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AN ENQUIRY INTO HEBREW CHRISTIANITY

by

Norman S. Lipson

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the Degree of Master
of Arts in Hebrew Letters and Ordination

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion

1972

Referee, Dr. Stanley F. Chyet

Digest

This thesis is an attempt at showing the background, growth, and development of the Christian missionary movement known as "Hebrew Christianity." In it, I have presented information from the various missionary journals in addition to detailing the actual methods used by Hebrew Christian missionaries in their pursuit of Jewish converts.

Beginning at the turn of this century, Hebrew Christianity saw the light of day due to new winds blowing across the globe, winds allowing Jews to be proud of their Jewishness, winds that signalled a rebirth for Jews through Zionism. Now that the identity of the "Jewish nation" was being restored, it was felt by many Gentile missionaries that the time had come for the Jewish nation to come into its own by maintaining their Jewish nationality and even strengthening it by accepting the Jewish messiah, Jesus.

At first, the movement grew slowly, its members attempting to build a new identity for themselves, an identity that borrowed from both Judaism and Christianity and yet was new and different from either of them. It fought as strongly against those who urged the retention of Jewish rituals as nationalistic symbols as it did against those who urged the Hebrew Christian movement to dissolve, because of Gentile fears of Jewish Christians feeling separate and better than Gentile Christians.

Hebrew Christianity sees itself as the spiritual child

of the Hebrew Christian Church that existed at the time of the Temple in Jerusalem 2,000 years ago. Because of this belief, only it is the true Judaism, not the Rabbinic Judaism that evolved after the Temple's destruction. As representing the true Judaism, it is those Jews who ridicule and scorn the Hebrew Christians who are the *p'9N1EN*, the apostates. Hebrew Christianity feels that by its literal belief in the Bible, it has gained the truth and because of that truth recognizes Jesus as messiah.

The religious brother of the Hebrew Christian is the Gentile Christian, and together they work to bring the unsaved Jew to the "truth" that they both have found.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

With great thanks I wish to acknowledge the assistance and aid of the following people, without whose aid this thesis could not have been written.

Dr. Stanley F. Chyet - referee, teacher, and friend.

Mrs. Fannie Zelcer - brave typist and dear friend, whose ever present laughter and constant urgings enabled me to finish somewhat on time.

To my friends and colleagues at H.U.C. who already know why.

Finally, a special thanks to Peter Grumbacher, David Wucher, Roberto Graetz, and Fred Natkin.

This is dedicated to Shoshie, for special reasons.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page Number</u>
Chapter I	1
Chapter II	12
Chapter III	26
Chapter IV	39
Chapter V	50
Chapter VI	62
Chapter VII	82
Conclusion	94
Footnotes	99
Bibliography	107

"The greatest contributions Hebrew Christians have made to the life of the Church is undoubtedly in... missionary activity, especially in the Jewish field."

from Jewish People and
Jesus Christ

INTRODUCTION

In the long saga of Judaism, a religion which has spanned 4,000 years of history, many changes, both internal and external have appeared on the Jewish scene. Some of these were of lasting duration affecting the ritual or theological beliefs and practices of the religion, while others hardly made a ripple on the river of Jewish experience.

One of the most drastic external changes which affected the Judaism of 1,900 years ago, was the breaking away of a group of Jews, the Nazarenes, in the first and second centuries of the common era. By this break-away, a new daughter religion was to come into being, Christianity, named after their savior, Jesus the Nazarene.

History has shown in great detail, the rise of this group of Jews and their non-Jewish converts into one of the world's great religions, a religion that deems itself responsible for bringing salvation to every human being on earth. It is not my purpose to review all the fact and theory involved in this growth and development. Rather, my concern will lie in one facet of Christian experience, the missionary quest in general and how it affects the Jew in particular.

CHAPTER I

The Christian was and is obliged to be a missionary for his religion. He is commanded to witness Christian truth to all, whether Jew or Greek, and in this universal witness lies a latent seed of conflict.

Jewish converts are...the result of the missionary effort of the Church which knows herself called to preach to all men. What appears to the Synagogue as interference is for the Church an expression of loyalty and faith. To leave out the Jew from the missionary obligation is to the Church not religious tolerance but betrayal of her cause and denial of her faith. Without the Jews, the Church is incomplete.¹

For the Christian to approach a pagan or a follower of Mohammed or Buddha and plead his case is not likely to present theological difficulties to the missionary, or even to the non-Christian. Everyone knows his particular role to play: the missionary, as the possessor of truth facing the non-Christian, the upholder of a false religion in the face of the truth of Christianity. The difficulty begins when the missionary approaches the Jew.

When missionary confronts Jews, a strange encounter results. The Christian, normally viewing all non-Christians as people removed from the "TRUTH" and needing that truth for their salvation, sees the Jew as a special breed apart from the normal unsaved person. It is almost as if the Jew is a compound entity. On the one hand, he

is a non-Christian, an unbeliever. Yet on the other hand, he is a JEW, of the people of Jesus, a carrier of God's revelation at Sinai and a member of the first Chosen People. Lastly, the Jews' belief is the mother-religion of Christianity, and herein lies the problem. How can the Jew, the author of the monotheistic and messianic idea, remain a non-believer in the compound monotheism and messianism of Jesus?

Throughout the often blood-stained years of Jewish-Christian confrontation, the Christian Church has felt especially challenged by the Jew's refusal to believe in its teachings and beliefs. How can the Church's message be universal while Jesus' own people refuse to accept either Jesus or that message?

Because of such questions and problems, the Church has devoted extra time and funds toward making the Jew an especially prized convert. Recognizing the Jew as a problem, Christianity has had to evolve new and different approaches to get the Jew to enter its fold, for it found that the standard missionary approaches were unsatisfactory to the missionary as well as ineffective in pursuit of the final goal of Jewish conversion.

The most common method in missionary propaganda was the direct assault upon Judaism. Christian preachers and writers have set themselves to prove the inferiority of the Jewish religion as compared with Christianity.

The starting-point of this method was the attempt to show the Jews their misunderstanding of the Old Testament.²

As a result, a rethinking in basic Christian premises was needed, ideally a blending of effective missionary work in combination with active Jewish response. An answer was found by attempting to take "the best of all possible world," both Jewish and Christian, and merging them together.

The result of this merging was a new person on the religious scene, a person called the Hebrew Christian.

Traditionally there has been a belief held by both Jews and Christians, that upon religious conversion, a convert no longer retained ties to his former religion or past. In the case of the Jew who converted to Christianity, he no longer remained a Jew but had left the Jewish fold; he became a an apostate, and no longer retained any tie or bond with Judaism or the Jewish people. The Christian Church looked upon him as a person with a Jewish past, but he was now a Christian, while the Jews looked upon him as a lost soul.

With the rise of a new missionary approach to the Jew, however, this previously held belief was changed in the hope of bringing in more Jewish converts. It was thought that if only the Jew could be brought to think that he was not leaving the Jewishness of his past, then

perhaps better results could be obtained. Instead of making the Jew abandon his Jewish heritage, as was held necessary in the past, the act of conversion became seen as an act of 'completing' and 'fulfilling' an emptiness supposedly found in the Jew. The whole thrust of conversion was adapted to emphasize, not the changing of religions, but rather fulfilling the Jews' incomplete Judaism with Jesus, the Jewish Messiah.

This new interpretation of conversion was, and is, not held by many branches of the Christian Church. Among those who engage in active Jewish mission work, however, it is a cornerstone of their foundation. To them, a Jew remains a Jew, in addition to his becoming a Christian. In fact, he is more of a Jew because of his acceptance of Jesus.

Believing in the Messianic mission of Christ is not just the prerogative of Gentiles, and the Jews don't need to change their religion in any way to believe in Christ...³

The above quote best explains the concept of fulfillment a Jew supposedly acquires upon accepting Jesus. The question could be asked: "How could such a belief be supported and believed by any Jew, much less by missionaries?" The answer is that on a very basic level, this concept of a Jewish or Hebrew Christianity has an historic premise. The accepted viewpoint expressed by

Hebrew Christians as well as by non-Christians is that the Church was founded at first by Jews in Jerusalem. Only after years of persecution and disturbances within the larger non-Nazarene Jewish community of Palestine did these Hebrew Christians eventually leave and directly confront a Gentile population with their message of salvation.

The Messianic movement scored considerable success amongst the Jewish people, notable in the period between the destruction of Jerusalem and the Bar Cochba rising, and affected Judaism considerably. It was only after the Bar Cochba incident, when national survival became the sole consideration, that the initial success of Christianity abated.⁴

Hebrew Christianity saw itself as a non-nationalistic belief, owing its first loyalty to God and not to a special people or country. Because of this teaching and belief, and because of their disavowal of Jewish law, they found themselves ostracized from their fellow-Jews. As the years passed, they became more and more a minority within their new "Judaism," Christianity, and eventually disappeared in a sea of Gentile Christians.

Hebrew Christians of today view their divorce from Jewry as one-sided, with the unfulfilled Jews doing the divorcing. The reason for such cutting off, they say, was because of reasons of Jewish national survival,

something they, the Hebrew Christians, did not believe in or need.

Because Jewry was scattered across the face of Europe and was in constant danger of disappearing, it had to close ranks and drive out any form of free-thinking and protect itself from the threat of Christianity.

The attitude of Judaism towards Hebrew-Christianity must be viewed from the angle of national emergency. Prior to A.D. 70 the Messianic movement was looked upon as another kind of heresy; but after that date, and especially after the Bar Cochba incident, a new element came into play. The Jewish people, deprived of its national life, could not afford to its members freedom of conviction without endangering its national existence. To preserve a small religious minority surrounded on every side by hostile nations was a task which only the ingenuity of the Synagogue could accomplish. Christianity, with its universalistic outlook and supra-national tendency; constituted a menace to the integrity of Jewish life. Hebrew Christianity was a breach in the walls of nationalism, opening wide the doors to assimilation. Opposition, therefore, towards Jewish Christianity, tended to grow in violence in proportion to the worsening of the Jewish national position. In the end it became relentless and uncompromising. The weapons the Synagogue used were social ostracism, religious excommunication, and every other form of suppression.⁵

As the situation stood, Judaism had closed ranks and withdrawn inwardly while her erstwhile children, the

Hebrew Christians, disappeared, having lost their children to Gentile Christianity and they themselves dying out.

With the late 1800's, the new approach in missionary work was begun with emphasizing complete religious fulfillment for Jews who converted to Christianity.

The appearance of political Zionism was...followed with keen interest... This gave a new stimulus to missionary activity and made the Church realize the national coherence of Jewish life...The baptized Jew was not any more expected to break away from his people. On the contrary, it was insisted upon that the convert remained a loyal member of the Jewish nation. It was this new development that made modern Hebrew Christianity possible.⁶

It was now taught that just as the Jews of Jerusalem, the founders of Christianity, were considered Jewish-Christians, so too then could Jews who became Christians today, be considered Jewish-Christians.

The great stumbling block in the way of my brethren is the error in thinking that the Christian religion and the Jewish religion are two different religions, in direct opposition to each other, while, in fact, they are only two different dispensations, but not two religions...⁷

Since it was now established as gospel that Jewish Christians were, in reality, fulfilled Jews, the question was then asked by Jews as well as by many Christians: "What are the attitudes expressed by the 'Jewish Christians'?

toward the Bible and Jewish traditions of the ages?" In other words, how much Jewishness remains in the Jew who becomes a Hebrew Christian?

The Hebrew Christian's response shows a rather strange approach to his heritage. First of all, he believes that the Bible is literally the Word of God, and all laws and commandments mentioned within it are incumbent upon all Jews, i.e. sacrificial system, high priest, temple, etc. However, following the appearance of Jesus and the destruction of the Temple, Judaism should have placed itself into the hands of Jesus as the Messiah. Since Jesus was the Jewish messiah, they argue, there was no need to continue belief in Mosaic Law since Jesus transcended the need for such law. In other words, the Law is to be followed by the Jew, but since there is no more Temple system and there is Jesus, the Jew is released from the Law!

If the above sounds paradoxical and illogical, perhaps the use of an example would clarify the difficulty.

In 1915, the Hebrew Christian Alliance of America was founded. It was thought that such an organization would aid Jewish Christians in maintaining their beliefs in the face of Jewish and sometimes even Christian displeasure.

The question of what Jewish practices should remain in the ritual of the Jewish Christian and what should be

discarded was brought up in the first convention meeting. Those Hebrew Christians who urged the retention of certain Jewish rituals--because of Jewish "national" reasons and as proof to unconverted Jews that the Hebrew Christians were still Jews--were literally purged out of the Jewish Christian movement. They were given, according to them, the horrible label of Judaizer and were held in the lowest esteem possible by those Jews who called themselves the True Israel.

It is here that we find a series of rather confusing feats of logic occurring on the part of the Hebrew Christians. The movement calls itself Jewish in the Complete sense of the word, because they have the Jewish messiah, yet they root out and expel anyone who urges the practicing some of the rituals that are considered Jewish by all Jews; lighting the Shabbat candles, circumcision, etc. The answer given by the movement is that by accepting Jesus, the Jew is free from all Jewish ritual and should not practice any of them for any reason, whether national or religious.

It is a sad fact, but nevertheless true that some converts and missionaries among the Jews advocate and personally practice rites, ceremonies and customs which ought to have been done away when accepted the New Testament.⁸

A fierce and bitter fight was begun which did not end until years later. In an early editorial written in one

of the more popular missionary magazines of the time by a Mr. Thomas Chalmers, a vicious verbal assault was heaped upon those Hebrew Christians who still clung to the customs of their previous religion. For reasons which will be further developed later, Mr. Chalmers was no friend of the nascent movement. The reason for this was, because, as a long-time Gentile missionary to the Jews, he feared that the members of this new movement would become as 'particularistic' in their new religion as they had been in their previous non-believing unredeemed state. Accordingly, he became a sort of 'religious watch-dog' to all of their actions and movements. Upon hearing of 'Judaizers' loose in the Movement, he wrote:

We are well aware that some brethren have a Judaizing tendency...If the coming Convention should take the ground that Jewish Christians are at liberty to observe the seventh day Sabbath, and to continue participating in the Passover and other ceremonies of the Jews and to have their children circumcised, we should be impelled on the basis of the gospel to protest with all our power against such a stand. It is no answer or excuse to say these things are maintained only by way of remembrance of the Jewish past, as our nation celebrates Fourth of July. We are not dealing here with merely national history but with God's ways toward men. Faith in the gospel cuts one loose from all his past, be it heathen or Mohammedan or Jewish or merely worldly past.⁹

This movement which was challenging orthodox Hebrew Christianity was named "Messianic Judaism" and was headed by Mr. John Mark Levy, Secretary to the Hebrew Christian Alliance.

