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A HISTORY OF AMERICAN REFORM JUDAISM

1885 - 1900

by

Philip S. Gershon

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the
Master of Hebrew Letters Degree
and Ordination.

Hebrew Union College - Jewish
Institute of Religion
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SUMMARY OF THESIS

This thesis deals with the period in American Reform Jewish history from the year 1885 to the year 1900. The first chapter deals with the physical aspects of reform. The institutions which were part of the Reform movement at that time are described. The chapter material is handled in a logical sequence beginning with the American Jewish periodicals which originally created an atmosphere where the work of the reformers would be acceptable. The Union of American Hebrew Congregations and its contribution to the total scene through its many activities and especially its Committee on Circuit Preaching, is handled. There is a discussion of the various Rabbinical seminaries which were in existence during this period. The Pittsburg Conference from its inception to its completion is fully covered. Following the Pittsburg Conference there is a description of the various ministerial conferences which were organized with especial attention being given to the Jewish Ministers' Association of America, the Conference of Rabbis of Southern Congregations, and the Central Conference of American Rabbis. The development of the Union Prayer-book is described and the growth of the Jewish Chautauqua Society and Jewish Publication Society is covered.

The entire second chapter is devoted to the theology of the Reform movement. Included in this is the theology of the movement as a whole and the theologies of individual men within the movement.

The third chapter deals with the reformers actions. It tells of the ideas and changes which they advocated,

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regardless of how effective they were. It speaks of the subjects of marriage, funerals, cremation, circumcision of proselytes, confirmation, the synod, and Biblical criticism.

Chapter Four describes the breaks that were evident between the Reform movement and the Orthodox movement on the subjects of Bible, Talmud, Dietary Laws, hats, robes, prayer shawls and Zionism.

Chapter Five is the concluding chapter of the thesis and makes the attempt to describe the environment out of which the Reform movement operated. It attempts to answer the question, "Were the reformers of that period really Reform Jews or were they liberal Orthodox?"

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CHAPTER I

RESOURCES: PHYSICAL ASPECTS OF REFORM

Introduction: Method and Objectives

The scope of this thesis is from 1885, the year of the Pittsburg Rabbinical Conference, to 1900, the year of the demise of Isaac Mayer Wise. This work is based primarily on the Yearbooks of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the Proceedings of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, and the American Jew's Annual. However, extensive use has been made of the American Israelite, an American - Jewish weekly newspaper published in English in Cincinnati, and edited by Isaac Mayer Wise. This periodical was consulted to provide detailed background material for the historical facts recorded in the primary reference books of this period. Numerous other works on this period, which the reader will find listed in the bibliography at the back of this thesis, were also utilized.

The method of presentation is primarily topical. However, an attempt has been made to deal with the numerous topics in the logical order of their development. Therefore, each topic in the first chapter may be considered to be a logical development from the preceding topic, with the exception of the sections on Jewish congregations and the

outstanding men of the period. The remainder of the work is strictly topical with no special arrangement except for that indicated by the respective chapter headings.

Aside from providing a detailed history of the years considered in this work, the objective of the study is to determine exactly what it meant to be a Reform Jew during that period. Were the people who professed Reform in those days akin, in any way, to the Reform Jew as we know him today?

Periodicals

The press has always been an influential factor in American history. The history of the Reform movement in America has been no exception to this phenomenon. The American Israelite was organized for the precise purpose of influencing the Reform movement. The following question reveals it. "What did all that reform movement accomplish, for which the American Israelite was originally started, and to which it has always tenaciously clung?"¹ The periodicals of the American Jewish press played a decisive role in the shaping of Judaism's destiny in this country. Pleading with the Jewish reading public, the periodicals became a potent factor in the final establishment of a union of congregations, a rabbinical seminary, a rabbinical conference, and other less permanent institutions of the same character. Isaac Mayer Wise's organ, the American Israelite, was a leading propaganda vehicle for the cause of Reform. We read that

it preached union, reform and Americanism, so long, so incessantly and vehemently; without paying any regard to the violent disunion cries of rabbis and journals, till the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Hebrew

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Union College were established.²

Dr. Wise claimed this distinction for the American Israelite alone.

Besides the AMERICAN ISRAELITE no public organ raised its voice against that confusion leading to a state of anarchy in American Judaism, and the American Israelite was for years the target for the champions of that impossible orthodoxy and that particularism in the other camp.³

What were the characteristics of the other periodicals of this period? In an effort to compile the paper which he had been appointed to present to the Religious Press Congress of the World's Congress Auxiliary, at Chicago, in May 1893, Dr. Wise published a request in the columns of the American Israelite.

To the Editors and Publishers of Denominational Journals.

Dr. Wise having accepted the appointment to present a paper to the Religious Press Congress in the World's Congress Auxiliary at Chicago in May next, on the topic, "Judaism and the Modern Religious Press," politely requests publishers and editors of all Jewish papers to furnish him the data of their respective publications, especially:

1. NAMES of the publication, the publisher and editor or editors; language, place and date of each publication, and date of its establishment.

2. RELATION to and opinion of the modern religious press in general, and in this country in particular.

3. SUGGESTIONS for improvements of the religious press.⁴

Judging from Dr. Wise's descriptions of some of the periodicals, it seems probable that in addition to any replies he may have had to his published request, he interpolated a bit of his personal opinion. Taking this subjective factor into account, we may then obtain an idea of the nature of the American Jewish Press of the period. We cite Dr. Wise's description of the leading English language publications.

ADVOCATE, THE REFORM, a Weekly, appears every Saturday in Chicago since 1891, by Bloch & Newman, edited by Emil G. Hirsch. It is in size octavo, 20 pages 14x10, three columns to the page, and belongs to the class of the religious journal, without belletristic literature, with but some of the current news, and more critical and scientific matter. Its theological tendency is radical, more negative critical than positive dogmatic in theism and Scriptural exegesis. In its tone it is liberal, broadly humane and universal. In its diction it is nervous, pointed and not seldom sarcastic with a marked inclination towards deviation to the one side or the other. On the whole it is a meritorious organ by its free and outspoken standpoint and its reliance on logic, whether in an offensive or defensive position.

EXPOSANT, JEWISH, a weekly, appears in Philadelphia every Friday since 1886, "devoted to the interests of the Jewish people," as it maintains, published by a company and edited by Charles Hoffman. It is in size octavo, 8 pages, 10x15 inches, and five columns each. It belongs to the class of Jewish newspapers with belletristic literature, local news and occasional theological contributions. It is in its tendencies like all its Philadelphia predecessors, stoutly conservative and exclusively Jewish. Its predecessors were the Occident and the Jewish Record, which appeared weekly in Philadelphia from 1884 to 1887, edited by Alfred T. Jones and Henry S. Morais, which in the last years of its career became an opposition organ only, against all progressive ideas, measures and institutions. However, given credit for clean, chaste and popular family reading of a plainly religious character.

HEBREW, THE AMERICAN, a Weekly appearing every Friday in New York City since 1879, by the Hebrew Publication Society; no editor mentioned. Philip Cowen is its publisher, representing an anonymous Board of Editors. It is in size octavo, beginning with twelve and increasing gradually to thirty-two pages of 6½x9½ inches, double column. It belongs to the class of the religious journal with occasional critical and scientific contributions. Its tendency is conservative, anti-reformatory, from which it departs not unfrequently, especially when it absorbed Kaufman Kohler's organ, THE REFORMER, which was established after the Pittsburg Conference and in defence of its Declaration of Principles. On the whole, however, it has maintained its conservative character, although it has become less violent in its polemics as it grew in age and size.⁵

STANDARD, THE HEBREW, successor to the LEADER, a weekly, appearing every Friday in New York with this motto, "The best advertising medium for reaching the Jewish public"; and above its head the words, "The HEBREW STANDARD has a guaranteed circulation larger than that of all Jewish Journals in New York combined." So it characterizes

itself as a business enterprize with pretensions beyond the reach of prediction or verification. It belongs to the class of the Jewish Newspaper, without belletristic literature, in religious matters spitefully, often unreasonably orthodox, and insincere at that, as was the same writer, when he published a sheet of ultra-radicalism. The STANDARD, is published and edited by J. F. Solomon, with the aid, of course, of a silent editor, and Harry W. Rosenbaum, business manager. Its size is now folio, 17x13 inches, 5 columns to the page, 24 pages, more or less every week.

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TIMES, THE JEWISH, a Weekly, published every Friday in New York by M. Koppel, edited by Moritz Ellinger from 1868 to 1880. Its size was quarto, 12, 16, 20 pages at different times, 10x12 inches each, double column, partly German, chiefly English. It belonged to the class of the Religious Journal with critical and scientific contributions from many of the contemporary scholars, radical in all questions of religion, vehement and spiteful in its attacks, strong and careless in its diction, proceeding on the methods of a political campaign sheet or without regard to persons or even causes. It was always conducted in the tone of a negative organ of opposition, and became from and after 1869 the one sided negation to all persons and causes not proposed or endorsed by the powers behind the editorial chair. With a vehemence bordering on fanaticism it opposed the formation of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the establishment of the Hebrew Union College, the organization of Rabbinical conferences except that of 1869, everything not coming directly from its governing powers. The consequence of this peculiar method in conducting a religious organ was its ruination, notwithstanding the prominent abilities of its editor, the learning and labor of its contributors, and its advantages of being published in New York City with a strong following in all parts of the country.⁶

In the field of German language publications, Die Deborah, edited by Isaac Mayer Wise, is not to be overlooked. It's standpoint was the same as the American Israelite. In fact, Dr. Wise went so far as to publish sermon series, alternating with each sermon from the American Israelite to the Deborah. Numerous editorials in the American Israelite referred back to articles which had appeared in Die Deborah.

In spite of the wide differences of opinion between the several organs being published for American Jewry, there

followed some very tangible results.

and now the intelligent portion of the community looks upon Judaism as the most advanced and the most enlightened religion, which contains all the elements of the religion of intelligence, the continuous discussions on the chair, the family pews, classical music and the emancipation of woman in the synagogue, the establishment of benevolent societies and public charities in our midst, the Rabbinical Conferences, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the Hebrew Union College, on doctrines and precepts, customs and observances, the Friday evening service, all of which went through the laboratory of my columns, aroused, nourished and trained that spirit of enthusiasm which is now the soul of American Judaism.⁷

Union of American Hebrew Congregations

Isaac M. Wise was aware of the important role that the proceedings of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations would play in the writing of future histories of the Reform movement. "The minutes of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in future days will be a main source for the history of Judaism in this country."⁸ But at the same time he felt that the real influence of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations would never really be known. In 1892, he wrote the following:

In July, 1893, it will be twenty years that the Union of American Hebrew Congregations was constituted. The work it has done is laid down in three volumes of its proceedings, edited by its popular secretary, Lipman Levy, Esq. The influence which this body exercised on American Judaism and the public at large, is a matter of unwritten history, and will, most likely, never be written, because it is moral influence which generally is not tangible enough to be written, and knowable only to close observers of general events. Some points might be mentioned here which afford an idea of the moral influence exercised on the community.

The Union lifted up the congregation from its third to the first rank in the estimation of the community. The lodge occupied the first rank, the club was next, and then came the congregation, stripped of its charity and all other social work. It is entirely different today, the last is the first and the first the last in the kingdom

of Israel.

The Union has given to American Judaism a public representation and demonstrated that it is a power in the land for good, for moral and religious work, for education and enlightenment, the advancement of the intellectual standard on the basis of religious faith, which is the acknowledged standpoint of modern civilization.

The very organization and maintenance of this Union proclaim loudly to all who know of it, that we are not only faithful Israelites, but also truthful American citizens. . . . It is true, however, that the establishment and support of the College was all that was wanted by most of the men who laid the foundation to this Union. Still, there were others who expected much more. 9

The American Jew's Annual further explains the objectives of the establishment of the Union and other institutions under its auspices.

The primary object in forming the Union of American Hebrew Congregations was to establish a Hebrew Theological Institute . . . to aid and encourage young congregations by such material and spiritual support as may be at the command of the Union, and to provide, sustain, and manage such other institutions which the common welfare and progress of Judaism shall require - without, however, interfering in any manner whatsoever in the affairs and management of any congregation.¹⁰

Yet, in spite of the good intentions professed by the proponents of the Union, it remained very difficult to interest a good many of the congregations in joining the Union. Pleas for affiliation were commonplace in the pages of the American Israelite.

If you did forget to write down a resolution to be brought up in your next congregational meeting, to affiliate your congregation with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, please do it now, that you do not forget it again. The "Union" is not complete as long as any chartered congregation stands outside of it. Remember the principle is, every Israelite must be a member of a congregation, and every congregation must be a member of the "Union," if you as Israelites want to stand before the public as a religious body of some importance, and you are in earnest about it, that Judaism be preserved and respected in this country.¹¹

Although many efforts were made to preserve the peace

among the congregations so that a true union of the congregations could be achieved, it was almost hopeless.

When the Union of American Hebrew Congregations was established, all liturgical questions were excluded from the discussions and enactments of its Councils, because they were considered disturbing elements on account of the disagreements of the rabbis and the variety of opinions prevailing in the congregations.¹²

The many opponents of Isaac M. Wise's plan for union only waited for the slightest chance to disrupt the workings of the Union.

Right after the Pittsburg Conference adjourned the old opponents of the Union and College cunningly seized upon the false reports spread, and initiated a violent attack upon the Union and College, as though the Union, or College, was in any way connected with that conference. In the very method and style of demagogues, a violent attack was made and the vilest falsehoods spread. Fanaticism was called in as an ally, and the weapons of political ringleaders were employed to form a new "Union" and to establish an "orthodox" rabbinical seminary. Circulars were sent to the congregations, demanding of them to leave the Union and to affiliate with the "orthodox" combination to be established, agents were appointed to advocate that cause, meetings were held, an organization was perfected in New York, officers were elected, money was donated, and the cooperation of Drs. Gottheil and Kohut were supposed to be secured. All that, so far, has come to nothing. The Union has remained intact. A few congregations, unwilling to pay their dues, embraced this excuse to withdraw from the Union, but more new congregations have joined.¹³

Thus, twelve years after the Union had originally come into being, there was still strife. Nevertheless, the idea of the Union had made progress. We can get an overview of the work of the Union from the minutes of its meetings.

The aims and objects of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations Are -

- 1st. To establish and support educational institutions for the training of ministers and teachers for the purpose of preserving Judaism intact and bequeathing it to our posterity in all its purity and sublimity.
- 2nd. To raise the standard of Sabbath-Schools for the better instruction of the young in Israel's religion, history

and language.

3rd. To assist young congregations by such material support and spiritual aid as the Union can command.

4th. To establish and maintain such other institutions as may be required for the common welfare and progress of Judaism.

5th. To carefully watch the progress of events and public opinion, so that neither at home nor abroad any interference with civil or political rights of Israelites be permitted without calling the attention of the proper authorities thereto, in order to obtain such redress as the circumstances of the case require.

6th. To assist those of our brethren who may desire to obtain a livelihood by following agricultural pursuits with the means necessary to enable them to carry out their inclinations.

Thus far as to Aims and Objects.

What has Been Accomplished.

Since July, 1873, when the Union of American Hebrew Congregations was called into existence, we have established the Hebrew Union College at Cincinnati and the Preparatory School at New York. The former has a home in its own building, which, with the library contained therein, is worth today nearly one hundred thousand dollars, and is free from debt. The Faculty--three Professors and two Preceptors--impart instruction to 32 students, who give promise of becoming ministers and teachers capable, not only of becoming the religious guides of congregations, but who before the world will be able to stand forth as worthy and able champions of Judaism. The New York Preparatory School is likewise doing its share of the good work, and is training its scholars to become qualified students for admission to the College.

Through its Board of Delegates at New York the Union of American Hebrew Congregations has kept a watchful eye on all political and other movements tending to the prejudice of our race, and is now exercising its influence to repress the barbarities inflicted upon our sadly afflicted coreligionists in Europe and obtain redress for their injuries and sufferings.

Measures have been instituted for the creation of a fund to be devoted for the promotion of agricultural pursuits among those of our faith who desire to return to the vocation of our ancestors, who were a nation of farmers, and for many centuries had mainly no occupation than that of tillers of the soil.

All this has been accomplished by the united action of more than one hundred congregations, scattered in thirty-two states of the United States, who, by becoming members of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, have demonstrated what the Israelites of this country can achieve when united.

What We Need.

1st. To arouse among our brethren, wherever they reside, a spirit of pride in our faith and race that will

induce every man to unite himself by ties of membership with some congregation, to establish congregations where none now exist and to bring every congregation into the Union, so that each one, by his contribution of the one dollar yearly dues required by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, may contribute toward the successful realization of our objects.

2nd. To induce the Women of Israel to form Ladies Educational Aid Societies and inscribe their names on the "Roll of Honor", as yearly contributors of one dollar to the Indigent Students' Fund, in order that we may not hereafter be compelled to turn from the doors of the Hebrew Union College those worthy and intelligent youths who desire to be educated so as to fit themselves to become our future ministers and teachers, and who need the means of subsistence during the eight years' time required to complete their scholastic studies.

3rd. We need an educational fund, whose income, combined with that from other general sources, will be ample to meet the wants of the College and Preparatory Schools, and for the payment of the salaries of professors and tutors and to supply the needs of their libraries.

4th. To meet the rapidly growing desire to become farmers on the part of many of our poor co-religionists now crowded into the tenement houses of large cities, we must have large sums of money for the purchase of land, farming implements, live stock and all that is required for the opening of farms and colonizing those who wish to go there under proper superintendence.¹⁴

Kaufman Kohler, although opposed to Isaac M. Wise on many issues, nevertheless, felt that

a union of Jewish congregations, irrespective of religious differences, in every city and town should be the aims we all strive for. Such a union will not only help in elevating the Jew and Judaism everywhere, socially, intellectually and morally, but secure to us also an authoritative public representation whenever required.¹⁵

The American Israelite kept up an unending campaign to recruit congregations into the Union. It made use of any and all means to get its point across to the congregations. The following excerpt from the editorial page of the American Israelite is typical.

To celebrate well the Day of Atonement, we must become aware of our sins, truly repent our misdeeds, and make atonement before God by humiliation, confession and appeal to God's mercy with the firm resolve to sin no more. The

ISRAELITE could not possibly specify the probable sins of the multitude of people and show the path of salvation to every individual sinner. It must necessarily limit itself to some communal sins, and of these it can specify but a few.

We sin by neglecting the sanctuary of Israel, by non-appearance in the house of the Lord to worship God with the congregation. Repent.

We sin by neglecting the Torah, the holy treasure of Israel's history and literature - this sin is most grievously committed by the Rabbis - for ourselves and our children, whom the Father of men entrusted to our care. Repent.

We sin by our constant longing for change of ritual and ministers, because we respect neither for any length of time; and for innovations, making every now and then a new sort of religion, because in fact we had not much of any. Repent.

All congregations neglecting to join the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, refusing to assist in cementing the Union of Israel in this land of liberty for us and the unborn generations, sin grievously against Israel's future in this country. Repent.

All congregations that feign to be too poor to pay to the Union the one dollar dues, and each of whose members is able to spend plenty of money in articles of luxury, sins grievously. Repent.

All congregations that fail to send their representatives to the Council of the Union, as Ezra said in his time, sin grievously. Repent.

All the Rabbis who minister to congregations not in the Union - especially the graduates of the Hebrew Union College - without trying their utmost to free their respective congregation from this sinfulness, sin grievously. Repent.¹⁶

It was the practice of the Union to publish in its proceedings some detailed information concerning its membership. Although the membership ran well over one hundred congregations, it was customary for the proceedings to summarize approximately one hundred congregations. This will give us some idea of the physical condition of this organization of congregations. In the summer of 1880, we have

a summary of reports from one hundred congregations, although there are actually 121 members in the Union, which reveal that ninety-three congregations have six thousand and fifty-six contributing members and seat-holders. Seven congregations have not reported their membership.

Sixty-nine congregations own real estate worth \$3,183,936 exclusive of burial grounds. Twenty-one congregations own no real estate except burial grounds. Ten congregations did not report their real estate holdings.

Eighty-four congregations had expenses during the year, excluding the erection of buildings, amounting to exactly \$420,126 .06 . Sixteen congregations did not report expenses.

Eighty-one congregations have a total of seven thousand, seven hundred and six children in Sabbath-Schools.¹⁷ Seventy-nine have ministers. Thirteen have no ministers.

The report for the year ending in the summer of 1881 tells us that, from a total of one hundred congregations tallied

87 Congregations have 6,155 members and seat holders.
13 Congregations have not reported.
74 Congregations own real estate valued at \$3,229,220.50.
13 Congregations have no real estate except burial ground.
13 Congregations have not reported.
83 Congregations had expenses last year totalling \$403,059.30.
17 Congregations have not reported.
77 Congregations have 7,431 children attending Sabbath-school.
9 Congregations have no Sabbath-schools.
14 Congregations have not reported on Sabbath-schools.
70 Congregations have ministers.
17 Congregations have no ministers.¹⁸
13 Congregations have not reported.

The report for exactly one year later, the summer of the year 1882, now sets the figures for ninety-nine congregations as follows:

91 Congregations have 6,775 members and seat holders.
8 Congregations have not reported.
77 Congregations own real estate worth \$3,675,570.00.
12 Congregations own no real estate except burial grounds.
10 Congregations have not reported.
82 Congregations had expenses last year of \$407,347.65.
17 Congregations have not reported.
82 Congregations have 8,389 children in Sabbath-schools.
6 Congregations have no Sabbath-schools.
11 Congregations have not reported.
77 Congregations have ministers.
16 Congregations have no ministers.¹⁹
6 Congregations have not reported.

On March 1, 1883, the following congregations were members of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations:

Ahavath Achim

Cincinnati, Ohio

Bene Israel
 Bene Yeshurun
 Bnai Sholom
 Bene Yeshurun
 Ohev Zedukah
 Sherith Israel
 Rodef Sholom
 Bene Israel
 Children of Israel
 Adas Israel
 Indianapolis Hebrew
 Beth El
 Beth Israel
 Beth El Emeth
 Bnai Israel
 Adath Israel
 Tiffereth Israel
 Ohavia Sholom
 Anshe Emeth
 Bnai Israel
 Benai Israel
 Hebrew Educat'l Soc.
 Adath Joseph
 Beth Elohim
 Rodef Sholem
 Benai Jehudah
 Anshe Chesed
 Meadville Hebrew Soc.
 Anshai Emeth
 Benai Israel
 Anshe Mayriv
 Benai Yeshurun
 Emanuel
 Anshe Chesed
 Benai Israel
 Temple Beth Zion
 Rodef Sholem
 Benai Israel
 Bene Abraham
 Achdus Vesholom
 Anshe Chesed
 Beth El
 Emanu El
 House of Israel
 Gemilas Chasodim
 Akron Hebrew
 Washington Hebrew
 Beth El
 Beth Ahaba
 Mishkan Israel
 Bnai Isael
 Beth Israel
 Anshe Emeth
 Etz Raanon
 Victoria Heb. Ben. Soc.

Evansville, Indiana
 Cincinnati, Ohio
 Quincy, Illinois
 Dayton, Ohio
 Springfield, Ohio
 Cincinnati, Ohio
 Youngstown, Ohio
 Cincinnati, Ohio
 Memphis, Tennessee
 Louisville, Kentucky
 Indianapolis, Indiana
 Detroit, Michigan
 Louisville, Kentucky
 Camden, Arkansas
 Natchez, Mississippi
 Owensboro, Kentucky
 Cleveland, Ohio
 Nashville, Tennessee
 Piqua, Ohio
 Columbus, Ohio
 Keokuk, Iowa
 Charleston, West Virginia
 St. Joseph, Missouri
 Charleston, South Carolina
 Wabash, Indiana
 Kansas City, Missouri
 La Crosse, Wisconsin
 Meadville, Pennsylvania
 Peoria, Illinois
 Vincennes, Indiana
 Chicago, Illinois
 Des Moines, Iowa
 Grand Rapids, Michigan
 Vicksburg, Mississippi
 Columbus, Georgia
 Buffalo, New York
 Pittsburg, Pennsylvania
 Hamilton, Ohio
 Portsmouth, Ohio
 Fort Wayne, Indiana
 Cleveland, Ohio
 San Antonio, Texas
 Milwaukee, Wisconsin
 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
 Port Gibson, Mississippi
 Akron, Ohio
 Washington, D. C.
 Knoxville, Tennessee
 Richmond, Virginia
 Selma, Alabama
 Galveston, Texas
 Houston, Texas
 Pine Bluff, Arkansas
 Rochester, New York
 Victoria, Texas

Bnai Sholom	Chicago, Illinois
Bnai Zion	Titusville, Pennsylvania
Beth El	Helana, Arkansas
Beth Israel	Peoria, Illinois
Shaare Emeth	St. Louis, Missouri
Oheb Zedek	Pottsville, Pennsylvania
Bickur Cholim	Donaldsonville, Louisiana
Temple Sinai	New Orleans, Louisiana
Brith Sholom	Springfield, Illinois
Bnai Sholom	Huntsville, Alabama
Bnai Sholom	Bastrop, Louisiana
Children of Israel	Athens, Georgia
Emanu El	Denver, Colorado
Emanu El	San Francisco, California
United Hebrew	St. Louis, Missouri
Beth El Emeth	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Emanu El	New York, New York
Beth El	New York, New York
Shaarai Shomayim	Mobile, Alabama
Mount Zion	St. Paul, Minnesota
Keneseth Israel	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Ahavath Chesed	New York, New York
Rodef Sholom	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Temple of Israel	Wilmington, North Carolina
Bnai Jeshurun	New York, New York
Anshe Emeth	Albany, New York
Berith Kodesh	Rochester, New York
Kahl Montgomery	Montgomery, Alabama
Yeshurun	Paducah, Kentucky
Shaara Tefilla	Lynchburg, Virginia
Shaaray Tefila	New York, New York
Gates of Mercy, D.O.J.	New Orleans, Louisiana
Rodoph Sholom	New York, New York
Beth Israel	Portland, Oregon
Society of Concord	Syracuse, New York
Beth Elohim	Brooklyn, New York
Beth Israel	Hartford, Connecticut
Zion	Chicago, Illinois
Benai Israel	Canton, Mississippi
Ohabei Shalom	Boston, Massachusetts
Bnai Jeshurun	Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Adath Israel	Cincinnati, Ohio
Benai Jeshurun	Newark, New Jersey
Oheb Sholom	Baltimore, Maryland
Bnai Israel	Eufaula, Alabama
Hebrew Benevolent	Chattanooga, Tennessee. ²⁰

The summary of the reports of one hundred and two congregations for this same date, read

- 93 Congregations have 7,004 members and seat holders.
- 9 Congregations have not reported.
- 80 Congregations own real estate worth \$3,782,037.14.
- 12 Congregations own no real estate except burial grounds.

- 10 have not reported.
- 86 Congregations had expenses of \$451,943. 01.
- 16 Congregations have not reported.
- 86 Congregations have 8,738 children in Sabbath-schools.
- 7 Congregations have no Sabbath-schools.
- 9 Congregations have not reported.
- 83 Congregations have ministers.
- 11 Congregations have no ministers.²¹
- 8 Congregations have not reported.²¹

For the year 1884, the following summary of the reports of ninety-eight congregations was submitted:

- 86 Congregations have 6,429 members and seat holders.
- 12 Congregations have not reported.
- 72 Congregations own real estate worth \$3,397,400.00.
- 13 Congregations own no real estate except burial grounds,
- 13 Congregations have not reported.
- 79 Congregations had expenses of \$400,928.69.
- 19 Congregations have not reported.
- 74 Congregations have 7,814 children in Sabbath-school.
- 8 Congregations have no Sabbath-schools.
- 16 Congregations have not reported.
- 75 Congregations have ministers.
- 13 Congregations have no ministers.²²
- 10 Congregations have not reported.

The work of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations was apportioned out to committees. The foremost committees during the period from 1880 to 1900 were the Committee on Publications, for books of value to religious schools or Hebrew colleges; the Committee on Statistics, for statistics of Jews in the United States, which was disbanded when its work was done in²³ 1881; the Committee on Agricultural Pursuits, the Committee on College Buildings and Grounds, who took charge of matters²⁴ concerning the campus; the Committee on Hebrew Union College, to whom were referred the reports of the Board of Governors and President of the Hebrew Union College, and of the Examiners of the College; the Committee on Sabbath Schools, who took charge of the President's report on Sabbath Schools and the report of the President of the Sabbath School Union; the

Committee on Civil and Religious Rights, the Committee on Finance, who looked into the financial condition and prospects of the Union; the Committee on Auditing, which audited the books and accounts of the Secretary and the Treasurer; the Committee on Correspondence, and the Committee for Examiners for the Hebrew Union College, who chose suitable persons to act as examiners of the classes at Hebrew Union College.²⁵

During the meeting of the Council in July 1883, a motion was brought that it be

resolved, That the President appoint a committee of five to present to this Council before its final adjournment, a plan for offering in due time a fitting testimonial in honor of Sir Moses Montefiore's anticipated centenary.

Concerted action to this effect, on a scale and in a manner fully adequate to the dignity and fervor of American Israel, would certainly contribute largely to the celebration of the Nestor-hero and philanthropist of living Judaism and modern humanity.²⁶

The committee of five was appointed for this special purpose. They presented the following report, which was adopted:

WHEREAS, The Centennial birthday of our illustrious co-religionist, Sir Moses Montefiore, is to take place in 1884; and,

WHEREAS, His life-labors in behalf of humanity throughout the world are recognized as among the brightest and purest; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Board of Delegates on Civil and Religious Rights, is hereby authorized to unite with this special committee in the issuing of a call to the Israelites of the United States, in their individual and corporate capacity, soliciting their free will offerings to Jesse Seligman, Esq., of New York, as Treasurer of what shall be known as the "Montefiore Testimonial Fund of the United States"; said fund to be devoted to the endowment of a Chair of _____ in the College of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations at Cincinnati, to be known as the Montefiore Professorship Fund; and the proceeds so collected to be paid into the Treasury of the Union, to be held in trust for, and the interest arising therefrom to be for-

ever pledged to the purposes of such professorship.²⁷

This motion was received with such apathy that one year later, in July 1884, President Moritz Loth had to bring the following motion:

I deeply regret to report that nothing has yet been accomplished toward raising the one hundred thousand dollars to endow a Chair in the Hebrew Union College in honor of the centenary of Sir Moses Montefiore, and I recommend that some action should be taken to raise the money for that purpose.²⁸

This brought forth a motion that was designed to solve two problems at one and the same time.

On motion, the President and Secretary were instructed to address the Presidents and Ministers of all the congregations belonging to the Union and request them to hold a special service on Sunday, October 26, 1884, for the purpose of celebrating the one hundredth anniversary of the birthday of Sir Moses Montefiore and to make collections on that occasion to the fund for endowing the Montefiore Professorship in the Hebrew Union College.²⁹

After trials and tribulations, the Moses Montefiore Memorial Professorship of Sacred Literature was established at the Hebrew Union College on November 1, 1884.³⁰

The adoption of the Pittsburg Platform by the rabbinical conference at the close of 1885 brought repercussions to the floor of the Union. At the meeting of July, 1886

letters were read from Mr. Isaac Strouse, a member of this Board, in reference to the sanctioning by the President of the Hebrew Union College of the platform of principles adopted by a conference of rabbis held at Pittsburg last December. On motion, the letters were referred to a Committee, consisting of Messrs. Bettmann, Levyn and Klein.³¹

This was not a matter that was to be taken lightly, for some of the congregations threatened the most serious steps.

The action of the Rabbinical Conference at Pittsburg, and the endorsement of the platform there adopted by the President of the Hebrew Union College, has been made the basis of bitter attacks upon that institution, and several

congregations have threatened to withdraw from the Union on that account.³²

Realizing that the situation was highly volatile, the committee appointed to handle the letter of Mr. Isaac Strouse presented their report which was adopted by the Council.³³

To the President and Members of the Executive Board of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations:
GENTLEMEN:- Your Committee, to whom was referred the subject-matter, contained in the letter of our fellow-member, Mr. Isaac Strouse, respectfully recommend the adoption of the following:

In view of the various questions agitating the minds of our co-religionists throughout the land, the Executive Board, after mature deliberation, considers it timely and proper to make the following public announcement:

The Union of American Hebrew Congregations is now, and has always been since the hour of its formation, a real Union of American Hebrew Congregations united for the purposes set forth in the Preamble and Article II of the Constitution, and no attempts looking toward the abandonment of the principles therein set forth have been made or would be tolerated, as any action to the contrary of these expressed ideas on the part of any of the officers of this Union we consider as endangering its future welfare and interests.

The Executive Board requests, as a simple act of justice, that the Union be held responsible only for its own acts, as shown by the doings of its Council and Executive Board, and not for the acts, opinions or utterances of any man or body of men, unless the same be officially endorsed by said Councils or Executive Board.

Respectfully Submitted,

B. Bettmann

S. Levyn

David Klein, Committee.

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One of the memorable events of this period took place at the December, 1894 meeting of the Council at New Orleans. These conventions were generally routine meetings. This meeting proved to be a surprise. The situation arose when Leo N. Levi, an attorney from Galveston, Texas, delivered an address to Council in compliance with the invitation of Mr. Julius Freiberg, President of the Executive Board.³⁵ Dr. Wise and Dr. Philipson, both tell of the incident.

Mr. Levi, whose eloquence has a national reputation, and who had been heard by many present, was greeted with great applause as he mounted the rostrum. Mr. Levi then delivered a long and earnest address. It was obvious, however, from the start that he was entirely without sympathy with the Council and its objects and was an opponent of the reform movement. The address was full of unfavorable criticisms of the rabbis who preached reform and of the results of their labors.³⁶

It was really a castigation of the rabbinical leaders for what the speaker claimed to be a neglect of duty and a dereliction of purpose. The large company was gripped with surprise. At the close of the address the hall rang with applause and cheers. Someone rose and moved that 10,000 copies of the address be printed and distributed. Then it was that Isaac Mayer Wise, the Nestor of American Judaism, arose and thundered his indignation at this unworthy attack on the rabbis. The old lion was at his best. He held his auditors in the hollow of his hands. When he sat down the volatile public applauded him as vigorously as they had the attacking speaker.³⁷

Dr. Wise related the events of the meeting immediately following this address.

It was Wednesday morning. I came a little too late to the Council, and my level-headed colleague, Mr. B. Bettman, of Cincinnati, had taken the wind out of my sails, although we had not spoken a word on the subject. He had moved that the Council declare that it does not identify itself with or endorse all Mr. Levi had said in his oration. The other side of the house, of course, opposed it, but Bettman's argument was too strong for them, they gave in and his motion was carried unanimously. This was the sober second thought and saved the honor and integrity of the delegates sent to this council by reform congregations, and applauded the speaker denouncing the Reform. But it did not defend the American rabbinate, which had been grossly assailed by the speaker, the claqueurs, and now also in the press which had faithfully reported yesterday's proceedings. Therefore Dr. Philipson rose and read the following protest and moved it be embodied in the proceedings of the Council, appended to the oration of Leo N. Levi, Esq.:

We, the officers of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, which includes within its ranks the great majority, if not all, of the so-called Reform rabbis of this country and members of this council, do hereby protest against the strictures made upon the rabbis and their work - the oration delivered before this body by Mr. Leo N. Levi. These strictures are not founded on facts. Mr. Levi's conception of the reform movement in Judaism is erroneous, and his conclusions have been hastily arrived

at, without a thorough study of the question. His sweeping statements, like all generalizations, are unjust. It appears that Mr. Levi, in his eager search for enlightenment, has overlooked the volume lately published by this union of American Hebrew Congregations, entitled "Judaism at the World's Parliament of Religions." Within its pages he would have found his questions answered time and again by the very reform rabbis whom he has so severely arraigned,

ISAAC M. WISE
President C.C. of R.
DAVID PHILIPSON
Corresponding Secretary
CHARLES S. LEVI
Recording Secretary.

A profound silence ensued after the reading of this protest. Mr. Bettman whispered in my ear, "they could not accept this, it is too strong." One of the members rose to request the president to rule it out of order, but he did not, because the signers were members of this Council. a discussion having ensued, which threatened another waste of time, I put in my explanation of the matter and moved the previous question. A minute more and the protest was adopted with a few timid dissenting votes. That settled this matter forever, and proved that there are well intending men who say and do things on the spur of the moment which they undo after a sober second thought.³⁸

Circuit Preaching

The idea of circuit preachers was first brought to the attention of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in the early part of 1880. Later that year, at the meeting of the Union, President Loth appointed a committee.

Agreeable to the resolution adopted at the late Council authorizing me to appoint a committee on circuit preaching, I beg leave to report that I have appointed Bernhard Bettmann, Solomon Levi, and Lewis Seasongood, as the committee, who, I have no doubt, will lay before you the result of their labors.³⁹

There were also others who volunteered their services
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after the Council meeting had adjourned. During the meeting of the Council the report on circuit preaching was given. It stated:

I have endeavored to carry into effect the powers

with which you entrusted me at your last meeting, and I am pleased to report that circuit preaching has achieved a greater success than the inauguration of a measure so new to our people could have been expected to meet with. Every minister with whom I have corresponded on the subject has volunteered his services, without remuneration; the travelling expenses, with one exception, have been paid by the communities who have been benefitted by these services. I regret that the general failure of our circuit preachers to report the places that have been visited, prevents a detailed statement, but from the letters received, and the information contained in the public press, I am satisfied that by your aid, religious instruction and enlightenment regarding Jewish affairs have been afforded to many of our co-religionists and others, who would otherwise not have been the recipients of the same.⁴¹

At the Council meeting of the following year, 1881, the lack of interest in circuit preaching, by the very people who benefitted from it, was lamented. What had started with a rush, as something new, the previous year, now began to slow down.

