

THE RECONCILIATION OF CHURCH AND SYNAGOGUE

IN FRANZ ROSENZWEIG

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ABSTRACT

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The "Two Covenant" theory of Franz Rosenzweig, which seeks to relate Christianity and Judaism in such a way that their apparent antipathy is effectively resolved by making them complementary, is examined in the context of the life and experience of its author. Rosenzweig's experience of Judaism and Christianity and his change of heart first towards Judaism, and then Christianity, and his ultimate settled commitment to Judaism are seen as contributing to the formulation of the theory. His major work, The Star of Redemption, various letters and occasional writings are examined where they relate to the theme of this thesis. Rosenzweig's view of the Synagogue and his view of the Church are examined, and the views of other writers on these themes and on Rosenzweig's theory are considered. Comments and an evaluation of Rosenzweig's position conclude the thesis.

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## INTRODUCTION

Franz Rosenzweig belongs to the twilight which marks the end of a period in German Jewry's history which began with great promise with Moses Mendelssohn in the eighteenth century and ended in stark tragedy in the twentieth. The problems of persecution, assimilation, and the challenge of the surrounding culture which are never far from Jews in exile, take on the shades and colours peculiar to Rosenzweig's period as we examine his life and work.

One special contribution which arises from the experiences, studies and special insights of this outstanding figure of Jewish thought is his "Two Covenant" theory of the relationship between God, Israel and the Church. Rosenzweig first broadly indicates the terms of God's dealings with the world, but then makes a qualification with regard to Israel. The covenant between God and the world is seen by Rosenzweig to operate through the mediation of Jesus of Nazareth. He says, "We are wholly agreed as to what Christ and his church mean to the world: no one can reach the Father save through him."<sup>1</sup> As these words were written after Rosenzweig had considered and decided against being baptized himself, this position of Rosenzweig and his fellow-Jews naturally requires clarification. He gives this clarification by saying, "But the situation is quite different for one who does not have to reach the Father

because he is already with him. And this is true of the people of Israel (although not of individual Jews)."2

Thus God's covenant with Israel is seen to be of a different nature from that with the rest of the world. Whereas one is a "Way", involving movement into a covenant relationship with the Father, the other is a "Life", which is itself a relationship with God and, in Rosenzweig's view, exempts the Jew from any recourse to the mediation of Jesus. The full implications of these two covenants are brought out as Rosenzweig describes, in his other writings, the two communities which the respective covenants produce.

An examination of Rosenzweig's career prior to his enunciation of this theory throws considerable light on the development of his thinking and will help to outline the situation to which Rosenzweig addressed himself. Two currents are to be seen operating in his life. One carries him towards Christianity, and the other and stronger current, carries him away from Christianity to Judaism, so they would seem to be irrevocably opposed. But, because Rosenzweig in his later phase very carefully outlines Judaism as a "non-Way"<sup>3</sup>, his earlier description of Jesus as the only way would seem to be capable of incorporation alongside Judaism in a self-consistent system. The feasibility of this device, both as a rationalisation of Rosenzweig's own experience, and as a possible bridge between the separated Jewish and Christian communities is well worth examining.

## CHAPTER I

### BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY ON ROSENZWEIG

Franz Rosenzweig was born in Cassel, Germany on December 25th, 1886. Both his parents were Jewish and were identified with the Jewish community. They expected Franz, their only child, to be similarly identified, although Judaism and Jewishness in general did not dominate the home. His father, George, and his mother, Adele, were respected members of the wider community with a wide circle of influential friends. They could hold a leading social position in this German city and were able to give their son Franz a fine secular education without being required to renounce their Jewish identity. But this acceptance and progress in the non-Jewish world were not achieved without cost. The wide involvement of the family with the life of the larger community in its social and cultural activities seems, in their case, to have brought about an attenuation of their practice of their ancestral faith. Thus, the home in which Franz Rosenzweig grew up lacked a vital atmosphere of enthusiasm and devotion to things Jewish, although the festivals and certain ceremonies such as Bar Mitzvah were still observed.

There was one member of the household, a grand-uncle, Adam Rosenzweig, whose interest in Jewish life was more vital than that of the parents and through this relative came a certain

amount of exposure to the Jewish spirit which would otherwise have been lacking. But so far as a systematic education in the traditional Jewish manner is concerned, Rosenzweig's parents saw no need for equipping their son, Franz, in this way. Rosenzweig himself, lacking such parental guidance and even lacking parental example in Jewish matters beyond the barest essentials, was late in coming to a thorough examination of his Jewish heritage.

His secular education, however, was extensive and crowned with high academic achievement. Rosenzweig began to study medicine, but went on to major in history and philosophy and eventually, in 1912, took his Ph.D. This process of higher education from 1905 to 1912 would tend to give a form and content to his mind and thought which would influence all later development in his life. Questions would arise and answers would suggest themselves which would be absent from the thought of a more naive and less sophisticated person. But it would be equally true that in his later consideration of Judaism and even Christianity, Rosenzweig could only draw on the knowledge he had gained in the period between his major studies and after his graduation.

#### The Influence of Rosenstock-Huessy

As early as 1909 we find Rosenzweig meeting with friends in order to encourage what can be called a more "existential"

view of history.<sup>1</sup> Already at that time he was dissatisfied with the Hegelian approach to history which saw it as a process to be contemplated rather than as a situation in which a person must be actively involved. He brings this out in a letter to Hans Ehrenberg in 1910<sup>2</sup>, in which he indicates that a God merely observed in history was inadequate. What was needed was a God who could be encountered in religion. Here Rosenzweig is commenting on the general intellectual position of the twentieth century view of history and religion as contrasted with that of the nineteenth century.<sup>3</sup> He could see that the approach which he and others had inherited from Hegel was inadequate because it lacked a vital religious element.<sup>4</sup>

But it was when Rosenzweig was challenged as to his personal religious position by his friend Rosenstock-Huessy that he became particularly aware of its inadequacy. Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy was a lecturer in medieval constitutional law at Leipzig University. Rosenzweig had met him previously in Baden-Baden in 1910 and went to Leipzig to renew contact with him. Nahum Glatzer tells us "The two friends met daily for their noon meal. Frequently conversations between the two concerned contemporary academic philosophy and its failure to satisfy the spiritual needs of the individual."<sup>5</sup> The attraction that Rosenstock had for Rosenzweig is illustrated by Rosenstock's description of their common predicament.



"We both," he says, "were nearly drowned by a third force, neither Christian nor Jewish, the spirit of nineteenth century positivism. Our brotherhood consisted in our, both of us, emerging in vigorous swimming from the abyss of this faithless, godless 'world' without 'star, love, Fortune'. So our negation we had in common; and with regard to this negation, I was in the lead. With regard to the goal, we were in disagreement."<sup>6</sup>

At one particularly decisive encounter on July 7, 1913, Rosenzweig felt overwhelmed by the strength of his friend's argument for the primacy of divine revelation and confessed later, "I was inferior to him from the outset since I had to recognise for my part too the justice of his attack."<sup>7</sup>

Rosenstock's own evaluation of his friend's philosophically based position comes out in his account of the July 7th meeting. He says, "This conversation too was concerned with questions of faith. But it was not Judaism and Christianity that were there arrayed against each other, but rather faith based on revelation was contrasted with faith in philosophy. From this difference of orientation in that last important conversation, the difficulties in understanding which make themselves felt in the letters are explicable. It was just these difficulties which served to call forth a growing measure of clarity."<sup>8</sup>

The particular nature of this discussion of July 7th, 1913, is important for our present theme. Rosenstock-Huessy was of Jewish extraction but had become a convinced Christian

with a strong and articulate faith. Rosenzweig, as an intelligent and educated man, had naturally formed certain opinions on religious matters but, exposed to the probing of his friend's arguments, they crumbled into insignificance, even for Rosenzweig.

Rosenzweig found that he had to reconsider his view of Christianity. He said,

"I had 'Judaized' my view of Christianity. I had considered the year 313 as the beginning of a falling away from true Christianity, since it opened a path for the Christians in the opposite direction to that opened in the year 70 for the Jews. I had begrudged the Church its scepter, realizing that the synagogue bears a broken staff. You saw how, on this assumption, I began to re-construct my world. In this world (and anything outside the world unrelated to what is inside I did not then or do I now recognize) - in this world there seemed to me to be no room for Judaism."<sup>9</sup>

Rosenstock-Huessy, by the force of his arguments and by the influence of his own personal faith, had made a profound and lasting impression on Rosenzweig, and any position which Rosenzweig took in the future would have to give due weight to this experience.

Having decided that "there was no room for Judaism", Rosenzweig began to prepare himself for baptism as a Christian, thus following the example of Rosenstock-Huessy. But before this, Rosenzweig had already approved in principle the step he was about to take. He said of the baptism of his relative,

Hans Ehrenberg, "I really see nothing shameful in the whole matter. It's an excellent thing..."<sup>10</sup> This was written in 1909 to his parents, and in the same month Rosenzweig wrote, "Christianity has a tremendous advantage over Judaism: it would have been out of the question for Hans to become a Jew; a Christian, however, he can become."<sup>11</sup>

The inference here is that Ehrenberg, although like Rosenzweig of Jewish extraction, was neither Jew nor Christian. He would have to "become" one or the other, preferably the latter. Whatever rationalization kept Rosenzweig from following himself the advice he gave to his cousin was understandably inadequate when his own testing time came. But Rosenzweig decided that he "could turn Christian only qua Jew".<sup>12</sup> His mother sensed that he wanted to be baptized and Rosenzweig's reaction was to point to his New Testament saying, "Mother, here is everything, here is the truth. There is only one way, Jesus."<sup>13</sup> But his later statement, "I have reversed my decision. It is no longer necessary to me and, therefore, being what I am, no longer possible. I will remain a Jew"<sup>14</sup> indicates that another factor had begun to assert itself at this stage in his development.

As the time drew near for the 1913 celebration of Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement, Rosenzweig, who had gone to Berlin after being denounced as an apostate by his

mother,<sup>15</sup> attended the Atonement Day Service in a small orthodox synagogue. No clear indication of what transpired on that occasion is recorded, but Glatzer says, "The experience of this day was the origin of his radical return to Judaism."<sup>16</sup> This seems a reasonable inference when, in the same month, we find Rosenzweig saying that conversion to Christianity "no longer seems necessary to me."<sup>17</sup> He had been awakened to his religious need and it had seemed that Christianity was essential to him to fulfil that need. But this conclusion had not ended his search. Intellectually convinced, it seems he was not emotionally engaged in the way he was to be in Judaism. In the orthodox synagogue he would be confronted with an experience, not an argument, and it seems that there had been a response from Rosenzweig's heart which, although it could not invalidate his logic, could circumvent it like a stream flowing round an obstacle which it cannot move.

Faced now with the need to understand his new position, Rosenzweig began studying the sources of Judaism under Professor Hermann Cohen. Cohen had much to contribute to Rosenzweig's development, both from his learning and from his experience. Cohen had received a thorough grounding in Jewish traditional learning before taking up philosophy. A distinguished career in philosophy had been combined with an enthusiastic imbibing of and championing of the German culture and national spirit.

But after he had advocated the assimilation of the Jews into the German nation, whose Protestantism he felt was essentially alike to liberal Judaism, the impact of German anti-Semitism helped to revive his dormant Jewish loyalties and he began, in retirement, a defence of distinctive Judaism.<sup>18</sup> In Cohen, Rosenzweig could see living proof that philosophy was no substitute for religion, assimilation was an unsatisfying expedient, and the merging of Judaism and Christianity was an illusion.

Rosenzweig then served in World War I and by early 1916 was serving in Macedonia on the Balkan Front. Removed from the academic world and thrown very largely on his own intellectual resources without access to any adequate libraries or intellectual companions, he began to reflect on his own pilgrimage and the universal lessons to be learned from it. In this year he began a remarkable correspondence with his friend, Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy.

In this correspondence Rosenzweig seeks to carry on the struggle in which he had experienced temporary defeat in 1913. Still concerned with the relation of Israel and the Church and their respective relationships to God, he seeks to modify the position taken up on July 7, 1913, and seeks to show that his capitulation to Christianity was premature and, on reflection, unnecessary. The respective roles of Church and Synagogue are worked out to take account of all that Rosenzweig had learned

about both since the reversal of his decision to convert. These themes are also included in his work, The Star of Redemption.

This book, Rosenzweig's magnum opus, a major work on philosophical lines, begun to emerge during this period of war service. Rosenzweig began to write material for his book on Army postcards and sent them home to Germany for later incorporation in the finished work. The Star ranges much wider than the immediate issues dealt with in his letters, but it does contain among other things an outline of Judaism and Christianity, and their relation to one another and to God.

In attempting to work his ideas into a self-consistent whole, while maintaining intellectual integrity in his dealings with his friend Rosenstock-Huessy, Rosenzweig enunciated some very remarkable concepts and The Two Covenant Theory is outstanding among them. Rosenstock-Huessy and his Christian faith cannot be dismissed lightly by one who had grown to respect them so much. Neither could they be allowed to swallow up the Jewish faith which Rosenzweig had come to love. By including both Judaism and Christianity within his overall view of God's dealings with men, seeking to make them complementary rather than diametrically opposed, Rosenzweig might feel that justice had been done to both without loss to either.

After his release from the Army, Rosenzweig took up the study of the Talmud with Rabbi Nobel of Frankfort. He later

headed the Lehrhaus in that city which taught Judaism, and he did translation work on the poems of Judah Ha Levi and on the Bible. All these studies added to his stature as a Jewish scholar, but the formulation and enunciation of the Two Covenant Theory antedate these studies and owe nothing to what Rosenzweig learned later.

## CHAPTER II

### ROSENZWEIG'S PROBLEM

Because of his immersion in a society which made a strong profession of Christianity and, particularly, because of the impact of his friend Rosenstock's testimony, Rosenzweig could not ignore the Christian faith. But because he had been brought up to identify himself with Judaism even if in an attenuated form, he was equally unable to ignore Judaism.

In his own references to the Jewish faith before his crisis in 1913, Rosenzweig displays an attitude to Judaism which would seem to make a re-appraisal such as occurred in that year fairly predictable. In his diary for March 27, 1906, he asks, "And what is my own Judaism based upon? It is the religion of my forefathers ... I enjoy observing certain customs without having any real reason for doing so ... I believe in Plato ... I like to think in terms of biblical images."<sup>1</sup>

For a man of Rosenzweig's calibre such a faith as is indicated in this outline would be far from satisfying, so it is not surprising to find his personal dissatisfaction coming to the surface as he writes to his parents about the baptism of his relative, Hans Ehrenberg. He asks, "... can the empty notation in the registrar's office, "Religion Jewish", satisfy a religious need? If I am given the choice of an empty purse or a handful of money, must I choose the purse?"<sup>2</sup> Although



Rosenzweig used the personal pronoun, it might be thought that he did not have his own case in view. His statement could be taken as an argument against being an unenthusiastic Jew, and the evaluation of Judaism as "an empty purse" could be seen as the subjective estimate of an individual Jew who, for all his faith means to him, might as well be baptized. But, in a later letter which like the former was sent to his parents in November, 1909, he refers quite clearly to his own case and theirs. He writes,

We are Christian in everything. We live in a Christian state, attend Christian schools, read Christian books, in short our whole 'culture' rests entirely on a Christian foundation ... In Germany today the Jewish religion cannot be "accepted", it has to be grafted, on by circumcision, dietary observances, and Bar Mitzvah. Christianity has a tremendous advantage over Judaism.<sup>3</sup>

His comment in a letter sent in the following month to his parents reveals the special problems that Judaism faced in the German situation:

However, it doesn't rest with the children but with the parents, and religious instruction is of no avail, at least to us, without a religion that is seen, heard, tasted, and visibly exercised upon the body. With the Christians it's different.<sup>4</sup>

It is noteworthy that a comparison with Christianity is so frequent in Rosenzweig's comments on Judaism at this stage. He is not facing the simple issue of whether to retain or reject his Jewish heritage. He is not simply asking whether or not

his "passive enthusiasm"<sup>5</sup> for Judaism was an adequate response to the faith which was supposed to motivate his life. He is continually measuring Judaism as he experienced it against Christianity as he saw it all around him in German society, apparently guiding and motivating the whole of non-Jewish society. Perhaps there was already present in his mind the picture which was to have such a strong influence on his subsequent thinking, the representation of church and synagogue as portrayed in the cathedrals of Freiburg, Hamburg and Strasbourg, which showed a crowned female figure bearing a scepter to represent the church and a blindfolded figure, bearing a broken staff, to represent the synagogue.<sup>6</sup>

Rosenzweig's view of the relationship between church and synagogue as he saw them, prior to his Yom Kippur experience could be summed up in his statement already quoted, "Christianity has a tremendous advantage over Judaism."<sup>7</sup>

But Rosenzweig's estimate of Judaism being completely transformed by his Yom Kippur experience in October, 1913, gave the relationship problem an entirely new twist. German society, Christianity, and the world remained unchanged, and Rosenzweig still felt the need to orient himself in relationship to them. But, whereas before he had "reconstructed his world" and found "no room for Judaism"<sup>8</sup>, he now took up his stand for Judaism and sought to relate an apparently triumphant Christianity with the

faith he now embraced. Certain aspects of Judaism had obviously taken hold of Rosenzweig even prior to his crisis as we can see from his statements previously quoted - "It is the religion of my forefathers ... I enjoy observing certain customs ..."9

Also, in describing the ineffectiveness of Jewish religious instruction in Germany in 1909, he says

... religious instruction is of no avail, at least to us without a religion that is seen, heard, talked and visibly exercised upon the body.

