THE JEWISH QUESTION IN THE EARLY REFORMATION ERA

DEGREE OF MASTER OF THEOLOGY

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The original idea for this thesis was derived from my own personal interest in the areas of Reformation History and Judaism which naturally led to a merging of the two. It was then carried out by means of library-based research over a period of two years (the first of these comprising full-time study) under the careful and patient supervision of Dr. W.I.P. Hazlett.

Generally, the scope of the thesis encompasses the differing views held by key figures within the Early Reformation Era (Reuchlin, Erasmus, Zwingli, Luther, Bucer, etc.) with regard to the "Jewish Question" of the day. It is already well documented that medieval theology had not been kindly disposed towards the Jewish people up to the eve of the Reformation. However, having examined the most recent relevant material pertaining to this epoch of history, I felt that the way in which the Jewish question has been handled was often overlooked. Perhaps the reasons for such an omission are related to a need to assess the more pressing concerns of the time, i.e. why did the early protagonists require to "reform" the Christian Church at all, what kind of new theologies were formulated in the light of this etc.? - all of these of course being very valid and indeed crucial pursuits.

Naturally, no argument is ever one-sided and, to this end, I have provided an overview of Jewish reaction to the Reformation itself in order to provide a more balanced picture to the bulk of the thesis, being devoted as it is to the outlook of the Reformers. Finally, the Conclusion pulls together the various themes and pertinent strands of the work and offers an overall assessment of "The Jewish Question in the Early Reformation Era".

PREFACE

With the advent of the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century, the Jewish people within Europe now stood at a new crossroads. For centuries they had been viewed with suspicion, at best, and, in many cases, treated with outright intolerance and contempt throughout the continent. Indeed, forced expulsions during the Middle-Ages from places such as England (1290), Spain (1492), and France (1394) had reduced the number of Jews living within Christendom. Those who remained faced severe restrictions in their means of employment, general living conditions, etc..

However, at the outset of the sixteenth century a new sense of hope prevailed. More positive messages were perceived by the Jewish people to be emerging from a movement which took a fresh interest in the Old Testament in its original tongue of Hebrew - the sacred language of the Jews. In addition to this, the focus for the first wave of Reformers, initiated by Martin Luther's (1483-1546) initial spark at Wittenberg in Germany, was the Roman Catholic church, which itself had been the chief persecutor of the Jews throughout the Middle-Ages. How then did the main Reformers regard the Jews? Was their outlook to be more positive than what had gone before or would it merely be a re-working of old suspicions and prejudices? Additionally, in the light of all this, how did the Jewish people themselves react to the Reformation, both at the beginning and, as the new movement developed, in the proceeding decades of its early era?

The aim of this thesis then is to answer those key questions. In order to do this it will//

will be necessary to consider the stances of a wide variety of central characters from the Early Reformation Era, drawing upon a range of primary and secondary literature to establish their view of the Jews. These figures will include Reuchlin, Erasmus, Zwingli, Bucer, Luther, Osiander and Carlstadt, etc. who provide the Reformed stance. In contrast to this, the opinions of Jewish writers of the time such as Halevi, Rosheim etc. will be forwarded.

Firstly, we will look at the position of the Jewish people on the eve of the Reformation, so that something of the background to the problems they had faced in previous centuries may be highlighted. Within this area, the work of Hayim Hillel Ben-Sasson in his The Reformation in Contemporary Jewish Eyes is particularly useful, contributing as it does selections from key primary Jewish sources. Given the fact that many of these sources are derived from old, out of print texts, and that others are in Hebrew or German, two languages which are unfortunately largely closed to me, I was still able to gain an understanding of the Jewish position due to the wide variety of writers whom Ben-Sasson cites. In addition, a cross section of reading was drawn upon for this Chapter with perhaps the most important secondary material including Cecil Roth's Short History of the Jewish People, H. Graetz's Popular History of the Jews, Paul Johnson's A History of the Jews, as well as various Jewish Encyclopedias, all of which proved valuable in building up this pre-Reformation background picture.

Having set the scene, it is then possible to examine two key figures within the Humanist camp, viz. Johannes Reuchlin (1455-1522) and Desiderius Erasmus (1469-1536) both falling within the early Reformation era and preceding Martin Luther//

Luther. For the Reuchlin material I was again largely reliant upon two central secondary documents to provide an outline of the original works, viz. Heiko Oberman's The Impact of the Reformation and The Roots of Anti-Semitism, this because the primary sources were again only available in German. Erasmus provides an interesting comparison and contrast to Reuchlin in regard to their outlook towards the Jews. Indeed, as many of his letters and other documents contain references concerning the Jews, I was able to examine a cross section of these from the different volumes of the Correspondence of Erasmus, ranging from the years 1515 to 1530 (and published in English). It may also be noted that the best summary of his stance was to be found within Shimon Markish's Erasmus and the Jews. Before considering the position of Martin Luther who unquestionably produced more comment on the Jews than any other on the Reformed side, we will look at a different area of Reformed thought - that emerging from Switzerland. This next Chapter will again provide a contrast and balance to the picture painted both by the Humanists as well as Luther and the other German Reformers, as the movement within Switzerland developed independently.

The principal figure to be examined here is Huldrych Zwingli (1484-1531) (in Zurich). Although it must be admitted that Zwingli did not concern himself too widely with the Jews, his strong interest in the Old Testament and covenant theology means that he is worthy of mention. To this end, we will look at his original writings which do contain references to the Jews, these being : Concerning Choice and Liberty Respecting Food (1522), Solemn Warning against the Control of Foreign Lords (1522), Commentary on True and False Religion (1525) and Refutation of Baptist Tricks (1527). (These again being published in English by Samuel Jackson). Additionally, the secondary literature provided by Louis Newman//

Newman in his Jewish Influence on Christian Reform Movements, as well as biographical accounts of Zwingli by authors such as Gäbler, Potter, Stephens and Rilliet, were helpful reading in the compilation of this Chapter.

Having considered this initial spectrum of opinion, it allows us to directly examine, again from the original sources, the writings of Luther himself. The most space is devoted to this section simply because he was the most prominent writer on the Jews. In 1523, he produced That Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew, a rather positive document which, at this stage, seemed to provide genuine hope for the Jewish people that the Reformation would indeed free them from the shackles of the past. However, when comparisons are drawn with the polemical works of the later Luther, we shall see that such early optimism was soon to be cruelly eclipsed. By considering Against the Sabbatarians (1538), On the Jews and Their Lies (1543) and finally Von Schem Hamphoras (1544), a balanced picture of Luther's stance toward European Jewry can be painted. Much has been written over the years concerning Luther and the Jews, particularly since World War II, and, to this end, a variety of secondary material will be considered. Of particular value here are the biographical sketches of Luther with Bornkam, Brecht and Brandler devoting the most attention to this topic and therefore carrying the most weight.

After rounding off the Luther section with a brief look at Von Schem Hamphoras, the last treatise on the Jews before his death, we turn to consider the opinions of other contemporary Lutheran Reformers. This will include the view of men such as Ulrich von Hutten (1488-1523), Philip Melanchthon (1497-1560), Andreas Carlstadt (1480-1541), Andreas Osiander (1498-1552), and Sebastian Münster, thus providing//

providing a broad sweep of Reformed input on the Jews.

Another early Reformation character to emerge in the 1530's with comments upon the Jews, was Martin Bucer (1491-1551) of Strasbourg. Here I am indebted to the Rev. Lindsay Schluter for her kind work in translating Bucer's 1537 treatise On Whether a Government Can Allow Jews to live Among Christians from the original German. This allowed me to gain a valuable insight into Bucer's polemical stance towards the Jews, which was to evoke a direct response from the Jewish camp by Josel von Rosheim. Indeed, this Bucer document probably provides the most aggressive early Reformed work on the Jews, outwith Luther's diatribes of the 1540's.

It is perhaps worth pointing out that John Calvin (1509-1564) has been excluded from this survey due to his main work being considered among the "second generation" and therefore "later" Reformation.

Before reaching a final conclusion, we can regard the thoughts of the Jewish people themselves, noting the change in attitudes towards the early Reformation as the various Protestant writers gradually formulated their opinions.

Here we shall also consider an important and interesting contrast between the outlook of those within and outwith Germany with men such as von Rosheim for instance, taking a more fervently opposed stance towards the Reformation, presumably because of his closer proximity to Luther in Germany, than say Italian Jews//

Jews such as R. Abraham Farissol.

Again, a wide variety of predominantly secondary literature (due to the plethora of out of print and Hebrew originals) will be taken into account with Ben-Sasson, Roth and Johnson according most attention on this subject.

Finally, a conclusion will pull together the different strands of opinion from both the Reformed and Jewish camps providing an overall summary of the position of the Jews in the Early Reformation Era, in line with the aforementioned key questions, as well as considering the implications for the Jews within Reformed circles in future generations.

CHAPTER ONE
JUDAISM ON THE EVE OF THE REFORMATION
THE DAWN OF A NEW ERA?

By the time the time the Reformation had emerged into view upon the spiritual and social horizon of the Jews, several Jewish thinkers had already devised certain explicitly defined concepts on the basis of which they patiently and eagerly awaited revolutionary changes in Christian outlook. Underlying such notions there may be perceived the dim traces of former Jewish struggles against early Christianity, when the phrase "If they fail to return to Thy Law" (1) constituted a qualifying clause in the twelfth century benediction of the 'Amidah' prayer against the Christians (Minim), according to an earlier and sharper version of this benediction. Singularly enough, it is during the twelfth century, when social and religious tension between Jews and Christians had become almost unbearable, that we witness the emergence of a systematic evaluation of Christianity, prompting the use of the aforementioned benediction. In his evaluation, the author of this prayer elaborates Christianity's position and its relative significance in the unfolding of the Divine purpose in history. Another unamed author of the same era likewise offers a muted prayer, as it were, for a future transformation of Christian outlook and sentiment. In his Code, which is located in the section on the Messiah and his times, the famous Jewish philosopher, Moses Maimonides (1135-1204) states:

> But when King Messiah will arise in truth and will triumph and be greatly exalted, they will all immediately retract and realize that their 'fathers had inherited lies' (Jer 16 : 19) and that their prophets and ancestors had led them astray. (2).

Here Maimonides is presenting a strong defence of the place of Torah within the Jewish faith, in the process overruling the claims of "that certain man" (3) (the term given to Jesus in Jewish usage). One can imagine then that such a work would//

would be inspired by a religion which was facing a contemporary threat from outwith its own bounds, i.e. in the shape of Christianity, prompting the need to re-emphasize its own position.

Furthermore, as the present day Jewish scholar, Ben-Sasson informs us, (4) Maimonides is seen here to be taking a leaf from the Christian world view : the concept of "praeparatio evangelica", which seeks to explain ancient Israel's existence within the course of history until the advent of Jesus. Thus he transformed this concept into a Jewish doctrine, according to which the religions which had emanated from Judaism, i.e. Christianity and later Islam, claiming boastfully to both fulfil and replace its message, were, by the mysterious workings of Providence, no more than "praeparatio legis" (5). Both Jesus and Mohammed, therefore, entered history for no other purpose than "that of preparing humanity for the acceptance of the sovereignty of the Torah and its precepts" (6). The Gentiles' feeling that their biblical studies corroborated their own erroneous viewpoint, and that they were dealing with something which had lost its original plain sense, could not, according to this view, be altered in line with the final outcome.

Viewed from such an angle, any change or upheaval in a world that inherited delusion so that it might obtain the truth, would naturally, as Ben-Sasson argues (7), kindle the hope that the preliminary stage of the Redemption was beginning to yield the desired fruits. Messianic symptoms would therefore be perceived in any movement that could possibly be construed as a Christian or Moslem inclination towards Judaism.

As//

As Ben-Sasson then continues to assert in the notable, though by no means exclusive, instance of Maimonides, this concept is "linked to the belief that contemporary Jewry's adherence to the Torah served as an example designed to win the hearts of the Gentiles to the Jewish outlook and way of life" (8). Thus we later find Maimonides' son Abraham, explaining the biblical concept of a "Kingdom of Priests" (Exod. 19 : 6) as denoting that ... the priest was the leader of his community, its dignitary and its exemplar, so that the men of his congregation should follow in his footsteps and thereby attain to righteousness. [God] said:

> May you, by keeping My Torah, be leaders of the world : may your relationship to the rest of the world be like that of the priest to his congregation. Let humanity walk in your ways, imitating your deeds and adopting your standards (9).

Indeed, the very same century was to witness a supplication for vengeance upon the Crusaders uttered by R. Shelomo B. Shimshon of Germany, who set out to recount the dreadful attrocities perpetrated by them against the Jews and the "kiddush ha-Shem" (martyrdom) of his people. At the same time, there is an ardent request that he may live to see a change of heart on the part of these murderers, that they may of their own accord, admit their error and mend their ways and "So that all creatures may realise their sins and misdeeds towards our people ... Stultifying their wisdom and trusting in their false idols ....." (10).

Such notions which encouraged an anticipation that providentially induced changes would occur within Christendom continued to mark Jewish speculation. They were also to come to the fore with added force at a time when apparent symptoms//

symptoms of transformation manifested themselves in the Christian camp.

With a hard-hitting article, another contemporary scholar, one R. Nathan, accuses Christianity of leading the Gentiles astray - to the detriment of their souls. However, a message of unity then pervades his position, as he states "the Exile will be prolonged, until we return to the Lord in complete penitence" (11). R. Nathan then proceeds to question the key Christian doctrine of the Trinity, "They use against us dubious and false arguments ... it is distinctly stated 'the Lord will be One and His name One' " (12).

These arguments within this context were intended to account for the long duration of the Exile, a fact to which the Christians pointed as justifying their own case against Judaism. As Ben-Sasson goes on to assert, it is possible that the exercise of spiritual influence upon Christianity, i.e. "strength and power, wisdom and understanding to lead the errant peoples back to the true faith" (13) was a necessary precondition to any act of redemption. As Jewry's transgression lay in the misleading evangelism, some of its sons had undertaken in order to diesseminate Christianity among the Gentiles, it followed that this had to be balanced by a missionary propagation of the true faith designed to re-assert monotheism in its pristine purity. Some of the points made by R. Nathan seem therefore specifically aimed at a Christian audience.

The potency and range of such sentiments is further demonstrated by their reappearance some generations later in a far-removed and entirely different sense, viz. in Bohemia during the rise of the Hussites in the fourteenth century. Here//

Here traditional Jewish ambitions of a more positive Christian outlook seemed to be on the point of imminent realisation. The eventual failure of this movement however, rendered it even more plausible for disappointed and embittered Jewish thinkers to construe Hus and his followers as a movement of "return to Judaism", as pointed out by Cecil Roth (14).

Indeed, due it would seem to their opposition to the church, the Hussites during the life ministry of Jan Hus (1372-1415) are depicted by this Jewish author as essentially a Judaizing movement. As Ben-Sasson cites from Sefer Maharil :

> Now the above mentioned rabbi (Hus) would compose liturgical song in Hebrew and German with the exaltation of monotheism as the theme. These hymns would be sung in public, to the glory of the Jewish faith. 'One and only God unique' ran the caption of one among many similar songs (15).

The again unnamed author goes on to denounce the actions of the "Emperor from Hungary" (i.e. Sigismund) who broke all the "weighty guarantees" accorded Hus on his appearance at Constance, where he was executed, an event which was regarded as an act of martyrdom by this Jewish writer. Indeed, for the author, the "Judaizing" tendencies of these fighters (the Hussites after the death of their leader) were of central significance. He recounts at length the sufferings of the Jews at the hands of the anti-Hussite crusaders. However, he also appears to have overlooked both the strong political and social elements of the Hussite movement (particularly after 1416) as well as the fact that it was utterly steeped in the Christian spirit. But the Jews, at this stage, wanted to believe//

believe otherwise. So strong was their revulsion against the aggregation of "statues, altars, icons and priests!" (16), and so intense their desire to behold the shedding of Christian forms in favour of Judaism, that they began to discern trends and moods that represented their own wishful thinking, rather than the more concrete reality of the day.

Ben-Sasson goes on to make the conjecture that Jews debating with Christians in this environment may have registered dissenting voices within the Hussite community that were more extreme in character than those preserved in traditional Christian sources. Such instances, isolated even in the revolutionary camp, could have supplied Jewish imagination and aspirations with a basis for their sanguine expectations. An example of this may be found in the Italian scene on the eve of the Reformation where we see that, in this turbulent period, sensitive Jewish ears were able to register at their meetings with Christians a profusion of discordant notes and events even in this staunch pro-Catholic area of Europe.

R. Abraham sums up these developments in his book (of the late 1300's) of polemics under the heading Concerning Some Strange Doctrine Deviating From Those of the Generality of Believers Whose Way I Have Observed and with Whom I have Conversed.

Ben-Sasson then citing R. Abraham's opening background impressions:-

"after//

"after I had spent a long time in debates with many wise men ... I chanced to hear the shrill notes of strange doctrines deviating from the centre, uttered by men arguing their extraordinary doctrines ... until they expressed utterly corrupt views not enjoined by their religous teaching; and they went so far as to base their opinion on premises drawn from the words of the four apostles [i.e. the Evangelists] and upon some of the utterances of Moses voicing ideas never dreamt of by the ancestors (17).

With considerable discernment, R. Abraham here distinguishes between two kinds of heresy, the one proceeding from Christianity towards Judaism and the other issuing from Judaism to Christianity. The latter containing

some other false doctrines, held by a few errant men who during my own days forsook the Jewish fold, acting heretically against the foundations of the flawless Torah, and went up in smoke because of their false opinions (18).

These "men" had therefore, whilst forsaking Judaism, evolved a path of their own in Christianity, for which they were punished severely.

Additionally, R. Abraham regards the laws of the Torah as being associated with the Christian mysteries. Both are equally important to the believer, since one applied to the physical and the other to the spiritual aspects of man. Against this view, we are presented with the arguments of "many of the children of Israel who defected from their fold because they espoused the doctrines that follow. (19). R. Abraham then continues by citing their theories and refuting them at length. In other words, the latter joined the Christian camp on account of the very Christian heresy//

heresy that was in their mind at the time of their departure from Judaism. Once within the precincts of Christianity, they continued to pursue their own peculiar concept of Christianity. Their cardinal error as Jews thus lay in the spirituality they employed as a criterion for distinguishing between various types of believers and the modes of faith appropriate to each of them. Accordingly, there emerged, on the one hand, a spiritual "elite" destined for genuine Christianity, as against the vulgar masses for whom Judaism with its laws and statutes was the proper faith. They would therefore

> erroneously contend ... that intentions of mind and heart, rather than deeds, were the essence. Thus ... in their view ... the practical Torah of Moses pointed to the theology of the new teaching, which was devoid of these practical injunctions. As they further claimed ... that the Torah of Moses and its basic observances were limited in time and locality to the land of Israel. (20).

Ben-Sasson also informs us that evidence shows this line of thought was objectionable to the Christian church on the basis of the punishments meted out to the protagonists (21). It may well have been branded by the church as a "Marcionite-Judaic" heresy. In it, the Torah of Moses was rejected in stronger terms than customary on account of its very constitution and terrestrial limitations. Thus we have been made aware of this scholar's evident discovery of prevalent areas of tension between contemporary Jewry and Christendom, wherein attraction and aversion existed side by side. Additionally, R. Abraham reveals to us two further phenomena that emerged from the Christian camp which remained entirely within its precincts and strove//

strove to effect a reform from within. First there is the incident of a "reformer" who acted as leader of an overtly functioning circle in Italy :

> A singular man followed by many who ... proclaimed that the true religion consisted in the observance only of the new religion as taught by Jesus and his disciples; in fulfilling it literally, without addition or subtraction, and in accordance with the doctrine pursued and formulated by the illustrious leaders who founded the faith ... However, the contemporary views and the interpretations originating from the Roman curia circles since the days of the Emperor Constantine until our own times did not, in his opinion, agree with earlier doctrine. He therefore disliked the doctrines of their new interpreters, preachers and priests with their differing sects. They almost considered this a heretical doctrine, like those of Zadok and Boethius in regard to our own Holy Torah. (22).

The unnamed man, it is evident, was appealing for a return to the pure apostolic faith, a fairly prevalent phenomenon in early sixteenth-century Italy, which, as yet, had not materialised into a clear-cut programme of reform. Doctrinally, it was known as "theologia positiva". The other development is presented by R. Abraham, where he cites the example of a man who was a "great celebrity at the time" (23), calling himself "Son of God, Mercurius Trismegistes, Enoch and Methuselah" (24). It seems that this figure believed that whoever "elevated himself and endeavoured to gain perfection would attain, in his opinion, to the status of a son of God" (25). Again this individual understandably met with opposition from the Church and is deemed worthy of mention by R. Abraham at some considerable length.

From//

From a very early period then, there existed spiritual grounds for Jewish interest in developments within Christianity. These, it was hoped would eventually lead Christian believers within their own inherent constellation of ideas onto the road to Judaism. Indeed, there were, as Ben-Sasson informs us, circles within Jewry who considered their own redemption as dependent upon such a basic transformation. The first major upheaval in the European continent prior to the Reformation (26), that of the Hussites, had deeply impressed Jewish observers by the intense cleavage between the heretics and the leadership, traditions and ritual of the church. Jews considered the anti-hierarchical, anti-monastic, and iconoclastic tendencies of the Hussite movement, as a whole or in parts, to be a change in the right direction. In their eager minds, such trends wove themselves into an image of Hus and his followers as men who had chosen a road that led to the goal of Jewish Monotheism. The subsequent failure of the Reformers to join the Jewish faith was ascribed to the absence of a worthy leader after the burning of Hus.

The later rise of Luther in Germany occurred at a time when Jews were in particular in need of encouragement. The slightest spark of hope therefore naturally drew their eager attention. In 1517, a mere 25 years had elapsed since the expulsion from Spain (1492) and a bare 20 years since the brutalities of forced conversion in Portugal (1497), R. Abraham Farissol (1451-1526) like many who came before and after him, interpreted the unspeakable horrors of this period as intimating the imminent advent of the Messiah :

> ...And it is evident that when 'the shattering of the holy people' under the blows of the 'fourth beast', i.e. Rome, comes to an end, and they set out for Israel's lovely land in the East all these things shall be finished (27).

In//

In Germany, the breeding ground of the Reformation, the Jews were at this time fighting for their very existence. The year 1519 saw their expulsion from Regensburg. This was indeed the climax in a campaign of frequent and closely-related urban expulsions. One must bear in mind here the traditional accusations levelled at the Jews in the Middle-Ages. We can particularly cite the problem of the "blood libel", i.e. the sacrifice of children and the host, connected with magical practices. As Hsia asserts

> Well before the twelfth century before the first ritual murder accusastion was raised in Europe, Jews had already acquired a firm magical reputation in the medieval world.
>
> As fortune tellers, healers, physicians and sometimes as charlatans, some Jews peddled their magical arts just as other practised their mercantile and artisinal trades in the Roman Empire. (28)

This view still pervaded the world of the early Reformed theologians.
Jewish sensibilities were thus alive to the course of events in the various regions of their host country. Their minds could certainly grasp the revolutionary significance in the rise of Luther and all that it implied. They now, therefore, felt themselves to be faced with an ever-growing process of profound and far-reaching change.

It seemed as if religious and social developments had been urged on by an inner dynamic, threatening to destroy hitherto accepted Christian institutions and customary patterns of life. The initial reaction was one of astonishment at the very phenomena of the transformation. It is evident, as Ben-Sasson informs us (29) that Jewish eyes were fixed on the more extreme and dynamic elements of this movement. The robust vigour, as we shall discover, inherent in the Reformation, gave rise to the optimistic feeling that the movement was destined to//

to be brought within the confines of Judaism and to give rise to universal salvation, in accordance with traditional Jewish aspirations. The very same manifestations that had infused Jewish hearts with sympathy for the Hussites, were likewise in evidence here.

Moreover, the Reformation displayed an uncompromising repudiation of monasticism and an outspoken reversion to the authority of the Bible. Not least, the movement was able to claim persistence as well as success. In Germany itself, however, Jewish communal leadership soon changed their views of Luther. His fanaticism and disenchantment with the Jews after his missionary activities had failed to attract them to his own brand of Christianity, and this, coupled with the wave of popular violence unleashed by the Reformation had rendered the Jewish position in Germany ever more precarious. With the passage of time and the cooling down of reactions and initial passions, when it was possible to look at the scene from a great distance, Jewish thinking began to be coloured by the reaction to the every-widening division and shading of the Christian world as Johnson points out. (30). As we shall see, the evolution of this Jewish viewpoint, which had remained firm in the teeth of official persecution would continue to do so in the decades to come.

Having sketched in something of the background to the Jewish position on the eve of the Reformation, we can now examine some early Reformed opinion - that of two key Humanists, viz. Johannes Reuchlin and Desiderius Erasmus.