While it is admitted on all sides that circuit preaching would be beneficial to those communities which, for want of means, are unable to permanently support a minister, yet it is nevertheless a fact that these very communities show the greatest apathy toward a measure undertaken for their special benefit. Although nearly all our ministers are ready and willing to respond to calls for their services, these calls are but rarely made. How to remedy this state of affairs is a problem that you in your wisdom should undertake to solve. It is evident that means must be found to create that interest in Judaism which is so necessary for its maintenance, and whether that can be done without the aid of ministers who will devote their entire time to that object, is a matter of grave doubt. It is greatly to be regretted that we have not at present the means at our command, financially and otherwise, to carry out this plan, yet I have full confidence that the time is at hand when the liberality of our co-religionists will enable us to promote this as well as other measures that should receive our support.⁴²

The program of circuit preaching continued to be a source of disappointment to the Union. Varied attempts were made to solve the problem. At the 1883 meeting of the Council it was suggested that

a special committee be appointed to report to the Council a plan for the more perfect carrying out of the resolution, adopted in past conventions, authorizing circuit or district preaching under the auspices of the U.A.H.C.⁴³

The committee was appointed and reported out a resolution which was adopted by the convention. The resolution read

that the Council of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations recommend to the Executive Board, for the future, the employment as circuit preachers of such graduates who have not yet accepted the positions of rabbis of congregations; and that the Executive Board be empowered to appropriate a certain amount for remuneration of their services.⁴⁴

The issue of circuit preaching had by this time become an annual affair at the meetings of the Union. It began to appear that the rabbis had been anxious to offer their services where they were not wanted. The following resolution was therefore offered and carried.

This Board has carefully considered the report of the Committee on Circuit Preaching, made to the Eighth Council, part of which report says:

Inasmuch as it is within the personal knowledge of members of the Committee and others, that remote congregations in Iowa, Utah, Nebraska, Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi, which are unable to bear the expense of special religious instruction for themselves, would yet cheerfully contribute a considerable annual amount toward the support of one in community with their nearest neighbors, we respectfully suggest that the Union put itself into communication with such congregations, and then map out appropriate districts, appointing district preachers, whose time shall be entirely devoted to the religious instruction of the communities within their charge.

And as the Executive Board have made earnest and repeated efforts to carry the laws of the Union and the resolutions of Councils on the subject into practical effect, but have found these efforts to be fruitless, because of their inability to obtain the co-operation of the parties who were sought to be benefitted; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Secretary be instructed to correspond with the members of the Committee who signed the aforesaid report, and request them to furnish this Board with the names of the congregations referred to in their report, as well as the names of those gentlemen who have cog-

nizance of other congregations, in order to enable this Executive Board to carry into effect the existing laws of the U.A.H.C. on the subject of circuit preaching.⁴⁵

The result of this inquiry was, to put it in the diminutive, surprising.

The Secretary reported that in accordance with the action of the Board as reported on pages 1445-46 of the Proceedings, he corresponded with the members of the Committee, with the following result: Rev. Dr. F. De Sola Mendes did not answer; Rev. Jacob Voorsanger promised to furnish the information, but had not yet done so; and Rev. Dr. E. Schreiber had sent in a number of names of congregations and of individuals, but that these, when written to, had not answered. On motion, further action on this subject was deferred until the annual meeting in July next. ⁴⁶

In the midst of all the deliberations concerning the problem of circuit preaching, a new attack was directed at Isaac M. Wise.

A letter and memorial were read from Rodef Sholom Congregation of Philadelphia, in reference to the President of the Hebrew Union College.

On motion, Mr. Mayer Sulzberger was invited to participate in the proceedings in this matter, and the letter and memorial were referred to a Committee consisting of Messrs. Wolf, Binswanger, Krohn, Rosendale and Wertheimer.

The following report was presented and unanimously adopted and a copy thereof ordered to be forwarded to the Congregation:

To the Executive Board of the Union A.H.C.:

Your Committee to whom was referred the memorial of Congregation Rodef Sholom, of Philadelphia, have carefully considered same and have unanimously come to the conclusion that it is a matter of regret that a Congregation of the standing of Rodef Sholom should have deemed it of sufficient moment to be aggrieved at editorials and comments made in the AMERICAN ISRAELITE and assumed to have been written by Rev. Dr. I. M. Wise.

The memorial does not charge the President of the Hebrew Union College with anything deserving of criticism or censure, but simply complains that the language sometimes employed by him as editor of the AMERICAN ISRAELITE has not the elegance of diction nor refinement of expression that scholars ought to use when commenting upon or criticizing the action of their colleagues.

Your Committee further believes that neither the Executive Board nor the Union itself can arrogate unto itself the power to act as a censor of the press.

It seems clear to us that we ought not so seriously

regard the expressions complained of, being those of a forceful and vigorous mind, which expressions are not otherwise objectionable and not uttered in an official capacity as an officer of the College, which from their form perhaps too readily wound the sensitiveness of many otherwise excellent persons.

Your Committee, while admitting the scholarship and learning of the Rabbis of the Union, and while conceding their individual right of criticism, most emphatically state that acts after all speak, and that the life-long labors, self-sacrificing at all times, of Rev. Dr. I. M. Wise entitle him to our warmest support, highest esteem and personal respect.

In the progress of every great work some obstacles will occur, but time and patience and a thorough devotion to the main object will remedy matters at the time apparently serious, but which in the end will appear to have been casual incidents to be lost sight of in the grand result.

Let us hope that the good work so far contributed by Rodef Sholom Congregation will be continued in the future and united for a common purpose accomplish the main object of our Union.⁴⁷

The letter brought quick results. Rodef Sholom, of Philadelphia, withdrew from the Union.

Continuing with the question of the circuit preaching, some new resolutions were offered to the Union in the winter of 1894.

WHEREAS, The Jewish families in the smaller cities of the country, being unable to maintain communal institutions, are denied the opportunities of religious instruction, be it therefore

Resolved, That a standing committee of three be appointed to devise ways and means to supply these opportunities, be it further

Resolved, That a sum sufficient for the need of the committee be placed at the disposal thereof subject to the approval of the Executive Board.⁴⁸

This committee met and resolved to send out an appeal for co-operation and information to all the rabbis in the country.⁴⁹

It was also resolved to supply the Ministers with copies in convenient pamphlet form, of the regular weekday evening service, taken from the Union prayer book, for purposes of distribution and use in those communities where no established

is in use, and also with the following letter, as a suggestion for correspondence with communities to be visited:
Dear Sir:-

It is my intention to make periodic visits at intervals of six or eight weeks to the towns containing ten or more Jewish families, but who are unable to maintain a religious teacher. I propose to organize Sabbath-Schools where there are none, and to examine the progress of those already established, to hold services and preach. I write to you as a representative gentleman of your community to ask your cooperation in carrying out this plan.

Please to inform me (a) How many Jewish families are in your city, (b) How many children in the Sabbath-school, if there be one, if not, how many available for a school, (c) What "Minhag" or prayer book do you use, (d) Who compose your choir and (e) is there anything occurring on any evening of the week, which will detain Jewish merchants in their store after eight o'clock.

I expect to have the actual expense only of each trip borne by the community I visit, but if its members should feel themselves unable to provide this I will come at my own expense.

Trusting to be favored with an early reply, I am, etc.

It is the purpose of the Committee to tabulate the replies received and to assign to each Rabbi certain territory with a request that he cover it at his own discretion and convenience, and report to the committee.⁵⁰

This venture was started with the blessings of the American Israelite, which stated editorially,

we hereby extend our most distinguished felicitations to Rabbi E. N. Calisch of Richmond and to those who have followed in his footsteps upon their inauguration of circuit preaching. We hope the day will soon dawn when even the smallest communities of Jews will have frequent opportunities of instruction and exhortation by such worthy teachers in Israel.⁵¹

In the early part of 1896, the American Israelite gave its first account of a circuit preaching trip. The account was of a circuit in Kentucky.

Rabbi Feuerlicht has just returned from his first trip as Circuit Preacher, having visited Marion, Princeton, and Bowling Green, Ky., and reports this new venture a big success everywhere. The Yehudim are quite enthusiastic over this new move, and it certainly will prove a big success for American Judaism. A crowded house greeted the rabbi at Marion, Ky., where he spoke at the Opera House. Here he organized a Sabbath School, which he left in charge of Mr. E. H. Fohs.

At Princeton, Rabbi Feuerlicht found quite a number of enthusiastic Yehudim, who are overjoyed with the new work. At this place Rabbi Feuerlicht lectured at the North Presbyterian Church, and standing room was at a premium. Jew and Gentile live in great harmony at this place, and the Rabbi received invitations from the various ministers to occupy their pulpits on his next visit. A large Sabbath School was organized at this place and left in charge of Jacob Goldnamer, Esq., ably assisted by Mrs. Ike Cohn.

At Bowling Green, Ky., he found a very intelligent set of Yehudim, who are greatly respected in the community, and they take a great interest in Judaism, and in the new move of circuit preaching. Every Yehude in the community, young and old, assembled at the club rooms of this place to listen to a lecture delivered by Rabbi Feuerlicht. A large Sabbath School was also organized in this community, and left in charge of an excellent staff of teachers, who are as follows: Misses Brunswick and Marks, and Messrs. I. Nahm and Chrystall. In addition to this Rabbi Feuerlicht organized a Bible class at this place.

On Sunday February 9th Rabbi Feuerlicht will lecture at Henderson, Ky. which is also in his district, and as quite a number of Yehudim reside at this place he will no doubt be able to do some very good work here.⁵²

In response to the letters addressed to the rabbis for information, the results were not so heartening.

Out of 130 letters sent out, replies were received from 90 rabbis, all but three of which contained assurances of their author's willingness to co-operate with the Committee in its work. But of these 90 only 15 gave the information desired.⁵³

In the month of August, 1896, inquiry was made of those rabbis who had indicated a willingness to co-operate. The purpose of the inquiry was to find out just how much had actually been accomplished.

There was a total of 154 visits made, covering an area of 19 states, in a list of 53 towns. Of these, 30 towns give a list of 618 members, with a SabbathSchool membership of 892 children. In addition to which there were organized by correspondence 3 Sabbath-schools. This work was done by 19 rabbis out of a total of 90, who had agreed to co-operate.

The Committee had 1,000 copies of the Week-Day Evening Service, according to the Union Prayer book, printed, of which over 400 were distributed and put in use on the various circuits.

The difficulties which confronted the Committee, were

both on the part of the Rabbis and of the communities to be visited. The fact that reports were received from only 17 rabbis, together with excuses from 11 more, making a total of 28 out of 125 blank reports sent out, is to be noticed. It is true that some of the rabbis are prevented by physical incapacity to withstand the fatigue of travel, from joining in the work, and others are occupied with manifold duties at home; and others still refused to take the initiative step, and waited to be invited by the respective communities, before they would venture forth, but many ignored the work out of sheer indifference.

The difficulty with the communities lies in the heterogeneity of the elements which make up even the smallest of Jewish communities. Where there are mayhap only a dozen or fifteen families the social barriers are strongly drawn, and national differences, accentuated by close contact, serve to prevent a union for religious purposes.

It may be interesting to note that the Jewish communities of the South took more kindly to the movement than those of the North, for the reason doubtless that there is among them a greater percentage of native-born Americans. In many of the communities of the North, and especially in the New England States, the field is very infertile, owing to the fact that these communities are made up of foreign born, who desire a "Schochet" or a "Mohel" in preference to a Rabbi, and who are prejudiced against the Rabbis of the reform school.⁵⁴

In the report which was submitted to the Council of the Union, Rabbi Leucht, who was chairman of the committee, reported that the expenditures for the year had been \$105.30.⁵⁵ This was a small sum for the amount of work done. For the year 1897, Edward N. Calisch, Rabbi of Richmond, Va., was appointed chairman of the Committee on Circuit Preaching. In his annual report he commended the rabbis of the country for⁵⁶ their good work and love of cause. The American Israelite in turn took note of Rabbi Calisch on the editorial page.

Rabbi Edward N. Calisch, of Richmond, Va., addressed a circular letter to all his colleagues, in which he reminds them of their duty of circuit preaching during the coming season, as promised to the Council of American Hebrew Congregations, and the committee appointed by that body of which Mr. Calisch is the chairman. Rabbi Calisch desires every colleague to inform him what territory one chooses for his work, or let him assign you a territory if you send him a list of available cities within your

easiest reach for the work. He sends by mail the book necessary for this work, and will send more, he says, if needed and asked for. It is a laborious task which Mr. Calisch has taken upon himself voluntarily for the good of the cause. The colleagues, we should think, ought to support him generously. Judaism paying no salaries to missionaries has not any too many workers in its behalf, although every conscientious Israelite must feel the necessity to do missionary work among our own, at least, especially to bring the holy inheritance of Israel home to those who by circumstances over which they have no control, young or old, have no opportunity to hear the word of God at stated times. Support Rabbi Calisch in the Holy enterprize the best you can and as soon as you can.⁵⁷

The report for the following year stated that

the work in circuit preaching, for 1898, has been carried on substantially in the same manner as was outlined in the last report of this committee, viz: by a number of rabbis who had taken the time from their own congregational duties to make visits to the various committees in their vicinity, to hold services, preach and examine the Sabbath-school. From the reports that have been made by these gentlemen to the chairman of the committee, the following statistics have been compiled:

Total number of visits made.	122
Total number of towns visited.	47
Total number of states covered.	17
Total Sabbath Schools organized and maintained.	7
Schools organized but not maintained.	2
Congregations organized, services instituted.	2
Congregations induced to join the Union.	6

In addition to the above, there are four places where regular visits at short intervals were made, to-wit: at Woodland, Cal., twice a month; New Castle, Pa., every week; at Walden, N.Y., where thirty seven visits were made, and at Lincoln, Nebraska, every two weeks.

These figures represent the work done by twenty rabbis.

The obstacles which were mentioned in the last report remain yet to be surmounted. The greatest of these is the indifference, the utter lack of cooperation on the part of the majority of the smaller communities. A great many of them show no disposition to meet this work half way, and many rabbis, not possessing that proselytizing zeal which permits them to carry their doctrine where it is not welcomed, have laid down the work in disappointment. Almost all have declared their willingness to go where they are invited, but they will not go where they are not wanted. The chairman of your committee has spent much time and labor in correspondence with various communities throughout the land, endeavoring to open up communication between them and the rabbis in their neighborhood, but he has not met with the full realizations of his anticipations. There

appear to be two reasons for this.

First, in many of the smaller towns the dominant element in numbers is of the orthodox type, for whom reform rabbis and their ways have no appeal. An incident corroborative of this is furnished in one of the reports. A visit had been made to a small town in New Jersey and the service conducted according to the booklet which the committee has provided. The congregation seemed to be impressed, but after the service was concluded a number of them retired to an ante-room where they read Mincha according to their own fashion. That which had been done counted to them for naught.

The other reason lies in the fact that the services conducted by the visiting rabbis must necessarily be held on a week-day. While the average Jew may appreciate a lecture or even a sermon on a profane day, it does not seem that he has arrived at that point where a religious service, dissociated from the Sabbath or a festal day, has value or appeal for him.

As long as the present arrangements are maintained, while a vast amount of good is unquestionably done, these difficulties will remain. The best method would be to go at once to the heart of the matter, and secure men who will devote their entire time to this work, who will cover a certain territory, containing four or five towns, at frequent and regular intervals, holding services on the Sabbath and Holy Days, maintaining the religious schools and, above all, be known to these smaller communities as their own rabbi.

To begin this the Hebrew Union College at Cincinnati may add one year of compulsory circuit work to its curriculum, and in course of time there will doubtless be some who will continue in the work by reason of special aptitude or predilection. The question of the maintenance of those rabbis shall be met by the congregations and the Union. The committee has no doubt that even now some circuits can be arranged that will be entirely self-sustaining, and that others with proper encouragement can be made so.

Your committee further recommends that provision should be made for the issuing of pamphlets containing sets of (5) sermons for use on the holy days of Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur. It is at this season that every gathering of Jews, no matter how lax they are otherwise and at other times, endeavors to hold services. The pulpit is supplied by laymen, and the desire to have appropriate sermons as part of the service is universal. There are a great many holiday sermons published, but not in the form that makes them available for the purpose that has been mentioned. One publication has been made in this direction, that is the "Holiday Sheaf," by Dr. David Philipson, of Cincinnati. It is the recommendation of your committee that similar work should be done by the Union and under the auspices of the Circuit Preaching Committee. It will be sufficient to issue

but one set a year.⁵⁸ - 30 -

Through the impetus of the drive for the establishment of the circuit preaching system, these early pioneers almost stumbled upon the scheme for the Hillel work at the colleges which we now have established.

Your Committee would further suggest that the Council recommend to the Committee on Circuit Preaching, that it include in its work, during the coming year, the various colleges of the United States. There are large colonies of Jewish young men, and Jewish young women, at the several Universities and Colleges throughout the United States.⁵⁹

If we were to judge by the report in the American Israelite, the publication of holiday sermons suggested by the Committee on Circuit Preaching had touched upon a spot in Jewish life where a lack was definitely felt,

Editor ISRAELITE:

Sir:- I desire to bear testimony to the ubiquitousness of the American Jewish Press. Since it has been made known through the Jewish papers of this country that holiday sermons were to be had for the asking, I have received requests for them from three continents, reaching from England to California and from Manitoba to the Cape of Good Hope. If the pervasion of a movement is evidence of its soundness, then this action of the Circuit Preaching Committee of the U. A. H. C. is certainly along the line of beneficent activity.

I desire, however, that you will kindly give emphasis to one feature of this movement, viz., that these sermons are prepared for congregational use, that is to be read in public before such congregations whose service is conducted by a layman. I have received numerous applications from individuals in large cities, who certainly have the opportunities to enjoy the ministrations of a regular religious teacher. I have sent copies in answer to these applications for the sole reason that I have enough to go around, but I desire to lay stress upon the fact that these sermons are for congregational, rather than individual, use.

Referring again to the value of the Jewish Press I will not, for harmony's sake, say which paper has been the most effective, but I will say that the application from the most distant point came in response to the notice in the ISRAELITE.

EDWARD N. CALISCH. 60

In the final committee report for the period, 1885-1900, the importance of the sermon tracts was made evident.

We beg to submit the report of the Committee on Circuit Preaching for the year ending October 31, 1899.

We have no statistical report of the visits made by the various rabbis to the smaller communities, as these figures are only asked for biennially; but the good work is being kept up along the lines laid down, and without doubt effectively and beneficially.

The pamphlet of holiday sermons sent out by the committee has been a most decided success. There were three hundred pamphlets printed, two hundred of which were sent out, and of these one hundred and twenty five to small congregations direct. The chairman of the committee has received the most encouraging comments as regards the value and the usefulness of these sermons for the communities to which they are sent. Many of the writers made requests for weekly discourses. The committee would like very much to do this work, but it cannot be done with the present appropriation granted by the Executive Board. There was no specific sum mentioned at the convention in Richmond last year, but the committee has received \$200, of which there is left a little less than \$100. If the Executive Board could see its way to grant a further appropriation of \$100, the committee could manage to send out a number of sermons weekly to the small congregations for the rest of this season and the beginning of next season, up to the time of the meeting of Council.

The committee is going to make a very strong effort to induce these smaller communities, who have begun to see the value and the usefulness of the Union, to become members of the Union, not so much for the sake of their financial, as their moral support and encouragement. While it is the rule that personal appeals are far more effective than written communications, still the committee has hopes that because it has demonstrated the great value of the Union, it may receive some gratifying response to its appeal.⁶¹

Rabbinical Seminaries

Before taking a view at the Hebrew Union College, it might be well to consider the other rabbinical institutions and training schools which were extent during this period and in close proximity to this period. Although there are no references to substantiate the supposition that there was some form of rabbinical training in America prior to these formal

institutions. The orthodox rabbis in this country were undoubtedly training a few men privately, and perhaps unknown to each other. We do know that aside from the Hebrew Union College there was, in 1877, a school in Cincinnati. It took on the form of an opposition to the school in Cincinnati.

Under the auspices of The Emanu-El Theological Association of New York, a Preparatory School was opened under the superintendence of Dr. Samuel Adler and Dr. Gustav Gottheil, on February 10, 1877. Eighteen students attending university, enrolled and formed two classes. When their number grew to twenty-six, a third class was added. The principal of the school was Dr. Moses Mielziner, the Rabbi of Anshe Chesed Congregation, who was assisted by Dr. Louis Schnabel and the distinguished Bible exegete, Dr. Arnold B. Ehrlich. The instruction consisted of six hours per week, and was devoted to Bible, Mishna, Gemara and selections from medieval authors. When the Board of Delegates on Civil and Religious Rights (organized in 1878), and a number of eastern congregations joined the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Dr. Gottheil proposed that the Emanu-El Preparatory be taken over as a department of the Hebrew Union College, and administered by a New York board. Though the amount spent by the Union on this school was small, it depleted the limited resources of the Cincinnati institution and restrained the Board of Governors from admitting new students, thereby impeding its progress. In his ninth annual report, Dr. Wise called the Board's attention to the fact that "No student can be expected from the Preparatory Department of New York, which up to date has sent none, one excepted, who came from New York before the Department was established; on the contrary, the New York graduates are sent to Europe, or retained there as a class of post-graduates." Despite his complaint, the pledge given to the New York school was kept by the Union. However, it rejected the subsequent proposal that the New York School be turned into a rabbinical seminary as a branch of the Hebrew Union College, on the ground that the creation of what would be tantamount to a second college, should "if not immediately destroy, certainly continually retard, the growth and threaten the prosperity--nay the very existence of both." When for reasons of declining health, Dr. Gottheil resigned from its superintendency, in 1886, the school was discontinued, notwithstanding the plea of Dr. Kohler, who for some years had served on its staff.⁶²

As was his wont, Isaac Mayer Wise led the readers of the Israelite to believe that the move to establish the New York Preparatory School as a branch of the Hebrew Union Col-

lege was in reality an attempt to establish an orthodox seminary in New York. He states that at a meeting of the Ministerial Association of New York and vicinity

the Rabbinical Seminary to be established in New York also came up for discussion and action. An official organization was effected and officers were elected to carry out the desires of the parties concerned. Here again appears to be a contradiction in terms. The most orthodox and outspoken opponents of the Union and the Hebrew Union College were elected into the Board of officers, which could be interpreted only as an avowed intention to establish a genuine orthodox Rabbinical training-school, with Talith and Tephilin, the black cap and the Polish Machzor, which is certainly all right for those who want it so. On the other hand, however, it was declared in the same meeting that the intention is merely to establish some school of that kind for New York only, because, as Dr. Gottheil maintains, it seems foolish that New York boys should be sent to the college in Cincinnati and be supported there, when they have homes in New York, and complete their rabbinical education there; therefore, the congregations, although remaining in the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, might also support the home institution, viz: the Rabbinical Seminary of New York.⁶³

Aside from this controversy, and stemming from an incident which occurred at the first ordination to be held by the Hebrew Union College, there was the difficulty with the desired establishment of the Jewish Theological Seminary.

That first ordination of American trained rabbis was looked forward to by reform Jewry in this country as an epochal event. Wise and his followers were in a glow of excitement. To provide a proper setting for this first ordination, the officers of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations arranged for the holding of the Council of the Union in the city of Cincinnati.⁶⁴

The convention of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, whereof this rabbinical ordination was the peak, closed with a great dinner at a great hilltop resort, The Highland House. Knowing that there would be delegates from various parts of the country present who laid stress upon the observance of the dietary laws, the Cincinnati committee engaged a Jewish caterer to set the dinner. The great banqueting hall was brilliantly lighted, the hundreds of guests were seated at the beautifully arranged tables, the invocation had been spoken by one of the visiting rabbis, when the waiters served the first

course. Terrific excitement ensued when two rabbis rose from their seats and rushed from the room. Shrimp had been placed before them as the opening course of the elaborate menu. . . . The hosts had, as they thought, provided for just such eventualities by engaging a Jewish caterer. But he failed in the emergency. This Highland House dinner came to be known as the "terefa Banquet". The orthodox eastern press rang the changes on the terefa banquet week in, week out. This incident furnished the opening to the movement that culminated in the establishment of a rabbinical seminary of a conservative bent. . . .65

This incident together with Dr. Wise's reference to the Pittsburg Platform as a "Jewish Declaration of Independence," set the tone for the establishment of the new seminary. Dr. Wise and the Union tried to smooth things over but

it was too late. The breach could not be healed. Sabato Morais, the conscientious opponent of Reform, saw the opportunity of either restoring the Maimonides College in Philadelphia or of creating a new conservative seminary in the midst of the rapidly growing Jewish community of New York. With the aid of the brothers Henry Pereira and Frederick de Sola Mendes, Aaron Wise, Benjamin Szold, Marcus Jastrow, Alexander Kohut and other like minded rabbis and lay-leaders, he launched a counter movement which resulted in the establishment of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City. . . .66

As the conservative elements rallied around the Jewish Theological Seminary, the Hebrew Union College remained the training center and citadel of Reform Judaism. With the tension eased, Dr. Wise and the Board of Governors devoted themselves to strengthening the scientific character of the College and increasing its usefulness.67

But before Dr. Wise began the business of strengthening his own College he could not resist one final withering blast at the new seminary.

For a number of years some gentlemen in the eastern cities of our country, who claim to be the orthodox or conservative men among the American Israelites, or even the only true Israelites, have been at work to antagonize the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Hebrew Union College. Last year these gentlemen succeeded in interesting the New York Portuguese Congregation in a scheme of establishing a theological seminary in New York. That congregation holds funds years ago bequeathed for the

establishment of a rabbinical institute, and never did anything to carry out the wills of the testators. It was resolved to contribute \$1000 per annum to the new seminary. The Portuguese Congregation, of Philadelphia, and such other congregations who had never affiliated themselves with the Union or had left it previously, were obligated to contribute \$25 or more per annum each toward the maintaining of such seminary. A society was organized, and a so-called orthodox rabbinical seminary was formally opened at the beginning of the year 1887, with one teacher for one class, an adequate number of officers and the antagonistic Reverend Doctors and Reverend Hazanim as protectors, patrons, examiners, directors or securities, that the said seminary will remain genuinely orthodox, or what is called so in that region of the land. The Rev. S. Morais was made its President, and he is, perhaps, the only conservative man in that company. All the other gentlemen are very far distant from the conservative standpoint. The said seminary can not and will not be for any length of time an orthodox rabbinical institute. No orthodox institution holds out long among American Israelites. But that is of no importance. It is certainly a scholastic progress that such a school exists, however small it is now, however short its existence may be; it is, and it has the object in view to teach Jewish literature; it is a scholastic progress.⁶⁸

The meeting of the Ministerial Association of New York and vicinity took notice of this new seminary in this manner. The President said

it is my duty to notice the steps taken by some congregations here and in Philadelphia to found a theological college in this city. It was opened yesterday under promising circumstances. Bearing as it does, a decided theological character I have no right to do more in this place than to mention the fact. It will be for you to decide whether we shall go beyond this.⁶⁹

Hebrew Union College

During the early years of the Hebrew Union College there was much antagonism toward that institution. At times this antagonism was directed toward the College itself, at times toward the Union, and at times it was directed toward Isaac Mayer Wise. In an attempt to get more financial backing

for the College, he declared before the Board of Governors of the College that he was ready to resign.

Still you know as well as I do that I have personal enemies, who oppose this College, because I am at the head thereof, and it is not in my power to change the disposition of prejudiced persons. Therefore, if you or the Council resolve that my resignation would benefit the College, or the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, my resignation as President, as teacher, either or both, I will thank you and retire. I have not done the work which I may have done, in order to be President or professor. I have done it to build up the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and this College, and here they stand. I claim no other reward, acknowledgement or consideration. If the College be benefitted by my resignation, demand it; it is your duty to demand it, and you shall have it instantly without weakening the warm interest which I take in the Union and College. Permit me only to add here that I entertain only the highest respect for the members of this Board and the Executive Board, and gladly acknowledge the friendly and cordial relations which always existed between us.⁷⁰

Needless to say, his offer was not accepted. That same year, 1881, the dedication of the new Hebrew Union College building on Sixth Street, took place.⁷¹ The American Jew's Annual, which was published yearly around the time of the High Holydays followed the progress of the College closely. Each year it reported the number of graduates and other pertinent data.⁷² During the period immediately preceding the Pittsburg Conference, the College was in dire need of funds. Nor was this an unusual state of affairs for the college to be in.

It can not be denied that the Hebrew Union College still has its opponents in the community, and all attempts to endow it, or only to endow sufficiently the Moses Montefiore Memorial Chair of Sacred Literature, or even to obtain sufficient funds to support talented and willing young men whose means would not allow them to spend their time and the best years of youth in earnest studies, have proved a failure.⁷³

A resolution offered at the Union convention in 1885, that the 1887 graduation of the Hebrew Union College take place in Pittsburg together with the meeting of Council was

defeated.⁷⁴ Charges that the scholastic program at the Hebrew Union College was not of the highest caliber were met by the American Israelite.

There is no cause why the patrons of the Hebrew Union College should suspect that the young rabbis do not receive here the highest academical training which can be obtained anywhere by a theological student. The Shemitic Department is fully supplemented in the College, where they study the Hebrew, Aramaic and Syriac.⁷⁵

The columns of the Israelite also decried the lack of students.

The Hebrew Union College has none to graduate in 1885, and but four candidates for the next three years, after which time full classes are to come up year after year. Why is this so? interested readers of the AMERICAN ISRAELITE might ask, and we can answer them. It is not the fault of the management, of the Board of Governors nor the faculty. They have always done their respective duties diligently and conscientiously. The cause must be sought elsewhere. After the college had been in operation for a year or two the opposition became so violent, that outside of Cincinnati every Jewish organ decried and denounced it so maliciously, that the means of support became very meager, and the young men became frightened. That is one of the causes and perhaps the main one. It had also the effect that those who had commenced to study were led to believe that there was no prospect for them ahead and they stopped. So hitherto not one of the boys accepted from the Cleveland Orphan Asylum has yet graduated from the College, although the students from that institution now at work are more promising. None of the young Poles turned out successful. And so quite a number of others after they had pursued their studies a number of years at the expense of the "Union" left us. . . . We never stopped calling and begging, but the opposition never stopped crying down the institute and the prospects of young rabbis after they would have finished their studies. When facts began to tell, what class of young men are to be sent out to the American Israel and what splendid prospects there were open for them, the opposition found other means to decry and defame the "Cincinnati College" as they call it, while those who had become its friends would do nothing to advance its growth. This was perhaps most visible in the movement to establish a Montefiore Memorial Professorship in the Hebrew Union College, to which the opposition was much louder and fiercer than its advocates. . . . We do lament over those who do nothing, but most bitterly we lament over those who prevent others from doing what is good and necessary. We do tell so now because we want to explain why

the advanced classes of the H.U. College are so small in number now. We owe this explanation to the friends of the cause, that they might know where the defects are to be located.⁷⁶

Those students who were at the College were sent out to officiate for the holidays. Their availability was made known through the columns of the Israelite.

Congregations wishing to engage any of the students of the Hebrew Union College to officiate for them the coming holidays, are respectfully requested to notify us as early as possible, as there will be, as usual, more applications than students.⁷⁷

The congregations at which these students served gave much needed praise to the College. It was a welcome sound for Dr. Wise. The congregations to whom the graduates had gone had similar praise.⁷⁸ The appearance of the College aside from the financial aspect was a pleasing one. The report of the Union's Committee on the Hebrew Union College read as follows:

We find from the various reports that the work of the College and New York Preparatory Department is being as thoroughly done as could be expected. We heartily concur in the opinion of all your former committees that the Union may congratulate itself upon its College, and that its efforts in resting it upon a more solid foundation should be untiring. Rome was not built in one day. It is the unanimous opinion of your committee that the excellent results so far attained by the College, warrant a redoubling of our interest and an enlisting of the heartiest encouragement both moral and material, not only of the one hundred and two congregations, but of every congregation throughout the land. . .⁷⁹

But the students had one complaint. They submitted a petition to the Board of Governors that said

We, the students of Senior, Junior and Second Collegiate Classes of the Hebrew Union College, do hereby petition your honorable Board for an appropriation of sixty dollars for elocution lessons, to be taken at the school of Mrs. Geppert. Hoping you will favor our petition, we are yours,

Most respectfully,
M. P. Jacobson

R. Grossman,
E.N. Calisch,
Committee.

On motion of William Goodheart, Esq., the following was adopted:

Resolved, That the sum of sixty dollars be and is hereby appropriated for the payment of a teacher of elocution for the present Collegiate year.⁸⁰

The controversy over the Pittsburg Platform had become a major issue to the public. The college was cast into the center of the argument. On December 9th, 1885, not long after the Pittsburg Conference had adjourned, Dr. Wise received this letter:

Rev. Sir:- At the convention of rabbis, held at Pittsburg, several resolutions were adopted, and still others proposed, of which the Trustees of the Congregation Ahavath Chesed are not in accord. I am intrusted by said Trustees to state that if such articles, as adopted and proposed, are to be the instructions at the Hebrew Union College that they, as a member of said Union, find themselves morally bound to protest against such teachings. We earnestly hope that this protest may prove of sufficient weight so as to spare us the unpleasant duty of taking further action in this matter. I am, reverend sir,

Yours respectfully,
MARCUS KOHNER, Hon. Sec'y.

The President of the Hebrew College replied to this letter, December 11th, thus:

To Mr. Marcus Kohner, Hon. Secretary of the Congregation Temple Ahavath Chesed, New York City:

Dear Sir:- I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, dated New York, December 6th, communicating to me a resolution of the Board of Trustees of your congregation; and I beg leave to address these lines in reply to said resolution to you personally, as it appears from the tenor of your letter that you are the chosen organ of the Board to speak in its behalf, hence also to receive response for said Board, and to communicate it to the same.

Permit me to say, first, that I feel extremely sorry, personally, that the Board of the Ahavath Chesed takes exception to some of the enactments of the Pittsburg Rabbinical Conference, over which I presided; and no less sorry I feel that the objectionable points in those enactments are not pointed out to me, informing me clearly to what the Board objects, so that perhaps I might explain or retract, if need be. Still, as the matter is before me now, I can only say that -

The enactment, resolutions or proceedings of the Pittsburg Rabbinical Conference, or of any other Conference

except the Council of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, have nothing in the world to do with the course of studies or the methods of teaching adopted in the Hebrew Union College.

You see, dear sir, no forewarning was necessary; the Hebrew Union College, as far as I am concerned, remains the honest seat of Jewish learning - and no drilling institution for opinionated candidates - to educate competent scholars of free and unbiased minds for the Jewish pulpit, men who can draw their information from the original Jewish sources and think for themselves.

With due regard to the Board and to yourself personally, I have the honor to be

Your most obedient servant,

ISAAC M. WISE,

President Hebrew Union College. 81

The meeting of the Conference of Rabbis of Southern Congregations was held in December, 1885. On the subject of the College and the Union they declared:

The Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Hebrew Union College. -- These two institutions are, in fact, identical. The latter is the offspring of the former, is nursed upon its bosom. They are deserving our special solicitude. The value of the College is best exhibited by the character and standing of the graduates it has sent forth, who occupy pulpits in prominent congregations and prove themselves able and conscientious advocates of our sacred cause. 82

We recommend the following for adoption:

Resolved, That in recognition of the success of the Hebrew Union College and the able, unselfish and faithful labors of its President and faculty, this Conference does firmly and enthusiastically pledge the full measure of its moral support to the U.A.H.C. and the Hebrew Union College.

Adopted unanimously. 83

For the academic year 1886-7, the faculty at the College was as follows;

The Rev. Dr. Isaac M. Wise, President of the College, tendered his services gratuitously as Professor of Philosophy, Exegesis, etc., etc., of the College for the ensuing year, which were accepted with thanks.

The Rev. Dr. M. Mielziner was re-elected as Professor of Talmud and Rabbinical Discipline for the ensuing year at a salary of \$3000 per annum, payable monthly from the 1st of September, 1886.

The Rev. M. Goldstein, Cantor of the K.K. B'nai Israel, of Cincinnati, tendered his services as Preceptor of

Liturgy and Liturgical Music to the College for the ensuing year, which were also accepted with thanks. The Rev. Dr. Henry Zirndorf was re-elected as Professor of History and Literature for the ensuing year at a salary of \$1,800, payable monthly from 1st September, 1886. The Rev. Sigmund Mannheimer was re-elected as Preceptor of Hebraica and Aramaic Grammar for the ensuing year at a salary of \$1,200, payable monthly from 1st September, 1886. The Rev. David Davidson was re-elected as Professor of Biblical Literature for the ensuing year at a salary of \$600, payable monthly from 1st, September, 1886. Mr. Ephraim Feldman was duly re-elected as assistant Preceptor of Talmud, etc., for the ensuing year, at a salary of \$480, payable monthly from the 1st September, 1886.⁸⁴

As a result of the turmoil caused among some member congregations of the Union after the passage of the Pittsburgh Platform, Mr. Bernhard Bettmann, President of the Board of Governors of the Hebrew Union College, felt compelled to make a statement concerning the future policy of the College.

In view of the resolutions just adopted, the undersigned respectfully begs leave to correct the erroneous impression entertained by some that the tenets of any platform other than Judaism pure and simple are permitted to be taught, directly or indirectly, in the Hebrew Union College. The institution is governed in strictest accordance with the laws enacted for that purpose by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. The curriculum prescribed by Council is faithfully followed, and the fact that the College is supported by and consequently owes equal duty to every congregation in the Union is never lost sight of. For proof of the conscientious execution of our trust we point to the reports of the various learned examiners during all the years of its existence, representing all shade of Jewish religious thought and opinion in the United States.⁸⁵

When Isaac Mayer Wise had a slight disagreement with the Executive Board of the Union he did not hesitate for a moment to bring his grievance to the attention of the public through the columns of his newspaper.

