UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

FACULTY OF ARTS

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James Parkes (1896-1981): A Study of his Early Life; his Involvement in Jewish-Christian Relations, and Related Post-War Developments.

by

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ABSTRACT

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JAMES PARKES (1896-1981): A STUDY OF HIS EARLY LIFE;
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This thesis deals with the life and work of Rev James William Parkes, MA, D Phil, Hon DHL, D Litt, who lived from 1896-1981. He was a pioneer in Jewish-Christian relations. For many years he was a lonely figure in seeking the reasons for antisemitism and not merely exposing the evil but also in searching for a solution to it. After completing his degree at Oxford, he worked with the Student Christian Movement and later with the International Student Service in Geneva. During the 1930s he decided to devote himself full-time to the study of Jewish-Christian relations: he was a prolific author. The thesis seeks to consider not only the first fifty years or so of Parkes' life but also the wider implications of Jewish-Christian relations during this time. Relevant records at the London Metropolitan Archives, the University of Southampton Archives and the Lambeth Palace Library, have been carefully examined to note the part played by James Parkes in setting up the Council of Christians and Jews and his subsequent involvement in it. The formation of the Society of Jews and Christians and Jews in1925 and its activities until 1937 are also explained in detail. Each of the eight chapters is self-contained and they result in, among other things, providing information which has not been previously known about the organisations with which James Parkes was connected.

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INTRODUCTION

Section 1 (1896-1923)

James Parkes was born in Guernsey in 1896. He first attended a Dame School for a year, then left for the Lower School of Elizabeth College, where he stayed until he was nineteen. He received a typical Victorian education in the classics for which he seems to have had a particular liking and aptitude. He had, well before the age of thirteen, started to learn Latin and Greek, and, by the time he left school in 1915, he could write these languages as fluently as he could English and could produce '*a beautiful example*' of quite a selection of different styles.[1] From this it will be evident, from the start, that Parkes was not one to hide his light under a bushel! He also became a senior prefect and a senior sergeant in the OTC, and seems to have asserted his authority with a vengeance. One form was proving extremely difficult for a temporary master, and, after a warning, did not mend their ways. They were duly whacked and, as a result of this, Parkes '*ruled the school unchallenged*'. He became the senior sergeant in the OTC and '*never lost a field day*'. He went through a period of violent unpopularity but was determined to make no concession to become more popular; his punishments were severe.[2] At the same time Parkes was working with a scholarship in view. It would have been quite easy to have obtained a Channel Island scholarship but he did not want this. He wanted an open one to Hertford College, Oxford - one of the best available. There was opposition to this from the Headmaster - allegedly because of some petty jealously and he refused to allow the classics master to give Parkes the necessary tuition during school hours. The master, however, invited Parkes to see him in the evenings twice a week.[3] Parkes duly obtained the scholarship but he says that it was, perhaps, at an excessive cost as he had a serious breakdown, although he recovered sufficiently to continue to exercise his rigorous discipline in the school. The rift between Parkes and the Headmaster was healed in later years. Parkes stayed in Guernsey until the winter of 1915, took his scholarship in December, and joined the army in January 1916.[4]

He enlisted in the Artists' Rifles, a regiment which mostly attracted public schoolboys and men in the professions. His early experiences were, perhaps, not unlike many others volunteering at this time, but while the wartime experiences of many men have to be 'dragged' out of them, Parkes is not at all reticent about his. His early experiences were not unlike many others who joined the army at this time. Within two months of enlisting he was

[1] James Parkes, *Voyage of Discoveries* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1969), p.15
[2] Ibid, p.17
[3] Ibid, p.18.
[4] Ibid, p.25

in France, enduring the well-known hardships and tribulations. One particular piece of misfortune was that, as a result of drinking water straight out of a canal, he contracted severe poisoning and was in hospital for three months. The trouble arose from the fact that, like his brother, Parkes had been invited to join the Battalion Scouts. *They were a picked lot; we paraded quite separately from the rest of the men...* another example of Parkes' ego. They had a special café on a canal where they used to rendezvous and where the water was boiled so that it could be drunk safely. One day too many scouts turned up and, short of boiled water, he was given his *citron au vin bleu* with water straight from the canal. The results for him were disastrous. He was in hospital for three months, ending up in Halloughton Hall, a country house in Warwickshire.[5] Parkes returned to duty in the summer of 1916, he was posted to an Officer Cadet Battalion and sent to the Staff College at Camberley to complete his training. In December he was commissioned into the Queen's Royal West Surry Regiment, sent to Sittingbourne and almost immediately crossed to France. As he, himself, says, *the life of an infantry subaltern in the Ypres Salient has been described so often that I have nothing fresh to add to it.*[6] Parkes was exposed to mustard gas, although he did not know this until he suddenly went blind on parade some days after he had left the line. He moved from hospital to hospital until he finally arrived in London in the autumn of 1917. He recovered his sight but did not return to France. During his time in the Ypres Salient he had spent a week in water without taking off his boots. Consequently he developed Dupuytren's contraction of the foot and it was decided that an operation was necessary. Nothing, however, seems to be straightforward with Parkes, and the operation was completely botched. The trouble was put right when he was posted back to the Third Battalion at Sittingbourne and went into hospital there. Later he was attached to a number of different gas schools where he found plenty of scope to improve matters. Finally, he assisted with demobilisation of the troops until, in the spring of 1919, he, himself, was demobilised. Thus, he left the army having been poisoned by water, gassed, and having fallen prey to Dupuytren's contraction of the foot. This last disease and the mustard gas would have recurring side effects for the rest of Parkes' life.[7]

It was at this time that Parkes considered that he had a fairly clear idea that he wanted to be ordained. He had not, however, completely made up his mind, feeling that Oxford would give him the opportunity to reflect and decide.[8] Understandably, he was in no fit state to go up to Oxford immediately after demobilisation and, in fact, he did not take up residence in Hertford College until October 1919. Probably, at this time, Oxford was a similar place to

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[5] Ibid, p.33
[6] Ibid, p.35
[7] R A Everett, *Christianity Without Antisemitism; James Parkes and the Jewish-Christian Encounter* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1993), p.3
[8] Parkes, *Voyage of Discoveries*, p.52

what it was after the Second World War. Many of the students would have been mature with an outlook different from that of the normal fresher. Hertford was one of the smaller colleges, with a little over a hundred students so that they all knew each other. Parkes was still not fully fit and was very satisfied when he was awarded a good 'Second' in classical mods. Presumably with ordination still in mind, he then decided to study theology. For this subject his tutor was Cyril Emmet, a church historian, who was to have a lasting influence on Parkes.[9] Parkes had a talent for painting and was delighted to be able to take as his special subject Early Christian Art and Architecture. When, however, he came to take his final examination in 1923 he was suffering from measles and had to be examined, orally, in bed. Following this he was given a letter stating that, as far as he had progressed, he had achieved a 'First'. This letter was to stand Parkes in good stead when, some eight years later, he sought permission to work for a doctorate.[10]

During his time as an undergraduate Parkes had been on good terms with the college chaplain, J M Campbell, who, when he found that Parkes was thinking about ordination, introduced him to the Student Christian Movement, about which more will be said later. Even so, Parkes was not greatly involved with this because he became immersed in the League of Nations Union. He joined this when he went up to Oxford because his

> *desire for ordination was not based on any wish to escape from the contemporary world, but was tied to the conviction, which I shared with so many of my generation, that we had to discover the moral foundations of a way of life for the whole world which would make a repetition of the war impossible.*

He was later asked to take on the University secretaryship of the LNU and, after consulting the University authorities, agreed to do so. He considered that consultation was necessary because he was a 'scholar', and, for a year, *the LNU would come first, and theology second.*[11] Never one to accept things as they are, Parkes wished to set about, immediately, making the union effective in the University but realised that that would mean considerable work in devising appropriate activities. The University authorities agreed to this, and, for the next year, appeared to be more concerned with how the LNU was progressing rather than with what progress he was making with his studies. Parkes knew that there were then, as always at Oxford, a great number of students from all over the world. This helped in the formation of an assembly similar to, but not exactly the same as, the Assembly of Geneva. As has been said, most students at Oxford at this time were mature and Parkes was able to set up an assembly of a high order. It was also the most popular regular meeting in the

[9] Everett, *Christianity Without Antisemitism*, p.4
[10] Parkes, *Voyage of Discoveries*, p.52
[11] Ibid, p.59

University. He had to devise the whole of the procedure for the meetings because he did not want them to be a 'debating society' where speakers automatically opposed each other. In, perhaps, typical 'Parkesian' fashion, he proposed that he, himself, would be the constitution and there would be no appeal from his rulings, but that at the beginning of the second term, with more experience, a constitution would be made. With, possibly, everyone afraid to demur, this was agreed! The meetings seem to have been very lively affairs. The issues debated were always the burning issues of the day and Parkes says that at times the Assembly had to be suspended before *it broke into furious chaos*. Distinguished visitors could be invited by any delegation and they enjoyed precisely the same rights of speech as all the other delegates. Parkes devised a curious system of voting in the Assembly. He did not want *intriguing and indignant minorities all the time*, so there were three categories of decision. For a report to be 'accepted' it had to have the approval of two-thirds of the members of the Assembly - each delegation counting as a single vote. To be 'rejected' it had, similarly, to be refused by two-thirds. In between, the report was 'not accepted'. Parkes realised that the Assembly was too complex and mature a body for the much younger generation which followed the ex-service men and women for whom it had been devised and it came to an end in 1925. In fact, Parkes ceased working for the LNU in late 1921 when he began to prepare for his theology finals.[12]

The Assembly, however, had not been Parkes' only activity as college secretary of the LNU. Thorough, as ever, in all his work, he had appointed a secretary in each college to recruit members and he, or someone else, spoke in most of the colleges. In addition, he spoke about the League in many places surrounding Oxford, coming into contact with local dignitaries and also frequently meeting opposition. This work, however, gave Parkes an insight into what he considered to be the basic political problem of his generation. The older generation deemed the war to be an unfortunate - indeed tragic - lapse in a political world with which they were otherwise contented. Parkes maintained, however, that his generation saw the war as proof that the distribution of political power and responsibility had failed and needed to be radically changed. Furthermore, they considered that the second world war was due largely to the misfortune that all the positions of authority between the wars were occupied by those who rejected a new world and wanted to return to the old.[13] Parkes' position as University secretary of the LNU had, of course, brought him into close contact with undergraduates who were engaged in running the other main activities. These included successive presidents of the Union and the political clubs, editors of *Isis*, and leaders of the SCM and the religious societies. The president of the University branch of the LNU at this

[12] Ibid, pp.60-61
[13] Ibid, pp.61-62

time was Professor Gilbert Murray, founder of the LNU. Murray gave considerable assistance to Parkes.[14] It will be apparent that all these activities would take their toll on any person, even someone with the energy of James Parkes, and by the time he retired from the LNU his health had been affected. He seems, however, to have made a quick recovery because, very soon after this, he again had to spring into action. At the end of 1922, the President of the Union had invited twelve German students to visit Oxford for a month in the summer term. The rector of the City Church was very much opposed to this and preached a sermon in which he declared that it was *an offence against all decency, the mere mention of which shocked and disgusted him.* He sent the text of his sermon to the *Oxford Chronicle*, a paper that had always backed the LNU and was amicably disposed towards the Assembly. Accordingly, Parkes asked the Editor to publish a letter from him indicating that while the rector was free to adopt what attitude he liked to his German contemporaries, he could not decide the attitude to each other of those who had borne the brunt of the fighting on both sides, since they had mostly been at school when war broke out. The letter was duly published, but then a national newspaper became involved and misrepresented what Parkes had said so that he appeared as a schoolboy attacking the ex-service men. Worst of all, however, was their comment that he

> *was the natural product of the pernicious teaching of William Temple, Bishop of Manchester; Dr Cairnes, Professor of Dogmatics at Aberdeen University; William Inge, Dean of St Paul's and Dr Selbie, Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford.*

In later years Parkes was to remind them of this. In the end the Germans were invited and the visit passed off peacefully.[15]

Reference has already been made to Parkes' interest in ordination and, following graduation, he was accepted by the Bishop of Lichfield. Parkes' family came from the Warwickshire-Staffordshire border and he was pleased at the thought of beginning his clerical career there. This, however, was not to be because in March 1923, he received quite unexpectedly, an invitation to join the staff of the Student Christian Movement, which he accepted. No doubt the invitation had arisen as a result of all the work Parkes had done with the LNU.[16]

As he was to spend the next five years or so of his working life with this organisation, it is worth going into some detail about its history. The SCM only began in the 1890s: it was named originally the Inter-University Christian Union; then, a little later, the British College Christian Union. Under Victorian Protestant inspiration, its principal bases were Cambridge

[14] Ibid, p.63
[15] Ibid, p.65
[16] Ibid, p.68

and Edinburgh, its early meetings at Keswick, linked with the well-known annual Evangelical Convention. Its main concern was with volunteering to go overseas as a missionary and with personal holiness. Its basis was a non-denominational commitment to *a belief in Jesus Christ as God the Son and as Saviour of the World.* Its theme was the evangelisation of the world in this generation. Thus, if only for a short time the SCM energized the evangelical missionary zeal among British university graduates towards the end of the nineteenth century. It also provided a bridge of communication between younger Protestant Christians of all churches.[17] The National Union of Students was not formed until after the First World War and no denominational chaplaincies existed. In these circumstances, with an increasing number of universities and the sense of a rapidly-growing and forward-looking student world, national and international, the SCM achieved quite extraordinary importance. Of the 50,000 students in any form of higher education in pre-1914 Britain, 10,000 were members of the SCM. Over the years, however, its concern and emphasis had changed from its Keswick-linked origins. From its start it had included those who were not 'evangelicals' in the narrow sense of being 'converted' or 'born-again'. The more it grew, the wider became the field from which it drew members: Anglo-Catholics as well as many young people who, although seriously interested in religion were not fully committed Christians. One result of this was that an increasingly smaller proportion of members seriously intended to volunteer for foreign missions, but a 'social consciousness', absent in the first years, was coming to be seen as a crucial part of the movement's mission. This was at the time - 1907-9 - when its name was changed from 'Christian Union' to Student Christian Movement.[18] Even so, the SCM continued to flourish and by 1920 had never been more active. Canon Tissington Tatlow, its General Secretary, could boast in 1919 that he received twenty thousand letters a year. Thus, by the time Parkes arrived in Oxford the SCM was in the middle of its greatest period. Without the SCM the great Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910, generally and correctly regarded as the real start of the modern ecumenical transformation of Christendom would never have taken place.[19] William Temple was twenty-eight years of age when this conference was held and he played a small part in it. He was a member of the preparatory Commission on Missionary Education, and attended not as a delegate but as a guest - and also as a steward, because the SCM had been given the task of appointing the stewards. In great demand as ever, he had to leave before the Conference was over but he often testified that his first acquaintance with the world problems of the Church was made in 1910, in the Assembly Hall of the Church of

[17] Hastings, *A History of English Christianity*, 1920-1990 (London: SCM Press, 1991), p.87
[18] Ibid, p.88
[19] Ibid, p.87

Scotland.[20] The most important sequel to the 1910 Conference was the appointment of a Continuation Committee, which led eleven years later, to the formation of the International Missionary Council. Temple described this as *now quite an indispensable part of the machinery for carrying the Gospel throughout the world.* The Committee's progress was signalised by the next ecumenical Missionary Conference, which was held in Jerusalem in 1928, when not only were more representatives present than before of the younger churches, but also their delegates were chosen not, as hitherto, by the Missionaries and the missionary societies but by the Christian communities and churches throughout the world.[21] At this time the SCM, too, was very active in Oxford. There was taking place there a campaign entitled *Religion and Life* when the biggest halls in the university were filled nightly. Hundreds flocked to the discussions and questions after the meetings. William Temple took a very active part in the *Religion and Life* meetings. When, in later years, there were complaints about the 'political' tone of the Archbishop's speeches, and of the lack of any adequate reference in them to religion, one of Temple's defences was that so far from the 'fundamental truths of the Gospel' being neglected, they were being preached with striking results in the *Religion and Life* weeks organised by the British Council of Churches in many parts of England. In fact the *Religion and Life* movement was originally called the Commission of the Churches for International Friendship and Social Responsibility.[22] Later, Parkes attended the Missionary Quadrennial in 1921 where the platform was 'crowded' with national figures in Church and State. This was of interest to him because in the sectional meetings

> *he could find and talk to men and women who could speak from experience on the problems of all the continents, and of almost every career which offered opportunities for Christian service.*[23]

The ecumenical future of Britain is said to have been decisively forged within the SCM: a co-operative effort, largely a lay effort; and quite as much Free Church and Scottish as Anglican. The standard bearers of the new ecumenical consensus - among them William Temple - had found their gospel within the SCM and gradually carried it to the heart of all the major non-Roman churches of the land.[24]

This was the organisation which, in 1923, James Parkes joined.

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[20] F A Iremonger, *William Temple* (London: Oxford University Press, 1948), p.391
[21] Ibid, p.392
[22] Ibid, pp.582, 423
[23] Parkes, *Voyage of Discoveries*, p.57
[24] Hastings, *A History of English Christianity*, p.91

Section 2 (1923 – 1928)

He seems immediately to have become at home there. The two leaders were Rev Tissington Tatlow and Miss Zoë Fairfield. Both had been with the SCM for some time: Tatlow as General Secretary since 1903 and Miss Fairfield as Assistant General Secretary since 1909. Tatlow's constructive work in the early days of the SCM was regarded as among the most noteworthy religious efforts of the time.[25] Parkes regarded them very highly and complementing each other perfectly. *'They were completely without any denominational narrowness: and the contribution they made to the developing ecumenism of British Christianity was immeasurable'.* These were, of course, qualities dear to his heart. Indeed, the position seems to have suited Parkes admirably. He had a high opinion of the SCM: 'it was jealous of nobody and, generally speaking, nobody was jealous of the SCM'. He was in charge of International Study: other departments were Social Study, Missionary Study and Bible Study. There was a Dutch girl who was linked to International Study and who was invaluable for her understanding of the continent and her knowledge of languages. Although, for a time, with her help he was able to enter into *'profound theological correspondence'* with German students, later his knowledge of Latin enabled him to correspond in Latin: no mean achievement.[26]

Parkes seems to have spent much of his life attending meetings and conferences, tasks for which he would appear to have been eminently suited. He took up duty with the SCM in London and almost immediately went to an Anglo-American conference at High Leigh and then to Switzerland. This was to attend a conference of the World's Student Christian Federation at Heinrichsbad, a small Protestant spa, in the north-east corner of the country. Parkes regarded it as a very moving occasion because it witnessed the first meeting since the war of the French and German Christian Movements. He, of course, was a member of the SCM – a movement for students whose object was to create or deepen their understanding of Christianity. On the other hand, the continental movements were for Christian students. The British movement was interdenominational and only the Roman Catholics – of their own volition – did not join it. Parkes stated that the continental movements were primarily 'confessional', by which he meant, presumably, denominational. The culmination of the conference was a Communion Service, held in German, French and English. This

[25] F A Iremonger, *William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury* (Oxford: University Press, 1948), p.124
[26] James Parkes, *Voyage of Discoveries,* p.70

seems to have been something in which Parkes would have revelled. All present at the conference considered that this could be *'the only possible consummation of a deeply stirring experience'*. The members of the conference had to compose the service themselves. A Danish pastor read the words of consecration: Parkes – though not yet ordained – took the English part; and a French student read the French part. The Swiss pastor of Heinrichsbad presided. Parkes regarded this as the beginning of what was to be 'a somewhat odd clerical career, conducting strange services in strange places under strange language conditions'. Perhaps this sentence just about sums up Parkes' whole way of life. There was never any fixed pattern: it would have been very difficult to write a job description for him![27]

The nature of Parkes' work at this time – International Study – brought him, of course, into contact with a number of other bodies, including the British Institute of International Affairs, later to become 'Royal'. Perhaps always being rather exceptional, or perceiving himself as such, in most things he did, he stated that he was very much younger than the average member – he would have been about twenty-seven. He was of considerable assistance to the Institute because he could inform them of promising members in the British Universities, and also report on conditions in the European Universities. These were very active political bodies. This is not particularly unusual: many university students were politically active. Conditions in post-war Germany were atrocious: there was hyper inflation. Obviously life was very difficult for German students – as, indeed, for all German people.

During this time Parkes had a special relationship with the National Union of Students, which had been brought into existence to provide a national body which would combat the anti-German policy of the Confédération Internationale des Étudiants. Once again he was quickly active in this and became a visiting member of its executive, as representing the SCM. He was also somewhat indispensable because, while students came and went, he remained by far the most senior member outside the permanent officers and *'so the natural consultant on difficult internal matters'*. This was helped by his phenomenal memory for people: he knew presidents and secretaries of local unions from his visits to the universities and to Swanwick. The NUS were experiencing problems at this time: their main interest was the international battle but the British students were experiencing difficulties in meeting

[27] Ibid, p.72

'the skilled intrigue of their continental opposite members'. At one autumn council meeting which Parkes attended, there was general disappointment at the failure of all their efforts and a reluctance to reproach anyone for the failure. A whole morning was spent in trying to frame a suitable resolution to express these feelings. Parkes said he solved the problem easily, by suggesting a simple formula. Parkes was also in touch with the League of Nations Union and succeeded in obtaining something which he considered was very much needed: an autonomous academic LNU organisation incorporating all the university branches.[28]

As has been previously stated, Parkes had intended to be ordained but his plans were frustrated. The Bishop of London, however, was accustomed to ordaining secretaries of the SCM and accepted Parkes, but said that he would have to pass his examination. While, perhaps, most candidates sitting the paper – whatever the questions might be – would have treated them seriously, Parkes treated them with utter contempt – his version of the event in his autobiography makes amusing reading. Consequently, of course, he was unsuccessful. Although the Bishop's senior examining chaplain gave Parkes the opportunity to sit the examination again, this he declined to do. William Temple, however, then Bishop of Manchester, had heard about this and asked Parkes to visit him the next time he was in Manchester. As a result of this, Temple wrote a long letter to the Bishop of London and Parkes was ordained. Parkes made many visits to William Temple, who *'remained a much-loved guide and friend to the end of my life'*. Parkes served his title at St. Stephen's Hampstead – where he almost immediately became involved in some controversy with the vicar – but he never worked as a full-time parish priest. He did, however, spend much time in assisting churches in the parishes in which he lived.[29] In his unpublished work 'Campaigner against Antisemitism: the Rev. James Parkes 1896 – 1981; an Interpretative Study', Colin Richmond says that it was a contemporary criticism of Temple that he ordained unsuitable candidates. Parkes, however, could hardly be regarded as an example of this, though his ministry was not the usual conventional one.

After ordination Parkes was able to develop his work with the SCM. He travelled widely in Britain and Europe, getting the 'feel' of student life at this time. He did not always see eye to eye with continental students and there were problems. One of his first difficulties was with the German Movement for Christian Students (Deutscher

[28] Ibid, p.74
[29] Ibid, p.76

Christentum Studenten Verbindung – DCSV). This movement liked to keep religion and politics separate, which was, of course, the very antithesis of Parkes' creed. Indeed he believed that politics were the very essence of religion, in which members of the Church should get thoroughly involved. Parkes also experienced difficulties with the World's Student Christian Federation. This had, in 1921, founded a Committee for European Relief (later the International Student Service, now the World University Service). Parkes was involved with this because the SCM always took the lead in fund-raising. At this time, the ESR were engaged in famine relief work particularly amongst students in Russia. When proposals were made to increase the size of the budget to provide for German relief as well, the only opposition came from the DCSV spokesman. He insisted that *'feeding the starving had nothing to do with preaching the Gospel, and was no responsibility of a Christian student organisation'*. Although, in every possible way, the British SCM, in full co-operation with the NUS tried to reach all sections of the German student body, it was not easy because the German liberal tradition, which concerned itself with political and social questions, was very much smaller and weaker. More headway could be made with the ESR rather than through the WSCF.[30]

Parkes says that his visit to Heinrichsbad had involved him immediately in the controversy from which he did not escape until he left Geneva for England in 1935. This was the controversy with German Protestant theology about the nature of 'the fall', and the basic relationship between God and man. He dealt with this in a lecture entitled *'Politics and the Doctrine of the Trinity'*, given at Gilon, Switzerland, WSCF Conference, 1929. This will be considered in section 3.

During 1924, Parkes carried out a punishing schedule of European visits. In February he went as representative of the British SCM to the Jubilee of the Norwegian SCM. He made a speech in Norwegian which he had learned by heart for the occasion. Between July and September he attended the annual conference of ESR at Schloss Elmau in Bavaria, that of the CIE at Warsaw, and the study conference of WSCF at Bad Saarow in Prussia. Parkes contrasted the Elmau and the Warsaw conferences. He arrived a day or two early at Elmau in order to digest more than one hundred pages of reports of the administration, the building-up of self-help, and the projects of the coming year. He described it as being *'an intensely serious and*

[30] Ibid, p.78

realistic conference'. At Warsaw, Franco-Belgian-Polish politics dominated everything. The central issue was the question of the admission of Germany to the CIE: understandably a controversial matter. The Swedish and British delegations were in favour of admission. Opposed to it were the French, Belgian, Polish and Czech student bodies. These had so devised the constitution of the CIE so that Luxemburg, which had no university, was a member, while Germany, with the largest student body in Europe, could not be. Parkes often seemed able to see the 'funny' side in many complicated situations and here he found great amusement in the various shenanigans.[31]

Meanwhile, at home, Parkes pressed on with the creation of study programmes *'based on serious reading'* and gradually accumulated books on current international questions. He was always ready to allow them to be borrowed if they could not be absorbed into college libraries. He tried to get students interested in serious books rather than popular editions even though these might be valuable. He caused a stir on one occasion when a serious request was made for Lenten reading and he recommended Parker T Moon's *Imperialism and World Politics.* This might give the impression that although Parkes was ordained he was not *'massively religious'*. In fact he was at pains to point out that, notwithstanding recommending that book, he did a great deal of devotional work, especially in taking retreats for committees and small gatherings. Indeed, these were the *'backbone of the term's multifarious activities'*. The main topics of international study at that time included war and pacifism, and the League of Nations. Although Parkes was sympathetic to the pacifist point of view he did not join any pacifist organisation. He always thought that the slogan should be *'much more peace'* rather than *'no more war'*, and that *'the latter slogan concealed the real issue'*. Understandably – in view of his enthusiasm for the LNU while at Oxford – he encouraged *'positive'* study of all the machinery of the League of Nations rather than *'abstract'* study of the rightness and wrongness of war.[32]

In January 1925, Parkes attended another Missionary Quadrennial, held in Manchester. He was impressed because there were present over two thousand students, several hundred of whom came from the Christian and Student Christian Movements of other countries. As international study secretary he was mainly

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[31] Ibid, p.81
[32] Ibid, p.79

occupied with foreign guests. He regarded the gathering as outstanding as it had been at Glasgow and a triumph for the organising powers of Tissington Tatlow and Zoë Fairfield. Parkes – a Channel Islander – had always found the English winter extremely trying, but at the Quadrennial he met Pastor Medard who *'suggested that it was not too far to Provence, and that there I could get dried out in the winter sun'*. Then began what Parkes described as *'a long-drawn-out love affair'* with that region.[33]

Parkes – always ultra conscientious – said that in his second year he had become aware of what he described as a 'void' in his activity as a promoter of the study of international questions. He wanted to teach students how to get to the roots of problems and show how they could be resolved. He sought to develop in them a sense of the moral and the immoral in politics but could not give them a solid basis in a *theology* (Parkes' emphasis) of politics. This, of course, was not a new problem. People of opposing political views often claim to be equally devout members of the same religious organisation. There is not – in this country at least – a 'Christian' political party. Parkes' problem was accentuated because he was in contact with continental theologians who denied that politics had anything at all to do with religion. The matter came to a head for Parkes during a visit he paid to the Mirfield Community of the Resurrection. There was a long discussion about it but it remained unresolved. Even discussion with William Temple failed to resolve the matter, although Temple encouraged him to go on 'puzzling'. Parkes considered the problem must be connected with the doctrine of the Trinity: there was not much difficulty in understanding the second person; the first and third were more difficult.[34]

Parkes was, by this time, becoming increasingly impatient with pacifism. He was convinced that any attempt to create a pacifist state, which would allow itself to be destroyed, was completely wrong. He continued to press for pacifists to concentrate on making *'much more peace'* but he agreed that he made little headway with this. Although Parkes had a busy schedule of work organising study groups, conferences and retreats, he was also the sub-warden of Student Movement House in Russell Square. This was used principally as a club for students, particularly foreign students. As he said, *'It was always short of money and full of problems'*. His flair for organisation, however, was evident here: he seems to have exercised considerable

[33] Ibid, p.81
[34] Ibid, p.84

ingenuity in getting the furniture and fittings repaired; his method kept the staff happy and had the repairs done efficiently.[35]

In 1925 Parkes again did considerable travelling on the continent. The committee of the European Student Relief had its conference at Gex, near Geneva, and the World's Student Christian Federation conference was also in Switzerland, at Oberaegeri, near Zug (not far from Zurich). He went, too, to the then Yugoslavia, where he attended two conferences, including one of the Russian Orthodox Church. All this just goes to show some of Parkes' flexibility. He regarded the ESR and the WSCF conferences as being important for the future. By this time the various continental governments and universities were becoming more capable of meeting their own needs and increasingly self-conscious about accepting 'charity'. Thus the relief work which ESF had been founded to perform in central and eastern Europe was coming to a close. At the Gex conference a commission was set up to determine whether ESR should be gradually run down. Parkes was one of the two secretaries of the commission – surely a mark of the esteem in which he was held. There was unanimous opposition to the closing down of ESR and speakers from the various organisations were insistent that ESR had been the only organisation *'where they all met each other and which inspired universal trust in a situation where trust was a very rare quality'*. The reasoning behind this was that since 1921, when it had been founded, ESR would work in a country only through a Committee representing the whole student body of that country. The result of this was that the Gex commission requested that a new department should be set up to develop 'cultural co-operation'. The executive of the ESR then decided to change its name from European Student Relief to International Student Service – about which more will be said later (Section 3). It postponed, however, consideration of the proposed new department to a later date. Parkes was appointed chairman of the Oberaegeri conference. He said that it was at this conference that he was brought into direct contact with what he called the 'Jewish problem'. *'Hitherto it had just been one of the many contemporary problems of which I was aware. The conference made me conscious of its violence and its special quality'*. The trouble arose because of a very antisemitic speech made by one of the Christian delegates. After what Colin Richmond, in his unpublished work

[35] Ibid, p.85

already referred to, calls a 'typical Parkesian scene' the speaker said he must have been misunderstood if he had appeared to be antisemitic.[36]

Understandably, no conference appeared to have been free of its problems. Parkes said that at every conference of the WSCF there was – a usually unspoken – conflict between students influenced by Anglo-saxon theology and students influenced by German theology. The term 'Anglo-saxon' is rather a curious one. Parkes explains it by saying that it included British, Commonwealth, American and Asian students. The Anglo-saxons wanted to discuss Christianity's relation to social and political questions, whereas students influenced by German theology were opposed to the idea that Christianity was concerned with such questions. They demanded unlimited Bible Study, usually of what Parkes regarded as *'the worst passages of St. Paul's letters'*. Elimination of any discussion of social or international issues was, of course, anathema to Parkes. As regards the Orthodox conference in Yugoslavia, he enjoyed this even though it lasted from one and a half to three hours before breakfast and he had to stand during the whole of this time. In addition he did not understand a word of the language! Yet *'The liturgies were...a profound spiritual experience'*.[37]

In the spring Parkes agreed to continue his SCM work for another three years but in the autumn he was asked to become warden of Student Movement House. This was a very demanding post: the most difficult in the SCM; from which his predecessor had had to retire because of exhaustion. Even with all its problems, once again, it was a post for which Parkes seemed eminently suited. The House was a focal point for organised students from overseas – Indian, Chinese, West Indian and others – while, moreover, non-Christian students were made welcome. As always, of course, there were large numbers of these in London and there was no other place where they could find the social life and activities of a club. Because of this, SCM House became a centre for all foreign students with a 'Christian presence' in the leadership. Parkes seemed to have organised things well: the social life of the House was run by an elected Club Committee on which the SCM came to have no special authority. Obviously the real effort to maintain equally the original dual purpose of its foundation contained within itself many possibilities of tension. These arose because the Club was now nearly ten years old and a small group of ex-students had, quite legitimately, remained members. People staying overlong in certain situations often

[36] Ibid, p.87
[37] Ibid, p.88

cause problems and here they became a not very good influence on the younger members. The problem was not easily solved because it was not desirable to limit the membership to full-time students, as it was among the younger ex-students that the most valuable helpers and committee members were found, providing the element of stability in the rapid turnover of undergraduate members, many of whom spent only a year in England.[38]

The House was open to any genuine student: the main difficulties arose with students, young and inexperienced, probably living abroad for the first time. It was essential to attract the right students which, of course, could only be done by having the right activities: physical, intellectual, aesthetic and religious. That done, it was necessary to have a *'sixth sense for possible candidates'*. As with all clubs of this kind, there was always the problem of 'breaking the ice' so that new members came to know each other. Parkes devised a novel but highly effective method for this. Just when he was beginning to enjoy his work at the SCM, in the winter of 1927, he received an approach from International Student Service as unexpected as that of the SCM had been four years earlier. The Assembly of the ISS had decided to adventure on the programme of cultural co-operation outlined at the conference at Gex which Parkes had attended some three years earlier. They invited him to go to Geneva to put it into action. The main problem was how this was to be financed as no funds were available. Almost, as if by divine intervention, Bettina Warburg, daughter of the wealthy American banker, Paul Warburg, called upon him. Parkes had met her previously and he asked her what she would think of his trying to put the Gex programme into practice. She replied immediately that if he was going to do that her family would be responsible for the finances.[39]

So, in March 1928, Parkes joined the staff of the ISS.

Section 3 (1928 – 1930)

It had begun life in 1921 as the Committee for European Student Relief but by 1925 it was felt that the Committee's purpose had been served, and a conference convened to decide its future proposed that under its new name it should work to develop cultural co-operation. (Later the ISS changed its name to the World University Service). The ISS had no student membership but was a small self-perpetuating Assembly,

[38] Ibid, p.89
[39] Ibid, pp91-92

registered under Swiss law. Because members were not recruited in the universities, there was no competition with other student societies. The ISS was also protected from becoming a *'remote bureaucracy'* because the annual programme was drawn up at the summer conference while at the same time plans were made for raising the budget required by the programme from the student bodies of co-operating countries.[40]

The ISS held one important conference each year: in 1928 it was held at Bierville (France). It was at this conference that Parkes presented his plans for a department of 'Cultural Co-operation'. Through this department he co-ordinated conferences on conflict, political problems, race, nationality, and other issues of the day. One of the aims of the conferences arranged by the ISS was to help people learn how to 'discuss' issues but Parkes found that the idea of an 'English Debate' was a mystery to those taking part. He also came up against the problem of nationalism, making it increasingly difficult to group together people from different countries. Parkes was travelling widely at this time and soon found European universities, especially those in Eastern Europe, to be breeding grounds for nationalism and antisemitism. Hence he was not surprised later at the support given to the Nazis by the university communities of Germany and other European universities.[41]

In 1928 Parkes also attended a discussion conference organised by the World's Student Christian Federation near Gex in Switzerland. It was here that he received his introduction to Barthian theology. Karl Barth's assistant was to lecture on four subjects: the Fall, the Incarnation, Atonement, and the Holy Spirit. To Parkes' great consternation some five and a half hours were spent on the Fall while a quarter of an hour was considered to be sufficient for the Holy Spirit. In his autobiography Parkes described this as an *'admirable introduction'* to Barthian theology and added *'that the evil doctrine spread over Germany is understandable, even though supremely tragic'.* Parkes' attitude to Barthianism is dealt with in chapter 2.

Parkes said that, as a result of the increasing influence of Barth, he was made *'to think furiously'* and in the spring of 1929 he produced a tentative Trinitarian theology. Accepting that God in his 'home life' was wholly other and unknowable, he argued that he had from the beginning of creation revealed himself and accepted responsibility for it, and was himself the inspiration of its development. He was its

[40] James Parkes, *Voyage of Discoveries,* p.93
[41] R A Everett, *Christianity Without Antisemitism,* p.11

ruler and inspirer as well as its redeemer. His essay had the advantage of criticism and encouragement from, among others, William Temple, and led to his being asked by Francis Miller, Chairman of the World's Student Christian Federation, to give a series of lectures at the summer conference at Glion, near Montreux, Switzerland. The title was *'Politics and the Doctrine of the Trinity'*.[42] The overall theme of the lectures was the relationship between politics and theology – something dear to Parkes' heart. Underlying the lectures was Parkes' belief that the Trinity could provide a key to development of a theology of politics. The lectures have not been published but Everett, quite rightly, goes into them in some detail.

