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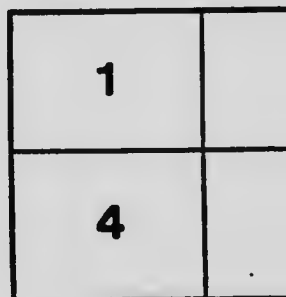
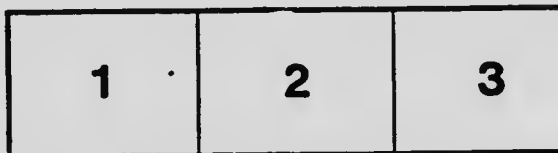
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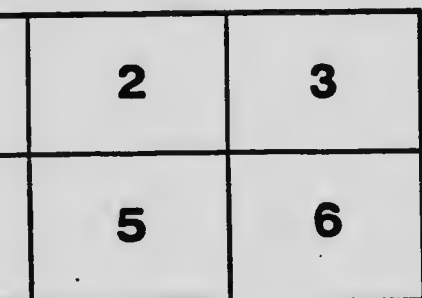
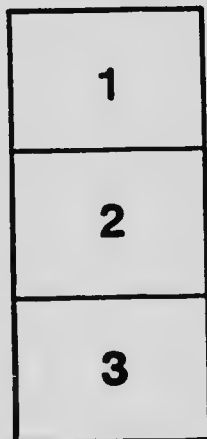
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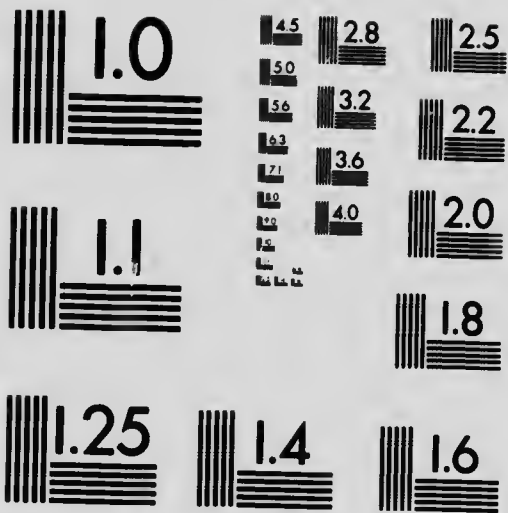
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# Modern Developments in Judaism

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BAN  
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1914

BY THE

REV. SABETI B. ROHOLD

Superintendent Mission to the Jews

Presbyterian Church in Canada.



Published by the  
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## INTRODUCTION

The author of these pages is a Jew. Born and reared and educated in Jerusalem and converted to the Christian faith when a young man, he knows their history, present condition, and national view point. With eyes no longer veiled to the meaning of God's Word he is an eager witness to his own people—and an effective one by reason of his early training and educational equipment.

He is Superintendent of the Jewish work of our Church in Toronto. To this work he came by invitation of The Foreign Mission Committee from similar work in Great Britain.

The matter of this Booklet appeared as an article in the "*Westminster*" for February, and is reprinted in this form with the permission of the Westminster Co.

J. MCP. SCOTT.

Toronto, Feb. 21, 1910.

# MODERN DEVELOPMENTS IN JUDAISM

BY THE REV. SABETI B. ROHOLD.

Ye of the wandering foot and weary breast,  
When will ye flee away and be at rest?  
The wild dove has her nest, the fox his cave,  
Mankind their country, Israel but the grave.

**A** JEWISH legend tells us that a few years before the destruction of the Temple, God foretold this tragic event to some pious Jews in Jerusalem who left the Holy City immediately, not to witness the terrible catastrophe. The light of the Shekinah led them and so they wandered from one place to another until they reached Europe. There the light of the Shekinah ceased shining, and they knew not where they were or where they were going. Some came to Spain and could go no further, but settled and built a Synagogue. Some survived in Prague, the capital of Bohemia, settled there and built the "Altneu-Schul" (one of the most ancient Synagogues in Europe). These latter knew that the destruction of the Holy City would soon take place. One day they saw the Roll of the Synagogue unroll till it came to the passage in Deuteronomy 28: 15-68, where the terrible curses are pronounced which would befall Israel when they ceased to hear the voice of the Lord their God. They knew what it meant—that Jerusalem was destroyed, and the Temple burned to ashes. In distress they ran away



from the Synagogue ; its white walls at once became black and so remain until this day. When the Messiah comes (so the legend runs) the blackness will immediately pass away.

