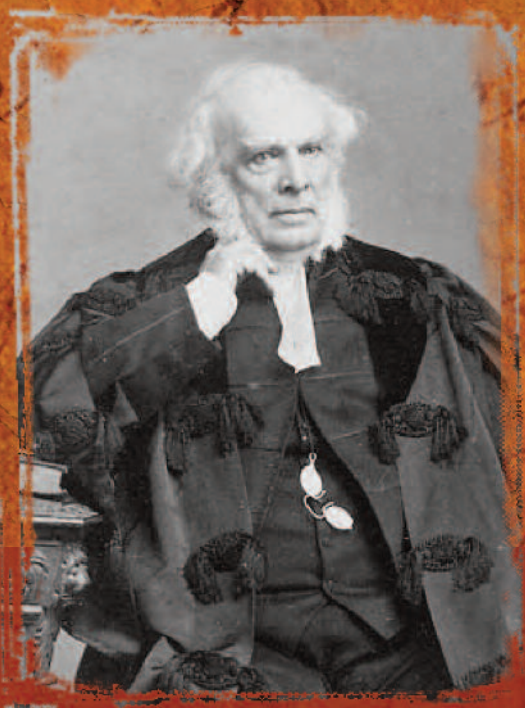


*Voices from the Past 3*



HORATIUS BONAR'S  
**THE JEW**



## INTRODUCTION

Horatius Bonar (1808-1889) was a Calvinistic evangelical Scottish churchman who came from a long and distinguished line of Free Church ministers.

*The Jew* first appeared in the July 1870 edition of *The Quarterly Journal of Prophecy*, which Bonar founded in 1849. *The Jew* is an unapologetic plea for Christians to love the Jewish people and to recognize that Israel still occupies a primary place in the purposes of God. Though written twenty seven years before the first Zionist conference was held in Basle in 1897 and before the Jewish people began to return in significant numbers to Palestine, Bonar believed the Jews would one day return to their ancient homeland. Most important of all, Bonar believed that Christians should love the Jewish people and evangelize them.

Bonar's dated language and style of writing have been abridged and modified, and biblical quotations have been changed from the Authorised (King James) version to the New King James version. Biblical references, subheadings and footnotes have been added to the text. The intention throughout has been to make Bonar's ideas and thoughts easily intelligible to today's readers. The original article can be downloaded from:

[www.bunyanministries.org/books/israel\\_and\\_millennialism/19\\_app\\_i\\_the\\_jew\\_bonar.pdf](http://www.bunyanministries.org/books/israel_and_millennialism/19_app_i_the_jew_bonar.pdf).

## THE JEW

The Church for nearly eighteen centuries has treated the Jewish people as the scum of the earth. Mohammed taught his followers to despise and persecute the sons of Abraham. One Roman emperor after another tried to exterminate them. Cicero<sup>1</sup> spoke sneeringly of "Jewish gold" and thought their religious rites were at variance with the splendour of the Roman Empire. Horace<sup>2</sup> looked down on the "credulity" of the "circumcised Jews". Petronius<sup>3</sup> wrote of their worship of a porcinum numen, a "pig divinity" and their bondage to "Sabbath fasts". Pliny<sup>4</sup> described the Jews as a nation famous for its contempt of the gods. Martial<sup>5</sup> despised the recutitorum Judæorum, the "circumcised Jews". Juvenal<sup>6</sup>, regarded

1. *Pro Flaccus* ch 28. Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-46 BC) was a statesman and philosopher, and considered to be one of Rome's greatest orators and prose stylists.

2. *The Satires* Book 1, ch 9. Quintus Horatius Flaccus, (65-8 BC), better known to the English speaking world as Horace, was the leading Roman lyric poet during the reign of Augustus.

3. *Satyricon* 37. The satirist Gaius Petronius (27-66 AD) was the Emperor Nero's advisor in matters of luxury and extravagance.

4. Gaius Plinius Secundus (23-79 AD), better known as Pliny the Elder, was a Roman author and naturalist.

5. *Epigrammata* Book 7, ch 30. Marcus Valerius Martialis (circa 40-circa 103 AD) was a Roman poet known chiefly for his 12 books of Epigrams.

