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Why Europe dislikes the Jew and Christianity, 1927.

"WHY EUROPE DISLIKES THE JEW AND CHRISTIANITY."

RABBI ABBA HILLEL SILVER.

THE TEMPLE, SUNDAY MORNING.

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Dislikes the Jew," which appeared in this month's Harper's, because the article, consciously or unconsciously, is anti-Semitic in character, and the coincidence of the proximity of the publication of the article to the festival of Purim, which commemorates the deliverance of Israel from the hands of the arch anti-Semite, Haman. It was too great a temptation to resist. Again, this week saw the beginning of a trial in which the latest of the long line of Hamans is involved, and that fact, too, was a temptation too strong to resist. The Ford-Sapiro trial, and this article, and Purim, all three combined, warrant a discussion of the subject of anti-Semitism, although, as a rule, I am rather averse to dwelling too much upon this subject, because, like a discussion of the weather, it really never leads to anything.

In speaking of the Ford-Sapiro trial it may be said in passing that already this modern Haman, f.o.b.

Detroit, has suffered the outstanding defeat, because the main issue in this controversy has been the charge of the existence of a Jewish conspiracy, which Mr. Ford has spent millions of dollars to propagate throughout the land. He published four volumes to substantiate his charges that there exists somewhere in the world a Jewish super-government, a Jewish comspiracy, which aims to dominate and control the affairs of the whole world. He published, you will recall,

the libelous, infamous tract, "The Elders of Zion" -- a mythical legend about the elders of Zion who were the leaders of this conspiracy. In the four years Mr. Ford has searched high and low over this country for evidence of this conspiracy; he was frequently challenged to submit his evidence to an impartial board of investigation. He refused. In the last year he was twice challenged, once by Mr. Nathan Straus, you will recall, and a second time by Aaron Sapiro. Aaron Sapiro finally succeeded in forcing Mr. Ford into court. Mr. Ford for a whole year has tried to postpone the trial, but finally he was forced to trial, and he now has the magnificent opportunity to submit all of his evidence accumulated by his agents and by his millions, to a jury to prove the charge; but instead of doing that he engaged a hundred thousand dollar lawyer and a whole array of other legal talent who fought desperately to keep every reference to a Jewish conspiracy out of the trial. While Aaron Sapiro and his attorneys were demanding the inclusion of the conspiracy evidence into the trial. Mr. Ford and his henchmen were fighting desperately to keep the whole issue out of it, knowing what a pitifully miserable showing he would make before a tribunal of justice. The whole contraption of lies collapsed within sight of the court of justice. And so whatever the outcome of the trial may be, the main issue has been definitely settled. cowardly anti-Semite did not have the courage to present his facts to a jury. The old Haman found his reward on top of a tree fifty cubits high. This modern anti-Semite. I am sure.

will find his reward in being pilloried for all time to come for the emendation, as an unscrupulous and dishonest maligner and traducer of a whole people.

But all this is said in the way of passing. I want to speak of the article of Joseph Bard, called "Why Europe Dislikes the Jew." This article presents a rather novel reason for anti-Semitism. The reason was not unknown in Europe among the groups of decadent intellectuals in Vienna, in Berlin, in Paris, in London, but it is novel in the United States. Mr. Bard, who evidently moves in this circle of decadent intellectuals, was tremendously impressed by this article, and needlessly impressed by it. He seems to have taken the tattle of a small group for a great voice that echoes around the world. He seems to have taken the reasoning of that ingrown group which the last war spewed out as characteristic of the whole of Europe. And being tremendously impressed, this writer, Joseph Bard, a Jew, took the trouble to inform the American people of this new and astounding reason for anti-Semitism.

