

## The Impact of Nineteenth-Century Christian Missions on American Jews

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MOST historical discussions of Christian efforts to convert American Jews concentrate on the goals set by the missionaries themselves. After evaluating the efforts expended, the money spent, and the relatively small number of souls converted by the missionary organizations, they conclude—unsurprisingly, given the weight of the evidence—that “these attempts have failed.” “If the historical importance of such associations is measured by their success in promoting a cause,” Professor Lorman Ratner thus writes, “then [the American Society for Meliorating the Condition of the Jews] should be left in obscurity, for it accomplished very little.”<sup>1</sup>

This negative appraisal of missionary accomplishments, while accurate in some respects, leaves much unsaid. Indeed, the evidence seems to me to suggest that missionaries, albeit unknowingly and unwittingly, actually contributed in important ways to the development and strengthening of the American Jewish community. American Jews might have been happier had missionaries not posed their challenge, but they would also have been substantially worse off.

To explore this surprising paradox, this paper, after briefly reviewing the history of nineteenth-century Christian missions to the

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Jews in the United States, will focus on two critically important areas of missionary impact on American Jewish life. It will argue that missionaries ultimately strengthened the Jewish community by forcing Jews to confront first, the uncertainties of American religious pluralism, and second, serious community problems that they had hitherto neglected.

### 1

The history of Christian efforts to convert American Jews may be summarized briefly.<sup>2</sup> In the colonial and early national periods such efforts were private and often casual religious solicitations undertaken either by ministers or laymen, usually with the intent of converting someone with whom they were already socially acquainted. The eagerness of Ezra Stiles to convert his friend Aaron Lopez of Newport, and efforts by people in Warrenton, North Carolina, to convert Jacob Mordecai typify situations that numerous Jews faced at one time or another.<sup>3</sup> In many cases, asking a Jewish friend to convert was not a fanatical or even an unfriendly act, nor did Jews view it as such. The suggestion, indeed, was often a backhanded compliment, a way of inviting popular but not yet completely acceptable members of the community to upgrade their civic status by becoming “good Christians,” and joining a church like everyone else.

The first organized American societies dedicated to Jewish evangelization were formed in New York (the American Society for Evangelizing the Jews) and Boston (the Female Society of Boston and the Vicinity for Promoting Christianity among the Jews) in 1816, during what is known in America as the Second Great Awakening. Societies for the promotion of innumerable benevolent causes were formed during this period, among them the American Bible Society (1815), the American Colonization Society (1817), and the American Tract Society (1825), and many of the same reform-minded evangelicals were involved in each group.<sup>4</sup>

Spurred on by Joseph S. C. F. Frey,<sup>5</sup> a founder of the London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews, author of a best-selling missionary autobiography, and himself a convert, recently removed to New York; and also spurred by “intelligence from Germany announcing the desire of a number of Christian Jews to emigrate to the United States for the purpose of forming a Christian-Jewish settlement,”<sup>6</sup> the American Society for Evangelizing the Jews re-

organized in 1820 and applied for a state charter. It received one, in April of that year, and emerged both with a new name, the American Society for Meliorating the Condition of the Jews (ASMCJ), and with a new objective:

to invite and receive from any part of the world such Jews as do already profess the Christian religion or are desirous to receive Christian instruction, to form them into a settlement and to furnish them with the ordinances of the Gospel and with such employment in the settlement as shall be assigned to them.<sup>7</sup>

Numerous notables connected themselves with the ASMCJ during this period. Elias Boudinot, former president of the Continental Congress, served as its president. John Quincy Adams, William Phillips, Stephen Van Rensselaer, Jeremiah Day, Ashbel Green, Philip Milledoler (the last three, respectively, presidents of Yale, Princeton, and Rutgers), and former New York governor DeWitt Clinton, all served at various times as honorary vice-presidents. Peter Jay, son of the diplomat John Jay, served as treasurer. By the mid-1820s, the ASMCJ enjoyed prestige, publicity, and liberal support from several hundred auxiliary societies scattered in different states of the union.<sup>8</sup>

Nothing came of the ASMCJ's effort to colonize Jews. In 1826, following a spate of bad publicity and a shift in public attitudes back toward more secular concerns, the society collapsed amid factional and legal squabbling.<sup>9</sup> It continued to languish, although periodically showing renewed spurts of vigor, particularly in the 1840s, but it never regained its former eminence. Henceforward, the ASMCJ and missions to American Jews generally attracted fewer supporters, more detractors (Jewish and non-Jewish), and far less money. Premillennial hopes that Jewish converts would spur the onset of the "end of days" waned, confidence in colonization schemes faded away, and missionizing assumed the form, known as direct missionizing, that remains familiar. Societies—the ASMCJ and denominational societies like those of the Baptists and Presbyterians—hired individuals, many of them Jewish apostates, and sent them into Jewish neighborhoods, where they formed a visible presence (sometimes in storefronts), and could confront "potential converts" on a one-to-one basis. Over the years, this missionary presence grew stronger or weaker depending both on the religious temper of the times and on the perceived potential for success. In 1900, according to A. E. Thompson, the Jewish missionary enterprise in America consisted of some seventy-five mis-

sionaries, representing twenty-nine different societies, in thirteen United States cities.<sup>10</sup>

## 2

From early on, American Jews viewed Christian missionary activities directed against them both as a serious threat to their own immediate well-being, and, more broadly, as another in a long series of Christian efforts to undermine Jewish civilization. Jews knew that they had to respond to such challenges, and respond they did—vigorously. American Jewish responses to missionaries<sup>11</sup> began in 1816, with *Tobit's Letter to Levi*, or, since that seems to have been penned by a gentile, in 1820, with *Israel Vindicated* (written by one who called himself "An Israelite," even if he wasn't),<sup>12</sup> and continued to appear right through the century, with the antimissionary fulminations of Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise being particularly noteworthy. The literature is enormous, considering the small size of the American Jewish population at the time, and it covers a wide spectrum from theological arguments, to historical arguments, to ad hominem arguments. It borrows liberally from European polemics, particularly those of Isaac Troki and Isaac Orobio de Castro, as well as from deistic tracts. Yet at the same time, it includes arguments and emphases peculiarly appropriate to American Jews' own situation—for example, arguments based on the Jewish contribution to American independence. It thus displays elements both of continuity and of change. It reflects, in this sense, the American Jewish experience as a whole.