The content of the lectures revolved around Parkes' main interest at the time and he stated that they took place through his encounters with three groups: the League of Nations Union, the SCM (and the ISS), and the German Movement for Christian Students (DCSV). In his introductory lecture he said that *'it is in reflection on the different ideas and the different approaches of those groups that I have myself begun to think out my own attitude on the Idea of God, and the place of the Church, and the Christian in international affairs'*. Parkes was concerned because each of these groups had a difficult time relating their ideas to both politics and religion. The members of the LNU were full of idealism, often based on the life and character of Jesus but had little use for the Church. The German DCSV, though quite different from the other groups also influenced Parkes' thinking. He disagreed with them over their strict separation of religion and politics, but he admitted that they had forced him away from a shallow optimism into taking seriously the reality of sin. It was from this background that Parkes began to formulate his own 'theology of politics'.[43]

The aim of the lectures was, firstly, to show how the community was as essential to the purpose of God as the individual and, secondly, to construct at least the outline of a Christian theology that concerned itself with more than personal salvation. In doing so he hoped to show that social, political and economic issues were as important to God as the plight of an individual soul. The next lecture dealt with the question of the community in the purpose of God. At the beginning he argued that progress and perfection were characteristics of God's plan for the world. Parkes regarded perfection as being *'the perfect adjustment naturally and spiritually of any stage of development to what God would have it (be) at that stage'*. Parkes then moved to the

[42] Parkes, *Voyage of Discoveries,* p.104
[43] Everett, *Christianity Without Antisemitism,* p.104

second characteristic of a world doing the will of God – what he called fellowship. He did not limit fellowship to the Church alone but introduced the idea of the importance of Divine – human co-operation. Parkes continued the idea of fellowship over to a description of the Church. He argued that the genius of the church was its ability to create a fellowship among such different types of people. Parkes summed up by saying that the Church should be interested not in state politics but in the community.[44]

Parkes' great concern about communities stemmed from his arguments with many students and fellow workers about the role Christianity should play in the public arena. In the lecture entitled *The Community in the Purpose of God* he challenged their assumptions that communal and political issues were of little concern to the Church and claimed that communities had dominated historical events. Parkes maintained that God was as concerned with the material world as with the spiritual world. Creation was still good, in spite of the Fall and it should not be seen as evil or ungodly. It was through the material world that God worked to reveal the stages of his plan. Parkes anticipated the criticism that the material gains did not imply progress because they had been used for destruction, and argued that, while this had happened, it was not the necessary consequence of material progress.[45] Parkes also stated his belief in the *'awful consistency of God'*. This, he considered, hampered God because it would tolerate no compromise. God worked mercilessly to eradicate the evil which impeded his kingdom and he was tireless in the effort. Parkes linked together his ideas about God with his effort to show the importance of the community in God's plan. As illustrations of modern evils for which there must be corporate atonement, he referred to the Jewish problem of Europe; the United States and the issue of slavery; and white empires and their exploitation of coloured races. From a theological view, Parkes argued that *'there are no signs in these problems before us that God will accept compromise. It must be remembered that they are problems demanding corporate, not individual atonement'*. In raising the question of corporate atonement, Parkes presented his strongest argument for the community in the purpose of God. He argued that while individuals could do much in terms of corporate atonement for social evils, they still remained related to their nation and subject to both the good and the bad of their nation. Thus the community played an important

[44] Ibid, pp.70-73
[45] Ibid, p.75

role in the purpose of God. In addition, corporate existence also gave rise to good and evil, and given God's moral consistency in working for the good, God had a great deal of interest in what circumstances did concerning such issues, as, among others, war, economics, and race relations.[46]

In the next three lectures: *Politics and the Holy Spirit, Politics and the person of Christ* and *The Person of Christ and the Holy Spirit* Parkes attempted to build a theological bridge to politics and show how Christians could rethink their ideas about such themes as Christology, the Incarnation and the Trinity. The lectures marked Parkes' first serious attempt to construct his own theology. He was at pains in these lectures, to show the problems that Christians had in finding any relationship between their theology and the social issues of the world. In the first lecture, Parkes talked about God's steady work to reveal his plan for the world at various stages in history. Parkes believed that there was a constant striving by God to better not just individuals, but the community as well. Yet, somehow, Christianity had lost contact with the social aspect of God's purpose, and reduced itself to concern for individuals alone. Parkes also took issue with the doctrine of the Fall which had already stirred some controversy between the German students and himself. The doctrine of the complete Fall of Creation was anathema to him: it reduced man to a pitiful state of existence; and it effectively halted any efforts in the areas of social justice and community. Parkes attacked what he believed to be an excessive concentration on the individual by the Church. The idea that the incarnation was for the redemption of individual souls alone he regarded as half true. He considered that the main task of the Church *'was to secure future bliss, not present change. It was a refuge from the world, not a challenge to it'.*[47] Parkes did not view the Incarnation as an event which had occurred outside history. He believed the Incarnation had a man-ward side and a God-ward side. The man-ward side was tied up with individual redemption: the God-ward with God's plan to move his creation towards perfection. The Incarnation enabled God to *'face the burden of the world's suffering and know His power to guide it to the perfection for which he had designed it'*. Parkes stressed the theme of God's involvement with human progress on a level beyond that of individual redemption. He believed the view to be only half-true that the course of history up to Christ was simply one of decline and desperation and that the Incarnation ushered in a

[46] Ibid, pp.80-81
[47] Ibid, p.85

new period in regard to the struggle of man with sin. While, on the one hand, man had fallen so low that only God could raise him up, on the other hand, he had risen so high that only God could complete the process. Later in his writings, Parkes coined the phrase that '*good theology cannot be built on bad history*'[48]: he was adamant in arguing that history was the stage upon which the Hand of God was seen. Thus theology had to give credence to what history had to say. In his quest for a holistic theology, Parkes challenged the exclusive Christian position that salvation could be achieved by faith in Christ alone. He argued strongly for a certain doctrine of universal salvation based on God's idea of perfection for his entire creation.[49] Parkes wrote that *'Salvation is not only universal in the sense that it embraces all men; it is also complete, in that it raises all men to their perfection. It would be a poor business if all that God "saved" were a collection of half-developed virtuous nit-wits who, with their half-developed personalities, would find eternity infinitely boring'.*[50] In Parkes' holistic theology, God's ability to work whenever, wherever and however He so wished destroyed any parochial interpretation of His love and revelation. Parkes was insistent that the Church should be alive to the spiritual truths of other religions, *'instead of allowing these to be discovered by her opponents'*. There was a wider area of concern in which God worked and this was not limited to the Church or to those who professed to be Christian. Parkes was also critical of the type of Christian ethics which limited itself to religious concerns alone. As God had been divorced from His creation in much of traditional theology, Parkes believed a similar divorce had taken place between God and ethics.[51]

If there was to be any change in Christian theology, Parkes believed that it needed to broaden its understanding of the Incarnation and the Trinity. This would result in Christian theology being less christocentric and more theocentric: terms which appear repeatedly in his writings on theology and on Jewish-Christian relations. Indeed, his ideas about theocentric theology were to become a cornerstone for his ideas about a new Christian theology of Judaism. Thus Parkes' later works, which contrasted christocentric and theocentric theology, were not dependent on a need to be more favourable to Judaism in order to construct his case for better Jewish-Christian relations, but rather the continuation of a theme found early in his work. It was his

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[48] Ibid, p.48
[49] Ibid, pp.88-90
[50] John Hadham, *Good God* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1940), p.77
[51] Everett, *Christianity Without Anti-Semitism,* p.92

initial reinterpretation of Christianity, brought about by his desire to find a means of creating a theology of politics, which allowed him to reinterpret Christian views about Judaism, and not the influence of Judaism and his Jewish friends upon his work. Parkes concluded his lectures by saying that he was *'not writing this in any sense for publication'* and as has been said the lectures never were published, although he valued the criticism of a few, including William Temple, who read them.[52]

In 1929 Parkes also wrote a paper entitled *Some Aspects of the Jewish Situation in Europe.* It was an able analysis of what he called *'the fundamental problem'*, namely *'the cultural problem in relation to nationalism'*, especially in Germany, where the *'idea of racial purity is untrue as it is of any other of the great European peoples, and the idea of cultural purity is perhaps more untrue than that of their neighbours'.* Parkes believed that the very idea of the cultural state came to them from the bible. He considered that German culture was great enough to grow out of this idea, but while it lasted it would create a malaise between those who held it and their minorities. This would be made much easier when the cultural life of the nation could be separated a little more from the political life of the state. So long as uniformity was expected within an artificial political frontier in cultural matters, there was much to be said on both sides that a solution was impossible. As our own cultures were developed it would become apparent that it was not inconsistent with others developing theirs, even if they remained within the same political boundaries. There would also be more scope for a free interchange, since in the long run no culture lived to itself and if it was once rooted it profited by drawing into itself all the streams which could be attracted towards it.[53]

In the spring of 1930 Parkes decided that, as he had not found a competent short study of anti-Semitism in English, he would write one.[54] (Nicholas de Lange described it as one of the foundations of his future writings and a strong statement of

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[52] Ibid, p.95

[53] Colin Richmond, (unpublished) 'Campaigner Against Anti-Semitism: the Rev. James Parkes 1896–1981; An Interpretative Study'

[54] James Parkes, *The Jew and His Neighbour: A Study of the Causes of Anti-Semitism,* (London: published for the International Student Service by the Student Christian Movement Press, 1930). A second, revised edition was published in 1938. In the preface to *Anti-Semitism and the Foundations of Christianity* (Ed Alan T Davies), Parkes says that the reason for this was that by this time the Nazis were in control in Germany, and their anti-Semitic programme was being openly practiced (sic). Hence he revised the first edition 'in the light of National Socialism in theory and practice'.

the need for Christians to listen to Jews and understand them, instead of trying to convert them to Christianity[55]). This is dealt with in chapter 4.

Section 4 (1930 -)

So much for the first thirty or so years of Parkes' life. These have been considered in some detail as, of course, they form the basis for his later work. His life and thought were dominated by his interest in Jewish-Christian relations which originated from the hostility to Jewish students generated by the crisis in the universities resulting from the political and social aftermath of World War 1.[56] This thesis seeks to consider not only the first fifty years or so of Parkes' life but also the wider implications of Jewish-Christian relations during this time. The Society of Jews and Christians had been founded in 1925 and this thesis explains how it evolved during the first twenty years. The Council of Christians and Jews was, eventually, established in 1942: Parkes played a leading part, with others including Archbishop William Temple, in setting this up, and he took an active part in it throughout his life.

It must have been gratifying to Parkes to note the development in Jewish-Christian relations following the end of the 1939-1945 war. The impact of the Holocaust on world Jewry cannot be overstated[57] and this, no doubt, acted as a fillip. The first International Conference of Christians and Jews was held in Oxford in 1946 and this was followed, a year later, by a conference in Seelisberg, Switzerland, both of which Parkes attended. The main outcome of the 1946 conference was that in an *'Address to the Churches'* it set out what were soon to become widely-known as 'The Ten Points of Seelisberg' which took the form of a series of suggestions for the guidance of teachers in the presentation of the relations between Judaism and Christianity, especially of the story of the crucifixion.

As Parkes recognised, by the early 1960s, with John XXIII as Pope, extensive changes were beginning to take place in the Roman Catholic Church: these came to a head at the Second Vatican Council in 1964. Indeed in the comparatively short space of five years the Pope inaugurated a new era in the history of the Church, as regards the attitude to Jews. This resulted in the decree *'Nostra Aetate'* being promulgated in

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[55] Nicholas de Lange, James Parkes: A Centenary Lecture. In Sian Jones, Tony Kushner and Sarah Pearce *Cultures of Ambivalence and Contempt: Studies in Jewish-Non-Jewish Relations* (London: Valentine Mitchell, 1998), p.32

[56] Peter F Gilbert, 'The Analysis of Anti-Semitism in the Theological, Historical and Sociological Criticism of James Parkes.' PhD thesis, University of Toronto, 2003, p.1

[57] H P Fry, *Christian-Jewish Dialogue* (University of Exeter Press, 1996), pp.43 and 13

1965 which was a decisive turning point in Catholic-Jewish relations. It dealt with the relationship of the Catholic Church in respect of all the other great religions which are not Christian. Section 4 (*Nostra Aetate)* however, by far the longest part of the document, referred specifically to the Jewish people. This began by recalling the spiritual bond that linked people of the New Covenant to Abraham's stock and by offering God's continuing covenant with the Jewish people. The document commended dialogue and, most important of all, the charge of deicide was repudiated. The decree also condemned all persecution and particularly displays of anti-Semitism.[58] The Jewish reaction to the decree was mixed as it was widely reported that it 'absolved' the Jews of guilt for the crucifixion, but as Jews had never recognised this accusation, they regarded the so-called absolution as an artificial non-issue. They also objected to other aspects such as the absence of any expression of contrition or regret for the long history of church-inspired suffering of the Jews, the non-mention of the Holocaust or the State of Israel. Some were indifferent, feeling that events had outstripped rhetorical declarations, while others welcomed it as a major turning-point, notably for the opportunities opened up.[59] Twenty years later, the Secretary-General of the World Jewish Congress wrote that *Nostra Aetate* constituted a real milestone in Christian-Jewish relations and opened a new vision for the future.[60]

To celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Oxford First International Conference of Christians and Jews a major conference was held in Cambridge in 1966, which James Parkes attended. It produced a number of reports including a critique of the declarations made in *Nostra Aetate.* This was commended for careful study by all organisations working for Christian-Jewish understanding. The conference also produced a definition of the Christian-Jewish dialogue which *'amid the plethora of such definitions produced in recent years still had much to commend it'.* The report stated that dialogue was essentially a dialogue between persons, an attitude to life and a mere technique. It had proved an enrichment of faith in God to committed Jews and Christians, and had dispelled many misunderstandings of each about the faith and

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[58] B Th Distance Learning Course, *Jews and Christians in Dialogue* Unit, (Oxford: Westminster College, undated), p.37

[59] G Wigoder, *Jewish-Christian Relations since the Second World War,* (Manchester University Press, 1988), p.77

[60] G Riegner, 'Nostra Aetate: Twenty Years After' in *Fifteen Years of Catholic-Jewish Dialogue 1970-1985* (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana and Libreria Editrice Lateranense, 1988), p.278

practice of the other.[61] By the time *Nostra Aetate* had been promulgated, Pope John had died and had been succeeded by Pope Paul VI, whose personal views were more ambivalent than those of his predecessor. On the one hand it was he who abolished the Good Friday prayer about the unbelieving Jews, but, on the other hand, in a Lenten homily, referred to the Jews as a people who had fought, slandered, injured, and, in the end, killed Christ! Even so, Pope Paul VI took a number of steps to build upon *Nostra Aetate.* He extensively revised the prayer *'For the conversion of the Jews'* into a prayer *'For the Jews'*.[62] In 1974 the Vatican issued a second document on the Jews in the form of *Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing the Conciliar Declaration.*[63] The Guidelines restated that the spiritual bonds and historical links binding the Church to Judaism condemned (as opposed to the very spirit of Christianity) all forms of anti-Semitism and discrimination. Further, those links and relationships rendered obligatory a better mutual understanding and renewed mutual esteem. Christians must therefore strive to acquire a better knowledge of the basic components of the religious tradition of Judaism. Referring to the use of the words *the Jews* in St. John's gospel, the statement went on that, obviously, the text of the bible could not be altered but, with a version intended for liturgical use, there should be an overriding preoccupation to bring out, explicitly, the meaning of a text, while taking scriptural studies into account. Thus, in St. John's Gospel the expression *the Jews* might mean either 'the leaders of the Jews' or 'the adversaries of Jesus'.[64]

Over the years efforts had been made to form an International Council of Christians and Jews. Informal contacts had been maintained in Europe between representatives of the slowly-growing number of organisations for Jewish-Christian co-operation. These included those from France, Germany, Austria, Florence, Switzerland and the British Council of Christians and Jews.[65] In 1962 an International Consultative Committee of Organisations Working for Christian-Jewish Co-operation was formally established at a meeting in Frankfurt-on-Main. Meetings of the Committee had continued to be held over the years and in 1974 the International Council of

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[61] W W Simpson and R Weyl, *The Story of the International Council of Christians and Jews* (Heppenheim, Germany: 1997), pp.35, 36
[62] G Wigoder, *Jewish-Christian Relations,* p.80
[63] *Catholic-Jewish Relations – Documents from the Holy See.* Introduction by E J Fisher, (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1999), p.23
[64] *Catholic-Jewish Relations,* p.26
[65] Simpson and Weyl, p.35

Christians and Jews was formally established. It remains in existence with conferences in different countries being held usually annually.

Since Parkes' death in 1981, developments in Jewish-Christian relations have continued. In 1985 the Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews published its third document on Catholic-Jewish relations. Originally entitled *Notes on the Correct Way to Present the Jews and Judaism in Preaching in the Roman Catholic Church*[66] it was later called, more simply, *The Common Bond.* There was a divergence of views between Christians and Jews about the significance of the 'Notes'. Marcus Braybrooke quotes the views of Eugene Fisher, Associate Director, Secretariat for Ecumenical and Inter-religious Affairs, National Conference of Catholic Bishops (USA), that dialogue was still in its babyhood and the document showed the depth of the faith-substance with which the document must yet deal.[67] More critically, Wigoder states that for all its positive statements and subsequent clarification by Catholic spokesmen, key sections of the document came to Jews as a disappointment because it failed to meet as completely as had been hoped the declared need to conduct the dialogue on the basis of the mutual recognition of the other's self-definition.[68]

In the years leading up to 1988 the World Council of Churches gave consideration to the question of Jewish-Christian relations and at a meeting in Sigtuna, Sweden, the documents dealing with the matter were reviewed. The WCC declared that they significantly advanced the Christian understanding of Judaism and Jewish-Christian relations on the basis of certain key points. These included:

1. the covenant of God with Jewish people remains valid;
2. anti-Semitism and all forms of teaching of contempt for Judaism are to be repudiated; and
3. coercive proselytism directed towards Jews is incompatible with Christian faith.

It has been said that the omission of affirmations on the land of State of Israel and on mission was bound to disappoint Jews. They felt that the World Council of Churches which had issued statements hostile to Israel, was not committed to Israel's

[66] Catholic-Jewish Relations, pp.31-49
[67] M Braybrooke, *Time to Meet,* (London: SCM Press, 1990), pp.21-22
[68] Wigoder, *Jewish-Christian Relations,* p.8

right to exist. In addition, they could still not be sure that conversionist activity had been abandoned in favour of dialogue.[69]

Every ten years a conference of Anglican Bishops – known as the Lambeth Conference – is held. Following the 1988 Conference, the *Reports, Resolutions and Pastoral Letters from the Bishops* were published in a document entitled *The Truth Shall Make You Free.* Appendix 6 of this was entitled *Jews, Christians and Muslims: The Way of Dialogue.* The Conference commended this document and added that it 'encourages the Churches of the Anglican Commission to engage in dialogue with Jews and Muslims on the basis of understanding, affirmation and sharing illustrated in it'[70] The document acknowledged that Judaism was not only a religion but a people and a civilisation. In the second section – *The Way of Affirmation* – it was stated that for Christians Judaism could never be one religion among others: it had a special bond and affinity with Christianity. It was the final section – *The Way of Sharing* – which was the most hotly debated: it was about attempts to convert Jews. The section recognised the variety of views within Christianity today. Some hoped that Jews, without giving up their Jewishness, would find their fulfilment in Jesus the Messiah. Others believed that in fulfilling the Law and the prophets, Jesus validated the Jewish relationship with God, while opening the way for Gentiles through his own person. Yet, for others, the Holocaust had changed their perception, so that until Christian lives bore a truer witness, they felt a divine obligation to affirm the Jews in their worship and sense of the God and Father of Jesus.[71] Marcus Braybrooke considers that this was probably as much as could have been accepted by the Conference, but it lacked the forward-looking breadth of the draft document. This suggested that Christian concern for Jews today should firmly reject any form of proselytising which attempted to convert the individual Jew to Christianity.[72] James Parkes would thoroughly have agreed with this.

In 1993 the Theology Committee of the International Council of Christians and Jews published a document entitled *Jews and Christians in Search of a Common Religious Basis for Contributing Towards a Better World.* It contained both separate Jewish perspectives concerning mutual communication and co-operation, as well as a joint

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[69] Braybrooke, *Time to Meet,* p.29
[70] Jews, Christians and Muslims: The Way of the Dialogue, in *The Truth Shall Make You Free.* The Lambeth Conference, 1988, Anglican Consultative Council, Appendix 6, p.307
[71] Ibid, pp.300, 302, 305
[72] Braybrooke, *Time to Meet,* p.31

view of a common religious basis for Jews and Christians to work together for a better world.[73]

The year 1993 also saw a 'Fundamental Agreement' being signed between the State of Israel and the Holy See. The purpose of this was stated to be to regularise the status and legal personality of the Catholic Church and its institutions in Israel, after about 500 years of undefined legal status under the Ottoman Empire, the British Mandate and Israeli rule. The Church had an interest in the agreement since its institutions were recognised *de facto* but not *de jure,* causing no small number of difficulties, and the Church wished to institutionalise its legal status.[74] Full diplomatic relations between the Vatican and Israel were established in 1994.

In 1994, too, the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland's Commission for Inter-Faith Relations published a booklet entitled *Christians and Jews – A New Way of Thinking.* The preface stated that this summarised much of the work done since 1945, and set out where the Churches now stood in the continuing process of exploration and reflection. Referring to the New Testament, it said that it was a distressing but indisputable fact that certain passages in this had given rise to outbreaks of anti-Semitism and a teaching of contempt for Judaism. The two testaments should never be contrasted because law, love, promise and fulfilment were found in both. *'Jesus of Nazareth, his family and first disciples followed the laws, traditions and customs of the Jewish people to whom they belonged'.* The casting of the Jews in the role of 'Christ-killers' was said to be not only bad theology but, more than any other single factor, responsible for anti-Semitism, discrimination and violent persecution.[75] In August 1996, the (British) Council of Christians and Jews published a *Code of Practice for Members* which outlawed proselytism. It has been said that the word 'mission' rings alarm bells throughout the Jewish community and that it is probably the most sensitive area in the Christian-Jewish dialogue. Part of the problem is that for centuries the Church taught that Christianity had replaced Judaism as the true heir to the biblical promises. The rejection of Christ by the Jews led to an active missionary outreach to them, eventually culminating in periods of forced

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[73] *The New Relationship between Christians and Jews,* (International Council of Christians and Jews, Heppenheim, Germany), p.38

[74] State of Israel, *The Legal Personality Agreement between Israel and the Holy See,* (Jerusalem, 10 November, 1997), pp.9, 10

[75] Richard Harries, Norman Solomon, Mary Kelly, John Parry, Tony Bayfield, *Christians and Jews – A New Way of Thinking* (London: The Churches' Commission for Inter-Faith Relations, Council for Inter-Faith Relations, Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland, 1994), pp.4, 7

conversions, forced baptisms and persecution.[76] James Parkes was very much opposed to conversion. In his autobiography he stated that he never had a reasoned debate with those who regarded the missionary approach as the only approach loyal to Christian principles. He recorded, however, that the former Archbishop William Temple, while willing to regard the two religions as leaving truth on both sides, refused to agree that Judaism was so special a case that it justified special treatment in relation to missionary active.[77] More recently, (2001) Archbishop George Carey said that when he met with Jewish friends he did not approach them as people to convert. He approached them as people already known and loved by God and therefore to be respected and esteemed. He did not abandon that desire to introduce them to his faith but that would only come at the right time, in the right context and when his friend took the first step. One of Carey's predecessors, Donald Coggan, put it more pithily: 'No pressurising! No proselytising! No conversionism! Rather an invitation'.[78]

In March 1998, the Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews published the fourth of its documents on Catholic-Jewish Relations: *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah.* In this there was a reminder that the 20th century had witnessed an unspeakable tragedy: the attempt by the Nazi regime to exterminate the Jewish people with the consequent killing of millions of Jews. The inhumanity with which Jews were persecuted and massacred was said to be beyond the capacity of words to convey. In accordance with the title of the document, an invitation was extended to all men and women to reflect deeply on the significance of the Shoah.[79] The document was said to have been greeted cautiously, and, by some in the Jewish community, negatively.

On 10 September 2000, a statement published as a full-page advertisement, appeared in the *New York Times* and the *Baltimore Sun.* Its title was *Dabru Emet* – taken from Zecharia 8:16, meaning *'speak the truth'*. The statement was signed by over 160 rabbis and Jewish scholars from the United States, Canada, United Kingdom and Israel. *Dabru Emet* acknowledged the progress made in understanding between Jews and Christians and declared that Jews and Christians worshipped the same God, sought authority from the same book (the bible), accepted the same moral principles,

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[76] H P Fry, *Christian-Jewish Dialogue,* p.77
[77] James Parkes, *Voyage of Discoveries,*pp.209-210
[78] *Church Times,* 4 May, 2001, p.9
[79] *Catholic Jewish Relations,* pp.58, 61, 70, 71

and were obliged to work together for justice and peace.[80] This is something which James Parkes would have endorsed wholeheartedly.

In February 2001, a report entitled *Sharing One Hope? The Church of England and Christian-Jewish Relations: A Contribution to a Continuing Debate* was drawn up by a working party of the Church of England's Inter-Faith consultative Group. It was said to have been offered as *'a contribution to a continuing debate'* not a definitive statement of Church of England attitudes.[81] The report stated that the primary challenge for Christians, in the area of Christian-Jewish relations, was to engage in meeting, dialogue, and (where appropriate) practical co-operation with Jewish people. As well as primary dialogue of Christians *with* Jews, there was need to strengthen conversations among Christians *about* Christian-Jewish relations. This might well be regarded as part of Parkes' philosophy.

So, within twenty years of James Parkes' death, considerable advances have been made in the sphere of Jewish-Christian relations, which he, as a pioneer in this sphere would have valued greatly.

Section 5 (outline of the thesis)

It will be apparent from the list of contents that when this thesis was written the various chapters were intended to be self-contained, rather than forming a continuous narrative. They give, however, an outline of the first fifty years or so of Parkes' life and provide information not previously known about the organisations with which he was connected. The first chapter – headed, simply, James William Parkes – is intended to give only a cursory overview of his life and refers to some of his theological beliefs vis-à-vis anti-Semitism. It also refers to other theologians who did not share his views. The second chapter, dealing with Modernism, Barthianism and Ecumenism, explains, firstly, the meaning of Modernism and how it influenced Parkes' thinking. His attitude to Barthianism is then considered, surprising as – at first sight – it may seem. Then his Ecumenism is discussed: not confined to Christianity and certainly including Judaism. Chapter 3 – *James Parkes and Jewish-Christian Relations 1920-1940* – gives an outline of Parkes' work and interest in Jewish-Christian relations from the time of his arrival in Oxford until the writing of

[80] *Church Times,* 9 February, 2000, p.15

[81] The report was published by the Archbishop's Council

the *The Jewish Problem in the Modern World in 1939.* His boundless energy and unlimited zeal for travel are apparent.

Chapter 4 – *James Parkes: The Jew and His Neighbour, the Council of Christians and Jews and the Society of Jews and Christians* – deals, to commence, with the first book written by Parkes. This is said to have been written because Parkes could find no satisfactory guide to the causes of Anti-Semitism. The chapter then goes on to deal with the formation of the Council of Christians and Jews, in which Parkes took such a leading part, and the Society of Jews and Christians. Chapter 5 – *The Society of Jews and Christians* – sets out in detail the history of the Society from its inception to March, 1937. This information has been extracted from the original minutes now kept at the London Metropolitan Archives.

Chapter 6 – *The German Refugee Problem 1933-1939* – provides an introduction to how refugee work became one of the important strands pulling together (as well as sometimes pulling apart) liberal Jews and Christians in Britain. The part played by James Parkes is noted. Chapter 7 – James Parkes, *The Society of Jews and Christians, and the Council of Christians and Jews c.1930-1945* – deals with Parkes' early interest in Jewish-Christian relations and in the Society of Jews and Christians and Council of Christians and Jews, particularly in their formative years: Parkes' contribution was persistent but sometimes impatient. The final chapter 8 – *James Parkes and the Council of Christians and Jews c.1935-1943* – deals in detail with Parkes' early involvement with the Council and draws on minutes and other papers in the archives at the University of Southampton and also at the London Metropolitan archives.

Section 6 (Literature about James Parkes)

Surprisingly little has been written about James Parkes, given his importance in twentieth century religious dialogue and the fight against prejudice. Apart from his autobiography *(Voyage of Discoveries),*[82] *Christianity Without Anti-Semitism: James Parkes and the Jewish-Christian Encounter,* by R A Everett was published in 1993.[83] The author stated in his preface that *'it is an intellectual biography of James William Parkes, one of the true pioneers in the field of Jewish-Christian relations and the*

[82] London: Victor Gollancz, 1969
[83] Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1993

study of antisemitism'.[84] He added that Parkes remained one of the few Christian thinkers who had attempted to interpret the Jewish tradition and the Jewish experience to the Gentile world. Everett's book is said to deal primarily with these two aspects of Parkes' work, *'but, in doing so, it tries to place these aspects in a context beyond the Jewish-Christian issue'*. Although, in the preface, the author described Parkes as a 'rather competent theologian and historian', the book deals almost entirely with Parkes' theology. Among the seven chapter headings are: *'Interpreting Christianity'*, *'The rediscovery of Judaism'* and *'Anti-Semitism and a New Theology'*.[85] In 1998 – to mark the centenary of Parkes' birth – *Cultures of Ambivalence and Contempt: Studies in Jewish-non-Jewish Relations* was published.[86] The editors were Sîan Jones, Tony Kushner and Sarah Pearce. This contains a number of studies of different aspects of Parkes' work including one by Nicholas de Lange, entitled *'James Parkes, a Centenary Lecture'*. 'Campaigner Against Anti-Semitism: the Rev. James Parkes 1896-1981; An Interpretative Study' by Colin Richmond is due to be published this year. It is a comprehensive study of the life and work of James Parkes. There are also references to Parkes' work in, among other books, *Dissent or Conform? War, Peace and the English Churches 1900-1945* by Alan Wilkinson.[87] He wrote (p.228) that for his pioneering work in research and writing about Jewish-Christian relationships Parkes won world-wide renown. Parkes, in his autobiography (p.75), described William Temple as a much-loved guide and friend to the end of his life. In the index, however, to Iremonger's biography of William Temple – *William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury*[88] – there is no reference to James Parkes or to the Council of Christians and Jews which Temple, like Parkes, did so much to bring into being.

In addition to the above, Parkes' work has been the subject of the whole of one PhD thesis. Entitled 'The Analysis of Anti-Semitism in the Theological, Historical and Sociological Criticism of James Parkes', it is by Peter F Gilbert. This was submitted to the University of Toronto in 2003. C Kotzin, in the Introduction to her PhD thesis 'Christian Responses in Britain to Jewish Refugees from Europe: 1933-1939', University of Southampton, 2000 (p.7) wrote that James Parkes was one of the few

[84] Ibid, p.ix
[85] Ibid, pp.96, 161, 189
[86] London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1998
[87] London: SCM Press, 1986
[88] London: Oxford University Press, 1948

contemporary British Christian thinkers and scholars to reflect on the influence of negative Christian attitudes towards Jews and the effects of scabrous depictions of Jews perpetuated by Church teachings, many of which he found to be flawed or in error. Kotzin added that Parkes was particularly adept at utilising his reputation as specialist on the 'Jewish problem' and he fostered greater understanding amongst Christians of Nazi anti-Semitism and charges made against Jews more generally, as well as connecting Jews and Christians across confessional lines in the furtherance of refugee activism. Some of Parkes' work for refugees is outlined in chapter 5 ('The Church of England') and chapter 6 ('Christian-Jewish Refugee Agencies') of the thesis. Tom Lawson, in his PhD thesis 'The Anglican Understanding of the Third Reich and Its Influence on the History and Meaning of the Holocaust', Southampton University, 2001, also referred to James Parkes. He wrote in chapter three (p.142), (The 'War of Ideals: Anglican Understanding of Second World War and the Murder of the European Jews') that Parkes campaigned within the Anglican Church for a redesign of the Christian-Jewish relationship throughout his career, and especially during the Nazi era. Parkes centred the campaign around an attempt to place the Jews at the heart of any plans for the post-war European future and an effort to create a world in which it was safe for a *'Jew to be a Jew'*.

In spite of these works, there is still a serious gap in the literature on James Parkes and the area of Parkes and Jewish-Christian dialogue is, until this thesis, particularly underdeveloped.

CHAPTER ONE

James William Parkes

The Reverend Dr James Parkes was born in Guernsey in 1896 and died in England in 1981. An Anglican priest, who never served full-time in a parish, Parkes

> *'if remembered at all today, is seen as a pioneer in the study and betterment of Christian-Jewish relations. His work outlining the history of anti-Semitism and in particular the Christian roots of modern hatred of Jews is occasionally acknowledged, although the originality of his contribution is often lost sight of as those that followed his lead have been given credit for work that he pioneered in the most difficult of academic circumstances.'*[1]

Parkes joined the Army in 1916 and left it *'in 1917, having been poisoned by water, gassed, and having fallen prey to Dupuytren's contraction of the foot at Ypres.'*[2] He entered Oxford University in 1919, took a 'good second' in Classical Mods, and then decided to study theology.[3]

> *Parkes was an historian as well as a theologian and he was always concerned with relating Jesus and his message to the historical environment in which he lived. He took seriously the fact that Jesus was born, raised and died a Jew.'*[4]

The writings of James Parkes can be divided broadly into two categories: on the one hand theological, and, on the other, Jewish-Christian relations, anti-Semitism and Jewish history. Parkes decided that it would be best to write his theological works under a *nom de plume*, John Hadham, in order to prevent them from being confused with his rather controversial books on the Jewish question. A knowledge of the Hadham material contributes greatly to the understanding of Parkes' basic theological position. Most of the work under the name of John Hadham was published between 1940 and 1944; it consisted, principally, of four books and numerous articles.[5] Hence the bulk of Parkes' work was published under his own name.

Parkes' first book on theology, 'Good God' was published in 1940 (under the name of John Hadham). The first sentence reads *'I am not going to try and prove that God exists.'*[6] In the opening pages Parkes set out a description of what could loosely be called his 'theological method'. Instead of, perhaps as is more usual, creating a theology based on philosophical

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[1] Tony Kushner, 'James Parkes and the Holocaust' in John Roth et al (eds) *Remembering for the Future: The Holocaust in an Age of Genocide* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Publishers Ltd, 2001), pp575-586
[2] R A Everett, *Christianity Without Anti-Semitism: James Parkes and the Jewish-Christian Encounter* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1993), p3
[3] Ibid, p4
[4] Ibid, p127
[5] Ibid, pp103-4
[6] John Hadham, *Good God* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd, 1940), p9

arguments, he wanted to produce a theology based on what could be known about God through ordinary experience and language. This method resulted in many problems for people schooled in formal theology and philosophy, since it did not fit into any of the usual categories used to classify theological thinking.

Parkes aimed his writings at a general audience and he attempted to write in a way that would make his work available to the general public. His main theological purpose was to help people think about how God relates to them and their personal existence, rather than producing any formal arguments about God's existence.[7]

Robert Everett is of the opinion that Parkes was concerned not with formal doctrine and argument, but rather with the effect God has on a person who assumes His existence. He considers that Parkes concentrates on God's relation to creation, to the earth, rather than on theological speculation of the philosophical kind.[8]

Parkes wrote that

> *being the God of this world is no sinecure for an idealistic and egocentric autocrat. It is an occupation in which only the most complete realism is the least likely to be successful. And I am sure that He had this in mind when He started the whole process.*[9]

Thus it is clear throughout his writings that Parkes was quite prepared to discuss God in rather unconventional terms, and that He sought ways which he thought made it easier for ordinary people to think about God.[10]

Although there was a danger that if God's existence could only be assumed and not proved, this might lead to agnosticism, Parkes was steadfast in this belief.[11] As has been mentioned, he always tried to avoid discussing theology in philosophical terms: yet he viewed the issue of freewill as being crucial to his theology. He argued that God has a plan for the world and that He is working to bring it to fulfilment.[12] Parkes was very much concerned with the concept of a responsible God and how this could be related to the old question of undeserved suffering. This was very relevant to someone who was particularly troubled by the Holocaust.

He wrote:

> *'A most interesting aspect of the character of God is revealed by the fact that he in no way attempted to make a safe world. He gave a basic and rather incomplete security to life itself at the cost of pain, but beyond that he was*

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[7] R A Everett, *Christianity Without Antisemitism*, p.105
[8] Ibid, p107
[9] John Hadham, *Good God*, p10
[10] R A Everett, *Christianity Without Antisemitism*, p107
[11] Ibid, p107
[12] Ibid, p110

apparently indifferent to the dangers inherent in the products of his imagination.'[13]

Fundamental to Parkes' theology was the proposition that God takes full responsibility for guiding the world closer to its intended perfection and also for the suffering found in the world. He argued for God's responsibility throughout his writings, and it is a determining factor in any theological thinking for Parkes.[14] As he wrote:

> *'... it seems to me that all theories which out of false reverence, attempt to minimise the entire responsibility of God for every tragedy in the world's history insult him rather than do him honour. No theology can escape the fact that no man ever born asked to be born, or was allowed to determine the conditions of his birth.'*[15]

Perhaps one of the basic tenets of Christianity is life after death and Parkes believed that this idea clearly indicates God's responsibility to the world and individuals. Parkes' emphasis on God's responsibility for the world and its salvation helped to influence his views on the nature of God's character and the adjectives that could be used to describe Him. He wanted to discard the traditional attributes of God such as omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent in favour of such terms as benevolent, wise and responsible. This desire was partly due to his belief in the need to speak about God as a personality, and it made sense to talk about God in personal ways easily understood by the ordinary man or woman. There was also his belief that God and man were engaged in a co-operative effort in the struggle for achieving perfection in the world. Thus Parkes revealed the Modernist influence on his thinking: he believed in the idea of progress.[16]

Parkes argued for a theocentric theology: he was opposed to christocentric theology; and this is central to his thinking on Jewish-Christian relations. Parkes believed that traditional ideas about Judaism were incorrect and a different theology needed to be established. Grounded in Modernist theology, he did not think that this would compromise his fundamental Christian faith in any way.

Parkes' demand for a theocentric theology meant that certain traditional ideas about Christ would have to be discarded. This had implications for his views on Jewish-Christian relations since the question of the messiahship of Jesus had been the central point of debate between Jews and Christians.[17] In Parkes' theology, Jesus was always a reconciler of men, not a divider. The horrendous doctrines that made some people sheep and others goats condemned to Hell, had no place in the theological thinking of James Parkes.[18]

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[13] John Hadham, *Good God*, p21
[14] R A Everett, *Christianity Without Antisemitism*, p112
[15] John Hadham, *Good God*, p65
[16] R A Everett, *Christianity Without Antisemitism*, pp.115, 116
[17] Ibid, p127
[18] Ibid, p134

For his D Phil thesis Parkes' subject was to be an enquiry into the origins of antisemitism. As his writing progressed he says that he

> *was completely unprepared for the discovery that it was the Christian Church, and the Christian Church alone, which turned a normal xenophobia and normal good and bad communal relations between two human societies into the unique evil of antisemitism, the most evil, and, as I gradually came to realise, the most crippling sin of historic Christianity.'*[19] *The conflict of the Church and the Synagogue*,[20] which developed from his D Phil study, was published in 1934.

