

CONFERENCE PROCEEDING

Founding Father of Jewish-Christian Relations:
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The Rev. Dr. James Parkes, Anglican clergyman and leader in many national and international student and other organizations from the early 1920s on, author of ground-breaking historical and theological works, deserves to be acknowledged as the founding father of Jewish-Christian relations as he was the first to recognize that the roots of antisemitism were to be found in Christianity from its earliest days. In this work he was a genuine pioneer. The following overview is based partially on two recent biographies published in 2005 and 2006 along with an earlier study in 1993,¹ on Parkes's autobiography, but even more on my own personal knowledge of him and his work.

My husband Roy Eckardt and I first got to know James and Dorothy Parkes in 1963-64 when Roy was researching how European thought about the Christian-Jewish relationship might have changed in the roughly 20 years since the Holocaust.² We had chosen to live in Cambridge, England for the University's library along with its nearness to Parkes's home in the small village of Barley. We worked frequently in his library, and had morning tea and the mid-day meal with them many days. By the end of the year I had come to see James as a true Renaissance man because of the width and depth of his interests and knowledge. We also experienced his impish grin and his marvelous story-telling, which our fourteen-year-old daughter and eleven-year-old son thoroughly enjoyed; especially his "ghost" story.³ We continued to visit and be in touch with them through the years into 1979, shortly before James's death.

When in 1966 Parkes preached to a post-World War II gathering of Jews and Christians he said, "There lies behind us centuries of persecution in the name of Christ, centuries of massacre in the name of Christ, centuries of forced baptisms in the name of Christ, all of which we Christians cannot undo." The centuries-old and still widely-prevailing Christian view of Jews and Judaism produced all of those actions. For the church taught that although at one time God had chosen this people to carry His message to the world, they had lost that role when they rejected Jesus Christ as the messiah. Thereafter Christians became God's beloved children,

¹ Haim Chertok, *He Also Spoke As a Jew* (London and Portland, OR: Vallentine Mitchell, 2006); Colin Richmond, *Campaigner Against Antisemitism* (London and Portland, OR: Vallentine Mitchell, 2005); Robert A. Everett, *Christianity Without Antisemitism* (Oxford and New York: Pergamon Press, 1993). James Parkes's autobiography is *Voyage of Discoveries* (UK: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1969).

² A. Roy Eckardt, *Elder and Younger Brothers* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1967).

³ In the text Parkes actually refers to the so-called "ghost" as an "impersonating elemental." See chapter 2 in *Voyage of Discoveries*.

and, according to doctrines developed early in the church, Jews survived only as a teaching reminder of what befalls those who continue to follow the evil they had perpetrated.⁴

This teaching still is regnant in many churches of the non-western world. But even in the west many mainline churches are not always sensitive to, or properly aware of, recent positive changes most of these churches have asserted at their top levels. And much of evangelical or fundamentalist Christianity has not addressed the issue at all. Moreover, prescribed liturgical readings remain heavily weighted toward anti-Judaism, particularly in the Easter season which includes post-Easter Sundays. It was this that led Parkes, in his later years, to decide he could not attend worship services during this church season.

How did Parkes come to be the founding father of Jewish-Christian relations? And a pioneer in uncovering the real history of the church's relation to Judaism and its people? And then to be in the forefront of those rethinking and reworking Christian teachings about Judaism? Well, it didn't happen right away.

At Oxford he was among those of his generation who survived the Great War (1914-1918). They wanted to establish an effective moral foundation for a new way for the world that would not repeat the tragedies of the war so recently ended. And so he gave a good bit of one of his university years to foster and debate those ideas as head of the University's League of Nations Union, and got many of his fellow students equally involved. (For the remainder of his life he held to those goals.) By 1923, in his mid-twenties, he had earned his university degree and set about working with university students of Britain, the continent, and beyond as part of the Christian Student Movement, along with a number of other international agencies. In 1927 he moved to the International Student Service with headquarters in Geneva where he secured a marvelous flat in a sixteenth century house in the old *Cité*. It was on the top floor, originally the servants' quarters. When he entertained a full gathering it was lit by 60 candles set in domestic English brass holders. He furnished his apartment with antique furniture acquired over some years at low prices because he purchased a Jacobean style that was not then in fashion. As he was away from the apartment for extensive periods he left the key with his colleagues who were free to lend it to anyone (mostly students) they thought fit. (Every now and then an absolute stranger would approach James to thank him for the use of his apartment.)

