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EMINENT "HEBREW-CHRISTIANS" OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

by

Yossi J. Liebowitz

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for Ordination

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Referee, Professor Samuel Sandmel

To the thousands who could have,

but did not.

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(Proverbs 4. Verses 10-13)

"Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings;
And the years of thy life shall be many":

Dr. Samuel Sandmel, רבי ומורי, in deep appreciation of the wisdom, honesty, kindness he offered in guiding me through the research and writing of this thesis.

"I have taught thee in the way of wisdom;
I have led thee in paths of righteousness":

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"When thou goest, thy step shall not be straitened;
And if thou runnest, thou shall not stumble":

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"Take fast hold of instruction, let her not go;
Keep her, for she is thy life":

My wife Ayala, for her love, for her interest, for her encouragement, and most of all, for her being herself.

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DIGEST

This thesis examines the lives and careers of nine Jews who converted to Christianity during the nineteenth century in Europe. These converts became eminent in the Church through work as scholars, missionaries and clergymen. They regarded themselves as "Hebrew-Christians," which meant that they professed belief in Christ and also identified as Jews.

The first chapter of this study surveys the history of Jewish conversion to Christianity and focuses on Jews who converted and became prominent in the Church. We discovered that the Jewish tradition justifiably regards these converts unsympathetically. From the time that Judaism and Christianity became two distinct religions, Jewish converts to Christianity often persecuted their former co-religionists for reasons of ambition. Once the medieval convert began his affiliation with the Church, he abandoned his practice of Judaism and his ties to the Jewish people. Beginning with the post-Reformation period, Jewish converts to Christianity (especially to Protestant Christianity) were less interested in persecuting their former co-religionists. To the contrary, they often helped bring Jewish learning to Gentiles and in so doing helped enhance the image of the Jew.

The second chapter continues by examining more closely the conversion of Jews in nineteenth century Europe. In Germany, there was an almost epidemic number of conversions to Christianity. Meanwhile in England, a major missionary effort was organized to convert the Jews of Europe. The question of why Jews in the nineteenth century embraced Christianity when their ancestors had resisted baptism under far more difficult conditions is discussed and a number of pertinent social, political, and religious developments are examined. The validity of Judaism as a modern religion was assailed on several fronts, while Christianity was perceived as the most sophisticated and civilized of all religions. Strangely enough the Jews as a people were not attacked. To the contrary, it was an asset to be a Jew in some social circles.

Some Jewish converts to Christianity benefited from these changes. In the third chapter we describe the lives and careers of nine eminent Hebrew-Christians, concentrating on their conversions and attitudes toward religion. It is shown that these people were sincere Christians who still felt committed to the Jewish people. Many of them spoke out against anti-Semitism.

Historically, the nineteenth century Hebrew-Christian was unusual because he was able to maintain to some extent a double status as a Jew and as a Christian. However, he was not able to pass the double status on to his children. This study concludes with some comments about the modern "Jew for Jesus" and how he can be understood in the light of our findings.

INTRODUCTION

The strange appellation "Hebrew-Christian" is seemingly a contradiction in terms. It refers to a Jew who has professed belief in Christianity, but nevertheless has not abandoned his sense of allegiance to the Jewish people.

Throughout the centuries following the advent of Christianity when Jews have undergone conversion they have usually severed their ties to Judaism and to the Jewish people. However diverse their reasons for conversion, from the perspective of Jewish tradition, their motivations have been viewed negatively.

The Jewish terms for a convert have ordinarily been pejorative. These apostates, משומדים were classified as follows: מומר להכעיס - "an apostate for spite,"[1] מומר לתאבון - "an apostate for convenience,"[2] כופר - "a denier of the law,"[3] כופר - "a denier of the God of Israel,"[4] פושע ישראל - "a transgressor in Israel,"[5] פורשים מדרכי צבור - "one who has abandoned the customs of the community,"[6] and אנוסים - "one who converts under duress."[7] Among these categories, only the אנוסים are regarded with any sympathy. None of these categories expresses the possibility of a sincere conversion to Christianity free of malicious intent towards Jews and Judaism. Given the realities of Jewish history, the Jews' attitude toward converts is not unjustified. Yet, the result has been a guarded or an overt

suspicion of all converts to Christianity. Opportunism, sheer malice, or cowardly submission to compulsion constitute the basic Jewish evaluation of the motivations of apostates. Rarely is religious conviction or sincerity ascribed.

The term "Hebrew-Christian" as used here relates to the authentic and sincere convert to Christianity who has not relinquished his sense of kinship with Jews. He continues to possess positive feelings toward Jews and, in some cases, positive attitudes about Jewish tradition. In his own view, the Hebrew-Christian is neither a renegade nor a defamer of his people. He attempts to maintain a dual allegiance, not only to the Church that he has embraced, but to the people whose destiny and purpose he believes to be fulfilled by the Church.

Of the thousands of Jews who have converted to Christianity, only a restricted number can be viewed as Hebrew-Christians. Only a few of these have been able to maintain this double status for any period of time. Rejected by Jews as an apostate, the Hebrew-Christian is often torn between Christian anti-Semitism and his belief in the Church's faith.

Of the few who have resolved these difficulties, only a fraction have risen to positions of prominence in the Church. Nineteenth century Europe provides us with several interesting Hebrew-Christian personalities who attained such eminence in the Christian world. It is the purpose of this thesis to examine the lives and personalities of these individuals in order to determine the nature, character, and

extent of their religious commitments. In inquiring into the sincerity and authenticity of their conversions, it will be necessary to examine those forces, political, social, and religious, which might have influenced their lives.

Of interest also will be the specific ways in which these Hebrew-Christians initially came to profess a belief in Christ. In addition, inquiry will be made into their post-conversion attitudes with respect to Judaism and Jews. Upon conversion, which Churches or Christian denominations attracted them the most? Did they meet with acceptance among their former co-religionists? What kinds of difficulties and successes did they encounter in their careers in Christianity? Finally, from the perspective of Jewish history, how do these Hebrew-Christians of the nineteenth century differ from those converts who achieved prominence in earlier times? It is with this last concern that we begin this study.

INTRODUCTION

NOTES

[1]Sukkot 56b.

[2]Avodah Zarah 26b, Erubin 69a.

[3]Sanhendrin 39a.

[4]Babah Mezia 71a.

[5]Tosefot Sanhendrin 13:5.

[6]Tosefot Sanhendrin 13:5.

[7]"Apostasy," Encyclopedia Judaica Vol. III, edited by Cecil Roth, (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House Ltd., 1971), p. 212.

CHAPTER ONE

A HISTORICAL SURVEY OF JEWISH CONVERSION TO CHRISTIANITY

In its beginning stages, Christianity was a Jewish movement. Its leaders were Jewish and its followers were Jewish. Less than a century after the death of Jesus however, Christianity had become a non-Jewish movement. It had begun its rapid spread to the Gentile world. Graetz notes that Christianity's shift from a Jewish to a Gentile movement was neither sudden nor easy.[1] The very first Christians, referred to by scholars as Jewish-Christians, mixed freely with other Jews and deliberately avoided dissension and strife. For a variety of reasons, the teachings of the new sect were unacceptable to most Jews living in Palestine. The movement looked to Gentiles for new adherents. Among them it found success, but with that success there came a growing schism between itself and Judaism.

Between Judaism and emerging Gentile-Christianity stood a dwindling Jewish-Christianity. Since its views and practices were unacceptable to both Pharasaic Jews and Gentile-Christians, its future as a viable Jewish or Christian movement was not very bright. In time, both Judaism and Gentile-Christianity would regard Jewish-Christians as heretics.

Traditional Jewish and Christian sources contain references to several heretical Jewish-Christian groups which combined faith in Christ with Jewish legal observance and custom. In the writings of the early Church fathers, several terms are used to identify these groups. Most frequently we find references to Nazareans and Ebionites.

Schoeps minimizes the differences between the Ebionites and the Nazareans.[2] Referring to them as "Ebionites/Nazareans," Schoeps believes that they became a separate group, distinct from the rest of primitive Christianity at the time of Jerusalem's destruction (70 C.E.). He further contends that the "Ebionites/Nazareans" were the descendants of the original Jewish-Christian sect of the primitive Church.[3] Described in Acts as "zealous for the law,"[4] this early sect feuded with Paul who was active making converts among the Gentiles.[5]

While our information concerning the actual origins of these groups is scanty, several aspects of their history seem clear. The destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem was a major turning point for Christianity and Judaism. Up until that time, the major conflict between Judaism and Christianity was over the significance of the life of Jesus. After the Temple's destruction, the law, as interpreted by the rabbis, became the basis of Judaism. Moreover, the interpretations of the event differed dramatically. While the rabbis regarded the destruction as a punishment, the Christians believed it was not merely a punishment, but a declaration by God that the old covenant with Israel was now at an end. Christianity, the New Israel, was the inheritor of the new dispensation.

During these turbulent times the Jewish-Christians are reported to have emigrated from Jerusalem to Pella in Transjordan. There, according to the supposition of some scholars, the Jewish-Christians dwelled until as late as the Bar Kochba revolt (135 C.E.). Occasionally, they returned to Jerusalem, now a Roman city from which Jews were barred. During this period the "Ebionites/Nazareans" missionized among the Jews with little success. Instead their efforts served only to antagonize the Jews.

Jewish disdain for the "Ebionites/Nazareans" is reported in several sources. Most telling was the social exclusion from the synagogue. During the patriarchate of Gamaliel II in Jamnia (ca. 80-110 C.E.), the Birkat Ha-minim or malediction against heretics was formulated by Samuel the Small. According to Kohler,[6] the malediction was originally used to denounce Rome. Later on, when Christians were regarded as a menace, the malediction was altered to denounce Christians and other heretics. Since it was used by Jews to express displeasure with several groups, a number of versions are found in Jewish sources. One version reads:

> And for slanderers let there be no hope, and let all wickedness perish as in a moment; let all thine enemies be speedily cut off, and the dominion of arrogance do Thou uproot and crush, cast down and humble speedily in our days. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who breakest the enemies and humblest the arrogant.[7]

Other examples of ostracization by Jews are reported in the Talmud. According to tradition, Ben Dama, the nephew of Rabbi Ishmael, was bitten by a snake. Though he was near death, his uncle forbade him to seek a cure from the heretic Jacob, a native of Kefar Sechania and a disciple of Jesus.[8]

The Jewish-Christians were persecuted by Gentile-Christians as well as by Jews. In his Dialogue with Trypho the Jew, Justin Martyr, a Church father of the second century (ca. 150 C.E.), refers to two groups of Jewish-Christians. The first was a moderate group within the Church with Judaizing tendencies, and the second a more intolerant group which refused to live with Christians unwilling to incorporate into their faith basic Jewish practices such as circumcision and dietary laws:

> "But if, Trypho," I continued, "some of your race, who say they believe in this Christ, compel these Gentiles who believe in the Christ to live in all respects according to the law given by Moses, and choose not to associate so intimately with them, I in like manner do not approve of them."[9]

Jewish-Christians would offend Gentile-Christians in other ways. The Ebionites, according to Cross, tended to emphasize the humanity of Jesus as the son of Mary and Joseph in opposition to Johannine writings.[10] Early in the fourth century, the Church historian Eusebius claimed that the Ebionites' use of the unorthodox "Gospel of the Hebrews" led them to denigrate Paul and his writings.[11]

Excluded from the Synagogue, unable to blend in with emerging Gentile-Christianity, the "Ebionites/Nazareans" fared no better with the Roman authorities. In the tenth year of Trajan's reign (107 C.E.), their bishop Simon suffered death by crucifixion. His death ushered in a period of schisms and heresies within the Jewish-Christian community. Eusebius' history indicates that during the years 106-135 C.E. the Jewish-Christian bishopric changed hands fifteen times.[12]

The fatal blow to Jewish-Christianity was inflicted by Bar Kochba. The Jewish-Christians, who had long since accepted Jesus as their

messiah, were hardly sympathetic to Rabbi Akiba's declaration that the messiah had arrived in the person of Bar Kochba. Moreover, they were quite reluctant to join the rebellion against Rome for fear of reprisals. Bar Kochba, interpreting their inaction as support for Rome, persecuted the Jewish-Christians.[13] Subsequently both the Jewish state and Palestine Jewish-Christianity came to an end.

For the next 300 years, Jewish-Christianity suffered the fate of many heretical movements: ripped apart by schisms, opposed by other sects, Jewish-Christianity slowly disintegrated. Theologically, it failed to respond adequately to the delay of the parousia. The dual rejection by Christians and Jews proved fatal. By 135 C.E. Jewish-Christianity had long ceased to be a bridge between Judaism and Christianity. By the fourth century, not even a vestige of an autonomous Jewish-Christian group could be found.[14]

With the demise of the Jewish-Christian sects, the history of Hebrew-Christianity as a community ceases and the history of individual Hebrew-Christians begins. No longer could one speak of a Hebrew-Christian sect capable of tracing its origins to the time of Jesus and the Temple. Moreover, those Jews who would subsequently convert to Christianity would seldom assemble together as an identifiable group. Instead, they would assimilate into the Church on an individual basis, where they adopted its practices and its dogmas.

But even before the total demise of the Jewish-Christian community, Jews converted to Christianity by joining the Gentile-Christian Church. Once baptized, they abandoned Jewish traditions and severed their

social ties with their Jewish brethren. A few of these converts became prominent in the Church.

Hegessippius (120?-189 C.E.), perhaps the first ecclesiastical historian, may have been an early Jewish convert to Christianity. Eusebius infers that Heggessippius was a "Hebrew" for several reasons:[15] Hegessippius' use of the Gospel according to the Hebrews, his insertion of Hebrew words, and his references to the unwritten traditions of the Jews. Even though Hegessippius' Jewishness is not always regarded by scholars as a certainty,[16] his activities were carried out with a convert's zeal. As a defender of the early Church, he vigorously wrote against Gnosticism and other heresies.

Over a century later, Epiphanius (315-403 C.E.) followed in Hegessippius' footsteps by writing his Panarion ("A Refutation of All Heresies"). It contained accounts of many kinds of heresies such as the Samaritan and the Gnostic heresies. Epiphanius was a zealous defender of orthodox Christianity and a supporter of the monastic movement. During his lifetime he denounced as heretics such prominent personalities as Chrysostom and Origen. According to legend he was converted to Christianity from Judaism at the early age of sixteen because of a miracle. Ultimately, he became the Bishop of Constantia.

By the time of Hegessippius, the split between Christianity and Judaism had become irreversible. By Epiphanius' time, the relationship between the two faiths had degenerated into open hostility. The Christian faith, fast becoming the dominant religious force in the Roman world, soon gained the upper hand.

Graetz comments that for Jews, the Middle Ages began with the Emperor Theodosius (408-459 C.E.).[17] During his reign several edicts were enacted which limited Jewish rights. These edicts prohibited Jewish ownership of Christian slaves, curtailed construction of Jewish synagogues in particular areas, and ended Jewish jurisdiction over Christian offenders in Jewish courts. Violent clashes between Jews and Christians were not uncommon during this time. Instigated by Christian clergymen, mobs would set Jewish synagogues ablaze and plunder Jewish property. The hatred between Christians and Jews grew. As a result of this extreme polarization between the two faiths, the Jewish convert to Christianity had little choice about loyalty. Since no viable Hebrew-Christian community like the Nazareans existed, the convert was forced to leave behind Jewish practices as well as the Jews who had rejected Christ. For centuries to come, this would be the fate of any Jewish convert to Christianity, be he rich or poor, lowly or prominent.

