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The Renaissance of Judaism

A Series of Sermons

by

Rabbi Joseph Silverman, D.D.

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1918

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DEDICATED
TO THE MEMORY OF
REV. DR. GUSTAV GOTTHEIL
RABBI OF TEMPLE EMANU-EL
1873--1903

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THE RENAISSANCE OF JUDAISM

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THE RENAISSANCE OF JUDAISM

"The hand of the Lord was upon me and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones.

"And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O, Thou Lord God, Thou knowest.

"Again He said unto me, prophesy upon these bones and say unto them, O, ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord!

"Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones, Behold! I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live.

"So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath came into them and they lived and stood upon their feet, an exceeding army."

(*Ezekiel XXXVII, 1, 3, 4, 5, 10.*)

This is a sublime vision, portraying the death and the restoration of ancient Israel. It refers to the time of Israel's captivity in Babylon. Its national life was gone, its temple lay in ruins, its chief leaders and prophets were dead, discredited or discouraged. Faith had given way to despair; Jehovah in many instances had been displaced by idols. Both physical and spiritual death had destroyed the nation and its religion.

The Prophet Ezekiel realized his im-

TO JUDAH
AND BETHLEHEM

potence to arouse the people from their spiritual lethargy, and to restore them to their patrimony. It was quite natural, therefore, that he should experience the vision in which his people seemed as lifeless and incapable of resuscitation as a valley of dry bones. He had heard the people say of him, "Doth he not speak parables?" He had seemed to them only as one with a pleasant voice and nothing more. But now he was to realize that he had power to revive dry bones, to resuscitate the dead and deadening souls.

The vision of the dry bones and the interview with God are subjective. The Prophet really asks himself, "Can these dry bones, these dead souls live? "Can Israel be revived? Can Judaism be reborn?" As the text says, "Through the voice of God," the thought came to him, that as only through the spirit can the body live, how much the more can the soul only be revived through the spirit of God.

The sequel is known to students of Jewish history, that during the reign of Cyrus Israel was permitted to return to Palestine

and, through the help of Ezra and Nehemiah, aided by the Prophets of the Exile, was freed from its idols and other forms of heathenism, and that Judaism was restored to pristine power and glory.

There have been several crises in the development of Judaism, crises that threatened our ancient faith with extinction. The next great breach occurred when Israel came into contact with Greek culture. New and unexpected conditions were presented to the Jew, and his religion, as well as his social life, received a shock under which both staggered. Hellenism, with its touch of Occidentalism, its active life of game and sports, and its iconoclastic tendencies, marred the ancient ideals of Israel's religion. The conflict between the old and the new was bitterly fought and ended in sects; the Sadducees, the Pharisees, and Essenes. But Judaism survived, for the Spirit of the Lord lived in the hearts of the people and sustained its Faith.

Soon after occurred the second downfall of Jerusalem, and under its ruins were buried all that remained of the ancient na-

tional religious cult—the altar, the sacrifices, and the priestly functions. Again the leaders of Israel saw the vision of the field of dry bones. But into these bones was breathed the spirit of God by the new Prophet Jochanon ben Saccai. The nationality of Israel only was destroyed; its zeal for the law and enthusiasm for the faith lived. And this zeal rebuilt schools and synagogues in all parts of the world and re-established the House of Israel.

Again it was found that there is no death where God lives. The breath of divinity instills spirituality in man and restores his manhood, his divine aspirations and moral excellence. Many Jews were attracted to Greek literature and philosophy, and many others to Arabian science, philosophy and poetry. When the Jewish scholars were hampered in the Orient by persecution, they migrated westward to Spain and France, and there revived both the science and philosophy of Judaism and created a school for Jewish, Greek, and Arabic theologians, poets, philosophers, and scientists, to whom both Bible and Talmud were sacred, but no

fetich. This was a period of Jewish renaissance, in which reason vied with faith, traditional conservation with iconoclasm, rationalism with mystic cabalism. And over it all was the wonder working resuscitating spirit of God.

This golden era of peace and fertility in Israel was, however, not destined to continue long. The Spanish Inquisition brought new trials and stimulated persecution throughout Europe, save in free and cultured Holland. The Jew pined in the Ghetto, his life seemed extinct, his progress was checked. Again the vision of dead bones scattered through all the Ghettos of Europe. The real divine spirit in Israel, however, was not dead; it only slept. When the prison walls of the Ghetto were opened, the Jewish soul stepped forth ready to breathe in the new life of the world. Mendelssohn is the prophet of this new renaissance, breathing new life into Israel to revive it by his philosophy, by a rational faith and practice, by his translation of the Pentateuch into German, by carrying the world's best culture to the Jew of the Ghetto.

This revived Judaism in time came to America, and took root in the new soil, and has lived for over a century under various interpretations, doctrines, and practices. All honor to leaders like Wise, Lilienthal, Einhorn, Hirsch, and Gottheil, who in this land breathed the spirit of reform into Judaism and preserved it and enhanced its value.

But later events have proven that Reform has its limitations, limitations which were not foreseen by our leaders and teachers of a generation ago. They builded for their times and we to-day must meet new conditions. For fifty years or more the animated struggle between Orthodoxy and Reform kept alive the religious fervor. But now that that struggle has ended, now that the old antagonism is no more, an era of dead calm has set in which is fatal to religious progress. The danger of reform begins when it has nothing more to reform in doctrine or ritual or practice, when it realizes that it has reached the end of progress.

What has happened to modern Judaism is simply this, that in the past century efforts have been directed to building up an

external Judaism, beautiful synagogues, new rituals and forms, edifying music and sermons. But the inner Judaism, the spiritual side of our faith, did not receive adequate attention. And now it transpires that all that beautiful fabric which was undoubtedly necessary at the time, and still serves a certain purpose, is inadequate to cope with modern conditions of materialism, scepticism, commercialism, religious indifference, and the pleasure-seeking proclivity.

Let me name some of these various conflicts that we are facing. First, the Sabbath against commercialism. Which is about to win? Look around you and ask where are the men? The answer is, in the clutches of commerce, industry, and worldly pursuits. Second, conflict between our religious service and the social world. Where are our women? The answer is, following the lead of fashion wherever it carries them on the Sabbath or at other times. Third, conflict between our religious belief and scepticism. Where are the college students of the day? They are chasing after the vague theories of Nietzsche and Bernard Shaw. Fourth, con-

flit between our faith and religious indifference. www.libtool.com.cn Where are the children? Answer, permitted and encouraged by indifferent parents, they are following their own pursuit of pleasure.

Confess it, you loyal men and women of our faith, that Judaism presents to-day what it did in the days of Ezekiel, in the Greek period, in the Roman period, in the Spanish Inquisition, in the era of later reconstruction—a field of dry bones, synagogues appearing like sepulchres that harbor only the dead fragments of a once great faith, or like museums in which are treasured religious antiquities. The House of Israel presents in large measure a house of dead souls instead of the great living spiritual force that once was.

I do not mean our Temple merely. This dead and deadening aspect of Judaism is general, even in congregations, who through sensational preaching occasionally draw a large crowd. We could also attract a mixed multitude here if we chose to pander to the sensation and curiosity seekers.

A learned rabbi, it is related, found that

his congregation was at times listless during his sermons. Therefore, he resorted to this device: He took three red balls in his pulpit, and when the attention of his congregation lapsed, he juggled with the balls. The people then woke up, nudged one another, and smiled. Then said the rabbi, I have it now. When I speak to you seriously on the condition of your souls, you are listless and indifferent. But when I make a fool of myself in the pulpit, you look up and are attentive.

Sensationalism in the pulpit is a dangerous expedient, and is itself an admission of the decadence of a religious spirit. It is no remedy for our present evils.

What, then, is the panacea for the ills of Judaism? What can revive these dead souls? Not our broken and crippled Sabbath, not our conventional services or perfunctory compliance with traditional customs, not our religious schools alone, good as they may be, not the mourners' Kaddish, nor the annual revival on Yom Kippur, not even modern educational and social accessories that we have borrowed from our neigh-

bors. These are all parts of the dead bones, cast into discard by the lost souls of Israel.

We to-day again hear the word of God spoken to Ezekiel: "Son of man, can these dry bones live?" And we hear the definite answer, "Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live."

Can the dead souls in Israel live again? I believe they can. What has been done so often in Jewish history can be done again. Nothing is impossible with God, but without Him failure is inevitable.

What Israel needs to-day is a new sense of God. The people have lost their God and are worshipping idols, namely, money, pleasure, power, fame, popular applause. They put their trust in princes and the sons of man.

Secondly, Israel needs to-day a new sense of the dignity of man, of his relationship to God through the spirit. Men are catering to the requirements of the flesh, and are neglecting the conditions of their souls. What profit to a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?

Third. Israel requires a new sense of the meaning, necessity and power of prayer. The people have become so materialistically minded, that they rely only on physical remedies, and eschew the importance and value of prayer as a means for spiritual resurrection for comfort, strength, patience, and hope.

Fourth. Israel needs a new sense of consecration to the ideals for which our faith has always stood, a consecration such as Israel faced at Sinai when it said, "We will hear and we will obey." The Marranos have never saved Judaism. They saved themselves and bartered their faith for a mess of pottage. Lecke has truly declared of Christianity, "martyrdom is the seed of the church." This thought applies to our faith. The martyrs of Israel, those men who sacrificed themselves, have saved Judaism. The men who are going to the battlefields, at the risk of their lives, will save America and humanity. We need such stalwart men and women in Israel to-day, who possess the courage of their conviction, and who will care more for Judaism on the Sabbath than

for chance speculation, or a passing amusement; who will care more for their faith than for the social prestige of an antisemitic neighbor.

Fifth. But more than that, we need the missionary spirit in Israel, a spirit that has done so much for Christianity. Our neighbors have learned much from us; let us at least learn from them how to create a religious revival, how to carry our religion to our people, to arouse them to understand its beauty and power, to teach them that as Moses has said, the law of God is the one great distinction of Israel, its knowledge and its glory. Who will be a missionary in Israel? Who will help us create a Jewish revival?

When the spirit of God will again enter the dead souls of Israel and revive them, giving them a new sense of God, of the power of spirituality, of the force of prayer, of consecration, of the martyrdom to conviction, and above all, a missionary spirit, then will the modern renaissance of Judaism have set in. Then will we have a revival of Sabbath observance, a revival of the interest of

young people, a restoration of the Jewish home, a renewal of parental example and authority, a re-establishment of the synagogue as the center of the congregational life and activity. There will then follow a revival of Jewish culture, of Jewish idealism, of Jewish ethics, together with the creation of fellowship and a new solidarity in Israel. Then it will appear to all that the dead bones of Israel live again and stand upon their feet "an exceeding great army."