Parkes had joined the staff of the Student Christian Movement in 1923 and in 1926 became warden of Student Movement House. He was on the staff of International Student Service in Geneva from 1928 to 1935. Subsequently he concentrated on antisemitism and the history of Jewish-Christian relations.

Everett considers that the influence of the late Archbishop William Temple on Parkes is unquestionable and that referring to Temple gives a context to Parkes' thought that is easily missed and seldom acknowledged.[21]

It is of interest that it has been said that Temple was inspired throughout his life by a desire for social and national righteousness, Church union (he played a leading part in the ecumenical movement), and reasoned exposition of Christian faith (he maintained close contact with the Student Christian Movement). Temple, too, was always watchful about signs of antisemitism in Britain. Like James Parkes he took an active part in the establishment (in 1942) of the Council of Christians and Jews in this country and became its President.

One area in which Parkes and Temple differed was the vexed question of mission to the Jews. Parkes was quite definitely opposed to this.

He wrote:

> *In this time and generation, not only do I not desire to see the conversion of all Jews to present forms of Christianity, but I do not seek the union of the two religions. That may happen in the future. But it can only happen when I can bring all that I value of the Christian tradition to the common pool and the Jew can equally bring all that he values of the Jewish tradition. And that day is certainly not yet, and in our present circumstances a religion made out of patches and compromises and superficial synthesis would be a monster lacking the very qualities which give each tradition its permanent value to humanity.'*[22]

Temple and others disagreed with him. Temple did not believe that the relationship between Christianity and Judaism was as unique as Parkes had made it out to be, and he

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[19] James Parkes (John Hadham), *Voyage of Discoveries* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1969), p123
[20] James Parkes, *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue* (London; The Soncino Press, 1934)
[21] R A Everett, Christianity Without Antisemitism, pp101,2
[22] James Parkes, *Judaism and Christianity* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1948), p12

believed that some form of mission was justified.[23] In this connection it may be noted that the *London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews*, founded in 1809, although still in existence, has changed its name to the Church's Ministry among Jewish People. In 1992, the Rt Rev George Carey became the first Archbishop of Canterbury for 150 years to decline the usual invitation from the organisation to be their patron, on the grounds that it was incompatible with Christian-Jewish understanding.

Without question, James Parkes was regarded by many as being *the* Anglican expert on all matters pertaining to Jews. Yet, as Everett points out, there was nothing in his background to prepare him for the role he was to play in the effort to revise Christian ideas about Judaism. It was not until 1928 that he became involved at all in issues related to Jewish affairs, but then it was initially with issues dealing with the politics of anti-Semitism. His activity in this field created something of a chain reaction in his thinking, and an evolution in his thought began which continued until he reached the point where he not only saw the value of Judaism and the Jewish experience, but he argued for it being an equal to Christianity.[24]

Parkes wrote the following summary of his evaluation in the foreword of one of his most important books, *The foundations of Judaism and Christianity*, in 1960.

> *It is unfortunate that Christian scholars of the Old Testament have chosen to call all or part of the period of Jewish history which begins with the return from exile by the title of 'Spat-Judenthum', 'Bas-Judaime' or 'Late-Judaism'. They inevitably imply thereby that Judaism was about to pass away, whereas in fact it had just come into existence; and that its passing was preceded by a decline in stature, whereas the key-note of the period is the attempt to weave the teaching of the prophets into the life of the people. It would be just as accurate to describe the Elizabethan Age as 'Bas-Moyen Age' or the early north Italian renaissance as 'Spat-Lombardisch'. Bad history cannot be the foundation for good theology. This attitude to the period arises from their natural desires to show that Christianity is firmly rooted in the Old Testament, and in God's covenant with the Children of Israel. And it has been traditionally regarded as a necessary corollary to this belief to present the Church as the* ***only*** *legitimate successor to the grandeur of the prophets and the responsibilities of the covenant. Since, in this view, all that was of permanent value in Jewish history was soon to pass to the credit of the Christian Church, this period following the return is automatically, if unconsciously, looked at through spectacles which focus the sight only on evidence for the decline and the passing of the spiritual authority of Judaism.*[25]

Parkes' study of Judaism revealed that the *'dead, arid religion he had been taught about at Oxford was nowhere to be found historically'*.[26] He discovered, instead, that it was a vital

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[23] R A Everett, *Christianity Without Antisemitism*, p18
[24] Ibid, pp161-2
[25] James Parkes, *The Foundations of Judaism and Christianity* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1960), ppix-x
[26] R A Everett, *Christianity Without Antisemitism*, p169

and active religion engaged in a healthy debate with itself over the proper course it should take to ensure its survival in an uncertain world.

Everett suggests that in weighing the historical evidence he discovered, Parkes concluded that the picture of Judaism that most Christians obtained from New Testament literature was a distortion, from which spring all sorts of negative implications.[27]

In his book *Jesus, Paul and the Jews* Parkes set out the problem:

> *The question has been posed in its bluntest terms for the sake of clarity. The question which arises from it is this: that the Gospels as a complete source for a study of the Pharisees are quite inadequate it is not possible to deny: that the picture of the 'Law' describes no known form of Judaism is equally certain: but is the error to be ascribed to Jesus or Paul, or is it to be found in the evangelists on the one hand and our misunderstanding on the other? The question is one of capital importance in the sphere of Jewish-Christian relationships. If it be true that the picture of Judaism, which (with the Gospels and Epistles for basis) has been consistently given since the second century, is in reality unjust to the Jews, then the reparation which the Christian Church owes to Judaism is so terrible that it is not possible to evaluate it. For from this conception springs the whole growth of anti-Semitism and the age-long tragedy of the Jewish people.*[28]

The discoveries that Parkes made about the nature of Judaism offered him an answer to the questions he had asked earlier about the relationship of religion to politics and society. He discovered that, contrary to traditional Christian beliefs, the Jewish religion was not an incomplete form of Christianity, but rather an entirely different kind of religion.[29]

> *Consequently my first important discovery was that Judaism was not an incomplete form of Christianity nor just a different religion* ***but a different kind of religion stemming from the same divine origin and revelation****. The essence of the difference is expressed in the two completely different senses in which Jews and Christians speak of themselves as a 'chosen people'. For the Jew it is the whole natural community which has been chosen for a special responsibility. For the Christian it is a new community chosen out of the natural communities of the world.*[30]

It was on this belief that Judaism and Christianity are two different kinds of religion that Parkes tried to establish a new Christian approach to Judaism. Parkes' view of Judaism is of course, different from traditional Christian teachings. In particular there has been little thought given in Judaism to the prospects of life after death which is in contrast to Christianity.

What Parkes had discovered about Judaism, when he began his study of it in the early 1930's, developed into a profound appreciation of the Jewish tradition. He discarded

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[27] Ibid, p169

[28] James Parkes, *Jesus, Paul and the Jews* (London: SCM Press, 1936), p12

[29] R A Everett, *Christianity Without Antisemitism*, p183

[30] James Parkes, *The Interplay of Judaism and Jewish History* (London: The Council of Christians and Jews, 1967), p7 (Parkes Library Pamphlet 18)

traditional teachings about Judaism, and he argued for a new Christian approach to Judaism and its role in human history and God's plan for creation. What he found in Judaism filled many of the gaps he had discovered in Christianity when he began to examine the relation of religion to politics and society. Judaism appeared to be tailor-made for such concerns.[31] Parkes reached this position as a result of studies which he began at the request of the World Student Christian Federation in 1929. He unexpectedly discovered in Judaism the kind of approach to religion and politics he had been seeking in Christianity since the early twenties. This rediscovering of Judaism marked the beginning of Parkes' quest for a new Jewish-Christian understanding. Coupled with this was his work on the problem of anti-Semitism, also begun in the late 1920's and early 1930's. The roots of Parkes' theology of Jewish-Christian relations also can be traced back to this period. Thus when Parkes is read in this context, his position becomes clearer, and it can be seen as a logical development of his early theological and historical thinking.[32]

It was while James Parkes was study secretary for the International Student Service in Geneva that he became acutely conscious of the anti-Semitism which, by 1929, was emerging in European universities. He was a pioneer in this field, albeit if often *'a lonely prophetic voice'*.[33] In his autobiography he recalled how he began his research:

> *My subject was an enquiry into the origins of anti-Semitism. I could not more closely define it, as I was in considerable doubt as to what I should find. I had been a classical scholar and was familiar with the dislike of Jews and other Orientals among the Romans of good Latin stock. I knew Cicero's pretence that it was dangerous to offend Jews of Rome, though I did not know whether it was a typical Ciceronan flight of rhetoric or a genuine fear. But I knew very little either of patriotic attitudes or of later Roman legislation. Of post-New testament Judaism I knew nothing at all. I had understood from my teachers at Oxford that all that was good in the Old Testament had passed to the Christian Church, and I had been content to leave it at that.*[34]

As Parkes continues his research, he was reluctantly led to the conclusion that the roots of antisemitism could be traced to the teachings of the Christian Church.
Everett maintains that for Parkes, antisemitism was an 'abnormal hostility'. Hostility directed at Jews is anti-Semitic when it is abnormal in the sense that there is no adequate explanation for the form or the severity of its manifestation in the actual contemporary

[31] R A Everett, *Christianity Without Antisemitism*, p186
[32] Ibid, p188
[33] Ibid, p189
[34] James Parkes (John Hadham), *Voyage of Discoveries*, pp 120-1

conduct of the Jews against whom it is directed.[35] This abnormal hostility is not to be confused with *'anti-Jewishness'* or *'anti-Judaism'*.[36]

In a lecture delivered at a conference of the Youth Council of Jewish-Christian Relations in August 1942, Parkes stated:

> *Anti-Semitism is a quite definable social scourge and its definition is not difficult. As long as Jews are disliked for the conduct which can in fact be attributed to them even if it is exaggerated or maliciously interpreted so long is the feeling anti-Jewish, and comparable to other dislikes which pervade our imperfect society. But when Jews are hated for conduct of which they have not been guilty, for crimes which in fact they have never committed, then we are in the presence of antisemitism.*[37]

This line of reasoning remained with Parkes throughout his writings. More than twenty years later, he wrote:

> *For what differentiates antisemitism from other group prejudices, whether suffered by Jews or any other people, is that group prejudice is normally related to something contemporary, something which actually happened, even if it be wrongly or distortedly interpreted; whereas antisemitism has almost no relationship to the actual world, and rests on a figment of the imagination perpetually bolstered up by other figments.*[38]

This contrast between *'anti-Jewish'* and *'anti-Semitic'* is important in Parkes' writings. Perhaps nothing fuels Christian antisemitism more than the charge of deicide: that the Jews killed Jesus. This arises in all the Gospels in one form or another and there are also one or two references outside the Gospels. The deicide charge carried with it the idea that the Jews were to be punished eternally for their crime against God. It was used to explain the fall of Jerusalem in CE70, and the Jewish Diaspora was linked to the belief that Jews were driven from their homeland as punishment for killing Jesus.[39]

Although the deicide charge had a devastating effect on Jewish-Christian relations over the centuries, Parkes argued that initially it was not the deicide charge that led to the ultimate separation of the Church and the Synagogue, but rather their quarrel over the meaning of the Jewish Law. Parkes took the position that Jesus never intended to supersede Judaism with a new religion or to denigrate the Jewish tradition.[40]

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[35] R A Everett, op cit, p194, quotes from 'Anti-Semitism from Caesar to Luther', *Query* (1938), pp12-13
[36] James Parkes, *An Enemy of the People: Anti-Semitism* (New York: Penguin Books, 1946), p65
[37] James Parkes, *Jews, Christians... and God* (London: Youth Council on Jewish Christian Relations, 1942), p4
[38] James Parkes, *Anti-Semitism: A Concise World History* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1963), p62
[39] R A Everett, *Christianity Without Antisemitism*, p210
[40] Ibid, p212

Another concept at the heart of the Christian anti-Jewish tradition is the idea that Christianity possessed all possible religious truth, and every other religion was an incomplete form of the Christian faith. Parkes wrote that the

> *claims of churches to truth is one thing: the claim they so frequently make to complete or absolute truth at this extremely youthful stage of the world's existence is on a par with all other claims to omniscience associated with extreme youth.*[41]

Everett is of the opinion that in examining Parkes' work, it is found that he has provided Christian theology and the church itself with many of the historical and theological correctives needed in order that the quest to create a theology free of antisemitism might succeed. He adds, however, that it can be safely assumed that Parkes' ideas did not receive universal acceptance in the Christian community. For many conservative/fundamentalist Christians, Parkes simply was giving away too much of the Christian tradition. His tracing the roots of antisemitism back to Christian teachings and the New Testament itself was simply unacceptable. They would certainly reject his position that salvation is not an exclusive commodity, and they were e decidedly opposed to his rejection of the whole mission/conversion enterprise of the Church toward the Jews.[42] It is, of course, understandable that not everyone will agree with all that Parkes has written. Everett says that perhaps his most persistent opponent was Jacob Jocz, a theologian of the Barthian school who had converted from Judaism, and who took Parkes very seriously and did not hesitate to praise him for his battle against anti-Semitism. He regarded Parkes' theology as so persuasive and influential within the Churches of Britain and America that it needed to be continually dealt with by those who held opposing ideas.[43] Jocz took issue with Parkes' ideas on christocentric theology. He wrote that

> *for the Church to reduce her high Christology in order to accommodate the synagogue would spell dissolution. She stands and falls with the confession that Jesus is Lord.*[44]

Jocz was very critical of Parkes because of his opposition to missions to the Jews and thought that he had reached the wrong conclusion. For him missions must continue, but with a sense of humility.[45]

There have been other critics of Parkes' position both in the Jewish and Christian community.

The American Rabbi Levi Olan has argued that Parkes still falls into the traditional Christian trap of making Judaism appear to be nothing more than an incomplete form of

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[41] John Hadham, *Good God*, p44
[42] R A Everett, Christianity Without Antisemitism, pp267/274
[43] Ibid, p274
[44] Jacob Jocz, *Christians and Jews: Encounter and Missions* (London: SPCK, 1966), p33
[45] Ibid, p12

Christianity. He was aware of the qualifications that Parkes put on his views of the different emphasis in Judaism and Christianity, but did not find them adequate.[46]

The Canadian Protestant scholar, Alan Davies, found Parkes' work to be problematic on a number of points. He considered Parkes' distinction between Judaism and Christianity to be forced and found Parkes to be guilty of making Christianity into a romantic religion.[47]

The Catholic theologian John Pawlikowski, is deeply appreciative of Parkes and has written a valuable critique of him. He faults Parkes for not giving enough attention to philosophical questions related to his position and says that *'his model and vision need expansion and refinement. But in his writings we have witnessed a terribly important breakthrough.'*[48]

Pawlikowski believes that Parkes is basically sound in his historical work and that modern scholarship supports what he was saying in the 1930's about this issue. He thinks, however, that Parkes' philosophical-theological position suffers from not being more clearly defined.[49]

A R Eckardt, a Protestant theologian-ethicist, thinks that Parkes' historical work has presented a challenge to the Christian community that it can ignore only at its peril. He agrees that Parkes does not try to gloss over the differences between Judaism in the name of tolerance. Eckardt is favourable to Parkes' idea of Christianity and Judaism being religious traditions in tension with each other, but he thinks that Parkes does not explain his position clearly enough.[50]

Marcus Braybrooke, a former Executive Director of the Council of Christians and Jews, in several of his books refers to Parkes in complimentary terms. He recalls that, as early as 1930, Parkes wrote to Conrad Hoffmann, who had been appointed director of the recently formed International Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews, and said

> *We are, quite definitely, not interested in the evangelisation of the individual Jew. It seems to me that your brethren have completely left out of account another alternative, which seems to me to be the most truly Christian one at the present time: our Christian responsibility to give the Jew a square deal to be a Jew.*[51]

As regards initial thoughts on what James Parkes has written, perhaps what has been written of him might assist.

His very full obituary notice in the *Jewish Chronicle* on 14 August 1981, concluded:

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[46] Rabbi Levi Olan, 'Christian-Jewish Dialogue: A Dissenting Opinion', *Religion in Life*, Vol.41, No.2, (Summer 1972), pp168-9

[47] R A Everett, *Christianity Without Antisemitism*, p268

[48] John Powlikewski, The Church and Judaism: The Thought of James Parkes, *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* (Fall 1969)

[49] R A Everett, *Christianity Without Antisemitism*, p270

[50] Ibid, p271

[51] M Braybrooke, *Christian-Jewish Dialogue – The Next Steps* (London: SCM Press, 2000), p15

> *When Dr Parkes received from the University of Southampton the honorary degree of D Litt, the public orator paid tribute to him as 'a scholar in an age of unreason, an individualist in an age of conformity and a tolerant man in an age of intolerance' – an apposite epitome of the man's life and work.*

It is of significance that his obituary notice in the *Church Times* on 14 August 1981, was not nearly so informative.

Reading Parkes, there is little doubt that, at the time, his ideas were unpopular, but, believing fully in them, he was determined to propagate them. His view of Judaism as a necessarily continuing part of God's revelation and his alienation from the Church because of its anti-Semitic history, its fossilised liturgy and its anti-liberal theology, had turned him into an angry crossbencher.[52]

Everett considers[53] that

> *Parkes still remains one of the essential figures in the Christian quest for a theology without anti-Semitism. In many ways, his work must be seen as seminal in nature, though it is hardly a complete systematic theology. Yet it does provide a glimmer of hope that it is possible to develop a Christian theology that can free itself of the need to denigrate and perpetuate the evil of anti-Semitism. It is, as it were, a kind of signpost that points the concerned Christian in the proper direction. It is no accident that so many of the people involved in the modern dialogue between Christians and Jews point to Parkes as one of the major influences in their thinking. Even if they do not follow Parkes entirely in their thinking, he is still seen as the one who opened their eyes to the problem. Parkes helped to enlist many in the Church into the battle against anti-Semitism, what he called a battle for decency and fellowship in communal life.*
>
> *The Holocaust was a turning point for many Christians in the battle against anti-Semitism. Parkes' greatness stems from his uncanny ability to identify the demonic depths of Christian anti-Semitism many years before the events of the Holocaust were to unfold. He was one of the first Christian thinkers to take the Church to task for its responsibility in creating and perpetuating anti-Semitism. He was equally one of the first to deal with the theological implications of his discovery. It is easy to forget just how lonely a prophetic voice James Parkes actually was, now that so much of what he was concerned with has become the concern of a growing number of Christians.*

Let Nicholas de Lange have the last word:

> *Re-reading Parkes today, I am struck by the clarity and vividness of his writing, and by the force of his argumentation, even if the style and diction sometimes seem dated with the passage of time.*[54]

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[52] Alan Wilkinson, *Dissent or Conform?* (SCM Press Ltd, 1986), p228

[53] R A Everett, *Christianity Without Antisemitism*, p276

[54] Nicholas de Lange, 'James Parkes: A Centenary Lecture' in Sian Jones, Tony Kushner and Sarah Pearce (Eds), *Cultures of Ambivalence and Contempt* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1998), p41

CHAPTER TWO

James Parkes: Modernism, Barthianism and Ecumenism

This essay is a continuation of the previous one. It sets out to explore the theology of James Parkes in relation to Modernism, Barthianism and Ecumenism. At this stage each of these aspects is treated separately; and each is intended to be 'self-contained'; although the footnotes run consecutively throughout. Later, of course, these three features, with others, will be integrated so that the theology of James Parkes can be considered as a whole.

Modernism

English modernism was to have considerable influence on the work of James Parkes. It had begun as a movement in the Roman Catholic Church in France in the last decade of the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th century. It had sought to reinterpret traditional Catholic teaching in the light of 19th century philosophical, historical and psychological theories and it called for freedom of conscience. In this country, as critical work on the New Testament developed at the beginning of the 20th century, many Christian scholars realised that the relation between fact and interpretation and between history and theology was much more complex than had hitherto been perceived. They increasingly became of the opinion that faith did not depend simply on historical evidence, nor even on the testimony of the apostles, but on the whole continuum of Christian experience.

In 1912 a younger group of Oxford scholars produced a volume of essays entitled *Foundations: A Statement of Christian Belief in Terms of Modern Thought*. One of the essays on *'The Historic Christ'*, by the editor B H Streeter (1874-1937, a distinguished New Testament scholar), was regarded as the first notable attempt by an Anglican theologian to interpret the life of Jesus in the light of current advances in critical work and the new emphasis on eschatology. It was not to be supposed, he said, that the Gospels gave a correct chronological account of the ministry of Jesus. They were written for practical and devotional purposes, not to serve the interests of the modern scientific historian.[1] While all this might, so far, have applied mainly to High Anglicans, there was a parallel process proceeding among Evangelicans both in the Church of England and in the Free Churches. Alec Vidler records that, in addition, a new association of liberal Anglicans, known as the Churchmen's Union, had been formed in 1898, which was in the succession of the Nineteenth Century Broad Churchmen: later its members became known as 'Modern Churchmen', or as 'Modernists', and their affinities were much more with liberal

[1] Alec R Vidler, *The Church in an Age of Revolution* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1961), p.196

Protestantism than with Catholic Modernism.[2] In his autobiography Parkes relates that, in their early teens, the three children in his family were left free to go to Church or not, as they wished. His brother was attracted to the High Church, but James *'loved the country parishes'*.[3] Perhaps this was an early indication of James Parkes' brand of theology.

It is not, however, easy to define modernism. H D A Major, described by Adrian Hastings as '*the strategist and most insistent propagator of Anglican modernism'* wrote:

> *We believe that there is only one substance of the Godhead and the Manhood, and that our conception of the difference between deity and humanity is one of degree. The distinction between Creator and creature..... seems to us to be a minor distinction.*

Hastings considers that for the demystification of theology *'that certainly takes some beating.'*[4] Everett believes that most Modernist thinkers shared the belief that the Church needed to reinterpret many of its traditional teachings in the light of modern historical research and modern science.[5] They liked to refer to Isaiah 43: 18/19 *'Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?'* Unlike many of the older theologians, the modern churchmen had been affected by the intellectual culture of their age. This resulted in a tolerable middle way for learned but doubting clerical scholars, anxious to retain some ground for their ecclesiastical status, but it was not a faith strong enough or coherent enough to form an intellectually convincing option: something to which the unbeliever could be converted or which would prevent ordinary Church people drifting towards agnosticism. Hastings, however, regards modernism as the most characteristic theology of the 1920s.[6] This was the time when James Parkes was beginning his academic study of theology. One of the modernists (in its widest sense) at this time was William Temple. In his autobiography Parkes describes Temple as a *'much-loved guide and friend to the end of his [Temple's] life.'*[7]

Everett records that the Modernist movement saw the development of biblical criticism, critical examination of dogma, and the idea of evolution and progress as allies in the task of re-interpreting the Christian faith for the modern world. He adds that most Modernist thinkers shared the belief that the Church needed to interpret many of its traditional teachings in the light of modern historical research and modern science.[8] Modernists also believed that Christianity must take modernity into account if it was to play any part in the

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[2] Ibid, p.198
[3] James Parkes, *Voyage of Discoveries* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1969), p.23
[4] Adrian Hastings, *A History of English Christianity* 1920-1990 (London: SCM Press, 1986), p.231
[5] R A Everett, *Christianity Without Antisemitism: James Parkes and the Jewish-Christian Encounter* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1993), p.59
[6] Hastings, *A History of English Christianity*, p.232
[7] Parkes, *Voyage of Discoveries*, p.75
[8] Everett, *Christianity Without Antisemitism*, pp.58/59

world after the First World War and not rest on the past, while there was also a belief that Christianity must make sense of the common man, and not deny what everyone knew to be true simply because Church dogma did not accept it as true.[9]

It was in these circumstances that the first theology book by James Parkes, under the nom-de-plume of John Hadham, and entitled *Good God*, was written. It was published in 1940. In his autobiography Parkes says that he had long wanted to write a book like this in which he did not theologise or seek to prove that God existed but simply described his activities as he would *'those of the prime minister or the Archbishop of Canterbury. Writing about such people one would not begin by seeking to prove their existence, and I wanted to assume the existence of God in the same way.'*[10] Another feature of Modernist thought in Britain was its acceptance of the higher critical method in interpreting Scripture. H A D Major wrote that belief in an infallible bible was being replaced by the belief in an inspired bible and the statement that the Bible was the word of God was being replaced by the statement that it contained the word of God, not the only one, but the clearest and most authoritative for practical purposes.[11] An example of Parkes' sympathy with the Modernist view can be seen from his statement that:

> *The Gospels were never meant to be the final truth; and they are certainly not all true. The incredible subtle thing which God has done is to make his own figure so tower above that which his disciples have written of him, that the figure itself continually corrects their mistakes. Of course, so long as men were tied by the bonds of verbal adherence to the actual test, and worse still, verbal adherence to the first attempts at explanation which the New Testament contains, the figure itself had little freedom.*[12]

These words express similar thoughts to the words of B H Streeter quoted earlier. Parkes also appears to have been concerned about the extent of the authority of scripture and was as cautious about the amount of authority he wished to give scripture as he was about the authority of the Church. Thus

> *...man is always anxious to establish authority, and endows every religious doctrine which he accepts with an objective authority which God has most carefully and scrupulously refused it. 'The Divine' authority of either a Church or the Bible is an entirely human idea and completely contrary to everything which God has shown of himself.*[13]

More than this, with his Modernist background, while Parkes believed that the Bible was a guide for those seeking to know more about God, he regarded it only as a guide and not the last word. Thus in *Good God* he writes that the

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[9] Ibid, pp.62/63
[10] Parkes, *Voyage of Discoveries*, p.156
[11] H A D Major, *English Modernism: Its Origins, Methods and Claims* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1927), p.117
[12] John Hadham, *Good God* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1940), p.60
[13] Ibid, pp.44/45

> *idea that the 'early Church' and the books of the New Testament embody the whole truth, from which we have subsequently declined, reduces the whole brave adventure of God-in-a-human-life to the level of a rather pointless melodrama.'*[14]

Parkes' Modernist influence did not allow him to believe that Christianity had a monopoly of religious truth. He wrote

> *The claims of churches to truth is (sic) one thing; the claim they so frequently make to complete or absolute truth at this extremely youthful stage of the world's existence is on a par with all other claims to omniscience associated with extreme youth.*[15]

It is of interest that with, perhaps, increasing hostility to Islam since 11th September, the Archbishop of Canterbury recently made a plea on radio for tolerance towards Islam. He spoke of Christianity and Islam being *'two great religions'*. A number of listeners objected to this: they maintained that there is only one great religion, Christianity. Was James Parkes here, again, ahead of his time? Perhaps Parkes' Modernist attitude can also be seen in some of the chapter headings, taken at random, of *Good God*. Thus *'[God] plans for the Future – and Enjoys Himself'; 'A Reckless Adventure'; 'What God is Not Interested In'; 'How He Works'*; Are these typical of a theology textbook?

Parkes believed that Jesus was the Messiah but *'not the Messiah envisioned by the prophets'*. He considered that not only was a personal Messiah not an essential feature of the Messianic age as they foreshadowed it, but

> *even where he is spoken of, there is one basic difference from the reality of the Incarnation. No prophet envisaged a messiah who would be rejected by his own people, or would depend for recognition on the personal surrender of each one of his followers.*[16]

In Parkes' view Jesus always sought to draw people to him, rather than to turn them away from him and he had no time for the belief that the 'lost' would be consigned to Hell. The idea that Jesus was 'a seminal' figure rather than an 'eschatal' figure can also be regarded as a reflection of his Modernist sympathies.[17] So, too, can his belief in progress. In *Good God* he wrote:

> *The stages of God's revelation once achieved are never lost. The conqueror may flow over them, and appear to destroy them. In reality he destroys only himself. Even art and literature, the most fragile of human activities, cannot be wholly destroyed however complete their apparent eclipse.*[18]

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[14] Ibid, p.60
[15] Ibid, p.44
[16] James Parkes, *The Foundations of Judaism and Christianity* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1960), pp.145-6
[17] Everett, *Christianity Without Antisemitism*, p.135
[18] Hadham, *Good God*, p.107

Thus, without doubt, and understandably, Modernism had considerable influence on the theology of James Parkes. Does this make it of little value? Adrian Hastings quotes some words of H D A Major written in 1939. *'Today Liberal Christianity is spoken of with contempt; as something which is discredited as it has proved itself to be futile.'*[19] To this Hastings adds: *'Thus had modernism come and gone.'*[20] Perhaps, however, it is worth noting that the name of James Parkes does not get a mention in Hastings' book. Everett takes a more 'upbeat' view:

> *It should not be inferred that because Parkes is a Modernist his ideas are suspect or worthless. While the Modernist position has come under attack, it is by no means dead. ...Modernist views on the interpretation of the Bible are accepted by a good number of Christians, and are very helpful in reassessing traditional Christian views about Judaism.'*[21]

Barthianism

'It was my first encounter with the full blast of the abominable heresy of Barthianism... That this evil doctrine spread over Germany is understandable, even though supremely tragic.' These are the words of James Parkes, himself, and leave the reader in no doubt about his opinion of Karl Barth's doctrine.[22] The comments arose as a result of Parkes' attendance in 1928 at a World's Student Christian Federation Conference in Switzerland. One of the speakers was Fritz Lieb, Karl Barth's assistant. Barth was born in 1886 and died in 1968, so that the lives of Parkes and Barth overlapped for some seventy years. Barth was a Swiss theologian, regarded by many as being among the most influential of the 20th century. Before the First World War, he was committed to the liberal theology of the day, based on the optimistic belief in the essential connection between God and humanity. The First World War, however, shattered Barth's liberal convictions. He rejected the idea that human beings could know the nature of God and accused liberal theologians of forgetting the absolute distance between God and people. In these circumstances it is small wonder that Parkes, although also influenced by the First World War, disagreed with Barth's theology, and, throughout his theological writings, attacked it. As Everett points out, this resulted in his being more out of step with his colleagues as they came under the sway of Barth's influence in the 1930s.[23]

Parkes, of course, realised that young Germans had to have great courage to resist

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[19] *Modern Churchman* (June 1939), p.119
[20] Hastings, *A History of English Christianity*, p.299
[21] Everett, *Christianity Without Antisemitism*, p.313
[22] Parkes, *Voyage of Discoveries*, p.101
[23] Everett, *Christianity Without Antisemitism*, p.12

> *so comforting a doctrine of the universality and inescapability of human inability to do anything about the evils of the social and political worlds. It rid them of any sense of responsibility for the war and its evils.*

Parkes considered that a sense of social and political responsibility was *'a very young and tender growth'* among members of the Lutheran tradition and that instead of fostering it, Barth's influence destroyed it, thereby making the surrender to Hitler in the vital academic field so much easier to achieve.[24]

Parkes' theology was theocentric rather than christocentric. Parkes believed that it was the traditional christocentric theology of the church that hampered its ability to deal with the political situation of the modern world. This was the antithesis of the theology of Karl Barth. Everett is of the opinion that this developed early in Parkes' career and was not directly linked to his interest in Judaism.[25] Parkes maintained that since the beginning of Christianity there had been only one brief period in which there existed orthodox Christians who yet understood and shared the basic conception of Judaism. This was the original Judeo-Christian Church, and the period in which it was allowed to consider itself orthodox was short. Parkes considered that it was the Church's habit of destroying the documents of those she judged heretics which prevented any close knowledge of the Judeo-Christian tenets as they developed after the Apostolic Age. He was inclined to the view that it was their belief in the continuing validity of Torah, rather than any lack of belief in Jesus, which led to their rejection.[26]

James Parkes was, of course, a historian as well as a theologian and he never forgot that Jesus was born, brought up and died a Jew. His neighbours in Nazareth, where he lived his early life, would have been ordinary Jews who observed the main traditions of Judaism. This is important because often there is a tendency to believe that Jesus lived most of his life in opposition to Judaism. Everett says that concern for historical facts about Jesus' life also counters those interpretations that would make the life of Jesus so cosmic in nature that it loses all its grounding in human existence and experience. In *The Foundations of Judaism and Christianity* Parkes wrote that to say that Jesus was not the Messiah expected by the prophets, nor the Messiah of apocalyptic eschatology, nor the political heir to the throne of David, does not mean that the answer to the question 'art thou he that cometh?' should be negative. He then goes on:

> *Nor does it mean that we can explain the Incarnation, after the fashion of Dr Barth, only as an 'intersection' of the plane of history by a wholly other, wholly unforeseeable, wholly comprehensible, vertical plane which strikes the historical plane in the manner of an 'exploding shell', leaving a void or*

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[24] Parkes, *Voyage of Discoveries*, p.102
[25] Everett, *Christianity Without Antisemitism*, p.126
[26] James Parkes, *Judaism and Christianity* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1948), p.141

> *crater like that of an exploding bomb, at the point of intersection.* (In a footnote Parkes says that *'the sensitive choice of metaphor'* is Dr Barth's, not his).

Parkes then adds: *'Jesus came on the plane of ordinary history, and "in the fullness of time" – our time, the time of history'*.[27] Referring to these words Everett writes: *'Parkes consequently took particular issue with Barth when he wrote them'*.[28] Although, in this sentence, 'he' would appear to refer to Barth, it must refer to James Parkes.

Barth's first major work published was a commentary on Paul's Epistle to the Romans. (This was translated into English in 1933 by Sir Edwyn Hoskyns.) It established Barth's position as a notable theologian with a new and arresting message about the goodness of God and the unlimited range of his grace. The critical and explosive nature of his theology came to be known as *'dialectical theology'* or *'the theology of crisis'*; it initiated a trend towards neoorthodoxy in Protestant theology. *Dialectical theology* is always critical and a church whose theology is dialectical will realise that it always stands in need of reformation and will never claim that its reformation was accomplished once and for all in the past. The *'crisis'* refers not so much to a grave turning point as to judgement, under which man always falls when he tries to solve the problem of his destiny by his own powers.[29] The year 1933 was, of course, also the year in which Hitler came to power and Barth was deeply involved in the church struggle. He was one of the founders of the so-called Confessing Church, which reacted vigorously against Nazi nationalist ideology and the attempt to set up a 'German Christian' church, sponsored by the Nazis between 1933 and 1945. Parkes agrees that when Hitler was in power and turned to attack the Lutheran Church, the disciples of Barth *'were the backbone of the Confessing Church'*. He adds, however, that in the year when Hitler might have been prevented from ever achieving power Barth was silent, and the immense majority of Protestant leaders were silent under his influence. Worse still, these were years when the danger was already evident, and when the Jewish community of Germany was making instant appeals for Christian backing in their warnings to President Hindenberg and the nation of the danger which was menacing them.[30] Parkes adds that as he was made *'to think furiously'* by the increasing influence of Barth, he produced in the spring of 1929 a tentative Trinitarian theology. *'Accepting that God in his 'home life' was wholly other and unknowable, I argued that he had from the beginning of creation revealed himself and accepted responsibility for it, and was himself the inspiration of its development'*.

Parkes found the reaction to his essay very interesting because the Anglo-Saxons were

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[27] Parkes, *The Foundations of Judaism and Christianity*, p.148
[28] Everett, *Christianity Without Antisemitism*, p.128
[29] Vidler, *The Church in an Age of Revolution*, pp.219/220
[30] Parkes, *Voyage of Discoveries*, p.102

irritated that he had spoiled sensible remarks about politics with medieval obscurantism, like the doctrine of the Trinity, while, understandably, the Barthians found it blasphemous to mention politics in the same breath as the *arcana* of theology.[31] Parkes had come into contact with the World's Student Christian Federation in 1921. In 1931 W A Visser t'Hooft became its General Secretary. Parkes says that *'t'Hooft was a complete disciple of Barth'*. He introduced Barth to English theological students in a tour of theological colleges in 1930. Reviewing a World Council of Churches publication in the *Church Times* of 25 January 2002, Paul Avis, General Secretary of the Council for Christian Unity, says that at William Temple's insistence the thirty-six year old t'Hooft was appointed as the executive officer of the World Council of Churches when it was being set up and became its General Secretary at its inauguration in 1948. As a result of reading Karl Barth's *'explosive commentary'* on St Paul's Epistle to the Romans, *'he moved from the cloudy Hegelian idealism of pre-First World War Europe to a biblical, prophetic position that was critical of the prevailing social gospel.'*[32] Parkes says: *'that the Protestant continent went Barthian is explicable; that the Anglo-Saxon theologians succumbed to its evil influence is still an unexplained mystery.'*[33] Apart from his commentary on *Romans*, Barth was introduced to English readers by a work entitled *'The Word of God and the Word of Man'*, a title which Parkes regards *'of inherent and inescapable absurdity for a work of any human being.'* Not only that, but, according to Parkes, *'the word of God'* was inevitably represented by the opinions of Dr Barth, and in *'the word of man'* were inevitably included all the opinions from which Dr Barth dissented. That such a perverse theology had so overwhelming an effect is due in part at least, in Parkes' opinion, to Barth's attractive personality.[34]

From what has been written, Parkes' distaste for Barth's theology is apparent, but it should be noted that Parkes was not alone in this, especially in this country. According to Alan Wilkinson, Anglicanism itself, by its very nature and history, was unlikely to be hospitable to Barth's theology. He quotes A M Ramsey (later Archbishop of Canterbury) as saying that very few Anglicans were interested in Barth's theology as such, but many underwent a theological and religious shock.[35] A C Headlam, Bishop of Gloucester 1923-45, held the influential post of chairman of the Church of England Council on Foreign Relations from 1933 to 1945. He, too, had distaste for Barthianism and opposed the anti-Nazi Confessing Church as schismatic and infected by Barthianism.[36] Adrian Hastings considers Barth to be

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[31] Ibid, p.104
[32] *Church Times*, 28 January 2002, p.23
[33] Parkes, *Voyage of Discoveries*, p.104
[34] Ibid, p.103
[35] Alan Wilkinson, *Dissent or Conform? War, Pace and the English Churches*, 1900-1945, (London: SCM Press, 1984), p.200
[36] Ibid, pp.145/146

too Protestant, too emphatically divisive of grace from nature, to be wholly welcome in English circles. He regards the American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr as offering a more subtle model, as emphatic as Barth in rejecting the fashionable liberal Protestantism of the previous generation, but without falling back into what could seem a new fundamentalism.[37] Niebuhr also accused Barth's theology of having weakened forces opposed to Hitler, by inducing a spirit of pessimism and by making it more difficult for Christians to accept the inevitable relativity of political decisions.[38]

Everett maintains that in all fairness to Barth, it should be pointed out that Parkes' criticisms are generally levelled at what is called the *'Early Barth'* theology and, for the most part, stem from his contact with students and theologians influenced by Barth in the early 1920s and early 1930s. At an International Student Services Conference, which Parkes was attending, he was constantly being confronted by Germans who refused to consider political and social issues as being relevant to Christianity, *'and they were usually quoting Barth and praising him as their mentor.'*[39] It was this group of German theologians who were causing difficulties for Parkes to make any headway in his agitation for a theology of politics. In his autobiography Parkes says that he could not accept any doctrine of a purposeful creation which did not include the ultimately complete responsibility of the Creator. Parkes maintains that Barth's *'perpetual insistence on the* ***otherness*** (Parkes' emphasis) *of God merely enfolded him* [Barth] *in a fog too thick to penetrate rather than in a light too brilliant for human eyes.'*[40]

It is, of course, not unusual for scholars in the same field to criticise each other's work, but perhaps it is unusual to do so as vehemently as Parkes did about Barth. Alec Vidler says that on all hands, Barth has been recognised as the greatest theologian of his time, but adds that it is too early yet to *'attempt a definitive appraisal of his theology and its influence.'*[41] Perhaps it is also premature to attempt a judgement on Parkes' criticism of Barth.

