

הברית החדשה.

The New Testament in Hebrew.

Translated by Prof. Franz Delitzsch.

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Address the Editor of THE PECULIAR PEOPLE.

THE PECULIAR PEOPLE.

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A Christian Monthly Devoted to Jewish Interests.

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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.

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OUR PLATFORM.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

הַבִּיטוּ אֶל-צִוֵּר חֲצַבְתֶּם

Isa. 51: 1. וְאֶל-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. 122; 8, 9.

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JUDÆUS SUM; JUDAICI NIHIL A ME ALIENUM PUTO.

It seems a little odd that, of all people in the world, some of our Jewish readers should object to the name of our little magazine. The title appears to strike them as a little singular. Now, in point of fact it is by no means so. We feel impelled to offer a word of explanation, since by one of our readers a year or so ago the name was declared to be sheer nonsense, "the Jews are not peculiar at all."

Now if we simply look at the meaning of the word in English, and consider a moment its origin and history, we shall see that the word does not at all mean "queer," "odd," or "strange." That is the last derived meaning of the word in modern use. The word "peculiar" is derived from the corresponding French word, which in turn comes from the Latin *peculium*, meaning private property or that which belongs to one as his exclusive right, his *peculiar* property. The word *peculium* had a special meaning in Roman law, but the word in its general sense was still further derived from *pecus*, a flock or herd of cattle, because the property of people anciently was for the most part in flocks or herds of cattle. This meaning of "peculiar" is the one from which all others,

including the last modern use, that of "strange," have been taken.

BUT if one did not know that the word in ordinary English has the meaning of "belonging to a particular person or thing," oftener than the other meaning, the text we print on our title page from Deuteronomy 14: 2 ought to suggest the true meaning to the thoughtful reader: "The Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself." Surely the meaning is at once apparent. The Lord Jehovah has chosen the Jewish people to be His own people, His chosen especial treasure. That is the sense and the only one in which we use the term on our title page. And the Jewish reader, familiar with the Hebrew text, must know that the words *עם סגולה* signify a beautiful and most poetic thought, "a people, a choice treasure," so dear to His heart.

It may be profitable for us to reflect a little upon the way in which Israel is a chosen people, the especial treasure of Almighty God. Not to dwell upon past history, but rather upon the broad meaning and significance of Israel's place among the peoples of the world, we think first that they were God's chosen people in that they have been selected by God in his providence to hold up before men the truth of the One God, opposed to all other false or imaginary deities. This they have done in spite of many disloyalties in their earlier history, and notwithstanding their falling away in some parts of Israel's camp from the idea of a personal God who has such a regard for His people as is expressed in the words under consideration. They are the people selected to bring to the world religion above all other peoples. Other nations have brought into being philosophical systems of mighty influence, other peoples have wrought out great ethical problems and solved in a noble way moral questions, thus proving their kinship with their Creator: but Israel

has brought to the world religion, the union of man with God. We owe our Bible to Israel; to her we owe the festivals of the Christian religion in all the various parts of the Church; to her we owe the early apostles of our faith; and to Israel we owe our Saviour. Surely this people was chosen of God in a true sense. Is it not a painful thing that those of that race should try to break down the thought of this relationship between Israel and Israel's God? True, we all have the one Father; one God hath created us all. And He will have all become His children through faith in Him. But this does not take away from Israel her glory, but rather intensifies it. May Israel never cast her crown beneath her feet or expose it to shame at the hands of the nations, but by a complete faith in her mission and in Jesus of Nazareth, that typical Israelite through whom the world is to come to the knowledge of God and the possession of the Divine life, rather lift up her head and fulfil her destiny as the people of God, the choice possession of the Eternal.

A PASSAGE FROM THE TEACHING OF RABBI
AKIBA.

Akiba was a celebrated rabbi of the second century. His home was in Palestine. Every public teacher has his idiosyncrasies. From the utterances of Rabbi Akiba strewn through Jewish literature we infer it must have been delightful to have known him. He must have possessed a warm and emotional temperament. In one place it is recorded of him that he said, "Blessed be ye, O Israel. Before whom do you purify yourselves and who cleanseth you? Your Father who is in the heavens, as it is said, I will sprinkle upon you clean water and ye shall be clean. The Hope of Israel, the Lord, He it is who speaketh. What is the hope? That He will cleanse the uncleannesses, even the Holy one, blessed be He. He it is who *cleanseth* Israel."¹

(1) *Yoma*, 8, 9.

In keeping with the peculiar character of this utterance is another, found in the treatise, *Ethics of the Fathers*¹: "Greatly beloved was man that he was created in the image of God. Still greater was the love shown to him in that it was made known to him that he was created in God's image, as it is said,² For in the image of God He made man. Greatly beloved are the people of Israel that they should be called the sons of God. Still greater was the love that was shown in that it was made known to them that they are called sons of God, as it is said, Ye are the children (or the sons) of the Lord your God.³ Greatly beloved are the people of Israel that to them has been given a delightsome Vessel (or Instrument). Still greater is the love that was shown in that it was made known to them that to them was given a delightsome Instrument by which the world was created, as it is said, For I give you good doctrine; forsake ye not my Law."⁴ As is evident from the Scripture citation the latter reference of the vessel or instrument is to the Law of God, His Word.

