

AN INTRODUCTORY BIO-BIBLIOGRAPHY TO JECHIEL ZEBI HERSCHENSOHN-LICHTENSTEIN (1831-1912)

By Jorge Quiñónez

INTRODUCTION

There are many historically interesting Jewish believers in Yeshua from the late 19TH century.¹ For the purposes of this study, they may be categorized broadly in several different ways. However, some Jewish believers fit into more than one category. First, there are those who actively pursued the idea of an independent congregational movement, an “independent Hebrew-Christian Church”² as it was sometimes called at that time. Examples in this group include Joseph Rabinowitz,³ Mark John Levy,⁴ Philip Cohen,⁵ Paul Phillip Levertoff,⁶ and Hayyim Yedidyah Pollak.⁷ Next, there are those heavily publicized individuals usually supported by particular missionary groups for their uniqueness, contribution, or importance. Examples in this group include Joseph Rabinowitz and Rabbi Isaac (Ignatz) Lichtenstein.⁸

- 1 See Chapter 6 in Jacob Jocz's *The Jewish People and Jesus Christ*. London: S. P. C. K. (1949).
- 2 Aaron Bernstein. “A Formation of a Hebrew-Christian Church: Is It Desirable?” in *Jewish Missionary Intelligence* (May 1902), 67-69.
- 3 Kai Kjær-Hansen. *Joseph Rabinowitz and the Messianic Movement*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans/Handsels (1995).
- 4 Robert I. Winer. *The Calling: The History of the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America*. PA: MJAA (1990), 5, 20-23, 101-105.
- 5 Philip Cohen. *The Hebrew Christian and His National Continuity*. London: Marshall Bros. (1907-1910?).
- 6 Jorge Quiñónez. “Paul Phillip Levertoff: Pioneering Hebrew-Christian Scholar and Leader.” Unpublished (2002).
- 7 Also known as Christian Theophilus Lucky (1864-1916); Cf. Henry Einspruch. “A Lamed-Vovnik” in Henry and Marie Einspruch (eds.) *Would I? Would You?* Baltimore: Lederer Foundation (1970), 74-78; Cf. Theodor Zoeckler. “Christian Theophilus Lucky” in *Saat auf Hoffnung*, 60, Leipzig (1917), 2-8.
- 8 He is not related to Jechiel Zebi Lichtenstein (of Romania), the subject of this paper; Rabbi Isaac (Ignatz) Lichtenstein (1824-1909) was a Hungarian Orthodox rabbi and a Jewish believer. Isaac Lichtenstein is erroneously called “Iechiel Lichtenstein” in Jacob Gartenhaus's *Famous Hebrew Christians* (Hixon, TN: I. B. J. M., 1998), 123-126; Also, Steven J. Zipperstein confuses Jechiel Zebi Lichtenstein, as well, with *Isaac Lichtenstein* in his article “Heresy, Apostacy and the Transformation of Joseph Rabinovich” from Todd Endelman's anthology, *Jewish Apostacy in the Modern World* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1987). See Footnote 54.

The last group, and perhaps the most interesting, are the writers and scholars who may be remembered only for a book(s) they translated or wrote. People in this group include Joachim Heinrich Biesenthal (Raphael Hirsch),⁹ Isaac Salkinson,¹⁰ Paul Phillip Levertoff, Joseph Immanuel Landsman¹¹ and the subject of this paper, Jechiel Zebi Lichtenstein-Herschensohn (or Yehiel Tsvi Lichtenstein-Herschensohn, hereafter Lichtenstein). Among all of the Jewish believers previously mentioned, Lichtenstein remains among the least known in this group to the English-speaking world, because so little is written about him at least in English. Few people know that he was the most prolific Messianic Jewish writer in the Hebrew language at the end of the 19th century. He wrote the first complete commentary in Hebrew of the entire New Testament and was a translator of the Hebrew Scriptures into Yiddish. What follows is a short assessment and overview of Lichtenstein's life and literary work.

