

WINNING JEWS TO CHRIST

A Handbook to Aid Christians in their Approach to the Jews

by

Jacob Gartenhaus, Lrrr. D.

Copyright @ 1963

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

OBJECTIONS AND QUESTIONS THE AVERAGE JEW IS LIKELY TO ASK

In your work among the Jews you are likely to encounter many obstacles and impediments, bitter contentions, arguments, belligerent controversy.

I assume that you are blessed with the love and the patience needed for this kind of work, but you probably lack the knowledge of what particular questions the Jew may ask you, and what you ought to answer.

A. SOME OF THE USUAL OBJECTIONS THE OBSERVANT OR ORTHODOX JEW MAY MENTION

Objection 1

I have my own religion. I don't want any other.

Reply 1

I don't intend to tell you of another religion. It is about your own religion, which is also mine that I want to speak to you.

(Here he may cut you short: telling you he does not want to discuss it with a missionary, especially a Gentile. In that case you need extra tact and wisdom to retain his attention. He may tolerate or even encourage further discussion. Then, you may tell him that the Christian God is the Jewish God; that the Christian Messiah is the Jewish Messiah; that the Christian Bible is the Jewish Bible — the only difference is in the interpretation of it. And since the Christians are convinced that their interpretation is not only the true one, but also that on it depends life and death, they count it as their most sacred duty to bring this truth to all people including the Jews).

Objection 2

I know you worship three gods while we Jews have been taught from the days of our progenitor Abraham, on Sinai, and by our prophets and teachers that there is but One and only One God.

This was, is and forever will be our faith. The Christians during the ages have tried their best, but unavailingly, to make us change our faith and you are not going to do it either.

Reply 2

(Here you may tell him that true Christians respect and honor the Jewish people for their valiant and tenacious stand in their belief in the true God. Indeed, Christians feel much indebted to the Jews who taught them this faith in the one true God. Again it is the One God according to the Jewish conception of Him that Christians worship and none other).

There are not three gods, but there are three aspects of Him, and this the Christians learned from the Jews, from the ancient Jews to whom the Bible was near and dear. It was only later on, in the Middle Ages, in order to counteract Christianity that some Jewish Rabbis began to teach that God has no attributes, that He cannot be imagined by man because He has no form, no appearance whatsoever. These Rabbis knew well that this sort of God is not the Jewish God, is not the God of the Bible. This was not the only distortion of the Bible which some Rabbis perpetrated in order to uphold a certain point of theirs.

Of course there is only One God, and He is so great that we puny creatures cannot comprehend Him with our puny minds. But does not the Bible, the Jewish Bible, from beginning to end, speak of God who often acts like a human being? He walks, He stands, He sits, He speaks, He is glad, He is angry. He comes in contact with man usually in the form of man. He dwelt in the Tabernacle in the wilderness. Later He dwelt in the Temple. He conversed with Abraham. He struggled with Jacob. He appeared before Joshua as a warrior. He also appeared in dreams and in visions, and by His spirit the Holy Ghost, He spoke to the prophets. It is hard to understand it but the Bible, the Jewish Bible, is full of God's threefold being:

1. The Incomprehensible "endless" Creator of all existence.
2. His revelation to man by assuming human form, so that mortals could grasp His presence.
3. His revelation through the Spirit.

In fact, God the Infinite, the Eternal, never asked man to believe in Him as an incomprehensible abstraction. One cannot believe in, or love, or pray to "something" which he cannot by any means comprehend or perceive.

It is only the revealed God, the One who assumed human garb that the Jews, or any man, were asked to believe in, to love, to fear, to worship. He never spoke to the Jews as the inconceivable God, Creator of the universe, but, as thy God, the God of your fathers. On Sinai, in the greatest of His revelations, His first words were, "**I am thy God who have brought thee out of Egypt.**"

Objection 3

Yes, but we believe that the same God — the abstract one who created the world — is also the concrete one who revealed Himself to man, whether in human form or by His spirit.

Reply 3

Exactly so do we Christians believe. These Three are One. There is only that difference that you insist on emphasizing the word One as an absolute unity, while we prefer to emphasize the three-fold nature of the One.

