

THE JEWISH ERA

A CHRISTIAN QUARTERLY

IN BEHALF OF ISRAEL

זִכְרֵנוּ לְעוֹלָם בְּרִיתוֹ [תְּהִלִּים קִיא ה.].

"HE WILL EVER BE MINDFUL OF HIS COVENANT."

OCTOBER 15, 1900

CONTENTS:

	PAGE
THE JEWISH DISPENSATION— <i>By Dr. A. W. Mason</i>	97
THE POWER OF PRAYER	100
THE ZIONIST CONGRESS	101
NOTES FROM THE JEWISH COLONIAL TRUST	102
THE JEWISH PROBLEM	102
ISRAEL'S CRY— <i>By Mrs. E. M. Exton</i> —Poetry	103
JONAH AS A PROPHET OF ISRAEL'S HISTORY— <i>By Rev. A. M. Ayers</i>	103
FROM NEW YORK— <i>By Wm. E. Blackstone</i>	104
GLEANINGS FROM A SHEPHERD'S LIFE— <i>By Miss Florence Ben-Oliel</i>	107
A REVIEW OF THE JEWISH FIELD AT THE CLOSE OF THE 19TH CENTURY <i>By Rev. Louis Meyer</i>	109
THE CHILDREN OF ABRAHAM— <i>By Oscar D. Fitz-Gerald, M. D.</i>	113
THE JEW—Poetry	117
THE SURNAMENES OF THE JEWS	117
THE MOST IMPORTANT CITY IN THE WORLD	118
EDITORIAL:—	
THE FOURTH ZIONIST CONGRESS	119
MRS. BEN-OLIEL	120
BOOKS AND THE BOOKSTORE	120
MISSION ITEMS	121
MISSIONS AND LABORERS	123
JEWISH NOTES	124
BOOK REVIEWS	125
MAGAZINES AND PAPERS RECEIVED	127
DONATIONS	127
QUARTERLY REPORTS	127

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THE JEWISH DISPENSATION.*

BY DR. W. A. MASON.

This chapter brings us to the fifth dispensation. It lasted from the call of Moses to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, a period of about 1500 years. It is sometimes called the dispensation of law. This period occupies all of the Bible from the beginning of Exodus to about the ninth of Acts. Much of this Scripture deals in Jewish prophecy, almost nine-tenths of which is yet to be fulfilled, after "the times of the Gentiles" are past.

We must be satisfied with a mere outline of this dispensation, but enough will be given to show the utter failure of man under the law, and to gather the lesson of that age for this one.

Let us note one or two things. First, in this period the promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were largely fulfilled. A most comprehensive expression of God's will for the Jews is found in the 28th of Deuteronomy. Notice carefully, that while this is a period of law, grace is prominent in it. The deliverance at the passover and at the Red Sea, the sweetening of the bitter waters of Marah, feeding the people in the wilderness, and the whole Levitical worship, together

with the pillar of cloud and fire were constant memorials of God's favor to Israel. Three months after leaving Egypt the people were before Mt. Sinai. There God proposed to bring them into special nearness to Himself and insure their perpetual greatness by giving them the test of obedience. They were willing to do this and three times pledged themselves to perfect submission. Blood was brought in as a solemn sanction of the claims of this covenant. We shall see how Israel failed.

While Moses was in the mount receiving the law, the first of which was, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," the people were making an image of a four-footed beast to worship. This happened at the inauguration of the law, and God's judgment came forth in the slaying of three thousand of the culprits, thus giving a token of His everlasting judgment against idolatry. It is interesting and delightful to notice the difference between the inauguration of law and that of grace. The day the law was inaugurated three thousand men were *slain*. The day that grace was inaugurated, at Pentecost, in its full function, three thousand were *saved*.

Let us notice here that man failed first on the law while it was being written. Man was an idolator right in the face of God. The second time the law was written

*From "The Lessons of the Ages," P. 67, Chap. 6th.

he shows them it can scarcely be wondered that they recall the name he gives them in love, and that they remember the voice of their faithful guide and protector so that no one can deceive or mislead them.

Ann Arbor, Mich.

A REVIEW OF THE JEWISH FIELD AT THE CLOSE OF THE 19TH CENTURY.

BY REV. LOUIS MEYER.

It is well to look over the Jewish field once more before the nineteenth century closes, that we may see what is being done and gather strength for renewed effort.