Ecumenism

It was at the beginning of the 20th century that ecumenism, in its popular meaning, began to 'take off', and this was due, very largely, to the Student Christian Movement which began in the 1890s and was, by 1920, in the middle of its greatest period. Without the SCM the great Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910, generally regarded as the real start of the modern transformation of Christendom, could never have taken place. It was the World's

[37] Hastings, *A History of English Christianity*, p.293
[38] Wilkinson, *Dissent or Conform?* P.206
[39] Everett, *Christianity Without Antisemitism*, p.13
[40] Parkes, *Voyage of Discoveries*, p.102
[41] Vidler, *The Church in an Age of Revolution*, pp.216/217

Student Christian Federation which had, in the preceding twenty years, created the new ecumenical consciousness focussed in that meeting. Edinburgh 1910 marks the first great step forward in what was to be regarded as an ecumenical century.[42] The SCM comprised a combination of liberal orthodoxy, biblical studies, a concern for both Christian writing and social problems, matters dear to the heart of James Parkes and it was with the organisation fostering these that he became actively involved.

James Parkes went up to Oxford in 1919, when, as has been said, the Student Christian Movement of Great Britain was at the height of its power. Parkes joined it and was in charge of International Study. Perhaps this was an augury of his interest in world religious matters. Soon afterwards he went to London and took part in an Anglo-American conference. Subsequently he went to Switzerland to attend a conference of the World's Student Christian Federation. Parkes regarded this as a very moving experience as *'it witnessed the first meeting since the war of the French and German Christian Student Movements.'*[43] He says that his concern with international study brought him naturally into contact with various other bodies including the (now) Royal Institute of International Affairs and the League of Nations Union. He was also in touch with the leaders of the German Movement for Christian Students. In 1921 the World's Student Christian Federation had founded a committee for European Student Relief and Parkes was a member of the English Committee. As an example of his wanderings, he states that between July and September 1924 he attended the annual conference of the European Student Relief Committee in Bavaria, that of the *Confederation Internationale des Edudiants* in Warsaw and the study conference of the WSCF in Prussia. In addition he gave two German students a holiday in Austria.[44] This pattern of life for Parkes continued until in 1926 he was asked to become Warden of Student Movement House - *'undoubtedly the most difficult job in the SCM'*. Parkes was beginning to enjoy this work when the following year the General Secretary of the International Student Service asked him to join them and go to Geneva. This he did in March 1928. This position gave him ample scope for travel and for arranging conferences and he continued with this until 1934. By this time the 'Jewish question' – antisemitism – had given him considerable cause for concern and he decided to stay on in Geneva to do research into this subject. The year 1929 had seen the end of any creative relations with the WSCF but it had also seen the beginning of *'real involvement in the Jewish question'*. Riots between Nationalist and Jewish students

> *were tragically common in Germany, Austria, Hungary, Romania and Poland. The aggressors were, inevitably, the nationalists, for the Jewish*

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[42] Ibid, pp.257/258
[43] Parkes, *Voyage of Discoveries*, p.102
[44] Ibid, p.80

groups wanted nothing except to be left in peace. In some cases the riots caused deaths.... it was not uncommon for the whole university to be closed down until the authorities could regain control of the situation.[45]

As a result of his research Parkes found that there was no *'competent short study'* of antisemitism in English and in the spring of 1930 he decided to write one. It was entitled *'The Jew and his Neighbour: a Study of the Causes of Antisemitism'* and was first published in London in 1930 by the Student Movement Press. Meanwhile Parkes continued with his conference work. In 1931 a conference was held on the Jewish question in Nyon on the lake of Geneva. After this he visited Poland, as the official guest of the Polish National Union of Students to study and discuss with them the problems of Jewish participation in academic life. It then became apparent to Parkes that if he *'were going to get anywhere in so controversial and difficult an issue'* he would have to become *'Herr Doktor'*. The International Student Service agreed to his spending one term a year at Oxford for three years so that he could fulfil the residential requirements for an Oxford Doctorate of Philosophy. His subject was to be an enquiry into the origins of antisemitism, and he soon found that antisemitism arose from the picture of the Jews *'which Christian theologians extracted from their reading of the Old Testament, a work for whose every word they claimed divine punishment'*. Parkes duly obtained his doctorate and his thesis was published, as a book, in 1934 under the title *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue: a Study in the Origins of Antisemitism*. It still remains a classic in its field. This was followed by another book published in 1936 entitled *'Jesus, Paul and the Jews'*, a title surely indicative of Parkes' main interest. He says that it was at this time that he came to believe that the missionary approach of different churches, intended to turn Jews into Anglicans, Lutherans or other Gentile forms of Christianity, was a mistaken approach.[46] Parkes remained against proselytism for the whole of his life.

Parkes had returned from Geneva in 1935 and went to live in Barley, near Cambridge; he then devoted himself full-time to research into antisemitism, writing about Jewish-Christian relations and lecturing at conferences. For this pioneering work he won world-wide renown and had the firm backing of William Temple. Parkes proved to be a prolific writer. As previously stated, in 1940 he published his first book under the nom-de-plume of John Hadham. Entitled *'Good God'* it was the first Penguin Special on religion and sold 100,000 copies in a few months. Parkes says that in this he was 'sketching' christocentric Christianity untraditionally expressed. William Temple is said to have considered it the most important contribution to theology for the previous fifty years.[47] *'God in a World at*

[45] Ibid, p.111
[46] Ibid, p.126
[47] Ibid, pp.158/159

War' appeared in 1941 and *'Between God and Man'* was published in 1942. In 1944 *'God and Human Progress'* appeared in print, the last three books, too, being published under the *'nom-de-plume'*, of John Hadham. Parkes continued to publish books under his own name until well into the 1970s. They were mostly concerned with Jewish-Christian relations or antisemitism. Indeed one book entitled *'Antisemitism'* was published in 1963. *'Judaism and Christianity'* had been published in 1948 and *'A History of the Jewish People'* in 1962. At the same time he travelled and lectured extensively. James Parkes was under no illusions about how long it would take to tackle antisemitism. When asked this question he replied *'three hundred years'*.[48] He had no reason to be surprised or impatient, therefore, at the lack of Christian response to his belief that the whole attitude to Judaism needed a radical reappraisal.

Vidler records that William Temple called the ecumenical movement *'the great new fact of our era'*. Writing in 1961 Vidler added that *'it is too early yet to say whether this was a piece of prophetic insight or of wishful thinking.'*[49] Some forty years later there can be little doubt that it was *'prophetic insight'*: and that this prophetic insight is now beginning to become fact. The Concise Oxford Dictionary, however, defines *'ecumenism'* as *'the principle or aim of the uniting of Christians worldwide, transcending differences of doctrine'*. It will be noticed that the reference is to Christians only and not to people of any other religion. This, it is submitted, is not James Parkes' idea of ecumenism: he envisaged something far broader than this and certainly including Judaism. In *'God and Human Progress'* he records his very close association, from 1924 to 1935, with the World's Student Christian Federation (previously referred to), which he describes as *'the oldest movement to which the sinister name ecumenical would now be applied... '* He agrees that personal relations with leaders of other Churches in Ecumenical Conferences can lead to very deep and moving spiritual fellowship and exultation. Then he adds *'but, set against the general background of the Age, the Ecumenical Movement has been a disaster of the first magnitude'*.[50] James Parkes had been at the heart of what is regarded as ecumenism: but there is an ecumenical dilemma. Ecumenical engagement is always dangerous because there is the common theological enterprise which may lead to challenging one's own position. Happily, today, members of the Jewish faith, too, increasingly take some part, from time to time, in Christian services. Only a few weeks ago, a Rabbi took part in the Sunday Eucharist at the well-known Anglican Church of St James's, Piccadilly, and gave a very interesting address on how a Jew sees Jesus Christ and how a Christian sees Him. This, no doubt, would have gladdened the heart of James Parkes!

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[48] Ibid, p.247
[49] Vidler, *The Church in an Age of Revolution*, p.268
[50] John Hadham, *God and Human Progress*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1944) p.74

CHAPTER THREE

James Parkes and Jewish-Christian Relations 1920-1940

The emergence and development of the twentieth century phenomenon of Jewish-Christian co-operation and the dialogues that were witnessed during that century had several roots. On the one hand the horizons of Western Europe were expanding and there was a new questioning of traditional religious teaching. On the other, antisemitism and racialism in Eastern and Western Europe were a spur to the emergence of political Zionism.[1]

The World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh in 1910 may, perhaps, be regarded as the beginning of the ecumenical movement, but this gave way to an even greater awareness of the grave divisions in faith as Christians fought against Christians, Jews against Jews, and members of other faiths against each other in the 1914-18 World War. The end of that war saw the emergence of a new form of ecumenism: this time in the field of international relations. This was the League of Nations which, though ideologically well founded was soon discovered to be without the practical resources to ensure the fulfilment of its purposes. As for the Churches, while the challenge of 'Edinburgh 1910' remained, the reproach of their peoples' involvement in the war itself gave rise to a great deal of self-examination, especially in respect of attitudes to other faiths. The aim, now, was a fellowship of faiths rather than conversion to Christianity.[2]

Already by 1924 leading churchmen in Britain, realised that the Christian 'triumphalism' which had marked the pre-war years had been deeply challenged by the events of the war itself. Accordingly a conference was held in Birmingham in that year, in the preparations for which representatives of all the Churches in England took part, including the Roman Catholics, though they had to withdraw before the conference took place. This was known as the 'Conference on Politics, Economics and Citizenship' (COPEC). The twelve volumes of commission reports that were published in preparation for it indicate the extent to which Christian social thinking was by this time permeating the Churches in England. The conference was presided over by William Temple.[3] In 1924, too, a 'Religions of Europe' Conference was held in London. In 1840 a Reform Jewish Synagogue had been established in England and this was followed early in the twentieth century by a form of Liberal Judaism. In the same year, 1924, the Social Service Committee of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue in London, motivated by the consideration that *'in spite of serious differences of*

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[1] William W Simpson and Ruth Weyl, *The Story of the International Council of Christians and Jews* (1995), p.11. (The book appears to be published by the International Council of Christians and Jews: no place of publication is given but presumably, it was at Heppenheim, the address of the ICCJ).

[2] Ibid, pp.14-15.

[3] Alec R Vidler, *The Church in an Age of Revolution* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1961), p.260.

belief, Jews and Christians are at one in their desire to bring nearer the Kingdom of God on earth', approached a number of other religious bodies and in consultation with them convened a conference on 'Religion as an Educational Force'. As a result, this London Conference of Jews and Christians set up a continuation committee which, in 1928, launched a 'Society of Jews and Christians' to pursue the following aims:

1. *To increase religious understanding, and to promote good-will and co-operation between Jews and Christians, with mutual respect for differences of faith and practice.*
2. *To combat religious intolerance.*[4] [5]

The same year, 1924, was also significant for Christian-Jewish co-operation in America. It was the year of a Presidential election in which a Democratic Party candidate, Governor Alfred E Smith, became the victim of a scurrilous attack, largely waged by the Ku Klux Klan on the grounds that he was a Roman Catholic. When Smith again sought nomination for the 1928 election this opposition was renewed. By this time, however, a number of leading individuals and organisations recognised the need to break the power of the Klan. The first steps were taken by the Federal Council of Churches (a Protestant body) and B'nai B'rith (a Jewish organisation), which set up a Committee of Goodwill between Jews and Christians and which was soon to be joined by a number of Catholic and other organisations. Thus in 1928 the National Conference of Christians and Jews was established: this became a most powerful factor, not only in America, but also in the building up of the International Council of Christians and Jews.[6] The first Executive President of the National Conference was Everett R Clinchy, a Presbyterian minister. By dint of perseverance he obtained the support of many leaders in all sections of the community and secured the financial support necessary to *'establish a social order in which the religious ideals of Brotherhood and Justice shall become the standards of human relationships'*. Clinchy propounded his ideals into what he termed a 'scientific formula'. W W Simpson regards these as relevant to the ongoing programme of the International Council of Christians and Jews and quotes them in full:

> *First, reduce the social distance, the isolation between the various religions and radical groups so that democratic communication may be kept alive. Secondly, discard the economic and sociological forces, which make for prejudice and deal with the several factors individually. Hold the guiding star in the sky of men's aspirations, political democracy above totalitarianism; industrial democracy above economic injustice; freedom of*

[4] Simpson and Weyl, *The Story of the International Council of Christians and Jews*, p.15.
[5] When, in 1942, the Council of Christians and Jews was set up in Britain, the Society added the word 'London' to its title, affiliated to the Council and continued its specific work in the field of inter-religious dialogue.
[6] Ibid, pp.15-16.

> *the human spirit above tyranny, peace above war, essential justice for all groups above privilege for anyone.*[7]

Even with these developments, however, Simpson considers that for nearly thirty years, most Christians viewed inter-faith dialogue with suspicion. Then, with increasing awareness of the horrors of the Holocaust they began to re-examine traditional attitudes and teaching about Judaism and gradually came to recognise that the origin of anti-Semitism, *'as the pioneering Anglican scholar Dr James Parkes, was already teaching':*

> *unconsciously and unintentionally lay in the interpretation of the Old Testament current in the early Church, and in the picture of the Jews, as a rebellious people who had crucified the Messiah and still refused to believe in him, which was constantly repeated from the Christian pulpit.*[8]

James Parkes had gone up to Oxford in 1919 and for a time his main activity centred around the League of Nations Union, of which he was appointed University Secretary. He joined this because, although he intended to be ordained, his desire for ordination was not based on any wish to escape from the contemporary world, but was tied to the conviction, shared with so many of this generation, that the moral foundations of a way of life for the whole world had to be discovered which would make a repetition of the war impossible.[9] Parkes was, of course, also interested in the work of the Student Christian Movement, and in fact, membership of the two bodies overlapped a great deal. In March 1923, Parkes received, quite unexpectedly, an invitation to join the staff of the SCM, which he accepted. At this time the SCM was at the height of its influence and authority; Parkes was placed in charge of International Study. He had by now been ordained and he threw himself wholeheartedly into his work with the SCM. In 1924, as one of their representatives he attended the Jubilee of the Norwegian SCM. Later the same year he attended the annual conference of the European Student Relief Committee in Bavaria, that of the Confederation des Etudiants in Warsaw and the study conference of the World's Student Christian Federation in Prussia.[10] The year 1925 was of similar pattern. The ESR had its conference near Geneva while the WSCF Conference was also held in Switzerland at Oberaegeri, near Zug. After that he went to Vienna and then to Belgrade. While in (the then) Yugoslavia he also attended a conference of the Russian Orthodox Church at Hopovo.

The WSCF Conference at Oberaegeri brought Parkes into direct contact, for the first time, with 'the Jewish problem'. The WSCF had invited a member of a Central European Christian Movement to open a discussion on the 'Jewish question' and it had also invited a Rumanian Jewish student to be present. The Christian's speech was so venomous, contained

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[7] Ibid, p.16.
[8] Ibid, pp.17-18.
[9] James Parkes, *Voyage of Discoveries* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1969), p.59.
[10] Ibid, p.80.

so many accusations and innuendoes that Parkes was sure were false, that he took the unusual step of saying from the Chair that he could not accept the speech as the introduction to a discussion of the problem among Christians. Parkes added that he would invite no one else to speak until the speech was withdrawn. This, of course, caused a considerable stir among the audience, but - after some twenty minutes of silence! - the speaker said he must have been misunderstood if he had appeared to be anti-Semitic and this was enough for Parkes to accept.[11]

At every conference of the WSCF there was a – usually unspoken – conflict between students influenced by Anglo-Saxon theology (this included British, American and Asian students) who wanted to discuss Christianity's relation to social and political questions, and students influenced by German theology, who opposed the idea that Christianity was concerned with such questions, and who demanded unlimited Bible Study, *'usually of the worst passages of St Paul's letters.'* Parkes adds that the Germans – he says it regretfully but objectively – usually won *'by the blackmail of sulks and intolerably bad manners if they were opposed'.*[11] In 1926 Parkes was asked to continue his work for another three years and he *'gladly agreed to do so'*. In 1927, however, Dr Walter Kotschnig, general secretary of the International Student Service, asked him to put into action a programme of cultural co-operation upon which the ISS had decided to embark. Accordingly in March, 1928, Parkes joined the staff of the ISS going first to Prague, then to Geneva. The ISS was a body without a student membership and consisted of a small and self-perpetuating Assembly registered under Swiss law. One of Parkes' problems at this time was to find *'a real theological interpretation of the divine relation to our social and political life'*. He could not accept any doctrine of a purposeful creation, which did not include the ultimately complete responsibility of the Creator. Anything less seemed, to him, to be just immoral. Then,

> *along came Barth proclaiming a godling who, apparently, revelled in making himself totally obscure and incomprehensible to his creation – causing unending suffering and misery thereby – and who accepted no responsibility for the result.*

Parkes says that he was made *'to think furiously'* by the increasing influence of Barth and produced in the spring of 1929 a tentative Trinitarian theology. Accepting that God in his 'home life' was wholly other and unknowable, he argued that he had from the beginning of creation revealed himself and accepted responsibility for it, and was himself the inspiration of development. He was its ruler and inspirer as well as its redeemer. Parkes concludes,

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[11] Ibid, p.87.
[12] Ibid, p.93.

however, that the real significance of this attempt to sum up his thinking from Oxford onwards was that he had not yet discovered any clear guidance to a theology of politics.[13] In the same year 1928, that Parkes moved to Geneva, the International Missionary Council held an important conference in Jerusalem. Following this, the International Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews was created as a focal point for all Protestant work relating to Jews. It soon became apparent that the views of this Committee and those of the ISS were quite different as regards conversion of the Jews. In December, 1930, Parkes wrote to Conrad Hoffmann, Secretary of the Committee and said that the Council implied that either Jews should be converted whenever possible or no responsibility should be accepted for them. It seemed to him, however, that another alternative had been omitted, which was the most truly Christian one at that time. This was *'our Christian responsibility to give the Jew a square deal to be a Jew'*. That became James Parkes' life work. *'The absolute basis of my work is that the Jews with whom I am in contact know that I have no secret desire to convert them'*.[14]

The year 1929 saw the end of any creative relations Parkes had with the WSCF, and the beginning of his real involvement in the Jewish question. The 'Jewish question' was regarded as undoubtedly the most widespread cause of disorder as riots between nationalist and Jewish students were tragically common in Germany, Austria, Hungary, Rumania and Poland. *'The aggressors were, inevitably, the nationalists, for the Jewish group wanted nothing except to be left in peace'*. Among grave forebodings Parkes arranged a conference between the nationalist and the Jewish student organisations to be held in Bierville, near Etampes, in France, in January 1929.[15] The result was that the two sides were able to meet and hear each other out. In addition the non-Jewish participants were able to hear about aspects of Judaism and Jewish history that they never would have heard at home. Parkes was encouraged by both sides to continue his work on the issue, to visit their universities, and to keep the ISS active in this area. Perhaps the most important discovery made by Parkes at this time was the lack of any Christian able to speak intelligently on the Jewish issue. The ISS agreed that there was a void to be filled here, and they instructed Parkes to make a study of the Jewish problem. So Parkes began his career as a Christian scholar devoted to the Jewish question.[16] Following this, Parkes gradually built up a group of

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[13] Ibid, p.104.

[14] Letter, 9 December, 1930, Parkes to Hoffman. Parkes Archives, quoted by Theodore C Linn in an unpublished essay, 'From Conversion to Co-operation: James Parkes; Call to Christian Conscience'. Referred to by M Braybrooke, *Children of One God* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1991), p.4.

[15] Parkes: *Voyage of Discoveries*, pp.113-4.

[16] R A Everett, *Christianity Without Antisemitism: James Parkes and Jewish-Christian Encounter* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1993), p.20.

Jewish scholars *'who showed infinite patience in answering my innumerable questions'*. Among these was Claude Montefiore, the biblical scholar and philanthropist.

At the same time as Parkes was developing his new work, he also maintained his former interests. He was *'trying to become something of an expert on European Jewish history with special reference to the Jewish student'*. In the spring of 1930 he had decided that, as he had not found a competent short study of anti-Semitism in English, he would write one. Entitled *The Jew and His Neighbour*, this was published in October 1930, by the SCM Press. In 1931 a second conference on the Jewish question was held in Nyon on the lake of Geneva. After this he visited Poland as the official guest of the Polish National Union of Students, even though the purpose of his visit was to study and discuss with them the problems of Jewish participation in academic life. The impetus to this invitation had come from their vice president and foreign secretary of the Union, who was a former member of the ISS. Parkes considered that it was a most interesting visit, in which the Polish student leaders were completely loyal, if rather bewildered co-operators.[17] Parkes then considered it desirable to acquire an Oxford Doctorate of Philosophy: his subject was to be an enquiry into the origins of antisemitism. He considered that antisemitism arose from the picture of the Jews which Christian theologians extracted from their reading of the Old Testament, a work for whose every word they claimed divine authority. He agreed that the Old Testament was very frank about Jewish sins and very definite in its certainty that they earned divine punishment: but it also dwelt on the love between God and Israel, and the promises of the Messianic Age. So long as both elements in the story were accepted as being about a single people, a lofty balance was retained. Christian theologians, however, divided it into the story of two peoples: the virtuous Hebrews, who were pre-incarnation Christians, had all the praise and promise; and the wicked Jews who had all the crimes and denunciations. Parkes maintained that this was the interpretation repeated over and over again, in every possible variation, and in every century from the third onwards. Indeed, in the eyes of the leading Church historian of the fourth century, Eusebius of Caesarea, Jews and Hebrews were biologically two distinct races. Parkes carried his study down to the end of the Roman influence on the first Barbarian societies, Visigoths, Vandals and the rest, and ended in the Dark Ages. It was longer than was necessary for a doctorate, but it completed a period and left the Middle Ages for subsequent study. Parkes duly obtained his doctorate and his thesis was published under the title *The Conflict Between the Church and the Synagogue* in 1934.[18] It established the author's reputation in this field of research and even after almost seventy years maintains its original authority.

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[17] Parkes, *Voyage of Discoveries*, p.120.
[18] Ibid, pp.123-3.

Parkes resigned from the ISS in 1934, but he remained in Geneva until 1935. By this time he had begun to develop his own theology in relation to questions relating to world events, and he was becoming more involved with the Jewish question. One aspect of his thinking was his continued opposition to missionary activities among Jews. He remained of the opinion that the missionary approach of different Churches, intended to turn Jews into Anglicans, Lutherans or other Gentile forms of Christianity, was a mistaken approach. He believed that if Jews ever came to accept Jesus as Messiah, it would be in their own way, not in terms of Hellenistic theology, nor the Christian interpretation of the Old or New Testament. Parkes knew, however, that at that time his view was mainly negative. He admits that he had never had a reasoned debate with those who regarded the missionary approach as the only approach loyal to Christian principles. He could not argue with a constant *'how do you reconcile that with this or the other verse of St Paul?'* He recorded, in all fairness, that his friend William Temple, while willing to regard the break between the two religions as leaving truth on both sides, still refused to agree that Judaism was so special a case that it justified special treatment in relation to Christian missionary activity.[19] During his last year in Geneva Parkes had made a more detailed study of the Gospels and the Pauline letters than was possible for his doctorate. This was published in 1936 after he had come home, under the title *Jesus, Paul and the Jews*. Reviewing the relations between the two religions as his two books had revealed them, he realised how false it was to say that *'the Jews rejected Jesus'*. The immense majority of the Jews had rejected a Gospel account of the life of Jesus in which he was made to exaggerate their faults and to distort their religion, a distortion – Parkes maintained - which in Paul became at times a completely false picture.[20]

During his last years in Geneva Parkes had been active in helping refugees from Germany and they often spent time at his flat. Unknown to him his 'Swiss' students were Nazi spies: he was regarded as an enemy of the Nazi movement and marked out for attack. Such an attack did, in fact, take place but failed because the Nazi agents mistook his valet for Parkes and accordingly attacked the wrong man. The valet sustained severe wounds. After nursing him back to health, Parkes left Geneva in the spring of 1935 to return to England.[21] He went to live in the village of Barley, in Hertfordshire, which as he says, *'lies high up in a fold of the hills between Royston and Saffron Walden'*.[22] In 1937 he completed the writing of *The Jew in the Medieval Community: a Study of his Political and Economic Situation*. This was

[19] Ibid, pp.126, 209.
[20] Ibid, p.126.
[21] Ibid, p.131.
[22] Ibid, p.131.

published by the Soncino Press in the following year. A second edition was published in 1976. In an introduction to the new edition Parkes stated

> *The volume to whose second edition this forms the Introduction traces the origin of both the political and the economic distortion of European Jewish life.... Today, in 1975, in the post Holocaust era, it would have been right to sum up the picture of two thousand years of relations between Jew and non-Jew with some assessment of the changes in the right direction as well as the persistence of the evils of the past. There is evidence both from the scholar and the general public that change is in the air, theological as well as political and social.*[23]

Parkes was nearing completion of his next book, *The Medieval Church and the Jews*, when Gilbert Murray, Literary editor of the Home University Library, asked him to write a book on the Jewish problem in the modern world and a volume under that title appeared in 1939. In writing this Parkes realised that he would have to include something on Zionism and the actual problems of the Palestine Mandate. He did this in a chapter entitled *Hopes and Conflicts in Palestine*. In November, 1938, Parkes went to the United States and Canada where he lectured on anti-Semitism and refugees to various types of Christian audience, *'and tried to persuade the Canadian authorities to open their doors more widely to professional refugees from Nazi Germany'*.[24]

As has been said, throughout his life Parkes was opposed to attempting to convert Jews to the Christian religion. His first *'positive formulation'* of his attitude to missions to Jews took place in October, 1939, when he was invited to preach, at Oxford, a university sermon, endowed by the principal of his College (when it was Magdalen Hall) *'... to confute the arguments of Jewish commentators and to promote the conversion to Christianity of the ancient people of God'*. This was, of course, the very antithesis of Parkes' philosophy, and he wondered whether he should have refused the invitation. In the event he accepted, but preached *'with intentions opposite to that of the pious giver of the endowment'*. After detailing the tragic and disastrous story of Jewish – Christian relations over the whole period, Parkes concluded:

> *We have failed to convert the Jews, and we shall always fail, because it is not the will of God that they shall become Gentile Christians: antisemitism has failed to destroy the Jews, because it is not the will of God that essential parts of His Revelation should perish. Our immediate duty to the Jew is to do all in our power to make the world safe for him to be a Jew.*[25]

In a pamphlet entitled *The Christian and the Jewish Problem*, published in the same year, 1939, W W Simpson, to whom reference has already been made, looked beyond the

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[23] Compilers: S Sugarman and D Bailey; Ed D A Pennie, *A Bibliography of the Printed Works of James Parkes* (University of Southampton, 1977), p.116.
[24] Parkes, *Voyage of Discoveries*, p.151.
[25] Ibid, pp.153-4

immediate tragedy of the horrors of Nazi persecution, to recognising the Christian share of the responsibility for Jewish sufferings. He stated that it was important to realise that one of the chief factors in forcing the Jews into a negative kind of separatism had been the attitude adopted by the Christian community.[26] He referred to the charge of deicide, the attacks of the Crusaders, the institution of the Ghetto and the Inquisition. He added that the problem called for education: Christians needed a far better knowledge of Judaism.[27] He maintained that the history of the Jewish community in post Biblical times was almost completely ignored in the modern educational syllabus. Perhaps those words are less true now than they were when they were written more than sixty years ago, because Jewish History and Culture, as a subject, is often part of the modern curriculum in educational establishments. In addition there is an annual Holocaust Memorial Day, on 27 January in 2002. Simpson went on to become one of the two joint secretaries when the Council of Christians and Jews was set up in 1942.

In conclusion, it can be seen that the years 1920-1940 were formative years: formative for Jewish-Christian relations and also for James Parkes. The First World War had given birth to a new form of ecumenism: this developed, particularly as regards Jewish-Christian relations. So far as James Parkes is concerned, he had gone up to Oxford in 1919 and immediately began to take an active part in the SCM and the ISS. He travelled widely and threw himself wholeheartedly into the work of these and other organisations. During the period under review Parkes began his career as a Christian scholar devoted to the Jewish question and the fight against antisemitism; and he went on, of course, to devote his life substantially to those causes. He wrote his first book – *The Jew and His Neighbour, A Study of the Causes of Antisemitism* - in 1930, and proved to be a prolific writer. A notable event in 1924 was the Conference on Politics, Economics and Citizenship, presided over by William Temple. The Society of Jews and Christians, set up in 1928, stimulated inter-religious dialogue. The National Conference of Christians and Jews was set up in America in 1928, and this led to the establishment of the International Council of Christians and Jews (a worldwide organisation) formally constituted as such in 1974. The National Conference of Christians and Jews has recently changed its name to the National Conference for Community and Justice: a title more indicative of its aims and purposes. In the last paragraphs of his book, *Children of One God*, Marcus Braybrooke quotes some words of Rabbi Leo Baeck, spoken shortly before his death. The rabbi said:

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[26] W W Simpson, *The Christian and the Jewish Problem* (London: Epworth Press), p.16. Referred to by M Braybrooke, *Children of One God*, p.9

[27] Simpson, *The Christian and the Jewish Problem*, pp.19, 21, 24

I am convinced that the next great phase of the world's history will witness the emergence of a new sense of partnership between the Jewish and the Christian worlds, within the kingdom and purpose of God.[28]

To these words Braybrooke added *'Amen'*.

[28] Leo Baeck, quoted in the memorandum of the Manchester Council on a World Conference.

CHAPTER FOUR

James Parkes : *The Jew and His Neighbour*, the Council of Christians and Jews and the Society of Jews and Christians

The first book written by James Parkes is entitled *The Jew And His Neighbour : A Study of the Causes of anti-Semitism.*[1] In the Introduction (Pages 10, 11), Parkes explains that this is neither a complete history of the Jews nor is it an exhaustive study either of their crimes or of their virtues. He recognises that there is a Jewish problem and adds that he is dealing with a problem which has its roots in history and in human nature, and not in anything supernatural, so that given the patience and the goodwill requisite, it is one which can be unravelled by human intelligence and resolved by human action (This can, perhaps, be described as a rational, modernist solution).

Having dealt with the *'Jewish Dispersion'* in the first chapter of the book, Parkes goes on to devote the second chapter to *'The Nature of the Jewish Problem'*. He agrees that the Jews are a people apart (page 39) and gives three possible explanations for that *'peculiar situation'*. The first, and oldest, is that it is supernatural, the direct action of God, the condemnation of the *'deicide race'*. Parkes considers that such an explanation has a Jewish counterpart in certain orthodox interpretations of the Prophets and later Apocalyptic writers. Many Jews accept with a kind of fatalism the explanation of the divine anger as the sole cause of their misfortunes, and look to no human effort, or understanding, for the betterment of their position. They rely only on the direct action of God for the destruction of their enemies and the restoration of the glories of Sion. The second explanation is that it is *'unnatural'*, the result of the deliberate malice of the party to which the speaker does not belong. It is either the envy and jealousy of the Gentiles which is solely responsible, or it is entirely caused by the hostility of the Jews to the rest of humanity. A third, and what Parkes describes as an *'admittedly prosaic explanation compared to the other two'*, is that the Jewish problem is composed of an admixture of historical facts, misunderstanding, ignorance and prejudice - just like all other problems *'which vex human society'*. Parkes dismisses the first two explanations so that there then remains the problem of human relationships, *'which, however difficult, we can assume to be capable of reasonable human study and ultimately of human solution'* (pages 43/44). First, however, he considers it is necessary to get some clearer idea of what actually is involved in the problem itself. While

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[1] James Parkes, *The Jew and His Neighbour : A Study of the Causes of anti-Semitism*, (London: published for the International Student Service by the Student Christian Movement Press, 1930). A second, revised edition was published in 1938. In the preface to *Antisemitism and the Foundations of Christianity* (Ed. Alan T Davies), Parkes says that the reason for this was that by this time the Nazis were in control of Germany, and their antisemitic programme was being openly practiced (sic). Hence he revised *The Jew and His Neighbour* in the *'light of National Socialism in both theory and practice'*.

he agrees that it can legitimately be called *'the Jewish problem'* - to which Parkes was to devote the rest of his life - it was well to realise that there were as profound differences between Jew and Jew as between Jew and anti-Semite. *'It has been said with some truth that there is no fiercer anti-Semite than the converted or assimilated Jew'*. Parkes maintains (page 47) that *'in the loose sense of everyday speech'*, anti-Semitism, whatever its particular cause may be in any particular place, is *'instinctive'*, and as such, is the common inheritance of a common past. Parkes considers (page 49) that dislike of the Jew is *'now quite instinctive and unreflected to the majority of Europeans, whether they be economically affected by them or not'*. His conclusion is that the essential task is to get down *'to the roots of the "instinctive" anti-Semitism of today'*. That, too, became Parkes's life work.

In chapter 111 Parkes deals with *'The Jewish Community Before the Outbreak of Persecution'*. In this he asserts (page 66) that the Jews of Europe differ in one very important point from other Jewish communities. From the earliest times of their European history they had to fulfil a particular function in the general society and were not able to develop the many-sided life which characterised their existence elsewhere (page 66). The fact that, in general, they were unable to own land, and that they were linked together by ties of relationship in many different countries drew them naturally into intellectual professions and commerce. The Christian prohibition of usury also placed the greater part of this profession in the hands of the Jews. He refers to the history of the Jews as narrated in the Hebrew bible. Later Parkes comes to the time of the crusades and says (page 70) that the immediate cause of the first popular attack on the Jews was the appeal to the crusaders: *'Will you offer your lives for the recovery of the holy places, and leave in peace those who were actually responsible for the death of the Saviour?'* Yet, Parkes adds, if the crusades were the occasion, they were not *'the real cause of these massacres'*. The causes were threefold: the hostility of the Church, the separate organisation of the Jews, and their wealth; a religious, a social and an economic reason.

If the Jews had been living in peace for some centuries it was not by the goodwill of the Church that this was so. Parkes considers (page 71) that the conflict between the secular and ecclesiastical authorities was one of the most prominent factors of the Middle Ages, and the victory of the latter was everywhere accompanied by increased restrictions upon the Jews (page 71). The second cause of the hostility was the exclusiveness of the Jewish communities, although they were not the only exclusive community of their time. The Church already, and the Jews later, possessed their own communal organisation and quasi-independence. With the Jews, however, this independence possessed special characteristics which were a source of danger to the Jews themselves, the most important of which was their religion (page 72). Parkes points out that for common worship ten adult men would be

required, which meant that Jews were not likely to be found in groups of less than forty or fifty people. Religious toleration would not be expected in the kind of society of which mediaeval Europe was made up, and the strangeness of their religious customs, the fact that they used Saturday as a day of rest, and their foreign appearance, made it possible for popular superstition to be easily moved against them (page 73). Their religious strangeness became serious when Christians tended to become converted to Judaism and usually it was Christian servants in the service of Jews who became converted. *'This was a terrible thing to the mediaeval mind, since to desert the true faith was to lose the chances of eternal life.....'* Parkes maintains that the third motive which made possible these attacks was avarice (page 74). Even if not yet exclusively confined to financial occupations, yet in so far as gold or silver was concerned they were already the richest class in the community. Some Jews were already moneylenders and that *'they charged an excessive rate of interest is an accusation frequently made against them and probably frequently true'*. Parkes concludes the chapter by saying (page 75) that

> *it is in the characteristics developed by the Jews as an isolated urban and unsettled population that we shall find the Jewish responsibility for later anti-Semitism; but it was the hostility of the Church which perpetuated their isolation and created the instinctive anti-Semitism from which we are still suffering.*

The fourth chapter of The Jew and His Neighbour is entitled *'The Religious Element in antisemitism'*. In the second edition of the book, published in 1938, Parkes has substantially revised this chapter and gets to grips with the question of the origin of antisemitism. He writes that the origin of antisemitism

> *lies unconsciously and unintentionally, in the interpretation of the Old Testament current in the early Church, and in the picture of the Jews, as a rebellious people, who had crucified the Messiah and still refused to believe in Him, which was continually repeated from the Christian pulpit'.*[2]

Writing more than thirty years later, in his autobiography, Parkes reinforced this view, when he said that it was the Christian Church, and the Christian Church alone, which turned a normal xenophobia and normal good and bad communal relations between two human societies into the unique evil of antisemitism, the most evil, and as he gradually came to realise, the most crippling sin of historic Christianity.