6. Decimus Iunius Iuvenalis (circa 55-circa 140 AD), better known as Juvenal, was a Roman poet and satirist.

the Jewish nation as “traffickers in dreams, worshippers of the clouds and despisers of the Roman laws. Tacitus<sup>7</sup> wrote of their “stubborn superstition” and “unbridled lust”.

Even Shakespeare caricatured the nation and called the Jew a “villain with a smiling cheek”<sup>8</sup> and made one of the ingredients of his hellish cauldron “liver of blaspheming Jew”<sup>9</sup>. The Jewish people have been scorned in popular ballads and regarded as the devourers of Christian flesh.

The Jews to this day are wanderers, sufferers and outcasts. They inhabit the narrow Judenstrasse of Frankfurt, the Old Jewry of London, the poor Zion quarter of Jerusalem and are shut up in the Ghetto of Rome.

Yet we should speak respectfully of the Jewish people if not for what they are, at least for what they were and what they shall be when “The Redeemer will come to Zion, and to those who turn from transgression in Jacob” (Is 59:20).

## RESPECT

In the Jewish people we see the development of God’s great purpose regarding the “seed of the woman” (Gen 3:15). It was a Jew who sat on one of the most exalted thrones of the earth; it is a Jew who now sits on the throne of heaven (Mk 16:19; Heb 1:3). It was a Jew who once worked great miracles on our earth, and spoke gracious words. It was a Jew who said, “Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Mt 11:28), and a Jew who said, “Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me” (Rev 22:12). It was Jewish blood that was shed at Calvary; it was a Jew who “Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree” (1 Pet 2:24). It was a Jew who died and was buried and rose again on the third day. It is a Jew who lives in heaven to intercede for us, a Jew who will come in glory and majesty as earthly judge and monarch. It is a Jew who is our Prophet, our Priest and our King.

Christians, then, should speak respectfully of the Jewish people, whatever their present degradation. Just as we tread respectfully on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem where there once stood the holy temple in which Jehovah was worshipped (2 Chr 3:1), we should also tread respectfully on the ground where those people live to whom belong “the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came” (Rom 9:4f). The Temple Mount is not what

7. *The Histories*, Book 5. Publius (Gaius) Cornelius Tacitus (circa 56-circa 117) was a Roman senator and historian.

8. *The Merchant of Venice*. Act 1; Scene 3.

9. *Macbeth*. Act 4; Scene 1.

it once was; the beautiful temple has gone and not one stone is left upon another (Mt 24:2; Mk 13:2; Lk 21:6). The Islamic Mosque of Omar now covers the spot where the altar of burnt-offering once stood; the feet of Muslims now tread the former sacred courts; from the neighbouring minaret the Muezzin calls out the name of Allah instead of Jehovah and the Qur'an is chanted instead of the Psalms of David.

Nevertheless, the ground of the Temple Mount still feels sacred. The massive stones built into the wall are witnesses of better days and the whole scene gathers round it associations which, in spite of the rubbish, desolation, ruin and pollution, fill you irresistibly with awe. The Muslims claim that the stones with which the mosque is built retain the odour of the musk in which they were originally steeped. But there is a holier fragrance there which transports you back to even earlier times, recalling not only David and Solomon but also the One who said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (Jn 2:19). The Muslim will show you the supposed imprint of the prophet's foot upon the sacred rock but to the Christian the footprints of holier feet are everywhere. They are those of the One who, somewhere on that rock, stood and cried on the last and great day of the feast of Tabernacles: "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink" (Jn 7:37). So it is with the Jewish nation. Indelible memories are connected with the Jews which keep anyone who believes the Bible from despising them. Those memories carry with them a nobility and dignity which no other nation has ever possessed or can ever attain to. To God, in whose purposes the Jewish people occupy such a great place, they are still "beloved for the sake of the fathers" (Rom 11:28). Of them, "according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God" (Rom 9:5).

