

What the Christian Owees to the Jew.

In his address at the Synagogue on Friday evening, speaking on the subject of the Christian's indebtedness to the Jew, H. Weinstock said: Not long ago I received a lengthy communication from a gentleman living in San Francisco in which he took occasion to severely criticize certain views which I had expressed in an address delivered by me before a religious body in his city. The writer of that communication had evidently been born and reared under Christian influences, but had become an atheist and an opponent of Christianity. Speaking of the influence of the Bible and the Christian religion, he wrote:

"Civilization, literature, art, education and general intelligence existed ages before the disturbing elements of Christianity had formed lodgment in the human mind. . . . I have always felt that it would be far better if the Old and New Testaments had never existed; if the name of Christ had never been uttered by human tongue; if the religion promulgated in the name of the mythical Jesus had never been thought of, than that the ages of suffering and devastation, misery and death, had followed the introduction of that name."

My non-believing correspondent spoke but truth when he said that "civilization, literature, art, education and general intelligence existed ages before the disturbing elements of Christianity had formed lodgment in the human mind." The splendor of the Egyptian court, the greatness of Nineveh, Babylon and Persia, the literature and philosophy of Greece, the high standard of civilization attained in Rome, existed centuries before Christianity was dreamed of. Seneca was born 2 B. C. and wrote his counsels of moral perfection before Jesus was heard of in Rome. Livy gave to the world his great historical works 20 B. C. Virgil had gained fame as a great poet 40 B. C. Plato had written his wonderful philosophy, and Demosthenes had become one of the world's matchless orators 350 B. C. Socrates had taught his pure and uplifting morality 400 years before the Christian era. Phidias had given his marvelous works of art in marble and in bronze 500 years before the birth of Jesus, and Homer had sung his immortal poems over 800 years before Paul went forth to preach Christianity.

That the influence of the heathen philosophers and scientists, artists and poets, statesmen and orators, moralists and teachers, had potent effect on their time, and more or less continue to have a potent influence even on our time, will not be denied. No great deed can be achieved and no great thought can be uttered—no matter by whom, or when, or where—that is not certain to live and to wield a permanent, if silent, influence. To deny our obligations to the great men of thought and of deed who belonged to the ages before the Christian era, and who were born and reared under the influence of paganism and heathenism, would be an evidence of ignorance or unfairness. Our present civilization comes from no one stream alone, but is the concentrated results of the influences which have come from all streams and in all the ages and stages of the civilization of the past. The deeds and the thoughts of little value have passed away and lie deeply buried in the memory of the past. The thoughts and the achievements of those who have gone before, which appeal to mankind, and which have never been uplived, have been handed down and are likely to continue to be handed down, so long as civilization shall stand. No intelligent, believer, however devout he may be, will deny the good which was achieved for humanity by the great and the good of heathendom. No skeptic or non-believer can be well informed or just who will deny the still greater good which has come to civilization through Christianity.

I cheerfully give testimony to this as a Jew, speaking from a Jewish pulpit to a Jewish congregation, and when I give such testimony I voice the sentiment of every intelligent, fair-minded Jew. 'Tis true that the enemy of Christianity can present a strong picture against Christian civilization. 'Tis true that he can point out that, despite Christian teaching and Christian professions, war and destruction, carnage and bloodshed, hate and envy, vice and degradation, wickedness and unholiness, thrive in many places throughout Christendom. 'Tis true that the enemy of Christianity can point out that, while professing Christians repeat the teachings of their master, too often these repetitions are merely lip words that come from the head and not from the heart, and that the Commandments of their Savior are observed in the breach rather than in the practice. It is not difficult for an unfair critic to find much under heathen civilization to command respect and admiration, and much under Christian civilization to be denounced and condemned. A spirit of fairness demands, however, that the virtues of heathenism shall be placed in contrast with the evils of Christianity, but that the general condition of society and the average mental, moral and material condition of the individual should be compared under heathenism and under Christianity. The most pious Christian, I take it, will not maintain that all human beings were cruel and wicked under heathen civilization, nor that all men and women are Saints under Christian civilization. If more people "do justice, love, mercy,

and walk humbly before their God" under Christian influence than under the influence of heathenism, the crown of glory must be placed upon the Christian brow and heathenism declared an evil of the past.

