

"INTO ALL THE WORLD"

The Great Commission:
A Vindication and an Interpretation

by

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CHAPTER EIGHT

ISRAEL IN GOD'S PROGRAM

"I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace" (Romans 11:1-5).

Israel has had a wonderful past; Israel still plays its part in world-history today; and Israel has a glorious future according to the promises of GOD in the Old and New Testament Scriptures.

Dr. Keith of Edinburgh tells of a row of carriages he once saw at a London reception. On one of them the coat of arms read: *Fuimus Erimus* - "We were, we shall be." He was not astonished that the occupants were Jews.

In all literature, perhaps, there is no nobler tribute to the Jewish people, more succinct and more inclusive, than that of the Apostle Paul.

Himself an Israelite and persecuted by the Jews of his day, he could use sharp words as in I Thessalonians 2:15, 16. Here one would almost say that the great apostle was guilty of anti-Semitism! He wrote from Athens: **"The Jews, who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men, forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles . . . for the wrath (of GOD) is come upon them to the uttermost."**

And then after five years, during which his heart was in the crucible of CHRIST's redeeming love and his patience had accomplished its perfect work, he bursts out in a eulogy of Israel that is without parallel. It is a nine-fold reiteration of the glories of Israel, a historic resume of what the Lord did for them and through them. Strange to say, it is preceded by a threefold solemn oath and closes with a doxology and Amen. It is rather astonishing that some great Jewish or Gentile composer has not set it to music. How it would lend itself to an interpretation by some Mendelssohn, Haydn, or Handel.

The passage occurs in Romans 9:1-5:

"I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: Who are Israelites;

"To whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen."

In one Greek sentence of thirty-one words the apostle pronounces a eulogy - wrung from a love-broken heart, which calls GOD to witness - a eulogy involving GOD's malediction and anathema on the speaker, if by so doing he might save Israel.

Paul exceeds Moses in his intercessory love, for Moses (Exodus 32:32) identifies himself with his people and, if they cannot be saved, would perish with them; Paul could find it in his heart, were it possible, to perish for them.

This unique place of Israel in privilege and prestige, Paul finds in nine aspects of the Old Testament record.

1. They are not Jews - sons of Jacob - but of Israel, who was named a prince of GOD.

Not the national but the theocratic name expresses the spiritual prerogative of the nation (II Corinthians 11:22; Galatians 6:16).

2. Theirs is the divine adoption, not in a Christian but in a pre-Christian sense, referred to by Hosea and in Exodus.

"When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." "And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn" (Hosea 11:1; Exodus 4:22). The Jews are in a particular sense GOD's own.

3. Israel had the symbol and the promise of GOD's glorious, constant Presence.

In the burning bush, in the pillar of fire, most of all in the Shekinah glory of Tabernacle and Temple, Israel knew that GOD was a consuming fire but also a real Presence.

Here mercy and truth met together, righteousness and peace kissed each other at the mercy seat. **"He hath not dealt so with any other nation,"** as the Psalmist says.

4. GOD's covenant was made with Abraham.

It was a universal promise for all mankind but only through Abraham's seed. The branches ran over the wall into the Gentile world but the root and the trunk were in Israel. All the covenants made to the other patriarchs, to Moses, David, and Solomon, **"established in all things and sure,"** are here mentioned together. There are more than two hundred references to these covenants in the Old Testament. The Israelites are indeed, in a deep sense, the people of the Covenant, of all the Old Testament covenants.

5. To them, and to them only, pertains the giving of the Law.

Undoubtedly Paul refers to the great Sinaitic code of universal ethics, the Ten Commandments, given to Moses amid all the pomp of circumstance, the supernatural display of power and the awful tragedy of Israel's backsliding. No nation could forget such a code of law and no nation ever paid it higher honor by being its custodian for all the centuries and in all the world. It is the basis of all ethics.

6. The worship of GOD in spirit and truth belonged first to Israel.

The cultus of the Tabernacle and of the Temple is, as some have said, "the only legitimate cultus in the world."