This suggests that religious instruction by itself is not adequate "at least to us". He points out the responsibility of parents by saying, "... it doesn't rest with the children but with the parents". He says that what is lacking is a "religion that is seen, heard, talked and visibly exercised upon the body." Since it is Jewish parents who are held responsible for this lack in the lives of Jewish children which makes religious instruction in schools of "no avail"<sup>10</sup>, the inference is that Jewish instruction in the school must be complemented and reinforced by Judaism in the home such as observing Jewish laws about the Sabbath, food, clothing, washing, shaving, house-cleaning, candle-lighting, etc, would give a religious significance to acts which are not dealt with specifically by Christianity.

A phrase which occurs immediately after the last statement quoted above is significant here. Once again making a

comparison, Rosenzweig says, "With Christians it's different."<sup>11</sup>

In the negative context in which it occurs the suggestion is that a religion such as Christianity which does not rely so much on sense experience would be more adaptable and easier to communicate in a modern situation. But understood in a positive sense it could be a source of strength and even the statement "Christianity has a tremendous advantage over Judaism"<sup>12</sup> would now seem a mere statement of fact and not an argument in favour of adopting the other faith.

Rosenzweig seemed to be willing to make very large concessions to "the dominant faith" once he had ceased to feel personally involved in the outcome of his inquiry. Having decided that he would not himself become identified with Christianity, his inquiry would become more objective as he sought to find the meaning and significance of Christianity for others who, unlike himself, were not partakers of the divine covenant with Abraham. Christian writers have been impressed by the many positive statements that Rosenzweig makes about Christianity and have felt that these indicate that a significant initiative from the Jewish side was being made to bridge the gap between Church and Synagogue. But these statements have to be read in the sense in which Rosenzweig intended them.

Speaking of the period of the formulation of his Two Covenant Theory, Rosenzweig describes himself as "anti-Christian".<sup>13</sup>

A discussion of the power, influence, magnificence and admirable qualities of a person or institution does not necessarily indicate affection, just as sharp and painful criticism may not necessarily indicate hatred. Rosenzweig now felt sufficiently detached from the claims of Christianity to speak dispassionately about its apparent success in the world. Thus, his positive statements about Christianity, including his assertion that it is a valid way to God, in no way indicate that he was about to embrace Christianity when he made them, nor that he wanted his fellow-Jews to do so. Rather, it is because he had rejected Christianity and established a distance between himself and it that he could speak after this about its great and even beneficial influence and even validity for others, but not for himself and his fellow-Jews.

Likewise, his "anti-Christian" attitude did not require from him a vilification of Christianity or a denial of its good points. Rather, it implied a determined rejection of an opposition to any application of the message of Christianity to his own life. The significance of the positive statements, then, is that his position had been taken up after what he felt was a careful and fair examination of the facts of the situation.

## CHAPTER III

### ROSENZWEIG'S PROPOSED SOLUTION

#### CONVERSION TO CHRISTIANITY?

The crisis in Rosenzweig's relationship to Christianity came on July 7, 1913, during his conversation with Rosenstock, just as the crisis in his relationship to Judaism was to come later in his Yom Kippur experience in the same year.

Rosenstock made a determined attack on Rosenzweig's position which Rosenzweig himself called a "relativistic" position.<sup>1</sup> In this decisive discussion with Rosenstock, he came to revise his "entire conception of Christianity and of religion generally". Rosenzweig gives a rather confusing description of the development of his thought and he uses the expression "I Christianized my view of Judaism...I shared your faith," once to describe what he actually did, and once to describe what he had mistakenly thought he had done. The descriptions occur in a letter to Rudolf Ehrenberg soon after the decisive conversation with Rosenstock.<sup>2</sup>

Speaking of the more distant past he says, "I thought I had Christianized my view of Judaism, but in actual fact I had done the opposite." The correct description of his pre-Rosenstock view is then given. "I had Judaized my view of Christianity."<sup>2</sup> Rosenzweig also says of his pre-Rosenstock view of the year 313 A.D. "I had considered the year 313 as the beginning of a falling away

from true Christianity..I had begrudged the church its scepter.."3

There then follows a reconstruction of Rosenzweig's world and Glatzer interprets this as based on "the assumption that the year 313 meant progress and not distortion."4 As this is the opposite of the Judaizing view mentioned above and as Rosenzweig calls the opposite of this view "Christianizing my view of Judaism"5, it follows that the post-Rosenstock view of Judaism must be described as taking a Christian view of Judaism which was a negative one and a natural corollary of sharing Ehrenberg's faith which was Christianity.

It would seem, then, that in his pre-Rosenstock phase, Rosenzweig had held the view that prior to 313 A.D., Christianity had been more true to its ideal than after this date. Alexander Altmann, describing this as the Protestant view, also calls it a "Judaizing of Christianity"6. Regarding religion in general, Rosenzweig confesses to having held a "dualism between revelation and the world"7. After the conversation he felt that "any form of philosophical relativism is now impossible to me".8 He was "forced ... to take an absolute standpoint"9, based on religious conviction and not on philosophical relativism. Also, he now saw Christianity as realizing its destiny in reaching out into the world after 313 A.D. rather than frustrating its destiny.

Rosenzweig felt that he had to identify himself with the cause of a triumphant church which since A.D. 313, after

Constantine had begun his pro-Christian policy in the Roman Empire, had made such great strides in the world. This recognition of the Church's dominant role in the world seemed to involve the necessary eclipse of Judaism and his own renunciation of it by being baptized. In his new view of the world, based now on Christian premises, he says "there seemed to me to be no room for Judaism".<sup>10</sup>

At this time Rosenzweig could see no parallel role for Judaism. All the various functions which might seem to be reserved for Israel seemed to be taken over by the Church. It was the Church which provided the world's way to God.<sup>11</sup> It was the Church which provided the foundation for the cultural life, even of Jews.<sup>12</sup> Also, if we take Rosenzweig's denunciation of the assertion that Jewish religion could only be consummated in Jesus<sup>13</sup> as a hint that he had previously accepted this, the Church, through its Lord, could be seen as fulfilling everything which Judaism had stood for previously. This theme of the Church's role in the world is taken up later by Rosenzweig as a factor in an Israel-oriented system. At this stage, however, he sees the Church as having no real rival, certainly not in Judaism.

This was one possible way of stabilizing the relationship between Judaism and Christianity. Judaism is seen as a stage which leads naturally and inevitably to Christianity.



Rosenzweig could still say to his mother, after his baptismal resolve, "I am still a Jew."<sup>14</sup> and he could look forward to retaining this status during the period of preparation and up to the moment of baptism. But his previous "Jewish" view of Christianity which saw it as having its roots in Judaism and recognized a genuine continuity between Christianity and Judaism that had been actually hindered by Constantine's patronage, was now abandoned. From the Christian standpoint he was now taking up, Judaism was seen as redundant and fully replaced by Christianity. Although Rosenzweig himself does not give much insight into his psychological state at this time, the external details he does describe help to indicate his inner state.

There seems to be an air of grim necessity about Rosenzweig's resolve. The step could only be made in a certain way, "I could turn Christian only qua Jew"<sup>15</sup>, and although this could be seen as an affirmation that there was an unavoidable logic in such a step, there is none of the joy and enthusiasm displayed which one would expect from someone who was convinced that he was entering a wonderful new life.

Rosenzweig had already tried to rationalize this step on existential grounds when considering the case of his relative, Hans Ehrenberg. In his diary for May 25, 1906, he says,

"The force of heredity may be reduced to almost zero through adaptation ... Thought of in this way the baptism of Jews loses some of its stigma of desertion. But ... one must have the courage to commit oneself to the individual which is not

conditioned historically; and one has that courage as soon as one no longer feels one's self so conditioned. Whoever has managed to do this need not fear the odium of this despised road. I am not one of them!"<sup>16</sup>

Certainly Rosenzweig did not lack courage as he contemplated his own baptism, as his confession to his mother proves.<sup>17</sup> But it seems doubtful that the discussion with Rosenstock had really given Rosenzweig sufficient inspiration to face the "stigma of desertion" on "the despised road" with any kind of cheerfulness.

Seen in this light it might be thought that Rosenzweig's visit to the Berlin synagogue was less of a philosophical exercise and more of an attempt to expose himself once more to the influence of Judaism in case it had any further word to say to him. The choice of an orthodox synagogue may indicate that more than a mere temporary continuation of his former nominal Judaism was in view.

In his subsequent criticism of the sentiments expressed by a Protestant minister, Parson J., Rosenzweig seems to reveal the kind of arguments he would have made himself in his pro-baptism phase. Summed up, these are that Judaism is not dead, merely interesting (a euphemism for anachronistic), the development of the Jews "leads through Jesus, in whom alone Jewish religion could consummate itself, "who is the one ... already arrived through whom their historic mission is to be fulfilled."<sup>18</sup>

Having come to the brink of staking his whole life on the truth of such doctrines, Rosenzweig drew back and made a clear renunciation of them. He says

The Jews simply refuse to see that their development leads through Jesus. Judaism ... rejects with all possible force the notion that he has already arrived through whom their historic mission is to be fulfilled ... The development of Judaism has by-passed him whom the heathens call "Lord"... Here an abyss opens between J. and his church on the one hand and every Jew on the other - an abyss that will never be filled up. That "connection of the innermost heart with God" which the heathen can only reach through Jesus is something the Jew already possesses, provided that his Judaism is not withheld from him by force; he possesses it by nature, through having been born one of the Chosen People.<sup>19</sup>

Already there is here a clear statement outlining two separate but equally valid divine dispensations which distinguish between Jew and non-Jew. He says quite clearly that the heathen can only reach God through Jesus. But he is equally clear in stating that the Jew already possesses what the heathen aspires after, and that Judaism "rejects with all possible force" the claim that the Messias for whom it waits has already come in the person of Jesus. The God who has made fellowship with Himself possible to the Jew "by nature" makes this same "connection of the innermost heart" with Himself available to the heathen through Jesus, according to Rosenzweig's view. If this is accepted it would follow that the Christian message has no application to Jews because Christianity so defined is applicable only to Gentiles. But Rosenzweig is fully aware that in

implying this he is rejecting a basic tenet of the classic Christian platform, for he states that a real Christian, as distinct from the Christian of "the registrar's office" is under compulsion to be a missionary whenever he meets a real Jew.<sup>20</sup> The impulses of outreach on the one side and rejection on the other are inherent in the classic Christian and Jewish positions. But, having rejected any claims that Christianity in general and Christ in particular might make on him, Rosenzweig was now concerned to portray Christianity, where he had to refer to it, as something outside the concern of and foreign to Judaism.

#### WHOLEHEARTED COMMITMENT TO JUDAISM

Rosenzweig's personal confrontation with Judaism, seen as vital and autonomous and not merely as a stage on the road to Christianity, is dated from his visit to an orthodox synagogue on the Day of Atonement, 1913. It seems that at this stage in his pilgrimage, Rosenzweig's dilemma regarding the claims of Judaism was resolved by his plunging wholeheartedly into an unqualified commitment to Judaism. But, in addition to resolving his own personal problems of allegiance, Rosenzweig felt that he was being equipped in a special way to solve these problems for his fellow-Jews. Speaking of the temptation of "Christian and pagan ideas", he says, "I am armored against this kind of temptation as perhaps no Jew in galut (exile) has been before me". As he refers in the same place to the writing of "The Star"

as "forging my armor, the dangerous book"<sup>21</sup> it can be seen that by publishing the book, Rosenzweig was making available to other Jews as applicable to them, the solutions he had found for his personal problems.

Rosenzweig's grasp of the vital importance of the study of Jewish sources for a Jew is demonstrated by his decision to stay on in Berlin after his own Yom Kippur experience, to study under Hermann Cohen at the Liberal Jewish Theological Seminary.<sup>22</sup> In his later writing and especially in his devotion to the cause of adult Jewish education at the Lehrhaus in Frankfurt, Rosenzweig lays great emphasis on this factor in Jewish life.

#### A DEMARCATION BETWEEN CHURCH AND SYNAGOGUE

In a letter to his relative, Rudolf Ehrenberg, written after his decision to remain a Jew, Rosenzweig uses the symbol of the two figures referred to earlier<sup>23</sup> in which the church and the synagogue are portrayed as triumphant and defeated respectively. Here a Christian artist had shown the two entities as alienated from each other and as experiencing diametrically opposed destinies. The church is shown as regal and triumphant, wearing a crown and holding a scepter as a symbol of rule and authority. The synagogue is shown as blindfolded and holding a broken staff, in darkness and of no account in the world. Rosenzweig does not challenge this estimate of the two bodies.

Rather, he takes it up and uses it as an "ad hominem" argument for the independence and autonomy of the Jewish people. He speaks of the synagogue "renouncing all work in this world", as having her eyes "covered by a band" therefore "she saw no world". The synagogue "leaves the work in the world to the church and recognizes the church as the salvation for all heathens in all times". He refers to the church as "this champion certain of victory", but the synagogue is described as standing "with broken staff and bound eyes".<sup>24</sup>

Thus, from ostensibly "Christian" premises, Rosenzweig can show that church and synagogue are separate and distinct entities, each with a different role in the world and a different self-consciousness. He is not concerned to contest the humiliating aspect of the portrayal. He is satisfied to claim the demarcation implied. He acknowledges the aptness of the symbols of the "broken staff and bound eyes", but makes these very humiliations a source of strength. The impotence represented by the broken staff frees Israel to "renounce all work in this world, and muster all her strength to preserve her life and keep herself untainted by life". The eye-covering band means that Israel "could see only by dint of her prophetic inner eye, and she saw nothing but the ultimate, the most remote".<sup>25</sup>

The business of the church is in the world; as the synagogue is isolated and set apart from the world, the church has no business with the synagogue. But although this is "what the

church admits for Israel in general", Rosenzweig points out that "she denies this to the individual Jew". So far as he is concerned, the church shall and will "test her strength in the attempt to convert him".<sup>26</sup> Contesting the admissibility of this attempt will be one of the aims of Rosenzweig's treatment of the church-synagogue relationship. It seems incongruous to Rosenzweig for the church to admit that Israel is to survive and yet still seek to win over the individuals who constitute Israel. Certainly he has a point when one considers the crude imagery of victor and vanquished in the statuary to which he refers. If, as the statue implies, the Jewish people are such an object of scorn and contempt, it is difficult to see what the church, as depicted in the sculpture, has to gain from winning over Jews to its side. In any case, if persuasion and not coercion is to be the means of converting the Jew, then a figure showing more respect or at least concern for the Jewish people would be more appropriate.

#### THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH

Although Rosenzweig referred to his position as "anti-Christian", his evaluation of the church and his assessment of its role in the world tends to be positive. Unlike many earlier Jewish writers on this theme, Rosenzweig was not involved in public disputations, nor did he have any mandate as a spokesman for an officially-approved Jewish position.<sup>27</sup> His concern was

to fit the church and his own people, Israel, into a self-consistent scheme which would make sense of the existence of two seemingly parallel and yet rival groups which professed to serve the same God.

To achieve this purpose, Rosenzweig uses pair-concepts such as Star and Rays, Way and Life and more contrasting categories such as People and Ecclesia, who experience respectively unmediated and mediated fellowship with God. In each case the church is represented by the secondary category, but this is inevitable in an Israel-oriented scheme such as Rosenzweig's. The Rays of the Star.

In his key concept of The Star of Redemption, which provides the title for his magnum opus, Rosenzweig implies a relationship between Christianity and Judaism by saying, "The rays shoot forth from the fiery nucleus of the Star".<sup>28</sup> As the Star represents Judaism, the characterizing of Christianity as the rays of that star gives in vivid, metaphorical form what is declared plainly elsewhere. In a letter to Rudolf Ehrenberg he says, "The synagogue ... leaves the work in the world to the church and recognizes the church as the salvation for all heathens in all time".<sup>29</sup> This element of "recognition" is a special characteristic of Rosenzweig's attitude to the church. He is not concerned to attack. He does not even choose to ignore the church. Instead, he recognizes the age-long importance of



the church as the means through which the nations of the world find salvation. This is said despite Isaiah's description of Israel as "a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth". (Is. 49:6). By designating the church as the channel of salvation to the Gentiles, Rosenzweig seems to be giving up one of Israel's prerogatives. But although the church is seen as the agent for world enlightenment, the light which is shed abroad in the earth has been derived from Israel.

