The Christian Debt to Pharisaism

J. Massingberd Ford

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarship.shu.edu/jcs-bridge-V

Part of the Biblical Studies Commons, Catholic Studies Commons, and the Jewish Studies Commons

Recommended Citation
THE CHRISTIAN DEBT TO PHARISAISM

THE Church cannot forget "that she draws sustenance from the root of that well-cultivated olive tree onto which the wild shoots of the Gentiles have been grafted (cf. Rom 11:17-24)." Thus spoke the Council fathers at Vatican Council II. No doubt, they had in mind Israel's long history with God; they remembered especially the patriarchs and their faith. It may not be inappropriate, however, to apply the saying of the Council to Christian dependence on pharisaic thought.

Christians have long regarded an important and grace-bearing segment of the Jewish people, namely the Pharisees, as dry and rotten wood and have thus denied an intrinsic part of their own inheritance. In the past, Christians unjustly and indiscriminately accused the Jews as a whole of the death of Jesus, thereby sowing seeds of hatred for those whom they should love as the descendants of their spiritual ancestors. Similarly, Christians saw the Pharisees only through the pages of the New Testament. Thus the Pharisees, collectively and individually, became victims of the accusation of hypocrisy and insincerity. To some extent this reputation has affected our conception of the entire Jewish people.

It cannot be my task here to exonerate the "New Testament Pharisees." I should like to ask a more constructive question: Where would Judaism and, consequently, where would Christianity be without the Pharisees? Let us adopt the custom of men who remember, not the evil their deceased fellows did, but the immense good they generated (Lev. Rabbah 34:8).
THE TERM "PHARISEE"

THOUGH "Pharisee" was probably a nickname meaning "separatist," Pharisaism in its full sense was essentially a religious movement, potent and dynamic, that arose within Judaism at a time when her very existence was threatened. Its cradle stood in the Babylonian exile, where the Israelites found themselves without Temple or sacrifice and wondered whether they could "sing a song of the Lord in a foreign land" (Ps 137[136]:4). Many decided they could, and from that spirit Pharisaism was born.

Pharisaism had a noble lineage. It sprang from the prophetic tradition of early Israel. The men who were later known as Pharisees came from the same class as the early prophets. Indeed, the Talmud traces an unbroken chain of tradition that is analogous to the apostolic succession which links a bishop of the Church to Christ's apostles. "Moses received the Law from Sinai and transmitted it to Joshua, and Joshua to the elders, and the elders to the prophets; and the prophets transmitted it to the men of the Great Synagogue" (Ab. I, 1), that is, a body of one hundred and twenty elders, including the last Jew prophet, who came from Babylon with Ezra. Prophets and Pharisees had the same ideals, the chief of which were to bind the people closer and closer to the covenant love of God, and to insist that the Covenant obtained with or without the Temple and that God required truth and justice and mercy more than sacrifice.

Hence, as the prophets had assembled the people around the local shrines or spoken to them in the Temple, leading them to return to the Law of the Lord; as they had gathered disciples, so the first Pharisees gathered the confused exiles, rebuilt their faith in the word of God, and gave them hope that the Temple would be restored. Their program is epitomized in the talmudic saying: "Be deliberate in judgment, raise up many disciples, and make a fence around the Torah" (Ab. I, 1).²

2. See Asher Finkel, The Pharisees and the Teacher of Nazareth (Leiden, 1964), p. 21. Dr. Finkel comments: "The Sofer is not like his forerunner, the Nabi, who can communicate directly with God; rather he resort to explanations and interpretations of God's law in order to fulfill it and to teach in Israel statutes and judgements" (Ezr 7:10).
Just as the early prophets had become the teachers of the people and the medium of the revelation of God's will, and their disciples later had committed their teaching to writing, so the precursors of the Pharisees became the official teachers and scholars of the community and compilers of the word of God. They, too, committed some of Israel's history and thought to writing. The proto-Pharisees may have been largely responsible for editing the Pentateuch, the Prophets, the historical and poetical books; they also cared for a considerable body of noncanonical literature, which influenced the thought and discipline of Jews and, ultimately, of Christians and Muslims. Not only were they interested in the written Torah, the oral Torah, too, was developed and used as the unfailing source of the continuing revelation of the will of God, affecting the details of the life of the community and the individual.

Study and scholarship were born in the Exile among the early Pharisees as they began to search, *derash,* the Scriptures; biblical exegesis became the instrument whereby the past, present, and future will of God was revealed. The congregation learned that YHWH's religion was universal, not restricted to the Temple domain. The Shekinah hovered, not only over it, but also over every single scholar studying the Torah.

