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The Wandering Jew

Sermon by Rev. Samuel W. Purvis, Presbyterian clergyman, in Philadelphia Evening Bulletin.
Texts: And I will bless them that bless thee and curse them that curse thee; and in them shall all families of the earth be blessed. Gen. 12:3. What advantage then hath the Jew? Much every way. Rom. 3:12.
Our Jewish friends are now observing their New Year—the 5,681st. The period includes the fast of Guadaluah and culminates in Yom Kippur, the most solemn Day of Atonement, next Wednesday.

As a man of affairs, I want to stop, and take notice of one of the most remarkable phenomena of the centuries—the preservation and indestructibility of the Jewish race. Here is a marvelous thing—a bush is burning and is not consumed! "Show me a miracle," said Frederick the Great to his chaplain. "Sire, it is the Jews," answered the man of God. As an ambassador of God, I, too, in a labor of love would stop and pay a tribute of appreciative recognition to this wonderful people to whom you and I are indebted for so many things, not the least of which is the fundamentals of our own Christian religions.

All the world's a stage whereon not only individuals but nations and races are players. Every nation has played some part, great or small. Each one has had its message for the centuries in which it lived. Rome gave government; Greece, culture; Phoenicia, commerce, the Jew has carried monotheism, the worship of a single God, through the ages. He has played his part and played it well. Where he has faltered or blundered he always paid a fearful penalty. I know of none other that has suffered so much and survived.

When the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed the Jew became a wanderer, a man without a country. There isn't a continent, there isn't a nation upon the face of the earth of which he is not an inhabitant. Innumerable forces of history through many ages have helped to form his destiny. His story is at once the miracle and the romance of human history. None can blot him out. Babylonian captivity, Roman domination, Grecian absorption, mediæval persecution, modern massacre, have been in vain. Talk about the splendid line of Roman pontiffs on the banks of the yellow Tiber—the Jew has out-lived Egypt, Chaldea, Assyria, Persia, and the dynasties of the past. While our fathers were savages living on roots in the forest or gnawing a bone in a cave his were Princes in the home of King David. He to-day is nothing more or less than a child of his great yesterday. Though removed from his Asiatic origin well-nigh two thousand years, there's a queer dualism which makes him a creature old and new. He has one foot in the soil of antiquity, the other rests on the foreground of to-day. His profile is that of Ur of Chadees, but in Russia his features are Russian, in Italy, Italian, in Spain, Spanish. There are fifty thousand black Jews in Abyssinia, negro Hebrews, while there are even Chinese Jews who observe all the Jewish religious rites and all their dietary laws—yet they have the almond eyes, the flat noses and the yellow skin of Mongolians.

In the Fiery Furnace.
The three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace were forerunners. In the sixteenth century in Venice was begun the concentration camp known as the Ghetto. Back of the old Ghetto, or iron foundry, the Jew had to live in a restricted district. The name was gradually applied to the Jewish quarter of every city. In each ghetto he developed a life of his own—religion, custom, literature, tradition, song, pleasure at his own. During those Middle Ages he was persecuted relentlessly, bitterly. It wouldn't surprise me if that mediæval life had not left an indelible impress on him. That part, indeed his any part is not a mere memory to be cherished and revealed, but a hideous living, ever-present experience, burned on his consciousness. Is

capable of splendid sentiment and great gratitude. Time will never efface it.
The Jewish Old Testament literature molded Puritan thought. It was the Jew who loaned Washington six thousand dollars to finance the Valley Forge campaign. The inscription of the Liberty Bell in our fair city is taken from the Jewish Bible. Lincoln's addresses show his inspiration from Jewish Elijah. What a coincidence that the Lincoln penny, the coin of the little child and the common people, is a product of a Jewish designer—Victor D. Brenner. In America the Jew is a patriot without a hyphen. They have never tried to form a "Jewish vote" at election time. He is the average citizen, reaching the heights and depths of human possibility. He is as rich as Dives and as poor as Lazarus. He is Karl Marx, the socialist or Rothschild, the capitalist. He is Felix Alder the law-abiding or "Ikey the gunman." He is a Shylock or Baron de Hirsch. He is a wanderer, and yet he clings to the pale. He is homeless, yet he owns Broadway. The

he "peculiar?" If he is, circumstances have made him so. Suppose we had taken a few hundred thousand people of any nation two thousand years ago, set them apart in live in restricted districts, forced them to wear a distinctive garb, forbidden them to engage in agriculture, limited their usefulness to particular trades, only in rarest cases allowed to own property, many other things prohibited under pain of death—wouldn't any people become "peculiar?" Would it be wondered at if long continued persecution would leave them suspicious? The constant menace of the proselyter would make no less fearsome than the fortune chamber itself—they would soon fear the Greeks when bearing gifts. Each period of oppression would send him back decades, grieved and bewildered.

