

# THE PECULIAR PEOPLE,

A CHRISTIAN MONTHLY,

DEVOTED TO JEWISH INTERESTS.

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

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

Vol. VII.

JULY. 1894.

No. 4.

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

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## 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 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.

# THE PECULIAR PEOPLE.

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

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

הכיסו אל-ציר חצבתם  
ואל-מקבת כור נקרתם  
Isa. 51: 1

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"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.

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Vol. VII. ALFRED CENTRE, N. Y., JULY, 1894. No. 4.

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JUDÆUS SUM ; JUDAICI NIHIL A ME ALIENUM PUTO.

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"FROM Judaism to Christianity" is not a phrase that we consider the best to express the journey we hope that sons of Israel may take in their religious lives. It savors too much of the antagonism of two religious systems that are not antagonistic. It suggests what ought not to be; namely, the opposition of Judaism to the teachings of a pure Christianity, and the opposition to things Jewish on the part of non-Jewish Christians.

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THE journey we would have our Jewish brethren take is not *from* Judaism, but *in* Judaism. In other words, while we advocate their acceptance of the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth and the recognition of Him as their personal Saviour, we emphatically wish them to remain Jews in all that that term signifies. That the word "Jew" does not and ought not mean rejection of the Messianic claims of Jesus, we stoutly maintain. With the looseness of language prevalent at the present day we notice that the word "Jew" means very many things; and among all these meanings there is surely room for that meaning which to us is a precious one: a son of Israel who, acknowledging Moses and the Prophets, accepts Jesus of

Nazareth as the promised Messiah and as his personal Saviour. Such an one is a Jew indeed. The journey to this position is to Christ, to be sure, but from only that feature of Judaism which might be understood as anti-Christian. If "to Christianity" means to much that is known by that name, which is as erroneous as anything in Judaism, we do not wish our friends to come to it. But, all the same, we have to take language as it is, and the title of the personal narrative in this issue is one that will readily be understood. It is a story of how a son of Israel found Israel's Saviour, and that is what is meant.

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WE would like many of our Christian friends to take the other journey, not from Christianity to Judaism, but from many of the errors of post-apostolic Christianity to the pure religion of Moses and the prophets, and of Him of whom they spake. It would not hurt Christianity to have some strong faith in Mosaic religion, or to give a more earnest heed to the Prophets of Israel. The tendency in these days to affirm that the law of God has no place under the Christian dispensation is a tendency that means only ruin to our religion and to the world. We recommend the study of the early Jewish-Christian Church to Christians of every name. Do not forget whence you have received the teachings which are such a comfort to your hearts. Do not think that you can with your nineteenth century ideas easily understand them all, rejecting the light that comes from the pure Jewish conceptions which were in the minds of the writers of the New Testament. Remember that the God you worship is Jehovah, God of Israel, that Jesus is the Messiah of Israel, that with possibly an exception of one, every biblical writer was a Jew. Make Judaism a comprehensive term and Christianity an exact term, and the two will be identical. Oh, that every son of Israel after the flesh would come to Jesus! Oh, that every Gentile who affirms his trust in Jesus were truly a child of Abraham by a real faith! Oh, that error and superstition were banished

from both camps, that a fervent zeal for the Lord God of hosts, according to that knowledge which comes from Him who is the Way, and the Truth, and the Life, might animate all our hearts!

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### FROM JUDAISM TO CHRISTIANITY.

"Truth shineth by its own light."

I was born in Wollstein, a small city in Germany, September 15, 1825. My parents professed the orthodox Jewish religion, and being very pious, as a matter of course, early initiated me in their faith. My father, being proud of my aptness for learning, before I was six years of age entertained the lofty idea of making a rabbi of me, and to achieve that end spared no expense for my education. It may not be out of place if I here state the main position a rabbi holds in the Jewish Church,<sup>1</sup> which probably was the cause of my father's plan for me: "A rabbi is next in dignity to God; there is no greater honor than the honor of a rabbi, and there is no greater fear than the fear of the rabbi. In matters appertaining to religion and also in controversies regarding secular affairs his decision is infallible."

To aid me in my studies a competent teacher was engaged. Under his instructions I made remarkable progress in learning, and throwing into it all my energy to gratify my father, and being myself ambitious, I was so far advanced in Hebrew literature that at the age of eight years I passed a creditable examination before the Chief Rabbi and his coadjutors. One of the rabbis, a venerable old man, laid his hand upon my head, and asking a blessing upon me from heaven, called my father's attention and said to him: "Mr. Goldberg, that boy will be a great man in Israel; he has wheels of iron in his head." What he meant by "wheels of iron in his head" I did not understand, nor have I, after an elapse of over sixty years, been able to solve that mysterious oracle. However, I thought at the time there was something grand in the future con-

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1) That is, in the ignorant orthodox Jewish communities.

nected therewith, and the words were ever afterwards a talisman to me in my efforts to acquire knowledge, not only in Hebrew but also in secular branches taught in the public schools of our city, which latter I was compelled by law to attend from my sixth year of age.

