

THE PECULIAR PEOPLE.

A CHRISTIAN MONTHLY,

DEVOTED TO JEWISH INTERESTS.

Founded by the late Rev. H. Friedländer and the Rev. Ch. Th. Lucky.

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“The Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself.”
Deut. 14:2.

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OUR PLATFORM.

THE PECULIAR PEOPLE is to serve *Jewish national interests* by advocating the adoption, by the Jewish people, of the following:

1. Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah promised to our fathers.
2. Palestine as the country in which to re-establish a Jewish commonwealth.
3. Hebrew as the language to re-unite the different portions of the Jewish people, now estranged from one another through their different tongues.

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THE PECULIAR PEOPLE.

"The Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself."—Deut. 14:2.

A Christian Monthly devoted to Jewish Interests, Political, Social, Literary, and Religious.

הַבִּיטוּ אֶל-צִוֵּר חַצְבֹתֵם

Isa. 51: 1. וְאֶל-מִקְבַּת בְּיַר נִקְרָתֵם

"For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee. Because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek thy good."—Psa. 122: 8, 9.

VOL. X.

PLAINFIELD, N. J., MARCH, 1898.

No. 12.

JUDÆUS SUM; JUDAICI NIHIL A ME ALIENUM PUTO.

IN reviewing the past ten years since our little magazine first saw the light in New York as an eight page weekly, published by Jews who believed in Jesus as the Messiah, written by Jews and for Jews with the intention to express the national aspirations of Jews from a Jewish Christian point of view, we must note many changes. The hand of God can be seen in the history of this decade, and although the events of the years have not been as any prophet could have foreseen, yet they all tend to the welfare of God's people and prove that He still watches over Israel.

THE national longings of the Jewish people have found fuller expression and a clearer and more decided conception. There is no lack of enthusiastic lovers of Zion who year by year have put into more practical shape their hopes and ideas in reference to the future of the Jewish national community. There are journals many, and now even among Gentiles many appear, which advocate in the most important matters the very national position of Jewish Christians which was put forth by the first founders of this magazine. In theory, at least, several movements among Christ-believing Jews are loyal to the nation,

its institutions and every national feeling, and that with the approval of their Gentile friends.

THAT in practice these theories have found but an imperfect realization is perhaps not surprising, and we ought to thank God that there is as great an advance as has been made in this respect. It is much that those who at first regarded the pure Jewish Christian national position as absurd and chimerical now look upon it as logical and absolutely consistent, although they may in practice prefer that the Jews who confess Christ shall become as Gentilized as possible still. It is much that Jews who have long been Christians look with more consideration upon the possibility of a future national Jewish Christian church, even though those who accept Christ even yet are prone to assimilate with their newly made Gentile friends and straightway forsake their Jewish customs. It is much that there are those who advocate a pure Biblical New Testament Jewish Christianity for Jews, even though they still maintain a paganized Christianity as better for Gentiles. The leaven is working.

It is not our purpose here to review the history of Jewish missions during this period of time. That may be left for the future or for our esteemed friends, the missionary periodicals to undertake. We beg to remind our readers that this paper was started in New York City ten years ago by two Jewish Christians, not missionaries in the accepted sense, although they longed for the national turning of their people to Jesus their Messiah as well as for the conversion of all their brethren individually to God and God's revealed way of faith for His people in Jesus of Nazareth their Saviour. It was at first thus an independent paper by Jews for Jews. When afterwards it was continued at the death of its chief editor by the one whose name has been associated with it for nine years, during which it has been issued in its present monthly

form, the intention was to keep its spirit essentially the same. The same motto has appeared at its head, "I am a Jew and consider nothing Jewish alien to me." We have advocated with unvarying consistency the most absolute loyalty on the part of Christian Jews to their nation, and to its institutions on national grounds. We have also stood for a pure Christianity of the New Testament, as taught by Jesus and His disciples, with God's moral law unaltered and a pure and simple Gospel with Jesus' primitive ordinances observed by a church which is simply a Christian synagogue as the ideal of all Christendom, whether Jewish or Gentile. Tradition or heathen developments in Christianity we repudiate and reject as being perversions of the true religion of Jesus and as being in themselves not according to the Divine will as well as because they are repugnant to the Jewish mind. We are glad now to see that the reasonableness of this position is every year more apparent even to those who differ most widely with us.

