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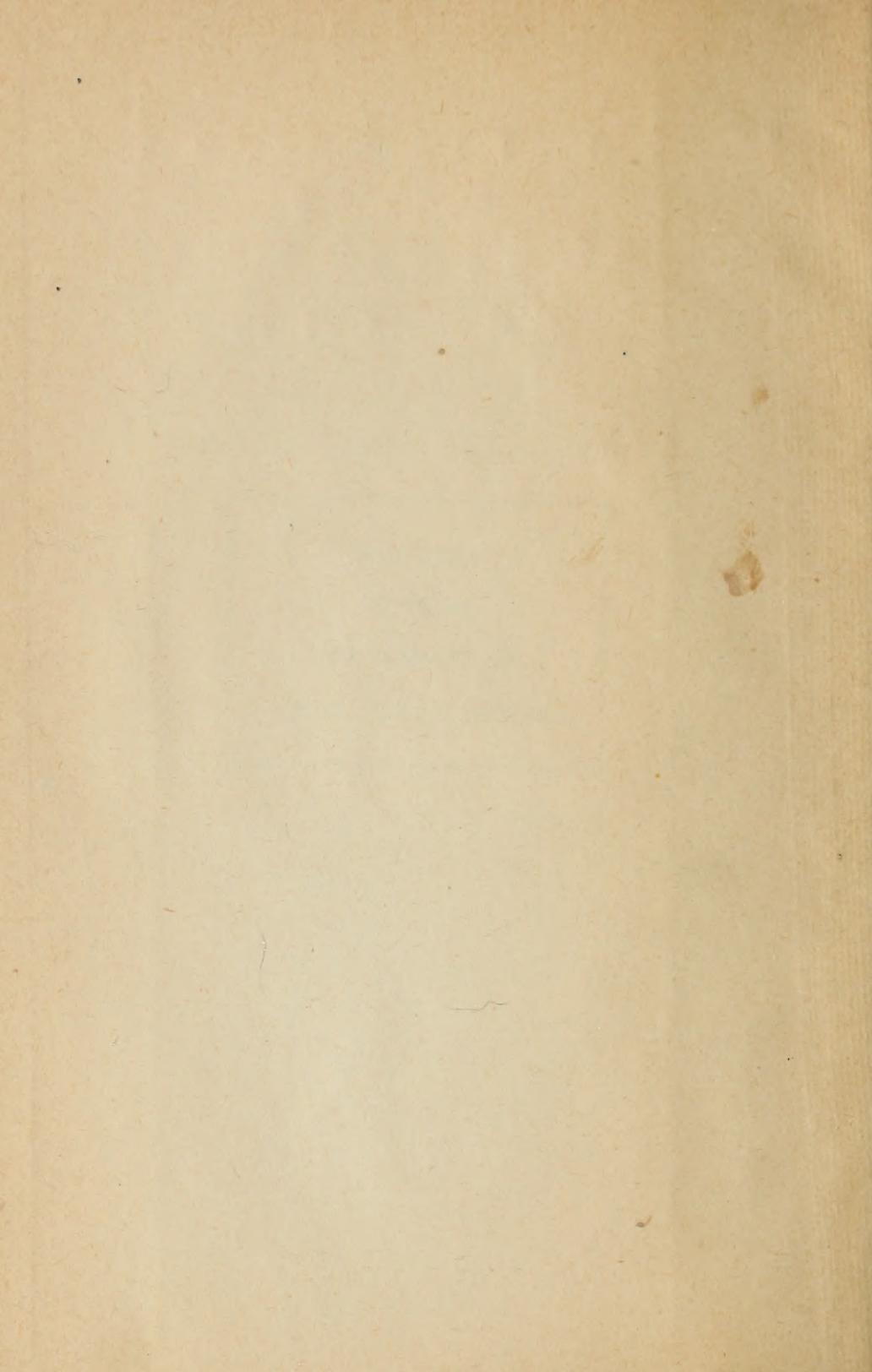
THE PLACE OF JUDAISM
AMONG THE
RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD
C. G. MONTEFIORE



