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“The Service of Synagogue and Church to the World,”
1911 February 26.

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Rabbi Moses J. Gries
The Temple, Cleveland.
February 26th, 1911.

Paragraphs from

THE SERVICE OF SYNAGOGUE AND CHURCH TO THE WORLD.

"They are slaves who dare not be
In the right with two or three".

James Russell Lowell

I rejoice to fellowship and worship with any God believer. I am not affrighted by the charge and cry of "assimilation" - never yet defined. The Jew is the historic apostle of the right of conscience. These centuries he has suffered for the right to be Jew, and as Jew, to be recognized as brother to his fellowmen. Jew and Christian may meet without compromise and without the least surrender, but with mutual respect for the life and faith and truth of both.

The wonderful Parliament of Religions, almost a score of years ago, sounded the true keynote, expressing an ideal, fundamentally Jewish, the acknowledgment of the Fatherhood of God and of the brotherhood of man. ^{Leading} As Orthodox Rabbi of New York City then spoke of the "Universal brotherhood, prayed for by ~~the~~ Catholic, by Protestant, by Hebrew and by all men". Some believe in praying for, I believe in working for, the recognition of the one God and of Human brotherhood.

The warning is spoken - we are not ready for fraternal fellowship, because co-religionists still suffer hate and persecution and oppression. The whole world cannot wait for the enlightenment of semi-civilized Russia. All the more should we welcome fellowship in a land where the Jew lives under the flag of freedom.

I believe in the Messianic ideals of Israel. Our Messianic hopes should be more than a fervent prayer or a glowing peroration. They are to become reality. They are the destined goal, toward which we are ever on the march.

Eagerly we have looked forward to the twentieth century for a realization of the dream of the nineteenth - human brotherhood, and for the fulfillment of the philosophical ideal of the eighteenth - liberty, fraternity and equality. But the twentieth century is witness to the revivals of medieval hate and to the outburst of inhuman savagery in countries falsely called civilized.

Israel in Russia lies bruised and broken and bleeding under the heel of the persecutor. No human arm is outstretched to save. And the great nations of the civilized world, (is it to their honor?) speak words of diplomatic courtesy to Russia, the infamous, guilty of words and thoughts and deeds, which would have disgraced the brutal barbarian in an age of savagery.

And America is urged to bar the highway to escape and to shut the gate to freedom. Will America thus intensify the cruelty of the Russian oppressor? Are we, the United States and England and France and Germany, altogether guiltless, if Russia crushes her impoverished millions? "Civilization cannot escape the penalty for the deeds that civilization has permitted". And the remedy? Let the demand for justice trumpet throughout outraged Christendom. Summon Russia before the high tribunal of the nations - before the public judgment of the civilized world.

Would you solve the problem of Jewish immigration? Compel Russia to abolish the "Pale of Settlement" and to give to her own people, "the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Our social problem does not originate in the East Side tenements, with their teeming thousands. Its true source is far across the Atlantic, on the Continent of Europe, in the heart of the "Jewish Pale" - in the Russian Duma - in the very Palace of the Czar. Can America - the liberty-loving democracy, be friend and ally to Russia, the liberty-destroying despotism?

New York City faces the most difficult social problem in America - the problem of human life, involving the happiness of millions. Needed therefore are the united moral energy and moral enthusiasm and moral courage of all who are morally in earnest - united by the hunger of human hearts, ^{united} ~~starred~~ by the common need of a common humanity. The city speaks a challenge to all soldiers for the good, to arise in their might in order to destroy the armed and entrenched hosts of evil.

The whole life of man, of the city and the nation are within the province of the Church and Synagogue. The supreme business of the twentieth century Church and Synagogue is not the saving of souls, but the salvation of society.

America needs a new birth of moral ideals and the awakening of conscience - individual, corporate, national and international. Ours the duty to arouse the con-

science of men and of the nation to the sins of this generation - the licentiousness of the rich and the vices of the poor - immoralities, unrighteousness, iniquities unrebuked ^{O!} the degradation and the perversion of the glorious endowments of the race.

In this moral crisis, would be "leaders" are insistent upon conformity rather than upon conscience, and seem to value ceremony and ritual more than conduct and religiousness, and would substitute ~~mumery~~ for the mighty moral law. ^P America needs a new proclamation of the old prophecy. The Jew still believes in the coming Kingdom of God - call him dreamer and visionary - He is seer and prophet - Kingdom of God, not in the world to come, but the rule of God among men and in the life of the nations, when "Justice shall roll on like water and righteousness like a mighty stream".

The moral leadership of the nation belongs neither to statesmen, however patriotic; nor to the press, however powerful and incorruptible. The Synagogue and the Church held the historic appointment to unselfish human service.

The truest service to God is in service to God's children. Men and women should not be mere society's devotees, but servants to society, in service to society to use their rich endowments, not only of wealth, but of heart and of intellect and of soul.

I believe that good has power to triumph over evil; that justice will be enthroned over injustice; but ours the duty to arouse and inspire and organize the good and the intelligent and the honest and the patriotic in the city and in the nation. We must lead and direct the mighty forces for human upliftment, if righteousness and justice and peace shall ever be established in the world.

The ancient Hebrew set the whole world dreaming of Messiah and the Messianic days to come. The magnificent world ideals of righteousness and justice and peace and Messiah are the original contribution of the Hebrew. His ethical interpretation of life and the universe, his everlasting ethical emphasis are his noblest distinction in human history. The Jew treasured a never-dying faith, hope springs eternal in the Jewish breast, that the prophetic ideals ^{would} find fulfillment, and freedom and justice would bless mankind.

The Millennium has not yet come. The Messianic time is not near at hand. Justice is exalted, but injustice is enthroned. Love is preached, but hate is practiced. The glorification of the Golden Rule finds debasement under the rule of gold. The glad tidings of peace and goodwill are drowned ^{by} ~~down~~ the clamor of violence and of war. Are the millions of the world happy - enjoying the blessings of contentment and peace? Hear their cry of affliction under the burden of social wrongs, and their rebellious murmurings beneath the red of political tyranny. The human race is not yet free.

Mankind needs the consecrated service and the inspiring leadership of the Synagogue and Church. The world's great movements are moral movements - the struggle for human happiness against the social injustice which crushes the body and the spirit of men and women and children - the conservation of human life against bloody war and destructive disease. I knew that injustice and iniquity lower like black clouds, but mankind is writing "Justice" in flaming fire across the darkened sky. I knew that the men and women of our generation do not burn with moral passion, nor glow with moral enthusiasm, but the world is at its best, when under the leadership of moral ideals. Wonderful the power potential in man, for noble achievement and for glorious service to the world.