While American Jewish antimissionary literature portrays an ostensibly unified community responding as one to a common threat, in fact the missionary challenge set off a highly significant—and hitherto overlooked—tactical debate within that community over how best to formulate a response appropriate to America's distinctive religious situation. In Europe, after all, Jews had always been forced to respond to missionaries from a position of weakness, particularly in the post-emancipation period when Jews depended on Christians for toleration, and feared to offend them. Even in England, Jewish opponents of the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews had to remember that they were a minority fighting an established church at a time when Jews had yet to win full legal equality.<sup>13</sup> In the United States, by contrast, "free exercise of religion" was

guaranteed by the Constitution, if not always by the states, and there was no established church at all. Legally, at least, Jews had won equality, not mere toleration.<sup>14</sup> They were one minority religious group among many others.

Some American Jews, conscious of the freedom America afforded them, wanted to respond to missionaries more forcefully than was possible in other countries. Rather than just defending Judaism respectfully by disputing Christian interpretations of Scripture and casting aspersions on individual missionaries, these Jews, whom we might term extremists, sought openly to revile Christianity, putting it, rather than Judaism, on the defensive. At the same time, other Jews, particularly those who regularly interacted with the Christian majority, opposed these tactics. Not wishing to alienate all Christians because of the missionary tactics of some, they advocated moderate, nonthreatening responses, the kind that could be effective without being offensive. The debate is difficult to reconstruct, and positions were naturally more varied than this idealized model suggests. Broadly speaking, however, we can say that extremists viewed Jewish-Christian relations in triumphalistic terms as a battle between two religions in which one—the more correct one—would emerge victorious. Moderates, by contrast, viewed the relationship in pluralistic terms, and therefore searched for a middle ground on which Jews and Christians could continue to coexist. The missionary threat brought these two conflicting outlooks into the open, with the result that each side produced polemics suitable to the particular end that it sought to advance.

Two examples illustrate this point. The first involves Mordecai Manuel Noah, the leading Jew in early America, and Solomon Jackson, the leading Jewish antimissionary. Noah worked as a New York journalist and politician, and spent the majority of his time in the company of non-Jews. It therefore comes as no surprise that his reaction to missionaries fell into what I have labeled the moderate camp. For several years, in his newspaper, he ignored American missions to the Jews completely. When he did break his silence, in 1818, he did so with words carefully chosen to ensure that no Christian would take offense:

We have seen some remarks . . . concerning the pious labours of Mr. Frey in converting the Jews in this country, and the success attending his efforts. We have not noticed this person since his arrival in this country, as we are very indifferent on the subject of his labours to make an honest living by making proselytes: but this we

know, that the Society in London where there are 20,000 Jews who employed him, bade him farewell without regret, and in this country he has not made a single convert. We have no objections to his success, if sincerity and piety really govern his motives, but we have no idea of permitting the community to be deceived on this subject. We could say much more on the occasion, but religion should not occupy the columns of a newspaper.<sup>15</sup>

Noah later felt himself more free to express antimissionary views, and he did so effectively. But he never attacked Christianity as a religion. He limited himself to fulminations against missionaries' misappropriation of funds, lack of success, false piety, and immoral tactics.<sup>16</sup> He did not allow those whom he denominated "pious frauds" to sway him from his generally pluralistic religious stance, his image of Jews and Christians traveling side by side along roads so closely parallel as to be virtually indistinguishable:

There are two packets belonging to the New York and Boston line, one named *Jew* and the other *Gentile*. They carry equal freight, and sail with equal swiftness. They sail from the same port and arrive at the same destination. So it is with human *Jews* and *Gentiles* of the great world.<sup>17</sup>

Noah's pluralism was lost on Solomon Jackson,<sup>18</sup> a New York printer who displayed a more extremist and triumphalistic bent. Jackson, as a youth, had immigrated to America from England, settled in Pike County, Pennsylvania, and married a Christian woman, believing as he then did that "all religion was imposition—a mere trick of state."<sup>19</sup> But following his wife's death and numerous personal tribulations, Jackson became a *baal tesbuva*, a Jewish penitent, and thereafter he devoted much of his life to strengthening the Jewish faith. He published a translation of the prayer-book (1826) and the first American edition of the Passover Haggadah (1837), he supported Jewish education, and he led the Jewish Agricultural Society *Tseire ba-Tson*, which, among other things, barred from membership anyone married to a non-Jew and anyone "in the habit of violating the Sabbath."<sup>20</sup> In 1823, Jackson published what he is best remembered for: *The Jew*, the first Jewish periodical in America, "Being a Defence of Judaism against All Adversaries, and Particularly against the Insidious Attacks of *Israel's Advocate*."

In his periodical, Jackson expressed impatience with Jews of "trembling heart," who saw "danger" in his effort to defend Judaism. "Caution is now fear," he admonished these moderates, "and instead of being a virtue is in truth a weakness."<sup>21</sup> One of his contributors used Scripture to prove that "We are not to consider whether our answer

will offend or not; we are not to fear the consequence of doing our imperious duty. . . . It is the duty of every man of our persuasion, when attacked, to defend, as much as in his power, the religious tenets and peculiar doctrines of the unity of the Godhead."<sup>22</sup> To Jackson, moderation in defense of Judaism was a vice. He, therefore, attacked Christianity as "idolatry," and looked forward triumphantly to the day "that all the world will become of the Jewish persuasion, and be of their religion which is the only true religion."<sup>23</sup>

The dispute between Noah and Jackson was a basic one, argued time and again over the span of American Jewish history. The contrasting antimissionary styles of the two greatest American Jewish religious figures of the nineteenth century, rabbis Isaac Leeser and Isaac Mayer Wise, display the same moderate-extremist dichotomy. Leeser, especially in his early years, advocated a Mendelssohnian approach to missionaries: he sought to avoid religious controversy altogether if possible. In two books, *The Jews and the Mosaic Law* (1834) and *The Claims of the Jews to an Equality of Rights* (1841), and in one article, "The Jews and Their Religion" (1844), all three directed to gentile audiences, Leeser pleaded with missionaries ("we claim as children of one Father, as followers of his law, as supporters of a highly social system, to remain Jews, without the interference of our Christian neighbors and fellow-citizens; just as we act towards them"), and defended the good character of the Jewish people. He stressed the "common ground" that Jews and Christians shared, notwithstanding the many differences between the two religions. He forbore polemics and personal attacks, and at least when speaking to non-Jews made no triumphalistic claims. All he asked was that Jews "be left alone undisturbed." "We wish to live in peace," he assured his Christian readers, "doing to others as we wish to be done by."<sup>24</sup>