Parkes's work took him all over Central and Eastern Europe, setting up conferences for Christian and Jewish students. This was when he discovered and entered into the world of Judaism, Jewish-Christian relations, and antisemitism. For he saw virulent antisemitism at first-hand and witnessed what terrible damage it was doing, particularly when some Jewish students turned to him for help.⁵ As the Christian and Jewish students refused to mingle at these gatherings he deliberately set one cold January meeting in the only room of an old castle with a large fireplace.

Because he could not find any competent short study of the history of antisemitism (which by 1930 he had researched in depth) in English, he published a small volume entitled *The Jew and His Neighbour: A Study of the Causes of Anti-Semitism*. This traced the history back to the start of the Crusades. But he had to go back still further in time to find the origins of that antisemitism, and to find out why it was still so rampant, particularly among confessing Christian students. Moreover, he had learned that without a graduate degree what he said and wrote didn't have the necessary impact. And so, with some financial help, he returned to the

⁴ "The End of the Way," Aug. 14, 1966, published in *Encounter Today* II, 3 (Summer 1967), 90-93.

⁵ As far as I can tell it was during these years that he first came to know any Jews.

University of Oxford on a one semester a year basis. In 1934 his doctoral thesis was published. It was, and remains, an extremely important and path-breaking study entitled *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue: A Study in the Origins of Antisemitism*.⁶ In his research he found that Catholic, Protestant, and even Jewish scholars had previously accepted that Jews were responsible for three early Christian martyrdoms (of Pionius, Pontius, and Phillip) as supposedly “proved” by various writings of early Church Fathers. Yet something told him to check out the evidence. This drove him to the sixty-six “fat folio volumes” of the Acts of the Saints which had been gathered together in the eighth and ninth centuries when hostility to Jews was already theologically based. What did he find? That not one of them mentioned any Jewish responsibility. This then led him to go through all the lives of the saints of the Western Church, the Eastern Orthodox Church, as well as of the Arab Jacobite, the Ethiopian, the Armenian, and the Georgian Churches.⁸ So he then examined the Roman world but concluded that any anti-Jewish attitudes or actions during that time were only those of “normal intolerance,” related in part to the fact that Rome allowed the Jewish people not to make offerings to the Roman gods and goddesses. Only when Christianity became the legal religion of the empire in the fourth century did the earlier Christian writings against Judaism and its people come to prevail and influence legislation that removed previous Jewish rights and cast them into ever more restricted areas of livelihood. Parkes followed the many consequences historically and theologically up to the medieval period.

Parkes was already at work on the next book: *Jesus, Paul and the Jews* (published in 1936). In it he insisted that Jews did not reject Jesus; rather they rejected the Gospel accounts which presented Jesus as distorting their [also his] religion and exaggerating Jewish faults. Furthermore, the Church claimed exclusive rights to interpreting the Old Testament, and finding evidence for Christian faith even there.

In 1933 Parkes was considering resigning from his job with the International Student Service as his health was deteriorating under the pressure of trying to do too much. But when Hitler came to power that year the International Student Service was overwhelmed with trying to find help for Jewish, non-Aryan, and even Left-Wing Christian students who were expelled from the Third Reich. The agency needed to find countries that would give them sanctuary and allow them to continue their studies, stay and work. Parkes was given the most difficult task – helping Jewish students. In England he found that the Marks family had set aside funds for just this purpose. Parkes was sent to see Israel Sieff, a brother-in-law of the family, to arrange for accessing some of this money.⁹ This established a long relationship between Parkes and Sieff, and in subsequent years Israel Sieff came to underwrite many of James’s professional expenses.

