two Covenant theory. He was not, as some mistakenly assume, the originator of the idea, but he was perhaps the most articulate spokesman for the view among contemporary Jewish theologians."⁷⁴ These words are Mitch Glaser's and they appear after a discussion of the so-called Noachide Laws, which in Jewish tradition, now as before, are regarded as sufficient means for the gentile to be considered righteous and to find a place in the world to come. The doctrine of *Shittuf* (partnership), which was developed in the Middle Ages, even knew of a positive explanation why Christians are not idolaters.⁷⁵ David Berger and Michael Wyschogrod say about this: "Belief in *shittuf*, the belief that God shares his being in equal partnership with Jesus and the Holy Spirit, is not idolatry by the standard of idolatry demanded by gentiles. But the very same belief held by a Jew constitutes idolatry by the standard applicable to Jews."⁷⁶ Mitch Glaser finds that this reveals an "incredible inconsistency ... between the attitude toward Jews who accept the deity of Christ on the one hand, and toward gentiles who are trinitarian on the other."⁷⁷

In so far as the emphasis is chiefly on Judaism's traditional "tolerant" view of Christianity and its acceptance of Christianity's positive effects among non-Jews, Mitch Glaser's general assessment that Rosenzweig is not the originator of two-covenant theology is correct. Yet, there are a few aspects which are not sufficiently accounted for in such an assessment.⁷⁸ They will briefly be discussed here.

When the interrelationship of Judaism and Christianity is discussed today in the framework of a double covenant theology, Maimonides (1135–1204), the great Jewish medieval authority is often produced as an example of Judaism's positive attitude to Christianity. But often the problem becomes blurred. Whatever the reason may be, the explanation is not that Maimonides is not clear. When it comes to clarity, he surpasses most modern spokesmen for two-covenant theology.

It should be noted that Maimonides, strictly speaking, cannot be taken as an spokesman for a two-covenant theology, since Islam and Christianity for him, *in principle*, are on the same level in relation to Judaism. This observation does not induce me to play with the idea that Maimonides can be turned into an spokesman for a "three-covenant theology". It would be quite beyond him and his way of reasoning.

It is also worth noticing that when or if a modern two-covenant theology understands Judaism and Christianity as religions being in possession of totally equal validity and as being mutually complementary, it is difficult to find support for this in Maimonides.

And yet an observation which, at least to Christians, should not be without significance: Unlike some modern Jewish spokesmen of the double covenant, Maimonides does not turn Jesus into a Messiah for non-Jews. Jesus – and Mohammed – "served to clear the way for King Messiah"⁷⁹. In Maimonides it is an axiom that Jesus was not the Messiah, not for Jews and not for non-Jews. Both Jesus and Mohammed were false prophets.⁸⁰

Maimonides appreciated the achievement of the two monotheistic religions, Christianity and Islam, about this there is general agreement. He is often quoted for these words:

It is beyond the human mind to fathom the designs of the Creator; for our ways are not His ways, neither are our thoughts His thoughts. All matters relating to Jesus of Nazareth and the Ishmaelite (Mohammed) who came after him, served to clear the way for King Messiah, to prepare the whole world to worship God with one accord, as it is written, *For then will I turn to the peoples a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord to serve Him with one consent* (Zeph. 3:9). Thus the messianic hope, the Torah, and the commandments have become familiar topics – topics of conversation (among the inhabitants) of the far isles and many people ... (Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Melakhim XI,4).⁸¹

For us, the only uncertainty is that it is a matter open for debate whether or not his concession to the value of "all matters relating to Jesus of Nazareth" is not conditioned by the historical circumstances under which he lived rather than by his theology. This is a question that need not concern us here. But that Maimonides' view of Christianity and Islam can also be seen in the light of a struggle for Jewish survival in confrontation with two religions which outnumbered Judaism and presented a danger to Jewish life, should not pass unnoticed.

Abraham Joshua Heschel is realizing "that it was Christianity that implanted attachment to the God of Abraham and involvement with the Hebrew Bible in the hearts of Western man".⁸² No religion is an island, and therefore today religious isolationism is a myth. "Judaism is sooner or later affected by the intellectual, moral and spiritual events within the Christian society, and vice versa," he argues. To him the choice is between "interfaith and inter-nihilism", and he chooses the former.⁸³ With reference to leading Jewish authorities, such as Jehuda Halevi and Maimonides, who acknowledged "Christianity to be *preparatio messianica* [preparation for the Messiah], while the Church regarded ancient Judaism to have been a *preparatio evangelica* [preparation for the gospel]," he says: "Thus, whereas the Christian doctrine has often regarded Judaism as having outlived its usefulness and the Jews as candidates for conversion, the Jewish attitude enables us to acknowledge the presence of a divine plan in the role of Christianity within the history of redemption."

Heschel sums up Maimonides' view in the following words: "Christianity and Islam, far from being accidents of history or purely human phenomena, are regarded as part of God's design for the redemption of all men." For Heschel it is "arrogant to maintain that the Jews' refusal to accept Jesus as the Messiah is due to their stubbornness or blindness". Heschel gives expression to his satisfaction that "there are important Christian voices who expressed themselves to the effect that the missionary activities to the Jews be given up". In this context he adduces Reinhold Niebuhr's statement that missionary "activities are wrong not only because they are futile and have little fruit to boast for their exertions. They are wrong because the two faiths despite differences are sufficiently alike for the Jew to find God more easily in terms of his own religious heritage than by subjecting himself to the hazards of guilt feelings involved in conversion to a faith which, whatever its excellencies, must appear to him as a symbol of an oppressive majority culture ..."⁸⁴

Maimonides' view of Christianity and Islam calls for comments. Jacob Katz, among others, has some: Maimonides "conceived their historic task to be the dissemination of Jewish ideas in preparation for the messianic era, when the pure monotheistic doctrine of Judaism would be universally accepted. But in their actual religious practices and tenets, he regarded them – Christianity even more than Islam – as contaminated with idolatrous elements."⁸⁵

The Jewish religious authorities in the Middle Ages accepted the Talmud's words: "Pious men of all the nations have a share in the life to come." All those who observe the so-called Noachides Laws fall under the category *hasidei ummot ha-olam*⁸⁶ Jacob Katz has this comment on Rashi (1040–1105): "Since for the Talmud and midrashic literature Christianity was reckoned but one of the many heretical sects to be combated, Rashi followed their lead and did not make explicit reference to it. Christianity was included in the notion of *ummot ha-olam* the 'Nations of the World', i.e. the Gentile ... The other nations, Christians not excluded, were *ovedey avodah zarah*, that is adherents of 'alien worship' or idolaters."⁸⁷

It was not Maimonides, but his popularizer, Rabbi Menachem Ha-Me'iri, who, at the turn of the fourteenth century, in Provence, and, as regards the attitude to the two religions, Christianity and Islam, "took up a stand independent of that of Maimonides, and indeed in diametrical opposition to it".⁸⁸ Jacob Katz emphasizes that "Ha-Me'iri expresses the exclusion of Christians from the category of idolaters not only in the negative, but also by a definition in positive, terms. In this way he granted them a positive religious status," in that Ha-Me'iri distinguished between the nations of talmudic times and contemporary Gentiles. The latter he referred to as *ummot ha-geduroth be-darekhey ha-dathoth*, 'nations restricted by the way of religion'.⁸⁹

Ha-Me'iri's writings remained largely unknown, however, and therefore of little influence, Katz says.⁹⁰

It is characteristic of medieval Jewry as such that it was convinced of Judaism's truth, its superiority, and its religious mission.⁹¹ And the fact that Christianity was no longer evaluated as "idol worship" for certain practical purposes did not imply, however, that "from a theological point of view, Christianity was no longer regarded as a 'pagan' religion".⁹² Christianity was, in any case, evaluated as a religion for Gentiles only.⁹³

Before the rise of the Jewish Haskalah movement proper Rabbi Jacob Emden (1697–1776) went as far as maintaining "that Jesus had never intended to abrogate the *Torah* so far as Jews were concerned, but had wished merely to spread Jewish tenets and the Seven Noachide Commandments among non-Jews", Katz says.⁹⁴ To Moses Mendelsohn, Judaism's superiority over Christianity lay in its rationality.⁹⁵ As a Haskalah Jew Mendelsohn went farther than Emden in his tolerance towards all non-Jews, in that he did not base his tolerance towards Christians on Christianity's relative affinity to Judaism.⁹⁶

Rosenzweig went further than Maimonides, in that he held that the church and Christianity possess the truth for non-Jews and that these can only reach the Father through Jesus Christ. Rosenzweig speaks differently than Maimonides about the role of the church, but it is more difficult to get a grasp of Rosenzweig than of Maimonides simply because – to put it bluntly – Rosenzweig says so many things. In a theological and historical perspective Maimonides seems to be a lot more consistent than Rosenzweig. In any circumstances it makes a great difference whether Christianity is regarded as a *preparatio messianica* where Jesus, it is true, is seen as a false prophet for both Jews and non-Jews but whose message has nevertheless had positive consequences, and then on the other side, as Rosenzweig does, to regard Jesus as a totally unnecessary person for Jews but as an absolutely necessary person for non-Jews for them to reach the Father. But if, instead, one chooses to emphasize that Rosenzweig, with a reference to Jehuda Halevi, also says that "Christianity as a universal power is Jewish dogma",⁹⁷ then it is possible in this to see an approximation to Maimonides' main view.

