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BY EDWARD M. MERRINS, M.D., WUCHANG, CHINA.

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“For them that honor me, I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.”— *1 Samuel* ii. 30.

THE factors of a nation's greatness may be numerous, but the one thing needful, without which all others are unavailing, is religion, vital and elevating. A nation may become dominant by ruthless warfare, or it may succeed by diplomatic craft in the struggle for material wealth and aggrandizement; but no true greatness or permanence can rest on such foundations.

The Jews, under divine education and discipline, developed a noble national ideal. They believed in the unity, justice, and supremacy of Jehovah, that he had intrusted to them his law and oracles, and they believed with heart and soul in his overruling Providence. Indeed, according to Renan, “the exaggerated belief in a special Providence is the basis of the whole Jewish religion.” As a corollary, they also believed that God had specially chosen them to incarnate and proclaim his law to all the world. This law was regarded not as an arbitrary imposition, but as expressing the will of the good God, and therefore setting forth an ideal for the family and the nation. In it the essential principles of morality and the deep concerns of spiritual religion found a prominent

place; and to give worshipers the repose of knowing how far its requirements had been complied with, all the forms of worship and legal observance were precisely formulated and strictly enjoined. Because it thus met all their felt needs, and inspired them as a nation with the consciousness of a sacred vocation, the law was obeyed and loved with supreme devotion. In the words of the Psalmist, it was of more value to them than thousands of gold and silver; . . . though enemies had almost made an end of them, they forsook not its precepts. The one characteristic which made them terrible to their enemies was the daring contempt of torture and death when their religion was threatened. The inspiration of religion, and their fidelity to it, were the source of the lasting strength and goodness of the Jewish people.¹

A religion so elevated and strong could not become the very life of the nation in one generation. Until this end was reached, it needed all the help and protection which external symbols and forms could give. If many of the people at various times fell into a mechanical, routine way of caring only for the exterior part of the law, to the neglect of purity and sanctification of the heart, this is a danger to which men everywhere are prone, and was not the fault of the law.

One of the principal of these forms was the rite of circumcision. Ethnologists differ greatly as to the origin of this rite. The various hypotheses are: that it was a preparation

¹“Of the many Semitic peoples one only, and that one politically one of the smallest and weakest, has maintained itself as a national unity; this small nation has defied all storms, and stands to-day a unique fact among men,—without a fatherland, without a supreme head, scattered all over the world, enrolled among the most different nationalities, yet united and conscious of unity. This miracle is the work of a book, the Thora, with all that has been added to it by way of supplement” (Chamberlain, *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*).

for marriage; an obviation of superstitious peril from sexual relations; a test of endurance; a tribal distinction; a substitute for human sacrifice; a consecration of the generative power; a mark of social distinction (e.g., in the days of the Pharaohs, Egyptian boys were initiated by it into the order of the priesthood); a mark of subjection, the victors permitting the vanquished to retain their lives with this permanent stamp of their humiliation (1 Sam. xviii. 27); a sign of initiation into the tribal community; a hygienic precaution. In opposition to those who argue that for hygienic reasons alone, it would be well if circumcision were practiced universally, it should be said that its value in this respect is not so great as to justify its performance in all cases.

As the Jewish sage Maimonides wisely said, religious rites depend for their spiritual value not so much on their origins, as on the use men make of them. Whatever its meaning to other peoples, to the Hebrews circumcision was the sign of their Abrahamic covenant with Jehovah. It admitted the circumcised to all the rights and privileges belonging to the Hebrews under the terms of the covenants, and it was the sign of the consecration of the individual life to the service of Jehovah. Those only were Jews who submitted to the rite, for belief in the religion without circumcision did not admit to membership in the community. The rite was further spiritualized by Jeremiah, who made it more clearly sacramental, by teaching that the outward sign was the symbol of that circumcision of the heart which leads to the putting away of the lusts of the flesh. In this more spiritual form, the covenant was still associated with the permanence of Israel as a separate people (Jer. xxxi. 36).

