

## THE JEWS AND THE GOSPEL.

WITHOUT attempting to deal with the larger apologetic argument from the Old Testament as a whole, I propose to investigate a most unhackneyed kind of Messianic prophecy, and to ask if the Jews themselves do not prophesy of their future conversion to the Gospel. I think that the hostility of the Jews to the so-called "Christian propaganda" would be abated if we approached them in a less dogmatic spirit, and made more of this as our preliminary thesis, that the needs, both ethical and religious, of the people of Israel are not and cannot be satisfied by Judaism. I hope that I am on my guard against Christian prejudices. I admit all that can be said in praise of the *Pirke Aboth*, which, having had a certain amount of liturgical use, and being still inserted in the Jewish prayer-book, must have contributed elements to the moral character of existing Judaism. I admit that both in Jewish literature and in Jewish life there is a Christianity, or (for I am not using this word in a dogmatic sense) a Christianness, of a more developed character than that which St. Augustine recognises in every human soul. I should not be at all surprised if many have some times even been tempted by this phenomenon to give another turn to a famous question dramatically thrown out by St. Paul, and ask, "What advantage then hath the Christian?" But before replying in a sense unfavourable to Christianity, let us inquire if the Christianness of Judaism is so distinct and unqualified as we have been led to presume. Let us investigate that world in itself, Jewish literature and Jewish life. Without

plunging into the chaotic mass of piled up traditions and discussions which the Jews of old were wont to call the "Sea of the Talmud," let us but read the most celebrated of the sixty-seven treatises of the Mishna, to which I have referred already, the *Pirke Aboth*, in the standard translation by Dr. Charles Taylor (1877). In spite of the occasional golden sentences, some of which have become current coin among ourselves, can it be said that the moral spirit of the work as a whole is lofty or edifying? Do not Antigonus and Hillel and Gamaliel (the reputed authors of some of the choicest sayings) strike us, to adopt a truly poetical figure from Kuenen, like "captive birds pecking at the wires of their cage" (*Hibbert Lectures*, p. 213)? And after reading this, pass on to a repository of Talmudic lore, which, although the composition of an old-fashioned orthodox divine, has obtained the approval of such a fair-minded and comparatively speaking competent Christian reviewer as Dr. Schürer, though it fails to satisfy the unreasonably high requirements of the Talmudic contributor to the *Westminster Review*,—I mean the *System of the Theology of the Palestinian Synagogue*, by Ferdinand Weber (1880).

The author, though a plain parish clergyman, is nowhere dependent on those older works of Christian scholars, some of which are vitiated to Christians of our day as well as to Jews by the spirit of partisanship, or even of hostility, which pervades them, but has acquired his knowledge at first hand from the sources.

It may be urged in reply to his Jewish censor, that there is hardly a single historical investigator who might not be stopped in mid-career, if too severe an inquiry were made into the critical character of his texts and the profundity of his preliminary studies. I cannot see that Weber's book is "dangerous" because "attractively written" (if indeed this amiable weakness can be detected by an Englishman); and

Weber's friends, in editing his, alas! posthumous work, do, I am sure, only express the author's conviction when they admit—as who must not admit?—the variety of opinion on many points among the Jewish doctors. But is not Weber right in stating as a fact that legalism is the central principle of orthodox Jewish religion? So far as I can judge, the eminent Westminster reviewer (from whom, if he will continue to write in English, great things may be expected) errs in one direction, as much as he supposes Weber to have erred in another. All systems of ecclesiastical theology are no doubt dangerous to unprepared students; but if there be any Church whose theology admits, under due limitations, of being systematized, it is the Jewish; both the early Catholic and the Roman Catholic Church are inferior in uniformity of belief, as well as in cohesiveness and extent, to the Church of Talmudic Judaism. I know that freedom of thought and loftiness of aspiration were not extinguished by the synagogue; but I hold that the free thoughts and the lofty aspirations which do occur are prophetic of a future Jewish Christianity; indeed, speaking a language which has been partly formed by Christianity, I can hardly do otherwise than call them Christian. It would be too great a digression to inquire, whether we may not go beyond Castelli,<sup>1</sup> and argue, not merely for a spontaneous semi-Christian movement in Judaism, but for a direct Christian influence upon members of the early Jewish community. I will admit provisionally (what in itself would be only natural) that any ethical parallels in the documents of early Judaism and those of Christianity are due to the common origin of both forms of religion. But I do maintain, that after the fall of Jerusalem such parallelism on the Jewish side became more and more an eccentricity; the