> *It was not any particular contemporary fact on either side which led to this tragic result, nor was it any deduction by the Christians of any one period from the behaviour of their Jewish contemporaries.*[3]

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[2] James Parkes, *The Jew and His Neighbour* (2nd Edition) (London: SCM Press, 1938), p.63
[3] James Parkes, *Voyage of Discoveries* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1969), p.123

At the beginning of chapter V - *'The Economic Element in Anti-Semitism'* - Parkes stresses that the instinctive anti-Semitism of 'today' - writing in 1930 - had its origin in religious intolerance and not in the economic position of the Jews. He adds, however, that there were important economic elements in their situation which had prevented anti-Semitism from disappearing with the growth of religious tolerance. Parkes agrees that it is often said that the part played by Jews in commerce and finance is due to racial aptitude; that it is an instinct with the Hebrews - *'to use Semites in this connection is impossible as no such financial aptitude has been shown by other semites such as the Arabs'*. Parkes considers the *'urge'* which draws Jews into finance and concludes that the most important was the prohibition of usury (page 103). He points out that in the twelfth century the crusades created a quite unprecedented demand for ready money, in order to finance wars abroad, and this put a premium upon the Jewish traders who possessed it and led to a great extension of usury among them (page 107). Another reason for the Jewish concentration upon money-lending was their exclusion from other trades. As the guilds spread their control throughout Europe, they came to be exclusive monopolies covering both merchants and artisans. The Jews were universally excluded from the guilds, which were largely religious in their character, and thus the extension of their influence drove the Jews out of one occupation after another (page 108). These difficulties in securing employment led to the charge that the Jewish standard of business honour differed from, and was lower than, that of the Christians. Parkes regards this as *'a natural one and probably often true'* (page 112).

Chapter VI of *The Jew and His Neighbour* deals with *The Political and Racial Element in Anti-Semitism* and at the outset (page 123) Parkes says that to say how much exactly of every particular manifestation of anti-Semitism is to be allotted to the religious, political and economic motive,

> *is a useless and indeed impossible task. So far it has been suggested that at first the religious motive was paramount, though some economic element was rarely absent even in the mediaeval persecution; but that from the sixteenth century onwards the economic motive acquired increasing importance, and manifested itself in new forms.*

It remained, now, for Parkes to consider the extent to which political and racial antagonisms added a new element in the nineteenth century and *'caused a considerable recrudescence of hostility towards the Jews in western Europe, where it had seemed to be on a rapid decline'*. Parkes goes on to say (page 130) that in general political development the nineteenth century was significant for the extension of political action into new fields of national life, both industrial and commercial. These were fields in which the Jews played their greatest role, so that it was not in the political parties only, that their position attracted

attention, but a political significance was attached to their financial, industrial and economic activities. He mentions in particular, the Rothschilds, who were not only bankers but who also played a prominent part in industrial development. Parkes considers that another remarkable development of the nineteenth century was the political power of the newspaper. He points out that many important newspapers in Austria, Germany and England were in Jewish hands, *'and were naturally suspected of using their influence in support of Jewish projects'* (page 131).

Parkes concludes the chapter (page 145) by stating that so long as anti-Semitism was primarily religious intolerance, and the demand made upon the Jews was that they should accept conversion, they could not be expected to give any answer other than a straightforward *non possumus*. That there are two sides to the question, and that Jewish action is needed as well as non-Jewish to overcome the difficulties involved in their peculiar position, *'begins to be clear in the seventeenth century economic conflicts, but is still clearer in the views of today'*.

In chapter VII Parkes deals with *The Inner Evolution of the Jewish Community* (page 157). He is of the opinion that it was the unfortunate but inevitable result of the Middle Ages that the Jew should shut himself up by himself and have as little to do with the Gentile as he could.

> *But this made it equally inevitable that when the renaissance came, he should have absorbed but little of the culture and toleration of that period, and should have been unable to profit, except in a few cases, by the revival of interest among the humanists in his language and history.*

Parkes considers that just when Europe was beginning to shake off its mediaeval prejudices and when the breach might have been healed between Jew and Gentile, the Jew himself no longer wished this healing to take place. The seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth centuries were the 'dark ages' of Judaism. Exhausted by their long suffering, their life still restricted at all points, they presented to the beginning of enlightenment the most pathetic and at the same time, repellent picture of the survival of mediaeval superstition and ignorance.

Parkes refers (page 158) to the *'terrible massacres'* in Poland from 1648 to 1653 which accentuated the situation and resulted in large numbers of Polish Jews fleeing westward and spreading over Europe.

> *They brought with them not only a narrow rabbinical tradition, but also the doctrines of Jewish mysticism, the Kabbala, a mingling of eastern philosophy with magic and strange superstition.*

Parkes maintains (page 164) that a Jew is accepted in society in the measure in which he denies his Judaism, and his kinship with those who are the subject of the contempt and the dislike of the anti-Semites.

> *By their insistence upon the despicable character of the Jew the anti-Semites have thus helped to keep him in the state of ignorance and dirt in which he is too often found, particularly in Eastern Europe.*

While these words were, of course, true when Parkes wrote them, more than seventy years ago, it will probably be agreed that, bearing in mind the events that have happened since then, including the Holocaust, the position is now greatly changed.

' "I don't like Jews, but I don't know why". Mention the Jewish problem to most people and that will be their answer'. So James Parkes begins Chapter VIII, *The Effect Upon the Jew of His Position in Society*. Once again, it is submitted that while these words were true when they were written, they are not true today. Similar sentiments might have been expressed at one time about black people and Asians. While there are in this country, even today, occasional outbursts of antisemitism and race riots, by and large 'foreigners' have now been integrated into society. Parkes concludes the chapter by saying (page 183) that the possession of wealth without the full responsibility in the community which wealth should bring, or the uncontrolled exploitation of the weak, is always demoralising, whether it be American industrial magnates or Jewish business men, European exploiters of the native races, or Jewish exploiters of eastern European peasants. The possession of intelligence and of the means of education without an outlet in executive work always creates unrest, whether it be the Indo-Chinese student struggling against the French, the Indian dissatisfied with his insufficient share in the public affairs of his country, or the Jewish intellectual excluded from careers to which his qualifications entitle him. *'Where these conditions exist, there is trouble, whether it be Jew or Gentile'*. Today, happily, it can be stated without any fear of contradiction that Jews have achieved outstanding success in many walks of life including business, the law, finance and education.

In conclusion, towards the end of his book (page 195) Parkes declares that the Jewish problem will never be solved until anti-Semitism *'as we know it today, disappears'*. As Sian Jones, Tony Kushner and Sarah Pearce[4] say, Parkes is at pains to stress the need for Jews to find *'the right adjustment of their situation in the general body of the State'* (page 196), though they add that it is clear that Parkes wrote such statements so as to appear *'balanced'* to the non-Jewish reader.

Some two years before *The Jew and His Neighbour* was published, Parkes had gone to Geneva to take charge of the International Student Service Office there. In the same year the

[4] Eds. Sian Jones, Tony Kushner and Sarah Pearce, *Cultures of Ambivalence and Contempt* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1998), Note 49, p.27

International Missionary Council held an important conference in Jerusalem and, following this, the International Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews was created as a focal point for all Protestant work related to Jews.[5] It soon became apparent that the views of the Committee and those of the ISS were quite different as regards conversion of Jews. In December, 1930, Parkes wrote to Conrad Hoffmann, Secretary of the Committee, and said that the Council implied that either Jews should be converted whenever possible or no responsibility should be accepted for them. It seemed to him, however, that another alternative had been omitted: the most truly Christian one at that time. This was *'our Christian responsibility to give the Jew a square deal to be a Jew'*. He adds *'The absolute basis of my work is that the Jews with whom I am in contact know that I have no secret desire to convert them'*.[6] Parkes was one of the first to recognise clearly that the root of much antisemitism lay in the teaching of the Churches, as he argued in the book published as a result of his doctoral thesis, *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue: A Study in the Origins of Antisemitism.*[7] In this he wrote:

> *the Christian public as a whole, the great and overwhelming majority of the hundreds of millions of nominal Christians in the world, still believe that "the Jews" killed Jesus, that they are a people rejected by their God, that all the beauty of their bible belongs to the Christian Church and not to those by whom it was written...*[8]

A year before *The Conflict* had been published, Hitler had come to power and, as Braybrooke says *'a few Christians - alas, too few! - quickly recognised the need to combat anti-Semitism, and to relieve the sufferings of the Jews'*.[9] Thus, in 1934, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, recognising the *'age-long sufferings of the Jewish people'* and aware of *'the present outbreaks of anti-Semitic fanaticism'*, declared its heart-felt sympathy for the Jewish people and that their ill-treatment was *'abhorrent'*.[10] As is well-known, during the 1930s refugees from Germany arrived in Britain in increasing numbers, and efforts were made by various voluntary bodies to assist them. By late 1938, following Kristallnacht, the situation had deteriorated sharply[11] and in that year Anglican, Free Church and Roman Catholic Churches agreed to support a Christian Council for Refugees. W W Simpson was appointed secretary. From the time that Parkes had returned

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[5] Marcus Braybrooke, *Children of One God* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1991), p.4
[6] Letter, 9 December 1930, Parkes to Hoffmann. Parkes Archives, quoted by Theodore C Linn in an unpublished essay 'From Conversion to Co-operation: James Parkes; Call to Christian Conscience.'
[7] Braybrooke, *Children of One God*, p.5
[8] James Parkes, *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue: A Study In The Origins of Antisemitism,* (London, The Soncino Press, 1934), p.376
[9] Braybrooke, *Children of One God*, p.6
[10] *Antisemitism in the World Today*, Church of Scotland Board of World Mission and Unity, 1985, Appendix VIII, p.68. Referred to by Braybrooke, p.6
[11] Braybrooke, *Children of One God*, p.7

to England from Geneva in 1935, he was concerned to get as much Christian support as possible for this work. He had always had the backing of William Temple (then Archbishop of York) and the well-known Bishop Bell of Chichester, in addition to some SCM officers. It had, however, been very difficult for the ordinary Christian to think of relations with Jews in any other terms than those of conversion to Christianity. Although Parkes was not yet clear what he should substitute for this, he was at that time quite certain that a relationship *'which had produced such a uniquely disastrous result as antisemitism could not be the relationship divinely intended to exist between the two religions'*. Moreover he had discovered in the course of his mediaeval work that all the false accusations which had led to the deaths of tens of thousands of Jews had come from Jewish converts to Christianity.[12] During this time there was increasing concern among leading Churchmen and others to form a joint organisation of Jews and Christians and the result, eventually, was the founding of the Council of Christians and Jews, Parkes says in his autobiography[13] that he *'was constantly meeting people in London for every kind of serious discussion'*. Presumably this must have included the desirability of forming a Jewish-Christian organisation, because he goes on immediately to say that the first steps

> *to the formation of the Council of Christians and Jews were taken under a pear tree at Barley* [where he lived] *through the instrumentality of Mrs Freeman who did almost all the preliminary visiting of possible supporters.*[14]

Parkes describes Mrs Freeman *'as a lady of considerable experience and ability who had become interested in the relations of Jews and Christians'*. She had been to see Dr Mattuck, a liberal rabbi, who had referred her to Parkes. It was she who arranged the inaugural meeting, with William Temple, the Roman Catholic Bishop Matthew, the Chief Rabbi Dr Hertz, *'and a very representative group of Jewish and Christian elders'*. At length, on 20 March 1942, the decision was taken to form the Council of Christians and Jews. The meeting was chaired by William Temple, whose nomination to be Archbishop of Canterbury had just been announced.[15] The agreed aims of the Council were:

> *That since the Nazi attack on Jewry has revealed that anti-Semitism is part of a general and comprehensive attack on Christianity and Judaism and on the ethical principles common to both religions which form the basis of the free national life of Great Britain, the Council adopts the following aims:*

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[12] James Parkes, *Voyage of Discoveries*, p.141

[13] Ibid, p.174

[14] For the record, a different account of the beginnings of the CCJ is given by W W Simpson. In a paper presented to the Jewish Historical Society of England on 17 March 1982, Simpson says that similar discussions were taking place in Bloomsbury House [where all the refugee organisations had their offices] and where Mrs Freeman was also well known as a member of the Bishop of Chichester's Committee for non-Aryan Christian Refugees. *'One needed only to build on the foundations already laid by the Society of Jews and Christians with which Mrs Freeman was also associated as indeed was suggested'*.

[15] Braybrooke, *Children of One God*, p.13

(a) *To check and combat religious and racial intolerance.*
(b) *To promote mutual understanding and goodwill between Christians and Jews in all sections of the community, especially in connection with problems arising from conditions created by the war.*
(c) *To promote fellowship between Christians and Jewish youth organisations in educational and cultural activities.*
(d) *To foster co-operation of Christians and Jews in study and service directed to post-war reconstruction.*

Surprising as it may seem in retrospect, the aims of the Council were formulated without any specific reference to antisemitism, because as William Temple emphasised at the initial meeting, antisemitism, evil though it manifestly is, is not the ultimate evil. It is rather a symptom of deeper disorders in human society, to the exposure and eradication of which, the Archbishop affirmed, Jews and Christians, by virtue of the ideals and principles they have in common, have a very important contribution to make. The ultimate aim must be to combat, not only antisemitism, but all forms of racial and religious prejudice. But first, he insisted, there must be mutual understanding and respect between Jews and Christians themselves.[16]

It was agreed to invite the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Moderator of the Church of Scotland, the Moderator of the Free Church Federal Council and the Chief Rabbi to be joint presidents. An executive Committee, with a maximum membership of twenty was set up: one of its members was James Parkes. W W Simpson was appointed joint secretary. Initially the Council was *'a small self-perpetuating oligarchic body'*. Membership was limited to fifty, although soon this figure was increased to two-hundred. At Parkes' suggestion, an associate membership of sympathetic individuals was created, but they had no say in the running of the Council. It was not until the 1980s that the structure was changed and the Council became a democratic body and members of the Executive were elected by members of the Council.[17]

In his autobiography, Parkes says that he was often asked in the early days of the Council whether he did not think that he should have been invited to become secretary of the organisation which he *'had done so much to bring into existence'*. His reply was always that he would have wrecked the Council in a month! He adds:

> *Nor can I disagree with those who consider this estimate of my patience and diplomacy rather exaggerated, and who consider that a week is the maximum I would have borne the frustrations...*[18]

[16] CCJ Executive Minutes 1942. CCJ Archives, 1/2, SUA.
[17] Braybrooke, *Children of One God*, pp.14/15
[18] Parkes, *Voyage of Discoveries*, p.175

Parkes was gratified that *'the discussions under the pear tree have led, not to a mere partridge, but to a substantial national institution with the Queen as patron...'*[19] Later in his autobiography he says it was a pleasure to watch the development of the Council of Christians and Jews: that until his retirement he remained a member of its Executive; and *'their meetings were one of the occasions I tried not to miss'*.[20] This is confirmed by the minutes[21] although as Tony Kushner explains[22] the early tensions and limitations of the CCJ led to Parkes threatening to resign.

However, not only was James Parkes active in the Council of Christians and Jews, he was also active in the Society of Jews and Christians. This was an organisation bringing together Jews and Christians which had been founded in 1924. The first reference to Parkes in the minutes of the Society is that it was reported during a discussion on anti-Semitism on 22 Jan 1934 that *'it was impossible to get Mr Parkes of ISS to address the Society during his short stay in London'*.[23] During a public meeting on 1 April 1935 there was to be a discussion on *'Nationalism and Internationalism - Jewish and Christian Voices'* and it was hoped to get Parkes to open this, Parkes also gave an address on *'Relations Between Jews and Christians in the Middle Ages'*, a report of which appeared in the Bulletin of the Society on 1 April 1936. Ten months later a Press Committee, to review certain papers, was appointed with James Parkes as a member and on 16 November 1937 the chairman announced that Parkes had agreed to join the main Committee. After this Parkes took an increasingly active part in the Society and, with the outbreak of war and evacuation from London, was particularly concerned about Jews being evacuated to country areas and suffering loneliness.[24] On 27 May 1942, an Extraordinary General Meeting was held to discuss the relationship of the Society of Jews and Christians to the newly-formed Council of Christians and Jews. Parkes was asked to open the discussion. It was not, however, until some five years later that a decision was made that the Society's name should be changed to the London Society of Jews and Christians (affiliated to the Council of Christians and Jews). In conclusion it may be stated that although Parkes continued to take an interest in the Society for many years, the minutes record in the 60s that he declined to speak in January or February, because of the weather, but he would be pleased to speak in March![25]

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[19] Ibid, p.174
[20] Ibid, pp.212/3
[21] CCJ Executive Minutes, CCJ Archives, SUA.
[22] T Kushner, 'The Beginnings of the Council of Christians and Jews', *Common Ground*, Nos 3 and 4 (1992), p.9
[23] London Metropolitan Archives, ACC/3686/01/01/001
[24] London Metropolitan Archives, ACC/3686/01/01/003
[25] London Metropolitan Archives, ACC/3686/01/01/004

CHAPTER FIVE

The Society of Jews and Christians

The Jewish Year Book 2002 describes the London Society of Jews and Christians as '*the oldest interfaith organisation of its kind in the UK, established to give an opportunity to Jews and Christians to confer together on the basis of their common ideals with mutual respect for differences of religion*' (p.102).

The Society seems to have begun life as *The Interdenominational Conference Committee*. The first (handwritten) minutes of the Committee in the London Metropolitan Archives are of a meeting held in the Liberal Jewish Synagogue, London, on 7 January, 1925, although they refer to the minutes of a previous meeting being read and confirmed. (As will be seen from what follows, the meeting on 7 January 1925[1], with its report on the organisations represented, seems to have been in the nature of setting up the Committee). Rabbi Israel Mattuck was in the chair.[2] Present were '*official and unofficial*' representatives from the following organisations:

- Auxiliary Movement
- Congregational Union
- Presbyterian Church
- Society of Friends
- Social and Industrial Committee of National Church Assembly
- United Methodist Church
- Wesleyan Methodist Church
- West London Synagogue
- Liberal Jewish Synagogue

The number of representatives present was fourteen, together with two joint honorary secretaries.

A report was given on the representation of organisations on the Committee. In addition to those mentioned above, representatives were named from:

- Social Services Union of the Unitarian Church
- Industrial Christian Fellowship

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[1] Reference ACC/3686/01/01/001

[2] This was the same Rabbi Mattuck who, James Parkes says in his autobiography, helped to set up the Council of Christians and Jews in 1942. Parkes says of him: 'though a liberal, (he) was by far the best lecturer to a Christian audience on the traditional values of Judaism I ever encountered'. (*Voyage of Discoveries* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1969), pp.174, 145).

- Primitive Methodist Church
- Salvation Army (an unofficial representative was present with no hope, apparently, of an official one)
- United Synagogue[3]
- Roman Catholic Church[4]

The main purpose of the Committee seems to have been to organise the Annual Conference, although at the meeting consideration was given to the formation of groups '*to discuss religious questions*', but, after much consideration, it was agreed that it would be inexpedient for the Committee to organise such groups at this juncture, because:

1. it might raise difficulties in the organisations represented on the Committee; and
2. It might be prejudicial to the Conference.

The representative of the Auxiliary Movement stated that interdenominational group meetings were a part of the Auxiliary Movement and she '*was sure that Jewish guests would be welcome at some of these meetings if such invitations would be acceptable*'. Rabbi Mattuck, on behalf of Jewish members present, felt sure that this suggestion 'would be received with gratitude'. The next meeting of the Interdenominational Conference Committee was held on 17 February 1925. Most of the time was taken up with considering representation on the Committee. An unofficial representative of the Baptist denomination had agreed to join and the Roman Catholic Church had also agreed to send a representative. The meeting of the West London (Reform) Synagogue to discuss representation had not yet taken place. There were now thirteen Christian and three Jewish bodies represented either officially or unofficially on the Committee. It was agreed to hold the next Conference on 29 October 1925, and there was some discussion about the subject. One suggestion was that it should be *The Prevention of Crime,* linked to the question of capital punishment. The Chairman (Rabbi Mattuck), however, expressed the view that whatever subject was chosen, the Conference should not be used for political propaganda. After further discussion it was agreed that the subject should be either *Religion and the Race*

[3] A letter from the secretary of the United Synagogue stated that there was no prospect of their being represented officially so it was agreed to co-opt Miss Hannah Hyam 'as an individual orthodox Jewess, subject to her consent'. Miss Hyam did consent and attended meetings regularly.
[4] The Roman Catholics agreed to secure the co-operation of a Roman Catholic member if possible.

Problem or *The Relation of Religion to National Legislation.* A small sub-committee of four, which did not include any Jewish members, was appointed to draw up a scheme for both subjects.

The sub-committee met on 10 March 1925, and agreed unanimously that it would not be possible to draft a satisfactory programme on *The Relation of Religion to National Legislation* so agreed on *Religion and the Race Problem.*

Sessions were to include addresses, followed by discussion, on

a Religion and National Ideals;

b the Realisation of the Religious Ideal of National Fraternity;

c the Government of Subject Races;

d the Question of Immigration;

e the Rights of Minorities.

Meetings of the Committee continued to be held at regular monthly intervals and at the next meeting on 24 March, 1925, it was agreed that the minutes of the previous meeting should be amended by substituting the words *'the Conference should not be committed in advance to any point of view'* for *'the Conference should not be used for political propaganda'.* There were several changes in representation on the Committee and it was also reported that the West London Synagogue had decided to be represented officially. The proposed Conference agenda was approved subject to one or two amendments.

At a meeting on 31 March, 1925, the agenda was further discussed. One of the joint secretaries said that in her opinion, and in that of one or two co-religionists whom she had consulted, the most useful contribution which Jews would be likely to make to a conference on *Religion and the Race Problem* would be on the subject of anti-Semitism; this would also be the special aspect of the larger subject which would be likely to attract the largest number of Jews. Antisemitism was hardly involved in the question of immigration, and, although it was involved in the Rights of Minorities, she thought that the question of Jewish Minorities in Central Europe was too remote from most Anglo-Jews to attract them. She therefore suggested that the evening session be devoted entirely to discussing the question of anti-Semitism and that Mr C G Montefiore and a Christian speaker be each asked to speak for about thirty minutes, the rest of the time to be devoted to discussion.

On 5 May 1925, the Committee agreed that the subject of the second afternoon session of the Conference should be *The Contribution of Religion to the Improvement*

of Race Relations. It was also agreed that the Conference should be held in a Christian place of worship. At a meeting on 15 September 1925, the Conference was further discussed and some amendments made: a session on *Native Races – a Sacred Trust* was to be included. It appeared that Mr Montefiore would not be speaking on anti-Semitism. The Wesleyan Methodist Church had invited the Committee to hold the Conference in their Church.

The next meeting of the Committee took place on 10 November, 1925, by which date the Conference had been held. Admission had been by ticket and it was reported that 1060 tickets had been issued and about 100 late applicants had been refused. As far as could be ascertained, the tickets had been issued to the various denominations in the following numbers:

Church of England 68
Wesleyan Methodists 76
Congregationalists 97
Unitarians and Theistic Church 60
Society of Friends 80
Presbyterians 43
United Methodists 2
Roman Catholics 5
Salvation Army 4
Free Religious Movement 5
Hebrew Christians 1
German Protestant 1
Auxiliary Movement (Interdenominational) 112
Denomination unknown 107

This made a total of 668 Christians (according to the minutes!).

Tickets issued to Jews (Liberal, Reform and Orthodox) numbered 392 and one ticket was sent to a member of the Ethical Society. It was estimated that about 700 people were present at the afternoon session and 800 or 900 at the evening session. Among the written comments on the Conference received, two were from Jewish members who thought the subject for the evening session – *Antisemitism* – was unsuitable for discussion. One of the members also thought that it would be a pity to discontinue the Conferences which had had such a promising beginning, but the other was of the opinion that no good was done by them. There seems to have been some

discussion on whether the movement should continue and another Conference arranged. A decision on this was deferred to the next meeting which was held on 8 December 1925. It was then agreed to hold another Conference the following year: the Council of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue was to be asked for permission to hold it there on 28 October, 1926. Subjects suggested were:

1. some aspects of the conflict between the individual and the Committee;
2. religion and recreation, to include dancing, cinemas, plays and novels;
3. religion and the new morality, to include ideas on marriage;
4. religion and industry;
5. religion and (?);
6. religion and social service.

There was a consensus of opinion that Religion and Industry might be a good subject and the honorary secretaries were asked to prepare a skeleton programme for submission to the next meeting of the Committee, to be held on 12 January 1926. At this meeting it was reported that the Council of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue *had gladly given permission for the Conference to be held there.* A letter was received from the secretary of the West London Synagogue of British Jews containing a resolution agreed by the council

> *that this synagogue, while not unwilling to associate itself with the Interdenominational Conferences formed by the Liberal Jewish Synagogue, will only do so in future on condition that no announcement be published without first obtaining the sanction of our Executive.*

The resolution seems to have been passed as the result of a misunderstanding because, in fact, the West London Synagogue had been kept informed about the Conference.

The joint secretaries reported that they had been unable to draft a satisfactory programme on *Religion and Industry* mainly because of '*the vastness and vagueness of the subject*'. They had therefore submitted an alternative programme on *Religion and Youth.* This was not accepted but the joint secretaries were asked, instead, to submit a programme on 'Religion and the Wage System'. Suggestions for the programme were discussed at a meeting of the Committee on 9 February, 1926. It was agreed that there should be a Jewish chairman at the afternoon session and a Christian chairman in the evening.

Further discussion about the Conference took place on 23 March 1926. It is obvious that efforts were being made to obtain '*good quality*' speakers: among the names mentioned were Sir William Beveridge and Mr Seebohm Rowntree. At the next meeting on 28 April 1926, however, it was reported that neither of these was able to speak. Instead Mr W T Layton, editor of *The Economist* was to be approached. Miss Margaret Bondfield was also suggested. The Committee agreed, too, to ask 'two wage earners i.e. Mr William Strang, Secretary of the Brassworkers' Union and a jewess' to speak.

The minutes of the next meeting, on 8 June 1926, (and subsequent meetings) are headed 'Conference Committee of Christians and Jews' rather than, as previously, 'Interdenominational Conference Committee'. Difficulties were again reported in securing the speakers suggested and further names were considered. Similar problems were discussed at the meeting on 21 September 1926. By the date of the next meeting, 9 November 1926, the Conference had been held. Before discussing it, however, the Committee considered a letter from the Welsh Presbyterian Church asking if 'it would not be possible to arrange some sort of social intercourse between Jews and Christians' because one or two members had had to leave the Conference early. The Committee decided to consider this in conjunction with future plans.

Three members said that they had no doubt that the Conferences '*did good*' and hoped they would continue. The Society of Friends' representative extended a cordial invitation for the next Conference to be held in their new Meeting House in Euston Square and this was accepted '*with much pleasure*'. The Chairman (Rabbi Mattuck)

> *Urged the advisability of securing permanency for the movement by establishing a society for the promotion of fellowship between Christians and Jews, which might hold local group meetings for the discussion of social or religious subjects, and by holding another Conference in 1927, and, after that, every two or three years.*

Several members '*expressed themselves strongly in favour of small local meetings, and of the formation of a society, if a workable scheme could be formulated*'. It was agreed to appoint a sub-committee to look into this and to report at the next meeting.

As regards the Conference, it was reported that the attendance had been much smaller 'than was anticipated' because of the bad weather, only about 400 people being present in the afternoon and 600 in the evening. Six hundred people had asked

for tickets for reserved seats but many were unable to come and the audience included a number of people who were without tickets. The honorary secretaries considered it was a mistake to invite people to come without tickets as their names and addresses were not known. Another difficulty was that, in order to try to fill the synagogue, notices had been sent to many organisations which were social and political, rather than religious. Hence some people came and took part in the discussion who did not understand or appreciate the religious basis of the Conference. There had been criticism that one or two speeches were not entirely on the lines which the Committee had intended but this was because of the unusual difficulty in finding speakers on the subject chosen. It had not been possible to find one 'big' employer to take part in the discussion. In spite of these, and other, criticisms, however,

> *'the general opinion, as far as it could be ascertained, was that the Conference was, on the whole, successful.'*

A letter was read from Mr C G Montefiore *'making small criticisms and suggesting that it could be useful in future for Conferences to deal with religious differences between Jews and Christians'.*

The sub-committee appointed to draw up a scheme for the formation of a society to promote fellowship between Jews and Christians met at the Liberal Jewish Synagogue on 23 November, 1926. They wished to make it clear that:

> *Any multiplication of fellowships or societies is to be deprecated and that unless the proposed society meet some need not already met it should not be formed: thus, for example, most people interested in industrial and social questions could and did join existing organisations, and, therefore, the main contribution of a Jewish-Christian group would, obviously, be a religious one. The sub-committee suggested that the general Committee should go forward with plans for a fourth conference, and recommended that it be used as an opportunity to extend membership of the Society, and that the programme be arranged in the interests of the Society, if it should go forward. To further these ends, it would recommend that the Conference be arranged on less public lines, with, possibly, a limit of four hundred people as the maximum number to attend.*

The scheme proposed was:

> The Conference Committee shall invite members of previous conferences to assist in the promotion of the Committee's plans by the following means:

a promoting fellowship and understanding between Jews and Christians;

b giving opportunity to Jews and Christians to approach together the social and industrial problems of the day from the religious standpoint, and arranging speeches and inter-visitations;

c giving opportunity to Jews and Christians to meet together socially;

d distributing from time to time publications which shall be in accordance with the aims of the Conference.

Men and women should be eligible for membership if they professed allegiance to Judaism or Christianity, and expressed their desire to further the objects of the Conference.

The sub-committee recommended that while small local gatherings should be aimed at, the simplest method of realising that aim would be by calling a preliminary meeting of those who had attended any or all of the Conferences to put the scheme before them. The result of this would probably be a request for a further united meeting, after which local groups would gradually and spontaneously be formed.

At a meeting of the conference committee on 15 December 1926, the report of the sub-committee was read and discussed. In view of the proposals, however, it was agreed to circularise a copy to each committee member, with a covering letter urging attendance at the next meeting, '*or some opinion of the proposals in writing*'. In the course of discussion it was agreed that every effort should be made in plans for fellowship to include as many orthodox Jews as possible. It was suggested that recent conferences between such leaders as Professor Elmslie and Dr. Salaman were of great value, and much might be learned from them. The Committee agreed to invite both to the next meeting. Rabbi Mattuck told the Committee about experiments on similar lines '*being tried in the United States, and suggested that a report should be asked for*'. Following the resignation of a former secretary to the committee a new one had not yet been found. It was agreed that the next secretary should be Jewish.

At a meeting of the (full) conference committee on 11 January 1927, the sub-committee's report on the proposal to organise a Society of Christians and Jews was discussed and agreed. It was decided to invite those who had attended and shown interest in the Annual Conferences to form a Conference which should meet from time to time to promote work along the lines laid down in the sub-committee's recommendations. The subjects suggested for the next Conference were:

1. religion and individual responsibility for civic life;

2. study and discussion of some passage of the bible (e.g. the Servant Songs in Isaiah);
3. the power of prayer;
4. Jewish and Christian mysticism and ritual;
5. the approach to God, Jewish and Christian;
6. religion and nationality: has a nation a soul?
7. religion and the use of force.

The sub-committee met on 9 November 1926, to consider the proposed scheme for the new organisation, when it was agreed to submit the following to the Conference Committee:

1. the first Conference Re-union should be in two parts: (a) a social re-union and, (b) a meeting with Rabbi Mattuck in the chair;
2. at the meeting there should be one or more Christian and one or more Jewish speakers;
3. among those suggested as speakers were Mr Montefiore, the Bishop of Kensington and the Dean of St. Paul's;
4. that at the meeting the following resolution should be moved:

   that to further the aims for which the Conferences of Jews and Christians have been held, a permanent organisation be established of those individuals who ask to be members of the Conferences;
5. that after the speeches the new body elect three Christians and three Jews '*of its own constituents*' to form an Executive Committee;
6. that the Executive Committee should organise any small meetings, other than the Annual Conference.

There were four further points dealing with comparatively minor matters. The re-union should be held on 31 March 1927, at the Liberal Jewish Synagogue.

At a meeting of the Committee on 1 February 1927, it was agreed to hold the re-union on 29 March 1927, and that one Anglican, one Freechurchman and one Jew should speak. It was thought that the best subjects submitted for the 1927 Conference were (1) *Religion, Nationality and Peace,* and (2) *The Power of Prayer and the Approach to God: Jewish and Christian.* It was considered better to have the first, and more definite subject at the Conference and the more intimate subject at a *Select Conference* to be held a few months afterwards. A sub-committee was appointed to make further arrangements.

The sub-committee appointed to draw up a scheme and formulate a subject for the 1927 Conference and the later *Select Conference* held two meetings in February 1927. The scheme suggested for the Conference was:

> *Religion, War and Peace, to be divided into two parts, Religion and War, and Religion and Peace. Among the speakers suggested was the Rt. Hon. J. Ramsay Macdonald.*

As regards the *Select Conference,* it was considered with such a difficult and fundamental subject as the *Power of Prayer* and the *Approach to God, Jewish and Christian,* it would be better if those people who were going to speak could themselves meet and decide what lines the discussion should take and what should be the title of the discussion. At a meeting of the Committee on 7 March, 1927, there was further discussion about the title of the 1927 conference. At length it was agreed that it should be *The Religious Judgement on War.* In the afternoon, pacifists and non-pacifists would state their views and in the evening there would be sessions on *Religion and the Combative Instinct* and *Promotion of International Co-operation through the Churches.* It was reported that Mr C G Montefiore, among others, had consented to speak at the Re-union.

At a meeting of the committee on 5 April 1927, it was reported that 230 people had accepted invitations to the Re-union on 28 March and about 130 had attended. There had been some minor criticisms of the Re-union but, on the whole, it had been considered a success, even though the number of members present was not very large. It was agreed that a pamphlet was needed to explain the aims and objects of the Conference and that this should be prepared. It was decided that the title of the Committee should be *The Committee of the Conference of Jews and Christians.* It was reported that Mr Ramsay Macdonald would not be able to speak at the Conference in October, but might be able to do so in November. In this event it was agreed that it would be worth postponing the Conference until November. One member of the Committee said that not only must common ground between Jews and Christians be discussed but differences of belief *'must not be put on one side'.* It was pointed out that these differences could be discussed better in very small expert groups. It was decided to discuss this at the next meeting. Rev. J. Jordan James reported that Rabbi Mattuck had consented to speak at the anniversary of his church – the Hinde Street Wesleyan Church.

At a meeting of the Conference of Jews and Christians on 17 May it was reported that there were now 104 members of the Conference, 62 Christian and 42 Jewish. The drafting of the pamphlet was discussed and it was agreed that further consideration should be given to this. It was decided that a 'small' meeting for those members interested in intimate religious subjects should be held on 24 October 1927. There should be a discussion on *The Approach to God* with one Jewish and one Christian speaker. This meeting should be the first of the organisation held centrally: small local groups should, however, be formed as soon as possible.

At a meeting of the Conference of Jews and Christians on 14 June 1927, it was stated that there were difficulties in having the Salvation Army represented because *'it was difficult to find anyone who was in sympathy'*. The draft pamphlet was agreed with some amendments: the organisation should be called *The Society of Jews and Christians*. It was reported that Dr. Montefiore and Dr. Garvie (an eminent theologian and Church leader) had agreed to speak at the Society's meeting on 24 October 1927. Arrangements for the Conference were further considered. At the meeting on 20 September 1927, it was reported that a letter had been received referring to a resolution passed by the South Eastern Assembly of the Unitarian and Free Christian Churches welcoming *'the organisation being formed in London to provide goodwill and co-operation between Jews and Christians'*. Arrangements for the meeting on 24 October 1927, were discussed and it was agreed to give wide publicity to the fact that Dr. Montefiore and Dr. Garvie were to speak. It was agreed that 2000 or more people should be sent programmes of the 1927 Conference and every effort should be made to interest members of the Society of Friends. A resolution was passed that there should be two kinds of members of the Committee: those representing organisations (as at present) and those representing the Society.

At the meeting of the Committee on 25 October 1927, it was reported 140 people had accepted invitations to the meeting on 24 October although about 175 had attended – many non-members. Subjects suggested for the future were *The Personality of God* or *The Approach to God in Connection with Sin*. As regards publicity it was agreed that the notices of future Society meetings should be inserted in the newspapers and no reporters should be allowed at the meetings. Only members of the Society should be circularised before the meetings. (The decision to exclude reporters was reversed at the next meeting).

At the meeting on 15 December 1927, the 1927 Conference was further discussed. As a follow-up to this it was agreed that the Society should apply to become a corporate member of the League of Nations Union and seek representation on the Religion and Ethics Committee. After discussion it was agreed that the subject for the March 1928 meeting should be *The Problem of Suffering*: this should include the whole problem of evil. At a meeting of the Committee on 19 February, 1928, the main business was the arrangements for the meeting in March which would be held in the Liberal Jewish Synagogue.

At the Committee's next meeting on 16 February, 1928, it was reported that, in response to an approach from the Society, the secretary to the Archbishop of Canterbury had reported that the Archbishop '*had expressed interest*' in the Society. It was also reported that the Society had become a corporate member of the League of Nations Union. Suggestions for increasing the membership of the Society were discussed, including more propaganda.

