# THE PECULIAR PEOPLE.

*A CHRISTIAN MONTHLY,*

DEVOTED TO JEWISH INTERESTS.

---

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

---

EDITORS:

*THE REV. WILLIAM C. DALAND, D. D.,*
*London, Eng.*

*THE REV. SYLVESTER S. POWELL,*
*Little Genesee, N. Y.*

---

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

---

Vol. 10. December, 1897. No. 9.

---

## Contents.

To the Blessed Christ.—Poetry, - - - 193
Editorial Paragraphs, - - - - - 193
The True Glory of Israel, - - - - 196
Jewish Wayfaring Life in the Middle Ages, - - 200
News, - - - - - - 208
Gleanings from the Jewish and Non-Jewish Press, - 209
An Important Subject, - - - - 212
The Jews of Corfu, - - - - - 214

---

PUBLISHED BY
THE AMERICAN SABBATH TRACT SOCIETY,
BABCOCK BUILDING, PLAINFIELD, N. J.

Digitized by Google

## 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.

THE PECULIAR PEOPLE will discuss all current events which bear upon Jewish national interests from a biblical point of view. Its contents will, therefore, be of *equal interest to members of the Synagogue as to members of the Church.*

The former—the members of the synagogue—will have an opportunity of making public, in our pages, their views about the New Testament.

The latter—the members of the Christian Churches—will learn what is *the real state of the Jewish mind*, and they will be able to correct many erroneous notions rife on the subject.

---

## THE LEESER BIBLE,

The Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament Translated into English

BY ISAAC LEESER, an eminent Jewish Rabbi.

This is the Standard Jewish English Version of the Scriptures, and should be within the reach of all, both Jews and Gentiles. The purity and beauty of its renderings in innumerable passages richly repay its perusal. Proceeds from the sale of this Bible are to be devoted to the cause of the PECULIAR PEOPLE.

Price, bound in full leather, $1.50.

Address, THE REV. S. S. POWELL,
LITTLE GENESEE, N. Y.

Digitized by Google

# 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.*

הביטו אל־צור חצבתם
Isa. 51:1. ואל־מקבת בור נקרתם

"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., DECEMBER, 1897. No. 9.

JUDÆUS SUM; JUDAICI NIHIL A ME ALIENUM PUTO.

## TO THE BLESSED CHRIST.

BY I. ZANGWILL.

O Blessed Christ, that foundest death
When life was fire and tears,
Not drawing on a sluggish breath
Through apathetic years.

Still, still about Thy forehead gleams
The light we know Thee by,
O blessed Christ, to die for dreams,
Nor know that dreams would die.

LONDON, Eng. —*The Independent.*

SOME of the friends of the cause of Christ among Jews are of the opinion that the position assumed by THE PECULIAR PEOPLE is so much influenced by the national point of view of its platform that there is scarcely any room left for the coversion of Jewish hearts to the Saviour of sinners. It seems to them that in our contending for the principles we advocate we lose sight of the work of converting the soul. It seems, therefore, that it may be well for us to make it very clear that we believe Jesus Christ to be the Saviour of sinners, and an almighty personal Saviour of the individual believer, Jew or Gentile, who trusts in Him. We are sorry if our words have conveyed any other impression.

Digitized by Google

BUT, while this is so, we believe that there is a diversity of work in the vineyard of the Lord, and in doing one portion the faithful laborer does not deny the value of the labor of another, and if in order to the faithful accomplishment of one task, his attention is so given to it, that the more important labor of another receives little attention, it is not therefore true that he regards his own of greater moment. Our platform sufficiently sets forth what is the object of our magazine. That it is not explicitly stated that the purpose of our publication is to win the individual Jew to Christ is due to the fact that that is not the immediate purpose of the paper; that is to say, it is not published as a tract or a distinct appeal to the individual Jew. But we think that the work we are trying to do is a necessary work in order to the accomplishment of this very end; namely, that "all Israel shall be saved."

---

WE think that to enlighten the minds of Gentile Christians in regard to Jews, Jewish thought, Jewish literature and institutions, and to remove prejudices on their part against Jews and things Jewish is a help and a needed one to the right accomplishment of the very end, the conversion of the individual Jewish soul to Christ. To clear away these mists, to arouse an interest among Gentiles in these subjects is a means to this end. On the other hand to set forth before the Jewish reader the Christianity of Jesus and His disciples, to clear away misconceptions from his mind as to what New Testament Christianity really is, to help him to see how the sincere, believing Gentile Christian does regard him, to remove his prejudices against Christianity and Christians as such is likewise an important means to this very end which we have been thought to ignore. If we published every month sentimental stories about faith, and such things, it would be thought appropriate. Those things are right in their place, but their publication is not the work of our maga-

Digitized by Google

zine. We are to mediate between Jews and Gentile Christians, always holding before them the message of peace, the glad tidings of the blessed Gospel of God.