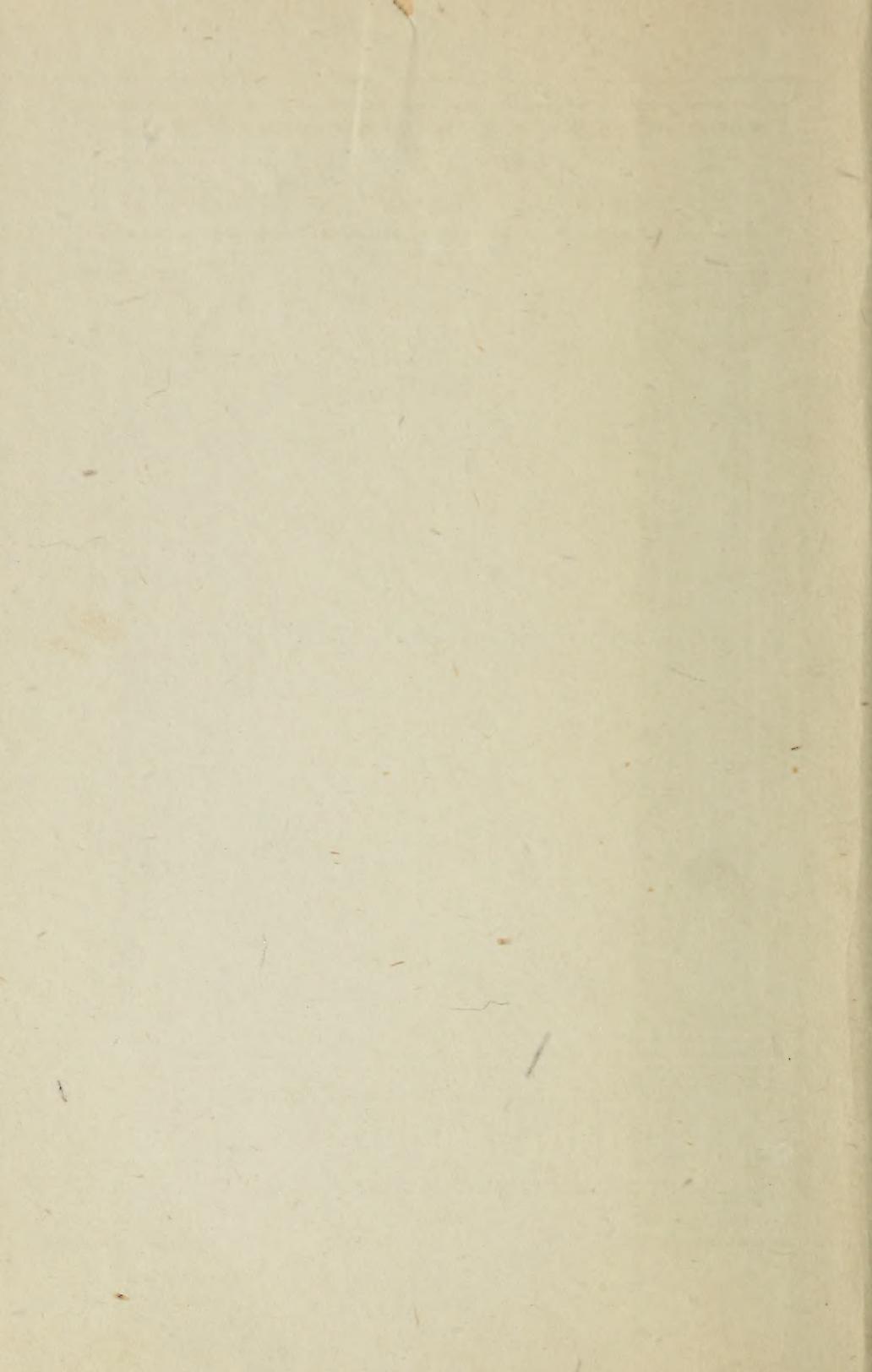
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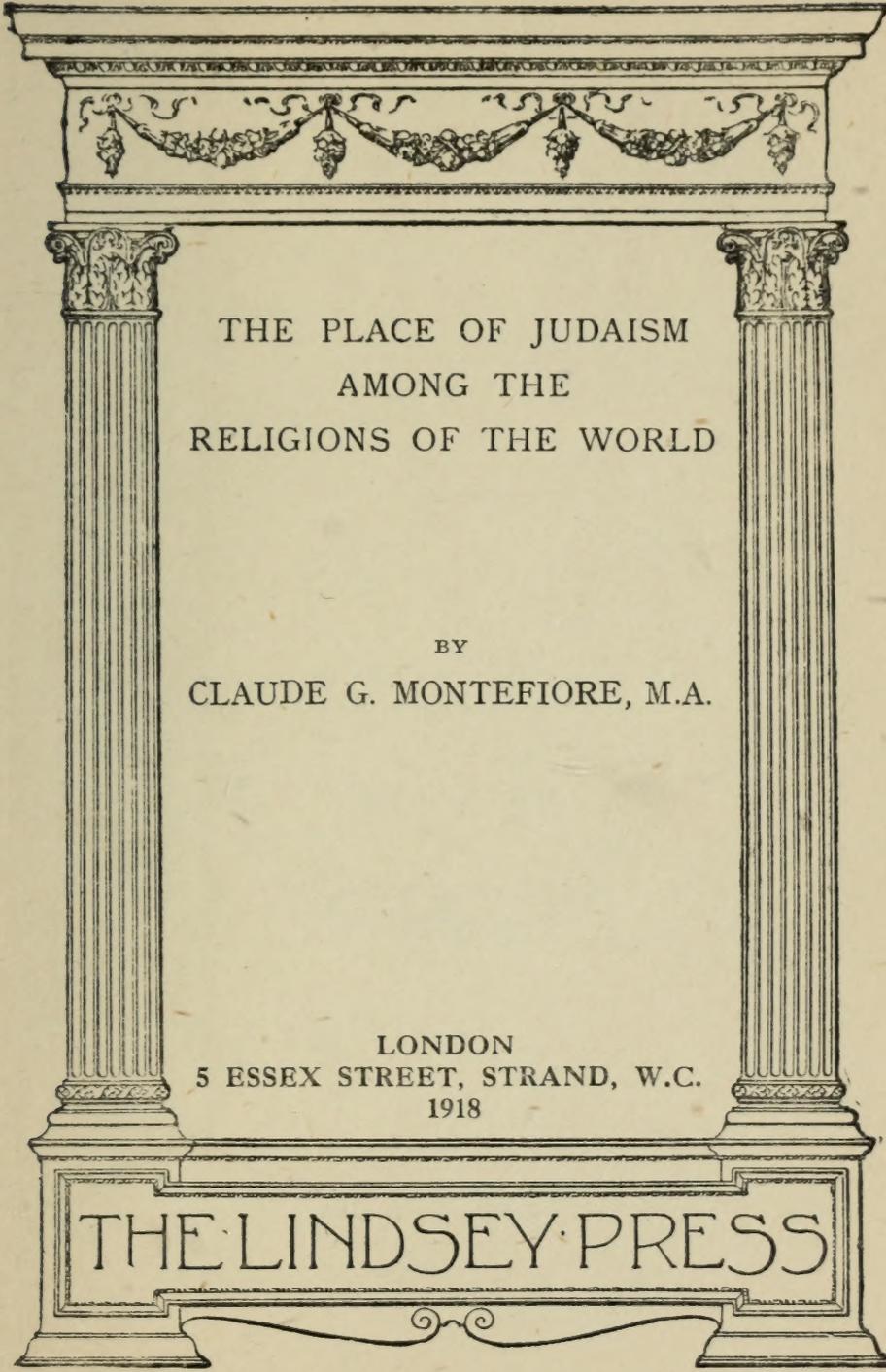
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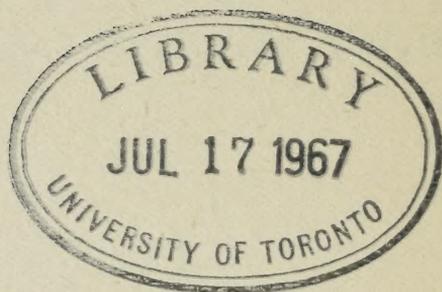
The title page is framed by a decorative border. At the top is a horizontal band with a repeating pattern of grapevines and clusters of grapes. Below this are two fluted columns with ornate capitals. The text is centered within the space between the columns.