EARLY LIFE

Lichtenstein¹² was born in 1831 in Jassy, Romania. He had a Chassidic upbringing in Bessarabia with the traditional education in the cheder and yeshiva. In his later years, he became very knowledgeable in Jewish mysticism, learning which he demonstrated in his later writings. By the time he was 19 years old (1850), he acquired a New Testament and "...began to study it, together with a few friends, and in 1855 he and his friends

- 9 [Joachim Biesenthal]. *halggeret el Romim*. London (1899) [Originally published in 1853; Reprinted in 1999 by Keren Ahvah Meshihit (K. A. M.), Israel]; Raphael Hirsch Biesenthal. *halggeret el halv'rim*. Loew: Berlin (1857) [Reprinted in 2001 by K. A. M.]; Immanuel Fromman & Raphael Biesenthal. *haBesorah al pi Lukas*. Loew: Berlin (1869) [Reprinted in 2001 by K. A. M.]; Biesenthal's 'Acts Commentary' in Hebrew [*Sefer Po'ole haShelehim*. Berlin (1867)], the last of his Hebrew commentaries still not republished, will be printed in the near future by K. A. M.
- 10 Hanna Scolnicov. "The Hebrew Who Turned Christian: The First Translator of Shakespeare into the Holy Tongue" in *Shakespeare Survey*, Vol. 54: *Shakespeare and Religions*, Peter Holland (ed.), November (2001), 182-190.
- 11 Joseph Immanuel Landsman. *Toledot Yeshua haMashiah /Life of Christ*. London [1907].
- 12 His original last name is "Herschensohn." In the literature, he is also referred to as "Herschensohn-Lichtenstein." However, most of the time he simply went by "Jechiel Zebi Lichtenstein." The name is very frequently confused with Rabbi Isaac (Ignatz) Lichtenstein by other scholars and most commonly by library catalogs. (*Researchers, beware!*) Herschensohn sometimes appears in English language library catalogs as "Hirshenzon," the English transliteration of the German "Herschensohn." See Footnote 54.

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baptized themselves in a river near Jassy, wishing in this way to lay the foundation of a Hebrew Christian Church.”¹³

The question of whether Lichtenstein was truly an ordained rabbi is not entirely clear. Landsman, who would later be Lichtenstein’s student in the late 1890s, said:

He was a great Talmudic scholar, and also deeply versed in the Kabbala, the mystic literature of the Jews. He once told me himself that for a time he had been a wonder-rabbi with the Chassidim, but becoming acquainted with modern culture he had given it up and become a merchant.¹⁴

The title pages of some of his publications include the title of “Rav” before his name which was probably not just honorific. The fact that Landsman calls him a “wonder-rabbi”¹⁵ says much. In any case, Lichtenstein’s days as a wandering “miracle-working” rabbi were soon over; for, the *Haskalah*¹⁶ eventually caught up with him and subsequently he became a merchant.

Sometime near or after 1855, he met Joseph Rabinowitz and gave him a New Testament; however, according to Landsman “at the time [Rabinowitz] did not consider it seriously. Mr. Lichtenstein married, subsequently, a sister of Joseph [Rabinowitz], but she died a short time afterwards.”¹⁷ Over the next decade, Lichtenstein began his literary career.

HEBREW WRITER AND MISSIONARY

His earliest known work was *Limudei haNeviim*¹⁸ (“The Teachings of the Prophets”), which he published in 1868 or 1869.

13 Landsman. “The Continuous Testimony at Our London Centre,” 110; cf. Otto von Harling. “Jeziel Lichtenstein” [Obituary], *Saat auf Hoffnung*, 49 (1912), 52.

14 J. I. [Joseph Immanuel] Landsman. “The Continuous Testimony at Our London Centre,” *The Scattered Nation*, 70 (April 1912), 110.

