

SOME FAMOUS JEWISH PROSELYTES

BY DUDLEY WRIGHT

A DIFFERENCE of opinion exists even among leaders of Jewish thought as to whether the Jewish faith is to be termed a "missionary" religion. If the Old Testament is to be regarded as the sole basis of religious action, then no command was ever given to the Jews to act as missionaries. They were not to go to the Gentiles; on the contrary, the Gentiles were to be drawn to them. "Nations that know not thee shall run unto thee, because of the Lord thy God and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee." "Ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, 'We will go with you for we have heard that God is with you.'" The ideal of Judaism undoubtedly was that there should be no uncircumcized alien in the Holy Land, and so all who entered it were circumcized, but there appear also to have been proselytes in foreign lands (see Exodus xii. 48-9; Acts ii. 10; xiii. 43). There is a legend that at the time the Law was given, many other nations were offered the opportunity of close relationship with the Eternal, but only Israel would accept the burden which that relationship involved.

Certainly Judaism has never had any notable proselytising apostle like St. Peter or St. Paul of apostolic times, or Henry Martyn or Bishop Heber of a more modern period. It has even sought to dissuade men and women from seeking admission into the fold. Great difficulties had to be surmounted: initiation into the Abrahamic covenant of circumcision was essential, and they had to separate from their families and friends in eating and drinking. Nevertheless, it is an extraordinary fact that during the half century after the destruction of the Jewish State, there were everywhere conversions of heathen to Judaism, both in the East and in Asia Minor, and particularly in Rome, while the severe laws of the Emperor

Domitian against proselytes suggests an inference as to their frequency. According to Prynne, a Puritan writer and a virulent enemy of the Jews, in the reign of Henry I., Jews were beginning to proselytise in England and even to bribe some Christians with money in order to get them to embrace Judaism.

Josephus gives several instances of compulsory conversion. When the Itureans were conquered by Aristobolus, they were compelled "if they would continue in that country to be circumcised and to live according to the Jewish laws" (*Ant.* XIII. c. xi. 3). Pella was destroyed "because its inhabitants would not bear to change their religious rites for those peculiar to the Jews" (XIV. c. xv. 4). Hyrcanus, also (XIII. c. ix. 1), "took Dora and Marissa, cities of Idumea and subdued all the Idumeans and permitted them to stay in that country, if they would circumcise their genitals and make use of the laws of the Jews, and they were so desirous of living in the country of their forefathers, that they submitted to the use of circumcision and the rest of the Jewish ways of living."

From St. Matthew xxiii. 15, it would appear that the Scribes and Pharisees of the time of Jesus were keen on making converts to the Jewish faith, although no other evidence of such a fact is obtainable, but, in the opinion of Dr. Israel Abrahams, the *Didache* was probably, in the first instance, a manual for instructing proselytes in the teaching of Judaism. The school of Shammai (3-37 A.D.) cared not for proselytes. They had too many proofs among the converted Herodians of how dangerous those half-hearted Jewish converts had proved to Judaism. The Talmudist doctors afterwards called proselytes the "plague of Israel" and said they hindered the coming of the Messiah. The school of Hillel however, looked upon proselytism as a duty and even, according to Horace.

Ac veluti te Judaci cogemus in hanc concedere turbam went so far sometimes as to enforce conversion. In Alexandria the Jews were among the privileged classes and men were attracted to Judaism by the prospect of an advantageous political status.

The bitterness engendered by the Hadrianic persecution prompted the Rabbis to make conversion as difficult as possible. The Jews had suffered considerably from the cowardice and treachery of proselytes, who even acted as spies and denounced them to the Romans, which fact led to the introduction into the daily liturgy of the prayer against "denunciators and slanderers." Yet, true proselytes were always highly esteemed and from Ruth's experience the rule was derived that proselytes must be refused acceptance three

