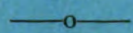


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THE PECULIAR PEOPLE,
A CHRISTIAN MONTHLY,
DEVOTED TO JEWISH INTERESTS.

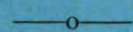
Founded by the late Rev. H. Friedländer and the Rev. Ch. Th. Lucky.



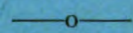
EDITOR,

THE REV. WILLIAM C. DALAND,

(Pastor at Westerly, R. I.)



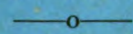
"The Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself."
Deut. 14: 2.



Vol. V.

JUNE, 1892.

No. 3.



CONTENTS.

Editorial Notes,	- - - - -	49
Shebuoth,	- - - - -	50
The Jews,	- - - - -	54
News,	- - - - -	56
A Successful Jewish Colony,	- - - - -	57
Jews and Socialism,	- - - - -	58
What Keeps the Jews from Christ?	- - - - -	61
The Vine of Israel,	- - - - -	63
Correspondence,	- - - - -	71

PUBLISHED BY
THE AMERICAN SABBATH TRACT SOCIETY,
ALFRED CENTRE, N. Y.

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־צִוֵּר הַצַּבְתֶּם
Isa. 51: 1. ואל־מִקְבַּת בּוֹר נִקְרַתֶּם

"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. 123: 8, 9.

Vol. v. ALFRED CENTRE, N. Y., JUNE, 1892. No. 3.

JUDEÆUS SUM ; JUDAICI NIHIL A ME ALIENUM PUTO.

PENTECOST is dear to Jew and Gentile alike; to the Jew if he thanks God for His gift of the holy law, and yet more if he believes in Jesus as the Messiah; to the Gentile if he trusts in Jesus his Saviour, and thanks God for the gift of the Holy Ghost.

How SHALL we keep this feast? Even as at Passover we are to eat the unleavened bread of "sincerity and truth," so at Pentecost we must, by such holy living and speaking, by such pure thinking, be fit temples for the indwelling of that sacred spirit which hallowed ancient Israel, and which gave to the Christian Church its holy birth.

BUT we must yield to the Holy Spirit if we would have Him with us. We must not resist Him. Whether Jews or Gentiles, whether believers in Israel's God alone or also in the glorious revelation He has made of Himself in His Son Jesus Christ, the Messiah of Israel and the Saviour of the world, we need to yield to the subtle influence of the Holy Spirit. He will lead us to Jesus if we have not

come to Him; and if we have, He will further lead us to all the truth, according to our Saviour's promise.

AND we need to remember that this same Holy Spirit lives and works to-day as much as when of old to Israel's saints and prophets He conferred the gift of prophecy, and as truly as when upon the infant church there was vouchsafed a divine bestowment whereby the gospel was rendered mighty to the salvation of multitudes. God hath not taken from us His Spirit. If we yield to His influence and keep ourselves in a receptive attitude His power may be felt in us, whether we be Jews or Gentiles. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him!" Matt. 7: 11.

SHEBUOTH.*

This feast is the second in order of the three prominent feasts (שלוש רגלים) as commanded in the Torah, Ex. 23: 14. It was instituted as the feast of the harvest. Having been delivered from bondage and servitude, and become free men, and having enjoyed the fruits of their labors, they had to return thanks to God and manifest their gratitude by offerings unto the Lord on this day. But there is a greater event of which this festival is commemorative. Shebuoth is the time of commemorating the blessed gift of the Torah, which occurred the fiftieth day after Passover. While Passover is observed as זמן חרות (the time of our deliverance), Shebuoth reminds us of זמן מתן תורתנו (the time of the gift of our Law). This was the real end in view of our Heavenly Father in redeeming His people to dedicate them to His own service.

The preparations for this feast are very significant and cannot help impressing one with awe and reverence. Before the Passover feast is at an end, even on the second evening of it, the counting of the seven weeks begins. Lev. 23: 15. Hence it is termed Shebuoth, meaning *weeks*,

* Pentecost.

or as the Greek calls it *πεντηκοστή* (Pentecost), meaning the *fiftieth* day after the Passover. When in the land of promise, a sheaf (*omer*) of the first fruit was to be brought to the priest on the second day of the Passover that he might wave it before the Lord. Next after this ceremony of waving the sheaf there began the counting of the seven weeks, at the end of which Shebuoth was to be celebrated. Although no waving of a sheaf is obligatory in the land of dispersion, the counting is continued, beginning with the evening of the second day of the Passover. But how that counting? With fear and trembling it is practiced every evening after prayers in the synagogue by the *Sheliach Tsibbur* (the one leading in prayer,) and the congregation, thus: "This is the first day after the waving of the sheaf" (היום יום אחד לעומר), etc. Great stress is laid upon it. Every day has, according to the Kabbalah, a "foundation" (יסוד), in connection with the attributes of the Shekinah. The seven weeks are designated by seven of the ten names of the Sephiroth,¹ viz., 1. חסד (Grace). 2. גבורה (Omnipotence). 3. תפארת (Beauty). 4. נצח (Triumph). 5. דוד (Majesty). 6. יסוד (Foundation). 7. מלכות (Kingdom). Each week has a different one of these seven names, and each day is connected with a different one in consecutive order. The first day of the first week, for example, has for its Yessod (יסוד) of the Sephiroth; חסד שבחסד (Grace of Grace); the second day גבורה שבחסד (Omnipotence of Grace); the third תפארת שבחסד (Beauty of Grace), etc. The first day of the second week has for its Yessod חסד שבגבורה (Grace of Omnipotence), etc. Forgetting to count one time is considered an offense to the very name of Jehovah, and then the remainder of the counting must be done without the benediction. Three days immediately preceding the festival are observed as the שלשת ימי הנבלה (three days of limitation)—putting themselves in the condition of getting ready to approach the Mount of Sinai (Ex. 19: 10-20), since every one ought to consider himself as the recipient of the