It being a matter of greatest importance, I was taught like all Jewish children that the Jewish religion was the only true and holy religion in the world, having for its foundation God's direct revelation to our forefathers from Mount Sinai. I was to be faithful and circumspect in the carrying out of its principles and defend them to the utmost of my ability. I never was to depart from it, and if necessary yield up my faith only with my life's blood. The examples of Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and other martyrs for the holy cause, were vividly set before me and impressed upon my mind. At the same time my mind was filled with the positive fact established by a thorough investigation of all the circumstances by the rabbis, doctors of the law, and other learned men, that Jesus of Nazareth was an impostor; that it was my duty to entertain the utmost hatred against Him, as being the cause of all the misery that befell the Jewish nation; that I was not to permit His name to pass my lips, but rather to show my contempt of Him by spitting, by which action it would be understood, when in conversation with other Jews about Him, that all His teachings had been inspired by the Evil One. Thus a formidable restraint was exercised upon my own power of judging for myself regarding the facts represented as positive truth. To save my soul from everlasting perdition I was not to read any written or printed matter regarding Him, and should His name appear anywhere, and I could do it, I was to expunge it. I was also instructed to blaspheme and apply the most opprobrious epithets to His name, and to discredit His miracles as wrought by divine power, considering them as done by the aid of Satan. In fact, everything conceivable in sentiment and expression to make Him appear as the lowest and most degraded reprobate, whom to correct and bring back to obedience to the Jew-

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ish covenant of faith was impossible, was embodied in the catechism of my religious life. To do all this were merits which would be highly rewarded not only in this world but also in the world to come. Not less was it impressed upon my mind that the miraculous birth of Jesus, claimed by Christians, was nothing else than a subterfuge invented by His companions, who were as bad as He was, and a deception and falsehood practiced upon credulous people to hide the shame and disgrace of Mary, His mother, who being very wealthy and having moved in high society, would otherwise have been considered a lewd and wanton woman and shunned by society.

The rabbis, amongst other injunctions of more or less importance and consequence, pronounced the most fearful anathema, calling down the full vengeance of heaven upon every Jew who acknowledged Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah. By that curse the Jew accepting Him as such is to be killed, and if that could not be done is to be persecuted to the utmost; is to be excommunicated from the faith of the house of Israel; to be expelled from the membership of the congregation; is not to be permitted in the synagogue or any other place of worship or assembly of the Jews; is put under the ban or boycott and no Jew permitted to have any dealings with him; his blood relations are to consider him dead, and are bound to do mourning as for the real dead; his soul is cut off from everlasting life and deprived of the enjoyment of bliss and happiness of Paradise, and the honor of sitting with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the saints at the great banquet awaiting all Jews.

At the age of thirteen I was publicly confirmed in the Jewish creed, and was instructed in the use of phylacteries and all other necessary appendages. Graduating with honor from the public school at fourteen years of age, a change of sentiment regarding my rabbinical aspirations came over me. I lost all interest in that direction and at last made up my mind to engage in a secular calling. My reputation as a good penman being well known, a prominent lawyer engaged me as a clerk, with whom I

remained three years. At seventeen I considered myself capable of looking after my affairs in my own way, and in order to carry out that idea I went to Berlin, the capital of Prussia.

Being free from the supervision of a father's eye, my religious sentiments underwent an entire change. Judaism lost its grip on me and I became, in the true sense of the term, a man of the world, and pursued gayeties and allurements without restraint. One Sunday morning a friend called desiring me to accompany him to a meeting of Free-Thinkers, where the religion of rationalism was advocated. I had heard and read of it before, and complied. The lecturer based his arguments upon reason. He maintained that the Bible from which Jews and Christians derived their religion could not have been written by so-called divine inspiration on account of the many discrepancies recorded therein, and also because of its statement of facts offensive to a refined and delicate taste. Quoting some of them he said that the whole book was made up from a number of fictitious writings, based perhaps on some events having occurred in the past, which are accepted without investigation. Analyzing religion from observations of general practice, he showed it to be possible that any system of religion could be acquired by training the mind to accept anything as a truth. He illustrated this by calling attention to the established fact that a child, at the dawn of its intelligence, lisps its belief on the mother's knee just as it was taught, no matter what the subject may be, and the teaching thus instilled into its mind grows up as it advances in physical and intellectual development. That first impression or foundation of so-called religion regarded as a truth is confirmed by more advanced ideas in religion or theological schools according to their respective methods of interpretation, either from an ancient or modern point of view. The deduction therefrom is, that religion could be acquired as any other branch of learning. This criterion is established from the multitude of religious ideas among mankind, each differing from one another in dogma and

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ceremonies. Each of the different religions is elbowing its way to a so-called heaven, whereas science proves that there is no heaven but illimitable space; from which it follows that the expounders and promoters of the different religious systems could prove nothing tangible to be relied upon as a basis of truth and be accepted as such by common sense. Every endeavor to do so proves a failure. Looking at the different religions from a moral stand-point, one religion is as good as another. All are more or less alike in the principle of improving the condition of man.