Without the rite of circumcision, it is doubtful if the Jewish nation with its religion would have survived to the

present time. A religion that costs nothing, that involves no conception of pain or sacrifice in some form or another, has no abiding influence. Certainly in the early stages of moral development, physical pain seems to be an indispensable disciplinary agent, and often the pain is more salutary when inflicted on another dearly loved, than when endured by oneself. So the deep religious significance of circumcision was impressed upon the mind of the Jew every time he witnessed its performance, particularly when his own child was the sufferer, and he could not but remember that he had himself suffered in like manner. Further, the religious value of the rite was great, as it kept the Jewish church pure and strong by repelling would-be proselytes who were timorous, half-hearted, or insincere. Privileges so gained were not lightly cast aside. It was deplorable, but hardly surprising, that in time circumcision came to be regarded as absolutely necessary to salvation.

On the other hand, without the living power of religion to support the rite, it became a dead, formal ceremony; and those who despised it, did their best to efface its marks, and then joined themselves to other nations (1 Macc. i. 16).

Another sign of the relation of Jehovah with this people was the institution of the Sabbath, connected with the Mosaic covenant. An old institution, it was hallowed and given a new spiritual significance when its observance was made a national obligation of the Jews. The cessation of all work on one day in seven was a blessing because of the physical rest it gave; but its great value lay in the opportunities it offered for spiritual recuperation, and the purification and development of national ideals. In public worship the heart is lifted above individual needs to prayer for the nation. No wonder that, in the time of the Jewish captivity, the observance of the Sab-

bath, with submission to the rite of circumcision, came to be regarded as the mark of the true Israelite. The legalists unfortunately hedged the day about with a formidable array of religious enactments and prohibitions which made it repellent and burdensome to many; but to those of a free religious spirit, it was a festival, a day of joy and delight, keeping strong and pure the currents of their religion and patriotism.

The desire for comfort, luxury, wealth, for all the good things of this life, has surely never been so keen generally, nor has social and industrial competition ever been so fierce, as in our modern civilization. In consequence there is the fear that the inner life of the people may come to rest on a wholly materialistic basis, brotherly love and self-sacrifice vanishing in the struggle for self. This means the loss of all enthusiasms and ideals. A nation in which this happens is dying. Therefore, in the interests of the state itself, to mention no higher reasons, it is the duty of the state to support the cause of true religion, by insisting on the observance of one day in seven as a day of rest, and of opportunity for spiritual refreshment.

It may be objected that, in these days, the Christian church, one only of several religions, is so torn by faction that it can never become again what it once was, a compact organization capable of guiding and inspiring the national as well as the individual life. Even so, there are a few fundamental principles, such as love to God, and the brotherhood of man, which afford a basis sufficiently strong and wide for not only all Christian denominations, but also those of other monotheistic religions, to unite in working for the good of the state. And the state has the right to demand from them, as representing all that underlies national well-being, whatever prac-

tical help they can give towards the solution of social and other national problems. When the forces of religion and the state are working vigorously and harmoniously together, the nation is becoming truly great.

IX. SERVICE TO THE NATION.

"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I remember thee not; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."

Jewish Psalm.

To win and hold the ideals essential to a nation's greatness, the people must be patriotic. By patriotism is meant, of course, far more than sentimental attachment to one's country, its rocks and rills, its woods and templed hills, although, as when colonies clash with the mother country, this often seems to be the most powerful feeling. It means whole-hearted devotion to the highest national interests, irrespective of local and personal considerations, and willingness to make great sacrifices for them. The Romans in the days of their power mastered all other peoples, because they always preferred the success and aggrandizement of the state to their own private advantage.

To call forth such patriotism there must be in the public mind the consciousness of a great national destiny, the recognition of some noble cause worth every sacrifice. If nothing is deemed worthy of sacrifice and struggle, and pure selfishness in all its forms is rampant, the vitality of the nation, that instinct which leads not only to the bare preservation of the race, but, through struggle, to its supremacy, sinks very low, and may pass beyond the point of recovery. As with the individual, so with the nation, it is saved by its hopes. Politically and religiously the Babylonian exile was one of the greatest crises in the national history of Israel, and, as Cor-

nill remarks, if Israel had been an ordinary people, they would never have survived the catastrophe. But Israel was the exponent of a great religion, and so could not perish.