¹ A Kabbalistic name for *Potencies*, or emanations from God. According to Edersheim it is derived from the word *σφαίρα*.

Law. Each day brings him nearer to God, the giver of the Law, and endears the Law to him as if it were given directly to him.

The Shebuoth eve has now come. What a precious and blissful time! The gift of the Torah is to be commemorated the next morning. No sleep is given to the eyes nor slumber to the eyelids the whole night. This night is spent wholly in praying and reading the Scriptures. The *תקון שביעית* (the liturgy for Shebuoth eve) must all be read through. The beginnings and endings of every chapter in the Bible are arranged to be read, and accepted in the Lord's sight as the reading of the whole Bible, and thus a proof of their readiness to obey what is therein.

As being ready for entering in the covenant with God, washing of the body must not be omitted. Immersion in the *מקיה* (a water collection) must be attended to on the morning of the feast. Pure and clean the Hebrew goes to attend the services which are arranged for that occasion. They are intensely inspiring. The goodness of the Lord God and the importance of the Torah are praised and exalted. The Torah tells of her antiquity and of the ancient glory she had with God before the world was, having been his delight before the mountains and foundations of the earth were created :

אני הייתי משתעשעת על ברכו, משחקת לפניו להללו ולברכו;
משחקת בתבל אחי היום בערכו, להודיע לכל כי אין כערכו.

"On Jahveh's lap in joy of old I lay,
Exultant, blessing, praise to Him I bore;
The world, His creature, glad I sing to-day—
Like Him declare is none forevermore."¹

This inestimable blessing was intended to be bestowed upon Israel from time immemorial. The Decalogue is arranged in poetry and does not fail to touch the profoundest depth of the heart. The *פיוט*, poetry in the Aramaic language, known as the *אקרמיות*, with its everlasting, unchangeable chanting tune does its share in making an impression upon all who understand it; and who does not understand it, as every school-boy is taught to know its

¹) As English verse is not natural to my pen I have asked the Editor to render these *Piutim*—BEN ISRAEL.

meaning? In poetry of mediæval fashion this describes the omnipotence of God thus :

גבורן עלמין ליה ולא ספק פרישותא,
 גייל אלו רקיעו קוי כל חורשתא
 דין אלו ימי וכל מי כנישותא
 דידי ארעא ספרי ורשמי רשותא.

"Were all the boundless heaven a parchment scroll,
 The great seas ink, and every tree a pen,
 And every man a scribe, fit to extol,
 God's power almighty none could tell e'en then."

God's chosen people are described in the same poem as having preference above angels. The great boon of carrying everything to God in prayer as frequently as they desire is granted to them, while angels are not permitted to praise Him but once in their lifetime :

סתירא בהון קשהא וכר חלפא שעהא
 סיומא דלעלם ואוף לא לשביעהא
 ערב יקר החסנתיה חביבין רבקבעתא
 עבדין ליה חפכה ברנח ושקעתא.

"They chant His praise as once it is their due,
 And then 'tis done, their tongues are ever still.
 But precious Israel, always loved and true,
 At morn and even always do His will."

Out of love the Almighty has chosen them to give them the Law :

פרומם הוא אלהין בקמתא ובריתא;
 צבי ואתרעי בן ומסר לן אוריתא.

"From God's Love which ne'er grows cold
 Hath His Law to us been given;
 So forever, as of old,
 Shall His praise ascend to heaven."

The book of Ruth is read, as there is found the genealogy of King David, a prototype of Israel's Redeemer, who is to redeem them from the bondage of sin.

Indeed, this festival is of great significance to the devout Hebrew, but to a believer on Jesus it has a two-fold meaning and is a most sublime memorial. The Law, the guide into all truth, was given on this day, and also the object and anti-type was realized on this very day. The gift of the Holy Spirit was made manifest at this feast in Jerusalem for the first time, and the truth which is in the Lord Jesus then began to be made known, and His church

on earth began to be built up. There were added to the small band of Christian adherents on that day about three thousand souls. "And the Lord added to them day by day those that were being saved." Acts 2:47, R. V. The Lord Almighty has brought about His promises, and has sent down upon earth a Redeemer in the person of Jesus Christ that whosoever should accept Him might have everlasting life and not perish with the sinning ones, and on Shebuoth He sent the Holy Spirit to teach this blessed truth to mankind. The Torah was given only as a picture of the person of Christ and His mission, and He is the reality. Who can help rejoicing for this great and sublime gift?