It was only thanks to Parkes’ private intervention that in that same year of 1933 the Archbishop of Canterbury was stopped from telling Parliament (as he had planned to do) that Ambassador von Ribbentrop had assured him the tales of Jewish persecution in Germany were unfounded. What stopped him? Parkes had shown the Archbishop actual copies of Germany’s anti-Jewish laws.

In 1934 James decided to return to England and devote full time work to correcting the Christian misapprehension of Judaism and to countering the evil which had resulted from it.

⁶ First published in 1934 by The Soncino Press in England; republished in 1961 by The World Publishing Company and The Jewish Publication Society of America.

⁸ See *Voyages of Discovery*, 121-22.

⁹ Parkes also received financial help for these students from Fritz Warburg in New York, and then went on to Toronto where he met and became life-long friends with Maurice Eisendrath.

Israel Sieff had agreed to help him financially only after Parkes replied to the question of how long he anticipated it would take to change Christian ideas and attitudes: Parkes replied, "About 300 years." Sieff laughed and said, "Good. I am prepared to help you. Had you said 'twenty-five years' or 'my lifetime' I would have told you to go away because you did not understand what you were talking about."¹⁰

And so the decision was made. An old house was purchased in Barley. It was a very simple medieval manor with rooms dating from the thirteenth century to the early twentieth, at least one per century. But it was in a dreadful "slummy" condition, as were the outbuildings, the garden and orchard. Over the summer of 1935 Parkes and his handyman installed two bathrooms, built bookcases lining most of the rooms, and began to clear the garden of decades of debris.

The actual move still had to be made, and this was when a significant event occurred. Among the students utilizing Parkes's apartment at times were young Nazis (obviously not recognized as such). Because by 1935 the Nazi Party had decided that Parkes was too pro-Jewish and a hindrance to their anti-Jewish goals, they planned to assassinate him. While in England James had hired Thomas Thomas to work for him in Barley, but first, to go to Geneva with him to help pack up his possessions. When they went to the market Thomas (tall and impressive) was wearing his best clothes while James was dressed as always, most casually. The Nazi agents determined that Thomas must be Parkes. So when he descended the back stairs to check where the dustbins were that he was to put outside, his head was clobbered viciously. (Apparently only his thick skull saved him from actually being killed.) Only when he staggered into the apartment an hour and a half later was James aware that anything had happened. The Swiss police doctor concluded that Thomas was suffering from influenza; the policeman who had been assigned to watch the apartment refused to look for any attacker; the British consulate did nothing to help; and the Geneva police insisted that either Thomas had invented the whole thing or had taken a young man to the cellar for improper purposes and had been turned on. Only the American community in the city provided care and help for Thomas in the following weeks. Obviously Parkes was indeed in danger; it was not a half-witted idea he had cooked up.

1935 was the beginning of three decades which Parkes spent in Barley – before, during, and after the Second World War, and where I first met him. It was here that he took in refugees from Germany early on. Here that he continued to work in the world of Christian-Jewish relations, to write and publish, speak and preach. In 1938 he published the first of three intended volumes under the overall title *The Jew in the Medieval Community*. This one dealt with the Jews' political and economic situation; the others were to deal with Judaism in medieval theology and the Jew in medieval drama. However they were abandoned because a publisher asked him to write on the Jewish problem in the modern world (the actual book title), which was published the following year. Rightly he felt that one chapter had to consider Zionism and Britain's Palestine Mandate, his first published consideration of this subject.

With the commencement of war in 1939 Parkes became involved with many pressing issues and tasks. He actually came to have two identities: one as James Parkes, scholar; and one as "John Hadham,"¹¹ whose writing on Christian and Jewish faith in the modern world was non-

¹⁰ *Voyages of Discoveries*, 128-29.