OUR mission has thus been both to Jews and to Gentiles to accomplish a better understanding; to Jews who do not believe in Jesus that they should accept Him, and to Gentiles that they may do more for the salvation of the Jews. But it is our wish during the coming year and during the coming years, if it shall be God's will that our journal continue its life, to address ourselves more directly to Jewish ears than we have done of late. It has been right for us to teach Gentiles many a lesson, but this is not our only mission. We are to voice a word of peace to Israel, the glad message of the Kingdom of God come in Jesus of Nazareth. We are to preach the Gospel, not in the technical sense, but in the proper sense, to tell the glad tidings that the Kingdom of Heaven is come, not here nor there, but among us all, a spiritual reign of God in the human breast and in our earthly life; that this kingdom is absolutely connected with the personality of Jesus; and

that by placing ourselves under the influence of that personality we attain a new life which solves all the problems of this life by the Divine method of renewal, so that in Him we have rest, peace, riches and joy even in the midst of disquiet, strife, poverty and misery. Come to Him, every weary and heavy laden soul, and in Him you will find rest. Take His yoke upon you and learn of Him, who is meek and lowly of heart, and He will give rest unto your souls. For easy is His yoke and light is His burden. Come to Him.

It is our intention with this number to send to all our readers an index to the first ten volumes and hereafter to furnish an index to each volume when completed. We hope also shortly to re-publish in our pages some of the more important articles in the first volume, which is now impossible to procure, and thus enable our readers to have them to preserve.

JEWIS AND JUDAISM.

[The following interesting article we reprint from *The Jewish Missionary Intelligence*, the official organ of "The London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews," which is the chief organization of the Church of England for missions to Jews. It is a review of recent English publications.—Ed.]

In illustration of the popular ignorance respecting the Jews which at one time prevailed, a former Bishop of our Church used to tell of a fashionable gathering in a well-known society house, where the question arose, "Who, and what are the Jews?" One said one thing, another another, and no one seemed to know much about it, until a cavalry officer, who was present, settled the question by exclaiming, "Jews—aw—he knew all about the Jews: they were a kind of people who *ate pork on Saturdays*." That was a long while ago, and the world has changed a good deal since then; yet the author of the "Jewish Year Book"¹ remarks at page 207, that "the chief thing that

¹ The Jewish Year Book. An annual record of matters Jewish, 56s8. Edited by Joseph Jacobs, London, 1897.

the outside world knows about Jews is that they do not eat the flesh of pig." Certainly, such a reproach cannot be made with truth against English Christians. And it may be questioned whether the "Jewish subject" is not studied more thoughtfully and more Scripturally, if that expression may be allowed, amongst earnest-minded Christians than by the great majority of the Jews themselves.

Mr. Joseph Jacobs' book contains a large amount of interesting and useful information about the chosen race. Their feasts and fasts are of course set forth, together with the "Haphsakoht," or official instructions as to the days and hours when they begin and end. Then come general statistics of the number of Jews in various countries, from which it appears that there are probably eleven millions of Jews existing in the world at the present time, of whom some eight millions are resident in the countries of Europe, over a hundred thousand being in the British Isles. It used to be a standing joke, that there were no Jews in Scotland, but we find it stated that about 2,060 are now to be found there, whilst in Ireland there are only 1,779. Australia has 15,139, British North America 6,414, India 17,185; and the total number of Jews living in countries under British rule is given as 147,649.

The charity of the Jews, especially among their own people, is well known, and it is not surprising therefore to find a long list of benevolent Institutions which are supported by them. The total expenditure of those in the Metropolis alone amounted last year to no less than £86,688, which, if the number of Jews in London be reckoned as 70,000, shows an average contribution of about twenty-five shillings per head by every member of the community, rich or poor.

The Jewish Peerage, Baronetage, Knighthood, etc., is followed by a list of Jewish celebrities who have lived in various lands during the present century. Among these are poets, painters, philosophers, scientists, philanthro-

pists, statesmen, who have occupied a foremost place among their fellow-men, and it is not a little remarkable that no less than 58, or 14 per cent of the whole number are marked as having been "converted," that is, had embraced the Christian faith. It is often objected that Mission work among Jews deals only with the lowest and least religious and intelligent class, and that converts are bought and do not become such from conviction. But how is it to be accounted for that so surprisingly large a proportion of the noblest intellects of the Jewish race have found satisfaction for their spiritual longings only in the faith of Christ? Surely *they* were not bought? Might we not put it, with all respect, to our Jewish friends, whether they may not have allowed prejudice, and their conservative spirit, and the fear of losing their distinctive position as a peculiar and highly favored people, to blind their eyes to the truth?