May this very festival come to Israel's hearts as a reminder of the blessed Redeemer that they may open their spiritual eyes and see His glory and accept Him as their Lord and then Messiah, is my earnest prayer.

BEN ISRAEL.

THE JEWS.

The most singular people on earth, from first to last, are, undoubtedly, the descendants of Abraham by the line of the patriarch Jacob. That they have been the peculiar and especial care of the God of nations, the rest of the world that is at all familiar with their history as a people must admit. Never vast in numbers, compared to other peoples, their contemporaries from time to time in their so checkered career along the progress of the ages, and never, excepting perhaps the single reign of their shepherd king, David, possessed of very many or great warriors, yet their want of numbers and lack of military prowess has been strangely and miraculously supplemented from time to time, as by invisible hands of angelic hosts, to the utter overthrow and obliteration of great armies of their enemies! A strange, a most peculiar people, truly! If there were no revelations from the Creator of all things, and no knowledge of His dealings with men, by merely looking at what has been, and confining our view to this one people, reasoning from what we all know has been

their past history, we might assume with a considerable degree of plausibility that they are held in store by the same Almighty and invisible hand that shaped their past for things yet to come, that while other nations, their contemporaries all along the ages, have been permitted to destroy themselves, Sodom-like, by "pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness," or by other sins against their national life, or to fall before the scythe of the common destroyer, Time, the Jew has not been suffered so to fall, and disappear from the stage, but is kept upon it as if, *in spite of himself*, by an overruling Providence. God has a use for them!

Babylon and Nineveh, Tyre and Sidon, Media and Persia, Athens and Rome, as recognized powers, died long, long ago, but the little nation of the Jews whom they successively oppressed and trampled over, is alive to-day; and though outcast from the home of their fathers and few in numbers, exert, as individuals, some of them, at least financially, no mean influence over the affairs of other nations.—*The Cottage Pulpit.*

WHY should David specially delight to call on his God by this tender name, "Jehovah"? Why not use the simple and ordinary name of "God"?

We apprehend that the reason lies in the fact that while the term God is ordinarily applied to our Creator, and belongs to Him as the ruler of the universe, the term Jehovah describes Him as the God who has made with us a covenant of salvation. "Jehovah" describes the God who, before the foundation of the world, made a mutual covenant to perform the several acts necessary to save poor sinners. He is the God who has given to us His promise to *save* all those who repent and turn unto him. Therefore, when David calls on "Jehovah," he is appealing to him by all his covenant promises and pledges. He is appealing to him with confidence and assurance that he shall receive the answer that is pledged to us in God's covenant of salvation.

The Peculiar People.

חדשות הנעשות—NEWS—במחנה ישראל.

THERE has appeared in New York a new weekly paper against Anti-Semitism, called "*Der Antisemitenspiegel*."

THE dedication of the new synagogue of the Russian-Jewish colony at Chesterfield, Conn., took place Sunday, May 8th, with very interesting exercises.

A NEW synagogue is building for a Jewish congregation in Baltimore. A commendable feature in the work is that, by the payment of a certain sum to the builders, no work is done on the Sabbath.

THE "Holy Synod" of the Greek Church in Russia has lately decreed that any Jew who embraces the religion of the Greek Church, in case his wife refuses to do the same, may, with the permission of the bishops, abandon his wife and marry again. Comment is needless.

A JEWESS named Nadeschda Vassielieff, who has recently arrived in this country, graduated from the Gymnasium in St. Petersburg and then taught in Moscow. Because of this she was ordered to leave Russia, receiving only three months' notice. On the journey she was compelled to stand for twenty hours packed in a car with others with the thermometer at 30 degrees below zero. She is to teach at Milwaukee, it is said. Her case awakens sympathy because of her education and refinement, but there were 7,000 others compelled to take that journey with her.

STEINAMANGER, in Hungary, is an old Roman city. Every now and then Roman antiquities are discovered there, especially in graves accidentally discovered. There are found all sorts of ornamental things in those graves' and especially the Obolus, which was placed in every sepulchre, to pay the ferryman to transport the dead across the Styx. Lately there was found in such a grave a coin with Hebrew inscriptions from the time of the Maccabean high priest Simon (142-132 B. C.). Here the question arises, whether the deceased was a Hebrew or whether the Romans believed the Hebrew coin was as good for this purpose as the Roman Obolus. Simultaneously another discovery was made in Transylvania. Ten feet under the surface of the earth a plate of slate was found, engraved on which is the figure of a long-bearded Hebrew sitting under a weeping willow, with the shield of David on one side, an altar with a sacrifice and a flame of fire, and the inscription "Judia." It seems, therefore, certain that Hebrews came with the Romans to that country at as early a date as they came to Belgium and North-western Germany.—*The American Israelite.*

A SUCCESSFUL JEWISH COLONY.

