

THE JEWISH ERA

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No. 2.

"A light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel."

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MRS. T. C. ROUNDS, EDITOR.

LIFE FROM THE DEAD.*

BY REV. HARRIS H. GREGG.

Abraham believed that God is a God of resurrection. To confirm this faith of Abraham God gave him Isaac when it was past the time of nature for him and Sarah to have a child. Abraham's faith in God's promise to give him this son was his faith that God is able to raise the dead. It was this resurrection faith that God imputed for righteousness to Abraham. God gave His own righteousness to resurrection faith.

Abraham was also shown, in a type, that resurrection is the principle of God's redemption, when he received Isaac up from the altar, at the word of God; God having provided Isaac's redemption in giving the lamb to take his place in death. Isaac took the lamb's place in life. It was life after death, as well as life through the taking of another life. Thus God taught Abraham that in providing redemption God bestows resurrection life to those who accept His redemption. "By faith Abraham offered up Isaac—of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called, accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he re-

ceived him in a figure" (or type). Thus Isaac was a child of God's resurrection both in his birth and in his redemption.

The history of Israel's redemption out of Egypt into Canaan is but the history of God schooling Israel in resurrection truth. The redemption and life of the first born in Israel through God's provision of the passover lamb, on the night when all the first born among the Egyptians were slain, was a resurrection never forgotten in the law and the prophets. The death of the Egyptians in the Red Sea and the passing of Israel through the sea, up from the death behind them, was also a lesson in resurrection truth.

All of the offerings on the brazen altar of the Tabernacle pitched in the wilderness, made after the pattern that the Lord gave Moses in the mount, repeated for the offerer the lesson, that resurrection life is what God provides through His redemption. The preservation of a nation in the wilderness, a scene of death, was but manifesting God's resurrection power. Water from the smitten rock and manna on the desert sand every morning, were but life from the dead, the principle of resurrection.

Again, in a figure, God led Israel on to resurrection ground, when He opened the Jordan before "the ark of the covenant," and on

*A Discourse delivered at the Reading Room of the Chicago Hebrew Mission, Saturday, January 26, 1901.

THE FIRST JEWISH CHRISTIAN
IN NORTH AMERICA.
JUDAH MONIS.

BY REV. LOUIS MEYER.

The statement of the venerable Increase Mather, 'made May 1st, 1722, that Judah Monis was "the first Jew that ever I knew converted in New England," is true not only in regard to New England, but probably in regard to North America, for a most careful investigation, carried on through six years, has not been able to discover the traces of any other Jew publicly baptized in North America prior to 1722.

Little is known of the early life of Judah Monis, except that he was born in Algiers in 1683 of Sephardic stock, and that his parents soon removed to Italy.² His education was the strict training of the pious Jew, in the ceremonial law and in the traditions of the fathers, so that he soon became "truly read and learned in the Jewish Cabbala and Rabbins, a Master and Critic in the Hebrew."³ After having been a private Antoe in a rich Jewish family for a few years, the young venturesome Jew determined to find a home beyond the ocean, far from the caressing (?) arm of the powerful persecutor of the Italian Jews, the Roman Church. He landed in Boston about the year 1716, and made a scanty living as precentor and slaughterer (chazan and shochat) among the few Sephardic Jews living then in Boston. In Monis, breast was a strong desire after a higher education, and as soon as he had mastered the English language sufficiently, he devoted his spare time to studies in the renowned Harvard College. In spite of his age of thirty-five years

and of the innumerable difficulties in the path of the poor foreigner, Monis succeeded well and received the degree of A. M. at Harvard in 1720. In the College Library of Harvard is preserved a letter of the young Master of Arts, addressed to the corporation of Harvard June 29th, 1720, which was kindly copied for my perusal. Monis had finished "an essay to facilitate ye instruction of youth in ye Hebrew language," and now submits it for the "judicious perusal" and the eventual approval of the most reverend gentlemen. The letter states that the essay had already received the approval of "some best and learned gentlemen of the Dissenters and of different churches," so that Monis seems to have been well known at this time. The letter is written in the awkward style of the foreigner who, still thinking in his mother-tongue, translates his thoughts into English while he writes; and it is full of grammatical mistakes. The essay was later re-written and published as a grammar in 1735.