<sup>1</sup> *Il Messia secondo gli Ebrei*, p. 222. The thesis of direct Christian influence has been recently adopted and ably supported by Dr. Edersheim in his Warburtonian Lectures.

ship of Judaism (would that we had a corresponding term to *Judenthum*!) was inevitably steered to the haven of legalism. Christianity in one way, as Buddhism in another, had taken up what M. Réville, in his *Prolegomena of the History of Religions*, calls the "principle of redemption"; a fatal logical necessity drove Judaism to identify itself more and more with that of law. Persecution too contributed to the same result. The faith of the Jews in their *Torah* was, to use the beautiful figure of the Jewish novelist Franzos,<sup>1</sup> the helmet which covered their head in the day of battle (or let me say rather, of martyrdom). It kept them united, and what was even more essential, distinct; it tightened their grasp of that personal relation of God to His people, which, as Malachi showed, even sin could not destroy. But it also led them farther and farther on the downward path of the externalization of religion. The process indeed never was and never will be completed—the psalms and prophecies, and the human heart itself, never ceased to lift up a protest against it; but how deep in superstition the Jews of the continent lay till Mendelssohn, "the third Moses," appeared, Jewish writers are not backward to admit. The last hundred years have seen a great change both for good and for evil in the Jews of the West; but a thick cloud still broods over those of the East, or, to continue the novelist's metaphor, the helmet of traditional faith has dropped down so low upon their heads that their eyes are closed to the bright light shining in the West. As to the purity of that light, we should no doubt differ from Franzos, but his metaphor is but too applicable to the Talmudic Jews of Eastern Europe, and to the uncouth Jewish pilgrims in the Holy City.

<sup>1</sup> *Die Juden von Barnow*, p. 309. Notice the novelist's personal opinion: "Es wäre nicht nöthig dass sie ihn lüften, und vollends verderblich wäre es, wollten sie ihn ganz fortwerfen, aber ebenso verderblich ist es, wenn er ihnen die Augen deckt."

I have spoken of Moses Mendelssohn, who with a far greater justice than Hillel, the Babylonian, may be called a reformer (or shall we say a *transformer*?) of Judaism. Both these ornaments of the synagogue agree however in this respect, that the leading feature in their characters is gentleness. Both also (but especially the former) are representatives of those lofty aspirations which, not less than the formalism of the multitude, prophesy of a Jewish Christianity. Those who thus hunger and thirst after the higher righteousness will surely at last seek a more congenial home in the brotherhood of Jesus, and the many who have sunk or who are in danger of sinking so low will surely recognise the only arm that can rescue them from the deadness of formalism.

In speaking thus, I have admitted by implication that legalism is not bound to pass into a stiff formalism. Who indeed knows not that the "yoke of ordinances" may be so mitigated by spiritual love as not only to be endured but gloried in? Just as those which M. Réville calls the religions of redemption do not disdain the aid of law, so one at least of the religions of law has often been idealized to its adherents by the action of love. From the time of Hosea onwards, love to God has been regarded by the Jews (and *we* have learned it from them) as a state of the will as much as of the affections. When Rabbi Johanan of Tiberias died (the Rabbi who said that the teachings of the *Soferim* were even more to be esteemed than those of the Law), his contemporaries illustrated his love of the Law by quoting the glowing words of Cant. viii. 6, "If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned." A passionate love, then, for Israel's God could be combined with intense legalism. Yes, but not a serenely happy love, and therefore, on St. John's principles (1 John iv. 18), not a perfect love. When the earlier Johanan, called "the light of Israel," lay sick unto