Upon his expulsion from the Alliance, the following summary of their 1916 convention was issued:

...it was necessary to clear the atmosphere of certain elements before we could proceed to our proper business. We also desired to place ourselves on record before the Christian public as not favoring Judaizing teachings, which are not accepted by the large majority of the members of the Alliance. Messianic Judaism has been a thorn in the sides of Jewish believers and missionaries since Paul's time, hindering the noble cause of Jewish evangelization...Severe measures were necessary, but we believe that God led us by His word and Spirit to act thus.¹⁰

Following the purge and the purifying of their Movement, the Hebrew Christians began to consolidate their strength and to flex their missionary muscles. They knew that the old missionary approaches hadn't been effective and that the Church was counting on them to bring in better results, for after all, they too were Jews and they knew how Jews think and act. The question was, just what would be the best method in reaching their fellow-Jews?

CHAPTER II

In previous Jewish missionary campaigns by Gentile-Christians, the missionary tended to assume the complete religious and spiritual superiority of Christianity over Judaism. The Jew was portrayed as being completely spurned and cursed by both God and man for his sin of rejecting Jesus, and it remained for the missionary to have both Christian charity for him and to point out his sorrowful condition, a condition that could so easily be changed. The following episode is supposedly a true confrontation between Jew and missionary on a train in New York City, circa 1912:

...the Jew exclaimed, 'What makes you Christians so aggressive?'
'Well, my friend, I will tell you,' said I. 'We Christians have something! How is it with you? You have nothing neither God nor idols! You have no country! You have no temple! You have no altar! You have no sacrifice! You have no priest! You have no ephod! You have nothing! Once God was among you...Now your name is a by-word and a reproach in every land! Throughout the conversation supreme silence had marked the whole company in the car; and my friend, struck with blank astonishment as the impoverished condition of his nation was so vividly pictured, burst out at the end with these words, 'Who are you?' I answered, 'I am a Christian!'

The entire approach of "old-time" Jewish missionary work was marked by condescension and at least covert

ridicule of the Jew, as one can see from reading available contemporary missionary literature. Every conceivable Jewish stereotype is present, from physical characteristics to cultural differences. Ostensibly, they are for teaching and for use as an objective means of understanding the Jew, however, a far different result occurs.

In an article written in 1918 entitled "Don'ts for Jewish Mission Workers," written "By One of Them," the novice missionary is instructed in the various strengths and weaknesses of the Jews and how to gain the best possible results from working with them.

Don't make fun of them in any way; of their manners, their physique, their mode of living or of speech. A Jewish Christian might be forgiven for this; a Gentile never, as a Jew is very sensitive to even a slight reference to his peculiarities.

Don't refuse their hospitality if offered in their own homes. As Jewish women can rarely forgive your not partaking of some dish, delectable in her opinion, which she has prepared. The more you can eat of it, the more you are apt to be in her good graces, and thus have your way paved to higher things. Many a Jew has been won to Christ over a glass of tea.

Don't scold them in preaching to them. Of course they deserve it... Tell them they are sinners, but tell it to them lovingly... while one must make it plain that the curse rests upon them as a nation...¹²

The founding of groups made up of Jewish converts to Christianity, such as the Hebrew Christian Alliance, in 1915 was due partially, to the above ridicule and scorn tossed at them by their new brothers in Christ. The Hebrew Christian, however, attempted to alleviate this anti-Jewish sentiment by saying that the true Gentile-Christian could and would never be anti-Semitic, but a Gentile non-Christian possibly could be. By making this distinction, the Jewish convert was able to maintain belief in the teaching of all-conquering Love in Christianity, and could disregard anti-Semitic occurrences with Gentiles.

This hurdle being cleared, the Jewish Christian still had to face the scorn of the Gentile Christian who simply distrusted Jews, whether converted or not! After a long series of such innuendoes, whether in the name of Love or not, in 1919 the editor of the missionary magazine Prayer and Work for Israel, came out strongly opposed to the proposed separation of the Hebrew Christian movement, whose leaders wished to set it apart from individual Gentile Christian denominations. He was, seemingly, completely "unaware" of anti-Jewish feelings within Gentile missionary circles. And in fact, contributed greatly to the hardness of feelings between the Hebrew Christian movement and Gentile Christians by continuing to heap aspersions of mistrust and suspicion upon these

newly saved Jews. Upon hearing of their organizational plans, Chalmers wrote some advice to them:

First, the Hebrew Christian Alliance. ...should strengthen its staff of officers and its executive board by the inclusion of some Gentile Christians to membership in the Alliance itself would be wise.

Second, instead of having a single treasurer, let the Alliance entrust the funds it proposes...to a finance-committee of five or more Gentile Christian men, one of whom should be treasurer. This will at once win the confidence of men and women of means.¹³

Always the constant fear of Jewish superiority feelings felt by Gentile Christians remained even when the Jew became a fellow follower of Christ. The suspicion was deepened because of this group's desire to retain their identity as Jews. The Jewish Christian still remained suspect of having underhanded financial dealings and, therefore, had to be constantly watched and supervised. Even though the Jew had a change of heart and now saw the truth, the missionary was urged to "Remember that they have been taught that it is not a sin to lie or to cheat a Gentile."¹⁴

Anti-Semitism remains whether clothed in Gentile Christianity or non-Christian garb. Upon probing deeper into the distrust of Jews by Gentiles, one finds on a very basic level, a Gentile Christian feeling of superiority over the Jew.

If there was any reason for the slightest superiority of the one over the other, the Gentile might readily boast of it and on the ground of Christ's own words... our Lord, in dealing with the Jewish leaders...said: 'The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.' Math.21:43. This certainly leaves no room in his dispensation for Jewish converts to boast of any superiority in spiritual privilege. There can be no corporate leadership from Israel in this age...¹⁵

Even though the Jew becomes Christian, he still remains a Jew racially and must be carefully observed, lest he exhibit any of the more disagreeable Jewish traits -- revert back to type.

With thinking like that of the above, the Jewish Christian found himself in a bind of, basically, his own making. Specifically, because he called himself a Hebrew Christian, he faced the paradox of trying to prove himself still a Jew to his erstwhile people, the Jews, while at the same time, Christian enough to show Gentile Christians that he had changed and like them, had become a saved soul. He was riding a fence, fearful of swaying too close to one side or the other. Truly he existed in a seemingly impossible situation.

Despite the distrust and resentment towards them by both Jew and Gentile, the Hebrew Christians once again reaffirmed their objectives in 1919, once more stressing

their loyalty to Christianity. In spite of their precarious role of being neither fish nor fowl, they still maintained their role in missionary work as being able "To provide for the evangelical Christian Churches of America an authoritative and reliable channel...to serve the cause of Jewish evangelization."¹⁶

This cause was to be best served by winning "Israel to the gospel not from without but from within."¹⁷ And what was meant by an inner movement among Jews? "The method adopted in most all mission fields...the method of the Alliance, the Jew to the Jew with a Jewish message, in the Name of the Jewish Messiah."¹⁸

The first part of this plan, 'the Jew to the Jew...! is a rather difficult concept for the non-converted Jew to comprehend. As was stated earlier in this thesis, the Jew looks at a converted Jew as a *Q/MIEN* an apostate, and will have nothing to do with him. Because of this break away from his people through conversion, he is a stranger to them as well as being an oddity among Gentile Christians. He is alone.

...the genuine convert from Judaism, ostracized by the Jews as a traitor to his people, and a stranger among gentile Christians...re-enacts the drama of primitive Christian discipleship.¹⁹

When questioned as to what "Jewish" means, the Hebrew Christian will divide Jewish into two sections: Biblical

and Rabbinic. To him, however, the only true Judaism is that which is based solely on the Bible and not on the tradition of the rabbis. As an introduction to a book on her conversion to Christianity, Ruth Specter has the following quote in the preface of her work:

It is not intended by the author that this volume be a composition concerning Rabbinical or modern Judaism, but that it be a description of TRUE Judaism contained in the complete Word of God...²⁰

The Hebrew Christian looks toward the Bible for all answers to his questions because it is seen as being the "source" of all information, the Jewish Christian asks how he is and can remain a Jew while being a Christian:

A Jew, according to the Abrahamic Covenant, is any descendant of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Jewishness would then be defined as nationality.²¹

A definite "racist" attitude, in addition to the Jewish ethnic nationalistic stand, is also present in Hebrew Christianity. Just as a person always remains a member of his race, the Jew, always remains Jewish.

By this definition, no matter what the individual Jewish person may believe or disbelieve, he remains a Jew. A Negro who is a Christian remains a Negro...The same is true of the Jewish person...Whether Orthodox, Reform, atheist, or communist, he remains a Jew.²²

The Jewish Christian must lay this type of groundwork of always remaining a Jew in order to allow himself to remain

in the family of Jews. Belief cannot and must not play any type of role in deciding who is a Jew.

If a Jew chooses to believe that Jesus is his Messiah, he also remains a Jew. Nothing, absolutely nothing, can change the fact that he is a descendant of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.²³

In speaking to Jews, the Hebrew Christian missionary presents himself in this above light of complete identification with the Jewish people, "radically" and ethnically. Following such an introduction, the missionary will then attempt to show that he has not gone over to the "goyim" and even has added a dimension to his Jewishness.

If a Jewish person accepts baptism solely on the basis of attempting to lose his identity as a Jew, he is by no means to be considered a Hebrew Christian, but a renegade, a traitor, and an apostate. A Hebrew Christian is proud of his Jewishness and is also proud of his faith in the Messiahship of Jesus.²⁴

Jewish identity has therefore a "racist" nationalistic basis to it, which is proved from the Bible, with personal belief having no bearing on the individual's Judaism. All this is ostensibly based on Biblical Judaism, but what of the other division of Judaism, the Rabbinic interpretation? What are the Hebrew Christian's attitudes toward the interpretation of Judaism which has survived both the Temple and the priesthood so much vaunted by the fundamentalists?

The Jewish Christian is firmly and completely opposed in every way and manner to any type of Rabbinic Judaism, much less Rabbinic interpretation of the religion. According to their way of thought, any type of "tampering" with Biblical Judaism by rabbis is a corruption and desecration of God and His means of salvation. The rabbi is looked upon as a corrupter of Jews.

The Gospel is not and cannot be the crown of Rabbinic Judaism. Rabbinic Judaism does not point to Him. True Mosaism did point to Him- so also does the religion of revelation declared by the prophets. But the degenerate Judaism of later Old and New Testament times pointed away from Him, or rather it confused its adherents by pointing to itself, so that they missed Christ and forsook His Gospel when proclaimed.²⁵

The intense hatred for Rabbinic Judaism is a direct outgrowth of Christian notion of Pharasaism, the ancestor of modern Judaism.

The New Testament must be shown as the necessary completion of the old covenant religion, and not a foreign growth, as Rabbinic Judaism is.²⁶

The whole missionary attempt, whether Hebrew Christian or pure Gentile, is to try and tear the Jew from his moorings in the "traditions" of Rabbinic Judaism and force him to view the Old Testament by itself in relation to the New Testament. The rabbi is the main stumbling-block to this effort and naturally missionary wrath falls upon him.

Contemporary Judaism, of whatever variety, is much more based on the Talmud than on the Old Testament, and the Jew, trained in Judaism of this variety, may have to have this covering of the rabbinic Talmud stripped from his religious thinking before he can see the relationship between the acts of God in the Old Testament as related to the acts of the same God in the New Testament.²⁷

In other words, the missionary is aware that "Judaism is not the religion of the Old Testament, but a development from it."²⁸ However, this development is viewed as wrong and in direct conflict with Christianity. The missionary constantly works at separating the Jew from "rabbinism" and making him view the Old Testament clearly; through the Christian interpretation.

Supposedly, the Hebrew Christian is especially sensitive to the burden of Rabbinic Judaism, and sometimes he is, for having "suffered" under it, he is a most important source of information for the Church at large. Proof of such suffering has been offered countless times by countless converts, however the president of the Hebrew Christian Alliance himself, Rev. S. B. Rohold (1918), once gave a personal testimony as to the suffering he had undergone as a disciple of Rabbinic Judaism. In speaking to a fellow Hebrew Christian who was in favor of reinstituting some rituals of Rabbinic Judaism in Hebrew Christianity, Rev. Rohold presented the following traumatic picture

of his life as a Rabbinic Jew.

...our brother...has not tasted, as some of us here, 'the bread of affliction;' wasted his youth in the Yeshibah (Jewish College); raked his brains on the argumentative discussions of the sages; spent sleepless nights on the bare benches of the Beth-Hamidrash (House of Meditation); fasting Mondays and Thursdays; getting up at midnight and sitting on the stone floor of the Synagogue to say Cha'tzaoth (a midnight service of lamentation); again rising early to repeat Maamadoth (standing petitions); wearing the Tallis (praying shawl) and two pair of Tephilim (phylacteries); reciting endless prayers and psalms; tormenting the body; straining every nerve to observe the six hundred and thirteen precepts; and all this to secure peace with God, and to find at the end of a weary day's agony and honest efforts, that there is no anchor to lay hold on. We who know its horrors fully appreciate the liberty of the Gospel.²⁹

The Jew has been so caught up in the web of the rabbis, so their thought goes, that,

A Rabbinical commentary, which in their (Jewish) mind occupies the same position as the word of the sacred scriptures themselves is studied with it. They put in far more time studying the traditions, the doctrines, and the maxims of men, than the word of God. Therefore, it is quite a problem for the missionary to the Jews to be in a position to remove the Rabbinical fences.³⁰

The missionary is so certain of the correctness of his assumption that the rabbis have corrupted the ordinary Jew, that they can write that: "We feel sure that if we

could get the Jewish people to study the Old Testament instead of their 'traditions,' it would lead them to the promised Messiah."³¹

These 'traditions' constantly referred to in missionary jargon are the post-Biblical customs and rituals which make up the Judaism of today. If the Hebrew Christians can nullify the validity of these rituals and denigrate them in status to mere "inventions" of sinful man, then what remains is a false and perverted form of the real Judaism; Christianity without Christ.