That doctrine suited my taste. My mind becoming imbued with it I applied myself assiduously to its thorough study, and accepted the doctrines of rationalism. In order to be more fully established in my new religious ideas I fortified myself with facts to counteract any influence which might be brought against it. Searching for facts I found in the creed of the Hindoo practiced for ages, that, among other rites and ceremonies, the woman is to take her first-born baby and drown it in the river as a sacrifice to appease her offended deity. The Mussulman reaches heaven by way of Mecca, spurred on by the sword of Mohammed, the great prophet. The dervish crawls to heaven by daily flogging himself and living in abject poverty. The Jew ascends to heaven by putting on his phylacteries and praying with his face to the east, expiating his sins by shaking the skirt of his coat over running water on New Year's Day, kissing the strings of his *Orba Kanfus*<sup>1</sup> at certain words in his prayer, swinging a rooster in a circle three times over his head on the Day of Atonement. He believes in purgatory, saying prayers for the dead, and a host of other rites and ceremonies. He takes it as a divinely instituted fact that when the officiating rabbi proclaims on the Day of Atonement the general letter of indulgence, that "all vows, oaths, and promises he should make during the year to come, he is beforehand absolved therefrom." Where did he acquire

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1) ארבע כנפות, "Four wings." See Deut. 22: 12.

such ideas? They were drilled into his mind from childhood and confirmed in the rabbinical schools. The Roman Catholic follows in the wake of the Jewish Church, and, as he claims, "having taken possession of the Messiah of the Jews, he is entitled to the Jewish religion," he therefore performs the same rites and ceremonies. He also makes pilgrimages to the graves of departed holy men, adores the Virgin Mary as the Queen of Heaven (the Jews salute the moon as the Queen of Heaven), wears the scapular as the Jews the *Orba Kanfus*, likewise amulets and sacred medals, elevates the host, and bows before images, pictures, and the handiwork of men.

I am satisfied that all believers in these religions are groping in an impenetrable darkness without knowing it. Joining the Society of Free-thinkers I was commissioned to go on a lecturing tour, and left Berlin. I went through Germany, England, France, and again to Germany, everywhere meeting with minds ready to accept the doctrine of rational religion. I came at last to Eisleben in Prussia, the city where the great reformer, Martin Luther, was pastor. There I became acquainted with Mr. V., commissioner of government lands, who was a Free-thinker. He asked me to become his assistant, and I accepted.

Being one day in the house which had been occupied by Luther, and examining the original correspondence and other relics of his controversy with Pope Leo X. and other dignitaries of the Church of Rome, I met there two young gentlemen, brothers, who were preparing themselves for the ministry in the Martin Luther Theological Seminary. I considered them very valuable material to work upon in the interest of rationalistic religion. I courted their friendship and was appreciated by them, so that we soon became involved in arguments. Their religion consisted of faith, which they could not describe nor explain, being a substance unseen and engraven upon the pages of their hearts, whereas my religion was a system emanating from visible matter as the outcome of evolution. Meeting my young friends one day, I was invited by them to visit them at their home on the following Sunday and take dinner

with the family. Calling there, I was introduced by them to the mother, — who was the widow of the late pastor of the church of which Luther had charge,—and their sisters. In the course of the conversation I gave an outline of my travels, experience, and information gathered during my eventful and adventurous life in the different countries. From the attention with which the family honored me I think I must have been considered by them to be a living encyclopedia. I of course introduced my favorite subject of rational religion. Commenting there I tried to convince them that religion consists of the duty of practicing such virtue as contributes to the public good. Summing up the principles, as it were, in a nutshell, I quoted the well-known adage, "Do unto others as you would be done by." By exercising that moral excellence I was satisfied in my own mind that if there were a hereafter I would enjoy it in like manner as those who believe in the Bible or the faith emanating therefrom, for that very Bible teaches: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." To offset the assertion of the Bible I argued that if God gave the spirit, it therefore emanating from Him must be co-eternal with Him, and if so, that spirit, while embodied in the human frame, must have some recollection of its doings previous to its union with nature or the body. Every human being, however, is constrained to admit the negative of this; hence it follows that the spirit will return to the same unconsciousness which it possessed in its former state. The theory of a future conscious state, I argued, is therefore a chimera.