THE PLACE OF JUDAISM
AMONG THE
RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD

BY
CLAUDE G. MONTEFIORE, M.A.

LONDON
5 ESSEX STREET, STRAND, W.C.
1918

THE LINDSEY PRESS



PRINTED BY ELSOM AND CO.,
MARKET PLACE, HULL

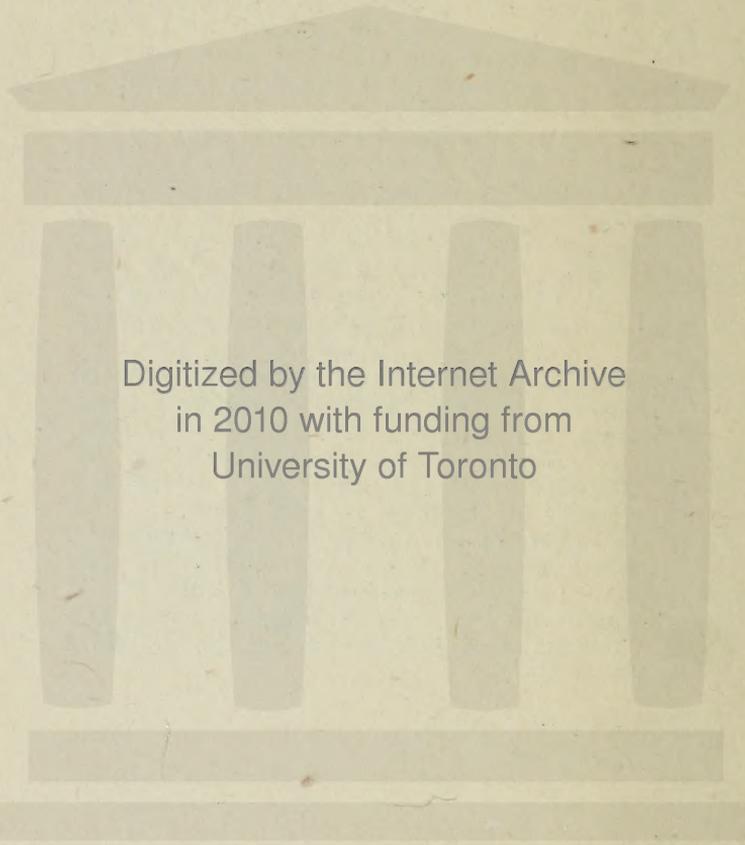
PUBLISHERS' NOTE

THE Essex Hall Lecture was established with the object of providing an opportunity for the free utterance of the thoughts of a selected speaker on some religious theme of interest to serious minded people.

The first lecture was delivered in 1893 by the late Rev. Stopford A. Brooke, on 'The Development of Theology, as illustrated in English Poetry from 1780 to 1830.' 'The Relation of Jesus to his Age and our own' by Dr. J. Estlin Carpenter; 'The Idea and Reality of Revelation,' by Professor H. H. Wendt; 'The Immortality of the Soul in the Poems of Tennyson and Browning,' by Sir Henry Jones; 'Religion and Life,' by Professor Rudolf Eucken; 'Heresy, its Ancient Wrongs and Modern Rights,' by the Rev. Alex. Gordon; 'The Religious Philosophy of Plotinus, and some Modern Philosophies of Religion,' by the Dean of St. Paul's—these are a few of the subjects of the lectures in past years.

The lecture by Mr. Claude G. Montefiore when delivered evoked warm appreciation in the audience; and it is believed that a wider public will read with deep interest what he has to say on 'The Place of Judaism among the Religions of the World.'

Essex Hall, London,
June, 1918.



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THE PLACE OF JUDAISM AMONG THE RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD

THIS lecture is to be about Judaism; not about the Jews. It has to concern itself with the place and the prospects of a religion, and not with the place and the prospects of those who, at the present time, may be the adherents of that religion. There is, indeed, a connexion between the two subjects, and it will not always be possible, in dealing with Judaism, to avoid saying something now and then about the Jews. But, so far as possible, I shall keep to Judaism, and avoid the Jews. Judaism is quite big enough, and even

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inconveniently big, for one lecture, and the amount that must be left unsaid of it will still be extremely large.

I have a special difficulty which I must mention at once. My subject is Judaism. But there is more than one Judaism, as there is more than one Christianity. For our purpose it will suffice to say that there are two main varieties, and that of each variety there are many shades. There is Orthodox Judaism, on the one hand; there is Liberal Judaism, upon the other. And here is the difficulty of which I spoke. I am, I fear, a party man. I am a believer in, and an adherent of, Liberal Judaism; moreover, that Liberal Judaism is of a pretty advanced type. Hence my conception of the place of Judaism among the religions of the

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world, my conception of its prospects, its aspirations, its future, is not the same as the conception of an Orthodox Jew.

This lecture should, perhaps, have been delivered by a man who could say that he believed in Judaism without an adjective. But, after all, what sort of person would he be? If he repudiates both adjectives, and stands beautifully balanced in the centre, he would speak for a small minority. Or his Judaism, however admirably central, would, I think, tend to be somewhat flabby, vague, invertebrate. Or, again, if he claims that his Judaism is the right Judaism, and the only Judaism that deserves the name, so that all adjectives are superfluous, you might not greatly care to listen to so dogmatic and exclusive an individual. And thus I

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take heart of comfort in spite of my difficulty.

I want to start by putting before you what I take to be the average Christian view about Judaism and its place among the religions of the world. Then I shall try to state how far Orthodox and Liberal Jews accept or challenge this average Christian view concerning their religion.