Objection 4

But the Bible tells us: “Hear ye, O Israel, Jehovah our God Jehovah is One.” This verse we repeat several times in the day — this is the most sacred principle of our faith, this is repeated by every Jew when he returns his soul to God.

This oneness precludes all plurality, all polytheism.

Reply 4

(Here you have to explain to him that plurality is not polytheism). Indeed, the Hebrew word which we translate God really is a plural noun. That very verse, most sacred to the Jews, if properly translated would be: “. . . Jehovah our Gods . . .” The Bible starts with the words: “In the beginning Gods created . . .” Further on we read, “— And Gods said, let us make a man in our image —”

The plural noun for God is mostly defined by an adjective in the singular but sometimes also in the plural, which suggests or teaches that while God is One, He may appear in more than one form. Just as man consists of three different beings, body, soul and spirit; or for example, electricity, which no one really understands, may show itself as (1) light, (2) heat, (3) power. An “electric” train is driven by electricity, lighted by it, and in cold weather also is heated by it.

(The Ancient Rabbis, exegetes and exponents of the Bible well understood this plurality, or the threefold unity of God, as they expressed it in the Targums, Midrash, and the Kabbalist books. See special chapters on these subjects).

Objection 5

If this plurality, or trinity as you call it, is the true nature of the Godhead, why does not the Bible speak of it in unequivocal words? Why only in hints, allusions and implications?

Reply 5

It is because there was no need for telling things which were of common knowledge, of common thoughts and belief.

You may ask on what ground did Rambam (Maimonides) formulate the thirteen Articles of the Jewish Creed, which the Jews have to believe and recite in their morning prayer. There is no solid ground for them in the Bible except allusions.

Like Christians, the Jews, too, believe in the Messiah because all the Bible is permeated with the “Coming of the Messiah.” Like Christians the Jews, too, believe in the Resurrection.

The Bible nowhere says one must believe in any or all of these thirteen articles or principles, which Rambam enjoins every Jew to believe. What basis did he have for them?

Is it not because he knew that for hundreds of years this creed had been already the common belief of Judaism, and that up to his time there was no need of writing them down? It was only because in his time there was the danger of Jews going over to Christianity, or Mohammedanism or atheism that he found it necessary to define and formulate what the Jews must believe.

So also was the creed which is now known as “Christian.” For many centuries, since Abraham, and even before, it was the common creed of all believers in God. There was no occasion for any of the authors of the Bible to record something that everyone knew. It was only after the people began to doubt, to waver, to form schisms, that some of the followers of Jesus, the Church fathers, had to formulate the creed, which was then in danger of being attacked, abandoned and forgotten.

There might have been another reason: In the times of Moses and the other prophets the Jews were still inclined to revert to idolatry, like the people around them. Thus the Biblical writers had to be very cautious in the choice of words. If Scripture had used the word trinity, it might have led someone to believe that it sanctions polytheism, whereas by the time of Christ this danger no longer existed. Then the threefold unity of the Godhead could be generally spoken of and so it became the common belief.

In short, there is nothing which the Christian believes that is not in the Bible and which the Jewish people believed for hundreds of years even after biblical times.

Objection 6

Ridiculous, preposterous, blasphemy! Do you mean to say that all those fancy dogmas of Christianity are in accordance with Judaism? With the Jewish Bible?

How absurd all this talk about Jesus, that poor carpenter’s son, asserting that he was the Messiah, that he was born of a virgin, that after he died he rose from the grave and went up to heaven. All that stuff you may believe, if you please, but don’t tell me that it is in accord with our Bible.

Reply 6

All this may sound absurd and contrary to human reasoning but it is certainly in harmony with your Bible. Jesus was and is the Messiah because all the prophecies of the Bible about the Messiah were fulfilled in Him. These include His virgin birth and all the other things which you consider so absurd. *

*** See chapter on “Christianity is Completed Judaism.”**

True, these are irrational, unfathomable mysteries, but so is all life, all existence. We are surrounded by millions of inexplicable mysteries. At any rate these “absurdities” are the very essence of the Bible.