A clear answer to the question of whether the Christian church's message of Jesus is to be regarded as a *preparatio messianica* is essential in order to understand what Jews think of Christianity. Two examples will be adduced in an attempt to demonstrate that.

Pinchas Lapide follows in Rosenzweig's footsteps.⁹⁸ He sees "that the coming-to-believe of Christendom was without doubt a God-willed messianic act, a messianic event on the way to the conversion of the world to the One God."⁹⁹ Also to Lapide Judaism and Christianity are two ways that lead to the Father. Therefore Jews are not to be converted to Christianity, which would be "to sprinkle sugar on the top of honey".¹⁰⁰

In the book *The Resurrection of Jesus* Lapide reaches the conclusion, which is certainly a daring one for a Jew, that the resurrection of Jesus is a historic event. He says: "The experience of the resurrection as the foundation act of the church which has carried the faith in the God of Israel into the whole Western world must belong to God's plan of salvation."¹⁰¹ The theological weight of the argument is debatable. Something similar could be said for the Eastern religions in the East. Be that as it may. But it calls for objection when Lapide in the quotation above from Maimonides (Hilkhot Melakhim XI,4) finds "confirmation for this supposition from a high rabbinic authority," i.e. Maimonides.¹⁰² Lapide is not right when he argues that all these matters that refer to Jesus, for Maimonides, also "have to include his [Jesus'] resurrection," *the way Lapide understands it*. It is beyond Maimonides' imagination that the resurrection of Jesus should be a historic event. To non-Jews he is the one who prepares the way for Messiah, who has not yet come although Christians maintain that. Therefore it makes sense when Maimonides wishes that Jesus' bones be turned into dust, which he does in his Letter to Yemen.¹⁰³ Maimonides here acts on the obvious supposition that Jesus did not rise from the dead. He recognizes the Christian resurrection *belief* and its effects, which is something different from what Lapide uses him for.

In the "Epilog" Lapide is not so ambiguous. In spite of all, Jesus only belongs to the *preparatio messianica* of the full salvation which is still in the future. But this does not mean that his resurrection makes him the Messiah of Israel for the Jewish people. Lapide refers to Clemens Thoma, a Catholic theologian, who admits that "for Jewish scholars, the testimony of the resurrection was no proof for the messiahship of Jesus because for them the concept of resurrection is not connected with the messianic expectations of salvation ... Through the resurrection of Jesus, an access to faith in the one, until then unknown, God of Israel was opened to the Gentiles."¹⁰⁴ Lapide concludes: "I therefore can accept neither the messiahship of Jesus for the people of Israel nor the Pauline interpretation of the resurrection of Jesus."¹⁰⁵

Again, one cannot help wondering at his way of arguing. Following the line of this argument, it might with some justice be said that since Judaism does not include the idea that there will be a risen Jewish Messiah for non-Jews, this whole construction will have to fall to the ground.

But exactly the fact that Lapide's approach to his subject of the resurrection of Jesus in the New Testament is *historical*, makes his leap away from the historic testimony of the significance of the resurrection for Jews all the more dramatic and all the more incomprehensible than the leap made by Rosenzweig, the philosopher. Again, in this essay it is not necessary to discuss the truth of the New Testament's testimony of the resurrection of Jesus. That the New Testament testifies to the resurrection is beyond question. It is also beyond question that the same New Testament maintains that the resurrection is *for Jews*. Theologically speaking, Lapide has placed himself in a hopeless situation when, with the New Testament as basis, he recognizes the historical facticity of Jesus' resurrection and at the same time, in spite of the New Testament, denies the importance of this event for Jews.

In the light of such observations it may be argued that Maimonides is clearer than Lapide and some Christian theologians who are eager to create a harmony.

The more or less scientific debate and the academic dialogue between Jews and Christians today, where the words and terms are usually subdued if not always clear, is one thing. Another is the confrontation where Jews warn against Christian mission among Jews and try to remedy the damages they think Christian mission inflicts on Jews.

An example will now be given of what things look like in such Jewish circles when Maimonides is followed by and large.

"How to Refute Christian Missionaries" is the subtitle of Samuel Levine's book, *You Take Jesus, I'll Take God* – a title which in modern language expresses a point in two-covenant theology, namely that Jesus is only for pagans. Levine's book is, as he says in his introduction, "a response to Christian missionaries who are trying to convert the Jews". And he continues: "I have no quarrel with Christian missionaries who try to convert pagans into becoming Christians. That is highly meritorious, because they are then transforming an immoral, primitive person into a more moral and spiritual one. However, this is not true when a Jew becomes a Christian."¹⁰⁶

Apart from the fact that some people would consider Levine's choice of words about "the pagans" of our day offensive, it is nevertheless worth noticing that Christian mission *among non-Jews* is said to be "highly meritorious". However, this does not prevent Levine from arguing that "the New Testament itself clearly indicates that Jesus and Paul were not the lovely people that they are claimed to be. They were vindictive, hate-breeding liars, rather than Messianic producers of peace, gentleness, unity and brotherhood among men".¹⁰⁷

Levine concludes: "Let us conclude this investigation of Christianity with the realization that it is easy for millions of humans to believe in nonsense ..."¹⁰⁸

In other words: nonsense and hate-breeding liars are good enough for "pagans"!

Jewish and Christian academics who advocate two-covenant theology will doubtless prefer not to be lumped with Samuel Levine. But there is no denying that his unmistakable words help us to focus attention on what is theologically relevant for our understanding of Christianity as a *preparatio messianica* for King Messiah. We can therefore sum up the

following:

When Christianity is understood solely as a *preparatio messianica*, theologically it makes sense to argue that Jesus was neither the Messiah for Jews nor for non-Jews, even if he is meaningful for the latter. Whether or not the picture of Jesus is a sympathetic or a less sympathetic one, it remains a fact that the work of Jesus has been reduced compared to the New Testament picture.

When Christianity is understood as *more than a preparatio messianica*, as a special covenant, that does not apply to Jews but *only* to non-Jews, it is very close to being historical and theological nonsense to want to find a basis for this in the New Testament. Nor is there basis for such a view in Maimonides.

Whether it is the church's *Christ*, who according to Rosenzweig leads non-Jews to the Father, or it is a "nasty and deceitful"¹⁰⁹ *Jesus*, who according to Levine is nevertheless good enough for non-Jews, or it is a false prophet like Jesus, who according to Maimonides yet serves to clear the way for King Messiah – these views are agreed about one basic view: Jews do not need *Jesus Christ* as Messiah and Lord.

As it seems to me that spokesmen for two-covenant theology often treat New Testament passages lightly and strain the meaning of them, we shall now deal with this issue.

VI Historical and Exegetical Absurdities

It is impossible to prevent people from re-interpreting historical texts against their original intention. If the re-interpretation, however, is in obvious conflict with the original content, an admission of this would be welcomed – and would increase the degree of seriousness. When philosophers and theologians make the leap away from the obvious historical meaning of a text, they must be prepared to meet with criticism – whether they are Jews or Christians.

A few examples will be given of, in a historical and exegetical perspective, frivolous play with New Testament words.

1. John 14:6

Frank Ephraim Talmage argues that "Rosenzweig tried to abandon the apologetic approach and establish a corelationship with Christianity which would affirm the necessity of each".¹¹⁰ When *The Star of Redemption*, for example, is compared to earlier Jewish apologetics and polemics, then Talmage is right. But it does not change the fact that Rosenzweig's thinking as such is apologetical, since it "serves to refute the traditional Christian claim to absolute truth", as rightly observed by Arnulf H. Baumann, who refers to Rosenzweig's use of John 14:6. "It is a way of saying, 'Leave us alone with your claims to ultimate truth. Leave us in peace!'"¹¹¹

Rosenzweig's use of John 14:6 shows that in his approach he has not completely abandoned a way of thinking and arguing which has parallels in traditional polemics – Jewish as well as Christian.

It can hardly be denied that Rosenzweig uses the words from the Gospel of John contrary to their original meaning. Jesus' words, "No one comes to the Father, but by me," were addressed *to* Jews. So when Rosenzweig, unambiguously, takes the words to refer to non-Jews, it is a historical and exegetical absurdity. And only if Rosenzweig's use of these words is seen in the light of an apologetic context, may it be argued that it bears the hallmark of "near-genius", as Shemaryahu Talmon characterizes it.¹¹² Talmon quite right asserts, however, that Rosenzweig is contradicted by the first half of the verse: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life," since the point of this verse is that eternal life can be received through faith in Jesus. According to the Gospel of John this verse speaks of the redemption which Rosenzweig claims belongs to Judaism.¹¹³

2. Luke 15:31

In the Rosenzweig quotation at the head of this essay there is an allusion to the parable of the Prodigal Son or, as Joachim Jeremias prefers to call it, the parable of the Father's Love (Luke 15:11–32). In the parable the father says to the elder son, who does not want to take part in the party for the younger son who had come home: "Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours."