There are encouraging signs that this renaissance of Judaism is on the way. The reaction of the war has set in. At first, the war had a blighting effect upon faith and idealism, and people thought the foundation of religion and civilization had been destroyed. But now we realize, that the world needs religion more than ever, and that people are again returning to their God for comfort and help. And so will Israel yearn again for God saying, "I thank thee, O Lord, that Thou hast afflicted me. It has been my salvation."

There is, secondly, a new awakening in Israel, due to the sense of common suffering

which has resulted in a new unity for relief. The success of the eleven million dollar fund for the relief and welfare work of Israel in connection with the war, will have permanent results that will manifest themselves in a united people, consecrated to God and humanity.

Thirdly, there is a greater activity in synagogal and Jewish communal life throughout the country. There seems to be a stirring among the dead bones and a resurrection is foreshadowed.

Fourthly, there is a greater interest manifested to-day in Israel among those whose souls are aroused to the necessity of the day to awaken those who are still asleep.

Fifth. The capture of Jerusalem by the British, and the hope entertained by many of a regenerated Palestine has put new life not only into Zionism, but into many faint hearts who had lost all hope of a revival of Judaism.

Sixth. Large bodies of intelligent men like the Intercollegiate Menorah Societies, which are holding a convention in this city at present, are creating a new interest in Juda-

ism and Jewish communal problems, and bidding fair to recruit a new corps of Jewish leaders from our best men and women of the colleges and universities. This is one of the most encouraging signs of the times, exhibiting a missionary spirit that will make for Jewish renaissance.

Let us take new heart therefore over these gratifying evidences of the recuperative powers of Israel. Judaism is not dead. It may be asleep, but its heart is awake. Let us as a Congregation do our part. Let us inaugurate a renaissance in our own midst, by being true to our name and our watchword Emanu-El, "God with us." If God is with us, no one can prevail against us.

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A REVIVAL IN TEMPLE EMANU-EL

"I shall not die but live and declare the works of the Lord."

(Psalm CXVIII, 17.)

These words are indicative of the fact that the revival in ancient Israel at the dedication of the second Temple was not to be a mere nominal resurrection, but rather a strong, useful, and progressive vitality. The Temple was to be not merely a meeting house for Israel but was to stand as evidence of Israel's great active soul. The Temple was not to be an idle or empty place for mere mechanical worship but a school for Israel's teachings, for the translation of religion into actuality. In other words the revived religion of Israel was to be part of the life of Israel. And the Temple of Jerusalem was to be the source of inspiration for such an intensive testimony to the presence and power of God.

And when finally the Temple of Jerusalem fell and Israel was scattered, every synagogue, built wherever the exiled Jews as-

ship. The committee, knowing his reputation, advised that he wait a month and prayerfully consider the matter of his fitness. At the end of the month he returned and was asked to give his experience before the entire church. He arose, solemnly turned to the minister, deacons and audience, and said: "Fellow sinners, daily for a month God has admonished me not to feel badly, if I did not get into this church, for He had tried for twenty years and was not in yet." The moral of the story is plain. A church cannot hope to convert others unless it has been converted itself. A synagogue cannot hope to lead people to God unless it has God in its own midst. I believe that when this Temple was founded, seventy-three years ago, God was with the Congregation, and the men who gave the name *Emanu-El* (God with us) to this Congregation, did it out of the sincerity of their hearts. They believed in God, they walked with God, they obeyed His law. Their religion was a reality. And, therefore, they founded this Congregation and wrote this Preamble to the Constitution: "*To perpetuate Judaism and uphold the be-*

belief in and worship of one God, the Emanuel Congregation has been established."

This preamble gave definite, cogent purpose to the Congregation, and in a measure was for many years the ideal which guided it. The struggle for Reform, the improvement of the ritual, the removal from one building to always a better one, the creation of the Religious School, the encouragement given to Jewish charitable and educational institutions, the practice of patriotism and civic duties and the participation in all public movements for general relief, as well as for the welfare of city, state, or nation, all tended to the furtherance of a comprehensive interpretation of that preamble, to wit: the perpetuation of Judaism and the promotion of the belief in and the worship of one God. I believe that the first generation of this Congregation did its full duty, as it understood it, in carrying out the laudable purpose for which the Temple was established.

But there came a time when the old text of the Scripture was verified, "And Jeshurun waxed fat and he kicked," that is to say, there came a time when worldly interests

absorbed the attention of this Congregation to the detriment of its original purpose. In the course of the last fifty years the old ideal has been lost sight of—on the part of many has been ignored—and on the part of some has been contradicted by their words and needs. The Congregation as a whole has done little to uphold the purpose for which it was established, namely *“to perpetuate Judaism and to uphold belief in and worship of God.”* Do they worship God? If so, when and where? Those certainly do not worship God in the synagogue who are studiously absent on the Sabbath and holy days. Do they worship God, and uphold belief in Him in their home? Can a fair percentage of those who observe no Sabbath or holy days testify, that they uphold the worship of God in their homes? My experience and observance in many families would compel me to testify in the negative. Do members of the Congregation seek to perpetuate Judaism through the Religious Schools which they have neglected and even to this day ignore? Do they perpetuate Judaism through the congregational activities? The

Emanu-El Sisterhood and Brotherhood, which have for years solicited members from the families of the Congregation, have complained in vain of the lack of active workers.

I am not unmindful of the fact that there is a saving remnant in the Congregation, as there is in every congregation, that does its full duty. And it is to that saving remnant that Emanu-El owes its present existence and whatever prestige it has secured. It is to such a saving remnant, that Israel owes its preservation throughout its two thousand years of trials and emergencies.

I believe the time has come to put an end to this status of indifference. I believe that the whole Congregation should perform its full duty. Every member of this Congregation assumes a duty upon being elected, to fulfill the purpose laid down in the preamble of the Constitution, to wit: "*to perpetuate Judaism and to uphold the belief and worship of Jehovah.*" I believe the time has come for a great revival in Temple Emanu-El, for a revival in which every member and every home affiliated with this Temple should take a part. We should end at once

and for all this state of indifference to the Temple, as well as to Judaism in general. Members of the Congregation should learn that they have not only rights but duties, duties that are concerned in upholding the honor and usefulness of the Temple and in making it an instrument of service to Judaism and Israel. The duty of a citizen to his country consists not merely in paying the taxes but in obeying the laws and in serving the country in war and peace. Similarly the duty of a member of a Congregation does not end with the payment of the yearly membership fee, but includes service of the highest order—consecration to the Temple and the cause it represents. Our country demands one hundred per cent of patriotism. That indicates what I mean by a Revival in Temple Emanu-El, the replacing of the one per cent. Judaism that many members possess by one hundred per cent. Judaism. We have hyphenated Jews, that is, Yom Kippur—Jews, race Jews, cosmopolitan Jews, emancipated Jews, Jews-at-heart, charity Jews, Unitarian Jews, Christian Science—Jews, Free Thought—Jews, etc.

A revival in Emanu-El means that we must convert all these hyphenated Jews into real Jews. www.libtool.com.cn

Let it not be said that when people become wealthy, they lose their religion. I know that in several conspicuous instances this charge is untenable. But perhaps these conspicuous instances constitute the exceptions that justify the charge. I am not ready to grant even that. I believe there is much pent up religion in Emanu-El. It shall be pent up no longer. It shall find a vent and express itself. Let us institute a revival marked by attendance at services, by Sabbath observance, by increase of the Religious School, by greater interest and co-operation in the welfare of the Temple and all its activities, and by greater participation in the movements making for the general advance of Israel, by the study of the Scriptures and the history of Israel, by observance of the festivals and holy days, by instituting some form of home religion, in short, by perpetuating Judaism and upholding the belief in and worship of one God.

Such a revival will benefit not merely the

congregation as a whole, but every family and every individual. A religious revival must react on the home and the individual, for no one can enter into a religious revival without very soon experiencing a decided spiritual improvement. A religious revival is a moral tonic—a spiritual stimulus which leaves the possessor richer in mind and heart, gives him a broader outlook upon life and makes him more contented and happy.

But the revival will not end at the doors of Emanu-El or in the soul of its members and the heart of its homes. It will extend beyond those precincts. When once our members are aroused to the importance and necessity, to the value of a revival for Emanu-El and its members and homes, they will think of those who are less fortunate than we in the direction of opportunity for religious or spiritual uplift.

There are a hundred thousand Jews in this city too poor to belong to any synagogue, and too busy trying to earn a livelihood to organize themselves into congregations, even if they had the means. There are two hundred thousand Jewish children

not receiving any religious instruction at all, because ~~several of their parents are~~ either too poor or too indifferent to provide it for them. The Sisterhood and Brotherhood are organized for such and other purposes, and are conducting free religious schools and free services. But the work is limited, owing to lack of funds. This Congregation should open branch synagogues and schools in several parts of the city, where the congestion creates pressing needs. Several large Christian Churches, like Trinity and the Collegiate Church, have branch churches or Chapels, and it is high time that our Congregation developed the missionary spirit and carried its message outside its own doors to Jews who are willing to receive it. We must perpetuate Judaism beyond our own Temple. That would be the greatest evidence of a Revival.

A Revival in our midst will be of benefit to Judaism at large which needs the example and leadership of Emanu-El. I say this in all modesty, but advisedly, for it is a fact that Emanu-El has initiated many reforms

that have been later adopted by other congregations. And if we take the lead in creating a general revival in our Congregation, that will manifest itself in unmistakable forms, it will not be long before the contagion of such a good example will spread far and wide.

My friends, in the Ethics of the Fathers, it is said: "The day is short, the work is great, and the laborers are sluggish; the reward is much and the Master of the House is urgent." This saying may apply to the task of Revival that is before us. The time is short, the work is great, and the laborers are sluggish. Who will help in this work of reviving Emanu-El? Who will join a Revival Committee and lend a hand in this laudable effort? Awake, O Emanu-El, and remember what your fathers and forefathers have done. Perpetuate this Temple and aid the cause of Israel. O Emanu-El! thou repository of sacred traditions, of sweet memories, arise from thy lethargy, and take thy place in the forefront of the battle for Israel's faith. Be not the pall bearers of Israel's faith. Be captains and workers in the

vineyard of the Lord, so that Emanu-El
may say, as did ancient Israel, "I shall not
die, but live and declare the works of the
Lord!"

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DUTY AND PART OF THE YOUTH IN THE REVIVAL

"And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord and great shall be the peace of thy children."