CHAPTER TWO

THE HUMANIST BREAKTHROUGH

In assessing the period before Luther, it is necessary to sketch in the prevailing views of other theologians concerning the Jews. Here we may consider two figures within the humanist camp, viz. Johannes Reuchlin (1455-1522) and Desiderius Erasmus (1469-1536). Overfield offers us an important overview of the Humanist movement stating:

> Scholasticism was facing a challenge by the 1450's, albeit a weak one at first from a handful of individuals who viewed the humanist educational programme as a superior alternative to existing scholastic priorities. During the next seven decades humanism in Germany steadily gained adherents, until by the 1520's and 30's humanist reformers were able to achieve fundamental changes in the goals and methods of university studies (1).

This then was the world in which Reuchlin and Erasmus moved.

For Heiko Oberman, the previous views of Reuchlin have been "shaped and misshapen in three distinct, historical phases" (2). In each, true insights have been articulated, revealing critical aspects of the primary sources; to this extent, each phase has passed the test of time.

First, Reuchlin has been portrayed as a forerunner of Martin Luther and as a herald of the Reformation. While Reuchlin was yet alive, a pamphlet appeared in Strasbourg entitled The History of the Four Heretical Dominicans (1521). The title page not only presents the scandal of Dominican heresy, but especially highlights the common stance of three heroes, allies in their love of truth, the heroes being Reuchlin, von Hutten and Luther. The three men stand together; capital letters boldly proclaim their identity as "Patroni(i) libertatis, Champions of Liberty." (3). This Strasbourg pamphlet then calls for emancipation and religious freedom, asking for mobilization against the obscurantist conspiracy of the//

the Dominican Order.

In recent times, the inner connection shared between Reuchlin and the Reformation has been rightly called into question. Less than one year before the Strasbourg pamphlet, Luther had proclaimed the "libertas christiana" as a spiritual liberation through faith. Reuchlin, ironically a favoured guest of Johannes Eck (1486-1543) Luther's fierce opponent, left no room for doubt or rumour; he had no sympathy for Luther's view, in his eyes a position threatening public order and private discipline. The Strasbourg portrayal of the united triumvirate reflected the hopes of many, but, while both took pride in their stance as biblical scholars, Reuchlin and Luther did not stand side by side on the same front aganst "Rome".

Yet, the common ground shared by Reuchlin and Luther cannot be overlooked, On the way to Worms in April 1521, Luther rejected the offer of an alliance with the German-national movement of Ulrich von Hutten and Franz von Sickengen (d1523). Likewise, Reuchlin did not support the plan of these German knights for armed intervention on his behalf. Clearly, Luther and Reuchlin agreed on one crucial issue - the rejection of a militant, nationalistic solution.

For the portrayal of Reuchlin in modern times, Heinrich Graetz's monumental history of the Jews has proved to be most influential (4). Alongside Graetz stands Ludwig Geiger's three formidable volumes: a history of Hebrew language studies (5), a still unsurpassed biography of Reuchlin, and an edition of Reuchlin's correspondence (6). As Guido Kisch has convincingly argued, this scholarly tradition "has been moulded by a sentimental optimism among nineteenth century Jews in Germany, who looked back on the Enlightenment as the torch bearer of emancipation. On this basis, Reuchlin could be perceived as a//

a bold forerunner of the Enlightenment, far ahead of his own time." (7). To this day, when the name of Reuchlin is mentioned, one hears the echo of Graetz's lofty assessment of Reuchlin's courageous brief on 6 October 1510: "Reuchlin's defence of the Jews was the first stuttering statement on the way to that liberating declaration of full equality; it took over three hundred years for this development to be fully articulated and to gain the force of the law" (8). Indeed, this view was favoured by the widely held Burckardtian interpretation of the Renaissance as the re-discovery of the individual and the human dignity (9).

Since World War II and the horrors which we have come to associate with the Holocaust, the reconstruction of the complete history of Jewish rights has acquired a further dimension unknown to Reuchlin. Whereas the "Forerunner" interpretation positioned Reuchlin and Luther shoulder to shoulder, since the 1940's, they have been placed in opposite camps. At times, a continuous "German" tradition, reaching from Luther to Hitler, was suggested, and, indeed during the Nuremburg Trials, Luther's name was invoked in order to justify and legitimate antisemitism. In fact, Reformation scholarship had been criticised by the Nazi's for omitting from the record Luther's demonization of the Jews. While some Luther scholars hastened to correct this oversight, after the war, the general tendency was to de-emphasize Luther's antisemitism. Luther's previously privileged passages were now marginalized, while the spotlight turned brightly to Reuchlin, the authentic German defender and advocate of the Jews. Accordingly, in this third and last phase of Reuchlin research, the fundamental thrust of the first phase has been completely reversed. Reuchlin the "opposite number" to Martin Luther has been replaced by Reuchlin the "significant other" of Martin Luther but, in so doing, Reuchlin is again read out of context. For Oberman to do justice to Reuchlin, we have to restore him to his historical setting.//

'HOMO TRILINGUIS' : REUCHLIN AGAINST DOMINANT HUMANISM

It was only late in his life - when he was already fifty five and for his time an old man - that Reuchlin became embroiled in a dispute with the converted Jew, Johannes Pfefferkorn (1469-1521) and the Dominicans of Cologne, an episode which has subsequently pre-occupied Reuchlin scholarship. After the Dominicans sided with Pfefferkorn and opened litigation against Reuchlin, a virulent reaction united those German humanists whom Reuchlin came to designate as his own party and praised as the "poetae et historici" (10). Admittedly, Reuchlin fully shared the enthusiasm and aims of his fellow humanists for the rediscovery of the ancient languages. He even used the phrase "Second Pentecost" to celebrate the rebirth of the true humanism to be disseminated by a newly united republic of scholars. But for Reuchlin, this Pentecost designated more "tongues" than Latin and Greek, it had to be widened to include Hebrew.

Both Reuchlin's prominent predecessor, Rudolf Agricola (d1485) and his eminent successor, Desiderius Erasmus (d1536), insisted on Latin and Greek as the sole requirements for the revival of learning. For Reuchlin, these two languages were acutely inadequate, as to learn Hebrew is to master God's own language. An interesting pointer to Reuchlin's ecumenical spirit appears in a fictional dispute between the Greek philosopher Sidon, the Jew Baruch, and the Christian Capnion (interestingly the Greek version of the name Reuchlin). As Oberman points out, the debate has led to a lofty praise of Reuchlin as the torch bearer of tolerance to be compared with both Giovanni Boccaccio's (d1375) and Gotthold Lessing's (d1781) Ring Parable, although it must be said that it would be more relevant to point to Nicholas of Cusa's (d1464) account of religious debate involving a Jew, a Muslim and a Christian (11).

For Oberman, however, by focusing enthusiastically on Reuchlin's "ecumenical" spirit,//

spirit scholarship has overlooked critical elements in his account. The dispute in Pforzheim culminates symbolically in Pythagorean initiation rites but de facto in the consummation of the two central Christian sacraments - penance and baptism. After Capnion has established the superiority of the Christian faith, he demands conversion and achieves the repentance of Sidon and Baruch : the latter renounces the Talmud : the former repudiates Epicurus and Lucretius. Both obey his command: "Let yourselves be washed, be cleansed" (12). Hence a ritual clearly representing Christian baptism seals Capnion's triumph.

Before this climactic conversion scene, Capnion (Reuchlin) assails the unbaptized Baruch, unleashing the full fury of medieval anti-Jewish ideology: "The saving power of the World has forsaken you and chosen us. As all can see, God stands with us and on our side." (13). Why has God rejected the Jew and embraced the Christian?

> Because you Jews have perverted and obscured the secrets of salvation; in vain you perpetually mumble your prayers, in vain you cry out to God; you do not honour God as he commands. You flatter yourselves with forms of worship you yourselves invented; you persecute us with eternal hatred because we are the true servants of God. But from the beginning of time God has condemned hatred and what he wants to find in the human soul is the love of peace. (14)

This amazing and revealing usage of the biblical commandment of love was and will continue to characterize Reuchlin's view of the Jews, a portrayal which does not fit with the Enlightenment idealization of Reuchlin's life and thought.

THE POSITION OF THE JEWS

What is the mere background in Reuchlin's The Miracle-Working Word with its story of the conversion of the Jew becomes the principal theme of his Tutsch Missive//

Missive (1505). In this "Open Letter", written in German, Reuchlin explains the exile (elland) of the Jews as an affliction sent by God, a punishment for their collective guilt : they repudiate God, they are God-haters. Such severe blindness besets the Jews that only a severe hand can thrust them toward the path of repentance. "True penance means both repentance and suffering; harsh treatment of the Jews and true conversion to the Christian church are necessary for their eternal salvation." Reuchlin ends the letter by invoking the traditional Good Friday prayer for the "Perfidi Ludaei" : "I pray to God that he may enlighten them and lead them to genuine faith, so that they might be released from the prison of the Devil" (15).

While fifteen years later Luther would assail the Bablylonian Captivity of the Church. Reuchlin is concerned with the Babylonian Captivity of the Jews. Whereas the biblical Jews were punished with an exile of seventy years, the modern Jews remain in the "Devil's prison as long as they are Jews" (16).

These findings are therefore confirmed : for Reuchlin the Jews stand collectively under the wrath of God. Further to this idea, in a cloister near Denkendorf in 1502, Reuchlin pointed out that a successful sermon style is dependent "upon a vivid use of illustrations" (17). In one of these illustrations, the Jews appear, quite surprisingly, in an unexpected allusion not demanded by text or content: if you want to have an impact on the congregation, the Brethren are told, you must display Christ's crown of thorns as a striking example of the crimes perpetrated by the Jews in order to stir up passion against the Jews, a stance known as "contra Judaeos".

However, one statement from 1506 appears to contradict our findings. "I am well aware of the miserable condition of the Jews in our time, expelled not only from Spain, but also from the German Empire so that they are forced to emigrate all//

all the way to Turkey" (18) yet, even here, the Jews emerge once again merely as the bearers of previous wisdom:" .... secret knowledge is disappearing with them completely, jeopardizing the study of Holy Scripture." (19). In order to make Jewish help redundant, Reuchlin wrote his Hebrew Grammar, thus enabling Christians to learn the holy language without the need for Jewish tutors. Such grammar instruction is essential, he adds in conclusion, because our German Jews ("nostrates Judaei") refuse to initiate Christians in their language (despite Reuchlin himself having been taught by a Jew), be it from "envy or ignorance" (20).

CITIZENS IN THE EMPIRE-ALIENS IN THE KINGDOM

On July 26, 1510, Emperor Maximilian I ordered four universities and three independent scholars, including Reuchlin, to write an expert opinion on the toleration of 'Jewish' books, a task to be completed three weeks later. (21). Here begins the third phase of Reuchlin's life. Reuchlin research has traditionally regarded this period as the most significant (22) and, appropriately enough for Oberman, insofar as this "opinio" marks an important shift towards Jewish emancipation. Yet Reuchlin's stance vis-a-vis the Jews does again, for Oberman, deserve another look since before his article Reuchlin and the Jews, it had not been noticed that Reuchlin had to wage a two-front war in his attack against Johannes Pfefferkorn and the Cologne Dominicans.

THE CONFRONTATION WITH PFEFFERKORN

The campaign of Johannes Pfefferkorn - to confiscate and burn Jewish books in order to further the Christian mission among the Jews evoked a fierce response from Reuchlin against "that baptised Jew" (23) (Taufjuden), his preferred designation for Pfefferkorn. After all, this convert had dared to make two absurd charges : he claimed Reuchlin had only a superficial knowledge of Hebrew//

Hebrew and had been bribed by the Jews to support their cause (24).

This assault on his good name by a converted Jew arouses Reuchlin to exploit the traditional mode of slander against the Jews in general and converted Jews in particular. Reuchlin now questions the motivation of all converted Jews by calling them " 'vagabundi' whose 'treachery' draws them back to their own vomit" (25). It is interesting to note at this point, as Overfield does, that "other humanists such as Conrad Mutian, Willibald Pirckheimer and others wrote to Reuchlin after the appearance of the Augenspiegel. Rather than offering their support for Reuchlin they expressed dismay that the humanist had bothered with Pfefferkorn at all" (26). Therefore his contemporaries felt that Reuchlin had devoted an inordinate amount of time to this issue, which they perhaps deemed unnecessary. However, Reuchlin's harsh judgement of contemporary Jews still does not diminish his appreciation for the historical role of the Jews as bearers of divine wisdom.

It would seem, however, that the subsequent condemnation of Reuchlin by the Dominicans was prompted, not by his defence of Jewish books, but rather by his critical views which were to parallel Luther on the authority of the "Magistri nostri", i.e. the church and the church alone interprets scripture.

CHARACTERS OF LATE-MEDIEVAL ANTISEMITISM

In Oberman's opinion, Reuchlin was deeply immersed in the antisemitism of the "cultured elite" (27). Indeed, as far as Reuchlin himself is concerned, the evidence from his third and last writing period shows that the paradoxical tension between tolerance and hostility in his earlier phases remains unchanged. Tolerance denotes the defence of civil rights for the Jewish Minority pertaining to the protection of property and life - but not unconditionally to religious freedom. While Imperial censorship must establish which Jewish books are to be burned, those//

those books passing inspection should be retained as a resource for the conversion of the Jews. The bottom line continues to be that, for Reuchlin, there is no place for the Jews as Jews but only insofar as these "fellow citizens" are en-route to the baptismal font.

However, in order to properly discern Reuchlin's view of the Jews, we have to realize that his stance appears in variable modes and disguise. Again, for Oberman, it is like a snake which sheds its skin only to re-appear in an ever new "Gestalt", recognizable in its continuity and skillfully adjusting to the new environment provided by cultural change. Indeed, the full implications of Reuchlin's increasingly articulated position vis-a-vis the Jews can only be assessed properly within the context of escalating antisemitism in the later Middle-Ages. This frame of reference offers the historically reliable gauge for the measurement of the extent of antisemitism. Oberman categorizes such a diagnosis of late-medieval and early-modern antisemitism into four areas: (a) the criminalization of the Jews; (2) the polemic against usury; (3) the suspicion of baptized Jews; and (4) the charge of falsifying Holy Scripture.

THE CRIMINALIZATION OF THE JEWS

The myth of Jewish well-poisoning emerged in the wake of the plague which had scourged Europe since 1348. This superstition was by no means confined to the common man or to the naive piety of the uneducated. The influential Swiss humanist and admirer of Reuchlin, Joachim von Watt (Vadianus) (d1551) inserted horrifying stories into his chronicles, presenting them as "Factual" reports: that many Jews in Zurich, Schaffhausen, Winterthur, Wil and St. Gallen "were burned as punishment for their terrible deeds - the poisoning of the wells." (28).

Furthermore, belief in Jewish ritual murder extended to all social circles in Reuchlin's day - including leading scholars such as Johannes Eck, Reuchlin's host//

host in Ingostadt. In 1267, residents of Reuchlin's birthplace, Pforzheim had accused the Jews of the outrageous crime of kidnapping a young girl named Margaretha, draining her blood and discarding her body in the river. In Reuchlin's own lifetime (1507), Dominican sisters opened Margaretha's grave and, with Cardinal Bernadino Carvajal as witness, reported discovering that Margaretha's corpse had not yet decomposed - full proof of her saintly martyrdom at the hands of the Jews. This "miracle" encouraged ever new accusations of ritual murder - even until 1931! It is perhaps worth noting here, however, as Hsia does, that : "although ritual murder accusations were quite widespread by the thirteenth century and reached their climax in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries ..... Hapsburg authority had a clear limit" (29) when prosecuting such cases. This was due to the social and financial importance which the Jews had on central European communities.

Indeed, "accusations of ritual murder were were explicitly condemned by Charles V in 1544, renewed by Ferdinand I in 1562, Rudolf II in 1577. This provided the legal bulwark in the Jews' defence against the blood libel" (30).

THE PROBLEM OF USURY

Recent research has shown how the sermons of the mendicant friars, in particular the Franciscans of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, spread anti-Jewish propaganda to a European-wide audience. Poisoned wells and ritual murder became living legends which grew even deeper in the soil of popular piety. It is thus tempting to assume that these legends rose from "below" to the "top" of society. This model, however, does not do justice to the evidence. For the educated elite not only disseminated such "evidence" uncritically, but also embraced it as part of their own personal convictions; in unison the civic elite and the common man charged the Jews with extortive money-lending practices - the//

the vicious crime of usury. The leading humanists were proud to be laymen living no longer under monastic vows. But a great many of them, especially humanists living north of the Alps, retained the basic concepts of their mendicant predecessors, perpetuating their animosity toward the Jews. The expulsion of the Jews was therefore supported by all classes of society, including the educated.

THE MARRANOS : SUSPICION OF THE BAPTIZED JEW

Two new developments emerge at the beginning of the sixteenth century. After the expulsion of the unconverted Jews from Spain (1492) those prepared to be baptized, the Marranos, fell increasingly under suspicion. Baptized Jews were accused of concealing their opportunistic and diabolical motives. They secretly reverted to their previous faith, returning to their own "vomit" because they had "swallowed" the Christian faith unwillingly. This ugly caricature was to be found among Reuchlin's opponents and allies; Reuchlin himself subscribed to this view. Erasmus of Rotterdam also offered a variant of the same malicious charge when he suggested that countless unbaptized Jews would spring forth if Pfefferkorn were to be split open (31).

Here we encounter not just anti-Judaism, as Erasmus scholars insist, but touch upon one of the roots of antisemitism, as Gavin I. Langmuir has proposed (32). Yet, for Oberman, he rightly disagrees with the position of Hannah Arendt (33) that antisemitism only replaced anti-Judaism in the modern era. The fatal shift from anti-Jewish sentiment to racial antisemitism can already clearly be distinguished when in the later Middle-Ages, the cleansing waters of baptism are no longer believed to purify the sinful Jew. Hence, holy baptism is no longer "colour blind".

THE VERITAS HEBRAICA : VILIFYING THE RABBIS

When//

When speaking about his own place in history, Reuchlin points to his discovery of the "veritas hebraica" as his greatest service to posterity. Indeed, Reuchlin's Hebrew Grammar had made the self study of the language possible.

Yet this achievement unleashed two kinds of polemic : one defending Christian "orthodoxy", the other attacking Jewish religion. The first assault Reuchlin had expected. With regard to the literal meaning of the Hebrew text and the reaction such a stance would receive, he said "they will cry", 'What a disgusting disgrace!' (34).

But this very advance in biblical studies, the discovery of the "veritas hebraica", had unexpected implications for the development of antisemitism. The enthusiastic recovery of the most ancient biblical language produced a growing suspicion. Apparently the Rabbis had been untrustworthy guardians of the treasures entrusted to them : they had been intentionally withholding from Christendom the holy writings and mysteries entrusted to them. Luther expressed this view in particularly harsh fashion in On the Jews and Their Lies (1543). For Luther, the corrupt men are not this time the scholastics, but rather the Rabbis who have knowingly distorted the text of the Old Testament. Thus Luther advocated a severe restriction of any toleration for the Jews. He supported both the burning of synagogues and the confiscation of Rabbinic books in order to eliminate the centres from which Jewish lies were spread. At the same time, Luther justifiably considered himself Reuchlin's pupil by insisting on the original meaning of the Hebrew text. However, as we shall discover, his antisemitic recommendations separate him from Reuchlin. Although Luther never shared Pfefferkorn's hope for Jewish mass-conversion, like Pfefferkorn at the end of his life, he did propose a pogrom-like policy for the Jews and called for a silencing of the Rabbis (35). It was thus this Christian discovery of the "veritas hebraica"//

"veritas hebraica" which led to his vilification of the Rabbis.

Therefore, Reuchlin's view of the Jews can now be examined in light of the four crucial factors mentioned above.
Traditional accusations against the Jews - the poisoning of wells and ritual murder - were rife among the educated elite of upper Germany. Of these charges no trace appears in Reuchlin's work.

The dread of the Jews, propagated by the preaching mendicants, spread like wildfire. This again is not echoed by Reuchlin. But widespread approval of Jewish expulsion touches on a sensitive point, which, as Oberman addresses, has until now not been properly acknowledged. Contrary to the view of Ludwig Geiger and Guido Kisch, Reuchlin did indeed support a policy of forced expulsion. In his Augenspiegel (1511), he discusses the usual charge that Jewish usury damages the common good. Reuchlin does not question this charge at all and, indeed, makes it the basis for an awesome alternative : the Jews must desist from their usury or face expulsion. Here then, one must lodge an important fact. Reuchlin, like Zwingli and other "Reformed" Christian Hebraists did not consequently favour the Jews or Judaism as a result of their academic pursuits.

It is noteworthy that in determining the grounds for this, he advocates a principle, radical for its time : in each case, individual guilt should be established since Jews are legally "concives"; just as the Christians, they are subject to imperial law and the penalties based upon it (36). It should also be noted that Reuchlin designates the legal status of Jews not as "cives" but as "concives", as subjects of the Emperor, but the status of "resident aliens". In Florence, for example, three-quarters of a century earlier the Jews were already designated as "cives",
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This "equality before the law" is a marked advance : but Reuchlin is also exceptional as the only Christian author of his time to grasp the tragedy of the Spanish expulsion for the history of European Judaism. Indeed, his perspective points to the wider significance of the year 1492; under the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella not only was America "discovered", but also the Jews were expelled.

Despite his opposition to the burning of Jewish books, Reuchlin did not take the critical step of opposing this fundamental flaw of Christianity. His horizon was rather limited to the world of scholarship. Expulsion of the Jews meant, for him, the loss of that expertise and knowledge absolutely necessary for de-coding the sacred sources.

Insofar as the "Pfefferkorn dispute" brought home to Reuchlin the threat posed by the "baptized Jews", he shared a suspicion of the Marranos who had fled Spain, a view likewise held by Reuchlin's humanist allies. At the same time, it should be granted that his personal bitterness towards the 'Taufjuden' Pfefferkorn is quite understandable. It must be borne in mind that Pfefferkorn's attack had ravaged the last ten years of Reuchlin's life. It even lamed his interest in his precious library, one of the great private holdings in Europe, a rich collection, which contained at its peak 250 volumes in Latin alone; after 1512, he would not add a single volume.

We find no evidence whatsoever that Reuchlin ever suspected the Rabbis of consciously distorting the biblical texts. Yet he is in full agreement with the view that the discovery of Cabalistic truth not only confirms the superiority of the Christian faith, but also "crushes the stubbornness of the Jews of our time convicting them of their perfidy" (37).

CONCLUSION//

CONCLUSION

Reuchlin's significance lies in his insistence that the Jews should not be dependent on Christian charity but on secular law. Indeed, the lasting part of his high view of Renaissance humanism is the insistence that "humanism" is to be transferred from the realm of ideas to the rule of law.

Reuchlin has long been regarded within scholarship as a friend of the Jews. Thus the scholar from Pforzheim, the first true German humanist, served the cause of "humanity" befitting "Menschlichkeit", (to use Reuchlin's own term) in word and deed; notwithstanding his own theological reservations, social prejudices and personal antipathy toward the Jews of his time. No doubt Reuchlin stood "contra Judaeos" - holding up Christ's crown of thorns to the unbaptised Jews. At the same time, he stood "contra Christianos", against every form of coercion distorting Christianity into tyranny. In sum, Reuchlin was indeed a "forerunner" but of a Reformation and Enlightenment still to be achieved.

From this point we are now able to turn and look at another key Humanist of the early Reformation era, viz. Desiderius Erasmus.

ERASMUS

Not once in the five hundred years following his birth did Erasmus' judgements on the Jews and Jewry attract any special attention. The first work on the subject appeared exactly in the jubilee year 1969, when the legal historian, Guido Kisch, published a brochure concerning this issue entitled Stellung zu Juden and Judentum. In it, he argued that Erasmus was a "convinced and fundamental anti-semite, able and ready to share the views and programme of the later Luther, the same programme which, a good many years afterward, the Nazis so warmly approved." (38).

For the more recent Jewish historian, Shimon Markish, this long scholarly silence is wholly understandable; Erasmus left no works specifically dedicated to the Jews, while his remarks about the past and present of the Jewish people - their religion, culture, language, customs, and so on - are incidental and unsystematic in nature. In fact, as Markish goes on to point out, the same thing might be said of Calvin, citing from the collection Christen und Juden : "If someone should wish to study the Jewish question of the sixteenth century, he should turn to anyone but Calvin; whatever Calvin may have said on the subject has no real substantive meaning." (39).

However, Guido Kisch's accusations are equally understandable, since Erasmus (like Calvin) belongs to the ranks of those great leaders from whom answers are sought to all questions, even to those which they themselves have not posed. This means that, if Erasmus truly was an overt anti-semite, the fact is very important for both the present and the future (since even now people speak of the//

the alternatives "Lutheran Europe" and "Erasmian Europe"), even though he never published anything which remotely resembles Luther's inflammatory pamphlet On the Jews and their Lies.