In reading this latter passage of the teaching of Rabbi Akiba not long since the conclusion was quite irresistibly borne in upon the mind of the writer that the eminent Jewish teacher must have been familiar with the writings of the Evangelist John and that the teaching above cited may have been suggested by this passage found in John 3: 1: ראו מהגדולה אהבתי להאבי הנתינה לנו אשר נקרא בני האלהים. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God." The similarity between the two passages is very striking and illustrates how truly identical Judaism and Christianity are when rightly understood. Faith in the Christ of God, the divine Son, is all that is necessary to

(1) *Aboth* 3, 14.
 (2) Gen. 1: 27.
 (3) Deut. 14: 1.
 (4) Prov. 4: 2.

bring all things that are truly essential and helpful into the most delightful harmony.

That we are the children of God by virtue of our creation is evident from the myriad tongues by which Nature both animate and inanimate speaks. The same sentiment was voiced by Paul when he repeated the words of the Greek poet, Aratus, "For we are also his offspring."¹ No other of all His creatures did God fashion into his own image. How greatly therefore must man have been beloved! Dominion, honor, majesty, all these were conferred upon him, and to him was given that he should rule over the winged fowls of the heavens, over the beasts of the fields and over the fishes of the seas. The picture presented in the original Mosaic record of man's dominion is beautifully taken up and presented in that hymn of David's, the eighth Psalm. The winged fowls, the flocks scattered over the fields, and the widely extending sea, dotted with the sails of every craft, these have all been placed under the dominion of man. In the Epistle to the Hebrews² it is shown that all things have not yet been placed under the dominion of man, unless we understand both the command in Eden and the language of David to refer in their fullest meaning to Jesus, the perfect Man. To the devout believer in our Jesus, the Messiah of our souls, is it given to see Him sitting in the heavenly places and crowned with many crowns. The last enemy has been subdued under His feet, and He shall yet wear the princely crown of Judah and the crowns of all the nations. Napoleon put upon his head the iron crown of Lombardy; but of our Jesus we may say:

" All the isles shall know Him,
Though they glance not on His earthly face ;
The farther times shall gaze on His appearing,
To find the deathless life in His embrace."³

(1) Acts 17 : 28.

(2) Heb. 2 : 8, 9.

(3) J. G. Schliemann, cousin to the eminent archæologist, the late Dr. Henry Schliemann, the discoverer of Troy.

But many of us are the children of God in quite another sense than that of creation, by regeneration or the new birth. "All Israel," it is affirmed in rabbinical writings, "shall have a part in the world to come." This inference is derived from Isaiah 60: 21. But all are not of the true Israel who bear that name. "He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly." The simple fact of birth into the Jewish nation can give no man a title to an eternal inheritance in the world to come.

A prominent Jewish gentleman, once the editor of a well-known Jewish newspaper, remarked at one time to the writer that he did not consider that he belonged to a peculiar people. He did not feel peculiar. While the gentleman was taking the word סגולה translated *peculiar*, in a sense quite other than that intended in the original, he was at the same time abjuring that glorious inheritance which is the birthright of the Jewish nation that they are to be a peculiar people. That birthright as we are to learn from the Hebrew word is that they are to be the acquired possession of Jehovah. God's true people have been acquired to be His own by means of the sacrificial death of His Son through which we also are constituted His sons. So far from being ashamed of our glorious inheritance we have reason to glory in it. God's great love is conspicuously manifest in the election of His people. We should not throw away our privileges but should set a proper valuation upon ourselves as God's peculiar possession.

God has given us to know, if we are of the true Israel, that we are His children by means of His Word, the Holy Scriptures. Great is the praise which the rabbies bestow upon the Law, and it is none too extravagant. It was sufficient for God to speak only, throughout the successive days of creation. By the word of the Lord the heavens and the earth were made. It was the instrument also of regeneration; and by means of that holy word every child of God is built up, for there is an etymo-

logical connection between בן, son, and בנין, building,—into the strength and beauty of holy living. No character is rightly directed unless unerringly established upon the Word of God.

The Word of God is a sacred vessel containing costly and glittering treasures and both the vessel and the treasures are equally beautiful. What amid the products of human skill is more filled with beauty in every curve and line than a Greek vase?

“O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
Thou, silent form! dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity! Cold Pastoral!
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
'Beauty is truth, truth beauty,' that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.”