## COMPASSION

We should speak of the Jewish people not only with respect but also with compassion. The Jewish people are like Cain, fugitives and vagabonds on the earth. Their history of scattering, persecution and contempt during the last eighteen centuries is unparalleled. Nevertheless, the history of the Jews has also been one of grandeur surpassing any of the world's mightiest nations. But the thing that generates in us the most profound pity for the Jewish nation is something we have great difficulty understanding; their stubborn unbelief. We do not mean that the Jews have no faith in God or in the divine origin of the Hebrew Scriptures or in miracles. We are thinking specifically of their rejection of the one person for whom these other things should have specially prepared them: Jesus of Nazareth. It seems almost that the Jewish people have lost the power to believe in anything that has happened during the last eighteen hundred years.

What greater calamity could befall any nation? It is true that Jewish people are responsible, like everyone else, for their lack of faith. They have not only rejected the light but have also put out their eyes; they have not only cut down the olive tree but also have sowed the soil with salt:

Like the base Judean, threw a pearl away  
Richer than all his tribe.<sup>10</sup>

They, more than any other people, are surrounded by truth but do not have the heart to receive it. It is as though they were seated at a royal banquet but lacked the appetite for a single delicacy. Their heart of faith has gone and in its place is a heart of unbelief.

## JUDAISM

The Jewish people are a self contradiction. They believe far more than everyone else, yet they believe far less than everyone else. They have a great deal of history about which no-one but a Jew knows anything, but they are wretchedly ignorant about things which all others know. So the Jews have a larger amount of faith, as well as a larger stock of unbelief, than any other nation. Judaism was in fact established eighteen hundred years ago and appears incapable of addition or growth.<sup>11</sup> Orthodox Judaism rejects every theory of development; it refuses either to go back or to advance. It parts with nothing; it takes on nothing. It has isolated itself not from one age, but from every age; not from one philosophy or one creed, but from every philosophy and creed. It looks as though it is prepared to receive anything that is true, for it professes to listen to the voice of God and has accepted the larger half of a divine revelation, the Old Testament; yet it stands motionless, inert, frozen since the fatal ninth of Ab in 70 AD, when the temple fell and the nation was scattered, or since the school of Tiberias<sup>12</sup> proclaimed Judaism a fixture.

Judaism is reactionary, rejecting everything that was not believed in the days of Gamaliel<sup>13</sup>, or at least in the age of Maimonides<sup>14</sup>, or Nittai the Arbelite.<sup>15</sup> If

10. William Shakespeare. *Orbello*. Act 5; Scene 2.

11. Since Bonar wrote this, other branches have been added to Judaism. Nevertheless, Reformed and Progressive Jews, like the Orthodox, reject the New Testament, the doctrine of the Trinity, the need for blood atonement and Jesus as the Messiah.

12. After the fall of Jerusalem, the Sanhedrin retreated to Tiberias where they established the famous rabbinic academy. In the third century AD, Rabbi Judah the Prince supervised the compiling of the Mishnah, the civil and ritual laws and customs that were considered to be binding on all Jews. The Jerusalem Talmud was also compiled in the School of Tiberias.

13. The apostle Paul studied under Gamaliel (Acts 5:34; 22:3) and Jewish tradition demonstrates the high regard in which he is still held. He is called "Rabban" (our Master), a title higher than "Rabbi" (Master).

14. Moses ben Maimonides (1135-1204), a medieval philosopher and theologian, remains one of the most influential Jewish thinkers of all time. In addition to biblical commentaries and works of philosophy, he compiled the 'Thirteen Principles of Faith', which are still included in Jewish prayer books.

15. An early hard-line Pharisee who lived in the second century before Christ. Little is known of Nittai but some sayings attributed to him survive, such as: "Withdraw thyself from an evil neighbour; join not thyself unto the wicked; and renounce not the hope of retribution."

Judaism's unwillingness to change was a matter of wisdom or strength or the steadfastness of the martyr, we might defer to it. However Judaism's unteachable spirit is what the Bible calls "stiff-neckedness".

But the consciences of Jewish people may sometimes be reached even when their unbelief is immovable. A Karaite<sup>16</sup> rabbi in Jerusalem listened when I appealed to his conscience by asking: "How do you approach God?"

"By prayer," he told me.