- There was no idolatry but there was glorious symbolism.
- There were no secret rites but there was sacredness.
- There was prayer and sacrifice and praise and music.

The synagogue was a Temple in miniature and the Psalter became the prayer book of the ages. The Church is built upon the foundation of the prophets as well as of the apostles. And the Messiah is the chief cornerstone, in Old Testament and New Testament worship.

7. Theirs too are the exceeding great and precious promises of the Old Testament, promises that are, like the stars of a winter sky, innumerable and, like them, differing in glory.

How many and how great are the promises to the meek, the righteous, the merciful, the penitent!

But chiefly the reference is to the Messianic promises, those stars of the first magnitude, which all point to Bethlehem and Calvary and the empty tomb and the throne of glory and the kingdom, of which Daniel speaks, that shall be the climax and contrast of all earthly dominions in its power and blessedness.

8. The most glorious ancestry of any people is that of the Jews, "of whom are the patriarchs," the prophets, the martyrs, since the days of Abraham.

The eleventh chapter of Hebrews is the Westminster Abbey of these fathers of the faith. Read the record and gaze at this cloud of witnesses and wonder how the sons of such fathers could ever dare to forfeit anything for which the fathers had been called. Of no race or people can it more truly be said, *noblesse oblige!*

9. Finally, the chief glory of Israel, in the past - through GOD's promise, in history - by GOD's fulfillment, and in the consummation of all history, is the Messiah - the CHRIST.

Born of the seed of David after the flesh and declared to be the Son of GOD with power by His resurrection from the dead, JESUS occupies the topmost place in Jewry. He is the one Israelite indeed in whom there is no guile, no sin, no fault, no flaw - the Crystal CHRIST.

The most thoughtful minds in Jewry itself today place Him in the highest rank of all the prophets and seers and reformers of the Jewish nation. The verdict of history places Him higher than that. The glory of Israel is JESUS CHRIST. He who according to the flesh is of Israel, is at the same time over all, God-blessed forever.

Here, as elsewhere, Paul asserts at once the humanity and deity of the CHRIST. This interpretation of the text (Romans 9:5) is adopted by many of the best scholars (Gifford, Sanday, Westcott), and it is only by those who are unwilling to accept the natural interpretation of Paul's language that this doxology is made to refer to GOD the Father and put in parentheses.

The arguments for the former interpretation are given in full by James Denney in his commentary and are convincing. But this question of the doxology does not alter the eulogy that precedes.

Every sincere Israelite can read the evidences of who JESUS CHRIST is in the Gospel narrative and in the Epistles, which were written two decades earlier. The earliest portrait of JESUS is not by Mark but by Paul. He met CHRIST on the road to Damascus. Paul here expresses his sense of CHRIST's supreme greatness – of JESUS CHRIST as the Crown of Judaism – JESUS as the promised Emmanuel, GOD over all blessed for ever. And he adds, as we would also, “**Amen.**”

The record of the missionary enterprise in all its world-wide character and its age-long history, and its apostolic succession of heroes and heroines, ever leads back to the tent of Abraham and Sarah - Sarah, the mother of a nation, and Abraham, the friend of GOD. Not without reason, Dr. George Smith has put the call of Abraham as the title of the first chapter in his *History of Christian Missions*.

Christendom, Jewry and Islam all regard the grave of the patriarch at Hebron as the shrine of their historic origin. In him all the families of the earth have been blessed. And Abraham looms large in Paul's Epistle to the Romans. It is Abraham's faith and Abraham's righteousness that is the type of all the righteousness of faith. To the Jew first and to the first Jew, Paul, as the great Apostle to the Gentiles, pays tribute. It would not be difficult to prove this by a chain of texts from the Epistle to the Romans. In the first verse of the Epistle we have it: The Gospel was promised aforetime by the Old Testament prophets.

