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Liberal Judaism and Jewish nationalism, 1930.

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THE LIBERAL JEWISH MONTHLY

VOL. I. No. 9.

FEBRUARY, 1930

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Among the Contents:

WRHS AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES
Liberal Judaism and Zionism

By

RABBI DR. A. H. SILVER, of Cleveland, U.S.A.

Jewish Marriage and Divorce Laws in Germany

By

RABBI DR. DIENEMANN, of Offenbach.

Fleg's "Solomon."

THE LIBERAL JEWISH MONTHLY.

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CALENDAR.

Saturday, February 1st, at 11. Service at St. John's Wood Road. Rev. M. L. Perlzweig.
At 3-30. Service at Belfast Road. Rabbi Starrels.
At 3-45. Service at West Central Hall. [Rev. M. L. Perlzweig.
At 3-15. Service at Royal Institute, Liverpool. Rabbi Goldstein.

* * * *

Sunday, February 2nd, at 11-30. Service at St. John's Wood Road. Mr. B. L. Q. Henriques, J.P.

Saturday, February 8th, at 11. Service at St. John's Wood Road. Rabbi Mattuck.

At 3-30. Service at Belfast Road. Rev. M. L. Perlzweig.

At 3-45. Service at West Central Hall. Hon. L. H. Montagu.

At 3-15. Service at Royal Institute, Liverpool. Rabbi Goldstein.

* * * *

Sunday, February 9th, at 11-30. Service at St. John's Wood Road. Rabbi Mattuck.

Saturday, February 15th, at 11. Service at St. John's Wood Road. Rabbi Mattuck.

At 3-30. Service at Belfast Road. Hon. L. H. Montagu.

At 3-45. Service at West Central Hall. Rabbi Starrels.

At 3-15. Service at Royal Institute, Liverpool. Rabbi Goldstein.

* * * *

Sunday, February 16th, at 11-30. Service at St. John's Wood Road. Rabbi Mattuck.

Tuesday, February 18th, at 8-30. L.J.S. Council Meeting.

Saturday, February 22nd, at 11. Service at St. John's Wood Road. Rabbi Starrels.

At 3-30. Service at Belfast Road. Rev. M. L. Perlzweig.

At 3-45. Service at West Central Hall. Rabbi Starrels.

At 3-45. Service at Tudor Hall, Streatham. Mr. B. L. Q. Henriques, J.P.

At 3-15. Service at Royal Institute, Liverpool. Rabbi Goldstein.

READERS' VIEWS.

There will always be a column of the Monthly available for any one of our readers who would like to send us a short article on any subject relevant to the general character of the "Monthly."

ON
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 10th, at 8 o'clock
in

The Montefiore Hall
The Society for Jews & Christians
will discuss

"The Devotional Life."

The Speakers will be
The Rev. R. AMBROSE REEVES, B.A.
and Rabbi STARRELS.

The Hon. L. H. MONTAGU will take the Chair.

The Liberal Jewish Monthly

Vol. I. No. 9.

LONDON, FEBRUARY, 1930.

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PRESENT ISSUES.

A Zionist's View.

In our desire to give our readers all points of view, we publish in this issue the views of Rabbi A. H. Silver on the relation between Liberal Judaism and Zionism. Dr. Silver is prominent in America both as a Liberal Jewish minister and as a Zionist. In Zionism he holds a place of leadership, being a member of the Actions Committee, which is the executive committee of the Zionist world organisation. A year or two ago, he read a paper before the Central Conference of American Rabbis on "The Democratic Element in Judaism," devoting the second part to a discussion of the relation between Liberal Judaism and Zionism; we reprint the salient portions of this part of the paper. The audience before which the paper was read was composed of Liberal Jewish ministers, the large majority of whom were not Zionists. It is necessary to state this fact in order to relate Dr. Silver's expression of his views to the context.

* * * *

The Jews' Mission.

Now the first thing that strikes one in these views is the almost complete absence of any stress on political Jewish nationalism. Dr. Silver, following Achad Ha-am, does not lay much store by the establishment of a Jewish political nation. His Zionism is the faith in the universal mission of the Jewish people, with emphasis on the people idea as well as the universal function. The Jews, not individually, but as a people, a corporate group, are consecrated to the service of God, so that as a people they have a value in the world; upon their existence as a people depends the fulfilment of a divine purpose in the universe of men. The non-Zionist would fully agree with this view. He, too, holds the belief in the Jews as a people with a mission, being a channel of divine revelation; and that for the individual Jew the consecration of the Jews has a mediating value. In his attachment to the Jews, the Jew finds help for his spiritual life, and shares at the same time in the universal mission of Israel. Dr. Silver em-

phasises the need for religion in the life of the individual Jew as a way to strengthen the Jewish people for their religious service. All Liberal Jews would agree with him, adding also with him that loyalty to the people is a necessary part in the spiritual constitution of every Jew.

* * * *

"Jewish Culture."

Dr. Silver goes so far as to make religion the sole content of "Jewish culture." Jewish art, Jewish music and the like he brushes aside as of no consequence, perhaps even of no reality; the Jewish religion alone constitutes Jewish culture. That is presumably what he means when he says that "the distinctiveness of the Jewish culture is the dynamics of prophecy, the passionate outreaching for the *Malchut Shamayim* (Kingdom of God) All else is a pale replica of alien thought and culture." The non-Zionist agrees. Dr. Silver condemns secular nationalism for the Jews. "We are unique," he writes; "to attempt to fit us into the framework of the commonly held conceptions of men and culture, to liken us to other nations, is to miss the very quintessence of Jewish culture, to overlook the essential text and thesis of our life."

* * * *

A Definition of Zionism.

What, then, is Dr. Silver's Zionism? It is the desire "to enrich and beautify and vitalise Jewish group life . . . to hold fast to all the agencies which in the past preserved the integrity of the people—Israel's language, Israel's love, Israel's hope of national rehabilitation, Israel's memory-laden customs and habits of life adjusted to modern needs". In this list there is only one element to which the Liberal Jew who is a non-Zionist would be opposed, namely "Israel's hope for national rehabilitation." One wonders exactly what is meant; for Dr. Silver while desiring a strong Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine does not expect it to accomplish the miracle of preservation for the American Jew. Moreover, Dr. Silver has no use for a secular nationalism; he does not want a Jewish nation like other nations.

The Difference.

It would seem, therefore, that between a Liberal Jew who is a Zionist, like Dr. Silver, and the Liberal Jew who is not a Zionist, the difference has been reduced to one about the practical value of a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine. Both interpret Jewish history, Jewish experience in the same way; both hold the same ideal of Jewish life, and the same belief in the mission of Israel; both accept the ideas of a unique people with a universal mission; both reject any secular nationalism. Both further agree that a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine will not save the Jews in other lands. "Only the religious Jew," writes Dr. Silver, "who will continue steadfast in his faith will conserve and carry on the culture and the traditions of Israel." Presumably Dr. Silver would add that a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine would help him to do this, though it would not make him do this; while the non-Zionist would question that, adding that it might even endanger the existence of the Jews as a unique people with a universal mission.