When Dr. Schliemann was excavating amid the remains of ancient Troy he found, where once stood the palace of Priam, a collection of valuable treasure. Evidently in the haste caused by the catastrophe which befell the famous city on the Scamandrian plain all this treasure was placed in a large chest afterwards to be burned in the general conflagration. The treasure remained and is of priceless worth to the cause of Archæology. In it was found a large vase containing some of the most precious of the articles.

The Word of God is likewise beautiful in itself in its every part and contains jewels and treasures that we must possess ourselves of if we shall be at all children of the King.

S. S. P.

THE ETHICAL CHARACTER OF JUDAISM AND OF CHRISTIANITY.*

(Continued from page 237.)

From this state of degradation the woman was rescued by the Gospel. Here Christ was not merely at issue with the two schools, Hillel and Shammai, into

*By the Rev. M. Wolkenberg, in *Jews and Christians*.

which the Rabbinism of His day was divided. He was also directly at variance with the Mosaic legislation, which he described as a temporary concession to Jewish hardness of heart. And by reverting to the conditions implied in the original institution of marriage, as designed to rule man's wedded relations, He has, by implication, abolished the penalty of death, attached to their direct violation by the woman,¹ and banished forever divorce and polygamy from Christendom, and even from Judaism, so far as Jews are subject to Christian laws.

Not for a single moment be it understood, by the way, is it meant to insinuate that Jews of Western culture do not labor in the foremost ranks with those whose task it is to level to the dust what yet remains of the degrading distinctions of society. They have suffered too much themselves from such exceptional treatment, socially, civilly, and politically, to stand aloof from any efforts that are made for the removal of all galling disabilities, and for the conceding equal rights to all, without distinction of race or sex. Nor are they alone in cherishing those aspirations, and seeking to convert them into realities. Roman Catholics, though rigidly intolerant and exclusive wherever they are predominant and unrestrained, are yet no less eager in Protestant countries than Jews are to secure the same advantages alike for all, without regard to their creed. But none the less undeni-

(1) This is implied in the only condition attached, in the Sermon on the Mount, to the permission of divorce—a condition to which the Law attaches the penalty of death, and therefore leaves no room for divorce. (See also John 8 : 11.) Hence the school of Shammai insisted upon some cause not far short of that condition for the justification of divorce : whereas the school of Hillel held that a woman might be divorced for any cause, or no cause, even if the husband had conceived a liking for one more attractive than she was. (אפילו מצא אחרת נאה הימנה.)

But this throws much light upon the value of Jewish tradition. Divorce must have been a matter of frequent occurrence ever since the days of Moses. How is it, then, that there could be any dispute about such a fundamental matter as the cause which justified it ?

It is difficult to understand the grounds on which Canon Knox-Little refers (Matt. 5 : 32) to ante-nuptial unchastity. If after betrothal, the punishment is death, not divorce ; and if before, it is merely a case for a civil court (Ex. 22 : 15, 16 ; Deut. 22 : 20, 21, 23-29).

able is it that the impulse given in that direction, so far as the Jews are concerned, is no more due to the Rabbinic, or even to the Mosaic, legislation than is the impulse given in the direction of socialism and anarchism, which are so largely represented by Jews who have forsworn both Moses and the Rabbies, because the one knows as little as the others do of equal rights to all without distinction of race or creed.

Christianity, on the other hand, as it is the full and only development of the deeper and more comprehensive aims which are veiled in Mosaism, so also is it at once the only possible justification of that system, as a Divine institution, and its necessary consequence. As the hidden kernel, and owing to its final rejection by the Jewish people, the evolution of Christianity out of the Mosaic Theocracy is not so apparent as is the Rabbinic hardening and extension of the shell. But does anyone dispute the potential existence of the oak in the acorn, though its development is far less discernible by the senses?

Take, for instance, the command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," which is said, with some truth, to be the basis of Christian ethics. That command was given through Jews for Jews; Gentiles were not thought of, and, therefore, so far as the Law was concerned, they were not altogether improperly excluded by the Rabbies from Hillel downwards. "Neighbor" and "brother," though capable of universal comprehension, mean, in Mosaic no less than in Rabbinic phraseology, a Jew and no one else. When the lawyer asked, "Who is my neighbor?" it was not to solve any doubt of his own. He had none. His only object was to elicit and expose the views of Jesus, who had manifested strong tendencies to drop all racial distinctions from His ethics, and he succeeded far beyond his wishes. For here we have one of those most marvelous displays of Christ's wisdom in dealing with captious opponents which are so peculiar to His teaching. To choose a Samaritan, a member of a

community at deadly feud with the Jews, as an illustration of neighborliness, to which not even a priest and a Levite can lay claim, and to do this in such a manner as to compel the assent of His adversary and the universal admiration of mankind, shows such an amazing faculty of representing unpalatable truths in an acceptable form, that one no longer wonders at the exclamation, "Never man spake like this man." And yet, though at issue with the expounders of the Law in His definition of "neighbor," as well as in His command to love enemies, He did not go against the Law, but only beyond it. He gave it a greater depth and a wider range. "Neighbor" with Him meant the whole human race, and enemies as well as friends, and to love Him meant to die for him if necessary. And what He taught He exemplified in His own life, and in this way impressed His teaching indelibly upon the conscience of Christendom.