times, but not more. After the Hadrianic rebellion reception could only be granted by a complete court or board of rabbinical authorities. The candidate was solemnly admonished to consider the worldly disadvantages of the religious burdens involved in the intended step and was asked: "What induces thee to join us? Dost thou not know that in these days the Israelites are in trouble, oppressed, dispersed, and subjected to needless sufferings?" If he replied: "I know it and I am unworthy to share their glorious lot," he was reminded that while a heathen he was liable to no penalties for eating fat or disregarding the Sabbath, or for other trespasses, but as soon as he became a Jew, he must suffer excision for the former and death by stoning for the latter. If he remained firm he was circumcised in the presence of three rabbis and then led to be baptized; but even while in the bath he was instructed by learned teachers in the obligations he was undertaking. After this he was considered a Jew. The presence of three men also was required at the baptism of women converts, though due precautions were taken not to affront their modesty. This procedure is obligatory at the present time. The ceremony of reception cannot take place on a Sabbath or a holy day. Proper evidence of conversion is demanded before a claimant is regarded as a proselyte, though, to a certain extent, piety of conduct is a presumption in his favor. The conversion of a pregnant woman includes also the child. Minors could be converted with their parents but were permitted to recant when of age. A proselyte never became on equal terms with a born Jew. He could never become high priest; he was excluded from all public offices, although he was promised the greatest heavenly bliss if he lived the virtuous life. Only the born Israelite also was accounted worthy to receive the gift of prophecy.

Rabbinical law recognizes two classes of converts: 1. the full or perfect proselyte, the righteous stranger, who was admitted after circumcision, baptism, and the offering of a sacrifice, but after the destruction of the temple, the first two alone were possible, and 2. the limited proselyte, the resident alien or the proselyte of the gate who, without accepting Judaism, renounced idolatry and accepted Jewish jurisdiction, thereby acquiring a limited citizenship in Palestine. He was permitted to eat and drink with his Jewish brethren and he had to observe the seven Noachic precepts against idolatry, profanity, incest, murder, dishonesty, eating blood or things strangled, and allowing a murderer to live. Bertholet insists that there

was only one class of convert, the circumcised foreigner, who undertook to fulfill the whole law. (Galatians, v. 2.)

The details of the ceremony of reception were not settled definitely before the second century A.D. From the law that native Israelites and proselytes should be treated alike (Number xv. 14, *et seq.*) the inference was drawn that circumcision, the bath of purification, and sacrifice were pre-requisites for conversion. The sacrifice was to be the burnt offering of cattle, but to lessen the hardship, an offering of fowls was substituted. After the destruction of the temple, when the sacrifices were suspended, it was ordained that proselytes should set aside a small coin in lieu of the offering so that in case the temple were rebuilt they might at once purchase the offering. Later, when the prospect of rebuilding grew remote, then this requirement was dropped. Some dispute afterwards arose amongst the authorities as to whether circumcision was absolutely indispensable. It is not practised today by the reformed Jews. The only creed a proselyte would profess would be that contained in Deuteronomy vi. 4-9. The creed formulated by Moses Maimonides is not binding upon Jews. True, it has been included in the Liturgy and is sung as a hymn, but it holds no place in the Jewish ritual analogous to the Apostles' or Nicene Creeds.

Philo relates from his own experience that in his native country many heathen, when they embraced Judaism, not only changed their faith but changed their lives, which were henceforth conspicuous by the practice of the virtues of moderation, gentleness, and humanity: "those who left the teachings in which they had been educated because they were replete with lying inventions and vanities became sincere worshippers of the truth and gave themselves up to the practice of the purest piety." Above all, the women whose gentle feelings were offended by the impurity of the mythological stories seemed attracted towards the childlike and sublime scenes in Biblical history. The greater part of the women in Damascus, says Graetz, were converted to Judaism and it is related that in Asia Minor there were also many female proselytes. Some over eager Judaeans may have travelled with the intention of making converts, as was proved in the story of the Roman patrician, Fulvia. It was by a similar zeal for conversion that the Judaeans faith was introduced into an Asiatic court, the members of which remained steadfast adherents to Judaism during several generations. Great sensation was caused in Rome by the conversion to Judaism of Flavius Clemens and his wife Domitilla. Flavius was a cousin of the em-

peror Domitian, a member of the senate and consul, while his wife was also a near relative of the emperor.