(*Isaiah LIV, 18.*)

The Prophet Isaiah, in speaking of the restoration of ancient Israel, indicates how that revival of Judaism which took place after the rebuilding of the Temple might be made permanent. He realized that that generation would pass away, and he looked to the future. Over two thousand years ago, the wise sage sensed the principle that is common property to-day, that the future lies in the hands of the youth, that the proper education of the youth is the only guarantee for the salvation of the world.

This thought is borne out by a tradition found in the ancient history of Israel. It is related that, when God gave Israel the Law on Sinai and they promised to obey, He demanded a guarantee that they would never forsake their law. And Israel an-

swered, "Let Heaven and Earth be our witnesses." But the Lord refused to accept such a guarantee. "Then let the virtues of our forefathers, their good deeds, be indicative of what we will do," said Israel. Again the Lord refused. "Then let our prophets be surety," cried the people. "But prophets may differ, or may prove false, and therefore can not serve as assurance of the permanence of your faith," said the Voice from Heaven. "Then," said Israel, "let our children whom we shall teach the law, be our pledge that the faith will not depart from our midst." And the Lord accepted this pledge which is reflected in the words of Scripture, "*In the place of thy sires shall be thy children.*" "From the mouth of babes and sucklings the Lord will receive new strength."

The history of Israel attests the value of that pledge. The "*children*" have saved Israel and perpetuated Judaism. Abraham placed his reliance on Isaac, Isaac on Jacob, and Jacob on his twelve sons. Joseph, the Hebrew lad, is taken from prison, becomes the viceroy of Egypt, and is then by force of his virtue, intelligence, and power enabled

to save the embryonic nation of Israel from destruction during the famine and to place it in a position for future development. The crafty Pharaoh of four hundred years, later feared not the old Hebrews, bent under their tasks, but the young men, and therefore, he sought to destroy the male children. Moses, the lad, beheld Israel's dire plight and from his youthful soul that rebelled against the enslavement of his people, came forth the great liberator. The old generation of the wilderness, beyond the hope of redemption, died in the wilderness, but Palestine was conquered and redeemed by young Israel. Joshua and Caleb and the majority of Israel's later leaders, began their successful careers as young men. Samson is a judge at fifty; David, the youngest of Jesse's sons, was a youth when he slew Goliath and delivered Israel. When still a young man he was anointed King of Israel. Isaiah and Jeremiah prophesied at twenty. Ezekiel received the word of God at thirty. The youthful and strong Maccabees saved Israel from the Syrians and restored the Temple. And after Rome destroyed Jerusalem, Israel's

faith was saved by the young men who studied in the school at Jamnia under Jochanon ben Saccai.

We could continue thus to trace the history of Israel and prove that in every generation the burden rested upon the young to accept the law and carry it intact to the next generation, and that young Israel in the past has not been recreant to its duty. It was not tempted by bribe, or intimidated by threat or terrorized by sufferings. It bore the stings of ridicule, the pains of torture, the hardships of persecution, the ostracism and misfortune of antisemitism with an exemplary spirit of martyrdom. All honor to young Israel of past generations, to those stalwart young men and women who broke many a lance for our cause and aided in the preservation of our faith.

But what about young Israel of to-day? We are facing one of the greatest problems in the history of Judaism, namely, how to check the defection of young men and women from our ranks and cause them to realize the duty they owe to Israel and the part they can perform in the revival of Juda-

ism. This evil is not of to-day, but has been growing for the past two generations at least. It is due, firstly, to the irreligious tendency of the day which is reflected in many books and periodicals, as well as in conversation and public addresses. There exists a spirit of mocking in holy matters, as Bacon says, which makes for irreverence in the young. It is very often indulged in by teachers and professors in schools and colleges, who thus insidiously sow the seed of irreligion in the minds and hearts of pupils and students.

Secondly, I find that the young have been falsely trained to follow the fashion of the day, to note the prevailing currents of thought and action, and to trim their sails accordingly. And religion is not fashionable, especially not in Jewish circles. Hence the young people look askance at religion as not an essential part of the accomplishments or equipment of the modern man and woman!

Thirdly, young people, as a rule, possess only a superficial education. They have received a veneer of intellectual attainment,

only enough to cover up a native, crass ignorance. www.libtool.com.cn They possess that little learning which is a dangerous thing. They have scanned some pages of Spencer, Darwin, Huxley and Nietzsche, and are able to prate glibly of the Unknown and Unknowable and to defy any professor of religion to prove the existence of God, or the authenticity of the Scriptures.

Fourthly, it has become a notorious fact that young people regard religion as unnecessary for success. They have become all too practical, and tell us nonchalantly that the most successful, the greatest scientists, artists, philosophers, merchants, and statesmen have been irreligious. And when we point to such great men, like Gladstone, Mendelssohn, Washington, Montefiore, and innumerable others, they turn a deaf ear and claim that those shining examples, combining religion and success, are exceptions.

But the most lamentable cause for the defection of the young in our times, especially in Israel, is undoubtedly the lack of parental example. When fathers and mothers are

irreligious, very little can be expected of their children. libtool.com.cn

In the face of these trying difficulties the problem of the synagogue of winning young Israel back to the faith is herculean. It cannot be solved by casting the burden altogether on the minister, though it is pre-eminently his office to teach religion. It is idle to blame him for the shortcomings of this skeptical and materialistic age, for the evils of a faulty and superficial education of the youth, for the fact that religion is not fashionable, that it is not regarded as necessary for success, and that many parents set a woeful example of irreligion and indifference, instead of devotion to our sacred cause.

We cannot hope to reform the world, to convert all parents to religion, and to change conditions in schools and colleges that would eliminate scoffing teachers and professors. We cannot hope to induce society to make religion as fashionable as lectures on political economy and social science, and to teach the world that success, minus a

regard for a higher spiritual life, is not success. www.libtool.com.cn

But the case of young Israel is nevertheless not beyond remedy. Several methods of attacking the defection are open to us. First is recognition of the fact that the young can be influenced through their intellectual and their social proclivities. Man is developed through his thoughts and sentiments, and in any religious revival these must be touched. Currents of thought and action should be created that would tend to lead the young back to the synagogue. You cannot force them back. You must lead them by the things that attract the mind and the emotions. The social engineer understands this principle and applies it in the improvement of the crowd. This principle has also been acted upon in the establishment of neighborhood settlements, Young Men's and Young Women's Hebrew Associations, and similar agencies.

As society is now constituted, currents of thought and social life lead our young people away from the synagogue. Our leaders, without reflection on them be it said, are not

social engineers, and, therefore, have unconsciously permitted the young people to drift away from the synagogue for their intellectual and social requirements to the lecture hall, dance halls, club houses, libraries and other places of instruction and entertainment. The problem before us is to connect such avenues for intellectual and social life with the Temple, by creation of a *Temple Centre*, in which there should be ample opportunities for the play of thought and social instincts. I have often advocated this Temple Annex, and do so again with this additional argument, that, religion must ally itself to modern appliances for influencing the minds and sentiments of the young. It may cost several hundred thousand dollars to establish a proper annex to our Temple, but *every dollar thus expended is an investment and every moment lost is adding another nail to the coffin of modern Judaism.*

A second method of attack is to awaken young Israel to the duty it owes to itself and to Israel.

Let young Israel take to heart the text, "Let all the children be taught of the Lord

and great will be the peace of thy children.”
This applies firstly to the individual. It means that religion and peace or religion and a successful life go hand in hand. For religion is “a tree of life to those who seize hold of it.” Religion invests life with a broader and nobler outlook than merely the material. For the young man and woman starting out to make a career, religion is an asset that will be a source of intellectual, moral, and spiritual power. Let the youth of our day be earnestly advised of this relation of religion to success. Let them be shown that religion is not a philosophical speculation or superstition, but a moral influence that has a direct bearing on individual welfare. Faith is a supreme power that ultimately makes for righteousness, reconciles us to many trials and creates an optimistic spirit that is of great spiritual value in an emergency. In the present world’s crisis, it is religion that sustains many people with the unfaltering trust that the right will prevail. Let young Israel accept that faith and increase its courage, staying power, and hope of success.

Then there is, moreover, a duty that young Israel owes to the whole house of Israel. You should not separate yourselves from your own people. We ought to feel proud of the origin of the history of Israel, its people, its heroes and martyrs, its literature, its faith. "Look to the rock whence you were hewn." America is proud of the American patriots, and points to them with a glow of satisfaction. Americans are proud of their constitution, their democracy, their liberties. Young American Israel, know you not that the American Constitution is of Hebraic origin, that Israel was the first people to stand for civil liberty and religious freedom? Know you not, that the pioneers of America were influenced by the spirit of the Bible and especially of the Mosaic code? Know you not, that Judaism is the source of all the greater religions of the civilized world, that our Bible has influenced human thought and civilization more than any one book in all literature? This pardonable pride in Israel's achievements and contribution to humanity ought to lead young Israel to a hearty espousal of its cause.

If your father and mother were both dead, and, years after, you had found a document which they left and it had been brought to you, would you not read it; would you not try to decipher it, and have some one explain it? And if your parents had in that last document, which was their last will and testament, ordered certain things to be done, would you not try to perform them? Ancient Israel is your ancestor; it has left you a sacred document, the Bible, a sacred religion, Judaism. Will you not read that Bible and keep their religion? Will you not treasure that heritage of old? And when you find that it is useful for to-day and highly esteemed by the world, it should be both your duty and your pride to accept this Bible and practice this faith of your fathers. Thus the heart of the fathers will be turned to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers. Thus the mantle of Elijah will fall on Elisha, and the parents and children, teachers and pupils, will be united in the worship of God and the practice of love to man.

But what, we are asked, can young Israel specifically do in furtherance of the revival of Judaism? The very desire to further this cause is already an accomplishment. And it will stimulate activity in the direction of co-operation in the religious school and young people's societies and Jewish charities. Young Israel, your part lies especially in the furtherance of the interest of the synagogue! Let me remind those of young Israel who stood upon this holy platform on the day of Shabuoth and accepted the law of God with the resolution to keep it, that that resolution was made with the firm conviction that Judaism was part of your life and was to be a leaven in the development of your character and your career. That holy occasion should not be lost sight of. You are and should feel that you are a part of the synagogue. You can keep the Sabbath and holidays. You can attend the religious services. And when you have thus gained an inspiration for your own lives, you can carry it to others.

I have said that Emanu-El needs missionaries. And who is better equipped than

young Israel to become missionaries in this great cause?

Young Israel, *make this Temple your own*. In very truth it is yours. It will be your inheritance. The present leaders will pass away and you must stand ready to take their places. You are the reserve army of Israel. When the front lines have fallen at their post of duty, your lines must move forward to take their places. You must fill up the breach in the ranks.