The portion of the work which will be most often consulted by Gentiles is the "Glossary of Jewish terms," which affords an explanation of many Hebrew and other technical words in common use amongst Israelites. A study of this portion will give an insight into the customs, traditions and opinions of the Jews which the non-Jew could hardly obtain with so little trouble elsewhere. To readers of the Reports of Missionaries to the Jews, it will be specially useful, as explaining many references which, though well understood by the initiated, are puzzles to those who seldom come into actual contact with the Jew in his daily life. The author does not shrink from explaining even those terms which indicate the least admirable peculiarities of his people. Thus he gives a definition of *schnorrer*, a word lately become familiar to the outside world through Mr. Zangwill's novelette, "The King of Schnorrers," and *chutzpah*, which is used to express a "very distinctive Jewish quality," which Gentiles are apt to regard as undue self-assertion, or "impudence." The paragraph on "Messianic texts" will certainly be called

in question by many studious Christians. It asserts, for instance, that the words in Psalm 2: 12, translated "Kiss the Son" in our English Bible, are rendered by Jews "Worship in purity"; omitting to mention that Aben Ezra and Maimonides, Mendelssohn, Furst, and Zunz, agree that *bar* has in this passage the meaning of "son."¹

This "Year Book" deals, as has been seen, mainly with the externals of Judaism and the Jews. The "Studies in Judaism," issued last year by Mr. Schechter,² is a work of a different cast, representing to us in a series of essays something of the inner life of Judaism, and of the spiritual ideals and religious movements which have marked its history since the destruction of Jerusalem. Even among those most deeply interested in the destiny of the Jewish race, there are many who habitually think of Jews as a stubborn, intensely conservative, people, whose pride it is to believe as their fathers believed, to adhere strictly to ancient rabbinical rules of life, and to hand down to their children the traditions and customs, hopes and aspirations, which they have received from those who were before them. Yet this, as may be learned from a study of Mr. Schechter's book, is a very inadequate conception of the case. It is, indeed, true that the Jew is intensely conservative, within a certain limit; that he has clung, and still clings, with passionate persistence to belief in the Unity of God and the glorious destiny of his race; but outside of these tenets all is, and ever has been, uncertainty and unrest. Even the oral Law, as formulated and codified in the Mishna, was not laid down without many differences of opinion. The divergent views of the school of Shammai and the school of Hillel are matters of history, and often it may be noted that, after discussion of some difficult point, the decision (*halachah*) was not unani-

¹ But many Christians think also that the passage in question should be rendered "Worship in purity." The Messianic character of the Psalm does not depend upon the rendering "Kiss the Son." If "worship in purity" is the true rendering, let us admit it.—Ed. P. P.

² Studies in Judaism. By S. Schechter, M. A. London, 1896.

mous. And outside of social laws and ritual observances, where shall we find anything approaching to an authoritative or generally received opinion as to high spiritual truth? Whether there are any dogmas in Judaism is an old point of dispute. Mendelssohn asserted that there are none; and the majority of modern Jewish *theologians* have accepted his assertion. "The great dogma of dogmalessness," is the only dogma! Specially valuable, therefore, is the chapter on "The Dogmas of Judaism," in which the author discusses and lays before us historical data with reference to this question. Maimonides, who lived in the 12th century, was the first Rabbanite to formulate the dogmas of the synagogue, and his thirteen articles of belief appear to be still accepted by the majority of Jews. Yet we find so able a writer as Mr. Oswald J. Simon telling us that "the only scientific definition of Judaism is to call it the faith of the Jewish people in all ages"; and again, "Judaism, conceived apart from traditional ritual observances, which are intended to distinguish the Jewish community from other bodies, is Monotheism, supplemented by an ethical code, *which has never ceased to develop itself.*"¹ This is as much as to say that Jewish doctrine is in a constant state of *flux*; that, beyond the belief in one God, it has no fixed dogmas. "Believe what you like, but conform to the mode of life." Most Christians will agree with Mr. Schechter that, "to declare that a religion has no dogmas is tantamount to saying that it was wise enough not to commit itself to any vital principles. But prudence, useful as it may be in worldly affairs, is quite unworthy of a great spiritual power." (Introd. p. xxviii.)

An account of the fluctuating doctrines of Judaism in the various ages is given in the chapter headed, "The History of Jewish Tradition," which is founded on the great work of Weiss, on the same subject. "Tradition "

¹ Fortnightly Review, Oct., 1896. p. 584.

is there defined to be "the history of interpretation of the Scriptures, which was constantly liable to variation, not on grounds of philology, but through the subjective notions of successive generations regarding religion, and the method and scope of its application," (pp. 223-4). Two important events which greatly influenced the development of Tradition were the destruction of the Temple, and the rise of Christianity. The first of these led to the creation of a new religious center for Judaism, the school founded at Jamnia by R. Johanan ben Zaccai, which had the same authority and importance as the Sanhedrin had enjoyed whilst the Temple was standing. The second, the rise of Christianity, occasioned a more determinate expression of the Law. For the rabbis could not see that it is only the letter that killeth. They thought that the spirit without the letter is a mere phantasm, and that it may even slay more victims than the letter. Hence new laws were enacted and old ones revived, with the object of resisting Christian influences over the Jews. The Oral Law was expanded, and the effort made to give it a firm basis in the Scriptures, with the view of preserving Judaism intact; and throughout all the discussions and decisions of the rabbis, "the main object was to preserve the Jewish religion by strengthening the principle of Jewish nationality and to preserve the nationality by the aid of religion," (p. 233). Amid all the changes in Jewish thought on religious subjects which have taken place in later times, this object, or principle, has never been lost sight of, namely, to preserve at all costs the Jewish nationality "by the aid of religion." How different are the aim and ideal of Christianity; which teaches that by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles; that in respect of man's relation to God, there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all, and in all.