#### The Way To The Father

Another metaphor is used to complement that of enlightenment. The church is also to provide the way to God for those who are estranged from Him. The non-Jewish world is seen as separated from God and needing to traverse the distance between itself and the Father. Rosenzweig sees the church, in the person of its Lord, as providing this way to God. He says, "We are wholly agreed as to what Christ and his church mean to the world: no one can reach The Father save through him."<sup>30</sup> But being the way, even the only way to God for the non-Jewish world is not an unmixed blessing. Rosenzweig implies that the church, because it is a way, is a means and not an end. He says, "Christianity is only on the way."<sup>31</sup> "The eternal people already repose in the house of life: the nations of the world remain on

the way."<sup>32</sup> The Christian "is ever and only en route".<sup>33</sup> The church and those it serves need a way because they lack what Israel has - they have not arrived, they are only on the way. Also, he feels that the very influence that Christianity has on the nations brings it into danger. He says that the church, "this champion of victory, always faces the danger of having the vanquished draw up laws for her."<sup>34</sup> He feels that because Christianity seeks to bring every nation under the gospel, it has to wrestle with every national culture. "... Everywhere, a Siegfried is at strife with that stranger, the man of the cross."<sup>35</sup> He feels that there is an explanation for the church's power with the pagans. It is the "inextinguishable segment of paganism which is innermost in every Christian ..." "... This 'paganism' of the Christian qualifies him to convert the pagans."<sup>36</sup>

Rosenzweig refers to the current of time as a river. "The Christian ... takes up the contest with the current. He lays the track of his eternal way alongside of it." The reference to "the iron tracks" seems to picture the Christian as racing alongside the river trying to keep up with its flow by means of a railway train. The Jew, however, is withdrawn from the flow of time; the history of the nations leaves him untouched. God has constructed a bridge of law for the Jew which arches "high above the current of time ... which rushes power-

lessly along under its arches."<sup>37</sup>

Another picture of a temporal church contrasted with an historical Israel is presented at the end of Book II of The Star, where the nations of the world are seen as a river of blood flowing through a landscape of time into the ocean of history.<sup>38</sup> By contrast, Israel is "a single body of water in the world" which "stands ever circulating within itself ... it shirks the duty of all waters to seek the sea."<sup>39</sup> The church is involved, struggling and interacting with the world, whereas Israel is calm and detached, above the strife secure in its relationship with God.<sup>40</sup> Thus, with a wide range of metaphors, Rosenzweig seeks to compare and contrast the church and Israel. The more he seeks to describe the nature of the church, the more the limitations he feels are inherent in the Christian position tend to come to the fore.

### The Ecclesia

Because the church has to win its members out of the world and they are therefore members by choice, Rosenzweig feels that this voluntary, independent factor in each person's commitment must make itself felt in the nature of the community which results.

He says of the church that it took the name "Ecclesia" as appropriate for "a union of individuals" in line with the

classical use of the term which "designates the citizens assembled for common deliberation. But the Jewish community, God's people, designated its festivals as 'sacred convocations' with what was essentially a similar term. But for itself it used words like people or congregation."<sup>41</sup> But Rosenzweig here overlooks the fact that the Jewish translators of the Hebrew Bible into Greek chose this very word "Ecclesia" to render the Hebrew word 'congregation' in Psalm 22:22 (LXX). Also, the term "Synagogos" is used of a Christian assembly in James 2:2 in the New Testament, so it seems that categorization on the basis of names is complicated by an overlapping of terminology.

Also, when Rosenzweig refers to Paul's description of the church as a body, he seems to have gained an impression exactly opposite to the intended meaning. He says, "Paul's analogy of the congregation as the body of Christ does not imply some kind of division of labor like, say, the famous parable of stomach and limbs by Menenius Agrippa. Rather, it alludes precisely to the perfect freedom of each individual in the church."<sup>42</sup> But the whole point of I Cor. 12 is the interdependence of the members of the body. "The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you." (Vs. 21). Paul's "body" metaphor is intended to stress the total integration of the members of the church into Christ and, therefore, into one

another. It is a strong claim for "peoplehood" as a characteristic of the church. But because Rosenzweig accepts blood and birth as the only valid bases for a community life such as Israel experiences<sup>43</sup>, he cannot accord this title to the church whose members are specifically said to be "born not of blood". (John 1:13). In Paul's metaphor the freedom of the members is only conceivable as they partake of the shared life of the body. But Rosenzweig does not seem to see the church as an organism. He reserves this category for Israel and seems to see the church rather as an organization.

#### The Church And Mediation

Rosenzweig characterizes the church as needing a mediator to reach God, unlike the Jew who walks "without mediator in the light of God's countenance."<sup>44</sup> In contrast, "The Christian dares to enter the presence of the Father only by means of the Son."<sup>45</sup>

This emphasis on mediation is, of course, basic to Christianity, but it needs to be seen alongside the complementary doctrine of the Incarnation. For the Christian, the Son can only be the Mediator between Man and God the Father because he is God the Son as well as being the Son of man.

Rosenzweig's comments on mediation touch on the vital bases for membership in Israel and the Church respectively.<sup>46</sup>

The church quite clearly offers a mediated covenant, in that Christ, as mediator of the New Covenant (Hebrews 12:24) administers membership to his disciples. Rosenzweig's contrasting point about Israel's covenant is that membership is automatically effected by physical birth, without the need of a mediator, and fellowship with God is a natural and unmediated experience of the Jew.<sup>47</sup> He asserts that the Christian situation does not measure up to these standards.

The significance of the term "New Covenant" in the Christian scriptures is important here. A covenant is a community-forming instrument, whether the community is the couple united in the covenant of marriage, or whether it consists of the many thousands gathered at the foot of Sinai. And if there is to be any continuity in the covenant, the only way to span the generations is for the covenant to be seen as prospective, involving at its inauguration those who would follow after, who are seen as ideally present in the persons of the original contracting parties. The covenant community is seen, then, as an entity which spans the generations and the centuries, uniting all those who share the covenant relationship. This is claimed for Israel in that each child born into the people is considered, by virtue of his birth, a partaker of the covenant.

But a basically similar claim is made for the covenant administered by Jesus Christ. John says that Jesus would

"gather together in one the children of God". (John 11:52). He also records that Jesus prayed for "them also which shall believe in me." (John 17:20) And Paul shows that more than a mere loose association is in view by saying "... he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world". (Ephesians 1:4) Even the matter of "birth" into the covenant people is claimed, because every person who becomes a genuine disciple of Christ is said to be "born again" (John 3:3). This is without considering the Christian advocates of Covenant Theology who claim that babies born to Christian parents "enter the covenant by birth."<sup>48</sup>

But even if close parallels could be seen between the Jewish and Christian covenants it might still be pointed out that the Christian's relationship to God is through Christ who is "the mediator of the New Covenant", (Hebrews 12:24), whereas Jewish participation in the covenant is not through a mediator. But a stream cannot rise higher than its source and modern Jews can only be in the covenant through their ancestors at Sinai. And their ancestors entered the covenant through Moses who was their mediator, because mediation is the only way to describe what Moses speaks of when he says, "I stood between the Lord and you at that time." (Deut. 5:5).

#### The Reigning Church

But one of the most outstanding and characteristic fea-

tures of Rosenzweig's picture of the church is directly traceable to his 1913 encounter with Rosenstock, when he accepted the validity of the post-Constantinian development of the church. The church is seen by Rosenzweig as dominating the world, and this concept can be used to amplify and even counter-balance his antithesis between the Life of Judaism and the Way of Christianity. Although he says that the Jew is already with the Father<sup>49</sup> and "Christianity is only on the way"<sup>50</sup>, the situation can be re-stated in another form which relates directly to Rosenzweig's experience. It could be held that whereas Judaism is static, Christianity is dynamic. This is but a positive restatement of what Rosenzweig has expressed in the negative terms suited to his argument. It can be shown from many places in Rosenzweig's writings that he felt rather overwhelmed by the power and influence of the church as he saw it in his day. He sees the Roman Catholic church as the successor of the great Roman Empire<sup>51</sup>. In a letter to Rosenstock he speaks of "you who live in a church triumphant"<sup>52</sup>, "now the church is everything", - "now there is only Christianity"<sup>53</sup>; "Christianity identifies itself with the empires"<sup>54</sup>. It is true that he does speak of the "incompleteness" of this triumphant church, but there does seem in these statements an echo of that earlier letter to his parents where he told them "our whole 'culture' rests entirely on a Christian foundation."<sup>55</sup>



So, we find him in The Star saying of Christianity that it is "mistress over the way. No one can here compete with it."<sup>56</sup> This concept of "Christendom" dominating the life of empires and nations might seem strange to a modern man who has grown up in a secular society, especially if he lives in America with its strong tradition of separation of Church and State. But in this study we are looking at the work of a man who lived over fifty years ago and who lived under the shadow of Hegel who had, for many people, sanctified the state and almost equated Church, State and God. Rosenzweig could still speak in his day of a "faith which marches triumphantly through the world".<sup>57</sup> This last statement strongly suggests the contrast between a static Judaism and a dynamic Christianity. But Rosenzweig has sought to confine that dynamism within the boundaries of the non-Jewish world so that within the community of Israel the life of Judaism can go on unhindered.

#### THE ROLE OF THE SYNAGOGUE

In the chronology of Rosenzweig's mental development from the crisis of the Rosenstock conversation onwards, the role of the church preceded that of the synagogue in his working out of his system. The system was to be Israel-oriented, with the Jewish people as the Star at the center of things; but, in order of development of Rosenzweig's experience and thinking,

it was Christianity that made the first impact on him in his crisis period. And when he did come to accord such an important role in his system to the church as a result of his re-interpretation of the significance of 313 A.D., this came to a person who had lived in a milieu in which he himself felt "we are Christian in everything"<sup>58</sup>. The process which began at the Rosenstock encounter, of which Rosenzweig says, "I began to reconstruct my world"<sup>59</sup>, carried on to include his Yom Kippur embracing of living Judaism and was not shattered nor reversed by it. The Constantinian view of the church he adopted then continued to be a factor in a system which came to have Judaism and not Christianity as its center. Although this might seem out of keeping with a priori reasoning which would subordinate facts and experience to the requirements of a theory, it was possible because of the "New Thinking" which Rosenzweig adopted. There was no need for him to say, "So much the worse for the facts", as Hegel is said to have replied when his thinking was shown to be at variance with the facts.

The "New Thinking" was an attempt to break out of the confines of stereotyped philosophic thought which sought to fit life into a received pattern. Like Kierkegaard, Rosenzweig felt that life had to be "lived forward" and not merely "understood backwards", and this meant that he could learn from every situation rather than just select an appropriate formula to

explain it. Also, this new approach would free him from merely carrying on where former Jewish apologists and polemicists had left off. He need not necessarily engage in apologetics or polemics at all. He could examine each situation with a fresh and alert attitude of independence and expectancy. Formerly, "Philosophy has always enquired into the 'essence' of things"<sup>60</sup>; now what was needed was "a philosophy based on experience"<sup>61</sup>. "What the new philosophy, the new thinking, actually does is to employ the method of sound common sense as a method of scientific thinking."<sup>62</sup>

Rosenzweig was resolved to base his life on Judaism, and he thought and wrote and argued with this in view. But because the New Thinking was experience-oriented, he could come to a new appreciation of Judaism via a remarkable encounter with Christianity. Rosenzweig writes, "In the new thinking, the method of speech replaces the method of thinking ... speech ... does not know in advance just where it will end. It takes its cues from others."<sup>63</sup> Rosenzweig traced this "speaking thought" to Feuerbach and Hermann Cohen, but in his own case "The main influence was Eugen Rosenstock." He mentions Rosenstock's book<sup>64</sup> "Angewandte Seelenkunde", but, of course, his actual discussions and correspondence with Rosenstock are a classic example of this method.

In this context, the forming of convictions about the

church which precede and even influence convictions about the Synagogue is not incongruous but quite natural. In applying this "New Thinking" to Jewish learning, he calls it a

new learning - It is learning in reverse order. A learning that no longer starts from the Torah and leads into life, but the other way round: from life, from a world that knows nothing of the Law, or pretends to know nothing, back to the Torah ... In being Jews we must not give up anything, not renounce anything, but lead everything back to Judaism. From the periphery to the centre; from the outside, in.<sup>65</sup>

On this basis, the road to the Berlin synagogue could well lead through Rosenstock's room in Leipzig. The insights gained during that momentous conversation would not need to be renounced; Rosenzweig could "lead everything back to Judaism", even a Constantinian view of the church.

But the concessions involved in this view of the church would inevitably condition any approach to the synagogue, especially for one who held that "Judaism and Christianity have a peculiar position in common -- only Judaism and Christianity are not founded religions. Originally, they were something quite "unreligious", the one a fact, the other an event."<sup>66</sup>

In The Star of Redemption the picture of Judaism and Christianity is determined above all by the quest for an eternity that exists ... in Judaism from the fact of the Jewish people, in Christianity from the event on which the Christian community is founded, and only through these do Law and Faith become visible. And so here Judaism and Christianity are set both side by side and in contrast on a sociological basis.<sup>67</sup>

This setting of Judaism "side by side" with Christianity when already considerable concessions had been made in his thinking to the influence and power of the church, tends to limit Rosenzweig's view of Judaism. He writes, "The synagogue ... must renounce all work in this world ... she leaves the work in the world to the church ..." <sup>68</sup> This is a sweeping allocation of the spheres of influence, reminiscent of power politics where great powers recognize each other's authority within agreed boundaries. But in politics such understandings are based upon a realistic estimate of the might of the respective parties and are subject to adjustment as the power differential fluctuates. Jewish critics of Rosenzweig tend to see him as overestimating the church's power and, perhaps, Christian supporters are partly attracted by this same high estimate of Christendom's influence. But the Jewish critics such as Arthur Cohen, and Jacob Taubes have a point when they assert that Rosenzweig makes concessions to the Christian position at the expense of the Jewish position. <sup>69</sup>

Rosenzweig does, however, display ingenuity in extracting credit for Israel even out of situations where he seems to have conceded almost everything to Christianity. By likening the world-wide power and influence of the church to the rays

emanating from a star, and identifying the Jewish people as the Star, Rosenzweig is asserting that Christian light is derived from a Jewish source. He says, "The rays shoot forth from the fiery nucleus of the Star."<sup>70</sup>

Thus the people of Israel is the center of everything and the key to the understanding of God's purposes in the world. Because the rays of a Star are dependent on the fire of the Star, the rays go out, as it were, at the bidding of the star, as its agents and emissaries. It is Israel which has provided the light for the world's darkness according to Rosenzweig's metaphor.

Considering the sun as a parallel, one could not deny that the sun illumines the earth and insist instead that this is done by the rays of the sun. A difficulty regarding the nature of the light from the "Star of Redemption" arises here and it tends to weaken Rosenzweig's argument. Light from a Jewish star ought to be Jewish light. But the teachings propagated by the Church are often antithetical to mainstream Judaism. Although Christian teaching purports to be based on the Hebrew Bible, this claim would be strongly contested in many instances by Jewish interpreters. Also, notwithstanding any good that might be found in the New Testament, it would still be considered by many Jewish teachers as being foreign to traditional Judaism. Any admission of genuine continuity between the teaching of the Hebrew Bible and Christianity would

seem to them to be a conceding of a major Christian claim and thus too high a price to pay for any benefit that might ensue.

### The Life

In many different ways, Rosenzweig seeks to establish the independent, self-sufficient nature of Jewish life. Here, by presenting the Jewish people as an organism, a living entity sustained by blood and maintained by procreation, he is seeking to show that Israel is not a mere organization. It is not the result of propaganda, recruitment, indoctrination and supervisory control. Judaism is not something merely to be believed. It is, rather, something to be lived and experienced. This contrast would be stronger if it could indeed be shown that Christianity is not intended to be a life as well as a way. Also, the mere sharing of Jewish blood would need to be shown to be an unshakeable guarantee of Judaism's continuity. But Eugen Rosenstock and many like him were a living challenge to both these propositions. Christianity as a life to be lived was so manifest in him that Rosenzweig himself was almost won over permanently to his position. Also, Rosenstock had withdrawn from Judaism in spite of a blood heritage at least as genuine as Rosenzweig's.

