

“Messianic Judaism”; or
Judaising Christianity

By DAVID BARON

Reprinted from “THE SCATTERED NATION”

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but at the same time devoted to the interests
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PREFACE.

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This will account for its form and style.

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"Messianic Judaism"; or Judaising Christianity.

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Introductory.

IT has been a principle with us, as far as ever possible, to keep the pages of THE SCATTERED NATION clear of all controversial subjects, and to devote all its space either to the unfolding of the Word of God or to records of His work, and the spread of truthful information about the condition of the Jewish people in the different lands of their dispersion. There are, however, rare occasions when we must make exceptions to our rule, and, without entering into controversy, at least define our own position in relation to such controversial subjects which very vitally affect the cause of Christ among Israel and the spiritual welfare of those of our Jewish people whose eyes have been opened to recognise in Jesus of Nazareth the true Messiah and Son of God.

From different directions questions have been addressed to us as to our views and attitude in relation to the "Jewish Messianic Movement," which rather grand-sounding designation does not describe any movement of Jews in the direction of recognising our Lord Jesus Christ as the Messiah, but an agitation on the part of some Hebrew Christian brethren, who have evidently yet much to learn as to the true character of their high calling of God in Christ Jesus, supported by a few no doubt well-meaning excellent Gentile Christian friends, who either do not understand the real tendency of this

“movement,” or betray a sad lack of insight into the plainly-revealed plan and purpose of God in this present dispensation.

The Movement Defined.

What these brethren preach and agitate for is, that it is incumbent on Hebrew Christians, in order to keep up their “national continuity,” not only to identify themselves with their unbelieving Jewish brethren, in their national aspirations—as expressed, for instance, in Zionism and other movements which aim at creating and fostering “the national idea” and regaining possession of Palestine—but to observe the “national” rites and customs of the Jews, such as the keeping of the Sabbath, circumcision, and other observances, some of which have not even their

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origin in the law of Moses, but are part of that unbearable yoke which was laid on the neck of our people by the Rabbis.

The following are a few utterances of the champions of this movement. One of them, writing rather grandly on a proposed “World-wide Hebrew Christian Congress,” with a view to the establishment of a “Hebrew Church,” and “to formulate a definite plan as to which form of church government or ritual the Hebrew Church is to assume,” proceeds:

“Whatever is likely to be adopted by Congress as a basis for the formation of such a Church, it is bound to include the retention of Circumcision, the Festivals—such as the Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles, Purim, Chanukah—as well as part of the Synagogue liturgy in a modified form.”

And again:—

“It will be readily seen how a Hebrew Christian movement which will hold fast to the Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles, Chanukah, and Purim; which will include in its liturgy a good deal of the traditional Synagogue prayer; which will be favourably rather than unfavourably disposed towards every ceremony that has entwined itself in the Hebrew consciousness; . . . which insists on circumcision; which attaches itself to the Hebrew consciousness and holds by the historical and Biblical continuity of Israel’s Mission—can never be labelled by the Hebrew nation as a proselytising society organised by Gentile Christians, whose object is to absorb and to denationalise the Jewish people.”*

* Philip Cohen, in No. 1 of *The Messianic Jew*.

And another † concludes an article on “Jewish Christianity” as follows:

“In conclusion, allow me to say that I fully endorse what may be termed the ‘Minimum programme,’ as suggested by our much-honoured and widely-known Brother Ch. Th. Lucky, namely: That Hebrew Christians should observe Circumcision, the Sabbath, the Jewish Festivals, and that every effort should be made to revive the Hebrew language.

“Finally, I take the liberty of bringing before the notice of Hebrew Christians the following suggestions as a possible platform for Hebrew Christian activities:

“1. Hebrew Christians should seek to develop a close attachment to Zionism, and if the Zionists refuse to accept our co-operation we then should put forth Zionistic efforts on our own lines.