"But your fathers were not allowed to approach God without the shedding of sacrificial blood. Do you expect God to listen to you without blood?"

"Yes, because God is merciful."

"He was just as merciful in the days of your ancestors but He would not accept them without sacrifice; and if He would not accept even Moses or David without blood atonement, do you think He will receive you?"

The rabbi was silent and thanked me. He saw what I was getting at and did not attempt any further reply. The questions had touched his conscience, even though they did not appear to have shaken his unbelief.

Through the Law and the Prophets, God sought to educate the conscience of His people, and the Levitical ceremonies were provided for the purging of those divinely educated consciences. The blood of the sacrifices specially appealed to the conscience of the sinner as the one thing which could reach and pacify it and it was to the conscience of the Jewish nation that Peter appealed in his first sermon in Jerusalem. Under that sermon on the day of Pentecost, three thousand were pricked to the heart. It will be to that same Jewish conscience that the divine appeal will be made in the latter day, when "they shall look upon Him whom they have pierced, and mourn" (Zech 12:10). In that day the Jewish people will turn not in tens or hundreds, but in tens of thousands, returning to the faith of Abraham, who saw the day of Christ far off and was glad (Jn 8:56).

Even today we must appeal to the conscience of Israel when Jewish people refuse to listen to the message of Messiah. We must ask the children of Abraham if they know the God of Abraham. Have their souls found rest in Him just as Abraham found rest? Do they know the blessedness of which David sung when he said, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered"? (Ps 32:1). Why has Israel been a scattered nation, for eighteen centuries without a city, a temple or a home?

16. The Karaites are a small branch of Judaism who reject all Jewish traditions and claim to follow only the *Tanakh*, the Old Testament.

## “A FUTURE AND A HOPE”

I believe in Israel's restoration to their land and their conversion to their Messiah. I accept as a future certainty that the Jewish people will be gathered to their ancient homeland and that ultimately “all Israel shall be saved” (Rom 11:26). As I believe in Israel's present disgrace, so I believe in the nation's coming glory and pre-eminence. I believe that God's purpose regarding our world can only be understood when we understand God's purpose for Israel. I believe that all human calculations as to the earth's future – political or scientific, philosophical or religious – must fail if they do not take into account God's great purpose regarding the standing of Israel at the Last Day. I believe it is impossible to enter into God's mind regarding the destiny of mankind, without taking as our key or our guide His mind regarding that ancient nation whose history, so far from being ended, or nearly ended, is only about to begin.

Only the One to whom the future belongs can reveal the future. Only He can announce the principles on which that future will unfold. And if He has set Israel as the great nation of the future, who are we to set aside God's arrangements?

Human guesses of the future are the most uncertain of all uncertainties. Human hopes built on these guesses are sure to turn out to be the most disappointing, if not the most disastrous, of all failures. I believe that the sons of Abraham are destined to reinherit Palestine and that the forfeited fertility will yet return to that land: “The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose” (Is 35:1).<sup>17</sup>

I believe that, meanwhile, Israel shall not only be wanderers but also that everywhere only a remnant, a small remnant, shall be saved and that it is for the gathering in of this remnant that our missionaries go forth. I believe that these are “the times of the Gentiles” and that Jerusalem and Israel “will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled” (Lk 21:24). I believe that with the filling up of these times of Gentile pre-eminence and the completion of what the apostle calls “the fullness of the Gentiles” (Rom 11:25) will be the signal for the judgments which are to usher in the crisis of earth's history, the deliverance of Israel and the long-expected kingdom. How Israel, so long in abeyance, shall resume pre-eminence, I do not know; but that the Jewish people shall do so seems written plainly enough in the prophetic Word. It is written, “what will their

17. A year before Bonar expressed this hope, Mark Twain had recorded his impressions of Palestine in *The Innocents Abroad*: “Of all the lands there are for dismal scenery, I think Palestine must be the prince. The hills are barren, they are dull of color, they are unpicturesque in shape. The valleys are unsightly deserts fringed with a feeble vegetation that has an expression about it of being sorrowful and despondent. The Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee sleep in the midst of a vast stretch of hill and plain wherein the eye rests upon no pleasant tint, no striking object, no soft picture dreaming in a purple haze or mottled with the shadows of the clouds. Every outline is harsh, every feature is distinct, there is no perspective – distance works no enchantment here. It is a hopeless, dreary, heart-broken land.”

acceptance be but life from the dead?” (Rom 11:15) and “Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit” (Is 27:6).