Our exposition of Jewish converts to Christianity focuses on the prominent convert. Let us pause briefly to consider the reasons for drawing attention to some historical figures and not others. This survey attempts to present typical illustration of converts to Christianity throughout Jewish history. Quite often contemporary writers such as Schonfield[18] go to great lengths in their Hebrew-Christian histories to include prominent Christians with only remote Jewish connections. Anacletus, often called the "Jewish Pope,"[19] exemplifies such an inclusion. In reality, Anacletus was neither a Jew nor a Pope. His Jewish grandfather converted in the middle of

the tenth century for reasons of ambition. Anacletus, born Pietri Pierleoni, was elected Pope by a Church faction antagonistic to Pope Innocent II. Adopting the name Anacletus, Pierleoni was anti-pope for eight years (1130-1138). Mockingly his adversaries labeled him "Judaeo-pontifex." They slandered him with accusations of incest and other indecencies. Pierleoni, however, was Jewish neither in practice nor identity. Therefore, the only justification for calling him a Jew would be on the basis of descent.

On the other hand, an example of a Jew who had converted to Christianity and had reached a position of some importance in the Church is Julian of Toledo. Julian was born in the latter part of the seventh century and achieved success as the Primate of Spain. As Primate during the twelfth council of Toledo, he attempted to induce King Erwig to pass several laws injurious to Jews. Fortunately for the Jews, the King was not persuaded. Julian's anti-Semitism however, was not limited to political action. As a polemicist for Christianity and against Judaism, Julian wrote his De Comprobatione Aetatis Sextae Contra Judaeos ("Concerning the proof of the sixth age against the Jews"). With it he intended to induce his former co-religionists to convert. Despite his emnity towards Jews, he still maintained some cordial relationships with Jewish leaders. Although Julian's attempts to convert Jews were ineffective, he is an early prototype of the prominent Jewish medieval convert to Christianity.

Most prominent converts participated in missionary campaigns designed to bring the truth to the Jews. Often the efforts of these converts would be to the detriment of the Jewish community. To be

fair, it is not entirely unlikely that some zealous converts directed their attacks more against Judaism than Jews. Insisting that both Christianity and Judaism were derived from an older Judaism, and that the present form of Judaism was a corruption of the original form, these converts sought to separate the Jew from the "false" traditions that blocked their path to salvation.

Yet just as often, or perhaps more often, converts sought additional converts in order to justify their own conversion. They learned that these attempts were ways by which they could establish themselves affirmatively in the Church. The more the convert assailed Judaism and Jews, the more authentic he appeared. Having been raised as a Jew, the convert was familiar with Jewish traditions and could attack Jews and Judaism at what he regarded as their weakest points. Not a century passed without one convert or another participating in some missionary effort to gain Jewish converts.

Moses Sefardi (1062-1110 C.E.) was one medieval Jewish convert to Christianity who became eminent by attacking Jews. Like so many other converts, Moses Sefardi changed his name in order to symbolize his new religious allegiance. At the age of 44 Moses Sefardi became Petrus Alfonsi. He served as personal physician to King Henry I of Spain. In his spare time he pursued his other interests which included astronomy and literary translation. A talented man, he authored an interesting polemic, Twelve Dialogues Between Pedro and Moses. Representing himself before and after his conversion, he sets down a series of arguments against Judaism. One major contention of the work was that Jews were no longer capable of keeping the entire law

of Moses after the Temple's destruction in 70 C.E. Alfonsi implies that any attempt to keep the part of the law that they could observe was hypocritical and senseless. The only road to salvation led to the Church. Though Alfonsi died at an early age of 48, his short career was productive enough to earn him an ignoble place in Jewish history.

The anti-Semitic activities of Petrus Alfonsi were mild in comparison to the activities of the thirteenth century apostate Nicolas Donin of La Rochelle. Of all converts who attained prominence during this period, he was the most destructive to Jewish property in France. As a youth, Donin expressed doubts about the veracity of the oral law and was excommunicated by the French rabbis. In response, the "apostate for spite" took his revenge upon thousands of French Jews. Donin converted to Christianity and joined the Dominicans, the so-called "watchdogs" of the Church. The Dominicans aided the pious King of France, St. Louis and his program to suppress Christian heresies in the south of France. When these heretical groups had been neutralized in bloody crusades, the Dominicans turned their attention to the Jews. In this matter Donin's talents were useful. The Dominicans, aware of his hatred for the oral law and of his contempt for the rabbis who had excommunicated him, urged Donin to head their campaign against the Jews of France. That campaign led ultimately to the demise of the great French centers of Talmudical studies.

In 1239, with the support of the Dominicans and King Louis, Donin went to Pope Gregory IX with 35 articles charging that the Talmud blasphemed Christianity. Among these were accusations that

the Talmud foully lied about Jesus' life and birth and cast aspersions on the Virgin Mary. The Pope became convinced that these charges were true and that the Talmud served to delay the final conversion of the Jews. As a result, in 1240 an order to confiscate the Talmud was promulgated. While the order reached England, France, Castile, Aragon, Portugal and Italy, it was only in Donin's native land that it was fully carried out. The copies of the Talmud in France were confiscated and a public disputation was ordered between Nicolas Donin and four French rabbis. Significantly, one of these rabbis, Rabbi Yehiel, had been involved in Donin's excommunication years earlier. The disputation in Paris lasted three days. In the end, the verdict went against the Talmud and it was condemned to be burned. After some delay owing to the intervention of Walter Cornutus, the sympathetic Archbishop of Sens, cartloads of the Talmud were publicly burned in Paris in the year 1243. Donin's revenge was complete.

A generation later, history repeated itself in Spain. Raymond de Penyaforte, general of the Dominicans and confessor to King James of Aragon, was interested in elevating the position of the papacy in the state. Believing that the conversion of the Moslems and the Jews would enhance the Church's power, he ordered a public disputation in Barcelona between Nachmanides and one Pablo Christianus, a Jewish convert to Christianity. De Penyaforte believed that such a debate before the King and the Jews of his kingdom would result in waves of Jewish conversions. Fortunately for the Jews, the brilliant Rabbi Nachmanides was an able spokesman and a keen debater. He quickly frustrated the efforts of Pablo to discredit Judaism and the Talmud.

The King intervened and put an end to the debates, noting Nachmanides' skill and talents.

King James, however, did not put an end to Pablo's activities but encouraged him by sending him off on a missionary journey through Spain. In every place he went the Jews were commanded to listen to his lecture and to defray the expenses of his journey. In 1264, at the request of Pablo Christianus, the Pope issued a Papal Bull which once again ordered the confiscation of the Talmud. The Dominicans, with the assistance of Pablo, blotted out supposed heretical passages and returned the censored copies of the Talmud to the Jews. Though the suppression of Talmudical study in this case was less destructive than the suppression by the French a generation earlier, it nevertheless foreshadowed worse things to come for the Jews of Spain.

A century later, a Jewish convert to Christianity once again contributed to Jewish suffering. This time it was a former rabbi, Solomon Ha-Levi (1350-1435 C.E.). Solomon Ha-Levi belonged to a distinguished family which financially supported the Castillian kingdom. In his youth Solomon was an exceptional student. He corresponded with the great rabbi Isaac bar Sheshet on questions of ritual law. At the age of 30, the ambitious Solomon converted to Christianity with the rest of his family. Changing his name to Pablo de Santa Maria, he found a home at the University of Paris. In 1294, he became a priest. His ascent in the Church was as rapid as it was abhorrent to Jews: 1396 - Archdeacon of Trevinno, 1403 - Bishop of Cartagena, 1414 - Bishop of Burgos. Frequently he polemicized against Judaism and its practices, often mocking Jewish customs and criticizing

Jewish commentators on the Bible. As a skilled politician, he convinced Don Henry III to abstain from appointing Jews to high state offices. In 1408, he helped instigate the anti-Jewish edicts of Alfonso the Wise which seriously curtailed Jewish influence at court.

In January 1412, Vincent Ferrer, in the name of the child King Juan II, issued an edict which regulated Jewish dress, Jewish participation in handicrafts, Jewish movements, and social relations between Jews and Christians. Ferrer and his Dominican allies were assisted by Pablo de Santa Maria and by another convert, Joshua Al Lorqui. The latter was a student of Solomon Ha-Levi before Solomon had become Pablo de Santa Maria. In 1412 Joshua followed in his master's footsteps. At his baptism he took the name Maestro Gerónimo de Santa Fé. Joshua was influential in Spain because he served as physician to the Spanish antipope Benedict XIII. The apostate Joshua treated his former co-religionists with such contempt that they nicknamed him the "MeGaDeF" or the "Blasphemer," using the initials of his new name. The antipope badly needed a religious victory in order to reunite the divided Church. The "MeGaDeF" eagerly came to his assistance. He joined the Dominicans in a missionary crusade that violently turned synagogues into Churches. In all, some 20,000 Jews were forcibly converted.[20]

Inspired by this victory, Benedict ordered the Tortosa disputation. Like its forerunners, this disputation ordered rabbis to participate in a debate with an apostate. This time it was Joshua Al Lorqui, the "MeGaDeF." The Jews of Tortosa were forced to attend the disputation.

Unlike previous debates which attempted to cast aspersions upon the Talmud, the Tortosa disputation debated the Church's contention that the Talmud itself proved the truth of Christianity. For 21 months, from February of 1413 to November of 1414, the rabbis and the apostate debated. In all, 68 sessions were held. Unable to sway the rabbis, the Dominicans saw the prospects of a mass conversion diminish. During the sixty-second session, censorship of the Talmud was threatened. Soon after, the disputation ended inconclusively. Six months later, on May 11th, 1415, the frustrated antipope ordered the confiscation of the Talmud and forbade Jews to study it. He also commanded all Jews in Spain to attend Christian services at least three times a year. However, these harsh edicts were never carried out. Shortly after his decision, Benedict was deposed. Even so, the harm already done could not be undone.

Given the history of Jewish conversion to Christianity thus far, it is no wonder that Jewish tradition has taken such a negative view of apostates. Even less prominent converts assisted the Church in its efforts to convert the Jews: John of Valladolid in 1375 debated with Moses Cohen at the Church of Avila and published many anti-Jewish works; Astruc Raimuch, known as Francisco Dios Carne, also polemicized against Jews during this period. They achieved success in the Church by aiding in the persecution of Jews, either by political action or literary endeavor. Most prominent converts used both means to further their careers.

The sixteenth century marks a turning point in this survey of Jewish conversion to Christianity. This century ushered in the

Reformation, and with it the diminution of the Roman Catholic Church's power in England, Germany and other northern European countries. Another anti-Semitic convert contributed to the Protestant Reformation. The Dominicans continued their activities against the Jews and the Talmud. In 1509, Viktor Von Carben (1442-1515) disputed with Rhenish rabbis under the sponsorship of Archbishop Hermann of Cologne. The disputation ended with the expulsion of the Jews from the lower district of the Rhine. Johannes Pfefferkorn, a Jew who was a burglar by profession, converted to Christianity after his release from prison. As Erasmus (1466?-1536) put it, Pfefferkorn was "a most criminal Jew who had become a most criminal Christian."[21] Between 1507 and 1509, Pfefferkorn authored several anti-Jewish tracts. In 1509, he collaborated with the Dominicans and obtained permission from the German emperor to confiscate Jewish books.

At this point several forces came into conflict. The German princes and the Archbishop of Mainz, wishing to check the emperor's power, interfered with the order. An investigation was begun. The humanist Johannes Reuchlin, backed by other scholars, joined the fight on the side of the Jews. Standing for literary freedom, Reuchlin defended the rights of Jews for over ten years.

Reuchlin himself was not essentially a friend of the Jews, but a devotee of Jewish learning. While he deplored the Spanish inquisition and its expulsion of Jews, his major concern was the study of Jewish literature. That he was on the side of the Jews was fortunate but only coincidental. A committed Christian, Reuchlin was the first scholar to introduce Hebrew at the University of Tübingen and the

University of Ingolstadt. In his dispute with Pfefferkorn, he too condemned the Toledot Yeshu and its less than flattering account of the life of Jesus, but he refused to condone any confiscation or destruction of the Toledot Yeshu or any other Hebrew books. Reuchlin feared that such measure would lead to the demise of Hebrew language and study.

Many parties were drawn into the debate. Meanwhile the papacy remained indecisive. As a result the prestige of the Church declined. In 1517, at the height of the controversy, Martin Luther promulgated his 95 theses. Finally in 1570 the Pope decided against Reuchlin and in favor of Pfefferkorn. The Jews, however, scored a minor victory because of the delay. Bomberg had by this time begun to print his Talmud. In reality the issue was no longer over the Talmud but over the jurisdiction of the Church in scholarly matters. The ultimate decision against Reuchlin was a political one: the King of France and the Emperor Charles IV sided with the Dominicans and the Pope in order to check the spread of the Reformation in Germany. But this strategy failed.

Reuchlin's battle for literary freedom marked a turning point in Jewish history. It ended the last major effort by the Church in Europe to attack Jews through suppression of Jewish books. Moreover, the attitude towards those books changed. Renewed interest in Hebrew and in Old Testament studies led to an appreciation of Jewish learning, if not an appreciation of the Jews for having preserved it. It was not in Protestant circles alone that such an interest was cultivated, but in some Catholic domains as well. Cardinal Ximénez, Primate of Spain, introduced the study of Hebrew at the University of Alcalá.

Jews continued to convert to the Roman Catholic faith, but it was in the Protestant Churches and universities that they received the greater degree of acceptance. Attempting to return to a simpler Christian faith, Protestant theologians began to study older sources. Jews, such as Paulo Riccio, found employment as a professor of philosophy in the University of Pavia. In the mid-sixteenth century, he translated three tractates of the Talmud into Latin for the Emperor Maximillian whom he served as physician. Riccio was highly respected by such men as Erasmus, who defended him in a controversy with Stephen the Presbyster. Although Riccio was active in missionary efforts to the Jews, he did not instigate violence against them. To the contrary, he helped disseminate Jewish knowledge to Christians. His other works included translations of the Kabbala.

It was not only Christian interest in Hebrew that facilitated the acceptance and employment of Paulo Riccio and other Jewish converts to Christianity. As shall be discussed more fully in the next chapter, there was a growing interest in missionary work. Unlike earlier attempts by the Catholic Church, the Protestant efforts tended to be less intimidating and at times coincided with charitable attempts to ameliorate the conditions of Jews. Cromwell of England, for instance, was motivated to grant Jews civil rights because he believed that it would bring them one step closer to conversion.

The first Protestant attempt to organize a missionary effort to reach Jews began in Holland at the Synods of Dordrecht, Delft, and Leyden (1676-1678). This was followed by the missionary campaign of the Moravian brethren in the eighteenth century and the Pietists of

Halle and their Callenberg Institute (1728-1792). The London Society for the Promotion of Christianity Amongst the Jews (hereafter referred to as the London Society), was the greatest of these efforts. It was founded in the early part of the nineteenth century and had a great role to play in the lives of many prominent Hebrew-Christians, as shall be seen.

All these attempts went hand in hand with other movements in Christianity. Throughout the nineteenth century, there existed a growing missionary consciousness that by the end of the century would spread to Asia, Africa and China.

It would be misleading to assert that all such missionary programs to Jews in the post-Reformation period were harmless. Overzealous missionaries would often act unethically in their attempts to make new converts. Esdras Edzard's eighteenth century "Institute for the Conversion of Jews" in Hamburg benefited from municipal laws forcing Jewish children to attend their schools. Often the programs of missionaries would effectively disrupt or tear apart Jewish families.

For many Protestants, the converted Jew was a very special person. He served as a link to the noble past. Moreover, the conversion of the Jews was a long awaited sign of the imminent return of the Christ. The Jewish convert to Christianity not only raised these hopes but suggested the early Christian drama when Jewish apostles had first begun to follow Jesus.

Increasingly, as we approach the nineteenth century, the character of the Jewish convert to Christianity changes. He differs dramatically from his medieval predecessors. No longer is he involved in violent

crusades which served only to widen the gulf between Judaism and Christianity. His feelings toward Jews and Judaism, although not unconditionally positive, stand in stark contrast to the virulent polemics published by converts in former times.