The great dangers to Tradition arose out of what a

rabbi of the 17th century called "nature and simple meaning," that is to say, natural science and philology; and, in order to obviate this, the basis of Judaism was shifted (Introd. p. xv.), and its tenets made to depend on "secondary meaning," or the interpretation put upon the Torah by the majority of the rabbis of the Synagogue (p. 231). It seems to be in great measure owing to this that so many Jewish leaders early accepted the guidance of the Higher Criticism, so called. For, if religion does not depend upon the "simple meaning" of Holy Scripture, the Written Word may be "reduced to the level of history"; and "History in its aspect of tradition" be raised to the rank of Scripture, without religion itself suffering; and thus we arrive at the astounding statement, that "Tradition becomes the means whereby the modern (Jewish) divine seeks to compensate himself for the loss of the Bible, and the theological balance is to the satisfaction of all parties happily readjusted," (Introd. p. xviii). "We seek the foundation of Judaism," writes Mr. Schechter, not without a touch of irony, "in political economy, in hygiene, in everything except religion. Following the fashion of the day, to esteem religion in proportion to its ability to adapt itself to every possible and impossible metaphysical and social system, we are anxious to squeeze out of Judaism the last drop of faith and hope, and strive to make it so flexible that we can turn it in every direction which it is our pleasure to follow," (p. 182). The Synagogue, it is argued, in ancient times determined the fate of Scripture. "Books like Ezekiel, the Song of Songs, and Ecclesiastes, were only declared to be Holy Writ in virtue of the interpretation put upon them by the Rabbis. . . . We may therefore safely trust that the Synagogue will again assert its divine right in passing judgment upon the Bible when it feels called upon to exercise that holy office," (Introd. p. xxii). Truly may it be said of modern Jews—at least of those of Western Europe—as was said of their forefathers by the mouth of Jeremiah the prophet,

“My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.” Jer. 2: 13.

Yet we should greatly err, were we to think slightly of the “long continuous cry after God,” which has characterized the Synagogue during twenty-three centuries. No religion, no people, can show a nobler record of saints, martyrs, scholars, philosophers, mystics, than Judaism can show. In extent of knowledge, in breadth of mind, in power of philosophic thought and philosophic expression, Maimonides was scarcely inferior to Aristotle. In all religious history there is perhaps no more beautiful episode than the career of Israel Baalshem¹ in his self-sacrificing effort to find, and to lead his brethren to a higher and more spiritual conception of religion than the quibbles and casuistry of the over-subtle Rabbis of his time afforded. These and hundreds of others were intensely in earnest in their search after God, and the knowledge of His ways. But what has been the result? An openly avowed looseness of belief, amounting to skepticism, on the one hand, and on the other the ignorance, superstition and fanaticism of the modern “Khoosid.” [“Saint,” extreme Orthodox.]

Nor are the causes of this far to seek. In all their struggles after communion with God, and the higher religious life, Jews have ever been hampered and thwarted by those two fatal principles of regarding religion as subservient to the preservation of the Jewish nationality, and of opposing every opinion and interpretation which did not tend to foster their hatred of Christianity and the severance of their people from it. But to reach the real cause, we must go behind these. As the old schoolmen expressed it, “the cause of the cause is the causing cause”; and for this we have but to turn to the words of a very

¹ Founder of the sect of *Chassidim*.

famous Jew, who wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, "Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded. According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear unto this day." And again, "I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery . . . that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." Rom. 11: 7, 8, 25. It is thus God Himself who, because of their unbelief, has left His people for a time to the hardness, and blindness of their own natural hearts, and in His time the veil which now hides from them the truth will be removed.

We have been hearing a good deal of late about "the mission of Judaism." But what mission has Judaism? or what can it have? Its only fixed belief is in the Unity of God, that is, the denial of the Trinity. But two hundred and fifty millions of Mohammedans are also professing and proclaiming the Unity of God, so that Judaism need not trouble itself on that score. And as to ethics, its teaching is in no respect superior, and in some respects is very far inferior, to the ethics of Christianity. Outside of its own community, what has Judaism ever done to lead dark and ignorant souls into the light of Divine truth? Into how many hearts and homes of the people around has it brought spiritual peace, consolation and hope? Mission implies sending, and sending the having something to send. But what has Judaism to offer to the world—that is, to the Gentile world? Monotheism, with "an ethical code" which is ever changing "through the subjective notions of successive generations" of more or less learned Jews.¹

¹ Very significant in this respect is the general tone of the opinions expressed by leading members of the Jewish Community and others with reference to the proposal of Mr. Oswald J. Simon to set on foot a Jewish propaganda. Mr. Abrahams says plainly "we need a further analysis of our moral consciousness before we can formulate the religion of the future." *Jewish Quarterly Review*. Vol. ix. p. 196. See also Dr. Cust's article on "*The New Judaism*" recently reprinted in pamphlet form from his "*Linguistic and Oriental Essays*."