15 A “wonder-rabbi” is a less-used term for a rural Chassidic rabbi with reputed powers to heal or perform miracles, more commonly known as a “tzaddik.” A “Tzaddik” with sufficient followers (i.e., Hassidim) is also known as a “Rebbe,” the charismatic leader of a particular Hassidic sect.

16 The *Haskalah* translated is “Enlightenment.” Its participants are called *maskilim* (singular: *maskil*). The *Haskalah* was a Jewish movement originating in 18th century Germany aimed at modernizing Jewish life and thought or the integration of Jews into the larger society. Notable features within the movement were cooperation with liberal-minded Christian thinkers and much of their literature was disseminated in Hebrew; Cf. Shmuel Feiner & David Sorkin. *New Perspectives on the Haskalah*. Oregon: Littman (2001).

17 Landsman. “The Continuous Testimony at Our London Centre,” 110; cf. Kjær-Hansen. *Joseph Rabinowitz...*, 36-37.

18 Y. Tz. Lichtenstein. *Limudei haNeviim*. Berlin (1868 or 1869).

According to Franz Delitzsch, Lichtenstein worked on *Limudei haNeviim* for 12 years.¹⁹ Later, Harling said that Delitzsch had called the work “the most scholarly and curious work, which a Jewish-Christian had written.”²⁰ *Limudei haNeviim* tried to combine the mystical teachings of the *Kabbalah* and the New Testament as it presents itself as a type of Bible commentary. Landsman explains it: “Lichtenstein undertook to harmonize the New Testament with the doctrines of the Cabbala, and the fruit of his studies was... [*Limudei haNeviim*].”²¹

Around the time of the publication of *Limudei haNeviim*, Lichtenstein came to the German city of Leipzig to meet Joachim Biesenthal, the leading Hebrew-Christian scholar and Hebrew writer of the middle 19th century, who was entering his twilight years and was 27 years older than Lichtenstein. He wanted to thank Biesenthal for the benefit he had received from reading Biesenthal’s Hebrew commentaries on various books of the New Testament (see footnote 9), which had been published in recent years.²² It was around this time that his acquaintance with Professor Delitzsch commenced.

By 1872, Lichtenstein came to London and he was again baptized, this time by Henry Aaron Stern of the “London Society for promoting Christianity amongst the Jews.” Around this time, Landsman says that Lichtenstein “was engaged for a short time in missionary work, both in Russia and [Rumania].”²³ That same year, *Derekh haKodesh*²⁴ (“The Way of Holiness”), a shorter version of *Limudei haNeviim*, was published in Berlin. By 1874, he was working with Pastor Weber of the Berlin Society in Neuendettelsau, Germany. He continued to work with the Berlin Society until 1879,²⁵ when he relocated to Russia, where his

19 Franz Delitzsch. “Feigenbaum Knospen,” *Saat auf Hoffnung*, 6 (1868), 189.

20 Harling, “Jechiel Lichtenstein,” 53.

21 Landsman. “The Continuous Testimony at Our London Centre,” 110.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

24 Jechiel Zebi Lichtenstein. *Derekh haKodesh*. Berlin (1872).

25 Johannes Friedrich Alexander de le Roi. *Die evangelische Christenheit und die Juden*, Vol. 2, Berlin: H. Reuther (1891), 173; See also, Kai Kjær-Hansen. Joseph Rabinowitz and the Messianic Movement. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans/Handsels (1995), 37-38.