¹¹ Six John Hadham books, or series of related pamphlets, appeared during the war years under such titles as *Good God*, *God in a World at War*, *Between God and Man*, *God and Human Progress*. In 1950 *Politics and Pacifism* was published under James' two names – Hadham and Parkes.

scholarly in style, and who occasionally spoke on the radio. James took on this *nom de plume* because he did not want what he was writing in these works to be confused with his “already controversial books on the Jewish question.”¹² (The Hadham work was immensely popular during the war years.)

When the London air raids began he and the local school mistress took over the sorting out of child evacuees, and he housed a number of the adults. He had trenches dug in his orchard so that children from the school next door could take shelter. With war shortages of food Parkes set to raising garden vegetables and gathering large quantities of apples from his trees which the Marks & Spencer stores sold for him so that they might become available to the public which was on short rations. At the same time he was traveling all over the country lecturing and preaching, and meeting in London with various committees. By late 1941 James was overwhelmed by all of his various responsibilities while trying to write without any secretarial help. So Dorothy Wickings, to whom he was introduced by his friend Bishop George Bell, offered to give him “stop gap” help until he could find someone else. It worked out fine. So fine that they were married the following spring (1945).

During the post-war years his output continued.¹³ Parkes had uncovered the dark and inhuman path regarding Jews and Judaism which the church had followed for so long while it affirmed the Trinitarian doctrine of God-in-three-persons. There had to be an alternative. As a thorough-going rationalist he also saw the necessity of affirming secular Humanism as the Deity's third means of reaching people and opening new perspectives. Hence Parkes viewed the Trinity as showing the “total involvement of God in the whole of His creation,” including in the scientific and political realms. In other words, the Trinity represented the activity of God (rather than the nature of God). For this reason James substituted the word “channels” for the former word “persons.” How did this work out? Judaism represents the “flow of divine purpose into the life of the community; Christianity, the flow of divine purpose into the life of persons; and scientific Humanism, the flow into the lives of humans as seekers for knowledge.”¹⁴ Parkes argued for this way of interpreting the Deity's outreach to the world right to the end of his life, for he saw it as essential in helping to counter Christian claims to exclusive access to divine truth, and as the way to place science and political activity within God's realm.

Parkes never wrote or spoke about the Holocaust; it was just too painful for him.

The State of Israel

In 1948 Parkes began writing and speaking about the relation of the Jewish people to the “land of Israel” then called Palestine.¹⁵ There are four major books dealing with that topic along with many shorter writings and talks. The first is *A History of Palestine from A.D. 135 to Modern Times*, (1949); the second, *The Story of Jerusalem* (1949); the third, *End of an Exile: Israel, the*

¹² *Voyages of Discoveries*, 148.

¹³ *An Enemy of the People: Antisemitism* (New York: Penguin Books, 1945); *Judaism and Christianity* (University of Chicago Press, 1948); *The Foundations of Judaism and Christianity* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, and Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1960); *A History of the Jewish People* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1962); *Antisemitism* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1963); *Prelude to Dialogue* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1969). For complete listings of Parkes's output see the published *Bibliography of James Parkes*, (University of Southampton, 1977).

¹⁴ *Voyages of Discoveries*, 223-24.

¹⁵ The word “Palestinians” as used in these early years applied to Jews living there, not to the local Arab residents.

Jews and the Gentile World (1954). Two editions of that book have been issued subsequently in the U.S., most recently in 2004. An extensive appendix with eleven articles¹⁶ has been added. The fourth of the books about Israel is *Whose Land? A History of the Peoples of Palestine* (1970 and 1971). In *End of an Exile* James writes about the five roots of Israel: Judaism, The Messianic Hope, Jewish History, The Continuity of Jewish Life in the Land of Israel, and The Relation of the Jewry of Palestine to the Jewish World. He viewed this long-awaited return of the Jewish people to their homeland and to a nation of their own as vitally significant, even while he recognized the tenuousness of its existence. Parkes became an ardent spokesman for the State, and visited there a few of times, initially in 1946. In 1970 the Hebrew University of Jerusalem recognized his decades of work on behalf of the Jewish people with an honorary degree.

