

## Jewish Problems Viewed Through Gentile Glasses

BY WALTER HURT

*"O wad some power the giftie gie us  
To see oursel's as others see us!"*

---Burns.

NOTE—Be it understood that this series of articles presents Jewish questions purely from the non-Jewish viewpoint, and neither the editor of this journal nor any Jew should be regarded as responsible for, or necessarily agreeing with, any opinion herein expressed, excepting quotations of Jewish origin.—W. H.)

### CHAPTER IV.

#### Prejudice and Persecution.

As a logical corollary, race prejudice finds its active expression in persecution.

Almost from his first appearance in history the Jew has been subject to persecution. In the elder years martyrdom was the daily bread of his race, oppression was his apprenticeship to life; and still he sips on sorrow and drinks the bitter wine of tears.

It is a peculiar fact concerning a peculiar people that hostility toward the Jews is not confined to any time or any locality or any class; it has existed in all ages and in every land, manifested by men of different races and divers religions, alike by the crude and the cultured. It is displayed even by other Semitic peoples, notably the Arabs.

The intensity of early social prejudice against the Jews is shown in Genesis, xliii:32, where it is recorded: "The Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians."

Jews have been publicly anathematized by a numerous tribe of anti-Semites, from Juvenal and Tacitus down to the bitter little bigots of today; from Haman to Henry Ford.

The history of the Jews is a transcendent tragedy—the Iliad of race immolation. From cradle to coffin they have been subject to persecutions such as no other people ever suffered and survived. They have been harried and harassed and hampered in every conceivable manner. They have encountered every impediment to their activities and every obstacle to their progress. They have endured every oppression, from the cruel inquisitions of individuals to the crushing tyranny of nations. They have been proscribed and plundered, exploited and imprisoned, exiled and enslaved. For them was created the Pale, within which they were confined as in a pinfold. They have known all tortures and terrors; they have been scorched by the flames of fanaticism and broken on the wheel of bigotry. They have faced the madness of the mob and found relief from its barbarities in the red mercy of massacre. And why?

For the reason that these enmities are universal, we must conclude that such widely distributed effects result from common causes, and that these causes reside largely within the Jew himself. No other race being thus marked for uniform malice, we can account for this unique unanimity of hate only on the hypothesis that the causes thereof are inherent in Israel. In most cases the causes of race prejudice are multifarious. Ordinarily, these causes are biological,

religious, political, lingual, geographical, phisic, and economic. All these factors enter into the prejudice against the Jew; but as he is the object of a special animosity, we should search also for a special cause. Let us drop a raisin of analysis into the varied ingredients and note the result.

The most common pretext for persecution of the Jew is religious. It also is the safest, being sure of very general approval. Most persons find it difficult to forgive those who differ from their religious faith, and they see a holy justification for punishing the heretic. Some centuries ago it was charged by persons desirous of founding a new religious sect that the Jews had slain the Christ. This libel hardened into legend, then was invested with a halo and became history. Many early rulers found it a most effective political issue. Their successors turned it to economic advantage.

Hatred of the Jew, however, does not depend upon the historical fiction that he crucified Jesus. That merely is an expedient for inflaming the minds of the masses whenever it is desirable to incite them against the Jews.

If Jews are persecuted for religious reasons, why is it that such persecutions invariably take an economic trend?

Antagonism to Jews antedates the Christian Era, and during that era it has not been confined to Christian nations. They have been persecuted with non-sectarian impartiality by the Alexandrians, Babylonians, Persians, Arabs, Turks, and many others. Even the colossal effrontery of a Billy Sunday might hesitate to connect the crucifixion on Calvary with the Babylonian captivity under Nebuchadnezzar II, 586 B. C.

Political considerations also often are responsible for persecution of the Jews. Conditions resulting from abuses of government are charged against them and credited by an ignorant and a credulous populace, who thereby are placated toward their tyrant. In old Russia this was a favorite device for diverting the spirit of revolt from the rulers and directing it toward the Jews.

The Jew frequently is persecuted because of certain qualities of mind and character, but this fact, as we shall see, should not cause him to esteem himself less excellently.

Race enmity is not engendered by superiority of the enemy. Superiority tends always toward tolerance. Inferiority invariably hates superiority. I am unwilling to admit, however inferiority to the Jew of the Aryan race. Possibly my instinctive race-consciousness prevents my doing so. Of race-pride I have none; nor have I reason for such pride more than has my race reason to be proud of me. The Aryan race is what it is without help of mine, so why should I pride in its achievements? Moreover, my race has done so many

things of which I am ashamed, that I am disposed toward humility.

While denying any general superiority of the Jew over Aryan peoples it must be conceded that he surpasses them in certain special qualities and endowments, even as he is surpassed by them in certain others. For example, the ethics of the Jew are superior, and he excels in mental alertness. It is for these special excellencies he is hated, and not for any general race characteristics.