The statement is not infrequently made that Western nations at the present time are suffering from the incapacity to adapt their moral and religious doctrines to the conditions of modern existence and the affirmations of science. However this may be, the vivifying of national ideals by some great conception that shall glorify the lives of even the humblest appears to be sorely needed. An English statesman writes: "A background to life, some common bond uniting despite the discordance of the competitive struggle, some worthy object of enthusiasm or devotion beyond the aimless passage of the years, some spiritual force or ideal over the shabby scene of temporary failure, this is the deep, imperative need of the masses in our great cities to-day. . . . No material comfort, increased intellectual alertness, or wide capacity of attainment, will occupy the place of this one fundamental creed. The only test of progress which is to be anything but a merely animal rejoicing over mere animal pleasure, is the development and spread of some splendid ideal which will raise into an atmosphere of effort and distinction the life of the ordinary man."¹

Whence comes such an ideal? To state that when the vital instinct of a nation is healthy, it readily suggests the religious and moral ideals which insure the nation's survival, seems to be arguing in a circle.² It is only when already animated by high ideals that the vital instinct is strong and healthy, for these ideals are the very lifeblood, as it were, of the nation.

¹ Masterman, *The Heart of the Empire*.

² René L. Gérard, "Civilization in Danger," *Hilbert Journal*, January, 1912.

What men do, depends on what they believe. This argument also seems to ignore the working of God in human history. The Hebrews, for instance, were naturally an unprogressive people, without a particle of originality in the industrial arts and the common avocations of daily life. Whence came their religious originality? Like all Semites, in religious matters they were intensely conservative, clinging tenaciously to primitive beliefs and practices, and some of these, as the licentious worship at the ancient shrines, were an almost insurmountable hindrance to spiritual progress. For them to develop original and inspirational conceptions of the Deity, totally at variance with the tenets and practices of surrounding religions, is a spiritual marvel not to be explained by anything in themselves. "Step by step an astonishing drama unfolds itself before us. Men come forward one by one, and speak now in impressive prose, now in poetry which for grandeur has never been surpassed on this earth, and one by one the calves, and the standing stones, and all the other ancient paraphernalia are thrown out as unclean things on the rubbish heap, and Israel realises at last that the God whom for countless ages he has ignorantly worshipped, He is the God of the whole earth. And this portent happens not among a reflective people like the Egyptians, or an artistic and philosophical people like the Greeks, or a practical nation like the Romans — but among Hebrews, a people who were incapable of so much as making a clay waterpot without having a foreign model to copy — and even then made it clumsily!"¹ Jewish history proves that a nation's salvation depends not on human wishes, nor on human efforts, but on God's mercy (Rom. ix. 15). It is he who determines the appointed seasons of the nations, and the bounds of their habitations, in order that

¹ MacAllister, *A History of Civilisation in Palestine.*

they should seek after him. This point is emphasized, because it makes a very great difference in the dominating power of ideals, national and individual, whether it is imagined they are wholly evolved from human consciousness, to be accepted or rejected as we please, or whether we feel they are imposed on us from without by a Power to whom we should be willing and glad to surrender.

The Jews were intensely patriotic. No people ever loved their land with a more passionate devotion. "By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept when we remembered Zion. . . . If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I remember thee not; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." And their love for the soil still exists. Jews have never ceased to congregate at the wailing place in Jerusalem, to express their grief because the holy land is in the possession of strangers.

Their patriotism rested on the deepest of all grounds, on the conviction that, as a nation, God had a very special work for them to do, and that, by fulfilling their destiny, all the nations of the world would be blessed. They did not create nor choose this destiny, nor was it their ancestors who selected it for them with a healthy instinct. For their prophets never wearied of reminding them of the pit whence they were digged (Isa. li. 1, 2), and of their miserable condition in the days of the nation's infancy, before God took pity on them and redeemed them (Ezek. xvi. 1-51; Hos. xi. 1). "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name, give glory, for thy loving kindness, and for thy truth's sake," was their ascription of praise.

In a nation without high ideals there is a tendency for all classes to sink to the same low moral and intellectual level.

Government is carried on by mediocrities and incompetents. The people cease to fear and respect the laws when they find those intrusted with power cannot guide and control them. "Where there is no vision, the people cast off all restraint" (Prov. xxix. 18).

