

reader; yet we have to remember that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries religious controversy was carried on in a manner different from our own; and Luther especially had set the tone with his unrivalled vocabulary of rude and offensive expressions.

Yet Angelus Silesius kept his deepest indignation not for the Protestants who, after all, tried to serve God though in their own mistaken way, but for a new phenomenon that had just begun to make its appearance on the continent: the modern State of religious tolerance and indifference, founded no longer on the Creed of Christianity but on what he ingeniously called 'politicism.' This he regarded as the worst heresy, before which both Lutheranism and Calvinism paled . . . Had he seen in an hour of inspiration that the State divorced from God would one day set itself up as a god? Had he seen with his mind's eye Hegel's Prussia, and Hitler's Germany? We do not know. But he fought the good fight for the souls of his people—'for the love of Christ,' as he himself said, though perhaps not always in the spirit of Christ.

When he died it was found that nothing was left of his considerable fortune. He had given all he had to the poor, allowing himself but the bare necessities of life. All he left behind was a manuscript which, for the most part, is lost; but its last words, a prayer, are preserved: 'Jesus Christ, God and Man, Bridegroom and Brother, peace and joy, sweetness and delight, kindness and grace, light and life, protection and salvation, heaven and earth, eternity and time, my Love and my All, receive my soul.'

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THE PATHS OF ISRAEL.

THE Jewish problem has become one of the most ominous and terrible issues of contemporary consciousness, which is tested by new waves of terrifying anti-Semitism. It must, however, be said that this paves the way to a deeper realisation of the problem itself. It is raised to a new level, receives new definition and new illumination. Beneath the surface of the elemental outburst something far more essential, significant and decisive than all this sounding storm around the 'Jewish question' is taking place. Above all, it becomes clear that it is not enough to oppose moral or legal standards to anti-Semitism; that the answer to the whole tragedy of Israel must be sought in its mysterious bond with the destinies of world-history.

There are several ways of approaching the Jewish problem. For sociologists, economists, for historians of culture and for moralists,

Jewry will always be a social, economic or cultural unit, or an object of moral valuation. Racial nationalism turns the whole issue into biology. At the present time anti-Semitism is primarily concerned with racial arguments; yet often these only conceal feelings of hatred and resentment. I will not speak of the approach to the problem which has become the chief source of the delirious ideas about the 'Jewish conspiracy,' the 'Wise men of Sion,' etc.—legendary tales, or rather blood-stained slanders, which still confuse some minds, not so much in this country as on the Continent.

But lately, and this has its connection with the new wave of Jewish persecution, another approach to the problem is arising, the consciousness of its *religious-metaphysical* significance.

Israel, 'scattered abroad and dispersed among the people,' a stumbling-block to them (Esther iii, 8), was always persecuted and crucified. The blood of the Jewish people has never ceased to flow: but probably it has never been crucified as it is crucified to-day. This very fact makes one go deeper, realising that there is a mystery in Israel, that he walks mysterious and secret paths—the whole of Israel, not only individually, but as a nation; that there is a *tragedy* of Israel, a tragedy which can only be grasped in the religious context.

The Jewish people is not a people only in the racial, ethnographical sense of the word; neither is it merely a historical unit, characterised by a special social or political life. Its path is marked by its inclusion in the spiritual destiny of the whole history of the world, at the heart of which it has its special calling: to be the *people of God*, the chosen people, the 'Holy Israel.' 'Thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham, my friend: thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the corners thereof, and said unto thee: "Thou art my servant, I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away"' (Is. xli, 8-9). 'I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the gentiles' (*ibid.*, xlii, 6). The existence of the Jewish people is determined by its mission, by its special religious vocation. Israel is ontologically the unity of the children of Abraham, the unity of a people chosen by God, bearing on its body the seal of the eternal divine Covenant. This God-given unity is stronger and deeper than any natural unity. It may be said that the unity and wholeness of Israel can only be likened to the mystical unity of the 'Communion of Saints' (*koinonia ton agion*), to the unity of the Church. Israel is the Holy Land, the Kingdom of God, yet only in promise, sought for but not possessed. The supreme sig-

nificance of Jewish culture lies in that it is permeated by religion, and it is not conceivable apart from religion. Individual Jews may not realise this: there may well be Jews who consciously believe in nothing, or in the platitudes of positivism and materialism. Yet even such Jews as these remain religious, preserve in themselves the religious impulse; ardent, aspiring to the ultimate and absolute, stopping at nothing . . . In the last resort the hatred of the world for the Jews is hatred of their desire and thirst for the Absolute. Israel is in the world to stir it up, to 'irritate' it, to set it in motion. Israel disturbs the world, does not let it sleep-spiritually; it brings disquiet, dissatisfaction, enflames the thirst for the Eternal, and thus, as it were, hastens the course of history. Even the most negative and repulsive features of Jewry, its conceit and ostentation, its greed and avarice, which rouse justified repugnance, have their depth, needless to say, concealed from those for whom everything in the world is flat and meaningless. The Jew seeks to slake his thirst and assuage his torture even in Mammon. Money has a peculiar, mysterious and fascinating power for him: money is the most terrible and ominous symbol, as it were the pale shadow of the sold and crucified Messiah. Léon Bloy speaks of this with amazing power ('*Le sang du pauvre*'). Money is the blood of the Pauper, of the Beggar, which has become a great sign—the price of the Priceless One. And Israel cannot free his hands from that which is sealed with the blood of Crucified Love.