Isaac Mayer Wise, by contrast, went to any length to oppose missionaries. He considered it a "sacred duty" to expose missionaries' "rascality," and wasted no opportunity to catch them at their "lying."<sup>25</sup> Like Solomon Jackson, he sought "always to wage an offensive, rather than to fight a defensive war."<sup>26</sup> He opened the pages of his newspaper to a variety of anti-Christian critics, and trumpeted his view that Judaism would ultimately triumph: "the essence of Judaism is destined to become the universal religion . . . before this century will close, the essence of Judaism will be THE religion of the great majority of the intelligent men in this country."<sup>27</sup>

Disputes such as these between moderates and extremists, plu-

ralists and triumphalists, Jews who sought coexistence with Christianity and those who foresaw nothing but an endless series of confrontations with it, did not originate in America. Similar debates, Jacob Katz has shown, raged much earlier in Jewish history as well.<sup>28</sup> The challenge which Christian missions to the Jews posed, however, did bring these debates into focus. By dramatizing the threat which Jews as members of a minority religion faced, missionaries forced Jews to confront, sooner and more directly than they might otherwise have done, their own religious situation in America, specifically their position vis-à-vis the Protestant majority. That Jews reached no consensus on the question of exclusiveness and tolerance is ultimately far less important than the fact that, thanks to the missionaries, the problem became a subject for spirited debate.

One aspect of the Jewish antimissionaries argument deserves special attention: the uniquely American debate over the meaning of the free exercise clause of the First Amendment to the Constitution. Jews, of course, had no monopoly on this debate. Americans have argued about what the constitutional guarantee of religious liberty means ever since that guarantee was proposed for ratification.<sup>29</sup> Still, the introduction of constitutional arguments into Jewish antimissionary polemics represents a new departure. It underlines again how missionaries forced Jews to confront their situation relative to America's other faiths.

Early on, many American Jews considered missionary activities directed against them to be an "invasion of the primary articles of our Constitution" or at least "contrary to the true spirit and meaning of the constitution."<sup>30</sup> Although the First Amendment only prohibited Congress from making any law "respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof," Jews reasoned that it was generally improper, as Isaac Leeser put it, "for the many to combine to do the smallest minority the injury of depriving them of their conscientious conviction by systematic efforts."<sup>31</sup> Leeser may have been interpreting religious liberty in terms of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787's guarantee that "No person demeaning himself in a peaceable and orderly manner shall ever be molested on account of his mode of worship or religious sentiment."

By the 1840s, American Jews realized that no such broad interpretation of religious liberty had taken hold in the United States. With many continuing to argue, as Daniel Webster did, that Christianity

formed part of the common law,<sup>32</sup> Jews fell back on an argument based on equality: "by the Constitution of the Union we are guaranteed, *pari passu* with our neighbors, the right to think, say and do."<sup>33</sup> Though they no longer believed that they could on constitutional grounds stop missionaries, Jews did insist that they had the same rights as missionaries. "I beg to address you as a God-fearing American citizen, recognized as such by the Constitution of the land," a Jew signing himself "M.S." wrote in an open letter to the *Churchman*.<sup>34</sup> Other Jews made the same point by asking, as Isaac Leeser once did, "how would missionary efforts by Jews be received among Christians?"<sup>35</sup> Having been taught by missionaries that religious liberty in America could imply free market competition between religious groups, Jews served notice that they were prepared to vie as equals. They proceeded to do so.

## 3

Missions directed at gentiles might at first glance have seemed like the most appropriate American Jewish response to Christian missions. How better to make the point that, in America, Jews could do whatever Christians could do? To evangelize Christians, however, Jews would have had to abandon both a longstanding diaspora tradition, one consistent with Jews' minority status, and also a powerful antimissionary polemic: the argument that Jews had no need to missionize since they did not deny to non-Jews the possibility of salvation. Even more important, sending missionaries out to the gentiles would not have solved the very real internal communal problems that left Jews prey to missionary blandishments in the first place. Missionaries, after all, directed their thrust at precisely those four areas where the Jewish community was weakest and most vulnerable. They concentrated on winning over ignorant Jews, isolated Jews, Jews confined to hospitals, and impoverished Jews. In so doing, they reminded Jewish leaders that apathy and neglect on their part could result in dire consequences. In a competitive environment, missionaries were free to exploit Jewish shortcomings to their own advantage.

It followed that "when we see today Christian missions springing up among our neglected Jews, we have no right to condemn them." So Minnie Louis, a prominent New York Jewish social worker, made clear in a paper read at the 1893 Jewish Women's Congress in Chicago. Before her audience could disagree, she explained that "it is we who

deserve the condemnation for unfaithfulness to our duty."<sup>36</sup> Jews came to understand in the nineteenth century that missionary successes were symptoms of Jewish communal problems. By investigating where missionaries made inroads, Jews learned where they themselves had failed. They also learned that to defeat missionaries they often had to imitate them. They had to find ways to create Jewish functional alternatives to missionary activities, alternatives as fulfilling as whatever the missionaries offered, but designed at the same time to keep Jews firmly within the fold.

The resulting dynamic interaction between missionary challenges and Jewish responses operated in all four areas of Jewish vulnerability, but most particularly in education. In early America, the overall state of Jewish education was, notwithstanding certain exceptions, wretchedly poor. Few early American Jews knew Hebrew. Very few Jewish textbooks and no Jewish translation of the Bible existed for those who knew only English. And even given those books that were available, "Jewish schools functioned irregularly and inefficiently and Jewish education could not rise above the elementary level."<sup>37</sup> Missionaries frequently commented on this "deplorable ignorance" to prove how benighted Jews were, and they then exploited the ignorance by posing questions which the average Jew, to his embarrassment, could not answer.<sup>38</sup> Isaac Leeser's plea—"do not as honest men, interfere with young children or ignorant persons"—went unheeded.<sup>39</sup> In an open society, ignorant Jews could not be quarantined away from Christians. They had instead to be educated.