This learning was not confined to the scholar. The early Pharisees made certain that the joy of the Torah was shared by all. They accomplished by making use of Aramaic, the vernacular, as a medium of education and knowledge as well as, in part, of dutiful service to God. In all likelihood, the Synagogue, the place of assembly for prayer, and the *beth ha-midrash,* the "house of study," later to be planted in Palestine, originated with the prayerful study of the Torah in the Babylonian captivity. One may go so far as to say that this development enabled Jews to play their priestly roles in the world, in the school, and in the Temple.

In the crucible of the Exile, the Jews, for the most part, broke the iron bars of class distinction. In suffering, they learned to appreciate their fellows as persons. There arose the ideal of a peaceful society, wherein layman and priest mingled freely. The pharisaic brotherhoods, *chaburot,* were open to all who were willing to observe strictly and without Love—of Talmudic scholars issued the oracles of the common purpose the community placed the revealed spirit, they received

Seen in this spirit of separation, of the unique essence of the community traditions that movement was born of Jewish learning.

In contrast to the priestly, aristocratic interpreters of the lower class, the scholars idealized the opinion that happiness was the great duty of the Pharisee: "In our day, entering into an except,

The Synagogue of Palestine

3. See "Habermacher" in *The Jewish Encyclopedia,* VI, p. 121.

4. For the *in Pharisian* 5. See Wilber 6. See also (Cambridge,
of the people and their disciples were precursors of the communists, committed to the proto-Pharisee Pentateuch, the Law, and the early Pharisees also cared for a troubled society, trying to meet the problems and the despair of their day, entering intimately into human lives in an attempt to elevate and alleviate. The Pharisees sought to meet the problems and the despair of their day, entering intimately into human lives in an attempt to elevate and alleviate. On the whole, Essenes tried to withdraw from the world into an exclusive brotherhood, ignoring the problems that beset the rest of men.

The Samaritans contemporary with Jesus occupied about one third of Palestine and were, apparently, cultured and influential people.

5. See William G. Braude, Jewish Proselytizing in the First Five Centuries of the Christian Era (Wisconsin, 1940).  
They, too, withdrew from the center of Judaism and its priesthood, establishing their own temple, priesthood, and community. It was left, therefore, to the pharisaic movement to be a leaven for the masses, the salt preserving the covenant community, the light of scholarship, and flame of love for both Jew and Gentile. In the words of Finkelstein: "Pharaism . . . was a demand not for rights, but for the opportunity to serve." The Pharisees' urge to serve, on the one hand, brought them into conflict with the rich as they sought to alleviate the burden of the poor; on the other hand, it made their readiness to serve God a living force among the sceptical townsfolk, the businessmen and traders. It brought solace to those who were in need of religious attention.

DISTINCTIONS WITHIN THE PHARISAIC MOVEMENT

To those who have been accustomed to viewing Pharaism as exclusive—a narrow minded and closed sect—it may come as a surprise to learn that the pharisaic movement was quite tolerant of others. It embraced not only those who wished to follow the religious observances most meticulously, but also those who would accept pharisaic tenets without taking upon themselves the more extreme demands. Tradesmen, for instance, were not excluded; upon them, less heavy burdens were imposed that would enable them to carry on their crafts. Thus it is understandable that nearly all the Diaspora was pharisaic. In fact, a number of pharisaic movements were associated with the prominent parties and sects of the time, and it is not uncommon to find pharisaic tendencies in the early Christians.

In addition to the well-known movement of Hillel, the school of Hillel was associated with another pharisaic movement. This was the school of Shammai, who was a bit more lenient in his approach to religious observance. However, it was the school of Hillel that was more widely accepted.

The main difference between the schools of Hillel and Shammai was the approach to the observance of the laws. Hillel was more lenient, while Shammai was more strict. However, both schools were accepted by the community, and their followers found solace in their teachings.

7. See John Macdonald, Samaritan Theology (London, 1965) for a full account of the Samaritans.
8. Louis Finkelstein, The Pharisees (Philadelphia, 1962), II, p. 627 (cf. I, p. xxxiii). See also I, pp. 266-267: "The Oral Law . . . became a platform of articulate, plebeian protest against the official interpretation of the Written Law. . . . [T]he scribe . . . became in a real sense the successor of the urban plebeian prophets of the First Commonwealth . . . the Torah was, for him, an ideal and divine instrument of government; if injustice prevailed under its supposed rule, it was the student's duty to show how God's Word was being misinterpreted, misunderstood, and misapplied."
pharisaic. In Jerusalem, “one in every four city families was formally associated with Pharisaism,”¹¹ even though, as Josephus tells us, the party numbered only about 6000 members.¹² Within the wide pharisaic movement, there were the stricter brotherhoods somewhat akin to religious congregations in the Roman Catholic Church. The latter demand a rigorous life, they differ in their respective demands; yet, they all serve the Church and accept each other, as well as the rest, as fellow Catholics.

