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DIALOGUE
BETWEEN
A CHRISTIAN AND A JEW

ENTITLED
*ANTIBOLH ΠΑΠΙΣΚΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΦΙΛΩΝΟΣ ΙΟΥΔΑΙΩΝ
ΠΡΟΣ ΜΟΝΑΧΟΝ ΤΙΝΑ*

THE GREEK TEXT
EDITED WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES, TOGETHER WITH A
DISCUSSION OF
CHRISTIAN POLEMICS AGAINST THE JEWS

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Dialogue

BETWEEN

a Christian and a Jew

Arthur Cushman McGiffert – 1889

CHAPTER I.

CHRISTIAN POLEMICS AGAINST THE JEWS.

§ 1. *The Nature of the Polemics.*

It lies in the very nature of the case that Christian polemics against the Jews should begin at an early date. The first problem which confronted the church when it began to come to self-consciousness and to reflect upon its own position was to determine its relation to Judaism. Its founder was held to be the Jewish Messiah, and yet he was rejected with scorn by the Jewish nation. His followers claimed for him all the rights and honors of that Messiah, but those rights and honors were denied him by his own people. There remained but one possibility open: the Jewish people were mistaken. The first problem of the Christian church was to prove this. All the circumstances of the age emphasized this need. Religion was at that time practically a national institution. Each nation had its own religion, and was left by the Roman power in undisturbed possession of it so long as it remained within its national limits. But Christianity, Jewish in its origin, was repudiated by the nation in whose bosom it had been born, and thus, as a religion severed from national life, it contradicted all the principles of the age. Again, the worth of a religion then was measured to a great extent by its antiquity. But Christianity, if the standpoint of the Jews were admitted, was nothing better than a novel superstition — without national approval, without the honor of antiquity. In this dilemma, felt very early by the church and felt with ever increasing force, there remained but the one course: to show to the world, first, that Christianity was the true Judaism, the true national faith, and secondly, that the Judaism of the day was in consequence a pervers-

sion of it and a departure from it. To prove the former it was necessary to show that Christ was the promised Messiah, whom the Jews themselves admitted would found a new order of things when he should come, to show that Christianity was the higher Judaism of the Messianic kingdom. There was but one way to proceed in the demonstration; the Jews' accepted book must be shown to prophesy of Christ and of his church. The search for Messianic prophecies began then at the very start. We see the results of it in the New Testament itself. Had the life of Christ corresponded so exactly with the expectations of the age, with the prevalent idea of the Messiah, that no doubt could exist in any one's mind that he was the promised Messiah, the effort to prove him such would of course have been superfluous. But this was not the case. The life of Christ contained so many elements apparently quite at variance with the Messianic prophecies that the disciples felt at the very start the need of justifying their belief in him, and that to themselves as well as to the Jews. They would have felt the need had there been no hostile Jews to impress it upon them. They might have accepted Christ as the founder of a new religion entirely independent of and severed from all connection with Judaism, as Marcion did; but this could never have occurred to them as Jews trained in the expectation of a Messiah. A deliverer was to come — the Messiah. Christ came to deliver; he could be to his disciples no one else than the Messiah, however much his life seemed to contradict the accepted Messianic ideas. The only alternative left them was to find themselves mistaken in their earlier interpretation of the Old Testament, and to find in it, with the key of Christ's actual life, predictions corresponding with that life.

But if the disciples were right in their views of Christ, the Jews must be wrong, and thus was felt the pressure to prove directly the falsity of their position, to prove, that is, that non-Christian Judaism was a perversion of true, divinely ordained Judaism. This second stage appears early. The Epistle of Barnabas is its classic monument. The necessity which lay upon the early church was a matter which concerned its very existence, and that entirely independent of all personal connection with the Jews, independent of any purpose of propagandism among them. Had no Jew attacked the claims of Christ as the Messiah, there would still have lain upon the church the necessity of self-justification. The substance of anti-Jewish polemics would have remained; it would simply have lost its polemic tone. This fact explains a remarkable feature of the polemics which characterizes it throughout. It shows itself, in fact, almost entirely regardless of the Jews themselves, and though cast in the form of polemics against them, seems to be aimed far less at them than at an entirely different public. The persuasion of the Jews, their refutation for the purpose of winning them, seems to be the last consideration with the author. Of all the anti-Jewish dialogues of which we know, but three (the dialogue of Simon and Theophilus being counted as a reproduction of that of Papiscus and Jason) result in the conversion of the Jew. In the remainder, whether