The Gospel is for all on the same terms but without prejudice to the historical prerogative of the Jew. The advantage and prestige of the Jews are admitted (chap. 3), because they were custodians of the oracles of GOD. It is their unique place and privilege, the splendor of their inheritance, that make their unbelief so pitiful, perplexing and tragic in the ninth chapter. Paul's passion for their salvation is because of their prestige.

The eleventh chapter again puts the Jew first. Of them, after the flesh, salvation came through CHRIST, and by them will come the great ingathering of all the Gentiles. Providence has not preserved them to no purpose – but for the salvation of the world. We owe the proclamation of the Gospel to the Jew today for many reasons.

“Der Ewige Jude” of Eugene Sue's greatest novel, *The Wandering Jew*, lives on and on. Nothing is more astonishing than the virility, the solidarity, the talents and triumphs of Israel. Who can describe their legacy to civilization?

It is a race that has been persecuted and hounded as no other race, in Europe and America as well as in Asia; in spite of this, their numbers today challenge attention. GOD promised Abraham that his seed would be multiplied and scattered, and would become a blessing to all the nations. A marvelous multiplication, a strategic concentration and repeated dispersions have been the history of Judaism.

Today [1943] there are 8,000,000 Jews in Europe, 5,000,000 in America, 745,000 in Asia, 457,000 in Africa, and 25,000 in Australia, while in Palestine, the land of their origin, only 500,000 find a home. The increase of the Jews on this side of the Atlantic is one of the outstanding facts in the migration of this race. A hundred years ago there were only 45,000 Jews in all America. Now in New York City alone there are over 2,000,000.

Like the ancient forests of Lebanon, the trees of the Lord have been full of sap. The Jewish race is immortal; its history displays the strength of the oak, the fragrance of the fir, the longevity of the cedar, the tragedy of the willow, the fruitfulness of the mulberry, and so one might go on to the palm and the other trees of the forest.

The trees of the Lord, in this case, were full of sap, and the Jewish race was immortal after GOD gave His promise to Abraham. The Jewish race has always been a race of giants - from Abraham and Moses to Einstein and Madame Curie.

In spite of age-long persecution and the extent of their dispersion, the strength of the Jewish people today is astounding. Take, for example, the promise of GOD to Abraham: “**In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed, and thy seed shall be as the sand and as the stars.**”

Think of the multiplication of this people, think of their concentration in great world centers, and think of their dispersion. Across the seven seas and in all of the six continents we find the Jew.

Whether you consider them as a people who are scattered everywhere, or as a people who are turning towards the Land of Promise, they are the miracle of history.

It is remarkable that four of the great non-Christian religions exhibit today currents and tendencies away from the old moorings, which are characteristically similar in origin and character. Whether you speak of Jews, Buddhists, Mohammedans, or Hindus, you find everywhere three currents coursing through their social, intellectual and religious life.

- First, the current of an idealization of the old religion;
- Second, the growing revolt against the idea of GOD and against all religion, and
- Lastly, the current which exalts politics and patriotism into a national religion.

First, you have the idealization of the old Judaism by breaking away from old sanctions and explaining away ancient rites. This is evident in the writings of men like Rabbi Montefiore of London. In Chapter XX of his book on *Liberal Judaism*, he says that Liberal Judaism is not different from Christianity. Chapter XXI, on the New Testament, is a striking testimony to this effort of idealizing Judaism. He writes:

"I cannot conceive that a time will come when the figure of JESUS will no longer be a star of the first magnitude in the spiritual heavens, when He will no longer be regarded as one of the greatest religious heroes and teachers whom the world has seen. I cannot conceive that a time will come when 'the Bible,' in the eyes of Europe, will no longer be composed of the Old Testament and the New, or when the Gospels will be less prized than the Pentateuch, or the books of Chronicles preferred to the Epistles of Paul. The religion of the future will be, as I believe, a developed and purified Judaism, but from that developed and purified Judaism the records which tell, however imperfectly, of perhaps its greatest, as certainly of its most potent teacher (JESUS), will not be excluded."