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*Chizzuk Emunah Emet*²⁶ (“True Faith Strengthened”) was published under the *nom de plume* “Even Tzehir” before the end of the year. This was a response to the second part of Isaac Troki’s *Chizzuk Emunah* (“Faith Strengthened”).²⁷

GERMANY

In 1883, Lichtenstein published *Sheva Hochmot* (The “Seven Wisdoms”) with the German subtitle, “Geography of the Talmud.”²⁸ He wrote it under the name of Jechiel Zebi Herschensohn (his original Jewish surname). This book was later reprinted in 1912 by a Jewish publisher. It is a collection of rabbinic sayings on geography (and science in general). He also published *Toledot Yeshua*²⁹ (“The Life of Yeshua”) in 1883 also under the pseudonym “Even Tzehir.” The title, of course, a response to the rabbinic polemic commonly known as *Toledot Yeshu*. It was probably during this time that Lichtenstein began to engage Delitzsch in regular correspondence, in Hebrew, regarding Delitzsch’s translation of the New Testament.³⁰ Many years later, in 1906, using the same name of Herschensohn, Lichtenstein’s *Megale Sod* (“The Secret Scroll” or “Revealer of Secret[s]”) appeared which was a commentary explaining selected difficult passages from throughout the Tanach. Curiously, the German title page prints the name of the author as “Hermann Herschensohn.”³¹

26 Even Tzehir [Jechiel Lichtenstein]. *Chizzuk Emunah Emet*. Leipzig (1879); [This bibliographical information is taken from: Gustav Dalman. *Kurzgefasstes Handbuch der Mission unter Israel*. Berlin (1893), 111]; *Chizzuk Emunah Emet* is one notable work by Lichtenstein which researchers (this one included) have not been able to obtain or locate. It is probably no longer extant. It is worthwhile to note, that even in 1911, Canon Arthur Lukyn Williams had to borrow a copy from Hermann L. Strack in Berlin for his research he did in writing his *A Manual of Christian Evidences for Jewish People*. (See the next footnote.)

27 A. [Arthur] Lukyn Williams. *A Manual of Christian Evidences for Jewish People*, Vol. 1, London: S. P. C. K. (1911), x.

28 Jechiel Zebi Herschensohn. *Sheva Hochmot*. Lemberg (1883) [Reprinted in London (1912)].

29 Even Tzehir [Jechiel Lichtenstein]. *Toledot Yeshua*. [Lemberg?] (1883); a German translation later appeared in *Saat auf Hoffnung* and was reprinted as Jechiel Lichtenstein. *Toledoth Jeschua*. Leipzig (1907).

30 The correspondence is housed in the archives of the British and Foreign Bible Society in Cambridge, England. Lichtenstein’s Hebrew correspondence to Delitzsch total 79 pages.

31 Jechiel Zebi Herschensohn / Hermann Herschensohn. *Megale Sod*. Budapest (1906).

By 1885, he joined the staff of the Institutum Judaicum in Leipzig, Germany, a postgraduate institute³² founded by Franz Delitzsch,³³ as a teacher and tutor. During the 1887-1888 winter semester, as an example, Lichtenstein taught courses on the Book of Acts and the Tractate *Sanhedrin*.³⁴ In later years, he taught New Testament courses based on Delitzsch's Hebrew New Testament translation and Lichtenstein's own Hebrew commentary, and another course on Isaac Troki's *Chizzuk Emunah*.³⁵ He also taught what must have been a very interesting class in 1905 on "The Messianic Prophecies with Rashi and Kimchi"³⁶ (both well known medieval Jewish Bible commentators). This is just a sampling of the courses he taught. In 1894, Lichtenstein published *Yeshua veHillel*, his Hebrew translation of Franz Delitzsch's, *Jesus und Hillel* (1866).

NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY IN HEBREW

While several medieval rabbis have written anti-New Testament or anti-Christian polemical treatises,³⁸ non-polemical commentaries of parts of the New Testament written in Hebrew up until the very beginning of the 18th century simply did not exist. The first commentary on a book of the New Testament was by Johann Kemper (whose Jewish name was Rabbi Moshe

32 The Institutum Judaicum was considered one of the best places in mainland Europe to receive a Jewish missionary education. Its curriculum included classes in Yiddish, Hebrew, the Talmud, Christian and Jewish apologetics, Bible studies, and so on. The Institutum Judaicum later changed its name to the Institutum Judaicum Delitzschianum in honor of Franz Delitzsch after his death in 1890.

