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THE PECULIAR PEOPLE.

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A Christian Monthly Devoted to Jewish Interests.

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All communications for the Editor should be addressed,

THE REV. WILLIAM C. DALAND,
118 Main St., Westerly, R. I.

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A CHRISTIAN MONTHLY,

DEVOTED TO JEWISH INTERESTS.

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

EDITOR:

THE REV. WILLIAM C. DALAND,

(Pastor at Westerly, R. I.)

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

Vol. 8. March, 1896. No. 12.

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

THE REV. PROF. WILLIAM C. WHITFORD, ALFRED, N. Y.

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.*

הביטו אל־צור חצבתם

ואל־מקבת כור נקרתם
Isa. 51: 1.

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

VOL. VIII. PLAINFIELD, N. J., MARCH, 1896. No. 12.

JUDÆUS SUM; JUDAICI NIHIL A ME ALIENUM PUTO.

In closing the current volume of THE PECULIAR PEOPLE, the seventh year of the present editorial supervision, we are glad to be able to say to our readers that a wider and brighter future seems to open before us.

It is appropriate that at the close of a week of years some change should mark the new Sabbatic cycle. Accordingly, beginning with the next issue of THE PECULIAR PEOPLE, the magazine will be conducted under the joint supervision of its present editor and his able colleague, the Rev. S. S. Powell, whose articles on Jewish literature have so often been found in our pages.

THE present editor will soon remove to London, England, and his colleague will have the charge of the American editorial department. Thus we hope to unite the Old World and the New, and, if possible, to be more efficient than in the past in our labors for the peace of Israel. In the April number we hope to set forth more fully our aims for the immediate future of our magazine.

פניאל.

When, seven years ago, I entered upon the then, by me, untried field of Jewish-Christian thought, it was with many misgivings as to my ability to present the thoughts

that burned within me. I said in the words of Rebekah, the mother of Esau and Jacob, למה יה אנכי? "Why am I thus?" In all these years there have been many times doubts and difficulties which troubled me. But in the spirit of the younger son of that birth, I have always cried out, when tempted to relinquish the field,

לא אשׁלחך כי אִסִּי־בִרְכָתִי

"I will not let thee go, except thou bless me!"

The words I then uttered are still the message of my heart. Let me repeat them:

"There is between the Jews and the Christian nations a misunderstanding centuries old. They have ever mutually hated and despised each other. This must cease. "Peace," is what I would cry. The causes of this misunderstanding are manifold. They will be mentioned in this paper again and again, that they may be taken away. THE PECULIAR PEOPLE will strive to show the Jews that Christians are not all Jew-haters, that many Christians have a sincere regard and a great care for the true welfare of Israel, that *some* Jews at least have become Christians without bribery or inducements of any kind but the conviction of truth, and that some Jewish-Christians are still Jews in the highest, purest sense, and that they in poverty, without pay, and solely for their love to Israel, preach the Messiah, Jesus. THE PECULIAR PEOPLE will strive to show to Gentile Christians that they have totally misconceived the Jewish spirit, that they have undertaken by a wrong method to win the Jewish nation; namely, by Gentilizing the Jews, instead of giving them the pure gospel and leaving them to become Christian Jews, that they have therefore won for the most part an unworthy portion of Israel, and that, consequently, they have a wrong estimate of the Jewish temper.

These words I still reiterate with renewed emphasis. I believed them then; I am now more than ever convinced of their truth. That others have accepted them is strengthening to my faith. I have come to Peniel and the face of God has been made known unto me. Henceforward I shall rest in peace and trust more implicitly in God and his purposes for Israel. My heart longs for the

accomplishment of the two aims set forth so long ago. May God grant that THE PECULIAR PEOPLE under the new management with increased usefulness may be a means blessed to this end!

THE EDITOR.

JESUS, THE CRUCIFIED.

During the present month, Adar, occurs the Jewish festival of Purim. It commemorates the great national deliverance of the Jews from destruction, when the counsels of Haman were defeated, as recorded in the Book of Esther. That was a great deliverance; for it was the intention of Haman, the Jews' enemy, to bring about a massacre analogous to that which the Turks are perpetrating now upon the Armenians. He would have destroyed the whole nation if that had been in his power. The festival has, during all the Middle Ages and until now, been deservedly popular.

Some of the customs observed at the present time during Purim are highly interesting to non-Jewish observers. The book of Esther is read in Synagogue, and whenever the name of Haman occurs the congregation cry out, "May his name be blotted out." At the conclusion of the reading of the book they curse Haman and Zoresh his wife, and bless Mordecai and Esther, and Harbonah, who hanged Haman.

In the laws of Theodosian there is evidence that the Jews of the later periods of the Roman Empire took occasion when cursing Haman and the Amalekites to curse also the Christians. It seems that they burned Haman in effigy, hanging upon the tree; and the wood upon which he was suspended was made into the form of the cross. The cross, once the hated symbol of Roman cruelty, had then come to be the heavenly sign of mercy and salvation. This custom the emperor forbade. The cruel persecutions of the Middle Ages seem to have given immense popularity to Purim. Still Haman

plotted and the nations still rose up against Israel, and we cannot wonder that the Jewish people loved to look back to the time of wonderful deliverance, when the beautiful Queen Esther interceded for her people and when a remarkable succession of providential interpositions converted the mourning of the Jewish people into gladness and a good day.