* * * *

Fundamental Agreement. We have dwelt as much as space permits on Dr. Silver's views to throw some light on the often discussed question about the relation between Liberal Judaism and Zionism. It is clear that there is little more than a practical difference between the Zionist who interprets Jewish life in religious terms and sees in the Jews' existence a universal religious purpose and the non-Zionist who emphasises the corporate spirit in Jewish life, seeing in it a needed influence for the individual Jew and a source of power in the life of the Jews. In fundamentals they seem to be in general agreement. And the practical issue about Palestine seems to be losing its significance through circumstances.

Let it, however, be made clear that our estimate of Dr. Silver's position is controlled altogether by the fact that he makes religion fundamental and regulative; for he himself, though a nationalist, rules out the secular nationalist, and others like him, "who have repudiated the historic religious ideal of Judaism." When the Zionist insists that a Jew must be a Jew by religion, then he is at one with Liberal Judaism in the most fundamental issue.

* * * *

The difficulties caused by the Christmas holidays were responsible for the delay in the last number of the "Monthly." That issue suffered in yet another respect—the numbering of the pages was wrong—they should have been 89 to 100.

LIBERAL JUDAISM AND JEWISH NATIONALISM

by

RABBI ABBA HILLEL SILVER, D.D., LITT.D.

(In response to a request for an article on the above subject, Rabbi Silver suggested the publication of the relevant portions of a paper read by him before the Central Conference of American Rabbis; adding that he had nothing to add or alter. The following consists, therefore, of excerpts from that paper, which we believe give, despite the omission of intervening passages, a full presentation of Dr. Silver's views.—THE EDITOR.)

God had made an eternal covenant with the whole house of Israel, that Israel as a people should become his pledged servant and emissary. For the first time in the history of mankind a whole people conceived of itself as having been consecrated to perform those functions which among other peoples were relegated to a small official group of priests.

Nothing is so basic in the religious philosophy of the Bible as this concept of the covenant and its implied sanctification of the whole people of Israel. And strange and difficult as this unparalleled idea of the mass ordination of a whole people may appear, Israel clung to it tenaciously throughout its history. It became the essential tradition of Israel.

It is to be found also in the deeper layers of modern Jewish nationalism. Thus the foremost philosopher of modern Jewish nationalism, Achad Ha-am, was a most eloquent and courageous spokesman of the ideal of the mission of Israel. He was frequently driven to attack what he regarded as the assimilationist tendencies of Western European Liberal Judaism, and its false interpretation of the mission ideal, but he boldly made the latter the chief corner-stone of his philosophy of cultural Zionism. This seems to have escaped the notice of many of his disciples. Writing after the first Zionist Congress in 1897, Achad Ha-am stated—and at the time he created a furor in Jewish circles—that he was not at all sure that Israel was ready to assume the role of a political nation. Furthermore that even if it were prepared and even if permission were granted to Israel to assume its place as a political entity in the world, he was not at all sure that that would represent the fulfilment of its destiny. Israel, he argued, has a higher destiny to achieve. Two thousand years of heroic suffering and martyrdom cannot find their compensation in the right to play the role of a pitifully small state in the world of political intrigue, a pawn in the hands of scheming international diplomats. "The reward

must be according to the suffering." An ancient people which has been "a light unto the nations" cannot and should not content itself with the moiety of political autonomy enjoyed by peoples, many of whom are culturally and historically insignificant and none of whom suffered as Israel has suffered. It was neither a matter of accident nor of slight moment that prophets arose in Israel who visioned "the end of days" when righteousness would be established in the world. This universal humanitarian ideal has been and must continue always to be an integral part of the ideal of Jewish nationalism. "The salvation of Israel will come to pass through prophets and not through diplomats."

The view opposed to the covenant-mission ideal is not unknown in Jewish history. There were many secularists in Ancient Israel as there are to-day. Israel, they maintained, was a secular people like every other people, and like every other people it also had a cult and a priestly class. They refused to ascribe to Israel any unique ethico-religious mission which called for a universal apostleship. They were not conscious of any dynamic Messianism, any crusading moral purpose inherent in the culture of Israel.

Their point of view in Jewish history may be called Sadducean, while the opposing view which triumphed in Jewish life may be called the Pharisaic. Both the Sadducees and the Pharisees were nationalistic, but the former clung to the universally accepted secular conception of nationalism while the latter clung to the radically new and distinctive prophetic concept of a holy nation.

Pharisaic Judaism turned sharply away from primitive Christianity largely because the latter, while seeking to continue, in its own way, the Messianic world-mission of Israel broke away from the tradition of national discipline and loyalty. Christianity concerned itself with the individual in relation to himself. Judaism continued to concern itself with the individual in relation to himself and to the Jewish people. Liberal Judaism placed itself in direct line of descent from this prophetic-Pharisaic tradition when it accepted as focal in its ideology the mission of Israel.

Where Liberal Judaism erred was not in holding fast to the covenant and the mission ideal. It erred as the early Judeo-Christians had erred in believing that the millennial age of perfection was at hand and that there was therefore no urgent need to stress the national ideal or the importance of maintaining a strong group discipline such as Pharisaic Judaism had built up.

Like the early Judeo-Christians some of the

leaders of the Liberal Judaism were frankly anti-nationalistic and anti-nomistic. Even those who called for the retention of a minimum of law and discipline, by the high exclusive emphasis which they placed upon the objectives of Judaism led men to think lightly of the technique and the methods of obtaining these objectives. They spoke forcibly and eloquently and truly of the mission of Israel, but they failed to evolve a *modus vivendi* by which the people would be constantly reminded that they are a peculiar, covenanted and consecrated people, and by means of which they would be saved from assimilation.

But the patient, sober Pharisees among us, who have not forgotten the lessons of their history, conscious that Israel has still as great a role to play in the future as it had in the past, will continue to pay scrupulous heed to the discipline and the morale of the group. They will fan the flames of enthusiasm and loyalty not only for the ideals of Israel but for the people of Israel as well. They will think in terms of the people of Israel and not merely in terms of an abstract theology and a moral code. They will be reverent not only of prophecy but of the people which gave birth to prophecy and to prophets and which may yet vouchsafe many a startling revelation to mankind. The modern Pharisees will proceed to enrich and beautify and vitalise Jewish group life. They will hold fast to all the agencies which in the past preserved the integrity of the people—Israel's language, Israel's lore, Israel's hope of national rehabilitation, Israel's memory-laden customs and habits of life adjusted to modern needs.