---

IT is further our conviction that the first declaration of our platform, that Jesus is the Messiah, is the first one to set before the mind of the Jew, prejudiced against the dogmas of Christianity as he has heard them expounded, parts of a complex philosophical system, of whose absurdity he feels sure. Where one Jew thus prejudiced would be willing to consider the claims of Jesus to be his personal Saviour from sin, or to be the manifestation of Deity in the flesh, many would be willing to consider His claim to be the Messiah. Nicodemus began by the conviction that Jesus was a "teacher come from God," and was at last numbered among His believing disciples. Many followed Him and saw in Him at first only God's Prophet and their wisest and best Teacher of Divine truth, who afterward with Thomas exclaimed, "My Lord and my God!"

---

BUT some one will say, "That was long ago. Now the doctrines of Christianity have become settled and fixed. So, being determined, it is better that the requisite authority, possessed of the fulness of religious truth, set it forth in order, and, inasmuch as belief in the Deity of Jesus Christ is the cardinal doctrine of Christianity, it should first be set before the catechumen." That is well enough for those who are dead certain they have a monopoly of Divine truth. But we do not find it to be God's way as revealed in Holy Scripture. To Matthew the command was given, "Follow me." To the woman of Samaria a presentation of purely spiritual truth was laid alongside the revelation of her wicked life. To Nicodemus the searching teaching of the absolute renewal of the nature of man was given as a theme upon which to ponder. The fierce and persecuting Saul was won by a vision

Digitized by Google

of the personally wounded Saviour. We believe that in order to the best result in the conversion of individual hearts to God, as many different methods ought to be employed as there are individuals. We do not lose sight of the conversion of the heart to the Saviour of sinners. That is the work of God, the work of Jesus, the work of His ministers, His church and of every one of His followers. But in order to do that work among Jewish people, we believe that certain principles are fundamental, and that it is important in some way to accomplish the removal of certain prejudices on both sides, and the awakening of an interest on the part of Gentile Christians in Jews and things Jewish, and on the part of Jews in the person and work of Jesus as the Messiah of Israel and in the doctrines actually taught in their purity by Himself and His first followers. This we try to do, with God's help.

## THE TRUE GLORY OF ISRAEL.

We would that all Christian Jews might be stirred by the present Zionistic movement to such a degree that they might be brought together in sentiment and thought from the four winds of heaven whither they are now scattered. Many have separated themselves from their people so thoroughly that they do not look upon themselves any longer as Jews. Joining themselves to the different sections in which Gentile Christianity is divided, they think that they must divest themselves of every distinguishing characteristic which they formerly possessed, forgetting that Christianity itself is Jewish in origin and essence. These things ought not so to be. Would that a penetrating voice might pass through the hosts of Israel, and that every believer in Jesus would give good heed, as it proclaimed: "Gather yourselves together, O believing Israel, and become one people, the Israel of all Israelites." If such as this were to occur,—making all due allowance for deceived and deceiving renegades,—the numbers already

Digitized by Google

gained to the true following of Jesus would be considerable, enough to demonstrate to the larger camp of Israel that the religion of these Jewish Christians is intensely Jewish and national in its tendency and results. Then might the question be asked, "Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?" And the watchman would be heard to reply, "The morning cometh to Israel, for at evening time it shall be light."

Is not the attainment worth striving for? Would not the results more than justify the efforts put forth in such a direction? The Zionistic movement has come to be one of large proportions. An important and integral part of this movement has been the creation and cultivation of a rich and vigorous modern Hebrew literature. The names of Gordon, Smolenski and others are household names in thousands of Jewish families. These men were creators and pioneers in the realms of modern Hebrew thought and literature; and they became immensely successful. What part has Christian Israel in the new world of the Hebrew thought of to-day? We are thankful to know that *Ha-Eduth*, "The Testimony," in Galicia, represents such work. But how much besides is being done? Are not they of Christian Israel asleep? Do they not need to be awakened? Are they content to be assimilated to purely Gentile ways and customs? Let them unite and all have one language, and that the sacred tongue of their own people. With national aspirations and with the true love of Jesus in their hearts blessings would overflow and good to their brethren of the house of Israel, who would see their actions and the good way in which they walked, and the result would be that the hearts of these latter would be turned in love to them and many would be joined to them in heart and soul and encamp under the banner of Jesus. So would they discover that He and He alone is the true glory of Israel. Such a course on the part of believing Israel would be a most powerful means for the holding up of the banner of Jesus before their brethren

Digitized by Google

and to enable them to discern the kingly beauty that is inherent in Him.

Disciples to Jesus from among the Jewish people should not forget their brethren or cease to cry to them that they may look and live. The inscription, written in three languages, that was nailed to the cross, was, "Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews." So is He now .and ever will be. He belongs to all Israel. He is their brother, of the house of David, and His throne is established forever.

Refusing their true King, Israel remains scattered, without the strongest bond of unity and without a fixed or certain standard either of orthodoxy or reform. No rest can come to the feet of wandering Israel, no refuge, no safe shelter amid the centuries until he find his rest in Jesus. The delusion is vain that with the progress of modern culture the world will outgrow the virulence of its attacks of anti-Semitism upon Israel. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, since Israel first began to wander, there is no escape, until in the kingdom of Jesus, under the sway of perfect love in the life and in the soul, ultimate rest is found. The pendulum of anti-Semitism may swing. But if it recedes it also returns.

Let all Israel gather to the standard of Jesus, and encamp under His regal protection. His standard is that of safety to every creature made in the image of God; but that salvation He published first to the Jewish people. Them He selected to be His peculiar treasure above other peoples and to them first He appeared and spoke through the voice of Jesus.

