

WORLD-WIDE EVANGELIZATION

THE URGENT BUSINESS OF THE CHURCH

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JEWISH MISSIONS

**Present Condition of the Jews throughout the World
and their Religious Needs**

The Jew in North America

The Obligation of Christians to the Jews

THE OBLIGATION OF CHRISTIANS TO THE JEWS

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VERY few Christians will deny that the Jew is included in the general obligation which binds the followers of Jesus Christ to evangelize the whole human race. "Preach the gospel to every creature" is the imperative and standing commandment of the risen Savior to His disciples, and this command is not to be questioned, or argued about, or neglected, or passed on to others, but it is simply to be obeyed. It is true that the Jews rejected Christ, but "God hath not cast away his people." The terrible words of Luther,—"It is just as impossible to convert a Jew as to convert the devil. A Jewish heart is so stony and iron-like, that it cannot be touched in any way. In short, they are young devils, condemned to hell,"—are generally acknowledged as unjust and not based upon the Word of God. Were not the evangelists and the apostles Jews? Did not the first congregations of Christian worshipers consist mainly of Jewish believers? Did not the grace of God display its marvelous power first of all in the conversion of Jews? Is not the gospel even now "the power of God unto salvation"? If it can convert the heathen, why not the Jew? Surely, the Jew must be included in the divine commandment, "Go, preach!"

But we do injustice to God's ancient people, if we are satisfied to place the Jews thus on a level with the Gentile world, for our obligations to bring the gospel to them are paramount. Far stronger are the claims of the Jews upon the followers of Jesus Christ, than those of any other nation, and among the great multitude, to which the voice of the herald of the gospel is to reach, the Jews should occupy the very front rank. Why?

I. Gratitude for benefits derived calls for especial consideration. All antiquity was ready to admit the existence of Jehovah, for the idea of a great supreme ruler is an innate one; but heathenism taught that there were other gods who were mighty and who should be served. It was the narrow and exclusive Jew who revealed the true conception of God to the surrounding nations, and who, even in the periods of greatest declension, preserved the knowledge of the one true Jehovah. And thus the Jew gave to the Gentile the invaluable patrimony of true religion!

Again, "unto them were committed the oracles of God." The Bible is nothing else but a consecutive history of the Jewish nation.

“ All its allusions to other peoples and to other events in the stage of this world’s everchanging panorama are but introductory, subordinate and subservient to its one grand theme, the Jews! ” It was written mostly by Jewish authors under God’s inspiration, and we owe it to the jealous care with which the Jews watched the Old Testament, that its text has been preserved to us in such purity and perfection.

But not alone was the Bible given to the world by the Jewish people; they gave to it Him of whom the Bible testifies. Jesus Christ Himself was a Jew. And thus, salvation is of the Jews. But alas! though they have been the bearers of the light, they themselves remain in darkness, thus calling for our special consideration.

2. Injuries and cruelties inflicted by nominal Christians demand reparation. The record of the sufferings of the Jews is unparalleled. History, past and present, bears testimony to the cruel wrongs inflicted upon the exiles from the land of their inheritance. For a long series of centuries the Jews were thrown back upon themselves, were confined to special quarters of the cities which they inhabited, and, warned off from settling in the open country, they were only grudgingly and by a bare tolerance allowed to exist. Expulsions, oppressions, spoliations and injustice in every shape and form were the cruel and inhuman treatment that the Jews have received from nominal Christians in every land during long ages. And to-day? The cry of the suffering Jew is heard from Russia, while Roumania in cruel hatred drives Jewish citizens from its territory. Germany silently permits anti-Semitic outrages, and France is shaken to its very foundations by the struggle between the friends and the foes of the Jew. The alien-law in England is directed against the Jewish refugees from Russia and Roumania. Alas! Italy and North America alone are fair and friendly to the “ homeless tribe of the wandering foot and the weary breast. ” Think of all these persecutions, the horrible wrong, the great iniquity, that has been perpetrated generation after generation, century after century, upon the Jewish people. Does not justice cry aloud for reparation and satisfaction for injuries so various, so accumulated, and so aggravated?

3. The future mission of the Jews demands attention. For 4,000 years Jehovah has been preserving them a distinct and peculiar people, by what seems to be a perpetual miracle of Providence — like the bush in Horeb, burning yet not consumed. Scattered among the Gentiles for more than eighteen centuries yet not crushed to extinction, they continue a “ cast-out but not cast-off ” nation, a people of a marvelous destiny. After the long and dark day of their dispersion, the light of eventide that shall shine upon the outcasts of Israel and the dispersed of Judah will be glorious. Yes; God says unto His chosen people, “ Though ye have lien among the pots,

yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold." They are now lying among the pots, with plumage polluted, ruffled and torn; but soon the weary-footed wanderers in all lands will have accomplished their sorrowful pilgrimage, and God will bring them back and give them rest! Then the veil shall be taken away, and the triumphant shout shall arise, like the sound of many waters, "This is the Lord! we have waited for Him, and He will save us!" Then universal religious knowledge will be diffused, and uninterrupted peace will be enjoyed; then a new and blessed era shall commence for all nations.