The construction of the law concerning rabbinical

diplomas by the Executive Board of the Union in its last session at Cleveland, O., is incorrect. The law was interpreted to ordain that the Rabbinical diploma should be given to such students of the Hebrew Union College who had passed through all its eight classes, and to nobody else. Such provision is not in the letter of the law, nor is it in the practice of the College. Candidates who did make their preparatory studies entirely or partly elsewhere, . . . could not be expected to begin again from the beginning, which would be a waste of time and discouraging to the students; it would be unjust and detrimental. Such students, of course, must be allowed to enter at once such higher class for which they are prepared, as is the practice of the College. Such candidates, however, according to that construction of the law by the Executive Board would not be entitled to their graduation diplomas, however well informed and thorough they may be. Such a law can not be enforced and such decision will have to be reversed in the next Council. Nor is it clear to us that the Executive Board possesses the right to expound laws referring to the College, which right, we think, belongs to the Board of Governors.⁸⁶

But Dr. Wise was not allowed to go unchallenged in his public attack on the Executive Board. Lipman Levy wrote an answer, published in the American Israelite, which explained that Wise had misinterpreted the law made by the Board. Mr. Levy also took him to task for his statement concerning the right of the Executive Board to legislate in these matters.⁸⁷

The excitement over the Pittsburg Platform and the attacks on the College because of Dr. Wise's connection with that platform were not at an end, even as late as 1887. In that year, Dr. Wise found it prudent to re-publish a statement he had published in 1885, when the College first came under the attack of those opposed to the Pittsburg Platform.

In behalf of the Faculty of the Hebrew Union College I do hereby declare and make known the following truths:

1. No member of the Executive Board of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, and no member of the Board of Governors of the Hebrew Union College, and none of these bodies conjointly or separately, individually or in corpore,

officially or unofficially, ever advised, influenced, ordained, commanded, advanced, or demanded anything of the said faculty concerning the curriculum of the said College, either as regards the subjects to be taught, the quantity of the pensa, the method and spirit to be pursued, the textbooks to be used, or any other point or points concerning the theological or scholastic affairs of the College; nor does the law governing this Union and this College confer any right upon any body or individual outside of the Council of the Union to amend, alter, or change in anywise the established curriculum of the College, either in letter or spirit. None besides the Council possesses the legislative prerogative, all bodies elected and committees appointed are vested with executive power only to enforce and carry into effect the enactments and resolves of the Council; hence it could make no difference what the theological, religious or irreligious, reformatory or orthodox opinions held by any of these officers are, as long as they were loyal to the Union and its laws. The Union was established eo ipso on such general principles of all loyal Israelites and citizens which exclude none for holding particular views on special points.

2. There is none, positively not one, and there never was one in the Faculty of the Hebrew Union College who ever taught or otherwise inculcated in the minds of the students or others, suggested, advocated or in any wise proposed or argued in favor of:

A transfer of the Sabbath;

The abolition of the Abrahamitic covenant;

The abolition of the dietary laws;

The denial of the divinity of the Bible.

All such and similar stuff accused against the said Faculty are false, base and slanderous, and in behalf of that Faculty I hereby declare and brand them as such. As a teacher in Israel I feel authorized to declare the publication of these accusations a gross violation of the divine laws.

3. In the Archives of the Hebrew Union College the theses of graduating students and the candidates for the degree of Doctor of Divinity are preserved, as accepted and approved by the faculty. There is not one word in those eighteen treatises to justify the accusation of heresy; on the contrary there are among them a treatise on the Sinaiic Sabbath by Dr. Joseph Silverman, and another on the Abrahamitic covenant by Dr. Israel Aaron, setting forth in scientific method and systematic arrangement the arguments and proofs in favor of these two institutions. The Faculty, in accepting those papers and approving them, identifies itself with the arguments contained in them.⁸⁸

The issue which caused him to re-publish this piece was precipitated by Dr. S. Solis-Cohen. It was written up in the American Israelite in the inimitable style of Dr. Wise.

After the glory of the Pittsburg Council some protest had to come, as seems to be a fatalistic necessity. It did come. The gentleman who presides over the society of the New York seminary, S. Solis-Cohen, M.D., of Philadelphia, having read in some newspaper that the Council in Pittsburg had before it a motion to endow the Hebrew Union College with \$500,000 (no action was taken on the motion) came out with an official call upon all whom it may concern, that the New York Seminary in spe should be endowed with \$100,000 instead of the Hebrew Union College with \$500,000; the latter should not be endowed at all, it should rather be closed. That is business, and as a business policy it seems all right. But the Doctor went far beyond this and came upon illegitimate ground. He took up the issue of heresy and threw it into the face of everybody and every institution; called all men outside of his narrow circle of acquaintance, priests of Baal, idolators, and worse than idolators; declared bluntly, only in other words, that all besides himself and his friends are damned; therefore everybody should give his money to the seminary which will be, when it will be, genuinely orthodox.⁸⁹

For the year 1888-89, there was an addition to the Faculty. Mr. Isaac L. Rypins was elected as a Preceptor at a salary of \$480 per year.⁹⁰ In the next scholastic year, 1889-90, two additions were made to the faculty of the College. Dr. David Philipson, who was the Rabbi of K.K. Bnai Israel, in Cincinnati, volunteered his services as Preceptor of Arabic and Syriac. The Rev. Charles Levi, who was the assistant rabbi of K.K. Bnai Yeshurun, in Cincinnati,⁹¹ volunteered as a Preceptor. In the following year Dr. Gott-⁹²hardt Deutsch was elected Professor of History.

In 1890, an attempt was made to get an endowment for a Chair of Theology and Philosophy at the Hebrew Union College. Dr. Wise went through his entire repertoire of approaches in his efforts to raise the money.

A sum of no less than \$75,000 is required to endow a Chair in the Hebrew Union College - the chair to be called forever by the name of him who endows it - for no Professor can be appointed to fill it well with a salary less than

\$3,000 a year, and money is worth no more to a corporation than four per cent per annum. Here is a chance for some rich benefactor to perpetuate his name, to purchase a mundane immortality, to be remembered forever at the very headquarters of Judaism.

Endow the chair of theology and philosophy in the Hebrew Union College; we would say furthermore to the inveterate opponents of Dr. Wise, it costs only \$75,000. You have worked very hard, very long and very zealously to get him out and down; it is not your fault, surely, that you did not succeed. You are conscientious men; no doubt you want to co-operate, to do all that good men can do, but not with Wise at the helm. Here is your chance to get him out and down, and it costs but \$75,000. What a Metziah! You are not stingy, not close-fisted, not narrow minded or hard-hearted. Here is your chance, and it costs but \$75,000 to reach your life's aim.⁹³

In an effort to help alleviate the financial burden under which the Hebrew Union College labored, and to set the example for his fellow rabbis, the Rev. Dr. S. H. Sonneschein took steps to insure the College of some income in future years.

Mr. B. Bettmann, President Board of Governors, Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, O.

Dear Sir and Brother:- Enclosed you will kindly accept a lasting token of my love and appreciation for the institute of learning whose progress and excellent work I would like to see promoted and supported by every patriotic American Israelite. We rabbis can not endow the college with funds, but each one of us, who is a true friend to it, can insure our life for any respectable, though limited, amount for its benefit, and thus pave the way to a sound and solid increase of its permanent fund for years to come. Let each Jewish minister in the United States thus contribute his share, and these mortal rabbis will truly help to build and secure the immortality of the Torah in the New World!

With fraternal regards to the members of your Board, I remain, as ever,

Yours,
S.H. SONNESCHEIN

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT OF BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF H.U.C.
Cincinnati, August 6, 1890

Rev. Dr. S.H. Sonneschein, St. Louis, Mo.:

Dear Doctor:- Among the many friends of the Hebrew Union College, not one, since the first hour of its existence, has been more true, faithful, energetic and devoted than you. Ever ready to assist it by word and deed, you have worked for it at home and away from it, have come here at your own expense and at great personal inconvenience to lecture before its classes and to attend

meetings of this Board, and now in your favor of 4th inst. you hand me an insurance policy on your own life for One Thousand Dollars! My very first wish is, that it may be many, many years before the institution you love so well can derive any benefit from this generous act of yours; my next, that your hope of saving and having your noble example followed by many others may be speedily and frequently realized.

In behalf of the College and its Board of Governors, I hereby extend to you most sincere thanks for your thoughtfulness and liberality. Your valuable gift will be handed over to the proper authority, Mr. Julius Freiberg, President of the Union, as soon as he returns, and your letter will be laid before the Board at its next meeting.

Meanwhile, I have the honor, with warmest assurances of personal regard, to remain

Faithfully yours,
B. Bettmann, President.⁹⁴

Almost a year later, at the death of the Rev. Dr. Samuel Adler, of New York, it was revealed that he had left a bequest to the Hebrew Union College. His son, Dr. Isaac Adler, wrote to the College authorities and informed them of the following:

My father, who passed from us June 9th, left a memorandum which contains his last commands to his children. In this memorandum there is the following paragraph, which I copy from the original:

Each of my children shall have the right to select from my library as many books as he may think proper, without reference to material value. The balance of my library, however, shall be given to the Hebrew Union College of Cincinnati, under the following conditions:

1. The said library shall be kept separately under the designation of the "Adler Library."
2. That in case the Hebrew Union College cease to exist, this library shall be given free of expense to another public Jewish library.

In another part of the memorandum there is a bequest of one thousand dollars (\$1,000) to the Hebrew Union College, of Cincinnati, in case it accepts the library under the above conditions; this sum is to be placed at interest, and the yearly proceeds to be expended in enlarging the "Adler Library".

I shall further add that the books which we, the children, will keep for ourselves, are comparatively few and in no direct connection with the whole of the library. Will you kindly inform me whether the College is willing to accept the bequests and the conditions named?

If so, the books will be sent to Cincinnati some time in the fall.⁹⁵

The communication was immediately answered and the offer was accepted by the College.

As a kind of sequel to the insurance policy plan for endowment which had been offered by the Rev. Dr. Sonneschein, of St. Louis, the Rev. Dr. Sessler, of Providence, Rhode Island offered what might be called the ten per cent plan. Isaac Mayer Wise offered a different solution in his answer to Rabbi Sessler's offer.

Dear Sir:- Knowing the financial standing of the Hebrew Union College, allow me, therefore, to propose the following for the lasting benefit of the above mentioned institute. I will send you a check for \$1,000, providing the graduates of the Hebrew Union College who are to-day rabbis and occupy the best pulpits in the Union will pay one - tenth of their salary yearly toward the maintenance of the College.

I will at the same time pay my yearly dues as promised, \$50, and perhaps more.

Trusting they will cheerfully consent, I am, as ever, yours very respectfully,

I.W. SESSLER.

The offer of Dr. Sessler is very generous, indeed. Its acceptance by the alumni, however, is very doubtful. It would hardly be fair, in our estimation, for the Union to accept such sacrifices from salaried men, whose income after all averages not more than about \$2,000 a year. To the best of our knowledge we recollect but five or six whose income is above that.

A better proposition might have been that the congregations, being under obligations to the College for having in their pulpits and schools the eminent graduates of the Hebrew Union College, would tax themselves with the ten per cent or but five per cent additional contribution for the support of the college. The congregations reap the immediate benefit from the labors of this college, and as far as we know, they do freely acknowledge it.⁹⁶

Besides the praise which Dr. Wise lavished on the graduates of the College he often made mention of the thirty-four men who had gone through the college in its first eighteen years. He gloried in the sizes of their pulpits.

In the scholastic year of 1891-92, the Rev. Dr. Max L. Margolis was added to the Faculty of the College as a Preceptor in Exegesis and Talmud and Instructor in Syriac.⁹⁸

Dr. David Philipson writes of the financial condition of the College in the year 1893. He writes that

the Hebrew Union College, was sadly in need of funds. The Board of Governors took steps to bring the needs of the college to the attention of various Jewish communities. A committee consisting of the officers of the Board, was commissioned to visit a number of cities with the purpose of presenting the cause of the college and obtaining annual subscriptions.⁹⁹

But financial troubles were not the only plague of the college. There was still internal strife among the rabbis who had been educated here and those who had received their ordinations in Europe. An incident at the conference in Chicago, related by Dr. Philipson, points this up.

During the meeting of the conference I was a central figure in an exciting controversy. During a symposium on the future of Judaism one of the most famous rabbis had, in the course of his remarks, indulged in dark foreboding as to the future of Judaism in this country, when the men of European training and education would have passed away and the matters would be entirely in the hands of such as had not received this training. Considering this an attack on the younger men who were educated in this country, I arose and said (and these are the words I used):

There is no one who has more respect for the learning of Dr. Kohler, no one who has more reverence for grey hair than have I; but I feel that a few words should be spoken in answer to the gentleman who has just sat down. It may be a misfortune not to have been born in Europe, but I can not consider it such; in fact, I am thankful that I was born in this country. It may further be a misfortune not to have been educated in Europe, but to judge by the results attained by some who were educated there, possibly it is not so great a misfortune after all.

I then went on to say that there was no need for taking so dark a view of the case; that there are some among the rabbis educated here who do aim to acquaint themselves with the best results of Jewish scholarship and do devote themselves to study.¹⁰⁰

A slight disturbance arose over the decision on the

part of the Hebrew Union College authorities to offer the degrees of Doctor of Divinity and Bachelor of Theology. Dr. Wise felt called upon to explain in the Israelite.

It might not be out of place to explain here, why this academic degree of Doctor of Divinity (also of Bachelor of Theology) was introduced in the Hebrew Union College, (and no Jew could get this degree and title anywhere, because there existed no legalized theological faculty of Judaism anywhere prior to the Hebrew Union College). All theological faculties were exclusively Christian. There are no Jewish Rev. Doctors, although many of them are worthy reverends and eminent doctors of philosophy. It was considered a matter of justice to the graduates of the H. U. C., that those who deserved it, should not remain behind their colleagues in academic titles. It was made a post graduate course in absentia, also to encourage those young rabbis to continue their studies, while in office, which was evidently done by those who received the D.D. degree. Aside from the graduates of the H.U.C. this academic degree was conferred on gentlemen of prominent distinction in theological learning and Jewish literature only, as a token of recognition, of the learned and worthy Jew by his own co-religionists, as he could not receive it from any Christian faculty in Europe. It must be understood that the faculty accepts no compensation, money can not purchase it, and it needs no advertisement, as its paper, certificates and diplomas are honored by every university or legal authority in the land.¹⁰¹

The college also entered into an arrangement with its language courses and offered them to the students of the university or anyone interested in Philology. For this course of study, there was no Theology.

From and after October 1896, the Hebrew Union College will offer to students a complete Shemitic course, independent of all theology. It will provide special courses in the Hebrew, Aramaic, Syriac, Assyrian, and Arabic languages and the history of those literatures, also lectures on Assyriology, Introduction to Old Testament Scriptures, Introduction to the Talmud, its commentaries, epitomes and codes. The department will be perfected as it progresses in time. All studies will be elective, and arranged in time so as not to conflict with the university, and be free of charge to all students of the university. It will lead to the academic degree of Bachelor of Hebrew, Aramaic, Syriac, or Arabic, and when completed, to the degree of Master of Shemitic Philology. The standard of admission free of all tests will be the same as in all universities.¹⁰²

Though advance came after advance, yet, the attacks on the college still continued just as strong and vicious as before. The Israelite would often cull these vitriolic statements from the press and comment on them.

The HEBREW STANDARD says:

One of our Reform exchanges says that at the ordination of the last batch of rabbis at the Cincinnati College, the young postulants knelt in prayer, prior to receiving the osculatory smechah from his Holiness.

Comment is unnecessary.

At the ordination of the "last batch of rabbis at the Cincinnati College" the "young postulants" did not kneel in prayer, nor did anybody else kneel in prayer, nor did any "Reform Exchange" of the HEBREW STANDARD'S say that anybody knelt in prayer.

Comment is unnecessary.¹⁰³

In keeping with the literary skills of their President, the students of the Hebrew Union College began to publish a journal made up of poems and short articles. This journal was entirely the work of students and a few literary contributions from rabbis.¹⁰⁴

The President of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations met the nail of the College's problem squarely when he said

are all the Henry Adlers dead? Thank heaven Jacob H. Schiff still lives, and I am sure that he and other representative Jews will cheerfully help to endow the college, so that the Board of Governors need not depend on the petty dues of the Congregations. If this can only be done by having the Jewish University or college in some other city, then let us have it, but let it not end in words, but deeds. No act of American Jews would be hailed with greater acclaim by Dr. Wise than this, for he has never been actuated by localism or selfishness. So far he has piloted the ship well, but he can not do it alone. If expansion, which is in the air, is to mark our future, let us have the evidence by accessions to our ranks, by a fuller treasury, by men of prominence everywhere aiding us.¹⁰⁵

Hebrew Sabbath School Union

At the 1885 meeting of the Jewish Ministers' Association of New York, Dr. Kohler, as chairman of their Sabbath-school Committee proposed the following motions for consideration:

Resolved-First- That the Jewish Ministers' Association appoint a standing committee of five for the purpose of collecting material for annual statistics, in order to become acquainted with the condition and progress of the religious instruction of the young, and to suggest and prepare, as far as it appears feasible and advisable, plans and methods of reform upon a basis of harmony with a view to uniformity.

Second-That the Jewish Ministers' Association recommends that a conference of Sabbath School Superintendents should be held annually, for the purpose of discussing all the important questions and problems, in order to be able to take action on such points on which an agreement is feasible and possible.

Third-That in view of the want of proper English hymn books for our Sabbath-schools, of English text-books containing choice reading for our children, both at school and at home, and other books desirable and needed for the religious instruction and devotion of our children, the Jewish Ministers' Association recommends the appointment of a Jewish-American Sabbath-school Publication Committee, for the purpose of preparing, and if approved, of publishing such books which could be used in common by the various Sabbath-schools in America. In order to defray current expenses of such undertakings, the Jewish Ministers' Association recommend to start a library fund to be made up by monthly Sabbath collections.

Fourth-That the Jewish Ministers' Association favors and recommends a Jewish Sabbath weekly, to be edited under the auspices of the association.¹⁰⁶

When Dr. Wise, who had heard that the Union had been slandered at this meeting, inquired the facts of Dr. Philipson, who had been present at the meeting, he was told that the Union had not been slandered and that these men simply desired to organize a Sabbath-school society for the glory of Judaism. Dr. Philipson seemed to be very pleased with the point of view of these ministers.¹⁰⁷

The foundations of the Hebrew Sabbath School Union, was laid in St. Louis, during July, 1885, by the Council appointing a committee to establish such a Union, under the auspices of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.¹⁰⁸

The Committee on Sabbath School presented the following reports which were adopted:

We recognize and uphold the constitutional right of every congregation in the Union to regulate its own internal affairs, including Sabbath-schools; and we furthermore have carefully considered the growing pressing demand for a "Sabbath School Union," and as the results of our deliberations we respectfully submit the following:

Cordially indorsing and warmly recommending the formation of such a Union, we are aware it can only be created by the voluntary actions of those congregations that desire to become members thereof. As means of best accomplishing the object sought for, we therefore propose that a call be issued at the earliest possible date by the Executive Board of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, advising every congregation of the action taken today, and inviting cooperation by electing a delegate for every Sabbath School below fifty, and an additional delegate for every fifty additional children, to meet at such time and place as may be hereafter determined upon, and then and there to form such Union of Sabbath-schools, make the proper laws which are to govern it, and thus secure in the best manner the desired object. The congregations are requested to notify the President of the Executive Board of their intention to become members of the proposed Union, and as soon as twenty congregations shall have signified, their assent, the President shall call a meeting of the elected delegates for the purpose of carrying out the foregoing recommendations. The Union of American Hebrew Congregations pledges itself to encourage and foster the desired object by all legitimate means in its power.¹⁰⁹

At the Pittsburg Conference of Rabbis, the presiding officer spoke in the area of the problems which would have to be undertaken by the new Sabbath-school Union.

One of the most important requirements of the hour, one in which all opinions concur, is an improved and as far as possible uniform system of religious instruction of our children. . . . Let me simply single out the three chief wants: we need books better adapted to the wants of the children than we have now, and more in accordance with the intellectual capacity and progress of the various classes. There ought to prevail a more harmonious method in the system of instruction, - a more

thorough understanding of the aims and objects of religious education.¹¹⁰

The vital interest of Judaism demands that we should introduce new ways and measures to make our people, and particularly the young, more familiar with the Bible and with the entire Jewish literature, and here, too, a certain regularity and uniformity ought to be maintained. We ought to have parts of the Bible read aloud, in the form of responses, in both Synagog and Sabbath-school, and there should be more stress laid on this than on the Hebrew, from which only very few will ever be able to derive any profitable result.¹¹¹

In keeping with the words of the address the Rev.

Chumaceiro moved, at a meeting of New York rabbis,

the formation of a Jewish School Association, under the auspices of the Association. It was adopted and a committee of three appointed to draw up a plan of constitution, and present the same to the next conference.¹¹²

In the spirit of the words spoken before them by Isaac Mayer Wise, the committee on mission work, of the Pittsburg Conference, recommended

the appointment of a committee for Sabbath-school work, with the intention of uniting with the Sabbath-school Union of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in working out a uniform method of instruction and preparatory books for each subject and class; the work to be entrusted to men considered competent.¹¹³

This was adopted and the further resolution carried that the committee be requested to do all preliminary work deemed necessary for a conference of Sabbath-school superintendents of the Sabbath-school Union, under the auspices of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, to be held in December next at Cincinnati.¹¹⁴

Although the conference in Cincinnati was postponed, these men perfected the organization of the Sabbath-school Union. The Jewish Literary Union also met and resolved to cooperate with the Sabbath School Union.¹¹⁵ Dr. Wise now set about undermining the proposal for Sabbath-school union that had originated with his opponents in New York. He took them to

task in the Israelite.

The Ministerial Association of New York and vicinity met in New York, the Rev. Dr. Gottheil in the chair. Routine business was transacted. A committee of five was appointed to attend the meeting in Cincinnati to establish a Sabbath-school Union, which meeting will take place simultaneously with the Rabbinical Conference. The Pittsburgh Conference also appointed a similar committee. We have not the slightest idea how those different elements can establish a Sabbath-school Union, unless the Eastern colleagues, like Dr. Gottheil and others, embrace the reformatory cause.¹¹⁶

In 1886, Dr. Wise outlined the objectives, membership, publications, and instructions of the Hebrew Sabbath School Union.

The object of this union is to provide a uniform system for all Hebrew Sabbath Schools in the United States, by promulgating a uniform course of instruction and by training competent teachers.

All regularly organized Hebrew Sabbath Schools are eligible to membership.

Any Hebrew Sabbath school may become a member to this union by a resolution to that effect, adopted by the body controlling such Sabbath school, and by transmitting a copy of such resolution to the secretary of this Union, stating at the same time, the number of pupils enrolled.

Each member of this Union shall pay into its treasury annually the sum of fifty cents for each scholar in its Sabbath school, which sum shall be payable in semi-annual installments, on the first days of October and April. The mode of assessing this payment to the common fund of this union is left to the directors of each Sabbath school, but it is desirable that it should be obligatory on every pupil to pay five cents per month during ten months of each year, in order to inculcate in its training the duty of contributing to educational purposes.

Any member failing to pay dues for one year shall thereby forfeit membership.

Each of said Sabbath schools shall be entitled to one delegate, and one additional delegate for every fifty pupils above fifty.

The Executive Committee shall prepare plans to carry into effect the unification of the work of the Hebrew Sabbath schools as specified in the following sections:

a. Instruction in the principles, doctrines and precepts of Judaism.

b. Instruction in reading of Bible in the vernacular.

c. Instruction in the Hebrew language, at least to the extent of understanding the Hebrew prayers and appropriate portions of the Bible.

d. Instruction in Jewish History covering the biblical and post-biblical periods.

e. Instruction in music, with a view to prepare children to participate in the service.

In addition to the foregoing, which shall constitute a six years course, including a one years instruction for confirmation, the executive committee shall also provide for a two years course of instruction for a post-confirmation class, and a complete course of study for normal classes, so as to educate advanced pupils to become teachers, and likewise to enable persons remote from congregations to prepare themselves to organize and conduct religious classes with the aid of the lessons supplied by this course.

The Executive Committee shall provide, at intervals, for the publication of pamphlets containing graded lessons to be taught in said schools, such lessons to include brief texts with explanatory notes. They shall also provide for the publication of the various books of the Bible, with commentaries, also for a juvenile Jewish literature of books, compiled from the rabbinical writings, or in which works of later Jewish authors are utilized.

The Executive Committee shall furnish free to each Sabbath school, copies of its publications, and each pupil in every Sabbath school shall receive free one copy of each pamphlet published by the Union.¹¹⁷

At the 1887 meeting of the Conference of Rabbis of Southern Congregations, the committee that was appointed to submit a report on Sabbath School instruction reported back with the recommendation that the Conference should give its wholehearted cooperation to the Hebrew Sabbath School Union of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.¹¹⁸

The Sabbath School Union, meanwhile, was receiving every possible attention from the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. A committee appointed to examine the report of the President of the Executive Committee of the Sabbath School Union, Dr. Moses Mielziner, submitted the following resolutions:

1. That we herewith resume the work of the Union on the basis of the Constitution and By-laws adopted at Cincinnati in June, 1886, with the omission of Art. III, Sections 3, 4, 5, making the annual payment of 50 cents

of each pupil of every Sabbath school a condition of membership, and instead thereof we recommend that the Executive Committee be empowered to take such measures for the establishment of a Sabbath School Union fund as they may find expedient and deem advisable.

2. That the Executive Committee be instructed to incorporate the Sabbath School Union under the laws of the State of Ohio.

3. That we proceed at once to the election of an Executive Committee.

4. That in accordance with Art. VII., Sec. 2, we urgently recommend the immediate preparation of a course of study for normal classes, so that from among the advanced pupils of each school a band of capable teachers be thus trained by the continuous co-operation of all the Jewish educators, who shall by this means be encouraged and aided in making the normal class a permanent feature of every school.

5. That in order to enlarge the scope of Jewish instruction, a further course of study in Jewish literature, language and religion be speedily adopted to meet the needs of post confirmants.

6. That in order to gain a finer basis for the activity of our organization, the Executive Committee continue each year to gather complete statistics of the conditions of all Sabbath-schools in America.

7. To stimulate the organization of new Sabbath-schools throughout the country should be one of the main objects of the Union, and to accomplish this we should recommend (a) all our members to correspond with and make personal visits to smaller communities lying in their vicinity, and (b) that the Executive Committee assign to competent persons the preparation of such pamphlets as will be helpful in this work, and that these be printed and widely circulated gratis throughout the land.

8. That to provide our Sabbath-schools with the best instruction in the doctrines and ethics of Judaism, our Executive Committee be empowered to purchase and circulate at nominal figures such books on these subjects as exist or may be published from time to time.

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The report was considered seriatim and after careful discussion was adopted as a whole. 119

The Rabbinical Alliance of Jewish Ministers, made up of rabbis from Missouri, Illinois, Kansas, and Nebraska vowed its intentions of cooperating with the Hebrew Sabbath School

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Union. At the 1890 meeting of the Central Conference of American Rabbis the following appeal on Sabbath School was read to the Conference:

Gentlemen:- The Members of the Central Conference of American Rabbis are hereby urgently requested by the Executive Board of the Hebrew Sabbath School Union of America to exert their influence, both collectively and individually, to have their respective Sabbath Schools join the Hebrew Sabbath School Union of America.¹²¹

Dr. I.S. Moses handed in the following resolution:

Be it Resolved, That a committee of three be appointed to report to the Conference by tomorrow afternoon, as to the best of the existing Sabbath school books for Biblical history and Ethics; such books to be recommended to the Sabbath School Union to make suitable arrangements with the respective authors or owners of copyright for purchase of the same.¹²²

Both of these motions were referred to committee. The committee reported out on both topics as follows:

Gentlemen:- Your committee to whom was referred the appeal of the Sabbath School Union of America unanimously concur with the sentiments of the Executive Committee of the Hebrew Sabbath School Union of America, and recommend that each rabbi of this conference exert his utmost to further the aims and objects of this Union.

The resolution of Dr. I.S. Moses, providing for an examination and recommendation of books of Biblical History and Ethics with a view of recommending the same to be purchased by the Hebrew Sabbath School Union of America, offers to your committee the difficulty of lack of time which such an examination of such books would require. We, therefore, deem it more expedient that a committee of three be appointed to act upon the suggestion of the resolution and report the same to the Executive Committee of the Central Conference during the coming year.

This report was adopted.¹²³

At the 1892 meeting of the Central Conference of American Rabbis Dr. Mielziner presented a petition which was adopted. It stated that

the Executive Committee of the Hebrew Sabbath School Union hereby petitions the Central Conference of American Rabbis to appoint a committee of five to cooperate with the committee on literature and publication in the preparation and publication of textbooks for Sabbath-schools, and to provide a manual to serve as a guide for Sabbath-school teachers, especially in such schools not under the guidance of a rabbi.¹²⁴

Unlike the Union of American Hebrew Congregations,

which refused to have a standing Sabbath School committee, the Central Conference of American Rabbis maintained a standing committee on Sabbath School Union. The purpose of this committee was to

co-operate with the committee on Literature and Publication of the Hebrew Sabbath School Union of America, in the preparation and publication of religious, ethical and Jewish historical textbooks for Sabbath-schools, and providing a manual of instruction to serve as a guide for teachers in such religious schools, not under the supervision of a rabbi.¹²⁵

This was in accordance with the terms of Dr. Mielziner's suggestion to the Conference. But the work of this committee did not progress as quickly as it should have. The following year, Dr. Wise found it necessary to repeat the request for textbooks for the religious schools.

We must have a union school catechism as well as a union manual of divine worship, a school catechism which is sent forth to the world with the authority of this body, as you send forth a manual of worship, a graded catechism of four divisions for four years instruction prior to the year or years of confirmation.¹²⁶

The Board of the Sabbath School Union was an active one. The backbone of this Board was Dr. David Philipson.

The Sunday School Board met and was called to order by Dr. Philipson, its president, who read a paper on its work and plans. He said that there were now in the association fifty schools and he summed up the work of publication carried on under its auspices. The organization must branch out further as there were many localities where there were no congregations but where the people would be glad to support a Sunday-School. He suggested the publication of leaflets for each week and was sure that there were a sufficient number of men and women who were competent to reproduce the truths of the Bible in a form suitable for the instruction of the children. With the assistance of those leaves there were many young men and women who could and would teach the children.

Dr. Philipson also advocated the establishment of a good Sabbath-school paper and the adoption of means to discover what communities were most in need of the Sunday-school work.

The suggestion regarding the leaflets was adopted and the president was authorized to appoint committees on the various phases of the work and to request the appointment of a committee by the conference of congregations.¹²⁷

Following the recommendation of the President of the Central Conference of American Rabbis the members of that organization extended great cooperation to the Sabbath School Union. The Union of American Hebrew Congregations also gave due praise and financial support to this union of the Sunday schools.¹²⁸

Pittsburg Conference

The Rev. Dr. Kaufman Kohler, after conferring with the Rev. Drs. Hirsch and Wise, issued the call for the Pittsburg Conference. There was a background to the issuance of the call.

The Rev. Dr. Adolph Kohut came to New York in May of 1885 direct from Hungary. His fame as a scholar and orator preceded him. Coming as he did from the interior of Hungary, the reformatory institutions and the precepts underlying them appeared to him un-Jewish and anti-religious, and he gave utterance to his opinions and convictions in a number of sermons, preached in the Ahavath Chesed Temple. The quasi-orthodox Jewish press of New York, supposing to have found at last an able advocate of their standpoint, lauded and exaggerated the statements of Dr. Kohut so loudly, that many in New York believed the Dr. to be an advocate of retrogression and ultra-conservatism. His next neighbor on Lexington Ave., their temples being a short distance apart, was the Rev. Dr. Kaufman Kohler.¹²⁹

. . . it was the aggressive denunciation of Reform Judaism by Dr. Alexander Kohut, the newly elected rabbi of Congregation Ahavath Chesed of New York, in defense of which Dr. Kohler published, in August 1885, a series of discourses under the title, "Backwards or Forwards?" simply claiming as he writes in the preface, "for our advanced views, for our no less sincere convictions, the same respect as we are willing to accord to theirs," that is, to those of the representatives of orthodoxy. "We want union. We want cooperation in all matters pertaining to the common interests of Judaism in America and the world over. But we cannot allow any interference with our religious progress by rabbinical anathemas." ¹³⁰

This led to a controversy in the two pulpits and in the journals, which, to say the least, revealed to the public that the unity of Judaism was fictitious.¹³¹

In his personal memoirs, Dr. David Philipson tells us that

in his call for a conference Dr. Kohler stated that he was issuing the invitation to the rabbis of the Reform wing to come together for the purpose of discussing the present state of American Judaism, its issues and its requirements, and of conferring upon such plans and practical measures as are demanded by the hour. In addition to this general call, I received from Dr. Kohler a special invitation couched in these words: "Dear Doctor, I hope you will not disappoint us. We cannot spare you, particularly at the prayer-book meeting. Besides, let us concentrate our forces and accomplish something creditable and worthy of a conference of rabbis. We must have you, and I wish you would prepare or suggest something in the way of practical reform."¹³²

Dr. Wise said, in his record of American Judaism for that year, that

November 1st, a call for a conference to meet in Pittsburgh was issued by Dr. K. Kohler of New York. Those most interested in that call understood the main object of the conference to be threefold:

1. To declare that American Judaism would not surrender or submit in anywise to the reactionary movements of any sort of European orthodoxy, and the men at the helm have no cause, and feel no inclination, to change their course and belie their past.

2. To declare on what principles the various shades of reformatory practices and doctrines, if on any, do agree, and can unite, to continue unitedly and legitimately the work of reformation and progress within the pale of Judaism.

3. To unite closer those men who are the outspoken friends and supporters of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Hebrew Union College, which they consider the main institutions to establish and elevate American Judaism.

Post festum, however, it was maintained by the opponents, that Dr. Kohler proposed that conference in order to receive its sanction in his controversy with Dr. Kohut, and to enable him to establish a new journal in New York, which none of the friends of the cause then thought, or believed, nor do they believe it now. The motives for calling the conference and attending it seem to have been honest and outspoken with all interested parties.¹³³

In answer to the call issued by Dr. Kohler, fifteen

rabbis gathered at Concordia Hall, in Allegheny City, Pa., on November 16th and 17th, 1885. Those present were as follows:

Israel Aaron, Ft. Wayne; J. Bloch, Youngstown, Ohio; Dr. Adolph Guttman, Syracuse, New York; Dr. Emil G. Hirsch, Chicago; Dr. Kaufman Kohler, New York; Dr. J. Krauskopf, Kansas City; Dr. Adolph Moses, Louisville; Dr. L. Mayer, Pittsburg; Dr. David Philipson, Baltimore; Dr. S. Sale, Chicago; Dr. M. Schlessinger, Albany; Dr. S.H. Sonneschein, St. Louis; M. Sessler, Wheeling, W. Va.; Samuel Weil, Bradford; Dr. Isaac M. Wise, Cincinnati.

A permanent organization was effected by electing the following officers: Dr. I.M. Wise, President; Rabbi Joseph Krauskopf, Vice-president; Rabbis David Philipson and Adolph Guttman, Secretaries.¹³⁴

The guiding principles of Reform Judaism for that time, which became known as the Pittsburg Platform, were accepted unanimously by the rabbis assembled at Allegheny City, with the understanding that it was to be examined carefully, sentence by sentence. The platform was then re-read and the amendments¹³⁵ and corrections were added.

In view of the wide divergence of opinion and of the conflicting ideas prevailing in Judaism today, we, as representatives of Reform Judaism in America, in continuation of the work begun in Philadelphia in 1869, unite upon the following principles:

First - We recognize in every religion an attempt to grasp the Infinite One, and in every mode, source or book of revelation held sacred in any religious system the consciousness of the indwelling of God in man. We hold that Judaism presents the highest conception of the God-idea as taught in our Holy Scriptures and developed and spiritualized by the Jewish teachers in accordance with the moral and philosophical progress of their respective ages. We maintain that Judaism preserved and defended amid continual struggles and trials and under enforced isolation this God-idea as the central religious truth for the human race.

Second - We recognize in the Bible the record of the consecration of the Jewish people to its mission as priest of the One God, and value it as the most potent instrument of religious and moral instruction. We hold that the modern discoveries of scientific researches in the domains of nature and history are not antagonistic to the doctrines of Judaism, the Bible reflecting the primitive ideas of its own age and at times clothing its conception of divine providence and justice, dealing with man in miraculous

narratives.

Third - We recognize in the Mosaic legislation a system of training the Jewish people for its mission during its national life in Palestine, and today we accept as binding only the moral laws and maintain only such ceremonies as elevate and sanctify our lives, but reject all such as are not adapted to the views and habits of modern civilization.

Fourth - We hold that all such Mosaic and Rabbinical laws as regulate diet, priestly purity and dress, originated in ages and under the influence of ideas altogether foreign to our present mental and spiritual state. They fail to impress the modern Jew with a spirit of priestly holiness; their observance in our day is apt rather to obstruct than to further modern spiritual elevation.