“2. We should retain, as far as possible, Jewish modes of worship, and a sympathetic appreciation of the Jewish national consciousness, even when manifested in a way that does not appeal to our modern ideas.

“3. We should encourage a hearty fraternal relationship with all Gentile Christian denominations, but on the basis of complete independence.

“4. We should put forth every effort to regain all assimilated Christians of Jewish descent.

“5. We should not permit any intolerant dogmatic principles to constitute the basis for fellowship; every Jew that is not against Jesus should be considered one of us.

“6. We should show to our unconverted brethren that we are not ‘Meshumadim’ (renegades), but, on the contrary, genuine, patriotic Jews, true sons and daughters of Israel.”

This is the “Minimum programme.” The “Maximum” includes joining in all the forms and ceremonies of the Christ-rejecting synagogue, to wear phylacteries and the talith (or prayer-shawl), to use the Jewish liturgy, just as the other Jews do, only to smuggle in now and then the Name of Jesus into those prayers!

The Movement partly a Reaction.

Now let me say, before proceeding to define our own position and to point out a few of the fallacies

and dangers of this movement, that it is partly a reaction and protest against certain wrong methods of Jewish missions and missionaries, and wrong views in the churches in reference to Israel.

(1) Societies and missions have not been content with merely evangelising the Jews, and bringing those whose hearts were inclined toward the Gospel into living contact with Christ, but have sought to absorb them into the particular sect and party to which they themselves belonged, and more or less to *Gentilise* as well as “Christianise” them.

(2) Christianity has for the most part been presented to the Jews as an *alien system* in a Gentile garb, and instead of presenting Christ to them as their “very own”—the Divine King of their people, the sum and substance of their Scriptures, the Fulfiller of their Law and their Prophets, the embodiment of all the promises and covenants which God made with their fathers; and the New Testament as the continuation and completion of the self-revelation of God to Moses and the Prophets—the Gentile Churches have invited the Jews to “change their religion,” and Jewish converts have been designated “proselytes.”

(3) As to the nation of Israel, these “proselytes” were taught for the most part that it is dead and done for; that the names “Israel,” “Zion,” “Jerusalem,” in the great prophecies and promises which are manifestly yet unfulfilled, are no longer to be taken literally, but apply to “the Church,” excepting when those names and terms occur in connection with curses and threatenings—then, of course, they do still apply to the “Jews.” In short, that the most which is to be expected in reference to the future of the Jewish people is the absorption of a certain number within the Church.

This being so, any special sympathy and interest on the part of Jewish converts for their own nation was looked down upon almost with suspicion, and any hopes for a future national restoration of their people was regarded “as Jewish,” if not carnal. In short, the “proselyte” must make himself as “un-Jewish” as possible, even to the changing of his old Jewish name for a Gentile one.

Our Own Position and Views.

Now, I need not explain to any reader of THE SCATTERED NATION that the Hebrew Christian Testimony to Israel holds different views, and works upon quite different principles. We are full of hope for the future of our nation, and most firmly believe with the Apostle Paul that the gifts and the calling of God in relation to Israel are “without repentance” or a change of mind on His part. We believe that Israel is still God’s nation; that Zion will yet again be the centre of God’s kingdom upon earth, and that not through the Churches, which are becoming more and more apostate and worldly, but through restored and converted Israel shall all the nations of the earth be led to a knowledge of Christ, and all the earth be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah, even as the waters cover the sea.

Nor is the aim of our “Testimony” to “proselytise” a few Jews for this or that particular sect or party in Christendom, but to spread abroad, and as widely as possible, the knowledge of Israel’s true Messiah and Saviour among the scattered people.

We repudiate and resent the term, “proselyte” as applied to a Jewish believer, for by faith in the Redeemer promised to our fathers he has become a true “Israelite,” who has entered into his own promised heritage of covenanted blessing—”a Jew” not only “outwardly,” like his unbelieving brethren, but also “*inwardly*, in spirit and in truth,” whose praise is not of men but of God.