More noted, however, is the case of Aquila. He was a native of Sinope, in Pontos, and is said to have been a very wealthy man. Epiphanius states that he was a connection by marriage of the emperor Hadrian; others supplementing the information that he was the son of the emperor's sister, converted from Paganism to Christianity because of the miraculous healings that he witnessed, but soon renounced that faith, owing, it is alleged, to his determination to practise magic, and became a Jew. In his new religion he associated with Camaliel, Eliezer, Joshua, and Akiba, whose disciple, according to Jerome, he became. He had a perfect knowledge of Hebrew and Greek, and he made a translation of the Scriptures from the former into the latter language, keeping strictly to the original Hebrew text and, with excessive caution, making an absolutely literal translation, independent of idiom. The Talmud says that the work was finished under the influence of R. Akiba, and that his other teachers were Eliezer ben Hyrcanus and Joshua ben Hananiah. It is certain, however, that his translation appeared before the publication of *Adversus Haereses* by Irenaeus in 177 A. D. Epiphanius says he himself set the task of removing all Christian evidence from the Bible. The Rev. M. Abrahams, in his lecture on *Aquila's Greek Version of the Hebrew Bible*, says: "The statement that Aquila reached Judaism via Christianity seems unfounded and the story probably arises from a confusion between our translator and a tent-maker of the same name who came from the same place and was associated with Priscilla in the New Testament. The name was not an uncommon one, being both Roman and Jewish." The Jewish account agrees in the main with Epiphanius, except that it knows nothing of Aquila's previous conversion to Christianity. Aquila is a favorite person in Jewish tradition and legend and whenever his name is mentioned the expression 'the proselyte' is added. He was always a great favorite with Hadrian and always inclined to Judaism, though he feared to embrace it openly in the emperor's proximity. He, therefore, obtained permission from his uncle to undertake some journeys abroad, not so much for the sake of profit as in order to see men and countries. He received from Hadrian the parting injunction to invest in anything, the value of which was temporarily depreciated, as in all probability, it would rise again. Aquila went to Palestine and devoted himself to the study of the Torah and both R. Eliezer and R. Joshua noticed his worn appear-

ance and were surprised at the evident earnestness of the questions he put to them concerning Jewish laws. On returning to Hadrian he confessed his zealous study of Israel's Torah had led him to adopt that faith, but surprised the emperor by saying that this step had been taken on his (the emperor's) advice, "for," said he, "I have found nothing so deeply neglected and held in such depreciation as the Law and Israel, but both, no doubt will rise again as Isaiah has predicted (referring to Isaiah, xix. 7). Upon Hadrian inquiring why he had embraced Judaism, Aquila replied that he desired very much to learn the Torah and that he could not do this without entering the Abrahamic covenant; just as no soldier could draw his pay without bearing arms, so no one could satisfy the Torah thoroughly without obeying the Jewish law. The last point is said to have been directed against Christians who acknowledge the law but refuse obedience to it. Epiphanius also states that some forty years after the destruction of the Temple (117 A.D.) Hadrian sent Aquila to Jerusalem to superintend the rebuilding of the city under the name of Aelia Capitolina, and it is contended by some that it was while he was engaged on this work that he became a convert to the Jewish faith.

Hadrian, on one occasion, asked Aquila to prove that the world depends, as the Jews maintain, upon the spirit. Aquila thereupon caused several camels to be brought and made them kneel and rise repeatedly before the emperor. He then had them choked when, of course, they could not rise. "How can they rise?" asked the emperor, "they are choked." "But they only need a little air, a little spirit," was Aquila's reply, proving that life is not material. He was a consistent Jew and on the death of his father, when the heritage was divided between him and his brothers, he would not take that portion of the share that had been derived from the sale of idols, but threw it into the sea.