Would it not, then, be true to say that the religious contribution of Judaism to the world is usually considered to be that it produced the Old Testament Scriptures, with all their nobilities and all their defects, and that it gave birth to Christianity? It has not made any further religious contribution to the world, nor is it likely to do so in the future. To put it candidly, few

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people believe that Judaism has any part still to play in the world's religious development. The interest of Christians, I take it, is much more concentrated upon the Jews than upon Judaism. The Jews, for one reason or another, as a problem, or as a romantic, or as a disagreeable, fact, attract attention much more than their small numbers would justify, and much more, may I add, than is often either pleasant or good for them, but Judaism, the religion, is, generally speaking, regarded as somewhat of a negligible quantity.

Of the two main types of Judaism, Orthodox and Liberal, the former is looked upon as a picturesque and curious survival, the disappearance of which would be regretted, as people

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would be sorry to see the Basque language die out, or as they deplore the cessation of some interesting and peculiar custom. Orthodox Judaism is regarded as what I may call a nice museum religion, and it is, in a way, desirable to have living religious museums, as well as dead ones, just as we like to look at queer-shaped animals alive in the Zoological Gardens as well as dead and stuffed ones in South Kensington.

Then as to Liberal Judaism. I fear *that* is usually regarded as an unpicturesque and chilly sort of compromise: a transitional phenomenon, without promise or future. Or, rather, its future must be either to drag on indefinitely as a small and negligible sect for a few westernized Jews of the

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middle and upper classes, or to end by being gradually merged into some modern form of Liberal Christianity.

Now what is the main reason why this view is taken of Judaism, whether Orthodox or Liberal? Why is it regarded as a survival, an anachronism, a museum religion? Why is it supposed to have no possible future before it? Why is it supposed that it can exercise no conceivable influence upon, or be of no conceivable importance in, the religious development of the world?

It is not merely because those who take this view, being Christians, believe that the world's religious future lies with Christianity. They may, indeed, believe that Christianity is ultimately to be the religion of the whole world, but they would not necessarily hold

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that every other religion from now onward is going to contract and wither away. They would, for instance, not judge Mohammedanism or Hinduism or Buddhism as they judge Judaism. They would not necessarily hold that these great religions will have no scope and place in, and no influence upon, the religious history and religious development of the world, even though in the *furthest* future they may all ultimately disappear.

Partly, no doubt, it is a question of numbers. The adherents of Mohammedanism and Buddhism — whether nominal or ardent—are very many. The adherents of Judaism are very few.

But even that, I think, is not the main reason. The main reason is that Judaism is regarded as the exclusive re-

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ligion of a small race or people. As such, it neither claims to be, nor can it be, more than the religion of a single race, the religion of a single people. It is not, and it never can be, a universal religion. It is a national, a tribal, religion. But the days of national and tribal religions are over. They are now only picturesque and antiquarian survivals. It is consistent with its position as a purely national or tribal religion that Judaism seeks and makes no proselytes. So, too, its embodiment is purely national. Its religious usages and ceremonies are national laws, racial customs. But the religions of the future must be universal religions ; either one or more of the existing universal religions, or some development or developments of these. So far

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as the West is concerned, it is very hard to see how the religion of the future can be anything else than some form or development of Christianity. But, even in the East, no less than in the West, Judaism, as a national religion, must be left high and dry by the logical march of events. It cannot be more, just as it does not want to be more, than the religion of a small race—a peculiar race, be it admitted, a troublesome, queer, persistent, inconvenient, even remarkable race, it may be allowed, but yet, withal, a single and small race, whose religion, like all other tribal creeds, must become less and less important, and more and more anachronistic, as the years roll by.

It is, I admit, a very rash, and apparently, a very obstinate, thing to

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stand up to these opinions, and to oppose them. What possible likelihood is there that a tiny and interested minority can be in the right? And who cannot perceive that for the views of the majority there is clearly a great deal to be said? Perhaps, then, all that I can do is to win from you a benevolent, if also an extremely sceptical, smile. But Jews have been so accustomed to be in a minute minority that they have, I suppose, become hardened to the part. Judaism, for many centuries, has been a sort of *Athanasius contra mundum*. Yet it does not feel quite so lonely in its dissidence as, say, some ten centuries ago. Who in Europe then rejected the orthodox dogmas of the Church except the despised and persecuted Jew? But, to-day, as the

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Jew sees things, there is a considerable number of Christians whose religious home seems nearer to Judaism than to Christianity. Thus the Jew finds solace for his rashness.

Judaism, then, in both its main forms, dares to dissent from that view of itself, and of its function and prospects, which has just been set forth. Both Orthodox and Liberal Judaism believe that Judaism has still some place to fill, and even some work to do, in the religious development of the world. They have the temerity—and for myself I use the word deliberately, and without a particle of sarcasm or irony—to believe that its work was not finished and ended when Christianity was born. Its mission was not, and is not yet, finally accomplished. Judaism

is even now something more than a curiosity, an anachronism, a survival. Its place is still among the living, and not merely in the anthropological museum.

Both Orthodox and Liberal Judaism believe that when the Prophet, some four to five hundred years before the Christian era, speaking, as Prophets at that time ventured to do, in the name of God, declared that the people of Israel were the witnesses and servants of the Lord, he said something that was true for more than five hundred years, and which will be true for many centuries to come. It may even be affirmed that the very hall-mark of Judaism lies in this belief in a mission, a charge, a work, an office, a duty, which has not been conceived, and is not maintained, without the will and the purpose of God.

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This strange belief in a mission, which no one but themselves believes in, is, I admit, singularly daring. It is all the more daring, because, as I must also admit, it is so wanting in proof, so lacking in credentials. Whether this belief, which for two thousand years and more has continued to haunt the Jewish brain and heart, and which haunts them still, is but further evidence of the proverbial and historic Jewish obstinacy, or is only one more instance of the pathetic deceptions and disappointments, which have dogged the footsteps of all religions and of all believers, the future must decide.

In the interpretation of the mission, in the methods by which it is to be fulfilled, Orthodox and Liberal Judaism show considerable divergence.

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It is curious, and not uninteresting, that Orthodox Judaism does not, by any means, entirely repudiate that conception of Judaism and of its characteristics, which is the conception of it generally held by the average outsider. Orthodox Judaism allows that, in one important aspect, Judaism *is* a national religion. For though it denies that the God of Judaism is a national, partial, and therefore immoral, God, it freely allows that the institutions, the ceremonials, the worship, of the Synagogue, are intended for the Jews alone. They were national; they are national; they will remain national. And this, indeed, is the peculiarity of the Jewish religion, according to the modern orthodox interpretation of it; this is the

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uniqueness of its place among the religions of the world.