"When the Lord shall again bring Zion," the whole fulness of the Gentiles shall be brought in; for the Jews, having found their Messiah, are to be the missionaries in the regions beyond who shall give to all flesh the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. We can never expect any particular enlargement of the Redeemer's kingdom till the veil be removed from Israel. Israel's conversion means the conversion of the world. When Israel's light is come, then shall the Gentiles come to her light, and kings to the brightness of her rising; then the name of Christ shall be known "from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same," and His praises shall be heard and celebrated in the uttermost parts of the earth. Since the conversion of the Jews is indisputably an object most intimately connected with the glory of God and with the honor of Christ, does not a special obligation rest upon the followers of Christ to turn their attention unto the Jews?

4. The wonderful care with which God is preparing the Jews for their glorious mission calls for immediate effort. God almost always prepares those destined for important work in the fiery furnace of affliction and suffering. Thus the suffering of the Jewish people is only the process of purification preparatory to rule; and out of suffering shall come not only blessings to themselves, but blessings to the world. "Perfectured by suffering" the Hebrews shall reveal God's glory among the heathen, preachers especially prepared to express every movement of the loving heart of God and to apply the healing balm of the gospel to every bleeding heart.

How marvelously God has distributed this people over all the world. Inured to every climate, they can live in all parts of the inhabited globe, an army in actual occupation of the world, prepared as an instrument for diffusing the gospel, because they are familiar with the languages, manners and customs of all the nations among which they are dispersed. And what a peculiar disposition to preach the gospel God gives to those of His Jewish children who follow Jesus "outside the camp"! Thus all the first preachers of the gospel were Jews who believed in Christ. And to-day about one in every hundred of the army of Hebrew-Christians in the world is actively engaged in preaching Christ, while of the Hebrew-Christians

living now in the United States and Canada, one out of every thirty-seven is a messenger of the gospel.

Again to the desire to preach the gospel God has added a singular ability to teach. Time fails us to repeat the names of all the illustrious Bible scholars found among the Hebrew-Christians of the past century. Neander, Margoliouth, Bissenthal, Jacobi, Edersheim, Hellmuth, Schereschewsky, are names familiar to every Christian scholar.

Add to these considerations the facts of the continuously increasing prominence of the Jewish people in education, politics and literary work of every kind, and of their wonderful success in commerce and in the accumulation of vast wealth, and can one deny that God is preparing with marvelous care the instrument which He has chosen for a glorious mission? Think what a mighty power for Christian work is ready to your hands in the conversion of a scholarly Jew. With those characteristics that have made them such strong factors in human history converted to Jesus Christ and made subject to the principles of His Kingdom, what a reinforcement they will give to the Church of the living God, what an onward march we may look for! God has prepared the instrument with marvelous care, and now He calls to us, "Go, preach the gospel to the Jew."

5. The readiness of the Jew for the reception of the gospel demands recognition. Here is a people with the knowledge of the One True God, as He is revealed in the Scriptures of the Old Testament — a people looking hopefully for the Messiah, although their knowledge of the prophecies is but superficial. Here is a people groping after something which will satisfy the longing of their souls. The Jews are now realizing that their religion is a dead one and that it is a physical impossibility to be a true Jew, according to their understanding of what that means. So the children of Israel are growing restless, are reforming their services, are looking for the living God and the veil is being removed, though slowly, from their eyes. The crisis in the history of the people of the Old Covenant is reached; the movement toward Christian truth is growing.

How often we have been told that the Jewish field is discouraging and almost hopeless. We do not deny that it is a peculiarly difficult one, but those who call it discouraging or hopeless, make a serious mistake, for no field of Christian effort is so fruitful as the Jewish field. Statistics tell us that 3,500,000 heathen and Moslems were gathered into the visible Church during the nineteenth century, while 204,000 Jews professed their faith in Christ by public baptism. Be it far from me to exaggerate the value of these figures; but none can deny that both are of the same value, and that they prove that one in every 300 heathen and Moslems became a convert, while one in every sixty Jews found the Messiah. Is a work

discouraging and hopeless where the converts are five times more numerous than in other similar effort?

North America with its million of Jewish citizens and its erratic, and at best inadequate, Christian efforts among the Jews, has reported 5,200 Jewish baptisms from 1870 to 1900, or an average of 140 per annum, with an increase to 179 annually for the last six years, — 1895 to 1901. Three hundred and seventy-three Hebrew-Christians have occupied pulpits of evangelical churches in America since April 15, 1818, when J. S. C. F. Frey was ordained by the Westchester and Morris County Presbytery, of which number sixty-three are still living. Two hundred and fifty-four ministers occupying to-day pulpits of American evangelical churches have Jewish blood in their veins. Are not these figures surprising? Do they not indicate that if the Church enters this field so peculiarly prepared by God with zeal and consecration there would be results that would astonish the world? Is not opportunity the fingerpost of duty? We have a people whose mind is full of God-given truth regarding the Messiah, but who are without the Messiah Himself; a people groping after something which will satisfy the longing of their hearts; a people never so ready to listen to the blessed gospel as they are to-day; a people calling loudly for immediate attention and help. Do we hear the cry?