Onkelos is often claimed as identical with Aquila; he, also, is uniformly referred to as "the proselyte," but, according to the Talmud, he was a nephew of Titus on his mother's side. He is said to have called up the shade of his uncle, then that of the prophet Balaam, and asked their counsel as to whether he should become a Jew. The former advised against it as the Jews had so many laws and ceremonies. The latter, with characteristic spitefulness, replied, in the words of the Scriptures: "Thou shalt not seek their peace nor their prosperity all thy days forever" (Deuteronomy xxiii. 6). He then conjured up the founders of the Church, who replied:

“Seek their peace, seek not their harm; he who assails them touches the apple of God’s eye.” This induced him to become a Jew. There are also a number of legends concerning him. It is related that when he became a convert the emperor sent a cohort to take him prisoner, but Onkelos converted his would-be captors by citing Biblical sentences. This happened no fewer than four times. The fifth time he was taken prisoner because the soldiers had strict orders not to speak to him. They noticed, however, that on leaving the house, he placed his hand on the mezuzah, and they had the curiosity to ask what it was, whereupon the proselyte gave them such an answer that they also were converted. After that he was left in peace. His extraordinary strict observance of the Levitical laws of purity is mentioned as a characteristic. In his daily life he observed the same laws of purity that the Scriptures commanded at sacrifices. On this point he surpassed even the patriarch, Gamaliel II.

Theodotion of Ephesus, the author of a Greek version of the Old Testament, of whom little is known personally, is claimed by Irenaeus and others as a proselyte. Jerome calls him an Ebionite, “a Judaizing heretic,” while Epiphanius describes him as “a Christian heretic,” a Marcionite, a native of Pontos, who apostatized to Judaism and acquired the Hebrew tongue.

A royal proselyte is found in Abu-Kariba, whose full name was Dhu Nuwas Zur’ah Musuf Ibn Tuban As’ad Abi-Karib. He was king of Yemen from 515 to 525 A.D. He is described by Graetz as a man of knowledge, judgment, and poetical endowments. He became a convert to the Jewish faith, taking the name of Joseph, and endeavored, not without success, to persuade his people to follow his example. His mistaken zeal for Judaism, however, brought about his fall. Having heard of the persecutions of the Jews by the Byzantine emperors he retaliated by putting to death some Byzantine merchants who were traveling on business through Hunijara. This destroyed the trade of Yemen in Europe and involved Dhu Nuwas in a war with the heathen king Ardirg, whose commercial interests were injured thereby. Dhu Nuwas was defeated in 521 A.D., but succeeded in re-establishing his kingdom. He then made war against the Christian city Najran in Yemen, which was a dependency of his kingdom. On its capitulation, in spite, it is said, of his promise of immunity from punishment, he offered the citizens the alternative of embracing Judaism or of being put to death. As they refused to renounce their faith he executed their chief and 340 chosen men. This caused a great stir among the Christians and

the Roman emperor, Justin, requested the king of Ethiopia to march against the Jewish king. The engagement ended disastrously and Dhu Nuwas, whose city, together with his queen and all his treasure, fell into the hands of the enemy. Preferring death to capture, Dhu Nuwas rode into the sea and was drowned. His nephew, Harikibn-Amru, also embraced the Jewish faith. There is a supposed reference to the persecution of the Christians by Dhu Nuwas in Sura lxxxv of the Koran, although Muhammad Ali, the translator of the latest edition thinks the reference may be prophetic of the great Arab army against which the Moslems were compelled to defend themselves by means of a trench, in what is called the battle of the Ditch. Al-Baghwi thinks that the reference is to Nebuchadnezzar casting Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into the fiery furnace.