In addition to this graded structure among the Pharisees, there is the well-known cleavage between the school of Shammai and the school of Hillel. It seems probable that the Shammaites were connected with the priestly and wealthy classes, while the Hillelites were associated with the lay and poorer classes. Again, Hillel’s origin in Babylon, where there was no Temple and, consequently, less reason to maintain levitical cleanness,¹³ may have induced him to take a more lenient view of many matters and to preserve more faithfully the genuine Pharisaism that had sprung from the prophetic movement.

It is against the acrimonious disputes between these two parties that we must see the controversy of Jesus with the scribes and Pharisees. His main contention was possibly with the Shammaites, and in this He was but the heir of many bitter quarrels between these fanatics and Hillel and his followers, whose thoughts Jesus Himself largely adopted.

The following incidents are illustrative. On a certain feast day, Hillel brought a sacrifice to the Temple in a manner displeasing to the Shammaites and narrowly escaped violence at their hands;¹⁴ Rabbi Akiba was flogged five times by a Shammaitic leader of the academy;¹⁵ in the academy, a sword was set up as a warning to those who did not comply with the Shammaitic discipline concerning ritual requirement.¹⁶

¹². See Josephus, Antiquities, xvii, 2, par 4. 42.
¹³. Originally, the laws of uncleanness were designed for the priests so that they would be in a state of purity for sacrifice. In extending them to the people as a whole, the Pharisees bestowed on the rest of the community a “priestly” dignity: It was only the elaboration of these laws that brought disaster. It is possible that Shammai was a Galilean and that in Jesus’ time a school was developing that had little in common with His teaching. (See Abrahams, op. cit., p. 15.)
¹⁴. See Finkelstein, The Pharisees, I, p. 84.
¹⁵. See ibid.
¹⁶. See Finkel, op. cit., p. 143. On this occasion the dispute concerned the uncleanness of grapes (Shab. 17a).
Those expelled from the pharisaic academies were banished not for divergence in doctrine but, most of the time, purely on levitical grounds. The most telling incident is that of Eliezer ben Enoch who was ostracized because he made light of the washing of hands before meals. Finkelstein comments that "out of this institution of niddui there arose in later times the elaborate system of excommunication which proved so powerful a weapon in the hands of both the Synagogue and the Church."\footnote{Finkelstein, The Pharisees, I, pp. 78ff.}

If the pharisaic opposition to Jesus is seen in this light, that is, in the context of the Hillel-Shammai conflicts, it appears less as a personal attack on Him than an instance of the traditional conflict between Jew and Jew.\footnote{Ibid., p. 79.} When Jesus refers to the "blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar" (Mt 23:35), He may well be referring to the murder of a pacifist Pharisee, of which incident Josephus gives a detailed account (\textit{Jewish War}, iv, 5.4). Jesus seems to foresee His own death and the antipathy towards His disciples in that light. In other words, they will suffer because their work is dedicated to what might be called genuine prophetic Pharisaism.

### Hypocrisy Among the Pharisees

Hypocrisy undeniably existed in the pharisaic movement, but it is difficult to find evidence that this accusation was leveled against the followers of Hillel. A Hillelite writer is known to have described the Shammaites in harsh words: "Treacherous men, self-pleasers, dissimblers in all their own affairs and lovers of banquets at every hour of the day, gluttons . . . devourers of the goods [of the poor]. . . . \footnote{See Finkel, op. cit., pp. 122ff.} Jewish tradition (\textit{Sot. 22b}) preserves this satirical criticism:

There are seven types of Pharisees: . . . The hunchback Pharisee—he is one who performs the action of Shechem.\footnote{Finkelstein, The Pharisees, I, p. 98.} The knocking Pharisee—he is the one who claims I do not love the poor . . . . \footnote{Ibid., p. 79.} The knocking Pharisee—he is bowed like walls.\footnote{See ibid., p. 142ff.} The knocking Pharisee—is the one who claims ["Whosoever . . . . . hidden is hidden"] \footnote{25:14, 1ff.} .