He starts out by declaring that anti-Semitism is a normal reaction of the European. He quotes as his authorities two men who lived 150 years ago--Goethe and Voltaire. I suppose anti-Semitism is a normal type of the European mind of today, but that is not because there is any inherent justification or validity to anti-Semitism, but because all forms of hate and prejudice are normal in Europe today; not only anti-Semitism. He points to the fact that

anti-Semitism is very old, and refers to Josephus, who two thousand years ago felt called upon to defend the Jew against Jonathan, the anti-Semite. I suppose that is true, too. He might have referred to Mordecai and Esther and Haman, who lived perhaps five hundred years before Josephus. anti-Semitism is old not because there is any inherent truth or justification to it. Anti-Semitism has persisted because the Jew has persisted; anti-Semitism has endured because the Jew has endured. If the Jew had ceased to exist a thousand or two thousand years ago, anti-Semitism would have ceased to exist, just as all ancient forms of prejudice among ancient peoples disappeared because those very peoples disappeared. In other words, the universality or the scope or the age of anti-Semitism are no more proof of the inherent soundness of the anti-Semitic position than the universality and scope of witchcraft during the Middle Ages was proof of the inherent soundness of the superstitions of witchcraft.

have been through the ages many reasons given for prejudice and dislike of the Jews, from bad manners to bolshevism. The Jew has been accused of all sorts of crime to justify the hatred of him, -- the ritual murder, the well poisoning; the Jew has been accused of being the arch capitalist and the arch communist; the Jew has been accused of racial inferiority and of any number of other reasons, which this author, being possessed of the naive and scientific temper of our race, dismisses, one and all. But he finds the real reason for

anti-Semitism, and one which cannot be so lightly dismissed. in what he calls the conflict between the mind type of the Jew and the mind type of the European. The Jew has a distinctive mentality, a distinctive mental construction, which differs radically from the mentality of the European. These two types of mind, irreconcilable, have been and will continue to be in continuous conflict. And that is the real reason for Europe's dislike of the Jew.

And the author proceeds to illustrate wherein the mind type of the Jew differs from that of the European. In the first place, he says, the Jew has been charged with a lack of courage; the Jew fears suffering, and the terror of death is for him the horror of all horrors. The European has a different attitude to suffering and death. His attitude is derived from his Valhalla (myths), from chivalry (knighthood). Bard, the author, himself suspects that he is perhaps writing a good deal of "stus" because he anticipates the answers to this statement by saying: "You cannot disprove this theory of mine by pointing to the fact that Jews have died on all the battlefields of Europe and have won distinction for bravery. You cannot disprove my fact by pointing to the long record of martyrdom which the Jew has endured for the sake of his faith from the days of the Romans to this day. You cannot." But he does not say why you cannot. How else is one to determine the attitude of a people towards suffering or towards death if not by its record of the past? And if history is not sufficient proofI think of the Talmud, and I think of the medieval literature, and I ask myself: "Where in those books which reflect the spirit and the attitude of the Jew through the ages do you find this fear of suffering and this horror of death?"

Death is spoken of in the Bible as the "sleep." One who dies returns to the bosom of his Father. He is gathered in among his Father. He is commanded in the Bible not to mourn excessively for the dead, and not to make cuttings for the dead, as other Gentile people may do. The Bible makes mention of a hope which transcends death. "Death shall be swallowed up in victory. God shall wipe away the tears from our faces." "Yes, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me."

I recall that stoic attitude towards death which one finds in that beautiful story of David. David's boy was sick unto death. David prayed for the recovery of the lad, fasted, shed tears, but the lad died, and as soon as David was informed that the lad died, he arose, bathed himself, put on new garments, ate and refreshed himself and said: "Why should I mourn for the lad? I shall go to him. He will not come back to me." One thinks of that prayer that Job uttered in the face of death: "The Lord hath given and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord."

And so that statement of the author is to me

absolutely incomprehensible. There used to be a time when people said Jewish boys were not brave; they would not fight; the Jews were physical cowards. But now that the Jewish boys are the prize fighters of this country, and that football is in danger of becoming a Jewish monopoly in the United States, this argument of Jewish lack of courage is being translated into the realms of metaphysics where you can't disprove. And so from charging the Jew with lack of courage the Jew is now being charged with fearing suffering and dreading death.

The second differentiating quality in the Jewish mind which the author finds is this: the Jewish attitude towards force. The European still clings to the idea of the beauty and the value of force, in spite of his Christianity. That idea of force, says the author, that reverence for force in the arbitrament of differences, the European mind has derived from his sagas or myths of long ago. It is imbedded in the soul; it is part of the blood. The Jew is by temperament and disposition a pacifist; the Jew hates force.

Well, there is a certain amount of truth in this, but the author does not know how to account for the fact. He seeks to explain the difference in attitude towards force between the Jew and the European non-Jew through racial psychology, whereas the real explanation is to be found in history. The Jew, too, in his early days, believed in force, and his early myths had to do with force.