In the Chazars we have an illustration of a whole nation going over to the Jewish faith. They were a people of Turkish origin, whose life and history are interwoven with the very beginning of Jewish history in Russia. Their kingdom was firmly established in South Russia long before the foundation of the Russian monarchy by the Varangians in 855. Graetz says that they professed a coarse religion which was combined with sensuality and lewdness, and the story runs that they became acquainted with Islamism and Christianity through the Arabs and Greeks and with Judaism through some Grecian Jews, with the result that they were converted to Judaism, according to some in A.D. 620 and, according to others, in A.D. 740. King Joseph, in a letter to Hasdai ibn Shaprut, in A.D. 960, gives the following account of the conversion:

Some centuries ago, K. Bulan reigned over the Chazars. To him God appeared in a dream and promised him might and glory. Encouraged by this dream Bulan went by the road of Darlau to the country of Ardebil, where he gained great victories over the Arabs. The Byzantine emperor and the Caliph of Jerusalem sent to him envoys with presents and sages to convert him to their respective religions. Bulan also invited the wise men of Israel and proceeded to examine them all. As each of the champions believed his religion to be the best, Bulan separately questioned the Mohammedans and the Christians as to which of the other two religions they considered the better. When both gave preference to that of the Jews, the king perceived that must be the true religion. He therefore adopted it.

It is said that he was followed by about four thousand of his nobles, and that his successor on the throne, Obadiah, occupied himself earnestly with the Jewish religion. He invited Jewish sages to settle in his dominions, rewarded them royally, founded synagogues

and schools, caused instruction to be given to himself and people in the Bible and Talmud, and introduced a divine service modelled on that of the ancient Chazanim. Although the account given above has been considered by some to be of a legendary character, Albert Harkavy, the Russian Orientalist in *Bilbasoo* and *Yevreiskaya Bibliotek* proved from Arabic and Slavonian sources that the religious disputation at the Chazarian Court is a historical fact.

The conversion of a Christian bishop, singular though the fact may seem to be, is not unknown. Bishop Bodo, chaplain to the emperor Louis, the Pious, of France, obtained permission from his royal master in May, 838, to go on a visit to Rome to receive the blessing of the Pope and to make a pilgrimage to the graves of the apostles and martyrs. According to some accounts he had led a dissolute life, but, according to others, it was the immoral life of the clergy in the Christian capital that filled him with disgust and attracted him to the purer religion of Judaism. Whatever the cause, he conceived a strong liking for the Jewish faith and hastened with all speed to Spain, where, at Saragossa, in August, 838, he was initiated into the Abrahamic covenant, assumed the name of Eliezer, and, within a very short time, was married to a Jewess. He appears to have entered the military service of an Arab prince and to have incited the Moorish government and people to oppose the Spanish Christians and he asked the aid of the king of the Franks not to tolerate a single Christian in his land, but to compel them to adopt either Islam or Judaism. In 840 he corresponded with the knight Pablo Alvaro of Cordova, a baptized Jew, each endeavoring in vain to lead the other back to his old faith. Many of these letters have been preserved.

In the eleventh century occurred the first persecution of the Jews in Germany. It is possible, says Graetz, that the fact of the conversion of a clergyman to Judaism, which the chronicles mentioned in the annals as an unlucky event, aroused the anger of the clergy against the Jews. The convert, whose name was Weccelinus, was chaplain to the Duke Conrad, a relative of the emperor. On his conversion to Judaism, in 1005 A.D., he wrote a lampoon on his former faith, which bears witness to his hatred of Christianity and to the coarseness of the taste of the time. The emperor Henry, however, was so angered at the conversion of the chaplain, that he commissioned one of his clergy to write a reply which was couched in equally coarse and undignified language. Seven years later, i. e., in 1012 A.D., the emperor decreed that the Jews should be expelled

from Mayence and, in addition, that they should be branded so that they might not be baptized.

Haham Artom, in a footnote in a volume of sermons which he published, says that when the learned Manasseh ben Israel applied personally to Oliver Cromwell for the re-admission of the Jews into England, the Protector reminded him of the three accusations that were constantly directed against the Jews: (1) That they employed the blood of a Christian child in the performance of their Passover ceremonies; (2) that they impoverished by their usury the country in which they lived; (3) their unremitting efforts to convert their countrymen to Judaism. The eloquent Rabbi had no difficulty in proving the injustice and futility of the first accusation. He showed that the second grievance might be averted if all trades were freely open to the Jews. He denied the third charge which was contrary to the views of their religion, but he promised that such things should never occur in England. The question then came before the Committee of the Council of State, which suggested seven conditions which should govern the re-admission of Jews to the country. The last two of these stipulated that they should print nothing against Christianity and that they should not discourage those who might attempt to convert them, while the making of converts by them was prohibited. There is no evidence that the document embodying these conditions was ever brought before the Council, but the Jews were re-admitted by order of Parliament dated 14th December, 1655, and R. Hermann Adler said that for a period of two hundred years from that time no proselyte was received into the Synagogue. There was, however, one notable exception, as will presently be seen. Manasseh ben Israel, it may be mentioned, was invited to England by Thurloe, Secretary of State, whose acquaintance he had made at the Hague.