The hanging of Haman upon the tree does certainly tend to bring into mind the crucifixion of Jesus; but how great the contrast! The one was the Jews' enemy, the Other, a Hebrew of the Hebrews and the Friend of man!

It has always been a wicked and disastrous course to attribute to the Jews of every generation responsibility for the death of Jesus, and then to proceed to visit condign punishment upon them for it, resulting in bloody persecutions. That was never the spirit of Him who became the Crucified, for He prayed that His murderers might be forgiven. Nevertheless it is true that the men of His own generation, they who were of His own people, were responsible for His death. "Father, forgive them," was the prayer of Jesus, "for they know not what they do." They who were directly responsible for that death evidently thought that they were doing God service. In further proof of this position we may be permitted to refer to the Talmud. Transgression of the ordinances of the scribes designed to protect the Law was a capital offense. See *Erubin* 21b. And according to *Sanhedrin* 11, 4, any teacher who so transgressed was to be put to death at one of the national festivals. This latter passage of the Mishna throws considerable light upon the question of the crucifixion of Jesus and is in many ways so interesting that it will be well for us to give some attention to it. From this passage it would seem that strict supervision was maintained, in the times of Jesus, over all religious teaching put forth in the schools and synagogues of the land. This supposition is corroborated by the strict surveillance to which we

know that Jesus was subjected by the Pharisees and scribes. A deputation had been sent from Jerusalem to watch Him at the time of the healing of the paralytic borne of four. In the second verse of the chapter in the Mishna referred to it is stated that there were three Sanhedrins which met within the Temple precincts. One sat near the door of entrance into the court of the Gentiles, another at the eastern gate of the court of the women, and still another, the supreme tribunal of the land in all religious matters, in the Hall of Hewn Stones, one of the chambers opening into the court of the priests. Before these tribunals religious teachers were accustomed to come and relate four things: their manner of study, the manner of study of their associates, the substance of their teaching, and their associates' teachings. If the account which such teachers gave of themselves before the lower tribunal was satisfactory they were dismissed; but if not, they were to appear before the next higher, and, similarly, before the supreme Sanhedrin; and still if their teaching was considered to be erroneous, they were required thenceforward to conform their teaching to the standards set for them by the national savants sitting in the Hall of Hewn Stones, "for out of it went forth the Law to all Israel." When these teachers returned, everyone to his own city, they studied and taught in accordance as they had learned. Teaching was not to originate with them. They were to teach and transmit what had been handed down to them; and if out of the presumption of their hearts they did teach new practices they had committed a crime worthy of death. "Weightier are the words of the scribes than the words of the Law," it is said in the beginning of the third verse of the passage under consideration. Evidently no disparagement was intended of the Law in this utterance, for all the words of the scribes were designed as a protection that the Law might be the better observed.

“They shall not put him to death by the Sanhedrin of his city, but they shall conduct him to the great Sanhedrin in Jerusalem and guard him until the feast and put him to death at the feast,” are the words specifying what disposition shall be made of a public teacher who failed to conform his teaching to that of the authorities. In the case of Jesus we know very well that He did not in all respects teach in accordance with the standards of the scribes. He set aside their ordinances in regard to the washing of hands and released from the heavy yoke that had been put upon the people in regard to the manner of the observance of the Sabbath. But herein was the Sanhedrists' great wrong. They should have known by the purity of the person of Jesus and by the graciousness of divine love displayed in His miracles that it was impossible for Him to break the Law of God, even though He did infringe upon their ordinances which they designed to be a fence to the Law. But they were blind and put to death the Holy One and the Just, and in doing so they uttered a curse which has not ceased to enter into effect from that generation to this, “His blood be upon us and upon our children.” קללת חכם אפילו בהנם היא באה (“The curse of a wise man, even though unjustly pronounced, is effectual”), it is said in the Talmud. The men of that generation were certainly not wise men who pronounced that curse, or they would have discerned the signs of their times. Nevertheless the curse has come into effect. Cursing and hatred have followed the mere mention of the name of Jesus in all the centuries since, and many of the expurgated utterances of the Talmud in regard to Him sound like the insane ravings of madmen. Madness and folly have fallen upon Israel in consequence of their own curse and in accordance with the plain predictions of Leviticus and Deuteronomy.

But so soon as Israel shall repent, the curse will be removed, and the curse which had been an instrument of shame will be converted into a glorious symbol of

triumph. Then shall Israel see that Jesus the Crucified, He it is, who has removed all curse and all consequences of our sins by His suffering upon the tree, as it is written, "Cursed is every one that hangeth upon a tree."

"Since my eyes were fixed on Jesus,
I've lost sight of all beside—
So enchained my spirit's vision,
Looking at the Crucified.
All for Jesus! all for Jesus!
All for Jesus Crucified."