Rabbi Klausner, of the University of Jerusalem, a Jewish University, pays a similar tribute to JESUS of Nazareth:

"He is indeed not yet the Messiah. He is not the Son of GOD. He did not rise from the dead; but His parables are without any equal. His ethical teaching rises high, even above that of Isaiah; His Name will endure as long as human history."

That is the first tendency, the tendency to idealize Judaism and make it appear as a form of present-day Christianity.

The second tendency is quite the opposite; it is a revolt - a bitter revolt - against all religion, against the idea of GOD; it is the spread of atheism among Jews, not only in Europe and America, but in England, and in Bombay, in Shanghai, and virtually wherever the modern Jew lives. Humanism finds its strongest advocates among Jews of this school. Secularism is their philosophy, and, in the words of the apostle:

"Their God is their belly, they glory in their shame and mind earthly things."

That is why some of the worst forms of modern literature and of the drama in our country, at least, are by this type of Jew, who has thrown all religion on the scrap-heap.

The third current is the exaltation of politics and patriotism into a new religion or cult. Many Jews seem to have lost all consciousness of the old religion, and their only faith is Zionism, an extreme form of nationalistic propaganda.

It is these Jews in Palestine who are causing the chief difficulty over against their neighbors, the Mohammedans and Christians, rather than those who still hold fast to their ancestral faith.

In the task of Jewish evangelism we are bound to reckon with these new currents; in the preparation of a new literature, in the approach to the Jewish family, and in all we can do to help our Jewish neighbors we need to remember the intellectual and spiritual movements among them.

We have already quoted from Rabbi Klausner and Rabbi Montefiore. The CHRIST who was cast out of the Ghetto for centuries as "an unclean bastard" is now taken into the pulpits of leading synagogues. The Jewish press and Jewish literature pay high honor to our Saviour. Rabbi Solomon B. Freehof in his remarkable book, *The Stormers of Heaven*, uses words that have deep significance:

"The personality of JESUS was such that His Sonship of GOD was magnificently evident. The Divine Spirit seemed manifest in His words and deeds. He impressed Himself upon the world, perhaps more so than other prophets or saints, as a '**child of the living God.**' Be that as it may, the consciousness of the presence of GOD has come to millions of men and women through JESUS. And that it is personality which is the essence of His power should be evident to every student of Christian literature."

In another place, he says:

"It is not merely that legends have been woven around JESUS' Name. Every great religious genius has been enhaloed with loving legend. The significant fact is that time has not faded the vividness of His image. Poetry still sings His praise. He is still the living comrade of countless lives. No Moslem ever sings, 'Mohammed, lover of my soul,' nor does any Jew say of Moses, the Teacher, 'I need thee every hour.' "

These are startling words, are they not?

We must add another fact when we think of Paul's challenge, "**To the Jew first.**" The ingathering has already begun.

If we look into their long past history, truly GOD has given us a record of what the Gospel was as the power of salvation among the Jews.

The first fourteen Bishops of the Jerusalem Church were all converted Jews.

- Hegesippus, the historian of the second century, was a converted Jew.
- Nicholas de Lyra, in the fifteenth century, was a converted Jew.
- Cardinal Ximenes, compiler of the Complutensian Polyglot in 1517, was a converted Jew.
- Neander, the Church historian, in 1813, was a converted Jew.
- Bishop Helmuth, of Huron, son of a rich banker who endowed Christian education, was a converted Jew.
- Bishop Schereschewsky, a most distinguished missionary to China of the American Episcopal Church, a translator, and the inventor of a Chinese typewriter, was a converted Jew.
- Ginsberg, the great Hebraist;
- Edersheim and Adolph Saphir, commentators;
- Da Costa and Capadose of Amsterdam, the one a poet, the other a physician;

Moses Margoliouth, one of the great founders of the British Museum - all were converted Jews.

Mendelssohn, Halevey, Mayerbeer, Offenbach, Rubinstein were all musicians who bowed their knees before the Lord JESUS CHRIST, and were all converted Jews.

