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THE INDEBTEDNESS OF MISSIONS TO THE MYSTICS

BY THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

That prince of preachers, Dr. Alexander Maclaren, of Manchester, England, has laid the whole Church under tribute by his masterly address, delivered at Edinburgh, in 1901, on "Evangelical Mysticism." *

With that authority that comes of a long life, unmarred by any unwise or unsound utterance needing recall or even regret, this master of the British pulpit ventures to defend what is good and great in that mysticism which so many condemn but so few really understand. Acknowledging that the brand of suspicion and disrepute is upon the very word "mysticism," Dr. Maclaren argues that its controlling principle is not only evangelical, but central to all truest and highest Christian faith and life—namely, *the direct union and communion of the Spirit of God and the spirit of man*. The doctrine of the New Testament on this subject is unmistakable, and is embraced in three particulars: First, the imparting of Divine Life to the believer by the Spirit, in regeneration; second, the indwelling of the Spirit of Life in the believer, for sanctification and assimilation to God; and, third, the out-working of the Spirit through the believer, for a new manifestation of God to man.

As Dr. Maclaren contends, the imperfect reflection of light in a mirror does not imply any lessening of the glory of the light itself; and the fact that mystics have run to extremes and sometimes into grave errors, must not discredit whatever of real truth and high spiritual attainment may be properly found in mysticism. Francis Bacon long since reminded us of the *radius reflectus*, *radius refractus*, and *radius directus*, and how often the direct ray is reflected from a distorted mirror, or refracted—bent out of its true course by a defective medium.

Mysticism is the name given to the doctrine and belief that man may attain to an immediate, direct consciousness or knowledge of God

* Presidential address at the autumn assembly of the Baptist Unions of Great Britain and Ireland, October 9, 1901.

we held a great thanksgiving service, and then, as the labor vessel's boats made for the shore, we began our sports and games. The heathen gathered from all quarters, and over a thousand people filled our grounds. All around were dense masses of armed men. The first item was a tug-of-war, and then came the greasy pole and other contests. The worshippers threw themselves with great heartiness into everything. The bright, laughing Christians, in their many-colored dresses, formed a striking contrast to the black, armed ranks of the heathen.

My first anxiety was the labor schooner, but soon a new peril made me lift my heart to God in prayer. Some of the heathen had not met since war had raged between them. At first they simply glared at each other, and then old hatreds broke out and hot words were spoken. Again and again I started some contest that would scatter the excited groups, but they soon came together again. Then I went from group to group and tried to spread a better feeling. Our Christmas gathering was nearly turned into a scene of bloodshed in our very garden, but God heard our prayers, and all passed off most happily.

The heathen immensely enjoyed the great feast spread out for them, and then the far-away ones returned to their homes, while our people went on with the games. In the evening we had a magic-lantern entertainment and singing. Despite the threatened dangers, the day was most successful, and made a marked impression on the heathen. One of them said, a few days after: "We know that the worship has come to stay. When we saw all the women and children mixing with the men in their joy, and all so nicely clothed, we felt ashamed, and that was why we stood apart and looked on. Where can we go? We can not escape the worship. We must take it in the end."

ENCOURAGEMENTS IN MISSIONARY WORK AMONG THE JEWS

BY REV. LOUIS MEYER, HOPKINTON, IOWA

"In the department of missions to the heathen we record, from month to month, continual new wonders of Divine conquests. . . . How different the record if we attempt to glean from Jewish-Christian sources the signs of redemption for Israel! It seems almost a way to discourage the friends of this cause if we pick up the occasional reports of a Jew or two converted, or a few willing to seek or hear of Jesus. It would seem more to the purpose to say nothing." Thus encourages (?) his readers the editor of a magazine which has, in large letters upon its first page, the motto, EVANGELIZATION OF THE JEWS THE CARDINAL ISSUE OF THE PRESENT CENTURY.

Such statements, based upon the superficial reading of a few monthly or quarterly publications, undoubtedly cause the common conviction that Jewish work, meeting with unsurmountable difficulties, is barren of results and quite useless, and thus increase the general apathy of the Christian Church toward a work which is especially dear to the heart of the Master, and which has shown quite remarkable signs of His goodness and of His gracious presence with the laborers during the past year.

"Encouragement in the work generally during the past year" is the report which reaches us from every one of the more than hundred societies and associations which are at present engaged in the blessed

work of bringing the Gospel to the scattered millions of Jews. And it will be well for us to look a little closer at these encouragements in a work which undoubtedly has greater difficulties than other missions.