Our modern Pharisees will also face in fair combat the secularists in our midst—our modern Sadducees. There are many groups in Israel who are the present day disciples of that ancient heresy which prophetic and Pharisaic Judaism fought doggedly through thirty centuries. Some of these secularists consent to have religion occupy a modest place in the totality of Jewish life. Others are frankly sceptical of its importance or outspokenly hostile. They have repudiated the historic religio-ethical Messianic ideal of Judaism. They are, however, hard put to it to find some other satisfying life-motif to substitute for it. Some of them are driven to a pseudo-scientific race idolatry—the exaltation of race identity a new blood cult. The newer theories of race and the findings of modern psychology are of course playing havoc with this cherished notion. Others are seeking refuge in a doctrine of cultural solidarity, extolling the ideal of the inviolability

of cultural identities. Israel must persist because it possesses a distinctive culture. But one wonders what the distinctiveness of Jewish culture is if it is not the dynamics of prophecy, the passionate outreaching for *malchut shamayim*! What other superlative contributions have we made to mankind? Whatever of the magnificent and the eternal there is in our life and literature derives from that one source. All else is a pale replica of alien thought and culture.

Members of other cultural groups when separated from their native homes sooner or later exchange their cultures for those of other peoples. The Jews persisted in racial uniqueness in order to preserve the integrity of his faith. Loyalty to the faith spelled loyalty to the race. Thus when the American Jew will abandon his faith he will swiftly and surely assimilate. He will inter-marry with the peoples about him, and he will destroy himself racially, and no quantum of Jewish music and Jewish art or books on Jewish literature and philosophy will be potent enough to save him.

Even the strong appeal which Palestine is making to-day to many of our people will not prove sufficient to command their loyalty here in the days to come. The establishment of a strong Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine will not accomplish the miracle of preservation for the American Jew. The existence of a great German Fatherland has not kept the Germans in the United States from assimilating. The Jew in the United States will not long remain either a Yiddishist or a Hebraist in the technical sense in which the proponents of cultural pluralism understand the terms. Only the religious Jew who will continue steadfast in his faith will conserve and carry on the culture and the traditions of Israel.

The strength of Liberal Judaism has been, and is, its adherence to the mission ideal. Its weakness lies in the fact that it has laboured under an anti-nationalistic, anti-nomistic incantation, which is fundamentally foreign to prophetic and Pharisaic Judaism. The ideal of the mission of Israel is inexplicably intertwined with the ideal of the people of Israel. Deutero-Isaiah, who of all Jews most eloquently vocalised the missionary faith of Israel, was of all Jews the most nationalistic and Palestinian. It is clear, is it not, that a people need not expatriate itself or continue as an expatriated people in order to be an apostle to mankind, and that universalism and nationalism rightly conceived are never anti-thetical.

LIBERAL JUDAISM IN GERMANY AND THE JEWISH MARRIAGE LAWS.

BY RABBI DIENEMANN, Offenbach on Main.

To avoid any misunderstanding, it is necessary to say at once that the connotation of "Liberal" in the terminology of the German Jewish Community is quite different from the English one. Whereas in England and America, the conception "Reform" is bound up with a presentation of a position which adheres to the traditional, and in that of "Liberal," the governing idea is of a position which has gone far in its break with all that is traditional; in Germany, it is just the reverse. "Liberal" describes the non-orthodox attitude, and "Reform" the Radical position. The Liberal movement is preponderant in numbers; only in the case of the Reform Community of Berlin has an independent, self-constituted community been established upon these Reform views. A self-constituted, independent group, whose members are free to belong to any defined religious movement, is unknown in Germany; the Community is an organisation existing by the state laws, to which one automatically belongs, if one is of the Jewish faith. It is true that one can withdraw from it, but for this purpose well-defined legal formalities are prescribed.

The German Jews see in this constitution of the community a source of strength to the Jewish position, and are therefore using every endeavour to preserve it. But this so-called "Unified Community," embracing movements in various directions, calls for mutual consideration in all matters pertaining to religion and in the openly advocated religious demands.

It must be pointed out in advance that religious marriage is in Germany a purely *voluntary act*; the legality of a marriage is established by the civil marriage which takes place before the official registrar. If the Rabbi puts any difficulty in the way of a person, should such a one dispense with the religious ceremony, he can still contract a marriage which will be legally valid and binding.*

This must be understood if one is to appreciate the attitude of Liberalism towards the Jewish Marriage Laws. These laws first make themselves apparent in the actual marriage ceremony. All circles of Liberalism lay distinctive value on a

* (This is also the case in England, but there are some countries where civil marriage is impossible. In Germany, moreover, we believe, that a civil marriage must always precede the religious ceremony.—The Editor.)

religious marriage ceremony, in the course of which the traditional formula is used, that is to say, the bridegroom places the ring on the bride's finger, saying: "Thou art consecrated unto me with this ring, according to the laws of Moses and Israel."

The prohibitions to marriage based on the Biblical and Talmud legislation are in general respected. The preachers of the Reform Community no longer recognise these laws as in any way binding and confer their blessing on any marriage which is permissible by the laws of the State. Hence, the following only applies to the Liberal sections. A Liberal Rabbi would hardly solemnise the marriage of a man with his brother's widow, and most certainly not if there were children by her marriage. On the other hand, most of the Liberal Rabbis do not attach binding force to the injunctions in the Talmud and Bible which forbid a Kohen from marrying a widow or a proselyte. In Liberal sections all these injunctions are disregarded, as all of them are bound up with the Kohen's place in the sacrificial service in the Temple.

The Bible-Talmud injunction about "Chalitzah" is also considered no longer binding. According to the words of the Bible, if a man dies without issue, his brother must marry the widow; but if he will not, a special ceremony must be performed by which the man releases the widow. And even if he is willing to marry her, Rabbinic Law does not permit him to do so, so that in every case, this ceremony must be gone through. Without it the widow cannot remarry. The original injunction was based purely on property grounds, for the first child born from the marriage with the brother was fictitiously accepted as the child of the dead husband, inheriting his name and estate. Inasmuch, however, as the law embodies the subjection of the wife to the whole family, it is quite foreign to our thought. Furthermore, the whole idea and the methods for carrying it out have quite disappeared from the knowledge of laymen. For these reasons the majority of Rabbis no longer consider themselves as bound by the law of Chalitzah, not requiring it and even refusing to observe it.

The most serious problems connected with the Jewish Marriage Laws have reference to remarriage, after divorce. In such cases, religious Liberalism in Germany does not follow the same course as that taken by Liberal Judaism in America and England, whose example is followed by the Reform Community of Berlin. These accept as a *fait-accompli* the divorce decree granted by the State, so that on the basis of it

they are prepared to solemnise a new marriage without further requirement. In the inner consciousness of the people there is, however, a strong feeling that just as a marriage should be begun as a religious ceremony and one should not be satisfied with a marriage before the registrar, so also when living together for man and wife is no longer a possibility, a religiously defined procedure should dissolve such a marriage. Among large circles of laymen there is a deep feeling that such a procedure, a religious form of divorce, should be required.