His early conception of his God was a god of thunder and a god of war. He had his martial periods in Bar Kochba, in the Maccabees, and in the period of the Judges, and in the period of Joshua. He, too, once upon a time was a bellicose, militant individual, but as he became older and wiser-every race passes through this youthful period of pugnacity; as it grows older it begins to realize the limitations in the value of force and it begins to seek for amicable means of adjudicating differences,—and so the Jew in Europe today, being perhaps two thousand years older than the European, naturally he represents the more mellow attitude towards force, while the European races are still passing through their youthful period of pugnacity, are still the worshippers of force.

In other words, the difference in attitude is not to be found subtly in racial difference, as though the Jews were conceded to be racially different, but simply in history. One represents an older civilization; the other represents a newer, a more recent civilization, and the European, the older he gets and the more experience he accumulates, the less he will think of force and the less he is coming to think of force, because in Europe today there are hundreds of thousands of non-Jews who abjure force, who love peace and pursue it, many of them outright pacifists.

The author tries to draw a distinction between the European pacifist and the Jewish pacifist. I am not able to follow his line of reasoning. The Jew, if Mr. Bard had studied his history and his literature, the Jew was never an outright pacifist. Nowhere in the Bible do you find pacifism. It is not the Hebraic spirit which is responsible for the doctrine of pacifism. It was Christianity which gave the doctrine of turning the other cheek to Europe. The Jew knew of two kinds of warfare. The Jew knew of a

mandatory war, a war in which the people had to engage in self-defense and in defense of its great ideal, and an involuntary war, in which the people had better not engage. The Jew sought peace, and the Jewish people was the first to project the ideal of universal peace twenty-seven or twenty-eight hundred years ago, but it was peace brought about through international cooperation, peace based upon international agreement; not peace based upon the unwillingness of men to resort to force under any provocation. That is unnatural, quite mystic and unreal.

and the third line of distinction, which the author finds is this: that the nationalist spirit among Jews is spurious, while it is real and manifest in the European. The Jew is only a nationalist through convenience, out of a sense of justice, but not through inner conviction. He is really an internationalist, while the European is a nationalist to the very core of his being, right to the very heart. The nation, to the European, is an amalgamation of God, state and the people. He is the real nationalist, and the Jew does not really know what real nationalism is.

Now that, too, to my mind, is "stus". The fact of the matter is that nationalism is very recent in

Europe and dates from the time of the Reformation. Up to the time of the Reformation the peoples of Europe had not developed a nationalistic consciousness at all. They were grouped regardless of racial antecedents and national composition; they were grouped helter-skelter in empire. It was only with the coming of the Reformation, and more especially with the rise of the last century, that the sense of nationalism developed among the European people; but among the Jews the sense of nationalism was all-powerful twenty-five hundred years ago,—so all-powerful that the Jew has been accused by other anti-Semites of being a tribalism; even his religion was accused of being a tribal religion. The sense of group solidarity was all-powerful in Jewish life long before the European people discovered nationalism.

But the Jew is old and the Jew passed through the first stages of intoxicating nationalism. He learned long ago that nationalism, while highly desirable, is not sufficient; that nationalism must be supplemented by internationalism, just as the individual's desire and craving for self-fulfillment must be supplemented by social cooperation, social service. The European is young in his nationalistic intoxication, and so he has not yet learned that which the Jew, being an older people, has learned—that nationalism, absolutism, is a fallacy, and national self-sufficiency is morally wrong; that while national personality is desirable, it should fulfill itself through international cooperation. But to speak of the Jew as not appreciative of nationalism,—

while being scattered to the four corners of the earth over two thousand years, -- is the rankest sort of hallucination and ignorance. The Jew up to very recently was not permitted to be a loyal citizen. Fourteen years ago half of the Jews of the world were not permitted to be citizens, -- the Jews of Russia, I mean, and the Jews of Poland. They were outcasts, gypsies, pariahs. But wherever the Jew was welcomed into the political fraternity of a people he gave of himself completely to the wellbeing of that people. Why, in many instances he out-Germaned the Tauton and out-Englished the Anglo-Saxon in his national fealty, enthusiasm and devotion.