There would be no Russian refugee problem for us to solve if all our Jewish immigrants from Russia could succeed as well as those have done who settled in the small village of Chesterfield, Conn., which is about eight miles distant from the city of Norwich. From a place of deserted farms and houses the Jews have turned it into a thriving and busy colony. The story of what they have accomplished is both interesting and instructive. About two years ago the first of the Russian Jews went to Chesterfield. During the past year many more were attracted there. At the present time this Jewish settlement contains 512 persons.

The heads of these families, numbering sixty men, are land owners. Altogether they possess 7,936 acres, which cost them \$93,600, of which sum \$37,970 was paid in cash, the balance remaining on mortgage. These farms range in extent from 35 to 385 acres. The Jewish settlers went to work in earnest. They became patient and persevering farmers, and their efforts have been crowned with success. They have also gone into the dairy and poultry business, and their butter, milk, fowls, and eggs, find a ready market in the neighboring cities.

But the great secret of the prosperity of the colony lies in the fact that there is not an idle person among them, and that their occupations are diversified. Those who are not occupied in agriculture are busy at some kind of industry which brings in money. The kitchens of the farm-houses are turned into work-shops. In one house the sewing machines are going and clothes are being turned out for the New York market. In another house a thousand cheap pocket-books are daily being made. Other occupations are the making of suspenders and shoes. There is, too, a small silk hat factory in the place, which is run by steam, and which produces twelve dozen hats a day. All of these articles are readily sold in New York by the metropolitan agent of the colony. Indefatigable efforts such as these are sure of being rewarded. The colonists have been able to build a synagogue at the cost of \$2,000. It will be dedicated on the 10th of next month, with imposing ceremonies and in the presence of many prominent Jews of this city, who have arranged to be there on that occasion. Our Jewish immigrants would do well to start other colonies conducted on the plan of that at Chesterfield.—*N. Y. Mail and Express.*

JEWES AND SOCIALISM.

It is the Jew who, since the dismemberment of the Palestine State in the year 70 of the common era, has been, at times, like Edward Everett Hale's hero, a citizen of nowhere, and, generally speaking, is cosmopolitan

enough to be a citizen of the world. He can truly say, with Baron de Hirsch, "The world is my country and all men my countrymen."

Such as he are needed in the re-organization of society that is now actually in progress, or about to take place. Trusts and combination of capital on the one side stand over against better organized labor unions of working men, clamoring for their rights and actually enforcing them. Corners, and other means of raising the cost of the very necessities of life, seem no better, after all, in that they cause destitution, misery, and death, than the bombs of the anarchists, whose frenzy at real and fancied wrongs has made them madmen. It threatens to be a warfare of chemicals against gold. And unfortunately, or as may transpire, fortunately, the Jews are oftentimes quite closely identified with the new revolution.

None seem more fitted than they to undertake the re-organization of society that the times and conditions make necessary. Moses, according to Henry George, has solved the land problem in his code, which makes the land the Lord's (the State's), never to leave the family except on short-term leases, always reverting to its owner, and which restores him from poverty to that which might give him a competence. Jesus, a later Jewish world-reformer, spoke for communism, an ancient form of nationalism. In our day it is Karl Marx and Lassalle, both with Jewish blood, who are the very founders of schools preaching the new dispensation of social democracy.

It will not do longer to charge these madmen—who believe to be able to shake the foundations of society at a blow—with ignorance or depravity; not a few of them can be characterized otherwise. The most nervous and impatient, the wildest and most visionary of anarchists, scarcely hope to see a change in this generation as a result of their propaganda and daring deeds. And not all are blind enough to endorse altogether the party platform of no government. They draw nearer and nearer to the Socialists and the Social Democrats, who form a large and important part of the respectable and intelligent working

classes in Germany, and in less numbers in this country. As revolutionists at war now with society, whose government they would destroy, they are the public's enemies, and are so to be dealt with as harshly as they deserve; as harbingers, more or less violent, paving the way for an altered state of society, that must come sooner or later to remedy the inequalities of our civilization and to improve the workingman's lot, they deserve more sympathy.

We must remember that the element of success decides for posterity the measure of an agitator's merit; it makes of the revolutionist, the traitor, the outlaw, the enemy of the State a self-sacrificing patriot, of the crank and wild dreamer a genius, and of the visionary expounder of impossible conditions a prophet with rare foresight. It is not so shocking, then, that among those who stand or imagine they stand on the heights and see a promised land of a new order of things; that among those who would hasten its coming, either by moderate measures or by force; that among those who devote their time, thought, energy, and life to preaching the doctrines of Socialism, or in its frenzied form, anarchism—should be Jews. The world, since the exposures of Kennan, of Stepinak, and of the true inwardness of the Czar's nationalistic policy and persecution, does not condemn the Nihilist as it used to, but rather admires him more or less for his heroic attempts to gain his rights. Socialists—less so their madmen brother-anarchists—begin to receive more attention from the thinking people—not for their bombs, but for their arguments. It is likely that the change will not come in a short time, or that it will be perceptible: the earth is constantly making a revolution, and yet but for the change in the seasons and the length of day and night we scarcely realize the great movement in progress. So, too, with the political conditions undergoing change, the light-bearers are despised now, and perhaps never will be appreciated for the services they are rendering humanity in their own, perhaps misguided, way. But they are doing their part for civilization just the same.—*The Jewish Exponent*.