Its doctrines, or, at any rate, its salient and most essential doctrines, are universal in character, and it is believed that the world will ultimately adopt them. Its ceremonial, and its religious usages and ordinances, are reserved for the members of a single people or race. A universal creed is wedded to a nationalist embodiment. Orthodox Judaism, moreover, accepts the charge of being a non-proselytizing religion. It takes up the position that though it sincerely hopes that all the world will adopt the main principles of its creed, it is, nevertheless, in no wise its duty to do anything towards the diffusion of those principles outside its own pale. I have no time to explain to

you how this curious view has historically arisen. I have merely to set it forth. Orthodox Judaism holds that the conversion of the world to pure, Jewish monotheism, with all the implications which that monotheism includes, lies in the hands of God, who will bring it about in His own good time. It has even been argued that Christianity and Mohammedanism are two chosen instruments, destined to bring pagan polytheists, at long last, into the haven of Judaism—of Jewish doctrine, that is, *minus* Jewish rites. This you see is a turning of the tables on a still older and more famous theory: of the Law as the schoolmaster which should lead men unto Christ. Judaism is, therefore, content to wait. The Jewish duty is to believe and to witness;

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to endure, to practise, to sit tight. By mere and sheer fidelity to the Law, and to the God, who ordained and gave the Law, the Jews are partners with God in bringing about that Golden Age, 'when the Lord shall be King over all the earth, when the Lord shall be One and His name One.'

Thus the gaze of Orthodox Judaism is turned rather inwards than outwards. It has a charge to fulfil, and this charge is not without relation to the world. But the nature of the charge was laid down long ago, once and for all. The Law was given to Moses for a perpetual inheritance. The Jews have but to keep it, and fulfil it. That is *their* business; constant, unswerving, changeless fidelity; the rest is *God's* business. You will observe

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that this attitude of Orthodox Judaism towards the outer world is conditioned by its attitude towards the Law and the Old Testament, neither of which attitudes Liberal Judaism shares. For we Liberal Jews look at that Law and at that great Scripture from the vantage ground of criticism and of liberty.

Such, then, if I have not misrepresented it, is the place of Judaism in the world, as conceived by Orthodox Jews. Its peculiarity is obvious. It is, in one sense, less daring, and more safe, than the position taken up by Liberal Judaism, but in another sense, it is less safe. It is less daring, and it is more safe, because it does not chafe and fret at its nationalist and particularistic embodiment. On the contrary, it accepts it. It does not object to exercising

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no direct influence upon the religious development of the world. It does not desire to enlarge its boundaries. It is quite content to be a minute and dissident sect with universalist principles, set to, or accompanied by, a tribal cult. So long as its adherents remain faithful to the divine ordinances, and practise them, it asks, and it aspires to, no more. It leaves the work of evangelization—if I may use so inapposite a word—it leaves the diffusion of Monotheism (according to the Jewish conception of Monotheism) to God. He will bring men to the truth in His own way and in His own time.

Such a view of the mission is sober, undaring, and safe. Yet it is also, in another sense, fraught with danger. For it depends upon a conception of the

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Old Testament and of the Law, which has been undermined by modern criticism and modern historical investigation. And, therefore, because it depends upon a conception, which, however honestly held, is radically unsound, it cannot be destined to endure. Whatever the sacred book may be, whether Talmud or Koran, Old Testament or New Testament, no religion is safe, the principles or practices of which depend upon an interpretation, which criticism and historical investigation have proved, or shall prove, to be untenable.

Liberal Judaism agrees with Orthodox Judaism in the conception of, and in the belief in, a Jewish mission, a Jewish duty to be fulfilled. It agrees with Orthodox Judaism in holding that the religious work of Judaism in, and for,

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the world did not terminate 1900 years ago with the birth of Christianity. But our Liberal conception of Judaism is more difficult and more daring. It is more difficult, for one thing, because we are more conscious of the difficulty. As our gaze is more turned to the outside world, as we think of and study and observe this outside world more attentively, we realize more fully the difficulties which inhere in this conception of a mission, in this belief that Judaism, which has had so little influence upon the religious development of the world for the last nineteen hundred years, is capable of exercising any influence, or is likely to exercise any influence, upon it in the future.

We are well aware that if Judaism is to play any part, even though it be

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still long delayed, in the world's religious history, it must be a Judaism in many respects very different from any Judaism which the world has hitherto known. It must be a Judaism, the rites, as well as the principles, of which must become suitable for the men and women of many races, and not merely for the men and women of one. And we realize that, to achieve this universalization, upon the one hand, and to maintain our historic continuity, upon the other hand, is a long, a difficult, and a delicate task.

It may be surmised that, for those of us who hold these views and aspirations, Judaism is essentially a religion, and the Jews are essentially a religious community. If we wish, if we feel ourselves to be, members of a religious

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community, the boundaries and limits of which are to be found in doctrine and not in blood, if for us Judaism is a matter of religious conviction and not of genealogy, it is clear that any limitation of the Jews to a particular place, any identification of them with a particular nationality, must be repugnant to all our most cherished dreams and desires. We Liberal Jews of the west do not want, or feel ourselves, to be a picturesque oriental survival; we are quite willing to sacrifice the picturesque, if in the west, at any rate, we can become a religion for westerners. For occidentals we are ourselves; occidentals are our children; a religion for occidentals we want for ourselves; a religion for occidentals we dream of building up for others. That is also

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why we want Jewish congregations and Jewish places of worship in all western lands and in all centres of western civilization. The dispersion of the Jews is a condition for the fulfilment of the mission of Judaism. Or, as an ancient Rabbi phrased it, 'On the day when the Temple was destroyed, the Messiah was born.' Or, as another declared, 'The purpose of Israel's dispersion was the making of proselytes.' We want, then, gradually to fashion a Judaism which, in form as well as doctrine, shall be not only acceptable to ourselves, but shall appear to others as at least *something more* than a religion for the museum. In the west, at any rate, it must be a religion for the men and women of the west, a developing religion, moreover, modern

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and progressive, but yet with roots which stretch right back into a dim and a distant past.