The woes treated with such severity by Jesus almost every time He applies solely to the religious duties of non-Pharisees are the deeds of the Pharisees.\footnote{Ibid.} "Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." (Mt 15:14). Jesus seems to foresee His own death and the antipathy towards His disciples in that light. In other words, they will suffer because their work is dedicated to what might be called genuine prophetic Pharisaism.

King Jann...
The bookkeeping Pharisee—R. Nachman ben Isaac said: He is the one who makes his blood to flow against walls.24 The "pestle" Pharisee—Rabbai ben Shila said: [His head] is bowed like [a pestle in] a mortar. The Pharisee [who constantly claims] "What is my duty that I may perform it? ... The Pharisee from love and the Pharisee from fear ... R. Nachman ben Isaac said: What is hidden is hidden, and what is revealed is revealed; the Great Tribunal will exact punishment from those who rub themselves against the walls.24

King Jannai said to his wife: "Fear neither the Pharisees nor the hypocrites who ape the Pharisees; their deeds are the deeds of Zimri but they expect a reward like Phinehas (Num 25:14, 1ff)."25

The woes of Jesus against the Pharisees in Matthew 23 must be treated with seriousness, but Finkel has convincingly shown that almost every detail of the criticism directed against the Pharisees applies solely to the peculiar practices of the school of Shammai.26 It might well be that the school of Shammai was identical with, or developed into, the Zealot sect.27 It was the latter who compelled the Hillelites to issue Eighteen Measures against the heathen28 and who refused to swear allegiance to the Roman Emperor.29 If seen against this background, we cannot speak of anti-Christian attacks by the Jews or of anti-Jewish polemic in the New Testament; we must

ligious duties upon his shoulder (i.e., ostentatiously) " (B. Talmud, Soncino ed., note 5, p. 112).
22. "He walks with exaggerated humility. According to the J. Talmud: He says, Spare me a moment that I may perform a commandment" (ibid., note 6).
23. "In his anxiety to avoid looking upon a woman he dashes his face against the wall. The J. Talmud explains: calculating Pharisee, i.e., he performs a good deed and then a bad deed, setting one off against the other" (ibid., note 7).
24. "In simulated humility. Others render: who wrap themselves in their cloaks. The meaning is that hypocrisy is of no avail against the Judge who reads the heart" (ibid., note 4, p. 113).
25. Of Zimri it is said that he brought a Midianite wife to the camp of the Israelites. On seeing them, Phinehas took a spear and slew the pair, fearing that the Midianite woman would induce Israelites to sacrifice to the gods of her people and to lure them to the licentious rites of Baal-Por (Num 25:6-15). Zimri is thus the compromiser, "the servant of two masters," and Phinehas the man consumed with zeal.
27. See ibid., p. 117.
28. See ibid., pp. 117ff.
rather see the initial controversy between Jesus and the Pharisees as a domestic struggle within Judaism.\(^{30}\)

One may thus say that the pharisaic movement as a whole was the instrument whereby God preserved the covenant community. If some members of that movement developed into zealous nationalists and others succumbed to the pietistic hypocrisy tempting to all religious systems, this does not mean that the whole movement failed. Let us rather confess that much had been sown and much had come to flower, and that in the end Christianity as well as Judaism did the reaping.

**CHRISTIANS REAP THE HARVEST**

"THE saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps,'" Jesus said. "I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor; others have labored, and you have entered into their labor" (Jn 4:37). This text probably refers in the first instance to the work of John the Baptist and his disciples, but those who had toiled before include, I have no doubt, the Pharisees.

Jesus was born into a Palestine transformed to a large extent by the pharisaic movement. When the Pharisees returned from Babylon, they brought with them the maturity their religion had gained in exile. Postexilic Palestine was strengthened by these pharisaic institutions: the Synagogue, the school, and the academy. It was nurtured also by these attitudes: the expectation of the messiah, and a fervor that was not confined to the Temple but in which the world was somewhat of a temple and school for each individual. Jesus executed His mission through these means.

In His early life, Jesus asked questions and gave answers to some doctors of the Law in the Temple (Lk 2:46-50). These doctors were probably Pharisees, for the priests had largely failed in their mission to the people. Is it too far-fetched to assume that, in His youth, Jesus visited the pharisaic communities and even Qumran?\(^{31}\) Could it be that He became the object of their teachers' questions?