- The Herschels, astronomers;
- Emir Pascha, explorer and naturalist;
- Rosa Bonheur, the painter;
- Sarah Bernhardt, the actress;
- Pauline Lucca, the singer;
- Sir Richard Solomon, statesman in South Africa;
- Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Herschel, Prime Minister and Chancellor respectively;
- Baron Reuter, the pioneer of news agencies;
- Joseph Pulitzer, editor of the New York World;
- Blowitz, correspondent and diplomat - these all were Jews by race.

Time would fail us to complete the record of men and women in every walk of life who would themselves rebuke us if we do not carry the Jews the Gospel and show us that their talents and their attainments had been laid at the feet of JESUS CHRIST, their Lord and ours.

Titus, after he took Jerusalem captive, is portrayed on the Arch at Rome in his wonderful triumph. Rome's legions are marching, carrying the trophies of Judaism. The city is wasted and destroyed; not one stone remained on another stone. But as you look at those trophies, there are three: the golden table for the shewbread, the seven-branched golden candlestick, and the silver trumpet; three great custodies of the Jewish people - GOD's Bread, GOD's Light, GOD's Trumpet; GOD's Bread for the whole world, GOD's Light for the whole world, GOD's Message for the whole world.

"He came unto his own, and his own received him not." He said, **"Jerusalem . . . Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."** But Christianity is now carrying that Bread of GOD to the world, and through the Cross that Light, and in CHRIST's Name that Triumph is sounding. If that is true, if leadership has passed from Judaism to Christianity in the plan of GOD, we need to ask ourselves: How can we raise up a new leadership among converted Jews for this problem of missions?

If missions to the Jews is a mistake, as some allege, then the mistake and the folly rest on the shoulders of our Lord and of His apostles. They went first to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. That such work for our Jewish neighbors is difficult is no excuse for neglect. The more difficult the problem, the greater the need for power; the more baffling the situation, the greater the need for patience and love.

In fact, we need two kinds of leadership.

First, leadership in the Christian churches to raise up people who believe in missions to the Jews. Alas, we have in our country distinguished Christians who repudiate the whole idea of Christian missions to Jews.

They advise a new approach without the offense of the Cross - without making proselytes.

We also need trained leadership to go out from the Church into this field and win the Jewish people. The character of the Jewish race demands that the quality of Jewish missionaries who are to win them for CHRIST must be exceedingly high. Who can estimate the cost of such spiritual leadership? We need men of spiritual vision, power and love.

Some people have no vision of what is possible in missions among the Jews.

The New Testament speaks of men who could "**see the invisible**" by faith. There are those who only see statistics, and cannot see behind the statistics the living, throbbing needs of our common humanity. "**Seeing the multitudes, Jesus was moved . . .**"

When CHRIST saw the man by the wayside and touched his eyes, He asked him if he saw ought. And he said, "**I see men as trees walking**" (Mark 8:24). A wooden world, a world of statistics! But when CHRIST touched his eyes the second time, he saw all things clearly.

There are too many missionaries and ministers in the churches who see men and women as trees walking; they are bewildered by the forest and cannot see the individual. They lack clear vision. To see things clearly, we need the second touch. We also need patience.

When Paul spoke of preaching to the Jews first, he was ever mindful of the infinite patience of GOD. His plans are age-long; a thousand years are as one day on His calendar. The history of Israel is the history of GOD's long suffering - the patience of Him who inhabits eternity. We may well ask ourselves: What do the Jews themselves think of this problem?

"Were there a ladder of suffering, then Israel would have reached the highest rung on it. If burning pain and the patience to suffer can ennoble a people, then the palm of nobility goes to the Jews."

So spake Leopold Zunz in the opening chapter of his *Die Poesie des Mittelalters. The legend of the Wandering Jew*, made immortal by Eugene Sue's novel, has the same keynote of tragedy.

Bernard Heller writes the Odyssey of this Jewish faith, culture and literature in a single volume replete with the expressions, affirmations and aspirations of the undying race for a period of nineteen hundred years. Indeed, the writer goes back to the conquest of Canaan and ends at the emergence from the Ghetto, when the old faith faces a new day - to be shattered on the rocks of persecution or to make the harbor of Zionism!