death, his disciples noticed with surprise that he trembled and wept. The closing words of his answer may be remembered. "There are before me two ways, one to paradise, the other to Gehinnom, and I know not which of the two ways I shall have to go—whether to paradise or to Gehinnom" (*Ber.*, 28 b.). I give this as an exceptional instance. Theoretically, such a great Rabbi could have reckoned on gaining paradise by study of the Law and good works. Why did God give so many *miçvoth* or commandments? it is asked in one passage of the Talmud. That He might multiply Israel's merits. The combined theory and practice of the *miçvoth* (all of which have direct relation to God), and a sufficient practice of beneficence, would ensure an overplus of good deeds in the great account-book. Still, though exceptional, I can believe that the case of Rabbi Jōhanan of Tiberias was not a solitary one, and that Saul of Tarsus was not the only legalist who, in despair of his own merit, cried out inwardly, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?" The higher spirits could not but be saddened, both in life and in death, by the thought of the strictness of the Divine requirements, more especially if they did not belong to the Rabbinical class. Doubtless they lived in the spirit of that saying of Rabbi Eliezer, "Repent one day before thy death" (*i.e.* repent every day). But with the majority a mechanical formalism was the necessary consequence of the Jewish doctrine of sin, or rather of sins, and merit, or rather of merits—a formalism which consoled itself for omissions of duty and commissions of sin by those palliatives and casuistic expedients in which Jewish theology abounds. The sadness of the few and the deadness of the many I claim as prophetic of Christianity. To a superficial observer, the Jews may seem as hard to convert as the Mohammedans; but no Jew who has learned the fifty-first Psalm, or devoutly and unsuperstitiously taken part in the

Liturgy for the Day of Atonement, can be impervious to the Christian message of a Redeemer from sin. Yes; Christianity may and does deepen the sense of sin in those Jews who embrace it; but it only deepens, it does not create it. Not only the religion of the Old Testament, but that compromise with human weakness which is based on the Talmud, testifies to the consciousness of sin. That can be no trifle which requires the elaborate and diversified methods of expiation which we find in Judaism, and which contrast so strongly with the simplicity of the New Testament doctrine. I know that original sin in the developed sense of Christian theology is not a Jewish tenet; but that by the sin of Adam the human race was permanently injured, not only physically, but morally, Judaism does not deny. A man ought, no doubt, in theory, to overcome the *יֵצֶר הָרָע* (the inclination to evil), but as a rule, can he? By its complicated arrangements for obtaining righteousness, the Jewish system virtually recalls its controversial denial of the fall of the human race, and points far beyond itself.

But we have really no occasion in our controversy to open the question of the effect of the first human sin. It is the sense of forgiveness for personal sins which transforms the atmosphere of the Christian soul and enables the man to cry, not merely *אֲבִינִי*, "our Father," but *אָבִי*, "my Father" (with which, as Delitzsch has shown, the "Abba" of Rom. viii. 15 is in Talmudic usage synonymous). No one can say that there is in Jewish Theism that tender personal sentiment which characterizes the Theism of Christendom. The fact may throw some light on the coldness and distance of which even Jewish writers have complained in the worship of the synagogue. For centuries long God was worshipped and loved (this the Jewish prayer-book testifies) as the God of Israel, but now that Israel seems able to stand by itself, and to need no protector, the love of many has

waxed cold. The first national redemption has become a fading memory, and there is no second redemption to reconsecrate the old forms. This is of course not the only reason which might be given. It is true that Israel is ceasing to realize its ancient history; it is also true that post-Biblical Jewish Theism became, or tended to become, too abstract and transcendental to admit of devotional warmth. As long as the nationalistic sentiment was vigorous, it partly counteracted this tendency—this is abundantly proved by the synagogue poetry of the middle ages. But now—how many Jews are there who can sympathize with that poetry? How many Mordecais or Daniel Derondas are there to renew the broken tradition of Jehuda Halevi? Where, where is a Moses with his rod to strike the hard rock in the wilderness, and give them drink as out of the great depth? <sup>1</sup>

To me the answer cannot be doubtful: in a different sense from that of Philo, we may say of the Jewish people, *ὀρφανοῦ λόγον ἔχει*. What is it that makes a Christian service warm and hearty? It is the personal appropriation of God's promises. It is God's love shed abroad in each heart (Rom. iv. 5), and evoking love in response. I know that the sacred name of love has been abused, and that there is a pietistic sentimentality which many Israelites have mistaken for Christian love. But—the truth remains, that Jesus has redeemed us who believe, by revealing the Father's love. "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen." The angel between man and his God is not, as an ancient Jewish doctor said, his reason, but that Love who is the highest reason. Here is the angel who can say with Israel of old, "Spring up, O well" (Num. xxi. 17), and whose felt spiritual presence or Shechinah will