the Jew plays his rôle throughout, as in Justin's dialogue with Trypho, or whether he drops entirely from the scene before the completion of the work, as in our present dialogue, he is at best but a lay figure, a sort of artistic setting. The artificial character runs in fact through all these dialogues. The real opponent of the Christian is not the Jew but the unbeliever in general, as the Christian imagines him, that is, his apology is directed not toward the Jewish nation merely, but toward the whole non-Christian world. This characteristic emphasizes itself more and more as time advances. From the speech of Peter on the day of Pentecost, when the Jews were addressed and the apology for Christianity was directed to them alone, to the dialogues and treatises of subsequent centuries is a great step. As the Jewish nation would not accept Christianity, Christianity must break with it, and that it did right early. And as it extended itself in the heathen world the Jews became a factor of ever decreasing importance. The artificial character of which we have spoken is excellently illustrated by a passage in our dialogue which states the author's purpose in composing it — or rather that of the latest editor in revising it: "We have quoted these few things from many contained in the Holy Prophets *for the sake of confirming the faith of us Christians*, and as a rebuke to the Jews' pride and hardness of heart." "With this passage are to be compared the words of Isidore, in the introduction to his work *Contra Judaeos*, in which, while the refutation of the Jews is to be sure mentioned, it is looked upon as a matter of secondary importance. But in these two passages it is not the defense of Christianity over against the heathen world that is emphasized, but rather the confirmation of the faith of the believers themselves. In that age it could not, of course, be otherwise. That which had begun in the time of the first disciples as actual polemics was continued as a confirmation for believers after the urgent necessity for polemics had ceased. This is but the history of Christian apologetics in general. Arguments which have been forged in the heat of battle to be used as weapons against assailants are one by one beaten into plowshares for the cultivation of the conquered territory. The fact which has been emphasized assists us in estimating properly the historical importance of the whole class of works with which we are concerned. Is the Jew but a lay figure, we realize at once that we can learn little from these works as to the actual relations between Jews and Christians. Polemics which would be continued, even if the personal object of attack vanished, will mirror very imperfectly the real position of that antagonist. In fact, if we wish to learn the actual attitude of the Jews toward Christianity we must seek elsewhere than in the Christian works which have been directed against them. This fact, which lies in the nature of the case, is well illustrated by the actual procedure of the Jewish figure in all of our dialogues. For the most part, his rôle is simply to assist the Christian in his demonstration by suggesting just such points, and asking just such questions, as furnish the needed steps in the discussion of the latter. He rarely impedes the demonstration in the slightest degree. This irrelevancy is particularly noticeable in the opening paragraph of our dialogue, in which the Jew is made

to object to the Christian's worship of images, as if it could be of any possible consequence to the Christian church of that age, what the Jews might think of their practice. This section, of course, is intended as a defense of the practice over against the attacks of iconoclastic Christians, with whom the strife was then raging. The historical value of this class of works is greatly diminished by this general consideration. We can seek at most only for occasional notices of the contemporary external condition of the Jews, such as the references in the present work to the Christian occupation of the Jews' sacred places, etc. [The work of Thaddaeus Pelusiota (see next paragraph) furnishes a few curious and interesting historic details; of which at some future time.] Of the real attitude of the Jews toward the Christians, of the nature of their polemics against Christianity, if they still troubled themselves with such polemics, these works tell us nothing.

During the early years of Christianity the Old Testament was the only book of oracles for Christians as well as for Jews. To it and it alone could they appeal for a written warrant for their teaching. They must find in it then, not simply prophecies of the external life of the individual Jesus, but also the whole plan of salvation as understood by them. It must, in fact, be their Gospel, [Cf. Harnack, *Texte und Untersuchungen*, Vol. I. Heft 3, p. 57.] and what Christ and his apostles taught must be found taught there too. The part which the Old Testament played in the early church was thus prodigious. Had Christ come with a written Gospel in his hand, as Mohammed came with the Koran, all would have been different. As it was, Jews and Christians had but one book, in which the Jews read one thing, the Christians quite another. But as in course of time Christianity came into possession of its own independent book, as the writings of the disciples began to circulate and to be looked upon as* possessing divine authority, the state of affairs was changed. The church was no longer confined to the Old Testament. And yet, though the church had by this time broken completely its Jewish bonds and had become universal in spirit and in principle, though it was composed largely of Gentiles, to whom Judaism was far from sacred, still the Old Testament had during the earlier years gained, under the necessities of the case, so completely the stamp of a Christian book, and under Christian interpretation had lost so completely its Jewish character, that it was preserved as a most necessary part of the Scripture canon of the church. It is to the necessity laid upon the early church to make of it a Christian book, that we owe its existence today in the canon. Later centuries, with their apostolic works and with their independence over against Judaism, would never have felt the need of so transforming it. But the process thus begun under necessity was most naturally continued after the necessity was past. Once given the Old Testament as a Christian book no generation of the church could be foolish enough to throw aside such a treasure. Once established the practice of reading it in a spiritual sense, its inexhaustibleness assured its permanent use.