33 Harling, "Jechiel Lichtenstein," 54-55.

34 W. [Wilhelm] Faber. "Aus dem Jahresbericht über das Seminar des Institutum Judaicum zu Leipzig," *Saat auf Hoffnung*, 25 (1888), 50-51; See also Kai Kjær-Hansen. "Glimpses from Institutum Judaicum in Leipzig," *LCJE Bulletin*, 19 (Feb 1990), 13-16.

35 See the Summer Semester Class Schedules of the Institutum Judaicum in 1903 (*Saat auf Hoffnung*, 40 (1903), 63) and 1905 (*Saat auf Hoffnung*, 42 (1905), 122).

36 "Lehrplan des Institutum Judaicum Delitzschianum in Leipzig für das Sommersemester 1903" in *Saat auf Hoffnung*, 40 (1903), 63.

37 Franz Delitzsch. *Yeshua veHillel*. (Translated by Jechiel Lichtenstein.) Leipzig (1894).

38 For example, Rabbi Shemtob ben Yitzhak ibn Shaprut's *Even Bohan* ("The Touchstone") from 1380, that was a Hebrew translation and polemical commentary on Matthew. Cf. Pinchas E. Lapide. *Hebrew in the Church*. Eerdmans (1984), 46-48; José-Vicente Niclós. *Sem Tob Ibn Saprut. 'La Piedra de Toque' (Eben Bohan) Una Obra de Controversia Judeo-Cristiana*. Madrid: C. S. I. C (1997); George Howard, *Hebrew Gospel of Matthew*. 2nd Edition. Georgia: Mercer (1995).

ben Aharon), a Jewish believer from Krakow, Poland.³⁹ Between 1700 and 1710, Kemper wrote a Hebrew translation and commentary on Matthew. Interestingly, Israeli scholar, Pinchas Lapide states: “The first modern commentary on the Gospels [actually just Matthew] in Hebrew [entitled *Kol Kore*] was written by an Orthodox rabbi, Dr. Elie Soloweyczyk [Eliyahu Tsvi Levi Soloveichik], and published in Paris in 1875.”⁴⁰ Lapide was not entirely correct in his statement. Kemper was the first Jewish individual to write a commentary in Hebrew on a part of the New Testament. Later in 1735, another Jewish believer, Heinrich Christian Immanuel Frommann, came out with his commentary and translation on Luke.⁴¹ Moreover, Biesenthal subsequently came out with his first commentary on Romans in 1853. Following in these footsteps, Lichtenstein would slowly write his own commentary on not just a few books, but eventually the entire New Testament.

During his time at the Institutum Judaicum in Leipzig, Lichtenstein, in addition to his pedagogical responsibilities, continued his writing and research while assisting Delitzsch with his translation. Lichtenstein’s overall contribution to Delitzsch’s Hebrew translation of the New Testament still needs to be properly investigated. However, it was probably more substantive than merely proofreading. In English, Delitzsch spoke very highly of him: “Zebi Herschensohn named Jechiel Lichtenstein the most learned of my critics, [a] Jewish convert, who is now occupied with the development of a Hebrew commentary to our Hebrew N.T.”⁴² By 1891, the first part of

39 The manuscript is housed in the University of Uppsala in Sweden (Cf. Lapide, *Hebrew in the Church*, 76). Kemper also wrote a multi-volume commentary on the *Zohar* (easily over a 1,000 pages) from the viewpoint of a Jewish believer. Recently, an excellent introduction to Kemper’s *Zohar* commentary has appeared, cf. Elliot R. Wolfson, “Messianism in the Christian Kabbalah of Johann Kemper,” in *Millenarianism and Messianism in the Early Modern European Culture: Jewish Messianism in the Early Modern World*, edited by Matthew D. Goldish and Richard H. Popkin, the Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers (2001), 139-187. For a good biographical account of Kemper, see the chapter entitled “Rabbi’ Joahn Kemper in Uppsala” in Hans Joachim Schoeps, *Philosemitismus im Barock*. Germany: J. C. B. (Paul Siebeck) Tübingen (1952), 92-133.