At the dinner table, previous to partaking of the viands, the family sang a hymn, accompanied by the piano, and then offered a prayer, both of which gave evidence of their sincere devotion to what they believed. I took, however, another view. I considered them intellectually weak-minded on the subject of religion, as, according to my theory, they only believed what they had been trained to believe without investigating for themselves its correctness and credibility. I was still more confirmed in this opin-

10n when I considered their dependence upon a crucified man to make intercession for them, instead of going directly to God, whom they, as His children, called Father. When I apologized for not having joined in their devotional exercises on account of principle, they acknowledged my frankness and expressed a wish that I could believe what they did and feel what they felt, at the same time assuring me that they would wrestle with their God for my conversion. On taking leave I was cordially invited to call again. One of the daughters, Miss Emily, handed me a tract with her name and address written on it, desiring me to read it. I promised to respect her wish.

"God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform." Having been about a year in Eisleben, my restless spirit again impelled me on, and after several weeks' travel, meeting with more or less success, I reached Hamburg. At the hotel where I stopped I met an old acquaintance who also was on a tramp as a lecturer on rational religion. We arranged that I was to assist him at his address the next day. When I was ready to go it so happened that I put my hand in the breast pocket of my coat, and feeling there some paper withdrew it. I recognized at once the tract the young lady in Eisleben had given me, and having time to redeem my promise, commenced reading. My thoughts became so much absorbed in the interesting method in which Christianity was handled that I forgot all about going to the lecture. What I had read set me to thinking. Looking back upon rational religion and its claims, I was astonished to think that it had been possible for me not to discover its blighting influences upon the fairest hopes of man in the limited span of his earthly existence. Its aspirations border on an empty future, an incomprehensible darkness, whereas if we believe the Bible to be the inspired voice of the Eternal, and consequently true, we shall enjoy the promises held out as a reward in the realms of the hereafter. I saw myself in a different light from that which I had before entertained. I conceived a new theory regarding my existence. "Man, know thyself," became the motive towards the solution of

the problem of the relation between *matter* and the *life* in that matter. The deduction from this was that life, being the unseen agency, must therefore be supernatural in its own sphere, possessing elements of progress and development. This being the case the supernatural spiritual part in matter must have had a prior existence to the formation of matter, being the cause of it as an effect.

In pursuance of this theory the fact became clear to me that the unseen spiritual life, apart from matter, is part of the creative power, and was placed in matter in its infancy as an active agent, simultaneously with the command which brought forth matter, the latter containing within itself the germs of the different forms of life. By the process of evolution activity is transmitted from development to development until a limit is reached, when separation occurs and activity and passivity each retires to its own sphere, neither of them being subject to annihilation. The disembodied spiritual life returns with the result of its activity, as an ended authoritative agency in matter to the original source of the general cause. There is, however, a difference in the life of migratory matter below the human race so that, when the former leaves the body, it does not carry with it the result of its activity, as that life is subject only to the established law of instinct, being unconscious of ethics. From these circumstances it was evident to me that matter could not be the result of evolution, but is subject to the animating process of a spiritual authoritative power. And in that ruling power I recognized a living spiritual existence, combining in itself omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence, filling unlimited space, and infinitely higher than finite intellect is able to comprehend. Before that power, generally called God, I bowed in reverence, conscious of the principle of having to render account of my doings during the present stage of existence. By intuition I was forced to accept the deduction as absolute, that I depended on that God for the rational conception of myself in my wonderfully constructed physical existence, and also of an absolute and necessary relationship between us. And

upon recognizing that relationship it was an imperative duty to regulate my actions to conform harmoniously with the will of the Author of all being. In pursuance of this inference it became evident to me that in my natural state I was a free moral agent, and as such was able to discern right from wrong, and I concluded that the light emanating from that discernment constitutes the "image of God," in its purity, called the soul. Adam, the first free moral agent, endowed with that image, or special gift of God, represented by God's breathing into his nostrils the breath of life and man's becoming a living soul, stained that gift or light (knowledge) by his disobedience and tried to hide his guilt. The injunction not to eat of the forbidden tree was a test of the force of his moral principle in like manner as was Abraham's when he was commanded to sacrifice his only beloved son Isaac. My conscience, or the innate principle of God's image within me, accused me of having done things which I ought not to have done, and of having left undone things which I ought to have done.