Christian apologetics is of three kinds: that which appeals to prophecy, that which appeals to reason, and that which appeals to history — not to imply, of course, that these three kinds are always kept distinct in practice. The original relation of Christianity to Judaism necessarily gave to the earliest Christian apologetics the form of an appeal to prophecy. But as the church began to face more and more the heathen world, which had neither the opportunity nor the inclination to examine the Jewish Scriptures and to test the proofs of the Christians drawn from this source, as in fact it faced a world with whom this common ground was wanting, it had recourse necessarily to the second form of apologetics. Christianity must be shown to be rational, not simply ordained by the God of the Jewish Scriptures. This second form begins with the works of the Greek apologists of the second century. But even here it was not only external pressure, but also internal intellectual need, which gave rise to this kind of thinking and writing. Christians sought confirmation in their faith, justification for their belief. Jewish Christians had sought it in the sanction of the national God, whose word, recorded in their national Scriptures, was law to them. Greek Christians, trained in the atmosphere of philosophy, sought it in the sanction of their reason. But the second kind of apologetics by no means drove out the first. The use of the Hebrew prophets for the confirmation of the Christian faith was not confined to Jewish Christians. Begun by them, it was taken up and pursued eagerly by the heathen converts. But to them the Old Testament played a different role. To Jewish Christians it was in and of itself the word of God. Its prophecies had a worth, therefore, independent of the life of Christ. To heathen Christians it was the word of God *only* because it prophesied of Christ. To the latter, therefore, it was at first valuable only in so far as it contained predictions and types of the Messiah and his church. By them was felt, therefore, far more keenly than by Jewish Christians, the need of finding for every part of the Old Testament a correspondence in the life of Christ, and it is to them, more than to Jewish Christians, that we owe its transformation from a historical book to a thesaurus of divine oracles. Jewish Christians would have remained satisfied to find in the historical books national history, in the prophetic books, to a certain extent, national prophecies. It was not necessary for the life of Christ to exhaust the whole mass of Old Testament predictions. But to the heathen the Old Testament as a national book could have no meaning. It must not only include Christianity, it must be wholly Christian.

An argument from prophecy has always had great weight with the human mind. There enters into it so prominent an element of supernaturalness as to give it a peculiar force. The gentile Christian church found itself in possession of books written centuries before the advent of their Christ, which, as the Jewish Christians had already pointed out to them, foretold a Messiah and a Messianic kingdom identical with their Messiah and his kingdom. They did not need to ask as to the divinity of these books; they did not need to accept them first

as Jewish Scriptures. They accepted them at once as divine and as Christian books because they prophesied of Christ. To them they were at first that and nothing more. Before them then lay the task, undertaken with a very different motive from that of the Jewish Christians, of making the two elements, prophecy and fulfillment, fit not simply in part but completely, of co-ordinating them throughout. With the Jewish Christians it was enough to prove from the Scriptures that Christ was the promised Messiah of the Jews. To the heathen Christians that could of itself have no meaning. To them Christ was not the Jewish Messiah but the Saviour of the world and would have remained such had there been no Old Testament. They gladly adopted the latter because, spiritualized as they spiritualized it, it proved to them the antiquity of their religion and furnished them in its prophecies, so wonderfully fulfilled, welcome testimony to the divine origin of their religion.