But, holding these views and cherishing these hopes, and with hearts full of yearning love for our nation, we do not overlook nor forget the great though temporary *break in Israel’s national history* occasioned by national apostasy and sin, nor the solemn consequences both to Israel himself and the world of this break in God’s national dealings with our people, *and the special character of the dispensation which was inaugurated by the advent of the long-promised Redeemer, and the preaching of His Gospel.*

The Dangers of the “Movement.”

The national continuity of Israel as the “Everlasting Nation,” and their restoration to their own land and future blessing among the nations of the earth, are guaranteed by the covenants and promises of God, which can never fail. But what these Judaising brethren forget is—first, that during the period of Israel’s national unbelief a *new thing* is being formed. Out of Jew and Gentile—yea, from all kindreds and tribes of the earth—God is gathering out “a people for His Name.” This new people, whose calling is heavenly, whose inheritance is incorruptible, fills also the position and fulfils the mission of Israel during the interval of this present parenthetical dispensation. It is the Kehillah—the *ecclesia*—the Church, or “congregation” of God; it is His “holy nation,” because every essential element of what constitutes “nationality” is to be found in this new brotherhood, which has one common origin, one fatherland, one language, one common hope and destiny, through which, and not through Israel nationally, He is during the present time carrying out His purpose of grace on the earth.

Secondly: Christ being rejected by Israel, and despised by the world in general, those who profess allegiance to Him, and become members of the body of which He is the Head, must be ready to take up the cross and follow Him. And one very heavy part of the cross is the separation which it often involves to disciples, even from among Gentiles, and almost invariably to Jewish believers, from those near and dear to them. To the Jew and to the Gentile who would follow Christ and exchange the friendship of the world for friendship with God—though perhaps in a more literal sense to the Jew—the same call and the same holy requirements are addressed as to our father Abraham: “Get thee out from thy country, and from thy kindred, and

from thy father's house, into a land which I will show thee.”

Oh! it is hard to bear suffering and reproach; to be misunderstood and misjudged; to be called “Meshumed”; to be regarded as an “outlaw” by one's own kindred; and to suffer, it may be, the loss of all things for His dear Name's sake; but the conditions of discipleship are not different now than they ever were. “He that taketh not his cross and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me he that loveth his life shall lose it and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve Me let him follow Me; and where I am there shall also My servant be.”

As far as the Jewish believer is concerned, and his relationship to the nation, the present condition of things may be likened to that which existed after the great sin of Israel in the matter of the golden calf, when “Moses took the Tabernacle and pitched it without the camp, and called it the Tabernacle of the congregation (or ‘the tent of meeting,’ *i.e.*, between God and man). And it came to pass that every one which sought the Lord went out unto the tent of meeting which was without the camp” (Ex. xxxiii. 7). So also during this much longer period of national apostasy God's Tabernacle is removed from the camp of corporate official Judaism, and every one from among Israel who in truth seeks the Lord must be prepared “to go forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach” (Heb. xiii. 13). Or, to use the figure of John x., during the period of Israel's national rejection of Christ when the “sheepfold” is given over to “thieves and robbers,” the Good Shepherd calleth His own sheep by name, and *leadeth them out*” so that together with those “other sheep” of His from among the Gentiles, who were “not of this fold,” they may form “one flock,” even as He is their one Shepherd.

Thirdly: If there is one truth more emphasized than another in the New Testament it is the unity, inter-relation, and interdependence of Jews and Gentiles in the one true Church of Christ, in which “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female,” but all are one in Christ Jesus. To use only two or three of the figures in the New Testament, they are parts of one *Building*, built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *Corner Stone*, in whom every part, “*fitly framed together*, groweth into an holy *Temple* in the Lord”; they are members of one *Household*, in which all are equally “children” in relation to their heavenly Father, and “brethren” in relation to one another; they are members of one *Living Body*, the Head of which is Christ, “from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building-up of itself in love” (Eph. iv. 16, R.V.).