During the years 1720 and 1721 Monis was a private teacher of Hebrew to a few students of Harvard College, and he continued to act as chazan unto his Jewish brethren. But a sudden change came over the Jewish Rabbi, for the Holy Spirit illumined the writings of the prophets from which he was teaching so diligently; the truth was made known to him, and he saw the prophecies fulfilled in Jesus. It was a short, but sharp struggle; then he decided to follow his Saviour outside the camp!

An illustrious audience assembled in the College Hall at Cambridge March 27th, 1722, to witness the baptism of the Jewish rabbi. The venerable Dr. Increase Mather, the celebrated preacher of New England, had been requested

to "preach the sermon and serve on so great a solemnity," but had declined on account of old age, and Benjamin Colman, pastor of a church in Boston, had the honor to preach the sermon and to baptize the first Jew in North America. The sermon was based upon John 5:46; its theme was "Moses a witness unto our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;" and it was permeated with love for neglected Israel. Its closing appeal to the young disciple is touching in its simplicity and shows clearly the high respect which Monis already enjoyed. After the discourse, the rite of baptism was solemnly performed, and the first Jew in North America had publicly acknowledged his Messiah! Immediately after the baptism the convert ascended the platform and delivered a discourse, "The Truth," in which he addressed his Jewish brethren (see below!).

We hear of no persecution of Monis by his Jewish brethren nor of insults offered to him on account of his "desertion" of the Jewish faith. In the address to his brethren according to the flesh, with which he later accompanied the address delivered at his baptism, he simply says, "I do expect the news of my embracing the Christian religion that came to your ears some time ago, has been surprising to you all; and I am afraid you did not think it to be the best you ever have heard" (May 1st, 1722).

At a meeting of the Corporation of Harvard, held probably very soon after the day of his baptism, Judah Monis was elected a teacher of the Hebrew language in Harvard College. In a letter of May 22d, 1722, preserved in the College Library and kindly copied for my perusal, he gratefully accepts the honor bestowed upon him. "Tho'

I believe I could betake my selfe to such secular business as by ye ordinary blessing of Providence would promote my worldly interest and estate more than what I can expect by instructing youth in ye Hebrew, yet I find my selfe steadily inclined and willing to spend my time (if Providence favor ye design) in giving the best instruction I can in ye aforesaid language, to all such members of the college as shall be desirous to learn of me. I think the more acquainted ye ministers of the Gospel are with the Hebrew tongue, and so with the Old Testament, the better able they will be to understand the New Testament and so to preach our glorious Lord Jesus Christ who was spoken of by all the Old Testament prophets." The salary offered to Monis was very small, so that he says in the letter, "It is not sufficient to support me in my single state, much less if I should enter into a married state (which I have some hope of doing)." If Monis was successful with his prayer for an increase of salary, we do not know; but we know that he married at Cambridge soon after the letter was written. The letter of May 22d, 1722, is written in much better English than the one of June 29th, 1720, and shows the diligence with which Monis followed his studies.

In the same year, 1722, Monis published the discourse which he had delivered at his baptism, "The Truth," adding two essays, with separate title pages, "The Whole Truth," and "Nothing but the Truth." Since these three essays form the first religious tract to Jews which was published in North America, we may be pardoned for describing them to the reader.

On our table is a small book, 6½ inches by 4 inches, in the brown leather binding of the 17th

A
Discourse
Had in the
College-Hall
At Cambridge, March 27. 1722.
Before the Baptism of
R. Judah Monis.
By *Benj. Colman, V.D.M.*
To which are added
Three DISCOURSES
Written by Mr. *Monis* himself,
The Truth, The whole Truth, and,
Nothing but the Truth.
One of which was deliver'd by him
at his BAPTISM.

BOSTON: Printed for Daniel Henchman, and
sold at his Shop over against the old Brick
Church in Cornhill. 1722.