S. S. P.

BLESSING AND MALEDICTION.*

ברכה וקללה

According to Hebrew Sources.

BY DR. AARON WISE.

(Continued from page 263.)

BLESSINGS IN THE PENTATEUCH.

This theory is also fully supported by the various formulas of blessing in the Pentateuch. The patriarchs invariably use the name of Elohim in their blessing. This is seen to have been the custom of Abraham,—“And it happened after the death of Abraham, and Elohim blessed Isaac his son.” Gen. 25: 11. Of Isaac,—“May Elohim give to thee of the dew of heaven” (27: 28) and “May El Shaddai bless thee.” 28: 3. Of Jacob—“The Elohim before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk” (42: 15), and “Elohim shall be with thee.” 48: 31. Of Joseph—“Elohim shall surely visit you.” 1: 54. But Moses peremptorily enforces the name of Jehovah instead of Elohim in the blessing: “Thus and not otherwise shall ye henceforth bless the children of Israel,” and gives the priests an entirely new formula, a Jehovistic one, *יברכך יהוה וישמרך יאר יהוה פניו אליך ויחנך, ישא יהוה, פניו אליך וכו'.*

*This article is reprinted from the *Menorah*, and will be found to be very suggestive to students of the Bible. We conceive, however, that, while a blessing pronounced by a man of God is in essence only a prayer, there is more in it than the author would seem to imply. Oh, that Israel would attain to the fulness of the Divine blessing which is ready to be poured out upon the *עם סגולה*.

“May Jehovah bless thee and keep thee. May Jehovah cause His countenance to shine upon thee and be gracious to thee. May Jehovah lift His countenance to thee and grant thee peace.”

And in order to make his command and his objects perfectly explicit, he concludes, *ישמו את שמי על בני ישראל* and so dear was this, the Jehovist idea, to Moses, and so predominant was it in his mind, that in his last blessing which he bestowed on his people he repeated the tetragrammaton, Jehovah, seven times.

Still clearer does it appear that the principal effort of Moses consisted in the substitution of the Jehovah worship for the ancient patriarchal worship of Elohim, from the utterances of his follower and disciple, Joshua. In his admonitions to the people the latter plainly exhibits the bitter war of the new idea against the old one.

And the people again pledged their adherence to Jehovah. “They answered and said, Far be it from us to forsake Jehovah and to serve other gods.” From the last passage of Joshua’s speech which I have quoted it appears that Elohim implied a belief in local divinities and consequently as a multiplicity of gods, for *האלהים אשר אלהי האמורי אשר אתם וכי* seems to be distinct from *אלהי האמורי אשר אתם וכי* while Jehovah was the same God everywhere. If we refer back to the history of the *Akeidah*, we find reason to assume that the Elohim also required human sacrifice, while Jehovah would not tolerate that terrible rite. Take the chapter of the *Akeidah* and read it carefully, and you will find that in all the preparations Abraham made to sacrifice his son Isaac, he only followed the commands and guidance of Elohim.

Only by the command of Jehovah the human sacrifice was rejected and the ram substituted in its stead.

Thus the abolition of the service of Elohim meant the abolition of the belief in a multiplicity of divinities and of the rites of human sacrifices; hence the legislation of Moses. “He that brings sacrifice to Elohim shall be

anathema," and "cursed be he who passeth his son and his daughter in fire before Moloch." The belief in Jehovah soon became predominant in Israel, although the other institutions connected with it were sadly neglected.

Greetings and blessings were given in the name of Jehovah. The angel greets Gideon in the name of Jehovah. Boaz greets Ruth in the name of Jehovah. The marriage blessing is pronounced in the name of Jehovah. And when the union of Ruth and Boaz is blessed with a child, Naomi is congratulated by her friends, "Blessed be Jehovah who hath not refused thee a redeemer." Still further, David sends his greetings to Jabesh Gilead with the words, "May Jehovah be gracious unto you. Blessed be ye to Jehovah who has shown his love to you." And at the dedication of Solomon's Temple the blessing is solemnly pronounced in the Jehovistic form: "Praised be Jehovah who has vouchsafed rest to His people Israel."

THE CURSE.

The original conception of malediction seems to be only as a negation of blessing, *i. e.*, not to be blessed means to be cursed. The root, קלל means, "to be light of weight" only, hence unimportant, despicable, or unencumbered with the goods of this world. The verb קלל "to curse," can therefore be used in the piel, *i. e.*, in the intensified form. And מארה from the root ארר is of no less an intricate nature, and with great difficulty to be defined. Delitzsch suggests that ארר was originally an interjection of horror. Hence ארר would simply mean the "horrible," the one whose appearance would provoke great disgust.

But, be this as it may,—for we are not here now to discuss the meaning of Hebrew words,—one thing is certain, that קללה or מארה means only the absence of blessing. In consequence of this, the primitive significance of קללה and מארה was unproductiveness; and in connection with that, all that hinders production, or

makes the same unenjoyable, is implied in the word. Thus we find: "Cursed be the earth for your sake; it shall not continue to afford you its products, thorns and thistles shall it sprout forth." And further on, "In pain shalt thou bear children." Authority to pronounce the blessing implied the reverse when the person refused to exercise his functions; and where the blessing was restored, naturally the curse was wiped out.