The world hates the *longing* of Israel, his spiritual and bodily wandering, his hunger and thirst, his torture and questioning, and in the last resort his *calling*. *Odium generis humani*. Yet this hatred of the world is the glory of Israel; it only enflames his longing and burning expectation of what is to come. In this hope is the power of Israel's life; he was created for this, for passionate hope and expectation—to look for God's revelation on earth. Israel desires God's justice in the world, in this life, here and now, with a mad eternal desire, he seeks the City of God. Until he has found her, his heart is troubled and full of anguish. As by the waters of Babylon, Israel groans and struggles to meet Jerusalem, and in the mouth of his prophets calls to her, to the City of God and her terrible glory. 'If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy. Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said: raze it, raze it, even to the foundation thereof: O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us. Happy shall he be that taketh and

'dasheth thy little ones against the stones' (Ps. cxxxvii). Let Israel's persecutors to-day hear this, and let them know that these words, torn from a bleeding heart, are the words of the wrath of God. These are not the faded 'vegetarian' speeches of the 'humanistic' defenders of Jewry, but words which can make the walls of 'Babylon' tremble, words which cannot be erased, and will not remain vain. They resound in eternity, and they sound to-day, when Israel is again 'beside the waters of Babylon,' in exile and suffering.

Here the question of Israel's destiny arises in all its acuteness. We have seen that the true nature of Israel is not in its national and ethnical qualities, but as it were in its existence as an ontological unit, included in the depth of the history of the world, in the very being of humanity. There is a mysterious bond between Israel and the world, like the bond between the Church and the world. Israel is above all the blessed heart, into which all the threads, all the rays of the divine revelation are gathered, where are concentrated all the powers of nature and of grace needed for the manifestation of the Messiah in Israel, for the acceptance by the world of God for whom it seeks and thirsts. There is innate precisely in Israel an acute feeling of the manifestation, revelation, incarnation of eternity in time: that blessed but terrible nearness of God and man which is the foundation of knowledge, of life and being in its deepest experience. This is true not only of the Old Testament religious consciousness, but of almost all Jewish writers and thinkers. After all, Israel was always waiting sub- (or one should say super-) consciously for God to be 'born'; in this very thirsting and unquenchable expectation is his mission and his task. He came so to love and know the very nature of birth, of life at its deepest source, that he believed God would sanctify it, and become flesh in and through divine and human birth.

In general, the common notion of Judaism in terms of the utter transcendence of God to the world, where God reveals himself solely as a judge and law-giver, where he is united with man only by an outer 'covenant' extrinsic to him, where the whole of Old Testament religion is turned into a moralistic system—such a notion must be considered as quite unsatisfactory. The whole of the Old Testament, from the first pages of the book of Genesis, is a direct refutation of this. For Israel eternity is co-related with time, is incarnate in time and in the temporal, in the concrete, in history, on earth. God is as it were the 'focus' of history, enters it and defines it. It was precisely the Jewish people who through its prophets created a philosophy of history, filled history with ontological meaning, discovered it as *Sacred History*, as the divinely-revealed, divine-human

process leading straight to the Incarnation, and as it were anticipating it. The 'beginning' of salvation, that meeting of God and the world which Israel sought so ardently, was to come about precisely in the conditions of time and space, in the sacred heart of Israel. 'Thou hast revealed salvation in the depths of the world' (from a hymn of the Orthodox Church in Holy Week). In this sense Israel has a quite unique and exclusive significance: he is, as it were, not by himself, but *for others*; he is that through which we have to 'pass.' He knows no limit, is not confined in himself, though in the Old Testament the Jewish people was preserved providentially in self-isolation. Israel is the 'in-between,' in which and through which history begins, widens, and reaches eternity. This is the messianic mission of the Jewish people, which could only be actualised in the absolute revelation of God which is the Incarnation, incarnate divine-human being. If the divine centre, the sacred foundation of history is found in Israel, then this central position of the Jewish people becomes concrete historical actuality in the divine-human event of Christ's nativity. Thus the very existence of the chosen people is already potential God-manhood, the 'first-fruit,' the 'root that bears the whole,' of which St. Paul speaks (Rom. xi, 16, 18). 'Out of Sion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem' (Is. ii, 3). 'Salvation is of the Jews' (John iv, 22).