There are many other books on the legacy of Israel to the Western World in science, art and literature, but Dr. Heller is a believer (he dedicates his book to "*Parents who exemplified the Fear of GOD and Reverence for the Divine*") and tells of the purposefulness of Jewish history and the ethical significance of Jewish survival.

Yet he is blind to the central place of JESUS CHRIST and has much more to say about many false messiahs than about the Saviour of the world.

On two very significant pages he contrasts JESUS and Paul. The latter "substituted the divinity of JESUS for the onerous stipulations of the Torah." As for JESUS, "Prophetic teachings permeated His consciousness. GOD was to Him the Creator and Sustainer of the cosmos no less than He was to those who advocated a contrary program. He too conceived GOD to be the Universal Father, whose devotion embraced all mankind. Prudence rather than primitive notions seems to have dictated JESUS' policy. He probably felt that dispatching exponents of Judaism to a people spiritually unprepared for its reception was a futile or hazardous venture."

In the prologue he points out that there are three conceptions of the course of history:

- That of the recurrent cycles as in Hindu philosophy;
- That of constant progress in ever-ascending line - social evolution; and
- That which is spiral.

History does not repeat itself but rises to new levels and civilizations. The spiritual adventure of the Jew reveals signposts to guide nations and individuals against deadly precipices.

The story begins not with Abraham but with Joshua, when the desert nomads turn farmer and settle in the Fertile Crescent. The chapters that follow tell of the songs of Zion at the waters of Babylon, of what happened when Jew met Greek and when the Pharisees democratized the faith.

"Of the manifold products of the cultural Odyssey of Judaism, none possesses more universal import than does Pharisaism. Maligned by biased proponents of a divergent and triumphant religious system and discipline, Pharisaism nevertheless succeeded in permeating its rival (Christianity) with its very spirit." How?

In depicting the end of the Jewish State and the destruction of the Temple, the author leaves out the chief cause of all this, namely the Advent of the true Messiah and the prophetic judgment that followed His death and resurrection. But we learn that from that day "as interpreted by the rabbis, Judaism represented a way of life totally independent of sacrificial altar and priestly mediation. The Law became the soil in which Israel sank deep in national roots."

In the eighth century a Luther entered the Jewish camp. The followers of Rabbi Anan at Baghdad went back to the Old Testament, and hence they are called "Karaites." It was a revolt against Talmudic Judaism, and although once a very strong movement, it now numbers only a few thousand.

Karaism resembled the Reformation in many respects. Again, under Moslem rule and in Mesopotamia there was controversy between scholar and politician, which resulted in a peace without victory.

Then came the great Maimonides "the Greatest Jew since Moses," and rationalized the faith.

Dr. Heller draws a clever parallel between this philosopher and Thomas Aquinas, who died seventy years later.

With emergence from the Ghetto, a wave of restless emigration laid hold of Judaism. It was partly due to cruel persecution but even more to social unrest in Jewry itself. In Russia, Germany, and even France, there was a vicious form of anti-Semitism that resulted in wide assimilation. "The trek to the baptismal font at times appeared like a stampede. The candidates were not confined to the Jews and Jewesses of elegant homes and fashionable salons. Nor was Germany the only country where Jewish mass-conversion was witnessed. Russian Jewry provided its share of apostates as well." These thousands adopted Christianity to satisfy an irresistible desire for social equality. But there were reactions against these mass-conversions.

Today, especially in our own country, the old faith faces a new day and a new attempt at adjustment. There is a deep inner conflict between secular and spiritual ideals in Jewry. Herzl in his later years revealed a profound understanding of the real issue when he said: "Zionism is the return of the Jews to Judaism even before their return to the Jewish land; the salvation of Israel will come through prophets, not through diplomats." Yet he did not see that "**salvation is of the Jews**" - and for the Jews only through the Messiah, JESUS CHRIST of Nazareth. Other Jews today are drawing so close to the CHRIST of history that they lead others to Him.