In speaking of the customs of *mitzvot* and the use of *shema* and *prayer*, etc., Eckstein writes:

These rabbinic traditions are still believed and taught. Even until my conversion, I continued to practice this tradition...Of course, these things are all man made and God had nothing to do with these human traditions and inventions.³²

The rabbi, therefore, is the enemy of fundamentalist missionary Hebrew Christianity; because he is viewed as such an overpowering enemy, he is given the aura of an almost semi-divine figure, for perhaps he is in league with the Devil?

"The rabbi was the representative of God on earth."³³ He is attributed with having complete and absolute power over the Jews; he is an equal with the Pope for infallibility of judgement.

The Jews have never questioned the teachings of the rabbis, blindly clinging to their conclusions, accepting them as infallible.³⁴

The common people have been taught to regard their sages and rabbis as if they were heavenly messengers.³⁵

The rabbi is the controlling factor for the Jewish Christian. If he can neutralize the influence of the rabbi, he has a greater opportunity of success with the Jews. The worst part of the problem with the rabbi is the fact that the rabbis really do know the truth about Jesus, but refuse to face it. They are recalcitrant just for spite!

When will the Jewish rabbis learn wisdom? Is it too much to hope that they will learn to look at things without prejudice?³⁶

The Hebrew Christian has now attempted several actions; he has tried to establish and maintain a "Jewish" identity in spite of becoming a Christian and rejecting post-Biblical custom and tradition; he considers himself a Christian though his faith is qualified with a Jewish basis to it; and he has declared war on his enemy, the rabbi.

Following all this, the missionary is now ready to move toward his next goal, of presenting his interpretations of Jewish rituals, of Biblical texts proving Jesus the Messiah, and preaching of the truth of a literal and fundamentalistic understanding of Judaism and Christianity. The fundamentalist approach is the most critical of all the missionary's

maneuvers, because upon this belief hangs the final question of proof of Jesus or not.

If he (Jew) does not believe Moses he will not believe Christ, no matter what other kind of approach might be used.³⁷

CHAPTER III

Fundamentalism is the catchword of a Hebrew Christian. The foundation of his new religion, Christianity, is the conviction that only by means of a literal belief in the Old Testament can a person come to the higher truth found in the New Testament. The Jewish Bible must be accepted as the beginning of God's revelation to man before any other beliefs are attempted.³⁷

To the Jew who will accept the Old Testament revelation as a starting point we are on solid ground.³⁸

By starting with the Torah as the basis of revelation, the Hebrew Christian then works his way through the Psalms and Prophets, always attempting to reach higher and higher levels of truth in the Messiah. The Old Testament is viewed as an entire entity of perfection with no scientific criticism permitted. It is seen as pointing to one specific goal, showing Jesus to be the Messiah. According to missionary thought, since the Word of God is unchanging and ever-present in the Bible, it is up to the missionary to be able to present God's message to the Jew in an effective manner.

We need not be scholars to be able to approach Jews, but we need to know how to rightly divide the Word of Truth in a sensible and logical manner.³⁹

Despite the above disclaimer of not needing to be scholars in working with Jews, attempts are made by missionaries to literally "snow under" a Jew with a barrage of

Biblical verses as "proof texts" to the missionary's case. The Hebrew Christian, often knowing only enough Hebrew barely to read a prayerbook or Bible, is diligently coached by his mentors into depths of Hebrew grammatical minutiae guaranteed not only to overwhelm the Hebrew Christian, but also any Jew who may be in the way.

In the first chapter of the book of Genesis, the word ELOHIM (which means the plurality /sis/ of God) is found 30 times. (ELOHIM which is a uniplural noun, is formed from the word EL (God). Thus God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, are latent in Elohim.)⁴⁰

Armed with such "obvious" proof, directly from the Hebrew Bible itself, the missionary proceeds with this campaign of making Jewish conquests.

As opposed to the Hebrew Christian of yesteryear, all rituals and prayers sacred to Judaism are seen by the Hebrew Christian of today as carrying the inner kernel of Christian truth of Jesus as the Jewish Messiah. The only prayers which cannot fall under this category, are those which have been put in by the Synagogue to specifically keep out the Hebrew Christians of early days. The addition to the שְׁמַיָּהוּ of the אֱלֹהֵינוּ is an example of this.

For example, the אֱלֹהֵינוּ the cornerstone of monotheistic Judaism is considered by the Jewish Christians as a sublime example of this hidden truth of Jesus. The line of thought proceeds as follows. Adam and Eve are called

אנלע דער one flesh in Genesis; are they really one in number or do they still retain their individuality? In this case, the missionary continues, the word אנלע stands for a concept called a compound unity! In the declaration אלוהים אחד God's unity is in reality, a compound unity of three divisions: God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; since God is mentioned three times;⁴¹ Here we have the classic Christian argument of 1+1+1=1 being "proven" true from Jewish documents!

The Hebrew Christian is called upon to act as the "Jewish expert" in matters of missionary work by Gentile missionaries. It is up to him to decide what will reach the Jewish mind and heart and what will offend. By proving missionary teachings from Jewish sources, the missionary assumes that his chances of making headway with Jews will be that much greater.

The Jewish Christian missionary presents a fundamentalist attitude toward both Judaism and Christian thought. The fear of Judaizing is still present in Hebrew Christianity and can be kept from creeping in opposed successfully only by strict adherence to "Bible Christianity."

For the discussion with Israel it is absolutely mandatory that we Bible Christians, not compromise and dilute any of these doctrines, neither the virgin birth of Christ. For the word for 'virgin' used in the well known prophecy by Isaiah (7:14) is in the original Hebrew: 'almah,' derived from a modus of the Hebrew

verb 'ALAM' (to hide), denoting the fact that this girl was still 'at home' (hidden) and had no social contact yet with men. Otherwise how could the birth of this baby be a 'sign' of the Lord?⁴²

In a folder entitled The Virgin Birth published by the American Board of Missions to the Jews, a picture of the "Jewish" approach toward miracles in the Bible is presented. Their logic being, if God creates all types of miracles, and Abraham and Sarah can have a child at an advanced age, then a virgin can give birth to a child also. In comparing Abraham and Sarah with Mary, the folder reads:

This entire discussion has been based only on the first book of the Torah, indeed the first few chapters of the Torah alone, and is not the imagination or machination of some Christians or missionaries. These are the words of the Torah and the words of Moses. Would you dare to call Moses a liar? Dare you disbelieve the Torah? Unthinkable! Impossible! He Who was born of a Jewish virgin in accordance with the Holy Torah ...calls to you now.⁴³

As was stated earlier, according to the missionary, it is the rabbi who is endangering the souls of his Jewish flock. It is the rabbis who twist the truth in the Bible to suit their own ends.

Then, dear reader, why not play safe? On one hand, you have the uncertain promises on the say-so of the Rabbis; on the other, the sure Word of God. In which of the two will you put your trust?⁴⁴

Needless to say, in addition to the interpretations of "virgin" passages and of compound unities of God, the Hebrew Christian uses all the same tired "prophetic" passages from the Old Testament "proving" the Messiahship of Jesus, as do Gentile Christian missionaries. In this approach, however, the Jewish Christian missionary has as little "success" as does the Gentile Christian missionary. Both types operate under the same guiding principle:

The law cannot save a Jew, it
only condemns him, but the
loving Christ can save him.⁴⁵

The complete and unshakeable belief in the Bible as being the only true Judaism and Word of God has led the Hebrew Christians to feel a superiority over the "unsaved" Jew. In his world of complete absolutes, the Jewish Christian gives utterance to his glorious state of salvation by claiming that it is not they who are *p'PNIEN*, apostates, but rather the leaders of Jewry who refuse to allow the light of Christianity to illuminate the darkness of Judaism.

We are not Meshumudim; we are the
true children of Israel. It is
the great body of our intolerant,
bigotted, and proud Jewish leaders
who are the Meshumudim.⁴⁶

He claims for himself the title of being the "...TRUE JEW IN THE SCRIPTUAL MEANING OF THE TERM."⁴⁷ Since he therefore is the "true Jew;"

The voice of the Christian Jew is the only voice of real assurance and hope in the Jewish world of today, because our faith is based on what proved to be the unchanging and unchangeable Word of God - the Bible.⁴⁸

Because a positive belief, on the part of a Jew in the Bible, would necessitate a belief in Jesus as well, the rabbis, therefore, had to steer Judaism away from the Bible and towards works of rabbinic authority. The result of such rabbinic maneuvers was and is a religious dilemma on the part of Judaism.

In its persistent efforts to get away from Jesus, Judaism was forced to move further and further away from the Old Testament. In the process of this movement away from the Bible many Jews lost faith in God's Word, faith in a Messiah, faith in a here-after and, finally, faith in God.⁴⁹

Due to this loss of "true" Judaism, the Jew wanders aimlessly, and it is left up to the Hebrew Christian to guide his fellow-Jews in regaining their lost heritage.

Our task is to help the Jewish people recover faith in a personal God, faith in the Bible as the Word of God, and faith in a personal Messiah as the Redeemer of Israel and the Saviour of the world.⁵⁰

Aside from attempting to prove the veracity of their tenets from biblical proof texts, the Hebrew Christian reinterprets Jewish holy days as well, to fit into the Christological mold. There are two holidays in particular that are of special interest to the Hebrew Christian missionary in his crusade for a Jew's soul; Yom Kippur, the Day of

Atonement, and Passover.

To a Jew:

Yom Kippur is a solemn fast day. For twenty-four awesome hours from sundown to sunset, Jews the world over...assemble in synagogues and places of prayer, to seek atonement with God and forgiveness for all their sins. It is 'The Day' of judgement and reckoning.⁵¹

Because there is no sacrificial system today, the Jew must follow an atonement service arranged by the rabbis, with Repentance, Prayer, and Charity, the leading methods of atoning for past sins. In addition to the above, there are other means of attempting total forgiveness: personal suffering, the study of law, being inflicted with the ritual 39 stripes, and death. In addition to the above methods, there is also the "sacrifices of hens and roosters... called KAPPOROTH, which means propitiatory or atoning sacrifices."⁵²

The Hebrew Christian looks at this and maintains his biblical position that blood from an organized sacrificial system is needed to atone for sins and to gain true forgiveness. He asks the question: "Where is the needed blood?" The answer he receives, that Judaism of today is no longer in need of or desirous of blood, is totally meaningless to him. Once again he blames the rabbis for having corrupted the true Judaism of the Bible.

Deprived of Temple, priest and sacrifices, Rabbinical Judaism has made a consistent effort to water down the importance of the sacrifices and the shed blood which alone make atonement for the soul. In place of the atonements, the Day of Atonement itself has been declared to make atonement for sinners, without the necessity of a sacrifice.⁵³

To the Jewish Christian, the concept of needing blood for atonement becomes an almost obsessive thought. He constantly is plagued with the idea that "...there is no atonement except through the blood of the sacrifice."⁵⁴ Since he is operating only in one dimension of Judaism, the strict biblical interpretation, one might suppose that at least, he is being consistent with his beliefs. However, because of his obsession with the blood atonement, the Jewish Christian projects this thought to all Jews, resulting in his knowing that they too feel an emptiness and longing for complete forgiveness from sin, which to them, is impossible under Rabbinic Judaism.

In spite of Yom Kippur, the day dedicated to atonement, there is no assurance of sins forgiven in Judaism. There is longing, there is hope for forgiveness, but of assurance, there is none. This only the Son of God can give to those come to him in faith. The Day of Atonement is only a substitute for Atonement. Judaism could be best summed up as man's attempt to justify himself by his own effort, without the atonement made by a Saviour. That cannot be done.⁵⁵

The Hebrew Christian is literally unable to see any other possible interpretation to the biblical method of stonement. For him, there is the Bible's way and the wrong way, with Rabbinic Judaism being the latter. Arguing or even discussing this with him is useless, for since he knows the truth, he cannot possibly change any of his thoughts or stands; the Bible has the proper way and to differ from it is sin.

Turning from the Day of Atonement to Passover, we find the Jewish Christian once again drawing Christian symbols from Jewish observances. The festival of freedom from slavery becomes, in Hebrew Christian eyes,

...a clear prophecy of a greater story,
the story of redemption through Christ
the Messiah, the Lamb of God, who lived
and died and rose again for the re-
demption of all who believe.⁵⁶

The holiday symbols take on Christian coloring as more and more of their interpretations are fitted into the Passover story. The festival is viewed as the supreme essence of the role of Jesus as the sacrificial lamb of God, atoning for man's sins.

It is a Hebrew Christian premise that not only is Jesus a critical part of the Passover seder, but that even the seder of today itself is of Hebrew Christian origin. Today, the Jew celebrating Passover has all the necessary elements and symbols, except for one thing, the lamb to sacrifice:

Only one thing, the essence of Passover, is missing - the lamb, ordained to be sacrificed and consumed by every Jewish family. Passover without the lamb is like a wedding without the bride. What the modern Jews celebrate today is not the Passover [sic] but the Feast of the Unleavened Bread.⁵⁷

In other words, the Jew of today is only going through the motions of celebrating Passover. He has no lamb or temple, therefore, he has no sacrifice to offer, hence it is an invalid celebration. So what type of religious ceremony is the unsaved Jew really celebrating when he sits down to the seder table? It is, in reality, a combination of Jewish and Hebrew Christian elements: the Jewish elements consisting of the lamb and various symbols and the Hebrew Christian which consisted of the "bread" and wine.

With the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in A.D. 70, the Jewish Seder ceased, and the only Seder which survived within the Jewish nation was that of the Hebrew Christians, who continued to be an integral part of the Jewish community. Thereupon, this Seder, the chief elements of which were the Bread and Wine, became the nucleus of the Seder celebrations of all Israel, which by degrees adopted it and made it their own, unconscious of the real story it told, and the real message it conveyed.⁵⁸

Therefore,

Everytime a Jew partakes of the pass-over, unconsciously he bears witness of the Messiah.⁵⁹

How is such witness borne out by Jews who are opposed to Jesus?

