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REFORM JUDAISM AND LIBERAL CHRISTIANITY.

BY RABBI MOSES J. GRIES.

One year ago last night, the Parliament of Religions convened in the city of Chicago. To thoughtful students of the history of the race, the day marks the beginning of a new epoch. The Parliament was not a church council. It was dominated by no ecclesiastical ruler. It promulgated no new decrees. It was a human fellowship meeting. It was dominated by the rule of love. It proclaimed to all mankind the ringing message that love of God does not mean the hate of man.

I know not whether it was accident or design, but Judaism held the first of the religious congresses; and the Parliament began its sessions on the evening of the Jewish New Year, and at the Mid-winter Fair, the lesser Parliament began on the Jewish Passover and the first Congress of Liberal Religious Societies met in a Jewish temple. To you, these things may mean nothing. To me, a representative of Judaism, they mean much. These things can be symbolical. Jewish tradition has it that the world was created on the New Year's Day. To me, it seems as though in the year 5654, according to the Bible chronology, the year 1893 of our common era there was a new creation. The old mankind full of hate and standing apart, perished, and the new creation was begun. We have a Jewish legend, that in the beginning God created but one man. Man, *one*, neither Jew nor Gentile nor heathen—but simply man, child of God. And Scripture tells us God formed man out of the dust of the earth. How beautiful is the thought of our legend, that from every land, from countries far and near, from this side and the other side of the great waters came the birds of heaven, bearing each in its bill a grain of dust, and so man was made in the beginning, universal, formed out of the dust of *all* the earth.

In the beginning was God, and the first of our race was the child of God, and so are we all the children of God, one family, one human brotherhood. Let that Parliament, which gathered its representatives from all the earth, on the traditional creation-eve, proclaim

to you as it does to me, the formation of the one man, child of a Common Father, member of the universal human brotherhood.

And the historic Jewish Passover is the feast of liberty. Then was Israel redeemed from the bondage of Egypt! It was the first emancipation proclamation, declaring "one man shall not be master and his brother slave! Equal are men in the sight of God!" Man shall not hate, persecute, oppress his brother with rigorous burdens upon the flesh nor upon the spirit. No creature of God was blessed with life to be shackled and enslaved. Every man shall be free; every man ought to be equal: free and equal in life's opportunities. Let the Mid-winter Parliament, convening on the eve of the Festival of Liberty, proclaim to you as it does to me, freedom unto all God's creatures, because they are the creatures of God, a human fellowship of love and not of hate, of upliftment and not oppression of the fallen, of redemption and not of banishment of the outcast—a united human fellowship for helpful human service; and that Jewish congress, first of all congresses, and that meeting of liberal religious societies in a Jewish temple, are not without deeper meaning. Then and thereby, in the sight of all mankind, did old and hoary-headed Judaism give testimony, that though the burden of centuries rested upon its shoulders, it was not bowed with the weight of age, but that erect it stood among the nations, strong with vigor and burning with the fire of perpetual youth. Judaism, old yet eternally young! A living force among the living! In the beginning was it a religion to shape the life of a nation—a faith to be lived. In the end it is still a religion of life unto the living. Its emphasis is not upon belief. Right living is the essential. Let the Liberal Religious Congress, finding birth in a Jewish temple, proclaim to you as it does to me, that Judaism, inheritor of the law, bearer of the prophetic message, lives and will live.

Friends, I bring you greeting. The old mother of religions salutes you! Flesh of her flesh, spirit of her spirit, though not altogether thought of her thought! I come speaking peace and good will. I will not magnify disagreements. With joyful heart do I emphasize agreements. You ask me to speak my thought freely, and I hesitate not, assured that I am a friend among friends, a man among men, all of us seeking the light and the truth and the way.

I have little sympathy with that prevalent indifference, Jewish and Christian, which makes light of all disagreements, which masking itself under the cloak of liberalism, is false liberalism, laxity, license in religious faith and practice, truer child of thoughtless convenience than of thinking conviction. I do not feel inclined for the sake of the pleasure it may give the unthinking few, to slur over or to conceal disagreements. Between Judaism and Christianity there are fundamental differences. Reform Judaism and Liberal Christianity have drawn near, one to the other, but the chasm is unbridged.