Therefore, my young friends, I bid you to realize the imperative duty of the hour, to train yourselves for your present as well as your future work, for your God and your people. Become torch bearers of Israel's faith. The light that you carry will illumine your own souls and will aid in dispelling ir-religion, scoffing, barbarity, and inhumanity, and bring nearer a new era.

Young Israel, you are the advance guard of a new civilization. When this war has been fought and won, when peace has been established and reconstruction has begun, you will enter a new world of greater thought and action than has ever existed.

You can prepare yourselves for that greater day, by now espousing the ideals of your faith, Truth and Justice, Liberty, Equality, and Peace, for that will be the slogan of the reconstructed world. When you have been taught of the Lord, your peace will be great and eternal.

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**SHALL WE SURRENDER
JUDAISM?**

"They who builded on the walls and they that bear burdens with those that loaded, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work and with the other held a weapon. For the builders, every one had his sword by his side and so builded."

(*Neh. IV, 17-18.*)

Nehemiah, a great leader of ancient Israel, about the year 444 B. C., had obtained permission from the King of Persia to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, in order to make the city and the Temple, as well as the people, secure. But the Samaritans, jealous of the return of the Jews to their former home, threatened to prevent the rebuilding of the walls. The intrepid leader, Nehemiah, however, was undaunted, and he armed his builders. As the text says, the men built with one hand, while with the other they held a weapon. Some had a sword beside them; others a spear, always ready with which to defend themselves. But they never ceased to build. It was not long before the Samaritans, seeing the readiness of the Jews for defense, retired, and the work of building the

wall was completed without further interference. www.libtool.com.cn

This story teaches the valuable characteristics of an intrepid leader, who is not intimidated by difficulties while engaged in an important work. As Nehemiah prepared himself for building the wall and at the same time for defense against the attacks of the enemy, who sought to prevent the work, so every one must act if he wishes to succeed in any important engagement. Every one must be equipped with the trowel and the sword: the one indicative of an instrument for labor; the other of a weapon for defense.

It often happens that, whilst one is engaged in a great reformatory task, his motives are impugned, his method is criticized, his purpose is belittled and questioned. And if this process of hampering the reformer does not avail, his plans are attacked in general, as well as in detail, and every possible obstacle is put in his way. The envious Samaritans are not all dead. They raise their heads everywhere, and are ever ready to carry on their selfish, destructive work. Hence, it is necessary to be provided with

the trowel and the sword, unless one is willing to relinquish his task and surrender to his foes and be recreant to his duty. The great men of history, who fill the halls of fame are immortal; they were builders and fighters.

The trowel and the sword held by a person at the same time, constitute a symbol of militant progress, and may serve to indicate the militantly progressive spirit of Israel. The Jews under Nehemiah caught the spirit of their brave leader. This was not accidental, but rather in line with that determined, self-reliant, aggressive spirit that marked the Jewish people.

Abraham exhibited that resoluteness for work and defense when he left his father's house, city, and country, to build a new nation in a strange land. The same impulse for advance actuated Moses to become the liberator and re-organizer of his people. That defensive belligerency was also manifested by Mordecai and Esther, by the Macabees, by Hannah and her seven sons, and by innumerable stalwart sons and daughters in Israel, who would not bend the knee to

idols, nor surrender any of their cherished beliefs or ideals.

Israel has been called "the miracle of history," because it has preserved itself despite all attacks, whilst many other nations have fallen under similar burdens. Judaism may be called the miracle in the history of religions. Whilst many religions have come and disappeared, Judaism still remains; and it remains intact, because it was always a militantly progressive religion. Religion to be successful must be a builder and a fighter. It must build up the spirit within and fight aggression from without, especially the aggression of infidelity, error, ignorance, intolerance, and prejudice.

The ancient rabbis built a wall around the Jewish faith; that is to say, they added line to line, precept to precept, law to law, ceremony to ceremony, as is explained in the Jewish writings, in order to protect the Torah. The Talmud says, that this building of a wall around the Torah is as if a man had a precious garden, around which he built many fences, so that if the outer fence was destroyed, there would be still other fences

to protect the garden. But the walls of Judaism have been gradually broken down of late years: first, the dietary laws; then the strict Sabbath laws; then the Sabbath itself. Later the home ceremonies went by the board one by one; then the Synagogue ritual was continually shortened. The Hebrew language was gradually replaced by German, then by English or some other vernacular, until now Hebrew is regarded by some as an intrusion in the ritual, whereas it formerly was there by right. The funeral ceremonies have been curtailed. The Minyan service has been reduced from seven days to three, or two, or one, and often it is omitted altogether. The Kaddish is still said; but many of the modern children regard it merely as a custom rather than an outpouring of the human heart to God and a memorial for the dead. Thus, the walls, the fences of Judaism, have been gradually impaired. In the cases of some of our brethren, these walls have been entirely broken down. There are some who have destroyed their religion altogether. I mean they have surrendered their own faith and become

atheists, or ethical culturists, or embraced another religion. Such apostasy might have been expected in ancient times, in the face of persecution, when men and women were threatened with death by fire, unless they abjured their faith. Then there might have been some excuse for apostasy. But to learn that in free America, or in some of the other enlightened countries of Europe, conversion is occurring amongst Jews to an alarming degree, passeth human understanding.

No wonder the House of Israel laments the defection in its ranks. It feels humiliated, stung to the quick, when it realizes that some of its own sons and daughters have turned traitors to their faith. There is an ancient parable that describes this condition and feelings of Israel. It runs as follows: The wood remonstrated with the iron and said: "Why do you cry so loud when you are struck? When I am struck, I hardly utter any but a very low sound." "Your case is different than mine," replied the iron. "When you are struck by an axe, for instance, you are struck by that which is not of your own kind. But when I am struck

by the hammer, I am struck by my own kind—hence my piercing cry.”

When children turn against their parents, then is the hour of deep parental woe. When a friend proves treacherous, then is the time of keen pain and despair. When Israel's sons and daughters are disloyal, criticize their own faith, then is the time for protest and lamentation. But when adults in Israel turn apostates, then surely does Israel feel the agony of an almost mortal wound.

But the humiliation becomes more aggravated when we learn on what grounds some seek conversion to the dominant faith. If only one of those converts could say convincingly that he became converted because of conviction, because he had seen the error of Judaism and the truth of another faith; if only one of them could truthfully say that Israel erred two thousand years ago, and that it is now time for Israel to acknowledge its error, there might be some solace for the defection in Israel, painful as it would be for the faithful.

But no. The apostates can excuse their action neither on the ground of conviction,

nor the error of Judaism. They stand charged, that they seek the dominant faith only because of convenience and self-interest. They sell their birthright for a mess of pottage; they sell their God for gold; they barter their better self for pelf.

Some claim an excuse for their apostasy that one religion is as good as another; that religion, after all, is accidental, and that if they had been born of Christian parents, they would have been Christians. Therefore, they claim, they will become converted in order to correct the accidents of birth, that at least their children might not be handicapped by a faith that is unpopular. Others are bold enough to claim that they desire by conversion to escape the prejudices and discrimination of anti-Semitism, on the plea that they desire to meet the world on equal terms. Still others make a great pretense of liberalism, and claim that the world ought to have only one religion, and since that is desirable, the minority should surrender to the dominant faith. Complete assimilation as a basis for universal brotherhood is their plea.

All these so-called reasons are mere sophistry. *Firstly, is one religion as good as another?* Our answer is that Christianity is just as good for the sincere Christian as Judaism is for the true Jew. As Lessing says in Nathan the Wise: "*Was dich zum Christen macht, macht mich zum Juden.*" The religion in which a man believes is the best for him, because it is the basis of his character and is the means of his salvation. But this principle does not hold good for the apostate who changes his faith as he would his coat, in accordance with the society he wishes to enter. The mercenary apostate has no religion but selfishness; no God but an idol to which he prostrates himself.

Secondly, does the apostate insure the welfare of his children by providing through his apostasy that the children should be born in the environment of the dominant religion? This is problematical. There are cases on record of children who, having learned that their parents were apostates, returned to Judaism when they were able to judge for themselves. This is due to the fact that

Jews are a race, not merely a religious community, and that through racial characteristics the Jewish spirit often maintains itself. It has been noted that once a Jew always a Jew, and that many an apostate recanted on his deathbed and died with the "Shema Yisroel" on his lips.

Thirdly, I ask, does it betoken liberalism on the part of the apostate to claim that he is furthering the millenium by seeking to establish only one religion? The sophistry here is clear, when we realize that the creation of a universal religion is an impossibility. Differences of religion are due to varying conceptions of the Deity, of duty, ethics, of ceremonialism, rituals, Bible interpretations, etc. If one possesses the true spirit of religion he will be liberal toward all faiths.

Fourthly, I ask, does the Jewish apostate escape the ills of anti-Semitism? He may meet with a certain kind of formal respect. But at heart no one admires a renegade, and if anti-Semitism pursued him before, it certainly will not permit him to escape after conversion. When it becomes known that a convert adopted another faith not from con-

viction, but from mercenary or some other ulterior motives, the apostasy acts as a boomerang, and the anti-Semitism which he tried to throw off recoils upon his own head with doubled force.

Is the apostate right in regarding it a misfortune to be a Jew? The answer depends on the term "misfortune." To many Judaism has been an asset, a source of spiritual strength which could be found for the true Jew in no other religion. And even if the survival of Judaism is coupled with some inconvenience at times, or even embarrassing becomes instead of a hindrance, an incentive for the cultivation of the courage of his conviction. Can any Jew regard it as a misfortune to be descended from the prophets of Israel, from the makers of the Bible, from the first preacher of that monotheism which a great part of the world to-day acknowledges. Disraeli, at the acme of his career, took a pride in referring to his Jewish origin and did not regard his relation to the Jewish people as a misfortune.

The apostate's plea that he believes in thorough assimilation with the country in

which he lives in order to carry out the idea of perfect nationalism or cosmopolitanism is also untenable. Cosmopolitanism has reference to social and civic or political affiliations. Every good government recognizes the possibility of patriotism coupled with independence of religious convictions and practice. No good government insists on assimilation to the extent of a surrender of an individual's conscientious religious principles or scruples. When the Jewish convert seeks to excuse his apostasy on the plea of perfect assimilation, he makes himself guilty of sophistication for the purpose of befuddling the issue.

Thus we see that the arguments of the apostate fail because the following points are established.

1st, that one religion is not as good as another, unless coupled with sincere belief therein.

2nd, that the apostate does not insure the welfare of his children by his conversion.

3rd, that one universal religion is impossible, and that liberalism means toleration of all religions.

4th, that the renegade does not escape the evils of anti-Semitism.

5th, that it is not a misfortune to be a Jew, and

6th, that assimilation does not require surrender of faith.

