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SOME PROBLEMS OF MISSIONS ON THE FOREIGN FIELD.

BY THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF.

Paul's experience at Ephesus, "a great door, and effectual, opened" before him, but "many adversaries,"* has been a typical one throughout mission history. The opposing and obstructing obstacles, including hostile parties and hindrances of every sort, must be understood and appreciated; otherwise we shall get no true estimate either of the difficulties to be met, or of the success already secured. At some problems which continually confront the missionary, we purpose now to look.

Different fields present different problems, according to the character of the people, their ancestral customs, antiquated notions, religious faiths and superstitions, national prejudices, physical, mental, and moral habits, and general condition. Many hindrances are local, and some temporary; others are universal and permanent, demanding a complete revolution for their removal. But to know what the difficulties are and to study carefully and prayerfully their nature and the true method of meeting them is absolutely necessary if the great warfare of the ages is to be carried on without repeated and disastrous defeat. It is not the part of a wise man to underrate the strength of his foe, or treat with contemptuous ignorance or arrogance his resources and reserves. Certain hindrances are general, and may be passed by with a word of reference, such as those of climate, remoteness and difficulty of access, foreign and difficult tongues, deep-seated idolatry and iniquity. Some of these must be met by an advancing civilization, with its increased intelligence and precaution, its facilities of approach by good roads and railways; others must be met by patient forbearance and persistent teaching of truth, backed by consistent practise of godliness. But there are special obstacles which pertain to special fields, and it is these which we desire now to consider.

For example, to begin at the remote East, there is the Sunrise Kingdom, Japan. When modern evangelical missions found entrance

* I Cor. xvi: 9.

JEWISH MISSIONS AT THE CLOSE OF THE 19TH CENTURY.*

BY REV. LOUIS MEYER, HOPKINTON, IOWA.

In the closing year of the eighteenth century no regular missionary labored among the Jews, and only one society for the purpose of bringing the Gospel to the Jews was in existence. The Institutum Judaicum in Halle, founded by the pious Callenberg in 1728, for the preparation of missionaries to the Jews, had been abandoned in 1792, a victim of the rapidly increasing German Rationalism. The Moravians, who had entered upon the work among the Jews with great enthusiasm in 1739, sending Rabbi Samuel Lieberkucher to Amsterdam to preach the Gospel to his Jewish brethren, had become discouraged and abandoned the work, soon after the death of Count Zinzendorf in 1760. The Esdras Edzard Institution in Hamburg, founded in 1667, was the *only* society, so far as we know, which labored for the evangelization of the Jews during the closing years of the eighteenth century, and which could report a few conversions almost every year. In England, France, America, and all other countries, no attention was paid to the benighted Jew. While the Gospel was carried with ever increasing zeal to the heathen, the children of Abraham seemed to be forgotten.

Yet God had not forgotten them! The morning was very near. Joseph Samuel Christian Frederick Frey, predestined by the Lord to become the father of modern Jewish missions, had been baptized in 1798, and the beginning of the nineteenth century found him in the Missionary Seminary in Berlin, where he was preparing himself for the preaching of the Gospel. Before the century had far advanced the Lord opened the way, and in 1805 he began to preach the Gospel to the Jews in London, under the auspices of the London Missionary Society. In 1809 the London Society for Promoting Christianity Among the Jews was formed by Frey, Way, and others, and soon missionary societies for the evangelization of the Jews were founded in all parts of the world. The New York "Society for Ameliorating the Condition of the Jews" received its charter on April 14, 1820. The Berlin "Society for Promoting Christianity Among the Jews" was formed in 1822. The Basel "Society of the Friends of Israel" saw the light in 1830. The year 1838 brought an increased enthusiasm for the evangelization of the Jews, when McCheyne, Bonar, Keith, and Black were sent out by the Church of Scotland "to visit and inquire after the scattered Jews." To the Church of Scotland God gave the great honor to first undertake Jewish work *as a Church*, and she started her first missions among the Jews in Pesth and Jassy in 1841. Since then, society has followed society for the evangelization of the Jews, denomination after denomination has obeyed the Master's call to preach the Gospel to the Jew, until now, in the closing days of the nineteenth century, we find one hundred and nineteen societies for the evangelization of the Jews, employing more than eight hundred missionaries in two hundred and forty-six stations (see my "Christian Efforts Among the Jews" in *Jewish Era*, April 15, 1900). Of these societies we find thirty-seven in Great Britain, eighteen in Germany, five in Scandinavia, four in the Netherlands, two in France, seven in the remaining parts of Europe, two in Africa, six in Asia, four in Australia, and thirty-four in America.