The increased interest in Jewry, particularly in Judeo-Christian relations, which followed World War II, cannot be considered wholly academic. It was born first of all in a feeling of guilt and responsibility among members of the Christian world. From here, it follows for Markish, that Erasmus and "Erasmism", which have played so great a part in the history of toleration in modern times, "belong to the history of European Jewry regardless of the scope of Erasmus' thoughts about the Jews per se." (40).

From the perspective of a starting position, Luther and Erasmus were from a different stance, as pointed out by Lewin, Luther was a reformer, politician, a practical man, while Markish prefers to term Erasmus "a theologian and moralist who effaced all chronological boundaries, mixing all temporal planes in allegorical exegesis." (41).

Indeed, the point of comparison is important in posing the problem, the standard of this or that attitude to Judaism. As Markish asserts in his approach to the problem of Erasmus and the Jews, Kisch has compared Erasmus with his friend and model anti-semite, Ulrich Zasius (1521 - 1570), contrasting him with the equally model philo-semite Reuchlin. Unlike Zazius, Erasmus never considered the Jews to be slaves, finding the idea of forcible baptism of Jewish infants deeply alien, and never approached even close to Zasius' unrestrained cruelty and "scabrous style". (42). Despite Reuchlin's seemingly pro-Jewish stance, Markish puts forward a more//

more sceptical note that, in this case, like others of the era, it seems "premature to speak not only of friendliness but even of the rudiments of toleration" (43).

From this point, he goes on to suggest that the point of departure must therefore be intolerance and (the inescapable consequence of intolerance), missionary zeal.

It is the view of Heiko Oberman, however, that the case made by Kisch against Erasmus "has not been overstated" (44). In fact, Erasmus actually suspected the Jews (including Pfefferkorn) of collective conspiracy, and he held them as culpable as the wirepullers of the Peasants War. In a letter dating from 1516 (1517?), Erasmus could note as a praiseworthy accomplishment that France is the "purest blossom of Christianity, since she alone is uninfested with heretics, Bohemian schismatics, with Jews and half-Jewish Marranos" (45).

Another observation which Oberman makes of Erasmus concerns the limits of toleration and the shape they assumed in his case. He makes the conjecture that Erasmus would have had no patience with the modern enlightened ideal of toleration - of indivisible human rights, that extend to every acre and creed. What concerned him was not the freedom of the individual scholar - not the risky freedom of a Christian being such as Luther conceived it, but rather the protected free range of a Christian intellect, such as would allow him to publish the results of research unhampered by schools and their persuasions, unthreatened by Church and politics. Set in this context, the apparently contradictory judgements Erasmus passed on Reuchlin, within the brief span of three years became intelligible. In 1519, in the first of his Colloquia (Louvin), Erasmus//

Erasmus flatly asserts : "I am not a Reuchlinist. I have never backed him, and he would never have wanted me to do so" (46). However, when Reuchlin died in the summer of 1522, Erasmus hastily appended his Apotheosis Capnionis, the assumption and beautification of Reuchlin, to his expanded, second edition of this same Colloquia, while it was still in press at Basel. In this "in memorandum", the deceased is venerated as a second Jerome, as the successor, in other words to that great philologist and undaunted Biblical exegete among the Fathers - for Erasmus no doubt the highest accolade imaginable. For Oberman, Erasmus was undoubtedly an advocate of "tolerance" - in the face of inquisitional animosity toward higher culture. His tolerance was, however, of too purely an intellectual cast for him to exert a moderating influence on anti-Jewish elements. Academic freedom and Christian tolerance do not bring Erasmus to the threshhold of acceptance, not, at least, where toleration and emancipation of Jews are concerned. The church critic Erasmus coined the oft-repeated phrase, "If to hate the Jews is the proof of genuine Christians, then we are all excellent Christians". (47).

Oberman, like Kisch and Falk, thus maintains that Erasmus' thought is permeated by a virulent theological attitude of anti-Judaism. By this, however, is not meant a social or political hostility to Jews. Falk does blame Erasmus' prejudices on his being a "son of his times" (48), and sides with Kisch's view that his anti-Judaism is an inevitable result of "the centuries old theological interpretations concerning the Jews begun in the main by St. John Chrysostom and St. Augustine and continued ever after " (49).

However, this form of anti-Judaism, presented by Erasmus is not regarded by these//

these authors as racial anti-Semetism. In the course of his campaigns against religious formalism and its host of prescriptions and proscriptions, "Pharisee" and "scholastic", become synonymous for Erasmus, as did terms such as "Judaic" and "legalistic". For Oberman, the immediate target of all this anti-Judaism was not the Jews at all, but rather "a fundamental, and in those days, burning topic of the Reformation : the tension between the superficial expression of religious sentiment and the inner search for truth, between lighted candles and burnings hearts" (50). Still he goes on to argue, the matter-of-fact and ubiquitous use of the term "pharisaic", "Judaic", and "Jewish" in polemical contexts betray "the abject susceptibility of linguistic usage to customary frames of reference and experience" (51) : the "experience" in this case being that of a Christian society continually faced with the menace of an "obdurate Israel" (52) In the mind of Erasmus, this threat could stifle the most basic values : knowledge, the social order, and religion. As a result, he advanced the causes of independent research, an educated society, and genuine devotion. Tolerance, however, was a Christian virtue which did not take place in society for the "most pernicious plague and bitterest foe of the teachings of Jesus Christ" (53)-- Judaism.

When Erasmus made a public profession of the fact that he was not a Reuchlinist, he obviously feared a heresy proceeding. He spoke out of fear, and, even so, he spoke the truth : he was not a Reuchlinist, despite his change of attitude in the Apotheosis Capnionis. Above all, Erasmus was concerned with the renaissance of classical letters, with paganism and Judaism being regarded as a threat to this objective. As we noted earlier, although he never produced a single work dedicated solely to the Jews and certainly never reached the//

the polemical boundaries of the later Luther, the views of Erasmus, coming as they do on the eve of the Reformation, from an influential figure, form an important part of the equation. Having sketched in the background to Erasmus's views concerning the Jews, it is now possible to examine his corespondence in more detail.

CONTEMPORARY JEWS OF ERASMUS' ERA

Erasmus first speaks of Jews contemporary to him in his famous essay on the adage Dulce bellum inexpertis (1515) : "When has the sword, murder, arson, plundering, turned people into good Christians. Openly to be a Turk (Muslim) or a Jew is a lesser evil than to pretend to be a Christian" (54) As Markish asserts, this remark may be considered to be typical of Erasmus' ideals of non-violence, and the boundaries of genuine and false Christianity, characteristics of his work throughout. At this early stage, the humanist's view of Judaism would appear to be non-controversial.

The first edition of his New Testament Commentary (1516) leaves the subject of contemporary Jewry almost untouched, with only two exceptions, in the foreword, and a later remark on Matthew 1 : 21, which includes reference to the "madness of Jews of our day" (55) who claimed that Christ had a name other than Joshua ben Nun (from the Book of Joshua) and Joshua the High Priest (Ezra 3 : 2, 10 : 18, et al).

However, the initial hostile remark from Erasmus concerning the Jews was rather to be found in a letter (1516) to Wolfgang Capito (1478-1541), in praise of//

of Capito's theological and philological work :

> There is still one misgiving in my mind : that under cover of the reborn literature of antiquity paganism may try to rear its ugly head ... or that the rebirth of Hebrew studies may give Judaism its cue to plan a revival, the most pernicious plague and bitterest enemy that one can find to the teachings of Christ ... Lately there have been published several pamphlets which breathe the unadulterated air of Jewry. I watch our great hero Paul (the Apostle) toiling to defend Christ against Judaism, and I feel that some men are slipping back into it secretly. Then I hear of people who have other schemes afoot which can add nothing to our knowledge of Christ but merely throw dust in men's eyes (56).

For Markish, this context shows primarily that this is "Judaism", the tyranny of rituals in the Church, not the living Judaism of the living Jews; after all, "no one can doubt that what Erasmus means here by paganism is not the worship of Athena Pallas or Jupiter on the Capitoline but the "neopaganism" of the "Renaissance" (57). However, it would appear that the tone set in this passage shows Erasmus to be of the medieval mind which had viewed Judaism with suspicion for centuries and, indeed, it is this kind of thinking which Luther was to build upon.

In contrast to this, it is interesting to note the comments of Erasmus in regard to Paolo Ricci (d. 1451) in Antwerp in 1516 or 1517. Ricci was a Hebraist and physician, as well as personal surveyor to Emperor Maximilian and had been converted to Christianity and baptized. Erasmus wrote:

> I was so attracted by Paolo Ricci in our recent conversation that I have a kind of great thirst for more frequent and intimate talk with him. Besides his//

> his knowledge of Hebrew, what a lot of philosophy he knows, and theology too! And such an upright character, a great desire to learn, an open readiness to teach, a modest manner in debate. Personally, I liked him long ago at first sight in Pavia (Erasmus had met Ricci in 1506) ... and now that I see him at close quarters, I like him still more. At last I find in him an Israelite indeed (58).

Such remarks would suggest that Erasmus did not perhaps harbour a continuing grudge against baptized Jews per se, but rather considered them on individual merit. In the light of his reaction to Pfefferkorn : "If one were to operate on him, six hundred Jews would spring out"(59), coupled with an apparent view that a baptized Jew could never become a "fully-fledged Christian"(60), we find an inconsistency in Erasmus. The theory that baptized Jews would be judged in Erasmus' eyes on their individual merit, is strengthened by evidence which would suggest that his attacks on Pfefferkorn stemmed from the converts' disrespect toward Erasmus, describing him as a "runaway monk"(61). Whereas Erasmus had a poor personal relationship with Pfefferkorn (although admittedly he did not concern himself with Pfefferkorn for long), his admiration for Ricci and Matthias Adrian (another converted Jew), led him to paint a far more positive picture. One wonders at this point how far the humanist's viewpoint was obscured by grounds of intellectual superiority, treating Ricci and Adrian more as equals, in contrast to Pfefferkorn.

Furthermore, Pfefferkorn was regarded as having infiltrated Christianity in order to serve Judaism from within. In Erasmus' view : "As a Jew in disguise he could throw peace among Christians into confusion"(62), further suggesting that a motive for conversion was also questioned in individual cases. In view of//

of this lack of a uniform policy, it could be argued at this stage that Erasmus' polemic toward Pfefferkorn bore the hallmark of a personal vendetta rather than an overall view of converted Jews.

Another issue which arises from Erasmus' diatribe toward Pfefferkorn is the notion of Jewish conspiracy. In keeping with other medieval suspicions of the Jews, this concept held sway in the mind of Erasmus, as he sought to portray Pfefferkorn as the enemy within attempting to overthrow Christianity. However, although Markish argues that Erasmus presents a consistent ideology of conspiracy, it would seem, from his letters, that this is once again a ploy applied to Pfefferkorn, in order to destabilize his opponent, and, as such, presents an isolated case.

With regard to Jewish studies (in particular the pursuit of Hebrew language and literature and an adherence to the Old Testament), Erasmus would appear to hold reservations, due to a firm Christological conviction. With his background influenced by the Brethren of the Common Life, the movement founded by Gerard Groote, which held an influential following in the Low Countries, Erasmus continued to observe a sense of practical worship, free from distraction. Markish suggests that Erasmus regarded Judaism and the Cabalistic philosophies propounded by Reuchlin to hold such distractions. However, he continues to argue that, on this point, Erasmus is not "manifesting hatred ... but rather disaffection on the grounds of principle" (63).

THE ISSUE OF JEWISH CONVERSION - A COMPARISON WITH LUTHER

What then were Erasmus' views with regard to the need for Jewish conversion, aside from his acceptance or otherwise of those who had already made the switch?//

switch?

A statement from his Ratio Verae Theologiae (1518) would seem to indicate an indifference to the subject. Erasmus writes : "Once, in order to bring the Jews to faith, it was necessary to turn to the authority of the Old Testament; now we are attached to the Jews only to an insignificant degree" (64). This apparent disinterest continues in the second edition of Erasmus' New Testament Commentary (1519). Commenting on Matthew 23 : 15, he states:-

> The bad pagan made a worse Jew. If you will, this speaks to our ways; after all, we consider it a great business to bring a Jew to baptism. Of course we are all obligated to desire that all the Jews should come to their senses, but some men seek their personal glory in this and so lead the new convert along the wrong roads, teaching them something other than real Christianity. In truth, how can we make other Christians if we aren't Christians ourselves? ... There are those too who act on a new plane, making Christians by force of arms, and under the guise of spreading the faith they trouble only to enrich themselves. However, you gain nothing in this way, save sorrow in pure Christian souls (65).

For Markish, this text not only "uncompromising condemnation of forced conversion (Erasmus decidedly follows the "soft" line of the Western Church, represented by Pope Gregory the Great, the Venerable Bede, Bernard de Clairvaux, Eugene III's papal bull Sicut Iudaeis, and Thomas Aquinas) but also doubts the goal of Christian missionary work among the Jews" (66).

This stance contrasts Luther's early approach contained in his 1523 work That Jesus//

Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew, (which I shall deal with in greater depth later on). At this point, the German reformer, rather than showing indifference to the matter, calls for a wider Jewish conversion : "we in our turn ought to treat the Jews in a brotherly manner in order that we might convert some of them ...Therefore I would request and advise that one deal gently with them from Scripture, that some of them may come along."(67). Comparisons may be arguably drawn here that, just as Erasmus was opposed to a forced conversion of the Jews, pointing out the flaws of this approach in Spain, Luther also advocated a subtle, understanding proselytisation (in 1523). However, whereas Luther regarded such conversion as desirable, and in need of encouragement, Erasmus, as we have seen, invested in it no such necessity, preferring to offer an outlook of indifference.

THE ISSUE OF ERASMUS' JEWISH "TOLERATION"

In a 1526 response to an accusation by the Parisian theologian Noel Bedier (1470-1537) that his views concerning a repetition of baptismal vows at an adult stage, and toleration of those who refused to do so, was heretical, Erasmus answers with regard to the Jews:

> No one should be forced to a profession of Christianity. After all, we don't do that with the Jews (and in my opinion should not), and they are greater foes of our religion ... But if someone falls away all the same, let him live among us as the Jews do, for whom (even) entrance to Church sermons is not forbidden ... All this intends to give us true and real Christians, not coerced and hypocritical ones. (68).

Here we see Erasmus not only condemn the forced baptism of Jews, but also state//

state that they have the right to "live among us", as long as they do not slander Christianity. Markish argues, on the basis of this text, that "Erasmus sees here the Jewish question in the context of (or in agreement with) his entire moral system, as a result of which the results are wholly Erasmian."(69). Therefore, the anti-semitic remarks of Erasmus contradict this system.

However, despite advocating toleration for Jews "living among us", at this stage, Erasmus still does not regard mixed marriages as permissible, and, as such, continues a policy of enforced segregation. In his Institutio Christiani Matrimonii (also in 1526), he refers to the injunction of the Church which forbade a Christian woman "to marry a pagan or a Jew", to the Apostle Paul, who permitted marriage solely in the Lord", and he concludes : "So I am astonished how certain writers of our day affirm that one may marry with a Jew or pagan. If it is sufficient condition to be man and woman, why a brother and sister are man and woman."(70).

Again, in his Vidua Christiana of 1529, Erasmus, despite his toleration of Jews in society, purports that there need be no direct contact with them :

> Their company is to be avoided, save when necessity requires or the hope beguiles that bad might be turned into better .... There are also closer relationships, which are called ... friendships. And it is to friendships that they should not be admitted, those who suffer from heavy sins and who give no hope for correction.(71).

However, there is not really an anti-semitic tone in this passage as such, no hatred. Rather, as in the case with Erasmus' earlier writings, it displays a lack of understanding of Judaism.

However,//

However, there is a continuing differentiation in Erasmus' stance toward the Jews, with regard to toleration. On the one hand, he states that there need be no social contact or intermarriage with the Jews, but, on the other, upholds their right to freedom from physical persecution.

In addition to his earlier pronoucements dealing with forced baptism, in his Interpretation of Psalm 28 ("Must There Be War with the Turks?", printed in March 1530), Erasmus presents us with a further indication of his thought :

> ' The Christian authorities punish the Jews if they commit a crime against the civil laws to which they submitted themselves, but no one kills for the difference in faith, since the Christian religion is inculcated, not imposed by force ... The right by which Jews carry punishment equal to that of the Christians was once applied by pagan rulers to the Christians and would now be so applied by the Turks ... And they are cruelly mistaken who believe that they shall fly directly up to heaven if they should fall in battle with the Turks; if your conscience is not clear, then you can't get to heaven even if you were, in the name of Christ, to lay your head on the block before a tyrant who demands that you bow down before idols. (72).

From this, we may ascertain that Erasmus advocated an equal application of the civil laws to all, regardless of belief. Being of another faith is therefore not grounds for violence against the individual; the illegal murder of someone of another faith is not a service but a sin. This outlook again would seem to originate from Erasmus' intrinsic view of toleration in general, and in the process, deflect accusations of anti-semitism from authors such as Kisch and Falk.

Having//

Having completed this survey of the available Erasmus materials, it is also important to note a phrase from a letter of 30 January 1523, which "has often served as the major (if not the sole) grounds for seeing Erasmus as sympathetic to Jews."(73), and which Guido Kisch eliminates from consideration entirely:

> I have never refused anyone friendship because the man was sympathetic to Luther or kept aloof from Luther. I have a temperament such that I could love even a Jew, if only he were well mannered and friendly, and did not dig up blasphemy of Christ in my presence. Such decorum I consider especially useful in ending dissent. (74).

As Markish points out, this is "said with a certain facetiousness, if only because Erasmus almost certainly never encountered Jews close up and showed no desire ever to do so." (75).

Overall, as scholarship has been divided on whether or not Erasmus exuded an air of anti-semitism, we must make a careful examination of the original sources of Erasmus himself. Although, as we have seen, there would appear to be an element of inconsistency in his views at times, the whole picture does seem to present an outlook of general indifference, especially with regard to attempts at Jewish conversion, Erasmus leaving such a possibility open to the grace of God, rather than deliberate concerted efforts on the part of others.

Having considered the views of two key Humanists, we may now examine a different area of Reformed thought - that of Ulrich Zwingli in Zurich.

CHAPTER THREE
ULRICH ZWINGLI - "JUDAIZER IN ZURICH"?

With the spread of Reformation ideals in the early 1520's, following Luther's initial spark at Wittemburg, the new wave of theology was to reach Switzerland, and, in particular, Zurich. The key figure in this area in those early days was Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1521). Indeed, under Zwingli's leadership and his successful working relationship with the city authorities, Reformed doctrine gained ground more radically than in Germany. (1). A central event in this process was the abolition of the mass at Zurich in 1525, in addition to such measures as the introduction of clerical marriage and the removal of images and statues from churches in the area. The Zwingli revolt in Zurich then originated in a combination of cause celebres, yet, in the eyes of the Catholic Christendom, and even in certain Reformed circles, the "Judaic" influence was one of paramount importance. The Zurich Reformation itself was marked by a return to the authority of the Bible, with particular regard to the Old Testament; Zwingli and his contemporaries developed the Hebrew language and literature; as in the case of other Reform movements a translation of the Bible from its original Hebrew into the vernacular was made. Several of Zwingli's doctrines were called "Judaic", his ideas concerning the nature of Christ, his opposition to images and the Eucharist. Additionally, it was alleged that his theories of government (an integral part of his theology) arose from his prejudice in favour of the Old Testament, and his instruction at the hands of various Jewish scholars.

The occasions on which the charge of "Judaizing" was raised against Zwingli and his followers are numerous. His occupation with the original text of the Hebrew Bible placed him under the suspicion of Judaic heresey at Marburg in 1528,//

1528, where he was compelled to deny an affiliation to "humanitarian" or "Jewish" views on the nature of Christ. This did not, however, as Newman informs us, prevent Luther from comparing Zwingli to Arius, the famous heretic of the early church. Furthermore, Zwingli's attack on the veneration of images was compared to the practice of the Jews, with the direct implication that the iconoclastic stance of the Zurich reformers was derived from Jewish sources.

So strong was the suspicion of his Jewish associations that Zwingli was compelled to issue a defence on June 25th 1524, against the charge that he had derived his knowledge of the Scriptures from a certain Jew of Winterthur, named Moses. Zwingli requested the Jew himself to deny the truth of the accusation. The Reformer confesses, however, to a knowledge of Hebrew and admits that he had debated with this Jew concerning the Messianic prophecies. It is notable that, as Newman points out, in the same tract he takes occasion to refute another charge, namely that in a sermon he had denied the divinity and atonement of Christ. These facts are sufficient to indicate that there was some basis for the assertion by Catholic groups in German-speaking Switzerland that Zwingli not only inclined towards the Jewish Old Testament, but also had direct relations with the local Jews.

To estimate the extent and importance of the evidence thereon is our task in this assessment. As Zwingli, unlike Luther, did not write a specific treatise on the Jews, our original sources for this purpose are comprised primarily of:- Concerning Choice and Liberty Respecting Food (1522),Solemn Warning against the Control of Foreign Lords (1522) Commentary on True and False Religion (1525) Refutation of Baptist Tricks (1527). However, before embarking upon an examination of these sources, we must sketch in the background to Zwingli's Judaic influences.

ZWINGLI AS A HEBRAIST

Although Zwingli had acquired a thorough knowledge of the Vulgate and the Septuagint, this did not satisfy his inquisitive mind. Therefore, he turned to "the text beyond which no student could go further in a study of the Scriptures, namely Hebrew" (2). For Newman, Zwingli as a Hebraist takes his place by the side of the most distinguished students of the subject, (in contrast to Luther), during the Reformation era. When he began his studies therein is uncertain. He may have commenced during his early days at Zurich, or at Einsiedein. Between the years 1517-19, he secured a copy of Reuchlin's Rudimenta Hebraica, "the grammar which introduced many a contemporary Hebraist into a knowledge of the Scriptural tongue". (3).

It would appear that Zwingli had an instructor in Hebrew until 1519, or perhaps even later. In the autumn of 1520, Jacob Ceporinus, a brilliant young linguist, who was studying Hebrew at Ingolstadt, visited Zurich; from him, Zwingli received many interesting points of information concerning Ceporinus' teacher, the eminent Hebraist, Reuchlin. Zwingli was then to keep Ceporinus in mind and, at the first opportunity, called him to Zurich as teacher of Hebrew.

Prior to the time of Ceporinus, Zwingli's instructor seems to have been a certain Andrew Boeschenstein who had been a pupil of Moses Moelln in Germany, and a teacher of Hebrew at Ingolstadt, Augsburg, and also Wittenberg. Indeed, after 1518, he taught Melanchthon Hebrew at Wittenberg, but soon after Luther dismissed him as being an "arch Jew", giving further evidence of his inability to grasp Hebrew himself.

After the departure of Boeschenstein, Jacob Ceporinus became Zwingli's own teacher. Later on, he was to assist Zwingli in the translation of the Hebrew into//

into Latin.

With the stimulus provided by Ceporinus, Zwingli made satisfactory progress but, unfortunately, the death of his tutor in 1523 left him without a teacher of Hebrew at that point.

In 1524, as Newman points out, we find Zwingli forced to deny any debt to Moses of Winterthur, for instruction in the Scriptures, and the latter publicly announced that he had not influenced the Reformer in any way. (4). This repudiation of friendship with the Jews Zwingli felt to be necessary out of deference to the prejudices of the time; the public looked with suspicious glances upon any student who associated with the Jews, a fact to which Reuchlin could amply testify. In order to absolve the Reformation, he had instigated from a hint of Jewish influence, Zwingli took this decisive action. His confession, however, that he knew Hebrew, and that he had held discourses with the Jew Moses of Winterthur concerning the Messianic prophecies, lends weight to Newman's supposition that, during these debates, Moses had offered the Reformer his own interpretations of Scriptural passages.

ZWINGLI AND THE REUCHLIN AFFAIR

Newman goes on to suggest that Zwingli may have known Reuchlin's Kabbalistic works. (5). It is certain that he knew of the humanists' defence of the Talmud and other Jewish books against the attacks of the Cologne Inquisition, and the Obscurantists throughout Europe. The conflict between the forces of liberalism on the side of Jewish literature, and of reaction, determined that Judaism should not be studied, even for the purpose of seeking therein proof of Christianity. This found an echo in German-speaking Switzerland and, as such, deserves attention.//

attention.

Zwingli came into contact with this revolutionary upheaval prevalent to the German Reformation through both direct and indirect means. In the person of Joachim von Watt or Vadian (1484-1551), both Zwingli and Reuchlin found a friend. Vadian, the Reformer of St. Gall was a student at Vienna at the time of the Reuchlin-Dominican affair. Vadian later wrote to Reuchlin extending him his friendship during the trial at Rome. Reuchlin subsequently thanked him for this friendship and Newman offers the supposition that, were it not for "many duties intervening" (6),he would have kept in more regular contact with Vadian.