Why is it easier for the modern Jew, remote from Bible teaching, to fathom God appearing in human form (as to Abraham, Jacob, Joshua, Manoah) for a short time, than to believe that He appeared in human form for a longer time — as in Jesus?

Jews know, although they don't understand it, that God lived in the Holy of Holies, because the Bible says so. Surely the omnipresent God did not leave all the universe to take care of itself while He was sojourning with the Jews in the Tabernacle and later in the Temple.

But because the Bible says so, Jewish believers are sure it was so. They even have a word for it — the “Shechina” which implies, “God-living-among-men.”

Thus, too, the Bible speaks of the Messiah as a divine person, incarnation of the Infinite, Son of God.

When the Bible foretells the Messiah's birth of a virgin, why not believe this miracle as any other miracle recorded in the Bible? Is not every birth a miracle?

Death, too, is a miracle, and rising from death is a miracle. The whole Bible from beginning to end is a record of miracles, so when you do believe part of it, why not all?

These records, these doctrines about the Messiah are not the creations, fabrications of Gentiles. The Christians learned them from Jewish teachers and preachers. Many rabbis, especially the mystics (Kabbalists), were teaching and expounding these doctrines long after certain Jewish authorities discredited such teachings for argument's sake. Indeed, they are Jewish doctrines; purely Jewish precepts.

Objection 7

We Jews could not accept Christianity, as it is full of superstitions, and doctrines which are repugnant to Jewish taste, sentiment, ideas and principles; such as original sin, vicarious atonement (by Messiah), mediation and the like. We cannot believe that people now, thousands of years after Adam, should be punished for his sin. We cannot believe that one man can atone for the sins of another man. We have a straight, direct access to God and we don't need anyone, no Messiah, no Son of God, to mediate, to intercede between us and God.

Reply 7

Original Sin — These ideas which you now express, are those of some liberal Jews. They are not according to the Bible, not even according to traditional Judaism. According to the Bible and to post-biblical Judaism, suffering and death came to mankind because of Adam's sin.

Because of the voluntary suffering and death (the supreme sacrifices) offered by another man, the greatest of men, the Messiah, death was abolished, lost its sting (See Appendix).

Mediation — Mediation is an old Hebrew principle, as old as Melchizedek, priest of the Most High God, and Abraham, who interceded for Abimelech (Genesis 20:7,17) and for Sodom (Genesis 18:23-32). Moses and other men of God interceded for their people. The priests were mainly mediators and intercessors between sinful man and a Holy God. The people and kings begged the prophets to intercede for them before God.

Throughout the ages, Jews were accustomed to beg saintly men to intercede. They traveled long and hazardous distances to rabbis or to the graves of saintly people to seek their intercessions. In cases of troubles (sickness, etc.), people hastened to the graves of relatives to supplicate that they might appear before the Throne of Mercy and intercede for help. People have been hired to say *Kaddish*, and learn *Mishnaoth* in order that the departed relatives may have peace in the other world.

Among the most solemn prayers of New Year's Day certain angels are pleaded with to bring the prayers before the Throne of Glory. In one of those prayers even *Yeshua Sab Hapanim*, which may mean Jesus, "Lord of the Innermost," or, "Lord of the Face," is implored to mediate between the Jewish people and God. As to how this Jesus got into the prayer book, no one has yet found a good explanation. Nor does any Jew know to whom this great Mediator refers. In most new editions of the prayer book, for the High Holy days, this prayer is omitted.

At any rate, mediation is a (good) Jewish doctrine and Christianity obtained it from Judaism.

Objection 8

All right. But all this talk of a Mediator is superfluous. Since you claim that Christianity is all taken from Judaism of old, and thus, by your religion (conviction) you are a real Jew, why not preach to us to be good Jews, to keep all the Law, and not to sin, so we shall not need any intercession, any forgiveness? No sin — no punishment, no expiation.

Reply 8

That would be fine, if it could be achieved. Think of Adam and Eve; they had everything any creature could desire. All that God wanted from them was just a little obedience: All paradise was at their disposal except one tree, whose fruit they were not to eat. Had they obeyed God, this world would have remained a paradise to mankind, but they didn't and they and their offspring were cursed for it.