Fifth - We recognize in the modern era of universal culture of heart and intellect the approach of the realization of Israel's great Messianic hope for the establishment of the Kingdom of truth, justice and peace among all men. We consider ourselves no longer a nation but a religious community, and therefore expect neither a return to Palestine, nor a sacrificial worship under the administration of the sons of Aaron, nor the restoration of any of the laws concerning the Jewish state.

Sixth - We recognize in Judaism a progressive religion, ever striving to be in accord with the postulates of reason. We are convinced of the utmost necessity of preserving the historical identity with our great past. Christianity and Islam being daughter religions of Judaism, we appreciate their mission to aid in the spreading of monotheistic and moral truth. We acknowledge that the spirit of broad humanity of our age is our ally in the fulfillment of our mission, and therefore we extend the hand of fellowship to all who cooperate with us in the establishment of the reign of truth and righteousness among men.

Seventh - We reassert the doctrine of Judaism, that the soul of man is immortal, grounding this belief on the divine nature of the human spirit, which forever finds bliss in righteousness and misery in wickedness. We reject as ideas not rooted in Judaism the belief both in bodily resurrection and in Gehenna and Eden(hell and paradise), as abodes for everlasting punishment or reward.

Eighth - In full accordance with the spirit of Mosaic legislation which strives to regulate the relation between rich and poor, we deem it our duty to participate in the great task of modern times, to solve on the basis of justice and righteousness the problems presented by the contrasts and evils of the present organization of society.¹³⁶

To paragraph 2 of the platform, Dr. Kohler moved that his original words "of Divine Revelation and" be inserted before "consecration".¹³⁷

After much discussion, and seeing that the question was

not a matter of principle, Dr. Kohler withdrew his amendment.

In paragraph 3, which first read "Mosaic laws", Dr. Hirsch objected to the distinction made between moral laws and ceremonial laws. . . . Whereupon Dr. Kohler moved to substitute the word legislation. This was carried. Upon the acceptance of the platform as a whole the meeting adjourned until the afternoon.¹³⁸

Following the adoption of the platform there were several other items of business brought on the floor.

Dr. Sonneschein handed in the following resolution which was adopted:

Resolved, That, inasmuch as the so-called Abrahamitic rite is by many and the most competent rabbis no longer considered as a condition sine qua non of receiving male gentiles into the fold of Judaism, and inasmuch as new legislation on this and kindred subjects, is one of the most imperative and practical demands of our Reform movement, a committee of five, one of them to be the President of this conference, be entrusted with formulating a full report to be submitted for final action to the next conference.¹³⁹

The following was unanimously adopted as the sense of the conference on the subject:

WHEREAS, We recognize the importance of maintaining the historical Sabbath as a bond with our great past and the symbol of the unity of Judaism the world over; and

WHEREAS, On the other hand, it cannot be denied that there is a vast number of working men and others who, from some cause or other, are not able to attend the services on the sacred day of rest; be it

RESOLVED, That there is nothing in the spirit of Judaism or its laws to prevent this introduction of Sunday services in localities where the necessities for such services appear, or are felt.¹⁴⁰

There was a committee on Jewish mission work appointed. This was a committee for missionary work to the Jews themselves and not to those of other faiths. They brought in their report which was unanimously adopted.

In order to accomplish the religious, moral, social and economic elevation of the masses, who now, by reason of their cramped social condition, fail to be reached by our congregations and to be brought into contact with our better situated brethren, we recommend that in each congregation or community a society be organized to take upon

itself the mission by personal efforts in the spirit of pure philanthropy to bring these under the influence of moral and religious teaching.

Second - That as a means to accomplish this philanthropic work, it be resolved to recommend the formation of schools for the religious, moral and industrial instruction of the children of our poor.

Third - As a means to spread the knowledge of Judaism, to strengthen its influence and to foster Jewish sentiment, we recommend that steps be taken to publish pamphlets on Jewish history and religious and everyday life for distribution by such societies, and we appeal to our wealthy co-religionists for the support of this movement.¹⁴¹

.
A committee was appointed to do all the preliminary work necessary and report at the next conference on the Preparation of Books for Domestic Devotion and a common ritual for Weddings and Funerals.¹⁴²

After Dr. Kohler had moved that a committee be appointed for the revision of the regular Torah portions for the Sabbath, Dr. Wise moved that each rabbi in accordance with the regulations of the Hebrew calendar should read only those sections of the Torah that he considers proper and fitting.¹⁴³

Cincinnati was named as the place of the next meeting. This meeting was scheduled for the first Monday in May, 1886.

In the 1887 edition of the American Jews' Annual, Dr. Joseph Krauskopf tells us that

this(Pittsburg Platform)"Declaration of Principles" attracted widespread attention. It was copied by almost the entire secular and sectarian press of our country and extensively translated and commented upon in the European Press. The Rabbis of the Southern Conference, meeting shortly afterward, (December 29, 1885) in New Orleans, unanimously endorsed the declaration of principles. . . . At first the orthodox press detected nothing dangerous in the Pittsburg principles. The American Hebrew, the ablest, most conscientious and most consistent advocate of orthodoxy in America, even it, editorially acknowledged(November 20, 1885), "Inasmuch as six of the eight resolutions adopted at the Pittsburg Conference of Reform rabbis are accepted as conservative doctrine, they form a wise and temperate platform, remarkable mainly for two facts, which we have frequently emphasized - first, that the chief differences between so-called orthodoxy and so-called reform are mainly differences in words" and slight objections are raised

against the action on dietary laws and restoration to Palestine, and the article closes as follows: "To the 6th resolution all will give a hearty Amen, and the 7th, which rejects as not rooted in Judaism, the belief in everlasting punishment, might have gone further and said that such belief scarce found a lodging in Judaism. . . . Taken all in all, the platform is a far more conservative one than we had looked for." But a few weeks later we find them harping on a different string. Some one had spread the report that in that conference circumcision had been abolished and the Sabbath had been transferred to Sunday.¹⁴⁴

At the Conference of Rabbis of Southern Congregations, which was held a few days after the close of the Pittsburg Conference, the following was adopted in reference to the Pittsburg Platform, with the exception of the last section of Clause 1:

1. This conference has subjected the principles enunciated by the Pittsburg Conference to an anxious and rigorous examination. This duty was imposed upon it by the many false impressions prevailing among the people as to the true meaning of these principles; and we therefore deem it our duty to declare that they are in harmony with the spirit of progressive Judaism, and must be regarded as the inferences made by Jewish teachers from the oldest conceptions of our faith.

2. We, however, individually and collectively, reserve the right to dissent from any practical deductions that have been or may be drawn from them.

3. Referring to the report of the President, we, the members of the Southern Conference, do hereby declare that the observance of the Sabbath of the Decalogue and the practice of the Abrahamic rite are just as binding today upon Israel as they ever were.

Samfield voted no, for the reason that, according to his opinion, "there existed no necessity for such a declaration at this time".

Bien voted no, because, in his opinion, "the declaration was unnecessary, impolitic and uncalled for."¹⁴⁵

Of the Pittsburg Conference, Isaac Mayer Wise said,

it opens a new chapter in the history of American Judaism. It brought together face to face the men supposed to represent the various phases of the reformatory and progressive ideas entertained by the American Israelites, and to be of a conflicting and irreconcilable nature. It proved satisfactorily to all that the differences among those parties concern side issues only, which are of no vital importance, while in principle and its main sequences all concur and heartily agree to the very last point.¹⁴⁶

Dr. Philipson tells us of the conditions that he found

upon his return to Baltimore from the Pittsburg Conference.

Conservative rabbis raged and fumed. When I returned from Pittsburg to Baltimore I found the Jewish community in a ferment because of the agitation against the conference by the senior rabbi of the community, who denounced the gathering and its pronouncements in extravagant terms of blame and criticism. The best known public structure in Baltimore was the Washington Monument. He compared the rabbis assembled at Pittsburg to pygmies attempting to pull down the Washington Monument.¹⁴⁷

Ministerial Associations

At the time of the establishment of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, it was decided to refrain from discussing theological and liturgical questions because of the widespread disagreement which would result. There was, therefore a need for some organization which would discuss those matters. The organization would logically have to be made up of rabbis.

The late Rev. Dr. Max Lillienthal, by his personal influence, succeeded in establishing a nucleus for such a union, which was called the "Rabbinical Association". Most all prominent rabbis of this country were members thereof. It published ten numbers of the Hebrew Quarterly Review, and held its annual conventions in New York, Chicago, Detroit, and Cincinnati, but proved to be a still-born child. The Review, which was expected to become the medium to equalize opinions and views, was neglected. The rabbis would not write. The only rabbis who contributed were, Adler and Kohler of New York, Lillienthal, Mielziner and Wise of Cincinnati, Schwab of St. Joseph, Mo., Adler and Felsenthal of Chicago, and Falk of Buffalo. Others criticized, made opposition, contributed nothing, and the Review proved a failure. The annual conventions which were intended to fraternize the rabbis, also proved a failure, because most of them did not attend, the committees reported in exceptional cases only, and except in the conventions at Detroit and Chicago, no essential business was transacted. When Dr. Lillienthal had been summoned before the throne of glory on high, the Rabbinical Association and the Review also expired, strangled at last by the officers elected in the Cincinnati convention of 1883, none of whom ever acted.¹⁴⁸

The graduates of the Hebrew Union College formed an

alumni association in Cincinnati, on June 30, 1884. The original membership consisted of six rabbis. Rabbi Aaron, of Ft. Wayne was elected permanent Chairman. Rabbis Aaron, Berkowitz, and Silverman were appointed to frame a constitution. The constitution was presented at the next meeting which was held July 13, 1885, in St. Louis, Missouri.

1. OBJECT.

The object of this organization shall be: 1. To promote fraternal feelings among the graduates of the Collegiate Department of the H.U.C. 2. To extend mutually such aid, materially or otherwise, as members may from time to time require. 3. To promote the interests of the H.U.C. 4. To secure a representation in the Board of Governors of the H.U.C. 5. To publish, whenever so resolved, deserving productions of its members. 6. The discussion of questions suggested by the needs and development of Judaism in our time, with the purpose of acquiring the greatest possible unanimity of doctrine and ritual of worship.

2. OFFICERS.

The officers who shall be elected annually shall be, President, vice-President, Secretary, and Executive Committee.

3. DUTIES

The duties of the President and the Vice-President shall be such as usually devolve upon such officers. The Secretary shall, in addition to his other duties, keep in a separate book a record of the residence of each member of the Alumni, and the prominent features of his career. The Executive Committee shall consist of the President, Vice-President and Secretary, who shall have the power to transact all business connected with the Association that may arise between meetings.

4. TIME OF MEETING.

The meeting shall be held one day prior to the meeting of the Council of the U.A.H.C.

5. MEMBERS.

All graduates of the H.U.C. are eligible to membership.

6. ORDER OF EXERCISES.

1. Address of welcome by the President.

2. Business.

3. A poem, prayer or oration, by the member, designated by the President at the previous meeting.

4. Discussion. A written statement of opinions on important questions which may agitate Judaism.

5. Election of officers.

It was decided that the President present to Council a resolution asking that one of the graduates of the College be placed on the Board of Governors.¹⁴⁹

After the adjournment of the 1885 meeting of Council,

the delegates gathered together to form the Alliance of Teachers and Elders in Israel. The term "elders" denoted men who were at the head of congregations, benevolent, scholastic, or literary societies. Its constitution said that

1. This Alliance T.E.I. shall consist:
 - (a) Of all the members of the faculty of the Hebrew Union College;
 - (b) Of all graduates of the said College;
 - (c) Of all those invited to the first meeting who declare their willingness to be members;
 - (d) Of those teachers of Judaism and Elders whom the Alliance shall elect from time to time.
2. The object of the A.T.E.I. is to cultivate and to promulgate religious knowledge and literature.
3. The A.T.E.I. meets annually, in years when the Council of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations assembles, at the same time and place chosen by that Council, and in off years in such time and place as appointed in the last general meeting. Moreover, special meetings may be convoked under the regulations of the Alliance.
5. The general meeting moreover elects annually at least one Orator, who shall preach the set sermon publicly before the next general meeting, on the subject which the general meeting selects before the orator shall be appointed, and that sermon shall form an integral part of the minutes of the Alliance.
6. The cultivation and furtherance of religion shall be accomplished by the A.T.E.I. methods applicable to Ministerial Associations, Rabbinical Conferences or Synods, as the Alliance shall legislate for itself hereafter.
7. The cultivation and promotion of Jewish literature shall be accomplished
 - (1) by the annual publication of the protocol and proceedings of the general meeting;
 - (2) by such other books, pamphlets or periodicals as may be published under the auspices of the A.T.E.I..
8. The A.T.E.I. begins its literary history with the following subjects:
 1. EXEGESIS.- It undertakes systematically to revise the existing English versions of the Bible, publishes annually in its protocol the emendations and critical notes proposed by any of its members and approved by the Alliance, and whenever the material thus collected shall warrant it, a corrected English version of the Bible shall be published under the auspices of the A.T.E.I.
 2. LITURGICAL AND DEVOTIONAL MATTER.- It undertakes systematically to collect and preserve in its protocols the devotional and liturgical literature, in prose or poetry, original or translation, contributed by its members or otherwise accepted by the Alliance, from which may be compiled hereafter the book or books of public, domestic

or Sabbath school worship, under the auspices of the Alliance.

3. JUVENILE LITERATURE.- It undertakes systematically to collect and preserve in its protocols all juvenile literature contributed by its members or otherwise accepted, from which may be constructed and published under the auspices of the Alliance the requisite books for the young in the school and the house.

9. It shall be the duty of every member to contribute annually one literary production on any of the subjects adopted by the Alliance for its present work, and these contributions shall be read in the general meeting, discussed and entered upon the minutes together with the strictures which might be passed on it. Any member of the A.T.E.I. that does not contribute literature to the protocol shall pay five dollars a year into the treasury of the society.

10. The Alliance shall be incorporated, hold a seal, and furnish each of the members a diploma and a printed copy of its laws and proceedings; and it shall conduct its affairs in such a manner that it shall likely become a "Legion of Honor" to the American Israelites.

A temporary organization was effected by electing the Rev. Dr. Gutheim as President and Rabbi Aaron, Secretary.¹⁵⁰

This was one of the few times that this organization was referred to as the Alliance of Teachers and Elders in Israel. It became commonly referred to as the Jewish Literary Association.¹⁵¹ The St. Louis correspondent of the Israelite, however, evinced some opposition to this association.

I, for one, must say, the same has at present as constituted in its presently circumscribed field of usefulness, no future; it must soon die of inanition. It is not what the faculty of the college had planned for it; it is not what the majority of its members had fondly anticipated. I do agree with the late Dr. Huebsch, that for purely literary purposes we need no society.¹⁵²

On the 1st of November, 1885, the following call for a conference went out through the mail and through the columns of the American Israelite:

To the Editor of the American Israelite:

Having consulted with several friends and colleagues, among whom I will mention as seniors the Rev. Drs. I.M. Wise and S. Hirsch, and received encouraging responses, I herewith take the liberty of inviting all such American

rabbis as advocate reform and progress and are in favor of united action in all matters pertaining to the welfare of American Judaism, to meet in conference on November 16th and 17th, in the city of Pittsburg, for the purpose of discussing the present state of American Judaism, its pending issues and its requirements, and of uniting upon such plans and practical measures as seem demanded by the hour.

Sincerely trusting that this simple suggestive call will be favorably received and, even at some sacrifice heartily responded to by all friends and supporters of the cause of reform, I am, fraternally yours,

DR. K. KOHLER.¹⁵³

This conference adopted the famous Pittsburg Platform and dealt with several other problems of importance to Judaism. The Pittsburg Conference also set a date for another rabbinical conference to be held in Cincinnati, on June 28th, 1886. This conference was not held at that time.¹⁵⁴

During 1885, several attempts were made to form a rabbinical conference.

January 19th, 1885, a meeting of rabbis took place in the hall of the Y.M.H.A. in New York, and the Association of Jewish Ministers of New York and vicinity was established. The term "vicinity", however, was extended as far up as Boston and down to Baltimore, and out West to Buffalo and Pittsburg. The ministerial association met again on April 13th, in the parlors of the Broad Street Temple, in Philadelphia, accepted a constitution and mapped out its work for the future, especially for the Sabbath School, and then adjourned to meet again in fall in Baltimore.

At the same time the rabbis of the Southwest met in Conference, April 14th, in the city of New Orleans, and succeeded in organizing a similar association, to meet annually in some southern city.¹⁵⁵

October 28th, the third conference of the Jewish Ministers Association of New York and vicinity, took place in Baltimore, in the house of Rabbi Benjamin Szold, and one meeting in the Temple. Twelve ministers were present. No particular work was done. A considerable number of the members did not appear at that meeting, on account of the conference which was to convene shortly. . . . There were two reasons for the absence of those members; the orthodox element was supposed to control that body, and its opposition to the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Hebrew Union College was generally surmised, on the ground that those very men who were the most outspoken op-

ponents to those institutions, and who for a number of years clamored for the dissolution of both, were the leading minds in that conference. The ire of that body was aroused by the failure, and something unpleasant was expected.¹⁵⁶

Jewish Minister's Association of America

On December 15, 1884, six rabbis from New York had a call and paragraphs of association published in the Israelite.

DEAR SIR:- In drawing your attention to the purpose outlined in the inclosed Constitution of the Jewish Minister's Association, we desire to express the conviction that much mutual benefit will result from closer cooperation and fellowship among our ministers. We have therefore great pleasure in extending to you an invitation to join us, and would notify you that the first Conference will be held on Monday, January 19, 1885, in the City of New York.

Requesting the favor of a reply by December 31st as to your willingness to be present,

We are, dear sir, very truly yours,

HENRY S. JACOBS, Chairman,
G. GOTTHEIL,
DR. K. KOHLER,
F. DE SOLA MENDES,
H. PEREIRA MENDES.

1. This society is denominated "The Jewish Minister's Association."

2. It is composed of the actual ministers of congregations in New York and its vicinity, who may be invited from time to time to unite therewith, by the consent and agreement of two-thirds of the existing members.

3. Its objects are to promote brotherly feelings and harmony among its members, to be helpful by mutual counsel without fettering individual opinions, and to strive by friendly union and cooperation, to advance and strengthen the best interests of Judaism without interference in the congregational autonomy.

4. There shall be quarterly conferences of its members, to be helpful by mutual counsels, held at such time and place as shall have been previously decided upon by the vote of the Association.

5. At the first conference in each year, a Chairman and an Honorary Secretary shall be appointed to hold office during the year.¹⁵⁷

The Jewish Ministers Association debated the following problems, all of which are covered in detail in other sections of this work: Alliance Israelite, Sunday School Publishing Society, Moses Mendelssohn Centenary, Jewish Sunday Union,

Home Prayer Book, Women in the Congregation, and Marriages.

They also handled the Sabbath Half-Holiday, funeral displays,
and congregational worship.¹⁵⁸

Its membership consisted of the following rabbis:

Samuel Adler, New York; A.S. Bettelheim, Baltimore; Victor Caro, Philadelphia; Edward M. Chapman, Dallas; Joseph H.M. Chumaceiro, Philadelphia; Oscar J. Cohen, New York; B. Drachman, Newark; E. Eppstein, New York; R. Farber, Erie; Gustav Gottheil, New York; Richard J.H. Gottheil, New York; A. Guttman, Syracuse; Maurice H. Harris, New York; Leon Harrison, Brooklyn; Samuel Hirsch, Philadelphia; H. Hochheimer, Baltimore; Abraham S. Isaacs, New York; Henry S. Jacobs, New York; M. Jastrow, Philadelphia; Morris Jastrow, Philadelphia; A. Kaiser, Baltimore; L. Kleebeerg, New Haven; Kaufman Kohler, New York; Alexander Kohut, New York; M. Landsberg, Rochester; Raphael Lasker, Boston; Joseph Leucht, Newark; David Levi, Charleston; William Lowenberg, Scranton; J. Mayer, New York; L. Mayer, Pittsburg; S. Mendelssohn, Wilmington; Abraham P. Mendes, Newport; F. de Sola Mendes, New York; H. Pereira Mendes, New York; Isaac P. Mendes, Savannah; S. Morais, Philadelphia; Isaac Noot, New York; David Philipson, Baltimore; Adolph Radin, Elmira; Leo Reich, Philadelphia; M. Schlessinger, Albany; Henry W. Schneeberger, Baltimore; M. Sessler, Wheeling; William Sparger, Brooklyn; L. Stern, Washington; Benjamin Szold, Baltimore; Morris Ungerleider, Lancaster; S. Weil, Bradford; L. Wintner, Brooklyn; Aaron Wise, New York; M. Zinsler, New York.
CBIIT, 1886. Sampson Falk, Buffalo.¹⁵⁹

Conference of Rabbis of Southern Congregations

In the January 23, 1885, issue of the American Israelite, the correspondent from Houston, Texas, wrote:

The honor of issuing a call for a Southern conference belongs, of right, to the Nestor of Southern Judaism, the Rev. Jas. K. Gutheim, who, I am certain, would be glad to meet his young Southern colleagues, most of whom are not over thirty years of age. I offer this suggestion for whatever it may be worth to the parties concerned.¹⁶⁰

This conference was organized on April 14, 1885 in New Orleans.

The membership consisted of the following rabbis:

James K. Gutheim, New Orleans; M. Samfield, Memphis; Jacob Voorsanger, Houston; S. Hecht, Montgomery; I.L. Leucht, New Orleans; H. Berkowitz, Mobile; Joseph Bogen, Greenville;

A. R. Levy, Athens; B.E. Jacobs, Meridian; L. Weiss;
E.S. Levy, Natchez; Joseph Silverman, Dallas; Joseph
Stolz, Little Rock; Maurice Eisenberg, New Orleans;
David Levy, Charleston; J. S. Jacobson, Atlanta; I.
Lewinthal, San Antonio; E.L. Hess, Shreveport.¹⁶¹

During this first meeting the conference drew up its
constitution:

PREAMBLE.

Recognizing the fact that Judaism in the South has developed to such an extent as to make periodic conferences of Rabbis desirable, we, the undersigned, convened in the city of New Orleans on the 14th day of April, 1885¹ the 29th day of Nissan, 5645, do form ourselves into a permanent organization for the purposes and in accordance with the plan herein adopted.

NAME.

This organization shall be known as the Conference of Rabbis of Southern Congregations.

OBJECTS.

The objects of this conference shall be--

1. The interchange of opinions and views on all subjects appertaining to the functions of the rabbinical office.
2. The encouragement and promotion of literary work relating to Judaism and its history.
3. The promotion of harmony and good will among its members.
4. The organization and government of congregational religious schools in accordance with the best methods.

MEMBERSHIP.

All Rabbis not yet enrolled, shall, on application, be elected by a two-thirds vote.

OFFICERS

The officers of this conference shall consist of a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary and a Treasurer, who shall be elected for a term of one year at the annual meeting, and perform the duties usually incumbent upon such officers.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

The Executive Committee shall consist of the officers of the conference and three additional members, to be elected at the annual meetings; and their duties as such shall be--

1. To govern the affairs of the conference during the time of its adjournment.

2. To issue the call for meetings.

3. To answer all questions that may be propounded to them by members of the Conference in relation to objects for which the same has been founded.

4. To exercise their good offices for arbitration in any emergency that may arise involving the interests of congregations and ministers.

5. To assign the subjects for papers and discussions, and appoint the persons who are to prepare the same.

TIME OF MEETING.

The sessions of the conference shall be held annually at the place decided upon at each previous meeting.

DUES.

The annual dues shall be two dollars, and be paid in advance.

RULES OF ORDER.

Roberts' Rules of Order shall be guide in all matters pertaining to the government of the conference not herein provided.

AMENDMENTS.

This constitution may be amended at any regular meeting by a vote of two-thirds of the members present; provided, that amendments have been previously submitted to the Executive Committee.¹⁶²

The Southern Conference dealt with the following matter which is covered in detail elsewhere in this work: Alliance Israelite Universelle, textbooks, prayer books, marriage ceremony, confirmation, burial of the dead, Religious schools, Hebrew Union College, Mendelsohn centenary, Pittsburg Conference, Jewish history and normal classes.¹⁶³

Central Conference of American Rabbis

Prior to the organization of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, we find on the editorial page of the American Israelite the following:

Will you call a conference? one of our friends asks in a sort of admonishing tone. We will not, is our reply, although we are willing at any time to call the continuation of the Pittsburg Conference, if the majority of its members authorize us to convene it; or if in July next in Detroit, at the meeting of the Council of the U. of A. Heb. Congregations the Rabbis present want it so, or to establish some new rabbinical convention. At the same time we admit as we always did that a close union and co-operation of the Rabbis in this country would be a blessing to the cause of Judaism and a great benefit to the Rabbis themselves. We are in a state of primitive anarchy in all matters appertaining to the synagogue and the lawful relations of the Rabbi and Congregation, and by way of self deception we call it personal freedom or free development, or by any other optimistic name, which is the mantle of charity thrown over the frail limbs of our disintegrating self-conceit. If you want a change you must do it, we

are tied down in honor to the Pittsburg Conference.¹⁶⁴

Dr. Philipson, however, tells a different tale.

It was in this home shortly after the celebration that Isaac Mayer Wise confided to me the plan that he had been considering for some time, namely, the organization of a rabbinical conference. . . . He felt that the time had now come when the rabbis could organize into a conference with some possibility of success. He felt that he could count upon the cooperation of his own disciples, the eleven graduates of the Hebrew Union College. The present senior class of the institution, the members of which would be ordained in June, numbered nine. This made twenty. Besides them, there were quite a number of rabbis who had supported Wise in his various ventures and who could be relied upon to rally to his standard when it was raised. The Union of American Hebrew Congregations was to hold its convention in the city of Detroit in July of that year, 1889. Most of the rabbis heading the congregations belonging to the Union would in all likelihood be present at that convention. We did not communicate with the rabbis before the convention took place. The plan was that I would gather the rabbis present at Detroit and that then and there Dr. Wise would present the idea and submit the plan for the formation of a rabbinical organization.¹⁶⁵

One of the delegates, possibly Dr. Wise himself, came to Detroit with a draft of a constitution for the new conference of rabbis.

The Central Conference of American Rabbis.

1. The Central Conference of Rabbis shall be a perpetual association of all American Rabbis, authorized to this title as specified hereinafter.

2. The object of this association shall be,

a. To unite the talent, learning and zeal of all teachers of Judaism in the service of Israel's faith and literature, to be preserved, advanced and promulgated by their united efforts.

b. To produce and preserve uniformity in all observances in the houses of worship, schools of religious instruction, and the discharge of rabbinical functions.

c. To continue unitedly the lawful development of Judaism, where the former conferences of American and European rabbis left it.

d. To prevent schisms in Judaism, public controversies on subjects which can be decided only by the men of learning, and unbecoming discussions in public print by colleagues in office, co-laborers in the same cause.

3. Any rabbi now in office in any Hebrew Congregation, or who has held such office before, is entitled to membership in this association, provided he claims such pri-

vilage prior to Passover next and fulfills the obligations mentioned hereinafter. After that time there shall be entitled to membership all graduates of any acknowledged Rabbinical Seminary or College; all Doctors of Philosophy or Philology that possess the Rabbinical diploma from a competent authority; all autodidactic preachers and teachers of religion who have been for at least three successive years discharging those duties in any one congregation; all authors of eminent books on any subject appertaining to Jewish theology or literature; and all such men who have rendered important practical services to the cause of Judaism; provided, however, such name or names be proposed for election in an annual general meeting of the association and receive the consent of the majority of the members present.

4. Every member of this association shall pay in advance the annual dues of five dollars and be entitled to a free copy of the Association's publications. He shall attend all meetings of the association, as provided hereinafter, or excuse his absence by letter to the conference. He shall contribute annually at least one literary production to the association, appertaining to Jewish theology, ritual, literature, discipline or jurisprudence, unless he has published during the year any such literary production which may be offered to the conference instead. He shall submit to the conference any grievance against any one of its members before he seeks any other means of redress or satisfaction. None shall apply for any position, office or appointment in any congregation if another member has applied before him, unless the latter failed to be accepted; nor shall one consent to preach on probation, defraying his own expenses, in any congregation. He shall not leave his congregation without its consent, and do nothing which reflects dishonorably on the congregation, on the rabbinical office, on any colleague, or on Judaism in general. Charges for neglect or violation of any of these duties brought before the conference shall be investigated, a fair trial granted to the accused, and if found guilty of such charges, he may be reprimanded, suspended or expelled, as two-thirds of all members present in the Conference shall decide by ballot, and such decision shall appear on the minutes of the conference.

5. The officers of the association shall furnish every member thereof with a diploma testifying that he is a member of the association, and said diploma can be revoked if such member be expelled according to paragraph 4.

6. If any member of this association be impoverished, unable to support his family, the officers of the association, on being notified of such fact, shall request all the other members to make a collection in their respective localities in favor of the impoverished colleague, and send him the proceeds through the said officers; unless the association had previously established a bureau of assistance to take care of such cases.

7. The association shall meet annually in general con-

ference on the close of the Sabbath day preceeding the biennial Council of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, and in the same city, and continue from day to day with the transaction of its business till the sessions of the said Councils open; and in such years when the said Council is not convoked, the Conference shall meet at such time and place as the previous Conference ordained, which shall be announced by the officers in all Jewish journals, at least four weeks prior to the meeting.

8. The Conference to organize by the election of One presiding officer, one proxy, two secretaries and one treasurer, whose duties are the same as in any other parliamentary body. The rules of order and proceedings shall be submitted to the house by a special committee.

9. All business proper of the association, and all appertaining to Judaism, its literature and its welfare is legitimate business for the conference, if brought before it in proper shape, viva voce by any member, or by communication from any individual, congregation or any other chartered community; and no business brought before the conference shall lay over until another unless referred to a committee.

10. The association shall publish annually a YearBook, which is to contain, besides the proceedings of the conference, such essays and communications as may have been accepted by the committee of the Conference, to be furnished gratuitously to the members, the press and to interested parties; the balance of the edition may be sold by the officers, or be sent gratuitously to the congregations, public libraries and special applicants as the officers may decide.

11. The five officers elected by the Conference, as in Section 8, shall be the Board of Trustees and the Executive Board of the association, to represent it, to enforce its laws and the resolves of the Conference, and to hold their office until their successors are duly qualified. They shall submit annually to the Conference a report of their official transactions.

RESOLUTIONS.

1. Resolved, That this meeting declares constituted the association called "The Central Conference of American Rabbis," that its members pay one year's dues in advance, elect the five officers of the association, to effect a legal act of incorporation and to take charge of the business of the association.

2. Resolved, That the Rev. Dr. Samuel Adler, of New York, the only surviving member in this country of the Rabbinical Conferences after 1840, shall be and is hereby elected Honorary President of this Association.

3. Resolved, That all proceedings of former rabbinical conferences be collected by the Executive Board; that either the entire documents or the substance thereof be translated into English and added to the first "year book" of the association to be published.

4. Resolved, That the above-document containing the

eleven articles of agreement be referred to a special committee whose duty it shall be to recast them together with such other provisions as that committee might deem proper to add into a regular constitution and by-laws of this association, and report the same to the rest of the Conference.

5. Resolved, That a copy of the proceedings of this meeting be sent to every Jewish paper of the land with the request of the association to publish the same in full and to invite all Rabbis of the land to become members of the association, prior to Passover of the year 5650 A.M., by simply sending in their respective names to the Executive Board and paying one year's dues in advance.¹⁷⁰

The Central Conference of American Rabbis, during the period from 1889 to 1900, dealt with the following questions, all of which are handled in detail topically in this work: marriage agenda, prayer book, Sabbath School, catechism, Sabbath observance, hymnals, funeral ceremonies, cremation, circumcision of proselytes, confirmation, the synod, Friday evening lectures, Sunday services, attitudes toward the Bible and the Talmud, women in the congregation, the separation of Church and State. the dietary laws, Zionism, and hats, robes and prayer shawls.¹⁷¹ Dr. Wise was President, until he died.

Other Associations

During the week of January 23, 1890, a Rabbinical Alliance was established in St. Louis. The following report was sent to the papers:

The Rabbinical Alliance of Jewish Ministers completed its labors yesterday, organizing with the following officers: Rev. Dr. S.H. Sonneschein, President; Rev. Dr. S. Sale, Vice-President and Treasurer; Rev. Dr. H. Berkowitz of Kansas City, Secretary. The field embraced by the Alliance comprises the states of Missouri, Illinois, Kansas, and Nebraska. . . . The following circular will be sent to prominent Jewish citizens in each district, asking their cooperation in the work of providing facilities for the religious education of the Jewish youth:

To our Co-religionists in _____:— We, the undersigned, being all the rabbis residing in the district comprised by

Missouri, Illinois, Kansas and Nebraska, have united in order to labor for the cause of Judaism throughout this section. We are thoroughly conscious of the difficulties with which you and all our people residing in the outlying towns and villages have to contend in the matter of imparting to your children a knowledge of our beautiful religion and of the stirring history of our people; we are painfully conscious of the lack of organization everywhere outside of the large cities and consequent neglect of all matters appertaining to Jewish education, and, therefore, we have determined to proffer to you the voluntary assistance of our alliance in overcoming these difficulties and remedying these evils. Your community will be visited by Rev. Dr. _____, of _____, who will come to you to organize and establish among you a school for the religious instruction of your children, a normal class for those who will undertake to instruct in the same, and, also, in due course of time, such other auxiliary educational or literary societies as may be desired. Dr. _____ will, with your cooperation, conduct these classes, visiting the same from time to time, and also by correspondence in every possible manner will aid your community in this sacred work. We ask not pay, but a generous, whole-hearted, co-operation from all of you, young and old. We seek your benefit and the benefit of your children, that the stigma of neglect and indifference may be removed and the communities of Israel everywhere may stand together in the great conflict of our age for light and truth. We certainly expect an early and appreciative response to this communication.

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ALL THE MEMBERS.

A Board of Jewish ministers was also organized in

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San Francisco. The Israelite also informs us that

Rev. Samuel Friedman, of Harrisburg, was in Philadelphia during the past week, and called upon the various rabbis, with a view of interesting them in the establishment of an organization of the Jewish Ministers of Pennsylvania to look after the interests of the smaller Jewish communities in the interior of the State, and generally to promote the religious interests of the Jews throughout the Commonwealth. He has been greatly encouraged in his undertaking, and the call for a meeting in Harrisburg is likely to issue soon.

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Rev. Drs. Joseph Krauskopf and J.R. Grossman, of Philadelphia, and Rabbi Friedman, of Harrisburg, Pa., have called a meeting for Monday, November 28th, in Ohav Sholem Temple, in Harrisburg, to organize an association of ministers of Pennsylvania, with the following objects in view:

1. To diffuse religious knowledge among our people who have not been provided with such by any of the existing organizations of our community.

2. To establish an authority which shall guide congregations in electing fit ministers and teachers.

3. To devise means of raising the dignity of the Rabbinical office and increase the prestige of the office holder.

4. To restore harmony and brotherly feelings among the able workers in the face of our common enemies, ignorance and indifference.

5. To assure for our divine inheritance a rightful advance founded on faith and reason.¹⁷⁵

Prayer Books and Hymnals

Dr. David Philipson, in his autobiography, sums up for us the drama of the prayer book in Reform Judaism.

The opening month of the year 1892 was notable for me in that it was then that the first meeting of the newly appointed ritual committee of the Central Conference of American Rabbis took place. The purpose of this committee was to prepare a new ritual for liberal Jewish congregations. Isaac S. Moses agitated the subject at the Cleveland meeting of the Conference. He had prepared a prayer book which he urged the conference to adopt. There was strong objection to the sponsoring of a prayer book composed by an individual, but the idea of a new prayer book found favor. The individualism of the Jewish Reformers appeared most strikingly in the matter of the prayer book. Well nigh, every leading reform rabbi has produced a prayer book, both in Europe and the United States. Best known were the prayer books composed by Abraham Geiger in Germany and by David Einhorn and Isaac M. Wise in the United States. Of the two latter the Einhorn prayer book was in use principally in the East, while the Wise book, known as "Minhag Amerika" was quite generally used in the middle West and South. There were a number of other prayer books, such as the Temple Emanuel prayer book and the Szold-Jastrow ritual, which was used in a few congregations. The confusion wrought by these many rituals was great. It was felt by many rabbis that a very great desideratum was a union prayer book for all the congregations. Isaac S. Moses really gave the impulse toward this and although the prayer book submitted by him to the Conference was not adopted, as he hoped it would be, still it is but right and proper that acknowledgement be made to him and his memory for his initiation of the movement which eventuated in the production of the Union Prayer Book.¹⁷⁶

At a time when there existed yet no common prayer book, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations felt the need for a common hymn book and that body therefore

resolved, That a committee of five be appointed to submit a hymn book to the next convention, to be held two years hence, in 1885.

The committee be instructed to act as follows:

They shall request of all the rabbis of the United States to contribute texts, and as soon as a sufficient number of hymns are obtained a body of distinguished composers of this country be chosen to set the hymns to music.

A book thus obtained will undoubtedly be adopted by all the congregations of this country, and the pecuniary result, which likewise will be considerable, shall go to the treasury of the Hebrew Union College; thus a perpetual income of considerable amount to said institution could also be created.¹⁷⁷

In the early months of 1885, Isaac M. Wise declared,

there hardly can be any doubt that our synagogal form of worship rapidly approaches dissolution. During the last few months no less than four different prayer-books have come into existence, two in the book form and two in the post-stamp form. In a short time the prayer-book will occupy among our people, the sanctity of the dime novel. Just think of the idea that any Mr. Nowber, Mr. Snert, Mr. Comet or such compatriots sit down and fabricate a prayer book for a synagogue and introduce it at once in their congregations, of course. Let that thing run its natural race, as it necessarily will, and you will, as sure as fate, land in dissolution.¹⁷⁸

But in the matter of hymn books, especially when published by friends, Dr. Wise took a different approach.