Israel's history may be full of legends, but it is also full of real tragedy—for they have been bound for centuries in every land with the shackles of political slavery, impotence and religious superstition. It was on All Saints' Day, November 1st, 1290, that England—to our great sorrow—commenced the cruel and inhuman work of expulsion. Edward I. drove them from the British shores, and so country after country exiled them as lepers, their banishment being always enhanced by cruel and most inhuman treatment, each nation trying to out-do the others, until the sixteenth century, which stands out pre-eminently as the darkest of the world's history of civilization, and the climax of Israel's terrible persecution, her cup of sorrow was at last filled to overflowing when Russia in 1648, with fiendish cruelty, slaughtered 200,000 Polish Jews. With Sir Walter Scott we say : "The blood in the veins of their persecutors compared with their own was but as the puddle of the highway to the silver fountain."

The result of these experiences is put clearly by a Jewish writer : "They were forced into secret and sordid ways, denied hope, aim, or ambition of any worthy sort, contemptuously shunned, when they were not actively hated, protected by princes and persecuted by priest. What wonder if the Jews at last became degraded? Honor and honesty came at last to be regarded as impossible virtues. Life was so uncertain that it became unduly dear, and men

and women in their terror became selfish and cowardly. Under the terrible conditions of their life, the very virtues of the Jews turned to vices. The old Jewish characteristics of steadfastness and prudence and intelligence seemed to take new and lower forms ; for bare life's sake, the loyal, large-minded Jew learned to be narrow and secret and cunning. Money-getting became the one absorbing pursuit of the race, the one ambition of life, the one possible protection against cruel and tortured death. To toil for wealth which they might not openly enjoy, and to passionately believe in a religion which they might not openly confess was the portion of the Jews for centuries."

Is it any wonder that their mental powers were well-nigh destroyed, that the bright days of the schools of learning belong to the past, and that the fair goddess of learning refused to live in the narrow, dark Ghettos where the common rights of humanity were forbidden? They refused to learn the language and literature of their oppressors ; instead, devoting their whole being to the Talmud, the Sayings of the Rabbis, and to the mystic Cabala and Zohar, producing and chanting the quaint "Piyutim," the national, penitential songs of exile, such as :

Destroyed is Zion and profaned,  
 Of splendor and renown bereft  
 Her ancient glories wholly waned,  
 One deathless treasure only left :  
     Still ours, O Lord,  
     The Holy Word.

So darkness prevailed.

"As the Christian, so is the Jew" is a German proverb ; thus not only had Christianity waned to its darkest hour when the Reforma-

tion commenced, but Judaism had about the same time reached its lowest ebb. A bright light began to shine. Uriel Acosta, a writer and nationalist, born at Oporto, Portugal, in 1590, came to Amsterdam for liberty, but found Judaism a rigid, cumbersome and prosaic accumulation of ritual observances, very different from the liberal religion which he longed for. Feeling the inspiration of his high ideals, he was frank enough to express his disgust with the formal Judaism of the day, and to denounce the Pharisaism of the Amsterdam Jews. On the other hand, the Amsterdam Jews, who had known persecution, were not disposed calmly to see an impetuous young enthusiast openly assail the ancient faith. After printing his works, "An Examination of Pharisaical Tradition" and "Immortality of the Soul," he was indicted before the magistracy for the utterance of views subversive of the foundation, not only of the Jewish but also of the Christian faith, and judgment was asked against him as "a public enemy to religion." He was arrested, thrown into prison, and fined three hundred gulden, and his books were condemned to be publicly burned. He undoubtedly possessed the uncommon intellectual endowments and enthusiasm of the reformer, and so he gave his life, for he died after receiving thirty-nine stripes in the Synagogue in Amsterdam in 1647.