We find many specific instances of this envy-inspired hatred. For example, Jews excel in music, which accounts for Wagner's amarulent attack upon them in his "Judaism in Music."

Another prolific cause of prejudice against the Jew is a distinctiveness that makes the non-Jew conscious always of their differences. His marked unlikeness causes dislike. Invariably those who are unlike are regarded as inimical to the interests of those to whom they are dissimilar. The Jew makes the mistake of perpetuating Orientalism in the Western World.

The mental fellowship that makes for understanding also is lacking. Men form no liking for mysteries; they distrust what they do not understand. Jew and non-Jew are psychic strangers; their viewpoints have no common focus, their modes of thought are alien. Between their respective intelligences is draped a veil impenetrable. The workings of the Oriental mind are hidden from all the West except those few favored ones to whom it is given to see always the souls of other men.

The Jew must emerge entirely from the cramping chrysalis of Orientalism before he can enter into the fullness of Occidental freedom.

The Jew is hated also because of his ideals. They fail to fit into the Gentile scheme of things, and this prevents a complete social adjustment according to the Gentile method. Were these ideals wholly spiritual there would be no such difficulty, hence no hatred. But the Jew has an economic ideal, and all his ideals are interwoven and they interact. The Gentile has no economic ideal—only an economic idea. The solution is a universal ideal idea.

Again, the Jew evidences an aloofness and exclusiveness that is an unspoken claim of superiority and as such is a perennial challenge to Gentile egotism. As one writer has explained of the Jew:

"He entrenched himself behind the fences that had been erected around the Torah by Ezra and the first scribes, later by the Pharisees and the Talmudists, reformers of primitive Mosaism and enemies of the prophets. He isolated himself, not merely by declining to submit to the customs which bound together the inhabitants of the countries where he settled, but also by shunning all intercourse with the inhabitants themselves. To his unsociability the Jew added exclusiveness." Again: "At the time the serpent tempted Eve, says the Talmud, he corrupted her with venom. Israel, on receiving the revelation from Sinai, delivered itself from the evil; the rest of mankind could not recover. Thus, if they have each its protecting constellation, Israel is under the very eye of Jehovah; it is the Eternal's favored son who has the sole right to his love, to his good-will, to his protection, other men are placed beneath the Hebrew; it is by mere mercy that they are entitled to Divine munificence, since

the souls of the Jews alone are descended from the First Man. The wealth that has come to the nations, in truth belongs to Israel, and we hear Jesus himself reply to the Greek woman, 'It is not meet to take children's bread and cast it unto the dogs.' (Mark, vii:27). This faith in their predestination, in their election developed among the Jews an immense pride. It led them to view the Gentiles with contempt, often with hate, when patriotic considerations supervened to religious feeling."

Thus, the Jew, by his own inherited attitude—a legacy so many have not yet renounced—is in no small measure responsible for Gentile animosity. It scarcely could be expected that the arrogant assumption of the Jews that they are the Chosen People—selected by Deity for special favor, instead of being set apart for a special mission—should be relished by other races. It is but natural that victims of Divine discrimination should discriminate against the beneficiaries of such partiality.

I would not have the Jew cease to be a Jew, but I would have him cease to isolate himself.

Effects in turn become causes to produce other effects.

Isolation is at once a cause and an effect of race prejudice. Isolation and effect, by a series of reactions, create a vicious circle; isolation engenders prejudice, and prejudice generates isolation.

Gentile exclusion is a logical reaction against Jewish exclusiveness.

In order of objectionableness, next to the Jew who is offensively boastful of his blood comes the one who fain would conceal his racial identity. No man respects another who fails to respect his own origin. When one apparently is ashamed of such a thing, it is not strange that others should assume there is sufficient cause for shame. Clandestine Jews do more than any other class to destroy racial dignity, and effect more serious damage to race repute than does the entire horde of Judaiphoes.

A type of Jew, by no means rarer, who adds to the prejudice against his people is he who sycophantly affects a contempt for the traditions of his tribe. He ostentatiously orders pork in a public refectory as if thereby he were practicing a shining virtue that should command the commendation of all Gentile observers. Now, there is no essential merit in eating pork. Hygienically considered, of all meats it is least fit for human food. It is, of course, quite within the rights of the Jew to share the dietic sins of the Gentile, but it were better he should do so unobtrusively and without obvious intent.

One major reason for prejudice against the Jews collectively is the fact that a certain limited and least desirable class is by the unenlightened public accepted as representative of the entire race. "Every Jew has been made responsible for the acts of every other Jew," says Madison C. Peters in "Justice to the Jew." As one anonymous Jewish writer so well has stated it:

"The fault or folly of one Jew is reflected in popular opinion on the Jews as a whole. Every Jew of evil eminence is taken as a type. A Jewish murder, a Jewish divorce, a Jewish embezzlement, a Jewish case of usury, even a particularly 'loud' costume or luxurious equipage, if the property of Jews, is imputed not merely to the sinful agent, but to the Jewish community en bloc. There is a merciless argument from the