There is yet another aspect of the radical distinction between Judaism and Christianity which accounts for their wide ethical divergence. But, though lying on the surface, it is generally overlooked, and its disregard is the cause of not a little confusion of thought in matters which should be perfectly clear. Much has been written and said, in a tone of repugnance, on "the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees," its superficiality and its subversive and evasive literalness. And some of them, on their own admission, were certainly eager for popular applause and fond of ostentatious display in the discharge of their public and personal duties, especially those which were more particularly of a religious character. But even those who were honestly endeavoring to live up to the demands of the Law, and proved their single-mindedness by the sacrifice of their lives rather than transgress it, understood it only in its strictly literal sense. In the early stages of the Hasmonean wars, for instance, they allowed themselves to be massacred by the thousand—men, women and children—rather than carry

weapons for their own defence on the Sabbath-day. Self-evident as is the axiom, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath," they yet dared not go behind the letter of the Law until they were driven to do so by the alternative of the total extermination of the people.¹ And to this day, "observant" Jews will not move a finger to rescue their property from the flames on the Sabbath-day, though they do not scruple to evade the Law by having recourse to some subterfuge or another, which has been provided by the Rabbies since the days of the Hasmoneans.

This rigid adherence to the letter of the Law, it will be perceived at once—extending as it did to all the civil, social and domestic duties—tended directly to produce low and defective ethical conceptions. To it is it due, in a great measure, that many beneficent laws are restricted in their application—that women, for instance, are ranked in the same category with children and slaves, because the legal term employed is "man," not woman, or "son," not daughter; and there could be no freedom of interpretation with a Law which was directly given by God Himself. Moreover, the religious element of the Theocracy having merged into that of the State, women, as a matter of course (and as is the case, more or less, in all political organizations even now) shared neither in its duties nor in its privileges. For owing to the direct and absolute sovereignty of God over the people, in secular as well as in religious matters, these two elements, unlike the modern Church and State, were essentially and inseparably intermingled; one could not exist without the other. But as the rewards and the penalties attached to a national constitution can affect only the mundane prospects of the people—because nations as such have no

(1) The phrase occurs in Yoma 85 ab. "Desecrate one Sabbath for the sick man, and he will keep many Sabbaths afterward," which can only apply, as, indeed, the halachah expressly restricts it, to cases where life is in danger not otherwise.

existence in eternity—"the God of the spirits of all flesh" was lost sight of in the temporal King of the nation. The "Kingdom of heaven," a phrase of frequent occurrence in the Rabbinic literature, meant nothing else but Jehovah's visible dominion, in the person of some great descendant of David, over Israel as the dominant race, and through them over "the nations of the world." Obviously, then, in such a purely material or mundane government, ethics must have been weakened in proportion, as it could only be actual, not contemplated and unaccomplished, transgression which constituted a breach of the Law. "The Holy One, blessed be He," sounds the Rabbinic maxim, "takes cognizance of evil deeds only, and not of sinful intentions; for it is written (Psalm 66: 18—mark the construction put upon the passage), If I contemplate iniquity in my heart, the Lord does not notice it!" (Kidushin 40 a.)

Accordingly, when in the last illness of Rabbi Eliezer,¹ one of his disciples expressed his fears lest the dying Rabbi had already received his reward in this world for all the good deeds he had ever done, and was reserved for punishment in the next for his shortcomings, the latter cried out with his dying breath and with all the vehemence of which he was still capable, "Akiba! Is there anything in the whole Law which I have failed to fulfill?" כלים חסרתי מן התורה כילה (Sanhedrin, 101 a.)

Still more explicit, if possible, in the incident recorded in connection with a "holy man" (חסיד אחר) who, for the sake of the fresh milk prescribed as the only means of preserving his life, had transgressed a Rabbinic injunction, prohibiting the rearing of goats in Palestine (and there only), lest they should commit depredations in other people's fields, which in that country (explains Rashi, *in loco*) generally belonged to Jews—another illustration, by the way, of the restricted application of the word

(1) Cf. p. 264, *supra*. He married a sister of Gamaliel II, and was thus related by affinity with the house of Hillel.

"neighbor." When, however his whole life was subjected to a close scrutiny, it clearly appeared that no other blame attached to it. "And he himself," adds the narrator, "averred with his last breath that, with this single exception (which was only a breach of the letter, not of the spirit of the prohibition, for the animal was tied to the foot of his bedstead), he was free from all sin" (Baba Kama, 80a).