Later, God chose unto Himself a people that would in course of time become a blessing to accursed mankind. Till that glorious time came He gave them a set of laws by which they would be disciplined, educated and kept holy. Every earthly blessing was promised to those who would submit to God's grace and obey His commandments, and a curse was laid (or rather the original curse remained intact) upon the one who would disobey Him.

Yet, if the sinner repented and offered a certain prescribed sacrifice (as a symbol that he himself is worthy of death) his sin was forgiven, or “covered,” as the Hebrew means.

Were the Jewish people, the chosen people, better than Adam and Eve? They certainly were not. After God had brought them out from Egypt by so many marvels, after they had heard His voice on Sinai, accompanied by wondrous visions, after they solemnly swore to obey the One God, their God, the God who brought them out of Egypt, after all these they went and made themselves a golden calf, and worshiped it as their god.

Disobedience, rebellion against God, was committed repeatedly by individuals as well as by the people as a whole, so the Bible tells us. But then, there were the sacrifices for individual as well as for national expiation.

Now there is no Jew who keeps all the laws of God; what can he do to be forgiven since there is no sacrifice to be offered in expiation of his sin?

Objection 9

We hope and pray that God would bring us back to our “promised land,” there we shall reinstitute the sacrifices as prescribed by Moses. Till that time we offer prayer instead of sacrifice. If a Jew sins he may atone by repentance, prayer and charity, and for these we need no mediator: also the Day of Atonement is set for the atonement of our sins.

Reply 9

The Rabbis so taught you, but the Bible expressly says that there is no remission of sin without blood (Genesis 4:1-4; Leviticus 17:11).

If prayer and fasting, almsgiving and repentance were effective for atonement, why do the Jewish people still feel guilty? Why are they not forgiven? Why do they still have to suffer for their sins? There is not in the whole world a people who repents more, prays more, is more charitable. Why does not the Merciful God, the God of Israel, accept all these signs of submission and penitence?

The great prophets, beginning with Moses, have warned their people that if they disobeyed God’s Word they would be exiled from their country and then, in their exile if they truly, wholeheartedly repent He would return them to their country. The first part of the prophecy was fulfilled — they rebelled against God, and they were exiled. The second part has not yet been fulfilled. *

*** Only a small number of “Jews” (as they were after called) returned from Babylonian exile and only for a short period were they really an independent sovereign nation. After (the rejection of Christ and) the destruction of Jerusalem the Jews were dispersed to all corners of the earth. The rise of the new Jewish state – the state of Israel – again like the return from Babylon, is only a partial return, since the greatest part of the people are still in exile.**

Why? All through exile in Diaspora the people prayed God for forgiveness, prayed for the Messiah, prayed for the return to the Promised Land, prayed for the reinstatement of the holy altar and the sacrifices. They performed all the rites and meticulously, punctiliously kept all the laws — which the rabbis taught them to keep and perform in order to find favor in the eyes of God. But all to no avail.

Why, O why! Why was not their unparalleled suffering throughout their exile, why were not all their good deeds enough to atone for their sins? Is not God, their God —the God of love and mercy and forgiveness?

Can there be another answer than that only sacrificial blood has had the power to atone? Since the sacrifices of animals have ceased, and since they have rejected the supreme sacrifice of the Messiah, there can be nothing else to atone for sin.

Another question might be asked of the Jews (remember we deal now with observant Orthodox Jews): They continuously, in prayer, confess their sins for which they have been exiled; on the High Holidays they recite long lists of sins “for which we were exiled from our land.” These lists are being recited and confessed several times on the Day of Atonement — the Day on which, according to the Jewish faith, God forgives their sins. Does He forgive them? Judging from what has been meted out to the Jews all through their exile, and their still being in hostile exile, it seems that He rejects their confession and their repentance.

Why, oh why?

There can only be one answer: Among the long list of sins and crimes which they confess to have committed, many of which they did not, many they could not have committed, they have been leaving out one sin, the greatest sin: their rejection of the Messiah — Jesus.

When their leaders delivered Him into the hands of the Romans to do away with Him as a criminal, the Jewish people, as a whole, acquiesced. Since then, the people, as a whole, justify the judgment of their forefathers and He is still rejected by the people. Isn't this the sin for which the Jews do not ask for pardon, and for which they are still unpardoned? If this is not the sin for which they have been suffering, for which they have been castigated during the last nineteen centuries, what else is?