These two kinds of apologetics then run alongside one another — each playing an important part in the literary activity of the early church. It is noticeable, however, that they are usually in the earlier centuries kept quite distinct. We have apologies of the first class and apologies of the second class, but not combinations of the two kinds. As an example of the first, for instance, may be cited Justin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho, of the second, his apologies; so Tertullian's *Adversus Judaeos* on the one hand, and his apology on the other. This must of necessity have been the mode of procedure in the earliest generations, when the two classes of assailants, the Jews and the heathen, were so sharply distinct. To represent to the Jews the rationality of Christianity was useless. To them only the Scriptures had weight. To appeal to the heathen from the Scriptures, when they knew nothing of the Old Testament, would have been absurd. In the first generations of Christianity, Judaism played an important role in the ranks of its antagonists. In spite, therefore, of what has been said as to the necessary inward impulse toward apologetics, it is certain that at first there was felt very forcibly the external need also. The Jews were a real and formidable enemy then, and they were besides a people among whom the church hoped to propagate Christianity. -The continued independent use of the first class of apologetics, even after the second had begun, is therefore not to be wondered at. It is further quite natural that this class of apologetics should continue to bear the name *Adversus Judaeos* long after the Jews had ceased to play a part of any consequence among the enemies of the church. The two classes began as *Adv. Judaeos* and *Adv. Nationes*, the one biblical, the other rational. It was most natural that all works in which Old Testament prophecies were exhibited as proofs of the truth of Christianity should continue to be thrown into that form, even after they had ceased to be directed against the Jews themselves. In order to give force and vividness — still more in order to give, so to speak, an excuse for a composition of this kind, there must be supposed an opponent contradicting the truth of the Christian's conclusions, and who else could this

be than the Jew? And this must have been true also of works not cast in the form of a dialogue. Wherever Old Testament prophecies are appealed to, there the Jew is naturally thought of as the one who disputes the Christian's conclusions. To justify any apology there must be an opponent real or imagined. If there is no actual one, and the work is written simply to confirm the faith of believers, then an opponent must be imagined to exist — in the present case of course a Jew. We know that before many centuries had passed the Jews had dropped entirely out of consideration among the Christians in most parts of the empire, that the church no longer feared them and no longer came into actual conflict with them. And yet the nominal apologies addressed to the Jews continue even down to the end of the middle ages, their artificial character of course strongly marked.

Another point must be noticed in connection with this class of apologetics. Prophecy is the correlate of history. What prophecy foretells, history fulfills. A work devoted, therefore, to the demonstration of the truth of Christianity upon the basis of prophecy must confine itself to the realm of history. Dogmatics can properly play no part in such a work, for it is absurd to speak of a dogma as being prophesied, when the dogma is itself ostensibly drawn from the very book which prophesies. If the dogma embodies the assertion of a fact which has occurred or is supposed to have occurred in history, the predictions which may be cited in proof of its truth are cited of course for the fact as such, not for the dogma about the fact. And such dogmas as have to do with eternal truths can of course have no relation to prophecy. Dogmas vary from age to age. But in apologetics based upon prophecy we have two unchangeable factors: Old Testament predictions, New Testament fulfillment. In the generations before the formation of the New Testament canon the second factor was, to be sure, variable. The traditions as to the life of Christ were not yet absolutely fixed, and opportunity was given to alter and add to them at will, a process of which we can detect many traces in the writings of the second century, But after the New Testament canon was established this process ceased. The factors were fixed, and there remained only the discovery on the part of sharp-sighted and keen-witted men of new coincidences between the two. The framework within which all such search must proceed was unalterably settled. This is the natural cause of the stereotyped character of this class of apologetics, which is very marked throughout. It is not surprising that in a work of the middle ages devoted to prophecy and its fulfillment we should find the same general matter as in a work of the earliest centuries. It could not be otherwise. The contents of the life of Christ had long been fixed, and with that prophecy had chiefly to do. (The fulfillment of prophecy in the later history of the church is for the present left out of consideration.) The ordinary marks of the doctrinal views of the author, from which we are accustomed to judge as to the age of his work, we have no right to expect. If they occur, they are misnomers and inconsistencies in the work. At the same

time they do occur, illogically, very frequently. [Much oftener than one might gather from Harnack's remarks. Besides the Pseudo-Gregorian *Testimonia* which he mentions, the dialogue of Gregentius with Herbaso the Jew is permeated with the theological atmosphere of the sixth century, and the same general fact is true of many later works, especially of the scholastics.] In fact, the works in which an indication of date cannot be gathered from their doctrinal tone are largely in the minority. But in spite of this the natural character of these works is archaic. The theological passages do not form their chief characteristic.