If our religious susceptibilities and our deep sense of human imperfection rise in revolt against such a low standard of duty towards God and man, it should be borne in mind that there is no ground for the least suspicion of hypocrisy in either of the two instances here adduced. There can be no conscious deception of self, or of others, on the brink of the grave. It is merely a question of slavish adherence to the Law, and of outward conformity to it, which, as far as the letter went, the Rabbies rightly believed was all that God required of them. Are not law-abiding citizens respected everywhere? Who ever asks for their motives in obeying the law, or expects them to go beyond the letter? And that is exactly the position occupied by "observant" Jews, whose eternal relations to their Creator are all but lost sight of in their transitory relations to the State or the community of Israel,¹ and whose immortal soul is regarded in the light of a vanishing citizen of a passing commonwealth. It was probably because St. Paul, before his conversion, regarded it in the same light that, "as touching the righteousness which is in the Law," he, too, no less than the Rabbies, and, like Zacharias and his wife in the Gospel, deemed himself "blameless."

For, "I say unto you," is the emphatic declaration of

(1) This is strikingly illustrated by the fact that, notwithstanding the widespread and ever-growing ignorance of Hebrew among all classes of Jews, the latter are, nevertheless, made to repeat their daily prayers in that language, because, forsooth, it is the principal tie which still unites the Jewish people all over the world. And yet a Rabbi complained, in the pulpit of the Hamstead Synagogue, of the absence of spirituality among the Jews.

the Saviour, "except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." In that one sentence He sums up the sharp contrast between the Christian and the Jewish conception of the ultimate end designed in the Mosaic Theocracy, which runs through the Sermon on the Mount—that new Law of the New Covenant. He gives full prominence to the hidden, spiritual aspect of the Law; He brings out or attaches to it, a deeper and wider significance, and He exalts the citizen of a visible and transient commonwealth into a denizen of an invisible and everlasting kingdom.

It is this essential difference between Christianity and Judaism which characterizes their ethical systems. Both lay claim to superhuman sanction. But while Christian ethics, dominated by man's spiritual relations to God, spurn all degrading distinctions, and are limitless in depth and range of application, those of Judaism, swayed only by mundane considerations, are disfigured by social, sexual and tribal restrictions. Above all are they depressed by the letter of the Law which has been obsolete for eighteen centuries, and, to a great extent, is not suited to the conditions and requirements created by the Gospel. And yet Mendelssohn went to the heart of the matter, and gave utterance to the inmost feelings of the Rabbies, when he said that God only, who dictated the Law, could also abolish or modify it; in other words, that only another Moses, or one greater than Moses, could carry out that object successfully. That is just what Jesus of Nazareth has done for Christendom. May He not ultimately do so likewise for His own ancient people?

IN St. John's College, Oxford, is preserved a portrait of Charles I., in which the engraver's lines, as they seem to be, are really microscopic writings, the face alone containing all the book of Psalms, with the creeds, and several forms of prayers.

BLESSING AND MALEDICTION.*

ברכה וקללה

According to Hebrew Sources.

BY DR. AARON WISE.

INTRODUCTORY.

Blessing or cursing means originally the expression of a desire that certain conditions or circumstances change for the better or for the worse.

As the person who uttered such a wish did not have it in his power to enact its fulfillment at once, the belief in a higher power and in a future was necessarily involved in the one who uttered the blessing or the curse; he believed that Divinity would in the course of time fulfill his desire. Gradually, as blessings and curses were being fulfilled, and as it was supposed that Divinity complied with the wishes of those who had expressed them, the persons who expressed the blessings or curses were believed to be the special favorites of God, and to possess a knowledge of the hidden future.

Their favorable or unfavorable wishes for persons or things were regarded as a prophecy of the good that was to happen, and their curse as a prediction of the evil in store for the ill-favored. Thus sentiments developed into beliefs, and beliefs were crystallized into creeds as regards blessings and maledictions, and those who uttered them.

It is a noteworthy instance of the optimism of the Bible, that the blessing appears immediately at the creation of life, while the curse is pronounced later as a punishment for transgression. Thus the inference is justified that the inspired book took it for granted that the object of creation was primarily for the good, and the

*This article we reprint from the *Menorah*, an excellent Jewish review, because we think it will be of interest to our readers. We, of course, do not partake of the quasi-rationalistic views of Jewish history, or of human history, here presented, but there are many things in the article highly suggestive. The use of the anathema by the Christian Church is an interesting subject for study. The superstitions connected with excommunication have not yet been wholly eradicated even from those denominations which are freest from later Jewish or pagan error.

evil came only as a punishment or a consequence of the wrong which subverted the original destiny of the creatures by their own sinful deeds.

It is natural that the wishes of the most aged and the most experienced persons are the most moderate and the best suited for the persons and circumstances in whose behalf they are expressed. The power of blessing, then, was quite rationally believed to repose with the patriarchs of the families and the chieftains of tribes in the ancient times. But, as those patriarchs and chieftains were also the religious guides of their families and clans, their blessings assumed the solemnity and the power of a divine oracle. Later on the priests, who succeeded the patriarchs in the performance of religious functions and rites, claimed the power of blessing and cursing all for themselves. That power is still believed to be in their hands to a very considerable extent, especially in religious denominations by which they are regarded as the very representatives of God on earth, and alone capable of interpreting the divine will and word.