<sup>1</sup> The natural effect of the treatment of the Jews by Christians is not a belief that "God is Love." See the powerful and affecting conclusion of Franzos' novel, *Moschko von Parma*. The hero of the story gives as the lesson of his life, that God is not a God of revenge, nor of mercy, but of justice.



stir up the latent ardour of Jewish worshippers. "Therefore," we may devoutly say with John Wiclif, "Sweet Father that art in heavens, Thy name be hallowed in the hearts of heathen men that they may believe in Thee; and in the hearts of Jews, that they may believe more perfectly and also love Thee." (*The Pore Caitiff.*)

Nor is it only love to God which will assume a new colour in the Israel of the latter days. The Jewish view of love to man will partake of the transformation. The traditional virtues of Judaism will be glorified, and their limitations removed. For limitations there are. With all humility it must be said that the moral standards of the Jewish community need some rectification. No doubt, patients in a hospital should be considerate to each other, but I am not so much criticising performance as standards. I remember what Bishop Temple has told us of our indebtedness to the Jews: I could perhaps even go farther than he. But the moral standards of the Jews, as a body, have been too stationary, while those of the Christian races have progressed. Philanthropy, in the widest sense, is a tender plant in Judaism, isolation and the pride of race and religion have hindered its development. More than this; the point of progress reached by the highest Jewish teachers has not been maintained; the non-Israelite is not without the shadow of an excuse for his bitter feeling and cruel conduct towards the Jew. I have a painful sense that the milder and in the ethical sense Christian virtues are imperfectly recognised by Jewish standards, and I am confirmed in this by those striking pictures of genuine Jewish life with which great Jewish novelists have made us familiar. There is still, I think, in Jewish standards too strong a dash of Hebraism, for a race which boasts itself, not without excuse, to be the classic people of religion. There is still room in short for a second redemption.

Do I merely say, there is room? Nay; from east and

west alike there is an urgent cry for a broader spiritual horizon. "Oh that the salvation were given unto Israel out of Zion! Oh that the Lord would deliver His people out of captivity!" The cry may not be always expressed in the language of Canaan; but all who have faithful Jewish hearts—all, that is, who can devoutly repeat the Sh'mà, and have not fallen a prey to materialism—long for some better thing than the Judaism of the past. Must we not regard this longing as Messianic prophecy? And if the Jewish interpretation of it be different from ours, need that disturb us in our reasonable conviction? Apologetics are useless, if there is no common ground between the two sides in the controversy: useless for instance when directed against the lowest type of materialism. But the Jews and we have a common ground; we have the word of prophecy (in the widest sense), supported by the prophetic longings of the Jewish heart. Let us turn our thoughts to the latter.

I will not attempt a *Præparatio Evangelica* on a large scale, and will leave on one side the claimants of Messiahship, whose history would form an instructive chapter in a Christian Apologia. Far be it from me to judge them, or to pretend to have sounded a deep psychological problem. Nor will I do more than indicate the deep and prophetic dissatisfaction with Judaism expressed in the Cabbalistic movement. The points of contact with Christianity in the Cabbala are undeniable; the movement itself is natural, and deserves a sad, respectful sympathy, but it stands apart from the regular development of Jewish thought. The same remark applies to the Jewish movement in Persia towards Bâbism; the most modern outburst of nominally Mohammedan mysticism, and not without Christian affinities. And I must not attempt on this occasion to estimate the results of the preaching of Christian missionaries, and of the circulation of the New Testament in various parts of the Jewish world. I will only quote two significant