What does Judaism, what does Christianity teach regarding man and his life on earth? Christianity declares "man born in sin,

a creature fallen from grace. He needs salvation! He cannot redeem himself! A mediator stands between him and his God. There is but one path to salvation." "He that believeth shall be saved." (Luke xvi. 16.) Judaism declares "man a God-creature, fashioned in the image divine and sent upon earth to accomplish a divine purpose. He is a child of God, destined to live a god-like life. He is not a perfect nor a sinless creature. But salvation reaches him by no process of faith not by the help of a mediator. He must save himself." Man does not lie prostrate in the dust, cringing, fearing, trembling before his God. He stands erect and turns his face to see his Maker. The Christian prays "lead me not into temptation," and the Jew, were he to write the Lord's Prayer as his fathers had, the thought would ask for strength to meet temptation and conquer it. Temptation comes to all, the weak fall and are swept away, the strong standing upon the rock of righteousness cannot be moved. Christianity offers salvation unto all men. In this it is universal, but it insists upon the one path, and thereby it makes itself less than universal. It still clings to the last remnant of its creed. "Believe in a fallen world and in Jesus as the Redeemer." I like your name Universalism—it is not narrow. It seems broad, all-mankind, inclusive. But I would welcome the fact more than the name—a universalism in truth, with no barrier to the gate of heaven, with more than one path leading to salvation's portals, a universalist also on earth, on this side of the grave, in life, and not only after death—above. Judaism in its doctrines of salvation approaches a true universalism. All men may enter into the covenant of God—redemption is unto all the righteous, Jew and non-Jew, believing and unbelieving. In the prayer in memory of the dead, a prayer of sanctification unto God, expression of mourning hearts trusting in God, prayed daily in synagogues and temples, we reverently ask "may the Lord of heaven and earth grant eternal peace and a full participation in the bliss of eternal life, grace and mercy to Israel, to all the righteous and to all who departed this life by the will of God." Faith does not save. Conduct and character make for salvation. As spoke the Psalmist: "This is the gate of the Lord, the righteous enter into it."

I know that Judaism is supposed to be narrow, provincial, tribal, national, racial, and I know also that Judaism in its essential teachings is truly universal. Many were the laws made for Palestine, for the Israelitish nation, for worship while the Temple stood in its glory. They were, but they are not! The Temple is in ruins; the nation has perished; Palestine is under the rule of the Moslem. Though some Jewish hearts may mourn for Jewish greatness and sorrow not to have seen the glory of God's house, and cherish a longing for national power and dominion, *we*, I speak not for myself alone, but the million Jews dwelling in lands of freedom, seek and *desire* not a restoration of the kingdom, nor a rebuilding of the Temple. We rejoice that we are here. Israel's face is turned to the west and not to the east. God's blessing is upon all the earth; this

is His Holy Land. The God of Israel has sent His people unto all lands and unto all nations. *His people, chosen, not for blessings, but for service that "in them all families of the earth shall be blest."* (Gen. xii. 3.) Our fathers have obeyed the Scriptural command, "Get thee out of thy country, out of thy birth place, and out of thy father's house." (Gen. xii. 1.) The national, the provincial, the temporal are behind us. Laws and customs and institutions of the old time may still appear in our midst. But gradually the body of our religion is conforming itself to its spirit. Our teachings and our thoughts are universal. Their expression soon will be.

Judaism is misconceived and misunderstood. It has been long in the world, but is little known of men. How many are there who esteem it an antiquated faith, an outworn religion, a curious relic strangely preserved, a religion in the midst of life, but dead. It is thought that the Jew completed his life-task 1800 years ago. Israel lived only to produce a Redeemer. Judaism to give birth to Christianity. It is taken for granted that Christianity is something higher than Judaism ever was or is. Christianity regards the Jew as a living testimony to the events of 1800 years ago. It awaits his acceptance of the Saviour whom the fathers rejected. There are those who make bold to send us missionaries to convert us to the true faith, and they wonder why we Jews do not lay aside the old distinctions and become Christians. A few Jews may become Christians "for revenue only," and a few may wear the Christian cloak to win worldly privilege and honor, but Jews and Judaism cannot and will not cease to be until the religions of mankind are representative of the broadest in thought and highest in life, until they become all-man-inclusive! Let the denominational name stand! it *must* stand until there can be a fellowship true enough to demand surrender of no truth.