We do not claim the slight increase of Jewish baptisms between May 1, 1902, and May 1, 1903, as a peculiarly encouraging sign, for the number of baptisms can never be the measure of success of any missionary effort, and baptism does not always mean conversion. But we claim, as the first especially encouraging sign in Jewish missions, *the greater accessibility of the Jews to Gospel effort*. This does not only mean that there is a very hopeful change in the attitude of the Jews toward Christ and Christianity, for that change has come very gradually during the last twenty-five years. Nor does it refer to the peculiar attitude of American and English Reform Jews, who declare themselves highly honored because Jesus, the teacher and the prophet, was one of their brethren, and some of whom are even trying to introduce the reading and the study of the New Testament into their services and Sabbath-schools. It refers chiefly to the accessibility of the Talmudical Jews in the eastern part of Europe.

The Russian laws, unfavorable to the propagation of any Protestant doctrine within the territory of the Holy Synod, forbid direct missionary effort among the multitude of orthodox Jews, and it is possible only to reach them by the printed Word of God and argumentative tracts. John Wilkinson has scattered thousands of Hebrew and Yiddish New Testaments throughout the Russian pale, and he and Gaebelein and the late Joseph Rabinowitz have distributed vast multitudes of good Gospel tracts in almost all the Jewish centers of Russia and Poland, and frequently the printed Word has shown the way of salvation unto Jewish hearts who were longing and searching for it. But the last year has shown a most remarkable improvement in the reception of the printed page among these fanatical Jews. The late Rev. J. M. Eppstein* was led to start a new missionary paper for Russian Jews, *Kol Shophar*, which he sent by mail to numerous rabbis and prominent Jews in Russia. The result was surprising. A few resented what they considered an insult, and wrote angry letters to the English clergyman. Many copies of the paper were torn to shreds, unread, with bitter curses. But a considerable number of the recipients of the paper not only read it, but were incited to further inquiry. Letters from Russian rabbis began to reach Mr. Eppstein, and a vast correspondence between these searching Jews and the missionary ensued, which a few years ago would have been considered impossible. The proofs of the great usefulness of this correspondence in spreading the Gospel among a class of Jews who hitherto had utterly refused to read the New Testament, are so abundant that now, where Mr. Eppstein has entered into his rest, the London Jews Society is raising a special

* See MISSIONARY REVIEW, August, 1903, pp. 609 and 621.

fund for the continuance of the correspondence with Russian rabbis and the circulation of the periodical, *Kol Shophar*.

Add to this the greatly increased demand of the Jews everywhere for the Yiddish Old Testament and their continued readiness to receive the New Testament, and there can be no doubt that the Jews were never so accessible to Gospel effort as at present.

II. The greatly increased interest of Christians. We do not say the greatly increased interest of the churches, because their interest in Jewish missions is little, if at all, increased. The number of denominational missions to the Jews has decreased a little during the past years, and many of those in existence are greatly hindered by decreasing contributions. But the interest of individual Christians in the conversion of the Jews has greatly increased during the last year. Three reasons for this can be given.

First of all, the shameful massacre of Kischineff called the attention of the whole world to the despised Jew, and the Christian joined the Jew in his protest against the barbaric cruelties of the Russian mob and the connivance of high Russian government officials. The pulpits rang with earnest appeals to come to the help of the suffering Israelites, and these appeals led naturally to an increased study of the promises of the Word of God concerning His chosen people, and thus to an increased interest of individual Christians in Jewish missions.

In the second place, the great accessibility of the Jews to Gospel effort is so manifest that men interested in Jewish work took new courage, brought new sacrifices, and by their example influenced others. Thus, Mr. Corey, long interested in the Jewish work in Pittsburg, saw the encouraging signs, and, believing that the time for a step forward had come, provided from his own means a well-equipped home for the Pittsburg mission. It was, as far as we know, the largest gift of any living individual to Jewish missions on this side of the ocean since their beginning. His faith must influence others, and the gift encourages every Jewish worker.

In the third place, the movement among the Jewish followers of Jesus has greatly increased the interest of Christians in Jewish missions. This is proved by the large number of letters from individual Christians in almost every part of the world, which reached the writer after the Hebrew-Christian Conference held in Mountain Lake Park, Maryland, July 28 to 30, 1903.

And that brings us to the consideration of the third encouraging sign in Jewish missions.