If Jesus had arisen from among the Gentile nations and presented Himself to the Jewish people to be their Saviour, even though He were very wise and though all nations sought His teaching, it would be small wonder if Israel refused His voice, for God had promised to Moses that a Prophet He would raise up from among his brethren. But it is a wonder passing strange, an insoluble

Digitized by Google

enigma, why Jesus is still refused, the Prophet of the Jewish people and the glory of His race. In the land of Judah His light shone. If His light, the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world, enlightens other nations, should His own people therefore refuse Him? On the contrary, it should be a source of exultation to the Jewish people that Jesus is the light of the Gentiles as well as of themselves.

The teaching of Jesus and His religion ought not to be regarded as strange and foreign to that of the Jews. These are perfectly identical with the teaching and religion of Moses and the prophets; and all, becoming indeed world-wide in sway, was indigenous to the sacred soil of Israel. Jesus came not to destroy the old but to establish; not to up-root, but to plant; to implant within us eternal life and to transform our wilderness into a paradise, wherein we may freely eat of the tree of life and of the tree of the purest knowledge. If the Gentiles who believe in Jesus have partaken of the splendor of this life Israel should be glad and indeed discern that Jesus is the glory of their election.

Jewish people should not refuse to believe in Him because His doctrine declares that He is the Son of the living God and that by His blood He atoned for the sins of all who sincerely repent and for all mankind. Moreover they should not be offended because the followers of Jesus teach that by faith alone a man is justified before God, for the reason that the righteousness of Christ only delivers from the judgment to come, and that good works alone have no power to deliver a man when he shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ. These teachings are all fully declared by Moses and the prophets.

A certain distinguished German was on a visit to Jerusalem at one time. He called upon and engaged in conversation with some of the leading Jews of the religious community there and declared to them that the Jewish people are the heart of the nations. All mankind is

Digitized by Google

the body, each nation a member; but Israel is the heart. If the heart in man is sick, then the whole body is debilitated. So is it with Israel. So long as the people of Israel say, "We have no pleasure in Jesus," so long will the heart of humanity remain impaired. But when Israel repents and turns to Jesus then will health and vigor proceed into all the members of the human race.

Therefore, for the sake of Israel and for all mankind we would that Christian Israel might gather together and become one people, the Israel of Israel!

S. S. P.

## JEWISH WAYFARING LIFE IN THE MIDDLE AGES.

BY ISRAEL ABRAHAMS.

(Continued from page 191.)

Another type of short distance traveler was the Bachur, or student. Not that his journeys were always short, but he rarely crossed the sea. Such students who, young as they were, were frequently married, often accomplished enormous land journeys entirely on foot. They walked from the Rhine to Vienna, and from North Germany to Italy. Their privations on the road were indescribable. Their ordinary food was raw vegetables culled from the fields; they drank nothing but water. They were often accompanied by their teachers, who underwent the same privations. Unlike their Talmudical precursors, they traveled much by night, because it was safer, and also because they reserved the daylight for study. The dietary laws made Jewish traveling particularly irksome, as may easily be imagined. We indeed find Jews lodging at the ordinary inns, but they could not join the general company at the *table d'hote*. The Sabbath, too, was the cause of some discomfort, though the traveler always exerted his utmost efforts, sometimes, as we have seen, with supernatural aid, to reach some Jewish congregation by Friday eve. On the road, the student was often attacked, but as happened with the son of the great Asheri, who

Digitized by Google

was waylaid by bandits near Toledo, the robbers did not always get the best of the fight. The Bachur could take his own part. One Jew gained much notoriety in 801 by conducting an elephant all the way from Haroun al Raschid's court as a present to Charlemagne, the King of the Franks. But the rabbi suffered considerably from his religion on his journeys. Mr. Schechter tells us how the Gaon Elija got out of his carriage to say his prayer and, as the driver knew that the rabbi would not interrupt his devotions, he promptly made off, carrying away the Gaon's property.

But the account was not all on one side. If the Bachur suffered for his religion, he received ample compensation. When he arrived at his destination, he was welcomed right heartily. This was not the case with all Jewish travelers, some of whom received a very cold shoulder from their brethren. Why was this? Chiefly because the Jews, no more than the rest of mediæval peoples, realized that progress and enlightenment are indissolubly bound up with the right of free movement. They regarded the right to move here and there at will as a selfish privilege of the few, not the just right of all. But more than that. The Jews were forced to live in special and limited ghettos. It was not easy to find room for new-comers. When a crisis arrived, such as the expulsion of the Jews from Spain, then, except here and there, the Jews were generous to a fault in providing for the exiles. Societies all over the continent and round the coast of the Mediterranean spent their time and money in ransoming the poor victims who, driven from Spain, were enslaved by the captains of the vessels which carried them, and were then bought back to freedom by their Jewish brethren. This is a noble fact in Jewish history. But it is nevertheless true that Jewish communities were reluctant in ordinary times to permit new settlements. The question of space was one important reason, for all new-comers had to stay in the ghetto. Secondly, the new-comer was not amenable to discipline.