Objection 10

Let us not argue about the supernatural. Let us get down to facts, to life. The Messiah whom we Jews expected was to be a mighty King who would initiate and institute a new world-order of peace and justice in which the nations of all the world would be guided by the people of Israel — out of Zion. But Jesus did none of these.

Wars are being waged now no less than before. There is no more justice now than there was before, and as to the Jewish people, not only had he not helped them but could not even help Himself when he was arrested and executed as a criminal.

Moreover, the most horrible crimes against the Jews have been perpetrated in His name and fulfill all law and prophecy and inaugurate “The World to Come.” (See chapter on “The Messiah”).

There is still much confusion among the less informed Jews as regards the two appearances of the Messiah. They know little of the suffering Messiah. (To these you may point out the passages in the Bible - Psalm 22, Daniel 9:24-27; Isaiah 53, etc.)

It surely is surprising to see how much space the Bible devotes to the suffering and dying Messiah for the sins of mankind, with the space it devotes to the finally triumphant Messiah.

Some rabbis, (usually) antagonistic to Christianity, interpret those passages as referring to the suffering Jewish people, but any scrutiny of the text will at once show that it cannot mean the Jews. For example: Isaiah 53:8 last clause.

In reply to the charge that Christianity has been the greatest enemy of the Jews; that the vilest, crudest atrocities were perpetrated in Jesus’ name against the Jews, may I state briefly: whoever does wrong, or harm to anyone, especially to the Jews, is not a true Christian, because true Christianity means to follow Christ, which implies to love, to sacrifice, to forgive.

How much sin and crime has been committed in the name of God! Those so-called Christians who persecuted the Jews had not and could not cite anything that Jesus said or did, that would support their evil deed. But they could cite (and they did so) many passages in the Hebrew “Tanach” (Old Testament) where God, the God of Israel, rebuked and reprovved the Jewish people in most severe terms and visited upon them the most severe chastisement.

Should God be rejected because some fools took His name in vain? because some perverted mind had abused His name? Why, then, should Jews blame Jesus for the misdeeds of beguiled, misled or benighted people?

Since the Pharaohs of Egypt, long before the advent of Christianity, and through the ages, the Jews have been persecuted. Even from the simple human standpoint it can be easily understood. People do not like strangers, and because the Jews are the most strange, the most peculiar, they are the least liked. Wherever Jews lived they were disliked, distrusted. All races, nations, religions, sects, parties, all social strata (rich, poor, aristocrats, commoners, capitalists, socialists), all have had some grudge against the Jews.

The main reason for this dislike is, surely, the Jewish way of keeping aloof, or at least keeping to themselves. However, this dislike is not particularly a “Christian” fault or shortcoming. On the contrary, only in “Christian” countries did the Jews survive; only there did they prosper; only there have they acquired rights and privileges equal, or almost equal, to those of the other, the native inhabitants. Once in a while, the evil spirit prevailed and it came to bitter persecution and violence even in so-called Christian countries, but there it was only a passing madness, while in non-Christian countries, the passionate anti-Jewish outbreaks brought total annihilation.

The more a country was influenced by the spirit and love of Christ, the better it was for the Jews to live there. Modern anti-Semitism which climaxed in Nazism and Communism is only the result of the decline of Christianity among these people.

An Anti-Semite is not and cannot be a Christian, because he has to hate the founder, the propagators, the first churches, because they all were true faithful Jews, and because Christianity is all based on the Jewish Bible, a book that the Christian is to use as the standard of life.

Look around and you will see that the only friends the Jewish people have now are Christians. Only Christian nations helped in the establishment of the new state of Israel; only Christian nations are helping its survival in the midst of implacable enemies.

So the notion that Christianity is the greatest foe of the Jews is a base lie invented by misleading and misled leaders.

But whatever human beings do to the Jews or to anyone else has nothing to do with the saving grace of Christ, and this is our message.