Rosenzweig and others use the quotation to say that Jews do not need Jesus in order to reach the Father; they are already with the Father.

In the light of what has been said above, we shall confine ourselves to the following observation: The parable may be identified as an apologetic parable, "in which Jesus justifies his table companionship with sinners against his critics," as Joachim Jeremias says.¹¹⁴ In the Luke context Jesus' critics are the Pharisees and the scribes (Luke 15:2). And the sinners and tax collectors are – like the Pharisees and the scribes – *Jews*. On the basis of just this one observation it is absurd to use Luke 15:31 as an argument for the opinion that Jews, without accepting Jesus' teaching, are with the Father.

The parable has a double climax: it describes not only the return of the younger son, but also the protest of the elder

brother.¹¹⁵ While the point is to defend that the gospel is for sinners – Jewish sinners – the second is an invitation to some leaders – Jewish leaders – to abandon their resistance to the gospel. This invitation contains a criticism of them because they cannot rejoice when the "big" sinners accept God's love which Jesus proclaimed. The parable has an abrupt end. "Sadly," Robert L. Lindsey says, "the parable ends without our knowing whether the father is going to convince the elder brother to join the merrymaking or not."¹¹⁶

However, the double climax of the parable does not speak for but rather against a double covenant theology. Even if we pose that the younger son does not merely represent sinners and tax collectors in Jesus' day but in an anticipatory way includes future generations of non-Jews who accept the gospel, we shall do violence to the parable by isolating one verse which will then contradict the information given in the immediate context and also the context of the totality of Jesus' teaching.

Quite apart from that, modern research of the parables has seriously challenged the allegorical interpretation of the parables of Jesus. For centuries this interpretation has been very popular, not least because it has made it possible for the reader to read his own subjective, profound ideas into single words. It is the main point – or as here – the two main points of the parable that require our attention.

When isolated words or passages in the Bible present problems, it is a sound – and reformatory – hermeneutical principle to interpret that which is less clear in the light of that which is more clear. This principle need not be applied here, however. The main issue is very clear. Jesus, the narrator of the parable, is a Jew, and both those that he defends and those that he criticizes through the parable are Jews. The message Jesus brings is for both "big" and "small" sinners, and consequently also for the Jewish leaders. From an exegetical point of view it is therefore absurd when Luke 15:31 is used as an argument that Israel, interpreted as the elder son in the parable, belongs to the father's house and is on God's way and in God's will.¹¹⁷

3. *"To save those who are eagerly waiting for him"*

Franz Rosenzweig's statement that "whether Jesus is Messiah will be shown when the Messiah comes"¹¹⁸ is sometimes transformed into the popular idea that the second coming of Jesus will be the first coming of the Messiah for the Jews. Even the esteemed scholar David Flusser can say: "I do not think many Jews would object if the messiah when he came again was the Jew Jesus."¹¹⁹ It is not quite clear to me what Flusser means. David Berger says about such statements about Jesus and the Messiah that they are "thoroughly atypical in the Jewish community, and there is little prospect that this will change".¹²⁰ The fact that Christian tourist groups in Israel, when presented with a similar idea by Israeli rabbis, clap their hands tells me that Christian Israel-lovers are prepared to buy the idea, at least those with a romantic relationship to Israel.

And yet, the whole idea is an absurd one – from a New Testament point of view but also from a traditional Jewish point of view. According to the New Testament it is the same Jesus that went into Heaven who will come again – from Heaven. According to the Jewish way of thinking about the Messiah, he will be a man among men, who does *not* come from Heaven. Among the adherents of the Lubavicher Rebbe, Rabbi Menechem Mendel Schneersohn, there are some who, according to the Jewish Chronicle (30 November 1990) "if asked, would say that they don't know of anyone more suitable in the world today, in terms of leadership, scholarship and worldliness, than the Rebbe." (30 November 1990) Even if other Jews would doubtless refuse the offer of a Messiah from Brooklyn – it goes without saying that I am not talking about the Jews who have altogether abandoned the idea of a personal Messiah – it does not challenge the conviction that the Messiah will not be a supernatural figure but an ordinary person that God uses in a special way. The comparison quoted above obscures this important difference between the New Testament doctrine of Jesus' supernatural second coming from Heaven and the traditional Jewish expectation that the Messiah is a human being of this world.

It also implies a trivialization of what in the New Testament is considered a major point and of which the author of the Letter to the Hebrews gives a succinct summary, after having written, in chapter 9, about the once-and-for-all character of the redemptive death of Jesus. He says: "And just as it is appointed for men to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him" (Hebrews 9:27–28).

When it is all-important for Christians to "be ready" – a theme which recurs in many of the so-called Parousia parables, first related to Jews – the same applies to Jews. The promised salvation is for those who are eagerly waiting for him who offered himself once and for all.

4. *The exegetical and historical difficulty admitted*

Hans-Joachim Schoeps is an example of a spokesman for two-covenant theology that admits the existence of exegetical and historical difficulties in relation to the New Testament.

Rosenzweig is one of the few in recent times who has noticed the inner connexion between Moriah and Golgatha.¹²¹

Schoeps himself shares Rosenzweig's main thesis. Schoeps claims "that the Jewish revelation is final and unsurpassable for orthodox Jews, but none the less the modern Jew with a sense of realities may admit that outside Israel, and without any direct significance for Israel, there may take place in the world other revelations and other covenants."¹²² Even though "the view that Jesus is a divine person in the Godhead, as taught by the church, must remain obscure to them [the Jews] and will sound as blasphemous to-day as it did 1,900 years ago to the high priest" and therefore is "opposed to the usual Jewish opinion", Schoeps nevertheless, from "a modern sense of history" calls it "something powerfully new". And he continues: "As far as I can see, there is no prejudice on the part of the Jews against the salvation of non-Jews."¹²³ "The New Testament is glad tidings only for the nations of the world, and the latter bear witness to it in the polyphony of the Christian churches and communities centred in Christ," Schoeps says. Schoeps poses the question "how far Christian dogmatics may be ready to grant the existence of an absolute revelation apart from its own, such as would except Israel from the sphere of its saving proclamation." He formulates the difficulties without beating about the bush. The issue is complicated, among other things, by "the fact that Jesus' original sense of mission was directed towards His own people". Schoeps' own answer to this is: "However, the continued existence of Israel almost 2,000 years *post Christum natum*, still undisturbed in its consciousness of being God's covenant people, is testimony that the old covenant has not been abrogated, that as the covenant of Israel it continues to exist along-side the wider human covenant of the Christian church." Schoeps describes the problems in a disarmingly honest way: "We stand in obvious opposition to the view of history outlined by Paul. But we have taken into account the possibility that Paul falsely interpreted the will of God, that his understanding of saving history was a subjective judgment and an objective error. Although his view became official church teaching, the question of revision of this might now be raised, one result of which would be to correct the church's judgment on Israel in such a way as would involve the abandonment of the church's mission to the Jews. For to speak of the blinding and hardening of the Jews was a mistake, which might even now be rectified."¹²⁴

Ronald H. Miller arrives at a similar result. To the question of whether or not Paul maintained an exclusivist theology he says: "Finding myself unwilling and unable to manipulate the Pauline text into an inclusivist position, I am constrained to argue that Paul's polemical formulation was simply wrong... He can still be right, even magnificently so, in his ecstatic expression of a covenanted life with God in Jesus. And yet he can be wrong, tragically wrong, in his inability to understand and appreciate other covenanted lives with God not based on the Christ event."¹²⁵

5. *The exegetical and historical difficulty obscured*

It seems to me that the exegetical and historical difficulty is obscured in an exegetical Christian scholar like Krister Stendahl, in that he tones down what Paul does actually say in Romans 9–11. The importance of these chapters for Paul's view of Israel and for his theology as such cannot be exaggerated. This importance has far from always been recognized in the history of the church and of Christian theology, on the contrary if anything. Krister Stendahl is one of those theologians who, in recent time, has emphasized this importance. And yet the exegetical basis of his argumentation seems to be weak.

Stendahl sees chapters 9–11 of Romans as a "climax" to which a "preface", the first eight chapters, has been attached, so to speak.¹²⁶ Suffice it here to say that from an exegetical point of view it is inadvisable if an alleged "climax" is isolated from and not related to that which leads up to the climax. And it is criticizable if the alleged climax is interpreted in conflict with clear words in the "preface", a term which I do not at all think is adequate for the content of the first eight chapters of Romans, because Paul makes it quite clear that to him both Jews and Gentiles are guilty of sin and both parties are justified by faith in Jesus.