Realizing this situation, Jews slowly came to see education not just as a religious duty, but as a vital component of their whole countermissionary program. They proceeded to copy successful Christian educational patterns in order to use them for Jewish ends. The Jewish Sunday school, introduced by Rebecca Gratz and Isaac Leeser in 1838, is a good example. It was modeled on its Christian namesake, but with decidedly Jewish purposes in view. Isaac Leeser had determined that missionary successes proceeded from two causes: "either from ignorance of our religion, or because it is made the interest of converts." He expressed certainty that it was "not the interest of Christianity to bribe the interested to an outward profession which their soul does not feel." "As to the ignorant . . .," he continued, "we have established Sunday-schools within the last two years, for the gratuitous instruction in religion in New York, Philadelphia and Charleston, and similar ones are proposed for Richmond and St.

Thomas. It is to be hoped that the good thus commenced will be ardently and earnestly followed up, until in all the world there shall not be a Jewish child ignorant *why* he is a Jew."<sup>40</sup> There were, of course, other motivations behind the Jewish Sunday school movement as well, but its antimissionary function cannot be too strongly stressed.

*The Jewish Miscellany*, a tract series, also introduced by Isaac Leeser, proceeded from the same strategy. According to its publishers, gentiles spared no effort "to diffuse false views . . . propagated through books, tracts, and publications of all kinds." Since this "mass of erroneous views" could result in "the loss to Israel of many precious souls who are now of our communion," it was time for Jewish "counter action." What better than to create a Jewish publication society, "to prepare suitable publications to be circulated among all classes of our people, from which they may obtain a knowledge of their faith and proper weapons to defend it against the assaults of proselyte-makers on the one side, and of infidels on the other. . . ."

Propaganda of this sort, as the publishers realized, was "in fact the plan adopted by our opponents," but, of course, for different ends. "Shall we not profit by them," they wondered rhetorically. Their response, soon translated into terms of concrete action, was to learn everything possible from the missionaries and to use that knowledge to strengthen Judaism from the inside.<sup>41</sup>

Later on in the nineteenth century, this pattern repeated itself. Beginning in New York in 1864, and then in other cities too, missionaries set up free "mission schools" in Jewish immigrant areas, ostensibly to offer instruction in the Hebrew language, but in fact designed to Americanize Jewish children and in the process to convert them. Jews attacked these schools, verbally and even physically, but they had to admit that they themselves had done nothing about setting up a system of free Jewish education for those too poor to pay. The problem was soon solved: "the principal men of thirteen or fifteen synagogues assembled, and, after long consultation, passed resolutions to the effect that the Jews of New York should establish a sufficient number of free-schools where the children of all classes, who might wish to avail themselves of the means offered to them, should receive a Hebrew education."<sup>42</sup> The conversionist specter called forth the necessary funds, and shortly thereafter the first Jewish free schools, sometimes actually called "Jewish mission schools," came into being.

temporarily driving the missionary schools from the field. Years later, the *Jewish Messenger* ironically observed that "if there had been no 'Jewish missions' in New York, we should have had no Hebrew Free Schools with nearly 3000 children as pupils. . . . The conversionists are our benefactors."<sup>43</sup> Missionaries had identified a need and showed how it could be met. Jews did the rest.

Isolated Jews in small towns and rural villages formed another area of Jewish vulnerability. They fell prey to formal and informal conversionist efforts on a continual basis. "Missionary tours" undertaken by rabbis and laymen, ongoing efforts to set up "circuit preachers" to serve outlying communities, and various mail order publications all sought to stem these threats, using techniques borrowed from the missionaries themselves. Isaac Leeser understood very early that many American Jews abandoned their faith "owing to their being entirely isolated from our people and in constant intercourse with ministers of Christianity . . . imbibing foreign manners from a constant intermixture with persons who are not Israelites."<sup>44</sup> He therefore urged American Jews to become "lay preachers":

We wish Israel to take example from the activity and missionary zeal of all the sects which surround us . . . we call upon Israelites of every degree to become missionaries, not to carry the good tidings beyond the sea and into desert lands, but to the bosom of their own families, to their neighbors, to their friends.<sup>45</sup>

Leeser saw his own publications as missionary surrogates, designed to maintain contact with Jews "dispersed over so wide a space of country that we are precluded from waiting upon all individually to speak with them upon the concerns of their immortal souls."<sup>46</sup> Even the *Occident*, his monthly magazine, initially proceeded from this need. The ASMCJ had founded the *Jewish Chronicle*, a nationwide conversionist periodical. Leeser replied with a periodical of his own. His understanding of the relationship between the two periodicals says much about the relationship between missionaries and counter-missionaries generally:

two such little planets revolving around their peculiar axis; the former to malign the Jews and to report all their faults and apostacies, the latter to be in a measure their advocate, and to reprove without hesitation and reserve when errors and wrong are discovered.<sup>47</sup>

Missionaries challenged; Jews responded. In this case, as in many others, the Jewish response surpassed the challenge both in magnitude

and significance. Without the missionary challenge, however, the appearance of Jewish periodicals in America would probably have been far longer delayed.

The third vulnerable sector of American Jewry to attract missionary attention in the nineteenth century consisted of Jews confined to hospitals. Most American hospitals during this period were maintained by religious denominations, and many nurses pursued their vocation from a sense of religious calling. In some cases, missionaries or nurses baptized dying Jews in perhaps well-meaning, but to Jews thoroughly reprehensible, efforts to save them. Reports of deathbed conversions abounded.<sup>48</sup> As a response, the first communitywide Jewish hospital in America, the Jewish Hospital of Cincinnati (1850), came into being. In seeking financial support for it, Isaac Leeser stressed its countermissionary appeal:

every Jew must be anxious to have around him in the moments of suffering those who sympathize with him, not alone by pitying his pains and sorrows, but by sharing his religious sentiments, and his hopes of the future; and he must ardently desire not to have his hours of illness embittered by the appeals of those who prowl about sanitary establishments, and omit no opportunity to preach their unwelcome doctrines to all ears, in season and out of season; not to mention the dread which the conscientious invalid must feel of being tampered with in moments of unconsciousness, *as there are zealots who would not besitate to baptize, as they call it, a Jew or heretic, or infidel, in extremis, so as to prepare his soul for beaven, even if he be entirely unaware of the act or ceremony which is performed on him.*<sup>49</sup>