There can be little doubt that they have also followed their community, they had something more in common than the heritage of Scripture: a radical faith that Jesus was the Messiah.\(^{32}\)

For this reason, the Pharisees and the people are often contrasted in the teaching of Jesus. He denounces the teachers of the Law for their hypocrisy and their pietism, instead transcending these institutions and focusing on the person of the Messiah.\(^{33}\)

In gathering these disciples around Him, and as He sent the seven followed by the twelve, and later wrote a letter from exile. One may wonder what had appeared in that exilic period, what movements to the pharisaic sects: the Synagogue, the school, and the academy. It was nurtured also by these attitudes: the expectation of the messiah, and a fervor that was not confined to the Temple but in which the world was somewhat of a temple and school for each individual. Jesus executed His mission through these means.

In His early life, Jesus asked questions and gave answers to some doctors of the Law in the Temple (Lk 2:46-50). These doctors were probably Pharisees, for the priests had largely failed in their mission to the people. Is it too far-fetched to assume that, in His youth, Jesus visited the pharisaic communities and even Qumran?\(^{31}\) Could it be

30. This is not to deny that Jesus did not claim to be God but to suggest that even without this claim He might have met the fate of the non-Zealot Pharisees.
that He began His public ministry only after His encounter with the 
teachers there, after hearing them and responding to their teachings? 
There can be no doubt, however, that Jesus frequently taught in 
the synagogues established by the Pharisees. He also joined in the liturgy
they had shaped, and it was this liturgy—the reading and interpreta-
tion of Scripture in the vernacular33—that served Jesus in proclaiming 
that "He who is to come" (Mt 11:3) has come.

For this moment, it would seem, the Pharisees had prepared the 
people by a diligent performance of Torah, by the development of a 
searching mind in the study of Scripture, by a certain freedom in its 
interpretation, and by the fostering of messianic hope. Messianic hope 
had been neither a constant nor a prominent feature of Judaism but 
it was of great importance to the Pharisees who felt that the ideal 
community could come only with the Messiah. Jesus and His disciples 
preached the fulfillment of that hope, using the hermeneutics of the 
Pharisees and applying pharisaic methodology in their own teaching.33

In gathering His disciples around Him, in teaching them His doctr-
ine, and in preparing them to gather disciples themselves,34 Jesus 
followed the tradition of the pharisaic teachers. When these disciples 
later wrote the New Testament, they imitated the proto-Pharisees in 
exile. One must pause to wonder what would have happened if Jesus 
had appeared in pre-exilic days, before the academies had been 
inaugurated. How much ground would He have covered and how 
great a following would He have gained, without the example of the 
pharisaic schools and discipleship?35 There is reason to assume that 
Nicodemus (Jn 3:1-21) was not the only pharisaic disciple of Jesus. 
How fantastic and even more revolutionary Jesus' teaching would 
have sounded if Hillel had not gone before Him!

The pain in Jesus' passion and the horror of His death was softened 
by those "deeds of loving kindness" the Pharisees taught and prac-
ticed, particularly through their chaburot. When Jesus celebrated His 
last Passover, the meal seems to have been confined to the company 
of His immediate disciples, His own chaburah. On the way to the

32. See the scene in Nazareth (Lk 4:16-30). For discourses on the haftarah 
(prophetic lessons) see Abrahams, op. cit., pp. 6f, and Finkel, op. cit., pp. 159ff.
34. See Birger Gerhardsson, Memory and Manuscript (Lund, 1961), pp. 71-181.
35. For the establishment of schools, see Moore, op. cit., 1, pp. 308-322.
Crucifixion, women offered Him an analgesic; after His death, Joseph of Arimathaea buried Him and later the women of His company came to anoint His body. On the third day, His body rose to life again, thereby fulfilling that great Pharisaic belief of the resurrection of the dead. Could anyone, even the disciples, have believed in His rising had the Pharisees not previously taught the resurrection-to-come?

**PAUL, PHARISEE AND APOSTLE**

Paul bears in his own life the marks of both schools of Pharisaism, first that of Shamai (although he studied under Gamaliel) and, when he became a Christian, that of the gentle Hillel. In the early part of his Christian life, Paul followed the pharisaic practice of study and prayer in preparation for his missionary work. When he took up his active apostolate, he followed in the steps of many of his pharisaic brothers. He went to the synagogues in the Diaspora founded by them (see Ac 18); he entered their houses of study and disputed with them on their own level; he spoke not only to Jews but to proselytes whom the Pharisees had converted. He was welcomed, protected, but sometimes rebutted, by officials and nobles whom Pharisees had won over to the Jewish faith and through whom they had smoothed the path of Judaism, and consequently Christianity, in the world. He was protected by them, not because he was a Christian, but because he was a Jew and a Roman citizen, a privilege gained by his pharisaic ancestors.