Advancing gradually further on the subject, I was led to set it down as a fact that my existence on the earth was for a purpose, and that that purpose was to be progressive in its good achievements until the end of my earthly journey. The question arose in my mind, what provision I had made for that end, considering my own disobedience to the will of God, which must sooner or later come to pass. I could not separate myself from that thought. It became my constant companion. I sought to get rid of it in various ways, but did not meet with success. I found myself lost in an abyss of darkness. Perceiving the importance of religion my thoughts reverted to my knowledge of Jewish precepts by which I might be enabled to obtain peace of mind, but in them I found nothing else but rites and ceremonies, which could not heal my wounded spirit. It was clear to my mind that by the performance of them I could not be reconciled to the offended Deity, as the body could not sin of its own volition, it being only the instrument of carrying out the be-

nesses of the mind, where the disobedience to God's will is conceived. My intellect became more and more beclouded the more I thought of it. I felt an intolerable depression. At times I thought my reason was dethroned and my mind on the brink of a collapse. In my dire distress I was afraid of my own shadow. In the evening I wished it were morning, but the morning brought no comfort for me. I was in a labyrinth of mental agony. And yet, strange as it may seem, during that whole time I attended satisfactorily to my daily duties as a clerk in a broker's office. Looking back upon that period of my life I am surprised and wonder how I could have stood such a terrible strain upon my mental powers without serious results. I cannot, however, see clearly, after having been brought to the truth, that God, in His mercy, kept me, while He refined my soul in the furnace of affliction and shaped my heart to accept Jesus as the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Being at a loss what to do, and considering that perhaps a different climate, change of scenery, or one thing or another might exert some influence upon my mental condition, I gave up my situation and took passage on a steamer for Hull, in England. For a time the change caused some beneficial result. Becoming alive to the necessity and importance of acquiring a knowledge of the English language, I set resolutely to work and accomplished my task in a very short time, and that in a rather novel way. I provided myself with an English Bible, and copying from it the first verse of the opening chapter of Genesis I placed under each word, by the aid of an English-German dictionary, the translation of it after the following manner:

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

*"In dem Anfange Gott schuf den Himmel und die Erde."*

These ten words constituted my first day's lesson to commit to memory. Having had a whole day to devote to it I had not only a perfect mastery of it but I had also the satisfaction of knowing its spelling. As a matter of course I knew the definition of it. On that plan I went on

day after day, never taking more than ten words for a day, and each evening going through the vocabulary of all the words I had learned. At the end of one month my knowledge of the English language had augmented to the respectable number of more than three hundred words, some composed in complete sentences. It was no amusement to do it, for the acquisition of any language from books is a dry subject. But I worked with a will. I believe any one knowing three hundred words of any language will be able to get along in any ordinary conversation. I did not stop, however, where I was. I kept on in my work, and read nothing else but English literature. Everything I know was acquired by self-teaching, and if any fault is found with my feeble effort to give an intelligent and succinct narrative of my life, I beg the reader to put it down to my ignorance. The newness of my mental occupation partially restored my mind to its normal condition. At times I was cheerful, nay, I plunged with a will into the whirl of worldly and business affairs. Before long I gave up my bachelor life and was married.

Real happiness, however, cannot be found upon earth: it is sought in vain. No matter what the excitement or enjoyment might be, the simple thought: "The present may be the last moment in the realms of earthly life," is enough to mar or impair everything of an enjoyable nature. Such was my experience. My old malady, to seek that which would secure peace of mind, was lurking again in my breast and made me miserable. My former sinful life, especially during the time when I denied the existence of a God, made sport of and profaned His holy name, made me shudder. I saw myself lost forever, and in consequence became almost a victim of despondency. My change from Hamburg to Hull having brought me some relief I thought it expedient to change Hull for London for a similar purpose. I went there and soon secured remunerative employment. But the peace of mind I enjoyed by the change was not lasting. Giving up everything outside of my business duties for the purpose of devoting my time to the search for something which would give

me relief from my troubled spirit, I followed that course at all hazards. I concluded that one religion of all the religions in the world must possess the light the knowledge of which would result to my benefit. I was convinced that my mental condition was a matter to be settled between me and my God. Taking a retrospect of my life in the years gone by I found that my good deeds were but few, and that my best deeds were defiled by a mixture of selfish if not pharisaical motives. The doctrine of justification by works may be agreeable to the Jew, and lull his awakened responsibility towards his Maker. Reconciliation with God by rites and ceremonies was a philosophy which I could not and would not accept. The prospect of death forced me to anticipate the act of divine justice in all its awful terrors. I could not afford to wait until the Day of Atonement, on which day alone, according to Jewish doctrine, God forgives sin. I might die before that day, and what would be the result? My conscience was, therefore, dissatisfied with the consolation Judaism offered with which to meet the Judge of all the world.