After Acosta's tragic death, Baruch Spinoza, philosopher and Biblical critic, appeared one of the most celebrated of the Spanish Jews. He, too, dissented from traditional Rabbinism. Born in Amsterdam, Novenber 24th, 1632, his history is common property, and there is no need to

dwelt upon the vastness of his learning or the acuteness of his knowledge. After leaving the Pereira Yeshibah, rumors became persistent that the young Spinoza had given utterance to heretical views, such as had led Uriel Acosta into trouble. When his father died his relatives disputed his claim to any of his father's estate, but he succeeded in taking possession of one bed as an heirloom. Two of his companions elicited his opinion that, according to Scripture, angels were merely phantoms, that the soul is identified in the Bible with life and regarded as mortal, and that in calling God "great" the Scriptures attributed to Him extension. He was summoned before the "Beth Din" and he made no concealment of his views. His teacher, Morteira, offered him, on behalf of the congregation, a pension of 1,000 florins a year, provided he would not give public utterance to his heretical views. This he refused and the congregation proceeded to his formal excommunication with all the curses written in the law—"Cursed be he by day, cursed be he by night, etc." A fanatical Jew even raised a dagger against him after leaving the Synagogue. He was thus cut off on July 27th, 1656, at the age of twenty-three years. Obligated to leave Amsterdam for a neighboring town, he supported himself by grinding optical glasses, living a brief but profitable life, without reproach, unselfish and unworldly, quietly pursuing his philosophical studies. "The Ethics" was his great work. He rejected Revelation and elaborated a system which is a combination of Pantheism and Fatalism. He died at the age of forty-four years, apart from all Jewish or Christian prepos-

sions, in the greatest spiritual isolation ; but he lived and died true to his principles and left much that is treasured by Jew and Christian alike.

In the Jewish Ghetto of Dessau, in the year 1729, was born the "Liberator," the apostle of intellectual liberty, or as Professor Gratz calls him, "the rejuvenescence or renaissance of the Jewish race," Moses Mendelssohn. His father was a respected Torah-Scribe, whose exacting occupation had a marked influence on the delicate physical and mental traits of his son. In spite of poverty, the child was carefully educated, and though extremely delicate, from a very early age he gave his whole soul to learning, and when he was thirteen years of age he was promoted to the school of Rabbi Frankel, with whom he became a great favorite. Although stunted in form, retiring and nervous in disposition, a kindly light shone in his eyes and the true, gentle spirit was such a living reality that he won the love of all who came in contact with him. Even his enemies, Jews and Gentiles alike, had to admit that he had a great soul. Dr. Frankel, his beloved teacher, was removed to Berlin as Chief Rabbi. The parting was too much for him ; with tears he pleaded to be allowed to follow, which he did on foot. The Rabbi was no less fond of his disciple, so he received him very kindly, lodged him in his house, and made him his copyist. German, Latin, Greek and Hebrew he studied thoroughly and soon learned Algebra and various sciences. He was the first Jew to enter the temple of Gentile learning. Lessing, the poet, became his intimate and life-long friend, and

the one greatly influenced the other. The Academy of Berlin awarded Mendelssohn the prize for an essay in a competition in which he defeated Kant, the Philosopher. He was elected one of the members of the Academy of Berlin, but Frederick the Great would not sanction the admission of a Jew. His first resolve was to endeavor to raise the standard of education among his co-religionists, so he published a Hebrew magazine, "The Moral Preacher." But the Rabbis took alarm at this tendency to investigate and for some time he had to give up writing. Twenty years of struggle so changed the life of the people that he was enabled to publish a translation in classical German of the Five Books of Moses, the Prayers, and several works on philosophy and theoretical religion. Here was his real work—the emancipation of the Jewish youth from Rabbinism. He protested against the interference of the synagogue with the rights of conscience. He became the leader of Jewish Reform and opposed Rabbinic Judaism. His great work "The Immortality of the Soul," had immense circulation, Jews and Christians alike reading it; but the latter could not understand how such an earnest seeker after truth should not see Christianity in their own light. So Lavater, of Zurich, wrote to Mendelssohn, in his preface to Bonnel's "Inquiry into the Evidence of Christianity," and publicly challenged him to a refutation. Of course Mendelssohn refused the challenge; and the uniform courtesy, the temperateness of his language, and general charity of his reply was such that Lavater was so impressed with the sense of Mendelssohn's nobility and high morality that

he accepted his refusal, and even wrote and apologized for the liberty he had taken.