B. SOME (OF THE USUAL) OBJECTIONS OF THE LIBERAL JEWS

“Liberal” Jews (Reformists, Conservatives and others) usually contend that Christianity with its irrational doctrines cannot be accepted by the Jewish people, because for thousands of years, they have been taught a simple, logical and rational religion. All those dogmas, of the Trinity, God becoming Man, Virgin Birth, the Fall of Man, Original Sin, Christ’s Vicarious Atonement, and Hell with its horrors, etc., are contradictory to reason and to the spirit of Judaism.

Such objections are often used in religious controversy by Jews who are “very proud” of their “Judaism” which they either disbelieve or of which they are quite ignorant.

Some half-baked scholars “prove” that the Christian dogmas were introduced from pagan mythology.

To such Jews you may reply: “Whether these dogmas are irrational, or are of pagan origin, is a different question. But, whatever they are, they are truly Jewish. Christianity acquired them from Jews, from the Jewish Bible, from Jewish belief, and from Jewish teachers.”

If what is irrational (to our minds) is what repels Jews from Christianity then they ought to repudiate their own Bible, their own Talmud and all their religious literature. The most revered part of the Bible, the “Five Books of Moses,” is from beginning to end a succession of things (stories and laws) which could be called unreasonable. Many scoffers, some of them known as “great men,” had little respect and much ridicule for these five books. And if this is so, what is left of Judaism, of which they are so proud? Moreover, just as Jewish scholars find pagan origin to some Christian doctrines and practices, so have other Gentile scholars found pagan origin to Jewish beliefs and practices such as circumcision, sacrifices, and various other laws. So, you may tell them, we are in the same boat. You can’t deny the one without denying the other.

On the other hand, no part of the Bible, whether of the Old Testament or New Testament, may be discredited because it contains something that had already been written or done before by other people.

One must remember, that, if the Infinite God revealed Himself to man, then He had to appear to him in a manner as to be understood by him. If man of antiquity was accustomed to mutilate his body, to offer sacrifices and the like, when he wanted to pay homage, to appease his god, if that was man's way, if that was how man understood it, the Lord in His infinite mercy and love for man dealt with him in his own way. Only He taught him to limit his practices to more "humane" ways, forbidding harmful mutilations and human sacrifice, etc.

At the same time He let them know, by His Spirit through the prophets, that there would come a time when circumcision of the "heart" would replace that of the flesh, when the "supreme sacrifice" would do away with all other sacrifice, when everyone would know the law and would know what the Lord wants him to do in each case. He will not have to ask anyone else, rabbi or priest, what to do.

Some Gentile scholars, with a touch of Anti-Semitism and atheism, have often disparaged Judaism by showing the Code of Hammurabi as proof that the Jews were not the first to have a written law. Well, what of it? Any sensible man may know that wherever there was an organized society where people lived together, they must have had rules and regulations as to how to make life more endurable and more pleasant.

Space does not permit enlargement here upon this subject and it is also irrelevant when dealing with the Jew. You may use this only as an example in regard to some Jewish arguments, that all the nice sayings of Jesus, parables, etc., were taken from the Jews. To prove this they quote certain passages from the Talmud, showing that the rabbis had already said that.

In reply say: "As Jesus was a Jew, who always lived among Jews, and was reared in Jewish tradition, and who knew the Torah, He must have been speaking in the Jewish manner; but most of His sayings were unique and new, and the people marveled hearing Him speak as no one 'spoke like it before.' Surely He did not copy His sayings from the Talmud which was written hundreds of years after Him.

"True, there are some things in both the Old Testament and New Testament which seem unnatural, unreasonable; well, there are millions of things around us that we cannot understand; some of them we may get to know and some never. All life is a fathomless mystery. Rising from death is unusual, unnatural, but it is no more of a mystery than death itself, than birth itself.

Being born from a virgin is unnatural, but any birth is beyond our understanding. It is only that we have become accustomed to this mystery. And so it is with the other miracles and mysteries of the Bible. We may only say that God knows what He is doing and that His will must be done."

The liberal's view about sin and retribution is extremely vague.