In chapters 9–11 Stendahl sees an expression of "Paul's growing awareness that God envisages a co-existence between Jews and Christians, a co-existence that makes mission an inappropriate mode of witness".¹²⁷ Paul's missionary urge to convert Israel is held in check.¹²⁸

Stendahl supports this main view with the following words: "For can it be pure coincidence that in Romans 9–11 the names of Jesus or Christ are not to be found after 10:17 (or even 10:9, depending on what manuscript we read)? And it is equally striking that the doxology by which he concludes this section of Romans (11:33–36) is the only one in Paul which is totally in 'God language', i.e. without any reference to Jesus or Christ. There are not many places in Paul's epistles where you can find three or four pages without reference by name to Jesus or Christ. It so happens that it is in this part of Paul's epistle to the Romans that he consciously (or if unconsciously, then it is the more interesting) drops the Christ language. There is a striking absence of overt Christology ..."¹²⁹

Stendahl's thesis is not based in sound exegesis. His thesis makes Paul contradict himself, which challenges the validity of his thesis. It also seems strange that Stendahl ignores Paul's main concern in 10:1–17: that salvation is tied up with the confession of Jesus as Lord (v.9), that there is no distinction between Jew and Greek (v. 12), and that the gospel needs to be preached to Jews if they are to believe (vv. 14–17). Add to this that according to Acts 28 Paul tried, during his prison time exactly in Rome, to convince the local leaders of the Jews (Acts 28:17–31). There is no reason to question that this

should be the historical reality at the end of Paul's work.

There is no denying that in Romans 9–11 Paul struggled with essential theological issues which include the idea of the mystery of Israel. But according to Pauline understanding a theology of the mystery of Israel includes the proclamation of Jesus to Jews. Whatever is meant by "mysterious co-existence", the proclamation of the gospel is included. In other words: Paul can only be salvaged with the help of bad exegesis.

Rosemary Ruether, for example, has seen this clearly. Even though I have strong reservations about her interpretation of Paul, she is right when saying this: "The 'conversion of the Jews', then, becomes in Paul the last even in the historical economy of salvation."¹³⁰ To Ruether, contemporary ecumenists speak "out of good intention, but inaccurate exegesis", when they use Romans 11 to defend the doctrine of the two covenants. Gregory Baum designates it as "wishful thinking" when Christian theologians attempt to derive a positive conclusion from Paul's teaching in Romans 9–11.¹³¹

Ruether and Baum understand what is Paul's main concern, namely that Jews need to believe in Jesus in order to be saved. In this main concern they *interpret* Paul correctly, but they themselves turn *against* Paul and reject his ideas as non-valid for Christians today. In other words: The recognition of Judaism as the truth for Jews today involves, for these theologians, a rejection of the Apostle Paul's words about the necessity of the proclamation of Christ to Jews.

6. *The absurdity*

"Judaism for the Gentiles"¹³² is one among several expressions used for Christianity within the framework of two-covenant theology. The theory is as fascinating as it is absurd. It is fascinating because "the Christianizing of the nations means indirectly the triumph of Judaism in its innermost meaning and aim", to borrow a phrase from Carl E. Braaten.¹³³ It is fascinating because it seems to have a theological basis that both parties can accept as equally valid. But when both "covenants" are seen as equally valid – with the explicit or implicit modification that Judaism is superior to Christianity – the result becomes a trivialization of the Christ event. Also to non-Jews. The theory also leads to absurdities which are often camouflaged behind theological parlance.

The absurd may be described in the following way.

All our essential knowledge about Jesus has been passed on to us by Jews. The question whether the first Jesus-believing Jews were frauds or belonged to the Messiah freaks of the first century in Palestine need not concern us here. Neither need we consider whether their faith in Jesus was true or false. Nor need we argue that their Christology cannot be understood save on the background of Judaism. The only relevant issue here is whether they believed that their faith – be it highly developed or primitive as to Christology – *in of through* Jesus of Nazareth was only for non-Jews.

Unless one argues that Jesus never existed – an idea which does not have many spokesmen today¹³⁴ – the answer to the questions above, from a historic point of view, are obvious. The first Jesus-believing Jews did not believe that the message Jesus had proclaimed was only for non-Jews. It was *also* for non-Jews. From a historical point of view there is no doubt whatsoever that the first Jesus-believing Jews approached fellow-Jews with the message of and from Jesus. Scriptural references are superfluous here. This matter is there for us to read on almost every page in the New Testament, explicitly or implicitly.

That Jesus-believing Jews in their missionary practice approached fellow-Jews was something they had learned from Jesus of Nazareth. And whatever Jesus had thought and said, also about himself, the fact remains that he was born of a Jewish mother, bore a good Hebrew name, Yeshua, and *chiefly* approached Jews. The few times the gospels mention encounters between Jesus and non-Jews are the exceptions that confirm the rule. The question whether there were many or few, compared to the total of the Jewish population, who had an opportunity to become acquainted with his teaching is not very relevant in this context.¹³⁵ Nor is the question of how many of how few Jews in the first century came to faith in Jesus of much importance. Only when a small number is used as an argument against the proclamation of the gospel to Jews today does it become relevant to point out that the "little" group of Messiah-believing Jews may well have been larger than many seem ready to accept.¹³⁶ But in any circumstances, it was a *minority* of Jews in Palestine that accepted Jesus as Messiah. However, Jews as well as Christians should be able to agree that theologically speaking the truth of a question is never decided by the number of adherents. This ought to be sufficiently evidenced by what the Bible has to say about a "remnant" which, in the face of a majority that forsook God, is faithful to God, something which contradicts the idea that the majority should always be right.

It is not least the so-called Jewish "Heimholung" (reclamation) of Jesus – bringing Jesus home – which has emphasized the Jewish roots of the teaching of Jesus. And this research does not, of course, query that Jesus intended his message *for* Jews. The story of Jesus is trivialized when the first addressees of the gospel are ignored. Those first addressees were Jews.

On basis of the New Testament it is not possible, neither historically nor theologically, to argue that salvation from the God of Israel comes to non-Jews through Jesus, if this same salvation does not apply to Jews. What cannot be stamped as a *philosophical* absurdity becomes a *theological* absurdity, if this is maintained. These are insolubly tied together.

It is not a theological absurdity to argue that Jesus was not the Messiah for Jews. In the final analysis such a question is answered in the world of faith, and denial is also a form of faith. But it is a theological absurdity to argue that the Jesus who, allegedly, was not the Messiah for Jews was nevertheless the Christ for non-Jews, when practically all that this Christ did was done for Jews, and practically all that he preached was preached to Jews. Not even in the theological world can you have your cake and eat it. A choice has to be made. If one chooses to say that Jesus is not of decisive importance to Jews, it follows that he is not of decisive importance to Gentiles either, but he has the importance that the individual, Jew or non-Jew, might ascribe to him. And vice versa: If Jesus means everything for a non-Jew to reach the Father, he must also mean everything to a Jew. Either Jesus is nothing to all, or he is all to all. For all that Jesus Christ is to non-Jews is *derived* from what he was to Jews. It is an absurd idea that the church's Christ, on this background, should be of decisive importance to non-Jews.

Or in a slightly different way: If you trust your historical investigations and if these lead you to believe that the "real" or the so-called "historical" Jesus is somewhat smaller than the New Testament says, then it makes sense, theologically, to argue that *this* Jesus is for all – Jews as well as non-Jews. If you trust the New Testament so much – and it is not only Christian scholars who do so – that you think that Jesus, in some way or other, believed about himself that he was unique, that he was the Messiah, then it is quite a legitimate thing, theologically, for a Jew to say no thank you to that Messiah.

But it is a theological absurdity to argue that the Jesus who approached Israel is not yet the Messiah of Israel, but on the contrary the Messiah of non-Jews.

We shall now proceed to give a brief outline of that reformulation of Christology which advocates of two-covenant theology have found compelled to make. While Rosenzweig emphasized the importance of the *church's Christ* for non-Jews, although with the modifications we have mentioned above, quite a few modern spokesmen for two-covenant theology have challenged the church's Christ and his importance for non-Jews.

VII A Reformulation of Christian Theology

"Reformulation", "transformation", "rethinking" and similar expressions are characteristic words when spokesmen for two-covenant theology try to describe the consequence of this theory for Christian theology as such. I am well aware that there are significant differences between the various versions of the double covenant theology. I will, nevertheless, confine myself to commenting on a few examples of the radical reformulation of Christian theology. Far from all Christians are aware of this, and laymen often find it difficult to realize what is at stake. The reason could be that an emotional mode of argumentation is sometimes used when a popular version of two-covenant theology is presented.

It is interesting to note that this reformulation takes place whether or not one argues for a single covenant theory or for a double covenant theory. John T. Pawlikowski offers a succinct characterization of the difference between the single and double covenant theories with the following words: "The first wishes to re-incorporate Christianity into the original Jewish covenant. The second acknowledges two covenants that are different but complementary."¹³⁷

1. *Guilt and the Holocaust*

It would be a gross simplification to maintain that the appearance of two-covenant theology is due to the Holocaust. Its roots are, as we have seen, in the time before the Holocaust. On the other hand, it is difficult to over-emphasize the impact of the Holocaust on the theory's growth and further development in *Christian* circles after World War II. Ridden with guilt some Christians were forced to a rethinking which, for some, resulted in a theology of silence towards Jews. In a discussion that took place in Jerusalem in 1997, J. Coos Schoneveld said: "We have used the slogan: "No mission but dialogue" but I am not happy with this slogan. I think that in this post-Holocaust time we are invited to silence; to rethinking, and at least, as far as the Jews are concerned, a moratorium of our witness; witness in the sense of speaking about our beliefs."¹³⁸

We should not forget, however, that a radical reformulation of traditional biblical theology had been done by Christian theologians long before the Holocaust and independent of the ecumenical dialogue between Jews and Christians. It is relatively easy to trace radical views on traditional Christian theology in the rationalistic theology of the 19th century; they are also there in the so-called liberal theology before and after the beginning of the 20th century, and in the existentialist inspired interpretation of the New Testament.

