

Our Contributors

The Jewish Mission.

BY THE REV. J. MCCARTER

Our Presbyterian church is now adding to its other activities also a Mission to Israel, and surely the time is ripe.

In the last two generations the Jewish population has increased nearly eighty fold on both sides of the international line, and it goes on increasing. God brings them to our doors, transferring them from a dead ecclesiasticism into contact with the most vital form of Christianity. No movement of such magnitude has occurred among them since the fall of Jerusalem.

And the Jew is opening his eyes after the sleep of ages. The bondage of the Talmud is broken. Jewish journals complain that Jews, migrating west, leave their religion in the ocean. They are free to examine the claims of Jesus Christ. Many are now reading the New Testament, a book which many of them never saw till they crossed the Atlantic. Also rationalism and infidelity are making rapid strides among them. Jewish immorality and crime, almost unheard of in Eastern Europe, are rapidly growing.

The Presbyterians of Scotland, with whom our Canadian Church identifies itself, began missions to the Jews sixty-two years ago, that is contemporaneously with missions to the heathen, and has enjoyed a resulting blessing ever since.

A young Hebrew Christian, a graduate of the Theological Seminary in Montreal, has just been appointed to Jewish work in that city, where there is the largest centre of Jewish population in Canada. A mention of some of the circumstances leading up to this may interest the reader. In 1892 Jewish mission work was begun in Montreal by Mr. G. A. Newmark, a young Christian Polish Jew. The Presbyterian church adopted and supported it till 1895, when Mr. Newmark retired, and the church also dropped it. Being then in a charge within that Presbytery I offered myself by application to the Presbytery, and to the Assembly's Foreign Mission Committee, to do my best to continue the work. The offer was not accepted, no other agent was sought, and the field was abandoned. However, I did not see fit to leave it so, but resolved in simple dependence on God to venture on this exceptionally hard and, as many regard it, uninviting field. My reasons I state simply in self justification. I had by divine grace an unsoiled record of thirty-three years in the Presbyterian ministry. Though not a Jew I have felt a life long interest in the Jews, and given attention to Jewish missions.

I knew that in commencing Jewish missions the Scottish churches, from whom I had my training, had simply asked some of their ministers to exchange their pastoral for mission work, and some of this class I had personally known. I knew I might expect help from God so long as my walk should harmonize with His will. In all this my wife was absolutely like-minded, and we would be in interfering with no man's sphere of work. I resigned my ministerial charge, and began with the voluntary help of a few Christian Jews six months after Mr. Newmark had left the field. We simply cast ourselves upon God, and upon the friends

of Israel in any and every church. That I took an undenominational stand was thus not of my choosing. It was unavoidable unless I should exchange my Presbyterianism for some other name, which I had no desire to do. Personally I retained my church membership and my place in the Presbytery of Montreal. One thing I did expect,—larger moral sympathy from Christians generally, and more especially from the Presbyterian section,—and this was almost the only point in which I was out in my calculations.

During these past six years I have found no cause for flinching. The Master had been abundantly faithful, and some in each of the Protestant churches have supported us nobly. Our effort has been two fold,—to lead Jews to see Jesus of Nazareth their promised Messiah, and to awaken Christians to recognize the spiritual needs of Israel. Many words have been spoken, and much literature circulated with both these objects. Many Hebrews have been helped spiritually and temporally. More than one has made a credible profession of saving faith. Three times I invited Jewish evangelists to the city, whose words stirred the hearts of many. As time advanced a feeling of satisfaction began to dawn on me. The persistent keeping of this object before the view of Christians was having effect. Interest was being increased, and even a call arising that the work should be done on a larger scale than in my hampered circumstances was possible. Jews were becoming more receptive, and new avenues of contact with them were opening. Even the bitter and persistent opposition of the Jewish authorities showed that the truth was telling. My prayer that the care of Israel might become one of the recognized activities of the city seemed being answered.

Meantime the attitude of the Presbyterian church remained unaltered; self respect forbade my repeating an offer once refused, for any initiatory step seemed to me to lie rather with church itself. Once, on 11th Dec. 1900, I asked the Presbytery of Montreal to define its relation to my work, and I give the reply verbatim:—

"The 17th item on the docket was 'work among the Jews by the Rev. John McCarter.' The Rev. J. L. George called the attention of the Presbytery to the nature, the extent and importance of Mr. McCarter's work in Montreal and was followed by Mr. McCarter himself, who dwelt at considerable length upon the same subject, showing the difficulties he had to encounter and the limited resources at his command and the necessity for more 'both men and means to grapple successfully with so arduous an undertaking.'

"The Presbytery listened with much interest to the details of the work among the Jews in Montreal, as carried on by Mr. McCarter, and cordially recommend 'this work to the practical sympathy of the Christian public who are in a position to help on so important a cause.' (Extract from Minutes.)

This kindly expressed recommendation, however, led to no practical results. In the summer of 1900 a young Hebrew Christian, Mr. J. T. Trebitsch arrived from Germany, and called upon me. He impressed me most favorably and seemed to me one of the few of his class, whom

I have chanced to meet, in whom one can feel like putting full confidence. A few months later, at his own request, I invited him from New York, and for 13 months he gave me faithful and effective help in the mission. He also entered the Montreal Presbyterian College, and is now about to graduate in Theology. It now occurred to me as perhaps the fittest for the interest of my work to offer it in its entirety to the church, and to the care of my young co worker. I made this offer to the Presbytery of Montreal in December last, and in due course it was accepted, in so far that Mr. Trebitsch has been appointed to the field tentatively for a year, and the church is welcome to utilize the fruits of six years of pioneering labor. It is not without regret that I leave the field, for in a varied ministry of forty years I have not found a task which, with all its drawbacks, has yet been more enjoyable. Yet there is satisfaction that a beginning has been made in a field where no one was working. Without some quickening of interest it is not likely that any church would be moving now any more than was the case six years ago, nor is there the least likelihood that Mr. Trebitsch would now be on the ground, unless I had brought him.

Financially it has been a heavy personal loss, for the voluntary gifts, generous on the part of many, still left a constant shortage, which fell as an unequal burden on my family. But for this I have neither complaints nor regrets. It was a voluntary offering to God, and I will not mar the integrity of the sacrifice by any reflections. The reward I look for is to see the Jewish section of our population spiritually cared for, to the salvation of many souls, and abundant reflex profit to the Church of Christ.

Inspiration versus Intoxication.

BY PROF. W. G. JORDAN, D.D.

On this subject note the Apostle Paul's striking words: "Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess but be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5: 18.) Paul is not now thinking of the danger from persecution, sickness or death, but of the moral dangers that beset the soul; we must walk carefully, not as fools but as wise men. Who would care to be written down in God's book as a fool? We wish to be wise and successful, and yet how many people have befooled themselves and entangled themselves in the meshes of ruinous habits. The question which many are asking now is it the will of God that Christian men should be total abstainers, and that alcoholic liquors should be banished from society and confined to the medicine chests? These questions had not been raised in Paul's day. We have to face them now; and if we differ as to details, we can all set our faces steadily towards soberness and righteousness. At present we are dealing simply with the personal side of this great question and avoiding its political aspects. It seems to me that the whole trend of Scripture teaching is against indulgence in strong drink and in favour of "plain living and high thinking." We cannot imagine men who have the spirit of the prophets and apostles patronising the modern bar room. We do not need Scripture to teach us that many of the drinks that are sold to day are not fit for any living creature to use; they are vile decoctions tinkered for the sake of profit;