sayings, the one from an English, the other from a Russian Jew. The former an intelligent inquirer, has reached this point, that "Christ may, indeed must, have been more than human; but between this concession and Deity (he says) there is an infinite gulf." The other, a devout man, well read in the Old and New Testaments, said, "although I am still far from believing Jesus to be the Son of God, yet I consider Him my mediator with God," and I often say in my prayers, "This for the sake of Jesus of Nazareth" (that is, not for the sake of the inferior merits of the Jewish "fathers"). Such persons seem on the point of reviving a primitive Judæo-Christianity; dare we hinder them? Are we sure that the hellenized theology of the Church of the Councils is not partly responsible for Jewish unbelief? I do not wish to see the Christian religion de-hellenized; even for the Jews themselves a hebraizing Christianity could perhaps only be a halting-point. The doctrine of the Logos, in its essence, is the postulate, not only of a deep historical philosophy, but of a complete Christian experience. It has yet to be proved that this conception is inconsistent with the Theism of the Hebrew prophets. But there is no doubt that the mental habits of a Jew almost compel him to think that it is. He interprets the prophets by the light of the Sh'mà, forgetting that the great prophets were not preoccupied with the *monotheistic* idea of Deuteronomy, forgetting the *El-gibbor* of the greatest Messianic prophecy. While the prejudices of Judaism are what they are, is not a Judæo-Christian Church a necessity? In the earliest times the Gentile Christians received their directions from Jerusalem. Must the Jewish Christians in our time be dictated to by Leipsic or Canterbury? Such is the question which, during the past year, has been practically answered in the negative in the south Russian province of Bessarabia. I should have no excuse for not devoting some attention to this remarkable because spontaneous

Judæo-Christian movement, the official papers of which supply us with material as important as any of the Rabbinical commentaries. Its object is the formation of Christian communities of Jewish nationality ("sons of the new covenant"), repudiating the dogmatic forms of the Gentile Churches, and retaining so much of the Law and of the national customs of the Jews as is not inconsistent with the spirit of the Gospel. Its leader, Joseph Rabinowitz, is not a Reform-Jew; he clings to the idea of a personal Messiah, not merely on Biblical grounds, but because "the moral and spiritual wounds" of the Jews require a physician, and this physician, this national leader or Messiah, can, historically, be no other than Jesus of Nazareth. "Therefore," says the twelfth thesis of the programme, "our strong love to our Israelitish brethren obliges us to sanctify and reverence the name of Jesus our brother, devoutly learning His holy words, and taking the books of the New Testament into our houses for a blessing, and uniting them with all the sacred writings which our true wise men in all generations have left us for a blessing." The words "Jesus our brother" sound the keynote of these remarkable theses, and contain the secret of the attractiveness of the movement. But another sentence of its leader, not included in the programme, is equally significant.—"I first of all honoured Jesus as the great man with a compassionate heart, afterwards as Him who sought the good of my people, last of all, as Him who has borne my sins."

The oldest church-history tells us how, on hearing certain things, the chief priests "were much perplexed concerning them, whereunto this would grow" (Acts v. 24, R.V). But to Jews and Christians alike we may quote the saying, "Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it" (Isa. lxxv. 8). Yes, even to Jews. For all friends of Israel should hail with joy every spontaneous moral effort on the part of Jews. I,

for my part, can greet with almost equal sympathy that phase of progressive Judaism which a young and fervent Israelite has so attractively pictured in the *Contemporary Review*.<sup>1</sup> Those who think with him may surely in a very true sense be called disciples of Jesus; for they not only honour our Master, but have been morally influenced by His life. I claim them as prophetic heralds of a fuller discipleship, when "all Israel," in St. Paul's words—that is, all Israel worthy of the name, the "servant of Jehovah" in one of the two higher senses—shall be "saved." I know full well that this liberal or progressive Judaism has its own interpretation of the great Messianic prophecy of the Deutero-Isaiah. To it "the hope of Israel" is not the Messiah, but the realization on Israel's part of its own quasi-Messianic calling. The prophecy of a Messiah (that is, of a king Messiah, and to the Jews there is no other sense of the word) is regarded as only the temporary investiture of the belief in progress.<sup>2</sup> But the prophecy of a servant of Jehovah, who shall make known the truth to the Gentiles, is permanently and literally true of the people of Israel. For this beneficent object, and not to bear an imaginary punishment, the Jewish people has been so wonderfully preserved. The Talmud has had its day; its ordinances maintained the national peculiarities; but all that was good in it has passed into the life-blood of its people. Reform-Judaism desires no return to Palestine, no exchange of prayer for sacrifice, no Messiah; it claims, indeed, a primacy, but only that claimed already for England by Milton, of "teaching the nations how to live." The theory of the Reform-Jews, both in its negative and in its affirmative aspects, is not so bold as it may seem. It

<sup>1</sup> *Is Judaism a Tribal Religion*, by Claude Montefiore. *Contemporary Review*, xlii. p. 361 foll.