Here is a word picture of the conditions existing under heathenism, painted by a modern writer in the "North British Review":

"The corrupting influence of paganism met man in every incident of life—in business, in pleasure, in literature, in politics, in the armies, in the theaters, in the streets, in the baths, at the games, in the decorations of his home, in the amusements and service of his table; in the very conditions and the physical phenomena of nature. It is not easy to call up as a reality the intending sinner addressing to the defiled vice which he contemplates a prayer for the success of his design; the adulteress imploring of Venus the favors of her paramour; the harlot praying for an increase of her sinful gains; the pander begging the protection of the goddess on her shameful trade; the thief praying to Hermes Dolos for aid in his enterprises or offering up to him the first fruits of his plunder; young maidens dedicating their girlish to Athens. Apatourus, youths entreating Hercules to expedite the death of their rich uncle. And yet these things, and far worse than these, meet us over and over again in every writer who has left a picture of Roman manners in the later republic and under the beginning of the Empire."

Referring to the morality and the philosophy taught by the heathen stoics, Proude declares: "It carried no consolation to the hearts of suffering millions who were in no danger of being led away by luxury, because their whole lives were passed in poverty and wretchedness. It was not missionary the stoic declared no active war against corruption. He stood alone, protesting scornfully in silent example against evils which he was without power to cure. Like Caesar, he folded himself in his mantle. The world might do its worst. He would keep his own soul unstained."

George Lorimer (to whose work on "The Debt of Christianity" I am deeply indebted for many facts presented in this address) calls attention to the fact that the foremost heathen stoic philosophers felt little or no moral impulse from their own teachings, as witnessed in their lives. "Cato, the elder, was notorious for his cruelty to his slaves. Brutus was guilty of continued and merciless cruelty. The name of Sallust was a by-word for contemptible avariciousness. And Seneca, the Roman moralist, has not been entirely excused from the responsibility for some of the crimes of his royal pupil, Nero."

The condition of women and children under heathen civilization was far below that accorded them under Christianity. The heathen regarded woman as his inferior. "In cultured Greece woman's only avenue to higher education was through harlotry. In the time of Socrates only public women enjoyed intellectual advantages, and during the imperial age of Rome the condition of woman fell to a low degree."

A writer, describing society under the Caesars, says: "We are assured by Seneca that there were women in Rome who counted their age, not by the consuls, but by their husbands, and by Jurena that one had married eight husbands in five years. Divorce was resolved upon on the slightest pretext. Cicero put away Terentia apparently because he had a rich ward whose fortune he coveted. Many separated merely for love of change, disdaining to give any reason—like Emilius Pallas, who told his friends that 'he knew better where the shoe pinched him.'"

As against the pictures, let us look upon others presenting an opposite view. Lorimer, in speaking of the Christian missionaries who traverse the globe "to save in time for eternity the low-browed, animalistic, benighted masses of alien lands, to save from disgusting wizardry of groveling superstition the deceptions of lying oracles and the baser rites of idol service, the ambassadors and soldiers of Christianity plunge into the pestiferous wilderness, wade through malarious swamps, penetrate regions scorched by tropic heat, or blighted by winter's cold, and separated from friends and exposed to enemies, endure, resting nights, brave the assassin's knife and the tyrant's dagger, and pass through suffering the most excruciating to mind and body."

Let us now ask, of what moral value to the world is all this Christian missionary work, and is it worth the cost? Sir Bartle Frere, when Governor of Bombay, wrote regarding the beneficial influence of missionaries: "I speak simply as to matter of experience and observation, just as a Roman prefect might have reported to Trajan or the Antonines; and I assure you that, whatever may be told to the contrary, the teachings of Christianity among a hundred and sixty millions of civilized, industrious Hindus and Mohammedans in India are effecting changes, moral, social and political, which, for extent and rapidity of effect, are far more extraordinary than anything you or your fathers have witnessed in modern Europe."

Dr. Clifford, in his book on "Inspiration," relates the following story: "It would take you to a little village near my station, where they had embraced Christianity in a body but eight months before, and where the high priest of the temple near by came secretly to me in my tent and asked:

"Sir, will you please impart to me the secret? What is it that makes that Bible of yours have such power over the lives of those that embrace it? Now, it is but eight months since the people joined you. Before they were quarrelsome; they were riotous; they were lazy; they were shiftless, and now see what a difference there is in them! Now they are active, energetic, laborious. They never drink; they never quarrel."