Now, to say that in the One

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Church of Christ one set of rules, one attitude in relation to certain rites and observances enjoined in the law, and certain earthly or “national” hopes and expectations befit and are incumbent on its Jewish members, which do not befit and are not incumbent on its

Gentile members, is nothing less than to try to raise up again the middle wall of partition which Christ by His death bath broken down, and to introduce confusion into the one “House of the Living God.” it is very kind of one of the Gentile champions of these Judaizing views to issue a manifesto to Hebrew Christians to assure them that “this is the liberty in the Gospel of Christ that the Gentile need not take upon him the law, and the Jew need not forsake the law”; and again, “the Jew in Christ is as free to retain all that is possible for him to retain of the law, as the Gentile in Christ is free to keep aloof from all that savours of laws and ordinances,* but the New Testament nowhere tells “the Gentile in Christ” that he is “free” from anything from which “the Jew in Christ” is also not freed; and to quote, as this writer does, the cases of “Moses and David and Isaiah,” or even of “Zacharias and Elisabeth, the parents of John the Baptist,” who walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless—as proof “that there is a law observance which is not unto spiritual bondage”—only betrays great confusion of thought, and forgetfulness of the sad religious development of the Jews, which is, perhaps, the most tragic element in the history of Christless Israel these past nineteen centuries.

* Professor Stroeter, in No. 1 of *The Messianic Jew*.

But let it suffice here to say, in reply to the above statements, that “all the law and the prophets prophecied unto John”; that the “new covenant,” into the blessings of which we have now been brought by the grace of Christ, is “not according to the covenant which God made with our fathers in the day when He took them by the band to bring them out of Egypt”; and that since the advent of our Redeemer, Who by the rending of His flesh on Calvary’s cross “abolished the enmity, even the law of commandments, contained in ordinances, that He might create in Himself of the twain (*i.e.*, of Jew and Gentile) one new man, so making peace”—we live in a different dispensation, when those who are children of God are put in a different position and relation to the law than “Moses and David and Isaiah,” or even than “Zacharias and Elisabeth.”

It was most certainly primarily to the Jewish believers in the churches of Galatia that the Apostle addressed himself in Galatians iv. and v., in order to instruct them in this very thing. *“But I say that so long as the heir is a child he differeth nothing from a bondservant, though he is lord of all; but is under guardians and stewards until the term appointed of the father. So we also, when we were children, were held in bondage under the rudiments*

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of the world; but when the fulness of the time came God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that He might redeem them which were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. . . . But now that ye have come to know God, or rather to be known of God, how turn ye back again to the weak and beggarly rudiments (or ‘elements’) whereunto ye desire to be in bondage over again? Ye observe days, and

months, and seasons, and years; I am afraid of you, lest by any means I have bestowed labour upon you in vain. . . . With (or 'for') freedom did Christ set us free; stand fast, therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage."

Not that either the Jewish or the Gentile believer is lawless, "but under law to Christ" (1 Cor. ix. 21); and since the moral law of God is written on our hearts, and put in our inward parts, the righteousness and purity which the law aimed at, but which could never be attained by mere "observances," is fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Jewish Nationality unlike any other.

4. "But," say these brethren, "why expect the Jew to denationalise himself when he comes to believe in Christ by giving up his Jewish 'national' observances and ceremonies, when the Christian Englishman, or German, or Frenchman, etc., still remains—as far as his earthly relationships are concerned—English, French, or German, as the case may be, and shares in the national aspirations and observances of the various nations to which they belong?"

To this my answer is: Jewish history is peculiar and unique—unlike that of any other nation, and the so-called Jewish "national" observances are altogether unlike the customs of any other nation. The peculiarity of the Jewish people consists in the fact that God called and chose it to be the medium of His self-revelation on the earth.