37. The *chaburot* often provided help for burying the dead.
38. The resurrection of the body was a belief upon which the Pharisees insisted and for the denial of which they expelled persons from the Synagogue. The Sadducees denied the resurrection and this was said to be the fiercest of all controversies between them and the Pharisees. It is not quite certain whether the Essenes and the sectarian of Qumran accepted this belief or not. (See Abrahams, *op. cit.*, pp. 150–168, and Claude Gruber-Magitot, *Jésus et les Pharisiens* [Paris, 1964], pp. 368–399.)
40. Some notable converts were made in the Diaspora, for example, the royal house of Adiabene became converted to Pharisaism; Aquila, a Roman noble, and Shemaya, "the foremost Pharisaic teacher of the age immediately before Herod" were of pagan descent (Finkelstein, *The Pharisees*, I, p. xiv).

The Pharisees and the independence and prosperity of the Jewish communities in the Diaspora. For near the middle of the first century, the view was expressed that "By the good name the Empire." Paul, from his own conversion, was also by a misses,

Thus Pharisees, though they were not quite certain wether the Pharisees and the sectarians of Qumran, of our Fathers” for the faith to continue, as may be expected from the Pharisees in what we call the first Christian example, with the faith and the sacrifices of the main, Pharisaic points might be explained.

The Pharisees and the sacrificial system of the main, Pharisaic Torah, which had the confidence of the whole world. Though it is impossible to list all the points might be explained.

The Christian Debt to Pharisaism

The Pharisees had learned both the art of adaptability and that of independence as well as the art of keeping their way whole in foreign lands. For nearly one hundred years, Christians were sheltered by the good name the Jews had won with the secular powers throughout the Empire. Paul preached the Gospel, helped by his pharisaic inheritance of strong belief in Providence, in free will, in faith, animated also by a missionary zeal that, incidentally, the Gentiles had learned to expect from the Jews. Paul used the missionary techniques of the Pharisees in whose footsteps he trod, though making concessions, for example, with regard to circumcision, "for the sake of peace." Thus Pharisaism, in spite of the insincerity of some of its members, is worthy of praise and honor from Christians. Indeed, one could almost ask whether Christianity could have been founded so firmly or spread so quickly without it. I think one can say that Pharisaism was one of the "many and various ways" in which "God spoke of old to our Fathers" (Heb 1:1). Both Christians and Pharisees were to die for the faith to which they consecrated themselves.

CONCLUSION

What lessons can we learn from this Pharisaic origin of early Christianity that we may put into practice in the wake of Vatican II? Pharisaism has several distinctions that are as worthy of inheritance by twentieth-century Christianity as they were by first-century Christianity. Though it is hazardous to make generalizations, some of the following points might be considered.

The Pharisees were a community that, while revering the priesthood and the sacrificial system, allowed ample scope for layfolk. In the main, Pharisaism was tolerant. There was a constant re-adaptation of Torah, which kept it a living and nourishing tradition, revealing more fully the will of God among the people. This tolerance would not

41. Baedek (op. cit., p. 8) notes that Alexander the Great assigned a separate quarter of the city to Jews "to enable them to follow their way of life more purely..." (See also Josephus, Jewish War, ii, 18.7, and Finkel, op. cit., p. 136.)


have been obtained without the emphasis laid on scholarship. For the Pharisee, study became as important as prayer; to him study, too, was a dialogue with God that opened his mind and heart, not only to the Lord, but also to his fellow man. Pharisees exhibited a missionary zeal that enabled them to offer the true religion to pagans, on terms that were not too rigid. These converted pagans numbered in their ranks great teachers who even rose, at times, to become heads of the academies.

Nor are these forces and ideals mere past history; they live and flourish in today's Judaism. Our willingness to learn from Pharisaism not only offers some small atonement for the grave misinterpretations of the past, it promises a genuine enrichment of our own Christian faith-understanding.

FOR centuries, as the Messiah, God's grace had firmly believed.
It was out of the Theodor Herzl in Palestine, in possiamo, "We, the Zionist drea
ized our Lord,
Only thirteen stand. In May the Pope's sym
Benedict XV was ephemeral one.
meaningful [ide
the labor of the history has char
imperial Rome]
[that is, the pap
deeply moved by an observation punished enough while the Jewi
reclaim possessi
ment, Benedict XV.

1. Complete Disc.