WHAT KEEPS THE JEWS FROM CHRIST?

The Apostle Paul tells us that "blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in." In harmony with the same Scriptures would seem to be that declaration of our divine Saviour, when coming to the Jewish capital just before the crucifixion. He beheld the city, and weeping over it, said, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes." If we have a correct understanding of these texts they imply that the Almighty has seen fit to exclude the nation of Israel from the privileges of the gospel for the time being, and the reason is apparent. It will be seen by the Bible student that very great care was taken by our Lord, Jesus to manifest His favor to the Israelitish people as the chosen of God, a "holy nation." In His own blessed ministry on earth He seems scrupulously to have kept Himself on Jewish ground. "Let the children first be fed," was the reply He made to the Syro-Phœnician supplicant for her daughter. And when about to "ascend up where He was before," He gave commandment to the disciples to "tarry in Jerusalem;" and that the gospel should first be preached there. In all this a great honor was conferred upon the Jews, and their casting of it from them greatly aggravated the offence before God. Their punishment for this, as we see from these texts, and corresponding passages, is that now "blindness in part is happened to them;" which, as is seen in the very letter of the law of God imposing the penalty, must last for a clearly defined period, which is expressed by the words, "until the fullness of the Gentile," or, last, least, and lowest of the other nations or families of mankind "be come in," that is to say, shall have had the gospel preached to them, to accept or reject. From being the head of all, Israel thus became the foot in the order of national preferment; from being first, she waits her turn to take her place as last of all; for prophecy here is not dealing with the individual in the case of the Jew, and to make it do so in the

case of the Gentile would be wrong. In either instance the reference is to nations, and those desirous to know, at least approximately, how near at hand is the end of this so long continued age of Israel's helplessness as a people to come to Christ have only to examine and see what nations or peoples of the earth are yet to be called to look unto the Crucified and be saved; how many have yet to have, through the wonderful agency of printing, that privilege accorded to the "devout Jews out of every nation under heaven," on the day of Pentecost, of reading and hearing the apostolic message "in our own tongue, where-in we were born," as they expressed it.

By divine appointment this "blindness in part is happened to Israel." Here, then, is found the explanation of the whole mystery of Jewish obstinacy all through the ages of the past. Here, too, as in a mirror, is seen their present relation to the church and status as a people. Though themselves ignorant of it, because the fact is hid from their eyes by the mass of rubbish which their Talmudic false teachers have piled upon the Holy Scriptures, they are waiting their turn, now, and have been doing so for the past eighteen hundred years or more. Individuals, here and there, have been, and may be converted; but not the nation, or any material part—conversion to Christ not the rule, but on the contrary the rarest exception.

But must we stop here, with the present state and circumstances of the unhappy Israelites only a little more clearly brought to view? Can we do nothing for them? Must we leave them where we find them, under a curse of spiritual blindness? Of a legal barrier shutting them off as a people from the Lord's Table? Is not the Jew our elder brother? And are we not plainly under the teaching of the Lord Jesus our brother's keeper? Are we not able to express our sympathy, and to feel a brotherly love warming our hearts and drawing our souls closer to him, yea, just for the reason that he is such a sufferer as we find him to be? Did not Moses set us a better example than this, when, because of their misconduct, his brother and sister, Aaron and Miriam, fell under the curse of the Al-

mighty, and beholding the effect of it he fell down before his Maker and prayed for them, and God was entreated for the offenders and mitigated their sentence for Moses' sake? If it were a human judge or ruler we would have to approach with a petition to have a sentence upon a brother or sister mitigated, or a pardon granted, we might hesitate, but not so; it is the great God. We know Him, and that He is indeed "merciful and gracious, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin." Can we not, therefore, with confidence go to Him and plead with Him to forgive Israel now, and take away their blindness, and give them eyes to see the matchless beauty that is in our Saviour and theirs, the Christ, as Solomon, their wise king, saw it in prophetic vision and sung of it in his Song of Songs? Can we not pray Him to heal their deafness and let them hear again the enrapturing music with which the angels made vocal our lower heavens when they ushered in His glorious nativity? O will not the reader, if a believer in Christ, offer one prayer now for Israel's restoration to his former state of favor with God?

* * * * *

Remember the words of our Lord, encouraging persistent effort in petitioning the Throne of Grace, "The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." God can command, and the fullness of the Gentiles shall come in at His bidding. When He sees us ready to receive our Jewish brother, with hearts aglow with warmth of a true, brotherly affection for him, and desire to welcome him home again, then perhaps what is meant by "fullness of the Gentile," will, in the divine Eye, "be come in."—*The Cottage Pulpit*.

THE VINE OF ISRAEL.¹

"Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts. look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine." Psa. 80 : 14.