This is the day of the election; the age of the glory will follow, “For yet a little while, and He who is coming will come, and will not tarry” (Heb 10:37).

## MOTIVES FOR MISSION

Our missionary work concerns this “remnant according to the election of grace” (Rom 11:5). We are to be ingatherers of the elect remnant of Israel. We do not know how many make up this remnant, whether tens, or hundreds, or thousands. But numbers do not determine our duty, nor is the certainty of great success a proper or Scriptural stimulus to work for the Lord. Our desire should be that the Word of the Lord will be magnified. The source of our action and courage should be Jehovah’s purpose; our motivation should be the constraining love of Christ; our irrepressible urgency should be that of the apostle, when he said, “I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise” (Rom 1:14) and “necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!” (1 Cor 9:16). Our sustaining hope is that of the same apostle: “that I might by all means save some.” (1 Cor 9:22).

Some argue that the conversion of all Israel and the world is the only legitimate and indispensable motive for missionary work. In response, we should bear in mind the following:

*First*, the Bible nowhere says that such a hope should be our motive. *Second*, the apostles are never represented as carrying out their mission on the basis of such a motive. *Third*, such a motive is linked to Arminian theology.<sup>18</sup> The Arminian doctrine that God wishes to save everyone in general but has no plan to save anyone in particular has often generated fervent enthusiasm. Nevertheless, does that motivate us to mission as much as the Calvinistic<sup>19</sup> teaching that God has a definite purpose to save his elect people? According to that understanding, missionaries are sent to carry out a task which they can be certain will succeed. When we recognise that God has a purpose regarding both Jews and Gentiles – which must be carried out irrespective of our schemes and wishes – we will see that our true role is that of servants carrying out their master’s will and doing the precise work to which he has called them, and not some benevolent scheme of their own. Our true honour and dignity consist in serving a divine purpose,

18. Arminian theology is based on the ideas of the Dutch theologian Jacob Harmenszoon or Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609). Amongst other things, Arminianism teaches that God’s election is based on faith in Christ, that Christ died for everyone, that people can resist God’s grace and that it is possible for Christians to lose their salvation.

19. Calvinism takes its name from the Genevan Reformer John Calvin (1509-1564). In contrast to Arminianism, Calvinism states that before time God unconditionally elected certain people to salvation, that Christ died for the elect, that all His elect will be saved and that those He saves will never fall away.

whether that purpose seems the best in our own eyes or not. Our missionary zeal will be sustained by the consciousness that we are acting out the purposes of God. If we had the power to persuade human beings to believe the gospel and turn back to God, and if their souls were within our reach as completely as their bodies, then the doctrine of the sovereignty of God would be irrelevant to us. But the reconciliation of humanity to God is something totally beyond our power. The power of the human will to resist the gospel is almost inconceivable and the overcoming of it requires the same omnipotence that created the heaven and the earth. Therefore, when we take the gospel to both Jews and Gentiles, God's ultimate purpose must be uppermost in our mind. Only the knowledge that God has an unailing plan to save His people will fill us with true missionary devotion and enable us to endure disappointment or frustration. "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight" (Lk 10:21) was the truth on which the Son of God rested in the day when the Jewish people first rejected His word and it is on the same truth – a truth that places the divine purpose into its rightful place – that each of us, whether minister or missionary, must rest in a day of apparent failure.

This system of theology, which connects all work for God with His definite purpose, has the power to make us feel invincible and to assure us of victory in the work of mission. Understanding the divine purpose and having adopted it as the basis of our operations, we are in unity with God while working for Him. This oneness of mind with God will strengthen and sustain us. Whoever is on God's side must always win. With this in mind we shall be better equipped to endure hardness and for expending ourselves till all that is in us has been expended. If we are in harmony with the One who so loved the world that He gave His Son, knowing that God has a definite plan to save His people will not lessen our love for the lost. The Lord Jesus, recognizing the divine purpose regarding Jerusalem, still wept over the impenitent city. In mission to the Jews, particularly, the understanding of a divine purpose for their present and their future, will enable us to know what God expects of us and what He does not expect of us. That will energise us. It will be to us like a sword in our fight against Jewish unbelief.