Since hatred of the Jews has nothing to do with what Jesus taught or did and since persecution of the Jews was against what Jesus wanted, Moishe Rosen concludes: "So, persecution of the Jews, instead of becoming a reason to cease telling Jews the gospel of God's love in Christ, should have become an impetus to do that."¹³⁹

It therefore becomes a relevant question whether it is God's word and his imperatives to missionize among Jews which

should be obeyed, or whether it is people's emotions and ideas of the Holocaust that should guide one's thinking. In double covenant thinking, so much significance seems to be attached to the Christian church's cruel history that the authority that the Lord of the church possesses, according to the New Testament, seems to be disregarded.

When one concludes that Christian mission, in the light of the Holocaust, is inadmissible then we are facing a radical change – as compared to the New Testament – in the view of God's revelation and its inherent commitment to mission.

2. *Anti-Semitism and the Bible*

Rosemary Ruether's book, *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism*, has been particularly important for the development of a Christian two-covenant theology, because the alleged anti-Semitism in the New Testament has been the starting-point for some rethinking. A reformulation of the New Testament's Christology is only a logical consequence of Ruether's opinion that the New Testament's interpretation of Jesus' suffering and death is anti-Judaic and that "anti-Judaism is the left hand of Christology".¹⁴⁰ The problem is not solved by isolating a few Bible verses in the New Testament. For the problem is "the basic structure of New Testament theology itself", as Alan Davies puts it.¹⁴¹

David Berger is quite right in pointing out that there are "Christians who refuse to reject even one line in the Gospels but nevertheless argue that no antisemitic implications need emerge".¹⁴² I concur in that view knowing that some passages in the New Testament have been used and misused for anti-Semitic purposes.

Clark M. Williamson, who is among those who find anti-Judaism in the New Testament, expresses the consequence he has to draw like this: "When we find anti-Judaism in a text from the Gospels, we have the hermeneutical freedom to preach against the text in the name of Jesus the Jew".¹⁴³

To Alice and Roy Eckardt, for example, the consequence is that an insistence on "the divine inspiration of all Scripture ... cannot escape a proclivity to antisemitism".¹⁴⁴

When alleged anti-Semitism in the New Testament results in the above-mentioned conclusions, a reformulation of the view of the Bible as God's word is a fait accompli.

3. *The Messiahship of Jesus*

Rosemary Ruether argues that from the standpoint of the faith of Israel itself, "there is no possibility of talking about the Messiah having come (much less of having come two thousand years ago, with all the evil history that has reigned from that time until this) when the reign of God has not come."¹⁴⁵ She maintains that "what Christianity has in Jesus is not the Messiah, but a Jew who hoped for the kingdom of God and who died in that hope."¹⁴⁶

Gregory Baum argues that "as long as the Church proclaims Jesus as the one mediator without whom there is no salvation, no theological space is left for other religions, and, in particular, no theological validity is left for Jewish religion". To Baum it means that "Jesus is the Christ *now* only in the sense that he anticipated the divine victory at the end."¹⁴⁷ Some time in the future, and not till then, will Jesus be Christ in the proper sense of the word.

Although some advocates of two-covenant theology – among those Baum – maintain that to non-Jews Jesus may be Christ, all agree, however, that to Jews he was not the Messiah. The way Jesus is portrayed as Christ seems to indicate that the work of Christ is understood in a way that differs from the New Testament's explicit teaching. Which is another example that it is not enough to speak of Christ. The decisive question is always: which Christ?

When the messiahship of Jesus is being denied and considered of no significance for the salvation of Jews, the New Testament's view of the work and significance of Jesus has been reformulated.

4. *The resurrection of Jesus*

To Roy Eckardt the Holocaust has had the consequence that the resurrection of Jesus must be removed from the Christian faith if the degradation of the Jewish faith is to cease. He says about Jesus: "That Jewish man from the Galilee sleeps now. He sleeps with the other Jewish dead, with all disconsolate and scattered ones of the murder camps, and with the unnumbered dead of the human and non-human family. But Jesus of Nazareth shall be raised. So too shall the small Hungarian children who were burned alive at Auschwitz."¹⁴⁸ Resurrection – however that may be – is conceived as a futuristic category.

When the resurrection of Jesus is denied, or reinterpreted in existentialist terms, the result is a reformulation of his resurrection, as the apostle says: "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins" (1 Corinthians 15:17).

5. *Salvation*

When Jesus is not the Messiah and did not rise from the dead, it is no wonder that the New Testament's concept of salvation needs to be reformulated, which has already been indicated by the quotations above. Among modern Christian double covenant advocates salvation is not understood as the reception of the forgiveness of sins through Jesus'

redemptive death. The Christ event means to the Christian what the Exodus event means to the Jew, Rosemary Ruther argues. This seems to be boiled down to a hope suspended between the present existence and that which it ought to be.¹⁴⁹

When the view of salvation does not include redemption in the blood of Jesus as something central, and the forgiveness of sin as a consequence of this, the New Testament's understanding of salvation has been reformulated.

6. *The many ways*

Although the point in question is *two-covenant-theology*, for some of its spokesmen there is a latent "multi-covenant concept" implied. It is characteristic of Baum that, at one and the same time, he can speak of Jesus Christ as "the unique instrument and servant" of God's approaching Kingdom and yet make room for the value of other religions (cf. point 3 above).¹⁵⁰

Here Baum continues an idea which Rosemary Ruther expresses in the following way: "The cross and the Resurrection are a paradigm for Christians, not for 'all who would be a part of Israel' or necessarily for 'all men'. That is to say, it is a paradigm for those for whom it has become a paradigm. Those who have not chosen to make it their paradigm, because they have other paradigms which are more compelling to them from their own history, are not to be judged as false or unredeemed thereby. This contextual view of the significance of the cross and the Resurrection takes seriously the diversity of peoples and their histories, out of which they hear God through the memory of different revelatory experiences."¹⁵¹

Although two-covenant theology does not necessarily lead to universalism and religious pluralism, Moishe Rosen's view is well taken: "A low view of Jewish evangelism leads to a defective missiology. Logically, the reluctance to evangelize Jews leads to universalism, the belief that no one needs to be evangelized."¹⁵² It is a fact that in the wake of the Jewish-Christian dialogue there are examples of both Jews and Christians who have become advocates of a theology of human unity and pluralism,¹⁵³ and where some of these recognize that such a reassessment of the relationship between the religions implies a clear break with biblical tradition, because this is made responsible for absolutist claims of religious groups, as asserted by David Hartman.¹⁵⁴

If it is true that there is a latent "multi-covenant concept" in much two covenant thinking, this observation says more than many words of these theologians' view of the nature of biblical revelation. An intolerance of other people's faith that is based in revelation is much to be preferred to a tolerance based in religious pluralism and truth-relativism, which easily becomes intolerant to other believers' absolutist claims to the truth. The reason is that the same revelation allows a tolerance of people who believe differently, because it teaches that all men have been created in God's image and should therefore be treated in accordance with that – no matter what they believe. It ought to be emphasized that it is implied that this faith intolerance uses words only, and not power or force.

When a two-covenant theology almost imperceptibly becomes a "multi-covenant theology" this does not only lead to a reformulation of the New Testament message of Jesus' unique significance for all men; it also leads to a reformulation of some absolutist claims in the Old Testament and thereby to a reformulation of the concept of the God of Israel.

7. *The many intermediate positions*

There is a variety of intermediate positions and not all theologians want to draw such radical conclusions from their double covenant position as those quoted above. James Parkes is an example: "Judaism and Christianity are to me equal partners in the task of bringing mankind to the Messianic age, and neither can replace the other. This means, of course, that I hold the Atonement wrought on Calvary to be of equal significance, whether they accept it or not, to all men ... I think they [the Jews] are in error just as I think those Christians are in error who are convinced that they possess everything which can be offered by Judaism."¹⁵⁵

Above it has been shown that the denial of mission to Jews involves such serious exegetical and historical difficulties that it is hard to accept Parkes' viewpoints.

It lies beyond the scope of this essay to trace the influence of double-covenant thinking in the official documents of churches and Christian organizations about the relationship between Jews and Christians. These documents are often characterized by much good will and much guilt feeling towards the Jewish people. Alongside an insistence on the church's doctrine of the significance of Jesus for Christians there is often very little emphasis on Jewish evangelism, if this is not downright rejected.