As the readers are informed by an advertisement in this paper, the Rev. M. Goldstein, the indefatigable Cantor of the Mound Street Temple, will soon publish a hymn-book for Jewish worship. From the well known musical talent of the author, we may expect a work of great merit and of permanent value. Carefully selecting and arranging his texts from the collections of the Hamburg Temple, Stein, Temple Emanuel, Isaac M. Wise, and others, he put to every one of them an original melody. Many of these melodies, especially those of the holidays, are based upon the traditional airs of the synagogue, and thus combine the refined taste of our century, with the reminiscences of the past. It is especially for this distinctive feature that we recommend this book. . .¹⁷⁹

For Rabbi Adolph Moses, of Nashville, who did not belong to the Conference, but who published a Hebrew-English prayer book, Dr. Wise had few words of comfort. He said that

Rabbi Moses' prayer book was

void of originality. Compilations of this sort, like the little books called catechisms for children, can hardly be classed as literary productions, as scarcely anything is produced in them which was not known long ago.¹⁸⁰

Speaking then of a hymn book compiled by Dr. Gottheil, of New York, Dr. Wise leaves no doubts as to the excellence of that work.

It contains a number of original writings by the compiler, the late James K. Gutheim, Emma Lazarus and a few others. The rest is adapted from Christian sources, and the music to the whole collection, also published in New York, partakes of the same Protestant slow and sure character for congregational singing, an entire stranger in the synagog. However, the selections made by Dr. Gottheil are excellent as literary productions, although Jewish theology would not subscribe to all the sentiments they contain. . .¹⁸¹

The other rabbis were not to be outdone. The Jewish Ministers Association of New York had, in the interim, appointed a committee to compile a Home Prayer Book. They reported to the 1887 conferences that

they wished to ascertain the will of the Association as to the contents of the proposed book, whether it was to contain an abbreviation of the ritual prayers, or be confined solely to prayers for daily use and occasional devotions of a domestic nature. . .¹⁸²

They were instructed that it should not be an abbreviation of the ritual prayer book. It was published in March, 1888.

When the Central Conference started working on a prayer book, the first step taken was to

issue an address to the congregations, asking them to declare officially whether or not they would be willing to adopt a prayer-book if their Rabbis in convention agreed upon one compiled under their auspices, and also to impress upon them that such an agreement would enable the conference to publish one at very cheap rates. This proposition was, after a brief discussion, put as a motion and unanimously carried.¹⁸³

While the Conference was working on the prayer-book,

Rabbi Joseph Krauskopf published his "Service Ritual," which was designed for the Sunday service. From its description in the American Israelite it appears to be a minimal type of service.¹⁸⁴

It was Dr. Wise's desire to have the Minhag Amerika used as the prayer book for all congregations. In his vain attempts to get acceptance for the book he published its history in his paper.

The first part of the Minhag Amerika, "Book of Worship" appeared in Cincinnati, 1857. It contained on 142 pages Hebrew and as many in English and in German, all Hebrew prayers with the exception of those for New Year and the Day of Atonement. Its title page mentions its three compilers: Wise, Rothenheim, and Kalisch, as the commission appointed by the Conference held in Cleveland. The second part viz.: for New Year and Atonement was published in 1866, and shortly after also the completing portion of "Hymns, Psalms and Prayers in English and German," both were written by Wise alone, except the latter, to which the late Mrs. Minna Kleeberg contributed, and some few hymns were adopted from other Jewish sources. In 1871 the Minhag Amerika was re-edited with the amendments suggested by the Cleveland-New York-Cincinnati Conference. The German translation of Part I was made by Rothenheim and Calisch, and later on revised by Goldammer, and the English by Wise. Since 1871 the triennial cycle of reading the Torah was replaced by reading select passages from the weekly sections as established in the congregation, a section of no less than 21 verses is read. The Minhag Amerika was mainly abridged from the old prayer book, only all passages referring to the coming of a personal Messiah, returning of the Hebrews to Palestine, and resurrection of the body were omitted, all monarchical and materialistic passages were eliminated, and the extra prayers called piutim were replaced by hymns in the vernacular. It was then as now the conservative form of worship for reform congregations, which is the very cause of its rapid spread all over the country.¹⁸⁵

At the July 14, 1890 meeting of the Conference, Dr.

Aaron Hahn moved that

a committee be appointed to compile a new prayer book, to be used on all occasions in the synagogue and the home.¹⁸⁶

Dr. Wise in his opening address to the conference asked that

consideration be given to compiling a common prayer book for the congregations.¹⁸⁷ Dr. Sonneschein then offered the following motion:

Whereas, it cannot be denied by even the most scrupulous and conservative among the members of this conference that a demand for a standard Union Prayer Book is prevailing everywhere in the Reformed Synagogue of American Israel; and,

Whereas, This general and urgent demand is prompted by the principal motive and the sure prospect that such a uniformity in our ritual would serve as the strongest factor in the consolidation of American Judaism, and in the best patriotic and religious sense of the word; therefore, be it

Resolved, That this conference elect a committee of five to be so instructed and authorized as to submit to the next annual meeting a thoroughly digested and completely arranged manuscript for the publication of such a new Union Prayer-Book, a book whose literary merit be above reproach and whose truly Jewish devotional character be beyond criticism; and, be it further

Resolved, That the Prayer-book thus contemplated will have to evince not only a thorough sympathy with the ideal of a Religion of Humanity, but must in its main features with the same firmness of purpose adhere to the sacred language and living historic mission of Israel in all its prominent details and arrangements in every popular branch of its aesthetic as well as its ritualistic aims and object.¹⁸⁸

This was submitted to committee and reported out so that it now read as follows:

Resolved, That it is deemed advisable to compose a set of three or four rituals for alternation on Sabbaths and such holidays when alternation is commendable. Be it further

Resolved, That the equivalents of the Hebrew prayers given in the vernacular be more in the nature of original productions than of mere translations. Be it further

Resolved, That the service for the Day of Atonement be so arranged as to give a series of meditations, psalms, responsive readings, etc., for use during the intervals of the regular service. Be it further

Resolved, That an appendix be attached, containing rituals for Confirmation, Marriage and Burial, services for death, anniversaries (Yahrzeit and for the Seder) and a selection of Hymns.

The report was adopted.¹⁸⁹

At the meeting in 1891, the ritual-committee placed before the

Conference an outline of the prayerbook.

- I. Sabbath Eve
 1. Introductory Mismor Shir and Hymn.
 2. Borchu and Benedictions (English Version).
 3. Sh'ma, ve-ohavto, Emeth ve-emunah (English version).
 4. Mi Chomocho, Choir and Congregation.
 5. Prayer.
 6. Ve-shomru (closing with le-olom), Choir and Congregation.
 7. Birchath sheba (English version).
 8. Hymn
 9. Kaddish with Introduction.
 10. Olenu (English version) and Hymn.
- II. Sabbath Morning (Three Orders)
 1. Introductory psalm, verses and hymn.
 2. Nishmath (English version).
 3. Hymn
 4. Borchu and Benedictions (English versions).
 5. Sh'ma, ve-ohavto, Emeth ve-yatziv (English version), Choir and Congregation.
 6. Birchath sheba and Kedusha (English version with original meditation).
 7. K'riyath ha-Thorah service.
 - a. En Komocho, Choir.
 - b. Isaiah: chapter 2, verses 2, 3(English), closing with Ki-mizion, Choir.
 - c. Invocation (adapted from B'rich Sh'me and closing with organ interlude).
 - d. Scripture-reading (Hebrew and English).
 - e. Psalm xix, verses 8, 10. Closing with Ez Chaim, Choir.
 8. Psalm (Responses).
 9. Hymn
 10. Sermon
 11. Kaddish with Introduction
 12. Olenu (English version).
 13. Hymn.
 14. Benediction.
- III. Erev Rosh-Hashonah.
 1. Introductory psalm, verses and Hymn.
 2. Borchu and benedictions (English versions).
 3. Sh'ma, ve-ohavto, Emeth ve-emunah (English version).
 4. Mi chomocho, Choir and Congregation.
 5. Prayer.
 6. Psalms, chapter lxxx1, verses 2, 4, closing with Thik'u ba-chodesh. Choir.
 7. Birchath sheba with u-b'chen ten (English version).
 8. Hymn and Sermon.
 9. Kaddish with Introduction.
 10. Olenu and Hymn.
- IV. Rosh-Hashona Morning.
 1. Introductory psalm, Verses and Hymn.

2. Nishmath (English version).
3. Hymn.
4. Borchu and benedictions (English versions).
5. Sh'ma, ve-ohavto, emes ve-yatziv.
6. Birchath sheba with u-v'chen ten and Kedusha (English version).
7. Attou Socher (Meditation, English version).
8. K'riyath ha-Thorah service.
9. Rejoicing service (Theruath -Shofar).
10. Sermon.
11. Kaddish with Introduction.
12. Olenu (English version).
13. Hymn.
14. Benediction. ¹⁹⁰

This original presentation of a scheme for a prayer book was followed by much wrangling and shifting of committees, but by 1892 the progress had been so great that the ritual committee was prepared to report,

1. That the ritual as arranged in the printed pamphlet submitted hereby be adopted by the Central Conference of American Rabbis as the first part of the Union Prayer Book for Jewish Congregations of this country.

2. That a ritual committee be appointed to arrange the second part of the Union Prayer Book, containing the services for Rosh Hashona and Yom Kippur, according to the same principles as the first part and to submit their work to the next convention of the Central Conference.

3. That a committee of five members be appointed to lay before this convention suggestions in regard to the way of publishing this Union Prayer Book.

4. That the Hymn-book published by the Rev. Dr. Isaac M. Wise be adopted as the Union Hymn Book, and that in a new revised edition of the same a choice selection of other hymns be added by the Ritual Committee. . . .191

The first part of the Union Prayer Book was now published. It included as appendices, the Confirmation and Marriage Agendas and the Seder Haggadah. It was decided that in all future editions of the Union Prayer Book these Agendas would be left out and published as a separate handbook. ¹⁹² Shortly after the publication of the Union Prayer Book, Isaac M. Wise spoke of it in his editorial.

The new prayer book should receive such a revision at the hands of competent parties as to place it above

criticism as far as the English used is concerned. The generations to whom the synagogue must now look will not tolerate a prayer-book the language of which is liable to arouse emotions of ridicule instead of emotions of devotion. Moreover the younger generation will not give respectful attention to a form of worship not in consonance with the best taste prevalent amongst those with whom it comes in contact in all matters save those of religion. It is not possible to form a taste in literature, and then reverse it, or violate all of its canons, as is so frequently done in the writing or compilation of our books of worship. I see no reason why Jewish prayers shall not be written in a form of English language that appeals to the emotions as commonly expressed in the English tongue instead of a forced imitation of Oriental style. Let the language of the prayer-book be good, clean-cut English, like the Episcopalian Book of Common Prayer; that will be a long step in advance towards procuring uniformity in our synagogues.¹⁹³

He went one step further yet, at the end of the year. It is truly remarkable that he was not taken to task for his attitude toward the work of a Conference of which he was President.

You may say, it is rather late in the day to protest. The Union Prayer-Book is out, duly vouched for by a committee and fostered by the Conference, after a single-handed, compilatory birth in Chicago. That may be. But it is one thing to print a book, another to secure for it general acceptance. Perhaps we ought to be more on our guard before we fix the massive seal of synodal prestige.

I submit this thesis: The Union Prayer-Book, or, for that matter, all similarly modern adaptations of ritual tradition, bear no mark of a distinctively Jewish character of worship. They have nice arrangement, at best, but no logical construction. The separate parts of the service (in them) do not grow one out of the other into an organic unity of worship. No one, for instance, has yet shown why a Jewish congregation begins its worship with praise, ends with allusions to Messianic aspirations and dwells, in the central part of it, on the sublimity of God and His law. Still all this is logical and to be accounted for; lovers of ancestral things and all students of history would be rewarded amply by the study.

I charge that, outside of those who in their revisions have followed faithfully the traditional cast into which Jewish worship has crystallized (such as the Minhag America) for none of the recent versions have its respective authors and editors given any logical and liturgic account. They have not given it because, with all deference to their learning in general, as they had only adjusted phrases, and made aesthetic refinements, they could not.¹⁹⁴

The ritual committee reported in at the 1893 convention with a pamphlet containing the following rituals:

1. Service ritual for New Year's Eve.
2. Morning service for New Years Day.
3. Service for the eve of Yom Kippur.
4. Service for the morning of Yom Kippur.
5. Service for the afternoon of Yom Kippur.
6. Memorial service in two forms.
7. Service for the close of Yom Kippur.

They also reported that "Some very important congregations in the East, express their willingness to adopt the Union Prayer Book, provided that certain revisions were made and alterations introduced. At our sessions, held in Cincinnati, the Rev. Dr. G. Gottheil, made suggestions in regard to the desired revision and alteration. Although this, your Ritual Committee, has no authority to change anything adopted by the Conference, we found that these wishes and suggestions are entitled to consideration, and consequently resolved that a sub-committee be appointed to prepare those amendments and additions to be made in a revised edition of the Union Prayer Book, Part I, and submit the same to the Ritual Committee for approval, and if adopted, they should be submitted to the Central Conference.

Submitting this report of the revision committee with our approval, to your honorable body, we trust that you will authorize the Ritual Committee to make necessary emendation of a prospective revised edition of the Union Prayer Book, Part I.¹⁹⁵

This request was granted to the Ritual Committee. That part of the Ritual Committee's report dealing with the Union Prayer Book, Part II, was accepted with the request that all members of the Conference send in their suggestions for this book by the first of January, 1894.¹⁹⁶

The Committee on Union Hymn Book reported that the response to requests for hymns had not been what could have been expected, although the Committee had already chosen seventy-five hymns.

The Committee, in accordance with the resolution of the Conference, has also placed itself in communication with the Cantor's Association of America, and forwarded to them fifty hymns, for which they were to find suitable melodies.

The Cantor's Association has as yet refrained from doing any practical work in the way of finding the melodies we are so ardently looking for. They claim, that the Conference of American Rabbis should officially adopt the texts, before they select or compose melodies.

The Committee begs leave to suggest that, as a Union Hymn Book is a crying need in all congregations, the conference take immediate steps toward meeting this want by adopting the hymns presented, or selecting as many of them as they see fit, and thus form the nucleus of the coming Hymn Book, which could immediately be sent to the Cantor's to be set to music.¹⁹⁷

This report was referred back to committee with power to have the hymns printed.

The Union Prayer Book, Part II, was reported in to the Conference as ready for publication and one month after the Conference adjourned the following advertisement appeared in the American Israelite:

The Publication Committee desires to announce that the Union Prayer Book for the New Year and the Day of Atonement, as finally adopted by the Central Conference of American Rabbis at Atlantic City, is now in press and ¹⁹⁸ will be ready for delivery on or before September 20, 1894.

Dr. Wise described, once again, the Union Prayer Book.

The book consists of two volumes, one for the days of New Year and Atonement, which has been reviewed already in this journal, and one (Part I.) now revised and published, contains the forms of worship for every other day of the year. This is a book of 416 pages of excellent print. It provides for morn- (Shacharith), evening (Minchah), and night (Maarib) prayers and worship of every day, Sabbath and holy days. Provisions are made for family worship in this volume, and 216 pages of Scriptural selections are at the close of the book, which is well arranged for daily readings for the family. The same is the case with selections from Rabbinical ethics added to the Sabbath Minchah service p. 181.¹⁹⁹

The Prayer Book was adopted by the Emanuel Congregation of New York City. They ordered 1,000 copies.²⁰⁰ Rodef Sholom Congregation of Philadelphia, where Henry Berkowitz was the Rabbi,²⁰¹ adopted the new prayer book. The old conservative Portuguese congregation, Shaarey Tefila, of New York,

adopted the Union Prayer Book for use in its services.²⁰²

Temple Emanuel of Montreal, Canada, also adopted the new
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prayer book.

But all was not as well as it looked from the surface.
In his opening address to the Central Conference in 1896,
Isaac M. Wise excoriated those who paid no heed to the rules
of the Conference.

It certainly redounds not to the honor of this body
if any of its members assume functions which belong to
the body, as was done in this case and others, as for in-
stance re-publishing an older prayer book, or adding to
the Union Prayer Book on demand of some one congregation,
or publishing songs, hymns, and manuals of worship for
congregational singing and Sabbath-school services.²⁰⁴

To brighten things up a bit, the Publication Committee re-
ported at the afternoon session that

the Union Prayer Book had been officially adopted by 86
congregations in the United States and Canada. 26,004
copies have been sold; 14,264 copies of Volume I and
11,740 copies of Volume II. . .²⁰⁵

At the 1897 Conference, the Publication Committee was ordered
to have printed a cheap edition of the Friday evening and
Saturday morning service as found in the Union Prayer Book.
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This edition was for use in the schools. The report of the
Publication Committee this year said that

since the last report at the last Conference, 5,456 copies
of the Union Prayer Book have been sold; 2,553 copies of
Volume I and 2,903 copies of Volume II. This makes a grand
total in less than three years of 31,460 copies. Also
since the last report, 29 more congregations have adopted
the Union Prayer Book. . .²⁰⁷

This was also the year of the publication of the Union
Hymnal.

Union Hymnal for Jewish Worship.
Edited by the Central Conference of American Rabbis.
This welcome addition to our synagogal music is now
almost ready for the public. The music has been selected

and arranged by the Society of American Cantors.

The table of contents is as follows:

- I. Praise
- II. Devotion
- III. Supplication
- IV. Confidence and Trust
- V. Thanksgiving
- VI. Meditation
- VII. Sabbath and Festivals
- VIII. Special Occasions
- Appendix.
 - a. Hebrew Hymns and Responses
 - b. Sabbath School Hymns
 - c. Anthem-Texts.

As will be seen from the table of contents, the book contains songs for all occasions, and covers every phase of Jewish worship. The melodies are simple, tuneful and devotional, and every hymn selected has been tested by actual use. It contains, besides selections from the best choral works, a large number of original compositions; the traditional melodies of the synagogue have been carefully arranged for congregational singing, and impart to the book a decidedly Jewish character. The Hebrew hymns and responses set to music, are according to the Union Prayer Book; in the appendix will be found about one hundred anthem texts, to which the names of the composers are added, embracing the best compositions in the realm of sacred music suitable for the synagogue. This feature will not only serve to assist music committees in selecting out of the great mass of publications those most suitable for the Jewish service but it will also provide congregations with the text of the compositions sung by the choir.²⁰⁸

The report of the Publication Committee for 1898 was as follows:

3,834 copies of the Union Prayer Book were sold during the last year. 2,086 copies of volume I and 1,748 copies of Volume II. The Union Prayer Book has been adopted by 8 new congregations. 123 congregations now use the Union Prayer Book. 35,294 copies have been sold in less than 4 years.

The Committee on Union Hymnal reported. The hymnal had been put on sale by the Society of American Cantors on September 24, 1897. In a little more than nine months almost the entire first edition of 5,000 copies had been disposed of.

The Committee recommended that::

1. The thanks of this Conference is due and is hereby extended to the Society of American Cantors.
2. That the Conference, at once, assume the proprietary rights of the Union Hymnal.
3. That a Committee be appointed to be known as the Union

Hymnal Committee, which is to have charge of the sale, revision and future publication of the Union Hymnal.

4. That said Committee shall consist of the Revs. A. Kaiser, Wm. Sparger, and Wm. Lowenberg, and four rabbis selected by the Central Conference of American Rabbis, or its President.

5. That said Committee be charged to pay the remaining indebtedness on the Union Hymnal (as per report) from the future proceeds of the book.

6. That in view of the fact that many congregations have not yet adopted this Hymn-book, it is urged that the members of this Conference use their influence in inducing their respective congregations to introduce it.

7. That, whereas there are only a few copies of the Hymnal on hand, the Union Hymnal Committee be instructed to order 2,000 copies of the book at once.

8. That the Committee is to pay no commissions at all, and appoint no agents outside of its own committee, without the sanction of the Executive Committee. 209

The motion was taken up seriatim and passed.

The theology of the Union Prayer Book was discussed as a paper on the floor of the Conference. Dr. Wise commented that this was

the pleasurable event of that Friday afternoon; Dr. Heller read in abstracto his paper on the theology of the Union Prayer Book. He read, spoke, expounded, compared this new prayer book with the old Tephillah, being always strictly objective and faultlessly logical. As he proceeded from step to step, it became evident to every body, that the principles, doctrines and beliefs of the old prayer book are fully expressed in the new one, the one or the other is more emphasized in this or that, in accordance with the progress of thought and culture, but always the same in re. In the course of reading and speaking Rabbi Heller nearly frightened us into believing that we were even more orthodox than were our sires of old.²¹⁰

The 1899 report of the Publication Committee said that:

10 congregations have adopted the Union Prayer Book since the last report making a total of 133 congregations into which the Union Prayer Book has been introduced, within five years and a total sale of 37,692 copies.²¹¹

Jewish Chautauqua Society

In the Central Conference meeting of 1895, Rabbi Henry Berkowitz presented a paper entitled, "A Jewish Sum-

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mer School and Assembly". The paper dealt with setting up a Jewish Chautauqua Society.

Chautauqua provides for all people in America excepting two, these are the Jews and the Catholics. . . . Why should we not succeed in the establishment of a Jewish Summer School and Assembly? The same three elements exist among us, to answer whose needs among other people, this movement in education sprang into existence.

We have a body of specialists, the professors in our theological colleges and those in the various universities, as well as among our learned colleagues in the pulpit. To them a new field of usefulness would open in gathering about themselves the graduates of these colleges, Rabbis, clergymen, of the various denominations as well as students at large, who, however much they may desire it, have no opportunity to pursue the various departments of higher Jewish learning under competent direction.

In the second place we have a large body of young men and women who are teaching the classes of our religious schools throughout the land. Excepting in rare instances they have but poor equipment for one of the most difficult and sacred functions which can be assumed. The moral and spiritual training of our boys and girls, is for the most part in the hands of unqualified persons.

In the third place there are a great many people, neither students nor teachers, who need such an opportunity as a Jewish Summer Assembly would afford. . . .

I respectfully submit the following preambles and resolution:

Whereas, The want is deeply felt by many rabbis and other students, of some opportunity for the combined and systematic pursuit of advanced studies in Jewish science under competent direction;

Whereas, also the need of some practical means for the better preparation of teachers in our religious schools is absolutely necessary, and

Whereas, Furthermore, the promulgation of Judaism is greatly neglected during the summer months, and the opportunity then exists for clearing up much of the ignorance and misunderstanding respecting the religion, life, history and literature of the Jews, which prevails among our own numbers as well as others; therefore be it

Resolved, That with the aim and purpose of accomplishing these results, the Central Conference of American Rabbis organize and establish a Jewish Summer School and Assembly according to such plans as may hereafter be agreed upon.

The motion was carried.²¹²

In keeping with the spirit of the motion made by Henry Berkowitz, Rabbis Louis Grossman, Samuel Schulman, and Emil G. Hirsch presented a motion intended to apply the principles of Rabbi Berkowitz to the universities and colleges of this

country.

Gentlemen:- In view of the fact that there are colonies of Jewish students at many of our great universities throughout the country, the undersigned beg leave to suggest that this Conference appoint a Committee to devise ways and means by which these students may be given that attention through lectures, and if possible through occasional services, which this very promising nucleus of the New Judaism amply deserves. This committee shall supply to each contingent of Jewish students at the various institutions, lectures on Jewish history and Jewish literature, either in the form of extension courses or by occasional assignments to capable and representative Jewish scholars.²¹³

This motion was not carried. The makers of the motion asked for a re-consideration of the motion and this time it was carried and the makers were constituted a committee to report a plan for carrying out the essence of the motion.²¹⁴

By October of this year, Dr. Berkowitz had produced a plan for a Summer Assembly which he submitted to the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee heartily endorsed the progress reported, and instructed Dr. Berkowitz to continue in his excellent plans for the Summer Assembly. A motion unanimously prevailed that the Committee on Jewish Summer School appointed by the Executive Board in Rochester, invite all Jewish Educational Institutions to cooperate with them in their noble endeavor for American Israel, and present the report of their activity to the annual meeting of the Conference in July.²¹⁵

Plans for the assembly continued and Dr. Kohler was appointed the chairman of the Sabbath School Union Committee. The purpose of this committee was to establish a Jewish summer school under the auspices of the Jewish Chautauqua Society.²¹⁶ When the plans were finally drawing near to fruition, Dr. Wise announced in his paper, that

the sessions of the summer assembly of the Jewish Chautauqua opened last Sunday morning at Odd Fellows' Hall, Atlantic City, N.J., in the presence of a representative audience, among whom were many of the leading

Rabbis and teachers in Israel. The Assembly is to last from July 25th to August 8th, and is in charge of Rev. Henry Berkowitz, Chancellor of the Jewish Chautauqua, and Dr. Lee K. Frankel, Director. This formal opening is the result of several years hard work on the part of Dr. Berkowitz. The idea of a Jewish Chautauqua not only originated with him, but he also did all of the work that was necessary to awaken the interest of the public in it and enlist the services of efficient assistants. The movement is full of promise to American Israel.²¹⁷

He later reported that

in spite of the very inclement weather, in spite of the fact that Atlantic City is a place to which the Jews of this land come for social pleasures and not for the sake of knowledge, the attendance at each session was large and on some days the hall in the synagogue was crowded. Not only were the sessions well attended, but there was also a marked interest shown in every lecture and talk. This was evinced by the animated and earnest discussion following the reading of the various lectures, and in these discussions not only rabbis took part, but men and women of the laity as well. A spirit was manifested which if it spreads over the land, will aid in re-establishing a love for Judaism in the hearts of all Israelites. The Chautauqua has succeeded in arousing an interest in Jewish lore and Jewish learning, and with the spreading of the Chautauqua idea will come an awakened interest and love for Judaism. This is the idea and hope of Dr. Berkowitz the earnest and able Chancellor of the Assembly.²¹⁸

The Assembly dealt with the following topics among others:

the Bible, the ethics of the Bible, episodes from Jewish history, the Apocrypha, Jewish pedagogy, the holidays, the Holy Land and the synagogue.²¹⁹ A report of the second week of the assembly appeared in the American Israelite.

The second week of the assembly proved as successful as the first, both in regard to the number of participants and the interest shown by them. There are altogether almost 250 names on the register, of which 30 are rabbis, and 35 others connected with Jewish religious schools in some capacity.

It gives one great satisfaction to state that the expenses of the Assembly were kept within the sum of money collected, so that the public spirited chancellor and director are nothing out of pocket. But future assemblies will need much more money for support, as the leading scholars of this country can not be asked to contribute their valuable time and energy for nothing. At least the travelling expenses and board bills will have to be paid.

Besides this, there will be a thousand and one lesser expenses, which amount up to a great deal, and it is not right that two or three private individuals shall be called upon to support so public and all-embracing an institution?²²⁰

Joseph Leiser, in writing of American Judaism, says of the Jewish Chautauqua Society:

The Jewish Chautauqua Society, organized 1893, in Philadelphia, is an adaptation by Rabbi Henry Berkowitz, of the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle, founded in the early '80's by Bishop John L. Vincent of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and his associates, to supplement the old Methodist Camp Meetings so dear to the pioneers of early colonial history. The Jewish Chautauqua followed the formula of the older society and published text-books, organized "circles" and held summer and mid-winter conventions and still continues this policy, also aiding and supplementing the works of the rabbi and superintendent of religious schools.²²¹ . . . The Jewish Chautauqua is a cultural movement.

Miscellaneous Laymen's Organizations

In Dr. Wise's sketch of Judaism for the years 1884-85, we have a glimpse at his attitude toward the laymen's organizations of that time.

In the majority of cases American Jews are affiliated with most of the secret societies, such as Freemasons, Odd Fellows, Druids, United Workingmen, Redmen, etc., but about 50,000 of them support also Jewish orders of the same category, called Bene Berith, Keser Shel Barzel, Free Sons of Israel, and similar names; and several thousand daughters of Israel have similar lodges of their own. The secrets in all those orders are worthless for the intelligent and are a mere bait to catch the mystery loving class of individuals that delight also in high-sounding and semi-barbarous titles, pieces of ribbons, scarves and feminine aprons; but the work done in those lodges is highly meritorious. It is practical charity in an organized and systematized form. . . . The Jewish orders in question, for instance, give to the widow of a deceased brother \$1,000 and exercise a guardianship over the orphans. This point alone justifies their existence.²²²

The young men's associations and clubs, although composed of Jews, have nothing in common with Judaism except the practical charity which they might occasionally dispense, as does the Young Men's Association of New York, which gives annually a charity ball or festival, and es-

established a technological school for the young of the poor class. . . . The young men's associations are imitations of similar Christian institutions without their religious tendencies, and the clubs are German institutions which have been Americanized.²²³

Isaac M. Wise felt very strongly concerning these groups.

Men who carried packs upon their backs and trudged from house to house, selling a few cents worth here and there, when Friday night came would lay down their sack and do homage to the coming Sabbath. On the day of rest they would not toil, would not desecrate the Sabbath in the smallest extreme. And now look at their sons. What are they? Nothing more than heathens. Do they attend divine services? No. Whose fault is it? There is only one answer, and that is - the fault of the parents. There are thousands of men today, men of family, who sit down and play "poker" or some game of cards upon the Sabbath afternoon when they should have their families about them, instilling the beautiful truths of religion into their souls. What is the cause of all this? There is only one answer - the clubs. There is no question that clubs are not only derogatory to Judaism but that they are a disgrace.

No young man who is a member of a club can do justice to his religion. These club-rooms have caused the downfall of more young men than all the gambling halls and bawdy houses in the world. They not only serve to divert the attention of young men from society obligations, but lead them into those disreputable habits which prove the curse of their lives. There is no question that the clubs must be discontinued, and the young man who joins one does so at the risk of his moral and material welfare. Aside from the gambling, drinking and other dissolute habits to which these clubs lead, they have an utterly destructive effect upon all religious and moral instincts.²²⁴

Jewish Publication Society

Shortly after Dr. Wise gave his report to the twelfth session of the Union, he remarked in his paper his thoughts on the subject of Jewish literature. He said, "supply young and old with good and cheap literature". Three years later saw the beginning of the fulfillment of his wish. David Philipson writes,

Shortly after Krauskopf's coming to Philadelphia, I was invited by a Jewish organization of that city to deliver an address. My classmate came to hear me and after

the address we went to his house. He unburdened himself to me. He was in the heart of a determined opposition but he was determined to fight. And fight he did and he achieved brilliantly. In that very first year of his ministry in Philadelphia he advocated in a Sunday morning address the formation of a Jewish Publication Society. He had organized a society called the "Knowledge Seekers". The society, through his urging, arranged for a meeting of Jews in Philadelphia and neighboring cities, to consider the advisability of organizing a Publication Society. The meeting was held in the city of Philadelphia in May, 1888. Men and women of all shades of opinion were present also from New York, Baltimore and other places. The fur flew, for the discussions were hectic. But the organization was effected and the Jewish Publication Society was born. Krauskopf was really the founder of that society. His implacable foes, however, secured the upper hand; he was gradually forced out.²²⁵

The promoters of the proposed society issued an informal call in the columns of the American Israelite.

To the Jewish Community of America:

With the object of securing representative signatures to a call for a convention to organize an American Jewish Publication Society in America, that shall have for its object, to familiarize American Jews with -

1st. The Ethics of Judaism;

2d. The History of the Jewish People;

3d. The Writings of Jewish Masters;

by the publication of books, essays and such other writings as may from time to time be deemed advisable, of such a tendency as shall command the support of all parties among the Jews.

A circular letter requesting cooperation was issued to all Jewish congregations and their ministers, so far as these could be learned, and to a few individuals known to be interested. The responses received were so encouraging that the call has been issued appointing Philadelphia, June 3rd, as the place and time for the convention.

As, however, there may be many who would gladly participate, whose addresses are unknown to the committee having the matter in charge, and as it is desired to interest the entire Jewish community of America, the undersigned have been appointed a sub-committee to issue through the Jewish press this general invitation to individuals and to congregations and Jewish societies, to attend the meeting, or to be represented thereat by delegate or by letter.

JOS. KRAUSKOPF,²²⁶
S. SOLIS COHEN.

The organizational meeting was by no means an uneventful one.

The tale is best told as it appeared in the Israelite.

A resolution was passed that it was advisable to organize a Jewish Publication Society, whose object should be to issue, from time to time, publications designed to foster a knowledge of Judaism, its religion, its literature and its history among the Jews of the United States.

The motion of Mr. Newburger to appoint a committee of nine to draft a Constitution and By-laws caused considerable excitement, particularly among the rabbis present.

In announcing the names of the committee, the Chairman said that, as he wished to avoid any conflict of religious opinion, he had not appointed any of the rabbis. This remark brought the Rev. Dr. G. Gottheil to his feet, with the declaration that the action of the Chair was a slur upon the cloth, and he for one must decline to further participate in the proceedings, and that he consequently would leave the Convention. The Rev. Dr. Sonneschein, "as a member of the cloth, did not think that the remark of the Chairman was a slur upon it." A stormy scene ensued. The Rev. Dr. M. Jastrow took the floor and said that the Rabbis had come to the Convention as individuals, but as the distinction between ecclesiastics and laymen had unfortunately been made, and he and his colleagues had been excluded from participating in the actual work of the Convention, he thought it, to say the least, useless for them to remain, and he, must therefore, leave the Convention. The Rev. Dr. Kohler also prepared to follow, and for a time great excitement prevailed. Mayer Sulzberger, Esq., and the Hon. Simon Wolf attempted at once to create harmony and resigned from the committee. The Rev. M. Samfield, of Memphis, also spoke, saying, that he did not think the clergy had been openly insulted, and that they could do no harm on any committee. (Laughter.) Mr. Peixotto, of New York, rose to make some suggestion for harmony, but the Rev. Dr. Kohler, who was still greatly excited, shouted: "We don't want it; let the nine gentlemen write and publish the books."

Mr. Rosendale made a complete apology for his misconstrued remark, for in taking his action he was actuated by a desire to preserve harmony, and nothing had ever occurred in his private or public life that had caused him as much sorrow as this.

Mr. Sanger moved to appoint an additional committee of three, and Mr. Max Cohen, a New York lawyer, took up for the Chairman, saying: "Simon W. Rosendale could be no more guilty of insulting a rabbi than I would be guilty of striking, in this Convention, a man I regard as much as my father - Dr. M. Jastrow, who has guided me from childhood." At this juncture a sensation was created by Mr. David Teller, President of the Rodef Sholom Congregation, of which the Rev. Dr. Jastrow is rabbi, declaring the conduct as shameful, and stated that if they insisted on breaking up the meeting they would be held personally responsible. (Great applause.) He characterized the Convention as the finest gathering of Jewish intellect he had attended in this country; but if the intolerant spirit was to prevail they might as well give up endea-

voring to organize the society.

"For whom?" interrupted Dr. Kohler.

"For American Judaism," warmly replied Mr. Rosendale. Again the Rev. Dr. Sonneschein, of St. Louis, took the floor, and after exonerating the Chair of any intentional insult, stated that he was for "American Judaism first, profession afterward."

At last quiet was restored, the committee's resignation accepted, and the rabbis remained. A new committee of thirteen, composed of Mayer Sulzberger, A.L. Sanger, Simon Wolf, Morris M. Newberger, Dr. Cyrus Adler, Jacob Ezekiel, B.F. Peixotto, Dr. S. Solis Cohen, Dr. A. Friedenwald, Rev. Drs. G. Gottheil, M. Jastrow, K. Kohler and Joseph Krauskopf, was chosen to draft a constitution.

The committee reported in about an hour. The preamble of the society states that the object is to organize a Jewish Publication Society of America, which shall publish from time to time works designed to foster a knowledge of Judaism, its religion, its literature and its history throughout the world, among the Jews.²²⁷

A further report in the American Israelite had a bit more to say about the fiery disturbance at the convention.

At this moment the prospects of the proposed society began to look very blue. One of the reporters at the press table whispered something to his neighbor about a pre-concerted plot to disrupt the Convention and found that his brothers of the pencil entertained the same suspicion.²²⁸

After the Rev. H. Pereira Mendes had been assured that the proposed society was not a disguised movement to advocate the Sunday Sabbath he was no obstructionist. In fact the so-called orthodox gentlemen showed an honest desire to assist in the carrying out of the objects of the Convention and bore themselves with great moderation.²²⁹

Five years after the organization of the society, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations subscribed for a life membership with the idea that the books be placed in the Hebrew Union College Library.²³⁰ But relations almost became a little less than cordial when Isaac M. Wise remarked:

The Jewish Publication Society of America, we are informed, has called a special meeting at Atlantic City for July 12. This is exactly the time when the Central Conference of American Rabbis will be in session in Milwaukee. If that meeting was called to Atlantic City on July 12, with full knowledge and the intention that none of that Conference should attend it, it is a successful political

move.231

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As the situation developed, it showed that Dr. Wise had miscalculated. The Publication Society changed the date of its meeting.

CHAPTER II

PROBLEMS, ATTITUDES, AND HOPES OF REFORM

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Theology of Reform

In the paper delivered at the Pittsburg Conference by Dr. Kaufman Kohler, in his attempt to interest the rabbis in the writing of a platform, there were enunciated several points of Reform theology.

We can no longer be blind to the fact that Mosaic-Rabbinical Judaism, as based upon the law and tradition, has actually and irrevocably lost its hold upon the modern Jew. . . .