Here again I must point out the fact that while, according to the Mosaic institutions, it was the duty of the priests only to bless—in one individual instance alone could the high priest pronounce a curse against a person *הַסֵּה*. (the woman charged with adultery) and even that on conditional terms—the priesthood of younger religious denominations have assumed the prerogative of doing at least as much unconditional cursing as blessing. We do not know of a single instance in which the Jewish priesthood pronounced a curse. But later on Rabbinism, which developed at the same time and under the same circumstances as the daughter religions of Judaism, assumed the power of cursing, and handled the anathema *שְׁמַזָּה חַרֵּם* etc., quite freely, which, by the way, was used in a most practical manner to solve a problem that agitates even now the minds of many men, *i. e.*, to pro-

tect the copyright of books against literary pirates throughout the Jewish world.

THE BLESSING.

According to the Bible, Divinity itself was the first one who blessed; productiveness, fecundity, or increase, was dependent upon it. Thus, when the creation of aquatic and winged beings was completed, the blessing bestowed upon them was, "be fruitful and multiply" (Gen. 1: 22), and when the higher forms of life were created and man was called into existence, the same blessing was repeated, *ibid.*, 5: 28. Indeed, all that the world needed at that early stage of existence was population, and by the divine blessing (*i. e.*, design or promise for the future) this was assured. The same blessing was repeated to Noah and his children, *ibid.*, 9: 1, 7. From this, the directly divine blessing, it appears the Hebrew word, *B'rakha*, (ברכה) which is from the same root as *B'rekha*, (ברכה) a spring of water, a source, originated and subsequently applied to all kinds of blessings, whether they had anything to do with productiveness or not. And when the author of the Biblical narrative tells us that the Lord blessed (ויברך) the seventh day, *ibid.*, 2: 3, in which instance the wish for its future cannot be identified with fruitfulness or productiveness, he finds it really necessary to supplement his statement with the word ויקדש איתו he sanctified it, because the word ויברך by its derivative meaning would appear in this case quite devoid of sense. But as soon as we meet with patriarchal life we find that the prerogative of blessing reposed with the head of the family. Thus Noah disposes of his sons by blessing and cursing respectively. Gen. 10: 25, 26, 27. In the story of Abraham we see how Divinity itself relegated the power of blessing to the head of the family. Gen. 12: 23. Rabbi Berachyah at least (Midrash Rabba) inferred as much from the wording of these passages. Thus he says: It is written, ואברכך "I will bless thee." Why then the repetition, והיה ברכה "Be a

blessing?" But herewith the Lord Almighty meant to say, "Hitherto it devolved upon me to bestow blessing in the world, but henceforth the blessings shall be delivered into thy hands, that thou mayest bestow them on those whom thou regardest as worthy of them." But the original purport of the blessing (*i. e.*, productivity, increase, fecundity), was not changed, whether it came from Divinity itself, or from the mouth of the patriarchs to whom the power was relegated. Thus we find in the covenant of circumcision the blessing of fruitfulness repeated and reiterated (Gen. 17: 2, 6, 16, 20) and again in the covenant of the Akedah (22: 17) a repetition of the same. Futher on, when Eliezer, on his mission to procure a bride for his master's son, mentions the blessings which God had bestowed on Abraham, he recounts his prosperity and the vastness of his possessions which was but a result of a promised increase, (24: 35,) and when Rebekah is sent off by her parents, they bestow on her the blessing, "Thou shalt increase in thousands and ten thousands." *ibid.*, 60. Abraham transferred the prerogative of blessing to his favorite son Isaac. Thus a Rabbi opined (Midrash Rabba to Num. chapter 6) that the verse "And Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac" (Gen. 25: 5) referred to the power he vested in him to bestow blessings.

And verse 11 in the same chapter, "And it came to pass after the death of Abraham, God blessed his son Isaac," seems directly to point to the circumstance of the transferring of the power or authority to confer blessings from the father to the son. In the age of the patriarch Isaac, the belief seems to have gained ground that the blessing as well as the power of disposing of it could be obtained even by indirect means. If it was only solemnly pronounced by the patriarch in authority, though he did not mean or intend to bless the person, it was valid and incontrovertible. Hence the manner in which Rebekah was scheming with Jacob to obtain the blessing of Isaac

for him. The wording of that blessing is nobler and betrays a vaster view of life than that of the blessings previously mentioned, inasmuch as it takes cognizance of the causes of prosperity which are and always will remain in the power of God alone. But still it culminates in the old and original formula, וַיִּפְרֹךְ וַיְבָרֵךְ יְיָ "He (God) shall fructify thee and increase thee," etc. (Gen. 28: 29, and 28: 3, 4. Yet the latter part of that blessing, in which a formal transfer of the power and authority to bless is made by Isaac to Jacob, the Biblical author is careful to have pronounced with the full consciousness, and by the freewill of the giver toward the receiver. From this it appears that the author of the narrative could not well approve of the validity of a stolen blessing, but still he could not suppress the facts as they were submitted to him with reference to the first part of Isaac's blessing.