The medieval convert assimilated fully into the Church. Either he severed his social ties with Jews, or they were broken off for him by his former co-religionists. The post-modern convert is characterized by his attempts to maintain more cordial relations with Jews.

Efforts are made to revive a Hebrew-Christian community. Though they ultimately fail, they too reflect the different nature of these people. With the help of Christian philanthropists, Hebrew-Christians succeed in forming associations and fellowships.

The first of these, the "B'nei Abraham" (later called the "Abrahamic Society"), was founded in 1813. Its purpose was to spread the Christian gospel to Jews and to provide relief for its members. Other Hebrew-Christian movements continued throughout the century and were based mainly in England: e.g., "Hebrew-Christian Prayer Union" (1882), "Hebrew-Christian Alliance" (1886). In 1915, the "Hebrew-Christian Alliance of America" was founded. Ten years later, under the leadership of Sir Leon Levinson, the "International Hebrew-Christian Alliance" was established. As a pro-Zionist organization, the Alliance committed itself to maintaining a separate identity by not affiliating with any Christian groups.[22] In contemporary America, other small Hebrew-Christian groups were founded such as "Jews for Jesus" and the "Messianic-Jewish Alliance."

However, of all historical periods, it is the early nineteenth century which produced the most interesting and the most fascinating Hebrew-Christians of prominence in the Church. They did not stand outside of history, but were subject to the same influences and pressures that affected so many Jews during these radically changing times. These changes, political, social, and religious, were as swift as they were powerful. The Jewish community living under relatively good conditions witnessed widespread desertions to the Church. Many of these converts like the Lopezes and the Ximeneses of England, the Capadoses and the da Costas of Holland, were descendants of Spanish Jews, who under far more difficult times had resisted baptism. What kinds of changes led these Jews and thousands of others to abandon their ancestral faith? It is to this unique problem that we now turn our attention.

CHAPTER ONE

NOTES

[1]Heinrich Graetz, History of the Jews, Vol. II (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1956), p. 370.

[2]Hans-Joachim Schoeps, Jewish Christianity: Factional Disputes in the Early Church, trans. Douglas R. A. Hare (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), p. 11. Other writers tend to accent the differences between the Ebionites and the Nazareans. See: Jacob Jocz, The Jewish People and Jesus Christ, A Study in the Relationship between the Jewish People and Jesus Christ (London: S.P.C.K., 1949), pp. 192-193 and F. L. Cross, ed., The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), pp. 438-439.

[3]Acts 15:5.

[4]Acts 21:20.

[5]Galatians 2:4.

[6]A. Z. Idelson, Jewish Liturgy and its Development (New York: HUC-JIR Press, 1956), pp. 102-103.

[7]S. Singer, Authorized Daily Prayerbook (London: Hebrew Publishing Co., 193?), p. 48. Schoeps offers another version: "May the Apostates have no hope, may the dominion of wickedness be speedily uprooted in our days, may the Nozrim and Minim quickly perish and not be inscribed together with the righteous. Blessed art Thou, the Eternal, our God, who crushes the wicked." Schoeps, Op. cit., pp. 33-34. For references to this malediction see: John 9:22, 12:42, Avodah Zarah 17a.

[8]Avodah Zarah 27b.

[9]Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho the Jew, Chapter 47, Ante-Nicene Fathers (Boston: Christian Literature Publishing Company, 1885).

[10]Cross, Op. cit., pp. 438-439.

[11]Eusebius, The History of the Church from the Christ to Constantine, trans. G. A. Williamson (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1965), pp. 136-137.

[12]Ibid., p. 156.

[13]Justin Martyr, First Apoplogy of Justin, Chapter 31, Ante-Nicene Fathers (Boston: Christian Literature Publishing Company, 1885).

[14]Schoeps, Op. cit., p. 37. For some evidence of vestigal remains of the Ebionite community in the seventh century see: James Parkes, The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue: A Study in the Origins of Antisemitism (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1961).

[15]Eusebius, Op. cit., p. 182.

[16]Cross, Op. cit., p. 628.

[17]Graetz, Op. cit., Vol. II, p. 617.

[18]Hugh J. Schonfield, The History of Jewish Christianity: From the First to the Twentieth Century (Oxford: Kemp Hall Press, Ltd., 1936), pp. 155-156.

[19]H. C. Enelow, "Anacletus," Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. I (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1901), p. 550.

[20]Graetz, Op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 300.

[21]Cecil Roth, "Pfefferkorn," Encyclopedia Judaica, Vol. XIII, ed. Cecil Roth, (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, Ltd., 1971), p. 356.

[22]For a fuller discussion of these small groups and their activities see: Schonfield, Op. cit., pp. 209-250.

CHAPTER TWO

POLITICAL, SOCIAL, AND RELIGIOUS BACKGROUNDS--NINETEENTH CENTURY

The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were times of decisive political, social, and religious change. For the Jews of Europe, these changes held great promise which for the most part went unfulfilled.

The political emancipation of German Jews was a slow, at times painful, process. The great mass of German Jews remained deprived of basic civil rights. Like their fellow Jews in Poland and England, they were subject to many limitations and regulations: choice of handicraft, admission to universities, participation in the military. Unable to attain full citizenship, German Jews had to adjust to a lower status.[1]

The years 1789-1806 were particularly difficult for the Jews living in lands under Prussian and German domination. For instance, the city of Breslau was "normalized" in 1790. This meant that the number of Jewish families was limited to 160, while new "protective taxes" were levied against the Jews.[2] University towns in Prussia and in other German states, like Breslau and Göttingen, were frequently "normalized" in order to discourage Jews from seeking university careers. Often thos Jews seeking admission were immigrants from

smaller European towns. Their hopes for a career were frequently dashed by anti-Semitic quotas and restrictions. Jewish students were permitted to study medicine only. Other Jews who somehow managed to study law, philosophy, or some other discipline, found a subsequent career impossible unless they submitted to baptism.

Sudden relief came to the Jews of Europe when the Emperor Napoleon came to power in France. By 1795, the armies of the revolution had carried the liberal ideals of the French "Declaration of the Rights of Man" to Holland. Napoleon subsequently brought emancipation to German lands. The liberal Prussian Prime Minister Hardenburg assisted the Jews by enacting a series of reforms. In 1808, Jews were first granted local citizenship. Then in 1812 an historic edict abolished protective taxes, academic restrictions, and prohibitions against Jewish government service. Under Hardenburg's reforms, the way was paved for Jewish participation in the military. For these rights, Jews were required to adopt last names and to use German. The Jewish reaction to these changes was most positive. During the wars of 1813-1815, Jews patriotically served in the military and distinguished themselves.

Unfortunately, these rights were shortlived. Following Napoleon's defeat, the Congress of Vienna was convened, under Count Metternich's leadership old institutions, altered by Napoleon, were revived. This subsequent reactionary period, referred to as the "Restoration," reversed the programs implemented by Napoleon. During the Restoration an anti-Semitic reaction swept across Poland, Prussia, and the German states. The Prussian emancipation of the Jews, which had

reached its apex in 1812, was destroyed in less than six years. When Russian troops entered Hamburg in 1813, the old order was re-established and the rights of Jews were revoked. In 1814, Frankfort once again placed economic and political restrictions on Jewish activities. It was only in Holland that the emancipation took root and flourished despite Louis Napoleon's overthrow in 1814. Under the restored monarchy of William V (1815-1840), Jews were permitted to retain their positions of influence in the government, to study at universities, and to share in local secular education.

But for the German Jews, the end of emancipation ushered in a new period of anti-Semitism. The conditions of these Jews were greatly aggravated by postwar famines and economic recessions. In 1819, the "hep-hep" riots in Hamburg demolished Jewish property and homes. A period of overt anti-Semitism continued intermittently for the next 25 years. A gradual return to revolutionary ideals paved the way to a more lasting emancipation which came about in the latter part of the nineteenth century.[3]

Throughout the frustrating period in which Jews were first denied, then granted, and once again denied basic civil rights, a great number of Jews converted to Christianity. In the second and third decades of the nineteenth century, these desertions reached almost epidemic proportions. In 1823, nearly 1,300 Jewish baptisms were recorded in Berlin and almost 1,400 in the rest of Prussia.[4] These acts of apostasy came from all segments of Jewish society, rich and poor, educated and unlearned, native-born German Jews and immigrants.

At the height of the "hep-hep" riots, three talented Jewish scholars--Leopold Zunz, Eduard Gans, and Moses Moser--banded together to form an organization to promote Western culture among Jews through their "Society for the Culture and Sciences of the Jews." They believed that the Jewish acquisition of Western learning would mitigate German anti-Semitism and lead to a fuller acceptance of Jews as a civilized people. The Society's first condition of membership was a vow of loyalty to Judaism and a promise to resist any and all allurements to join the Church. In less than a decade after its founding, the wealthy Gans apostasized in order to obtain an academic chair of jurisprudence. Moser followed soon afterwards and urged other Jews to embrace Christianity. The poet Heinrich Heine, a friend of Moser, said of Gans' decision: "If he does it out of conviction, he is a fool, if out of hypocrisy, he is a rascal."[5] In 1825, Heine did it for a job. To be sure, his conversion was not unique. In 1810, so many Jews were suspected of converting without conviction that a royal edict was enacted urging Protestant pastors to exercise greater restraint in accepting Jewish candidates for conversion.[6]

The conversions of other Jews, however, were influenced mostly by an attraction to German culture. In the beginning of the century, Jewish women in particular gained admission to German society in literary salons and social circles. The Protestant theologian Schleiermacher once wrote his sister from Berlin:

> It is quite natural that young scholars and elegant women assiduously visit important Jewish homes here. Whoever wishes to enjoy fine company, without ceremony, tries to be introduced into these homes, where talented people are readily welcomed.[7]

In Berlin and in Vienna, societies were organized by upper class Jewish women. These places often became places of intrigue and romance. For instance, the romantic relationship between Dorothea Mendelssohn and the young Protestant scholar Schlegel resulted in her divorce and subsequent conversion to Lutheranism (1804). Similarly, Henrietta Herz, who founded the "League of Virtue," became involved with Schleiermacher. In 1817, she too converted to Lutheranism.

Only a generation earlier, Dorothea's father Moses Mendelssohn had sought to spread Western culture and learning to Jews without sacrificing Jewish tradition in the process. Yet three out of his six children converted to Christianity. A fourth child, Abraham, merely baptized his children. What kind of changes had occurred during the lives of the Mendelssohns that made such an abandonment of Judaism possible? Did they simply forsake the time-honored traditions of their ancestors for a government position, an academic post, or a lover? Yet centuries earlier, Spanish Jews had sought Spanish culture and learning without sacrificing Jewish traditions. Under far more difficult conditions, they resisted the temptation to convert and did not abandon Judaism. Why the apostasy now?

While the forces at work were less violent that the pogrom or the crusade, they effectively led Jews to accept Christianity. Among the Jews themselves, there arose assaults on Jewish traditions, religious practices, and culture, and these led to increased attraction to German culture and the majority religion.

The Romantic and Evangelical movements of the time jointly and individually revived and energized Christianity. As they attacked

the Jewish religion, these same movements, oddly enough, bolstered the image of the Jews as a people.

Both movements were a reaction in part to the rationalism of the Age of Enlightenment, which we need to summarize briefly. The times of Locke (1632-1704), Newton (1642-1727), and Rousseau (1712-1778) were characterized by a spirit of inquiry. A visible decline in religious fervor and zeal accompanied the denigration of many long held religious beliefs. In addition, Europe had had enough of religious struggle and strife. Philosophers tended to view religion more rationally by emphasizing the natural order of the universe. Consequently, devotional aspects of the faiths suffered. Enthusiasm was equated with fanaticism and outward displays of religious fervor were regarded as socially unacceptable. Places like the University of Halle, which had been a center of Pietism, became a center of rationalism.

Many Jewish leaders were impressed by the ideals that accompanied the Age of Enlightenment, and they hoped that the political extension of these ideals would aid the Jews. Moses Mendelssohn, who was learned in both secular and Jewish studies, tried to bring Western learning to Jews. In order to encourage them to use German instead of Yiddish, Mendelssohn translated the Hebrew Bible into High German. Mendelssohn also developed a rationalistic Jewish philosophy consistent with the times. He proposed that Judaism was a natural religion like all civilized religions which held to the belief in a single God. Additionally, he contended that the laws and traditions revealed at Sinai were a particular discipline for a particular community and as

such did not contradict any other natural religion which did not adhere to the Sinaitic covenant.

Both Christians and Jews were put on the defensive and needed to respond to the challenge of rationalism. Deism was one religious form which rationalism adopted. It asserted that there existed simple universal truths fundamental to all religions and that these truths were evident to man's reason. Deism de-emphasized the possibility of a particular revelation. Deists believed in a Creator, but not in one who was continually involved in man's history.

Politically, the most extreme expression of Deism was found in France during the rule of Maximilien Robespierre (1758-1794). In 1794, he proclaimed a civil religion of the "Supreme Being," in which no single religion was regarded as superior. All faiths were subject to state supervision. Robespiere's activities were the first of many major actions on the part of the French to limit the power of the established Churches. Throughout the Revolutionary Period (1790-1814), the power of the Roman Catholic Church was seriously threatened. Thus Popes Pius VI and Pius VII were imprisoned by Napoleon when he annexed the Papal states.

There was strong reaction to the political acts of the French and to the general anti-religious sentiment. Such reaction came mostly from England and Germany. Edmund Burke, in his Reflections on the Revolution in France (1790), denounced the anti-religious sentiments of the Enlightenment and especially the recorded activities of the French. In his view, religion was a stabilizing force in society, for in instilling a sense of reverence it supported the state's right

to rule. Without such respect and support, the social order could not be maintained. Burke wrote:

> We know, and what is better, we feel inwardly that religion is the basis of civil society. . . . We know, and it is our pride to know, that man is by his constitution a religious animal; that atheism is against, not only our reason, but our instincts; and that it cannot prevail long.[8]

The growth of the evangelical movements was partially a reaction to the rationalism and the political activities of the Age of Enlightenment. These revivals concentrated less on institutional and doctrinal practices than on the personal moral transformation of the human being through his awareness of sin and grace. In England, the greatest of these evangelical revivals began with John Wesley's Methodist movement in the mid-eighteenth century. Its influence came to be felt in America in a series of revivals known as the Great Awakening. In Germany, a form of revivalism called Pietism, which has been previously mentioned, grew in strength during the late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century. Its historical roots went deeper than those of the Methodist movement in England. Pietism could trace its origins to the German mystics of the late Middle Ages. As such, it stressed personal experiential religion and stood against emotionless scholasticism. Pietism had a humanitarian outlook. It responded to the religious strife and conflict of the post-Reformation period by accepting all Christian denominations. Stressing love and compassion, Pietists opposed war and encouraged charities and other social endeavors. Like Methodism and other revivalist movements, Pietism kindled emotions and encouraged outward signs of religious fervor.

These movements had popular appeal; in time the established Churches began to incorporate some of their practices and beliefs. Though they never replaced the established Churches, the revivalists eventually transformed them; thus by 1815, the Church of England had its first Evangelical bishop.

The Evangelical influences on the Church of England had political dimensions. To support England meant supporting the Church and opposing the anti-religious Napoleon. Burke's divine sanction of the state encouraged the Church's followers to oppose France. This patriotic religious fervor did not end with Napoleon's fall. Throughout the nineteenth century, the interests of the Church were repeatedly linked to the interests of the nation. The German philosopher Hegel wrote of the state in divine terms.