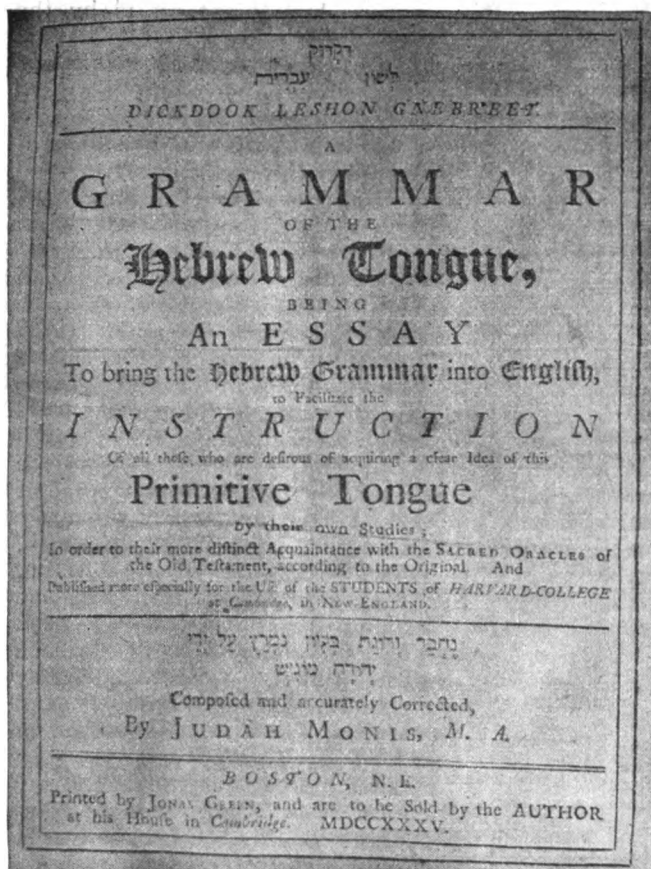
NOTHING BUT
The Truth:
BEING
A Short ESSAY,
WHEREIN
The Author proves the Doctrine
Of the Ever-Blessed and Eternal
TRINITY,
Both out of the
Old Testament,
And with the Authority of the
Cabalistical Rabbies,
Ancient and Modern:
And that said Doctrine is not a
NOVELTY, as his Country-
Men do think, but as *ancient* as
the *BIBLE* it self.

By R. JUDAH MONIS.

BOSTON: Printed for Daniel Henchman, and
sold at his Shop. 1722.

century, kindly lent to us by the librarian of Harvard College, Mr. W. C. Lane. It is, as far as we know, the only extant copy of Monis' three tracts, or essays, and of the sermon preached at his baptism. As we open the cover, we read on the title page of the book, "A discourse had in the College Hall at Cambridge, March 27th, 1722. Before the baptism of R. Judah Monis. By Benjamin Colman, V. D. M. To which are added three discourses written by Mr. Monis himself, The Truth, The Whole Truth, and, Nothing but the Truth. One of which was delivered by him at his baptism. Boston: Printed for Daniel Henchman, and sold at his shop over against the old Brick Church in Cornhill, 1722." The title of the sermon, Moses, a witness to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, has been mentioned before. In the preface Rev. Colman speaks very highly of Judah Monis' character and learning. The sermon is printed on twenty-seven pages.

The title page of the first essay reads, "The Truth, being a discourse which the author delivered at his baptism, containing nine principal arguments the modern Jewish Rabbins do make to prove the Messiah is yet to come: with the answers to each, not only according to the orthodox opinion, but even with the authority of their own authentic Rabbins of old. And likewise, with the Confession of his Faith at the latter end. Dedicated to the Jewish Nation. And prefaced by the Rev. Increase Mather, D. D. By R. Judah Monis. Boston, 1722." The preface by Mather is especially interesting because it shows his extraordinary familiarity with the names of the few Christian Jews living in the beginning of the 17th century. It is dated May 1st, 1722.



The essay is printed on thirty-six pages.

The title page of the second essay reads, "The Whole Truth: being a short essay, wherein the author discovers what may be the true reason why the Jewish Nation are not as yet converted to Christianity, besides what others have said before him. And likewise, he proves the divinity of Christ, not only with the authority of the sacred oracles, but even by the opinion of the Jewish authors of old; and answers all the objections that the discourse brings forth out of Isaiah 9:6, 7. Concluding with a word of exhortation. By R.

Judah Monis." Forty pages. The title page of the third essay reads, "Nothing But The Truth: being a short essay, wherein the author proves the doctrine of the ever-blessed and adorable Trinity, both out of the Old Testament, and with the authority of the Cabalistical Rabbies, ancient and modern: and that said doctrine is not a novelty, as his countrymen do think, but as ancient as the Bible itself. By R. Judah Monis." 26 pages.

The Hebrew quotations are printed with English types in these tracts

since it was not possible to get Hebrew types in New England in 1722.