The "living" emphasis of Judaism, of course, is not seen as a mere animal force. The element of law is present to

give shape and meaning to the Jewish life. Rosenzweig chooses a metaphor for it which once again emphasizes the independence and inviolability of Israel's position. Whereas Christianity "takes up the contest with the current of time", God "withdrew the Jew from this life by arching the bridge of his law high above the current of time which henceforth and to all eternity rushes powerlessly along under its arches."<sup>71</sup> The law, then, is seen as a factor which separates Israel unto a life lived in independence of wordly time and the history of nations. By contrast, the dynamic element of Christianity plunges it into the arena of wordly affairs with all the risks entailed in being the Way to God for all the nations of the world. But, his description of Judaism as "The Eternal Life"<sup>72</sup> also takes the edge off the description of Christianity as "The Eternal Way", because it is Rosenzweig's contention that because Israel already possesses life in the presence of the Father, they have no need of a way by which they might come to the Father to obtain life.<sup>73</sup>

### Mediation

This Jewish independence of anything that Christianity may offer is similarly shown in his assertion that Israel "is walking without mediator in the light of God's countenance."<sup>74</sup> Thus, the Christian possession of a mediator with God, which



Rosenzweig does not deny, is qualified by the assertion that Judaism does not need one. Thus, what might be claimed as a deficiency in the Jewish position in that contemporary Judaism does not in general make provision for mediation<sup>75</sup>, is, instead, claimed to be evidence of a weakness in the Christian approach which cannot operate without mediation. All that the Christian aspires after, for which he takes up his journey along the way, "the presence of the Father", "the light of God's countenance", are claimed to be the present experience rather than the goal of the Jew. These are brave words but in the context of German Jewry's spiritual poverty they reflect an ideal state rather than an everyday reality, at least in Rosenzweig's milieu. But, as we shall see in his treatment of the Jewish Year, Rosenzweig saw a great potential in the annual round of festivals for the realization of this ideal.

### Peoplehood

Incorporation into the people of Israel is seen by Rosenzweig as an automatic consequence of being born of Jewish blood. He says, "There is only one community in which ... a linked sequence goes from grandfather to grandson." Such is Israel which is "a blood community" which can "propagate itself from its own blood."<sup>76</sup>

He goes on to establish a diaspora-orientation for his

concept of Israel's peoplehood by saying, "We were the only ones who trusted in blood and abandoned the land."<sup>77</sup> He also says that the "eternal people has lost its own language and all over the world speaks a language dictated by external destiny, the language of the nation whose guest it happens to be."<sup>78</sup> Certainly, then, at this stage, Rosenzweig's sympathies are not with Zionism. He could say, "Hermann Cohen, with absolutely trustworthy instinct, hates the Zionists"<sup>79</sup>, and it is obvious from this remark that Rosenzweig himself looked more to the diaspora than to Palestine as the Jewish people's natural setting. Israel could not dazzle the world with an institution such as "The Holy Roman Empire", or "Holy Russia". It could boast of no Kaiser or Tzar nor even a Pope, and it even lacked a unifying center such as the Sanhedrin had provided in ancient times. Rosenzweig accepts the scattered, de-nationalized but multi-national condition of Diaspora Jewry and seeks to show that what has been lost is expendable, whereas what was vital has been retained. Rosenzweig's tendency to make a virtue out of necessity comes to the fore here and prevents him from seeing more of the tremendous potential of the Zionist movement which was destined to outlive the European communities which Rosenzweig saw as world Jewry's center of gravity.

#### Supranationality

But one advantage that Rosenzweig sees in Israel's lack

of nationhood as compared with Christendom's imperial sway over the nations, is that this opens the way for a concept of Israel as supra-national, above the course of history. The withdrawal from the world already referred to<sup>80</sup> is given a positive significance by asserting that this gives Israel a freedom and independence from worldly influence not shared by "the church ... this champion certain of victory" which "always faces the danger of having the vanquished draw up laws for her."<sup>81</sup> By contrast, he speaks of Israel as "... the eternal people which is not encompassed by world history."<sup>82</sup> Rosenzweig asserts here, and in several other places in The Star that the Jewish people is "ahistorical" and this influences his whole interpretation of the Jewish role in society. He would like to detach the Jewish people from the world of wars and statecraft, and one important way in which he indicates this is to show the Jewish people revolving in an independent orbit of festal observances which make up the Jewish year.

### The Jewish Year

In his description of the Jewish Year, Rosenzweig lists the Sabbath, Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles, New Year and the Day of Atonement, and he actually uses the term "the small circle of the year"<sup>83</sup> to emphasize the "cyclic" nature of the Jewish liturgy. He realizes that if the Festivals are given a

strong commemorative weight it would mean that the events of Creation, the Exodus, the giving of the Law and the Wilderness journey would be highlighted and a marked connection with world history would be made, especially in the Pilgrim Festivals and the Sabbath. So he seeks to overcome this challenge to his "ahistorical" approach by saying "... these feasts only seem to be feasts of commemoration. In reality, the historical element in them is living and present ... every participant ... must celebrate the feast as though he himself had been delivered from Egypt."<sup>84</sup> This genuine existentialist insight which stresses the "here and now" element in human existence is backed by a well-chosen allusion to the Passover Hagadah.

Rosenzweig brings out the cosmic significance of these festivals in such a way as to illustrate what he means by their being "dematerialized and permeated with spirit."<sup>85</sup> He does this particularly in his handling of the Day of Atonement which is, of course, an unquestionably cyclic event with an unmistakable cosmic significance in that it deals with the destiny of the individual as he stands before the Divine Judge. Here the worshipper "... kneels only in beholding the immediate nearness of God."<sup>86</sup> The suggestion made here by the use of the word "immediate" is that the worshipper enjoys fellowship with God without any form of mediation. Thus, what is claimed for the liturgy as a whole is asserted particularly of this most solemn

moment of the Jewish Year which, for Rosenzweig, would have a special poignancy.

Rosenzweig does not mention the festivals of Purim and Chanukah, even though they have been very popular in Jewish communities down through the centuries. It may be that their associations of political and military triumph in the arena of world history would make their inclusion unsuitable for Rosenzweig's purpose.

This purpose seems to be, quite clearly, to establish the independence, autonomy, viability and credibility of Jewish existence. He resists any suggestion that the Jewish people are a mere anachronism, a "fossil", an incomplete people who can only be consummated through the Christian way of salvation.

With all the vast sweep of Jewish custom and liturgy before him, Rosenzweig, like anybody in his position, would have to be selective in his portrayal of the Jewish devotional life. He does say quite clearly in The Star, "Judaism and Christianity are set both side by side and in contrast"<sup>87</sup>; and he does consider "the Christian's relationship to God, and hence his religion, a meager and roundabout affair."<sup>88</sup> Therefore, the possibility of conscious or unconscious "editing" of his material to suit his argument cannot be precluded, just as it cannot be proved beyond doubt.

Whatever may be the case regarding the above, there can

be no mistaking Rosenzweig's very high estimate of Jewish worship. Speaking again of the Day of Atonement, he says "In this moment, he (the Jew) is as close to God, as near to his throne, as it is ever accorded man to be."<sup>89</sup> He speaks of the Jewish man's "blissful togetherness - alone with God" in contrast to the world which lacks this "certainty of being God's child"<sup>90</sup>. He says of the circuit of the year,

"It was the circuit of a people. In it a people was at its goal and knew it was at the goal. The people had suspended for itself the contradiction between creation and revelation. It lives in its own redemption. It has anticipated eternity. The future is the driving power in the circuit of its year."<sup>91</sup>

Rosenzweig locates this living out of eternal life, which he sees as the chief characteristic of the Jewish experience, within the liturgical year. Of course, every established and organized religion, and especially Christianity, has a liturgical year and each system would have its advocates, each as eloquent for its festivals as Rosenzweig is for those of Judaism. But Rosenzweig's special point is that this festal cycle is for Israel a refuge from the world and its affairs, an oasis of eternity in a desert of temporality, a "closed circuit system" which is not tunable to any outside signal.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE PROPOSED RECONCILIATION

Rosenzweig's predecessors in Jewish literature had usually faced a different situation from his, and their responses had tended to be different from his. Jews and Christians, involved in debate, polemics and outright hostility, had usually faced each other as rivals. In order for Judaism to be proved right, Christianity had to be proved wrong. Christian source documents were examined carefully to reveal their apparent discrepancies and the basis for various Christian doctrines was declared to be false. Similarly, Christian writers would examine Jewish source documents to seek to show that Judaism was not true to the Bible and had been superseded by Christianity.

The church and the synagogue were rival claimants to the peoplehood of God, to the possession of the truth, to the possession of the title "Israel" and, especially, they were rivals for the honour of being in a covenant relationship with God. The Jews claimed to have the original covenant with God and pronounced the New Covenant of the Christians as spurious. The Christians claimed that the New Covenant was the one now in operation, the former covenant having been broken by Israel and finally abrogated by God.

Rosenzweig, by proposing the existence of two covenants between man and God, both covenants operating concurrently

instead of consecutively, sought to lift the debate out of its "either-or" confrontation and to place it on a "both and" basis. Having said "Yes" himself to Christianity and then "No", he went on in true Hegelian fashion to say, "Nevertheless". Rosenzweig was not an ecumenical statesman and was not trying to work out a formula for inter-faith negotiations. On the contrary, his description of his attitude as "anti-Christian"<sup>1</sup> and his dismissal of Islam as a "parody"<sup>2</sup> of Judaism and Christianity would disqualify him for the kind of interfaith activity that goes on today. He seemed rather to address himself to the problems of the classic confrontation between the Church and the Synagogue. He felt that Judaism and Christianity were in a category apart from all other religions: they "have a peculiar position in common".<sup>3</sup> One of Rosenzweig's aims was to introduce a certain order into this situation which had known little but strife for over nineteen centuries. He may have taken up this task to clarify his own development to his own satisfaction, or, he may have sought to establish a tenable position for his own German Jewish community to take up. He might even have been led into the propounding of his ideas by a sheer existential response to the challenge of his own experience and the expressed convictions of his partner in dialogue, Eugen Rosenstock.

What can be said with some certainty, however, is that



he was unlike many of his predecessors among the classic protagonists of Judaism. Unlike Crescas he did not write a book to present "The Refutation of the Christian Dogmas", nor did he, like the Karaite, Isaac of Troki, think that a work on the "Strengthening of the Faith" had to feature a collection of anti-Christian arguments. He was not even concerned to present a work such as that of his admired master, Yehuda Halevi, which portrayed Judaism winning a three-cornered contest with Christianity and Islam as does "The Kuzari". Rosenzweig seems, instead, to have come onto the battle field not to conquer, nor to surrender, but rather to stop the fighting. To develop the military metaphor, he seems to have moved up and down the front line seeking to disengage the combatants at every point where the battle raged. His Jewish critics saw him as a compromiser, and Christian observers were encouraged by what they took to be a softening of the Jewish position. But it was not for nothing that Rosenzweig said, regarding "toying with Christian and pagan ideas" ... "I am armored against this kind of temptation as perhaps no Jew in galut (exile) has been before me."<sup>4</sup> He was not looking for peace so much as for "peaceful co-existence", and there is an interesting phrase from his friend and colleague, Martin Buber, which seems to catch the spirit of his approach. Buber speaks of "The Church which recognizes no limited sphere of authority, and Israel, which is conscious of its sphere of

authority."<sup>5</sup> For Rosenzweig, Israel's sphere of authority was the people of Israel itself. This might be called a "Fortress mentality" but Rosenzweig himself used this fortress imagery when he asked, "Shall I, then, let the castle itself fall to ruins in order to strengthen the endangered outer bulwarks?"<sup>6</sup> To himself he said, "as much as possible inside Jewish bounds"<sup>7</sup>, and Rosenzweig seems to have been willing to make many concessions "outside Jewish bounds" in order to strengthen and preserve what was within those bounds.

The key principle in Rosenzweig's approach to the Church-Synagogue confrontation appears to be the divine mandate he allows to the church in bringing men to God. He does not merely say that some good can come out of Christianity because it will help restrain idolatry and immorality in the world. He does not even say merely that because Christianity has introduced a garbled version of Judaism to the world it will make it easier for the world to accept the truth of Judaism at a future time. He says quite clearly, and referring to his own day as well as to the future, "... Christ ... no one can reach the Father save through Him."<sup>8</sup> This is a denial of the theological imperialism of such as Hermann Cohen who looked for "the conversion of the Christians to the 'pure monotheism' of his Judaism"<sup>9</sup>. Certainly Rosenzweig excepted the Jews from the "no one" category of the above statement. But even with this qualification, the state-

ment is a handsome endorsement of the church's work in the world, very gratifying to them so long as they had no designs on the Jews. By declaring himself in this way, Rosenzweig was tackling one important source of rivalry, resentment and scorn.

But in another area, that of Jewish distinctiveness, a source of resentment and hostility since before the time of Haman (see Esther 3:8), Rosenzweig was also at work. Although he had expressed his admiration for "the ideal Polish Jew" with his distinctive dress and side curls, living in a kind of social quarantine in his ghetto, Rosenzweig advocated none of these external methods of separation from the non-Jewish population. He did not, himself, wear side-curls or kaftan, nor did he live in a ghetto. But far from advocating assimilation, he insisted on an intensification of Jewish identity and self-awareness which he located within. "It is something inside the individual that makes him a Jew."<sup>10</sup> It did not involve "a line drawn to separate us from other kinds of humanity. No dividing walls should rise here."<sup>11</sup> Certainly, Rosenzweig is not advocating the abolition of Jewish customs and ritual observances but he is rather calling for an attitude of openness on the part of the Jew, a dropping of any "limiting barrier that cuts the Jew off."<sup>12</sup>

Even in the vital area of education and culture, about which his fellow Germans were so proud and sensitive, and regard-

ing which German-Jewry was so ill-equipped in the Jewish sense, Rosenzweig had a contribution. Instead of advocating censorship of learning, a boycotting of all that was not recognizably and acceptably Jewish, he recommended an eclectic approach, but with an important proviso. He says, "... in being Jews we must not give up anything, not renounce anything, but lead everything back to Judaism."<sup>13</sup>

Throughout all his apparently revolutionary and apparently daring advocacy of a fresh approach to Judaism and its relationship to the non-Jewish world and, particularly, to Christianity, Rosenzweig displays a consistency that is not always obvious to his critics. He is fighting to preserve Judaism at its vital inner core and in order to do this he is willing to let some of the "outer bulwarks crumble"<sup>14</sup>, especially if he feels that what is endangered has only apparent relevance to Jewish survival.

As we shall see, Rosenzweig's approach has been acknowledged by some with enthusiasm as a genuine move towards the reconciliation of church and synagogue; but it is undergirded throughout with a firm insistence that Jewish identity must be respected and left inviolate. In the key principle of the Two Covenant theory, where Christianity's mandate in the world is acknowledged, an express exception is made in the case of Israel. He feels that "to want to Christianize the 'eternal Jew' would

be a blasphemy, a veritable 'taking of the Kingdom of God by violence'."<sup>15</sup>

This resistance to the Christian message and strong protest against any attempt to apply it to Israel would seem necessarily to involve a rejection of Christianity as untrue. The stand taken by the Jewish polemicists of the past, as we have seen, was that Christianity was to be rejected because it was false. If it seemed plausible, this was because it was a dangerous mixture of error and borrowed Jewish truth, fire stolen from the Jewish altar, a mere half-truth. What Rosenzweig suggests, however, is that Christianity is completely true in an incomplete way. It is completely true when it is applied to the non-Jewish world for whom it was intended. But, because he feels that it is an incomplete message in that it is inapplicable and inappropriate for Israel, it is not true for the Jew. Rosenzweig, instead of calling Christianity a half-truth, classes it with Judaism by saying, "... we both have but a part of the whole truth. The 'whole' truth, too, is truth only because it is God's part."<sup>16</sup> The discrepancy between Christianity and Judaism is not that between truth and error, nor yet between error and divergent error. The two faiths only differ because they are different parts of one divine truth. Although they might seem antithetical they are, in fact, complementary in Rosenzweig's view.

Judaism and Christianity, although both are true and both partake of the truth of God, must in the end pay the price of incompleteness. In the Eschaton, the "Eternal Way" is shown to be but the way into eternity. "The way ends where home has been reached ... it is ... finite, since eternity is its end."<sup>17</sup>

Rosenzweig also speaks of the "time when even the eternal people "sank and disappeared" and as he also refers this to the future, saying, "... we together will one day sink"<sup>18</sup>, it would seem that both Judaism and Christianity as we know them are considered by him to be finite. Speaking again of the end, however, he does say, "Where everything is on fire, there are no more rays, there is only one light."<sup>19</sup> As the fire is Jewish and the rays are Christian in Rosenzweig's scheme, it would seem that he tends to side with Yehuda Halevi in holding that the nations of the world, embracing a faith which grew from Mosaic seeds, will one day bear fruit like the Mosaic original.<sup>20</sup> But this is seen by Rosenzweig to happen at the end and not during this age.