Digitized by Google

Local custom varied much in details both of Jewish and general law. The new settler might claim to retain his old customs, and the regard for local custom was so strong that the claim was often allowed, to the destruction of uniformity, and the under-mining of authority. To give an instance or two. The new-comer would claim to shave his beard in accordance with his home custom, but to the scandal of the town which he was visiting. The native young man would imitate the foreigners and then there would be trouble. Or the settler would assert his right to wear colors and fashions and jewelry forbidden to native Jews. Again the marriage problem was complicated by the arrival of insinuating strangers, who turned out to be married men masquerading as bachelors.

Then as to public worship, the congregation was often split into fragments by the independent services organized by foreign groups, and it even became necessary for the native congregation to prohibit its own members from attending the synagogues of foreign settlers. Then as to communal taxes. These were fixed annually on the basis of the population, and the arrival of new-comers seriously disturbed the equilibrium, led to fresh exactions by the government, which it was by no means certain that the new settlers could or would pay, and which, therefore, fell on the shoulders of the old residents. When we add that, strange as it may seem, Jews are not fond of foreigners, that in Avignon, in the 18th century, every Jewish merchant who employed a foreign clerk was forced to pay a tax of thirty livres a year to the synagogue, when we add further that Jews have always felt with considerable truth that their safety lay in fewness, that the Jews are best treated where there are fewest of them—when, I repeat, we consider all these facts, we can see that the eagerness of the mediæval Jews to control the influx of foreign settlers was only in part the result of base motives. And, of course, the exclusion was not rigid. In Rome the Sephardic and the Italian Jews fraternally placed their

Digitized by Google

synagogues on different floors of the same building. In some German towns the foreign synagogue was fixed in the same courtyard as the native. Everywhere foreign Jews abounded, and everywhere a generous welcome awaited the genuine traveler. As to the traveling beggar, he was a perpetual nuisance. Yet he was treated with much consideration. The policy with regard to him was: "Send the beggar further," and this suited the beggar, too. He did not wish to settle, he wished to move on. He would be lodged for two days in the communal inn, or, if as usually happened, he arrived on Friday eve, he would be billoted on some hospitable member, or the Shamash would look after him at the public expense.

The genuine traveler was, however, an ever-welcomed guest. If he came at fair time his way was smoothed for him. The Jew who visited the fair was only rarely charged local taxes by the synagogue. He deserved a welcome, for he not only brought wares to sell, but he came laden with new books. The fair was the only bookshop, for at other times Jews were dependent on the casual visits of traveling vendors of volumes. Bookselling does not seem to have ever been a settled occupation in the Middle Ages. The merchant who came to the fair also fulfilled another function—that of Shadchan. The day of the fair was, in fact, the crisis of the year.

Even the ordinary traveler, who had no business to transact, would often choose fair time for visiting new places, for he would be sure to meet interesting people. He, too, would mostly arrive on a Friday eve, and would beguile the Sabbath with reports of the wonders he had seen. He would tell of a mighty Jewish kingdom in the East, living in idyllic peace and prosperity; he would tell of the latest new Messiah; he would describe the River Sambatyon, which keeps the Sabbath, and, mingling truth with fiction, in one breath would truly relate how he crossed a river on an inflated skin, and in the next

Digitized by Google

breath would romance about Hillel's tomb, how he had been there, and how he had seen a large hollow stone, which remains empty if a bad fellow enters, but at the approach of a pious visitor fills up with sweet, pure water with which he washes, and *wishes*, being sure that his wishes will come true. But it is impossible to tell all the wonders of the tombs. Jews were ardent believers in the supernatural power of sepulchres, they made pilgrimages to them to pray and to beg favors. Jewish travelers' tales of the Middle Ages are heavily laden with these legends. Of course the traveler would also bring news about the brethren in distant parts, would tell about foreign countries, their ways, their physical descriptions, and their strange birds and beasts. These stories were in the main true. For instance, Petachia tells of a flying camel that runs fifteen times as fast as the fleetest horse. He must have seen an ostrich, which is still called by Arabs the flying camel. But we cannot linger over this matter. Suffice it to say that as soon as Sabbath was over the traveler's narrative would be written out by the local scribe, and treasured as one of the communal prizes. Of course the traveler often kept a diary, and himself compiled a description of his adventures. Jewish geographical literature is very rich, and I hope that I shall one day have the leisure to write a book on the subject.

But the most welcome guests, even more welcome than distant travelers or globe-trotters, were the Bachurim and traveling rabbis. For the Bachurim or students there was a special house in many communities, and they lived together with their teachers. Here their life was by no means dull or monotonous. A Jewish student endures much, but he knows how to get the best out of life. This optimism, this quickness of humor, saved the rabbi and pupil from many a melancholy hour. Take Abraham Ibn Ezra for instance. If ever a man were marked out to be a bitter reviler of fate it was he. But he laughed at fate.

