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**Christians and Jews:  
The Jew and the Cross  
The Gospel According to Saint John**

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"Would you deliberately break Congress' instructions?" "Unless," Jay replied, "we violate these instructions the dignity of Congress will be in the dust. I do not mean to imply that we should deviate in the least from our treaty with France." (Page 310.)

In the meantime, Vergennes' undersecretary, Reyneval, was secretly telling the British agent Fitzherbert how displeased France was towards her American ally's interest in Canada and the nearby fishing grounds. Similarly, Vergennes voiced his view to Luzerne, cautioning him that:

This way of thinking ought to be an impenetrable secret from the Americans. It would be a crime that they would never pardon. It is convenient, then, to make an outward show to convince them that we share their views, but to checkmate any steps that would put them into effect in case we are required to cooperate. (Page 326.)

Although not directly cognizant of her ally's plans of limitation for her, it is no surprise to see the generally suspicious American commissioners, including a reluctant Franklin, sign a preliminary peace with England in Paris on November 30, 1782, stipulating that it would not take effect until France and Spain had accepted the *fait accompli*. This is what happened on September 3, 1783. And, in view of Vergennes' own stratagems and the ruinous financial state his country was in, Americans can only pity the man's misguided statecraft and laud his fortuitous support. For, without the Comte de Vergennes, there would be no United States of America today.

GERARD DRUMMOND

## CHRISTIANS AND JEWS

THE JEW AND THE CROSS. By Dagobert D. Runes. New York: Philosophical Library, 1965. 94 pp.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT JOHN. Edited by Dagobert D. Runes. New York: Philosophical Library, 1967. 97 pp.

The first book is interesting in this age of ecumenism, not because it is a Jewish dialogue with Christians—the author insists he is conducting a monologue with Christians—but because it reveals the feelings of a Jewish writer who suffered the loss of dear ones in Nazi times and who here reviews the centuries-long persecution of Jews at the hands of Christians. Responsibility for these crimes is

attributed in great part to the approval and direct orders of the Vatican and, to a lesser extent, to the exhortations of Luther. The ultimate reason for this official and popular anti-Semitism is stated to be the 2,000-year old charge of deicide leveled against the Jews in catechisms, sermons and prayers.

This book is not history though it contains many sad claims which must be admitted as factual, and, understandably, the book manifests both personal hurt and not a little bitterness.

Pope John XXIII acknowledged the truth of this plaint by changing the Good Friday prayers for the Jews. According to one Catholic exegete who would be fairly representative: "that the Jews rejected Jesus and had Him crucified is historically untenable" and this falsehood "must therefore be removed from our thinking and our writing, our teaching, preaching and liturgy"; those responsible for Christ's death were "a small hard core of Palestinian Jewish authority" as well as the Christian Judas and the cowardly Roman governor. (Cf. *Theological Studies*, 1965, pp. 189, 213.) In the decree on Non-Christian Religions, Vatican II officially promulgates this view of the truth about the Gospel facts, insists on the spirit of love in the New Testament, and condemns all discrimination and harassment of Jews and others.

Anti-Semitism has been a fact among many Christians, even among those in authority. The human and sinful side of the Church cannot be glossed over. D. D. Runes emphasizes this at great length, with passion as well as rhetoric ("vile accusations...shouted by every monk and every priest from every pulpit in every church"). Unfortunately, his one-sided view — although understandable in the atmosphere of deep emotion—does cost him something in the way of full credibility and sympathy. There have been two traditions in Christian history towards the Jews; the one is lamentable; but more than just a few voices were raised in protest against unjust attacks and persecutions.

Regarding the silence of Pius XII about the Nazi pogroms, there is another possible explanation which deserves, in all justice, at least mention, even if the author cannot bring himself to accept it. Fear of still greater reprisal against the Jews—even if it were a misjudgment—would be believable in a man who personally and through direct authority provided shelter, protection and escape for Jews in the Vatican and elsewhere. The Jewish writer Pinchas Lapide in a book not overly favorable to the Papacy and somewhat polemical, *Three Popes and the Jews*, has recently estimated that Pius XII was responsible for saving as many as 860,000 Jews in Europe.

*The Gospel According to Saint John* in the King James version has, according to the lengthy subtitle, been "edited in conformity

with the true ecumenical spirit of His Holiness, Pope John XXIII." This editing, which consists in exorcising apparently anti-Jewish statements and ascribing them to Christian writers in the early centuries, does little for the service of truth. Scholars accept them as authentically part of the New Testament. If they are difficult to understand, the solution should lie, not in expurgation, but in attempts to understand their meaning as intended by the author. The usual scientific interpretation would see in John's harsh references to "the Jews" a condemnation, not of the Jewish people, but of the Jewish leaders and others who wilfully rejected Christ and engineered His death.

If Mr. Runes refuses to enter into dialogue, his very feelings can help a Christian towards adopting a more ecumenical outlook. Christians here can see how prejudices cut deep, and can be forcibly reminded that these are not of Christ's religion. The New Testament, and the Old Testament as well, though often difficult of interpretation, is still the Word of God who is the God of love.

PHILIP J. CALDERONE, S.J.