But the case against the apostate is still stronger when we consider the fact that a few years ago the late Bishop Potter opposed establishing a Christian mission on the East Side to convert the Jews, because he held that such an act would be an insult to the intelligence of the Jews and because the Jews could take care of themselves. Other great non-Jews have time and again expressed their esteem for the religion of Israel, and have admired the consistency of the Jew and his martyrdom for conviction in the face of great trials.

Instead of surrendering our faith because of anti-Semitism or hardship in breaking down prejudice, there is every reason why a Jew should be faithful to his Judaism. We should remain Jews,

Firstly. Because no religion has yet been established that is superior to it.

Secondly. Because the belief in one God and His law is fundamental to all monotheistic religions, and this thought has been taken from Judaism.

Thirdly. Because we are Jews for the sake of principles, not worldly gain. We are like servants who serve their master without the expectation of reward.

Fourthly. Because if we did desire worldly recognition, we could find it better by remaining true to our faith than by renouncing it.

Fifthly. Because Jews can be better citizens by being better Jews; because they will win the respect of mankind by sacrifices for God and humanity.

Sixthly. Because Judaism still has a great mission in the world. The war has proven how all ideals of religion, of culture, and civilization have failed in a world crisis. Something is wrong with the world's religions, with civilization. Perhaps Judaism possesses some panacea for the ills of mankind.

This is a time to stand firm—this time of world carnage, when the world is combative,

nation fighting against nation and all are learning the art of war; this is the time for the Jew to be staunch. Stand by your God, your race, your country, your religion, your rabbis, your Bible, your prophets, your principles, and ideals. Whilst the world is all agog is not the time to leave the tried and true moorings of our ancient faith. Let us remain Jews, for we can help bringing about the millenium of universal peace with liberty, equality, and fraternity for all nations.

Just at this crucial hour of the world history, more than ever, is the time to cling close to the ancient moorings. Surrender not one title of Israel's faith. We need a militant, progressive Israel to-day. We need Ezras, Nehemiahs, Mordecais, Esthers, Maccabees, who were inspired to lead the people. Ascend the broken walls of your faith, O Israel. Repair the breaches. Like the builders and fighters of old, take a trowel in one hand and a sword in the other. Rebuild the spiritual walls and fight against the enemy from within, as well as against the enemy from without. And from God will come the victory for the faithful.

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REVIVAL OF THE JEWISH HOME

"Unless the Lord build the house, in vain labor those who build on it."

(Psalm CXXVII, 1.)

The implication in this text is, that despite great efforts many fail to build a real home, a Jewish home, and that they fail because they have no God in their minds or hearts.

The stability and comfort of the traditional Jewish home whose praises have been voiced by Heine and other writers, notably also by Israel Abraham in his "Jewish Life in the Middle Ages," have sprung from the love of God which permeated the husband and wife.

I have sometimes been asked to describe definitely what a Jewish Home is. In what respect does it differ from any other home? There is only one answer: a Jewish home is one built up by Jews, true Jews, who believe in God and practice the Jewish religion. Those who are Jews in name only, who have no faith and no regard for the synagogue,

may build themselves a home, a gilded mansion, if you please, but it will not be a Jewish Home. To be more specific, I would say, that a Jewish home is characterized not so much by special visible forms as by a distinctively Jewish spirit, a spirit of reverence for God and for sacred things, as well as of loyalty to the house of Israel, to certain Jewish ideals, purposes, and interests. By way of illustration, let us ask, what constitutes an American Home? Not the American flag or pictures of Washington and Lincoln that one may find there, but rather a spirit of patriotism, a love of our country, its laws and free institutions, its people, its heroes, its history, literature, the high resolve to do one's duty to country in the home or outside thereof. In the present national emergency, it is the spirit of devotion in the home to conservation of food and fuel, to necessary economy, to a grim determination to be brave and make sacrifices, to urging on the volunteer, to helping the soldiers at the front, to aiding all our countrymen and allies to win this war for humanity; it is all these characteristics combined that constitute an American Home.

Now, if in such an American home we find also a certain Jewish spirit that manifests itself in reverence for God and things sacred, as well as loyalty to Israel, we have the beginnings of a Jewish Home. Such a Jewish spirit would mold the thoughts and feelings of its members and condition many of their acts. It would, firstly, induce the father and mother of the family to voice the command of Jacob to his household to "put away the strange gods from their midst." Like Hezekiah they would seek to break down the heathen altars that are practically found in many so-called Jewish Homes. *Strange gods and heathen altars* in Jewish homes? It is incredible. Yet it is a fact. Would you expect an American home to halt between two flags? How long do you expect a Jewish home to endure that halts between two gods, that worships at two shrines, that flirts with other religions?

A true Jewish spirit would change that hybrid aspect of religion in the home and foster a love for some tangible forms of Judaism. In the traditional Jewish home there may still be found the Mezuzah on the

doorposts, the Sabbath lamp, the Hanukkah lamp, the Kiddush cup, the Shield of David, Biblical or other Jewish pictures, a Hebrew calendar or Yahrzeit tablet. These symbols or emblems of Judaism could be made to serve a definitely spiritual purpose to-day, even in a home permeated with the modern spirit. And there is urgent reason why the Bible and some books on Jewish history and literature should be found in every Jewish home, why these should be read and discussed there. And there ought to be a revival of some forms and ceremonies, either a prayer at stated times, or the proper induction of the Sabbath on Friday night, the home celebration of Purim, Hanukkah, Passover, and Sukkoth. Those who remember the spirit of festivity and holy joy that pervaded the former Jewish home on the Sabbath or a holiday, will yearn for a revival of those ceremonies that breathed new life into the family and brought its members closer together, as well as nearer to God, to Israel, and Humanity.

I believe in modernism—to a certain extent. I believe, also, that we have permitted

our homes to be secularized too much. Secularism is the curse of the modern Jewish home. Let me give you an instance of this. I have seen the old-fashioned six-pronged Sabbath lamp fitted up with electric bulbs, and on Friday night, instead of filling the lamp with oil and lighting the old-fashioned taper, the master of the house presses a button and six flaming electric lights herald the Sabbath. But the effect is not the same. The flavor of antiquity is missing, the tie that bound us to the olden days is broken by that rude grafting of modernity upon a quaint, beautiful, old custom.

But this is only an indication of how secularization of the home has gradually driven out the former Jewish spirit. You hear no Hebrew word in many homes, and no Jewish melody. Everything Jewish is taboo. No Bible, no prayer book, no Jewish magazine or paper, can be found in a secular home of the ultra-radical Jew. And with the loss of the Jewish spirit much of the loyalty to Israel, its ideal, its purpose, and interest, has passed away and fidelity to synagogue and Jewish institutions has been impaired.

It is no wonder then that even the beautiful ceremony of remembering the dead by the recital of the Kaddish, a custom that has been honored by the deepest sentiment of the heart, has also been touched by the sacrilegious hands of the radical skeptic.

But the greatest harm of the all too rapid secularization of the Jewish home has been done to the young. The older people have still lurking in their souls some of the ancient afflatus of religion and Jewishness. But the younger generation who are brought up in secularized homes have no opportunity of breathing the real spirit of Judaism. You cannot create the same spirit for the young in a school or the synagogue. Religion is in the first instance a matter of the home, of the family. And the child inherits his religion as he does his family and the family name and reputation. He breathes in his religion by virtue of the religious spirit that pervades the home and by force of the religious examples he sees there. The child is not born a Jew, but is made a Jew by the Jewish home in which he is brought up and trained. *The Jewish home is the Alma*

Mater of the Jew. Israel Abrahams in his Jewish Life in the Middle Ages, while speaking of the effects of persecution on Judaism, says,

“Home religion became an etiquette, a provincial code of manners against foreign intrusion. Then, with the close of the eighteenth century, came one touch of the modern spirit, and lo! the evil humours fled one by one into the night and ‘The Tree of Life’ revived, erect and expansive. For its roots were fixed in the home, and the Jewish Home, whatever its faults and limitations, was never tainted with moral corruption.”

Our ancient sages and rabbis understood the psychology of Home influence, and therefore they insisted on the practice of home ceremonies. Therefore Moses commanded his people, “Thou shalt teach these laws diligently to thy children and shalt talk of them, when thou sittest in thine house, when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.” *Home religion is the best religious instruction for the child.*

To-day, alas, we have this great and dis-

treassing anomaly presented, that the child is sent to the religious school where he is taught his religion, and, when he goes home he finds much of the instruction he received violated. He is told to keep the Sabbath, which he sees transgressed by his parents and elders. The same is true with regard to the holidays and the ceremonies of Passover, Yom Kippur, Sukkoth, Purim, and Hanukkah. The child is told to believe in God and prayer, but in many cases he finds no God and no prayer in his home. He is told that Judaism has a mission to free the world from idolatry and he finds idolatry, the worship of Mammon, in his home. He is told to love Israel, the Bible, Jewish history and literature, the heroes and martyrs of Israel, but in his home often these subjects are scoffed at, and he is reminded by some elders that we are living in the twentieth century and must only revere Washington and Lincoln and not think so much of the Maccabees and Mordecai and Esther.

That inconsistency between the secularized Jewish home and the instruction of the Synagogue and School is one of the sever-

est blows to Modern Judaism. Israel Abraham says of the ancient Jewish home: "It was a haven of rest from the storms that raged around the very gates of the ghettos, nay, a fairy palace in which the bespattered objects of the world's derision threw off their garb of shame and resumed the royal attire of freemen. The home was the place where the Jew was at his best."

Yes, and we may add, the Jewish home was the fortress of Israel, the citadel of Judaism. There the Jew was safe from the mailed fist and the cold world. There he nurtured his faith and brought up his children to love God and his family, his people, his religion and humanity. No matter how the world outside raged against him and tempted him from his faith, in his home the Jew recovered his poise. No matter how Jewish children may have felt humiliated by meeting aspersion against their faith and people in the world outside, in the Jewish home the children regained their self-respect and strengthened their Jewish consciousness.

But what bulwark does the secular home afford to Jewish children to-day who meet,

perchance, with the flings of anti-Semitism and the rebuffs of the ignorant and prejudiced? It is no wonder that many of the young drift from the ancient moorings! When we lose the Jewish home, we lose the antidote to the poison of prejudice, ridicule, discrimination, and other forms of anti-Semitism.

Our friends tell us to draw the people to the synagogue and the children to the school. But that is not the remedy for the present emergency. It is beginning at the wrong end. We are now preaching in synagogue and school, but our preaching is negatived and thus neutralized by the secular home. We must begin at the other end and bring religion back to the Jewish home, or all efforts of synagogue and school will fail. The Jewish home is the source of Jewish enthusiasm and loyalty. We must revive the Jewish home and restore the altar of our faith there, make of every father and mother a priest and priestess ministering at the family hearth. We must turn back the hearts of the parents to the children and the hearts of the children to the parents.