There were, of course, other reasons for supporting Jewish hospitals that found expression. Abraham Sulzberger, in 1864, told Philadelphia Jews that it reflected the "greatest discredit" on them that their "friendless brothers" were forced "to seek in sickness and prospect of death the shelter of un-Jewish Hospitals; to eat forbidden food; to be dissected after death; and sometimes even to be buried with the stranger." He noted several cases where "Israelites of this city have died in Christian Hospitals without having the privilege of hearing the *Sbemang Yisrael*—the watch-word of their faith and nation."<sup>50</sup> Some Jews considered it a source of embarrassment that non-Jews provided hospital care for the sick of all faiths while Jews did not provide it for any. By the end of the nineteenth century, discrimination against Jewish personnel in Christian hospitals had become yet another irritant with which the community had to contend. Still, the missionary problem—the specter of deathbed conversions—was the spur, if not the only cause, of efforts aimed at creating Jewish hospitals, open to

Jews and non-Jews alike, in Cincinnati, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. If Christians could have hospitals where they displayed the benefits of their religion to Jews, Jews could counter with equally sumptuous hospitals, designed both as protection against conversionists, and as proof to Christians that Jews were every bit as generous and charitable as they were.<sup>51</sup>

The final major area in which missionaries made a substantial impact on nineteenth-century American Jewish life is the area of philanthropy. Jews had, of course, developed a comprehensive system of community aid going back to colonial days.<sup>52</sup> In response to missionary activities, however, they extended their efforts in new directions, to meet new problems.

In the 1820s, missionaries attempted to set up a colony in Ulster County, New York, for meliorating the condition (termed "grievous in the extreme") of persecuted European Jews: converts and potential converts who were then being victimized by riots and reactionary laws.<sup>53</sup> American Jews had considered the possibility of their country becoming a haven for European Jews before, but in the wake of the missionary thrust they offered several new and concrete proposals. *Israel Vindicated* (1820) suggested an interfaith relief effort:

If these Nazarenes . . . are really desirous of doing a service to the poor of our nation, thousands of whom at this moment feel real distress in Europe . . . let them lay aside, in the outset at least, all attempts to interfere with our religious principles; let them consider our needy brethren only in the light of men suffering under the pressure of a common calamity, and, as such, entitled to their compassion; let them unite their efforts with the more wealthy of our nation, in endeavouring to procure an allotment of land for them in this widely extended country; and having succeeded in obtaining this, let them, as with one heart and with one voice, invite them to take possession of it, by holding out suitable inducements, and proffering them pecuniary aid.<sup>54</sup>

Mordecai Noah put forward a more comprehensive plan for setting up "an asylum for the oppressed," his well-known Ararat plan.<sup>55</sup> In 1826, Jacob Solis, then living in Mt. Pleasant, New York, suggested yet another plan for "establishing a JEWISH ASYLUM in this Country, to improve the future condition of the Jews." He noted that missionaries "had expended thousands of thousands of dollars to no purpose, because the great object was lost sight of." With "but little more than one year's interest of the amount expended by that [missionary] Society," he promised to do the job better by creating what he called "The American Jewish Asylum," designed "to admit all those



Jewish youth of both sexes, flying from oppressive governments here for refuge."<sup>56</sup> Since, as it turned out, Jews did not fly to America in the 1820s, Solis's plan, like all those that preceded it, Jewish and non-Jewish, came to naught. But that should not obscure the process, now familiar, whereby missionaries challenged Jews, and Jews then imitated missionaries in order to subvert them. The pattern recurred throughout the subsequent history of American Jewish philanthropy.

By the 1840s, Jewish immigrants began to flow to America's shores in larger numbers. In New York, owing to depressed economic conditions, many of them lived amidst squalor in the poorest sections of town—areas where wealthier Jews never traveled. Missionaries, however, did discover these forgotten people, and in October 1842 they appointed a special missionary, James Forrester, "to labor steadily and daily among the Jews, by visiting from house to house." The scenes Forrester described finding in New York revealed a problem far greater than American Jews had realized:

The number of Jews now in this city has been ascertained to be nearly ten thousand. A large portion of them consists of emigrants from Europe, mostly from Germany, and many very recently. These are generally poor—some extremely so—and many touching recitals are contained in Mr. Forrester's journal, of scenes of suffering which he was compelled to witness, and sometimes had the gratification to relieve. . . . Sick and destitute females have been found in lonely garrets, without fire, in the coldest season, struggling to subsist themselves and their shivering infants upon a few crusts. Families, on the verge of being driven by their landlords from their scarcely habitable lodgings into the streets, have implored the missionary for aid in their time of need. The Board are gratified to add, that, in several of these cases, they have been enabled to afford relief; and that the small sums bestowed by their agent out of the moderate fund placed at his disposal, have been received with the most heartfelt expressions of gratitude.<sup>57</sup>

How New York Jews responded to these reports cannot be known for certain, but a strong indication of their alarm may be seen in an emergency twelve-page report of the Committee of the Society for the Education of Poor Children and Relief of Indigent Persons of the Jewish Persuasion, commissioned on 8 January 1843 and published just twenty-two days later under the names of three of New York's leading Jews: Benjamin Nathan, Henry Hendricks, and Solomon I. Joseph. Without mentioning missionary Forrester by name, the report confirmed much of what he had alleged. It went on to urge reforms in the whole system of Jewish poor relief in New York City.<sup>58</sup>

Writing from Philadelphia soon afterward, Isaac Leeser, likewise concerned about the missionary threat, urged New York Jewish lead-

ers "to be up and adoining, to counteract any evil the [missionary] society or its agents may attempt."<sup>59</sup> That, apparently, is just what New York Jews did, for by 1845 Forrester was complaining about violence perpetrated against him, and his missionary activities seem to have abated. At the same time, Jewish charities, particularly the Hebrew Benevolent Society, expanded their efforts, and Jews generally became more conscious of the new responsibilities that immigration had thrust upon them.<sup>60</sup>

In the ensuing years, Jews periodically grew lax in their charities, and when they did, reports of some missionary success usually led them to redoubled efforts. In 1859, for example, the *Jewish Messenger* reported that a Jewish child, placed in a non-Jewish orphanage for lack of a Jewish home, had been converted there to Christianity. The resulting outcry brought about two long-discussed but hitherto postponed developments: the merger of the Hebrew Benevolent Society with the German Hebrew Benevolent Society, and the founding of the Hebrew Orphan Asylum.<sup>61</sup> Jewish hospitals and Jewish free schools, as we have already seen, came about in similar fashion, occasioned by well-publicized reports of what missionaries had done.<sup>62</sup>

All of these developments might, of course, have taken place even in the absence of the missionary challenge, just as a result of Jews' ongoing and abiding concern for the fate of their brethren in need. But the fact remains that throughout the nineteenth century, missionary challenges did stimulate both the direction and timing of Jewish social reforms. "Our sleeping fellow-Israelites," Isaac Leeser once lamented, "are aroused to action only when they see a sign of some danger."<sup>63</sup> Since in Jewish eyes no greater danger existed than missionaries, they played a considerable if unintentional part in galvanizing Jews into action, teaching them about the problems that existed in their midst, and showing them how those problems might be resolved.