In all, Parkes published twenty-three books, plus multiple pamphlets and articles.¹⁷ In 1964 James moved not only The Parkes Library as a Special Collection to the University of Southampton, but also himself and Dorothy to the Dorset village of Iwerne Minster. Of course, James created a new garden. In his late years he wrote superb book reviews, giving praise unsparingly when it was due, and scathing denunciation when the work was unworthy.

Parkes's Roots and Early Years

James Parkes had grown up on the Channel Island of Guernsey where there may well have been no Jews at all at that time. Even during World War II there were only a small number, most of whom quickly retreated to England when the Third Reich's army began to sweep across the Low Countries and France. One of the recent biographers sees James Parkes as a heroic figure in Guernsey's past, but then notes what a total contrast to Parkes was the Islanders' behavior during the Second World War. Not only did they collaborate to a considerable extent with the German Nazi occupiers, but quite on their own deported to the continent the three or four remaining Jews who then were sent directly to concentration camps.¹⁸

The Parkes' family crest shows an oak tree with a squirrel in the center of its branches.¹⁹ On his book plates he added "James William Parkes." The Latin family motto (in translation) was "You may break, but you cannot bend me" ("*fragas non flectes*"). Dr. Parkes certainly lived up to the last part of that motto as over many decades much of the church and the scholarly community either ignored or severely criticized him. Yet he never gave up.

¹⁶ The Appendix contains seven articles about Parkes: by Robert A. Everett (1980), Reinhold Niebuhr (1942), Rose G. Lewis (1981), Richard Harries (2003), Malcolm Lowe (2003), John Pawlikowski (2003), Rev. Dr. Petra Heldt (2003). These are followed by James Parkes' article regarding The Parkes Library while it was still in Barley (1960), and an Afterword by Tony Kushner (2003) about The Parkes Library after it was situated at the University of Southampton, along with University courses related to the subject. An "In Memoriam" by A. Roy Eckardt written shortly after Parkes died in 1981 completes the Appendix.

¹⁷ A complete compilation of Parkes's writings with biographical notes (excluding book reviews and Letters to the Editor) was made by Sidney Sugarman and Diana Bailey and edited by David A. Penne. It contains 329 items, is 132 pages in length including the index, and was published in 1977 by the University of Southampton.

¹⁸ Tony Kushner, "Foreword" in Richmond, *Campaigner Against Antisemitism*, p. viii. He notes that Parkes is "written out of history" in Guernsey.

¹⁹ A close friend commented on the squirrel by noting that it is a sort of collector, which James certainly lived up to. When James incorporated his library in the later years at Barley, he substituted an open book for the squirrel. When the University of Southampton accepted his large library collection of books, pamphlets, and journals, along with his own publications, unpublished sermons, talks, etc., it adapted that crest for The Parkes Library.

James' childhood on Guernsey was quite idyllic in some ways, although he himself was frequently ill, and bedridden at times with splitting headaches. Unfit for school sports he was free to explore the island and got to know its every feature.²⁰ He had an older brother David and a sister Mollie. David was killed in 1917 at Paeschendael; and Mollie in 1918 when a ship taking her to Ireland from her English school was torpedoed. The tragedy of his youth was his mother's death after a long illness when he was 13. As the family savings were depleted, and tomato growing was then "in the doldrums" his father sold their home (Les Fauconnaires) and had a small bungalow built on a back corner of the land on which their former home stood. James later wrote that the cottage "was haunted almost from the year we built it" though the previous house, "a very ancient and very gloomy" place, overhung by huge trees, should have been the one to be haunted.²¹