And lastly--and this is perhaps the most important item in this distinction between the mind-type of the Jew and of the non-Jew of which Mr. Bard speaks--the Jewish mind, he says, is less encumbered than the non-Jewish mind. It is not more capable; it is less weighted down with loyalty, and therefore the Jew can out-general the non-Jew in the economic struggle; he can out-distance him because he is not held down, not restricted by so many historic inhibitions, by so many emotional restraints which the non-Jew in Europe is held down by. For instance, the European, when he is a business man, must still be a gentleman. Presumably the Jew need not be. The European, while engaged in international trade, must still be a patriot. Presumably the Jew need not be. The European while looking out after his own interest must still continue to be a

Christian. -- a religious man. Presumably the Jew need not be. The European is still dominated by the code of chivalry of long ago. I quote from the article: "The European, on the whole, is never a thorough-going economic creature. The highest code of the European business world is the code of the gentleman, which is only a modernized and democratized code of knighthood with many respects and loyalties to other standards than that of money-making and profit. The spirit of a sublime but hard justice, much closer to the power of nature than to the weakness of man, pulsates in the Jew--the unhellenized and intensified grim fatality of the Old Testament." The highest code of the European business

world is the code of the gentleman!

One thinks of the European exploitation of China, of the opium war. One thinks of what the European business man did in India, in Egypt. While one is a little doubtful of the gentleman code of the European business man, one thinks of the Standard Oil Company and one wonders how far the code of the gentleman of knighthood controlled the early history of this corporation and of other corporations. Why, says the author, the Jew is held by his religion in business, while the non-Jew is thwarted by his religion. The Old Testament is a commercial book. "The Old Testament, full of the spirit of haggling, is certainly more in accordance with the business spirit than the New Testament, which records in several versions how the Savior drove out the representatives of businessin Jerusalem from the Temple. For

a man brought up in the perusal of how Abraham haggled with God about the saving of Sodom and Gomorrah, and with what a pleased mien the Deity regarded the shrewd proposition of the patriarch, business transactions have a much happier taste in the mouth than for the man who, brought up properly on the New Testament and the tradition of feudalism, unconsciously waits for the whip of a punishing angel when he makes money on the Exchange."

That has been a favorite argument of these decadent intellectuals for some years—the Old Testament is a book of commercial haggling, who point to the story of Abraham, how he baggled with the Almighty to save the city of Sodom, and upon that simple, naive story they base all these dialectics and hermeneutics of Judaism being a religion of the business man. One wonders in whose behalf Abraham haggled with the Lord. When Abraham said to the Lord. "Wilt Thou destroy Sodom if you find fifty righteous men?"—or twenty, or ten, or five—in whose behalf was Abraham haggling? For himself? No. For his fellow Jews? No. For pagans, for heathens, for non-Jews was this father of the Hebrew race haggling with the Lord.

Why, if this man and others like him knew
Jewish history, how stupid those arguments, based on nothing,
would appear to them. The Jews for a thousand years were
not business men at all, traders at all. Our forefathers
in Palestine were peasants and shepherds. Our patriarchs

were shepherds; our old heroes were men of the soil. Our religion was a religion of a people living on the soil. Our festivals were nature festivals -- Passover. Shebulot, Succoth. What are they but festivals of the soil? The whole code of legislation in the Bible is built for a land folk. Our whole literature derives its tone, texture, symbols, its metaphors, its forms, its speech, from a people living on the soil .-- the rain, storm, wind, clouds, the earth, the trees. It was only after we had been driven from Palestine and denied the right to work the soil that we were forced into cities and into dirty Ghettoes in the city, and forced into money-lending, and forced into trade to keep alive. It was only from that time that the Jew became a business man. It is the rankest kind of stupidity to say that the religion of the Jew permits him to do business. implying that he can do that business unscrupulously, without regard to the code of the gentleman of modern times.

And so on the basis of these subtle tests which he and other anti-Semites have set in the mind of the anti-Jew as well as in the mind of the non-Jew, the author comments: "These two types of mind are in dreadful conflict, but the Jewish type of mind, being the hardier and the simpler and the better organized, must ultimately conquer the more fragile, less organized and the more confused mind of the European, and the European knows that he is doomed in this conflict with the Jew, and therefore he hates him."