I feel somewhat straitened on this occasion, because of the speciality of my subject. I have been persuaded by the Society to preach on the behalf of the Jews, but my mind

¹ A Sermon preached at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington, on behalf of the British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Jews, by the late C. H. Spurgeon.—Reprinted from *The Jewish Herald*.

does not quite run in the direction which is prescribed for it. I have been so in the habit of preaching the gospel to everybody, knowing neither Jew nor Gentile, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, that the very recognition of anything like nationality and speciality is somewhat difficult to me. I do not think that the recognition of the distinction is wrong—nay, I think it right, but it is so unusual that I scarcely feel at home. I would sooner, by a thousand times, take a text and preach the gospel to sinners, or to saints, than discourse upon a special race; yet it is needful, and therefore let it be done; and I trust the Holy Ghost may make our meditation profitable. Assuredly, if there be any distinction which might be maintained,—and I think there is none, for that distinction of Jew and Gentile seems to me to be wiped out and obliterated,—if there be any distinction, we may at least recollect that which lingeringly subsists between the seed of Israel and the nations, for God's election of old fell upon them, and when the whole world lay in darkness gleams of light gladdened their eyes. To them belonged the oracles. They were long the sole preservers of precious truth, which they have handed down to us; and if through their unbelief we have taken their place, we cannot but recollect who occupied it for so many centuries, and we cannot but look with extraordinary tenderness and affection and earnest desire to that elder family whom the Lord loved so long, and towards whom, methinks, His love still burneth, as shall be seen when the day comes in which He shall gather Israel again unto Himself.

We shall view the prayer of the text in its reference to Israel. "Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine." The vine was peculiarly a type of Palestine and the Jewish nation. When this psalm was written the Gentiles were not in the psalmist's mind, but only Israel. So let us speak of Israel now, and let us pray to God that He will return in mercy, behold in pity, and visit this vine and the vineyard which His right hand hath planted.

Let us reflect upon *what an amount of interest surrounds*

this vine—this chosen people. Brethren, Israel has a history compared with which the annals of all other nations are but poor and thin. Israel is the world's aristocracy, and her history is the roll-call of priests and kings unto God. At the very beginning, what interest attaches to *the planting of this vine!* The psalmist speaks of the Lord's bringing the vine out of Egypt and casting out the nations that He might find a trench wherein He might place Israel's roots, that she might strike deep and take possession of the soil. But what wonders God wrought in the removal of Israel from the soil of Goshen, wherein her vine seemed to have taken deep root, until the wild boar of Egypt began to uproot her. Never can we forget what He did at the Red Sea. Even at the very mention of the name we feel as if we could sing unto the Lord who triumphed gloriously and cast the horse and his rider into the depths of the sea. What marvels He wrought all through the wilderness, when He turned the rock into a pool of water and made refreshing streams to follow His chosen along the burning sand. Neither do we forget the Jordan; our hearts begin to sing at the mention of the name,—What ailed thee, O Jordan, that thou wast driven back when the Lord's ark led the way through the depths of the river and the priests stood still in the midst, while all the hosts of His people passed over dry-shod? Neither can we fail to exult as we think of the planting of the vine in Canaan. Saw ye not the walls of Jericho tottering in ruins at the sound of the rams' horns when Israel gave her shout, for the Lord was in the midst of His people? Therefore the sword of Joshua smote the Canaanites till they were utterly destroyed; the sun stood still, the moon in the valley of Gibeon, because the Lord hearkened to the voice of a man, working marvelously with His people, that He might settle them in the land which He gave unto their fathers—the land which flowed with milk and honey. When I think of such a planting it seems to me that this vine can never be given up to be utterly burned with fire after such wonders as these. It is not God's fashion to cast away a people for whom He has done so much. The

commencement of Israel's national history is by far too grand to close, as we fear it must, if we judge only according to carnal reason. An era brighter and more glorious must surely dawn, and the Lord must bring again from Bashan and lead up His chosen nation from the depths of the sea. Once again He will make bare His arm, even He that cut Rahab and wounded the dragon, and the whole earth shall behold all Israel, both spiritual and national, singing in one joyous song the song of Moses, the servant of God, and of the Lamb. The very planting of the nation makes us feel the deepest possible interest in its welfare. O God, behold and visit this vine, and the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted.

Let us reflect again upon *the prosperity of Israel and the wide influence which the nation exercised for centuries*. I am keeping closely to the psalm, which is really my text, for we are told that after the planting of the vine the hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. "She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river." No nation has ever exercised such an influence upon the thought of the world as the Jewish people. I grant you that some other nations exercised greater influence upon the world's art and sculpture, and the like; for Israel eschewed much of art and science, not greatly to her loss, especially since the reason for it was so greatly to her gain. But the idea of one God, which the Lord had graciously written upon the hearts of His elect people, though it took many an age to erase the natural lines of idolatry which nature had imprinted there—that idea of the unity of the Godhead is a treasure handed to us by the seed of Abraham. The grand truths which were contained in type and shadow and outward ordinance, and given to the chosen people of God, exercised a far more powerful influence over the world than, perhaps, most of us have ever dreamed. I feel certain that the religion of Zoroaster came from the Jews. I believe that much of whatever is pure in eastern religions might be distinctly traced to the teachings of Moses, to gleanings of the Israelitish vintage which were carried to the na-

tions through their commerce and intercommunication; perhaps directly and distinctly by the teachings of Jews who journeyed thither as exiles in captivity. The earth had become corrupt even in father Abraham's time, and though here and there there might have been found godly individuals like the patriarch Job, adhering to the simple worship of the one only God, yet, for the most part, the whole world was sunken in idolatry, and the light came to it and remained in it, gleaming strangely in the darkness, like flashes of lightning amidst the blackness of a tempest; that light came always, as I believe, by the way of Israel. The original light of tradition grew dimmer and dimmer and threatened to die out, for in transmission from father to son its brightness was sadly beclouded with human error. But the truth retained much of its vitality and purity in the midst of Israel, and from Israel it influenced the rest of the nations.