Because of the Island's history and location both French and English were spoken extensively, along with a local *patois*. The currency was another international matter: While the official coinage was a mythical coin called the *livre Tournois*,²² French francs and British shillings casually mingled with Belgian and Swiss francs, Italian liras, and Greek drachmas. James (and other Islanders) had no trouble doing all the complicated math making the various coins equivalent to the cost of an item in English sterling since they learned to do it while growing up.²³

There was still another Island curiosity: One day James opened the door to a strange woman who informed him that she had come to collect her fee (*rente*). When James said he didn't know they owed any fee, she replied that he was too young to know as she only collected it once in fifty years. Aghast and imagining the worst, James asked how much. It turned out to be only twopence halfpenny once every 50 years. However this inherited right gave her a number of other rights over the purchase or sale of the property. For by law land had to pass to all direct heirs even though only one of them would occupy the property. But that person owed fees (*rentes*) to the others, and to their descendants, and to the offspring of their brothers and sisters as well, and on indefinitely into the future. It is not surprising that when James' father sold Les Fauconnaires and purchased a small plot of its land on which to build the cottage he spent considerable time and money to free himself from any such obligations.

Although Parkes won a much coveted scholarship to Hertford College at the University of Oxford he had to wait to use it until after his part in the war ended. In January 1916 he signed up²⁴ and crossed the Channel in a March gale. Before long he was accidentally poisoned by being given unboiled canal water to drink, which led to three months in an English hospital. Then after receiving officer training he was sent to the front at the Ypres Salient, where in his last period in the line he was in command of the Company simply because he was the only

²⁰ In 1915 when most of the senior students and a number of the "masters" (teachers) joined the Army Parkes became the senior sergeant in the Officer Training Corps at the school. During their field days he and the other country boys could throw a "network of intelligence" over the island which could detect the movement of any of "the enemy."

²¹ James's account of the family members' experiences of the ghost ("impersonating elemental") appears as chapter two of his autobiography. Our youngsters were fascinated hearing him recount the events in person.

²² The *livre Tournois* was based on the value of corn in a specific market in the 14th century, and was equivalent to one shilling and two pence.

²³ One of Parkes' first collections was of French five franc pieces from the first through the third year of the French Republic.

²⁴ The Channel Islands were subject to the conscription which was begun in 1916. But James (as also his brother David), volunteered.

officer still alive. But he got a dose of mustard gas²⁵ without realizing it until he went blind. After a series of hospitals (and recovery of his sight) he found himself in London during the zeppelin raids of autumn 1917. Finally recuperated he was sent to the Gas School in the North where he subsequently was put in command. Here he was able to use his many creative teaching skills. He remained in the Army for some time after the war ended even though as an accepted University student he could have been discharged very quickly. But the colonel had begged him to stay on and complete the job. However, following another collapse from the old effects of the gas, James finally was demobilized. The way that was accomplished would delight any film producer: He signed three forms as adjutant, demobilization officer, and the officer to be demobilized, because he actually was all these. (His colonel signed the fourth.)

How else can I help you to get to “know” the person who was James Parkes, alongside the pioneering scholar of the history of the relation of Judaism and Christianity? Perhaps a further look at some of his additional unique qualities and oddities will help:

– As an undergrad at Oxford University he chose for his Special Subject “Early Christian Art and Architecture.” However, though it was on the Faculty List, no one had undertaken the subject in 28 years, and no one at Oxford was considered adequate to serve as a supervisor. So he went to the British Museum and once a week met with the man in charge of that section (at Oxford’s expense). When it came time for the exam James was found to have measles. Consequently his faculty committee of five had to give him an oral exam (while keeping as far away from him as possible). After a rather stupid or insufficiently precise question was asked, which James queried thus showing his extensive knowledge, they hastily went their way, giving Parkes a First (top grade).