And so a new reason for a lasting anti-Semitism

is discovered, because you see this conflict makes anti-Semitism a continuous and an insoluble problem. There is no way out. There are two diametrically opposed types of mind struggling for mastery, and the Jewish type of mind is better equipped in the struggle, so that the non-Jewish type of mind will succumb. And so a new reason is given for anti-Semitism. There used to be three groups of reasons offered in justification of anti-Semitism. The first was the religious. The Jew had a different religion and therefore he should be hated, but now that peoples have become a little more civilized, that reason has been ruled out of court. It is no longer the thing to hate a man because of his religion. And so a second type of argument was invented -the nationalistic type. The Jew is an alien and a foreigner. He cannot be a patriot. The Jew is a different nationality. and therefore he should be hated. Well, in our day when nations are getting together into cooperative groups for mutual interest, that argument is being ruled out of court. It is not the thing any more to hate another people because it is another people. And so within the last generation or two a third set of arguments based upon racial superiority and racial inferiority was invented. The western European represents a more advanced type of race; the Jew represents an inferior type of race, and therefore the Jew should be discriminated against. Well, it is being found that this race argument cannot hold water. It, too, is being laughed out of court.

and so the anti-Semite must find a new set of arguments to justify his dislike of the Jew, and that new set of arguments is presented now in this doctrine, not of race superiority or inferiority but of race psychology, and the subject of psychology being so new and so vague and so termous, anything goes. Just so you say things with sufficient clarion voice, with sufficient impressiveness, and employ scientific lingo, it goes; and for the next generation or two we shall be directed to a whole anti-Semitic literature based on this racial psychology.

The author averts to more reasons why the Jew is hated -- this is a very interesting one -- the European hates the Jew because the Jew gave Christianity to the European. He tricked the European into taking Christianity! I quote his own words: "The European resents Christianity." He resents the doctrines of love and peace and compassion which Christianity preaches. He still hankers after the Valhalla idea, -- the brute force, conflict, contest. Well. I don't know how far that is true of the average non-Jew of Europe, and how seriously he resents the fact that the Jew gave Christianity to Europe. I rather doubt that that resentment is widespread, but if it is widespread, it is a tremendous compliment to the Jew. And it is one of the things I would like to see the Jew disliked for. Every prophet was disliked for having brought an idea which the people at first refused to accept. They were hated, they were stoned to death, and they were crucified. If we are to be hated for having given to Europe the Old Testament and the New, for having given to Europe Moses and Jesus, for having given to Europe the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount, if we are to be hated not only for killing Jesus but for not killing Paul, then it is well that we should be hated.

Europe will some day be Christianized, and the salvation of Europe lies in its being Christianized, in having those bellicose passions swept out. It may come through blood and war and horror, but they must be drained out of the psychology, the thought complex of the European. Christianity will some day have a chance in Europe.

European dislikes the Jew because the Jew refused to die, because the Jew is eternal, and the European suspects—so says the author—that the Jew will be there when the European will no longer be there. Well, I don't know how real that theory is in the European. I have never encountered it. I have yet to find one race in Europe or one people that has disappeared because its mind type succumbed to the mind type of the Jew. If the European believes that the Jew is eternal, that the Jew has found the secret of eternal youth, then the thing for the European to do is not to distrust or dislike the Jew but to learn from him the secret of the eternal Jew, to find why he is an "eternal being," and perhaps to learn from this older brother, who produced a culture when the European was still a barbarian, unknown to

civilization, --to learn from this older brother who has walked many a road since his beginning, and who has perhaps drained every cup and tasted every tribulation and sampled every philosophy and known all the wisdom of mankind, --to learn from this older brother, much more experienced than he is, what is the secret of survival, and perhaps, learning from him, he may himself profit.

If I were to sum up in one word what I think is the real reason for anti-Semitism. I would quote the words of Mr. Haman of the Megillat. But, after all, all this is a twice-told tale of the Jew; it is a rehash. The classic example of that anti-Semitism and anti-Semite is already found in the Bible. What reason did Haman give for hating the Jew? Well, there were two reasons. The first reason was he did not like Mordecai. He did not like one Jew, and so, the Bible says, it was contemptible in his sight merely to destroy Mordecai; he had to destroy the whole people to which Mordecai belonged. Now, there is a great psychology involved there. It is inherent in the fate of a minority that the sins of one of its members are always placed upon the shoulders of all. That is a rule of right which we cannot escape. Mordecai displeased Haman. Haman was not satisfied merely to destroy Mordecai as he would if Mordecai were a non-Jew, but he determined to destroy his whole race.