From what has been said above it must be clear that a weak position on Jewish evangelism to me is a litmus test of who you think Jesus is and what is his work. With that in mind it is not surprising that evangelical Christians can criticize other evangelicals when the latter are weak on mission to Jews, or pass over the subject in silence, or restrict themselves to dialogue.¹⁵⁶ An example of such criticism among evangelicals can be seen in Arthur F. Glasser's reaction to Marvin R. Wilson's book, *Our Father Abraham*.¹⁵⁷

After Glasser has agreed with Wilson that we should reach out thoughtfully, humbly, and caringly to Jews, Glasser proceeds to say about Wilson: "But, when he stated that this reaching out is to be expressed by 'interfaith dialogue, educational activities and social action' (p. 324), I became curious as what he meant. His explanation left much to be desired. For instance, by dialogue Wilson wants us to understand that its object is 'not to convert one's partner from one faith and transition to another' (p. 325). Wilson is very implicit at this point. He laments, 'Too frequently in the past dialogues have exposed hidden Christian agendas and tactics' (p. 325). I personally am offended at this. In this whole section ('Face-to-face in Dialogue) Wilson is very critical of Christians who evangelize Jews. This is what makes *Our Father Abraham* so destructive."¹⁵⁸

With a few exceptions there are not many in the evangelical camp who have attempted to formulate a theological version of two-covenant theology.¹⁵⁹ But this does not necessarily mean that they feel a clear obligation to missionize Jews. For some this is motivated by a conviction that Israel will only be saved in connection with the return of Jesus, which means that in relation to Israel there are matters with a higher priority than mission on the agenda. Such matters can be the preoccupation with the state of Israel as a fulfilment of Old Testament land promises, or eschatological speculations. When one considers the zeal shown by the very same evangelicals to bring the gospel to non-Jews, indeed to nominal Christians, one cannot help being astonished at their negligence of the obligation to bring the gospel to Jews. But even more astounding, there are evangelicals who say an emphatic no to mission among Jews. In section I, I called it a contradiction in terms. An example of this will now be given.

VIII An Evangelical Contradiction in Terms

John Hagee's book, *Should Christians Support Israel?*, is a clear example that also among so-called evangelicals there are extreme theological viewpoints. In the book the author is introduced as "senior pastor of Cornerstone Church, a non-denominational, evangelical church located in San Antonio, Texas".¹⁶⁰ It is reasonable to assume that the ideas put forward by Hagee are representative of other evangelical circles, and therefore it is relevant to mention them here.

The author has a deep love of Israel. Hagee calls his book "a declaration of War" against, among other things, the "heresy" that "The Old Covenant is Dead and replaced by the New Covenant".¹⁶¹ This is a fine "war" to wage. But his weapons, to remain in the picture, are highly criticizable. Catchword follows catchword (e.g. "The only theology that God ever created was Judaism!"; "God the Father was the first Zionist");¹⁶² uncritically and speculatively Hagee sees the fulfilment of Old Testament statements in events and persons of our day (Hagee mentions, for instance, about 40 well-known Jewish persons, among them Kirk Douglas, Barbara Streisand, Danny Kaye, Peter Falk, to say that "These people are living testimonies; 'in thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed'").¹⁶³ With such a use of the Bible, one fears the worst when it comes to more important matters.

One of Hagee's main points is: "The message of the gospel was *from* Israel, not *to* Israel."¹⁶⁴ As true as the former part of this allegation is, as wrong is the latter, as has been shown above. Historically speaking, this is a striking denial of facts.

Hagee's main viewpoint leads him to the assertion that Jesus did not at all want to be Messiah for the Jews, a rather rash assertion for an evangelical. "The Jews did not reject Jesus as Messiah, it was Jesus who rejected the Jewish desire for Him to be their Messiah."¹⁶⁵ It is true that there are divergent opinions among theologians and historians of whether Jesus regarded himself as Messiah or not. In the history of theology there has also been some discussion about how Jesus and the primitive church understood his messiahship. There is no reason to try to hide that theologians differ considerably on this point. But the scholar who denies that Jesus was – or understood himself as – the Messiah would never take it into his head to begin a book the way Hagee does: "If you do not believe the Bible to be the inspired Word of God ... put this book down."¹⁶⁶ With such an introduction he signals to his readers that he sees the Bible as the Word of God. And when that is the case, it is out of the question to do what a radical theologian might do: make a distinction between the so-called historical Jesus, who did not want to be Messiah, and the Christ proclaimed by the primitive church. And the teaching of the primitive church, as we know it from the New Testament scriptures, is quite unambiguous that while the gospel came *from* Israel it is also *for* Israel.

There is no reason to go into details with Hagee's views. He argues that "right now there are Jewish people on this earth who have a special relationship with God"¹⁶⁷ – implied: without faith in Jesus. The result of this is that Jews should not be evangelized. Under cover of loyalty to the Bible Hagee actually rewrites the entire New Testament testimony of Jesus.

IX Jewish and Christian Exclusivity

"The test of tolerance is where men combat for truth but honor persons,"¹⁶⁸ Arthur A. Cohen maintains. I fully agree in this but I do not hesitate to admit that I have had difficulty in living up to this test of tolerance in this essay. Or to put it bluntly: It is easier to show respect for Jews who from their point of view reject Jesus as Messiah, who are pleased with Judaism and without hesitation designate it as *the* truth, than it is to show respect for Jewish and Christian advocates of two-covenant theology who, although they refer to the New Testament, reformulate its message and dare not speak about truth in order not to offend anyone.

As shown above there is no theological or exegetical reason in the New Testament why the gospel message of Jesus should only be for non-Jews. When that is nevertheless argued, the consequences for New Testament Christology and theology as such are disastrous.

In the New Testament message there is an exclusivity attached to Jesus the Jew. It is not possible to remove this exclusivity without at the same time violating the Christian message. Christians who feel committed to the New Testament message have a clear right to go on believing that Jesus is the Messiah for Jews as well as for non-Jews. And they have the same clear right to *repeat* the exclusivity which was expressed by one of the first Jesus-believing Jews, namely the Apostle Peter, who, facing the Jewish council in Jerusalem asserted that there is salvation in no other name under heaven but the name of Jesus (Acts 4:12). For those who share this conviction it means a commitment to take back the gospel to the Jewish people.

This attitude cannot under any circumstances be described as un-Jewish.

That Jesus is the Messiah is something Gentiles have learnt from Jews.

That the God of Israel, when he reveals himself, means what he says is something Gentiles have learnt from Jews.

That there is such a thing as truth – distinct from relativism – is something Gentiles have learnt from Jews.

That the gospel is for Jews is not a Gentile or a Gentile-Christian invention, but a Jewish conviction delivered to us by the Jesus-believing Jews.

That there is salvation only in the name of Jesus is something the first Jesus-believing Jews said to their fellow-Jews.

It is possible to come across the opinion that Christians who believe Christianity to be the truth in relation to Judaism are guilty of imperialistic superiority, indeed a "kind of religious arrogance that must be labelled *a sin*", in Daniel F. Polish's words.¹⁶⁹ In connection with this it may be remarked that the "sin" that God can only be known through Jesus is also something Gentiles have learnt from Jews.

When one reads the literature of two-covenant theology and related subjects and comes across statements like the one above, one cannot help being astonished that repeating what the first Jews said is labelled anti-Semitism.

There are many bad things to be said about Christian theology's treatment of the relationship between Jews and Christians. Many more bad things can be said about the way the Christian church has treated the Jewish people over the centuries.

But one thing that cannot be said is that it is "un-Jewish" to tell Jews about the Jew Jesus.

However, this is said so often that some believe it.

Most of what has been said in this essay has been said on the evident assumption that "that about Jesus" was first a Jewish matter. Only when history is re-written is it possible to argue, *theologically*, that the gospel about Jesus is for non-Jews.

Two-covenant theology creates bigger problems than it solves. For Christians, anyway. When the heart has been taken out, it is no wonder that some Jews do not mind that form of Christianity, and that other Jews think it is a waste of time to occupy oneself with it.

"The test of tolerance is where men combat for truth but honor persons," Cohen says. Among quite a few Jews and many advocates of two-covenant theology it is quite difficult to find this tolerance towards the Jesus-believing Jews of our time.

The Messianic Jews have, by and large, been made losers by two-covenant theology. The contempt they often meet is comparable to the contempt which the Christian church has often shown Jews and their Jewish faith. It is not proper, however, for Christians to reject Jews who believe in Jesus for the sake of good relations with other Jewish people who do not accept Jesus.¹⁷⁰

If the struggle against Christian contempt of Judaism is to be credible, I honestly believe it must include a struggle against a similar contempt of Jesus-believing Jews – a subject that Tuvia Zaretsky treats in another chapter of this book.

