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“Men,” 1902 November 2.

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Please return copy to Rabbi Moses J. Gries, 45 Oakdale Street,
Cleveland, O.

November 2, 1902.

M E N.
"The proper study of mankind is Man" -- Pope

I propose to study human beings: men, women and children. We are making human civilization. We of this generation by what we are and what we do, give direction and impetus to twentieth century civilization.

All the world loves a manly man. Men are strong and weak. Men are physical giants and puny weaklings. Men are intellectual sages and ignoramuses. Men are morally clean and morally leprous. Yet they all are men. Manhood is not determined by physical strength, nor measured by mental powers. Character is manhood. The world is full of likenesses and differences. Most of us recognize a maple leaf as soon as we see it. Yet upon examination, each leaf is distinctly different from every other. Flowers are alike. The American Beauty seems ever the same in color and in fragrance. Yet each rose is individual. All human beings have likenesses which distinguish them as human creatures, and yet no human beings are wholly alike. The appearance of the one may suggest the other, the ~~face~~ face of the stranger may remind us of our friend; natures and dispositions may suggest those whom we know. Rarely indeed, do we fail to distinguish between two human beings, however remarkable the resemblance. Each human being is a distinct individual and should live an individual life.

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The average man is a worker. His path in life is narrow--his outlook is narrow--his hopes are narrow. He works--earns--saves--in order to secure power to buy for self and family. He is right-meaning and right-doing--decent enough and honest enough--hardworking, plodding--a human beast of burden. Here is made plain the greatest value of all education: to widen the outlook of life, to bring to men a knowledge of the larger life and the larger thought and the larger culture, to make him discontent with the drudgery of the day.

Culture-life is worth more than money. It brings not only power, but it gives capacity to ~~knowledge~~^{enjoy}. What avails money, if our minds are dwarfed and our natures stunted and our whole life narrowed? O, pity those who are deaf and blind to the music and beauty of the world!

There are all kinds of men, and some of them are tailor-made. How runs the phrase,--"It takes nine tailors to make a man?" I am not lost in admiration for the manly fashion-plate. It is only the appearance of a man. It may not be a real man.

Have you not known some of these effeminate dandies, who are horrified at the wrong cut of a coat and the wrong hang of a garment, appalled at the wrong shape of a hat and overwhelmed by the wrong color of a tie? I must not forget the style of the walking-stick. They actually look down upon those

without these "correct" things as though they belong^{ed} to a lower order of beings. This is not sense, but silliness. A thousand times, there is more genuine manhood underneath a working shirt and a suit of overalls. Real men do not change with every whim of fashion, but truly great men rise superior to the law of fashion. There are some little men who know and keep the rules of fashion better than they know and keep the Commandments.

Neither is manliness revealed in the sporty life,-- in vices small and great--drinking, and smoking, and swearing, and gambling, and things unmentionable, worse than these. The clean man is the manly man: clean of speech and clean of thought--clean of habits and with actions clean. Young man, are you clean in your life? What is the true history of one week of your life? Can you with pride tell your father and mother all? Have you nothing to hide from your employer? Is not your better self ashamed of your lower self? Let the best within you be master. Young men should be strong and have principles. They should not weakly be led on by the worst of their associates. They should have the courage to stand for the best.

What are the ideals of men in life, and what are their standards? Business men, professional men and laboring men all seek success. The business man may hold money to be success, and integrity may be his standard. The professional man may count reputation as success, and honor his standard. And the laboring man may believe that he who earns most succeeds best, and honest work may be his standard. Whatever your work, business

or profession, manliness is straightforwardness, uprightness, truth and courage.

There are men of the world and there are men who prefer their homes to the world. Thank God, that among Jews the old home sentiment never died out, in spite of the low and degrading conditions under which Jews were compelled to live! Thank God, that amidst ^{the} sternest prose of life, we have ever preserved our poetic exaltation of the home! You believe in the sacred home. You believe that the family life is to be honored. As men, what do you do to safeguard the home and to help realize and perpetuate the ideals of family?

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But how about men politically? In a government of the people, the people should govern. It is un-American that we men ~~should~~ suffer ourselves to be ruled by bosses in high and in low places. Men should act the manly part. They should not be blind followers, but independent thinkers. The power is within them, and they should govern themselves in city and state and nation. It is disgraceful that we are so indifferent as not to act when action is needed--so blind that we need ever to be led. How few have the courage of their convictions! How few dare to be politically independent! How few there are who are not afraid to speak! O, the thousands that hesitate because of policy and prudence and a thousand other selfish reasons! It is amazing that strong men should be so controlled by motives and influences other than principle. No man is a

true American citizen who is not interested in public questions and forms for himself an independent opinion. Let us always act independently. If we cannot, we are unfit to be the leaders and rulers in city and state and nation.

Religiously, men should be independent--brave and free enough to think and to live in accordance with their convictions. Upon men in Israel was the burden of the Law, which was esteemed a privilege. If we have convictions, why not stand for them consistently? Why not make sacrifice, if sacrifice be needed?

Man is fashioned in the image of God. The ragged unfortunates and the degenerate criminals--these, too, are men. Let us not draw away from our fellow creatures as though they were not human. The divine something is within them, and we should carry forward works of redemption and reformation--and better still, of prevention--that these unfortunate human beings be given a human chance.

Men are selfish and unselfish. Some men are willing and able to bear responsibility; and others are not able and surely not willing. Thousands give nothing more than money. Thousands will not give even money. All men are engaged in a world-wide human undertaking. They are part of a world-wide human movement. They must all be workers: there should be no drones. What works of kindness and of mercy, what institutions and societies of helpfulness would exist in our communities, if all did as little as these thousands of selfish ones in every community? Men are false to one of their highest duties as

men, when there is work to be done for men as men, and they refuse to do their share.

Who are the men of influence in any community? The men who serve the community. Who are the men called upon in the time of crisis and need? The men who are unselfish. The men of capacity too selfish to serve another are no real help to a community.

Man's purpose is to better human life--to combat ~~with~~ the evils of the past and the growing evils of the present--to overcome prejudices--to dispel error--to establish truth--to end superstitions--to fight the wrongs and injustices of the world. Who is a man worthy of the name who fails to do his humble duty here?

The world's great works and the world's mighty movements, which are carrying forward the human race in its wonderful development, depend for their strength upon the thousands of men everywhere: each man doing his little. Why live the narrow, selfish life? Why toil and struggle and sacrifice through much sorrow and hardship for money-success? Is man only a beast of burden to carry the loads of humanity? a beast of prey, to seize its rich rewards? There is divinity^{with} in man. From the day of creation, his life has had purpose. Slowly and surely, he is making his way upward. We have supreme faith in human kind--that he is risen, and not fallen--that he is rising, and ever must rise. You and I and the millions of others must give our strength of hand and heart and mind not alone to our

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selfish work, but to this larger life--to further the progress of the race. Step by step, slowly the race advances toward that perfect civilization of the future, when the millions, ~~C~~hildren of God, shall be happy and free.

