

**PROGRAMME OF
TEYLERS GODGELEERD GENOOTSCHAP
AT HAARLEM
FOR THE YEAR 2016
THE DIRECTORS OF TEYLERS STICHTING
(TEYLER'S FOUNDATION)
AND
THE MEMBERS OF TEYLERS GODGELEERD GENOOTSCHAP
(TEYLER'S THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY)**
announce an essay competition to be answered before May 1, 2019:

Subject

A critical description and evaluation of research done in the last fifty years into the parting of the ways between Judaism and Christianity in the first centuries of our era.

Further information

For a sound understanding of the origins of Christianity as a religion beside a non-Christian Judaism, we have to know where, when, how and why the two movements went separate ways. When asked in our present-day context, these complex historical questions easily become more than just historical questions: because Christian anti-Judaism has been, in the view of many people, one of the sources of inspiration of the Shoah, the historical questions rapidly acquire theological and moral connotations. This is understandable and in part inevitable, but it does not advance the clarity of the discussion.

How much ideas on the separation of Judaism and Christianity diverge, can be well illustrated by means of the titles of a few publications on the topic. J.D.G. Dunn published in 1991 *The Partings of the Ways: Between Christianity and Judaism and Their Significance for the Character of Christianity* (London: SCM; ²2006). The next year, there appeared with Mohr Siebeck in Tübingen a collection of essays entitled *Jews and Christians: The Parting of the Ways, A.D. 70 to 135* (edited by the same J.D.G. Dunn). In 2003, the same publisher brought out a collection of essays *The Ways That Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (edited by A.H. Becker and A.Y. Reed). The first title suggests that there have been several partings of the ways between Judaism and Christianity, the second that the period between 70 and 135 has been crucial to the parting of the ways, and the third that the ways have never parted.

A central point in the discussion on the parting of the ways has been the explanation of John 9:22, one of the most noted (or most notorious) passages from early Christian literature on the separation between Jewish followers of Jesus of Nazareth and other Jews: "The Jews had already decided that if anyone confessed him [Jesus] to be the Messiah, he would be put out of the synagogue." In his influential study *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968; 3rd ed., Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2003), J.L. Martyn connected this text to a passage from the Babylonian Talmud (*Berakhot* 28b) from which one could deduce that "the benediction [here a euphemism for curse] against the heretics", part of the Jewish Eighteen Benedictions prayer, came into being at the end of the first century of our era; the decision

of the Jews mentioned in John's Gospel would then refer to the formulation of this benediction. Against this view, others have advanced the argument that the original "benediction against the heretics" was not directed against Jewish Christians. Moreover, scholars have wondered to whom precisely the author of the Gospel of John referred when he spoke of "the Jews", what the status of the decision mentioned above may have been, what "putting out of the synagogue" may have implied, etc.

So it is not very clear to what parting of the ways between Jews and Christians the passage from John refers, and the discussion on this passage can be considered to be representative of the entire discussion on the parting of the ways between Judaism and Christianity in the first centuries of our era. What is requested, is therefore a description and evaluation of this discussion during the last half century, based on the really significant publications, with special attention to the clarity of the concepts used: of which Jews and which Christians does one speak? When can someone be labelled "Jew" or "Christian", "Jewish Christian" or "Christian Jew"? What does one mean by the "parting of the ways" between Jews and Christians? Such an analysis of the present-day discussion may result in recommendations for future research into the "parting of the ways" between Jews and Christians.

Entries should consist of either one extended study, in the form of a text prepared for publication, or of several publications, most of which should have appeared in the three years prior to May 1, 2019. In the latter case entrants should also submit a hitherto unpublished text, written especially for the competition, in which the earlier publications are placed in a broader academic context.