Evangelism had another dimension: missionary work. Throughout the nineteenth century, the Protestant Churches of England, America, and Germany were actively bringing Christianity to the far reaches of the globe; to China, Africa, India, and Asia Minor. Their missionary zeal was not directed at Gentiles alone. Large scale efforts to convert Jews went hand in hand with general missionary programs. In fact, the idea of the final conversion of the Jews energized the entire missionary movement. The cataclysmic changes brought about by the French gave rise to Millenarianism: the anticipation of the second coming of Jesus following the return of the Jews to their land. Some evangelists believed that Jewish emancipation would facilitate the return of the Jews to their land. In the nineteenth century, English leaders Like Lord Bexley and Robert Grant vigorously supported

the efforts to emancipate Jews and at the same time promoted missionary activities designed to convert them. Others simply supported a program of conversion, believing that conversion alone should be the prerequisite to emancipation.

The London Society, referred to previously, was founded in 1795 by a converted Jew, Joseph Frey. However, its main support came from Christian philanthropists like Lewis Way. Soon after its founding, the London Society was joined by Scottish and Dutch groups in efforts to convert Jews. These missions differed from their medieval forerunners, for their quarrel was not with the Jewish people but with the religion which inhibited their conversion. Rabbinic Judaism was viewed as a corruption of the Old Testament religion. Oddly enough, at the same time Jews were venerated as the ancient people of God. England especially was pervaded by a spirit of friendliness towards Jews, who were portrayed more positively in literature and in plays.

Depsite this new tack, the missions to the Jews met with relatively little success in England. The efforts were soon directed to Jews on the Continent as well as to Jews living in Africa. By 1845 the London Society had made considerable progress in establishing missionary stations abroad in Berlin, Warsaw, Frankfort, Jerusalem, Safed, Strasburg, Breslau, Posen, Constantinople, Baghdad, Smyrna, and Amsterdam. Representatives of the London Society were placed in every major Jewish center in Prussia and Poland.[9] Religiously, they represented the Anglican Church; politically, the Crown.

The successes of these groups were minor. It is clear that they never achieved the widescale results that were anticipated.

One researcher called their efforts an "exercise in futility."[10] Vast sums were spent on distributing missionary tracts and translations of the New Testament. During the nineteenth century, the London Society alone spent an average of 600 pounds in order to convert a single Jew.[11] The costs were so high because Jews converted by the London Society received financial support from the Society after their baptisms. It was not unusual for a convert to seek employment as a London Society missionary. Many converts came from lower class backgrounds and were often people who had been uprooted from their homes. The London Society and similar missionary groups could claim credit for only a fraction of the conversions in Prussia and in other German states. These missions did more to stimulate interest in Christianity among Christians than among Jews. One writer satirically renamed the London Society "The London Society for Promoting Christianity among Christians."[12]

Reverting now to the Romantic movement (1780-1830), its broad influence touched not only literature and art but religion as well. It also promoted Christianity among Christians. Politically the Romantics supported the Restoration and the re-establishment of the secular and religious institutions altered by Napoleon. Many writers like Johann Gottfried Von Herder (1744-1803) glorified the social order and the religion of the medieval era, which was no longer viewed as a barbaric period but as a noble and virtuous time. The Catholic Church benefited from such reflections. Francois René, Vicomte De Chauteaubriand (1768-1848), a Romantic and a Roman Catholic, emphasized the beauty and truth of Christianity in his Genius of

Christianity (1802). In England, writers such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) also glorified Christianity, supporting the established Protestant Church.

In Germany, new theological and philosophical speculations served to enhance the image of Christianity. These ideas were of great interest to all of Europe. Of particular significance was the influence of Georg Wilhelm Freidrich Hegel (1770-1831), who has already been mentioned. His theories gave rise to a view which placed Christianity above all other religions in history.

Hegel believed that the universe was evolving. Change was at the heart of all things, as the world moved progressively towards a higher stage of existence. Positing a belief in a metaphysical "world spirit," Hegel contended that man's history was the "progress of the consciousness of freedom."[13] Whatever mankind had experienced in his history was necessary so that he could move on to a higher stage of being. Each period was under the guidance of the "world spirit," and as such, was a reflection of the divine will. Every political, economic, and social form which developed in history was a precursor of a more sophisticated political, economic, and social form. The Prussian historian Leopold Von Ranke (1795-1886) utilized Hegel's ideas, viewing each period of history as unique and "immediate to God."[14] History was deified.

Hegel also viewed religions in terms of higher and lower forms. For Hegel, Christianity was the highest, most sophisticated form of religion ever embraced by the "world spirit." He asserted that the Prussian state was a "temporary embodiment of that spirit," for it

supported Christianity and promoted its causes.[15] Other German writers such as Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814) ultimately carried these ideas to portentous extremes, exalting German peoplehood, culture, and language.

Hegel lauded the contributions of earlier peoples. The Greeks, the Romans, all had given the world their gifts of art, science, law, and philosophy. Now they were gone, but a higher civilization had taken their place.

For Judaism, this approach to history had serious consequences. Protestant theologians, influenced greatly by Hegel's theories, elevated the historical position of Christianity, identifying it as the noblest and the most sophisticated form of religion. Judaism had held this position ages ago, but now history under the direction of the "world spirit" had passed it by.

Anticipating Hegelianism, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-1781) in 1778 wrote his Education of Humanity. Lessing viewed religions as phases or points of transition in the education of the human race. All civilized religions expressed religious truths: the knowledge of the one God, the immortality of the soul, the belief in an afterlife. However, some religions articulated these truths in a more sophisticated manner which better enabled the adherent to grasp the truth. Israel had inherited a few religious truths from a lower form of religious expression. Israel had been taught as a child is taught, painstakingly and simply. That lesson was the Old Testament principles of reward and punishment. In comparison, the New Testament was a higher lesson which concentrated on higher

religious truths. In the religious classroom of history, Jews were slower classmates of Christians.

Later on, the German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1734-1804) was less charitable to Judaism than was Lessing. He contended that the Old Testament was merely a political design for a commonwealth and had little to do with religious truths. Jews who continued to follow the Law of Moses restricted their religious growth and impeded their acceptance into the progressive European world.

Other theologians who at least considered Judaism a religion were reluctant to view it as eternal. Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher (1768-1834) considered Judaism a dead religion and compared its practitioners to those who mourned over a mummy. Another one of his less favorable evaluations described Judaism as "a single fruit, which after all the life-giving sap is gone from the stalk, remains hanging on a withered stem until the coldest season and then dries up."[16] This was the same Schleiermacher who spoke so enthusiastically of Jewish homes and their literary societies.

These philosophical assaults were difficult for Jews to repel. Hegel had made the German state holy. The Romantics had glorified Christian civilization and history. Protestant theologians had proclaimed Christianity the noblest, most sophisticated, religious form. German society, culture, and religion were the best that mankind had to offer. In comparison, Judaism was decaying and withering.

Many German Jews were influenced by Hegelianism and tried to apply it to Judaism in the same spirit in which Mendelssohn had

defended Jewish tradition rationally. The Jews tried to reach a religious compromise which would facilitate political emancipation.

At first, many Jewish leaders contended that Judaism was a religion like all others. They argued that it contained the essential truths common to all civilized religions. Since Judaism was like all religions, why should its practitioners be deprived of basic civil rights? In 1799, an anonymous brochure appeared in Berlin and articulated some of these feelings. It had been written by David Friedlander, a prominent Jewish disciple of Mendelssohn and a defender of Jewish interests. The brochure was entitled "A Letter to the Supreme Consistorial Councilman, Pastor Teller, from Several Heads of Families of the Jewish Faith." It proposed a religious-political compromise with German-Christian society. In part it read:

> For a long time, we've held a certain position between the two extremes--the fanatical belief of the adherents of the Talmud and the fashionable disbelief of the youth. We recognize the great truths that are basic to every religion: the unity of God; the immortality of the soul; aspiration to the ethical perfection. Both Moses and Jesus placed these foundations in their religions. Judaism drifted into ritualistic formalism; Christianity into mystical dogma. The rites of Judaism really interfere with the civil duties; and for the welfare of our posterity we have to discard the yoke of ritual. But on the other hand, we cannot embrace Christianity directly, as we are deterred by the Christian dogmas, and the Christian "historical truths" which contradict the "truth of reason." For instance, we cannot recognize the dogma of the "Son of God" in its Church sense without hypocrisy. . . . We see many in our midst embrace the Church lightmindedly. By means of a couple of words, they get rid of the deprivation of rights. But such neophytes can afford little joy to a judicious person. . . .
>
> Teach us, you noble friend of virtue! Tell us: if we were to join the great Christian Protestant Society--what sort of a public confession of creed would you and other men of your honorable council demand of us? We are few in number; but we hope that many others would follow our example.[17]

In short, David Friedlander and these families were proposing that Jews be allowed to enter society through some Christian rite which would not be offensive to Judaism and to "reason." They emphasized the adherence to certain "eternal truths" and the acceptance of civic responsibilities stemming from those "eternal truths."

Protestant theologians responded very negatively to this proposal. For them Christianity was not merely another religion, but was the highest religion. In addition, their form of Christianity, Protestant Christianity, was superior to the over-ritualized Roman Catholic form. It certainly had surpassed Judaism and could hardly be considered its equal. Some satirically viewed Friedlander's proposal as a "dry baptism."[18] Schleiermacher warned that any attempt to carry out this proposal would lead to the creation of a dangerous Judeo-Christian sect. Fearing subsequent judaizing of Christianity, Schleiermacher commented: "What? we are to believe that Jesus was only a Jewish Rabbi, with philanthropic sentiments, and some socratic morality . . ."[19]

Despite Christian rejections, Jews continued to pursue political emancipation through religious compromise. For many these compromises came easily. As noted in the beginning of this chapter, many upper class Jews became involved in German society. In literary salons and in social circles, German culture replaced Jewish culture. Yiddish went unspoken; Hebrew was revered only as the language of ritual. Jewish literature stood in stark contrast to the romantic writings of Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe (1749-1832) and Johann Christoph Freidrich Von Schiller (1759-1805). In quenching its thirst for German culture.

the post-Mendelssohn generation disregarded its own culture and traditions.

The religious and philosophical assault by Christians on the Jewish culture was joined by a Jewish attack upon Jewish culture. The Jewish author and Kantian philosopher Lazarus ben-David had often criticized Jews who apostasized. Even so, at the turn of the century, he reluctantly commented that "one cannot reproach the apostate Jews who prefer the animated and gay Church to the desolate and mournful Synagogue; and they endeavor to save themselves and their children."[20]

Abraham Mendelssohn Bartholdy who himself resisted baptism decided to "save his children" by raising them in the Christian faith. On the occasion of his daughter's confirmation in the Church he wrote the following words to her:

> The form in which your teacher of religion expounded all of these (Christian teachings) had formed historically: and, on par with all human laws, it is subject to the change of time. Thus several thousand years ago, the Jewish form prevailed, then the Pagan, and now the Christian form prevails. We, your mother and I, were reared in the Jewish faith: and we did not change the form and we observed the precepts of God in our conscience. You--you and your brothers, however--we reared in the Christian faith, because that had become the form of the most civilized people.[21]

Hence the process had run its course. German philosophy and German culture succeeded in winning Jews to the Church where German anti-Semitism alone had failed. Though the attack had been waged on several fronts, political, social, and religious, it was the attack by philosophy which had been the most difficult to repel.

A generation before, during the Age of Enlightenment, Mendelssohn's rationalism defended Judaism. Even then however, his ideas were attacked as partially irrational. Within a generation his rationalizations would not provide an adequate defense during the Age of Romanticism and Hegelianism. Traditional Judaism suffered in contrast to a glorified, enthusiastic Christianity. Theologians and missionaries viewed it increasingly as a dying vestige of a once noble religion. The appeal of the sophisticated, civilized religion and culture of Germany won over many Jews to Christ.

To be sure, there were Jews who converted for purely economic reasons, just as Jews had done throughout Jewish history. However, this period of Jewish history is unique because of the significant numbers of Jews who converted out of a deeper commitment and attachment to Christianity.

To understand the motivations of any convert, one should consider many factors. More often than not, it is difficult to identify which assault had the greatest effect upon a particular individual. How does one view the young Polish Jew who journeys to Germany and gains admission to a university by converting to Christianity? His conversion cannot be understood in political terms alone, but must be understood socially and religiously as well. Only by taking into consideration the philosophical forces can one more fully explain the conversions of the Heines and the Ganses who were driven to baptism by conditions which their ancestors might have tolerated. Their religion did not mean as much to them as it did to their ancestors.

In viewing nineteenth century converts to Christianity, one must distinguish between the Jewish convert's national feelings and his religious feelings. Frequently these people were proud to be Jews but were dissatisfied with the religion that accompanied that privilege. The Jewish convert who dedicated his life to Christianity in the nineteenth century can only be understood by grasping the fact that he looked favorably upon Jews but not upon Judaism. This shall become clearer as we continue now by outlining the careers and personalities of Jewish converts to Christianity who achieved eminence through their dedication to the Church.

CHAPTER TWO

NOTES

[1]Simon Dubnov, History of the Jews, Vol. IV, Part I, Chapter III (Cranbury, N.J.: Thomas Yoseloff Ltd., 1973), p. 588.

[2]Ibid., p. 593.

[3]Peter Gay, Freud, Jews and Other Germans (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 96. In 1869, civic equality was proclaimed for Jews in the North German Federation. Two years later, emancipation was extended to all of united Germany.

[4]Heinrich Graetz, History of the Jews, Vol. V (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1956), p. 587. The statistics for Jewish conversion in nineteenth century Europe are often contradictory. Estimates range from 100,000 to 250,000 Jewish conversions. (Kaufman Kohler, "Conversion," Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. IV New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1901 , pp. 249-52.) Gay conservatively estimates that 22,000 Jews converted to Christianity in Germany during the nineteenth century. (Gay, Op. cit., p. 97.)

[5]Graetz, Op. cit., p. 522.

[6]Dubnov, Op. cit., p. 643.

[7]Ibid., p. 637.

[8]Josef Altholz, Churches in the Nineteenth Century (Indianapolis: Dobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1967), p. 48.

[9]Melvin Meyer Scult, The Conversion of the Jews and the Origins of Jewish Emancipation in England (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, Inc., 1969), pp. 233-34.

[10]Ibid., p. 10.

[11]Cecil Roth, A History of the Jews of England (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), p. 11.

[12]Scult, Op. cit., p. 8.

[13]Herbert James Muller, Freedom in the Modern World (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1966), p. 12.

[14]Ibid., p. 12.

[15]Ibid., p. 19.

[16]David Charles Smith, "Protestant Anti-Judaism in the German Emancipation Era," Jewish Social Studies, Vol. XXXVI (New York: Conference on Jewish Social Studies, 1974), p. 210.

[17]Dubnov, Op. cit., p. 595.

[18]Ibid., p. 596.

[19]Graetz, Op. cit., p. 427.

[20]Dubnov, Op. cit., p. 645.

[21]Ibid., p. 641.

CHAPTER THREE

EMINENT HEBREW-CHRISTIANS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

In this chapter, we will summarize briefly the lives and careers of nine eminent Hebrew-Christians: three bishops, one missionary, and five scholars.

These individuals were chosen for several reasons. First, these men collectively typify the life and career of the Jewish convert to Christianity who achieved eminence through services to the Church in the nineteenth century. They were also chosen because the contributions and careers of these men are each unique and worthy of study in their own right. Because their careers were pursued in various parts of the world, they provide us with interesting reflections of Jewish and Christian life in different countries. Additionally, their individual stories of conversion offer significant insights into the dimensions of the Hebrew-Christian personality. The Church went on to utilize the talents and interests of these men in various ways. It was not uncommon to find that a convert experimented with numerous roles before achieving success and fulfillment through one particular service.

We turn first to three Jews who came to serve as Bishops.

THE BISHOPS

Samuel Isaac Joseph Schereschewsky (1831-1906)

As noted in the second chapter, the nineteenth century Church was witness to an expanding missionary movement. Samuel Isaac Joseph Schereschewsky, a former rabbinical student and the son of a Lithuanian rabbi, helped bring that movement to China.

