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

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

Box	Folder	Item
4	8	8

“What Jews of Today Believe,” 1906 April 1.

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WHAT JEWS OF TODAY BELIEVE

That Judaism, its laws and customs and institutions, permeate the literature and speech of our time. Judaism is lifeless and Christianity is life. Judaism is law and Christianity is love. It is not sound historically. It was not true nineteen hundred years ago and it is not true today.

The Bible is not the whole of Jewish literature. None should judge Judaism without knowing directly or indirectly the content of Jewish literature of all time.

Judaism is not and never was a unity. The Jews do not believe the same, nor worship according to the same forms, nor observe the same customs. Differences and divisions have always existed and no doubt always will exist, but there are no sects nor no denominations in Judaism. We believe in ethical Monotheism - faith in God and human duty from God. The essential principle, without which there can be no Judaism, is the unity of God.

Jews believe in the unity of God and in the unity of all life and all history. God rules - not the God of the Hebrew in Palestine, but as the Bible teaches, one God of all the world. Jews believe that God is Father, and that man is son of God. We emphasize the sonship of every man. There is no humanizing of Deity and no deification of humanity. We believe that man is fashioned in the image of God, living under a Divine appointment, a moral, responsible being. Judaism emphasizes the nobility and dignity of man. No races are lost, no nations are doomed. We have no faith in a fallen humanity, but rather in a rising human kind. Judaism taught the civilized world to interpret life ethically, to weigh the conduct of individuals and of nations in the scales of justice.

The ethical ideals and the ethical possibilities of mankind came not out of Babylon, of Egypt, or of Greece or Rome. The moral law came out of Judea. The world's passion for purity and holiness, mankind's thirst for God and hunger for

righteousness are born of Israel.

What about the Messianic doctrine of the Saviour? The Jew denied, and still denies Jesus as the Messiah. They did not crucify him and they are not accursed of God because of the crucifixion. Religious men believe the curse to be upon Israel and they fulfill the curse. We must not hold God responsible for man's inhumanity to man.

The Jewish Messiah was not to be a saviour from sin, to bring redemption into the world. Messiahs there were in Israel before, in the time of and after the days of Jesus. Judaism does not culminate in the crucifixion. Judaism, the mother religion, did not die in giving birth to Christianity. The Jew historically denies the Messiah, but affirms the Messianic prophecy and the Messianic hope. The Messianic age of mankind is not in the past, but always in the future.

What is the future of Judaism? Will Jews accept Christianity? Vain is the hope of those so eager to convert the Jews. Nothing in the history of the Jews justifies their hope. The Jew has not surrendered these four hundred years. He has met all religions, all philosophies and all civilizations. He has been under fearful pressure. He has felt the sword, the rack and the fire. Millions of lives were sacrificed. For centuries he endured martyrdom.

Christianity today is emphasizing its fundamentals. All of them are Jewish. I doubt not Judaism and the Jews will continue to live until Israel's mission is fulfilled, until mankind will accept the one God and will live according to justice and love. Jews believe in the unity of God, and therefore in the unity of mankind - the real fatherhood and the real brotherhood. Man - Jew and Christian and Heathen - is made in the image of God.