During the very time that Vadian interested himself in the activities of the German humanists, Zwingli was in correspondence with him at Vienna. On October 4th 1512, a few months after Vadian's first epistle to Reuchlin, Zwingli sent his brother James to Vadian with a letter of introduction, commending him to the latter's care. Vadian and Zwingli remained in constant communication throughout the Reformer's career and he must have relayed news of the controversy surrounding Jewish books, as Zwingli was of course interested in information concerning Reuchlin.

Zwingli also came into contact with the Reuchlin affair through Erasmus. As the Zurich Reformer was on friendly terms with Ulrich von Hutten, the leading supporter of Reuchlin in his battle with the Obscurantists, Erasmus later dedicated to Zwingli his Sponge to wipe off the Aspersions of Hutten (1523). However, an estrangement had arisen because of Zwingli's friendship with Hutten, due to the latter's attacks on Erasmus for his failure to embrace the cause of the Reformation. Indeed, the Reuchlin affair, as Newman points out, would doubtless have arisen in conversation between Zwingli and von Hutten.

JUDAIC TRENDS IN ZWINGLI'S IDEOLOGY//

JUDAIC TRENDS IN ZWINGLI'S IDEOLOGY

For Newman and Gabler, the theological system of Ulrich Zwingli was essentially Christological (7), yet, in the opinion of F.H. Foster, it had its roots in the Old Testament religion. (8). It is, however, possible to go even further, as Newman proceeds to do, and affirm that Zwingli's theology was influenced not only by Old Testament Hebraic influences, but by Jewish and Rabbinical ideas. Again, Newman points out that the Reformer's belief and practices were "dominated by a Christian impulse; they centred about the personality of Christ; they traced their origin through the Roman back to the primitive Christian church" (9). Nevertheless, in several important particulars, especially where Zwingli dissented from orthodox Catholicism, a strong Judaic element is present, as we shall detect from the original sources.

Having breifly examined the role of Hebrew language and Scriptures in Zwingli's ideology and scholarly activities, and having found them during the latter years of his life to be profoundly significant, it is now possible to examine the Judaic element in the original sources.

REFUTATION OF BAPTIST TRICKS - AN OLD TESTAMENT OVERVIEW?

In 1527, Zwingli was forced into writing a tract to refute the arguments of his Anabaptist opponents in Zurich to clarify his position against them. The Anabaptists, led by Felix Manz (1498-1527), had broken away from Zwingli and, by this stage in 1527, were in the ascendancy, playing upon their former mentor's Achilles heel as they saw it. If a theological system was to be built around scripture, how could Zwingli justify infant baptism, when the New Testament indicated no clear pattern for it? Within this treatise, which has its//

its central motif Zwingli's covenant theology, we find a strong emphasis upon the old Testament. Indeed, his covenant ideals are themselves based upon a unity of Testaments view-point, with Zwingli criticising his Anabaptist opponents for what he sees as having a disregard for the Old Testament.

> At Gruningen you deny the Old Testament ... Since then you disparage part of the Old and part of the New, you only show that you are the very worst and most fickle of men, indeed atheists ... By which do you not despise the Old Testament? And yet Christ submitted himself and his teaching to it, and the apostles used no other Scripture, indeed they could not, since, until after the begining of their preaching there was no Scripture as yet other than that drawn from the Old Testament. (10).

In the conclusion of his arguments with the baptists:

> What difference is there between the Old and New Testament? Very much and very little I reply. Very little if you regard those chief points which concern God and us : very much if you regard what concerns us alone.(11).

Zwingli's views do however remain firmly Christological in this document. In the sense that God is our God and we are his people, there is no difference between Testaments. However, he does point to six areas of possible variation, in order to perhaps balance his views:

> Christ is now given which formerly they (in the Old Testament times) awaited with great desire. Simeon is a witness.
>
> They who died in faith did not ascend into heaven but went to the descendants of Abraham; now he who trusts Christ enters not into judgement, but has passed from death to life.
>
> Types were offered, as shown in Hebrews.
>
> The light shines more clearly, as pertains to the illumination of the understanding.//

understanding.

The testament is now preached and expounded to all nations, while formerly it was enjoyed by one nation (Israel).

Before there was never set forth for men a model for living as has now been done by Christ.

In keeping with this theme of a continuation in history between the two Testaments, Zwingli also points out that the same covenant which God had entered into with Israel, he now enters into with Christians also

> that we may be one people with them, one Church, and may also have one covenant. I suppose that some will vainly cry out : See how that fellow would make Jews of us, though we have always been told of two peoples, two churches and two covenants (12).

It is easy to see within the pages of Refutation of Baptist Tricks, why such an accusation would be made against Zwingli. In tracing a brief history of Israel, he paints an even more positive picture of the Jews and their election, than Luther had done in That Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew.

> Therefore the Israelite people excelled all others on the earth, both in those matters which pertain to God, and in those pertaining to nobility of race. For as they were all sprung from one (Abraham), so from them sprung he who was made the only king and emperor of all nations. What greater nobility or what equal grace is discoverable? (13).

These words then echo Luther's 1523 article That Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew, but express a positive view in more glowing terminology.

Furthermore, Zwingli dwells upon the special place of Israel at greater length than Luther. He continues:

"The//

> The Israelites were God's people with whom he entered into covenant, whom he made especially his own, to whom also he gave a sign of his covenant from the least to the greatest, because high and low were in covenant with him were his people and were his church .(14).

Here Zwingli would appear to be stressing the unique relationship Israel held with God on the basis of the covenant, and its mark of circumcision, which maintained the relationship "even though very many of them had displeased the Lord" (15). Notably, Luther, unlike Zwingli or his successor in Zurich, Heinrich Bullinger (1504-1575), did not pursue a covenant theology. However, this was an important aspect which may have resulted in a greater toleration of Judaism by Zwingli.

Zwingli also asserts:

> The promises (of God) also were made to them alone ... It was then the special people whose were the promises, even though he spoke also through Sibyl prophetesses among the Gentiles, that we might recognise the liberty of his will and the authority of his election.(16).

For Jackson, this remark shows how extremely liberally-minded Zwingli was. Again, although Luther had pointed to the special place the Jews held as a result of their being granted the promises of God (which he later denied), he did not dwell upon it in such terms.

With regard to the salvation of the Jews, Zwingli states (on the basis of Acts 2 : 36) "Jesus was made the Christ, that is Messiah, the Saviour of the Jews, therefore also the Jews have salvation" (17). Thus Christ indeed belongs to the Jews, and through him alone, they, as well as Christians are saved. "For he arrived first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles" (Romans 1 : 16). Once more in//

in Acts 10 : 34, Peter states : "of a truth I perceive that God is no respector of persons" (here proving that Christ is also for the Gentiles). Therefore, for Zwingli, we have one and the same Saviour.

However, Zwingli goes on in Refutation of Baptist Tricks to allay accusations of proselytising for Judaism when he says :

> Whenever there is held in Scripture that there are two distinct and diverse peoples necessarily one of these is not the people of God. For both, when the Jews were God's people, and we who are Gentiles were not, and now when we who are Gentiles are God's people and the Jews are cut off, there is only one people of God, not two. In Genesis 25 : 23 we read 'Two peoples shall be separated from thy bowels, it is not to be understood as though both were and would be his people at the same time' (18). Thus, at this point for Zwingli, the formerly impious people (i.e. the Gentiles) are now the Jews and it is the Christians who have replaced them and been put in their place. Therefore it cannot be two diverse covenants because this would necessitate not only two diverse peoples, but also two Gods (19).

However, such polemic is about as dismissive of the Jews as Zwingli gets in Refutation of Baptist Tricks.

Although one must bear in mind the fact that this treatise is aimed at those who may sympathise with the Anabaptists and specifically revolves around covenant theology, Zwingli undoubtedly takes a refreshing stance towards the Jews and their election, displaying little or none of the aggressive anti-Jewish approach adopted by Bucer and the later Luther. Having built his case around a firm adherence to the Old Testament, the Zurich Reformer remains loyal to his Hebraist background, and his relationship with Moses of Winterthur. However, it must be//

be borne in mind that this document was written as a matter of urgency to address the problems created by his opponents in Zurich, and was not specifically aimed at the Jews, of whom they may have been few in the city anyway. However, one would imagine that such a stance would prove attractive to any Jewish readers either within or outwith Zurich

CONCERNING CHOICE AND LIBERTY RESPECTING FOOD

Though Zwingli championed the Old Testament in general, he protested against the use made thereof by the established church in vindication of its intricate ritualistic and ceremonial system. In his work Concerning Choice and Liberty Respecting Food, written in March 1522, we find Zwingli addressing this issue in connection with Jewish "ritual".

The document was primarily concerned with the contemporary debate as to whether anyone had the authority to forbid flesh at any time. It was the first of Zwingli's publications in the interest of the Reformation, and, as Jackson points out, shows the practical order of his mind. Zwingli had by this time come to the conclusion that whatever practice lacked Biblical support, was not of obligation, and resultantly dismissed the church's stance thereof. However, he did not disobey the city regulation himself, although some of his parishioners, notably the printer Froschauer, chose to ignore the ruling. When visiting Froschauer during Lent, Zwingli himself was offered sausage meat but, although he declined, he absolved the printer's rights as a Christian man. The authorities however thought differently and cited Froschauer before them. It was then that Zwingli preached this sermon in which he maintains the eating of meat during Lent was not forbidden in the Scriptures.

In//

In the first section of the work Zwingli may be found to be dismissing what he regards as ritualism in the Old Testament: "And although certain foods are forbidden in the Old Testament, they are made free in the New" (20). In a reference to the food laws of the Torah he goes on:

> Here you seen again that he (Paul writing in Titus 1 : 15) did not desire Jewish wiles heeded; this is plainly shown by the words next proceeding, where he says : 'Wherefore rebuke and punish them sharply (of course with words), that they may be sound in faith, not listening to Jewish fables and human commandments, that pervert the truth . (21).

Within this document then we have detected repeated efforts to force the Catholic church into a "Judaic" position by describing rules concerning food as derived from Jewish sources.

SOLEMN WARNING AGAINST THE CONTROL OF FOREIGN LORDS

Zwingli's reliance upon the Old Testament can be further seen from his advocacy of Old Testament theocratic and anti-monarchical principles. He aimed at the reformation of political and social life through the medium of Scripture; like Calvin at Geneva, though in a lesser degree, to create a model commonwealth founded upon the laws and spirit of the Bible. Indeed, Zwingli held far more liberal views with regard to the federalist rights of people in a collective capacity against their rulers, supported by passages from the Old Testament, whilst Luther relied exclusively on the New.

Zwingli//

Zwingli supported his concept of government as divinely ordained by means of illustrations derived from Jewish history. These were: the foundation of all positive law is in the Bible; all decisions which affect the life of the state, found in Old Testament codes are to be recognised as binding upon every Christian government. He quotes as authority for laws on adultery, Lev 20 : 10 "The preachers to whom the Word of God and superintendence (of morals) shall ban and exclude such sinners (adulterers) from the Christian parish" (22). On perjury, he cites Deut 17 : 5, he also regards the Decalogue as "the fountain source of ethical legislation" (23). However, a contrast to Zwingli's other views may be found in the statement "no government should be so dishonest with its citizens that it tolerates Jews or other usurers" (24). However, his attitude on this issue is far removed in severity from Luther's suggestions in On the Jews and Their Lies/

In outline and details, however, Zwingli's model commonwealth had its roots in the Old Testament theocracy; it was naturally overlaid with Christian ideas and forms, with New Testament passages standing side by side with selections borrowed from the Old Testament. Yet its essential spirit was borrowed from the Pentateuch, "sufficiently noticeable to give it an Old Testament character and mould" (25). Indeed, we can find Zwingli citing Old Testament texts in Solemn Warning against the Control of Foreign Lords, in support of his republican ideas. God favours such independence, as he proved when he led the children of Israel out of Egypt because the Egyptian Kings and people maltreated them. For this read Exodus. Furthermore, later when the Jews demanded a king, he informed them of the power and abuses of kings (I Sam 8 : 10-27),//

10-27), undoubtedly warning them to beware of such rule. See also St. Paul's letter to the Corinthians (I Cor 7 : 21) : "But if thou mayest be made free, use (strive for) it rather." (26).

COMMENTARY ON TRUE AND FALSE RELIGION

In this major work, written in March 1525, Zwingli outlines his view whereby the Zurich Reformer at this stage asserts "the Law is nothing else than the eternal will of God" (27).

Furthermore, for Zwingli, the law will never be abrogated that you are to love your neighbour as yourself; and theft, false witness, murder, etc., will always be recorded as crimes. He goes on to stress that, without a full knowledge of the law, one cannot know of the danger of sin :

> We are forced to admit, therefore, that the Law proceeded from God; for of ourselves we should not know what sin was unless God had manifested in His word what should be done and what not done ... The Law therefore, is nothing else than teachings as to the will of God through which we understand what He wills, what He wills not, what he demands, what he forbids. (28).

Zwingli backs up this assertion, in which may be found his Covenant theology, by adding: "In Matthew 7 : 12 Christ says : "All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, even so do ye to them; for this is the law and the prophets". (29).

This important treatise, which also deals with "Statues and Images", another issue on which Zwingli was accused by his opponents of holding a "Jewish view",//

view". This gives a further indication, as we have noted, of his loyalty to a Hebraist background, presenting an overall outlook which, again with regard to his reverence for the Law (a position which also pervades Refutation of Baptist Tricks) would presumably have proved appealing and indeed hopeful to a Jewish audience.

Overall then, although one must admit that Zwingli did not contribute much comment upon the Jews directly, he is nonetheless worthy of inclusion.

Like Reuchlin before him, his pre-occupation with Hebrew sources would have presumably met with approval from Jews within Switzerland.

Although Zwingli, despite his adherence to theological arguments based upon the Old Testament did not devote time to advocating religious and social emancipation for the Jews, one must bear in mind the problems facing him at the time. During his short career, Zwingli was plagued by continual opposition from both the Roman Catholic Party and the Anabaptists. Therefore, the establishment of the Reformation in Zurich remained his chief concern, leaving little scope for "side issues" such as the Jews.

From here it will now be possible to examine the most problematical Reformation figure regarding the Jews - Martin Luther.

CHAPTER FOUR
LUTHER'S EARLY ATTITUDE

It is necessary in composing any picture of "Luther and the Jews" to sketch in his relationship with Reuchlin and Erasmus, in order to set him in the proper context of the reform movement of the day. Additionally, a look at his relationship with Justas Jonas (1493-1555) will prove to be useful. Initial investigation then prompts the first question - Was Luther's stance always unambiguous, or was he not rather caught between hope and resignation in his biblical expectation of the Jewish conversion and in his hatred-filled call for an uncompromising attack on the Jews? Bainton indeed argues that Luther was "sanguine that his own reform, by eliminating the abuses of the papacy, would accomplish the conversion of the Jews" (1).

In contrast to the opinions which have branded Luther an anti-Semite and credited him with being unequalled in that line until Hitler (2), to scholars he had appeared, for over a century long, as a man of changing roles; Luther was, in turn, the Jews' friend and then the Jews' foe. In 1523, with the publication that year of That Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew, he was actively seeking the elimination of obstacles to Jewish conversion. However, in stark contrast to this, his polemical writings of the 1540's heap scorn and ignominy upon the Jews for their "obstinate blindness" (3). This shift has not escaped modern scholarship any more than it did the Jews of Luther's time. Again, as Oberman asserts, such a change does not necessarily imply a fundamental re-thinking on Luther's part and must not be taken as a sign that he had shifted his opinion of those Jews who wished to preserve their identity and evade the embrace of the Christian church.

On 11 June 1537, Luther politely, but firmly, declined an offer to exert his influence//

influence at the Saxon court of Electoral Prince Frederick on behalf of the Jews who, in line with the decree of August 1536, were obliged to leave electoral Saxony. The "brotherliness" he was still urging in 1523 had proven ineffective as an inducement to conversion. In fact that Christ was a Jew had been stressed in 1523 - a Christian self-criticism, with the papal church the unmistakable target. Now it was turned directly against the Jews : the pre-Christian anti-Jewish sentiment Luther argues, the hatred which the Gentiles harboured against the Jews illuminates all the more radiantly the wonder of God, for these very non-Jews were prepared to accept a Jew, Jesus, as their Redeemer. If even Gentiles can be made to turn to the Lord, as children of God, then the sons of Abraham ought no longer to keep aloof - they should therefore abandon their expectations of a Messiah. God has already become flesh and established his invisible realm; only conversion and baptism will lead to the messianic kingdom. Thus the Jews should now, at last, halt their quest for an end to their world-side diaspora.

Luther later announced that he was planning a special study of this, an intention he ultimately fulfilled, in the form of four works on the Jews. The basis then of Luther's anti-Judaism was the conviction that, ever since Christ's appearance on earth, the Jews have no future as Jews.

In his written opinion (4) on the Reuchlin controversy, probably dating from February 1514, Luther declared Reuchlin's orthodoxy above all suspicion, and then grounded his own criticisms of the book burning rationale which was completely alien to the Christian cabalist. Since the prophets themselves foresaw that the Jews would always revile their lords and kings, even a first semester theology student can see that, to divert Jews from their blasphemy, is tantamount//

tantamount to contradicting God and labelling him a liar. Therefore, the Dominicans' enterprise during the Reuchlin affair was not simply unlawful, it was ungodly, and, if converting Jews be the goal, book burning, banishment and other superficial measures, in a similar vein, would, for Luther, be wholly futile as God converts from within. Thus, although he was one with Reuchlin in the repudiation of brute force, their essential difference lay in Reuchlin's willingness to protect the Talmud against charges of blasphemy - even if that required using certain passages - while for Luther these "blasphemies" represented a God-ordained fact that no man could alter.

As Oberman goes on to point out, another reason why Luther was no Reuchlinist, was his explicit "Scepticism regarding the cabala" (5). Following his reading of Reuchlin's De verbo mirifico as well as De arte cabbalistica, Luther rejected the cabala as unscholarly and unsuitable for reliable exegesis. Only "nosy idler's" wish to devote themselves to such a text. To Luther's mind, the Hebraic letters are indeed secretly filled with divine powers - but for the superstitious alone. Only the true word of God, which is received through proper faith, possesses real efficacy.

In terms of their scholarly method, Luther and Reuchlin were worlds apart. Luther's modern, progressive training at the University of Erfurt had taught him to ascertain the exact meaning of words from their substantive context and grammatical connection. Summoned to Wittenberg as a young lecturer on the Bible, Luther remained faithful to this so-called nominalistic tradition. If he rejected the cabala as an unreliable exegetical tool, he did so for the same reasons that he later rejected the symbolic "meta" reading of the Eucharist. Propositions and, in particular, biblical propositions, were not to be interpreted through//

through some deeply buried meaning, but, according to the plain grammatical context. The nominalistic exegetical method explicitly repudiated on principle all word-magic. Throughout his life, Luther abided by this approach.

However, Luther was not a Reuchlinist. This assertion, again made by Oberman, deserves at least a brief explanation. The counter-reformer, Johannes Eck looked upon the reformer Andreas Osiander, as a "Luther-son" and "Jew-father", the natural offspring of the Luther line. This thesis in Eck terminology, this "unmasking" - is, for Oberman, unsustainable. Luther's prescriptions and cures may have undergone change, and significant change at that, but his diagnosis remained the same from the beginning; for their blasphemy, the Jews have been chastised with blindness and dispersal. They will, therefore, never possess a land of their own.

Osiander was, however, no isolated Nuremberg deviator from the Wittemberg party line. There is reason to believe that Melanchthon, Reuchlin's great nephew, was just as unhappy over the harsh writings on the Jews of the later Luther era as were some of the city reformers. Melanchthon indeed sought to avoid a scandal when he suppressed the evidence of Osiander having sent the erudite Jewish scholar from Venice, Elias Levita (1468-1549) a written statement of apology for Luther's splenetic tirade.

Luther's relationship with Erasmus in this period does not appear to have included any debate regarding the Jews. One must bear in mind, however, that their earlier friendly relationship had turned somewhat sour following their controversy over Free Will in 1523.

More//

More illuminating still was the stance of Justas Jonas, Luther's lifelong colleague and best man at this wedding. Jonas was entrusted with a unique charge : through his translation into Latin of Luther's German writings on the Jews, Luther's ideas would gain a widespread European audience. Jonas' autonomous viewpoint has probably gone unnoticed due to the simple fact that he lavished such praise and commendation on Luther's vision that we assume the Latin represents a faithful reproduction of Luther's position on the Jews. But Jonas ventures increasingly, and at critical junctures, to graft his own ideas onto the Luther text, ultimately adducing his own conclusions which approach those reached by modern exegetical practice.

In his preface to the Latin translation of a treatise, Luther had written the year before, that is, in 1523, Jonas' personal interpolations at this point are still much less a matter of explicit statement than of accentuation and shading. Jonas underscores the common features in the destinies of Jews and Christians, both of whom have been led astray - the Jews by Tamudic hairsplitting, and the Christians by scholastic subtlety. Just as Christians would be won over to the cause of the Reformation by the recovery of the Holy Scriptures, so too would the Jews see the light of truth if they but entrusted themselves to the unadulterated testimony of Moses and the prophets. Christians should however, recognise their brethern and companions in destiny - the Jews - and resultantly include them in their prayers. As Oberman cites from Der Briefwechsel des Justus Jonas (The Correspondence of Justas Jonas), "seeing that even among us, not all that purports to be Christian ... deserves the name" (6). Even within this new perspective a traditional accusation comes to the fore, when Jonas accuses the rabbis of deliberately misleading their people. As Oberman cites : "Do they want us to believe that this kingdom can be found on the moon?"(7), in reference to the delusion of the Jews that the kingdom of Abraham//

Abraham yet exists.

When in 1538 Luther spoke out against the Sabbatarians (Christians who adopted Jewish practices with specific regard to Jewish ritual laws) it was again Jonas who translated the work into Latin. As Oberman points out, he once more introduced his own notions so emphatically that the resultant text distorts Luther's position, which has in fact hardened, "presaging the vitriolics to come" (8). Jonas does his best to offset Luther's increasing disenchantment with the mission to the Jews and in the process, manages to draw an entirely novel and positive picture of them. The papists now emerge as infinitely more removed from Scripture than the most unworthy offshoot of Abraham's tribe ever was. The uncovering of the Gospel "in our own day" has opened our eyes to the fact that never have greater "doctors of theology" existed than among the people of Israel in those times. Reformation readings of the Gospel lead to the realization that we Christians are in fact "guests" (9)in the house of Abraham. Previously, impious Gentiles, Christians are latecomers to the promise of God. Jonas is here following Paul (Rom.11 : 17) when he understands Christians to be the Gentiles grafted onto the "tree of Israel", united in one body with the Jews together under the single head of Jesus Christ. This outlook then, is obviously a positive attitude towards Judaism and, in itself, seems to transmit an ambiguous statement from Jonas, a common theme, it would appear in Reformation theology of this early era as Bornkam writing on Luther asserts.(10).

Indeed, Jonas was in full agreement with Luther (both young and old) in ascribing to the church the responsibility for the mission to the Jews : "we owe it to them to save as many as we can, as from a sinking ship" (11).Still, Jonas' notions of a common past and a common future are not Luther's. Despite his aforementioned//

aforementioned positive outlook, it must be noted that Jonas' key idea is not the conversion of the Jews but rather a summoning of the heathen. The reception of the Gentiles into the bosom of Abraham and the subsequent fusion of the two peoples into one body, all made possible through Christ - this is the unprecendented, if un-Lutheran, attitude toward the Jews which Jonas put forward.

However, as Oberman goes on to point out, an attitude towards Judaism was a "bone of contention"(12) between Jonas and Luther. On December 21 1542, Luther wrote to Jonas in Halle that, despite the latter's counsel, he was little inclined to abandon the topic himself, let alone to accommodate his view to that of Jonas. Significantly, Luther did not reject Jonas' stance as "unreformed". The Wittenberg Reformation thus provided two distinct approaches to the Jewish question without, in the process, creating a division in its own camp. Luther never yields : conversion is the only route to salvation but, at the same time, a mass conversion of the Jews is not to be expected, a dichotomy which remains throughout his work. The promises made to Abraham do not refer literally to Abraham's blood and seed, nor is the biblical prophecy of salvation addressed to the Jews as Jews (again a recurring theme). The Jews have simply been rejected by God. The consistent homelessness of the Jewish people down through the ages here provides Luther with such overwhelming proof of this that he feels able to take an oath ; "if it should happen that the diaspora comes to an end, and the Jews are led back to Jerusalem, then we Christians will follow on their heels and ourselves 'become Jews' "(13).

