

acknowledging this, the prevalence of the drawbacks I have named seems to become more prominent and trying because they appear to us unnecessary, and to mar, instead of assisting, the onward march and growth of our National Church, beloved by us from childhood.

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ART. VIII.—TO WHAT EXTENT HAS CHRISTIANITY
INFLUENCED LIBERAL JEWS?—II.

WHAT about Reformed Judaism in England? How far have its exponents advanced along the road to Christianity? We get our information principally from the writings of Mr. Claude Montefiore, editor of the *Jewish Quarterly Review*, the Rev. Rabbi Morris Joseph, and Mr. Oswald Simon.

The first-named describes Jesus and His teaching as "an intricate and fascinating subject," and declares the old Jewish view of patronizing indifference or depreciation as being most certainly modified, and that "some elements in the teaching of Jesus, or perhaps its very core and principle, may be recognised as vital portions of Judaism itself, and their origin or fullest enunciation in the mouth of Jesus may be freely allowed; but, nevertheless, Jesus will find His place in the development of Judaism."¹

Again, "Jesus seems to expand and spiritualize Judaism."²

And in his "First Impressions of Paul," the same writer has evidently grasped the Apostle's teaching, and thus sums it up: "That at the appointed season God redeems man from his bondage to the law and to sin, and gives him righteousness and salvation through Christ's work for man, and through man's faith in Christ."³

And in his article on "The Religious Value of the Fourth Gospel," he has likewise laid hold upon the object of its writer, and his central proposition, "that the eternal and Divine Word became flesh, that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, and that He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life."⁴

Claude Montefiore, indeed, in his numerous articles which enrich the pages of his review, appears to be holding open an umbrella labelled "Church of Israel," and inviting Jews, Unitarians, and Theists to come under its shade. Thus he says: "Jews might join hands with Unitarians in a

¹ *Jewish Quarterly Review*, vol. vi., p. 109.

² *Ibid.*, vol. vi., p. 429.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. vi., p. 448.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. vii., p. 27.

common determination, to the advantage of us both, to find out the truth, as far as it can still be found, about Jesus and the New Testament."¹

He sees scarcely any difference between the Christian Theist, the Unitarian and the Reformed Jew, and in a most striking article on "Liberal Judaism in England" he sounds the following note of warning to Unitarians, that their children often marry into the Established Church, and their offspring is lost to Unitarianism.²

The entire article is worth attention. It abounds in evidence that Jews are becoming more "liberal"—that is to say, they are being alienated from the synagogue, and giving up old beliefs of orthodox Judaism. And the reasons? The writer gives the following: The services being in Hebrew and not understood, they are deadly dull; they are antiquated; the sexes are separated; the results are unsatisfying; and the day is Saturday. We can well believe in the cogency of these reasons, and can readily understand, with the writer, that they are sufficient to drive English Jews from the synagogue, either to Christian churches, where the services are beautiful in comparison, or to the Unitarian chapel, where the service is intelligible and modern, if simple. Circumcision is another stumbling-block. The above are some of the reasons for the dissatisfaction felt by many liberal and nominal Jews with existing Judaism. Dissatisfaction is certainly not a strong enough word; estrangement would have been nearer the truth. Another reason is to be found in the fact that Jews nowadays read books which are wholly non-Jewish; not merely books in which the common assumption is that the preaching of Jesus Christ is the highest and finest ever given to man, but also the New Testament itself, which is "very attractive."

And, once more, Mr. Montefiore speaks of Christ "as the most important Jew that had ever lived, and to whom the sinner and the outcast, age after age, have owed a great deal of gratitude."

Mr. Oswald Simon asks: "Would it not be a distinct gain to civilization and to the development of the religious idea that there should be between Christendom and Jewry a channel of direct religious fellowship?" He it was who courageously a short time ago initiated great reforms in the mode of conducting Divine service. The Rev. M. M. Ben Oziel, who was present on the occasion, thus describes the service:

"It was held on the Sunday, the sexes sat together, the men had their heads uncovered, and they were permitted to kneel if they wished—an outrageous thing among the Jews.

¹ *Jewish Quarterly Review*, vol. ix., p. 247.

² *Ibid.*, vol. xii., 641.