In the days of Solomon how proudly did the temple stand upon its holy hill, beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, the one Pharos of the midnight sea of humanity. That little country—we often forget what a very little district Palestine occupied—was, nevertheless, the very queen among the nations. From Sheba they came to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and to other lands the rumor of his glory extended, and all his greatness was with the worship of God, for she who came from Sheba came to hear all the wisdom of Solomon “concerning the Lord his God.” That little land thus influenced all lands and transmitted far off adown the centuries what was known of the ever-blessed God among the people. To me it seems so sad that she that sat over against the treasury should now be poor; that she that laid the daily shew-bread before the Lord should now be famished; that she that piled the temple and brought the offering should now turn away from the one only sacrifice, and should these many days remain without priest or temple. Alas! poor Israel. Our hearts take the deepest interest in thee, and we pray the Lord to look down and behold, and visit this vine, when we remember the days of thy glory, and all the

splendor of the revelation of the Most High in the midst of His people.

Nor does the interest become one particle the less when we come to the *time of Israel's decay*. She would imitate the heathen and go aside to false gods; nothing could cure her of it. She was chastened again and again, and at last it came to banishment, and the people were scattered. Alas, for the tears that Judah and Israel shed! What sea could hold them all? How were God's people made to smart and cry and groan! Let the waters of Babylon tell how salt they flowed with Judah's griefs. How could they sing the Lord's song in that strange land? What a history of woe has Israel's story been! And then, when they were brought back, cured of idolatry, as, thank God! they most effectually were, there came an equally mournful decay; for formalism—the absence of all spiritual life, the mere observance of outward ritual—came into the place of idolatry, and the people in whom all the nations of the earth were blessed had the Christ among them, but refused Him. "He came unto his own and his own received him not." Woe worth the day! Speak of it with seven-fold sorrow. He came for whom they long had waited—Israel's hope—and they refused Him, yea, they crucified Him. My tongue will not attempt to tell what came of it, when His blood was on them and their children. Earth never saw a more terrible sight than the siege and destruction of Jerusalem. Then did they sell the ancient people of God for a pair of shoes, and the precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, were esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter. The enemy ploughed the holy place and sowed it with salt, and the seed of Abraham were scattered to the four winds of heaven. Alas! the evil ceased not when the last stone was overthrown, but wrath followed the fugitives. Through many, many centuries Israel was persecuted—shame covers my face—persecuted by those who called themselves Christians. The blood of Israel hangs in great gouts upon the skirts of Rome, and will bring down upon that thrice-accursed system the everlasting wrath of the Most High; for did

they not grievously oppress the Jews in Spain, and every Catholic country, remorselessly hunting them down as if they were unfit to live, torturing them in ways that it were impossible for us to describe lest your cheek should blanch as you heard the horrible story? The men that were of the same race as the Christ of God were so hated by the professed followers of Jesus that no indignities were thought to be great enough, and no severities to be fierce enough, for execution upon what they thought to be the execrable Jews. Thank God! such persecution is over—let us hope forever, at least in the Western world. The race would have been stamped out, however, if Rome's tender mercies could have wrought their will. Go to the Ghetto to-day, in the Jews' quarter in Rome, and see the church, as I have done, in which a certain number of Jews were compelled to hear a sermon, once in the year, levelled at their own race and faith, and over the door of which is written what from such a quarter is a wanton insult to them, "Unto Israel, he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people." Verily, it would be so eternally if the hands of Rome were the hands to be stretched out, when she encouraged, if she did not command, the racing of Jews in the Corso, and the pouring of contempt upon them in the rudest fashion. Israel would never worship images, saints, and virgins. Blessed were they as a nation for this thing at least, that they utterly rejected the idolatry of which Rome is shamelessly guilty. It were better far to be no Christian than to think Popery to be Christianity,¹ for it is one of the vilest forms of idolatry that ever came from the polluted heart of man. Alas, poor Israel, what hast thou suffered! What tongue can tell thy woes? I feel, perforce, compelled to apply to Israel the language which Byron applied to Rome when he called her "the Niobe of nations," and reckoned all sorrows beside hers but petty misery :

"What are our griefs and sufferance? Come and see
Jerusalem in heaps, and plod your way
O'er steps of broken thrones and temples."

1) Is not this putting it rather strong?—ED.

Look, too, on a princely people crushed under persecution, laboring and finding no rest. "Princes are hanged up by their hands; the faces of elders were not honored. They that did feed delicately are desolate in the streets: they that were brought up in scarlet embrace dunghills. How is the gold become dim! How is the most fine gold changed!"