"Why, sir, I joined in the persecution when they became Christians and tried to stamp out Christianity before it gained a foothold here; but they stood firm, and now, in all the region around here, the people all respect and honor them."

"What is it that makes the Bible have such a power over the lives of those who profess it?" "Our vedas have no such power." "Please, sir, give me the secret." Moncure D. Conway, after visiting India, wrote as follows: "On my book shelves you will find copies of all the sacred books of the East, over which I have pored and expounded for years. The noble aspirations

of the ancient writers, the glowing poetry of the vedas, the sublime imagery of their seers, have become part of my life. But, when I went to the great cities of India, the Pilgrim sites, to which through every year millions of those who profess to follow the faith of the men who wrote those books, and mingled with the vast procession of worshippers at the shrines sacred to the deities, whose praises are sung by the Hindoo poets; then, alas! the contrast between the real and the ideal was heart breaking. In all those temples, myriads of worshippers no one man, not even one woman, seemed to entertain the shadow of a conception of anything moral or spiritual or religious, or even mythological in their ancient creed. Not one glimmer of the great thoughts of the poets and sages lighted their darkened souls. To all of them, the great false god which they worshipped (a bulk of roughly carved wood or stone) appeared to be the authentic presentment of some terrible demon or invisible power who would treat them cruelly if they did not give him great butters of gold. In their spiritual sense, there is none. If you wish for religion, you will not find it in Brahminism."

Here and there under heathenism, a glorious character, such as Socrates, may be found, with his pure and high morality; or a Marcus Aurelius, whose character for gentleness and benevolence, and whose love of mankind makes him stand out in bold relief as among the greatest and noblest of heathens; or an Epictetus, whose moral philosophy still commands widespread attention. These, however, were the exceptions and exalted exceptions. The average men and women living under heathen influences, were low and degraded in their thoughts, and their habits of life were filled with the love of animalism, rather than with the spirit of morality and righteousness. They appreciate the high value of Christian civilization, we need but compare the very few names that stand for morality and righteousness which have come out of the thousands of years of heathendom with the myriads of names that stand for the highest morality and righteousness which have come out of the century alone. Think of such names as Herbert Spencer, Darwin, Mathew Arnold, Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, Gladstone, Emerson, Longfellow, Peabody, Peter Cooper, George W. Childs, Tennyson, Whittier, Bryant, Lowell, Holmes, James Freeman Clarke, Grant, Max Mueller, Humboldt, Agassiz, Ruskin, Phillips Brooks, Starr King. Think of these, and the myriads of others whose lives were open books, whose achievements as soldiers, statesmen, poets, authors, philosophers, scientists, philanthropists, preachers and teachers, have left a deep impression on their own generation and on untold generations to follow. Remember that these were not only men of deeds, but men filled with high and exalted thoughts and ideals, whose intense love for humanity led them to give the best that was within them for the benefit and for the welfare of mankind. The few names mentioned are but as Captains of armies of men and women dedicated during this one century to high thinking and pure living. True, that some of these are looked upon by the orthodox as great and noble, as heroes or non-believers, but all of them were nevertheless reared under Christian influence, and to Christianity and to its spirit is largely due the moral power these noble characters have sent forth.

If you were to ask the most prominent atheist, agnostic, or enemy of Christianity whether he would rather live and rear his children under heathen influences such as existed before the Christian era, or under the Christian influence which prevades to-day, what, think you, would be his answer? Unless blinded by prejudice or unthinking prejudice, you may rest assured that he would look upon it as a misfortune to him and his, if he were denied the privilege of living under an enlightened Christian civilization and forced to exist and to rear his young, as heathens did in the darkest days of the past; if animalism had been replaced by spirituality, and immorality by virtue, and idolatry by godliness; if man had not only been brought nearer to man, but also nearer to God, and if the world to-day is better than the world of the Christian era, little of all this is due to Christianity and to Christian effort. Modern civilization owes a debt to Christianity which it can never repay. The inspired Christian men and women who have labored and who are laboring, for the upbuilding and the uplifting of the human family, belong to civilization's great benefactors, and the world has been made better and nobler for their having lived in it.