At the meeting of the Committee held on 16 March, 1928, the meeting held on 5 March was reviewed. It was agreed that much enthusiasm had been aroused and that another meeting should be held on 11 June. It was agreed, among other things, that small groups were '*better fitted*' than large groups to cultivate '*the atmosphere proper for understanding and frank discussion*', and that each member of the Committee should become a group leader. Among suggestions for subjects were *The Way to a Better World* and *Social Implications of Judaism and Christianity.* It was agreed that there was not yet the right proportion of Jewish members of the Society. There were difficulties arising from the position of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue: few orthodox Jews would join the Society. It was thought that a Synagogue meeting and possibly an exchange of speakers between the synagogue and a church might be helpful as a means of explaining the functions of the Society. Ministers should be asked to interest their congregations in the Society and a small Publicity Committee might be formed '*to utilise the religious press*'. Because of the difficulties in securing a Jewish speaker for the June meeting, it was decided that this should be cancelled, and the next meeting held on 22 October 1928, when the subject would be *The Social Teaching of Judaism and Christianity for Today.* This should give an explanation of these teachings and their source. The subject chosen for the meeting on 21 January 1929, was *Religion and Modern Psychology.*

At the next meeting of the Committee on 17 May 1928, difficulties in securing speakers for the October meeting were again discussed. It was decided that the subject *Religion and Modern Psychology* should be discussed at both the January and June meetings. At the meeting on 21 June 1928, one member asked if the Committee was not in danger of forgetting the reason and purpose for which it was formed. She reminded members that some of those who attended the Conferences felt that such big meetings gave no opportunity for Jews and Christians to talk in a friendly and intimate way, without reserve, but also without controversy, on aspects of Judaism and Christianity which were distinctive of those religions. She understood the Society was formed to fulfil this need, and, in her opinion, it was a departure from its original intentions to discuss a subject such as psychology (to which neither Judaism nor Christianity, as such, could make any contribution), or even social subjects, unless such religion had some special distinctive point of view with regard to them. This point of view was not entirely accepted by the other members of the Committee but the opinion was expressed that whereas the public conferences were intended to witness to the Society's agreement on certain wide issues, it was also necessary to use the smaller meetings for explaining religious differences and misunderstandings, so that the Society might discover profound agreement on important points below the surface of apparent disagreement. It was agreed to discuss this further at the next meeting.

At this meeting on 4 October 1928, Mrs McArthur proposed the following resolution:

> *That in future the subjects for papers and discussions at meetings of the Society should be mainly chosen from topics on which Judaism and Christianity have each a distinctive point of view; that the speakers be asked to bring forward and emphasise the positive contributions of each religion to the subject, but that although differences in belief may inevitably be referred to, the non-controversial character of the meetings be strictly maintained.*

Mrs McArthur added that she felt that the Committee *'was departing from its original lines of work'*. The chairman (Rabbi Mattuck) emphasised that the Society was there to show how Jews and Christians could work together and not to emphasis differences of belief. After discussion, the motion was withdrawn. (Mrs McArthur subsequently resigned from the Society). It was agreed that the subject for the Society's meeting on 21 January 1929, should be *The Effect of the Generally Accepted Results of Modern Psychology on the Fundamental Teachings of Judaism*

and Christianity. At a meeting of the Committee of the Conference of Jews and Christians on 15 November 1928, there is the first reference to James Parkes. He had written *giving information about work in connection with the International Student Service in Europe – particularly in connection with attempts to ameliorate the conditions of Jewish students.* In his letter Parkes stated that money was needed for the work. It was decided to write to him wishing him success and to send a copy of his letter to members of the Society recommending them to help. It was reported that at the Society's meeting on 22 October 1928, about a hundred people were present, approximately equal numbers of Jews and Christians. Many people had found the groups '*difficult*' because, often, only one or two people spoke and some felt that they were asked questions which they could not answer. It was decided not to have group discussion at the next meeting but to have the discussion in the hall. It was agreed that at the meeting on 22 April 1929, the subject *The Jewish and Christian Views on the Means of Atonement* should be discussed. Efforts were to be made to start groups of the Society in the universities of Oxford and Cambridge.

The next meeting of the Committee was held on 17 January 1929, when it was reported that because of a generous gift from one member of the Society, the sum of just over £60 had been sent to James Parkes for the work of his Conference of Jews and non-Jews in Europe. Rabbi Mattuck gave an account of a visit from James Parkes, from whom he had received a very encouraging report of the Conference and its plans for the future, the most important being a proposed series of pamphlets on the Jewish question, which were to be published in France. There was, as usual, further discussion about speakers and subjects for further meetings.

The next meeting of the Committee of the Society was held on 21 February 1929, when speakers and subjects for the next Conference were discussed. At the meeting on 21 March 1929, it was agreed that the whole position of the Conference Committee should be discussed. It was then decided that:

1. not enough '*extensive*' work was being done;
2. the Committee should attempt to take an active part in the social problems of the day and that their work should not end with the calling of Conferences;
3. one of the aims of the Society should be to consider and discuss religious and theological problems;
4. more-informed and far-seeing people should be asked to join the Society and the general membership should be increased.

'*To bring about these ends*' a resolution was passed that:

1. a council of outstanding people should be formed: it should meet at most once a year;
2. the present committee should be called the Executive Committee;
3. the council should consist of all denominations, but the representatives should not be chosen as representatives of any particular denomination;
4. there should be, approximately, an equal number of Jews and Christians.

It was suggested that, apart from the autumn Conference, a small Conference of representatives of all peace societies of religious denominations should be held at an uncertain date to give an authoritative opinion on the subject of peace, and thus help public opinion. As regards the autumn Conference, the '*question of how to make the Society a bigger thing should be discussed*'. The general subject *Religious Toleration* could be taken and such subjects as *Jews in Public Schools* could be included.

Arrangements for the Conference were further discussed at a meeting of the Committee on 22 April 1929. It was decided to take as a subject *The Jewish View of Christianity and the Christian View of Judaism,* with the sub-heading *How Far Can Jews and Christians Co-operate?* The topic of missions should be excluded, but should be discussed at the first Society Meeting after the Conference. As regards the proposed Peace Conference it was agreed that the aim of such conference would be to get together a number of individuals '*and ask them to work out a plan of what religion can do to exert an effective influence on peace questions*'. Among the practical suggestions were to organise:

1. an effective research office of experts to supply full information on international matters and to give an authoritative opinion in the name of religion; and
2. an enquiry, in the name of religion, on broad lines as to the proper distribution of the resources and opportunities of the world.

It was decided to ask Lord Davidson (Archbishop of Canterbury 1903 – 1928) to preside at the conference and peace organisations should be asked to send representatives. Among the names suggested for the proposed Council were Dr. C G Montefiore, the Bishop of Kensington, Sir Herbert Samuel, Dr Garvie and Miss Margery Fry. Further arrangements for the Conference were discussed at a meeting of the sub-committee on 21 March 1929. Part of the Conference was to show:

1. how Jews and Christians can co-operate to give a spiritual basis against secularised materialism;
2. that the religious motive should be made effective in social reform.

In spite of differences Jews and Christians should be able to co-operate *'religiously'*. One of the speakers *'should be asked to show that there is a universal core in religion which is necessary to social reform'*.

The sub-committee appointed to organise the Peace Delegates' Conference met on 17 May 1929. It was decided that an attempt should be made to set up a *research bureau* which should consist of about six members and a secretary. The secretary should keep in touch with all international affairs and should be able to call in an international lawyer and a journalist. He should be able to draw up a memorandum, at a moment's notice, in any crisis and circulate it to his co-workers for their approval. The co-workers should have been kept informed of any developments before a crisis and should be able to be reached *'at the end of a telephone'*. They should *'be able to be got together quickly'*. A trust to provide finance should be set up if possible. The bureau should not be a separate organisation but should consist mainly of advisers to religious bodies which already exist. It was decided to put the scheme before a conference of about 25 people and to ask Lord Davidson to preside. Among the names suggested were Sir William Beveridge, Dr. C G Montefiore, Mr Lionel de Rothschild and several bishops. Professor A. Zimmern (international scholar) should be approached with a view to being appointed secretary. (Included in the minute book are five loose quarto size sheets of single spacing typing, giving more details of the proposed conference). A meeting of the Committee of the Conference followed immediately after the meeting of the sub-committee. It was reported that Dr. C G Montefiore, among others, had agreed to sit on the Council. At a meeting of the Committee of the Conference (of Jews and Christians) on 20 June 1929, it was reported that the Bishop of Kensington and Miss Maud Royden (a noted preacher) had consented to sit on the Council. The other names suggested had refused, although they sympathised with the aims of the Committee. Further names were proposed. Dr. C G Montefiore had agreed to speak at the Conference (on 25 November 1929), on *Jewish Views on The Necessity for a Spiritual Basis in Life.* The next Society meeting was to be held on 5 November 1929, the subject being *The Value of Prayer.* Jewish and Christian points of view were to be presented.

At a meeting of the Committee of the Conference on 23 October 1929, it was reported that a number of eminent people had agreed to join the Council: more were to be asked. A Chairman had not yet been found for the Peace Conference: further efforts were to be made. The (main) Conference was now to be held on 27 November 1929: a number of speakers had agreed to take part, including Dr. Montefiore. At a meeting of the Committee of the Society on 21 November 1929, it was reported there had been a record attendance at the last meeting of the Society. Rabbi Mattuck said that the speakers seemed to minimise, rather than stress, the difference between Jewish and Christian standpoints, *'which was a pity'*, and destroyed some of the value of the discussion.

At a meeting of the Committee of the Society held on 16 January 1930, it was reported that more people had consented to sit on the Council. (Of these, three had DD after their names). It was agreed to hold the first meeting of the Council in May or June. (At this time there were *'250 odd'* members of the Society). At the meeting of the Society to be held on 10 February 1930, the subject was to be *The Devotional Life.* The next meeting of the Society was held on 20 February 1930. It was reported that there was an attendance of 110 at the Society meeting held on 10 February 1930, the majority being non-Jews. The spring meeting was to be held on 4 June 1930, with a subject such as *The Relation between Jews and Christians.* As regards future Conferences it was agreed that these should be held bi-annually with *'a large open meeting'* in alternate years. There had been some discussion about problems between Jews and Christians in Clapton. A suggestion was made that it was better to speak of *Jews and non-Jews* rather than of *Jews and Christians* because the ill-feeling was considered to be *'more economic than religious'.*

At a meeting of the Committee of the Society on 20 March 1930, it was agreed that the subject for the Open Meeting in October or early November should be *Institutional Religion: has it a Permanent Value?* Further discussion took place about the arrangements for the Society Meeting in June 1930, and also about extending the work of the Society among Jews in the provinces. The Chairman Rabbi Mattuck, said that it was only in certain congregations in the north that the Society was likely to find new Jewish adherents. At the meeting of the Committee of the Society on 15 May 1930, it was agreed to cancel the meeting arranged for June and to hold a meeting in mid-November.

There are no records in the London Metropolitan Archives of any meetings after 15 May 1930, until 19 May 1932.

At this meeting of the Committee a number of comparatively minor matters were discussed. It was reported that at the public meeting held on 14 April 1932, there was a crowded audience of about 320 people. Dr. Montefiore had read a paper on *Immortality.* It was also reported that at the meeting held on 4 May 1932, while the numbers attending were not so large as on 14 April, they were *'quite satisfactory'.* There were 14 new members, bringing the number of new members since 1 January 1932, to 29. It was decided to hold a public meeting in November with Professor Charles Raven, Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, as speaker. The subject was to be *The Place of Jesus in Modern Christian Thought.* It was also decided to hold a meeting on 12 January 1933, with the subject *The Place of Law in Modern Jewish Teaching.* Under the heading *Other Business* the minutes record that consideration was given to how to extend the Jewish interest in membership of the Society. There were three suggestions:

1. a letter should be sent to the Jewish Press;
2. orthodox Jews should be invited by personal letters;
3. Jewish literary and other societies should be notified of the existence of a panel of speakers who would be willing to address them on the relations between Jews and Christians.

Consideration was also given to *'if and how'* the Society could help the International Student Service (one of James Parkes' main interests). The ISS was severely *'hampered in its excellent work'* by lack of funds. The chairman, Rabbi Mattuck, stated that, considering the financial position of the Society, *'he could in no way'* see how the ISS could be assisted. At a meeting of the Committee on 22 September 1932, among the comparatively minor matters considered was the receipt of a letter from Brondesbury Park Congregational Church asking for help in *'some sort of useful contact with the Jewish people'* in their neighbourhood. The chairman, Rabbi Mattuck, suggested that a reply should be sent pointing out the existence of the Society and suggesting the possibility of a joint meeting between the Congregational Church and the Society. At a meeting of the Executive Committee on 20 October 1932, the Bulletin secretary was congratulated on the appearance of the first number of the bulletin.

A letter was read from the President of the World Brotherhood suggesting that two meetings should be held, one in a synagogue and the other in a church, to discuss brotherhood '*pure and simple*'. Although there was no mention of the Society of Jews and Christians, the chairman, Rabbi Mattuck, thought that the Society should co-operate with the World Brotherhood in these meetings, '*which came precisely within the scope of the Society*'.

At a meeting of the Committee on 17 November, 1932, it was reported that a joint meeting of Jews and Christians was to be held in Brondesbury '*in spite of difficulties foreseen by the Society*'. As regards the World Brotherhood, the chairman (Rabbi Mattuck) reported on a meeting he had had with the organising secretary, during which he had '*expressed the goodwill of the Society towards its aims*'. The secretary reported that the meeting held on 7 November 1932, when Professor Raven spoke on *The Place of Jesus in Modern Christian Thought* was one of the most successful meetings and '*certainly one of the most brilliant and stimulating addresses the Society had ever had*'. There was a larger number of Jews than usual in the audience, amounting to about one-third of the total of 320. Fully half of the audience were not members of the Society. Because of this, '*the Committee felt*' that if non-members who had attended more than two meetings did not enrol as members, they should not be sent further cards of invitation.

At a meeting of the Committee held on 15 December 1932, it was agreed that the subject for the meeting on 24 April 1933, should be *The Nature of Religious Experience.* The subject chosen for the 1933 biennial Conference in November was *The Religious Judgement on the Social Order.* Several names were put forward for speakers. The next meeting of the Committee was held on 19 January 1933, when, amongst other things the programme for the Conference in November was discussed. It was reported that at the meeting on 12 January the paper on the *Place of the Law in Modern Jewish Society* had a good reception from the audience of about 100 '*who seemed to be of a different nature from the usual audience*'. At the Executive Committee meeting held on 16 February 1933, the arrangements for the November Conference were discussed. There was also discussion on the celebration of the 10th birthday of the Society in October 1934. One suggestion was that '*all the more outstanding papers delivered to the Society should be published in one book*'. The chairman, Rabbi Mattuck, saw two difficulties in this: the invidious nature of the choice of papers and the difficulty of finance. It was, however, agreed to give further

consideration to this matter. At the meeting of the Committee on 20 April 1933, arrangements for the November Conference were further discussed. The following resolution was also passed to be laid before the public meeting on 24 April:

> *that the Society of Jews and Christians view with abhorrence the persecution of Jews in Germany as contrary to the spirit of the teachings of Judaism and Christianity alike, and expresses its sympathy with those who are suffering and the hope that religious forces in Germany will use their influence to secure an immediate cessation of this persecution.*

At the meeting of the Executive Committee on 25 May 1933, a report was presented on the meeting of 24 April. With regard to the resolution passed with reference to Germany, a copy of the resolution had been sent to the German Embassy and to all the leading daily newspapers. A letter was received from Professor Streeter, of Cambridge, expressing sympathy with German Jews in their present sufferings but also doubt about the beneficial effects of such resolutions. The secretary stated that Mr James Parkes of the International Student Service was shortly coming to England on the question of relief for German refugee students and it was decided to invite him to address a semi-private meeting of the Committee on the subject of *How to Combat Anti-semitism*. *'Any other special persons suggested'* should also be invited. At the next meeting of the Committee on 23 June 1933, it was reported that it was impossible to *'get Mr Parkes of the International Student Service to address the Society during his short stay in London'*. A letter was read from Dr. Alexander Ramsay suggesting a meeting of a private nature where Germans who had suffered should be invited to speak. The chairman, Rabbi Mattuck, said there were two objections: the Society did not want evidence of persecution and, also, it would probably be very painful for those who had suffered. Arising from this subject the chairman said consideration should be given to whether there was anything the Society could do *'to prevent the use of anti-semitism in this country'*. The intention of the Nazis was *'to make propaganda in every country against the Jews'*. He suggested that a group of Jews and Christians 'should apply themselves' to a complete study of the question of anti-semitism and they should then be asked to speak to any interested organisation. One member considered that the *'actual existence of this Society'* was a good thing and suggested that *'some definite educational work'* should be undertaken e.g. among the National Union of Teachers, and among the clergy of small provincial parishes. A sub-committee was then set up. A letter was received from Lord Dickensen expressing the view that no good would

be done by sending to the leaders of the various Lutheran and Catholic churches in Germany a copy of the resolution passed at the public meeting on 24 April, deploring the present position of the Jews in Germany.

At the meeting of the Committee held on 28 September 1933, it was reported that the sub-committee on anti-semitism had met and examined as far as possible the problem of anti-semitism. They felt that at the moment not much could be done and not much really needed to be done. They did not feel that there was any serious fear of the growth of anti-semitism in this country but it was felt that the position of the Jew in the modern world should be more clearly discussed, but that the discussion should not be confined to anti-semitism. The Committee recommended:

a that a Study Group should be established composed of the Committee, the Council and any others nominated by them;
b that the Study Group should proceed by inviting speakers on one or other aspect of anti-semitism (e.g. one speaker might give the views of the Zionist and another of the Nazi);
c from the Study Groups would develop a non-Jewish rota of speakers who would explain to modern audiences the outlook of the Jew. This would establish something in the way of a bulwark against hostility to the Jew. The first discussion would be opened by Dr. Joan Fry on 19 October when the subject would be Germany Jewry;
d these discussions would be held on the same date as the monthly meetings of the Executive and would either precede or follow them.

These recommendations were approved by the Committee. Arrangements for a *Commemorative Volume* were then discussed. This was followed by consideration of the arrangements for the November Conference. The subject was to be *The Religious Judgment on the Social Order.* The Committee then discussed the correspondence which had been received, the main item of which referred to a motion passed by a large meeting of Methodists expressing sympathy with the sufferings of the Jews in Germany. At the meeting of the Committee on 19 October it was reported that the arrangements for the Biennial Conference on 14 November were almost complete. It was decided to hold the next public meeting in January, the subject to be *The Place of the Bible in the Religious Life of Today* from

a the Christian conservative point of view;
b the Jewish orthodox point of view;
c the Jewish modernist point of view;
d the modernist Christian point of view.

As regards the *Commemorative Volume* the proposed contents were Foreword; the Approach to God; the Reality of God; the Attitude to the Problem of Evil; the Means of Atonement; Social Teaching of Judaism and Christianity for Today; the Religious Ideal for Human Society; Personal Religion; Revelation; Immortality; the Nature of Religious Experience; the Place of the Law in Modern Jewish Teaching; the Place of Jesus in Modern Christian Thought; Apocalyptic Views; Christian Views of Judaism; Jewish Views of Christianity. The inaugural meeting of the Discussion Group was addressed by Miss Joan Fry immediately before the meeting of the Committee.

At a meeting of the Committee on 16 November 1933, the secretary reported that at both sessions of the November Conference the attendance had been about 300. One member of the Committee said that he would welcome an occasional meeting of a more social nature. Another said that many Christians had never met a Jew. It was agreed, therefore, to allow 30 minutes after each meeting for '*social intercourse and refreshments*'. There was general agreement that Christian speakers seemed afraid to present '*the actual Christian point of view: there never seemed a distinctively Christian note*'. The chairman considered that the level of discussion had been very poor and suggested that at future meetings certain members should be asked to come prepared to speak. At the second meeting of the Discussion Group '*in the sudden absence of Mr James Parkes*' Professor Norman Bentwich had spoken on *Problems involved in a Study of the Present Position of the Jew in the World.* It was decided that the speaker at the next meeting should be either Mr James Parkes or an anti-semite e.g. Mr G K Chesterton. At the meeting of the Committee on 14 December 1933, it was reported that the number of new members since the Biennial November Conference was 7, bringing the total for 1933 to 13 – compared with 29 for the previous year.

At a meeting of the Committee on 14 December 1933, a letter was received from the Jewish Religious Union Council to the effect that the subject of combating anti-semitism had been considered by them at the suggestion of the Social Betterment Committee of the World Union for Progressive Judaism. This suggested that the Society (of Jews and Christians) should endeavour to get in touch with the Church leaders and Sunday School teachers in order that opportunities might be found for winning their assistance in combating existing prejudice. It was especially felt that instruction on the Crucifixion was often given in schools in such a way as to establish in the minds of the children a permanent vendetta against Jews; and apart from the

difficulties connected with the New Testament, it was felt that modern Jewish presentation of the Old Testament was not understood. Members of the Committee had great sympathy with these suggestions, and it was agreed that non-Jewish members of the committee should be asked to influence the organisations they represented to give an opportunity to Jewish speakers to deal with the subject '*on the lines indicated above*'. It was reported that the Archbishop of York had agreed to serve on the Council of the Society: the head of the *United Methodists* was to be asked to join.

(From now on the minutes are typed: a great help!)

At the meeting of the Committee on 1 February 1934, the main business was the *Commemorative Volume* and assisting the Jewish Religious Union. At the next meeting on 12 February 1934, it was reported that the Public Meeting in July – subject *The Place of the Bible in Modern Religious Teaching* – had been very successful. It was to pursue the subject further '*from different angles*'. It was also agreed that the subject for the next Discussion Group on 1 March 1934 should be *What the Society asks the Sunday Schools to do to combat the danger of anti-semitism.* At a meeting of the Committee held on 1 March 1934, it was agreed that the subject for the Public Meeting on 18 or 19 April should be *Anti-Semitism*. The Society had previously sent a letter to *The Times* which had produced a great number of replies. Many of those who had responded lived in the provinces and had asked what they could do to help. The chairman suggested that they might either form groups of their own or arrange a public meeting in a church or synagogue hall, advertising it by letter in a newspaper such as the *Manchester Guardian*. In the event of such a meeting being organised, the Society should send a speaker to explain its aims and objects. All those who had written from the provinces had been asked to join the Society so that they could receive the Bulletin and the notices of meetings.

At the Committee meeting on 22 March 1934, it was reported that arising from the circular letter asking clergymen to give Jewish speakers an opportunity to present the Jewish view of the Crucifixion, a number of invitations had been received. In response to the letter, giving the aims of the Society, which had appeared in *The Times* of 9 February, letters had been received from readers in all parts of the country, asking how they could help. It was agreed that this was an opportune time to spread the work of the Society to the provinces and the following places were suggested as '*starting points*': Birmingham, Oxford, Southampton, Reading and Liverpool.

'Certain select persons' were to be asked in each locality to organise meetings to which the Society would send a speaker. A local branch might then be formed *'if no financial liability was involved'*. (Meetings of the Committee now appear to be held at regular monthly intervals). At the meeting on 26 April 1934, it was announced that the next *Public Meeting* would take place on 1 May 1934. The subject would be *Religious Education and Relations between Jews and Christians.* Approximately 1,400 invitations had been sent out. As regards the *Commemorative Volume* satisfactory arrangements had been made with the publishers and it was hoped that the volume would appear in September. For the Public Meetings in 1934-5, it was suggested that Dr. Barnes, Bishop of Birmingham, should be asked to address the Society on *Religion and Science.* If he was unable to do so, the following subjects were suggested:

a the use of public worship;

b Religious Influence in Social Service;

c Religion and Authority;

d Religion and Political and Social Freedom; and

e Emotion and Intellect in Religion.

At the Committee Meeting on 24 May 1934, a report was given on the Public Meeting on 1 May 1934, when the subject was *Religious Education and the Relation between Jews and Christians.* Over 2,000 invitations had been sent out and between 80 and 90 people attended the meeting. The chairman was of the opinion that this had been one of the most successful meetings of the Society. Reference was made to a number of meetings of mixed or non-Jewish audiences at Liverpool, University College London, YWCA London, Acton Parish Church and Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge. These were all regarded as successful.

At the meeting on 26 June 1934, several speakers reported on their visits to churches etc. All said that they had been most cordially received. It was suggested that Christian members of the Society should visit Jewish societies. At the Committee Meeting on 25 September 1934, it was reported that at a meeting of the Society on 5 July Rabbi Luxeron (of Baltimore) had spoken on *Co-operation between Jews and Christians in USA.* His address was in the nature of a parochial tour of USA in company with an Episcopalian and a Roman Catholic. The audience numbered between 250 and 270. As regards the *Commemorative Volume – In Spirit and In Truth* – the book would be appearing in October. Difficulty had been

experienced '*in getting a big man*' to speak on *Science and Religion* in November, so it seemed advisable to have *Religion and Social and Political Freedom* as the subject of the meeting with *Religion and Science* later. The following places were selected for the holding of meetings of Jews and Christians to which the Society would send a representative: Birmingham, Southampton, Richmond and Oxford. A similar meeting had been arranged at Oxford which Rabbi Mattuck had attended. The next meeting of the committee – which now appears to be called the Executive Committee – was held on 20 November 1934. Reports were given on the meetings in Southampton, Birmingham and Oxford, but not a great deal of success had been achieved. At the Public Meeting held on 7 November, the attendance was '*poor*', not exceeding 110. At a meeting of the Executive Committee on 18 December 1934, it was reported that the arrangements for the next public meeting were complete. The subject would be either *Religion and Psychology* or the *Freudian Attitude towards Religion*. The subject agreed for the meeting on 1 April 1935, was *Nationalism and Internationalism: Jewish and Christian Views*.

At a meeting of the Executive Committee on 22 January 1935, a report was given on the *Commemorative Volume*. It was stated that a review had appeared in a number of newspapers and religious magazines, both Jewish and Christian. At a meeting of the Committee on 19 February 1935, it was decided to hold, before the middle of April, a '*goodwill*' meeting, in the city, during the lunchtime. The subject was to be *Relations between Jews and Christians*. A report was given on the public meeting addressed by Dr. William Brown on 31 January in the Montefiore Hall. Attendance had been better than usual, about 400. The *Commemorative Volume* had been on sale and also Dr. James Parkes' *The Conflict between the Church and the Synagogue*, together with some Liberal Jewish Pamphlets, although it appeared that sales had been poor. It was decided to hold the next public meeting on 1 April, the subject to be *Nationalism and Internationalism – Jewish and Christian Views*. It was hoped to get Dr. James Parkes as *'opener of the discussion'*. At a meeting of the Executive Committee on 19 March 1935, it was announced that Professor Waterhouse had agreed to speak at the meeting on 24 October, on a subject such as *The Religious Significance of Religious Differences*. Among the matters discussed at a meeting of the Committee on 14 May 1935, was the *New Aims* leaflet. It was decided that this should be arranged as follows:

Pages 1 and 2, a description of the Society and its activities, slightly expanding the current material;

Pages 3 and 4, names of the Committee and Council;

Pages 5 and 6, opinions on the Council and subscription form.

It was reported that at the public meeting held on 1 April in the Essex Hall, Essex Street, Strand, when the subject discussed was *Nationalism and Internationalism – Jewish and Christian Views,* the attendance was just over 250. *'Apart from Mr Perlzweig's speech, which was much applauded, the discussion was very poor. The literature stall was a disappointment'.* It had been arranged that the subject of the next public meeting to be held on 24 October should be *The Place of Reason in Religion.* One member regretted the Society's rate of progress and moved that:

1. the Society be represented on the Committees of General and Christian Organisations;
2. Rev. Canon A C Deane, DD, Steward of Windsor, and Rev. H D A Major, DD, FSA, Principal of Ripon Hall, Oxford, be invited to join the Advisory Council;
3. the Chairman be urged to express publicly the mind of the Society, in times of crisis, when the judgment of Theists on (a) international and national, and (b) inter-religious questions, would be particularly opportune and valuable.

The recommendations were approved, the third with some modifications. At a meeting of the Committee on 17 September it was agreed that, in addition to the public meetings, the Society should issue a bi-monthly bulletin *'if necessary duplicated on the typewriter'.* Incorporated in this should be:

1. notes on the work of the Society – (a) articles by various members on subjects connected with the Society's aims and work and (b) a summary of any paper delivered to the Society;
2. happenings of interest to members e.g. a description of the Society of Jews and Christians of France, etc;
3. new books.

It was reported that the next public meeting would be held on 26 October, when Professor Waterhouse would speak on *The Place of Reason in Religion.* Professor Charles Singer would take the Chair. The subject suggested for the January meeting was *The Attitude towards Religion of the Modernist and the Orthodox.* A subject suggested for the March meeting was *The Distinctive Contribution that Judaism and*

Christianity have made to Civilisation. Another subject suggested was *Where We Agree and Where We Disagree in Theology.* At a meeting of the Committee on 22 October 1935, it was reported that '*Dr. James Parkes was now in England and would be willing to address the Society early in the New Year for a fee of three guineas*'. The Committee welcomed the suggestion and chose as subject *The Relation Between Jews and Christians in the Middle Ages.* It was decided to hold two subsequent meetings in April and June and to make them co-related. The subject chosen for April was *The Attitude of the Conservative or Traditionalist towards Religion* and, for June, *the Attitude of the Modernist towards Religion.* It was confirmed at a meeting of the Committee on 19 November that Dr. James Parkes would speak as arranged. At a public meeting held on 24 October Professor Waterhouse, a member of the Council, delivered a very interesting address on *The Place of Reason in Religion.* Just over 100 people had been present. Four new members had joined, making a total of 15 for the year 1935. At a meeting of the Committee held on 17 March 1936, it was confirmed that Dr. James Parkes had spoken, as arranged, at the meeting on 17 February. '*The attendance was fairly good but the discussion was poor*'. It was agreed that the discussion after the next Committee meeting should be *The Place of Tradition in Judaism.* At a meeting of the Committee on 12 May 1936, a brief outline was given of the work of the American Federation Sisterhood. It was agreed to form a sub-committee for similar purposes i.e. to watch the Press for anti-semitic articles and then to correct mis-statements.

At a public meeting of the Society on 27 April 1936, Mr Arthur Barnett of the Western Synagogue and Mr Richard O'Sullivan KC had spoken on the *Traditional Attitude towards Religion.* The audience numbered between 100 and 150. '*The discussion was poor*'. It was agreed that all members of the Society who were ministers should be circularised with a view to finding a convenient date when the subject of a sermon could be *Relations between Jews and Christians.* At a meeting of the Committee on 16 June 1936, it was agreed that the work of the Press Committee should be '*to peruse all the papers, especially the district papers in London and be ready to contradict any incorrect or exaggerated statements regarding Jews, and to ask some outstanding person in that district to sign it*'. Among the names suggested for the sub-committee was James Parkes. A public meeting on *The Modernist Attitude towards Religion* had been held on 8 June '*when the attendance had been fairly good*'. The following subjects for meetings and a conference were agreed:

Autumn Meeting 1936	The Devotional Use of the Bible
Biennial Conference	Religion and Economics
April Meeting 1937	Relations between Jews and Christians.

The next meeting of the Committee was held on 6 October 1936. In a reference to the Press Committee the name of James Parkes was not mentioned among its members. It was reported that the subject for the Biennial Conference would be *The Religious Judgment on the Present Economic System.* Of the 50 letters sent to ministers of religion asking them to observe 10 or 11 October as dates for preaching on goodwill between Jews and Christians, 27 replied. Of these only 9 were affirmative, 17 were quite sympathetic but found the date impossible, while one was a definite refusal. A copy of Bulletin No 3 was submitted.

The contents were:

The Bishop of Chichester's message
Position of the Catholic Church in Germany, by Father Vincent McNabb OP
Church and Old Testament in Germany, by Dr. Otto Piper
The traditional View of Religion (2 papers read to the Society)
Forthcoming meetings
Books of interest

A letter was received from Rev. R L Pelly (Shoreditch Rectory) asking for three different speakers for three different occasions '*as he was much concerned over the manifestations of anti-semitism in his parish*'. At a meeting of the Executive Committee held on 17 November 1936, it was reported that at the first meeting of the Press Committee held on 2 November 1936, it had been decided to formulate a strong resolution of protest against anti-semitism in this country as follows:

> *That this Society condemns the propagation of hatred against the Jews as an unmitigated evil which violates the teachings of religion as detrimental to the religious life of the nation. The Society urges all Christians and Jews to seek by mutual understanding and sympathy to maintain a spirit of harmony, which will enable them to work together for the nation under the guidance of their respective religions.*

The same resolution was put to the public meeting held under the auspices of the Society on 13 November and was carried unanimously. It was decided to ascertain exactly the scope of the work of the Co-ordinating Committee of the Jewish Board of Deputies before forming a special *ad hoc* committee and whether the Society or its individual members could be of assistance to any existing committee. Arrangements for the Conference had been delayed while awaiting replies from perspective speakers. If Professor John McMurray refused, the Conference would be held later in

the year and a public meeting would be held at the end of January. The subject suggested for the Conference was *The Religious Value of the Old Testament.*

At a meeting of the Committee on 15 December 1936, it was agreed that, because of the difficulty of securing speakers, the Conference should be postponed until the autumn, but another public meeting should be held in April. One suggestion for the subject was *The Church in Christianity and the Community in Judaism*, while another suggestion was *The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Christianity.* It was decided to have a discussion on the latter at a Committee, possibly followed by a public meeting, but to adopt the first proposal for the April meeting. A message had been received regarding the advisability of holding a meeting of the Society in Hoxton. A visit there had revealed a great deal of anti-semitism, due largely to the opening of Jewish shops on Sunday. A member strongly supported this, saying he had been surprised at the very general uneasiness of the clergy regarding anti-semitism at the meeting he had attended there, and at the ignorance displayed by their answers. It was decided to ask Rev. H Pelly if he would welcome such a meeting. At a meeting of the Committee on 26 January 1937, a letter was read from Rev. Pelly in which he said that anti-semitism in the East End seemed to be on the wane. Some of the Committee were of a different opinion, but there seemed general opinion that the Public Order Bill had helped considerably and also Dr. Mallon's *Council of Citizens*. It was then decided to leave Hoxton for the present and get in touch with Mr Pelly's successor there.

At the meeting of the Committee on 2 March 1937, it was reported that arrangements for the next meeting in April had fallen through so it was decided to postpone the meeting until the end of May. Dr. Parkes had written to the Chairman (Rabbi Mattuck) about a Methodist minister who wished to send out literature about the Society. Two leaflets from those printed by the Jewish Board of Deputies were finally agreed upon: *The Jews of Great Britain* and *What the Jews of Britain did in the Great War.*

CHAPTER SIX

The German Refugee Problem: 1933-1939

This essay seeks to set out, briefly, some of the difficulties experienced in helping refugees from Nazism into this country. It refers to some of the action taken by both the Jewish community and the Christian community, the setting-up of the Central British Fund for German Jewry, and some of the part played by James Parkes and William Simpson.

Early in April 1933, newly enacted German anti-Jewish legislation began to deprive Jews and non-Aryans (persons whose ancestors included a Jewish grandparent) of the right to participate in the economic, professional and civil life of Germany. Persecution of Jews in Germany differed from the antisemitism manifest in Poland and Romania. It became apparent that the German authorities were intent on excluding Jews from the political, economic and social life of the country, and systematically undertook statutory measures to achieve their goal.[1] It was at this time that Jews, and Christians who were known political opponents of the Nazi regime, were being taken into 'protective custody' and interned in concentration camps, with results that we well know. No one, however, could have envisaged the extent of the tyranny that the Germans would perpetrate, or the degree to which fundamental moral principles would be corrupted. Leaders in the Anglo-Jewish community viewed developments with foreboding and agreed that Jews must be helped to leave the country. At this time the British government would not welcome German Jews as immigrants, but would permit them a transient stay while countries of permanent settlement were found. The effort to achieve those goals through the Central British Fund for German Jewry, which leaders in the Anglo-Jewish community created in 1933, is an epic tale of Jewish political alliances, of transatlantic co-operation and dissension between British and American leaders, and of considerable action. It produced the greatest communal endeavour in the history of Anglo-Jewry, and resulted in the saving of thousands of lives.[2] More will be said about this later.