"For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and from the one end of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it? Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live? Or hath God essayed to go and take Him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? Unto thee it was showed that thou mightest know that the Lord He is God; there is none else beside Him. Out of heaven He made thee to hear His voice, that He might instruct thee: and upon earth He made thee to see His great fire; and thou heardest His words out of the midst of the fire" (Deut. iv. 32-36, R.V.).

In brief, Israel was called to be a theocracy—a people whose king and lawgiver is Jehovah; not a *kingdom* merely, but the centre of

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God's kingdom upon the earth. And the holy law with its ceremonial observances were not the natural product and development of the history of the people, or the expression of its "national" character and spirit, as is the case with the secular laws and customs of the nations, but were *divinely revealed* to Israel.

That the law and its “observances” were not the national product of Israel is attested by the continual apostasy of the people from this very law, and disregard alike of its moral and ceremonial observances, of which the prophets and psalmists are the witnesses.

Then apart from the ethical character of the law, its divinely appointed rites and ceremonies were so many types and symbols setting forth great spiritual realities, which were to find their fulfilment in the Messiah and in the “new covenant” which would be established by Him; which, as already shown, is “not according to the covenant which God made with our fathers when He took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt.” There is, therefore, no parallel in this respect between the Christian Englishman or Frenchman and the Jew in Christ.

Their customs and “observances,” in as far as they are “national,” have nothing to do with religion, and as far as they are “religious” (whether or not they are right and justifiable from a Biblical point of view) are not peculiarly national, but are the common observances of all the peoples which constitute “Christendom.” The Jewish observances, on the other hand, have their chief significance in their *religious* character, and their practice by a Hebrew Christian, who professes to be a son of the new covenant, is nothing else than the attempt to build up again that which is “done away in Christ.”

Neither must we forget that though God has not cast off His people which He hath foreknown—that though Israel is still God’s nation, and will assuredly yet form the centre of God’s Kingdom on earth, Jewish nationality is for the time being, so to say, *suspended*; and these are the “many days” in which the children of Israel are without a land of their own, and “abide without a king and without a prince, without a sacrifice and without an image, and without ephod and without teraphim”—a *diaspora*, without any national cohesion or unity, so that many of their “national” celebrations and observances, *which might be in their right place and appropriate, were the Jews in their own land, are out of place and meaningless when practised even by unbelieving Jews during their dispersion*; and in the case of the believing Jew the observance of them is not only doubly incongruous, but, as experience has shown, a hindrance to his own full spiritual development; a means of confusion to his fellow-believers from among the Gentiles; and a stumbling-block to the Jews.

Of course we are told again and again that it is not intended that Jewish Christians should attach any *merit* to these observances,

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but it is none the less a *fact* that the Jews *who confound national custom with religion, and whose religion now consists in these very observances, can never dissociate the idea of merit from them*; and in spite of all disclaimers and explanations, their thought about any Jewish or Gentile Christian who observes any of their characteristically “national” or Jewish “rites” or customs, is that he is, after all, not fully satisfied with his Christianity, and is therefore *coming back to Judaism*.

The Significance of Circumcision.

To deal fully with this subject, and to point out all the dangers and fallacies of this “movement,” one would require to write a very long treatise; but let us very briefly look at those observances which are included in the “Minimum programme” of these Judaising brethren. At the head of all stands circumcision. Now, from the physiological and hygienic point of view, there is a great deal to be said for the practice; but to say that it is incumbent upon the Jewish Christian to circumcise his children in order to keep up “his national continuity,” is both erroneous and absurd. As far as nationality goes circumcision will no more link the children of Hebrew Christians with the Jews (even if this were an end desirable) than with the Arabs, or Turks, or Egyptians, all of whom also practise circumcision in the flesh. In Israel circumcision was appointed of God, not only as the distinguishing mark of the Abrahamic family, entitling its members to a share in Canaan (Gen. xvii.), but as a *sign* and pledge of a great spiritual gift of grace which God would bestow upon them.