In such circumstances great men do not appear, — an ominous sign of decay. A nation in this condition can be saved only by passing through fiery tribulations that humble and purify. When the hearts of the people are made fit and receptive, when there is a purified and united national spirit, then God sends his messengers, who "come in the fullness of time into a world which is waiting for them. They are the consequences of vast upheavals, products of the world's stress and storm, pushed upwards from beneath by the pressure of mute social forces which have been long mustering. For this reason great men come, not singly as a rule, but in groups, like highest peaks in a mountainous region. The greatest of them does not stand alone, nor does he rise abruptly from the level plain. His base is on the table-land of some vast public emotion."¹

When the Jewish nation was carried into exile, the people of the Southern Kingdom retained the priesthood, and the Book of the Law as their rule of life; and, being permitted to exercise their religion, it became the more precious to them during their years of adversity, and was purged of all its idolatrous practices. The conditions being thus favorable, prophets rose up among them to further strengthen and inspire the people, who accordingly clung tenaciously to their ideals, and in time returned to their own land to fulfill their destiny. On the other hand, the ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom had actually surrendered their nationality in spirit

¹ Jones, *Idealism as a Practical Creed.*

before they went into exile. Without law and sacrifice, or the Levitical priesthood, they were thoroughly leavened with pagan customs, and as in exile there were no other institutions and ordinances to support and strengthen their religion and nationality, the voice of prophecy was no longer heard among them, and as a separate people they passed away. Even more striking was the fate of the Assyrian empire. With no great ideals, as far as we know, and with no principle of cohesion, it fell, not gradually, like the Roman empire, but with a sudden and terrific crash.

As adversity, when its uses are rightly perceived, strengthens and purifies the national spirit, conversely, in ease and prosperity a people is apt to relinquish its ideals. Many of the prosperous Jews of the exile, even of the Southern Kingdom, did not return to their native land and in time were absorbed by their conquerors. If all had accommodated themselves to expatriation in the same spiritless and worldly-wise manner, nothing would have remained of Judaism but the name of a people in cuneiform writing, which modern erudition would have deciphered as *hebr* or something similar, one name more among other meaningless names.¹

In our own day, outbursts of anti-Jewish feeling and the appeals of "Zionism," are reviving the national spirit of the Jews of western Europe, who are rapidly being absorbed by surrounding peoples. "Anti-Semitism," by wounding the susceptibilities of Jewish youth in the local educational institutions, has roused them to a sense of racial injustice, and stung them into enthusiasm for a national revival.

"The most important effect of Zionism," writes Dr. Ruppin, "is that to those Jews who had cut themselves off from their religion, and who, as Jews, had lost almost every land-

¹ Peschel, *The Races of Man*.

mark, every lofty ideal, and were compelled, baptised or unbaptised, to assist, repressed and unbidden, in the cultural activities of the people among whom they lived, or to renounce ideals entirely and lose themselves in money-making and material enjoyment — to those Jews Zionism has by the mere fact of its existence, given a new meaning to life and endeavor.”¹

Patriotism may demand the extreme of pain and sacrifice. When a nation is passionately devoted to its religion and country, inevitably it will be drawn into war with other nations, because every nation, beside the struggle for material advantages, is impelled to make supreme its own particular type of national character. It was usually in defense of their religion that the Jews went to war. “Nor have we exerted our courage in raising up wars to increase our wealth,” writes Josephus, “but only for the observation of our laws; and when we with patience bear other losses, yet when any person would compel us to break our laws, then it is that we choose to go to war, though it is beyond our ability to pursue it, and bear the greatest calamities to the last with much fortitude.”

All Christians must long for the time when peace shall reign over all the earth; but there must be universal righteousness before there can be universal peace. With the world as it is, war seems necessary not only for the maintenance, but also for the development, of ideals. There is no advance in civilization without strife. Man must strive with Nature or with man, if he is not to deteriorate, and the harder the nation strives, the more capable it will be. With each advance there is a strife of ideas and personalities before there

¹Die Juden der Gegenwart.

is satisfactory adjustment to the new conditions. When strife ends, decay sets in. Hence the easier life is rendered, the more easy is degradation.¹ In such a state, war is not wholly evil, but is God's stern measure for lifting a nation out of its slothfulness, ease, and love of pleasure.

