

## SAMUEL M. ISAACS.

### A Tribute of Regard.

MANY of the readers of the JEWISH MESSENGER will have learned, ere the appearance of this issue, of the death of its Senior Editor, REV. SAMUEL M. ISAACS. This sad event occurred on Sunday evening last, the 19th inst. It is, however, not, as a journalist, nor in his connection with this paper, that the writer of these lines would speak of one whose name is so widely known and respected, as to have become familiar as a household word. He had other and higher claims on our regard, which will long survive the grave, and cause his loss to be mourned as a national sorrow.

For nearly forty years he was engaged in the ministry; and until within a month of his death, he fulfilled the duties of the sacred office. Though he had not latterly occupied the pulpit, yet he never ceased to devote himself faithfully and diligently to the spiritual wants of his flock. Idleness was repugnant to his temperament. His restless disposition was never satisfied, unless he was actively employed in some good work. Sick or well, his ear was given to the plaint of the unfortunate, his hand widely open to dispense a never-failing succor. Whilst he was the kind counsellor of the erring, he was also the unflinching denouncer of wrong-doing. He lifted up the bowed-down, he compassionated the weak, he sympathized with the afflicted, he encouraged the desponding. Full of tenderness and pity, no mourner ever listened to his voice but felt cheered and comforted, as his hopes were turned to the Fount of eternal love; no sinner but would be moved by the thrilling utterances which came from the heart and went to the heart. His life became a benediction to his kind, as he rose to a conception of the sublime position of being "a messenger of the Lord of Hosts."

Mr. Isaacs owed most of his success as a preacher of the Word to the implicit reliance people placed on his sturdy integrity. Even those who differed from him in his rigid conception of religious duties, accorded him thorough honesty of motive and principle. A vigorous defender of Orthodoxy, he was consistent in every act of his life, which reached to nearly seventy-five years. His piety was beyond all question. Hypocrisy and insincerity were altogether foreign to his nature. He was honestly personified, and so gained the respect he enjoyed, the golden opinions he won from all kinds of men.

But whilst devoted to the pastoral care of his Congregation (*Shaaray Tefila*), he did not fall into the error of limiting his exertions to this single field of duty. He had larger views. He labored for Judaism. Congregational obligations gave place to the general weal of his people. He was national in his very instincts. Closely identified with our religious interests in all public matters, he was long regarded as a leader, in whose zeal, firmness, and discretion, unbounded confidence could be reposed. Sensitive to every assault on the ancient citadel of our Faith, he was ever the valiant and chivalric champion of Judaism, ready to do battle in the sacred cause, at any and every personal sacrifice. No enterprise of this kind ever found him lukewarm or indifferent. When the Mortara outrage startled the conscience of the civilized world, he was foremost in denouncing the indefaceable wrong, and was conspicuous in the public proceedings which branded with infamy the crime. But not satisfied that the ardor evinced should die with the immediate occasion, his practical mind sought to utilize the national feeling which had been elicited. He foresaw with remarkable prescience, that events would be constantly arising calling for prompt and energetic protest, and that the necessity was

urgent for the establishment of a permanent organization to represent and defend the interests in which American Judaism was largely concerned. He impressed others with these views; till, at length, his restless energy succeeded in bringing together one Sunday afternoon, at the Cooper Institute, representatives from various congregations of this and other cities; and thus sprang into being the "Board of Delegates of American Israelites."

The limits of this article will permit but a passing allusion to the charitable societies for which he toiled, and which to-day owe much of their prosperity, possibly of their existence, to his earnest and unflagging endeavors. We must not, however, forget to mention how lovingly his heart turned towards the Holy Land, how deep and practical was his sympathy for the miseries of those who inhabit her ancient cities, and bedew her dust with their tears.

This tribute of regard would be incomplete did we omit one feature in our friend's life, and yet we hesitate from a sense of its delicacy. It

is as the Husband and the Father, that his spotless life and bright example became yet more nobly instructive. The home life was made attractive by its geniality and harmony, and was adorned with a purity, simplicity, and an unaffected piety which illumined it with the beauty of holiness, and crowned it with glory and honor. Patriarchal in his character, no wonder that love and veneration were the willing offerings which made a Sanctuary of his home. But these relations are too sacred to be paraded before the public; and we draw the curtain over the scene. The sorrow of a bereaved wife and children claims our sympathy, which we offer most sincerely, as we mourn with them the loss they have sustained. May the Father of Mercies comfort and strengthen them! Samuel M. Isaacs has gone, but he has left a deathless inheritance in the good name which will not soon be forgotten. It will live in the hearts of the many that honored the face of the old man, whose example will long be cherished, whose memory will be valued and preserved as a priceless blessing.

זכר צדיק לברכה.

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