So I sought relief elsewhere. Looking into the Koran I found there moral principles good in their ways, but nothing beyond to feed the languishing soul. I then made up my mind to find out what the Christian religion taught regarding the soul's salvation, not knowing the difference between the Roman Catholic and Protestant faith. I thought them to be identical, only differing in the carrying out of principles. I examined the writers of the Roman Hierarchy, considering them to be more worthy of confidence on account of that church's claiming to be the only true and holy church, and also older than the Protestant churches, which date from the fifteenth century; but I found nothing but teaching of the fathers from tradition. To see for myself how that church serves God I went to a place of worship. But alas! from what I there beheld I was convinced that I should gain nothing to fill the vacancy in my aching heart. I there saw only the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish synagogue worship, only more gorgeously and elaborately performed. It was an emp-y

show the devotees worshipping the creature instead of the Creator. I heard the Virgin Mary invoked to forgive sin, and saints called upon to intercede. I thought if this be the only holy and true religion I will have none of it, including the Protestant churches in my own protest.

And yet I could not believe that God would suffer man to grope in darkness without a revelation. If all humanity had only that religious knowledge which I thus far had been able to gain from the best theologians in Judaism and Christianity, then not one human being would be safe regarding the future. All were leaning on a broken reed, manufactured by man. I wondered how they personally felt about the prospect of death and their future state. But I was determined to find out the truth. Something told me, "Seek and ye shall find."

As before stated, I viewed Judaism in all its bearings from a talmudical point of view. But it occurred to me one day that I might find out for myself what Moses had to say about the soul's salvation, or the restoration of the image of God within me to its original purity. The same right the rabbis had to interpret the Law of God as given by Moses, that same privilege God has vouchsafed to me, as He has endowed me with the needed faculties.

Blessed thought! What a divine inspiration! A light seemed to dawn within me. The prospect of getting rid of my sin drew near. From the very thought I anticipated the balm of hope realized. I read and re-read Moses and the Prophets. I stood before the bar of the Law convicted of sin. The sin which originated in Paradise with the disregard of God's injunction by the first created human beings was transmitted from generation to generation, and came also to me as a legacy; hence my own sinful actions. Continuing my search I came to the remedy to be applied for the removal of my guilt. And comparing that remedy with the one propounded by the Talmud or rabbinical exposition, I found that the latter was diametrically opposed to the justification proposed by the ordinances of God in His holy Word, and only acceptable to Him. From this it was evident to me that the Bible, like every-

thing else that has God for its author, is unerring in its pathway, discoverable by the eye of the mind of the unlearned, and at the same time has perfection to exercise the observation and skill of the most learned.

I lighted upon the type foreshadowing the penalty to be paid by the Deliverer from sin, but had not yet been far enough enlightened to take it as a type, but regarded it as an actual remedial fact, and the only one "It is the blood that maketh atonement for sin." Here then arose the perplexing difficulty. I was to offer "a lamb without blemish," as a sacrifice for my sin, the blood of which was to be sprinkled upon the altar by the high priest. Without it I could not be forgiven. Knowing that I could find no high priest,—nor was there an altar in the Jewish Church,—my hopes of deliverance received a check, and I was placed in the same position of uncertainty in which I was before.

The New Testament was still a sealed book to me. In fact, I did not suppose that it had anything to do with the sin-offering, as that was an exclusive ordinance for the children of Israel only. Weeks, months, and years had now passed since my soul was first awakened to the importance of seeking its salvation, and I was still in the darkness about the truth. I was more miserable every day. The hand of God was very heavy upon me. I was almost ready to give up in despair, and yet I was bound to acknowledge its justice, for the audacity I had in persistently denying the existence of God and leading other innocent souls astray by influencing them with my pernicious doctrine of rationalism. I felt that their blood was required at my hands.

Late one evening, being greatly depressed in my spirit, I left home and walked several miles out of London, having found myself in a neighborhood where there was no house in sight. I was thinking upon my forlorn condition, and of ever obtaining peace. I knelt down on the wet grass and earnestly prayed to God to put an end to my misery, acknowledging my transgressions, but being unable to offer the sacrifice as an atonement. I got up,

but experienced no relief, and tramped home. It must have been after midnight when I reached there. Retiring I was restless and sleepless. I soon arose and contemplated finding out what the New Testament taught, but the thought crossed my mind that as it speaks of Jesus of Nazareth, and the great and learned men, the Sanhedrin, the great Jewish Council of His time, had repudiated His claims to the Messiahship, no good would come of reading it. Thinking it over I say that I could not be any worse off than I was, even were I to read the teachings of Jesus, and having the courage to reject the expositions and teachings of the Talmud, as inconsistent with the Law of God, I might with equal valor break the shackles of the injunctions under which I was placed by the rabbis—basing their curse upon Deut. 13,—and see for myself what the teachings were.

My deliverance from the chains of darkness and misery was approaching. The Dayspring from on high visited me. I made up my mind to read the New Testament, and did so at once. Sleep was banished from my eyes. I read and understood. What a marvelous revelation to my benighted soul! I found from the undisguised acknowledgements of the writers of the New Testament,—all Jews and therefore as much to be believed and trusted as the writers of the Old Testament, who were also of the seed of Abraham from Moses down to Maiachi,—that the rabbis and doctors, the Pharisees and scribes, were the implacable enemies of Jesus of Nazareth because He told them the sober and naked truth.