The other reason given in the Book of Esther was: Behold, there is a people that is different, whose religion is different, whose customs are diff erent. When

all is said and done that is at the heart of all forms of antipathies and prejudices. The pack does not permit any of its members to be different, and as soon as a member of a pack, of a horde, does something which displeases the pack, it is destroyed; the pack tears it to pieces; and the mob psychology, the psychology of the mass, is the same. It wants uniformity, it wants sameness, it wants compliance with the standards and the code of the pack, of the mob, of the mass, and it distrusts and it hates the protestant minority, the group that stands out, that wants to be different. That is why it destroys the heretic; that is why it persecutes every sect which breaks away from the mother church; that is why it destroys the political rebel.

Now, the Jew has for two thousand years lived among other people and lived differently. His religion was different, his customs were different, oftentimes his speech was different, and this difference was a continuous challenge and an irritation, if you will, to the people in whose midst he lived. And that is the root of all anti-Semitism. All else, all other arguments are secondary. If the Jew had consented to assimilate, to wash out his distinctiveness, to lose himself in the world, anti-Semitism would have long ago disappeared. But refusing to do that, preferring to worship his God in his way, a handful of him, while five hundred millions worshipped differently, he was naturally an object of hate and suspicion, and all kinds of reasons were invented in justification of this hate.

Now, what is the solution? The solution is a very simple one. The solution lies in education -- and this kind of education: education which will teach men to respect differences of their fellows: education which will teach men to like one another without being like one another. I had occasion to say that at the last Good Will meeting of our Temple Men's Club. In order to like a man he does not need to be like me. It is a simple, almost a truism, but a profound truism that nine-tenths of mankind is not yet understood. As soon as individuals and races and nations will learn that the future of mankind and the hope of the world depends not upon all people becoming alike, looking alike, thinking alike, speaking alike, dragooned, goosestepped, mechanically uniform, but that the future of mankind and the hope of the world means that every nation. every group and every individual shall fulfill himself and express himself and realize himself to the fullest, while at the same time affording the same privileges, the same opportunities, to the other fellow, the other nation and the other group .-- when that time comes anti-Semitism, like all forms of hate and distrust and suspicion, will vanish from the earth.

But it is a long time coming. I have no illusions about the subject. Mr. Ford is not the last of the anti-Semites. The mass moves slowly. There is a fatal pull of gravity which pulls us down to the earth. Mankind does not walk or mankind does not run. It crawls and stumbles

and slides back, and then with bleeding hands it moves
another step forward. Anti-Semitism is one of a host of
hates which exist in the world, and which will through the
long centuries to come wear down slowly, almost imperceptibly,
if we continue our work of education, of self-discipline, of
self-emancipation, from the superstitions and the bigotries
and the idolatries and the fanaticism of today.

Europe dislikes the Jew. I suppose it does. Europe dislikes itself. The European nations dislike one another: the religions of Europe dislike one another. If they liked one another they would not have, ten years ago. killed twelve millions of their best sons on the battlefield: if they liked one another they would not have devestated their civilization. They hate one another. Religiously they hate one another; racially they hate one another; nationally they hate one another. And the Jew shares in this universality of hatred of the European. His destiny is linked up with their destiny. The more liberal they become, the more tolerant they become, the more educated they become, the less will there be of anti-Semitism in the world. The European mind has nothing to fear from the Jewish mind. It can hold its own pretty well. No men and no race has a monopoly on virtues or talents or genius. The European mind is pretty robust and creative; it can hold its own as it has been holding its own throughout the world. But the European mind and the Jewish mind need to learn. they are learning very slowly is that the greatest good in

the world is attained by cooperation, the pooling of resources. If the Jew has any peculiar virtues which the non-Jew has not, and the non-Jew has any peculiar talents which the Jew has not, the best thing for them to do is to pool their talents, to merge their potencies and powers, and work for the common welfare of both.

That will come in time. It is a long way off; and until that time it will be well for all of us to continue to celebrate the festival of Purim.

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