In connection with this idea that the curse is only the absence of the blessing, where it is due, a third word which denotes cursing, but which occurs only in the form of a verb and never as a noun, must be taken into consideration. It is the word קבה used by Balak and Balaam. The root of קבה is נקב a hole, emptiness, and implies precisely what I have said before. From this also Balaam's excuses can be well understood מה אקרב לך? How can I create emptiness? where God has not left it so? לא קבה אל.

In this connection it is well to note the contents of all the blessings of Balaam. They were, the provision of plenty, plenty of the goods of this world, plenty of productiveness, plenty of power to subdue enemies and to attain success.

Another instance to show that the original Hebrew conception of cursing was merely the withdrawal or the precluding of blessing will be found in Samuel 13. The wording of this passage is altogether inexplicable, excepting as suggested by Gesenius that it means, Eli's sons curse themselves. Now, in this instance, cursing could not mean wishing ill for themselves, or pronouncing maledictions on themselves. But according to the description of the defection of Eli's sons, we see that they merely precluded the blessings that were due to them to rest upon them; they forfeited the respect of the people by their immorality, they forfeited their rights to the priestly position by abusing their functions and their authority. Thus, if my suggestion with regard to the

original meaning of קללה and ברכה be correct, the curse is only a mark of the absence of blessing, and the latter is a natural consequence of the existence of creation.

This constitutes one of the most beautiful testimonies to the optimistic principles of our sacred Bible: The Law of the Lord is perfect.

SYMBOLS AND CEREMONIES.

The one who was endowed with the power to bestow blessings seems to have carried the insignia or symbol of his power. What the insignia were in patriarchal times is very difficult to conjecture. The well-known saying of the Talmud: "A precious stone was pending from his neck," seems to me to point at an ancient tradition, that the first patriarchs carried as the insignia of their authority a gem or an amulet upon their breasts.

Later on we find the "staff" of Moses as a symbol of divine authority and power, and our ancients gave that staff a pedigree reaching back to the time of Adam, and would have it still existing and waiting till the Messiah will come and adopt it as a sign of his authority. It seems quite natural that a people of pastoral and nomadic origin should adopt such a sign. Aaron seems to have had both the breastplate and the staff as signs of his authority and his divine commission; the *חֶשֶׁן* or breastplate is well known, and the staff is suggested by the narrative of its budding and blooming as an evidence that divine authority was vested in its owner. "Behold the staff of Aaron budded." Joseph again probably following an Egyptian usage, had a goblet, or "gebia," as a talisman, as appears from the passage: "The cup from which my master drinks and wherewith he divines." It seems that this is also the origin of the "four cups" on the eve of Pesach.

The blessing was bestowed, in some instances, at the ceremony of partaking of a meal. Thus we find that at a meal the angels announced to Abraham that he would

get a son by Sarah. Much circumstance is made about the meal of which Eliezer partook in the house of Bethuel, where he sought the blessing of a wife for his master's son. Isaac blesses Abimelech at a meal. And in his old age, when Isaac wishes to bestow his blessing on his son, he says: "Bring me some of the relish which I used to love."

The rabbinical "cup of benediction" appears more like the Egyptian "gebia" and the "S'udath Mitzvah" like Isaac's Mat'ammim;" in the latter instance we also find reference to the wine.

THE OATH.

To conclude this, I feel constrained to make a few remarks about the Hebrew oath שביעה. In the popular conception of the present the oath immediately connected with a blessing or the reverse originally means to swear, to invoke a blessing in the case of veracity, or a curse in the case of faithlessness. Not of this nature is the Hebrew שביעה. It is simply identical with the pledge, and synonymous with *B'rith* (covenant). The regular Hebrew oath has originally only one definite form in the Bible, *i. e.*, the oath or testimonial with Abraham.

The later indistinct and incomprehensible formula of "Thus may Elohim do to thee," etc., is the only form of an oath that we meet in the Bible. The word "Alah" may perhaps mean an oath in our sense of the term, but it is more connected with a curse than a blessing, and it is hardly possible that our ancestors would use it as frequently and as formally as an oath.

But as regards "Shebua," it was nothing but a pledge, and this is perhaps the reason why, as a verb, this word occurs only in the passive form. *Bi'nishba'ti, neum Jehovah*,—I pledge myself, saith the Lord, or *Hishab'ah li*," Pledge thyself unto me, or *Ki sham nishb'u sh'nehem* for there they both pledged themselves. If the pledge between men was to be of, or to have a specially solemn nature, it was made ביהרה "in divinity."

“The oath of the Lord between them two,” *i. e.*, calling divinity to be a witness of the sincerity of the parties making the pledge. Thus the abrupt saying of Elijah: “By the living God, if there shall be dew and rain,” which appears ungrammatical, and quite the reverse of what the zealous prophet means to assert, becomes explicit, if we take the words *Hai Jehovah* merely as an interjection and do not explain the whole passage as if Elijah swore by the life of God.