A Decalog-Judaism will not do, for it is either too vague or too narrow; in fact, both. Too vague, for it fails to include some of the most genuine and most important Jewish laws. . . . It is too narrow, for as an authentic record of divine revelation it is like the entire Bible too much subject to critical inquiry to form a firm and lasting basis for our entire religious system. For have we not a double version of the Decalog?²³²

With these thoughts as part of the basis, the Pittsburg Platform, which we have discussed above, was brought into existence. Isaac Mayer Wise declared of that platform that it

presents a particular feature which must not be overlooked. It declares by its tone and position, that we, the much-abused reformers, radicals, decried, defamed and debased by the men of the minority who usurped for themselves the titles of conservative and orthodox, or rather the Jews par excellence - we ARE the orthodox Jews in America, and²³³ they WERE the orthodoxy of former days and other countries.

He synopsisized it by saying that

like orthodox Judaism, Jewish reformers teach that there is one eternal God, that the soul of man is immortal and

that Israel was divinely elected to propagate the main doctrines of the Judaic religion. These three tenets constitute the fundamentals of Judaism. The reformers do not look forward to a re-establishment of the Jewish nation; they aim at de-nationalizing the Jewish religion. According to the Reformed Church the Jewish nationality was meant to be only a temporary form for the embodiment of the Jewish faith; a means of protecting the religion against the evil influences of idolatry. While regarding the national life of the Jews as a very important factor in the development of their religion, the reformers believe that the time has come for the destruction of the Jewish nationality. Accordingly, Reform Judaism maintains that the religious duties of the Jews must be kept distinct from those of a political and civil character, and that only those laws are binding on the Jews which have a religious significance. It desires that Judaism shall be nothing but a religion, and it believes this is only possible of accomplishment when the religious tenets of the Jews are divorced from their national laws.²³⁴

Prior to this platform and the reaction to it, there had been some degree of comment in the Jewish-American press concerning reform and its principles. The comments were on every facet of reform and religion.

We do protest most emphatically against the alleged results of that negative Bible criticism which uproots the veracity and integrity of the inspired writers and reduces the ancient history of Israel to a record of rude barbarism.^{125a}

When, in April, 1885, the President of the Sinai Congregation retired, he delivered a farewell address in which he

suggested a few reforms of Jewish observances to his constituents. . . . such as abolishing the rite of circumcision, observing the Sunday - Sabbath, changing the Biblical holidays, Yom Kippur included, to the Sunday next following or preceding them, and other minor points. These reforms he suggested.^{126a}

In commenting on these suggestions, Dr. Wise said,

they are not new in the history of Judaism. Paul of Tarsus declared circumcision abolished. Pope and Council established the Sunday-Sabbath and changed both Easter and pentecost to Sunday; and they did it with the avowed intention to distinguish the Church from Judaism, chiefly not to be mistaken for Jews by the government which, es-

pecially from and after the reign of Emporor Hadrian, with few exceptions, hated the Jews and Judaism. They succeeded well. For after circumcision had been abolished the days for Sabbaths and festivals had been changed, and other than the underlying historical mementoes had been substituted, Christianity appeared no longer a Jewish sect, it became also externally a religion of its own, and made so many more enemies for Jews and Judaism. The reformatory suggestions of the President of the Sinai Congregation are not new. The only questions not answered in this connection yet are these: Should American Jews imitate now the work done by the Church so many centuries ago, follow the prudent advice of Roman Catholic prelates, and declare the teachings of our own savants superstitious errors, promulgated these eighteen centuries, which we must correct now?^{127a}

Later in the year, in reporting on the state of American Judaism, Dr. Wise said,

Except Mr. Loewenthal's proposition to the Sinai Congregation of Chicago to abolish circumcision, to transfer the Sabbath and holidays to Sundays, and to abolish the Hebrew in synagogue and school, which, together with the strictures of the Rev. Dr. Hirsch on those propositions and the resolutions of the congregation in consequence, were published in a small pamphlet, no theological document was published even in that form, and this will hardly exercise any influence in the history of Jewish theology, which will never submit to arbitrary changes in its forms and essence.^{128a}

The Rev. Dr. Sonneschein, in coming to the defense of one of his sermons which had been attacked by members of his congregation stated,

You may say, however, that I made no statement to the effect that the Jewish race would be extinct in a hundred years. My sermon advocated first, purer worship of God; second, the abolition of ceremonies as far as possible; third, praying in the English language; and fourth, the abolition of the supernatural. It is from the fourth topic that this report of the extinction of the race sprang.

By supernatural I mean contrary to the course of nature. If you should see a stone fall away from the center of gravity that would be supernatural. Angels and miracles are supernatural. There are left the true worship of the One God, the moral and physical improvement of humanity, charity in its broadest sense, and lastly, the drawing closer together into one brotherhood the races, nations and creeds.^{129a}

Dr. Wise remarked in a sarcastic vein.

Some of the reverend gentleman's congregants are much excited over this sermon. They evidently understood him differently. That sermon ought to be published in full. A sermon on the abolition of ceremonies and the abolition of the supernatural in religion would be interesting reading and give a new foundation to theology. A religion without observances (as much as possible, of course) and a theology without any supernatural element would be a novelty which ought to be made widely known. . . 130a

In his efforts to prove that the trend in American Judaism was toward reform, Isaac Mayer Wise taunted his opponents in his editorial columns.

And now, in your grand, elegant and modernized temples, on the Day of Atonement if you wish, take a vote of the congregation to ascertain how many hope for and believe in the coming of a personal Messiah, the return of the Hebrews to Palestine, the restoration of the sacrificial polity on Mount Moriah and the throne of David on Mount Zion, the reinforcement of the whole law, Biblical, Talmudical and Post-Talmudical, and you will learn with mathematical certainty how many of your members are really and actually conservative conscientiously, and consciously conservative. All who vote yea are conservative, all who vote nay are positively conservative no longer, whatever particular notions or prejudices, utilitarian or prudential motives the one or the other may have. 131a

Explaining the differences between Reform, Orthodox, and Conservative Judaism, he said,

The orthodox hold that every law of Moses and every Rabbinical law, custom and observance is eternally obligatory upon Israelites, and must practice them conscientiously, to please God and to worship Him. Such laws, etc., which can not be observed now are not abrogated on that account, but will again be obligatory, as heretofore, when by a change of outer circumstances they can be observed again. The reformers hold that all laws, etc., are subject to change; whatever means, etc., have lost their efficiency of leading to piety, righteousness and humanity, have abrogated themselves, and they have changed their observances and mode of living according to the reasonable demands of this age and country, and so also in other countries of advanced civilization, and do admit such changes as the progress of civilization, and enlightenment demands. The conservatives are a class of whom we have no exact knowledge, as they never advance any set of principles or any principle at all. 132a

On the subject matter of our prayer books of that per-

and he felt that

whether we imitate in our public worship the right wing or the left wing of the Unitarians, the Catholic or the Episcopalian Church, the New Lights or the Old Lights, it is always imitation or rather mimicry unbecoming the Israelite, who is the original author of all divine worship, it is a disgrace to the genius of Israel. . . 133a

In his introductory remarks at the 1890 Central Conference meeting he told the rabbis that

we are the new hope of American Israel. The main duty of a rabbi in Israel is to preserve, develop and exalt Judaism in strict adherence to its own spirit and a conscientious appreciation of the just demands of time and place and the circumstances they produce. . . . We make no concessions to the adherents of status quo. The spirit of Judaism is universal, the future religion of mankind. It is not unreasonable to maintain that the Jehovah of Moses is a Divine revelation after we know that all mankind these thousands of years could not duplicate and not improve it. . . . The preservation of Judaism is accomplished not only by theoretical and abstract teachings, reasonings, expounding and convincing arguments and illustrations; it must be done with the aid of adequate forms, institutions, usages and performances, in which the spirit is manifested. They are both educational means and the media of intercourse between the feeling and the reason, the emotional and the intellectual natures of man. Wherever these forms are adequate as a bond of union with Israel and the spirit of Judaism and they reach their end and fulfill their aim to guard and to recommend them by word and deed. Wherever the means are no longer adequate to the end, it is no less our duty to replace them by new and proper means, - antiquated, nationalistic, local paraphernalia are to be discarded in favor of the universally understandable. 134a

Kaufman Kohler spoke of the danger which confronted the Jews in America.

Reform has almost spent its force without succeeding to secure its proud championship by the young. We have reformed Judaism, but not the Jew. Agnosticism and an indifferent, if not hostile, attitude to the synagogue are preferred by the educated young generation. Judaism's claims and demands, the Sabbath and holidays, are disregarded. Sympathy and love are shown to the poor suffering Jewish brother, but none whatsoever to the Jewish religion. Is reform to blame for this decline of religion. . . . ? The young Jew in Europe shows less love and devotion to our ancestral faith than in this country. . . . Still

we ought not to be blind to the fact that Reform, with no other principle but that of progress and enlightenment has created a tendency to treat the past with irreverence and to trifle with the time honored institutions and venerable sources of Judaism. This is especially true of the Sunday innovation. . . . The Sunday service is a patricide. It may crowd the temple to overflowing but it will never satisfy any but the intellectual aristocrat who lacks pious reverence for the past. . . . In our efforts at reform and progress we have been too eager to abolish, instead of learning from nature not to cast off the old before the seed or the bud containing the new has sprouted forth.^{135a}

In 1893 Isaac M. Wise said to the rabbis that he felt

we must have a systematic theology of Judaism - which we have not - satisfactory to ourselves at least, before we can give a school catechism to our constituents. . . . This it is, which I felt, felt these many years, felt especially when I was appointed to speak in the Religious Parliament on the Theology of Judaism, and speak thereof on behalf of all Israel, I could not do it without the consent of the masters in Israel. Therefore, I wrote a comprehensive introduction to the Theology of Judaism, to be laid before you in the Congress, to obtain your assent or dissent, and be guided by either by what I shall say in the Parliament.^{136a}

He did not gain approval of this plan from the rabbis.

Dr. Kaufman Kohler was a proponent of a different type of reform than that proposed by many of the other reform rabbis. At the 1894 Conference of rabbis he delivered a paper on his idea of the spiritual forces in Judaism.

With all due deference to our sainted pioneers and the still living leaders of Reform, I say that Reform Theology, when based on sole reason as fundamental principle, is, or was, built on sand and quagmire.

Ruskay is right when complaining that "Reform Judaism has failed to invest the home with the sanctity the Jewish household of old had, when the traditional signs and symbols were still observed." . . . We are fast drifting toward a humanitarianism which borders very closely on agnosticism.

We have all philosophized too much. We have trained the young to look only to the deed, and not to creed, conduct, and not to confession, and now they simply draw the practical conclusions.

There is no other Judaism but race Judaism. Jewish Monotheism without the nation as living and acting force, is Theism or Deism, Pantheism and any other ism but Judaism.

We have been abrogating obsolete forms, but failed to substitute better and more impressive ones in their place. . . . If we are actually the world's missionaries, as we say and maintain in our prayer and in our teaching, we must by all means model our life accordingly, and train our people and our children in this spirit.

We must lay greater stress than we did hitherto on the emotional side of man. But in doing so, we ought not to imitate and thoughtlessly copy ideas and notions of the church. . . .

Particularly, I wish, in conclusion to emphasize the need of a better and firmer basis for our theological and pedagogical training of the young. I do not hesitate to blame the old school theologians, ever since the days of Zunz, for having made of Judaism an archaeological and philological science, rather than, what it should be, a live system of theology- nay, a life force of human history, a system of ethical and spiritual life superior to any other.^{137a}

In a quote from the Israelite of January 11, 1894, we get an insight into the basic idea of reform held by Isaac M. Wise.

Those who acknowledge the highest authority of Holy Scriptures in matters of religion, especially in Judaism, and add thereto "we have the religion of the prophets" are gravely mistaken. There is no religion of the prophets, for theirs was the religion of the Torah of Moses, that fear, veneration and worship of the absolute Jehovah, of which alone and exclusively the divine bard said (psalms xix) "it standeth forever". Again those who acknowledge not or pretend not to acknowledge Holy Writ as the highest authority in matters of religion, they can fabricate a religion out of Shakespeare or Goethe, Aristotle or Hegel, Darwin or Hacckel, they can also make an extra system from the words of the prophets or of any literature. When the system will be finished, rounded and polished it may be good for food and pleasant for the sight, but it will never be Judaism, the historical faith of Israel, for this is based upon the Torah of Moses, the God revelation contained therein. It is the fear, veneration and worship of Jehovah which standeth forever.^{138 a}

There were many diverse views on the nature of Judaism. Dr. David Philipson, in his autobiography wrote,

Judaism is a religion, the Jews a religious community. Racial Judaism is repugnant to us. In truth, racial Judaism is a fiction. There is no such thing as a pure Jewish race. . . . Reform Judaism teaches in season and out of season that religion is a matter of conviction and not of birth. He is not a Jew although descended from Jews

who is not affected by the high teachings of the faith; he is a Jew who worships the One God of righteousness and lives and orders his life in accordance with this, even though there be not a drop of so-called Jewish blood in his veins. It is this "physical" Judaism, if I may so term it, which is the greatest stumblingblock in the path of the lofty aspirations of the reform movement. The fashion of heralding as Jews men and women who have gained distinction in any of the walks of life but have turned their back upon the faith and been converted to another religion, is discountenanced by us. . 139a

In his efforts to influence the people and convince them of the need of a defined system of theology for reform Judaism, Isaac M. Wise spoke of the Conference's decision on patristic literature in his paper.

It established the fact almost unanimously that this Conference holds Judaism emancipated and free from Rabbinical legalism - this is the main content of the patristic literature - the Shulchan Aruch is of no authority to us. It also brought to light the opinion of the left wing of the house, calling itself radical, that the Mosaic laws also are of no authority to us. Therefore we maintained that the line of demarcation between orthodox and reform is not finally drawn. Another conference is required to decide the principle in regard to the laws of Moses and the prophets. Are any of those laws, or none, perpetually obligatory? If some are and others are not, by what criterion and principle can we distinguish the one from the other? If none of these laws is perpetually obligatory, what is the position and relation of Judaism to the laws of this land, or any civilized country, all of them being built upon the laws of Moses; what is the relation of Judaism to the history of civilization, past present and future? All these questions must be clearly defined and settled before the line of demarcation can be finally drawn between orthodox and reformer, Judaism and the ethical culture school, between them and Unitarianism and similar systems of religion and ethics. . 140a

After the rejection of his idea at the 1895 meeting of the rabbis, he lashed out against the action taken at that meeting.

When someone arose in our midst and maintained this: "If anyone should ask himself conscientiously, what is that great truth which we possess and so zealously promulgate and advocate; what is its contents, its criterion, its quiddity, its essentiality, and admits that what we do not know scientifically, we do not know well enough to

impart to others, he will be astonished to learn how little he knows, and how little prepared he is to teach it. And yet it is true, that whatever is knowable is definable and expressible in words; whatever is definable and expressible in words can be ratiocinated and cast into scientific form of principle and system. If that truth of which Israel is exponent is at all knowable - if not how could we know it - it must possess the quality of being analyzed and constructed in scientific system, to be accessible to the intelligence of the world and comprehensible to ourselves." When this was advanced loudly and emphatically, there rose in our midst the antiquated horror of what was called in Christian theology "dogmas," with all the specters of persecution, excommunication, damnation, sword, fire, and hell-fire behind it, as though such a Satanic cyclone could ever rage where religion and reason, faith and common sense are not in conflict, as this was always the case in Judaism, and is especially the case in this phase which we have made our standard in American Judaism. 141a

On the matter of the authenticity of the Bible, there was some difficulty. The Israelite served as a sounding board.

The authenticity of the Torah, the five books of Moses, is with us an indisputable fact, not only because such is the uninterrupted tradition in Israel, and its entire literature is based upon it, but because such is the fact, at the cognition of which we arrived after years of reading and unbiased reasoning. Of late we called in some witnesses testifying to the correctness of our judgment, such as Mr. Gladstone, Professor Sayce, Prof. Virchow, and other competent authorities. We have referred to none of our co-religionists, because our antagonists always refer to non-Jewish authorities exclusively, and we meant to meet them on their own ground. This might lead outsiders to believe, that among Jews we stand alone with our defense of the authenticity of the Pentateuch, i.e. all others gave in to the Protestant authorities. It is evident, however, that this is not so, especially from the youngest historian of Judaism, Dr. M. Brann, the successor of the late Dr. Graetz as Professor of history at the seminary of Breslau. . . . This learned gentleman writes history without the least attention to anything which the Bible critics of this century advanced. . . . Thus we know that Jewish authorities in this matter agree with us. 142a

CHAPTER III

LIBERAL IDEAS ACCEPTED: TYPICAL REFORMS ADVOCATED

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Marriage Laws and Ceremonies

The concern of the rabbis with the marriage laws and ceremonies was first made evident by the Central Conference of American Rabbis when the subject was brought up in a paper by Dr. Moses Mielziner. After giving the historical development of the marriage laws and rituals, he goes on to say that

the essential elements in a modern Jewish wedding are: the placing of the wedding ring on the brides finger by the groom in the presence of two witnesses; the recital of the formula of betrothment by him, preceded by a benediction, the birchas erusin, and followed by the nuptial benedictions, the birchas n'suin.

Some immaterial and obsolete usages are done away with, and are replaced with forms more in harmony with the views of our time. The usages dispensed with are the chupa and the k'suva. In our time the room in which the ceremony is conducted represents more fittingly the chupa. Since the wife in our days is fully protected by the civil laws of the country the k'suva has become a useless formality.

Commendable additions are; the introductory address by the officiating rabbi, the question put to each of the parties whether they of their own free will consent to be united as husband and wife and pledge themselves to fulfill their respective duties in love and faithfulness.

In some respects there is no uniformity in the modern mode of solemnizing marriages. The main difference is in the language of the ritual. Even from a strictly rabbinical standpoint there can be no objection against the use of the vernacular in the blessings or the use of a corresponding formula.

I, therefore deem it advisable that in the Agenda to be adopted by our Conference the ritual be given in Hebrew as well as in English, and that it be left to the option of the officiating minister to use either of them.

In the Hebrew ritual I would suggest only a few

changes, or rather omissions, which, for obvious reasons, have already been adopted by some of our progressive colleagues in this country.

It is a matter of course that the English ritual is not to be a mere translation of the Hebrew, though retaining its general character and contents.

The drinking of the two cups of wine previously referred to should be left to the discretion of the officiating minister. The use of two wedding rings instead of one should be optional, although I deem it sufficient for the wife simply to pronounce a formula for her to express her full equality in the conjugal relationship.

Impressed as I am with establishing uniformity in all affairs of religious life, we must beware of going to the extreme and establishing uniformity in the minutest particulars of religious observance. We must leave room for individual opinions. Uniformity in essentials, freedom and variety in that which is unessential and less important.

I submit the following Marriage Agenda;

1. Wedding Address
2. Questions to the couple
3. Benediction - osar lonu
4. Espousals - haray ot
5. Prayer - oday od
6. Declaration and Final benediction - I now pronounce you man and wife and y'varechecha.^{143a}

At the Conference in the following year, 1891, some slight acquiescence was given to this proposal. At a later time in the history of the Conference, the rabbis made a plea to the states to legislate uniform statutes in all states, regulating divorce and marriage.^{144a} The delivery of Dr. Mielziner's paper was greeted with apparent zeal on the part of the Conference.^{145a}

The Jewish Ministers' Association of New York also took action on the problem of marriage. Being the older organization they preceded the Conference by five years.

RESOLVED, That in the opinion of this Conference, the laws in many states of the Union regulating marriages and divorces are so lax in several of their features, and so detrimental to the sanctity of the home life, that it behooves this body, composed of rabbis and ministers, to call attention to this important matter, and to place on record their solemn conviction of the extreme necessity for immediate measures being enacted.

RESOLVED, That such part of the report of the Committee on Marriages be adopted as referred to the appointment

of a special committee to obtain all necessary information and to endeavor to cooperate with other bodies in the matter, and to submit petitions to the State Legislature and to the Fiftieth Congress, asking for action looking to the amendment of the present lax statutes on the subject.^{146 a}

The New York rabbis were successful in this effort and it was reported in the 1887 meeting by Dr. Aaron Wise.

Dr. Wise. . . read the committees report. It recited the introduction in the Legislature by Mr. Cantor of the measure that is now a law, which permits only ministers of the gospel and of incorporated congregations and priests, of every denomination, to perform marriages.^{147 a}

In Louisville, Kentucky, an English newspaper gave a detailed accounting of a Chalitzta ceremony. The American Israelite screamed out

the HERALD has a long drawn out account of a Jewish woman. . . who was divorced from her husband, who is dead, and from her brother-in-law, to whom she never had been married. In order to show the utter absurdity of the whole matter, the article is here reproduced in full, not for the benefit of the unenlightened Gentile, but for the delectation of the better informed Jew: . . .

No Israelite can read the above account and preserve his gravity except for the annoyance caused him by the reflection that thousands of well-meaning and kindly disposed Gentiles will read it and immediately take for granted that such is the prevailing custom among the Jews. To the Jew of today such a custom as the one above described is as great a piece of news as to his Christian neighbor, and many for the first time will be made aware, through the perusal of this article, that such a ceremony was ever in vogue. . .^{148 a}

Funeral Ceremonies

Rabbi Joseph Stolz had been asked to submit a funeral agenda to the rabbinical conference of 1891. However, he did^{149 a} not have the opportunity to complete it in time. At the conference where Dr. Stolz presented his paper, the rabbis took action on the subject of funerals by resolving

that the rabbis of the Central Conference do formally record their disapproval of the habitual and promiscuous

pronouncement of eulogies at funeral services; and that each rabbi be urged to educate public sentiment in his community towards a wiser, more consistent and simpler conduct of funeral services.^{150a}

In his paper delivered to the Conference, Dr. Stolz suggested five principles to guide the procedures at deaths and funerals.

(a) Personal Service. In former days. . . all the offices required by the dead were performed by loving hands, not by hired help. The body was washed and dressed, the shroud prepared, the coffin fashioned, the bier borne, the grave dug and closed by friends of the departed. As far as possible and feasible and conformable with our modern feelings, this custom should be re-instituted among us. . . .

(b) Simplicity and Equality. In view of the needless expensiveness, the indecent display, the bootless waste at our modern funerals, it is both timely and necessary, from economic, aesthetic and ethical reasons to protest most emphatically against the wicked expenditure of money, the vulgar sham and parade practiced, when with expensive hardwood or metallic coffins adorned with gold and silver, we interfere with nature's law of decomposition, create invidious distinctions between rich and poor, burden with debt those not strong enough to resist the demands of fashion, and waste for mere show the money which, according to the old Jewish customs, was bestowed commendably upon the poor. . . . It is our duty to urge simplicity in this direction.

(c) No arbitrary rule can be established in regard to the time that ought to elapse between death and the funeral. Undue haste should, of course, always be avoided. . . . If the deceased was an inconspicuous member of society, let there be a quiet tender memorial at home. . . . If he was a public character, one who in his life made himself a part of the community, let him serve once more, and let the memorial service be held in the temple of his choice. . . .

(d) Rationality. We must be consistent with ourselves, and in our rites and ritual not continue practices and sentiments which were born from a belief in bodily resurrection, or which reflect the gloom and excesses of despair rather than the sunlight and moderation of hope and resignation.

(e) Self-restraint. We must not allow our grief to overlay us; we must master it by a pious resignation to God's decree. It is as much a virtue to exercise self-control at the coffin as at the banquet table.

. . . I would further commend that out of respect for the dead, Kaddish be recited at the synagogue twelve months, not eleven.^{151a}

Leo M. Franklin also delivered a short paper on the same sub-

ject.

First, that the abuse which are essential for us to correct represent largely but one phase of that eager clamoring for sham and show which has invaded every part of our sacred ceremonials, funerals, weddings and confirmations alike; and, second, that the reforms to be encouraged do not necessitate the introduction of new and untried measures, but rather a return to that beautiful simplicity which in former years characterized the Jewish funeral, and which emphasized in death what was too frequently denied in life - the absolute equality of men.

. . . I would heartily favor the movement already introduced by some of our colleagues of conducting all funerals from the synagogue.

The one mourning custom which seems destined to survive the ravages of time is the Kaddish, and of this I beg to say a few words. . . . What I wish to urge is that the Kaddish should be made intelligible to the people, who, in their ignorance, imagine that it is a mass for the souls of the departed. . . . In most congregations the custom still prevails for mourners to rise during the Kaddish prayer. This, I believe, is made by many an opportunity for unnecessary display, and it should be remedied if possible. To my mind it can sooner be accomplished by having the entire congregation rise during this part of the service than by seeking to have the mourners retain their seats, as prejudice and superstition would alike combat against the introduction of such a reform.^{152 a}

From the two sources which were presented to them, the rabbis adopted the following four procedures:

1. The Central Conference of American Rabbis deems it eminently becoming that mourners show their respect for the dead by ceasing to follow their daily avocation for three days, counting from the day of the funeral, if possible, and by remaining at home during this period if it will not interfere with the performance of important public duties.

2. It is most appropriate to hold religious services at the house of mourning during these three days, and to read selections from our religious literature.

3. It is out of reason to retain oriental modes of mourning which never have been exclusively Jewish, such as to sitting on the floor, rending the garments, removing the covering of the feet, refraining from shaving, etc.

4. It is commendable that out of respect for the dead Kaddish be recited at public service during the whole year of mourning, and on every anniversary of the death (especially of parents).^{153 a}

The Jewish Ministers' Association of New York adopted a similar motion on the funeral problem.

Resolved, That the Ministers in conference express their disapproval of the modern custom of lavish display at funerals, and recommend to all their colleagues to firmly discourage such and to endeavor to secure the simplest funeral rites for rich and poor alike.^{154 a}

In the matter of holding funerals from synagogues, Dr. Wise announced that

As usual, the East is marching at the tail end of the Western procession. Temple Emanu El of New York, advocates the holding of funerals in temples; Cincinnati carried that reform into effect twenty years ago.^{155a}

It was reported in the columns of the American Israelite, that the Board of Directors of the Mt. Sinai Cemetery of St. Louis, had decided not to allow any more figures or statues to be placed in the burial ground.^{156a}

The 1897 conference of American rabbis, Dr. Wise made a statement about funeral services for suicides.

He took a humane and liberal view of the question, expressing the feeling that it was a cruel thing to condemn what was, in all probability, the act of an insane, and consequently, irresponsible man. Speaking for himself, he said that he felt that it was the duty of all ministers to stigmatize the crime, but in the funeral to say nothing but what was kind about the dead.^{157a}

Cremation

At the 1891 meeting of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, Dr. M. Schlesinger presented a paper on cremation. In part, he said that

modern Judaism has discarded the ancient eschatology, and returned to the simple faith and belief in immortality, as implied or presumed in the finer and sublimer passages of Scriptures; as Psalm xlix.16; lxxiii.24, where death is looked upon as a return to God.

These simpler and sublimer views have again become the eschatology of our modern Judaism; and this, surely, does not demand as an indispensable condition the slow and loathsome dissolution of the body in a pit, a process which pollutes the air and the water, and endangers the health and life of those we leave behind. Cremation may be accompanied

with the same pious rites and ceremonies as burial, and the dust and ashes of our dead surrounded with even greater respectful veneration than they are now. Our religious sense need not be shocked or violated in the least.

So much is sure: the spirit of Judaism is not against, but most decidedly for, cremation.^{158a}

This paper was assigned to a committee of five with instructions to report at the next meeting of the Conference. As the

report of this committee, Dr. Felsenthal, of Chicago, submitted a paper on cremation. Although he differed with Dr.

Schlesinger on many points, the practical suggestions that he made were no different than those of Dr. Schlesinger.^{160a} As

the committee resolution, Dr. Felsenthal offered the following:

RESOLVED, That in case we should be invited to officiate as Ministers of religion at the cremation of a departed co-religionist, we ought not refuse on the plea that cremation is anti-Jewish or irreligious.

The motion was carried. . .^{161a}

Dr. Wise, in reporting this added his own observation that

this question is out of the way as far as the Rabbinical office is concerned, and beyond that the conference did not feel entitled to go. It might have decided that it is lawful for congregations to erect crematories on their grounds, and to provide places in the same for depositing ashes and erecting monuments above them; but this was not considered to come within the sphere of a Rabbinical conference, being a matter which concerns the individual congregations everywhere. The time may come when it will be considered a wise concession to urgent demands of the age, but then the concession must be made by the congregations and not by the rabbis whose consent is thus pronounced in advance.^{162a}

There arose some objection to the rabbinical point of view, which while probably motivated by other circumstances were couched in the following terms:

Now, if the members of these and other congregations would take it into their heads to have their heads, bodies included, burned after death, the new cemeteries will not be filled for a thousand years to come; and as the burial plots pay nearly one-quarter of the expenses of the synagogue, where will the rabbis get off when their beloved members go off in dust; and what will the grave-digger,

the florist and the tombstoner have to say when their revenue is thus ruthlessly cut off, not to speak of the Hebrew letter cutter, whose means for a livelihood will thus be taken away.163a

Circumcision of Proselytes

In the early part of 1885, Mr. B. Loewenthal, the President of Sinai Congregation, of Chicago, said that

the rite of circumcision, to which even the most radical among us cling with such tenacity, has frequently been denounced from our pulpit as a disgusting relic of barbarism. If this assertion is true, as most of us concede it to be, why is it not our duty to declare in unmistakable language that the practice of the rite of circumcision is sacreligious and should be discontinued, and also make known the fact by resolution, what may be inferred from the silence on that point in our Constitution? That circumcision is not made a test for admission to membership! This will do no violence to any one's conviction, nor keep any one from performing the rite, who chooses so to do, and will place us in a true light in the eyes of the world.164 a

This brought quite a bit of criticism to its author. But the remarks reached a tremendous volume when the Pittsburg Conference was given the views of Dr. Kohler on a related topic.

We ought to revise the Rabbinical regulations regarding the admission of Christians into our fold and no longer exclude those who are eager to join us "because they have seen that God is with us" by rites which reason and the spirit of humanity revolt against. I do not for a moment hesitate to say it right here and in the face of the entire Jewish world that to have a grown man who from conviction has with all his heart and soul become a Jew, in order to be admitted undergo the act of circumcision, is a barbarous cruelty which disfigures and disgraces our ancestral heirloom and our holy mission as priests among mankind. The rite is a national remnant of savage African life, and has no bearing upon the religion preached by Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the great Deuteronomic law-giver.165 a

Dr. Sonneschein, of St. Louis, then handed in a resolution which was adopted:

Resolved, That, inasmuch as the so-called Abrahamitic rite is by many and the most competent rabbis no longer considered as a condition sine qua non of receiving male gentiles into the fold of Judaism, and inasmuch as new

legislation on this and kindred subjects is one of the most imperative and practical demands of our reform movement, a committee of five, one of them to be the President of this conference, be entrusted with formulating a full report to be submitted for final action to the next conference.^{166a}

Because the next conference, which was scheduled to meet in Cincinnati, in 1886, did not meet, and the resolution of the Pittsburg Conference was wasted.^{167a}

The forces of opposition wasted no time, however, in using these latest reform measures to attack Isaac M. Wise. Accused of advocating the abolition of the rite of circumcision, Dr. Wise felt compelled to issue a rebuttal in his paper.

The editor of the AMERICAN ISRAELITE says for himself: Milah and Sabbath are not merely laws, the latter of which being in the Decalogue which makes it unchangable per se, but they are the "signs of the covenant," and could be abolished only with the covenant. The covenant is neither a law nor a ceremony, it is a principle of Judaism which no Jew will touch, especially not the Pittsburg Conference, which adhered to the "Messianic idea" and the "priestly nation" both of which conceptions are based upon the Abrahamic and Sinai covenants. What the editor of the AMERICAN ISRAELITE brought up for the discussion at the Philadelphia Conference in 1869, and not being decided then was brought up as unfinished business in Pittsburg, was the "circumcision of proselytes," of grown-up persons, which will again be discussed in the May session. This, however, has nothing to do with the children of Israel and the Abrahamic rite.^{168a}

By 1890, the matter had presented itself as a real problem.

On July 23, 1890, Rabbi Henry Berkowitz, of Kansas City, Mo., being applied to by a Christian, who did not wish to submit to circumcision, for admission to Judaism, also addressed a circular letter to the rabbis of the country, asking for their opinion and advice. He received a number of responses; some rabbis had expressed their opinions on the subject before this; in published views or in responses the following had declared that proselytes could be admitted without circumcision, I.M. Wise, B. Felsenthal, G. Gottheil, K. Kohler, A. Moses, E.G. Hirsch, M. Landsberg, E. Schreiber, S. Hecht, M. Samfield; of an opposite tenor were the views of M. Mielziner, M. Spitz,

H. Iliowizi, Dr. Berkowitz received all these. Dr. Berkowitz accepted the young man into the faith without his having submitted to the initiatory rite.^{169 a}

The letter which Dr. Berkowitz sent out was as follows:

Kansas City, Mo., July 23, 1890

The undersigned recognizes the danger to Judaism which is likely to arise from a self-sufficient and unauthorized treatment of important ritual questions: he believes that usages consecrated by age, but which have become untenable by reason of the changed conditions and requirements of life, ought accordingly to be revised and transformed; he therefore wishes hereby to submit to you, the rabbis of the land, in whom is vested the authority and the duty to decide all such matters, a question, which, however often it may have engaged your attention, has never been fully and unqualifiedly answered, but being always evaded or deferred, has made authoritative action on the part of any individual rabbi, as far as the sanction of his colleagues was concerned, an impossibility. I refer to the question of "Milath Guerim."

I am of the opinion that all rabbis who have ceased to act in accordance with the directions of the "Shulchan Aruch" are also unanimous in the belief that "Milah" is not an absolute requisite for qualifying a non-Jew to accept the principles and participate in the work of Judaism. As yet, however, there has been no concerted and public avowal of that belief yet made.

Being confronted by a case of this kind, I would respectfully ask of you, my colleagues throughout the land, the unequivocal expression of your thought on this subject in order to enable me and others who may be called upon in similar cases to proceed in accordance with acknowledged authority, and thus obviate the just reproach incurred by arbitrary action.^{170 a}

By the fourth of September of the same year the discussion had reached such proportions that Isaac M. Wise had to bar it from

his newspaper.^{171 a} Dr. Berkowitz was invited to present a paper on the subject to the Conference but he declined on the grounds that he had already taken a positive action in this matter.^{172 a}

Drs. Hahn and Schwab were then assigned the papers. Dr. Hahn said that the Central Conference

should it decide in favor of the abolition of Milath Guerim, may at the same time decide that every Jewish minister shall communicate that decision to his congregation, and shall, in his official functions, consider himself duty bound to abide by the decision of his congregation.^{173 a}

Dr. Schwab took an entirely different attitude toward the matter.

If any changes in the mode of admitting them have to be made, it must, we propose, be done on the independent account of that modern American Reform Judaism desirous of it. (That the concurrence of some European rabbis would not be wanting, we suggest as quite possible.) But it must not be attempted under cover of a relative authority from the so-called rabbinical age. There is, so far as we are aware, none such to be found by the way of honest and accurate research. . . .^{174 a}

The American Israelite editorialized on the subject week after week. The general tone of the editorials was not committed to either side, in most cases.

If anybody holds that we, in this nineteenth century, are bound to uphold, as a matter of religious customs so and then originated without any basis in the Torah, or even rabbinical law, he must be opposed to the abolition of those initiatory rites. Those, however, who think that customs of that kind are not obligatory for us now, and consider it proper and advisable to dispense with them, have undoubtedly the right to say so and do so, if any authoritative body declares so, without endangering the union of Israel and the unity of Judaism.^{175 a}

After much discussion on the subject, Dr. Kaufman Kohler was appointed to frame a substitute motion on the
^{176 a}
question of Milath Guerim. This motion was then offered on the floor of the Central Conference.

RESOLVED, That the Central Conference of American Rabbis, assembled this day in this city of New York, considers it lawful and proper for any officiating rabbi, assisted by no less than two associates, and in the name and with the consent of his congregation, to accept into the sacred covenant of Israel and declare fully affiliated to the congregation any honorable and intelligent person, who desires such affiliation, without any initiatory rite, ceremony or observance whatever; provided, such person be sufficiently acquainted with the faith, doctrine and religious usages of Israel; that nothing derogatory to such persons moral or mental character is suspected; that it is his or her free will and choice to embrace the cause of Judaism, and that he or she declare verbally and in a document signed and sealed before such officiating rabbi and his associates his or her intention and firm resolve:

1. To worship the One, Sole and Eternal God, and none

besides Him.

2. To be conscientiously governed in his or her doings and omission's in life by God's laws ordained for the child and image of the Maker and Father of all, the sanctified son or daughter of the divine covenant.

3. To adhere in life and death, actively and faithfully, to the sacred cause and mission of Israel, as marked out in Holy Writ. Be it furthermore,

Resolved, That a committee of three be appointed to report to this conference formulas of the two documents, viz., one to be signed by the proselyte and witnesses, to remain in the hands of the officiating rabbi, and another to be signed by the officiating Rabbi and his associates, to be delivered to the proselyte.

The motion was carried twenty-five to five.^{177a}

The five dissenting votes were cast by M. Mielziner, Maurice H. Harris, Isaac Stemple, L. Weiss, and I. Joseph.^{178a}

Dr. Wise summed up the proceedings nicely in his weekly paper.