On the seder table are placed three matzot, commonly thought

to symbolize the three types of Jews, not Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform, but Cohen, Levite, and Israelite. Not so, say the Hebrew Christians! These three cakes of unleavened bread, in reality, represent the Trinity!

We see Jesus the broken matzoh...
The other two matzoth of the seder
rite complete the symbol of the
Trinity...⁶⁰

The proof of such symbolism is in the Jewish Passover ritual itself, claim the Jewish Christians. During the festive meal, the father takes the middle matzoh, breaks it, distributes half of it to those seated at the table, and the second half of it is hidden and brought forth only at the end of the meal to be eaten by the family. Jesus, at the Last Supper, also took bread, broke it and divided it among his followers:

Take, eat: this is my body, which
is broken for you: this do in re-
membrance of me...⁶¹

As the Hebrew Christian missionary writes:

How strange that the hidden half
of the unleavened middle cake
should be preserved as a symbol
and rite even to the present day -
a wonderful testimony to the
broken body of the Lord Jesus
Christ and His resurrection.
Strange and beyond explanation
are the wonderful ways of our God.⁶²

As a final bit of comfort to the Jew, the Hebrew Christian folder entitled "The Broken Matzo" adds this thought to consider at the Passover season:

And so dear Jewish readers, every time you break the Matzo on the Passover Night and every time you drink the cup of wine, you are unconsciously celebrating the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ's body was broken for you and for me, on the Cross of Calvary 1900 years ago.⁶³

What the Hebrew Christian has done therefore, is to pick and choose from among all those customs and traditions held sacred by Judaism. He feels himself the only Jew who can see the role of these rituals in the proper light; the light of Christian truth. Those customs which are followed are changed in interpretation and emphasis to such a degree that an unbaptized Jew would sometimes have trouble recognizing them as his own.

One can begin to notice a paradox developing in the consciousness of the Hebrew Christian follower. On the one hand, he turns his back on his Jewishness and embraces Christianity, yet, on the other, he doesn't completely turn from Judaism, no matter when he claims. He sets up a scale of absolutes, whereby he is able to judge who is a true Jew or an incomplete one. He needs to be on the side of an authority, Christianity, that tells him that he is saved. While seeking this certain salvation, he can't ignore his past, so he compromises and fantasizes. The result is a concoction called "Hebrew Christianity."

The pieces fit together like a puzzle. The rabbi is the villian; he has corrupted Judaism, and because of that corruption, a Jew who is seeking the truth must go to

Gentiles to find it. The "truth" is that Jesus is the Jewish Messiah and that, the Hebrew Christian claims, is what Judaism really preaches.

Upon claiming for his own both his ancestral heritage and his new religion, the Hebrew Christian looks at his, as yet, unsaved fellow Jews, and what does he see? Does he see a mass of people who blindly follow rabbis, as was thought in an earlier time? Or does he see groups of Jews following different interpretations of Judaism? How does he view these Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox Jews? Are they all equally false, or does one group have a closer grasp of the truth than the others?

The problem of the Hebrew Christian missionary is now to devise a way to approach each group of Jews separately and to attempt to win them over to Jesus, but first they must be classified and catalogued as to beliefs and characterologies. It is to this problem that the missionary next turns his attention.

CHAPTER IV

In America, the Hebrew Christian missionary usually encounters four types of Jews; Reform, Conservative or Orthodox, and the secularist. Whether the Jew is actually a practicing follower of one of these interpretations of Judaism or just a nominal follower is unimportant to our investigation. What should be remembered is that the missionary views all interpretations of Judaism whether religious or secularist oriented in need of change.

Today a Hebrew Christian might theoretically claim one of two positions in regard to judging the validity of Reform, Conservative or Orthodox Judaism. The first claim would be to the effect that:

I could not say that one form of
Judaism is any better or worse
than any other form of Judaism...⁶⁴

Or he could claim:

I don't believe that there are
any shades of wrong.⁶⁵

Upon first glance one thinks he sees a difference of opinion among these two Hebrew Christians, but upon close examination, there is really no difference between these two quotes; one is just more polite than the other. Once again the statement must be reiterated, that according to Hebrew Christian thought, Rabbinic Judaism is wrong, whether it is Orthodox or even Reform; it is still incomplete because Jesus is excluded from it.

The first of the religious interpretations of Judaism which will now be discussed will be Orthodoxy. Though its followers have been subjected to strains and stresses as have other Jews and have had to make inner adaptations in the religion in order to survive, Orthodoxy is viewed by many Jews as well as by many Christians as the most authentic version of Judaism and the closest to the religion of Moses.

When Hebrew Christians are asked to what interpretation of Judaism they would follow if they were not Hebrew Christians and which interpretation is the closer to the "true Judaism," the answer is almost always: Orthodoxy.

The Orthodox Jew is closer because he's a fundamentalist.⁶⁶

I would rather gravitate toward the Orthodox...⁶⁷

When giving basic knowledge of the Jewish religious structure is presented to the missionary, Orthodox Judaism is always shown as the best expression of Judaism which is: fervent in its belief in the literal word of the Bible, yet due to the rabbis, totally misses the mark in its devotion.

For centuries the traditions, doctrines, commentaries, commandments of men have been observed as if they were the voice of God... they have assumed a character as comparable to the inspired word of God. With fanatical passion and zeal, Jewry is trying to conform to them. But of course it is impossible.⁶⁸

The words "fanatical passion and zeal" and "fervor," are

always used as synonyms for Orthodoxy. After reading the missionary's material for any prolonged length of time, one almost begins to wonder if the missionary ever separates Orthodoxy from anything except fanaticism and intolerance. In reading of the "suffering and oppression" with which the "fanatical Orthodox Jew" is burdened, one might ask why the Jew remains a Jew at all, much less an Orthodox Jew? The reason probably is that the Jew is so enwrapped in his "blind hatred of Jesus and Christianity" that he refuses to open his eyes and see the "beauty" he is rejecting.

The Hebrew Christian missionary sees himself as the crusader in the noble cause of saving Jews from "fanatical Judaism." In Joseph Hoffman Cohn's memoirs of his father, Leopold Cohn, founder of the American Board of Missions to the Jews, Joseph Cohn writes of his father's attempt

...to bring the Jew across the
bridge from 'Fanatic Judaism
to genuine faith in the Lord
Jesus Christ as his Messiah.⁶⁹

The Orthodox Jew is seen by the Hebrew Christian and his fellow believers as that type of Jew closest to the Jew of Mosaic times.

The 'Orthodox' or 'Talmudic' Jew
is the accepted type of the race...
Differing but little from the
average Jew at the time of Christ
...The Talmud is their standard of
ethics and esteemed almost as highly
as the Scriptures of which they knew
very little.⁷⁰

Because this type of Jew is so highly prized, the missionary

that goes after his soul should have an in-depth training in Judaica.

There should be one man to deal with the orthodox Jews, well versed in Talmudic lore, in all the mysteries of the Cabbala. He ought to know Hebrew better than any other modern language and almost know the Old and New Testaments by heart.⁷¹

One would question the Cabbalistic ability of the vast majority of Orthodox Jews of today, much less that of the Hebrew Christian missionary.

It is interesting to observe that there is an almost superstitious "awe" of the Orthodox Jew on the part of the missionary. Because of this "awe" which is felt, there are at times contradictory attributes said to be present in the Orthodox Jew. Cabbalistic mysticism, unchanging since the time of Jesus, having a fundamentalist belief in the Bible, and always defying a belief in Jesus. Since the Orthodox Jew is commonly considered to be the Jew most closely connected to Jewish tradition, the Hebrew Christian, also claiming to be the most authentic Jew, identifies himself as also being an Orthodox Jew.

We claim that Christian Jews are the remnant today who are Israelites indeed, the forerunners of the new nation of Israel that shall appear when the veil which now hides the glory of Jesus Christ is removed from their eyes.⁷²

At times, the missionary himself has become "orthodox" when working in an Orthodox environment. Leopold Cohn,

mentioned earlier, was raised in a traditional environment in Europe and converted while still in Europe. When he converted, he supposedly maintained his Orthodox practices,

...not that he felt himself under the law of Moses, but that by this method he was able to win Jews to Christ who could not have been won otherwise.⁷³

The precedent for such questionable behavior was laid down by Paul the Apostle in First Corinthians 9:20:

...unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law.⁷⁴

Therefore, whenever Cohn was involved with Orthodox Jews, he dressed and acted like those surrounding him. As his son writes:

My father's ministry was saturated with this form of approach. To the Jews he was always a Jew. He never became what fanatic Jews would scornfully call a 'goy.' He was always a Jew who SIMPLY accepted the Christ as the final revelation of the Godhead, and as the only means through Whom salvation and deliverance would ever come to the people of Israel and to the world. This gave him a hold upon the minds of the large Jewish audiences that would wait upon his ministry.⁷⁵

The Hebrew Christians themselves seem divided as to the proper attitude toward Jewish law. Though they claim to have found the full and complete meaning for their "Judaism," they still have their differences of interpreting God's law as

do Jews in their "unsaved" state. Some Jewish Christians maintained a structure of following Jewish law and claimed it on a basis of voluntary practice. Others claim no allegiance to Jewish law or practice at all and yet take for themselves the same label of "complete Jew," as do the former. With seemingly contradictory attitudes, it would seem that the Hebrew Christian is as confused in his new religious state as he was when he was still an "unsaved Jew."

An example of this difference of opinion follows. Stephen Eckstein, a Hebrew Christian missionary, was once travelling in a sparsely populated portion of the United States when he stopped at a home for the night. During a conversation at the dinner table, he mentioned that he was a Jew:

'Brother Eckstein, you do not have to fear with regard to the meat. It is not pork, but good choice beef. You do not eat pork, do you?' I said, 'Yes, I eat pork.' She exclaimed, 'You do?' I replied 'Of course I do, since I embraced Christianity.'⁷⁶

Which Hebrew Christian is the truer to his religion, Mr. Cohn in his masquerade as an Orthodox Jew or Mr. Eckstein denying all Jewish law? This will be left up to the Hebrew Christian movement itself to decide.

A second interpretation of Judaism to be discussed is that of Reform Judaism. In this group I will include both Reform and Conservative Judaism, for a very important reason.

Both, to varying degrees, view Judaism as a constantly changing religion with flexibility and versatility, while the Orthodoxy of today would take an opposing viewpoint. The Hebrew Christian has nothing to say specifically about Conservative Judaism and therefore, I have included it under the same label as Reform about which a great deal is written.

The Hebrew Christian tends to maintain a love-hate relationship with Orthodox Judaism, but he maintains a pure hate relationship with Reform. The Hebrew Christian stereotypes Orthodoxy into a religion of great heights and depths, with belief in a literal Word of God as a central pillar of its structure. Equally so does he paint a stereotyped picture of Reform Judaism, a picture which no longer exists in reality, but only in the mind of the Hebrew Christian.

Reform Judaism denies the status of nationality to the Jew, relinquishes the hope of a future restoration as historically dreamed by others, clearly declares Israel to be a far cry from the fulfillment of that dream as some hold it to be; they declare, 'Washington is our Zion.'⁷⁷

I feel that there are several very important reasons why Hebrew Christianity must be opposed to Reform Judaism, with all of them being critical to Hebrew Christianity's survival.

A basic premise of Reform is that Judaism, by its very nature, has always changed in the past and constantly must change and develop over the ages. Whether it is called "progressive revelation" or not, Judaism is an ever changing

river that is constantly on the move. This, a Hebrew Christian must oppose violently. For the Hebrew Christian, "true" Judaism is the same today as it was yesterday as was proved in an earlier quote (Orthodoxy is the same now as it was in Jesus' time, footnote #70.) Anyone who suggests that it changes its premises, such as belief in a personal Messiah in favor of a messianic age, commits heresy.

Secondly, Reform, being a liberal religion, must, by its very make-up, be opposed to any type of reactionary or absolutist religious structure, and Hebrew Christianity is certainly absolutist. The whole structure of Hebrew Christianity shows men what must be believed and what should not be thought. Freedom is allowed in personal practice, but belief must be rigidly restricted. Differences of beliefs, such as the Judaizers of another generation, are eliminated and purged from the movement. Hebrew Christianity is well aware of its structural differences from Reform Judaism, and because of it, is always prepared to do battle against it.

A third reason for Hebrew Christian opposition to Reform, is Reform's contention that Mosaic Law and prophetic "teachings," being part of the Bible, are pieces of literature which can, though not necessarily, lose their relevancy for modern man. The ramifications of this are that if there is no longer unquestioned validity to Mosaic law, which is a preliminary stage for the later appearance of Jesus, then the very foundation of Christian truth is eliminated and Christianity

is left without a base in Judaism.

Reform is a danger to Hebrew Christianity for it places the value of man and his freedom over that of Christianity's teachings of man's depravity. Here the differentiation between Reform, per se, and Orthodoxy merge and blend into a larger entity called Judaism. Now it is no longer just Reform which is standing in opposition to Hebrew Christianity, but a larger whole, all of Judaism. All of Jewish thought and belief stands up in protest to the attempted blending of itself and Christianity into the false creation called Hebrew Christianity. All Jewish interpretations, whether Orthodox or Reform, protest over the bastardization of Judaism into a thing which it is not.

The dogmatic stringency of the Christian system of belief, the militant attitude of Christian theology, the belief in a virgin birth, the predominance of supernaturalism, and the historic revelation of Christ as the perfect and final revelation of God are repulsive, seeming to Jews to be inroads of Hellenistic heresy, parasitic accretions of the epoch in which Christianity was born.⁷⁸

In 1917, Elias Newman, a member of the Hebrew Christian Alliance, wrote that

The orthodox Jew still refuses the claims of Christ with an antagonism that is characteristic. The Reform Jew denies Jesus to be the Messiah, but admires Him as a Prophet, but all alike are united in their opposition to the Gospel and all missionary effort.⁷⁹

In the fifty-five years since that writing, how has the picture changed in the missionary arena? Orthodox Judaism still refuses to accept either Jesus or any of the claims to Jewishness presented by Hebrew Christianity. Though Orthodoxy still believes in a personal messiah, and physical resurrection as does Hebrew Christianity, there the similarities end. No matter what claims of authenticity are brought by Hebrew Christianity, the Orthodox Jew still remains apart from him and refuses to be brought into an alliance with him against the Reform Jew.