Indeed it is quite unnatural to invoke good or harm, which is beyond human power to give, as witness of what is in keeping with truth or sincerity.

It is quite incompatible with the lofty ideas of God and His inscrutable wisdom which Judaism represents, that its adherents should ever have presumed to dispose of His Providence for good or for evil according to the actions which they proposed to perform, or of the truth which they professed. The pledge, “Shebua,” was given by laying hold of an object that was regarded as most sacred. Thus our Rabbies explain the passages of the Bible where an object was seized in taking the oath. Later on our Rabbies instituted a solemn pledge, to be announced while holding a scroll of the Law or a pair of phylacteries in the hand.

THE HUMILIATION AND GLORY OF ISRAEL.

The Jew to-day is the marvel of the world. He stands a perpetual miracle, defying the solution of philosophers and sages, defeating every calculation of the political economist, and stultifying the wisdom of the statesman.

There are laws that govern the rise and fall of nations. Empires flourish and decay, and the sociologist will tell why, and profoundly declare that like causes mark the flourishing and decay of the mightiest dynasties or the most obscure confederation. But before the Jew his theories are scattered to the winds. The causes that work the annihilation of other nations are harmless. Before the tempests that overwhelm mighty empires the

Hebrews bow and bend, only to rise again when the storm is spent. Names once synonymous with grandeur and power and wealth are known now only in history and in records inscribed upon monuments dug from their mold and earth-covered ruins. The sands of the desert are their tombs.

But here is a people whom these nations have overrun again and again, burning their cities, levelling their walls and fortresses, leading their captive kings to adorn a victor's triumphal train, making their people hewers of wood and drawers of water, and menials about the dwellings of their conquerors. And yet they live.

For eighteen hundred years without a ruler, without a city, without a home; scattered wanderers over the face of the earth; banished from one country, persecuted in another; massacred by thousands, burned alive, plundered, denied the rights of citizenship, and even the claims of humanity. And yet, strange to say, and despite all theories and all known social laws, these people have survived. Even now, in the midst and before the eyes of their oppressors, they often surpass their rivals, drive competitors to the wall, plant themselves in the strongholds of commerce, all the while multiplying in numbers, until kings and rulers, like Pharaoh of old, exclaim: "The people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we. Come on; let us deal wisely with them." And, accordingly, by oppression and hardship, they give the alternative to perish, or flee to other lands. They do not perish. And wherever they go, while the lowly Jew fills crevice and corner, garret and hovel, yet in legislative halls, in councils of state, in galleries of art, in halls of music, and seats of learning, occupying the foremost rank, is the cultured Jew.

It is a record of humiliation and of glory. This has been their record since Abraham's day. And when the student of the philosophy of history, bewildered with the enigma, casts about in despair for a solution, we point him to the one and only explanation; here is the hand of God. God loved their fathers, and made their children His own chosen people. Hence all their greatness and glory. They were stiff-necked, disobedient and rebellious—hence their humiliation. Their own histories confirm it. It is the testimony of their prophets, the burden of their majestic or plaintive strains.

Accepting as true the record of Biblical and contemporaneous history, we have some most significant facts, with certain inevitable conclusions.

The peace, the temporal prosperity, the honor and glory of the nation, their triumphs in war, all were coincident with seasons of submission, obedience, and fidelity to the King of kings. But this was something more than a coincidence. All the greatness and glory of the nation had, by the voice of inspiration, been promised on condition of such obedience. All the woes depicted in such fearful colors had been threatened with most positive assurance of their inevitable coming in case of disobedience. These are facts as significant as they are unquestionable.

We turn now to the Jew of to-day, and ask what is his condition? Is it one of honor or of disgrace, of prosperity or misery, of triumph or humiliation? There can be, alas! but one reply to such questions.

And now, reasoning from all the experience of the past, inasmuch as in all the records of their history there was never a dispersion and oppression, never a national disgrace and subjugation, while the people were loyal to the God of their fathers, but one possible cause can be assigned for their being cast off now. And that is this: in some way they have brought this curse upon themselves. Outside of this you may endeavor to conjure up a thousand explanations, and you may bring forward theories that would be plausible when brought to bear upon the rise and fall of other people. But in the case of a race set apart from their beginning as God's people, with laws and ordinances appointed by God Himself, led and directed by the hand of God, with promises and threatenings the utterances of inspiration, there is but one possible explanation of their condition for now more than eighteen centuries, namely, God has cast them off. They brought themselves, and still continue, under His displeasure.

What was that special cause that brought about their rejection? Why is it that, with all their zeal for God and reverence for their religion which, in their dispersion, they have for so many centuries, with more or less fidelity, maintained, they have not been received back into favor? Surely never captivity and never dispersion before was of such duration! Surely it must be for some

transgression for which it is possible for them to repent, else they would not now be kept alive. They are cast off, but they are not cast away. God has withdrawn His favor from them, but He has not forsaken them. They still live, a separate people, "not counted among the nations." And judging this fact from the principles which have prevailed in the past, it is a fair inference that God is, as of old, "waiting to be gracious," and when the chosen ones acknowledge that sin is the cause of their miseries, and accept Him whom God has sent to them, the long period of their humiliation shall end, and a new age, more glorious than any before, shall begin.