40 Pinchas Lapide, *Israelis, Jews and Jesus*. N. Y.: Doubleday (1979), 112; Cf. Kai Kjær-Hansen’s book review: “Kol Kore or the Talmud and the New Testament” in *Mishkan* 4 (1986), 70-74.

41 Lapide, *Hebrew in the Church*, 77.

42 Jean Carmignac & Hubert Klein, *Traductions Hébraïques des Évangiles/Die vier Evangelien von Franz Delitzsch (1877-1890-1902)*, Belgium: Brépols (1984), xvii.

Jechiel Zebi Lichtenstein's *Beur leSifre Berit HaHadashah* ("Commentary on the New Testament") was published.

The commentary was published in eight parts⁴³ over a span of 13 years, between 1891 and 1904: Matthew⁴⁴ (1891); Mark⁴⁵ and Luke (1896); John (1897); Acts (1898); Romans (1898); Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians (one volume, 1901), Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and Hebrews (one volume, 1902); James, Peter, John, Jude and Revelations (one volume, 1904). Nearly all of the commentary itself was in Rashi script,⁴⁶ while the New Testament text was in the traditional square script. Arthur Lukyn Williams said of the commentary: "J. Lichtenstein's commentaries on books of the New Testament are notes on difficult passages rather than a consecutive exposition."⁴⁷

The commentary was apparently meant to be a companion volume to Delitzsch's own *magnum opus* Hebrew translation of the New Testament that provided elucidations and explanations relating to those parts that would be of interest to Jewish readers. Landsman states the reaction a Jewish individual he was evangelizing had towards the commentary:

...it so happened that the Hebrew commentary to the New Testament, by Mr. Lichtenstein, of [Leipzig], fell into his hands. The book made a deep impression on him. Here a learned Hebrew Christian, with vast Jewish learning, was expounding and explaining the New Testament. Every word in the Hebrew New Testament and the commentary

43 All the individual commentaries have the general title of *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament/Beur leSifre Berit HaHadashah* and by 'J. Lichtenstein'; they are all in Hebrew, save for their German title pages, which are as follows: *Matthäus*. Leipzig (1891); *Marcus und Lucus*. Leipzig (1896); *Johannes*. Leipzig (1897); *Apostelgeschichte*. Leipzig (1898); *Römerbrief*. Leipzig (1898); *Briefe an die Korinther, Galater, Epheser, Philipper, Kolosser*. Leipzig (1901); *Briefe an die Thessalonicher, Timotheus, Titus, Philemon und Hebräer*. Leipzig (1902); *Briefe an die Jacobi, Petri, Johannes, Judä und die Offenbarung Johannis*. Leipzig (1904). The commentary was republished in 2002 as: *Yehiel Tsvi Lichtenstein. Sugiyot Nibharot BeSefer HaBerit Hadashah* [A Commentary on Selected Portions From the New Testament]. Jerusalem: Keren Ahvah Meshihit (2002).

44 Parts of the Matthew commentary were translated into German by Zöckler. Cf. Zöckler, *Aus Jechiel Lichtensteins hebräischen Kommentar zum Neuen Testament*. Leipzig (1895).

45 The Mark commentary was translated into German by Kahan and Zottmaier. Cf. Kahan & Zottmaier. "Aus Lichtensteins hebräischen Kommentar zum Neuen Testament. Das Evangelium nach Markus." *Saat auf Hoffnung*, 40 (1903), 119-154.