In the fall of 1722 Judah Monis entered upon his duties as teacher of Hebrew in Harvard College. We hear very little of him, until his Hebrew Grammar appeared in 1735. It is printed in Boston, N. E., by Jonas Green, and is to be sold by the author at his house in Cambridge. It well shows the scholarship of its author. On the last page, 94, is printed a Hebrew translation of the Lord's Prayer and of the Creed of the Apostles. And it closes with the humble Hebrew words, "by the least of the

fellows, Judah Monis." The thirty-nine articles of the Church of England, the Shorter, and the Larger Westminster Catechism were also translated into Hebrew by Monis, but never published. A copy of the "Grammar of the Hebrew Tongue" is preserved in Harvard and was kindly lent to us; we know of but four copies preserved in the U. S. Monis' wife died in 1761, and soon after her death he retired from active service. He went to Northborough, where he died in 1764. At his death he left a small fund, the interest of which was to be divided among ministers in indigent circumstances.⁴ Monis was an excellent Hebrew scholar and had an extraordinary knowledge of the Scriptures. His diligence, industry and ability are acknowledged by his contemporaries, and the sincerity of his conversion has never been doubted. He was "an Israelite indeed."

Hopkinton, Iowa.

(To be Continued.)

"I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, thy seed will I establish forever, and build up my throne to all generations. Selah." Ps. 89:3, 4.

In 1685 Jewish residents of New York petitioned for permission to build a synagogue, and sent the petition to the Governor, and he to the Mayor and Common Council, who refused to grant it on the grounds that worship was extended only to sects professing faith in Jesus of Nazareth; but Governor Dongan in the next year of his term granted the permit. In 1691 the Jews had a place of public worship, which stood on the south side of what is now Beaver street between Broadway and Broad street. The attendance was twenty families or about 100 souls.—*Jewish Daily News.*

(1) Preface to the essay "The Truth," page IV. (2) Monthly Anthology, 1810, page 59. (3) Benj. Colman's discourse, preface. (4) Hannah Adams' History of the Jews, II 212. De le Roi, I. 433-35.

FROM WASHINGTON.

Dear Sister Rounds and Readers of the Era:

I heartily approve of the effort to bring out the ERA "on time" and yet the change does make it seem but a few days since I last saluted you. Perhaps the time seems brief because I have been able to do so little. I was taken very ill with the prevailing grippe the tenth of January and was confined to my room for about three weeks and since then strength has come very slowly. But thank God! it has come in a degree, so that I have held thirteen services, in several churches, missionary meetings, etc., and my engagements cover twenty-seven addresses in the next thirty days.

Humanly speaking it may seem presumptuous, but I am learning more and more to lean hard on the Lord with a "willful faith."

I ask no higher privilege, in the days that remain, than to be enabled, and have the opportunity, to witness for the truth of the Coming of our Lord, and to emphasize our responsibility for service "while the day lasts."

My heart has been greatly pained, when I see how many "under-shepherds" of the flock are so indifferent, if not antagonistic to the Scriptural teaching of the "Blessed Hope" of our Lord's return.

I find the people everywhere are interested in the presentation of the truth, especially when it is brought out in connection with the teaching of the Word concerning the Jews.

God make us all, who "see the day approaching," willing to spend and be spent in testimony, with tears and wholesouled earnestness wherever we find an open

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THE WITNESSES FOR GOD WHO CANNOT BE PUT TO SILENCE.

BY R. SCOTT MONCRIEFF.

To the seed of Jacob alone amongst men God hath said, "Ye are my witnesses" (Isaiah 43:10). He had often warned them by Moses and the Prophets that they were to be a *separate*, a *scattered*, a *persecuted*, and yet a *preserved* people. The history of every nation in Europe furnishes abundant proof that, from century to century during the last nineteen hundred years, the Jews have been found a race *separate* from all others; *scattered* in every land and *persecuted* as no other people on earth ever have been persecuted; and their survival to this day, in defiance of every effort put forth for their destruction, proves them to have been *preserved*, and in a manner so marvelous that, whereas at the beginning of the last century the total number of Jews in the world was estimated by the Rabbis in Paris not to exceed three millions, it was found at the end of that century to have increased to considerably more than eleven millions!

So exactly moreover do the details of the persecutions, of which they have been the victims throughout the Christian era, correspond with those so tersely and

graphically specified by the Prophets as having been appointed for them by God that, had these prophecies of the future then before the Jews been written now for the first time in the shape of a history of their past, its fidelity to the truth could not be questioned.

And it may with equal fitness be said of the prophecies foretelling the desolations which were to be poured upon their land that, had these, now and for the first time, appeared as the report of a traveler who had recently visited every part of it, he could not more faithfully describe its condition than in language borrowed from these prophecies.