It is impossible for me in this article to enter into the least detail of this truly great man's philosophy, ethical teaching, activities, and the vastness of his influence on the Jewish mind even to this day. His whole life was spent in awakening the sense of the beautiful and the harmonious, which was almost entirely dormant among the Jews of his age. The Reformers in the Jewry call him "The Liberator," the "Second Moses," and he is looked upon as the "Living Spring of Modern Reformed Judaism." He died on the 4th of January, 1786.

We must pass over all other of the earlier names, as we wish to say a few words on the present day Reformed Judaism.

A Council of Rabbis was held at Frankfort, in 1843, which determined to have Reform. Permission was granted to (1) to do away with Hebrew in prayer, (2) eliminate from the Liturgy (*a*) all mention of the Messiah, (*b*) all sacrificial prayers, (*c*) all reference to a return to Palestine. All were allowed to believe as they wished; one part denied the divinity of the Old Testament, another accepted what they pleased.

In 1890, an authoritative declaration of the ethical principles of Reformed Judaism was printed, signed by two hundred German and Austro-Hungarian Rabbis, which was a liberal improvement on 1843.

A few years later the Revisionist Society was formed to revise the trial of Jesus Christ, which they did successfully and declared Him innocent. Because of dark Russia with its super-

stitious Judaism, as well as bigoted Christianity, this society did not live long.

In December, 1899, Father Hyacinthe wrote a remarkable letter to Dr. Max Nordau, comparing Jesus of Nazareth with Dreyfus, and inviting the Jewish people to revise the judgment which condemned Jesus of Nazareth. To this Dr. Nordau replied, and the letter appeared in the *Jewish Chronicle*, December 15th, 1899. He says: "Jesus is soul of our soul, as He is flesh of our flesh; who then could think of excluding Him from the people of Israel? St. Peter will remain the only Jew who has said of the Son of David, 'I know not the man.' If the Jews, up to the present time, have not publicly rendered homage to the sublime moral beauty of the figure of Jesus, it is because their tormentors have always tortured and assassinated them in His name. The Jews have drawn their conclusions from the disciples as to the Master, which is a wrong, a wrong pardonable in the eternal victims of the implacable, cruel hatred of those who call themselves Christians. He honors our race and we claim Him as we claim the Gospels—flowers of Jewish literature and only Jewish. The revision of His trial has long since been made."

Reformed Judaism came to England and in the year 1841 the first Reformed Synagogue in London was established. The Rev. Professor Marks became their first Rabbi. In fact he was the leader of Reformed Judaism in England. He was a man of culture and power and with great energy. The then Chief Rabbi and the London Rabbis delivered fiery sermons denouncing the Reformed Jews as heretics. But



the movement flourished and is a great power in the London Jewry. Professor Marks, who was the target of the Orthodox Jews, lived to a great age, beloved and esteemed by all. He died in May, 1909, at the great age of 89 years, in great triumph. Memorial services were held in many synagogues and an elegy was even delivered by Dr. Adler, the chief Rabbi of Great Britain, who is supposed to be head of the Orthodox party.

In the United States, Reformed Judaism made rapid strides; Sunday services were successfully organized, and a very liberal spirit was taken towards Christianity. In "Creed and Deed," Professor Felix Adler declares that "In Jesus we beheld the renewal of the ancient prophets."

In 1902, a new epoch came to Reformed Judaism—the "Jewish Religions Union" was definitely instituted in London, with Mr. Claude G. Montefiore as leader and President. Its object was to provide means for deepening the religious spirit among those members of the Jewish community who are not in sympathy with the present synagogue services. During the first year of his leadership, Mr. Montefiore delivered a course of lectures which were printed in book form, entitled "Liberal Judaism," a very interesting book, in which are set forth the ethics of the "Union." He speaks very reverently of Jesus Christ—"The most important Jew that ever lived, to whom the sinner and the outcast, age after age, have owed a great debt of gratitude." The Rabbis were greatly alarmed and raised a great cry, but the movement went on.