What that great gift should be is expressed already by Moses, in such a scripture, for instance, as Deut. xxx. 6: “*And Jehovah thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love Jehovah thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.*” Circumcision of the heart—or, in other words, a *new nature*, the condition of fellowship with God, and the pledge not of earthly inheritance in Canaan, but to one incorruptible and undefiled, and which fadeth not away—is that of which circumcision in the flesh is the symbol and pledge. No wonder that those who teach that Jewish Christians should circumcise their children, also tell them to identify themselves with the Zionist movement, and to claim Palestine as “their heritage.” But true believers, whether Jew or Gentile, who are members of the one Church of Christ, mind not “earthly things,” because they know that “*our citizenship is in heaven*, from whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory, according to the working whereby He is able to subject all things unto Himself” (Phil. iii. 18-21, R.V.).

Furthermore, since the advent of Christ, the bringer in of the better hope, and the appearing of the *grace* of God which brings salvation to man apart from works, ceremonial circumcision in the

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flesh has become the mark of those who still think that they can attain unto righteousness through the law. It is this fact which lends force to the Apostle’s earnest warnings and entreaties to the Galatians: “*Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye receive circumcision, Christ will profit you nothing. Yea, I testify again to every man (whether Jew or Gentile) that receiveth circumcision, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Ye are severed from Christ, ye who would be justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit by faith wait for the hope of righteousness*” (Gal. v. 2-4). In view of these solemn asseverations of the inspired Apostle, it is nothing less than to pervert truth to write as the leading Gentile champion of these Judaising views does, that “they are not

preaching liberty to you but bondage, who would have you forsake Moses, and not to circumcise your children.”*

* Professor Stroeter, in his “Urgent Call to Hebrew Christians,” in the first No. of *The Messianic Jew*.

Truly there is need to-day, as there was in the Apostle’s time, earnestly to warn weak and unstable believers, both among Jews and Gentiles, not only to “beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers,” but to “*beware of the concision*” (which is the Apostle’s contemptuous term for those who still urged circumcision of the flesh); for *we are the concision* who worship by the Spirit of God, and glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh” (Phil. iii. 2, 3, R.V.); or, in words of the same Apostle, which have more particular reference to the Jews, “He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh, but he is a Jew which is one *inwardly*, and circumcision is that of *the heart*, in the spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not of man, but of God.”*

* I much regret to be obliged for lack of space to omit my remarks on the observance of the Sabbath, the Passover, and other festivals, all of which to the Jew are bound up with the Mosaic economy and the land of Palestine. But I may take the liberty of directing the attention of my readers to my book “**Types, Psalms, and Prophecies,**” in the first chapter of which the typical and spiritual significance of the Sabbath and Jewish Feasts are fully unfolded.

The practice of Jewish Observances by the first Believers.

(5) These modern Judaising teachers never tire of pointing to the fact that the first Jewish believers “remained in unbroken continuity with the Hebrew nation,” and that they attended the temple and synagogue worship, and kept the Sabbath, the Jewish festivals, etc.; in proof of which they appeal to the book “in which the historical records of Hebrew Christianity have been kept—the Acts of the Apostles.” †

† “The Hebrew Christian and his National Continuity.” By Philip Cohen.

Now it is quite true that the Acts of the Apostles, especially the first twelve chapters, may from one point of view be regarded as a record of “Hebrew Christianity,” but as the record unfolds we can trace already the divergent principles which would make the continuance of the “unbroken

continuity” between church and synagogue an *impossibility*. And that it was the *synagogue* which always took the initiative in breaking the “continuity,” by driving from its midst, and persecuting even unto death, those of their number who took upon themselves the Name of Jesus, we also see from that book. But what these brethren overlook is, that in relation to this and other matters the Acts of the Apostles introduces us to a *transition period* and describes conditions which most evidently were not intended of God to be permanent.