Perhaps, at this stage, some one may be inclined to say : ' A truce to all this tall talk, which is also vague talk. Come out into the open, and be precise. Say what you mean plainly, and without disguise, and then the full absurdity of it will be revealed. Do you mean that, in the far future, you hope and believe that the religion of all Europe, America and Australia (to put Asia and Africa on one side) is to be Liberal Judaism, and that the Synagogue is finally to overcome and extinguish the Church ? '

To this plain question I must then attempt a plain reply.

I will begin with a question. Must

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not a Unitarian, still keen on the first three letters of his denomination, believe that his own conception of religion, however purified, developed, enriched, must ultimately prevail? *Must* he not believe this, if that very conception of religion includes the belief that 'Magna est veritas et (etiam in terra) prevalebit'?

The Liberal Jew is in a precisely similar position. Nevertheless, I desire to confess to my rash belief in the distant victory of Liberal Judaism with certain important reservations. Like my hypothetical Unitarian, I, too, can only picture that distant prevailing religion as my own religion, purified, developed, enriched. It cannot be the actual Liberal Judaism of to-day or to-morrow, not my Liberal Judaism or my son's. And secondly, it seems to

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me absurd and ridiculous to suppose that the great drama of Christianity will pass away, if it ever does pass away, without leaving deep traces and influences upon the religion of the distant future. Thus I plead that there is no inconsistency in believing that Liberal Judaism has a part to play in the religious history of the world, and that its fundamental religious conceptions (purified, developed, and enriched) will ultimately prevail, without, at the same time, dogmatizing, or even having any opinion, as to the name or names of the religion or religions of the far future, or as to the names and the nature of the buildings in which the public worship of God may then be carried on. With that Unitarian, who is keen about the first three letters of his name, the Liberal

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Jew may hereafter be more closely allied than now, and from their separate, yet kindred and complementary, conceptions of religion, a larger Theism, perhaps even *the* larger Theism, of the far future may be destined to emerge.

With this fairly plain answer to the very plain question, I must now return from distant visions to the present, and to a future, which is not far but near.

If we ask what is the place of Judaism among the religions of the world, it is at once obvious that it is an historical religion, on the one hand, a Theistic religion, upon the other. And Liberal Judaism emphasizes both characteristics. In spite of its differences from Orthodox Judaism, in spite of the changes and developments which it has already made, in spite of the puri-

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fications, developments, and enrichments which it may undergo in the future, it holds, as one element both of its power and of its essence, that it is connected with, and related and indebted to, a long and varied history, a long and varied past. It derives from Moses and Isaiah : it is connected with Hillel and Akiba. It is indebted to Maimonides and Mendelssohn. And, if, for a moment, I may tread on delicate ground, I would, for my part, also say that it is connected with, it is related to, Jesus ; it is even connected with, and related to, Paul. This does not mean that Liberal Judaism accepts the entire beliefs of any of these great men as *its* beliefs ; this does not mean that it does not reject some important, and even, perhaps, some, to them, essential

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elements in their respective teachings and conceptions. But it does mean that it has learnt something, or that it has something still to learn, from *all* of them. It does mean that it is a religion with all the strength and the power of a long inheritance, of a rich and a varied history, of a long succession of great personalities. And when sometimes men say to us, 'Why not be frankly modern? If Unitarianism is still too Christian for you, why not join in founding, or enlarging, a simple Theistic church, free from all entanglements and difficulties which your connexions with a past, intertwined and interwoven with religious conceptions so different from your own, must create for you?' we proudly reply, 'There may be difficulties, there may be entanglements; but

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we prefer gradually to solve and overcome these than to break with our history, to cut the thread of our development, to lose our connexion with so rich and remarkable a past. Witnesses to, and servants of, God we were called two thousand four hundred years ago; witnesses to, and servants of, God we call ourselves to-day. We will not abandon our historic flag, a flag entrusted to us, as we believe, by the divine will; we should not increase our strength by joining a new religious group, which, perchance, may be here to-day and gone to-morrow. We should only dissipate and destroy it.'

Judaism, then, is, and must remain, an historical religion. No less is it, and must it remain, a Theistic religion. Monotheism is, indeed, the very essence

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of it. With Monotheism it stands and falls.

Hence Judaism, so far as its place among the world's religions is concerned, is with Christianity and Mohammedanism ; not with Pantheistic systems such as Hinduism, or with non-Theistic religions, such as Buddhism.

But to say this is to say what is obvious. The more important question is : assuming, as is obvious, that Judaism, or Liberal Judaism, is one of the Theistic religions, what is the peculiarity of its Theism ? What has it, as regards its conception of God, to offer to the world ?

There was once a Rabbi who said : ' Every one who renounces idolatry may be called a Jew.' This paradox must not be taken too seriously. It is, how-

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ever, true that Jews have been sometimes too inclined to make their Theism too meagre. They have been too inclined to make it consist in a denial of certain doctrines of orthodox Christianity and in an affirmation of the Unity of God. But Mohammedans deny these same doctrines of orthodox Christianity, and they affirm the Unity of God. Are then Jews Mohammedans, or are Mohammedans Jews? It is not surprising that, in view of this somewhat abstract estimate of the Jewish faith, outsiders have been apt to regard Judaism, but more especially Liberal Judaism, as a *thin* religion. It asserts the existence and unity of God, and that is about all. If, indeed, that *were* all, Judaism, or Liberal Judaism, would have little to offer to its own adherents,

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let alone to the world. It can only be regarded as all, if we take everything else as implied in, and deducible from, the conception of the divine unity, or if we press and illustrate that noble saying of the apostle : ' O the depth of the richness of God.'