Cobbett, in his *State Trials* (vol. xiii. pp. 938-9), gives particulars, quoted from Wodrow (vol. ii. p. 221) of the trial, in his absence, of a convert to Judaism. The full extract is as follows:

Another lamentable effect of the bearing down of the gospel and the neglect of instructing the people at this time was the apostasy of too many from the very profession of religion; and, indeed, profaneness was now at a terrible height. In the justiciary registers I find a process against the underwritten person for Judaism. It being the only instance as far as I know of this since the Reformation, the curious reader will be content to have a view of it. I give it as it stands in the criminal books, and it is what may be a caution

to parents to found our children well in our holy religion, before they suffer them to go abroad.

Edinburgh, June 15, 1681. Francis Borthwick, second son of James Borthwick of Harelaw, being often called to have compared before the justiciary, this day and place, in the hour of cause, to have underlien the law, for the crime of blasphemy committed by him, in so far as being born of Christian parents, and baptized and educated in the Christian faith, and continuing in the open profession thereof, and communion of the Christian and Catholic faith, until the age of fourteen years, he went abroad to foreign places, to follow the trade of merchandise where he was studious to make a shameful apostasy from the most holy faith, and he professed and openly declared himself to be a Jew, and was circumcised, and having returned to Scotland, at Edinburgh, Wrightshouse, Brandsfield, and Hall-heriot, he did rail against our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, denying Him to be God, and affirm him to be a mere man, and a false prophet, and treacherously reviling him by such other horrid blasphemies as are not fit to be uttered, renouncing and cursing the holy sacrament and rite of his baptism. And he did with great and horrid execrations wish all manner of judgments to befall him, if ever he should return to the Christian religion, in manner at length mentioned in the criminal laws, raised at the instance of His Majesty's advocate and James Cockburn in Duddingstoun, informer, against him thereanent. And being lawfully cited and not compearing, the Lords adjudged the said Francis Borthwick to be outlaw and fugitive and all his goods and gear to be brought in for His Majesty's use, for his contemption and disobedience; which was pronounced for doom.

The most notable instance in modern times of a conversion to the Jewish faith is that of the famous Lord George Gordon. Dr. Robert Watson, in his pamphlet *Life of Lord George Gordon*, says that he had long entertained serious doubts concerning the truth of Christianity and observed that its professors were at variance, both with revelation and reason; whilst the Jews literally adhered to the laws of Moses. He therefore embraced Judaism. Had he, like many others, merely declined attendance at places of public worship, or tacitly favored the religion of any, it would have occasioned no surprise; but it was surely a matter of wonder to see a man of his genius and opinions attach himself to a system so fatal to his designs and more intricate than that which he had renounced, nor had there been a similar example in Great Britain since the days of the eccentric Montague. To this unreasonable and imprudent step, says Watson, must be attributed his future degradation, for it was literally signing his political death.

Lord George Gordon applied for admission into the Jewish faith to Rabbi David Schiff of Duke's Place Synagogue, London. R. Hermann Adler, grand-nephew of Dr. Schiff, thinks that his uncle's refusal to accede to the request was probably due to the belief that a promise had been made to Oliver Cromwell by Manasseh ben Israel that no proselyte should be received. He adds: "My father assured me that he had seen the letter in which the application was made. Lord George was received into the covenant at Birmingham without the sanction of the ecclesiastical authorities. And whenever requests for admission into the synagogue were made, the candidates were compelled to incur considerable expense and great inconvenience in proceeding to Holland or Germany."