In this connection it is important to notice at what level Rosenzweig places the affinity between Christianity and Judaism. It is in the sphere of divine truth. It is not on the level of every day intercourse so that Jew and Christian might be encouraged to seek to combine forces. It is not a mere mutual recognition of philosophic achievement, an acknowledgement of

self-evident truths in the teaching of the other which would be grounds for mutual interest and respect. Rosenzweig says of the partial truth held by both groups that it is part of God's truth and, therefore, each is a divine revelation. This is not pragmatic reasoning, but rather an assertion about the metaphysical sphere. A Jew is saying that Christianity is true because it possesses divine truth. He is also claiming that Judaism is true because it possesses divine truth. It follows from this that no matter how natural it is for one to oppose or seek to dominate the other, all such struggle is futile. Rather, each should see in the other a bearer of divine truth and each should seek to apply their own truth in its appropriate sphere where it is wholly true, and never seek to intrude it into an alien sphere where it must be wholly false because of its irrelevance. Thus Rosenzweig, in a masterly way, has managed to acclaim Christianity as true and yet, at the same time, reject it for Israel by laying down boundaries of applicability for the two faiths.

If Rosenzweig's Two Covenant Theory were acceptable to Jew and Christian, the "casus belli" between Church and Synagogue would be removed and each group could be reconciled to the existence of the other because each would recognize the validity of the other's position. Rosenzweig quite clearly expects that the forbearance and mature wisdom needed to achieve

this "peaceful co-existence" would have to come from the Jewish side. He is concerned for Jewish survival in the Diaspora and, looking back on Jewish history, he would side with Johanan ben Zaccai who rescued rabbinic Judaism in the first century by coming to terms with the Gentile powers rather than with Bar Kochba who was crushed in the second century while trying to overthrow them. He is not advocating a fierce Jewish reaction against Gentile persecution. Rather, he is advocating a Jewish initiative in the realm of peace-making. He feels that the Jews must acknowledge the Church's right to a scepter of power."<sup>21</sup> He calls on the Jew to love "his enemy as the executor of divine judgment."<sup>22</sup> It is understandable that Jewish critics should resent this as an apparent capitulation to anti-Semitism and that Christians should hail this as a great advance. But this is no overture to the Church, and Rosenzweig's evaluation of overtures from the church is not encouraging. He speaks of "the Christian love of one's enemy" as "the strongest weapon with which to conquer the world", and calls this "the mercies of conquest".<sup>23</sup> Thus, the Christian, although respected for his role in God's plan is kept at arm's length. Even his love is seen as a "Weapon of conquest". Rosenzweig feels that the Jew, as he has described him, can survive in a predominantly Christian world. He also feels that the Christian, contemplating such a Jew, should be willing to let him survive because on Rosenzweig's showing no detriment to Christian interests is involved.



Despite the interest which Rosenzweig's theory has aroused, the "peaceful co-existence" to which he seemed to look has not yet been achieved. It will therefore be necessary to consider Jewish and Christian reactions to the Two Covenant theory and seek to make an evaluation of the theory to see if it is adequate to its task.

## CHAPTER V

### SOME SUPPORT FOR THE TWO COVENANT THEORY

In the interpretation given thus far of Rosenzweig's thought, it has been suggested that his Two Covenant Theory is Israel-oriented and put forward in the interests of the Jewish people. If this be so, it would be natural for Jewish reaction towards it to be favourable and Christian reaction to be favourable or unfavourable, depending on the view taken regarding Israel's need of salvation. As it happens, Jewish reaction tends to be unfavourable and the most favourable reaction comes from Christian quarters. (The Jewish writer, Hans-Joachim Schoeps, is an exception to this trend but, as we shall see, there is a special reason for this.)

These seemingly incongruous reactions could arise because the most striking feature of the theory, though not the most important one, is the description of Christianity as "the Way to the Father" for the non-Jewish world. This term "way" is a familiar one to Christian writers, and Rosenzweig's use of it would seem to be a large concession to their position. But, by the same token, it would seem to Jewish writers to be a damaging concession. However, in his scheme, Rosenzweig is willing to concede world dominion to Christians so long as he can retain religious self-determination for Jews. He is giving away some-

thing that the Jewish people does not possess and he is retaining what Israel must possess in order to survive in its traditional form. Because he uses a Christian text (John 14:6) as well as Christian terminology (The Way), his Jewish interest, which will be discussed more fully later, is not as obvious as it would have been if he had expressed the same ideas in terms more familiar to Jewish ears.

#### THE 'DOUBLE WAY' CONCEPT

Although Rosenzweig does not himself use the term "Double Covenant Theory", this term is more true to his thought than the "Double Way" concept which is seen in the three examples given immediately below in which Christian writers give views which are taken to be harmonious with Rosenzweig's position. Rosenzweig sets forth a "Way-Covenant" and a "Life-Covenant". They are not two alternative paths covering the same ground and leading to the same destination. Only one is a path. The other is the destination. Only one covers any ground. The other has no intervening distance to cover to reach the Father. But Borchsenius, Herford and Parkes, who are quoted below, all seem to understand a parallel pair of ways to God, one Jewish and one Christian, which are for the use of the Synagogue and the Church respectively. This is a familiar concept, something like the "All roads lead to Rome" idea but it is not

what Rosenzweig is putting forward. Although these writers did not write contemporaneously or in the order given below, a classic philosophical development can be seen in their positions relative to Rosenzweig's theory.

Borchsenius states, erroneously, that Rosenzweig presents "two ways to God"<sup>1</sup>. Herford and Parkes take this "Two Ways" position as their point of departure and, using the principle of "Occam's Razor", seek to resolve the dualism they see there into a more satisfying monism. Because of their different estimates of Christianity, they arrive at different conclusions as to the nature of that final single path. Herford sees a Jewish path and Parkes sees a Christian path, but they both feel that the one path they set forth is an essential synthesis of the "Two Ways" with which they started out.

#### Poul Borchsenius

A book which takes its inspiration from the Two Covenant theory was published in 1968 under the title Two Ways to God. Its writer, Poul Borchsenius, is a Danish Christian pastor who is said to be "one of the world's leading exponents of Judaism and most of his books ... demonstrate his passionate belief in the affinity of his own faith and that of the Jews."<sup>2</sup>

Borchsenius says that the dialogue between Church and Synagogue was never genuine "... until modern times ... It had

consisted of two monologues in which neither side listened with an open mind to what the other had to say." He sees the time of Moses Mendelssohn as a turning point when "the former enemies began to exchange ideas on an equal footing. But the breakthrough to real dialogue came only with Franz Rosenzweig ..."<sup>3</sup>

He quotes Rosenzweig as saying

Before God there are two, the Jew and the Christian, workers on a common task. He cannot do without either of them. He has made them eternal enemies and at the same time entwined their paths and interwoven them in the most intimate way.<sup>4</sup>

The rather unfortunate summary which Borchsenius makes of the Two Covenant theory is that there are "... two ways to God, one for the born Jew, the other for everyone else."<sup>5</sup> It is clear what he means, but his saying that there are two ways to God involves a flat contradiction of Rosenzweig's description of the Jew as "one who does not have to reach the Father because he is already with him."<sup>6</sup> According to Rosenzweig, only one way is required because it is only the "everyone else" category which needs a way to God. The Jew is "already with him".

But the significance of Borchsenius' reaction is that he is encouraged because "Rosenzweig takes Christianity's spiritual claims more seriously than any Christian has taken Judaism's."<sup>7</sup> He sees Rosenzweig's initiative as a "breakthrough to real dialogue."<sup>8</sup> Any man with a "passionate belief in the affinity of

his own faith and that of the Jews"<sup>9</sup> would need encouragement if he were looking for a reciprocal passion from the Jewish side. It is natural for him to sense a kindred spirit in Rosenzweig, but Rosenzweig did not participate in dialogue with the Church. Instead he argued with his Christian friend, Rosenstock, as an individual and his aim was to hammer out for Judaism a "place to stand" despite the challenge to his position represented by Rosenstock and his Christian faith. Despite the sanguine hopes of Borchsenius, Rosenzweig was not reaching out a friendly hand to the Church. Rather, his hands were busy building the defences of the "castle" of Judaism.<sup>10</sup>

#### Travers Herford

Another Christian writer, a contemporary of Rosenzweig, whom Nahum Glatzer sees as sharing Rosenzweig's position is R. Travers Herford, a Unitarian who is famous for his sympathetic treatment of the Pharisees and their beliefs. Glatzer says

Herford faces the ultimate question about the relation between Judaism and Christianity. He sees them as the two great religions which throughout history are destined to accomplish that for which God made them two and not one and then to "join in this service, and side by side ... inspire the lives of his children". In this faith Herford the Christian is joined by the Jewish thinker Franz Rosenzweig who, in his Star of Redemption (which appeared shortly before Herford's The Pharisees) spoke of the two religions as standing before God as equal partners in His truth.<sup>11</sup>

This comparison between Herford's and Rosenzweig's position is interesting because although Herford cannot be called a commentator on Rosenzweig's work, he is certainly a commentator on Rosenzweig's theme of the "Two Covenant" theory. Herford, like James Parkes, whose work is examined next, throws light on the inner tension of Rosenzweig's position by extrapolating from the dualistic "double truth" of the Two Covenant position in an attempt to remove the antinomy involved in the concept of the "eternal enemies" who stand "before God ... workers on a common task".<sup>12</sup>

Herford seems to be on common ground with Rosenzweig when he says, "It has been admitted that Christianity was better qualified to bring good to the Gentile world than Judaism was."<sup>13</sup> Here we see the concept of Christianity as the way to God for the nations of the world who, unlike the Jews, are not "already with him". But Herford is not content, like Rosenzweig, to recognize "the church as the salvation for all heathens in all time."<sup>14</sup> Herford is urged on by a monistic impulse which causes him to dissolve Christianity into Judaism, even during this present age. He says of Judaism, "... the best she has to give will only find acceptance when the preparation of Christianity has done its work, and the world is ready for a religion which will at last unite the imperishable elements of both its forerunners."<sup>15</sup> He says, further, "But when the time shall

come when Christianity shall have done all it can do ... there will then be a Judaism able and ready to offer its imperishable treasure ..."<sup>16</sup> Thus, although he says that God made Christianity and Judaism "two and not one", he sees this as a preparation for the time when the two will become one and then it will be Judaism that will "offer its imperishable treasure".<sup>17</sup>

### James Parkes

Another writer who is taken up with the theme of the parallel development of Judaism and Christianity is the Anglican writer, James Parkes, who also moves into a monistic position but at the opposite pole from Herford's.

Parkes refers to Rosenzweig's theory as the view "that Judaism was the Divinely-intended religion for the Jews and Christianity for the Gentiles." He feels that this would be acceptable "had the two religions been identical in character" but "there was something which each missed -- each ultimately needed the other."<sup>18</sup> So, although Parkes formally withholds his full approval for Rosenzweig's thesis, in effect, he is saying that there are two ways to God which are both valid and that they are complementary to each other. This, of course, is in no way opposed to Rosenzweig's position. He says, "Judaism and Christianity are to me equal partners in the task of bringing mankind to the Messianic age, and neither can replace the



other."<sup>19</sup> But then he goes on, "This means, of course, that I hold the Atonement wrought on Calvary to be of equal significance, whether they accept it or not, to all men."<sup>20</sup> He goes on to make specific reference to the Jews, saying "... the Atonement comes to all men including especially Jews and Christians ... through the one act of Jesus Christ ... I am stating something which at present Jews cannot accept."<sup>21</sup> But he sounds hopeful of a change in the Jewish attitude when he says of the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Trinity, "If there are universal truths enshrined in these doctrines, then I believe that they are as relevant to Jews as to every other people ... In what way Jews will express "(their belief)" ... as to when they will express it, I do not know."<sup>22</sup> This does not agree with the statement about Judaism and Christianity given above to the effect that neither "can replace the other". Dr. Parkes looks forward to a Jewish acceptance of the peculiarly Christian doctrines of the Incarnation and the Trinity and once again we see the monistic urge at work.

This is an alternative extension of Rosenzweig's position. Rosenzweig leaves the unresolved paradox of a God who is one but who had two distinct ways of dealing with mankind. Herford explains this by asserting that Judaism really includes Christianity, without Christians knowing it, so really in the end there is only one way to God. Parkes, by saying that Jews are really

beneficiaries of Christ's salvation, even through they may deny it, is saying that true Christianity includes Judaism and once again there is only one way to God.

#### THE OVERSHADOWED WAY

##### Hans Joachim Schoeps

None of three writers mentioned above really stays with Rosenzweig in his Two Covenant thinking, because each one brings to the situation a synthesizing tendency which is foreign to Rosenzweig's thought. However, one writer who can be said to have given, at one time, an accurate endorsement of Rosenzweig's position is the Jewish writer, Hans Joachim Schoeps.

In contrast to the previous writers, we see that Schoeps is able and willing at first to embrace Rosenzweig's position without qualification, mainly because his life situation so closely paralleled Rosenzweig's. As his situation changes, however, and the shadow of the Holocaust darkens his vision, he is no longer sure that he can see what Rosenzweig saw. He therefore asks, "whether the period of religious dialogue may not perhaps be past."<sup>23</sup> This is an important observation, from a sympathizer, that the Two Covenant theory contains within it a limiting temporal factor which detracts from its relevance as it is taken forward out of the time-setting in which it emerged.

André Neher says that Schoeps is the only contemporary

Jewish thinker who has defended Rosenzweig's thesis as being in agreement with Jewish tradition.<sup>24</sup> It is significant that Schoeps went through a similar experience of confrontation with the "question 'Jew or Christian'?" He was challenged by an older friend who was studying Protestant theology and he says, "The 'no' which I finally said was said with difficulty, and even today I feel in all its old strength the demand that I vindicate this 'no' in spirit and in truth."<sup>25</sup>

It is this struggle with the rival claims of Judaism and Christianity and the lasting impression left on him by this experience, that prepares us for the affirmation which Neher says is unique in contemporary Jewish thought. Schoeps says, "Rosenzweig can even admit what no Jew before him ever admitted of his own free will - and without this Jewish admission, in the future, no further discussion is possible - that not one of the nations of the world comes to the Father except through Jesus Christ."<sup>26</sup> Schoeps wrote these words in 1937, very close in time to Rosenzweig's period. But when writing his foreword to the second edition of his book, "The Jewish-Christian Argument", in 1949, after losing both parents in the death camps, he wrote "In view of this experience, I ask myself today whether the period of religious dialogue may not perhaps be past."<sup>27</sup> This qualification must be borne in mind when we read his pre-Holocaust statement, "There is a new state of affairs. In respect

to the reality of historical events the Jewish side recognizes the divine origin of Christianity and its revelation as the way of salvation for the Gentile world outside of Israel."<sup>28</sup>

The close parallel of confrontation and indecision regarding Christianity, resolving into a firm commitment to Judaism, coupled with a high estimate of the other faith which we see in the experience of both Rosenzweig and Schoeps, underlines the significance of the statement Schoeps made in 1949. What would Rosenzweig have said in 1949? Rosenzweig's statements of a half a century ago are taken and used by modern writers, and Harold Stahmer can write in 1968 that "the Rosenstock/Rosenzweig dialogue of 1916 continues to be of the greatest possible relevance."<sup>29</sup> But since then the Hohenzollerns and the Romanovs are gone, the British Empire is dissolved, six million Jews have been slaughtered and Israel has emerged as the strongest nation in the Middle East. All this must be taken into account.

The pessimistic note struck by Schoeps as he questions the validity of Jewish-Christian dialogue after the Holocaust need not detract from the relevance of the Rosenstock/Rosenzweig dialogue and the Two Covenant theory which is so closely associated with it. But it does preclude any naive use of these sources which ignores their provenance and time-setting and the impact of subsequent events on the application of the ideas

expressed there. It is here that the paradox of Christian enthusiasm and Jewish antipathy regarding Rosenzweig's theory can find explanation. For some Christian writers, the Two Covenant theory was "an idea whose time had come". For its Jewish critics, its time had passed, if such a time had ever existed. But even the Christian supporters of the theory quoted above show by their subtle adjustment and re-interpretation of Rosenzweig's theory that they are not fully satisfied with the position. They are taken up with their own situation and its problems, and their very modifications of the scheme testify to their convictions of its inadequacy as it stands. This is even true of Herford who, without commenting directly on Rosenzweig's work, is obviously struggling with the same basic dualism found in Rosenzweig's theory.