The Mission of *Israel* is something very different. The promise that in Abraham and his seed all mankind should be blessed has never been taken back. We may note its fulfilment month by month and year by year. But the fulfilment does not come through Judaism, nor is it at present being brought about through the efforts of Judaism or of Jews. The truths revealed to Israel found their development, their completion, in Christianity, or rather in the person of Christ; and it is by the followers of Christ, animated and impelled by the Spirit of Christ, that millions of the human race have been taught the knowledge of the truths of God's revealed Word. Judaism has done nothing in this regard.¹ It is the disciples of the despised Jesus who are now carrying out the Mission of Israel, and who for eighteen hundred years have, under God, been the means of keeping alive the flame of Divine truth. Most mournful, most saddening, is the confession of a Jew in a letter printed in the *Jewish Chronicle* of January 22d, of last year: "Let us face the truth—the truth which must dawn upon us all sooner or later; the age for the Jewish religion is past. . . . The religion is dying, but the fire of nationalism still burns . . . There is no future for the religion, and on that account the only future for the race must be in a land of its own. This is the mission of Israel." To such an *impasse* have the rejection of Christ and the teaching of the Rabbis led. All that Judaism has to show is "the broad belief in one God" and—"nationalism!" But to the attentive student of the Holy Scriptures this lamentable decadence will occasion no surprise nor cause any doubt as to the ultimate restoration and salvation of

¹ The contrast between the spirit of Christianity and the spirit of Judaism in respect of missionary effort may be illustrated by two quotations:

New Testament: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." St. Mark 16: 15, 16.

Talmud: "The Gentile who occupies himself with the Law is guilty of death. For it is said (Deut. 33: 4) 'Moses commanded us a law *even* the inheritance.' For us an inheritance, and not for them." (Talm. Bab. Sanhedrin 59a.) Cf. 1 Thessal. 2: 16, "Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved."

Israel. The gifts and calling of God are without repentance. Even in their unbelief and worldliness, the Jews are unconsciously fulfilling the Divine purposes. The very decay of faith among them may be taken as one of the signs that the day of their redemption is drawing nigh; for did not our Lord Himself intimate to their forefathers, that when the Son of Man cometh He shall find faith gone from among them? As regards religious beliefs, the minds of the Jews are fast becoming as *tabula rasa*, and it is just this condition that is fitted to lead them to find in Jesus their Christ and Saviour, when once through the influence of the Holy Spirit a sense of sin shall spring up in their hearts.

x.

THE JEWS.

The marvelous history of the Jews, comprising unique and picturesque characters and startling situations, constitutes the most thrilling tragedy of the ages. After fifty centuries of strangely mingled prosperity and adversity, they stand among us to-day in full possession of all those remarkable traits and powers that enabled them to defy the Pharaohs, and with the sword of Gideon to smite the Midianite. The most powerful races and nations have failed either to assimilate or absorb them. Originally endowed with pre-eminent force of intellect and passion, the Jew is still characterized by clear thought and profound feeling. Love or hate with him must go to extremes. How Isaac of York, in "Ivanhoe," defies the tortures as he thinks of Rebecca! How intense and beautiful the charity of Nathan, in Lessing's touching story! What ardent devotion in Mordecai, as in every change of fortune the struggling soul of Daniel Deronda receives a new inspiration!

Until recent years the Jew has been regarded as the mere scheming, selfish, ubiquitous man of trade. The world is, however, beginning to take a new view of the

Jew. If he is made a conspicuous character in novel or drama, it is no longer as Isaac of York, or Shylock of Venice, dreadful in avarice and in vengeance, but as the student, the artist, the philanthropist and the statesman. In the past he has been placed in the most unfavorable position and light of comparison with other men. But in the blaze of the most unfriendly criticism he stands the peer of any in the display of those qualities which constitute human greatness in all the spheres of thought and action. Who that has ever studied the philosophy of Spinoza, or read the poetry of Heine, the romances of Disraeli and Auerbach, the dramas of Micheal Beer, the epics of Frankl, or heard the musical masterpieces of Mendelssohn, Rubenstein, Ernst and Halevy, can speak slightly of Hebrew genius?