The losses of war are commonly alleged to be one of the principal causes which ruin nations; but, as a matter of fact, all great nations have forged their way to the front by fighting, attended by terrific loss of life. Rome was never so great as in her life-and-death struggle with Carthage. When a nation has faith in itself and in its ideals, it does not perish by war. God can make even the wrath of man praise him. Out of declining empires, ancient and modern, Christian states have been carved by war which have progressed in culture and civilization far beyond their old masters. Except among barbarous tribes and primitive peoples whose one resource is their physical strength, it is only when deep decay has already set in that the ravages and defeats of war overturn a nation. It is also a point worth consideration, that the loss of life due to war, appalling as it may seem, can hardly be compared to the losses due to disease.²

From their entry into Canaan until the time when they ceased to be a territorial nation, the Jews were engaged in

¹ Petrie, *Revolutions of Civilisation.*

² In the United States, during the four years of the Civil War 70,923 lives were lost in battle. In 1906 there died during the year in that country from tuberculosis alone 138,000 people; and of those now living in the States, it is estimated that five million will die of this disease. In the Franco-German war, the Germans lost 40,951 men by wounds and disease. Twice as many people die every year in Prussia from tuberculosis. In the South African war between the British, and the Boers, of 557,650 British officers and men, 7,582 died of wounds received in battle. In Great Britain during 1910, the deaths from tuberculosis numbered 70,433.

constant warfare. If the loss of life due to war was in itself sufficient to ruin a nation, the Jewish nation should have perished long ago. In its last and most disastrous struggle, begun with the Romans because of religious insult and persecution, out of a total population in all lands of about five millions, over a million died, according to Josephus, during the siege of Jerusalem, and another million were either executed or sold into slavery. It is certain that a great part of the population of Galilee and Judæa were destroyed. The suppression of Bar-Cochba's insurrection under Hadrian, during which 580,000 Jews fell on the field of battle, and multitudes perished from hunger and disease, marked the final desolation of Judæa, and the dispersion of its inhabitants over the face of the earth. Jerusalem was made a heathen city, and the whole of Judæa was made like a desert. Yet still the Jews exist as a separate people.

Further, in the long courses of their history, the Jews have suffered more than any other nation from cruel, decimating persecutions. Stoned to death, crucified, sawn asunder, tortured on the wheel, put to the sword, burned to death, even their women and children being slain because of loyalty to their law, what have they not endured? They chose rather to die than be defiled, or be compelled to profane the holy covenant, leaving their martyrdom as an example of noble courage and a memorial of their virtues unto all their nation. Despite their losses, the Jews are more numerous than ever before, and exercise an influence and power out of all proportion to their number. The religion and patriotism which so often led them into war and caused them to be persecuted, have at the same time strengthened and preserved them as a people.

X. THE EDUCATION OF THE CHILDREN OF THE NATION.

"Our principal care is to educate our children well. . . . The law commands us to bring children up in learning, to exercise them in the laws, and to make them acquainted with the acts of their predecessors, in order to their imitation of them."—*Josephus*.

To a very great extent, the course of national history depends on the character of the education given to the children of the nation. What this character shall be, is still the subject of dispute. Education has been defined as the instruction of the intellect in the laws of nature, and the fashioning of the affections and the will into an earnest and loving desire to move in harmony with those laws. This is very good as far as it goes; but laws are impersonal, and, unless regarded as the expression of the will of a wise and gracious Lawgiver, there is little in them to appeal to the imagination and affections of children in such a way as to influence their life and conduct. The net result of education on this basis is the cultivation of the intellect alone, the highest aim being to make it a clear, cold, logic engine, with all its parts of equal strength and in smooth working order. The ideal which is said to lie hidden in every child is not developed. Such an education inevitably ends in materialism, and when a nation becomes wholly materialistic its doom is sealed. A highly educated Hindu complains bitterly that the Western education, purely secular, which is given to his countrymen in the government educational institutions, is so nauseatingly materialistic, all-intellectual, and soul-killing, that the Hindu mind, being essentially spiritual, has failed to assimilate it, and in every direction it is breaking up the harmonious order of their communal, social, and domestic life. An education that does little or nothing to foster the love of God, the love of country, and of one's kind, cannot be too severely con-

demned. The truly educated man, it has been well said, is one who has a clear view of some divine purpose running through human affairs with which he tries to identify himself. This implies that he perceives his own high calling, and the destiny of his nation.