## CHAPTER VI

### SOME CRITICISM OF THE TWO COVENANT THEORY

Jewish commentators who have commented on Rosenzweig's theory since the Holocaust, will naturally be more influenced by that catastrophe than Christian writers. As we have seen, these writers tend to share the pre-Holocaust optimism shown originally by Schoeps. But when we encounter the view among Jewish writers such as Arthur Cohen and others that Rosenzweig's theory represents an excessive concession to Christianity, some pattern in Jewish negative reaction can be traced. As late as 1928 Rosenzweig could complain that "The Star has met with such little response."<sup>1</sup> Even in 1961, Nahum Glatzer, writing in the preface to the second edition of his work on Rosenzweig, could say, "Eight years ago when the first editions of this volume appeared, the name of Franz Rosenzweig was barely known in the English-speaking countries."<sup>2</sup> Interest in Rosenzweig's thought in the English-speaking world is therefore a post-1953 phenomenon and for the Jews of that world, who now constitute world Jewry's largest segment, it is peculiarly a post-Holocaust phenomenon. This could help to explain the almost solidly negative reaction towards the Two Covenant theory from them.

These Jewish writers live in a world that has much less respect for the power and influence of the church than the world

of Rosenzweig's day. But as we shall see, especially in the contribution of André Neher, they live in a world which has lost the clear focus of religious loyalties that obtained in an earlier day. In the West today there is a wide-ranging tolerance, mixed with curiosity, towards almost any kind of religion, and what would formerly have passed for commendable forthrightness in affirming belief and denying its antithesis would now seem to be narrow bigotry. It is inviting sharp criticism today to say of any religion or belief that it is false. But at the same time, Society does not require of anybody these days that they should make a clear and positive statement of religious conviction either.

Thus, Rosenzweig's clear endorsement of Christianity's mandate to evangelize the world would seem to modern writers such as Guttman, Neher, Fackenheim and Taubes an unnecessary concession. But they themselves are required to pay their own tribute to the Zeitgeist which, having changed since Rosenzweig's day, demands a different payment.

#### THE "WIDER WAY" CONCEPT

Although Rosenzweig does refer to Islam and the ethnic religions in The Star and elsewhere, he gives pride of place to Judaism and Christianity, calling their nearest cognate faith "their parody Islam".<sup>3</sup> Other faiths are even lower down the

scale than Islam and none, including Islam, is given the high position that he accords to Christianity. Since Rosenzweig's day, the great surge of interest in anthropology and in Asiatic religions has combined with the decline in world status of organized Christianity to make his position look incongruous. So we find his critics castigating him for overestimating Christianity and underestimating the non-Christian faiths.

#### Julius Guttman

As Julius Guttman reviews Rosenzweig's philosophy as set forth in The Star it is obvious that he sees Rosenzweig's approach as subjective, and he disagrees with his handling of Christianity. He says, "Christianity ... Judaism, he conceives of both of them as twin forms of religious life, with equal merit and stature"<sup>4</sup> but "he negates the great religions of India and China ... he criticises Islam in a most unfair manner."<sup>5</sup> We shall see this same criticism in other writers, and Guttman's comment on Rosenzweig's isolated position in his attitude to Christianity is also echoed elsewhere. Guttman says, "His view allows him to conceive Christianity in a more positive way than any in Jewish traditional literature."<sup>6</sup> This isolation is described more forcefully by Gershom Scholem, who speaks of Rosenzweig's "comparative analysis of Judaism and Christianity which ends in a non-liquet, and therefore with a dictum that from



the point of view of orthodoxy must seem rash and nearly blasphemous."<sup>7</sup>

Although Scholem shows admiration for Rosenzweig's "imperious aggressiveness"<sup>8</sup>, he has to concur with Guttman's statement that regarding his approach to Christianity he is not in the mainstream of Jewish thought.

### André Neher

This dissonance with traditional Jewish thought is put forward as an objection to Rosenzweig's scheme by the French-Jewish writer, André Neher. He says, "La Révélation du Sinai fait du peuple juif le peuple prêtre, témoin et messie, pour l'ensemble des autres communautés humaines. Il n'y a pas deux pôles de la Révélation, il n'y en a qu'un, celui du Sinai."<sup>9</sup> Neher refuses to single out Christianity as worthy of a special status alongside Judaism. Judaism is unique, the one pole of revelation and all other peoples, Moslems, Hindus, Confucianists and Marxists, as well as Christians come within the "grand cercle de l'alliance noachidique."<sup>10</sup> He says, "L'éternité du peuple juif oblige à se mettre en contact avec tous ces peuples, successivement ou simultanément."<sup>11</sup>

He claims that Rosenzweig's passing over other faiths to give a special status, even a proselytizing status, to Christianity is "radicalement contraire à celle de la théologie juive traditionnelle."<sup>12</sup> He makes a good point when he recalls that

Yehuda Halevi, whom Rosenzweig looked up to as his master, himself gives priority to Judaism's link with Islam.<sup>13</sup> But Neher leaves Halevi as well as Rosenzweig behind when he complains about the significance given by Rosenzweig to the "biblical" religions. Neher's universalist stance, although it is ostensibly based on "théologie juive traditionnelle" serves to draw attention to the significant development of interfaith relationships since Rosenzweig's day. The scant respect which Rosenstock and Rosenzweig could give to Islam and other faiths in their day, without exciting much comment, is now seen as an unfair "putting aside"<sup>14</sup> of a "moment of salvation"<sup>15</sup> held in trust by another community.

#### Emil Fackenheim

Sentiments similar to Neher's are expressed by Emil Fackenheim who says

I could never accept Rosenzweig's famous 'double covenant' doctrine according to which all except Jews (who are already with the Father) need the Son in order to find Him. How can a modern Jew pray for the conversion of the whole non-Jewish world to Christianity when even pre-modern Jews could pay homage to Moslem monotheism? Rosenzweig's doctrine seems to be altogether outmoded at a time when Christians are beginning to replace missionary efforts with inter-religious dialogue, and I wonder whether, even for Rosenzweig, this doctrine was more than a stage in his self-emancipation from modern paganism.<sup>16</sup>

Thus, Fackenheim echoes Neher's objection about

Rosenzweig's treatment of Islam and, also, appeals to traditional Jewish thought to support his statement. He also is concerned about the fate of the whole non-Jewish world as Neher is. But he is more specific than Neher in pointing to what they both obviously feel. Times have changed and Rosenzweig's theory no longer meets the needs of the changed situation. It is as a modern Jew that Fackenheim rejects the theory. Its basic weakness is that it is "altogether outmoded". Christianity, which Rosenzweig was at such great pains to interpret in relation to Judaism, is no longer what it was in his day.

#### THE IRRELEVANT WAY

The last two Jewish critics of Rosenzweig tend to stress the irrelevance of Christianity for the Jews. Taubes does mention the Islamic factor referred to above, but both he and Cohen stress that Rosenzweig's elevation of Christianity to an "associate-status" with Judaism is uncalled-for and pernicious.

#### Jacob Taubes

Like Fackenheim, Taubes takes up the issue of contemporary relevance. He speaks of "the magic spell of Christianity's historical success" and its effect on writers such as Schoeps and Rosenzweig, and then asks, "do we not stand on the threshold of a post-Christian era?"<sup>17</sup> Taubes complains that the "basic theological differences between Judaism and Christianity" need

restating because "in the last twenty years it has become fashionable to gloss over and distort these differences."<sup>18</sup>

Specifically, of Rosenzweig he says, "Franz Rosenzweig, introducing a new 'theological' notion into Jewish thought, interpreted the coming of Jesus as having a Messianic significance for the Gentile nations, but not for the Jewish people." But this is to "make Rosenzweig's highly doubtful reading of a Christian text (John 14:6) the basis for the doctrine of the synagogue. What Rosenzweig is expressing here is his own spiritual biography."<sup>19</sup>

Here we have a reiteration of Fackenheim's criticism. Rosenzweig is 'out-dated' because he wrote under a spell which is now lifted. He rationalizes his own spiritual pilgrimage in his Two Covenants doctrine so this has only subjective relevance for him but none for Judaism. Taubes also makes Fackenheim's point about Islam and castigates Rosenzweig for dismissing so lightly a religion which is "much more the complement (less heretical!) of Judaism than is Christianity."<sup>20</sup>

But a more telling criticism is his charge of illogicality regarding Messianic doctrine. He says, "But to posit an event that has Messianic significance for the Gentiles yet does not touch Israel is absurd, and arranges a rapprochement between Christians and Jews somewhat too neatly."<sup>21</sup> Taubes quite rightly asks, "... how can Jesus be the Messiah come to redeem the

nations, but not the Jewish people?"<sup>22</sup>

Arthur Cohen

Another writer who is unhappy with Rosenzweig's position because he feels it gives away too much is Arthur Cohen. He says, "Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig, Hans Joachim Schoeps any and all Jewish apologists (and I suspect myself included) have all defined the Jewish stance vis a vis Christianity in terms which all but concede the force of the Christian argument."<sup>23</sup>

Cohen fights this tendency in his work. Whereas Rosenzweig says, "Before God, then, Jew and Christian both labour at the same task"<sup>24</sup>, we read from Cohen, "The only common reality is that Jews and Christians divide before the same Lord."<sup>25</sup>

Taking up his task of destroying "The myth of the Judeo-Christian Tradition" (the title of his collection of essays), he sets out to "... break through the crust of harmony and concord which exists between Jewdom and Christendom, but more to destroy that in both communities which depends on the other for its authentication."<sup>26</sup> In this series of essays, Cohen helps the cause of dialogue by establishing very forcibly that there are two genuinely distinct positions represented by Judaism and Christianity, and he feels that it would be dishonest and futile to pretend that polarity and antithesis do not exist. He is very concerned to cut loose from any dependence on Christianity, any endorsement of its claims or any suggestion of an "associate

status" for Judaism in a predominantly Christian milieu. Both he and Taubes seem to feel that this is the weakness of Rosenzweig's position. Cohen makes a very good point when he accuses Rosenzweig of putting himself in a position where he "was obliged to ontologize historical realities. The Jews and the Christians cease, in his analysis, to be historical and become hypostatic."<sup>27</sup> This is, perhaps, the most perceptive and incisive thing which can be said of Rosenzweig's scheme.<sup>28</sup> As Taubes points out, there is for the historian "a dangerous temptation to take what is for what ought to be."<sup>29</sup> By taking his own personal situation and that of early 19th century European Jewry as standards, Rosenzweig was able to construct a vast universal metaphysical structure as a framework for ideas which really belonged to a particular setting and a particular period.

But in all these writers, representing both church and synagogue, we have seen a dissatisfaction with Rosenzweig's scheme. Those who are favourable show by their interpretations, which are really modifications of the theory, that the requirements of the situation are not being met, in their estimation.

The critics, by expressing open dissatisfaction, confirm this verdict and the combined testimony of both sympathizers and critics shows that the Judaism and the Christianity that they know are not really amenable to the treatment that Rosenzweig gives to them in his Double Covenant Theory.

## CHAPTER VII

### AN EVALUATION

#### PRACTICAL

In both the positive and the negative reactions to Rosenzweig's Two Covenant theory given above, there have been indications that an ecumenical significance has been attributed to Rosenzweig's scheme. Borchsenius saw in this "the breakthrough to real dialogue."<sup>1</sup> Schoeps says that Rosenzweig's recognition of the Church's world mission is the key to future Judeo-Christian discussion, "without this Jewish admission in the future no further discussion is possible".<sup>2</sup> Taubes accuses Rosenzweig of arranging "a rapprochement between Christians and Jews somewhat too neatly"<sup>3</sup>. And Neher speaks of "en unissant intimement, et d'une manière à la fois agressive et indéchirable, le judaïsme au christianisme"<sup>4</sup>. But the rapprochement which the critics have feared and which the supporters have eagerly anticipated has not materialized.

One reason for this could be the fact that the ecumenical movement tends to operate on the institutional level, in the realm of ecclesiastical statesmanship, a sphere which had no attraction and very little significance for Rosenzweig. He was not concerned to strive for any practical liaison between Jewish and Christian organizations.

It was different, however, on the personal level, where Rosenzweig can even speak of "communion". Of his fellowship with Rosenstock he says, "... where Eugen and I met, no anti-<sup>1</sup> quated walls separate man and man ... Our communion - which I tried to resist between 1913 and 1917 - is safe. Judaism, Christianity, Creation: what has happened to us with regard to all three is the living faith ..."<sup>5</sup>

Another reason which would have the effect of inhibiting ecumenical initiative from the Jewish side is the almost unanimous suspicion, which we have noted from Jewish writers, that Rosenzweig's high estimate of the Church involves a corresponding lowering of the position of the Synagogue.

#### HISTORICAL

Another significant aspect of Rosenzweig's scheme, to which reference has already been made, is the interpretation of history which it involves. Rosenzweig was aware that he was living through cataclysmic events, especially as he saw World War I come to a disastrous conclusion for his native Germany. But living so near the events, he could not be expected to understand just how deep an abyss was opening up in world history at that time. His whole sacral view of history, which stems from his positive interpretation of the Constantinian revolution in the church, causes him to hold on to ideas which



are already anachronistic. He writes, "Christianity has been able to synthesize with the world. What matters is the fruitful tension of such syntheses, which has given Christian Europe her spiritual dominance in the world."<sup>6</sup>

Here Rosenzweig is still thinking in terms of "Christendom". In the same context he could write about "secularization" and he even seems to anticipate modern ideas about "religionless Christianity", as he looks into the future. But he is still basically oriented to a Constantinian view of history and still sees the Church as dominant, triumphant and mistress in the world. But despite the fall of the Hohenzollerns and the Romanovs, the decline of the British Empire and the decreasing relevance of religious influence in national and international politics, Rosenzweig could not see that "establishment" was not of the essence of the Church, even though it was a phase of many centuries' duration. But the Church did not begin as an established and privileged Imperial cult, and even in Rosenzweig's day it had ceased to be this in Russia and most of Europe. It had never been this in North America (whose rising eminence as a world power and effective dominance of world affairs even in his day seems to have escaped Rosenzweig's notice). It is not surprising, then, that in the intellectual climate of the '50s after World War II, when Rosenzweig's thought began to make its impact, this historical factor in his work should raise problems.

## THEOLOGICAL

But for most interpreters the general focus of attention on Rosenzweig's Two Covenant theory seems to be centered on the positive evangelizing role of the church in the world. It is his "taking of Christianity's claim more seriously"<sup>7</sup> that encourages Borchsenius, and it is his inclination to "all but concede the force of the Christian argument"<sup>8</sup> which incenses Arthur Cohen. It is the idea that a modern Jew should "pray for the conversion of the whole non-Jewish world to Christianity"<sup>9</sup> that causes Emil Fackenheim to reject the Two Covenant theory with such vehemence. But this is not Rosenzweig's point of emphasis regarding the Church at all. Despite anything that Rosenzweig's critics or supporters might say, his scheme is not Church-oriented but Israel-oriented. The Church is brought into the picture in order to relate it to a centrally-placed Israel and not vice-versa, as Arthur Cohen suggests when he accuses Rosenzweig of seeing the Jews as "compelled by history to function alongside Christianity, neither true nor false, but historically relativized."<sup>10</sup>

Rosenzweig's emphasis on the role of the Church, which Cohen and others criticize has to be seen, in fairness to the critics, as a contrast to his treatment of Judaism, which is not handled in the theological and philosophical way he deals with Christianity. As Julius Guttman points out, "The Star

"is not a philosophy of Judaism. It does not intend - at least in the important sections of the book - to evaluate Judaism."<sup>11</sup> Certainly, Rosenzweig goes into great and loving detail about the lore, customs and worship of the Jewish people but he sees them in a different light from the Church, which he sees as a community of "the spirit".<sup>12</sup> But of the Jewish people he says, "This people has a unique characteristic which, when one tries to dismiss it through the front door of reason, forces an entrance through the back door of feeling."<sup>13</sup> Following this line, Rosenzweig does not pit Jewish theology against Christian theology. This would be out of keeping with his whole approach. His whole aim is to contrast Christianity, seen as a theoretical system, with Jewish life. He presents Christianity as a way, a system, a philosophy which he admits is the best of its kind in the world. Judaism, however, is not of this "kind" at all. A Jew is not won into Israel; he is born into it. He does not confess, "I believe." Instead, he declares, silently if necessary, "I am, and I prove what I am by what I do." Writers such as Cohen seem to prefer to fight their battle on the Christian ground of theology. Rosenzweig, however, is not alone in Jewish thought: in choosing to take up his stand on Jewish practice and tradition as being the essence of Judaism. Credit, therefore, can be given to the church for its "Way" without detriment to Judaism's "Life".