For hundreds of years the Manchu dynasty had effectively discouraged foreigners from entering China. In the beginning decades of the nineteenth century, British commercial ventures in Canton led to the establishment of a Protestant missionary outpost. In time, all major European powers established military and commercial presences in China. After the British millitary victories against China in 1842 and in 1858, new areas were opened to trade, for example Shanghai. As a result of the colonizing successes, missionaries were able to make contact with a large segment of the Chinese population. Many of these missionaries to China came from America and Britain.

As a young rabbinical student in Zhitomer, Lithuania, Schereschewsky knew little of the events taking place in China. He was raised by his half-brother, a timber merchant, who was training him to be a glazier. Young Schereschewsky however, had other plans. At age nineteen, he left home for the city of Frankfort and eventually went to Breslau where he enrolled in the University as a student of Semitic languages. Even before he left Lithuania, Schereschewsky had become interested in Christianity. In 1859, as a new immigrant to America, he wrote: "My conversion took place in Europe, in my native town through the reading of the New Testament in Hebrew."[1] His daughter,

however, relates that his decision was a gradual one and that it became final not in his native town but through a religious experience in a German cathedral. She reports that Schereschewsky, while standing alone in prayer and gazing at the altar, saw a beam of light which "suddenly struck the crucifix."[2]

Soon after this experience, Schereschewsky emigrated to America where he met John Neander, a Hebrew-Christian and pastor of a Presbyterian Church in New York. In 1855, Schereschewsky attended a Passover seder arranged by other Hebrew-Christians. At one point in the service, he rose and confessed, "I can no longer deny my Lord, I will follow Him without the camp."[3] That same year he was baptized a Presbyterian Christian and was offered a scholarship to the Western Theological Seminary in Pittsburgh. He accepted and enrolled in the seminary under the name Samuel I. Joseph. During his second year of study at the seminary, Schereschewsky began to have doubts about both Calvinistic theology and the Presbyterian system of church government. At the same time, the young immigrant became friendly with the Reverend Dr. Theodore B. Lyman who offered him admission to the Episcopalian General Theological Seminary in New York. Schereschewsky's subsequent acceptance angered his Presbyterian sponsors, teachers, and classmates, to whom he had not voiced any of his doubts. The Western Theological Seminary's final report on Schereschewsky noted that his general behavior and academic standing were good. However, they added that "his determination to enter another seminary had nearly, if not quite, destroyed all of our confidence in his candor, fairness, disingenuousness, prudence, honor and stability . . . and until he

gives some proof of a great change, the faculty cannot regard him as a profitable member of any seminary."[4] The Episcopalians were nonetheless glad to have him. A letter of introduction to the faculty of the General Theological Seminary read: "He brings to you a more than ordinary amount of various learning, especially Hebrew, Chaldaic, and Rabbinic. . . . He bids fair, if well trained and disciplined, to be hereafter useful in a way and degree to which we do not find men capable of aspiring."[5]

Midway through his studies at the General Theological Seminary, Schereschewsky met Bishop Boone of China who was seeking young men for missionary work. A lifelong friendship began between Schereschewsky and the Bishop. With the seminary's permission, Boone ordained Schereschewsky as a deacon of the Church, even though he had not finished the entire course of study. The two left for China. On the way Schereschewsky began what was to become his life's work: the study of the Chinese language. Soon after his arrival in China, Schereschewsky was ordained a priest. He spent the next thirty years serving the Church in China primarily as a translator. As a talented linguist, Schereschewsky became expert in several Chinese dialects. Here is a partial list of his translations:

1) Psalms--Colloquial Mandarin
2) Old Testament--Mandarin and Wen-li
3) Prayerbook--Mandarin and Wen-li
4) Apocrypha--Wen-li
5) New Testament--Wen-li

In addition to these, Schereschewsky compiled a Chiness grammar, a Chinese dictionary, and a Mongolian dictionary. Amazingly, many of these works were completed after he was afflicted with paralysis

in 1882. With great courage and determination, he continued his work, typing entire manuscripts with his one unparalyzed finger. His revision of the Mandarin Old Testament and his translation of the entire Christian Bible were nicknamed the "One Finger Bible."[6]

Schereschewsky's scholarship was greatly respected. Max Muller, a noted scholar, considered him "one of the six most learned orientalists in the world."[7] Schereschewsky was neither the first nor the last to translate the scriptural writings into Chinese. He hoped that his works would be accepted as the authoritative Chinese translations of Scripture. Often he would ask: "Is it not possible to have one Bible for China?"[8]

It is difficult to measure the Bishop's success as an administrator. After declining the bishopric twice, he accepted reluctantly in 1877 and then only after he was assured that funds would be forthcoming to build a university in China where he could teach. In 1879, St. John's College was opened, and in 1881, a medical school was added.

Schereschewsky was not personally active in seeking out converts. He believed that ultimately only Chinese missionaries could convert the Chinese. He delegated most of the missionary responsibilities to his subordinates. In 1881 he freely admitted: "From the very beginning I was convinced that I had not the special gifts and qualifications for this office. I regard my episcopate thus far as a failure . . . I see no reason to hope that I shall be more successful in the future."[9]

His fellow workers heartily concurred with Schereschewsky's self-appraisal. William Boone, son of Bishop Boone wrote: "Between us (field missionaries) . . . he is not a worker of men from all reports."[10] Miss Fay, another missionary added:

> He holds the most extraordinary opinions in theology and he has more than a Jew's contempt for the theology, learning and opinion of others. As for the Chinese, he looks upon them as a Brahman does upon a pariah. He is kind and amiable to those he likes, but it seems to me he has little love for fallen humanity.[11]

Though Schereschewsky was often criticized by his fellow workers, he nevertheless mangaed to retain his influence and power. The Bishop often held unpopular opinions, including strong feelings about religious matters. For instance, his dislike of Buddhism interfered with his work as a missionary. Again he was extremely jealous of other Protestant groups in China, and especially of the Roman Catholics who were far more successful in converting the Chinese than were the Protestants. Concerning the Roman Catholic Church and its missionaries he wrote:

> I cannot but think that the Church of Rome displays an uncommon amount of activity and energy in the conversion of the heathen--much more in proportion, I am persuaded than is displayed by our own Church. It is a great pity that the true Church should not at least be as zealous to spread the whole truth as the corrupt Church of Rome is to propogate her doctrines and superstitions.[12]

Throughout his life, Schereschewsky identified as a Jew and proudly believed that his upbringing was part of a divine plan to equip him with special knowledge to spread the gospel. He often insisted that one could not translate the Bible accurately without knowledge of Hebrew. One of his early experiences in China reflected both his interest in Jews and his inability to function as a missionary.

While still a priest, Schereschewsky had been told about a small village, K'ai-fêng Fu, which was populated by a few hundred assimilated Chinese Jews. The rabbi of this community had died two generations previously. They knew little if anything about Christianity. Schereschewsky decided to personally bring the gospel to them. His efforts, although sincere, were ill-received, and he and his servant were forcibly driven from the village by angry Jews. In subsequent times, the Bishop directed his attention to the problems of scholarship, for which he was greatly remembered.

Michael Solomon Alexander (1799-1845)

Michael Solomon, to use his original name, met with more success as a missionary than Schereschewsky. Born in Schölanke, Posen near the Prussian border, Michael was the son of an English rabbi. During his childhood, Posen had fallen under Prussian domination. The brief emancipation permitted Jewish boys to attend secular elementary and secondary schools. Young Michael attended these schools and also went to a Yeshiva where he became a rabbi. As he grew to manhood, he began to have doubts about the value of the Talmud and voiced these doubts to his older brother. A turning point in his life was the death of his father in 1820, after which his older brother became the head of the family and served Schölanke as its rabbi. Disappointed that he could not be the rabbi, Michael left home and journeyed to England where he sought employment in the Jewish community. He served as Hazzan and Schochet in several English communities: Norwich (1820-1821), Nottingham (1821-1823), and Plymouth (1823-1825).

While at Plymouth, he was befriended by the Reverend B. B. Golding, the curate of Stonehouse to whom he gave lessons in Hebrew. Together they studied the Christian Bible, comparing passages in the Old Testament to New Testament passages. Alexander's decision to convert was slow and difficult. His interest in Christianity provoked numerous quarrels with the family of his fiancé, Deborah Levi. He put aside his interest long enough to marry Deborah at the Plymouth synagogue in accordance with Jewish custom. But his attraction to Christianity was strong and eventually he began to attend the Reverend Golding's services regularly. His appreciation of Christianity grew: "I was greatly struck with the first chapter of St. Matthew, and had no idea that Christianity knew anything of our patriarchs; and was still more struck with the character of Christ, and the excellent morals he taught."[13] Soon he began to share such thoughts with his congregants, and this led to his dismissal by the chief rabbi Reverend Solomon Herschel.

On June 22, 1825, Alexander was baptized at the Church of St. Andrew in Plymouth before a sizable crowd. Five months later his wife converted as well. The new converts to Christianity moved to Dublin where Alexander taught Hebrew and studied theology at the Trinity college. In 1827, he was ordained a deacon. One year later he became a priest.

Accompanied by another missionary, Reverend W. T. Ayerst, Alexander set out for Danzig to open a mission to the Jews. While in Germany, he visited his brother and sister whom he had not seen in over nine years. He met only briefly with his brother, who according to Alexander drew a pessimistic picture of Jewish life in Posen:

"It is generally expected that the next generation will embrace Christianity, as Judaism is fast dying out."[14] His brother-in-law and sister reluctantly received Alexander into their home for an evening, requesting that he keep his presence a secret by leaving before daybreak. They feared that their brother's presence would cause an incident with the townspeople who had no great love for missionaries, especially apostate Jewish missionaries. Alexander refused their request saying: "I should be heartily sorry to convey the impression that I wished to escape the cross," and decided to stay and "leave the result with God."[15] The following day, Alexander publically visited the local Church. Angry crowds gathered and drove him and his companion from the town with mocking requests for Bibles and missionary tracts. Yet aside from this incident, Alexander and Ayerst did achieve some success after they set up a school in Danzig for Jewish children, many of whom were converted to Christianity.

After three years, Alexander returned to London and continued his work as a missionary for the London Society for the Promotion of Christianity among the Jews. In 1832, he received a D.D. from Trinity College and was appointed Professor of Hebrew and Rabbinical Literature at Kings College. He taught there for the next ten years, during which time he translated the New Testament into Hebrew.

During the terrible blood libel and pogrom in Damascus in 1840, many concerned Christians and Jews organized in support of Jewry. Alexander organized a special meeting of English Hebrew-Christians, and together they issued a petition which was well-publicized by the press:

> We, the undersigned, members of the Jewish nation having lived till manhood in the belief and customs of modern Judaism, but having now, through the grace of God, become members of the Christian Church, do hereby solemnly protest that we have never, directly or indirectly, heard of, much less known the practice of killing Christians, or using Christian blood, and that we believe this charge, so often brought against them formerly, and now lately revived, to be a foul and Satanic falsehood.
>
> Signed: M. S. Alexander, Professor of Hebrew and Rabbinical Literature in Kings College, London; formerly officiating Rabbi in the Jewish Congregation at Norwich and Plymouth, followed by fifty-six other signatures.[16]

Alexander's involvement in this international issue came to the attention of the Church and the British government at an opportune time. The British and the Germans, in an effort to check Turkish and French influence in the Middle East, set up a joint Anglican-Lutheran Bishopric in Jerusalem. They justified the bishopric by claiming that the Jews of Palestine should be cared for (and converted) by a European Church. From 1841-1886, the Germans and the British shared the responsibility of appointing a Bishop to serve in Jerusalem. Alexander was the first Bishop to serve. He was elevated to the office on November 7, 1841 by the Archbishop of Canterbury who bade "a Hebrew of the Hebrews" to "carry back the message of peace to the source from which it flowed,. . ."[17]

Alexander's episcopate lasted a brief four years. Even so it was an active service. He converted several Jews and set up a Christian hospital in Jerusalem to serve the Jewish population. The Jewish community in Jerusalem viewed Alexander and his church with curiosity. His conversions went smoothly and did not agitate

local Jews excessively. The most disruptive incident came about after he converted an Algerian immigrant, Rabbi Judah Levi, who then divorced his wife and left his family. By 1844, Alexander had baptized 37 Jews, confirmed 26, and had ordained nine deacons and five priests.[18]

Alexander met with an untimely death at the age of 46, when on a missionary journey to Egypt he became ill and died. The Bishop was buried in Jerusalem on Mt. Zion. Said one member of his church: "The Mitre of Jerusalem, like the wreath of our blessed Lord, has been to him a crown of thorns."[19]

Isaac Hellmuth (1820-1901)

The third of the Hebrew-Christian bishops of the nineteenth century was Isaac Hellmuth. He achieved eminence as a Bishop of Huron in Canada. Like his fellow bishops in China and Jerusalem, Bishop Hellmuth served the Church not only as a priest but as a scholar as well. During his life, Hellmuth wrote a number of papers which defended the fundamentalist approach to the Bible. For example, in 1867 he wrote The Authenticity and Genuineness of the Pentateuch. In addition he published a Biblical Thesuarus in 1884.

Born and raised in Warsaw, Hellmuth attended a yeshiva until the age of sixteen. Subsequently, his parents sent him to study classical and oriental literature at the University of Breslau. In Breslau, he met Dr. S. Neumann, a representative of the London Society and a professor at the University. Dr. Neumann convinced

Hellmuth to move to England and contact the Reverend H. S. Josephs of the All Saints Church in Liverpool. Soon after this move, Hellmuth embraced Christianity and spent several years studying theology under the evangelists Hugh McNeile and James Haldane Stewart. His decision to convert estranged him from his family. His wealthy father disinherited him, cutting him out of his will. Years later, Hellmuth's brother's restored his inheritance to him.

As a scholar and as an evangelist, Hellmuth was particularly suited for a career in Canada, where the major task of the Church was to maintain loyalty among the colonists. By 1787, a full Church hierarchy had developed. In 1860, Canadian Protestants inaugurated their first Archbishop. Hellmuth emigrated to Canada in 1844, carrying a letter of recommendation from the Archbishop of Canterbury. Two years later he was ordained a priest, and in 1853 he received a Doctorate of Divinity. Thereafter, Hellmuth served the Church in several capacities: Professor of Hebrew and Rabbinical Literature at Bishops College in Lenoxville, President of Huron College, and General Superintendent of Colonial and Continental Society in British North America. Hellmuth integrated well into Christian society. He was married twice, once to a general's daughter in 1847, and then again in 1886 to the daughter of an admiral.

In 1871, Hellmuth was appointed Bishop Coadjutor of Huron, assistant to Bishop Cronyn. After Cronyn's death the following year, Hellmuth succeeded him as Bishop. His successful bishopric was characterized by expansion and growth. During his eleven years as Bishop many churches and schools were opened. Previously in

1865 Hellmuth, as a priest, founded Hellmuth Boys College and in 1869, Hellmuth Ladies College. Seventeen years later, Bishop Schereschewsky's daughter would attend Hellmuth Ladies College. In 1880, Bishop Hellmuth journeyed to England where he raised funds to build Western Ontario University. It supplemented Huron College, a theological and liberal arts school also founded by Hellmuth (in 1863). Hellmuth was so committed to this project that he personally contributed 2,000 pounds sterling to the college's endowment fund.[20]

In 1883, Hellmuth resigned the see in order to accept an appointment as Bishop Suffragan to the Bishop of Hull in Canada. On a legal technicality, the appointment was revoked and Hellmuth had to settle for a lesser position as Bishop Coadjutor. When the Bishop of Hull died in 1884, Hellmuth was forced to resign. From then till his death nine years later, he served in a number of minor church posts.

During his long career, Hellmuth was involved in several political disputes. One major entanglement between himself and the Lord Bishop of Montreal damaged his personal reputation. In a series of public letters, the Lord Bishop charged that Hellmuth, as an archdeacon, had manipulated Church leaders into building a church on his father-in-law's land. It was contended that Hellmuth promised to donate a substantial amount of money, but later reneged by turning the donation into a loan. The matter was never resolved.