– While he was in the trenches he says he “was never a very good soldier,” and that he was terrified of “getting shell-shock.” In the midst of a German barrage he lost the last of his courage and expected to die any moment. “Then something – I would say someone – which was certainly not me, just took complete charge of my inside, calmed it all down, and cooled it, and gave it back to me.” One of his recent biographers notes that this was the closest Parkes ever came to a mystical experience, or at least one that he recognized as such.²⁶

– James was always on the periphery of the Church of England. In the mid-1930s when he was working for the Student Christian Movement, he was accepted by the Bishop of London as a candidate for ordination in the Church of England. But he failed his ordination exam because the questions were too “mid-Victorian” and he found it impossible to answer them with any seriousness. Subsequently he refused to take an oral exam with his bishop’s chaplain. It was only with the intervention of the Bishop of Manchester, William Temple, that he was finally ordained.²⁷

– James frequently became impatient in committee meetings. He solved the problem by taking up elaborate needle work. This also helped his hands from closing up as a result of having acquired Dupuytren’s Contracture during the Great War. Toward the end of his life he was finally reduced to typing by grasping a short padded stick clenched in a hand he could no longer unclench.

²⁵ See p. 8 for a later consequence.

²⁶ Colin Richmond, *Campaigner Against Antisemitism*, 39, with citation from *God in a World at War*, 60.

²⁷ Bishop Temple (who later became the Archbishop of Canterbury) was to be one of Parkes’s staunch supporters over the years. However, they differed totally about missionary work among the Jewish people.

– Shortly after the Third Reich occupied Czechoslovakia James learned from an irate rabbi that some Czech Jewish parents had entrusted their son to a man who would take him to England for his safety. When the rabbi went to visit the boy, he was told no Jews were allowed to see him. It turned out the mother had been tricked into signing a document that gave permission for the boy to be raised as a Christian. After three months' investigation the boy was found living amidst one of "the extreme Protestant missionary societies" and rescued. The search also found twenty-eight other boys similarly "kidnapped" (to use Parkes' own word) in this unscrupulous way. Whenever James spoke about this incident he wept – in outrage at such an abuse of faith.

– James was a non-conformist in many ways, including his way of dressing. He described his usual attire as "casual informality" which usually meant an open-neck shirt with a sweater.²⁸ James was most formally dressed when he wore a suit with the Anglican clerical collar, as he was dressed for his wedding.

– One author describes him as "thoroughly rebellious, highly original, and inordinately cantankerous." In the years that my husband and I knew him, we only saw the cantankerousness briefly expressed on one occasion – at a moment in his last years when I felt he was quite justified. The originality is clearly found in his published work, many letters, sermons, and radio talks. I'm not quite sure about the word "rebelliousness" though he surely was more than ready to disagree with any person or institution that refused to accept historical evidence which refuted the usual charges against Jews and Judaism. Yet the amazing thing was James' readiness to keep trying to get people to see things as he did. And somehow he remained hopeful and positive.

– He was once offered a peerage so that he might be able to advance his cause in the House of Lords. Yet he refused it.

- James was always on the periphery of the Church of England as his peers thought his work for the Student Christian Movement was "too political." And after he began his work on antisemitism, and then on the State of Israel, churchmen saw him as a trouble maker. He was a lone voice until considerably late in his life.

– He insisted "You cannot build good theology on bad history." Furthermore, good Christian teaching has to be relentlessly truthful concerning the actual history and life of the church.

The conclusion of Roy Eckardt's eight page "In Memoriam" of Parkes is a fitting summing up: "[James] had few peers within the category historian-cum-theologian. Nor do I know a more superb teller of tales...From Parkes's early years to his death (and beyond?), he has been living out the motto of his family crest,...'you may break me, but I do not bend.' His prodigious intellect was matched by his valor, his prophetic indignation, his steadfastness, his hopefulness. But the greatest of all was his empathy. He was not a Jew, yet he was a Jew."

²⁸ I can attest that the sweater was much needed most of the year in his home in Barley. While there I usually felt half frozen despite wearing a warm tweed suit, a heavy sweater, and lined boots.