Reform Judaism continues its denial of Jesus as Messiah and today it no longer maintains the "love affair" it once had with Jesus the man, missionary propaganda notwithstanding.

Many Jews, eminent rabbis and recognized intellectuals, are writing and speaking in respectful terms of Him, designating Him as the greatest moral reformer, one of the brightest of Jewish sons that ever walked the earth.⁸⁰

At one time, Reform felt a bond with Jesus the Nazarene. Like Jesus, they too were antinomian and felt value in only the ethics of Judaism. Today all of that has changed.

Today Reform has become aware of the need of ritual and law if it hopes to maintain anytype of meaningful Jewish existence. For it to depend only on ethics to survive would have resulted in religious suicide for Reform and its dissolution into a type of Unitarianism with Jewish traces within it.

Hebrew Christianity challenged Orthodox and Reform Judaism for superiority over them and failed in its attempted coup.

Let us now look at some of those people who challenged and continue to attempt to challenge the validity of Rabbinic Judaism. We will look into the make-up of the individual Hebrew Christian, the general conditions leading up to his conversion, and the possible presence of self-hatred before and after the conversion.

CHAPTER V

Many Jews have become Hebrew Christians out of a lack of a solid Jewish background and basic knowledge of Judaism, and have embraced their new religion, Christianity, with openness and with honesty, others, more knowledgeable simply needed new answers for their questions. One such Jew, Aaron J. Kligerman, gave his reasons for becoming a Hebrew Christian.

Because my life as a Rabbinical Jew was unsatisfactory. The study of the Talmud and its commentaries, its quibbles and subtleties, became a weariness to the flesh and spirit. Because I found better and truer nourishment in the study of the Old Testament side by side with the New Testament and other Christian literature. Because the attendance of the synagogue services and the recitation of the many prayers left my heart void and unsatisfied, and I craved for a more spiritual worship. I desired simply to worship in spirit and in truth such as I witnessed among some of God's choicest Gentile Christians.⁸¹

One notices the underlying desire to be like the Gentiles, to opt for an "easier" way of life religiously, and to find simplicity in belief and in religious practice. Regardless of one's own personal opinions, the sincerity of Mr. Kligerman is apparent. Mr. Roy Kreider, a noted writer of missionary material for Jews, once wrote a most interesting article concerning members of minority groups who convert to the religion followed by a majority of a population. The following has great bearing on the above quote of Mr. Kligerman:

A readiness to convert religiously may actually be an effort to overcome inferiority complexes by leaving the minority of the oppressed and joining the ranks of the oppression-free minority.⁸²

In speaking specifically of Hebrew Christians, those Jews who convert to "Hebrew" Christianity, the transition is not quite complete. The conversion may be religiously valid, but the person still feels himself Jewish. We have seen that this is in large part due to the method used by the Gentile missionaries, to let the Jew "retain" his Jewishness. This may be satisfying to the missionary, but to the Jew, the results are sometimes far different.

Marshall Sklare, a noted Jewish sociologist, wrote on Hebrew Christians in a congregation in Chicago, Illinois. The observations he made concerning them are valid for all Jews who convert, not to Christianity per se, but specifically to Hebrew Christianity.

Why, once conversion from Judaism to Christianity has taken place, do these people insist on being identified as both Jews and Christians? It appears that for the...convert a complete break from the original Jewish group is too severe a step; instead, a more limited move from Judaism is chosen.⁸³

That "limited move" spoken of by Sklare is Hebrew Christianity.

In an earlier chapter, the element of self-hatred was mentioned in connection with Jewish converts to Hebrew Christianity. This self-hatred results, today, not from the Jew who make the complete break with his past, but quite often

the contrary, the Jew who only goes half-way with his conversion. He has hated himself as a Jew and tries to erase his past, but he can't and because of this failure on his part he hates himself as well as his fellow Jews who have not attempted to convert. The hatred he feels within himself needs an outlet and it finds one in the convert writing of his Jewish past and of his decision to find salvation with Jesus.

There are numerous ways that these presentations are made; testimony to the supernatural saving power of Christ and of out of the ordinary experiences with New Testaments or missionaries, comparisons of Jewish ritual (often those which are based in superstitions and not in the actual religion itself) with the simpler beauty of the Christian ritual.

The following is a description of a service which the apostate attended while still a Jew. It is taking place on the morning of one of the Pilgrim Festivals. His description is somewhat questionable (having a mixed choir in an orthodox service?) and the whole attitude used in describing the service and the purpose of such description is definitely an act of self-ridicule and of mocking his people.

It was the chief part of the service, and the Synagogue was filled-to hear the Cantor. The singing began: 'on account of our sins have we been exiled...' It commenced to get lively. The sopranos began to screech ... 'O gather our dispersion from among the nations.' The bassos bel- lowed, the altos sighed, and the tenors

screamed; the Cantor, as a Cantor should; shouted the loudest 'O gather our dispersion' a dozen times. They came to 'and there in Thy presence will we prepare an offering,' imitating a company of soldiers on their march. As they neared the end, the 'Katzenjammer' doubled. Finally the choir was through, greeted by a tremendous ovation of hand-clapping and cries of 'Bravo' ...Even the women in the gallery set aside from them pushed back their orthodox headgear and looked down with enjoyment. The Cantor bowed right and left, sang over again, 'O gather our dispersion from among the nations,' and again received great applause.⁸⁴

Jews are well aware that, the love expressed by missionaries for Jews is quite often only skin deep. Once the Jew rejects his message, the love felt for him quickly turns to hatred. The Missionary preaches love, but a love with qualifications:

Even now the judgements of God rest more heavily upon the Jews in unbelief than upon any other people, and so shall it be for those of them who die in unbelief. For the heathen who dies in unbelief it will be more tolerable than for the Jew.⁸⁵

There can be no doubt that various causes have contributed to the wide dispersion of the Jews. But we recognize that the real cause of their dispersion lies in the forsaking of God's ways and in the rejection of Jesus.⁸⁶

At times, the preachings against Judaism become a bit more covert and subtle and attempt to take on an aura of "objectivity." Christianity is shown, not only as a superior

religion, but also as a faith which is so far advanced that Jews have great difficulty in ever hoping to become true followers. It is not only the Jewish religion which is inferior, but Jews as well...

Christianity demands a high moral standard which acts as a deterrent to many Jews. Their own peculiar faults of character- selfishness, love of money and material prosperity, habits of lying, doubtful commercial dealings, lack of sense of sin, and in some areas drinking and impurity- are challenged by the stricter Christian morality, and cause a revolution in their moral outlook, and in many cases the change seems to be too demanding and radical.⁸⁷

A great many of the Hebrew Christians, former Jews themselves, take up the same anti-Jewish sentiment and apply it to non-converted Jews while at the same time vicariously chastising themselves. Any and every caricature of Jews is used by them; at times with terms of "endearment" as one Jew speaking to another, while at other times with hatred and obvious negative sentiment.

In a lecture entitled "A picture of Contemporary Judaism" by the Hebrew Christian Jakob Jocz, a statement as described above appeared.

On a memorable Sabbath in 1948 in the great synagogue of Tel Aviv, the ram's horn was sounded to mark the end of the Exile. The Knesset passed the Law of Return, no Jew need live in Galut anymore. He needs no visa, only a ticket and a Jewish nose.⁸⁸

In the same book of lectures appeared another "survey of contemporary Judaism," this time by a Gentile Christian, Otto Piper. Since a Jew can write with sarcasm and hidden resentment of the Jewish people, why not a true Christian? And write he does.

Being destined to be a blessing to the whole of mankind, the Jews because of their sinfulness constantly put an obstacle in the way of realization of that destination. We know how true that is historically. The Jew is a 'grand fellow'; however, he also has all the vices of his virtues. He has extraordinary and outstanding qualities, but whether he likes to admit the fact or not, he has also great faults which, while they are the perversions of his special gifts and endowments, are historical realities nevertheless, by which fellowship with him is rendered difficult. This explains the paradox that ever since the Exile, Judaism has been instrumental in keeping alive in mankind the idea of an ethical monotheism. Yet at the same time, the way in which the Jews have lived their own religion has contributed greatly to hatred and contempt of the Jews...⁸⁹

The publication in which the two articles appeared was not prepared by a religious fringe group of missionaries in the 1920's but rather was published under the auspices of the National Lutheran Council in 1959! Just as the Jew was viewed as an "extraordinary" and different creature by Christians in the early days of missionary work and Christianity, the view seems not to have changed much over the years.

As was stated before, the self-hatred of the apostate

can and does take on numerous expressions and forms. At times it is open and brutal hatred, while at other times it is subtle and deadly. The autobiography of Joseph Hoffman Cohn, the son of the founder of the American Board of Missions to the Jews, Leopold Cohn, is a good example of the latter type of writing. His book, I Have Fought A Good Fight, was written for a non-Jewish reading public and therefore his references to Jews and Judaism take on the coloring spoken of before, sarcastic, over-loving of the Jews, and stereotyped characteristics. However his claims to Jewishness ring false to a Jewish reader, as well they might.

When speaking to Church groups about his conversion to Christianity, he would bill himself as the "Wandering Jew." Once, after being cheated out of the rental of an auditorium in Los Angeles, he complained to the management:

I pitched in and explained that the doors in Los Angeles had been closed to me, that I had paid 50 good JEWISH DOLLARS for this auditorium...⁹⁰

The attempt to constantly connect Jews with financial dealings occurs throughout missionary writings. As another example of this self-hatred by Hebrew Christians we use the article entitled "On the Bowery of New York." A missionary named Joe "the Jew" Justus wrote telling of his conversion to Christianity. He writes that one night he was attending a gospel meeting:

I used to sit there half dozing. One night a man got up and said, 'What shall it profit a man...' When I heard that I woke up. You can't expect a Jew to sleep when he hears of profit.⁹¹

Even the most abstract and tenuous subject can be twisted by the people to involve Jewish financial dealings.

Salvation paid. I bring him misery; he gives me joy... That is a good bargain. Salvation is a paying business. The proof of its being good is that a Jew has stuck to it for twenty-seven years.⁹²

Anti-Semitic slurs by Gentiles are reshaped by Hebrew Christians to become statement in which to take pride. For example, Leopold Cohn, the Jewish missionary, was once accused by a Jew of accepting \$1,000 from the Baptist Church for every Jew he converted. When the Jew brought these charges before the Church board.

The Baptist brethren dismissed this poor misguided Jew and his charges. One of them told him, however, that he was all wrong, and the proof of that was that if this missionary business was such a profitable business, every Jew would be in it!⁹³

There is another dimension of the Hebrew Christian which has not yet been touched upon and which is an outgrowth of his self-hatred, and that is his first encounter with Christianity. Working from a basis of dissatisfaction with self and with Judaism, the encounter with Christianity is usually of a traumatic and extraordinary nature.

One such meeting was described by Edward Steiner in

a book entitled When Jews Face Christ by Henry Einspruch. A young Jew knocked down a priest by accident, and the priest insisted that he kiss the crucifix the priest carried as a sign of apology. The Jew refused:

I would not kiss the cross; instead,
I struck it, and it fell into the
dust. I spat upon it thrice, to
prove I knew no fear, and to cleanse
myself of that hated touch.

The age-long rage of Gentile against
Jew burst forth. He smote me with
the rope, he beat me with the cross,
and pressed it to my bleeding lips
to kiss; then, that first sacramental
blood grew sweet upon my lips, my
tears and blood mingled, and lying
prostrate there, I grew young again.
The birds sang, I breathed more deeply
the scent of lilacs, and near me I
felt a Presence which I could not
touch, or name, or dared to speak it,
had I known. I did not know that
somewhere, on some height, which men
call depth, where length meets breadth,
and forms a cross-we two should meet
again.⁹⁴

When the decision is finally made for Christ, great emotions are felt and expressed by the convert. The converts speak of becoming free, of shedding fetters, of seeing great light, etc. The parallels to the vision of Paul the Apostle are obvious.

I can assure you dear reader, that I
experienced a joy which can be fully
felt only by one who has come out of
Judaism into Christianity, out of
extreme bondage into the glorious
light and liberty of the Lord Jesus
Christ.⁹⁵

As Stephen Eckstein describes his own decision for

baptism,

A sudden glory passed through my soul,
and instead of hatred-love; instead
of bondage-freedom; instead of death-
life, salvation, resurrection and
heavenly treasure.⁹⁶

Eckstein's encounter with Christianity is quite typical of written testimonies of Hebrew Christians. He was disappointed in and dissatisfied with Judaism and knew of no solution to his problem. According to Eckstein, one day a stranger entered his store.

A peculiar, indescribable feeling came
over me as we shook hands and he ex-
tended me that traditional greeting
among the Jewish people, 'Sholom
Alaichem'...⁹⁷

Needless to say, this stranger was missionary to the Jews. Eckstein began speaking to him about Judaism and how unhappy he was as a Jew.

I explained to my new acquaintance
that the Jewish religion has no
comfort to offer.⁹⁸

One hopes that, upon conversion to Christianity, Eckstein found the comfort he was looking for.

At times the identification as Hebrew Christian becomes blurred and the label Jew comes out from behind the artificial label that has hidden it.

Martin Klayman is a representative of the American Board of Missions to the Jews and is a Jew converted to Hebrew Christianity, living in North Miami Beach, Florida. While being interviewed for this thesis about his convictions as a Hebrew

Christian, he stated that he was not a Zionist, had never experienced discrimination as a Jew, and felt at one with Gentile Christians. Though he claims he is not a Zionist, he certainly does speak like one:

Politically I'm not involved in the cause (Zionism). But I do know this, that until the Jewish people get together into a place where you can be Jewish and not be ashamed that you're Jewish, we are just sojourners; we don't belong in any place.

A Jew is not at home until he's living back in Israel, Eretz Yisroel.⁹⁹

Many Hebrew Christians could say the above statement, though one is impressed with the sentiment expressed. The following statement, however, could only be said by a person who has suffered and suffered deeply as a Jew. The facade, the covering that had been built up over the years by claiming to be a Hebrew Christian completely was torn open and exposed as an impossible dream on the part of a disturbed person.