On the face of it, this looks like just another example of Jews marching to the cadence of Christian drummers.<sup>64</sup> In fact, however, a more complex post-emancipation process was at work. Jews in America formed a beleaguered minority competing against a powerful majority in a more or less free religious marketplace.<sup>65</sup> Missionaries sold the religious wares of the majority, and in good businesslike fashion they tailored their marketing program to those areas where the minority's hold seemed weakest. Thoroughly alarmed, Jews rushed in with products of their own, modeled on those of the competition but



promising more, designed to shore up their areas of weakness so as to retain, so to speak, their market share. Soon, the majority returned to the offensive, perceiving some new way to exploit Jewish weakness, and the cycle began once more. Round and round it continues, down to the present day.

So frankly adversarial a model, applying to religion the principles of free market capitalism, seems dismal indeed, particularly since it offers no hope for relief. Yet, as we have seen, missionary competition has actually led to the strengthening of the American Jewish community on a myriad of fronts. Competitive challenges, even if they weakened Judaism at first, have ultimately led to a stronger and more viable Judaism than existed before.<sup>66</sup> Missionaries have served as a kind of Jewish early warning system, pointing up problems that would have grown far worse if left untended. Where Jews might have been lulled into complacency, allowing evils to fester, missionary provocations compelled them to deal with problems vigorously and at once. Losses, real or feared, prompted necessary and effective counteractive measures.

Seen in a broader perspective, this American Jewish encounter with missionaries reveals how, quite generally, religious competition has worked to the advantage of Jews<sup>67</sup> serving as a critical factor in the survival and strengthening of American Jewry. Competitive challenges have, of course, always weakened Judaism at first, and have inevitably led the faint of heart to question whether Judaism can maintain itself. But in the long run, these challenges have had a salutary effect. By stimulating new efforts and programs, they have contributed to making the American Jewish community stronger, more viable, and far more socially conscious.

## NOTES

1. David Max Eichhorn, *Evangelizing the American Jew* (Middle Village, N.Y.: Jonathan David Publishers, 1978), p. 193; Lorman Ratner, "Conversion of the Jews and Pre-Civil War Reform," *American Quarterly* 13 (1961): 43.

2. For further details, see, in addition to works cited above, Max Eisen, "Christian Missions to the Jews in North America and Great Britain," *Jewish Social Studies* 10 (1948): 31-66; Marshall Sklare, "The Conversion of the Jews," *Commentary* 56 (1973): 44-53; Lee M. Friedman, "The American Society for Meliorating the

Condition of the Jews and Joseph S. C. F. Frey," in Lee M. Friedman, *Early American Jews* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1934), pp. 96-112; Robert M. Healey, "From Conversion to Dialogue: Protestant American Mission to the Jews in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 18 (1981): 375-87; and Louis Meyer, "Hebrew-Christian Brotherhood Unions and Alliances of the Past and Present," *Minutes of the First Hebrew-Christian Conference of the United States* (Pittsburgh, 1903), pp. 16-31.

3. Arthur A. Chiel, "Ezra Stiles and the Jews: A Study in Ambivalence," in *A Bicentennial Festschrift for Jacob Rader Marcus*, ed. Bertram W. Korn (Waltham, Mass.: American Jewish Historical Society, 1976), pp. 63-76; Myron Berman, *Richmond's Jewry, 1769-1976* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1970), pp. 110-24. For the situation in later periods, see Louis Schmier, ed., *Reflections of Southern Jewry* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1982), p. 32; Eli N. Evans, *The Provincials* (New York: Atheneum, 1973), pp. 120-39; and Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity*, vol. 4, *The Great Century, A.D. 1800-A.D. 1914, Europe and the United States of America* (New York: Harper, 1941), p. 293: "chance contacts seem to have been the chief sources of conversion."

4. Donald G. Mathews, "The Second Great Awakening as an Organizing Process, 1780-1830," *American Quarterly* 21 (1969): 23-43; Clifford S. Griffin, *Their Brothers' Keepers: Moral Stewardship in the United States, 1800-1865* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1960); Charles L. Chaney, *The Birth of Missions in America* (South Pasadena, Calif.: William Carey Library, 1976), and Ronald G. Walters, *American Reformers 1815-1860* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1978), offer useful introductions to various aspects of this period, and cite other sources.

5. George L. Berlin, "Joseph S. C. F. Frey, the Jews, and Early Nineteenth Century Millenarianism," *Journal of the Early Republic* 1 (1981): 27-49.

6. Philip Milledoler, quoted in *Occident* 1 (1844): 43.

7. Quoted in Ratner, "Conversion of the Jews," p. 45.

8. American Society for Meliorating the Condition of the Jews, *Constitution of the American Society for Ameliorating the Condition of the Jews; with an Address from the Hon. Elias Boudinot . . .* (New York, 1820); Joseph S. C. F. Frey, *Judah and Israel* (New York: D. Franshaw, 1840), pp. 81-93; Joseph L. Blau and Salo W. Baron, eds., *The Jews of the United States, 1790-1840: A Documentary History*, 3 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), 3: 714-73; Jonathan D. Sarna, *Jacksonian Jew: The Two Worlds of Mordecai Noah* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1981), pp. 56-57; Marion L. Bell, *Crusade in the City: Revivalism in Nineteenth Century Philadelphia*, (Lewisburg, Pa.: Bucknell University Press, 1977), pp. 137-59.

9. On the decline of the ASMCJ in the 1820s, see the secondary literature cited in note 2; *Israel's Advocate* 2 (1824): 67-68; 3 (1825): 6, 151; 4 (1826): 65-67, 86; and especially the final volume, 5 (1827) now found in microfilm, American Periodical Series #401; as well as *Religious Intelligencer* 10 (1825): 486; 12 (1828): 485. Ratner, "Conversion of the Jews," pp. 49-50, claims that the ASMCJ renewed its efforts in 1836. No evidence substantiates this claim; for contrary evidence, see Frey, *Judah and Israel*, p. 100; and *Jewish Chronicle* 10 (1854): 252.

