



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE
AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

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

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

Box	Folder	Item
4	10	1

“The Faith by Which to Live,” undated.

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

Rabbi Moses J. Gries
The Temple, Cleveland, O.

"The Faith by Which to Live"

What the world needs is a faith by which to live. The evil is that men and women have no faith by which to live - a faith by which to live three hundred and sixty-five days in the year, and through all the waking hours.

What men and women believe, they are. What you believe, you are. What do you believe? You must have a belief, formulated or unformulated. You answer you believe in doing. Is it the doing of good or evil? You believe in conduct. Is it right or wrong conduct? The world needs a faith in prosperity and in adversity, a faith for the child, the youth, for men and women.

What is the faith? Not a set of doctrines - not a code of laws - not a creed to be recited or even believed - not observances to be practiced. The Bible gives answer in its opening chapters - its idea of God, its conception of man created in the image of God - its interpretation of life, under the command of God and ~~making~~ covenant with God.

The faith by which to live, is faith in God. Live as though God were and not as though God were not. Be reverent in the presence of divinity. Man ~~may~~ be conscious of the divine ^{spark} ~~spark~~ within thy breast - establish a harmony between the God in man and the God of the universe.

Life is divine purpose, not aimless existence. Man is under appointment to fulfill the divine purpose, to do the work of God among men.

Judaism, not the code of laws, not the ceremonies and forms, not the vague historical and traditional religion of the fathers - Judaism, its truths, its principles, its faith, its ideals, is the life conviction by which we should work and live three hundred and sixty-five days in the year.

Judaism is our heritage. Unless we thrust it aside, refusing to accept the inheritance from the fathers, it is ours by birth. We're born to Judaism. It is

our historic obligation. We are under the appointment of history to stand as representative and champion of its truths.

Even if altogether free to choose from among the religions and the philosophies of the world, I should choose Judaism, the principles of Judaism, freed from its ancient orientalism and from mediaeval symbolism, not embodied in law and custom and language. There is no belief better than Judaism. There is no religion more rational than Judaism. There is no religion and no philosophy more inspiring than Judaism as a religion of life.

We Jews are not altogether free to choose. We cannot separate ourselves from our history. We cannot and we would not forget our history. We cannot forget the loyalty of the fathers through four thousand years of life, nor what that loyalty compelled, and still compels - the sacrifice of peace and happiness and the opportunities of life, a living martyrdom, danger of death, and death itself.

Jews are the children of history. They have helped to make the history of human civilization, and they are still making their deep impress upon the nations.

What contribution has the Jew made to the civilization of the world? The Jew is proud of his intellectuality and of his contribution to learning. He has won distinction, not alone in commerce and in industry, but in all the realms of science and literature and music and art. Glorious are the achievements of the intellect. The glory of the intellect is the mark of distinction. It stamps men for leadership.

I prefer to emphasize the glory of morality. The highest civilization of mankind is characterized by intellect and by culture with morality. Without morality, it spells degradation and degeneracy. Here is the distinction of ancient Israel. This has been its best contribution to human civilization. No civilized people is there which does not live under the mighty influence of the Hebrew lawgiver and of Israel's prophets. The world of morality is the noblest expression of the Jewish spirit. It is still our sphere. It must still be the distinction of the Jews.

What men believe, they are. What we Jews believe and do not believe, we are

and we are not. What we believe is the revelation of our character, the indices of our personality. Judaism:

Judaism is the exponent of the spiritual, and the opponent of the material. The world charges the Jew with being a materialist and a sensualist. Whatever element of truth may be in the charge, Judaism is the historic representative and teacher of the spiritual.

Judaism is the faith by which to live - its idea of God as One and the fundamental unity of the universe, of mankind and of history - its conception of man, the man divine, fashioned in the image of God - its interpretation of life, the life divine in covenant with God.

God is in the life of nations and in the individual life, transforming government^s and the institutions of mankind, establishing the peace of the world with righteousness as ruler. Slowly but surely the nations and men are transformed. Mankind refuses to believe, or professing to believe, refuses to live out its faith. Czar and kings and rulers are masters over the bodies and minds and souls of men. They hold millions in bondage. The old brute in man is unwilling to be conquered.

In the image of God, man! In that phrase is written the emancipation proclamation of the human race. Believe it and live it. It will establish the rule of justice and the glory of human freedom.

The world needs this faith. America needs the faith by which to live.