The education valued by the Jews was of a threefold nature. First, the law required them to bring their children up in learning, the common secular learning of the time, which could be imparted by any competent person, Jew or Gentile. But they valued far more a sound knowledge of religious ideals and racial experiences, implanted in the minds of each succeeding generation by carefully selected and trained religious teachers. The law required children to be exercised in the laws of their religion as part of their education, and conversely, the knowledge of other subjects was made religious teachers. The law required children to be exercised thrice daily, is the petition: "Thou dost graciously bestow on man knowledge, and teachest mortals understanding. O let us graciously be endowed by thee with knowledge, understanding, and discernment. Blessed art thou, O Lord, gracious giver of knowledge." From duly ordered knowledge of this kind proceeds righteousness, and such measure of prosperity as is well for the nation.

The law also required on the part of children, as Josephus states, acquaintance with the acts of their predecessors, in order to their imitation of them. Not only in the schools, but at all religious services and festivals, did they hear the injunction: "Let us now praise famous men and our fathers that begat us, for the Lord hath wrought great glory by them." History was vitalized by making it religion. At the annual Feast of the Passover, for example, the national deliverance from Egypt is celebrated in circumstances and with religious

ceremonies which cannot fail to make an abiding impression on the minds of children. In every Jewish home the family gather at the table on which the feast is spread, and the narrative of the Exodus is recounted in prose and verse. The strange symbolic dishes,—the bitter herbs and the sweet mixture of apples, almonds, spices, and wine; the roasted bone and the lamb; the salt water and the four cups of raisin wine; the great, round, unleavened cakes with their mottled surfaces, some especially thick and sacred; the special Hebrew melodies and verses with their jingle of rhymes and assonances, the quaint ceremonial with its striking moments, all this as a religious service penetrates deeply into the minds of Jewish children, making the recurrence of every Passover coincide with a rush of pleasant anticipations, and a sense of the special privilege of being born of the Jewish race.¹

A similar effect was produced by other commemorative services. The frequent recitation of the proud roll call of their martyrs, with its moving record of outrage and pain, loneliness and death, appeals with irresistible force to imaginative children, binding them to their race by ties not easily broken. There was no sharp break with the past. At every synagogue service, to imaginative children the great men of the past seemed to be present as a cloud of witnesses, keenly interested in the race their descendants were running, and in return receiving their veneration.² In consequence it may be

¹Zangwill, *The Children of the Ghetto*.

²"The shadow of a large mysterious destiny seemed to hang over these poor, superstitious zealots. . . . The grey dusk palpitated with floating shapes of prophets and martyrs, scholars, sages, and poets, full of a yearning love and pity, lifting hands of benediction. By what great highroads and queer byways of history had they travelled hither, these wandering Jews, these shrewd, eager fanatics, these sensual ascetics, these human paradoxes, adaptive to every environment, energising in every field of activity, omnipres-

said of them, as of the ancient Romans, "they thought highly of themselves and could not therefore venture to do anything unworthy of their ancestors."

It is this threefold strand of religion, patriotism, and education, each strengthening the other, which has so marvelously preserved the nation, for it is a significant fact that Jewish children educated in other than Jewish schools, do not preserve the traditions of their forefathers. "Alas!" laments a Jewish Rabbi, referring to these losses, "it needs courage to admit it—that young Israelites, whose scholastic successes are so remarkable and startle their comrades of other creeds, are generally lost to Judaism: they learn everything save their own history, and they take pride in remaining unacquainted with our religious practices." Hence the insistence of the orthodox Jews that culture is not merely science and art, a high degree of technical development, a refined mode of life, or lofty conceptions of morality, but the sum total of all those spiritual conceptions which fit men for life in association with their compatriots, and endow them with poise and intellectual perspective.¹

XI. THE FUTURE OF THE JEWISH NATION.

"If the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, it is this remnant that shall be saved."—*Romans ix. 27.*

Inquiry into the causes of the decline and fall of nations covers a very wide field, but limitations of space forbid the ent like some great natural force, indestructible and almost inconvertible, surviving—with the incurable optimism that overlay their poetic sadness—Babylon and Carthage, Greece and Rome; involuntarily financing the Crusades, outliving the Inquisition, illusive of all baits, unshaken by all persecutions—at once the greatest and meanest of races" (Zangwill, *The Children of the Ghetto*).