As to the adherence of the first Jewish disciples to the national customs and traditions, and the observance even by the Apostle Paul of certain rites and ceremonies, we have to remember the peculiar circumstances and conditions. But whatever doubt and perplexity a Hebrew Christian might have found himself in as to what his attitude to the “national” observances should be, so long as the Temple with its original divinely appointed ritual and ceremonies still remained, *things were altogether changed in this respect* when the forty years’ probationary period of God’s long-suffering after the Crucifixion of Christ, during which the Temple ritual, with its national worship and ceremonial, was allowed to drag on, came at last to an end.

When this additional time of grace, given by God to Israel nationally in the hope that through their *now empty ceremonies* they might yet perchance recognise in Jesus the true Redeemer, and repent of the great national crime of having handed over their own Messiah to the Gentiles to be crucified, was allowed by them to pass, and the heart of the nation only hardened itself against Christ, and hastened to fill up the cup of its iniquity by adding to the apostasy from the Father and the Son resistance to the Holy Ghost, by attempting to hinder the spread of the Gospel among the Gentiles—then the long-threatened judgment of God at last came. The Temple which was not only the symbol of fellowship with God but of the national unity of the people, was destroyed, the land laid waste, and the people scattered; the observance of the ritual and “national” customs, including the observance of the Passover and all the other festivals, according to their divine appointment, *made impossible*; and Jewish nationality suspended until the times of the Gentiles should be fulfilled, and the Lord shall once again arise and have mercy upon Zion.

With the breaking up of the Jewish national polity there emerged the Church of Christ—at first, indeed, regarded by Jew, Greek, and Roman as a mere Jewish “sect” (Acts xxvi. 22), but becoming more and more clearly and distinctly defined as the “Israel of God” of the present dispensation, not dependent upon any building or land for its centre of unity, and whose worship does not consist in “observances,” but in spiritual sacrifices and service which are acceptable to God through Christ Jesus. Then also, just before

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the Temple was destroyed, primarily for the comfort and instruction of the Jewish believers who sorrowed and were perplexed because they were excluded by their unbelieving brethren from partaking in these “national observances,” the Epistle to the

Hebrews was given to the Church, in which the spiritual significance of the Mosaic ritual and covenant is unfolded, and Christ is shown to be its substance and “better than” all.

Is anything to be Gained by Compromise?

(6) One point more and I am finished. These brethren seem to think that by observing the Jewish ceremonies and customs, and thus demonstrating their “national continuity,” Jewish opposition to Christ will be disarmed, and a way made to the heart of Israel for the Gospel. But history and experience prove that they are mistaken. The first disciples did try to keep up their “national continuity,” and conformed to the customs of their nation; but that did not open the heart of the nation for Christ, or prevent their being hated and persecuted. Some twenty or twenty-five years ago, after the death of Franz Delitzsch, a small company of young German pastors who had been his students at the *Institutum Judaicum* in Leipzig came under the influence of Theodore Lucky (who is the real father of this modern Judaistic movement), and went out to Galicia and other parts of South-Eastern Europe to convert the Jewish nation on these lines. They told Jewish inquirers to remain in the synagogue, to conform to Rabbinic Judaism, and to wait till a national Hebrew Christian Church should be formed. But nothing came of it all, except it be some mischief.

For many years Theodore Lucky, the chief and ablest of all the Judaising brethren, has lived in Galicia with a handful of secret “converts.” These brethren go in for the “Maximum programme,” and conform to the “national customs” of their people to such an extent that there is nothing to distinguish them in their manner of life from the strictest Talmudical Jews: have *they* in any perceptible degree disarmed Jewish opposition to Christ, or brought the Jews any nearer to the Gospel?