As a theologian, Hellmuth was zealously evangelical. In 1865, he preached eight discourses in the Huron College Chapel which were later published under the title The Divine Dispensations and their Gradual Development. He published these discourses in order to provide

believers with adequate responses to the attacks of contemporary skeptics who Hellmuth claimed "held high posts of honour and involvement in the Church."[21] In global language he warned:

> According to a late estimate, the world contains a population of about twelve hundred millions. Of this nearly nine hundred millions are Pagans, Mohammedeans, and Jews--the latter about ten millions. The remaining three hundred millions constitute Christendom. Of this nearly two hundred millions are Romanists, while fifty millions belong to the Greek Church; the rest consist of Protestants, many of whom, alas! it is feared have the form of godliness, but are strangers to the power of it. Is this not a truly appalling picture to behold and that in the nineteenth century of the Christian era? . . . Nearly two hundred millions blindly adhering to the superstitious and idolatrous system of Rome. One hundred millions deluded by the Arabian imposter, while many who call themselves Protestants, and even fill places of high positions within the Church, are not only destitute of vital godliness, but are actually undermining our Zion.[22]

During the course of his lecture, Hellmuth touched upon many subjects including Bible, theology, and politics. With regard to the Jews, Hellmuth predicted their imminent return to the land of Israel. In millenarian style, he traced their history and rejection by God, contending that all was necessary for the development of Christianity and mankind. He regarded Judaism as a proper step in the religious development of the human race. He believed that in studying Judaism one could more fully understand and appreciate Christianity. Hellmuth felt himself to be a superior Christian because of his Jewish background.

THE MISSIONARY

Joseph Wolff (1795-1862)

Frequently, Jewish converts to Christianity dedicated their entire lives to the conversion of their former co-religionists. The most eminent of these was Joseph Wolff, the son of a Bavarian rabbi. The Reverend Aaron Bernstein, in his book Some Jewish Witnesses for Christ, states that Joseph Wolff and David Livingstone were "the two great missionary explorers of the nineteenth century."[23] While Livingstone sought to bring Christianity to Africa, Wolff concentrated upon contacting his dispersed brethren in the Orient. Wolff's records of his adventures and missions were published in several popular books: Researches and Missionary Labours among the Jews, Mohammedeans, and other Sects 1831-1834 (London, 1835), Narrative of a Mission to Bukhara to Ascertain the Fate of Colonel Stoddart and Captain Conelly (in two volumes, London, 1845), and Travels and Adventures of the Reverend Joseph Wolff, D.D., LL.D., (London, 1861). It is in this last book, his autobiography, that most of the details of Wolff's life are recorded.

Wolff, named simply after his grandfather, was born in the small Bavarian village of Weilersbach in 1795.[24] Soon after his birth, his family moved to Halle where he received a strict orthodox Jewish education and upbringing. At age eleven, he and his brother entered the Protestant Lyceum at Stuttgart. A short time later, Wolff moved to Bamberg and lived with his cousin whom he called "a modern styled Jew," leaning "towards infidelity."[25] In Bamberg, he attended the Roman Catholic Lyceum. There, for the first time,

Wolff read the romantic works of Goethe and Schiller as well as the philosophical writings of Kant. Wolff's attraction to Christianity however, began long before he came to Bamberg. Wolff recalled that as a child Christian friends and neighbors had told him fascinating accounts of the grandeur and glory of the Roman Catholic Church. The stories of the missionary Xavier intrigued young Wolff, who spent many hours dreaming of becoming a great missionary, and one day the Pope. Not yet seventeen, Wolff embarked upon his first journey in order to pursue his dreams of glory. In 1812 he went to Rome where he was baptized Joseph Wolff. Later at his confirmation he took the name Stanislau Wencelas, a name he never used. The young convert spent the next few years studying languages at the University of Vienna. There he became acquainted with Dorothea Von Schelegel and her confessor Clement Maria Hoffbauer, a romanticist and a leader of the pro-papal party in Vienna. As a result of these influences, Wolff entered the seminary of the Collegio Romano in 1816, and in 1817 enrolled in the Collegio Urbano della Propaganda Fede. While in Rome, Wolff gained an audience with the Pope to whom he presented a Hebrew Bible.

However, Wolff's personality was such that he was unable to adhere to the discipline of the Catholic school. Frequently he disputed with his classmates and teachers over matters of ritual and theology. In his memoirs, Wolff writes with delight of many spirited debates. His teachers, less appreciative of his iconoclastic personality, accused him of corrupting his classmates, and in 1819 he was asked to leave the College. Years later he wrote:

> . . . Though I am indebted to the Propaganda for many excellent things I witnessed . . . I nevertheless heard many sentiments, and saw many practices in the Church, against which my conscience revolted, and I was openly obliged to protest against them which induced Pope Pius VII and Cardinal Litta to decree my banishment from Rome.[26]

It seems doubtful that the Pope personally directed Wolff's expulsion. Throughout his autobiography, Wolff exaggerates and glorifies his actions. Wolff's egotism often led to disputes which more often than not necessitated his departure from one organization or another.[27]

The quarrelsome Wolff found more acceptance in the Anglican Church. In 1819 Wolff met Lewis Way of the London Society. The evangelical philanthropist was impressed with Wolff and financed his education at Cambridge, where he studied language and theology under Professors Lee and Simeon. In 1821 Wolff secured the financial support of a patron, Henry Drummond, who sent him on his first of many missionary travels. In 1827, Wolff married the Lady Georgiana Walpole, daughter of the Earl of Orford. Their son, the noted statesman and diplomat, Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, was named after Wolff's patron. Wolff's travels took him to Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Bukhara, and to America. In 1836 he delivered a sermon before Congress and received an honorary degree from Annapolis. In 1838 Wolff was ordained a priest in Dublin.

It is difficult to measure Wolff's success as a missionary in terms of actual numbers of conversions. Wolff's writings contain exaggerations which make his reports unreliable. It is clear that his many readers and supporters greatly appreciated and respected his efforts and accomplishments.

Though Wolff maintained his identity as a Jew, he was never entirely able to find a Hebrew-Christian community where he could maintain social relationsips with other Hebrew-Christians. No doubt his eccentric nature and style, as well as his egotism, prevented his feeling fully at home in any community. Wolff frequently questioned the depth of others' religious convictions, especially the convictions of Jewish converts. Often he referred to Paul's religious experience on the road to Damascus in order to illustrate what an authentic convert should feel at the moment of conversion. Wolff himself never records having had such an experience. His temperment and personality were well-suited to his profession: they allowed him no other.

On his mission to Bukhara to investigate the disappearance of two British officers, Wolff was arrested and brought before the Emir, Asaad Oollah Bejk, as a spy. Wolff defended himself by claiming to be a missionary seeking the ten lost tribes of Israel. When asked to explain why he had undertaken so difficult a mission, he responded:

> The world, O brother, remaineth not to anyone. Fix, therefore, your heart on the Creator of the World, and it is enough. I have found out, by the reading of this book that one can only bind one's heart to God by believing in Jesus, and believing this, I am like one who walks in a beautiful garden, and smells the odour of the roses and hears the warbling of the nightingale; and I do not like to be the only one so happy; and therefore I go about in the world for the purpose of inviting others to walk with me, arm in arm, in the same beautiful garden.[28]

In truth, Joseph Wolff walked alone.

THE SCHOLARS

Isaac da Costa (1798-1860)

In this section we will outline the lives and careers of five Hebrew-Christians who achieved eminence in the Church through academia. Our first personality is the Dutch author, theologian, and poet Isaac da Costa. His conversion to Christianity in the third decade of the nineteenth century is an interesting historical commentary. Isaac da Costa was distantly related to the famous Marrano Uriel da Costa (1590-1647). In 1617, Uriel da Costa and his brothers had fled Portugal and moved to Amsterdam where they renounced Catholicism and joined the synagogue. Uriel, however, found the practices and beliefs of Dutch Jewry difficult to accept. He publically disputed with rabbis and was excommunicated several times. He drifted in and out of Judaism, often identifying as a deist. Late in his life, he went mad and committed suicide.

Two hundred years later, his brother's descendant, Isaac da Costa, also became disillusioned with traditional Judaism. Like Uriel, he was intensely proud of his Jewish heritage; unlike him, he found fulfillment in the Church.

As a child, Isaac da Costa received a traditional Jewish education and studied under the famed Hebraist Moses Leman. Religiously however, the young scholar was torn between his mother's devotion to Judaism and his father's indifference. Da Costa recalled that his father "was not a strict Jew," and only "maintained a decorous respect for the outward ordinance of religion."[29]

As an adolescent, da Costa would, as he put it, "addict" himself to prayers and commandments, but would sooner or later lapse into doubt. His search for a meaningful religious life was a frustrating one. Like Uriel da Costa, he wavered back and forth between Judaism and Deism.

In 1811 da Costa's father arranged to have Isaac study the classics with a professor of antiquities and literature. These studies sparked an interest in history. For the first time in his life, da Costa began to regard the Old Testament as an historical revelation. Motivated by a personal search for meaning, da Costa began to research the history of his family in Spain and Portugal. In 1815 he met the celebrated Dutch poet Bilderdyk (1756-1831), recently returned to Amsterdam after his exile by Napoleon. The guidance and teachings of the older poet meant a great deal to the struggling young Jew. A master-disciple relationship developed. In time, their relationship combined an interest in poetry with a study of the Bible. Bilderdyk showed da Costa prophecies in the Old Testament which he felt were fulfilled by Jesus. After da Costa received his degree in law from the University of Leyden, Bilderdyk wrote a poem to Isaac expressing his deep personal hopes for Isaac's conversion. In 1822, his hopes were realized. Along with his wife, the wealthy Hannah Belmonte and his close friend, Dr. Abraham Capadose, Isaac da Costa left the synagogue for the Church. Philosophically and religiously, he had abandoned Judaism long before. In his history Israel and the Gentiles da Costa relates how his conversion to Christianity came about through his appreciation of Jewish history:

> I came to the simple and certain conclusion, that the wonderful and unprecedented circumstance of the existence of the Jewish nation and their varied doctrines, during the space of 3,000 or 4,000 years, could only be accounted for by admitting these three truths; Their election by God as his people, on account of that Just One who was to be born of the seed of Abraham; their present misery, because of their rejection of the Messiah, and the divine origin of the prophecies, fortelling their future restoration and conversion.[30]

Da Costa viewed Jewish history in a romantic light. Since he could trace the origins of his family to the time of the Inquisiton, da Costa felt himself a part of that hsitory. He regarded himself as noble and special. Da Costa believed in predestination and wrote about his salvation as if he were especially chosen by God. In his book The Noble Families among the Jews (1857), da Costa stressed his noble descent. Throughout his life, he identified himself as a Jew. Partly out of pride and partly out of conceit, he poetically asserted: "I am not a son of tepid Western shores. My fatherland is where the sun awakes."[31]

The poet's elitism was demonstrated politically as well. As an arch-reactionary, he supported conservative causes with great zeal. As a central figure of the Protestant "Reveil" wing of the Anti-Revolutionary party, da Costa attacked freedom of the press, the abolition of slavery, and the constitutional monarchy. With respect to state-church relations, the Reveil group preached a return to the simple faith and orthodoxy of former times. Da Costa believed that "the true prince governs his children as a father who heeds none but the command of our Father in heaven."[32]

Da Costa did not believe that Jewish emancipation should be encouraged. Their freedom should be earned through conversion. As a supporter of missions to Jews, da Costa urged Jews to abandon the traditions of the rabbis which had nullified God's word and had "cast a veil over the predictions which were fulfilled in Jesus Christ."[33] With great disdain for those traditions he wrote: "The Talmud is an immense heap of rubbish, at the bottom of which a few bright pearls of Eastern wisdom are to be formed."[34] Regarding the persecutions of Jews by Christians in former times, he insisted that they were by "men calling themselves Christians," who "at heart were disbelievers."[35]

Despite his denigration of Judaism, da Costa was not hated by his former co-religionists. His writings, while biased in favor of Christianity, were not unkind to Jewish peoplehood, as this poem illustrates:

> Fired with an Eastern flame,
> By the Iber and the Tagus
> Men of honor, men of fame
> Whom they stripped of all possessions,
> But unsullied left their name.[36]

Da Costa spent his later years directing a seminary for the Free Church of Scotland. Shortly before his death in 1860, da Costa edited the last of sixteen volumes of the Poetical Works of Bilderdyk, who had adopted da Costa as his intellectual and spiritual son.

Moses Margoliouth (1820-1881)

In many ways the Reverend Dr. Moses Margoliouth was the English counterpart of Isaac da Costa. As an English priest, he published

many works which enhanced the image of the Jews while decrying their traditions. Claiming kinship with the famous Margoliouth family which had produced many outstanding rabbis, Moses prided himself on his special Jewish heritage.

Margoliouth was born in Suwalki, Poland and was raised in a strict orthodox environment. In his autobiography, he angrily recalls how his yeshiva training made him "a slave to the laborious study of Talmud."[37] Candidly he related how superstitious customs and practices burdened him with feelings of guilt and anxiety. As a child he was severely rebuked by his father for asking questions about Christianity. Until the age of sixteen, all that Moses knew of the New Testament was through his study of the anti-Christian polemic Defense of the Faith.

Upon completion of rabbinical study in Kalwaryia, he was given a copy of the New Testament by apostate Jews. The young Jew saw the book as an evil temptation: "I felt assuredly that Satan's devices are insurmountable and I felt so uneasy and guilty for that book, that I was almost beside myself."[38]

From that moment on Margoliouth felt hounded by what he had come to regard as the truth. In 1837, against the wishes of his parents, he left home for England. Once there, he began to study seriously the New Testament with missionaries. The following year Moses converted to Christianity and was disowned by his family. His first years as a Christian were difficult. He earned a meager living teaching German and Hebrew. At times he relied upon the London Society for support.

In 1840, Margoliouth entered Trinity College in Dublin thanks to the financial support of a wealthy friend. On January 30th, 1844, Margoliouth was appointed curate of St. Augustine, Liverpool. In 1857, he received a Ph.D. from the University of Erlangen. From 1877 until his death in 1881, Margoliouth served as a vicar in Little Linford, Buckinghamshire.

Of all prominent Hebrew-Christians that we shall mention in this chapter, Margoliouth was the most dedicated to the cause of Hebrew-Christianity. He founded the monthly Star of Jacob in 1847, and in the 1870's edited The Hebrew-Christian Witness. Many of his books and articles encouraged the revitalization of the Hebrew-Christian community. He maintained correspondence with other notable Jewish converts. Not surprisingly, most of these writings were read by Christians rather than Jews.

Like da Costa, Margoliouth studied Jewish history out of personal ethnic pride. Often he delighted in tracing the lineage of what he referred to as "supposed true-born Englishmen":

> I see vestiges of them in every assembly I have an opportunity of observing. Others may think what they please; but I consider that it is an infinitely higher honour--I mean for people who seek honour one from another, in consideration of Pedigree-to be able to trace one's descent, be it ever so remotely to this sacred race, than to the equivocal races of Saxon, Dane, Norman, Batavian, &c., &c.[39]

Margoliouth was equally proud of his knowledge of Hebrew and believed that any clergyman who knew Hebrew was superior to an ignorant bishop. In order to induce Christians to study Hebrew, he wrote The Poetry of the Hebrew Pentateuch (1871). In it he claimed

that the New Testament authors John, Paul, and Matthew were great Hebrew poets. Christians would do well he argued, to study Hebrew if they wished to understand them.