Digitized by Google

He gaily wandered from his native Spain over many lands penniless, traveled with no baggage but his thoughts, visited Italy, France, and even reached London, where he perhaps died. Fortune ill-treated him, but he found many joys. Wherever he went, patrons held out their hand. Traveling students found many such generous lovers of learning, who, with their wealth, encouraged their guests to write original works or to copy out older books, which the patrons then passed on to poor scholars in want of a library. When such a scholar arrived, the whole congregation would turn out to meet him. He would be taken in procession to the synagogue, where he would say the Hag-gomel, in thanks for his safety on the road. Perhaps he would address the congregation, but he would do that rather in the school than in the synagogue. Then a banquet would be spread for him. This banquet was called one of the Seudoth Mitsva, *i. e.*, a "Commandment meal," to which it was a duty of all pious men to contribute their money and their own attendance. It would be held in the communal hall used mostly for marriage feasts.

When a wedding party came from afar, similar steps for general enjoyment were taken. Men, mounted on horseback, went forth to welcome the bride, mimic tournaments were fought *en route*, torch-light processions were made if it were night-time, processions by boats if it were in Italy or by the Rhine, a band of communal musicians, retained at a general cost, played merry marches, and everyone danced and joined in the choruses. These musicians often went from town to town, and the Jewish players were hired for Gentile parties, just as Jews employed Christian or Arab musicians to help make merry on the Jewish Sabbaths and festivals. We need not wonder then that a traveler like Ibn Ezra was no croaker, but a genial critic of life. He suffered, but he was light-hearted enough to compose witty epigrams and improvise rollicking wine songs. He was an accomplished chess player, and no doubt did something to spread the Eastern game in

Digitized by Google

Europe. Another service rendered by such travelers was the spread of learning by their translations. Their wandering made them great linguists, and they were thus able to translate medical, astronomical, and scientific works wherever they went. They were also sent by kings on missions to collect new nautical instruments, thus the baculus which helped Columbus to discover America was taken to Portugal by Jews just as a French Jew invented it. They were much in demand as traveling doctors, being summoned from afar to effect specific cures. But they also carried other delights with them. It was the Jews, like Berachia, Charizi, Sabara, Abraham Ibn Chasdai, and other incessant travelers, who helped to bring to Europe Æsop, Bidpai, the Buddhist legends, who "translated them from the Indian," and were partly responsible for this rich poetical gift to the Western world.

Looking back on such a life, Ibn Ezra might well detect in his own pains and sorrows a Divine Providence. So, Jew-like, he retained his hope to the last, and after his buffetings on the troubled seas of life, remembering the beneficent results of his travels to others, if not to himself, could write in this faithful strain—

My hope God knoweth well,
  My life He made full sweet;
Whene'er his servant fell,
  God raised him to his feet,
Beneath the garment of His grace,
  My faults He did enfold,
Hiding my sin, His kindly face,
From me, my God did ne'er withhold.
  Requiting with fresh good,
  My black ingratitude.

But I must reserve the short time that I have left for a brief account of the great merchant travelers who sailed over all the world and brought to Europe the wares, the products, the luxuries of the East. These had their own peculiar dangers. Shipwreck was the fate of others besides themselves, but they were peculiarly liable to capture and sale as slaves. Foremost among their more nor-

Digitized by Google

mal hardships, I should place the Bridge Laws of the Middle Ages. In the Kurpfalz, *e. g.*, the Jewish traveler had to pay the usual "white penny" for every mile, but also a heavy general fee for the whole journey. If he were found without his ticket of leave he was at once arrested. But it was when he came to a bridge that the exactions became insufferable. The regulations were somewhat tricky, for the Jew was only specially taxed on Sundays and Festivals of the Church. But every other day was some Saint's Festival and while, in Mannheim, even on those days the Christian traveler paid one kreuzer if he crossed the bridge on foot, and two if on horseback, the Jew was charged four kreuzer if on foot, twelve if on a horse, and for every beast of burden he—unlike the Christian wayfarer—paid a further toll of eight kreuzer. The Jewish quarter often lay near the river, and Jews had great occasion for crossing the bridges, even for local needs. In Venice, the Jewish quarter was naturally intersected by bridges; in Rome there was the Pons Judæorum, which, no doubt, the Jews had to maintain in repair. It must be remembered that many local Jewish communities paid a regular bridge tax which was not exacted on Christians, and when all this is considered, it will be seen that the Jewish merchant needed to work hard and go far afield if he was to get any profit from his enterprises. Nevertheless, these Jews owned horses and caravans, and sailed their own ships long before the time when great merchants like the English Jew, Antonio Fernandes Carvajal, traded in their own vessels between London and the Canaries. We hear of Italian Jews in the 5th century with ships of their own. Jewish sailors abounded on the Mediterranean, which tended to become a Jewish lake.

(To be Continued.)

---

OUR century cries always for light. It is the same as happens to many people who cannot sleep the entire night, and when it is light they go to sleep at once.—*From the German of Saphir.*

Digitized by Google

IT is said that Jews expelled from Siberia are settling in Manchuria.

---

HAPISGAH, the excellent Jewish weekly recently published in the Hebrew language, W. Schur, editor, has been revived.

---

IT is reported that there are about 500 Jewish residents in Norway, more than half being residents of the capital.

---

NER HA-MAARABI, "The Western Lamp," is the name of a Jewish literary monthly published in the Hebrew language in New York City. It is now in its second year.

---

REV. DR. GOTTHEIL, of New York City, was one of the speakers at the funeral of the late Henry George. The latter was a candidate for the position of first mayor of Greater New York.