We have spoken of two classes of apologetics. To these is to be added the third, already enumerated: apologetics based upon history; that is, apologetics in which the history of the church and of its enemies is appealed to as a proof of its divine origin. This class is, of course, of later growth. Only when Christianity had a history behind it, could it make use of that history as an argument. Strictly speaking, this is of course an appeal to reason. The preservation of the church in the midst of persecution, its continued prosperity, its benefits to the human race — these were so many appeals to the reason of man for the divine origin of Christianity. But in the present instance the history of the church served a double purpose in the realm of apologetics. Not only did it furnish of itself a direct argument, but in fulfilling Scripture predictions it increased the sum of proofs from prophecy. The Old Testament was found to contain not only prophecies of Christ, but also of his church, and indeed of subsequent world history in large proportions. In this way the argument from history by itself, and the argument from prophecy fulfilled in it became closely joined and were continually used together. This was more and more the case as time advanced. The numerical predictions of Daniel play a rôle of constantly increasing prominence. And at the same time, partly in connection with these predictions and partly independent of them, the contrasts were drawn with ever more minuteness of detail between the prosperity of the Christians and the ill-fortune of their Jewish adversaries. The dark lot of the latter formed an excellent background against which to display the brilliant history of the former. Works in which this style of argument is prominent gain a degree of vividness and life-likeness, which makes it seem that they must be directed against real Jewish opponents and be sprung from the actual heat of conflict, and yet we are not safe in drawing this conclusion upon this ground alone. But these historical sections will at the same time usually be found to give us welcome data for fixing the age of the works in which they occur. The subject can scarcely be developed without contemporaneous events leaving their impress, and at this point we must look for most light as to the composition of the various works, and also for the most matter of interest, because matter least stereotyped.

The literary form of the works *Adversus Judaeos* is threefold. We have dialogues between Christians and Jews; we have regular treatises in the form of apologies, or of attacks,

or of both; and we have *Testimonia*, which are but a massing together of Old Testament predictions, arranged according to the events which they foretell. The first is a favorite form. A glance at the list given in § 2 will show that quite a proportion of all anti-Jewish works are dialogues. It was a form suggested by the very nature of the material. In no way could the force of the Old Testament predictions be better brought out than by supposing their proper interpretation disputed by the Jew, who is then obliged to yield his view to that of the Christian. The nature of the subject necessitated a constant change from one topic to another which was peculiarly fitted to dialogistic discourse. [Cf. the preface to the *Dialogus Gualteri et Balduini* (Migne, ecix. 426), and the passage quoted from Richard's work *De Emmanuele libri duo* (infra p. 26).] For the explanation of the prevalence of this form in anti-Jewish works it is, therefore, unnecessary to assume the influence of the dialogues of Justin and Trypho, or of Papiscus and Jason. It is plain, of course, that we cannot conclude the actual existence of the parties named in the dialogue. They may be, as they probably most often are, fictitious characters.

The second form mentioned treats the subject in essentially the same manner as the first. The formal introduction of the two contending parties is merely an externality which hardly affects the disposition of the material. Many of the regular treatises could be transformed into dialogues by the mere insertion of names. The similarity between the two classes is so great that the one form may pass quite easily into the other, even within the same work; as, for instance, in the work we are to consider, in which the form of the dialogue disappears entirely long before its conclusion.

The third form mentioned is quite different from the other two. Its representatives are the *Testimonia* of Cyprian and of Pseudo-Gregory. It is an illustration of what has been said of the natural tendency to throw all works which deal with prophecy into the form of anti-Jewish polemics, that even these *Testimonia*, which in form are the farthest possible from polemical works, still bear the title *Adv. Judaeos*. But it must be remarked that the distinguishing characteristic of all the three classes which we have been considering is not the fact that they are formally directed against the Jews — this, though so universal, is but an accident, not an essential property upon which the classification depends. The essential characteristic is the use of Old Testament prophecies. And thus, though the lost *Eclogue* of Melito, for instance, were not, so far as we know, brought formally into any connection with the Jews, they nevertheless belong to the general class of works under consideration, just as much as the *Testimonia* of Cyprian and of Pseudo-Gregory, whose titles expressly name the Jews. They will therefore be included in our list of anti-Jewish works. At the same time there are, on the other hand, works against the Jews which are purely polemical, being devoted solely to an exhibition of the wickedness of the Jews, and containing no element of apology for

Christianity, no attempt to prove its truth in any respect. Such, writings have no connection with the class of works under consideration, although the word "Jews" appears in their titles. They will, therefore, be omitted in our list.