Rosenzweig's own interpretation of his purpose in his references to the Church in The Star of Redemption is very simple and very different from that understood in the critical views quoted above. He says,

The mission to the Jews is the true shibboleth which determines whether a person has grasped the true situation. There will continue to be some Jews baptized, even if the pastors make it as difficult as possible for those who come to them, but there must not be an organized mission to the Jews. That is the ecclesiastical point of Der Stern der Erlösung.<sup>14</sup>

Because there is a danger of mistakenly attributing Olympian detachment to Rosenzweig's book, The Star of Redemption, it is most important that the significance of this statement should be grasped. It is not a chance remark, apropos of nothing, thrown out in conversation with Jewish friends. It is addressed to a Christian pastor and it refers directly to "the question of a possible Evangelical mission to the Jews".<sup>15</sup> Rosenzweig draws the contemporary Church, the primitive Church, the Jewish community, Christian dogma and eschatology and his own book, The Star, into his statement, which he says is a clear declaration of his intention in his Church references in The Star. Rosenzweig is saying what Church policy towards the Jews should be. His "must not" is quite peremptory and there is no suggestion of indifference or apathy about his tone. He quite clearly

feels that the activity of the Church in the field of evangelism had a direct bearing on the interests of his people and he is insisting on an arrangement that will remove Christian proselytizing pressure from the Jewish people. This is a practical move, in the interests of the community, in relation to the Church and it is Rosenzweig who makes the connection with The Star. Thus it is established, on the highest possible authority, that of the author, that The Star at least included certain strategic or tactical principles for Jewish survival.

So it is not what the Church is able and authorized to do in the Gentile world which concerns Rosenzweig, although it is this factor in his scheme which has provoked most of the anger and admiration which the Two Covenant theory has drawn to itself. This is interesting to Rosenzweig but not vital. What is vital is the literal sense of being essential to Israel's life as he sees it is the limitation on the Church's mandate which he has laid down. Because the theme of this thesis is Rosenzweig's treatment of the relationship between Church and Synagogue, his treatment of Judaism and Christianity in themselves is examined only as it bears on this issue. It would be possible to take up many points in his handling of both faiths, because his independent line often clashes with the authorities in both religions. But in the insight into his intentions given in the statement above, Rosenzweig provides the means for

a sharper focus on the heart of his theory.

André Neher shows more insight than most Jewish commentators when he says, "Même ce que Rosenzweig appelait la 'kirchenpolitische Pointe' de son système, l'obligation théologique faite à l'Eglise de renoncer à toute mission à l'égard des individus juifs, a obtenu un début de traduction dans la 'politique' de l'Eglise." He goes on to say, "Certains chrétiens d'aujourd'hui auraient tendance à accepter les définitions de Rosenzweig et à tirer les conséquences logiques et pratiques."<sup>16</sup>

#### The Problem of Conversion

To understand this problem of missions to Jews, which seemed so important to Rosenzweig, but which seems to have escaped the notice of his Jewish commentators with the exception of Neher, we must look at the background.

The decision of Franz Rosenzweig to convert to Christianity can be seen as the major formative factor in his attitude to Christianity and its relationship to Judaism, even after his return to Judaism. His great friend, but doughtiest opponent, Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, who had a great influence on Rosenzweig's development, was a Jewish convert to Christianity. Rosenzweig's life work was to be in a Jewish community which saw thousands of its young people turning to Christianity. Any attempt by Rosenzweig to lead his fellow-Jews into a meaningful Jewish experience

would have to take this factor into consideration. The almost overwhelming attraction he himself had felt would necessarily cause him to take this challenge seriously. Certainly, one other who took this seriously was Rosenzweig's teacher, Hermann Cohen. Giving his "Views on Education" he writes:

In other educated circles (i.e., among various Christian groups) in our country, religious education is pursued with wise insight and religious fervour. Indeed, many of our young people are attracted by this alien fascination and seduced by it into conversion.<sup>17</sup>

In another essay he tells us which level of society is most vulnerable. He writes, "The more the defection of the higher classes brings us painful losses, the more diligently and deeply must we be concerned to secure for ourselves the lower classes."<sup>18</sup>

Rosenzweig goes farther than this by speaking of "the trend toward conversion which every year takes away the best from among us, and not - as is so often and falsely asserted - the worst."<sup>19</sup>

Even Rosenzweig's successor at the Frankfort Lehrhaus, Rudolf Hallo, the father of the English translator of "The Star of Redemption", "toyed with the idea of baptism"<sup>20</sup>, according to Rosenstock. Another writer, Israel Cohen, writes regarding the volume of conversions, "the grand total of Jewish defections last century amounted (in round figures) to 224,000<sup>21</sup> ... The

defections from Judaism have continued with even greater intensity since the beginning of the twentieth century."<sup>22</sup> As Cohen wrote in 1929, the year of Rosenzweig's death, it was a very real issue when Rosenzweig was writing, and would tend to put him in a defensive frame of mind which later readers might criticise without knowing the possible causes of this attitude.

Rosenzweig, therefore, in order to guard against what he felt was a grave danger to Israel, laid down that "there must not be an organized mission to the Jews". As he says that a grasp of this principle "determines whether a person has grasped the true situation" and as he says that his ban on Jewish missions is "the ecclesiastical point of The Star of Redemption"<sup>23</sup> it is germane to our inquiry to ask what warrant Rosenzweig has for taking up this position.

#### The Gospel to the Jews

Rosenzweig's justification for saying that the claims of Jesus Christ do not apply to Jews is that the Jew is "already with" the Father.<sup>24</sup> This would be a simple matter to uphold from Jewish premises, but what Rosenzweig is claiming is that the Jew must be excluded from the Church's evangelistic mandate on Christian premises. His text is not from the Talmud but from John's gospel, which says that no man comes to the Father but by Jesus Christ. Rosenzweig insists that because "coming" is



involved and because the Jew does not have "to come", he cannot be included. But this is begging the question, since this principle of Jewish self-sufficiency without Christ which he takes as axiomatic is the very principle which he is required to prove. The term "no man" is universal in application, unless some qualification can be found in the text which allows for an exception. But the whole tenor of the New Testament affirms this universal need of salvation and leaves no room for doubt about the Jewish need to "come to the Father", in the Christian view.

Jesus says, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."<sup>25</sup> He said to His disciples at the Last Supper, "This cup is the new testament (or covenant) in my blood, which is shed for you."<sup>26</sup> But Jeremiah tells us that the New Covenant is for Jews for he writes, "I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah."<sup>27</sup> The disciples were, of course, Jews, but they are seen as representatives of the whole Jewish people to whom the covenant primarily applies.

The gospel says of Jesus, "He shall save his people from their sins."<sup>28</sup> Jesus says of the people of Jerusalem, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings and ye would not."<sup>29</sup>

It is an uncontested fact of history that Jesus addressed

his ministry to the Jews of Palestine. The climax of his career and public ministry took place in Jerusalem. He left instructions that his gospel should be first proclaimed in Jerusalem.<sup>30</sup> All his first disciples were Jews and their public testimony in the mother city of world Jewry was that Jesus was the Jewish Messiah.<sup>31</sup>

Paul's message was that "the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."<sup>32</sup> Although he was the apostle to the Gentiles, it was his invariable practice to seek out the Jews in every place he visited and he explains this to a Jewish audience by saying, "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken unto you."<sup>33</sup> Paul explains that, far from being an unnatural and abhorrent thing for a Jew to be joined by faith to Christ, it is as natural as grafting an olive branch back into its own tree.<sup>34</sup> By contrast, the grafting in of the Gentiles is contrary to nature and only explainable by pointing to God's grace and mercy exercised on their behalf.

Rosenzweig's reference to the "dying out" of the Jewish Christians which is quoted below is an example of what Taubes called the "dangerous temptation to take what is for what ought to be".<sup>35</sup> There was no requirement in the program of the early Church that Jewish Christianity should die out. Rosenzweig says,

The Jewish Christians have their justification, historically, in primitive Christianity, where they soon died out as the Gentile Church of

Paul grew, and dogmatically, in Christian eschatology. In the meantime, in regard to the former, they are an anachronism; in regard to the latter, a paradox.<sup>36</sup>

The action of the Jewish community in expelling the Hebrew Christians as early as the second half of the first century by means of the Birkath ha-Minim, "a declaration about heretics so worded what the Judeo-Christians could not pronounce it"<sup>37</sup>, would do more to hasten the demise of this group than the growth of the "Gentile Church". It was never intended that there should be a "Gentile Church" or a "Jewish Church". But there is clear provision in the New Testament for a parallel development of both Jewish and Gentile cultures within the Church universal.<sup>38</sup>

Peter is clearly designated as the Apostle to the circumcision, and there is a clear recognition by Paul of the right of his fellow Hebrew Christians to express their faith differently from his Gentile converts. Paul makes a solemn public declaration of this principle by partaking of a vow ceremony in the Temple with members of the law-observant Hebrew Christian community in Jerusalem.<sup>39</sup> It is true that Paul was nearly killed by the Temple mob for his pains but he did at least take the trouble to endorse the observant Hebrew-Christian position. He did more than this. By refusing to allow the Pharisaic party in the Church to begin assimilating Gentile converts into the Mosaic

system<sup>40</sup>, Paul prevented a dilution of the Jewish community which, because of the growth of Gentile Christianity to which Rosenzweig refers, would have resulted in the swamping of native Judaism.

Once again, by measuring early Christianity against a much modified twentieth century version, instead of vice-versa, Rosenzweig has missed a vital factor in New Testament teaching and practice, the principle of the parallel development of the Jewish and Christian cultures within the one Church body.

#### The Thin End of the Wedge

But another principle is at stake in Rosenzweig's excluding the Jew from the Church's mandate. Rosenzweig has already been quoted as describing the struggle of the national spirit of each nation as it resists the universal gospel.<sup>41</sup> But what happens to the mandate of the Church if the gospel is not universal? Each nation, as it accepted the gospel, would have to confess its inferiority to Israel who, along among the nations, did not need the gospel. Many nations have their own superiority as the first article of their national faith. Rosenzweig's scheme, by asserting Israel's national exemption from the need of salvation (a very different thing from being the chosen people) is aggravating the very chauvinistic principle he sees as militating against the gospel.

## The Universality of the Gospel

But much more important than this, Rosenzweig's exclusion of the Jews from the Christian way of salvation undermines the whole fabric of the Christian edifice. The message of the gospel has an anthropological base which cannot admit of any exceptions. It declares that "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God."<sup>42</sup> It declares that "The wages of sin is death"<sup>43</sup>, and it asserts of Jesus "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."<sup>44</sup>

This message does not admit of modification. It can be accepted or rejected, but if it is tampered with, it shatters to pieces. If one individual, let alone the whole house of Israel, can be shown to be sufficient without Christ then the "universal" gospel is invalidated.

If Rosenzweig is to take up his stand on anything resembling post-Christian rabbinic Judaism, he must of necessity reject the deity and Messiahship of Christ and, also, personally reject Christ's offer of salvation. But having done this, he cannot transform a rejected Messianic pretender into a prophet to the Gentiles. If God sent Jesus and sent him to the Jews, who are the Jews to reject him? And if God did not send Jesus, why should the Gentiles accept him? It is an inescapable fact of history that Jesus "came unto his own and his own received

him not."<sup>45</sup> To suggest that a prophet who is not good enough for the Jews is good enough for the Gentiles, is not only an insult to the Gentiles. If the message of Jesus was intended only for Gentiles and yet the circumstances of his birth and life meant that Jesus only contacted a handful of Gentiles during the whole of his ministry, it would imply that the Almighty had made a mistake in sending Jesus to Jerusalem instead of Athens or Rome.

As we examine Rosenzweig's "gospel" it would seem at first sight to be incapable of saving anybody. But it was intended to "save" or at least protect the very people it excluded, the Jews, by diverting the evangelistic efforts of the Christians away from them to the nations of the world. Its effectiveness can be assessed from Neher's statement that "certain Christians of today would have a tendency to accept Rosenzweig's definitions, and to draw from them their logical and practical consequences."<sup>46</sup> Some, like A. Roy Eckardt and Reinhold Niebuhr, do this by denouncing missions to Jews.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CONCLUSION

As we noticed at the beginning of this study, Rosenzweig stands at the end of a period which began with Moses Mendelssohn facing the challenge of the Enlightenment but which ended in the bitter smoke of the gas chambers. Rosenzweig's approach has been characterized as unique by Glatzer<sup>1</sup>, Borchsenius<sup>2</sup>, Scholem<sup>3</sup>, and others; and, if his passion for Jewish survival is accepted as his basic drive, as is suggested above, this could be traced to the unique challenge of his day. A previous threat to Jewish existence had been directed by the monolithic Church-State synthesis of the Middle Ages against intellectual dissent. A centripetal society, it sought to draw each and every kind of man into its vortex and reserved its venom for Waldenses, Albigenses, Marranos and Jews who refused to assimilate. Like Molech of old it was especially partial to children.

But in Rosenzweig's day a centrifugal society was forming in Germany which sought to spin off every foreign and exotic element. Taught by Gobineau, H.S. Chamberlain and Nietzsche and later by Hitler, the new totalitarianism had a morbid fear of children, and saw some magical powers in the blood of gypsies and Jews and other non-Aryans which could permeate and eventually overwhelm the racially pure Herrenvolk. No longer was assimi-

lation demanded - it was feared as a cloak for a pernicious infiltration of the native stock.

Rosenzweig could not have known Hitler, but he was familiar with the works of Gobineau<sup>4</sup>, Chamberlain<sup>5</sup>, and, of course, Nietzsche<sup>6</sup>. Knowing the "folk" orientation of this school of thought he would be able to foresee the kind of tensions that would arise between German society and its Jewish minority, but, of course, he could not have known what depths this "folk"-mania would plumb. For him and for the community he was seeking to serve, the future had to be worked out in the context of German society, for better or for worse. His rallying cry, "Into Life"<sup>7</sup>, did not have a transfer to Palestine or North America as a precondition. "Life" meant holding onto and maintaining the continuity of a Jewish life in Germany which had survived the challenge and tragedies of the centuries.

Seen in this light, the Two Covenant theory can be understood as a modus vivendi to enable Jewish life to go on, even in a hostile milieu. From this angle, the exclusion of Jews from the Church's evangelistic mandate was not a prohibition but a release from an obligation on the part of the Gentile church authorities. Whereas under a universal mandate, Jews would have to be encouraged to join the fellowship of Gentile Christians and welcomed as brothers and sisters in Christ when they did join, they could now be bypassed with a clear conscience.



Also, Rosenzweig's strong emphasis on the racial element in Judaism, in which he put such stress on "blood", could be the exact opposite of the claim to superiority it might at first seem. It could be seen as a guarantee of Jewish apartness, an undertaking that Jews would hold themselves aloof from the sacred genetic bank which the racists were so jealously guarding.

All this is not to deny the wide sweep and relevance of Rosenzweig's universal concepts, nor does it detract from the philosophical value of the New Thinking and its place in the development of Western thought. But Rosenzweig's experience and the letters which distill his reflections on this experience show clearly that his ideas were not formed in a vacuum, and that they had an unmistakable connection with the hard facts of his situation.

If, then, Rosenzweig did seek to chart a course for German Jewry in the troubled years between the wars, his desire was frustrated. Because of the national insanity which seized the German people, no thoughtful or reasonable counsel could hope to prevail. But where reason could not operate, armed might did and the "thousand year Reich" was swept away and many of the factors that seemed so permanent in German life were swept away with it. But the German Jewish community was already destroyed. The situation to which Rosenzweig addressed himself, therefore, no longer exists. His European diaspora orientation

and his Constantinian view of history are now anachronistic. The tolerance for which he argued cogently on behalf of Judaism is available now in the West to all religions on the grounds of indifferentism and not mutual respect, and it is denied in the East on the same grounds.

It is a fact of history that neither Rosenzweig nor anybody else really solved German Jewry's problems, and it yet remains to be seen if Rosenzweig's philosophy will help American Jewry in the problems it faces today. But in the matter of the Two Covenant theory the very formulation of this concept may serve a useful purpose. In the world of science, it is not only successful experiments and confirmed hypotheses which are recorded in the scientific journals. It is of considerable academic importance if a reasonable-sounding hypothesis, carefully investigated by the use of the appropriate experiments and controls, is shown to be invalid. Such a report can save time for succeeding experimenters.

In the field of Jewish-Christian dialogue, Rosenzweig has gone farther than any other, according to his interpreters, in the direction of reconciliation between Church and Synagogue. Because of his remarkable background, his learning and lack of learning, his experience and lack of experience, Rosenzweig was ideally equipped for the experiment he made. People with less learning would have been unable to draw on the many sources

which he used from world literature. People with a stricter and more systematic training in Jewish sources would not have attempted what he attempted. A person who had never hovered on the brink of conversion to Christianity would never be able to show the sympathy and insight towards it which he does. And a person who has not fought back to a position of commitment to an ancestral faith would lack the compassion for the weak and wavering which Rosenzweig showed to the "periphery" Jews who came to the Lehrhaus at Frankfort. But with all his efforts, the situation remains as it was; the problem of Jewish and Christian antipathy remains unresolved. But if a problem is to be solved, it is all gain to know that the problem still awaits solution.