---

NEW YEAR and Day of Atonement services were held this year in a private residence in the city of Mexico. This is the first time that a Jewish congregation has assembled in that city in the present generation.

---

THE first Jewish service ever held in Alaska was celebrated on New Year and Atonement days of the present year. Twenty-three gentlemen and a few ladies were in attendance. A scroll of the Law had been forwarded from San Francisco. A permanent congregation has been formed.

---

THE CENTRAL UNION, formed to guard the interests of the Jewish community of Berlin, recently had a meeting, at which the Sunday-Sabbath question was discussed. It

Digitized by Google

was resolved, with only seven dissentients, that the Sunday-Sabbath services were against the interests of Judaism, and should be abolished.

---

THE retiring Lord Mayor of London, Sir George Faudel Philips, has, during his one year in office, raised three million five hundred thousand dollars for the victims of famine in India. Irrespective of creed, Mr. Philips raised that large amount of money to be distributed among suffering humanity.

---

IT is reported from Morocco City, that a Jew who had recently arrived there from Jerusalem, and was visiting the main centers of the Moorish Empire, for the purpose of soliciting donations for a Jewish institution in Palestine, has been assassinated near Tadla. The crime was committed for the sake of robbery.

---

## GLEANINGS FROM THE JEWISH AND NON-JEWISH PRESS.

### WHICH IS "PREPOSTEROUS"?

The *Free Church of Scotland Monthly*, for September contains the following remarks upon Dr. Herzl's proposition of a Jewish state in Palestine:

An agitation, to which in certain quarters considerable importance is attached, has been going on for some time in favor of the formation of a Jewish state in Palestine. It is thought that in this direction alone lies any hope for a satisfactory solution of the Eastern question. The idea is to purchase the country from the Sultan, and to set up in it an administration in Hebrew hands. Not much thought about the proposal is needed to convince any reflecting man of its preposterousness. Where are the Jews who could at this moment be trusted to rule, and where is the nation that could be trusted to obey? The Christian world, besides, could never approve of such an arrangement. It is only when the Jews themselves become Christianized that their possession of their own

Digitized by Google

land could be regarded as a good thing. We have already non-Christian governments enough, and it would be simply to set the hands back on the dial-plate of time to assent to the establishment of another.

The editor remarks further:

While this idea of "the Zionists," as they call themselves, is out of the question, there is no reason why the colonization of Palestine should not be encouraged. Some leading English Jews (among others, Mr. Zangwill, the author of *The Children of the Ghetto*) have been spending a fortnight in the country, with a view to forming an idea of the capabilities of the land, and they have returned much impressed with a sense of the importance of promoting Hebrew settlements in it. One consequence of this will, no doubt, be an increase in the confidence which largely prevails as to the ultimate recovery of Palestine. That is a perfectly legitimate state of feeling to cherish, and if it were commoner, good results in various ways would follow. But all the same, we have no belief in the good time coming to which the Jews are looking forward, until they are brought to mourn for Him whom their fathers pierced.

As we have already remarked, we are not over-hopeful of the immediate success of this plan, nor do we see in it an evidence of the speedy fulfilment of prophecy or a sign of the immediate conversion of the Jews *en masse* to Christ. But why is this preposterous? and is it more preposterous than the suggestion of the editor of the Scotch monthly?

We confess to an inability of so easily disposing of a difficult question. We admire the serenity of the Scotch editor who can so calmly dispose of the nations of the earth as though to him the inscrutable ways of Providence were as plain as the alphabet or the multiplication table. Is it so easily to be proven that the conversion of the Jews will precede their ingathering? Is it not possible that the contrary may happen and their restoration precede their turning to Christ? Or has there been lately given some special revelation on the subject?

Digitized by Google

But apart from prophecy, who are the dogmatic "we" who have enough of non-Christian governments? Are Christians prepared to "inherit the earth," or to rule the universe? Have professing Christians the right of dictatorship over the affairs of men? We should feel as doubtful of the wisdom of trusting the ordering of international affairs to any dogmatic Christian body as of trusting the proposed Jewish state to any council of Zionistic enthusiasts. It is an impertinence to say that we have non-Christian governments enough. Are the so-called Christian governments an honor to the name? If the present "Christian" order prevails much longer, there is a danger that another "we," more irresistible than dogmatic, may rise up and say: "We'll have no Christian governments at all!"

But granting all the judgments of the *Free Church Monthly* to be just, is it not equally *preposterous* to propose the conversion of the Jews as a prerequisite to their formation of a national state? It is said that the contrary is absurd. But is not this suggestion more absurd? If they are converted what will they be? Scotch Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, Lutherans, Episcopalians, or what?

The one effect of conversion to any of these sects is the utter eradication of all national spirit and cohesiveness. If this is the order and if the means and manner of their conversion be such as Christian teachers of like dogmatic spirit employed, by the time the Jews are converted there will be no spirit left for a national return.

If we believe in God's purposes for Israel, let us humbly advance them, but let us not proudly dictate terms to the Almighty. Why try to take from the Jew his loyalty to his institutions? Why not, as we present Jesus and His claims, accord to the Jew every privilege in the observance of his rites and customs? Why present Christianity as opposed to Judaism?