But we will not end here, my brethren. The interest which we feel with regard to Israel and which makes us pray, "Lord, visit this vine," rises as we think of its future. I am no prophet or interpreter of the prophecies, but this much seems clear to me—that the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of the Jews, will have dominion over them, and they shall be converted and shall own Him to be the Messiah which was promised to their fathers; so doth the New Testament teach us as well as the Old. It seems to me that we may work for the conversion of Israel with the absolute certainty that if we do not see it ourselves yet it shall be seen, for the natural branches of the olive tree which for awhile were cut off shall be grafted in again, and so all Israel shall be saved. The future of the Gentiles in the fullness of its glory can never be accomplished till, first of all, the Jews shall be ingathered. Ye shall have no millennial day or full brightness of His glory until yonder, by Jordan's streams and Judah's deserted hills, where once the Saviour worked, and walked, and preached, the song shall yet again arise of Hallelujah to the God of Israel.

One thought more, and then I leave this point of the interest we take in Israel. We must forever take a special interest in the Jews, because *of them came our Lord*. He was so completely a man that one forgets that He was a Jew, and, perhaps, for the most part it is best we should, for He is more a man than a Jew; but still, "he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham." Jesus is the son of David. The Jews have a part in Him after the flesh which we have not; and, amid all the privileges which we enjoy, we can well afford to let

them have everything they can claim, and they can certainly prove a special kinship to Him whom our soul loveth. Oh, if it were for nothing else but that our Saviour was of the Jews, we ought to love them and make them the subject of our prayers and of our earnest efforts. Surely the mention of that will suffice, and I need not say so much as one solitary word more. Interest in the Jews, indeed, is a very wide subject, and we have said enough for the present purpose.

(To be continued.)

CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editor of THE PECULIAR PEOPLE:

Dear Brother;—While taking a trip to New York, between New Smyrna and Jacksonville, Fla. I found myself seated with a contributor to your publication (Ben Israel), and through him learned of its existence for the first time. These providential meetings are not accidental. God's eyes run to and fro throughout the earth, bringing about His blessed purposes. My study of the Scriptures for more than ten years has aroused in me an exceedingly deep interest in the Jewish people, now seeing them in a different (scriptural) light to what I did previously.

God's precious Word is ever unchanging, and 1 Thess. 2: 15 still remains true; but God is beginning that work so as to fulfill His promises to the fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The time is not far distant when Dan. 12: 2 will be realized and the Jewish people become the head of the nations and not the tail. Before this, however, the 11th of Romans must be fulfilled. The branches of the olive tree, wild by nature, through Gentile conceit, will be cut off by severest judgments, and the natural, the Jewish people, again grafted into their own olive tree.

The gospel belongs to the Gentiles, and the Jew can only come in for blessing now through the gospel. The election belongs to the Jews for the fathers' sakes, not for theirs. Their wickedness has been too great. Were it not for God's un failing promises to the fathers, all Israel would be swept clean out of existence. Before the Babylo-

nian captivity they exchanged the God of Israel for idols, and though idolatry has been given up by them since that time, what can they boast of in their history since? God solemnly declared that if they would not give to Him a whole-hearted obedience He would punish them above all people on the face of the earth. I love the Jewish people with all my heart, soul, and strength, just because I see them in the precious light in which God has placed them upon the inspired page. I know the dust of Jacob is yet to become the greatest blessing in and to the world. When God has brought them through the trouble of Jacob, which is yet to take place, the Jewish people will ever tremble that they shall never depart in heart again from the living God.

When brought to humbly acknowledge themselves guilty before God, according to Rom. 3:9-19, when the veil is taken from their hearts and they set themselves in God's unchanging light, when they are brought in confusion and shame before God, utterly unable to speak a word in their defense, when they are brought to know what Zech. 12:10-14 means in the light, when the veil is taken from their hearts,—God will graciously fulfill to them every jot and tittle of the law and the prophets, and ten men out of every nation under heaven will be glad in humbleness to take hold of the skirt of a Jew. The glorious blessing of Deut. 33 will be made good to the letter. Balaam's prophecies are yet in the future. The time has not yet been that the dust of Jacob could not be counted, not even taking into consideration the fourth part of Israel. The time has never been yet that Israel could take that exclusive place, so as not to be reckoned among the nations. God has been patiently waiting all the ages past for them to yield a whole-hearted obedience to Him so that He can make all His promises good to them.

The time is coming when the word of the very least, not only of the Jews, but of all restored Israel, will be esteemed throughout the whole earth as the word of the holy God.

WILLIAM WEBSTER.

NEW SMYRNA, Fla.

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

 Drafts, checks, or money orders should be made payable to John P. Mosher, Agent, Alfred Centre, N. Y., to whom all business correspondence should be addressed. Foreign money orders should be drawn on Hornellsville, N. Y.

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 The Editor is not responsible for the opinions of contributors.

Entered at the Post-office in Alfred Centre, N. Y., April 5, 1889, as second-class matter.