III. The Hebrew-Christian movement. The greatest obstacle in the way of the spread of the Gospel among the Jews, and of the increase of interest in Jewish missions, has probably been the fact that the great majority of those Jews who believed in Jesus as the Christ were entirely absorbed by the existing Christian churches, and thus bore

no testimony of the fruitfulness of missionary work among the Jews. In addition to this absorption, it was deplorable that many of those who posed before the public as "converted Jews," and collected money for themselves or nominally for work among their Jewish brethren, were frauds and impostors, so that even well-meaning Christians lent an ear to the oft-repeated claim that all the converts from Judaism to Christianity were simply attracted by financial considerations.

Many efforts to correct this condition were made during the nineteenth century, but all were in vain. A small party arose, chiefly composed of Gentile workers among the Jews at first, which favored the founding of a Hebrew-Christian Church, in which all the Hebrew-Christians were to be united. Tho this idea has met with no favor in the United States, and only few Hebrew-Christians of other countries have come out openly in favor of it, the plan is so much discussed in missionary magazines of Germany and England, that even the approaching International Jewish Missionary Conference in London (October 21 and 22) is to consider its Scriptural aspects.

Hebrew-Christian Brotherhoods and Alliances had frequently been founded in America and England during the nineteenth century, but none of them had proved of much help in the difficulties which confronted the Jewish work from within, when God put it into the hearts of a few Hebrew-Christians, who had met in Boston in 1901 (by invitation of Dr. E. S. Niles), to undertake steps looking toward the founding of a Hebrew-Christian Alliance. The appointed committee, shrunk to two members, saw the way providentially opened, and called a meeting of Hebrew-Christians to Mountain Lake Park, Maryland, and after that meeting was called there appeared unexpectedly that which we would call the most encouraging sign perceived in Jewish mission work for many years. The call, through friends of the cause, found its way into German and British magazines for Jewish missions, and was not only read with interest, but heartily seconded. Thus it came that the corresponding member of that committee received almost four hundred and fifty letters from Hebrew-Christians in every part of the world, who rejoiced in the prospect of a Hebrew-Christian Alliance, for which many of them had prayed for years, and also official letters from already existing Hebrew-Christian Alliances in London, Stockholm, and Jerusalem, pledging support and signifying readiness to join in an International Hebrew-Christian Alliance.

The Mountain Lake Park Hebrew-Christian Conference was held on the prearranged date, and tho it was not largely attended, it undoubtedly marks a forward step in Jewish missions, and is of greatest encouragement to the laborers and friends of the cause, because it has established beyond doubt that the Spirit of God is moving among those Hebrews who followed Jesus outside the camp, so that their ears are opened to the cry of their brethren perishing without the

Gospel, and they are ready to band themselves together for increased effort among Israel, for stronger testimony to the Church of Christ, and for mutual strengthening and helpfulness.

To us the Hebrew-Christian movement of to-day speaks of the time to favor Zion, the set time, and is an earnest of great things to come. For when the Jewish believers in Christ, scattered over the whole world and found in every condition of life, are thus banded together for earnest Gospel effort, we may look for the onward march of the Gospel not only among the Jews, but also among the heathen.

Truly, the Lord is encouraging his children in their efforts among the Jews. May these encouragements lead us to more earnest prayer, greater liberality, and largely increased efforts!

THE MISSIONARY MIRACLE

BY REV. J. K. WILSON, D.D., PORTLAND, ME.

The parable of the sower is the missionary parable, setting forth the seed, the sower, and the varying conditions of soil in "the field, which is the world." In like manner, the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand may be considered as the missionary miracle. In no other of our Lord's mighty works have we so clear an illustration of the meaning and content of the great commission.

Here are the three factors in the missionary equation: A world that needs; a Christ who gives; a Church that carries.

1. The primary missionary impulse. "When *He* saw the multitude *He* had compassion." Our interest in men is begotten of His interest in them.

2. The supreme missionary obligation. "*He said* unto them, Give ye them to eat."

3. The feeding of the five thousand was distinctly a superhuman and Divine work, not a development of the time and place and existing conditions. Missionary success is not the evolution of germs of good in heathen religions; it is the direct working of the grace and power of God.

4. The Divine purpose includes human thought and study. "He Himself knew what He would do"; yet He said to Philip: "Whence are we to provide bread, that these may eat?"

5. The apparent inadequacy of the means—an invariable factor in every problem of Christian service. *E.g.*, the twelve, and the opposing forces of a whole world lying in sin; Luther and the Romish hierarchy; Carey, "the cobbler," and the millions of heathen. Judged by human standards, there is never "enough to go 'round.'"

6. The Divine mathematics: $5 + 2 \times 12 = 5,000$. Five loaves and two fishes multiplied by One Lord and divided or distributed by