In the closing year of the eighteenth century no missionary labored among the Jews, though here and there a child of God raised his voice among the chosen people, telling them of their rejected Messiah, and only one society for the purpose of bringing the gospel to the Jews was in existence. The Institutum Judaicum in Halle, founded by the pious Callenberg in 1728, for the preparation of missionaries to the Jews, had been abandoned in 1792, a victim of the rapidly increasing German Rationalism. The Moravians, who had entered upon the work among the Jews with great enthusiasm in 1739, sending Rabbi Samuel Lieberkucher to Amsterdam to preach the Gospel to his Jewish brethren, had become discouraged and abandoned the work soon after the death of Count Zinzendorf in 1760. The Esdras Edzard Institution in Hamburg, founded in 1667, was the only society, so far as we know, which labored for the evangelization of the Jews during the closing years of the eighteenth century, and which could report a few

conversions almost every year. In England, France, America and all other countries, no attention was paid to the benighted Jew. While the gospel was carried with ever-increasing zeal to the heathen, the children of Abraham seemed to be forgotten.

Yet God had not forgotten them! The morning was very near. Joseph Samuel Christian Frederick Frey, predestined by the Lord to become the father of modern Jewish missions, had been baptized in 1798, and the beginning of the nineteenth century found him in the Missionary Seminary in Berlin, where he was preparing himself for the preaching of the Gospel. Before the century had far advanced, the Lord opened the way, and in 1805 he began to preach the Gospel to the Jews in London, under the auspices of the London Missionary Society. In 1809 the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews was formed by Frey, Way and others, and soon missionary societies for the evangelization of the Jews were founded in all parts of the world. The New York "Society for Ameliorating the Condition of the Jews" received its charter on April 14, 1820. The Berlin "Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews" was formed in 1822. The Basle "Society of the Friends of Israel" saw the light in 1830. The year 1838 brought an increased enthusiasm for the evangelization of the Jews, when McCheyne, Bonar, Keith and Black were sent out by the Church of Scotland "to visit and inquire after the scattered Jews." To the Church of Scotland God gave the great honor to first undertake Jewish work *as a church*, and she started her first missions among the Jews in Pesth and Jassy in 1841. Since then, society has followed society for the evan-

gelization of the Jews, denomination after denomination has obeyed the Master's call to preach the Gospel to the Jew, until now, in the closing days of the nineteenth century, we find 119 societies for the evangelization of the Jews, employing more than 800 missionaries in 246 stations (see my "Christian Efforts Among the Jews" in *JEWISH ERA*, April 15, 1900). Of these societies we find thirty-seven in Great Britain, eighteen in Germany, five in Scandinavia, four in the Netherlands, two in France, seven in the remaining parts of Europe, two in Africa, six in Asia, four in Australia and thirty-four in America. Such is, in general terms, the state of the Jewish field in the closing days of the present century. We do not intend to enter upon a discussion of the several societies, nor do we want to discuss the number of converts and baptisms, since we do not believe that it is right to measure the success of *any* missionary labor by the number of converts and baptisms.

The most encouraging fact, as we consider the Jewish missionary field, is perhaps the fact that during this century so many *denominations* have entered upon the Jewish work *as such*, and we hope and pray that the day be not very far off when Jewish work shall have the same rank with foreign missionary work in the councils of the churches. The following denominations are today engaged in Jewish work (we add the year in which the work commenced): The Episcopal Churches of England (1815), Ireland (1889), Australia (1890), and America (1842, resp. 1878), the Church of Scotland (1840), the Free Church of Scotland (1843), the Presbyterian Churches of England (1871), Ireland (1841), Australia (Victoria

1896), and America (1870), the Lutheran Churches of Germany (1822, resp. 1871), Scandinavia (1856 and 1865), and America (1878), the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (1894), the United Presbyterian Church of North America (1899), and others. The oldest society is the Esdras Edzard Institution in Hamburg, founded in 1667.

The largest society, and the most influential of all, is undoubtedly the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews (Church of England), founded in 1809. It employs 226 missionaries in fifty stations and has an income of about \$190,000. The largest undenominational society is the Mildmay Mission to the Jews in London, founded by Rev. John Wilkinson in 1876. It employs sixty-five workers in nine stations, and has an income of \$45,000. Its chief work is the free distribution of the Hebrew and Yiddish New Testament.