But those who will not accept the narratives of the book of Genesis as authentic historical records may still be thankful to the author for the exquisite picture of patriarchal domestic life which the story of Isaac's blessing conveys. Jacob in his turn exercises the functions of a blessing giver. He blesses Pharaoh. Gen. 47: 10. He blesses Joseph and his sons. On the latter he seems to have conferred his authority as blessing giver as suggested by Midrash Rabba in numerous places.

Attention must be called to the little altercation between Jacob and Joseph, when the former was bestowing his blessing on the sons of the latter, which seems to me to characterize the first struggle between Semitic tradition and Egyptian usage within the Hebrew family. It will be remembered that the blessing descending from father to son since Abraham was not bestowed by the patriarch according to the priority of birth, but according to selection. Neither Isaac nor Jacob were the firstborn sons of their parents. Jacob, following their example, made Joseph the recipient of his blessing, not-

withstanding his being his eleventh son. And it would appear that on his death-bed the patriarch was intent upon the tradition of his family: that the blessing should always depend on the choice and the selection of the giver, and not on the accidental birthright of the receiver. He, therefore, quite arbitrarily as it seems, preferred the younger son of Joseph to his senior brother. Joseph, on the other hand, who had become familiar with the royal forms and the Egyptian usages, and through his high position it is only natural that he conceived a certain sympathy for them, could not understand the pure motive of his old father, and strongly remonstrated with him. He even went so far as to try by force to remove Jacob's right hand from the head of Ephraim to that of Manasseh. "Not so, father," he protested, "but this one is the first born." But the patriarch remained immovable. "I know that, my son," he said, "I know that, but his younger brother shall be greater than he." From this it would appear that the priority of the first-born was not originally a Semitic institution, but of pure Egyptian origin. If this suggestion be of any weight, it might throw light upon many Biblical passages, the slaying of the firstborn and the consécration of the firstborn. But here is not the place to enlarge upon this subject. I merely throw out a hint for the student, without dwelling upon it.

In conclusion, I would say that the author of Genesis seems to be desirous of conveying the idea that the right of bestowing blessings on the part of the descendants of Abraham was recognized by their neighbors. Thus Malki-Zedek, a priest of the Most High, recognizes Abraham as blessed by the Most High. Laban says to Jacob, "I have made divinations, and the Lord hath blessed me for thy sake," and there are several more instances of this kind.

FORMULA OF THE BLESSING.

The theories about the age and authorship of the

edition on the Pentateuch, by various parties, notably those of the Elohist and Jehovists, respectively, are well known, and it is unnecessary to dwell upon them. But I must admit my inability to appreciate any of them, though I can perfectly well appreciate the ingenuity of their expounders whenever I go to my Bible in search on the consecutive development of any idea contained in it. The same was my experience when I pursued my study on the subject now before us. Instead of tearing the sacred volume in shreds and perforating it with falsehoods and forgeries that may have been committed by various offenders at various times, I prefer taking it as a whole, and regarding its apparent inconsistencies as a reflex of the various stages of growths in the religious conceptions of our ancestors. I also take it for granted that the patriarchs, though they may at times have anticipated the worship of Jehovah, were mostly Elohist, *i. e.*, they worshipped Divinity by the name of Elohim, which implied the *tout ensemble* of all supernatural powers they conceived of. Accordingly, their blessings were bestowed in the name of Elohim. Moses is to be regarded as the great schismaticist who eradicated that worship from the Hebrew tribe and substituted the worship of Jehovah in its stead. Together with this great reform, he also, in connection with it, instituted the office of the priesthood, and to the priests exclusively he relegated the functions of religious services, made the blessing a part of it, and on them, too, he bestowed the prerogative of pronouncing the blessing. But their religious functions as well as their blessing were to be exercised solely and exclusively in the name of Jehovah, יהוה. We do not find the name Elohim in the whole book of Leviticus in connection with any of the sacerdotal functions of the priest, but many a time the name of Jehovah. Our ancients have taken notice of this.

In Siphri to Pinhas, Shim'on son of Pasai says: "You observe that in connection with the offerings

Elohim of Shaddai or Tsabaoth is never mentioned but always the name Jehovah." In *Torath Cohanim*, another Tana* remarks: "Whenever *Korban* (sacrifice) is spoken of, it is only in connection with Jehovah."

And this great reform was speedily enacted; for, at the first formal religious ceremony that took place, at the dedication of the Tabernacle, we are informed, "And Aaron spread his hands upon the people and blessed them."