Sholem Asch, the great novelist, wrote *The Nazarene* - a tribute to the life, character and teaching of JESUS; most remarkable in its admissions and omissions.

Now he has gone a step farther in his book, *What I Believe*.

It is a remarkable book and one that deserves reading for three reasons. The author is perhaps the most distinguished prose writer among modern believing Jews and his novels have had a phenomenal sale; the theme of the book, although not so stated, is JESUS of Nazareth; and the author leaves no doubt that "the fact of CHRIST" is the one great inexplicable fact of history. What I believe, what I fain would believe, and "**Lord, I believe, help mine unbelief**" - these can be read between the lines of this masterly attempt to solve the mystery of the Messiah - the inescapable problem of Judaism.

Sholem Asch writes: "As one of many who feel upon their shoulders the crushing burden of the times, as one who suffers in the common torment, I have taken it upon myself to awaken certain ancient memories, to point to ancient moral values which are charged with the power of salvation for us and for our days." The book expresses his "innermost convictions" and therefore disarms mere intellectual criticism.

In introductory chapters we have the contrast between the Greek-Roman ethics and philosophy over against the revelation of GOD to Abraham, Moses and the prophets. What a vivid picture he draws of Israel in Egypt under the Hitlers of that day! Chapter VII bears the title, "The Weaving of the Robe of the Messiah," and tells of the Messianic ideals of Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah - and JESUS of Nazareth is no longer hid. Then he asks bluntly: "What was it that constituted the coming of this incomprehensible personality, which has become for the entire Christian world the symbol of the coming of the Messiah? He himself divided His Advent into two parts: in the first He came to prepare man and the world for the kingdom of GOD; in the second He would come upon the clouds in heaven as Judge and Ruler of the kingdom of heaven when it should have begun on earth."

- What was His mission and teaching?
- Whence came His authority?
- What is the significance of His death?

Such are the questions asked and partly answered, e.g., "The life and death of JESUS were alike a part of the cardinal principle of the creation of the Messiah. Therefore no one can be accused of having been instrumental in the fulfillment."

And yet he misses the clue to the mystery even when describing the theology of Paul in contrast to that of James and Peter. So near and yet so far; so far and yet so near to the Manger and the Cross!

Simeon foretold that CHRIST would be "**a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of (his) people Israel.**" Missions to the Jews are the unveiling for them of the threefold glory of the Manger, of the Cross and of the Resurrection.

In 1852 Benjamin Disraeli wrote in the last chapter of his *Life of Lord George Bentinck*:

"Perhaps, in this enlightened age, as his mind expands and he takes a comprehensive view of this period of progress, the pupil of Moses may ask himself whether all the princes of the house of David have done so much for the Jews as that Prince who was crucified on Calvary. Had it not been for Him, the Jews would have been comparatively unknown, or known only as a high Oriental caste which had lost its country. Has not He made their history the most famous in the world? Has not He hung up their laws in every temple? Has not He vindicated all their wrongs? Has not He avenged the victory of Titus and conquered the Caesars? What successes did they anticipate from their Messiah? The wildest dreams of their rabbis have been far exceeded. Has not JESUS conquered Europe and changed its name into Christendom? All countries that refuse the Cross wither, while the whole of the new world is devoted to the Semitic principle and its most glorious offspring, the Jewish faith; and the time will come when the vast communities and countless myriads of America and Australia, looking upon Europe as Europe now looks upon Greece, and wondering how so small a space could have achieved such great deeds, will still find music in the songs of Zion, and still seek solace in the parables of Galilee."

"These may be dreams, but there is one fact which none can contest. Christians may continue to persecute Jews and Jews may persist in disbelieving Christians, but who can deny that JESUS of Nazareth, the Incarnate Son of the Most High GOD, is the eternal glory of the Jewish race?"

Ninety years have passed since Disraeli's prophecy, but its truth has been vindicated and it will yet be fulfilled.

~ end of chapter 8 ~

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