Let us be humble. Let us not be found condemning

Digitized by Google

as "preposterous" what *may* be God's will and pleasure. Let us not by our dogmatic systems and our proud Gentile teachings crush out from the Jews that national cohesion which is necessary to a national return. Is not this the preposterous way?

## AN IMPORTANT SUBJECT.

During the last fifteen years or more the subject of the better preparation of those who might enter upon the work of preaching the Gospel to Jews, and that of the general instruction of theological students in the Jewish religion and literature, as well as in the history and methods of mission work among the Jews, have received more attention than formerly in German universities. This has been largely due to the establishment of the *Institutum Judaicum* in the University of Leipsic in the year 1880, by Pastor William Faber and the late Franz Delitzsch, which has for its object the training of students to become efficient missionaries to Jews, and the founding of the *Institutum Judaicum* in the University of Berlin in 1885, by Prof. H. L. Strack, which is a society of students for the prosecution of studies in the realm of Jewish religion and literature, and the history and methods of mission work, with the view of furnishing the churches with pastors who shall be interested in these subjects and well informed upon them. Of these organizations we hope to have something of interest to say in our next issue. It is at present our wish to set before Christian people in the United States, and pastors in particular, this important subject for their consideration.

Whatever view we may hold as to the future of the Jewish people or as to the time of their national turning to the Messiah, one thing is certain; the command of our Lord to "Go, make disciples of all nations," at least includes the Jewish nation. In many minds the question is reversed now-a-days. In apostolic times it took a super-

Digitized by Google

natural revelation to make it clear that the gifts of God were to other nations than to the people of Israel. Now it seems that we almost need another revelation to enlighten the minds of people and to make them see that it is possible that the Gospel should be accepted at all by those of Jewish blood!

It is important in all our thinking and reasoning on the subject of missions that we should include God's ancient people in our plans, our purposes and our prayers. "Like priest, like people," is a homely proverb, and it contains much truth. When our pastors preach upon this subject, pray for Israel in their public ministrations, talk of this work in their meetings, then will the people come also to take an interest in it.

We recognize that for other mission work special preparation is necessary. The same Gospel is preached to the learned and cultured as to the ignorant and degraded, but in different language and in a different way. The same gospel is preached to the savages in Africa and to the philosophic Hindu in India, but in different tongues and with a different manner of expression. We must also recognize that for mission work to Jews the missionary must know what the Jew knows, of the Old Testament, its interpretation and the related literature of Judaism; he must know and understand what the Jew thinks about all these and about Christianity, and he must know how best to meet the Jew and win his attention and interest. It is not enough that the missionary be himself a Jew and have a new-born zeal to labor. Such may be a good missionary and may not.

Further, until missions to the Jews take their proper place in Christian thought and among Christian institutions, and even after that, it will be found necessary that every Christian pastor understand these things. Jews are found everywhere. Is he a fully equipped servant of God who is not able, to some little extent, to sympathize with them and understand their thoughts and feelings

Digitized by Google

and so be prepared to bring to them the Gospel? How many pastors know little, and care less, about the language, literature, history and institutions, not to say the present thoughts and feelings of the Jews! These things ought not so to be.

The *Institutum Judaicum* in the University of Berlin is a society of students established for the purpose of bringing about a better state of things, that the men of God in the years to come may know more of these subjects and take a greater interest in them than the present generation has done. This also is one of the important aims of THE PECULIAR PEOPLE. May God grant that our labors may not have been in vain in the Lord!

W. C. D.

---

## THE JEWS OF CORFU.

The Jews of Corfu form an interesting section of the community, as appears from the following account published by a local correspondent to the London *Jewish Chronicle*.

Tracing their history, which offers many telling episodes, we find that Jews did not inhabit Corfu before the twelfth century, though they were scattered about the rest of the islands of the Greek archipelago from the earliest historic days. Rabbi Benjamin, of Tudela, who visited Corfu about that time, has told us that while Arta and Naupaktos numbered 100 Jews each, Guboa and Krissi 200, and Thebes gave shelter to no less than 3,000 Jews engaged in the silk manufacture and dyeing of purple, he only found one Jew at Corfu, who was also engaged in the above-named trade. But toward the thirteenth century a colony immigrated from the east. They spoke Greek, and their synagogue was known as the "Greek Synagogue." It is a remarkable fact that the oldest book written in the vernacular Greek was a translation of the Book of Jonah made for this same congregation. The

Digitized by Google

MS., which was written with Hebrew characters, may be seen in the Bodleian at Oxford.

The Jews of Corfu suffered, like the rest of their brethren, from persecution, but we meet with several decrees issued by different monarchs insisting on the equal treatment of the Jews and Gentiles, and under such rulers their lot was fairly tolerable. They were recognized as citizens, claimed civil rights, and were not too heavily taxed. Early in the fifteenth century, a deputation of Gentiles waited upon the Doge, filled with bitter feeling, and requesting his sanction to put the Jews to death. This it was impossible to grant, but the council felt compelled to give some ear to the claims of its "faithful subjects," and many restrictions upon our co-religionists were the result. They were enjoined to wear the yellow badge and were debarred from buying property or landed estate. But the latter harsh decree was in a few years modified to limiting the property of any Israelite to the value of 4,000 ducats.