10. A. E. Thompson, *A Century of Jewish Missions* (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1902), pp. 277-78.
11. Jonathan D. Sarna, "The American Jewish Response to Nineteenth-Century Christian Missions," *Journal of American History* 68 (1981): 35-51.
12. Jonathan D. Sarna, "The Freethinker, the Jews, and the Missionaries: George Houston and the Mystery of *Israel Vindicated*," *AJS Review* 5 (1980): 101-14.
13. Harvey W. Meirovich, "Ashkenazic Reactions to the Conversionists, 1800-1850," *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England* 26 (1979): 8-15; Todd M. Endelman, *The Jews of Georgian England, 1714-1830* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1979), pp. 71-76, 285-86; Bill Williams, *The Making of Manchester Jewry, 1740-1875* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1976), pp. 45-48, 148-50; Sarna, "American Jewish Response," p. 46, n. 41.
14. George Houston, *Israel Vindicated* (New York: Abraham Collins, 1820), pp. 100-101, and Isaac Leeser, *The Claims of the Jews to an Equality of Rights* (Philadelphia: C. Sherman & Co., 1841), p. 51, both make this point; cf. Sarna, "The Freethinker, the Jews, and the Missionaries," p. 104.
15. Quoted in the *Federal Republican and Baltimore Telegraph*, 12 September 1818, in the collection of the American Jewish Historical Society, Waltham, Mass.
16. Sarna, *Jacksonian Jew*, pp. 56-57, 132, 179 n. 68.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 131.
18. George L. Berlin, "Solomon Jackson's *The Jew*: An Early American Jewish Response to the Missionaries," *American Jewish History* 71 (1981): 10-28, and Abraham J. Karp, *Beginnings: Early American Judaica* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1975), pp. 37-40, contain the best short biographies of Jackson and cite earlier literature.
19. *The Jew* 1-2 (1823-25): 480.
20. *Address and Articles of the Association Tseire ba-Tson* (New York, 1837), p. 6.
21. *The Jew* 1-2 (1823-25): vi, vii.
22. *The Jew* 1-2 (1823-25): 53.
23. *The Jew* 1-2 (1823-25): 77, 158, and cf. 153, 306. See also Jackson's attack on Noah and others deemed too friendly with Christians, in his "Address to Joseph Dreyfous . . . 1829," reprinted in Solomon Solis-Cohen, "A Unique Jewish Document of a Century Ago," *Jewish Exponent*, 25 October 1929, p. 8.
24. Quotations are, in order, from Leeser, *Claims of the Jews*, pp. 11-12; I. Leeser, "The Jews and Their Religion," in I. Daniel Rupp, *An Original History of the Religious Denominations at Present Existing in the United States* (Philadelphia: J. Y. Humphreys, 1844), pp. 357, 362; and *Claims of the Jews*, p. 87. See also Sarna, "American Jewish Response," pp. 41-42; and the advertisement in *Occident* 18 (29 March 1860), supplement, p. 1, where Leeser praises Benjamin Dias Fernandes, *A Series of Letters on the*

- Evidences of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Bloch, 1853) for being "so gentlemanly in its tone."
25. Quoted in Sarna, "American Jewish Response," p. 47.
  26. Isaac M. Wise, "The World of My Books," trans. Albert H. Friedlander, in *Critical Studies in American Jewish History*, ed. Jacob R. Marcus (Cincinnati: American Jewish Archives, 1971), 1: 174.
  27. James G. Heller, *Isaac M. Wise: His Life, Work, and Thought* (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1965), pp. 537-38; cf. Benny Kraut, "Judaism Triumphant: Isaac Mayer Wise on Unitarianism and Liberal Christianity," *AJS Review* 7-8 (1982-83): 179-230.
  28. Jacob Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance* (New York: Schocken Books, 1961).
  29. Anson Phelps Stokes and Leo Pfeffer, *Church and State in the United States* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964); Paul G. Kauper, *Religion and the Constitution* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1964), esp. pp. 45-53; Philip Kurland, *Church and State: The Supreme Court and the First Amendment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975).
  30. "Of the House of Israel," in *New York Evening Post*, 15 March 1829, p. 2; Houston, *Israel Vindicated*, p. v; and see generally Morton Borden, *Jews, Turks and Infidels* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984).
  31. *Occident* 3 (1845): 42.
  32. Stokes and Pfeffer, *Church and State in the United States*, p. 106.
  33. [Prospectus for] *The Asmonean* (1849) in Lyons Collection, item 91b, American Jewish Historical Society, Waltham, Mass.; cf. "Honestus," *A Critical Review of the Claims Presented by Christianity for Inducing Apostacy in Israel* (New York, 1852), p. 21.
  34. Reprinted in *New York Tribune*, 30 March 1855.
  35. *Occident* 3 (1845): 42; see Sarna, "American Jewish Response," pp. 45-46.
  36. Minnie Louis, "Mission-Work Among the Unenlightened Jews," *Papers of the Jewish Women's Congress* (Philadelphia, 1894), pp. 185-86.
  37. Seymour Fromer, "In the Colonial Period," in *A History of Jewish Education in America*, ed. Judah Pilch (New York: National Curriculum Research Institute of the American Association for Jewish Education, 1969), p. 23; Hyman B. Grinstein, *The Rise of the Jewish Community of New York, 1654-1860* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1945), pp. 225-59; Jacob R. Marcus, *The Colonial American Jew, 1942-1776* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1970), 2: 1056-68.
  38. *Jewish Chronicle* 2 (1846): 275; cf. *The Jew* 1-2 (1823-25): 228-29; Leeser, *Claims of the Jews*, p. 15.
  39. Leeser, *Claims of the Jews*, p. 15.

40. Ibid., p. 86. Cf. Naomi W. Cohen, *Encounter With Emancipation: The German Jews in the United States, 1830-1914* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1984), pp. 71-187. In 1876, the Rebecca Gratz Sewing School was founded for the same reason: "Jewish children . . . attended mission schools of another religious denomination." See Solomon Solis-Cohen, "The Hebrew Sunday School Society," *Judaism and Science* (Philadelphia, 1940), p. 10.