Ought not Judaism yield? Its adherents are but few in number. Ought they not surrender? Abraham was one God-believer in a heathen world. To-day "God is One and his name One" in all civilized lands. Palestine and Greece were small countries. To-day Greece and Judea are little more than provinces; but by the might of mighty spirit, they rule all mankind in culture and in conduct. Judaism hopes not for a physical triumph and seeks it not. The Jew dreams not of dominion world-embracing. The seed of Abraham, the descendants of Judah, are not to conquer. The truth of the patriarch, of the law-giver and the prophets, will conquer.

The prophets proclaimed one God over all—a divine unity making necessary a human unity. Reform Judaism lives in the spirit of the prophetic teachings. It overleaps and breaks through and is destroying all the barriers which past generations, in self defence, erected to divide man from man. The separating walls are down, can we not clasp hands? "Have we not one Father?" Are we not God-children? Why stand we apart?

When freedom and justice shall be, when tyranny and oppression are no more, when love shall bind where hate now severs, when

men will know themselves God-children, all, then, Jew and Christian, need be no more. We, Liberal Christianity and Reform Judaism, are preparing the way. We have overleaped and broken through and destroyed behind us, the narrow walls that hemmed us in. We are the leaders. We may stand far in advance but all the world follows behind.

Our religion is not a new creation, nor a new discovery, and certainly not one of the modern improvements. We have but returned to the teachings of our first great masters, you to the man of Nazareth—we to our Rabbins and prophets and law-givers. The orthodox may declare us of the unfaithful. "You are not true Christians, we are not true Jews." The law giver and the prophets, the Nazarene and the Apostles, would not be faithful to the religions they founded, as some judge the truly faithful. Orthodoxy has divided mankind and liberalism in seeking to unite it. We have suffered and suffer now from too much denominationalism, wasteful individualism of effort, from senseless disunion of forces. Selfish individual effort is the doctrine of a past age. Co-operation we need and want. If fundamental difference compels us to live apart, it is well. The few fighting for principle and conviction, to guard the truth, are heroic. But we have been too fearful for the truth. Felix Adler has well said it, "Truth can take care of itself." Our duty is to man. We were *men* before we were Jews or Christians or Mohammedans or Buddhists. God-children were we in the beginning. Let us be God-children now! Let us do worthy service unto God.

Let there be a union of all liberals! not one creed, not one church doctrine! One theology, one philosophy, one religion will not and cannot be; but there can be one work to do, one service to fulfill! Let liberalism stand united, in city and State and nation, united everywhere, as the enemy of bigoted intolerance, as the champion and defender of the liberties of man, civil and religious. Let Liberalism everywhere be a force strong by union making for human upliftment. Let it sound the call to a higher life and a broader human fellowship. God-children and brothers, all, let us learn to live rightly.

Then are you true Christians! Then are we true Jews! Then are Jews and Christians true men!

A CONSENSUS OF RELIGIONS.

THOMAS O. MARVIN.

General Lew Wallace's latest book, entitled "The Prince of India," will undoubtedly win a place among the great volumes of English fiction. It is a greater book than Mrs. Humphrey Ward's "Marcella," for it is more consistent, more graphic, more logical. The wavering course and changing convictions of Marcella exasperate the careful reader, while the steadfast adherence of the Prince of India to his plans and hopes, in the face of great difficulties and discouragements, must command one's admiration.

What was the work which the Prince of India endeavored to accomplish? It was the organization of the best elements of the world's greatest religions, particularly Judaism, Christianity and Mohammedanism, into one grand system, with God as its cornerstone, a faith which should commend itself to all the multitudes of men.

There can be no religion without the God idea, and where the God idea is truest and purest there you have one element at least of the truest religion. At heart Judaism is the simplest of all great religions. Its fundamental conception is God and His righteousness. Mohammedanism, which originally claimed to be a revival of the faith of Abraham, is equally loyal to the belief in one God. It was not only their chief article of belief, it was the battle-cry of all Islam. Not only in the mosque might be heard the murmured confession of the devotee, but over many a bloody field has rung the triumphant slogan: "There is no God but God, and Mohammed is His Prophet."

Among Christians the majority believe still in that mystery of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, and to all, practically without exception, Christianity is a Christ-religion rather than a God-religion.