In connection with the passage I have just quoted, is a passage in Bemidbar Rabba which seems to be of historical significance. Thus in chapter 11 the Rabbies say: When Aaron came to pronounce the blessing the people began grumbling, "We do not want a priest to bless us, we want the blessing to come directly from Thee, O Lord." Whereupon, Moses appeared in the name of God, saying: "And they [the priests] shall put my name upon the children of Israel and I will bless them."

From this it appears that the Israelites acquiesced in all the institutions of Moses, but were unwilling to submit to the innovation that the priests alone should possess the power of bestowing blessings. And Moses explained to them that the priests were only there to invoke Divinity by its right name, but the blessing was indeed to come directly from God as heretofore: And I will bless thee.

Perusing the description of the Mosaic institutions, it becomes plainly apparent that the great legislator bent all his efforts to substitute Jehovahism for the patriarchal Elohim, the worship of one invisible and ineffable God

*The *Tanaim* were the early doctors of the Mishna, the most ancient of the Talmudic doctors. Like *Mishna*, the word *Tana* conveys the notion of repetition. The oral law, supposed to be from Jehovah through Moses, was handed down by constant repetition. Of course, we do not wholly agree with Dr. Wise that monotheism was so sudden a reform in Israel, though doubtless in times before Moses the polytheistic idea was present in the word Elohim. But Moses, by divine direction, rendered fixed and certain the conception of God as the Eternal, the *יהוה* of Exodus 3. It is by no means necessary to suppose so sudden a revolution as the writer implies, nor is it needful to suppose so crude a view of Divinity in the minds of the patriarchs.

for that of a union of many various divinities. And this plan he pursued with the greatest energy. The priests were initiated in the plan, and the mysteries of this revelation, which could not be trusted to the people entire as yet, were relegated to the functions of the heads of the families.

The high priest as the representative of this caste of Jehovahists was also made the representative of the faith and the cultus of Jehovah. Hence the golden frontlet which he had to wear on his head, with the inscription, Kadosh L'Adonai. All this only to eradicate the worship of Elohim and to enforce the new worship of Jehovah.

(To be continued).

THE JEWS AND SOUTH AFRICA.

In these days when attention has been so prominently called through reckless speculation to the gold fields of South Africa, it may not be generally known that this country of wonderful resources, to an immeasurable extent, owes its development to the Jews. If a record in detail were written to substantiate this, it would be of romantic interest.

They were the earliest traders doing great service, opening up the whale, guano, and fishing industries of the colony; they took a conspicuous part in the construction of piers for the safety of the shipping; they established the Cape Angora hair and the wool trades. The first tannery in South Africa was started by a Jew, while ostrich farming took practical shape under their versatile hands. It is claimed by the *Jewish Chronicle* that without exception the whole interior trade during the last fifty years was opened by the Jews, and that there is not a town but owes to the Jews the foundation of early settlement as a trading and commercial center.

While they had no direct part in the actual discovery of Cape diamonds and gold, they have held no inconspicuous position as dealers, multitudes of them amassing immense fortunes, perhaps not always in a way that would "count for righteousness," and they are still "buying and selling and getting gain" in these fields so rich in auriferous deposits and isometric crystals.

With regard to the gold fields of South Africa, it would not require a great stretch of imagination to believe that the old gold workings of these parts that have now made these Jews so rich, was the much-sought-for Ophir, the source from whence King Solomon derived his almost fabulous revenues. In 1 Kings 9: 26 we read, And King Solomon made a navy of ships in Ezion-geber which is beside Eloth on the shores of the Red Sea (at the head of the Elamitic gulf) in the land of Edom. And Hiram sent in the navy his servants, shipmen that had knowledge of the sea, with the servants of King Solomon, and they came to Ophir and fetched from thence gold—four hundred and twenty talents (\$13,020,000), and brought it to King Solomon, making the voyage in those days of slow sailing, in three years. See verse 22. See also 2 Chron. 9: 10, "And the servants of Solomon brought algum trees (sandal wood) and precious stones." Ver. 13. "Now the weight of gold which came to Solomon in one year was six hundred and threescore and six talents, or about \$20,000,000."

Although so much has been written "pro and con" about the source from whence these treasures were derived, it does not seem very rash to record our opinion that these were the very gold fields that have lain unworked for centuries, and that the servants of Solomon were the workers.—*The Jewish Era, for January.*

GRACE DIVINE.

"My grace is sufficient for you."

Almighty God, I promise Thee,
As Thou shalt grant me grace divine,
To bear life's sorrows patiently,
And to Thy will my lot resign.

As blessings on my nature fall,
And fruits of faith Thy gifts reveal,
I see resultant good in all,
And tribulation's pangs conceal.

Thy peerless love sustains my heart
When wounded by another's deed ;
And charity restrains the dart
Revengeful feeling would have freed.

Falsehood abashed then flees away,
And vain regrets are captive led ;
For truth triumphant is my stay
And Hope the banner o'er my head.

—Mark Levy.

OUR VIEW OF MISSION WORK.

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