I asked Mr. Klayman of his thoughts and emotions when he heard that Jerusalem had fallen into Israeli hands in June, 1967. The answer I received from him was completely unexpected:

I cried, I said Praise the Lord. Because we Jewish people are not going to ever find any homeland until we're back in Eretz Yisroel. There will always be anti-Semitism; there may be anti-Semitism amongst the Jewish people, I can take it from the Jewish people, but I can't take it from the goyim and the gentiles. At least in Israel you know you belong there; and even if it's

hard, you're working towards a goal. But I can work my guts out here in this country and I'm still a Jew bastard; so what good is... what have I got to invest in this country, what have I got to invest in anywhere I go in the world? It was thrown at me so many times by...no matter how hard I worked as an American. I was as patriotic as anyone during war years, but that still didn't do me anything; I was still a no good Jew.100

Mr. Klayman may not be representative of all Hebrew Christians but the inner tension he gives evidence of is also within many of his fellow Hebrew Christians. Self-hatred mixing with love of Jews results in inner turmoil and division among loyalties.

One other result of this clash of interests is for the Hebrew Christian to become absolutist in his beliefs and to drive out all possible doubts and questions. Persons like Mr. Klayman are open to discussion and to questioning and challenging. Others, the more adamant, are the active missionaries for the faith. They attempt to overwhelm their opponents with numerous verses from the Bible and with long prepared speeches and personal testimony.

In the next chapter we will examine the many methods used by the Hebrew Christian missionary in Jewish work. The methods are different in approach but with the same goal in mind; the conversion of the Jew.

CHAPTER VI

Hebrew Christianity has borrowed many of its missionary methods and techniques from Gentile missionary workers. Since 1915, when the Hebrew Christian Alliance began, missionary work among Jews has made great strides in developing techniques and presentation of the Christian message.

In 1924, an article appeared in the missionary magazine Prayer and Work for Israel. This article, written by Jacob Gartengaus, outlined nine steps needed for a successful missionary campaign. To reach the Jews, Mr. Gartenhaus used this 'shot-gun' approach which ranged from an intensive mailing campaign to visitation work and prayer circles. Many of his suggested methods, such as 'open air work,' have fallen into disuse by many missionaries. Several reasons -- the basic lack of interest by Jews, and the sophistication of the times, being the most prevalent among them -- have led to this method being a product of a bygone age.

Many a Jew, who would not think for a moment of entering a mission, will sometimes stop on the street to listen to the preaching of the gospel.

Such songs as 'We are Marching to Zion,' 'Come ye that Love the Lord,' etc., can be used with good effect. Messages that have Old Testament characters, prophecies and stories will attract the Jew.¹⁰¹

Another form of outdated missionary work is the "reading room." This approach was effective at a time when the Jew was still new to America and was uncertain of his own identity

as an American Jew. The reading room "...was supplied with various secular and religious reading material in the English, Hebrew and Yiddish tongues."¹⁰²

The reading matter was in reality bait for the Jewish reader. Knowing that the Jewish immigrant used every opportunity to gain knowledge by reading, the missionary would be present to speak to and work with those Jews who showed potential interest in the message being delivered to them.

Jews come to glance over the papers, but usually very little reading is done. Instead, the missionary in charge is kept busy answering the many questions asked him. It requires one well versed in Jewish customs, life and religion to answer these questions.¹⁰³

Here was where the Hebrew Christian could come into his own. The Gentile missionaries realized that

...the native missionary is best suited to win the native, and a missionary board, which engages in such work, thinks that 'a Jew is the best messenger generally to the Jew.'¹⁰⁴

It was felt that if a Jew heard the testimony of another Jew, he would feel more comfortable and perhaps would more readily accept or at least listen to the talk.

Basically the Hebrew Christian desires to convert the non-believing Jew to Christianity, yet not to a specific denomination of Christianity. Today, the thrust in conversion is for the Jew to "maintain" a Jewish identity; but, as was

stated in an earlier chapter, this is still a relatively new attitude on the missionary scene.

The main purpose of missions to the Jews was established in the 1917 issue of the Hebrew Christian Alliance Quarterly:

If we desire to reach the Jews at all effectively, it will not be by aiming to get baptisms. Many a rogue has been baptized and he still remained a rogue, without any efficacy resulting from the water. It will not be by trying to make Episcopalians or Presbyterians of them. In fact, according to our Lord's plan and the Apostle's example, I do not see what else we are to do except preach, witness and persuade the Jews to repent, and accept the Christ. The Apostle does not aim to get up a report of baptisms or converts. Our aim, if we want to reach the Jews of America with the Gospel, should be, first of all, to preach the pure Gospel Message.¹⁰⁵

The article went on further to explain the reasons why denominationalization of Jewish Christians would be destructive to the very concept of Hebrew Christianity.

...the Jewish nationality cannot be effaced, as some missionaries aim and glory in attempting, but that the Jews coming to Christ do not become 'proselytes,' or Gentiles, but re-enter their own spiritual inheritance. The Mother-Church of all the Churches was not apostate Rome but the truly Apostolic Hebrew Christian Church of Jerusalem.¹⁰⁶

It was the Hebrew Christian contention that by becoming a part of a specific denomination of Protestantism the Jewish convert would possibly lose his Jewish identity and disappear. For them, their Jewish identity must never be lost; it is their

being Jewish that drives them to not only follow Jesus but also to spread the "word" to their fellow Jews who are still unsaved. To one looking from the outside, this is truly a clash of identities and loyalties!

Our Testimony as Hebrew Christians must be as Jews to Jews, and we must aim to show our people that it is because we are Jews we accept Jesus as our Lord and Master.¹⁰⁷

Elias Newman, a Hebrew Christian missionary in the 1920's, once wrote of his own personal dream, a dream which has gained reality today. The dream said that the Hebrew Christians would one day no longer need to be dependent upon Gentile missionaries to the Jews, but could send their own men to the field.

Personally, I would like to see the day when Hebrew Christians themselves could be so organized as to send their own missionaries to the Jewish people.¹⁰⁸

It was this desire, of having separate missions of Hebrew Christians for Jewish missionary work, that at first horrified many Gentile missionaries. As was stated in an earlier chapter, there was a Gentile fear of Hebrew Christians breaking off to form their own religious body - to be apart and separate from Gentile Christians as Jews were from non-Jews. This fear proved unfounded as was quickly seen by the churches. Hebrew Christians began moving in their own circles but always remained loyal to Christianity first and in fellowship with Gentile Christians.

Jewish Christians were to become an integral part of the missionary crusade for Jews. Whether attempting to maintain their own "independence" as a separate body of Christians or becoming followers of Gentile churches, the Jewish Christian began to step forward to make his contribution of gaining Jewish souls.

The Gentile churches consider the Hebrew Christian as quite a valuable asset in their missionary campaign today. For example, the National Lutheran Council in 1959 issued a list of statements expressing their views of missionary work and the necessary approaches needed to win over Jewish converts. They came out strongly in favor of the new approach toward Jews (retaining their Jewish "identity") and the use of Hebrew Christians.

Hebrew Christians should be trained for evangelism among Jewish people since they will more likely have a congenial understanding of the Jewish people, their faith and their prejudices.¹⁰⁹

One of the papers presented in the book The Church Meets Judaism, 1960, written by a Gentile Christian, was in complete agreement with the principle of Hebrew Christians retaining a Jewish identity.

Allow them (Jews) as Christians to preserve their peculiar features as we allow it in other nations. In that case, being what they are, and by means of what they are, they should make a saving contribution to the history of mankind.¹¹⁰

Almost expressing verbatim the sentiments of Elias Newman of some 30 years before, this Gentile missionary, Otto Piper, writes that

Our task is not to make the Jew
a Gentile Christian, but to make
the Jew a true Jew. Hence we
must first of all enable him to
be a good Jew, and only then
also, a Jew who is saved, that is,
a Jew who sees what Christ actually
means for the historical mission
which his people have in the world.¹¹¹

Even a book as "orthodox" in fundamentalist thought as The Home Front of Jewish Missions, is in favor of the establishment of Hebrew Christian churches and community centers. The old adage "nothing succeeds like success" has made the churches realize the potential of Hebrew Christianity. And when one compares this new form of missionary work expressed in Hebrew Christianity to the standard forms used by Gentile Christianity, one can see that a Jew who is wavering on the question of conversion would be attracted to the movement closest to the Judaism and people he already knows.

Just as the expression "ask two Jews a question and you get three opinions" is said to characterize Jews, so too does this describe the situation among missionary techniques used by Hebrew Christians. One Jewish Christian missionary, Stephen Eckstein, emphatically says, "Tracts, pamphlets, charts, all these are primarily for Gentile consumption. The Jew does not read them."¹¹²

In contrast to this, Leopold Cohn, of the American

Board of Missions to the Jews, felt that tracts were quite successful and useful in Jewish work. In an article on Jewish mission work, written in the early 1920's, Cohn wrote of the proper manner in which to use tracts.

Please take one of our tracts, for instance, the one called, 'Behold, A Virgin Shall Conceive and Bear a Son.' It is printed in Jewish and in English. Read it carefully for yourself. Study it until you know it by heart.

After you have done this, hand it to the Jew of your acquaintance. Tell him that you received the booklet from a Jewish friend who wrote it himself and you would like to have his opinion of it. Knowing that one Jew understands another better than a Gentile, you would like him to read it carefully and give you his view of it. If you think of it, you would really without anyone's suggestion, be interested to hear any Jew's opinion along that line, so that you are on the side of truth in making this proposition. The Jew may have many questions to ask and he does it with the purpose of evading the main question, but you must stick to your text, namely that the word 'alma' which is the Hebrew for 'virgin,' is proven from the Old Testament Scriptures beyond the shadow of a doubt to mean absolutely a virgin.¹¹³

Perhaps if Eckstein had used Cohn's approach in tract handling, he would have had more success...

As a means of bringing alive the technique of pamphlet distribution, the following example is the recorded experience of one such distributor-missionary. Joseph Hoffman Cohn began

his missionary career, circa 1900, passing out his father's tracts in Jewish settlement houses in New York. Being a young novice, he would distribute his literature starting from the first floor and work his way up to the top floor:

But the stupidity of this system soon taught me a hard lesson. By the time I had reached the top floor of a building, the tenants in the lower floors had absorbed the contents of the circulars I had given them and with a hissed 'Aha! A Meshumad!' they were laying for me all the way down the stairs... Hot soup poured down on my head from above; pots and pans were thrown at me from open doors behind which my benefactors were lying in wait for me. Some tried to get hold of me and beat me. Finally I escaped into the street.¹¹⁴

Aside from such exceptional occurrences which happen in every profession -- missionary work usually works on well organized principles and plans. In the broadest sense missionary work usually follows six stages or steps. True, there are sometimes great differences between one missionary and another and between a missionary organization and another, however, these points are constants in all such work among Jews. The first and primary step is to show friendliness to the Jew in every possible way. It is only through being open and friendly that any type of missionary program can hope to succeed today.

The second step to be followed is to "Form a fellowship group with Jewish and Christian people in your town and

neighborhood."¹¹⁵ Before any successful campaign among Jews can be waged the confidence of the Jew must be gained and held. By means of these fellowship groups one is able to maintain an informal and casual yet effective contact with a Jew. The key being friendliness and pleasantness.

It is important that friendships be kept warm and fresh, and this can be done effectively by the frequent casual chat...The brief call at their work, in their homes, where they resort, the well-timed invitation to the mission home or lecture hall where they can learn more of Christ - these approaches will be appreciated and acceptable, even though perhaps not accepted immediately by them.¹¹⁶

Following the stage of the "fellowship group," the third step is to have regular classes to examine Jewish and Christian values and claims and how they compare to one another. It is stressed that the **tone** of these classes should be kept friendly and informal at all times. As Kligerman writes,

Light refreshments give an additional touch of friendliness and will enhance the neighborly feeling.¹¹⁷

These classes are to be conducted in such a manner as to give the Jew an opportunity to express his feelings as a Jew on religious matters and to permit an opportunity for the missionary to present his cause. Judaism is acknowledged as having values and teachings pertinent to today and seemingly has equal footing with Christianity. The "give and take"

expressed in the classroom situation is in reality however, just a new technique in the missionary's bag of tricks. Roy Krieder, author of Judaism Meets Christ writes that

...there has developed a more positive attitude of acknowledging the religious and ethical values in the non-Christian religions, and this has provided a good starting point for missionary effort. Thus in Judeo-Christian relations also there is in process a re-examination, and a new tactical approach is emerging, and it seems to be securing better results than formerly achieved.¹¹⁸

The missionary now listens to the other side, not in the quest of learning, but only because it is a more effective technique to be "open-minded" rather than "closed."

An aggressive attack on another faith closes the doors to evangelism, where an approach in humility opens doors.¹¹⁹

The method of attack now is more subtle than in previous times; it is just a new way to reach an old goal - conversion of the Jew.

...proclamation meets far less resistance and is more effectively rendered after we have listened.¹²⁰

Third step of winning over a Jew is by further developing the "friendship" with the Jew by inviting the Jew to special functions of enjoyment to him. These "special functions" range from having a Passover seder to celebrating the anniversary of Israel's independence. If the confidence of the Jew can be won, the Gospel can then be more easily presented to him.

The unbelieving Jew is encouraged to practice his rituals and observe his holidays. The Jew must have a basis in his religion if he is to attempt the transition to Christianity. As was stated in an earlier quote, "If he (Jew) does not believe Moses he will not believe Christ..."¹²¹

When the missionary reacts favorably to Jewish practices, the Jew is caught off guard and quite possibly his fears that the missionary is trying to convert him are allayed.

...instead of thinking it strange that a Jewish neighbor should still be keeping these holidays with careful ceremony, one should take note of them and commend him for keeping them.¹²²

This is precisely what the missionary, whether Hebrew Christian or Gentile Christian desires. Once the Jew's guard is down, he is then open for the missionary to make his move.

...taking note of the observance of the Jewish holidays and of the ceremonies they observe has specific value in approaching a Jewish neighbor with the gospel.¹²³

The exact manner in which such tactics are to be performed was quite explicitly stated in the book Judaism Meets Christ by Roy Kreider:

The new attitude of those who approach Jews is rather to begin by agreeing that there is much misunderstanding on both sides, that the Jewish religion has a great deal of the truth concerning God, and that Christians should be grateful for all that the Jews have done to prepare for the coming of Jesus and in nurturing the Christian

church in its first years. In thus emphasizing the good points of Judaism at the beginning the way is better prepared for showing later that what the faith of Judaism lacks can be filled only by acceptance of our Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour and Messiah.¹²⁴

A fourth step in missionary evangelism involves careful explanations and presentations of the Christian message to the Jew. This is a most important stage in missionary work, for Christian Monotheism, basing itself on a Trinity, differs in great detail from the Jewish concept and Jews are quickly lost to missionaries if monotheism is presented to them as really being a multiple compound instead of a unity.