When Israel fought against the Amalites, the arms of Moses held up in prayer, in order that Israel might prevail, were sustained by Hur and Aaron. The modern Rabbi is fighting secularism, anti-Semitism, and irreligion, but in order that he may prevail, the congregation and the home must, like Hur and Aaron, uphold his arms.

In a word, the paramount duty of a congregation that seeks the renaissance of Judaism, is to revive the Jewish home. But in order to accomplish this, God must be put back in the Jewish home, and then will its pristine beauty, and glory, its unity, joy and peace be established. "Unless the Lord build the home, in vain labor those who built on it."

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THE REVIVAL OF SABBATH OBSERVANCE

"The children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath and observe it throughout all generations. It is a sign of an everlasting covenant between me and the children of Israel saith the Lord."

(*Exodus XXXI, 16 and 17.*)

In all synagogues throughout the world this text is read at every Friday evening service. Because of an appreciation of its truth and importance it has been retained in the Union Prayer Book. In addition to that the Prayer book contains also these significant words, "Oh, help us to preserve the Sabbath as Israel's heritage from generation to generation, that it may ever bring rest and joy, peace and comfort to the dwellings of our brethren and through it thy name be hallowed in all the earth."

And just as persistently as these passages are recited, so are they violated. Israel presents no greater anomaly to-day than this public, deliberate, flagrant inconsistency of

professing to stand for the Sabbath and then, by acts, of contradicting and nullifying this profession. It is astounding that a religion should thus negate one of its fundamental principles in the very movement of avowing it. We organize congregations and build synagogues and splendid temples for the preservation of Judaism and then deliberately destroy the Sabbath for which the synagogues were built and which is necessary for the salvation of our religion.

In vain are all synagogues and temples, all religious schools, societies and classes, in vain all preaching and teaching, unless we have a Sabbath. The *Sabbath* is the corner stone of Judaism, not its superstructure. Without the Sabbath all efforts for the rehabilitation of Judaism is like the ineffectual flapping of a butterfly in the midst of a cyclone.

"The Sabbath is the sign of an everlasting covenant between God and Israel." That is the all-important fact which we must keep before us and bring home to our congregations. It is the embodiment of all that Judaism stands for. It was so regarded by Moses

and on that account Sabbath breakers were threatened with the punishment of death in the Mosaic code. Though perhaps this extreme penalty was hardly ever executed, still the Sabbath breaker was held in contempt by ancient Israel and looked upon as a traitor to our sacred cause.

And why? Because the Sabbath was regarded as a distinguishing mark of a Jew, as an outward expression of his beliefs and practices, of his loyalty to God and Israel. When he violated the Sabbath it followed that he practically denounced his former beliefs and defied God and Israel.

In interpreting the Sabbath as a link between God and Israel, it must be remembered that the Sabbath, as a day sacred to Jehovah, was a possession of Israel and distinguished Israel from other nations. Whilst other nations kept their Sabbath in honor of Saturn or another planetary deity, Israel consecrated the day to Jehovah, to its conception of the spirituality, unity and universality of God.

The Sabbath and Israel's conception of God and religion are inseparable. Let us

pursue this thought as follows: Judaism regards God as an ever active cause of the Universe. God does not sit idly by and behold the Universe work, but lives and acts in and through it. Man shall imitate God. He shall not be an idle being, indifferent to the world about him, but an active being, identified with its welfare and processes of thought and action. Yet man shall not lose his identity and become a slave to his own activity. He shall complete each week's work in six days and on the seventh declare himself free from earth and rise upward to God by sanctifying his soul. In this sense the Sabbath became a visible, tangible protest against slavery, materialism and idolatry. Further, the Sabbath practically is a declaration of freedom and spirituality as well as sanctification to higher ideals, which are identical with a recognition of Divinity. The Sabbath—by ennobling man, by raising him above the animal and lower passions, by bringing recreation and sanctification, causing the godlike, the higher self, to reign on earth, as God reigns throughout the universe, must certainly lead to only one result,

that the Sabbath is an everlasting link between God and man, between God and Israel.

This idea of the Sabbath as a link between God and Israel becomes clearer and more convincing when we compare it to some conceptions of life. The Greek regards the world as the highest existence, and loses his identity therein. The Indian regards the world as sin, a falling from grace, from which state we should flee as from something unclean. But the Jew neither shuns the world, nor loses himself therein, but retains his identity and individuality, for the Sabbath restores his spiritual balance or equilibrium. Some have thought the conception of the Sabbath to be a fleeing from the world, a negation of all that is world or material. That is the Puritan conception. But according to Judaism the Sabbath symbolizes our regard for the world, in harmony with our regard for God, the Master of the Universe. Man should seek to accomplish his share of the world's work in such a manner as to gain the blessing of God and man.

Judaism contemplates the Sabbath as a

means for the spiritual and moral development of man, awakening in him a self-conscious-yearning for a higher life, dominated by divine manifestation of intellect, feeling and will, in fact, as a link between God and the higher man and hence as a sign of the covenant between God and Israel. The prophets all conceived the Sabbath from this lofty standpoint and insisted upon its proper observance. Amos, Ezekiel, Jeremiah are emphatic in their denunciation of Sabbath desecration, but it remains for Isaiah to sound the strong prediction that Israel's final glory depends upon a proper regard for the day. His insignificant call is as follows: "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord honorable, and shalt honor him, by not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words,

"Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord: and I shall cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob, thy father, for

the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."—Is. 58, 14.

This idea of the Sabbath is borne out by the Talmud, where we find such comments as the following: "Whosoever observes the Sabbath testifies to God's creation of the world." "The Sabbath is balanced against the whole law." "One who violates the Sabbath violates the whole law." "If one observes the Sabbath rigidly though he has practised idolatry his sin is forgiven." (The thought here is that Sabbath observance is a negation of idolatry.) "Whoever observes the Sabbath has done as much as if he had created it." (The thought is that he contributes to preserve it.)

To further teach the importance of the Sabbath the Talmud has this beautiful legend. "Two angels, one good and the other evil, accompany every Jew on Sabbath eve from the synagogue to his home. If the Sabbath lamp is found lighted and the table spread, the good angel prays that this may be the case also on the following Sabbath and the evil angel is compelled to say "Amen." But if no preparations for the

Sabbath are seen, the evil angel pronounces a curse and the good angel is compelled to say "Amen." The meaning is obvious; a proper observance of the Sabbath in the home gives it a festive and sanctified spirit and turns all evil into good. With the Sabbath, God and peace enter the home and prepare a good influence for the coming week.

Some will perhaps recall the Friday evening at home of their youth. The Sabbath was welcomed with the Sabbath light, and the father, returning from the Synagogue, blessed his family. There were prayers and wine for sanctification of the Day. Good cheer and singing added to the enjoyment of the festive evening hour.

With the Sabbath, God and peace enter the home. And if this process is preserved in every Jewish home, then will love and peace reign throughout Israel. Said an ancient Rabbi, "If all Israel were to observe two successive Sabbaths as they should be observed, that is, by spiritual sanctification and the worship of God at home and in Synagogue, redemption would ensue at

once." "If even one Sabbath were rightly kept," said another Rabbi, "the Messiah would appear."

Because the Sabbath was regarded of such vital importance to Judaism, the law enjoining it was by Moses placed in the Ten Commandments, which stand as the embodiment of all that is fundamental in Judaism. Because the preservation of the Sabbath was so important to the future of Judaism and Israel its desecration was severely punished. And thirdly because with a strict observance of the Sabbath Judaism would prevail therefore in generations past Jews made great sacrifices to preserve it. The enemies of Israel who endeavored to destroy Judaism, realizing the strength and value of the Sabbath, persecuted Sabbath observers. Antioch Epiphanes issued decrees against the Jews and declared the observance of the Sabbath and every Jewish law to be a capital offence. Many Jews suffered death rather than violate the Sabbath, even by self-defence on that day. The faithful became martyrs while the weak gave up Sabbath observance and were lost to Judaism. A second form

of persecution consisted of the inimical and sarcastic writings of Roman and Greek authors against the Sabbath. Then came Christianity and instituted Sunday as its day of rest and worship, and the antagonism between the Jewish and the Christian Sabbath became intense and bitter. It is unnecessary to pursue this antagonism further. It exists to this very day and is patent to all. Because of the dispersion of Israel throughout the world, because of the almost universal acceptance of Sunday as a day of rest and the conversion of Saturday into an important business day, the Jews have practically lost their Sabbath. And with Sabbath desecration has come a corresponding weakening of Judaism.

It requires no further argument to drive home the thought that the preservation of Judaism depends on the Sabbath. Surrender the Sabbath and all that is vital to Judaism falls. We need the Sabbath in our time to testify to Israel's fidelity to our cause. *The Sabbath makes the Synagogue.* Without it the Synagogue stands empty and the opportunity for public instruction and wor-

ship is greatly impaired. We need the Sabbath to strengthen the religious consciousness of the Jew and give him an ideal to uphold. We need the Sabbath to reinstitute thereby religion in the life of the individual and the home. We need the Sabbath as a link between God and Israel. And finally we need the Sabbath as a tie that unites all Israel. The Sunday will not serve as a substitute. It lacks historical authority and cannot borrow its sanctity from secular legislation. Instead of unifying Israel it would serve to create a schism.

How then can we revive Sabbath Observance? That is the practical question before us. It can only be done by united effort on the part of all members and officers of the congregation. Once let them be convinced of the absolute necessity of Sabbath observance for the preservation of Judaism; once let them realize the anomalous position of a congregation that supports a vast Temple only for ornamental purposes, and for a camouflage religion; once let them comprehend what a stultification in the eyes of the world it is for a congregation to open the

doors of its synagogue for worship on the Sabbath and then for the great bulk of the Congregation to spend the Sabbath in unnecessary business or in idle pursuits and pastimes, and all officers and members will unitedly give up Sabbath desecration and rally to the upholding of our ancient institution.

If the elders will set an example of Sabbath Observance, it will be followed by the children. Time was when every parent brought his children to the synagogue and taught them by precept and example to know God and obey His law. Time was when Jews practiced what they preached and professed. Then they had a Sabbath and there was no question as to the drawing powers of the pulpit. We are fallen into low straits indeed when God is no more an attraction in the synagogue, but when forsooth congregations worship not God in the synagogue, but a fine singer or a sensational orator.