So far as British Christians were concerned they did not speak with one voice, nor act as a single constituency for the aid of Jewish refugees. There were many and varied

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[1] A Z Gottlieb, *Men of Vision* (London: Wiedenfield & Nicolson, 1998), p.5.
[2] Ibid, p.6.

responses by Christians in Britain to the plight of refugees from Nazism between the years 1933 to 1939. Those approaches ran the gamut of outrage, compassion, caution, rejection and even repudiation. Responses were by no means set, and were apt to change with time and circumstances. Within the Christian groups at various times there were also differences in stress and substance so that no one monolithic reaction could be discerned. Instead, several strands could be elicited from each group, which at varying points overlapped each other, and at times diverged from one another. What emerges more equivocally, is that, largely Christians did not make Jews the recipients of fundraising nor rescue policies until 1938, and thereafter only as part of a specific programme known as the *kindertransporte* (children's transport)[3] As C R Kotzin points out[4] James Parkes was one of the few contemporary British Christian scholars to reflect on the influence of negative Christian attitudes towards Jews and the effects of the depictions of Jews perpetuated by Church teachings. In *'The Conflict'*[5] he had written that the great and overwhelming majority of the hundreds of millions of nominal Christians in the world still believed that 'the Jews' had killed Jesus and that they were a people rejected by their God. He went on to say that if, on this ground, so carefully prepared, modern antisemites had reared a structure of racial and economic propaganda, the final responsibility still rested with those *'who prepared the soil, created the deformation of the people, and so made these ineptitudes credible'*. As Kotzin states *'Parkes emerges as a significant figure during this time, working as an intermediary behind the scenes, building informal contacts across the spectrum of Protestantism.'*[6]

As has been said, there was no one Anglican response to Nazism, nor Nazi antisemitism. On the whole Anglican churchmen were opposed to Nazism and its antisemitism, although there were exceptions. A small number of clergymen went as far as supporting Nazi Germany and the ideology behind Nazism and antisemitism, believing that Nazism was consistent with Christianity.[7]

Lay Anglican responses are more difficult to establish but on the whole much of the comment was critical of the illiberal aspects of the regime exemplified by the

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[3] Chana Revell Kotzin, *Christian Responses in Britain to Jewish refugees from Europe: 1933-1939*, (Southampton, PhD thesis, 2000), p.321.
[4] Ibid, p.7.
[5] James Parkes, *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue: a study in the origins of anti-Semitism* (London: The Soncino Press, 1934), p.376.
[6] C R Kotzin, p.8.
[7] Ibid, p.198.

suppression of political dissent. Violent attacks against Jews as well as their gradual exclusion from economic and public life were also condemned.[8] The Archbishop of Canterbury, Cosmo Lang, had remained largely aloof from this matter and had chosen, instead, to pursue private contacts with German churchmen and others in order to *'get the other side'*. Some information about the events in Germany was received from Anglican ecumenical contacts. Canon Tissington Tatlow, Rector of All Hallows in London, had received from an Austrian Christian, a long memorandum on the German Church situation and had highlighted the use of violence as a tool of suppression against Jews and socialists. The author was Dr Walter M Kotschnig, Chief Secretary of the International Student Service. Lang's reply was disappointing. He had agreed to take part in a meeting at Queen's Hall, London, on *'the treatment of Jews in Germany'* but he added that he knew well how sensitive the new German nationalist spirit was and he did not want to offend it. As Gottlieb says *'inexplicably, he continued, knowing as he did, "so much about the real situation in Germany" it would be "impossible... to speak with the vehemence which the Jews might expect".'*[9] Perplexed by this attitude, Tatlow asked James Parkes to speak to Lang's chaplain to clear up misconceptions and clarify the position of German-Jewish nationals in Nazi Germany. Parkes wrote a detailed letter covering the various topics raised and quashing various Nazi charges made against Jews. Parkes believed that the meeting at Queen's Hall was *'a unique opportunity for a declaration of fundamental Christian principles'* and it was utterly appropriate that *'a great Primate of a great Christian community'* speak out against the *'lies'* inherent in Nazism. The term *'Aryan'*, he explained, was a linguistic, not an ethnological, signifier and the Nazi theories of *'racial'* superiority were completely spurious. Moreover, Parkes believed that a Christian could not accept racial antisemitism because it was inconsistent *'with the idea of the Fatherhood of God'*. The Church in Germany was presently silent about Nazi actions against Jews and therefore the Church of England must intercede on behalf of them. This was particularly necessary as *'no condemnation'* would come from the Vatican, since the Roman Catholic Church in Germany had made *'official peace with the National Socialists.'* Parkes concluded that the Archbishop of

[8] Ibid, p.199.
[9] Ibid, p.207.

Canterbury had the *'weight of official authority possessed by no-one else'*.[10] The meeting was deemed to be a great success by the Anglican community while the response from the Jewish community was *'effusive'*. Yet, subsequently, Anglican interest quickly dissipated and continued to decline for some time.[11]

Meanwhile, James McDonald had been appointed League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and had met with George Bell, Bishop of Chichester, and other Church leaders around Europe throughout the autumn of 1933. He pressed for a co-ordinated European and American Christmas Appeal to be made through their respective national and independent Churches on behalf of all refugees. He wanted the entire refugees issue to *'be recognised as a concern of all communities and not as a Jewish problem only'*.[12]

Seeing a joint Churches appeal as the only way forward for the needs of Christian refugees, Bell set about planning the Christmas appeal, but experienced difficulties with the Archbishop, Cosmo Lang, over emphasis. The Archbishop wished to appeal to all kinds of refugees without distinction of religion in keeping with McDonald's vision. Bell agreed, but felt it was necessary to safeguard *'the interests of the non-Aryan Christians'* in the allocation of funds. James Parkes[13] was the head of the International Student Service at that time and he did not support the idea of funding distinctions between refugees. He pointed out that until the present time the established organisations had so little emphasised discrimination that it seemed to him it would be *'a pity for Churches' appeals to do so'*.[14]

It appears that Bell did not take kindly to Parkes' criticism and replied that there had never been any intention, as far as he knew, of discriminating between the victims of the present regime on the part of the Church. What he hoped was that the Churches might make a special appeal to their own constituencies at Christmas time and that this appeal would be for every kind of victim, and by mentioning the fact that the

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[10] Ibid, pp.207/8, from a letter to Rev. Alan C Don, 9 June, 1933, in Lambeth Palace Library, *Lang Papers*, v.38, fo 32-35.

[11] C R Kotzin, p.210.

[12] Letter from Bell to H L Henriod of the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work (Ecumenical), Lambeth Palace Library, *Bell Papers*, v.27, fo 148. Quoted by Kotzin, p.221.

[13] Parkes had met McDonald in Canada: *Voyage of Discoveries* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1969), p.108.

[14] Letter from Parkes to Henriod, 15 November 1933, Lambeth Palace Library, *Bell Papers*, v.27, fo 167-69. Quoted by Kotsin, p.221.

victims were both Jewish and non-Jewish, show that the responsibility of Christians was very wide.[15]

Eventually it was decided to make two separate appeals, one in Britain and the other through the member churches of Bell's Universal Christian Council for Life and Work (Ecumenical). Despite the considerable efforts of everyone concerned only about £11,000 was raised. This sum was regarded as paltry in comparison with that raised by contemporary appeals of the Jewish community and it was decided not to publish the figure.[16]

Meanwhile, there was increasing concern in this country about antisemitism, particularly about the events in the East End of London. Being aware that the Archbishop of Canterbury was to make a Christmas broadcast, Neville Laski (President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews) approached his chaplain. He asked whether the Archbishop would be willing *'to introduce into his talk a word which would indicate the distaste which the Christian Church feels for the miasma of antisemitism which has been so cruelly aroused in this country by Sir Oswald Mosley and his followers?'* The chaplain replied:

> *His Grace did not feel able to incorporate any reference to antisemitism into his broadcast but he had included a short paragraph on antisemitism in his monthly diocesan magazine, subsequently reproduced in The Times at the beginning of January.*[17]

Similarly the attempt of Sidney Salomon[18] (Press Secretary of the Board of Deputies of British Jews) to elicit interest for an official Christian document on antisemitism was cautioned against by James Parkes, who maintained that the Churches were *'cumbersome organisations'* and *'any call... for them to produce an authoritative statement'* would meet with *'silent resentment'*. Any general action *'should be the result of a Christian initiative'*. There were signs of an *'awakened conscience'* within the leadership of the Church.

The problem was that the greater *'mass of Christian folk'* continued to think of Jews in *'conventional terms'*, believing that their Christian responsibilities lay solely in

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[15] Letter from Bell to Henriod, 20 November 1933, Lambeth Palace Library, *Bell Papers*, v.27, fo 172.
[16] 'Minutes of a meeting to consider Christian Responsibility for the Refugees from Germany', 5 July 1934, Lambeth Palace Library, v.34, pp. fo,44. Ludlow, *Protestant Relief Programmes*, 573. Quoted by Kotzin, p.223.
[17] Letter from Neville Laski to Alan Don, 23 December 1936, Lambeth Palace Library, *Lang Papers*, v.38, fo 105; letter from Don to Laski, 4 January 1937, LPL *Lang Papers*, v.38, fo 108. Quoted by Kotzin, p.245.
[18] In his autobiography Parkes refers to him as *'Dear Sidney Salomon'*. *Voyage of Discoveries*, p.210.

conversionary efforts. For an official Christian body to develop a responsibility to Jews in non-missionary terms *'requires slow and careful preparation'*. Naming, among others, William Temple and George Bell as the most likely individuals to lead the way, Parkes cautioned Salomon to wait until the preparations for two international Christian conferences the following year were over.[19]

Thus throughout the 1930s there was comparatively slow growth in Christian voluntary refugee aid for which there was a number of reasons. The first was a view commonly held by Anglicans and free Churchmen in Britain about British Jews and Jews more generally: namely that the refugee crisis was a Jewish problem and the Jewish community in Britain (and worldwide) were financially and organisationally able to provide for their German-speaking brethren. The second concerned internal Christian assumptions about Christians in Britain: that Christians were more likely to respond to calls for aid to Christian as opposed to Jewish refugees and that Christians had a special duty to aid Christian refugees. It should, however, be added that some of these assumptions were contested within Christian circles and that Christian attitudes were neither unanimous nor uniform.[20]

The issue of 'non-Aryan' Christian refugees illuminates assumptions made about 'Christian' duty, on the one hand, and likely Christian responses to refugees made by Christian leaders on the other. As has just been said, the most prevalent view held was that the issue was primarily a 'Jewish problem', one to be solved by Jews, rather than a common humanitarian concern to be addressed practically by both Christian and Jew alike. Another was that Christians would prefer to give to other Christians. To add to the confusion, 'non-Aryan' Christians were seen as both 'Christian' and 'Jewish' by different sections, and not necessarily seen as 'Christian' in the *'real Christian-Christian sense'* by much of the Church and wider public. Hence a multiple of responses resulted from these viewpoints. The first was that Christians saw Jews, rather than Christians, as in need of aid, so were less likely to give to Christian refugees because it was not entirely clear that Christians, too, suffered under racial and political legislation. The second was that they saw this grouping as 'Jewish' and believed that it was not their concern. The third was that although this grouping was Christian, they were still 'racially' Jewish, oppressed because of their 'Jewishness', rather than their Christianity, and hence they were a 'type' of Jew and again the

[19] Letter from Parkes to Salomon, 12 December 1936, BDEP, ACC/3121/C15/03/17, LMA.
[20] Kotzin, pp.322/3.

problem of Jewry. When it was realised that the complexity of explaining the intricacies of Nazi racial divisions was too confusing and ultimately unproductive, Christian refugee activists played down the needs of Jews and Jewish refugees in order to highlight the needs of 'non-Aryan' Christians. In this way, according to Kotzin, they created a hierarchy of suffering, which favoured Christian over Jewish refugees.[21]

Following the enactment of the Nuremberg laws in September 1935, which held that anyone with a Jewish grandparent was Jewish, the number of 'non-Aryan' Christian refugees increased rapidly. Consequently in October 1938, Anglican, Free Church and Roman Catholic Churches agreed to support a Christian Council for Refugees from Germany and Central Europe. The chairman was the leading Methodist, Rev. Henry Carter, who was later to chair the Council of Christians and Jews for several years. Bishop Bell also played a leading part in this organisation. W W Simpson was appointed secretary.[22]

The remit of the Christian Council was limited to 'non-Aryan' Christian refugees. The reason for excluding Jews was on the assumption that the resources of the Jewish community were sufficient to cope with Jewish refugees.[23]

There is, indeed, some basis for this. During the early 1930s German citizens were permitted to enter Britain as visitors, business men or students without the need to secure British visas. None was permitted to accept employment, however, or take up permanent residence unless their presence served the interest of British science or industry, or they possessed substantial financial resources. Those not meeting these criteria would be expected to depart for third country destinations within a reasonable period. With the increasing number of refugees into Britain officials in the Home Office expressed a wish to meet representatives of the Anglo-Jewish community to discuss the matter.[24]

The meeting took place after 1 April 1933, when the German government officially launched its national boycott of Jewish shops and other Jewish enterprises. The deputation proposed that the government permit all Jewish refugees from Germany to enter Britain without discrimination, and that those already admitted as visitors, or others who might be granted permission to land in future, be authorised, while the

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[21] Ibid, p.323.
[22] M Braybrooke, *Children of One God* (London: Vallentine Mitchell 1991), pp.7/8.
[23] Kotzin, pp.323/4
[24] A Z Gottlieb, *Men of Vision*, p.12

emergency situation in Germany lasted, to prolong their stay indefinitely. In support of their proposal they pledged that *'all expense, whether in respect of temporary or permanent accommodation or maintenance, will be borne by the Jewish community without charge to the state'.* This undertaking, which had not been demanded, but which the government accepted, was without precedent. Never before had representatives of the Anglo-Jewish community felt obliged to undertake a blanket financial commitment to support Jews whose numbers, financial means or length of stay could not be predicted with any degree of accuracy.[25] Even so, the government decided that it would be best to maintain, for the time being, the existing provisions for admission of German-Jewish refugees. It recommended adding, however, the condition that they register with the police immediately upon reaching their destinations in Britain, instead of doing so following the customary three months' wait. The Anglo-Jewish community was to be informed of this, and advised that, in cases where refugees desired to obtain permission to extend their temporary stay,

> *the government would be prepared to consider a further extension provided that the Jewish community were prepared to guarantee, as far as it might be necessary, adequate means of maintenance for the refugees concerned.*

Thus the government had relegated the entire German-Jewish refugee problem to the Anglo-Jewish community, and it was to be held to its pledge and made to bear the financial cost.[26]

Those who had visited the Home Office were, of course, aware of the need to establish a nationwide fund-raising organisation, and they had discussions with individuals of wealth and position whose co-operation was essential if a national body for the benefit of German Jews was to be created.[27] At Marks & Spencer headquarters in Baker Street, Simon Marks, chairman and managing director of Marks & Spencer, agreed to serve as chairman of the committee that would establish the Central British Fund for German Jewry. Officers of the CBF were to be located in the newly constructed Jewish Communal Centre, at Woburn House, in Bloomsbury.[28]

Before the end of 1933, an impressive sum of almost £250,000 had been donated to the CBF, an amount which proved to be proportionately more than the total donations

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[25] Ibid, pp.13/14.
[26] Ibid, pp.17/18.
[27] Ibid, p.21.
[28] Ibid, p.29.

to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and the United Palestine Appeal in the United States in the same period.[29]

At first the CBF resolved to encourage and to finance immigration to Palestine. In 1935, however, a total of some 3,800 refugees had registered with the Jewish Refugees Committee[30] and it was estimated that 3,000 were still in Britain, of whom some 1,100 had not registered with the Jewish Refugees Committee. They were assumed to have established themselves in business and to be of independent means.[31]

The Nuremberg Laws, of course, generated an accelerated movement of Jews from Germany, although almost all of the refugees who had entered Britain as transients since the beginning of the crisis in Germany had left for other countries by the end of 1937. Many of those who remained were awaiting visas or shipping to third-country destinations. A total of some 3,000 refugees had registered with the Jewish Refugees Committee.[32]

Further measures against the Jews were promulgated in 1938. From 12 November they would be barred from owning retail stores and after 31 December they would be prohibited from engaging in service industries. Other decrees ordained that the licences of Jewish doctors would expire on 30 September and Jewish lawyers would be prohibited from practising their profession after 31 December. *Kristallnacht* (the night of broken glass) began on 9/10 November 1938, and continued for three more days. Initially there was a tremendous growth in the number of Jews who sought sanctuary in Britain, an upsurge in arrivals that continued until the outbreak of war. The Anglo-Jewish community was, of course, in no way prepared for the arrival of thousands of new refugees, many of whom were without financial means. Even so, the Council[33] immediately informed the Home Office that the advice given after the *Anschluss* – that it was unable to maintain the guarantee, lodged in 1933, that no refugee would be permitted to become a charge on public funds – was no longer

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[29] Ibid, p.31.

[30] This was the title of a committee formed in 1933. It consisted of a number of Jewish people who were concerned with helping refugees into this country. One of the first tasks of members of the JRC was to meet trains from the continent at London railway stations or planes landing at Croydon or Heston, and escort Jews from Germany, who were without friends or relatives, to the Jews Temporary Shelter in Mansell Street, London. (Gottlieb, pp.7/10).

[31] Ibid, p.43.

[32] Ibid, p.77.

[33] "The Council" was an alliance of the Central British Fund, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, Zionist and other organisations, and known as the Council for German Jewry.

valid.[34] To fulfil this undertaking further fundraising followed and the Council was able to sustain the basic needs of refugees, who continued to arrive from the continent in their thousands. Some 13,000 among those who arrived before the end of 1938 registered with the Jewish Refugees Committee. In the eight months of 1939 prior to the onset of war, some 55,000 new refugees registered with the Jewish Refugees Committee, exclusive of the 15,000 whom the Ministry of Labour had permitted to enter the country as domestic servants. The Council continued to provide financial aid to those still attempting to emigrate from Austria and Germany. Only when war was declared and remittances to enemy-occupied territory were prohibited by the government, did funding for projects in Europe cease.[35]

When considering the CBF, it should be remembered that it was established as an *ad hoc* organisation, to be dismantled when the German-Jewish crisis ended. In the event its original intention was rendered impossible. During the twelve years of the German Jewish crisis, the CBF called upon Jews in Britain to help refugees as the events unfolded. They were repeatedly asked to contribute financially to enable Jews to emigrate from Nazi Germany and from Austria; and to help provide a measure of social and economic viability for those who came to Britain. Following Kristallnacht, they were invited to offer housing, employment and support for adults and children who, for the most part, were total strangers, and many responded. From the inception of the CBF until the end of the first year of the war, some £3 million was raised for the benefit of German and Austrian Jews; the greater part of which was contributed by members of the Anglo-Jewish community. The activity that was initiated through the efforts of those who created the CBF may be regarded as an excellent example of constructive community endeavour. From the beginning of the crisis in 1933 right up to the peace, those who worked to secure the success of the CBF's mission gave generously of their time and money. It was due to their persistence that thousands of adults, some 10,000 unaccompanied children, and many men and boys, rescued from concentration camps in the months before the war, found refuge in Britain.[36]

Among the names already mentioned is that of W W Simpson and he, too, was active in the refugee movement at this time. After Cambridge he began to work on the fringe of the East End of London as a trainee Methodist minister. He had links with a Free

[34] Gottlieb, p.91.
[35] Gottlieb, p.92.
[36] Ibid, pp.195/6.

Church missionary society and had seen from the inside something of the various Christian missions to the Jews. Increasingly he felt unhappy with this approach and was helped by a scholar, Canon Lukyn Williams, who had reacted strongly against traditional Christian efforts to persuade Jews of the errors of their ways. Simpson had been encouraged by the Methodist Church authorities to devote two years to the study of contemporary Jewish problems and for that period he was a part-time student of Jews' College, London. He was, therefore, well qualified to be secretary of the Christian Council for Refugees from Germany and Central Europe, to which reference has been made.[37] Simpson looked forward beyond the immediate tragedy of the refugees and the horrors of Nazi persecution, to recognising the Christian share of responsibility for Jewish sufferings. *'It is important to realise'* he wrote *'that one of the chief factors in forcing the Jews into a negative kind of separation has been the attitude generally adopted by the Christian community'*.[38] He mentioned the charge of deicide, the attacks of the Crusaders, the institution of the Ghetto and the Inquisition.[39] From this it is obvious that the thoughts of James Parkes and W W Simpson - close friends - ran on similar lines.

Thus Simpson had a strong background of interest in Jewish-Christian relations. His membership of the Church of England Committee for 'non-Aryan' Christians is another example of this.[40] Bishop Bell believed that Christian appeals for ('non-Aryan') Christian refugees were the best way to invoke a sense of responsibility in Christians to the plight of refugees in general. On a practical level, however, the number of Christian refugees was small, numbering less than a fifth of the sum total, but they were a significant and growing group. The refugee aid network had become increasingly compartmentalised into such groups as academics, professionals, trade unionists and eventually children, so it was not surprising that within this framework Christians would also wish to establish relief committees. Unfortunately there was a lack of support for developing such machinery, but towards the end of 1935, with continued extension of anti-Jewish and 'non-Aryan' policies, the time was considered ripe for a renewed effort on behalf of the Churches. Two years after the start of the refugee exodus, there was greater knowledge of the refugee plight and this, it was

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[37] Braybrooke, p.8.
[38] W W Simpson, *The Christian and the Jewish Problem* (London: Epworth Press, 1939) p.16, Quoted by Braybrooke, p.9.
[39] Simpson, p.19, Braybrooke, p.9.
[40] Kotzin, p.250.

hoped, would produce a greater response. Even so, the confusion engendered by the persistent segregation of refugees along racial lines continued.[41]

Beginning in December 1935, plans to develop a non-Jewish equivalent of the Jewish Colonisation Association for resettlement of 'non-Aryan' Christians had been circulating within the international community with the support of the League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. An International Christian Committee for German Refugees was created to launch appeals in Europe through national appeals. Bishop Bell was appointed chairman, but the venture was hampered by financial difficulties and did not succeed. The Bishop contacted the Foreign Office in November 1936, and asked for a grant of £5,000 with a suggestion that a special issue of stamps with a surcharge for refugee organisations be considered. The proposal was declined: all funds for refugee organisations were to be raised privately by the voluntary aid committees. By the end of December less than £8,000 had been raised from over 890 churches and 910 individuals. This compared with £1,400,000 raised by British Jews. Further efforts to raise funds did not meet with much success. In 1937, appeals were still beset with confusion in the public mind over who was being aided and there was little success. The appeal closed in mid-1937, having raised approximately £9,700.[42]

Discouraged but undeterred, Bell founded his own committee for refugees - The Church of England Committee for 'non-Aryan' Christians. Although nominally Anglican it was composed of men and women already in the field of relief and as has been said, included W W Simpson as well as James Parkes.[43]

From what has been written it is apparent that many difficulties had to be overcome in the 1930s to afford assistance to the increasing number of refugees from Nazi Germany into Britain. The action taken by the Jewish community was certainly effective. So far as action by some of the Christian community was concerned it can, perhaps, be regarded at best as an ecumenical effort in which James Parkes and William Simpson played an active part.

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[41] Ibid, p.247.
[42] Ibid, pp.248/9.
[43] Ibid, p.250.

CHAPTER SEVEN

James Parkes, The Society of Jews and Christians, and the Council of Christians and Jews, C 1930-45

James Parkes went up to Oxford in 1919 and soon became very involved in the League of Nations Union, of which he was appointed University Secretary. He joined this because, although he intended to be ordained, his desire for ordination was not based on any wish to escape from the contemporary world, but was tied to the conviction, shared with so many of his generation, that the moral foundations of a way of life for the whole world had to be discovered which would make a repetition of the war impossible. When Parkes joined the Union, it had no special activities for a university section, and university members were simply part of the city branch of the National Union. He wanted to make the Union effective in the University. Parkes was also involved with the Student Christian Movement, an inter-denominational organisation which only began in the 1890s and was, by 1920, in the middle of its greatest period.[1] He says that there was nothing inconsistent in finding his interest in the LNU rather than the SCM, because membership of the two bodies overlapped a great deal. In fact, '*wherever one was concerned with political or social progress, one would find members of the SCM on the ground floor.*' In those happy days, Parkes says, neither 'liberal' nor 'humanist' was a term of abuse, and humanist and committed Christian worked together over a wide area of life.[2]

In 1929, during his spell of international work among students Parkes first became involved in the 'Jewish Question' and came increasingly to realise that his future work should be in the sphere of Jewish-Christian relations. In the spring of 1930 he decided that, as he had not found a competent short study of antisemitism in English, he would write one. This was entitled *The Jew and His Neightbour*[3] In the introduction Parkes explains that this is neither a complete history of the Jews nor is it an exhaustive study either of their crimes or of their virtues. He recognises that there is a Jewish problem (see below) and adds that he is dealing with a problem that has its roots in history and in human nature, and not in anything supernatural, so that given the patience and goodwill requisite, it is one which can be unravelled by human intelligence and resolved by human action. (To which T Kushner adds: '*a rational modernist solution!*'). In fact, Parkes devotes the second chapter of his book to '*The Nature of the Jewish Problem*'. He agrees that the Jews are a people apart and gives three possible explanations for that '*peculiar situation*'. The first, and oldest, is that it

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[1] Adrian Hastings, *A History of English Christianity 1920-1990* (London: SCM Press, 1991), p.86
[2] James Parkes, *Voyage of Discoveries* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1969), p.59
[3] James Parkes, *The Jew and His Neighbour: a Study of the Causes of Antisemitism* (London: published for the International Student Service by the Student Christian Movement Press, 1930).

is supernatural, the direct action of God, the condemnation of the '*deicide race*'. Parkes considers that such an explanation has a Jewish counterpart in certain orthodox interpretations of the Prophets and later Apocalyptic writers. Many Jews accept with a kind of fatalism the explanation of the divine anger as the sole cause of their misfortunes, and look to no human effort, or understanding, for the betterment of their position. They rely only on the direct action of God for the destruction of their enemies and the restoration of the glories of Sion. The second explanation is that it is '*unnatural*', the result of the deliberate malice of the party to which the speaker does not belong. It is either the envy and jealousy of the gentiles which is solely responsible, or it is entirely caused by the hostility of the Jews to the rest of humanity. A third, and what Parkes describes as '*an admittedly prosaic explanation compared to the other two*', is that the Jewish problem is composed of an admixture of historic facts, misunderstandings, ignorance and prejudice – just like all other problems '*which vex human society*'.

Parkes dismisses the first two explanations, so that there then remains the problem of human relationships, '*which, however difficult, we can assume to be capable of reasonable human study and ultimately of human solution*'. First, however, he considers it is necessary to get some clearer idea of what actually is involved in the problem itself. While he agrees that it can legitimately be called 'the Jewish problem', it was well to realise that there were as profound differences between Jew and Jew as between Jew and anti-Semite. Parkes maintains that '*in the loose sense of everyday speech*', antisemitism, whatever its particular cause may be in any particular plane, is 'instinctive', and, as such, is the common inheritance of a common past. Parkes considers that dislike of the Jew is '*now quite instinctive and unreflected to the majority of Europeans, whether they be economically affected by them or not*'. His conclusion is that the essential task is to get down '*to the roots of the "instinctive" antisemitism of today.*'[4] That became Parkes' life work.

In 1931 Parkes decided to undertake research for an Oxford Doctorate of Philosophy: his subject was to be an enquiry into the origins of antisemitism. He considered that antisemitism arose from the picture of the Jews which Christian theologians extracted from their reading of the Old Testament, a work for whose every word they claimed divine authority. He agrees that the Old Testament was very frank about Jewish sins and very definite in its certainty that they earned divine punishment but it also dwelt on the love between God and Israel, and the promises of the Messianic Age. So long as both elements in the story were accepted as being about a single people, a lofty balance was retained. Christian theologians, however, divided it into the story of two peoples: the virtuous Hebrews, who were pre-incarnation Christians, had all the praise and promise; and the

[4] Ibid, p.47

wicked Jews had all the crimes and denunciations. Parkes maintained that this was the interpretation repeated over and over again, in every possible variation, and in every century from the third onward. Indeed, in the eyes of the leading Church historian of the fourth century, Eusebius of Caesarea, Jews and Hebrews were, biologically, two distinct races. Parkes carried his study down to the end of the Roman influence on the first Barbarian societies, Visigoths, Vandals and the rest, and ended in the Dark Ages. It was longer than was necessary for a doctorate but it completed a period and left the Middle Ages for subsequent study. Parkes duly obtained his doctorate and, in 1934, his thesis was published under the title *The Conflict Between the Church and the Synagogue.*[5] It established the author's reputation in this field of research and even after nearly seventy years maintains its original authority.

From this time onwards Parkes increasingly devoted himself to the cause of Jewish-Christian relations. He took every opportunity to travel extensively in the British Isles, and elsewhere, lecturing on the fruits of his historical research which had encouraged so warm an appreciation of the positive virtues and contributions of Judaism.[6] In January, 1937, he delivered a lunch-hour address as part of the Modern Churchmen's Union course of addresses at St Edmund's Church, Lombard Street, London. Parkes said that antisemitism had been created by the Church not out of hatred of their Jewish neighbours, but out of a theological necessity. The theologian and preacher created a picture of the Jew which led to popular hostility which, in turn, created the modern antisemitism.

> *So long as we teach in the churches that the Jews invoked upon themselves the blood of the crucifixion, and so long as we go on teaching that Judaism is a mass of arid forms and laws, so we shall be responsible for preparing the minds of the people for the seed that the Nazis and antisemites have sown.*[7]

In 1939 Parkes published another book, *The Jewish Problem in the Modern World.*[8] Reviewing this, the *Jewish Chronicle* referred to *'Dr Parkes' masterly work'*. The review went on to say that throughout the book one was struck not only by the vast knowledge shown by Dr Parkes but also by the objectivity with which he was able to regard that most dreadful of problems – the emergence in a world professing to be Christian of an attitude towards a certain section of its fellow-citizens for the parallel of which one had to go back to the darkest of ages. The review concluded by saying that Parkes laid great stress on the importance of a change of heart among the people of the world.

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[5] Parkes, Voyage of Discoveries, p.123.
[6] Richard Gutteridge, The Churches and the Jews in England from *Judaism and Christianity Under the Impact of National Socialism* (Jerusalem: The Historical Society of Israel and the Zalman Shazap Centre for Jewish History, ed. Otto Dov Kulka, 1987), p.360.
[7] *Jewish Chronicle*, 15 January 1937.
[8] James Parkes, *The Jewish Problem in the Modern World* (London: Thornton Butterworth, 1939)

> *Such a change of heart, however, can only come with the spreading of knowledge of what the Jew is, why he is, and what he means; and it can only be attained by the publication and worldwide circulation of books such as this.*[9]

In 1939, too, Parkes preached a university sermon at Oxford which he declared to be his first positive formulation of his attitude to missions to the Jews. In this he proclaimed gentile Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism to be the first and most tragic of all schisms. He preached that our immediate duty to the Jew was to do all in our power to make the world safe for him to be a Jew.[10] In 1941 Parkes published the *Jewish Question*,[11] described in the Jewish Chronicle review of it as an '*admirable pamphlet*'. The review went on to say that Dr Parkes was long known for his intelligent and humanitarian interest in Jewish matters – and for his able analysis of historical Christian relations with Jews.

> *Dr Parkes here sets out with perfect objectivity the principal factors in the World's Jewish Problem. The reasoning is eminently sane and just and the language clear.*

The review goes on to say that the pamphlet should be read and re-read by Jews as well as non-Jews for its sound estimate of the Jewish position and its clear discrimination between historical fact and popular belief.

> *Dr Parkes' pamphlet should be included in the syllabus of every adult education (sic). It would contribute not a little to securing the peoples of the world against barbarism.*[12]

Parkes was a 'modernist' and thus could readily regard antisemitism as a problem not concerning Jews only but as an attack upon every kind of progressive and democratic enemy.

In an article published at the end of 1943, he dealt with the spread of antisemitism in Britain, claiming that, despite sympathy for the persecuted Jews abroad and horror at the report of massacre, there were undoubtedly agencies at work, insinuating Jewish plots and wickedness, spreading rumours and reports of unscrupulous black marketing, abuse of hospitality by refugees, and shirking of participation in the war effort. For Parkes the Jewish problem was a religious one every bit as much as a social and political issue, with the question mark against the traditional presentation of the New Testament narrative and the disparagement of Jewish faith, forgetting that Jesus was a loyal Jew, and Paul, to the end of his life, a Pharisee. He concluded with the admission that Christians did not possess the whole truth, and that what was lacking was to be found in Judaism. Recognition of this

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[9] *Jewish Chronicle*, 15 December 1939.
[10] Parkes, *Voyage of Discoveries*, pp.154/5.
[11] James Parkes, *The Jewish Question* (Oxford: Pamphlet on World Affairs, No.45; Clarendon Press, 1941).
[12] *Jewish Chronicle*, 18 April 1941.

called for a wholly new approach.[13] Thus the British Jewish community found in James Parkes a unique ally. Gutteridge refers to a tribute in which he was described as '*an utterly selfless friend, honest and courageous in his objective search for truth.*' There was obviously universal Jewish appreciation of his remark that '*all Jews who can reach our shores are welcome*', the recommendation that planning for the future should be *with* them rather than for them, and his admission that Christians had altogether more to learn from Judaism than the other way round.[14]

Society of Jews and Christians

When Parkes wrote his pamphlet on the Jewish Problem in 1943, Britain was, of course, at war with Germany and the plight of Jews in Nazi-controlled Europe was well known. The only Jewish-Christian organisation in existence in this country at that time was the Society of Jews and Christians. This had come into being as a result of the Social Service Committee of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue feeling keenly that, in spite of serious differences in belief, Jews and Christians were at one in their desire to bring nearer the Kingdom of God on earth, and that a joint conference, if it could be arranged, dealing with some aspect of religion and social betterment, would reveal this community of interest, and might, also, bring about a better understanding between them. The Honorary Secretary of the Social Service Committee, Mrs McArthur (who was later to play an active part in the Council of Christians and Jews), was therefore requested to 'sound' various religious bodies, with the result that an organising committee was formed (under the chairmanship of Dr Mattuck, Minister of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue) on which sat representatives of the Social and Industrial Committee of the National Church Assembly, the Social Service Union of the Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, the Congregational Union, the Society of Friends, the Social Service Committee of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue and the West London Synagogue of British Jews; also, in their individual capacities, a member of the Free Church Council, a Wesleyan and a Roman Catholic. The subject chosen for the Conference was '*Religion as an Educational force*', and it was held at the Liberal Jewish Synagogue on 27 November, 1924, its aim being as stated on the programme, '*to give an opportunity to Jews and Christians to confer together on the basis of their common ideals and with mutual respect for differences in belief.*' The principal speakers belonged to two sections of the Jewish religion and to six Christian denominations. The meeting was very successful and speakers in the discussions expressed a strong desire that the work so auspiciously begun should be continued. The committee, therefore, remained in being but

[13] James Parkes, The Jewish Problem in *Modern Churchman* (December 1943), pp.226 ff. Quoted by Gutteridge, p.360.
[14] Gutteridge, pp.360/1.

was enlarged so as to include an orthodox Jewess, a Baptist, a member of the Salvation Army and others. Three years later, in March 1927, at a social reunion of the persons who had been attending the meetings and conferences, it was proposed to form a more permanent organisation '*to promote fellowship and mutual understanding between Jews and Christians*', and the Society of Jews and Christians came into being.[15]

Councils of Christians and Jews

This society is still in existence although it has now changed its name to the London Society of Jews and Christians. By the early 1940s, however, in face of the vast increase in the number of refugees into this country, the threat and then the outbreak of war, the constant necessity for a united approach to the Government, and because of joint concern to counter prevailing expressions of antisemitism, it was felt that the setting up of an alternative and altogether more influential organisation (than the Society of Jews and Christians) in which Christians and Jews could be observed working together, not just talking or holding discussions, was greatly needed. It obviously required the support of both Orthodox and Liberal Jews, and the active backing of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Moderators of both the Free Church Council and the Church of Scotland, the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster and the Chief Rabbi. The most difficult problem was to secure the goodwill of the Chief Rabbi, Dr Hertz, but this was eventually obtained. On 19 November, 1941, a conference was held in London, at which general agreement was given to the formation of a Council of Christians and Jews, the first formal meeting of which was held in March 1942.[16] There are two accounts of how the initial steps were taken. The first is recorded in James Parkes' autobiography where he states that

> *the first steps to the formation of the Council of Christians and Jews were taken under a pear tree at Barley, through Mrs Kathleen Freeman who did almost all the preliminary visiting of possible supporters.*[17]

W W Simpson, however – the first secretary of the Council of Christians and Jews – says

> *I happen to know, because I was involved in them, that similar discussions were taking place in Bloomsbury House where Mrs Freeman was also well-known as a member of the Bishop of Chichester's Committee for non-Aryan Christians Refugees.*

Simpson adds that one needed only to build on the foundations already laid by the Society of Jews and Christians, with which Mrs Freeman was also associated, as indeed was suggested.[18] (It might be that there was no 'love lost' between Simpson and Mrs Freeman,

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[15] Pamphlet *The Society of Jews and Christians*, James Parkes Papers, MS60 15/76 SUA.
[16] Gutteridge, p.369.
[17] Parkes, *Voyage of Discoveries*, p.174.
[18] W W Simpson, *Jewish-Christian Relations Since the Inception of the Council of Christians and Jews*, a paper presented to the Jewish Historical Society of England, 17 March 1982.

because on 3 April, 1943, she wrote a letter to William Temple criticising Simpson very severely for the manner in which he spoke at a public meeting when some 600 people were present. Temple responded by saying that while Simpson was an excellent secretary, perhaps someone else was needed to do public speaking.)[19]

Throughout the period under review James Parkes had been active in the work of the Society of Jews and Christians. The first reference to him in the minutes is that it was reported during a discussion on antisemitism on 22 January, 1934, that '*it was impossible to get Mr Parkes of ISS to address the Society during his short stay in London*'.[20] During a public meeting on 1 April, 1935, there was to be a discussion on '*Nationalism and Internationalism – Jewish and Christian Voices*' and it was hoped to get Parkes to open this. Parkes also gave an address on '*Relations Between Jews and Christians in the Middle Ages*', a report of which appeared in the Bulletin of the Society on 1 April, 1936. Ten months later a Press Committee, to review certain papers, was appointed with James Parkes as a member, and on 16 November, 1937, the Chairman announced that Parkes had agreed to join the main Committee. After this Parkes took an increasingly active part in the Society and, with the outbreak of war and evacuation from London, was particularly concerned about Jews being evacuated to country areas and suffering loneliness.[21] On 27 May, 1942, an Extraordinary General Meeting was held to discuss the relationship of the Society of Jews and Christians to the newly formed Council of Christians and Jews. Parkes was asked to open the discussion. It was not, however, until some five years later that a decision was made that the Society's name should be changed to the London Society of Jews and Christians (affiliated to the Council of Christians and Jews).[22]

James Parkes was equally active in the work of the Council of Christians and Jews: reference has already been made to his version of how the Society came into being. He was present at the first meeting of the Executive Committee on 20 March, 1942, and thereafter continued to attend regularly. At a meeting on 27 April, 1942, it was decided to increase the size of the Committee and a list of possible names was referred to the chairman, the joint secretaries and James Parkes for detailed consideration. At a meeting on 7 May, 1942, it was decided to publish at an early date, a statement on the formation, nature and aims of the Council. Four members of the Committee were appointed to prepare this: they included Parkes.[23] At a meeting a fortnight later suggestions made by Parkes about the formation of a general policy for the Council's activities were accepted. Dr Israel Mattuck (who, for many years played a leading part in the Society of Jews and Christians) and James Parkes were

[19] Temple Papers, V16, fo 181, L P L.
[20] ACC/3686/01/01/001 L M A.
[21] ACC/3686.01/01/003 L M A.
[22] ACC/3686/01/01/004 L M A.
[23] CCJ Papers, 2/1, S U A.

appointed to consult together about this. Initially the CCJ was a small self-perpetuating oligarchic body. Membership was limited to 50, although quite soon this figure was increased to 200. At James Parkes' suggestion, an associate membership of sympathetic individuals was created, but they had no say in the running of the Council. It was not until the 1980s that the structure was changed and the Council became a democratic body in which members of the Executive were elected.[24] In his autobiography, Parkes says that he was often asked in the early days of the Council whether he did not think that he should have been invited to become secretary of the organisation which he '*had done so much to bring into existence*'. His reply was always that he would have wrecked the Council in a month! He adds:

> *Nor can I disagree with those who consider this estimate of my patience and diplomacy rather exaggerated, and who consider that a week is the maximum I would have borne the frustrations....*[25]

Thus, at least, Parkes was not unmindful of his shortcomings. On 25 January, 1942, before the Council of Christians and Jews was set up, Parkes had written to William Temple, then Archbishop of York, suggesting the appointment of a Minister for Jewish Affairs, with possibly himself (Parkes) in mind for this post. He added '*As John Hadham I may be violent, but I can also be patient and diplomatic, and I think I have been that with my poor dear Jews.*'[26] In his later years Parkes looked back with pleasure on his connection with the Council of Christians and Jews and said that he remained a member of the Executive Committee until his retirement and '*their meetings were one of the occasions I tried not to miss.*'[27]

In spite of his impetuosity, however, Parkes was a doughty warrior,[28] throughout his career, for a 'redesign' of the Jewish-Christian relationship; this was especially so during the Nazi era. Parkes sought to persuade his fellow Christians to abandon the principle of mission to the Jews which, he argued, was the root cause of the historical problems of the Christian-Jewish encounter.[29] Parkes argued that '*the Missionary attitude*' was '*inevitably coupled with... the denigration of Judaism*' and the accusation that the Jews had been responsible for the death of Christ.[30]

Parkes believed that one could only understand modern antisemitism if it was seen as having Christian antisemitism as its foundation. He was of the opinion that the Church's

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[24] M Braybrooke, *Children of One God* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1951), pp.14/15.
[25] Parkes, *Voyage of Discoveries*, p.175.
[26] Temple Papers, Vol 54, FO 59, L P L.
[27] Parkes, *Voyage of Discoveries*, p.213.
[28] A profile of him in *The Observer* dated 18 September 1960, was headed 'Scholar – Fighter'.
[29] J Lawson, PhD Thesis, The Anglican Understanding of the Third Reich and its Influence on the History and Meaning of the Holocaust, Southampton University 2001.
[30] James Parkes, *Christianity and Judaism: Conversion or Co-operation*, April 1942, Parkes Papers MS 60 17/10/02, S U A.

persistence in teaching its anti-Jewish tradition from the pulpit, and in church schools, kept the masses of Europe conscious and suspicious of the Jews even in the modern period.[31] Parkes' life in the church had been devoted to the investigation of Jewish-Christian relations since he first began with the Student Christian Movement in the 1920s. The entire thrust of his theology was geared towards exposing what he saw as the profound theological error of Christian anti-Judaism. Parkes argued that Christians misunderstood Christ's relationship with the Jewish community from which he came, by failing to appreciate that the objections to religious orthodoxy that he voiced were a dialogue within a community rather than a break from it. Consequently Parkes argued that Christianity and Judaism were different forms of a single faith. This original mistake had, according to Parkes, distorted Christian theology by spawning the understanding that each successive stage of God's revelation superseded that which had preceded it.[32] According to Parkes, however, the stages of God's revelation once achieved were never lost. The conqueror might flow over them, and appear to destroy them. '*In reality he destroys only himself: and when he has passed, nothing is missing in the picture except himself.*'[33] Parkes' view of the historical relationship between Judaism and Christianity influenced his perception of the contemporary relationship between the two faiths. If Christianity and Judaism were both equally valid stages of God's revelation then the idea of Christian missions to the Jews was supremely illogical.[34] Parkes considered that, while Christianity was a missionary religion, its relationship to Judaism was unique and called for a different approach: both Sinai and Calvary are channels for God's power. He maintained that both religions are part of one revelation of God: Judaism emphasising the community, while Christianity emphasises the person. Christians, therefore, needed to see this meaning of Sinai.[35] Parkes saw Judaism as a religion that taught the Law and encouraged its performance. It became the means by which a Jew could develop his/her identity, and identify other Jews as well. The Torah conveyed the Law and Jews responded by performing. Performance and responsibility were stressed in Judaism and the upshot of this was the lessening of any need to talk about salvation. One did not desire to be saved from the world in Judaism; rather one was taught the proper way in which to live in the world.

