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“The Out-Reaching Synagogue,” 1907 October 27.

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Rabbi Gries,
The Temple, Cleveland, O.

THE OUT-REACHING SYNAGOGUE.

October 27, 1907.

I believe in the Free Synagogue. What you call the Free Synagogue we have been calling the Open Temple. Our motto has been "Thy Gates Shall Stand Open Continually." After thirteen years of actual experience, we believe all the more firmly in the Open Temple idea. The Temple should be open for worship. Its gates should stand ^{wide} ~~right~~ open. Every one should be welcome to worship, and at all times - members and non-members, Jews and non-Jews, the rich and the poor. There is vast room for the Free Synagogue movement in New York City. Thousands, yes tens and tens of thousands of Jews, are untempled and unsynagogued.

We believe in the Open Sabbath School - open to all for religious instruction. Our principle and our policy are directly opposed to the prevailing rule and practice of Jewish congregations, viz: that members children only are accepted and all others are not welcome and surely are not sought. Who knows how many tens and tens of thousands of Jewish children are without religious instruction in New York City. The Open Sabbath School policy has created in Cleveland, relatively a small Jewish community, the largest Jewish Sabbath School in any congregation in this country, and perhaps in the world, with an enrollment last year of more than eight hundred children. Study the report of Jewish population of Congregations and Sabbath Schools in the current Jewish Year Book and discover how few children are in Sabbath School and how many thousands remain on the outside. How few are members of Congregations and how many thousands belong to the unaffiliated, the host of the untempled. The children are eager enough and will come, if they and their parents know they are welcome. How can we expect our children to be informed with the Jewish spirit, to be Jewish in feeling and in life, if we shut them out and they remain untaught. Small wonder the men and the women and the children continue unaffiliated and remain outside of the Temples and Synagogues. We in our blindness and with our policy of the closed instead of the open door, are mainly responsible.

We must awaken the congregation and all other organizations which should co-operate. We should offer religious education to every Jewish child. We should change the policy of our Temples and our Synagogues so that all will be

welcome to worship at all times. Far rather the open than the closed Temple. The Temple should not be a monumental Mausoleum, but the living Temple, center of life and light and power.

The President of these United States has become a preacher of righteousness. Like ancient Prophet, he preaches on the highways and in the byways, and standing in the city gates. Clear and strong is his condemnation of unrighteousness. "Successful dishonesty" shall not escape punishment. The great newspapers, independent and fearless, are speaking words whose meaning is not to be mistaken. They are creating a public opinion and awakening a new conscience that shall have power to save America.

Leadership in moral reform belongs not to statesmen, nor yet to the press, but of right belongs to the church. The church is the historic organization, entrusted with the moral leadership of mankind. The Church is too silent, too prudent, too polite, too diplomatic in the presence of wrong. It should make no compromise with wrong. It should not honor the wrong doers. The Synagogue dare not be silent. With prophetic spirit it should rebuke "successful dishonesty", the licentiousness and immorality of the rich, the corruption of idlers and the vices and crimes of the poor, degrading and brutalizing man. The voice of the church shall awaken the conscience of the individual and the nation. Proclaim to the nation the "Thou Shalts" and the "Thou Shalt Nots" of old. Let the great commandments thunder and illumine and burn with the lightning flash the sins and the vices and the crimes, the unrighteousness and the immoralities of our age and generation.

the appeal for justice and for righteousness rings through Hebrew literature. The moral law and the moral ideas of mankind have come not out of Greece and Rome, nor yet out of Egypt and Babylon, but out of Judea. Mankind's passion for purity and zeal for holiness, the thirst for God, the hunger for righteousness, the hope for justice are born of Israel.

Fundamental to the Free Synagogue and to the social movement is the never-doubting faith in world betterment. It is the Jewish Messianic Prophecy

and hope. Never in all history had the world more need to vision again the glowing hopes and the inspiring ideals of the seers and prophets of Israel. This age of doubts and denials and despair, with its familiar negations, "I don't know", "I don't believe" and "I don't care" needs the positive affirmations of a living Judaism. Let the Jew speak his message. He, historically, is the world's ethical teacher. He accented the ethical emphasis in the minds and hearts of men. Stand steadfast for righteousness and against unrighteousness. Redeem mankind from every enslavement and establish human freedom. Destroy injustice and make sure the foundations of justice. None better than the Jew knows the injustices of every age and land. Let not the Synagogue be narrow. Fight not only the injustices against the Jew, but fight every injustice, to end man's inhumanity to man. Herald the triumph of justice on earth. It is Kingdom of Heaven. It is prophecy of Messiah and the fulfillment of Messianic hope to mankind.

The church and the Synagogue must face the problem of society and of the individuals who together make society. Religion has to do with all of the problems of life. In the Church and the Synagogue, let there be born the conscience, the enthusiasm, the wisdom and the power for human betterment. Here must be leadership in the fight for the good and against the evil, in the age-long battle of righteousness against unrighteousness. The Synagogue, the Temple and the Church should be ^{the} living and the social center, the sender of power and of light to the homes, ennobling the home and exalting the family - the inspirer of life and living, the moral force, regenerating and uplifting the whole race.