Let Israel bestir itself. It needs reformation, the very kind of reformation that a Sabbath alone can give, namely, sanctifica-

tion of the spirit, consecration to lofty ideals, a surrender to God and all that is divine in thought, feeling and act. Whereas the Sabbath is the link between Israel and God, let us re-establish that link, and bind ourselves again in thought and deed to our God. In the words of Isaiah, let us turn away our feet from the Sabbath, let us call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord honorable.

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REVIVAL OF JEWISH FESTIVALS

"These are the festivals of the Lord, even holy convocations which ye shall proclaim in their seasons."

(Lev. XXIII, 4.)

The festivals which are then enumerated in the twenty-third chapter of the Book of Leviticus are Passover, Shabuoth or the Feast of Weeks, Succoth or the Feast of Tabernacles, New Year and the Day of Atonement. These festivals were intended as special holy convocations or assemblies that were to be proclaimed at their proper seasons. There were no doubt weighty reasons that led to the establishment of these festivals. Some of the reasons have been lost or become obsolete in the course of ages, but some are still of enough importance to be worthy of consideration to-day.

These festivals, especially Passover, Shabuoth and Succoth were originally agricultural feasts for they occur simultaneously with the harvests; Passover with that of the

first ripe corn; Shabuoth with that of the first ripe fruits and Succoth with the general fall harvests. It seems quite natural and reasonable for an agricultural people to have observed some kind of a religious festival in connection with their harvests for the people depended for food and other necessities of life upon these harvests. They would naturally rejoice and express their gratitude to God at such seasons. And a commercial people might still with propriety, as well as sentiment, observe such harvest festivals, for though they are not engaged in agriculture or in cattle raising, they depend for food as well as for the sale of their manufactured products upon the soil and the farmer. Hence they too may well observe the harvest festivals as seasons of rejoicing and thanksgiving.

But the origin and idea of religious festivals lies in human nature rather than in the harvest. The latter only fixes the time or season of the festival; the former furnishes the motive underlying all religious public services, Sabbath and festivals, namely the fact, that religion is not merely an individual

or private matter, but also a social or public function. If every man lived for and by himself he might be led to express his gratitude to God for life and sustenance only for himself. But as the head of a family, as a member of society, the religious consciousness of the individual grows larger and deeper. He is grateful to God for the blessings of home, of society, and he beseeches God to bestow divine grace on his home, society and the world. Believing, as we do, that the answer to prayer and the benefit of worship is subjective and not objective, it becomes necessary for those for whose benefit the prayers are offered to be cognizant thereof or to be present. Therefore, in ancient times, when sacrifices were still in vogue, it was customary for people to bring their own sacrifices to the Altar. *"They should not come empty before the Lord."* (Deut. XVI. 10.) Those who had no large animal should bring a small one and even a little flower carried in the hand would suffice. The idea here is that the spirit of devotion, the sincerity of the heart is more important than sacrifice. The sincere coming to the altar was the principal

thing and brought results. The mingling in worship with others was the important act.

The chief and most significant factor connected with public worship on Sabbath and Festivals is the benefit of *common worship*. If to pray to God alone is beneficial, to pray to him collectively is of greater spiritual value. The psychology of public worship has never been fully recognized by those who content themselves with private worship. Nor is the psychology of private worship fully recognized by even them. The more sincere and intensive is the devotion of the individual in private, the more will he be impelled to join his fellow-devotees in the synagogue. The normal religious instinct is also social in character. One who loves God desires his fellow-men to love God. He who worships God is willing to proclaim that worship publicly. A devotee of God loves his fellowmen and his co-religionists and can not be absent from a public demonstration in behalf of his God, of his religion and his people.

And then comes the spiritual effect. In common worship devotion is intensified. The

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focusing of many minds upon the same God in an act of prayer increases the ardor and enthusiasm and hence the intensity of devotion, and thus the sanctification and consecration of the soul to higher ideals are deepened. Add to this the effect of a temple dedicated to the worship of God, a prepared ritual, impressively rendered with appropriate sacred music and song, and there must result an inspiration which is helpful and lasting. Because in ancient times it was impractical for an agricultural people to have large temples in various parts of Palestine, it was ordained that the people, at least the men, should go thrice a year to Jerusalem to appear before the Lord in His holy place. The lawgiver who enacted that law understood the psychology of public worship and there is no doubt that these religious pilgrimages had a great moral and spiritual effect on the people. The men returned to their homes, renewed in spirit, uplifted and encouraged. They returned to their tasks with greater zeal and ambition. They were enabled to inspire their families with the hallowed spirit they had received at Jeru-

mine were kings and priests and prophets, forebears of modern civilization." The festivals will teach us that Israel was never recreant to its God, its faith, even in the darkest hour; that it was patriotic and loyal, humanitarian and peace loving. These teachings of the festivals have helped to preserve Israel.

But the festivals have even a greater value for Israel and Judaism in the spiritual and religious principles they represent. Pass-over teaches the principle of liberty; Shabuoth, the value of law; Tabernacles the duty of thanksgiving and rejoicing; New Year, the worth of a new beginning for the spiritual life; the Day of Atonement, the blessing of purity and reconciliation. Thus the ethical aspect of Judaism is presented by its festivals and holy days, through the teachings of *Liberty, Law, Gratitude, Reformation, Reconciliation*.

Analyze all the religions of the world and you will find in none a series of festivals that inculcate in five terms the greatest teachings of religion and civilization, the basic principles for the redemption of mankind.

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Judaism still lives, despite all criticism and ridicule of its doctrines, despite apostacy and materialism, despite dissension and differences as to creeds, Bible, forms and ceremonies amongst its own devotees. And Judaism has survived, because the Sabbath and the important festivals have survived. As long as the Sabbath and the Festivals are kept, so long will Judaism live. And as long as Judaism lives, so long will Israel live. Israel's future depends on Judaism and Judaism's future depends on the Sabbath and the festivals; on the Sabbath, because it is the link between God and Israel; on the festivals, because they preserve the memory of Israel's history and all that that history teaches of Israel's glory, its heroes, martyrs, patriotism and literature, on the Sabbath and festivals, because they incorporate and inculcate public worship as well as the essential ethical teachings of Liberty, Law, Gratitude, Reformation and Reconciliation of Truth, Justice, Righteousness, Love and Peace.

If we are in earnest with the Renaissance of Judaism, then it becomes imperative to

re-institute observance of the festivals. The ancient command "These are the festivals of God, even holy convocations which you shall proclaim in their seasons" is enjoined upon our modern congregations. What is the purpose of a congregation, if it does not include in its program the observance of the festivals?

But that is where most of our modern congregations fail. They have no program. They merely exist, they vegetate, like so many individuals. They have no definite aim, they strive for no results, and naturally they achieve none.

If a program were formulated, it should include not only observance of the Sabbaths, but also of the festivals. In these times when it is difficult for many; when it is almost impossible for some to observe the Sabbath, it is desirable to create enthusiasm at least for the festivals, for those five important holy convocations of which we have spoken.

At present many confine their attendance at public worship to one hour on the Day of Atonement. That is no worship at all, and instead of commendation, deserves the sever-

est censure. To attend public worship one hour in the year indicates no religious spirit whatsoever, and is of practically little, if any benefit to the individual or the house of Israel. It may satisfy some hidden sentiment. The least that any Jew who does not keep the Sabbath should do is to observe the five principal festivals, for they have a spiritual, ethical and inspirational value.

Those festivals are like stations on the road leading to some destination, stations where one can refresh himself and rest before going further. In religion they serve to check a tendency to spiritual apathy and indifference; they have a direct bearing on the life and spiritual striving of the individual. They have a deep spiritualizing influence on the Jewish home. The festivals especially were home feasts. Who can forget the Seder service on the first night of Passover when the father led in the reading of the Hagadah of which various members of the family read portions? Who can forget the home festivity of Shabuoth, especially if a child of the family was confirmed. Who can forget the family celebration of

the Feast of Tabernacles, or the sanctity of the home on New Year or the Day of Atonement? Who can forget the joys and delights of Purim and Hanukkah celebrations in the Jewish home of former generations?

Often we have heard of late years, that we have no festival like Christmas. But this is an erroneous impression. All the Jewish festivals are essentially home festivals and are associated with such beautiful and inspiring ceremonies and customs as tend to deepen the devotion, increase spiritual joy and unite the family in love and peace.

If the festivals, with their attendant ceremonies in the home, the school and the synagogue, could only be revived throughout Israel, what a wonderful renaissance of Judaism they would create! The Sabbath lights, the Passover, the Seder Service, the Confirmants' festivity in the home on Shabuoth, the New Year's greetings, the breaking of the fast on Yom Kippur in the home, the masks and merriment of Purim, the Hanukkah lights, with all their songs and sanctification, with their good cheer and hospitality, with all their love and charity would move

the hearts of Israel, unite parents and children, give to Judaism a new life and to Israel a new hope.

Well then Emanu-El! Are you convinced? If so, let us write into the Constitution of this Congregation the ancient command, "These are the festivals of the Lord, even holy convocations which ye shall proclaim in their seasons." Yes, proclaim them and keep them in the synagogue, in the school and in the home, and thus contribute to the revival of our ancient faith.

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REVIVAL OF JEWISH IDEALISM

And God said unto Elijah, "Go and stand on the mountain before the Lord."

(*Kings XIX, 11.*)

Elijah is one of the greatest characters of the Bible, a child of nature, a man inspired of God. He was a prophet who feasted upon great ideals, whose life was devoid of every taint of materialism or commercialism, even of the ordinary precautions that actuate most men. His greatest mission consisted in battling against idolatry and heathenism and in drawing the people away from a sordid existence to a nobler and higher life. He was an indefatigable champion of idealism and an uncompromising opponent of all the gross materialism of his day, whether he found it in high or low places. He was the friend of truth and righteousness and the inveterate foe of all hypocrisy and evil. He was a giant in spiritual strength,

a bulwark of rectitude, invulnerable in every contest for truth, right and justice. Yet notwithstanding all his energy, long suffering, patience, perseverance and buoyancy, he finally succumbed under the many disappointments that fell to his lot; gave up the good fight for idealism and withdrawing from the world of activity, strife, turmoil and vexation, hid himself in a cave. Here in obscurity he would rest, secure from all the corruption of the world and all its mean and unworthy motives that his heart abhorred. Here he would be free from the dangers that threatened him in the city and from the cruel fate that had overtaken his colleagues. We can infer all this from the anguish of soul that he expressed in his reply to the reproach of God, "What doest thou here, Elijah." In the intense grief at his bitter disappointment, he cries out, "I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant, thrown down Thine altars and slain Thy prophets with the sword and I, even I alone am left and they seek my life to take it away." (Kings XIX. 9 and 10.)