Among the numerous missions in the United States the Chicago Hebrew Mission deserves especial mention, not so much on account of the magnitude of the work, as on account of the wise and prudent management, and the great influence it is exerting upon other missions. It is interdenominational, was established in 1887 by that great lover of Israel, Wm. Blackstone, and is, so far as we know, the only incorporated Jewish Mission in America.

When we look at the manner in which the Gospel is brought to the Jews, we find several things of great interest. In general, the preaching of the Gospel is considered the chief means of reaching the stiff-necked Jews—and so it ought to be—and, in addition to preaching, all the larger societies sustain well-ordered schools, read

ing rooms and free dispensaries. Since the Jews are an intellectual people and in general well educated in their religion and language, the distribution of literature claims a more prominent place in Jewish work than in any other, and the missionary to the Jews has to be well supplied with New and Old Testaments and tracts in the different languages used by the race (Hebrew, Yiddish, German, Russian, Spanish, etc.). Rev. John Wilkinson of the Mildmay Mission in London was led by the Holy Spirit to distribute the New Testament (in Hebrew and Yiddish) freely among the scattered Jews, and he has done a great work during the last decade of the nineteenth century. It is well worth our notice that today any worthy missionary to the Jews is provided freely with Hebrew and Yiddish New Testaments by the Mildmay Mission of which the Chicago Hebrew Mission is the sole agent in this country.

During the last years Marcus Bergmann has translated the Old Testament into Yiddish, and a society has been formed for the distribution of this quite expensive book.

Since the work is considered peculiarly difficult, men are continually looking around for new methods of work. *M. M. Ben Oziel*, of the Kilburn Mission to the Jews in London, writes and prints pamphlets of his own, and sends them by mail to "educated, wealthy and busy" Jews. *Wm. Greene*, of the Postal Mission to the Jews in London, approaches the Jews in personal letters, while *A. E. Abrahamson*, of the Hebrew Christian Message in London, asks Hebrew Christians for testimonials of their religious experience, and sends these testimonials to the Jews. *Wurts and Brown*, in Philadelphia,

started in 1898 the Jewish Bible Shop Window Mission. Open Bibles in Hebrew, Yiddish, German and Russian, as well as tracts in different languages are laid in the show window of a store in the Jewish quarter, to attract the passing Jew. The pages are turned every day, to cause inquirers to return, and Bibles, New Testaments and religious papers are distributed freely by the person in charge of the store. Bible Shop Windows of this kind are established in eight or nine cities of the United States, and claim to have abundant success. It is too early to say whether these Shop Window Missions are a step forward or not. *Dunlop*, of Philadelphia, established in 1898 "Open Air Work among the Jews," traveling over the country and preaching to the Jews in the streets. *Prof. Stroeter* became in 1899 an "Evangelist in Israel," and is now traveling and preaching in Russia and Poland.

A few missionaries are teaching the Jews that doctrine which was so clearly condemned by the first council at Jerusalem; but their number is steadily decreasing.

In regard to *the amount of money* which is spent annually in missionary work among the Jews we can give only an estimate. We believe that during 1899 about one million dollars was spent.

It now remains that we consider *the field itself*. Missionary work among the Jews is today carried on in every part of the world, and wherever the Jew is found today the gospel is preached to him. Yet, while some parts of the field have only one missionary for more than 200,000 Jews, other parts are simultaneously occupied by missionaries of different societies, which often not only work not in harmony, but oppose each other vehemently. We hope that the

new century will bring about harmony among the different societies so that the field may be properly divided and cultivated, and money be no longer squandered by sending new missionaries to fields already occupied by other societies.

If we look at the state of the soil, that is, at the attitude of the Jews toward Christianity and toward the missionary who brings the Gospel to them, we can naturally only speak in general terms, which admit of exceptions in particular localities. Yet, we can truly say, that the attitude of the Jews toward Christianity is far more favorable in the present day than it has been at any period since Apostolic times, and the hostile opposition of the orthodox as well as the reformed, or rationalistic Jew, is greatly diminished and mitigated. But we must be careful to discern between the attitude towards Christianity and the attitude towards the missionary. In regard to the latter we can only say that very much depends on the missionary himself. The Hebrew Christian meets naturally greater difficulties than the Gentile, for the old prejudice against the "apostate" Jew remains unchanged, although the progress of civilization has covered it a little. Add to this prejudice the fact, that Gentile Christians, especially in America, often think that any Jew who claims to be converted is a missionary whether he be educated or not, and that many missionaries sent out in this manner, whether they be frauds or not, are a hindrance to real missionary work among the Jews; and you have the main reason why work among the Jews is today not as prosperous as we would like to see it. The last years, however, have taught the Christians the lesson that Jewish missionaries must be just as well