There is scarcely any department of human thought and activity in which the Jews have not distinguished themselves. In general literature they more than average with writers of the same class, of other nationality. It is a very remarkable thing that at the same moment, the leader of the Liberal party in Germany, the leader of the Republican party in France, the leader of the Republican party in Spain, and the leader of the Conservative party in England, were all Jews. A more extended sphere of useful activity is being opened to this long persecuted race. They became great in trade because forced out of the professions. Endowed for greatness, they must be successful in whatever they undertake. Every encouragement should be given them to exercise their wonderful talents in behalf of our common civilization. We firmly believe that this divinely gifted people, who have so inspired our literature, music and drama in the past, will yet be in the van of the moral, mental and material march of the world's progress.—*Selected.*

WOE UNTO the disciples of the wise who busy themselves with the law, but among whom there is no fear of Heaven.

HOMES AND HOME LIFE IN JERUSALEM.

BY EDWIN S. WALLACE.*

The account of home life in the Holy City will be interesting to the readers of this article only in so far as that life differs from their own. There are homes here of Christians and the better class of Jews which might be transported to any city of Europe or America and never occasion remark. The designs of the houses, the interior furnishings and the residents themselves are Occidental. They are more out of harmony with their surroundings here than they would be in Paris, London or New York.

The same is true of many other cities of the Orient. There is a charm about the life that makes some people overlook the unpleasant features, such as the wretched poverty and filth to be seen on every side, the lack of social and educational advantages, and the absence of many of the comforts of a more advanced civilization. The visitor of a few days wonders how any one can be content to live here; but the fact can be proved to-day by at least a hundred Americans and Europeans residing in the city of Jerusalem that they are not only contented here, but would be discontented in any place else. Many of the mission workers have returned to their former homes with the full intention of remaining. They have come back because, all in all, living here is to them more agreeable. They are victims of the Orient's charm.

As for the natives who leave to seek homes and fortune in foreign countries, all whom I have met look forward to the time when they can turn their steps toward their own land, for none other can be in reality their home land. This cannot be because their home land is more beautiful or more fertile, for in these respects it will not compare with Europe or America. Palestine is wild and rugged in appearance, and most of the year has a very barren aspect. Its native inhabitants have few real comforts

* United States Consul at Jerusalem.

and no luxuries. The lack of these does not make them restless for new and better conditions. The lands that can provide these are not home, and therein lies the difference. Home without these is better than a dwelling among strangers with them.

Nine-tenths of the native homes of Jerusalem are unpretentious, uncomfortable, and therefore unattractive to the Occidental. He cannot understand how so many of a family can live in so small an apartment and, with so little to make them so, seem to be so happy. The utilization of house room has been reduced to a fine art, when father, mother and any number of children that the Lord blesses them with can manage to exist in two and in some cases three rooms. One room will serve as living, dining and bed room. In the morning the beds, which are only thin ticks, are rolled up in bundles and hid away in some small recess or cupboard in the wall. The family has no table, and would not use one if it had, preferring to sit or recline on the floor at meal-time and partake of their food from a large dish placed in the center of the circle.

This is a primitive method, to be sure, but suffices for the wants, and makes much less labor for the wife or servants; for it is a custom that obtains in some of the best Moslem homes where servants are numerous. One who has partaken of the hospitality that can be provided in this manner finds much less to criticise in the method of administering it than he did previous to the partaking.

One characteristic of Oriental home life, which is well illustrated by every grade of Jerusalem's population, is hospitality. Wherever you call, at whatever time of the day and upon no matter what business, you are expected to partake of some refreshment. It matters not how poor the home, a cup of coffee or glass of wine will be brought out by the hostess if it be a Christian home; if a Moslem home a servant will bring in a small cup of black coffee for each visitor, and cigarettes will be offered. Until this mark of respect is offered and received no business matter

may be discussed. I have gone to the homes of the poor—Jew, Christian and Moslem—homes where I knew it was not always possible for the inmates to have enough of what we call life's necessities, and been offered these things, which to them are luxuries, and partaken of them not because of a desire to do so, but because a refusal would have been a breach of etiquette and would have caused pain. In most particulars our Western civilization is superior to that of the past; but when it comes to showing respect we must confess our inferiority.

This respect is well illustrated also in the attitude of the young toward their elders. As long as the father lives, the sons, no matter though they be gray-bearded men themselves, reverence him and defer to his wishes. The father is, in reality, the "head" of the family, and sons, grandsons and great-grandsons acknowledge his pre-eminence. Similar respect is not shown to the mother or grandmother. From childhood the girl has been treated as inferior to her brothers. At marriage she assents, not dreaming of questioning, that her husband is the superior. When her sons have attained a certain age, she occupies toward them the position of servant rather than mother. Their wish is virtually law unto her. This inferiority of woman is the belief and practice among all Orientals, and has been accepted by the women as the penalty their sex must pay. The Christian and Jewish woman of England and America would regard the position of their Jerusalem sisters in the home and society as almost intolerable.