It is not the object of this paper to set forth the grounds for the Christian's conviction that Jesus of Nazareth is indeed the Messiah, and that in the persistent rejection of Him is to be found the explanation of the present long continuance of Israel's humiliation. Treatises on that subject are abundant, and accessible to all who desire to consult them. But here are some points for the candid and enlightened Jew to consider:

Abraham and his descendants were set apart, and called to the knowledge and worship of the true God. The Christian Church has the same purpose and commission.

The promise was made to Abraham, and renewed to Isaac, that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. It is not to be denied that the Jewish Church, while bearing faithful witness to the object of its calling, was a blessing even as a lone light in a world of darkness. But the great blessing to the nations—that which has spread onward and on to every quarter of the earth, bearing civilization, culture, humanity, godliness, increasing with every century—has been, as all must admit, the religion taught by that descendant of Abraham, Jesus the Jew, and disseminated by his Apostles, also Jews. Here are facts beyond dispute, and every year is bringing nearer a fulfillment of such blessing of all the nations of the earth.

It does seem as though the candid and enlightened Jew, if he would but duly and conscientiously ponder these things, must come to the conclusion that if his entire race would but accept Jesus as the Messiah, join hands with His followers in spreading the knowledge of the true God throughout the world, and enlightening it

with the principles and precepts of a consistent Christianity, there would be realized, in all its fulness of meaning, the promise to Abraham, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

Christians, Gentile Christians, are carrying that blessedness over the world now. But it should be the legitimate office of the lineal descendants of Abraham to do this work. The Jew, however, does not seem to have arisen to a due appreciation of his mission and destiny, which is to *bless*.

He was called to protest against idolatry. In carrying out this purpose, God made him the instrument of executing the divine judgment against idolatrous nations. This part of his office was not blessing, but inflicting judgment. To overthrow and lay waste their cities; to sweep away every vestige of their possessions; to devote to destruction men, women and children, and every living thing—this was not blessing, but pouring out wrath upon them.

There is a sentiment far too extensively prevailing among the Israelites, *viz.*, that the reign of the Messiah, when He comes, is to be signaled by a like visitation upon the Gentile nations, which, under the Messiah, are to be devoted to an unrelenting destruction; that those who submit are to be spared, indeed, but only as slaves—as hewers of wood and drawers of water—for the subjects of the Messiah.

Now, without inquiring what are the grounds of such a belief, without at all discussing the *rationale* of prophecy, we appeal to any intelligent and candid Jew, and ask, would such a reign be in any sense of the word a blessing to the nations? Could anything more preposterous enter the mind of a rational being than the supposition that when God said to Abraham and Isaac that through their seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed, it was meant that the Jew should triumph over, trample upon, and give over to indiscriminate slaughter all the uncircumcised of the earth? No such a picture as this would fill the ideal of that happy period of the Messiah's reign.

Wherever the religion of Jesus the Jew has gone it has borne a blessing. The degree of blessing has been in proportion to the degree of consistency and devotion with which that religion has been embraced.

In reply to this assertion, we are pointed to cruel persecutions which the Jews have endured at the hands of Christians. But we are not speaking now of any mediæval, or Spanish, or Russian, or other anti-Semite Christianity, but of that which was proclaimed in the Sermon on the Mount, in the daily teaching and example of Jesus, and in the faithful witness borne by the Apostles and the true followers of Jesus in all ages.

The genius of that religion is love, not hate; forgiveness, not vengeance; winning enemies by kindness and forbearance, not trampling upon them. When we seek to convert the Jew to Christianity, we want him to embrace and have his heart penetrated with these sentiments: "Love your enemies; bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you."

It was Jesus, of the seed of Abraham, who taught these precepts, and the practical duties of whose religion are founded upon them. Set these in contrast with the maledictions of the prophets denounced against the heathen, and tell us which would be the blessing of the nations? Were the whole race to rise up and say, "Let us now go forth to fulfill our mission and our destiny," where would they go for principles of action? Has anything ever been uttered by the lips of man that could better qualify them to accomplish such a glorious mission? Accept Jesus as the Messiah, and you can bless the nations; but never while you continue to reject Him.

Realizing the purpose for which God called her into being, and set her to be the glory of all the earth, the daughter of Zion may cast the garments of her humiliation behind her, and, rising from the dust of her degradation, rejoice in the fulfillment of all those prophetic visions of Israel's pre-eminence among the nations. What greater glory can be conceived than to bring the Messiah into the world, and then be foremost in bringing the nations lovingly to His feet? Take the words literally or spiritually as you will, there is but one way to accomplish Zechariah's prediction that "many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts at Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord;" that "ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you."—*By the Rev. W. A. Matson, D. D.*

JEWS IN FRANCE.