Everything was now clear to my mind. The gospel plan of salvation was unfolded before me. I found that the key to the Old Testament. The veil which had shaded the eye of my intellect was removed by the interpretation of the New Testament. I beheld Jesus of Nazareth, of my flesh and blood, my kinsman, my personal deliverer, and everything in Him fulfilled what Moses and the Prophets and the Psalmist had predicted. "He came unto his own, but his own received him not." But thanks be

to God! I received Him. I recognized in Him the One who was to "bruise the serpent's head" (Gen. 3: 15), at the time when "the sceptre was to depart from Judah and the Lawgiver from between his feet" (Gen. 49: 10), to be born of a virgin (the virgin to retain her virginity till she brings forth a son), to be called "God with us" (Isa. 7: 14, Jer. 31: 22), "seven weeks and three-score and two weeks from the going forth of the decree of Cyrus to rebuild Jerusalem" (Dan. 9: 25), "to be stricken, smitten of God and afflicted," "to be wounded for our transgressions and our iniquities, upon whom is the chastisement of our peace, and with whose stripes we are healed." "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." "By his knowledge shall many be justified, for he shall bear their iniquities." "He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." Isa. 53. I felt at once that I was among the "many" for whom He makes intercession as High Priest. My heart was full of joy. At last I found the substitute for my deserts. The chastisement of my peace was upon Him. What relief! The Father handed me over to Jesus to be in His keeping. Having found thus the Messiah of whom Moses and the Prophets spoke, I anchored my hope in everything upon Jesus, revealed to me not by any word of man's dogmas, but by the Spirit of God. And "who shall separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus?"

One evening, being specially animated in consequence of having found the Messiah, I felt a struggle going on in my breast. Doubts perplexed me. I thought that the whole structure of my faith in Jesus was tottering and tumbling down. But I was determined to retain my faith in Him. Nay, I went further. I was not satisfied to have a superficial knowledge of Him; I wanted Jesus to take possession of my soul. For the first time in my life I knelt down before my God and earnestly prayed Him to forgive my sins for Jesus' sake; to strengthen my faith

in Him as my personal Saviour, who shed His precious blood for me as an atonement.

Language is too poor to describe what I felt at that moment. A solemn atmosphere encircled me; a bright light shone into my heart; Jesus took possession of it. At the same time I heard a powerful stroke as if the house were shaken upon its foundation. I trembled in every limb, but collecting my thoughts, remembering that I was in the presence of El-Shaddai, I heard a small whispering voice, saying, "Peace, be still." I arose a new man, born again.

I then understood what my young friends in Eisleben meant when they said that their religion was faith in their hearts which they could not describe. A miracle was performed. All prejudice, malice, hatred, blasphemy, and profanation, the stupendous fabric of Judaism was uprooted from my heart, and love, reverence, and humiliation toward Jesus of Nazareth, was engraved in every recess thereof. It is wonderful! Jesus takes the sinner, whosoever comes to Him, by the hand, and as Mediator presents him before the Father, thereby effecting the reconciliation. It is marvelous! "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." I need not tremble at the chilling thought of death. Death has lost its sting and the grave its victory. I know whom I trust. I am ready. I have now every day a day of atonement, and need not wait for Yom Kippur, on which, as the Jewish doctrine is, God forgives sin. I know not whether before another sun rises I may not pass to the presence of my God. "I speak the truth and lie not;" "My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved."

was baptized on Easter day, 1857.

JOHN M. GOLDBERG.

PROVIDENCE, R. I., March 20, 1894.

# The Peculiar People.

זריות הנעשות—NEWS—כמחנה ישראל.

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THE change in the Constitution of the Congregation Rodef Shalom that makes Jewesses eligible to membership is another recognition of the influence of women in religious affairs. They have long since, however, proven how indispensable they are in congregational work.—*Jewish Exponent*.

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OWING to the absolute objection of the Tsar to the bestowal of a cross, the symbol of Christianity, upon Jews, whom he regards as enemies of the Christian religion, a proposal is being discussed in high official quarters to add to the Order of the White Eagle, which does not have a cross in its insignia, some supplementary classes of a lower grade, which could be conferred upon non-Christians.

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THERE arrived at the port of Philadelphia during May 206 Jewish immigrants, as compared with 508 during the same period in 1893. Of the total 179 hailed from Russia and Poland, 9 from Austria and Galicia, 8 from Germany, 5 from England, 3 from Roumania, and 12 from France. There were 96 males and 110 females. Sixty-four remained in Philadelphia and the others were sent to different parts of the United States.