Margoliouth mercilessly denounced the Jewish religion. His most anti-Jewish work, The Principles of Modern Judaism Investigated (1843), was a vicious attack on basic Jewish practices and rituals. Angrily, he equated tefillin, mezzuzot, and tallitot with idolatry and superstition and asserted that Jewish devotion to "rabbinism" had led Jews away from the truth. Drawing widely from traditional sources, he pejoratively compared rabbinism to "popery," in its use of ceremonial objects and in its reliance upon a chain of tradition. Concerning the עין יעקב, he writes:

> It consists of all the allegories, absurdities, fables and indecencies, and wonders found in Talmudic lore. Mr. Finn, in his Sephardim, rightly styles it, "one of the most trashy, and cumbrous impositions that ever depraved a nation's intellect, or undermined their moral principles . . . a few spangles of gold, the relics of a pure tradition, but the greater part being of base metal and encrusted with a poisonous oxide."[40]

Through his exposé Margoliouth hoped that Jews would abandon these traditions and convert to Christianity. Moses Margoliouth is an example of a vitriolic Hebrew-Christian sincerely loving his people, but despising their religion. His attacks bordered on the medieval. Fortunately for the Jews of England, it was the nineteenth century.

Johann August Wilhelm Neander (1789-1850)

A less angry, more typical Hebrew-Christian scholar was the Church historian Neander, a distant relative of Moses Mendelssohn.

David Mendel, to use his given name, was born in Göttingen, Germany. He was the youngest of five children, all of whom lived in poverty, and all of whom converted to Christianity. Their father, an unstable merchant, was often unable to provide for them. When David was still a baby, his mother divorced his father and took the family to Hamburg.

In Hamburg, young Mendel received an education in the state school system. He was a bright student and easily made friends with his Christian classmates. Under their influence, Mendel slowly began to practice Christianity. At the age of seventeen he was baptized. At his baptism he took the name Johann August Wilhelm in honor of his sponsor and patron Johann Gurlitt and his two friends Wilhelm Neumann and Karl August Varnhargen Von Ense. To these names, he added the surname Neander, meaning a "new man." For his conversion, Neander wrote an essay for his pastor describing his reasons for converting. Among other things, he asserted that there were various stages of religious human development and that he wished to participate in its highest stage, Christianity:

> My reception into the holy covenant of the higher life is to me the greatest thing for which I have to thank you, and I can only prove my gratitude by striving to let the outward sign of baptism unto a new life become, indeed, the mark of the new life proclaiming the reality of the new birth.[41]

Soon after his baptism, Neander enrolled in the University of Halle to study divinity under Schleiermacher. In 1812, Neander was appointed Professor of Theology at Heidelberg. The following year he accepted a similar position at the newly founded University of Berlin where he remained for the rest of his life.

Neander had little in common with other Hebrew-Christians who actively spent time as missionaries. His interest in Jews was mostly academic. He did not encourage the conversion of the Jews. However, he did show his concern for them when, upon leaving school in Hamburg in 1805, he gave a speech in Latin to his classmates deploring the difficult position of German Jewry and pleaded for equality. In addition, he publically denounced the blood libel without hesitation. For the most part, though, his conversion to Christianity served to diminish rather than expand his interest in Judaism and Jews. His transition from Judaism to Christianity was to be as complete as the historical evolution of Christianity from Judaism. The influence of Hegel is most apparent in Neander's view of history:

> . . . Three great historical nations had to contribute, each in its own peculiar way, to prepare the soil for the planting of Christianity--the Jews on the side of the religious element; the Greeks on the side of science and art; the Romans, as masters of the world, on the side of the political element . . . all were separate threads interwoven in a veil.[42]

However, Neander approached history more from the standpoint of the individual than from the standpoint of institutions. He adopted the motto Pectus est, quod theologum facit ("It is the heart that makes the theologian") as his own. For Neander, the individual Christian represented some aspect of Christ's life. Collectively, these individuals formed an "invisible Church,"[43] which represented Christ on earth. In his magnum opus The General History of the Christian Religion and Church, Neander emphasized the individual contributions of great Christians. Romantic to excess, Neander often

failed to take into account the influence of institutions and movements. Neander made clear his dislike of Roman Catholicism when he wrote that their outward ordinances, rituals, and priesthood were a threat to Christian simplicity and the "invisible Church."

In a simplistic manner, Neander divided the history of Christianity and the Church into three stages of development: the birth of the pure spiritual religion, the emergence of the priesthood, and the Protestant reaction to the Roman priesthood which reaffirmed Christian liberty.

Neander was also a strong opponent of rationalism. As a defender of Protestant Christianity, he was asked by the government to judge whether or not Strauss' Life of Jesus should be banned as a heretical work. To his credit, Neander refused to pass judgment, claiming: "Scholarly works are to be fought with the weapons of science, not the power of the state."[44] He then published his own Life of Christ which was acclaimed by many as the best possible retort to Strauss' theories.

During his career, Neander wrote other biographies: Julian the Apostate, St. Bernard and His Age, and Life of Chrysostom. He also published numerous articles and lectures.[45]

As a teacher and as a man, Neander commanded a great deal of respect and admiration from his colleagues. He was also well-loved by students whom he often invited to his home. Theological discussions frequently led to confessions of feelings about Christianity and Christ. Though he was never ordained, Neander's lectures were often delivered sermonically. Many of his colleagues and students regarded him as eccentric:

> We had an opportunity of hearing Dr. Neander lecture for an hour to about four hundred students. He stood without any gown, carelessly dressed in a brown surtaut, leaning over a rude desk. His large shaggy eyebrows and prominent Jewish nose, gave an expression of depth and power to his faith, but his whole manner and appearance are most ungainly.[46]

Neander never married. He lived with one older sister his entire life.

There have been mixed reactions to Neander's scholarship. He has been often criticized for his personal approach to history and for his reluctance to analyze classical sources more critically. Reviewing Neander's General History of the Christian Religion and Church, the Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church states: "It was based on a wide study of original sources, somewhat uncritically treated however, and exercised great influence."[47] The Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia summed up Neander's career in this way:

> Among those who contributed to the revival of faith and theology in the first half of this century he has, beyond dispute, one of the most prominent places, perhaps the most prominent if practical results be considered.[48]

Alfred Edersheim (1825-1889)

The career of Dr. Alfred Edersheim is a composite of several careers that we have discussed thus far. As a missionary he attempted to share his conversion with his fellow Jews. As a scholar and as a minister, he introduced Christians to Jewish traditions. Unlike the cynical Margoliouth, Edersheim had a fine appreciation of Jewish traditions. Though he found their observance objectionable theologically, he was continually interested in their study. He wrote sympathetically about Judaism in several books

The Temple, Its Ministry and Services as They Were at the Time of Jesus Christ (1874), Sketches of Jewish Social Life in the Days of Christ (1876), and The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah (1884). The last of these was considered to be his finest and most widely read book. Some of his books are still being reprinted today.

Edersheim was devoted to the study of Jewish sources, for he believed that through their study one could come to know the historical Christ. Edersheim insisted that the "historical Christ is the best evidence of the truth of what Christianity teaches about his direct God-mission,"[49] As a staunch fundamentalist, Edersheim reacted harshly to scholars who studied the Bible critically. Concerning his former teacher Strauss and his theories he wrote:

> Strauss' Life of Christ reminds me of an official guide through a gallery. He knows everything, tells you everything and in wonderful language--but has not judgement of his own, and is an awful bore.[50]

As a child in Vienna, Edersheim received both secular and Jewish educations. His father, Marcus Edersheim, was a banker who had achieved status in Viennese society. The Edersheim home was an intellectual and artistic center where many distinguished travelers would gather. It was in this stimulating environment that young Edersheim was exposed to politics, art, and language. The head of the French Bar, the Lawyer Cremieux (probably Adolph Cremieux, 1796-1880) once heard Edersheim deliver an address in French in Vienna. Greatly impressed with the young man, the lawyer invited Edersheim to accompany him to Paris to study law. Edersheim however had other plans. In 1841 he entered the University of Vienna as a philosophy

student. Unfortunately his father went bankrupt that year, forcing him to leave the University after his first semester. Alone, Edersheim left home for Hungary where he sought a new position at the University of Pesth. As a language tutor, Alfred was able to support himself well enough to finance his education. During his first years in Hungary, he wrote and published a number of romantic short stories, one of which drew a warning of censorship for its "dangerous tendency."[51]

It was during this time that Edersheim came to embrace Christianity. Two of his students were Presbyterian Scottish missionaries. A friendship developed which gradually led Edersheim to a study of the New Testament. Some years later he recalled how these students influenced his life:

> The purity and holiness of life of these men attracted me: their earnestness and conviction aroused me to inquire into the views which had made them so quite other from those whom I had hitherto known, and from what I know myself to be. Our acquaintance soon ripened into friendship . . . I had never seen a New Testament till I received the first copy from the hands of the Presbyterian Minister. I shall never forget the first impression of "the Sermon on the Mount," nor yet the surprise, and then deep feeling, by which the reading of the New Testament was followed. That which I had so hated was not Christianity: that which I had not known, and which opened such untold depths, was the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth. I became a Christian, and was baptized by the pastor of the Reformed Church of Pesth.[52]

In truth, other social and philosophical influences had played a part in the conversion of the young Jew from Vienna. Like Neander, Edersheim valued Judaism only so far as it led to Christiantiy:

> The Kingdom of God develops, as does humanity, as does life, from the smallest germ to find maturity--from the antediluvian stage of an infant, or the Abrahamic stage

> of childlife, to the perfectness of Christ-likeness and reign with Him. It grows, and it grows par passu with the life of humanity.[53]

The head of the Scottish mission to the Jews of Pesth was John Duncan LL.D., Professor of Oriental Languages in the New College of Edinburgh. Edersheim was introduced to Duncan and impressed him so that Duncan invited him to Scotland. Edersheim accepted, and supported by Duncan he studied language, theology, and dogmatics in Edinburgh. After a few years there Edersheim moved to Berlin and continued his studies under Strauss and Neander. In 1846, Edersheim was ordained a Presbyter a year earlier than usual due to his extraordinary talents.

Not content to serve as minister, Edersheim longed for the missionary life. He traveled to Rumania via France, Italy, Greece, and Turkey and established a Scottish mission to the Jews in Jassy, Rumania. His stay, however, was brief. In 1847 he married Mary Broonfield, another missionary, and returned with her to Scotland. In 1861 he was married to the daughter of Admiral John Hancock.

After his return to Scotland, Edersheim served the Free Church of Scotland as a minister in several communities. His career as a minister lasted over 25 years during which time he earned a fine reputation through preaching and scholarship. In 1882 Edersheim joined the Church of England and served briefly as Vicar in Dorset. Shortly before his death he explained his decision to join the Anglican Church in this way:

> I have passed from the Scotch to the English Church, and have not for one moment regretted the change. . . . I am convinced of the historical Church: I believe in a national Church. I prefer a liturgical Church--and on these grounds, I have joined the Church of England.[54]

Edersheim spent his last years lecturing at the University of Oxford. Like his teacher and fellow Hebrew-Christian Neander, he wrote voluminously. His varied interests included Bible, history, philosophy, and theology.[55] He even took some time to write a number of children's books. One such book, Miriam Rosenbaum, romantically described the conversion of an Eastern European Jewish family to Christianity. Edersheim's portrayal of these Jews was essentially positive. He wrote sensitively and sympathetically of their traditions. It is doubtful that these books influenced many Jews. All of his writings however, were greatly valued by Christians. A part of his book The Life and Times of Jesus Christ the Messiah was included in one of the many volumes of The Library of the World's Best Literature (New York: J. A. Hill & Co., 1902). The introduction to the entry sums up well the contributions of Edersheim the Jew, Edersheim the Christian, and Edersheim the man:

> Among writers in Biblical topics, Dr. Alfred Edersheim occupies a unique place. Bred in the Jewish faith, he brought to his writings the traditions of his ancestry . . . and unconscious religious influences of his youth entered the work of his manhood.[56]

Christian David Ginsburg (1831-1914)

We conclude this chapter with a brief sketch of the life and career of Christian David Ginsburg, the great biblical scholar in the field of Masorah. Of all converts cited thus far, Ginsburg earned the most "lasting fame":[57] this for his work The Masorah. In it he collected the original text of the Masorah from printed manuscripts and rabbinic Bibles, arranged them in alphabetical

order, made notations, and translated into English many of the masoretic notes. This monumental work printed in four volumes took 25 years to write (1880-1905). In 1897, Ginsburg wrote his Introduction to the Massoretico-Critical Edition of the Heberew Bible. In this work the sources and reasons for his choices of texts are given. Quoting freely from traditional sources Ginsburg used the commentaries of both Christian and Jewish writers. Ginsburg is also appreciated for his two editions of the Hebrew Bible, printed in 1894 and 1911.

Few details of Ginsburg's early life and conversion are known to us. He was born in Warsaw, Poland and at an early age came under the influence of missionaries. At the age of fifteen he converted to Christianity and moved to England. From 1846 to 1883, Ginsburg devoted himself almost entirely to missionary work to Jews. Little is known about his success as a missionary. After he gave up missionary work to devote himself to scholarship he never went back to being a missionary.

Most of his work was in Jewish research. Aside from his study of the Bible, he published a number of essays on "The Karaites" (1862) and on "The Essenes" (1864), as well as a descriptive account of "The Kabbalah, its doctrines and development and literature" (1863). Ginsburg approached these books from a scholarly point of view. Rarely did his feelings about Christianity interfere with his objectivity.

In 1883, William Shapira (1830-1884), a Jewish-born Christian, brought to Europe some fragments which he claimed to be early portions of the Book of Deuteuronomy. The British Museum appointed Ginsburg

to report on the authenticity of the fragments. He determined them to be forgeries. His opinion was supported by other scholars.

Ginsburg was a sincere Christian. He was a friend of Edersheim and maintained professional contacts with other Hebrew-Christians, for instance Reverend George Margoliouth, Professor of Oriental Printed Books and Manuscripts Department of the British Museum (and a nephew of Moses Margoliouth). With his friend Edersheim, Ginsburg wrote a small book L'Israelite De La Naissance A La Mort (1896). Written primarily to a Christian audience, the book describes the traditions of Jews in a positive light with references to Jesus in the New Testament. In 1886, Ginsburg translated the New Testament into Hebrew.

In addition to all these works, Ginsburg wrote a number of commentaries on the Bible which are still in use today: Song of Songs (1857), Ecclesiastes (1861), and Leviticus (1882). Before his death in 1914, Ginsburg edited The Pentateuch (1908), Isaiah (1909), The Prophets (1911) and The Psalms (1911). Few Hebrew-Christian scholars have earned the lasting respect that Ginsburg has earned.

CHAPTER THREE

NOTES

[1]James Arthur Muller, Samuel Isaac Schereschewsky (1831-1906): Apostle of China (New York: Morehouse Publishing Co., 1937), p. 30

[2]Ibid., p. 30.

[3]Ibid., p. 30.

[4]Ibid., p. 35.

[5]Ibid., p. 38.

[6]Ibid., p. 208.

[7]Ibid., p. 119. In addition we read in the Dictionary of American Biography Vol. XVI (edited by Dumas Malone, New York: Charles Scribners' Sons, 1935), p. 429: "Both were of excellent quality (Schereschewsky's translation of the Bible into Wen-li and Mandarin) and were widely used. . . . He was humbleminded, large-hearted. . . . and an indefatigable and persistent worker."

[8]Bishop Schereschewsky, Translation of the Scriptures into Chinese (_____: _____, 1887), p. 3.

[9]Muller, Op. cit., p. 200.

[10]Muller, Op. cit., pp. 96-97.

[11]Muller, Op. cit., p. 100.

[12]Muller, Op. cit., p. 36.

[13]Muriel W. Corey, From Rabbi to Bishop: The Biography of the Right Reverend Michael Solomon Alexander, Bishop in Jerusalem (London: Church Missions to the Jews, 16 Lincoln's Inn Fields, 1956), p. 38.

[14]Ibid., p. 34.