<sup>2</sup> *Croyance au Progrès*. M. J. Darmesteter, in his eloquent *Coup d'œil sur l'histoire du peuple juif*.

is but the combination and development of teachings of eminent rabbis, from Johanan ben-Sakkai to Maimonides and Joseph Albo: it does but represent the point at which the entire Judaism of the West is bound logically to arrive. The same right by which the Talmudic doctors adapted the Scriptures to *their* age appertains to the wise men of our own totally different age. The question is that of the legitimacy of doctrinal and ritual developments. We have long ago settled this for ourselves in the affirmative; can we quarrel with the Jews for taking a similar course? I criticise the developments of Reform-Judaism, not as in principle unjustified, but as inadequate to the wants of the Jews. Take for instance its assertion of the Messianic functions of the Jewish people. I heartily concur with Jewish writers in opposing the theory that the Jews are under a curse for having rejected the true Messiah. Doubtless every nation must suffer the consequences of its own misdeeds, and, speaking historically, it was the rejection of that new creation of Judaism, called the Gospel, which involved the Jewish people in a complication of calamities. But must we not admit, that, upon the whole, the dispersion of the Jews has produced beneficial results both for themselves and for the world? I will only now allude to the preciousness for the balance of truth of the vigorous Jewish protest against polytheism. Was not this a result which deserves to be called providential? And must we not sympathise with the heart-felt rhetoric of Jewish preachers, when they declare that the flames which reduced the temple to ashes were not less the ministers of God's will and the prophets of His wisdom than the men who once erected that holy house.<sup>1</sup> Truly, if "Messianic" be only another word for "beneficent in the moral and religious sphere," the Jewish people has often exercised Messianic functions.

<sup>1</sup> S. Holdheim, *Predigten*, vol. i. p. 102, referring to Maimonides.

But how can we accept this for the fulfilment of the prophecies in the Deutero-Isaiah? For what is there upon such a hypothesis to justify the enthusiasm of the writer? and if a high ecclesiastical authority<sup>1</sup> (Archbishop Benson) is right, and there are truths from the far East waiting to be worked into our view of the Gospel, why may not other Eastern races besides the Jewish be called Messianic? But if the term "Messianic" implies a commission to propagate the fullest and truest religion, can it be said that the Jews have taken up their privilege? Do they indeed even desire to do so? Here are two striking sentences which, on an unprecedented occasion, I heard fall from the the lips of a learned Rabbi, "Of a truth! Jesus is a Saviour of the Gentile world, seeing, that ye, Gentile Christians, are the seal of his Saviourship in God! May then Christianity yet bring many thousands and millions of men to Christian worship, to the worship of the God first recognised and taught by Israel to mankind."<sup>2</sup> But if Israel claims the privilege, can it disembarass itself from the responsibilities? The prophecy, "He shall bring forth judgment to the nations," is not exhausted by the most decided passive protest against heathen religions. I think that the most candid Jews would not deny the soundness of this objection. I think that they would be foremost to reprove the spiritual pride which seems to lurk in so many Jewish utterances. Israel is not yet a Messianic people, but it may, and, if the visions of the prophet are to be realized, it must, become a Messianic people. Not that other nations are excluded; it is true in more than one sense that—

"All man to be  
Will make one people ere man's race be run."

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Benson's words were stronger than those in which I have ventured to convey his meaning. But as they formed part of a speech, it seemed unfair to emphasize the form of this liberal-minded and courageous utterance.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Schiller-Szinessy, *Exposition of Isa.* lii. 13—liii. 12, p. 31.

