

THE SHAMES OF CHRISTENDOM

by

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CHAPTER TEN

IN MODERN TIMES

“Why stir up the muddy deposits of the past? Our business is with the present and the future,” my readers may remark.

Unfortunately we cannot act as if the past never existed. Natural law is inevitable. We reap whatsoever we sow just as the Jewish people of to-day are reaping the harvest of the past, so we, too, as part of Christendom, suffer, and will suffer, for our ill-treatment of them. It matters not that the anguish inflicted upon them by Christian peoples may be the punishment attached by God to their disobedience and transgression; this does not absolve the Christian nations from blame in inflicting that anguish, any more than the fact that the Incarnation, Crucifixion and death of the Son of God were part of God’s plan for world redemption, absolves the men who crucified Him from the guilt of their act. But to some extent the evil consequences of misdoing may be mitigated by repentance and reparation. The man who sows the fruits of disease in his body by impurity or drunkenness will certainly reap the pain and the shame, but the full harvest of suffering may be mitigated by a return to a cleaner and healthier mode of living.

There is still a large amount of prejudice, hatred and unchristian behavior manifest in all Christian countries towards the Jew. In our own it shows itself very clearly, even amongst Christian people, in an unwillingness to support Missions to Jews. But of course prejudice and anti-Semitism do not stop there.

Happily, in England we have done much to repair the terrible wrongs our forefathers perpetrated upon the Jew. In few countries have the Jews been better treated, England has not lost by this.

The Jews have given of their best to England. Their brains and enterprise have done much to place our country where it is. The brilliant powers of the Goschens, Rothschilds, Herschels, and men like Lord Reading, Lord Swaythling, Lord Bearsted, Lord Melchett, Earl Jessel and Sir Henry Slessor, Sir Herbert Samuel, and others too numerous to mention, in the domain of public achievement, have helped to enhance the glory of Britain. Few sections of the Empire responded more generously or spontaneously in pouring out their treasure and their blood in the hour of England’s trial than the Jewish community. Its war record and honors are exceptional (See *Power of a Great Hope*, p. 37, by Miss Shann, Church Missions to Jews).

But even in England the last restriction upon Jews was not removed until 1890.

Access to the peerage was granted in 1885, when Nathaniel Rothschild took his seat in the House of Lords. In 1870 they had been allowed to become scholars of English universities, and in 1850 Parliament was thrown open to them.

There are among Jews living to-day those who have vivid recollections of the struggles of their people for full rights of citizenship in this country where they have lived since the time of William the Conqueror.

Other countries had anticipated England in this respect. France had already emancipated the Jew on the principle of "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity," the watchword of the Republic. Holland was not long behind France in 1796. Belgium granted them equality with their fellow-citizens in 1815.

This does not mean that the implacable enmity ceased.

The Dreyfus case in France is a sad witness to the depth of meanness, duplicity and dishonor into which gentlemen of one of the most chivalrous nations of Europe allowed their hatred of the Jew to plunge them. The fortitude, generosity and gentleness of Dreyfus the Jew throughout the torture and shame of his prosecution and imprisonment were in strong contrast.

In few countries in modern times have the Jews suffered more than in Russia. Confined in the Pale of Settlement, they were reduced almost to the condition of cattle.

Dr. J. Macdonald Webster says:

Jews were confined to this Pale of Settlement and not allowed to step outside it, unless they belonged to one of the privileged classes; even within the Pale itself right of travel and change of residence were restricted; a fearful congestion was the result. The privileged five per cent, consisted of artisans, merchants who paid special taxes, certain graduates and prostitutes. The public service was closed to Jews. The buying, selling, leasing or managing of land outside the Pale, or outside the City limits within the Pale was forbidden them. Artisans could under no circumstances own their homes. Jewish ownership of mines and oil fields was also prohibited. Special taxes had to be borne. There were severe educational restrictions.

Although forced to serve in the Army, Jews could not advance beyond the rank of corporal" (*The Jewish Situation*).

The Revolution changed all this, and in the reaction many Jews, grasping at the chance, rose to a hateful eminence in the Bolshevist movement. The fact that Trotsky, Kamenev, Zinoviev and one or two others were Jews has given a false impression as to the revolutionary proclivities of the Jew. He is normally an exemplary and loyal citizen.

Previous to this, modern Russia stained herself with the most fiendish crimes against this people. The awful scenes of violence and massacre that took place in 1881, when Jewish lives and property were destroyed, are thus described by G. F. Abbott:

“Within a few weeks all the provinces from the Baltic to the Black Sea were a theatre of arson, rapine, and slaughter, such as Europe had not witnessed since the tragedy of the Black Death in the fourteenth century. The civilized world shuddered at the appalling spectacle; but the local authorities, both civil and military, looked for the most part complacently on. The peasantry, having slaked their thirst for vengeance, plunder, rape and gin, by sacking Jewish houses, drinking-shops and brothels, proceeded to embody their grievances against the Jew in the following series of demands. Then follow the demands, twelve in number, revealing an amount of simplicity, ignorance and extravagance hard to realize in these days of progress and enlightenment. This wild and furious outburst on the part of ignorant peasants was excelled in systematic and cold-blooded cruelty by the repressive measures of the Government, which made it almost impossible for the Jew to live. Indeed, swift death from the brutal bludgeon of the peasant was almost to be preferred to the lingering anguish of the poverty, misery and hunger of the Pale of Settlement.” (*Israel in Europe*, see note, pp. 23, 24).