And thus, even as "the Lord set a mark upon Cain," after he had slain his own brother, "lest any finding him should kill him," so hath He set His mark upon that race "of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came," and by whom He was crucified and slain, lest any should destroy them as a people—and yet He hath ordained them as His witnesses! Had they wholly disappeared from amongst men as those nations whose doom was foretold by His Prophets have disappeared, it might be thought that the Lord had failed to fulfill His word to the Jews. But, so far from that, whilst every nation that was doomed (and by name) to perish has perished, that one race of

the Hebrew tongue? We want to remain Hebrews, but what spiritual power does the Synagogue with her Hebrew, the Roman Church with her Latin and the Greek Church with her ancient Bulgarian possess for the regeneration of men? How many understand the Hebrew as a Vernacular? Will we not become isolated from the Evangelical church? Will not Hebrew Christians observing the law, being too few for a separate organization, feel out of place in the Gentile Christian church? As far as his

b. What relation to the SYNA-GOGUE? He will *not* only *feel* out of place there, but he will soon be *put* out of place, when as his loyalty to Christ becomes manifest. Your observance of the law will not make any difference. The leaders of Zionism do not observe the law at all, and yet they are recognized as brothers. But I can observe as much of the law as I please, and I will find only contempt with the majority, because I have been baptized in the name of Jesus. The Jewish Christian then observing the law will tear himself loose from the church, and will be spurned by the Synagogue.

It is not Christ then who tore us away from our beloved nation and dear kindred. The sin rests upon our people who have rejected Him and now reject us because of Him. "Let us, therefore, go forth unto Him without the camp and bear his reproach." Heb. 13:13.

Efforts like these proposed have been attempted in the French Mission to Israel and Gaebel's Work in New York and that of Rabinowitz in Keshenew. They failed, and we too will fail, if we expect a national conversion through any method of our own devising. It is ours to obey; to

preach the Gospel and not to try to manufacture conversions and enumerate baptisms. Prepare ye the way of the Lord. This alone is blessed. Thrice happy are we who have a share in the work of the Son of God. If we suffer with Him, we shall also rejoice and reign with Him. The need of the hour is not men who keep the ceremonial law, but men full of the Holy Ghost and power, men with clear heads, clean hands, and hearts and lips set on fire by the impassioned love of the Lamb. Oh, Lord, give us such men. Oh, give us the whole nation of Israel for Thee! Amen.

THE FIRST JEWISH CHRISTIAN IN NORTH AMERICA. JUDAH MONIS.

*A brief outline of the three essays of
Judah Monis.*

BY REV. LOUIS MEYER.

Continued.

1. "The Truth." The "Preface to the reader" is written by Increase Mather, Boston, May 1, 1722. It begins with the solemn words, "The conversion of Mr. Monis to Christianity is an effect of divine grace. The truth and reality of his conversion appear in what is here exhibited." Mather speaks of the coming "General Conversion of the Jewish Nation," and then proceeds to name a few Jews who have found Christ. He mentioned Tremellius, who died in 1580; John Alexander, who lived about 1690 in London; and Theodore John, baptized in London, 1693. Then follows a statement which cannot be verified from the records accessible today, "A learned man, viz.: Dr. Kidder, gives an account of two hundred

Jews lately converted in the city of Frankford," (Kidder was bishop of Bath and Wells, very much interested in the evangelization of the Jews, and the author of a defence of the Christian religion against the Jews (London 1684-1700)). Mather is not afraid to mention the fact that some Jews like Conrad Otto, had "quitted their profession of Christ and turned to Judaism." But, he continues, "There is no cause of fear that Mr. Monis will renounce his Christianity, since he did embrace it voluntarily, and gradually, and with much consideration, and from Scriptures in the Old Testament."

The preface of Mather is followed by *Monis' dedication*, "To my brethren according to the flesh," in which he asks for an attentive reading of his discourses, "without prejudice (if possible)," and for an examination of the quotations. "I saw in the writings of the Old Testament the prophecies that speak concerning the Messiah . . . fully accomplished in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." He defends the Protestant religion, "the best religion, and so far as I know clearest from superstitions," but confesses that the Church of Rome is practically denying the Law and the Prophets; and he finally states his purpose to prove "that Christianity is not an upstart religion . . . but as old and ancient as the Bible itself."