In//

In summary then, the Jewish question of the sixteenth century in the Empire was as virulent and pressing as ever, even after the great waves of earlier expulsions (after 1520 the Jews were sporadically expelled from a relatively small number of cities). It is true that violent measures such as mass expulsions, or forced conversions, occurred for the most part before the beginning of the century. But, as Oberman points out, humanism and the Reformation carried on the struggle against the Jews with their own weapons. These movements could not realize their hopes for a reconstruction of church and society, (a theme to which the Jewish question was continually linked), without first settling their score with the Jews and Judaism. Rather, the intensification and deepening of the ideological conflict was in fact a characteristic feature of the incipient new era. Both humanism and the Reformation, complexly allied in several ways, together diagnosed the affliction of the age as symptomatic of its deepest disorders : reform demanded the absolute renunciation of a "Judaism" that had infiltrated into all aspects of life - the church and the monastery. It would seem that a certain element of paranoia had crept into both theological and social thinking in this era. As we have already noted, even where the Hebraic tradition was upheld, scepticism of Judaism remained.

However, in his early writing on the Jews, Luther presented a seemingly more positive outlook and it is to this which we can now turn our attention.

THAT JESUS CHRIST WAS BORN A JEW

Having sketched in the background to Luther's attitude concerning the Jews, we are now able to examine in more detail, the two main texts he wrote on the subject, namely That Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew, written in 1523, and the greatly contrasting treatise of some twenty years later On the Jews and Their Lies.//

Lies.

What to do about Luther was one of the major issues concerning the Diet of Nurnberg (1522). At that time, under the ban of church and Empire, while he was living openly at Wittenberg, his writing was as active as ever. Among those in attendance at Nurnberg - Elector Frederick was not present - nearly all the princes were hostile towards Luther, although most of their councillors were good "Lutherans". Inevitably, there was much rumour and gossip about Luther's teaching. As Brandt informs us (14), Hans von der Planitz, Elector Frederick's representative on the Council of Regency, relayed some of the gossip to his senior. It was charged, among other things, that Luther taught that Mary was not a Virgin, but instead had other sons after Christ. In view of the contemporary adoration of the Virgin Mary, these were serious charges.

When Luther learned through friends that even Archduke Ferdinand had publicly accused him in Nurnberg of teaching the new doctrine that Christ was conceived through Joseph, the seed of Abraham, he could no longer regard such nonsense as a "joke", but rather realized that the charges were being made in earnest. Idle gossip was one thing, but a public charge by an imperial regent was something quite different. Some sort of reply was therefore necessitated if, for no other reason, than to save the reputations of his friends and supporters. Count John of Anhalt had urged Luther to clear himself of the charge, and his reply was the treatise That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew.

The document is divided into two sections. In the first part, Luther, on the basis//

basis of Scripture, a constant feature throughout his work, demonstrates that Jesus was a Jew, born of the seed of Abraham, but begotten by means of a miracle; that his mother Mary was indeed a Virgin when Jesus was born and, there being no Scriptural evidence to the contrary, must have remained so thereafter. The second part is devoted to the Jews, and, as such, is the area with which we are most concerned here. It begins with an appeal to Christians to deal more kindly with the Jews in the hope of converting them, and ends with an elaborate argument from Scripture and history to convince the Jews of Christ's Messiahship. One must bear in mind here that the treatise was written in the early years of the Reformation, before its establishment, when Luther was still under attack from different quarters, and, as such, may have regarded Jewish support at this juncture as more positive than negative. Twenty years on, however, he was perhaps in a stronger position to clarify his view of Judaism in the polemical On the Jews and Their Lies. (15).

Again, Brandt informs us that Luther probably began That Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew not long after his letter of January 22nd 1523 to Spalatin. We do not know just when the first (Wittenberg) edition came from the press, nor do the earliest letters which mention it bear a specific date. One of these from Luther to Bernard, a converted Jew, mentions that a copy of the treatise was being sent to him with the letter. Since a second edition was in preparation at Strasburg in early June, it seems reasonable, as Brandt again points out, to assume that the first edition appeared in May.

Luther introduces the treatise by outlining the accusations which had been levelled//

levelled at him in the opening paragraph :

> A new lie about me is being circulated. I am supposed to have preached and written that Mary, the mother of God, was not a virgin either before or after the birth of Christ, but that she conceived Christ through Joseph and had more children after that. Above and beyond all this, I am supposed to have preached a new heresy, namely that Christ was (through Joseph) the seed of Abraham. How these lies tickle my good friends, the papists! (16).

Luther then aims to take this opportunity of redressing the balance in full and, at the same time, also possibly converting the Jews to the cause (which means, of course, that the treatise is quite clearly intended for their ears as well.) "that I might perhaps also win some Jews to the Christian faith" (17).

Indeed, in language which is couched in unequivocably friendly terms, with regard to the Jews, Luther strongly criticizes the Roman church for its treatment of the Jewish people up to this point .

> They have dealt with the Jews as if they were dogs rather than human beings; they have done little else than deride them and seize their property. When they baptize them they show them nothing of Christian doctrine and life, but only subject them to popishness and mockery. (18).

Luther goes on to draw out this point -

> Furthermore, as the true Gospel has been withheld from the Jews as well as Christians, by the church, it follows that 'They (the Jews) have never yet heard anything about Christ from those who baptised and taught them' (19).

Thus//

Thus, a starting point of the mission to the Jews must be grounded in Scripture:

> I hope that if one deals in a kindly way with the Jews and instructs them from Holy Scripture, many of them will become genuine Christians and turn again to the faith of their fathers, the prophets and the patriarchs (20).

Compassion at this stage of Luther's outlook towards the Jews is unquestionably also a keynote of any conversion programme : "we in our turn ought to treat the Jews in a brotherly manner in order that we might convert some of them" (21). These words were however to provide a stark contrast to his attitude some twenty years later, after the failure of the Jews to convert on a major scale.

One can certainly detect Luther's continuing friendly Jewish outlook at this stage when he goes on:

> When we are inclined to boast of our position, we should remember that we are but Gentiles, while the Jews are of the lineage of Christ. We are aliens and in-laws, they are blood relatives, cousins and brothers of our Lord. Therefore, if one is to boast of flesh and blood, the Jews are actually nearer to Christ then we are (22). Ironically, it was to be on these very grounds, i.e. an inheritance based on lineage that Luther was to so viciously dismiss in the opening section of <u>On the Jews and Their Lies</u> in 1543.

Indeed, as he advocates in <u>That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew</u> not only are the Jews closer to Christ in lineage, but they are also the only nation to have raised up patriarchs, apostles and prophets, in addition to which they have had the Holy Scriptures uniquely committed to them by God. Luther supports this claim from Romans 3 : 2, and Psalm 147 : 19-20 -

"He//

He declares his word to Jacob, his statues and ordinances to Israel. He has not dealt thus with any other nation; nor revealed his ordinances to them '. (23).

Luther then begins a fully documented case in defence of his stance regarding Mary's virginal state. In order to achieve this, he again grounds his arguments in Scriptural exegesis, beginning at Genesis 3 : 15, which indicates the promise of Christ soon after the fall of Adam. From the text "I will put emnity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed; he shall crush your head and you shall bruise his heel". With reference to God's conversation with the serpent, Luther suggests that, as the serpent is equated with the devil, so it is that Christ, the only perfect being, will emerge from the "seed of a woman" (24) and crush the devil's head. For Luther, this establishes the first passage in which the mother of the child who is to be Christ, is described as a Virgin. She is his true natural mother : yet she is to conveive and bear him supernaturally by a means of a miracle of God, without a man, in order that her child may be a distinctive man, without sin, yet having ordinary flesh and blood like other men.

The second promise of Christ was made to Abraham in Genesis 22 : 18 when God said "In your seed shall all the Gentiles be blessed". Once again, for Luther, the mother of God is proven to be a pure virgin. Since God cannot lie, it was therefore inevitable that Christ should be of the seed of Abraham, that is, of his natural flesh and blood, like all of Abraham's descendents. He then goes on to re-emphasize this point: "Thus the word, by which God promises that Christ//

Christ will be of the seed of Abraham, requires that Christ will be born of a woman and be her natural child" (25). From this point he continues the defence with treatments of II Samuel 7 and Isaiah 7 : 14. It is however Luther's exegesis of the latter Isaiah passage which is of note concerning his Jewish outlook.

Here he derides the Jewish viewpoints which contended that the "young woman" referred to in Isaiah 7 : 14 could be taken to apply to Abijah, mother of Hezekiah (II Kings 18 : 1-2; II Chron 27 : 27-29:1) and the prophecy thus to refer to the birth of Ahaz's successor on the throne of Judah. Why Luther argues, can the Jews regard God as not capable of such an act, involved in the birth of Christ ? As he states:

> I do not deem any Jew so dense that he would not grant sufficient power to create a child from a virgin, since they are compelled to acknowledge that he created Adam from the earth (Gen 2:7) and Eve from Adam (Gen 2:21-22), acts which require no less power (26).

On this basis he continues to offer plausible arguments for the doctrine not only of the Virgin birth, but also for the perpetual Virginity of Mary on the foundation of various Scriptural comparisons from both the Old and New Testaments.

THE JEWS

Having sufficiently set out his case in order to refute opponents in the first section of the treatise, Luther now turns his attentions centrally to the Jewish question, outlining his intentions thus:

> we would like also to do a service to the Jews on the chance that we might bring some of them back to their own true faith, the one which their father's held. (27) //

held. (27).

With conversion therefore in mind, Luther asserts his intent to convince the Jews of their error with firm Scriptural conviction. Also, he presents us with a clue as to the audience for this section; "suggest for the benefit of those who want to work with them" (28) indicating the need to instruct Christians involved in the proselytisation of the Jews within Germany.

He begins by refuting the Jewish hope for a Messiah yet to come, a theme which was to be repeated in different terms in On the Jews and their Lies. This argument is based on Genesis 49 : 10-12 when the holy patriarch says:

> The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a teacher from those at his feet, until the Shiloh comes; and to him shall be the gathering of the nations. He will bind his foal to the vine and his ass to the choice vine. He will wash his garments with wine, and his mantle with the blood of grapes. His eyes are redder than wine and his teeth whiter than milk. (29)

For Luther, this passage is a divine promise which cannot lie and must be fulfilled "unless heaven and earth were first to pass away" (30). It follows that, since the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70, the Jews have had no sceptre, that is neither kingdom nor king. Therefore, the Shiloh or Messiah must have come before this fifteen hundred year period, before the destruction of Jerusalem.

In addition, when Jacob says that the sceptre shall endure until the Messiah comes, it clearly follows, for Luther, that this sceptre not only must perish, but also that it must become far more glorious than it was previously, before the Messiah's coming. He reiterates this point; "For all the Jews know full well that the Messiah's kingdom will be the greatest and most glorious that has ever been//

been on earth" (31) continuing : "the sceptre has now been non-existent for fifteen hundred years, this prophecy can therefore be understood to refer to none other than Jesus Christ our Lord". (32).

Having offered a plausible enough interpretation of Genesis 49 : 10-12, Luther goes on to refute Jewish counter-claims in anticipation of their being cited. This section of That Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew hinges on a proper exegesis of the key word "Shiloh" and its meaning, which designates "Lord". Luther chooses to divide this into different areas:-

First, as the "Shiloh" has no successors, he must die as a man and rise again in an immortal state, therefore his Kingdom, to which this passage refers, cannot be temporal.

Also, the text cannot be taken literally, i.e. references to "washing garments in wine" etc. and, as such demands a spiritual interpretation.

Luther then emphasizes the lineage of Judah in Christ, which presumably he expects will appeal to a Jewish audience. Indeed, a feature of this document is his persistence on re-emphasizing Jesus the Jew, which may explain his dwelling upon Section One of the treatise, i.e. the establishment of Christ's Jewish lineage.

Furthermore, Luther does not give the Jews an automatic right of reply in the text, but he does enter into a fairly informal dialogue style of which this section on Genesis 49 is an example. (33)

He then continues to argue his case, grounded in Biblical evidence, particularly from the Old Testament, which again was more likely to gain Jewish respect for his arguments. As he had offered a thorough exegesis of Genesis 49 : 10-12, regarding the Messiah, Luther now turns in a similar manner, to the apocalyptic vision//

vision of Daniel 9 : 24-27:

> Seventy weeks are determined according to your people and your holy city, that transgression may be finished, forgiveness sealed, iniquity atoned for, and everlasting righteousness brought in, and vision and prophecy fulfilled and the most holy annointed. Take notice therefore and know: from the going forth of the word to rebuild Jerusalem are seven weeks and sixty-two weeks until Messiah the prince; the streets and the wall shall be built again in a troubled time. And after sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, and they (who cut him off) shall not be his. But the people of the prince who is come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with violence. And after the end of the war there shall remain the appointed desolation. And he shall confirm the covenant with many in one week; and in the middle of the week sacrifice and offering shall cease. (34).

Again, as he had done with the Genesis passage, Luther addresses this text and its meaning for Jewish-Christian relations by dividing his opinion into sections: Firstly, he establishes the time frame for this prediction; "Neither Jew nor anyone else can deny that the angel Gabriel is speaking here of the rebuilding of Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity; this took place under Nehemiah" (35).

Luther then makes the assertion that the destruction of Jerusalem which subsequently took place under the Roman Emperor Titus "about the thirtieth year after the ascension of our Lord" (36). Thus the Messiah referred to by Gabriel must have come before the destruction.

He also dismisses Jewish opposition to this exegesis as "all manner of preposterous glosses" (37) and he continues: "This and similar efforts are worthless excuses, capricious and unwarranted evasions, and therefore quickly disposed//

disposed of (38). However, it might be worth pointing out at this stage that such polemic is about as fierce as Luther's vocabulary gets in That Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew, in stark contrast to On the Jews and Their Lies.

Luther subsequently offers a convincing refutation of the Jewish claim that the Messiah referred to in the Daniel passage is Cyrus, and goes on to affirm the central role of Christ from the basis of the text, using numerical axioms to trace the intention of Daniel's prophecy.

Finally, he adds: "Where will one find a prince or Messiah or King with whom all this accords so perfectly, as with our Lord Jesus Christ? Scripture and history agree so perfectly with one another that the Jews have nothing they can say to the contrary". (39).

Overall, the tone throughout That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew is really one of hope rather than conviction on Luther's part with regard to Jewish-Christian relations in the Reformation era. A new mood of toleration is however called for in which to begin the task of proselytisation. He does acknowledge, though admittedly not at any length, the wrongs of the past, which, although positive in their potential, stop short of any outright apology. The closing words are however interesting in line with his attitude towards the Jews in the early 1520's

> We must receive them cordially, and permit them to trade and work with us, that they may have occasion and opportunity to associate with us, hear our Christian teaching, and witness our Christian life. If some of them should prove stiff-necked what of it? After all, we ourselves are not all good Christians either. (40).

One must bear in mind that the 1520's saw the initial stages of Luther's Reformation//

Reformation and, as such, he would have required as much support as possible. If the Jews provided a potential avenue for such backing then it seems that a friendly approach towards them might be the answer. There is certainly sufficient evidence to suggest that this treatise was received favourably by the Jewish communities, who regarded it as a beacon of hope, after decades of darkness. However, in order to evaluate Luther's overall outlook towards the Jews, we must now turn to an assessment of the 1543 polemical work On the Jews and Their Lies.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE POLEMICAL MARTIN LUTHER

INTRODUCTION:

Already upon its first appearance in 1543, On the Jews and Their Lies caused widespread dismay, not only among contemporary Jews, but also in Reformed circles. Heinrich Bullinger in correspondence with Martin Bucer remarked that Luther's views reminded him of those of the Inquisitors. Also, a subsequent document prepared by the churches of Zurich condemned its contents expressing their dismay at the composition of such an article by a man of Luther's standing.

The negative attitudes expressed in these late treatises struck Luther's contemporaries with special force, as they do us, in view of the fact that, as we have already noted, earlier in his career he had shown marked sympathy for the Jews. For instance, in the great controversy over the banning of Hebrew books which had rocked Europe in the early 1500's, the young Luther had supported Johannes Reuchlin against the converted Jew, Phefferkorn, to whom Erasmus had also been bitterly opposed. Additionally, as we have already dealt with, when in 1523 Luther published That Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew, it was "greeted with joy by Jewish readers throughout Europe". (1).

In the previous document, he had spoken in such positive terms:

> I hope if one deals in a kindly way with the Jews and instructs them carefully from Holy Scripture, many of them will become genuine Christians and turn again to the faith of their father's the prophets and the patriarchs. They will only be frightened further away from it if their Judaism is so utterly//

utterly rejected that nothing is allowed to remain, and they are treated only with arrogance and scorn (2.).

Let us also consider again his concluding section :

Therefore I would request and advise that one deal gently with them from Scripture, then some of them may come along (3.).

Compared to this comforting and generally positive approach, Luther's treatise On the Jews and Their Lies presents a markedly different outlook. Here we find him treating the Jews with the "arrogance and scorn" that he had himself condemned in 1523. Rather than "dealing gently" with them, he advocates exceedingly harsh measures. With regard to the economic role played by the Jews, he overlooks the fact that the restrictions which a Christian society had placed upon them may have forced them into usury. Rather, he now blames this solely on their greed and cunning. In short, his image of the Jews and his recommendations concerning them here are almost wholly negative.

How is this transformation to be explained? Martin H. Bertram, who translated the 1543 work into English, outlines the several theories propounded to account for it (4.). Reference has been made to Luther's declining health in his latter years, to his frustration over the obstacles met by the Reformation and the splintering of the movement, and to certain untoward experiences of the Jews, such as the encounter he mentions in the 1543 treatise. The significance of such factors, as Bertram points out are however hard to estimate.

More clearly influential was the point on which he himself lays repeated emphasis,//

emphasis, namely what he terms Jewish "obstinacy", that is the Jews' refusal to accept conversion. Luther's hopes for such a mass conversion had been running high in the 1520's and are clearly seen in the treatise That Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew. The motive for the friendly treatment that he recommends is, as he frankly admits again, : "that we might convert some of them"; and the document ends on a positive and expectant note: "Here I will let the matter rest for the present, until I see what I have accomplished" (5). As Bertram continues to point out, the response among Jews in Germany was positive. They welcomed the return to Hebrew sources which the Reformation encouraged, as well as the break-up of the monolithic power of the medieval church which it was effecting, and which appeared to promise greater freedom for minority groups. Some Jewish people as we shall discover, even saw Luther's article as presaging the coming of the Messiah. The number of actual conversions, however, was very small. On the contrary, Luther began to hear of Jewish efforts to convert Christians and it was such reports that led to the writing of his 1538 treatise Against the Sabbatarians. Both there and in On the Jews and Their Lies he refers several times to the disappointment of his hopes in this respect.

Yet another theory (6)propounded by Newman, Lowenthal and others, refers to Luther's attitude to the Judaic elements within Christian theology. Although his own reformatory work may be viewed as an expression of the prophetic spirit, he later grew afraid of what he saw as a misrepresentation and exaggeration of the Old Testament motifs on the part of the chiliastic radicals, Sabbatarians, anti-Trinitarians, and other such groups. He therefore (according to//

to his view) turned in anger both against these "Judaizers" and against Jews as such.

It may however be that there was not so much of a change in Luther's attitude toward the Jews as has commonly been thought, an opinion advanced by Paul Johnston (7). A closer inspection of his utterances on the question throughout his career reveals that he was never so unabiguously positive toward them as a reading of his 1523 treatise on its own would suggest. It has been demonstrated by scholarship that Luther's earliest lectures - those on the Psalms, delivered in 1513-1515 - already contained in essence the whole burden of his later charges against the Jews. The Jews, Luther asserts in these lectures, suffer continually under God's wrath; they are paying the penalty for their rejection of Christ. They spend all their efforts in self-justification, but God will not hear their prayers. Neither kindness nor severity will improve them. They become constantly more stubborn and more vain. Moreover, they are active enemies of Christ, they blaspheme and defame him, spreading their evil influence even into Christian hearts. It would therefore be quite wrong, he concludes, for Christians to extend tolerance to those who hold such views.

Similar sentiments were also expressed in his Lectures on Romans of 1515-1516; and as for his role in the Reuchlin controversy, it appears that Luther, like most of his contemporaries, regarded the chief issues as being freedom of inquiry, the role of ecclesiastical authority, asnd the preservation of Hebrew literature (which certainly pervaded Reuchlin's own stance), for scholarly purposes, rather than the "merits of Judaism or the Jews as such" (8).

Overall,//

Overall, the evidence here indicates that the early Luther held to the full the traditional medieval prejudices against the Jews. Seen from this perspective, his more favourable attitude towards them, as expressed in the early 1520's, is to be understood as a temporary modification of the underlying negative stereotype which characterized his earliest statements, and to which he returned in his later treatises. That underlying stereotype, in turn, can only be understood in terms of the medieval background, as propounded by Brecht. (9).

The place of the Jew in culture, as dominated by the Christian faith and by Christian institutions as was medieval Europe had long been problematic. Already in the patristic period, the church's polemic against Judaism had produced a highly negative image of the Jew.

The so-called "Dark Ages", marked by the relative social disorganisation in Europe, were on the whole a period of respite for the Jews. But the more Western culture moved towards the unity of the "medieval synthesis", the more Jews appeared as an anomaly, a rent in the otherwise seamless robe of Christianity. The First Crusade organised to combat the Muslim occupiers of the Holy Land, turned against the "infidel at home" and, from this year, 1096, medieval history is marked by a never-ending series of persecutions, pogroms and expulsions of the Jews. The sixteenth century dawned with the forced dissolution of the "most substantial and most learned Jewish community in Europe" (10), that of Spain, from which the Jews were expelled by decree of Ferdinand and Isabella in 1492. Meanwhile, the Inquisition had been employed to//

to ferret out those of dubious faith among the Marranos (Spanish Jews) who had to be forcibly converted. Already in 1290, the Jews had been entirely expelled from England, in 1394 from France. Now as the sixteenth century proceeded, the disparate German principalities and cities followed suit.

The full story of Christian-Jewish relations during this period cannot be recounted here, suffice to say that Luther lived in an atmosphere charged with anti-Judaism. Moreover, he (Luther) had specific models on which to draw when composing his own anti-Jewish tracts. Not only were there the documents of the Reuchlin-Pfefferkorn controversy earlier in the century; more recently key figures in both the Protestant and the Roman Catholic camps had issued blasts against the Jews. The Strasburg Reformer, Martin Bucer, published a treatise On the Jews in 1539 which caused him to be regarded by the Jews, for the time being, as their chief antagonist among the Protestants. Compared with Luther's subsequent proposals however, Bucer's programme for dealing with the Jews, was relatively moderate, though the area of overlap is obvious. No new synagogues were to be built. The Jews were to refrain from "insulting" Christianity, and were to be compelled to attend Christian sermons. They were to abjure whatever the Talmud had added to the Scriptures, to be barred from all business activity, and to be assigned to menial tasks. The Jews, Bucer declared, are implacable foes of the true faith, just like the papists and the Turks.

Two years later, Luther's arch-antagonist, Johann Eck, published a similar treatise entitled Refutation of a Jew. In it, he decries the security and freedom they had hitherto been granted and recommends new and more stringent anti-Jewish//

anti-Jewish laws. As the historian Heinrich Graetz comments, noting the similarity of Eck's treatise to Luther's published two years later, "These two passionate opponents were of one heart and soul in their hatred of Jews". (11).

Bertram continues his assessment of the reasons for Luther's anti-Jewishness by pointing to the works of Jewish converts to provide "both an explanation and an exposé of the practices of their former co-religionsts" (12). A key document in this area, most fully utilized by Luther, was a book published at Augsburg in 1530 by Anthony Margaritha entitled The Whole Jewish Faith. Descendant of an eminent rabbinic family, Margaritha became a convert to Christianity in 1522, and subsequently embraced Lutheranism. His book so appealed to Luther that he had it read to him at table. The Jewish community, however, considered it inaccurate and slanderous and petitioned the emperor to bar its circulation. Their complaints resulted in Margarithas' imprisonment and eventual expulsion from Augsburg. For much of the Biblical interpretation in the present treatise, Luther was dependent on his medieval predecessors in the chain of Christian polemicists against the Jews. He himself mentions two of his mentors in this respect within the very first paragraph, referring to "those two excellent men, Lyra and Burgensis". (13). Both of these eminent exegetes whose work dates from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, were also evident in Luther's earlier work Against the Sabbatarians. Underlying this work, as Bertram points out, was that of Raymund Martin, thirteenth century Dominican scholar (d. 1285) whose anti-Jewish apologetic treatise Dagger of Faith Luther may also have consulted directly. Another authority whose influence is shown by Luther's text is the early fourteenth century Genoan, Salvagus Porchetus whose Victory Against the Impious Jews was brought out in a printed edition at Paris//

Paris in 1520. This same treatise by Porchetus was to act as Luther's chief source for On the Jews and Their Lies.