46 Except for Matthew (1891) which is entirely in the traditional square script.

47 Hermann L Strack. *Jahrbuch der evangelischen Judenmission/Yearbook of the Evangelical Missions among the Jews*, Vol. 2, Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichssche Buchhandlung (1913), 13.

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sounded new and yet so homely, as if it were a message which suddenly reached him from home, which he had left long ago.⁴⁸

Lichtenstein left a manuscript of a completely revised edition of the Commentary on Matthew after he died, posthumously published in 1913.⁴⁹

YIDDISH TRANSLATION OF THE HEBREW BIBLE

At the same time he was writing his New Testament commentary and teaching at the Institutum Judaicum, Lichtenstein was also engaged in what appears to be a partial Yiddish translation of the Tanach.⁵⁰ He translated completely the Torah (Pentateuch), Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Kings, and Samuel. Whether he completed the entire Tanach translation is not entirely clear. Perhaps the fact that there was another very good Yiddish translation of the Tanach available at the time did not help matters. This was by Mordecai Samuel Bergmann (1846-1922), a London-based Jewish believer, who in fact finished a complete translation of both the Tanach and New Testament in 1894.⁵¹ There is no evidence that Lichtenstein ever attempted a Yiddish translation of the New Testament, since there were already multiple translations available by other Jewish believers from this time period, including one translated in part by his former brother-in-law, Joseph Rabinowitz.⁵²

48 J. I. [Joseph Immanuel] Landsman. "A Mission Tour in Russia" in *The Scattered Nation*, 61 (Jan 1910), 52.

49 Jechiel Zebi Lichtenstein. *Beur lesifre berit haHadashah /Kerech [aleph]: Matai*. Paul Levertoff & Heinrich Laible (eds.), Leipzig (1913); It is republished in Yehiel Tsvi Lichtenstein. *Sugiyot Nibharot BeSefer HaBerit Hadashah*, 13-63.

50 All the volumes were translated into Yiddish by 'Jechiel Lichtenstein' and published by 'British and Foreign Bible Society' (B. F. B. S.); *Sefer Yeshiyeh*. (1891) [Reprinted 1903]; *Sefer Yirmiyah*. (1892) [Reprinted 1903]; *Sefer Bereshit*. (1893); *Sefer Shemot*. (1894); *Sefer Vayikra*. (1895); *Sefer Bamidbar*. (1896); *Sefer Devarim*. (1897); *Sefer Yehoshua uShoftim, veMegilat Rut* (1898); *Sefer Shemuel*. (1 ve-2). (1900); *Melakhim* (1 ve-2). (1901). There may be more translations of the books of the Tanach which were published, however, only a thorough search of the B. F. B. S.'s archives or library would answer this.

51 Leonard Prager. *Yiddish Culture in Britain*. Frankfurt Am Main: Peter Lang (1990), 149-150.

52 Joseph Rabinowitz & Joseph Lerner. *Sifre haBerit haHadashah*. [in Yiddish] Berlin: British & Foreign Bible Society/Mildmay Mission to the Jews (1901).

CONCLUSION

The question of why Lichtenstein is not so well known, comparatively speaking, to the other Jewish believers discussed in the introduction is a good one and has no obvious answer. Landsman states that for Lichtenstein “direct mission work was not his vocation. He was no speaker, nor was he able to carry on a discussion. He was most happy engaged in tutorial work; and since 1886...he was connected with the Institutum Judaicum.”⁵³ Some people fare better as seminary professors than pulpit preachers. Also working against him was the fact that nearly all of his publications were in Hebrew or Yiddish (save for a few German articles in *Saat auf Hoffnung*). This certainly limited his potential reader to an educated Jewish audience. In this regard, he was quite the opposite of Paul Phillip Levertoff, the future successor to his position at the Institutum Judaicum, who while also quite a prolific writer in Hebrew, also wrote quite extensively in German and English which helped Levertoff reach a far wider readership. Additionally, there might have been confusion regarding his name since he shared the same last name as the Hungarian Rabbi Isaac Lichtenstein,⁵⁴ another well known Jewish believer.