If a consensus of the world's greatest religions could teach us anything, surely it would be the need and the value of placing supreme emphasis upon the God-idea. The grandest works of all Hebrew literature are those which stand first in the Great Book of the Jews: "In the beginning God." Throughout all the sacred books of Israel can be seen this tendency to exalt and magnify the Lord. It characterizes the law and the prophets and culminates in the Psalms: "Praise ye the Lord. Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord."

It was Mohammed's doctrine of the unity and supremacy of God which organized the chaotic elements of Arabia into a mighty power. "It seized on these Arab hearts like an inspiration; it roused

them by its breath out of death into a vigorous national existence; it made cosmos in their chaotic world; and wherever they bore it, it kindled a fierce enthusiasm. The Moslem rang it out like the blast of a war-trumpet, and everywhere it stirred, persuaded, quickened and organized the peoples prepared for its message. The way in which it was caught from lip to lip, and was repeated, re-echoed, age after age through the Moslem world, shows how deeply it has stirred the hearts and imaginations of a vast section of the human race. It is the one master-key to the history of the Moslem conquest."

What the God-idea has done in the past it can do to-day. The powerful influence which it has exerted upon human life and human history it can still exert. In these days, when religion touches every phase of life, when faith is eager and alive, when science declares that "there is no efficient force but spirit," when men's hearts beat as one, when all are ready to yield to a new enthusiasm and respond to a new inspiration, let our proudest mission be to rally the world about the standard of God.

A Christianity that subordinates God cannot become the conquering creed of the world. Christ without God is an impossibility; Christ equal to God or superior to God is an absurdity. The great marvel of Christian progress is accounted for when we remember that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." Without God the Nazarene could never have become the Christ. Without God, above all, and through all, and in all, Christianity can never conquer the world. With God supreme in our thought and faith all things are possible.

At a recent congress of liberal religious elements Mr. Salter, speaking for the Ethical Culture Society, said that "the basis of co-operation must be an ethical one," that the God-idea could not form the rallying point, but that all could agree on a rule of life. There can be no true rule of life, no real morality that is not founded on eternal righteousness. It would be possible to organize a political party or form a social improvement society without God as a basis, but no great religious movement can be instituted that is not founded upon the God-idea.

In all of the great religions the God-idea is present; in the universal religion it must be pre-eminent. There is no God but God, and all teachers of truth are his prophets.

HARD TIMES AND THEIR REMEDY.

BY GEORGE S. WEAVER, D. D.

Many remedies are suggested for these troublous times, but none fully meet the case. The causes of the bad times are numerous, and require many remedies. Partisanship, a superabundance of wage-earners, a lack of individual business men, waste, and an unwillingness to abide by the law of demand and supply, are probably among the chief causes. The greed of gain is no doubt now much as it has always been, and is no greater in rich than in poor men. Plutocrats to-day are much as they have always been, save that humanity in them is more marked than formerly. Human nature is much the same from the top to the bottom of society, and differs but little in our time from its old-time self. No one class of men have made the hard times, but similar qualities in all classes.

1. Partisanship is the most immediate and inciting cause. It destroys confidence in all opposing parties and in the opinions and purposes of their members; and confidence is the life-blood of business. Prosperity is possible only in the general confidence of men in each other.

When the Democrats elected Mr. Cleveland on the tariff issue, the Republicans, many of whom were heavy capitalists and large business men, lost confidence in the business situation, and began at once to take in sails in preparation for a storm, though it was certain that the tariff laws would not be changed under a year or two, and the monetary system of the country would be unchanged for months if changed at all. But confidence was gone, and a business crash invited by a general scare. Business had been overdone; the prices of both goods and labor were high, and the strain was great to keep them up. A little disturbance would and did break them down.

On the other hand, Democrats lacking confidence in Republican politics, and especially in Republican tariff laws, saw only good in a reduced tariff, and went about the work of reduction with the utmost assurance. Not being agreed among themselves, they were forced on partisan grounds to work out their tariff changes in the heat of a long party contention. So the sharp partisanship on both sides stood in the way of a sober and patriotic consideration of the subject. Rabid partisanship led the way to and aided in bringing on and keeping up the hard times. The remedy for this is for individual politicians to reduce the heat of their partisanship and learn to consider with candor and fairness the opinions of other parties. A more judicial temper is the thing needed to adjust wisely all such differences. It has become pretty certain that all the wisdom on the tariff questions is not in the two old parties, and that wiser methods for their adjustment may be reached by a broader study of the whole subject.