Yet another source of Luther's attitude toward the Jews was the undercurrent superstition of the Middle Ages in which the Jew figures in all that was "uncanny or subversive of established order". Sorcery and magic, poisoning of wells and blighting of crops, and the ritual murder of Christian children - these and all sorts of other evils were charged against them as documented by Brecht. (14). It appears, for Bertram, that Luther accepted this aspect of the popular culture at face value. Moreover, the intensity of his own sense of the demonic only added special vividness to these images in Luther's mind.

It is indeed difficult, as Bertram continues to point out, to determine to what extent Luther's anti-Jewishness, as expressed by the treatises of 1543, represents merely a

> distillation and concentration of the traditional Christian enmity toward the Jews and to what extent it was fed by special elements of his own theology or by the dynamics of his own personality (15).

It would seem that Bertram plays down the element of Luther's own ego in this matter. Although he admits that the German Reformer had an "immense capacity for hatred", coupled with "a gift of language" (16) he does not spend much time on the fact that Luther may have taken the Jewish failure to convert en masse as a personal slight against his own powers of proselytisation. It would indeed seem rather ironic that an individual as concerned with the fundamental action of God's grace in conversion, should place such an emphasis on//

on his own ability to work for change in this area.

As to theological factors, it can be said quite firmly, as it is done by Bertram, that Luther's attitude toward the Jews was in no way due to a Marcionite attitude which would disparage the role of the Hebrew Scriptures or "postulate a disjunction between the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and the God and Father of Jesus Christ" (17). As much as he strongly insisted on the distinction between the law and gospel, Luther never equated these directly with the Old and the New Testaments as such. As we have already seen, other figures of the era, such as Reuchlin and Zwingli would, by contrast, have pursued a unity between law and gospel. As a prisoner of his time, Luther continued to grapple with the age-old questions raised over Old Testament authority, i.e. who had the right, Jews or Christians to deem themselves the true inheritors of Israel?

Luther's intent to write something like the 1543 treatise had been intimated at the conclusion of his letter Against the Sabbatarians. Later he apparently had a change of heart and resolved "to write no more about the Jews or against them" (18). However, when in May 1542, he received from his Moravian friend, Count Schlick, a copy of a Jewish apologetic pamphlet (which Bertram informs us has never been identified), together with a request to refute it, Luther decided to break his silence; he at once put pen to paper and the full force of his accumulated wrath burst forth.

ON THE JEWS AND THEIR LIES

The treatise falls into four major parts plus an addendum. In the first, Luther considers//

considers what he calls the "false boasts" of the Jews : their pride of lineage and homeland and their reliance on the covenant of circumcision and the law.

The second and lengthiest portion of the treatise is then devoted to the exegesis of key biblical passages, most notably concerning the Messiah.

In the third section, with his polemic never abating, after dealing with their reputed calumnies against the persons of Jesus and Mary, he recounts some of the grossest elements of medieval superstition concerning the Jews. It is with all this behind him that he arrives at the fourth and final main section of the work. Here he presents to both secular and ecclesiastical authorities, his recommendations for action concerning the Jews. This is the section which has been most often quoted in subsequent anti-Semitic literature and which, above all, for Bertram, is responsible for the notoriety of the treatise.

Fortunately, Luther's proposals did not meet with a widespread response among the authorities. Indeed, the document itself apparently did not have a large audience, as contrasted to his earlier work That Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew. In no case were his suggestions for the burning of synagogues, the razing of houses, and the seizure of books followed. In Neumark, however, the right of safe conduct of the Jews was withdrawn. The same occurred in Electoral Saxony, where Elector Frederick revoked certain concessions made to the Jews in 1539. In doing so, the Elector specifically cited Luther's treatises as having alerted him to the Jews nefarious designs. Philip of Hesse also introduced new measures prohibiting Jews from engaging in money-lending and requiring them to//

to attend Christian sermons, an echo of Bucer's earlier call. In Brandenburg on the other hand, Elector Joachim followed a tolerant policy and when accusations were made against local Jews, Luther's old antagonist Agricola (1490-1555) stepped forward to defend them. The immediate effect of Luther's proposals thus was small, it remained for a later century to refine and apply them on a massive scale.

Having considered at length the reasons for Luther's vitriolic treatise On the Jews and their Lies, we may now proceed to deal in depth with the document itself.

ON THE JEWS AND THEIR LIES

Luther begins the treatise very aggressively, setting out his intentions

> But since I learned that these miserable and accursed people do not cease to lure themselves even to us, (a reference to Jewish conversions from Christianity which Luther had heard about) that is the Christians, I have published this little book, so that I might be found among those who opposed such poisonous activities of the Jews and who warned Christians to be on their guard against them. (19).

He then signals a note of disappointment that the 1523 treatise had failed in its objective "Much less do I propose to convert the Jews for that is impossible"(20). Indeed, in his opening section, Luther portrays a situation of utter hopelessness for Judaism, due to their rejection of Jesus. In this context he attributes the wrath of God towards the Jews throughout history to this very failing.

From//

From this point, Luther immediately incites feelings of potential resentment among the German people based upon Jewish arrogance and folly to regard themselves as the chosen race, to the exclusion of the lesser Gentiles (Goyim) and women, quoting a Jewish liturgical prayer out of context :

> And to fill the measure of their raving, made and stupid folly, they boast and they thank God, in the first place, because they were created as human beings and not as animals; the second place because they are Israelites and not Goyim (Gentiles); in the third place, because they were created as males and not as females (21).

One would imagine that such an image would create the intended anger within the common German mind of the day. Surely there is an irony in Luther's dismissive attitude towards the importance of Jewish lineage from Abraham, a point he had attached such great regard to in his earlier work in an attempt to attract the Jewish people to Christ.

The focus then switches, once again, as it had done in the 1523 work, to Scripturally-based exegesis on key Old Testament passages. However, in contrast to the earlier pattern of trying to prove Christ's Messiahship, in order to convert the Jews, Luther now concentrates on counter-arguments to disprove the Jewish "boast" of being the chosen people Israël.

SECTION I - NOBLE BIRTH

His case here hinges on a dismissive stance towards preferential birth and subsequent lineage. By use of a careful theological order, Luther claims

> 'the blind Jews are totally stupid fools much more absurd than the Gentiles, to//

to boast so before God of their physical birth, though they are by reason of it no better than the Gentiles, since we partake of one birth, one flesh and blood, from the very first, best and holiest ancestors (22).

Indeed he asserts we all share a common ancestry : "for we are all descended from the Deluge from that one Noah"(23)and, as a result, are not judged on the basis of noble birth, but rather by God's grace alone.

Furthermore, when David declares in Psalm 51 : 5 "Behold I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me". Luther argues that not one of us has any cause to boast of "noble" birth, since we are all sinners and, as such, open to God's wrath.

CIRCUMCISION

One may detect a common strand throughout the next section of this diatribe that is Luther's preying upon common German ignorance of synagogue worship. This deficiency thus allows him to attack a further aspect of Jewish "arrogance" in the area of circumcision. Beginning : "What a stench we poor people are in their nostrils because we are not circumcised!" (24). This then is the second charge to be levelled against the Jews as "in this boast of nobility they glory as much as they do in their physical birth" (25). Luther here points out that other nations (such as Egypt, the Ismaelites, Canaanites, Edonite and the Midianites) also practised circumcision, and, as a result, the Jews again have no reason to assert that they have been singled out by God on this basis; "If circumcision does not help them (Abraham's other son Ismael, or Midian born of Ketwark) in becoming God's people, how can it help the Jews." (26).

Furthermore//

Furthermore, Jewish circumcision causes "extraordinary pain" (27) to the child, contrary to God's command, so they cannot as a result claim to observe the rite more strictly than others do. In addition, Luther focuses on the Old Testament passages which advocate rather a circumcision of the heart, employing sarcasm in the process "Well, well, dear Jeremiah (in reference to Jeremiah 6 : 10) you are surely dealing roughly and inconsiderately with the noble, chosen, holy, circumcised people of God." (28).

A stark and ironic contrast may be found at this point in On the Jews and Their Lies, "For they (the Jews) are the ones who have constantly pursued godless ways, idolatry, false doctrine" (29). Let us then compare this view with the closing passage of Jesus Christ was Born a Jew some twenty years earlier. "Instead of this, we are trying only to drive them by force, slandering them accusing them of having Christian blood if they don't stink, and I don't know what other foolishness." (30).

This section therefore epitomises the severe change in Luther's outlook towards the Jews as the most pronounced of all the Reformers. Indeed, I would certainly purport that this radical shift of position was due not to a frustration at the Jewish failure to convert en masse but rather to an inherent in-built anti-Jewishness based on racial rather than theological grounds, coupled with an inflated self opinion dented by the conversion failure which characterised Martin Luther throughout.

In addition to the boastful, arrogant picture already painted of the Jewish people, Luther adds a further more sinister element, that of the Jew as vengeful and bloodthirsty,//

bloodthirsty, with regard to the Gentile world.

> The sun has never shone on a more bloodthirsty and vengeful people than they who imagine they are God's people, who have been commissioned and commanded to murder and to slay the Gentiles" (31) and he goes on : They treated us Christians in this manner at the very beginning throughout all the world. They would still like to do this if they had the power, and often enough have made the attempt, for which they have got their snouts boxed lustily. (32).

Scholarship, however, has not discovered a clear basis, if any, Luther may have had for this latter assertion. A comparison could be drawn here with Luther's paranoid view of the Turkish menace from the south, which he had earlier regarded as of apocalyptic proportions. Although not couched in such dramatic terms, the element of paranoia about a physical Jewish threat is striking. This short section is however a strange insertion in the text at this point temporarily interrupting as it does Luther's opinion of the rightful place of circumcision.

In concluding this lengthy section, Luther asks "Of what use then is circumcision? Or why did God command it so strictly? We answer : Let the Jews fret about that! What does it matter to us Gentiles?" (33). As it was not imposed upon the Gentiles it is not regarded as necessary to be God's people, just as the people in Nineveh, Babylon, Persia and Egypt were without it. Rather the purpose of circumcision as found in Romans 3 : 1 is to institute, enfold and preserve God's word and his promise. This means for Luther that circumcision should not be useful or sufficient as a work in itself, but those who possess/

possess circumcision should be bound by this sign, covenant or sacrament to obey and to believe God in his words and to transmit all this to their descendants.

God therefore, has bound his word to circumcision, so that for Luther : "where these two part company, circumcision remains a hollow husk or empty shell devoid of nut or kernel" (34). This theological stance may, therefore, be seen to remain consistent with the Reformed emphasis on word and sacrament together as inseparable. Indeed, Luther turns on Christians within the Roman church who have separated the link between baptism and the word, just as the Jews have done with circumcision. Again, circumcision can be regarded as a "work", rejected by the Reformers as a means of grace, without faith and the Word of God. This turning away from the Word of God then leads Luther into his next section, which deals with Israel's treatment of their prophets and their attitude to the Law.

THE LAW

His argument that the Jews have violently refused to listen to their own prophets fits into this context of their rejection of the Word in general. Not only have they disregarded the prophets' proclamations, but overthrown them by means of murder:

> In brief, they are a prophet murdering people; since they can no longer murder the living ones, they must murder and torment the ones that are dead. (35).

Within this, falls the Jewish possession of the Law, which Luther perhaps has more//

more difficulty in grappling with. This he considers to be the third area in which the Jews are boastful and conceited, because "God spoke with them and issued them the Law of Moses on Mount Sinai." (36). It would also appear that Luther had had several colloquies with Jews who had visited him in Wittemberg on this matter, with a Jew asking him : "Indeed, what do you have to say to this that God himself spoke with us on Mount Sinai and that he did this with no other people" (37). Although he subsequently retorts "One can neither express nor understand the obstinate, unbridled, incorrigible arrogance of this people, springing from this advantage - that God himself spoke to them." (38). Here Luther fails to offer a plausible counter.

Furthermore, the Ten Commandments are not sufficient on their own merit as being issued to the Jews for they must also be kept : "He who has them and fails to keep them must be ashamed and terrified because he will surely be condemned by them" (39).

The only hope of forgiveness for failing to adhere to the precepts of the Law is to be found in Jesus Christ, whom God has appointed and whom the Jews reject.

THE PROMISED INHERITANCE

Luther now switches his offensive to Jewish "boasting" over their inheritance of the land of Canaan, the city of Jerusalem, and the temple from God.

The fact that "God has often squashed such boasting and arrogance especially through//

through the King of Babylon who led them away into captivity and destroyed everything (just as the King of Assyria earlier had led all of Israel away and had laid everything low)," (40) coupled with the Roman destruction of the temple, proves that, on this account once again, they cannot be a peculiar people.

Indeed, God's granting of land, city and temple to the Jews is only dependent on their keeping his commandments, which, for Luther, they have not done, and again means that this does not give them authorisation to be God's people or "church" (41).

Furthermore, Luther's use here of the specific term "church" rests on his strong sense, like Zwingli, of the unity of the Old and New Testaments, and indicates one of the great underlying issues in the continuing polemic between Jews and Christians; which of them can claim to be the legitimate successor of ancient Israel as the "people of God". Zwingli of course had chosen to pursue this question in a more positive manner.

This presents a constant theme throughout. The Jews may claim to be God's people on the basis of lineage, circumcision, the Law, and inheritance of land, city and temple, but if they do not keep God's Commandments, all four areas are of no value.

SECTION II - The Messiah

Luther now turns to the "main subject" - The Messiah (42). This had of course been the basis for his earlier treatise That Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew, and, as such, presents the best opportunity for comparison of the two key Luther documents.//

He begins by employing the effective tool of sarcasm once more, and goes on to make a possible reference to his own previous attempts at conversion twenty years earlier. "They turned a deaf ear to us in the past and still do so" (43).

Also, their failure to do so at this juncture is blamed upon the Rabbi's, whom Luther now chooses to villify, having corrupted their own youths. "But these villains prevent our sincere views from coming to their attention" (44).

Having established this premise, he now turns to Scripture, with Genesis 49 : 10 once again at the forefront. This time, however, his exegesis pursues a slightly different angle.

Again, Luther makes the assertion that the Messiah must have been fulfilled in the person of Christ, due to the fact that the sceptre had been absent from Judah for fifteen hundred years. Luther, though, rather than offering this proof to the Jews on friendly terms, instead decries their willful rejection of the truth. "Nobody should consider such a person worthy of wasting a single word on him, even if it dealt with Markoff the mockingbird, much less if it deals with such exalted divine words and works." (45). Thus he has again expressed the hopelessness which now pervades Christian-Jewish relations, as they have been given ample opportunity to accept the truth, and chosen to reject it.

Luther now continues to comprehensively dismiss various Jewish interpretations of the text, a feature he had not pursued at any length in That Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew. However, as it had done in the earlier treatise, he focusses upon the//

the word "Shiloh", and the different exegesis which have been offered. Given the length of time he spends on dismissing the various arguments, he obviously felt a particular need to drive home his anti-Jewish message, by dismantling contemporary Jewish views in his text, a constant theme throughout.

Luther then goes on to link this section on the Messiah with his next section on their "lies", by reiterating the hopelessness of trying to convert the Jews, and, at the same time, gives us a clue as to his change in outlook from 1523 to 1543;

> But after having been hounded a long time, they still persisted in their obstinacy and now set to erring consciously, and would not depart from their rabbis. Thus we must let them go their way and ignore their malicious blasphemy and lying.
>
> I once experienced this myself. Three learned Jews came to me, hoping to discover a new Jew in me because we were beginning to read Hebrew here in Wittemberg, and remarking that matters would soon improve since we Christians were starting to read their books. When I debated with them, they gave me their glosses as they usually do. (46).

Many interpreters of Luther, taking their clue from his own statement in the latter part of this paragraph, consider the incident described here to have been pivotal in Luther's development of a negative attitude toward the Jews, although, as pointed out in the introduction, many other factors must also be considered. Luther had mentioned this incident earlier in a sermon preached on the Twenty-fifth Sunday after Trinity in 1526. Commenting on Jer 23 : 6 ("This is the name by which he will be called 'The Lord is our righteousness' "), which he interprets Messianically. He also notes that//

that the application of the sacred name to Christ is proof of his divinity, adding :

> I myself have discussed this with the Jews, indeed with the most learned of them, who know the Bible so well that there wasn't a letter in it they didn't understand. I held up this text to them and they could not think of anything to refute me. Finally, they said that they believed their Tamud : this is their exegesis, and it says nothing about Christ. They had to follow this interpretation. Thus they do not stick to the text but seek to escape it. For if they held to this text alone they would be vanquished (47).

Here we see a vilification of the Talmud, which in a sense remained consistent with the Reformers.

Luther proceeds to cleverly employ the image of David's everlasting Kingdom, as promised by God : "Now let the Jews produce an heir of David" (48). As they cannot do so, he contends that Christ is the true heir and fulfilment of this promise, another example of the careful Christological exegesis of Old Testament texts. Ironically, although having dismissed the Jews as being better "left to their own devices" (49) they are obviously still worthy of some Scriptural debate, although it seems without any real right of reply.

Another key text which Luther chooses to focus upon in this section of On the Jews and Their Lies is Daniel 9 : 24

> "Seventy weeks of years are decreed concerning your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity//

> iniquity to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to annoint a most holy place. (50).

Luther points to this passage as foretelling of Christ's advent (seventy weeks signifying four hundred and ninety years, with Luther stating that: "there is complete agreement on this" (51) what Christ will do : "take away sin, bring righteousness, and do this by means of his death" (52). Additionally, it points to the timing of Jerusalem's destruction by the Romans in 70 AD. Yet again, he presses home his point that the Jews cannot realistically argue with this Biblical interpretation: "Therefore we shall let it rest at that and hold to our opinion that the Messiah must have appeared during these seventy weeks; this the Jews cannot refute". (53).

Having dismissed Jewish claims that the Messiah is yet to come, Luther now turns his attention towards exposing Jewish "lies" in several areas.

LIES PROPOUNDED ABOUT JESUS AND CHRISTIANS

The section is opened by a declaration of intent :

> to look at their lies about the person of our Lord as well as his dear mother and about ourselves and all Christians. These lies are such as a devil resorts to when he cannot assail the doctrine (54). Such dishonesty is compared to those who lie in court 'when the silver or gold-fever seizes them'. (55)

He then proceeds to list the charges which the Jews have cited against Jesus, primarily that he is a "sorcerer" (56) (an ancient accusation levelled against the early//

early church), because they "cannot deny his miracles" (57). Most of these and the following charges were part of common medieval tradition. In many cases, the charges and countercharges are traceable to the earliest polemics between Jews and Christians in the first and second centuries.

Furthermore, Luther contends that the Jews defame the name of Jesus and Christians by use of the Hebrew, and "since we are not conversant with the Hebrew, they can vent their wrath on us secretly" (58). Ironically, Luther was of course not particularly "conversant with the Hebrew" himself. Indeed, irony continues to pervade the treatise as Luther claims that the Jews have defied God's commandment not : "to speak falsehoods against our neighbour, to lie, to deceive, to revile, to defile", which things Luther of course does throughout the document!

From this point he turns to lies concerning Mary :

> What harm has the poor maiden Mary done to them? ... She did no more than bear a son, whose name was Jesus. Is it such a crime for a young wife to bear a child? (59).

(Here we find Luther once more appealing to the common German mind, a feature of other treatises). Furthermore, a family theme pervades this argument, as a method of provocation, with the continuing accusation that Mary, as a Jewess, was the "Jews cousin and blood relative" (60). As the average person would not wish to demean family honour, by slandering their cousin, should the Jews not then say:

> "Why//

> "Why should we slander her? After all she is our flesh and blood ... and if they wish and inflict all kinds of disgrace and evil on their own flesh and blood, which is innocent and about which they know nothing evil (in reference to Mary), what do you suppose they wish us accursed Goyims? (61).

Again he asks "What harm has this poor man Jesus done to these holy people? ... No accursed heathen in all the world will persecute and malign forever and ever a poor dead man who suffered his punishment" (62).

Luther goes on to cite the reason for this outlook on the words of Moses in Det 28 : 18, claiming the Jews are insane : "The Lord will smite you with madness and blindness and confusion of mind", a "spiritual" thunder and lightning which Luther maintains, stretching the text to the limit once again that God has inflicted upon the Jews.

From this point he continues to incite a hatred for the Jews by informing the reader of what they "do" in a synagogue service as well as at home :

> They vent their curses on us openly every Saturday in their synagogues and daily in their homes. They teach, urge and train their children from infancy to remain the bitter, virulent and wrathful enemies of the Christians (63).

He goes on with a more general overview of Jewish "lies" that they are held captive in Christian countries, when in actual fact "They stuff themselves, guzzle and live in luxury and ease from our hard-earned goods" (64) (a reference//

to usury).

As a result "They could not have enjoyed such good times in Jerusalem under David and Solomon with their possessions as they do now with ours, which they daily steal and rob" (65). Having reiterated the list of traditional medieval superstitions concerning the Jews : defaming Jesus and Mary. kidnapping and murdering Christian children, poisoning wells, thirsting for blood, greed for money, and corruption of Christian workers etc., Luther, even by his standard, now moves onto the most unpleasant section of the treatise : what to do about the Jews.

LUTHER'S JEWISH SOLUTION

This final section begins by asking :

> What shall we Christians do with this rejected and condemned people, the Jews? Since they are among us, we dare not tolerate their conduct, now that we are aware of their lying and reviling and blaspheming (there then proceeds a warning) If we do, we become sharers in their lies, cursing and blaspheming (66).

Although Luther begins his solutions by stating "We dare not avenge ourselves" (67) he continues ironically contradicting himself again, to advocate extreme violence. In order, he suggests:-

> First to set fire to their synagogues and schools and to bury and cover with dirt whatever will not burn, so that no man will ever again see a stone or cinder of them (68).

As//

As Bertram points out, most of Luther's proposals are paralleled in other anti-Jewish literature of the time. However, these specific ultra-antagonistic formulations are attributed to him. Fortunately, most of the authorities proved unwilling to carry out his recommendations.

> Second, I advise that their houses also be razed and destroyed ... Instead they might be lodged under a roof or in a barn, like the gypsies. This will bring home to them the fact that they are not masters in our country as they boast. (69).

> Third, I advise that their prayer books and Talmudic writings, in which such idolatry, lies, cursing and blasphemy are taught, be taken from them (70.).

Such a suggestion had of course been made previously in the earlier part of the century but, yet again, Luther takes this point to new depths.

> Fourth, I advise that their rabbis be forbidden to teach henceforth on pain of loss of life and limb. (71).

> Fifth, I advise that safe conduct on the highways be abolished completely for the Jews. For they have no business in the countryside since they are not lords, officials, tradesmen, or the like (72.).

Here we find Luther advocating openly physical violence against the persons of Jews, as well as their property. Sinisterly, he adds : "Consider carefully what good//

good could come from this" (73) (the use of violence).

> Sixth, I advise that usury be prohibited to them and that all cash and treasure of silver and gold be taken from them for safekeeping. (74)

(surely giving people the right to steal from the Jews without recrimination).

> Seventh, I recommend putting a flail, an axe, a hoe, a spade, a distaff or a spindle into the hands of young, strong Jews and Jewesses and letting them earn their bread in the sweat of their brow, as was imposed on the children of Adam (Gen 3 : 19). (75).

Finally, Luther suggests expelling the Jews completely from Germany, after exacting financial compensation for the "crime" of usury.

> Let's emulate the common sense of other countries such as France, Spain, Bohemia, etc., compute with them how much their usury has extorted from us, divide this amicably, but then eject them forever from the country. (76)

A statement which leaves one wondering why the previous measures were necessary in the first place. However, it is left to the pastors to enforce such schemes, as Luther does not obviously regard it as realistic to expel them completely from the country.

> Especially you pastors who have Jews living in your midst, persist in reminding your lords and rulers to be mindful of their office and of their obligation before God to force the Jews to work, to forbid usury, and to check their blasphemy and cursing. (77).

However,

> if//

> if neither prince nor subject will do anything about it, let us follow the advice of Christ (Matthew 10 : 14) and shake the dust from our shoes, and say 'We are innocent of your blood'. For I observe and have often experienced how indulgent the perverted world is when it should be strict, and conversely, how harsh it is when it should be merciful. (78).

Indeed, during the Peasants' War in 1525, Luther had called for a similar treatment of the serfs by the authorities.

Finally, in the addendum, Luther repeats his recommendations to the ecclesiastical authorities, omitting however, those which have no explicitly religious reference (destruction of houses, denial of safe-conduct, prohibition of usury, and assignment to manual labour) and adds a new point - the fourth in the present list - concerning use of the name of God. "Fourth, that they be forbidden to utter the name of God within our hearing". (79). However, in general, the previous tone remains throughout this section as well.