Israel is in this sense a true symbol, a living prototype of the Church, the body of Christ, in which his Mystical Body is incarnate. This is the meaning of the well-known patristic idea that the New Testament is the realisation and fulfilment of the Old Testament. The 'type,' however, exists not apart from the proto-type, but in it and through it. The prototype is the essence, foundation and entelechy of the 'type,' and is realised and actualised in it. The Old Testament is eternal, for it is comprised in the New Testament, rests eternally in the memory of God and of man, in divine-human memory. Hence the indelible, unalterable, irrevocable character of the calling of the chosen people (Rom. xi, 29), unchanged though it refused the Messiah who had come: hence the eternal meaning of Israel . . . Christ the God-man, 'the glory of Israel,' remains an Israelite. This is not absorbed or destroyed in his All-humanity, which has nothing to do with abstract universality, but merely overcomes the limits of human and national isolation. The God-man himself is thus God-Israel as well.¹ The refusal to accept this leads

¹ In this connection it is essential to refer to the image of the Holy Mother of God, who concentrates and embraces in herself all the Old Testament sanctity of Israel, and through Israel the sanctity of the whole world. In her is revealed the mystery, the meaning and significance, of the divine calling of the Jewish people.

us into the blind alley of monophysitism and docetism. Here again we face the mystery of the unbroken bond which unites the destiny of Israel with the destiny of mankind. For the King of Israel is likewise the King of all nations.

Yet what can be the meaning of the rejection of its own Messiah, of the fulfilment of its own destiny? What is the meaning of that terrible 'Crucify him!' which seems to ring eternally, which nailed the Saviour of the world to the Cross on Calvary? We face here an unheard of and unique tragedy in the world, before which the mind and consciousness of man are helplessly torn asunder. We must look into the depths of this mystery, though everything here is a threatening abyss. But there seems to be no issue from the conflicts of the Jewish destiny, and no way for the Christian to understand this destiny, except through the realisation of this agonising and abysmal secret. We must descend into this 'outer darkness' of fall, rejection, and theocide, which tear the very heart of Israel, that we may see the face of Christ through the surrounding darkness.

Israel crucified Christ, his nearest one, his own Messiah, in mad, suicidal self-denial. This is the source of his tragic destiny, his 'curse,' and moreover the source of the inner religious tragedy of every Jewish heart. The rejection of the Messiah reveals this tragedy of self-denial, and Israel's existence now is this rejection of the God-man, whose blood is 'on them and on their children.' This blood brands the agonised brow of the sons of Israel. Yet in rejecting Christ Israel gave *himself* to be crucified. He had to mount the Golgotha of rejection in willing or unwilling anguish, and die as the natural body of the Messiah, as manhood in the God-man, so that the Divine economy of salvation might be fulfilled. What is this mad and awful clamour of the sons of Israel 'Crucify Him! Crucify Him!' but 'Crucify, crucify *thysself*!'; crucify *thysself* not for thy own sake, but for the sake of the world in ruins. To crucify himself, to don a crown of thorns, to pierce the body and tear it with nails—for this no faith is needed. Thus *Israel is on the Cross on which the Son of God is crucified, the Cross of the salvation of the world*. St. Paul speaks about this mystery in his great and daring witness, beginning: 'I say then: Hath God cast away his people? God forbid' (Rom. xi, 1-29).

If the election is in the power of divine love, wisdom and almightiness, it cannot be mistaken, it cannot fail: but it is 'justified' and actualised, however terrible this may seem, in the very rejection of Christ, in his Crucifixion by Israel. This is the direct implication of St. Paul's witness, and must be accepted, although to accept does

not mean to affirm the very rejection of Christ as something morally right and necessary. In general this problem is not to be solved on the moral plane.

Yet even in his election Israel remained free. His own destinies were, as it were, entrusted to him, and here lies the destiny of the whole world. Thus was fulfilled the economy of salvation. Israel freely took on itself the curse of Christ's blood, chose the terrible lot prepared for him by divine Providence. 'It is terrible to fall into the hands of the living God,' for he gives to each what his soul desires . . . And Israel accepted the cross. His cross and his curse last until now, as Christ too is crucified until to-day, though he rose again and sitteth on the right hand of the Father. This is the fate and the path of Israel. He is condemned to the agony of rejection, to exile and dispersion—'until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in,' until the very day of the last fulfilment, until he takes the God-man from the Cross, in whom he gave himself to be crucified, for whom he longed while persecuting him, whom he loved while crucifying him—his own Messiah and his Redeemer. He could not but love him, because he thirsted for him in his great abandonment.

Thus to-day in the torn and tortured face of Israel is seen the outraged, despised, blood-stained face of him who called himself the King of Israel. If Israel himself is crucified, the Lord must love even the agonies of blasphemy in his own people, and in these very agonies bestow the forgiveness of his redeeming, saving love. For he loved Jacob, who wrestled with him on that mysterious night, and who did not leave him until he had received his blessing. The choice is indelible, unalterable and without repentance, and if Israel rests in the eternal memory and love of God, then Christ is in him and with him, and he will arise like Saul, whose heart in his very struggle against Christ concealed the power of Christ's Resurrection . . . 'Oh the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgements, and his ways past finding out! . . . For of him and through him and to him are all things: to whom be glory for ever, amen' (Rom. xi, 33; 36).

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