In 1891-2 anti-Semitic feeling again broke out with fresh murders. Numbers of Jews, men, women, and little children, were found in Moscow and other places, and were driven out in the midst of the terrible Russian winter to die of cold and privation in the frozen wastes.

In 1903, again, the world was moved to horror by the massacres at Kishineff, when old men and women, too feeble to fly, and women with their babes in their arms, as well as all others unfortunate enough to fall into their hands, were ruthlessly butchered by Christian worshippers after their service on Easter Day.

Throughout these outrages not only did the police authorities refuse any protection whatever to the helpless victims, even when besought to do so, but individuals here and there assisted in the robbery and destruction.

Is it any wonder that men like Trotsky, who escaped with their lives from such bloody scenes of merciless hate, should cherish in their hearts the seeds of a terrible vindictiveness against Christianity, which, nourished and fed by further repeated tales of brutality, should burst forth in the fulness of time in the foulness of Bolshevism? While we pity the poor victims of Soviet tyranny and accord full sympathy and whatever help we can give them in their anguish and distress, we cannot forget that the Russian Church is suffering to-day in large measure the natural reaction of her own sins (Isaiah 60:12).

While in modern Germany wholesale and murderous assaults like those which happened in Russia are unknown, yet Jew-baiting is far from uncommon. There have been anti-Jewish riots with loss of life, and many people are of the opinion of a priest deputy in the Bavarian Diet, who said in an address on January 30th, 1880, “If you wish to assist the starving population in the Spessart make one brief law, ‘Every *Handelsjude* (Jewish peddler) is to be shot or hanged”” (*Jewish Encyclopedia*, Art. “Anti-Semitism.”)

In the German elections, 1930, very strong support was given to the Anti-Semitic National-Socialist Party under Hitler, partly as the result of a popular recrudescence of anti-Jewish feeling.

To-day, we are shocked at the apparent lapse of a civilized and cultured people into barbarism.

Some of the worst horrors of the Middle Ages have been repeated in Germany and the systematic cruelty of the “cold pogrom” has been adopted for the slow starvation of the unhappy Jews.

In Romania Anti-Semitism is rampant, and while recently in Government circles there has been a diminution of this, popular feeling remains unabated and many outrages are perpetrated upon the Jews. It is said that out of the thirty thousand students in the four Romanian Universities, at least twenty-two thousand are members of anti-Semitic organizations. Jewish students are continually liable to brutal assaults, and Jewish synagogues, shops, etc., as well as peaceful Jewish citizens, are the subject of frequent attacks.

The word “Christian” in Romania connotes anti-Semite, and has little or no relation to Christian in the sense understood amongst us. “Christian” organizations are for the most part those whose sole aim is the extirpation of the Jew, so much so that “Secretaries of the World’s Student Federation pioneering for the Student Christian Movement in Central Europe were at first always supposed to be promoting an anti-Semitic movement,” and the “Christian” Party in the Parliament is the anti-Semitic Party.

A quotation from a Romanian students’ newspaper, given on page 33 of the “Sixth Report of the World Call of the Church of England” runs thus:

“We will overwhelm them (the Jews) in blood, we will crush their heads as we do those of poisonous snakes, we will strew their brains to the winds. If justice is not done for us we will do it for ourselves.”

The following quotations, given by the late Miss Shann in *The Power of a Great Hope*, reveal the terribly virulent attack of Judeo-phobia from which even educated Romanians are suffering:

“There exists in Romania an Association called the Christian League of National Defence, to which a number of students belong. They take their banners into a church, and they are blessed by the priests. They then go out and attack Jews and break their windows. ... At Czernowitz the examining commission of the Romanian professors failed the minority and Jewish students by a practical application of the *Numerous Clausus* * without apology. The students rebelled against this, and insulted the commission. A number of students were then arrested, amongst whom was a young Jewish student. They were tried, and at the trial a Romanian lad of seventeen came over from Jassy and shot the Jewish student dead in the court. At the trial he was acquitted and declared to be a national hero. On the same day a number of Jews who had chastised some Romanian boys who threw stones at their Synagogue on the Day of Atonement were condemned to pay a fine and to various terms of imprisonment from six months to two years . . .”

“While the Romanian Government realizes the loss of prestige incident upon these outrages, it seems unable to give adequate protection to the Jews. Local officials and juries will neither take action nor convict those guilty of these assaults.

“Some time ago in Jassy a prefect was appointed who meted out even-handed justice to Jew and Gentile alike. This raised the ire of the Romanian students. They created a disturbance. Some were arrested, and at the trial were defended by a young lawyer, a son of one of the leaders of the anti-Semitic party. As they left the court he shot the Prefect and his Chief of Police dead. He was arrested and sent up for trial at a town having a large Jewish population. The anti-Semitic party got up disturbances against the Jews, broke their windows, etc. The trial was then moved to a non-Jewish place, but the man was acquitted . . .