When the facts of the respective Jewish and Christian positions are examined, especially when the Christian claims for Christ and the Jewish denials of those claims are considered, it seems that the available options are clear. Both Judaism and Christianity could be wrong. Judaism could be right and Christianity could be wrong. Or, Christianity could be right and Judaism wrong. What is not possible is that Christianity and Judaism, as we know them, could both be right in the absolute sense of the word "right". There is, of course, much common ground on which both Jews and Christians agree. Also, where subjective statements about personal convictions are

made, such as "I believe in the Trinity", or "I do not believe in the Trinity", both statements can be accepted as true because both are affirmations about a state of mind on which the speakers are presumably the best authorities. But if I say, "God is a Trinity", I am not making a statement about my convictions but I am making a statement about God. Such a statement can only be verified by reference to the nature of God. If it is decided that God is indeed a Trinity, then the antithetical statement, "God is not a Trinity", must be held to be untrue. Both Judaism and Christianity purport to deal with the truth about God, and unless this truth has a genuine objective relevance to God and not merely to the subjective opinions of the believer, it has very little value. Because Jew and Christian reach diametrically opposed positions on the depravity of man and the unity of God and many other issues, we have to accept Arthur Cohen's verdict that, "Christian and Jew are locked in theological enmity."<sup>8</sup> But because God is one we can look forward hopefully to the time when He will unite those who look to Him into one people. For this reason we can hope that the controversy between Jew and Christian will prove to be a MACHLOCHET LESHEM SHAMMAYIM (A struggle in the name and for the sake of Heaven).

## APPENDIX

### A NON-THEOLOGICAL ALTERNATIVE

#### JUDEO-CHRISTIAN HUMANISM

A suggestion for a non-theological basis for improved relationships between Jews and Christians comes from Arthur Cohen, who advocates a Judeo-Christian humanism.<sup>1</sup> Cohen suggests that Jews and Christians can meet and cooperate on the basis of their common humanity without any prejudice to their respective claims to truth. Where there are vital issues of human importance, it is as human beings that they are involved.

There always have been convinced Christians who have taken a very friendly interest in the State of Israel, for instance. Well before the first Zionist Congress in 1897, during the Congress and since, there have been figures such as Balfour, Churchill, Wingate and others who have helped Israel, not in spite of their beliefs but because of them. There are great social evils to be overcome, such as anti-Semitism. In intensity of suffering, anti-Semitism is truly a Jewish problem, but from the standpoint of numbers affected and the brutalizing and degrading of the social fabric it involves, it is much more a Gentile problem and people such as James Parkes are working for the benefit of both Jews and Gentiles in opposing anti-Semitism, regardless of what we think about their beliefs. As we have

seen, Doctor Parkes harbours the desire that one day the Jews will see the truth of the Incarnation and the Trinity. But even Arthur Cohen says, "We await patiently the return of Christendom to the Synagogue."<sup>2</sup> So what seems like incipient theological imperialism need not inhibit the useful activity of those who entertain it.

Already there are some like Rabbi Soloveitchik, acknowledged leader of America's orthodox Jewry, who can say,

"In the areas of universal concern, we welcome an exchange of ideas and impressions. Communications among the various communities will greatly contribute towards mutual understanding and will enhance and deepen our knowledge of those universal aspects of man which are relevant to us all ..."

But he does place a limitation on the scope of such discussion by adding, "We are ... opposed to any public dialogue or symposium concerning the doctrinal, dogmatic, or ritual aspects of our faith vis-a-vis similar aspects of another faith community."<sup>3</sup>

#### A NEW INITIATIVE

It would be a great pity, however, if everybody observed a "muzzling" rule which imposed censorship on all meetings of Christians and Jews. Christians who never mention Christ and Jews who would rather not discuss what the Zohar says about God or what the Midrashim say about Messiah, are operating below

their potential, in that they are inhibiting any possibly fruitful exchange of ideas in vital areas of interest simply because they are controversial. The timid insistence that only harmless and innocuous speakers and insipid subjects should arise at inter-faith meetings would seem to condemn many future audiences to more rabbinical anecdotes and lectures on architecture and music, when, actually, there are burning questions within the hearers which they will take away unanswered.

The deep reflection on Christian matters by Arthur Cohen and on Jewish matters by men such as James Parkes are by no means unique. But not everybody has the opportunity or even the boldness and initiative to press for answers as these men have done. Martin Buber calls for "genuine dialogues, speech from certainty to certainty, but also from one open-hearted person to another open-hearted person."<sup>4</sup> There is no need for a prior commitment to any position such as outlined in Rosenzweig's Two Covenant theory to make this possible. There is no real place in such a Jewish-Christian dialogue for joint acts of worship which can only embarrass and compromise those who are sincere enough to take them seriously. But there are many lectures, discussions, conferences and other non-sacramental occasions in Church and Synagogue where an occasional visit across the "Judeo-Christian gulf" would be of mutual benefit to both Jew and Christian.

## NOTES

### INTRODUCTION

1. Quoted by Nahum Glatzer, Franz Rosenzweig:  
His Life and Thought, p. 341
2. ibid p.341
3. ibid p.341

### CHAPTER I

1. Alexander Altmann, "About the Correspondence",  
Judaism Despite Christianity, p.28
2. Quoted by Alexander Altmann, op. cit. p.28
3. cf Alexander Altmann, ibid p.29
4. ibid p.29
5. Franz Rosenzweig: L & T, p.23
6. Judaism, D.C., p.48
7. ibid p.32
8. ibid p.32
9. Franz Rosenzweig: L & T, p.24
10. ibid p.18
11. ibid p.19
12. ibid p.25
13. ibid p.25
14. ibid p.28
15. ibid p.25
16. ibid p.25



17. ibid p.28
18. see Herman Cohen, Reason and Hope

#### CHAPTER II

1. Franz Rosenzweig: L & T, p.9
2. ibid p.19
3. ibid p.19
4. ibid pp.19-20
5. ibid p.17
6. ibid p.24, N3
7. ibid p.19
8. ibid p.24
9. ibid p.9
10. ibid pp.19-20
11. ibid p.20
12. ibid p.19
13. ibid p.107

#### CHAPTER III

1. Franz Rosenzweig: L & T, p.23
2. ibid p.24
3. ibid p.24
4. ibid p.24 N4
5. ibid p.24
6. Judaism D.C. 36

7. ibid p.32
8. ibid p.33
9. ibid p.32
10. Rosenzweig L & T, p.24
11. ibid p.25
12. ibid p.19
13. ibid p.27
14. ibid p.25
15. ibid p.25
16. ibid p.11
17. ibid p.25
18. ibid p.27
19. ibid p.27
20. ibid p.27
21. ibid pp.106-107
22. ibid p.29
23. ibid p.24 N3
24. ibid p.342
25. ibid p.343
26. ibid p.344
27. R. Jehiel ben Joseph had been called on to give a public defence of the Talmud in 1240, but twenty-four wagonloads of Talmud copies were burned publicly afterwards. At the Disputation of Barcelona in 1263, Moses Nahmanides was called on to give a public answer to three questions pertaining to Christianity but the result was the banishment of Nahmanides. Joseph Albo and others were called before

the schismatic Pope Benedict XIII at Tortosa in 1413-14 for another Disputation, but it merely prepared the way for the Expulsion from Spain later in the century.

Hans Joathim Schoeps, The Jewish-Christian Argument, pp.54-56

28. The Star, p.337
29. Franz Rosenzweig, p.342
30. *ibid* p.341
31. The Star, p.370
32. *ibid* pp.374-375
33. *ibid* p.339
34. Franz Rosenzweig, L & T, p.343
35. *ibid* p.336
36. The Star, p.350
37. *ibid* p.339
38. *ibid* p.378
39. *ibid* p.378
40. *ibid* p.339
41. *ibid* p.343
42. *ibid* p.344
43. *ibid* p.299
44. Judaism D.C., p.135
45. The Star, p.350
46. Rosenzweig's assertion that Israel "walks without mediator" needs to be examined in the light of the Bible narrative. Abraham accepted the priestly ministrations of Melchizidek (Gen. 14:19), and the whole ritual system of ancient Israel was based on the mediation of the Aaronic priests culmina-

ting in the dramatic ceremony of the Day of Atonement when the High Priest made atonement "for all the congregation of Israel." (Lev. 16:17). But the most popular proof given for Israel's free access to God is the passage which asserts the opposite. At Sinai it was to Moses the people said, "We will hear ..." They went on to say, "but let not God speak with us lest we die." (Exodus 20:19). When Moses himself was describing this great event he said, "I stood between the Lord and you at that time, to show you the word of the Lord: for ye were afraid by reason of the fire." (Deut. 5:5). In Bible times fellowship with God was for Israel, via mediation just as much as it is now via mediation for the church, as Rosenzweig rightly asserts.

47. The Star, p.307
48. Louis Berkhof, Systematic Theology, London: Banner of Truth, 1963, p.287
49. Franz Rosenzweig: L & T, p.341
50. The Star, p.370
51. *ibid* p. 279
52. Judaism D.C., p.135
53. *ibid* pp.157-158
54. *ibid* p.160
55. Franz Rosenzweig, L & T, p.19
56. The Star, p.374
57. *ibid* p.412
58. Franz Rosenzweig L & T, p.19
59. *ibid* p.24
60. *ibid* p.190
61. *ibid* p.192
62. *ibid* p.196
63. *ibid* p.199

64. ibid p.200
65. Franz Rosenzweig, "On Jewish Learning"  
Contemporary Jewish Thought,  
ed. Simon Noveck, pp.223-224
66. Franz Rosenzweig, L & T, p.203
67. ibid pp.203-204
68. ibid p.342
69. Arthur Cohen and Jacob Taubes, Arguments and Doctrines,  
ed. Arthur Cohen, pp.402-406
70. The Star p.337
71. ibid p.339
72. ibid p.298
73. Franz Rosenzweig L & T, p.341
74. Judaism D.C. p.135
75. But see Rabbi Yaakof Yosef of Polnoy (eighteenth century Chassidic teacher), who writes: "The Zaddik ... 'stands between heaven and earth, between God and the people, just as Moses was the intermediary between Israel and the Holy One, blessed be He.' " It is only possible to join together two opposites through a third force." Quoted by Samuel H. Dresner, The Zaddik, London: Abclard-Schumann, no date. p. 124.
76. The Star pp.298-299
77. ibid p.299
78. ibid p.301
79. Franz Rosenzweig L & T, p.53
80. ibid p.342
81. ibid p.343
82. The Star, p.335

83. *ibid* p.308
84. *ibid* (*italics*) p.317
85. *ibid* p.307
86. *ibid* p.323
87. Franz Rosenzweig L & T, p.204
88. *ibid* p.346
89. *ibid* p.288
90. *ibid* p.305
91. The Star, p.328

#### CHAPTER IV

1. Franz Rosenzweig L & T, p.107
2. *ibid* p.203
3. *ibid* p.203
4. *ibid* pp.106-107
5. Quoted by Hans J. Schoeps, The Jewish-Christian Argument, p.160
6. Franz Rosenzweig L & T, p.347
7. *ibid* p.347 (*my italics*)
8. *ibid* p.341
9. *ibid* p.351
10. *ibid* p.216
11. *ibid* pp.214-215
12. *ibid* p.215
13. *ibid* p.231

14. ibid p.347
15. Judaism D.C., p.99
16. The Star, p.416
17. ibid p.379
18. ibid p.384
19. ibid p.379
20. ibid p.379
21. Franz Rosenzweig L & T, p.24
22. ibid p.348
23. ibid p.348

#### CHAPTER V

1. Poul Borchsenius, Two Ways to God, p.190
2. ibid (cover)
3. ibid p.191
4. ibid p.191
5. ibid p.190
6. Franz Rosenzweig: His Life and Thought, p.341
7. Two Ways p.191
8. ibid p.191
9. ibid (cover)
10. Franz Rosenzweig, L.T., p.347
11. Glatzer in foreword to R. Travers Herford, The Pharisees,  
p.6
12. Two Ways, p.191

13. Herford, The Pharisees, p.232
14. Franz Rosenzweig L & T, p.342
15. The Pharisees, p.234
16. *ibid* p.238
17. *ibid* p.238
18. James Parkes, Prelude to Dialogue, p.198
19. *ibid* p.201
20. *ibid* p.201
21. *ibid* p.201
22. *ibid* pp.176-177
23. Hans J. Schoeps, The Jewish-Christian Argument - xi
24. A. Neher, L'Existence Juive, p.229n
25. Schoeps, pp.vii-viii *op.cit.*
26. *ibid* pp.141-142
27. *ibid* xi
28. Schoeps, pp.159-160 *op.cit.*
29. Harold Stahmer in Judaism Despite Christianity, p.10

#### CHAPTER VI

1. Franz Rosenzweig: His Life & Thought, p.165
2. *ibid* p.v
3. *ibid* p.203
4. Guttmann, Philos. of Judaism, p.389
5. *ibid* p.389



6. ibid p.393
7. Gershom Scholem, Messianic Idea in Judaism, New York, Schocken Books, 1971, p.322
8. ibid p.320
9. André Neher L'Existence p.230-231
10. ibid p.230
11. ibid p.231
12. ibid p.230
13. ibid p.230
14. ibid p.229
15. ibid p.231
16. Emil Fackenheim Commentary, August 1968
17. Jacob Taubes "The Issue between Judaism and Christianity"  
Arguments & Doctrines, ed. A. Cohen, pp.405-406
18. ibid p.405
19. ibid pp.408-409
20. ibid p.410
21. ibid p.411
22. ibid p.410
23. ibid p.402
24. Rosenzweig, The Star, p.415
25. Arthur Cohen, The Myth of the Judeo-Christian Tradition,  
iii & iv
26. ibid p.vii
27. Arthur Cohen, The Myth of Judeo-Christian Tradition, p.210

28. Cohen insists that his position is not a "simple restatement of Franz Rosenzweig's teaching of the two covenants, the divine reconciliation of theological enmity, where both covenants implicitly espouse the validity of the other, each fulfilling a role which the other, by its nature, cannot perform." Instead, he re-affirms the reality of theological enmity between the church and the synagogue. But he does seem to compromise his position by saying, "Rosenzweig suggests that the parousia for the Christian may well be the first coming for the Jew, that the reconciliation will take place at the last moment when the Jew's virtual existence becomes actual in eternity and the Christian has been enabled by Christ to offer history back to God. Rosenzweig's is heady doctrine and not without considerable merit."

If this means what it seems to mean, that the one who comes again for the Christian is the one for whom the Jew now waits, it would seem that Cohen is here making the greatest concession of all, despite his avowed determination not to emulate the concessions of others.

The Myth, p.210

29. Jacob Taubes, Arguments & Doctrines, ed. A. Cohen, p.406

#### CHAPTER VII

1. Borchsenius, Two Ways, p.191
2. Schoeps, Jewish-Christian Arg. p. 141-142
3. Taubes, Arguments & Doctrines, ed. A. Cohen, p.411
4. Neher, L'Existence, p.228
5. Rosenzweig, Judaism Despite Christianity, ed. Rosenstock, pp.75-76
6. Franz Rosenzweig: His Life and Thought, p.274
7. Two Ways, p.191
8. Arguments & Doctrines, p.402
9. Commentary, August 1968

10. Arguments & Doctrines, p.402
11. Philosophy of Judaism, p.372
12. The Star, p.299
13. Franz Rosenzweig, His Life and Thought, p.335
14. The Jewish-Christian Argument, p.145
15. ibid p.145
16. L'Existence, p.229
17. Contemporary Jewish Thought, p.159
18. ibid, p.162
19. Franz Rosenzweig: His Life and Thought, p.218
20. Judaism Despite Christianity, p.75
21. Jewish Life in Modern Times, London: Methuen, 1929, p.273
22. ibid p.274
23. The Jewish-Christian Argument, p.145
24. Franz Rosenzweig: His Life and Thought, p.341
25. Matthew 15:24
26. Luke 22:20
27. Jeremiah 31:31
28. Matthew 1:21
29. Matthew 23:37
30. Luke 24:47
31. Acts 2:36
32. Romans 1:16
33. Acts 13:46
34. Romans 11:24

35. Arguments & Doctrines, p.406
36. The Jewish-Christian Argument, p.145
37. James Parkes, The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1961, p.77
38. Galatians 2:7
39. Acts 21:18-28
40. Acts 15:2ff
41. Franz Rosenzweig: His Life and Thought, p.337
42. Romans 3:23
43. Romans 6:23
44. Acts 4:12
45. John 1:11
46. L'Existence, p.229

#### CHAPTER VIII

1. Franz Rosenzweig: His Life and Thought, xxv
2. Two Ways, p.191
3. Messianic Idea, p.322
4. Judaism Despite Christianity, p.107
5. ibid p.157
6. ibid p.117
7. The Star, p.424
8. The Myth of the Judeo-Christian Tradition, p.209

APPENDIX

1. The Myth of the Judeo-Christian Tradition, p.VI
2. *ibid*, p.53
3. quoted by Roland de Corneille, *Christians and Jews*, p.136
4. *ibid* p.133

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