¹ Rupplin, *Die Juden der Gegenwart.*

examination of sources of national weakness not hitherto mentioned. This need not be regretted, as they are, comparatively speaking, unimportant, and are all traceable to moral decadence and the irreplaceable loss of ennobling ideals.

There remains for consideration the question which cannot but concern the whole human race, What of the future of the Jews? Are they in danger of complete absorption, or will they continue to the end of time a peculiar and separate people?

Their continued existence as a people will certainly not wholly depend on the physical vitality of the people, extraordinary as that seems to be. Their close family life, early marriage, the careful nurture of their children, and the general sobriety, have done much to preserve them from disease; but it cannot be said that the sons of Jacob, as compared with the rest of the human race, represent a higher state of physical evolution. Indeed, to not a few diseases, especially those of nervous origin, they are very vulnerable. A strangely gifted race intellectually, producing men of genius and talent in far greater number, proportionately, than any other nation, their high mental endowments are accompanied by special risks. Nervous and mental diseases are very common among them; in fact, so common that it has been suggested it would be well for them to return to the agricultural mode of life of their ancestors, rather than be wrecked by the mental toil of sedentary occupations in large cities.

Nor will the Jewish religion, with its lofty moral standards and pure monotheism, be sufficient hereafter to preserve them as a distinct and separate people, for the ethics and monotheism of the Jewish religion are not now their exclusive possession, but have passed into other religions, and as soon as

the gains of any nation in truth, goodness, and beauty, become the possession of other nations, that particular nation may be regarded as having done its work; there is no racial necessity for its continued existence. Indeed, for the perpetuation of its influence, unless it has some thing further to communicate, it may be better for the world that it should pass away.

Because all that is best in Judaism has been absorbed by Christianity, to a very great extent Judaism is failing to hold its own when the two religions are in close contact. Since the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Jews all over the world have made common cause with Christians. In countries of high culture, such as most parts of Europe, North America, Algeria, and South Africa the Jews have become insensibly little else than Unitarian Christians, who are rapidly fusing into the national community of the countries they inhabit, becoming very English in England, very American in the United States, typically French in France, indistinguishably Italian in Italy, Teuton in Germany, and Hungarian in Hungary.¹

The prospect of speedy absorption by other races, unless some new movement inspires the hearts of their people, is clearly seen by the Jews themselves. They say that their countrymen, compelled by economic and social exigencies to learn the language of their environment, have thereby gained access to the latest science and culture, and are rejecting their own. Their children brought up in Christian schools, and continually face to face with the apparent superiority of Christian culture over Jewish, grow up to despise the traditions of their forefathers. Further, Jewish culture is mainly Bib-

¹ Johnston, "Congress of Races," *Contemporary Review*, August, 1911.

lical, and the higher criticism of recent years, with which the Jewish student makes his acquaintance at a susceptible age in the university, deals the beliefs of his race a mortal blow. Versatile, industrious, keen, enthusiastic, conscious of intellectual power, he is now more concerned with the living present than with a moribund past. "We no longer have an ideal," is the mournful confession, "we disown our past." So as a distinctive people they are passing away, being assimilated by the people among whom they dwell.¹

Have the Jews then come so far, only to disappear at last, absorbed by Unitarian Christianity or lost in the morasses of modern doubt and materialism? Surely not, for the gifts and calling of God are not repented of. They are not all Israel who are of Israel, neither because they are Abraham's seed are they all children of the promise. Only that part of the nation which believes that it still has a mission in the world can be expected to maintain the national existence. And the faithful Jew still thinks that on him in some real sense depends the fulfillment of the purpose of God; it is still his conviction that he is to remain a witness to God, a continuous testimony to the hand that is molding the life of humanity, until the world is wholly won to truth and righteousness. A people, or the remnant of a people, that believes itself to hold this place in the divine purpose deserves to survive, and will survive.

As the continued existence of the Jews as a separate people has no meaning or value except the nation has some particular message to deliver, or work to do, the question arises,

¹ Ignaz Tollschan, *Das Rassenproblem*; Ruppin, *Die Juden der Gegenwart*; Benjamin, "The Passing of the English Jew," *Nineteenth Century and After*, September, 1912; and Tavernier, "The Jew in France," *Ibid.*, February, 1913.