“A priest of the superior type and a teacher of religion in the schools, and about to be a professor in a Theological College, defended the shooting of the Jewish student as a justifiable act, on the score that they had an enemy within their borders . . .”

** This ‘Numerous Clausus ‘ restriction operates legally in Hungary, but has no validity in Romania.*

Enough has been said to show that the sad story of hatred and injustice does not belong altogether to the past. Let us look within our own hearts and ask ourselves, Are we altogether clear of this prejudice? Even if we consider that the undesirable characteristics manifest in the Jew have brought upon him much suffering, we too easily forget that he is largely the creature of his environment—the creature that years of oppression and persecution by Christians have bred. We must admit at least that the attitude which repays his alleged craft and duplicity with scorn and hatred is not Christian. If Chalmers, Williams, Paton and others had so treated the natives of New Guinea and Oceania, there would have been few miracles of grace in the South Seas.

On the other hand, the histories of our country and of our Church alike are too rich in the names of great and honorable men of the Jewish race to allow us with any degree of justice to point the finger of scorn at this great people. No section of the community has been more distinguished, and no constituent of our Empire has done more for us than the Jewish people.

Judaism to-day is in a state of solution. The old forms of faith are bankrupt. The intellectual element of Jewry has either abandoned the synagogue altogether, or is seeking to readjust ancient forms to modern conditions; but Judaism is too inelastic and untractable, the attempt to do so means either the complete collapse of Judaism or the production of a form of faith so different from the old that it is often hard to see their relationship.

The efforts of men of deep spiritual insight and lofty idealism, like Dr. Claude Montefiore, and the opposition they have aroused in official Jewish circles, show how difficult is the path of the Reformer in Judaism. Indeed, these attempts seem to spring for the most part from the feeling that to renounce Judaism is to cease being a Jew. The racial and religious are so closely and so long entwined that the Jew can scarcely distinguish them. Many solve the problem by renouncing the practice of Judaism and becoming to all intents and purposes materialists. They may retain the old practice of repairing to the synagogue at the great Festivals, but of any living faith in Judaism they have none.

Many even do not retain this fragment of faith.

In the United States of America 80 per cent, of the Jewish population has renounced all semblance of religion. On the other hand, there are many earnest and seeking spirits exploring new channels of faith. Numbers are being led down the backwaters of Christian Science, Theosophy, or Spiritism, but many have found rest in Christ.

In Europe since the close of the War at least eighty thousand have found their way into the Christian Church, and the records of every missionary society engaged in this work are bright with stories of the heroism and sacrifice of many who have made the great surrender of home and loved ones for the unsearchable riches of Christ. While the Jew who deserts the worship of the synagogue and lapses into infidelity and even falls a prey to that sexual immorality so rare in orthodox Judaism is for the most part unnoticed, his brother who decides to follow Christ and accept the pure and noble standards of the Christian faith and to acknowledge it by baptism becomes anathema as a *meshumet*—apostate. He is the shame and disgrace of his family, a traitor to his faith and to his race.

This condition of things in Jewry is ominous in the presence of a Christian Church apathetic or hostile to Jewish missions.

The flames of a secular and material conception of life are raging throughout the world, threatening it with the complete destruction of faith. Their effect is most manifest perhaps amongst awakening races like the peoples of India, China and Africa, and many missionary leaders feel the extreme urgency of arresting their advance amongst these peoples, believing that in their secularism lies the greatest menace to Christianity.

The danger is nearer to our doors, and greater and more deadly there than elsewhere.

The fires are no less rampant in Judaism, and while the Jewish people is possessed of an intense national and racial consciousness, and is exercising an extraordinary influence intellectually and morally upon every civilized nation in the world, the Chinese and Indian peoples are still as a whole relatively inchoate and primitive, and their impact upon other nations is insignificant compared with that of the Jews.

It is a policy fatal to the future of Christianity to overlook the race that has given to our own generation alone intellectual giants like Einstein, Freud, Bergson and Epstein, of whose individual work it is not too much to say that it has produced a revolution in its own peculiar field. To attempt to arrest the progress of secularization by evangelizing comparatively uninfluential peoples, while ignoring a race whose triumphs in the realms of science, literature, art, politics, commerce and finance are giving color and form and substance to the life of every civilized nation, can only be compared to the attempts of firemen standing with pails of water by their sides endeavoring to subdue with effete and futile garden squirts the raging conflagration of a forest fire.

The Jewish people are to-day accessible to an extraordinary degree, and it is through a Jewry won for Christ we shall best stay the onrush of this devouring secularism at home and abroad.

We must not abate our evangelization of other peoples, their need of a Saviour and our loyalty to that Saviour alike demand that we shall give ourselves wholeheartedly to win them to Him, but the strategic center lies in Jewry.

It may be, as the late Bishop of Ripon asserted, that we have delayed the evangelization of these peoples because we have not sought it in God's way—through the Jew.

~ end of chapter 10 ~

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