* Condensed from the *Jewish Era*, Chicago.

The most encouraging thing, as we consider the Jewish missionary field, is perhaps the fact that during the century so many *denominations* have entered upon the Jewish work *as such*, and we hope and pray that the day may not be very far off when Jewish work shall have the same rank with foreign missionary work in the councils of the churches. The following denominations are to-day engaged in Jewish work (we add the year in which the work commenced): The Episcopal Churches of England (1815), Ireland (1889), Australia (1890), and America (1842, resp. 1878), the Church of Scotland (1840), the Free Church of Scotland (1843), the Presbyterian Churches of England (1871), Ireland (1841), Australia (Victoria 1896), and America (1870), the Lutheran Churches of Germany (1822, resp. 1871), Scandinavia (1856 and 1865), and America (1878), the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (1894), the United Presbyterian Church of North America (1899), and others. The oldest society is the Esdras Edzard Institution in Hamburg, founded in 1667.

The largest society, and the most influential of all, is undoubtedly the London Society for Promoting Christianity Among the Jews (Church of England), founded in 1809. It employs 226 missionaries in fifty stations and has an income of about \$190,000. The largest undenominational society is the Mildmay Mission to the Jews in London, founded by Rev. John Wilkinson in 1876. It employs sixty-five workers in nine stations, and has an income of \$45,000. Its chief work is the free distribution of the Hebrew and Yiddish New Testament.

Among the numerous missions in the United States the Chicago Hebrew Mission deserves especial mention, not so much on account of the magnitude of the work, as on account of the wise and prudent management, and the great influence it is exerting upon other missions. It is interdenominational, and was established in 1887 by that great lover of Israel, William Blackstone.

When we look at the manner in which the Gospel is brought to the Jews, we find several things of great interest. In general, the preaching of the Gospel is considered the chief means of reaching the stiff-necked Jews—and so it ought to be—and, in addition to preaching, all the larger societies sustain well-ordered schools, reading-rooms, and free dispensaries. Since the Jews are an intellectual people and in general well educated in their religion and language, the distribution of literature claims a more prominent place in Jewish work than in any other, and the missionary to the Jews has to be well supplied with New and Old Testaments and tracts in the different languages used by the race (Hebrew, Yiddish, German, Russian, Spanish, etc.). Rev. John Wilkinson, of the Mildmay Mission in London, was led by the Holy Spirit to distribute the New Testament (in Hebrew and Yiddish) freely among the scattered Jews, and he has done a great work during the last decade of the nineteenth century. It is well worth our notice that to-day any worthy missionary to the Jews is provided freely with Hebrew and Yiddish New Testaments by the Mildmay Mission, of which the Chicago Hebrew Mission is the sole agent in this country. During the last years Marcus Bergmann has translated the Old Testament into Yiddish, and a society has been formed for the distribution of this quite expensive book.

Since the work is considered peculiarly difficult, men are continually looking around for new methods of work. The late Mr. A. Ben Oliel, of Jerusalem, wrote and printed pamphlets of his own, and sent them by mail to "educated, wealthy and busy" Jews. William Greene, of the

Postal Mission to the Jews in London, approaches the Jews in personal letters, while A. E. Abrahamson, of the *Hebrew Christian Message* in London, asks Hebrew Christians for testimonials of their religious experience, and sends these testimonials to the Jews. Wurts & Brown, in Philadelphia, started in 1898 the Jewish Bible Shop-Window Mission. Open Bibles in Hebrew, Yiddish, German, and Russian, as well as tracts in different languages, are laid in the show-window of a store in the Jewish quarter to attract the passing Jew. The pages are turned every day to cause inquirers to return, and Bibles, New Testaments, and religious papers are distributed freely by the person in charge of the store. Bible shop-windows of this kind are established in eight or nine cities of the United States, and claim to have abundant success. It is too early to say whether these shop-window missions are a step forward or not. Dunlop, of Philadelphia, established, in 1898, "Open-Air Work Among the Jews," traveling over the country and preaching to the Jews in the streets. Professor Stroeter became, in 1899, an "Evangelist in Israel," and is now traveling and preaching in Russia and Poland.