The Liberal Rabbis insist upon a religious solemnisation of marriage, both upon purely religious grounds and for the sake of Jewish unity. The danger must be avoided that a polemic Orthodoxy might disqualify certain families on the ground that they issue from a marriage which they cannot recognise, and refuse on this ground to sanction a marriage between any of its adherents and the members of such a family. If then, in the case of a divorce, both parties agree to a religious divorce, this will take place in the traditional way, and, to use the legal expression of the Talmud law, the Get (Divorce decree) will be given them.

It is true that the contents of the Get and the granting of it constitute a legal process rather than a religious form, that the traditional wording of the Get is antiquated and shows a state of absolute dominion for the man and oppression for the woman, which are in contradiction to our feelings. There is, therefore, much to be altered in it. But having regard to the sensitiveness of Orthodoxy and to the unity of the community and Judaism, one clings fast to the traditional form, since no harm is caused by perserving it.

Difficulties, however, appear as soon as one of the two parties tries to sabotage the Get process. If the wife refuses to accept the Get decree, a remedy can be found according to the traditional Jewish code. An exponent of Judaism in the 19th century formulated a solution for such a case, decreeing that, notwithstanding the refusal of the wife, a husband might remarry with the consent of one hundred Rabbis and men learned in the Torah. Such an agreement can be easily arrived at with the present-day postal and traffic facilities. Even the Liberals sometimes follow this strange course, with the object of maintaining unity, and because there are no compelling reasons to abrogate a line of action which does not meet with general approval. But what happens if the

man refuses to grant the Get? He has the Divorce decree (Get) drawn up and hands it over. But what happens if he refuses or he makes use of this opportunity for the purpose of extracting money as unfortunately occurs?

The elders of the so-called "tikkun agunoth" (i.e., the care of abandoned wives) looked upon their work as a specially holy task, considering it a moral and religious duty to facilitate the remarriage of every abandoned wife; they gave in all such cases to the Rabbinical Courts the right to the wife to compel the husband to deliver the Get. They coined the formula—*kaufin aussau ad schejaumar rauzeh ani* (one compels him, until he says, I am prepared to hand over the divorce deed). This presupposes a Rabbinic Court invested with compulsory powers, but such a tribunal is no longer to be found in any part of the world, not even the Beth-din hagadol in Jerusalem possesses such power. A short time ago it gave a judgment that it was the duty of the husband to give the Get, but it had no means of enforcing such a judgment.

Just as there is a difficulty in levying on a husband's property for non-compliance in the above judgment, there occurs a still further difficulty in cases where he is missing, has disappeared or is insane. For all such cases Orthodoxy has not yet found a remedy. It has adopted the view that there is no tribunal which would have the right of altering the existing law, in accordance with the Talmud dictum, "a Beth-din can only put forth an alteration in decrees of a former Beth-din, if it itself possesses a greater number and greater wisdom." The right of passing new laws is conceded to none of the present-day tribunals by Orthodoxy which holds to this view in spite of the fact that in Eastern Europe, the number of Agunoth (abandoned wives) has risen to many tens of thousands, who are, therefore, prevented by the ancient law from remarrying. In many of the countries of Eastern Europe the Jewish marriage law is, or was until lately, the competent State law for the Jews, so that all these unfortunate women were forced either to lead sad existences in enforced celibacy or become the victims of immorality. Orthodoxy holds fast to these views, so that in Germany the number of those who are satisfied with a civil marriage, is steadily increasing, though in their hearts they yearn for a religious blessing on their second marriage; and Orthodoxy can give no help to those who cannot bring themselves to make another marriage if they must do without this religious blessing.

For many years Liberalism has shown great patience in this matter for the sake of maintaining Jewish unity, but its conscience no longer allows it to do so. In May, 1929, the Union of Liberal Rabbis in Germany devoted a whole sitting to this question, and the writer of these lines had to draw up a report on it, and make a recommendation. Faithfully adhering to the moderate course of German Liberalism, it was desired not to abolish the Get completely, but rather so to amplify Jewish laws as to make them accord with common sense.

The one who drew up the report proposed that in the above cases the Beth-din should of its own power and competence appoint a representative who, when the husband was refractory, would then give the Get, empowered by a power of Attorney issued by the Rabbinic tribunal. This measure was proposed at the same time in Jerusalem by Rabbi Klatzkin, who belongs to extreme Orthodoxy. Rabbi Freudenthal, of Nürenberg, made the proposal that in future the husband should, at the time of the marriage, sign a paper by which he would then empower the Beth-din to give the Get, in the event of a civil divorce.

For certain reasons it was impossible to arrive at a formal resolution, but it was the general opinion that the proposal in the report opened a way of overcoming all difficulties in the Jewish marriage law, and of giving every divorced wife the right to remarry.

There is therefore a practice being evolved, by means of which the Jewish law will be developed rationally. There is no intention of abolishing the law or of looking upon it as no longer binding, but its form will be changed; so that its continuity is maintained and yet relief will be given where it is needed.

It is true that they only are given relief in this way who have been divorced according to German Civil Law, and they can thus secure another religious blessing on their marriage. There is no relief for those women in Eastern Europe who are subject to the Jewish marriage law, which is the only one considered valid in their case by the State; nor is any relief given to the Polish Jews living in Germany, to whom only the marriage laws in their own country are applicable, according to the International arrangement now in force, so that they are left entirely dependent on the interpretation of the Jewish law by the Polish Rabbis. Relief can come to them only when these Rabbis adopt the arrangement proposed above or when they find some other method of removing these difficulties.