Up to the fifteenth century Corfu was confined within the limits of the fortress, but a suburb stretched out seawards. The portion between these two was known as the Jewish quarter. But in 1414 it was resolved to include the suburb within the walls, and this sufficed as a pretext to pull down the dwellings of the Jews. The effect of this was that the Jews spread over the city, living side by side with the Christians, which in its turn again gave offence. A long struggle ensued, but finally, in 1622, Jews were once more confined to one portion of the city, which they were allowed to leave without special permission from the *Provveditore*.

The sad history of the beautiful Rachel forms one of the romances of that period, and went through several editions of the *Phœnix Printing Press*, of Venice. The story goes that the "Count," who was the son of the priest, fell in love with this beautiful Jewish maiden, who, barely 16 years of age, was persuaded to leave the faith of her fathers, and follow her lover. On the day after

Digitized by Google

their flight, when the marriage feast was preparing, some officers sent by the parents of Rachel, wishing to seize her, came into collision with the people. Finally the bride was taken prisoner by the authority of the Venetian Government, and the poor girl ended her days in a dungeon.

It was not till the downfall of the Venetian Republic that better days dawned for the Jews. When in 1797 the government passed into the hands of the French, freedom and equality penetrated into the Jewish quarters of Corfu also. The intermezzo of English rule was also favorable; but only in 1863, when Corfu was handed over to Greece, did the Jews become entitled to full equal rights with the Christians.

The present Jewish population of Corfu counts about 3,000 souls, and is of mixed race, Eastern, Greek, Spanish and Italian. The dialect which they employ is chiefly composed of the Greek and Italian.

---

PRAECO LATINUS.—The October number of this elegant Latin periodical lies upon our table. This is the first number of the *Latin Herald's* fourth volume, and comes out enlarged and greatly improved. It is a monthly in Latin devoted to the cultivation of the Latin language and literature. In its bright pages the ancient classical Latin appears as a living language of to-day. There are articles, elegant verses, an anthology of striking sayings, letters, editorial notes, news of the day, an epitome of Roman history and other matter. Latin has continued longest, of the European nations, as a language of the people in Hungary. The accomplished editor of this journal is a Hungarian. The price is $1.50 per annum. Address, "Praeco Latinus," 1328 Spring Garden St., Philadelphia.

---

PARADISE is not around us, but within us. It is wrong to say the man enters Paradise. It comes to us; we do not go to it.—*From the German of Saphir.*

Digitized by Google

## OUR VIEW OF MISSION WORK.

Missions to the Jews rest upon the same ground as missions to any other people. A "mission" is a "sending out." Missionaries are men sent out to preach to people the glad tidings of salvation which God has provided for mankind. Missionaries to the Jews are men sent out to preach this good news to Jewish people. If men are sent out to do anything else, they are not properly Christian missionaries. We should send missionaries to the Jews because it is in our nature, if we possess any idea we think of value, to desire that every one should accept it. Especially is this so if we think we have in view a lofty and excellent ideal. If we do not this, it is a confession that we have no proper ideal worth the name. Another reason why we should send our missionaries to the Jews is that we have charity and love towards them. We believe that the one sure and certain way to enter the kingdom of God is through Christ. We are not disposed to say what may be the lot of those who have lived godly lives and who have not worshiped Jesus Christ. We are not disposed to limit the operations of divine grace. But we believe that Christ is Life Eternal. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. We are sad when God's children are astray and do not accept the safe and sure way. A third reason why we should send missionaries to the Jews is our Lord's great command, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Our Leader and Master has bidden us. The loyal follower of Christ considers no alternative. "If a man love me he will keep my words," says our Master. As disciples of that Master, as servants of that Lord, what can we do but send forth those to proclaim these glad tidings "to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile?" Jesus asks us to do no wrong—to cheat, to deceive, or to bribe,—but to teach, to make known His message, to declare His counsel in love, to speak what we believe to be the truth.

Digitized by Google

# SOLEMN QUESTIONS

## Addressed to Hebrews of Culture,

By Prof. Franz Delitzsch.

Translated from the German by the Rev. Wm. C. Daland.

—o—

A discussion of Christianity by an eminent scholar well versed in Jewish learning. Price, in paper, 10 cents.

Address: THE REV. S. S. POWELL,
Little Genesee,
New York.


# THE PECULIAR PEOPLE.

—o—

**A Christian Monthly Devoted to Jewish Interests.**

—o—

| | |
|---|---|
| Domestic Subscriptions (per annum), | 35 Cents. |
| Foreign " " | 50 " |
| Single copies (Domestic), | 3 " |
| " " (Foreign), | 5 " |

—o—

☞ Drafts, checks, or money orders should be made payable to John P. Mosher, Agent, Babcock Building, Plainfield, N. J., to whom all business correspondence should be addressed.

All communications for the Editors should be addressed,

The Rev. S. S. Powell,
Little Genesee, N. Y.

The Rev. Dr. Daland may be addressed,
*1, Maryland Road, Wood Green,*
*London, N., England.*

—o—

☞ The Editors are not responsible for the opinions of contributors.

Entered in the Post-office at Plainfield, N. J., as second-class mail matter.

Digitized by Google