In spite of all this he has developed a marvelous love for his stop-motherlands. The Jew has always been a patriot of the land which gave him birth. He quickly adapts himself to the country that gives him food and shelter. He soon finds himself. Given the opportunity, he perfects himself in science, music, painting, sculpture, literature, medicine, mathematics, history, astronomy. In all he gave his best, ferquently in return he was refused civil privilege, political office, military honor. Their hands were tied and they were blamed for not using them! Persecution, fire sword, rack and dungeon were his reward. Captive children, murdered men, ravished women were considered his birthright.
How loyal he is may be seen in the strife of the Great War. In England eight per cent. of the Jews enlisted to six per cent. of the non-Jews. America sent between two hundred thousand and two hundred and fifty thousand into all branches of the service. Their quota being about three per cent. of the population, they exceeded by one-third. Of the eight hundred citations for valor, 174 won the Croix de Guerre, 130 Distinguished Service Cross, three the United States Congressional Medal of Honor, our highest gift, and two the rare French Medaille Militaire. Their casualties were about eighteen thousand. Three thousand five hundred laid down their lives by the side of their non-Jewish comrades under the poppies of Flanders. They too, had a rendezvous with death. Honor to them! In the great conflict on all sides one twentieth of the Jews of the world fought with nothing to gain but the opportunity of killing their own martyred race!

The Melting Pot.
America spells opportunity for the Jew.
Some one has said: "In this melting pot the Jew will be lost—he is losing rapidly through intermarriage, modernism and infidelity."
No. He will not be lost. If he will only be true to his ancient landmarks he will find himself. You see, he belongs here as surely as the rest of us. He came with Columbus. There were five Jews in the fleet, Rodrigo Sanchez was the overseer of the crew, Luis de Torres was the interpreter. They were of the first to behold and set foot on the new promised land. Abraham and Columbus were men who pioneered westward, not knowing whither. If, as is said, Columbus's mother was Suzanne Fonterosa, a Jewess, then Columbus was a fine successor of Abraham. There is no discovery without faith—both were men of faith. Who can tell whether the hand that has guided the Jew westward from the Euphrates to the Jordan, from the Jordan to the Nile, from the Nile to the Tiber, from the Tiber to the Guadalquivir, did not also lead him across the Atlantic that he might under God's sun, in a land of freedom, live where he chooses, worship as he desires; no ghetto to wall him in, no restriction to fetter his feet, no tribunal to cow his spirit; free to develop his highest faculties, and in return give the best that is in him to make America the hope of a struggling world? I believe America's noble treatment of the Jew is graven on his heart. He is of a race

Jew of the lowest was Judas—at the highest he was Jesus.
An American Jerusalem.
Not in Judaea, but in New York, is the real Jerusalem.
If there are fifteen million Jews in the world, America has about three million, of which about a million and a half are in and about Greater New York. In that city every sixth person you meet is a son of Israel, while on Manhattan Island the proportion is one to four. About two-third of the student body of Columbia University is Jewish, the City College is nearly ninety-seven per cent. New York has the largest high school in the world—the Washington Irving—practically all of the six thousand pupils are Jewish. The New York telephone directory shows sixteen columns of Cohens and but fourteen of Smiths. In Philadelphia there are two and one-half columns of Cohens to seven of Smiths. There was a time a generation ago, when New York was Roman Catholic—today it is Jewish! There is not a Christian church on the east side, but there are three hundred and sixty synagogues.
Will the Jew go back to Jerusalem? Never, except as a tourist. America is the Jew's Palestine, and Washington, D. C., his Zion. I suspect that if you plant the blue and white flag of Zionism on one side and the red, white and blue of the United States on the other and demand of the Jew, "Choose ye this day which will you serve," there will be but one answer. This is his country. He is on the bench of the Supreme court of the United States, he is in senate and house of representatives, he is governor in three states, he is mayor of several cities. Two of New York's most successful newspapers, The World and The Times, are works of Jewish proprietors. The business manager of the Hearst newspapers is Jewish. The banking house that stands next to J. P. Morgan com-

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pany is Jewish. A Jewish engineer built the Pennsylvania tunnel under the East river.
Will the Jew intermarry? I do not know of the future—but he has and does! August Belmont married a daughter of Commodore Perry. The distinguished Dr. Abraham Jacobson married Mary Putnam. Walter Dumas married the daughter of James H. Blaine. Ossip Gabrieliowitz, the musician, married Mark Twain's daughter. Do you know any of the fruit of Christian-Jewish marriages? Let me refresh your memory. Did you know that Bret Harte was once grave, the critic; Sir John Millias, the astronomer; Francis Turner Palgrave, the critic; Sir John Billiall, the artist; Leon Garofallo, the statesman; Sir Arthur Sullivan, the composer, and—now hold your breath!—the mother of General William Booth, the youthful sawbroker's assistant, the glorious Christian saint of Salvation Army fame, was a Miss Moss, a Jewess! Take a look at his picture and see how she bequeathed to him that magnificent Old Testament physiognomy which was such a valuable asset in his public appearance.
Hath Not the Jew a Soul?
Will the Jew become a Christian? I rather think not. Not in appreciable numbers. Do we have grapes of thorns and figs of thistles. Not in this year of our Lord 1920.
The young Jew is causing his elders considerable anxiety religiously. As in all other religious bodies there is much drifting in these days of transition, the young Jew is making money, he is getting an education, he is intense on social problems, many are pronounced Socialists—but he isn't becoming Christian. Not Not Christianity but Christians stagger the Jew. What he has undergone at the hands of Christians in Europe would stagger us if the condition were reversed.
America is not the present in its

tolerance—humanity never will be. But thank God for the American spirit of fair play and a chance. It is ten thousand times better than Russia or Central Europe from which many of the Jews have fled. Give the Jew a Gentile's chance, give the woman a white man's chance, give the poor the rich man's chance, and they will make good. America spells that chance!
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