How shamefully have we neglected our duty to the benighted Jew! The treatment of him by the Christian is among the darkest pages of the world's history, and may well fill all Christendom with shame and should impel the Church of Christ to fall on her knees and pour forth her penitent prayer. Surely, we are very guilty as concerning our brother. Let the consciousness of this supply the motive for amendment, and constrained by the love of Christ, enabled by His grace, encouraged by His approval may we pay our debt to our long-neglected Jewish brother. Then, "Israel shall blossom and bud and fill the face of the world with fruit," and then we shall be blessed, for "blessed is He that blesseth thee" and "they shall prosper that love" Israel.

QUESTIONS

Q. Would the Jews, if they returned to Palestine, find a home and sustenance for themselves there? A. I would say, on the authority of the Consul-General of the United States in Palestine and men of that stamp, that the country is capable of supporting such a population as the Zionists intend to send there. In fact there are already certain colonies that are quite successful, and it is urged on that account that other Jews be sent there. The land is neglected now because of the centuries of war that have passed over it, but there is a good basis in Palestine soil. There is better soil in South America; but there must be something more than simply

the idea of making a living. There must be some religious motive, and this the Holy Land furnishes; so that the way is open, and they will be supported.

Q. What proportion of the Jews are interested in the Zionist movement? A. I think a very large proportion. There are no statistics possible; but at the last meeting of the Zionist Congress in Basle, Switzerland, a few months ago, there was evidence that the movement is constantly gaining force. In the United States a journal has been started, called *The Maccabean*, printed partly in English and partly in the Jewish dialect; and from that it seems that Zionism is spreading into almost every city in the United States. Local societies are formed to instruct the people and to raise the funds necessary to purchase or rent Palestine.

Q. Is there any missionary effort directed toward the Jews in Europe? A. There are a great number of societies in London and Germany. The Society in London is doing a great work. I think the greatest work that can be done for the Jews is not done by special missionaries, but by Christian people and by the ministers, if they would only once a year invite the Jewish people around the churches to come and have a talk about these things. The Church is neglecting its greatest opportunity. I was converted through the instrumentality of an individual. What is necessary to emphasize is not so much the importance of establishing Jewish Missions, — though they are helpful, — but the necessity of making every Christian and every minister who has the chance a special missionary to show them how much they lose when they have not Jesus in their lives now. The question of future salvation is important, but the life that now is, is also important and no man can make the most of himself, unless he has Jesus as the power of God in him.

Q. What response would the Jews give to such an invitation as was just suggested? A. I think it would be worth while trying. I have an idea that at first you might not get a response. It depends on the community; it depends on circumstances. But I venture to recommend that you take up the subject on Sunday evening and ask your members to invite their Jewish neighbors to church.

MR. MEYER. — I was a Jewish missionary in Cincinnati for four years and then went into the regular ministry and have a congregation in Iowa. When I was in Cincinnati as a missionary, I got into touch with all classes. We had no complaints about Jewish audiences because we had evangelistic meetings and mixed audiences. But here arises the question, Am I doing more now? I answer that undoubtedly I am. I am in touch to-day with more of the prominent Jews by letter than when I was a missionary. As a missionary I was absolutely excluded by prominent Jews, and to-day where I am a minister they come. I was converted through a minister

and not through a missionary, and I was converted directly under his private influence. If you have seen an article published in the December number of *The Missionary Review of the World*, I there made the statement that 1,072 baptisms occurred in the United States between 1895 and 1901, and then I added that out of these 1,072 baptisms more than 500 were administered by ministers, while only 200 were baptized by missionaries. I think you have the whole statement there that after all the Church is the place to win the Jews, and not the exclusively Jewish mission. And so I believe that every one of you has a personal mission, and then in that audience of one let the Holy Spirit work.

MR. JACOB FINGER, Drew Theological Seminary. — As a student will you allow me, please, to give my experience? I simply wish to tell how I, a Jew, became a Christian and how I look upon Jewish work. I didn't become a Christian because some one came to me and proved out of the Old Testament that Jesus Christ had fulfilled prophecy. I became a Christian because a janitor in a certain place asked me one day whether I wanted to go to school. I can look back to that very morning, and to-day I believe that he was only joking; but from that day I can date, not my conversion, but almost a new life. The treatment in the schools which I have attended was sometimes shameful, because a great many people have no idea as to what Judaism is. The Jew has a heart as truly as the Gentile, and if you want to touch the Jew you must go to him in no back-door way; you must face him and treat him as a brother. I believe that the hope of the Jew is Jesus Christ and a true national assimilation. If you try to transport them you will have the same experience as Bishop Turner had, who found that for every negro whom he sent to Africa, 700 were born the next day. If you give us the privileges of men, I believe that the Lord God Almighty has created us with the same instincts that he has placed in you, and all that the Jew needs is the same privileges that you afford to your sons and daughters. Time only will tell whether he is capable of being a man or not.