In Moslem homes the marks of the inequality of the sexes are most noticeable. Until very recent years no Moslem woman could read or write her own name. To educate her in any way was regarded as destructive of order as decreed by Allah and his more favored creature, man. To-day there is no real family life in Moslem households. The patriarchal idea obtains, and the husband is absolute ruler. His wife, or wives, is guarded as though

she were suspected, and conversation with a man whose relationship to her is more remote than that of brother is considered as a legitimate ground for divorce, and generally so results.

The Moslem wife never sits down to a meal with her husband should any male guest be present; and among the stricter ones not when her husband is alone. Her duty is to serve; and after her "lord" has partaken of all he wishes, he sends the remains of his repast to the rest of the family. Where such customs obtain there can be little respect and less love between husband and wife; and yet to make wholesale condemnation of those who indulge in such practices would be unjust. It must be remembered that for centuries in the unchanging East woman has been regarded as man's inferior and treated accordingly. Nothing else was known until comparatively recent years. The foreign element in the population is giving an object-lesson and it is being gradually adopted by many of the natives. It will be a long time, however, before woman is given her rightful place.

The most noticeable lack in the female portion of Jerusalem native homes is education. This is true among all classes and religions, though I am informed that much advance in this particular has been made in recent years; and for this advance the mission schools are responsible. The Roman and Anglican churches have done most along this line, and wherever they have been successful in securing the attendance of boys and girls have done them much intellectual good. These beneficent agencies have been able, to a very limited extent only, to reach the children of Moslem and Jewish parents. Native Christian families supply the scholars.

As a natural consequence of this refusal to permit education, Moslem and Jewish girls grow up in absolute ignorance. Not only do they not know how to read or write, but they are unacquainted with even the commonest duties of the household. They must have the simplest sew-

ing done by outsiders. No wonder that when early in life they become wives and mothers they are utterly unable to meet the obligations of these two honored spheres of truest womanhood.

The persons who are responsible for this ignorance—namely the men—are in the end the ones who suffer by it. Their homes are wretchedly kept, their children uncared for, their wives unattractive and uninteresting—a necessary evil. May the responsible parties continue to be the victims of their own shortsightedness and their domestic miseries increase till they be compelled to treat wives, mothers and sisters as human creatures—their own equals!

The home life of native Jerusalem women would be most monotonous to one who had ever been used to other conditions. To sit in the house and do nothing, unless it be to smoke the narghileh (Turkish water-pipe) or cigarettes and talk the small talk of their neighborhood with their likewise mentally starved neighbors, seems to be the acme of their social enjoyment. Such an event as a social gathering, where husbands and brothers and near friends mingle with wives and sisters and female friends, has never taken place except among a very few of the native Christian families who have been influenced in this respect by European ideas.

The variety of nationalities represented in the Holy City makes it impossible to express in a sentence or two the characteristics of their homes and life. The Jews alone are so affected by the customs of the lands from which they have come, and in the midst of their Judaizing tendencies reproduce so much that is foreign to their Jerusalem homes, that to specify the respects in which they differ would be beyond the province of such an article as this. It may be remarked of all nationalities among them that a religious atmosphere pervades all their homes—an atmosphere that influences every department of the home. The children, as soon as they are able to lisp their prayers

and to obey the requirements of the Law, are taught them by their elders. The adults are controlled in every action of life by the injunctions of this Law as given by Moses and interpreted by rabbinical authorities. The result appears to an outsider to be a life of gloomy austerities among which but little that is joyous is apparent. The residents of the Jewish home do not so think. They are here for their religion's sake and find enjoyment in obedience to that religion's injunctions.

Many of the Christian homes are pervaded by a similar religious spirit. Most of the Christian population are adherents of the Greek Church, a church in which ceremony is carried to the extreme. Whatever the inward feeling, the outward form must be expressed. The numerous priests and lower clergy can oversee each home, and their power is such that what they advise is acted upon. The same is true, though to a less extent, in Latin, Armenian, Coptic and Syrian households. To disobey would be for a household to invite the censure of the ecclesiastical authorities, and hence requires more independence than Christian householders here possess. Church lines are very rigidly drawn even in the home life. The common people see how jealous the patriarchs and priests are of those of other branches of the church, and are affected by what they see. The result is there is little Christian love exhibited between the members of the different sects.

Poverty is an inmate of the great majority of native homes, and also seems to be present in most of the Jewish homes. With it comes wretchedness. There are sights to be seen on every side that make the heart sick; the wonder is how the inmates of some of the homes possibly endure their privations. That many of them do not, can be learned by any one taking the trouble to inquire. The mortality among children is appalling, and is due to neglect. In the coldest time in winter, when snow and sleet fill the air, many families have no fires and their members are not half clad. Pneumonia is a frequent visitor, and

seldom leaves without a victim. The majority of Jerusalem children die in infancy.