41. *Address of the Jewish Publication Committee to the Israelites of America* (Philadelphia, 1845), reprinted as the introduction to *Caleb Asber* (1845), the first number of *The Jewish Miscellany* to be published.

42. *Israelite Indeed* 8 (1864): 10.

43. *Jewish Messenger*, 18 May 1888, p. 4; see Isaac S. Moses, "Missionary Efforts in Judaism," *CCAR Yearbook* 5 (1895): 87, "Copy the methods employed by Christianity." Alexander M. Dushkin, *Jewish Education in New York City* (New York: Bureau of Jewish Education, 1918), pp. 53-59; Hyman B. Grinstein, "In the Course of the Nineteenth Century," in Pilch, *History of Jewish Education in America*, p. 37; Myron Berman, *The Attitude of American Jewry Towards East European Jewish Immigration, 1881-1914* (New York: Arno Press, 1980), pp. 313-14; Ida Cohen Selavan, "The Founding of Columbian Council," *American Jewish Archives* 30 (1978): 32-33; and for a related example, David Philipson, *My Life as an American Jew* (Cincinnati: J. G. Kidd & Son, 1941), p. 133.

44. Leiser, *Claims of the Jews*, p. 84.

45. *Occident* 2 (1844): 63.

46. *Address of the Jewish Publication Committee*, p. 2.

47. *New York Tribune*, 2 July 1848; Sarna, "American Jewish Response," p. 49.

48. Moshe Davis, *The Emergence of Conservative Judaism* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1963), p. 69; Allan Tarshish, "The Rise of American Judaism" (D.H.L. thesis, Hebrew Union College, 1938), pp. 274-76, 324-25.

49. *Occident* 8 (1850): 260; cf. 6 (1849): 537. Maxwell Whiteman, "The Legacy of Isaac Leiser," in *Jewish Life in Philadelphia, 1830-1940*, ed. Murray Friedman (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1983), pp. 37-38.

50. Henry S. Morais, *The Jews of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Levytype Co., 1894), p. 117.

51. Morris U. Schappes, ed., *A Documentary History of the Jews in the United States 1654-1875* (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), p. 220; Alfred J. Kutzik, "The Social Basis of American Jewish Philanthropy," (Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 1967), pp. 309-10; see also Tina Levitan, *Islands of Compassion* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1964).

52. Standard surveys include Marcus, *Colonial American Jew*, 2: 1032-55; Grinstein, *Rise of the Jewish Community of New York*, pp. 131-62; David and Tamar de Sola Pool, *An Old Faith in the New World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), pp. 341-78; and Kutzik, "Social Basis of American Jewish Philanthropy," pp. 114-43.

53. Blau and Baron, *The Jews of the United States*, 3: 714-58 (quote is from p. 736); S. Joshua Kohn, "Mordecai Manuel Noah's Ararat Project and the Missionaries," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 55 (1965): 162-98; Sarna, *Jacksonian Jew*, pp. 61-62.

54. Houston, *Israel Vindicated*, p. 10.

55. Sarna, *Jacksonian Jew*, pp. 61-75; see pp. 221-22 for earlier literature.

56. Solis's plan "For Improving the Condition of Jewish Youth of Both Sexes" is reprinted in *The Jewish Experience in America*, ed. Abraham J. Karp, 5 vols. (Waltham, Mass.: American Jewish Historical Society, 1969), 2: 184-86. Edwin Wolf, "Unrecorded American Judaica Printed Before 1851," *Essays in American Jewish History* (Cincinnati, 1958), p. 205, no. 61, misdates this item. For contemporary discussions of the Solis plan, see *New York American*, 27 June 1826, p. 2; 23 August 1826, p. 2; 16 September 1826, p. 2; and *Connecticut Observer*, 5 June 1826, p. 3.

57. *Twentieth Report of the American Society for Meliorating the Condition of the Jews* (New York, 1843), p. 11; cf. Jackson, "Address to Joseph Dreyfous" (cited above, n. 23). The process whereby missionaries "discovered" poverty in New York is described in Carroll Smith Rosenberg, *Religion and the Rise of the American City* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971); for a broader perspective, see Edward K. Spann, *The New Metropolis: New York City, 1840-1857* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), pp. 67-91.

58. The report is reprinted in Schappes, *Documentary History*, pp. 217-22.

59. *Occident* 1 (1843): 47; *Caleb Asber* (n. 41 above), a fictional tract, underlined the relationship between poverty and conversionism.

60. *Jewish Chronicle* 1 (1845): 177, 270, 274-75; Sarna, *Jacksonian Jew*, pp. 128-29.

61. Grinstein, *Rise of the Jewish Community of New York*, p. 160.

62. Jewish prison chaplains also came about in this fashion. See Adolph M. Radin, *Report of Visiting Chaplain to the Jewish Ministers' Association of New York* (New York, 1893), p. 17: "Your honorable Board has done an important and laudable step in . . . having established this missionary chaplainship. We imitate the good example of our Christian brethren as far as compassion and sympathies for prisoners is concerned." For Emma Lazarus's effort to use the missionary specter to rouse Jews to action, see her letter to the *American Hebrew* (9 May 1883), reprinted in *The Letters of Emma Lazarus*, ed. Morris V. Schappes (New York, 1949), p. 58.

63. *Occident* 3(1845): 42.

64. For a different perspective on gentile influences, see Michael A. Meyer, "Christian Influence on Early German Reform Judaism," in *Studies in Jewish Bibliography, History and Literature in Honor of I. Edward Kiev*, ed. Charles Berlin (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1971), pp. 289-303.

65. On competition in American religion, see Sidney E. Mead, *The Lively Experiment* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), pp. 129-33; and Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1967), pp. 142, 171. For a marketing perspective on missionary activities, see Arnold S. Stiebel, "The Marketing of Jesus:

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An Analysis of Propaganda Techniques Utilized by Christian Missionaries in Their Attempt to Proselytize the American Jew" (ordination thesis, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, 1982).

66. As early as 1816, *Tobit's Letters to Levy* (New York, 1816), p. 26, warned that missions would backfire and unify Jews. Protestants, too, had to learn the value of religious competition; see Winthrop Hudson's discussion of "Lyman Beecher's Great Discovery," in his *The Great Tradition of the American Churches* (New York, 1963), pp. 63-79.

67. For an earlier perspective, see Asher Ginzberg, *Selected Essays by Abad Ha'am*, trans. Leon Simon (Philadelphia, 1912), pp. 107-24.