Axel Torm, former chairman of the Danish Israel Mission, has coined a sentence which I find very pertinent to the problem of two-covenant theology. Torm says:

*In earlier times the church downgraded Judaism in order to exalt Christ. It was a sin that the church committed. Today people downgrade Christ in order to exalt Judaism. Is that better?*¹⁷¹

Notes

- 1 *Franz Rosenzweig: His Life and Thought*, Nahum N. Glatzer (ed.) (New York: Schocken Books, 1953), p. 341.
- 2 Oscar Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1967), pp. 2–3.
- 3 Cf. *Christian Witness to the Jewish People*, Lausanne Occasional Papers No. 7 (Wheaton: LCWE, 1980), pp. 15–16.
- 4 Cf. also the articles on two-covenant theology in *Mishkan*, no. 11, II/1989: Maurice G. Bowler: "Rosenzweig on Judaism and Christianity", pp. 1–8; David W. Torrance, "Two Covenant Theology", pp. 31–35; Arnulf H. Baumann, "The Two Ways / Two Covenants Theory", pp. 36–43; Mitch Glaser, "Critique of The Two Covenant Theory", pp. 44–70. Louis Goldberg's article is quoted from the revised edition, see note 13 below.
- 5 Kenneth A. Myers, "Adjusting Theology in the Shadow of Auschwitz", in *Christianity Today*, October 8, 1990, p. 42.
- 6 Poul Borchsenius, *Two Ways to God* (London: Vallentine, Mitchell, 1968).
- 7 See John T. Pawlikowski, *What Are They Saying About Christian-Jewish Relations?* (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), pp. 35–41; and John T. Pawlikowski, *Christ in the Light of the Christian-Jewish Dialogue* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982), pp. 9–19.
- 8 See John T. Pawlikowski, *op.cit.* 1980, pp. 41–67 and *op.cit.* 1982, pp. 19–34.
- 9 See Yechiel Eckstein, *What You Should Know about Jews and Judaism* (Waco, Texas: Word Books 1984) p. 321.
- 10 For a discussion of the various covenants, cf. Barry R. Leventhal, "Theological Perspectives on the Holocaust, Part Two", in *Mishkan* nos. 8&9, I+II/1989, pp. 79–117.
- 11 *Ibid.*, pp. 98–99.
- 12 Oscar Cullmann, *Salvation in History*, (London: SCM Press, 1967), p. 172.
- 13 See also Louis Goldberg, *Are Their Two Ways of Atonement?*, (Baltimore: Lederer Publications, 1990), pp. 27–30.
- 14 Marc Angel, "Covenant", in Leon Klenicki & Geoffrey Wigoder, *A Dictionary of the Jewish - Christian Dialogue*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1984), p. 37.
- 15 *ibid.*, p. 36.
- 16 "The Willowbank Declaration on the Christian Gospel and the Jewish People", Article III.12. The Declaration is printed in *Mishkan*, no. 11, II/1989, pp. 76–84.
- 17 Cf. *Mishkan*, no. 11, II/1989, p. 85.
- 18 *Ibid.*, pp. 77–78.
- 19 Darell Turner, "Evangelical Statement Stresses Importance of Witness to Jews", in *Religious News Service*, May 9, 1989.
- 20 Peter Steinfel, "Evangelical Group Urges Conversion of Jews", in *New York Times*, May 21, 1989.
- 21 "Ecumenical Debate: Preaching Jesus While Respecting Other Faiths", in *Los Angeles Times*, May 27, 1989.
- 22 In *Chicago Jewish Sentinel*, June 8, 1989. – The references in notes 19–22 are available in Tuvya Zaretsky, "A Report: Response To the Willowbank Declaration", presented at the LCJE meeting in St. Louis, March 15, 1990.
- 23 See Barry R. Leventhal, "Theological Perspectives on the Holocaust", in *Mishkan*, nos. 6&7, I+II/1987, pp. 10–48, and nos. 8&9, I+II/1988, pp. 79–134.
- 24 A. James Rudin, "Prospectus for the Future", in Marc H. Tanenbaum & Marvin R. Wilson & A. James Rudin, *Evangelicals and Jews in Conversation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), p. 312.
- 25 Cf. David Berger, "Jewish-Christian Relations: A Jewish Perspective", in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 20:1, 1983, p. 14. He refers to an article by Harold Ditmanson, in *Face to Face*, 3–4, 1977, pp. 7–8.
- 26 See *Christian Witness to the Jewish People*, p. 5; and Reidar Hvalvik, "'To the Jew First and also to the Greek': The meaning of Romans 1:16b", in *Mishkan*, no. 10, I/1989, pp. 1–8.
- 27 David Berger, *op.cit.*, p. 17.
- 28 See Daniel C. Juster, "Discrediting Jewish Evangelism", in *Mishkan*, nos. 6&7, I+II/1987, pp. 113–117.
- 29 Daniel F. Polish, "Contemporary Jewish Attitudes to Mission and Conversion", in Martin A. Cohen & Helga

- 30 Croner, *Christian Mission – Jewish Mission*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1982), p. 162.
- 31 A. James Rudin, *op.cit.*, p. 313.
- 32 See Daniel F. Polish, *op.cit.* 1982, pp. 150–153.
- 33 David Berger, *op.cit.*, pp. 18–19.
- 34 Nahum N. Glatzer, "Introduction", in Franz Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972), p. x.
- 35 *Franz Rosenzweig: His Life and Thought*, p. 23–24.
- 36 *Ibid.*, p. 25.
- 37 *Ibid.*, p. 25. For a recent monograph which positively supports Rosenzweig's view of Jesus and the importance of the Church for Gentiles, see Ronald H. Miller, *Dialogue and Disagreement. Franz Rosenzweig's Relevance to Contemporary Jewish-Christian Understanding* (Lanham, New York, London: University Press of America, 1989).
- 38 Nahum N. Glatzer, "Franz Rosenzweig", in *Great Twentieth Century Jewish Philosophers* (Washington, D.C.: B'nai B'rith Books, 1985), p. 162; cf. Louis Goldberg, *op.cit.*, p. 7.
- 39 Louis Goldberg, *op.cit.*, p. 6.
- 40 *Franz Rosenzweig: His Life and Thought*, pp. 27–28.
- 41 *Ibid.*, p. 341–342.
- 42 *Ibid.*, p. 28.
- 43 Phillip Sigal, *Judaism. The Evolution of a Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988), p. 263.
- 44 *Franz Rosenzweig: His Life and Thought*, p. x.
- 45 Franz Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption*, p. 396.
- 46 *Ibid.*, p. 407.
- 47 Frank Ephraim Talmage, *Disputation and Dialogue* (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1975), p. 245.
- 48 Shemaryahu Talmon, "Das Verhältnis von Judentum und Christentum in Verständnis Franz Rosenzweigs", in R. Schaeffer & Bernhard Kasper & Shemaryahu Talmon & Yehoshua Amir, *Offenbarung im Denken Franz Rosenzweigs* (Essen: Ludgerus, 1979), p. 133.
- 49 *Franz Rosenzweig: The Star of Redemption*, p. 415.
- 50 *Ibid.*, pp. 415–416.
- 51 *Ibid.*, p. 350.
- 52 *Ibid.*, p. 399.
- 53 *Ibid.*, p. 341.
- 54 *Franz Rosenzweig / Briefe*, Edith Rosenzweig (ed.), (Berlin: Schocken Verlag, 1935), p. 553.
- 55 *Franz Rosenzweig: The Star of Redemption*, pp. 346–347.
- 56 John T. Pawlikowski, *op. cit.* 1980, p. 89.
- 57 Frank Ephraim Talmage, *op.cit.*, p. 245.
- 58 Cf. Mitch Glaser, *op.cit.*, p. 53.
- 59 C.G. Montefiore, *Rabbinic Literature and Gospel Teaching* (London: 1930), p. 201.
- 60 Gershom Scholem, "On the 1930 Edition of Rosenzweig's Star of Redemption", in *The Messianic Idea in Judaism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), pp. 320–324,
- 61 *Franz Rosenzweig: His Life and Thought*, p. xix.
- 62 Gershom Scholem, *op.cit.*, p. 321.
- 63 *Franz Rosenzweig: His Life and Thought*, p. xxii.
- 64 John T. Pawlikowski, *op.cit.* 1980, p. 90.
- 65 Arthur A. Cohen, *The Myth of the Judeo-Christian Tradition*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), p. 210.
- 66 *Franz Rosenzweig: His Life and Thought*, p. xxi.
- 67 *Ibid.*, p. xxii.
- 68 *Ibid.*, p. 28.
- 69 Arthur A. Cohen, *op.cit.*, pp. 210–211.
- 70 *Franz Rosenzweig: His Life and Thought*, p. 27.
- 71 Arthur A. Cohen. *op.cit.*, p. 210.
- 72 *Ibid.*, p. 222.
- 73 Emil L. Fachenheim, "Jewish Faith and the Holocaust", in *Commentary*, August 1968, p. 33.
- 74 Maurice G. Bowler, *op.cit.*, p. 3.
- 75 Mitch Glaser, *op.cit.*, p. 54.
- 76 *Ibid.*, pp. 50–52.
- 77 David Berger & Michael Wyschogrod, *Jews and "Jewish Christianity"* (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1978)