The essay, *The Truth*, has for its motto, like the other two essays, Ps. 116:10. "As nothing can be established without a foundation," it commences, "so likewise according to the firmness and solidity of said foundation, the superstructure will last or decay." Jesus Christ is the secure foundation of the Church, a foundation permanent and desirable. The Church of

God was built upon the expectation of Christ from the beginning, upon His being already come afterwards. The Jewish nation denies that Christ is already come, and is therefore punished. "They shall never come to be a gathered nation with grandeur and splendor, till they come with one consent and acknowledgment . . . that Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, is already come." Monis then states the nine objections commonly raised by the Jews against the fact that the Messiah has already come, and answers these objections from the Scriptures and from the Jewish writings, showing a excellent knowledge of the Talmud. The confession of his faith at the close of the essay is very brief, but to the point.

2. *The Whole Truth*. The author, without any introduction, enters at once upon a discussion of the question, Why are the Jews not yet converted? He enumerates the eight reasons commonly given, viz: The idolatry of the Romish church; the lack of piety in the Protestant church; the unwillingness of the Jews to hear; the cruel persecutions of the Jews; the denominational quarrels; the power of the Rabbis; the curse the Jews brought upon themselves according to Matt. 27:25, and the curse upon the Jews according to Gal. 3:10. Monis regrets all these reasons for Jewish unbelief and gives as the only reason Rom. 11:25, "Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." Then he proceeds to "inquire which are the chief points these two churches, *i. e.*, of the Jews and true Christians, do differ in," and he proves from Isaiah 9:6, 7, that the Jews are mistaken and the Christians are right. A short exhortation to

his Jewish brethren to follow and confess Christianity closes the essay.

3. *Nothing but the Truth.* Monis here speaks of the doctrine of the Trinity, the great stumbling-block for the Jews. He deals quite harshly with Papists and Arians, and then proceeds to prove that the doctrine of the Trinity is true and contained in the Bible as well as in the writings of the Rabbis. He takes Deut. 6:4 and unfolds in a remarkably clear manner the proposition, showing a fine knowledge of Cabbalistic and Talmudical literature. A general appeal to his readers closes the work.

The three essays are worthy of reading and careful study, even in the present more advanced age of missionary enterprise among the Jews. They are not entirely free from objections from the standpoint of the Jewish missionary, especially in those cases where Monis takes his refuge to the Cabbala to prove difficult problems. We will mention here especially page 32 of the essay, "The Whole Truth," where he tries to prove from the shape of the letter (Mem closed) not only "that the mother of our Lord was to be a pure virgin," but also "one whose name was to be called Mary, and no other." But, after all, the essays show the love of the author to his Saviour and to his Jewish brethren very clearly.

Note. McClintock and Strong, *Cyclopædia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*, do not mention Judah Monis, but one Judah Morris, of whom it is said that he was a Jewish convert to Protestant Christianity, a native of Italy, and emigrated to this country about 1835; that he was for a time instructor in Harvard University, and died in 1855; and that he published a Hebrew Grammar and some religious books.

Diligent inquiry failed to discover any traces of Judah Morris in Harvard University or in the United States. We are inclined to believe that the writer meant Judah Monis, but can offer no explanation for the dates, 1835 and 1855.

Hopkinton, Iowa.

THE LAMP OF THE SANCTUARY.

SOME FRAGMENTS FROM THE MIDRASH CONCERNING SPIRITUAL LIGHT.

MIDRASH RABBAH.

When thou lightest the lamps (Num. 8:2) the Holy One, blessed be He, said unto Moses, "If ye be zealous to kindle the lights before Me, I will kindle for you a great light in the world to come." Therefore it is said: "Arise, shine, for thy light cometh."

And the Holy One, blessed be He, said unto Moses, "If ye will be zealous to kindle a light before Me, I will preserve your souls from every evil thing." For the soul is likened unto a lamp, as it is said, "The soul of man is the lamp of the world."

And it is written: "For thou shalt light my lamps" (Ps. 18:28). Israel spake before the Holy One, blessed be He, "Lord of all worlds, Thou hast bidden us to kindle light before Thee, as it is written: 'And the light dwelleth with Him.' Yet Thou biddest me kindle light to shine even 'beyond the lamps.' Shouldest not Thou rather light my lamp?" And the Holy One, blessed be He, said unto Israel, "It is not that I am in need of the light from you; but that you shall give light for Me in the manner wherein I have given light for you. And say ye, 'How shall this be?' It shall be in such wise that ye be kindled as a light before the people that they may say, 'See how Israel