But whence came this inspiration that has led the descendants of the savior of the world to the heights of the Gothic and the Norman, who drank mead out of the skulls of their enemies, and who adored the sun, moon and fire as deities; or the descendants of the piratical man hunting and cruelly ferocious Anglo-Saxon, to become gentle, kindly, moral, God-fearing Christian men and women? Need it be said that it was due to the influence of the teachings "to do justice, to love mercy and to walk humbly before God," the teachings to "love thy neighbor as thyself, and to do to others as you would have others do to you."

But whence did the Christian get these teachings, to the spreading of which he gave his heart, his mind and his soul? Need it be stated that all these noble and uplifting thoughts came to the Christian from the great book of books, the Jewish Bible? When the Christian missionary went among the heathen and the pagan, the Frank and the Hun, the Goth and the Vandal, to lead them from heathenism to Monotheism; from man-worship to God-worship, he preached to them the thoughts and the ideas of the Jewish teachers and preachers; he implanted into their hearts and minds the teachings of Jesus and Paul, who had lived simply to plant the seeds for universalizing the belief and the teachings of Judaism.

Take out of Christianity the contribution thereto made by the Jew, take out of it its Old and New Testaments; take away from its traditions the Jews, Jesus, Paul, James, Peter, Mark, John, Matthew and the wonderful spiritual influence, and all that remains of Christianity is pure heathenism. Can you now begin to realize the debt which the Christian owes to the Jew? Can you begin to appreciate the deep and lasting obligation under which the Christian will forever be placed to the race which stands as an blessing given to the world its greatest preachers and its foremost teachers?

Great as is the debt the Christian owes to the Jew, this debt is, however, not altogether one-sided. The Christian owes much to the Jew. The Jew, likewise, owes much to the Christian. How deep is the debt of Jew to Christian, will be told in the address to follow a week later.

Must it not be plain that when, in the past, Christian hearts were filled with malice and hatred toward the Jew, that their minds were befogged and obfuscated, and when their souls were filled with bitterness and enmity toward the Jew, they were repaying to him the gifts with thanklessness, and spiritual bequests with base ingratitude?

Let us be grateful that we are living in an age when the debt that Christian civilization owes to the Jew is being better understood and more highly appreciated, and that such appreciation on the part of the Christian is bringing Jew and Christian into closer touch and into deeper harmony. Let us feel grateful that the Christian's interest in the Jew and in Judaism is being reciprocated by the Jew's deeper interest in the Christian and in Christianity, that each is finding new virtues in the religious beliefs and character of the other, and that the children of the mother and the daughter religion are thus cultivating for each other a higher regard and a deeper love.

May God, in His wisdom, permit this holy work to go on, and may you and I lend our humble aid to speed the day when Jew and Christian, the world over, may work together heart-to-heart and hand-in-hand, for all things that tend to the betterment of the human family and to the spreading of Love, of Justice and of Righteousness.

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DIED. HANLON.—In Franklin, December 14th, Joseph, beloved husband of Katie Hanlon, father of Joseph James and Marie Hanlon, a native of Ireland, aged 62 years.

Friends and acquaintances are respectfully invited to attend the funeral Sunday afternoon, December 17th, at 2 o'clock, from the residence of the Cathedral, Eleventh and K streets. Casket will not be opened in church. Interment St. Joseph's Cemetery.

McCALLION.—In this city, December 15th, Nellie, daughter of the late Susie and J. J. McCallion, grand-daughter of the late John and Annie Fay, a native of California, aged 17 years and 34 days. (San Francisco papers please copy.) Friends and acquaintances are respectfully invited to attend the funeral to-day (Sunday), at 11 o'clock, from the residence of Alex. Fourness, Washington, Yolo County; thence to the Cathedral, where services will be held, commencing at 2 p. m. Interment City Cemetery.

WALDECK.—In Yolo County, December 15th, infant daughter of Herman and Mary Waldeck, a native of California, aged 1 year and 10 months.

PHILLIPS.—In this city, December 15th, Jessie Phillips, a native of Portugal, aged 1 year and 10 months. Funeral notice hereafter.

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