It has long been the subject of remark that Jews in France have enjoyed a measure of emancipation from the prejudice and ill-treatment that they have received in other countries. This has often been said to be due to the fact that the French are liberal even to infidelity in matters of religion, and since the prejudice against Jews is largely a religious prejudice, such would be less in a country like France. That this is not the whole story is clear, although there is much of truth in it. The fact remains that in France there is hardly the shadow of a "Jewish question," certainly not in the sense in which there is such a question in Germany or Austria, not to speak of Russia, and far less than in England, even less than in the United States, if that be possible—and we think it is possible!

But those who are interested in this circumstance will be pleased to read the following, from Prof. Sloane in the February *Century* on the Jews and Napoleon. It throws some light on certain of the causes which have produced the condition of things in that country.

A measure of Napoleon's, already referred to, but little known, . . . was more successful than any other; it certainly is most characteristic of the man. The evil aimed at was cured at the time, and the permanent question is less acute in modern France than in any other European country. For years past there had been chronic distress among the agricultural classes in some of the most fertile districts of France, notably in the northeast. This was attributed to the presence of Jews in large numbers. The stringent laws of the old regime had crowded that unfortunate people out of every occupation but two—peddling and money-lending. In both of these they became experts, and when emancipated by the Revolution they used their liberty, not to widen their activities, but to intensify the evils of the monopoly which they had secured. Since 1791, large numbers of Polish and German Jews had established themselves on the right bank of the Rhine, and, reaching hands across that stream to their kinsfolk on the left bank, they combined to strip the French peasantry by the

familiar arts of barter and usury which need not be described here, until in a few years they were creditors to the extent of twenty-three millions and had become extensive landed proprietors. They were never seen to labor with their hands, and, having no family name, they evaded the conscription laws with impunity, while the courts of justice became their humble servants in enforcing the collection of scandalous debts or in the foreclosure of inflated mortgages.

In the previous year (1806) a temporary decree had suspended all legal executions in certain districts, and many Jews of the better class made ready to bow before the coming tempest and come to the assistance of the government. Napoleon, aware that the Old Testament law was civil and political as well as religious, shrewdly asked advice from these and other men of the more enlightened sort. It was agreed to call a council. The emperor summoned his prefects to name its members, and appointed a committee to represent the government at its sessions. Decisions taken by this assembly were to be submitted to a general Sanhedrin of all Europe. The assembly of French Israelites met in Paris during the latter part of 1806, and, after due deliberation, gave satisfactory answers to a carefully prepared set of questions propounded by the government commission. In 1807, the economical situation had nevertheless become graver. The Sanhedrin met early in February. They vied in flattery with the Roman priesthood setting the imperial eagle above the ark of the covenant, and blending the letters N and J with those of the Jehovah in a monogram for the adornment of their meeting-place. On March 4 they issued a decree which is still the basis of instruction among Jewish youth. They forbade polygamy and admitted the principle of civil marriage without anathema; they ordered all Israelites to treat those who believed that God is the Creator of heaven and earth as fellow-citizens and brothers, to obey the civil and military laws, including that of conscription, and to train their children to industry and handiwork; they also invited them to enter the learned professions, and to attach themselves to the country by the purchase of public obligations. Usury was absolutely forbidden, the Israelite being enjoined as a religious precept to make no distinction in money transactions between Hebrew and Christian. The minutest details of the whole

transaction were foreseen and regulated by Napoleon, and may be studied in his correspondence with his ministers.

A year later, after careful and mature deliberation, there appeared an imperial decree, not only organizing the Jewish church and regulating its relations with the state, but defining the civil and political status of Hebrews. They were pronounced to be citizens like other men; but they could not exact higher interest than five per cent, while if they should demand over ten they should be punished for usury. Every Jew in the northeastern department must have a license to do business, and a notarial authorization for pawnbrokerage. Any Jew not domiciled at the moment in Alsace might not thereafter acquire domicile in that department, and could do so in others only by becoming a landowner and tilling the soil. Every Jew should be liable to military service, and, unlike his Christian fellow-citizens, might not provide a substitute; moreover, he must adopt and use a family name.

This stringent law was rigidly enforced, except in Bordeaux, the Gironde, and the Landes, where no offense had been given. Its effect was steady and sure. Before long, first one and then another Israelite was exempted from its rigors, until finally, in 1812, the department or the man still subject to its provisions was the exception and not the rule.

From that day to this there has scarcely been in France what is known elsewhere as the Jewish question. Hebrews are found in every line of human activity; they have the same civil, political, and religious standing as men of other blood and confessions; they are illustrious in finance, in politics, in science, and in the arts. They are, moreover, passionate patriots, and to the casual observer scarcely distinguishable in mien and appearance from other citizens. The temporary contravention of the civil code, both as to spirit and letter, by the notorious decree above referred to, has been so beneficent that it has for the most part escaped any criticism or even remark.

JEWES IN CHINA.