FROM THE MONTH'S NEWS.*

Looking over a selection of items from recent Jewish news, very little it would seem could be said to be of a cheerful nature. There is some satisfaction in the belated honour to be bestowed on the memory of Heine by his native city of Düsseldorf, which has decided to erect a statue of the poet. An international committee of distinguished *litterati* has issued an appeal for funds for this purpose. * * *

A recent report from Hungary records the fact that 567 men, 481 women, and 88 children, who left the Synagogue to become Christians, have returned to the Jewish fold. The precise period of time covered by the report is not indicated, yet it serves to show that one's religious heritage is not a thing that is shed readily or without regrets. * * *

Anti-Shechita agitation appears to go in waves, and the question of slaughtering has been up for consideration in a number of countries, including Great Britain. With the new year the new slaughtering regulations adopted by the Norwegian Parliament went into force, and, of course, work great hardship on the Jews of that country. The Jewish community of Trondheim held a mourning service to mark the event. Despite the fact of vigorous protests from other lands, including letters from the Branch Deputies and Dr. Hertz, to exempt Shechita from the new regulations, the bill was carried by very large majorities in both chambers of the Norwegian Parliament. * * *

According to figures recently issued in Moscow, there are 646 fewer Synagogues in Soviet countries at the present time than before the Revolution. The claim is made that the number of Synagogues confiscated corresponds exactly to the proportion the Jewish population bears to the number of Christian churches that have been closed down. * * *

Several years ago the Orthodox Yeshibah of New York launched a building campaign for five million dollars, which even in days of big building programmes seemed prodigious. Two million dollars went for the Yeshibah College buildings, erected in showy style, in an expensive part of the city; and now the school is threatened with being closed down for lack of ordinary running expenses. Two millions of dollars is no paltry sum, and the collapse of the overly-ambitious plans, would seem to emphasise the moral that a

rabbinical seminary need not be so dependent on ostentatious material structure. * * *

Despite the fact that when the enlarged Palestinian Agency was launched in America, it was hailed by great outburst to the effect that the distinction between non-Zionists and Zionists had disappeared, and all could now unite in the new scheme, the two groups, nevertheless, looked like strange bed-fellows. The inevitable question: Is the *real* leadership to be non-Zionist or Zionist? has already arisen in acute form. The non-Zionists, it appears, want their say on various Zionist policies, and are pressing for a reorganisation of the American Zionist body as well as of the Agency Executive in London. The urgency of the situation is perhaps one of the reasons for Dr. Weizmann's trip to America the latter part of January. It still remains to be proved whether the joint management of Palestinian Jewish affairs by Zionists and non-Zionists is workable. * * *

According to a recent report, American Jews contributed 15 million dollars in the last ten years for the relief of Jews in other lands. * * *

On January 17th, General Smuts gave an address before the Zionist organisation of New York, stating his views on the Palestine position. Because of his position as an imperial statesman and because, too, he was one of the three signatories to a letter which appeared recently in *The Times* urging an investigation of the workings of the Balfour Declaration (Lord Balfour and Lloyd George were the other signatories) his views have a special significance. He was also associated, it seems, with the formulation of the Balfour Declaration. In the course of his address he said: "What did the Balfour Declaration pledge? Not to bring all the Jews there, but to make a National Homeland for those of the Jewish people who want to go there, and, to my mind, the pledge carries with it two things. It means that such conditions must be maintained in Palestine for those who wish to go there, that those for whom there is an opening there can go with good will, and not with any restraint. There should not be a barrier for Jews who wish to go to Palestine. Law and order should be maintained in the proper sense. I think that that is implied in the undertaking of the National Homeland, that there will be such conditions to security that it might be looked upon fairly and rightly as the National Home. I think that that was the undertaking, and that undertaking must be carried out." S.E.S.

*We are indebted to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency for some of the facts in these items.

IN THE COMMUNITY.

The efforts of a number of animal protection societies to improve the conditions under which animals are slaughtered for food in this country have at last resulted in the introduction in the House of Commons of a Bill for the regulation of the Slaughter of Animals in England and Wales, and it is understood that the motion to give the Bill a second reading—the first reading was agreed to before Parliament rose in December—will be debated in the House of Commons in the course of the coming month. There is grave danger, unless early action is taken to avoid it, that the debate may produce a public controversy which, whatever its outcome, will prove very damaging to the Community.

The promoters of the Bill have included a clause which, out of consideration for the religious requirements of Jews and Moslems, enables properly licensed Jewish and Mohammedan slaughterers to continue their work unaffected by the provisions of the Bill. Unfortunately the clause has been so drafted that its wording has aroused violent opposition among some sections of the Orthodox Community, whose rights are closely affected. This, it must be added, is no way the fault of the promoters of the Bill, whose sole and very laudable intention it is to satisfy the Community as a whole; the difficulty has arisen because the Jewish authorities whom they consulted have, for reasons of their own, chosen to ignore the wishes, as well as the existing rights, of a section of the Community. The quarrel is, so far, an internal Jewish quarrel.

The wording which has led to the trouble runs as follows: "The provisions of . . . this Act shall not apply where an animal is slaughtered for the food of Jews by a Jew duly licensed for the purpose by the Chief Rabbi." Now a not inconsiderable number of observant Orthodox Jews in this country, as well as a number of Orthodox Rabbis, do not recognise, and refuse on principle to recognise, the jurisdiction of the Chief Rabbi, in whose appointment they have no voice, and whose claim to be the ecclesiastical head of the whole Orthodox Community they have always strenuously denied. The Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations, a London body claiming a membership of some three thousand, whose leader was the late Rabbi V. Schonfeld, propose, if necessary, to take parliamentary action to offer the most strenuous opposition to the wording of this clause. They have hitherto exercised, through their Rabbis, the right of licensing their own slaughterers under what appears to them the necessary religious conditions, and they do not propose lightly to surrender that right. They claim that the Bill is being used for a purpose

which its promoters never intended; to enforce the jurisdiction of the Chief Rabbinate on people who do not want it and who are moved by sincere religious convictions to reject it. The Bill is, therefore, an attack on religious liberty and upon existing religious rights. No monopoly of the kind proposed, it may be added, has ever been vested before in the hands of a single individual, and there is no sanction for it in Jewish Law.

I have set out the views of only one organisation; it must not be supposed that they stand alone; they have their supporters in every important Jewish centre throughout the country. And there are, of course, Jews who are not interested in *Shechitah*, but who have very strong opinions on the subject of religious liberty.

Is there going to be a debate on the subject in the House of Commons? Every loyal Jew will hope that the problem will be solved before internal Jewish differences are debated in Parliament. For my own part, my sympathies are entirely with those who oppose the present wording of the clause. Religious liberty overrides every other consideration; we must be prepared to concede the liberty we claim for ourselves to others, even when we disagree with them. The spectacle of a Jewish ecclesiastical authority using the civil power to enforce its jurisdiction on those who reject it fills many of us with astonishment. Does the Chief Rabbinate feel itself so weak that it has to resort to mediæval devices of this kind to buttress its waning authority? If the present wording of the clause is allowed to stand, it will mean that the Anglo-Jewish Community has been untrue to the heritage of religious freedom which it has received from the generation which fought and won the battle for Jewish emancipation.

The controversy raises issues of the gravest character. But it is still not too late to solve the problem and to enable the Community to present a united front. The Orthodox Union have proposed as a compromise that the President of the Board of Deputies should be empowered to certify slaughterers who hold licenses from Rabbis of Congregations represented on the Board. It is a reasonable compromise; the opposition has conceded a great deal, because Congregations not represented on the Board are still excluded from the benefits of the clause, and there is no valid reason why religious rights should be dependent on membership of the Board. But it gives the Board, as a representative Jewish body, the power to prevent abuses.