The ancient rites in accepting proselytes into Judaism, it was proved in the reports on the subject, are not contained in the laws of Moses, nor can they properly be called rabbinic law as they are not mentioned in the Mishna. Their origin is from a time after the traditional law had been codified, and had therefore its origin either in custom which was later made Halachah or it grew out unlawfully from the opinions of individual rabbis or from local customs at different times. The Conference considered it a debt of honor which we American Jews owe to our fellowmen with our frequent declarations of universality, liberality and catholicity, to open the gates of the synagogue to all upright men and women desirous to enter into the covenant between God and Israel; also in evidence of our frequent declarations that Judaism as a religion is not either tribal nor national nor legalism. Therefore, the three ancient rites of Milah, Tebilah, and Korban should be discontinued.^{179a}

Some writer who professed to give the views of the people on the matter had his say in the Israelite.

Now the general opinion of our people (and I speak from direct information in the limited sphere accorded me) in regard to the loophole by which the unbeshnittene Weiberjaegers are to slip into our sanctum sanctorum to the detriment of and in discrimination against our Jewish young gentlemen who are looking for fat dowries as an agreeable appendage to the matrimonial halter, is decidedly against the innovation of the non-circumcision of proselytes. The opinions against a step so radical seems to be unanimous,

though divided as to their reasoning. One party claims circumcision a tenet of our faith, the ground pillar of our religion, the steel ribbed band that held Judaism in close fellowship amidst peril and persecution, and hence not to be abandoned. The other party holds circumcision a sanitary and anthropological question, which has outgrown its necessity under the benign influence of physiological science.

They are for the abolishment of the Abrahamitic rite altogether.* They hold, and with seemingly fair reason, that liberty of thought, liberty of action, is the birth-right of every human being, and no parent should have the power or authority to circumcize and so abrogate that right by placing the mark of religious slavery upon a child, debarring him of the right of choice, when old enough to discriminate, to choose the path which his conscience might dictate and his reason approve.

*The Milath gairim and the Milath for Jews by birth are two entirely separate questions and should not be considered at the same time. The action of the Conference referred to "Milath Gairim"; the propriety of "Milath" for the sons of Jewish parents was not questioned by anyone.
ED. AM. IS. 180a

At the 1895 meeting of the Conference, the committee which had been appointed to decide on the reception of proselytes reported back as follows:

Your committee, appointed to frame a formula for the reception of proselytes beg leave to submit the following for your consideration:

The applicant shall make replies to the following formal inquiries:

"1. Is it your earnest and sincere wish to become a member of the Jewish faith?

"2. Do you choose to take this step of your own free will and accord?

"3. What are the principles of Judaism?

"4. Do you believe in these principles?

"5. Do you adopt these as your creed?

"6. Do you intend with all your heart and soul and might to follow the high moral and religious aims which they teach?

"7. Is it your earnest intention and devout purpose to live as a Jew (Jewess) and to observe the sacred ordinances of the Jewish religion?

"8. Have you been forced to make this declaration or unduly persuaded?

"9. I now ask you to make solemn profession of all this before God and in the hearing of those who are here assembled. (Here follows profession of faith.)

"10. Do you give your solemn promise to me as a rabbi, in the hearing of these witnesses, three rabbis, that you will remain steadfast in your duties as a Jew (Jewess), so

help you God?

The declaration of the acceptance of Jewish faith is as follows:

1. I believe with a sincere and steadfast faith that there is a God, who is one and only one, the Creator, Preserver and Ruler of the world.

2. I believe with a sincere and steadfast faith that man is created in the image of God, innocent and pure, endowed with reason, conscience and free-will, and capable of triumphing over sin and developing to perfection.

3. I believe with a sincere and steadfast faith, that the soul of man is immortal, and righteousness brings reward, and wickedness brings punishment.

4. I believe with a sincere and steadfast faith, in the common Fatherhood of God and common brotherhood of men. To make this real is the real, is the great aim and hope and mission of Israel.

And God will be King over all the earth that day. God will be one and His name One.^{181a}

Confirmation

We find a report of the confirmation reform in the American Israelite.

In order to appreciate what constructive reform in the right direction may accomplish, the Shabuoth (Feast of Weeks), as it is now celebrated among us American Jews, must be compared with the Shabuoth of thirty or forty years ago. The confirmation which, with the exceptions of a few congregations, is now generally set for Shabuoth, has made of this feast a gala day, a truly Jewish high feast, in the very spirit of Judaism in consonance with all the requirements of modern civilization. In the first place a class of young people is instructed for months prior to the confirmation in the doctrines and precepts, duties and hopes of the sacred faith of Israel. . . . In the second place there comes into the Temple the grand service, which brings to the tabernacles all who can go, young and old, the serious and the gay, the worshipper and the spectator, and none can honestly maintain that he leaves the house of worship without lasting benefit. Every one feels impressed with the solemnity of the occasion, the simple and telling words of the classes, the admonitions of the preacher, and the sublimity of the choral and musical performances. . . .^{182 a}

In addition to the confirmation ceremony there grew up another innovation. The Directors of the Mound Street Temple, in Cincinnati,

inaugurated a movement which bids fair to be a matter of

great importance in the near future; namely, the establishment of a "Post-Confirmation Class," or, in other words, a Sabbath-school for young ladies and gentlemen. An institution of this kind has long been needed by the young people, and once inaugurated their attendance is not in doubt. A Sabbath-school class of this kind is sadly needed, not only here but in every city.^{183 a}

Rabbi Louis Grossman, of Detroit, Michigan, also formed a
^{184 a}
Post-Confirmation class at his Temple.

At the 1887 conference of the Rabbis of Southern Congregations, the following resolutions were adopted after extended discussion:

RESOLVED, This Conference urgently recommends to the congregations of the South that utmost simplicity characterize the several religious ceremonies of confirmation, marriage and burial.

RESOLVED, That it is the sense of this Conference that the applicants for confirmation in our synagogues should, after satisfying the Rabbi of their fitness, also give public evidence thereof to the congregation to which they are about to be admitted.

RESOLVED, That the recommendation of the committee, that the confirmation take place between the ages of thirteen and sixteen, be concurred in.

RESOLVED, That the foregoing resolutions are the sense of this conference.

The question whether confirmation should be made obligatory and constitute a necessary proof of adherence to the Jewish faith was discussed at length, and the sentiment prevailed that such an obligation would be contrary to all Jewish precept.

The committee was given further time to perfect the plans it had presented.^{185 a}

The President of Joseph Krauskopf's congregation in Philadelphia had certain defined ideas on confirmation ceremonies as opposed to Bar Mitzvahs.

. . . I can not pass on without censuring the meaningless practice which has become so customary with us, and which is an utter contradiction to our reform ideas and practices. I refer here to the practice of boys who have attained their thirteenth year, going up on the pulpit and repeating, parrot-like, the benediction before and after reading the chapter of the Thora - I refer to the ceremony of Bar Mizvah. This is, as performed now, at most, a meaningless practice, not understood by the boy, and is a ceremony belonging to a past generation and obsolete for

us and has no religious signification now; it serves more to gratify the vanity sometimes of parents and relatives. Reform has supplanted this ceremony by the certainly understood and elevating institution of Confirmation at the Shebuoth festival, preceded, however, by the special training and instruction of the confirmants in the duties incumbent in passing from the school-room to the busy walks of life. I would therefore recommend the abolishment of Bar Mitzvah.^{186a}

We can get a fine view of the Confirmation ceremony from a description of it written by Isaac M. Wise in defense of that institution.

Every reform has its opponents. Confirmation as introduced in our temples also has its opponents. They would not allow girls to be confirmed, and insist that boys must be confirmed that very Sabbath after their thirteenth birthday. . . . In order to say something effective against this innovation, they maintain it is all a show, exposition and pomp only, a sort of child's play. We admit there are teachers and pupils, parents and children, who love sensation and vain show, and may indulge in their morbid disposition also on this occasion. There are many people with a very convenient and pliable conscience; with them confirmation may also be a mere sensational show. This could be the case with a few only, for most people are conscientious, and is not the case with us, who have officiated thirty-five times in the confirmation service. With us here the following course is followed up: The confirmation class has gone through a course of Hebrew studies and the history of the Hebrews. . . . The confirmation itself is conducted thus: The morning service, with the exception of the Reading of the Law, is concluded in the usual holiday style. After conclusion thereof, the president and vice-president of the congregation go down to the vestry room, where the class is assembled, dressed all alike and in the plainest style. While the choir sings the En Komocho, the said officers lead the class into the temple, and they group around the pulpit in a semi-circle. Six or more of the class deliver the opening prayer (as in our hymn-book), after which the choir sings the hymn, during which the class deposit their flowers at the ark and the pulpit, and then six of them recite this prayer consecrating this flower offering as a symbolic action. The class being seated, the minister's address or sermon follows; then begin the Bar Mitzvah exercises thus: The class conducts the whole service, with all ceremonies, prayers and readings, without any interference or assistance of the minister. They recite the prayers, take out two scrolls of the law, observing all concomitant ceremonies, speak in chorus the benedictions, read from the Sepher Torah the entire sections for Shebuoth; and have thus performed the Bar Mitzvah in

full, besides showing their Hebrew knowledge. Then follows again the confirmation service. Six of the class recite the confession (as in our hymn-book), then each of the class recites his motto, kisses the Torah, as a symbol of his entrance upon the divine covenant, which is followed by the blessing, the minister blessing each child separately while the choir sings the priestly benediction. Six of the class recite the closing prayer, after which the ceremonies are closed, while the confirmants return to their parents with the invocation and a grand Amen Hallelujah.^{187a}

In the paper of Dr. David Philipson, dealing with this reform, which was presented to the 1890 Central Conference of American Rabbis, he said that

although traditionally the ceremony was foreign to the synagogue, yet in view of the need of the time and the changed religious conditions, confirmation was not only permissible in, but highly advantageous to the synagogue. When it is no longer so it will be abolished as all religious forms must be when they have lived their day, to make room for something better.

Confirmation would then mean for us that public impressive ceremonial whereby the confirmants shall declare their purpose to believe in and uphold the principles of Judaism, a responsible, self-actuated confession of their religion and belief.

During the confirmation, shall any promise be extracted from the children? Shall they be made to swear that they will keep this or believe that? I do not consider it proper to demand these promises from the children for two reasons. First, at the age at which we now confirm, these children are not responsible. They make these promises because they are told to do so without any thought of the words they speak. Secondly, for this very reason these promises are always broken. It seems to me that these promises should be kept out of the confirmation ceremony; a confession or a declaration of faith should be substituted for it in which the chief articles of Judaism are contained. A short examination, is however, in place.

I suggest the following ritual for confirmation;

1. Opening hymn by the class.
2. Opening Prayer.
3. Music by choir.
4. Floral offering and Prayer.
5. Read Ten Commandments from Torah and Brochos.
6. Music by choir.
7. Speech on significance of day by one confirmant.
8. Music.
9. Sermon by Rabbi ending with admonition to Children.

10. Music.
11. Short Examination ending with Declaration of Faith.
12. Rabbi blesses Children.
13. Closing Hymn by Class.
14. Concluding Prayer.
15. Dismissal of Children to Parents.
16. Music. 188a

The Synod

Isaac M. Wise approached the entire idea of a rabbinical conference in terms of a synod. That was his dream and hope. In 1885, prior to the Pittsburg Conference, he wrote in the American Israelite as follows:

We are in possession of quite a number of epistles, in which the question of a synod is discussed pro and con. The standpoints of those gentlemen are very different. One wants a Synod to reach the object of unification and uniformity in the synagogue ritual and text-books for the Sabbath-school, the other thinks the Synod might stop the arbitrary innovations and give us a period of rest until we have assimilated the new forms and doctrines advanced during the last half of a century; while the other is in favor of a Synod to continue, in union and harmony, the work of natural progress as the change of times and circumstance might need it. Another, again, favors the establishment and maintenance of a Synod, in order to set bonds to the Rabbi's freedom of action, which they maintain is too arbitrary and often too inconsiderate to do much good. Another again favors a compact union of the rabbis, in order to protect them against the whimsical desire of innovation on the part of the congregations or portions thereof who want to make a new religion every other week. One thinks the Synod will force the rabbis to progressive work, and another believes it will stimulate the congregations to that end, especially those who do not rely upon their respective rabbi's authority. Like the pros so are the cons divided in their opinions, and we can make nothing out of it which might meet the consent of all. We have one paper before us suggesting how a Synod might be established by the Council of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, a paper which we think might be laid before the Council at its next meeting, July next, in the City of St. Louis, where it might create a storm in the teakettle; but it answers only one question, viz., how might a Synod be established? This is not the main question, however. We ought to know first what that body should do after it is established; and then we ought to know what authority the enactments and resolves of that body are to have.

Hence we must beg the friends of the cause, if they

wish to write on the subject of a Synod to be established, to answer first these two questions: What should that body do after it is established? and what authority are its enactments and resolves to have?^{189a}

In his writeup of the conference of the Rabbis of Southern Congregations, Isaac M. Wise again fought the battle for the Synod.

The graduates of the Hebrew Union College in that conference, the Rabbis Berkowitz, Silverman and Stolz, says our correspondent, were fairly lionized, and did good work, especially when the Synod was discussed, which they, of course, aided by the Rev. Mr. Hecht, of Montgomery, Ala., defended against the whole house. We wish to say to the friends of a regular Synod for American Israel, that it may be built up any day, that it should be established at once and by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, to prevent the further dissolution of formal Judaism; and it will be established and maintained forever, whenever the number of graduates from the Hebrew Union College will be large enough to take that matter in hand.^{190a}

When this plan was submitted to the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, it was referred to their Committee on Synod, which reported back that

after a thorough and deliberate discussion, they came to the unanimous conclusion that the Council is not competent to legislate upon the recommendation of the President concerning the Synod, inasmuch as such action would be in conflict with Article II of the Constitution of this body.^{191a}

Dr. Wise dealt with this action in an editorial on the subject.

The report of the Committee on the Synod to the Council of the U.A.H.C., in St. Louis, and the action of that body on the report, have given rise to misunderstandings which ought to be dispelled. That Committee, as well as the whole Council, consisted of men whose propositions and actions, to say the least, are considerate and law-abiding. They are no petty politicians who seek momentary effect, no sectionalists or sectaries who proceed on ex parte statements. The Committee reported, as will be seen from the official proceedings, that the Council, in obedience to the constitution under which it acts, has no authority to convoke or establish a Synod, although several members of that committee are personally in favor of a Synod; and the Council confirmed this opinion of the committee by a unanimous vote.^{192a}

Dr. Wise followed this article with another, explaining why

nobody was very excited about the Council's action.

There is but one case left to be considered and it is this: Those rabbis and congregations that do agree on the main point, who want the unification of American Judaism on the principle of legitimate and uniform progress, might unite and establish such an enlightened and conservative body, call it a Synod, and bestow upon it the authority necessary to reach that end. Such a democratic, self-denying and loyal submission to the cause and the majority of its chosen representatives, such a rational admission of the maxim, that many are wiser than one, can be expected of Americans only, and two-thirds of our rabbis and members of our congregations are Americans in politics only, in all other provinces of the mind they are foreigners. Therefore you will have to wait till a sufficient number of Americans occupy the pulpits and the pews, to establish a Synod with that only available material.

These are some of the considerations which moved the friends of the Synod to acquiesce in the report of the Committee and the action of the Council averse to convoking a Synod.^{193a}

With the birth of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, there disappeared from the pages of Dr. Wise's periodical all references to Synods for quite a time. On February 23, 1899 an advertisement was placed by the Young Men's Hebrew Association of Philadelphia.

The Young Men's Hebrew Association of Philadelphia offers a prize of fifty dollars for the best Essay submitted on "The Scope of Authority of an American Synod, Organized and Acting under Jewish Law; its Influence and Practical Importance."^{194a}

This served the purpose of touching off the spark. Within a month, the Israelite ran a lengthy article on the proposed synod.

Some of the leading men in the East of the country are desirous to establish a Synod for the American Israel.

It is evident that if we propose to establish a Synod, we must be prepared to give satisfactory reasons, why and wherefore such an institution is necessary and advisable; how it could be established and sustained. If we argue, we want a union of all the American Israel, and a representative body thereof for all secular affairs in Judaism, we will be met with the fact, here it is, here is the Union of A.H.C. with its biennial Council, founded on democratic principles, free and open to all. All those friends of union in Israel have to do is to unite their efforts with the body existing for this very purpose, and this union

combines already the largest congregations of all the largest cities, with a hundred smaller congregations in the land.

If we furthermore argue, that it is supposed the Union A.H.C. consists of reform congregations exclusively- which is not exactly the case - the orthodox or conservative congregations look upon it with suspicion on account of certain prejudices, also with aversion, we would have to meet the rebuff; hence they are unfit to be members of any union; and it would be an injustice to the cause of union to affiliate with persons or bodies who harbor such suspicion, aversion and prejudices.

Therefore the friends of a synod may argue - therefore we want a synod to modify the existing difference between orthodoxy and reform, to make the attempt at least of a compromise between the parties. This is to say, we leave the secular standpoint and enter the ecclesiastical arena. Those who are well informed of the points at issue as they are understood by the congregants on each side have no doubt that such a compromise is impossible, as the congregations are not prepared for it. Not many on either side would elect delegates; not enough anyhow to make up a synod. There may be, however, on either side a respectable number of enthusiasts to favor the convocation of a Synod for the sake of union in Israel, and on that account be willing to compromise the main issues. Those very men, as was done forty-five years ago in Cleveland, would have to be convened at a preliminary conference. In this voluntary conclave they would mutually inform themselves of the points at issue, and ascertain whether a compromise satisfactory to all could be attained. If attained, they must go before the congregations with this treaty of peace, and let them elect delegates to a synod on this basis. On this plan it might be possible that a majority of our congregations be represented in the first convocation of the synod, to constitute it, define its aims, claims and duties, and prepare the work for the next session of the body.

It seems to us that a synod to cement a union on ecclesiastical grounds, under the prevailing circumstances, is impossible in this country of individual freedom and ingrained individual rights which prevail not only in every congregation but in almost every individual thereof. A union on a purely utilitarian basis, for the benefit of the entire American Israel, to establish and govern public institutions useful to the whole community, . . . this might be achieved by a synod of moderate and earnest men - not, however, without the Union of A.H.C., whose membership comprizes a very important and influential portion of the entire community. Without them a union would be a sham, fractional and factional. We have no use for ecclesiastical union or for sects in Judaism. It is not our duty to reform the orthodox, nor is it the duty of the orthodox to reclaim the reformers; it is the duty of all to let everybody believe and worship God as he thinks

proper, and interfere with none. It is our duty to build up Judaism in this country by the united efforts of all to the glory of God and the honor of Israel.195a

The Sabbath - Sunday Controversy

In Dr. Philipson's history of the reform movement we find a survey of the development of the Sunday morning service.

Sinai Congregation, of Chicago, instituted Sunday services in 1874, and on October 13, 1881, the Board of Trustees of Keneseth Israel Congregation of Philadelphia, adopted a resolution to make provision for a service on Sunday. This resolution was endorsed by the congregation; the rabbi of this congregation, Samuel Hirsch, had been the first to broach the subject in a public Jewish forum, and had been a consistent advocate of the transfer of the Sabbath to Sunday throughout his career. The services on Sunday since 1887, have been a feature of the congregation's activity.196a

From the appearances of dispatches in the American Israelite, the life of the Sunday service in the Keneseth Israel Temple in Philadelphia did not go unchallenged. The New York correspondent of Dr. Wise's newspaper reported some activity in New York which concerned itself with Sunday services.197a

The Sunday service movement in the Emanu-El Congregation, received its quietus last Monday evening, and it is safe to say that it will be years before any similar idea will be proposed in this city. Although the night was a disagreeable one, the meeting was largely attended, near one hundred gentlemen being present. At the outset, the President, Mr. Lewis May, announced that the meeting was private, and hinted that members of the press were especially unwelcome; a ridiculous precaution, as the reporters easily ascertained all that transpired. The debate was, of course, of the most enthusiastic nature, the principal speakers being those who favored the movement, while its opponents for the most part kept quiet, and when the time came made their votes tell effectually by killing the project.

Dr. Kohler, who had the Sunday service "bee in his bonnet" some time ago, has seen the error of his ways, and in his sermon last Sabbath gave the following cogent reason

for his change of views: "It is to the Jewish mothers that I look for a re-kindling of our Sabbath lamps of domestic re-union and spiritual elevation. And if I am to state the reason why I have long since given up the belief in the Sunday service movement inaugurated by me here and in Chicago, it is because that I found that at no time and nowhere have our Jewish women given their consent to it. . . 198a

The trend inaugurated by Temple Emanu-El was soon followed by Dr. David Stern. He also gave up the Sunday lectures at his temple. 199a

In the farewell address of the President of Chicago's Sinai Congregation, the suggestion was made that the Sabbath be changed to Sunday. He also advocated that the Biblical holidays, Yom Kippur included, be moved to the Sunday next following or preceding them. 200a

The time of the Pittsburg Conference found the air heavy with the controversy over the Sunday - Sabbath. At that conference of rabbis, Dr. Kaufman Kohler said,

However heavily the prejudice of many Jewish rabbis and laymen against Sunday services may lay in the balance of congregational worship, they can have no power to justify our utter disregard of the claims and demands of those who, dependent upon the employ of others, are compelled to work for their living from Monday morning till Saturday night, finding no leisure or respite except on the public day of rest. 201a

When the Sabbath - Sunday Committee presented its report, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

Whereas, We recognize the importance of maintaining the historical Sabbath as a bond with our past and a symbol of the unity of Judaism the world over; and

Whereas, On the other hand it cannot be denied that there is a vast number of workingmen and others who, from some cause or other, are not able to attend the services on the seventh day of rest; be it

Resolved, That there is nothing in the spirit of Judaism or its laws to prevent the introduction of Sunday Services in localities where the necessity for such services appears, or is felt. 202a

This pronouncement gave impetus to a storm of protest and accusation from the opponents of reform.

The Sunday - Sabbath remained a burning issue. In the 1886-87 issue of the American Jews Annual, the action taken by Sinai Temple of Chicago was discussed.

The Sinai Congregation has also during the last year voted an annuity of \$150 to the Hebrew Union College, and discontinued divine service on the Sabbath day, not officially, but from want of attendance. Its temple is open for divine worship and sermon besides on the Jewish holidays and every Sunday morning at 10 o'clock. . . . In the year 1869, it was the rabbi of the Sinai Congregation, Dr. Chronik, who made the motion in the rabbinical conference in Philadelphia, that the said conference declare the Jewish Sabbath transferred to Sunday. The conference refused to consider the motion but permitted it to go on its record. Shortly after that it was attempted in Chicago to carry out Chronik's resolution, when the first great conflagration destroyed a large part of that city and stopped temporarily all enterprises of that nature. The matter was taken up again in 1875 by Dr. K. Kohler, the successor of Dr. Chronik. It will be seen therefore that it was not Dr. Emil G. Hirsch, but the Sinai Congregation which after twenty years of agitation discontinued divine service in its temple on the Jewish Sabbath day.^{203a}

The American Israelite declared that

Christianity with its Sunday Sabbath, stands outside of the covenant, whatever its pretensions may be. Any Jew or body of Jews imitating the Christian custom of Sunday - Sabbath, for the sake of accommodation or business purposes, may justify that course on the principle of utility, of worldly advantages, social pleasantness, or national habits; but not on principles of Judaism or Jewish history.^{204a}

The Israelite also gave Rabbi Isaac S. Moses, of Milwaukee, an opportunity to play the role of the prophet. He submitted a letter addressed primarily to Dr. Sonneschein, of St. Louis.

It is not long since when the Rev. Dr. Sonneschein was a bitter opponent of Sunday lectures. . . . Many things have changed during the last four years. They who first urged the necessity of having a service, or at least a lecture, on the day when people have time to attend, are now glad to welcome to their ranks those who predicted the ruin of Judaism if Sunday lectures were to be

introduced. . . . I am glad for more than one reason to extend to my friend the hand of fellowship and brotherly greeting.^{205a}

Isaac M. Wise sounded a new watchword in the columns of his newspaper. He declared that, "you can desecrate the Sabbath, but you can not consecrate the Sunday".^{206a}

The American Israelite described the situation in Baltimore as follows:

The Israelites of Baltimore have very decided opinions on the subject of Sunday services, and it is right that their ideas, at this time, should be - however indifferently - set forth. The great majority of them are firmly opposed to Sunday services, or anything that tends to encourage the underlying ideas connected with the same. It seemed for some time that it would not be necessary to have anything to say upon this topic, as there is absolutely no hope for the success of such a movement here, nor is there, so far as we know, any such idea on the part of our co-religionists.^{207a}

It tried to arouse the opposition against the Sunday service.

Indeed, it appeared that, with the exception of Chicago and Kansas City, the field for such a project was very limited. It was not thought that in this part of the country a movement which undoubtedly tends to the ultimate abolishment of the Sabbath day could gain foothold at all. But we have been sadly mistaken. What had been attempted twice before in Philadelphia, each time with ignominious failure, has, within a few weeks, been successfully accomplished, and Sunday services have been brought from the distant West to find an abode in the Quaker City. Young, talented, eloquent Joseph Krauskopf has succeeded in bringing the representative reform congregation of Philadelphia to the observance of Sunday worship in all its glory. Right in our midst the feat has been done; it is a question of momentous significance. It can not be evaded. It must be met. Everyone identified with our cause, and alarmed at the danger which the masses of our co-religionists decry in the success of this movement, is now^{208a} called upon to take an unequivocal stand in this matter.

At many temples in the East, the issue that came up again and again was the issue of the Sabbath - Sunday. It played a part in the re-election of officers and rabbis.^{209a} Accusations and counter-accusations filled the air. Both rabbis and congregations were divided on this issue.

We come now to the main question, which is this; Of late discussions have taken place, privately and in public, on the transfer of the Sabbath to Sunday, principally in St. Louis and Chicago, with Dr. S. Sale, of St. Louis, and Dr. E.G. Hirsch, of Chicago, in favor of such a transfer, and Dr. Sonneschein, of St. Louis, opposing it, as he did always when this question was raised. We do not recollect any other theological gentleman having recently taken a stand in this issue. The discussion is interesting inasmuch as it furnishes evidence that those gentlemen who call themselves radicals hold conflicting opinions on this very important issue.^{210a}

Not only was it a question of the Sunday service, but the Friday evening lecture also came under discussion.

The lecture also is rapidly becoming an institution in American Judaism and is delivered in most of the congregations Friday evening or on Sunday. . . . In the West and Southwest the Friday evening lecture is the rule and the Sunday lecture the exception. In the East the Sunday lecture in four or five congregations is the rule, and the Friday evening lecture the rare exception. In the Southeast there is no standing rule yet in this matter. . . .^{211a}

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The Sunday - Sabbath agitation amounted to nothing; the Jew may be a Sabbath-breaker but never a Sabbath-changer; he never changes a genuine article for a counterfeit.^{212a}

In an effort to solve the controversy over the Sunday-Sabbath, the Jewish Ministers' Association discussed an alternative action to Sunday services.

Dr. Drachman introduced the following resolution: Resolved, That this conference of Jewish ministers welcomes the proposed Saturday Half-holiday Law as a useful and timely measure, both for the people at large, and for the religious welfare of our community, and hopes that the Jewish community will make it the means of full regaining and restoring the proper sanctity and esteem of the Biblical Sabbath.

Dr. Wintner, of Brooklyn, spoke in favor of the resolution. Dr. G. Gottheil, from experience in Manchester, England, where the Saturday half-holiday has long existed, feared that the result would be the very reverse of what was anticipated by the mover of the resolution. The people would make it a holiday, but not a holy day -- would never dream of devoting it to religious purposes. Besides, the limitation of business hours to the forenoon would prevent many attending the forenoon services who now had the afternoon for such pressing business as the closing of the European mails and all shipping agencies on Saturday rendered imperative. It would diminish attendance in the

synagogue, not increase it.

Revs. Kleeberg, of New Haven, and Harrison, of Brooklyn, spoke finally for and against the resolution, and Dr. Bettelheim moved to refer it to the Executive Committee, and to report to the next convention.^{213a}

In a letter to the editor of the Israelite by someone who signed himself as "A STRONG OPPONENT TO SUNDAY LECTURES," we get a layman's point of view.

The Sabbath question is one with which I most heartily agreed with you, up to the last number of your valuable AMERICAN ISRAELITE, although I differed from your conclusions, why Saturday, not Sunday, can and should be the only Jewish Sabbath. I contend that the principle underlying the day is such that we can not make this concession to Christianity, which keeps Sunday for no other reason but that Christ has risen on that day. We may as well change our Day of Atonement to Good Friday, the day of the Crucifixion, it being a legal holiday in this, and perhaps some other states.

I have always maintained, and do so now, what you so truthfully say in the article in question, that there is no cause for such innovation where the Friday evening service is established. This offers ample opportunity to attend Sabbatical worship and to receive religious instruction. And to this, I add, we then stand on Jewish and not on Christian ground.

These Sunday lectures, which you properly term "fraud," will gradually accustom our people to the Sunday Sabbath.

In my opinion, a Sunday lecture is an indirect blow at the Saturday Sabbath, which must sooner or later give way to Sunday. Proof of this assertion is plainly at hand.

And now to the exception which I make to your editorial, and which part I read with sorrow and astonishment, coming as it did from your pen, "to deliver lectures or any other class of discourses with or without devotional exercises of a non-Sabbatical character on Sunday, in any Jewish house of worship, does not involve any religious question."^{214a}

The 1888 report of the President of Keneseth Israel of Philadelphia shows that that congregation, at least, was
^{215a}
extremely satisfied with the Sunday lecture service. At the same time, the JEWISH VOICE wrote that, "the Chicago American Israelite is published on Sabbath morning, because to the
^{216a}
Chicago Jews that day is erev Shabbes. What a mockery."

The emphasis now shifted to a glorification of the Friday

evening lecture.

Look out for your Friday evening service and lectures; it is the salvation of Judaism under the circumstances under which we are placed. It is the salvation of the congregation that can not get its members to assemble more numerous on Saturday morning. . . . It is the salvation of the Sabbath in the consciousness and conscience of those whose hearts are still with God and Israel. It redeems men and women out of the bondage of unbecoming habits and the slavery of fashion, the sensual pleasure seeking inebriation which benights and bewilders ever so many. Take care of your Friday evening service and lecture. Be not led astray by the Sunday innovation; it is not for the congregation, it is for outsiders, and will be short-lived everywhere where Judaism is prized higher than style, fashion and whim.^{217a}

At the 1896 conference of rabbis, there was a discussion of the problem. The statement was made that there was no religious coloring to the Sunday service.

Dr. E.G. Hirsch, refuted the statement that Sunday lectures are without religious coloring. . . . Sunday services were not the panacea for all the illnesses that Judaism was heir to. . . . Dr. Hirsch would advise no rabbi to begin the Sunday movement until he has some zealous men to stand by him until it becomes a fixed institution.^{218a}

By 1898, the outlook of the situation had not changed to any great extent, although millions of words had gone over the dam.

For the information of our secular exchanges we would say that just now there is no discussion whatever in the Jewish church regarding the Sabbath, whether it is to be Saturday or Sunday. The little ripple caused by a Cleveland rabbi advocating the substitution of the Sunday for the Saturday Sabbath received no serious consideration, not even from his own congregation, in which, by the way, he is exceedingly popular. Saturday services have been abandoned in only one congregation in the United States, Sinai of Chicago, and this was not done as a change of the Sabbath day, but because the Rabbi, Dr. E.G. Hirsch, objected to preaching on Saturday morning to a congregation composed mainly of women. The Doctor, in a recent sermon in New York, stated most positively that in spite of the abrogation of the Saturday service his congregation in no wise regarded Sunday as the Sabbath. This is up to date the full extent of the movement. . . .^{219a}

On the following year, 1899, Sinai Congregation celebrated

the twenty-fifth anniversary of the institution of Sunday
220a
services at their temple.

From Cleveland, Ohio, the American Israelite received
a communication.

Editor ISRAELITE:-

I wish timely to inform you of the success of the Sunday lectures given in our temple. The failure of the Saturday attendance and the discontinuing of the Saturday services, is the coming event, as stated by our worthy rabbi in today's (Sunday) lecture. Times have changed. In our temple we have no true religion. Its mockery, after they discontinued taking out the Torah on Saturdays, had the effect of weakening the interest of those few who were still sincere in their worship. Now the attendance is made up of a class that only go to see and to be seen. A great number of Gentiles attend at times, when the lectures are sensational. 221a

In spite of Dr. Wise's efforts to prove the contrary, it appears that the Sunday service movement had acquired a substantial foothold in some of the largest congregations in the land.

Biblical Criticism

From the very beginning of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the men brought with them a new view of the Bible. At the 1890 conference, Dr. E. Schreiber, in a paper entitled, "How to teach Biblical History in our Sabbath Schools," put forth the following ideas:

Shall the teacher of the higher classes instruct the pupils in accord with the antiquated ideas on inspiration, miracles, divine authority of the Bible, revelation, thus ignoring or even defying the results of history, geology, biology and natural philosophy? Or shall he try to harmonize science and religion? . . .

Let the teacher inform his pupils that the poet of the Bible had produced a beautiful legend, far superior to the cosmogonies of other nations of antiquity. The Bible loses nothing in its grandeur and sublimity by such methods. It gains rather.

. . . In conclusion, no teacher should attempt to excuse or

palliate sins or wrongs committed by Biblical characters, as such a course would blunt the moral sentiment of the child.

I would, therefore, propose the following resolution: Resolved, That the Conference of American Rabbis appoint a committee to publish a Biblical history on the basis of Biblical science.^{222a}

This motion was carried but came to naught through inaction on the part of the committee.

Biblical criticism was not an unrecognized problem to the reformers of this time. Isaac M. Wise spoke editorially of it.

We do protest most emphatically against the alleged results of that negative Biblical criticism which uproots the veracity and integrity of the inspired writers and reduces the ancient history of Israel to a record of crude barbarism. We do so not because that negative criticism is injurious to Judaism, although we believe that it is a death blow aimed at it and religion in general, especially if those alleged results are carried into the pulpit or the Sabbath school, where they can do harm only and no good at all; because we firmly believe that truth must take care of itself. If that upon which we have based our faith proves not to be true, we must adjust our faith, as facts are unchangable. We protest loudly and emphatically against those alleged results, because we know them to be false, and we protest against every falsehood.

Must we not finally open our eyes to the fact that all those ingenious conjectures and combinations do not weigh a straw opposite the Massorah, which is as old as the post-biblical literature (excepting the vowel and accentual signs) and the traditions of the Hebrew people older and more faithful than both? Must we not finally come to the conviction that we, who were, so to say, born with the Hebrew language and grew up with the commentaries on our lips, understand the Bible better than those few Protestant clergymen who are the authors of that negative criticism?^{223a}

The American Israelite went so far as to re-publish a series of articles defending the Massorah and the Masoretic text of the Bible.^{224a} Isaac M. Wise took to printing homilies and bits of news designed to prove the correctness of the Bible.

In the night between the 23rd and 24th of April, a negro woman, Susannah Nelson, in the city of Washington, died at the age of 128 years. The ninth of her sixteen

children lives in Washington and is over eighty. She was born a slave and remained one to the end of slavery. Now we hope none will find it unlikely that Moses lived 120 years, as some skeptics did not long ago.225a

Isaac M. Wise did not hesitate to take to task any attempts at undermining revelation.

If a graduate of the Hebrew Union College said the story told in the first chapter of Genesis is like that of Santa Claus, he said something original; nobody before him said so, at least it is not preserved anywhere in the world's literature. It is no happy idea in criticism, for there exists no more similarity in the two productions than between a rock and a swamp, and things without any similarity can not be critically compared. If the idea to be conveyed is that both pieces are fictitious, the blunder is no less uncritical than tasteless; for the account of creation deals in stubborn facts, in nature's real and visible objects as a cosmos, as does the 104. psalm, nothing of which could be declared fabulous except the seven day's work, while the Santa Claus story consists of condensed wind and gas colored for babies. . . . Aside, however, of the rules of criticism it does not appear proper to use so profane a simile in the pulpit; it is in language too coarse and in sentiment too offensive to scientist and layman.226a

The Position of Women

At the time with which this work deals, women were just beginning to come into their own rights in society. This reflected itself in their recognition by their synagogues and other religious organizations. In 1892, at the conference of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, Rabbi Clifton Levy and Dr. Henry Berkowitz offered a resolution in respect to the status of women in Jewish congregations; the following is the resolution as adopted:

Whereas, We have progressed beyond the idea of the secondary position of women in Jewish congregations, we recognize the importance of their hearty cooperation and active participation in congregational affairs; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Executive Committee have prepared for the next annual conference a paper tracing the develop-

ment of the recognition of women in Jewish congregations, and expounding a conclusion that women be eligible to full membership, with all privilege of voting and holding office in our congregations.^{227a}

In Leiser's American Judaism, we get an insight into the motivations for the activities of the women during this period.

The Jewish women felt that they too could pay understanding heed to literature and art, and began to devise means for the attainment of those ends sought in classes and circles that would familiarize such as had no literary culture with the messages and historic content of great poets, playwrights, romancers, artists of western civilization.

Impulses of this nature came to a head during the World's Fair, 1893, and crystallized in the formation of a Council of Jewish Women which endeavored to transfer to the Jewess the same inspiration and motivation that flourished among her American neighbors. . . . The Jewish women responsible in a larger measure for the formation of the Council were religious offspring of Reform Jewish congregations. Born and reared in the Middle West as happened to be the case with the organizers, they were directly molded by the liberalizing preachment of prophetic Judaism as it was preached by the rabbis of Chicago, especially Dr. E. G. Hirsch, who unfolded the destiny of Judaism in terms of service to humanity and not in the idiom of a national restoration to Palestine.