In regard to the amount of money which is spent annually in missionary work among the Jews, we can give only an estimate. We believe that during 1899 about one million dollars was spent.

It now remains that we consider *the field itself*. Missionary work among the Jews is to-day carried on in every part of the world, and wherever the Jew is found to-day the Gospel is preached to him. Yet while some parts of the field have only one missionary for more than two hundred thousand Jews, other parts are simultaneously occupied by missionaries of different societies, which often not only fail to work in harmony, but oppose each other vehemently. We hope that the new century will bring about harmony among the different societies, so that the field may be properly divided and cultivated, and money be no longer squandered by sending new missionaries to fields already occupied by other societies.

If we look at the state of the soil—that is, at the attitude of the Jews toward Christianity and toward the missionary who brings the Gospel to them—we can naturally only speak in general terms, which admit of exceptions in particular localities. Yet we can truly say that the attitude of the Jews toward Christianity is far more favorable in the present day than it has been at any period since Apostolic times, and the hostile opposition of the orthodox, as well as the reformed, or rationalistic Jew, is greatly diminished and mitigated. But we must be careful to discern between the attitude toward Christianity and the attitude toward the missionary. In regard to the latter we can only say that very much depends on the missionary himself. The Hebrew Christian meets naturally greater difficulties than the Gentile, for the old prejudice against the "apostate" Jew remains unchanged, although the progress of civilization has covered it a little. Add to this prejudice the fact that Gentile Christians, especially in America, often think that any Jew who claims to be converted is a missionary whether he be educated or not, and that many missionaries sent out in this manner, whether they be frauds or not, are a hindrance to real missionary work among the Jews; and you have the main reason why work among the Jews is to-day not as prosperous as we would like to see it. The last years, however, have taught the Christians the lesson that Jewish missionaries must be just as well prepared for the work as missionaries to the heathen,

and the Institutum Judaicum Delitzschianum in Leipzig, the Institutum Judaicum in Berlin, and other schools of the same kind are steps in the right direction.

In general, however, the attitude of the Jews toward the missionaries has become an attitude of polite inquiry, and tho the audiences in Jewish mission chapels are still small, vehement interruptions and open outbreaks of violent hostility become less and less frequent. Open-air preaching seems to be most offensive, tho it is quite successful in particular localities. Missionary schools and kindergartens are well attended, free reading-rooms are heartily welcomed, and both have certainly a softening influence upon the Jewish people; and even the curses of the enraged rabbis can no longer keep their sick parishioners from the free dispensary and the Christian hospital. The Zionist movement seems to me a great hindrance, rather than a help, to missionary effort among the Jews, since it puts great emphasis upon the fact that "the acquisition of a publicly and rightly assured home for the millions of persecuted Jews" is the only salvation of Israel. The true cause of Israel's suffering and dispersion—the rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ—is left out of the account, and the Jew is taught to look for temporal prosperity only. The great annual gatherings, however—the Zionist congresses, which are attended by ever-increasing numbers of Jewish delegates from all parts of the world—give the missionaries good opportunities to speak to the delegates individually of the true salvation of Israel.

After all, when we look over the field, we can truly say, "The fields are white to harvest." And the laborers? They are few; but the day is breaking. The Church of Christ is awakening from her long sleep and is coming to a knowledge of her long-neglected duty to the Jew.

And as the nineteenth century closes we stand with grateful hearts as we look over the Jewish field; and we exclaim, What has God wrought in the last century!

"For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?"—ROM. xi. : 12, 15.

THE CHINESE REFORM EDICT.*

SIR ROBERT HART'S EPITOME OF THE EXTRAORDINARY DOCUMENT.

Principles shine like sun and star, and are immutable; practice is a lute-string, to be tuned and changed. Dynasties cancel one procedure and substitute another; succeeding reigns fall in line with the times and conform to their requirements. Laws, when antiquated, lose fitness and must be amended to provide for the security of the State and the welfare of the people.

For decades things have gone from bad to worse in China, and what calamity has been the result! But, now that peace is on the eve of being re-established, reform must be taken in hand. The Express Dowager sees that what China is deficient in can be best supplied from what the West is rich in, and bids Us make the failures of the past Our teachers for the conduct of the future.

The so-called reform of the Kang gang have not been less mis-

* From *The Christian Work*.