- p. 33.
- 77 Mitch Glaser, *op.cit.*, p. 51.
- 78 Cf. also Louis Goldberg, *op.cit.*, pp. 27–28.
- 79 Abraham Joshua Heschel, "No Religion is an Island", in Frank Ephraim Talmage, *op.cit.*, p. 358.
- 80 Joseph Sarachek, *The Doctrine of the Messiah in Medieval Jewish Literature* (New York: Hermon Press, 1968), p. 137.
- 81 Cf. Araham Joshua Heschel *op.cit.*, p. 358.
- 82 *Ibid.*, p. 344.
- 83 *Ibid.*, p. 345.
- 84 *Ibid.*, pp. 356–358.
- 85 Jacob Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance: Jewish–Gentile Relations in Medieval and Modern Times* (New York: Schocken Books 1962), pp. 119–120.
- 86 Mitch Glaser, *op.cit.*, p. 50.
- 87 Jacob Katz, *op.cit.*, p. 24.
- 88 *Ibid.*, p. 119.
- 89 *Ibid.*, p. 115.
- 90 *Ibid.*, p. 164.
- 91 *Ibid.*, p. 81.
- 92 *Ibid.*, p. 162.
- 93 *Ibid.*, p. 168.
- 94 *Ibid.*, p. 167.
- 95 *Ibid.*, p. 171.
- 96 *Ibid.*, p. 177.
- 97 *Franz Rosenzweig: His Life and Thought*, p. 346.
- 98 See Carl E. Braaten, "Introduction: The Resurrection in Jewish–Christian Dialogue", in Pinchas Lapide, *The Resurrection of Jesus* (London: SPCK, 1984), pp. 16–18.
- 99 Pinchas Lapide & Jürgen Moltmann, *Jewish Monotheism and Christian Trinitarian Doctrine* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), p. 71.
- 100 *Ibid.*, p. 70.
- 101 Pinchas Lapide, *The Resurrection of Jesus* (London: SPCK, 1984), p. 142.
- 102 *Ibid.*, p. 142.
- 103 See A.S. Halkin, *Moses Maimonides' Letter to Yemen. The Arabic Original and the Three Hebrew Versions* (New York: 1962), pp. 12–13.
- 104 Clemens Thoma, *Kirche aus Juden und Heiden* (Wien: 1970), p. 45.
- 105 Pinchas Lapide, *op.cit.*, p. 153.
- 106 Samuel Levine, *You Take Jesus, I'll Take God* (Los Angeles: Hamoroh Press, 1980), p. 12.
- 107 *Ibid.*, p. 91.
- 108 *Ibid.*, p. 131.
- 109 *Ibid.*, p. 92.
- 110 Frank Ephraim Talmage, *op.cit.*, p. 110.
- 111 Arnulf H. Baumann, *op.cit.*, p. 37.
- 112 Shemaryahu Talmon, *op.cit.*, p. 135.
- 113 *Ibid.*, p. 136.
- 114 Joachim Jeremias, *Rediscovering the Parables* (London: SCM Press, 1966), p. 104.
- 115 *Ibid.*, p. 103.
- 116 Robert L. Lindsey, "Dialogue or Mission or...?" in Ole Chr. M. Kvarme, *Let Jews and Arabs Hear His Voice* (Jerusalem: UCCI, 1981), p. 54.
- 117 See also A. Roy Eckardt, *Elder and Younger Brothers. The Encounter of Jews and Christians* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1967) and Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide. The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism* (New York: Seabury Press, 1974), pp. 254–255.
- 118 Cf. David Berger, *op.cit.*, p. 9.
- 119 Cf. Clemens Thoma, *A Christian Theology of Judaism* (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), p. 134; David Flusser, "To What Extent Is Jesus a Question for the Jews?", in *Concilium*, 1974, new series vol.5, no.10, p. 71.
- 120 David Berger, *op.cit.*, p. 10.
- 121 Hans-Joachim Schoeps, *Paul. The Theology of the Apostle in the Light of Jewish Religious History* (London:

- Lutterworth Press, 1961), p. 148.
- 122 *Ibid.*, p. 255.
- 123 *Ibid.*, p. 256.
- 124 *Ibid.*, pp. 256–258.
- 125 Ronald H. Miller, *op.cit.* pp. 144–145.
- 126 Krister Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles and other essays* (London: SCM Press, 1977), p. 4 and 29.
- 127 Krister Stendahl, "In No Other Name", in Arne Sovik, *Christian Witness and the Jewish People* (Geneve: LWF, 1976), p. 53.
- 128 Krister Stendahl, *op.cit.* p. 4.
- 129 Krister Stendahl, "In No Other Name", pp. 52–53. Cf. also John T. Pawlikowski, *op.cit.* 1980, p. 17.
- 130 Rosemary R. Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide*, p. 106.
- 131 Gregory Baum, "Introduction", in Rosemary R. Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide.*, p. 6.
- 132 John T. Pawlikowski, *op.cit.* 1980, p. 71.
- 133 Carl E. Braaten, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
- 134 For earlier examples, see Gösta Lindeskog, *Die Jesusfrage in Neuzeitlichen Judentum* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1973), pp. 202–207.
- 135 See Louis Goldberg, *op.cit.*, pp. 20–23.
- 136 See Kai Kjaer–Hansen, Review article "Are there two ways of Atonement?" in *LCJE Bulletin*, no. 22, 1990, pp. 26–27.
- 137 John T. Pawlikowski, *op.cit.* 1980, p. 35.
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- 140 Cf. Rosemary Ruether, "Anti–Semitism Is the Left Hand of Christology", in R. Heyer, *Jewish–Christian Relations*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1974), pp. 1–9.
- 141 Alan Davies, *Anti–Semitism and the Foundations of Christianity* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), p. xv; cf. David Berger, *op.cit.*, p. 19.
- 142 David Berger, *op.cit.*, p. 20.
- 143 Clark M. Williamson, *Has God Rejected His People* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1982), p. 172.
- 144 Cf. David Berger, *op.cit.*, p. 11.
- 145 Rosemary Ruether, "An Invitation to Jewish–Christian Dialogue: In What Sense Can We Say That Jesus Was 'The Christ?'" in *The Ecumenist*, 10, 1972, p. 17; cf. John T. Pawlikowski, *op.cit.* 1982, p. 26.
- 146 Rosemary Ruether, "Christian–Jewish Dialogue: New Interpretations", in *ADL Bulletin*, 30, 1973, p. 4; cf. John T. Pawlikowski, *op.cit.* 1982, p. 26.
- 147 Gregory Baum, *op.cit.*, p. 5 and 19.
- 148 Roy Eckardt, "The Resurrection and the Holocaust", in *Israel Study Group*, New York City, 4 March 1978, p. 13; cf. John T. Pawlikowski, *op.cit.* 1980, p. 40.
- 149 See John T. Pawlikowski, *op.cit.* 1982, pp. 28–29.
- 150 See *Ibid.*, p. 28.
- 151 Rosemary R. Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide*, pp. 250–251.
- 152 Moishe Rosen, *op.cit.*, p. 382.
- 153 Marc H. Tannenbaum, "Judaism, Ecumenism, and Pluralism", in Paul D. Opsahl & Marc H. Tannenbaum, *Speaking of God Today* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), p. 108–120. See other examples in John T. Pawlikowski, *op.cit.* 1980, pp. 77–81.
- 154 Cf. John T. Pawlikowski, *op.cit.* 1980, p. 79.
- 155 James Parkes, *Prelude to Dialogue* (London: Vallentine, Mitchell, 1969), p. 201.
- 156 This criticism is voiced in circles attached to the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism (LCJE).
- 157 Marvin R. Wilson, *Our Father Abraham* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989).
- 158 Arthur F. Glasser, "Reaction Paper to *Our Father Abraham*" presented at the LCJE meeting in St. Louis, March 15, 1990, p. 11. Cf. also Jim R. Sibley's review in *Mishkan*, no. 11, II/1989, pp. 90–96.
- 159 See Robert M. Price, "An Evangelical Version of the 'Double Covenant': New Possibilities for Jewish–Fundamentalist Dialogue", in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 20:1, 1983, pp. 33–42; a critique is given by Louis Golderg, *op.cit.*, pp. 23–24.
- 160 John Hagee, *Should Christians Support Israel?* (San Antonio: Dominion Publishers, 1987), p. [174].

- 161 *Ibid.*, p. 1.
162 *Ibid.*, p. 136 and p. 165.
163 *Ibid.*, pp. 162–163.
164 *Ibid.*, p. 62.
165 *Ibid.*, p. 72.
166 *Ibid.*, p. 1.
167 *Ibid.*, p. 125.
168 Arthur A. Cohen, *op.cit.*, p. 216.
169 Daniel F. Polish, "A Jewish Perspective: This Moment in Jewish–Christian Relations," in *Ecumenical Bulletin* 44, 1980, pp. 8–9; cf. David Berger, *op.cit.*, p. 15.
170 See Daniel C. Juster, *op.cit.*, p. 117.
171 Axel Torm, "Kirke og synagoge" [Church and Synagoge] in Magne Saeboe, *Israel, Kirken og Verden* [*Israel, the Church and the World*] (Oslo: Forlaget Land og Kirke, 1972), p. 188.