Lichtenstein died at the age of 81 on February 12, 1912. Four decades later, Otto von Harling, looking back at his years when he had been a student at the Institutum Judaicum, recalled fondly how he called Lichtenstein the “Rebbe.”⁵⁵ It is also worth quoting what Harling said about Lichtenstein, apparently near the end of Lichtenstein’s life:⁵⁶

53 J. I. [Joseph Immanuel] Landsman. “The Continuous Testimony at Our London Centre” in *The Scattered Nation*, 70 (April 1912), 110.

54 In many of their publications, they abbreviated their first names as “J. [Jechiel (Tsvi)] Lichtenstein” and “I. [Isaac/Ignatz] Lichtenstein.” The confusion between them is due to the nature of the writing system in which their names were printed. Most German books at that time were printed in Fraktur, a gothic style alphabet (a variation of the Old Latin alphabet; it appears somewhat similar of the Old English font on most computers.) The appearance of the capital letters “I” and “J” are identical in Fraktur; hence the source of confusion.

This is a sample of Fraktur.

55 Otto von Harling. “Erinnerungen an Jechiel Lichtenstein,” *Saat auf Hoffnung*, 73 (1950), 164.

56 Otto von Harling. *Um Zions willen: ein Leben im Dienst des Evangeliums unter Israel*. Neuedtelsau: Freimund (1952), 59; My thanks to Doris Wearp for translating this passage from the German.

After he had completed his Hebrew commentary to the New Testament earlier in his life, he expected that the Lord would take him home soon. He showed me the inscription he wished to have written on his gravestone. The language he chose was Hebrew to make sure that everybody would realize that even though he would be buried as a Christian among Christians, he stayed faithful to his own people: the Jews. The inscription should read:

*Here rests a disciple of Yeshua the Messiah,
A brother in the spirit of the church of Jerusalem
Jechiel Lichtenstein
May his writings [life's work] be a blessing to all.*

To my question which church he meant, the 'apostolic church,' or the new church of Israel which we are all waiting for, he answered: 'The first church in Jerusalem, which was Jewish, whose leader was Peter, as head of the Jewish-Christian church. There I felt at home. Among you I was a guest. I often saw Peter,' he said and then very mysteriously added: 'I also saw the Lord; but He looks quite different than the Goyim think.' He had seen the Lord in a vision, the way he came into this world as a Jew.

Lichtenstein, the Romanian Hassid and sometime *tzaddik*, was a Bible commentator, translator, teacher, and overall rabbinic scholar. Like other Jewish believers of his generation, he was the product of an entirely different age. He came from a time when it was not at all unusual for a Jewish believer to have a strong yeshiva background. Today, obviously, quite the opposite is true.

Lichtenstein's writings are slowly being republished in Israel today: his New Testament Commentary was republished⁵⁷ in 2002 and *Limudei HaNeviim* is scheduled for publication in the near future. It is hoped that this brief overview will stimulate further discussion and interest in translating some of his writings from Hebrew into English; a thorough and critical analysis of his life and work is certainly required.

⁵⁷ Yehiel Tsvi Lichtenstein, *Sugiyot Nibharot BeSefer HaBerit Hadashahh*. Jerusalem: Keren Ahvah Meshihit (2002). Readers should beware it has been slightly edited, which explains the different title (e.g., *Sugiyot Nibharot*...instead of *Beur leSifre*...). Researchers using *Sugiyot Nibharot* are advised to double-check the original publication (*Beur leSifre*) if they need to employ Lichtenstein's commentary.

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57 Jorge Quiñónez, "An Overview of the Literary Life of Jechiel Zebi Lichtenstein (1831-1912)" in *Yehiel Tsvi Lichtenstein. Sugiyot Nibharot BeSefer HaBerit Hadashah*, 9-12.