Until within the last few years but little of the history of Jews in China is known. This can only be accounted for by the fact that the empire has been virtually closed to

all foreign nations. It appears, however, that some of the Christian missionaries were specially permitted to penetrate the interior. A description of the Chinese Jews has just been derived through the Jesuit mission located in China, as reported to the Roman directory. The Jews of China do not intermarry with heathens and Mohammedans, do not marry two wives, do not eat pork, do not associate with Mohammedans, must observe their religion with strictness and must keep the Sabbath holy. But such has been their poverty that they have sold some of the materials of the buildings around the synagogue. They look to the emperor to repair their temple, but scarcely expect it. Their religion makes outcasts, and some of them follow it secretly, like Mohammedans. The inquiries were interrupted by the jealousy of some of the Mohammedans, who threatened to prosecute the strangers, and this led to their abrupt departure from the city. The synagogue was in a very ruinous state, and the few people they saw were apparently extremely poor and had no teachers. Chaou-Wan-Kwei, one of the Jews, gave the key of the great chapel of the "Pure and true synagogue" to Chao-King-Ching, another of the Jews, "who opened the great chapel and sold us Jewish books, eight in number, large and small." The Rev. M. Milne says in his "Real life in China": "They brought with them two Chinese Jews, with whom I had frequent interviews, as they resided in our mission during their sojourn at Shanghai. Neither of them had a Hebrew name. The one was 40 years old, the other about 45. They had both submitted to the rite of circumcision in infancy. One of them had a remarkably Jewish cast of countenance: but in nothing were they distinguished from the surrounding masses except in religious profession, for they talked the Chinese language, dressed in Chinese style, and had the usual Chinese manners and customs." Both Bishop Smith and Mr. Milne furnish descriptions of the eight Hebrew manuscripts which the messengers purchased at Kae-Fung-

Foo. There is a little difference between the two descriptions in some of the details, but they substantially agree. The bishop says the books "are written on thick paper, bound in silk, and bear the internal marks of foreign, probably Persian, origin." Mr. Milne says they contained sundry portions of the Pentateuch, and then adds: "These manuscripts were chiefly on large scrolls, a few of them in a smaller book form, written on paper and some on sheepskin. One or two were of considerable antiquity. The writing in most was clear and distinct, without vowel points." Measures were afterward taken to attain complete copies of the law. One of the two Chinese Messengers, Tscang-Young-Che, drew up an account of the religion of the Jews of Kae-Yung-Foo and the inscriptions in the synagogue. He intimated that the Sabbath of the Jews in China falls on the day before the Christian Sunday. The sect itself places its introduction into China at the commencement of the Christian era; but the synagogue was not built till long subsequently. At first they consisted of seventy families, which have been scattered and reduced till seven only remain, numbering about two hundred persons, and distributed about the neighborhood. On a certain day they honor the sacred writings, but before the service they must all bathe in the place appointed, and then they may enter the synagogue. The rabbi then takes his seat in an elevated position and a large red satin umbrella is held over him. They bow toward the west when they worship and call upon God in the Chinese language by the name of Teen, or heaven. On the twenty-fourth day of the eighth Chinese moon they hold a great festival, perhaps the feast of the tabernacles, and called "the festival for perambulating around the sacred writings," because they go in solemn procession around the hall of the temple. For fifty years they have been without competent teachers to instruct them in fifty-three sections of the law and twenty-seven letters of the alphabet. As the Jewish alphabet has but twenty-two letters, the num-

ber twenty-seven is made up by counting as ten characters the five which have double form. The famous Jewish traveler, Benjamin of Tudela, who mentions China in the twelfth century, seems not to be aware of the Jews in the empire. He relates, however, that a Mohammedan, who wrote in the year 877, makes an allusion to them. The next who refers to them is the Moorish traveler, Ibn Batuta, in 1450, and it is said that soon after this the Spanish Jews speak of their brethren in China. Not till the time of Francis Xavier, however, is there anything definite upon the subject. As quoted by the Rev. H. Venn, in his life of the great Jesuit missionary, Xavier, thus relates what he has heard: "I met at Malacca with a Portuguese merchant who had recently returned from China. He told me that he had been asked by a grave and honorable Chinese resident in the royal city, whether Christians fed on swine's flesh. To this the merchant answered that Christians did not refuse; but why was the question asked? The Chinese replied that there was a certain tribe in the interior of China, shut in by mountains, whose customs and manners were widely different from the Chinese, and that they abstained entirely from swine's flesh and had celebrated with solemn observances many festivals."—*The Chicago Record*.

A JUST TRIBUTE.—The health authorities of New York testify to the fact that the lowest death-rate in that city is in the wards where the Hebrew population is densest. They do not undertake to account for this interesting fact; but it can be said that the same conditions exist in other cities, notably here in Boston. Not only is the mortality in the Hebrew section very low, but it is a notable circumstance that contagious diseases are not so prevalent in these quarters as they are elsewhere. During the prevalence of small-pox there were no cases at the North End, where the Hebrews are the most numerous; and that section is now almost wholly free from diphtheria, which is so prevalent in other sections of the city.—*Boston Christian Leader*.

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 hidden 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.