The true Israel is a spiritual one, and embraces all, whether Jews or Greeks, who wrestle with God and for God. Christians of all nations are called upon to do Messianic work, but none have such gifts for this high calling as the Jews. Each nation has its own strength and its own weakness, and the strength of the Jews lies in their intensity and persistent energy. They are a born missionary nation; though as yet the best part of their mission has been obscured by their protest. But now, alas! the eye of the great protester is become dim, and his natural force abated; and before the Jewish nation can become the "lamp" to which an ancient doctor, or the "fountain" to which the great Berlin preacher, Solomon Holdheim, has compared it, it must gain a deeper intuition and a more abounding moral energy. Is it not this which the Deutero-Isaiah saw in vision, when he promised in the name of Jehovah, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground" (Isa. xlv. 3)? Christendom needs this, too, I am sure; but Israel as a nation, unlike Christendom, still needs to feel her need. Not a mere Reform-Judaism, drawing part of its vitality from the Gospel; not a mere orthodox Western Christianity, but a moral and spiritual new birth through Jesus, can be the climax of her history. "The sons of Judah have to choose that God may again choose them" (Mordecai). But will God again choose them? Surely; "God hath not cast away His people whom He foreknew" (Rom. xi. 2). As the old Hebrew sages have said, "a Divine word, even though conditional, is never recalled." "I am Jehovah, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." When Jacob's name was changed to Israel, he was a prophetic type of his descendants. In his people he will yet again wrestle with God, and at midnight he will prevail. The past and present sufferings of his race will be forgotten in the great, the second redemption. He will recognise in "Jesus our



Brother," the true Saviour and reconciler of Jew and Gentile; not the destroyer of his nationality, but its glorifier; the personal revelation of Him whose name is Love. There are signs that Jacob's wrestling is soon to begin; can we, members of a Messianic Church, be unconcerned spectators? Can we, and dare we? For there is another strife beginning, and we need Israel's—that is, God's champion's—help. As a progressive Jewish writer (I. Singer, author of *Sollen wir Juden Christen werden?*) has lately said, "the next generation will see one of the most serious crises of history—serious above all for the still undecided religious question." I join him in his recommendation of the study of the *origines* of Judaism and Christianity. God grant that, before the conflict rages fiercely, the Christian may learn to read the New Testament more in the light of the Old, and the Israelite the Old Testament more in that of the New! Then shall we become fellow-champions of a religion, the same in its essence, though not in all its forms—the same, that is, in the heart-worship of a self-revealing God, who has brought us near both to each other, and to Himself by the sacrifice of His Son.

POSTSCRIPT.—The essence of the above article is that, whether with or without orthodoxy, the acceptance of Jesus as the Saviour is the only complete remedy for Israel's troubles. There is obviously a great interval between a spiritual though undogmatic Christianity and a meagre because predominantly negative Reform-Judaism. In the interests of spiritual religion, one could only rejoice if such Reform-Judaism should one day develop into any form of religion which can recognise the central importance of the person of Jesus and of the New Testament. But for the mass of the Jews, a resting-place will, I imagine, long be needed (until they seek a wider home in the general Christian

Church) such as Rabinowicz has tried, in a truly humble and unambitious spirit, to supply. It may not yet be God's time to grant full success to such efforts; the nearest way is not always God's way (Exod. xiii. 17), and we know that in the Apostolic Age the *Minim* or Jewish Christians were bitterly opposed by their non-Christian brethren. But the cause represented by Rabinowicz, if checked now, will sooner or later flourish again, and meantime there is abundant instruction for thoughtful students of the Scriptures in the various documents published under Prof. Delitzsch's superintendence, by Deichert of Erlangen. It may be truly said that they carry us back into the days of the Acts of the Apostles.

T. K. CHEYNE.

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## THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

### VI.

#### THE RECONCILING SON.

“For it was the good pleasure of the Father that in Him should all the fulness dwell; and through Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, *I say*, whether things upon the earth, or things in the heavens. And you, being in time past alienated and enemies in your mind in your evil works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death.”—Col. i. 19–22 (Rev. Ver.).

THESE words correspond to those which immediately precede them, inasmuch as they present the same sequence, and deal with Christ in His relation to God, to the universe, and to the Church. The strata of thought are continuous, and lie here in the same order as we found them there. There we had set forth the work of the pre-incarnate Word as well as of the incarnate Christ; here we have mainly the reconciling power of His cross proclaimed as reaching to every corner of the universe, and as culminating in its operations on the believing souls to whom Paul speaks. There we had the fact that He was the image of God laid