The opportunities for participating in the cultural movements and a study of the arts and literature of the new world was their goal. But linked to this ambition was the desire to know the sources of Judaism and the literature that had spiritually nourished their ancestors and kept them alive in famine. . . . The Council set forth to provide facilities for self culture in the field of Jewish history, literature and theology. For the Jewish women of America, women being by nature the conservators, the Council claims to stand for "the preservation of Judaism," which is of course a vague challenge to their visionary opponents who might deny this. The Jewish Council was open, they said, to every Jewish woman: Orthodox or Reform, conservative or liberal, Zionist or non-Zionist, American or foreign born.^{228a}

In 1885, Mickve Israel, the oldest and most conservative
229a
congregation in America, admitted women as members. The Jewish Ministers Association of New York also took action on this question, during their 1886 conference .

Resolved, That it is the sense of this Conference that women can become active members of congregations by having a voice in its meetings and serving as members of its committees on Sabbath-schools.^{230a}

At the Jewish Women's Religious Congress of the World's Fair the women presented a multifaceted program dealing with women and religion in interrelationship.^{231a} The Union of American Hebrew Congregations took the following plea to heart and pledged their moral support to the National Council of Jewish Women.

I have been requested officially to pledge the moral support of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations to The National Council of Jewish Women. The request came to me just after the meeting of the Executive Board in June 1896, had been held. Whatever my own personal views may be on the subject, I could not arrogate to myself the authority to act on behalf of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in the manner requested. The National Council of Jewish Women is an organization with the most praiseworthy objects in view, and I must submit their cause to you for your careful and earnest consideration.^{232a}

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We cheerfully acknowledge that they are fully worthy of the cordial support and encouragement of all Jews who have the cause of Israel at heart, within and without this Council. We would furthermore kindly request the Rabbis and leaders of those congregations which are members of this Union to give the officers of the National Council of Jewish Women all the assistance they can in their endeavors to establish branches of their society in their respective communities.^{233a}

Isaac M. Wise came forth with an eloquent plea for the equality of women in the synagogues.

In our congregational constitutions we have made the great mistake of excluding women from all congregational work and honors. A radical reform in this matter would be highly desirable and beneficial. There ought to be a number of ladies in every Board of Trustees or Directors, especially in the School-Boards of the Sabbath-schools, in the Choir committees, visiting Boards to enlist new members in the congregation - in fact, in every Board and standing Committee there ought to be a number of ladies. Every members wife ought to be counted a member of the congregation and enjoy all the rights and privileges of such members. So, also, every lady who stands alone should be permitted to become a member of the congregation. We

are now far enough advanced, we hope, in our views to do away with the antiquated notions concerning women in the ecclesia. By means of our family pews and mixed choirs in the temple we have emancipated woman in the synagogue, and we much need her enthusiasm and pious sentiments in our religious affairs, which could easily be enlisted and turned to good account by giving her the employment and honors which produce a depth of interest. Hitherto, the ladies have had nothing to say or do in the congregation, and yet you find at all times more ladies than gentlemen in the temple attending divine service. This matter deserves not only earnest consideration, but also speedy action, for the benefit of the cause.^{234a}

But, although Isaac M. Wise was in favor of the National Council of Jewish Women, he frowned upon covering them with any unearned glory.

The editor of the LONDON JEWISH WORLD should not allow himself to be misled by the New York correspondent for his paper. The National Council of Jewish Women is the outcome of Reformed Judaism in America, and could have had no existence without it, and if it continues to live it will be along the lines marked out by reformed Judaism. If there is any "wave of deep religious feeling passing over our American Co-religionists," or if the Jewish women of America are leading the "erring sons of the faith back to the path from which they have long strayed," the Council of Women has nothing to do with the matter. Whatever influence may be exerted by that organization in the future, it has not as yet accomplished anything - not even its own organization. A few papers have been read, a little talk has been indulged in, and a few branch Councils have been formed, and that is all. This paper has been favorable to the Council from its inception and has had nothing but good words for it, but it is absurd to speak of it in its present formative condition as a factor in American Judaism. Whenever the aspirations which it starts have crystallized into some definite form, it will be time enough to begin talking of its "powerful influence." As things are now I shall continue to encourage the ladies to go ahead and get their organization into shape, and when they have accomplished anything I shall be among the first to blow the trumpet and beat the drum in their honor.²³⁵

When a speech delivered from the pulpit of the Sinai Congregation of Chicago, by one of the members of the National Council of Jewish Women made the newspapers, the American Israelite informed its readers that this was not

the first time that a woman had spoken from the pulpit.

Now the fact is that Mrs. Solomon did not act as rabbi, she merely delivered a very bright discourse on the work of the National Council of Jewish Women. Mrs. Solomon is a very talented woman and a social light, but she makes no claim whatever to being a rabbi. Miss Ray Frank, however, did officiate in Spokane several years ago on the Day of Atonement, and has often lectured and preached since. This was long before Mrs. Solomon's first public appearance. A number of young women have attended the Hebrew Union College at Cincinnati as special students for a longer or shorter period. . . and one, Miss Emily Bloch, now connected with the Chicago Jewish Manual Training School, completed the course, but was never ordained. . . .²³⁶

CHAPTER IV.

REFORM BREAKS WITH ORTHODOXY:
ELEMENTS REJECTED IN WHOLE OR PART

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Biblical, Post-Biblical, and Patristic Literature

The wide gulf that was destined to separate the reform Jew from his orthodox brother could be distinguished in their respective attitudes toward the Bible and the Talmud. As early as 1885, the second, third, and fourth sections of the Pittsburgh Platform gave us a glimpse at the reform attitude.

2. We prize and treasure the books comprizing the national library of Israel, preserved under the name of the Holy Scriptures, as the records of divine revelation and of the consecration of the Jewish people for this mission as priests of the one God; but we consider their composition, their arrangements and their entire contents as the work of men, betraying in their conceptions of the world the shortcomings of their age.

3. While finding in the miraculous narratives of the Bible child-like conceptions of the dealing of Divine love and justice with man, we today, in common with many Jewish thinkers of the Spanish era, welcome the results of natural science and progressive research in all fields of life as the best help to understand the working of the Divine love, the Bible serving us as guide to find the divine power working from within.

4. Beholding in the Mosaic law a system for training the Jewish people for its mission as a nation among the nations of antiquity, planted upon the soil of Palestine, we accept only the moral laws and statutes as divine, but reject all those social, political and priestly statutes which are in no shape and form adapted to our mode of life and to our views and habits as people scattered among the nations of the globe, and standing upon the level of a far higher culture of mind and heart than stood the people for whom they were intended.²³⁷

At the 1895 meeting of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, Isaac M. Wise put the following question to the members:

What is our relation in all religious matters to our own post-Biblical, our patristic literature including Talmud, casuists, responses, commentaries?²³⁸

The Committee on Post-Biblical and Patristic Literature submitted the following report:

From the standpoint of reform Judaism, the whole post-Biblical and Patristic literature, including the Talmud, casuists, responses and commentaries, is and can be considered as nothing more or less than "religious literature". As such it is of inestimable value. It is the treasure house in which the successive ages deposited their conceptions of the great and fundamental principles of Judaism, and their contributions to the never ceasing endeavor to elucidate the same. Consciously or unconsciously every age has added a wing to this great treasure house, and the architecture and construction of each wing bears the indelible marks of the peculiar characteristics of the time in which it was erected. Our age is engaged in the same task. We, too, have to contribute to the enlargement of this treasure house; but we have to do it in our own way, as the spirit of our time directs, without any slavish imitation of the past.

To have awakened the consciousness of this historic fact, is the great merit of Reform Judaism; and the more this consciousness grows upon our minds, the more the conditions and environments of our modern life force it upon us, the more persistently we have to assert: that our relations in all religious matters are in no way authoritatively and finally determined by any portion of our religious literature.

M. Schlesinger,
E. G. Hirsch, 239
A. Guttman.

The discussion of this motion was lively.

Rabbi Wintner asked to know why we should say that the laws contained in the Bible, seeing that the ancient rabbis wanted to expel some of the books of the Canon, are binding upon us Reform Jews, and all other laws not in the Biblical Canon are not binding?

Dr. Wise said the Bible was not on trial. He said he had asked only an expression on post-Biblical and Patristic literature, hence there is only one question, "Is the post-Biblical and Patristic literature binding upon our religious conscience?" As regards the Bible, we have nothing to say.

This conference dares not contradict itself. This conference has just adopted a Union Prayer Book, in which are several declarations that we are faithful to the Canon of Israel, which means the Bible.

Dr. E.G. Hirsch stated that as a member of the committee he was perfectly willing that a change in the wording be made. He regretted to see the subject of the Bible brought up, saying he did not believe that one single line of the Pentateuch was written by Moses in its present form.

Dr. Wise said that we simply wish to announce to the world that this conference does not consider the post-Biblical and Patristic literature binding, or authoritative in religious matters.

Dr. Sale thought that the conference ought to consider the views of our own people here in this country before other countries. He contended that the adoption of the report may injure some of the brethren in the conference, and therefore, moved to lay the report on the table. The report was tabled 11-9 after a call for division.

Dr. Isaac M. Wise now arose saying: "I hereby enter my protest against this tabling the report of the committee, and my reasons are that it is well understood, well known, and in practice carried into effect that we do not believe in the post-Biblical and patristic literature as religious authority. I want this protest entered upon the minutes. I will not stultify myself before the country and before the whole of Reformed Judaism."

Dr. Philipson's motion to reconsider the motion to table was carried 10-8 and the report was re-opened for discussion.

Dr. Aaron offered an amendment substituting the words "post-Biblical and Patristic" instead of the word "religious" in the last line of the report. This was accepted. Dr. Heller moved that the question be publicized.

Dr. Wise stated that it does not make the slightest difference to him personally, whether this report be adopted or not; but it is of the utmost importance that the conference declare to the world their conviction on this subject.

The motion as amended was carried 11-9.^{239a}

At the opening of the Conference for the following year,

Dr. Wise spoke on the motion in his opening address.

Another inconsistency we are called upon to remedy, is our last years vote on the authority of the Talmud and Talmudical laws. The chair had proposed to have a general discussion and arrive if possible at a decision on this question. . . . This was referred to a special committee, which overstepped its boundaries in its report. Instead of answering this plain question, what is our relation to the post-Biblical literature, the report culminated in the clause, "That our relation in all religious matters are in no way authoritatively and finally determined by any

portion of our religious literature." This answered a question which was not asked. . . . The report having come in on Friday and being referred back to the committee, the amended report could not be brought back before the conference before Saturday evening, when several of the members had left the city, only twenty appeared at the session. The committee not having amended its report, the amendment was moved and discussed in that session and finally passed as amended by a vote of 11-9. This placed the conference on record that nine out of twenty hold the post-Biblical or patristic literature as authoritative and final to us in all religious matters. So the vote was generally understood by outsiders, and this placed the conference in a ridiculous position of inconsistency. . . . As this was positively not the import of that vote, it places the nine of the opposition in a false light before the world as being adherents and advocates of orthodox Rabbinism. It will therefore be necessary that a reconsideration of the said vote be moved by some one who voted on it in the affirmative. We must sustain the position we took from the beginning; that this conference consists of the reformatory element only and exclusively, and its standpoint is historical Judaism. . . and not that of one period, place or class of people.²⁴⁰

At this same conference Dr. Gotthard Deutsch presented a paper on the theory of the oral tradition. He said in part,

We may therefore safely say that tradition as authentic interpretation of Mosaic law is an illusion, because:

1. The Torah never mentions the existence of an oral law.
2. It directly regards the written law as sufficient.
3. The authenticity of the rabbinical law presupposes the Mosaic authorship of the whole Pentateuch.
4. It presupposes the existence of the great synagogue which can not be proven from historical facts.
5. Some of the rabbinic laws are erroneous interpretations of Scriptural commandments.
6. A considerable part of our rabbinical literature is pseudoepigraphic.²⁴¹

Isaac M. Wise had himself declared some years previously that, as far as rabbinical laws are concerned,

those laws are binding on those who believe in the infallibility of the Talmudical legislation and interpretation, not for those who do not maintain to be orthodox rabbinical Jews, and still are orthodox Jews as far as Moses and the prophets go.²⁴²

Dr. Wise called this, "liberation from Rabbinic legalism."²⁴³

The Dietary Laws

Isaac M. Wise was perturbed with the orthodox for their propensity to insult him and attack him. Orthodoxy and the dietary laws were for him synonymous.

Now the test of orthodoxy is transferred from the synagogue to the table; those who profess belief in the dietary laws of Moses and the Rabbis are orthodox, the others are reformers; this is now the standard, the criterion, the issue, des Pudel's Kern.²⁴⁴

What Dr. Wise does in the American Jews Annual for the year 1884-85 might correctly be called a history of kashrus in the reformmovement.

When the Council of the Union met in Cincinnati (July 1883), and the first class of rabbis were graduated from the Hebrew Union College, a number of Cincinnati gentlemen gave a grand banquet to the representatives of the Union, for which those gentlemen paid and had it managed by their own committees. The Union and the College had nothing whatever to do with it. At that banquet a number of dishes were served, such as oysters, clams, crabs, etc., which the laws of Moses excluded from the tables of our fathers in the wilderness. This incident was made a pretext by one minister, who was known to be an opponent of the Union, to persuade his congregation in New York to resign from that body; and was made a standing text in the opposition journals to deride and defame not only the Union but also the College, and more especially its President, as though he had been the cook or caterer at that banquet; although quite a number of very prominent American rabbis and high officers of the most respectable congregations in the land who were assembled on that occasion, and had nothing to say against it.

The question of the dietary laws, whether they are yet obligatory for the Israelite, was started in the Rabbinical conference of 1846 in Germany, and referred to a committee consisting of Drs. Einhorn, Geiger, and Holdheim. They did not report, because no conference was convoked after that in Germany. . . . Those three doctors came to the conclusion that the dietary laws belong to the category of ritual or Levitical "cleanness and uncleanness" and were de facto abrogated with the destruction of the altar on Mount Moriah, with which all those laws ceased to exist.²⁴⁵

When Rabbi Joseph Krauskopf happened to deliver a

sermon which favored the dietary laws, the clamor went forth that he had rebelled against the Hebrew Union College and its President. Dr. Wise soon stopped that rumor by publicizing the facts in the Israelite. He went so far as to publish a lengthy essay on permitted and forbidden food.

. . . . In the first place it must be borne in mind that no religious Israelite doubts that the sanitary laws of Moses are very excellent. We knew that long before the medical and other scientific men demonstrated it; nor does their demonstration, in our estimation, add any authoritative value to those laws, which we accept upon the authority of the Torah. Still all those demonstrations and all those proofs of sanitary qualities do not make that kosher or trepheh which our orthodox brethren are pleased to call so. What is forbidden food according to Moses?

1. Blood. Moses forbids the eating of blood.

2. Fat. He forbids to use for food certain fat parts of the intestines of animals. But here comes Abraham Ibn Ezra and maintains that Moses forbids to use for food only such parts of that fat which were burned upon the altar, and the prohibition could not have been intended to extend to times and places where there is no altar and no fat is burned of any sacrifices. Therefore if anyone should happen to maintain that fat is not trepheh, he is no more of a Poshe Yisroel than Abraham Ibn Ezra was, and he was one of the principle expounders of Sacred Scriptures.

. . . . You see, after all, we know no more and no better about that method of slaughtering animals and the examination of the carcass, beyond the prohibition to eat the flesh of any animal which died of itself, or was torn or killed by a beast, than what the rabbis of old established and taught on this very important question. This reduces the whole matter not to whether one believes in the law of Moses and the wisdom of his sanitary prescriptions, but to whether one believes in the prescriptions and ordinances of the rabbis. If one disregards those regulations, you can not say that he is no believer in the Law of Moses, nor do all the medical and scientific demonstrations in favor of the sanitary laws of Moses give any support to those rabbinical prescriptions and ordinances. The same is the case with the kosher making of flesh, the purging or cutting out the veins, arteries and some nerves running into the forbidden fat, and similar ordinances. Moses said nothing of the kind; it is all of rabbinical origin. Now suppose any man or any class of men like the Karaites maintain they do not believe in the divinity or infallibility of the Talmud and do not consider themselves bound by this legislation, can you tell him that he does not believe in any of the laws of Moses? You may say he is no rabbinical Jew,

and that is exactly what he himself says. If so, what is the use of all the medical and scientific evidence in favor of the sanitary laws of Moses? It proves nothing in your favor and nothing against those who do not consider themselves bound by the rabbinical legislation. After all we advocate the continuance of keeping kosher not as a matter of religion - for our religion is in the Thorah - but as a sanitary measure, on which modern legislation hitherto has not improved, although we expect it will be done in all civilized countries.²⁴⁷

To add a little spice to the general run of arguments among the theologians, Dr. Wise decided to declare that oysters are kosher according to the Talmud. He was opposed in this view by Rabbi Dana, the editor of the New York DAILY SUN, who maintained that they were not kosher.

Wise says, the shell of the oyster is the same protective casing to this bivalve, as the scales are to the fish, against the poisonous gases in the water - this is a piece of science - and his antagonist of the SUN says no!

. According to Moses also, oysters do not belong to the class of forbidden food. No marine animal is actually unclean, and none is expressly forbidden to be used as food except the scavengers, and the sign of those scavengers is that they have no scales. Therefore the Talmud holds that in fish one sign of cleanness suffices. The oyster is no scavenger, it can not even thrive in contaminated water, as your oyster men will tell you. Nor is it at all certain that Moses meant any marine animal except fish and creeping things in the water. But those people from the interior of Poland that never saw an oyster, perhaps never heard of the existence of such a thing, care no more for Moses than for science in matters of this kind. The Talmud and inherited custom are their sole guide. Therefore Wise said oysters are kosher according to the Talmud, and so they are, even if our venerable colleague of the New York SUN, does not submit to Wise's Rabbinical authority, and all the saints of the New York Ghetto raise the mad dog cry of heresy at his heels. They howl all the time anyhow, and there is none to be disturbed by them.²⁴⁸

Dr. Wise's attitude is summed up in the following statement:

. There are parties in our next neighborhood that keep no Sabbath and no holidays, and are not very

particular otherwise except in eating that only which the rabbis declared kosher, fit to eat. Not Moses, but the Rabbis are the authority in all matters of eating and even drinking. This fact affords food for thought. How did the people come to this conscientious strictness just in this matter of eating, also those whose religious conceptions otherwise are very lax or even immoral?²⁴⁹

Attitudes toward Zionism

The attitude which reform Judaism would take toward Zionism was reflected in the fifth paragraph of the Pittsburgh Platform. It stated:

We recognize in the modern era of universal culture of heart and intellect the approaching of the realization of Israel's great Messianic hope for the establishment of the kingdom of truth, justice and peace among all men. We consider ourselves no longer a nation, but a religious community, and therefore expect neither a return to Palestine nor a sacrificial worship under the sons of Aaron, nor the restoration of any of the laws concerning the Jewish State.²⁵⁰

At the first meeting of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, Dr Philipson said ,

he was desirous that the attitude of the Jewish people toward the United States should be brought out prominently. He introduced, in accordance therewith, the following resolution:

Although it has been stated time and again that the Jews are no longer a nation, they form a religious community only, yet this thought has not been thoroughly appreciated by the community at large. We still hear of the Jewish nation, the Hebrew people, and therefore this conference feels itself called upon to declare once more there is no Jewish nation now, only a religious body, and in accordance with this fact neither the name Hebrew nor Israelite, but the universal appellation Jew is applicable to the adherents of Judaism to-day.²⁵¹

The story is told in Dr. Philipson's autobiography.

The outstanding event of Jewish world interest was the launching of the Zionist movement at Basle, Switzerland, in the summer of this year, 1897. . . . The Reform Rabbis, with few exceptions, antagonized the Herzlian proposition. And none more decidedly than did I. . . . The position taken by the rabbis at Pittsburgh was officially reinforced by the Central Conference of American Rabbis, when, at the meeting held at Montreal in July,

1897, the following resolution, which I was instrumental in framing, was adopted: "RESOLVED, That we totally disapprove of any attempts for the establishment of a Jewish state. Such attempts show a misunderstanding of Israel's mission, which, from the narrow political and national field has been expanded to the promotion among the whole human race of the broad and universalistic religion first proclaimed by the Jewish prophets. Such attempts do not benefit, but infinitely harm our Jewish brethren where they are still persecuted, by confirming the assertion of their enemies that the Jews are foreigners in the countries in which they are at home and of which they are everywhere the most loyal and patriotic citizens.

We reaffirm that the object of Judaism is not political or national, but spiritual, and addresses itself to the continuous growth of peace, justice and love in the human race to a Messianic time when all men will recognize that they form one great brotherhood for the establishment of God's Kingdom on earth."

. . . the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, at its first convention after the Basle declaration, at Richmond, Va. in December, 1898, debated the proposition. I brought up the subject and moved for the appointment of a committee to consider the matter and report to the convention. The committee consisted of the Hon. Simon Wolf, the Rev. Dr. Joseph Krauskopf, and myself as chairman. This committee reported the following as a result of its deliberations: "We are unalterably opposed to political Zionism. The Jews are not a nation, but a religious community. Zion was a precious possession of the past, the early home of our faith, where our prophets uttered their world subduing thoughts, and our Psalmists sang their world-enchancing hymns. As such, it is a holy memory, but it is not the hope of the future. America is our Zion. Here, in the new home of religious liberty, we have aided in founding this new Zion, the fruition of the beginning laid in the old. The mission of Judaism is spiritual, not political. Its aim is not to establish a state, but to spread the truths of religion and humanity throughout the world."

In the debate which followed the introduction of the report, one of the speakers used the phrase, "Washington is our Jerusalem". This striking phrase, which was not in the resolution, was telegraphed throughout the country by the Associated Press. Thereafter the opposition Jewish press persistently declared that the Richmond resolution had pronounced, "America is our Zion and Washington is our Jerusalem".²⁵²

In answer to a report that a Jewish flag had been dedicated at a club house in Chicago, the American Israelite sent off a salvo.

And we Jews of the East side all over the land, all

belonging to the right side, protest loudly and emphatically against the flag of Solomon and any other flag except the star spangled banner of our country. We protest against such childish playing with the name and common sense of the American Israelites, even if it is done in a lodge of an unknown brotherhood and with the sanction of a pseudo-rabbinate, principally because,

1. Nobody knows, what the flag of Solomon was or looked like.

2. We want no flag besides the one of our country, no emblem of nationality besides the stars and stripes.

3. No lodge and no rabbinate has a right to make fan-tasts and fools of themselves at the expense of all American citizens of the Jewish persuasion.²⁵⁵

The Zionist meetings called by Herzl, Nordau, Montefiore and De Haas were calumnized in the columns of the American
²⁵⁴
Israelite.²⁵⁵ At the 1897 meeting of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, Isaac M. Wise again took the opportunity
²⁵⁶
to attack the Zionists. The result was the motion referred to in Dr. Philipson's autobiography.

At a meeting called by the Jewish Ministers Association of New York, and attended by all the ministers and representatives of all the Jewish congregations in the area, the following list of resolutions was adopted and sent to the Zionist International Congress in Munich:

Resolved, That we favor this or any conference of any prominence being furnished for its guidance when desired, with all possible statistics or other information as to the position of the Jews of America and the economical, social and political conditions which obtain in this country.

Resolved, That the colonization of Palestine and emigration to that country, within safe limitations, be endorsed, always provided that the consent of the Turkish government be obtained.

Resolved, That we sympathize with any intelligent attempt to rectify the Chaluka system as at present existing.

Resolved, That the presentation of any Jewish question to a diplomatic conference of the Great Powers should be made only in connection with and under the auspices of the Alliance Israelite Universelle, Anglo-Jewish Association, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, and other similar representative organizations.

Resolved, That while every association of Palestine

with the Jews arouses our interest and touches a responsive chord in Jewish hearts, we deprecate any movement tending towards the formation of a Jewish state in Palestine capable of being construed as casting doubt upon the citizenship, patriotism or loyalty of Jews in whatever country they reside.

Resolved, That we re-affirm our conviction that the true mission of Judaism is religious and not political, and that any plan or proposal for the uplifting of the Jewish people as such must be tested by its spiritual value and purpose.²⁵⁷

Commenting on the cancellation of the Munich Conference of Zionists scheduled for August, 1897, Dr. Wise erroneously prophesied that, "the entire movement is dead as a door nail".²⁵⁸ His general comments concerning the new movement were similar to the following one:

It may now be safely asserted that political Zionism has practically ceased to exist. The handful of zealots who are still preaching it with Dr. Herzl at their head are quarreling among themselves and are losing in numerical strength every day. The Judenstaat had ceased to be a thing hoped for and the dream of re-establishing a Jewish theocracy in Palestine under the aegis of Turkey has dissolved into mist. What is left of "Zionism" has for its object to help Jews to leave the countries with whose people they can not assimilate and to settle in Palestine as agriculturists and to help them there until they are able to help themselves. This means of course the unfortunates of those countries where active persecutions are going on, viz: Russia and Rumania. This kind of Zionism will recommend itself to every good man and all who can spare even a little should contribute to it. Should any measure of success attend the efforts of its adherents, good will after all have come out of Herzl's folly.²⁵⁹

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We know of course how absurdly and pitifully powerless the Zionists are, but the world at large does not. It has a vague belief in the myth called the "Jew money power," a powerful combine that is always about to do something wonderful, which however it never does. The persistent activity of the Zionists can not fail to injure the standing of the Jewish subjects of the Sultan and of the agricultural settlers in Palestine, to say nothing of making immigration to that province difficult or even impossible. Zionism has hitherto been only a folly, circumstances are fast becoming such that it may be a crime. The leaders of the misguided people may have very much to answer for if they persist in their wrongful course.²⁶⁰

Isaac M. Wise did not hesitate to make the most re-

viling remarks about anyone connected with the Zionist movement. In a report on the Zionist Congress at Basle, Switzerland, he says,

. . . the most striking thing was the silence of the American and English delegates while Dr. Nordau was casting groundless aspersions on the good name of the two countries. How such men as Prof. Richard Gottheil and Rev. Stephen S. Wise could sit by quietly and listen to Nordau's vile libel and distortion of unimportant occurrences, to substantiate his claim of the existence of anti-semitism among the people of the United States is hard to understand. Parliamentary courtesy might account for their silence during the reading of Dr. Nordau's address, but nothing can excuse the utter lack of patriotism or abject cowardice, whichever it was, that prevented them from defending the honor of their country, when it was so unjustly assailed before a cosmopolitan assemblage. We have no doubt that Messrs. Gottheil and Wise are honorable men according to their lights and strive for the right as they see it, but their inability to comprehend what was the proper thing for them to have done at the conclusion of Dr. Nordau's address is proof conclusive that they are utterly unfit to be leaders of men. We presume the English delegates are of the same caliber. The best cause would fail of success with such leaders, and "Herzl's folly" is far from being the best cause.²⁶¹

Professor Gottheil replied to this attack in a letter to the Israelite.

. . . The statement made by Dr. Nordau. . . was "Even the United States have not been free from this disease. The law and public life know nothing about Jew-hatred. Nevertheless, the number of hotels and public institutions which expressly close their doors to Jews is very great." The reason for the "silence of the American delegates" on this point was their knowledge that the statement was absolutely correct.²⁶²

Isaac Mayer Wise was not convinced.²⁶³ He proceeded to attack the American Hebrew for rendering journalistic support to the Zionist cause.²⁶⁴

At the 1899 meeting of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, Rabbi Henry Berkowitz delivered a paper²⁶⁵ entitled, "Why I am not a Zionist". Dr S. Sale also delivered²⁶⁶ an address on the same subject. The main argument of Rabbi

Berkowitz's paper was,

Providence has sent us into the world to oppose all forms of Paganism and immorality and work for principles of right, truth and justice among men. Our duty is to stay in the face of all ills and do our work until the final triumph.²⁶⁷

In the yearbook for that year there appeared a paper by Professor Caspar Levias, of the Hebrew Union College, justifying the Zionist position.²⁶⁸

The position of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations on this issue was clearly enunciated at the 1898 convention.

I am sure that the Union of American Hebrew Congregations while declaring emphatically against any political Jewish state and emphasizing by resolution its love of and for the United States, is actuated by the highest motives, and is not departing from any feeling of sympathy for those who are our brethren in faith, and whom we are most anxious to educate into a higher plane of citizenship. Reform must come from within, and not from without. If the so-called "Rebberes" could be eliminated out of the pale of influence, great good would result to the Jews as citizens.²⁶⁹

Hats, Robes, and Prayer Shawls

Although the material to be found on this subject is sparse yet it represents an important area in which reform differed with orthodoxy.

In 1885, the New York reporter for the Israelite reported that

Dr. Gottheil preached before the Ahawath Chesed Congregation, and astonished his hearers by appearing arrayed in a cap and gown.²⁷⁰

The following year the newspaper received a letter addressed to the editor, which read as follows:

DEAR SIR:- During our Yom Kippur services in this place an old gentleman came near disturbing the services

because the reader took out and read the "Sepher" with uncovered head. The Israelites here are divided on this point. Some say if it is not wrong to pray with uncovered head, it is not wrong to read the Torah in the same manner; others contend, that even in the most radical congregations the reader covers his head when reciting the "Pa'shah." The above-mentioned old gentleman recites "Miznefeth," bad, in "Acheremoth," another one "Kalluth rosh" in the "Alchet" confessions. Please enlighten us on this point through the columns of your paper and oblige.

Many Subscribers.

It is a mistaken notion that the covering of the head during divine worship or reading Sacred Scriptures is a religious ordinance, a Mitzvah, or that omitting it is an Averah. There is no such law in the code. It is an oriental custom and no more.²⁷¹

The approach of Isaac M. Wise to this problem was not a dogmatic one. Among the congregations, however, it could arouse no little strife. In answer to a report that a rabbi who had been invited to preach in a reform temple, upon refusing to remove his hat, was forced to leave that temple, Dr. Wise says,

It is a precious small business to allow such an insignificant matter to outlaw a Jew from the house of God. However, the liberal congregation is the more blameworthy of the two sides to the quarrel, as its members cannot enter the plea of conscience. The orthodox Jew may look upon it as a violence of his conscience to enter a synagogue bareheaded, but the liberal Jew certainly does not consider it a sin to keep the head covered, and as the latter stood in the position of host, the susceptibilities of the guest should not have been wounded. If reform does not teach its followers common sense, toleration and good manners in all things appertaining to religion, there is not much use for its existence.²⁷²

CHAPTER V

THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE REFORM MOVEMENT,
1885 - 1900

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During the period which is covered by this thesis, the United States was undergoing a transition from a rural, agricultural country to an urban, industrialized country. Reform Judaism itself had to gather its forces and concentrate on the growing cities. The Christians were deeply immersed in a controversy over biological evolution. This was only one manifestation of the conflict that was raging between fundamentalist and liberal, in the churches. The Christian fundamentalists felt threatened by the theory of biological evolution, the science of Biblical criticism, and the interest in comparative religion. The trend toward acceptance of the Darwinian theory became increasingly evident among the Christian clergy. In both 1881 and 1885, a revised version of the King James Bible appeared. This buttressed the position of the Biblical critics. When the Chautauqua Society opened its platforms to their speakers, the position of Biblical criticism in America was assured. The intense interest in comparative religion reached its zenith in the World's Parliament of Religion, which convened during the 1893 Columbian Exposition, in Chicago.

The newly arrived immigrants and the poor among the people were not attracted to the churches. Due to the influx of new customs together with their practitioners, the immigrants, the heretofore solemn Christian Sabbath began to take on some changes. The Sabbath came to be regarded more as a secular day of rest than as a religious day of consecration. In spite of all these drawbacks, the membership of the churches showed a substantial increase.

One of the outstanding characteristics of this period, concomitant with the growth of the cities, was the development of the institutional type of church. These churches were equipped with facilities to serve as social club houses as well as worship centers. The entire scene was one which favored the reappraisal of thought and truth. Religious thought and truth were no exception. The individual was in the mood to assert his independence. The ministers of religion made efforts to reconcile science with religion. Religion was declared in harmony with the Darwinian theory and the battle was joined.

Americans of a scholarly bent were apt to continue their university educations in Germany. Even when, in the last decade of the 19th century, American facilities were more adequate, the trend still continued, though somewhat abated. Adult education came to claim its portion of the stage.

The drive toward unification in religion was evident. In 1855, the Chicago Theological Seminary was established. This institution was the offspring of the American Congregational Union which was formed by the Congregationalists in 1853.

With the higher cultural and educational standards in

the ministry, brought about by a prospering America, came a doubting attitude toward the old orthodox ways. The religion of the fathers was forced to move aside for the more relaxed religion of the sons. Those Christian churches which had been known as poor mens churches were inevitably drawn into the vortex of the upper middle class.

Immigration to the United States rose to a roaring crescendo with the Russian pogroms of 1881. The Russian Jews flocked to these shores in multitudes. In 1877 there were two hundred and seventy-eight Jewish congregations in the United States and a Jewish population of 230,000. By 1890, the population and also the Jewish congregations had doubled. In 1890, there were, in the United States, five hundred and thirty-three Jewish congregations and approximately 500,000
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Jews.

This then is the environment in which the Reform movement, from 1885 to 1900, found itself. Its attitude toward its environs and some of its actions find explanation in the very nature of the decade and a half of which we speak. When we speak here of the accomplishments of the Reform movement, we shall not discuss those parts of it that were already in existence at the beginning of this period. We will, however, deal with anything these existing institutions may have contributed.

The Union of American Hebrew Congregations was in existence from the year 1873. It established the Hebrew Union College in 1875. During the period between 1885 - 1900, the outstanding contribution made by this Union, religiously speaking, was the institution of circuit preaching. The rabbis

who volunteered their services had as their main object the spreading of the knowledge of Judaism among the Jewish people in those small towns that could not afford a rabbi. They accomplished this objective through lectures and through the organization of Sunday schools in those small towns and cities. The other institution of which the Union of American Hebrew Congregations was the mother organization, the Hebrew Union College, grew in enrollment and in material size during this period. This was due in great part to the spirit of the men who were devoted to the College. The growth in enrollment was the result both of this and the general tenor of the times which was conducive to a liberal religion.

The spirit of the times was reflected in the planks of the Pittsburg Platform. Dr. Kaufman Kohler has been accused of calling the Pittsburg Conference in order to attain the upper hand in his dispute with Dr. Alexander Kohut. From the evidence at hand, this does not seem to be so. The conditions of the times, historically and religiously speaking, screamed for some pronouncement of this type.

The air was ripe for the creation of ministerial organizations. The three main organizations were the Jewish Ministers' Association of America, which was mainly in the New York area; the Conference of Rabbis of Southern Congregations, and the Central Conference of American Rabbis. There were many smaller organizations of rabbis, on the local and state levels, but these three organizations were the most influential. Although there was a meeting of the minds between the Central Conference of American Rabbis and the Conference of Rabbis of Southern Congregations; there was an interchange

of members between them; the Ministers Association of America was not so friendly. Perhaps, because it was in reality opposed to the formation of the Central Conference of American Rabbis and Isaac Mayer Wise. This opposition came from the top leadership and not from the members as a whole.

The outstanding contribution of the period for Reform Judaism was the compilation of the Union Prayer Book. This standardization of the prayer book for all congregations added much toward the growth of Judaism in this country. In this instance and also in the instance of the organization of the Jewish Chautauqua Society, the Jews were patterning themselves after Christian predecessors. In the all pervading atmosphere of unification and education, the Jewish Publication Society came into being. The movement went relentlessly toward organization and centralization.

In the midst of a society which was beginning to grant greater privileges to women, the Jews were caught up in the stream. Women's organizations sprouted throughout the country. The contribution of Reform Judaism was the National Council of Jewish Women. At the 1893 World's Exposition at Chicago, a religious presentation by all religions was envisaged. This took the form of a formal presentation of the point of view of Judaism by the rabbis, mostly of the Reform persuasion. The women were not to be left behind. They too, organized and presented a program on Judaism at the Women's Denominational Congress.

The main question which we might ask concerning this period is, "Were the Reform Jews of this period, of a reform frame of mind as we conceive of it today or did they really

espouse an enlightened form of orthodoxy?" The answer is not to be found in a simple yes or no. There was an admixture of feelings. The Reform Jews were more readily influenced by the practices and opinions of their Christian neighbors than were the Orthodox Jews. However, the Orthodox Jews did not stay entirely clear of this entanglement. If we were to use Isaac M. Wise as a measuring rod then we would have to say that reform for Judaism meant the throwing off of the yoke of Rabbinism. Although this may have been accepted in theory such was not the clear case in practice. The period marked a phase of change in Reform Judaism. People were thrashing about in one or the other direction trying to find the niche which would suit them. The almost violent reforms which were suggested or instituted in this period, only to be modified at a later time, give proof of the groping which was present. To be sure, men had their opinions, but in very few instances did the movement act as a whole. There were always those who were ready to give up everything but the thought that Judaism was universalistic, the radical Reformers; and those who tempered their reforms with the flavor of Biblical and Talmudical lore, the moderate reformers.

An honest answer to the question would be one that took cognizance of both of these trends in Reform. To take into consideration all the differing individual opinions would be to muddle the issue hopelessly. For an orthodox mind, the actions which the reformers took during this period were far removed from Orthodoxy and Judaism. To the person who was caught up in the spirit of the decade, who saw the rise of large cities and the emancipation of the individual

from much of the religious and economic serfdom to which he had been subjected, to such an individual the reformers of his day appeared as the logical development of Judaism in the environment in which it found itself. To us today, looking back upon that period, we can see it as the bedrock out of which was hewn the Reform Judaism that was to develop into that Judaism which we of the Reform persuasion practice today.

FOOTNOTES

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