In speaking to Jews, Christian terminology should not be employed by the missionary; only Jewish terms and expressions must be used. If the idea that the Jew is reaching for a completion of his Jewish self by conversion is to be stressed, then only the symbols and language familiar to him as a Jew should be used.

The American Board of Mission to the Jews in presenting the Gospel to the Jews strongly recommends that no cross be worn by the speaker or displayed in the auditorium. Instead of mentioning the word, 'cross,' substitute 'the sacrificial death of our Lord Jesus Christ for our sins,' or some similar phrase in presenting the Gospel to the Jews.¹²⁵

Please do not tell the Jew that he must become a Christian or that he must go to church. Use only Jewish terms: namely, 'You must accept the Messiah in His sacrifice for your sins; you must associate with His

followers, who love Him and love God
and the Word of God which is the Bible,¹²⁶
etc.

It is always assumed that the missionary is to have a firm foundation in the Bible as well as a belief in the literal word of God. This fifth point gives the missionary that much needed support which tells him that he is doing God's Work and therefore, any suffering or hardship he may endure is for the sake of the Kingdom of God. The missionary must be completely secure in his interpretations of the Bible and in the belief of a personal Deity.

In the words of Daniel Fuchs, general-secretary, (1965), of the American Board of Missions to the Jews,

The man who is not satisfied in his own mind as to the authority and sufficiency of the Bible will never plant convictions in the hearts of men. If you doubt the accuracy of the Word of God, please do not go to the Jew- he is already a better believer than you are!

Special emphasis must be placed on Old Testament indoctrination, for it is upon Old Testament truth that the appeal to the Jew for faith in Christ must be made.¹²⁷

When the missionary is challenged on Biblical belief he is to retain his unquestioned faith in its truth and strictness;

Here is no room for liberalism or moralism, but only for an absolute adherence to the Biblical truth of the total depravity of the unconverted soul of man.¹²⁸

Ideally, the missionary to the Jew will be able to

handle himself with any type of Jew, from secular to Orthodox.

Knowledge of Biblical and modern Hebrew is today (1960) increasingly essential and especially so since Yiddish is on the decline and Hebrew on the ascendance...¹²⁹

However, for a missionary to be completely successful in his work he should be aware that Judaism has added a great many "burdens to its back since the days of the Bible. The missionary must know how the Jew thinks and the reasons why such thoughts exist in his mind.

Nevertheless it is still of importance that missionaries have an acquaintance with Yiddish and rabbinics. It is of special effectiveness if the missionary is able to illustrate Biblical truth by an incident or quotation from Jewish history or tradition. The training should be theological and Biblical and include a course of Jewish history up to our own times, a certain amount of rabbinics, Jewish Prayer Book, Jewish customs and ceremonies, and Jewish beliefs. A careful study of the Jewish objections to Christianity and how to meet such objections should form part of the curriculum.¹³⁰

A sixth point in Jewish missionary work is for the need of a special love for the Jewish people. The question is asked of the potential missionary:

Do you find the Jewish people irksome?
Do their habits distress you?¹³¹

If the answer is yes, then the candidate's career does not lie in the Jewish mission. The missionary to the Jewish must always remember that

Unless we love the Jew we will never
be able to convince him that God
loves him.¹³²

Needless to say, every missionary organization has its own manner of waging missionary campaigns and its own list of methods as well. Radio evangelism, literature, bookstores, and hospital visitations are used to varying degrees of success in missionary campaigns at large and Jewish campaigns in particular.

For example, the American Board of Missions to the Jews, one of the largest missionary organizations in the world, has its Jewish missionary campaigns based on the following six points: The missionary to the Jew must be

1. ...enthusiastically in love with the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. ...a believer in the Word of God.
3. ...a student of the Bible.
4. ...a lover of the Jews.
5. ...patient. It may take years of labor before a Jew will be convinced concerning the Messiahship of Jesus. The Jewish people have been walking in darkness for years. Remember, when you bring them the Light it will take time before their eyes will be able to see clearly.
6. ...sensitive to the feelings and needs of the Jewish people.¹³³

Christians need to convince Jews of their sincerity, establishing confidence, before they can expect a response. Consequently, a genuinely Christian life is essential,... leading to... and emanating in a discreet and tactful personal testimony to the power of Christ's salvation.¹³⁴

The convincing witness of true Christian living... provide a basic evangelistic motive in an approach to Jews to stir them to jealousy so as to save some of them.¹³⁵

The only type of summary one is able to make about effectiveness in missionary material is to quote from the missionaries themselves:

Effective methods in one area may be relatively ineffective in another. The method must fit the individual we are trying to reach.¹³⁷

All of the methods previously mentioned have had varying degrees of effectiveness among different types of Jews in America and in the world today. Roy Kreider presents a breakdown of conversion possibilities which are potentially viable.

Though the Ashkenazi Jews differ from the Sephardim, and Reform Jews differ from Orthodox, nevertheless each type does not similarly respond to a uniform treatment. Sephardim are easier to reach than Ashkenazim, Reform are easier to reach than Orthodox. The unemployed are perhaps the easiest to reach, but are usually the least stable converts.¹³⁸

The major consensus of opinion among missionaries is that the

...heart to heart talk in the shop, or mission home, park, or hospital, the personal testimony as to what the Lord has done for us is still the most effective method...¹³⁹

In an earlier section of this chapter it was mentioned that the Jew should be invited to attend "special functions of enjoyment to him." One of the "special functions" which is used with greater and greater frequency today is Christian

identification with Israel.

For a missionary to gain the confidence of the Jew, he must first gain his interest. By showing an identification with a cause as important to a Jew as Israel, the missionary is able to make a favorable appearance and presentation and thus have potential territory to work from whenever he wishes.

Our example will be the magazine and organization "B'nai Shalom" founded at the turn of the century by a Reynolds Edward Dawkins. This group is anti-Catholic, anti-Protestant, ostensibly anti-missionary, pro-Jewish and pro-Israel. The magazine is published in Israel and in America and the group has toured the world giving programs on Israel. It has interviewed Ben-Gurion and has attempted to make strong ties with Israelis. These people have closely identified themselves with the Jewish people by passing out "ISRAEL MUST LIVE" bumper-stickers and making financial contributions to Israeli hospitals, etc.

All of this is well and good. However, there is from the Jewish viewpoint, which runs constantly throughout all their writings and work. They deny missionary work in Israel, yet statements appear which lead one to question the basic motives which motivate these people.

In writing of their close association with Jews, especially in Phoenix, Arizona, they say,

Because of our being here we have been richly rewarded in meeting and having close association with a number of very dear ones around the area. One of whom is Howard Gerstenhaber, Brother Abe's son. This young man is an example of how quickly and easily a Jewish person can receive the gift of the Holy Ghost... Through his simple telling of his love for us he was able to bring us Brother Robert, another Jew who has also received the Holy Ghost.¹⁴⁰

Why would a group, claiming as its main concern an interest in Israel and declaiming missionary work among Jews, issue statements like the above? The concept of using pro-Israelism as a come-on to attract Jews for missionary work must be at work here as well.

The B'nai Shalom use terms familiar to Jews, words in Yiddish, terms guaranteed to bring warm feelings from Jews reading their material and hearing them speak.

We went not as missionaries but as members helping other members of this body...to do a little 'mitzvah'...¹⁴¹

...underneath this outward dress (Chassidim) is a Yiddishe heart longing to see the fulfillment of that which their own prophets have written...¹⁴²

The purpose of this organization is to

...uncover the blasphemous ways of Christendom and her ages-old hypocrisy as an enemy of Israel.¹⁴³

Yet,

...when that Head (Jesus) takes leadership of the body (followers),

there will be a new creature in Christ Jesus. This is for the purpose of approaching Israel.¹⁴⁴

They are very pro-Jewish in the sense that

The scriptures teach us that Israel is the peculiar treasure and offspring of God. Therefore we call on the nations of the world at this time to recognize that God desires to speak to the world in the near future through the nation of Israel.¹⁴⁵

They feel that the people of Israel must remain intact as a compact unit and they speak out against missionary work in Israel.

Jewish People will never join anything... They were made to be joined.¹⁴⁶

Jewish People will never find their messiah that way (missionary work), anymore than gentiles have found a saviour.¹⁴⁷

"B'nai Shalom" is a queer group of people. They love Israel dearly and condemn Gentile attempts to change them, yet they themselves follow Christ and try to make similar followers out of Jews. They, while decrying missionaries, use the exact same tactics as were prescribed for Jewish work. Jews follow them because they feel that if a group of Gentiles love Jews and Israel and condemn missionaries, how bad can they be?

How bad can they be? They are sincere in their work and quite dangerous. A problem arises for concerned Jews: How do we keep the friendship of Gentiles while turning aside their missionary attempts? A problem with, as yet, no solution.

Now that the missionary work has been reviewed and discussed, we can turn to view the role of the Hebrew Christian in this program of conversion.

CHAPTER VII

The missionary platform has been laid bare for us to look at and observe, but where does Hebrew Christianity fit into it? Just how does the Hebrew Christian play his role in Christianity and to what degree is he successful?

As has been stated earlier:

...the genuine convert from Judaism,
ostracized by the Jews as a traitor
...and a stranger among gentile
Christians...re-enacts the drama of
primitive Christian discipleship.¹⁴⁸

Hebrew Christianity is, according to Hebrew Christians, the truest representation of Israel and therefore all glory rests with her.

Though being in such an "enviable" position, Hebrew Christianity suffers great identity complexes.

To the average Gentile...the Hebrew Christian appears as an interloper, who has trafficked with his soul in order to gain some social advantage. The natural reaction on the part of the Jewish convert is an attempt to find a way back to his own people. It is the struggle for a place in Jewish life which marks modern Hebrew Christianity...¹⁴⁹

In spite of the fact that Hebrew Christians attempt to remain identified with the Jewish community, their efforts have been in vain. This fact is readily admitted by one of their own members. Jakob Jocz in his book The Jewish People and Jesus Christ:

...so far history has proved that no attempt on the part of the Hebrew Christian to force his way into

Jewish life has been successful.¹⁵⁰

Despite the high cost the Jewish Christians pay to maintain such a tenuous identity, many Gentile Christians are still fearful of possible aloofness on the part of Hebrew Christian churches and groups.

...he [Jewish Christian] grows to feel that he is a Christian of a special variety and develops an unwholesome attitude and experience, and is more liable for disaster.¹⁵¹

The "disaster" spoken of is a possible return to Judaism.

Once the Hebrew Christian has "proven his stuff" and is accepted as a loyal Christian, albeit a Jewish Christian, he can attempt to become part of the Jewish missionary team. However, the same tension exists today as has always existed: Does the success of a "native" working with his own people outweigh possible failures or not?

Though a great many Gentile Christians feel that Hebrew Christians can be successful in Jewish work, they also feel that a great many difficulties could arise because of the presence of a Hebrew Christian among non-Christian Jews.

The Jewish-Christian will need to couple his natural aggressiveness and forwardness with an attested and thoroughly genuine life. It is generally true that Jews are frequently lacking in consideration, tolerance, sympathy, tactfulness, patience: they soon forget their own problems and mental agonies when considering Christianity.¹⁵²

At times, in fact, there is a noticeable dislike of

using Hebrew Christians as missionaries in any major capacity!

It has been a problem long debated whether Jewish Christians or well-trained Gentile Christians are the better missionaries to the Jews. Jews repeatedly and emphatically declare that they cannot and will not do business with fellow Jews. How much more so is this true when this relates to matters of religion...¹⁵³

The thought naturally arises that perhaps these people, the Jewish Christians, have been duped by others into accepting Christianity and, once baptized, were relegated to a "back of the bus" policy.

In actuality, the Jewish Christian seems to be placed under the restraining arm of a Gentile supervisor. The Hebrew Christian is active in missionary work in Gentile-run missions, but lacks any form of independence.

Though some Jewish Christians are very effective and desirable as missionaries, very few of them are capable of leadership.¹⁵⁴

Jewish Christians are significantly better for colportage and deputation work. For the mission center work, the Gentile is recommended as head with Jewish Christian colleagues.¹⁵⁵

Jews are a valuable conquest to make in missionary circles but once the victory is achieved and the Jew wishes to take his new religion seriously and become a missionary, a strange turnabout results. He can be trained with other Christians of non-Jewish origins but is to be kept from gaining too much influence.

As with the Gentile worker so also with the Jewish Christian, there should be long training before assigning or employing them. Their methods should be studied and guided by a non-Jewish missionary.¹⁵⁶

What we have written so far concerns itself only with the Hebrew Christian in a basically Gentile Christian environment. He is unable to express himself fully or carry on an independent program due to the veto of a Gentile Christian supervisor. Because of this, the Jewish Christian movement, with approval and assistance from concerned non-Jewish churches, has attempted to "break-away" and proceed with their own programs and approaches to Jewish missionary work.

One seriously questions the degree of independence actually permitted the Hebrew Christians in this quest and even more so, the motives for such a request being recognized. The independence is, basically, only nominal. Certainly "Jewish" approaches are used by these apostates and identification is made by them with their erstwhile people, but the actual behind the scenes planning and footwork come from the combination of Hebrew Christians and Gentile Christians. The Hebrew Christian is unable to work completely on his own because of the Christian philosophy that "all are one in Christ" and for a sect of Christians to claim any type of superiority over another is wrong; for the Jewish Christians to attempt to do so would be suicidal for them. Therefore, they have to use and work with their fellow Christian brothers, whether

Jew or not.

As an example of the Hebrew Christian church and philosophy being a mere come-on for Jews, I quote from the book The Home Front of Jewish Missions by Albert Huisjen. He suggests ways of approaching the establishment of a Hebrew Christian church in a Jewish area. They, the Jewish Christians, should start by

...naming the center of activity a Hebrew Christian Church at the earliest warrant; staffing the mission with Hebrew Christian personnel, generally though not necessarily with a family pattern; placing emphasis on their being Jews, different only by their belief in Christ and the implications of that belief; and, engaging only in such social services and activities as Christian charity commands.¹⁵⁷

The presence there of Gentile missionaries would be detrimental to the missionary cause, therefore, only Jewish Christians are to be used.