Judaism, then, has a much larger table of contents than the single heading, ' the Unity of God.' Nor is Jewish Theism summed up by some such merely negative assertion as that it is a rejection of the Trinity. Judaism teaches a rich and positive Theism ; but also, at least so far as Liberal Judaism is concerned, a growing Theism. We are fully conscious that we are by no means at the end of its development. It has still—for must not a human doctrine of God always be imperfect

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and inadequate?—its gaps, rough edges, inconsistencies, and these have to be progressively overcome, smoothed out and filled in.

Now it is clearly impossible to give any analysis of Jewish Theism, even if I were fully competent to do so. Time fails. The Jewish conception of God's relation to man and of man's relation to God, the Jewish conception of morality as coloured and conditioned by religion, must be omitted and ignored.

But what I want to point out is that Jewish Theism is, or, at any rate, seeks to be, a religion of reconciliation, of balance. Judaism, in many respects, is a religion of the mean, of the 'just middle,' and this characteristic constitutes its merit and its difficulty. Its

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merit, because it prevents one-sidedness; its difficulty, because it sometimes tends to diminish passion and enthusiasm.

Liberal Judaism, not unwisely, as I think, is inclined to use this capacity of Judaism for rich balance and many-sidedness in more ways than one. This does not mean that we are out for an incoherent eclecticism, borrowing titbits from every source. But so far as the Jewish conception of God is concerned, it does mean that this conception is, in our eyes, capable of enlargement and of growth.

No phase of Judaism could claim the title which did not press and cling to the doctrine of the divine unity and the divine fatherhood. That God is perfect, and that all men, past, present, and

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to come, were, are, and will be imperfect ; that He is the source and guarantee of truth and of goodness ; that He loves and can be loved ; that there is meaning and reality in prayer and communion ; that the divine unity is flawless and complete ; that there is both kinship and eternal distinction between man and God—these, and similar, doctrines must surely always form part of any religion which calls itself by the Jewish name. And what does all this imply ? It certainly implies that all forms of Judaism take their Unitarian doctrine very seriously. It means also that Judaism is very serious in its assertion of what is often called the divine transcendence and the divine personality. If there is one direction, if there is one religious chapter, in which it is one-sided, and in

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which it must, perhaps, remain one-sided, it is here—in a certain bias against Pantheism. And I can imagine that, as the fullest doctrine of God is very difficult for any one human being to grasp, one of the duties and functions of Judaism—its ‘place’ in the religions of the world—might for long ages be just to press and maintain this fundamental conception, that God is other than man, that He is ‘without’ as well as ‘within,’ transcendent as well as immanent, our Father and our King, our Saviour and our Lord.

But, within these limits, Judaism is free, even in its doctrine of God, to seek to attain to that balance and many-sidedness which is characteristic of it in its conceptions, for instance, of this world and of the next world, or of law

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and of duty. We can improve, enlarge, and enrich our conception of the divine immanence. We can take care to allow room for a pure religious mysticism. I have no doubt that, in these directions, there is much for us to learn and to appropriate from the mystics, and the mystical literature, both of Christianity and of other religions as well. How utterly foolish it would be to suppose that the immense travail of the ages as regards the fuller conception of God, or the immense experience of the ages as regards a deeper communion with Him, are only of value within the limits of a single religious community. One of the merits of Liberal Judaism is its freedom, on the one hand, its willingness to absorb, on the other—always, no doubt, within the

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condition of remaining faithful to the fundamental principles of any and every Judaism whatsoever. It is free as regards its own sacred scriptures. It is not bothered by miracles or authorships or dates. It is not bothered by human imperfections in the sayings of any of its prophets or teachers. And it is also able and willing to learn and to expand. It has not to assume that no light has come into the world except through Jewish windows.

Suppose, now, some one were to say : ' Let us assume that you have a certain body of religious and ethical doctrine, forming a fairly consistent whole, though capable of growth and adjustment, yet surely this doctrine is still wedded to a purely national form. Even if your continued existence may help the

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maintenance and the possible diffusion of the doctrine, the whole framework of your faith prevents Judaism being more than this unfortunate inconsistency. It is a mongrel religion. A catholic doctrine is linked to a national form.' I have alluded to this difficulty before, and now it meets us again. I fully admit that it is constantly making its appearance. We have seen how it is met by Orthodox Judaism. It meets it by full admission, and it declares that this mongrel or piebald character of Judaism is of its essence. And as things were in this regard, so must they remain. Liberal Judaism takes a different line. Or, perhaps, it is here safer to say, the lecturer takes a different line. He does not regard the mongrelness as a beauty. He does not specially desire

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to be a pied piper to the end of time. Nor does he think that it is yet proved and certain that one stocking may not ultimately be made to match the other. He fully admits the difficulties—the greatest being possibly so external, and yet so delicate, a matter as the difference of Saturday and Sunday. But it is yet curiously true, that the outward worship of the Liberal Synagogue is gradually becoming more catholic and universal, while, at the same time, preserving its distinctively Jewish character. It may be that I am heretic and venturesome enough to believe that it is not true that you can never successfully pour new wine into old bottles. It depends upon the bottles : it depends upon the pouring—sudden or gradual ; clumsy or skilful. It also depends

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upon the wine, which may, perchance, be something not contemplated in the utterance, namely, an harmonious and historic commingling of old and new. It is also curious how catholic and universal many of the festivals of the Synagogue can become ; how they can be made to celebrate, how they actually do celebrate, certain broad human conceptions which are not limited by race or nationality ; how, finally, the holiest day of the Jewish calendar is certainly also its most broadly and essentially *human* holy day, and is, perhaps, even second to none among the holy days of any religion in its independence of historic incident and in the universality of its appeal.

The function of Judaism among the religions of the world is, then, as I con-

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ceive it, to preserve, and, as occasion may serve, to proclaim and make known, an ethical Monotheism, historic, upon the one hand, yet independent of criticism, upon the other; already rich, yet capable of becoming richer. This Monotheism of reconciliation and balance, while subject to peculiar difficulties, is also possessed of peculiar qualities. I would not for a moment aver that the most orthodox Trinitarian cannot love God as keenly and as profoundly as the most convinced Jewish Unitarian. I would not for a moment deny that many such Trinitarians may love Him a great deal better than many such Unitarians. But I do believe that it is true to say that the full resources of the Father are only known to those for whom all that Son

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and Spirit may be to others are for them concentrated in Him. In other words, the God of Judaism may be—I quite admit—a thin God, a poor God; but He can be also amazingly rich. And if one is to judge the real value of a religion, one must take its God idea, not at its poorest, but at its best.