Surely there is enough magnanimity in the Community to ensure the acceptance of this compromise. We all desire Jewish unity, but it loses all its virtue if it is divorced from religious liberty.

M.L.P.

BOOK REVIEWS.

The Wise King.

This book (*The Life of Solomon*, by Edmund Fleg) is a blend of fact and fiction to give an impressionistic portrait of Solomon. For those who find no charm in myths and fairy tales, M. Fleg's method will prove unattractive. But those who can appreciate the kind of truth that myths and fairy tales suggest and reveal will find great attraction and much interest in this account of Solomon. The legends reveal him even more than the facts, though the legends have their origin in the facts.

The story falls into well-defined parts. Firstly, there is the rise of Solomon, the early part of his life when he is dominated by loyalty to true wisdom—so that when, in answer to his prayer for wisdom, he is given power and wisdom, he adds yet another prayer: "Grant then that I have wisdom never to use my power." But there is another part of him, worldly ambition, expressed in the utterances of his mother. And when finally his power over the kingdoms of the earth reaches its climax, ambition gets the better of wisdom, leading him to esteem himself as the King-Messiah and to reject the Torah which is the true wisdom. In the fulness of his glory begins the decay of his soul, until his glory and soul are destroyed; through a trick of one of those whom he had ruled he is turned into a homeless and rejected wanderer. That is the second stage. Thirdly, through the experiences of suffering he is restored. "What miracle, Lord, hast Thou accomplished? Thou gavest me all things, and I rejected Thy gifts. Thou didst deprive me of them, and, behold, I know their price. Seeking joy, I found but disgust. But in seeking repentance, behold, I have found joy."

And with his repentance, he found his true love, to whom he said: "Come now, and be my wife that we may create a son. If I have not known how to be the Messiah, let our son be He, or his son, or his son's son, or the son of his son. For every man in his heart may become the Messiah. And his heart alone hindereth him from being the anointed of the Lord."

And with his repentance Solomon returns to his throne. "Then at last when he had renounced the seven vanities which had turned away his soul from its paths, Solomon reigned in peace over Israel. And he was feeble before God, and strong in God alone." So the spiritual drama ends in purification.

From the Bible we learn that Solomon was a wise king, who glorified his reign by building the Temple and magnificent palaces. But that which glorified his reign destroyed his kingdom, for his building operations were conducted at the expense of his people from whom he demanded labour and money, so that a large section rebelled against his successor, forming a new kingdom. But the glory of his reign impressed succeeding generations more than its folly. The prophets alone remembered the second, but the popular mind thought of Solomon only in all his glory.

There was also a tradition that Solomon was very wise, in the sense in which the Orient often uses the word, wise in answering riddles; though to Solomon are attributed also other kinds of wisdom, such as the knowledge about animals and about the right ways for men. Because of his reputation for wisdom tradition ascribed to him the authorship of the Books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.

There was still another aspect of Solomon's life, his amours summed up in the legendary record of his thousand wives who led him to idolatry. Because of that reputation, presumably, helped by some references to him, tradition ascribes to him the authorship of the love poem, or poems, in the Song of Songs.

The tradition about the wisdom of Solomon gave birth to many legends, now found in Jewish and Arabic works, about his knowledge of magic and the power it gave him over all beings, including rule over angels and demons. With the admission of magic the way is open to unlimited fantasies. And the stories of Solomon reveal the most unrestrained imagination.

M. Fleg has woven together all these, the Biblical account of Solomon's reign, the Biblical books ascribed to Solomon, and the apocryphal stories about him into a continuous narrative, giving a record of Solomon's spiritual development, degradation and restoration. This is not a historic life of Solomon the king, but something better—an account of the spiritual life of Solomon, the symbol of humanity.

It is, however, remarkable that, despite the profuseness of legends and their wildness; despite, too, the diversely symbolic use of Solomon's experiences, he yet remains a living man. From the Bible, the story receives its historic character; from the legends, its romance; from the Books of Ecclesiastes and Proverbs, its wisdom; from the Song of Songs, its theme of love; but from all together its deep beauty; and the author has added in short sentences the light of his own spirit to illumine the whole.

The literary style of the book, thanks to the author and his translator, are a real joy. The legends are retold with supreme artistic skill enhanced by flashes of humour and by comments revealing deep spiritual insight.

I.I.M.

A SOCIAL INVESTMENT.

The latest Report of the Bernhard Baron St. George's Jewish Settlement is made especially interesting by the inclusion of a history of the organisation. It began with a small Boys' Club in 1914; and grew steadily until it has become one of the largest institutions of the kind in the country. Among Jewish institutions it is unique. Its growth and its social and religious influence are a tribute to the self sacrificing devotion of the Warden (Mr. Basil Henriques) and Mrs. Henriques.

The Settlement is, however, faced with a serious financial problem. The late Mr. Bernhard Baron gave the Settlement a new building which should be adequate for its many excellent activities. The building is nearing completion; but a large increase in the annual income will be needed to maintain it. It was the late Mr. Baron's wish that his very generous gift should be used up completely for the erection of the building; the only source of income is therefore the gifts of subscribing supporters. The Report before us shows both the excellent work the Settlement is doing and its great need for further annual contributions.

The Settlement does the best kind of social service, helping boys and girls to grow into the right kind of men and women. It also gives young men and women a healthy social and intellectual environment. It is work that means great good for the future of the Jewish Community, and for the life of the nation. The Report rightly names contributions to the Settlement "a social investment" with assured good results.

FROM ALL SECTIONS.

ST. JOHN'S WOOD.

Fifth Anniversary of the laying of the Corner Stone.

On Saturday, January 18th, the Liberal Jewish Synagogue celebrated the fifth anniversary of the laying of the Corner Stone. This took the form of a Dinner and Dance at the Savoy Hotel.

For some weeks a special committee under the Chairmanship of Dr. Mattuck had been engaged in making the arrangements, and they had in connection with the event issued an appeal for contributions to the Building Fund. This was especially directed to the newer members of the Synagogue, but as things turned out many of the original givers took the opportunity of adding to their previous contributions.

A large gathering, over 300, attended the function, which was presided over by Dr. Claude G. Montefiore, who was supported by the Mayor and Mayoress of St. Marylebone (Councillor S. G. Joseph and Mrs. Joseph), the Ministers and the Hon. Officers of the Synagogue.

After dinner there was a short interlude of music, contributed by Mr. Harry Isaacs, whose delightful pianoforte playing was greatly appreciated, and by a party of Welsh Glee-singers.

Mr. Montefiore, in his opening words, alluded to the death of Mrs. Hertz, the wife of the Chief Rabbi. He said that it was impossible for any gathering of Jews and Jewesses to come together without expressing to Dr. Hertz their feeling of the deepest and profoundest sympathy.