In Jerusalem I was able to examine one of the really genuine relics of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre: Godfrey's crusading sword. An army officer who was with us took the sword, examined it and made every kind of move and stroke with it. He declared it to be a first-rate sword because it was so well adjusted and balanced that the weight of the stroke always fell towards the point. So it is with the sword of the Spirit. There we find a sword tempered and adjusted to deliver always a true stroke in the most effective of all ways. Let us wield it as those who know this and who have confidence in the edge and the force of that divine weapon, which is "living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword" (Heb 4:12). With this weapon we shall win battles for our King and Captain.

Have faith in God, not in yourself or in your own intellect. Be confident in the mighty Word of God; Do not be ashamed of the gospel of Christ, “for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek” (Rom 1:16). In this way we may work as those who feel that life and death are in every word we utter.

## THOSE WHO HAVE A REDEEMER

I believe that the days are evil; and that “evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived” (2 Tim 3:13). I believe that Satan is working not only as the prince of darkness but also as an angel of light, clothing himself with all the attractions of natural goodness, natural wisdom and natural liberty to deceive, if it was possible, the very elect. I believe that he is undermining our foundations by discrediting the Bible and is lifting his axe against the Cross itself. His arguments, eloquently enforced, are all directed against the Anointed of the Father, the Messiah of God, and I am convinced that nothing but the power of the indwelling Spirit will enable us to withstand his wiles and the blows he is directing against the Church. If he cannot persuade us to leave God’s work alone he will put into our hands false weapons under the pretext of giving us one more suitable to the age. Therefore, it is necessary for us to ascertain not only what work is to be done, but also how we are to do it. If we do not, we may attempt to do God’s work in man’s way, forgetting the terrible words, “Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart departs from the LORD” (Jer 17:5).

There is much work to be done, both among the Gentiles and the Jews. Let us do that work as the apostles did it. We have the same weapons and the same divine power they had. We have the same promises, the same gospel and the same Almighty Spirit. How can Gentile and Jewish unbelief stand when attacked by these mighty weapons? We have a sword with which to strike of which the world knows nothing. We also have a power to wield that sword of which the world knows nothing. Let us do justice to that sword and that power, and then we cannot fail.

Life lies before us. Let us not waste it. Let your life be useful. Our first concern must, of course, be for ourselves. We must know the Messiah of whom we speak; we must have tasted His love and have clasped His Cross. We must not preach an unknown God. It is with the consciousness that we have been reconciled to God that we preach the everlasting gospel, in the Spirit of Him who said, “God has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ...and has committed to us the word of reconciliation” (2 Cor 5:18f).

In some places, Jewish people call the Christian, “The man who says he has a Redeemer.” Let this be a true name for us and in the strength of that name let us plead with the Jewish people till they also shall say, “I know that my Redeemer lives” (Job 19:25).

Horatius Bonar (1808-1889) was a Scottish churchman who came from a long line of Free Church ministers. He was a Calvinistic evangelical and was elected Moderator of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland in 1833.

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## ABOUT CHRISTIAN WITNESS TO ISRAEL

Christian Witness to Israel is an international, interdenominational mission to the Jewish people. It was established in 1842 and has remained committed to reaching Jewish people throughout the world with the message of Messiah. CWI has workers amongst Jewish communities in Israel, Australia, Bulgaria, France, Hungary, New Zealand and the UK. Our basis of faith is the great Protestant confessions of the Reformation.

To find out more about the work of Christian Witness to Israel please visit us at [www.cwi.org.uk](http://www.cwi.org.uk), phone us on +44(0)1959 565955, email us at [comms@cwi.org.uk](mailto:comms@cwi.org.uk) or write to us at: Christian Witness to Israel, 166 Main Road, Sundridge, Sevenoaks, Kent TN14 6EL