At this awful moment of the world's history, we see many grave reasons for remaining true to our charge, for maintaining our religious separateness and identity. It is a time in which our Monotheism of the centre, sane, balanced, independent, simple but full, reasonable yet earnest, appears to us to need all who can believe in it and live by it. Many dangers lie before it; dangers of various kinds, and proceeding from various quarters. Atheism

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and despair, upon the one hand; different kinds of reaction, upon the other. False affirmations of the world, false conjunctions of God with power or success. But also false denials of the world; false turnings away from it, or one-sided seekings of religion and God outside it. Democracy, too, will be on its trial, and a religionless democracy may become something more than a visionary peril. Combating materialism and atheism, upon the one hand, yet also opposed to the vision of God as Judaism sees it, there may offer themselves for the world's acceptance many curious phases of pantheism, strange mysticisms and theosophic speculations, upon the other. In the middle, firmly planted upon earth, yet unforgetful of heaven, Judaism holds that it must

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keep true to its simple, yet profound, teaching of the divine Father. It must seek to maintain a Monotheism which shall satisfy both the reason and the heart.

Moreover, from the days of Amos to our own—for two thousand six hundred years and more—this Monotheism could justly be called an ethical Monotheism. Now every cultivated person knows how the Prophets were succeeded by the Law, and how Judaism became more and more riveted to, and identified with, the Pentateuchal Code. Judaism is generally regarded as a religion of law, and in that description of it its condemnation is contained. It is not merely that Judaism means the supremacy of a particular Code, though that code, an odd mixture of many periods, a con-

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glomerate of high and low, prophetic teaching and ancient superstition, is in itself a heavy burden to any religion. But Judaism, it is said, means also the supremacy of law ; Judaism is legalism. And legalism in religion is as much an anachronism as nationality. Christianity wrought (so the argument runs) two permanent religious services. It overcame Jewish nationalism, and created a pure religious universalism. It overcame Jewish legalism, and created a religion of grace, of faith and of principles, as against a religion of merit, of ordinances, and of works.

I have so far avoided this great question of legalism, nor can I, at the very end of my lecture, make the omission good. I can only remark that the attack, not by any means, in

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my own judgment, wholly justified or accurate, applies, so far as it applies at all, to Orthodox Judaism only. For only Orthodox Judaism asserts the supremacy and unquestioned authority of the Pentateuchal law. The bugbear of legalism only applies to it. So far as it is a true bugbear, it is only Orthodox Judaism which is affected by it. Liberal Judaism is free and independent. It can absorb what is true and right in the catchwords of 'faith' and 'grace' and 'principles,' as opposed to the catchwords of 'merit' and 'ordinances' and 'works.' It can set about a theoretic and a practical harmony and reconciliation between them. And this suggested harmony and reconciliation bring me to the point which induced me to mention these

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high matters in this particular connexion and place. Liberal Judaism is not frightened by the endless attacks upon legalism still to vindicate and champion the principle of law—of law in religion. It brings in and uses this principle for the point of contact between religion and morality. It uses the idea of law just because it proclaims an ethical Monotheism.

Two things we mean by it. We mean by it that goodness and righteousness and love are not mere creations of man, without relation to, or independent of, an outside source. That source is God. He is their origin and He is their guarantee. If man did not create God, neither did he create righteousness. If *because* of God he was able to find God, so *because* of divine righteousness he was

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able to find his human righteousness.

Secondly, the very essence of human goodness lies in a recognition that it is not merely the law of man's own nature, but that it is God's law ; that it is without as well as within ; freely accepted by man as imposed from without, as well as freely accepted by him as imposed from within. The moral law is the law of God. Man must bow down before it in reverence and awe ; he must admit its obligations and its supremacy. It is not merely superior to the individual ; it is superior to the race. We have not merely to sing the praises of moral liberty and the freedom of the sons of God ; we have also to sing the praises of moral bondage and the subjection of God's servants. It is true that His

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service is freedom. But that is not the whole truth. Just as Judaism is keen upon establishing the kingdom of God upon earth, while yet believing that earthly life is given its truest value because death is not the end, just as Judaism is keen upon happiness and well-being upon earth, even though the guarantee of that happiness may be a higher happiness beyond earth, so does Judaism believe in the moral freedom of man, just because there is a divine freedom beyond him. Man can be free up to a point, because God is still freer. Or, in other words, the coalescence of freedom and bondage is only perfect in the divine Being. And, therefore, it is that Judaism still clings to the old Covenant and to the principle of law. The new Covenant is the ideal of the

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Messianic age ; it is the ideal of perfection. But, meanwhile, till the ideal is realized, ' thou shalt ' and ' thou shalt not ' are lasting human necessities. The constraint of duty abides. Call no man good but God alone. Commandments are necessities. The more freely and gladly they are obeyed, the nobler the result, the finer the character. But there can never be a complete and absolute absence of friction, and there must always be the adoring and humble acknowledgment of the constraining law, without as well as within, divine as well as human. It is the glad recognition and the unquestioned worship of this constraining law, majestic, august, divine, which are of the very essence of Judaism.

A Theism, then, of this particular

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type, is, as we believe, required by the world. But a Theism of this particular type is a difficult Theism ; it is greatly on its trial. There is still, we believe, a place for Judaism ; and desertion from it, abandonment of it, as a separate and distinct creed, is as little justified now as it was little justified in the years gone by. A great inheritance is ours, but an inheritance, I admit, fraught with difficulty and responsibility, if also with richness and with glory. But if Judaism withers and fails ; if it shrinks, and has no influence in the world, the fault will lie—so a believer must hold—not with Judaism, but with the Jews. Our feebleness and slackness will be the cause ; not the truths and not the faith which have been committed to our abiding care.

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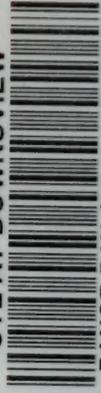
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