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A GREAT man in Israel has fallen; Dr. Alexander Kohut, Rabbi of the Ahawath Chesed Synagogue of New York. He was not so famous as a preacher as he was in literature. Devoting twenty-five years of his life he has left as a legacy to his nation a lexicon of talmudical and kindred writings which will preserve his name for many generations. Admired even by those who differed from his opinions, he has worked with his might to preserve from oblivion the vast treasures of Jewish literature.

THE colonists of Klein-Lieben, in the province of Odessa, have petitioned the Minister of the Interior to permit Jews to continue residing there. These frequent petitions to the government are significant. Only a few weeks ago the Commercial Union of Astrakhan sent two petitions praying that the Jews might be allowed to remain there and at Tsaritzin. Similar petitions have also been sent from Livonia and Courland.

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THE governor of Poland, acting upon the law of 1891, has given notice that Jews are not to be allowed to rent country houses during the approaching summer. This, it is thought, will prove as great a hardship to the people who let their houses in the country for a few months as to the Jews. The peasants of the village of Mroza, near Warsaw, are, in consequence of this order, trying to sell their property, the Jews of Warsaw being practically their only customers.

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THE success of the Agricultural School of the Alliance Israelite Universelle at Jaffa has induced several large landowners of the Mohammedan faith in Palestine to solicit M. Niego to place with them several of his pupils in order to cultivate their property. The Director believes that it is through the medium of these rich non-Jewish landed proprietors that the inclination of Jews for agricultural work will grow. With the sanction of the Alliance M. Niego has opened in Jerusalem a depot for the sale of the products of the school.

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A TELEGRAM from Lyck, in East Prussia, reports that a serious anti-Jewish riot has taken place at Grajewo, a small Russian frontier town, where the workmen engaged in building some new barracks, attacked the houses of Polish-Jewish dealers and shopkeepers. The windows and doors were smashed in, and in many instances the shops were looted and the inmates severely handled. A detachment of troops arrived on the scene when the rioting was

at its height, and after a fierce fight dispersed the workmen with drawn swords. Four persons were killed and about one hundred injured, some of them very seriously.

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THE British Consul at Jerusalem, in his latest report, gives some interesting details respecting the state of the Holy City. It appears that buildings of various kinds continue to be erected in the vicinity, and that the city is far outgrowing its former limits. On the western side houses have increased so rapidly within the last few years that quite a large suburb has arisen where formerly there were fields and vineyards. Every available piece of land is now being bought up by private persons or by benevolent societies and missions, and already the name of "Modern Jerusalem" has been given to this new quarter.

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TWENTY years ago, when Hebrew Associations were formed in this country, mainly upon the model of the Y. M. C. A., apart from the missionary features, it was thought that they would soon develop in importance and be worthy compeers of those useful Christian societies whose fiftieth anniversary this week has been celebrated in London. There is just as great a need for young folks' associations among the Hebrews as among other classes; yet experience has shown that our people are largely indifferent, and the few societies of the kind that have existed over ten years have been continued through the persistence of their officers rather than through any enthusiastic demand from the public.—*Jewish Messenger*

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THEY are blind, indeed, to the signs of the times who cannot or will not see how potentially the women of Israel are assuming their share of influence in the religious and communal concerns of our people. Equally unobservant are they who fail to realize that this access of power is destined to have a powerful and beneficent influence upon every phase of our spiritual and philanthropic activities.—

SO LONG as Russia continues an absolute despotism; so long as human rights in that country are utterly at the mercy of official caprice in the highest ranks and subject to the corruption or malice of officialdom in the lower planes, it ill becomes a free people to enter into any compact beneficial to Russia and discreditable to the institutions of democracy. Russia has treated us with open contempt in violating the article of the treaty guaranteeing to all American citizens equal rights within her domain. As she has herself broken an essential part of the treaty it is demanded by self-respect that the United States shall abrogate the instrument altogether, and without delay.—*Chicago Herald.*

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THE authority which Lord Rothschild exercises over the Jewish community of England has recently received a remarkable illustration. As President of the United Synagogue, which represents the associated synagogues of Great Britain other than the Sephardic and the Reform congregations, he strongly advocated the establishment of a new and large synagogue in the midst of the thickly settled Russian Jewish district (Whitechapel) in London, intimating somewhat obscurely that he would resign if this plan were not carried out. The mere hint of this catastrophe was enough to put an end to all opposition, and Lord Rothschild, in order not to appear to force his own views upon his constituents, was obliged to explain that every one "would be free to adopt what view he likes and to vote in accordance therewith," without fear of his lordship. We have not yet accepted this meek form of subordination in free and equal America.—*Jewish Exponent.*

## 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.*

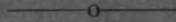
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A Christian monthly devoted to Jewish interests.

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, 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.

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