Then followed the order from heaven, "Go forth and stand upon the mountain before the Lord." Elijah obeyed and beheld that wonderful vision of storm, wind, earthquake and fire, and learned that God was not in the wind, the earthquake or fire that destroy, but in the still small voice that is forever building the universe and making for righteousness.

I interpret the command, "stand upon the mountain before the Lord," and the vision that followed, to mean, that Elijah was not to be discouraged; that he was to leave the valley of materialism, the lower planes of sordid conflict and go up to the mountain top of Idealism, to stand before the Lord and follow the still small voice of God, the dictate of conscience, the promptings of the better nature of man that lead always upward and onward to the highest goal.

We all have need of ideals to reconcile us to the many disappointments of life. Ideals are the buoys that keep us afloat upon the tempestuous seas of earthly existence until some unexpected help from without or within us comes to our rescue. Ideals are

the standards of excellence that we have set for ourselves in character, success or happiness. They give a lofty purpose to life, direct and stimulate ambition and pride and fortify us against the trials and vexations that beset our paths.

But the greatest value of ideals is to be found in the fact, that they constitute the mainspring of permanent progress. Those, of whose soul idealism has taken possession, do not rest content with the realization of any one goal. Every gain is to them but a stepping stone to another. An ideal realized creates in turn another ideal. There is no limit to progress in the realm of idealism.

The same principle obtains in nations. Ideals create them and keep them alive. When nations cease to be actuated by lofty and sublime purposes, they degenerate, as do individuals, into selfish, pleasure or power loving entities that in time lead to their destruction. Many nations have foundered on that rock. The Empires of Alexander and Napoleon are examples of the destructive influences of a national loss of idealism. Germany of to-day has built up a Franken-

stein in her militarism which is destined to be her undoing. The greatest nations of the world to-day, America, England, France, Italy and Belgium are actuated by an idealism for the benefit of humanity that will make them supreme.

Religions are subject to the same life-giving principle as are individuals and nations. Religions, it may properly be said, depend for their origin and progress on some high ideal which, embodied in a creed, in laws rituals and ceremonies, becomes so deeply rooted in the thoughts, feelings and practices of a people as to excell all other purposes in popularity and influence. And the very life of a religion depends upon the vitality of its visions or rather upon the preservation of the spirit of idealism which constantly looks forward to a higher goal of excellence. A religion, even as a nation or an individual, can not afford to rest content with any material achievement. Many religions, just as nations, have died because they lost their lofty outlook of spiritual progress. The mythologies of the ancient Greeks and Romans for centuries swayed

men's beliefs and hopes; idolatry and polytheism have had their days of glory and influence. But they died in the grip of material degeneracy.

Judaism succeeded in impressing itself upon men's minds and in rising superior to the sordid religions of antiquity because of its singular and superior idealism founded upon the holiness of God and looking to the perfection of man. In any discussion of the origin and permanence of Judaism, this basic fact must not be overlooked, that idealism is its distinct and distinguishing characteristic. In Judaism par excellence all material forms, rituals and rites are secondary to its ideal of human perfection. Judaism is an interpretation of life and must therefore be as broad, as comprehensive as life itself. It cannot be narrowly dogmatic; it must be broadly progressive, even "elastic" as has been facetiously remarked by a captious critic. Judaism is an outgrowth of the needs of human nature and must constantly correspond to those needs. Whilst forms, ceremonies, institutions may become obsolete, Judaism remains ever new. As long

as men live, as long as life lasts, as long as the soul has *aspirations* toward better things, so long will Judaism remain, because it represents those aspirations.

It is therefore possible to trace Judaism back through more than three thousand years of history, through the simple faith of the Patriarchs, the complicated Levitical Cult of the Mosaic Code, the Temple rites of the ancient priesthood, the humanitarianism of the prophets, the legalism, to wit, rigid ceremonialism of the Talmudic period, down to the Reforms of our own day and to find, notwithstanding innumerable changes and innovations of forms, the same historic Judaism, the same philosophy of the Universe and God, of life and man. In short, Jewish Idealism, the very heart of our religion, has maintained Judaism through three thousand years of development, with all its changes, destructive tendencies and internal crises.

And this idealism has maintained Israel despite persecution, discrimination, oppression and dismemberment. Israel survived dissension in its ancient kingdom, the woes

and strifes between divided kingdoms, Babylonian Exile and later its precarious existence under various forms of government. Israel survived because, whilst other peoples fought for territory, commercial, industrial and political power, Israel was buoyed up by the hope of realizing its idealism for man and mankind. Israel was sustained by the principle underlying the words of Scripture, "not by might and not by power, but by spirit saith the Lord."

Israel had heard and obeyed the word of God spoken to Elijah, "Go forth and stand on the mountain before the Lord." In the realm of idealism there is no defeat. He whose only aspiration is for the best, the highest, the purest, the noblest, is never lost. Disappointment may come even to idealists, but it acts only as a spur to great effort. That is the very nature of an ideal, that it is invincible. You may destroy property, kill people, but the ideal will live. In the present war, brute force may destroy life and all material things, but when the smoke of battle is cleared away, then will arise, phoenix-like from the embers of destruction, a new world

based on justice and humanity, liberty, equality and fraternity for all mankind.

Israel has died a thousand deaths, but its Idealism has survived. No sword thrust or shell can pierce an idea or an ideal. The thunder of Sinai is heard above the carnage of battle. While Jerusalem was in flames, a Rabbi built a school at Jamnia and planted anew the ideals of Israel. And so in every city and hamlet of the world, where a Jewish family took root, it planted its ideal and built a school and synagogue around it.

But the world's materialism grew apace at the same time and many people became engrossed by worldly interest and were swept away from the moorings of a higher spiritual life. No need specifically to analyze the momentous crisis of religion. Materialism is the world's greatest menace. It is sapping all that is sweet and pure and dear to life, all its nobler sentiments, its chivalry, its generous and almost prodigal unselfishness. Men have become centered in themselves to such a degree as to forget the world and God.

Judaism has suffered in common with

other religions from this universal evil. Many Jews have been enticed from the faith by the love of worldly interests. They have descended into the valley of material temptations are revelling in power, pleasure and plenty, deaf to every higher prompting of the soul. Therefore the Synagogues are depleted whilst men gather in their businesses or clubs to follow a lower impulse than their faith would dictate. Therefore are the children drifting away from Israel's ancient mourning.

We need a revival of Jewish Idealism, of that idealism that made Israel proof against the allurements of the worldly call, against the pitfalls of irreligion, skepticism and indifference engendered by the temptations of gold, glory and grandeur. To those of Israel who sit in the recesses of spiritual gloom, may there come the word of God that reached Elijah in his dark cave, "Go forth and stand on the mountain before the Lord." Get thee out of the valley of materialism, out of the lowlands of sordidness, the marshes of sensual desires, and stand on the heights of holiness, honor and hope. This

idealism means in the first instance to "know thyself."www.libtool.com.cn

The materialism of the day has blurred a knowledge of the real self, of man's soul, its grandeur, its sublimity, its possibilities. The soul has been forgotten and overlooked in the mad rush for wealth and pleasures. We must teach men again to know themselves, to study the hidden essence of life, that they may realize that it profiteth nothing to a man to gain the world, if he lose his own soul. To think lofty thoughts, to feel nobly, deeply, to peer into the recesses of the human heart, to draw from the wells of human nature all that is pure and good, *that is to live*, to develop, to grow, to be happy; it means to voice the prayer of the Scripture "Create in me a pure heart and renew a right spirit within me."

A true self-knowledge will open up to us the next stage of Jewish Idealism, that is, to know our fellowmen, to comprehend and rightly practice the command, "Thou shalt love thy fellowman as thyself." Materialism has bred selfishness, and selfishness has led to cruelty and violence, the logical and

bitter consequence of which has been war, relentless, uncompromising war. When men have looked into their deeper inward nature and redeemed themselves from every brutish taint, then will they be ready to treat their fellowmen on the basis of equality and equity. Then will they truly understand and follow the words of the prophet: "He hath told thee, O man, what is good, what the Lord requires of thee, but to do justice, to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God." Standing on such a spiritual height, men will lose all hatred toward their fellowmen, will turn swords into plowshares, spears into pruning hooks, battle ships into merchant vessels, forts and arsenals into school houses and exchange the arts of war for the arts of universal peace.

Jewish Idealism implied in the text "Stand upon the mountain before the Lord," indicates further that we should teach men to know the universe. Those who grovel in the valley never see the universe. Only on the mountain does the whole panorama of nature burst upon the view and reveal the great mysteries that God has wrought. The

materialism of the day has drawn men away from a contemplation of nature and created an artificial life from which the great universe is shut out. No wonder they know not God, when they know not his handiwork. You can not find God in a gambling den or in the graft processes of unfair competition.

The ancients were naturalists, though they possessed less scientific knowledge than is at our disposal to-day. They knew the universe at first hand, because they came into direct contact with the soil and felt their dependence upon the elements. Therefore the Psalmist could voice the sentiment contained in the words "The Heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament tells of His handiwork."

We must teach men again to become students of nature, to read the revelations God has written in the twinkling stars, in His footprints on the eternal sands, and in His insignia on the everlasting rocks. Then men will stand again on the heights between heaven and earth, will marvel again at the riddle of the universe, will try to comprehend the permanent Sphinx. Then will they

be lifted out of their crass ignorance and be edified by a spiritual illumination akin to wisdom.

Jewish idealism means finally, that we must teach the world to know God. "To stand on the mountain before the Lord" signifies nothing less than through the knowledge of self, that is, of the human soul, and the knowledge of our fellowmen and the Universe, to rise to a knowledge of God. The idealist appreciates the smallness of man and the greatness of Deity, He rises through knowledge and purity to an understanding of divinity. But the idealist goes further and comprehends somewhat of the greatness of man, of his spiritual possibilities when he discovers his relation to God; when, standing on the mountain before the Lord, he beholds his Creator, the Infinite One in whose image he, the finite, was fashioned. To stand before God is to be cognizant each day, each hour, that there we are in the presence of His Majesty, the King of Kings, and that we must so conduct ourselves as to be worthy of standing in His presence (cf. Ps. 34).

We need the revival of such an Idealism

that will cut to the very core of the evils that beset Judaism, namely, materialism. Let Israel, like www.Elijah.com Elijah, come forth out of the valley of unworthy thoughts and purposes, even of despair, and rise to the heights of wisdom, purity and possible perfection.

The mission of Israel is not lost. Only those individuals and peoples have no mission who have lost their ideals. Israel must and will redeem itself, must and will retain its ancient purpose to be a priest people, to learn the law of God in order to practice and to teach it to mankind; to establish its ideals of self-knowledge, of a knowledge of man, of the universe and of God and thus to stand always on the supreme heights before the Lord.

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