[15]Reverend W. Ayerst A. M., The Jews of the Nineteenth Century: A Collection of Essays, Reviews, and Historical Notices (London: Alexander Macintosh Printer, 1848), p. 133.

[16]Corey, Op. cit., pp. 45-46.

[17]Corey, Op. cit., p. 52.

[18]Reverend W. T. Gidney, The History of the London Society for the Promotion of Christianity amongst the Jews, from 1809-1908 (London: Printed at the Operative Jewish Converts' Institution, 1908), p. 233.

[19]Ibid., p. 240.

[20]Sidney Lee, ed., Dictionary of National Biography, second supplement 1901-1911 (London: Oxford University Press, 1912), p. 238.

[21]Isaac Hellmuth, The Divine Dispensations and their Gradual Development: Eight discourses preached in Huron College Chapel during Michaelmas Term 1865 (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1866), p. 4.

[22]Hellmuth, Op. cit., pp. 177-178.

[23]Reverend Aaron Bernstein, Some Jewish Witnesses for Christ (London: Printed at the Operative Jewish Converts' Institution, 1909), p. 511.

[24]Wolff himself was uncertain of the year of his birth, having supplied two different dates, 1795 and 1796. See Bernstein, Op. cit., p. 512.

[25]Joseph Wolff, Wolff's Travels and Adventures (London: Saunders & Otley & Co., 1861), p. 7.

[26]Joseph Wolff, Mission to Bokhara (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1845), p. 24.

[27]In 1829, Wolff served the London Society as a missionary in Jerusalem. At this time he sent a number of letters to the London Morning Herald which when published offered the board of the London Society on theological grounds. He was summoned home and was suspended for a time after he refused to appear. Gidney, Op. cit., p. 212.

[28]Wolff, Travels and Adventures, p. 296.

[29]Bernstein, Op. cit., p. 174.

[30]Isaac da Costa, Israel and the Gentiles (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1850), pp. VIII-IX.

[31]Moses Heiman Gans, Memorbook: History of Dutch Jewry from the Renaissance to 1940 (Netherlands: Bosch and Keaning, 1977), p. 343.

[32]Ibid., p. 343.

[33]Da Costa, Op. cit., p. 14.

[34]Da Costa, Op. cit., p. 117.

[35]Da Costa, Op. cit., p. 159.

[36]Gans, Op. cit., p. 343.

[37]Moses Margoliouth, The Fundamental Principles of Modern Judaism Investigated (London: B. Wertheim, 1843), p. II.

[38]Ibid., p. IV.

[39]Moses Margoliouth, Vestiges of the Historic Anglo-Hebrews in East Anglia (London: Longmans, Green, Reader & Dyer, 1870), p. 54.

[40]Margoliouth, The Fundamental Principles, p. 87.

[41]Bernstein, Op. cit., p. 391.

[42]Johann August Neander, History of the Christian Religion and Church Vol. I (Boston: Crocker & Brewster, 1854), p. 4.

[43]Johann August Neander, History of the Christian Religion and Church Vol. II (Boston: Crocker & Brewster, 1855), p. VI.

[44]Max Cohen, "Neander, J.A.W.," Jewish Encyclopedia Vol. IX (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1901), p. 198.

[45]For a partial list of Neander's work see: Bernstein, Op. cit., pp. 395-396.

[46]Andrew Alexander Bonar and R. M. M. Cheyne, Narrative of a Mission of Inquiry to the Jews from the Church of Scotland in 1839 (Edinburgh: W. Whyte & Co., 1842), p. 677.

[47]F. L. Cross, ed., The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), p. 958.

[48]Samuel Macauley Jackson, The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge Vol. VII (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1910), p. 96.

[49]Alfred Edersheim, Tohu Va-vohu (Without Form and Void): A Collection of Fragmentary Thoughts and Criticisms (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1890), p. 106.

[50]Ibid., p. 34.

[51]Ibid., p. XI.

[52]Ibid., p. XIII.

[53]Ibid., pp. 39-40.

[54]Ibid., pp. 44-45.

[55]For a complete list of Edersheim's work see: Bernstein, Op. cit., pp. 197-198.

[56]Dumas Malone, Library of the World's Best Literature Vol. IX (New York: J. A. Hill & Co., 1902), p. 5145.

[57]Christian David Ginsburg, Introduction to the Massoretico-Critical Edition of the Hebrew Bible (with a prolegomenon: The Massoretic Text, a critical evaluation by Harry Orlinsky), (New York: Ktav Publishing House Inc., 1966), p. V.

CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Our brief outlines of the lives and careers of nine eminent Hebrew-Christians show that the nineteenth century Jewish convert to Christianity was able to find success in various careers in different countries. Our findings suggest that they had much in common with respect to their conversions, their beliefs and their personalities. In reviewing their similarities, we can draw a picture of the life of the typical eminent Hebrew-Christian personality of the nineteenth century.

Regarding his conversion, we learned that the typical Hebrew-Christian began to seriously study Christianity as a young adult entering college. Often this took place after he had left home and his immediate family. In his new environment the Hebrew-Christian became friends with learned Christian scholars and missionaries, frequently serving as their tutors in Hebrew. Gradually, the relationship between the young immigrant and his Christian friends led to discussions about Christianity. Many missionaries and scholars who befriended the young Jewish scholar were older, more experienced men. Often a father-son relationship developed between them. It was not uncommon for the missionary or scholar to facilitate the convert's entrance into another institution

of learning or even to support him financially after his conversion. The relationships that the convert formed often provided him with a second family or in some instances a family that he never had.

The decision of the Hebrew-Christian to convert was often slow and painful. We rarely read of sudden religious transformations or of dramatic religious experiences like the one described by Schereschewsky's daughter (see p. 46 above). More often than not, the Hebrew-Christian's religious awakening stimulated his personal interests and played a part in his growth. This does not mean that he was irreligious. Even before reaching positions of prominence in the Church, he demonstrated strong religious feelings for Christianity and Christ. Additionally, he regarded his Jewish background as a divine preparation for his service in a Christian career.

Though the Hebrew-Christian's conversion to Christianity became fully confirmed when his academic career took on a specific direction, there is not reason to suspect that he embraced Christianity for reasons of ambition. We should not regard his baptism in the same way as we viewed the baptisms of Heinrich Heine and Eduard Gans (see p. 26 above). While we may assume that academic opportunities encouraged his decision to convert, it would be incorrect to assume that his subsequent dedication to the Church was insincere.

Frequently the eminent Hebrew-Christian claimed that he had never seen, let alone read, a New Testament before missionaries contacted him. While this is likely, he nevertheless was acquainted with general Christian teachings, customs, and practices before he left home. His attraction to Christianity probably began long before

he became friends with missionaries and scholars. The romantic, and philosophical currents of his time had made their impact upon him. Most of these converts lived and were converted during the early half of the nineteenth century, when romanticism and Hegelianism were exercising their strongest influences. That he was part of a larger social and religious phenomenon is evidenced by the fact that many of his relatives also converted during this period.

As we noted in our introductory remarks, the Jewish tradition looked negatively upon Jewish converts eyeing their motivations with suspicion and distrust. Later on we noted that the actions of many medieval Jewish converts to Christianity were anti-Semitic. Often these were the actions of vengeful people with seemingly unbalanced minds. Can we suppose that the nineteenth century eminent Hebrew-Christian had personal pyschological difficulties as well? We think not. Such a supposition does not find support in the stories of these men. For the Hebrew-Christian, Christianity was not a means of revenge against Jews. It provided the Hebrew-Christian with a meaningful tradition when Judaism had failed to respond to his innermost needs. The eminent Hebrew-Christian was somewhat rootless, but was nevertheless well-adjusted personally. To be sure his zeal sometimes led to unusual behavior as illustrated by the eccentric career of Joseph Wolff. By and large though, the eminent Hebrew-Christian married (mostly non-Jews), raised children who were sound citizens, and lived a full and satisfying life.

The eminent Hebrew-Christian made a conscious effort to integrate into Christian society. He succeeded with little difficulty. Often

he would assume a Christian name in order to identify as a Christian and to signify his new religious awakening. His commitment to the Church and to the state which supported his new identity was strong. Consequently his writings contain conservative and romantic themes. Often he strongly supported the Protestant Church which provided him with a career. Sometimes Jews were converted to Catholicism and became prominent in the Roman Catholic Church.[1] It was the Protestant Church however, which offered the convert the best opportunity for success. The Hebrew-Christian responded to the Church's openness by supporting Protestant causes without hesitation and by alligning himself with the most conservative evangelical wing of the Church. So strong was his commitment to the beliefs and practices of Protestantism that the convert often exhibited the most extreme Protestant prejudices against Catholicism. As writings previously cited suggest, the Hebrew-Christian found an audience for his views among Protestants, especially English Protestants who traditionally found the Roman Catholic Church objectionable. In his literary attacks on Rome, he derogated Roman Catholic practices by comparing them to rabbinic practices.

In his theology and politics, the Hebrew-Christian could not easily be distinguished from his Christian colleagues. Though we read of an occasional anti-Semitic slur against a Hebrew-Christian, there is no reason to believe that it was overly harmful to his career. To the contrary, his ethnic background was usually regarded as an asset. Generally the Hebrew-Christian was not only accepted but also was respected for being a Jew. The Hebrew-Christian took advantage

of the enhanced image of Jews in the nineteenth century by emphasizing his noble heritage and background, at times to chauvinistic extremes.

The eminent Hebrew-Christian never fully assimilated into Christian society. Emotionally he was committed to the Jewish people and its spiritual and physical well-being. We have seen the missionary efforts of Edersheim, Alexander, and Wolff who were reluctant to sever their ties to the Jews socially and hence participated in Hebrew-Christian organizations. In times of persecution against Jews, the Hebrew-Christian spoke out against anti-Semitism. He stands in contrast to the medieval converts Nicolas Donin and Solomon Ha-Levi. The orientalist and Hebrew-Christian Daniel Chowlson (1819-1911), whom we have not yet mentioned, was perhaps the most outstanding Hebrew-Christian defender of Jewish rights. Educated in Germany, Chwolson emigrated to Russia where he became professor at the University of St. Petersburg. During his long career, he spoke out against the blood libel and the suppression of the Talmud in Russia.[2] His actions, along with the actions of other Hebrew-Christians demonstrate rather clearly their commitment to the welfare of the Jewish people.

The eminent Hebrew-Christian wrote on Jewish and Christian topics. He achieved scholarly success in both endeavors, as the careers of Edersheim and Neander would indicate. However, it must be noted that the Hebrew-Christian who associated with Christianity in its Hebrew-Christian form was less successful than the Hebrew-Christian who moved in Gentile-Christian circles. Edersheim and

Ginsburg became famous because they were scholars and not because they were missionaries. Other scholars such as Margoliouth and Wolff, who concentrated greatly upon Hebrew-Christian matters, were respected and recognized, but not to the same degree as Edersheim and Ginsburg. In short, scholars were more highly regarded than clergymen, and clergymen were more highly regarded than missionaries. But all were respected and appreciated.

The nineteenth century Jewish convert to Christianity who achieved a position of eminence through Church service has a unique place in Jewish history. Unlike his medieval forerunners, he seldom if ever participated in anti-Semitic activities. His actions were, at the very worst, limited to either theological attacks against the Jewish religion or active proselytization of his former co-religionists. Only on rare occasions did these actions harm the Jews. On the other hand, his positive sense of Jewish peoplehood helped enhance the image of the Jew in society. At times he even brought Jewish learning and knowledge to Christians.

The nineteenth century Christian society in Europe and America supported a favorable climate in which Jews could accept Christianity and still identify themselves as Jews. Though this identity was difficult, he nevertheless experienced himself as a Christian and as a Hebrew. For a time he enjoyed the best of both worlds. The Hebrew-Christian could not however, pass on this dual identity to his children, who grew up as Christians.

CHAPTER FOUR

NOTES

[1]The most prominent Catholic Hebrew-Christians of the nineteenth century include: Johann Emanuel Veit (1789-1876) the Cathedral preacher of St. Stephen's Vienna, Alphonsi Marie Ratisbonne (1812-1884) and Marie Thédor Ratisbonne (1802-1884). The Ratisbonne brothers were priests in France who published a number of Christian histories and evangelical pamphlets. See: A. Bernstein, Some Jewish Witnesses for Christ (London: Printed at the Operative Jewish Converts' Institution, 1909), pp. 60-61, 66-67.

[2]In 1857, after the blood libel in Saratov, Chwolson wrote his book On Several Medieval Accusations against the Jews (1861). Subsequently, he wrote The Semitic Nations (1874) and Christianskoe Chtenie (1875) which responded to anti-Semitic accusations against Jews.

EPILOGUE

This study began with an historical survey of eminent Jewish converts to Christianity. Our discussion included an analysis of the lives and careers of talented Jews in the nineteenth century who, as converts to Christianity, became prominent in the Church and yet retained a sense of allegiance to the Jewish people. Since that time Jews have continued to convert to Christianity. The actions of some of them have aroused controversy in the Jewish world, for instance, the case of Brother Daniel which came before the Israel Supreme Court.

Oswald Rufeison (Brother Daniel's original name before conversion) was a member of the Polish underground and helped rescue many Jews from death. After the second world war, he became a Catholic monk and applied for Israeli citizenship under the Law of Return. The Supreme Court ruled that Brother Daniel was ineligible for citizenship. In handing down its decision, the court attempted to define who is and who is not a Jew. The court decided that the Law of Return is not based on Halacha (Jewish law), but on Jewish national historical consciousness. Thus, a Jew need not adhere to the precepts and practices of Judaism in order to be considered Jewish. However, apostasy to Christianity or to another religion removed a person from the Jewish nation. In short, the court made it impossible for Brother Daniel to be both a Jew and a Christian in the state of Israel.

In America today, however, no such legal decision has been formulated. Some Jews in America have converted to Christianity and at the same time have declared themselves to be Jews. The American Jewish community has been threatened by a growing movement of Hebrew-Christians. They have formed organizations like "Jews for Jesus" and the "Messianic Jewish Alliance," which like nineteenth century Hebrew-Christian organizations have established schools and places of worship for their memberships. In addition, they often carry out missionary work among Jews.

On the surface there are a number of striking similarities between these Hebrew-Christians and the Hebrew-Christians of the nineteenth century. Both have a positive sense of Jewish peoplehood and a distinct distrust of traditional Judaism. They seem to use ritual and ceremonial objects for ethnic identification only; their religious fulfillment is through Christ. In addition, Christian organizations support these groups as they have other Hebrew-Christian groups in the past. Just as the London Society promoted Jewish conversion in the nineteenth century so the American Boards of Missions to Jews do so today.

Can we, however, carry this comparison between the two eras much further? I think not. We discovered that the nineteenth century Hebrew-Christian was often raised in a traditional setting and had a fair, if not good knowledge of Judaism. Often the modern Jew for Jesus is either a Jew by birth only or a Jew with a most confused Jewish background. Furthermore, we discovered that in the nineteenth century, philosophical, political, and religious assaults

upon Judaism sometimes led to an almost epidemic number of conversions to Christianity. Can we, in this secular age, discern similar forces acting against Judaism and on behalf of Christianity. Our investigation of the earlier phenomenon indicates that these assaults were successful because some Jews could not defend Judaism as they understood it. The phenomenon of Jewish conversion to Christianity in the modern era is a consequence of Jewish influences as much as Christian influences. What forces are operating today which make conversion to Christianity an attractive option to Jews? In which ways and to what extent, if at all, are we addressing these influences?

In trying to understand the modern Hebrew-Christian, we should be guided by the lessons of the nineteenth century which teach us that these people can be sincere and authentic in their religious beliefs. The extent to which we allow ourselves to respect their beliefs is the extent to which we will be able to understand why they were attracted to Christianity and why modern Judaism has left them unfulfilled. It is to this painful task that we must now address ourselves.

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