The reception of Lord George Gordon took place after his expulsion from Holland, whither, it is stated, he had gone for the purpose of being received into the faith. He hid himself in the midland city, residing at the house of a Jew, his long beard and broad-shaped hat, after the Polish fashion, making an effective disguise. He adhered strictly to all the Jewish ceremonies and was given the name of Israel, together with the addition, as was customary with proselytes, of "son of Abraham our Father."

There is in existence a manuscript Hebrew letter by Meyer Joseph, who, frequently when a young man, visited the proselyte and acted as his preceptor in Judaism. It is as follows:

Lord George Gordon submitted at an advanced age to the operation of circumcision. The rite of the covenant of Abraham was administered to him in the town of Birmingham. The name of the individual who performed the ceremony was Rabbi Jacob. When Lord George Gordon recovered from the effects of the circumcision seal he came to London (and being already pretty well tutored in Jewish rites and customs, and was also able to read Hebrew with some degree of fluency) he attended the Hamburgh synagogue where he was called to the Reading of the Law, and was honored with *Me Shebayrach* [a form of blessing called down upon those who are called up to the Reading of the Law] and presented the synagogue with £100. He then went to Paris and wrote a book against Marie Antoinette, Queen of France, which proved libellous and subjected his lordship to imprisonment at Newgate. Whilst in prison he was very regular in his Jewish observances: every morning he was seen with his phylacteries between his eyes and opposite to his heart. Every Saturday he had a public service in his room by the aid of ten Polish Jews. He looked like a patriarch with his beautiful long beard. His Saturday's bread was baked according to the manner of the Jews; his wine was Jewish; his meat was Jewish, and he was the best Jew in the congregation of Israel. On his prison wall were to be seen the Ten Commandments in the

Hebrew language; then the bag of Talith, or fringed garment and of the phylacteries. Afterwards the Count required him to bring bail: he brought two poor Polish Israelites as guarantees. The Court would not accept them because of their poverty. The rich Jews would have nothing to do towards assisting the prisoner for fear of persecution. He died in 1793 of a broken heart and was interred in the Gordon family vault.

Then there is the more recent case of Elizabeth Jane Caulfeild, Countess of Charlemont, born 21st June, 1834, the only daughter of the first Lord Athlumney. In December, 1856, she married James Molyneux, the third Earl of Charlemont. Although a Christian by birth and training, she became a regular attendant at the services of the synagogue, seeking advice in spiritual matters from the rabbis. When in Ireland she attended the synagogue at Belfast and when in London, either the Hayswater or the Central Synagogues. She was a woman of many accomplishments, an excellent linguist and a good musician and possessed a remarkable gift for recitation, which she utilized on behalf of charitable institutions.

Conversions to Judaism were, perhaps, more numerous in the Middle Ages, when it was made unlawful for the Jews to admit proselytes. Various Church Councils prohibited it and the Code of Alfonso X made conversion to the synagogue a capital crime. Even at Oxford, in 1222, a Christian deacon was burnt for his apostasy to Judaism. The number of modern proselytes is perhaps more numerous in India than in America or England. In 1896 the Central Conference of American Rabbis formulated as a proselyte confession of faith the five tenets: (1) God the Only One; (2) man His image; (3) immortality of the soul; (4) retribution; (5) Israel's mission. The disregard for the Abrahamic covenant among the Reformed Jews has resulted in a much stricter examination by them of applicants for admission into the faith of their knowledge of the doctrines and practices of Judaism. Some Reformed congregations now even omit the practice of the total immersion of female converts. In contravention of the Rabbinical caution, marriage is, in most cases, the motive of conversion and proselytes of the female sex predominate. Instruction in the Jewish religion precedes the ceremony, which, in addition to circumcision (when carried out) and baptism, consists in the public confession of faith, in the main amounting to a repudiation of certain Christian dogmas and concluding with the recitation of the Shema. The baptism of converts is not mentioned by Philo, but is pre-supposed by the Mishnah.