Regarding the event which they were celebrating it seemed to him a justifiable occasion. The motto of the Synagogue was "Serve the Lord with gladness," and it was one of its sides to bring the members together on occasions of joy and festivity. Memories and recollections came into his mind and he recalled the beginning of their movement twenty-seven years ago, and he could not help feeling that his dear Friend, Miss Montagu, who had planted the seed from which the tree had grown must regard the present celebration with pride and satisfaction.

Although the five years spent at St. John's Wood was not a very long time it already seemed that they had been there for ever. Yet so well had they been accustomed to Hill Street that when they first came to their new building they had felt strange in the larger magnificence. They were in a way celebrating the completion of their Synagogue, and they would want him to express gratitude to all who had taken part in the work. They were grateful to their excellent architect, to their builders who showed such kindness and generosity. They also remembered with gratitude their dear friend the late Mr. Bernhard Baron.

He would like to ask those present this question. How far had the Synagogue fulfilled the functions for which it was founded and how far had they deserved their Synagogue. If they had received from the Services various kinds of help and inspiration then it might be said that the Synagogue had fulfilled its purpose. Then there were many young men and women who were grateful and better for the teaching and experiences they had received in the Classes. That was what the Synagogue really stood for. A building, however distinguished it might be, without men and women was as nothing. As a great Athenian once said "A city was not made by its walls—but by its citizens."

The Liberal Jewish Synagogue had created for its members responsibility. It stood as a sort of challenge

to themselves and the world. It stood as a witness to the truth of Liberal Judaism. It was for every member of the Synagogue to prove that Liberal Judaism was a theory that worked, and that they could do by showing what they made of its teachings. They were very proud of their Synagogue; very proud in the increase of membership, very proud of their Leader and Ministers. It was well that they should be proud of their Synagogue as a building, but they must not be too proud of it as such. They must regard the Synagogue as a spiritual home, they must go to it often: they must get from it consolation, encouragement, joy and strength. Just as they were in a sense more important than the Synagogue, nevertheless, so also was it true that more important still was the cause for which it stood—Liberal Judaism, Judaism and Religion as a whole.

The Mayor of Marylebone (Alderman S. G. Joseph) said that he was grateful for the compliment paid him that evening in being asked to speak. His interest in the Synagogue was threefold, not only was he a member of it, but he was partly responsible for its erection, and he also was the representative of the Borough in which it stood. He hoped he would not be misunderstood when he compared their movement to a new patent, in that it replaced something to which one had grown used to, and although it was welcomed by a great many there were others to whom it came as something strange. He alluded to the progress made by Liberal Judaism, its spread to the suburbs and the provinces and to the advance made by the World Union. He thought that the character of their cause was expressed in their Synagogue building. It was devoid of ornament, it was simple and modern, maybe it had severe lines, but it was of a bright and open atmosphere.

Dr. Mattuck explained that he stood before them in a dual capacity. Firstly as their Minister, and secondly, as the Chairman of the Committee. As the former he wanted less "begging" and as the latter more "begging" and giving!

Like their President he thought it was fitting that they should now celebrate the completion of their building, although it was some time since it was dedicated; they were now less worried and could do so in a happier vein.

In their celebration that evening there was intermingled gratitude for the past and hopes for the future. To-day their's was the chief Liberal Synagogue. Perhaps at its fiftieth anniversary, it might be the chief Synagogue in the Community.

He thought that they might measure the success of their Synagogue in the large services performed by the building as a centre of communal activity. Apart from the various Synagogue Societies which met there, conferences and meetings were held by the Society of Jews and Christians, and recently there had been inaugurated on its premises the Jewish Students' Common Room, which however was not part of the Synagogue's organization.

The Synagogue stood not only for their own movement but for Jewish comprehensiveness, tolerance and for the well-being of the Community as a whole. Their's was a two-fold purpose: the progress of Liberal Judaism and the good of Jewry.

Mr. I. B. Davidson explained that although the Committee had announced that there would be no "begging" at the Dinner he himself was prepared to receive offers of further donations to the Celebration Fund.

Mr. Julian H. Simon proposed the toast of the Chairman which was received with unusual honours, after which the company adjourned to the ballroom.

The Thanksgiving Service.

On the following morning a special service of Thanksgiving was held in the Synagogue. The service was conducted by Rabbi Mattuck, Dr. Montefiore, Rev. M. L. Perlzweig and Rabbi S. E. Starrels. During the service a book, which was called "The Book of Builders," was presented by Mr. Lionel Jacob, one of the vice-Presidents of the Synagogue, to Rabbi Mattuck who dedicated it.

This book will contain the names of all who contributed to the cost of the building and it will be deposited permanently in a receptacle near the Ark.

NORTH.

The heating arrangements at the Synagogue have now been considerably improved, and a number of minor structural alterations have been carried out. The special fund raised for this purpose has not yet been exhausted, but it is proposed to wait for a few weeks before any further alterations are made so that the existing machinery may be thoroughly tested before any further money is spent. The Council hope that with the resources now available they may succeed in removing what has proved to be a very serious handicap.

The special Chanukah Service, which was widely advertised, attracted a very large congregation. Though the service was conducted under difficulties—owing to an accident which could not be foreseen the only light available was that of the Menorah—it gave the Minister an opportunity of explaining some of the teachings of Liberal Judaism to the visitors.

A most enjoyable Chanukah party was held at Harmonic House under the direction of a Committee of women members organised by Mrs. Nordon. Over forty children attended.

In conjunction with another local Jewish body, the Discussion Group has arranged for a public meeting in the Synagogue, which will have been held before this issue of the MONTHLY appears. Mr. Perlzweig will be the speaker, and it is hoped that the meeting will result in removing misconceptions about Liberal Judaism which are apparently still current in North London.

The January Council Meeting approved the suggestion that special addresses or services should be arranged for the children of the Congregation.

WEST CENTRAL.

The work of this Congregation has been going steadily forward and their membership has increased to 134. Some stimulus was given to the membership campaign by a delightful Chanukah party to which the whole of the congregation was invited. On this occasion Rabbi Starrels made a stirring appeal, and the Alumni Society distinguished itself by acting a little play.

All the activities are now in full swing, and Rabbi Starrels and Miss Montagu are making a big effort to increase the membership of the Junior Discussion Group. The Brotherhood is steadily growing, and a series of interesting talks on medical problems is being arranged, while at the same time the members are taking a keen interest in the indoor sports provided by the Club.

SOUTH.

The membership has reached the hundred, barely three months after the Congregation's Inaugural Service. A List of Members was circulated with No. 3. of the

South London Bulletin. Mrs. Alfred Harrison presented the Congregation with a handsome Bible for the Reading Desk.