No initiatory rite, either circumcision or baptism, is to be required in this new community, and no phylacteries, etc. You might as well have been in a Baptist Chapel, or a meeting of Plymouth Brethren, except that the name of our blessed Lord was never mentioned. The name of our Lord was, however, mentioned in the discourse delivered, and in it He was held up as one of the great teachers and reformers, and it was said that Christianity had taken so much out of Judaism, through the person of Jesus, who was such a true Jew. Well, now, my impression is that this movement will fail. The leaders have not sufficient support amongst the Jews. Mr. Simon is a well-meaning and devout man, but he has not got the qualities for a leader. I look upon it as the nearest movement as yet made amongst the Jews to come to the Church, but I for one have prayed for its success, because I believe it is a step—the first step in the right direction. A number of them gathered round me after the service, for I knew some of them personally. I said to them: ‘Look here, my brethren, this will never do; the only means of salvation for Israel is by accepting the historical fact that Jesus of Nazareth was the true Messiah.’ I am afraid, as I have said, that the movement will not succeed, for want of support. Their prayers were all from the Jewish Prayer-book, translated into English; the selection was good, the best that could be made, certainly for a public audience, but what would interest you most was that they chanted the Psalms as we do in church. They had only two hymns printed, and sang them both, one by Watts and the other by Wesley.”¹

Mr. J. Abrahams, editor of the *Jewish Quarterly Review*, speaks of “the noble personality of Jesus.”²

It cannot be denied that a widespread process of disintegration is going on in the midst of Judaism. The Jews themselves are witnesses. The Sabbath is widely desecrated, “save on great occasions; the houses of prayer are practically empty.”³ Again, another correspondent writes: “We have borrowed much, pleads one, consciously and unconsciously, from the Christian order of worship. Let us not be ashamed to learn yet further how to adapt our ritual to the modern needs of weaker brethren.” And he instances the Book of Common Prayer, which, “though containing much that is out of touch with modern thought and feeling, is yet, on the whole, more suited to the common needs.”⁴

The Chief Rabbi of England, when opening the Kalisher

¹ “Report of Conference on Mission to Jews,” p. 99.

² Vol. vi., p. 114.

³ *Jewish Chronicle*, April 19, 1895.

⁴ *Ibid.*, April 12, 1895.

synagogue a few years ago, said: "I have been told that a considerable number of children of our working classes who attend Board Schools are present in the classrooms at the time when instruction in the New Testament is being given, while non-Jewish prayers are being read, and non-Jewish hymns are sung. I was inclined to disbelieve this statement. But all doubt on the subject was dispelled when I read as follows in the report of examination in Scripture knowledge issued by the Board School in Baker Street, Stepney. It says: 'In the classes other than Standard I. the Jewish children are present when the New Testament lessons are given, and *no objections are raised by parents.*' Nay, more, I have heard on good authority that in a certain Board School in Bethnal Green the prize for religious knowledge—mind, Christian religious knowledge—was carried off by a Jewish pupil. What an outcry was raised throughout civilized Europe when young Mortara was taken from his parental home to be brought up in the Catholic religion! And here are Jewish parents who, without raising a finger, allow their children to be brought up in an alien faith."¹

The *Jewish Year Book* gives a long list of Jewish celebrities "who have been converted."²

The foregoing facts eloquently testify that Christianity has influenced Jews of the Reformed faith to a very large extent. Apart from the direct results achieved in the way of actual conversion, there is a great work, a *preparatio evangelii*, going on. Is it too much to hope and to pray that Jews, who to-day are saying of our Lord Jesus Christ, "Behold the man," may cease to find satisfaction in admiring His sinless human nature, and be led on to exclaim in adoration and worship, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world"; and, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him; we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation"?

W. T. GIDNEY.

The Month.

EARLY in May the King's advisers found themselves face to face with the task of recommending clergy for one bishopric and two deaneries. The See of Oxford has many attractions, but the deaneries of Salisbury and Peterborough are two offices the distinction of which is no longer accompanied by satisfactory emoluments. The death of Bishop Stubbs drew out the fullest recognition of his great powers as a historian, but it also produced evidence of the widespread conviction that

¹ *Jewish Chronicle*, March 31, 1895.

² Issue for 1900-1901, p. 223.