CONCLUSION AND JEWISH REACTION

There can be little doubt that On the Jews and Their Lies bears almost no resemblance to Luther's earlier work That Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew, or indeed to the work of other figures of the era such as Reuchlin, Erasmus and Zwingli. The tone from the very beginning is highly polemical, leaving the reader in no doubt as to Luther's feelings toward the Jews, and prompting the thought that this must really have been his stance throughout, with such an attitude having been carefully veiled at an earlier date.

Although there is a structure to the treatise, i.e. accusations against the Jewish distortion//

distortion of such elements as noble birth and circumcision through to what should be done with the Jews, repetition is evident as a constant strand, as Luther drives home his points forcibly, as if his reader could be left in any doubt. As has been mentioned earlier, one is left wondering just how realistic Luther regarded his proposals and indeed he himself expresses doubt as to the issue of Jewish expulsion. However, it must be borne in mind that Luther was a man of his time and, as a result, did not rise above common medieval superstition, as say, up to a point, Zwingli had done. The same accusations of well-poisoning, kidnapping of children, etc. were used again in On the Jews and Their Lies in order to reinforce suspicion in the average German mind. However, Luther unquestionably takes anti-Jewishness to new depths by calling for a burning of synagogues and other Jewish property, as well as acts of violence against individual Jews, denying them safe conduct which they had previously enjoyed on the highways.

A crucial point to add at this stage is to emphasise the important role which the Jews played in Germany and beyond because they were the only ones permitted to lend money to the political leaders for interest and they enjoyed protection as a result. This meant that in view of the financial contribution of the Jews, the magistrates etc. were very reluctant to implement Luther's suggestions, fearing that their own financial situation may in turn be compromised. Thus, the Jews did hold their own political sway at this time.

It may well now be asked what was Luther's influence in turn upon Jews? In the first place, as Newman points out, even as he read but did not follow Jewish writings,//

writings, much more did the Jews read and "still less did they follow his works" (80). The Jews of the Reformation era took great interest in Protestant literature, as we have already noted from Ben Sasson; Luther's works were distributed and bought even in Jerusalem. His anti-Jewish treatises aroused great hostility among the Jews, none more so than On the Jews and Their Lies. As we have also previously noted, the Jews had formerly looked upon the Reformation as the advent of the Messianic age, as pointed out by Newman, Johnson, Ben Sasson, Oberman and others; they did not hesitate to combat Luther's emnity with almost "equal vigour" (81). The foremost Rabbis of Germany, among them Josel von Rosheim, accepted Luther's challenge and wrote several pamphlets in rebuttal of his charges. Even Christians rallied to the side of the Jews, for the idea of toleration had begun to take root among activist non-Jews of the time, among them the former monk, Eberlin of Guenzber and the layman, Hans Schwalb, who protested against the burning of heretics. Additionally, the Nuremberg preacher, Andreas Osiander, one of the best students of Hebrew and Jewish writings of the day, wrote a letter in defence of the Jews in opposition to Luther's utterances. As we have seen, early in Luther's career, the Jews regarded the Reformation as a sign of the advent of their Messiah, after centuries of persecution at the hands of the Catholic church. Indeed, Newman points out one of the remarkable testimonies to the role of Jews in the spread of religious reform movements in Europe as being the fact that the Marranos of Amsterdam sought to disseminate Luther's writings in Spain with "a view to break the sway of Catholicism which had brought them so much suffering" (82).

Despite the spread of Luther's writings among the Jews, it left the spirit of the people untouched and only in isolated instances had conversions to the Reformed cause occurred; Luther himself complained that Jews read his works only to refute//

refute them. Unlike Zwingli and Reuchlin, who had not made an attempt to convert the Jews en masse, Luther felt the need to make a terrible retribution against them, with the document On the Jews and their Lies, the recriminations of which were to be felt on a far more tragic scale some four hundred years later, with Germans again taking the lead role.

From this we can now examine Luther's final work on the Jews - Von Schem Hamphorus (1544) - and also consider the opinions of some other Lutheran reformers of this era.

CHAPTER SIX
LUTHER'S LAST SAY AND OTHER LUTHERAN REFORMERS

At the end of On the Jews and Their Lies, Luther had already announced another publication concerning the Jews. Given his despair at any hope of Jewish conversion, and his list of possible "solutions" which had of course included expulsion, one wonders what purpose a further document could serve. However, in addition to his previous diatribes concerning the "false" claims of Judaism, Luther saw a need to outline what kind of "fine" dogmas they (Christians who would become Jews) must believe and keep among the damned Jews.(1). In particular, these views would centre around the "Shem Hamphoras" or Secret Name, hence the title of the pamphlet, Von Schem Hamphoras, written in 1544.

In special notes then he sought to exhibit what Salvagus Porchetus de Salvaticis, a fourteenth century Cartesian monk had written about the power of Schem Hamphoras, having already used de Salvaticis as a source for On the Jews.

In the first section of the document, Luther deals with the sacred incantation of the Schem Hamphoras and the legends concerning its origins. He goes on to censure the superstition which is evidenced by the veneration of that incantation and ridicules the Jews who believe these "silly tales". (2). But as its entire heading indicates, the announced contents have a second part, an area which the reformer had covered in his two previous works, That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew, and On the Jews - the Lineage of Christ. As the Jews had claimed that Jesus could not have been of the tribe of Judah because the apostle Matthew directs the tribe toward Joseph and not toward Mary, that therefore he could not have//

have been the Messiah. Due to this, Luther was presented with a problem. Because he had not yet discussed this issue in On the Jews, he made up for it now, providing harmony between the divergent lines of descent in Matthew 1 : 1-16 and Luke 3 : 23-27. Thus he lets Jesus descend from David in one instance through his stepfather Joseph, and in the other through his mother, Mary. This second part is attached to the first without any other connection. As Falk informs us "They hang together only because they constitute a supplement to On the Jews and Their Lies". (3). Indeed, Von Schem Hamphoras was ready for publication on March 7th, 1543, so that preparation must have directly succeeded the publication of On the Jews.

VON SCHEM HAMPHORAS - A STUDY

Luther begins the pamphlet with terms similar to On the Jews : "A Jew or a Jewish heart is as hard as stone and iron and cannot be moved by any means. Even if Moses and all the Prophets came and did all their wonderous works in front of their eyes as did Christ and his apostles, so that they would quit their unreason, it would still be useless" (4). Therefore, he has completely given up on Jewish conversion to any extent : "I have no hope there anymore and know of no writings concerning such hope" (5) a feature which of course pervaded On the Jews throughout. Thus the "aim" of this document is to offer further discouragement to those within the Christian camp who may be prone to sympathize with the Jews.

Luther then initiates the work, as one would expect, in an aggressive tone, stating: "We will now see how the Jews were always such enemies of Christ's wonders" (6). Indeed, for Luther, not only had the Jews had the audacity to decry//

decry the miraculous works done by Christ, but they had gone to the lengths of composing a book against Christians ("Schem Hamphoras").

Having introduced the basis for such a book, he then proceeds to inform the reader of this pamphlet of its contents. Interestingly, Luther sets out this content outline in mythical style:

> It happened at the time of Helen, the Queen, who reigned over the whole land of Israel, that Jesus, the Nazarene, came to Jerusalem. In the Temple of the Lord he found the stone upon which in earlier times was set the Ark of the Lord; Schem Hamphoras was written upon this stone; whoever learned the names of these letters and understood them could do whatever he pleased. (7).

Accordingly, as the "wise men" did not want the children of Israel to learn this "Name", lest they use its "powers" for destructive ends, they set two bronze dogs on two pillars at the front of the Temple. If someone entered and learned the letters of the Name, and came out again, then the metal dogs would "bark at them so dreadfully that from fright he forgot the Name and the letters which he had learned." (8).

In line with this myth, it was then claimed that Jesus, having come to the Temple and learned the letters, ripped open his leg and put the parchment with the Name on it within. Having left the building and being caused to then forget the Name, due to the barking dogs, he was able to remember its contents by re-opening his leg at a later time and retrieving the parchment. Having gained this new authority, he was now able to recite the Name, and, as a result, made the lame//

lame walk and the dead live. Being angered by these events the "wise men" brought him before Queen Helen, who dismissed their allegations on account of Jesus' ability to raise the dead. However, the "wise men" secured the service of Judas, who likewise gathered the name, Schem Hamphoras, by ripping open his leg, and concealing its contents within. At a later occasion, before Queen Helen, as Jesus "flew between heaven and earth" (9), Judas, having the power of "Schem Hamphoras" was able to do the same, and wrestle him back down to earth. On this basis, Helen handed Jesus over to the "wise men" who duly executed him.

Having presented an obviously highly controversial story, Luther continues by charging: "where are they now, the unfaithful Christians who become Jews?" (10). There can be little doubt that such a presentation would stir up a hatred in the minds of those who perhaps came to Luther's pamphlet with a distrust of the Jews already in place.

Indeed, comparisons with the general tone of On the Jews can be drawn at this point in the pamphlet, with Luther degenerating into the same name calling style. Again, the analogy of the Jews as swine is used: "they smack their lips like swine" (11). Such language obviously being aimed at the intention to portray the Jews as an unpleasant and untrustworthy race.

Having inserted this interlude in the text, the author now proceeds to take a look at the "'fine' dogmas of the Jewish beliefs" (12) in more detail, "so that anyone who has the inclination to become a Jew will be relieved" (13).

Overall then, Luther's continued criticism of the Jews within the pages of Von Schem//

Von Schem Hamphoras remains firmly based, it would appear, on racial rather than theological grounds. Having selected a rather obscure legendary example, such as this, one is left to wonder how far even he could have realistically expected his readers to receive the work favourably. Indeed, after having made his views perfectly clear in On the Jews and Their Lies, his approach really required no further clarification, falling as it did firmly against the Jewish people.

However, in order to provide a more balanced picture of Luther's regional contemporaries within the early Reformation era, we can now turn to some of the other German Reformers.

OTHER GERMAN REFORMERS

What then were the views of other German Reformers? Although less radical than their master, Luther's close disciples basically embraced his anti-Jewish outlook. Even Ulrich von Hutten, who had so valiantly taken up the case against Johann Pfefferkorn - was anti-Semetic, as were most other members of the German gentry. As Baron points out, being "squeezed between the growing power of the princes, the rising bourgeoise, and the disaffected peasant masses, and largely displaced from its military functions by lansquenets, this class was doomed as a major political factor. " (14). Before joining Luther, therefore, this poet laureate of Emperor Maximilian I wrote a strongly anti-Jewish poem in which he repeated the traditional medieval folklore concerning the Jews. Nor did he recant this attitude in the last few years of his life, even though//

though Luther was at this point at his most friendly-Jewish. Philip Melanchthon (1497-1560), on the other hand, the learned humanist and Reformer, who became Luther's chief adjutant and diplomatic representative, was more moderate than von Hutten. Although Melanchthon's humanist background did not lead him to radically revaluate the traditional anti-Semitic prejudices of the day, it did allow him to' offer a defence of Johannes Boschenstein, despite Luther's criticism of the Hebrew scholar who was to influence Zwingli's thinking. However, in contrast to this, he did adopt a more negative stance toward Matthew Adrian, joining Luther in calling Erasmus' friend, a "pseudo-Christian" (15). Again, this did not prevent Melanchthon from delivering, as late as 1546 and 1549 two enthusiastic addresses on the study of Hebrew language, a theme which at least remained consistent in his approach. In them he declared: "We cannot afford to miss the Hebrew language in God's church" (16). Furthermore, he insisted that Hebrew was the very basis of biblical exegesis, doubly necessary to controvert the interpretations by Jews, who "do not wish to relinquish their dreams of world domination." (17). As Baron asserts, like Luther, Melanchthon "did not study Hebrew or the Bible for the sake of pure scholarship." (18). Rather, he was prone to cite the Old Testament mainly in support of his theological or organizational basis; for instance, to persuade the princes that it was their duty to supress heresies.

Indeed, for whatever reason Melanchthon was to be styled a "Judaizer" by the more radical Wittemberg reformer, Andrewas Bodenstein von Carlstadt (1480-1541) but he reciprocated by publicly calling Carlstadt "an uncouth man, without ingenuity, learning or common sense, 'one' who in his entire learning is accustomed to judaise." (19).

Further//

Further evidence of an anti-Semitic trait in Melanchton may be found in his reactions to Luther's polemical works. He was delighted, for instance, with Luther's pamphlet The Last Words of David, which he praised as "enjoyable reading" (20). However, when commenting upon On the Jews and Their Lies Melanchthon makes rather more ambiguous remarks which for Baron "betrayed his malaise about his masters unbridled violence." (21).

On only one occasion did Melanchthon render "however unintentionally" (22) a genuine service to the Jewish people. In 1538 at the Frankfort assembly of Catholic and Protestant spokesmen, he pointed out the exoneration of the Jewish martyrs in Brandeburg of 1510, which helped to persuade the new elector, Joachim II, to gradually re-admit Jews to the area.

Overall then, I would disagree with Baron that he "blindly" followed Luther's extreme anti-Semitic policy, and it can be said that Melanchthon, like other reformers of the era, proved inconsistent and generally unhelpful towards a more liberating assessment of Judaism in the sixteenth century.

Other adherents "followed Luther less blindly". Among these, one of the more independent was Andreas Osiander (1498 - 1552) who, at the age of twenty-two, had acquired a sufficient command of Hebrew to become a Hebrew tutor at Nuremberg, where he also served as preacher at the important St. Lawrence Church.

Quite early on, for instance, Osiander sharply combated the traditional blood libel which was levelled against the Jews. Asked for an opinion about such a libel//

libel regarding Jews in Posing, Hungary in 1528, he replied in a memorandum (later anonymously published) presenting no less than twenty arguments for the falsehood of such an accusation. Furthermore, although he was to eventually modify his words, Osiander was comprehensive in his criticism of Luther's Von Schem Hamphoras, asserting that the Wittemberg reformer had "completely misunderstood" (23) the meaning of "Shem ha-meforash" and what it conveyed to intelligent Jews.

As a Hebraist "far superior to Luther and Melanchthon", Osiander enjoyed undisputed scholarly authority, although his unwavering adherence to the views had antagonized many of his fellow reformers, and ultimately led to the so-called "Osiandrian Controversy". Indeed, this controversy plagued him until his tragic end in Konigsberg, where he had served as professor of Hebrew. Osiander's moderate view on Jews and Judaism could not fail to make an impression, and, as such, he forms an important part of the overall picture.

One of Levita's brightest pupils, Sebastian Münster became "the most eminent Protestant Hebraist of the sixteenth century" (24). Like many of his fellow reformers, he had begun his career as a Catholic monk. Apart from publishing specialized studies in Hebrew philology and comprehensive general works like his influential Cosmography, he devoted much effort to literature promoting the Christian mission among Jews.

Together with his new German translation of the Old Testament, which he published with the Hebrew original in 1534-35, he produced Hebrew versions of the Gospel of Matthew and the Epistle to the Hebrews, so as to make them more accessible//

accessible to the Jewish reader. Furthermore, he believed that Matthew had originally composed the Gospel in Hebrew, and hence that his own translation was merely restoring the original.

Additionally, in the same decade, 1529-39, he also published two missionary tracts, The Dialogue of a Christian with a Jew and The Christian and Jewish Messiah, in both Hebrew and Latin. In the second pamphlet, after an attack on such Jewish apologists as Yom Tob Lipmann Muhlhausen, who had supposedly "written with a virulent animus against all our sancta", Münster added:

> To-day the Jews freely live among Christians, abuse their venerable language and spout blasphemous words. These perfidious people should have been eliminated from all Christian boundaries had not the Redeemer himself wished that that infidel race survive unto the end of the era as an example to His faithful and in order that all things stated in Scripture under the dictation of the Holy Ghost be implemented. (25).

This outburst aside, Münster's tracts, though written with missionary fervour, steered clear of the violence and linguistic crudities of Luther's polemics. On the other hand, as Baron argues, the scholarly restraint of Münster's and Osiander's publications may well have robbed them of much of the popular acclaim which accompanied almost all of Luther's published statements.

In contrast to Münster was the widely read storyteller Hans Wilhelm Kirchhof. Calling Luther a "particularly learned man of God", Kirchhof did not hesitate to cite the Shem Hamphoras and to borrow some of Luther's other anti-Jewish folk tales.

Overall//

Overall, it would appear that Martin Luther did influence other contemporary German theologians in their outlook and attitude towards the Jews. However, although men such as Melanchthon and Kirchhof pursued the more negative aspects of contemporary feeling, at least a balanced German picture is presented by others like Osiander and Münster. Having depicted the wider Lutheran stance then, it is now possible to examine the reactions of a key figure who expounded a largely radical anti-Jewish sentiment in the late 1530's, viz. Martin Bucer.

CHAPTER SEVEN
MARTIN BUCER

Martin Bucer, the Reformer of Strasbourg influenced initially by Luther and later Zwingli, was regarded throughout his career as a mediating theologian. Cameron in fact regards his early thought as being of a humanist volition (1). This mediatory position was to thrust Bucer into several reconciliatory attempts both in continental Europe and England. With Wolfgang Capito he drew up the Tetrapolitan Confession (1530) to effect agreement between the Reformed and evangelical wings. Again in the Concord of Wittemburg (1536) he collaborated with Melanchthon to assist Saxon Lutheran theolgians in achieving unity over the doctrine of the bodily/spiritual presence of Christ in the sacrament.

However, despite his ecumenical work in other areas, Bucer was not to display such a courteous attitude towards the Jews. Indeed, as Keith asserts, it is surprising to find him almost paralleled to Luther here as the two men were "temperamentally different" (2). This attitude is best displayed while he was located in Hesse (an area with a large Jewish population) in the mid-1530's.

Having made a significant contribution to the organisation and development of the Hessian church, Bucer felt it necessary to compose a memorial to the Landgrave which would provide a "warning" (3) against the dangers of a pro-Jewish stance. To this end in 1537, he published the treatise On Whether a Government Can Allow Jews to live Among Christians, and it is this document which presents us with the best indication of Bucer's Jewish "solution".

Written in a formal style, and aimed primarily at Phillip Landgrave, the treatise does not offer any background to previous experiences of the Jews in the Hessian area. However, although evidence suggests that previous debate had occurred as to//

to what to do with the Jews (a fact which in itself implies that a large number of Jews resided within Hesse), Bucer had not been invited to give a response, a decision which he obviously made of his own choosing. (4). Additionally, it is worth noting that there would not seem to be any obvious direct influence for Bucer's outlook as he does not make use of earlier sources in this work.

Rather, this negative, polemical document seems to be of the author's own instigation. Bucer begins the treatise by immediately outlining his proposals for dealing with the Jews, these suggestions taking the form of "Seven Recommendations". (5). The "Recommendations" being:-

> That the Jews shall not be given permission to trade among Christians, except in towns and cities where no other tradesmen are available, the implication here being that Christian businesses must assume precedence. (6).
>
> If they (that is the Jews) continue to trade, there should not be any major trade or finance involved in transactions (again restricting Jewish business).
>
> If caught, they should be punished (although Bucer does not clarify what form such punishment should take). Furthermore, the Jews should not take any interest and should not pawn. Should they give somebody a loan of more than two or three gulden, then they have to notify the appropriate officials of the town, and then only act with the said officials' permission.
>
> The Jews should appoint one person among them to make sure that they abide by these regulations, and notify the authorities of any Jews who did not comply with the rules. (7).
>
> Every Jew should pay the local magistrate "protection" money, with the amount set for such payment being at the magistrate's discretion.
>
> Jews should be made to go and listen to sermons at local churches although, unlike the early Luther, Bucer did not seem to envisage any mass conversions as//

as a result of this.

Jews would not be allowed to debate their faith with Christians or discuss the precepts of it in public.

Taking these "Recommendations" at face value, Bucer's proposals do not appear to offer anything new or revolutionary with regard to Jews in the Middle Ages. Rather, the old fear and suspicions seem to manifest themselves again in the form of business and social restrictions. It is admittedly, difficult to discern how much financial weight the Jews of Hesse actually carried, but one would imagine that traditional forms of money lending would apply. Although Bucer advocates that Jewish money lending and usury should be restricted, he does not appear to rule out usury as a problem in itself, therefore making it a permissible practice for Christians to pursue. However, it is possible to detect a note of pessimism in Bucer's thought about how realistic it was for such measures to be implemented. Having outlined his ideals in the first Recommendation, he then spends the next three suggesting actions which the local authorities may use to enforce these initial restrictions.

Bucer then proceeds to cite Romans 2 as a basis for Jewish exclusion from Christian communities, whereby Israel is cut out from the tree of inheritance due to their unbelief (8). However, although he goes on to argue that Old Testament Laws also exclude Christians from living among Jews, he does not make his mode of Biblical exegesis on either account very clear. Additionally, the passage from Romans makes the assertion that only Christians who remain true to the faith will be saved: "Do not be arrogant, but be afraid. For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either" (Rom 11 20 - 21). Bucer does however admit that among the non-Christian religions, the Jewish faith is special, but then follows this up by purporting that too much tolerance will do harm//

harm to the simple and too clever people among the Christians. In view of this, a Christian government must act responsibly and implement the appropriate measures. It is perhaps interesting to note, at this point, that Bucer, like the later Luther, has a distinct fear of Christians being won over to Judaism. Indeed, it may be argued that their calls for the Jews to be excluded from Christian communities points to such an anxiety. Christians within Hesse whose faith was perhaps nominal, could have been seen by Bucer as being open to other ideas. Also, it would appear that "educated" Christians, at the other end of the scale were also regarded as "vulnerable".

Having then called upon the Christian government of Hesse to take appropriate action in order to prevent Judaism from gaining any kind of ascendancy, Bucer goes on to outline a further seven areas of possible action (9), these being:-

Blasphemy by Jews against Christianity will not be tolerated (although quite what form this "blasphemy" was to take is not made clear).

The Jews should not be allowed to promote or hold Talmudic studies, rather they must only study the Bible as a whole.

Jews should be enabled to convert to Christianity (although, as mentioned earlier, it is debatable as to what extent Bucer envisaged this as being realistic on a large scale).

No new synagogues should be built (though this would not seem to exclude existing synagogues from continuing). Thus differing considerably from Luther's//

Luther's later extreme opinions.

Only qualified Christians should enter into disputes with Jews. Those who are "not well grounded" (10) in Christian doctrine must avoid such contact. (again this would suggest that Bucer feared nominal Christians either becoming sympathetic towards the Jewish plight or else being converted outright).

Provision shall be made for "special preaching" (11) which must be attended by all Jews, including women and children. One would imagine that such "preaching" would be of an overtly evangelical nature, aimed at presenting key Christian doctrines to the Jews, although admittedly forced conversions are not implied here.

However, an interesting point concerns the attendance of women and children at services, which may have proved difficult for orthodox Jews, preferring as they did to keep the genders separate on such occasions.

Jews should not become involved in financial deals (i.e. usury) with Christians. Again, this point reiterates Bucer's earlier reference to money-lending policy, but this time, he argues that usury is in fact anti-Biblical, this assumption being based upon Deuteronomy 28 : 43-44: "The alien who lives among you will rise above you higher and higher, but you will sink lower and lower. He will lend to you but you will not lend to him. He will be the head and you will be the tail." For Bucer then, the Jews are once again forbidden from enjoying financial precedence over Christians.

Perhaps one of the most sinister aspects of Bucer's polemic against the Jews to be found//

found in an Opinion on Whether a Government Can Allow Jews to Live Among Christians is his suggestion that "the only work eligible for Jews should be the least desirable : mining, chimney sweeping and tree felling, because the hard work might be for their salvation." (12). This reduction of the Jews to the area of menial labour is a trait which is also present in Luther's later 1543 On the Jews and Their Lies. It would therefore seem that an unjustified fear of the Jews, disproportionate to their number in the area is prevalent in Bucer as well. To suggest, as he proceeds to do, that "sweat money should be taken off the Jews" in order that "the government can repay the poor, as they have done in Italy" (13) is surely to subject the Jews to unnecessary embarrassment, based on the assumption, in line with the common medieval stereotype, that the Jews have deliberately robbed the poor through means of unfair usury.

Finally, Bucer sums up his an Opinion on Whether a Government etc. ... by asking "Should the Jews be tolerated in Christian areas as they could serve as a bad example to frighten Christians" (14). Although he does not elaborate on what means they would use to "frighten" others (we could however assume that this point is linked to the apprehension that some Christians are in danger of being converted to Judaism).

