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MS-53: Moses J. Gries Papers, 1850-1934 (bulk 1890-1930).

Series D: Sermons and Addresses, 1893-1917, undated.

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“Charity My Religion,” 1905 October 9.

For more information on this collection, please see the finding aid on the
American Jewish Archives website.

Rabbi Bries at The Temple,
The morning of Atonement,
Monday, October 9, 1905.

CHARITY MY RELIGION.

Charity is a good religion. The old Hebrew word "Zedoko", charity, means also justice and righteousness, than which there is no better religion. The Prophet Micah commanded - "Do justice, live mercy and walk humbly with God. 'Tis the message of Daniel to King Nebuchadnezzar. Break off your sins by Zedoko - charity - righteousness, and thy iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor. Thus the Rabbis taught - charity, righteousness and repentance avert the evil decree.

Therefore it is, that the Jews throughout the centuries and everywhere in the world have been distinguished for charity. 'Tis not something which the Jews were taught by Christianity or Mohammedanism or by any new philosophy. Out of the old Bible the world learned the principles of charity. If charity be your religion, remember that religion taught mankind charity.

Jews have always cared for their own. With us 'tis historic pride. Formerly it was necessity. The world knows not our poor. To our glory be it said, Jews have helped their thousands from poverty and hardship to the open door of opportunity. All Israel are brethren in suffering and in sorrow. Jews always bear a double burden. We care for our own poor and help with the poor about us. Charity is more than money, money is far from the whole of charity. Let us practice charity, not of money but of the spirit. Let the spirit of charity rule us - the humane interest in our fellowmen-being the humane feelings for them that need - philanthropy, the love of man.

Let charity be your religion. Glorify the social spirit of the age. It is in harmony with good Judaism. Judaism had the strong social spirit. Its law-book and its literature, more than the sacred book of any other religion, emphasized the care for the poor and the weak and the stranger, the fatherless and the widow.

It is not enough that Judaism should proclaim charity. Jews should practice charity. Charity as religion demands a new attitude towards life. It means that we should be eager to do good, seeking opportunities for service. It means that we shall

make life, your life and my life, worth more to the world. The Prophet Isaiah spoke the truth strongly and plainly - "The fast which God hath chosen is to loose
✓ the bands of wickedness, to undo heavy burdens; to free th oppressed; to break yokes;
to feed the hungry; to shelter the outcast poor; to clothe the naked. Then shalt thou
✓ call and God will answer; thou shalt cry and He will say 'Here I am'"