The "Union" has again revised its creed, and have now formed themselves into a very important community, and have a synagogue of their own; and it is particularly their own. It is only a few months old, but it is an accomplished fact. It has set the whole Jewry in motion. The very Chief Rabbi, who delivered such an eloquent eulogy a few months ago on the death of Professor Marks, preached a great sermon denouncing the "Union" as heretics, and some Rabbis charged Mr. Montefiore with putting the knife into the heart of Judaism.

All this does not disturb the great leader, who, with the true spirit of the Reformer, remains calm, exhibiting a spirit of love and forbearance; but at the same time, giving his abilities, energies, and his fortune to this cause so dear to his heart.

In fact, the outcry of the Rabbis gave the "Union" a forward impetus, and Mr. Montefiore published a pamphlet which has been accepted by the "Union" as generally defining the principles on which the new Synagogue is based. The pamphlet is a wonderful human document, and one is at a loss which part to quote; and all the more so when we are only able to select a very few paragraphs. We do so reluctantly, as it may not convey the whole idea and importance of the movement.

"We have no creed," says the pamphlet, "and we will have none. We have no narrowing cut and dry series of dogmas, no articles thirteen and thirty-nine. We do not say Believe this and that and you are a 'Unionist,' deny and you are not." "We stand for a fresh and changed attitude towards authority, and especially towards that particular type of authority, which is the central importance in Orthodox Judaism, the authority of the Book ... and the Code. We accept nothing which does not see a to us good. The authority of the book so far as it goes is its worth, and so far as that worth reaches, so far reaches the authority. The

book is not good because it is from God. It is from God so far as it is good. The book is not true because it is from God, it is from God so far as it is true."

Mr. Montefiore elaborates his system of theology and ethics, and makes a very passionate appeal, concluding with this emphatic declaration :

"The traditional conception of Judaism both in Theory and practice is, we think, doomed. It mixes up so much error with truth, so much of the obsolete with the living, that the erroneous and the obsolete clog and ruin the living and the true. The ivy is killing the tree."

Such is the development of "Reformed Judaism" up-to-date. But we must not forget that, with all their liberality and charitableness, and though in many ways they accept certain Christian ethics, they are combatants more dangerous to Christianity than Orthodox Judaism is. Renan influenced and taught modern Jews to assume a friendly attitude and to claim Jesus as their own greatest teacher, and His ethical teaching as their own inheritance—a subtle attempt to destroy the doctrines of Christianity by levelling it down to the position of a mere ethical religion like Judaism.

But we at the same time fully agree with the Rabbi who said, "Judaism is bankrupt;" or with Mr. Montefiore who declares that "it is doomed and that the erroneous and the obsolete clog and ruin the living and the true." **Nay, the Jewish people are drifting and we must catch them while they drift.** May we not try to alleviate their condition or help to bring a ray of the true light to illuminate Israel's gross darkness and thus do our part to liberate the suffering race who produced "the suffering Messiah."

בית בשורת המשיח לבני ישראל.

The House of Good Tidings of the Messiah  
to the Children of Israel.



MISSION TO THE JEWS  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA

A Mission to the Hebrew People of Canada  
under the administration of the Foreign Mission  
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Only money specially contributed for this  
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This is a strong and well organized mission to the 16,000 Jewish people in Toronto. The Mission is to be extended to other parts of Canada as needs may require and as the means may warrant.

The Mission premises are in the heart of the Jewish quarter, and aggressive work is carried on in the following departments: Reading rooms, Night Schools for men and women, Sewing classes for women and girls, Sunday School, Boys' Club, Kindergarten, Tract Distribution, Gospel Services, Bible Classes, Open Air Services, Free Dispensary, Club for business women, Systematic visitation of homes and hospitals and other institutions.

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Mr. Rohold is prepared, as the claims of his other work will allow, to give lectures, illustrated by lantern slides from original views, and by curios, upon Palestine and Jewish life and customs.