There is no national sin, they say, and God did not disperse the Jews from their country on account of some sin, but sent them out into the world to spread Judaism among the Gentiles. They don't say how the Jews fulfilled this mission. However, this view is entirely different from Judaism. Not only does the Bible often refer to the national sins and threat of retribution by expulsion from their land and dispersion among the nations, but it also opposes the general Jewish conception of this subject.

The Jews often repeatedly confess in their prayers that "because of our sins were we exiled from our land," several times daily they pray that God may have mercy, for His own' sake and for the sake of their patriarchs, to bring them back to their land, where they might atone for their sins with sacrifices as prescribed of old.

At any rate, let him explain to you how God deals with sinners — what would prevent men from sinning?

One of the objections of liberal Jews against the Christian faith is that it requires bloody atonement, that a man had to die for the sins of others. Also, that it speaks of eternal punishment, of "gnashing of teeth" and the like. These liberals contend that God cannot be "so bad" as to allow human suffering on account of some frailty. These good people seem to have a sugar-coated God, who would do only the things which according to them are sweet and good and harmless.

In that case they might as well reject all Judaism because it, or rather the Old Testament speaks of God, not only as the Merciful, the Compassionate, the forgiving, but also the **"jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children."** So God Himself introduced Himself to the Jewish people in His Ten Commandments on Sinai (see Exodus 20:5, 6).

Indeed, liberal Gentiles have condemned the Old Testament because of its "cruel" God. Why cannot these good people understand that like a good surgeon, God has sometimes to administer some bitter remedy, or even to amputate a part of the body in order to preserve the remainder? If these liberals believe in that very liberal Supreme Being as they claim, why does He or It allow so much suffering in the world? Why sickness, earthquakes, floods, droughts, etc.?

Should we puny mortals ask our Creator why He does this, and why not otherwise? Can we not understand that He knows better what is good and what not? In this the Orthodox Jew is more correct when he declares: "All that the Compassionate does He does it for the good" (or "is good"). Or on hearing bad news of the death of a relative, etc., he is to exclaim: "God had given, God has taken: Blessed be the True Judge."

The liberal Jew is ready to concede that Jesus was a great man; some go even as far as to admit that He was the greatest Jew that ever lived, but no further. He was a man, but no more than that.

To these we may say, if Jesus was great, righteous, just and honest, as those liberals admit, then we must believe His words, when He claimed to be the Son of God, the Messiah (etc.). If what He claimed to be was false, illusory, misleading, then He was not a good, just, and truthful man. He was the reverse of all that.

Some of the liberal's objections are like those of the Orthodox (in regard to "mediation," for example, which we have already discussed).

C. DEALING WITH AGNOSTICS (ETC).

It is much easier to deal with Jewish agnostics and atheists than with non-Jewish ones, because, no matter how vociferously he claims disbelief, by the fact that he is of Jewish descent he is religious to some degree. No matter how much he denies his Jewishness, he is partial to Jews and Judaism. Why? Because in every Jew's heart there is a latent spark, which was once kindled by the ancient prophets and fed and kept alive for long ages. Every Jew is a potential minister of God. This latent spark you may kindle to a flame, giving out light and warmth.

Ask him to explain the unparalleled enigma of history —the existence (perpetuation) of his people after centuries of persecution, oppression and massacre.

No other people in the whole wide world could have survived such catastrophes as have befallen the Jewish people. All efforts of mighty people to destroy them, to extirpate them, were of no avail. Can this fact, this phenomenon be explained otherwise than that an almighty supernatural power has been keeping and guiding this peculiar people, and that this "power" has done it for some purpose?

Can he, or anyone, explain why the Bible written by different authors in different ages, mostly by primitive man and, to modern standards, also ignorant, has become the world's best, most beloved, most read book, and that in spite of all attacks against it? Is this not due to its divine inspiration and the divine will that it should be intact, studied and obeyed?

Of course you may also use the same evidence of the existence of a personal God, as may be used in argument with Gentile atheists, etc.

You may sometimes hear a cynical Jew say: "You want me to believe in the Son, when I don't believe in the Father," or, "I don't believe in the existence of the Father, how can I believe in the Son?"

Jesus must have been aware of such people when He argued with His persecutors (see John 5:19-47), "**For had ye believed Moses, you would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?**"

~ end of chapter 16 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>