By all means let us follow the example and methods of the great Apostle who said, “To the Jew I became a Jew”; let us adapt ourselves to the peculiar condition and needs of our people; let us show them that faith in Christ has not the effect of alienating love and sympathy in our hearts from “those which are our flesh,” and that we are ready, if needs be, to sacrifice ourselves for their good; but, in the words of my friend and colleague in the Hebrew Christian Testimony to Israel, C. A. Schönberger, “However much we may stoop to the conception of our unbelieving brethren, taking into account all their peculiar prejudices, one thing we cannot and *will* not do—we will not lower the standard of Christ, nor smooth over the offence of the Cross.” We will not preach another Christ than the

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One who is the end of the law for righteousness to all who believe, nor preach another Gospel than that of Christ crucified for our sins, and raised again for our justification; and by God’s grace we will show to our Jewish brethren that not “observances” make a true Jew, but a character moulded after the pattern of Him who was the only true Israelite, though at the same time God over all blessed for ever!

But in truth, to quote in conclusion some pertinent words from an able article by our fellow-worker, Naphtali Rudnitzky, in his little German quarterly, *Der Oelberg*:

“It is neither our freedom from the law which separates us from our brethren, nor is it faithfulness to the law which unites us. One name divides us; at one hill is the parting of the ways. Jesus is the Name; Golgotha and the cross the point of divergence.

“This was the experience of the first disciples of Jesus, although under the conditions of their time they held on to the synagogue a ground of contact with their people. ‘Let us threaten them that they speak henceforth to no man in this name; and they called them and charged them not to speak at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus’ (Acts iv. 17, 18).

“This has been the position of the Jewish people since its rejection of the offer of salvation in Jesus of Nazareth. The cross of Golgotha was to the self-righteous people, boasting of the works of the law, an offence, and has continued to be so to the present day. However we might slavishly humble ourselves under the yoke of the law, it would be but to hear again in the synagogue the cry, ‘Away with such fellows from the earth, for it is not fit that they should live!’ so soon as we proclaimed Jesus the Crucified as ‘Prince and Saviour,’ to give to Israel repentance and the remission of sins.

“The Judaising opponents of the Gospel who preached a strict observance of law were aware of this, and therefore they did not come with the teaching of the cross, nor with the full Christ. They degraded the Lord, representing Him as a servant of Judaism, and His first elected witnesses as train-bearers of the Pharisees. With one voice the whole company of these Spirit-filled witnesses opposed such misrepresentation.

“The success which the disciples had to record among their people was not the consequence of their strict observance of the law, but of their bold testimony to Him who was crucified and risen. Individual souls in Israel who thirsted for the truth and yearned for redemption from sin received their testimony; the others either took offence at it or scoffed (Acts iii. 11-13; Acts ii. 12, 13). And the same is the case also to-day. On the other hand, we cannot deny that not only in America, but in all civilised lands, a number of Rabbis have taken up a favourable position as regards the Person of Jesus. These Rabbis, however, and the Jews influenced by them, belong for the most part to the more liberal-thinking among the

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Jews—*just those who consider the national customs as obsolete*. He who would win them for Christ must not seek to force ‘religious observances’ upon them.

“Zionism is strictly national, but, for the greater part, holds itself just as aloof from the religious ceremonies of Judaism as do the liberal-thinking Jews.

“Now, as concerns the orthodox Jews—to them these observances are the mark not only of their peculiar national character, but of their religion; to them it is the practice of

these observances which constitutes the Jew. He who would win *them* for Christ must first of all show them that their view of religion is a false one; that they have enveloped the heart—the kernel of the religion of Israel—in a shell.

“This law-observing Judaism will not be contented were we to observe its national religious customs and yet believe in Jesus: if we would have its recognition we must deny Christ. This is the price required by the synagogue for our approach to it. Alas! some have paid this price who began by seemingly harmless ‘observances.’

“But if, in truth, we, as Jewish Christians, are to claim unity with our people, then there is a much more excellent way open to us (1 Cor. xii. 31)—unfeigned devotion to Jesus, and untiring wooing of the heart of our brethren through His Gospel.”

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