Overall then, Martin Bucer certainly proves and presents a polemical figure where Jews in the early Reformation era are concerned, a point which Falk (15) puts forward. It must be remembered however that the Reformer was very much a man of his time. Rather than offer a more positive approach to this question, as Reuchlin, Erasmus (up to a point) and Zwingli before him had done, Bucer chose to present the same old train of medieval superstition and prejudice concerning//

concerning the Jews. Avoiding any real theological justification for his stance, he preferred to attack the Jews on racial grounds, advocating that they be subjected to humiliation in the form of manual work, rather than be allowed to continue in their traditional role of money-lending. It is uncertain, in line with other figures of the Reformation, just how much contact Bucer actually had with contemporary Jews but, like Luther, and later Calvin, it is unlikely that such interaction was common. Instead, his assumptions would have been based on the superstitious traditions of what had gone before.

It is however possible to discover that Landgrave Phillip of Hesse rejected Bucer's anti-semitic proposals, on the basis of a short reply on 23rd December 1538 in which he stated that Bucer's views were both anti-Biblical and too hard on the Jews. Therefore, one must attest here that none of Bucer's suggestions were implemented, the chief reasons for this being the need for local magistrates like Phillip to keep the Jews "on side" because of their financial importance in Hesse. Additionally, a negative response to Bucer emerged from the Jewish community itself, notably from R. Joseph of Rosheim (1480-1544) who, when engaged in debate in 1537 at Frankfurt, endeavoured:

> in disputations I held before many sages, the wisest among the Gentiles, to prove to them from the words of our Holy Torah that the view of Luther, Bucer and their faction were incorrect. (16).

Also, he explained to the City Council of Strasbourg that his Write of Solace to the Jews Against the Composition of Bucer was written to "the best of my understanding, my earnest advice on the basis of the Holy Scriptures of the Pentateuch and Prophetic writings" (17). In other words, R. Joseph was using Scriptural arguments to refute Bucer's polemical proposals, a tactic which, as we have//

have already noted, the Strasbourg Reformer perhaps neglected in his work.

In conclusion, it may be said that this stance did not sit comfortably with Bucer's more reconciliatory attempts in other areas, such as his mediation in earlier disputes over the Lord's Supper, a point which Ozment dwells upon (18). However, at the time of his work in the late 1530's, we had still to witness the most negative Reformation work concerning the Jews which was to emerge under Martin Luther in the 1540's.

Having examined Bucer's outlook, and, in so doing, pulling together the main early Reformers (who concerned themselves with the Jews), we may now consider the actual Jewish reaction to the Reformation itself.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE JEWISH REACTION

As we discovered earlier, the initial Jewish reaction to the Reformation had been positive, mixed with an air of astonishment at the very phenomenon of the transformation. In what way then did that outlook change and develop in the intervening years between the eve of the Reformation and the high point of Luther's polemical writings of 1543?

INITIAL REACTIONS - EXPECTATION OF CHANGE

The observations of R. Abraham Farissol point to the maintenance of many-sided and intimate ties between Jews and various heretical denominational currents of Italian Christendom during the beginning of the sixteenth century. Further evidence would suggest that the period in question (i.e. the 1520's), saw among Spanish fugitive circles the reafforestation of ancient, obscure, astrological forecasts. These were now made to refer to Martin Luther. As Ben-Sasson points out in his The Reformation in Contemporary Jewish Eyes, such prognostication is similar to "prophecies" current at that time among several European nations. The Spanish-Portugese fugitive, Kabbalist and Messianic visionary, R. Abraham b. R. Eliezer Halevi (1460-1528), claims to have copied a series of predictive astrological records introduced as "These are the words of the sage and astronomer R. Abraham Zacuto (1450-1515) - a forecast of world events in general and in particular - which he drew up at Tunis in the land of the Berbers in the year 1504. (1.). Continuing to comment on such prediction, Halevi points to a forecast of the Spanish astrolger R. Joseph who in 1478-9 stated:

"Having//

> Having no desire to favour or flatter any particular religion or mores, I saw that a man will arise who will be great and valiant and mighty . He will pursue justice and loath debauchery. In his days Jerusalem shall be built of undressed black stone (2).

Having initially attributed this "man" to being Messiah b. Joseph, Halevi changed his mind, whilst copying the text, to imagine that the passage referred to none other than Martin Luther, sometime between 1524 and 1528. In Luther, Halevi saw a "reformer bent on upholding religious truth and justice, whose innovations were directed towards Judaism". (3). Further to Ben-Sasson's observations, Scholem, with regard to Halevi's views of Luther, adds:

> He regarded Luther as a "crypto-Jew", proselyte whose revolt was not limited to the Pope but extended to Christianity as a whole, so as gradually to draw the Gentiles near to the Jewish religion and its laws (4).

Further positive aspects of the Reformation were to be sought, as Scholem and Ben-Sasson continue to point out, in the prior preoccupation of contemporary Christians, such as Reuchlin, with the Hebrew language and literature. Halevi however, did not harbour any illusions as to the purpose of this Gentile concern for Hebrew "any more that did his mentor Maimonides" (5). But again, in accordance with Maimonides, he is also convinced that the power of the Hebrew language and Scriptures is such that it would cancel out the dishonourable intentions of Christians who pursued it.

Luther is thus seen, at this stage, to have emerged from a Christian scene which had begun to illuminate itself with the light of Israel's Torch for its own peculiar ends. Furthermore, for Halevi, working as he was from strands of information of varying provenance, Luther had revealed himself in 1524/25 to be anti-Christian//

anti-Christian during: "the year that has passed" (i.e. 1524) ... Luther had "disclosed internal matters and publicly demonstrated the falsity of their faith (the Roman Catholic Church) and fraudulence of their libations" (6). For Ben-Sasson, this view stemmed from an analogous appraisal of events in the Christian camp to those of the Hussite movement a century before, which as we have seen, was regarded as rejecting the Christian faith. In addition to this, Luther's iconoclastic activity was regarded as positive by Halevi. Thus, one would imagine that the removal of images from churches in Zurich during the Zwinglian Reformation would also have been greeted positively by the Jews.

Also, we are informed of an improvement in attitude towards the Jews:

> All the gentiles in all the lands ... affected by the influence of this noble man (Luther) exalt the Jews. Whereas before there were lands wherein any wayfaring Jew would be put to death, as also a land wherein they would extract a pound of flesh from any passing Jew, now they invite him to their worship, joyously and with a pleasant countenance (7).

It would indeed appear to be factual that this account by R. Abraham Halevi concerning an improvement in conditions for the Jews did reflect the mood following Luther's 1523 work That Jesus Christ was born a Jew. However, despite his admiration for the German reformer, Halevi never expected a wholesale conversion of Christianity to Judaism as a result of Luther's outlook. Rather, he relates these manifestations to his Messianic viewpoint and assesses possible future developments within the Christian camp:

> God's right hand is outstretched to accept them before the advent of the Messiah, for afterwards they are no longer acceptable ... Now through the man referred to, men in great numbers and of high repute are proceeding towards the goal ... Finally time alone will, with God's help, enlighten us as to//

to the ultimate fate of these men. (8).

However, as Ben-Sasson argues, R. Abraham Halevi's main reason for hope is in the "annihilation of the idols in the churches, the havoc wrought in Christian usage, the harrassment and humiliation of the clergy, the abrogation of Roman sovereignty and the very division in Christendom induced by the controversy on its past course and future ways" (9).

An additional source of positive reaction to the Reformation, though couched in a somewhat more restrained style, appears to have come from the same expatriates of the Iberian peninsula. As Ben-Sasson points out, all the symptoms point to Italy as the home of the composition. This viewpoint is set out in an exegete "note" to the book of Job, which is here regarded as the polemical arena where Israel argues about its fate. The connotation is with God, its own national ego and the "companions of Job", i.e. the religions encompassing the Jews. The Jewish author of the document, written in the first half of the sixteenth century presents a favourable image of the Lutheran movement:

> 'Zophar the Na'amathite signifies the new faith recently arisen in Germany, 'Zophar' being akin to "morning" and "light", because the new faith has shone forth as the morning light. Perchance now that it has come, we may soon witness the glow of redemption. Moreover, the founder of it too, is named Luther, denoting "light" in German'. (10).

However, as Ben-Sasson asserts, this annonymous Jewish scholar came much nearer to a sympathetic grasp of Christian dogma than did R. Abraham Halevi. This may well be the reason, he argues, why he knew better than to pin any messianic hopes //

hopes upon the person of Luther. He is well aware that the new movement stood in opposition to the Jewish people and its faith, no less than the rest of the "companions".

REACTION TO LUTHER FROM WITHIN GERMANY

Having considered the more positive elements of Jewish reaction towards both the Reformation in general and Luther in particular, it is now possible to turn our attention to the Jewish viewpoint within Germany.

The leader of German Jewry in their struggle for existence, R. Joseph (Joselmann) or Josel of Rosheim had gone of his own accord to hear the sermons of Capito, the Reformer of Strasbourg, because of the latter's "great wisdom" (11). He was however, free to depart whenever the Reformer expounded "aspects of faith not agreeable to myself" (12). This account was given currency by R. Joseph at a time when Bucer and his associates attempted to enforce Jewish attendance at Christian sermons.

In his debates with the leaders of the Reformation, he insisted on basing his argumentation on Scripture. Thus, when he was involved in a debate at Frankfort in 1537, he endeavoured: "in disputations I held before many sages, the wisest among the gentiles, to prove to them from the words of our Holy Torah that the views of Luther, Bucer and their faction were incorrect" (13). So also he explained to the City Council of Strasbourg that his Write of Solace to the Jews Against the Composition of Bucer was written "to the best of my understanding, my earnest advice on the basis of the Holy Scriptures of the Pentateuch//

Pentateuch and Prophetic writings". (14). Subsequently, in 1543, he informed the same Council that he was prepared to engage in a disputation against the polemical publications of Luther: "with the help of God and the words of the Prophets, with the uprightness and sincerity, in the presence of all the leading scholars". (15). He was also ready to reply, on the basis of Holy Writ, "both orally and in writing" (16).

As Ben-Sasson points out, R. Joseph of Rosheim felt particularly hurt by Luther's change of attitude and that of his associates towards the Jews. "In 1530", he bitterly recalled "we were severely taken to task for having supposedly taught the Lutherans their faith" (17). From 1543 onwards, he was to experience shock after shock upon the publication of such works as On the Jews and their Lies and Von Schem Hamphoras.

R. Joseph termed the first of these publications,

> such a boorish and inhumane book, containing curses and vilification hurled at us, hapless Jews, such as by the will of God can truly never be found in our beliefs and Judaism generally. (18).

Additionally, he points to the sinister social and legal initiative implicit in Luther's polemic:

> For never has it been contended by any scholar that the Jews ought to be treated with such tyranny; that none was bound to honour any obligation towards us or keep the peace of the land and that each man could worship his God according to his wish without fear. So all the people were exceedingly pleased' (19.).

R. Joseph continues to point out the possible practical consequence of Luther's writings://

writings:

> For some declare to the mass of the people, with open boastfulness, that if they harmed the Jews in person or in their property they would be pardoned, since Doctor Martin Luther had expressed such a view in his printed book (On the Jews and their Lies) and had ordered his doctrine to be propagated. (20).

Luther's anti-Jewish influence upon such Princes as had accepted his doctrines was known to R. Joseph even before 1543. The Duke of Saxony's resolution of 1536 "not to grant the Jewish people any foothold throughout his land" he imputed to the rancour "caused by the priest known as Martin Luther" (21). Indeed, it was in that same year that Luther refused to see R. Joseph of Rosheim. As to the latter's debate with Bucer at Frankfort, as Ben-Sasson informs us, it was conducted in such an "acrimonious spirit" (22)that R. Joseph felt the need to include an affirmation of Israel's eternity in his peroration:

> 'To his insulting and angry words I replied saying, since he had threatened us ... 'God our Lord has preserved us since the day of Abraham and will doubtless in His mercy also preserve us from you in the future.' With these words I took my leave from him. '(23).

Such a statement and need for assertion of Israel's position was felt necessary by R. Joseph due to the failure of German Reformation leaders to guarantee Jewish existence in their country. Furthermore, they would enlist the support of the civil authorities against the Jews as well as appealing to the physical violence of the mob. In vain then was Holy Scripture resorted to in defence of Jewish life and interests in Germany. For Ben-Sasson, Luther and Bucer regarded themselves//

themselves, "rather than the pleading scholars of the Jews, as the rightful authorities in Biblical interpretation." (24). The dire consequences were not slow in developing, expulsion and assault by the mob not being restricted to Saxony or Alsace. A Jewish fugitive from the "city of Brunswick" in 1547, approximately, who reached Eretz Israel through Poland and Italy to settle in Safed, described his expulsion by the Lutherans, and hoped for their downfall, thus:

> We were all suddenly expelled ... on the advice of the foul priest Martin Luther and that of the rest of the council of scoundrels who emanated from the stock and root of the arch-heretic and who were brought by the accursed rebels, for the multitude of our sins - this was the cause of our expulsion ... The council of the town of Brunswick ... disqualified us and broke up our writs of rights, which my ancestors had procured from them many years ago ... These accursed and impecunious repudiators of this town and council have invalidated and broken everything. There was not even one among them who spoke peace. (25).

Here, the author regards the worst action by the council as being the withdrawal of basic rights, which had been attained, at a price, some years before. This aggressive stance is blamed on the writings of Luther, in which he advocated such action. However, it must be borne in mind that this sort of reaction by local councils was not widespread, a fact which Ben-Sasson does not always make clear.

Naturally, R. Joseph, as the leader of German Jewry, was concerned by such incidents as did occur, and, as a result, he tended more towards an identification with the Imperial Catholic party in the country. Indeed, R. Joseph hoped that the//

the Catholics would take steps to curb the Lutherans, though at the time, the full impact of their radical measures was felt by the "Jews alone", and not the Catholic contingent.

Towards the end of his life, R. Joseph assumed a position of undisguised hostility towards the Reformation. He believed its religious and social manifestations constituted a menace to "morality and public order" (26). In his Sefer ha-Miqna he drew attention to the operation of Divine Providence in the preservation of the Jewish people:

> at all times - as we have now seen with our own eyes in the case of a people that has established a new faith, with all kinds of leniencies in order to cast off the yoke. And their aim was to set upon us and annihilate the people of Israel by various harsh legal measures and massacres. But God, seeing the affliction of His people, sent His angel, merciful kings, to give power to his majesty, the Emperor Charles - long may he live! (here we see R. Joseph's friendly Catholic stance) that he might prevail over them on many occasions, breaking their covenant and voiding their conspiracy ... And by a miracle he triumphed and saved the people of Israel from the hands of the new faith established by the priest Martin Luther, an unclean man, who intended to destroy and slay all Jews, both young and old. Blessed be the Lord, who foiled his counsel and frustrated his designs and allowed us to behold His vengeance and many salvations to this day. (27).

It is indeed interesting to compare the views of R. Joseph with those of Jews outwith Germany, such as R. Abraham Halevi. Having felt the consequences of Luther's//

Luther's polemic at first hand, R. Joseph is able to condemn the reformers' stance with authority. Moreover, we find the Reformation criticized for its opposition to certain ascetic restrictions and elimination of statues. Here, R. Joseph describes this as "various leniences" introduced into religious practice, and life as a whole. Ironically, such an outlook had previously been praised by Jewish sources.

Also, it is interesting to note that the Emperor Charles V of Spain (1500-1558) is now regarded as an emissary of Divine Providence, appointed to overthrow the Lutherans, his triumph in this area being regarded as nothing less than a "miracle". Again, the reversal in Jewish attitudes toward the Reformation in the space of twenty years is pronounced. Where previously both Martin Luther and the movement had been welcomed with such hope and expectation, with the possibility of throwing off the yoke of Catholic oppression, now it is the Lutherans who are oppressive, such is the impact of Luther's later writings in Germany. Indeed, as Ben-Sasson asserts, "R. Joseph's frame of mind and choice of language clearly indicate that, in the eye of German Jewry, the Luther of Von dem Juden und Ihren Luegen and Shen ha-Meforash (the specific name) was the very incarnation of Haman". (28). In the process of describing Luther's attitude against the Jews and Judaism, R. Joseph likewise emphasizes the heretical character of the German reformer, who:

> wrote many works; books of heresy would topple from his lap, stating: whoever stretches out his hand to the Jews has forfeited all hope. For the most part these works contain stories intended to forment ill-will among the princes and nations, so that the enemies of Israel (in this case the Jews) could barely survive. (29).

Once//

Once again, to regard Luther as "heretical" in a general sense is to see his views as being heretical against Roman Catholic doctrine as well, and, as such, continues to give credence to R. Joseph's pro-catholic stance.

Reformation circles soon became aware of the changed feelings among the Jews. Bucer's reaction came after the publication of his infamous Counsel Concerning the Jews. However, instead of attributing the modified Jewish attitude to the shift in Reforms policy against the Jews, he preferred to ascribe it to a basic affinity in the negative traits common to the faiths of Judaism and Catholicism. In an epistle to "the good friend", actually written as an accompanying letter in connection with his Counsel Concerning the Jews, Bucer writes:

> 'Nor should it surprise you that they (the Jews) are more inclined towards the attrocities of the Papists than toward our pure doctrines and the pure ritual of our churches. For, except that the Papists venerate icons and idols and set them up for worship, while giving lip service to Christ ... the faith and religious practices of Papists and Jews are really identical. (30).

Ben-Sasson attributes R. Joseph's choice of sides as being motivated by "the nature of his conservative turn of mind and social ideology". (31). This outlook unquestionably developed within him once he realized, probably in the mid-to late 1530's, that the Reformed party's attitude towards the Jews was determined by the views of Bucer and Luther, with the more moderate Capito and Osiander being overlooked.

In addition to R. Joseph, we find the Italian Jewish rationalist R. Yehiel b. R. Samuel//

Samuel da Pisa criticising the Reformation on dogmatic grounds, as opposed to R. Joseph's more social-based comment.

The views in question appear in 1539, and cannot therefore have been prompted by Luther's later polemic. Interestingly, Jewish criticism of Reformed dogma had not previously been an issue of any great merit. Indeed, one wonders if R. Yehiel felt a need to publish such a work after having given Reformed views the opportunity to properly develop. His comments concerned the suggestion that free choice and consequent justification of man by his good deeds are:

> in matters of faith the ultimate criterion and fundament. Such is the principle of choice and free will ... as against the mockers who claim that man neither prospers nor suffers perdition by his works unless Divine sanction had so determined ... And in this our generation we have seen the sages of the gentiles divided into sects ... Some maintain this view (i.e. predestination and the impossibility of justification by works) which is more bitter than wormwood and destructive of the very foundation of faith. But others (i.e. the Catholics) maintain the principle of free will in a simple and straightforward manner, branding their co-religionsts as heretics and apostates, as if they were followers of Zadok and Boethus. (32).

Here we see R. Yehiel suggesting that the tenet of free will is common to both Catholics and Jews alike, with the Reformed position, which he goes on to regard as purporting that ... "all the actions of man are of necessity subject to God's determination, in the absence of which man can do neither good nor bad. The same is also the case with punishment." (33). Therefore, R. Yehiel presents us with a friendly Catholic viewpoint from outwith Germany.

After//

After initially welcoming the Reformation then, Jewish reaction did undoubtedly change, especially after the writings of Bucer and the later Luther.

However, it is worth bearing in mind that this reaction does appear to have been geographically based. Those closer to Luther within Germany (i.e. Von Rosheim) adopted a more fervently opposed stance towards the Reformation, whilst those Jewish scholars from Italy remained somewhat more undecided.

CONCLUSION

When viewed as an overall picture, the position of the Jews in the early Reformation era does indeed take on a varied outlook. From the more moderate views of men such as Johannes Reuchlin and Huldrych Zwingli to the fierce polemic of the later Martin Luther, no uniformed stance towards the Jews emerges from the key Reformation leaders of Western Europe.

Although on the one hand it could be argued that Luther's approach of the 1540's represents a hardening of intolerance, which had featured for centuries, one must bear in mind that the problematic material of such works as On the Jews and Their Lies and Von Schem Hamphoras were atypical rather than the norm for most German followers of Luther. Indeed, the fact that his (and Bucer's) radical "suggestions" for dealing with the Jewish "problem" were not widely implemented by any magistrates or church leaders, demonstrates the lack of support shown by those who were perhaps tired of such a stifling approach towards a community with relatively small numbers. On the other hand it is possible to remain sceptical and suggest that the civil authorities found the patronage of Jewish financiers in their own districts too important to endanger by a fresh wave of persecution.

Another factor which perhaps aided the Jewish cause during the difficult times of the late 1530's and early 40's, was the organisation of men such as Josel von Roshiem who conducted a spirited and redoutable rejection of both Bucer and Luther's policies. In previous decades, the Jewish communities did not have any strong leadership, but, now encouraged by the new mood of semi-toleration in//

in many areas due, on the surface, to the breaking down of the previously harsh regime of the Roman Catholic church, European Jewry was determined to maintain its new found freedoms.

However, for the Jews, the early Reformation era did bring further elements of humiliation and suffering, due to the slanderous nature of accusations levelled against them by most reformers. The familiar centuries-old taints of Jews as well-poisoners and bloodthirsty schemers, who murdered children, were still evident. Additionally, the portrayal by both Bucer and Luther of the Jews as greedy money lenders who continually corrupted the Gentiles within their midst, was hardly original in its formulation. The sinister theological arguments advanced by Luther did inject an updated input to the more traditional caracature of the Jews as "Christ killers". Suggestions of their distortions of key Old Testament texts, which Luther portrayed as displacing the Jews as inheritors of God's grace and favour went beyond the boundaries of common racial prejudice. In the eyes of the German reformer, through the pages of On the Jews and Their Lies, the Jews were a people worthy of rejection due to the nature of their proud boasts based, as he saw it, on false grounds. In keeping with the anti-Jewish nature of sections of the early Reformation era, the Jews were never given a genuine "right of reply" to any of the theological "debates" in which they were denounced. As we noted in On the Jews and Their Lies when Luther cited a dialogue he had with "certain rabbis", it is unlikely if such a discourse ever actually took place, but rather was invented in order to embellish the author's own arguments.

What//

What then of the seemingly more positive aspects of certain Reformers? As has already been touched upon in an earlier Chapter, Luther's optimistic views of 1523 can be dismissed as not being truly representative of his real stance which was to emerge some twenty years later. Despite the fact that he called for an almost "gentle persuasion" in converting them, it cannot seriously be believed that he expected the Jews to convert en-masse to his cause.

Reuchlin, although advocating an increased awareness of Hebraic studies, a gesture which in itself advanced more credence and respectability toward the Jews than had been seen for some time did not advocate freeing the Jewish communities from their shackles. By the same token, it may also be said that Erasmus and Zwingli focused more upon the promotion of Old Testament studies (with the latter holding covenant theology in particular esteem), rather than again suggesting a break away from the social restrictions placed upon the Jews throughout Europe.

Overall, however, it can be argued that all the Reformed figures we have considered were unfortunately prisoners of their time. Therefore, for one lone voice to cry in the wilderness against centuries of prejudice would have proved to be unpopular to the extent of rejection and perhaps even ridicule by their peers. At the end of the day those involved in the Early Reformation Era were too predominantly pre-occupied with the establishment of their own new brand of Christianity, in opposition to the Roman Catholic Church to occupy themselves with such a side issue as an emancipation of the Jews. After all, as far as many were concerned, if the Jews had been so stubborn as to reject Christ for so long, was it really essential to bring them on board now in order to bolster the Reformation//

Reformation cause?

Finally, if one slightly positive outcome can be seen to emerge in this epoch of history, it is perhaps that the Reformation (Luther and Bucer aside) did not present any renewed staunch persecution of the Jews. How much consolation one can derive from this however is of course open to further debate.

And what of the future for the Jewish people living within the newly changing religious and political climate of Europe?

Josel von Rosheim continued to lobby those in authority and was eventually successful in preventing the expulsion of Jewry from Hungary and Bohemia. In addition to this, he convened a rabbinical synod which adopted a code of commercial ethics. Later, in seventeenth century Germany, we find the Jews living a traditional way of life and even coming to play a crucial role in state affairs, certainly defying the wishes of Martin Luther a century beforehand.

However, with the impact of the printing press during the Reformation with its ability to widely disseminate various tracts and writings which opposed the Jews, they could now find a broader audience in the future. The eighteenth century say the publication of such documents as "The Enemy of the Jews, The Scourge of the Jews, Jewish Practices a Study of Their Impious Life ... works which echo the Christian anti-Semitic attitudes prevalent in the Middle-Ages" (1). Indeed "from the end of the eighteenth century it became more common for Jews to convert to Christianity by way of baptism" (2). "Traditionally baptism had been an escape from persecution and emancipation should have made it unnecessary" (3).

Despite//

Despite the early promise of the Reformation with the overthrow of Judaism's traditional enemy, the Roman Catholic church, initial optimism would soon turn somewhat sour. It was still to be some time before the Jewish people could find true religious and social emancipation within the confines of Europe.

NOTES

CHAPTER ONE

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22. Z.A. Poznanski, *Magen Avraham*, p. 253.

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