What is the nature of this particular message or work? As stated by themselves, their particular mission seems to be the founding of a great spiritual republic; they look forward to a day when there will be no religions but only Religion, when Israel will come together with other religious communions or they with Israel. May not Christians be filled with the same radiant hope? Members of all denominations are beginning to be distressed and ashamed by the numerous and weakening divisions of the Christian church, and to long for union. Not much has yet been accomplished practically, beyond uniting the fragments of some particular denomination which as a whole still remains apart from other churches. It may be that in the providence of God the time is not ripe for the consummation of the movement towards general union, partly because the range of our vision and hopes is too limited.

With regard to the doctrinal basis of union, it must be broader than any one of the existing churches can furnish. Great native churches are now being formed in India, China, Japan, Korea, and other countries, that only a short while ago, were almost wholly non-Christian. The doctrines of the Christian faith will be examined, and to a considerable extent, no doubt, will be interpreted anew, by men whose training, temperament, and outlook are very different from those who formulated and compiled the doctrines of Christianity in the West. The Jews by standing firmly on the central article of their creed, the Oneness of God, may render most valuable service during this period of doctrinal reconstruction, provided they are assimilative and can find in other religions, complementary truths which can be conscientiously adopted. In the Christian doctrines of the Divine Logos and of the Divine Spirit, working in the world and in the hearts of men, so restated as to win the assent of the sternest mon-

otheist, may be found the solution of all the perplexities which now distress and divide the religious world.

The basis of organization or confederation must also be very wide. So far, the only practical scheme of unity suggested, is the union of the various Protestant churches. Few venture to suggest union with the great Roman Catholic and Greek churches; and it must be confessed that, at present, the possibility seems an iridescent dream. But there are mighty forces at work within these churches, and no one can predict what may or may not happen. Why should not the hope be entertained that in the course of time these churches, purged of the errors and doubtful accretions which have clung to them from the past, will unite with other churches in one great Christian confederation? And at last, may we not dream that this vast confederation will gather within its fold by the purity and strength of its doctrines, no less than by the holiness of life of its members, the devout and good men of all religions, including of course those of the Jewish faith, who will find all that is best in their own religions not destroyed but fulfilled in it? In the accomplishment of a splendid task of this kind, the Jew, with his unique spiritual gifts and missionary ardor in the cause he loves, may be indispensable. Then will be fulfilled the Jewish hope of a day when there will be no religions but only Religion, when Israel will come together with other communions, and they with Israel. As the spiritual influence of such an universal church will be irresistible, then will be fulfilled also the dreams of the ancient Jewish prophets, when nations shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; when war, crime, abject poverty, and misery shall be no more; and men everywhere shall dwell together in righteousness and peace. If the falling away of the Jews has enriched the

world, and their failure has enriched the Gentiles, how much more will result from their full restoration! If their being cast aside has meant the reconciliation of the world, what will their reception be but Life from the Dead! Animated by such ideals, the Jewish people cannot pass away. Without them, the glory has indeed passed from Israel, and as a people they are doomed.

To conclude: the most important cause, by far, of the decline and fall of a nation, is the irreplaceable loss of its ideals, and consequent moral decadence. Other causes such as a declining birth rate, physical degeneracy, pestilence, famine, war, slavery, etc., are but subsidiary. It is not the necessary result of physical laws alone when an institution, or a dynasty, or a people, is overthrown and perishes. The forces of nature are but the ministers of Jehovah fulfilling his word. As the ancient Hebrew prophet perceived, nations dwell amid the devouring fire, the everlasting burnings of the justice of God, which consume all that is weak and rotten in the foundations and superstructure of national power. If a nation cannot bear this testing by fire, it must pass away. Both in the sphere of creation and in that of government, mysterious forces are ever at work, destroying and at the same time reconstructing. To strengthen a nation in a state of incipient decay, the regulation of marriage, the increase of the birth rate, education, improved environment, and other measures advocated by the eugenicist, are helpful but inadequate. Nothing can really save it except the finding and adoption of ideals sufficiently great and glorious to capture the hearts of all classes of the people.