I cannot but believe that much of the poverty is caused, indirectly, by well-meaning people. It is an easily proved fact that more money for the relief of poor Jews and Christians comes to Jerusalem than to any other city on earth. Four-fifths of all the Jews receive the benefit of the Chaluka—a charity fund provided by their co-religionists in other parts of the world and sent here to be distributed by the rabbis. Any one applying for it can have a share without question. The amount each receives—except the rabbis—is not much, but is enough to permit its recipient to live in wretched idleness. Without this the head of the family would have to engage in some useful employment; with it, he is of no benefit to himself or anybody else. A great deal of Christian money is also sent. It enriches the Church whose adherents in other parts of the world send it. Much of it finds its way to the individual Christian, and, as an equivalent is not rendered for it, does more harm than good. Generally speaking, the deserving poor do not receive the benefit of the money sent to Jerusalem.

The home life of the children is not brightened by many joys. I have tried to find a reason for the unchildlikeness of Jerusalem children. They do not seem like children either in appearance or actions. They look old while still boys and girls. Life is too serious. Outside of the grounds of those schools established and taught by Europeans or Americans, I have never seen a band of either girls or boys engaged in a good healthful game of any kind. At home they seem subdued and reticent. The reason for this I cannot give.

Young men and women have no social gatherings, no parties, no picnics. A young couple who are to be man and wife never see each other alone, and may never have thought of each other in this light. Their parents make

all preliminaries, and when these are completed the marriage takes place. A bride ten years of age is not uncommon among Jews and Moslems, and very common at twelve and fourteen. The latter age, fourteen, is not an unusual one for Christian girls to assume the duties of wifhood. These child marriages and the methods used to bring them about result in great unhappiness and frequent divorce.

Divorce is disgracefully common among the Jews, and may be obtained by the husband for the slightest provocation. The rabbis have power to grant these, and do so for the modest sum of thirty piasters—less than a dollar and a half. This practice strikes at the sanctity of the home, and makes the life of many a wife one of continued fear lest her husband, displeased in some way, should send her away. The breaking of the marriage bond is of frequent occurrence among the Moslems also, and a very easy process, the husband simply ordering his wife to leave. Among the Christians the rules of the Church prevent such unnatural proceedings. I have heard of separations being granted, but never a divorce, by the ecclesiastical officials. With matrimonial affairs the local government has no concern. These are all in the control of the spiritual heads of the various religious communities.

From the above brief description of home life in modern Jerusalem there can be little gleaned by the dwellers in American homes that will cause feelings of envy.—*The Independent*.

JOSEPH RABINOWITZ ON ZIONISM.

In a Hebrew letter just received from Joseph Rabinowitz, of Kishineff, Bessarabia, South Russia, he expresses his opinion of the congress of Zionists, held in Basle, Switzerland, last August. We translate:

“The conference of Zionists in the city of Basle were assembled against Jehovah and against His Christ. The

majority of those who bear the name of Zionists are rebels and transgressors whom Jehovah, the God of Israel, will purify out from among His people as tares from the wheat that they may not go into the land of Israel. Ezek. 20: 38. This that the Jews in Jerusalem and in Palestine have begun to do, in that they are speaking Hebrew, is not that in this pure language all nations may call upon the name of Jehovah to serve Him shoulder to shoulder in the name of the one Lord Jesus the Messiah, but that they may glory in their wisdom and that it may appear to all the inhabitants of the world that they are their own rulers. 'Who is lord over us?' Psa. 12: 4.

"It remains for us who believe in Jehovah and in His Christ according to the Gospel of the Apostle Paul to wait a little moment until the days of purification and the testing of the people of Israel are completed. Then, only then, after the purifying will Israel call upon the name of Jehovah, and He will answer him and say, 'He is my people,' and the true Israel in whom is no guile will say, 'Jehovah is my God.' Zech. 13: 9."

THE January issue of THE PECULIAR PEOPLE, a Christian monthly devoted to Jewish interests, contains a goodly amount of reading along political, social, literary and religious lines. The tone of the magazine is clear and lofty, Christ the Redeemer of the world being exalted in every line.—*The North and West.*

THE Sabbath was appointed to be a joy to us. What greater joy can there be than to hear the 'words of the Law and to be satiated with angels' food and the bread of Heaven?

God is holy and we ought to be holy as He is. All, therefore, that we do ought to be done in accordance with His thought.—*Ch. Th. Lucky.*

A NEW Jewish Technical School, where instruction in other subjects is also to be given, will shortly be opened in Lodz.