prepared for the work as missionaries to the heathen, and the Institutum Judaicum Delitzschianum in Leipzig, the Institutum Judaicum in Berlin, and other schools of the same kind are steps in the right direction.

In general, however, the attitude of the Jews toward the missionaries has become an attitude of polite inquiry, and, though the audiences in Jewish Mission Chapels are still small, vehement interruptions and open outbreaks of violent hostility become less and less frequent. Open-air preaching seems to be most offensive yet, though it is quite successful in particular localities. Missionary schools and kindergartens are well attended, free reading rooms are heartily welcomed, and both have certainly a softening influence upon the Jewish people; and even the curses of the enraged rabbis can no longer keep their sick parishioners from the free dispensary and the Christian hospital. The Zionist movement seems to me a great hindrance, rather than a help, to missionary effort among the Jews, since it puts great emphasis upon the fact that "the acquisition of a publicly and rightly assured home for the millions of persecuted Jews" is the only salvation of Israel. The true cause of Israel's suffering and dispersion—the rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ—is left out of the account, and the Jew is taught to look for temporal prosperity only. The great annual gatherings, however, the Zionist congresses which are attended by ever-increasing numbers of Jewish delegates from all parts of the world, give the missionaries good opportunities to speak to the delegates individually of the true salvation of Israel.

After all, when we look over the field, we can truly say, "The fields are white to harvest." The dry

bones are shaking and coming together!

And the laborers? They are few yet, but the day is breaking. The Church of Christ is awakening from her long sleep and is coming to a knowledge of her long neglected duty to the Jew!

And as the nineteenth century closes we stand with grateful hearts as we look over the Jewish field, and we exclaim, What has God wrought in the last century!

But let us not rest satisfied; the good things of today are but an earnest of better things to come! Let us increase our personal efforts for the evangelization of the Jews; let us pray more for God's ancient people; let us give more liberally of the riches which God has entrusted to our care.

"Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fullness?"

"For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" Rom. 11:12, 15.

Hopkinton, Iowa.

THE CHILDREN OF ABRAHAM.

BY OSCAR D. FITZ-GERALD, M. D.

September 4th, of succeeding years, commemorates the time of the new moon of the seventh month Tisri, or Feast of Trumpets, which the Jews commonly call New Year's day—a season, as we know, of deep religious significance, and of holiday joyousness, and the ancient salutation, "Leshonoh Tovoh Tik-Kosewu!" is ringing through the land, from east to west. Carrying the happy greeting that the rendering imports—"I wish you all a happy NEW YEAR,"

making glad the hearts of The Tribe of Judah—the significance of whose name is "Praise!"

How sad and heart-sick it makes one when the sorrowful history of this most wonderful race is brought to mind, for in contrast to the obscurity in which the origin of other nations is veiled, we have the evidence of Holy Writ for the rise, progress, decline and fall of the most illustrious people of ancient times, deducing their rise from Arphaxad, the third son of Shem. They still exist, a separate nation, the living evidence of prophecy, and though without a country, they exercise no small or unimportant influence on the affairs of the world, and the time will come, according to prophecy, when they who are today a scattered people, an afflicted, forlorn race, and wanderers in a strange land, shall again assume their place, and re-occupy their land, a faithful people, under the renewed protection of the God of their fathers. The earliest prophecy has declared, the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head; but had whispered, "That the serpent shall bruise his heel." Thus gradually, and harmoniously, is the silver cord of promise woven into the evolution of the most diverse events, and the divine purpose of the ages is wrought out; Patriarch, Law-Giver, Priest, and Prophet; each point onward to "Some One," not yet revealed, and the history of the Jewish nation becomes a key to the history of the world.

I am so glad that the Gentile world is at last turning in Christian love and sympathy to their Hebrew brethren, and that today we have missions, even in Jerusalem, and many other cities throughout the world, wherein many Jews are turning to Christ