That the staff, the nuclei of a Hebrew Christian church in a Jewish community, be Hebrew Christian is most desirable. It is only right that the staff in such case be Jews among Jews, different only by their belief in Christ Jesus and the implications of that belief.¹⁵⁸

The Jewish Christian plays his role in Christianity as a pawn. His independence in thought and action are negligible though he may feel otherwise! At the bottom of the Jewish Christian movement one finds Gentile Christians in control, financially as well as ideologically.

Perhaps the following quote has greater ramifications than seen at first glance.

There was a time when the congregation of Israel was the people of God, the Old Testament, and we, Gentiles in unbelief, were the aliens and strangers. Now the congregation of Christians is the people of God, the New Testament Church, and the Jew, that is, the Jew in unbelief, is the alien and stranger.¹⁵⁹

Keeping in mind the earlier quote of Gentile superiority over Judaism, I wonder how much remains even when the Jew becomes a Christian?

When the Hebrew Christian opens a mission in a Jewish area, he is always questioned about his "Jewishness." One of the missionaries, Raymond Cohen, of the American Board of Missions to the Jews, wrote of his present status as a Jew in the April, 1972 issue of the publication, The Shepherd of Israel. In it he presents his definition of what a Jew is and how that differs from what is commonly thought of by Jews.

I am the Jew that God has always wanted,
the believing Jew, the completed Jew...
I have first become a Jew in God's eyes!

Now do you ask, do I keep the law? Do
I keep a kosher home? Do I observe
the Sabbath? Do I lay Tefillin?
These are the things you say makes one
a Jew. God says otherwise... God simply
requires us to believe Him!¹⁶⁰

Because so many testimonies of faith have been written by converts to Christianity, one is able to find a similar pattern developing in almost every one of the confessions of faith one reads. There are numerous booklets which are

compilations of just such testimonies by Jewish Christians. The booklet entitled Here is the Story Behind All Those Smiling Faces published in 1972 by the American Board of Missions to the Jews is the latest of a long series of such anthologies.

It is almost irrelevant to turn to a set page or person since almost all of their testimonies are so alike. Each one had a "miraculous" encounter with Christ and they now feel more Jewish than ever.

I came from a very Orthodox background, so I could not understand how my daughter could accept Christ as the Messiah. For nearly ten years I rejected my daughter for her decision. During all this time God was working in my life. Without knowing it my attitude began to mellow. Eventually I agreed to attend a meeting. I was impressed by the warmth of the Hebrew Christians. I met and began to study the scriptures with them. Then one day God showed me that He hears and answers prayer when Christ touched my life. From that day to this I was never more happy. The Messiah keeps the light in my eyes and the smile on my face.¹⁶¹

I was raised in an Orthodox Jewish home, so for a year I fought the acceptance of Christ. Then one day His love touched me. Since that time I have learned, above all else, that I can depend upon Him.¹⁶²

The testimonies go on and on with no great variance in any of them. At least the theme of a miraculous conversion

of a "Jewish Rabbi" has basically been done away with by missionaries. At times, however, it still appears in publications such as The Jewish Hope.

In the May, 1971 issue appeared the article entitled, "The Conversion of a Rabbi" written by Abraham Jaeger. In this story, all the elements of conversion are present; miraculous meeting with Jesus, change of character, peace of mind, and a new and greater love for Jews and God.

One day, tired and weak, looking for spiritual and bodily rest, thinking of my worldly spiritual troubles, I looked up to God and, after a deep sigh, said involuntarily, 'Jesus Christ, my Redeemer!' For a moment I feared I was out of my reason, but was still more astonished at the great delight the words gave me. I was satisfied that Christ was my Redeemer, no matter if I understood it or not. The belief in the Cross is a cross for the body and mind, it is the deepest humiliation before God, it is sorely self-denying.

I never realized what the aim of religion was until I felt that I was reconciled to God through the belief in Christ.

My attachment and hope for Israel as a nation is stronger than anyone can believe; God knows how willingly I would die for His people and suffer everything for their felicity.... If the Jews did not misunderstand Christianity they would surely accept it.

A man can never be converted in his mind; if the heart does not search the truth and yearn to God and change entirely, then a man will surely never see the truth.

In Christ I found living water for my thirst...I accepted it without asking the mind's counsel...I found the world cold, empty and dark; the only light is with the God of Israel, to whom Jesus Christ is the only way.¹⁶³

Because of the similarities among all the testimonies which spoke of conversions to Christianity, I interviewed two Hebrew Christians in two diverse sections of the United States. In June, 1971, I spoke with Mr. Martin Klayman of North Miami Beach, Florida, who is a missionary for the American Board of Missions to the Jews. In February, 1972, I interviewed Mr. Aaron Bortz, of Cincinnati, Ohio. Because of similarity in testimonies in the majority of answers, I have included the testimony of Mr. Klayman only. However, the tapes of the interviews are available in the American Jewish Archives.

Mr. Klayman has been a Hebrew Christian since 1935. He was raised in an orthodox environment in New York City and attended cheder, Talmud Torah, and yeshiva.

My background is very strict and very narrow orthodox.¹⁶⁴

When he was 19 years old he heard a missionary, a Mr. Wade Smith, speaking in a tent meeting about atonement and man's sinfulness, the need for a blood atonement and the lack of one for Jews today. Klayman realized that he was a sinner and that Judaism had nothing to offer him as atonement, since the Temple was destroyed and nothing could wash away his sins and guilt.

When I try to do something for God out of my humanity, it's not good. There's only one way that God will begin to see that something's good in me...when I have brought Him the blood atonement.¹⁶⁵

After hearing Mr. Smith's presentation, Klayment went home and looked up the various Biblical references Smith had used during the evening's presentation. The next night, Klayman returned to the tent meeting and "made a public confession..."¹⁶⁶ to belief in Christ.

Mr. Klayman has complete and absolute faith in the complete literalness of the Bible and its teachings.

When the Bible says something, it says something. The only book... I can really trust...is the Bible.¹⁶⁷

In addition, he also has a literal belief in an actual living creature called Satan: "Oh yes, I believe he actually exists as a person."¹⁶⁸

He claims that the true Judaism is only from the Bible. When I asked him to clarify his remarks, he said:

We try to follow the Bible as best as we can, as best as we understand. I don't find anything in the Bible about lighting candles. I don't find anything in the Bible about you got to eat potato latkes or you have to drink borsht at a certain time of the year and so forth. But there are a few things in the Bible that we are commanded and that we try to do.¹⁶⁹

The things commanded in the Bible and observed by Mr. Klayman are Biblical fasts and the Passover seder.

We remind ourselves that we're Jews... we're not divorcing ourselves from the Jewish people.

The Bible is a very simple book... If a man doesn't have an ax to grind and he wants to be pleasing in God's sight, the Bible is a very simple book. But when a man doesn't want to obey God, the Bible becomes very complicated and very legal and you have to sit about and argue about it.¹⁷⁰

When I asked him his thoughts as a Jew who has accepted Christ, he said:

When a Jew comes home to Christ, he comes home. He hasn't gone off and become a Gentile. It's the Gentile that has to change... I am a Jewish person who has come home to the faith of his fathers...¹⁷¹

Because of the attitude of hatred toward rabbis expressed many times by missionaries, I asked Mr. Klayman his thoughts on rabbis and Rabbinic Judaism.

...the Jewish people today... the rabbis that are teaching the traditions and following in it and the perpetuating of the traditions are perpetuating certain mistakes. And it's the rabbis who are the misleaders of the Jewish people... the real m'shumadim are the people who are rejecting Jesus.

The Jewish people haven't met the Jesus of Nazareth, the Jesus of the Bible; they've met the Jesus of persecution.

I love the rabbis; I think they're sincere. I think they're sincerely wrong.¹⁷²

Mr. Martin Klayman is sincere in his belief, sincere in his love of Israel and for the Jewish people. He is just one of many thousands of Jews who have made a decision to accept the belief in the messiahship of Jesus and by that decision have made the decision to risk losing family and friends for the sake of an abstract promise of salvation from sin and death.

CONCLUSION

It was stated at the beginning of this thesis that the Hebrew Christians have made their major contribution to the Church in Jewish mission work. For the Jewish Christian, this is the highest compliment that could be paid to him. Jews look at him and ask how could he be such a traitor to his people? Many Gentile Christians do not understand the position of Hebrew Christianity and have feelings similar to those of the Jews. It is only in the missionary-oriented churches that the Hebrew Christian can be recognized as a valid entity rather than a contradiction in terms; he is a Jewish Christian.

Though the Jewish Christian believes that he is a spiritual descendent of the early Hebrew Christian church of 2,000 years ago in Jerusalem, he is in reality, a creature of recent birth, beginning with the rise of political Zionism at the turn of the century (cf. footnote #6). The Christian missionary felt that by having the Jew retain his Jewish identity instead of leaving it, more Jews would be open for the message of the Gospel with a Jewish touch to it. What was overlooked, however, was that the self-perpetuation of a group such as the Hebrew Christians would be quite remote.

Jewish Christians, so far, have not been able to retain their identity. The implications of the Christian faith, with its definite denationalizing tendency, the social ostracism on the part of the Jews which invariably leads to intermarriage with Gentiles, and the infallible law that a

minority ultimately succumbs to the majority, makes Hebrew-Christian survival a remote possibility.¹⁷³

The Hebrew Christian stands in a middle position between Judaism and Christianity and because of this position, suffers from having dual commitments. Without question he is a true Christian in belief; however, his second loyalty is to the Jewish people, and herein lies the rub.

He feels he is still a Jew by race as well as by nationality, though his religion is Hebrew Christianity. He argues that,

...like the Frenchman or the Englishman who managed to be loyal to his nation and remain a good Christian, the Jewish Christian ought to be able to be both a Jew and a Christian.¹⁷⁴

In answer to this plea, the non-Christian Jew answers in the negative. Today, with the question of "Who is a Jew?" being asked by Jewish leaders and laymen, certain qualifications and limitations are and must be put on defining who a Jew is. One limitation which rabbis and the majority of Jewish lay-leaders subscribe to is that a Jew cannot join another religion and still be considered Jewish. Quite recently, the Bet Din of Boston, Massachusetts, issued a decree that specifically mentions Hebrew Christians as having lost all privileges as Jews;

The court said the 'Hebrew Christian' may not marry a member of the Jewish faith nor be a member of a Jewish congregation and may not have a right of burial in a Jewish cemetery.¹⁷⁵

Organized Jewry does not recognize the Hebrew Christian as a "fulfilled" or "completed Jew." It looks at Hebrew Christianity as another scheme of Gentile Christianity to ensnare Jews, and therefore opposes it completely.

A Hebrew Christian looks at his former people and wishes to remain part of them, and because of his great longing along with the teachings of his new religion, believes that he is and remains a Jew, regardless of Jewish insistence to the contrary!

Instead of joining a Gentile church where he could easily lose his Jewish identity, he affirms his Christianity in a Hebrew Christian church whereby he feels both Jewish and Christian. In his belief, he is a literalist Bible student as well as completely orthodox in Christian faith.

We now understand the reason why so many prominent Jewish Christians have championed the cause of orthodox Christianity. Positive Christianity can provide the only justification for the grave step a Jew takes when accepting baptism...If a Jew leaves his kindred and his father's house and becomes a stranger, there must be a great and compelling reason. True Hebrew Christianity is thus founded upon loyalty to Jesus Christ. It is for Christ's sake that the Jewish Christian is called upon to make this great sacrifice.¹⁷⁶

The Hebrew Christian sees himself as a modern Abraham, reliving the conversion experience he had upon realizing the existence of the One God. Just as Abraham had to leave family and home because of the truth he saw, so too does the Hebrew

Christian of today face the same decision and suffering of Abraham.

Abraham's experience is the experience of every true Jewish Christian ...Herein lies the significance of Hebrew-Christian existence to the Church. By the sacrifice of national loyalty for the sake of a higher good, the Hebrew Christian demonstrates before the Church and the Synagogue that the flesh profiteth nothing; it is the Spirit which giveth Life.¹⁷⁷

After having worked on this thesis for so many months, I feel that I have been able to gain a great deal of understanding of the Hebrew Christian movement today, and to see the inherent weaknesses and dangers within it.

As a Jew, I am adamantly opposed to their organization, their principles, and all for which they stand. I feel that this misrepresents Judaism as well as Christianity by corrupting the teachings and basic premises of both religions.

At one time in history it was possible to be a Jewish follower of Jesus and to believe in him as the Messiah. However, after 2,000 years of history, 2,000 years of changes in both Judaism and Christianity, the possibility that existed so long ago is no longer present among us. Too much has happened to Jews as well as to Christians for such a merger of faiths to occur, nor should a merger such as Hebrew Christianity ever be considered desirable.

The Hebrew Christian is sincere in his beliefs and because of that sincerity should not be mocked or ridiculed.

If this belief gives him the strength to face the world, then well and good. However, he should be aware of what his decision means.

By acting in such a way as to accept the tenets of another faith, he cuts himself off from the Jewish people and his heritage, no matter what his own desires are to the contrary.

A Jew who rejects "Judaism" in favor of any other religion still remains a Jew, although a sinning Jew. Because of the "sin" of, in this case, accepting Christianity in place of Judaism, the Hebrew Christian brings about a self-induced expulsion from the Jewish community. There are countless Jews who, throughout history, have realized this "either-or" situation and who have acted accordingly. Because of their needs and desires, they have become Christians and broken their ties with Judaism. This, both Judaism and Christianity recognize as fact and accept. The Hebrew Christian, however, has not acted in such a manner.

He has been told that only by baptism and belief in Jesus Christ as messiah will he become a "complete Jew." This is a very basic contradiction in terms. True, in matters of religion one can call himself whatever he wishes. However, man does not live in a vacuum and one's actions cause reactions around one. Just as a person may desire to call himself a "Hebrew Christian" and act accordingly, so too do the Jewish people have a right of free choice and to act accordingly as well by cutting these people off from any ties to Judaism or to the Jewish people.

FOOTNOTES

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