The Third Annual Meeting of the South London Section of the J.R.U. was held on the 19th at 55, Cavendish Road, S.W.12, kindly lent by Mr. and Mrs. S. J. Jewell. In the unavoidable absence of the President, the Hon. L. H. Montagu, the chair was taken by the Hon. Mrs. Franklin. After the Report and Accounts had been adopted, the Section, as a separate organisation, was formally dissolved, having, in the short space of less than three years, achieved its aim of establishing a Liberal Jewish Synagogue for South London.

From the Annual Report for 1929 of the South London Section of the J.R.U.

The Section held three meetings during the early months of the year. On Sunday, January 27th, 1929, Rabbi Starrels spoke on "Liberal Judaism in America." On April 7th, Mr. Roy S. Reuben gave an address on "Liberal Judaism in India," and on June 2nd, Mr. Ivor Warren gave a lecture (illustrated by members of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue Choir) on "The Evolution of Synagogue Music."

The Discussion Group was led by the Rev. M. L. Perlzweig, M.A., and in his absence Rabbi Goldstein.

Among the other activities were several rambles, social meetings and the performance of three plays by the Dramatic Section.

On July 13th it was decided to establish a Liberal Jewish Synagogue in South London, and 52 members of the section agreed to join. An inaugural service was held on September 21st.

As all the functions of the Section are now discharged by the Congregation, it has been decided to wind up the Section as a separate body and to hand over the balance of its funds to the Synagogue.

This dissolution of the Section has inaugurated a stronger religious life for all its members, and this life is expressing itself corporately in the Synagogue, which, it is hoped, will go from strength to strength. The Section did the difficult preparatory work thoroughly and well, and thus served to advance the cause of Liberal Judaism, and so realised the purpose of its formation.

LIVERPOOL.

The Congregation is continuing steadily in its good work. The attendances at Sabbath Services have been surprisingly satisfactory during the month which includes so many distractions. At one of the Services were to be found residents of Oxford, Manchester, Bristol, Wrexham, Hoylake, New Brighton, Blundellsands, London, suggesting that the influence of the Liverpool Congregation extends beyond the bounds of Liverpool.

During the month the second volume of the Weekly Bulletin was begun, the Discussion Group held an important meeting, the classes of the Religion School have reassembled, and the work of the Adult Study Group has been resumed.

The Congregational office which is ideally located in the centre of the town is proving of considerable value in increasing the efficiency of Synagogue affairs, in providing an opportunity for members to consult the Rabbi or Secretary, and in symbolizing the stability of the Congregation.

PERSONALIA.

Mr. Louis Baron has been honoured by the conferment of a Baronetcy for philanthropic and national services. He has contributed to several good causes, taking a special interest in Mr. Lansbury's scheme to develop playing facilities for children in the parks.

* * *

An interesting meeting was held recently in Manchester at which the diverse forms of Judaism were explained by representative exponents. Orthodoxy by Dr. Epstein, of Jews' College; Reform by Rabbi H. Reinhart, of the West London Synagogue, and Liberalism by the Rev. M. L. Perlzweig.

* * *

At a similar meeting in Liverpool, the Rev. I. Goller spoke for Orthodoxy, and Rabbi Goldstein explained Liberal Judaism.

* * *

On January 15th, Rabbi Starrels spoke on "Liberal Judaism" to a meeting of the Ilford Presbyterian Fellowship.

* * *

Rabbi Starrels will also be one of the speakers at the meeting of Jews and Christians, to be held on February 15th, to discuss "The Devotional Life." The Christian speaker will be the Rev. R. Ambrose Reeves, B.A.

* * *

A large congregation attended at the Liberal Jewish Synagogue on January 12th, to hear Professor Gilbert Murray's address on "The Progressive Elimination of War," at a special Thanksgiving Service, conducted by Dr. Mattuck, in celebration of the tenth anniversary of the League of Nations.

* * *

Dr. Mattuck and Miss Montagu will address a conference of German Liberal Jews, being held in Breslau on February 2nd, which they will attend after the meeting of the Governing Body of the World Union in Berlin.

* * *

At the service in the Liberal Jewish Synagogue on Saturday, January 25th, Dr. Mattuck referred to the death of Mrs. Hertz, expressing sympathy with the Chief Rabbi of the United Synagogue in his sorrow. Dr. Montefiore referred to Mrs. Hertz at the beginning of his address at the Celebration Dinner of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue.

* * *

The Committee which made all the arrangements for the Fifth Anniversary Celebration of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue, consisted of Rabbi Mattuck (Chairman), B. S. Anderson (Treasurer), J. L. Gerson (Secretary), J. M. Dupare, R. F. Halford, A. H. Hurst, H. Isaacs, C. Kahn, S. H. Levine, A. Levy, and Major C. H. Nathan.

* * *

Messrs. Sampson, Low, Marston & Co., have published an autobiography by Mr. Louis Bamberger who, until his retirement, was one of the leading men in the City with a special place in the Timber and Pianoforte trades. Mr. Bamberger was among those who were the first supporters of the Jewish Religious Union.

IN OTHER LANDS.

A letter from Rabbi Max Lasker, which has appeared in the American Jewish Press, describes the position in Poland with reference to a possible Liberal Jewish movement in that country. Rabbi Lasker writes:

"Among the youth in general there is little religion. Having been brought up in the 'Shtibele' or 'Kloize' of the Chassidic Rabbi, or in the strict ritualistic atmosphere of Orthodoxy, the break, when it came, was complete. Not only did they turn their backs on the religion of their childhood, but they seemed to have developed a hatred for all that smacks of religion.

"We have, then, a novel situation, where some call themselves Jews by nationality but Catholic by religion, or Atheistic Jews. Likewise, we have cases, as during the Holy Days, when attempts were made by some to break into the Synagogues and disturb the worshippers.

"Finally, there is the assimilationist group. Although numerous, they are extremely weak at present. Realising the danger that faces them, many of their children having completely left the Jewish fold, this group is anxious to turn back to Judaism. However, it cannot, and will not, re-enter the Orthodox group, and hence is anxious to form a new "gemeinde," a liberal group. This then is the main group, in addition to some of the youth, that we can hope to reach.

"In Poland, every group seems to have its own politics. The nationalist group is at present at the helm, with the Orthodox a strong second. Now this element, which calls itself the Liberal element, likewise wishes to build up a political machine, to oppose the Orthodox and Zionists. They are anxious to secure a powerful press, for the sake of propaganda, and as a central organ by means of which their views might be presented to the public."

Rabbi Lasker expresses the hope that his forthcoming tour throughout Poland will create small centres where the Liberal ideas will be propagated and will result in a 'more or less powerful and influential front.' The press has so far ignored the Liberal movement because, in one editor's words, "we dare not face the wrath of the Orthodox element." But, Rabbi Lasker concludes, "give the Liberal Jewish movement an influential leader, versed in Polish, Yiddish and Hebrew, and the cause will grow apace."

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