> *In Parkes' mind, this was the strength of Judaism and also the very place where Christian misunderstandings about Judaism begin.*[36]

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[31] Robert Everett, *Christianity Without Antisemitism: James Parkes and the Jewish Christian Encounter* (Oxford: Pergamon Press 1993), pp.238/9.
[32] Lawson, p.145.
[33] John Hadham, *Good God: A Study of His Character and Ailments* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books 1940), p.107.
[34] Lawson, p.145.
[35] Everett, p.45.
[36] Ibid, p.186.

The work which Parkes did on the history of antisemitism and Jewish history forced him to reject the traditional teachings about Jews. His favourite motto, *'Good theology cannot be based on bad history'* is at the heart of his theological revision. It does not automatically follow that good history will automatically produce good theology, but Parkes believed that any new Christian theology about Judaism would have to account for the historical evidence that militated against its anti-Jewish tradition. He also foresaw the argument that one should not tamper with Christian tradition 'just to please the Jews'. Parkes felt that changes had to be made in Christian theology for its own sake, for its own integrity, and not simply to ingratiate oneself with others.[37] Parkes concluded that the battle with antisemitism is the battle for decency and fellowship in communal life; '*and this is not a battle which concerns Jews only*'. He maintained that, even if antisemitism were due to the faults of the Jews, '*which it is not'*, it would still be foolish for others to leave it to the Jews to fight alone, or even to take the leading part in the struggle. Parkes argued that there were Jewish problems with which Jews must deal, just as there are problems in every human group. That is work Gentiles cannot do for them. But antisemitism is a Gentile problem, pre-eminently a Christian problem, and it is time [writing in 1948] that Christians and Gentiles realised that to pass resolutions of sympathy with its victims is a poor substitute for ensuring that the tale of its victims comes to an end.[38]

James Parkes was, of course, to live for another thirty-three years. In an obituary notice the Jewish Chronicle stated that he conceived it his duty to propagate his ideas, however unpopular, fortified in the knowledge that, as an esteemed *'honorary Jew'*, his friends would appreciate a candid assessment of the situation as he saw it.[39]

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[37] Ibid, p.251.
[38] James Parkes, *Judaism and Christianity* (London: Victor Gollancz 1948), p.179.
[39] *Jewish Chronicle*, 14 August 1981.

CHAPTER EIGHT

James Parkes and the Council of Christians and Jews. c 1935 – 1943

That James Parkes was active in the sphere of Jewish-Christian relations in the 1930s is evident from some of his correspondence. As early as 21 May 1936, W W Simpson wrote to Parkes saying that he had been approached by one of the YMCA secretaries asking if he could suggest *'really good lecturers, who from an impartial standpoint'* could give some cultural and historical lectures to their central clubs on matters about Jews and Christians. Parkes' name had been given.[1] On 20 October 1936, Neville Laski, then secretary of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, wrote to Parkes reminding him that he (Laski) had been in touch with him about speaking about Jews *'on your own volition'*. On 5 November, 1936, Laski wrote to Gordon Liverman saying that he was anxious to enlist the services of Parkes *'who occupies a unique position in the Christian world, to establish a liaison between the Jewish and Christian world, not least because of his academic position'*.[2] On 13 January, 1937, Parkes spoke on *The Treatment of Jews by Christians* at St Edmund's Church, London, as part of the Modern Churchmen's Union Course of addresses.[3] On 18 January, 1937, Parkes wrote to Laski informing him that he had received an invitation to speak on antisemitism at a meeting of the Willesden branch of the Jewish People's Council on 27 January, 1937.[4] In a letter written some time during 1938 – addressee unknown – Parkes stated that he was giving all his time to work on the Jewish question. He had lectured or preached in Liverpool, Manchester, Nottingham, Oxford, Cambridge, Croydon, Birmingham, London and elsewhere. He had also been invited to preach the MacBride University sermon at Oxford.[5] He was to visit Canada towards the end of 1938 at the invitation of the Committee on Jewish-Christian Relationships.

Perhaps a letter dated 20 July, 1939, which Parkes wrote to A G Brotman, then secretary of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, is indicative of his early interest in forming some kind of effective Jewish-Christian organisation. In this letter he spoke of the value an organisation equally composed of Jews and Christians might have at that time. He hoped to do something with the existing Society of Jews and Christians, rather than start a new society. He had been working with a group of Jews and Christians to determine what could be done. He thought that what was needed was:-

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[1] MS 60 16/715 SUA
[2] ACC 3121/C15/3/17 LMA
[3] Ibid
[4] Ibid
[5] Ibid

1. a full-time London secretary of the Society of Jews and Christians, working under a London Committee and promoting discussions and lectures in the corporate clubs within London – churches, synagogues, political clubs, youth organisations and boys' clubs; and
2. further exploitation of a wider field.

He had also decided that the only way to tackle the general public was through their ordinary reading matter: the usual type of meeting was out-of-date.[6]

Following this, there seems to have been considerable activity by a number of people, including Mrs Kathleen Freeman, a prominent Anglican lay-reader and one-time president of the National Council of Women, Bishop George Bell of Chichester, Rabbi Mattuck (Liberal Synagogue), Rev W R Matthews (Dean of St Paul's), Professor S Brodetsky (President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews), A G Brotman (Secretary BDBJ), W W Simpson, Rev Henry Carter (to whom reference will be made later) and James Parkes. There also seems to have been a number of meetings, some at the Holborn Restaurant. On 15 July, 1941, Simpson wrote to James Parkes saying that he was worried because he had not realised until recently, to what an extent one of the proposed gatherings was tied up with the Society of Jews and Christians. He had no prejudice against the Society as such but it was no use pretending that it was possible to get the Orthodox to co-operate with it. He was not so worried about people like Lady Reading and Sir Robert Waley Cohen – they were not really alive to the tensions which existed in the community. It was more important to get the effective help of one or two others, including Brotman, who represented the main body of Orthodoxy. If some sort of group that was independent of the Society could be set up it would be possible to gain the support of those and other Orthodox leaders. In the strictest confidence he warned that the proposed new movement should not be too closely identified with the good lady – (presumably Mrs Freeman) – who was so largely instrumental in getting the meeting together. She was *'a very good soul in lots of ways'* but he was not sure she was altogether sound *'from the point of view we are aiming at'*. She was on the British Jews Society –her object was to try and reform the Society *'almost beyond redemption'*.[7] Parkes does not appear to have responded directly to this.

In a letter dated 27 September, 1941, to Professor Brodetsky, Mrs Freeman stated that a number of Jews and Christians had met on 10 July, 1941, to discuss the subject *'What are the Causes for Antisemitism and the Means for Combating it in this Country'*. She said a small committee had been formed to draw up an agenda for a future meeting when a practical policy should be formulated. The meeting was to be held on 27 October, 1941,

[6] Ibid
[7] MS 60 16/715 SUA

when the Dean of St Paul's would attend. Professor Brodetsky replied on 5 October also agreeing to attend.[8] At this time there does seem to have been some 'crossing of the wires' about trying to get a Jewish-Christian organisation into being, because on 6 October, 1941, Professor Brodetsky had written to W W Simpson thanking him for his letter of 20 September with the draft of a *'Statement of Aims'* to be submitted to a lunch on 19 November, 1941, at which William Temple, then Archbishop of York, would preside. The draft read:

> *To consider the extent to which the danger of antisemitism involved in the repression of religious liberty can be averted by Jews and Christians working severally and together for the furtherance of those principles of justice, tolerance and social righteousness upon which that civilisation must ultimately rest.*[9]

In addition to the meeting held on 10 July, 1941, previously referred to, another (luncheon) meeting was held in the York room of the Holborn Restaurant on 3 September, 1941. Among those present were W W Simpson, Professor Brodetsky, Mr Leonard J Stein, Sir Robert Waley Cohen and Rev Henry Carter. (James Parkes was not present). The meeting seems to have decided that the first practical step should be that a consultative group should be formed of about eight leading Christians and the same number of leading Jews who would meet at regular intervals in order to find a common ethical basis and to promote the feeling of comradeship and common purpose among Jews and Christians in this country. Preliminary to this a smaller body of, say, two Christians and two Jews should draw up a memorandum suggesting the basis on which the consultative group could be called together. Rabbi Mattuck had previously expressed some criticisms of these suggestions and it was agreed that he should be contacted about them.[10] Mattock, who for many years played a leading part in the Society of Jews and Christians, had been involved in the negotiations all along, but was concerned that there seemed to be two separate groups in the process of formation. He knew that Simpson had recently lunched with Parkes who was, of course, willing to attend the luncheon conference on 19 November, as a Christian representative. Parkes was said to be well aware of the difficulties associated with the Society of Jews and Christians. He was also concerned about various proposed approaches to Chatham House (headquarters of the Royal Institute of International Affairs) and the Ministry of Information, etc.; Parkes had always been of the opinion that these should not be the concern of any formal body. He was, himself, working along those lines informally, through some of the personal contacts he had: he considered that that side of the matter

[8] ACC 3121/C15/3/21
[9] Ibid
[10] Ibid

could be left in his hands.[11] Parkes' attitude can be well understood because, at about this time, he had been invited by an official of Chatham House to help form a group on Jewish issues.[12]

The lunch, already referred to, was duly held at Grosvenor House on 19 November, 1941. To this William Temple had invited leaders of the communities to discuss what should be done. Among those invited – and who attended – was Dr Hertz, the Chief Rabbi. In his invitation the Archbishop stated that he hoped to invite more Jews and Christians to meet them in order to consider *'the great interests we have in common.'*[13] There were four Jewish representatives present and eleven Christian representatives. These included Rev Henry Carter, W W Simpson and James Parkes. The purpose of the Conference was said to be:

> *To consider the changes to civilisation involved in religious and racial intolerance and to establish means by which Christians and Jews, working severally and together, can further strengthen the practice of those principles of justice, tolerance and social righteousness which are common to Christianity and Judaism and which they believe are fundamental to civilisation and to the peace of the human race.*[14]

(It will be noted that this is broadly similar to the 'Statement of Aims' already referred to.) At this conference it was agreed '*that a committee be appointed to prepare a basis of and constitution for a Council to carry forward the work of the conference as outlined in the invitation, with the regard to what has been said in the conference.*' It was also agreed that the Archbishop should, in consultation, choose the seven Christian representatives on the committee and that the Chief Rabbi and Professor Brodetsky should choose the seven Jewish representatives. James Parkes was one of the seven Christian representatives.

One difficulty in setting up the new organisation was the 'vexed question' of its role vis-à-vis the society of Jews and Christians, founded nearly twenty years earlier. One suggestion had been to build on the existing Society of Jews and Christians, a suggestion favoured by James Parkes. A difficulty with this was that the Chief Rabbi, Dr J M Hertz, had often strongly criticised any form of 'religious fraternisation', which he regarded as *'neither desired nor desirable'*. He had often cited the Society of Jews and Christians as a prime example of this. Yet, obviously, there could not be any form of Council in which the Chief Rabbi did not take a leading part. This 'vexed question' would not seem to go away because on 9 November, 1941, the secretary of the Board of Deputies of British Jews had written to W W Simpson enquiring about the difference between the new Council and the Society of Jews and Christians. Simpson appears to have taken the line that the two bodies were quite

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[11] Ibid
[12] James Parkes, Voyage of Discoveries (London: Victor Gollancz, 1969), p.148
[13] ACC 3121/C15/3/21
[14] ACC 3121/E1/51

distinct inasmuch as the new movement was directed largely at the present-day increase in antisemitism, particularly in reception areas for refugees. Such matters were distinct from those in which the Society of Jews and Christians were involved.[15] On 4 December, 1941, Simpson replied to a letter from Dr Daiches, of Edinburgh, a Jewish representative, on the same subject. He said that he could not say, then, if there would be any co-operation between the Society and the new Council, but that no doubt, if it were at all possible, the new Council would have some sort of liaison with the Society and similar Jewish-Christian endeavours even if there was no intention of supervision.[16]

In spite of all the misgivings, however, on 20 March, 1942, the decision was taken to form the Council of Christians and Jews and an Executive Committee was set up, with a membership of twenty. Its Christian members included James Parkes. W W Simpson and A G Brotman were appointed joint secretaries. From the outset, however, there were problems. On 8 June Parkes wrote to Professor Brodetsky, President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews and also a Jewish member of the Executive Committee, stating *'I want to resign'*, but before doing so he wished to explain his reasons and, at the same time, hear whether Brodetsky felt that any serious harm would be done to the Jewish cause by his resignation.[17] He asked to be forgiven for a long letter (more than three A4 pages) but considered that he should explain his reasons fairly clearly. He then set these out with painstaking care: they make interesting reading; and are worth summarising. Parkes said that he had long been convinced that apart from *research*, there were two possible forms of Christian-Jewish organisations, and that these two were quite distinct and could not be mixed. Firstly, there was the action of which the history of the last seventy-five years gave us a number of examples: where a group of explicit Christians – or singly non-Jews – who genuinely sympathised with the Jewish cause, and who were genuinely hostile to antisemitic speech or activity, supported the Jews in their protests or proposals. As an example of these Parkes referred to various societies, in which the word 'Jewish' did not occur, and which existed on the continent and elsewhere. In these societies, the motive was *'frankly Jewish'*. The contribution of the Christians was primarily their name and their goodwill. In the majority of cases they were in no sense experts on the Jewish question nor possessed any knowledge of the issues independent of that provided by their Jewish colleagues. Parkes added that he had nothing whatever to say against such actions which arose naturally out of the 19th century rebirth of antisemitism, and had an obvious validity today, and for many Christians such societies were the only way in which they could express their feelings.[18]

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[15] ACC 3121/C15/3/21
[16] Ibid
[17] Ibid
[18] Ibid

Parkes then went on to say that there was a second kind of co-operation which went much farther and for which he had been working for years. It was a desire for co-operation of this second kind which underlay his suggestion two or three years earlier that a group (of Jews) should regularly meet informally, at lunch, a group of prominent gentiles. As Brodetsky knew, Parkes secured the gentile members of the group but Brodetsky *'decided not to go on with it'*. When, shortly after this, Mrs Freeman was introduced to Parkes by the Bishop of Chichester, he saw the prospect of working to the same kind of end again, from a rather more specifically Christian standpoint, and this underlay the help which he gave to Mrs Freeman. His objective, in both cases, was to build up a group in which Jews and Christians could come to know each other sufficiently intimately to talk over Jewish problems very fully and very frankly, until a body of informed *non-Jewish* (Parkes' emphasis) opinion came into existence, which would be able to speak on its own authority. Out of such contacts he hoped that two things would emerge:

1. He felt that there were frequently situations in which the responsible Jewish organisations, through their lack of touch with the kind of gentile opinion with which he was constantly in contact, did the wrong thing in their defence or propaganda and made mistakes (he said it quite frankly) which they ought not to have made and need not have made.
2. On the other side, his own isolation continually frightened him – as it still did – and he wanted to share his intimate contacts with Brodetsky with a group of fellow gentiles who could correct and supplement his many failings.[19]

He went on to say that at the moment when the Chichester-Freeman action *'was taken out of our hands and Henry Carter[20] took control'* he (Parkes) was too slow-witted to realise that all chance of the activity thus created getting anywhere near the second category had vanished. He did not criticise *'the group of you'* who were responsible for this because, as he said, he fully recognised that the first type of society was an honest activity in Jewish circumstances. But he was now wholly convinced that it was only to the first type of activity that the Council as constituted could possibly lead. The important point was that he was driven to the conclusion that to continue his membership of the Council would make it impossible for him to do anything along the second line, which he still believed to be much more fundamental, and to be likely in the long run to reap much more valuable results.[21]

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[19] Ibid

[20] 'Reading between the lines' it would seem that there was no love lost between Parkes and Carter, who chaired the Executive Committee of the Council for a number of years. There is no reference to Carter in the index of Parkes' *'Voyage of Discoveries'*. In the index of Braybrooke's *'Children of One God'* there is approximately an equal number of references to Parkes and to Carter.

[21] ACC 3121/C15/3/21

Parkes continued that he had come to this conclusion because it appeared to him to be quite definite that the main interest of the Council was one kind or another of political activity. In any approach to any section of the British government they were not approaching ignorance or malevolence – they were approaching people who had adopted a definite point of view with a considerable amount of knowledge and due deliberation. Where, in the past, the Board of Deputies had considered their action to be wrong or defective it had approached them by way of protest or discussion, and this was its obvious right. *'Now you want to bring in the help of Christian names for quite similar action'*. Parkes was not sure whether this would have the hoped-for effect, *'but there is no reason why you should not try it'*. One thing which must be recognised, however, was that the Home Office, or any other office, seeing the name Sir Robert Waley Cohen, Professor Brodetsky or Mr Brotman, would, in Parkes' opinion, be at the most only slightly more impressed than they were before by the fact that there were a couple of silent Christians in the background, and that the name of the organisation which the deputation represented was no longer the Board of Deputies, the Defence Committee, or the Trades Advisory Council, but the Council of Christians and Jews. *'You cannot alter this situation because, in fact, the deputation will be yours; the facts which the deputation goes to present are facts which you have accumulated; the opinions which they represent are your opinions'*. All that the Christians would bring would be a sincere sympathy and goodwill.[22]

Parkes was convinced that the Christian members of those deputations, insofar as they became known to the authorities in this connection, would and could only be *'so and so who came with those Jewish fellows'*, and *'while you will lose nothing because you have every right to put forward your own views and researches on matters which concern you intimately'*, Parkes knew that the Christians would be regarded either as cat's-paws by the hostile or as a benevolent chorus by the kindly.[23] Parkes then went on *'Partly because I am an idiot at that kind of thing, and partly because I do not live in London'*, he had talked to fewer prominent people than he ought to have about the Jewish question, but he attached great importance to the fact that when he had spoken to anyone of this kind it had been at their request. The initiative had not come from him, it had usually been some friend who, in the course of conversation, had told the person concerned that it would be worth their while to have a talk with Parkes and that person had written and asked him if he would go and see him. From the moment when he appeared as a junior and silent member of the kind of deputation which the Council would produce, that was going to cease and he would simply become one of the gentiles whom the Jews brought in with their deputations. He had

[22] Ibid
[23] Ibid

nothing to say against that position except that he thought he could do something more useful.[24]

On the other hand he was already acquiring an uncomfortable position in the Council by his opposition to those political conversations and it would be quite intolerable for him if he had to refuse the Council's request to take part in such a deputation – as he would certainly have refused had he been asked to join the (recent) interview with the Public Relations Officer of the Home Office. He was convinced that with the shape which the Council was taking his absence would not be important: his name was not known to the public; and he added nothing to the prestige of the Council in the kind of publicity which was envisaged. From the point of view of the Council which he had outlined, he agreed that it was more important to have Lord This, That and The Other and to build up a membership as they were doing. But he was still most anxious to work towards the other objective, even if it took years. He was now in the position where, directly or indirectly, he was getting more opportunities of talking to important people. On the other hand, Brodetsky knew him well enough to know that he would not do anything which, he was convinced, would injure the Jewish position. What he was afraid of was that after the existence and membership of the Council had been made public, a point would arise where his *'beastly conscience'* would compel him to resign, and probably explain why he had done so. If he went now he could slip out quietly with, he believed, no harm done. Parkes concluded his letter by saying that, he would always remain available for consultation on any question where he could be useful.[25]

Brodetsky replied to Parkes' letter on 11 June 1942, and said that he did not think that resignation would be a helpful step and asked him to defer this until he and Brotman had had a talk. Brotman – to whom Parkes had also written about resignation – replied on 10 June that he considered the Council should be a body at which Jews and Christians could come to table and talk frankly about Jewish problems without any reservations. He thought that Parkes was rather too modest about the value of his appearing together with some other gentiles of distinction in a deputation, even if it was quite obvious that any such deputation was motivated by Jews.[26]

There appear to have been some telephone conversations about this matter until, on 15 June, Parkes wrote again to Brodetsky and Brotman beginning by saying that he thought his explosion had been useful for performing that essential political function of *'clarifying the dripping'*. He summarised what he thought was the present position.

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[24] Ibid
[25] Ibid
[26] Ibid

1. If only a *'gentile umbrella'* was wanted, as a perfectly legitimate assistance in the extremely difficult and urgent problems confronting the Jews at the present moment, they could go ahead without him.
2. If they wanted to go much farther and develop a real common mind in a group of influential Christians and Jews, then he would stay put; and they work towards this objective recognising that it was a slower job and might not be much use for immediate necessities.
3. In practice (as Brotman's letter had suggested) the Christian end might get pushed a bit, because of its need to do something about a present concrete problem.[27]

Parkes then went on to say that if he had understood the position rightly – and that 2 was wanted more than 1 – he would certainly not resign, and he would transfer his barrage to the Christians, for in that case the quality of the actual Christian members of the Executive became extremely important and the present position must be regarded as most unsatisfactory from Brotman's standpoint. A much more serious effort must be made to get into contact with, and to get full value out of, the very small group of Christians who had independent knowledge and understanding of aspects of the Jewish question. Parkes added that this need not be a battle between him and Henry Carter, although he did not see how they could get out of having Henry Carter in the chair for the coming year or two, but he (Parkes) must try to widen the Christian membership *and attendance* (Parkes' emphasis). Brotman replied the following day and said there was no question of the Council or the Christian members of it being used as an *'umbrella'* to help in present and future difficulties. He added *'Please do not talk of resigning'* and Parkes did not resign.[28]

Parkes appears to have been upset by the turn of events at recent meetings. At a meeting of the Council on 7 May, 1942, he asked that an opportunity should be afforded for discussing general lines of policy in order that clear directions might be given to the Executive whose function it was to act as a policy committee and which had necessarily been chiefly concerned with matters affecting the constitution and organisation of the Council. He asked, too, that special attention should be given to the two major tasks inevitably confronting the Council, viz the combating of antisemitism and the promotion of greater knowledge and better understanding between Jews and Christians. He drew attention to three specific points: education, centres in which there was a dense Jewish population and foreign contacts and publicity. Members of the Council expressed general sympathy with and approval of the considerations advanced by Parkes and agreed to direct the Executive Committee, in considering the constitution, to allow for the largest practical measure of

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[27] Ibid
[28] Ibid

flexibility in the meeting for carrying out the aims of the Council. At the meeting of the Executive Committee on 20 May, 1942, suggestions made by Parkes at the previous meeting about the formation of a general policy for the Council's activities were discussed and it was agreed to accept as a basis for immediate action the points made by him, with the possible addition of another. Four persons, Jews and Christians, not necessarily members of the Executive or of the Council, should be invited to act as convenors in the formation of small advisory groups. Rabbi Mattuck and Parkes were asked to consult together with a view to suggesting, for the approval of the Executive Committee, the names of persons who might act in this way. At the meeting of the Executive Committee on 4 June, 1942, Parkes reported on discussions between Rabbi Mattuck and himself. The Committee, however, did not seem too impressed and did not think they needed to be acted upon. Four days later Parkes wrote his letter about resigning.[29]

Ironically, perhaps, Parkes, himself, was the cause of some dissatisfaction with the running of the Council. On 9 June, 1942, Sir Robert Waley Cohen wrote to W W Simpson, joint secretary, saying that he did not like the way in which certain members, most of all Parkes, were treating the Council, as a body for the combating of antisemitism. He thought that Parkes had devoted so much thought and time to trying to overcome difficulties that he could think of little else and he was so active-minded that he tended to drive everyone too much into the negative side. That matter, however, seems happily to have been resolved.[30]

Some rumblings of discontent appear to have continued for some time. In a memo to Brotman dated 26 June 1942, Professor Brodetsky stated that he had seen Parkes who said that a series of pamphlets about the work of the Council had been produced but none was of the type he had specifically requested. Parkes also mentioned his dissatisfaction with some of the Christian members of the Executive Committee. His main objection was that Henry Carter was the sole arbiter for nominations and he did not consult any colleagues.[31]

In spite, however, of all its early difficulties, the Council has survived and last year celebrated its 60th anniversary. This was marked by a reception at St James' Palace in November, given by H M the Queen, Patron of the Council. In his autobiography, Parkes says that he remained a member of the Executive of the Council until retirement and *'their meetings were one of the occasions I tried not to miss.'*[32]

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[29] MS 65 2/1 SGA
[30] ACC 3121/C15/3/21
[31] Ibid
[32] Parkes, *Voyage of Discoveries*, p.213

CONCLUSION

As a result of the material presented throughout this thesis, it will be apparent to the reader that James Parkes was a pioneer in Jewish-Christian relations. Appalled at the hostility and opposition to Jewish students generated by a crisis in the universities resulting from the political and social aftermath of World War 1, for many years he ploughed a lonely furrow in seeking the reasons for antisemitism and not only exposing this evil but also searching for a solution to it. Parkes distinguished 'antisemitism' from the 'Jewish Problem'. In his autobiography he stated that antisemitism arose from the picture of the Jews which Christian theologians extracted from their reading of the Old Testament, 'a work for whose every word they claimed divine authority'.[1] He used the phrase 'Jewish Problem' in a positive, objective sense to denote the negative social and political circumstances of Jews, sometimes interchanging it with the 'Jewish question'.[2] Parkes, of course, remained deeply interested in these matters throughout his life.

He wrote that one of the pleasures resulting from both being a pioneer and growing old was the ability to see things and people develop. He had in mind, particularly, the Council of Christians and Jews, which he had done so much to bring into existence and which he saw develop from tenuous beginnings into a substantial national organisation, with the Queen as patron.[3]

The Council now has 57 branches throughout the UK as well as a 'parliamentary group' which carries on all its letters and publications the logo *Making Dialogue Make A Difference*. This has stepped over a new threshold going beyond the dialogue between Christians and Jews. While its central concern remains Christian-Jewish relations, the Council of Christians and Jews has been seen since its inception as a pathfinder for inter-faith dialogue in society as a whole, and it continues to develop relationships with different faith communities, particularly Muslims. As the Council's Director recently stated: '... the Council of Christians and Jews' 60 years of experience is invaluable in promoting bilateral dialogue with other faiths, and with Islam in particular'. The Council has also initiated an important new development: its *Further Dialogue Group*. This group meets regularly and its object is to share different experiences and offer mutual support. This development responds to the concern of many of the Council's constituent groups about tensions between them and Muslims. Beyond the issue of Israel-Palestine, there are, only too evidently, problems around the world between Christians and Muslims which have effect on relations in

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[1] James Parkes, *Voyage of Discoveries* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1969), p.213

[2] Peter F Gilbert, The Analysis of Antisemitism in the Theological, Historical and Sociological Criticism of James Parkes. Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, University of Toronto, 2003, p.1.

[3] Parkes, p.174

Britain.[4] James Parkes - as has been said a pioneer - would have been delighted at these developments. In his autobiography Parkes also referred to the first International Conference of Christians and Jews held in Oxford in 1946, which he and his wife attended.[5] This was one of the great landmarks in the development of the Christian-Jewish dialogue. Its theme *Freedom, Justice and Responsibility* was carefully chosen. Its purpose, as the then Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr Geoffrey Fisher) wrote in a letter to *The Times* on 25th June 1946, was

> 'to consider the practical part which Christians and Jews can play in educating themselves and their fellow men for the exercise of responsible citizenship in a society based upon mutual respect, freedom and justice'.[6]

In a remarkable way the Conference anticipated much of what was to come in the following years.

In 1947, Parkes attended the second International Conference which was held in Seelisberg, Switzerland. Described as an 'emergency conference' this second gathering of Christians and Jews turned from the wider-ranging discussions of the Oxford Conference to the particular problem of antisemitism, which would, of course, have interested Parkes intensely. As stated in the Introduction to this thesis, the main outcome of this conference was that in an *Address to the Churches* it set out which were soon to become widely known as *The Ten Points of Seelisberg* which took the form of a series of suggestions for the guidance of preachers and teachers in their presentation of the relations between Judaism and Christianity, especially of the story of the crucifixion.

For some years efforts, stimulated by the (British) Council of Christians and Jews, had been made to set up an International Council of Christians and Jews. This had been suggested at the 1946 Oxford Conference. In 1948 a meeting was held at the Catholic University of Fribourg, Switzerland, to discuss the suggestion. James Parkes attended. One of the moving spirits behind this was Everett Clinchy, founder of the National Conference of Christians and Jews in the United States. At this conference a constitution was drawn up and adopted and it then only remained for the constituent organisations to ratify the agreement reached by their representatives in Fribourg. Unfortunately the American representative was advised by UNESCO and some other bodies that there was some objection to the wording; hence the constitution was not ratified.[7] In fact, for a variety of reasons, an International Council of Christians and Jews was not established until 1974 - within Parkes' lifetime - although international consultations continued to be held.

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[4] *International Council of Christians and Jews News*, No.28, Autumn 2003.
[5] Parkes, p.213.
[6] W W Simpson and R Weyl, *The Story of the International Council of Christians and Jews* (1997), p.2.
[7] Ibid, p.29.

One of these - which James Parkes again attended - was held in Cambridge in 1966. This was a major conference to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the first Oxford International Conference of Christians and Jews. Apart from producing a number of reports including a critique of the declarations made by the Vatican Council in 1965 (*Nostra Aetate*) the conference also produced a definition of Christian-Jewish dialogue. The definition confirmed that dialogue had proved an enrichment of faith in God to committed Jews and Christians alike and had dispelled many misunderstandings of each about the faith and practice of the other. The conference believed that it was not only consistent with their several loyalties to Church and Synagogue, but that it also increased inter-religious harmony as the problems and needs of a changing world were faced.[8] James Parkes was always opposed to proselytism and in favour of dialogue: this definition would, no doubt, have given him great satisfaction.

Writing of the early 1960s, Parkes stated that one of the most encouraging facts which emerged during this period was the growing involvement of Roman Catholic scholars in the revision of the traditional Christian attitude to Judaism. In 1945 it was possible for an English Roman Catholic scholar to write a pamphlet on *The Pope and the Jews* which was full of the grossest mis-statements, and made 'the wildest claims for the Vatican and Catholic clergy' and to be published and defended by the Council of Christians and Jews. This, in fact, happened and, as a result, Parkes threatened to resign from the Council.[9] He also referred to the case, in 1961, of an Irish Roman Catholic priest being able to find a publisher to print, and a distinguished Catholic scholar to introduce, another outrageous work in which Jews were made subtly responsible for the whole history of antisemitism. Some good, however, did come out of this as it brought Parkes into contact with the Sisters of Sion who created 'a real centre' for biblical and Jewish scholarship in London. Parkes became a lecturer on Palestine for this organistion.[10]

As Parkes recognised, the extensive changes brought about in the Roman Catholic Church's attitude to Judaism occurred during the pontificate of John XXIII. They have been referred to in the Introduction and came to a head at the Second Vatican Council in 1964. Parkes was not only gratified at these changes but also at their impact on Jewish-Christian relations in this country. He realised that tribute had to be paid at the time to the Dominican Order in England which initiated a Catholic-Jewish conference which became for some years an annual event, bringing in other Christians and held under the auspices of the Council of Christians and Jews, although this has since been discontinued. As a result of all the changes Parkes agreed that it would be unthinkable to plan any Jewish-Christian encounter in which

[8] Ibid, p.35.
[9] Parkes, p.233.
[10] Idem, p.235.

full Catholic co-operation was not expected. He recognised, however, that this did not mean that there were still not difficulties ahead. He knew from his own experience how deeply a contemptuous and hostile attitude to post-Christian Judaism had eaten into Christian consciousness and remarks could innocently be made which were deeply offensive *'to our patient Jewish friends'*.[11]

Thus, throughout his life, Parkes' scholarly output was prodigious. One of his best-known books written in 1962 - *A History of the Jewish People* - has been translated into German, Dutch, Italian and Spanish. In fact, one of the best ways to become acquainted with Jewish-Christian relations - and other related problems throughout the centuries - is to study Parkes' works.

James Parkes retired to Dorset in 1964, although for some years he remained active, lecturing, speaking, writing and conducting communion services in local churches, just as he had always done. He was, at all times, concerned to ensure that his unique collection of some 7,000 books and treatises should be safeguarded, although this involved formidable difficulties. The Parkes Library was registered in August 1956, and later set up in the University of Southampton.

In 1996 the Parkes Centre for the Study of Jewish/non-Jewish (*N.B. non-Jewish not simply Christian*) relations was formed in the University, as the first Jewish studies centre in the world to focus on the role and place of Jews in the non-Jewish world from earliest times to the present. This is based on the Parkes Library and archive, which represents one of the largest and most impressive Jewish documentation centres in the world. Today the Parkes Library forms the basis of one of the University Library's special collections and consists of both an archive and a printed section. The archive contains James Parkes' personal papers and a wealth of material relating both to his own work and to a broad range of topics of interest to historians. The Parkes Library remains unique since it is the only collection devoted to the relationships between Jewish and non-Jewish worlds. It includes books by most of the important writers on Jewish history from the fifteenth century to date as well as over 360 periodical titles. Accommodation for both the archive and the library is being improved at the present time.

James Parkes was President of the Jewish Historical Society of England, 1949-51, one of only four non-Jews to be elected to this position and in 1970 he was made an honorary fellow of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Honorary doctorates were also conferred upon him by the Jewish Institute of Religion, New York and the University of Southampton. When he received the honorary degree of D Litt from the University of Southampton, the public orator paid tribute to him as *'a scholar in an age of unreason, an individualist in an*

[11] Idem, p.235.

age of conformity and a tolerant man in an age of intolerance'[12] - an apposite epitome of his life and work. Indeed, the position of James Parkes on Jewish-Christian relations may truly be described as unique: he had a forceful personality; and this, together with a dogged determination to seek out the reasons for antisemitism and to search for a solution to it, tended to make him an isolated figure in Christianity, even in the liberal Anglican movement of his day.

[12] *Jewish Chronicle*, 14 August 1981.

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